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Literacy and social practice

in the

Ngaanyatjarra world

Inge Birgita Kral

March 2007

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

(Anthropology)

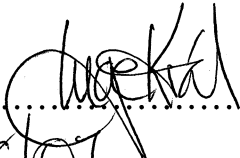
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I, Inge Kral, declare that this thesis comprises only my original work, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used. This thesis does not exceed 100,000 words in length, exclusive of footnotes, tables, figures and appendices.

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Table of contents

Tables and Figures	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
Abbreviations.....	v
Chronology	vi
Chapter 1 Literacy in the Ngaanyatjarra world—setting the context.....	1
Introduction	1
Background.....	2
Literacy and illiteracy.....	6
Ethnographies of literacy	13
An ethnography of literacy in the Ngaanyatjarra context.....	19
Thesis outline	24
Chapter 2 ‘Mission time’.....	31
Introduction	31
The ‘protectionist’ era.....	31
Mt Margaret Mission.....	33
The Ngaanyatjarra world.....	38
Warburton Ranges Mission.....	42
The mission generation.....	43
Literacy, Christianity and schooling—the English experience	49
Habitualisation into new practices	54
Literacy, Christianity and adults—the vernacular experience	57
Conflicting values and practices	59
The westerly drift.....	61
Conclusion.....	63
Chapter 3 ‘Native Welfare time’.....	65
Introduction	65
‘Assimilation’—a new policy era	65
Tutored assimilation.....	66
The ‘Native Welfare generation’.....	69
Education for unemployment.....	81
The move ‘from rations to cash’	91
Literacy and schooling	96
Literacy and adult practices	98

Conclusion	104
Chapter 4 'Government time'	107
Introduction.....	107
'When the new things came in'—self-determination and change.....	107
'Homeland time'—outstations and the return to country	111
Literacy and 'self-determination'.....	114
Literacy as social practice.....	119
The orality of written texts	128
Literacy as a political strategy	136
The formation of a community of interest	139
Conclusion	146
Chapter 5 Literacy and the 'practice of everyday life'	149
Introduction.....	149
Transformed practices.....	150
Literacy in the domestic space	153
Literacy in the public space	161
Literacy domains	167
Administrative literacies	173
Literacy as cultural practice.....	179
Conclusion	190
Chapter 6 Transmitting orality and literacy as cultural practice.....	193
Introduction.....	193
Socialisation into the Ngaanyatjarra world.....	193
Language socialisation.....	194
Language shift.....	200
Home, school and learning.....	203
Family literacy.....	206
Children reading and writing—a special situation.....	212
The birthday party— socialisation into a Western literate ethos	222
Conclusion	226
Chapter 7 Young adults—change, learning and engagement	227
Introduction.....	227
Altered maturational cycles.....	227
'Working for your own living'.....	235
New influences	240
Warburton youth arts	245

Alternative ways of learning and engaging.....	252
Conclusion.....	259
Chapter 8 Conclusion.....	261
Literacy assumptions and their consequences.....	263
Place, identity, young people and education.....	268
Diversity and the dignity of difference.....	270
Where do we go from here?.....	271
Appendix A Methodology.....	275
Appendix B Family Narratives A–K.....	281
Appendix C Language description.....	375
Appendix D Ngaanyatjarra glossary.....	377
Appendix E Population estimates.....	379
Appendix F Post-primary schooling estimates.....	382
Appendix G Census household data (2001).....	383
Appendix H NRS Literacy assessments (writing).....	384
Appendix I Training estimates.....	390
Appendix J Snapshot distribution of CDEP, Warburton February 2004.....	393
References.....	394
Additional resources.....	418

Tables and Figures

Tables		Page:
Table 3.1	Adult Native Education enrolment 1965–72	66
Table 3.2	Estimated adult Aboriginal population and employment figures Laverton and Warburton 1965–1972	84
Table 4.1	Estimated population Ngaanyatjarra Lands 1972–1983	109
Table 4.2	Letters—Corpus A	118
Table 4.3	Letters—Corpus B	129
Table 5.1	2004 CDEP Skills Audit—Literacy self-assessment	158
Table 5.2	2004 CDEP Skills Audit—Overall NRS (Ngaanyatjarra Lands)	159
Table 5.3	2004 CDEP Skills Audit—NRS Reading (Ngaanyatjarra Lands)	159
Table 5.4	2004 CDEP Skills Audit—Overall NRS young adults (Warburton)	160
Table 5.5	Estimated Ngaanyatjarra and English adult literacy competence	161

Tables in Appendices

Table AB.1	Overview Family Narratives A–K	275
Table AC.1	Language spoken at Warburton 2001 Census data	372
Table AE.1	Estimated population at Warburton Ranges and Cosmo Newbery 1936–1973	375
Table AE.2	Estimated Aboriginal population Warburton and Eastern Goldfields towns 1935–1983 (incl. children)	376
Table AG.1	Indigenous households in Warburton 2001 Census data	379
Table AG.2	Number of persons usually resident in separate households	379
Table AG.3	Selected averages for age, income and rent	379
Table AI.1	Training noted in CDEP Skills Audit 2004 (Warburton only)	386
Table AI.2	Accredited training Ngaanyatjarra Community College 2000–2003	387

Figures		Facing page:
Fig. 1.1	Map of the Western Desert region	2
Fig. 1.2	Rockholes along Warburton–Laverton road	4
Fig. 1.3	Aerial photo of Warburton 2004	4
Fig. 1.4	Map of the Department of Native Welfare (Western Australia) – Divisions, Offices, Hostels and Churches	6
Fig. 2.1	Education publications by M.M. Bennett (1935) and R.S. Schenk (1936)	36
Fig. 2.2	Ngaanyatjarra relationship terms	40
Fig. 2.3	The Ngaanyatjarra section system	40
Fig. 2.4	First group of school children, Warburton Ranges Mission 1936	44
Fig. 2.5	Early mud brick construction, Old Well Warburton Ranges Mission	44
Fig. 2.6	Men employed in building projects, Warburton Ranges Mission 1949	44
Fig. 2.7	Christian meeting, Warburton Ranges Mission 1939	44
Fig. 2.8	Wooden school building, Warburton Ranges Mission—before 1952	52
Fig. 2.9	Stone school building, Warburton Ranges Mission—after 1952	52
Fig. 2.10	School girls and boys, Warburton Ranges Mission—after 1952	52

Fig. 2.11	Girls from the Baker Home Dormitory, Warburton Ranges Mission 1950s	52
Fig. 2.12	Dormitory girls doing chores, Warburton Ranges Mission 1950s	52
Fig. 2.13	Young men doing pastoral work, Warburton Ranges Mission 1950s	56
Fig. 2.14	Older girls from the Baker Home, Warburton Ranges Mission 1952	56
Fig. 2.15	Gathering outside Warburton Ranges Mission compound fence	56
Fig. 2.16	Open air church service, Warburton Ranges Mission	56
Fig. 3.1	Christian meeting, Warburton Ranges Mission 1960s	100
Fig. 3.2	Article from <i>Today: Family Magazine</i> by Warburton pastor, 2004	100
Fig. 4.1	<i>Warburtonngamartaji Tjukurrpa – Warburton News</i>	118
Fig. 4.2	Dorothy Hackett and Anee Glass doing Bible translation work with Ngaanyatjarra literates, 1982	118
Fig. 4.3	Letters from Warburton adolescents, Kalgoorlie 1970	120
Fig. 4.4	Petition from Warburton Community to Director of Primary Education, Perth 1975	126
Fig. 4.5	Letter to Senator Cavanagh, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs concerning Blackstone outstation, 1973	132
Fig. 4.6	Hortatory text 1990s	132
Fig. 4.7	Notice to all staff 2002	132
Fig. 4.8	Petition concerning formation of the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku	144
Fig. 4.9	Letter concerning Ngaanyatjarra Council By-Laws 1987	144
Fig. 5.1	Writing <i>turlku</i>	160
Fig. 5.2	Literacy resources available at Warburton local store 2004	160
Fig. 5.3	Work literacies	170
Fig. 5.4	Administrative literacies: official motor vehicle correspondence	174
Fig. 5.5	Information notices	180
Fig. 5.6	Event notices	180
Fig. 5.7	<i>Purnu</i> and literacy	180
Fig. 5.8	Church literacies	180
Fig. 5.9	Sports literacies	188
Fig. 5.10	Speeches	188
Fig. 6.1	Story wire for telling sand stories	200
Fig. 6.2	Ngaanyatjarra children's books and colouring-in packs	208
Fig. 6.3	Children with laptop computers	208
Fig. 6.4–6.5	Rosina writing (age 4.5–4.6)	214
Fig. 6.6–6.7	Nina writing (age 5.6–5.11)	214
Fig. 6.8	<i>Bamboozled</i>	216
Fig. 6.9	Nina writing (age 7.5)	222
Fig. 6.10–6.11	Rosina writing (age 6.8–6.10)	222
Fig. 6.12	'Happy Birthday' glass plate	224
Fig. 7.1	Warburton graffiti 2003–2006	242
Fig. 7.2	Diary writing	246
Fig. 7.3	Multimedia workshop poster	246
Fig. 7.4	<i>Wilurarra</i> Youth Arts Festival, Warburton, April 2005	246
Fig. 7.5	<i>Nintirringkula Newsletter</i>	246
Fig. 7.6	Cartoon stories	246
Fig. 7.7	Songs and scripts	246
Fig. 7.8	Scribbling and doodling	246

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnography of literacy. It is also a study of the social process of learning. It focuses on a remote Aboriginal group in the Western Desert of Australia. Although the last out of the desert (the first wave came out in the 1930s and the last in the 1960s), the Ngaanyatjarra encountered an unusual sequence of relatively benign post-contact experiences and were never removed from their traditional country.

A literacy perspective is used to trace the history of the Ngaanyatjarra encounter with the United Aborigines Mission and with the state. This historical perspective underpins the contemporary ethnography. A generational approach is taken to analyse the impact on literacy of differing developmental trajectories—the post-1930s mission-educated older generation, the assimilation-influenced generation who were educated by the state in the Eastern Goldfields during the 1960s and the current generation of young adults who are influenced by myriad intercultural connections.

It is proposed that literacy processes cannot be understood simply in terms of schooling or technical skills competence. Literacy is also a cultural process and cannot be analysed in isolation from circumstances and conditions that precipitate the development of literacy as social practice. Literacy also cannot be removed from the cultural conceptions and social meanings that are associated with reading and writing in historical and contemporary contexts. In this newly literate group we see how oral narrative schemas and speech styles seeped into the incipient literacy practices of the older generation and how young adults are now incorporating intertextual practices drawn from eclectic influences.

The generational approach exemplifies how in just three generations a literate orientation has evolved. Some Ngaanyatjarra have incorporated literacy into social practice and literacy is being transmitted as a cultural process to the next generation. Yet not all Ngaanyatjarra are literate and many literacies do not measure up to mainstream standards of competence and this has consequences. The central argument of the thesis is that if literacy is to be maintained, elaborated and transmitted in this newly literate context it must be meaningfully integrated into everyday social practice in a manner that extends beyond pedagogical settings.

Abbreviations

AAEM	Australian Aborigines Evangelical Mission
AAPA	Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (Western Australia)
AEW	Aboriginal Education Worker
AIEO	Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer
AnTEP	Anangu Teacher Education Program
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
BIITE	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
CAPS	Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed Schools
CDEP	Community Development Employment Project
CNA	Commissioner of Native Affairs (Western Australia)
CNW	Commissioner of Native Welfare (Western Australia)
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Commonwealth)
DCW	Department of Community Welfare (Western Australia)
DNA	Department of Native Affairs (Western Australia)
DNW	Department of Native Welfare (Western Australia)
DSS	Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
EGHS	Eastern Goldfields High School (Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Western Australia)
EGRP	Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison (Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Western Australia)
GBTI	Gnowangerup Bible Translation Institute
LLN	Language, Literacy and Numeracy
LOTE	Languages Other Than English
MNA	Minister of Native Affairs
MNW	Minister of Native Welfare
NLS	New Literacy Studies
NPYWC	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
NRS	National Reporting System ¹
NT	Northern Territory
NTU	Ngaanyatjarra Council Native Title Unit
SA	South Australia
SAE	Standard Australian English
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
UAM	United Aborigines Mission
UB	Unemployment Benefits
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WA	Western Australia
WADET	Western Australian Department of Education and Training

¹ (Coates et al. 1995)

Chronology

Protectionist policy (Western Australia)

- 1915-1936 A.O. Neville serves as Chief Protector in the Department of Aborigines
 1905-1936 *Aborigines Act 1905* (WA).
 1921-1953 Rodolphe Schenk is Superintendent of the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) at Mt Margaret.
 1934 Moseley Royal Commission.
 1934 Warburton Ranges Mission is established by UAM missionaries Will and Iris Wade, and others.
 1936 Introduction of the *Native Administration Act* (WA).
 1936-1940 A.O. Neville is Commissioner of the Department of Native Affairs (DNA).
 1940-47 F.I. Bray replaces Neville as Commissioner.
 1944-1971 *Native (Citizenship Rights) Act* (Amended 1950 and 1951).
 1948-1962 S.G. Middleton is Commissioner of Native Affairs (CNA).
 1953 Cosmo Newbery Settlement handed over to the UAM.

Assimilationist policy (Western Australia)

- 1954 Commissioner Middleton introduces *Native Welfare Act* (WA) and the Department of Native Affairs (DNA) is renamed the Department of Native Welfare (DNW).
 1959 Amendments made to the *Commonwealth Social Services Act*—child endowment made available to mothers and the pension made available for aged, widowed and invalid people under the care of missions, settlements and cattle stations.
 1961 F.E. Gare succeeds Middleton as Commissioner of Native Welfare.
 1963 Amendments made to the *Native Welfare Act*.
 1967 Commonwealth constitutional referendum on Aboriginal citizenship question.
 1968 *Federal Pastoral Industry Award* amended and equal wages for Aboriginal pastoral workers sanctioned (government settlements established in the Northern Territory as a consequence).

Self-determination

- 1971 Tonkin Labor government elected in Western Australia and the functions of the Department of Native Welfare now absorbed by the Department of Community Welfare (DCW).
Native (Citizenship Rights) Act repealed.
 1972 *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act* (WA) introduced. Remaining functions of DCW absorbed by Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA).
 1972 Federal Labor party elected under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Policy of self-determination introduced under new commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). National Aboriginal Consultative Committee elected by Aborigines Australia-wide.
 1973 UAM relinquishes Warburton Ranges Mission to the government.
 1974 Commonwealth DAA takes responsibility for most aspects of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia and becomes the main service provider to remote communities. F.E. Gare formerly CNW now Director of DAA in WA (and remaining functions of AAPA at state level).
 1975 Federal Liberal party government takes over under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser
 1989 Functions of DAA taken over by the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).
 2004 ATSIC abolished by Liberal Federal government under Prime Minister John Howard.

PART I

CHAPTERS 1 – 4

CHAPTER 1 Literacy in the Ngaanyatjarra world— setting the context

Introduction

In this ethnography of literacy in a remote Australian Aboriginal community I consider that literacy cannot be understood independently of the social, cultural, political and historical forces and traditions that shape it, nor can it be analysed in isolation from the social practices that surround it and the ideological systems in which it is embedded.² I focus on the Ngaanyatjarra region of Western Australia (WA) and analyse literacy practice in English and the vernacular Ngaanyatjarra. I use an ethnohistorical perspective to shed light on the social practices, cultural conceptions and social meanings associated with reading and writing in the contemporary context.

Most literacy studies in the 'newly literate' remote Australian Aboriginal context have paid scant attention to how literacy is used in everyday life, or to the social and cultural values, habits, attitudes and norms associated with literacy practice. Australian studies tend to concentrate on technical literacy skills and pedagogy. Overwhelmingly the literature is oriented toward children and schooling: methodology, curriculum, policy, outcomes and the determinants of 'educational success' or 'failure'. Additionally, our understanding of adult literacy in remote areas is primarily anecdotal and focuses primarily on Vocational Education and Training (VET) outcomes.³ Rarely do accounts incorporate a historical or cultural purview to consider the implications of literacy acquisition from a longitudinal or ethnographic perspective in these recently preliterate groups.⁴ In fact, there is a striking paucity of ethnographic research on literacy *outside* instructional settings in remote Aboriginal Australia.⁵

² See (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al. 2000; Besnier 1995; Graff 1987; Kulick and Stroud 1993; Street 1984; Street 1993a; Street 1995).

³ There have been no thorough surveys of English adult literacy in remote Aboriginal Australia and adult education research tends to be vocationally-oriented. A 1989 survey of Australian adult literacy (Wickert 1989) did not include the Northern Territory. A 1993 study of adult literacy in urban situations in the Northern Territory (Christie et al. 1993) compensated for the omission of the Northern Territory from Wickert's study, however this latter study did not include any survey of remote Aboriginal communities. Likewise the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey of aspects of literacy excluded adults living in remote or sparsely settled areas (Skinner 1997), see also (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2004). For an overview of Indigenous adult Vocational Education and Training policy and reviews see: (ANTA 1998; ANTA 2000; Gelade and Stehlik 2004; Long et al. 1999).

⁴ Histories of Aboriginal education and literacy learning in remote Aboriginal Australia include: (Christie 1995b; Gale 1997; Milnes 1987; Richardson 2001). See also (Nakata 2000; Nakata 2002).

⁵ Exceptions tend to include studies by sociolinguists or anthropologists including: (Austin 1986; Biddle 1996; Biddle 2000; Ferguson 1987; Foley 1997; Goddard 1990; Kral 2000; McKay 1982; Rhydwen 1996).

Background

This thesis has arisen out of my own twenty year journey in Aboriginal education and an increasing unease with the normative cultural assumptions that pertain to literacy in the remote Aboriginal context.⁶ It is set against a nadir in the public discourse around literacy and Aboriginal education, and pessimism about the future of Aboriginal youth in remote communities.⁷ In this discourse youth are portrayed as failing in the education and training system: general academic performance is below national literacy and numeracy benchmarks and 'far below age'.⁸ Adolescent learners are not engaging with education and training institutions and absenteeism and poor school attendance are pinpointed as the nub of the 'problem'.⁹ As a consequence, youth are left 'unemployable' and descending into a vortex of anomie, substance abuse and violence in 'outback hellholes'.¹⁰ A moral panic around Aboriginal literacy has ensued; illiteracy, we are told, is 'threatening the continuity of an ancient culture'.¹¹ We also told of the 'collapse' of literacy and numeracy since the idealised 'mission times', irrespective of context-specific differences.¹² Solutions to the 'problem' of illiteracy include: reforms to the welfare system, more comprehensive reporting on individual literacy levels, additional community sector literacy support and incentives for individuals to participate in education, training and employment.¹³

I do not wish to underplay the extent of social disadvantage in the remote Aboriginal world, but rather to question responses that are based on normative cultural assumptions.¹⁴

⁶ I first visited the Pitjantjatjara Lands in the north-west of South Australia in 1981 and did my student teaching practice there in 1983. Since 1984 I have worked as a teacher and teacher linguist at Strelley School in the Pilbara region of Western Australia and Yipirinya School in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. I have worked as an adult literacy practitioner in English and Aboriginal vernacular languages (Kral 1999; Kral 2000; Kral 2001; Kral and Falk 2004). I later worked as an education and literacy consultant in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

⁷ (Beadman 2004; Cleary 2005; Hughes and Warin 2005; Johns 2006).

⁸ Although the diversity of Indigenous contexts in Australia is acknowledged, reviews and reports are nonetheless framed within a discourse of 'educational disadvantage' that draws attention to the 'serious gaps' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous outcomes in literacy, numeracy, student attendance, retention into senior secondary education, Year 12 certificates and completion rates in VET and higher education. This data then informs policy direction, see (Commonwealth of Australia 2002; Commonwealth of Australia 2003; Commonwealth of Australia 2005a; Gelade and Stehlik 2004; Long et al. 1999; Mellor and Corrigan 2004; Schwab 1999; Zubrick et al. 2004). See also (Charles Darwin University and the Northern Territory Government 2003; DETYA 2000; MCEETYA 2001a; MCEETYA 2004; McRae et al. 2000b; McRae et al. 2000a; Schwab 2005).

⁹ See (Beresford and Partington 2003; Folds 1987; NLLIA 1996; Schwab 1999; Schwab 2001b; Schwab 2001a; Schwab 2005). The Collins Review found 'unequivocal evidence of deteriorating outcomes from an already unacceptably low base, linked to a range of issues, led primarily by poor attendance which has become an educational crisis' (Collins 1999: 1).

¹⁰ Report on the visit of the Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough to remote communities in the East Kimberley (Misha Schubert: *The Age*, March 20 2006).

¹¹ (McMullen 2006: 5).

¹² (Beadman 2004: 26; Zubrick et al. 2004).

¹³ (Pearson 2000; Storry 2006). Community sector literacy support includes the Fred Hollows Foundation (Schwab and Sutherland 2004), Ian Thorpe's Foundation for Youth Trust (McMullen 2006):

<http://www.ianthorpesfountainforyouth.com.au/> literacy projects in the Katherine region in the NT and the Story Writing in Remote Locations (SWIRL) initiative from Victoria University in Melbourne: <http://www.staff.vu.edu.au/SWIRL/about.html>

¹⁴ For an overview of Indigenous social disadvantage see (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2005; Zubrick et al. 2004). For discussions on the corollary between improved education and improved health

I seek to reach an understanding of learning, literacy and human development that takes account of, and gives valence to, differing social and cultural practices and the webs of meaning that surround oral and literate practices.

Research location

The research site in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Fig. 1.1) was chosen because the context provides a unique complex of factors in which to study the introduction of literacy to a previously preliterate group and its impact on successive generations.¹⁵ Although one of the last Aboriginal groups to come out of the Western Desert—the first wave of Ngaanyatjarra/Pitjantjatjara came out in the 1930s and the last of the Ngaatjatjarra/Pintupi in the 1960s—this group encountered an unusual sequence of relatively benign post-contact experiences. Literacy was first introduced to the Ngaanyatjarra at the Warburton Ranges Mission in the 1930s. Depending on family history, the current generation of children represent either the second, third or fourth generation to encounter literacy.

As outlined in the methodology in Appendix A, the longitudinal perspective taken in this thesis is enhanced by ethnographic interviews and observations. The full accounts from three to four generations of literacy learners in eleven family groups can be found in the *Family Narratives A–K* in Appendix B.¹⁶ The research is strengthened by an already existing relationship with the Ngaanyatjarra communities. I have worked on education and literacy projects in this region over the past decade, including an intensive period of PhD fieldwork over twelve months in 2004 and three return visits in 2005 and 2006.¹⁷

outcomes and vice versa (Boughton 2000; Collins 1999; Lowell et al. 2003; MCEETYA 2001b; McRae et al. 2000b; Mellor and Corrigan 2004). See also work by J. Caldwell on maternal literacy and child health (Caldwell 1981).

¹⁵ There is relatively little published anthropological writing on the Ngaanyatjarra region. Ngaanyatjarra Council has been hesitant about research *per se* as a consequence of the publication of unauthorised material by an earlier researcher (Gould 1969). As a consequence there is little published material on the area: (de Graaf 1968; Dousset 1997; Fletcher 1992; Glass 1997; Jacobs 1988; Thompson 2000). Other published material includes exhibition catalogues (Plant and Viegas 2002; Proctor and Viegas 1990; Turner 2003), language texts (Glass and Hackett 1979 [1969]; Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]; Glass and Hackett 2003; Glass 2006; Obata et al. 2005) or internal unpublished reports (Staples and Cane 2002; Thurtell 2003). Other academic research has been education-related (Heslop 1997; Heslop 1998); health-related (Cramer 1998; Simmonds 2002; Shaw 2002) or language-related (Glass and Hackett 1970; Glass 1980). Anthropologists including David Brooks and Jan Turner have written numerous reports for Native Title and other purposes and both have commenced PhD study in anthropology.

¹⁶ The narratives are reconstructed from the transcripts of interviews with Ngaanyatjarra people. Interviews have been sorted into generational groupings within families. Pseudonyms have replaced real names of Ngaanyatjarra interviewees.

¹⁷ I first worked in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in 1997 (Kral 1997) and have worked on a range of education related projects with Ngaanyatjarra Council and Ngaanyatjarra Community College and conducted a review of education and training (Kral and Ward 2000). I subsequently worked with Ngaanyatjarra people to develop a cultural awareness course for Ngaanyatjarra College. I also worked with Elizabeth M. Ellis and community members gathering information to develop a [draft] Ngaanyatjarra language and culture curriculum. The PhD research grew out of this established relationship. Throughout the fieldwork period I collaborated with the Warburton Arts Project and worked with the youth arts project.

Aboriginal people in the Western Desert region of Australia lived a relatively unchanged existence for thousands of years prior to contact with European culture.¹⁸ Anthropologists talk of a 'Western Desert cultural bloc' comprising a single social system and relative cultural homogeneity that extends from Woomera in the south-east to Kalgoorlie in the south-west, then north through to Wiluna, Jigalong and Balgo.¹⁹ Unlike the circumstances of many other Aboriginal groups, remoteness protected the Ngaanyatjarra from the profound ravages of the colonial encounter and from the dislocation and trauma of the 'stolen generation' experience.²⁰ David Brooks, an anthropologist who has worked with the Ngaanyatjarra since 1988, notes that because the Ngaanyatjarra as a group have never left their country, nor has their country ever been annexed or occupied by outsiders, 'the difference in the quality of the "people to country" bond is palpable' and this is a significant factor in the strength of the Ngaanyatjarra today.²¹

The Ngaanyatjarra Lands in the east of Western Australia comprises some 250,000 sq. kms. (or approximately 3% of mainland Australia) fanning out from the tri-state border with South Australia and the Northern Territory. It encompasses parts of the Gibson, Great Sandy and Great Victoria Deserts and the Central Ranges (and falls within three Shires: Ngaanyatjarraku, East Pilbara and Laverton). Significant landforms in the area include the Warburton Ranges and Brown Ranges, and the Rawlinson and Peterman Ranges around the NT border. The harsh desert terrain has long provided the Ngaanyatjarra with water, food, medicine, implements, and shelter (Fig. 1.2). The Ngaanyatjarra Lands (hereafter the 'Lands') now operates as a cohesive and co-operative set of eleven communities under the umbrella of the Ngaanyatjarra Council which has given some 2500 Aboriginal people in the Lands a symbolic and real sense of security. The Aboriginal leadership of the Council is strong, participation is high and the outcomes are tangible.²² The overall administrative needs and service provision are met within the organisational structure of the Ngaanyatjarra Council.²³ The health needs of the people are met by the community-controlled Ngaanyatjarra Health Service, and land and legal issues are dealt with by the

¹⁸ Veth (1996) cited in (Rose 2001: 35) reports that archaeological research from the Western Desert indicates a human presence before 24,000 years ago. Richard Gould refers to archaeological excavation at the Puntutjarpa rock shelter in the Western Desert and dates human occupation of this site at some 10,000 years, with observations of Ngaanyatjarra people occupying the same general vicinity during the 1960s (Gould 1980: 35).

¹⁹ (Berndt and Berndt 1959; Berndt and Berndt 1980; Tonkinson 1978b).

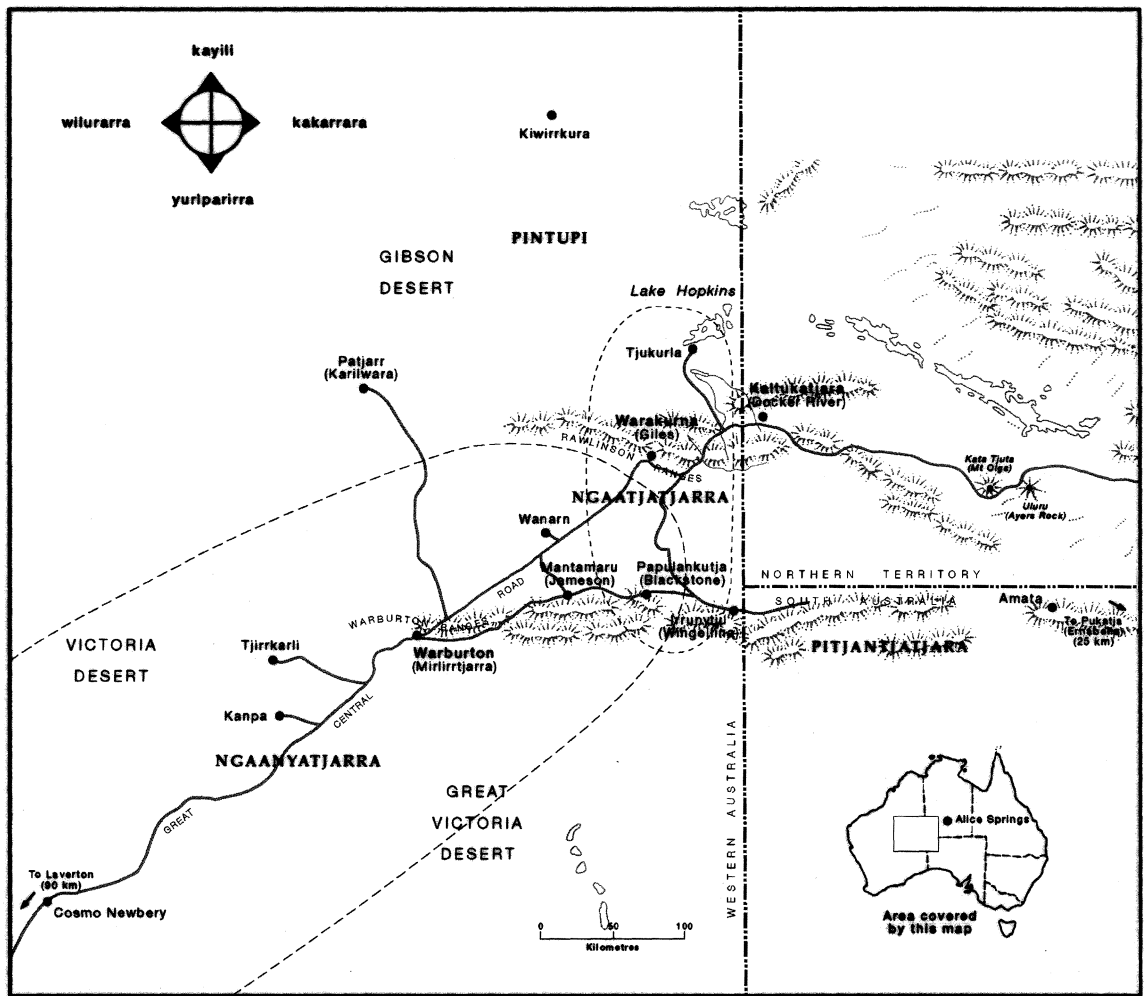
²⁰ See (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997; Read 1981) for accounts of the 'stolen generation'.

²¹ (Brooks 2002: 78).

²² Each of the communities elects a community 'chairman'. The 'governing committee' of the Ngaanyatjarra Council comprises each community chairman plus the elected chair of the Ngaanyatjarra Council.

²³ Ngaanyatjarra Council is the umbrella organisation for a number of Ngaanyatjarra service delivery organisations: Ngaanyatjarra Health Services; Ngaanyatjarra Services Accounting and Financial Services; Ngaanyatjarra Services Building Division; Ngaanyatjarra Services Works Division; Ngaanyatjarra Air; Ngaanyatjarra Agency and Transport Services;

Fig. 1.1 The Western Desert region



Map by Brenda Thornley, © The Institute for Aboriginal Development, 2006.

Fig. 1.2 Rockholes along Warburton–Laverton road



Source: Inge Kral.

Fig. 1.3 Aerial photo of Warburton 2004



Source: Inge Kral.

Native Title Unit. The Ngaanyatjarra Community College, based in Warburton, delivers adult vocational education and training. The primary source of local employment is through the Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) scheme.²⁴

The only major outside body to deliver services is the WA Department of Education and Training (WADET). There is a remote community school in each community implementing a mainstream curriculum model and there are no qualified Ngaanyatjarra teachers. At the time of research in 2004, schools provided a 'secondary-tops' programme up to Year 10 only.²⁵ Literacy instruction in school commences in Standard Australian English, even though learners may speak a Western Desert vernacular or a non-standard dialect of English. Residents of the Lands are predominantly Ngaanyatjarra speakers, but the speech community also comprises speakers of other mutually intelligible Western Desert dialects (predominantly Ngaatjatjarra and Pitjantjatjara) and many adults have multilectal competence in the local dialects and English (see further language description in Appendix C). People are variously referred to as *Yarnangu* (Ngaanyatjarra/Ngaatjatjarra), *Anangu* (Pitjantjatjara) or *Wangkayi*.²⁶ In this thesis I generally refer to people as 'the Ngaanyatjarra', unless specifically referring to Ngaatjatjarra or Pitjantjatjara speakers.

In this study I focus primarily on one community, Warburton (Fig. 1.3). I chose this community because it has been the locus of continuous contact with European practices since a United Aborigines Mission (UAM) was established there in 1934. Today Warburton is the largest of the Ngaanyatjarra communities with a population of some 600 Aboriginal residents with non-Aboriginal residents numbering between 50–80.²⁷ Community facilities include a church, store, clinic, school, college, an arts project, a youth Drop in Centre, swimming pool and a roadhouse. Local government services are provided by the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku (including a regional art gallery and café). This is a comparatively functional and well-resourced community with a number of non-Aboriginal residents who have a long-term commitment to the region, and it has developed a national profile as a

Native Title Unit; Ngaanyatjarra Community College; Ngaanyatjarra Media; Ngaanyatjarra Council Savings Plan; Ngaanyatjarra Marshall Lawrence Insurance Brokerage; and Caltex Alice Springs (Indervon Pty Ltd).

²⁴ The Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) is the government-funded employment programme operating as an alternative to Unemployment Benefits. See (Altman et al. 2005).

²⁵ One Ngaanyatjarra student completed Year 12 in the South Australian Certificate of Education through the 'Wiltja' Programme annexed to Woodville High School in Adelaide in 1999 (Kral and Ward 2000: 81).

²⁶ Use of the term 'Wangkayi' or 'Wongai', to refer to people, tends to be used more by older people who may have spent time in the Eastern Goldfields. This expression derives from *wangka* meaning 'speech' or 'language' and people are termed *wangkajja*, sometimes rendered as 'Wangkatha', 'Wongatha' or 'Wongutha' (Douglas 1964). The term *yarnangu maru* (maru meaning black) is sometimes used by the Ngaanyatjarra also.

²⁷ These figures are approximates only, as at December 2003 the total population of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands was 2,701 and the population of Warburton was 660 (males – 318, females – 342) (Ngaanyatjarra Health Service 2003).

'model community'.²⁸ The Warburton population now comprises three broad social groupings:

1. Descendents of the original Ngaanyatjarra mission families from the Warburton Ranges region. In these families young children are still only the fourth generation to experience formal schooling.
2. Descendents of families who moved away in earlier times and attended school and worked in the Mt Margaret Mission, Laverton, Kalgoorlie and Cosmo Newbery region of the Eastern Goldfields (Fig. 1.4). These families tend to speak English as their first language.
3. Predominantly Ngaatjatjarra speaking families who came out of the Gibson Desert or Rawlinson Ranges during the 1960s comprising middle-aged adults who were born in the desert, and at most only two generations who have participated in formal education.

As a consequence, the Warburton, and broader Ngaanyatjarra Lands, 'speech community' is not homogeneous.²⁹

Literacy and illiteracy

The 'taken for granted' nature of literacy in Western society (and English literacy in Anglo-European countries such as Australia) and its 'primacy' in everyday life, masks its complexity.³⁰ Illiteracy is seen as a 'problem' that needs to be remedied by improved policy and instructional methodology. School literacy practices, in particular, are bounded by culturally normative expectations of correctness, neatness, organisation and time management. They are also informed by prescribed stages of child learning development and evaluated against standards determining individual success or failure. In Australia a process of 'literacy and numeracy benchmarking' assesses all school learners against normative standards of English language, literacy and numeracy.³¹ The English literacy and

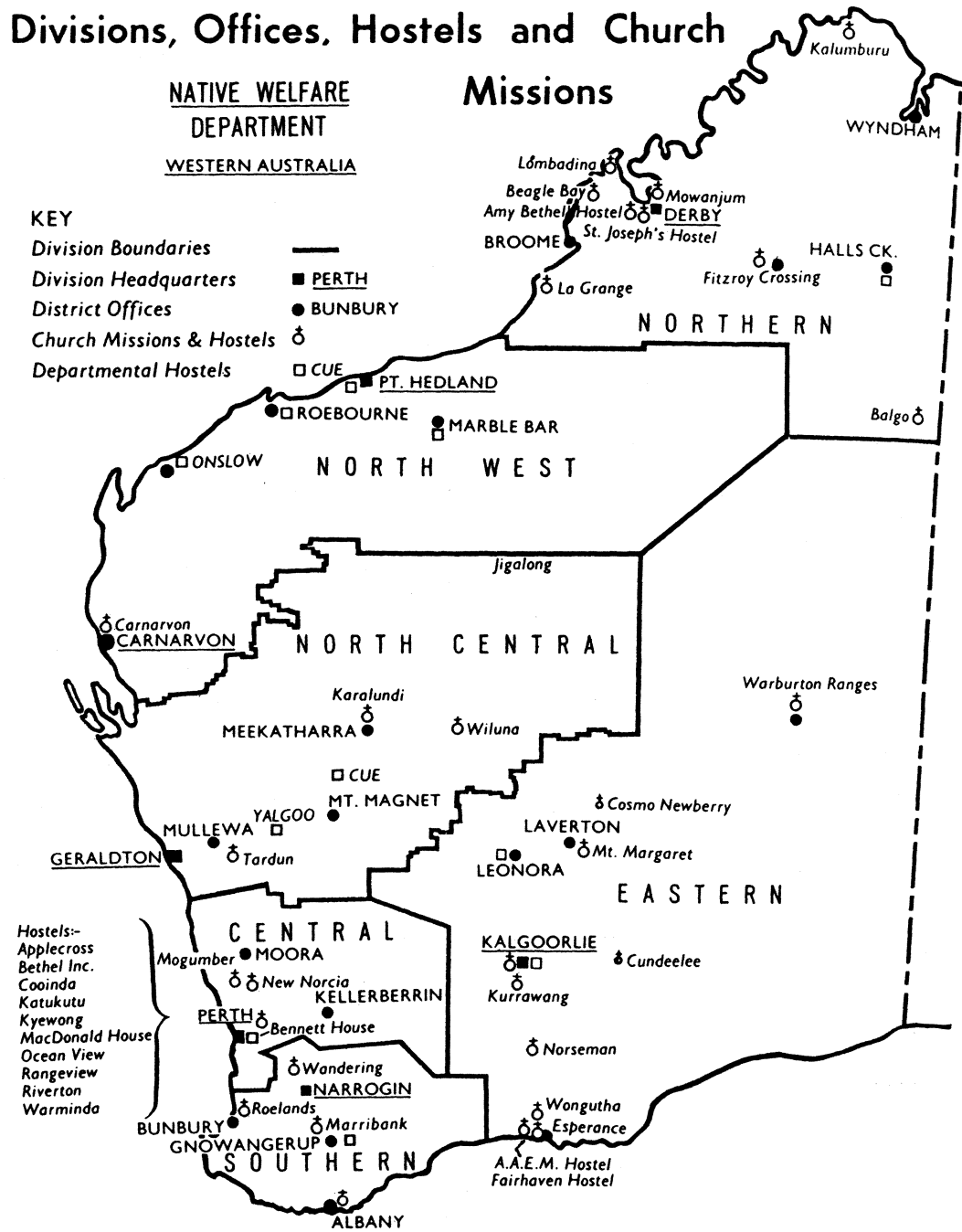
²⁸ In an editorial (*The Weekend Australian* 4–5 February 2006: 16) reference was made to Warburton as a 'model community', also see Nicolas Rothwell's report (*The Weekend Australian* February 4–5 2006: 5). On Regional ABC Radio, Kalgoorlie (September 9 2004) Fred Chaney described the Ngaanyatjarra Lands as 'the best administered Aboriginal communities in Australia'. This is further illustrated in the Howard government's willingness to establish a Regional Partnership Agreement with the Ngaanyatjarra Council for the Ngaanyatjarra Lands region, see: <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/rpa/wa/ngaanyatjarra.pdf>

²⁹ The notion of 'speech community' emerged from linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics and was developed by Hymes (Hymes 1972; Hymes 1974) and Gumperz (Gumperz 1982). Romaine (Romaine 1994: 22) asserts that a speech community is 'a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of language'.

³⁰ (Graff 1987; Graff 1994 [1982]).

³¹ The Multi-level Assessment Programme (MAP) is a mandatory national programme of benchmarking literacy and numeracy data on students in Years 3, 5 and 7, see (MCEETYA 2004). Data is aggregated nationally and at a State level. It is found that Indigenous students from metropolitan and regional areas achieve at a higher level than students from remote and very remote regions (Frigo et al. 2003). Data from the remote schools in the Western Australia Literacy and Numeracy Assessments (WALNA) is conflated with data from urban, regional schools (Commonwealth of Australia 2005b). WALNA data is not released on a school by school basis, hence data from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands schools are conflated with data from the entire Goldfields District, inclusive of urban schools with a non-Indigenous school

Fig. 1.4 Department of Native Welfare (Western Australia) – Divisions, Offices, Hostels and Church Missions



Source: Department of Native Welfare Newsletter Vol. 2 No. 2 1971.

numeracy of Aboriginal students from remote schools are also benchmarked using the same assessment tool. Generally, most remote Aboriginal children are found to be below the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks set by their English as a first language speaking peers. The process of literacy benchmarking is bound by normative assumptions about, and simple conceptualisations of, literacy—including the notion that literacy is a technical skill acquired primarily in instructional settings. Underlying the benchmarking process is an implicit assumption that—after only a few generations of schooling and exposure to English language and literacy practices—remote Aboriginal learners (who generally speak their own vernacular as a first language) will be commensurate with their mainstream counterparts.³² This assumption is problematic because, in effect, it locates Aboriginal learners in the discourse of failure outlined above, with minimal explanation of why literacy levels differ so greatly. In this discourse little account is taken of how literacy has evolved over many centuries, in many societies, from its origins in oral traditions through the transformation of social and cultural practices, and the invention and adaptation of the material resources, that support the particularities of Western literacy.

The development of Western literacy

It has taken many thousands of years for literacy in Western society to evolve to the stage where it is now. Writing systems were developed between 3100 B.C. and 550 B.C. and ‘alphabetic’ literacy was used in classical Greek and Roman schools and civic contexts, and to a lesser extent during the Dark Ages.³³ However, in Britain and Western Europe the cultural shift from ‘memory to written record’ took place over more than two centuries (between 1066 to 1307 according to historian Michael Clanchy), during which time a familiarity with literate rather than oral modes slowly took hold.³⁴ Significantly, the shift from oral to literate habits and ways of thinking and acting (i.e. the shift from trusting memory and the spoken word above the written word, and from ‘habitually memorizing things to writing them down’) took time to develop.³⁵ Literacy gradually gained acceptance and influence over many centuries. During which time oral processes were used to successfully spread the written Word of God through oral preaching and teaching to semiliterates and illiterates. Prior to the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in

population. It is therefore difficult to attain a correct picture of the English literacy and numeracy benchmarking in the Ngaanyatjarra remote schools. Outcomes for the Goldfields District (encompassing the Ngaanyatjarra Lands schools) can be found at: <http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/walna/pdfs/PerformanceReport.pdf>

³² Literacy assessment systems have been critiqued nationally and internationally, see (Christie et al. 1993; Levine 1998; Rogoff 2003; Wickert 1989).

³³ (Graff 1987).

³⁴ (Clanchy 1979).

³⁵ (Clanchy 1979: 3).

1447, reading and writing were separate skills.³⁶ Reading was more often linked to speaking and hearing, emphasising the continuing connection with oral traditions.³⁷ Reading remained for a long time an 'oral, often collective activity' rather than the private, silent activity it tends to be today.³⁸ Reading and dictating were commonly coupled together and the skill of letter-writing was in the art of dictating to scribes, mainly monks, who formed the small group of those able to write.³⁹ For many, writing was thought of and used merely as a mnemonic device for a long time.⁴⁰ In medieval England to be 'litteratus' (literate) meant knowing Latin, but not necessarily having the ability to read and write. Before literacy could grow and spread beyond the small class of clerical writers 'literate habits and assumptions, comprising a literate mentality, had to take root in diverse social groups and areas of activity'.⁴¹ By the thirteenth century increasing mercantile, business and civil activity gave literacy a practical application beyond clerical purposes and royal administration.⁴² In 1476 Caxton introduced the printing press to England, and 'print not only encouraged the spread of literacy', it also 'changed the way written texts were handled by already literate groups'.⁴³ Print gradually replaced the oral aspects and memory arts of scribal culture and introduced a push for language standardisation. Ong argues that 'print' was a major factor in 'the development of the sense of personal privacy that marks modern society' and set the stage for 'completely silent reading'.⁴⁴ By the fourteenth century many English towns had elementary or grammar schools and by the fifteenth century there were lending libraries and evidence of everyday writing and record-keeping practices.⁴⁵ Yet England remained neither a 'wholly literate' nor a 'wholly illiterate' society.⁴⁶ However, by the end of the sixteenth century, the term 'literate' was used not so much as a marker of self-identity, but as 'a descriptor to dichotomize the population into literates who could read in the vernacular languages and illiterates who could not'.⁴⁷

The link between literacy and religion is significant and has remained so in the 'nearly three millennia of Western (alphabetic) literacy'.⁴⁸ The sixteenth century Reformation most strikingly linked literacy to 'religious practice' and 'constituted the first great literacy

³⁶ (Clanchy 1979:).

³⁷ (Clanchy 1979: 227; Graff 1987: 35).

³⁸ (Graff 1987: 5).

³⁹ (Clanchy 1979: 97).

⁴⁰ (Olson 1994: 61).

⁴¹ (Clanchy 1979: 149).

⁴² (Graff 1987: 55).

⁴³ (Eisenstein 1985: 21–22).

⁴⁴ (Ong 1982: 130–31).

⁴⁵ (Graff 1987: 96).

⁴⁶ (Schofield 1968: 312–13).

⁴⁷ (Heath 1991: 4).

⁴⁸ (Graff 1987: 10).

campaign in the history of the West, with its social legacies of individual literacy as a powerful social and moral force'.⁴⁹ Harvey Graff postulates that in the wake of the Reformation in Sweden, for example, 'near-universal levels of literacy were achieved rapidly and permanently', without the 'concomitant development of formal schooling or economic or cultural development that demanded functional or practical employment of literacy'. A 'home and church education model' was fashioned that trained a 'literate population'.⁵⁰ However, as Graff points out, the Reformist educational process of rote memorisation of the alphabet and catechism left many 'less than fluently literate'; even so some 'effect' of literacy 'must have taken hold'.⁵¹ The eighteenth century 'Enlightenment' consolidated the 'ideological underpinnings for the "modern" and "liberal" reforms of popular schooling' and literacy came to be seen as 'the root of schooling for the populace'.⁵² For many, literacy was not necessarily 'a formal, distinct or institutionalized activity', nor an event synonymous with childhood or youth'.⁵³ In the 1700s in the United States being 'literate' was defined as 'being able to sign one's name or an X to legal documents'. By the 1800s it had become 'the ability to read and recite memorized passages, not necessarily with comprehension' and by the early 1900s being able to read 'began to require literal understanding of unfamiliar passages'.⁵⁴ The spread of the ideals of liberal democracy and capitalism was to push more people towards functional literacy skills and literacy became tied to the uneven pace of social and economic development. Industrialisation introduced the need for literacy for practical purposes and the growth in technology made available a greater volume of printed material.⁵⁵

Prior to the late 1800s families were expected to care for children and, moreover, teach them to read at home. At that time the home and the workplace were less separated so childcare took place side by side with learning through observing and participating in adult processes and 'making sense of the mature roles' of their community.⁵⁶ The concept of the school class or grade emerged gradually between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe.⁵⁷ With the introduction of compulsory schooling in England and the United States in the late 1800s learning shifted from acquisition in a familial context embedded within community and church life to institutionalised learning.⁵⁸ During the nineteenth century

⁴⁹ (Graff 1994 [1982]: 157). See also (Graff 1987: 132–163; Strauss 1978).

⁵⁰ (Graff 1994 [1982]: 159).

⁵¹ (Graff 1987: 141).

⁵² (Graff 1987: 14).

⁵³ (Graff 1987: 237).

⁵⁴ (Rogoff 2003: 260–261).

⁵⁵ (Graff 1987: 235–6; Clanchy 1979: 258–265).

⁵⁶ (Rogoff 2003: 130–140).

⁵⁷ (Aries 1962).

⁵⁸ (Rogoff 2003: 340–341).

literacy and schooling became 'more closely allied', and schooling, in effect, institutionalised literacy learning.⁵⁹ Schooling developed largely as a 'hegemonic inculcation of the moral bases of literacy'.⁶⁰ The new middle-class promoted literacy as the basis of moral order.⁶¹ Schooling became a 'socializing agent' aiding the 'inculcation of values thought required for commercial, urban and industrial society'.⁶² In particular, education promoters and social reformers attempted to instil 'the moral bases of literacy, particularly in children of the poor' in their attempts to avert idleness, pauperism and immorality.⁶³ Graff also suggests that illiteracy came to signify that, within the underpinning philosophy of 'linear, progressive or evolutionary change' the training required for civilization and progress remained incomplete'.⁶⁴ Literacy also came to represent emancipation and enlightenment with the political mobilisation of the working class. This led to the demand for access to literacy as a right and the later rise of popular literacy movements among the poor and disenfranchised.⁶⁵

Until at least the mid-nineteenth century rote repetition and oral reading dominated in the classroom and attention to meaning was neglected, so students 'were not learning to read well'.⁶⁶ By the end of the nineteenth century schooling supported sequenced approaches to learning to read and write and valorised individual achievement, and 'in its drive to instruct, measure and prescribe the individual, the school jettisoned much of the learning in communities'.⁶⁷ By the last quarter of the twentieth century, literacy skills such as 'making inferences and developing ideas through written material' were expected, 'prompted in part by widespread use of information technology in the workplace'.⁶⁸ Simultaneously, as Heath posits, critics in the developed world pointed out the failure of schools 'to move large numbers of students beyond a minimal level of competence in literacy' and educators were chided for 'letting standards slide from past eras of mythical high achievement'.⁶⁹ Writers have suggested that a moral panic regarding the twentieth century 'literacy crisis' and the purported decline in literacy standards has ensued.⁷⁰ Heath suggests that the critics of literacy achievement focus almost completely on schools even though 'closer looks at the history of literacy in the industrialized nations of the West make it clear that developing a

⁵⁹ (Graff 1987: 261).

⁶⁰ (Graff 1987: 324).

⁶¹ (Collins 1995: 82).

⁶² (Graff 1987: 263–75).

⁶³ (Graff 1987: 261–4).

⁶⁴ (Graff 1987: 323).

⁶⁵ (Freire 1993 [1970]; Hoggart 1957).

⁶⁶ (Graff 1987: 326–7).

⁶⁷ (Heath 1991: 4–5).

⁶⁸ (Rogoff 2003: 260–261).

⁶⁹ (Heath 1991: 4–5).

sense of being literate, rather than simply acquiring the rudimentary literacy skills of reading and writing, entailed far more than schools alone could give'.⁷¹

The 'literacy myth'

Early literacy studies in the social sciences were influenced by behaviourist and cognitivist theory.⁷² Exponents of what Brian Street terms the 'autonomous' model of literacy tended to 'conceptualise literacy in technical terms, treating it as independent of social context, an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character'.⁷³ In the 'autonomous' model certain inherent properties of alphabetic literacy are believed to explain the differences between preliterate and literate societies and individuals and to cause changes at a societal and individual level.⁷⁴ In the early development of anthropological thought 'literacy' was emblematic of the 'great divide': the binary division between 'civilised and primitive', 'literate and illiterate; and the determinant of difference between 'us' and 'them'.⁷⁵ The oral-literate dichotomy was a major preoccupation of early anthropological thought, exemplified in the distinction between the 'great tradition' of the literate, religious and urban, and the 'little tradition' of the oral, magical and rural.⁷⁶ From this purview, literacy reached its 'apogee' only in the West and in the non-Western world illiteracy was a signifying feature of inferior or primitive cultures.⁷⁷ Moreover, on the literacy continuum from preliterate to literate, Jack Goody suggests that the newly literate acquired only a form of 'restricted literacy'.⁷⁸

In the autonomous model, according to Street, literacy is conceptualised as:

[A] universal constant whose acquisition, once individual problems can be overcome by proper diagnosis and pedagogy, will lead to higher cognitive skills, to improved logical thinking, to critical inquiry and to self-conscious reflection.⁷⁹

Moreover, as Street continues, literacy has 'been seen as a "neutral" mechanism for achieving functional ends, a *sine non qua* of the state whatever its ideological character, a technology to be acquired by sufficient proportions of the population to ensure the mechanical functioning of its institutions'. Graff questions such 'normative assumptions' suggesting that for the last two centuries conceptions of the value of reading and writing

⁷⁰ (Graff 1987; Heath 1991; Street 1995).

⁷¹ (Heath 1991: 5-6).

⁷² (Goody 1968; Goody 1977; Olson 1977a; Ong 1982).

⁷³ (Street 1993b: 5).

⁷⁴ (Besnier 1995: 2-3).

⁷⁵ (Goody 1968; Ong 1982).

⁷⁶ (Redfield 1971 [1956]).

⁷⁷ (Besnier 1995: 1).

⁷⁸ (Goody 1968).

⁷⁹ (Street 1993b: 11).

'have been intertwined with post-Enlightenment "liberal" social theories and expectations of the role of literacy and schooling in socioeconomic development, social order, and individual progress.⁸⁰ He terms this the 'literacy myth' and posits that the 'data of the past strongly suggests that a simple, linear, modernization model of literacy as a prerequisite for development...will not suffice'.⁸¹ Embedded in the 'literacy myth' are assumptions about the superiority of Western culture where literacy is associated with ideological promises emblematic of modernity and progress, and linked to economic growth and development.⁸²

When colonisation was at its apogee the late 1800s and early 1900s Western schooling was utilised to 'civilise' the peoples of the colonies and progress the evolutionary process. These attitudes paradigmatically influenced early anthropological attitudes to Aboriginal society in Australia and provided the intellectual and philosophical backdrop to colonial, missionary and later assimilationist attitudes to Aboriginal education. They also continue to underpin the perceived relationship between literacy, modernity and progress. The historical legacy of colonisation has recently led to anthropological concern with development and alterity (i.e. 'the concept and treatment of the alien objectified other') and a post-colonial critiquing of the notion of 'Otherness'.⁸³ Post-colonial theorists and human development researchers have questioned the 'illusory' aspects of Western education and the idea of a linear cultural evolution based on the premise of a single developmental trajectory towards the same desirable endpoint.⁸⁴

The notion of individualism, and concerns with 'self' or 'selfhood' are concepts particular to Western culture. Western academic theories of human development have enshrined the moral concepts of 'autonomy, individual rights, justice as equality'.⁸⁵ The dominant Western ideology of individualism has imbued formal education with 'liberal assumptions about the role of schools in a meritocracy, where upward mobility is assumed to be an outcome of talent and effort'.⁸⁶ In his influential study of education and working class students in England, Paul Willis counters the 'common educational fallacy' that 'opportunities can be *made* by education, that upward mobility is basically a matter of individual push, that qualifications make their own openings'.⁸⁷ Graff's notion of the

⁸⁰ (Graff 1987: 3). See also (Graff 1979; Graff 1994 [1982]).

⁸¹ (Graff 1994 [1982]: 152–159).

⁸² See (Collins 1995; Dyer and Choski 2001; Gardner and Lewis 1996; Rival 1996; Rogoff 2003; Street 1995; Street 2001).

⁸³ (Rapport and Overing 2000: 9). See (Bhaba 1994; Said 1978).

⁸⁴ (Jessor et al. 1996; Rogoff 2003; Serpell 1993).

⁸⁵ (Shweder 1996: 36). See also (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990 [1977]; Carrithers et al. 1985; Dumont 1965; Mauss 1985 [1938]; Ogbu 1990a; Ogbu 1990b; Scheper-Hughes 1992).

⁸⁶ (Levinson and Holland 1996: 4). See also (Hoggart 1957; Varenne and McDermott 1999b).

⁸⁷ (Willis 1977: 127) [emphasis in original].

'literacy myth' resonates with what Australian researchers also describe as the 'illusion' that the 'ideology of fair competition' is 'neutral and based on meritocratic performance' where success or failure is dependent on individual hard work and effort.⁸⁸

In 'mainstream' Australia, successful schooling is contingent upon an assumed and shared understanding of the 'normal biography', that is 'the clear and persistent pursuit of a credential' and the 'cultural logic' that follows.⁸⁹ This 'cultural logic' is the assumed linearity of the transition from school to work, this 'sequenced pathway' appears 'normal' but is problematic even in mainstream Australian contexts.⁹⁰ This linear trajectory has even less relevance for young adults in remote Aboriginal Australia where schools are teaching for mainstream labour market employment outcomes that simply do not exist.⁹¹ Current Aboriginal education discourse enshrines the normative values and culturally-bound assumptions of participation, equity and upward mobility associated with Western pedagogy.⁹² It takes for granted that the receiving culture will aspire to upward mobility and the future goal of individual participation in the wage labour market. Yet, in remote Aboriginal Australia a number of generations after the inception of formal schooling the assumption that schooling leads to employment is implausible.

Ethnographies of literacy

This thesis draws on the theoretical foundations that place ethnographies of literacy at the interface between anthropology and sociolinguistics. An 'ethnography of literacy' looks at social practices, social meanings, and the cultural conceptions of reading and writing, and how they are embedded in the broad range of ideas that the term anthropology encompasses.⁹³ Ethnographies of literacy fall into two categories: those with an

⁸⁸ (Smyth and Hattam 2004: 148). See also (Falk 2001a).

⁸⁹ (Smyth and Hattam 2004: 145). Mainstream—the cultural practices, traditions, values and understandings of literate middle-class 'Western' i.e. European Australian society.

⁹⁰ (Smyth and Hattam 2004: 152).

⁹¹ In the current political climate in Aboriginal affairs we are told explicitly by the political architects of 'mutual obligation' that 'education is the passport for people who want a better future'; furthermore we are assured that 'this is not assimilationist' but is about providing Aboriginal people in remote communities with 'real choices and the opportunity to determine their own destiny' (Vanstone 2004). See also (Pearson 2000; Pearson 2001). In a Media Release announcing improved school retention rates for Indigenous students (March 8 2006) the Federal Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Mal Brough MP stated that 'Good education opens the door to employment opportunities and lays the foundation for better choices and opportunities in life'. <http://www.atsia.gov.au/media/media06/0906.aspx>.

⁹² Recent federal government initiatives such as the 'Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme' and the 'Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme' are underpinned by an ideology that asserts that individuals 'just need the opportunity to succeed'. In this frame individual Indigenous youth are selected and 'given the same opportunities to make informed choices' and 'to realise their full potential' and 'value the opportunities that education can bring' (Julie Bishop, Federal Minister for Education Science and Training, launch of the 'Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme' Parliament House, Canberra October 9 2006).

⁹³ See (Szwed 1981) for an early use of the term 'ethnography of literacy'.

anthropological focus on the acquisition of literacy in newly literate cultures and those with a more sociolinguistic focus on everyday oral and literate practices.

An anthropological perspective

Early studies explored the 'impact' of literacy on the receiving culture and some perceived that, in the introduction of literacy, 'preliterate' people perceived the written word to have magical powers.⁹⁴ Other studies have explored the acceptance or rejection of literacy in the local vernacular, or the introduced language, by exploring whether literacy has 'taken hold' in preliterate cultures and under what conditions.⁹⁵ In some studies 'schooling' and 'literacy' are situated as distinctly separate concepts and the cognitive 'consequences' of schooled and non-schooled literacies are explored.⁹⁶ More recently, researchers in newly literate cultures have investigated why literacy has acquired certain cultural meanings and how value has been attributed in a range of different situations to focus attention on 'the creative and original ways in which people transform literacy to their own cultural concerns and interests'.⁹⁷ Studies include Besnier's investigation of the social, ideological and textual characteristics of literacy on a Polynesian atoll, and Bloch's study of schooling and literacy in Madagascar.⁹⁸ Also Scollon and Scollon's work in an Athabaskan community in Alaska, and Reder, Green and Wikelund's Alaskan research on literacy development and ethnicity in Alutiq. Kulick and Stroud have studied the conceptions and uses of literacy in Gapun in Papua New Guinea and Clammer studied literacy and change in Fiji.⁹⁹ Some researchers suggest that Indigenous peoples have taken on literacy to suit their own cultural needs.¹⁰⁰ Others consider that introduced literacy can have disempowering consequences in minority language, newly literate contexts.¹⁰¹ Significantly, these studies situate literacy acquisition as a social and cultural process within the dynamic of social change and foreground the 'culturally shaped' nature of literacy acquisition and use in newly literate groups. They also address the lacuna in our knowledge about literacy in such contexts.¹⁰² Besnier posits, nonetheless, that relatively little ethnographic information is available on how literacy takes root in newly literate societies and Kulick and Stroud note that more ethnographic studies

⁹⁴ See (Levy-Bruhl 1923; Parsonson 1967; Wundt 1916). See also (Wogan 1994).

⁹⁵ (Ferguson 1987; Huebner 1987; McLaughlin 1989; Spolsky and Irvine 1982; Spolsky et al. 1983)

⁹⁶ Luria's famous study of literates and non-literates in Central Asia in the 1920s found differences in the ability to use decontextualised or abstract thought, with preliterates using more concrete and contextualised thinking (Luria 1976). See Cole and Scribner's study of the Vai in Liberia (Cole and Scribner 1981) and Street's study of 'Maktab' literacy in Iran (Street 1984). See also (Akinnsa 1992).

⁹⁷ (Street 1993b: 1).

⁹⁸ (Besnier 1993; Besnier 1995; Bloch 1993).

⁹⁹ (Clammer 1976; Kulick 1992; Kulick and Stroud 1993; Reder and Green 1983; Reder and Wikelund 1993; Scollon and Scollon 1981).

¹⁰⁰ (Aikman 2001; Besnier 1995; Kulick 1992; McLaughlin 1992; Rival 1996).

¹⁰¹ (Muhlhausler 1990; Muhlhausler 1996).

¹⁰² (Kulick and Stroud 1993: 56).

of literacy are needed to understand how people in newly literate contexts have shaped the creative and cultural uses of literacy and why.¹⁰³

A further related point I wish to note is that in many colonial contexts Christian missionaries (often influenced by the Protestant tradition in relation to the written Word and preaching in vernacular) have shaped the literate world for preliterate groups. In Alutiq, literacy was introduced in Cyrillic through the Russian Orthodox Church, concomitant with the development of specialised Indigenous leadership roles within the church.¹⁰⁴ Subsequent 'outside' literacy practices were introduced by the American schooling system, the bureaucratic requirements of the state and the English language Baptist church. In Gapun, missionaries introduced Christian literacy in the mid-1950s and the link between literacy and the Church remains strong with few uses for literacy outside formal schooling and the Christian domain. Kulick suggests that the villagers' ideas about literacy and Christianity 'form a framework into which all aspects of the modern world are fitted'.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, 'the very concept "book" is essentially Christian in nature' suggesting an 'isomorphism between Christian and European styles and values'.¹⁰⁶ The contextual complexity of proselytizing through Christian text has been explored in other post-colonial contexts.¹⁰⁷ Besnier claims that on Nukulaelae no social arena is as 'suffused with literacy' as religion.¹⁰⁸ Harries' social and cultural history of black African workers in South Africa and Mozambique in the late 1800s incorporates an analysis of the role of missionaries and the embedding of literacy as cultural practice within Christian domains.¹⁰⁹

As I outline above, it has taken more than a thousand years for literacy to become widespread in Western society and for written English to become standardised, yet Western society still cannot claim to have achieved universal literacy.¹¹⁰ In contrast, literacy has only relatively recently been introduced to Aboriginal people in remote Australia without the prior and parallel development of meaningful social and cultural textual practices. Hence if we compare the Aboriginal context with the historical conditions outlined above 'the development of Aboriginal literacy has been rapid and spectacular in the extreme'.¹¹¹ Literacy in the remote Aboriginal context emerged out of the arbitrary

¹⁰³ (Besnier 1995; Kulick and Stroud 1993).

¹⁰⁴ (Reder and Green 1983; Reder and Wikelund 1993).

¹⁰⁵ (Kulick 1992: 175).

¹⁰⁶ (Kulick 1992: 170).

¹⁰⁷ For instance in South Africa (Harries 1994; Prinsloo 1995) and Latin America (Ebacher 1993).

¹⁰⁸ (Besnier 1995: 116).

¹⁰⁹ (Harries 1994).

¹¹⁰ (Crystal 1995; Strang 1970).

¹¹¹ (Hoogenraad 2001: 129).

conjunction with either church or state ideology and in some instances it made more sense than in others. Literacy learning has been influenced in some communities by the Christian Reformist tradition from Lutheran Germany, or Bohemia and Moravia, emphasising a 'deeper reading' of Christian text in the vernacular; and in others by the Calvinist Puritan emphasis on universal schooling.¹¹² Literacy learning has also been intertwined with the state's desire for individuals to progress towards citizenship and participation in the labour market economy. The impact of Christian missions on Australian Aboriginal society has been documented.¹¹³ Few accounts, however, focus on language or literacy issues.¹¹⁴

Finally, fundamental to an anthropological perspective on literacy is the notion that 'illiteracy' is not primarily a technical skills issue, but is 'relational' or 'ideological'.¹¹⁵ Street asserts that many people who would be labelled 'illiterate' within the autonomous model, do in fact derive meaning from and make use of different *literacies* in various contexts.¹¹⁶ Thus the definition of what constitutes literacy needs to be broadened to see what is accomplished with literacy, rather than what is deficient.¹¹⁷ Other theorists have explored literacy and disempowerment, that is, how literacy or illiteracy can stem from the inclusion or exclusion of individuals or groups from societal power.¹¹⁸ Too often blame is placed on the 'victim of illiteracy' for 'failing' to take responsibility for becoming 'literate'.¹¹⁹ The presence or lack of literacy 'skills' may, however, be the result of a real or perceived life context that makes their acquisition either worth, or not worth, the effort.¹²⁰ An alternative literacy discourse emphasises the multiplicity of 'literacies' that the term literacy encompasses to signify that there can be no single definition of literacy. As literacies are 'situated' and context dependent, a singular criterion for what literacy competence entails is unattainable as competence differs according to domain and function. Street contends that, as linguists such as Ralph Grillo propose the acceptance of 'language varieties' outside the dominant norm, there is also a need to accept 'literacy varieties'.¹²¹

¹¹² See (Graff 1987: 251; Olson 1977b).

¹¹³ (Bos 1988; Edwards 1999; Hilliard 1968; Leske 1977; McDonald 2001; Stevens 1994; Swain and Rose 1988).

¹¹⁴ See (Christie 1995a; Elkin 1963; Ferguson 1987; Gale 1997). See (Disbray 1997; Edwards 1999; Kral 2000) for further discussion on the influence of religious tradition on vernacular literacy in Aboriginal missions.

¹¹⁵ See (Cook-Gumperz 1986a; Smith 1986).

¹¹⁶ On 'literacies' see (Barton et al. 2000; Gee 1996; Street 1995; Walton 1996), 'multiliteracies' see (Cope and Kalantzis 2000; Nakata 2000; New London Group 1996) or 'multimodal texts' see (Menezes de Souza 2003).

¹¹⁷ (Street 2001; Prinsloo and Breier 1996).

¹¹⁸ See (Gee 1996; McDermott 1974; McDermott and Varenne 1995; McDermott and Varenne 1996; Ogbu 1990a; Varenne and McDermott 1999b).

¹¹⁹ (Chopra 2001: 86).

¹²⁰ (Smith 1986: 270).

¹²¹ See (Street 1994) and (Grillo 1989). In Aboriginal Australia non-standard varieties of language include, for example: Kriol (Rhydwen 1996) and Torres Strait 'Broken' (Shnukal 1992 [1988]).

A sociolinguistic perspective

Over recent decades studies in education anthropology and sociolinguistics have shifted the emphasis away from a traditional, cognitivist view of literacy as a set of technical skills possessed, or conversely lacked, towards studies of the social and cultural behaviour associated with literacy.¹²² Education anthropologists have drawn on theory from anthropology, sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication and discourse analysis to examine 'the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing'.¹²³ Researchers have used developments in sociolinguistic and anthropological research to look at the relationship between language and literacy use in social context.¹²⁴ A sociolinguistic perspective on literacy arose as researchers also began to look outside of schools to family and community to better understand and provide programmes to support learners from non-mainstream cultural, linguistic or socioeconomic backgrounds. This perspective was significant in that it started to shift the discourse beyond deficit theories that attributed school failure to individuals, family environment, or non-standard language use.¹²⁵ Research began to take account of the discontinuities between school and home, especially in minority contexts where non-standard language forms were used, with linguists arguing that no language was deficient.¹²⁶ As sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists were unable to separate language from sociocultural practices, a less stark divide between orality and literacy emerged.¹²⁷

Culture, language and literacy

Linguists and anthropologists have also opened up new understandings of the interrelationship between culture and literacy with the application of ethnographic methods to the study of communication. Theories of 'ethnography of communication' blended anthropology and linguistics and explored the links between culture, language and

¹²² The tradition of sociolinguistics or linguistic anthropology stems from reservations about Saussure's distinction between *langue* (the ideal language form) and *parole* (actual language use) (Saussure 1959) by Bronislaw Malinowski and Raymond Firth. Malinowski's work on language in social context influenced a later generation of linguists like Michael Halliday, Ruqaiya Hasan and other systemic functional linguists (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Halliday 1978). Links between language, culture and society are associated with work by Gumperz and Hymes (Gumperz and Hymes 1964; Gumperz and Hymes 1972) that was in part influenced by Boas' linking of language learning as a requirement in anthropological field work. See also (Duranti 1997; Foley 1997; Grillo 1989).

¹²³ (Street 1993b: 1). Education anthropology emerged from studies within cultural anthropology (Goetz and LeCompte 1984) See (Foley 2002; Goetz and LeCompte 1984; Spindler 1974; Wolcott 1985; Wolcott 1991) for an overview of the international literature. See also (Levinson et al. 1996; Levinson 1999; Levinson et al. 2000; Ogbu 1979; Ogbu 1990a; Varenne and McDermott 1999b; Wolcott 1967). Education anthropology is little explored in the Australian Indigenous education literature, see (Schwab 1998; Schwab 2001b). For writing on ethnography of communication see (Gumperz and Hymes 1964; Gumperz and Hymes 1972) and discourse analysis see (Fairclough 1992; Fairclough 1995).

¹²⁴ See (Cook-Gumperz 1986b; Levine 1986; Maybin 1994; Prinsloo and Breier 1996).

¹²⁵ See the notions of 'restricted code' and 'elaborated code' in (Bernstein 1973) wherein school failure in marginalised groups is attributed to their lack of access to a so-called 'elaborated code'.

¹²⁶ See Labov's study of Black English Vernacular (Labov 1972), now commonly referred to as African American Vernacular English by linguists.

¹²⁷ See (Cushman 1998; Finnegan 1988; Gee 1994 [1989]; Heath 1982a; Heath 1984; Tannen 1982).

literacy.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, Vygotsky's 'activity theory' focused on learning and human development and emphasised socially mediated learning, introducing the concept of the 'zone of proximal development' underlying the notion of scaffolded learning.¹²⁹ Theorists have embraced activity theory and drawn on anthropology and sociolinguistics to present a situated and social perspective on participatory learning that broadens learning beyond formal instruction, advancing the notion of learning and literacy as purposeful, context-specific and socially organised practice.¹³⁰

Despite the generally accepted assumption that schooling is 'a more effective and advanced institution for educational transmission', theorists such as Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger have turned away from formal schooling to explore the concept of 'situated learning' through participation in situated activity.¹³¹ A divide has grown between educationalists who see schools as the primary site for learning and researchers who foreground a 'fundamental distinction between learning and intentional instruction'.¹³² Lave and Wenger emphasise the significance of 'shifting the analytic focus from the individual as learner to learning as participation in the social world, and from the concept of cognitive process to the more-encompassing view of social practice'.¹³³ Schooling, they assert, 'does not exist alone', however 'conventional theories of learning do not offer a means for grasping their interrelations'.¹³⁴ Lave and Wenger situate learning within the 'trajectories of participation in which it takes on meaning' where the learner is a member of a sociocultural community, or a 'community of practice'.¹³⁵ In 'communities of practice' situated learning 'takes place in a social world, dialectically constituted in social practices that are in the process of reproduction, transformation, and change' and human lives are seen as trajectories through multiple social practices across the life span.¹³⁶

¹²⁸ See Gumperz and Hymes on 'ethnography of communication' (Gumperz and Hymes 1964; Saville-Troike 1982)

¹²⁹ See (Vygotsky 1978). The notion that learners are mentored, through interactions with more experienced adults or peers and are assisted to work beyond the 'zone' that they are performing at alone, thus also activating the non-formal learning acquired in the family or community. Scaffolded literacy is a term applied to a method developed by Australian researchers for teaching literacy in Aboriginal schools around remote Australia (Rose et al. 1999). See also YACHAD Accelerated Literacy Programme <http://www.yalp.org.au> and the National Accelerated Literacy Programme <http://www.cdu.edu.au/sspr/NALP.html>

¹³⁰ See (Cole et al. 1971; Cole and Scribner 1981; Engestrom 1990; Lave 1988; Lave 1996; Rogoff and Lave 1984; Rogoff 1990; Rogoff et al. 1993).

¹³¹ (Lave and Wenger 1991: 61). See also (Gee 2004).

¹³² Other approaches that incorporate the concept of learning through situated activity are variously termed 'practice-engagement' (Reder 1994); 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger 1991); 'guided participation' (Rogoff 2003) or 'intent participation' (Rogoff et al. 2003). See also discussions of 'out-of-school' (Hull and Schultz 2002) or 'community-based' (Heath 1983; Heath 1994; Heath and Smyth 1999) learning.

¹³³ (Lave and Wenger 1991: 43).

¹³⁴ (Lave and Wenger 1991: 55).

¹³⁵ (Lave and Wenger 1991: 52). Other writers (Barton and Tusting 2005) have critiqued the communities of practice paradigm for lacking a linguistic perspective more adequately covered by the term 'speech community' from sociolinguistics and ethnography of communication (see footnote (f.n.) 28).

Barbara Rogoff also proposes that learning is ‘a process of changing participation in community activities’.¹³⁷ Human development, she considers, is ‘a process of *people’s changing participation in sociocultural activities of their communities*’ where ‘[p]eople of each generation, as they engage in sociocultural endeavours with other people, make use of and extend cultural tools and practices inherited from previous generations’.¹³⁸ James Gee also takes issue with traditionalists who ‘advocate a sequential, skills-based approach to reading instruction’. His argument is that although learning to read can be an instructed process, it works best as a ‘cultural process’. He asserts that youngsters who ‘must learn reading primarily as an instructed process in school are at an acute disadvantage’, suggesting that, irrespective of all the social and cultural factors interrelated with literacy, ‘traditionalists would have us believe that poor readers, young and old, have failed to learn to read well because they have received poor skills instruction early on in school’.¹³⁹

The application of a social theory of learning resonates in the remote Aboriginal world. While not discounting the importance of schooling and good teaching, it draws learning away from the focus on individual attainment of outcomes. A social theory of literacy learning embraces a participatory emphasis on learning that is of relevance to the social community to which learners belong. It also pays attention to the transformational aspect of learning and identity formation and is cognisant of the social, cultural, historical and political influences that impact on the formation of a community of practice.

An ethnography of literacy in the Ngaanyatjarra context

This thesis is an ethnography of literacy. It is also a study of the social process of learning. It is about finding out how people acquire literacy, what people do with text and how literacy is used in everyday contexts. This is not a study of pedagogy, so from this stance there is no judgment of ‘success’ or ‘failure’ in the acquisitional process.¹⁴⁰ Nor is there an attempt to analyse pre-contact systems of graphic representation or traditional ways of ‘reading’ the environment.¹⁴¹ My intention is to draw a distinction between ‘literacy’ and ‘schooling’, and to explore the introduction of alphabetic script and the development of literate practices. An ethnohistorical approach to anthropology is used to show ‘the way in

¹³⁶ (Lave and Wenger 1991: 123).

¹³⁷ (Rogoff 2003: 284).

¹³⁸ (Rogoff 2003: 52) [emphasis in original].

¹³⁹ (Gee 2004: 10–14).

¹⁴⁰ I take from second language learning research the distinction between ‘learning’ and ‘acquisition’ (Krashen 1976) where second language ‘acquisition’ is an informal process that develops through interaction and immersion in language events. Second language ‘learning’ is an incremental process of individual skill acquisition reliant on formal instruction.

¹⁴¹ Some writers evoke a reading of the landscape (Benterrak et al. 1984; Rumsey 1994; Rumsey 2000) See also (Biddle 1996; Biddle 2000; van Toorn 2006).

which the impact of external forces is internally mediated, not only by social structural arrangements...but also by cultural patterns and structures'.¹⁴² This ethnography brings an anthropological and sociolinguistic perspective to literacy to gain insights into how literacy has been acquired, developed and maintained over successive generations in a range of contexts in one remote Aboriginal region. This thesis posits that literacy cannot be removed from the social, cultural, historical, and political contexts of use since the Ngaanyatjarra encounter with Western practices began in the 1930s. It is a consideration of the acquisition of literate behaviours and practices and how they have been transmitted and transformed across the generations.

True ethnography confronts us with alternative worlds of value and meaning, with different universes of preference and constraint. It tests the limits of our capacity to suspend our disbelief and to access hidden, unconscious or marginalized aspects of our own subjectivity. It draws us a picture of moral communities where people have different ideas about the desirable functioning for human beings.¹⁴³

I aim, through ethnography, to shift the stance away from the current frame that locks remote Aboriginal people into a history of failed policies by exploring a countervailing position that seeks to understand how one remote group, the Ngaanyatjarra, came to be in their present position and how the scope for future possibilities can be widened.¹⁴⁴

This thesis is based on the premise that the learning of technical literacy skills in school is an important component of the literacy learning process. However, a singular focus on pedagogy obscures the less obvious realisation that we must also be cognisant of practice and the broader sociocultural factors associated with literacy acquisition, maintenance and transmission in the newly literate context of the remote Aboriginal world.

Practice theory

'Practice theory' underpins the interpretive framework of this thesis. I draw on it to trace how some Ngaanyatjarra have acquired the social practices of European Australians and how these have been interpolated into cultural processes over successive generations.

The concept of 'practice' draws on anthropological conceptualisations. Practice theorists commonly use Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' to reflect on the nature of social reproduction and transformation.¹⁴⁵ In Bourdieu's theory of practice, habitus is 'both a system of schemes of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation

¹⁴² (Ortner 1989: 14). See also (Appadurai 1986; Comaroff 1985; Harries 1994; Sahlins 1981).

¹⁴³ (Shweder 1996: 18).

¹⁴⁴ See (Gibson-Graham 2006).

¹⁴⁵ (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1990 [1980]).

of practices'.¹⁴⁶ Habitus is also understood as 'a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions*'.¹⁴⁷ Like Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus, sociologists Berger and Luckman use the term 'habitualization' (i.e. the process of forming habits) to describe how frequently repeated action—'practice'—becomes 'cast into a pattern', then reproduced with 'an economy of effort' and the meanings associated with 'habitualized actions' become embedded as 'routines' or 'taken for granted actions'. They suggest that individual processes of 'habitualization' precede any institutionalisation and 'institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions' built up through a 'shared history'. They suggest that new roles and routines are likely to be 'reciprocally typified' only if they are relevant. Routines are transmitted to the next generation only when 'habitualization' and 'typification' become 'historical institutions' experienced as 'possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact', having an objective reality. The final stage—'legitimation'—is when transmitted practices become taken for granted cultural processes.¹⁴⁸

Bourdieu describes the process of acquisition as a practical 'mimesis (or mimeticism)' which implies an overall relation of identification where individuals cultivate the art of becoming something else and take on a mimetic form in the 'social space':¹⁴⁹

Between learning through sheer familiarization, in which the learner insensibly and unconsciously acquires the principles of an 'art' and an art of living, including those that are not known to the producer of the practices or artefacts that are imitated, and explicit and express transmission by precept and prescription, every society provides structural exercises which tend to transmit a particular form of mastery.¹⁵⁰

In any consideration of underlying cultural processes Sherry Ortner suggests that,

[A]nthropologists must use the cultural frames and structural contradictions of the local society as a kind of lens through which to view the practices and policies of the larger system, because it is these cultural frames and structural contradictions that mediate both the meaning and the impact of the larger political and economic forces in question.¹⁵¹

It is commonly asserted that literacy has been imposed on newly literate societies by missionaries or representatives of the state to allow previously preliterate groups to 'see the light' and begin the linear progression towards modernisation. This perspective is, however, too narrow and does not take account of the complexity of diverse contexts nor the agency of individual members of the receiving culture. The notion of 'agency', from

¹⁴⁶ (Bourdieu 1989: 19).

¹⁴⁷ (Bourdieu 1977: 82–3) [emphasis in original].

¹⁴⁸ (Berger and Luckmann 1975 [1966]: 70–85).

¹⁴⁹ (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 73; Bourdieu 1989).

¹⁵⁰ (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 74–5).

Bourdieu, has been incorporated into the anthropological tradition by so-called 'practice theorists' who emphasise the impact of social influences on agency.¹⁵² By drawing on Ortner and others, this ethnography of literacy seeks to understand 'practice' and the 'configuration of cultural forms, social relations, and historical processes that move people to act in ways' that produce or determine certain effects.¹⁵³ From Ortner we understand that 'human action or interaction' as an instance of practice can only be considered in relation to the structures that shape it: '[p]ractice emerges from structure, it reproduces structure, and it has the capacity to transform structure'.¹⁵⁴ Marshall Sahlins notes similarly:

Culture may set conditions to the historical process, but it is dissolved and reformulated in material practice, so that history becomes the realization, in the form of society, of the actual resources that people put into play.¹⁵⁵

In this thesis I present literacy as an instance of practice. I discuss the introduction and transmission of literacy by using the cultural frames of Ngaanyatjarra 'local society' and return to Ortner's notion of the underlying 'cultural frames' or 'cultural schemas' that determine the reproduction of literacy practice in the new habitus.¹⁵⁶ I explore the introduction of literacy and whether it has been 'put into play' as a resource within enduring Ngaanyatjarra cultural processes (i.e. the 'structures of the long run').¹⁵⁷

Literacy as social practice

Theorists from the so-called 'New Literacy Studies' (NLS) have drawn on developments in sociolinguistic and anthropological theory and 'practice theory' to take an 'ethnographic perspective' on literacy.¹⁵⁸ Their approach embodies the view that reading and writing 'only make sense' when studied in the context of social and cultural, as well as historical, political and economic practices 'of which they are but a part'.¹⁵⁹ Ethnographic methodology is used to document literacy activities in communities and link the meanings of local events to broader cultural institutions and practices.¹⁶⁰ The NLS researchers conceptualise literacy not in terms of skills and competencies, but as integral components of social events and practices. The term 'literacy event' has been utilised by Shirley Brice Heath to encompass speech events that have social interactional rules around text.¹⁶¹ Brian Street points out that

¹⁵¹ (Ortner 1989: 83).

¹⁵² See (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990 [1977]; Bourdieu 1990 [1980]; de Certeau 1984; Lave 1988; Ortner 1984; Ortner 1989; Sahlins 1981). Also see (Giddens 1979; Giddens 1991; Lefebvre 1991 [1974]).

¹⁵³ (Ortner 1989: 12).

¹⁵⁴ (Ortner 1989: 12).

¹⁵⁵ (Sahlins 1981: 7).

¹⁵⁶ (Ortner 1989: 60).

¹⁵⁷ (Sahlins 1981: 9).

¹⁵⁸ (Gee 2000; Maybin 2000; Street 1993b).

¹⁵⁹ (Gee 2000: 180).

¹⁶⁰ (Barton and Padmore 1994; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al. 2000).

¹⁶¹ (Heath 1983: 386; Heath 1982a).

'literacy practices' incorporate 'literacy events' and he employs the term 'literacy practices' as a broad concept 'referring to both behaviour and conceptualisations related to the use of reading and/or writing'.¹⁶² Janet Maybin considers that the notion of literacy practices provides an important conceptual and methodological framework for looking at the inter-relationships between individual activities, understandings and identities; social events and the interactions they involve; and broader social and institutional structures.¹⁶³ According to David Barton and Mary Hamilton, literacy practices are what people do with literacy every day and thus 'cultural ways of utilising literacy' may be more abstract and 'cannot be wholly contained in observable tasks and activities'.¹⁶⁴ They suggest that the following set of propositions embraces the notion of 'literacy as social practice', a concept I return to throughout the thesis:

- Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts.
- There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.
- Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies become more dominant, visible and influential than others.
- Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
- Literacy is historically situated.
- Literacy practices change, and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making.¹⁶⁵

Axiomatic to this thesis is Heath's notion that being literate involves more than having the individual technical literacy skills that 'enable one to disconnect from the interpretation or production of a text as a whole, discrete elements, such as letters, graphemes, words, grammar rules, main ideas, and topic sentences'.¹⁶⁶ Being literate also depends upon 'an essential harmony of core language behaviors and certain critical supporting social relations and cultural practices' and an individual's 'sense of being literate derives from the ability to also exhibit *literate behaviors*'.¹⁶⁷ Throughout this thesis I draw on the anthropological and sociolinguistic underpinnings embodied in the ethnographic approach taken by the NLS theorists. I consider that literacy cannot be studied independently of the social, cultural, political and historical forces that shape it, nor can it be analysed in isolation from the ideological systems in which it is embedded and the social practices that surround it.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² (Street 1993b: 12–13).

¹⁶³ (Maybin 2000: 198).

¹⁶⁴ (Barton et al. 2000: 8).

¹⁶⁵ (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 7).

¹⁶⁶ (Heath 1991: 3).

¹⁶⁷ (Heath 1991: 3–6) [emphasis in original].

¹⁶⁸ (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al. 2000; Besnier 1995; Kulick and Stroud 1993; Street 1984; Street 1993a; Street 1995).

Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into two parts: *Part I* (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) and *Part II* (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Throughout the thesis I interweave intergenerational narratives to illustrate literacy as a ‘generational cultural process’.¹⁶⁹ I draw on data from eleven Family Narratives (Appendix B), plus interviews with other key informants and other data (see Appendix A). Throughout the thesis Ngaanyatjarra words are used and translations not self-explanatory in the text can be found in the glossary in Appendix D.

In *Part I* I present a diachronic perspective on literacy. An anthropological approach is used to explore change, transmission and transformation in the evolving social practices, social meanings and cultural conceptions of reading and writing in the Ngaanyatjarra world. I trace the introduction, transmission and development of literacy and learning across the generations to consider the interconnection between a complex of factors, of which pedagogy is but a part. I explore the development of literate habits, assumptions, dispositions and behaviours as the shift towards a literate mentality starts to take hold and the Ngaanyatjarra begin using written language for their own social and cultural processes.¹⁷⁰ Throughout *Part I* the normative assumptions associated with introduced European practices are brought to the fore as I explore how Ngaanyatjarra people negotiated the profound period of social and cultural change from the 1930s up to the present. I incorporate Barton and Hamilton’s proposition that ‘literacy practices are culturally constructed, and like all cultural phenomena, they have their roots in the past’, thus, any contemporary understanding of the ideology, culture and traditions in which current practices are based must be underpinned by an historical approach as a background to describing the present.¹⁷¹ The historical forces that shaped literacy in the Ngaanyatjarra world thus provide insights into the ideological frames that have created the habitus—the normative practices—associated with literacy today.¹⁷² Practice theory is ‘a theory of the conversion, or translation, between internal dynamics and external forces’ and a dimension ‘concerns the ways in which a given social and cultural order mediates the impact of external events by shaping the ways in which actors experience and respond to those events’.¹⁷³ I use a practice-oriented approach to focus on the intersection between ‘experience, performance, and interaction’ and how the habitus of a colonising culture may

¹⁶⁹ (Rogoff 2003).

¹⁷⁰ (Barton et al. 2000: 8; Clanchy 1979; Heath 1991).

¹⁷¹ (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 13–14).

¹⁷² (Bourdieu 1977).

¹⁷³ (Ortner 1989: 200).

be taken on and transformed into practices that are also redolent of the underlying cultural values and processes of the receiving group.¹⁷⁴

Thus, underpinning *Chapters 2, 3 and 4* are the precepts that literacy is ‘historically situated’ and ‘culturally shaped’.¹⁷⁵ In *Chapter 2* I situate the Ngaanyatjarra encounter with the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) from 1934 onwards. I introduce the first generation of Ngaanyatjarra people to experience European practices during the ‘mission time’. I consider the changing spatial and temporal patterns and sociocultural processes associated with schooling, dormitory living and the emerging Christian community at Warburton Ranges Mission. I reflect on how the Ngaanyatjarra took on Western practices including literacy. I explore the nature of social relatedness and the notions of trust and compulsion as elemental to this experience. *Chapter 3* explores the Ngaanyatjarra encounter with the state during ‘Native Welfare times’ from the 1950s to the early 1970s when an ideology of assimilation was implemented to increase literacy and educate Aboriginal people to meet the standards of employment and citizenship required by the nation state. During this period people also encountered the cash economy, social services benefits and the social chaos wrought by access to alcohol. *Chapter 4* focuses on the new Federal policy of Aboriginal self-determination after 1972. I assess the impact of earlier learning and literacy experiences on the ‘self-determining generation’ and consider how literacy was used to address pressing social and cultural needs such as the establishment of outstation communities and the emergence of the Ngaanyatjarra community of interest.

In *Part II* (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) I use a synchronic perspective to focus on the present and explore the interwoven nature of literacy in the ‘practice of every day life’.¹⁷⁶ The questions I investigate are primarily: ‘how have people engaged with literacy?’ and ‘what are the everyday literacy practices?’ I use ethnographic observations of everyday life interwoven with the personal narratives of up to three generations in the eleven families to explore the histories, values, attitudes, and feelings associated with individual and community literacy practices, and the meaning attributed to text. I explore everyday life using an ‘anthropological’ approach. Writing about Aboriginal literacy rarely, if ever, considers the anthropological aspects of literacy such as social and domestic space, ‘habits and attitudes of time and space usage’, ‘literate systems’ or the ‘materiality’ required.¹⁷⁷ By focusing on literacy and spatio-temporal determinants of social practice, I consider the ways in which

¹⁷⁴ See (Ortner 1984).

¹⁷⁵ (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Kulick and Stroud 1993).

¹⁷⁶ (de Certeau 1984).

they are 'in accord with and mutually reinforce other cultural patterns'.¹⁷⁸ In *Chapter 5* I explore how changed social and spatio-temporal patterns and boundaries impact on the practice of everyday life and examine how these affect literacy. I examine literacy events and practices existing in a range of contexts outside pedagogical parameters and demonstrate the manner in which literacy has permeated the practice of everyday life.

Intergenerational change and the transmission of cultural values and practices are themes that run through *Part II*. I incorporate a generational approach from human development studies to explore change from a 'life span development' perspective.¹⁷⁹ Researchers in human development are 'interested in the ways individuals develop identities, particularly as they move from one life stage to the next' and the historical, political, economic, and cultural circumstances under which such transitions occur and contribute new meanings to 'patterned' developmental changes.¹⁸⁰

In *Chapter 6* I focus on aspects of language socialisation and literacy learning and transmission in family and community settings. Linguists have studied the impact of sociocultural change on language shift, socialisation and transmission.¹⁸¹ Researchers have investigated how children in mainstream and cross-cultural contexts are acculturated into the ways that adults in their home environment use spoken and written language.¹⁸² Studies have highlighted the importance of literate and oral practices in the family as antecedents to successful literacy learning at school.¹⁸³ Ethnographic studies of family, or intergenerational, literacy have enhanced our understanding of the social and cultural contexts that create opportunities for literacy development and transmission. In the anthropological frame, intergenerational literacy transmission is interpreted as cultural production and reproduction emphasising 'a continued process of creating meaning in social and material contexts'.¹⁸⁴ Rather than assuming a focus only on children and

¹⁷⁷ (Heath 1983: 393). See also (Charnofsky 1971; Hall 2000; Purves and Jennings 1991; Young 1988).

¹⁷⁸ (Heath 1983: 344; Lefebvre 1991 [1974]).

¹⁷⁹ (Jessor et al. 1996; Newman 1996; Nsamenang 1992; Rogoff 2003; Serpell 1993; Stigler et al. 1992).

¹⁸⁰ (Newman 1996: 372–73).

¹⁸¹ See (Eckert 1988; Romaine 1984; Schieffelin 1990). Linguists have examined language shift and language death in endangered language contexts in Aboriginal Australia (McConvell 1991b; McConvell and Thieberger 2001; Rigsby 1987; Schmidt 1990). See discussions on language shift and younger speakers in Ngiyampaa (Donaldson 1980) and Dyrbal (Schmidt 1985) and teenage speech in a Torres Strait language (Dixon 1980), Tiwi (Lee 1987) and in the closely related Pitjantjatjara dialect at Areyonga (Langlois 2004). Language socialisation has been studied in Aboriginal communities (Bavin 1993; Hamilton 1981; Kearins 1983; Laughren 1984; Lowell et al. 1996; McConvell 1988) and with the Ngaanyatjarra (Jacobs 1988).

¹⁸² Important 'cross-cultural' studies include: (Duranti and Ochs 1986; Ochs 1982; Ochs 1988; Ochs 1993; Ochs 1990; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Schieffelin 1990; Schieffelin and Gilmore 1986; Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977).

¹⁸³ Important studies in this field include: (Auerbach 1989; Heath 1982b; Heath 1983; Teale and Sulzby 1986; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988; Taylor 1994 [1983]; Varenne and McDermott 1986; Varenne and McDermott 1999a; Wells 1985), see also (Bruner and Plattner 1984; Cazden 1972; Olson et al. 1985; Wells 1981).

¹⁸⁴ (Levinson and Holland 1996: 13).

schooling, an intergenerational approach takes account of the knowledge, beliefs, habits and values and practices that are transmitted to children through participation in informal activities, or observation of adult roles and practices.¹⁸⁵ Australian research has affirmed the importance of children seeing reading and writing as elemental to everyday life at home and in the community (not merely as something done by and with teachers, only within the environs of school).¹⁸⁶ Literacy and 'school-readiness' has become an education policy issue.¹⁸⁷ This is also reflected in the community sector.¹⁸⁸

In mainstream Australia early literacy learning is synchronised with participation in purposeful institutional, social and community practices and contexts that require literacy. Whereas, in remote Aboriginal communities the historical and social circumstances of literacy learning differ and the cultural processes (i.e. the habits and attitudes associated with everyday literacy practices that underpin success at school) are still evolving. The arenas of adult literacy use are less transparent and the correlation with early literacy learning less apparent and more research is needed in this important area.

Finally, in *Chapter 7*, the penultimate chapter, I focus on the adolescent generation. 'Adolescence' has been the subject of studies in anthropology, sociology and human development.¹⁸⁹ Youth culture is commonly represented as problematic or 'at risk'.¹⁹⁰ In this discourse, a moral panic is often associated with youth who face 'the scourge of illiteracy'.¹⁹¹ Writers note how the school system often fails marginalised young people who become locked into a 'culture of refusal' and no longer engage with education because of the perceived incongruity between schooling and everyday life.¹⁹² In mainstream Australia

¹⁸⁵ (Barton and Padmore 1994; Damon 1990; Gadsden 1997; Heath 1983; Ivanic and Hamilton 1990; Street 1984).

¹⁸⁶ (Cairney et al. 1995; Cairney 2003). See also (Breen 1994; Falk 1999; Falk 2001b; Freebody et al. 1995; Knobel 1999; Searle 1999).

¹⁸⁷ On children and school-readiness see (Fleer and Williams-Kennedy 2001; MCEETYA 2001a; Mellor and Corrigan 2004). See (Doig et al. 2003) for a discussion of the importance of home numeracy practices as an antecedent to later success in numeracy at school. An objective of the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DETYA 2000) was to achieve 'literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students at levels comparable to those achieved by other young Australians'. A review of the strategy (Hugh Watson Consulting 2003) found that it was more a readiness for learning programme than a literacy and numeracy programme. An initiative under the strategy is the 'Books in Homes Pilot project': <http://www.booksinhomes@dest.gov.au/schools/indigenous/publications/booksinhomes.htm>

¹⁸⁸ Community sector early literacy intervention strategies include: the Australian Readers Challenge literacy backpack book supply to remote communities <http://www.readerschallenge.com.au/>; 'Let's Read' http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/research/index.cfm?doc_id=432 and <http://www.letsread.com.au/pages/litreview.php>; and HIPPPY – Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (Westheimer 2003).

¹⁸⁹ Studies of adolescence in the early anthropological and sociological literature have explored the concept of 'generation', see (Mannheim 1952; Mead 1943; Mead 1978 [1970]). Researchers in human development studies have also addressed sociocultural change and reproduction across the generations (Damon 1996; Jessor et al. 1996; Rogoff 2003; Scheper-Hughes 1992). Writing in psychology and sociology has focused on emerging 'youth identities', often categorising adolescents as an identifiable 'subculture' or 'peer group' (Erickson 1968). A growing literature is exploring the relationship between identity, ethnicity, socialisation and notions of 'adolescence' in cross-cultural contexts. (Amit-Talai and Wulff 1995; Condon 1987; Schlegel 1995).

¹⁹⁰ (Brake 1980; Denzin 1996).

¹⁹¹ (Collins 1995: 85). See Graff and Street for discussions on the literacy crisis of the twentieth century.

¹⁹² (Blake 2004).

there is a cultural logic to the pursuit of credentials and the assumed linearity of the transition from school to training and employment in the labour market economy.¹⁹³ The normative logic of this sequenced pathway holds little 'cultural logic' in the remote Aboriginal world where different social meanings are attached to the adolescent maturation period.

Australian researchers have flagged the notion of 'Indigenous learning communities' to address the limited engagement of Aboriginal youth with education and to explore the potential linkages between families, schools and communities.¹⁹⁴ An alternative international discourse emphasises the creative agency and adaptive strategies of marginalised youth.¹⁹⁵ Ethnographic research in the United States focuses on the potential that youth organisations have to support and stimulate non-formal, non-institutionalised learning, including literacy learning, in non-mainstream contexts.¹⁹⁶ Importantly, the research suggests that arts-based projects and organisations in particular, offer 'the greatest range and depth of opportunity for building information and honing skills – technical, communicative, and interpretive' by giving young people 'opportunities to create, demonstrate, practice, respond, improve, and perform in risk-laden tasks and projects'.¹⁹⁷ Writers suggest that arts-based projects provide a context for sustained learning that schools cannot match and are judged by youth themselves as desirable places to spend time. Researchers comment that adolescents look 'wholly different' when they find engagements that 'galvanize their natural strengths' and 'reinvigorate belief in their own potential'.¹⁹⁸ A synergy can be found between the research findings and current learning theories, outlined above, that emphasise participatory 'situated' or 'collaborative' learning.¹⁹⁹ Wenger aptly asserts that what is needed are 'inventive ways' of engaging learners in 'meaningful practices' by 'providing access to resources that enhance their participation, of opening their horizons so they can put themselves on learning trajectories they can identify with, and of involving them in actions, discussions and reflections that make a difference to the communities they value'.²⁰⁰

¹⁹³ (Smyth and Hattam 2004).

¹⁹⁴ (Schwab and Sutherland 2001; Schwab 2005).

¹⁹⁵ (Damon 1996; Jessor et al. 1996; Sullivan 1989; Vigil 1988; Willis 1977).

¹⁹⁶ (Cushman and Emmons 2002; Eidman-Aadahl 2002; Heath and McLaughlin 1993a; Heath 1994; Heath 1996; Heath 1998; Heath and Smyth 1999; McLaughlin et al. 1994).

¹⁹⁷ (Heath and Smyth 1999: 65).

¹⁹⁸ (Damon 1996: 469).

¹⁹⁹ For 'situated' learning see (Barton et al. 2000; Gee 2004; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and for 'collaborative' learning see (Chavajay and Rogoff 2002; Rogoff et al. 2003).

²⁰⁰ (Wenger 1998: 10).

Anthropological writing in the Western Desert region commonly presents a 'traditionalist' body of work.²⁰¹ Although some writers do address the consequences of change; John Stanton's research at Mt Margaret and Lee Sackett's work at Wiluna have both informed this thesis, as has Fred Myer's study of the Pintupi²⁰² Myers suggests that approaches that look at 'the new Aboriginal cultural formations' and Aboriginal practices 'contextually in historical process' illuminate the way in which meanings are reshaped and contested'.²⁰³ Francesca Merlan also explores the intercultural space of 'engagement and influence between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and institutions'.²⁰⁴ Her formulation of the 'cultural' takes account of the 'processual character of interrelationship' between the two groups and emphasises 'the processes of reproduction as well as non-reproduction' of sociocultural patterns and interaction.²⁰⁵ Few studies in the Aboriginalist literature have considered the impact of change on the normative life trajectory for Aboriginal youth.²⁰⁶

In *Chapter 7* I show that the developmental trajectory of Ngaanyatjarra youth is diverging from both cultural and mainstream norms. This generation is within a process of cultural transformation utterly dissimilar to anything their parents or grandparents experienced. Although their core cultural values reside in the traditional Ngaanyatjarra world, their contemporary identity is being moulded by Western influences and, unlike previous generations, they are experiencing everyday life as increasingly self-regulatory. I explore a youth arts case to show how young adults, many of whom may not be considered highly literate when measured against mainstream standards, are adapting oral narrative skills and using text in multimedia events. This case study illustrates how new influences are shaping the literacy practices that youth engage in.

²⁰¹ (Gould 1969; Gould 1980; Myers 1986; Tonkinson 1978b).

²⁰² (Sackett 1978a; Sackett 1990; Stanton 1983; Stanton 1990), see also (Folds 2001; Tonkinson 1974). Other writing on 'change' include (Berndt 1977; Rowley 1972a; Sansom 1980; Taylor et al. 2005).

²⁰³ (Myers 2002: 117).

²⁰⁴ (Merlan 2005: 167). See (Martin 2003) for an exploration of the concept of 'strategic engagement'.

²⁰⁵ (Merlan 2005: 169).

²⁰⁶ In the Australian Indigenous literature youth issues have been addressed either within a traditionalist life cycle paradigm (Burbank 1988; Burbank 1995; Hamilton 1979; Hamilton 1981; Myers 1986; Tonkinson 1978b) or within the context of social change (Ivory 2003; Robinson 1990; Robinson 1997b; Robinson 1997a; Tonkinson 1974). Other anthropologists have explored the social meaning of petrol sniffing (Brady 1992), youth crime (Putt 1999) and the tension between cultural continuity and change in response to new media and globalisation (Hinkson 1999; Hinkson 2004; Michaels 1986).

Introduction

Chapter 2 begins with an outline of the policy context of the so-called 'protectionist' era to underpin the ensuing discussion on the nature of the Ngaanyatjarra encounter with the European world. I contextualise the arrival of the United Aborigines Mission by first describing the mission experience at Mt Margaret Mission in the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia. I then consider the nature of the Ngaanyatjarra engagement with introduced European practices including literacy at the Warburton Ranges Mission. I also reflect on the westerly drift of the Ngaanyatjarra out of the Western Desert and into the Eastern Goldfields region.

The 'protectionist' era

In 1915 Auber O. Neville became Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia. Under his 'exacting administration' Aboriginal people in this Western Australia were so well protected by the Aborigines Department that they 'virtually became prisoners in their own land, denied even the most basic right to control their own lives or the lives of their children'.²⁰⁷ The desperate situation of Aborigines in the south and criticisms of maltreatment of Aborigines in the north led to the 1934 Moseley Royal Commission on the 'native problem' and the introduction of the *Native Administration Act 1936*.²⁰⁸ Although enacted to further 'protect' Aboriginal people, the 1936 Act in fact gave the Department of Native Affairs (DNA) more power over the daily lives of Aborigines in part because the Commissioner of Native Affairs (CNA) became the legal guardian of all 'native' children, whether illegitimate or legitimate, until they reached the age of 21.²⁰⁹ The 1936 Act succeeded in 'eroding individual rights' as the Commissioner ultimately had control over Aboriginal marriage, employment, education, place of residence and the enforced separation of mixed-blood children from their families.²¹⁰

Under protectionist policy the ideological dimension of literacy was utilised to separate Aborigines into groups according to caste criteria. Full-blood people, for example, were

²⁰⁷ (Maushart 2003 [1993]: 333). In outlying regions the Aborigines Department was dependent on honorary protectors some of whom were police who undertook a problematic 'dual role' as both 'protectors and prosecutors of Aborigines' (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 91–2).

²⁰⁸ (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 315).

²⁰⁹ (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 350; Biskup 1973: 170) The *Aborigines Act 1905* (WA) was the cornerstone of Aboriginal policy in Western Australia until 1936. It had replaced the *Aborigines Act 1897* (which had replaced the *Aborigines Protection Act 1886*) based on recommendations from a WA government inquiry headed by Dr W.E. Roth.

²¹⁰ (Morgan 1986: 209).

categorised into three tiers: 'detribalised' and living near towns, 'semi-tribalised' and living on pastoral stations, and 'uncivilised' and living in a 'tribal state'.²¹¹ A 1937 Commonwealth and State Ministers Conference on Aboriginal Welfare supported the policy that 'full-blood natives' should be educated to a 'white standard' only if 'detribalised'.²¹² The *Native (Citizenship Rights) Act (1944)* was to give Aborigines the right to apply for a certificate of citizenship 'provided that they were adult, literate, of industrious habits and good behaviour, and completely severed from tribal or communal associations'.²¹³ Accordingly, upon recommendation of several government officers, an Exemption Certificate to exempt that person from the 1936 Act could be attained to remove education, employment and town residence restrictions.²¹⁴

Semi-civilised full-blood natives can be kept under benevolent supervision in regard to employment and social and medical services in their own tribal areas, and education is not particularly necessary for them. Nor is education necessary for tribal or uncivilised natives. They should be safeguarded in their tribal areas and there is a doubt in my mind as to whether it is even necessary to disturb their social state by attempts at Christianity.²¹⁵

In other words, Western Australian policy in relation to 'full-bloods' living in a tribal state was that they were 'better left alone'.²¹⁶

Aborigines, literacy, and the state

The 1871 *Elementary Education Act* had 'theoretically' provided education for all Aboriginal children within a three mile radius of a state school, but this was never properly implemented and Aboriginal students were excluded from state schools well into the 1930s.²¹⁷ The *Aborigines Act 1905* had made Aboriginal education the responsibility of the Aborigines Department.²¹⁸ The Department admitted that it was aware that it had a 'statutory responsibility to educate Aboriginal children', but claimed that it was 'powerless to do very much' due to 'lack of finances'.²¹⁹ Separate schools for 'detribalised' Aborigines were advocated, but departmental cutbacks meant that this was not an option, so schooling took place primarily on missions or settlements.²²⁰ By 1940, WA was the only state in

²¹¹ (Jebb 2002: 161).

²¹² Annual Report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs (CNA) 1937: 3–4.

²¹³ (Bolton 1981: 151).

²¹⁴ (Stanton 1988: 298).

²¹⁵ Annual Report CNA 1945: 8.

²¹⁶ (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 156).

²¹⁷ (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 136–43, 307–10.)

²¹⁸ (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 136–43).

²¹⁹ Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines 1936: 8.

²²⁰ (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 168–9). Institutions such as Moore River and Carrolup Native Settlement embodied Neville's policy of separating children from families and assisting the inevitable assimilation of 'mixed bloods' into European society. Children sent to Moore River generally never saw their families again as depicted in the book (Pilkington 2002) and subsequent film *'Rabbit Proof Fence'*. By 1920 settlements aimed to provide Aboriginal children with basic literacy and numeracy and to prepare them for training as domestic and farm labourers, although the standard of education on settlement schools dropped after 1921 as the focus was oriented around vocational teaching programmes (Haebich 1992

Australia in which the Education Department did not provide teachers for Aboriginal reserves, missions or settlements.²²¹ It was not until the passing of the *Education Act* in 1945, that the state displayed its intent to educate its Aboriginal population. From 1947 the staffing of settlements schools with trained teachers was supported, as was non-segregated schooling despite some ongoing European community opposition.²²²

After 1948, following the *Bateman Report*, better educational opportunities prevailed under the reforming influence of the new Commissioner of Native Affairs (CNA) Stanley G. Middleton.²²³ At this stage, the adult full-blood population of WA was reportedly 'almost completely illiterate'.²²⁴ After being excluded from state education, school attendance was now to become compulsory for all Aboriginal children aged six to fourteen living within a three mile radius of a school.²²⁵ However it wasn't until 1951 that there was a 'willingness' on the part of the DNA to also 'accept responsibility' for the education of children in missions.²²⁶ In 1953 the Education Department established a section responsible for Aboriginal education and compiled a "Provisional Curriculum for Coloured Pupils in Caste Schools".²²⁷ This coincided with pedagogical research determining that 'motivation and environment' were apparently retarding Aboriginal students, not 'innate incapacity'.²²⁸

Mt Margaret Mission

In all, Neville's administration had led to a worsening of conditions in settled areas, including the Eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia. Some 30 years after European contact the Aborigines of this region were considered by the Chief Protector to be the 'most degraded' in the state.²²⁹ In 1921 Rodolphe S. Schenk established an Australian Aborigines Mission (renamed United Aborigines Mission (UAM) in 1929) at Mt

[1988]: 182–91). Moore River and Carrolup were the first settlements to get trained Education Department teachers in 1945 (Annual Report CNA 1945: 12). See (Maushart 2003 [1993]; Neville 1947).

²²¹ (Milnes 1987: 272).

²²² Annual Report CNA 1945: 12; (Milnes 1987: 320).

²²³ The Bateman Report (Bateman 1948) followed the survey on Aboriginal affairs by Resident Magistrate F.E.A. Bateman in 1947. (Biskup 1973: 232; Bolton 1981: 154).

²²⁴ (Department of Native Welfare 1967: 32)

²²⁵ (Haebich 2005: 211).

²²⁶ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 10/8/51 UAM to A/DCNA*.

²²⁷ (Biskup 1973: 242).

²²⁸ (Bolton 1981: 154–5).

²²⁹ (Milnes 1987: 151). The Eastern Goldfields opened up after gold was discovered in Kalgoorlie in 1893 and mining settlements grew in Kalgoorlie, Leonora, Laverton and Wiluna (Howitt 1990; Stanton 1990). A railway line to Kalgoorlie was laid by 1896 to service the goldfields, with a branch line to Laverton constructed soon after. The goldrush reached its peak around 1904 and went into decline thereafter. Pastoral development followed in the wake of mining when pastoralists were enticed into the Eastern Goldfields with offers of cheap leases of land from the government. In the Laverton-Leonora districts early stations to be established were Nambi (1899), Banjiwarn (1903), Laverton Downs (1918) and Bandy and Carnegie (1921) (Department of Conservation and Land Management 1994: 21). The influx of Europeans onto Aboriginal land, its occupation by pastoralists and the resulting loss of access to traditional food sources saw Aboriginal people living on the fringes of European settlements or gravitating to ration depots established for indigent or 'destitute' Aborigines (Rajkowski 1995).

Margaret some 30 kilometres south-west of Laverton in the Eastern Goldfields.²³⁰ Although following a tradition of colonial mission intervention in Aboriginal Australia, his impact over the next 32 years was to prove relatively benign.²³¹ Mt Margaret, in fact, provided a refuge from the adverse conditions in the Goldfields, in part because Schenk objected to the forced removal of children to institutions such as Moore River Settlement which 'won the gratitude of the locals'.²³² At Mt Margaret some families were able to maintain contact with their children and by 1931 full-blood children were also placed in the mission.²³³

Schenk's fundamentalism underpinned his attitude to literacy, by drawing on the 'Protestant impulse towards literacy'.²³⁴ He believed 'that the native who could read and understand the Bible stood a better chance of becoming and remaining a firm Christian than one who was illiterate'.²³⁵ It may also be speculated that his approach was grounded in the 'liberal social theories and expectations of the role of literacy and schooling in socioeconomic development, social order, and individual progress' in colonialist Australia.²³⁶ Schenk believed that if Aboriginal people are 'not educated, they will always need others to speak for them—they will never be able to speak for themselves'.²³⁷ A school for five to twelve years olds—the first school for Aborigines in the Goldfields—opened in October 1926 within the prevailing atmosphere that saw the state denying education to Aboriginal children.²³⁸ Mt Margaret was viewed as a 'model mission

²³⁰ The Australian Aborigines Mission (founded in 1893 under the name Christian Endeavour Mission) originated from LaPerouse Mission in NSW (Milnes 1987: 160). This group had established their first children's mission in Perth by 1909 (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 109), and later spread throughout the state. By 1935 the UAM, as it was now named, was the largest missionary society in Western Australia, with five mission stations under its management (Biskup 1973: 124) and the only mission group in the Goldfields region.

²³¹ See (Harris 1994 [1990]; Swain and Rose 1988).

²³² (Powell and Kennedy 2005: 57). Aborigines of the Eastern Goldfields were aware of Moore River Settlement and would have heard of incidents such as that in 1921 when police 'protectors' rounded up a group of Aborigines in Laverton and sent them by train to Moore River. The story of their escape is remembered by successive generations (see Family J) and has been documented in the literature (Dowley 2000; Morgan 1986).

²³³ (Milnes 1987: 190).

²³⁴ (Graff 1987: 251). The UAM had its roots in early missions that entered Australia and were products of the Protestantism of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, Calvinist Puritanism in England and the German mystical pietism of Bohemia and Moravia. In 1833 missionaries from Germany were solicited to work among the Aborigines of NSW when no English clergy would. A Moravian-Presbyterian partnership later began in Victoria (Disbray 1997; Edwards 1999). The UAM was 'initially supported by the Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches' but after 1940 the Methodists and Congregationalists withdrew, leaving only 'fundamentalist organisations supported mainly by Baptist, Church of Christ and Brethren churches' (McDonald 2001: 52–8).

²³⁵ (Marks 1960: 86).

²³⁶ (Graff 1987: 3).

²³⁷ (Morgan 1986: 138). Margaret Morgan, the daughter of Rodolphe Schenk, published a history of the Mt Margaret Mission (Morgan 1986).

²³⁸ (Milnes 1987: 178). P.D. Milnes has traced the history of Aboriginal education in WA with particular reference to the Goldfields district. His study emphasises the role that the missions, in particular the UAM, played in providing education for Aboriginal people in the Goldfields district when state education was not an alternative. Although government schools had opened in Coolgardie in 1894 and Kalgoorlie in 1895 (Mossenson 1972: 72), by World War II the missions in the Goldfields were still the main providers of education for Aboriginal children (Milnes 1987: 288). By 1946, only nineteen children of Aboriginal descent and three full-blood children were attending state schools in the Goldfields (ibid: 289) including seven children from Mt Margaret who had earlier been transferred to Laverton School (ibid: 232). In

settlement' distinguished from many other missions because of the 'remarkable achievements' in literacy and numeracy.²³⁹ Even the state government conceded that the educational results were 'quite remarkable'.²⁴⁰ Educational achievements were attributed to Mary Montgomery Bennett who ran the school from 1932 until 1941.²⁴¹ Although untrained, Bennett was considered an 'outstanding aboriginal educator' and in 1935 published *Teaching the Aborigines*.²⁴² For his part, Schenk wrote the *Educability of a Native* (1936) with the intention of publicising the successes of the Mt Margaret method, garnering public support and increasing awareness that Aboriginal people were 'capable of being educated' (Fig. 2.1).²⁴³ By 1938 Schenk was asking the government to supply mission schools with properly trained teachers.²⁴⁴ This request was not, however, to be granted until 1949 when the Education Department supplied a head teacher.²⁴⁵ A literate environment was fostered early and by 1937 a library had been established and Schenk reported that 'as a result of Mrs Bennett's teaching the children now read for pleasure as they never did before'.²⁴⁶ Even Schenk's business dealings with Aboriginal workers were textually mediated; he used written job and payment records believing that non-readers would seek out literates to assist and check payments.²⁴⁷ Christianity also provided a locus for social activity that pivoted around written text and by 1938 eleven religious meetings were held each week.²⁴⁸

According to the anthropologist A. P. Elkin, who visited the mission in 1930, Schenk was extremely fundamentalist and regarded all Aboriginal custom and belief as 'works of

1947–1948 a further eleven Aboriginal students enrolled at Laverton School. In other locations in the Goldfields children enrolled in state schools were from families who had been granted Citizenship Rights. For other children mission schooling was the only option (ibid: 322). So Mt Margaret remained the main school for Aborigine children in the district.²³⁹ (Stanton 1990: 220; Stanton 1988: 294).

²⁴⁰ Annual Report CNA 1937: 21.

²⁴¹ M.M. Bennett was an educator, writer and humanitarian (Bennett 1930) who had earlier worked at UAM missions at Gnowangerup and Forrest River for short periods (Bolton 1981).

²⁴² (Biskup 1973: 133).

²⁴³ (Morgan 1986: 209). When Bennett commenced teaching neither the Education Department nor the Aborigines Department provided any school resources so all materials were bought using donations from the 'Christian public' (Morgan 1986: 138). According to Morgan, by 1934 Bennett had brought the children up to 'Standard 2' examination level of the WA Education Department as set by the Correspondence School (Morgan 1986: 168). At the end of 1935 an elementary (or 'primary') school programme was provided up to the average age of Standard 3 pupils (around 13 ½ years old) (Schenk 1936). Classroom activities include dictation, writing, copying, reading flash cards, numbers and arithmetic (Bennett 1935). Schenk aimed to show the high standards achieved in literacy and numeracy using the methodology introduced by Bennett, to prove that their method was 'approximate as nearly as possible to State School standards' (Schenk 1936). In 1940 a Mt Margaret student won the 'Batman Essay Competition in which 401 Aboriginal students throughout the Commonwealth competed (Marks 1960: 86–7).

²⁴⁴ (Biskup 1973: 133).

²⁴⁵ (Morgan 1986: 266). This was in part because at the time the Commissioner Neville declined to permit Education Department teachers on settlements, thus it would have been an anomalous for the Education Department to provide teachers for mission schools while not providing them for state institutions (Marks 1960 87: 87).

²⁴⁶ Annual Report CNA 1937.

²⁴⁷ (Milnes 1987: 172).

²⁴⁸ (Marks 1960: 87).

darkness'.²⁴⁹ Schenk, however, departed from UAM policy by promoting secular education, not just the singular 'God is good, God is love' approach of other UAM missionaries.²⁵⁰ Anthropologist John Stanton comments that Schenk believed that 'the best future for Aboriginal people lay in their education and vocational training, and ultimately in their conversion to Christianity'.²⁵¹ This emphasis on vocational education was to give Aboriginal people 'a high degree of independence unparalleled elsewhere'.²⁵² After initially offering food for free, Schenk adopted a 'no work, no food' policy where workers were paid cash for labour from dingo scalp collection and sandalwood pulling, or paid on a piece-work basis for raffia, carpentry and cleaning.²⁵³ By 1928, with the closure of ration depots in the region, Mt Margaret became the central rationing station for the district, attracting large numbers of Aboriginal people into the mission.²⁵⁴ With a growing population to support, Schenk's philosophy was underpinned by necessity as the mission was in receipt of no government subsidies other than rations and could not rely on regular financial support from the UAM.²⁵⁵ Schenk's emphasis on 'learning to work' as a prerequisite to integration into the wider community led to carpenters, mechanics, shearers and miners in numbers unequalled by any other mission—young girls were also trained as domestic workers, typists and nurses.²⁵⁶

Schenk also tried to secure employment on pastoral stations in the region (and when he could not the mission undertook to provide paid mining work).²⁵⁷ Significantly, Schenk sought to ensure that men who had learned to be shearers and station hands on the mission were then paid reasonable wages when they worked on pastoral stations.²⁵⁸ In 1930, 23 Mt Margaret men found three months mustering work on stations and were the

²⁴⁹ (Elkin 1979).

²⁵⁰ (Milnes 1987: 179–180).

²⁵¹ (Stanton 1990: 220).

²⁵² (Biskup 1973: 132).

²⁵³ (Milnes 1987: 172–173; Marks 1960: 89).

²⁵⁴ Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines 1928: 6.

²⁵⁵ UAM missionaries were encouraged to open stations in situations so financially impossible that other mission societies refused. Financial support from their home church and other societies was then sought to maintain missions (Marks 1960: 80). See also (Morgan 1986; Smith 1933).

²⁵⁶ (Marks 1960: 85; Biskup 1973: 132).


²⁵⁷ In the 1930s mining was revitalised in the Goldfields as the price of gold rose and in 1935 Schenk started a small battery. He took advantage of a loophole in the Mining Act which 'prohibited the employment of aborigines on mining tenements, but failed to debar them from acquiring such tenements'. Schenk encouraged them 'to apply for small mining leases, and crushed their ore for a small fee' (Biskup 1973: 132).

²⁵⁸ (Marks 1960: 89). Under the *Aborigines Act 1905* freedom of movement was restricted and labour was controlled in an effort to develop and expand the pastoral industry. This gave the Chief Protector the right to remove Aboriginal adults to any district or institution and only people under an 'employment permit' were given an exemption from these removal powers (Jebb 2002: 77). Stanton states that pastoralists 'had the support of the Aborigines Department in securing permits for the employment of Aborigines'. In return, the Department subsidised workers at ration depots during the summer 'lay-off' season. Pastoralists were thus 'absolved' from having to provide for their work-force all year round, and the cost of Aboriginal labour was 'even cheaper'. Schenk criticised these practices, and pastoralists complained that he was 'influencing local Aborigines in his demands for better conditions' and attracting them to Mt Margaret 'with the

Fig. 2.1 Education publications by M.M. Bennett (1935) and R.S. Schenk (1936)

Teaching The Aborigines

Data from Mount Margaret Mission, O.A.



NOTES BY M. M. BENNETT

"The outstanding problem of the native reservation may be said to be the establishment of a plan obvious to the native which makes for his social and material betterment. Without it, his detention in a reservation becomes merely a period of imprisonment; with it he may be encouraged towards development."

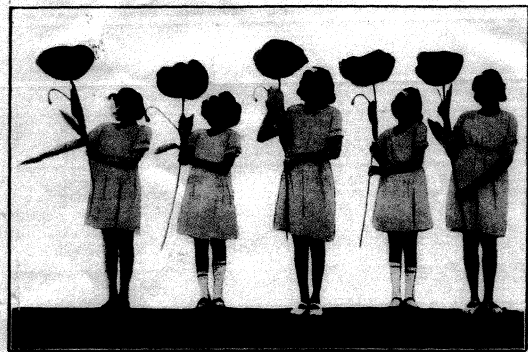
Dr. Cilento's Report

"The only way to save the remaining blacks is along the way of Christ"

Dr. Charles Duguid

THE EDUCABILITY OF THE NATIVE

BY R.S. SCHENK



"Each bright flower is lifted"

OBTAINABLE AT

U. A. M. OFFICES

163 SWANSTON ST., MELBOURNE, VIC.
KESWICK BOOK DEPOT, MELBOURNE, VIC.
140 ELIZABETH ST., SYDNEY, N. S. W.
62 GAWLER PLACE, ADELAIDE, S. A.

AND FROM

MT. MARGARET MISSION,
MORGANS, W. A.





first Aboriginal men in the Goldfields ‘to be paid one pound a week and keep’.²⁵⁹ In a submission to the 1934 Moseley Royal Commission Schenk stated that: ‘[e]ver since the pastoralists agreed to pay wages, we have had trouble with some...they hate the natives to be enlightened, not only because they want wages, but because they demand better treatment’.²⁶⁰ Schenk explained that Mt Margaret people had high expectations having already ‘earned their own houses and furniture’, so when the manager of Glenorn Station,

...fed them on the woodheap they objected and asked for a table somewhere. At the same place they also objected to getting tins from the rubbish for mugs, being sworn at like dogs by the overseer; and after doing good work some were refused wages till I threatened to summons.²⁶¹

It is at this point that I introduce the first of the families from the narratives found in Appendix B. I begin with Family A, a family with a strong connection to Mt Margaret Mission. Around the time that Neville was allowing some Aboriginal children of mixed descent to remain at Mt Margaret instead of sending them to Moore River, *Valcie* was born at Cosmo Newbery Station in 1930 (see Fig. 1.1).²⁶² As a child of mixed descent Valcie was picked up by Neville’s ‘protectors’ and placed in the Graham Home dormitory at Mt Margaret.

Mt Margaret school was good because the government was against the Aboriginal children being taught, going to school, and the missionaries that came to Mt Margaret, well they taught us in school, taught us from infants to up...It was a good education because they was teaching us something no-one else wanted to teach us.

Valcie later worked at the mission as a domestic and around 1950 married a Mt Margaret man—one of the early workers at Glenorn Station. Their son Wesley describes his father’s station experience:

Like my father...when he tell me how he got where he was. He left the mission home and he went and worked on a station just out of Mt Margaret towards the west called Glenorn Station. And when he went there...the blokes teaching him and seeing what a good worker he is and make him a windmill man, he was in charge of the windmills. And they have him sitting outside and they provide him with a feed, but he sit outside because he’s Aboriginal so he can’t sit inside. But he didn’t care, he’s still working, working hard. The blokes trust him and end up he getting all the young fellas from mission home working, they all go and work under him. Just to prove to that white man that he can work as hard as him and he can have the skills to be able to do whatever. So then he started teaching all the young boys from Mt Margaret Home bringing them out. He tell the boss there that there’s a good source of employment, young people you can employ, from this place. So they all started getting skills from working round stations. And then eventually he moves

promise of cash wages at a time when few stockmen or women were receiving such remuneration in the Goldfields’ (Stanton 1988: 293).

²⁵⁹ (Morgan 1986: 120).

²⁶⁰ Bennett and Schenk played a significant role in a post-World War I humanitarian lobby group for Aboriginal rights in WA. Bennett was at the forefront of the debate around the ‘native problem’ both in Australia and in England. She published and gave public lectures criticising Aboriginal policy under A.O. Neville. Their criticism of the treatment and condition of Aborigines helped lead to a Royal Commission in 1934 by M.D. Moseley (Attwood 2003; Holland 2005; Paisley 2005).

²⁶¹ (Morgan 1986: 163–64).

²⁶² (Milnes 1987: 182).

inside and eats at the table with them. But that's proving the point that he can do it. And that's what happened to a lot of Aboriginal people, you know, they put the effort into proving that they can do it, because they had to or they'd be left in the scrap heap.

Schenk's philosophy embraced the whole community until his retirement in 1953. His philosophy was to influence the attitude to education, training and employment at the UAM mission stations established subsequently at Warburton Ranges and Cosmo Newbery.

The Ngaanyatjarra world

In this section I provide a cultural overview of the Ngaanyatjarra world prior to contact with European society. I then turn to a discussion on the impact on the Ngaanyatjarra of the mission at Warburton Ranges.

According to anthropologist David Brooks, in pre-contact times there were perhaps 2000 Ngaanyatjarra people, widely dispersed over a large region of the Great Victoria Desert.²⁶³ Brooks suggests that the Ngaanyatjarra probably spent most of their time in bands of around 12–20 people and the 'tendency' was for senior men and their families to roam on their own country 'with sets of brothers usually sharing a common broad country'. Each brother would have one or two wives; the children and probably a grandparent, perhaps a widow or two and perhaps a couple of young men, who would sleep separately from the groups.²⁶⁴ Survival in the physically harsh environment of the Western Desert provided a 'subsistence challenge'.²⁶⁵ In times of rain people moved through the broader stretches of country to forage for food and other resources. In times of drought people were less mobile and exploited a tighter locus of water sources. Tonkinson describes the 'rhythm of desert life' as an 'irregularly alternating aggregation and dispersal of social groups'.²⁶⁶ Large gatherings of people would come together for ceremonial Business, usually young men's manhood-making ceremonies (now referred to as the '[Law] Business').²⁶⁷ These would take place perhaps twice a year in locations where food and water were sufficiently abundant and last only a few weeks.²⁶⁸ With the Ngaatjatjarra, Gould speculates that due to

²⁶³ (Brooks and Shaw 2003: 2–3).

²⁶⁴ Myers suggests for the Pintupi, a closely related Western Desert language group located to the north-east of the Ngaanyatjarra, that the range of movement for a family over a year was 'within an area of 3,000 square miles' (Myers 1986: 77). The Pintupi belong to the same broad Western Desert cultural bloc as the Ngaanyatjarra and speak a mutually intelligible dialect of the Western Desert family of languages. Myers' work is useful for drawing analogies between the two groups, however, there are cultural distinctions and differences deriving from the colonial encounter.

²⁶⁵ (Gould 1969; Hamilton 1979; Myers 1986).

²⁶⁶ (Tonkinson 1978b: 29).

²⁶⁷ Noticeable by its absence in this Chapter and in Chapter 7 are descriptions of, events surrounding manhood making ceremonies and the Law Business among Ngaanyatjarra adolescent males. As I describe further in the post script at the end of the Methodology in Appendix A, these aspects were deleted from the thesis at the last minute by community request. For further reading see (Myers 1986; Peterson 2000; Sackett 1978b; Tonkinson 1974).

²⁶⁸ (Brooks and Shaw 2003: 5).

the harshness of the Gibson Desert 'gatherings of more than 150 were probably uncommon'.²⁶⁹ Myers suggests that the unreliability of rainfall necessitated a 'continual interdependence' among a network of people across the Western Desert, and 'social isolation' was 'ecologically impossible'.²⁷⁰ The Ngaanyatjarra had knowledge of people and country across a wide area. Ritual and ceremony involved a complex network of relationships extant through marriage, economic exchange and the reciprocal transmission of knowledge.

In Western Desert Aboriginal culture 'a strong element of internal dynamism in the religious life' contrasts markedly with the 'dominant ideology of nonchange'.²⁷¹ Fundamental to social unity and cultural life was, and still is today, the *tjukurrpa* ('dreaming') and the Ancestral Beings who created the landscape enacted in the annual performance of ceremonies that reproduce the Ancestral Beings' original acts:

The Dreaming Beings also created the animals and plants which provided food for people; and they gave names to these animals and plants and to all things. They taught people how to hunt, gather, cook and share out the various types of food; as well as how to make implements such as spears, water carrying vessels and the like. They laid down the roles to be played by people, men and women in the course of their life cycles, and the methods by which the successive transformations through the life cycle were to be achieved. They established different groupings within the body corporate of Ngaanyatjarra people as well as various roles to facilitate the conduct of an orderly life in the sphere of material production and to govern social relationships generally. All these creative acts which the Dreaming Beings performed were sacred (*miirl-miirlpa* or *mayaka*); and as well as performing them for the first time they taught the people to regularly reproduce their original acts, and thereby to keep the energising sacredness alive.²⁷²

For the Ngaanyatjarra, country is 'first and foremost' a matter of *tjukurrpa* relationships:

It is in and through the cycle of sacred creation, which was initiated by the Dreaming Beings and continued through the generations by living people, that Ngaanyatjarra people's common relationship to the land is constituted and maintained. This relationship, which has spiritual and emotional dimensions, and entails responsibilities and obligations as well as rights and interest, is in a sense the birthright or inheritance of all Ngaanyatjarra people.²⁷³

An 'idiom of human relatedness' is applied to all the 'creative products of the Dreaming Beings, to the living beings which *yamangu* use for food and to the country itself'.²⁷⁴ Immense 'social value' continues to be placed on 'relatedness with others' in the Western Desert.²⁷⁵ In the Ngaanyatjarra world social 'relatedness' is to *tjarntupirti* or *yungarrapirti* ('relations') and the social system organised through the Law. During the annual Law Business ceremonial activity kin across the Western Desert are tied into a system of

²⁶⁹ (Gould 1969: 102–3).

²⁷⁰ (Myers 1986: 27).

²⁷¹ (Tonkinson 1978b: 19). See also (Myers 1986).

²⁷² (Brooks 2002c: 12).

²⁷³ (Brooks 2002c: 18).

²⁷⁴ (Brooks 2002c: 14).

²⁷⁵ (Myers 1986: 107–9).

reciprocal rights and obligations where the Law provides a set of socially sanctioned norms of conduct or rules that govern behaviour in the broader moral community.²⁷⁶

The flouting of any kind of rule threatened not only the matter immediately covered by the rule, but the fragility of the whole fragile edifice. And it *was* fragile, because in the absence of institutionalised authority the whole way of life could only be maintained through the support of the individual.²⁷⁷

The breaking of rules resulted in retribution through spearing or *warrmarla* – ‘revenge parties’.²⁷⁸ This regulatory capacity was further reinforced by fear of the dark, sorcery and supernatural forces and elders carried authority.

Still today, undergirding all social practice, is the normative continuity of the kinship system at a symbolic level and as a framework of protocols that governs relatedness between affinal and consanguinal kin. Distinctive features of relatedness are found among consanguinal or ‘close’ kin and similar kin terms are applied to affinal or ‘distant’ kin (Fig. 2.2).²⁷⁹ Overall ‘relatedness’ between Ngaanyatjarra people (and across the broader Western Desert) is held together by the underpinning structure of a classificatory section system.²⁸⁰ The six section system of the Ngaanyatjarra is of the Aluridja type and acts as a ‘guide’ to protocol in sorry camps, funerals, in the structure of some ceremonies, and as a framework for marriage options.²⁸¹ In this system:

A *Tjarurru* man can marry either a *Panaka* or a *Yiparrka* woman (and has *Purungu* children).

A *Purungu* man can marry either a *Karimarra* or *Milangka* woman (and has *Tjarurru* children).

Whereas,

A *Panaka* man can only marry a *Tjarurru* woman (and has *Karimarra* children).

A *Karimarra* man can only marry a *Purungu* woman (and has *Panaka* children).

A *Yiparrka* man marries a *Tjarurru* woman (and has *Milangka* children).

A *Milangka* man marries a *Purungu* woman (and has *Yiparrka* children).²⁸²

The widespread ‘rule’ in the Western Desert was for marriage to ‘occur at a (genealogical and geographical) distance’.²⁸³ The diagram in Fig. 2.3 exemplifies the marriage options for a *Panaka*/*Yiparrka* man.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁶ See (Stanner 1987 [1956]).

²⁷⁷ (Brooks and Shaw 2003: 18).

²⁷⁸ *Warrmarla* were revenge party ‘soldier’ men who came in groups to raid or take wives and would make themselves black with charcoal and place sticks with white wood shavings on them in their headbands (Glass and Hackett 2003: 502). ‘Revenge’ parties can be of two types: the secret travel-by-night ‘featherfeet’ (*tjina karrpilpa*); and the more open confrontational ‘warrior groups’ (*warrmarla*) (Brooks and Shaw 2003). Rose claims that revenge killings were a ‘sanction against individuals transgressing the common good’ and ‘by such means the Law has enabled the smooth running of the society on a large scale, and its reproduction through deep time’ (Rose 2001: 28). See also a ‘revenge expedition’ narrative by Thomas Murray in Glass and Hackett’s edited collection of Ngaanyatjarra texts (Glass and Hackett 1979 [1969]).

²⁷⁹ (Glass 2006: 132).

²⁸⁰ See (Goddard 1983; Hamilton 1979; Myers 1986) for discussions of the kinship and section systems in the Western Desert. For other Australian Aboriginal contexts see (Heath et al. 1982).

²⁸¹ (Brooks 2002b: 35-6). This shorthand system for relatedness is often referred to as ‘skin names’.

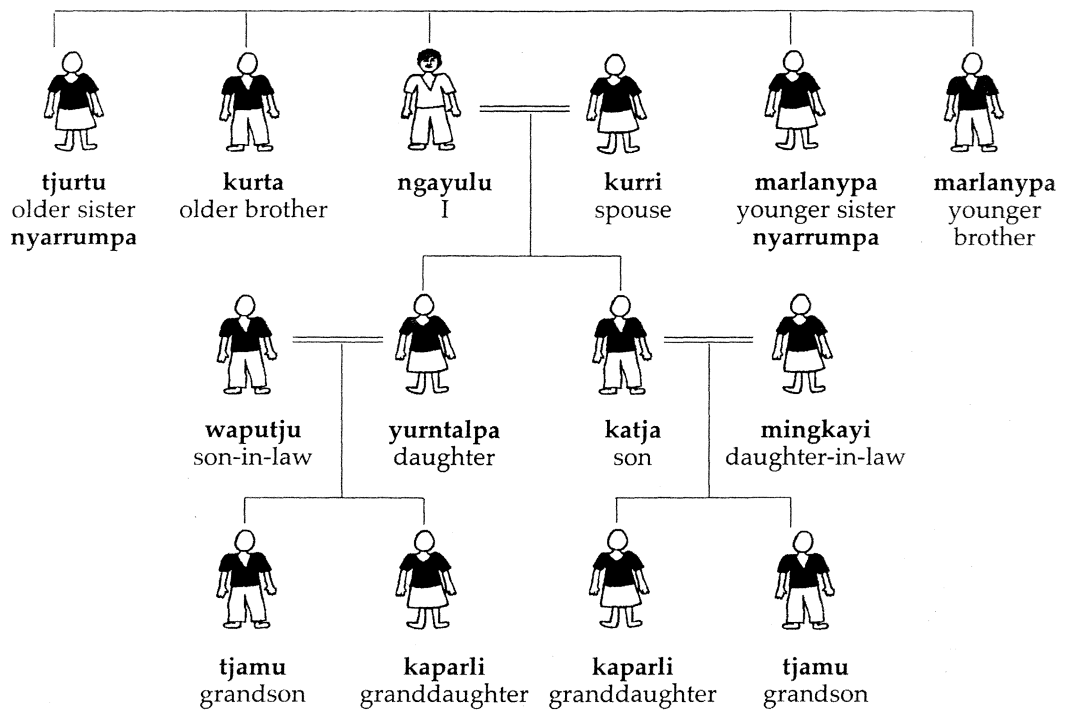
²⁸² See (Brooks 2002b; Glass 1997).

²⁸³ (Brooks 2002a: 37).

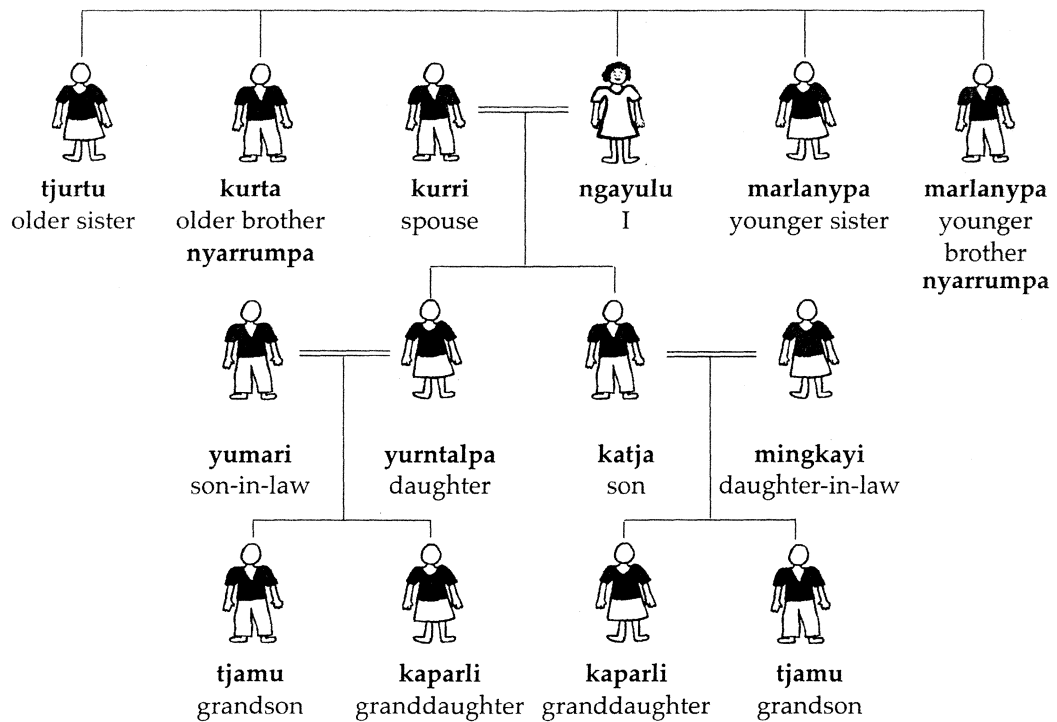
²⁸⁴ (Glass 2006: 135).

Fig. 2.2 Ngaanyatjarra relationship terms

Family tree showing a man and his children and grandchildren

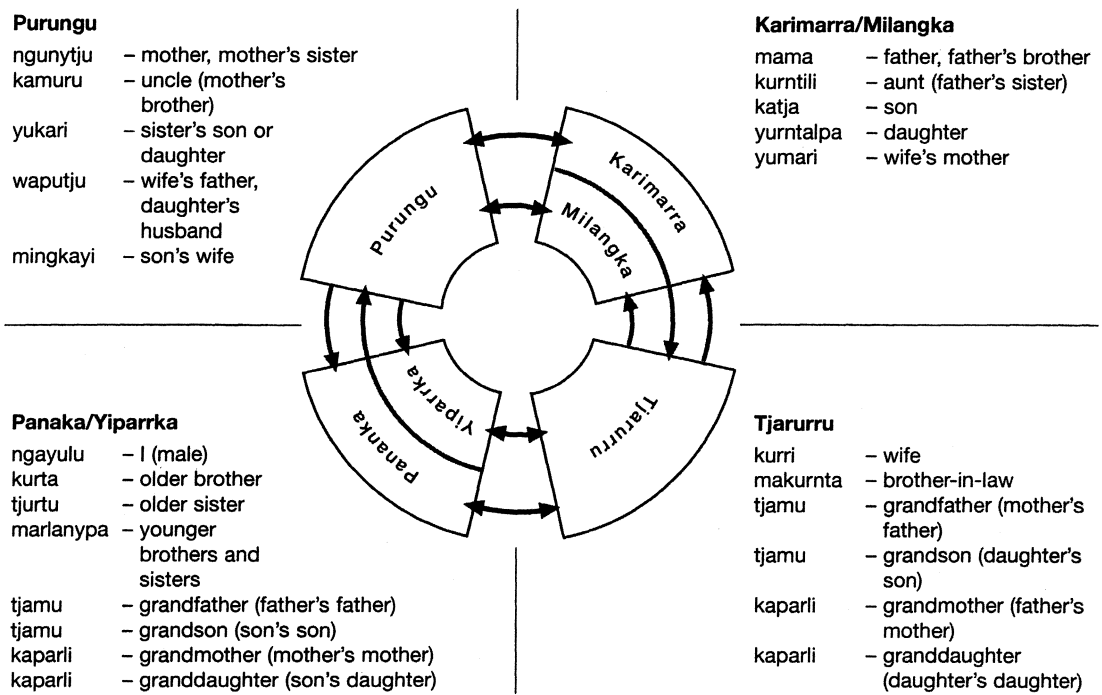


Family tree showing a woman and her children and grandchildren



Source: Ngaanyatjarra Learner's Guide (Glass 2006).

Fig. 2.3 The Ngaanyatjarra section system for a Panaka/Yiparrka male (ego)



Source: Ngaanyatjarra Learner's Guide (Glass 2006).

The Ngaanyatjarra also have a horizontal moiety system. The group is divided into two parts based on sets of alternating generations. This generational moiety division ‘unites all the people of one set of alternating generations and places them in opposition to the people of the other set’. As Brooks further notes ‘[n]ot only does each person inalienably belong, from birth, to one ‘side’ or the other, but ceremony grounds, ceremonial activity and sacred sites ‘are spatially divided into two parts on this basis’.²⁸⁵ Generational moiety division is denoted by the paired terms:

Tjirntulukultul(pa)—the ‘sun side’ social grouping consisting of *Tjarurru*, *Panaka*, *Yiparrka*

Ngumpalurrungkatja—the ‘shade side’ social grouping consisting of the *Karimarra*, *Milangka*, *Purungu*²⁸⁶

From a Western Desert perspective the cyclic nature of the system means that grandkin are in the same generational moiety as one’s own generation, and one’s children and one’s parents are in the opposite generational division. This is emphasised in the use of reciprocal kin terms for alternating generations:

tjamu > *mama* > *tjamu*

grandfather > father > grandson

kaparli > *ngumytju* > *kaparli*

grandmother > mother > grandmother

Generational moiety division remain central to the ‘social and symbolic order’ of Ngaanyatjarra life and is deeply embedded in cultural processes.²⁸⁷

In the traditional maturational cycle, skill in hunting or gathering was a survival requirement for both males and females.²⁸⁸ As children grew, gender divisions increased and by the age of about ten, male and female activity started to diverge. Initially, the new couple would hunt together until childbearing commenced and the division of labour bifurcated. When mothers were foraging, toddlers would commonly be left in the camp with grandmothers or older siblings, so mobility was not hindered. Over time mothers became more knowledgeable as the grandmother generation, in turn, transmitted ceremonial knowledge and stories. With the onset of puberty boys generally spent more time with older brothers, uncles, grandfathers, camping in the *tawarra* (‘male camp’) and travelling on *yantjaki* (‘overnight hunting trips’) with the *wati* (‘men’). In this way adolescent males learned to be mature hunters and how to cook and share meat with kin in the proper

²⁸⁵ (Brooks 2002b: 39–41). See also (Hamilton 1979: 270; Douglas 1976).

²⁸⁶ (Glass and Hackett 2003: 236).

²⁸⁷ (Brooks 2002b: 39–41).

²⁸⁸ The maturation cycles of males and females has been described in the Western Desert literature. See (Gould 1969; Hamilton 1979; Myers 1986; Tonkinson 1978b).

way.²⁸⁹ The maturation cycle for males also incorporates a ceremonial transition, or rite of passage, from childhood into manhood.

My purpose in briefly outlining Ngaanyatjarra cultural processes has been to signal what Sahlins terms the 'structures of the long run' or what Ortner terms 'cultural schemas',

...organized schemas for enacting (culturally typical) relations and situations' often taking on 'an ordering function, achieving a degree of generality and transferability across a range of somewhat disparate social situations'.²⁹⁰

A recursive theme throughout the thesis is the enduring influence of these deeply embedded processes in contemporary everyday practice.

Warburton Ranges Mission

As explained earlier, the political philosophy of caste criteria that prevailed in the 1930s, and into the 1940s, determined that tribal full-blood Aboriginal people were better left alone. Consequently, the Ngaanyatjarra had remained virtually unaffected by the protectionist policy that had such a deleterious impact on Aborigines in the Eastern Goldfields. This philosophy, and an antipathy that had developed between Neville and Schenk, underpinned the circumstances of the establishment of the UAM mission at Warburton Ranges in 1934.²⁹¹ This philosophy was also perpetuated by Neville's successor, Commissioner F.I. Bray, who remained 'unwilling to encourage the breaking up of tribal families for the purpose of education...

...Young girls from Warburton Ranges are better off in their country, especially as no doubt they are betrothed tribally...natives should live their tribal lives as far as possible. They are happy tribally and what does it matter if they are lazy or if they indulge in corroborees as long as no obnoxious rites are practiced.²⁹²

By the early 1930s, other than a few ventures west by foot, and occasional encounters with explorers, prospectors and doggers, Ngaanyatjarra people remained virtually unscathed by the colonial encounter by virtue of their remoteness.²⁹³ When the UAM sought to expand

²⁸⁹ (Gould 1969: 16–18).

²⁹⁰ (Sahlins 1981: 9; Ortner 1989: 60).

²⁹¹ After Elkin's visit to the Goldfields region in the 1930s he lobbied to formalise a 'buffer zone' around the Central Reserve to preserve and protect 'tribal' Aborigines. Initially, this was consistent with Neville's determination to leave full-bloods alone, but countered Schenk's plan to expand into the Warburton Ranges area. Ultimately, the anthropological interest in preserving traditional culture departed from Neville's determination to leave full-bloods alone (Biskup 1973; O'Malley 1994) The initial 'spirit of cooperation' between Neville and the UAM broke down due to the rapid growth of the UAM (Biskup 1973: 138) and the worsening relationship between Schenk and Neville in particular. When in 1937 Schenk asked for permission to open a mission at Cosmo Newbery he was refused (Biskup 1973: 139) and the DNA opened a ration depot at Cosmo 'to thwart Schenk's "imperialist" designs' (Biskup 1973: 185).

²⁹² WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 18/6/42 Bray to Schenk*.

²⁹³ The first explorer in the Warburton area was William Gosse in 1873, Ernest Giles and his party spent some eight months in the region in 1873–74 (Giles 1995 [1899]) followed by Forrest in 1874, Tietkins in 1891 and Carnegie in the 1870s (Carnegie 1982 [1898]). With the rush to the Goldfields and the development of pastoral industry around Laverton, occasional ventures into Ngaanyatjarra country were made by prospectors, surveyors and doggers. Surveyors Talbot and Clarke came through in 1916 and in 1931 government surveyors Paine and Barclay traversed a route from near Laverton

its evangelising further east into the heart of the desert country, this was done contrary to Neville's wishes.²⁹⁴ The UAM made exploratory camel trips out into the West Australian section of the Central Aboriginal Reserve in 1933.²⁹⁵ A mission was established in 1934 by missionaries Will and Iris Wade and others at *Mirlirrijarra* (Old Well) some 560 kilometres east of Laverton.²⁹⁶ The Wades were to remain at Warburton Ranges until 1958. The continuity of the Wades and other missionaries was to prove an important factor in determining the nature of the Ngaanyatjarra encounter with the new world.

The mission generation

Neville's punitive response after Warburton Ranges Mission was established against his wishes was to deny support. With the government ceding financial responsibility, the new mission was initially left to their own resources.²⁹⁷ This put pressure on the fledgling mission to be self-sufficient; as a consequence, the trading of rations in exchange for dingo scalps was a critical early endeavour.²⁹⁸ Commodities were also exchanged for evangelisation: when scalps were brought in the missionaries gave out a portions of the rations and 'the balance of the goods' was received only after a gospel lesson.²⁹⁹ In 1947 payment for a scalp was 10lb flour, ½ lb sugar, ½ lb tea and a pair of trousers or a dress.³⁰⁰ After Middleton's appointment as Commissioner, missions across WA started to be

to Warburton (Mollenhauer 2002: 65). Harry Lasseter made prospecting trips to the Peterman Ranges area further east in 1897 and 1931 (Idriess 1933). After 1933, the Western Australian section of the Central Reserve was declared an 'Aboriginal Reserve' and this 'buffer zone' helped restrict access by non-Aboriginals and provided the Ngaanyatjarra with a form of protection from outsider incursions for longer than in other parts of remote Australia. For example, the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara in South Australia, due to their proximity to the camel and rail route north to Alice Springs, had greater exposure to doggers collecting dingo scalps for the bounty, and to pastoralists. By the 1930s several cattle stations had been established west of this railway line, including Kenmore Park Station only some 20 miles east of Ernabella (Hilliard 1968: 95–97). Nevertheless, reports of violence against the Warburton Aborigines were noted (*United Aborigines Messenger* June 1930: 11).

²⁹⁴ WA SRO Acc 993 1220/61 17/762—*From CNW to MNW summary of history of Warburton Ranges Mission.*

²⁹⁵ Will Wade and Fred Jackson first made contact with Ngaanyatjarra people in the Warburton Ranges area in 1933 at *Mirlirrijarra* or 'Old Well', on Elder Creek a short distance from the present location of Warburton community (Douglas 1978). An exploratory expedition had earlier been made to Central Australia by Wade and R. M Williams (Williams 1998).

²⁹⁶ The early days missionaries included: Iris and Will Wade (1934–1958), Harry and Ethel Lupton (Warburton from 1935, then Cosmo in the mid-1950s); Jack Johnson (1933–34); Fred Jackson and Lindsay Lovick (based at Mt Margaret but at Warburton at various times 1933>); Charles and Bertha Payne (early 1940s); Claude (1947>) and Dora Cotterill (nee Quinn) (1950>) (Warburton then Cosmo); Ed and Edna Nash (1946>); Roy and Rita Mitchell (1939>); Syd Williams (1936, then 1951>) with Leila Williams; Albert Brinkworth (1938); Henry & Dora Wakerley (mid 1940s); Brian Morcombe (1940); Roy & Melville Nash (1947); Sam Mollenhauer (1951–1955), then with Heather Mollenhauer (1964–1968); Mr and Mrs J.M. Gurrier-Jones (1946–1955); Keith and Betty Wells (1956–1961); Noel and Olive Blyth (1954–1963) (originally based at Cosmo Newbery); Ken and May Siggs (1955–1963), Harrie and Marion Green (1955>), Wallace and Claire Mack (1950s); Charles and Beryl Lanham (1955>); Dick and Dorothy Hawthorn (1962>); Merv and Joy Young (1958>); Bruce Rowe (1955>); and John Lydon (1960s). (Sam Mollenhauer and Amee Glass pers. comm. 2007).

²⁹⁷ WA SRO ACC 993 1220/61 17/762—*From CNW to MNW summary of history of Warburton Ranges mission.*

²⁹⁸ In 1925 the government had introduced a system to protect the sheep industry from marauding dogs, with the Vermin Board then paying the Mission a bounty of 5 shillings per scalp for dingo scalps and in later years up to a pound each (Morgan 1986). Trading with Aboriginal people for dingo scalps was a crucial source of income at both Mt Margaret and Warburton Ranges missions. The missionaries took advantage of this economic exchange in order to purchase food and other resources that could be used both as payment for scalps collected by Aboriginal people, and in exchange for Aboriginal labour on Missions where there was no cash economy. Dingo scalps from Warburton were taken to Laverton Shire Council several times a year, a small bounty was paid for each scalp and money went into purchasing mission supplies (Mollenhauer 2002 69).

²⁹⁹ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 21/4/48 Bisley to CNA re. visit to Warburton 1947.*

subsidised.³⁰¹ Milnes considers that Middleton thought it was cheaper for missions to support Aboriginal education than the government and this led to his decision to begin subsidising missions in 1948.³⁰² In 1950, instructions were issued for the rationing of 'indigent natives' at Warburton on the understanding that 'the issue of rations to able bodied natives will be dependent on the first consideration that employment is not available'.³⁰³ Bulk rationing of blankets, clothing and food for around 20 adults and up to 100 children continued well into the 1960s. However rationing was clearly not enough to support the population numbers reported at the mission (Appendix E—Table AE.1) so families continued to return to country and live off the land.

In the first group to make contact with the missionaries were the families of *Katherine* and *Arthur* (Family B), *Mary*, *Harold* and *Silas* (Family C), *Rosie* (Family D), *Clem* and *Samson* (Family F), and *Una* and *Maisie* (Family H).³⁰⁴ The first group of children to be left with the missionaries for schooling included: *Una's* father (Family H), *Silas's* father (Family C), *Jim's* mother (Family I), *Patricia's* mother (Family E) and *Clifford's* mother (Family J). *Katherine*, *Arthur* (Family B), *Mary* (Family C), *Joshua* (Family G), *Rosie*, *Daphne* (Family D) and *Molly* (Family F) were also among the first generation to be left with the missionaries. Schooling soon commenced at Old Well. In 1936 Wade reported: 'the readiness with which the natives are leaving their children in the care of the missionaries and already 22 were at the Mission' (Fig. 2.4) and by 1937 ten boys and ten girls under 16 were attending school daily.³⁰⁵ In 1936 the Old Well site comprised the Wades' corrugated iron room and two tents, one for the Luptons and the other serving as a school, dormitory and children's eating area.³⁰⁶ In 1936 the mission moved away from the flood-prone creek to a permanent site on higher ground (and the present location of Warburton community). A girl's

³⁰⁰ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 21/4/48 Bisley to CNA re. visit to Warburton 1947.*

³⁰¹ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters (1942–1956) 27/9/56 letter from Middleton CNW to Editor United Aborigines Messenger.*

In 1942, the Federal Aborigines Missions Board of the Churches of Christ had started a children's mission at Norseman (Biskup 1973: 199). With Middleton's decision to fund missions a further eleven new missions were established across WA between 1948 and 1955. This removed the dominance of the UAM in the Goldfields: Cundeelee Mission (formerly a ration depot) started under the Australian Aborigines Evangelical Mission; Mogumber Mission (formerly Moore River Settlement) under the Methodist Overseas Missionary Society and Kurrawang Native Mission under the Brethren Assemblies of Australia were both established in 1952. In 1954 Wongutha Mission Training Farm was started by Rodolphe Schenk's son R. W. Schenk, under the Council of Wongutha Mission Training Farm Inc. the Seventh Day Adventists opened Karalundi Mission, near Meekatharra, and established a mission in Wiluna in 1955 (Milnes 1987: 311).

³⁰² (Milnes 1987: 310–311).

³⁰³ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 30/5/50 CNA to D/Director of Rationing.*

³⁰⁴ See (Douglas 1978).

³⁰⁵ Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines 1936:17; WA SRO Acc 993 1220/61 17/762—*From CNW to MNW summary of history of Warburton Ranges Mission.*

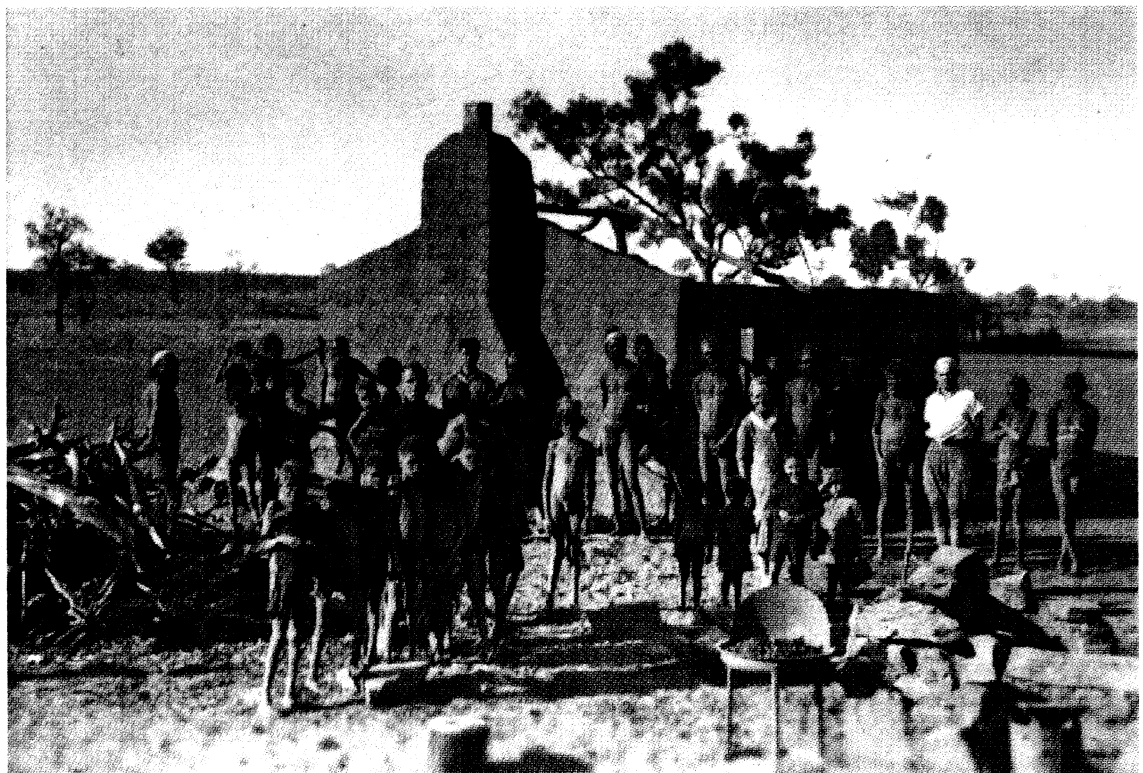
³⁰⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1937: 9. The *United Aborigines Messenger* newsletter was the 'organ' of the UAM. It was used to disseminate claims of achievement and success from mission endeavours throughout Australia and to assist in raising finances for the UAM missions. The mission relied heavily on donations from church groups and others to supplement clothing, building and other needs.

Fig. 2.4 First group of school children, Warburton Ranges Mission, 1936



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Fig. 2.5 Early mud brick construction, Old Well, Warburton Ranges Mission



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Fig. 2.6 Men employed in building projects, Warburton Ranges Mission 1949



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Fig. 2.7 Christian meeting, Warburton Ranges Mission 1939



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dormitory was built first, followed by a boy's dormitory, to house the first generation of school children in what became known as the 'Baker Home'.³⁰⁷

The early aims of the missionaries were 'to preach the gospel, to check polygamy and cruel customs in regard to young men in their corroborees; also to help to stop degrading contacts with whites'.³⁰⁸ Despite these intentions it was acknowledged that in the early days, life 'was so bogged down by the difficulty of establishing the essentials of life that the real work of making disciples was being neglected'.³⁰⁹ Few families actually settled in the mission in its rudimentary beginnings. Some camped nearby when dingo scalps were brought in to exchange for goods, but most families still roamed in what Brooks terms the 'hinterland'—the desert expanse between Warburton Ranges Mission in the west and Ernabella Mission in the east.³¹⁰

Over time, an interdependency grew between the Ngaanyatjarra and the missionaries, illustrated for instance, by the mission reliance on *kuka* ('bush meat') to feed children in the Baker Home up until the 1950s, as Una describes:

I was born here that's why they been put me in the Home because, long time, they used to wait for truck to bring food in. But not much, you know, they was sort of waiting. There was plenty of kangaroos, and all that. But it must have been a little bit hard for them...people use to come out, that's first thing in the morning, on maybe 5 o'clock, because the mission had to give the gun out to bring some meat for the mission. So they get lucky sometimes, some miss out. Someone comes in early, they take off and bring some *kuka* back, that's for lunch.

In addition, with no government subsidies to assist with building, some adults in the early contact group provided labour in exchange for rations and so the infrastructure of the mission developed (Fig. 2.5).

Following along the well-tried and proven ways of Mr Schenk and his family at Mt Margaret, the early missionaries at Warburton introduced basic employment. Men helped to make mud bricks while women were taught elementary needlework by Mrs Wade and her fellow workers.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1938; *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1940.

³⁰⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1935: 3.

³⁰⁹ *United Aborigines Messenger* October/November 1991: 10.

³¹⁰ Ernabella Mission was established in 1937 by Charles Duguid and the Presbyterian Board of Missions. The missionaries at Ernabella, like their Warburton counterparts, had a relatively congenial relationship with the Pitjantjatjara and believed in education and training. A school commenced in 1940 and a grammatical description of Pitjantjatjara was published soon after (Trudinger 1943) to support the vernacular literacy programme in the school (Hilliard 1968). The two missions shared some similar characteristics as both were located on traditional country and Aboriginal people were not relocated to the mission, although no dormitory system was established at Ernabella. During the 'mission time' speakers of the eastern dialect Pitjantjatjara intermittently spent time in the west at the Warburton Ranges Mission, and likewise, speakers of the western dialect Ngaanyatjarra spent intermittent periods at Ernabella Mission in South Australia. A craft employment initiative for the women of Ernabella Mission in 1948 was inspired by a visit from M. M. Bennett (Hilliard 1968) and has continued up to the present at Ernabella Arts (Partos 1998). Bennett was friends with Charles and Phyllis Duguid as they were allies in the campaign for the advancement of Aboriginal people throughout the 1930s and 1940s (Holland 2005).

³¹¹ (Mollenhauer 2002: 69).

After 1945, with the establishment of a garden and the introduction of sheep, goats and cows, farm-related training and employment ensued. Between 1947–1957 men were also employed hewing and carting stone for building work (Fig. 2.6) and women were preparing meals, baking bread, sewing and mending clothes for children in the Home.³¹²

Why did families in the early days of the Warburton Ranges Mission leave their children to be cared for by these emissaries from an alien cultural world? The early days of the mission coincided with the 1930s drought and this may have attracted large numbers to the mission with an expectation that food could be found.³¹³ The extent to which coercion accounted for parents leaving their children at the mission has been explored and evidence of some parental resistance is noted.³¹⁴ In correspondence from the Minister in 1940, allegations were made that ‘native children are retained at the mission as a means of securing the services of the parents in obtaining dog scalps’.³¹⁵ Given the scarcity of resources in the early days this allegation may have had some veracity.

Ngaanyatjarra accounts are, however, generally positive and give agency to Ngaanyatjarra people’s comprehension of the changes they were encountering. A man who was placed in the Home in the 1930s recalls:

[W]hen I was a little boy...my mother and father...asked the missionary if they could look after me and they said: ‘Yes, we’ll look after him’. I remember my mother said to me, said to that *piranypa* (white people), in language she said: ‘*Yuma, tjiiji ngaanya kanyila purlkala nyama*’. That means: ‘Look after this little boy and see how he gets on’. She said that, I still remember that.³¹⁶

Silas perceives that families left their children in the Home in exchange for food, and the missionaries ‘stepped in to look after the children’. Joshua suggests that ‘parents didn’t worry about kids because they were all safe home.’ Mary believes that her family was happy to leave her in the Home in the 1940s: ‘they been putting us in the Home, they don’t want to carry long way, walk around, he got another one, my sister’. Molly (Family F), was born in 1940, and aged about ten when her family brought her in to the mission: ‘they was happy...they just brought us and left us in the Home’. Her narrative provides an insight into how some families acted as intermediaries. They shared the symbols of the new world and encouraged bush relatives to bring their children into school: Harold’s mother ‘always

³¹² *United Aborigines Messenger* October/November 1991: 10–11.

³¹³ (Burnside 1979: 258).

³¹⁴ (Plant 1995). At the time Vicki Plant was the Ngaanyatjarra Council Native Title Unit historian.

³¹⁵ WA PRO, Acc 1674 73/5, Central Australian Reserve 17614, Letter to the Aboriginal Advisory Committee from the Minister for Native Welfare, 27/1/1940, quoted in (Plant 1995).

³¹⁶ (Plant and Viegas 2002: 41).

used to go there with a little bit of clothes for her families, she brought us back, she told us: 'Come back home, come back, *tjiiji pirni* schooling there'...

...My old uncle he came over and said: 'This girl want to go in the school.' So they put me in. It was new, we used to sleep on iron bed...I think I felt alright, we had friends there. We had 'Mary' there...our family, that's why I wasn't worried, they was in school there, those big girls. My brother was in the Home too...and my cousin...they was in school. Big mob of them...I was happy because we had a lot of family was in the Home...I had my little niece there...she was in school with her sister...Big family, I know them.

Katherine says that the Baker Home was *wahykumunu* ('really good'), but it was also 'really strict one, not allowed to go out, not allowed to swear or anything, we have to get the biggest, biggest hiding, strap, *ngarltujarra*, put us down flat, can't sit down'. Others recall being belted with a strap for wetting the bed or running away to find family out bush.

Arthur, who was born around 1949, recalls stories about '*warrmarla* time' when people were still fearing revenge killings, so children were left with the missionaries 'to stay safe':

You know at that time, maybe before my time when I was born, before it was really hard for our families to settle, like to sit down in one rockhole. They wasn't like that, [if] they stay at the rockhole, homeland, well there's trouble, maybe trouble coming up from another tribes come down and maybe do something and go back. Well at that time it was really hard for like my families to be with our parents all the time, see. That's why you know, at the same time missionaries came, you see. Missionaries came and all that *warrmarla* business you know from another tribes come in, like revenge, payback and they go back. So really hard for like when we was small, they can't carry us and run, they wanna be free, just pick up what they need.

He further recalls:

It was a good Home but we still loved our mother and father and we wanted to be with them and that's another part where you are all jammed in like, and you're forced to stay not to go. That was hard too for us, but we gradually learnt what the missionaries looking after us told us.

The dormitory experience was strange and new, but as children were brought into the Home they were not isolated. In fact, they were interacting with relatives in a way that cemented social relatedness between horizontal generational groupings in families. This generation was the first to experience the institutionalised durative aggregation of mixed gender, same age cohorts under the new moral authority of Europeans that was to radically change traditional Ngaanyatjarra life.

By drawing on Sahlins proposal that: '[p]eople act upon circumstances according to their own cultural presuppositions, the socially given categories of persons and things...[and] sediment new functional values on old categories'.³¹⁷ It is interesting to analyse these accounts of the first encounter with things European to understand in some way the Ngaanyatjarra interpretation of events. The internal trust of this small kin-based society

³¹⁷ (Sahlins 1981: 67–8).

was counterbalanced by the external distrust of *malikitja* ('strangers or persons from another place') and a fear of supernatural forces, often in the form of *warrmarla* ('revenge parties'). In Myers study of social relatedness among the Pintupi he emphasises the sentiment *kanyininpa* ('looking after' or 'caring for', expressed in Ngaanyatjarra as *kanyilku* or *miranykanyilku*) as a core value in the framework of social relatedness—and one embedded with inherent expectations of reciprocated exchange.³¹⁸ Drawing also on Myers' analytical paradigm it may be surmised that a certain trust must have emanated during the initial interaction with the missionaries. If one interprets the encounter through the Ngaanyatjarra cultural frame of social relatedness (i.e. the traditional norms of reciprocity and the obligation to look after people) it is possible to speculate that people comprehended the practices as *miranykanyilku*—that is, the missionaries' actions were grounded within social norms of 'looking after' children. When the mission was moved to the permanent location in 1936 it was to overlay an important sacred site on the *marlu* ('kangaroo') dreaming track. The traditional owners who mediated this move were to overcome their propensity to mistrust *malikitja* by allowing such an incursion on a sacred site.³¹⁹ The Ngaanyatjarra tolerated the presence of the mission on their country as the missionaries reciprocated by looking after the children.

Ngaanyatjarra accounts tend to run counter to the negative image of missionaries generally portrayed in the Australian discourse.³²⁰ Ngaanyatjarra leaders like Silas highlight the difference even between the missions at Mt Margaret and Warburton. His retrospection is suggestive of the agency that the Ngaanyatjarra people felt then (and continue to exhibit today).

Mt Margaret was a little bit different and Warburton was a little bit different...It was way out here, you know long way, way out. But they trying to use that same policy like in Mt Margaret. But some of my uncle...and my father and all them ones, they stood up and said: 'No, we don't want that thing to be done here in Warburton, we want to have that fairness and we want to have that free

³¹⁸ (Myers 1986; Myers 2002).

³¹⁹ Brooks discusses this incident in his forthcoming PhD thesis (Brooks forthcoming). He describes how the missionaries 'asked' the old men to show them a good site and they 'agonised' over the decision because it was 'serious country'. However, permission was granted.

³²⁰ Generalisations about missionaries forcibly removing children, inculcating them with Christian beliefs, and bestowing literacy through schooling are common in the contemporary discourse (Beresford 2003; van Toorn 2006). In one survey of missions in WA (including Warburton) it is concluded that: '[i]n reality, the missions constituted a new frontier, in which contact between Aboriginal and European Australia was negotiated in an ideologically charged symbiosis: Aboriginal people wanted food and supplies and the missionaries sought their souls' (Davenport et al. 2005: 164). This may have been true of Jigalong Mission, for example, established in 1945 by fundamentalist Apostolic missionaries north of Wiluna on the edge of the Western Desert. Jigalong (previously a ration depot) comprised various Aboriginal groups who had drifted towards the stations and ration depots. As the Mardu congregated at Jigalong their children were removed from the camp and placed in the dormitory for schooling. According to anthropologist Robert Tonkinson there was minimal interaction between the Mardu and the missionaries and 'a considerable amount of mutual dislike and distrust' (Tonkinson 1974: 118). While Aboriginal people may have been coerced into submission by the church, or the state; some circumstances are more nuanced and require closer analysis allowing for the possibility of a more complex dynamic between missionaries and Aboriginal groups.

time when the parents come in for Christmas holidays we want to go out with their parents for walkabout.'

At Mt Margaret, for some children of mixed descent, the parent-child relationship was severed, whereas at Warburton, continuity was mostly maintained. An exception was *May* (Family E) one of only two children of mixed descent to be removed by the state. May was removed from Warburton and taken to Mt Margaret in 1952.³²¹ Silas comments that the Mt Margaret children who were taken away 'lost their identity...that's why they talk about the stolen generation...it's sad story and that's why they live in that in-between and they angry'.

It can be surmised that by the 1930s and 1940s Ngaanyatjarra people had gleaned some comprehension of the European world outside their domain. Afterall, people had been venturing out since the 1920s and stories of the 'new world' had seeped in.³²² It has been suggested by the son of a missionary that the Ngaanyatjarra wanted to embolden their children with sufficient information to deal with this change. Brooks suggests that they took advantage of the missionaries to train their children to be the 'intermediaries'.³²³ In other words, the Ngaanyatjarra were strategically arming themselves with a new form of knowledge, that is 'getting learned' so they could competently adapt to the inevitability of the new world. As Joshua reflected: 'we learn us about God, and how to live in the future'.

Literacy, Christianity and schooling—the English experience

In this remote context the first encounters with alphabetic script may have been the incomprehensible initials and dates carved by doggers and explorers on trees and rocks.³²⁴ As time went by the strange signifying system used by Europeans was reiterated in Scriptures and school texts, and on the introduced objects of Western material culture (alphabetic script on documents, flour sacks, tins, utensils, money, etc.).

Undoubtedly the introduction of literacy by the missionaries was ideologically driven and text became imbued with a specific social purpose and cultural meaning. As early as 1934 efforts were made to communicate the Scriptures to adults by missionaries 'holding a Gospel picture roll and trying to explain the good news of God's grace and love to these needy and benighted souls' (Fig. 2.7).³²⁵ By the 1940s, however, early missionaries were concentrating on the children living in the Baker Home 'for a deeper Christian impression

³²¹ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1948: 12; (Powell and Kennedy 2005).

³²² (Stanton 1983: 161).

³²³ P. Gurrier-Jones—Interview October 2004; Brooks pers. comm. March 2005.

³²⁴ Giles and other explorers marked rocks and trees with initials and dates of their arrival (Green 1983: 50).

³²⁵ *United Aborigines Messenger* October 1973: 11.

will be left on them than on their parents'.³²⁶ It must be remembered that at this time children in the first generation at school, (and adults) were encountering both spoken and written English for the first time.

Little is known of the teaching methodology used by the untrained missionary teachers, however it can be inferred that the missionaries carried with them the Mt Margaret philosophy and expectations of the 'educability' of Aboriginal people.³²⁷ This is encapsulated in a 1935 *United Aborigines Messenger*. 'If you have the time and patience there is nothing the native child cannot be taught. The work done at Mt Margaret is evidence of this'.³²⁸ Evangelising went hand in hand with rote learning and repetition: '[t]hey are learning texts of scripture, and one girl can repeat fifteen from memory'.³²⁹ Early achievements were reported in the *Messenger*: 'eighteen scholars' aged from four and a half to twelve learning to read and write, 'with astonishing speed these early mis-shapen efforts spring with mushroom growth into well-shaped letters and figures that give promise of splendid writing' and after only two months tuition 'these little ones can read any three-lettered word quite well' and 'are equally good at figures' with boys reportedly able to copy a two-page letter:

Some of the letters, now almost perfect, give us ground for great hopes for the future of these boys, that, being able to read the Word of God, their lives may be transformed by the Holy Spirit, and with a real burning love for Christ they shall go forth and preach the glorious Gospel message to their own people in their own tongue.³³⁰

Results from a memory test in 1940 were 'most gratifying' and in 1947 the children's work was still 'going ahead splendidly'.³³¹ A contrary report suggests that tuition consisted of teaching them to 'thank Jesus for the slops they receive and sing hymns in school'.³³²

Clearly many children were placed in the care of the missionaries (see Appendix E—Table AE.1), however the length of time spent in concentrated schooling is a matter for speculation. Scant evidence indicates that many children were quite old when they commenced school, stayed intermittently over a few years and spent only the morning in lessons.³³³ A 1947 DNA inspection report notes that children stay 'for an average of three

³²⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1948: 12.

³²⁷ (Schenk 1936). Ethel Lupton was a teacher with M.M. Bennett at Mt Margaret Mission in 1935 before transferring to Warburton Ranges (Milnes 1987: 220). Untrained missionary teachers included Iris Wade, and later Dora Cotterill (nee Quinn) and Edna Nash.

³²⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* June 1935: 3.

³²⁹ *United Aborigines Messenger* June 1936: 10.

³³⁰ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1937: 9.

³³¹ *United Aborigines Messenger* April 1941: 11; *United Aborigines Messenger* January 1947: 11.

³³² WA SRO Acc 1419 23-7-3—*Missions UAM Mission Warburton Ranges. Reports Annual Inspection 22/7/47 (Report from Constable Anderson re. annual inspection of Warburton Ranges)*.

³³³ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1948: 12.

weeks and go bush for several months'.³³⁴ After the annual Christmas party families would collect their children for the summer holiday and 'come back two moon time'—a tradition established at Mt Margaret where 'parental love was regarded as sacred'.³³⁵ Arthur recalls how:

At the Christmas holiday time we go out...and our parents bring us back to school, not on the right time, but you know? Bring us anytime they coming back this way. Walking and they bring us Home here, and we go back in the Home here, and then we keep going every year, right up.

The holiday periods extended for several months, with families returning their children to the mission compound some time in the new year for schooling.

[A]n attempt is being made to give them a standard primary education when there is absolutely nothing in their prospective lives as adults to which this education can be applied. Just how successful is that attempt is open to question when it is known that they are dismissed into the bush for nearly three of the summer months each year.³³⁶

This pattern continued through to the 1960s by which stage the tradition of walking had transformed into a dependence on the missionaries transporting a comparatively sedentarised population out to windmills in a 'big Austin truck' with additional supplies of rations provided by the mission.³³⁷ Although the practice may have impacted on the continuity of schooling, it was a critical factor in the maintenance of ceremonial and physical links to kin and country and assisted in subverting the breakdown of family relationships in the mission encounter. It provided an intensive, iterative environment for maintaining Ngaanyatjarra language and absorbing the oral narratives associated with place within multigenerational family groupings.

With the benefit of hindsight, one teacher has suggested that prior to 1950 the school operated on an '*ad hoc*' basis' where 'everybody had a go' and it was only after 1950 that the school began to operate more consistently.³³⁸ Middleton's decision in 1948 to subsidise missions carried the requirement that they teach the '3 Rs' up to the age of at least 14 and provide some form of vocational training.³³⁹ In 1950 Dora Quinn assisted Edna Nash using a curriculum borrowed from Mt Margaret school.³⁴⁰ Despite improvements such as additional teaching staff and increased hours of schooling, a 1951 DNA inspection found

³³⁴ WA SRO Acc 1419 23-7-3—*Missions UAM Mission Warburton Ranges. Reports Annual Inspection 22/7/47*(Report from Constable Anderson re. annual inspection of Warburton Ranges).

³³⁵ (Marks 1960: 90).

³³⁶ Annual Report Commissioner of Native Welfare (CNW) 1957: 135.

³³⁷ (Kral and Ward 2000: 24); *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1962: 16.

³³⁸ Interview with Dora Cotterill (nee Quinn) and P. Milnes Leonora, February 1981, cited in (Milnes 1987: 379).

³³⁹ (Marks 1960: 95-6). By the late 1950s 'Native Educational Grants' were provided to the Education Department by the DNW to cover the education of Aboriginal children on a per capita basis (Milnes 1987: 393).

³⁴⁰ (Milnes 1987: 380).

80 children aged from four to fourteen inadequately accommodated. They were taught in 'a small hall' (Fig. 2.8) with poor quality teaching:

At present the whole responsibility is carried by Mrs Nash, an untrained 'natural' teacher, who by sheer determination and natural ability and with the help of correspondence lessons, received by one of the white children on the Mission, has hammered out a curriculum and evolved methods which are producing some results... These children have had about 18 months continuous schooling. For the first twelve months, they averaged about 1½ hours daily; latterly have been attending three hours daily. Six older girls and four older boys attend during the afternoon only. There are about 30 children in the six–nine group who are not able to attend school because of staff shortages... The only reading book available is Witcomb and Tombs Readers, which deal with objects and situations completely outside the range of experience of these children.³⁴¹

Nevertheless, the UAM continued portraying a positive picture:

On looking back to their effort of twelve months ago, we realised what splendid progress they had made with their schoolwork throughout the year, and how much credit was due to those who, for love of the Saviour, had so patiently sought to teach our native girls and boys.³⁴²

The timber school 'hall' was replaced by a stone building in 1952 which served as both school and church (Fig. 2.9):

Word has been received from the Warburton Ranges of the opening of the new school building to accommodate probably seventy children, all the work of the missionaries and their native helpers, built principally of stone taken from the locality... The school is furnished by desks made by Mr. Sam Mollenhauer, and they are so highly appraised that he has received encouragement to make more.³⁴³

In 1956 one commentator assessed the school at Warburton as: 'by no means adequate' with many children not commencing 'until they are ten or so years old' and completing school at about Grade IV standard.³⁴⁴ It was also noted that: 'if a good season occurs the parents are likely to take the child away from the Mission and keep it for periods of one or two years or more'. The school was also periodically left without teachers due to missionaries leaving to take up other work, and dormitories and classrooms remained overcrowded (Fig. 2.10).³⁴⁵ In retrospect it was found that the mission generation had 'limited' experience of schooling 'often less than three years'.³⁴⁶

What do the mission generation recall of their schooling experience? Molly remembers:

School was a good school because we learnt to read and write and go there in time. You can't miss out like when you got to be picked up by someone or force them to go to school.

³⁴¹ Annual Report CNA 1950; WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters (1942–1956) Oct 27–Nov 10 1951 Report A/D CNA and A/DOC Annual Inspection Report re. Warburton Ranges Mission.*

³⁴² *United Aborigines Messenger* March 1951: 9.

³⁴³ *United Aborigines Messenger* April 1952: 7.

³⁴⁴ (Grayden 1957: 26–27).

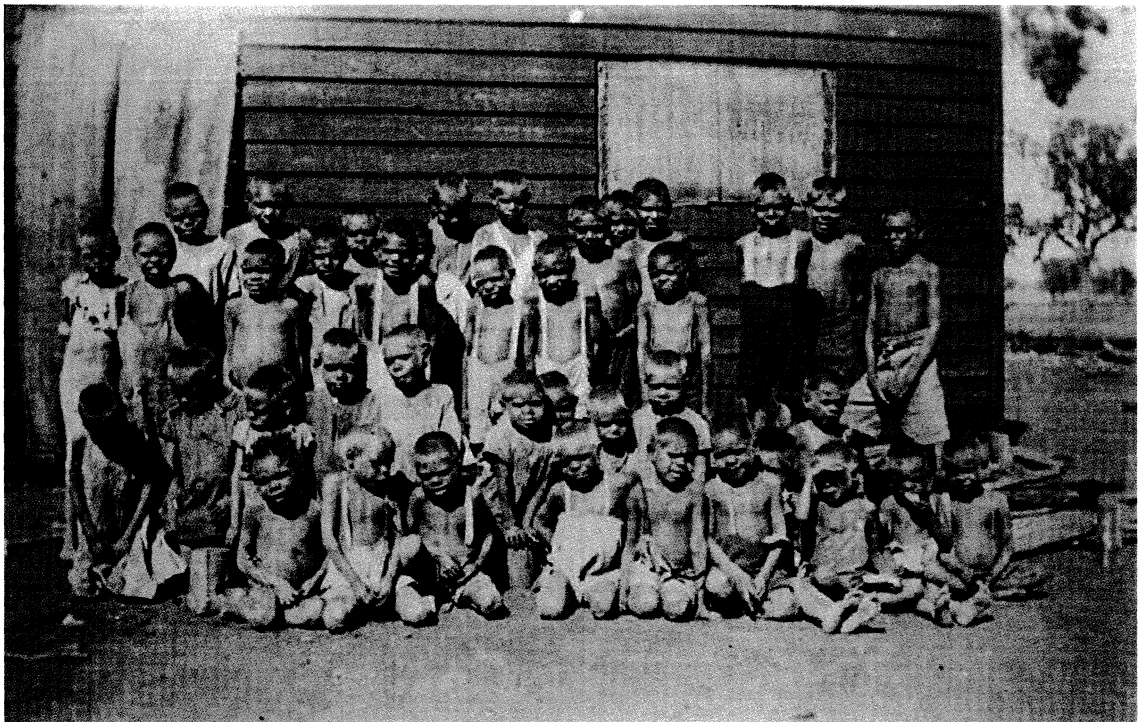
³⁴⁵ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1957: 8; WA SRO Acc 993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters 18/12/58 ADO Eastern Goldfields Inspection report Warburton Ranges Mission.*

³⁴⁶ (Green 1983: 35).

Fig. 2.8 Wooden school building, Warburton Ranges Mission—before 1952

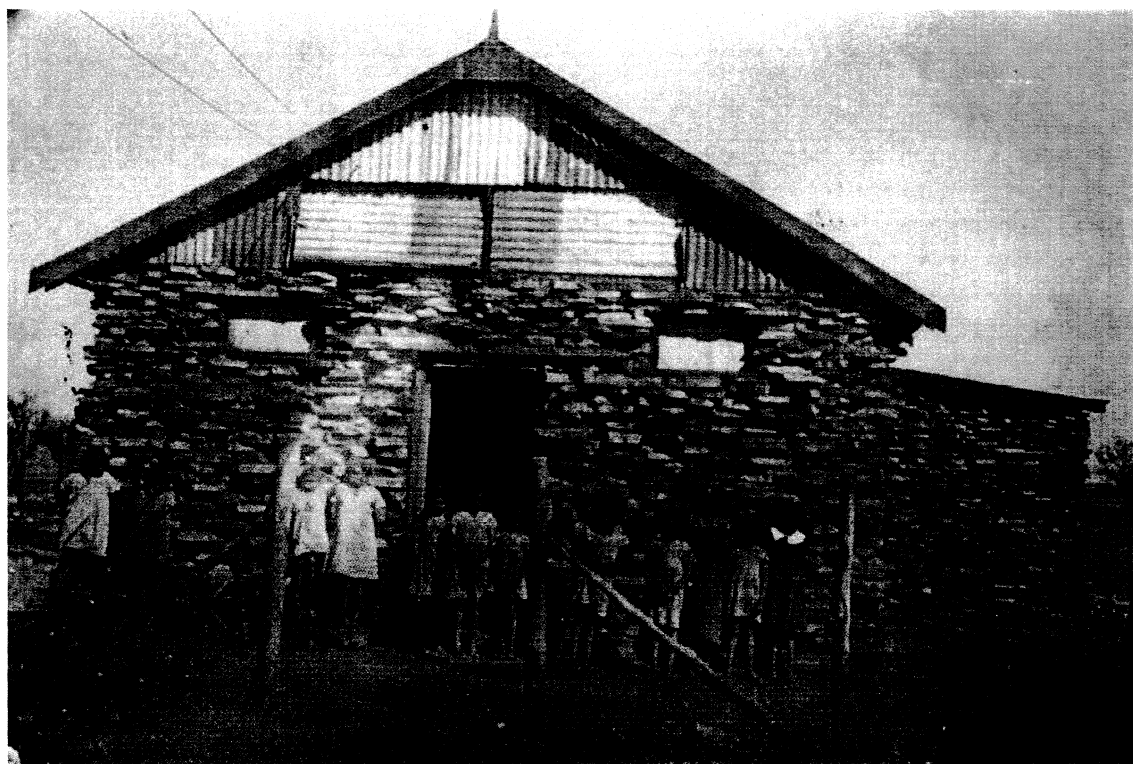


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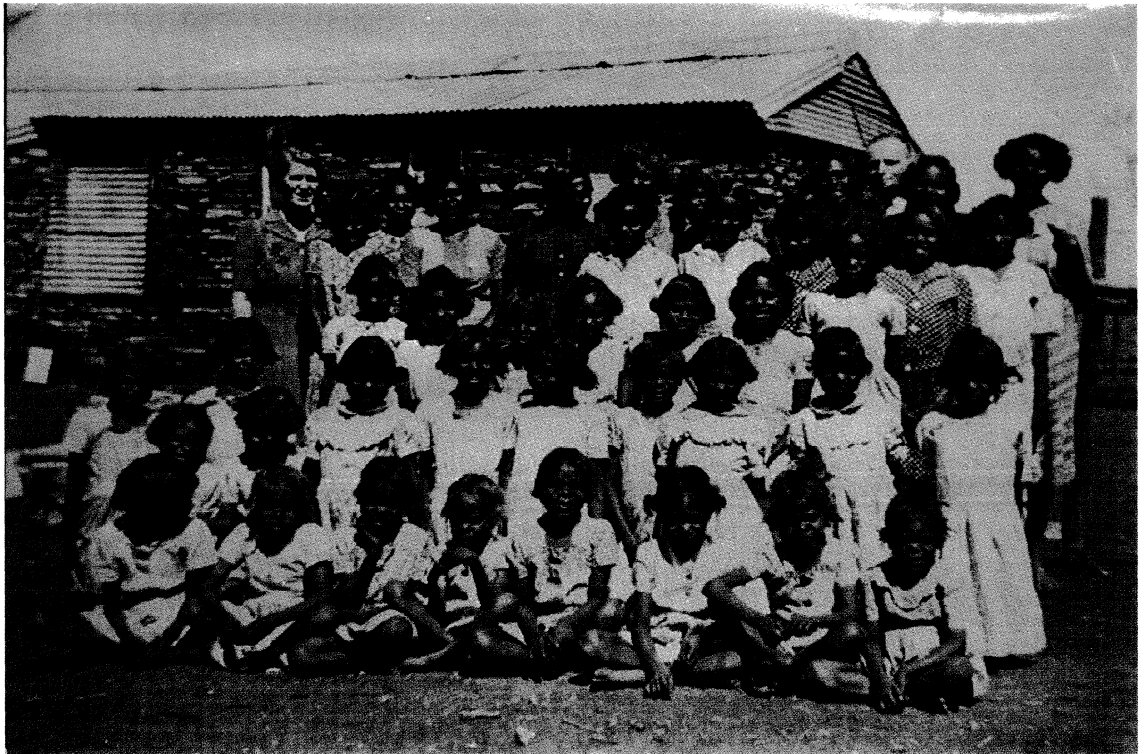
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Fig. 2.9 Stone school and church building, Warburton Ranges Mission—after 1952

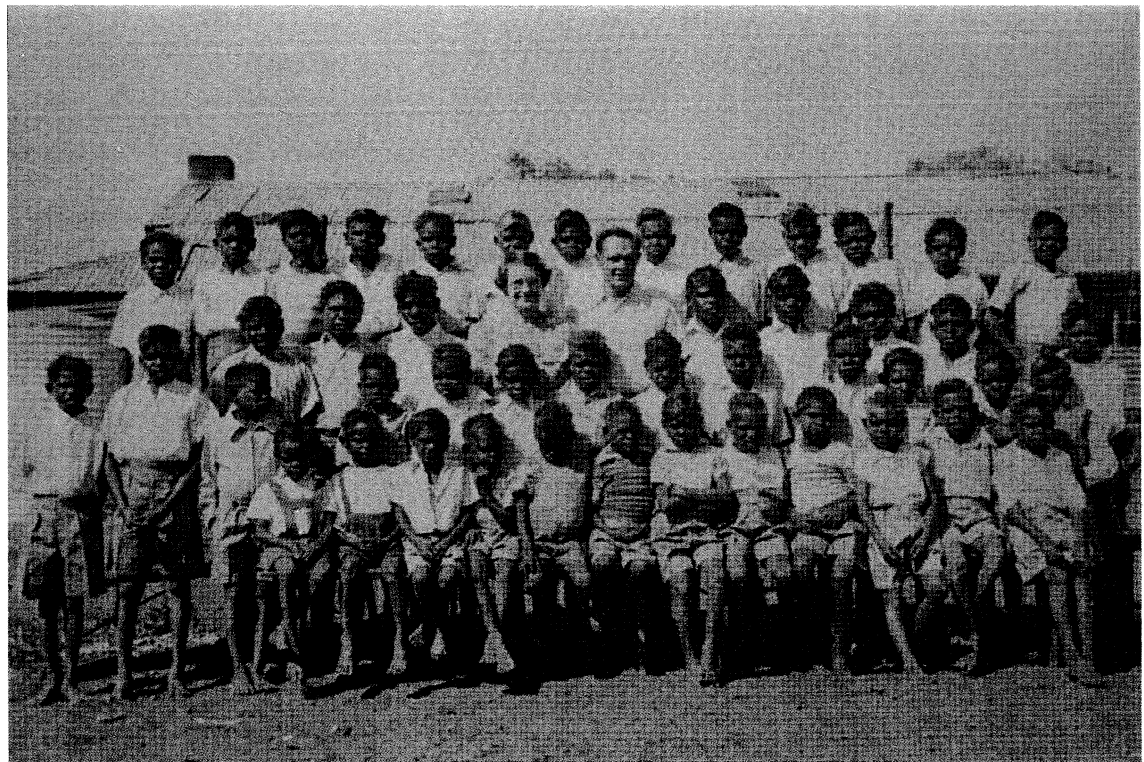


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Fig. 2.10 School girls and boys, Warburton Ranges Mission—after 1952



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Fig. 2.11 Girls from the Baker Home Dormitory, Warburton Ranges Mission 1950s



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Fig. 2.12 Dormitory girls doing chores, Warburton Ranges Mission 1950s



© Ngarmanytjatja Archive.

Other women, including Daphne recall liking school a 'little bit' but remember getting 'sad for our parents when they go out, go away'. Mary was born in 1935 and spent virtually all her childhood and adolescence in the Baker Home (Fig. 2.11). She recalls schooling first in the 'timber building':

[C]halkangka, writetamalpayi, slate, chalkangka writetamalpayi, writetamalpayi and scribblemalpayi in the paper. And when we been getting big we come to this 'nother house. Brick house. I was writing good way... I used to read. Lovely school teacher, Mrs Cotterill used to learn us and Mrs Nash long time ago when we little girl. Mrs Mitchell used to looks after us in the school, that's our teacher, Mrs Mitchell. And after, all this other rest.

Arthur was born in 1949 and remembers school in the stone building:

Still remember it, made out of slabs from Brown Range and we used to see our parents go down helping, bringing the slabs and cracking it and leveling, starting to build. So we seen that school go up. School and it was a church too you know, where people worshipped, come to church. That's what it looked like and a cement floor, and a door, a couple of windows, maybe four windows and a store room where we had books stored away, look after the books...It was the pencil and a book we had, you know them books with lines...Many story books, story books and you know that school paper book...shows you everything about what is happening that way, stories like *Waltzing Matilda*, *Once a Jolly Swagman*.

He also recalls:

At that time it was really hard to bring in kids like, into school, they didn't have proper school, like a building or something like that. But they still were going to school. The school it was not like nowadays you got a heaters and fan and a cool room you do school nowadays, this was like, it was really hard at that time, you sat down and came to school as they are, as they were, you know.

Arthur considers that the missionaries 'taught us a lot of things' like 'stories in the Bible', however he concludes:

All those things, they sounded strange to us, see. At that time I was growing and knowing: 'Oh yeah?', but we didn't know what was up there or down here and all that we was slowly learning. I really liked school too, you know, at that time, go to school...You know when I was little, young, like I said, it was really hard for me, like you can only talk when your parents are down, there, see. But that's when they, when whitefellas was looking after us. And that's why we had to like, follow up every day, every school day, and we thought at the end of a week we think it's, well to me, almost forgetting about your mother and like learning what the white people do. So we had to, I really like school, I did because at the year ahead, you know, I thought: 'Oh well I'm gonna be like this, I wanna learn'. So I like school.

To summarise, mission schooling prior to the 1950s was relatively *ad hoc* and poorly resourced, with little continuity. Few children commenced as infants, long periods were spent out bush and schooling had ceased by age fourteen. Half-day tuition was provided in English by untrained teachers and teachers were often absent. Data on the literacy levels of the mission generation school children are absent, however, it is unlikely that 'a truly useful level of reading ability' resulted under such circumstances.³⁴⁷ However, during this early period missionaries tended to stay for long periods and built up relationships. Hence there

³⁴⁷ (Graff 1987: 101).

was continuity in the process of social relatedness that made sense within the Ngaanyatjarra cultural framework and people generally reflect fondly on those days.

Habitualisation into new practices

Once children entered the Baker Home and went to school, a reshaping of normative everyday practices commenced with the imbibing of new social, spatial, temporal and linguistic habits, routines and values.

So we are seeing real changes, and our boys and girls are aiming for a higher standard of living than mere food and water...Education is closely allied to Evangelism, and it is said "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." We now have a bathroom for the children...Containing two showers and a 6ft. galvanised bath, it has already given the boys and girls a sense of ownership and privacy unknown to the native in his camp socialism. To see the clean hands and faces, the tidy hair, as the places are filled at the meal tables, is to feel a sense of achievement. Another improvement is the manufacture of beds...³⁴⁸

Sleeping on beds inside a dormitory, bathing, eating with utensils, sitting on chairs at tables, and wearing clothes became routine practices.³⁴⁹

We was all in the girl's Home and we have to get up, have a shower, go wash our faces. We used to have a bath night-time, go to sleep, get up, wash our faces, comb our hair, have breakfast, go to school.

As did routine chores after school or on Saturdays (Fig. 2.12):

We sit down and do work at the Home. Wash the plates and mop the floor. Wash the clothes with a hand, soap, cake of soap.

By the 1950s, introduced Christian temporal routines had impacted on adult practice:

Most people used to go to church, I think the main attraction was probably the rations afterwards. Each person who went to church was given a little square token usually cut out of lino as they walked out, which was exchanged at the store after the service for flour, tea, sugar and jam.³⁵⁰

Sundays provided an opportunity for families to see their children after church:

Every Sunday they tell a story to the people, they come from the camp they hear about the Lord Jesus and get you know, ticket, little ticket from the missionary for *mirrka*. We used to get a ticket and get a *mirrka* and go back *ngurraku*.

After Sunday School free time was spent playing, however if children returned late they soon learned that they would be punished. Young girls were also called upon to look after the babies at the weekly '*witjinti* day' ladies' meeting where women did craft and sewing activities, sang 'choruses' and listened to a 'simple message'.³⁵¹ Molly recalls:

³⁴⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1948: 12.

³⁴⁹ Gould describes how in the 1960s some adults remained less concerned about wearing clothes out bush, but in the mission a transformation had occurred where young men and women who had been to school had become clothes conscious (Gould 1969: 184).

³⁵⁰ (Wells 2002: 53).

³⁵¹ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1948: 12. Called '*witjinti* day' from the mission time expression '*parapiija witjinti*' – 'come around the corkwood tree, referring to the Thursday women's meeting in the mission (Glass and Hackett 2003: 530).

[When] they used to all come to the meeting, ladies, we used to look after all the little ones, kids... All the ladies used to come to the meetings because, because you know why? Because there's a scone, scones going out, they make a lot of scones for the ladies meeting where they sing, learn, same way, they preach, the missionary ladies preach.

From the 1940s adults in the first contact families who participated in direct interactions with missionaries slowly started to take on English first names (and later surnames). Prior to missionisation, people were known by 'bush names' or nick names (and often still are), or known by one's *mother's name* plus the suffix *-kurnu*, as in 'child of'. Personal names were given, but rarely used as a vocative, rather an indirect mode was preferred practice: demonstratives (e.g. *wati ngaanya* – 'this man here'), 'skin' names (e.g. 'that *Milangka*') or kin terms, (e.g. *Cliffordku kurtaku katjaku yurntalpa* – 'Clifford's older brother's son's daughter'). Kin terms—vocatives of social relatedness—are still commonly used in direct address. Naming, in effect, inserted one into a collective web of social meaning where 'almost everyone was a known person and strangers were rarely encountered' and 'the knowledge and use of names is part of the "system" itself (and not only an interface)'.³⁵²

By 1950 the mission was reportedly 'influencing' some 500–700 Aboriginal people in the Central Reserve area with the aim of uplifting them: 'to take their place as citizens of Australia, through evangelisation, education and the establishment of local industry by the natives for their own benefit'.³⁵³ In effect, however, two socio-spatial worlds were emerging. Bourdieu uses the term 'social space' to mark the spatial and social distance existing between groups of people. I use this notion to explore how the mission generation became 'habitualised' into the introduced practices, habits and attitudes and imbibed a constructed 'sense of one's place' in the newly defined 'social space' of the mission.³⁵⁴ A habitus was being constructed around speaking English, wearing clothes, eating rations (as opposed to bush foods), and the re-formed temporal and spatial rhythms. It can be construed that European conceptualisations of 'cultural, social or symbolic capital' started to accrue value in the new habitus.³⁵⁵ The imbibing of Western values by some Ngaanyatjarra people led to an emerging gap between them and the majority 'nomadics' who remained outside the mission compound. While most families remained predominantly nomadic, a few families sensed that they were 'accepted' by the missionaries—acquiring in effect, a 'sense of one's place' in the new social space. Silas recalls that some families would 'hunt for their living', however his family got food from

³⁵² (Brooks 2002b: 29; Dousset 1997: 53).

³⁵³ Annual Report CNA 1950: 29.

³⁵⁴ (Bourdieu 1989: 16–17; Berger and Luckmann 1975 [1966]). Bourdieu draws on Goffman's notion of a 'sense of one's place' (Goffman 1956).

'rashing out' (i.e. from rations, conceptualised as 'working for your living'), as he says 'the policy in that time, the people who want to work for their living, they was accepted'. Silas continues:

My families was a little bit different from the people who lived round the mission compound, when they was still in the *wiltja* and still in the bush. My families was a little bit different because they was accepted by the missionaries.

The UAM maintained a focus on work creation to build up the community infrastructure. This included firewood and post cutting, well-sinking, fencing, making mud bricks, building, cutting a new road to Laverton and pastoral work (Fig 2.13), in addition to artefact making, spinning, crocheting, knitting and sewing clothes to sell in store.³⁵⁶ The first generation of dormitory trained adolescents also worked (Fig. 2.14). By 1957, out of a population of some 198, the workforce was:

52 *unskilled*: without any dormitory training (male–25, female–27).

17 *skilled*: with some dormitory training (male–10, female–7).

17 *males were in regular employment*: six shepherds, four building in stone, three carting wood, pans etc; 1 chopping wood; two hunting game for missionaries; one store.

Females with dormitory training were also all working as domestics in the missionary's homes except one who was a 'school monitor'.³⁵⁷

Katherine worked as a domestic, and Mary and Rosie worked in the 'hospital' and some men started working as preachers.³⁵⁸ Silas' family represents the transformation of practices. His father Horace was a preacher and his parents were the first to wed in a Christian ceremony in 1950 and, atypically, by 1951 his family was living in a cottage—the first family on the mission to do so.

Una, April and Patricia's families were also 'accepted' by the mission and went to Cosmo Newbery (after it was finally handed over to the UAM in 1953) 'to do their work with the mission mob there'. With no school at Cosmo, some children were transferred to Mt Margaret for schooling.³⁵⁹ Marlon was one of these children and recalls being locked in the dormitory from six at night, to six in the morning:

I don't remember school, everything was new to me. I didn't know what I was doing there, what they put me in the Home for? It felt like in a cage, you know you put a bird in the cage. I didn't know what I was doing in there, how can I get out of that? I was locked up... We was locked up,

³⁵⁵ (Bourdieu 1989: 17).

³⁵⁶ WA SRO Acc 1419 23-7-3—*Missions UAM Mission Warburton Ranges, Reports Annual Inspection 10/8/56, Superintendent to ADO Abridged Report on year's work ending 1956*. Pastoral work included 100 goats for milk and meat, and 450–500 sheep producing wool for sale with men shearing, shepherding and slaughtering sheep on a piecework basis. Cows were brought from Cosmo Newbery and the men trained in the care and handling of cattle. This scheme was found to be unmanageable, and the herd was trucked out by the 1960s (Mollenhauer 2002).

³⁵⁷ WA SRO Acc 993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters April-May 1957 H. Moorhouse Survey Report of the Warburton District*

³⁵⁸ The first 'hospital' was an old house transported from Laverton in 1953 and a hospital opened in 1954 servicing 40–100 outpatients a day.

³⁵⁹ Annual Report CNW 1955: 27.

Fig. 2.13 Young men doing pastoral work, Warburton Ranges Mission 1950s



© Ngarmanytjatja Archive.

Fig. 2.14 Older girls from the Baker Home, Warburton Ranges Mission 1952



© Ngarmanytjatja Archive.

Fig. 2.15 Gathering outside Warburton Ranges Mission compound fence, 1950s



© Ngarnmanyjatja Archive.

Fig. 2.16 Open air church service Warburton Ranges Mission



© Ngarnmanyjatja Archive.

can't go that way, had to listen to what they tell you, if you go across and talk to the *kungka* you get a good hiding, the biggest hiding you ever got, but it never worked! All the things what they do in the mission time, you don't see that today. Mothers and fathers loved their children more than the strap, they don't want to see their kids get a hiding, they want to let'em go loose.³⁶⁰

In the Home at Mt Margaret, unlike at Warburton, speaking an Aboriginal language was forbidden. Marlon reflects on his experience:

When I went to school not allowed to talk our language, get a good hiding, smack. 'Don't talk that language here, you talk when you get out bush.' And that's why we lost a lot of our culture in the missionary time, they was taking that away from us. 'If you come to this Mission, you learn to talk English, don't talk no other language, we want to know what you're saying.' We felt no good, we was frightened all the time when we talk to each other in language, then we see any white person coming up we talk in English, 'cause if they catch you, you get a hiding. And when we came out of that mission back into our own culture it was pretty hard for us to understand what my people are saying. 'Oh you think you're a white kid.' they tell me. 'No, it's the way I was brought up.' It took me a long time to understand, I'm still coming to terms.³⁶¹

Literacy, Christianity and adults—the vernacular experience

In 1952 a new direction in UAM linguistic policy commenced when missionary linguist Wilf Douglas strove to 'break the barrier of unknown speech' and began work on Ngaanyatjarra language.³⁶² Prior to the 1950s, text *was* English and virtually no linguistic or educational attention had hitherto been paid to Ngaanyatjarra, despite an early initiative in 1941 to use newly translated Scriptures.³⁶³ Early literacy artefacts were rudimentary and scarce. Una recalls her father, who was in the first group to experience mission schooling, telling stories about using a slate and abacus at school. The initial emphasis was on 'listening to the Word' (i.e. 'hearing' rather than reading) and reiterative exposure to increasingly familiar textually mediated practices—singing and listening to Bible stories.³⁶⁴ Molly remembers that 'we use our head to sing, no hymnbook in front of us, like nowadays they have hymnbook'. The 'Good News' was shared using Gospel pictures, as Molly describes:

They used to have a Christian picture that's all, all the picture. One person stand up with all the picture, lift him up another page, another page... whitefella got to be there and a dark bloke is there, like that.

Adults in close proximity to the mission also imbibed the value that Europeans attributed to the written Word.

³⁶⁰ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

³⁶¹ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

³⁶² *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1957: 12. Wilf Douglas studied the Western Desert dialects of the Eastern Goldfields (Glass 2004). His work on Ngaanyatjarra was the first serious study of the language and built on his earlier linguistic work at Ooldea (Douglas 1955). He compiled the first grammatical analysis of Ngaanyatjarra by 1957 and developed a Roman alphabet orthography. When Douglas devised the orthography it was only the second Western Desert language, after Pitjantjatjara, to have an orthography and Douglas based the Ngaanyatjarra orthography on the Pitjantjatjara model.

³⁶³ *United Aborigines Messenger* April 1941: 11.

³⁶⁴ See (Clanchy 1979: 214–20).

Douglas was to trial the first vernacular 'Gospel recordings' at Warburton in 1953:³⁶⁵

The messages recorded on the tape were also written on paper, so that in the days following we were able to select extracts for use in meetings, and for introducing visiting natives to the Gospel. A few small portions of Scripture...were translated, and many opportunities were given to read these to the people. It was indeed a privilege and joy to be able to read God's Word to the older folk, in a language they understood. Even the children could barely contain themselves when a new portion was read to them in the familiar terms of the camp speech.³⁶⁶

After this success, the teaching of vernacular reading commenced with seven young women who were soon to leave the Home (including 'Katherine', April's mother and Patricia's mother):

Five reading Primers and much supplementary material was prepared as the lessons were given. The girls made rapid progress, and immediately started teaching the younger girls to read. By the end of five weeks they could read the five basic Primers, which had introduced them to their complete alphabet, and were able also to write simple sentences in their own language. The Primers were designed with a view to giving the young people a clearer understanding of English, also, and contained a simple English-Wangka dictionary.³⁶⁷

The primers, entitled *Wangka*, introduced the first accessible reading materials for the literacy learner and remained the main introductory vernacular primers until 1969.³⁶⁸ They achieved 'amazing results': 'young people who have been taught to read, now read to their own folk'; boys learned to read in a month and girls from the Home, now married, taught their husbands to read.³⁶⁹ It was suggested in the *Messenger* that the Lord 'revealed methods which enable "primitive" folk to become "literate" in comparatively short time' as the 'greatest incentive to learn to read is the desire to read the Bible in the mother tongue'...

...Teenage girls were able to write short stories in their own language, after five weeks, of one hour each day. Young men who had been taught to write English in school were able to write letters in their own language after only one hour's tuition. These letters contained free expression of thought, whereas letters written in English by the same men were stereotyped and uninteresting.³⁷⁰

These events were significant because they signalled the beginning of literacy in the mother tongue. A language that had previously only been heard and spoken was now signified in a written form and an awareness of the distinction between spoken and written language ensued, leading to the realisation that meaning could be exchanged in written, as well as spoken, text.³⁷¹ Moreover, through vernacular Christian texts adults were introduced to knowledge and concepts that accompanied the European vision of the world. The missionaries now devoted their attention to cultivating a literate Christian community, and

³⁶⁵ The young men who recorded these messages were Stewart Davies, Harry Simms, Tommy Simms, Stanley West and Phillip West (Plant and Viegas 2002: 57).

³⁶⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* March 1954: 9.

³⁶⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* March 1954: 9. The seven young women who were taught were Rachel Richards (nee Lane), Carol Holland (nee Simms), Esther Green (nee Richards), Lily Simms (nee McLean), Joan Mitchell (nee Davidson), Ruth Richards (nee Lane), and Linda Green (nee Smith) (Plant and Viegas 2002: 57).

³⁶⁸ (Glass 2000).

³⁶⁹ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1957: 12.

³⁷⁰ *United Aborigines Messenger* August 1958: 10.

³⁷¹ (Halliday 1985).

later an Indigenous Christian leadership. Literacy was not useful *per se*, and it can be speculated that the minority emerging Christian community used literacy as an extension of their social relatedness with the missionaries and a restricted form of literacy was developing.

Conflicting values and practices

Preachers such as Harold, Jack, and Horace acted as ‘intermediaries’ between the missionaries and the majority ‘nomadics’ who occupied the other ‘social space’ in the hinterland and the camps outside the mission compound (Fig. 2.15). It can be construed that those who took on the role of intermediaries in fact freed others to maintain Ngaanyatjarra social, cultural and linguistic practices distanced from the Christianising influence of the missionaries (Fig. 2.16). George (whom I introduce in Chapter 3) suggests that:

The missionaries they knew that we had our own culture but...they never interfered with the culture, cultural side. They did what they came out to do, tell the Good News, but people still had their ceremony business and all. Because old people like ‘Jack’ used to work, stop in the mission and ‘Silas’ old man, some old people who finished now, they used to work together and help...but they never interfered with the Law side.

Even though traditional Law was not eroded, ‘cultural conflict and identity split’ were acutely felt.³⁷² Silas explains: ‘my family, my father especially was a tribal, tribal leader, but he balance his Law in a private way, you know the tribal ways, tribal ways and the Christianity...two ways, *yarnangu* Law strong and Christian ways’.

Nevertheless, sites of conflict and resistance developed between traditional values and practices and introduced practices that emphasised countervailing moral values. Spearfights were a feature of daily life.³⁷³ The cause of many fights—represented in the *Messenger* as ‘Satanic resistance to spread of the Gospel’—centred on the mission’s determination to ‘protect’ girls from polygynous marriages with older men:³⁷⁴

Girls of about 15 years and upwards being subjected to tribal laws, are the cause of dissension between the missionaries and the camp natives. To counteract the natives’ demands for the older girls, the missionaries have surrounded the whole of the girls’ home block with a seven-foot-high fence ring-lock stock fencing. It would not deter anyone determined to enter the compound and serves mainly to irritate the natives, who compare it indignantly with the goat yard...The Mission policy for these girls appears to be to oppose tribal marriage practice and encourage them to marry young men raised in the Mission Homes. I doubt if their teaching are sufficiently implanted to counteract the weight of tribal influence.³⁷⁵

³⁷² (Brooks 2002e: 80).

³⁷³ *United Aborigines Messenger* August 1959: 10.

³⁷⁴ *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1956: 9.

³⁷⁵ Extract from Memo from CNW to MNW 21st March 1957—UAM Files NTU Archive.

The generation of girls who grew up in the Baker Home imbibed a conflicting moral response to socially sanctioned norms: ceremonial obligations requiring the fulfilment of betrothals and the traditional practice of polygyny. Teenage girls were locked in the dormitory at night and the compound was fenced in to 'protect' them from the advances of older men.³⁷⁶ Molly says she (and a few other girls) shifted to Cosmo to escape the pursuit of older men. In doing so, she asserted a challenge to traditional marriage practices:

My mother and father and all the families I left them behind in Warburton. They wasn't happy but I put my foot down and said: 'No, I'm going.' They said: 'You've gotta stop.' And I said: 'No, I've made up my mind, I want to go.' I was frightened for the man who chase me round all the time.

Once at Cosmo, she and other adolescents were set on a path of 'vocational' training:³⁷⁷

We used to do training, housework, no school...in the morning...learning to cook, then in afternoon we used to go out...start milking cow...The boys would look after the sheep, windmill, bullock cattle...I think it was a good way. Anyway I learnt my way, good way.³⁷⁸

Molly and other girls were taught to 'save money' to 'buy things you want to move out to your own house' for a 'glory box' including 'forks and knives and anything, cups, any plate and dish, tablecloth, tea towels'...

...[The missionaries] tell us you should have this, get ready. Like a mother, you know fuss over you, if you got, if you want to get married...probably your mother might do the same to you, help your relations. Help you like that, she was like a mother to us. Helping us to get ready for anything you want.

Similarly, Maisie's narrative (Family H) highlights the contestation around diverging practices. Maisie accompanied her family to the Laverton region in the early 1950s. While her father worked on stations and her mother was in the stock camp, Maisie was left at Mt Margaret, returning to her family each summer:

Like Christmas holidays, the missionaries say to us: 'Alright, you children have to wait for your mum and dad to come and pick you, pack all your things ready.' And they come and pick their child and they go and they come, we're still waiting for our parents to come and pick us up...they came in their early days car...and my uncle came and pick us up...took us to Laverton we got our toy...and had our Christmas holiday, stayed there. When the school started, went back to Mt Margaret, stayed there.

Maisie tells how the missionaries set her sights on aspirations outside the traditional paradigm. At the end of school a missionary invited her to Melbourne, 'I had my things packed up but didn't went, got married straight away...wanted to take me there for on holiday to look around, but mum and dad gave me away'. Maisie married an older husband and returned to Ngaanyatjarra country. So powerful was this new form of socialisation, however, that Maisie still regrets her thwarted aspirations. These examples are notable as

³⁷⁶ (Plant 1995).

³⁷⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1957: 11.

³⁷⁸ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

they represent early challenges to the Ngaanyatjarra *status quo* and the beginning of a changing developmental trajectory for youth.

Christianity introduced a new moral authority. It provided comprehensible parameters to explain social action and how to live in the new world. It also provided certainty in a rapidly changing world and through vernacular literacy some adults gained an intellectual continuity that has sustained them up to the present. Ultimately, however, it can be claimed that a syncretism between traditional Law and Christianity has been reached. As Silas (who like his father before him is now a Pastor) concludes:

I can't as a Christian man I can't abolish my tribal ways. I can't abolish it. I can't throw them away. Because you know without the culture we just nobody, you know. I'm nobody without a culture. Because you know some of my people went to Mt Margaret and Laverton and all that you know, they lost that, lost their traditional way of living.

The westerly drift

Thus far I have developed a scenario which situates Warburton Ranges Mission as the locus of an aggregation of Western Desert dwellers. I now focus on the westerly drift of people to the fringe towns of the WA Goldfields and the exertion of 'frontier agency' (see Appendix E—Table AE.2).³⁷⁹ According to Stanton, Ngaanyatjarra people began drifting into the Laverton region around the 1920s, then assisted by free railroad travel for Aborigines after 1925 some drifted further down the line between Laverton and Kalgoorlie.³⁸⁰ Mt Margaret mission initially provided a 'good buffer' between the non-Aboriginal pastoral stations and townships, and the remaining 'local' Aborigines.³⁸¹ Warburton mission substantially slowed down the westerly drift of desert people, but it did not halt the movement altogether and a 'pattern of serial migration' into the Laverton region developed.³⁸² Periods of intense drought accounted for waves of migration in 1939 and 1953–1956. The 1939 drought brought many starving people out of the desert. So in 1941 Neville established a ration depot at Cosmo Newbery to provide rations and to prevent 'bush natives from the Warburton Range area advancing further into civilisation and becoming useless hangers on around the goldfield towns and railways'.³⁸³ This did not

³⁷⁹ (Rowse 1998: 42). A westward drift out of the Western Desert began slowly around the 1890s coinciding with the establishment of gold mining settlements in Kalgoorlie, Leonora, Laverton and Wiluna (Howitt 1990; Stanton 1990). See also (Berndt and Berndt 1964; Sackett 1978a; Stanton 1983; Tindale 1974).

³⁸⁰ (Stanton 1983); WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters (May 1946) Officer in Charge at Cosmo to CNA*. Free railroad travel was abolished in 1957, increasing the need for more rations further east (Annual Report CNW 1957: 44).

³⁸¹ (Elkin 1979: 302).

³⁸² (Brooks 2002a; Stanton 1983).

³⁸³ WA SRO Acc 903 901/40—*Cosmo Newbery Native Station. Acting CNA C.L. McBeath to the Hon. MNA 5/9/47*.

During the 1930s Cosmo Newbery was a pastoral station, and from 1938 a DNA reserve (Bolton 1981: 148). From 1941 to 1947 Cosmo operated as a 'Native Station' ration depot before it was converted into a detention centre for Aborigines

halt the movement and in 1942 it was found that 'Warburton Range natives are in the Laverton district and permanently so it seems'.³⁸⁴ The government's continuing refusal to provide rations at Warburton often led to desert people heading westward towards Cosmo for rations.³⁸⁵

Many Western Desert people ventured west because they wanted to 'see for themselves where flour, tea and sugar was coming from'—and some say to escape *warrmarla* attacks. Narrators describe long treks west either by foot, camel or, later, on the Laverton mail truck.³⁸⁶ Some remained in the Goldfields' towns where curiosity with European life was followed by 'familiarity', resulting in an unintentional 'reliance' on the materiality of European life.³⁸⁷ Others went west 'chasing bullock' and found pastoral work in the Goldfields. The year 1944 was a record year for Aboriginal employment in the Goldfields with a 'corresponding increase in wages' as employers 'competed' for Aboriginal labour on sheep stations to fill positions vacated by Europeans who had been conscripted during World War II.³⁸⁸ Following the war Western Australia experienced an expansion in the agricultural and mining sector and Aboriginal people once again had to compete with non-Aborigines for employment.

In the early days when desert people entered the settled areas their movement was restricted; towns were prohibited areas and they were excluded from entering unless under an employment permit. The Governor, by proclamation, could declare any municipality 'out of bounds for all *natives* except those in employment' and a local police protector was empowered to 'order *natives* to remove their camping place to a distance 'from such town or municipality as he may direct' or to 'order any *native* out of town'.³⁸⁹ The permit system compelled Aboriginal workers to stay on the stations. Clifford (Family J) recalls stories of the 'permit time' handed down from family who worked around Laverton-Leonora:

That era that stage that was the law I think. But they was, well Aboriginal people weren't accepted in town...so that's why they mostly out on stations.[If in town] They was just told to move, go out.

in 1948 (Biskup 1973: 234). It continued in its dual role as ration depot and reformatory until it was handed over to the UAM in 1953 (Annual Report CNA 1952).

³⁸⁴ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 18/6/42 Bray to Schenk*.

³⁸⁵ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 9/5/46 telegram from Bray to Cosmo*.

³⁸⁶ (Plant and Viegas 2002). Michael Terry brought the first vehicle through on a survey trip in 1932 and made a track for camels between Laverton and Warburton that was used to collect stores and mail from Laverton—a trip that took about six weeks. After WWII an ex-army truck was obtained and the trip was reduced to about seven to ten days and a more direct outline track to Laverton was constructed. Until 1957 the only tracks in the region were the Laverton-Warburton road and a camel track east from Warburton to Ernabella. By the 1960s, monthly trips were made by the Laverton-Warburton mail truck and people were able to get lifts on the truck (de Graaf 1968: 11–13).

³⁸⁷ (Sackett 1978a).

³⁸⁸ (Milnes 1987: 271).

³⁸⁹ (Rowley 1972 [1970]: 68)[emphasis in original].

Even old people, tell them go out, work. There wasn't hardly time to hang around town all the time, they was always work on a station, station work, move to another station, sheep station.

Likewise, Jim remembers that 'when families moved out that way they had to work...if men were caught sitting around they'd be picked up and taken to a station to work'.

Finally in 1953 Cosmo Newbery Settlement, still a viable pastoral station, was handed over to the UAM, providing a staging post for goods and people going in and out to Warburton.³⁹⁰ Under the UAM Cosmo became a training centre, especially for boys drifting westwards from Warburton.³⁹¹ Large numbers congregating at Warburton in the 1950s experienced overcrowding and tension and so travelled further west 'primarily for ritual exchanges and other ceremonial activities' and, unable to return home because of the 1950s drought, remained at Cosmo for months.³⁹² I return to this theme again in Chapter 3 where I discuss the relationship between education and employment in the Goldfields during the assimilation era.

Conclusion

The Ngaanyatjarra had no exposure to Western cultural practice or literate artefacts prior to the coming of the mission. Through the missionaries the causality of the new world was explained and a template for social relations with Europeans was set. Mission schooling had social meaning and Christian symbolism and sentiment—'God is love'—resonated within an existing meaning system. Literacy became synonymous with English and schooling, and also with adult Christian practice in the vernacular. Introduced European practices, routines and habits became normative to a certain extent. The Ngaanyatjarra were able to display agency in the contact encounter, in part because of remoteness, and because the majority Ngaanyatjarra populace remained connected to country, kin and ceremonial practice for longer than in other regions. Additionally, the benign nature of the mission led to the development of a Christian community without major conflict. State intervention was also for a long time less apparent. However, as I show in the next chapter the onset of the new policy of assimilation was to alter the nature of the Ngaanyatjarra engagement with mainstream Australia.

³⁹⁰ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1954: 8.

³⁹¹ Annual Report CNW 1955.

³⁹² (Stanton 1990: 221); Annual Report CNA 1953: 12.

Introduction

In this chapter we meet the generation who grew up in the policy period of assimilation under the Department of Native Welfare and witnessed the expansion of the known world through state-controlled change and intervention. Some of these children were in the second generation to be raised in the mission and some were the last of the nomadics to encounter the Western world. I explore further how social, economic and political forces impacted on literacy development among the Ngaanyatjarra. I consider how the two prevailing ideologies—the Christian commitment to providing the written Word of God to adults in Ngaanyatjarra and the new state narrative of advancement through education in English—impacted on literacy development from the late 1950s to the early 1970s.

'Assimilation'—a new policy era

When Stanley Middleton was appointed Commissioner of Native Affairs in 1948 Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia were in a dire state—with an 'illiterate' and 'alienated' Aboriginal population.³⁹³ Middleton was to reform Aboriginal policy by using welfare to achieve the goal of social assimilation to dismantle legal restrictions applying only to Aborigines and to bring them 'fully into the scope of all governmental welfare benefits available to other Australians'.³⁹⁴ Moreover, he was to use the concept of 'tutored assimilation through stages of monitored training' to bring Aboriginal people up to a 'satisfactory social standard' for eligibility for assimilation, employment and ultimately citizenship.³⁹⁵ It was conceded by the state that 'education alone' would not achieve the desired goal of integration unless it was supported by an 'improvement in living conditions'.³⁹⁶ The cornerstone of Middleton's policy was the 1954 *Native Welfare Act* which ushered in new freedoms for West Australian Aborigines. Then in 1963 the *Native Welfare Act* was amended to remove the last restrictions that had regulated Aboriginal life. Public policy under the renamed Department of Native Welfare (DNW) was to see literacy inextricably linked to 'social development' as a determinant of citizenship and an assumed criterion for employability, and ultimately assimilation.

³⁹³ Annual Report CNW 1971. A policy of assimilation was formally adopted by the newly elected State conservative government in 1948 and mirrored the evolving Federal policy of assimilation for the national Aboriginal populace under Paul Hasluck the Commonwealth Minister for Territories under Robert Menzies Liberal Government (1951–1963) (Haebich 2005; Rowse 1998).

³⁹⁴ (Schapper 1970: 59).

³⁹⁵ (Haebich 2005: 202; Rowley 1972b: 323).

³⁹⁶ Report of the Special Committee on Native Matters (Perth 1958) under the chairmanship of F.E. Gare who was to succeed Middleton as Commissioner of Native Welfare in 1961, quoted in (Schapper 1970: 27–28).

As the 1954 Act took effect another shift in the 'pattern of serial migration' in the Eastern Goldfields took place.³⁹⁷ Once the *Native (Citizenship Rights) Act* Exemption Certificate was abolished in 1961 a whole new range of educational and employment opportunities opened up as people were now free to reside wherever they wished.³⁹⁸ As Morgan notes, 'no longer did Aborigines need employment permits' and 'no longer were there any prohibited areas', and the latter aspect 'more than any other...altered the lives of Goldfields Aborigines'.³⁹⁹ The lifting of legal restrictions on towns meant that schools, hospital services, employment and housing became available to Aborigines. As adults at Mt Margaret took advantage of the new freedoms and moved to urban centres in search of employment, desert people from further west began drifting into Mt Margaret, finding employment on stations, and congregating on the emerging 'town reserves' (see Appendix E—Table AE.2).⁴⁰⁰

Tutored assimilation

By 1960 the WA Education Department had established a special section to deal with Aboriginal education.⁴⁰¹ A concerted programme of secondary education and training with an explicit assimilationist agenda was implemented across Western Australia with the founding of technical schools, agricultural schools, pastoral training, and apprenticeships in tandem with residential hostels (see Chapter 1, Fig. 1.4).⁴⁰² On January 22 1961 *The West Australian* newspaper announced that the DNW was establishing the hostel system with the 'intention of cutting the "high illiteracy rate" among Aborigines'.⁴⁰³ A higher standard of education was seen as the best long-term solution to employment so children and adults were 'encouraged and assisted to this end'.⁴⁰⁴ Hostels were initially operated by church groups, allowing Aboriginal teenagers from Cundeelee, Laverton and Warburton Ranges to start attending high schools in Kalgoorlie, Norseman or Esperance. After 1957, adolescents residing at Kurrawang Mission were bussed daily into Kalgoorlie for schooling at Eastern Goldfields High School (EGHS).⁴⁰⁵ In 1961 the Australian Aborigines

³⁹⁷ (Stanton 1983).

³⁹⁸ (Stanton 1988: 298).

³⁹⁹ (Morgan 1986: 268–269).

⁴⁰⁰ By the time Rodolphe Schenk retired in 1953 many members of the early mission group at Mt Margaret had dispersed throughout the Eastern Goldfields and over the following years increasing numbers of 'Easterners' arrived from Warburton Ranges (Stanton 1983; Stanton 1988). According to Stanton, however, they were 'largely neglected' by the mission administration and much of the mission fell into disrepair (Stanton 1988: 298). The UAM withdrew from Mt Margaret in 1976 and management and ownership was transferred to former mission residents under the Aboriginal Movement for Outback Survival Inc. (AMOS) (Stanton 1990: 219). Mt Margaret continued operating having attracted a new community (including a group from the Gibson Desert and their descendents), to fill the 'vacuum' left by the original inhabitants (Stanton 1983).

⁴⁰¹ Annual Report CNW 1960: 30.

⁴⁰² Boarding schools and hostels were similarly used as a strategy for 'civilising' Native Americans in the United States (Spring 1996) and the Indigenous population of Canada (Miller 1996a).

⁴⁰³ (Milnes 1987: 395).

⁴⁰⁴ Annual Report CNW 1964: 13.

⁴⁰⁵ Annual Report CNW 1957: 40. Eastern Goldfields High School (EGHS) had opened as a public secondary school in Kalgoorlie-Boulder in 1914 (Mossenson 1972: 115). However, it was not until Kurrawang Mission near Kalgoorlie,

Evangelical Mission (AAEM) opened a hostel in Esperance in 1961 (operated by Mr and Mrs I.S. Pedlar) for boys undertaking agricultural training—after a two year course graduates would then remain at the hostel to be employed on a station for Award rates of pay.⁴⁰⁶ The AAEM also established a hostel at Condingup, near Esperance, for graduate trainee workers.⁴⁰⁷ Fairhaven Hostel in Esperance operated as a Church of Christ boarding facility for teenage girls who attended Esperance High School three days a week and spent the remaining two days at Fairhaven receiving instruction in home management, laundry, catering, poise, personal grooming and dress sense.⁴⁰⁸ Upon completion of schooling, girls also remained at Fairhaven and employment was found for them, mainly as domestics.

The DNW aimed to have all Aboriginal children receiving 'educational benefits of some type'.⁴⁰⁹ The DNW and the Education Department opened the 'Boulder Working Youths' Hostel' in Kalgoorlie-Boulder (managed by the Pedlars and AAEM) to cater for young working men.⁴¹⁰ The DNW was also to build an additional eight hostels in regional centres across the state so Aboriginal children aged from six to fifteen could attend local schools.⁴¹¹ The DNW provided staff, food and clothing, the Education Department paid a Living Away from Home Allowance, and children returned home for holidays.⁴¹² Nabberu Hostel opened in Leonora in 1967 with the aim of ensuring that no children in the DNW Eastern Division were living under conditions too 'poor' to attend school.⁴¹³ Nindeebai Hostel opened in Kalgoorlie in 1970.⁴¹⁴

The DNW worked in tandem with the Education Department to 'help' Aboriginal people to 'get as much learning as they want'...

...The opportunities are there and it is for Aboriginal people to take them. But the decision is theirs. The wise mother and father will encourage their children to learn so that they have a better chance of a successful and happy life than they had.⁴¹⁵

This paternalistic discourse ostensibly placed the onus on parental responsibility for children's schooling. Government hostels were established for:

- i) children whose parents live on pastoral stations where there is no primary school;

planned to open a residential hostel in 1957 in close proximity to EGHS that it was seen by the DNA as the ideal location to accommodate Aboriginal adolescents from across the district and a large number started attending EGHS (Annual Report CNW 1955: 36);(Milnes 1987: 385). See (Bull 1961).

⁴⁰⁶ *Department of Native Welfare (DNW) Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.2 August 1967: 27.

⁴⁰⁷ *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.5 August 1968: 44.

⁴⁰⁸ Annual Report CNW 1966: 28.

⁴⁰⁹ Annual Report CNW 1966: 28.

⁴¹⁰ *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.6 December 1968: 55.

⁴¹¹ (Long 1969: 25).

⁴¹² *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.3, December 1967: 40.

⁴¹³ Annual Report CNW 1966: 27.

⁴¹⁴ *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.9 January 1971: 47.

⁴¹⁵ *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.3 December 1967: 39.

- ii) children who continue their schooling at high or technical school and whose families do not live in the town;
- iii) children who are without parents or have been removed from them under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act; and
- iv) young people who have left school and are in employment.⁴¹⁶

The hostels were to give children the opportunity to further their education and admission was 'voluntary'. However, as Haebich suggests, 'considerable pressure was exerted on parents to admit their children'.⁴¹⁷ As the Commissioner remained the legal guardian of all Aboriginal children, whether illegitimate or legitimate, until they reached the age of 21, the DNW was legally able to control the movement of young people to hostels for secondary education and subsequent vocational training.⁴¹⁸ Although certain provisions of the *Native Welfare Act* were repealed in 1963, the DNW retained the duty of providing for the 'custody, maintenance and education of the children of natives' and the 'control, care and education of natives in native institutions' until 1972.⁴¹⁹

Table 3.1 Adult Native Education enrolment 1965–72

	<i>Laverton</i>	<i>Leonora</i>	<i>Warburton</i>
1965	-	12	-
1966	50	30	-
1967	13	23	57
1968	-	54	-
1969	-	66	-
1970	-	54	162
1971	64	12	144
1972	57	143	104

Source: Annual Reports CNW 1964–1972

Education policy initially focused on children, until the government realised that the progress of children 'was continually foundering upon the indifference and even hostility of illiterate or non-literate parents'.⁴²⁰ Consequently, adult education was advocated to train adults for citizenship and to stimulate interest in their children's education. An Adult Native Education scheme commenced in 1965 with 30 centres across Western Australia, including Warburton (Table 3.1).⁴²¹ The aims were to 'develop literacy and community obligations and to assist the native people in their assimilation into our western culture'.⁴²² However, critics found 'most' adult literacy classes 'farcical and wasteful'.⁴²³

⁴¹⁶ (Schapper 1970: 35).

⁴¹⁷ (Haebich 2005: 212).

⁴¹⁸ (Haebich 1992 [1988]: 350).

⁴¹⁹ (Haebich 2005: 205).

⁴²⁰ (Long 1969: 25).

⁴²¹ Annual Report CNW 1965: 8.

⁴²² *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.2 August 1967: 35.

⁴²³ (Schapper 1970: 99). See also (George 1979; Long 1969).

To summarise, the aim of DNW policy was to 'raise academic standards' and 'open wider employment opportunities' for Aborigines who otherwise would have 'remained illiterate'.⁴²⁴ Ultimately, through tutored assimilation Aboriginal people were to be trained to become 'effective members of the nation' where 'citizenship was the goal'.⁴²⁵

The 'Native Welfare generation'

Until the mid-1950s remoteness had protected Warburton Ranges Mission from the 'tight bureaucratic system of written accountability', 'surveillance' and 'paternalistic control' of Commissioner Middleton.⁴²⁶ Inspections had remained infrequent due to the distance from DNA administrative offices, but were to increase with the devolved responsibility to the DNW Eastern Division office in Kalgoorlie and greater allocation of field officers.⁴²⁷ In 1954 there were still an estimated 6000 'nomad natives' in WA who were 'beyond the confines of civilisation'.⁴²⁸ By the end of this era, however, the Native Welfare generation was to experience an unprecedented encounter with the state that would leave virtually every individual identified by the bureaucracy. Moreover, it would acquaint the Ngaanyatjarra with the conditions of the literate systems of state bureaucracy for the first time. Furthermore, the state would question the future viability of the mission and determine that young people be led 'away from the Warburton Ranges to training at other centres where they could ultimately be absorbed into the white community'.⁴²⁹

Education for what?

State intervention in education provision began with Middleton's assertion that Warburton people must become 'an economic asset, instead of a financial burden, to the state':

The missionaries at Ernabella in South Australia and at Warburton Range in Western Australia, are now educating large numbers of native children and evangelising many young people and adults, and the question arises as to how they can utilise this knowledge and training without some form of employment that will condition their minds economically to the impact of a white civilisation that, with the increasing population of Australia, is bound to come sooner or later.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁴ Annual Report CNW 1972.

⁴²⁵ (Rowse 1998: 8).

⁴²⁶ (Haebich 2005: 207).

⁴²⁷ (Department of Native Welfare 1967: 17)

⁴²⁸ Annual Report CNA 1954: 60. O'Malley has questioned how it was possible that as late as the 1950s in 'a sophisticated administrative welfare state, for a considerable area of the country (i.e. the Western Australian Central Reserves area) to be so completely ungoverned?' He argues that such 'ungovernment' was made possible not because of absence or neglect of the Aboriginal populace in the region by government, but can be sourced from the state of 'preservation' that surrounded the Central Reserves region after World War I. By this he means the cultural protection initiative suggested by anthropologist A.P. Elkin and others, that was supported by the West Australian government in the belief that full-bloods would eventually die out if left alone (O'Malley 1994).

⁴²⁹ WA SRO Acc 993 1220/61 17/762—*From CNW to MN, summary of history of Warburton Ranges Mission.*

⁴³⁰ WA SRO Acc 5296 321/74 13/12/51—*From CNA Middleton to the Undersecretary for Mines.*

This opened up a debate on the purpose of education in the Ngaanyatjarra context that has continued up to the present day. In 1956 Middleton affirmed the inherent right of all Aboriginal children to education, including those at Warburton:

What was to become of them after they had completed their primary education? Having deprived them of the opportunity to become proficient at foraging for their livelihood...and made them wholly dependent on our economy...were they to be left in Central Australia to become forever dependent on the charity of the Mission and the Government? On this particular point Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights puts the matter clearly, in this way: '(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be easily accessible to all on the basis of merit.' I see no reason for excluding the children of the Warburton Range.⁴³¹

Middleton initially endorsed sending secondary-aged Warburton children to Cosmo Newbery Mission for training, a suggestion borne out of the need to resolve the economic sustainability of Warburton Mission.⁴³² This never eventuated, primarily because of the opposition raised in Parliament by W. L. Grayden. The intention, nevertheless, sparked what became known as the 'Warburton controversy' and threw the mission into the public spotlight for the first time.⁴³³

In 1951 the Education Department finally agreed to second staff to mission schools with the cost debited to the DNA.⁴³⁴ In 1953, the Warburton mission superintendent J.M. Gurrier-Jones requested assistance for the school from the Education Department, as per the new policy, and in 1954 two trained missionary teachers arrived, but the government provided few material resources.⁴³⁵ Only in 1956 were the first qualified government

⁴³¹ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters (1942–1956) 27/9/56 letter from Middleton CNW to Editor United Aborigines Messenger.*

⁴³² WA SRO Acc 993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters 18/11/58 from CNW Middleton to MNW*; WA SRO Acc 993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters 18/12/58 ADO Eastern Goldfields report on Inspection of Warburton Ranges Mission.*

⁴³³ In 1956 the Independent Liberal MLA W.L. Grayden secured the creation of a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly to 'inquire into the plight' of people in the Central Reserves as a consequence of the British government's atomic bomb programme at Maralinga (Attwood 2003: 149–51). Grayden travelled out from Laverton to Warburton Ranges Mission and when he returned raised the alarm regarding the condition of Ngaanyatjarra people in the region in the 'Grayden Report' (Western Australia Parliament 1956) to the annoyance of the DNW. Grayden deplored, in particular, the contemplated move by the DNW to have all school-age children removed to Cosmo Newbery which he claimed was contrary to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. In 1957 anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt conducted anthropological surveys of the Central Reserves-Goldfields region arising out of the 'Warburton controversy' (Berndt and Berndt 1957). Their evidence found Grayden's account of undernourishment and social breakdown in the Warburton Ranges area exaggerated. Warburton Mission became the focus of intense media debate about the condition of Aboriginal people in the Central Desert and the Ngaanyatjarra were unwitting protagonists in the film *Manslaughter: The Warburton Range Film* made by Grayden in 1957 to 'expose' their supposed plight in the fight for Aboriginal rights (Grayden 1957; Grayden 2002; McGrath 2004). The increased public exposure and criticism of the mission from the late 1950s mirrored the growing unease in the Australian public about the treatment of Aboriginal people by missions and government. The 1957 attempt to pass the 'First Bill for Citizenship Rights' in Western Australia arose out of the Warburton controversy. Ronald Berndt states that this Bill was of major importance as it dealt with the notion of 'native citizenship' in a manner that was 'a sign' of the changing climate of local opinion, and an attempt to counter 'the unfavourable publicity' provoked by the 'Warburton Controversy' (Berndt 1959: 3).

⁴³⁴ (Biskup 1973).

⁴³⁵ (Milnes 1987: 380–381).

teachers appointed to Warburton 'Special Native School'.⁴³⁶ At the end of 1960 the parent generation made the decision not to return their children to the Baker Home after the Christmas holidays.⁴³⁷ The dormitory system was abolished in 1961 (and the last dormitory children passed through the school in 1965). Approximately 120 school children were placed back in the care of families at a time when some 400 people were living in *wiltja* or windbreak constructions in camps with no sanitary or ablution facilities.⁴³⁸ This event also coincided with a drought and the cessation of earlier self-reliant nomadic foraging patterns.⁴³⁹ An aluminium building originally planned as a mission dormitory became the new 'government' school, a dining room was built and children continued coming into the mission for ablutions and three meals a day, five days a week while attending school.⁴⁴⁰ According to Neville Green, parents began to accept school as a government institution, however 'the relevance of western education was never established' and the school was dependent on the dining room to attract children from the camp every morning.⁴⁴¹

People recall the difficulty of camp life without water, sanitation or firewood. The camps *kayili* and *kakarrara* were located far from the mission according to the cardinal directions of traditional country:

We were outsiders. Some people lived right close to the mission boundary, but our families had to live out that way because we had feeling for that country. Still like that now, you can see the houses built on different sides. Just a way of life. My family all comes from the north so live that side. But all married in now. It's our culture.⁴⁴²

By 1965, Warburton was a community of discontent with 'people fighting, quarrelling, stealing, threatening', broken down equipment, lack of staff and a lack of economy.⁴⁴³ A tension was also growing between the old guard Christians and the new secular employees.⁴⁴⁴ The UAM was proposing that the DNW take more responsibility for the community.⁴⁴⁵ The future of Aborigines in the Central Reserves area was investigated and the mission difficulties acknowledged.⁴⁴⁶ It was recommended that for the 358 Warburton people still living in windbreaks 'to make change' and adapt to a future life 'similar to any

⁴³⁶ (Green 1983: 15–16). I.S. Hansen (Head Teacher), C.D. Metcalfe and R.D. Jeffrey were employed as Education Department (Native Education Branch) teachers (WA SRO Acc 993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters 18/12/58 ADO Eastern Goldfields Inspection report Warburton Ranges Mission*).

⁴³⁷ (Douglas 1978: 4–5).

⁴³⁸ WA SRO Acc 1419 23-7-315/162—*Letter from CNW to Federal Secretary UAM*.

⁴³⁹ (Plant 1995).

⁴⁴⁰ WA SRO Acc 993 1220/61—*Warburton Ranges Mission, general correspondence Nov. 61 Johnson Welfare Inspector's report; Report on nutrition at Warburton Ranges July 1972—NTU Files*.

⁴⁴¹ (Green 1983: 16). Neville Green was a teacher at Warburton School in 1966 and has documented his experiences in *Desert School*.

⁴⁴² Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁴⁴³ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1965: 6.

⁴⁴⁴ (de Graaf 1968); *United Aborigines Messenger* July/August 1980: 9.

⁴⁴⁵ WA SRO Acc 1733 66/65—*Warburton Ranges Native Matters April 1965. Correspondence: UAM Federal Secretary to CNW*.

⁴⁴⁶ WA SRO Acc 1733 66/65—*Warburton Ranges Native Matters June 1965. Correspondence: CNW to MNW*.

other Australian community', they would need special assistance in 'education, housing, hygiene, training, and employment'.⁴⁴⁷ Electricity came only in 1962 and a 'reserve', with toilets, showers and 'huts' was established by the DNW outside the mission. Visits from government officials, anthropologists and mining explorers increased and began to shape community life and a DNW district office opened.⁴⁴⁸ A small scale mining venture with Western Mining Corporation commenced and the potential 'mining boom' generated optimism.⁴⁴⁹ With increased outside influences during this period, the Ngaanyatjarra began to locate themselves in relation to a broader sociocultural space and challenges to the indisputable authority of elders and the traditional *status quo* became more frequent.

*From education to employment—the narrative of 'advancement'*⁴⁵⁰

In 1962 the Minister for Native Welfare in his determination to implement 'the ultimate assimilation of natives in Western Australia' indicated that, despite all the money that had been spent on education at Warburton, there was little to show for it and the resumption of nomadic life was likely. He considered it necessary to expose young people to 'civilised areas' where they could have access to training 'to fit them more for employment'. His aim was to 'lift them up' by giving them 'at least a handyman type of training for the boys—those with aptitude something better—and for the girls, domestic science and home crafts'.⁴⁵¹ Contemporaneously, government officials and the UAM had concluded that there was no need for 'emergency measures' regarding sending children away as they 'would not benefit from secondary education due to the low standard already reached in primary education'.⁴⁵² However, by 1964 the ability of some students was 'high enough to cope with High School'.⁴⁵³ Consequently, in 1964 it was decided that adolescents aged thirteen to sixteen would be sent to Kurrawang and Norseman missions.⁴⁵⁴

Overall, many Warburton teenagers were sent to the hostels between 1964 and the mid-1970s, residing as secondary students and staying on as 'working girls' or 'working boys'. In addition, younger children were sent to Naberu Hostel in Leonora. In earlier research,

⁴⁴⁷ WA SRO Acc 1733 66/65—*Warburton Ranges Native Matters Report Superintendent of Economic Development to CNW 1965*.

⁴⁴⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* October 1966: 5; Annual Report CNW 1966: 27.

⁴⁴⁹ WA SRO Acc 1733 66/65—*Warburton Ranges Native Matters, letter 27/4/65*.

In 1955 a lease had been granted to Southwestern Mining Co. in the Blackstone, Jameson, Wingellina area. By the early 1960s copper shows were being worked by Ngaanyatjarra men and Warburton Ranges Minerals Pty Ltd was formed. Early in 1966 the WA government decided to permit non-native prospecting and mining under controlled conditions on 'native reserves' and this primarily affected the Warburton section of the Central Reserve and opened the opportunity for mining employment in the region (and an agreement was made with Western Mining Corporation to explore and mine minerals in the Central Reserve (Annual Report CNW 1966: 33); (Toyne and Vachon 1984; Turner 2003).

⁴⁵⁰ Title drawn from (Sackett 1990: 201).

⁴⁵¹ WA SRO Acc 993 1220/61 18/7/62—*Notes from meeting between MNW, CNW and UAM*.

⁴⁵² Report of the trip to Warburton Ranges 14th to 21st September 1962: UAM Files—NTU Archives.

⁴⁵³ R. Hawthorn, Acting Superintendent, UAM District Office Report, Warburton Ranges August 1964 UAM Files—NTU Archives.

findings from the 100 Ngaanyatjarra interviewees indicate that approximately 60–70% of the middle-aged cohort self-describe as having participated in the hostel programme.⁴⁵⁵ In Appendix F data from the 2004 Ngaanyatjarra Council CDEP Skills Audit indicates that of the 119 interviewees (CDEP recipients only) in the 41–61 year age group, 42% claim to have had no post-primary schooling or are unsure. This correlates with the 2000 findings, suggesting that some 60% of this cohort experienced some form of post-primary type schooling outside the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Undoubtedly, the duration for many was short and they soon returned home. Nevertheless, for a remote group it represents a significant level of adolescent schooling for the current middle-aged to older generation.

I now turn to the narratives from 'Native Welfare time'. *Joshua, Arthur, May, Molly* and others were teenagers by now and children like *Una, Jim, Silas, April* and *Patricia* were from families habitualised into mission life. It can be suggested that certain introduced practices and routines had been transmitted to this generation and become institutionalised through 'a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions'.⁴⁵⁶ Others in this generation like *George* (Family I), *Clem* (Family F), *Louisa* (Family K) and *Marrkilyi*, whom we meet in this chapter, were in the last group of 'nomadics' to encounter the Western world, and literate practices, for the first time.

Joshua (Family G) was one of the first teenagers to be sent to Wongutha Mission Training Farm as early as 1956.⁴⁵⁷

When I went to Wongutha Farm I learnt more, which I didn't know here in the mission... That was in 1956...learning lots of things, what we should do and all. We had a roster up on the wall, saying what we gotta do, this week or the next week coming...our new roster. Weekends we used to go to Esperance...I played football for three years...I was learning a lot of things which I didn't know here in Ranges...gardening...I was trying to be a mechanic...I went to places like Gnowangerup, up to Perth...We start building another building, dining room. We went to school there in Esperance, come back and do lecture in the night, learning about farm husbandry...how to run a farm...There was for young fellas that wanted to learn something.

Most others were sent away after 1964. The narratives of those sent away are in general positive:

I went to Esperance, high school for one and half years, living at Fairhaven Hostel then work experience, I used to look after a little boy, housework, when parents at work, in town, going out

⁴⁵⁴ (Green 1983: 17).

⁴⁵⁵ (Kral and Ward 2000: 43).

⁴⁵⁶ (Berger and Luckmann 1975 [1966]: 70–85).

⁴⁵⁷ Wongutha Mission Training Farm was set up in 1954 by R.W. Schenk, the son of Rodolphe Schenk from Mt Margaret Mission, as an agricultural training school for boys of post-primary school standard providing a two year course in farm practices, arithmetic, social studies, animal husbandry, physics, elementary chemistry, carpentry, plumbing, mechanics and elements of saddlery, blacksmithing and welding (Annual Report CNW 1955: 25). In 1957 the Education Department gave approval for students from Wongutha Mission to attend Esperance Junior High School for woodwork and metalwork classes and the training of girls commenced in 1962. See also (Liddelow 1979).

for day working by myself then coming back. Lots of girls doing that, some used to go out to work for the week then come back at the end of the week to hostel. Learnt about work, being with whitefellas - good experience. Came back to Warburton then working for Welfare.⁴⁵⁸

Joshua's wife *Dawn* (Family G) was happy at Fairhaven because her same age friends and family were there. People also recall going for only a short time or running away because of homesickness or fights. At one stage this dilemma was ameliorated when a mother went down 'to look after all the girls' at Fairhaven.⁴⁵⁹ In the next chapter I discuss how the separation of these youngsters from their families was the impetus for letter-writing and this represented an early instance of written language being used for social purposes.

Despite positive recollections, the coercive aspect of the Native Welfare policy is recalled. After May was removed from Warburton as a child, she was sent from Mt Margaret to Kurrawang Mission, and then to Fairhaven Hostel when she was old enough to work:

They made all the decisions for you, you couldn't argue with them...you couldn't think for yourself, they did all the thinking for you...we didn't know anything at the time, we were just told to go... I was at Kurrawang three years, I went to Kalgoorlie High School.

Other narratives echo stories of running away and being picked up by 'Welfare' and returned to the hostel. Arthur recalls: 'it was really strict at that time, the government, Department of Native Welfare sent us to Pedlar's'. Clem was one of the last children through the Warburton dormitory system and in 1966 Native Welfare sent him to Kurrawang for secondary schooling:

They organised that, they got all the forms in the school...they done all that because missionaries were like parents was, we had not only the parents from when we was born, but also we had missionaries, then we had Native Welfare.

Una says that if children were not at school Native Welfare would forcibly take them there. George comments that when they were living in Laverton 'Native Welfare would check' so his family always told him to go to school, in the belief, he says, that 'there would be jobs at the end'.

Clearly families had pressure placed on them by Native Welfare. Murray Wells comments: 'I shouldn't imagine families chose to send the kids away to school, I would have thought it was the mission influence and the expectation by agencies like Native Welfare'.⁴⁶⁰ Only

⁴⁵⁸ A number of narratives can be found in the data collected for (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁴⁵⁹ In 1976 the bilingual community newsletter *Warburtonngamartaji Tjukurrpa*—Warburton News reported children going away to school and parents going with them, Vol.3, No.2 (17/2/76); and Vol.3, No.3 (24/2/76) reports nine children going to high school and four parents accompanying them.

⁴⁶⁰ Wells—Interview 1/4/04. Murray Wells lived at Warburton Ranges Mission from 1956–1961 with his missionary parents, then at Mt Margaret Mission for nine months. He returned to Warburton in 1974 to work in the bilingual programme in the school and later worked as an itinerant outstation teacher. After teaching at Blackstone School for five

English, or 'Australian pidgin', was used in administrative dealings with Aborigines and interpreters were used 'only with great reluctance' suggesting that in some cases families may not have fully comprehended the intent of the exchange.⁴⁶¹ Green considers that there was 'some uneasiness among parents but no-one really knew how to oppose such a decision, other than by a retreat to the bush', and 'the teachers and missionaries assured the parents that their children would be safe'.⁴⁶² One woman recalls how 'heart-broken' her parents were when she went to Fairhaven. A mother who was at Laverton working 'at the sandalwood' with her husband recalls consenting to sending the children to Esperance or Leonora: 'they went in the Home stayed there, they go to high school...we sent them so they can get learn...they learn English and school'.

How did Ngaanyatjarra people interpret this event? Prior to European contact, venturing into unknown territory was feared and time was mostly spent in the company of kin, moving within relatively predictable socio-spatial parameters. As I speculate in Chapter 2, sufficient trust must have developed between the Ngaanyatjarra and the missionaries for them to have confidence in the missionaries' assurances that their children would be safe in the country of strangers. George suggests that the experience paralleled the manner in which parents first entrusted their children to the missionaries. He is aware that Native Welfare controlled the movement of children, but there was agency in the exchange as parents recognised that children would learn the English required to negotiate the new world 'on their behalf':

My parents they was really happy for me going to school, going to learn the language so I can talk to white people, English *wangkaratjaku*, they used to tell me, my parents. So when in time they need help I can talk on their behalf and I been doing that when I been in school, talking with my family when Native Welfare come around. They was really happy for me to go and learn in school. They been a bit worried when we been away, but they know we was in good care, we stayed in hostels and they used to come around and visit us on the weekends. Native Welfare, they put us in [Nabberu], but when we went to the hostel we had like missionary people there to look after us, go to church every Sunday. My parents they been working here in the mission, so they was really happy.

From this perspective the social relatedness established at Warburton Mission was extended to the broader Christian 'family' in the Goldfields and fears were assuaged because hostels were generally managed by 'familiar' Christians. By taking a Bourdieuan perspective it can be suggested that the habitus of the mission community was replicated in the social space within the Christian-run hostels. The replicated habitus was presenting itself 'in the form of agents endowed with different properties that are systematically linked

years, he left the Education Department. He has lived almost continuously in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands since then. In 2006 he retired as Environmental Health Worker trainer (Wells 2002).

⁴⁶¹ (Wurm 1971: 1034).

⁴⁶² (Green 1983: 17).

among themselves'.⁴⁶³ Thus hostel life represented a 'world of commonsense' with spatially-relocated, but familiar, practices.⁴⁶⁴

Having established that the hostels 'looked after' the teenagers, the dual ideological role of the hostels must also be highlighted.

Firstly, as May's comments reveal some hostels were sites for Christian conversion:

That was for them, not for us. At Kurrawang you weren't allowed to look at magazines, the only book you had was the Bible to read. You had to learn all these things from the Bible, you had to, what do you call it, memorise things, Chapters, Verses and all those things. That's their main purpose was to drown you in Christianity, in the Bible...you weren't even allowed to look at comics in Kurrawang.

In retrospect, May is cynical:

The main aim of the missionaries was to convert us to their religion and to teach reading and writing for work after the mission. Some people benefited from the missionaries' education, but lots more were just trained to be domestic servants on low-paid wages, like me.⁴⁶⁵

Silas also acknowledges the ambivalent relationship, but believes that missionaries 'wanted to give us hope to go forward into towns and cities and get a good job on that level...to grow up to be a good citizen'. Others remember paternalistic control: 'you're dictated to by missionaries from the word go, you're told to put a trousers on, shirt on, this is the way you got to dress, you got to eat this food, you got to eat that and it has continued on till this day'.

In addition, the hostel training programme was also a platform for the state narrative of advancement that underpinned assimilation. Hostels were instrumental in inculcating values to assist 'social development' by socialising adolescents into European-style habits and routines that would counter the social, cultural and linguistic 'deficiencies' of the Aboriginal home environment.⁴⁶⁶ Adolescents were introduced to Western systems of organisation implemented using literate modes such as duty rosters and timetables in the hostels, and timesheets, forms, notices and other literacies associated with their workplace. Girls at Fairhaven reportedly made 'remarkable strides in self-advancement'.⁴⁶⁷

Every girl is now able to obtain employment and live as an independent citizen. Several have married and have set up good homes, some in Esperance.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶³ (Bourdieu 1989: 19).

⁴⁶⁴ (Bourdieu 1989: 19).

⁴⁶⁵ (Powell and Kennedy 2005: 55).

⁴⁶⁶ (Miller 1966; Makin 1977).

⁴⁶⁷ *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.2, No.2 Christmas 1971: 46-7.

⁴⁶⁸ *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No. 4, March 1968: 33.

While at Pedlar's Hostel:

The boys...have acquired the work habit, save hard and have ambitions about owning their own place one day. Regular employment, good housing and a sense of belonging to a district that regards Aborigines as useful and wanted citizens will, we hope, fall naturally into place...⁴⁶⁹

Warburton adolescents were inculcated with the notion that returning to Warburton would represent a backwards step.⁴⁷⁰ Critics of the programme argued that the 'typical hostel situation...can no more provide experiences and skills for home-making, independence, and integration than could a prison'.⁴⁷¹

To summarise, the hostel experience in some ways mirrored the practices of the mission with families entrusting their children into the care of the extended Christian community. In addition, the experience of isolation was ameliorated as adolescents tended to reside with same-age, often kin, groupings. Lastly, immersion in this European environment exposed young people to a broader range of European social, oral and literate practices than experienced in the mission.

'Testing time'—the last wave out of the desert

The Native Welfare generation included the last wave of 'nomadics' brought out of the Gibson Desert and the Rawlinson Ranges and into Warburton by patrol officers during the 'testing time' (coinciding with a drought from around 1960–1966) ostensibly to protect them from the long range rocket testing at Woomera in South Australia.⁴⁷² Some families remained at Warburton where life was 'beset with difficulties of adjustment'.⁴⁷³ This group:

...have from the time of their first arrival at Warburton played something of the part of a measuring stick for the other residents...the local people, who by this time had been *in situ* for more than thirty years, were quite antagonistic to the newcomers. Having made adjustments, some of them painful,

⁴⁶⁹ DNW Newsletter, Vol.1, No.4 March 1968: 17.

⁴⁷⁰ (Kral and Ward 2000: 28).

⁴⁷¹ (Schapper 1970 36).

⁴⁷² Native Welfare patrols brought people into Warburton, Papunya, and Jigalong (Davenport et al. 2005; Long 1964; Nathan and Leichleitner-Japanangka 1983) between 1957 and 1966 after the Commonwealth government in co-operation with Great Britain started Blue Streak long range rocket testing at Woomera and atomic tests at Maralinga and Emu Plains, South Australia. Giles Meteorological Station was established in 1956, to support the rocket trials within a few kilometres of what is now Warakurna community. From 1957-64 access tracks through SA and WA were constructed for the Woomera Rocket Range. Len Beadell (Beadell 1967), the surveyor with the Gunbarrel Road Construction Co., constructed the 'Gunbarrel Highway' in tandem with the Australian Weapons Research project. The Warburton-Giles section of the Gunbarrel was constructed in 1958. The new roads opened up access to the region and a greater range of people visited: scientists, surveyors, anthropologists, etc. Over several years the desert groups were regularly visited in their home environment by Patrol Officers from the NT Administration, Weapons Research Establishment and the Department of Native Welfare and filmed by the Commonwealth Film Unit (Dunlop 1966-70). The so-called 'desert people' are variously referred to as the 'Gibson Desert mob', 'kayili mob', Karilwara mob' or 'Patjarr people' and came in from around the Clutterbuck Hills some 150kms northwest of Warburton. Other groups came in from the Rawlinson Ranges near the NT border. The last family groups to come in from the desert settled at Kiwirrkura community in 1984. Certain residents of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands are identified by some as 'Pintupi', including those at Kiwirrkura.

⁴⁷³ (Brooks 2002e: 77).

to the whitefellas expectations and way of life, it must have been uncomfortable, not to say undermining, to be confronted with what amounted to a vision of one's own past.⁴⁷⁴

First encounter stories remain fresh:

We can't understand what this white people come, we a bit scared...first time to start the food from the white people like apple, orange and like tin-a-meat and all tinned stuff. So we get learn slowly. When we been get into missionary so we get more learn, so we get used to it.⁴⁷⁵

The traditionally-oriented habits and dispositions of this group contrasted starkly with the accrued 'social or symbolic capital' of the mission-acculturated generation and rendered them 'outsiders', yet their temporal proximity with pre-contact practices imbued them with greater Law- or *tjukurrpa*-affiliated cultural capital.⁴⁷⁶

Darren, Mick, Kenny (Family D), and *Louisa* (Family K) experienced this transition as children. Families camped across the creekbed in *kayili* camp ('north' camp, reflecting their socio-spatial origins):

We used to have to walk in the cold mornings, have a shower, have brekkie and go straight to school. We walked with a tin cut down with fire, that's how hard it was for us, we had no vehicle *wiyartu*. We were outsiders...In those days we used to be forced going to school...Government school, rough teachers...if the kids don't go to school they get a whack on their backside or on their hands with canes.⁴⁷⁷

A pattern of teasing and marginalisation was established—this has largely been ameliorated by intermarriage between family groups. Louisa's experience at Warburton School was typical: 'kids were cheeky to me, bad kids...they teased me in the school...'

...I went into school, but didn't understand what was going on...it was fun, but I didn't even really recognise it was school. I didn't know that was the right place to learn, you know, for me. I didn't had no ideas about that. I just went along.⁴⁷⁸

Other families made the long trek west by foot or on the mail truck and reconnected with relatives in Wiluna or Jigalong who had walked out earlier.⁴⁷⁹ Once in town, the 'Gibson Desert mob' generally gravitated towards the town reserves.

'If you don't go to school Welfare will send you away'— life on the reserves

Under Middleton's 'family welfare' policy the government was persuaded to give up Aboriginal settlements as it was hoped that 'moral and political pressures would establish Aborigines in the towns' to assimilate as members of the town community.⁴⁸⁰ Paradoxically, this policy gave rise to the growth of reserves on the edge of centres like

⁴⁷⁴ (Brooks 2002e: 77).

⁴⁷⁵ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁴⁷⁶ (Bourdieu 1989: 17). See (Sackett 1977; Stanton 1983).

⁴⁷⁷ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁴⁷⁸ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁴⁷⁹ See (Davenport et al. 2005; Peasley 1990 [1983]; Tonkinson 1974).

⁴⁸⁰ (Rowley 1972 [1970]: 55).

Kalgoorlie, Leonora and Laverton. As I alluded to earlier, the hostel program embraced not only mission children, but also the children of the Western Desert diaspora, many of whom were by now living on town reserves. Haebich suggests that hostels were also established for those children deemed by state authorities to be 'neglected'.⁴⁸¹ Living conditions on reserves were described as a 'sorry spectacle', despite the Department's attempts to improve conditions.⁴⁸² While some families on reserves maintained family routines others struggled to meet the state imposed standards of parenting and had their children removed to the hostels.

In 1965 the UAM was reporting that families were reluctant to stay at the missions:

...lack of employment, the need to be in work to get Social Benefits for unemployed, and the practice of Native Welfare issuing rations to children of parents who are indigent, ie between the working age and old age pension; all has a bearing on keeping them on the reserve at Laverton.⁴⁸³

It is noted that during this period that the Aboriginal population in state schools in the Goldfields increased as a consequence of the numbers on the town reserves.⁴⁸⁴ Patricia's family had moved to Cosmo Newbery in the 1950s and Patricia was a second generation school-child. When her father found work at Mt Windarra mine the family shifted to the Laverton reserve.⁴⁸⁵

We used to stay in the camp and go to school, stayed there for must be two years or three. We have to take our homework down to the school and do it and we have to take it back the next day in the morning to the teacher...My friends that come down from Laverton, Aboriginal kids from the class, do home work all together and they help me out...sometimes my mother helped me...And we didn't have no houses at that time, never had a house to go to school, just from the camp.

At age twelve Patricia was sent to Nindeebai Hostel in Kalgoorlie.

Jim's father was doing seasonal mustering while the family camped at the Laverton reserve:

⁴⁸¹ (Haebich 2005: 212).

⁴⁸² (Department of Native Welfare 1967: 23–4). By 1959 the government had put in place a three stage transitional housing scheme aimed at improving facilities on reserves and moving Aboriginal people from living on reserves to residing as rent payers in conventional suburban dwellings in regional and metropolitan centres (Long 1969). It was 'conceded' that better housing would lead to improved living conditions which could aid educational progress, as the current situation was precluding the chance for Aboriginal children to study at home (Miller 1966: 30). See also (Haebich 2005).

⁴⁸³ UAM Western Desert Report presented to the Federal Conference Melbourne, April 1965 by District Superintendent, Keith R. Morgan—UAM Files, NTU Archives.

⁴⁸⁴ Milnes found that in 1959, 14 out of the 19 children at Laverton State School were Aboriginal, however by 1962, 39 out of the 45 children at the school were Aboriginal. The proportion was so high that the Principal requested that the school be classed as a 'Special Native School'. Similarly Leonora State School student population was one-third Aboriginal in 1960 and half by 1967 (Milnes 1987: 391). In 1964 it was reported that at Laverton School standards in the basic skills varied considerably and many pupils were 'below average' by 'white standards', falling standards were also noted at Leonora School (Milnes 1987: 398). A government school operated at Cosmo Newbery after 1960.

⁴⁸⁵ The Family Narratives indicate that a number of Ngaanyatjarra men worked at Mt Windarra Nickel Project near Laverton, see (Howitt 1990).

From the reserve we used to go to school. We went to school every day...If you don't go to school Welfare will send you away somewhere, must be down somewhere in the mission home somewhere, Kurrawang or Norseman.

George's family moved from Laverton to the Leonora reserve after Native Welfare shifted the children to Nabberu Hostel:

We moved, because they had hostel there, for kids...to do schooling, Nabberu Hostel. My parents used to go out working on station and do odd jobs. I was still in primary in '67...Native Welfare shift us kids first and family was back in Laverton. So they shift because of us...they were doing little bit odd jobs and sometimes travelling to Wiluna, going to stations.

George was at Nabberu from 1968–1969.

Many in the Gibson Desert mob had their first schooling experiences in the Goldfields, as Louisa notes:

I went to Laverton school, my grandmother took me there, she lived there and she looked after me and put me in the school. I was looking at all the kids playing games and reading books, I used to look at the books 'cause I didn't know how to read. I didn't learn to read until I was about eleven years old at Leonora School.⁴⁸⁶

Louisa and Marrkilyi were at Nabberu Hostel at the same time. As station workers, Marrkilyi's parents camped at the Leonora reserve in the off-season to be near the children. While on the reserves, if children were not attending town schools they were sent to the hostels, however some adolescents like Darren missed out: 'I went station to learn...I been learn...when I was a young fella, I got to work, I got to earn some money'. Marrkilyi recalls the police, working for Native Welfare, picking up children who ran away from school and taking them to Nabberu. Schooling was to offer a reprieve not only from the teasing at Warburton, but also from the drinking on the reserves. Mick recollects that Wiluna 'was a good school, safe place for kids, mainly Aboriginal kids...lots of fights used to happen around the hotel because of drink'. Kenny describes his experience:

I stayed here [Warburton], but I never go to school...We was trying to go to school, but they was keep on, like teasing. Every day just walk around here. Go school sometimes. But mainly I went to school up that way, Laverton, Mt Margaret, Wiluna.

Kenny recalls his parents 'drinking right through' and as a young child he was taken to Nabberu and at 14 he started high school in Wiluna:

When I tried going the next year, the school said: 'No, you're right, you can stop, go home...don't worry about coming to school.' I was 16...They was working at Desert Gold...and my mother worked in Emu Farm. They keep doing that, like that now, work, alcoholics go to the pub, get the money, go straight to the pub, get a paper like a voucher, do something and go get a feed.

⁴⁸⁶ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

When Marrkilyi's family moved to Wiluna they worked at Desert Farm (see Chapter 4) and the children went to school.⁴⁸⁷

We went into a world that was so different to our parents' world, by going there, not a protective environment, they lived on reserves and were exposed to influences of drink. They had to survive but were always there for us kids, in holiday time they had to wait for the kids.⁴⁸⁸

To summarise, although marginalised from schooling at Warburton Mission most children from the 'desert families' went to school in Laverton, Leonora or Wiluna and they also observed their parents working on stations or at Desert Farm. Although it can be considered that some adolescents were 'removed' to the hostels by missionaries or government officials, most were to return to the Western Desert, as George describes:

I wasn't taken away for years and years like some other people, they been stolen from their family, taken away and never went back. It was different with me, I just went for school, learning and came back to be with my families, in my time...all of us here been sent away for school, missionary time, we did our job, we learn, then we came back here.

I discuss the return of these young adults to the Ngaanyatjarra region in Chapter 4.

Education for unemployment

The optimism of 'tutored assimilation' soon faded. Improved education and training opportunities were supposed to lead to increased employment, but the rural economy changed. Alongside a confluence of other factors, including alcohol and the introduction of Unemployment Benefits (UB), the trajectory of those who had been habituated into an expectation of advancement and employment through 'tutored assimilation' altered.

In 1964, the Warburton principal had worked hard to raise the first four students up to a standard to enter high school at a level equivalent to non-Aboriginal students.⁴⁸⁹ Nevertheless, most Aboriginal students tended to be placed at the lower levels, as May comments:

Most of us were in the bottom class...Aboriginal people were always in the lower class, right down the bottom, so we were doing Grade 5 and 6 again. So it wasn't really high school, only the name was there Eastern Goldfields High School.

⁴⁸⁷ In 1954 the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) established a mission school at Karalundi Mission School near Meekatharra for children from nearby pastoral stations and the Wiluna mission opened following year (Biskup 1973: 254). The school at Wiluna Mission was for children up to Grade 3, after which they were sent to Karalundi (Sackett 1978a). By 1957 Karalundi school went up to Grade VII (Annual Report CNW 1957: 47) and children who lived at the Wiluna reserve were bussed there. When Karalundi closed in the early 1970s children returned to Wiluna for schooling (Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. April 2004). Karalundi was re-established as a Christian boarding school and is now under the umbrella of the Aboriginal Independent Community Schools group. Families who returned to the Ngaanyatjarra Lands from Wiluna in the 1990s have continued the habit of sending children to Karalundi. See: <http://www.aics.wa.edu.au/content/theschools/map.asp>

⁴⁸⁸ Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. April 2004.

⁴⁸⁹ (Kral and Ward 2000: 26).

Clem recalls his own experience: 'they all went into 1J, they was all Aboriginal, but I was a bit smarter than they were and I was put into the class where there was all the white children'. In retrospect, Clem perceives that he was denied access to the employment rewards that 'tutored assimilation' was expected to deliver:

I thought education was really good...I was to do the second year high school...I had dreams of being a builder and I had dreams of doing this and that. I was going to stay there but the Native Welfare he talked me into agreeing to his terms...He talked me into going to Wongutha Farm...so I went down there. Then I started thinking: 'Oh we're learning all the farm works'...I was learning about shearing and they gave me a certificate...I stayed there, I didn't like it...I didn't want to do it, so I ran away...That was in 1967...I wanted to go to school more, learn to write more, all just like university things. But at that time full blood Aborigines wasn't given the privilege to go on to further education. Only half-caste were given that privilege. And I thought: 'Oh well, all my dark people they were stockmens.' So I went and became a stockman...I was still 14, it was sad...Aboriginals was only given the job of stockwork then, mustering sheep. Most of the young people who worked at Wongutha Farm, they all was everywhere, in stations...then I thought only half-caste children were able to go further school at that time...I thought white children and half-caste children were a bit smarter than me, I thought because they better than us...most of the half-caste kids I went to school with they were given better things. Native Welfare gave them the chance to stay further on for education. But calling me in the middle, when I was under-age, I should be doing the second year in high school, but that privilege that I had to go further on was cut off by the Native Welfare.

Others had gained the false impression that they had been 'right through' school and been 'real workers'. The paradox was that with the DNW maintaining 'control, care and education of natives in native institutions' until 1972, young adults were in fact compelled by the state to participate in the hostel training and employment program.⁴⁹⁰ Pedlar's Hostel purportedly accounted for a 'rise' in Aboriginal employment, however, contract employment was procured by the DNW or hostel managers, wages were controlled by an intermediary and workers resided in the hostels.⁴⁹¹ Jim was in a bit of trouble as a young man and instead of going to prison, he was sent to Pedlar's for nearly two years:

Working hand on the farm, shearing, mustering sheep...They paid the hostel manager and the hostel manager paid us...every Friday, they pay us. Manager take money for board.

George was a working boy at Condingup in 1972 and recalls up to ten young men working on farms and being paid only when they returned to Pedlar's.

By 1967 'due to cultural and environmental factors' it was found that few Aboriginal children in the DNW's Eastern Division had 'the academic ability to undertake conventional high school courses'.⁴⁹² A number of Warburton students, but not all, were then channelled into the 'Special Projects Schools'.⁴⁹³ As Wesley reflects:

⁴⁹⁰ (Haebich 2005: 205).

⁴⁹¹ Annual Report CNW 1963: 36.

⁴⁹² (Annual Report CNW 1967: 27). Milnes notes that by the 1960s the expansion of secondary education across Australia made educational qualifications based on recognised certification a national issue. This was to erect an insurmountable

The sad thing about Nindeebai is they might have been thinking they were going to school, but a lot of them had a special building, a special school called Project School out the back of Boulder and that's where a lot of them Aboriginal kids went. They didn't go to a proper school, I think Project School was more just physical learning, welding or something.

Progressively teenagers at Warburton began to resist being sent away and 'established a reputation for being aggressive and unco-operative'.⁴⁹⁴ Green perceives that 'discontent grew into unrest and sometimes violence erupted both at school and in the hostel'.⁴⁹⁵ By the mid-1970s the 'ultimate futility of education' was sensed: '[f]or some, high school offers some sort of promise, but most go for the sake of the experience rather than any ultimate opportunity that might be offered'.⁴⁹⁶ The transferral of teenagers for secondary schooling outside of the region began to wane:

[T]here is an increasing dissatisfaction with the practice of sending secondary age children away from Warburton for their 'high school' or equivalent education. Parents, and more particularly the old people feel this is wrong...relatives express constant concern about the welfare of their children, and become so agitated about them that once they have them home for term breaks, they are reluctant to allow children to return for succeeding terms...Children become homesick and despondent to the point of manifesting antisocial attitudes aimed at drawing upon themselves the negative attention necessary to cause authorities to send them back to Warburton.⁴⁹⁷

The advent of better transport by the 1970s meant that the few remaining children boarding at Esperance, Norseman and Boulder, who returned to their families for holidays, often didn't return to school the next term.⁴⁹⁸ By the 1980s the Project Centre at Boulder had closed and the Education Department no longer supported sending children away for secondary schooling.⁴⁹⁹ According to Wells, the Ngaanyatjarra students still boarding at Nindeebai Hostel were 'forced to go into the normal stream' at Eastern Goldfields High School and were not able to cope with this. Nindeebai Hostel closed soon after, leaving Norseman Mission as the last residential hostel taking secondary-aged students. Nevertheless, some families were later to return to the practice of sending teenagers away for residential post-primary schooling outside the Lands (see Appendix F).⁵⁰⁰ This was

barrier to Aboriginal students, especially those from remote communities (Milnes 1987: 347). Academic standards now determined procedure through the school years and this was further exacerbated by 'alteration in 1963 of [Education Department] Regulation 85 which stipulated that normal practice was to maintain chronological rather than scholastic promotion between grade levels' with all 13 year olds to be transferred to high school irrespective of academic performance (Milnes 1987: 399).

⁴⁹³ See (Kral and Ward 2000: 31).

⁴⁹⁴ (Green 1983: 112).

⁴⁹⁵ (Green 1983: 18).

⁴⁹⁶ School Policy Warburton Ranges 1974—Education File, NTU Archives.

⁴⁹⁷ School Policy Warburton Ranges 1974—Education File, NTU Archives.

⁴⁹⁸ Wells—Interview 1/4/04.

⁴⁹⁹ Concerns regarding the project classes were addressed in the 1984 *Beazley Report* on Aboriginal education in Western Australia (Beazley 1984: 334–335). The Report found 'conflicting evidence on the relevance and adequacy' of the 'project' classes. On the one hand they were perceived to provide 'practical skills' on the other hand they were seen as 'dumping grounds' with students given no opportunity to work on the mainstream 'Achievement Certificate curriculum'. The Report recommended a full review of the 'purpose and operation' of the 'project' classes.

⁵⁰⁰ Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed Schools (CAPS) commenced in Coolgardie in 1981, then at Kurrawang, followed by Wongutha in 1990 in facilities previously used by Wongutha Mission Training Farm. The CAPS system was formed by concerned Aboriginal parents who felt that the government schools were failing Aboriginal students. This initial group were Aboriginal people who had grown up at, or had links to, Mt Margaret Mission. They felt that the standard of

despite the fact that by the mid-1980s the Education Department had implemented a 'secondary-tops' post-primary program in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands schools.⁵⁰¹ This led to an increase in teacher numbers and drove the provision of permanent school buildings and teacher housing in the new communities, and ultimately to higher teacher turnover and a decrease in social relations between school and the community.⁵⁰²

The expectation of employment

As we have seen, residential hostels and training programs were established to enhance literacy and social development and 'to raise aborigines to the highest level of employment'.⁵⁰³

The Department of Native Welfare is well aware that lack of regular work is one of the major factors working against assimilation. Regular, satisfying and remunerative employment nearly always leads to an improvement in all other aspects essential to assimilation—housing, hygiene, education and social acceptability generally... In the long term, most faith is being placed in the education of Aboriginal children, not only in primary schools but to higher levels in secondary schools. But the problem of finding employment for youths and adults has to be faced today so that the task of assimilation can go forward.⁵⁰⁴

However the expectations of 'advancement' did not correlate with the known limited employment potential unfolding in the Goldfields.

As the 1954 *Native Welfare Act* took effect unskilled station work was the main avenue of employment available for Warburton people in the Eastern Goldfields sub-district.⁵⁰⁵ At the time it was suggested that the flow of Warburton people should be stemmed as there was 'not sufficient employment' for those already in the district. Simultaneously, it was assumed that as Mt Margaret graduates received 'technical and professional training to fit them for alternative and more dignified employment' this would open more vacancies in the pastoral industry.⁵⁰⁶ In 1957 R. and C. Berndt asserted that 'not enough' employment was available in the Warburton-Laverton-Leonora-Kalgoorlie region and the 'whole

education that they had achieved was far better than what their own children and grandchildren were achieving, and they desired education sympathetic to the needs of Aboriginal students, Christian, and modelled on the Mt Margaret school. See: <http://www.aics.wa.edu.au/content/theschools/map.asp> ; <http://www.wonguthacaps.wa.edu.au/history.html>

⁵⁰¹ (Kral and Ward 2000: 36–37).

⁵⁰² (NLLIA 1996).

⁵⁰³ WA SRO Acc 1419 EG 23-1 18/8/54—*ADO Eastern Goldfields to Superintendent Cosmo Newbery Native Mission*.

⁵⁰⁴ (Department of Native Welfare 1967: 27)

⁵⁰⁵ Annual Report CNA 1954: 24.

⁵⁰⁶ WA SRO Acc 1419 EG 23-1 18/8/54—*ADO Eastern Goldfields to Superintendent Cosmo Newbery Native Mission*. Mt Margaret established a reputation for instilling confidence in Aboriginal workers and producing 'numerous leaders' (Marks 1960: 104) who were celebrated as 'responsible and respected Australian citizens' (Department of Native Welfare 1967: 46) across the Goldfields and Western Australia. A number of Mt Margaret students studied in Perth and resided at Alvan House for females established in 1951 and McDonald House for males established in 1952 (Milnes 1987: 321). Sadie Corner studied nursing and became Matron of Leonora Hospital (Marks 1960: 80). May Miller studied teaching in Perth and returned to Mt Margaret as a qualified teacher employed by the Education Department in 1954 (Department of Native Welfare 1967). May O'Brien (nee Miller) became a high profile education professional in WA and has been awarded for her work in Aboriginal education. She has continued to work with Ngaanyatjarra people in their education

problem of employment for Aborigines in this region is a vital one, complementary to that of education'.⁵⁰⁷ A 1964 employment survey expressed concern at the numbers migrating to Laverton, but training and the preparation of work-ready Aboriginal adults was still recommended despite the employment scarcity in the Goldfields.⁵⁰⁸ Table 3.2 below shows the 1965–1972 population and employment figures for Warburton and Laverton, indicating that the adult population was greater than the number of jobs available in either Laverton or Warburton. The high mobility from the Central Reserves out to the Eastern Goldfields is also illustrated in the population figures in Appendix E—Table AE.2.

It was clear that by the early 1960s DNW policy regarding the economic future of Warburton was confused. On the one hand Commissioner Gare considered it 'fatal' for Warburton people to come west unless they were sufficiently 'advanced' to be absorbed into employment in other areas.⁵⁰⁹ On the other hand, the mission was told that they must empty the desert missions and 'get people into the Goldfields where they will get employment'.⁵¹⁰

Prior to 1969 there was no wage system for Aboriginal station workers in Western Australia. Government regulation of the pastoral industry had employed Aboriginal labour on a permit system where pastoralists had to supply rations, clothing, blankets and medicines, and cash payment of wages was 'a matter between local employers and the Aborigines'.⁵¹¹ In the Goldfields, the Mt Margaret expectation regarding employment conditions for Aboriginal pastoral workers had seeped into the ethos—as indicated in Wesley's account of his father's working experience 'breaking down the barriers' described in Chapter 2— and reiterated by Marlon:

I went to school in the 50s, only had six or seven years schooling...In that space of time I was taught everything you know and when I went out to work: Where you went to school? they asked me. 'Mt Margaret'. Squatters and managers said: 'You know how to work better than the rest of the people.' I said: 'Yeah, lot of these people they come straight in from the bush, they don't have that education, they was never shown.' Now that I had that little bit I can come out into the world and get any type of job.⁵¹²

endeavours. See transcript: 'A mission to remember' ABC Goldfields WA 11/10/04 <http://www.abc.net.au/goldfields/stories/s1217377.htm> (downloaded 22/6/05).

⁵⁰⁷ (Berndt and Berndt 1957: 7). Virtually no anthropological research had taken place in the Ngaanyatjarra region prior to the Berndts' visit in 1957, partly as a consequence of the UAM's antipathy towards anthropologists deriving from Schenk's hostile relationship with Elkin (O'Malley 1994). See (Berndt and Berndt 1957; Berndt and Berndt 1959; Berndt 1959).

⁵⁰⁸ WA SRO Acc 1733 300/64—*Employment Survey (Central Reserve and the Eastern Division, including Esperance and Kalgoorlie)*.

⁵⁰⁹ WA SRO ACC 993 1220/61 17/762—*From CNW to MNW summary of history of Warburton Ranges Mission*

⁵¹⁰ (Douglas 1978: 113).

⁵¹¹ (Rowley 1972 [1970]: 257; Biskup 1973).

⁵¹² Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

Table 3.2 Estimated adult Aboriginal population and employment figures

Laverton and Warburton 1965-1972

DISTRICT	1965				1966				1967				1968			
	Laverton		Warburton		Laverton		Warburton		Laverton		Warburton		Laverton		Warburton	
Population:	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
'Full-blood'	248	194			110	125	105	93	88	89	112	129	87	92	102	121
'Half-caste'	10	6			7	5	-	-	6	5	-	-	9	7	-	-
Employment:	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>Total</i>	109	13			90	26	30	-	35	15	23	-	50	18	36	19
Types	1	-	1		-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
2	-	1			-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
3	-	-			-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	15	1			10	5	6	-	5	2	-	-	-	6	1	-
5	10	10			8	15	-	-	3	10	6	10	6	9	3	16
6	25	-			4	-	21	-	6	-	9	-	13	-	14	-
7	40	-			40	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	30	-	-	-
8	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	19	-			28	-	-	-	1	-	8	-	1	-	18	-

DISTRICT	1969				1970				1971				1972			
	Laverton		Warburton		Laverton		Warburton		Laverton		Warburton		Laverton		Warburton	
Population:	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
'Full-blood'	112	90	70	100	40	22	92	116	54	53	103	126	51	52	120	116
'Half-caste'	15	11	-	-	11	12	-	-	11	9	-	-	15	10	-	-
Employment:	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>Total</i>	50	13	31	10	38	3	14	6	31	10	36	11	39	5	58	41
Types	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	1	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	10	1	5	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	5	10	1	-	-	3	-	6	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	12	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	4	-	-	5	-	5	10	41
7	23	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	13	-	-	6	17	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
9	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	15	-	9	-	13	-	35	-	18	-	47	-

Key to employment:	
Males:	Females:
1. Professional	1. Professional
2. Clerical and commercial	2. Clerical and commercial
3. Tradesmen	3. Skilled occupations
4. Rural workers	4. Unskilled occupations
5. Industrial workers	5. Domestic
6. Mining industry	6. Production process workers and general labourers
7. Pastoral industry	7. Service and recreational workers
8. Transport	
9. Self-employed	
10. Other (sandalwood pullers, labourers, service workers)	

Source: Annual Reports CNW 1964-1972
 Annual Reports AAPA and ALT 1973-1983
 ** 1973 Annual Reports stopped collecting this data.

Marlon recalls how he, Arthur and Silas had worked at Bandy Station, but 'walked away' because conditions were too 'rough':

Go out work hard all day from five to midnight, low money, not enough sleep, bad food, rude manager, swearing. Go out work till shirt and trousers break, shoes break, no wash, can't go to shop to get new clothes, worked till clothes fall off your back.

Marlon then moved on to Yundamindra Station where he became 'overseer' and stayed for around seven years. A continuity evolved because he felt trusted, had responsibility and developed a good working relationship with the manager. Wesley affirms that station managers 'built up relationships' with pastoral workers and would seek out the same workers.⁵¹³

Under the DNW compulsory vocational training system young adults were 'forced to work' and if they were not working they were picked up by police (acting for DNW). Arthur suggests that this drove the development of the working habit. Una confirms that if men were caught sitting around Native Welfare would pick them up and take them to a station in much the same manner as children who were not at school were forcibly taken there by the DNW. The narratives from those who had been at Wongutha or Pedlar's also describe how stations with the worst conditions were avoided. Arthur stayed at one station for a long time:

I been around every stations, and you see grumpy man...station owner, we didn't like that man, so we moved around till we, till I can see this is a kind man he look after Aboriginal people. So I stayed at this one station ten or eleven miles south of Laverton... and that station owner he looked after us ecause he teach me, teaching me the right way. Like I started off on the, like the station motors so he taught me how to take the head off, take the sump off, take the engine out of the body. That was like a thing that I really liked, really loved to do. So I kept working and the station man, you know, he like a man like that.

Although Arthur acknowledges that 'my way was forced, like, just the job part...that's why I got that habit', he also demonstrates agency in the manner in which he developed his working relationships:

[I]t wasn't a big pay you know, they paid us little money...this was 'pound time'. When we was working, we used to get little bit and money sort of changed at that time, you know and station people started paying us like right way. They see us working all the time and they know: 'Oh he's a good worker.' And pay you more. If you not working properly, you won't get much. So we really worked hard to earn more.

To this day a perception remains in the Ngaanyatjarra collective memory that ample employment was available: 'when there's station work in Laverton area they go...Leonora,

⁵¹³ The good relations between pastoralists and Aboriginal station workers in the Goldfields, especially on sheep stations, was affirmed by Kado Muir (pers. comm. September 2005) who grew up in the Leonora district and is currently Head of School, School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Charles Darwin University, NT.

right across to Wiluna, right across the Goldfields'. Moreover, literacy was not as intrinsically important to the attainment of work as the state ideology purported. Wesley recalls that even for those 'not that educated' there was also plenty of work in town: 'Laverton Hospital was full of young Aboriginal people working, as was the Shire, now a battle to find one'. Arthur concurs:

There was a lot of jobs in the Shire and the mailcarter, he take mail into Kalgoorlie, Leonora, they needed young people to work so we used to work on the mail too. Like mail carting, going out, picking up stores, they had no train that time, coming into Laverton.

Then, Arthur says, it was different 'because of the changing':

The wool price went down, not enough meat, bullocks and things, this is around Laverton, that time used to be no rain, no grass, stations all went down. And mining mob came that time. When I was still working there, mining mob came around...they were buying the land and the station owners all got out then. That time it was really hard.

Everything was different 'because of the changing'

In December 1968 the *Federal Pastoral Industry Award* determined that all Aborigines employed in the pastoral industry in Australia should receive equal wages for equal work. However, West Australian Aboriginal pastoral workers were specifically 'excluded from the provisions of industrial awards which set minimum rates of pay for station hands' until 1969.⁵¹⁴

The core of any discussion about 'equality' rests on the premise that a worker will have access to basic and award wages as well as access to full unemployment benefit when unemployed. The exclusion of Aboriginal workers, primarily in the pastoral industry, in the Eastern Goldfields from these basic rights exposed an inherent contradiction in the DNW policy. Without economic equality the chance of achieving Middleton's dream of integration was minimised.⁵¹⁵

Ironically, however, from 1969 the rural economy entered an unforeseen decline; wool prices plummeted and 'poor seasons and wheat quotas drove many farmers into difficulties'.⁵¹⁶ Additionally, increased mechanisation was being introduced to reduce labour costs and horseback mustering was replaced by aircraft and motorbikes. This led to reduced employment as stations in the Eastern Goldfields closed up or were taken over and an 'intractable set of problems started to grow at centres such as Wiluna, Laverton, and Leonora.'⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ (Schapper 1970: 10). In 1965 the Federal court prescribed that by the end of 1968 *all* Aborigines employed in the pastoral industry should receive the same wages as other workers (Bolton 1981: 166) and the *Federal Pastoral Industry Award* became effective in December 1968. All male Indigenous employees on Northern Territory cattle stations were entitled to the *Cattle Station Industry (Northern Territory) Award* by December 1 1968 (Rowse 1998: 118). This decision was also not applicable to Western Australia until the 1969 work season and applied only to Australian Worker's Union members and not to full-blood Aborigines employed as station hands unless they held a Certificate of Citizenship (Jebb 2002: 285), see (Bunbury 2002).

⁵¹⁵ (Rowley 1972b: 251).

⁵¹⁶ (Burnside 1979: 261; Bolton 1981: 168).

⁵¹⁷ (Burnside 1979: 262; Bolton 1981: 168).

As employment potential declined it intersected with the growing confusion among welfare officers regarding Aboriginal people's eligibility for unemployment benefits: welfare policy at that time was for departmental officers not to give out rations, while Social Security guidelines continued to exclude seasonally employed people from receiving a benefit during the lay-off period.⁵¹⁸ Aboriginal people were caught in a vicious cycle: lack of employment was further exacerbated by the inability to qualify for UB and by the DNW 'trying to rid their offices of rationees'.⁵¹⁹

As the 1960s drew to a close, diminishing employment prospects and the 'ineradicable proportion of structurally "unemployed" men' raised the question of eligibility for UB.⁵²⁰ After the election of the Labor government in 1972 it was declared that 'all Aborigines should be paid award wages when in employment and should otherwise be eligible for the full range of social security payments, including UB'.⁵²¹ With the introduction of UB Ngaanyatjarra people had their first experience of 'free money' or 'sit down'. Many did not welcome it, as Wesley's sister Helen suggests: 'it didn't seem right to get the dole when you were capable of working'. Jim concurs:

I never been on that... it's not good, for me...in that time my father told me that I'm old enough to work now: 'You got to work for your own living.' I think that money, that sit-down money made them give away all them jobs. Over there getting free money, why not sit down? No work. That's changed.

Marlon's reflection provides a similar perspective:

I got used to working and supporting my family, got good money in Windarra mine, I buggared it when I came here, to Tjirrkarli about '83, now I got no money. Came here and watched my family drinking and I started drinking too. From that time to today they made a big mess with 'sit down'—the government policy when they first gave 'sit down'...the damage they done. Before we had to work to keep the family going, that's what we were taught. When we came back to Warburton: don't work, you don't have to, everyone said you don't have to worry about it now. And we got Unemployment Benefit. That was 'government time' and a 'you give me this' attitude started and went right through, like: 'If they ask for things then I can too.' So we all got into this habit of sitting down, lining up, waiting for the money. Now they say: 'Why you all sitting down?' But it was their stupid idea in the first place, the government policy, that caused so many people to sit down and loaf and put their hand out. I changed too from hard working six to four, to getting the free money, no sweat at all.

From these reflections insights are gained into how the Ngaanyatjarra were paradigmatically 'habitualized' into the normativity of work that they encountered on the missions and stations. Then the state introduced incomprehensible waves of policy change

⁵¹⁸ (Jebb 2002: 288).

⁵¹⁹ (Rowley 1972 [1970]: 64; Jebb 2002: 294).

⁵²⁰ (Rowse 1998: 138; Sanders 1986).

⁵²¹ (Sanders 1986: 285).

and people began to experience a diminishing sense of certainty, predictability and control. As Arthur says:

I don't know why, but the changes came in, like you don't have to work and you still got the money coming in, all those sort of changes came, changed it around.

The dearth of employment also led to sedentarisation on the reserves and this coincided with the lifting of alcohol restrictions in 1971.

'Painted with the same brush'—alcohol and its effects

The 1963 amendments to the *Native Welfare Act* had removed many of the last restrictive regulations pertaining to Aboriginal people. Nevertheless, until 1971, alcohol restrictions still applied to any Aboriginal person not holding an exemption certificate issued under the provisions of the *Native (Citizenship Rights) Act* (see Chapter 2).⁵²² Even so, alcohol was still obtained illegally.⁵²³ Alcohol restrictions remained in place longer in the Eastern Goldfields than in other regions, apart from the Kimberley (despite the repeal in 1970 of the *Licensing Act* which had previously prohibited Aboriginal drinking).⁵²⁴ Finally, in July 1971, the *Native (Citizenship Rights) Act* was repealed—and West Australian Aborigines gained full citizenship rights.⁵²⁵ The 'ramifications' of unrestricted access to alcohol then rippled through the sociocultural system in the towns of Wiluna, Leonora and Laverton, as well as Mt Margaret, Cosmo Newbery and Warburton.⁵²⁶ European-Aboriginal relations deteriorated and alcohol-related fights increased arrests and incarceration—eventually culminating in a serious incident between police and Warburton men travelling through Laverton for ceremonial business at Wiluna.⁵²⁷

The removal of the remaining restrictions on alcohol access was to impact profoundly on tutored assimilation and the social development strategy. Some Ngaanyatjarra perceive that as a consequence they were no longer seen as potential workers, irrespective of their education or work experience. April considers that as alcohol took over, education was undermined:

When them young girls, young men came home after being away for two or three years being away learning a lot of things, work and everything, reading, writing, and all that... They came back and

⁵²² Annual Report CNW 1970: 10.

⁵²³ (Sackett 1977).

⁵²⁴ Annual Report CNW 1971: 8. Alcohol restrictions were lifted progressively in the different regions across WA. The right of access to alcohol on the same conditions as applied to the general public were granted in the South West Land Division in July 1964 and in November 1966 restrictions were lifted in the North West Division and the North Central Division, excluding the township of Wiluna (Annual Report CNW 1967: 11).

⁵²⁵ (Fletcher 1992:1).

⁵²⁶ (Sackett 1977).

⁵²⁷ The incident became known as the 'Skull Creek affair' and was of such severity that it led to the 'Laverton Royal Commission'. See (Legal Service 1976; Western Australia Parliament 1976; Woenne 1980).

sort of went down, drinking, they was teaching them the wrong way. Teaching them to drink, instead of teaching them to go out to the station or get a job in small towns like Laverton, Leonora. From that time, you know the ones I went to school with they went down...instead of going up and learning different things, they didn't learn anything after that. That's really sad 'cause I used to live in Cosmo, and when I used to go into Laverton and do shopping and I see all the girls I been to school with, they all drinking...which wasn't right, should have been all working, there was a lot of jobs there...When I was still going to school I used to see a lot of young ladies come back from Kurrawang, Esperance and they work in the hospital, work in the Welfare office, work in the shop, they had jobs everywhere.

Wesley suggests that Aboriginal people in towns like Kalgoorlie and Laverton were 'painted with the same brush' and April attests to this:

Citizen Rights come in, that just went down, wasn't good...They had no encouragement you know. 'Cause only they look at...they don't look at fullbloods...not encourage the fullbloods...they had that feeling all the time in small towns like Wiluna, Leonora, Kalgoorlie or Laverton.

Wesley senses that prior to this, non-Aboriginal people in the Eastern Goldfields had been 'building up relationships' with Aboriginal people, but non-restrictive drinking rights and the introduction of 'money for nothing' led to negative stereotyping that continues up to the present day. These days some Ngaanyatjarra leaders lament on how life should have been, had it not been for the insurmountable factors outlined above.

By 1969 Ministerial concern regarding underemployment in the Central Reserves and surrounding towns had intensified to such an extent that the resources and needs of the area, including Warburton, were evaluated by consultants W.D. Scott and Co.⁵²⁸ In 1972 the Minister accepted their in principle recommendations. With the 1972 election of a Federal Labor government, as I describe in Chapter 4, these recommendations were never realised.⁵²⁹

The move 'from rations to cash'⁵³⁰

Anthropologist Charles Rowley posits that education was seen as 'the one great hope for increasing the rate of change' for Aborigines, yet, he argues, the causal factors in the process of social change were not properly considered as it was assumed at the time that schooling was 'the main factor in social change'. Moreover, the 'effects of access to money...as a basic force in social change' were not taken into consideration.⁵³¹ Tutored assimilation was expected to bring Aboriginal people to a 'standard' warranting receipt of

⁵²⁸ Management consultants W.D. Scott and Co. were employed to survey the region and the DNW was given the impression that Warburton Ranges Mission was 'on its last legs' (WA SRO Acc 1667 444/70—*Central Reserves 1/8/70 notes from DNW Scott Survey Steering Committee*). Recommendations from the Scott survey included increasing the involvement of Aboriginal people in the development of projects; emphasising adult training and vocational training; and changing the system of primary education delivered by the WA Education Department. The Education Department was, however, scornful of recommendations regarding changes to education (WA SRO Acc 1667 444/70—*Central Reserves Director General of Education evaluation of Report*).

⁵²⁹ WA SRO Acc 1667 444/70—*Central Reserves 16/3/72 letter from CNW to Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra*.

⁵³⁰ Title adapted from (Rowse 1998: 112).

cash wages for the employed and welfare benefits for the unemployed on the assumption that they adopted the family form and household structure of 'normal' Australians.⁵³² However, for the training to be effective, 'rations would eventually have to be replaced by cash'.⁵³³

The Warburton experience of cash

The transition to a cash-based labour market economy was nuanced by the sociocultural expectation of the exchange relationship, the understanding of the ration relationship and the lack of familiarity with cash as an abstract medium of exchange. Western Desert society is founded upon the rule-bound, sanctified nature of reciprocity and exchange embedded in social relationships and ritual.⁵³⁴ This kin-based social economy does not articulate easily into a market-based cash economy.⁵³⁵

The mission was at first a cash-less society and the Ngaanyatjarra learned that 'rations' were not given, but earned (i.e. as payment for dingo scalps, or mission work because 'pauperism' was not encouraged).⁵³⁶ As a 'reward for effort' workers received a 'chit'—a piece of paper marked with the number of hours worked to be exchanged for rations, blankets and second hand clothes at the store. Even with subsidies, the mission's capacity to provide rations in exchange for labour was limited and depended upon the majority population maintaining their previous hunter-gatherer lifestyle:

Natives are not permitted to come and just sit around the mission all day in the hopes of cadging food or eating up the earnings of those who work, but are sent out hunting and encouraged to live their normal bush lives...the indigents are rationed on Mondays and the Child endowment goods are distributed for the camp children on Thursdays...there are 27 boys and 34 girls in the Homes with 60 children in the camp making a total of 121 for whom we receive Child endowment.⁵³⁷

⁵³¹ (Rowley 1972b: 322).

⁵³² (Rowse 1998: 117).

⁵³³ (Rowse 1998: 170).

⁵³⁴ Traditionally social transactions were enacted in ritual exchange, for example: trading exchange of weapons or utensils; ritual exchange of objects after the completion of funeral ceremonies; and the obligation to provide food in sorry camps. Myers talks of hunting and preparing large game in terms of a 'social product' where 'gifts of meat could satisfy other exchange obligations' such as bestowals of meat from a man to his future in-laws, and the distribution of meat to kin according to relationship with the hunter (Myers 1988: 21). Exchange of objects *or* 'services' may last many years, for example: a verbal contract for marriage where a son-in-law is obligated to contribute food, services or blankets to his father-in-law could extend over many seasons (de Graaf 1968: 98-99). See also (Hamilton 1972; Myers 1986; Rowse 1998).

⁵³⁵ (Austin-Broos 2003; Peterson 1993; Sansom 1994 [1988]; Schwab 1995)

⁵³⁶ Rowse argues that 'pauperism' is 'one of the central constructs of Australian colonialism' and underpinning the act of ration distribution was the philosophical need to inculcate Aboriginal people into 'earning' rations, thus reinforcing the 'ethical relationship between effort and reward' (Rowse 1998: 40-1)

⁵³⁷ WA SRO Acc 1419 23-7-3 Missions UAM Mission Warburton Ranges—*Reports Annual Inspection June 1954–June 1955 Annual Report from UAM to DNA re. Warburton*. Prior to the 1959 amendments to the *Commonwealth Social Services Act* the distribution of pensions and child endowment most likely arose from the mission exploiting its discretionary access to social security benefits. During the Second World War a number of important changes were made to the Social Services laws as they applied to Aboriginal people. 'Detribalised' Aborigines became eligible for child endowment under the *Commonwealth Child Endowment Act, 1941* and in the following year this was extended to missions and government institutions. An amendment to the family allowance legislation (Act No 5 of 1942) allowed the granting of child

The 'reward for effort' relationship was confused by churchgoers also receiving a token that could be exchanged for rations. In the 1960s the Western Mining workers were the first workers at Warburton to actually earn cash (and immediately purchased the first locally-owned vehicle).⁵³⁸ Then, as I explain further below cash came in the form of social security benefits and by 1968 a Savings Bank Agency operated with 20 accounts mainly used by locals.⁵³⁹

The Goldfields experience of cash

Unlike their mission counterparts, adults in the Goldfields had worked for cash and learned to handle money: 'like whitefellas you got to go out and work for yourself, can't depend on your family all the time...that's what Aboriginal people this side say'. Valcie states also that:

Even bush people, they come from Lands, they right, was stock work in those days...all working on stations and only rations for real old people in those days...no Social Security, no nothing. If you don't work you don't have anything. You don't have sit-down money or anything. And money wasn't good in those days, but whatever money, look after it, spend it right.

And Wesley concurs:

They had to work for a living because there was no such thing as the dole...After the ration depot finished, well they got to go and work for their own money. Then they had to go and work station and that was part of learning and they still kept on learning on the job, on the job training. Got to understand the white man, understand the white man boss.

Molly recalls:

I used to work around Laverton area, hospital, domestic, work anywhere to earn money, to keep me going and my husband used to work in the station. We worked to earn our own living, no government money, only child endowment. That's all the free money I know.⁵⁴⁰

Clifford also heard stories from his family about this experience:

I think they learned just to work, look after yourself, put food on the table...the people who camped around the mission they were sort of cared for...people who worked down that way Cosmo, Laverton, round Laverton, stations, Leonora...they had to work or else they wouldn't get nothing coming in.

Access to Social Security

The official goal of assimilation necessitated equality of access to social security benefits and inclusion in normal industrial awards as 'indisputable entitlements'.⁵⁴¹ Amendments to the *Commonwealth Social Services Act* in 1959 had finally allowed 'nomadic' Aborigines access

endowment payments to children maintained by missions under particular circumstances and pensions granted to the mission authority under (Acts Nos 3 and 19 of 1942) (Sanders 1986: 91–93). In 1944 the *Unemployment and Sickness Benefit Act* was applied to all Aborigines provided that they were considered by the Department of Social Services to be of sufficient 'character, standard of intelligence and social development' (Sanders 1986: 93). 'Nomadic' Aborigines were, however, denied access to the benefits until 1959.

⁵³⁸ (Plant and Viegas 2002).

⁵³⁹ *United Aborigines Messenger* July 1968: 10.

⁵⁴⁰ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

to welfare benefits previously denied: child endowment became available to mothers and the pension was available for aged, widowed and invalid people.⁵⁴² Social security reforms were based on the Department of Social Services 'principle' that if an Aborigine demonstrated his 'ability to handle money wisely and to manage his own affairs' then payments could be paid directly to him, or the mission was able to give out part of the pension to the individual in the form of a 'pocket money' payment.⁵⁴³

The distribution of social services benefits set the stage for the formation of an administrative identity—unmediated by social relatedness—in accord with the bureaucratic requirements of the state. In its attempt to assimilate Aboriginal people into European institutionalised norms, the social security system was unable to cope with aspects of Aboriginal sociality like traditional marriages (i.e. marriages not registered at law) and polygynous marriages.⁵⁴⁴ After 1959 identity requirements for social security eligibility were formalised—proof of residence, date of birth, naming, signatures—and by 1961 even the registering of Aboriginal births and deaths became 'compulsory'.⁵⁴⁵

Warburton people were given family surnames between 1955 and 1958, consistent with a 1954 DNW circular advising that 'where possible English surnames should be used'.⁵⁴⁶ Names were initially applied haphazardly with brothers receiving different surnames or a man being named after his wife. Older people with no surname were arbitrarily grouped into families because the administration required surnames. At the time of the first census in Warburton in 1966 a missionary realised that some family surnames had been attributed wrongly and one family had a number of different surnames. English names started to be used in tandem with the introduction of new systems. Una recalls that when rations were distributed the new English names were called out and gradually people began to learn 'this must be for me' and acquired the names. The more common usage of English name, may also have arisen around finding a form of address that was phonologically dissimilar from the bush name to refer to someone recently deceased.⁵⁴⁷ Brooks suggests that it was common for schooled adults to acquire surnames first then pass them on to other family

⁵⁴¹ (Rowse 1998: 114).

⁵⁴² (Rowse 1998: 133).

⁵⁴³ (Sanders 1986: 99).

⁵⁴⁴ (Sanders 1986).

⁵⁴⁵ (Jebb 2002: 260). See (Jebb 2002) for a discussion of the entry into the Social Security system in the 1950s in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

⁵⁴⁶ (Powell and Kennedy 2005: 34–6).

⁵⁴⁷ The term *Kunmarnarra* (or *Kunmarna*) is the name for someone who has a similar name to someone who passed away. See Ngaanyatjarra Glossary Appendix D.

members, including elders.⁵⁴⁸ These habits were to signify an overt appropriation of the introduced 'symbolic system', that is, a 'cultural marker' that publicly redefined the way that one perceived oneself and related to others.⁵⁴⁹ Pension and child endowment cheques, written out to an individual's recently acquired English name, came to the Warburton superintendent. The receipt of a set amount of pocket money (with the remaining proportion allocated in rations) required a verification mark—a signature (the phonographic code for the new oral vocative) or an 'X' (a legally valid stylised mark).⁵⁵⁰ It was in the mission's economic interest to promote the acquisition of English nomenclatures as only schoolchildren with English names could be claimed under Section 95(1) 8(3) of the *Act* and subsidised by the DNW.⁵⁵¹ Wells suggests that the subsidies were a means by which the mission kept operating.⁵⁵²

The dormitory had closed in 1961, ostensibly to train adults to take responsibility for their children and to encourage economic independence.⁵⁵³ However, the mission continued receiving government subsidies to provide three meals a day for some 100 school children and stores for 34 pensioners.⁵⁵⁴ Adults had by this time become reliant on food bought from the mission store using minimal cash from limited poorly paid employment or pocket money from child endowment or pensions.⁵⁵⁵ De Graaf suggests that at this time around 400 adults shared and subsisted on meagre resources with hungry parents 'begging' for food from children fed in the dining room.⁵⁵⁶ Despite the 1959 amendments to the *Act*, direct payment of full cash welfare benefits to individuals commenced at Warburton only in 1971 (see Appendix E—Table AE.1) and 'the real turning point' came with the election of the Federal Labor government in 1972.⁵⁵⁷ It is important at this point to juxtapose this paternalistic state of affairs with the demands and expectations of individual competence in managing not only one's personal affairs, but also community affairs, with the onset of self-determination only a few years later.

⁵⁴⁸ Brooks pers. comm. August 2004.

⁵⁴⁹ (Harries 1994: 60; Brooks 2002a: 29).

⁵⁵⁰ Glass and Hackett pers. comm. September 2005.

⁵⁵¹ WA SRO Acc 993 1220/61—*General correspondence Dec. 61: Report on inspection of Warburton Ranges Mission re. pension and family allowance.*

⁵⁵² Wells—Interview 1/4/04.

⁵⁵³ (Douglas 1978: 4–5).

⁵⁵⁴ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1965: 6.

⁵⁵⁵ Mark de Graaf was Principal at Warburton School from 1962–1963. He notes that by now flour bought from the mission store had replaced plant foods which were mainly gathered on bush trips (de Graaf 1968: 69).

⁵⁵⁶ (de Graaf 1968: 136–5).

⁵⁵⁷ (Sanders 1986: 115). The directive was issued by Billy Wentworth who was at the time the Minister for Social Security and in charge of the Commonwealth government's new Office of Aboriginal Affairs (Sanders 1986: 115).

Literacy and schooling

In 1953 the DNA had announced that it had been unable 'to collate statistical information which would permit an estimate of current literacy among adult natives' across the entire state of Western Australia.⁵⁵⁸ Nevertheless, by 1958 most Aboriginal adults were seen to 'lack skills' other than for a 'limited range of farm and pastoral tasks' and this was associated with the 'illiteracy of most Aborigines 30 years of age and above, and with functional illiteracy of a large number between 15 and 30 years'.⁵⁵⁹ This is hardly surprising if one considers that the 1945 *Education Act* had 'theoretically' opened 'white schools' to Aborigines, yet under 1954 *Native Welfare Act* 'legal restrictions to towns had prohibited them taking advantage of it' and only in 1951 had the DNA expressed a 'willingness' to accept responsibility for the education of children in missions.⁵⁶⁰

In 1951, in the DNA Central District, incorporating the Goldfields, it was found that not many school-age children had 'progressed beyond Standard V' and this was attributed simply to poor attendance arising from the 'itinerant nature of the children's family life'.⁵⁶¹ However, according to Biskup, 54.4% of school-age Goldfields Aboriginal children were found to be attending school in 1954 and educated at primary standard.⁵⁶² Ironically in 1956, despite a history of minimal state support for Aboriginal education, a DNW officer reported that it was 'an indictment of some 30 years of Mission effort in the Eastern Goldfields that so few adult natives can speak even a limited version of comprehensible English and a minimal percentage of them can read and write it'.⁵⁶³ By the 1960s, with increased Education Department involvement and Native Welfare compulsion, Aboriginal children were to form the majority state school population in many small Goldfields towns, although Mt Margaret remained the largest school north of Kalgoorlie.⁵⁶⁴ By 1963, in the DNW Eastern Division (Fig. 1.4) it was reported that 452 Aboriginal children were in primary school, 28 were in secondary, and twelve were at Wongutha Farm, with secondary participation up to Grade VII.⁵⁶⁵ Given the limitations of prior educational experiences it is

⁵⁵⁸ Annual Report CNA 1953: 6.

⁵⁵⁹ Report of the Special Committee on Native Matters (Perth, 1958) quoted in (Schapper 1970: 27–8).

Across Western Australia in 1936: 248 Aboriginal children were educated in state schools, 455 in mission schools and 156 in Native Affairs settlement schools and by 1948: 636 children were being educated in state schools and 358 in mission schools (Milnes 1987: 281). By 1960 3,140 Aboriginal children were attending primary school and 234 attending secondary, and since 1950, 22 children had passed the Junior Certificate and five the Leaving Certificate (Annual Report CNW 1960: 30). See (Schapper 1970) for education data from 1966.

⁵⁶⁰ (Morgan 1986: 268–269); WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 10/8/51 UAM to A/DCNA*.

⁵⁶¹ Annual Report CNA 1953: 6.

⁵⁶² (Biskup 1973: 255); Annual Report CNW 1955: 27.

⁵⁶³ WA SRO Acc 1419 EG 23-1 19/12/56—*From DO-C McLarty to CNW re. arguing against UAM teaching vernacular at Warburton Ranges*.

⁵⁶⁴ (Milnes 1987: 391).

⁵⁶⁵ Annual Report CNW 1963: 24.

understandable that few Aboriginal children in the Eastern Division were found to have: 'the academic ability to undertake conventional high school courses'.⁵⁶⁶ It is important to emphasise at this point that the Warburton students undertaking secondary education in the Goldfields who 'could not cope with anything but the most basic academic program', in fact formed only the first or second generation to experience schooling.⁵⁶⁷

It was perceived that the assimilation experiment in Warburton 'was doomed to failure, for the problems of learning in a second language had become cumulative'.⁵⁶⁸ Douglas concurs, considering that teenagers knew 'everyday English', but did not have sufficient competence to cope with secondary schooling having been taught English by a 'hit-or-miss method'.⁵⁶⁹ School records from 1961 indicated that reading levels of fifteen year olds were below those of a mainstream nine year old.⁵⁷⁰ In 1962 de Graaf found reading ages 'so low as to be at times immeasurable' with the highest English reading level equivalent to Grade 3 or 4, and by 1963 equivalent to Grade 7.⁵⁷¹ Later in the 1960s the school was not achieving 'even a basic level of literacy and numeracy' and by 1974 at the end of primary school 'a great number' of students 'have little to show for the time spent there'.⁵⁷²

Anecdotally, it is commonly asserted that young people at Warburton are less literate than their mission-educated elders. It is suggested that social relatedness accounted as much for the purportedly higher levels of literacy among mission-educated adults, as did 'compulsion'.⁵⁷³ Certainly children resident in the Home attended school regularly—when it was happening, and for shorter durations—and schooling was in harmony with restructured sleeping, eating and bathing routines. During 'Native Welfare time', a factor leading to 'better literacy' was compulsion, driven by hunger, as 'there was so little food that kids had to go to the dining room...so it meant that they went to school every day'.⁵⁷⁴ Wells describe that 'there was sort of this compulsion of going to school' because 'people

⁵⁶⁶ Annual Report CNW 1967: 27.

⁵⁶⁷ (Green 1983: 18).

⁵⁶⁸ (Green 1983: 18).

⁵⁶⁹ (Douglas 1978: 117).

⁵⁷⁰ (Green 1983: 35).

⁵⁷¹ (de Graaf 1968:134). The medium of instruction in state schools was English to facilitate Aboriginal assimilation into the European cultural domain with scant acknowledgement of Aboriginal languages (Wurm 1971: 1036), see (Elkin 1963; Wurm 1963). From the 1960s the specific curriculum needs of Aboriginal children began to be addressed. In 1967 Watts advocated a special transitional programme for remote Aboriginal children. She critiqued administrators and missionaries in Western Australia for believing that 'education should aim solely at minimum literacy and simple work skills' while failing to realise that 'active involvement in the process of social change by the people themselves requires the development of more than such low-level skill' (quoted in *DNW Newsletter*, Vol.1, No.2 August 1968: 3–10). Others addressed the 'problem of Aboriginal education' from a deficit perspective drawing attention to the 'deleterious effect' of 'home environment on Aboriginal children's learning' and the 'lack of long-term aspirations' (Makin 1977: 225–227).

⁵⁷² (Green 1983: 120-121; Glass 1974: 44).

⁵⁷³ Howell—Email interview 2004.

⁵⁷⁴ Glass and Hackett—Interview 8/5/04.

were still under the influence of the mission era where kids went to school, no questions asked' and 'partly because they were fed':

Kids came up from the camp, were showered, went to the dining room for breakfast, went from the dining room to school. We marched them back for lunch, then marched them back to school, then at the end of the school afternoon they changed into their camp clothes and went home.⁵⁷⁵

As a consequence, concludes Wells, children in those days 'appeared to be a lot more literate'.

However, in fact, data from the 2004 CDEP Skills Audit literacy assessments (shown in Chapter 5) suggest that the literacy levels of the older generation are approximately equivalent to those of the younger generation. If this is so, what accounts for the impression that the mission generation has better literacy? It is not my intention to determine whether mission schooling was more or less successful, nor to consider whether literacy outcomes have deteriorated or improved. Rather, my aim is to examine whether over a few generations adults have taken hold of literacy for social and cultural purposes and, if so, under what circumstances, in order to understand the factors beyond instructional learning that account for literacy in the remote Aboriginal context. I now turn the focus away from children and pedagogy to analyse the circumstances that precipitated the development of literacy as social practice in this recently preliterate group.

Literacy and adult practices

Street posits that 'literacy processes cannot be understood simply in terms of schooling and pedagogy: they are part of more embracing social institutions and conceptions'.⁵⁷⁶ He further contends that it is necessary to 'take account of the ideological issues and social practices that surround people's literacy practices', and I would add, act as catalysts allowing some literacies to flourish, and not others.⁵⁷⁷ I now turn to adults and the context that fostered the development of vernacular literacy.

Vernacular literacy

As discussed in Chapter 2, a vernacular approach to literacy commenced in the 1950s in the belief that 'the ability to read in the vernacular will be one of the greatest incentives and helps to the reading and mastery of English'.⁵⁷⁸ Driven by a new enthusiasm the

⁵⁷⁵ Wells—Interview 1/4/04. The missionaries operated the dining room until it was taken over by the Department of Community Welfare (DCW) in 1973 (*United Aborigines Messenger* April 1973: 4). DCW ran the dining room for a number of years, then the community ran it for only a short while longer.

⁵⁷⁶ (Street 1994: 145).

⁵⁷⁷ (Street 2001: 100).

⁵⁷⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* March 1954: 9.

missionaries aimed to establish 'self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating Aboriginal churches' and, unless they gave 'the people Scriptures in their own speech', they were 'doomed to failure'.⁵⁷⁹ Aboriginal pastors were trained at Gnowangerup Bible Training Institute (GBTI) to itinerate so that white missionaries would be free to move to areas: 'where Christ is not known'.⁵⁸⁰ However, this ran counter to the ideological position of the DNW:

While it is desirable that the Missionaries learn to converse understandably with the natives they profess to enlighten they must be brought to realise that if the natives are to make their way in a white man's world it is essential that they be given a good command of English...very little can be gained by attempting to make tribal natives literate in their own language.⁵⁸¹

The accepted Native Welfare policy was that 'English is spoken in all dealings with native children', and missionaries using the 'native dialect' were 'requested to discourage this practice'.⁵⁸² The vernacular approach had other critics:

This attitude, though of debatable value to the Australian drive for aboriginal "assimilation", has changed markedly the typical U.A.M outlook on native culture. Linked with this new outlook is a desire to provide this nascent church with the Gospel in the native language...This approach is the reverse of the integration and training in English so ardently advocated by R.S. Schenk, long an influential voice in the U.A.M. decisions.⁵⁸³

I would suggest that, paradoxically, Christianity and vernacular literacy were to provide a context for literacy maintenance and development not visible to the state.

Adults were taught to read Christian texts in Bible study schools at missions and in Kalgoorlie.⁵⁸⁴ At Mt Margaret in 1957, men from Cosmo Newbery and Warburton participated in textually-mediated exegetical tasks including: studies in the 'Old Testament, New Testament, Bible Teachings, Christian Service (Witnessing, Sermon Preparation, Art and Music)', vernacular literacy and the memorisation of Scripture. The Warburton group were given separate classes consisting of:

A set of 18 lectures on the chief Bible Doctrines. (These were given in the Warburton Ranges Dialect). 2. Translation of the following portions: Genesis 1-4: 16; 22: 1-14. Mark 1: 12; 3: 35. Selection of 26 verses for use in the Bible Doctrine lectures. 3. Production of a set of paraphrases of eight scenes surrounding the Crucifixion Story. 4. Compilation of a small book of Hymns and Choruses.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁹ *United Aborigines Messenger* August 1958: 10.

⁵⁸⁰ *United Aborigines Messenger* July 1958: 9.

⁵⁸¹ WA SRO Acc 1419 EG 23-1 19/12/56—*From DO-C McLarty to CNW re. arguing against UAM teaching vernacular at Warburton Ranges.*

⁵⁸² Annual Report CNW 1957: 12.

⁵⁸³ (Marks 1960: 101).

⁵⁸⁴ The Western Desert Bible School and Translation Centre was established in 1957 and in 1958 became the UAM Language Department in Kalgoorlie under the guidance of Wilf Douglas and his wife Beth. They provided resources and support for the development of Christian materials, particularly in the vernacular, across the whole of the Eastern Goldfields. The Bible-training section was transferred to the Gnowangerup Bible Training Institute. The UAM Language Department ceased operating after 1982.

⁵⁸⁵ *United Aborigines Messenger* December 1957: 10.

By 1966 it was claimed that the church was 'no longer a mission church, but the church of the people':

Many of the leaders of the church are illiterate, or have only little education. There is much they must learn for themselves before they can give out to help others. There is a great urgency to have God's word in their own language so they may have spiritual food to feed upon, that they may be able to fully understand the wonderful message of God's salvation to them.⁵⁸⁶

As only 'one or two' of the Christian leaders were able to read from the English Bible, most 'relied heavily' on Bible story pictures (Fig. 3.1).⁵⁸⁷

Some were able to read English but not write in it. Others could not speak nor read nor write English. Leadership roles did not call upon English literacy very heavily if at all. A small number of men could read English and did so in church services from the Bible. Writing was not called for.⁵⁸⁸

Howell also suggests that over time literacy in Ngaanyatjarra, rather than English, became integral to the church leadership role where reading in Ngaanyatjarra was 'almost an essential skill'. Silas says his father learned to be a preacher at Bible school and learned Ngaanyatjarra reading by doing translation work with the missionary Noel Blyth. Harold (Family D) trained to be an evangelist before 1963 when he went to the Australian Inland Mission Bible College in Singleton, NSW for three to six months. His wife Rosie recalls that when he returned there were many preachers 'telling story about *Mama* God... Jack, Silas's father, every Sunday they tell a story to the people, they come from the camp they hear about the Lord Jesus' then get 'little ticket from the missionary for *mirrka*'. Molly recalls:

In the mission Aboriginal teachers used to hold their own class, and when you want to have a Christian meeting, Christian Endeavour you learn to teach them from the Bible yourself. We used to have our own Bible School. The training they gave us, we used to teach, if you want a speaker for next week, well, you go and pick that speaker yourself they can speak on Sunday. Training, running their own things.⁵⁸⁹

A broader adult vernacular literacy 'campaign' commenced with the arrival of missionary linguists Ameer Glass and Dorothy Hackett in 1963.⁵⁹⁰ Initially they did not find 'the keen interest in the literacy campaign which they had hoped for...

⁵⁸⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* October 1966: 5.

⁵⁸⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1967: 6-7.

⁵⁸⁸ Howell—Email interview 2004.

⁵⁸⁹ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁵⁹⁰ A number of non-Aboriginal people have worked on Ngaanyatjarra language over many years beginning with Claude Cotterill and Sam Mollenhauer who had commenced untrained linguistic analysis prior to the arrival of Wilf Douglas, and subsequently Noel Blyth, Ameer Glass and Dorothy Hackett commenced a lifetime vocation learning Ngaanyatjarra, teaching vernacular literacy, and translating Scriptures from English to Ngaanyatjarra. They have published a number of significant Ngaanyatjarra texts including the New Testament (Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project 1999) and the Ngaanyatjarra dictionary (Glass and Hackett 2003). Still today they continue to teach Ngaanyatjarra literacy, translate the Old Testament and publish Ngaanyatjarra texts. Herbert Howell was a teacher at Cosmo Newbery from 1963-66 and in 1971 appointed superintendent at Warburton Ranges Mission. In 1978 Herbert and his wife Lorraine moved to Warakurna to develop a new ministry. In 1982 they resigned from the UAM and along with Glass and Hackett formed the Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project with the Ngaanyatjarra people. Thelma Roberts did missionary work at Warburton from the early 1970s to 1983.

Fig. 3.1 Christian meeting, Warburton Ranges Mission 1960s



© Ngarnmanyjatja Archive.

Fig. 3.2 Article from *Today: Family Magazine* by Warburton pastor, 2004

I'm [REDACTED], pastor of Warburton Ranges Community Church. I've been a Christian for a long time. We have difficult times, and as we journey in our Christian life, we must ask God to help us. It's been a difficult time for my Christian life, taking funerals in the Ngaanyatjarra land and doing the best I can. Lately I lost my aunt, Mrs [REDACTED]. She was the first person to see the missionaries coming out from Mt Margaret to the Warburton Ranges. She was one of the first Christians, and lived a long time. When she passed away, she told me not to have a sorry camp because she is going to a happy land, and we did what she asked. As a Christian we have to break down some barriers, so I'd like to encourage everyone who is reading this story, as a Christian we will face many trials and tribulations, but we can only look upon the Lord for our guidance and follow His way. Jesus said in John 14, 'let not your hearts be troubled'. He also said He's going to prepare a place for us and He's coming to take us to that wonderful home in heaven. We need to be ready all the time.

Today: Family Magazine, February/March 2004.

...there is a problem here as those who had grown up in the Home at the Mission and had been to school where they were taught in English, preferred the services in English. They seem to think it is a step back to learn to read and write in their own language.⁵⁹¹

The campaign was aimed not only at the male church leadership, but also at women. A group of 30 women started learning, with ten completing the 'course', however with insufficient reading material they were 'far from being fluent readers'.⁵⁹² At first simple duplicated reading materials were produced and groups 'were often split into those who had learned some English literacy at school and those who were non-literates'.⁵⁹³ In 1969 Glass completed a new set of seven primers entitled *Nintirriwa-la Wangkaku*.⁵⁹⁴

After returning to Warburton from the Goldfields, Una recalls observing her mother learning to read Ngaanyatjarra using the phonics method (i.e. syllable-based approach) introduced in the early literacy classes for women:

I used to go round and sit down and listen to the older people sitting down...and I was thinking to myself: 'Oh that's too hard, I can't do that'...But that was my language, but I was slowly learning. I used to come and sit down when the older people were talking to Miss Hackett and Miss Glass and I used to sit down and watch them...my mother used to take little books down, books like '*kapi, waru, mirrka*' all that. She used to then take little papers like this home and they and I used to sit down and say: '*wa-ru, mirr-ka, ka-pi*'. Then I got interested. They used to have a little Bible and songbook, then I used to learn, learn, learn.

Una considers that at school she 'didn't learn much, really...still a little bit not properly learnt, like going to high school, *wiyartu*'. But she was interested in reading nevertheless:

When I left school I used to read all sorts of, any sort of books, I see on the ground. Sometimes we get Reader's Digest...or sometimes they come second-hand and I used to read them...We used to stay long way and we used to sit down home, nothing to do and I used to sit down and read, anything what I see.

Una's motivation to learn Ngaanyatjarra literacy continued as she worked with Glass and Hackett, eventually authoring a number of stories, and contributing to Bible translation and dictionary compilation.

Marie Geytenbeek and Jan Mountney from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) were seconded to the Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project and worked in a number of Ngaanyatjarra communities from 1990 onwards. After the Howells shifted to Warburton, Lorraine along with Mountney and Geytenbeek worked on Ngaanyatjarra literacy and AEW training in the schools (Glass 2000: 5). In 1999 the Howells left the Lands and Herbert currently works at Wongutha Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed School (CAPS) near Esperance. Mountney and Geytenbeek lived for six months to a year in the communities and taught reading to adults and children from their caravans. Mountney is still based in Blackstone training Ngaanyatjarra speakers to teach literacy in the LOTE programme. The first non-missionary linguist, Kazuko Obata, was appointed by the Ngaanyatjarra Council to work at the short-lived Language Centre based at Ngaanyatjarra Community College from 2000–2001. She returned to complete other projects including a Ngaanyatjarra learner's guide, CD-rom and a picture dictionary (Obata et al. 2005).

⁵⁹¹ *United Aborigines Messenger* December 1964: 18.

⁵⁹² *United Aborigines' Messenger*, August 1968: 12.

⁵⁹³ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1964: 11; *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1964: 4–5.

⁵⁹⁴ (Glass 2000).

In the early days at Warburton there was minimal adult reading material other than Christian texts, although secular books sometimes arrived in donations of second-hand goods, as Una notes above.⁵⁹⁵

There's no books only school books... They used to go church. Only, what that book, Christian one, song, English one, *Redemption* one them older peoples.⁵⁹⁶

Christian literacy events were important as they modelled a purpose for reading outside the pedagogical context. At church services, 'picture sheets' were used, short Bible stories were read and the sermon explained the story. Sunday School was textually-mediated with hymns in English or Ngaanyatjarra, Bible reading, and a short story or quiz.⁵⁹⁷ Services were also held in the camps 'with hymn-singing, reading and a prayer' led by family members.⁵⁹⁸ The availability of Christian texts must have aided literacy as they provided a means by which newly literate individuals could practice their reading skills. The UAM Language Department produced and distributed material:

From Kalgoorlie we send out English literature to a growing number of aboriginal and part-aboriginal readers. It is not easy to find good literature in English simple enough to meet the needs of some of the people... But what we are sending out is increasing the desire to read on the part of the people, and we trust that more and more literature of the right type will become available as Christians and missionaries become conscious of the value of the printed page.⁵⁹⁹

'Mission Publications of Australia' also published magazines, Sunday School lessons, Scriptures and Hymns, primers and illustrated dictionaries.⁶⁰⁰ The *Christian Today: Family Magazine* has been distributed to Aboriginal Christians since the 1950s with simple text prepared for a community audience.⁶⁰¹ It was read for photos and stories about Christian people outside Warburton and people still contribute to it today (Fig. 3.2).

Literacy and Christian practices in the Goldfields

In the 1960s the Ngaanyatjarra participated in textually-mediated Christian practices within a web of interconnectedness extending across the Eastern Goldfields to Warburton. The Aboriginal church gained momentum as graduates from GBTI began itinerating around the Goldfields. Cosmo Newbery was an important site with ladies prayer meetings, Christian Endeavour for children, and services led by local church leaders, including April's father. Aboriginal Christians from Cosmo itinerated with workers at nearby stations:⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁵ *United Aborigines Messenger* June 1964: 12.

⁵⁹⁶ *Redemption Songs* (Redemption Songs n.d.) is a popular Hymn book. It is now out of print but people still ask to translate English songs into Ngaanyatjarra from the 'Redemption one' (Glass and Hackett pers. comm. 2004).

⁵⁹⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1964: 12–14.

⁵⁹⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1969: 11.

⁵⁹⁹ (Douglas and Douglas 1964: 54).

⁶⁰⁰ *United Aborigines Messenger* July 1960: 8; *United Aborigines Messenger*, November 1963: 17.

⁶⁰¹ P. Gurrier-Jones pers. comm. October 2004.

⁶⁰² *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1963: 18–19.

Pray the Lord will raise up someone to do itinerating trips around the stations in the Goldfields. I went around with three friends after the anniversary and found it a real necessity and worthwhile. Often the Christians get lonely on the stations with no fellowship and so they give up.⁶⁰³

Alcoholism and the despair of reserve life gave missionaries fertile ground for itineration and salvation.⁶⁰⁴ Permits authorised by the Minister for Native Welfare were required for missionaries to enter and evangelise as reserves were legally inaccessible to persons other than Aborigines.⁶⁰⁵ Douglas recalls how many a time on the Kalgoorlie Reserve he was followed and questioned by police who mistakenly assumed his bag contained illegal supplies of alcohol rather than Christian material.⁶⁰⁶ Itineration trips were also made to Laverton and Leonora 'to contact the people in the towns and native reserves'.⁶⁰⁷ Often a missionary would hold evening slide shows or films, give out Bible stories and Bible pictures or hold church services and teach Sunday School.⁶⁰⁸ Gospel Centres or shop fronts were also set up in Leonora and Laverton and this enabled the distribution of Christian materials for Christian meetings.⁶⁰⁹

Literature...puts into the hands of the ordinary missionary a valuable means of communication, instruction and propagation of the Gospel. It also assists the local church leaders and teachers...Over all, the trend is to consolidate the effectiveness of Gospel outreach in its many forms. Not only so – here is an effective means of making newly-literates more literate, and opens new doors of economic opportunity.⁶¹⁰

Kalgoorlie was a centre for services, Youth Fellowship and the Mission Church half hour on 6KG radio with people sending in hymn requests 'for someone they know'.⁶¹¹ Christian Conventions, often attended by hundreds of Aboriginal people from across the region, were regularly held at Mt Margaret providing opportunities for Aboriginal Christians to hone their skills and demonstrate leadership. The 1969 Convention at Mt Margaret was the first anniversary organised and run solely by Aboriginal Christians.⁶¹² Arthur recalls going to Mt Margaret after Pedlar's Hostel and observing people coming in for the 'Anniversary':

Big mob coming in from all over coming in to like Mt Margaret, for church service every once a year, so that's where I was learning like: where these people come from? Younger people and older people coming in. One of my parents told me: 'Oh they come in from stations, there's a lot of station around here, anybody can go and work.'...so I moved out into the station.

The Conventions offered a site for the exchange of information and new practices.

⁶⁰³ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1964: 4.

⁶⁰⁴ *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1968: 3.

⁶⁰⁵ (Schapper 1970: 41).

⁶⁰⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1968: 3.

⁶⁰⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* August 1963: 19.

⁶⁰⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* June 1963: 15; *United Aborigines Messenger* February-March 1968: 6.

⁶⁰⁹ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1965: 8; *United Aborigines' Messenger*, February/March 1968: 12-13

⁶¹⁰ *United Aborigines' Messenger*, August 1968: 12.

⁶¹¹ *United Aborigines Messenger* August 1965: 11; *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1963: 4.

⁶¹² (Stanton 1990: 221).

In summation, the missionaries taught adults to read, and to a lesser extent write, in their own vernacular believing in the inestimable importance of comprehension in the mother tongue. This process also worked in part because as Rose notes: ‘biblical discourse is meaningful’ and ‘directly translatable’ to Western Desert people.⁶¹³ Christian texts continue to manifest emblematic value as artefacts redolent of the sacred qualities of *turku*—polysemously rendered as both ‘song, corroboree, dance’ and ‘church service, church meeting’ in the Ngaanyatjarra Dictionary.⁶¹⁴

Some older people who’ve become Christians, they can’t read or write but they’ll still carry a Bible around with them because it’s the importance, it’s God’s Word, so they keep it. Cause it’s part of God, it’s all of God’s words in there, it’s a Holy Book that they keep with them, along with their Hymn book.⁶¹⁵

And despite socio-spatial factors working against the conservation of literacy artefacts, Bibles and hymnbooks have been looked after over many years.

Conclusion

In this chapter I begin to demonstrate that pedagogy is ‘only one influence’ on literacy.⁶¹⁶ In this period we see the enactment of two prevailing ideologies: one that echoes the narrative of advancement from illiteracy to literacy focusing on improved state schooling for children, and another that draws on the reformist missionary tradition of adults attaining their own meaningful relationship with the Word in the vernacular. The missionaries provided a social context for literacy, and reiterative encounters with the textually-mediated Christian community paradigmatically influenced the manner in which people took hold of literacy. Perspectives were expanded in ‘Native Welfare time’ when a consciousness about belonging to a broader Christian community, beyond kinship networks, started developing. During this period events from the Western world started to resonate marking a conceptual reconfiguring of the known world as the Ngaanyatjarra began to locate themselves within a broader national and international sociocultural space.

Ultimately, the expectations of assimilation, education and employment under Native Welfare were unrealistic and did not correlate with the rapidly changing socioeconomic circumstances of the late 1960s. The assimilationist policy of social development had placed the onus on individuals to take responsibility for their own advancement and tried to separate young people from the influence of traditional families. Sir Paul Hasluck, who later had misgivings about this individualist approach, reflected that ‘we did not see clearly

⁶¹³ (Rose 2001: 75).

⁶¹⁴ (Glass and Hackett 2003: 398).

⁶¹⁵ Marrkilyi E.—Interview 22/1/04.

the ways in which the individual is bound by membership of a family or a group'.⁶¹⁷ Nor did they comprehend the overwhelming attachment to country that would ultimately draw the Ngaanyatjarra back to their homelands, as will be explored in the proceeding chapter.

⁶¹⁶ (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 45).

⁶¹⁷ Sir Paul Hasluck was Commonwealth Minister for Territories under Robert Menzies Liberal Government (1951–63) and a key architect of assimilation policy (Rowse 1998: 115; Rowse 2005: 241)

Introduction

In the previous chapter I began to show that pedagogy is only one influence on literacy by situating the Ngaanyatjarra within the ideological (and economic) time and place that surrounded people's literacy practices. In this chapter we see the effect of rapidly changing circumstances as the Ngaanyatjarra are removed from the paternalistic control of the mission and Native Welfare. We also start to see literacy outside institutional contexts and adults using the written word for their own social, cultural and political purposes. I represent this shift by moving away from the historical narrative structure used in previous chapters and turning the focus more onto individual and communal textual practices.

The election of a Federal Labor government under Gough Whitlam in 1972 ushered in the policy era of Aboriginal self-determination. Change had already begun after the State Labor government, elected in 1971, prioritised the dismantling of most of the remaining legislation which treated Aborigines differently from other members of the community. The functions of the Department of Native Welfare were absorbed by the Department of Community Welfare (DCW) and in 1972 an Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA) was formed to carry out functions not handled by other government departments.⁶¹⁸ 'Self-determination' was a new policy frame where equity and equal opportunity began to hinge upon the self-managing capacity of Aboriginal people. From the 1970s the social and political landscape at Warburton and across the Goldfields was dramatically transformed.

'When the new things came in'—self-determination and change

The UAM relinquished control of Warburton Ranges Mission between 1972 and 1973. This opened up the opportunity for Ngaanyatjarra people to re-form and collectively use their acquired skills and practices, inclusive of literacy, to reshape a new 'community of interest'. Warburton Community was incorporated in 1973, AAPA and the DCW took on the administration of the community and Scott and Co. was designated to appoint the first 'community advisor'. The role of the missionaries was superseded, no longer the administrative backbone of the community, and their caregiving role made redundant, they now focused on Scripture translation, teaching literacy and providing language services to the new non-Aboriginal staff.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁸ (Bolton 1981: 167).

⁶¹⁹ *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1973; *United Aborigines Messenger* March/April 1984.

The transition to government administration corresponded with community unrest. The Federal government's implementation of award wages when in employment, otherwise eligibility for the full range of social security payments including UB, had contributed to high unemployment in the Goldfields.⁶²⁰ At Warburton the minimal availability of work and a 'surplus' of UB or 'free money', combined with unrestricted access to alcohol, aggravated law and order problems.⁶²¹ Central desert people in the Goldfields were also dispersed and fragmented by change and alcohol. Ngaanyatjarra youth from the hostels, unable to find employment in the Goldfields then drifted back to Warburton:

These are young people who feel unwanted in White society and so return to their own community only to find they do not have the tools with which to demonstrate the new skills they have learned...nor do they have a means of livelihood except finding methods of extracting pension money from elders...Generally speaking, neither parents nor children can see any real purpose in White Australian education.⁶²²

Warburton in the 1970s is remembered by locals as, 'lots of people, need things, new things, new buildings'. In 1972 housing was promised within six months by the Federal Minister for the newly-established Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). However, by the time Senator Cavanagh visited Warburton in 1974, only staff housing had been erected and people were still living in *wilja* constructions.⁶²³ Where mobility had previously allowed for dispersal, the intensive aggregation of extended family and more distant classificatory kin tended to amplify disharmony between groups from different country. In 1975 the various pressures reached a crescendo culminating in a 'rampage of destruction'.⁶²⁴

When anthropologist Nicolas Peterson visited the Central Reserve in 1970 he found only 5% of the population working at Warburton, whereas at Docker River 23% worked.⁶²⁵ At Warburton 'there was neither money available to pay people nor projects for them to work on'.⁶²⁶ At Docker, workers were paid more under the NT 'Training Allowance', instituted to assist the newly-established NT government settlements in employing Aboriginal

⁶²⁰ (Sanders 1986: 285).

⁶²¹ (Green 1976).

⁶²² (Douglas 1978: 117).

⁶²³ (Douglas 1978).

⁶²⁴ (Douglas 1978).

⁶²⁵ (Peterson 1977: 138–140). Government settlements in the Northern Territory were established in reaction to the displacement of Aboriginal people after the advent of the awarding of equal wages in 1968. Docker River government settlement was established in 1967–1968. During the mission time many Ngaatjatjarra, Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara people from country around the Petermann Ranges and Rawlinson Ranges area of the Central Reserve had gone across to Warburton Ranges. The opening of the settlement at Docker River allowed people to return to country (Woenne 1977) and lessened the pressure on Warburton, as Docker River served a 'de facto homeland function' (Brooks 2002a). Around 1969 Docker River helped to resource people living at Giles, Wingellina, Mt Fanny and Blackstone. Over the ensuing years many of Ngaatjatjarra and Ngaanyatjarra families then returned to the nascent outstations on the WA side of the border at Warakurna (Giles), and subsequently at Tjukurla.

⁶²⁶ (Peterson 1977: 139).

workers in capital works programmes.⁶²⁷ With minimal training or employment opportunities available at Warburton, many young adults who had been trained in the Goldfields moved on to the NT and SA for work.⁶²⁸ George recalls:

They worked around there, Northern Territory, from here, worked around Docker River...they was all working up there. Different from here, went over there working when they start the new settlement in Docker River, even Amata. Some like from Docker River been going to school in the mission here...they shift back to Docker River from Warburton and they help build that place up too. And over in Amata way, like from South Australia way...they grow up here, been to school here, been to Pedlar's too, so they know. They went back to South Australia side, they build up their communities like Irrunytju, Mt Davies, Kalka.

Clem, like many others, went to Docker River in 1970 for 'more money':

When I turned 19 years old people looked upon me to be an interpreter because I speak English because I know how to read and write. I started being a main figure in Docker River...once Australia changed for stockmen we can't get paid well, so we all went to South Australia and Northern Territory because we was getting more money than for working in [Warburton] Laverton, Leonora, all that.

It can be speculated that these experiences further reinforced the sense among people that they had been workers in the mainstream labour market. Moreover, as Rowse suggests, around this time there was 'a propensity' for people to be unable to distinguish between the source and purpose of the various new cash pathways: wages, training allowances, UB and other social service benefits.⁶²⁹

The inception of CDEP

In order to ameliorate unemployment at Warburton, a Regional Employment Development Scheme was initially implemented.⁶³⁰ After training at Wongutha Farm and Pedlar's, Jim worked in the mines in Kalgoorlie and at Wongutha Wonganarra in Laverton, before returning to Warburton.⁶³¹ He recalls:

No work was round until the mission handed over the thing to government, place turned into a settlement...Then they all started building, putting drains and pipes and that time we started working now. Helping get things down, hospital, putting down the floor...Them old people...telling the people to start work 'cause there's all these new things coming. And this mission gonna finish and this change, they keep changing all the time.

⁶²⁷ The building of settlements such as Docker River and Papunya required the input of a large Aboriginal labour force for the required capital works programs—road works, building of houses, airstrips, sewerage works etc. Aboriginal labour was used not only because it was cheap but also as a deliberate Native Administration Branch educational policy to 'instil in as many residents as possible a realization of the necessity of paid employment in a 'normal' way of life' (Rowse 1998: 172). However the payment of basic wages to settlement workers was to prove too expensive and a compromise was reached in 1969 whereby a small number of workers would be employed at award rates and the rest would be remunerated with a lesser cash 'training allowance'. Training allowances were replaced in 1973–1974 by UB as the move from rations to cash on NT settlements had 'precipitated a crisis of family poverty' (Rowse 1998: 175–8).

⁶²⁸ WA SRO Acc 1733 66/65—*Warburton Ranges native matters Report Superintendent of Economic Development to CNW 1965*.
⁶²⁹ (Rowse 1998: 179).

⁶³⁰ This was a precursor to Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and designed specifically for remote Aboriginal Australia. It was sponsored by the Minister for Labor and Immigration, Clyde Cameron, and was designed to stimulate employment at the local government level (Lloyd and Troy 1981: 228).

⁶³¹ In 1973, with the support of AAPA the Laverton community established 'Wongutha Wonganarra' an early initiative in self-management that gave Aborigines training and work experience (Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) Western Australia Newsletter Vol.1, No.7 July 1974: 27–30).

Then in 1977, the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) was implemented as an employment and training initiative to meet the unusual requirements of remote communities.⁶³² According to Rowse, it was also 'a response to anxieties about the moral consequences of remote people's sudden access to unemployment benefits paid to individuals'.⁶³³ CDEP was initiated to ameliorate the conundrum faced by remote communities which 'do not form part of the open labour market'.⁶³⁴

In 1977 H.C. Coombs recommended that the desert communities of Warburton, Wingellina, Blackstone, Giles and Jameson be included in the 'experimental phase' of CDEP.⁶³⁵ Another of the original CDEP projects was initiated at Wiluna Desert Farm and Emu Farm to improve the socioeconomic aspects of community life, reduce the 'damaging effect' of alcohol, increase training and develop general employment skills, and 'assist community members to manage their own affairs'.⁶³⁶ This early model was 'not simply a means of providing employment as a source of a minimum cash income, but a training exercise in self-management and increasing independence' to enable Aborigines to do work chosen by the community to strengthen economic independence and the quality of life.⁶³⁷

The scheme is based on the provision of funds for employment projects approximately equivalent to the total unemployment benefits that would be payable should all eligible Aborigines apply for such benefits. It has enabled the communities concerned to plan projects for their direct benefit and has removed the socially debilitating effect of 'sit down' money.⁶³⁸

Around this time Warburton had 500 on UB and Damian McLean recalls:

No-one would receive any pay for weeks then suddenly people would receive a big cheque in backpay and people would take it and go into town and blow it, better now as averaged out into a regular income. Child endowment was a mess to as it was irregularly paid. At that time the office in Warburton had no doors, no windows, experiencing the breakdown of everything. CDEP, and the CDEP on-costs was a primary factor in the stabilization of Warburton: 'CDEP allowed for on-costs of 10% which was sufficient to begin providing admin support for the community, an office, record keeping, admin assistance and a site for mail deposit'.⁶³⁹

⁶³² CDEP evolved out of a 1976 Federal government interdepartmental working party on Aboriginal employment (DAA 1976: v).

⁶³³ (Rowse 1998: 215).

⁶³⁴ *Hansard* 'Aboriginal Employment' 26 May 1977: 1921.

⁶³⁵ (Coombs 1977).

⁶³⁶ Annual Report Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA) and Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) 1977: 9. By 1973, after the departure of the Seventh Day Adventists, Wiluna went through a transformation. The mission was renamed 'the Village' and the old reserve 'Bondini' and proper housing was built with electricity and running water. By the end of 1974 AAPA had acquired Emu Farm and Desert Farm on behalf of the newly formed Ngangganawili Community. By 1976 the Desert Gold citrus and melon farm had developed and the community was ready to embark on a process of self-management. These ventures became the genesis of the new CDEP. During the 1980s the demography of Wiluna had changed, whereas in the 1970s the majority were away at school or station work for extensive periods of time, by this time the Aboriginal population was resident in Wiluna (Annual Report AAPA and ALT 1976: 9); (Sackett 1990).

⁶³⁷ (Coombs 1977: 1-2).

⁶³⁸ Annual Report AAPA and ALT 1978: 9.

⁶³⁹ Damian McLean commenced work in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in 1982. He has been Community Development Advisor at Warburton community for many years. He is also Shire President of the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku and Justice of the Peace. During this time he has worked closely with Ngaanyatjarra people in establishing much of the infrastructure and governance procedures in the region.

Coombs found Warburton people united in complaining that '[t]here is no work here and nothing to stay for and we want to go back bush'.⁶⁴⁰ CDEP was integral in providing the economic foundation to support the establishment of the new outstations.

'Homeland time'—outstations and the return to country

Affiliation to country was the main factor that drove the outstation movement, with the older generation determining the location of new communities. The four new communities of *Irrunytju* (Wingellina), *Papulankutja* (Blackstone), *Warakurna* (Giles) and *Mantamaru* (Jameson) in effect covered 'the huge, previously uncatered-for region between Amata in the east and Warburton in the west' (see Chapter 1, Fig. 1.1).⁶⁴¹ The homelands movement also relieved the pressure of overcrowding in Warburton and fulfilled the desire for greater autonomy and control.⁶⁴² It was also the magnet that attracted Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara people, who had earlier drifted east to Ernabella Mission and subsequently to Amata, back to Wingellina and Blackstone—their traditional homelands on the Western Australian side.⁶⁴³ In the 1970s Warburton was, in fact, outside the main political action stirred by the outstation movement and the push for land rights coming from South Australian returnees.⁶⁴⁴ The outstation movement was also to attract Ngaanyatjarra people back from the new NT settlements and from the Goldfields. Table 4.1 provides an indication of population movement during this period. As Green notes students that he taught in 1966 later 'travelled beyond the Western Desert', to Laverton, Alice Springs and the far north 'seeking work or attending ceremonies', but 'the yearning for the home country' brought all but a few back.⁶⁴⁵

In some cases, the determination to return to country was so great that people shifted without adequate resources or assistance from non-Aboriginal staff; for example, it was not until 1975 that Blackstone, Jameson, Wingellina and Warakurna received funding for Community Advisors. This is exemplified in a 1973 letter of request for outstation services

⁶⁴⁰ (Coombs 1974: 10).

⁶⁴¹ (Brooks 2002a: 10).

⁶⁴² Wingellina, Warakurna, Jameson and Blackstone communities were incorporated in 1976. Kiwirrkura (incorporated in 1984) was formed around 1982 when Pintupi people returned west from Papunya and Kintore in the NT. Tjukurla (incorporated 1987) was formed with people coming mainly from Docker River or Warakurna. Ngaatjatjarra speakers from Docker River had established an outstation at Tjukurla in the early 1970s, however lack of services meant that a permanent settlement was not established until 1986. Tjirrkarli (incorporated in 1987) was established by people mainly from Warburton, Cosmo and the Mungili/Wiluna area. People from Wanarn (incorporated 1989) came mainly from Warburton, although more recently families from Laverton and Mt Margaret have returned to the area. Patjarr was settled mainly by the Gibson Desert families. Cosmo was re-established in 1989 and came under the Ngaanyatjarra Council. Kanpa community was initially established as a bail facility/substance abuse centre for locally-located juveniles and adults (Ngaanyatjarra Council 2000).

⁶⁴³ (Hamilton 1987; Wallace 1990).

⁶⁴⁴ Brooks—Interview 15/8/04. See also (Toyne and Vachon 1984).

⁶⁴⁵ (Green 1983: 113).

discussed below. As a consequence, locals were required to take on roles and responsibilities and 'they were able to go that extra step'.⁶⁴⁶

The people who were in the developing communities, they filled a really crucial part, those ones who had more education, at Blackstone, Jameson, Warakurna and so on. Like XX and XX used to run the shop. [He] was completely illiterate, but he had always worked alongside the storekeeper in Warburton so he knew a lot about shops, but she went away to Kalgoorlie High School.⁶⁴⁷

Table 4.1 Estimated population Ngaanyatjarra Lands 1972–1983

	<i>Warburton</i>	<i>Cosmo Newbery</i>	<i>Wingellina</i>	<i>Warakurna</i>	<i>Jameson</i>	<i>Blackstone</i>	Total population
1972	408	70	-	-	-	-	478
1973	435	65	51	-	-	-	551
1974	438	75	16	31	-	-	560
1975	251	62	70	165	120	155	823
1976	273	68	94	201	110	166	912
1977	350	53	85	97	126	134	845
1978	350	68	85	97	126	134	860
1979	230	26	120	150	210	100	836
1980	400	130	110	100	180	100	1020
1981	400	80	130	200	210	100	1120
1982	573	62	130	102	222	104	1193
1983	453	72	133	147	102	91	998

Source: Annual Report DNW 1972
Annual Reports AAPA and ALT 1973–1983

Some young adults returned with English language and literacy, a familiarity with European practices and a sense of themselves as workers.

They are people that have sort of been leading lights in their communities and in the area like Teacher Aides, Health Workers and Council Chair people. They would have had that foundation from school here but that was built on by their experiences away from their communities. They saw a bit more of the outside world. They had a greater opportunity than what exists today when they did come back to sort of participate in more meaningful work in the community.⁶⁴⁸

Wesley reflects on the process:

You go and work for white man and they speak to you in their language and you get to understand and you keep picking it all up. You can understand the whole system...But they did spend a lot of time learning before they had to take responsibility.

With so few white staff locals were integral to the community building process irrespective of education or literacy competence. Hackett recalls that in the 1970s 'people were working together to make it happen, whitefella staff were like family' and community consultation and Ngaanyatjarra language interpreting were expected. People recollect working in stores, schools and making the cut-line road from Warburton to Warakurna.

I start looking for job, I went back to Warakurna when they start that little community and I was thinking, oh I'll be starting work, so I straight out work in the store, running the store and all the other things and all. Was easy to get jobs before...Before just used the money like in a little box.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁶ Wells—Interview 1/4/04.

⁶⁴⁷ Glass and Hackett— Interview 8/5/04.

⁶⁴⁸ Wells—Interview 1/4/04.

⁶⁴⁹ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

April recalls that when her family shifted from Cosmo to Tjirrkarli in the early 1980s there was only one staff member so they took more responsibility:

We had no school there so I start up for school there, in a little shed, used to teach all the little kids there, mainly I was teaching numbers and writing, and a little bit of reading because they used to bring books down from Warburton School and leave it there...I kept on saying: 'We'll have a school here anytime, so you got to learn how to count, learn how to read, and learn how to write.' That was the most important one for kids.

Similarly, when Wesley's family returned to Cosmo in 1989 they established a school.⁶⁵⁰ With the benefit of hindsight, Wells suggests that in comparison with the present there appeared to be 'more job opportunities' then and more locals were employed in the offices, stores and schools because their skills matched the requirements of the job. However, as I explore in Chapter 7, these experiences did not prepare people for modernity and the complexity of the post-1970s work environment.

Finally, around 1990, the Ngaatjatjarra-speaking Gibson Desert families heard that Warburton community was establishing an outstation at Patjarr and many returned from Wiluna. The Warburton mob said, 'we've got money now, you mob got to come back to country and set up homelands'.⁶⁵¹ Despite the ravages of alcohol and some conflict and 'fragmentation' in the community, many in this group had been workers on stations around Leonora and Wiluna, and under the self-managing ethos of the Ngangganawili Community and CDEP at Desert Farm and Emu Farm.⁶⁵² They returned with confidence, skills and experience and had retained a strong ceremonial connection.⁶⁵³ In addition, their children had been educated. Marrkilyi reflects on the impact of the Wiluna experience:

It made us more savvy to working with whitefellas, speaking English and being more vocal, you don't sit back, you get up and do things. And because we've been away from country it makes us more stronger about going back to our lands and looking after country.⁶⁵⁴

In summary, despite the chaos, this period also generated an optimism that through self-determination the Ngaanyatjarra would gain control of their communities. Many returned

⁶⁵⁰ After 1972 Cosmo Newbery passed from UAM to AAPA jurisdiction. It remained a functional pastoral station under the direction of UAMO Inc, the industrial branch of the UAM, constituted in the 1960s to provide for the placing of skilled workers to train Aborigines in new industries, transport and the management of trading stores (Douglas 1978). However the close proximity to Laverton saw an increase in fighting and money spent on alcohol rather than food and clothing for families (UAMO Inc Cosmo Newbery Annual Report June 1972 NTU files 6/1972). Eventually Cosmo reached 'a state of crisis' with little employment and drinkers travelling regularly between Laverton and Warburton (*United Aborigines Messenger* June 1979: 9). Although resolution came when the UAM handed Cosmo over to DAA in 1979, the situation continued to deteriorate (*United Aborigines Messenger* July/August 1980: 14). DAA eventually withdrew funding and many residents decamped to Tjirrkarli, one of the newly formed outstations from Warburton, and Cosmo lay dormant for a number of years. Then in 1989 Wesley's family returned to re-establish Cosmo Newbery community (Family A).

⁶⁵¹ Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. April 2004. See also (Brooks 2002e).

⁶⁵² (Sackett 1977; Sackett 1990).

⁶⁵³ (Sackett 1978a).

⁶⁵⁴ Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. April 2004.

to their desert home and entered the era of self-determination armed with sufficient skills and knowledge to forge a new political landscape.

Literacy and 'self-determination'

Under self-determination the Ngaanyatjarra were to encounter an entirely different conceptualisation of Western education, one that mirrored the new optimism about Aboriginal education across remote Australia.⁶⁵⁵ Previously, schooling had been intertwined with paternalistic control under the mission and then Native Welfare. The compulsion element of mission schooling and Native Welfare was dependent on the authorising outsider telling people what to do. The Ngaanyatjarra adapted to the regulatory framework of compulsory schooling as normative and families were not required to discipline their own or others' children or compel each other to take action. In Ngaanyatjarra sociality it remains difficult for adults to act compel others to take action (and grandparents and parents are increasingly unable to assert control in the contemporary milieu). Self-determination was to thrust people into a changed policy environment with a model of schooling underpinned by individual control. In the ensuing period, with virtually no prior experience, families were expected to compel their children to attend school and undertake the training that would lead to self-management outcomes.

Now that the people have assumed recognition as being controllers and organisers of their affairs, it becomes important that they be able to read and write. The old people will never accomplish this, but an adequate reading skill becomes vital to the younger generation, because they will finally occupy a position of importance in the community, and their leadership success will depend very

⁶⁵⁵ The election of a Federal Labor government changed Aboriginal education policy in remote Australia, including the beginning of official bilingual education programmes. Additionally the 1970s saw the development of special training, in-services and courses in Aboriginal Education. In WA these were offered at Mt Lawley Teachers' College and Graylands Teachers College and relevant resources and curriculum materials were developed and the WA Education Department funded the development of Aboriginal specific curriculum materials and resources including the 'Warburton Readers', a series of basic readers for Warburton Ranges school (*DAA Newsletter* (Western Australia), Vol. 1, No. 9 December 1974: 14–17). Prior to this, comparatively little had been written about Aboriginal languages in relation to literacy and education outside of missionary, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and linguistic circles (Gale 1997; Wurm 1963). Following the Watts and Gallacher Report (Watts and Gallacher 1964) investigating appropriate curriculum and methodology for Aboriginal schools in the NT, an openness to the idea of first language instruction emerged, deriving from the 1953 UNESCO axiom that the best medium of instruction in school was the mother tongue of the pupil (Bull 1964; Edwards 1969). After 1972, bilingual education was introduced in some Aboriginal schools in the NT (Wurm 1971; O'Grady and Hale 1974). This created a need for adults literate in their vernacular to be the teachers, writers and literature production workers (Goddard 1990). Vernacular adult literacy courses were held at the School of Australian Linguistics and SIL. Bilingual theory was drawn from international contexts (Cummins and Swain 1986; Fishman 1989b; Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins 1988) and the literature investigating teaching in comparable international Indigenous minority contexts (Dumont 1972; McLaughlin 1989; Philips 1972; Wolcott 1967). Through the 1970s, 1980s and into the 1990s, linguistics started to impact on education research with explorations in domain theory, code-switching and cross-cultural communication (McConvell 1988; Walsh and Yallop 1993; Harkins 1990; Harkins 1994). Australian research also addressed linguistic and conceptual issues particular to Aboriginal children who did not speak Standard Australian English (Brumby and Vaszolyi 1977; Eagleson et al. 1982; Kaldor 1980; Malcolm 1998; NLLIA 1996). After December 1998 the NT government discontinued resourcing a formal bilingual programme in NT schools, although some flexibility for the inclusion of language and culture maintenance programmes remains within the NT Curriculum Framework (NT Curriculum Framework Team 2001). A bilingual programme continued in the Pitjantjatjara Lands schools until 1990 when the communities requested that the SA Education Department provide an English only literacy programme (Rose 2001). In WA bilingual programmes have generally only been supported by independent schools, including those in the Catholic system. See (Gale 1997; Hartman and Henderson 1994; Hoogenraad 2001) for descriptions of Aboriginal bilingual programmes.

largely upon their abilities in skills fields, and particularly in their degree of reading accomplishment.⁶⁵⁶

Unrealistic expectations of what education could achieve were again generated and this has led to ongoing frustration:

If people had actually said: 'I'd like to be able to read and write', but there was all this pressure on that skills transfer, jobs transfer that the whites have got to get out of here and this has led to a grudging resentment towards staff and their role.⁶⁵⁷

As the following quote from Clem suggests, the resentment can also be sourced to the earlier assimilation ideology:

We came back from Wongutha Farm, from the high schools, ladies was sent to Fairhaven and we all came back to Warburton, [but] they didn't give us the opportunity to make Aboriginal people advance towards, advancement.

Education facilities at outstation schools were initially rudimentary and by 1978 there were only two itinerant non-Aboriginal staff with minimal Education Department funding.⁶⁵⁸

'Poor' school results were commonly attributed to the 'increasing mobility between the outcamps and Warburton'. The 'migratory habits of the people' were considered 'detrimental to the continued education of children'.⁶⁵⁹

One of the problems facing the success of the program is the irregular attendance of children at school. This is brought about by the high truancy rate of children while they are at Warburton and the fact that most children itinerate between Warburton and the neighbouring outstation communities, constituting frequent breaks in the continuity of their education.⁶⁶⁰

From a sociocultural perspective, however, this period can be interpreted differently. Over previous generations people had experienced a profound reconfiguring of socio-spatial relations on the mission or in the stations, hostels, towns and reserves of the Goldfields. With the outstation movement came 'a huge pent up release of energy' as people reasserted autonomy and control emanating from the empowerment gained by reconnecting to country.⁶⁶¹ This generation of school children, the self-determining generation, were immersed in this experience. They were to observe the strength and agency of their parents and grandparents, who with varying levels of education and literacy, worked in the schools and stores, built the infrastructure and asserted leadership responsibility. This generation were also to experience the turbulent social disruptions of the 1970s and 1980s.

⁶⁵⁶ School Policy Warburton Ranges 1974—NTU Archives: Education File.

⁶⁵⁷ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

⁶⁵⁸ (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁶⁵⁹ (Green 1983: 112); School Policy Warburton Ranges 1974—NTU Archives: Education File.

⁶⁶⁰ Warburton Ranges Special Aboriginal School: School Policy 1979—NTU Archives: Education File.

⁶⁶¹ Brooks—Interview 15/8/04.

Vernacular literacy

Throughout the 1970s the Ngaanyatjarra adult literacy programme continued. From 1974 to 1978 Glass taught both semi-literate and illiterate men and women, however 'few of the illiterates made any significant progress'.⁶⁶² From 1972 annual short-term Bible Schools for adults and children were held.⁶⁶³ It is interesting to compare attitudes. Observers note the 'growing demand' for adult literacy and the 'astounding' number of children attending a holiday Bible school.⁶⁶⁴ In contrast, school educators were pessimistic about the development of English literacy:

Reading has to be recognised for the important skill that it is, and especially in the light of the developing situation at Warburton. Unfortunately, reading, for various reasons, does not seem to be integrated into the thinking of the children as being a worthwhile skill. Seldom is any in-depth attention paid to reading material. There is a tendency for children to look at books and magazines, skimming rapidly over the pages as they go. The article is then flung in the direction of the storage area, another book is grabbed, and the process repeats itself. This method, implying carelessness and lack of interest, denies comprehension opportunities.⁶⁶⁵

Contemporaneously, the missionaries were itinerating in the new outstation communities and selling Christian reading material and cassettes. At Docker River people bought 'hymnbooks, Bible portions and other Christian literature' and at Blackstone 'one keen Christian leader...conducts services every Sunday and prayer meetings every morning'.⁶⁶⁶ On another visit, 'a group of school girls ran after me to buy books and Hymn books, "Just to practice!"', and one man 'bought books for all those at his camp'.⁶⁶⁷ By 1977 a ministry was established at Warakurna.⁶⁶⁸

Significantly, it was at this time that a body of secular texts—traditional stories and children's books—in Ngaanyatjarra and English also evolved, in addition to the ongoing production of Christian texts.⁶⁶⁹ Materials were produced for the new school bilingual programme and a community newspaper.

In 1974, the WA Education Department approved the introduction of a pilot Bilingual Education Programme at Warburton School in tandem with an Aboriginal Teacher Aides

⁶⁶²(Glass 2000: 3).

⁶⁶³ (Blackett 1997: 152).

⁶⁶⁴ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1976: 10; *United Aborigines Messenger* December 1976: 16–19

⁶⁶⁵ School Policy Warburton Ranges 1974—NTU Archives: Education File.

⁶⁶⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* December 1974: 8.

⁶⁶⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* March 1978: 5.

⁶⁶⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1977: 11.

⁶⁶⁹ Ngaanyatjarra literacy materials produced by 1974 included some 32 booklets on cultural, educational and religious subjects totalling 350 pages of reading material (Glass 1974). During the 1990s Hackett produced a series of eleven Christian Education books and a number of Ngaanyatjarra writers, story-tellers and illustrators had stories published through *Tjaa Yuti* Books (Books in our Language). Publications by Ngaanyatjarra authors include (Butler 1993; Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]; Richards 1997). Other publications include: *Mama Kuurruku Wangka Marlangkatjanya: The New Testament in Ngaanyatjarra and English* (Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project 1999); *Turku Pirinya* (Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project 2003); *Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjarra to English Dictionary* (Glass and Hackett 2003) and *Tjilkuku-tjanampa tjukurpa*

Scheme.⁶⁷⁰ The programme was developed by Glass and Hackett along with Murray Wells and local Teacher Aides.⁶⁷¹ Previously, children had attended schools where the medium of instruction was unknown and the learning of literacy was inhibited by linguistic and sociolinguistic factors.⁶⁷² At the time children in Grade 7 had literacy proficiency at Grade 3 level.⁶⁷³ The bilingual programme provided a focus for increased Ngaanyatjarra literacy production. In 1974, three Warburton men attended a ‘Creative Writers Workshop’ at SIL in Darwin.⁶⁷⁴ The event was acclaimed as a significant moment in literacy advancement.⁶⁷⁵ Prior to the workshop none of the men could read or write in Ngaanyatjarra, and only a little in English, yet by the end they were able to write ‘imaginative stories of high quality’.

Surely here is the beginning of a body of literature written by the people and for the people...we as Christian missionaries should be teaching the people to produce and enjoy good literature for themselves, as well as encouraging them to read and enjoy the Book of books.⁶⁷⁶

The bilingual programme was short-lived and had ceased by 1980.⁶⁷⁷

A Ngaanyatjarra-English community newsletter ‘*Warburtonngamartatji Tjukurrpa* – Warburton News’ was produced from 1973 to 1980 as an initiative of the newly formed AAPA community council to communicate information on the new agencies and changes (Fig. 4.1).

When I worked on the community newspaper I used to get all the stories first, reading it into English, get it into my *kata* (in my head) and *kuliku* (think about it) and then follow the English line and translate it. Like that *palyalpayi* (that’s how I did it). It was easy for me, I just picked it up quickly, self (*yungarra*).⁶⁷⁸

walykumunu: The children's book of wonderful stories (Hackett 2004), as well as (Glass and Hackett 1979 [1969]; Glass 1980; Glass 1997; Glass 2006).

⁶⁷⁰ (Gray 1975).

⁶⁷¹ In 1973 Glass attended a workshop in Darwin with Sarah Gudschinsky (Gudschinsky 1973). Subsequently, in consultation with Douglas and the few Ngaanyatjarra literates, changes were made to Douglas’ original Ngaanyatjarra orthography – diacritics were removed, and replaced by digraphs to represent the retroflex consonants; and ‘rr’ was to be used to represent the alveolar flap/trill (Glass 2000: 1). The retroflex sounds are still represented with diacritics (ɺ, ɽ, ɽ) in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1987) and Pintupi-Luritja (Heffernan and Heffernan 2000). The school curriculum used the Ngaanyatjarra primers *Nintirriwa-la Wangkaku* designed using principles from the SIL Gudschinsky method for teaching vernacular literacy to ‘preliterate people’ (Glass 1973: 8).

⁶⁷² (Glass 1973).

⁶⁷³ (Glass 1974).

⁶⁷⁴ (Glass 2000: 3).

⁶⁷⁵ DAA Newsletter (Western Australia), Vol.1, No.8 September 1974; *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1974.

⁶⁷⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1974: 3.

⁶⁷⁷ There is a widely held belief among educators and researchers that learners like the Ngaanyatjarra are profoundly disadvantaged if there is no bilingual programme or second language immersion environment. In the 1996 *Desert Schools Report* (NLLIA 1996) linguists and educators investigated the difficulties that speakers of Aboriginal languages, including Ngaanyatjarra, and non-standard English dialects encounter when learning to crack the English written code.⁶⁷⁷ They conclude that literacy learning problems arise because non-Aboriginal teachers are inadequately trained in language teaching methodology. Additional problems arise because Aboriginal teachers and language workers receive little or no linguistic training to enable them to explain the phonological, grammatical, semantic and pragmatic aspects of their own language, nor can they articulate the differences between the oral discourse properties of Ngaanyatjarra and the highly nominalised English written system. See also (Harris 1990b; Harris 1990a; Harris 1991; Hartman and Henderson 1994; Hoogenraad 2001; McConvell 1991a; Walton 1993).

⁶⁷⁸ Lalla West 2002 in (Plant and Viegas 2002: 59).

Information of local social and cultural relevance could now be accessed in a textual mode. The newsletter reported community news and the coming and going of community members, including staff. For families returning to country, the newspaper performed an important social function. At one point a letter requesting a copy of *Warburtonngamartatji Tjukurrpa* was sent from a community member in Jameson with an enclosed sum of money, illustrating that information of a secular nature was being sought through written text. The newsletter provides a glimpse into issues that mattered, including the visits of a ‘confusing multiplication of administrators and advisors’⁶⁷⁹:

Why is it that we in this place keep getting a surprise when we see cars and Europeans and aeroplanes coming and going? I will tell you the news so that some of us won't be ignorant all the time. That's why we are writing this newspaper so that you will all be able to read it and know what is happening.⁶⁸⁰

Over eight years at least 40 editions were produced. They recorded the transformation from the mission era through ‘government time’ and the embryonic beginnings of the Ngaanyatjarra community of interest.⁶⁸¹ A community newsletter was also started by SIL linguists in 1991, and Ngaanyatjarra Council later produced eight editions of the *Ngaanyatjarra News*, between 1996 and 2001.⁶⁸² Print media has now, in part, been made redundant by the immediacy of short-wave two-way radio and the advent of radio, video and TV—forms of oral and visual communication that fit cultural processes.⁶⁸³

In 1982 doctrinal differences between the remaining missionaries and the UAM arose. Douglas resigned and the UAM Language Department in Kalgoorlie ceased to operate. Glass and Hackett shifted to Alice Springs to concentrate on translation work under the banner of the Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project (Fig. 4.2) and language workers worked with them in Alice Springs. It was through Bible translation work during the 1980s and 1990s that a number of adults, some of whom had had only rudimentary schooling, learned to read Ngaanyatjarra. Some in the diaspora like George, Clem and Patricia returned with literate behaviours and a fluency, automaticity, and broad lexical range in oral and written

⁶⁷⁹ (Douglas 1978: 118).

⁶⁸⁰ *Warburtonngamartatji Tjukurrpa*—Warburton News Vol.2 No.1 25/6/75.

⁶⁸¹ Original copies of the full 40 editions are held in the personal collection of Ameer Glass and Dorothy Hackett.

⁶⁸² (Gill Shaw pers. comm. 2005). Community newsletters have played an important role in the promotion of literacy, in both English and the local vernacular(s) in many Aboriginal communities across remote Australia, particularly during the era of bilingual education in SA, the NT and WA (Gale 1997; Goddard 1990; Hartman and Henderson 1994). Hilliard notes a newsletter at Ernabella as early as 1958 (Hilliard 1968: 161). Goddard discusses the significance of the Pitjantjatjara newsletters (Goddard 1990). The dismantling of bilingual education programmes also led to the closure of Literature Production Centres as sites for vernacular literacy production. Vernacular/English newsletters have included: *Tjakulpa Mulapa* from Areyonga NT and *Amataku Tjukurrpa* from Amata Community, SA, *Kurparu* from Ernabella, SA (Pitjantjatjara-English); *Mikurrunya* (Nyangumarta-English) from Strelley Community, WA; *Junga Yimi* (Warlpiri-English) from Yuendumu, NT. NPY Women's Council has also used print media to relay social, cultural, lifestyle information and council news in two glossy, colour newsletters; *Minymaku News* aimed at women across the NPY lands; and *Never Give Up News*, a youth-oriented format.

Fig. 4.1 Warburtongamartatji Tjukurpa – Warburton News

Warburtongamartatji Tjukurpa
Warburton News

Volume 4 No 7
Wednesday, November 21st, 1979

Hospitalgamartatjiluya watjara -
Tjitja Adeletu, Ruthtju, Gilbylu, Wati yirnaluru Ruthtjuya mukurringkula goodbykarralkitjalu yamatji pirnila. Palunyaluya pirnipurkaku nintirringu. Puruyanyu pukuripa nyinarranytja ngurra ngaangka.

Mantingkaya pitjaku
Mr Neville Mellornya, Mr Douglasnga, puru walypala kutjupanya pitjakuya kutjupa Tjantingka. Nyangkaya pirninyartu pitja miitingiku Manti yunguntjarra. Nyangkalan pirninyartu wangkaku tjuuku. Kaltaya Mr Mellornya walypala pirninya marlaku yanku Cosmoku.

Jonathanngapula Kathynya
Kutjupa Mantingkalpipula Jonathantupula Kathylu Kununarranya wantirra wati-pitjangu. Palunyanyapula yurltutjarra pitjaarni. Nyinakupula Mr and Mrs Cotterillta palunyatjanu pitjaku Warburtonku.

Purnu payipungkula
Communitylulatju tjimarri pirningka payipungkulanytja purnu pirni yarnangungkatja. Purulatju nintilku manikitjalu Alice Springku puru Perthku. Purulan manikaralpi purnu pirninya payipungama yarnangungkatja. Mary Machalu yininti payipungku. Nyangka minyma pirniluya yininti pirninya murtu-murtulku. Mary Machalunyu purtu nyakupayi yinintiku.

Hospital staff say -
Sisters Adele, Ruth, Gilby, Wati yirna and Ruth would like to say goodbye to all the friends we have made at Warburton. We have learnt many things and are glad that we have lived in Central Reserve for a short while.

Coming on Monday
Mr Neville Mellor, Mr Douglas and another man will come here next Sunday. They want everyone to gather for a meeting on Monday morning. We will all talk about the store. Then Mr Mellor's group will go back to Cosmo.

Jonathan and Kathy Bates
Last Monday Jonathan and Kathy Bates left Kununarra. They are coming along by car. They will stay with Mr and Mrs Cotterill for a while then come here.

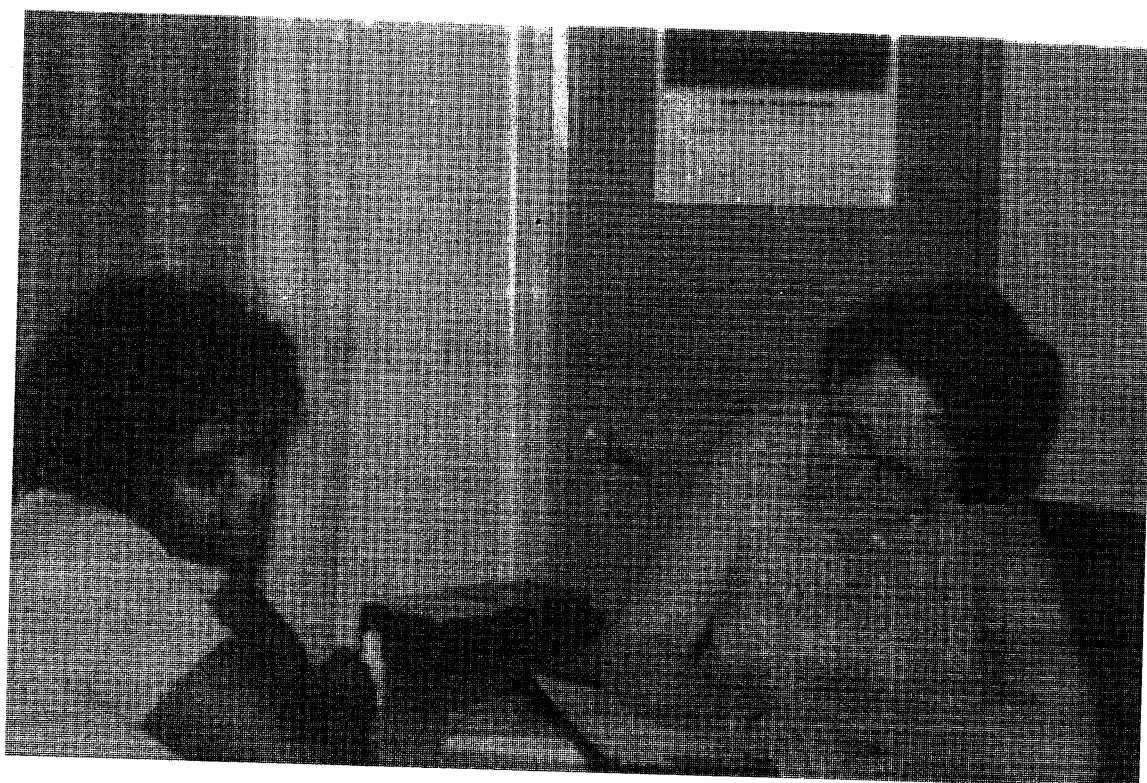
Buying artefacts
The community has been spending a lot of money buying artefacts from the people. We also need to sell these artefacts in Alice Springs and Perth so that we have enough money to continue buying artefacts. We especially need people at the artefact store to work dividing seed necklaces into shorter lengths and would appreciate any help as we have orders for these and Mary Macha has been waiting a long time for these.

Source: Warburtongamartatji Tjukurpa – Warburton News Vol. 4 No. 7 November 1979.

Fig. 4.2 Dorothy Hackett and Anee Glass doing Bible translation work with Ngaanyatjarra literates, 1982



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English. Contiguously, however, they also carried the *kurnta*—the ‘shame’ of no longer being fluent Ngaanyatjarra speakers.⁶⁸⁴ Nevertheless, by activating transfer literacy skills, Ngaanyatjarra literacy was gained and oral fluency returned. Workers were given additional daily literacy lessons and developed a particular kind of metalinguistic skill in the process of translating, checking and back translating.⁶⁸⁵ Patricia, for instance, participated in Bible translation and dictionary compilation work, and then went on to be a language worker in the school programme.⁶⁸⁶

Literacy as social practice

I now turn to the factors outside instructional settings that saw adults begin to use written language for their own social and cultural goals. After only two generations of schooling and exposure to Western literate practice some Ngaanyatjarra took hold of literacy to a certain extent for specific social, cultural (and as I show later political) purposes. Moreover, they began to exhibit ‘cultural ways of utilising written language’ and ‘literate behaviours’.⁶⁸⁷

Letter-writing

In the history of literacy in many societies letter-writing appears as a ‘pivotal genre’ that people readily ‘latch onto’.⁶⁸⁸ Letter-writing is considered the perfect genre for personal or political expression as ‘complete command of reading and writing skills is not necessary for the effective assertion of agency through literacy’.⁶⁸⁹

[R]eading and writing have regularly been mistaken as autonomous processes of pure form and meaning, separate from social circumstances, relationships and actions. Letters, compared to other genres, may appear humble, because they are so overtly tied to particular social relations of particular writers and readers, but that only means they reveal to us so clearly and explicitly the sociality that is part of all writing.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸³ Ngaanyatjarra Media, see: <http://www.waru.org/ngmedia/> See also (Michaels 1986; Hinkson 1999; Hinkson 2005) for discussions on Aboriginal media at Yuendumu, NT.

⁶⁸⁴ In Ngaanyatjarra *kurnta* is polysemous and means ‘shame’, ‘shyness’ and ‘respect’. *Kurnta* is characteristic of Aboriginal people throughout the Western Desert and manifests in a tendency to avoid focusing on the individual person and a reluctance to stand out or step forward in the company of strangers (Brooks 2002b).

⁶⁸⁵ See (Olson 1984; Yaden and Templeton 1986). According to Olson, metalinguistic thinking involves having the ‘metalanguage’ to objectify language as an ‘artifact’: that is to segment, isolate, label and describe language; to recognise patterns in written and spoken language and to recognise and analyse vowels, consonants, words, sentences and other parts of speech, see also (Heath 1986: 213).

⁶⁸⁶ After the bilingual programme ceased in 1980, a non-formal Ngaanyatjarra literacy programme—taught by Aboriginal Education Workers (AEW), later termed Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEO)—took place in a number of schools during the 1990s. In 1998 it came under the official Languages Other Than English (LOTE) programme of the WA Education Department (Glass 2000). Under the Ngaanyatjarra Education Area a draft Ngaanyatjarra Language and Culture curriculum was developed in 2002 by Ngaanyatjarra speakers with Lizzie Ellis and Inge Kral.

⁶⁸⁷ (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 8; Heath 1991).

⁶⁸⁸ (Besnier 1995: 16-17).

⁶⁸⁹ (Barton and Hall 2000: 9).

⁶⁹⁰ (Bazerman 2000: 27).

For these reasons letter-writing has been a focus of study in international research and in Aboriginal studies.⁶⁹¹ The ephemeral nature of letters means that examples of early letters are rarely preserved. In the Ngaanyatjarra context, the unique continuity of relationships between locals and staff has led to the preservation of letters revealing letter-writing as an incipient social literacy practice that went beyond the 'decontextualised school exercise'.⁶⁹² The practice of letter-writing was perhaps first modelled in the 'prayer letters'.⁶⁹³ Valcie recalls writing monthly 'prayer letters' at Mt Margaret in the 1940s by addressing 'about a thousand or more envelopes' to Prayer Partners:

[Children] had to do the envelopes and we daren't write it crooked on the envelopes, we had to go and do it. We had to do it straight and good handwriting. And they had taught us to write properly in school, and with Mrs Schenk.

Letter-writing was also a school activity at Warburton and an exercise for adolescents at the hostels (Fig. 4.3).⁶⁹⁴

Glass and Hackett's relationship with the Ngaanyatjarra extends back to 1963. Over the years they have received and kept copies of some 110 letters, as exemplified in Corpus A (Table 4.2). The letters fall broadly into two categories: 'letters of affect' and 'letters of advocacy'. The impetus for letters to emerge as a form of communication can be sourced to specific circumstances: the separation from family (as workers, students and during periods of incarceration), and the desire to move back to traditional homelands.

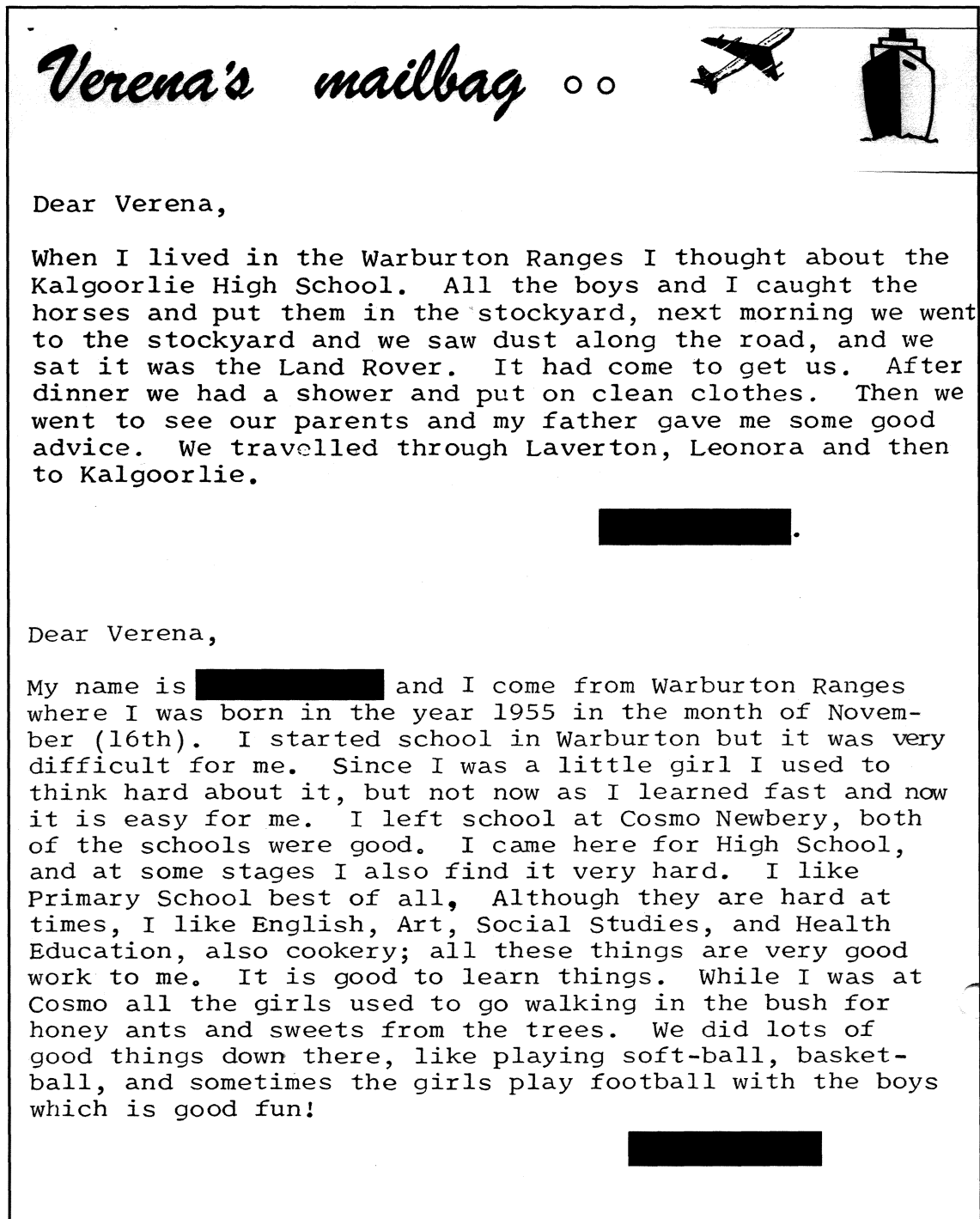
⁶⁹¹ See (Ahearn 2001b; Barton and Hall 2000; Besnier 1995; Kalman 1999). Australian Aboriginal examples include letter-writing at Killalpaninna Mission, SA (Austin 1986; Cane and Gunson 1986); Hermannsburg Mission, NT (Kral 2000); and colonial letter-writing in the south-east of Australia (Nelson et al. 2002; van Toorn 2006). Van Toorn suggests that personal letter-writing practices arose in response to the 'stolen generation' experience and many texts lie hidden in government archives. This warrants further research. Instances at Ernabella Mission have also been documented. Pitjantjatjara literacy tuition commenced at the mission at Ernabella Mission in 1940 and it was claimed that within a year children were writing as 'fluently' in Pitjantjatjara (Edwards 1969: 279). Evidence of this was a letter written by a twelve year old boy after only three months of vernacular literacy tuition (Gale 1997: 84-5). Hilliard notes early letter-writing practices between Pitjantjatjara correspondents as well as with Europeans. She describes letters written between family members away at other settlements, in hospital or on holiday in Adelaide (Hilliard 1968: 160-161). See also (Goddard 1990).

⁶⁹² (Barton and Hall 2000: 12). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the DNW used newsletters to celebrate the achievements of integration. A special section was devoted to 'Verena's mailbag' where letters from children who boarded at Nindeebai, the DNW hostel in Kalgoorlie were published.

⁶⁹³ Prayer letters were used by the UAM missionaries to keep the churches and supporters informed of the missionaries' work, as the missions relied on donations (Milnes 1987: 164). Prayer letters, along with the *United Aborigines Messenger* facilitated this campaign. Donors also sent letters and birthday gifts to children in the Graham Home (Milnes 1987: 191).

⁶⁹⁴ As exemplified in 1966 in (Green 1983: 79-80).

Fig. 4.3 Letters from Warburton adolescents at Nindeebai Hostel, Kalgoorlie, 1970



Source: Department of Native Welfare Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 9, 1971.

Table 4.2 Letters—Corpus A

<i>Sender and/or location</i>	<i>Recipient and/or location</i>	<i>No. of letters</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Language</i>
Male prisoners	Glass and/or Hackett	7	1977–2003	English
Ngaanyatjarra people mostly when absent from home location	Glass and/or Hackett	18	1965–1989	English
Ngaanyatjarra people mostly when absent from home location	Glass and/or Hackett	28 (2 dictated)	1965–1990	Ngaanyatjarra
Young people away in hostels (Kurrawang, Fairhaven, Wongutha, GBTI)	Glass and/or Hackett	16	1965–1979	English
Young people away in hostels	Glass and/or Hackett	1	1970	Ngaanyatjarra
Ngaanyatjarra female who had moved elsewhere	Glass and/or Hackett	15	1966–1988	English
Husband	Wife	1	1977	Ngaanyatjarra (dictated)
Ngaanyatjarra male	Aboriginal friend	1	1980	Ngaanyatjarra (dictated)
<i>Family corpus:</i>				
Daughter at Hostel	Glass and/or Hackett	1	1960s	English
Father in Warburton	Glass and/or Hackett	3	1971–1973	Ngaanyatjarra (dictated)
Father in Warburton	Daughter at Hostel	4	1972–1974	Ngaanyatjarra (dictated)
Father	Official letters to Government/Advisor	4	1973–1976	Ngaanyatjarra & English (dictated)
<i>Official letters:</i> Ngaanyatjarra people	Government: AAPA, DAA, etc.	10	1973–1975	Ngaanyatjarra or Ngaanyatjarra /English (dictated)
	Community Advisor	1	1975	Ngaanyatjarra & English (dictated)
	Editor, West Australian	1	May 1975	Ngaanyatjarra & English (dictated)

Letters of affect

Traditionally, social interaction was within a small scale family group or band and kin-based relationships and relatedness to country was (and remains) of foremost importance.⁶⁹⁵ Myers describes how the ‘discourse of daily life’ for the Pintupi (and likewise the Ngaanyatjarra) is ‘heavily nuanced’ with emotion including compassion, melancholy, grief, happiness and shame, with compassion and shame ‘constraining’ the ways in which social action is organised.⁶⁹⁶

For the Ngaanyatjarra, being away from family or country for extended periods causes a deep emotional and physical yearning for people and place. This circumstance engenders an intense empathy for the emotional suffering of absent relatives and elicits the

⁶⁹⁵ (Brooks and Shaw 2003).

⁶⁹⁶ (Myers 1986: 103).

particularly Ngaanyatjarra emotion of *ngartu* ('compassion'). In Ngaanyatjarra figurative speech, body parts are a 'category of metaphor' used to evoke affective expressions and idioms.⁶⁹⁷ The 'seat of the emotions of grief, anger and desire' is located in the *tjuni* ('stomach') or *lirri* ('throat'):

lirri kampaku—feel very angry (lit. throat burn)

lirri talan-talan(pa)—angry (lit. throat hot)

lirri warurringku—become very angry (lit. throat become hot)

tjuni kaarr-kaarrarriku—become homesick (lit. stomach broken)

tjuni kartaly(pa)—bereaved, sad through losing a relative (lit. stomach broken)⁶⁹⁸

In addition, telaesthesia or predictive powers, experienced as *punka-punkara* ('a significant throbbing in the body') indicate that 'a relative is thinking of one'.⁶⁹⁹ For instance, in the traditional story *Tjuma marlu purlkanya*—The story of the giant kangaroo—the phrase '*kurta-pula kutjarra muhya takarlarrarnu*' literally means 'the two brothers' noses were making the cracking sound' indicating that something is wrong with a relative.⁷⁰⁰ This excerpt personifies the intense physicalisation of familial emotion in Ngaanyatjarra culture. Homesickness arising from lengthy absences was not an unknown emotion as marriage had separated kin and post-initiate young men travelled widely.

Here we see letter-writing emerging as a social practice to ameliorate feelings of *watjil-watjilpa* and *tjuni kaarr-kaarrarriku* ('loneliness' or 'homesickness'). This practice emerged out of altered conditions and at the intersection of events in time and place. For letter-writing to emerge as social practice requires not only individual technical literacy skill, but also the motivation and purpose, and the resources, the 'materiality', of letter-writing.⁷⁰¹ Prior to 1954 towns were prohibited areas and Aboriginal people were excluded from entering unless under an employment permit. Assistance from non-Aboriginal intermediaries like station managers or missionaries was probably required to purchase writing resources or to post letters. At Glenorn Station, Valcie recalls reading and writing letters: 'I just write to my friends and they send me a letter back'. Arthur tells of how he would get paper from the 'station man' when working on the station:

I used to have my case, comics, books something to make bigger things like learning. I still had my letters, you know writing letter all the time...Had pencil, writing pad, envelopes, stamp...and I have my mouth organ or anything like that, keep it in there, magazines, like comics.

He says he wrote letters to his sister at Warburton 'all the time' and she replied sometimes.

⁶⁹⁷ (Douglas 1979).

⁶⁹⁸ Sourced from (Glass and Hackett 2003).

⁶⁹⁹ (Douglas 2001 [1959]: 6).

⁷⁰⁰ (Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]).

⁷⁰¹ (Hall 2000).

For others the separation from kin and country was institutionalised, coinciding with the moment in time when this generation had sufficient literacy and access to resources to enact the practice of letter-writing. Hostels, prisons and missions provide a fixed address and literate Europeans to mediate the process.

One of the boys from here, now a young man working at Esperance, recently wrote to Claude Cotterill telling of his love for the Lord and expecting to be accepted into Bible Institute this year and another had applied and he had 'proved himself trustworthy and a good worker'.⁷⁰²

Molly remembers writing letters at Cosmo: 'we knew how to read and write there, we used to write like a letter, letter to our boyfriends, that's all...in Kurrawang'. Una recalls that,

When I left school I used to write letters down to my uncle when I was down in Warburton here...he wrote letters back...because he'd been sent down to, what that place called? Pedlar's.

Others recall observing girls reading letters and writing letters in reply. Glass and Hackett recollect schoolgirls requesting writing materials to correspond with relatives in other places. Letters received by families were communal literacy events mediated either with literate adults, or by school children who would decode the text oblivious of the illocutionary force, the impact, that the content of the letter may have on individuals in the public audience.⁷⁰³ In speech act theory, illocutionary force is the effect that spoken or written text has on the listener or reader.⁷⁰⁴ Letters can have a meaning that goes beyond the content of the letter as the artifact can encode affect 'even when affect is not the primary focus' of the written text.⁷⁰⁵ Letters undoubtedly conveyed not only the literal reporting of news about family and friends, but also the illocutionary force, the emotional effect of homesickness for kin and country.

As an aside, a recurring theme among this cohort is that with few other distractions reading and letter-writing were used as leisure-time activities. On the weekends, while at Pedlar's, Jim 'read all the time, books, all kind of books...we write back home to family'. Similarly, when April was working at Leonora hospital:

I had nothing else to do so I used to lay down and read. We used to do a lot of readings, writing. I done a lot of writing...they used to write letters and I used to write back.

These practices required resources which were either bought or given. April says that she would get books from the Leonora bookshop (presumably the Gospel shop front mentioned earlier) and Jim mentions that 'sometime the farmer's wife give us book to read.'

⁷⁰² *United Aborigines Messenger*, June 1968: 13.

⁷⁰³ Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. May 2006.

⁷⁰⁴ (Austin 1962).

⁷⁰⁵ (Besnier 1993: 68).

Between 1965 and 1979 Glass and Hackett received 17 'letters of affect' (one in Ngaanyatjarra and the rest in English) from adolescents residing in the hostels (Table 4.2). The young writers request or send family news, report events, talk of their Christian faith and communicate homesickness. Initially, the government supplied only one free travel permit per year for each student, so mid-term holidays were spent at the hostels, thus exacerbating the sense of longing.⁷⁰⁶ *Phyllis* (Family D) wrote to Glass and Hackett from Fairhaven in 1972, and in 1973–1974 when she was at GBTI. Phyllis had learnt Ngaanyatjarra literacy as a teenager: 'we all living in *wiltjas* and we'd come over and learn to read—there were no DVDs or TVs or anything then'. Phyllis was at Fairhaven for two years and recalls wanting to be a missionary. She 'really wanted to be something' so went to GBTI—the only female from Warburton to do so. She also did a two week Bible translation course at the UAM Language Department. Glass and Hackett received other letters in English from students at GBTI who talk of 'praying for Warburton Ranges people to come to the Lord', 'training to preach in English and give out literature in jail', and wanting to 'help own people'.

Corpus A includes correspondence from one family; these eight letters include four from father to daughter when she was at Fairhaven. The summarised translated excerpts from the father's letters are overt in their expression of cultural meaning and values: affective appeals for compassion and obligation, pain at the separation from kin, the significance of birthplace, and the encoding of Christian practices:

July 1972

Are you well? I pray for you. Battery of company truck is flat. I have no money so you might send me some. Will you come in August? XXX has his daughter here and I want to have my daughter close. With all my heart I'm calling you back to your birthplace.

August 1972

Thanks for money. Are you still trusting in the Lord? The missionaries in Esperance have brought you up and we are only half your parents. XXX and his wife are truly parents to their child. My daughter is like an orphan. On Sunday we'll have a service at XX. God is Lord of all.

Although the father was unschooled, he was one of the few adults who went from being a complete non-literate to attaining some rudimentary vernacular literacy proficiency. He utilised the practice of letter-writing by dictating letters in Ngaanyatjarra which were transcribed and sometimes translated into English.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁶ Glass and Hackett pers. comm. 2004.

⁷⁰⁷ Glass and Hackett—Interview 8/5/04.

'Letters of affect' also include letters to and from prisoners. Prisons are a context where the social value of text is enhanced and letters or cards represent the physical proof of connectedness to the outside world.⁷⁰⁸ From the 1960s, increasing numbers of desert people particularly men, were incarcerated for alcohol-related incidents. With imprisonment came a fixed address, access to the resources often not available on town reserves or in camps, and the support of literacy mediators. Howell recalls that 'letters in English were written to parents by young men in jail and these were often brought to us to be read and translated'.⁷⁰⁹ Una recalls a 'lot of letters' in the 1960s and 'no telephones'.⁷¹⁰ *Jacinta* (Family C) recalls that when her husband was incarcerated in the 1980s they would write to each other as letters were private and 'that time they don't have no phone'. Molly recently wrote letters to a relative in prison but 'lately he's ringing back'. To a certain extent phones have replaced 'letters of affect' and young women today spend days waiting by public phones for calls from their *kurri* ('spouse') in prison.

Glass and Hackett have continued corresponding in Ngaanyatjarra with literates since the 1960s as a way of encouraging vernacular reading, and the reading skills of some have improved.⁷¹¹ Una describes how she used letter-writing as a strategy to improve her reading and writing:

Sometimes I used to sit down and write letters, we used to buy pads, pens and pads. I used to sit down and write and I used to think: 'Oh what I got to put?' Then I used to sit down and write to friends, you know my friends, I'd send letters to my friends.

Personal letter-writing has existed as a significant, yet largely invisible *social* literacy practice. I now consider the literate strategies used in the assertion of self-determination when 'event-centred' correspondence was composed for an audience of *malikitja* ('strangers').⁷¹²

Letters of advocacy

'Letters of advocacy' emerge at the transection of socioeconomic factors where circumstances of the period generated a shift in communication conventions. Letters and petitions arose as a constructed response to serve in this case the ideological interests of the Ngaanyatjarra themselves.⁷¹³ The circumstances that led to these literacy events are now briefly discussed.

⁷⁰⁸ See (Wilson 2000a).

⁷⁰⁹ Howell—Email interview 2004.

⁷¹⁰ Telephones were introduced to Warburton and other communities after 1990 and this has contributed to the demise of letter-writing as a significant social practice, a factor also noted at Ernabella (Goddard 1990). Interestingly, the advent of phones has introduced a new literacy practice: written communication via fax.

⁷¹¹ Mountney—Interview 3/3/04.

⁷¹² (Besnier 1995).

⁷¹³ (Street 1984). Political letters have been studied in the literature (Stotsky 1987). Petitions have been utilised by other Aboriginal groups in Australia. Van Toorn makes reference to the use of petitions by Aboriginal people in the south-east

After the government took over, rundown mission infrastructure was replaced. A new 'hospital' was to be built on the *marlu tjina* sacred site on the kangaroo dreaming track, giving rise to a fear that the site would be damaged by trench digging. The resulting outrage from Ngaanyatjarra elders led to a so-called 'rampage of destruction' in Warburton in May 1975.⁷¹⁴ As a consequence, the construction company, Cooper and Oxley, departed and nurses were withdrawn. The event was reported in the *West Australian* as 'Mass Spearings Feared at Warburton'. In May 1975 two Warburton men responded by sending a Letter to the Editor with Hackett acting as scribe.⁷¹⁵ A paraphrased excerpt from the scribed letter follows:

May 1975

Not upset nor want to fight. Didn't chase Cooper and Oxley away with spears. Had meeting and asked them to leave. Older men complained about digging up the sacred site, so we sent them away. We won't start more trouble.⁷¹⁶

In addition, the principal and all but one teacher were transferred to other schools, with three Aboriginal teaching assistants and Wells continuing the bilingual programme. In response the community sent a petition to the Director of Primary Education in Western Australia (Fig. 4.4). The petition is authenticated by the distinctive cursive signature of most of the adult community members, notable if one recalls how recently English names had been acquired.

From a cultural perspective this event symbolises the erosion of the Ngaanyatjarra capacity to 'shape space'.⁷¹⁷ Prior to contact with the non-Aboriginal world senior Law men held unquestioned authority over the parameters of known space. As an awareness of a world beyond their own insinuated itself into the cultural consciousness, the power of older men began to diminish.⁷¹⁸

They'd find that building was going on but they were never asked whether that building should happen. In Warburton the kangaroo dreaming goes right through and on numerous occasions, almost every time some big infrastructure program has gone on people have got upset because they perceive that damage has been caused to that track. So lessons were never learnt...it's a bit of a sad

of Australia as early as 1846 when a petition was sent to Queen Victoria from Flinders Island (van Toorn 2006: 119–122) and in 1881 from Coranderrk Station (van Toorn 2006: 130–132). Other examples include: a petition from the Australian Aborigines League to King George V(I) in 1937 (Attwood 2003: 35–59) and the Gurindji petition to the Governor General Lord Casey in 1967 (Attwood 2003: 273–282). In 1963 the Yolngu people of Yirrkala famously sent a bark petition to the government protesting the violation of their rights and lack of consultation over the Nabalco bauxite mine at Gove. This made social and legal history and led to the first land rights case in an Australian court of law. The 1971 rejection of the Yirrkala claim to land was the impetus for the Yolngu to write a letter to the Prime Minister and the ultimate historic passing of the Australian *Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Reid 1983: 1–2). In the 1970s the Yolngu also used letter-writing to stir responses from Aboriginal Councils and doctors to Aboriginal social and health issues (Reid 1983: 135–144).

⁷¹⁴ (Douglas 1978: 120–21). The event was termed a 'rampage of destruction' and reported in the *Sunday Independent*, June 8 1975 (Douglas 1978).

⁷¹⁵ Hackett pers. comm. 2005.

⁷¹⁶ Letters from the personal collection of Glass and Hackett.

⁷¹⁷ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]).

⁷¹⁸ Brooks pers. comm. 2006.

Fig. 4.4 Petition from Warburton Community to Director of Primary Education Perth, 1975

To: Mr SK Palmer
 Director of Primary Education, Parliament Place
 WEST PERTH

We the undersigned, being parents of children attending the Warburton Ranges School, wish to bring to your attention the fact that we have eighty children attending the School and only one European teacher. We therefore ask that you send another European teacher as quickly as possible.

Mr JACK Lane Mrs Jean Lane MUMMAINEWELL STANLEY - WEST LALLA Hazel Frazer Betty West Phillip West Peter Holland Carol Holland David Davides Gregory Fox Lily Simms Johnson Lane Mrs Wafda Lane John Richard Len McArthur Paddy Lane Wanajira Lane Freda Lena REIT ROBERTSON	Thelma Frank Andrew Lawson Nyna Lawson Gilbert Gersoning Darnley Gersoning Charlie Munro Eric's Munro Lena Mitchell Steve Mitchell Mr Tommy Robinson Violet Robinson Derek Mitchell Jennifer Mitchell Vera Woods Brian Woods Harold Robertson Ken Lawson PUAL SIMMS HARRY SIMMS
---	--

I certify that the above signatures are true and correct in every respect
 T. SIMMS.....
 T. SIMMS - CHAIRMAN, WARBURTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Source: Ngaanyatjarra Council Native Title Unit archive.

tale at Warburton in terms of Aboriginal control. That's something that's been there since the outset and its never got any better. It's got worse in the sense that the ratio of staff is greater and so many staff coming who people don't know about and they suddenly find that it has mushroomed, all these other people here doing jobs.⁷¹⁹

During the 'mission time', despite contestation over sacred sites, the Ngaanyatjarra had retained some spatial control, but as Warburton was transformed from 'an Aboriginal place' into a white town the power balance shifted. Community is thus a site of contested meaning; a physical entity and a 'symbolic construction' within a mythological space redolent with imagery.⁷²⁰

Another context that produced letters of advocacy was the outstation movement which was propelled by the strongly held desire to return to traditional country and the Ngaanyatjarra took advantage of the resources offered by the Whitlam government. Letters dictated in Ngaanyatjarra by senior leaders to Glass or Hackett were written to officials in DAA and AAPA requesting assistance to return to country (Table 4.2).⁷²¹ The English translation plus the Ngaanyatjarra transcription were sent. Glass recalls one old man wanting her to write a letter to an official but he had no idea about 'what writing letters was about or what he should put' and said 'just tell him my name'. Letters were generally requests for trucks, landrovers, bores or money, but the discourse conveys the depth of feeling for, and relatedness to, country, as the following translated excerpts suggest:

November 1973

...We are asking to stay in our own country...

July 1974

...I want a bore at Jameson my own country. Have become an old man at Warburton...

September 1974

...Please come to see my home at Patjarr. Bring lots of landrovers...

May 1975

...This story is about my country. Aborigines and white men have been getting stone from my country. A bore needs to be put down...

Once Community Advisors were appointed to the new outstations, letters were sent exhorting them to 'come quickly'.

⁷¹⁹ Brooks—Interview 15/8/04.

⁷²⁰ (Cohen 1985).

⁷²¹ Letters were addressed personally to Senator Jim Cavanagh (the Whitlam government's second Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs from 1973-1975); F.E. Gare moved from DNW to AAPA in WA and Jeremy Long (who had previously been a patrol officer) worked with DAA. The Ngaanyatjarra communities, although in WA, were serviced by the Commonwealth DAA office in Alice Springs until 1987 when Kalgoorlie DAA took over the central desert region (Fletcher 1992).

In one instance, Harold and two other men dictated a letter advocating the need for funds to help build a direct road to Giles.⁷²² The building of this road, by digging a cut-line following the traditional line of rockholes, resonates in the collective memory (see Family E), as people recall making the road without whitefella assistance with the process documented in the *Warburton News*. Significantly, the letters were instrumental in achieving results, as indicated by the existence of the requested roads and communities today. They convey a strategic awareness by senior *yarnangu* of the significance of the written word and a familiarity with literate modes.

The orality of written texts

Aspects of orality can be found in the incipient literacy practices of the Ngaanyatjarra especially, letter-writing. Letters ‘written in the style of speaking’ have been elemental in the emerging genres of writing in the Western world.⁷²³ Older people utilised letter-writing as a collective social practice and most were unable to write independently. A mediator would write the dictated words, capturing the nuances of spoken text, and then add salutations and other features of the written genre. Consequently, distinctive features of Ngaanyatjarra speech style and register are evident in the written register, as is the encoding of cultural meaning. It can be posited that the letters came to embody a form of ‘phatic communion’ that could ‘straddle the boundary between orality and literacy’.⁷²⁴

Oral speech styles and register

In the past, Ngaanyatjarra people employed more complex and subtle speech styles and registers than are utilised today.⁷²⁵ People use the term *tjaa yuti* (*tjaa yartaka* or *wangka yuti*) literally meaning ‘clear speech’ to refer to their richly nuanced language. The verbal arts are central to Ngaanyatjarra social interaction; ‘whether conversational, controversial, descriptive, hortatory, dramatic or entertaining’ Ngaanyatjarra ‘is enriched with all the devices of rhetorical art...metaphor and simile, epigram and pun, metonymy and synecdoche, irony and sarcasm, exclamation and rhetorical question, hyperbole and hypobole, euphemism and circumlocution, alliteration and onomatopoeia’.⁷²⁶ Ngaanyatjarra

⁷²² This road forms part of the main arterial from Laverton to Ayers Rock known as the Great Central Road.

⁷²³ (Bazerman 2000: 18). Writers on the history of literacy development (Clanchy 1979; Graff 1987) highlight the role of the scribe in mediating communal literacy events. In his work on nineteenth century English pauper letters, Fairman makes the distinction between ‘schooled’ written English and other non-standard varieties that more closely resemble spoken English. He describes people at the more spoken end of the literate continuum as ‘orate’ rather than ‘illiterate’ in order to focus on what they ‘could do’ rather than what they ‘could not do’ (Fairman 2000: 81). Also see (Baynham 1993; Kell 2000) and in Aboriginal Australia (van Toorn 2006; Kral and Falk 2004).

⁷²⁴ (Malinowski 1994 [1923]: 10; Besnier 1995: 18).

⁷²⁵ The range of speech styles used in social interaction in Aboriginal languages have been documented by linguists (Haviland 1979; Heath et al. 1982; Dixon 1990). See also (Goddard 1983; Goddard 1992) for a description of speech styles in Yankunytjatjara, a closely related Western Desert dialect.

⁷²⁶ (Douglas 1979: 49)

speech styles include baby talk, a special ceremonial language, and a form of public rhetoric.⁷²⁷

In earlier times across the Western Desert a form of public oratory or ‘rhetoric’ known as *yaarlpirri* or early morning talk was used extensively to discuss issues, air grievances, disseminate information or organise the day’s hunting and gathering.⁷²⁸ According to Liberman, *yaarlpirri* is a more formal version of ordinary discourse, an interactional system where comments are addressed to all persons present, the content is objectified and ‘the public nature of the discourse minimises personal interests’:

[G]enerally these ‘announcements’ are made by non-sequential ‘turns’ and the speaking will move about the camps until quite a few of the fires have had their full say. However, it is not always a personal say which is offered; more frequently it is a sort of public statement rendered as the comments of a community person. Topics become developed and clarified over a number of such ‘public announcements,’ as each contributor builds upon the formulations which have come before, often repeating what has already been said. The themes are formulated and received as publicly available discourse, which continues as the eastern horizon grows brighter with the dawn.⁷²⁹

Yaarlpirri is enacted to publicly admonish or ‘tell off’ individuals for minor misdemeanours. *Yaarlpirri*, although rarely heard in Warburton, is still utilised in other locations. It is conjectured that people’s capacities to utilise traditional speech styles in the maintenance of traditional authority has diminished, as Molly reflects:

Used to be way back, they talk about the things they got to do... They just sit down like in different camps and they get up and talk *yaarlpirri* and the next person gets up and talks. Sometimes they tell you off for taking off with that boy, how to get a boy or girl right skin way... That’s how it happened in our families. Nowadays most of them it goes over their head, not our days. Now they don’t listen. Now a lot of people close family they living together third cousins, fourth cousins. In old days, you do anything wrong spear in your leg, woman and man, and hit on the head. Not now, policeman around, domestic violence they say. No more tribal punishment. Government put the law out. Now they let them have their own way. Now if you talk *yaarlpirri* in Warburton they go and get the police ‘cause you’re not allowed to say that. That’s the white people interfering, they’re making the Law different.⁷³⁰

In Ngaanyatjarra, as in other Western Desert dialects, relationships and social context determine the nature of social interaction. These pragmatic elements determine the choice

⁷²⁷ *Tjaa nyantulypa* is a special speech style used during the ‘special boy’ ceremonies when addressing certain relatives (Douglas 1976: 56). As a speech style it is distinct from standard Ngaanyatjarra and used by the *yirrkapirri*—the grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, mother and father of the ‘special boy’ who accompanies the annual *tjilkeatja* journey (Peterson 2000). Also termed *wangka nyantulypa* or *tjamayitjunku* where *tjamayitjunku* means to talk a different (special) language (Glass and Hackett 2003: 419). Described by Goddard as *anitji* or *tjaa paku* in Yankunytjajara, an auxiliary language comprising separate lexical items, but identical grammar except for special pronouns, demonstratives and interrogatives (Goddard 1983: 325–330). Only some families continue to use this speech style.

⁷²⁸ (Goddard 1983: 319–322).

⁷²⁹ (Liberman 1985: 4). Rose also suggests that with the advent of two-way radio in the Western Desert in the 1970s features of *yaarlpirri* were ‘readily adapted to this form of non-visual communication between multiple interactants’ (Rose 2001: 62).

⁷³⁰ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

of register and style, and the paralinguistic and prosodic aspects of speech.⁷³¹ In addition, ‘interpersonal grammatical resources function in exchanges between speakers to negotiate the tenor of their relationships, most generally in terms of status, social proximity and affect’.⁷³² Paralinguistic or nonverbal codes such as gesture, gaze and hand signs, *yurriira watjara* (‘speaking by moving’) are integral to everyday discourse and are also employed in avoidance relationships and sorry camp interactions.⁷³³ The choice of register is determined by the relationship between interlocutors. A respectful or polite relationship is expected between certain relatives, that is, with one’s: *ngunyitju* (mother/mother’s sisters), *mama* (father/father’s brothers), *kurta* (older brother/male cousins), *tjurtu* (older sister/female cousins), *marlanypa* (younger brother/sister/cousins), *yurmtalpa* (daughter/niece), *katja* (son/nephew) or *watjirra* (‘cousin/cross-cousin – i.e. son or daughter of father’s sister or mother’s brother’). A joking relationship exists with one’s *kamuru* (mother’s brother), *kurntili* (father’s sister), *tjamu* (grandfather/grandson), *kaparli* (grandmother/granddaughter) and long way cousins. An avoidance relationship is required with one’s *yumari* (son-in-law/mother-in-law) and *waputju* (man’s father-in-law or potential father-in-law/son-in-law or potential son-in-law) and in certain ceremonial contexts.

Social relationships and context determine speech styles. Direct speech—*tjukarurru watjalku* (‘talking directly’) or *tjukarurrura kulilku* (‘understanding something straight’)—is employed in situations requiring ‘straight talking’. People frequently refer to ‘straight talking’ with an expectation that the talk will result in promises that will not be broken. Indirect speech—*tjitirrpapa watjalku* or *kiti-kiti watjalku*—employs subtle, highly metaphorical features and is used to deal with conflict in public, or when individuals who stand in a constrained relationship need to communicate with one another, they do so indirectly—using *tjarlpa watjalku*.⁷³⁴ In this context advice is given in a polite manner and the speech event incorporates morphological and lexical features such as: the politeness suffix *-munta*, the particle *tjinguru* (‘maybe’ or ‘perhaps’)—expressing uncertainty or even possibility, and the future tense form of the verb (e.g. *kulilku*), rather the command form (e.g. *kulila*).

⁷³¹ Distinct changes in the mode of voice production are common in Ngaanyatjarra. These include talking or singing on the ‘indrawn breath’ or lengthening the sound before drawing breath and using a ‘creaky voice’ when telling stories or reporting events. Similar features are noted by (Laughren 1984: 87; Walsh 2006) in other regions.

⁷³² (Rose 2001: 15).

⁷³³ Traditional auxiliary sign languages or gestural systems are found across Aboriginal Australia (Kendon 1988).

⁷³⁴ Rose suggests that the equivalent term *tjalpawangkantja* in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara, refers to speaking obliquely and is ‘constrained by rules of appropriate interaction’. It is ‘mainly spoken between affinal relations, particularly distant brother’s-in-law who have exchanged actual or betrothed spouses’ where the function is ‘to avoid any implication of status difference between speakers’ and to ‘avoid conflict’ and ‘express solidarity’ (Rose 2001: 62).

Speech styles in the written register

In Fig. 4.5a I show a transcription of a letter dictated in Ngaanyatjarra and translated into English (Fig. 4.5b) and sent to Senator Cavanagh in 1973 requesting services for an outstation at Blackstone. It represents a new type of communication event; the text is written rather than oral *and* the recipient is unknown. In this instance, the relationship between interlocutors elicits the indirect register indicating the respectful distance and politeness required of utterances with persons where social distance is required. The politeness markers—the future tense verb ending *-ku*, the politeness suffix *-munta* and the particle *tjinguru* ('maybe or perhaps')—are indicated near the beginning of the written discourse:

Wanytjawara-munta tjunku ngurra?

When will you put homes?

Kalatju purtulatju tjapilku tjinguru.

Perhaps we will ask in vain.

Features found in *jaarpirri* are also evident; for example, recapitulation or 'serial development of topic', and the use of utterances which have 'the character of formal announcements'.⁷³⁵ Revealed also is the 'encoding' of cultural meaning in the written register; the connection to country, the expression of *ngarltu* ('compassion') and an emphasis on *miranykanyilku* ('looking after' people).

A second corpus of letters (Table 4.3) written by *David* (Family J) also exemplifies texts written 'in the style of speaking'.⁷³⁶ David weaves cultural meanings and orality into a writing style that is not separated from social circumstance as an 'autonomous process', but overtly tied to social relations.⁷³⁷ His repertoire is inclusive of features that mirror Ngaanyatjarra speech styles and genres, for example the hortatory mode (see Fig. 4.6).⁷³⁸

Significantly, David reads mainly Ngaanyatjarra and only a little English. He had minimal schooling: 'never went right through in the school...never did get *ninti purlka* ('really knowledgeable') at the mission, not really, not me, left school at Grade 3'. His competence derives from learning to read Ngaanyatjarra as an adult and working with Glass, Hackett and Howell. David was one of the three men at the SIL 'Creative Writers Workshop' in 1974, mentioned earlier. He has since authored traditional stories, contributed to Bible translation work, assisted in dictionary compilation and taught Ngaanyatjarra language to

⁷³⁵ (Lieberman 1985: 102).

⁷³⁶ Many of these texts remain in the personal collections of Herbert Howell, Charlie Staples and Albie Viegas who mediated the writing process.

⁷³⁷ (Bazerman 2000).

new staff.⁷³⁹ In addition to the texts described here, David has written a collection of unpublished traditional stories.

Table 4.3 Letters—Corpus B

<i>Sender</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Content</i>
David in Darwin, 1974	Amee Glass	1	Corpus A	Personal news
David in Warburton, 1975	Senator Cavanagh	1	Corpus A	Request for bore, truck and money for outstation
David	Pitjantjatjara Council	1	DL1	Claim for money re. deceased relative
David	Ngaanyatjarra Community	1	DL2	Narrative history of Ngaanyatjarra Council
David	Community Advisor	1	DL3	Concern for petrol sniffers
David	ATSIC and Community Advisor		DL4	Letter inc. work history and request for vehicle to do work
David's wife	Community Advisor	1	DL5a	Work history and request for loan
David	Community Advisor	1	DL5b	Support for wife's request and own request for work
David	Community Advisor	1	DL6	Request for vehicle to do work
David	Editor, Ngaanyatjarra News	1	DL7	Open letter inc. work history and request for vehicle to do work
David	Notice to all staff, Warburton	1	DL8	Plea for respectful road use during Law Business
David	Lawyer	1	DL9	Compassion re. son's circumstances in prison
David	Lawyer	1	DL10	Compassion re. son's arrest
David	Police statement	1	DL11	Written statement re. events around card game
David	Police	1	DL12	Request for return of gun and licence
David	Fax to family	1	DL13	Condolences and apology for not attending funeral
David	General audience	3	DN1-3	Narrative histories inc. requests for vehicles/money

David's role, identity and status in this speech community are inextricably linked to literacy. He has the authority to communicate events and concerns using written, rather than oral, strategies and in this diglossic context his choice of Ngaanyatjarra or English is determined by the audience.⁷⁴⁰ David commonly writes, or dictates, a Ngaanyatjarra text, then the written text is translated into English with a scribe. In the case of official letters, he dictates an English version and seeks assistance to improve the syntax.⁷⁴¹ David reflects on his overtly literate practice: 'I'm the only one who does that. I think about what I want to say and I can explain it better writing than saying those words'.

⁷³⁸ (Glass 1980: 79-95). At a general level of textual organisation and/or function, speech genres can be classified at a universal level using terms like 'narrative', 'hortatory', 'expository' and 'procedural'. The repertoire of genres particular to any speech community alters, however, according to sociocultural context (Goddard 1990: 46).

⁷³⁹ (Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]).

⁷⁴⁰ (Ferguson 1959).

⁷⁴¹ Staples pers. comm. 2004.

Fig. 4.5a Letter to Senator Cavanagh, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, concerning Blackstone outstation, 1973 (Ngaanyatjarra)

Warburton Ranges,
P.M.B. Kalgeorlie 6431
November 19th 1973

Senator Cavanagh,
Dept of Aboriginal Affairs,
P.O. Box 241,
Civic Square A.C.T. 2608

Blackstonekurna wangkakitja. Wanytjawara-munta tjunku ngurra. Palunyatjanu tawunpa tjunku wati mapitjatjakuya Pensioners pirninya nyinatjaku tawunta Blackstoneta?

Kalatju kuwarripa waitumara puurumaratjaku kapi nganalu Georgetju. Tjinguru before Christmas puurumalku Georgeulu Warburtona ngarnmanytju wiyaralpi.

Kalatju purtulatju tjapilku tjinguru. Palunyatjanu ngurrangkalatju nyinakitja mukurringkula. Watjala warrpungkulalpi wiyala Canberralanguru tjinguru tawunpa. Tjingurutju kapamantu helpumaruna ngankuku Landrover nintilku ngurrangka nyinatjaku. Puukulatju nyakula. Puurumalku nyangka puungkalatju nyinaku ngarnmanytju Blackstoneta. Jackie Forbes, Fred Forbes, Jimmy Benson, Yiwinti Smith, Dinny Smith, Norman Lyons, Barry Ill, Mr Duncan. Palunyanyaya Blackstonetat nyinapayi.

Caravanpa tjinguru wiyalku medicinetjarra tjilku pirniku after Christmas Blackstoneku. Tjitji pirniku Blackstoneku caravanpa ngarnmanytju wiyalku mirrka mitjitjiku caravanpa tjunkunyangka sister nyinatjaku storestjarra nyinatjaku mirrkatjarra nyinatjaku. Kayi miranykanyinma pikarringkunyangka tjilturrunama. Palunyangka tjitji pikarringkunyangka.

Mukurringanyilatju mutuka purikanya wiyaltjaku pensioner pirniku mirrka katitjaku Warburtonanguru Partininytjarraku. Kan caravanpa ngalyawiyalku sisterkamu tjitji miranykanyiltjaku Blackstonetanguru.

Mr Cavanaghlakutulatju wiyarnu nyuntulun nyakutjaku Blackstone nga nyakutjaku nyuntulun Canberralanguru nyakulan w watjaltjaku.

Mukurringanyilatju Blackstoneta nyinakitja ngurra yungarrangkalatju. Christmaspalatju nyinarra kuwarripa nyakula ngalkulalatju Blackstoneku mapitjakitja.

Ngarnmanytju caravanpa wiyalku sister kutjarra wiyalku Blackstoneku nyinatjaku miranykanyiltjaku sister kutjarra puru mirrka storestjarra nyinatjaku tjarntutjarra matron kutjarraku pulampa weekendpa nyinatjaku tirtu.

Ngarnmanytju caravanpa ngalyawiyalku sister kutjarra mirrkamarntu stores sister kutjarraku nyinatjaku, medicinepa pikatjarra pirniku nintiltjaku blackstoneta nyinarranytjalu. Ka sister kutjarralu Blackstoneta nyinarranytjalu Warburten ka telephone ngalyawiyanna councilku ka kukurrahku mantjira katiku hospitalku Warburton Rangeku. Nyangka walykumumarringkunyangka marlakulu makatiku Blackstoneku. Tjitji tjinguru pikarriku mama ngunytjurtarra katiku hospitalku Warburtona kanyilku makatiku Blackstoneku.

Sister kutjarralu ngula palya nyinaku Blackstoneta medicinepa nintilku kanyilku miranykanyinma.

Manyawa sister kutjarra mantjiralpi ngalyawiyala Blackstoneku, Blackstoneta miranykanyiltjaku medicinepa nintiltjaku tjitji pirniku wati pirniku Blackstoneta nyinarranytjalu, Blackstoneta nyinatjaku caravantjarra nyinatjaku miranykahyiltjaku.

ready tawunpa wiyalkitjalu sister kutjarra ngarnmanypa ngalyawiyala caravantjarra medicinetjarra pitjala nyinatjaku Blackstone ta.

Fig. 4.5b Letter to Senator Cavanagh, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, concerning Blackstone outstation, 1973 (English)

Warburton Ranges,
P.M.B. Kalgoorlie 6431
November 19th 1973

Senator Cavanagh
Dept of Aboriginal Affairs,
P.O. Box 244,
Civic Square A.C.T. 2608

Dear Sir,

I want to talk about Blackstone. When will you put houses and make it a place for all the pensioners to stay at the Settlement of Blackstone?

We are waiting for George Bialobrodsky to put a bore down there. Perhaps George will be able to do that before Christmas after he has finished around Warburton.

Perhaps we will ask in vain. We are wanting to stay in our own country. You say the word and quickly send a house from Canberra maybe. Perhaps the Government will help me and give me a Landrover so that we can stay in our own country. We are waiting for a bore. When a bore is put down we will go and live at Blackstone. Jackie Forbes, Fred Forbes, Jimmy Benson, Yiwinti Smith, Dinny Smith, Norman Lyons, Barry Bill and Mr Duncan. These are the ones who always stayed at Blackstone.

Perhaps after Christmas you will send a caravan with medicine to Blackstone for the children. For the children first of all send a caravan and food for white women so that a sister can stay there with her own food. And she will look after the children and give them needles when they become sick.

We would like you to send a big truck to take the pensioners' food from Warburton to Blackstone. And to send a caravan and a sister to look after the children at Blackstone.

We have sent this to Mr Cavanagh so that you can see about Blackstone from Canberra. And so that you seeing from Canberra can say.

We want to live at Blackstone in our own country. After we have stayed here for a while and eaten Christmas we would like to go to Blackstone.

First perhaps you will send a caravan and two sisters to Blackstone to look after the children. Two sisters and their own stores so that they can stay there all the time even over the weekend.

First of all send a caravan and two sisters with food so that they can stay there and give medicine to any sick people while they are at Blackstone. And the two sisters at Blackstone can send a radio message to Warburton to the Council and they will come and get the sick person and take them to hospital at Warburton. And when they are better take them back to Blackstone. When a child becomes sick perhaps the mother and father also can be brought to Warburton to be near the children and then taken back to Blackstone.

It would be good for two sisters to live at Blackstone and give medicine and look after the sick.

Look for two sisters and when you can get them, send them to Blackstone to give medicine to the children and men at Blackstone, to live at Blackstone in a caravan and look after the sick.

When you are ready to send a house, send two sisters first with a caravan and medicine to live at Blackstone.

Yours sincerely

Dinny Smith.

Fig. 4.6. Hortatory text 1990s

Mr [REDACTED]'s story.

Long time ago when there was no Pitjantjatjarra and Ngaanyatjarra Council we always face up to the DAA every meeting time so we always bring our meeting each from the other community. So we heard all them Pitjantjatjarra people formed their own council so we heard when they formed their own Pitjantjatjarra council every meeting time we went to their meeting over there to bring it up at the meeting. So they always listen to us to help us too. And when we heard all those things so we formed our own Ngaanyatjarra Council ourself. So we always have a meeting. Those Pitjantjatjarra people they were high up and we were down low. Bit by bit, every meeting time we always get together, man and women from every community get together for this Ngaanyatjarra meeting. So we always talk about the things we want to get to make this Ngaanyatjarra big. So when we have the Ngaanyatjarra meeting everybody talks up and if they want anything on this Ngaanyatjarra Lands. The first plan we bought one little Cessna plane. From there, every meeting time we talk about other things too. We bought more planes, trucks, warehouse in Perth, all that. So this Ngaanyatjarra went big. Now today I'm looking at not enough people man and woman not coming in to this meeting to talk in the Ngaanyatjarra meeting. Look like only council talking at the meeting. Only some from the communities come, should be lots and lots of people coming from all the communities from all over from Ngaanyatjarra. Maybe people should talk at the community meeting and tell everyone, man and woman, to go to the Ngaanyatjarra meeting every time. This is the important Ngaanyatjarra meeting. We don't want to go down to be weak how this area was before. So this is what I'm saying now, because of the people not coming in to the meeting.

Source: Charlie Staples.

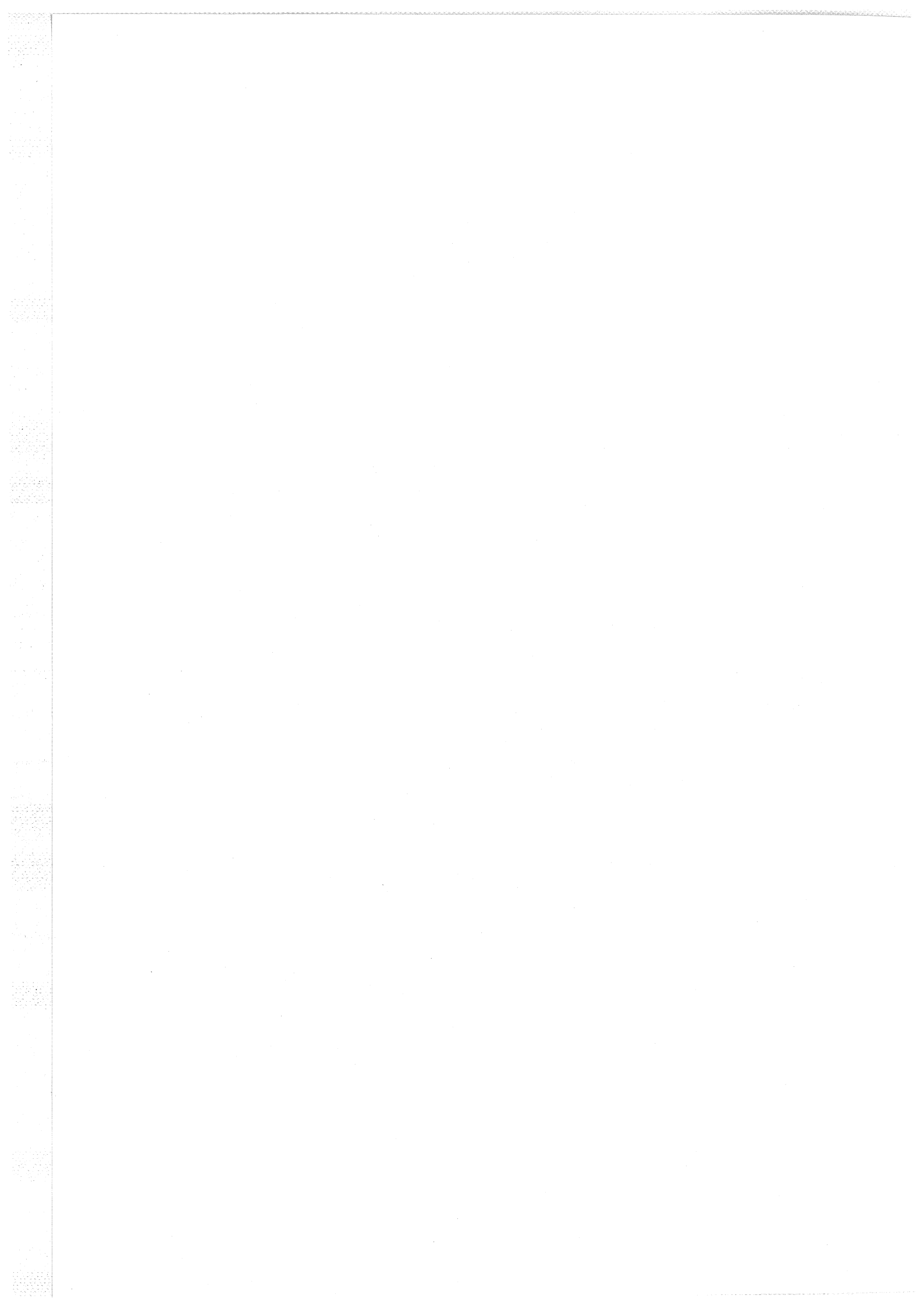


Fig. 4.7 Notice to all staff 2002

NOTICE TO ALL STAFF

This letter is to welcome all staff, who are coming to live and work in Warburton Community.

Warburton Community is a community of Ngaanyatjarra speaking Aboriginal people. We still follow the traditional law and culture of our people.

Sometimes you will see things to do with Ngaanyatjarra culture that are different to what you are used to. This is a time when all yarnangu have to think and be careful about where they go and what they say. They also have to be careful not to stare at things they are not used to been [sic] close to before.

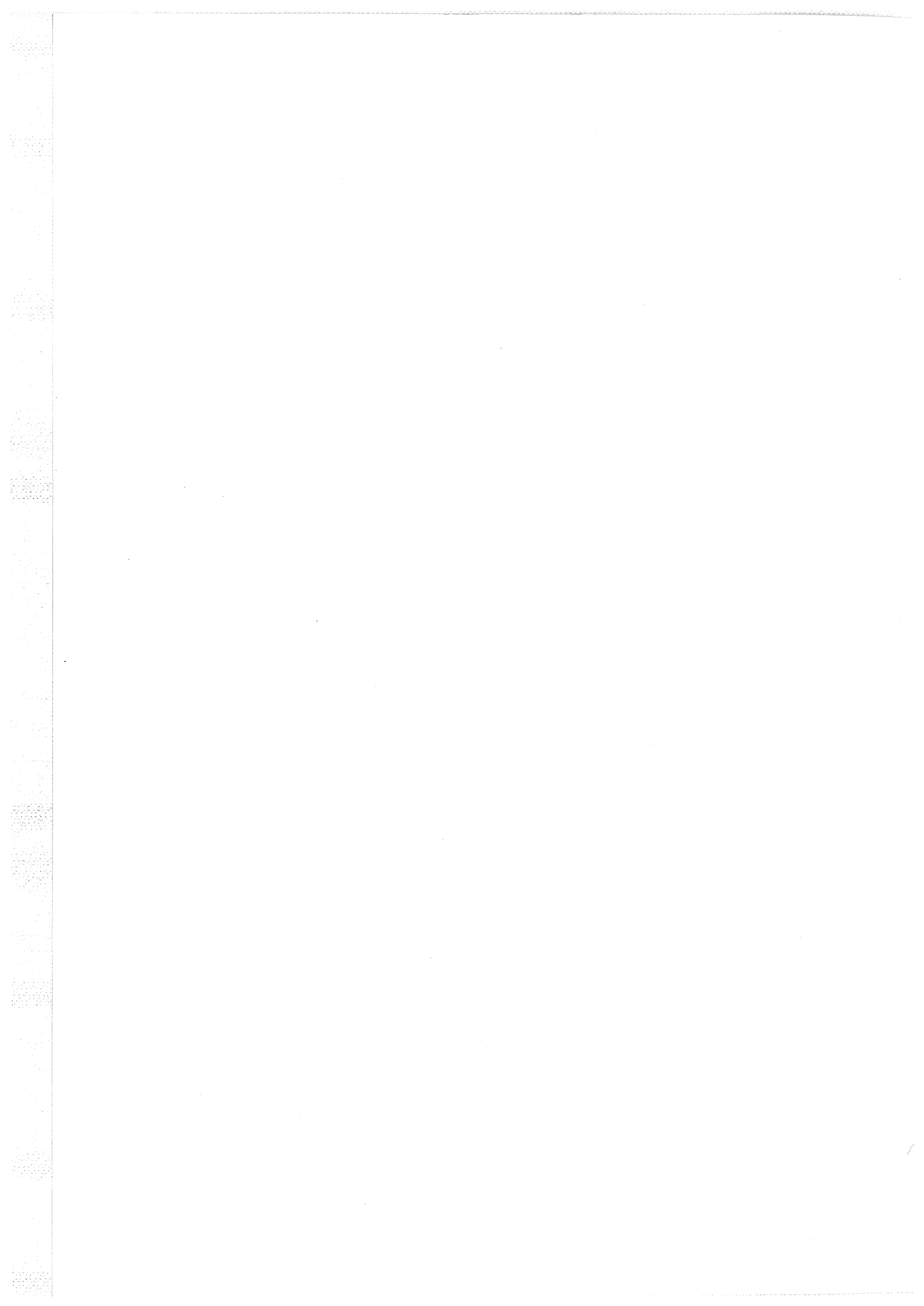
This is the same for staff working in the communities. Be patient and sensible. Don't ask. People will tell you things you need to know.

The roads shouldn't be used at all when Aboriginal culture (LAW) is on.

This means no white staff such as the clinic Toyota or trucks carting sand etc.

When the road is blocked this means the road is blocked for everyone including black and white staff.

By Mr [REDACTED]



International research exploring the links between oral traditions and ‘story schema’ has shown the culturally-bound nature of oral narrative structures and how this influences writing style.⁷⁴² It has been suggested that the ‘narrative structure that is valued in each community gives form to the way that people express ideas in conversation and writing’.⁷⁴³ In the Western Desert, regenerative re-enactments of the *tjukurrpa* through ritual and ceremony are critical to the wellbeing of people. Sacred texts and performances ‘encode the system of land ownership and resource exchange’, thus ‘encrypting’ information that is ‘indispensable to the social and material wellbeing of the culture over great distances and deep time’.⁷⁴⁴ Sociocultural systems ‘are manifested and reproduced through time as social situations, that are themselves realised as texts of various types, including verbal exchanges, instructions, narratives, songs, rituals, paintings’ and ‘prescribed material activities’.⁷⁴⁵ A complex web of cultural meaning is embedded in these ‘rich semiotic resources’ (i.e. the grammar, discourse patterns and prosodic characteristics of oral texts). Narratives from the *tjukurrpa* have varying discursive strengths and restrictions depending on the secular or sacred nature of context and audience. Narrative discourse structures play ‘a central role’ in how human beings the world over have ‘made sense of the world’.⁷⁴⁶ In the Aboriginal world language forms the nexus between social identity and land and the *marlu tjina* ‘incident’ illustrates the potency of the interrelationship between *tjukurrpa*, land, and wellbeing in the social construction of reality that ‘makes sense’ in the Ngaanyatjarra world.⁷⁴⁷

Through analysing the early written texts in the Ngaanyatjarra canon the influence of the oral tradition is palpable.⁷⁴⁸ It is possible to observe conceptual and linguistic transformations as translations take on formulaic English story-telling conventions. Early texts written in the style of speaking commonly use the expression *kutjulpirtulpi* (‘in early days’ time—from the adverb *kutjulpirtu* meaning ‘previously’).⁷⁴⁹ However in ‘the story of the two brothers’—*tjuma kurtarra-pula*—the opening phrase ‘*kutjulpirtulpinyu kurtarra-pula*

⁷⁴² (Bamony 2002; Bauman 1986; Brewer 1985; Kintsch and Greene 1978; Minami and McCabe 1996; Scollon and Scollon 1981).

⁷⁴³ (Rogoff 2003: 269).

⁷⁴⁴ (Rose 2001: 29).

⁷⁴⁵ (Rose 2001: 49).

⁷⁴⁶ (Klapproth 2004: 7).

⁷⁴⁷ See (Merlan 1981).

⁷⁴⁸ In a paper presented at an Australian languages workshop in 2006 linguist Michael Walsh outlines structural, lexical, grammatical and prosodic features of narrative style in Aboriginal Australia and how they differ from Anglo-Western narratives. These include: more common exophoric reference and intertextuality; repetition of events; intentional vagueness; resolution non-existent or delayed; cataphoric reference more typical than anaphoric; contrasting story schemata; co-construction with hearer; explicit anchoring of location/direction and drawn out articulation of key words (Walsh 2006).

⁷⁴⁹ (Murray 1979 [1969]-b).

nyinarranytja is translated as ‘once upon a time there lived two brothers’.⁷⁵⁰ Older people commonly recount events of the recent past using experiential or qualitative time expressions, for example ‘mission time’, ‘station time’, ‘testing time’, ‘government time’, or ‘DAA time’. Opening phrases in David’s early texts exemplify this: ‘Long time ago, in the mission time’ or ‘Long time ago when there was no Pitjantjatjarra [sic] and Ngaanyatjarra Council’ (Fig. 4.6). The use of written markers of fixed Western chronological or calendrical time (e.g. date or time markers) is common practice, although one can speculate that dating documents remained a mimetic form of the practice for some time.⁷⁵¹

David’s written texts display features of Ngaanyatjarra narrative style. In a series of letters—dictated in English and scribed by non-Aboriginal friend—David employs circumlocution to indirectly embed requests for work, money or cars within an oral ‘travelling narrative’ schemata—a ‘story schema’ from the traditional oral canon that predictably uses the ‘journey’ as a structuring principle in narratives.⁷⁵² Glass suggests that ‘journey’ schemas in Ngaanyatjarra are typically organised around a ‘departure phase’, a ‘transit phase’, and an ‘arrival phase’, with each phase encoded and elaborated in predictable patterns of grammatical and lexical cohesion.⁷⁵³ David exploits the distance and indirectness of written language in a sequence of letters that travel through these phases, often recounting scenes from his working life, before arriving at his climax: the indirect request. Elements redolent of *yaarlpirri* are evident in the texts where the topic is developed often by building upon what has come before, or repeating what has already been said:

This is what I’m writing about. To let you know that if you are getting a truck for that side, for the work, then this is what I’m thinking about. I can’t be taking a load of people around in the back of the truck and telling them what to do. One work truck not enough. You should get a second hand Toyota for the supervisor so he can run around and check up on the work, giving advice. I’ll be giving out different jobs to each people and they’ll be getting busy on all those jobs. So, whoever doesn’t work, then I’ll know about it, and I can put their right hours. It won’t be only one job, they’ll get wood and chop it, and they’ll go and get the sand for the garden and put it around the house, and get the rubbish and take it to the dump. So I’ll be busy running around and that’s what I’m asking for a second hand Toyota, to do that running round. Every night I’ve been thinking about that. Wouldn’t be my Toyota, would be for the CDEP work. (DL4)

⁷⁵⁰ (Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]).

⁷⁵¹ Myers suggests Western oral narratives are structured by ‘temporal relations’, whereas a ‘framework of spatial coordinates’ punctuates oral narratives in the Western Desert (Myers 1986: 54). Also see Clanchy’s account of the evolution of a socially constructed and ideologically embedded literate process of record keeping and dating documents (Clanchy 1979: 236–41).

⁷⁵² (Wilkins 1991). Klapproth explores ‘the journey’ as a ‘structuring principle’ in Pitjantjatjara oral narratives where the movement of characters from camp to camp ‘forms the structural spine of the narrative’ (Klapproth 2004: 253–258). Temporal duration in oral travelling narratives is prosodically highlighted by the use of verb repetition as a narrative device, as in Ngaanyatjarra: *yankula, yankula, yankula* – going, going, going. According to Rose this device differs from English nominal realisations such as ‘for a very long time’. Rose contrasts the Western Desert realisation representing ‘subjective experience’ with the English objectification of temporal duration as an ‘abstract thing’ (Rose 2001: 47–48).

⁷⁵³ (Glass 1980: 60–69).

More letters ensue, however his various requests for a truck are not fulfilled. So in another letter to the community advisor he adds the following:

One more thing I want to tell you, if I'm still waiting for the truck...Another thing's in my mind too. You know those cars like you got for the office and like Tjirrkarli got for CDEP, I should run around checking the name with those sort of *yurlju* [sic] when they are working with the tip truck. It wont [sic] be easy when they are working. I'll make them work hard too. All kinds of jobs I'll be giving out. They'll be busy. I'll make it easy for you, you'll be in the office and I'll be looking after everything outside and they won't bother you. That's why it will be easy for you. That's why I went back on the CDEP so I can work hard on this job. If I do get this job as foreman that means you can put me on the salary because I'll be working hard on this job. (DL5b)

It has been suggested by a non-Aboriginal observer that David takes advantage of his social identity as a literate to seek opportunity for himself through by-passing the normal process of obtaining public consensus in community meetings for personal requests. However, David's missives are eventually formulated as 'publicly available discourse' as exemplified in a letter on the same topic published in the local newsletter, the *Ngaanyatjarra News*.⁷⁵⁴

In another instance, David was angered by staff insensitivity to rules concerning driving on roads during the Law business so he wrote an open letter to all staff (Fig. 4.7) and put it up around the community. The situation was sufficiently extreme to warrant a public exhortation, written in English, aimed specifically at a non-Aboriginal staff audience. The text encodes features of the hortatory speech genre; the admonitory mode often utilised in *yaarlpirri*.⁷⁵⁵ The public posting of the text as a written notice functioned as 'publicly available discourse'.⁷⁵⁶ In social interaction direct criticisms are rare and people strive not to embarrass each other in public, moreover, indirectness, congeniality and tolerance of aberrant behaviour are aspired to.⁷⁵⁷ Although this text admonishes inappropriate behaviour around Business time, it is embedded with ambiguity and congeniality, and the grievance is addressed publicly, rather than directed at individuals.

⁷⁵⁴ (Lieberman 1985: 4); *Ngaanyatjarra News* June 1998: 17–18

⁷⁵⁵ Glass comments that hortatory discourse has variety in the semantic content, but an observable pattern of regular elements that give cohesion to the genre. Woven around exhortations are: 'statements about the status quo, statements that support the exhortation, statements of predictive encouragement concerning the good effects of heeding the exhortation, predictive warnings of the bad effects of ignoring the exhortation, exemplary citations of someone (usually the speaker) who did the right thing and what happened, and even outright ridicule of the addressee if he is pursuing a course of action contrary to that recommended' (Glass 1980: 79).

⁷⁵⁶ (Lieberman 1985: 4).

⁷⁵⁷ (Lieberman 1985). It should be noted that strong emotive displays are also intrinsic to the Ngaanyatjarra nature. People can, for example, be *nganyirri* and display 'explosive violence' (Brooks and Shaw 2003). The pressure to maintain harmony between disparate family groupings can be relieved by public explosions of anger or frustration, expressed as: 'going off', 'getting wild' or 'tempered up'. 'Jealous fights' may lead to older women stripping off and, armed with their *katuru* ('fighting sticks'), performing a stylised *wirri-wirri* ('angry dance'). These 'public proclamations' (Lieberman 1985: 101) are a socially acceptable release of tension after which it is expected that relations quickly return to normal.

Another 'text type' in David's repertoire is the 'legal statement': letters to lawyers regarding court cases and statements for police. David says he writes statements because he has a short memory: 'I might lose all the words what I was saying before, that's why I got to write it down before the police come and ask me all the questions'. In one example, the opening statement declares: "This is what really happened" and the written recount acts as a mnemonic. The paper acts as David's 'witness', indicating that he considers written communication to be more reliable than oral communication, as he explains:⁷⁵⁸

Just for the whitefella to think if I'm telling liar. I got to make sure on the paper, sort of witness, you know...just my witness so the police can find out, come and ask me and I'll say, in this letter, I'll just write it down so he can prove it, that was my writing and my story, so they can know, the police, they might come and ask me if I'm telling liar to them, but they can see this paper...they can prove it on the letter, on the piece of paper.

In summary, David's processes illustrate, to draw on Clanchy, the 'shift' from habitually memorising information to writing it down.⁷⁵⁹ His overtly textual expressions mirror the shaping of the community of interest that took place from the 1970s onwards and his strategies were borne out of that social and political milieu. I now turn the focus of the discussion to the use of literacy as a collective political strategy.

Literacy as a political strategy

In the early 1980s Warburton was a 'squalid' place, 'like a dustbowl, full of drunks, with spearfights almost daily'. Aside from the three or four houses for Aboriginal families, the majority still lived in *wiltja* structures a long way out of town. The community infrastructure was tenuous and further stressed by camp living, poor water and sanitary conditions and the constant demand for firewood. Alcohol and petrol sniffing-related violence, incarceration and deaths were ravaging the community.⁷⁶⁰ Matters had deteriorated to such an extent that in 1980 Warburton was described as the most troubled Aboriginal community in Australia by the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.⁷⁶¹ The difference between then and now is like 'night and day':

Petrol sniffing would generate a lot of tense arguments, it was a very tense, very violent sort of place. Then there was a lot of very problematic, demonstrative behaviour on the part of petrol sniffers racing around, skidding around...A lot of them just sniffed themselves into oblivion, what's around now is better than what was around then. Through the Lands over that period I think it was 29 deaths, but around Warburton it would have been about 18 to 22, from the early 80s through to early 90s, young men predominantly...When you couple that with the ones that weren't petrol, like the car that rolled over and burnt all those people, and then the Laverton smash where you have 5 oldest sons in their early 20s...who had all passed and managed to live through the the Warburton horror of the sniffing period and had all lived and passed out the other side, all got smacked as

⁷⁵⁸ See Clanchy's discussion on the shift to 'trusting' writing over the truth of the spoken word in twelfth century England.

⁷⁵⁹ (Clanchy 1979: 3).

⁷⁶⁰ See (Brady 1992) for an account of substance abuse in remote Australia.

⁷⁶¹ (Blackett 1997: 150).

well...So when you put that with all the petrol sniffing deaths and string it all together, it's very substantial. It was a big swathe of the potential leadership group...there were always people dying, people going off into sorry camps, abandoning houses, continually things like this were going on like this all the time, it was inevitable that you weren't going to get any consistency in anything.⁷⁶²

Petrol and alcohol-related social disruption and deaths caused profound grief and domestic instability. Frequent movement of large numbers of people into 'sorry camps' led to interrupted schooling routines, diminished control over the domestic environment and a reduced capacity to nurture consistency in literacy practices or routines.

The Christian 'Crusades'

As I explain earlier a nascent Christian leadership had been nurtured, but in the 1970s tension between Christianity and the Law simmered and saw a weakening of the church.⁷⁶³ A visit by a Christian evangelical group from Elcho Island in August 1981 initiated what came to be known as the 'Christian Crusades'.⁷⁶⁴ A second visit by the Elcho Island group coincided with the horrific December 1981 car accident in Warburton. This was a pivotal low point that catalysed significant change and precipitated a heightened level of Christian activity:

A lot of people made a decision that instead of getting bogged down in drinking and everything else they just moved out of that and went forward...It gave people experience of actually having a significant leadership role, an Indigenous leadership role in a whole paradigm.⁷⁶⁵

Hundreds of Aboriginal people participated in Christian meetings spreading from Warburton to Laverton, Wiluna, Jigalong and beyond, with the thousands gathering at Mt Margaret, Kalgoorlie and Perth gaining media attention.⁷⁶⁶ It was reported that at Warburton 'purpose and calm have replaced violence and terror' and 'it has happened entirely in the absence of white influence'.⁷⁶⁷

Glass and Hackett have reflected on the evolution of the 'Crusades' leadership group and how its genesis can be attributed to the formation of skills at GBTI. From 1968 to 1975 five Ngaanyatjarra people undertook the two-year course at GBTI.⁷⁶⁸ Clem in particular reflects on his experience:

⁷⁶² McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

⁷⁶³ *United Aborigines Messenger* June 1979:9; UAM Language Department Annual Report, Federal Conference, Melbourne April 1970—NTU files; Report of the UAM, Warburton Ranges, Prepared for UAM State Conference October 1972—NTU files

⁷⁶⁴ Antecedents to the WA event were to be found in the Christian revival movement in the NT starting in March 1979 at Galiwin'ku led by Yolngu people that subsequently spread through Arnhem Land to Warburton, and from there across the Goldfields and Kimberley region (Blacket 1997; Bos 1988).

⁷⁶⁵ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

⁷⁶⁶ (Blacket 1997). Including Jana Wendt's report for the *7.30 Report* (June 1982).

⁷⁶⁷ *West Australian* April 10 1982: cited in (Blacket 1997: 196).

⁷⁶⁸ (Blacket 1997: 147–148).

In 1971 I went to Bible College...Gnowangerup for 2 years. I was doing English...I was working differently on the spiritual side, the missionaries was doing that time they was training the Aboriginal to go back to learn about the Bible, teach them in a spiritual way. Reading, memorising, understanding. Interpret, talk about it and discuss it...we used to do our own writing, we got to learn like at the school. I was writing with commas, full stops, exclamation thing, marks. All the word...my own writing, that I learn in the school. Just like writing a diary. We gotta do that to write your own sermon down. Then so you'll take funeral things and do your own sermon from the thing.

Through reading and exegesis students at GBTI interpreted complex Christian concepts and acquired sermon writing skills. They also acquired the habitus, the literate and social practices of Christian leadership, and replicated it during the Crusades, as Clem illustrates:

Well, Crusade was a time that's when you have to speak to people then. Make a speech, preaching, but you got to choose a right word to speak and all that. It was the Lord I was talking about, it was the Holy Spirit living. And full Aboriginal people going out to Mt Margaret, Leonora, all that. They were my brothers...and the music was electric guitars. We didn't know nothing about it so we just went along and we taught each other as we went right around to Perth, Geraldton. A lot of leadership, that time I tell them the first thing we do is we got to be clean, bit different to the Aboriginal people today, we got to be, living like white way. But I wasn't thinking like a whitefella I was thinking about a missionary, who taught us to wash and be clean, at Gnowangerup you teach about that. You teach, you got to wash the floor, mop the floor, you got to polish the floor, make the beds. Wear neckties and shave. They teach you how to live, dress up properly and all that. I took that on and put all the respect from that and all the things were different, they were called white people, they were white peoples...I taught, wherever we went a lot of Aboriginal people joined up with us from Leonora, Kalgoorlie, Norseman and I picked out a few people who I thought were like leaders and I taught them how to preach, taught them how speak, taught them how to make movements and look at people. But I never taught them in front of the people, I taught them in the trees. How you dress, you can't come and stand...yeah I taught them all about it...I wrote sermons myself. And I told them if you fellas speak, you got to speak what you read from the Bible. Some of the Team, in my team they all went to Gnowangerup, then when that was finished they went to Perth...I was there in the Crusade.

Preachers such as Clem and George mainly used the English Bible, and the Christian revival led to the sale of 'thousands of dollars worth' of Christian literature.⁷⁶⁹

Ultimately, the Crusades catalysed the growth of an Aboriginal leadership of sufficient strength to lead people out of the devastation of the 1980s.⁷⁷⁰ Experiences outside Warburton mission had enabled this cohort to step forward and overcome their *kurnta* ('shame') and the Crusades built on this. The emergent leadership did not challenge the traditional authority structure and it was not imposed by an outside authority, but arose from within. The approval of senior Law leaders and their participation in evangelical meetings diminished some of the residual conflict between Christianity and traditional

⁷⁶⁹ (Blacket 1997: 165–7).

⁷⁷⁰ Anthropologists (Bos 1988; Sackett 1977; Tonkinson 1988) have sought to understand the significance of the Crusades. Bos notes that in Arnhem Land abstinence from alcohol was a key element in the conversion to the practice of Christianity and this also permeated the West Australian movement (Bos 1988: 432). Tonkinson suggests that the success of the movement can be explained in two ways, either positively...as an outcome of a growing Aboriginal confidence, fed by the progress made in Aboriginal self-management and leading to a sense of greater control in the post-paternalist era, or in more negative terms as a reaction against pressing social problems (Tonkinson 1988: 70–1). Stanton sees the emergence of the 'Desert Crusade' as a response to the frustrations of the 1970s when early expectations engendered by changed Federal policies for community development were 'to a large extent unfulfilled' and many Aboriginal groups experienced the destructive effects of alcohol (Stanton 1988: 303).

religion.⁷⁷¹ This was integral to the success of the young leaders and enabled them to speak with some authority about certain issues. Younger men had previously been excluded from positions of real power and leadership within the Law, however this generation of young men—with knowledge of Western systems and adherence to traditional Law—formed a new power base in the Crusades. The young ‘political’ leader, was not a challenge to the senior men, but a sanctioned requirement of the times.

The formation of a community of interest

Until the mid-1960s Aboriginal people in Australia had been ‘virtually excluded from formal participation’ in political events and full citizenships rights in Western Australia were not attained until 1971.⁷⁷² Yet, within a decade or so, desert people were participating in the political process and using literate strategies that were to radically transform the quality of life for Ngaanyatjarra people. The early 1970s mandated Aboriginal participation in governance and some Ngaanyatjarra also took on leadership roles in local and national domains. George reflects on this period with great eloquence. While acknowledging the difficulty of having been sent away for schooling, he considers that the experience empowered his cohort to be at the ‘frontline’ ready to take on the leadership challenges of the time:

For me, individual for me, I think it was bad some way, I get bad feelings when I been send away, but to think, look back now, I went away to learn something, so I got little bit both feelings...But if I didn't been send away I wouldn't be here now, learning, you know. Because I got all the knowledge, what I been learning in college and all, I would miss out on all that. Most of us my age, our parents worked with the missionaries, looking after the sheep, building the old house, getting the wood. We had to go out and train, you know, work experience then mix up with the whitefellas, working together, then coming back home and doing it yourself...When we came back, we was all ready, those who been in Fairhaven, Pedlar's, we was ready because in that 70s, that's when that change, when the government took over...All those who'd been sent away, we was start to be in the frontline, to start setting up the Council, working for Health, everything, getting the Shire and all, worrying about our own Land, for our roads, health, everything...in my time culture was still strong, it was still strong in that time when government took over...mostly I been away white side, whitefella side, then when I came back I still had time to...I knew it, in my heart but I hadn't been through the Law, so I had to go through first then, learn the Aboriginal way, culture side.

Rather than being weakened and fragmented by the compulsive elements of assimilationist education and training programmes, some Ngaanyatjarra people took advantage of the experience and strategically used their knowledge and skills to form a Ngaanyatjarra community of interest within the new self-determining policy environment. Tutored assimilation had attempted to develop a social orientation away from the Aboriginal family and forge individuated hopes and aspirations linked to the Western world, but social-relatedness and connection to country were to prove more powerful. The young men

⁷⁷¹ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

returned and went through the Law, thus making the requisite transition in the maturation cycle.⁷⁷³ The leadership cohort that emerged had the strength, will and support of the people to transfer control into the secular domain.⁷⁷⁴ This cohort then consolidated their skills in the leadership arenas emerging in the Ngaanyatjarra Council, the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku and ATSIC.

Ngaanyatjarra Council

On June 24 1980 a meeting to form the Ngaanyatjarra Council was held at Warburton and attended by people from Blackstone, Warakurna and Jameson.⁷⁷⁵ Prior to this, regional governance and representation for Ngaanyatjarra people had been under the Pitjantjatjara Council.⁷⁷⁶ Ngaanyatjarra people had never strongly identified with the Pitjantjatjara Council as the Ngaanyatjarra 'community of interest' is derived from their language and history linked to Warburton Mission and places further west. A unique aspect of the Ngaanyatjarra Council has been its unbroken record of regular monthly meetings since its inception. In the early days governance was an overlay on traditional relationships and people had to learn 'how to co-operate together to do things'. People who returned from South Australia, particularly those from Amata, were more aligned ideologically to the lands rights push from the Pitjantjatjara side and key non-Aboriginal players in Pitjantjatjara Council helped to politicise the nascent Ngaanyatjarra leadership.⁷⁷⁷ Like their Pitjantjatjara kin, Ngaanyatjarra traditional owners also sought inalienable freehold title over their land. The Ngaanyatjarra Council organised a Land Rights convoy to Perth in 1982 to present their views to the WA Government and this consolidated a growing sense of united solidarity and influence on the Ngaanyatjarra side.⁷⁷⁸ In 1984 the Council participated in the Seaman Inquiry into land rights, however land rights legislation in WA

⁷⁷² (Fletcher 1992: 1). Following the 1967 Commonwealth referendum for constitutional change Aboriginal people were finally constituted as part of the national populace, see (Attwood 2003).

⁷⁷³ The imperative to follow the Law in the Western Desert remains strong. To ignore or avoid the Law Business is socially isolating as to *wati* (men) such an individual 'is but a boy—incapable of having a voice in decision-making processes' (Sackett 1977: 90). Similarly, Hamilton describes how in the eastern Western Desert if men evaded the ceremonies by going away to work, even if they had grown to full adulthood and were in their 30s or 40s, these men were regarded as children by older men (Hamilton 1979: 185).

⁷⁷⁴ McLean pers. comm. April 2006.

⁷⁷⁵ Ngaanyatjarra Council (Aboriginal Corporation) was incorporated on March 24 1981 under the Commonwealth's *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976*. The five original member communities were Warburton, Warakurna, Blackstone, Jameson and Wingellina. As a regional representative body Ngaanyatjarra Council has effectively represented the central desert communities for 25 years. The Governing Committee consists of thirteen members—a representative from each of the twelve communities plus an independent chairperson elected annually by majority vote from the membership of the Ngaanyatjarra Council. In October 2006 four new permanent positions were formed on the Governing Committee to be filled by women from the Lands.

⁷⁷⁶ In 1976 the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people formed the Pitjantjatjara Council and the first meeting at Amata was attended by people from almost all communities in the north-west of South Australia and as far as Blackstone and Docker River. It was agreed at that meeting that membership was available to all Anangu irrespective of State borders and the first demand was that the Pitjantjatjara claim all the lands from Indulkana to Docker River. On 4 November 1981, the Pitjantjatjara received freehold title to over 102, 630 sq km of their traditional lands under the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act (1981)* (Toyne and Vachon 1984).

⁷⁷⁷ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

was defeated in State parliament in 1984.⁷⁷⁹ In November 1988 the Ngaanyatjarra people accepted 99-year leases from the WA government. At the time this was a 'big thing' as they were the only Aboriginal group in WA to gain such a lease.⁷⁸⁰ Then on June 29 2005 Ngaanyatjarra Council gained an historic Native Title Determination the largest in Australia, reached through negotiation, not litigation.⁷⁸¹

A female leadership has also developed under the closely aligned Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) where women have worked together on projects '*malpararra way*' or as members of the Executive Council.⁷⁸² April, Una and other women have social, cultural and literate processes to represent the needs of women and children at NPYWC. Una recalls:

At meetings there were all sorts of things, to read they used to give us, hand out sheets...and I used to sit down, and read, read, read...I used to read them and understand it and explain to some of the ladies, some of them who don't know how to read.

April comments:

That's what we got to read when we go for meetings...we got a lot of fax in and books from ATSIC, they send us a lot of books, like bulletin, and newsletter, and newsletter from Women's Council.

The leadership cohort also performed governance functions in ATSIC where they were able to represent their people at a regional level within ATSIC Western Desert Regional Council. Jim was an ATSIC Regional Councillor for six years and a member of the WA Education Consultative Group.⁷⁸³

I been away in that ATSIC time, meetings...When I was in the Regional Council that time there was a working party in WA, they called Consultative Group, working for education, adult education and all, do anything with independent schooling and all that. So I joined them, I was on that team, talked

⁷⁷⁸ (Brooks 2002a).

⁷⁷⁹ (Fletcher 1992).

⁷⁸⁰ (Tehan pers. comm. August 2005). Maureen Tehan was a lawyer at Pitjantjatjara Council from 1984-1991, then legal consultant to the Ngaanyatjarra Council from 1991-1994.

⁷⁸¹ The Claim covers some 188,000sq km of land, stretching from the Gibson and Great Victoria Deserts through to the border with SA and the NT and bound by the Spinifex Claim to the south and the Kiwirrkura and Martu Claims to the north and north-west. The Ngaanyatjarra Council, representing all traditional owners resident on the Lands, also oversees the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve and an Indigenous Protected Area in the Central Ranges.

⁷⁸² Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) was formed in 1980. It grew out of the South Australian Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Struggle in the late 1970s, and still provides a decision-making forum and service delivery function for women across the NPY lands in the cross-border region of WA, NT and SA, particularly in the areas of health, education, cultural, arts and social services. In the context of the NPYWC projects, *malpararra* means two workers 'working together on a project, one of whom is a non-Anangu woman employed for her specific professional skills, and the other a senior Anangu woman' (Woods et al. 1998: 7). NPYWC has been an effective lobby group for social issues affecting Aboriginal people in the Western Desert including demonstrations against alcohol during the 1980s and 1990s and most recently their calls for the roll-out of Opal Fuel across the Central Desert in order to control the ravages of petrol sniffing. See: <http://waru.org/organisations/npywc/>
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200602/s1576324.htm>

⁷⁸³ After 1972, with the formation of the Commonwealth DAA, a Schools Commission was created to give advice on education and the Aboriginal Consultative Group was formed as an advisory body for Aboriginal education (Beresford 2003: 63).

about education every time. Get together and we try and get money for school and place like this one here [College]... We talking about Tjirrkarli, that time, getting all the buildings, school there.

Clem also was 'busy with the government work, very busy':

I used to travel to Perth, Canberra, Alice Springs. I was Teacher Aide for ten years at Warburton School, then Teacher Aide at Tjirrkarli, then Cosmo. Then I came back and I was given role as Chairman of Ngaanyatjarra Council. Then later on... I went back onto drinking and I drink myself away.

George also worked with the State Working Party on Petrol Sniffing to develop education materials.⁷⁸⁴

Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku

Prior to 1984, in remote regions of Western Australia local government authorities (previously known as Road Boards) had 'political autonomy', yet the entire Ngaanyatjarra constituency in the extensive Shire of Wiluna was disenfranchised because they were not rate-paying property owners.⁷⁸⁵ Municipal services, especially roads, were severely neglected in the eastern zone of the Shire that encompassed the Ngaanyatjarra communities. Then in 1984, the *Local Government Act* was amended and this gave the majority Aboriginal composition of the Shire the capacity to vote, with virtually no experience of the election processes of liberal democracy. In 1985, with a large voter turn-out, the first Ngaanyatjarra representative on the Shire of Wiluna Council was elected and this was a 'big event, a big victory'.⁷⁸⁶ Following this success, and aware of the non-compulsory voting requirement in local government elections, the Ngaanyatjarra tactically used an electoral education campaign to increase voter awareness. An Aboriginal majority was reached in the Wiluna Shire election in 1987: two Ngaanyatjarra men and a representative from Ngangganawili Community in Wiluna.⁷⁸⁷ This was 'a highly sophisticated political move and the Ngaanyatjarra leaders understood this strategy and utilised it'.⁷⁸⁸ Key young leaders like George embraced the mainstream forms of governance:

I remember the next election... went to all the community, talked to people so they could vote me in. So we had the election and I was second one into that Council, Wiluna Shire. Every month we used to fly down, we had a small plane, Ngaanyatjarra Council and we used to fly in for the meeting... We had a lot of problem in the Shire... We been having hard time with them pastoralists, so we decide to resign. We had a meeting in Warakurna to resign, then we had another election and most of all from this end been there. Ngaanyatjarra people mostly. During that time we had a rough time with the pastoralists. We been on the *7.30 Report* where they mention about having our own Shire out this way. During that time when we still on we did some travelling round Queensland to look at other Aboriginal Shire Councils... Went to see how they run their Council, Shire Council, local government. Came back, that's when after that we decide to all resign... From there the Minister for Local Government decided that we should have our own Shire.

⁷⁸⁴ (Groom 1988).

⁷⁸⁵ (Fletcher 1992: 1).

⁷⁸⁶ Tehan pers. comm. August 2005.

⁷⁸⁷ (Fletcher 1992: 117).

⁷⁸⁸ Tehan pers. comm. August 2005.

However, by 1986 political recalcitrance on the part of the minority non-Aboriginal Shire Councillors made the Shire unworkable, the Aboriginal Councillors withdrew and the quorum was lost. The WA government then appointed a commissioner to administer the Wiluna Shire. The 'next logical step' was for the Ngaanyatjarra to create their own local government area and have complete control in a manner that would be integrated into existing regional governance structures. A petition was drawn up and sent to the Minister for Local Government to draw up new boundaries and signed by Ngaanyatjarra representatives (Fig. 4.8). In 1993 the first local government election for the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku (formed in what was the eastern zone of the Shire of Wiluna) was held and eight Councillors were elected, unopposed.⁷⁸⁹

The formation of the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku represents the determination of Ngaanyatjarra people to have agency over governance and service delivery. Literate strategies were implemented by the leadership to achieve their political goals. The electoral education campaign was strategically used to ensure that the potency of their recent enfranchisement was fully realized and the majority population participated in the democratic process irrespective of individual literacy competence.⁷⁹⁰ A significant action was the 'petition' sent to the State Minister for Local Government; this, in effect, encoded their claim for real political representation within the mainstream process. By petitioning the Minister, Ngaanyatjarra people were fully aware that they were exploiting their democratic rights as citizens. Their success was achieved with the support of mediators. By using Tehan as a legal mediator people were culturally able to maintain control over the dimensions that were important to the collective, such as 'country', while also controlling the complex process of providing legal instruction to Tehan. The leaders' ability to code-switch between two languages, Ngaanyatjarra and English, and between two cultural domains and 'Laws' and this gave them significant rhetorical power. Strategically, the Ngaanyatjarra were able to pursue their goal of 'making a name for themselves in civil society' and to demonstrate their capacity to act as a community of interest.⁷⁹¹ High voter participation continues in Shire elections.⁷⁹² The Shire Council remains an important site for the development of a governance style that differs from that of the Ngaanyatjarra

⁷⁸⁹ (Tehan pers. comm. August 2005). The Shire comprises nine of the Ngaanyatjarra communities. Cosmo Newbery falls within the boundaries of the Shire of Laverton and Kiwirrkura within the Shire of East Pilbara. The Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku offices are based in Warburton and provide services in a manner comparable with any local government, over an area of some 159,948 sq kms. It maintains a majority Aboriginal population and a majority Aboriginal elected Council. <http://www.tjulyuru.com/shirehist.asp>

⁷⁹⁰ Elections for the chair of community councils, the chair of Ngaanyatjarra Council and the Executive of NPY Women's Council are based on a process of public and collective transparency where votes are made as marks against a name or marbles placed in a box representing a candidate.

⁷⁹¹ Tehan pers. comm. August 2005

Council because of the necessity to adhere to the strict parameters of local government rules and regulations. Over subsequent years, despite the highly legalistic and bureaucratic nature of the oral and written discourse encountered in Shire Council meetings, 'literacy has never been an impediment' as Councillors are skilled in listening, reflecting, deliberating and thinking through issues.⁷⁹³

A perception has grown since the 1970s among some Ngaanyatjarra that they experienced economic disadvantage, political isolation and fewer training opportunities in comparison with their Pitjantjatjara kin across the border.⁷⁹⁴ In retrospect, however, these factors contributed to the assertion of a perseverant and independent Ngaanyatjarra identity. This is summed up in Brooks' recollection of 'Joshua', the long time Ngaanyatjarra Council Chairman, who would remind people at Council meetings:

We started this Ngaanyatjarra Council from ourselves, self-help, we had chuck-in... We didn't wait for the government to give us something or we didn't sit here and wait for somebody else to do things for us. We wanted to get a Council started and we did it... Now we look around us and we see what we have got. We got to remember that that's the way we did it and we've got to be proud of our Council and proud of these communities and what we've got now. We've done that because the people have worked hard.

Brooks suggests that there was a bit of mythologising involved, but also a kernel of truth.⁷⁹⁵ A strong Ngaanyatjarra identity and sense of place in the world has been galvanised by the cumulative effect of 'little successes' and dedicated non-Aboriginal support over many years.⁷⁹⁶ Underpinning the strength of the Ngaanyatjarra community is the role of the senior men and women who have 'primary responsibility for the performance of ceremony, which keeps the physical and metaphysical world in harmony and balance, for the benefit of all people'.⁷⁹⁷ In 2002, the Ngaanyatjarra Council established the *Tjilpi* Committee and

⁷⁹² (Thurtell 2003).

⁷⁹³ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

⁷⁹⁴ In the NT Aboriginal people were paid a 'training allowance' for work and some received 'on-the-job training' and 'off-settlement courses' (Rowley 1972b: 122-3). The training of Pitjantjatjara teachers was addressed relatively early by the SA government (Penny 1975). Although the implementation of training for Aboriginal teachers in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands was a priority of the Tri-State Project (Tri-State Project 1990) it came to nought and Ngaanyatjarra Aboriginal Education Workers (AEW) were rapidly left behind, especially as their peers had started Anangu Teacher Education Programme (AnTEP) training in SA in 1984, and Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) training through Batchelor College in 1987. A few Ngaanyatjarra AEWs commenced training, however as it was not systemic and there were few completions. There are still no qualified Ngaanyatjarra teachers in the WA Department of Education Remote Community Schools.

⁷⁹⁵ Brooks—Interview 15/8/04.

⁷⁹⁶ (Tehan pers. comm. August 2005). In 1982 a Ngaanyatjarra Council administrative office was established in Alice Springs for pragmatic reasons due to shared services with Pitjantjatjara Council, the location of DAA and other Commonwealth Departments in Alice Springs and the location of the Ngaanyatjarra Air service in Alice Springs after the first plane was bought in 1982. The first paid employees of Ngaanyatjarra Council came in 1983. Following this, Ngaanyatjarra Council established a significant economic and organisational structure including Ngaanyatjarra Services (Aboriginal Corporation) in 1986, Ngaanyatjarra Health Service (Aboriginal Corporation) in 1987 and Ngaanyatjarra Land Council (Aboriginal Corporation) in 1988, Ngaanyatjarra Agency and Transport Service in 1984, Ampol (subsequently Caltex) distributorship in 1986 plus the Indervon Co., and a 40% share in Marshall Laurence Pty Ltd insurance broker in 1998. (Ngaanyatjarra Council 2000: 167).

⁷⁹⁷ (Brooks and Shaw 2003: 23).

Fig. 4.8 Petition concerning formation of the Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT
SHIRE OF WILUNA

To His Excellency Sir Francis Theodore Page Burt, C.O.E.,
K.C.M.G., Q.C., Governor in and over the State of Western
Australia and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of
Australia.

We, the undersigned electors within the Municipality of the
Shire of Wiluna do hereby pray for your Excellency to
exercise the powers conferred upon you by virtue of Section
12(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 1960 (as amended) to
authorise the constitution of a new shire as hereinafter
described:

- (1) The municipality of the Shire of Wiluna is a Shire
constituted under the Local Government Act 1960 (as
amended from time to time).
- (2) The Signatories of the petition would be eligible to be
registered as electors on the electoral role of the new
shire to be known as the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire as
hereinafter described in paragraph (3).
- (3) The petitioners
have the exist
shires at lon
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Shire.
- (4) The petitione
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Ngaanyatjarra

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This is the
Statutory D
the 18th

[Signature]
Signature
person te

- 5) Notice to the petitioners may be served on D McLean C/-
Warburton Community, PMB 71, Alice Springs, 0871.
- (5) The person to whom any deposit required under Section
26 may be refunded is D McLean.

And your petitioners will ever so humbly pray.

[Signature]
D McLEAN

Joe Munroe
Rudley Nelson
Roma Holland

[Signature]

Andra Jean

Murray Wells

Sunny Lewis

[Signature]

(Henry Giles)
ANDREW WATSON

[Signature]

Myra Lawson

Lalla West

IVAN Shepherd

Dorcy Munroe

+ (Arthur Robertson)

Nellie Roberts

[Signature]

L. Gerrish

Jerome Ward

This is the Annexure marked "A" referred to in the
Statutory Declaration of Damian McLean made the
day of _____ 1991.

[Signature]
Signature and qualification
of person taking the declaration

COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS
2 Wilkeson St, Alice Springs

Source: Maureen Tehan.

Fig. 4.9 Letter concerning Ngaanyatjarra Council By-Laws 1987

NGAANYATJARRA COUNCIL
(ABORIGINAL CORPORATION)

P.O. Box 2189
Alice Springs, N.T. 5750

Telephone: (089) 52 3655
Telex: 81151
Fax: (089) 52 6371
Ngaanyatjarra Air Charter Office:
Telephone: (089) 52 4367

8th September, 1987

Our Ref: RB:gp: 86/63 B(D)

Honourable E. Bridge, MLA
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Capita Centre
197 St. George's Terrace
PERTH W.A. 6000

Dear Mr. Bridge.



RE: NGAANYATJARRA COUNCIL BY-LAWS

I refer to the discussions which took place with you about by-laws at the Ngaanyatjarra Council meeting in July at Warakarna. The Council members were especially concerned about "grog" on the Ngaanyatjarra lands and about petrol sniffing and wanted by-laws to make possession of "grog" and petrol and glue sniffing an offence. You agreed to the Council being given the power to make by-laws for this purpose under the Aboriginal Communities Act.

Having considered the by-laws in existence for La Grange, we are also keen to have by-laws giving the Council the power to give entry permits. This is appropriate since control and management is to pass to the Ngaanyatjarras under the proposed 99 year lease.

I now enclose draft by-laws, which the Council at its meeting last month at Wingellina resolved to make. These by-laws can of course only be made after the Governor has made a declaration pursuant to Section 4(b) of the Aboriginal Communities Act that Ngaanyatjarra Council is a Community to which that Act applies. For this purpose, we also enclose a copy of the Ngaanyatjarra Council Constitution and of its Certificate of Incorporation.

Yours sincerely,



Secretary, Ngaanyatjarra Council

An Incorporation of Ngaanyatjarra Aboriginal Communities.

the equivalent women's committee known as the *Minyma Pampa* Committee to give authority to the voice of senior Ngaanyatjarra men and women within the official Council structure.

Law and order

Ultimately, the Ngaanyatjarra were also able to implement strategies to curtail the ravaging impact of alcohol and substance abuse by exploiting the mechanisms of law and order from mainstream Australia (Fig. 4.9). The passing of the *Aboriginal Communities Act 1979* (WA) enabled the Ngaanyatjarra Council to utilise Sections under the Act to create By-Laws that allowed them to assert a 'standard of acceptable behaviour as determined by the Communities'.⁷⁹⁸ The By-Laws were gazetted in July 1989. McLean perceives that the development of law and order on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands has been critical to the success of the region:

The By-Laws regarding alcohol were crucial in the establishment of a good relationship with police and the Department of Justice, unlike in other places for example in the Pitjantjatjara Lands where there is no police presence and not the security that results from that, nor the development of positive relationship with police.

According to Ngaanyatjarra Council lawyer Leanne Stedman, Ngaanyatjarra people have a 'strong sense of ownership' over the By-Laws and have argued strongly for an effective police presence on the Lands to enforce the By-Laws and thus ensure community safety:⁷⁹⁹

Because of the influence of white ways of doing things, we as Aboriginal people are using part of the white system now to fill in the gaps. It's our law in that we requested it for the protection of our wellbeing. We're using their system to make it work for us.⁸⁰⁰

In Ngaanyatjarra society the 'autonomy' of the individual remains a core value.⁸⁰¹ Imposing one's moral authority over other individuals, or families, and commanding them to cease drinking or sniffing is virtually impossible for a Ngaanyatjarra person to enact. Police intervention provides the critical, additional regulatory authority that allows individuals to act to control alcohol or substance abuse.⁸⁰² Unfortunately, with the introduction of the *Sentencing Act 1995* (WA), sentencing options and penalties for offences under the *Communities Act* have been amended with less than satisfactory consequences.

⁷⁹⁸ (Staples and Cane 2002: 21).

⁷⁹⁹ Contrary to recent suggestions by the WA Law Reform Commission that the By-Laws were 'imposed'. Law Reform Commission of Western Australia (Discussion Paper December 2005) *Part V - Aboriginal Customary Law and the Criminal Justice System: Aboriginal community justice mechanisms*. Aboriginal Customary Law Publications, pp. 115–121. http://www.lrc.justice.wa.gov.au/Aboriginal/DiscussionPaper/Part_05D.pdf (download 5/7/06).

⁸⁰⁰ Quote from a Community Chairman, 2006 cited in Stedman, L. (2006) Ngaanyatjarra Communities Submission to the WALRC Discussion paper on 'Aboriginal Customary Laws' – April 2006. Alice Springs: Ngaanyatjarra Council.

⁸⁰¹ (Myers 1986: 22).

After the initial optimism of self-determination, desert people had to confront the unfulfilled expectations of self-management. Incrementally, the gap between expectation and reality widened and increasing numbers of non-Aboriginal people were employed to manage the ever more complex infrastructure. The 'self-determining' generation who grew up in this period encountered profound social disruption that fragmented their world. As they moved through their formative years they observed more whitefellas entering their realm and taking control with concomitantly fewer opportunities for their parents or their peer group to use or consolidate the European skills and practices they had acquired. Long-time observers suggest that unlike the milieu of interdependence and working together of previous periods, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people began to live in separate communities and, despite their numerical dominance and indisputable status as traditional land owners, the Ngaanyatjarra had 'lost their community' and 'lost their power'. The older generation, aggrieved by the humiliating loss of control over social space and the progressive devaluation and marginalisation of past practices and beliefs, have responded by distancing themselves from European practices and interpreting self-determination from their own cultural perspective, that is by asserting control in separate domains, especially the ceremonial domain.⁸⁰³

Ultimately, however, this period saw the evolution of a new, politicised Ngaanyatjarra collective able to deal with the contingencies of the era. The people were instrumental in establishing their own communities and creating a governance structure that transformed the quality of life for the broad community of interest. In addition, their various levels of education and literacy competence matched the requirements of the time and they were able to build on their accumulated habitus.

Conclusion

There is a belief among some Ngaanyatjarra that the model of schooling experienced by earlier generations created the leadership cohort and since then schooling has failed to deliver the expected outcomes.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰² Prior to 2006 police posts in Warburton and Warakurna were manned by police from Laverton Police Station. A permanent police presence exists with the erection of Multi Function Police Facilities at Warburton and Warakurna (and Kintore, NT) and a new Magistrate's Court of Petty Sessions at Warburton.

⁸⁰³ Other anthropological literature refers to the existence of separate Aboriginal 'domains' within the space of contemporary community life (Smith 2005; von Sturmer 1984; Trigger 1992).

⁸⁰⁴ Despite significant investment of Commonwealth and State funding in Aboriginal education over the past few decades there has been growing concern about literacy outcomes. In the Ngaanyatjarra Lands concern has been expressed by government, education providers and Ngaanyatjarra people themselves. Over the years numerous reviews and reports, research projects have been undertaken and education initiatives flagged (Goddard et al. 2000; Heslop 1997; Heslop 1998; Kerr 1989; Kerr et al. 2001; NLLIA 1996; Tomlinson Report 1994; Tri-State Project 1990). In 2000 the Ngaanyatjarra Council conducted a review of education and training (Kral and Ward 2000). This grew out of the keenly felt sentiment that education was outside of the control of the Ngaanyatjarra Council. A Memorandum of Agreement between the

A lot of Ngaanyatjarra people who went to school here were well-educated—they are the leaders. Fairly well-educated compared to what children are getting now.⁸⁰⁵

This phenomenon has been critiqued by other researchers as ‘the myth in the collective education memory of a Golden Age’.⁸⁰⁶ Clearly, hundreds of Ngaanyatjarra children have had some experience of schooling since 1936. However as shown in preceding chapters, we must also be mindful of the circumstances (social, cultural, historical, political and economic) that precipitated the activation and consolidation of literate practices. Many in the leadership group spent their formative years observing their elders participate in textually mediated Christian practices. In this chapter we see how people’s literate processes matched the requirements of the time and people were ‘as literate as the tasks required’.⁸⁰⁷ Literacy skills were acquired through pedagogy and maintained, as April expresses it, ‘from a lifetime, doing all that skill’. We see adults shifting between oral and literate modes, with some adults developing writing habits, but others using shared or communal literacy strategies.⁸⁰⁸ Literate modes and conventions were utilised to serve people’s own ideological purposes. We see, for instance, letter-writing used to address two pressing social and cultural needs: to maintain social relatedness and to look after country. For some Ngaanyatjarra it is these wider circumstances, rather than the pedagogical circumstances *per se*, that generated a ‘shift in ways of thinking and acting’ towards a developing ‘literate mentality’ in only two generations.⁸⁰⁹

In *Part I* I have explored how literacy is ‘historically situated’ and ‘culturally shaped’.⁸¹⁰ By considering the social meaning of literacy practices for participants, and the ‘ideological’ rather than ‘technical’ nature of literacy I have brought to the fore the circumstances that have supported literacy development and those that have worked against it.⁸¹¹ In *Part II* I continue this approach to literacy, but move to a synchronic description of how literacy is used in everyday practice. I follow the families that have been introduced in *Part I* and explore how they, their children and their grandchildren use literacy in contemporary community life.

Western Australian government and the Ngaanyatjarra Council established the Ngaanyatjarra Education Area. This Agreement has also purportedly failed (Goddard et al. 2005) and the Ngaanyatjarra Council is now embarking on an ‘Education Training and Lifelong Learning’ Shared Responsibility Agreement with the Federal government.

⁸⁰⁵ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁸⁰⁶ (NLLIA 1996: 17, Vol. 3).

⁸⁰⁷ (Clanchy 1979: 219)

⁸⁰⁸ (Kell 2000).

⁸⁰⁹ Clanchy emphasises that in medieval England it took two centuries for literate habits, ‘ways of thinking and acting’, to develop (Clanchy 1979: 3).

⁸¹⁰ (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Kulick and Stroud 1993).

⁸¹¹ (Street 1984: 111).

PART II

CHAPTERS 5 – 8

CHAPTER 5 Literacy and the ‘practice of everyday life’

Introduction

In *Part II* of the thesis I move away from the past and focus on the present. By looking at literacy from a synchronic perspective I throw a spotlight on the Ngaanyatjarra now and explore the interwoven nature of literacy in the ‘practice of every day life’.⁸¹² I continue to incorporate a ‘practice-centred’ approach to consider, as Merlan terms it, the ‘generationally differentiated’ nature of practice, and to shed light on how the influences of the past permeate the present.⁸¹³ I refer back to Barton and Hamilton’s propositions outlined in Chapter 1 and view literacy as a set of social practices that can be inferred from events which are textually mediated, purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices. From this perspective ‘literacy practices change, and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making’ in accordance with social and cultural processes.⁸¹⁴

I also draw on other theorists who take a practice-centred approach to language and literacy and I take account of the spatio-temporal determinants of social practice in domestic and public domains.⁸¹⁵ Linguistic anthropologists, in particular, have paid attention to the ‘spatio-temporal anchoring of linguistic expressions’ by examining language and social (or indexical) meanings and interaction in social space and the built environment.⁸¹⁶ The manner in which habitus ‘orients and naturalizes’ people’s action in social space has been considered by William Hanks who suggests that corporeal practices, ways of inhabiting space and ways that objects in space are used rest on ‘an immense stock of social knowledge’ and this knowledge which appears natural, is moreover, socially constructed.⁸¹⁷ From Ortner we understand that ‘human action or interaction’, as an

⁸¹² (de Certeau 1984).

⁸¹³ Francesca Merlan asserts that ‘experience and practical knowledge of living in places is generationally differentiated, as one might expect given considerable change in the forms of Aboriginal life’ (Merlan 1998: 77). Change and adaptation are commonly explored themes in Australian anthropology (Berndt 1977; Sackett 1990; Stanton 1988; Tonkinson 1974; Wallace 1990) with some writers focusing on the formation of community and adaptation to community living (Folds 2001; Martin 1993; White 1977; Woenne 1977). Merlan considers, however, that some ethnographies do not examine sufficiently ‘contemporary social practices’ and ‘ways of living in place’ (Merlan 1998: 77).

⁸¹⁴ (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 7; Barton and Tusting 2005).

⁸¹⁵ Theorists who take a practice-centred approach to language include (Ahearn 2001b; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Hanks 1990; Ochs 1988). See also (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]).

⁸¹⁶ (Duranti 1997: 321–28).

⁸¹⁷ (Hanks 1990: 7). See also (Levinson and Wilkins 2006; Ochs 1993).

instance of practice, can only be considered in relation to the structures or cultural schemas that shape it.⁸¹⁸ Ortner considers that:

...cultural schemas may become deeply embedded in actors' identities, as a result of actors growing up within a particular cultural milieu, and as a result of practices (social, ritual, and so on) that repeatedly nourish the schema and its place within the self. In consequence, actors will tend to 'do the cultural thing' under most circumstances, and even in some cases under inappropriate circumstances.⁸¹⁹

The Ngaanyatjarra world and the non-Aboriginal, or 'whitefella', world are now 'socially and spacially interconnected' and literacy is one of the threads that binds social practice in 'diverse and intercultural arenas'.⁸²⁰ Yet, as I will attempt to make explicit throughout *Part II*, although social interaction has been propelled away from 'pre-established precepts or practices' into the norms and routines of Western patterns of time and space usage, some sort of 'ordering function' or 'cultural schema' is operating across disparate, often textually-mediated, social situations and practices.⁸²¹

Transformed practices

The *tjukurrpa* provides an underpinning metaphysics that incorporates a 'changeless, timeless, permanence', it is the enduring 'moral authority' that lies outside individuals and underpins everyday life in the 'symbolic space'.⁸²² Control over the symbolic space is maintained by persistent cultural collective belief systems. Sorcery and the supernatural (manifest in apprehension or fear of unknown or malevolent forces) are, for instance, part of the perceived reality that underpins everyday life.⁸²³ Despite the permanency of this ontology, on a day to day level the Ngaanyatjarra still struggle with the changed power dynamic, the diminished authority of elders, and the assumed authority of the state and non-Aboriginal value systems.

In the past the reproduction and transmission of Ngaanyatjarra cultural practice was oral, and with no written record, the signifiers of linguistic and cultural change were imperceptible, embedded in memory and incorporated over many generations. Over time, with exposure to cars and planes and the increasing frequency of travel, people experienced the speeding up of time. A man whose first sighting of white people was in the 1960s, describes his reaction to speed when sitting on a moving truck for the first time: 'thought it

⁸¹⁸ (Ortner 1989: 12).

⁸¹⁹ (Ortner 1989: 127).

⁸²⁰ (Merlan 1998: 146).

⁸²¹ (Giddens 1991: 20; Ortner 1989: 60).

⁸²² (Myers 1986: 69).

⁸²³ See (Maher 1999; Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation 2003; Reid 1983).

was tree running, so start sick up'.⁸²⁴ Modernity, the advent of globalisation, and the massive technological changes since the 1970s have radically changed the course of everyday life.⁸²⁵ Technology now immortalises the present and records change, creating a 'modern kind of collective memory'.⁸²⁶ Temporal rhythms in the past were experienced within nature and space, through the seasons, the cycles of the sun, moon and stars and the interrelated patterns of hunting and gathering, social relatedness and ceremonial cycles, so there was a 'concordance of time and space'.⁸²⁷ The Western world then introduced 'metronomic' cultural practices; measurable time, measurable development and performance, punctuality, a morality around how time should be spent and chronologically-determined rituals were acquired—Christmas, New Year, Easter, baptisms and weddings.⁸²⁸ For the Ngaanyatjarra the passage of time altered as calendrical time and introduced temporal parameters became habitual.⁸²⁹ Social practices were reorganised and social identities reshaped to conform to the requirements of schooling and other Western institutions. A new framework for everyday life introduced the expectation that children and adolescents would go to school and become workers within a Western spatio-temporal cultural paradigm. Nevertheless, despite non-Aboriginal attempts to restructure temporal routines; unpredictable patterns and events—travel to sorry camps, funerals or football—interrupt everyday life. In a non-metronomic life there is little need for diaries, calendars or other mnemonic strategies for keeping track of time and this is often a source of conflict between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal world. Mainstream practices—training, employment and governance—are controlled by chronologically regulated rhythms. Few people have watches or clocks and so time is regulated by the school siren, TV or radio time calls and other strategies. Shop hours suit a '9 to 5' working paradigm and are not conducive to the needs of locals who have less structured home lives.

The Ngaanyatjarra encounter with Western materialism has also demanded a conceptual adjustment to the way that space, and the objects in space, are used. Previously normative socio-spatial and corporeal practices have been re-oriented around the built environment and the normative values and dispositions of introduced domestic practice are being transmitted as habitus to the next generation. Rosie and Harold's granddaughter Rosemary describes how only two generations previously families were from:

⁸²⁴ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

⁸²⁵ See (Appadurai 1996; Gee 2000; Giddens 1999; Giddens 1991; Hulsemeyer 2003).

⁸²⁶ (Young 1988: 207). See also (Mead 1978 [1970]).

⁸²⁷ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 267).

⁸²⁸ (Young 1988).

⁸²⁹ See (Musharbash 2003; Poirier 2005).

...all different places in the bush, rockholes, they moved to Warburton, they was staying in the *wiltja* long time ago. Hard life, they used to walk around in the hot heat. They used to carry the kids on their back and walk along, going place to place to the rockholes, camping at night and walking in the daytime. They was go hunting in the bush.

Whereas now, she remarks, families live 'all in the house, drinking water from the tap!'⁸³⁰ Molly says she is 'really proud' of her daughter who 'lives in her own house' and has 'her own things':

They got their own fridge, frying pan, car, anything they can have, firewood of their own. That's got to be strong, that's how you make them strong to look after their own things.

Una also incorporates Western values into her aspirations for her grandchildren:

I'd like to see my grandchildren having a good house and having a good *kurri* to look after and working and happy family, like that... Little kids to go to school, important, very important thing is school... so they can learn more and more and more and they can get *ninti*... They might start living like a proper person who might speak up: 'We want new houses, we might build more and more houses, and maybe a big shop.' Like that.

The generational shift is palpable. Young people 'want houses now because they've seen other people use them, and they've got TV, video and they want a stove to cook on... they're seeing it on TV and in all different places, so this sort of stuff starts to work its way through' and many homes contain the consumer items of mainstream domesticity.⁸³¹ Nevertheless, continuity with the past is signified in housing located according to cardinal directions reflecting socio-spatial origins.⁸³²

Text has also seeped its way into domestic and public space: on signs, notices, artwork, and t-shirts. Walls, floors, doors and windows are all surfaces for writing phone numbers, names, messages or graffiti. Social interaction remains, nonetheless, primarily oral and gestural, and many Ngaanyatjarra live without needing to read, write or calculate much at all. There are, however, individuals who incorporate literate behaviours and strategies into the practice of everyday life. In this chapter I explore what people do with text in the visible and less visible arenas of everyday life, and the resources, strategies, roles and domains of use associated with literacy events and practices. These are set against assessed

⁸³⁰ This quote also reveals the centrality of *kapi* ('water') in Ngaanyatjarra secular and spiritual life. Brooks talks of two types of *kapi*: firstly 'freely available water, not created by Dreaming Beings', i.e. seasonal rain water, ephemeral water sources with 'no sacred associations'. Another type of *kapi* is spring water that 'wells up from the earth' and is 'guarded by powerful beings' *warnampi* ('mythological water snakes') and has 'sacred associations'. 'Both sorts of water have always been part of the life of *yarnangu*, but it is plain to see that by far the greater value applies to the spring water. This is the "personal", known water, what might be called the "life blood" of *yarnangu* that has been specially given to them by the Dreaming. This is the water that *yarnangu* really need, that they can always fall back on, that is to be found "at home". The other water, originating from external agency, is an extra, allowing another (less social) dimension to life. But it is ephemeral and unreliable, and in this it functions as a contrast to the other, underlining the latter's centrality to life and to the 'cycle of creation' (Brooks 2002c: 15).

⁸³¹ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

⁸³² A continuity of spatially relative orientations to 'country' is noted in the Australian anthropological literature (Hamilton 1979; Merlan 1998; Sansom 1980). Myers found with the Pintupi that 'orientation in space is a prime concern' (Myers 1986: 54).

standards of adult literacy competence to highlight that through ethnography a richer and more nuanced picture of the literacy environment emerges than one revealed by decontextualised measures of literacy proficiency.⁸³³ I utilise the metaphor of ‘visibility’ – *yuti*, and ‘invisibility’ – *yarrkayi* to demonstrate a bifurcation apparent in everyday life.⁸³⁴ Barton and Hamilton assert, and I concur, that powerful institutions, (schools and workplaces) tend to support the visible or ‘dominant literacy practices’, which ‘can be seen as part of whole discourse formations, institutionalised configurations of power and knowledge which are embedded in social relationships’, whereas the ‘vernacular literacies which exist in people’s everyday lives are less visible and less supported’.⁸³⁵

Literacy in the domestic space

Despite changes at a superficial level, Ngaanyatjarra construction of lived space cannot be understood in isolation from the transformation of space in accordance with regular principles and recurrent schemata.⁸³⁶ Oral interactions and Ngaanyatjarra semiotic resources remain associated with deeply layered mythological space. Spatial practice, especially for older people, operates at the intersection of ‘diachronic and synchronic’ time: the synchronic town grid (superimposed by the mission and subsequent town planning) overlays the deeply felt ‘spaces, rhythms or polarities’ of the diachronic relationship with country and *tjukurrpa*.⁸³⁷ In comparison, the social construction of literate modes of interaction is synonymous with the built environment—a space with a short history, that is, literally, superficial.

Western society has developed what Lefebvre terms a spatial code ‘as a means of living in that space, of understanding it, and producing it’.⁸³⁸ Practice theorists suggest that social practice produces and reproduces the meaning of space:

Inhabited space—starting with the house—is the privileged site of the objectification of the generative schemes, and, through the divisions and hierarchies it establishes between things, between peoples and between practices, this materialized system of classification inculcates and

⁸³³ (Street 1984).

⁸³⁴ *Yuti*—1. (adjective, adverb) ‘bare, exposed to view, visible, clear (Glass and Hackett 2003: 602). *Yarrkayi*—1. (adverb) ‘blurred, indistinct’; 2. (adverb) ‘invisibly’ (Glass and Hackett 2003: 560-61). These are not emic categories, locals do not categorise the world in this way.

⁸³⁵ (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 10). The term ‘vernacular literacy’ refers originally to reading and writing in the first language or mother tongue as in the 1953 UNESCO axiom (Bull 1964). More recently the terms ‘vernacular’ (Camitta 1993) or ‘hybrid’ (Cushman and Emmons 2002) literacies have been used to refer to non-standard written forms.

⁸³⁶ See (Lawrence and Low 1990; Robben 1989; White 1977) for discussions on the anthropology of the domestic or built space. In her exploration of Warlpiri domestic space Musharbash notes that despite the similarity of the physical structure Warlpiri use of domestic space is ‘distinctly different’ from Western usage (Musharbash 2003). In Musharbash’s ethnography there are virtually no references to literacy use within the domestic space, despite Western schooling in the Warlpiri region and the strength of Warlpiri literacy (Gale 1997; Hoogenraad 2001).

⁸³⁷ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 164).

⁸³⁸ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 47–48).

constantly reinforces the principles of the classification which constitutes the arbitrariness of a culture.⁸³⁹

The interrelationship between social practice and how 'inside' space is used is attributable to the long history of 'things in space' including the 'ordinary objects of daily life' in Western society.⁸⁴⁰ In Western 'middle-class' literate homes normative assumptions are made about the ordering of domestic space and literacy practice. Literacy artefacts are categorised and stored in cupboards or bookshelves, and documents are alphabetically indexed in filing cabinets according to assumed systematic practice. The habit of living in the built space builds up socio-spatial typification and congruent interaction. The collocation of objects in domestic space depends on a shared understanding of how the world is ordered and the relationship between objects, in much the same way that the collocation of semantic and grammatical categories in written text depends upon similarly shared schematic knowledge. As 'good readers read' they acquire the habit of textual collocation (i.e. a familiarity with English written discourse where deictic expressions determine textual organisation by maintaining the cohesion of anaphoric, cataphoric and exophoric chains of reference), so the habit of living in the built space builds up socio-spatial typification and congruent interaction and corporeal dispositions.⁸⁴¹ I return again to consider that 'habitualized actions' become embedded as 'routines' or 'taken for granted actions' only when 'reciprocal typification of habitualized actions' build up through 'shared history'.⁸⁴² As Hanks suggests: the 'automatization of practice produces schematic knowledge' that has a 'corporeal dimension'; people's 'habitual postures and orientations make up a schematic background that is in play whenever they engage in talk', and I would add, in literate processes.⁸⁴³

Highly literate Europeans assume common-sense domestic socio-spatial corporeal and linguistic routines. Social meanings are sedimented in the routine actions of what Goffman terms 'participation frameworks' and the artefacts (houses, rooms, furniture, pen and paper) that 'allow us to interface with one another in particular ways'.⁸⁴⁴ In contrast, traditional Ngaanyatjarra life was oriented towards the overarching taxonomic categories of the natural world and the sociality, values, norms and practices that allowed people to act coherently in that environment.⁸⁴⁵ Over the last decade or so, generationally differentiated domestic habits and routines have emerged in the wake of sedentarisation and the slow

⁸³⁹ (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 76). See also (Bourdieu 1977; de Certeau 1984).

⁸⁴⁰ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 116).

⁸⁴¹ (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Hanks 1990).

⁸⁴² (Berger and Luckmann 1975 [1966]: 70–85).

⁸⁴³ (Hanks 1990: 150).

⁸⁴⁴ (Duranti 1997: 318–19). See also (Goffman 1981).

shift to houses, remembering that constructed domestic space for most people did not become the norm until the late 1980s and early 1990s. The generations who spent their formative years living in a *wiltja* were socialised into the socio-spatial orientation of a domestic environment without 'closed or secret places' for the enactment of literacy habits and the organisation of literacy artefacts.⁸⁴⁶ Although we are now seeing young people who have been socialised into living in the built environment exhibiting changed corporeal dispositions and habits, inclusive of literacy, as normative social practice, nevertheless, as Ortnier intimates, a tendency to 'do the cultural thing' may still take precedence over the Western classificatory principles underlying literate practice.

Literacy and the social capacity to control domestic space

Ngaanyatjarra domestic space remains oriented towards outside space. The social logic of the household 'camp' accommodates avoidance relationships and the approach of strangers but these do not map neatly onto the bounded parameters of the built house. Despite the availability of housing, the nuclear family household is a rarity and most people prefer to live in interconnected multi-generation households where housing allocation is determined by social factors rather than by the capacity to pay rent (see Appendix G). Houses are noisy social spaces occupied by fluctuating members of the extended family; people come and go, cars drive in and out, babies cry, children scream, adults call out across the open space between houses, and stereos and TVs resound in the background.

A developing consumer consciousness and increasing access to material goods and purchasing power has introduced new cultural concepts: private property and padlocked space. Concomitant with this new materiality is the tangential requirement of literacy; the perceived need to look after and protect *things*. Anthropologist Annette Hamilton observes that as materiality entered the Pitjantjatjara world in the 1970s, social and cultural reasons accounted for why adults were unable to maintain everyday objects.⁸⁴⁷ For instance, preventing children from doing things to everyday objects that fell outside 'the traditional framework of objects to be avoided' (i.e. *not* objects of a secret or sacred nature) was difficult to enact if it involved punishing another person's child or led to accusations of being 'mean' or 'ungenerous'. According to Hamilton, in relation to the 'free giving and getting' of secular objects it is assumed that one does not deny access to others. The prioritisation and enhancement of social relationships through sharing contrasts with a Western perspective on the 'proper' care of objects which assumes that objects be

⁸⁴⁵ See (Kopytoff 1986).

⁸⁴⁶ (Nicholls 2000: 89).

perceived as 'continuing assets' which must endure into an 'unspecified future time'. Literacy practice rests on the ownership of, and control over the materiality of literacy. However, as McLean states, 'the artefacts of literacy that go with houses...are not building up'. People cannot say:

...here's my phone bill, here's my rent, that's my letter box and that's my cheque book and that's where I store it all, and this is where I keep my calendar and diary to keep it all organized...If you have increased control over your personal environment then your capacity to be an agent in the literacy experience is enhanced. That's a really big problem socially as there is nothing in the Ngaanyatjarra environment that empowers you to do that. Nothing...The chaos factor...no order...literacy is intermeshed with these aspects of the environment, housing, lifestyle, the expectation of literacy post-school, the formation of the supports to allow literacy to happen outside of school are inextricably linked to the social factors that allow literacy to happen, like storage, possessions, property. It's not just knowing how to do it. The isolated, solitary activity of reading a newspaper is chipped away at, not allowed to take place which is what newspaper reading or whatever is all about. All the aspects that literacy is hinged on are at war with the Ngaanyatjarra social reality, in so many ways it works against literacy.⁸⁴⁸

Many aspects of Ngaanyatjarra cultural practice militate against the social capacity to control the domestic space in order to enact literate modes. 'Demand sharing', for instance, places pressure on the social capacity of individual Ngaanyatjarra to conserve cash or food and to regulate the removal and storage of property.⁸⁴⁹ In a social environment that privileges generosity and sharing and where children are not socialised into time and space rule-oriented boundaries, the ability to control private space and personal possessions is hard to achieve. As Mick explains:

They break it all up when you have books and something like that...these kids here, when they go, they rip it all up...I lock all my spanners up inside. Spanners and screwdrivers, and wheel spanners and jacks. Put it all inside so people don't touch it, tyre and all. If you leave it in the back somebody come along and steal it, take off with it, they won't bring it back.

Veronica tries keeping a notepad and phone numbers in a bag or cupboard but 'kids get it quick'. 'I keep some books home', says Una, 'but all blown away, strong wind came and blew it away':

I used to sit down and read and sometimes write down what I read from the Bible. I write it down sometimes, then I put in a safe place, but it's all gone. Like my grandchildren comes, they must think: 'Oh my nanna must have left something there'. They'll go through it and throw all the paper away, like a little note what we write it down...they just grab it and threw it away.

Una also uses a bag to store papers, but needs a place 'safe from the kids opening it and going through the bag'. Jacinta buys magazines from the store:

...but someone always come and steal them, must be some people from like store, bought a new one yesterday and it's gone, someone took it. I don't have any books. I'd love to have a books, but

⁸⁴⁷ (Hamilton 1979: 111–13). See also (Austin-Broos 2003; Myers 1988).

⁸⁴⁸ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

⁸⁴⁹ Demand sharing in Aboriginal Australia has been explored in the literature: (Austin-Broos 2003; Folds 2001; Musharbash 2003; Myers 1988; Peterson 1993; Sansom 1994 [1988]; Schwab 1995).

people always come in there and take it. I'd like to keep it in my room, locked up. I got a lot of photos there, keep it in little basket, I keep it inside.

Jennifer tries keeping books at home:

I keep it, but kids chucked it all out. You know, muck around and all that. Always keep my things private but they just go in there, chuck it away, make mess...I took some things to the house and I went to town and came back and I seen the things all over, just lying there...Must get a big cupboard or something with a lock.

Now her strategy is to store personal papers at the college:

That way I can get it whenever I need it if anybody come and ask me I just go there and grab it. They might ask me: 'Have you been doing this and that?' and I take them to the college if they ask me.

Mobility and iterative relocations of domestic space are further factors that impede home literacy practice, as evident during 'sorry business'. After a relative passes away families shift to a 'sorry camp' in their own, or a more distant, community—taking bedding and essential possessions—often leaving houses abandoned for months. After the funeral business is over a family may move to a new house to avoid memories of the deceased.

Ultimately, such conditions make the storage of literacy artefacts a challenging task and impact on home reading and writing practices.

Home reading

Unlike many Western homes, houses are not 'print rich environments' and people are not in the habit of accumulating texts in their camps.⁸⁵⁰ Money, keycards, bank details and phone numbers are carried by men in wallets or business card files, while women tend to use purses, shoulder bags or bras. Letters, address books and personal papers are stored on high shelves, in handbags, suitcases, overnight bags and pillow slips. In most houses there is little privacy and activity tends to be communal and public. Functional home reading (food or medication labels or home appliance manuals) is rare when function can be figured out by intuitive familiarity, oral instruction or 'reading' graphic symbols.

Magazines, letters and children's school work rapidly become obsolete and are discarded, and perhaps picked up by the next opportune reader, or raked up and burnt as rubbish.

Eileen tells me:

I read magazines, any books, Christian books, I can read a little bit of Ngaanyatjarra, any books laying round, keep them at home, get magazines from shop. I read those books, and other books I got found laying on the ground.

⁸⁵⁰ (Heath 1982b; Heath, 1983 #196).

There are specific texts, however, which are kept over many years: photograph albums, Bibles, Hymn books, the *Ngaanyatjarra Dictionary* (kept for its emblematic value), and texts that fall into the category of 'sociohistorical reading'.⁸⁵¹ Clifford (Family J) is known as a reader, he is one of the few men who buys magazines with 'find-a-word' puzzles. He and his wife Kayleen keep texts in their bedroom: 'newspapers in a basket, books, magazines and them other books'. Kayleen explains:

I've got that big book at home about all the Aboriginal people from the long time ago. You know *Drop in the bucket*. I read that every night, Mt Margaret stories, about girls been run away. That one, mission one, blue one, little red Bible.⁸⁵²

Clifford learns his family history by reading 'about those people down around Laverton way, who got sent away down south...my grandmother was a little baby in that story'. April is another avid reader: 'I had that book, that *Drop in the bucket*, read all that...I got a cupboard there and I got all the books there'. Another old man tells me he reads history books: 'like that by Len Beadell'.⁸⁵³ Others also read to seek information, as Arthur describes:

I had a couple of books about different sorts of Aboriginal way of living. I had that one and I used to read that. That was a really good one. You know, if I might go into another place up this way, north way, well I had to read that book to know, if I'm up there I got to be careful, you know. If I'm out here, I do the same, Amata way. It's only a book you know, might be whitefellas book that one, but it's really good to read...lend it to someone and it never come back.

Silas reads to expand his knowledge of the world: 'I read history stories...sometimes I read *National Geographic*, learning about other people on the other side of the world'. Mick reads 'to learn music' and borrows guitar tuition books to learn at home. On one occasion George wants something to read on the plane and borrows my Shakespeare. He tells me: 'I know about him, he was a poet, I watched a programme on TV about him yesterday'. Others, like Kenny, read 'anything':

I keep reading like book, anything, paper. I get some from the office, like newspapers. Then get a magazine in the store, *That's Life*, *True Stories* and all that...reading like signs...like next place, next town, read all them names. Keep reading like that...I read anywhere, college, or if someone's got a book. Get newspapers from office and take them home, look at it over and over, try and get another book and chuck that one away...It's just the way I do it.

Newspapers are accessed in the community office or staff homes and read for the news, the AFL scores, to find cars to buy, or 'just to see who is in prison'.⁸⁵⁴ 'Oh I read anything' echoes Arthur, 'I pick up a song book in language, another paper there, Bible I got there,

⁸⁵¹ (Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988: 172).

⁸⁵² See Chapter 2 f.n. 26 for the story of 'Clifford's' grandmother who was one in the group that ran away from Moore River Settlement in 1921. *Drop in the bucket* refers to the story of Mt Margaret Mission (Morgan 1986), 'mission one, blue one' refers to the mission exhibition catalogue (Plant and Viegas 2002) and the 'little red Bible' is the English Good News Bible.

⁸⁵³ (Beadell 1967), see Chapter 3 f.n. 80.

⁸⁵⁴ Newspapers include: *The Kalgoorlie Miner*, *Quokka* and the *West Australian*.

another book...letters, that police commission sends it here for me, like I lost a number plate, well I'm in trouble'.

Home prayer meetings are a site for 'public' or communal reading events, but individual silent reading is a rare sight. Finding locations for silent reading is difficult. In this highly social world Adina only reads 'at night when people go sleep'. Eileen tries reading alone at home, Christian stories or a *Mills and Boon* from the store, but it is too noisy. At my house she finds a place to read quietly and also borrows books, magazines and pens. While reading she likes to find new words and write them down to learn and understand 'more harder words in English'. The college library provides a site for solo reading.⁸⁵⁵ Here adults also use computers, prepare funeral texts, type hymns and songs, play computer games and watch videos without 'whitefella gatekeeping':

'Jim' would come into the library and there was one particular book where he would come in for several hours, for several weeks and he would read this book...turning the pages slowly, but he was very interested in this book because it was all about Wiluna and how the Ngaanyatjarra people were elected to the Wiluna Shire.⁸⁵⁶

Leah's favourite books in the library are: 'the story one, comedy stories and real life and movie story, good stories, some of the words it's hard when you read, the long writing'.

Home writing

Eileen discusses the difficulty of accessing or purchasing the material artefacts required for letter writing. She also suggests that letter-writing might cause her husband to become jealous so desists for this socially compelling reason:

Sometimes get little bit writing, forgot little bit...Sometimes write it on the pad, writing letters I like, but I got no chance to do that, [he] might think writing letters to boyfriend. Can't get stamps and envelope, try to get it but people might think writing to boyfriend, get jealous and talk about it.

Notes and messages are superfluous when information is mostly communicated orally. Some contexts do, however, warrant 'memory aids' and PIN or phone numbers are scribbled on scraps of paper or cardboard but easily lost, whereas phone numbers scrawled on walls or by public phones act as a permanent mnemonic.⁸⁵⁷ Arthur writes orders for car parts and Mick copies engine identification details:

Something wrong, you write it down, because it's got a thing there, name on the side of the thing, whatever is broken you just get that name off that...on the car thing there, it's got a thing there, numbers, for the car, what model is it. Get all the details off that and take it to the garage. That garage man, he have a look and if it the right thing, he give it to you.

⁸⁵⁵ Resources were provided by the WA State Library service. It has been shown that libraries offer important sites for family and community literacy and 'lifelong learning' in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (NT Libraries and Knowledge Centres 2005) and other fourth world Indigenous contexts (Crockatt and Smythe).

⁸⁵⁶ Paget—Interview 22/5/04.

⁸⁵⁷ (Heath 1983; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988).

Una's brother is deaf and although she uses sign language to communicate, writing is an alternative modality:

My brother, he's a deaf man, he comes back and he wants to know what things been happening here. So I have a pad and a pen and I write it down to him and show him...I write words down for him in English, and Ngaanyatjarra...we have to help him by writing it down for him and showing it...I write lots and lots of little notes for him so he can see. Because we get sorry by using our fingers, I get tired and he keep on asking...I write little notes down for him so he can understand...I don't write much, you know, only when my brother comes.

Lucille also communicates non-verbally using only sign language, gesture and note-writing. She reveals, in a note written to me, that she also writes stories in a book at home. Song-writing is also a home writing practice. Older people write *turlku* ('hymns') in English, Ngaanyatjarra or Pitjantjatjara (Fig. 5.1). Arthur has 'only been writing song, like translating from the English into language, like I can write a couple of *turlku*...if it's a English song, well I write it into Ngaanyatjarra'. Younger men in bands also compose songs, although these are usually memorised. Gavan and his wife sometimes write songs together; they buy paper from the store and as he plays the song on his guitar, they write the chords and words in English and keep the songs in a bag at home. Songs like 'Wiluna' and 'City Lights' are later performed by Gavan and the band.

To summarise, for most people, finding cultural acceptance of autonomous home reading practices is difficult and writing, is less common than reading. Additionally, private reading—and writing—demand a domestic space conducive to isolation and quiet and the social capacity to 'cut off', as well as spatial conditions: a chair, good lighting, warm in winter and cool in summer and access to resources.

Literacy resources

As Barton and Hamilton posit, opportunities for literacy are 'provided by the range of resources available to people'.⁸⁵⁸ Ngaanyatjarra people note that until recently reading and writing resources could not be purchased in Warburton. So literacy resources came mainly from staff or missionaries (who continue to supply Christian texts, readers, comics, gospel song tapes, children's colouring-in packs and stories). Resources are now available at the local community store, unlike in some other Aboriginal communities, although stationery items, stamps, envelopes and reading glasses are still difficult to obtain (Fig. 5.2).⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁸ (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 191).

⁸⁵⁹ The capacity to buy and store literacy artefacts as a factor inhibiting literacy in remote communities is noted in other studies (Bat 2005; Kral and Ward 2000; Kral and Falk 2004).

Fig. 5.1 Writing *turku*

There's a healing water flow throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Land
Throughout the rugged country
Across Ngaanyatjarra Land flowing for the people, people everywhere.
There's healing water flow throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Land

Chorus:
Let it flow across the rugged country across this Great Southern Land.
Let it flow across the rugged country.
Let the healing water's flow for and me

Let the healing water's flow
Throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Land throughout this rugged country.
Across the Ngaanyatjarra Land flowing for the people, people
Everywhere there's a healing water flow throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Land.

nyutupar
Ka Pokatja wiyangarany
2) nganampa mayatja nyutunya
Kinga pulkanya wikikumayatja
nyutupanya wakapanyinya
titutjara wangka nyinatjaka
nganampa mayatja
wikikumayatja

Mayatja Altimani Mununi Minala Ngayulu
Patani Nyuntumpa Mayatjaku.

Jesu-nya Marakatinyi Anangu Winkiku.

Nyuntu Ngali Kulila Ngura Ilkaritji Jesu-nya
Patani Nyuntumpa Ngalimpa.

Jesu-nya Marakatinyi Anangu Winki-ku.

Tjitu-nyanga Ilaringu Nyuntumpa Ngalimpa
Nyuntu Ngali Kulila Ngura Ilkiaritji.

Jesu-nya Marakatinyi Angu Winki-ku.

Nyuntu Ngali Malarinyu Watarku Nyira.
Nyakula Patani
Nganalu Katitjaku.

Jesu-nya Marakatinyi Anangu Winki-ku.

Fig. 5.2 Literacy resources available at Warburton local store 2004

Mills and Boon books - \$6.00 / \$12.00
Photo albums - \$3.50 / \$10.00
Scripture in Songbook (English) - \$25.00
Turlku Pirninya (Ngaanyatjarra Hymn Book) - \$12.00
Mama Kuurku Wangka Marlangkatjanya: The New Testament in Ngaanyatjarra and English \$25.00
Magazines: New Idea, Women's Weekly, Woman's Day, Take 5, That's Life, Starhunt.
Memo books - \$1.00
Writing pad - \$2.50
Scrapbooks - \$2.00
Pens - \$1.00
Pencils - 50c
Coloured crayon/textas \$6.50
Children's story books - \$2.00
Cards - birthday - \$1.80 / \$1.50
CDs – approx. \$30
Videos – approx. \$30 - \$40
Toys – some 'educational' (e.g. toy lap top computers - \$40.00)

Women's magazines and magazines with 'find-a-word' puzzles are bought at the store, mainly by women, and sell out fast.⁸⁶⁰ Molly buys a 'lot of books, nowadays still, I like reading, anything, any news, I buy *Take 5*, *That's Life*, *Woman's Variety*, *New Idea* and all that'. Naomi buys 'a lot of magazines every week from the shop, *That's Life* and *Take 5* because they've got the good stories...sometimes I do the crosswords'. When people buy the 'word puzzle' or 'crossword' magazines they also buy a pen, as few homes have pens or pencils. 'Find-a-words' are a popular pattern recognition activity where low level literates demonstrate 'literacy-like' behaviour by matching letter shapes rather than using alphabetical knowledge. The popularity of magazines and newsletters is apparent (especially those locally-produced with photos of friends or kin).⁸⁶¹ In the store, goods are priced to the nearest dollar or 50c to make it easier for 'innumerate' shoppers. People often shop using brand loyalty and 'a strong sense of visual imagery'.⁸⁶² Shopping lists are never made and, despite the dire financial situation of most families, budgeting is uncommon. Items are piled into trolleys, with scant estimation of total cost, and expensive items are commonly discarded at the check-out. In this environment non-Aboriginal expectation of Aboriginal literacy and numeracy competence is low, for instance, although the store stocked the recently published *Ngaanyatjarra Picture Dictionary*, a storekeeper explained to me that there was 'not much point, locals can't read it'.

Literacy in the public space

Literacy in the public space is commonly enacted against a background of normative definitions of literacy and expectations of competence. Non-Aboriginal people often have preconceptions about Aboriginal illiteracy and have been heard to make comments such as 'they are very primitive, they don't know how to write their name', 'some don't even know their date of birth' or 'they go to school, then can't fill in forms'. In the next section I draw together evidence-based findings from adult literacy assessments to underpin the discussion on elements that support or constrain visible literacy practices in the public space.

An assessment of adult literacy

In 2004 I assisted Ngaanyatjarra Council to conduct a skills audit of adult CDEP recipients across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and I was given permission to use data from 527 interviews. This represents approximately one-third of the 1500-odd adult population (aged

⁸⁶⁰ Studies that include data on Aboriginal reading practices are rare. An exception is Marika Moisseeff's discussion on reading preferences in a study of an Aboriginal community in South Australia (Moisseeff 1999).

⁸⁶¹ Magazines include: *Never Give Up News*, *Minymaku News*, *Ngaanyatjarra News*, *Marnita*, and *The Family Magazine: Today*.

⁸⁶² (Heath 1983: 192).

16–65) resident in the Lands.⁸⁶³ Assessments of English language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) competence were conducted using the *National Reporting System* (NRS).⁸⁶⁴ Examples of written texts assessed at NRS 1, NRS 2 and NRS 3 and the NRS descriptors can be found in Appendix H. This data provides a rare quantitative perspective on adult English LLN in a remote context—the problematic nature of measuring literacy competence notwithstanding.⁸⁶⁵

Data are sorted into the three generations of interviewees who have been through school.⁸⁶⁶ Interviewees were firstly asked to self-assess their literacy competence in English and their Indigenous mother tongue (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 2004 CDEP Skills Audit—Literacy self-assessment

Can you read and write?	<i>ENGLISH</i>		<i>VERNACULAR</i>	
	Warburton	Ngaanyatjarra Lands	Warburton	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
Nothing / A little	117 (74.1%)	415 (78.9%)	141 (91%)	465 (80.9%)
A lot	41 (25.9%)	111 (21.1%)	14 (9.0%)	47 (9.1%)
Not stated	1	1	4	15
Total:	159	527	159	527

Findings indicate that more people self-define as having literacy competence in English rather than the vernacular. In Warburton around 25% of adults perceive that they can read and write ‘a lot’ in English, with a slightly lower figure for the Ngaanyatjarra Lands as a whole. The conflation of reading and writing is ambiguous as it disguises the fact that people often have better reading than writing skills.

In Table 5.2 the overall NRS level has been rounded ‘down’ bringing the combined reading, writing and numeracy levels to a median level.

⁸⁶³ (Ngaanyatjarra Health Service 2003).

⁸⁶⁴ (Coates et al. 1995). The National Reporting System is a nationally recognised ‘mechanism’ for reporting outcomes of adult English language, literacy and numeracy programmes. The NRS data provides rough approximations of NRS levels only. The category ‘NRS 1 and below’ includes those assessed *Not Yet Competent* and assessments at NRS 1 (i.e. able to read and write key words and simple sentences, employ number recognition and basic numerical concepts). The category ‘NRS 2 and above’ indicates a ‘functional’ level of literacy competence and includes assessments at NRS 2 (i.e. approximately equivalent to upper primary and beginning secondary skill level) and NRS 3 (i.e. approximately equivalent to a lower secondary skill level).

⁸⁶⁵ See (Christie et al. 1993; Levine 1998; Wickert 1989). In an earlier study (Kral 1997) at Ngaanyatjarra Community College, Warburton I assessed 82 adults aged between 17–60 against the Interim Literacy Course Matrix (ILCM). The overall assessments against the ILCM indicated 21% at Pre-Level 1; 34% at Level 1; 29% at Level 2; 16% at Level 3. These scales are equivalent to levels used in the *Certificate of General Education for Adults*.

⁸⁶⁶ Of the 527 interviewees, 521 (98.9%) claim to have been to school (although the duration of schooling was not noted). Only six adults (1.1%) claim to have had no schooling at all, a rather remarkable figure compared with other data

Table 5.2 2004 CDEP Skills Audit—Overall NRS (Ngaanyatjarra Lands)

	<i>Young (15–25 yrs)</i>		<i>Middle (26–40 yrs)</i>		<i>Old (41–61 yrs)</i>	
	Government schooling in communities (1984–1993)		Government school at Warburton plus secondary hostels (1969–1983)		End of mission schooling and beginning of secondary hostels (1948–1968)	
NRS 1 and below	157	84%	180	86%	105	81.0%
NRS 2 and above	30	16%	29	14%	24	19%
Total no. 527	187	100%	209	100%	129	100%

Table 5.3 is sorted into NRS *reading* assessments only. Reading competence was found to be higher than writing competence. The reading data approximates with interviewees' own perception of their literacy competence as noted in Table 5.1 (i.e. equivalence between 'NRS 2 and above' and 'a lot')—suggesting that the discrepancy between perceived and actual competence is minimal and most adults have a realistic sense of what 'literacy' entails.⁸⁶⁷ It also mirrors the ethnographic data indicating that people read more than they write.

Table 5.3 2004 CDEP Skills Audit— NRS Reading (Ngaanyatjarra Lands)

	<i>Young (16–25 yrs)</i>		<i>Middle (26–40 yrs)</i>		<i>Old (41–61 yrs)</i>	
	Government schooling in communities (1984–1993)		Government school at Warburton plus secondary hostels (1969–1983)		End of mission schooling and beginning of secondary hostels (1948–1968)	
NRS 1 and below	145	77.5%	168	80.4%	97	75.2%
NRS 2 and above	42	22.5%	41	19.6%	32	24.8%
Total no. 527	187	100%	209	100%	129	100%

To summarise, the sample represents approximately one-third of the adult population of the Lands (i.e. those who are CDEP participants) so statements based on the findings cannot be attributed to the whole adult population. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that English LLN competence is approximately equivalent across the three generational cohorts, irrespective of schooling experience. The middle-aged generation appears to have the lowest level of competence, perhaps indicative of the ravaging effect of alcohol and petrol sniffing in the 1970s–1980s. Incidentally, many in this generation who were serious petrol sniffers when they were younger have suffered learning damage. A substantial number in this cohort claim to have 'forgotten' their reading and writing: 'I can't remember anything now, too much sniffing', said one man, and 'I never do that reading and writing, I lost my mind for that' said another. Moreover, the data show that the proficiency of young adults is approximately commensurate with their elders. This suggests that older adults do

from Central Australia (Hoogenraad 2001; Kral and Falk 2004). This group includes three middle aged women from Kiwirkura, who are from the last group to come out of the desert in 1984.

⁸⁶⁷ This contrasts with findings in other remote settings in the Northern Territory (Kral and Schwab 2003) where a greater discrepancy is found between perceived and assessed competence, indicating that in other remote locations Aboriginal people may have less insight into what being literate actually means.

not appear to have attained a higher level of literacy competence, despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary.

Finally, the data indicates that approximately 75%–80% of CDEP participants, irrespective of age, have an assessed English LLN competence at NRS 1 or below (i.e. ranging from non-literate to having basic literacy). The findings also tell us that some 20%–25% of adults have prerequisite English LLN proficiency for entry level competence for VET courses at *Certificate III* level and jobs requiring literacy.⁸⁶⁸

NRS assessments of young adult CDEP participants at Warburton (Table 5.4) indicate that English LLN competence in this sub-group is marginally higher. Approximately one-third are non-literate, one-third has basic literacy skills and one-third have entry level competence for VET courses at *Certificate III* level. The higher levels may be indicative of assessor reliability or the fact that more Warburton families have a longer connection with the mission and consequently a longer span for intergenerational literacy transmission to become evident.

Table 5.4 2004 CDEP Skills Audit—Overall NRS young adults (Warburton)

	<i>Young adults (16–25 yrs)</i>			
	NRS Reading only		NRS Overall	
NRS 1 NYC	16	28%	21	37%
NRS 1 C	22	39%	19	33%
NRS 2 C	19	33%	17	30%
Total no:	57	100%	57	100%

Hence, by drawing on the data, I suggest that adults can be divided into three categories of English literates: a top layer of approximately 20%–30% whom I call the visible literates (assessed at NRS 2 and above) whose public roles and identities are intertwined with literacy; an intermediate layer (some 30%), the less visible literates who may use literacy privately for personal purposes; and the final third of the adult population, the non-literates, who have little need for literacy in everyday life.

Such assessments must, however, be viewed from a wider perspective on literacy development (see Chapter 1). My argument is that the Ngaanyatjarra literacy context cannot be compared in any simple way with the mainstream. The Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra have only been participating in schooling for between two to four

generations, oral English has been acquired in tandem with technical literacy skills, and there have been relatively few meaningful arenas for adult literacy use. I suggest that the above findings are predictable given the circumstances of literacy learning and use. By mainstream standards they may appear low, but this cannot be an indicator of 'failure' or 'deficit', as the situation could have not been otherwise. Hence it can be concluded that a tension exists between the policy-makers and educators who seek commensurability with mainstream literacy benchmarks, and the lived reality of the Ngaanyatjarra and other remote Aboriginal groups. At this juncture it is worth emphasising the irony that in mainstream Australia universal literacy has not yet been achieved either.⁸⁶⁹ Thus the moral panic around remote Aboriginal 'illiteracy' is perhaps more indicative of the power of what Graff terms the 'literacy myth'.

Literacy strategies—the vernacular and English

Following on from this, data on vernacular literacy competence is minimal. Jan Mountney estimates that about 8% of adults can read Ngaanyatjarra, including a few older men who learned Ngaanyatjarra reading only and this approximates with the self-assessments above (Table 5.1).⁸⁷⁰ Her estimates also correlate with the subjective data compiled by Glass and Hackett in 2004 (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Estimated Ngaanyatjarra and English adult literacy competence

Illiterate	95	9.3%
Semi-literate in English	545	53.7%
Literate in English only	108	10.6%
Literate in Ngaanyatjarra only	11	1.1%
Literate in Ngaanyatjarra and English	90	8.9%
Literate in Ngaanyatjarra and semi-literate in English	64	6.3%
Total literate in Ngaanyatjarra	165	16.2%
Total literate in English	198	19.5%

1015 Ngaanyatjarra speaking adults aged 15 plus.
Source: Glass and Hackett pers. comm. 2004

Mountney suggests that for some adults, 'public reading' in the vernacular *is* reading. By 'public reading' she means reading a 'chunk of text', often Ngaanyatjarra Scripture, out

⁸⁶⁸ Based on data gathered in the *Language, Literacy and Numeracy Guide for the Certificate III in Aboriginal Health Work (Clinical)* (Human Services Training Advisory Council 2001) it is asserted (Kral and Falk 2004) that courses at *Certificate III* level require competence in English language, literacy and numeracy at Level 2 in the NRS (Coates et al. 1995).

⁸⁶⁹ See (Graff 1979; Graff 1987; Graff 1994 [1982]).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics *Survey of Aspects of Literacy* conducted in 1996 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997; Skinner 1997) found that in 'prose literacy' (i.e. the ability to understand and use information from various kinds of prose texts including newspapers, magazines and brochures) among Australian adults aged 15–74:

19.7% have very poor skills, likely to have considerable difficulties dealing with printed materials in everyday life.

27.5% have some difficulty with printed materials in everyday life.

35.3% able to cope with a varied range of materials found in daily life and at work.

15.5% have good literacy skills and able to use higher order skills associated with matching and integrating information and performing arithmetic operations.

2.0% have very good literacy skills, able to make high level inferences, use complex displays of information, process information and perform multiple operations sequentially.

⁸⁷⁰ Mountney—Interview 3/3/04.

loud in a group—a form of oral decoding where the reader may not fully comprehend the text, but can decode ‘quite well’. She estimates that maybe 100 adults in the 40-plus age group are doing public reading to varying degrees of proficiency, but only about 20 adults are able to read and understand the Ngaanyatjarra *New Testament* independently. Public reading may originate from the early practice of memorising and reciting Scripture or rote learning catechism and in this context those who are less literate can still enact literate behaviours. Examples can be found of non-literate adults memorising chunks of Biblical text so well that their imitative reading practices convince observers.⁸⁷¹

From her experience teaching vernacular literacy Dorothy Hackett observes that full texts are rarely read beyond the headlines or following long texts to seek coherence or cohesion. Glass and Hackett distinguish between two types of Ngaanyatjarra readers. In one group are ‘global’ readers, who read in ‘chunks’ and for meaning using word-recognition skills. They get a picture of words or phrases and fit them into a predictive text schema. In another group are those who are ‘analytical’, that is, they use word attack skills and segment parts of speech and affixes and are developing a metalinguistic awareness.⁸⁷² Hackett still visits camps to teach Ngaanyatjarra literacy to young adults whom she knows, and as she taught many of their parents and grandparents to read Ngaanyatjarra, they readily engage with her.⁸⁷³ As Dawn’s daughter Leah explains:

I do thing, language at home. That lady, she go round every afternoon learning more language...keep the language going...writing and spelling and all that. It’s important because if you don’t do that language, well all the young people they might grow up and they don’t know how to write and spell in their language. That’s why...might be the young people take over.

Significantly, Hackett finds that many young adults have sufficient English literacy to rapidly become proficient in Ngaanyatjarra, yet lack many taken for granted literacy skills:

I teach a lot of people, including younger people, to read the Ngaanyatjarra *New Testament* and even if they can read English, I’m doing transfer skills, and even if they can only read a little bit I take them through the four Readers and then I teach them to use the Ngaanyatjarra *New Testament*. I have to teach them lots of skills, I have to teach them that the Chapters they’ll find at the top of the page, and the numbers in the text are the verse numbers. And I have to teach them that there is connected text *over* the page, so I have to teach them to read over the page and another skill they need to know is that if you are reading on one side and you turn the page over you don’t read on the opposite page, you read at the back of that page. I also teach, people like ‘Lucy’, I taught her about quote marks yesterday because she was obviously reading something as quoted past the end of the quote marks.⁸⁷⁴

Others also notice that ‘reading’ may mean skimming the headlines, pictures and captions under the photos, a tendency criticised by older literates like April:

⁸⁷¹ Glass and Hackett—Interview 8/5/04. See also *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1976; *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1979.

⁸⁷² Glass and Hackett—Interview 8/5/04.

⁸⁷³ (Hackett 1998).

I never seen them sitting down with a book, they just like looking at pictures, they don't read it. Not only them but I have problems with my children, my daughter, she doesn't know how to read, she always ask me...but my oldest one she's good, she know how to read and write.

Literacy domains

As indicated earlier, the more visible Ngaanyatjarra literates tend to be those who participate in the institutional arenas of work, church and community governance. The less literate tend to be on the periphery of the institutional domains where the artefacts of literacy (pens, paper, computers, photocopiers, faxes) can be accessed. By drawing on the proposition that 'different literacies are associated with different domains of life', I now focus on the visible literacies enacted in the public space during training, employment, governance and community participation.⁸⁷⁵ It is in these public domains that adults tend to be measured against the standards of the 'dominant literacies'.⁸⁷⁶

Literacy for training

Adults in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands have been participating in health and education 'vocational' training only since the mid-1980s and in 1996 Ngaanyatjarra Community College opened in Warburton as a Registered Training Organisation.⁸⁷⁷ This has been a short time for them to imbibe the culture of formal training. Accredited training has taken place mostly at *Certificate I, II and III* level, however few full certificates have been completed (see Appendix I).⁸⁷⁸ Mainstream credentialing—delayed gratification for a future employment reward—is not perceived as a prerequisite for a fulfilling life by most Ngaanyatjarra. No adults have attained the academic preparation to undertake tertiary courses and even VET study generally requires mediated English literacy support.⁸⁷⁹ Moreover, writers assert that the academic English literacy skills of the majority of secondary students in the Western Desert are not commensurate with their mainstream peers.⁸⁸⁰ It can be argued that in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands an increasing orientation towards 'VET in Schools' and 'Aboriginal School Based Traineeships' is exacerbating adolescents not developing the high order English 'academic-literate discourses' required for senior and post-secondary study.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁴ Glass and Hackett—Interview 8/5/04.

⁸⁷⁵ (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 7).

⁸⁷⁶ (Barton and Hamilton 1998).

⁸⁷⁷ See Appendix 1—Table AI.1: The 2004 CDEP Skills Audit data indicates that of the 159 CDEP recipients interviewed at Warburton 57% claim to have done some form of training and 43% claim to have done no training at all. The data indicates that over the life span older adults have accumulated more training experience than younger adults.

⁸⁷⁸ See Appendix 1—Table AI.2 for data on module and certificate completions at Ngaanyatjarra Community College 2000-2003.

⁸⁷⁹ (NLLIA 1996).

⁸⁸⁰ See (NLLIA 1996).

⁸⁸¹ (Rose et al. 1998). See (Education Department of Western Australia 1999).

<http://www.apprenticeships.training.wa.gov.au/asbt/>

The low certificate completion rates have been attributed to the fact that most Training Packages do not fit the context:

We try to put competencies together that fit the community group and we find that part of one competency fits, but not the whole thing. There are parts of a number of competencies that people need, but they don't need the other things or can't fulfill the requirements of the competency because of their situation...English language literacy and numeracy is an element, but not the only one.⁸⁸²

The provision of accredited training is linked to an assumption that once trained the skills will be used in a workplace, yet some trainers suggest that there is insufficient work under CDEP for all the people who receive training, although training in 'office skills', 'childcare' and 'essential services' has led to CDEP work.⁸⁸³ Workers in health, environmental health, land management and education undertake accredited training. Jennifer is an AIEO at the school and started teacher training by correspondence at *Certificate III* level:

I was doing some computers jobs and typing, typewriters, computers, but I always ask them any of the hard words when they talk to me and when it's on the some paper...I always ask them: 'What's this word? Can you just make it a bit easier for me so I can understand.' I always tell them if they give a big paper to me...this is a strange word I always tell them and point to that word: 'What's this word here?' And they always tell me and I know. I don't get shamed to ask. I always tell them: 'What's this?' because I want to get learn more.

Mountney runs Ngaanyatjarra literacy workshops for AIEOs who teach LOTE classes:

Adults who are training in vocational courses tend to do all their written work in class. AIEOs read Ngaanyatjarra materials that they need to read, some of them are reading a limited amount of English stuff to do with teaching practices and their writing is fairly limited...people who have taken on study programmes...read lecture notes and try to write assignments, but because they've had very limited practice with that, it's very difficult.⁸⁸⁴

Notably, language teaching workshops provide an unusual opportunity for concentrated reading and writing in English and the vernacular. Jennifer notes that 'we only do it in the workshop' as the home environment militates against the social capacity for trainees to study. In workshops adults have an opportunity to draft and redraft Ngaanyatjarra texts, gain an understanding of the differences between spoken and written text, develop reading out loud skills and school-like question and answer routines around written text.

⁸⁸² Interview—Trainer 15/2/04.

⁸⁸³ It is assumed that VET is about training to work transitions or upgrading skills for workers, however in remote areas VET needs to relate more concretely to the conditions presented, as employment opportunities in remote settings are severely limited with CDEP the only avenue for expansion in employment opportunities (Gelade and Stehlik 2004). The NCVET National VET survey found that in remote areas reasons other than employment, including the community-related benefits, are more important as motivators for training (NCVER 2004). Other research has found that the link between education and employment is not self-evident in many Indigenous communities (Hunter and Schwab 1998) where successfully gaining employment in CDEP is not based on education (Taylor and Hunter 2001). Nevertheless, the Federal Government is initiating a raft of 'one-size-fits-all' youth-oriented school to work transition initiatives (*Working Together for Indigenous Youth – A National Framework* <http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/A949033865E84811B4DA423369850315/1100/NationalFramework.pdf>) that don't necessarily fit the particularities of remote Aboriginal community contexts (Mellor and Corrigan 2004).

⁸⁸⁴ Mountney—Interview 3/3/04.

Literacy for work

Employment in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands is CDEP and from a Ngaanyatjarra perspective CDEP is 'working for your living'.⁸⁸⁵ A few salaried positions do exist, however the formal written application process is often beyond the English literacy competence of most adults, so in effect literacy plays a 'gatekeeping role' by acting as a barrier to employment.⁸⁸⁶ The majority of CDEP positions do not require significant literacy competence (see Appendix J). Literacy may only be needed for filling in timesheets or signing names for CDEP wages. Certain workplaces support workers with low literacy by generating simplified 'plain English' texts and systems. For instance, simplified surveys for documenting flora and fauna, and an icon-based GPS recording system have been developed for Land Management fieldworkers. Likewise, a simplified checklist for determining household environmental health needs has been implemented for Environmental Health Workers. Some work literacies are displayed in Fig. 5.3.

Some CDEP jobs, for instance in the office, playgroup, school and college require varying degrees of literacy and numeracy competence. In these locations workers acquire the 'written language rituals' of the workplace and through repeated practice these become taken for granted habits.⁸⁸⁷ Few contexts require literacy skills such as alphabetical recognition, ordering or retrieval skills, and dictionaries are rarely used. Office workers have perhaps the most consistent need to use a literate system of information organisation. Kayleen works in the community office:

Count moneys. Do the pays for people in Warburton, in Patjarr and Kanpa. Add them up, put the money in payslips. Anthony helps, do it together....Giving cheques out, writing order for people and send their money away to other places when people ring for their money like in Kalgoorlie. People ring for their money and we send it, write it down and send it...on a order book.

She writes, sends and receives office faxes and uses the computer: 'do it by myself, use the password and open it and do work in the computer'. When I ask how she learned the skills for the job, she answers: 'I don't know, learn self' indicating the subtle way in which she has been mentored by a staff member through a process of informal training and 'intent participation'.⁸⁸⁸ Kayleen is now the certified Centrelink Agent in the office.

⁸⁸⁵ In Warburton CDEP jobs include rubbish collection, garden maintenance, collecting firewood, cleaning, and work at the brickworks, land management, college, school, clinic, cultural centre, arts project, women's centre and play group. Current public discourse is construing CDEP as contributing to welfare dependency (Pearson 2000; Spicer 1997). Other writers suggest that CDEP hides the real unemployment figures and that without CDEP Indigenous unemployment and welfare dependency would increase dramatically (Altman and Gray 2000; Altman et al. 2005)}.

⁸⁸⁶ See (Ivanic and Hamilton 1990; Levine 1986; Taylor 1997).

⁸⁸⁷ (Halliday 1985: 93).

⁸⁸⁸ (Rogoff et al. 2003).

Maisie runs the community playgroup with other local women and, with mediated non-Aboriginal assistance, trains playgroup workers and writes workshop reports.⁸⁸⁹ The Ngaanyatjarra workers have created a semi-structured learning environment suffused with literate elements. Walls are covered with commercial English number and alphabet charts alongside handwritten posters in English explicating daily routines: story-book reading, picture talk and songs and rhymes in English and Ngaanyatjarra. The workers write daily programmes, weekly timetables and shopping lists in English. Naomi works with Ngaanyatjarra Media and operates the community radio station at the college. She writes notices and reads community announcements over the radio: 'somebody might send a fax to me to read it in Ngaanyatjarra...I say it in English, then Ngaanyatjarra, do it both ways':

Sometimes I read Ngaanyatjarra, especially on the videos when I read all the, we have to write all the Ngaanyatjarra stories to put it into the video, make a little sticker, we have to do it all in the Ngaanyatjarra, sometimes English, but the main one is the Ngaanyatjarra, we have to use that, cause that's the main one for the Ngaanyatjarra Media, and if they don't know how to read English they can still read it on the Ngaanyatjarra.

Even though Lucille is deaf, she is in charge of the Drop in Centre snack bar and communicates through sign language and handwritten notes. Patricia works at the college:

I like working 'cause you can know how to read, write, fax papers through, photocopying, all that things. Get learn more...so when people come in and ask you questions, or do something, interview with you, might do it correct or wrong must be, that's why we need to work.

Workers are able to access literacy resources, computers and fax machines in the workplace to facilitate their own personal and administrative literacies. Patricia sends faxes to organise fixing the family Toyota and does her telephone banking. Maisie prepares resources for Sunday School and organises her tax from the college. Similarly, as a community liaison officer at the office Clem sends official and personal faxes.

Literacy for governance

Meetings routinely punctuate the temporal rhythm of community life. Meeting strategies range across the oral-literate continuum. At community meetings cultural issues can override any written agenda. Unresolved family disputes spark unexpected outbursts and pleas for compassion. In this highly charged rhetorical context protocols and oral discourse, tangential to Western meeting procedure, are on display and a good orator utilises *tjitirpa watjalku* (indirect speech) to defuse simmering tensions.⁸⁹⁰ Other meetings

⁸⁸⁹ The Ngaanyatjarra Health Service Strengthening Families programme *Mukuhyanjulu Walykumunu Kanyinma* and Ngaanyatjarra Community College have worked together in the delivery of *Certificate III in Child Care in Aboriginal Communities* (developed through Yorganup Aboriginal Corporation for the Community Services Health Education Industry Training Council based on National Training Package).

⁸⁹⁰ Similar elements have been discussed in the Australian anthropological literature (Lieberman 1985; Myers 1986; Sansom 1980; Tonkinson 1978a). Brooks suggests that in the old days indirect speech '*tjitirpa*' was the preferred norm as direct speech could be interpreted as a challenge, a risky rhetorical form in a society where sorcery was prevalent. He also

Fig. 5.3 Work literacies

PLANT COLLECTION DATA

SAMPLE NO: 006 DATE: 2-11-04
 OBSERVER: Yin: ~~WAEALPUKA~~ Karpuka
 LOCATION: Ngarrat: Jarrntjard GPS DATA:
 SPECIES NAMES:
 WAEALPUKA *Suares*
 KURRUPUKA *Acacia tetragon*
 KURRUNANTIRRIRRI *Lead finish*

HOW MANY?

VEGETATION TYPE *ngurrangka warta pakalayi*
milkuyu lightly wooded open area *purri* mulga woodland *kurrkapi*

LANDFORM *manta kutjupa-kutjupa*
pila flat sandplain *tali* sandune *rirra* rolling gray
karru drainage line *purri* breakaway *purthi-purthipa* scree slope

WHEN DID THIS COUNTRY BURN? *Wanyjama ngarra kampanji?*
not for v.v long time (not in living memory)

TELEPHONE MESSAGE
 To: [unclear] Time: [unclear]
 From: Playgroup
 Message: Lembo, a litre of Milk, 20 oranges, 20 apples, 20 bananas, 2 litre of Cardal, 2 biscuits, 1 litre of water

LAST WEEKS WORK
 WARRIBOON COMMUNITY
 P M B T1
 VIA ALICE SPRINGS
 NT 0872
 Pay period ending Friday 23/1/2004. Work area *Playgroup*
MEMBERSHIP Must be received by noon the following Tuesday

NAME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	TOTAL
[unclear]	0 + 0	0 + 0	0 + 0	0 + 0	0 + 0			
[unclear]	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00			
[unclear]	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00			
[unclear]	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00	9:00-12:00			

TUNE ON THE RANGES RADIO ON 98FM

are held with predictable regularity and tend to conform to the textually mediated discourse structures of Western meeting procedures.⁸⁹¹ Shire Council meetings and, to a lesser extent, Ngaanyatjarra Council meetings incorporate aspects such as talking through the Chair and following agendas.

The small leadership cohort is well-versed in meeting procedures and the various tiers of governance, but is 'worn out' by long-term involvement in meetings, workshops, and advisory committees. Although participants regularly read meeting agendas, minutes and often reports, assistance is commonly needed in penetrating the discursive features of bureaucratic language. A leader expresses his frustration when observing adults unable to 'read between the lines' or comprehend the unfamiliar knowledge and procedures inherent in the discourse style of Europeans: 'still we get caught out when people use hard words and idioms when coming to talk about things, English is not our language'. As George explains:

I can read, but there are some words, really hard, like government words that I still don't understand... Like, when we go to meetings like Council meeting, I want to keep a note of what's been said at the meeting, like write it down, but I haven't got pad or notebook or anything like that.

Communicative interaction between Ngaanyatjarra and European interlocutors often results in what Liberman terms 'strange discourse' full of ambiguity and imprecise understandings. In spoken interaction 'horizons of *potential* meaning' are allowable, and indeterminacy or misunderstandings can be forgotten or glided over, and the sense of the conversation is still maintained through using appropriate turn-taking strategies and paralinguistic responses.⁸⁹² Such ambiguity is, however, not acceptable in textual interactions which demand precision and accuracy.⁸⁹³ Subtle negotiations of power are manifest in these intercultural relationships. Local leaders who are able to assert control in their own social space may find themselves marginalised in the public space where whitefellas assume authority because they have the discursive oral and literate practices required to 'manage' the community and mediate the burgeoning requirements of the

speculates that introduced speech events such as 'public meetings' have ushered in a new rhetorical context where *yarnangu* have learnt to employ 'straight talking' strategies that at first may have been a 'shock' or a linguistic transgression of the boundaries of normative social interaction (Brooks pers. comm. 1/12/04).

⁸⁹¹ Ngaanyatjarra Council meetings are held regularly on the third Wednesday of the month and this tradition has remained unchanged for some 25 years. NPYWC holds regular monthly meetings and an annual general meeting. Meetings of the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku Council are held regularly and, until recently, meetings of the ATSIC Western Desert Regional Council were attended regularly by elected Ngaanyatjarra representatives. Advisory committees also require Aboriginal participation, e.g. the NPYWC Executive and Health Advisory Committee for the Ngaanyatjarra Health Service.

⁸⁹² (Liberman 1985: 176–78, 197–202; Gumperz 1982; Gumperz and Hymes 1972). See also (Dudley et al. 1999).

⁸⁹³ See (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Halliday 1985).

bureaucracy.⁸⁹⁴ Wesley, who speaks English as a first language, is secondary educated and has community management and governance experience, says,

The amount of reading I do every day to fulfil my role as Project Officer or Chairperson or Governing Committee member or Native Title or Education or whatever, the amount of paperwork that comes across my desk is unbelievable and for me to keep up with all that I have to be capable of reading at a certain level. And with my experience, I went to what, Year 10? That's probably the minimum you'd need in this sort of situation...to be able to compete in this world, that is, with enough knowledge and confidence to be able to speak up. That's where we have a lot of people hiding in the bush back here and don't want to go out and speak up because it's, that confidence. A lot of our people rely on people telling them, like a lot of these mob will listen to and they'll trust everything that's said by any white person. Like must be this white person tells them something who works in their community and they'll listen to it and they'll believe that. They're not finding out themselves...they just got to rely on the Advisor telling them, well the Advisor only give them what will keep him happy.

It can be conjectured that in earlier policy eras the Aboriginal world view had a voice and a salience that is increasingly absent in public life. Everyday life has become more bureaucratised and policy decisions are made nationally, irrespective of local conditions and opinions. Ironically, the increasing complexity and volatility of the national policy environment is undermining pre-existing forms of local control and precluding Aboriginal people from engaging in governance. Government policy and structures introduced over recent decades have only served to increase Aboriginal dependency on the welfare state, to the extent where now 'localised and limited community autonomy struggles in a web of bureaucracy'.⁸⁹⁵ Government programmes are increasingly bound by stringent reporting and accounting requirements—including the preparation of financial reports, annual budgets and strategic plans—the complexity of which is often 'well beyond the knowledge base of the Indigenous stakeholders'.⁸⁹⁶ It is at the intersection of local conditions and the bureaucratic requirements of the State that the marginalisation of most Ngaanyatjarra from authority over their own affairs is heightened. This has become more acute since the abolition of ATSIC in 2004 and the introduction of 'mutual obligation': Shared Responsibility Agreements and a Regional Partnership Agreement (see Chapter 1).⁸⁹⁷ Paradoxically, the impermanence of government policy and bureaucratic structures hinders the systemic transmission of administrative literacies from one generation to the next as knowledge is rapidly redundant. The high turnover rate of staff also diminishes the systematic transmission of skills and knowledge.

⁸⁹⁴ (Batty 2005).

⁸⁹⁵ (Palmer 2005: 109). See (Altman and Sanders 1991).

⁸⁹⁶ (Palmer 2005: 109–110).

⁸⁹⁷ Under the policy of 'mutual obligation' the Howard Government, through the state-based Indigenous Co-ordination Centres, is negotiating Shared Responsibility Agreements directly with communities. In remote Australia the notion of 'community' remains a contested site as the community as a recently contrived construct is made up of disparate groups of individuals who may not carry the authority to speak for the broader community of interest. See (Altman 2004; Palmer 2004).

Administrative literacies

Government policy, since the inception of the welfare reform agenda and mutual obligation, is increasingly predicated upon individual literacy competence:⁸⁹⁸

This individual approach works best where the applicant has reasonable literacy and numeracy skills, viable use of English, adequate maintenance of personal records (i.e. income details, birth certificate, tax file information, rent accounts and essential services accounts), an understanding of Government programs and program delivery and a residential address for the receiving of relevant mail. To date, the lack of this individual capacity on the part of Ngaanyatjarra community members has been addressed by the Ngaanyatjarra communities pooling limited resources and capacity to represent themselves to Government and Government agencies.⁸⁹⁹

With increased state intervention and an expectation of individual responsibility the Ngaanyatjarra are faced with a decreasing capacity to control the administration of day to day life. New CDEP guidelines are placing the onus on individuals to take responsibility for personal administration, functions that were previously mediated by the broader Ngaanyatjarra collective.⁹⁰⁰ Individual 'bureaucratic literacy' is too complex for the majority of adults who lack the formal registers required for official oral or written interactions and busy staff have to assist with official phone calls and form-filling.⁹⁰¹ This accentuates the fact that for some adults signing their names is the extent of their literacy practice.⁹⁰² Incidentally, when asked to write a signature people are usually told to 'put their name', so even the conceptual distinction between 'name' and a signature representing legal proof of identity is blurred.⁹⁰³ Signalled cuts to municipal funding herald a potential decrease in office staff to deal with the bureaucratic interface and continue providing the safety net of economic support.⁹⁰⁴

In literate Western communities administrative literacies are synchronised with cultural practice and enacted by individuals in the domestic space (filing and retrieving tax information, bank statements, birth certificates and educational qualifications). Conversely,

⁸⁹⁸ See (McClure 2000).

⁸⁹⁹ (Thurtell 2003: 4-5).

⁹⁰⁰ In this community CDEP has been collective, allowing for discretion in how funds were distributed. The Howard government has introduced reforms to CDEP such as the 'no work, no pay' (Vanstone 2004) ruling and the requirement that 15-17 year olds receive a reduced CDEP payment and undertake accredited training to get skills to go on and get a 'real job' (Karvelas 26 January 2006). This is limiting the capacity for the community to flexibly adjust CDEP to match community reality without regulation breaches. It is projected that new regulations will not compel people to 'work' as they will be looked after by the social economy, i.e. family members on pensions.

⁹⁰¹ See Reder and Green's discussion of bureaucratic or 'public sector' literacies (Reder and Green 1983) and Cushman's analysis of the oral and literate strategies used by a marginalised urban American community in dealing with the state bureaucracy (Cushman 1998). See also (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 235).

⁹⁰² New CDEP eligibility forms introduced in 2004 are complex and time-consuming to fill in as applicants generally don't know personal details. Misunderstandings regarding overpayment of Centrelink moneys, including Abstudy, are common and confusing to individuals and often left to office staff to sort out.

⁹⁰³ Glass and Hackett—Interview 8/5/04.

⁹⁰⁴ The Ngaanyatjarra Council (Aboriginal Corporation) Savings Plan was conceived of in 1991. A funeral fund was also established many years ago. Deduction from CDEP wages are paid into a Ngaanyatjarra Council administered fund. This covers cost of transport of the coffin and undertakers expenses for funerals (Ngaanyatjarra Council 2000: 14). Individuals receiving UB under *Newstart* are precluded from the community savings plan and the funeral fund.

in Warburton the community office is the administrative hub that takes collective responsibility for receipt of mail, writing purchase orders for fuel and food, booking air flights, making phone calls to banks, government departments and parole officers, filling in tax returns, and registering births and deaths. Important documents (e.g. tax file numbers, firearms licences, driver's licences, bank details, training certificates) are filed in the office, the college or with staff 'so the kids don't get them and tear them up', as Una explains:

I get them government ones, Centrelink, pension [letters]...I can read them...I give it to the office person: 'Put it away in my file'. They are all in the file there. I don't keep that at home because it get burnt, the kids might, you know.

Houses do not have mail boxes. Rent, electricity and other 'bills' are paid as deductions on CDEP payslips.⁹⁰⁵ In general, everyday financial literacy is neglected. Young people know how to use ATMs, PIN numbers and passwords, but older people still need assistance.⁹⁰⁶ Official mail from government departments accounts for most correspondence received by individuals. Although addressed personally these anonymous, abstract interjections tend to be unrelated to everyday life and only the more literate like Jennifer respond:

I read them and I always check the number and all when I get a cheque, that it's right amount, same. Always read when I get mail...If a strange paper I always give it to her or the Advisor...Some hard words in it, I must tell them: 'What is it?' and all that. Find out what it is. I am confident.

Similarly, Leah receives 'Centrelinks main one and Commonwealth letters' and mediates for those less literate. For the majority, administrative literacies are dealt with in an *ad hoc* manner and official mail is often not picked up, or thrown in the bin unread. Mostly it is inconsequential that correspondence from debt collectors, banks, and superannuation or insurance companies is not dealt with. It may be considered that the Ngaanyatjarra live in a separate domain and this nonchalant disregard for literate compliance with the nation-state perhaps represents an assertion of their status as outsiders.

Written off—traffic, literacy and prison

Not addressing traffic infringement, licence suspension and outstanding licence transfer fee letters may, however, have dire consequences (Fig. 5.4a-b). Some adults discriminate between types of official correspondence, but many do not:

This one's rubbish, chuck it away. But we all know that blue letter—licence suspension or fine notice, have a look to see how much.

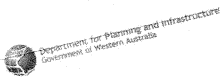
⁹⁰⁵ See (Thurtell 2003). Rent of \$10.00 per person per week is deducted out of weekly payments by the office.

⁹⁰⁶ The introduction of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) in communities happened hand-in-hand with the changeover from cheques to computerised payment of welfare benefits and CDEP. This has introduced a further financial burden for people on low incomes as it costs \$2.50 per ATM transaction. An additional issue is that older people are known to entrust their cards and PIN numbers to family members who may be less than scrupulous. Another dilemma with ATMs is that people are unaware that even just checking the balance costs money as exemplified in the story of a pensioner who had her pension money debited by \$200 from transaction costs she had accumulated by repeatedly checking her balance.

Figs. 5.4 Administrative literacies: official motor vehicle correspondence

(a)

1APW610 CHRYSL SEDAN 13 02 04
 REASON: CONC LIC TRANSFER TO NORMAL RATE
 BALANCE OUTSTANDING: \$24.65
 WARBURTON COMMUNITY VIA LAVERTON 6440
 WARNING - THIS DOCUMENT SHALL HAVE NO EFFECT UNTIL THE IMPRINT OF THE CASH REGISTER OR OTHER AUTHORITY IS HEREON.



D. B. FORTE
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LICENSING SERVICES
 BOX R 1290 G.P.O. PERTH 6844
 WESTERN AUSTRALIA

RE: CHRYSL SEDAN REG NO: 1APW610 13 02 04
 ISSUED TO WARBURTON COMMUNITY VIA LAVERTON 6440
 YOU WERE PREVIOUSLY ADVISED THAT AN UNDERCHARGE HAD RESULTED FROM A RECENT PAYMENT/VARIATION IN RESPECT OF THE LICENCE OF THE ABOVEMENTIONED VEHICLE. THIS UNDERCHARGE IS STILL OUTSTANDING.

AMOUNT DUE: \$24.65
 AMOUNT PAID: \$0.00
 DATE PAID: 29 10 01
 RECEIPT NO: 00000000



Department for Planning and Infrastructure
 Government of Western Australia

Your Ref. Customer Contact CVTOS
 Telephone 13 11 56

WARBURTON COMMUNITY VIA
 KALGOORLIE WA 6430

Dear Sir/Madam

Vehicle Licence Renewal Where Transfer Fees Have Not Been Paid

Your LDSTAR BOXTOP registration number [redacted] will expire on 16 April 2004.

This licence cannot be renewed until it has been transferred into your name. This requires the payment of the appropriate stamp duty and transfer fee. These fees are required to be paid within 28 days of purchase, at any Department for Planning and Infrastructure Centre on production of the completed vehicle transfer notice and the current licence papers or by forwarding the required documentation and your payment to the address below. Please make all cheques and money orders payable to the Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

You may also be required to fit a Government approved engine immobiliser to the vehicle prior to payment of the transfer. For further information visit our internet website at www.immobilisers.wa.gov.au or telephone our Call Centre on 131156.

Third party insurance coverage extends only for a period of fifteen days after the expiry date of the vehicle licence. Payment of both transfer and renewal fees must be finalised within this period.

The fees for renewal are listed below for your information. If a period of 28 days has expired since the purchase of this vehicle, penalties for non-payment of transfer fees may be added to these figures. A Tax Invoice will be produced upon payment.

For more information on fees, penalties and immobilisers please contact our Call Centre on 131156.

	Standard	
	6 Months	12 Months
Licence Fee:	\$10.45	\$20.90
Insurance:	\$2.86	\$5.50
GST on Insurance:	\$0.29	\$0.55
Stamp Duty on Insurance:	\$0.30	\$0.60
Recording Fee:	\$16.20	\$16.20
Adjustment:	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Due:	\$30.10	\$43.75

Yours sincerely

Dennis Forte

Dennis Forte
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 REGULATORY AND REGIONAL SERVICES

8 March 2004

Licensing and Regional Services
 GPO Box R1290 Perth
 Western Australia 6844
 Telephone 13 11 56
 Facsimile (08) 9427 8191

TOGETHER WITH THIS LICENCE TO BE SENT TO THE LICENSING CENTRE, PERTH BY POST TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS OR ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT OR ALTERNATIVE WITH THE DEPARTMENT.



Traffic Infringement Notice

Failure to Return Number Plates

Road Traffic Act 1974
Road Traffic (Infringements) Regulations 1975

Telephone Enquiries ☎ 13 11 56
From outside Western Australia (08) 9427 6464

PMB 71
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871

PAYMENT DUE BY
18 March 2004
VEHICLE PLATE NUMBER
9HM166

(b)

Infringement Details:
It is alleged that you committed the offence of failing to return number plates 9HM166, for vehicle 1985 NISSAN UTE within 15 days of expiry of the vehicle registration on 20 December 2003.

- If you want this matter dealt with by this notice, you must pay \$100.00 as shown below before 18 March 2004.
- You can elect to have this matter dealt with by a court. To do this, advise Department for Planning and Infrastructure of your intentions by completing Electing Action by (Part B) on the reverse of this notice. You must return this notice before 18 March 2004 otherwise you will incur further costs. Do not pay the fees referred to in this notice.

OR
If you disposed of the vehicle prior to the expiry of the vehicle licence notice, instead, complete the Statement (Part A) on the reverse Planning and Infrastructure, GPO Box R1290, Perth WA 6844

If you take no action, this matter may be registered with the driver's licence or any vehicle licence held by you, may be suspended until the AMOUNT DUE is paid or an election is made. If the Registrar is directed to the Fines Enforcement Registry, Ground Floor, 32 St Georges Tce, Perth, WA, 6000 Telephone 1300 650 235 Facsimile 1300 650 599 Email fines@justice.wa.gov.au Further information on fines enforcement procedures can be obtained at www.justice.wa.gov.au

Infringement Number: PC04114213 Offence Date:

Fees Payable:
Penalty \$100.00

This Account shall remain unpaid until the receipt of the
DEPARTMENT FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE PAYMENT CENTRE Please do Not Debit
GPO BOX K777 PERTH WA 6842

- Easy ways to Pay:** * Receipt will be mailed
- By Mail:** Please detach and mail PAYMENT ADVISE with cheques or payment order payable to "Department for Planning and Infrastructure". Cheques are accepted subject to being met on 1st business day after date of payment.
 - By Phone:** Telephone (08) 9427 6464 for payment by Mastercard or Visa (24hr Service). Please have card ready.
 - By Internet:** Access our secure transaction site www.dpi.wa.gov.au and click on Online Payments button for payment by Bank of Australia (24hr Service).

For Any Enquiries Quote This Case No. CASE No. 04/605580

PENALTY \$100.00 COURT COSTS \$52.50 AMOUNT DUE \$152.50 DATE DUE 07-APR-04

Offender's Copy

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WESTERN AUSTRALIA FINES, PENALTIES AND INFRINGEMENTS NOTICES ENFORCEMENT ACT 1994

To: PMB 71 ALICE SPRINGS

Cashier's Copy

COURT ORDER TO PAY OR ELECT

TAKE NOTICE: An infringement notice was issued for the alleged offence described below. Because the penalty in the infringement notice has not been paid the notice has been registered with this Registry for enforcement.

PAY OR ELECT: Pay the Amount OR Make a time to pay arrangement OR By the due date ELECT in writing to have a complaint for this alleged offence heard by a Court of Petty Sessions. That may result in a Court order to suspend your licence until the AMOUNT DUE is paid or an election is made. If the Registrar is directed to the Fines Enforcement Registry, Ground Floor, 32 St Georges Tce, Perth, WA, 6000 Telephone 1300 650 235 Facsimile 1300 650 599 Email fines@justice.wa.gov.au Further information on fines enforcement procedures can be obtained at www.justice.wa.gov.au

YOUR LICENCE(S) MAY BE SUSPENDED

AMOUNT DUE \$175.00

Offender's Copy

For Any Enquiries Quote This Case No. CASE No. 04/605580

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WESTERN AUSTRALIA FINES, PENALTIES AND INFRINGEMENTS NOTICES ENFORCEMENT ACT 1994

To: HARBURTON RANGES CMNTY KALGOORLIE 0430

Cashier's Copy

CONFIRMATION OF LICENCE SUSPENSION ORDER

You must quote this Case No. at all times

Case No. 04/605580

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE RETURN NUMBER PLATES

Infringement PC05982290

MVL No. 7LS080 Alleged Speed 159km/h

OR IF YOU HAVE CHANGED ADDRESS, IT IS FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN YOUR LICENCE BEING SUSPENDED WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

AMOUNT DUE \$ 159.50 DATE DUE 07-APR-04

TAKE NOTICE: More than 28 days ago a Notice of Intention to Suspend Licences was issued in respect of the AMOUNT DUE shown below.

LICENCE SUSPENSION ORDER: The amount has not been paid and so a licence suspension order has been made and the licences listed below have been suspended, including any extraordinary licence that the courts may have issued, as from the date and time shown below. The licences will remain suspended until the AMOUNT DUE is paid in full. AMOUNT DUE is paid in full. For how to pay, see the back of this notice.

PAYMENT: Payment may still be made in the manner prescribed on the rear of this form and the Suspension Order will be cancelled upon receipt of full payment.

ENQUIRIES: Enquiries should be directed to the Fines Enforcement Registry, Ground Floor, 32 St Georges Tce, Perth, WA, 6000 Telephone 1300 650 235 Facsimile 1300 650 599 Email fines@justice.wa.gov.au Further information on fines enforcement procedures can be obtained at www.justice.wa.gov.au

CASE DETAILS: Offence Description FAILING TO RETURN NUMBER PLATES Date 21-AUG-03 Location Perth, Western Australia

AMOUNT DUE \$ 175.00 DATE 08-MAR-04

WHEN SUSPENSION OCCURRED TIME 17:30

MDL NO. 3822972

VEHICLE LICENCE NUMBER(S)

10-MAR-04 DATE

REGISTRAR

McLean explains how fines enforcement letters ‘create a trap...for people who keep poor personal records, frequently change addresses, experience poverty’ as they ‘become enmeshed in a trap in the Justice system that’s designed almost perfectly to ensnare them’.⁹⁰⁷ An individual who leaves unpaid fines for long enough by not responding to correspondence from the Fines Enforcement Registry or the Department of Justice (or does not undertake fines enforcement processes to clear the fines, i.e. community work), will eventually enter a formal breach process and incur a period of incarceration.⁹⁰⁸ Most adults are inadequately educated about the consequences of unpaid fines, driver’s licences and fines enforcement:

They have no idea of the volume and amounts, they don’t understand how long it takes to ‘work off’ a fine, for example 300 Work Development Order hours to be completed in a set time. Fines can be overdue for cultural reasons, for example, people travelling or away on Business. The whole system is very complicated even for whitefellas and about 90% don’t understand much about the system...Mostly what people do understand is that they can do community work instead of paying off fines.⁹⁰⁹

Many Ngaanyatjarra are not understanding how abandoning a car in the bush with the number plates left on, or buying and selling cars with no official transfer papers—then not reading infringement notices, not paying the ensuing fines, and continuing to drive—could eventually result in imprisonment for driving under licence suspension.

Most people don’t know that you have to return number plates or else you get a \$1658 fine for unreturned plates. Everyone takes for granted that people understand, but there is no specific education...All they really understand is that your licence can be suspended for unpaid fines and that you can go to jail for unpaid fines...In court all the magistrate says is, say \$150 fine, but nowhere to pay it and police won’t take money for fines on the Lands.⁹¹⁰

Traffic offences and fines management account for the high imprisonment rate from the Lands.⁹¹¹ Paradoxically, although communities recognise the importance of licensed drivers and the payment of fines, they face insurmountable barriers, including language and literacy. Even gaining a first licence is restricted by regulations requiring supervision and a written log book, conditions that don’t suit the context. Increased fine defaults are

⁹⁰⁷ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

⁹⁰⁸ There are two sorts of fines:

1) Infringements issued by a government department when regulations are infringed, e.g. unreturned plates, unpaid motor vehicle transfer fees, speeding tickets, parking tickets. Infringements can be paid outright or paid off. An individual cannot do community service and cannot go to jail to pay off fines. Under an infringement a driver’s licence may be suspended. Outstanding fines and infringements must be addressed before taking a licence test or seeking a licence renewal.

2) Court fines, e.g. for assault, break and enter, damage, disorderly conduct, or substance abuse. First offenders can go to court or receive a fine or a community work order. This is determined in court at the time so that fines can be converted to a work order (Sheriff—Phone interview August 2004).

⁹⁰⁹ (Sheriff—Phone interview August 2004). Community Work Orders are issued as court orders by the Department of Justice. In an urban context an individual on *Newstart* allowance does community hours on top of their allowance.

However in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands people do not receive *Newstart* so individuals doing community hours are paid CDEP (otherwise they have no income). Supervisory Work Orders are issued in tandem with early parole. When first released from prison individuals sign up for *Newstart* and when back in the community they are signed on to CDEP.

⁹¹⁰ Sheriff—Phone interview August 2004.

occurring in part because there is no effective payment system under the *Fines, Penalties and Infringement Notices Enforcement Act 1994* (WA).⁹¹² Also individuals have insufficient income and no capacity to save on CDEP or Centrelink.⁹¹³

The Sheriff asserts that 'literacy issues start from the first court appearance as people don't understand what they read or what they agree to':

Personal record keeping skills is often an issue. In order to pay fines person needs to keep letter, but people lose letters. People are bombarded with so many bits of paper they don't know what to do with.

For instance, when one young woman received a letter regarding \$10,000 worth of fines owing, she misread the letter and thought she had *won* \$10,000. A policeman tells me, 'they can't read and write, no-one can read and write':

We always explain the bail form to them and make sure they know when to come to court and if they can't get there to ring up or they'll get a bench warrant, but most of them just screw it up and throw it on the ground or later they find it screwed up in their jeans pocket. They think: 'Oh that policeman told me I don't need this paper' and they don't read it.⁹¹⁴

The arrest rate for unlicensed driving is increasing and even the well-intentioned are curtailed by the preconditions of poverty and remoteness. As an aside, mobility and motor cars are integral to contemporary social and cultural practice and most adults drive, although having a driver's licence is not assumed cultural practice. Simultaneously, everyday life has become more regulated by the State. Driver's licences are now required for driving on 'any road available and used by the public' (*Road Traffic Act WA*)—and with an increased police presence in the region licences are checked more assiduously. This pertains to the Great Central Road, the main arterial linking Laverton with the Ngaanyatjarra communities, Docker River and the NT. Central desert people feel an intense spiritual and social connection to this road because it follows the *yimarra*—the route

⁹¹¹ Prison costs the state \$280 a day in the public prison system, \$145 a day in Acacia Prison (a private prison) and \$9–\$13 a week for someone on parole. Anecdotal evidence suggests that about one-third of prisoners in EGRP (usually short term prisoners) are from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Staples pers. comm. November 2004).

⁹¹² The *Sentencing Act 1995* (WA) replaced the *Aboriginal Communities Act 1979* (WA). Now a Justice of the Peace in the Warburton Magistrate's Court of Petty Sessions is no longer able to issue the preferred short sentence of up to three months for substance abuse or domestic violence to be served within the Lands. The court is left with the choice of a sentence of six or more months or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 (Parole Officer pers. comm. September 2004). See (Staples and Cane 2002: 9).

⁹¹³ CDEP payment is based on a weekly allocation per number of signed up recipients. The pool of CDEP money is finite, averaging out to approximately \$210 per person p.w. Consequently, if too many people receive wages then the average weekly net pay is reduced. A regular CDEP worker receives between \$18,000–\$25,000 p.a. An additional CPS top-up supplement of approx. \$20 per fortnight is received from Centrelink. A 'sit down' allocation is paid as the safety net base pay rate (with any hour of work paid in addition to the 'sit down' allocation). An individual receiving only 'sit down' is paid approximately \$6,500–\$7,500 p.a., and receives around \$163 p.w. 'sit down' before deductions are taken out. Thus an individual on 'sit-down' receives about \$80.00 - \$95.00 a week minus further deductions for 'book-up', whereas a regular worker receives about \$175 net p.w. with deductions taken out. Everyone with children received Family Allowance: Family Tax A of around \$130.00 p.w. per child plus Family Tax B because they are below the low income threshold. Single Parents received Parenting Payment plus Family Allowance but cannot access CDEP. Older people receive the Pension and a few adults are on the Disability Allowance (Warburton Office 2004).

⁹¹⁴ Police pers. comm. 2004.

that people traditionally walked from rockhole to rockhole. Moreover, they were instrumental in building the road in accordance with the line of rockholes. From their perspective they own the road because it is on their country and thus should be outside the domain of Western law and licensing requirements.

The consequence of administrative 'illiteracy' can be incarceration. However, people see only 'the unfairness of the white justice system for them' and perceive incarceration for fines and traffic offences as *kunpu-kunpu palyara*—'doing it for nothing'.⁹¹⁵ Silas, who also works for the Department of Justice, explains:

That's why people use that word all the time: 'No, I'm in here for nothing. *Kunpu-kunpu*, they picking on me for nothing.'... But that person must have done something. He or she must have done something like, never paid the fine or never done their work, but they don't understand and they use that word *kunpu-kunpu*... but they don't know the back side of that thing, they don't know, background, what's going on. They don't know... or can't understand.

Louisa's teenage son Jake reflects on this problem:

Some boys they were in prison and on court time they don't understand what the judge telling them, they get sentence or go in prison for, they get their months... they keep on ringing up to the shop, worrying about their children, wife, they keep going in prison.

Consequently, many Ngaanyatjarra men are typically spending part of their youth in prison—the 'inside world'—although this pattern tends to recede once they marry and have children.⁹¹⁶ Nevertheless, children are witnessing the incarceration of parents and siblings and absorbing this as normative cultural practice.⁹¹⁷ As one young fella explains:

I grew up in prison, been going up and down... I come out from prison and do silly things, you know... No good, no life in jail. No families... Just like you're finished, same like nothing, you're looking and look like ghosts walking around, no families.

The majority are at Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison (EGRP) in Kalgoorlie-Boulder:

It's a bit easy, but the other prisons like Perth, it's a bit hard. But in Kalgoorlie it's a lot of Aboriginals there like families, uncles and brothers in Kalgoorlie, when I was there I was happy to see them.

Ironically, prison offers an under-recognised site for ongoing education and training for adults from remote communities.⁹¹⁸ Research in the NT indicates that detention is seen by

⁹¹⁵ Charlie Staples—Interview May 2004.

⁹¹⁶ Nationally Indigenous men have higher levels of contact with the criminal justice system at an earlier age, see (Ogilvie and Van Zyl 2001; Putt 1999; Putt et al. 2005). Similarly, ethnographic studies in the United States indicate age-related patterns of criminal involvement among young males which recedes during the mid-twenties (Sullivan 1996: 211; Sullivan 1989).

⁹¹⁷ The Sheriff in Kalgoorlie describes overhearing a father from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands saying to his son: 'Everybody has to go to jail sometime, so get up and go to court.' (Sheriff pers. comm. 2004).

⁹¹⁸ International research with incarcerated youth shows that some perceive themselves as failures in the education system yet find textual expression through local literacies (Blake 2004) and letter writing (Wilson 2000a) in prison.

young men as a chance for a 'different experience' with some 'compelling attractions' including the 'opportunity to be stronger and smarter'...

...school in detention was described as more interesting and rewarding than the "outside" alternative because of its broadness, its focus upon basic individual literacy and numeracy needs, the sporting opportunities and the increased access to outside information such as documentaries and movies.⁹¹⁹

Similarly, Juvenile Detention offers a site for learning for compulsory school-aged youth. This experience has been a source of pride for young men like Troy:

They shift me to other school, to Unit 3, I was starting first Number 1, Number 2, Number 3. Then I got to Number 3...3 was bit harder...I was know for the easier stuff like maths, and they put to Number 2...I was proud 'cause I was working for money...doing English and all that, was good.

Troy later had a short spell at EGRP:

When I was in there I was going to school, always do about things, words, words and numbers, 'cause I was making own story about this place and dreamtime stories and it was good going to school.

Prisons have 'education centres' where modules are delivered from nationally accredited Training Packages in hospitality, horticulture and motor mechanics, as well as basic adult literacy and numeracy courses and compulsory Occupational Health and Safety Courses. Men like Kenny have taken advantage of these courses:

Put my name up there, then we done a bricklaying course like that, done a welding in the school...Then I came back and done some in Boulder, like tutoring. When I came back from that way, in Boulder for seven months. That one lady she was working there, she seen me. "Ah you doing things good and quick and you know, we're giving you real easy job, we'll give you this tutoring, literacy, something like that. Done that. They was helping me to do that thing now, they put me on a computer.

For some the education centre is a sanctuary:

They do all those schooling there those boys from out here. Can do it there, quiet and sober, when you're wearing the greens. Do those courses 'cause it helps with the parole plan, get out quicker if you do courses...Do them courses to prove that we been good. School room is better than working, scrubbing walls and that...When those blokes leave, so excited to leave and come home. They can take all their work and certificates with them, but they so excited to go home they just run out and leave it in their cells or somewhere.

Unfortunately, there is little articulation between prison education and community life, representing yet another instance of the State's failure to articulate with the real needs of its remote populace. Statements of Attainment are issued for modules or full certificates, however the onus is on ex-prisoners to store them in the unlikely event that they may mean something in the future. To most ex-prisoners credentialling has little relevance, as Kenny admits: 'I brought a paper like this for the college but I threw it away, somewhere in the bush there'. Additionally, the Privacy Act works against a community Registered Training

⁹¹⁹ (Ogilvie and Van Zyl 2001: 4).

Organisations accessing this information, so accreditation gained in prison is rarely transferred to the CDEP context. Prison provides a new normative frame within which individuals are separated from familiar surroundings and able to take on the attributes of the new environment including participation in education and employment. Such individualistic practice generally cannot be maintained once young people return to the self-regulated community environment.

Literacy as cultural practice

The office is the locus of social interaction and the site where people see and hear community news. Notices and faxes are mostly written in English and posted on the office wall. Different modalities are activated for communicating information: adults decode text or graphic symbols and the more literate mediate and 'reshape' written notices into oral modes for those less literate.⁹²⁰ Information dissemination is mostly oral and two-way radios let people know what is going on all the time so events are organised without a whitefella intermediary. During fieldwork I counted and sorted public notices from the office and found two main types of notices.⁹²¹

Firstly, notices disseminating information on the administration of day to day life (Fig. 5.5):

<i>Information</i>										
Type:	Office notices	Ngaany atjarra. Health Service	School	Shire notices	Store or Roadhouse	Job ads	Notices from community member	Ngaanyatjarra Media	Ngaanyatjarra Council	Land Management Unit
No.	21	14	12	7	5	5	5	4	3	1

Secondly, notices advertising events (Fig. 5.6):

<i>Events</i>									
Type:	Funeral notices	Mining meetings: Native Title Unit	Sports Carnivals	NPYWC notice	Concerts, festivals, etc	Christian Fellowship	Maruku Arts	Youth Arts	Sunday School
No.	30	18	10	9	9	9	5	2	1

On one level the notices represent a framework of everyday sociocultural events and administrative business. This, however, belies another important dynamic as the notices also signpost 'practice' and provide insights into how people use text in contexts that matter culturally. I return here to Ortner's notion that an instance of practice can only be

⁹²⁰ (Heath 1983: 200).

⁹²¹ *Information notices*: Information: Shire (road reports) Ngaanyatjarra Media (training), Ngaanyatjarra Health (visits from dentist, vaccinations, vet, audiologist); school notices, electoral notices, swimming pool rules, music festivals, ads (job, car for sale), community information (phones, plumber, rubbish collection, tax), government media releases. *Events notices*: Maruku Arts, Christian Fellowship/Conventions, sports carnivals, NPYWC *Kungka* Career Conference, youth arts, visitors, films, community barbecues. Meetings: Native Title (trips, mining negotiation/distribution meetings), NPYWC community, CALM/Land management, meeting cancellation/postponement notices.

considered in relation to the structures or cultural schemas that shape it.⁹²² Over the remaining section of this chapter I begin to describe instances of ‘generationally differentiated’ cultural practice.⁹²³ Through these cultural instances I seek to show that when the context is relevant and embedded with social meaning, literacy practices are being enacted, but enacted in a manner indicating a tendency to ‘do the cultural thing’.⁹²⁴ That is, the literacy events are linked to each other and situated within ‘a culturally standardized frame of some sort’.⁹²⁵ I also draw attention to the less visible roles and identities that adults assume often in domains shaped by traditional cultural or Christian schemas where literate ways of doing things have become taken for granted practice.⁹²⁶

Purnu—the ‘family business’

Kayleen reads faxes in the office announcing the pending arrival of ‘*Maruku* Arts and Crafts’ (Fig. 5.7), known colloquially as the ‘*purnu*-man’.⁹²⁷ She alerts her family, the Carpenters, who have been preparing wooden artefacts, or *purnu*, for sale. The notices are easily recognisable to non-literates and word spreads. The more astute reader is advantaged by comprehending the detailed text stipulating exact sizes required as this knowledge will ensure a more lucrative income on the day of sale as the *purnu*-man is discerning and items are rejected if not required or the quality is poor. To prepare for the *purnu*-man, locals work at a time and location of their choosing. Elders go out bush to select wood, tools are purchased and family groups undertake carving, rasping, sanding and burning pokerwork designs onto artefacts with hot wire. An older woman comments: ‘only writing I do was just the artefacts, *purnu*, that’s all, that’s part of *yarnangu* way, by design’. In the Carpenter family, Kayleen and her sisters are employed under CDEP at the community office and the Shire and only have time to participate in artefact production on weekends. As artefacts are completed they are stored in boxes, under beds and in locked rooms so finished items are protected and accumulate in preparation for the *purnu*-man’s visit.

⁹²² (Ortner 1989: 12).

⁹²³ (Merlan 1998: 92).

⁹²⁴ (Ortner 1989: 127).

⁹²⁵ (Ortner 1989: 67).

⁹²⁶ (Barton and Padmore 1994; Barton and Hall 2000; Ivanic and Hamilton 1990). Stephen Reder also indicates the importance of roles and domains of practice in the development of his ‘practice engagement theory’ of literacy (Reder 1994).

⁹²⁷ *Maruku* Arts and Crafts, based at Uluru National Park in the NT, was established in 1984 by Pitjantjatjara people in SA and NT, and subsequently spread to the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. It is an Aboriginal enterprise, supported by effective non-Aboriginal staff. *Purnu* is a polysemous noun meaning wooden artefact; but is also commonly used to refer to a category of related words—tree, bush, plant, wood, splinter, stick and log (Glass and Hackett 2003: 343).

Fig. 5.5 Information notices

**RUBBISH
COLLECTION**


WEDNESDAY

**PUT ALL YOUR
UNWANTED
RUBBISH OUT THE
FRONT OF YOUR
HOUSE.**

**WORKERS
WANTED!!!!**

WORKING ON THE
POOL.

PLEASE SEE
[REDACTED] OR
THE OFFICE.



 **NEEDLE TIME AGAIN**

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

AGED 12-17 Years

Starting Tuesday 2nd November
Bring an adult family member
and come and get your needle,
same one the babies get.

Be healthy be happy.



**BRING YOUR
COMMUNITY
ON THE**

6.7 SEPTEMBER 2004



**BRING YOUR
GROUP CERTIFICATES
AND
SOCIAL SECURITY
PAPER WORK WITH YOU**

60 [REDACTED]
REGARDS [REDACTED]

01-10-2004 11:47 PINKAUSTON HAVES SCHOOL ADDRESS:7614 001 8 280 000 81-00

School Assembly

Monday
13 December 2004
5:00 PM
School Grounds



**Join Us
For Christmas Songs
And Class
Presentations!**

Everyone Welcome!

00-00 00 000 00-00 000 000 00 0000

Fig. 5.6. Event notices

MT MARGARET REUNION

6,7,8TH OCTOBER

INVITING PEOPLE FROM

THE NGAANYATJARRA

LANDS TO THE CONVENTION

ON BEHALF OF THE MT MARGARET COMMITTEE

AND [REDACTED] WARBURTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Warburton Community Church Outreach Meetings and Fellowship At Mantamaru Community Friday 27th - Sunday 29th February

"Let us run with patience, the race that is set before us."
Hebrews Chapter : 12 Verse : 1

HELLO KIDS

THERE WILL BE SUNDAY SCHOOL BEFORE SWIMMING AT [REDACTED] PLACE SO COME AND DO COLOURING ALSO LISTEN ABOUT JESUS

COME ALONG JESUS LOVES YOU

Docker River Sports Weekend & Church Inma

**Starts Friday 13th August
Ends Monday 16th August**

Come to Docker River this weekend and enjoy great food from our top-rating pub/cafeteria. Plus lots of physical fun for all ages, including Tug-o-war and Softball. Then stay over for the Lutheran Church Sunday Worship which is beginning on Monday 14th - Thursday 16th August. Contact in Docker River on 131 3399 Fax 131 3399

WALUNGURRU SPORTS WEEKEND (Kintore)

KIDS ATHLETICS - Friday BLUE LIGHT DISCO - Friday FOOTBALL SOFTBALL BATTLE OF THE BANDS - Saturday GOSPEL NIGHT - Sunday

PLEASE BRING YOUR MEDICINE AND NIGHTPATROL (fuel and food vouchers available for Nightpatrol workers ONLY see Council on arrival)

KINTORE IS A DRY COMMUNITY NO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS ALLOWED

"CASH PRIZES"

24TH SEPTEMBER - 27TH SEPTEMBER

CONTACT [REDACTED] (President) 8956 8328 (Sports & Rec) 8956 8669 or fax 8956 8569

Everyone come and enjoy PALYA!

NGAANYATJARRA PIJANTJARRA YANKUNYATJARRA WOMEN'S COUNCIL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION
KULILAYA MNINYA TJUJA
NPY Women's Council
LAW & CULTURE
12-16 July 2004
Apankanu
Near Young's Well
Ernabella
Bring your swag, blankets, billycan, saucepan, peniklin and medicine.
Food will be provided.
Bring your baskets to sell.
Ring 8950 5445 or fax 8952 3742

NGAANYATJARRA
COUNCIL (Aboriginal Corporation)
NATIVE TITLE UNIT
CANCELLED
'One Claim'
Meeting
at Patjarr
The meeting for people of the GIBSON DESERT CLAIM to talk about joining the Claims together into one big Ngaanyatjarra Claim to be held at Patjarr on Thursday, 19 February and Friday, 20 February has been **CANCELLED** because of the rains and the bad condition of roads.
Further notices will be sent when a new date for this meeting is decided.
Please ring the Native Title Unit in Alice Springs on 8950 1740 if you need more information

PUKATJA SPORTS CARNIVAL
SEPT 25 26 27 2004
THERE WILL BE A
FOOTBALL
GRAND FINAL WINNER \$2000.00
RUNNER UP \$1000.00
SOFTBALL
GRAND FINAL WINNER \$500.00
RUNNER UP \$250.00
DASH FOR CASH
\$300 WINNER
SPEAR THROWING
\$200 WINNER
WOMENS BUCKET RACE
\$150 WINNER
CONCERT
FRIDAY SATURDAY & SUNDAY NIGHT
FEATURING
PUKATJA BAND
TJUPI
SUNLIGHT BAND
THUNDER BOYS
AND MORE....
FOR MORE INFORMATION RING [REDACTED] 89562966
ALL WELCOME NO PERMITS

Fig. 5.7. Purnu and literacy

MARUKU ARTS

PUNU BUYING TRIP

THE ONLY PUNU WE CAN BUY WILL BE

SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE WIRA (BOWLS)
 SMALL LIZARDS (ONLY SMALL ONES)
 *****KALI (ALL SIZES) *****
 MUSIC STICKS (SMALL & MEDIUM SIZE)

THANK YOU FOR HELPING, SALES HAVE PICKED UP
 OVER JULY AND AUGUST BUT WE ARE STILL DESPERATE
 FOR THE ABOVE TO KEEP ON TRADING PROPERLY BOTH
 FOR STOCK IN THE GALLERY AND FOR ORDERS

Tuesday 7 th Sept	Afternoon	Blackstone
Wednesday 8 th Sept	Morning	Jamieson
	Afternoon	Warburton
Thursday 9 th Sept	Morning	Wanarn
	Afternoon	Warakurna
Friday 10 th Sept	Morning	Tjukuria

Times may vary depending on conditions we will notify you of any change

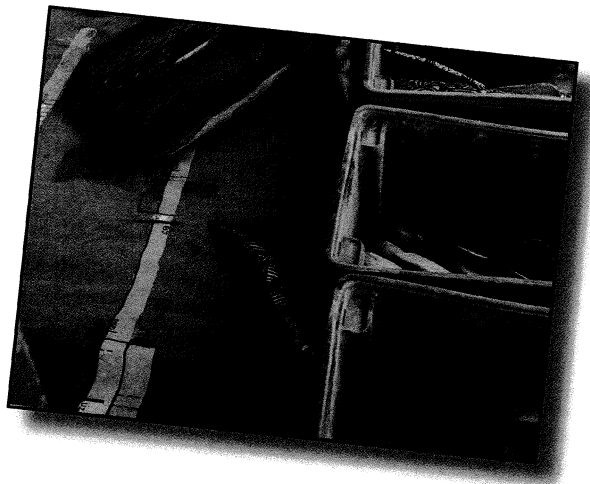
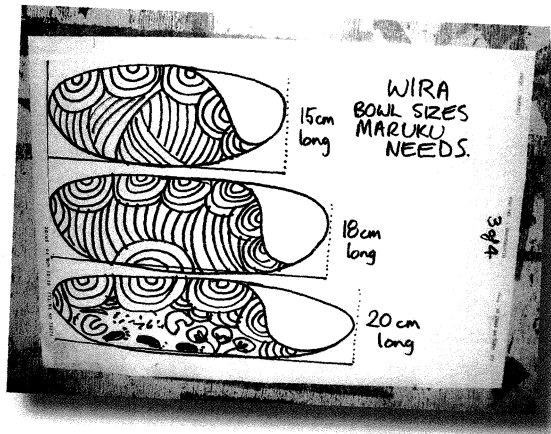
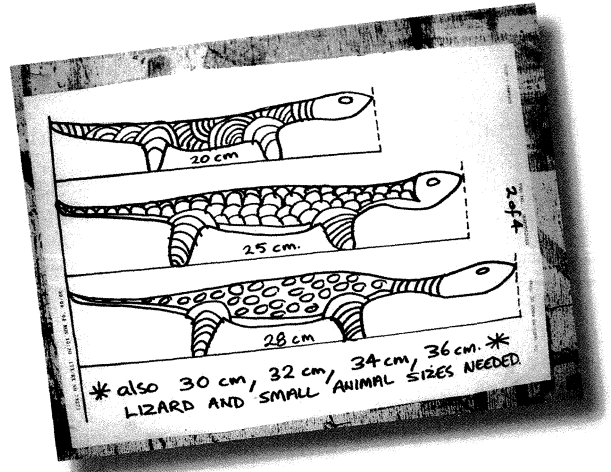
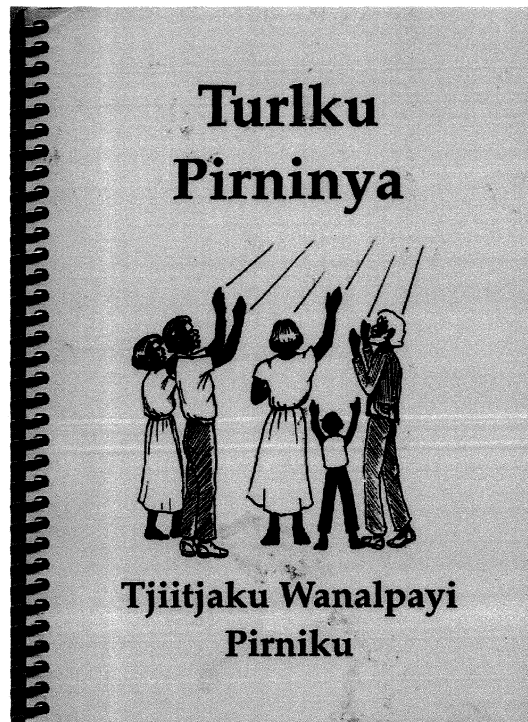
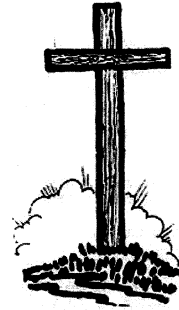


Fig. 5.8. Church literacies



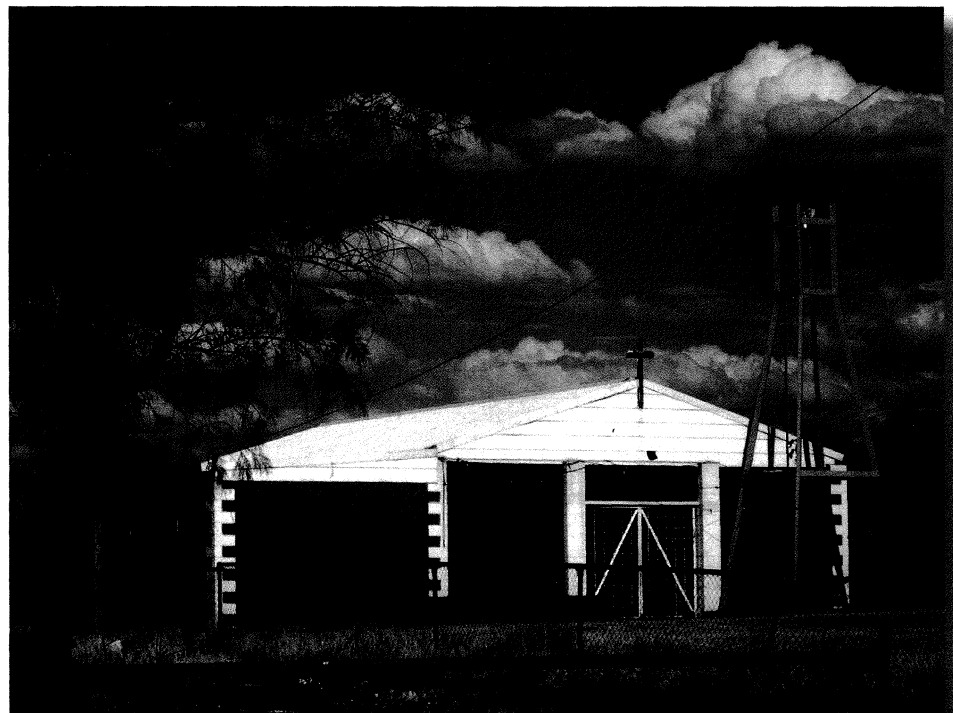
22. Tjiitjalu-rni Kanyinma
Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross (Redemption 390)

Tjiitjalu-rni kanyinma
Wartangka yitingka.
Palunyanya tjiitjapayi
Palyarungulkitja.
Tjiitjanya wartangka.
Mularrkuliku-rna.
Palunyanya pitjaku
Kutikatikitja.
Ngaralanytja wartangka
Tjiitjalu-rni nyangu.
Ngarlurringu, watjarnu,
"Pitja, wanala-rni."
Tjiitjanya wartangka,
Tirtu wanalku-rna.
Palunyanya pitjaku,
Kutikatikitja.
Palunyangka nyinarra
Mularrkulinma-rna.
Katukutu ngayulu-rna
Matjarpaku ngula.
Tjiitjanya wartangka,
Mularrkuliku-rna,
Palunyanya pitjaku
Kutikatikitja.



Jesus, keep me near the Cross; There a precious fountain,
Free to all, a healing stream, Flows from Calv'ry's mountain
In the Cross, in the Cross,
Be my glory ever,
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.

Public Domain



Warburton church building.

It is a hot November day and the big *Maruku* Arts truck pulls into town and parks outside the store ready to begin buying.⁹²⁸ Word goes around that the truck has arrived and cars arrive laden with artefacts. The *purnu*-man spreads a big tarpaulin on the ground and people sit in family groups around the edge. Older family members who are absent or too frail to attend entrust younger people to enact the transaction. Over the morning some 50 people mill around, some sell, others merely watch. Most sell only a few items, but the Carpenter family unload many boxes of high quality artefacts. The *purnu*-man categorises and codes items by type and size by measuring them against a standardised scale. Reminiscent of a medieval market, a public standardised measure (rendered on the tarpaulin) ensures transactional transparency in the commodity exchange so even non-literates can ‘read’ the graphic representation and witness the exchange. After items are categorised the *purnu*-man calculates the total value and the sellers immediately receive cash payment. The market lasts about two hours and \$6,498.50 is distributed between 19 sellers. Individuals earn between \$35–\$1300, with average earnings around \$200–\$400.⁹²⁹ Children skip school and accompany elders to observe and absorb the practice. *Purnu* is a fertile site for the transmission of traditional knowledge, and artefact production and enterprise acumen. Children observe elders undertaking planning, preparation, organisation, time management tasks and perceive that information is acquired through decoding written notices. They see older kin working collaboratively to earn cash income and imbibe respect for cultural practice. Social relatedness embedded in maths concepts is reinforced as children learn that artefacts (lizards and clapping sticks) are sold only *kurrirarra* – in identical ‘pairs’ (from *kurri* meaning ‘spouse’ + *-arra* a suffix meaning ‘two’ or ‘a pair of’).⁹³⁰ Other numeracy events

⁹²⁸ Older people have been producing artefacts for sale in the cash economy since the late 1950s when small sums of money were earned by selling to stores in Laverton (Berndt and Berndt 1959: 2–3) and the DNW-controlled Aboriginal Arts Centre in Perth (DNW Newsletter Vol.2, No.1 August 1971).

⁹²⁹ *Maruku* Arts and Crafts records show that in the years 1996–2001 the monies paid to Ngaanyatjarra communities for artefacts averaged \$130,000 p.a. (McFarlane 2001) It is well understood that an economic development problem is faced by Aboriginal people living in remote Australia. Solutions other than conventional training for employment in the mainstream labour market are needed. Writers discuss options such as the development of the ‘customary economy’ and the hybrid economy’ (Altman 2005a; Altman 2005b). Land-based piece work or ‘cottage’ industry such as artefact-making exemplifies customary activity blending with business to provide a direct cash income. The hybrid economy also includes income earned from land-based seed and to a lesser extent, sandalwood harvesting and bush medicines. A market development project in Alice Springs, ‘Outback Bush Foods’, has provided a reliable market for collected seed since 1998 (Jock Morse pers. comm. January 2004). In addition, the customary economy in the Lands includes spinifex and raffia baskets. Since 1995 NPY Women’s Council has supported basket production and in the 1999/2000 financial year baskets worth around \$20,000 were produced in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (McFarlane 2001: 58). Other piece work examples include: bead necklaces; acrylic painting; slumped art glass (<http://www.warburtonarts.com/site/glass.php>); and ceramics. Products are sold privately to individuals for cash or through the local Cultural Centre shop, roadhouses, or galleries in cities (<http://www.warburtonarts.com/site/index.php>).

⁹³⁰ Numeration is embedded in other parts of speech including nominals: *kutju* – one/single; *kutjarra* – two/dual; *mankurr(pa)* – three; *pimi* – many/plural, and adverbs: *kutjuwarra* – ‘once’; *kutjarrangara* – ‘twice’; *mankurrngara* – ‘three times’; *pimngara* – ‘many times’; and the pronoun system incorporating singular, dual and plural personal pronouns and enclitics.

are also observed as lengths are measured, categorised, items added, numbers called out and money calculated.⁹³¹

The church

Like his father before him, Silas assumes a mediating role as a church and community leader:

Sometimes I read newspapers, you know, what's going on in Australia or in the world, what's happening. And I tell my auntie or I tell my people, families in language then. It's very important to read the thing and tell the people in language what's going to happen. Like this problem we have if the money that the government people been giving it to the Aboriginal community and the government people been say that they been wasting a lot of money on ATSIC. And they getting fed up with giving money all the time. And that's why I tell them sort of things to the people who don't understand...about what's happening like the government side. Like now, the election. You know I say there's two man, he's going for that election. One is Liberal and one is Labor, and I tell them...Because without I'm telling them, they don't know what's going on in the world. You know it's too hard and something might happen in Warburton or in the Ngaanyatjarra Land and they might say: 'Why didn't people tell us?'

Silas received no formal evangelising training at GBTI, and only a little assistance from the missionary linguists. Instead he describes an intergenerational process of 'situated learning':⁹³²

I used to look at my father and I used to look at the missionaries and I used to look at my uncle and I would sometimes ask my father, or ask my uncle which passage he been read...I never went there, just learn by looking and learning from the way that person conduct that service.

At home he has devised his own 'Bible study' programme:

I got the book home about how to be a successful pastor. I got that and that help me too, so I can be guided, guided by that doctrine...I got videos about like Jimmy Swaggart and I got video about Billy Graham and in my spare time I sit and watch. I sit down and watch how they do it and I think: 'Ah well I'll try and preach this subject what this man been preach.' But I wouldn't go on his, I wouldn't go on his way when he was preaching, but I'll change it...Because if you want to be a preacher, you got to be yourself...like I can't copy...But I can get a, like a feedback. But I can't be like Billy Graham or I can't be like Jimmy Swaggart, you know, I got to be myself.

He prepares his service at home: 'I make my preparation by reading my story first hand and I keep it in the section, which one can I read'. His practice includes writing notes, (often from a book of prepared sermons) for telegraphic reference when delivering his sermon:

Sometime I write and keep it in a...in a column so I wouldn't forget...like a one page, then I look at it and I think, ah well, now I got to say this, I got to say that. So I don't have to, you know, like twist off. It's very important to go on that.

Silas then brings his notes to the service in an A4 leather-bound wallet.

⁹³¹ See (Saxe 1988) for a discussion on how unschooled Brazilian child street vendors use mathematical strategies with numeracy acquired through social practice. See also (Saxe 1981) for a discussion on 'traditional' numeracy in Papua New Guinea. Traditional numeracy has also been explored in the Australian Aboriginal education literature (Levinson 1997).

⁹³² (Lave and Wenger 1991).

The procedure of most services is similar. On Sunday morning the gospel band warms up, and this attracts a small congregation of mainly older people who gather on the grass in front of the church; larger gatherings are more common at funerals and Easter or Christmas Conventions. Silas—attired in a white shirt, black pants, polished shoes and reading glasses—takes the service:

When I take the church service, some of my audience...can't hear much about English, so I preach in language too...I never been reading from the Ngaanyatjarra Bible but I been like translating out of my own, from the English Bible, and I translate it...I talk in language...I read, I read the Bible and I do the illustration, illustration by the explanation.⁹³³

In this diglossic context Silas switches register between spoken English, marked as a high speech variety, and his mediated use of Ngaanyatjarra as 'phatic punctuation'.⁹³⁴

We can look back, we can think back to what happened in Warburton long time ago.

We extremely conscious today that our lives are rapidly moving along and will soon be over.⁹³⁵

You know it'll soon be over you know, *wiyarriku, wiyarriku*...

Where are we going?

Wanyjatja?

What is our purpose?

Nyaapa, nyaapaku palyala?

The Bible reminds us that God is gradually drawing us forward to the day when Jesus will return.

Jesus *marlaku pijaku*.

Silas is a fine public orator and deftly shifts between oral and written texts. Yet, his halting prosody (intonation, rhythm and stress) when he is reading reveals that he is not 'consciously reprocessing and translating' written text into a 'spoken medium'.⁹³⁶

The service typically wends its way through a sermon, prayers and Scripture readings and the congregation is invited to share a song or a testimonial. Clem, Samson and others in the band have been singing Gospel since the 1980s Crusades. Hymns are announced from *Turiku pirminya* (Fig. 5.8)—'Can we start with Number 22: *Tjijjalu-rni kanyinma wartangka yitingka?*'—and memorised through iterative singing in church and at home.

Yuwa, our reading this morning is from Luke Chapter 17. And the song we just sang is, you know it means about them people who stood long distance and they watched Jesus, they watched Jesus going into the village...Let us pray: *Mama God*...

The stylised evangelical performance mode of the preachers incorporates reiterated formulaic phrases and paralinguistic elements such as hand waving during gospel singing

⁹³³ Christian texts include the Ngaanyatjarra *New Testament* (Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project 1999), the English *Good News Bible* and the hymnbook *Turiku Pirminya* (Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project 2003).

⁹³⁴ (Kulick 1992: 147). See also (Ferguson 1959; Romaine 1994).

⁹³⁵ This typeface represents text-based speech. His reading is interspersed with utterances comprising explanations and questions.

and the laying on of hands. Affective oral testimonies feature and testify to the transforming power of *Mama* God. In the 'art of testimony' oral narratives are structured around 'before and after sequences': before one's body and social self was 'weak and depleted' and now one is 'strong and purposeful'.⁹³⁷ This aspect can also be traced back to the 1980s Crusades when Christian practice became endowed with a highly transformative element.⁹³⁸

On Sundays Maisie sometimes holds Sunday School classes. Sunday has been 'a special day...for learning and teaching' originating from her time at Mt Margaret Mission where she acquired the habit:

Sundays go to church, 1 o'clock go to Sunday School, Sunday School lesson, answer questions. The Sunday School teacher give us a test, remind, say: 'This is the text you're gonna bring back the next week, the next Sunday and the person who have the right, correct text will get prize.' So we go back with that text and what the person said we...That 'God is love' and we all, we always think: 'Oh what the text was? God is love, God is love.' Sunday, come back Sunday to Sunday School and the teacher says: 'Oh what was your text last week?' Some give the right text and some forget.

Maisie photocopies Scripture and worksheets for her Sunday School activities at the college then takes the texts home to practice in advance. Texts are not read aloud but used as a mnemonic. The Ngaanyatjarra Bible Translation Project provides another role for literates who undertake back translation tasks from Ngaanyatjarra to English. Literates gain a rare opportunity to draft and check extensive texts and produce good final copies. A woman and her adult daughter manage to do a translation at night when the children are asleep, and complete 20 A4 lined pages of English translation with simple one verb sentences and few complex sentences.⁹³⁹

In loving memory of...

Funerals are announced by fax with a regularity that accentuates the high mortality rate among Indigenous people. The 'sad news' is generally communicated by word of mouth, gesture and wailing. However written notices, mediated by the community office, communicate the detail of funerals and second funerals, and send condolences from families unable to attend.⁹⁴⁰ From the mid-1980s communities started establishing cemeteries and funeral rites entered a period of transformation with an increasing Christian

⁹³⁶ (Halliday 1985: 39).

⁹³⁷ (McDonald 2001: 161).

⁹³⁸ (Blackett 1997).

⁹³⁹ (Glass pers. comm. 2004).

⁹⁴⁰ Funeral notices arrive from locations across the tri-state border region of the Western Desert including: Wiluna, Jigalong, Nullagine, Docker River, Amata, Kintore, and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities and people often travel long distances to attend to social obligations and responsibilities in the sorry camp and at the funeral.

component.⁹⁴¹ Traditional social organisation remains, nevertheless, the core element in the structuring of funerals:

If it is a Panaka or Yiparrka person who has died, Tjarurru people are the designated ‘workers’, while the Panaka and Yiparrka sections, along with everybody else (i.e. Milangka, Purungu and Karimarra) who occupy the role of ‘mourners’...Although all ‘workers’ at a Panaka/Yiparrka funeral will indeed be Tjarurru, not all Tjarurru will be ‘workers’. Some will be ‘too close’. They will be ‘brothers’ (or ‘sisters’) in kinship terms. ‘Workers’ for a funeral need to be sufficiently distant, genealogically and geographically.⁹⁴²

Protocols at funerals remain important and if rules are broken, e.g. the deceased is buried by the ‘wrong’ or mixed social groupings there are social consequences.⁹⁴³

Within the last five years, as funerals have become more Westernised, a tradition of written eulogies has also emerged (although they are less common in the more traditional smaller communities). The *tilitjartu* or traditional undertakers organise the funeral, and, when available, negotiate and construct the written eulogy handed out at funerals.

The eulogy...will have to be done by *tilitjartu* doing the undertakers’ work...What they do now is they usually...find out from the families when they want the funeral, and they’ll organise through the office...when the funeral is going to be on and send a fax...The *tilitjartu* people have to write the fax, sometimes like they’ll do it, or tell whoever’s in the office, like a whitefella, office worker or whoever to do it. They organise everybody and they make sure with the family that everybody is there, let know who to come...when the coffin actually comes...they’ll come over and get the people and take them over to where the service is going to be...And they’ll do the burial, they’ll go ahead with the body while everybody drives behind and they’ll do the undertakers’ work and after when they do the burial, when families go back and they have to wait for them to finish their work and finish the burial and then the family come and give say ‘exchange’, like in the old days they would give like food or wooden implements or ochre, *kirri*, stone knives or anything like that.⁹⁴⁴

The process of writing funeral texts is communal and brings the sociality of related kin together in textual form.⁹⁴⁵ The order of the funeral service is organised and listed in the text: Bible readings, hymns, and prayers (in English and Ngaanyatjarra). In the funeral eulogy genre we again see the oral ‘travelling narrative’ story schema—the life journey and achievements of the deceased—used as the structuring principle of the written narrative. Older relatives dictate recounts of significant events which literates try and structure into a cohesive written narrative usually in English (and occasionally Ngaanyatjarra). Young people may be the writers, but they defer to their elders to approve the final draft:

That’s a big gap in there. I’ll print it and have a look. They should explain it to us properly so we can write it down, they shouldn’t talk in riddles. Can’t jump from little kid to working straight away. Go and see XX, she’ll know.

⁹⁴¹ Glass outlines the transition from traditional funerals to contemporary funerals now incorporating a Christian element. Second funerals (*manta nyakukitja* – ‘to see the ground’), some 9–15 months after the burial, derive from traditional Ngaanyatjarra practice, but now resemble the form of a ‘memorial service’ (Glass 1997: 36–41).

⁹⁴² (Brooks 2002b: 38–9).

⁹⁴³ (Murray 1979 [1969]-a).

⁹⁴⁴ Marrkilyi E.—Interview 22/1/04

⁹⁴⁵ Albie Viegas pers. comm. 2004.

The list of mourning relations is a key feature of the genre and this has a particular protocol. The affective significance of the text foregrounds the continuing and binding obligation that the *tilitjartu* have to the deceased. The process of negotiating the text can take days: deciding which kin should be listed, in what order (with older siblings, *kurta* and *tjurtu* first) and relationship to the deceased. This is enacted carefully to ensure that no-one is left out and that it is written in the 'right way', irrespective of past grievances. Jokingly writers comment: 'He might get wild and spear me if his name's not there.' Oral memory is used to compile the extensive kinship web, living and deceased, sometimes including up to 200 named relatives or more. Orally Ngaanyatjarra people refer to the deceased from the perspective of the living 'ego', e.g. 'Have you heard the bad news? Rosemary*ku kurri*?' However, looser Aboriginal English kin terms seeping in from the Goldfields have influenced the written form and relatives are identified from the perspective of the deceased, e.g. 'loving uncle of', 'nephew and cousin to'.⁹⁴⁶ Written texts require a genealogical accuracy that younger people, or Goldfields kin, are losing: 'wrong father*ku* name, that's his uncle's name, father's brother's name!'

Some eulogies are simple, handwritten texts that include errors in grammar and spelling. Increasingly, however, eulogy production involves group negotiated composition mediated through a literate person (often non-Aboriginal). Access to computers, and computer literates has led to the production of sophisticated documents inclusive of graphics and occasionally photos of the deceased. The incorporation of photographed images is relatively recent and there is still a reluctance to incorporate images of the deceased into funeral texts. The less literate participate by memorising the order and content of the text and commenting on the layout. The literacy event incorporates a number of key steps: researching key information (e.g. date and place of birth), drafting on paper, typing, redrafting, checking spelling, and cutting and pasting text on screen. Relatives reflect on previous textual productions to ensure that their text honours the status of the deceased and signifies the obligation the family feels toward the deceased. In this way, features of the written genre, including layout and formulaic phrases specific to the genre, are modelled and transmitted.

In summary, funeral texts represent a transformed social practice inclusive of literacy and Western Christian rituals and the public declaration of the name (and occasionally the image of the deceased). These texts are becoming the repository of oral memory and a

⁹⁴⁶ Linda Rive and David Brooks pers comm. 2004.

written record for future generations. Following on from this, on a return visit to Warburton in September 2006, I observed the production of 'memorial plates'. Artists in the Women's Centre are making hand-painted written memorial texts to deceased relatives on glazed ceramic platters as private keepsakes. The embedded text (up to 60-odd words in length) resembles a shorter version of the funeral eulogy genre, inclusive of the listing of mourning relatives, and is similarly imbued with heartfelt grief.

The sports carnival

Young people's time is determined by summer and winter sports—in summer they swim in the pool and play basketball and in winter they play football and softball. Written text is diffused throughout sporting events (Fig. 5.9). Around Easter notices go up at the office announcing the Alice Springs 'Lightning Carnival' which opens the winter sports season all over Central Australia. On late autumn afternoons at Warburton oval some young fellas begin football training, young women do softball training and the band brings amps and instruments down so it can practice. Across Central Australia football teams follow the colour coding of their Australian Football League (AFL) national counterparts. Football colours act as a symbol of community identity and permeate community iconography. Warburton football and softball teams are the 'Tigers' and follow the yellow and black of 'Richmond Tigers'. The affinity with AFL teams encourages people to read for meaning as they keep up with the scores nationally:

I've got people who come round to read newspapers. 'Kenny' stands out because he'll often come round and ask me and he wants to read the sports pages because he wants to know who's on the team, and who's not, for the AFL game and that's a big deal for him and he knows that that's a source of information and he can read well enough so it's worth his while because he could get the same info on TV.⁹⁴⁷

Men take football games seriously and they are well-organised.

For youngfellas it's important to be seen as a player and a *good* player. Even for men who are past it, still important to be involved in football in some minor way or as an organiser...It's like a sense of pride at the beginning of the year: 'Here's your jumper, you're on the team.' And if you're not playing then you need to send your brother, uncle, cousin along in that jumper to play.⁹⁴⁸

Older men write competition programmes and fax notices out to communities all over the region. On one occasion Clem and Mick draft a notice and organise for it to be computer-formatted by an office worker. Ironically, although the written notices are an important element, details often change and are communicated by word of mouth:

⁹⁴⁷ Youth Development Officer—Interview 1/3/04.

⁹⁴⁸ Youth Development Officer—Interview 1/3/04.

In Warburton you won't know when football is on, and then when it's on, it will be lots of people here. It seems that everybody else knows except the staff...They know where the football is...it's usually organised internally... it's not reliant on any sort of support or finance.⁹⁴⁹

Sports carnivals are high mobility events that everyone wants to be at (a football game in Laverton, for example, attracts up to 400 people from the Lands) and incorporate a range of social activities: catching up with relatives, talent quests, car raffles, and music competitions. Older men often use the time to arrange ceremonial Business.⁹⁵⁰ A serious atmosphere pervades football competitions and roles are clearly delineated. The coach counts out 18 players for the team from whoever turns up on the day. Games tend to be scored by older men, an assertion of their literate and moral authority. Scorers organise pens and pads ruled up into elaborate columns and rows for attributing points and goals. The scoring ritual is formalised with special table and chairs, a microphone and loudspeakers.

Unlike football games where older men take a high profile role, with softball young women tend to do it all: 'just the girls do it...we always do it when football festival and practise every Wednesday night'. Louisa's daughter expresses the pride generated by softball:

We always go for football, sports, come back. And we always play softball team...I always tell them: 'Play hard, so we can train for it.'...Sometimes we play basketball. I always tell them to train. We been win them...

At a football carnival in Warburton the main event is the fellas' football game on the grassy oval. Meanwhile on a red dirt pitch nearby, strategically situated next to the playground, young women organise a softball competition. With no fixed starting time and few watches, the players congregate at the pitch simultaneously. The girls know the routine and decisions are made about who will be captain, umpire and player. Each community group nominates their team. Names are written down and columns drawn, listing the nine players, plus two or three 'subs' (substitute players). Darleen writes the names down for her team and is assisted with spelling names and the girls help each other to score. In this collaborative process individuals with less literacy proficiency save face. Naomi and Leah are natural leaders and they organise the game and control the score-sheets. They have the seniority and the skills and there appears to be mutual consent from the group that this is OK. Leah claims that she learned to score by observing the strategies of older players and was 'apprenticed' by the previous cohort.⁹⁵¹ Leah now scores by herself having confidently taken on the role. She draws up her scoresheet with H for 'home' and O for 'out' in the

⁹⁴⁹ Youth Development Officer—Interview 1/3/04.

⁹⁵⁰ See also (Peterson 2000).

⁹⁵¹ (Rogoff et al. 2003).

Fig. 5.9. Sports literacies




25. 26. 27.
 5) All money to rebuild the Warburton Sporting Club.
 to Wilson + Laverton @ W.

1) All Welcome for
 2) Warburton "Opening Carnival"
 2) All teams to play fees \$500
 4) All funds to even competition \$50.00.
 "Talent quest" \$25.00

(3) No Alcohol + Drugs


(6) All welcome, to a part of the special event.
 Any enquiries please contact

 Ladies Softball Competition
 \$50 Entrance fee

Date: 24th, 25th, 26th & 27th June
Activities for the kids


Sports Carnival at Warburton Community


All are welcome

 Battle of the Bands Competition
 \$50 entrance fee

For more information call 08 89567655

NO Alcohol and Drugs

 Talent Quest
 \$25 entrance fee

 Men's Football Competition
 \$50 team entrance fee

All funds raised will go to help rebuild the Warburton Sports Club

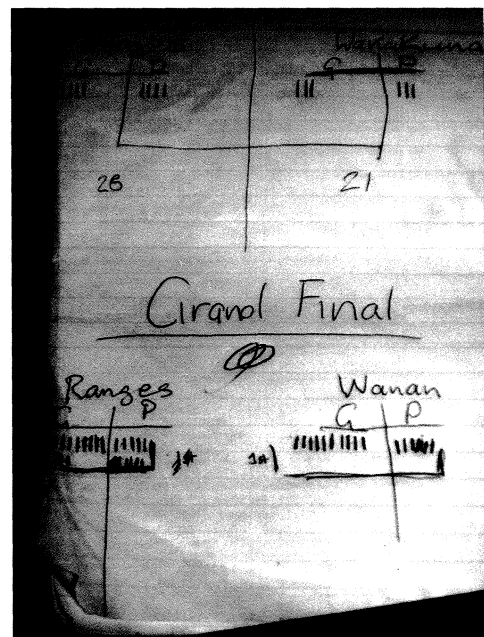
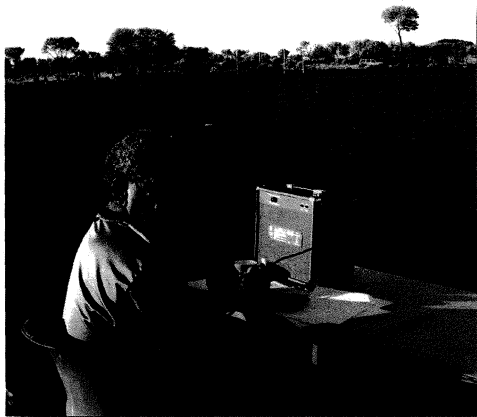
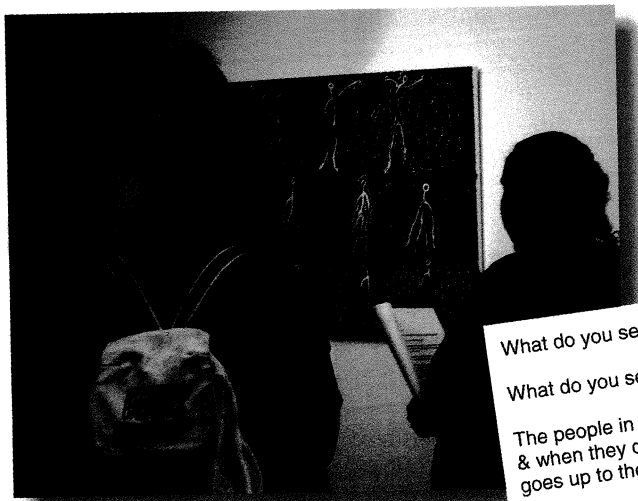


Fig.5.10a-b Speeches

When I started working in the schools I learn't how to teach Ngaanyatjarra language in classrooms with the children and also with Miss Glass and Miss Hackett. When I first learn't it It was really hard so I had to go through slowly and learn't alphabetical order and how to pronounce it .So this book will show the meaning of all the words and how to write them .It really good to have this Picture Dictionary for the Ngaanyatjarra Lands school to show the next generations, for our grandchildren.Also for the adult and older people to learn how to read and write in their own language . We already got our language, we speak it , but it's good to know how to read it .I want to thank Ameer and Dorothy Hackett and also Kazuko and Mrs Paget and Pam Collier for helping me with the Picture Dictionary. And also a very special thankyou to for her effort in getting the Picture Dictionary finished was'nt for Inge this book would'nt be here today. also thank you to the I.A.D. for publishing this book

(a)



Painting: Tjukurpa Yilkari-manta and Manta Kaninytjarra by Dorothy Ward.

(b)

What do you see in this painting in the 3 different sections?

What do you see in each section?

The people in the picture in the middle section they live there & when they die they go underground and their spirit *kuurti* goes up to the sky.

Sort of like our dreamtime and the 3 section are sky - *yilkari*, land - *manta* and underground - *manta kaninytjarra*.

Whitefellas see nothing, just the land, searching for *yapu* rock The *yamangu* it's already claimed - the sky the land & the underground, the spirits - the *yamangu* from the early days are already all round all 3 sections. They live there in all the rockholes, caves, and everywhere.

Those whitefellas comes in to land with their agreements for the *yamangu* to sign up to give away their spiritual land, all 3 sections together to the whitefellas.

innings columns marked against a corresponding list of players' names. Score-sheets are looked after carefully over the three days, scores are tallied for all games and the two teams with the highest scores play the grand final.

Team sports such as football, softball and basketball offer sites for 'situated learning'. Heath and Langman suggest that unrecognised learning events are embedded in sport and coaching events; players learn the 'role of rules' to regulate group interaction for which all members hold responsibility and these sustain 'the essentials of group collaboration as well as individual knowledge and skill development'.⁹⁵² These observations are also relevant in the Ngaanyatjarra context where team sports are usually mediated without non-Aboriginal support, and the girls demonstrate 'peer coaching' skills. The participants code-mix between English and Ngaanyatjarra and use 'role differentiated registers' to call out instructions and interact with spectators and players.⁹⁵³ Leah confidently uses an instructional mode, uttering commands, using negatives, conditionals, hypotheticals and superlatives and mathematical concepts (sequencing, ordering and counting). Through team sports participants learn, observe, trust their judgement and have ownership. Umpires and scorers know the rules of the game, maintain concentration, and integrate textual elements into practice. They also develop discipline, decision-making, time management and organisational skills.

The winter sports season continues until the football grand final is played and the winners return with victory trophies. As the heat of the summer takes over these sports take a lower profile and adolescents congregate once more around the basketball court while the community focus returns to the summer cycle of Law Business.

Community events

Other community events provide arenas for adults to assume literate roles: workshops (health, nutrition, youth, sexual health, cultural awareness), exhibitions, arts education programmes and music festivals.⁹⁵⁴ Exhibition openings and book launches, in particular, are textually mediated ritual speech events. Opening speeches, often in English, follow Western oratorical conventions. For instance, Silas opens the mining exhibition '*Trust*' in Kalgoorlie by reading a formulaic opening phrase from a co-authored written script:

⁹⁵² (Heath and Langman 1994: 87).

⁹⁵³ (Heath and Langman 1994).

⁹⁵⁴ In a catalogue from a 2002 exhibition of the Mirlirtjarra Ceramics (von Sturmer 2002), the Ngaanyatjarra manager highlights the design motifs on ceramics in her text: 'This is our story about Warburton Ceramics Centre. We started it for the young ladies. Their minds click for designs. The ladies come out every day, share their giggles. They work for their

Prime Minister, Mr Howard, Barry Hasse, Mayor Yurevich and distinguished guests.
My name is 'Silas'. I am from Warburton community. I am a Ngaanyatjarra man.

His closure is, however, an oral improvisation:

I have the privilege to be standing here, not only representing the Ngaanyatjarra Lands but for my black people throughout Australia.
Thank you

Patricia's speech for the launch of the *Ngaanyatjarra Picture Dictionary* is also co-authored. Not satisfied with the tone of the first draft, Patricia rewrites it by hand, then on computer. Patricia has assisted in compiling the dictionary and her speech embodies the significance of Ngaanyatjarra literacy in her life (Fig. 5.10a).

Exhibitions are also textually mediated events. In the past, stories of earlier generations were transmitted orally, now recent social history is being documented in acrylic painting, exhibition catalogues and, as I discuss earlier, funeral eulogies.⁹⁵⁵ Through these forms a collective written historical narrative is being collated, as exemplified in Una's response to the *Mission time in Warburton* exhibition:

I went one day and had a look and there was my grandfather's story, going down to Laverton. That's in that Cultural Centre there...Ooooh, I was really proud to read about my grandfather...I used to visit him...he must have been something like 90 years old. I was really happy to see that little story written down about my grandfather.

Exhibitions also incorporate banners, posters, t-shirts, and stories re-rendered as gallery notes for tour guiding or arts education activities (Fig. 5.10b). Paintings are signed with names, initials, a cross, or a 'squiggle' (i.e. an iconic representation of a cursive signature). Alphabetic text has also been incorporated into acrylic paintings and ceramics, and a signature 'ideograph' has been interwoven into an entire canvas by one artist.⁹⁵⁶

Conclusion

By using ethnography to trace the rhythms and patterns of community life I show that although literacy may not yet be normative practice across the whole Ngaanyatjarra populace, habits of reading and to a lesser extent writing are now second nature for around

own living, for their childrens. We like to share our little messages. Th[is] is our first time to have an exhibition, Year 2002. This story is true.' See: <http://www.warburtonarts.com/site/ceramics.php>

⁹⁵⁵ The Warburton Arts Project collection has been exhibited nationally and internationally and exhibitions documented in catalogues including: (Plant and Viegas 2002; Turner 2003; Warburton Arts Project 1993; Warburton Arts Project 1999) Paintings and objects are lodged in the Warburton Community Arts Collection.

⁹⁵⁶ See for example: Tjingapa Davies—*Right way to have a kurri* (1992), and Elizabeth Holland and Christine West—*All the early days rockholes* (2001) (Warburton Arts Project 1999). Warburton Arts Project also holds a painting by Pulpuru Davies—*Sandhills and Signature* (2004), and June Richards has done a series of paintings by (2006) where text covers the entire canvas.

one-third of the group. I show that according to certain indicators of competence varying levels of literacy competence exist, yet I suggest that such decontextualised measures reveal little about how people use literacy in everyday life and tend to support only dominant institutional literacy practices. By delineating benchmarks of competence, some people may be categorised illiterate irrespective of their literate behaviours, values and habits, and the 'non-standard' literacies which exist in their everyday lives.

Clearly, most Ngaanyatjarra are oblivious of the high order literacy processes and practices of the literate middle-class Anglo-European world. After all, with such short exposure to literacy and bounded by their narrow literacy experience, adults are only 'as literate as the tasks required'.⁹⁵⁷ Most literacy requirements are met either by an individual's own proficiency, mediated by networks of support, or literate processes are disregarded altogether.⁹⁵⁸ Reading events outnumber writing, and most literacy events tend to be in English, although Ngaanyatjarra texts prevail in the Christian domain. There are, however, situations where people do need literacy. In particular the administrative literacies required for interactions with the justice systems and in governance domains. The key is in finding an articulation between these domains. Literacy issues will not be ameliorated by more technical skills literacy training if policies and practices do not also take account of the sociocultural reality in the remote Aboriginal context. Processes also need to be found to ensure that more Aboriginal people have control over the administration of their personal affairs, and the language and literacy tools to engage in public affairs. Undoubtedly, literacy is being learned in school, however if there is 'no integral use' for what has been taught, this literacy will begin to 'atrophy'.⁹⁵⁹ Literacy practice is, I argue, contingent upon participation, and only becomes relevant when embedded in meaningful roles, identities and contexts of use.

⁹⁵⁷ (Clanchy 1979: 219).

⁹⁵⁸ (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 230; Barton and Padmore 1994).

⁹⁵⁹ (Street 1984: 190).

Introduction

In childhood one does not ‘acquire culture’, but one ‘acquires a set of practices that enable one to live in a culture’.⁹⁶⁰ Cultural practice results from the acquisition and transmission of everyday social habits and routines over successive generations. Children become culturally competent members of their own social and cultural group by acquiring ‘cultural tools’ and being socialised into the ‘cultural processes’ of the group.⁹⁶¹ Children are apprenticed in cultural processes through observation and ‘guided’ participation in mature community activities.⁹⁶² Child development is thus a process of socialisation or enculturation that is ‘inextricably bound to the process of orienting oneself within systems of meaning’.⁹⁶³ In ‘mainstream’ or literate ‘middle-class’ Western families literacy is integral to cultural practice. Most children in these families acquire literacy as a ‘cultural tool’ because they are socialised into literate systems of meaning, forms of discourse and social practice and they are embedded in ‘a way of life in which reading and writing are integral to communication, recreation and livelihood’.⁹⁶⁴

In this chapter I consider how Ngaanyatjarra children are socialised into oral and cultural practice and I discuss the impact of altered language socialisation processes on Ngaanyatjarra language. I show how literate practices have seeped into cultural processes and how they have been acquired and transmitted over the generations. I use ethnography to make links between social and cultural practice in contexts and locales that affect children and the process of language and literacy acquisition by focusing on the literate practices of children in one family group.

Socialisation into the Ngaanyatjarra world

In earlier times Ngaanyatjarra babies were born in the bush and ‘smoking the baby’ was common practice. *Puyungkatja* or *tjunarntatja* refers to someone who has been smoked as a baby ‘so as not to grow up to be a swearer or person who growls a lot’.⁹⁶⁵ Typically the

⁹⁶⁰ (Schieffelin 1990: 15).

⁹⁶¹ See (Gee 2004; Levinson et al. 1996; Rogoff 1990; Serpell 1993).

⁹⁶² (Rogoff et al. 1993).

⁹⁶³ (Miller 1996b: 183).

⁹⁶⁴ (Rogoff et al. 1993: 10).

⁹⁶⁵ (Glass and Hackett 2003: 354).

grandmother (MM) would smoke the baby to ensure that it 'grow up straight', as Louisa describes:

When the baby born in the bush, which rockhole, which spirit come from the baby, when the babies have the birthmark on them, grandmothers have to take responsibility for the baby, put it in a wooden dish in the smoke, then that man never grow up nuisance, he listen to the mother, never talk back to the family.⁹⁶⁶

Now babies are typically born in hospital and return home cosseted in baby clothes and blankets. Young children live in close proximity to their extended kin, often in multigenerational households where childrearing is shared. Sleeping and feeding routines are determined by need and babies are rarely left alone. Children develop into social beings through testing the parameters of autonomy and relatedness intrinsic to sociality in the Ngaanyatjarra, and broader Western Desert, world. According to Myers the communication of appropriate emotional states plays a vital role in the socialisation of Pintupi children into adults. Maturational development depends upon the ability to recognise one's social relatedness to others, and to subdue one's will in order to sustain relatedness and this development is perceived as an increasing ability to 'understand'. Small children do not 'know' (i.e. in Pintupi: *patjarra* or *ramarama* – 'unaware', 'oblivious', 'deaf' or 'unheeding'), so if they do not comprehend the importance of social events, throw tantrums or do not listen to or respond to parents they are considered 'not responsible' for their actions.⁹⁶⁷ Children are also not socialised into time and space rule-oriented boundaries, and this contrasts with the discipline expected of children during ceremony time.⁹⁶⁸

Language socialisation

All children acquire their first language or mother tongue through social interaction, however culturally appropriate 'communicative competence' and language behaviour patterns are acquired through language socialisation.⁹⁶⁹ Language plays a critical role in the 'construction of social identity'.⁹⁷⁰ As Maisie tells me:

Ngaanyatjarra is important for everyone because it is their birth, number one language and it's important for them not to lose their language, always keep it, it's their point, their own. Because the English is the second and we only use it when talking to the people like you, at shop, office.

⁹⁶⁶ See (Kral and Ward 2000: 147).

⁹⁶⁷ (Myers 1986: 107–9).

⁹⁶⁸ (Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. April 2006); (Shaw 2002). See also (Burbank 2006; Hamilton 1981) for similar ethnographic observations on Indigenous childrearing practices.

⁹⁶⁹ See (Romaine 1984; Snow and Ferguson 1977; Wells 1979). First language learning is seen as a natural process of *acquisition* (Krashen 1976), whereas in the Western pedagogic frame, second language and literacy are more commonly learnt via *instruction* (Ellis 1985). 'Communicative competence' is a sociolinguistic concept deriving from Dell Hymes (Hymes 1972; Hymes 1974) to refer to a speaker's underlying knowledge of the rules of grammar: that is the phonology, grammar, lexicon, and semantics and the rules for their use in socially appropriate circumstances, see (Romaine 1994: 24).

⁹⁷⁰ (Ochs 1993).

Language also acts as ‘an agent for the transmission of culture’ and it is through language children ‘acquire the ways and world views of their culture’.⁹⁷¹

Baby talk

Ngaanyatjarra language socialisation begins with the arrival of a new baby who is fussed over with much tactile interaction such as cuddling, pinching of cheeks and kissing, in conjunction with the undulating prosodic contours of ‘baby talk’. Observers of Aboriginal baby talk characteristically describe an incremental scaffolding approach to language acquisition in the use of diminutives, reduplication and a specific baby talk lexicon, as well as regular phonological modification of standard adult speech: consonant elision and consonant substitution and accompanying gestural interaction. Ngaanyatjarra baby talk exemplifies similar features:⁹⁷²

<i>Baby talk form</i>	<i>Standard Ngaanyatjarra</i>	<i>English translation</i>
<i>akula</i>	<i>ngala!</i>	eat it!
<i>kikila / kikilawu</i>	<i>tjikila!</i>	drink it!
<i>tutula</i>	<i>tjutjurla!</i>	cover it!
<i>ampu</i>	<i>yampula!</i>	hold me! pick me up! hug me!
<i>awulu</i>	<i>ngayulu</i>	I – 1 st pers. sing.
<i>utuna</i>	<i>nyuntunya</i>	you – 2 nd pers. sing.
<i>atjutjaya</i>	<i>ngarlitutjarra!</i>	poor thing!
<i>nyampi</i>	<i>nyampi</i>	child’s version of a traditional women’s dance/song
<i>uupa</i>	onomatopoeic sound and gesture	‘kiss’
<i>nyam-nyam</i>	onomatopoeic sound and gesture	‘yummy’
<i>nya-nya</i>	onomatopoeic sound and gesture	‘food’

Source: Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis pers. comm. 2006

Studies of baby talk suggest that simplified registers or modifications of adult speech assist in scaffolding the language learning process for young children.⁹⁷³ Olson asserts that in taking a ‘scaffolded’ approach to language learning caregivers model and objectify language by treating it as an ‘artifact’ that can be segmented, named and analysed. This is seen as an important antecedent to literacy learning, however Olson suggests that ‘nonliterate parents or less literate parents’ may make no assumptions about the scaffolded process of language teaching.⁹⁷⁴ Contrary to Olson’s assertion, I would suggest that, irrespective of literacy ability, Ngaanyatjarra/Ngaatjatjarra/Pitjantjatjara caregivers are conscious that through

⁹⁷¹ (Romaine 1994: 25; Schieffelin 1990: 14).

⁹⁷² (Douglas 1976; Jacobs 1988). Other linguistic studies on Aboriginal child language development note the early stages of verbal communication (Bavin 1991; Hamilton 1981; Lowell et al. 1996), including ‘baby talk’ (Bavin 1993; Hoogenraad 2005; Laughren 1984).

⁹⁷³ (Ferguson 1977).

⁹⁷⁴ (Olson 1984: 188).

talking 'baby talk, soft way' language is scaffolded and children 'learn to speak'.⁹⁷⁵ Later in this chapter we see how Ngaanyatjarra caregivers also scaffold written language for young learners.

By participating in social and cultural practice children acquire the linguistic and cognitive orientations of their elders.⁹⁷⁶ Like in other Aboriginal settings, the Ngaanyatjarra world is highly social, interactive and verbal.⁹⁷⁷ As families sit around the fire or in the shade of verandas and trees they *tjumangkarriku* and *tjumalku* – 'tell stories and gossip'. Story-telling and language play (including speech arts such as rhyming, metaphor, alliteration and onomatopoeia) are intrinsic to everyday discourse.⁹⁷⁸ Children are immersed in a language rich environment where they acquire the speech styles and oral narratives of their culture by listening to, and interacting with, those who speak *tjaa yuti* ('strong/clear language')—and increasingly with speakers who 'code-switch' and 'code-mix' between Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra or Pitjantjatjara, and English.⁹⁷⁹ From early childhood children also acquire the lexical and gestural vocabulary that denotes kinship relations and the rules that govern social organisation.

Play sheds light on children's growing familiarity with adult oral and cultural practices.⁹⁸⁰ Through mimetic actions children work out 'the "scripts" of everyday life—adult skills and roles, values and beliefs'.⁹⁸¹ Childhood play has been noted by researchers as important for the acquisition of language. Romaine, drawing on Hymes' notion of 'communicative competence', suggests that play is 'an important part of the child's development of communicative competence'.⁹⁸² Traditionally, unstructured play in the Ngaanyatjarra world involved few material artefacts and was imitative of adult oral discourse and social practice

⁹⁷⁵ (Kral and Ward 2000: 147). See an account of baby talk and language learning in Pitjantjatjara written by a Pitjantjatjara speaker for a Pitjantjatjara story writing contest (Goddard 1994) and (Ellis 2006) for a discussion on Ngaanyatjarra/Ngaatjatjarra baby talk and language learning by Ngaatjatjarra linguist Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis.

⁹⁷⁶ See (Laughren 1978; Wilkins 1991).

⁹⁷⁷ As noted also by Jacobs in her study of Ngaanyatjarra language socialisation (Jacobs 1988) and in other language socialisation studies in Aboriginal Australia (Hamilton 1981; Lowell et al. 1996).

⁹⁷⁸ (Douglas 1979: 49).

⁹⁷⁹ The term 'code-mixing' indicates that interlocutors may not be aware of mixing languages and the vernacular has become 'mixed and/or simplified' (AIATSIS/FATSIL 2005: 28). 'Code-switching' 'typically involves bilinguals who know both languages well but choose to alternate between them' (AIATSIS/FATSIL 2005: 85). See (McConvell 1988). At Warburton varieties of spoken English range between, on one end of the continuum, a form resembling Standard Australian English, and at the other end a form of 'interlanguage' (Ellis 1985) used by learners of English as a second language. Bilingual speakers who have spent intensive periods interacting with English speakers tend to have a notable proficiency in English demonstrating broad-ranging grammatical, semantic, prosodic and pragmatic competence, especially middle-aged speakers who have lived in the Eastern Goldfields. Young adults who have grown up in the Eastern Goldfields tend to speak a form of 'Aboriginal English' although many maintain a passive knowledge of Ngaanyatjarra.

⁹⁸⁰ (Goodwin 1990; Serpell 1993).

⁹⁸¹ (Rogoff 2003: 298).

⁹⁸² (Romaine 1984: 141; Hymes 1972). See also (Bruner and Plattner 1984; Vygotsky 1966).

through children's pretend songs and dances (*tjilkuku turku* and *tjilkuku nyarnpiku*), and pretend hunting (*marlu-marlu*) and 'cubbyhouse' (*wiltja-wiltja*) games.

Play with little spears and pretend they spearing kangaroo. Sand story for girls, long time ago used to get a leaf and tell the story, but we don't see that anymore. But the important one is the people, for man can go and sit down in the school and talk to the kids, tell the stories, dreamtime stories, different things they been doing, they'll know then...it needs to be taught in school. Telling old stories, hard language.

Over time, introduced Western objects have become intrinsic to imitative play and such play is now often nuanced with textual and numerical dimensions as children mimic reading and writing, and the gambling practices of their elders.⁹⁸³

Oral narratives

In many Indigenous cultures oral narratives have been central to instruction and learning in a manner that fostered attention, imagination and metaphoric thinking through the incorporation of 'moral themes and virtuous acts for children to emulate, or strange and fearful myths to deter them from doing wrong'.⁹⁸⁴ In the Western Desert, oral memory and the transmission of cultural knowledge and learning through the *tjukurrpa* (in this sense meaning both Law and story) have been critical to the maintenance of a regulatory framework that has bound culture over generational cycles. Children's 'dreamtime stories' or moral tales were told as sanitised versions of the *tjukurrpa*. In the socialisation of Ngaanyatjarra children a fear of *mamu* or 'bad spirits' was (and still is) inculcated to discipline or keep children obedient (*ngurlutjingalku* or *pinangkatjunku*) and to steer them away from sacred objects or locations (*pikangurlu*). *Mamu tjuma*—stories about 'monsters' or scary spirits were used to teach children the 'right way' to act. Stories are still told today, but have a diminishing potency.⁹⁸⁵

Daniele Klapproth suggests that in Western Desert storytelling practice the 'narrative negotiation of culturally relevant concerns' are lexicalised in 'cultural core concepts'.⁹⁸⁶ For instance, core cultural concepts such as being led by one's elders and being led 'straight' (i.e. metaphorically along the straight path, the 'right way') are used as structuring principles in narratives. In Ngaanyatjarra, the adjective *tjukarurru* – 'straight' is often used in terms of moral imperatives in sacred and secular domains, that is, to denote the 'proper way' of talking and behaving, or fulfilling obligations and responsibilities. Stories of two brothers—

⁹⁸³ (Plant and Viegas 2002). See also (Haagen 1995; Rockchild 1999).

⁹⁸⁴ (Rogoff 2003: 292). See also (Basso 1984). In preliterate Europe oral tales were used to instruct children and adults alike and metaphorical norms of conduct were embedded in narratives. It is argued that the introduction of printed fairy tales had an impact on the sociocultural nature of storytelling as the content and nature of the stories were transformed sanitised and simplified literary tales for an audience of children (Klapproth 2004: 61).

⁹⁸⁵ Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. 2004.

tjuma kurtarra-pula (i.e. ‘story of brother-pair’)—are typically found in the Ngaanyatjarra canon.⁹⁸⁷ Here the story schema thematically incorporates the seniority and leadership of the *kurta* (‘elder brother’) over the *marlany(pa)* (‘younger brother’, literally meaning the one coming behind) and is emphasised both as an organising principle of the narrative and a socio-structural metaphor. Through storytelling speech styles and the rules of appropriate interaction are learned. In the ‘two brother’ genre, a *kurta* can, for example, talk straight or make direct requests of a *marlanypa* until the younger brother reaches a certain age, after which time the *kurta* must *tjarlpa wajalku*—communicate indirectly.⁹⁸⁸

Through storytelling, Western Desert children are socialised into cultural understandings by taking on ‘the role of the receptive and attentive listener and observer who, from informed interpretation, arrives at his or her own conclusions about what is going on’.⁹⁸⁹ Klapproth suggests that children learn to discern the ambiguous multilayered complexity of stories through a process of ‘retrospective discovery and understanding’ of the moral consequences of protagonists’ actions. Traditional discourse styles emphasise children learning through listening, observing and understanding, as Molly recalls:

It was a very good education for me, strong family, strong teaching, strong inside. They taught me a lot of things those old people, when they taught me a lot of things I learn, I sat down and listened. Every time they taught me...they showed me how to do it, I used to watch them...I think they learn a lot from their older people not from the whitefella, but from their parents. It’s very good strong, you feel you gotta help your people, following, you got it right in your heart whatever they taught you. I listened to my old people and they taught us many things.

Brooks describes a discussion about the process of the cultural transmission of knowledge with an older Ngaanyatjarra man who commented that ‘[w]hen old people give a little bit of story to young people, it works inside their head [to become the full story].’ From this perspective ‘knowledge is real’ and in time can ‘work on the brain’ to reveal itself.⁹⁹⁰ Then as children grow they are expected to follow in the footsteps of previous generations, as Molly explains:

To be strong children have to learn the way of the land, in the land. Our Law, to be strong. That’s what we’re teaching our children. We teach them the way they taught us. Same way, not whitefella way.⁹⁹¹

Many elders struggle to transmit cultural knowledge in the old way so that children can follow in their footsteps. In other families like the ‘Gibson Desert’ families Louisa’s daughters have been ‘learning ceremony’. Louisa’s daughter says ‘my nanna always explain

⁹⁸⁶ (Klapproth 2004: 258–270).

⁹⁸⁷ See (Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]; Murray 1979 [1969]-c).

⁹⁸⁸ See (Lester 1981: 28).

⁹⁸⁹ (Klapproth 2004: 320–21). See also (Walsh 2006).

⁹⁹⁰ (Brooks 2002d: 97–8).

⁹⁹¹ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

me and I understand that, they tell me what to do, take me out bush'. Darleen's grandmother tells the girls: 'Oh when you grow up you'll be taking my place when we passed away'.

Mirlpatjunku—telling sand stories

Developmental studies on the acquisition of narrative competence indicate that 'narrative discourse structures are commonly acquired and internalised by age ten in a child's process of socialisation'.⁹⁹² We see this exemplified in *mirlpa* the typically female storytelling practice acquired in childhood throughout the Western Desert and across Central Australia.⁹⁹³ *Mirlpatjunku* is now commonly enacted by girls using the sharp end of a bent 'story wire' that is typically carried slung around the neck—fencing wire having replaced the traditional use of twigs and gum leaves (Fig. 6.1).⁹⁹⁴ In this story-telling practice oral narratives accompany drawing in the sand, and iconography, symbolic representations, spoken narrative and gesture are integrated into a 'coherent narrative whole'.⁹⁹⁵

Christine Watson suggests that sand story-telling is a cultural practice that has a 'societal role' as one of the means of 'inculcating the *habitus*' of Aboriginal society in young people. Sand stories illustrate conversations about everyday events, impart life skills and 'a sense of family ties, social mores and folklore' to teach youngsters their family histories.⁹⁹⁶ In a Ngaatjatjarra speaking community in the east of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, anthropologist Laurent Dousset notes the use of iconography drawn in the sand to represent the cultural schema of social relationships and genealogies, and in this schema social relationships 'include representations and elements of space-structuration'.⁹⁹⁷ Cultural information is transmitted to the next generation as young girls acquire skills, knowledge, and social relationship and kinship rules.

Through story-telling, girls are developing oral communication skills and good story-tellers formulate cohesive narrative discourse rendered in an appropriate prosodic form

⁹⁹² (Klapproth 2004: 57).

⁹⁹³ Other references to Western Desert sand story practice include (Eickelkamp 2005; Todd Woenne 1973; Wallace and Wallace 1968; Watson 1997). Also see the Warlpiri (Munn 1986 [1973]) and the Arrernte (Green forthcoming; Wilkins 1997). A comparable tradition is noted in the Alaskan Eskimo practice of girls telling 'mud knifing stories' (deMarrais et al. 1992).

⁹⁹⁴ *Mirlpa* is the noun form (syn. *milpirnti*, *tjinytja*); and *mirlpatjunku* is the verb form (syn. *milpirntinku*, *tjinytjatjunku*) (Glass and Hackett 2003: 159). A sand story is drawn with fingers and hands or beaten with wire or stick on smoothed ground during oral storytelling. Sam Mollenhauer (pers. comm. May 2006) recalls that in Warburton around 1951 an appropriately shaped gum twig was used and 'the story would be tapped out on a flattened sandy surface, after that each stanza of the story, would again be flattened for the next part'.

⁹⁹⁵ (Wilkins 1997: 136). Wilkins describes how Arrernte, narratives told to young children were typically accompanied by drawings in the sand and an auxiliary sign language (Wilkins 1997: 134).

⁹⁹⁶ (Watson 1997: 109). Watson's research was conducted at Balgo, a West Australian Aboriginal community to the north of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

depending on the audience. Numerical and textual elements are also evident in this traditional practice. Writers note the use of a tally of small straight lines used to count each person in the representation of social relatedness, with each relationship set linked by a straight line.⁹⁹⁸ I have noticed a similar tally system of counting in a sand drawing about a man with many wives. Ngaanyatjarra mothers and daughters are now writing initials and ‘names on the ground with story wire’ as they tell stories.⁹⁹⁹ In this cultural practice girls are verbalising stories, drawing cognitive links and matching these with symbols drawn in the sand—all essential ‘pre-literacy’ skills.

Language shift

Language socialisation practices have altered, however, and this is accelerating language shift. The introduction of Western schooling and changed social practice has affected Ngaanyatjarra cultural processes. While some oral traditions remain strong, Ngaanyatjarra language is endangered.

Ngaanyatjarra children are now more distanced from first language immersion contexts, for longer, than ever before, Western institutional practices, values and expectations are replacing cultural learning, and schooling has reduced the time spent acquiring and using complex linguistic structures, routines and traditional speech styles.¹⁰⁰⁰ The discourse structures and stories of past generations are not being transmitted as they once were. English language television and alternative night-time activities occupy the social space previously filled by oral narrative and language play. As Wesley explains:

I think a lot has to do with talking, life before was built around communicating, passing on knowledge, now it’s not like that. In the evenings now somebody is watching TV or listening to music or something like that, you’re not [talking], like I grew up with no TV...you talk a lot, explain how things work and how you achieve things.

Traditional roles are also diminishing, as exemplified in this lament from a Ngaanyatjarra *ngangkari* (‘traditional healer’):

I worry about the new young apprentice *ngangkari* these days. They are not getting the same bush upbringing that we old men did. I worry about them. *Ngangkari* business is too important to lose.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁷ (Dousset 2003: 19–20).

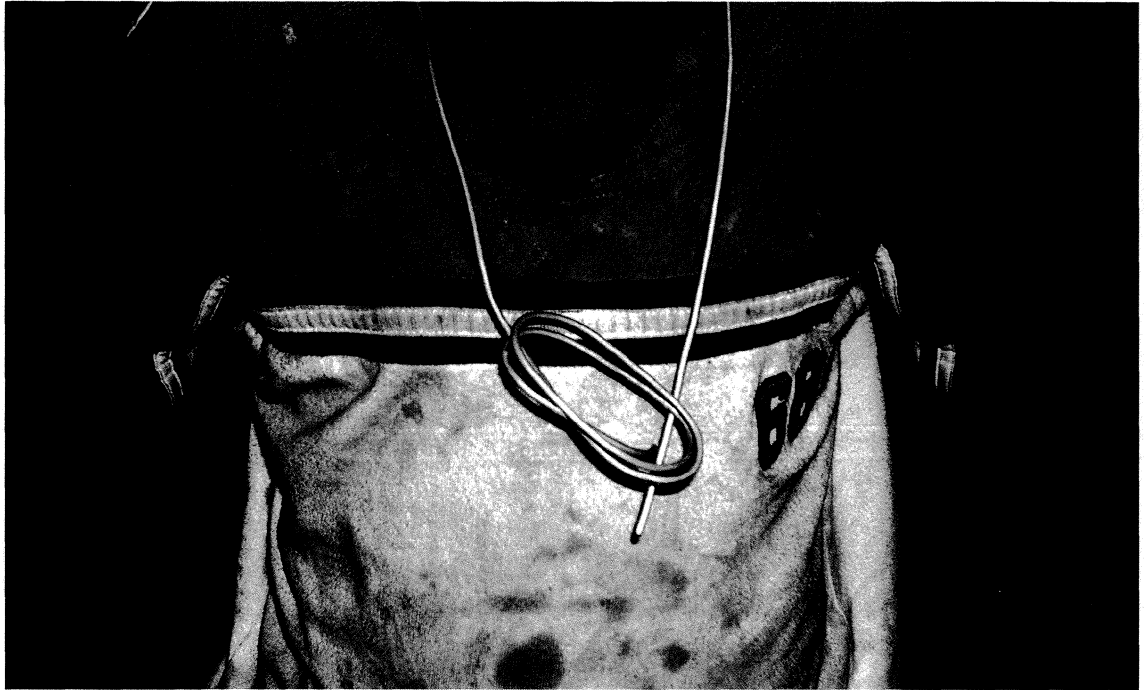
⁹⁹⁸ (Dousset 2003: 24–5; Watson 1997: 114).

⁹⁹⁹ In a presentation at the *Imagining Childhood Symposium* Alice Springs NT, September 2005 Eickelkamp remarked on how contemporary geometric symbols, representative of buildings, and alphabetic symbols had entered the lexicon of symbols she observed at Ernabella, a Pitjantjatjara-speaking community in South Australia (Eickelkamp 2005).

¹⁰⁰⁰ Shirley Brice Heath comment from presentation at *Imagining Childhood Symposium*, Alice Springs NT, September 2005.

¹⁰⁰¹ (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council Aboriginal Corporation 2003: 53).

Fig. 6.1 Story wire for telling sand stories



Previously, complex oral and gestural forms were learned, and used by children, *in situ*, with knowledgeable elders telling stories, noting signs of seasonal change in the flora and fauna, observing animal and human tracks and navigating using directional terminology and spatial orientation skills on land and in the night sky.¹⁰⁰² Now, with less time spent hunting and gathering, contextualised occasions for talk around tool production, animal behaviour, sign language when stalking prey, or meat and food preparation and distribution according to kinship relationships have diminished. Alongside the dissipation of contexts for oral story-telling, the transformation of oral genres into simplified written versions for children (or translated into English) is also reducing the function of oral narratives as moral or metaphorical cultural guides.¹⁰⁰³ It has been suggested that an outcome of changed practices and schooling in English, is that some Western Desert youngsters are ‘losing some of the insightfulness of their own language’ and may not be achieving ‘adequate self-expression in any language’.¹⁰⁰⁴

We still got our culture, you know, we got our culture...that culture is very important...Language is very important for our life too, we can't lose that. But to get together, like to mingle with the white people they have to learn that second language, that second language is that English. But our first language is Ngaanyatjarra. Ngaanyatjarra language is very important.

Clearly, language shift is in process in Western Desert and other Aboriginal languages.¹⁰⁰⁵ Howell suggests that language change at Warburton has increased in the last few years with more non-Ngaanyatjarra speakers residing there.¹⁰⁰⁶ Older Ngaanyatjarra speakers note that young people's speech is sounding like ‘baby talk’ as they tend to revert to using less complex sounds and increased code-mixing. Lexical substitutions for kin terms are

¹⁰⁰² See (Laughren 1978; Wilkins 1991; Wilkins 2004; Wilkins 2006) on the acquisition and use of spatial and directional terminology in Warlpiri and Arrernte. See also (Wallace and Wallace 1968; Wallace 1968) on Pitjantjatjara children learning and (Lewis 1976) on spatial orientation in the Western Desert and (Lowe 2002) on hunting and tracking in the desert.

¹⁰⁰³ Published collections of Ngaanyatjarra narratives tend to be transcriptions of oral texts. Some are rendered into simplified versions for a general Ngaanyatjarra or European audience such as *Tjuma: Stories from the Western Desert* (Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]) or academic texts embedded with interlinear glossing such as *Ngaanyatjarra texts* (Glass and Hackett 1979 [1969]). Goddard in his description of a Pitjantjatjara story writing contest in 1988 found that most written stories were based on traditional genres and story-telling practices (*mamu* stories and sand stories) (Goddard 1994: 319). See also (Gale 1995; Klapproth 2004; McGregor 1989).

¹⁰⁰⁴ (NLLIA 1996: 128, Vol. 2).

¹⁰⁰⁵ (AIATSIS/FATSIL 2005; Glass 1984; Langlois 2004). See also (Fishman 1991; McConvell 1991b; Rigsby 1987).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Herbert Howell email interview 2004. Howell noted changes occurring in command forms of verbs: *warrpuwa* (hurry!) is often said *warrpura* by younger generations. *Kunmarnarra* has become *kunmarna* or *kumarna/kumana*. The prohibitive verb-infinitive + *maaltu wanti* has become ‘don’ verb-command’ (heard with elided /t/). For example *pampuntjamaaltu wanti!* (don’t touch) has become *don’ pampula*. Glass has also noted changes in case-marking (Glass 1984). Additionally, the introduction and common usage of English loan words, many of which end in a consonant, has increased the percentage of words with stem-final consonants ‘perhaps accelerating the trend for reanalysis of the suffix *-pa*’ (which functions as an allomorph of the absolutive case: i.e. ‘the citation and unmarked form for all common nouns, adjectives and adverbs with stem-final consonant’). Differing phonotactic patterns in other Western Desert languages (Pitjantjatjara and Pintupi) mean that English loan words with final consonant tend to add a vowel, whereas English loan words in Ngaanyatjarra take *-pa*. For example:

‘town’	P. <i>tawuna</i>	Ng. <i>tawunpa</i>
‘school’	P. <i>kuula</i>	Ng. <i>kuulpa</i>
‘camel’	P. <i>kamula</i>	Ng. <i>kamulpa</i>

common, for example, ‘mum’ or ‘mummy’ is replacing ‘*ngunytju*’ (mother), ‘daddy’ is used for ‘*mama*’ (father) and ‘nanna’ for *kaparli* (grandmother/daughter). Dyadic mother-child code-mixing, sometimes referred to as ‘mix-mix’, reveals the extent of language change as shown below:

<i>sheku papa</i>	her dog	<i>Don't nyakulan.</i>	Don't you look.
<i>meku</i> friend	my friend	Same way <i>yarra!</i>	Go the same way!
<i>whoku</i> name?	whose name?	Brown one <i>mantjila!</i>	Get the brown one!
one <i>girlku</i> name	one girl's name	Don't <i>pampula</i> anything, just <i>nyakuma kutju!</i>	Don't touch anything just look only!
them two <i>ku</i> daughter	their daughter / the daughter of those two	You'll soon <i>tjunku</i> cake <i>pa</i> .	You'll put it in the cake soon.
<i>mumnga</i>	mum+ (ending for name with word-final consonant)	How you know hangman <i>ku?</i>	How come you know how to play hangman?
Headache <i>arringurna</i>	I'm getting a headache	<i>Nyuntuku</i> turn, hot water <i>mantjilku, kuwarri</i> , hot one <i>palunya</i> .	Your turn, get the hot water, now, it's hot water that one.

Language remains, nevertheless, a salient symbol of Aboriginal social identity and cultural heritage, and contemporary speech varieties ‘can reveal a range of creative linguistic and sociolinguistic processes that have brought about the translation and transformation of new indigenous ethnic identities’.¹⁰⁰⁷ At Areyonga, Langlois notes that in spite of media and Western influences on teenagers’ use of Pitjantjatjara, the impact does not seem to be as extreme as in other Aboriginal language contexts.¹⁰⁰⁸ Similarly, I found that language remains a strong identity marker and Ngaanyatjarra adolescents are transforming it to suit the contemporary context with some young adults consciously code-switching according to domain.¹⁰⁰⁹ As Naomi comments:

It's important for us to keep it because that's our culture. Like talking in Ngaanyatjarra, going out bush, sometimes we talk English like when kids go to school, young people working together, when they're not working they can talk Ngaanyatjarra, or go out bush because we have to keep it strong, not to throw it away like a rubbish. Keep it strong, the culture...important for the both, English and Ngaanyatjarra. Have both of them Ngaanyatjarra and English, Ngaanyatjarra is for talking at home, but English when you're working or going out, town.

The 2005 National Indigenous Language Survey rates Ngaanyatjarra as ‘critically endangered’.¹⁰¹⁰ Whether or not this assessment is accurate is unclear. It is evident that child language socialisation practices have altered and changed linguistic and cultural

¹⁰⁰⁷ (Rigsby 1987: 360). See also (AIATSIS/FATSIL 2005; McKay 1996).

¹⁰⁰⁸ (Langlois 2004: 11). Areyonga is Western Desert Pitjantjatjara speaking community in the Northern Territory where Langlois notes two language varieties are spoken: ‘Areyonga Teenage Pitjantjatjara’ and ‘Traditional Pitjantjatjara’.

¹⁰⁰⁹ See an elaboration of domain theory (Fishman 1972) in relation to Aboriginal languages and education: (Harris 1990b; Harris 1991; McConvell 1991a).

¹⁰¹⁰ (AIATSIS/FATSIL 2005: 193). The survey also assessed Pitjantjatjara as ‘severely endangered’ (AIATSIS/FATSIL 2005: 189).

factors have impacted on spoken Ngaanyatjarra, but whether this shift will lead to language death is yet to be seen.

Home, school and learning

As noted in Chapter 1, in earlier eras in the Western world families were expected to take more responsibility for childcare and learning to read at home. Childcare often took place alongside adult family members within the workplace and this gave children the chance to observe and ‘make sense of the mature roles of their community’.¹⁰¹¹ Modernity has increasingly institutionalised knowledge, and professionalised expertise, and there is more regulation of social practices than in previous generations. Across remote Aboriginal Australia the intervention of outside ‘experts’ (e.g. teachers, nurses, nutritionists and welfare workers) has been displacing the ‘moral authority’ of the Aboriginal family to prescribe normative childrearing behaviours and practices. Moreover, this is interpolated within a context where there is no cultural model for outside intervention; the traditional model of learning is gerontocratic and one becomes a ‘knowledgable’ adult through a different culturally-grounded system. The domain of child development thus represents a site of conflict between traditional cultural knowledge and introduced professional knowledge.

Schooling is now assumed cultural practice, experienced as possessing an objective reality of its own, as ‘an external and coercive fact’.¹⁰¹² It is also the locus around which many child and adult social interactions pivot. Conceptualisations of schooling are, however, drawn from Western cultural premises about child development and institutional learning. Outside educators tend to carry preconceptions about literacy and are imbued with the assumed normativity of the culture of Western schooling. This often precludes them from seeing the ‘webs of significance’ that surround the meaning and connectedness of literacy at deeper cultural and historical levels and few perceive the complex interconnections outside the school boundaries.¹⁰¹³ With limited knowledge of community processes teachers generally assume that the important learning takes place inside school, and approach their students as *tabula rasa*. It is also commonly assumed that few Ngaanyatjarra adults can read or write and that literacy rarely takes place outside of school. As one Principal claimed: ‘reading and writing ability is totally dependent on school attendance’, and another posited:

¹⁰¹¹ (Rogoff 2003: 130–40). See also (Giddens 1991).

¹⁰¹² (Berger and Luckmann 1975 [1966]).

¹⁰¹³ (Geertz 1973: 5).

I don't get a sense of there being any real place of literacy...only related to the school when we need to get permission forms...I have thought about this and I just don't see it. There's advertising the movies, there's getting permission forms...I don't know, I have no evidence of it. But I haven't been looking for evidence...I just am not seeing it.¹⁰¹⁴

It may be conjectured that poor school attendance is perhaps a manifestation of families counteracting the undermining of their moral authority as childrearing experts.¹⁰¹⁵ The profound diminution of Ngaanyatjarra autonomy is a source of humiliated cultural pride: 'government people and education say Aboriginal people are "no-hopers", but it's not true' a community leader tells me. The Ngaanyatjarra characteristically have a 'predisposition to reject authority', sometimes manifest in resistance to Western institutional domination, as exemplified in the following reaction:¹⁰¹⁶

That Principal is no good, driving around forcing kids to go to school...shouldn't be doing that, forcing [them] to go to school. Just because we're black...shouldn't be coming around and bossing us. White people think they are more clever just because we're black.

It may, however, be considered that from a Ngaanyatjarra perspective schooling imposes constraints on how children are reared and how time is spent. When asked, most Ngaanyatjarra affirm that education is important, as Jim illustrates: 'Education is very important for young people, if you got no education you are nowhere, you'll go nowhere, you need that, it's very important for the future'. But in fact, some adults may be taking on 'a mimetic form' of constructed social practice by stating that 'education is important' (in what Taussig terms the 'space between'—'a space permeated by the colonial tension of mimesis and alterity').¹⁰¹⁷ Yet, irrespective of 'school-time', their children commonly accompany them to the store, the office, to work and meetings, to funerals, football, out bush and to 'Business'. In this conflicted space, schooling perhaps represents an 'empty practice' where Western child development outcomes are disconnected from the lived reality of the adult world.¹⁰¹⁸ A teacher describes how 'everyone thinks school is important, but they don't really know why'.¹⁰¹⁹ Some educators interpret this as indifference to schooling:

Sending kids to school is the most important thing, but adults are not interested in education. Education is not a priority for them and they don't care. They don't support the school. They say they care about education, but it's all words and no action as they don't send their kids to school.¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹⁴ During 2004 three Principals were employed at the school, an indication of the high teacher turn-over rate.

¹⁰¹⁵ See (Beresford and Partington 2003; Folds 1987; Schwab 1998; Schwab 2001b) for other analyses of Aboriginal resistance to Western schooling.

¹⁰¹⁶ (Brooks and Shaw 2003: 4). Myers interprets Pintupi autonomy as a form of a reluctance to permit others to impose their authority over oneself (Myers 1986: 22).

¹⁰¹⁷ (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 73; Taussig 1993: 78).

¹⁰¹⁸ (Giddens 1991).

¹⁰¹⁹ Teacher—Interview 13/6/04.

¹⁰²⁰ Principal pers. comm. 2004.

Despite assumptions about community illiteracy, literate strategies are commonly utilised to communicate between school and home. Children receive award certificates such as 'Reader of the Week' to take home, but they are often lost along the way. Teachers only occasionally assign homework as there is a general expectation that it will not be done. To a certain extent their assessment is correct as homework, and the concomitant unstated expectation that it is the caregiver's role to assist, is not yet taken for granted cultural practice in many families, as the following scenarios illustrate. Kenny tells me that he doesn't know if his seven year old child can read or write because he's never seen it and he has 'no chance' to do any reading or writing with her because 'they just play around, kids, most kids'. Another time I encounter David's granddaughter, aged about nine, walking home from school carrying worksheets labelled 'Homework' inside a plastic sleeve. Next day I ask David if he did the home work with her:

*No, we just have a look and she take it back to school.
Did her mother help her to do it?
Don't know, maybe she did.*

I later asked the girl's mother if she had helped her with the home work:

No didn't help her, she done a little bit but she too busy playing—I told her.

In other families, however, literate modes are utilised and children are socialised into literate practices. One day Arthur's five year old *kaparli* Leeshana arrives home with a note from her teacher. Arthur assumes that the letter must be from 'Miss Hackett', but Leeshana asserts her comprehension and ownership of the literacy event and responds by saying, *ngayukutju* – 'my one':

L: *Tjamu, ngaanya*, that whitefella//
A: //Letter that one.
L: No.
A: I know that one. That's a letter from Miss Hackett.
L: No, school.
A: I know that yellow paper.
L: Nuh, school one.
A: *Munta*, school one.
L: *Ngayukutju*.
A: *Munta, yuwa*.
[Arthur reads the note out loud]
*Dear parents, School finishes at 10 am tomorrow, teachers
have a meeting in Yulara. School starts again on Monday.*¹⁰²¹
A: Their school teacher going to a meeting, so no school. *Yuwawu!*

Arthur then turns to me and further emphasises that in his family literate behaviours are encouraged:

¹⁰²¹ Reading aloud from written text.

I encourage them to go to school...at home she read, she has a lot of little books, get'em from town and bring them, good books...She write her name or drawing like cat, dog. She know how to write her name good way.

We see here how home-school communication is in fact a way of inculcating the young into literate compliance with bureaucracy. Children in literate homes start acquiring a bureaucratic ethos from a young age by observing how adults (like Arthur in this instance) respond to simple administrative literacies such as school-notes. This in turn may develop into a systematic way of dealing with adult administrative literacies (see Chapter 5).

Family literacy

An overarching frame of deficit is commonly attributed to Aboriginal family learning environments.¹⁰²² This is contiguous with a 'rhetoric of blame' that surrounds the question of family support for literacy and numeracy in many 'non-mainstream' contexts.¹⁰²³ Literacy research emphasises the importance of family literacy practices as antecedent to successful literacy acquisition at school where 'success in school is intimately related to the early acquisition of literacy'.¹⁰²⁴ On the one hand, writers such as Olson postulate that in cultures that are primarily oral, children are not gaining the prerequisite 'metalinguistic awareness' for successful literacy learning. That is, they are not learning that language is an object that can be segmented—and the parts of speech analysed and discussed—whereas literate parents are transmitting 'a literate orientation in the process of teaching their children to talk' and 'it is in the metalanguage that the concepts critical to literacy are carried'.¹⁰²⁵

On the other hand, ethnographic studies of family literacy tend to highlight the strengths of diverse language and literacy socialisation contexts.¹⁰²⁶ A sociolinguistic or anthropological perspective on language, literacy and learning has opened the way to seeing beyond deficit theories (see Chapter 1).¹⁰²⁷ Writers emphasise that literacy is a cultural

¹⁰²² Some commentators on Aboriginal education express the view that for children from remote communities to 'succeed' at school the behaviour of the parents will have to be changed. Johns suggests that schooling in the remote context is 'concerned with overcoming elements absent in the home: peace and quiet, food, civility, reading skills, discussion, use of the English language and the work ethic' and the 'new emphasis on preschool education is an explicit acknowledgement of making up for those things that are missing in the culture of the home and the community' (Johns 2006: 21).

¹⁰²³ (Auerbach 1989; Gee 2004; Wells 1985). Educational anthropologists working in Indigenous contexts have questioned the apparent 'silence' of students as indicative of a cultural and linguistic deficit, see (Briggs 1991; Crago 1992; Dumont 1972; Philips 1983). Alternative paradigms have emerged that interpret classroom silence as 'identity-producing cultural performances' in a broader ideological battle over 'cultural representation' (Foley 1996: 81). Nevertheless a sense of failure has been absorbed, leading students to drop-out of the schooling system, or in Aboriginal Australia with students feeling 'shame' in school (Harkins 1990).

¹⁰²⁴ (Wells 1985: 249).

¹⁰²⁵ (Olson 1984: 170). See also (Wallace 1992: 40-42; Yaden and Templeton 1986).

¹⁰²⁶ (Auerbach 1989; Cairney 2003; Heath 1982b; Heath 1983; Leichter 1984; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988; Taylor 1994 [1983]; Varenne and McDermott 1986; Varenne and McDermott 1999a).

¹⁰²⁷ (Au and Jordan 1981; Cazden and John 1971; Chavajay and Rogoff 2002; Crago 1993; Duranti and Ochs 1986; Heath 1983; Kulick 1992; Ochs 1982; Ochs 1988; Ochs 1990; Ochs 1993; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Schieffelin 1990; Schieffelin and Gilmore 1986; Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977).

process that 'everyday practice' is 'a more powerful source of socialization than intentional pedagogy'.¹⁰²⁸

Children who learn to read successfully do so because, for them, learning to read is a cultural and not primarily an instructed process. Furthermore, this cultural process has long roots at home – roots which have grown strong and firm before the child has walked into school. Children who must learn reading primarily as an instructed process in school are at an acute disadvantage.¹⁰²⁹

As Varenne and McDermott note, 'one does not "fail" familial literacy' as it is 'all but invisible in the family' and embedded in everyday tasks, where 'literacy as such is not highlighted'.¹⁰³⁰

Research has identified that children from literate school-oriented families commence school better prepared. Shirley Brice Heath indicates that where children have not been participating in specific school-like oral discourses, literate practices and child-focused instructional activities at home, they are less likely to do well in school after the initial few years.¹⁰³¹ In Western 'middle-class' homes 'caregiver talk' or 'motherese' tends to parallel 'teacher-talk' used in classrooms.¹⁰³² In both contexts interlocutors scaffold language for children in a literacy-oriented manner.¹⁰³³ Heath posits that in such homes children are prepared for schooling through modelled or instructed patterns of language socialisation including dyadic adult-child question and answer routines and ways of talking about books in literacy-oriented activities that correspond with structured periods of child development.¹⁰³⁴ Structured literacy learning activities are organised so children:

...learn the distinctions between contextualized firsthand experiences and decontextualized representations of experience, they come to act like literates before they can read. They acquire the habits of talk associated with written materials, and they use appropriate behaviors for either co-operative negotiation of meaning in book-reading episodes or story creation before they themselves are readers.¹⁰³⁵

In these ways the continuity between home 'caregiver talk' and the kind of adult-child interactions used in schools is reinforced as children learn the ways of 'taking meaning' from written texts by paying attention to text and having the right interactional style for orally displaying their 'literate orientation'.¹⁰³⁶

¹⁰²⁸ (Lave 1988: 14).

¹⁰²⁹ (Gee 2004: 13).

¹⁰³⁰ (Varenne and McDermott 1999a: 49).

¹⁰³¹ (Heath 1982b; Heath 1983).

¹⁰³² (Cazden 1988; Snow and Ferguson 1977).

¹⁰³³ The term 'scaffolding' is drawn from Vygotsky's notion of the 'zone of proximal development': as a way of guiding learners to a higher level of understanding (Vygotsky 1978). Literacy researchers have adapted this concept (Ninio and Bruner 1978; Rose et al. 1999).

¹⁰³⁴ (Heath 1982b).

¹⁰³⁵ (Heath 1983: 256).

¹⁰³⁶ (Heath 1982b: 56).

In literate Western middle-class homes routine social practices such as mealtimes and bedtime are taken for granted cultural processes. Mealtimes often provide a context for structured discourse routines that mirror 'school-like conversations'.¹⁰³⁷ This practice emphasises the individual separateness of family members who spend time away from each other and then come together around the dinner table to reflect on their unshared experiences using 'explicit, voluble talk'.¹⁰³⁸ Bedtime story-book reading is also a given in such homes.¹⁰³⁹ Western children tend to sleep in their own bedrooms replete with literacy artefacts, and an array of child-focused objects and toys that foster structured routines like bedtime reading. Bedtime reading is oriented around one-to-one (dyadic) interactions that mirror the dyadic social organisation common to Western schooling.¹⁰⁴⁰ Additionally, it is intertwined with Western assumptions around the 'proper' care of objects such as books (perceived as 'continuing assets' which must endure into an 'unspecified future time').¹⁰⁴¹

Literacy transmission in Ngaanyatjarra families

In the newly literate Ngaanyatjarra context what is striking is the way in which literacy has become a transmitted practice—a taken for granted cultural process in some Ngaanyatjarra families, mainly the families of the more visible literates, outlined in Chapter 5, whose public roles and identities are intertwined with literacy.¹⁰⁴² Here literacy artefacts and literate behaviours are permeating the space between public and domestic practice as adults participate in textually mediated events and transmit literacy artefacts and discourse into the home domain, thus children in these families are seeing reading and writing as elemental to everyday life.

As mentioned earlier, most Ngaanyatjarra homes are not 'print rich environments'; bills and miscellaneous papers are not kept on pin-boards or fridges, and children's pictures and school-work are rarely displayed, although some homes have posters, Christian pictures or calendars on the wall.¹⁰⁴³ In Ngaanyatjarra families there are few structured routines around sleeping or eating: children and teenagers eat 'whatever, whenever and wherever they like' and children tend to sleep close to kin in communal spaces.¹⁰⁴⁴

Like *yarmangu* families when they newborn when they're on *mimi* and they start crawling and walking parents don't teach them like things like reading and all that. Parents they teach them the other way,

¹⁰³⁷ (Rogoff 2003: 301–303).

¹⁰³⁸ (Martini 1995).

¹⁰³⁹ (Heath 1982b).

¹⁰⁴⁰ (Rogoff 2003: 141–147). Western dyadic interactional styles have also been found to contrast with communal Aboriginal communication styles and oral narrative traditions (Walsh 1997).

¹⁰⁴¹ (Hamilton 1979: 111–113).

¹⁰⁴² (Berger and Luckmann 1975 [1966]).

¹⁰⁴³ (Heath 1983; Heath 1982b).

¹⁰⁴⁴ (Shaw 2002). See also (Burbank 2006; Hamilton 1981).

Fig. 6.2 Ngaanyatjarra children's books and colouring-in packs

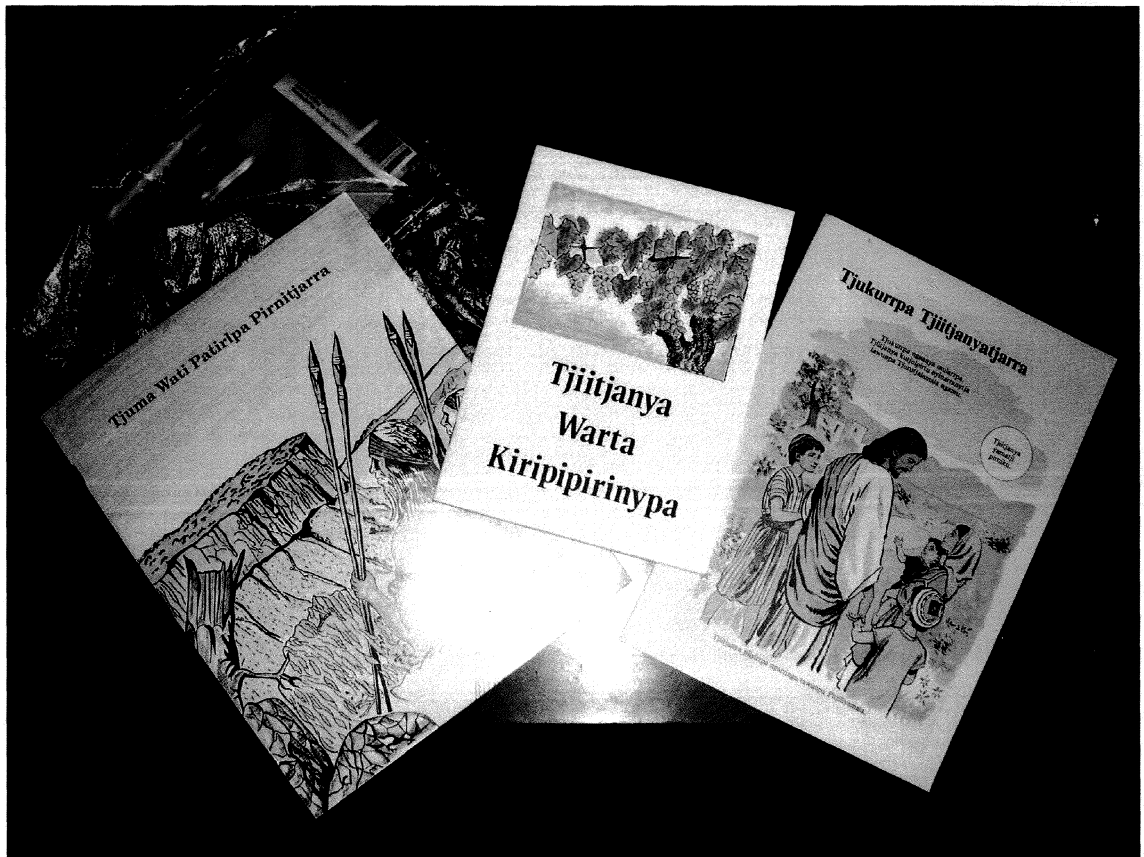
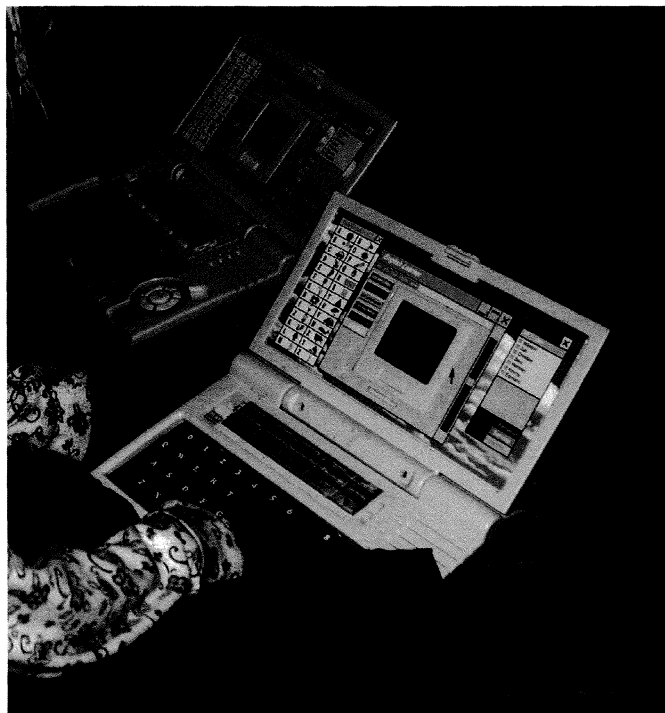


Fig. 6.3 Children with toy laptop computers



when they must be three, four, Aboriginal ways, going for *maku*, goanna, all that. What we eat, what's right and what's wrong. But in whitefellaku way, *tjiji* little ones grow up they listen to their parents read them bookpa, it's like *nyaapa*, bedtime stories but in Aboriginal way, kids they just lay back, there's no books, just keep the stories in their head, tell the stories, dreamtime story. Whitefellas are different they have the book there...But when Aboriginal kids go to preschool everything is new to them. Look like they're going into another world.¹⁰⁴⁵

Consequently, Western-style early literacy activities such as bedtime reading and school-like conversations at mealtimes tend not to be structured into social practice. Instances of structured child-oriented home literacy events are rare in part because of limited access to literacy resources. English children's books from the store are cheap, but not reader friendly. Christian story-books remain important and children are exposed to Christian literacy practices from early childhood. Visits by Glass, Hackett or Mountney are often the impetus for after-school informal literacy events (using Ngaanyatjarra secular and Christian stories, songs and worksheets) and children 'always go over there to buy books and read' (Fig. 6.2).

In some families children have been observing their elders acquiring Ngaanyatjarra literacy for two generations since Glass and Hackett commenced teaching adults in the 1960s. From the 1990s Mountney and Geytenbeek also taught Ngaanyatjarra literacy and 'children were constant visitors' and 'some of the brighter ones learned to read by watching as stories were read to them and trying to read for themselves.'¹⁰⁴⁶ As Howell notes:

A few adults and several children have been taught by others of their families to read Ngaanyatjarra. Some children have sat with their mothers or grandmothers and learned Ngaanyatjarra literacy from them. Some have somehow picked up literacy in Ngaanyatjarra by applying what they know of English literacy skills to texts printed in Ngaanyatjarra.¹⁰⁴⁷

Primarily this is evident in the 'mission families' where literate practices have been building up over three to four generations. Mary and Jack learned to read Ngaanyatjarra from Hackett and Glass in the 1960s. Their daughter Jacinta remembers:

Bibles, that's all, my mum would read it. I can read Ngaanyatjarra language from my mother...When she reads I always see her reading and listening and that's how I got learn.

When Jacinta was a teenager she continued learning to read Ngaanyatjarra with Hackett: 'we would learn every afternoon when she was living here'. In turn, Mary taught her grandchildren to read: 'I used to teach all the little kids in this house, at the tree...teaching the *Mama Godku* book, learning'. She describes how now her grandson Troy can read the Bible:

¹⁰⁴⁵ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

¹⁰⁴⁶ (Glass 2000: 4).

¹⁰⁴⁷ Howell—Email interview 2004.

Yuwa ninti purlkanya. I been learning him to do all that...*Yuwa, ngayuku tjamu*...I always sit down and read, sit and read...*ngurrangka*...*Yuwa, ngayuku tjamu*, he know. *Yungarralu readtamalpayi*...*Yuwa, ngayuku tjiji*, his aunty always teach them.

Troy is proud of his own reading and his grandfather's skills:

He know it for English, Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara language, three language, he can read, before he used to read. He read newspaper, dictionary, that old first one, first language.

Una, whose interest in reading was stimulated by observing her mother learning Ngaanyatjarra literacy, then read with her children during the 1970s and 1980s:

I read them story-books, like *Three Bears*...We might get it from the secondhand, they come on the truck...some bookspa, not really lot of books. Sometimes there's books from Christmas, always read them...They used to go school then come back. I used to sit down and read: 'Oh I've got a lovely little book here for you.' Then they sit down and listen. And I always tell stories, I love telling stories for my girls when they were little, in English and in Ngaanyatjarra.

Molly says her grandson likes reading because 'we used to keep a book for him all the time, Bible stories...and *Three Bears*, we used to buy reading books in the shop and read to him'. David contributed texts and drawings to a book of published Ngaanyatjarra stories and David's adult son recalls his father teaching him to read from this book.¹⁰⁴⁸ Jim's wife reads her Bible with her grandchildren every Sunday. Lucy says she keeps her reading and writing strong by observing her mother Patricia: 'when she do it, I look at her when she write and read'. Lucy is also now learning Ngaanyatjarra reading with Hackett and this is the catalyst for home reading with her five year old daughter Shantoya.

It must also be noted that literacy transmission is taking place in families where the encounter with literacy has been more recent and the parent and grandparent generations were unschooled. Louisa was a child when her family came out of the Gibson Desert in the 1960s and represents the first generation in her family to acquire literacy. She tells me:

I read lot Bible, I read any Chapter or any Prophet who wrote Bible...That's how I get my sense back from reading and all that. Because I don't know the hard word in the Bible...I read, trying to read it, but I can't read it cause I have to spell it, then I read it. But I pray and like read straight out. Read all the history in the Bible, New Testament, Old Testament.

Louisa's daughter Darleen has acquired the habit of reading from her mother and describes how her 'favourite thing' is to sometimes 'read Bible with my mother, she got a two Bibles, and it's one youth Bible...young people's, English...because it's got stories in there'.

Family literacy research suggests that literacy transmission often occurs at the 'margins of awareness'.¹⁰⁴⁹ However, in Dawn's recollection (Family G) of how she used to read with

¹⁰⁴⁸ (Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]).

¹⁰⁴⁹ (Taylor 1994 [1983]: 58).

her daughters Naomi and Leah, we see a conscious reflection on the process of literacy transmission:

I used to story *watjalpayi*, *tjukurrpa* read*tamalpayi*, bedtime stories *kuliljaku* like books*pa*, you know dreamtime stories. *Watjalpayi yuwa*, read*tamalpayi*, *tjaa yutulu* and English. From the, books*pa*, Bible*ku* paper with Miss Hackett and Miss Glass and my kids really liked it...when they come Bible*ku*, [we] used to take it home.

Dawn does not use reading as a contrived instructional activity, but is, nevertheless, aware that children are learning from her. She recalls her children *nyakula nintirringkula* – ‘watching and learning’ – from her as she read the Bible at home at night. Dawn is repeating the process with the next generation of children and claims ‘that’s how she learn*ringu*, she can sing and read*tamalpayi*...songbook*angka*, *yuwa*, *nintirringkupayi*?’. She also comments: ‘now today my little *tjamu*, he really likes the books, *tirtu nyakupayi* and *nintipukalpayinya*, teach him how to talk and read and count’. Leah affirms her mother’s strategies:

On her own in English and in the language, and we sit down and listen to her when she reads and she tell a story. And when she’s singing a song [my son’s] there clapping his hands, he know when she’s singing. Sometimes she sings from that songbook and learn his [her] little grandson, learning him right way.

Research also indicates the importance of memories of literate things in the transmission of a knowingness about literacy from one generation to the next.¹⁰⁵⁰ Jennifer recalls her mother receiving *Jungle Book* from the missionaries:

My mother always gets some books from the mail...Christian book...I used to get it and just help my mother read it, read it aloud so she can hear. Used to read it all the way, finish. I always tell her: ‘You have to learn us, kids, reading...like giraffe, elephants, lions, monkeys. African stories’.

This same copy of *Jungle Book* is noted by another family member, hence emphasising the importance of such gifts. Jennifer also reflects on her literacy strategies:

I happened to ask mother: ‘What is this?’ That way I got learn, she told me. And I asked her so many question...I used to read, read the Bible, if my mother hasn’t got eyeglass I used to help, even my sister, we help her to read. When she reach fullstop and couldn’t think what that word is we just say it, we help her out.

In Silas’ recollections insights are gained into the tensions that underlie incipient Christian and secular literate practices, and traditional oral practices:

In my after school when I go home my mother used to read a story time, like the Christian story, little baby Jesus...so you know I was learning like the education side, school but my mother was learning on the Christian side Jesus and all the stories. But she also learned me all the Dreamtime stories too. Dreamtimes, you know, because they never lost the Dreamtime stories, like the Seven Sisters...Sometimes when I play up in the camp, in the house when they trying to make me go to sleep, they tell a story then and then after that we go to sleep then. Like a bedtime story.

¹⁰⁵⁰ (Taylor 1994 [1983]).

Silas describes how now his wife reads the grandchildren 'bedtime stories like the *Seven Dwarves*, *Snow White*' and he explains characters from European fairy tales within the Ngaanyatjarra cultural frame: 'I tell them "No, it's a story, you know dreamtime story what happened in England"' and I tell them England is a long way, big place'.

These memories and reflections illustrate that the habit of reading has become transmitted social practice in some Ngaanyatjarra families and children are being 'apprenticed' in literacy through observation and 'guided participation' with mature community members.¹⁰⁵¹ They also shed light on the significance of iterative social practices such as reading the Ngaanyatjarra-English *New Testament* and singing from the hymnal or 'songbook' in the home domain.¹⁰⁵² In these communal literacy events anybody can participate, irrespective of literacy competence, either by decoding, or by memorisation and oral recitation.¹⁰⁵³ These children may not be acquiring solitary literacy practices typical found in literate middle class families, nor the dyadic oral and literate skills that match the kind of adult-child interactions used in schools, but they are acquiring the shared, communal literacy skills that match Ngaanyatjarra sociality.

Children reading and writing—a special situation

I now focus on the development of reading and writing with children in one family group. (Their literacy histories can be found in Appendix B—Families D, F and I).¹⁰⁵⁴ Rosie and Harold were schooled in the mission and now have numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Their granddaughters are proud of the fact that their grandfather 'he read and write and he talks English'. Hackett and Glass have since taught Ngaanyatjarra literacy to three generations in the family. Rosie and Harold's adult daughters (some of whom went away to secondary schooling in the Eastern Goldfields in the assimilation era), still do vernacular literacy lessons and help with Bible translations. Their granddaughter Nancy also sometimes reads the Bible 'with Miss Hackett in language and the singing book...she

¹⁰⁵¹ (Rogoff et al. 1993).

¹⁰⁵² (Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project 1999; Ngaanyatjarra Bible Project 2003).

¹⁰⁵³ A similar practice is noted among Afro-Americans where non-literate elders assist their grandchildren in learning to read Scripture by activating their memorised oral 'reading' strategies (Dorsey-Gaines and Garnett 1996).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Over the fieldwork year, and on subsequent visits, I observed the development of children's literacy in one extended family group. The literacy events described in this section came to light as a consequence of social interactions with the family in and around my house and their households. I created an environment in my house where children's books, paper, pencils and crayons and jigsaw puzzles were available. The proximity of my house to their camp meant that family members of all ages often came over to play and read, and the children would regularly borrow books to read at home and return. The children's interest in reading, drawing and writing inspired me to provide more literacy resources. Initially this was not done with the intention of observing the children. With their permission, I began to observe their practices in this resource-rich 'home literacy' environment and made field-notes, took photos of texts, collected texts and recorded some literacy events on mini-disc if it was not obtrusive. Hence I describe this as a 'special situation' as I was participant as much as observer. At the outset I acknowledge that my presence and relationship with the children has influenced the data, as acknowledged in other child socialisation studies (Miller 1996b; Scollon and Scollon 1981).

always give me little book to read'. Rosie and Harold's great-granddaughter Rosina is in the fourth generation to pass through schooling and their granddaughter Nina is in the third. The girls come from a family of visible literates. Nina's other *kaparli* (FM)—Phyllis whom we met in earlier chapters—takes on public roles requiring literacy. Rosina's grandparents Carmel (Rosie and Harold's daughter) and George also assume responsible textually-mediated leadership roles. Rosina's mother Adina went to high school near Kalgoorlie up to Year 10.

Both Nina and Rosina attended the community-run playgroup before starting school in 2004. The playgroup functions as a bridge between the home language socialisation environment and social, oral and literate practices required for 'school readiness'. The girls are bilingual Ngaanyatjarra-English speakers who enjoy going to school and attend regularly.

Hackett recalls how she taught Adina to read Ngaanyatjarra: 'I took her through everything and little 'Rosina' sat there and observed all that we've done'. Adina says she never buys children's books, but takes her Ngaanyatjarra readers home. Pamela (Nina's MZ) borrows children's stories (in Ngaanyatjarra and English) to read to the children as they go to sleep. Mothers commonly sing with their children from the hymnal *Turlku Pirminya*. One day I observe Adina singing with children and following the words in the hymnal with her finger. Afterwards she tells me: 'You know Inge, when they go sleep they singing!' and Rosina responds: '*Nintirringurna ini?*'—I'm learning, aren't I?. Another day I observe Nina sitting by herself reading and singing songs memorised from *Turlku Pirminya*. The iterative experience of singing in church and at home, in both Ngaanyatjarra and English, embeds literacy events within the sensation of affective connectedness to family and community. This generation of children are also observing the parent generation using computers for writing and film production in the '*Nintirringkula* Youth Arts' project and the children participate in computer literacy events and this inspires the purchase of toy laptop computers for Rosina and Nina from the community store (Fig. 6.3).

In April 2004, Rosina is four years and five months old (4.5) and Nina is five years and five months (5.5). Around this time I notice Rosina randomly scribbling alphabet-like letters on walls with a stolen texta. Rosina and Nina are both able to 'write' their names as 'tags' and self-describe: 'I'm writing my name'. Adina tells me that when Rosina was about three years old she taught her to write her name as a 'tag' using the initials of family names 'so she can get learn for the first letters' that represent her name. Nina's mother also taught her

daughter to write her name as the initial letters of her first name, mother's surname and father's surname. As I discussed earlier, social relationships are illustrated and inculcated through oral narratives and *miripa* 'sand story-telling'. Girls acquire the habit of story wire 'writing' in the sand and transfer it to other surfaces with ease. Rosina confidently scrawls graffiti-like letters on any surface and has learned her tag as a representation of kin on the mother's side and the father's side (Fig. 6.4):

R = (initial of first name)

O = (initial of her *father's father's* surname)

M = (initial of her *father's mother's* surname)

S = (initial of her *mother's father's* surname)

L = (initial of her *mother's mother's* surname)¹⁰⁵⁵

In this instance, girls are learning to write their name as a representation of their belongingness to the group, a representation of 'insidership'.¹⁰⁵⁶ This process is about teaching the sociality of what the name represents as much as it is about teaching writing *per se*. In another family, Patricia teaches her granddaughter Shantoya to write her name in a similar manner. Patricia considers it important for children to 'know how to read, write and know the family, family lines, family trees, know where my grandparents come from...know where my mother and father country is'. These children are learning a 'tag' which interconnects them with previous generations, contrasting with Western children who are inculcated into a first-person subjectivity where a child is more likely to learn to write his or her name as a representation of the individual self. Remembering here that English personal names only came into common written usage from the 1960s, contrasting with 'the social meaning' traditionally embedded in the oral evocation of names.¹⁰⁵⁷ From early on Ngaanyatjarra children are socialised into the web of relationships that will sustain them for life.

When Rosina and Nina started school the girls' teacher noticed that they could write their names as initials and, unlike other children in their cohort, were skilled in letter-formation and drawing and could engage in English story reading question and answer routines. Once at school, Nina soon begins writing her full first name. After three months at school Rosina begins making a transition from writing her name as an initialised tag to writing her full first name. She continues using her tag until around December, when at age 5.1 she is writing her full first name only. The girls exhibit other 'emergent' writing behaviours: concentration, pencil control, letter recognition and sound-symbol correlation, and when

¹⁰⁵⁵ The letters represent pseudonyms.

¹⁰⁵⁶ See (Brooks 2002b).

¹⁰⁵⁷ (Dousset 1997: 53).

Fig. 6.4 Rosina (age 4.5) writes her name as initials

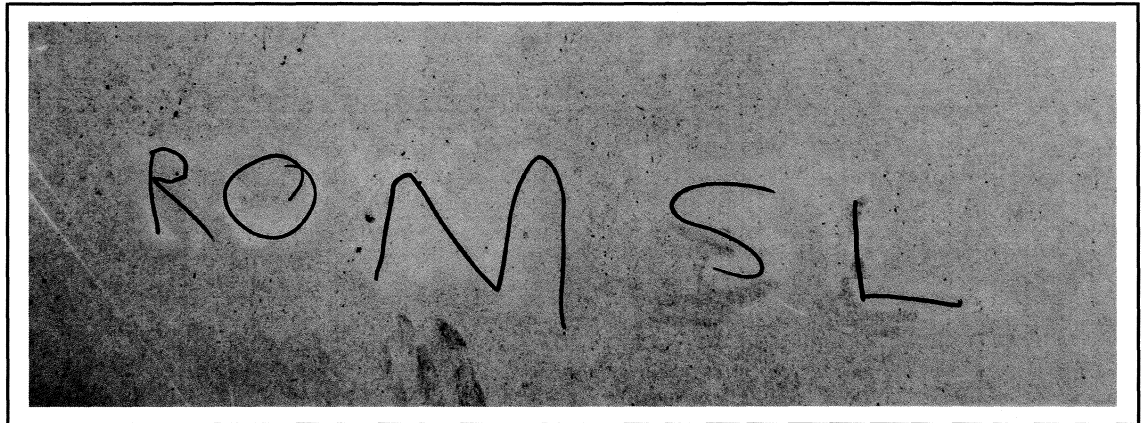


Fig. 6.5 Rosina (4.6) copies a sentence her mother has written.

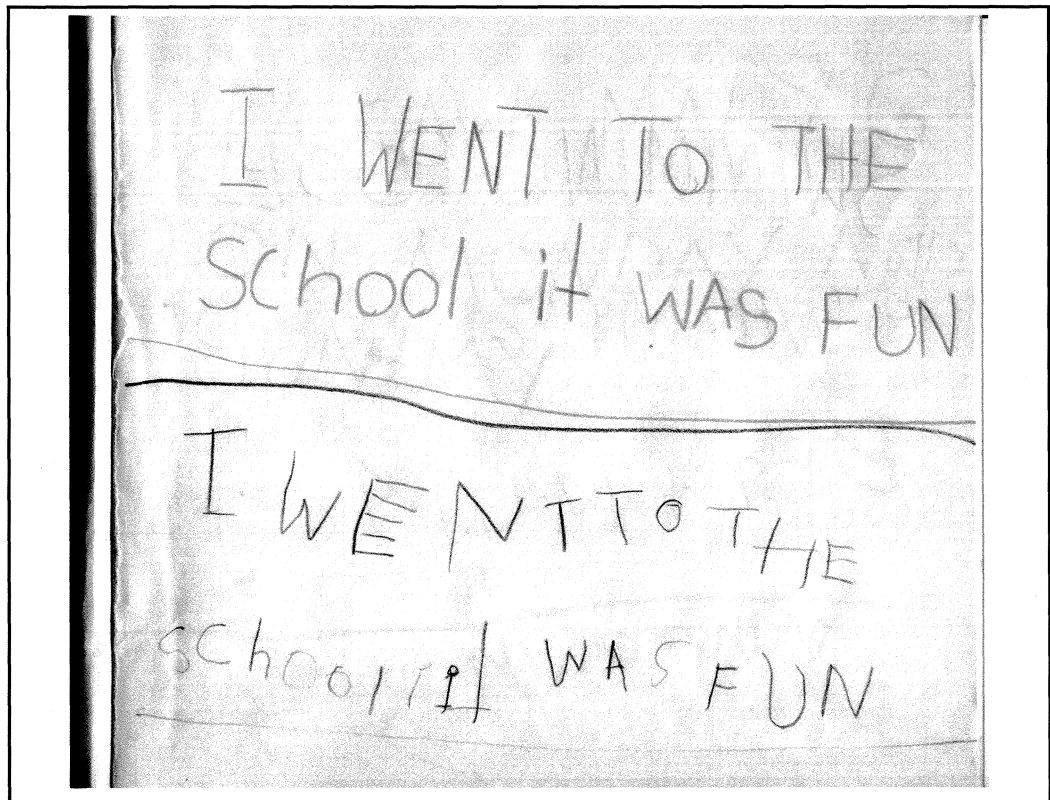


Fig. 6.6 Nina (5.6) writes a story using invented spelling

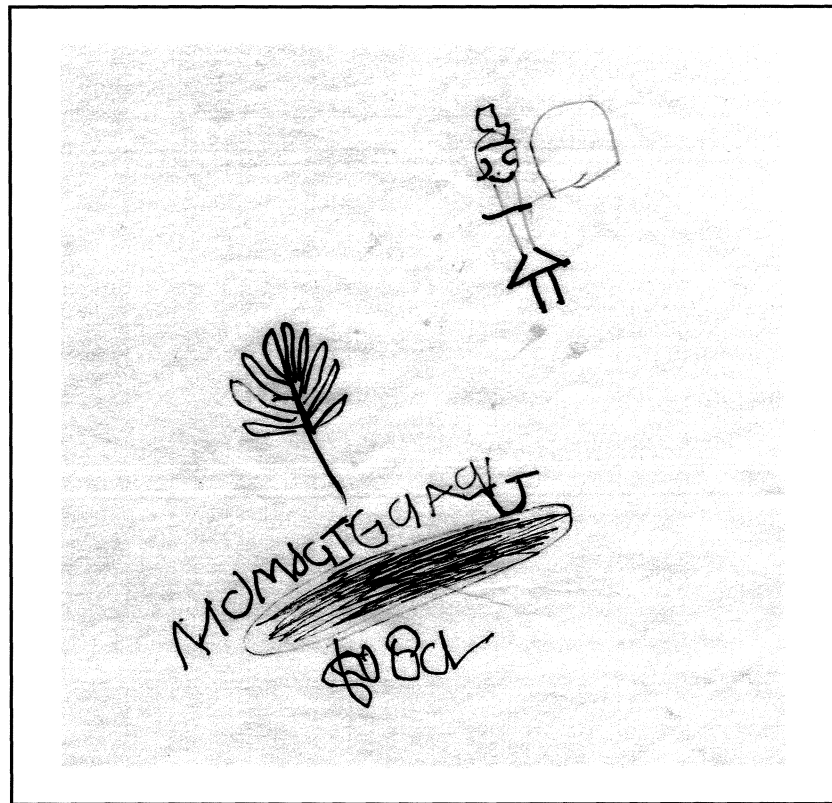


Fig. 6.7 Nina (5.11) copies a sentence her MZ has written



'writing' they are aware of left-to-right and top-to-bottom writing conventions as they draw lines to 'write' on.¹⁰⁵⁸

Girls 'writing'

Pretend writing and 'invented spellings' (i.e. spontaneous early attempts at writing as children begin hypothesising about spoken and written language using a mix of spelling conventions and mimetic symbols) emerge during the year also.¹⁰⁵⁹ In May I give out scrapbooks and pencils and watch Adina as she initiates writing sentences to describe Rosina's pictures and words for Rosina to memorise and copy (Fig. 6.5). Nina also draws pictures and uses invented spellings to 'write' a story (Fig. 6.6) and code-mixes as she retells the story: 'I know go to my *warta*. I know go into my *kapi*.'

One day in August when the girls are visiting, Nina asks me: 'Inge how your name?' I spell it out with finger-writing on the table while Adina says: 'I - N for Nancy - G for girl - E for egg'. Adina guides Nina to the initial sounds of common words, reinforcing a sound-symbol correlation and breaking words into segments. She says to Rosina: 'do your name long way, not initials' and Rosina starts finger writing on the table. In October I observe Nina's *ngunytyju* (MZ) Pamela encouraging Nina to 'write' other family names using capital letter first initials. Nina knows most of the letters of the alphabet by now and has a developed knowledge of the English sound system. Pamela guides her and writes: 'I LOVE Mummy' (Fig. 6.7) on a piece of paper and encourages Nina to copy it. By December, Rosina is writing stories using left-to-right and top-to-bottom 'pretend' cursive writing on hand-drawn lines, illustrating her comprehension of 'writing-like' behaviour. She 'reads' the squiggly marks pointing her finger from left to right: 'I like orange. I like apple. I like banana.'

In these instances we see caregivers and children talking about language as having 'an objective existence'. Even though these caregivers may be perceived as 'less literate' by mainstream standards here we see them taking a 'scaffolded' approach to language learning by treating it as an 'artifact' that can be segmented, named and analysed. These children are acquiring a 'metalinguistic awareness' as an important antecedent to literacy learning not just from school, but also from caregivers.¹⁰⁶⁰

¹⁰⁵⁸ See (Wells 1985: 237; Hall 1987) for discussions on children's emergent writing practices.

¹⁰⁵⁹ (Read 1986).

¹⁰⁶⁰ (Romaine 1984: 173; Olson 1984: 188).

Girls 'reading'

Over the fieldwork period joint story-book reading becomes a regular activity, sometimes I read to the children and sometimes they borrow books and adults read to them at home. At other times children 'read' to themselves or each other. Over the course of the year I observe the ways that these children interact with text and the mediating role that adults play. In September Rosina chooses a maths concept book and snuggles up to her *kaparli* Carmel who starts reading to her. As she completes the final page Carmel asks Rosina: 'How many green cars? How many wheels?'

Rosina knows the routine, but counts the wheels randomly. Immediately Carmel guides her: 'No, you got to do it like this' and scaffolds the literacy event by demonstrating counting in a left-to-right and top-to-bottom motion. In November, Rosina (R) and a non-Aboriginal adult (G) read the same book. In this scaffolded interaction Rosina demonstrates her familiarity with asking and answering book-oriented questions in English:

- R: How many red ones?
G: How many red ones? 123456789!
R: How many, which one? Red ones!
G: Red ones, 12345678! Ooh 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23! 23 red ones!
Yikes! There's a lot of red isn't there?
R: Lotsa red, little one, bigges', bigges', bigges', bigges' bigges', bigges', big!
G: Yeah, look at the stripey one and the spotty one.
R: Big one, big one, big one.
G: Biggest one?
R: Smalles', smalles', smalles', smalles', smalles'.
G: There's the littlest one right at the end.
R: Little right on the end.
G: Yeah, it's the littlest.

The children in the neighbourhood listen to stories often and Rosina and Nina, in particular, rapidly memorise them. The story-book *Bamboozled* (Fig. 6.8) became a favourite because of the 'funny' pictures and references to familiar lexical items.¹⁰⁶¹ In the following literacy event Rosina is reading *Bamboozled* with (G). (G) does not read the story word-by-word as the English is too complex, instead she intuitively paraphrases, using the pictures to bring the story alive. She asks questions and moves the focus away from the story-book itself by drawing on Rosina's real world knowledge. In this instance, what Heath terms 'immediate and tangible links between book materials and real life', are made by the adult reader and extended by Rosina.¹⁰⁶² (G) also uses a few Ngaanyatjarra words and this triggers Rosina's attempt to 'teach' her the meaning of the word *tjurlpu* ('bird'):

¹⁰⁶¹ (Legge 1994).

¹⁰⁶² (Heath 1983: 224).

Fig. 6.8 Bamboozled

Bamboozled

I love my granddad. I visit him every week. And every week, things are the same. But *last* week when I arrived, something seemed odd.

We sat down, as usual, and chatted for a while. Then Grandad poured the tea and we ate fresh cakes he'd baked that morning.

We played cards, and as always, he won.

We went through his old photo albums and I listened as he told stories about The Good Old Days.

I helped him with the housework, but all the while something bothered me.

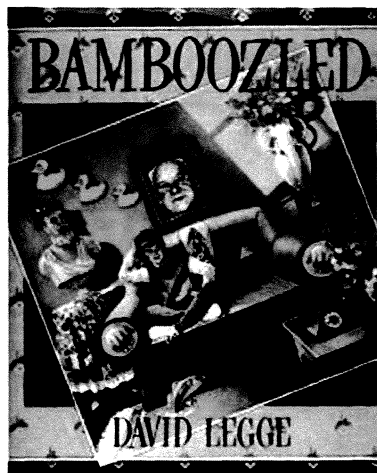
We worked in the garden, and I planted bulbs in the flower bed. I pushed the wheelbarrow while Grandad pruned the roses. And still, something seemed strange. It niggled and niggled at the back of my mind. 'You are quiet today,' Grandad said as he fed the cat. 'I know,' I said. I can't make it out. There's something I can't put my finger on. Something, today seems odd.'

'Well – I've redecorated the hallway.' No it wasn't that.

I've bought two new fish.' No it wasn't that either.

Then, just as we were saying our goodbyes on the doorstep, it suddenly struck me.

'Grandad!' I said. *That's* what it is. You're wearing odd socks!'
Silly granddad. We *did* laugh.



Source: (Legge 1994).

R: He's knockin' on th' door.
 G: He's knockin' on the door? Oh yeah.
 R: There now, her//
 G: //and open the door, must be his *tjamu*.
 R: She been knock, gran'pa
 G: Oh, lot of things! Is that a snake? *Lirru!*
 R: Funny house!
 G: *Yuwu*, funny house alright!
 R: Look, he's talking.
 G: *Yuwu!* And look at all the cake.
 R: *Tjurpu*, *tjurpu* is the bird.
 G: *Tjurpu* yeah, bird.
 R: 'Nother bird.
 G: And a fishing rod.
 R: And a fishing.
 G: That's when they go and catch the fish.
 G: That's when they go and catch the fish.
 R: Fishing rod, and monkey.
 G: And monkey in a cot.
 R: And rabbit.
 G: And lawn mower cutting the grass.
 R: And lawn... look there, that's a tree one, 'nother one, somewhere here, there. I'm here, this girl, I'm here!
 G: Is that you?
 R: Yeah
 G: Ooh, you must be having fun. OK, see you, you're a good reader!

By the end of the event Rosina is so involved in the story that she has even inserted herself into the narrative.¹⁰⁶³ At age five she is demonstrating that she knows 'not only how to take meaning from books, but also how to talk about it'.¹⁰⁶⁴ In comparison, on another occasion Adina reads *Bamboozled* to Rosina and in so doing displays a prosodic form that differs from that used by the non-Aboriginal reader above. Adina considers reading to her daughter a 'good thing' and is well able to decode the words, but engages in no dyadic question and answer interaction. Instead she reads word-by-word using a slow and halting articulation of the sentences and instructs her daughter to *watjala!* ('say it!'). Rosina conforms and copies each utterance:

A: *Watjala*. I helped him
 R: I helped him
 A: with the housework
 R: with the housework
 A: but all the while
 R: but all the while
 A: something bothered me
 R: something bothered me
 A: we worked in the garden, *watjala*
 R: worked in the garden...

And so forth, page after page, until Rosina makes an attempt to engage in a question and answer interaction herself as she is tiring of the repetition:

¹⁰⁶³ Scollon and Scollon describe how Athabaskan children learn and are taught 'the fictionalization of self required for the modern consciousness and essayist literacy' (Scollon and Scollon 1981: 57).

¹⁰⁶⁴ (Heath 1982b: 56).

- A: at the back of my mind.
 R: at the back—mummy how many, *gamepa?*
 A: shh, shh *watjala...*

Studies indicate that joint story-book reading plays an important role in the attainment of early literacy skills.¹⁰⁶⁵ These scenarios illustrate that story-book reading is emerging as social practice in this context. However, as Wells notes, ‘it is not the reading of stories on its own that leads children toward the reflective, disembedded thinking that is so necessary for success in school, but the total interaction in which the story is embedded’ and ‘a competent adult’ is needed ‘to mediate, as reader and writer, between themselves and the text’. Additionally when ‘decoding and encoding for themselves’, children ‘need help in interpreting the stories they hear and read’.¹⁰⁶⁶ Reading out loud is a learned skill and it can’t be assumed that it is a given, as Wells continues, for ‘mainstream’ parents reading a story can be an unrewarding chore, performed with difficulty and consequently ‘[t]heir rendering is halting and without expression—not such as to enthrall a young listener’ nor encourage ways of taking meaning from texts.¹⁰⁶⁷

The English text in *Bamboozled* is strange and at first glance too complex for these children, yet the affective experience of repeat readings and associated picture-talk with adults leads Nina to exhibit her ‘memory reading’ skills.¹⁰⁶⁸ One evening I find her sitting in my house, quietly reading to herself. I hear her announce the literacy event with a formulaic convention for the English genre (not in the text): ‘Once u/t/on a time...’

As an aside, in Chapter 4 I mentioned that the first generation of Ngaanyatjarra literates used a temporal dimension in the formulaic convention ‘long time ago’ that more closely resembled the Ngaanyatjarra oral narrative form *kutjulpirtu*—‘previously’ or ‘in the olden days’. Interestingly, in Nina’s use of the formulaic English narrative device ‘once upon a time’ it is evident that in just three generations a literate orientation has evolved that draws on English, rather than Ngaanyatjarra oral narrative practice.

¹⁰⁶⁵ (Debaryshe 1993; Moerk 1985; Ninio and Bruner 1978; Olson 1984; Senechal 1997).

¹⁰⁶⁶ (Wells 1985: 253-54).

¹⁰⁶⁷ This raises the issue of well-intentioned community sector groups distributing story-books and literacy backpacks to families in remote Aboriginal communities on the assumption that these texts will be read in a manner that will support children’s literacy development.

¹⁰⁶⁸ The illustrations in this story are vibrant and affective focusing on the social interaction between the girl and her grandfather and their encounters with strange objects in the domestic space. This story encouraged children to ‘read the illustrations’ and make up richly nuanced stories ‘inclusive of fine details’ rendered in the illustrations rather than the written text. Heath discusses research that notes the importance of ‘pictures that aid both comprehension and recall of stories’. This draws attention to the importance of illustrations in texts for emergent readers in communities that are highly visual. Heath notes that reading research suggests that there are ‘three ways or levels of extracting meaning from print: attending to the text itself, bringing in experiences or knowledge related to the text, and interpreting beyond the text into a creative/imaginative realm or to achieve a new synthesis of information from the text and reader experience’ (Heath 1983: 385-86).

Nina proceeds to 'read' the story by following the picture cues as she turns the pages:

Hello gran/f/a, I visit all day.¹⁰⁶⁹
We. We, we, we, weeee. We sa' down. We /f/oured the cake.
No, /f/oured the tea.
We sat down, we /f/oured the cake, we eat the cake, eat the all, eat the good.
We play cards. She won!
We. We, did she? We play card, she won.
Oh, she read 'ole story with tha' kid.
'Ow far? 'Ow far? She show 'im.
We help the, we help the yard, we clean.
We help the yard, 'n we do a cubby'ouse, tha' little jail man do.
She feed the pussycat. She feeding the food, pussy cat. No, that's tiger!
We kep' shoes, kep' shoes to the paper.
She happy lookin' the cake. Look oven.
Kamurl
What's this? What's this?
Penguin? Penguin.
How? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 6, 7, 8, 8, 9, 10.
With that girl an' man.
We got new fish. Two new, two fish.
We sit down lookin' tha' TV.
Purtu nyaku kamurl, purtu nyaku monkey, purtu nyaku tiger, duck, penguin, duck marnkurpa,
elephantpa.
Purtu nyaku fishpa. Purtu nyaku milk pirni. Purtu nyaku flowers.
Make them fas'.
Oh gran'pa, we laugh.
We laugh together. We laugh, we laugh together.

Nina exhibits her familiarity with 'school-like' reading in the manner described by Rogoff:

Children with experience of books and literate stories develop a sense of how text should sound (such as how short and long sentences should alternate for variety and what sentences with subordinate clauses sound like). They imitate the narrative framework, at first without coherent content... They copy adult intonation and phrasing in pretending to read books, irrespective of sense they sound like stories as they run pages smoothly using appropriate cadence, with repetition, contrast, counting, and exaggeration.¹⁰⁷⁰

She imitates the prosody associated with reading out loud and uses 'reading aloud' intonation contours.¹⁰⁷¹ As she reads she points to the text on the page using left-to-right and top-to-bottom strategies. She uses English confidently and at one point self-corrects the collocation of the verb 'poured' with the nominal 'cake', as follows:

We /f/oured the cake,
No, /f/oured the tea.

¹⁰⁶⁹ In this example Nina uses *gran/fa/* instead of *gran/pa/* and later */f/oured* instead of */p/oured*. This form of hypercorrection is typically found in the Western Desert. It may also derive from the word 'grandfather' as 'grandpa' is not commonly used in Aboriginal English (Marrkilyi E. April 2006 pers. comm.). Nina also uses 'she' rather than he to refer to the grandfather. Western Desert speakers commonly do not distinguish between gender when using the English 3rd pers. singular pronouns he/she/it. In Ngaanyatjarra bound pronouns, rather than free are generally used as suffixes and gender is not distinguished with he/she/it subject pronouns having zero ending. In other Western Desert dialects such as Pitjantjatjara *paluru* means he/she/it and gender is not distinguished.

¹⁰⁷⁰ (Rogoff 2003: 303). Studies have shown that teachers expect children to mark their narratives with particular elements. Narratives considered structurally appropriate in a school context tend to be tightly structured and centred on a single topic (Heath 1983: 393). See also (Michaels 1981; Michaels and Cazden 1986).

¹⁰⁷¹ Scollon and Scollon suggest that: 'Reading intonation represents intermediate prosody. The intonation structure is evident in the text itself because the text is written. Reading intonation, then, must introduce prosodic features of

She also asks and answers her own interactive questions:

What's this? What's this?
Penguin? Penguin.
How? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 6, 7, 8, 8, 9, 10.

Another evening Nina arrives with the children's book *Aladdin* that she received as a 'reward' from her teacher for going to school every day. The text is too complex to read word-by-word, so I paraphrase a simple story to match the pictures. Nina quickly perceives my strange reading prosody and no engagement with the text and tells me that I'm 'cheater reading', and looks for another book. She finds the *Three Little Pigs* with simple, large font text and cloze sentences marked with graphics. We read it together and Nina immediately engages by cross-referencing her textual and real life experiences by asking me: 'Who did this book?' Her *kaparli* (FM) Phyllis (whom I introduced in Chapter 4) has written a published Ngaanyatjarra version of the *Three Little Pigs* and it's a favourite. She finds this Ngaanyatjarra version on the shelf and reads her grandmother's name on the cover comparing it with the English author's name.

By the end of 2004 these two children are confidently using oral and written discourse in 'school-like' ways. They know and write letters, numbers and ordinals, they recognise patterns and colours, sequence sizes and use 'telling the time' conventions. When playing games they make up rhymes and use English commands and concepts: 'first', 'next', 'my turn', 'you turn', 'same card', 'different card', 'pair', 'put'em right way'. They demonstrate reading-like behaviour and exhibit the decoding-encoding conventions associated with learning to read and write: left-to-right and top-to-bottom progression, letter identification and formation.¹⁰⁷² They distinguish between conversational prosody and oral reading prosody and display other behaviours indicative of an emerging literate orientation.¹⁰⁷³

On return trips in April and September 2006 I again informally observe the literacy practices of these two girls. By this stage Nina is seven years old and Rosina is six. In the camp I notice a metal tucker box emblazoned with graffiti-like text, evidently written by the girls:

Nina
Rosina
to
GLy

ordinary speech for the sake of sounding "natural" but at the same time must not signal ordinary conversational processes such as turn taking.' (Scollon and Scollon 1981: 67).

¹⁰⁷² (Wells 1985: 237).

¹⁰⁷³ See (Olson 1984).

I decode this early attempt at graffiti as:

Nina
Rosina
two
girls only

Graffiti scribbling, as a form of textual play redolent of *mirhpa*, is acquired by observing the practices of older siblings, as I describe in the next chapter.

Both girls still exhibit an insatiable interest in story-book reading and engage during any chance visit to an out-of-school location replete with literacy resources. By April Nina is decoding unknown words as she ‘reads’ stories out loud using picture cues and predictive story schemata, while Rosina is finding and counting hidden objects embedded in pictures. Both girls also play word games like their teenage relatives: they spell names out loud, write them down, and recall and write known sight words or names of relatives. They also avidly copy and trace words from books, labels, stickers, and instructions on packets and even brand names on objects as obscure as ‘Staedtler’ on pencils and ‘Arnotts’ on biscuits (Fig. 6.9). Words are superimposed onto ‘lines’ that renders the page a visual imitation of a cohesive piece of written text. By September both girls are independently writing simple sentences. A sequence of independently composed sentences, written by Rosina, are illustrated in (Fig. 6.10a–c) and (Fig. 6.11a–c). In these examples we see Rosina deliberately segmenting sentences into word parts (Fig. 6.10c):

See / me / at / my / house

Also in (6.11b):

you · can · see · me · at · shop · at · WaButon

In (Fig. 6.11c) she plays a ‘tricky writing’ games by segmenting the separate letters and tracing them in dot-form in the phrase: TEAM BUSqBall (‘Team Basketball’) and asking us— ‘What’s this tricky word?’—before writing over the traced letters.

In many communities in remote Aboriginal Australia formal literacy learning in school has been experienced by only a few generations. This is a short time for the habits, attitudes and practices that underpin success at school to seep into family life and for intergenerational transmission to take hold. Yet in this ‘special situation’ we see emergent literacy practices—including the objectification of language as an artefact that can be segmented—in this generation of children. This situation may be atypical in the

Ngaanyatjarra Lands, and in the remote Aboriginal context generally, nonetheless, this case study indicates that literacy is being acquired and transmitted in ‘out-of-school’ contexts.¹⁰⁷⁴

The birthday party— socialisation into a Western literate ethos

In the final section of this chapter I want to draw the focus back to literacy as cultural practice. I use the occasion of the ‘birthday party’ to exemplify how Western practice is being incorporated into Ngaanyatjarra cultural processes and how through the birthday party ritual some children are participating in home literacy and numeracy events. In Western society, birthdays, like many social rituals performed in the family, provide an occasion for children to be ‘apprenticed’ in the social practices of the community.¹⁰⁷⁵

During 2004 I was invited to four children’s birthday parties within one extended family network. I will discuss two birthday parties and focus on two aspects: the birthday party as a literacy event, and how the structuring of birthday party represents new norms of individual identity socialisation. Rosina and Nina have birthdays a few days apart and in 2004 Rosina turned five and Nina turned six. Both girls know their birthdays and how old they are.

Nina’s sixth birthday party was organised by all her *ngunytju* (M and MZ) and her *kaparli* (MM). The day before the party the women ordered a birthday cake and sandwiches at the Warburton Roadhouse.¹⁰⁷⁶ On the morning of Nina’s birthday party chips, lollies, fruit, cordial, paper cups, plates and bowls are bought. A birthday card for a six year old is also purchased.¹⁰⁷⁷ One of Nina’s adult *tjurtu* asks me to help write the appropriate text, she signs it and organises for the rest of the family to sign it. When the food arrives from the Roadhouse the children are ordered out of the house and the women prepare the food, cover the kitchen table with a cloth and lay out the food, carefully placing the chocolate cake with *Happy Birthday* written in icing on the table. When preparations are ready everyone comes into the kitchen. *Happy Birthday* is sung before lining up to select a plate of party food.

¹⁰⁷⁴ (Hull and Schultz 2002).

¹⁰⁷⁵ (Gee 2004: 34).

¹⁰⁷⁶ Warburton Roadhouse is an entity under the Ngaanyatjarra Council that operates as a commercial enterprise on the Great Central Road just outside the community perimeter. It services the passing tourist trade with a store, camping ground and accommodation. It also provides an alternative shop, and catering service for the community.

¹⁰⁷⁷ The Warburton store sells a range of cards including birthday cards. It is still relatively rare for people to receive birthday cards, although people who are related to family in the Eastern Goldfields were more likely to receive birthday cards from their urban kin. I also witnessed the receipt of a card from Kalgoorlie announcing the birth of a new baby.

Fig. 6.9 Nina (age 7.5) copies words and phrases

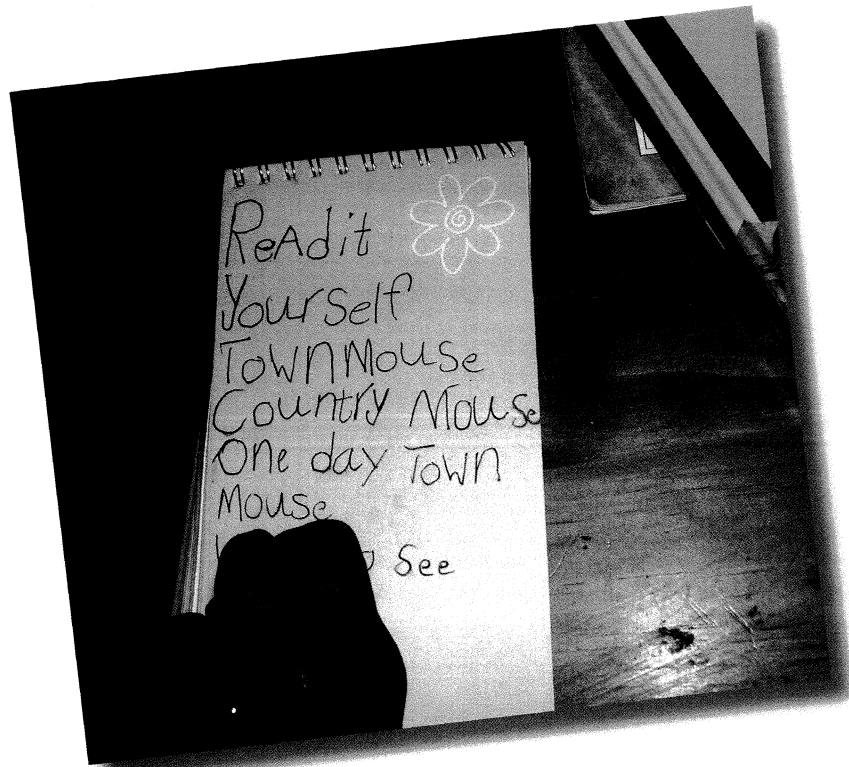


Fig. 6.10a-c Rosina writing own sentences: (a) age 6.8;
(b-c) age 6.10

(a)

hat. Dog
IN IN
The The
Box:Basket

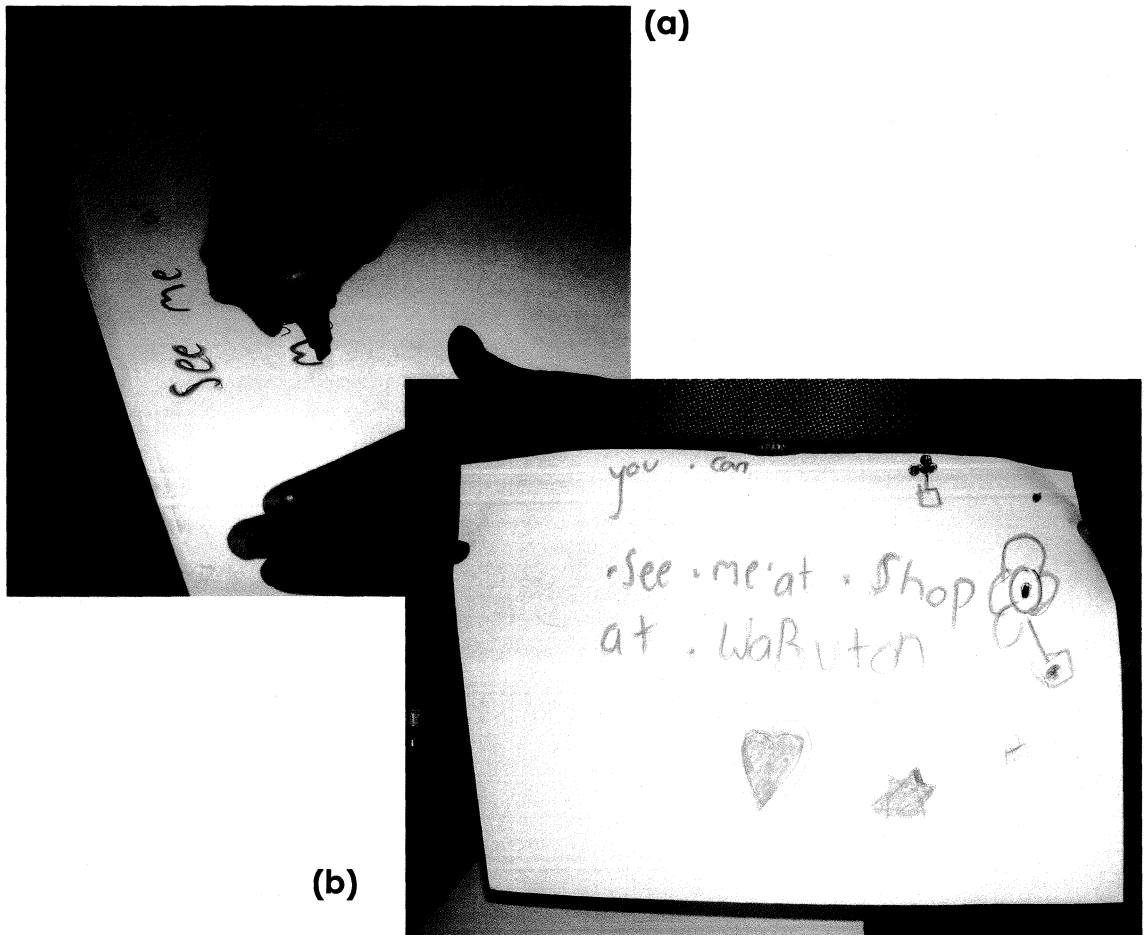
(b)

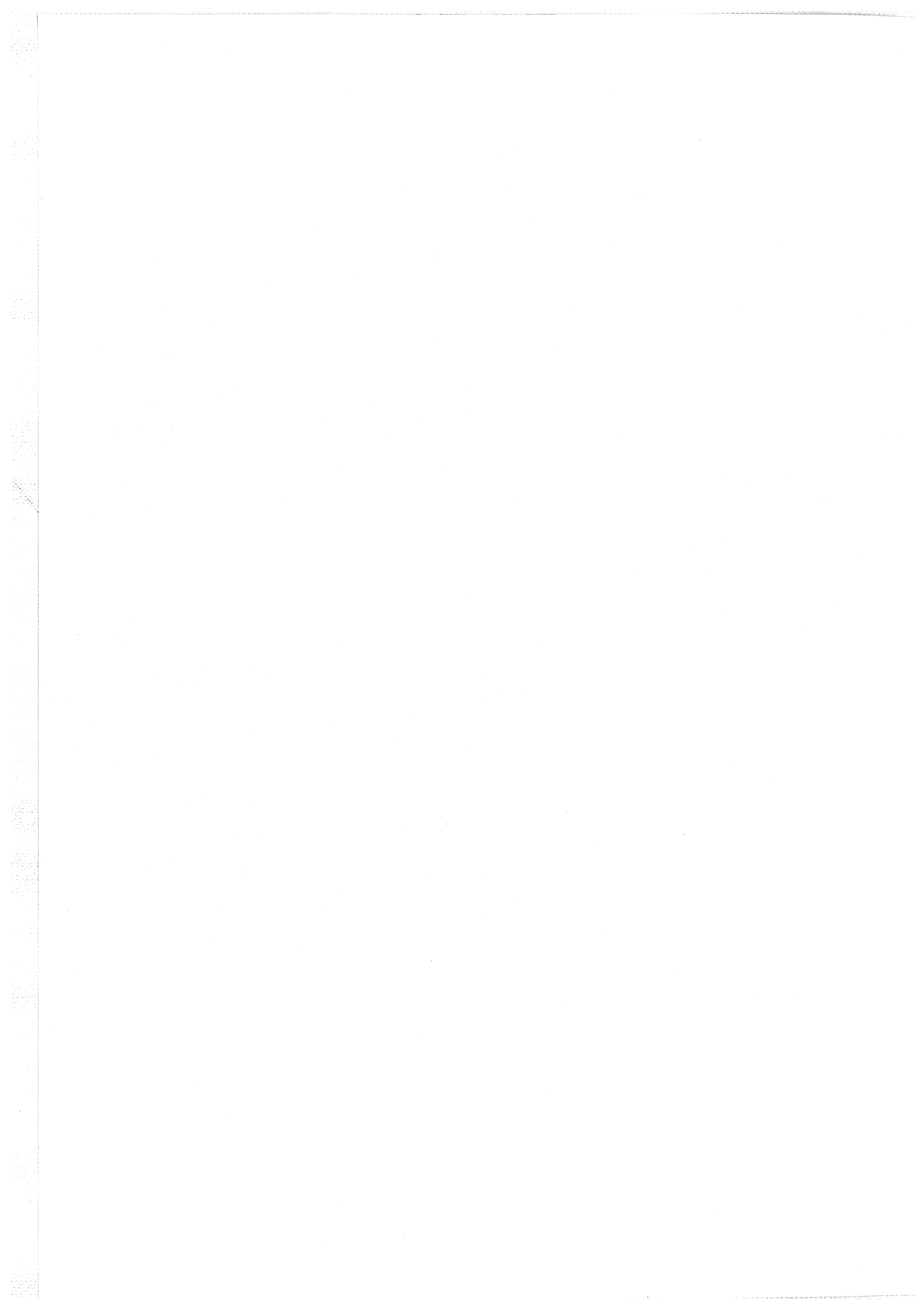
I went
Wak With
my friends.

(c)

Seelme lat 1 mglhouse

Fig. 6.11a-c Rosina (age 6.10) writing own sentences





A few days later Rosina announces: 'It's my happy birthday today, November 9', as we drive back to Warburton from another community. When we return in the afternoon, Adina has organised a birthday party for her daughter. She has bought an ice cream birthday cake from the store replete with five birthday candles, cooked special 'cupcakes' and prepared cut up fruit, lollies, sandwiches and cordial. Children from the neighbourhood come, along with a few young adults. The event is based on familiar routines associated with the birthday ritual: the children are kept outside until the preparations are complete and when they enter *Happy Birthday* is sung, then the children are told to 'line up' by the adults before selecting food and drink.

The Ngaanyatjarra have been imbibing the norms of behaviour particular to the 'party' ritual, including concomitant textual and numerical elements, since the mission time.¹⁰⁷⁸ In Chapter 5 I discussed the interrelationship between social practice and how 'inside' space is used and the accompanying domestic socio-spatial corporeal and linguistic routines. Mostly, this generation of young mothers did not grow up in houses, yet they are incorporating Western socio-spatial practices in the way in which they are 'growing up' their own children, as exemplified in the way some young mothers celebrate their children's birthdays. In this domestic practice female caregivers plan, prepare, and enact this Western ritual for their children. Everyday food preparation is generally a response to the demand of hunger rather than an organised temporal routine around mealtimes. In contrast, the birthday party (like other ceremonial rituals) is a planned affair with unspoken rules about presentation, order and routines. It could be suggested that the birthday party represents an atypical social event which allows adults to enforce 'school-like' rules around delayed gratification: keeping the children outside until preparations are complete and regulatory control of children through 'lining up' and taking food 'one-by-one'.

Significantly, the 'birthday party' reveals the extent to which literacy and numeracy have permeated social practice in events not initiated by 'whitefellas'. For instance, the planning phase involves estimating the quantity of food and drink required, ordering the catering and saving sufficient money to pay for the party fare. Before the party, birthday messages are encoded on the cake and candles are counted out. Birthday cards are also written and

¹⁰⁷⁸ Musharbash in her anthropological analysis of Warlpiri birthday parties suggests that birthdays are a 'relatively new occurrence' and that they 'contrast starkly to Western ones' (Musharbash 2004: 12). At Mt Margaret Mission the Christmas party ritual had been introduced by the 1940s with parties, prizes and associated textual elements such as Bible readings, letters, gifts and Christmas cards (*United Aborigines Messenger* February 1948: 12) and by the late 1950s birthdays were celebrated in the Graham Home (Marks 1960). It can be assumed that these Western rituals were also celebrated in the Baker Home at Warburton Ranges Mission. In addition, teenagers who lived in the residential hostels in Esperance,

signed. Leah, a young mother from a different family, told me, ‘when there’s party, [I] get a card and sit down and write’ but ‘not much people do like that, but I do’. All of these literacy and numeracy events are English-based, as is the ‘ritual speech’ enacted during the event with the singing the *Happy Birthday* song and the blowing out of candles.¹⁰⁷⁹ As in Western birthday parties, the ‘birthday cake’ has become an important signifier: a ‘birthday cake is a material object, but it is also an immaterial sign or symbol of kinship’.¹⁰⁸⁰ Birthday cakes have embedded literacy aspects either in the message signified in icing or in the common practice of making ‘packet cakes’. Baking packet cakes involves either reading the simplified English instructions on the packet, decoding the graphic symbols or simply guessing. On another occasion, Rosemary bakes a packet cake at my house for her baby daughter’s first birthday. Her baking process involves guesswork. Rather than scanning the packet for the instructed temperature setting or cooking time, she cooks two packet mixes in one cake tin. Another time Adina brings two packet cakes to bake in my oven. Her approach to baking also does not involve reading the instructions on the packet, and again two cake mixes are cooked in one tin and the cooking is not timed. After the mixture spills over and burns in the oven, her response is a characteristically Ngaanyatjarra, ‘He be right’. And it is!

As I mentioned earlier, school notes perform the function of socialising youngsters into literate administrative practices. Similarly, the celebration of birth, based on ‘date of birth’ as the signifying feature, introduces the child to Western bureaucratic notions. Ngaanyatjarra systems of classification, or taxonomies, were traditionally oriented around *tjukurrpa*, place, seasons and events and the connection between individuals and birth place bears significant cultural resonance.¹⁰⁸¹ When an individual is born he or she becomes ‘imbued with the identity or essence (*kuurti*)’ of the particular Dreaming associated with place and the newborn is interconnected with the country of a ‘grouping’ of relatives.¹⁰⁸² In Ngaanyatjarra culture a ‘time-since-birth’ measure of age and development was not a significant cultural marker. More important was the concept of seniority demonstrated lexically by the terms *kurta* for senior or elder brother and *tjurtu* for elder sister, and *marlany(pa)* (the one coming behind) for younger brother or sister.¹⁰⁸³

Kalgoorlie and Leonora during the 1960s and 70s would have been participants in party-focused festivities. Community life since the 1970s has further consolidated the annual ritual of parties around Christmas, Easter and birthdays.

¹⁰⁷⁹ (Weil 1986).

¹⁰⁸⁰ (Gee 2004: 33).

¹⁰⁸¹ (Brooks 2002c; Douglas 1976). See also (Hamilton 1979; Merlan 1998; Myers 1986)

¹⁰⁸² (Brooks 2002c: 19–21).

¹⁰⁸³ Prior to the middle of the 1800s people often did not know or have records of their birthdate and it was not until the 20th century that birthdays began to be celebrated, with birthday cards not appearing until 1910. The focus on age as a way to divide the lifestream is also recent practice in terms of the history of humanity (Rogoff 2003: 154–56).

Fig. 6.12 Rosina's 'Happy Birthday' glass plate



A function of the Western birthday party is to inculcate youngsters into 'a taxonomy of time'.¹⁰⁸⁴ In the Western cultural frame, 'the child must learn a temporal biography of self that will enter him within the continuous flow of cultural time' (i.e. linear, segmented time) and make him 'responsive to the taxonomic break between age-categories based on the units of the year'.¹⁰⁸⁵ Ngaanyatjarra families with experience of participation in Western bureaucratic norms are sensitive to these requirements, as illustrated by April who is dismayed that one daughter 'doesn't even know her birthday, I got to keep on reminding her'.

The 'individuation' of the birthday child is another feature of the Western birthday party.¹⁰⁸⁶ This situation runs counter to most other Ngaanyatjarra social norms where people tend to avoid focusing on the individual person, although there are exceptions such as the individuated focus on babies and on the 'special boy' during ceremony time.¹⁰⁸⁷ The availability of toys, bikes, clothes, books, pencils, scrapbooks and birthday cards at the store means that people have access to the materiality needed for Western gift-giving practices and this has ushered in a new form of individualised reciprocity. Other forms of gift-giving are emerging. When Nina and Rosina had their birthdays young mothers in the Nintirringkula youth arts project were making art glass. Spontaneously, the mothers (M and MZ) made glass plates inscribed with birthday messages. Pamela encoded the first plate with the message 'Happy Birthday Nina' and this plate was given to Nina's *kaparli* (FM). A few nights later Adina also made a plate (Fig. 6.12) and inscribed the message:

Happy Birthday Rosina

November 9 2004

The plates represent a new creative celebration of date of birth, with the glass acting as a textual surface for emblazoning names and dates emblematic of the celebrated individual.

In summary, through the birthday party ritual we can see that some Ngaanyatjarra children are imbibing a Western 'literate' orientation by classifying the self by temporal age since birth references, rather than spatial referents. The knowledge of one's own numerical age and date of birth are 'basic indexes of individual competence' in the Western world and Ngaanyatjarra children who are participating in this social practice are learning to enumerate their age and date of birth.¹⁰⁸⁸

¹⁰⁸⁴ (Shamgar-Handelman and Handelman 1991: 293–4).

¹⁰⁸⁵ (Shamgar-Handelman and Handelman 1991: 294).

¹⁰⁸⁶ (Weil 1986)

¹⁰⁸⁷ (Brooks 2002b); (Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. 2006).

¹⁰⁸⁸ (Shamgar-Handelman and Handelman 1991).

Conclusion

The introduction of Western schooling and changed social practice has altered Ngaanyatjarra cultural processes. While some oral traditions remain strong, Ngaanyatjarra language is endangered. It is conjectured that the moral authority of the family and traditional childrearing and language socialisation practices are being eroded by the authority of outside experts and the normative expectations of schooling and a Western developmental trajectory. Nevertheless just under the surface key cultural processes such as kinship, language and the significance of the *tjukurrpa* remain and impact on the present.

In some families, story-book reading has become second nature and is being incorporated into social practice. By focusing on the children who are in the third and fourth generation to experience formal schooling it has been possible to analyse the intergenerational transmission of literate behaviours and practices and the evolution of a literate orientation. It has been shown that a knowingness about story-book reading derives from exposure to Christian and secular children's stories. Ngaanyatjarra children are not socialised into literacy practices through contrived learning activities, but are absorbing the values, skills and mannerisms that their kin associate with literacy. It can also be conjectured that adults don't 'prepare' children for school with pre-literacy activities because *teaching* literacy is seen to be the school's job, yet if resources are available child-oriented literacy events happen.

In the community context there are few literacy resources in the domestic space so families take advantage of literacy resources and literate mediators when they are available. In families where literacy has become a taken for granted cultural process it may be more likely that these children will acquire the habits and values of literacy than children in other families. Research clearly indicates the importance of family literacy as antecedent to school success. However, if children only witness non-Aboriginal people in literate roles then the likelihood of literacy being acquired as social practice by the next generation is lessened and literacy learning through formal schooling alone may be less effective. Hence, children need also to be observing and participating in activities where literacy has meaning in the mature practices of their own community.

Introduction

In this penultimate chapter I turn my attention to the children of the 'Native Welfare' generation who are now young adults and parents themselves. These children were born into the petrol sniffing and alcohol-related social disruption and grief of the 1970s and 1980s. In the absence of mission- and Native Welfare-imposed compulsion, their families were expected to regulate school attendance, with virtually no prior experience of doing so. As a consequence, many in the young adult generation experienced interrupted schooling routines and diminished control over the domestic space.

The everyday social practices of the current generation of young adults are drawn from myriad intercultural influences. Connection to kin and country and the enduring relationship between place and identity remain strong—for some young adults the first contact their parents had with the Western world was in the 1960s, so the past remains close. Concomitantly, remoteness no longer isolates youth from wider culture influences. In this generation we are seeing continuities and transformations as young adults hold onto their 'Aboriginality' while simultaneously immersing themselves in the 'global cultural flow'.¹⁰⁸⁹ I consider also how young adults in Warburton are now on a developmental trajectory that differs not only from traditional norms within their own community, but also from the normative trajectory of their mainstream peers. In the public discourse (see Chapter 1) Aboriginal youth are commonly portrayed as failing in the education and training system. Rarely do such accounts portray the agency and creative adaptability that young adults are bringing to bear in contemporary circumstances. In this chapter I consider how new influences are shaping the literacy practices that young people participate in and I show how young adults engage in learning and working when stimulated by youth arts activities.

Altered maturational cycles

Prior to European contact Ngaanyatjarra society was, as Brooks describes it, 'strongly rule-bound, complementary, concrete, sanctified, inter-locking and predictable'. The regulatory environment of mission schooling and Native Welfare times provided continuity with the rule-bound parameters of traditional Ngaanyatjarra society. In contrast, the contemporary

¹⁰⁸⁹ (Appadurai 1996).

social world is perceived as 'open-ended, proliferating, seemingly rule-less and unpredictable'.¹⁰⁹⁰ The production and reproduction of cultural dispositions and norms began altering with the arrival of the mission and the inception of schooling. Schooling introduced a life-span division between childhood and adulthood that has shaped a new social category—'adolescence'.¹⁰⁹¹ It has contributed to the inexorable erosion of pre-contact maturation cycles and the diminution of 'rule-bound' practices. It has also institutionalised the close proximity of mixed gender, age-graded cohorts and peer, rather than multigenerational, relations have intensified the opportunity for Western-influenced 'love-way' relationships.¹⁰⁹²

Previously, young men who had been through the Law experienced a long period of pre-marriage independence, a 'liminal' period in which they went into the outside world to test themselves and assert autonomy, but this began to alter after the arrival of the mission.¹⁰⁹³ In the immediate post-contact period adolescent male life-experiences in many ways paralleled the traditional maturational cycle. The seasonality of station work, for instance, was conducive to traditional temporal cycles and the summer period of ceremonial activity and travel across the Western Desert. There now exists a disjuncture between Ngaanyatjarra expectations of adolescent development and the school's expectation of normative maturational stages and this is exemplified in low attendance and retention rates in the secondary years. The expectations of the two cultural systems are placing oppositional demands on adolescent males who also need to be free to participate in ceremonial obligations and not be bound by a web of rules and demands pertaining to the childhood-associated school domain. In the past going through the stages of the Law was a time-consuming imperative for young men. Although it remains a significant cultural process, the experience is no longer sufficiently enduring or robust to provide the full complement of skills needed for future social paradigms or circumstances. Yet the alternative Western male trajectory of institutional learning—schooling and VET sector

¹⁰⁹⁰ (Brooks and Shaw 2003: 15).

¹⁰⁹¹ Prior to the 20th century 'adolescence' as a developmental period in Western culture was unknown and virtually inconceivable (James 1993: 180). Adolescence as a concept appeared by the end of the 19th century in tandem with the transformation from agricultural orientations to an urban industrial orientation and the beginning of so-called 'youth culture' peer groups (Rogoff 2003: 171–74).

¹⁰⁹² Rogoff highlights the emphasis on age-graded institutions where same age interactions take precedence over multigenerational family and community relations in Western society. Social interaction has changed since 'colonial America' when large families often did not segment into separate generations, but spanned different ages and generations. As segmentation took place youth spent more time with each other in age-graded schools and recreation activities and this also made marital relations more of a peer relation (Rogoff 2003: 125–28). See also (Chudacoff 1989).

¹⁰⁹³ As I mention in Chapter 2, noticeable by its absence in this Chapter also are descriptions of events surrounding young men's participation in the Law Business. As I describe further in the post script at the end of the Methodology in Appendix A, these were deleted at the last minute by community request. See (Myers 1986; Peterson 2000; Sackett 1977; Stanton 1983; Tonkinson 1974). See anthropologist Victor Turner (Turner 1969) for a discussion on the notion of liminal transformations.

training—is not offering a substitute trajectory that makes sense either, so young men are struggling to find relevant identity formation processes.

It has been suggested that for young Aboriginal men prison has become a replacement rite of passage into manhood, although other research refutes this perspective.¹⁰⁹⁴ What is apparent, however, is that prison is holding some allure as a site for young men to test themselves. In prison young men encounter adults from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and gain experience negotiating complex social interactions as individuals. In this way young men are making connections that parallel events in the traditional maturational cycle. They are also observing a new regulatory norm, by adhering to the compulsion associated with the institutionalised boundaries of prison (or the requirement to pay off community hours) and this disciplined context offers a site for formal adult education that is difficult to replicate in everyday life.

Places and strangers are now no longer feared as they once were and reprisals for cultural transgressions are less potent, consequently young people are fearless in a way that their antecedents were not.¹⁰⁹⁵ Simultaneously, with the passing on of significant senior men—alongside diminished fear of sorcery, supernatural, and the dark (with street lights young people roam fearlessly at night)—the authority and regulatory capacity of the gerontocracy is less powerful than in the past. Paradoxically, however, as the boundaries of the known world have expanded, trust in the outside world has diminished. Families perceive that the chances of young people getting into trouble have been enhanced.

Assertions of autonomy are still typified in young men's speech, they say: 'you're not the boss for me', or *kuurti yungarranya* – 'I'm an independent spirit/individual', or *kurrumpa yungarralu palyara* – 'I'm doing it my way'.¹⁰⁹⁶ However, as Jim notes, unlike in his day when men worked outside of the Lands, now 'they all stop home...they must be want to stay close to their family or their families don't want them to go'. McLean concurs: 'one of the biggest problems with young blokes is that now their mothers don't let them go in the way that they did traditionally'.¹⁰⁹⁷ Unmarried adult sons 'stay with their mother and father all the time' and families are accused of 'spoiling' them. Families who led a more independent life in the Eastern Goldfields maintain that it is important for young men to 'to be self'. As

¹⁰⁹⁴ (Beresford and Omaji 1996; Biles 1983; Ogilvie and Van Zyl 2001).

¹⁰⁹⁵ See also (Merlan 1998: 89; Myers 2002: 115).

¹⁰⁹⁶ (Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. April 2006).

¹⁰⁹⁷ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

Molly declares: 'I let my sons or grandsons go out on their own to other places, but other families they chase up their adult children in town'...¹⁰⁹⁸

...teenagers they really close to their mother and father nowadays...In those days people go out from the mother in the bush people go out when they grow into teenager, travel around with the mate they meet. Go out, must be find a girl from bit long way. They go well away, they got to show that they free man. They was more independent, they look after themselves, they know how to hunt kangaroo, rabbit, goanna. Nowadays the government took over, everything is free look like it, give, give, give. Something different, stop home...Young people they stop home and when they want to go out on their own but their mother and father chase him up and bring them back again. They frightened they might die there get hurt. More scared. They don't let them out in the world self and...they worry, mother, father. And the young people they like to stop home with their parents too, even if they have a kid and a wife.¹⁰⁹⁹

In summary, the break in the maturational cycle—losing the period of premarital independence and marrying younger—is placing pressure on the identity formation processes of adolescent males. This contrasts with young women where the cultural imperative of childbirth and motherhood is allowing young women to maintain predictable cultural patterns.

Young women are maintaining a cultural logic in the process of identity formation that is inextricably linked to young motherhood and this also runs counter to the expectations of mainstream secondary schooling. Traditionally most food was prepared by women while young men camped 'rather haphazardly'.¹¹⁰⁰ Now young mothers spend time with multigenerational matri-kin, looking after children, washing, shopping and feeding. At this time they lose the freedom that young men tend to retain, as Rosemary (A) and her sister (B) illustrate:

A: When I get my money I just buy a lot of feed for the families, like kids... Something for the baby, buy Kimbie something like that¹¹⁰¹...I save some for next day, when we run out of feed...we always buy flour to last us, the bread will finish quick so make a damper. I always keep my money for me in my wallet.

If you need more money where can you get it from?

A: Just play cards

Is that the only way to get more money?

A: Yeah, win, in cards, just play card all day.

Do the young fellas spend their money on food and clothes for the kids?

A: They just get a smoke and cool drink. That's what they get. They just go play cards, finish their money with cards. They always go for drugs, other communities when they get their money, especially young fellas. Sometimes ladies too play cards, young girls.

Are young fellas a little bit more free?

A: Yeah, they just go, do what they like, go for drugs, buy drugs, come back home, with no money, look for feed.

Who gives them feed?

A: I don't know they just go, like that, no feed.

Don't worry about feed?

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Wati* is a polysemous noun meaning either a man who has passed through the manhood making ceremonies; or in this context it refers to a member of a *warmarla* 'revenge party'.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

¹¹⁰⁰ (Myers 1986: 43). Hamilton suggests a 'covert model' for the eastern Western Desert region in which 'females remain still and never move about, while males move a lot and seldom stay still' (Hamilton 1979: 36).

¹¹⁰¹ Brand name for disposable nappies.

A: They just only get a cool drink and a pie for the road, enough for their guts.
They don't buy the flour for the damper?
B: Nooo, they don't like a damper.
So they never buy any of that?
B: Nooooo!
It's up to you girls is it?
A and B: Yeah.

In the mission time, Maisie explains, 'girls just given away, straight away to a man to be married'. In the 1960s it was noted that marriages at Warburton that violated the section system were rare, and despite the missionaries efforts to discourage the practice, 13 out of 94 recorded marriages were polygynous.¹¹⁰² In the early 1980s the typical family profile was still polygynous, and there was stability and predictability in partnerships and marrying 'proper way':

Family groupings still consisted of a husband and sometimes one, mostly two and often three wives whereas now the domestic environment constitutes a dramatically different social arrangement with only a few polygynous marriages amongst some older people and a number of single mothers and men are marrying significantly younger, often ten years younger than in previous times. In the past a young pregnant woman would have been married off to an older man and young husbands were unknown as men had a discrete period of bachelorhood before marriage.¹¹⁰³

Now, asserts McLean, 'it's hard to see a stable "traditional" family unit'. The traditional practice of 'promised' unions between older men and younger women, and polygynous marriages—senior first wife, then a younger junior wife or wives—no longer exists among the younger generation. Nevertheless, some older women still consider that women with older husbands are 'lucky', primarily because young husbands often 'don't know what they are doing, they get too jealous, always running around getting into jealous fights'. The transition within the last few decades from greater mobility and *wiltja* living to more stable residence in houses has thrown the generations together in bounded spaces. This has exacerbated family tensions and challenged the boundaries of social etiquette including the intensified proximity of those in avoidance relationships.

The reshaping of traditional marriage patterns has arisen in part as a consequence of same-age, mixed gender adolescent cohorts spending substantial periods of time together. Previously, strict social rules applied, mixed gender groupings at night were rare and illicit liaisons punished. Older women like Katherine recall that when they were young 'girls were shy of boys, not like now'. *Kurmta* ('shame') previously operated as a form of regulatory control over young people, as did the authority of senior men. Yet, as noted in Chapter 2, challenges to traditional marriage practices began in the 1950s with some in the first

¹¹⁰² (Gould 1969: 108–184).

¹¹⁰³ McLean—Interview 9/9/04.

generation of mission-educated girls running away from marriages to older men to seek same age unions (but still 'right way' according to the section system). Young adults now tend to be more outgoing and able to deal with an increasingly complex range of intercultural social interactions. Relationships are more overt with public 'boyfriend-girlfriend' unions, an increased number of single mothers and a discourse in the public space around previously private subjects such as pregnancy, domestic violence and sexual health. New terminology has entered the lexicon to deal with the change: *kurri* means spouse, but the now popular term *yamatji* encompasses the concept: 'boyfriend/girlfriend'.

Importantly, unions that violate the section system are still unusual, 'love-way' unions are generally with a partner who is of the 'right skin' (see Chapter 2, Fig. 2.3). 'Wrong way' partnerships are more serious. As noted in Chapter 2 generational moiety division remains central to the 'social and symbolic order' of Ngaanyatjarra life as in the *tjirntulukultul(pa)* ('sun side') and *ngumpalurrungkatja* ('shade side') generational moiety division.¹¹⁰⁴ The rules surrounding generational moiety interaction are still strictly enforced and govern ceremonial activity and marriage rules. To marry '*yinyurrpa* way' (i.e. to a person of the other generational moiety) represents 'the worst violation of rules relating to marriage partners' and such 'wrong way' marriages 'strain the rules of acceptability, particularly for the older generation'.¹¹⁰⁵

Ultimately, the divergence of the developmental trajectory of youth away from traditional cultural norms is placing pressure on the social fabric of Ngaanyatjarra society. At the same time, the different social meanings attached to the Ngaanyatjarra adolescent maturation period run counter to the requirements of Western institutional settings.

'Follow in our footsteps'

The impact of major change on the traditional life course is represented in the language of older people:

Young people today have no respect for elders. There is no discipline, they are stubborn people, can't listen to the parents...I'm really glad I got learn the hard way.

In some families personal experiences of the past are 'codified' into 'a recognisable set of moral messages' reiterated in older people's public elaboration of young people's purported lack of education, work ethic and leadership potential.¹¹⁰⁶

¹¹⁰⁴ (Brooks 2002b: 39–41).

¹¹⁰⁵ (Brooks 2002b: 40). See also (Hamilton 1979: 301; White 1981).

¹¹⁰⁶ (Newman 1996: 380).

It's just different because in our days we used to just work like them. But like today, nowadays they just, they just there, doing their own ways or own way. You know they sniffing, or doing something bad, throwing rocks at people or anywhere, children arguing and fighting.

As Arthur comments:

Young men now...can't even work on their own like with a white man...they got different ways I think, our way was, we was like forced, now it's a sort of free way for anyone to live now...Nowadays young people can't work they, it's money there already for them.

Adults in the leadership cohort described in Chapter 4 who effectively integrated literacy and governance skills into everyday practice expect young people to assert similar skills without the intervening life experiences. When these expectations are unfulfilled they articulate their disappointment. Wesley emphasises that his generation went through 'an era where we had to fight, but these young ones have got it too easy'.

Like nowadays it's easier to get from A to B, there's a lot more vehicles, they can be lazy, drive around, watch TV, watch video...do whatever they want to do, there's access to all that kind of things, white man things that came in. They don't really need to do much 'cause there's access to everything the outside world provides.

Elders express frustration when they perceive young adults not following in their footsteps. Clem laments: 'The world is changing the government is changing, we're crying out: who'll take on in our footsteps, who'll do that? We believe that only through education our people will survive.' This despair is echoed repeatedly, by elders like Arthur:

I learnt a lot...I don't see young people nowadays doing what I been doing...They can't work or learn about anything...You know that's what we try to do to them, always telling them you should be learn, to be better than us. That's what I tell the young people, but no-one doing it.

As Patricia explains, elders must:

...learn the little grandchildren to be strong, you know, leading young peoples. Adults have to be strong in pushing younger ones. They have to have their knowledge and to keep pushing young people to know how to read and write so when they are adults they must be get tired and you know, we want our younger generation to work along too...and they can follow along, footsteps, you know, grandparents, *tjammu*, *nanna*, footsteps.

However, the cultural logic of the gerontocracy works against young people doing much until they reach an appropriate stage in the maturational cycle. In Western Desert society increased status is gained by males through progression in ritual knowledge throughout the span of the male life cycle. As Myers notes 'putting oneself forward and taking responsibility' are 'important dimensions of an older man's identity...the privileges of full adulthood'.¹¹⁰⁷ April comments that 'they like to enjoy themselves when they 16 or 20, but when they 30, that's the time they start thinking: Oh I better start doing little bit of work because the older people who is in front won't be around anymore, they might get sick and

¹¹⁰⁷ (Myers 1986: 246).

finish'. Following on from this, I would suggest that the precedent for good governance was set earlier by the leadership cohort and some young adults are emulating this, but within a new paradigm.

Older people emphasise the obligation that young people have to preserve and pass on the Ngaanyatjarra identity and way of life to successive generations:

We're holding the hopes for the children, we've got to give them hope...we got to teach them...our hope is our future, to know the country and to have strong leaders.¹¹⁰⁸

Yet institutional models of schooling, training, work, and government administration have changed constantly and the outside world has not offered any certainty. Consequently, the young adult generation is unable to absorb many cues from their elders on how to deal with the new world and young people are having to figure out paradigms for contemporary living for themselves. Anthropologist Margaret Mead suggests that when there has been a profound break between the experiences of the old and the experiences of the young (as exemplified in the transitional upheaval from nomadism, to mission time, Native Welfare time, and to contemporary community life) cultural transmission and socialisation patterns are challenged.¹¹⁰⁹ In Mead's terms, Ngaanyatjarra society was 'postfigurative' and depended for continuity 'upon the expectations of the old and upon the almost ineradicable imprint of those expectations upon the young'.¹¹¹⁰ However, as noted earlier, traditional multigenerational kin-affiliated norms have been challenged by introduced peer-affiliated age-graded groupings. Instead of the old transmitting knowledge and teaching the young, in many instances what is happening now is that it is the young who are 'prefiguratively' enculturating the old into the ways of modernity. Although still learning from their elders, young people are also becoming 'cofigurative' or peer learners, learning what they need for the new world from each other and absorbing new styles and ways of interacting. 'Prefiguratively' they are also providing new models for each other and for the children who will follow in their footsteps. It is these young adults who increasingly represent what the future holds, rather than their parents or grandparents.¹¹¹¹ Young adults are becoming the self-appointed definers of new forms of cultural competence in groups that are configured around both peer-affiliations and kin-affiliations, revealing that they are

¹¹⁰⁸ Warburton Community Meeting—August 2004.

¹¹⁰⁹ (Mead 1978 [1970]: 17). In the 1970s Mead developed a theoretical model for considering notions of cultural transmission and change based on three key forms: *postfigurative* (when the future repeats the past, change is slow and the old cannot conceive of any other future for their children other than their own past lives); *cofigurative* (in which the present is the guide to future expectations); and *prefigurative* (for the kind of culture in which the elders have to learn from the children about experiences which they never had) (Mead 1978 [1970]: 13).

¹¹¹⁰ (Mead 1978 [1970]: 17).

¹¹¹¹ (Mead 1978 [1970]: 83).

adroit in adapting to, and incorporating, change. From this perspective contemporary life is challenging the cultural process of leadership by elders.

‘Working for your own living’

Despite the moral messages articulated above, I would suggest that an ethos that values ‘working for your own living’ has, in fact, been transmitted. In some families the ‘habitualized’ work practices of the mission and station days have become ‘institutionalized’ practice possessing a reality of its own, ‘a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact’.¹¹¹² George tells me that: ‘it’s important for young people to work, gotta work, work, you know, making money, earning your own living’:

Like early days people used to go out *kuka*, hunting every day, and mothers and fathers...Now, it’s like this, young people got to learn to work on time and all that, wake up early, same like hunting, got to learn to work right time and knock off right time. And for that they got to learn all them things like how to know how to work on time, attitude, initiative, all those things. They got to be educated with all that, then they know...I just want to pass that on for young people so they can learn, learn about working. And put it into like when old people used to go out, *marluku*, hard, hot day, they still look for it. It’s like that when you go to work it’s like going out hunting, but this one here we’re working for money to get what we want, we got to work for it.

A similar ethos is repeated by his daughter-in-law Adina: ‘it’s good for you to work for your own living instead of staying home and laying around’. Leah describes how she also imbibed a working ethos from her mission family:

They been working before, that’s why I know how to work, do course. That why I learn from them, by watching them when I was little, been going school right through. Then I finish here schooling then I change my mind to go into college-ing in the town schools, in Wongatha CAPS two years.

Likewise Kenny says of his father (who walked out of the desert in the 1960s, worked on stations and at Desert Farm):

I just see it in my father, start following him, like this, I work like him. He force me, he told me: “Oh work, we got to work’, tell me to help him out, do this. Like that.

Some young people say they want to work because they ‘want to take over’ and ‘keep learning, pass it on to the little ones, so they can pass it on to them so they can keep learning’. However, the young can no longer rely on the obsolete work paradigm transmitted from previous generations. It can be speculated that the industrious survival imperative of hunting and gathering was replicated in station work and in the manner in which people established the Ngaanyatjarra communities in the 1970s and early 1980s. At that time basic schooling met the requirements of semi- or unskilled labour. Following on from this, I would suggest that the older generation also transmitted the sense that through

¹¹¹² (Berger and Luckmann 1975 [1966]: 70–85).

education youngsters could get what they wanted. However over time, as described in earlier chapters, the meritocratic rewards promised by education have become more illusive, and as a corollary, schooling has become progressively less relevant. In Chapter 4 I comment on how Wells suggests that there appeared to be ‘more job opportunities’ in the 1970s and early 1980s, whereas recently youth ‘haven’t had sufficient schooling’ to cope with the increasingly complex requirements of the work environment. In the early days technology was simpler and there was less disparity between the two worlds. Undoubtedly, more locals were employed in the offices, stores and schools because their skills matched the work requirements at that time. Since then the advent of globalisation and technology since the 1970s has dramatically changed the expectations of employment—all over the world.¹¹¹³ As an aside, Giddens notes how globalisation happened concomitantly with an ‘acceleration’ of the idea that humans can ‘control nature’.¹¹¹⁴ As discussed in Chapter 2, the centrality and constancy of the *tjukurrpa* deriving from a changeless, timeless past is fundamental to the Ngaanyatjarra world view.¹¹¹⁵ The immediate post-encounter generation took on the new world as a logical system within a cultural framework of non-change. It can now be speculated that modernity has wrought a schism in the Ngaanyatjarra world view by also introducing the notion that individuals have choice and control, rather than events being determined by the *tjukurrpa*, but within unpredictable and often incomprehensible contemporary parameters.

Even though many adults reiterate that ‘getting a job’ is an important education outcome, a profound mismatch exists between expectation and reality. This is illustrated by Darren who had virtually no schooling himself:

Young people got to go to school to learn something. Must be learn about mechanic, or something else, sister or doctor... They got to go to school to learn properly and you know, write properly, read and write properly. And they got to get a good job. Must be training, something, fixing motor car, or sister, or doctor, anythings, so they can help people.

False expectations about what education can achieve in the short-term continue to be perpetuated. For instance, at a school assembly a principal reinforces a virtually unattainable connection between attendance, school performance and outcomes: ‘If you send your kids to school they will go to university and become lawyers and doctors, and school principals and stand up here instead of me’. I conjecture that, despite the fact that people say that schooling is important, their understanding of what ‘successful’ schooling is does not match mainstream conceptions. Successful schooling outcomes are, in fact, more

¹¹¹³ (Gee 2000; Giddens 1991; Hulsemeier 2003).

¹¹¹⁴ (Giddens 1991: 144).

¹¹¹⁵ See (Brooks 2002c).

commonly tied to the local context. As Patricia illustrates: 'school is important for your children to know how to read, write, so when they get older they can get whatever job they want, they might work in the office or school, clinic'. Young people have imbibed the idea that going to school might give them 'jobs in town'. Rosemary repeats the cultural script that she thinks I want to hear: 'go to school, get learn more, get a job somewhere in the city or town, be a school teacher, get a house there.' However these Western outcomes are disconnected from the lived reality of the Ngaanyatjarra world. Rosemary continues:

Hey, we don't want to do that, I want to stay here, I grew up in this place. This is my home, stay with my families.

Young people unanimously express the importance of their connection to Warburton by describing it as a 'good place, better than town'.

The relationship between education, CDEP and employment (as well as money, gambling and the social economy) in the remote context is a complex one and there is insufficient space to explore it further in this thesis.¹¹¹⁶ However, counter to common assumptions I found that on the whole young people seek to engage in meaningful activity and if it is not provided through the institutional structures of CDEP, training or youth-oriented events, they initiate their own activities, including sport and music.¹¹¹⁷ A trainer also describes how young people 'want to do stuff, but work is not at the top of their list of priorities'. May tells me emphatically:

There's too many different things going on see, so they have to leave that job, they have to go somewhere, come back, too many distractions. Everyday life...football, funerals, something happening over there everybody has to go...Well, there's no jobs anyway, there's no work for them. They just do certain years in school then they drop out, get married, settle down and the same cycle goes around again.

One young man tells me that often 'young fellas' have 'got too many other things to think about, like girlfriends, family and Business' to engage in projects suggested by whitefellas.¹¹¹⁸

¹¹¹⁶ See (Altman 1985; Brady 2004).

¹¹¹⁷ Playing, recording and performing at music festivals have been significant in Ngaanyatjarra youth culture for a long time. Some of the previous bands in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands include, Mantamaru Band, Red 4 Danger (R4D), Mirlirtjarra Band, Warburton Rangers Band, Blackstone Band, Warakurna Spirit and Warrunyina Band. Bands have recorded at the recording studio associated with Warburton Arts Project and performed at music festivals throughout the Western Desert. Also see Ase Ottoson's PhD thesis on Aboriginal men and contemporary music in Central Australia (Ottoson 2006).

¹¹¹⁸ Burbank posits that school and work 'simply do not engage' many Aboriginal people because of 'the emotional incompatibility of the cultural self with a Western arrangement with others; thus the sense of senselessness when many Aboriginal people engage in Western acts' (Burbank 2006: 7). Folds similarly concludes that the Pintupi engage 'selectively and creatively with the contemporary world' (Folds 2001: 181).

Troy talks about wanting to work, but is held back by the shame factor associated with standing out from the crowd:

They'll look at me, laugh at me, they'll talk about: 'Look at Troy, he's working, got a good job.' They say it like that.

Finally, I want to draw attention to a factor that has been noted repeatedly. Commentators often explained that 'there are no jobs when they leave school'. Simultaneously, young adults are commonly criticised for not working: 'loafers...sit round, go to the shop, phone, go for walk' or 'sit around and do nothing...just sit back and win money from the card'. Some young people participate in vocational training, but completion rates are low (see Appendix I). This is hardly surprising if there is accuracy in the notion, as suggested in Chapter 5, that there is insufficient work under CDEP for all those who receive training. With the post-school young adult learning environment oriented primarily around accredited vocational training, there is little scope for the additional learning that young people need to competently deal with the other requirements of everyday life in the future, especially in a context where there are so few employment options.

At this point it is important to highlight—as a consequence of low school attendance and retention rates and limited participation in post-school training—how little concentrated time adolescents are spending in institutional learning contexts.¹¹¹⁹ At Warburton adolescents as young as twelve are claiming: 'I'm too old for school and I've had enough'. Out of a community cohort of approximately 50 school-aged teenagers only around five to ten attend regularly. There are 'an awful lot of twelve year olds not coming to school' and none older than thirteen or fourteen years of age.¹¹²⁰ As mentioned, earlier male adolescents tend to drop out of school when they go through the Law and females when they get pregnant. It is also assumed cultural practice that school ceases by sixteen years of age when adolescents can sign on for CDEP, although some young adults take up post-school vocational training options. Consequently, youth have large amounts of discretionary time and unlike in previous generations, everyday life is increasingly self-regulated. Older people consider that youth spend their time doing 'basically nothing' and 'play' has become the norm for how time is spent:

¹¹¹⁹ An audit of 12–16 year olds across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands schools in 2006 found that approximately one-third of 14 year olds do not participate (at all) in school, nor do about one half of 15 year olds and 'essentially' no 16 year olds (Gordon 2006: 6). In addition only 25% of 12 year olds and 5% of 15 year olds were found to have 'passable' attendance rates (*ibid*: 7). Department of Education personnel attribute low academic performance to 'absenteeism, transience, lack of family and parental support and lack of discipline' (Goddard et al. 2005: 13).

¹¹²⁰ Principal—Interview 27/11/04. It is understood that the annual cost of funding for schools in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands is approximately \$17 million for a total enrolment in 2005, for example, of 417 students (Goddard et al. 2005: 37).

Play everywhere, basketball. Go to the college, play around on the lawn, play cards on the computer... Games or anything, basketball, telling stories, bike, play with boys or girls, kids, or playing card.

April remembers how previously youth had fewer resources compared with now:

Like nowadays they have bluelight disco for the kids and all those sort of things... But I never used to do that 'cause it was only a mission... We had no time to do those things because weren't allowed... for the young ones now, they got everything just about. They got all like this sort of stuff here... We never used to do those sort of things.

Weekend leisure-time in the 1970s and 1980s was still generally spent out bush in multigenerational family groupings.¹¹²¹

The arrival of electricity in 1962 created a sector of the day that could be devoted to leisure.¹¹²² The arrival of YMCA youth workers in 1979 saw the beginning of structured diversionary recreation activities aimed at ameliorating 'youth problems'—petrol sniffing, domestic violence and sexual abuse. Youth programmes still tend to be framed around the 'youth as problem' narrative.¹¹²³ Ironically, however, for youth who drop out of institutional learning, many of their social and learning needs are now met by alternative sources, including youth programmes.¹¹²⁴ The Warburton youth programme includes a Drop in Centre most evenings, sports activities at the oval and swimming pool, discos and school holiday programmes. At the Drop in Centre adolescents are acquiring a complex of computer and interactive multimedia skills and participating in peer learning activities in a space where they feel a sense of belonging. James Gee posits that computer games and video games are exposing youngsters to 'language and other symbols connected to modern technologies and media' and that these are often 'more compelling and motivating' than school language and literacy learning activities.¹¹²⁵ Similarly, a youth worker notes how play stations in the Drop in Centre are prompting youngsters to read, poor readers are also learning to 'read' the visual cues and symbols embedded in the games and when they cannot read the alphabetic instructions, those who can read 'instruct other kids'.¹¹²⁶

It can be concluded that the correlation between institutional learning and employment does not match the cultural context. In mainstream Australia there is a cultural logic to the

¹¹²¹ Paget—Interview 22/5/04.

¹¹²² (Young 1988: 223).

¹¹²³ Police, juvenile justice, parole and probation officers and local community leaders have initiated and supported petrol sniffing prevention programmes and diversionary resources in the form of activities like sport and recreation and youth drop in centres. Ngaanyatjarra Health Service and NPY Women's Council have also been instrumental in funding youth programmes aimed at the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

¹¹²⁴ Across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands youth workers are employed by the Ngaanyatjarra Council, the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku and the NPY Women's Council.

¹¹²⁵ (Gee 2004: 37). See (Eidman-Aadahl 2002: 244) for a discussion of the value of discretionary time and non-school attendance among American teenagers and the role that youth groups play in providing important learning environments.

¹¹²⁶ Youth Development Officer—Interview 1/3/04.

pursuit of credentials and the assumed linearity of the transition from school to training and employment in the labour market economy.¹¹²⁷ In the Ngaanyatjarra context the normative logic of this sequenced pathway is less clear. Different social meanings are attached to the adolescent maturation period, and the purpose of vocational training is less apparent when there are not sufficient jobs. This raises the important question of finding ways of setting young adults on meaningful learning trajectories in an environment where there is limited employment, yet a critical need for engagement in purposeful activity that will build up the skills needed for the future. I return to this point later in the chapter.

New influences

This generation is exploring and internalising, as Merlan terms it, new and diverse 'intercultural arenas of social practice' to forge an emerging identity not based on models reproduced within cultural memory, but on a synthesised multiplicity of influences.¹¹²⁸

Remoteness no longer isolates youth from wider culture influences:

This generation can be in Kalgoorlie or Perth in a few hours. Huge impact, what they say, how they dress, what they do with their time. When you look at what young kids are wearing out here you could probably transport them to the city and they'd probably look the same. Even though the person out here had kangaroo for dinner and went out hunting, they sort of look the same. Influence from outside. *Eminem* song released a month beforehand can be playing in Warburton a month later. Previously never happening—'we're remote, we're remote'. Now you have kids coming in from Kalgoorlie and they bring new change and new ways of doing things and people here get into it. They embrace change.¹¹²⁹

New influences are also shaping the literacy practices that young people engage in, and as have indicated in earlier chapters some practices are also redolent of a cultural schema that marks these literacy practices as somehow Ngaanyatjarra.

Youth literacy

In this section I look at two instances of youth literacy—graffiti and diary writing. In the ethnographic literature it is suggested that graffiti opens the door to non-standard literacy practices and operates as a 'counterliteracy' or 'borderland discourse' for those marginalised from mainstream literacy practices.¹¹³⁰ As Conquergood notes:

While official literacy is associated with detachment, distance, disclosure, and a scene of solo production and reception—(writing and reading are typically figured as private, contemplative activities)—graffiti writing is characterized by contact, coding, collaboration, and collusion.¹¹³¹

Warburton graffiti is situated in an interconnected web of adolescent graffiti expression across remote Australia.¹¹³² In the walking-around, night-time space, adolescents write their

¹¹²⁷ (Smyth and Hattam 2004).

¹¹²⁸ (Merlan 1998: 145).

¹¹²⁹ Youth Development Officer—Interview 1/3/04.

¹¹³⁰ (Conquergood 1997; Wilson 2000b).

world as a form of 'street literacy' as tags—initials, symbols or phrases—scrawled on myriad surfaces in the public domain.¹¹³³ Unlike the older generation, adolescents display a corporeal confidence in the built environment and they know the material world. The built environment is replete with spaces and surfaces that provide the 'co-ordinates' for social relationships and a 'structured sequence of settings' where social interactions can be enacted, encoded and decoded.¹¹³⁴ Writing is deliberate, not random, and everywhere, every surface is daubed with textual scribbles, patterns, icons and authorising marks.¹¹³⁵ Youth do not discriminate between surfaces, but interact with all materials of the built environment—brick, concrete, plastic, metal, and paper—as surfaces to be filled with written expressions of self. Tags are smoked onto ceilings with cigarette lighters, rendered in texta on plastic bottles and in petrol on the bitumen road on sniffing nights, welded as initials on metal benches, drawn in dust on car windows and on refrigerator condensation, carved on trees, scrawled in charcoal on cement floors, etched onto skin as tattoos, and traced in the sand during storytelling. Teenage girls spend extended leisure hours, especially late into the summer evenings, sitting on the concrete pavement around town chipping text into the concrete with the sharp end of a story wire; these peckings, redolent of traditional rock pectroglyphs, become a permanent reminder of the moment. This rendering of symbols is transferred into other forms of leisure-time graffiti 'tagging' and compulsive 'scribbling' as teenage girls play word games such as writing 'all friends name' and 'name game on the paper'.¹¹³⁶ Paralinguistic tags, or alphabetic icons, are also signed in the air signifying a nuanced substitution when the voiced full name of the recently deceased cannot be spoken. These alphabetic initials—representative of full names—often become the permanent vocative.

At night, teenagers are 'night prowlers' (often chronic non-school-attenders who hide away during the day and emerge at night) and they tag the walls, declaring allegiances to 'gangs' and announcing their 'love-way' relationships to the world. Interactions with boyfriends (in the past possibly punishable with spearings in the leg) are now inscribed on walls in public

¹¹³¹ (Conquergood 1997: 358).

¹¹³² See (Martin 1993; Nicholls 2000; von Sturmer 2002).

¹¹³³ (Conquergood 1997; Pardue 2004: 425).

¹¹³⁴ (Duranti 1997: 321-323).

¹¹³⁵ See (Menezes de Souza 2003).

¹¹³⁶ School-aged girls in Warburton play an English language word game they call 'FLAMES' using the first letters of the descending words **F**riendship, **L**ove, **A**ctions, **M**arriage, **E**nemies, **S**ex. They explain the instructions: Take the first name of yourself and a boy you like, then cross out the letters F-L-A-M-E-S from both names. Add up the number of letters remaining and count that number through the FLAMES words above until you get to the last number and word. That word then defines what you, and the boy in question, will mean to each other (School girls pers. comm. 2004).

spaces for all to see.¹¹³⁷ These public textual announcements can escalate into community brawls if individuals feel wronged or shamed. Graffiti, as a form of social literacy, is crucial for acceptance and participation in ‘gangways’—fluid, mainly female ‘gangs’ where jealousy and feuding regularly redefine the group. Throughout 2004 one ‘gangways’—a group of teenage girls aged 16 and 17—fluctuate between being ‘best friends’ and ‘enemies’. Darleen, Leanne, Anthea and the other girls dropped out of school the year before and now spend most days hanging around public phones, gossiping, giggling and waiting for their boyfriends to ring, or ‘cruising around’ in cars. No matter how hot, the *de rigueur* dress for adolescents is baggy polyester hiphop-influenced ‘Snoop Dogg’, ‘Eminem’ or ‘50 cent’ logo shorts, t-shirts, baseball caps and multiple plastic bangles. Anthea says she can read and write a little: ‘I do some, but I don’t like doing it’. She did reading ‘long time’ ago, but doesn’t write, ‘only my name and my friends’ name’. In contrast, when I meet Leanne I gain an insight into the night-time creativity of the gangways:

They walk around all night with textas, if one person has texta they all ask: ‘Oh can I use it so I can write my name?’ And they’ll be writing their name. They’ll ask that other person if they can borrow it so they can write their name all fancy styles, some they just write their friend’s name and their boyfriend or girlfriend’s name, or if they’re from Warburton, so that they can let them know that it’s that person. I did this one here, that’s my name up the side.

Leanne indicates various secret names on the wall. Coded sequences of four capital letters represent the last letter of first name, second name, father’s surname, mother’s surname. Three and four letter tags representing kinship identity are commonly represented in Ngaanyatjarra graffiti:¹¹³⁸

NVTW	APMW
EQU T	AKMN
ONLY 2 FOREVER	2004

In gangways graffiti the self is ‘announced’ in and out of relationships with kin, gangways and lovers—expressed in self-defined ‘fancy writing’, ‘tricky writing’, coding and word games (Fig. 7.1).¹¹³⁹ Gangways invent and reinvent codes to disguise their identity; they write ‘short way, tricky way so they can’t read it, but us girls we can read it’. In some sequences different letter combinations are represented: one girl’s name is entwined with

¹¹³⁷ Similarly, Ahearn describes how in Nepal, traditional social systems are being challenged by young people and this is being expressed in love letters, an emerging literacy practice that poses a potential threat to the pattern of extended patrilineal families as writers negotiate new identities indicative of increasingly westernised concepts of personhood and romantic love (Ahearn 2000; Ahearn 2001a).

¹¹³⁸ A similar graffiti form has been noted among Warlpiri adolescents and Nicholls suggests that ‘autograph graffiti’ extends beyond individual identity. She suggests that this ‘coding of subjectivity’ has a particularity whereby ‘the sense of self or identity’ is almost invariably group defined’ and ‘emphasises connection, kinship and engagement with others through language’ unlike the subjectivity of Anglo-European adolescent graffiti where a stronger sense of first-person subjectivity and individualism is asserted (Nicholls 2000: 91–92).

¹¹³⁹ (von Sturmer 2002). Similar to the ‘short-way’ secret language, a vernacular oral code used by mainly female older Pitjantjatjara teenagers at Areyonga ‘usually to talk about their boyfriends’ (Langlois 2004: 16). Other examples of ‘secret’ Aboriginal languages have been documented e.g. an Arandic secret back-to-front language termed ‘Akarre Rabbit Talk’ (Turner and Breen 1984).

Fig. 7.1 Warburton graffiti 2003-2006





her boyfriend's by counting letters from the front of alphabet and transposing them with the mirror image letters counted from the back of the alphabet. As Leanne explains:

So they'll be thinking hard who could this person would be but that person won't show them how they do it, they'll be thinking hard: 'Who's this person, they got a lovely fancy writing?' So they'll start copying that person.

Colluded codings are used when girls have boyfriends:¹¹⁴⁰

OTLVS
OTLVS ALWAYS WILL BE 4EVER

when girls are 'best friends':

$\triangleleft = O3BF\ 4EVER = \triangleright$
ONLY 3 BEST COUSINS
ONLY 5 FAMILY'S
O3Gs
O2SFE
O5B Friends

or when 'they're enemies' and girls 'get wild, jealous for each other, for their boyfriend' and rub each other's names out or write 'dirty things about them'. Warnings are signalled to girls from other communities to read 'letting them know so can't get jealous for them'. Coding is also used when they're 'the only one without no boyfriend':

ONLY 1 GIRL OKAY
ONLY ONE NO LOVERS
OAONLIE GIRL 4EVER and EVER OK-AY
1.A.ONLY IN 20T4 S.D.G.J
ONLY 1 4 NONE

Anthropologist John von Sturmer suggests that the oft-repeated *OAO* – *One and Only* tag at Warburton represents an 'assertion of personhood', not 'an instance of untidy or imperfect English'.¹¹⁴¹

By the end of the year the social organisation of the gangways changes as girls 'get married', or are 'waiting' for babies and so transferring their social orientation to their husbands. Within a year this generation of graffiti writers has faded and been replaced by a younger gang with a new style of coding equally as impenetrable to outsiders, displaying coding similar to SMS mobile phone messaging by urban youngsters.¹¹⁴²

¹¹⁴⁰ Codings were copied directly off surfaces and can be interpreted as:

OTLVS = (Only Two LoVerS)

O3Gs = (Only 3 Girls)

O2SFE = (Only 2 Sisters For Ever)

O5B Friends = (Only 5 Best Friends)

1.A.ONLY IN 20T4 S.D.G.J = (One and only in 2004 So Don't Get Jealous)

¹¹⁴¹ (von Sturmer 2002: 6).

¹¹⁴² See (Gibian 2003). The codings are interpreted as:

ICU4URQT

SS
♥s
◁ = SOQT = ▷

Adolescent writing 'out of school' (including graffiti and other forms that differ from the essay text model) is often treated as 'rebellious' or 'inadequate attempts at proper literacy'.¹¹⁴³ According to mainstream standards of literacy, adolescent sub-groups appear to be failing, yet they produce their own creative literacies. Writers highlight the proliferation of everyday, non-standard uses of reading and writing.¹¹⁴⁴ Camitta's study in particular reveals how informal, often private, writings are representative of the cultural group rather than of formal or institutional standards of written expression. Cushman describes so-called 'hybrid literacies' that combine elements of oral and written discourse: storytelling, dialogue, letter-writing and personal journals that unite print and illustration and employ multiple meanings and social representations of self.¹¹⁴⁵

Graffiti apart, adolescent literacy practices at Warburton are relatively invisible and it is commonly assumed by elders like Arthur that 'some of these young people can't even write their names, not like us' and others concur: 'teenagers can't read and write, hard-pressed to just sign their name and they don't know their date of birth'. Yet I found young adults disclosing private writing practices. Troy describes how he writes his own stories in a book:

Scrapbooks, the little scrapbooks. Write my own stories, write my names. All sort of things. I bought it at the roadhouse and I always kept it in my bag but people going through my bag and stealing, that's why. Somebody stole that, I don't know which one. My own diary, but they steal it, one of my brothers steal it or my sister.

I also gave 'diaries' to some of the young women in the neighbourhood including Leanne and Adina. They later tell me that when they try writing at home at night the family always ask: 'What are you doing?', so the diaries are left at my house. These instances illustrate, as noted in Chapter 5, that adolescent literacies are also inhibited by the difficulty of accessing and storing resources to enact practices outside of institutional settings and in finding cultural acceptance of solitary literacy practices.

ICU4URQT = I see you for you are cute
And: SS 'loves' some one cutie

¹¹⁴³ (Street 1994: 146). See also Hull and Schultz's (Hull and Schultz 2002) edited collection exploring 'out-of-school' literacies.

¹¹⁴⁴ See writers' accounts of adolescent 'vernacular literacies' (Camitta 1993), 'hybrid literacies' (Cushman and Emmons 2002), 'sub-rosa' or secret literacies (Gilmore 1986) and diary writing (Finders 1997; Shuman 1986; Shuman 1993). See also (Blake 2004; Heath 1998; Pardue 2004).

'My private diary', as Adina names hers, is a textual space to record 'the discourse of social life'.¹¹⁴⁶ Diaries are filled with names, jottings, signatures, word games, recipes, photos, addresses and phone numbers, as well as longer cohesive texts. These texts are not confessional recounts of personal dilemmas, but social narratives, pages of everyday social interaction narrated in a written rather than oral mode. Texts are written in the third person often with fictitious or cartoon characters using reported speech to depict real life stories and distance the writers from the firsthand, ongoing experience (Fig. 7.2).¹¹⁴⁷ As I discuss above, the stability of traditional marriage has been replaced by new forms of interpersonal relating: 'love-way' relationships, multiple partners, and relationships where alcohol or petrol sniffing may lead to domestic violence. The privacy of diary writing gives Leanne and Adina the space to explore a storytelling genre where their fictitious characters tell 'everyone's story' while also attempting to write 'a new story' about relationships and the boundaries of selfhood. Camitta describes a similar scenario with adolescent writing she has studied:

Adolescents act on experience by writing it. They control, shape, and manipulate its properties – time, space and inhabitants – through texts and their use. Adolescents actively seek to change experience through writing, to act upon it by creating alternative realms through their texts.¹¹⁴⁸

In the next section I discuss further how adolescent writing typically incorporates 'vernacular' or 'hybrid' textual expressions or divergent, non-standard 'literacies'.¹¹⁴⁹ In the youth arts example I show how young adults, many of whom may not be considered highly literate when measured against mainstream standards, are adapting oral narrative skills and using text in multimedia events.

Warburton youth arts

In 2004 a confluence of youth-oriented activities for approximately sixty 16–25 year old young adults merged and built on an existing foundation of training, work and arts-based practice at Warburton.¹¹⁵⁰ The acquisition of multimedia skills was already underway for a

¹¹⁴⁵ (Cushman and Emmons 2002).

¹¹⁴⁶ (Camitta 1993: 229).

¹¹⁴⁷ See (Shuman 1986).

¹¹⁴⁸ (Camitta 1993: 240).

¹¹⁴⁹ (Blake 2004; Camitta 1993; Cushman and Emmons 2002).

¹¹⁵⁰ Many in this generation spent their formative years observing their parent or grandparent generation participating in arts-based activities at the Warburton Arts Project and Women's Centre. Some young people have also participated in accredited Vocational Education and Training (including Tourism and Hospitality, Hairdressing and Office Skills) through Ngaanyatjarra Community College, the local Registered Training Organisation. The 2004-5 projects included the *Nintirringkula Youth Arts Project* auspiced by the Warburton Arts Project; *Kungkaku Yangupalaku Tjukurrpa Project*, a Ngaanyatjarra Health Service sexual health strategy for young adults; Ngaanyatjarra Lands Youth Transition Unit (a nationally-funded Department of Education Science and Training school-to-work transitions project for Aboriginal youth auspiced by the Ngaanyatjarra Council). The Ngaanyatjarra Youth Transition Unit simultaneously focused on multimedia activities in conjunction with enterprise training in the café at the Tjulyuru Civic and Cultural Centre.

small group of trainees enrolled in the *Certificate III in Broadcasting (Remote Area Operations)*.¹¹⁵¹ For the rest of the cohort computer and film skills are attained through self-regulated, non-accredited multimedia training workshops (Fig. 7.3).¹¹⁵²

Mastery of multimedia skills comes easily as young people experiment with digital stills and video cameras, storyboard sequences, plan shoots, and edit films and slide shows. The immediacy of the digital medium matches their creative energy by allowing multiple images to be shot and viewed, then surreptitiously deleted or downloaded for instant replay and communal repeat viewings. Young people burst with pride and excitement about what they are doing and how they have control of the process. Film nights in the community hall showcase their work. The rough, grungy vitality of the films accentuates their determination to do something that matters. DVDs are made of the films and become coveted possessions. From a rapidly growing bank of photos individuals compile personal folders of meaningful images. The surfeit of images challenges the cultural orthodoxy regarding photographed images of people, but the community accommodates this transformed cultural practice, as illustrated by Clem at a youth arts meeting:

You fellas grow up in a different world, in a different way. Not your mother and father way, it's important you can video it for other children.

A shift in the presentation of self in the public space takes place as a new 'performativity' through fashion, film and writing evolves.¹¹⁵³ I draw on the concept of 'performativity' to consider how youth are 'performing' themselves differently from their parents and grandparents. Unlike previous generations who were more bounded by the parameters of ceremonial performance, over recent decades Ngaanyatjarra people have progressively been exposed to a greater range of 'performance' genres—sport, gospel bands, popular music, film, TV, music videos—as observers and participants. Young people's exposure to new genres and forms of communication has extended the boundaries of possibility, as George reflects:

Mostly we see'em on TV, catwalk, you know all the fashion model, and mostly all the white people. But...this the first time for this community here, setting it up like this, challenge for them young people, but really good, you know. Get them young people, break the barrier of shame, you know *kurnta*. They can walk out in front of big mob, lot of people, *kurru pirni* you know, they all looking...Give them more confidence next time when they go out to meet big mob, or talk in front of big mob, they can face that because they been through that.

¹¹⁵¹ *Certificate III in Broadcasting (Remote Area Operations)* is a nationally accredited Training Package delivered jointly by Ngaanyatjarra Media and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE).

¹¹⁵² Trainers from Ngaanyatjarra Media assisted with the multimedia workshops. Training began on word processing computers at Ngaanyatjarra Community College. Warburton Arts Project (with funding from LotteryWest and the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku) purchased Macintosh computers and software (*iPhoto*, *iMovie*, *iDVD* and *Photoshop Elements* and *InDesign*), as well as digital stills cameras, digital video cameras, a scanner and a printer.

¹¹⁵³ Judith Butler uses the term 'performativity' (Butler 1977) which she has adopted from speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969) and later echoed in the work of performance-oriented linguists (Bauman 1986; Bauman and Briggs 1990).

Fig. 7.2 Diary writing

SALLY & MICHAEL

THIS STORY IS ABOUT A GIRL WHO LOVED HER HUBAND SO MUCH BUT HE LOVED PLAYING FOOTBALL ON SATURDAY NIGHT HE WENT TO THE HALL AND THIS ONE GIRL FEEL IN LOVE WITH HIM AND THEY WENT OUT together and his WIFE WAS LOOKING for him she went to the HALL BUT HE WASNT Ther so she looked everywere Then she saw them in the old house having a sex a she ran off then the that girl was gone her Communitie

The End.

page (1)

Wayne and Charlotte

me and my man was in town and I was home and he went and got lots of drink and they went Bush and all the girls went with Him they was drinking then that Girl was looking for her man she went and start he car she went every wher and one man said they was drinking at the dam then she went to the dam and she saw Him with all the girls at the dam and she went mad then she got a big stick for them but they gave her hiding she went hospital then he went round and visit her. then she said no I don't want you any more okay he was crying for her she said you got lots of girls why cant you marry them she said he said NO!! then her mom and Dad came and picked her up then she got Married with Patrick.

NOTHER GIRL

HE'S WIFE AND 2 KIDS


HE'S WIFE WENT AND VISIT HIM HE DIDNT TOLD HER SHE DIDNT then 2 week past he NO WHAT WAS DIED Thru that GOING ON FOOTBALL TIME

SICKNESS

Fig. 7.3 Multimedia workshop poster



Fig. 7.4 Wilurarra Youth Arts Festival, Warburton, April 2005



KURRA! WILURARRA STYLE
An exhibition from the
Nintirringkula Warburton Youth Arts Team

WARBURTON COMMUNITY
invites you to the opening of

WILURARRA YOUTH ARTS FESTIVAL
A series of arts, music, fashion,
sports, dance, language, film and
cultural events 15-27 April 2005

on Wed 20 April 2005 5:30pm
Tjulyura Cultural and Civic Centre

by Mr Ian Ward, Warburton Community Chairman

Refreshments to be served

RSVP by 11 April - Kelli De Koven T 08 9954 9011
E kjulyura@warburton.com

WILURARRA YOUTH ARTS FESTIVAL
WARBURTON RANGES W.A. 15 – 27 APRIL 2005
Kurra! Wilurarra Style - Best in the West

Festival: This is our first youth arts festival. It's got everything all the young people have been doing. We're putting it together for this one big event. We like to show it to the community and everybody else. Enjoy the festival, come and show us your talent, join in and have fun.

Youth: They got different style and they got something to say. Kurra! Wilurarra Style – Best in the West.

Music: They like music that fit the lifestyle, music you can dance to.

Hand Signs: We can talk with our hands and our bodies. It's like a language, it's part of the fashion.

Photo: They learned to take photos of friends 'gangways', family and themselves. Maybe you can think about it and get some new ideas for yourself.

Film: We did it! We made these films from our own little stories.

Computer: It's not just for offices or for any big government person. Young people can take pictures for themselves, make slideshows for everyone to see. More stories, more ideas!

Style: We've got our own style. WILURARRA STYLE!

Fashion: Looking good. They like the fashion, they like dressing up, it's fun – and they look flash!

Fig. 7.5 Nintirringkula Newsletter

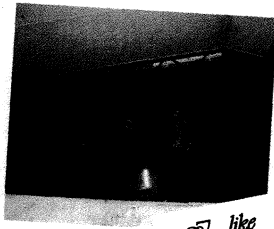


NINTIRRINGKULA YOUTH ARTS

FASHION AND MUSIC

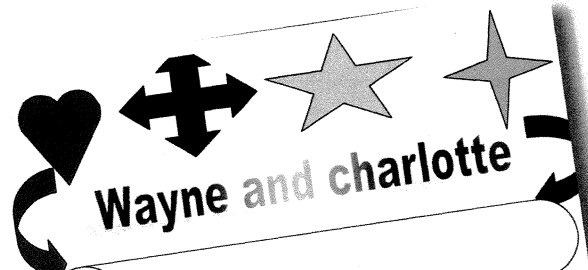
On Wednesday we went to the Culture Centre and had a meeting with the Shire. Then we went to Albie's office looking through the photos on the computer until lunch-time. After lunch we told all the young mens to come and do the fashion at the Hall. So the young fellas came and it was great. It was first time for the fellas. So they loved it and we had the band players there. They was practising too for the Carnival too. We will be having a great time and fun. It's great to have young girls and fellas doing different things like.

fashion-
music-
band-
typing-
cooking-
stories-
camera,s-
taking photos.-



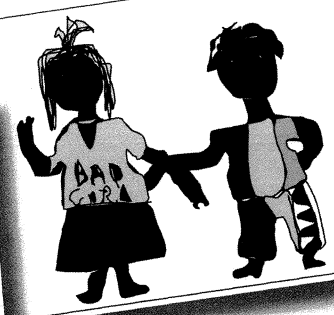



I like to learu more thing to type on the computer and make book on the computer and write story learu about video and video and learu softball rules. Painting and art music write song cooking on wedensday all the mans and woman play football and softball at the oval some time all man play basketball sometime I like to play softball because its good to play on the weekend warburton girls won the softball the kids learu cooking and spor evray night all the young people go to the dropin center they play on the poolalade and game watch video I with the girls to the oval to play softball some tmie I go out bush with my family for hunting

Fig. 7.6 Cartoon stories



Wayne and Charlotte

Me and my man was in town and I was home and he went and brought a lot of drink and went bush and all the girls went with him they was drinking then that girl was looking for her man she went and started the car she went every where and one man said they was drinking at the dam and then she went to the dam and saw him with all the girls at the dam and she went mad then she got a big stick for them but they gave her hiding then she went to hospital then he went round and visit her then she said no I don't want you any more okay he was crying for her she said you got lots of girlfriends why can't you marry them she said he said no then her mum and dad came and picked her up.


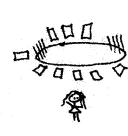
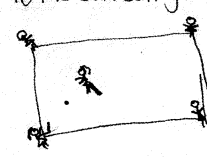



<p>On saturday this girl had a shower</p> 	<p>then she went to the oval</p> 
<p>THEN SHE WALK OVER TO THE SOFTBALL GROUND</p> 	<p>then that night they had a band. She was dancing</p> 
<p>then he went out WITH HER</p> 	<p>A MAN WAS WATCHING HER</p> 

Fig. 7.7 Songs and scripts

Man's story - That's how life goes...

1. In a dream I seen a man and a woman. This is a story about the man and woman.
2. One day he found a date with this girl and every night they go out.
3. Then the man was married to her. The woman got married to the wrong kind a man.
4. She was looking after him good way.
5. Then she found out when the man came home late and he said to make a feed.
6. That night the man's brother he came along and said, "Hey bro, you coming for a ride?" And he said, "Yeah, what for?" And he said, "Oh you want some drugs?" And he said "Okay, I'm coming." But his wife said, "Don't go." And he said, "Wait, I'll be back."
7. But his wife was worrying too much.
8. Later that night he came home drunk and stoned.
9. Then he woke his wife and said, "I want some food." And she said, "No food there."
10. And he got wild and start swearing at her all sort and she was scared

not more wild and start hitting her all night.
 her hitting and she called her brother.
 went to the police station and put a report
 what he was doing. He was hitting her in
 house
 round to the house, he was full asleep,
 house
 of the police van.
 man and they took him to the police
 the judge gave him a 18 months.
 his wife and family.
 with prison.
 of things
 wife. I should not do that to her."
 ks to his friends. They say to
 to her or what?"
 prison?"
 a big stick and she chucked him

et to her" they ask him.
 I did that for. Must be jealous of some
 wife."
 months. He sit down and think hard to
 to come back home.
 he sees the razor wire round and he
 some more space. He thinks it's too
 here.
 ns he made a phone call to her house.
 cked the phone up.
 the phone and that man said,
 e about what happened back there
 you back there."
 I am going to leave you. You'll
 to another place and stay there
 back to you."

Silm
 ...s Film ALL IN ONE DISC....
 Melissa and mark and Selina got
 married to mark
 Melissa tried her best
 trying to get mark but
 Selina kept taking mark
 away from melissa....
 melissa didn't worry
 for him she just
 went and found a
 nother man....
 The End of the
 Story!!....

...s. story
 Couple adays latter they all went to
 The festival and mark saw melissa with a
 nother man he was tall and he had green eyes
 and mark got really jelouse!! for him. and
 they had a
 the End!! Fight...x

Ngurra Kutjara
 KUNGA KUTJARA WATI PALUNYAKU
 PUTU NGURRA WATI PALUNYANYA
 YANU KUNGA KUTJAPATJERA
 CHORUS KUNGA
 WATI PALUNYANYA YANU
 NGURRA WILURRA KUNGA
 PALUNYALU KATINGU
 KUNGA PALUNYANYA NYINARR PUTU KULINDI
 WATI PALUNYAKU KUNGA KUTJAPALU
 KATINGAKA NGURRA WILURRA

Fig. 7.8 Scribbling and doodling



This generation is prepared to be singled out, to be on public show, to be praised though the receipt of certificates and awards, and to have their images and names enter the public space—a manifestation of *kurmta* in transformation.

The expression of self through fashion, initially a female activity, becomes a collaborative mixed gender event. Two young men say:

A: What about young fellas, we want to do for fashion.

B: Yeah we missed out. Fashion style walking. Every man want to do it.

A: Not just for girls, for young fellas too.

In the ‘fellas’ fashion’ events the presence of the local community band injects an aura of masculinity. For males and females alike, the fashion clothes are costumes that enable performativity in the projection of self. Public performances take place in film nights and fashion parades throughout 2004 and in the ‘*Wilurarra* Youth Arts Festival’ in Warburton in April 2005 (Fig. 7.4).¹¹⁵⁴ These events validate the transformation of personhood and the process is approved by the community.

Textuality

In the multimedia-oriented projects the visual image has initial primacy, and then almost seamlessly, written text is incorporated. Through the workshops young adults gain unique access to the spatial and material resources that literacy events require. The space gives them the individual privacy to write, but within a collective context. In Chapter 5 I show the findings of NRS English LLN assessments for the young adult cohort at Warburton.¹¹⁵⁵ By relying solely on this data a one-dimensional picture of literacy competence is gained. In the following ethnographic description I demonstrate that literacy use among young adults is in fact rich, nuanced and contingent upon social context and stimulus. I suggest that a level of competence lies dormant, because in everyday life there are few sites or activities that that allow unbounded reading and writing practices. By shifting the focus of literacy away from the assessment of the individual learner, we can see literacy activated for participation in a meaningful social world.

Early texts are mimetic of school practice and young people write of loving learning, being happy and proud, and of Warburton being a good place. Some young adults write texts of one phrase or one sentence and are oblivious of the formal conventions of the written register, while others write longer texts, mindful of grammar, punctuation and layout. Texts

¹¹⁵⁴ (Lawson 2005).

¹¹⁵⁵ Table 5.4 in Chapter 5 shows data from the CDEP Skills Audit English NRS (Coates et al. 1995) assessments undertaken in Warburton on 57 young adults in the 16–25 year old age group (roughly equivalent to the 60-odd young adults in the youth arts cohort).

are written predominately in English with insertions of emblematic Ngaanyatjarra words and phrases. It is mainly females who write longer texts, often drawing on the discourse style of their English-language schooling experiences. Leah spontaneously writes about a fellas' fashion event using a report writing genre. Arthur's daughter Maxine writes a three page personal narrative and takes photos to fit the text. Writers utilise a range of strategies: some draft texts on paper, then transfer them onto computer where spacing and fonts are adjusted, layout formatted, and punctuation, grammar and spelling checked. Coherence is sought; drafts are read out loud and decisions are made about content, sequencing and layout to 'check it to make it correct' explains Leanne. Through image and text young people document their world: football, softball, the band, fashion, family and each other. Some texts are published in their own newsletter, the *Nintirringkula News* (Fig. 7.5) and distributed around the community.¹¹⁵⁶

Leanne and Adina communicate visually and textually moving easily between the two modes:

- L: I been finish it mines, I did a whole page. Some they only do a little page.
A: Me and Leanne we went there first, no last, and we been finish our writing first.
L: And [she] got a shock: 'Eeeh, did long page!' That's why I been do mines, 5 page.

In a media workshop their skill range is extended and they watch attentively, absorbing new information and applying it immediately. The girls need no assistance in enhancing photos and producing cartoons, drawings and graffiti-like texts other than the structure within which to work. Their narrative writing style develops over a year or more. Diary stories are transposed into cartoon evocations and scripts (Fig. 7.6). They use the computer graphics software *Photoshop Elements* to display unique innovation, transforming digital photos into art pieces bursting with colour, pattern and text. Young people are also introduced to the art glass medium—moulding slump glass platters in the kilns at the Warburton Arts Project.¹¹⁵⁷ Not content with re-rendering the traditional iconic motifs used by older people, they create their own expressions of selfhood and identity and form new images that push the boundaries of the glass medium. Adina soon produces a triptych of glass platters on the theme of male-female relationships and her figurative work is replete with text. Later, using photos of the three glass platters she makes a slide show in *iMovie* based on her iterative relationships theme. Simultaneously, Adina drafts a script and sketches out scenes and this script is later typed into *iMovie* and enhanced with music.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Nintirringkula* can be translated into English as 'learning'.

¹¹⁵⁷ Art glass has been a successful medium for older artists at the Warburton Arts Project for many years. See (Thompson 2000) and <http://www.warburtonarts.com/site/glass.php>

Songs are a different textual space, often written not on paper but 'in the mind'. Songs are affective oral texts and in song-writing Ngaanyatjarra language is dominant. Although young men have tended to be the song 'writers' and band members, the youth arts project has opened the space for young women to emerge as singer-songwriters.¹¹⁵⁸ In music workshops a synergy is found between song-writing, recording and filming 'video clips'. Trainees from Ngaanyatjarra Media storyboard and film a video clip for a youth arts song recording. This inspires another group to make their own film: 'we wanna do a make up story, but real story for everybody' declare a small mixed-gender group. Young men also engage enthusiastically in writing their own narrative, yet the themes are recursive and through storytelling personal relationships are negotiated and alternative endings created (Fig. 7.7). These ideas are storyboarded but never realised in film as the group moves on to the next event.

Writing 'style way'

Adolescents around the world commonly use language as an important identity marker, often characterised by the development of patterns of linguistic variation or inventive teenage slang.¹¹⁵⁹ In adolescent cohorts in the Western Desert comparable identity-associated language features have been documented.¹¹⁶⁰ Writers note also how 'multimodal' textual practices often draw on traditional cultural elements with the innovative adolescent 'appropriation of words and phrases from oral tradition, popular culture or literary texts'.¹¹⁶¹ Through storytelling, social identity is structured and negotiated and the 'shape and content of narratives' provide insights into how young people are visualising and constructing their sense of themselves.¹¹⁶²

For adolescents, writing is personal and social, an act of invention in which everyday actions are shaped and influenced by the content and by the symbolic value of written texts. Adolescents appropriate cultural materials and incorporate and transform them into their own written texts. They collaborate with other individuals in the construction of those texts. And they work out their identities against the experience of others through performance or publication of their texts.¹¹⁶³

Writers suggest that 'hiphop' is now a globalised signifying practice and recent work on adolescent writing has documented the development of 'hiphop literacies'.¹¹⁶⁴ The popular

¹¹⁵⁸ Youth arts music workshops in 2006 led to a recording of a CD of songs by the youth arts performers.

¹¹⁵⁹ (Eckert 1988; Gibian 2003).

¹¹⁶⁰ Langlois describes 'Areyonga Teenage Pitjantjatjara' and notes the development of a Pitjantjatjara slang or 'short-way' language spoken within cohorts of older (mainly female) teenagers aged from 14–19 (Langlois 2004: 160).

¹¹⁶¹ (Camitta 1993: 239; Menezes de Souza 2003).

¹¹⁶² (Heath and McLaughlin 1993b: 3). See also (Bauman 1986; Bauman and Briggs 1990).

¹¹⁶³ (Camitta 1993: 243).

¹¹⁶⁴ (Mitchell 2001; Mitchell 2003; Pennycook 2003; Pardue 2004; Stavrias 2005; Richardson 2006). Pardue describes an education project in Brazil that uses hip hop as a new form of expression that is a potential medium for 'learning and community building' that reaches urban youth previously isolated from public education (Pardue 2004: 411).

culture styling of hip-hop has also flowed into the cultural and linguistic landscape of the remote Ngaanyatjarra world.

The verbal arts are central to Ngaanyatjarra social interaction. While they work, young people engage in oral banter: clever word play, simile, metaphor, and jesting merges with the ever-present *iTunes* music soundscape. After any work session, scraps of paper covered in ‘scribbles’ or doodles litter the room. In these doodles we see an embedding of identity in ‘text bytes’ (Fig. 7.8): scribbled patterns, symbols, initials, own names, names of family, friends or hip-hop musicians, and slogans such as ‘fashion for mens and girls’, ‘Warburton *Nintirringkula* Team 4ever’). The unconscious doodling of young people is a social activity, a form of textual play redolent of traditional *mirrpa* or sand stories—discussed in Chapter 6. Sand story-telling integrate symbolic and pictorial representations with spoken narrative and gesture in a ‘coherent narrative whole’ within a single ‘frame’, and this narrative schemata is easily adapted to new multimedia forms.¹¹⁶⁵

The youth arts group coin the term ‘Style way—*Wilurarra* style’ to embody the expression of their new style and expression of self through fashion, film and language. In this ‘semiotic social space’ the term ‘*wilurarra*’ embodies polysemous, multilayered references.¹¹⁶⁶ It refers to the cardinal direction ‘west’ and young people’s location physically in Western Australia, as well as their figurative location in modernity and the Western world, concomitant with hip-hop popular culture references to the *West* side of the Bronx. The new ‘style way’ form evident in young people’s multimodal expressions displays an overlapping of various communication systems. In slide shows and films social identity is structured and negotiated through storytelling, and image, sound, text, and ‘doodlings’ are all transferred into cartoon narratives and slideshow frames with ease. In April 2004 Leah initiates a stream of consciousness word play that continues over a year. She begins by ‘fashioning’ slogans and rhymes to overlay images cut from magazines: ‘bad girls, bat girls, mad girls, smokey way, sexy lips, think twice’. This oral word play is compiled in a scrap book of slogans and over the following year resurfaces as a poem in the newsletter, and a film on the *Wilurarra Style Film* DVD:

— PRESENTS¹¹⁶⁷
ORANGE CRUSH
MISs WaRbUrTon
&
LOVE IS LIVE
FELLAS IN STYLE
NeVeR eNoUgH fReEdOm

¹¹⁶⁵ (Wilkins 1997: 144).

¹¹⁶⁶ (Gee 2005).

¹¹⁶⁷ All personal names have been deleted and replaced by —.

ALL YOU NEED IS (LOVING HEART)
 COME ON TIGERS
 LOVE the FASHION 4 ever

 _____ & _____
 SMILE FOR MILES
 BAD BOYS

 KEEP IT IN FASHION 2005
 _____ & _____
 THINK PINK THINK TWICE
 #####
 MISs WaRbUrToN
 CAFÉ FELLAS
 'WTYA' THREE GANGS
 girls signs
 TIGERS IS THE BEST
 CHEERING CHILDREN
 BaSkEtBaLL TeAm
))(((
 IM AN AUSTRALIAN
 _____ & _____
 BEST FRIENDS
 _____ AND _____
 #####
 SMILE for a day
 _____ & _____
 Be happy in the WESTSIDE
 WILURARRA STYLE
 COPYRIGHT 2005
 WARBURTON YOUTH ARTS

Another young woman makes a slide show about gesture and signs for the *Wilurarra Style* Film DVD. Not content with the music available on *iTunes* she returns with the latest hiphop sound. The film is optimistic, stylish and laden with an intertextual layering of image, text, song and gesture. A clever interplay of rhyming phrases, slogans and metaphor overlays textual and gestural references to living on the *West* side alongside 'gangways' interposed with 'gangsters', 'peace gang', 'gang with style'. The images portray the changing nature of gesture with young people's hand signs blending new meanings with old.¹¹⁶⁸ The text is also infused with relatedness and local identity markers such as 'Go Tigers!' (the Warburton football and softball teams).

KURRA
 GANGWAYS!
 A FILM ABOUT
 GANGSTER
 SIGNS.
 PRESENTED BY

 THUG LIFE
 PEACE SIGN
 BEST BUDS
 GANGWAYS FROM THE WEST
 TWO BRO'S
 GANGSTERS
 THUGS
 WILURARRA STYLE
 SHOW THE REST SO PUT IT TO THE TEST
 Eest meet West
 TWO GIRLS FROM WARBO
 FOUR BOYS WITH STYLE
 GOT THAT SESTER!

¹¹⁶⁸ Paralinguistic or nonverbal codes such as gesture, gaze and hand signs are integral to everyday discourse. Traditional auxiliary sign languages are found across Aboriginal Australia, see (Kendon 1988). Hand signs from contemporary US black youth and hiphop culture have also been absorbed by Aboriginal youth.

WESTSIDE GANG!
 SISTERS
 WITH STYLE
 Eestside to the Westside
 Come to the west and show it the rest
 BEST IN THE WEST FEST
 PEACE UP
 BE HAPPY
 PLAY IT LIKE THIS
 WESTSIDE!
 NIGHT STYLE
 BE HAPPY IN THE WEST
 PEACE GANG
 WHAT'S UP
 PEACE BRO
 KEEP SMILING
 KURRA!
 THUMBS UP!
 GO WESTSIDE!
 GANG WITH STYLE
 STYLEY WAY
 GO TIGERS!
 THAT'S ALL FOR YOU FOLKS!!!!!!
 THE END
 BY _____

Through the incorporation of intercultural elements—global hiphop and local Ngaanyatjarra language, gesture and style—young people are forming ‘semiotic reconstructions’ and forging new cultural identities, perspectives and understandings.¹¹⁶⁹ They are challenging stereotypes and creating less bounded constructs of Aboriginality.

Alternative ways of learning and engaging

The indications are that, in addition to schooling and VET sector training, alternative environments for learning and engagement are needed that fit the cultural paradigm and the CDEP employment context. It is crucial to consider learning environments that are attractive to youth, where they can gain a positive experience of ongoing learning and participate in activities that meet community goals and aspirations. In the next section I analyse the factors that contribute to the success of the arts-based approach, outlined above. I suggest that its success hinges firstly on the pivotal creative multimedia aspect, and also on the fact that the distinction between ‘learning’ and ‘work’ is blurred. Lastly, the process is not imposed from the outside and works within, rather than against, the existing social and cultural patterns and rhythms.¹¹⁷⁰

Arts-based approach

For many in the young adult generation participation in mainstream learning has been sporadic as McLean indicates at a youth arts meeting:

¹¹⁶⁹ (Pennycook 2003: 527).

¹¹⁷⁰ In this section quotes come from informal interviews with facilitators from Warburton Arts Project, Ngaanyatjarra Media, Ngaanyatjarra Community College, the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, Ngaanyatjarra Youth Transitions Unit and the *Kungkaku Yangupalaku Tjukurpa Project*, who provided the mentoring, training and resources that supported the youth arts projects.

When all you mob went to school, you went to school in the '80s and early '90s and in Warburton at that time there was a lot of sniffing and too many people drinking, there was a lot of violence and a lot of problems and all you people didn't get a lot of support when you went to school. Nobody made sure you went, nobody took much interest in what you did in school. That was a difficult time to be a school kid. And a lot of people said: 'Oh that mob they missed out on school, anyway we'll look to the next generation.' And sort of wrote you guys off and said: 'Can't fit you into education.' Now with this project you guys got back into education, you're back into learning and you're back into doing things that are really important for you. And also really good for the kids who are coming behind to see you doing it, because they'll learn from that and they'll think: 'Oh if they can do that, I can do that too.' And it will give them confidence and they'll know that they can do it too.¹¹⁷¹

It has been suggested by Albie Viegas that arts-based activities are important for the slow cumulative development of skills and relationships where the focus is on the 'individual and their growth, not the teaching of content knowledge'. In these projects the aim was to explore different media for self-expression and to 'generate new ideas through learning and doing'.¹¹⁷² The arts provide an arena of expression, expectation and production that is both individual and collaborative. The process of media training works because it takes place within the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, in the local environment where young people are confident. In addition, as Ngaanyatjarra Media trainers suggest, 'media' is the perfect vehicle as it provides a framework for the articulation of ideas that matter to youth.

Furthermore, as in the studies of arts-based learning noted in Chapter 1, these young people have also developed 'high aspirations' and 'firm expectations of what they can achieve' through operating within an environment of 'respect, responsibility and relevance', as well as 'community, connection and commitment'.¹¹⁷³ Young people participate in processes that demand reflection, relevance, decision-making, planning, organising, discipline, time management and evaluation. As facilitators, adults create environments where learners experience affirmation, group achievement, and mutual expectations of high quality. A media trainer explains how young people 'gain confidence':

Pick up a camera, there's football, shoot it, chop it up, edit it, decision-making from start to end, preproduction to production. Organisation, decision-making, seeking relevance, time management, everything. Working as team, dealing with contingencies—footage they shot is not OK, they find this is OK, this is not OK, not enough detail to connect the footage. So let's go back again, take the trouble of going back, get the people who acted, make them act again, bring back a little more footage to connect with what they have. OK, so whatever they want to do they want to do it perfect.

Through media production young people gain pride in themselves as learners and as producers of visual media desired by their community. They also establish their own aesthetic, define their talents, focus on their own specialisations and attain high expectations of their own technical expertise and literacy competence.

¹¹⁷¹ McLean, Youth Arts meeting—13/12/04.

¹¹⁷² Albie Viegas, Co-ordinator of Warburton Arts Project (pers. comm. 2004).

¹¹⁷³ See (Heath 1998: 12-13).

Learning and working

New skills are learned and interpreted as 'real work' because young people have real roles and responsibilities. Naomi suggests that 'sometimes you're learning at the same time as you're working, that's what I do when I'm working'. The youth arts workers are paid for the CDEP hours worked. The work generates its own momentum; young people work long hours, through lunch, into the evenings and over weekends, often asking: 'can we do work today?' Contemporaneously, many of the same cohort participate in the Youth Transitions programme where hospitality training and 'employment' skills are gained. This group are the 'café workers' and they also represent themselves as workers on film, described by the Youth Transitions co-ordinator as 'picturing yourself as a worker':

It was fascinating to watch how these young people moved into the workplace and introduced their own style, music, technology, sociality. They created a model of work which was permanently captured on video, shared with the broader community throughout the editing process and again during public screenings in the hall, validated and held up as a new, modern model of work.

One group of young men on the fringes of formal learning are described as the 'least likely to succeed'. They are introduced to the youth arts approach and within three days learn how to take photos and make their own innovative films. This learning is interpreted as 'work' because young people are acquiring and using many of the skills and competencies required of the 'workplace' such as confidence, initiative, task completion, time-management, working in teams and individually, meeting deadlines, hypothesising and problem solving. They also know how to use computers, the internet, and digital cameras—all the sort of vocational skills expected of workers. Significantly, the level of enthusiasm and engagement in 'work' demonstrated in youth arts activities is often difficult to replicate in other vocational training or CDEP contexts.

In the arts-related activities formal teaching is minimal, instead the learning and development of skills and knowledge is activated through doing something meaningful. Because it is meaningful participants turn up, concentrate, complete tasks and work independently. This method of learning is not outcomes-based and there is no prescribed curriculum or compulsory timetable. Projects tap into what young people are interested in. This method of learning is, however, chaotic, unpredictable and responsive—elements not usually found in education and training institutions. As one facilitator expressed it: with 'no end in sight', it 'grew like topsy, so many hungry to do something, girls, fellas, babies, dogs!' and the ideas multiplied. A media trainer noted that the difference between this and compulsory training is that young adults 'are here because they want to be', consequently they are 'more relaxed, friendly' and 'a buzz happens, run out of time because so much is

happening'. Babies and toddlers are brought along to events, and young mothers are not excluded as the self-regulated aspect gives them the freedom to co-ordinate the day around shopping, feeding children and other social obligations.¹¹⁷⁴

This approach requires special adults who can work with young people as facilitators or mentors. Studies of youth learning emphasise the important role that 'wizards' or 'non-formal adult mentors' play in the process of engagement and learning.¹¹⁷⁵ Similarly, in the youth arts process facilitators 'who can think outside the box, have a vision and make it happen' are critical. In this case:

Facilitators need to be unshockable, to treat people as adults and be interested in their ideas and letting them have a go and follow whatever it is that interests young people, rather than own agenda. Pushing them beyond skill base, trusting them, pushing them to a level of responsibility, like those digital cameras are just cruising around the community and they always came back, football didn't, but digital cameras did!

Facilitators were also aware that they needed to be mindful of working in an 'adult environment', by being 'vigilant, but flexible' by giving 'freedom and space, but structure as well'. Facilitators describe how they 'take a gentle low key approach, getting alongside, rather than in front' and are 'sensitive to where adolescents are at'. This involves being conscious of what youngsters want to learn and waiting, being open to their suggestions and the different tangents, filling in the gaps, but not pushing learners in any direction.

Caring, trusting, often long-term, relationships are developed with mentors. In this environment young people are participating in bilingual-bicultural social and linguistic interactions with adults. To sustain turn-taking interactions with adults, adolescents develop the communication skills needed for negotiating, problem solving, seeking relevance and decision-making. They also need to listen to and comprehend complex instructional utterances, often in English as a second language:

You get the idea, the next step is for you guys to pick the photos you think would be really good together and make it longer and pick the music you want to go with it. You want to put words in there, so you click the place where you want to type.

Importantly, the mentors are both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Mick is in his late 30s and has worked with young people over many years at the Drop in Centre and with musicians at the recording studio and music festivals. He is a co-worker in the Youth

¹¹⁷⁴ In many instances domestic responsibilities inhibit a young woman's capacity to be a worker or a trainee. A working mother or trainee is torn between two obligations, her primary responsibility to look after her family and her secondary responsibility to meet the temporal requirements of work or training commitments. Most houses do not have fridges, so fresh food must be bought daily and this is a time-consuming activity. The store is open from 9am-5pm and closed at lunchtime.

¹¹⁷⁵ (McLaughlin et al. 1994; Stanton-Salazar and Spina 2003).

Transitions Unit and is an important leader for the *Nintirringkula* Team. The involvement of older people like Mick validates the process and he mediates social interactions, jealousies or conflicts.

Arts-based practice engages young adults in peer learning and collaborative 'situated learning'.¹¹⁷⁶ In the process they learn not only from adults, but also from each other in participatory activities. In the words of one media trainer young people, 'teach themselves' and 'teach each other' because they are 'hungry' for involvement. Young people are not scared of the technology and learn complex computer and multimedia skills 'co-figuratively' through a process of 'peer learning'.¹¹⁷⁷ In an early multimedia training workshop learners were told...

...only about two or three things, then went with it themselves, figured it out. Having a particular purpose driven by them was fundamental to it working so well. We went with the flow. People were engaged, busy, sitting at a computer or at a desk with a piece of paper working on something, they'd come up with questions when they got to a point where they needed to know something else, they'd find that out, ask someone else, progress. I guess that's learning. Enthusiasm, people came back, there was interest that grew on itself.

In peer learning, collaborative task-based oral interactions characteristically require 'critical judgement and systematic reasoning skills', such as 'hypothesising and posing problems, devising methods, specifying parts and steps and using appropriate vocabulary'.¹¹⁷⁸ In the following dialogue Adina and Leanne collaboratively figure out how to use the computer and teach Nancy how to do graffiti-like 'fancy writing':

- A: See look at this, it should be here, look right here look, that line here. Go to that line here and click one of them buttons. Nuh, try another one. Try all that.
- L: Somewhere round here, other side. There, *ngaany*, I been find it!
- A: Where?
- L: There!
- A: Oh yeah that way, she found it.
Which one you want N.?
- [back to L.]
Pick it that many colour one, press it and go OK.
- L: OK.
- A: No, cancel that. And you got to go//
- L: //I'll do it, *kurra, ngaanya!* First, no go back up.
- A: Take that off for while.
- L: Go this way, to your name first.
- A: Go that way to you name.
- L: Click it and just press it and over it till it go really black. *Ngaanya* just press over it.
- A: Hold the button down and go across.
- L: Go across, yeah, like that, go top, same way.
- A: Go up.
- L: *Yuwa* like that, now pick any one, colourful one.
- A: Then OK
- L: And OK, OK, there!
- A: Tell her to rub that one on top there.

¹¹⁷⁶ (Lave and Wenger 1991).

¹¹⁷⁷ Shirley Brice Heath—*Imagining Childhood Symposium*, Alice Springs 2005 drawing on (Mead 1978 [1970]).

¹¹⁷⁸ (Heath 1998: 7).

- L: And click it, yeah, click right out, and press 'yuwa', and go down, or tray and click this way, yuwa click it. Kurra, I'll show you.
 [she takes the mouse]
 There now!
- A: Make it.
- L: Nyaapa.
- A: Go here, go right on here, do it on there.
- L: Kurra, kurra.
- A: And get any sort of letters, see all that there, fancy one like that.
- L: Pick any writing, running writing.
- A: Which one you want? All the good ones, palunya, fancy one.
- L: This one?
- N: Yuwa.
- L: There now, try it out, should do it.

Oracy and literacy skills are extended through reading instructions on screen, explaining how to do tasks, listening to and using sequential or instructional language, seeking relevance and making decisions regarding images or music. In another example, a pair of girls assist each other with spelling on the computer screen:

- A: There go that way, proper one, which one you gotta put?
- B: You gotta press this?
- A: That one, capital letter.
- B: Ngaanya.
- A: Namepa, where this 'u', it should be showing up.

Youth arts activities provide an opportunity for young people to construct knowledge jointly in active learning situations and through participation and collaboration specific linguistic and abstract thinking skills are activated.¹¹⁷⁹

Working within the sociality

Social relatedness underpins all interaction in the Ngaanyatjarra world and the youth arts projects work within this cultural framework. A sense of relatedness with each other and with significant adults is integral to the process. Young adults identify as members of the *Nintirringkula* Team and engender a positive 'social solidarity' between participants.¹¹⁸⁰

Multigenerational involvement and support assists the process. Approval from the gerontocracy is valued and sought; older people were present and participating in activities or meetings, as onlookers, as fashion parade judges, or as conduits to the senior leadership. In turn, elders like Clem express pride in young people:

When I first seen that [films], I seen it in the hall. My daughter told me a little bit about it, she said: 'Oh you gotta go and see that whole thing'. So I went down there and that was really good... See them young people wanting to do things, because the world is changing, everything is changing, government changing and we can't change things, we're getting too old. But I'm sure you young people can get involved, so it makes me happy, you young people are doing really good. Doing something for yourselves, and not just for yourselves but also for your children and the people here. You getting a good name for the people... and gradually the people who run the government coming in here. They'll be seeing it and thinking: 'Oh Warburton good'. They'll be thinking differently now. They won't be thinking about sniffers, they won't be thinking about bad things, but

¹¹⁷⁹ (Heath and Langman 1994).

¹¹⁸⁰ (Newman 1996).

thinking about good things, what's happening in Warburton. Well keep going. Like I said I'll support you all the way until I die!

Ngaanyatjarra leaders like George are aware of the necessity to support young people: 'I help the young people step forward so [they] can grow up and be leaders too, *ngula*'.

George emphasises the importance of learning and overcoming challenges:

Even though some never win a prize, but they still got it in their heart, you know...That's how young people got to be today, keep on going, you win the prize and you go on to the next one, like that. But you got to do it yourself, but they got to have people to help them, encourage them, setting up the opportunity for them...Like making a play, young people like say: 'No to sniffing', you can act it out on stage front of big mob of people and families can come along. They can learn through that and young people who do that act they get more confidence in themselves too and other kids looking at what they acting and they can learn from that. They can say: 'Oh I can say no to that'. Learn from others too...it's important for them to work, gotta work.

George is mindful of the fact that younger children will look to this generation as role models and the children of the next generation will follow in their footsteps.

Community or arts-based practice offers a site for young people to take leadership responsibility and develop as role models. During the 2005 *Wilurarra Festival*, Mick, Clarrie and Naomi are festival directors and they organise events and keep the younger ones inspired and motivated. At 25 years of age, Jim's son Clarrie (Family I) is taking on age-appropriate male responsibilities that fit the transforming cultural framework. He is a band leader, captain of the football team, a worker and he attends Ngaanyatjarra Council meetings. Naomi is emerging as a strong leader through her role as a media worker where gender distinctions are not a consideration as 'it's anybody's job'. She has been encouraged by her family to work hard and become a leader and has the cultural authority to direct film and fashion events. Naomi tells me:

Education is important because we want to learn more about English, you know, education, get educated properly...one day some of the young people they might be leader, if they keep on going, not going the wrong way...you have to work for your living.

Concomitantly, she has the confidence to work independently and edit her films in the radio room over many days. Naomi generates enthusiasm, interest and engagement and is consciously leading young people. In 2004 Naomi completed her *Certificate III in Broadcasting* and her ongoing role as a media trainer for the younger adolescents has been integral to ongoing film production. She has also inspired a new cohort to undertake media training. In 2005 ten of the twenty trainees who commenced formal VET training with Ngaanyatjarra Media (*Certificate III in Broadcasting*) were from Warburton and in 2006 a further three young people enrolled—a direct result of having participated in the non-formal youth arts activities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that the developmental trajectory of this generation of young adults is diverging from cultural norms. The traditional maturational cycle has altered, yet the assumed normativity of the Western adolescent developmental trajectory does not match the cultural reality of the remote Ngaanyatjarra world. Despite obvious changes, Ngaanyatjarra core values continue to underpin the practice of everyday life and the construction of social identity is tied to the reproduction of these values over the generations. The mainstream rhetoric proposes that schooling and vocational training offer the choices or opportunities required for Aboriginal futures. However I suggest that we need to explore a broader range of options to engage youth in purposeful activity that will build up the skills they need for their future. In this chapter I have used the exemplar of community- or arts-based learning to gain insights into the skills, knowledge, values and behaviours that come to the fore when young adults participate in meaningful activities that interest and inspire them. I show that when stimulated by an optimal learning environment young adults display agency, leadership, creative adaptability and engagement as artists, learners, workers and literate participants.

A theme that I have repeatedly returned to throughout the thesis is the loss of the regulatory sanctions of the past. I discuss how the traditional rule-bound structures were challenged by the arrival of the mission, schooling, and the introduction of other Western practices. Old boundaries of obligation, responsibility or compulsion have dissipated and individuals can to a greater extent than before 'choose' how to spend their time and whether or not to attend school, training or work. There is also less compulsion to conform to the strict confines of Western formal or institutional standards of written expression. In past generations literacy practices were ideologically driven and defined by the frame of literacy initiated by institutions. Writing conformed to the genres encountered in schooling or in adult Christian practice. Adult literates read and wrote in different ways according to their emerging roles and identities within the expanding domains of practice. Now young people are creatively exploring divergent writing forms. Through the youth arts space young people have access to literacy resources that match their autonomy and unfolding contemporary self-identity. This alerts us to the important realisation that the discourse of failure surrounding literacy and learning among Aboriginal youth can be turned into horizons of possibility, if the right approaches are found.

By drawing on theory from literacy history, anthropology, sociolinguistics, the New Literacy Studies and from theorists who view learning as situated activity, I have explored and documented literacy in one remote Aboriginal context. The Ngaanyatjarra case study sheds light on the important fact that the remote context, unlike other regional or urban Aboriginal contexts, can still be seen as newly literate. Through ethnography and using a generational approach it has been possible to explore the incipient literacy practices and to analyse the ways in which the Ngaanyatjarra have taken hold of literacy. As I have shown, literacy cannot be understood independently of the social, cultural, political and historical forces that shape it, nor can it be analysed in isolation from the social practices that surround it and the ideological systems in which it is embedded.¹¹⁸¹ The meaning and uses of literacy in the Ngaanyatjarra world have been precipitated by the intersection of social, cultural or ideological circumstances. The particularities of the Ngaanyatjarra experience have shaped literacy practices that are specific to that situation and context. In other words, the historical development of literacy in this region created the conditions that enabled the literacy practices documented in this thesis. I suggest, in fact, that the Ngaanyatjarra case study marks a benchmark for normative literacy practice under such newly literate circumstances; not when measured against incommensurate mainstream standards but when compared with other *similar* situations. The conditions could not have been otherwise and as has been demonstrated literacy is taking place. Moreover, in comparison with other remote Aboriginal experiences and circumstances, it can be described as one of the 'best case' scenarios for literacy acquisition and use in the remote Aboriginal context. It does not, however, represent a replicable model for other remote communities as the specificity of the circumstances and conditions negate this.

Since first contact with European culture Ngaanyatjarra society has incorporated profound change, yet remained an essentially robust society. It is misleading to talk of cultural 'loss' or 'breakdown' rather than cultural transformation as a consequence of the colonial encounter. Compared with most other Aboriginal groups the Ngaanyatjarra encounter was relatively benign. Moreover, many Ngaanyatjarra have determined some of the outcomes of contemporary existence. They have exhibited reservoirs of resilience and a capacity to skilfully transmit and elaborate their cultural traditions. Their strength can be attributed to

¹¹⁸¹ See (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al. 2000; Besnier 1995; Graff 1987; Kulick and Stroud 1993; Street 1984; Street 1993a; Street 1995).

their unbroken connection to country, and their enduring sense of belonging and authority in the spiritual and ceremonial domain.¹¹⁸² Many Ngaanyatjarra have appropriated the habitus of mainstream practices, albeit in a mimetic form in some domains. They have been adept at taking on many European practices and institutional norms, yet just under the surface key cultural processes remain and impact on the present. In fact—as von Sturmer notes for other remote regions—the world view, social practices, language and culture of the Aboriginal ‘domain’ prevail, underpinned by the immutable authority of the *tjukurrpa* – the Law.¹¹⁸³

The Ngaanyatjarra experience of education has in general been positive. Uniquely, a large number of Ngaanyatjarra have participated in limited schooling, to varying degrees of success, over two, three or four generations. Significantly, early education experiences made sense and provided the key actors with sufficient literacy and Western ‘cultural capital’ to be effective and confident agents at critical junctures in the ever-expanding encounter with the Western world.¹¹⁸⁴ Importantly, however, schooled literacy has had cultural capital only when underpinned by a secure identity associated with connectedness to country. I have also considered that literacy involves more than technical skills competence and cannot be understood simply in terms of school-based pedagogy, as ‘literacy processes are part of more embracing social institutions and conceptions’.¹¹⁸⁵ I have shown how literacy practices are influenced by different ideologies across the generations and how, as new influences have entered Warburton, they have shaped the literacy practices that people engage in.¹¹⁸⁶ I have, for instance, described how letter-writing emerged as social practice to address two fundamental pressing social and cultural needs—to maintain social relatedness and to look after country. I have considered how oral practices and narrative schemas have seeped into literacy. Literacy has also seeped into the oral tradition—life stories, previously transmitted orally, are now being documented as a collective written historical narrative in funeral eulogies and arts practice.

Since first contact the Ngaanyatjarra have on the one hand been overwhelmed by the incursion of strangers into their place, yet on the other they have experienced and established enduring and positive relationships with Europeans. These relationships have been critical to the establishment of a self-assured expectation of positive interactions in

¹¹⁸² See (Brooks 2002e).

¹¹⁸³ (von Sturmer 1984). See also (Peterson 2000).

¹¹⁸⁴ (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1990 [1980]).

¹¹⁸⁵ (Street 1994: 145).

¹¹⁸⁶ (Barton and Hamilton 1998; Street 1984).

non-Aboriginal domains and a high degree of non-Aboriginal support and continuity. Significantly, literacy (in English and the vernacular) has been the locus of many of these enduring relationships, sometimes over many decades and across multiple generations. Nevertheless, the imperative that drives the attainment of literacy in the Western world has permeated only some sectors of Ngaanyatjarra society, but not all. For approximately one-third of the Ngaanyatjarra populace—predominantly adults who participate in roles and domains that require literate ways of doing things—literacy skills are reinforced, maintained and elaborated. These adults also tend to use literacy as social practice and, as Shirley Brice Heath terms it, ‘literate behaviours’ are being transmitted in the family.¹¹⁸⁷ Simultaneously, many other adults lead full, rich and complete lives without literacy. So with the Ngaanyatjarra we see how literacy has been ‘put into play’ as a resource for some adults, but has not yet been completely incorporated into cultural processes as a ‘structure of the long run’.¹¹⁸⁸

Literacy assumptions and their consequences

Earlier I posited that the circumstances of the Ngaanyatjarra experience have led to one of the ‘best case’ scenarios in the incipiently literate remote Aboriginal world. If this is the case, how do we interpret the moral panic around illiteracy in the remote Aboriginal world and the remediation of the ‘problem’ through policy change and methodological ‘improvements’? While giving credence to the serious argument that current literacy levels preclude Aboriginal participation in the mainstream labour market, I suggest also that the ‘problem’ lies not with Aboriginal literacy practices *per se*, but with the conception of literacy evident within public and policy discourse. In Chapter 1 I noted Graff’s concern that the ‘taken for granted’ nature of literacy in Western society (and I would add English literacy in Anglo-European countries such as Australia) and how its ‘primacy’ in everyday life, masks its complexity.¹¹⁸⁹ In particular we have lost sight of the complexity of literacy in the remote Australian Aboriginal context. By taking an anthropological approach, the normative cultural assumptions that surround literacy come to the fore and some of these assumptions are open to challenge.

The ‘literacy myth’ and the assumed autonomous nature of literacy

Western education is imbued with what Graff terms the ‘literacy myth’, where, for example the ‘transcendental power of literate education’ allows preliterate peoples to transit

¹¹⁸⁷ (Heath 1991: 3–6).

¹¹⁸⁸ (Sahlins 1981: 9).

¹¹⁸⁹ (Graff 1987; Graff 1994 [1982]).

metaphorically from darkness to light.¹¹⁹⁰ It is also inextricably linked with an aspirational philosophy positing that through education individuals can 'succeed', 'progress' and 'develop'. The aim of Western education takes for granted the value placed on deferred expectation for individual future wellbeing. In Australia, education and literacy have been represented as the enabling factors that will give Aboriginal people the opportunity to become functioning, socially competent members of mainstream Australian society. However, as Street postulates, literacy in itself does not promote social mobility or progress as 'literacy practices are specific to the political and ideological context and their consequences vary situationally'.¹¹⁹¹

The Ngaanyatjarra (and other remote groups) have been enticed into believing this literacy myth and to what Street terms the 'autonomous' model of literacy that tends to 'conceptualise literacy in technical terms, treating it as independent of social context, an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character'.¹¹⁹² Assumptions about the autonomous nature of literacy have been intrinsic to well-intentioned missionaries, educators and policy-makers alike who have operated within the Western, linear, evolutionary tradition where social policy has viewed literacy as necessary for Aboriginal futures, especially participation in the labour market. The cultural relativism of this position has perhaps not taken sufficient account of the social, cultural and political factors that also contribute to literacy acquisition and use. The 'problem' lies not with the literacy learners nor with the methodology, but with the assumption that literacy learning is a 'straightforward skill-acquisition process that can be delivered in a carefully programmed way to large numbers of people in a short period of time, with roughly uniform or predictable outcomes'.¹¹⁹³ The 'problem' is also that literacy learning is not a mono-linear process, it is multidirectional and erratic, incorporating both formal instruction and informal acquisition and the acquisitional process is lifelong and 'varies situationally'.

In newly literate circumstances, such as that with the Ngaanyatjarra, a tension thus remains: trying to squeeze thousands of years of Western literacy evolution into a few generations will not achieve commensurability with mainstream benchmarks while literacy remains a decontextualised technical skill. Literacy is, as Clanchy illustrates, a gradual process. Street emphasises that to 'eschew such gradualism' tends to lead to the failure of many literacy

¹¹⁹⁰ (Serpell 1993: 99; Graff 1979).

¹¹⁹¹ (Street 1995: 24).

¹¹⁹² (Street 1993b: 5).

programmes, and I would add, that in the remote Aboriginal context, that failure tends to be attributed to literacy learners themselves.¹¹⁹⁴ For literacy to take hold in remote communities it must have meaning and purpose over the changing domains and practices that span a person's life and this meaning and purpose must, in turn, be transmitted to the following generation.

*The assumption that schooling is the main factor in the 'cultural production' of the literate person*¹¹⁹⁵

A singular focus on pedagogy is linked to the widely held belief among educators, researchers and policy-makers that if the right methodology is found literacy learning will unfold. Significant amounts of time and money have been invested in implementing new literacy curricula and methodology, with each new version heralded as the panacea to the problem of Aboriginal illiteracy. But assumptions that investment in literacy methodology will produce significantly improved literacy ability, and the associated Western 'middle-class' literate behaviours desired by policy-makers, need to be revised.¹¹⁹⁶ In most Western families literacy builds on the long culture of literacy in Western society and the foundation of formal schooling. It incorporates interactive engagement and participation in other processes, practices and contexts that are meaningful and purposeful at an individual and community level and there is a synergy between these processes.

Recently, generalisations have been made about 'another generation lost' to schooling in remote communities compared with earlier generations who purportedly learned literacy in mission schools.¹¹⁹⁷ Writers infer that it was the pedagogical practices of the missionaries that generated the idealised literacy acumen of previous generations. By focusing solely on pedagogy we lose sight of other critical, but interrelated, factors associated with the meaning and uses of literacy. By drawing on ethnographic and historical data I suggest that in the Ngaanyatjarra mission context the acquisition of literacy made sense. The missionaries created a literacy environment and literacy artefacts that were 'personally meaningful' and people 'connected with the schema'.¹¹⁹⁸ They built on the oral tradition by proselytising through reiterative encounters with oral Bible stories and hymn singing. Elders were accorded proper status and trained as literate church leaders and adult literates were provided with an intellectual role in emerging arenas of participation. Christianity provided a purpose for literacy that had social signification not just for children, but also

¹¹⁹³ (Prinsloo 1995: 458–59).

¹¹⁹⁴ (Street 1984: 114).

¹¹⁹⁵ Drawing on Levinson's 'the cultural production of the educated person' (Levinson and Holland 1996).

¹¹⁹⁶ (Prinsloo 1995: 458–59).

¹¹⁹⁷ (Cleary 2005; Hughes and Warin 2005; Johns 2006).

for adults. In part this was because value was attributed to literacy in the vernacular as a marker of identity signification and because the Christian approach has represented certainty and continuity. It is, in fact, perceived by some Ngaanyatjarra that this approach to literacy has been more successful than the state school system because mother tongue literacy has been taught within cultural processes of relatedness across the generations.

The assumed importance of academic essayist-prose literacy

Too often literacy is associated with academic essayist writing and a literacy/illiteracy dichotomy is evoked when comparing literacy practices in divergent cultures and communities.¹¹⁹⁹ In the determination to bring remote Aborigines up to a standard of literacy enabling entry to vocational or higher education, attempts are made to ameliorate the gap between actual literacies and academic literacies. Writers have investigated the mismatch between oral first language discourse patterns and the requirements of the literate essayist prose style based on the discourse properties of English.¹²⁰⁰ Arguably, adult readers are exposed to too few contexts where they are required to seek meaning from, or interpret, decontextualised, abstract texts and there are even fewer contexts for writing. Consequently adults are not dealing with written texts containing complex semantic and lexico-grammatical patterns and 'lexical density' (e.g. complex sentences, relative clauses, subordinate clauses, phrasal verbs and prepositions, modality, passive constructions, abstract nominalisations, grammatical metaphor, etc).¹²⁰¹ Moreover, critical reading and metacognitive skills (e.g. skimming and scanning, seeking relevance, cohesion and coherence, understanding cause and effect, referencing, etc) are not being acquired.

At one level these factors resonate, because to deal more effectively with the demands of the state the Ngaanyatjarra will need a complex array of literacy skills and knowledge. As I outline in Chapter 5, not having the literacy skills to deal with these administrative literacies may have dire consequences, including incarceration. Clearly this is an alarming literacy requirement that needs addressing, but not necessarily by the promotion of academic literacies. Research shows us that in everyday life 'people never read and write without a purpose'.¹²⁰² Most critically we need to pay attention to creating a purpose for adult reading and writing, to understanding the social factors that work against literacy in the domestic domain, and to providing the resources and support for everyday literacies. This highlights

¹¹⁹⁸ (Ortner 1989: 199).

¹¹⁹⁹ (Street 1994: 142).

¹²⁰⁰ (Christie and Martin 1997; Halliday and Hasan 1976; Halliday 1985; Martin and Rose 2005; Rose et al. 1999).

¹²⁰¹ (Halliday 1985: 62–75).

¹²⁰² (Ivanic and Hamilton 1990: 15).

the situated approach to learning—English language and literacy must become intrinsic to practice as it is in practice that people learn the cognitive and communication skills that are integral to daily life.¹²⁰³ It also foregrounds the obvious, yet crucial point that if the primary arena for literacy use is in the school domain, or in vocational training or employment, literacy may well remain irrelevant in the lives of many Aboriginal adults.

On another level, and as I have shown, literacy is happening in the Ngaanyatjarra world, but often in the invisible space, the parallel universe of everyday Ngaanyatjarra life, and not within institutional boundaries. In this context literacy is often a collective or shared event, rather than a solitary act. Many of these non-standard literacy practices do not, however, meet the requirements of the Western pedagogical model. Such ‘non-school’ literacies may be seen, as Street expresses it, as ‘inferior attempts at the real thing’ to be compensated for by enhanced schooling or adult literacy training.¹²⁰⁴ Many adults who may be labelled ‘illiterate’ according to mainstream standards, do in fact derive meaning from, and make use of, literacy practices in contexts specific to their own cultural milieu. By observing and documenting the myriad ways in which literacy and written language are incorporated into cultural practice it is possible to see that the Ngaanyatjarra community cannot be categorised as either oral, literate, or illiterate—nor in fact can the broader Australian community.¹²⁰⁵

The assumed importance of literacy in English

Despite the early introduction of Ngaanyatjarra literacy and its purposeful application and diffusion, schools in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, as in most other remote regions, now focus on the teaching of spoken and written English with scant attention to the vernacular. The continuing dominance of English as the language of literacy holds profound sociolinguistic implications. Literacy is not being learned in the vernacular, the first language, the mother tongue, the language of the inner voice—the language that is imbued with the concepts that form the psychic home where the core values of culture reside—but in a second language that many do not speak well and remain culturally distanced from. The actual and symbolic significance of language—and the connection between language, identity affirmation and belonging—in post-colonial minority language contexts, such as with the Ngaanyatjarra, cannot be emphasised enough.¹²⁰⁶ The marginalisation of Ngaanyatjarra

¹²⁰³ (Lave and Wenger 1991: 85).

¹²⁰⁴ (Street 1995: 106).

¹²⁰⁵ (Barton and Hamilton 2000; Heath 1991).

¹²⁰⁶ For discussions on literacy issues in language minority contexts see (Coulmas 1984; Fishman 1989a; Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins 1988; Smolicz 1984).

language in essence signifies the symbolic marginalisation of Ngaanyatjarra culture and identity. To Ngaanyatjarra people language signifies identity, heritage and difference and Ngaanyatjarra people want to maintain that difference and do not want to be the same as Anglo-Europeans.¹²⁰⁷

Place, identity, young people and education

In the current debate around ameliorating Indigenous disadvantage in remote communities the focus is on accelerating literacy and numeracy outcomes, improving school attendance and relocating youth to urban centres to attend secondary boarding schools. Education policy is determining that schooling and vocational training offer the choices and opportunities needed for Aboriginal futures that are increasingly being oriented towards employment and mainstream aspirations.¹²⁰⁸ This is predicated on an assumption that Aboriginal people from remote communities will aspire to a trajectory of individuated upward mobility. Noel Pearson claims that the life chances of Aboriginal youth are diminished unless they attend 'high-quality, high-expectation boarding schools down south'.¹²⁰⁹ The Howard government is promoting the provision of educational 'choice' and 'opportunity' for learners living in remote communities, with Senator Vanstone asserting that 'as time marches on, young Indigenous children will want to move to the towns and cities' as many remote communities have 'limited economic potential and people are trapped there because they have no education'.¹²¹⁰ Critics such as Jon Altman conjecture that in this frame the future for Aboriginal Australians lies in 'modernity, urbanisation...and ultimately, assimilation'.¹²¹¹ The reference to assimilation is deliberate and harks back to the policy frame of the 1950s and 1960s.

In fact, the similarities between the focus on 'tuition before equality' in the 'assimilation era' and current government initiatives are startling. The generational approach taken in this thesis reveals the paucity of historical reflection on the lessons learned. Paralleling

¹²⁰⁷ Marrkilyi E. pers. comm. 2007.

¹²⁰⁸ See: Federal government initiatives such as the 'Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme' and the 'Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme'.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/iymp/default.htm

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/iylp/default.htm

¹²⁰⁹ *The Australian* October 30 2004. The Howard government subsequently announced funding for a \$23 million Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme to relocate 600 Indigenous youth to major regional centres for training and apprenticeships including 'safe' accommodation provided by Aboriginal Hostels Ltd

<http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Nelson/2005/12/n2053151205.asp> (download 15/12/05). William Deane, a former Governor General weighed into the debate in 2006 by announcing his support for the interventions promoted by Pearson and the Howard Government by criticising the 'appalling state of secondary education in Indigenous communities' and calling for more Aboriginal children to be sent away to urban boarding schools. (*The Australian* June 29 2006). See also (Schwab 2005).

¹²¹⁰ (Vanstone 2004). At the time Senator Amanda Vanstone was Federal Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

¹²¹¹ (Altman 2005a: 43).

current initiatives, in the assimilation era adolescents from remote locations in Western Australia were removed to urban centres for schooling and better employment opportunities. To a certain extent it can be claimed that the residential hostel and schooling model was successful, but for reasons that cannot be replicated today. These students were still imbued with an optimism that education could deliver the promised outcomes. Adolescents were not individually lifted out of their home environment, but went as a cohort, often boarding in hostels operated by mission groups, so a sense of belonging and familiarity remained. In addition, they returned to their communities where the education they attained had a resonance in their own cultural context and their acquired skills matched the requirements of employment in the early period of self-determination.

The policy of 'social development' in the assimilation era promised the Ngaanyatjarra the reward of 'admission' to an equal society. Under 'tutored assimilation' improved education and training opportunities were supposed to lead to increased employment in urban locations, but as I have shown, these aims were never realised. As a consequence a bitterness remains in certain individuals who were led to believe that they could have 'succeeded', but somehow were cheated. I noted how the policy of social development placed the onus on individuals to take responsibility for their own advancement and tried to separate young people from the influence of traditional families. I concluded Chapter 3 with Sir Paul Hasluck's later misgivings about his misplaced faith in individual upward mobility, deriving from his own experiences as a 'scholarship boy'.¹²¹² This resonates with Willis' critique in *Learning to Labour* of the 'common educational fallacy' that 'opportunities can be *made* by education, that upward mobility is basically a matter of individual push, that qualifications make their own openings'.¹²¹³

Policy initiatives to move Aboriginal youth out of remote settings and into urban environments are likely to develop similar false expectations. Moreover, these initiatives are unlikely to succeed if it means sacrificing connection to kin, country, language and identity, as illustrated in the following quote from Naomi:

Kalgoorlie it's too hard for us, we're not used to town because we grew up here in Warburton, not used to the town...I want to be happy because I still want work here in Ranges, not anywhere else. Just to be at home and work, that's where I want to be, keep staying here and work. [Young people] want to stay home, not going anywhere, town. I don't think nobody will go out from here, they want to stop home...Because that's their home, that's where they grew up...That's their way of life.

¹²¹² (Rowse 2005: 241).

¹²¹³ (Willis 1977: 127) [emphasis in original].

An anthropological perspective exposes the primacy of commitment to kin and the local versus an imposed allegiance to national priorities. The Ngaanyatjarra place primary value on social relationships and the engendering of emotional wellbeing by maintaining family ties and obligations. Their loyalty is to their Ngaanyatjarra identity and the preservation of Ngaanyatjarra language and culture into the future. Children's responsibility to maintain Ngaanyatjarra culture, and transmit it to the next generation, supersedes any commitment to the nation state of Australia. Learning in this context is about identity development for engaged participation in, and membership of, one's own community. These values run counter to those of the nation state which aims to enculturate remote Aboriginal groups into normative participation in schooling and employment, and following on from this, citizenship and nationhood.

Current rhetoric is focused on notions of individual choice and responsibility and giving individuals the opportunity to be citizens in a modern Australian not trapped in 'cultural museums'. The critical question that is left unanswered is: what will be gained, and moreover what will be lost, as a consequence of this quest for social mobility and the 'opportunity to choose'?

Diversity and the dignity of difference

In 1996 the *Desert Schools Report* flagged that the 'imposition of mainstream goals works to the detriment of effective teaching and learning' in desert schools.¹²¹⁴ In the intervening decade little has been learned. Moreover, in the current policy environment schools are less able to flexibly adapt to community requirements as they strive to provide 'equity and access' to mainstream choices. From my perspective the over-arching problem with the new policy rhetoric is that it will consolidate a sense of failure rather than affirm the positives of the cultural reality. In the drive for 'equity', we will let Aboriginal people in remote Australia take on the mantle of 'failure'. Here I draw on Gibson-Graham's use of Judith Butler's notion of 'performativity': that in recognising the inevitable 'performativity' of language, we also recognise its 'power to create the effects that it names'.¹²¹⁵ The more that the polemic reiterates the moral panic associated with illiteracy and low educational outcomes, the more that schooling may inevitably undermine the individual's self-belief by marking Aboriginal youth as failures. However, it can be conjectured that this so-called 'failure' actually has little to do with literacy *per se*, but more it is a failure to become 'like us', that is, a failure to attain mainstream standards and a failure to assimilate into Western

¹²¹⁴ (NLLIA 1996: 9, Vol. 1).

¹²¹⁵ (Butler 2003: 2; Gibson-Graham 2006: 2).

behavioural norms. The consequences for the identity formation processes of a cultural group such as the Ngaanyatjarra (and other remote Aborigines) cannot be anything but negative if they are told in so many insidious ways that they are failing and the authorising outside expert knows best. The danger is that the next generation will increasingly view its own cultural processes and practices from a deficit perspective.¹²¹⁶

Highlighted here is a continuing unresolved tension. The argument for choice and equal opportunity that fits the liberal ideology of meritocracy in Anglo-European Australia rests uncomfortably in the Indigenous communities of remote Australia. This poses a dilemma for liberal government in post-colonial society. The choice and equity argument works against Aboriginal people if individual competence is measured in terms of contribution to the labour market economy and they are found deficient when measured against these mainstream norms. Perhaps finding a compromise is an unwinnable goal? I think not, but what is accentuated here is the need to give valence to the 'dignity of difference'.¹²¹⁷ This is a call for the celebration of a plurality of norms, the coexistence of diversity and the valuing of difference. As education anthropologists Levinson and Holland suggest, 'we must seek to expand educational spaces which might accommodate diverse models of the educated person'.¹²¹⁸

Where do we go from here?

At this point in time there is a sense of urgency and education solutions need to be found. The sustainability of remote Aboriginal communities is fragile; it is therefore imperative that a future scenario with optimistic possibilities is sought for those who live there.¹²¹⁹ In the remote Aboriginal world there is deep uncertainty about what education and literacy *is actually for*. By participating in the everyday routines of schooling successive generations of Ngaanyatjarra have absorbed the taken for granted nature of schooling and the underlying Western cultural assumptions associated with institutional learning. The 'weak linkages between schooling and the meaningful occupation of young people' are, however, not being resolved.¹²²⁰ Nor is the relationship between schooling and teenagers' socialisation as members of their own cultural community. The traditional developmental trajectory has altered and by making schooling compulsory for the ambiguous new cultural category of

¹²¹⁶ Here we are reminded of education anthropologists Varenne and McDermott's notion that the culture and behavioural competence of low status minority students is marked as 'disability' and limited expectations are reinforced through the school system (McDermott 1974; McDermott and Varenne 1995; Varenne and McDermott 1999b). See also (Ogbu 1979).

¹²¹⁷ Tim Rowse pers. comm. October 2006.

¹²¹⁸ (Levinson and Holland 1996: 23).

¹²¹⁹ See (Martin 2003; Schwab and Sutherland 2003).

¹²²⁰ (NLLIA 1996: 139, Vol. 2).

'adolescents', childhood has been extended beyond normal cultural limits. Yet connectedness to kin and country, and meaningful, productive engagement in their own community may still have more traction than a trajectory of credentialisation leading to some futural maturation of abstract mainstream employment outcomes.

This leads us to two important issues:

In the first instance, attention must be paid to those adolescents who are school-age, yet are not engaging with mainstream schooling (as indicated by low attendance and poor retention rates). The challenge lies in improving the school model so that it can flexibly adapt to the learning needs of this group—which in many cases forms a high proportion of the secondary-aged school population. Additionally, attention needs to be paid to 'out-of-school' projects and methods that will maintain engagement and contribute to skills development for this group so that they attain the skills, including literacy and numeracy, needed for dealing with complex futures.

In the second instance, attention must also be paid to young adults in the post-school 16–30 year old age group. The focus on educating children rather than adults has been antithetical to traditional learning processes. Much critical learning needs to happen in the adult domain where the cultural logic is that learning is passed on, from senior to junior, and continues throughout adult life. The challenge here is in how to create circumstances where adults continue to receive literacy mentoring, not just as an adjunct to training courses, but as a component of informal learning that accompanies CDEP.

By shifting the notion of pedagogy and looking to the international research literature and theoretical ideas of 'out-of-school', 'situated' or 'collaborative' learning it can be seen that—in addition to formal education and training—alternative learning environments that are attractive to Aboriginal youth and fit the cultural paradigm are also needed.¹²²¹ I suggest that if the domains of learning are confined only to institutionalised education and training then we may not see the potential that resides in other forms of learning and other positive identity formation experiences. Arts-based, multimedia type projects offer one exemplar for meaningful literacy use and collaborative 'situated learning'. Other arenas of learning through community groups, youth centres, sports organisations, and the juvenile justice system also offer the potential to fit literacy and numeracy into events and structured learning activities. Programmes that fit the cultural paradigm and are aligned with

¹²²¹ See (Hull and Schultz 2002).

traditional learning cycles and the emerging leadership of young men through the Law Business can be explored. Sites are also needed that offer flexibility in teaching methodology and programme delivery including night school classes, teaching in diverse locations and greater integration of local knowledge and education leadership.¹²²²

Ultimately, very few of these young adults will be going to urban communities to find training and employment, and those who do will most likely return. A recent report on Indigenous vocational education and training aspirations also concludes that remote learners are unlikely to relocate to urban areas where more jobs are available, thus VET training in remote areas needs to relate more concretely to the conditions and opportunities presented, even though employment opportunities are severely limited and CDEP appears to be the only avenue for expansion.¹²²³ While it is understood that there is insufficient wage labour employment, creative ways of visualising meaningful engagement are needed. Cultural strength and connection to country can to be fostered through land management and native title activities where young adults can be mentored into processes, skills and knowledge in these domains. The challenge is to sustain meaningfulness in remote contexts where culture is the economy and enterprise can be generated within these parameters. In Gibson-Graham's terms we need to think of 'constructing a community economy' by 're-reading the local landscape—in this case, reading for absences...to restore visibility and credibility to what has been coded as backward, insufficient, or "nonexistent" as a contribution to development'.¹²²⁴

Irrespective of labour market employment options, most adults are only as literate as the tasks of everyday life require.¹²²⁵ The uses of literacy in the Ngaanyatjarra situation are highly social and context-dependent. For young adults to acquire the more decontextualised, disembedded literacy skills needed they must regularly be engaged in activities across a range of contexts where such literacies can be maintained and extended. Young adults need to be acquiring the vast range of skills and knowledge required for community governance roles, controlling everyday administrative literacies, dealing with encounters with the state and accessing new information. For adults to raise the next generation of literate children they must have increased access to literacy resources, through community libraries, resource centres and community stores. For these resources

¹²²² See the Mt Theo Warlpiri youth program. In particular *the Jaru Pirjirdi* Project community development program for the empowering young adults aged 17-25 and developing young community leaders within Yuendumu community: <http://www.mttheo.org/home.htm> . Also see <http://www.deadlymob.org/default.cfm> in Alice Springs.

¹²²³ (Gelade and Stehlik 2004).

¹²²⁴ (Gibson-Graham 2006: 169).

to be incorporated into domestic routines attention also needs to be paid to designing houses with appropriate storage spaces that take account of home literacy practices and to providing caregivers with mediated guidance in how to effectively scaffold literacy events for children.

Lastly, axiomatic to this thesis has been the contention that pedagogy alone has not, and cannot, give adults the complex range of literacy skills required across the life-span. If literacy is to seep into the remote Aboriginal world as cultural practice then it is critical that we understand more about literacy as a cultural process. A positive approach to literacy acquisition is required, one that builds on the often invisible competence residing in families and the community and is observant of the role of routine practices and habit. For literacy to take hold it must have a purpose and a meaning in arenas beyond school, training and employment.

In conclusion, it is imperative that literacy research in the Aboriginal domain step outside the confines of pedagogy. By this I mean that longitudinal ethnographic research is needed that looks at learning and literacy beyond the school years to investigate *whether* schooled literacy is maintained outside institutional learning and *how* literacy is maintained by adults in the practice of everyday life. Finally, as Street suggests, such research needs to begin from 'a more comparative, more ethnographically based conception of literacy as the *social* practices of reading and writing and to eschew value judgements about the relative superiority of schooled literacy over other literacies'.¹²²⁶

¹²²⁵ (Clanchy 1979: 219).

¹²²⁶ (Street 1995: 111) [emphasis in original].

Appendix A Methodology

Ethnography is an approach to inquiry whose primary heuristic is culture, that is, it seeks the explanation for behavior in the sets of understandings unconsciously shared by members of a society or social group...One concern of ethnography is to uncover [these] unconscious impetuses to behavior. Doing this not only provides explanations but, in bringing them to the attention of actors, creates new room for change...an anthropological view of literacy will build upon the results of ethnographic inquiry. This in turn seeks to explicate the meaning of literacy-related issues to participants without starting from preconceived notions about these meanings. It asks, "What is going on?" and "What does this mean in the lives of the people involved?" It seeks these answers by participating in their lives while at the same time observing and interpreting from the outside.¹²²⁷

An ethnographic approach

Through ethnography I have found a methodological tool that shifts the study of literacy from a study of pedagogical practices in schools to a study of literacy practices enacted in cultural context. I am aware of current methodological concerns associated with anthropological research in cross-cultural domains and the push towards more reflexive, ethical and multi-sited approaches to ethnography and writing.¹²²⁸ The methodology used for this thesis is underpinned by my own experience in education, language, literacy and learning in the Aboriginal domain, mostly in Central Australia since the early 1980s. In this respect I have been an informal 'participant observer' over many years, absorbing an array of information and pondering the 'what is going on?' question that finally led to this study.¹²²⁹

My methodology consisted of six key elements: life history interviews; key informant interviews; primary and secondary research; participant observation; the collection of literacy artefacts; and data from the Ngaanyatjarra Council 2004 CDEP skills audit. I was also given permission to access the original data collected for the 2000 review of education and training in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.¹²³⁰

Interviews

I have used an ethnohistorical approach in this anthropological study of literacy.¹²³¹ I have aimed, through ethnography to 'produce a picture of cultures and social groups from the perspectives of their members'.¹²³² Through life histories I have been interested in

¹²²⁷ (Smith 1986: 264).

¹²²⁸ (Denzin 1997; Marcus 1986; Marcus 1995).

¹²²⁹ (Spradley 1980).

¹²³⁰ (Kral and Ward 2000).

¹²³¹ See: (Appadurai 1986; Comaroff 1985; Harries 1994; Ortner 1989; Sahlins 1981; Wiedman 1986).

¹²³² (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 27).

exploring 'social memory'.¹²³³ Through oral memory the past is retrieved and events are identified according to individual and collective patterns of meaning.¹²³⁴

I structured two interview guides based on ethnographic methodology:¹²³⁵

1. *Life history interviews*

A person's practices can also be located in their own history of literacy. In order to understand this we need to take a life history approach, observing the history within a person's life.¹²³⁶

I used an open-ended interview technique to interview Ngaanyatjarra speakers and gather life histories. A set of topics were defined and interview questions covered these topics. This method, drawn from anthropology, develops 'a picture of the beliefs and practices of a community' through 'narratives' and 'accounts of specific experiences' of events 'to *typify* the behaviors and beliefs of the group'.¹²³⁷ Interviews were conducted in English and interviewees responded in either English or Ngaanyatjarra. Interviews were recorded on mini-disc and transcribed by myself and Ngaanyatjarra/Ngaatjatjarra interpreter-translator Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis. I wanted to gather intergenerational narratives from families whose experiences covered the arenas and themes I wanted to explore. Interviews spanned the collective memory of the period from the first encounter with missionaries in the 1930s to the present. The interviewees were selected to gain a cross-section of age and gender. In all I interviewed 58 Ngaanyatjarra people who fall roughly into three generational cohorts:

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Older adults	5	10
Middle-aged adults	8	14
Young adults	7	14

2. *Key informant interviews*

I used a non-standardised open-ended interview technique with 20 non-Aboriginal key informants. A defined set of topics were covered and most interviews were recorded on mini-disc and transcribed. One interviewee submitted a written response by email and for a few I took handwritten notes. Key informant interviews were conducted with: four linguists; two children of ex-missionaries; seven teachers/trainers; one anthropologist, one community advisor; two office workers; one nurse; one consultant working on justice and

¹²³³ (Marcus 1995: 109).

¹²³⁴ (Portelli 1991).

¹²³⁵ (Goetz and LeCompte 1984; Patton 1990; Spradley 1979).

¹²³⁶ (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 13-14).

¹²³⁷ (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 86).

prison issues and two community or shire staff. Information was also gathered as personal communication from police, parole officers and the court sheriff with the WA Department of Justice based in Kalgoorlie or Laverton. Also Additional conversations have taken place over the intervening years with various informants and data is coded as personal communication.

The subjectivity of the interviews was addressed by embedding affective recollections within a background of primary and secondary historical sources. Primary material has been gleaned from Western Australian State Records Office, Annual Reports and newsletters from the Department of Native Affairs and Native Welfare, the *United Aborigines Messenger* (the UAM newsletter) and the 2001 Census.¹²³⁸

2004 Ngaanyatjarra Council CDEP Skills Audit

In 2004 I assisted Ngaanyatjarra Council in conducting a 'skills audit' of CDEP workers across the eleven Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities. I was given permission to use data from 527 interviews (male: 253; female: 274). From this data set I created a second database of Warburton-specific interviewees, including 10 adults moving between Warburton and Patjarr communities: total no. 159: 64 male (40.3%) and 95 female (59.7%).¹²³⁹

<i>Age groups</i>	<i>Ngaanyatjarra Lands</i>		<i>Warburton</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%
16–18	48	9.1%	12	7.5%
19–21	62	11.8%	16	10.1%
22–25	77	14.6%	29	18.2%
26–30	66	12.5%	22	13.8%
31–35	72	13.7%	18	11.3%
36–40	71	13.2%	17	10.7%
41–45	50	9.5%	18	11.3%
46–50	31	5.9%	12	7.5%
51–60	38	7.2%	14	8.8%
61+	12	2.3%	1	0.6%
Total no.	527	100%	159	100%

The standardised interviews conducted for the 'skills audit' provide quantitative data on schooling, training and employment experience. With participants' permission an assessment of English language, literacy and numeracy was also conducted using the

¹²³⁸ (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001).

¹²³⁹ I completed all the Warburton skills audit interviews and NRS assessments.

National Reporting System (NRS) as a tool to assess adult literacy competence.¹²⁴⁰ This standardised data was loaded onto a survey database program (Survey View). I have ‘cleaned’ the skills audit data and removed misleading elements.¹²⁴¹

Validity and reliability

I worked with a designated Ngaanyatjarra Council research advisory committee and adhered to the guidelines of a research agreement drawn up by Ngaanyatjarra Council. The fieldwork for the PhD was conducted over a twelve month period in 2004. I gathered data mainly at Warburton community although time was spent in the other Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities. I designed my methodology to achieve validity and reliability.¹²⁴² I obtained signed informed consent for each interview conducted. I have made three short return visits to check and collect more data and to gain community approval for the draft thesis in 2005 and 2006. To attain ‘triangulation’ I combined ‘multiple’ and ‘dissimilar’ methods such as interviews, observations, and physical evidence to study the same aspect.¹²⁴³ I took extensive field notes from participant observation during fieldwork; with families, at community events and with the *Nintirringkula* Youth Arts project.¹²⁴⁴ All interviews and notes were coded for themes and sorted using a database on *Filemaker Pro*. I also regularly collected, sorted and coded literacy artefacts and photos relating to literacy events, and a synthesised is presented in the thesis. Archive photos, recent photos and literacy artefacts were reproduced with permission from the Ngaanyatjarra people.

I am aware that my form of participant observation ‘positively influenced’ the literacy environment. My home became a focus for literacy activities for all ages as I provided storybooks, paper, pencils and computer access. In this way the participants and I interacted in ‘a variety of reciprocal, mutually beneficial exchanges’.¹²⁴⁵

¹²⁴⁰ (Coates et al. 1995). The Ngaanyatjarra Council employed a number of people to do the skills audit interviews. I developed the NRS assessment tool. Training was given in how to do the NRS assessments, however most assessors were not language or literacy specialists. Interviews were conducted in English and interviewers were, generally, assisted by Ngaanyatjarra language speakers. This factor notwithstanding, a decontextualised, synchronic assessment of adult literacy competence can only give an impression of overall literacy competence. The problematic nature of measuring adult literacy competence is outlined in the literature (Christie et al. 1993; Levine 1998; Wickert 1989). This data set does, nevertheless, represent perhaps the largest study of adult literacy competence in remote Aboriginal Australia.

¹²⁴¹ Commonly, Aboriginal interviewees do not know what grade level or year school was completed, nor the name of post-school training courses (Kral and Morphy 2006). Interviewers often did not have sufficient contextual understanding and wrote down erroneous information. I used my background knowledge of individuals and context to ‘clean’ the data, for example the initial data incorrectly indicated that a significant numbers had completed Year 12 high school.

¹²⁴² (Merriam 1988: 169–172).

¹²⁴³ (Merriam 1988: 69).

¹²⁴⁴ (Goetz and LeCompte 1984; Spradley 1980; Wolcott 2005).

¹²⁴⁵ (Cushman 1998: 28).

Family narratives

From the data I have developed eleven Family Narratives (Appendix B) which form the basis for the intergenerational literacy histories. These most of the 58 interviews mentioned above and additional information has been added to some narratives. The Family Narratives were checked by most family members during return visits in 2005 and 2006. Individuals either read their own narratives or they were read to them and corrections were made to the text as requested and additional information added. 'Clifford', for example, read his and informed me that 'it didn't sound like the way he talked'. So he edited the draft to correct the erroneous aspects. Pseudonyms were approved to ensure that no names were used inappropriately.

This thesis must serve two purposes. It is primarily an academic work, but the narratives are also central to the thesis. The inclusion of the full Family Narratives in the Appendix has been necessary to portray the intergenerational connections, but also for the Ngaanyatjarra readers and their descendents to be able to read their family history.

Transcription notes

Spoken excerpts cited in this thesis are drawn from interview transcripts. The use of oral history in ethnography 'textualizes the meanings' of the spoken word.¹²⁴⁶ The transcription of oral texts into a written form requires making decisions about punctuation according to the grammatical rules of written English. My questions were removed and arbitrary decisions made about the cohesion and coherence of the written narrative. Transcripts were cleaned to remove hedging, hesitations and other types of repairs (e.g. 'yuuwa', 'yes', 'like', 'you know', 'er' 'um').

Ngaanyatjarra words are consistently written in italics and listed with translations in the Glossary (Appendix D). I do not use interlinear glosses or backslash markers as this thesis is not a linguistic description of grammatical features, nor is it a study of child language acquisition. Transcriptions contain the following conventions:

- ... indicates ellipsis or deleted excerpts/hedging between utterances
- ' an apostrophe represents elision
- // indicates the point of overlap when one speaker interrupts another
- [] words inside square brackets are name substitutes or inclusions to enhance the sense of the utterance

¹²⁴⁶ (Clifford 1986: 117–118).

Post script

As I mention above gaining community approval has been intrinsic to my method. In January–February 2007 I sent final drafts of chapters and the graphics back to particular informant groups in the community for their approval. In the final week before submission some of the young people at Warburton read and commented on Chapter 7. As a result of these discussions, descriptions of the Law Business and manhood making ceremonies were removed.

I recount this scenario for two reasons. Firstly to highlight the ongoing importance of Law ceremonies in contemporary Ngaanyatjarra life where having such matters articulated in the public domain causes unease among young Ngaanyatjarra adults. In addition, to exemplify that if there is a purpose to reading, as in this case, these young people will read and comprehend and provide a culturally-framed critique, even the academic discourse presented in this thesis. This scenario displays their agency not only in the literate process, but also as arbiters of appropriate behaviour for researchers such as myself. This scenario also exemplifies that these young people consider that the document will be read by community members and that the content needs to be appropriate for that audience as much as for an outsider non-Aboriginal audience of readers.

Appendix B Family Narratives A–K

Table AB.1 Overview Family Narratives A–K

	<i>Generation 1</i>	<i>Generation 2</i>	<i>Generation 3</i>	<i>Generation 4</i>
Family A	Valcie b.1930 m. husband	Helen b.1955		
Family B	Katherine b.1937 Arthur b.1949	Wesley b.1961 Children#	Children# Grandchildren#	Grandchildren
Family C	Mary b.1935 (Harold's sister) m. Jack Horace b.1932	Maxine b.1981 Jacinta b.1965 m. Patricia's brother Silas b. 1951	Leeshana b.1998 Troy b.1982	
Family D	Harold b.1934 m. W1 - Rosie b.1941	Daughter# Carmel b.1963 m. George b.1956	Children# Rosemary b.1985 Son m. Adina b. 1982 Nancy b.1987	Grandchildren# Rosina b.1999
		Eileen b.1967 m. Darren b.1956 Pamela b.1976 m. Mick b.1966	Kenny b. 1972 Mark b.1988 Nina b.1998	Kenny's children#
	(Phyllis b.1954 is Nina's FM) W2 - Daphne b.1944	Daughter#	Grandson# m. Leanne b.1985	
Family E	May b.1948 April's mother b.1940 m. father b.1925###	April b.1955 m. Marlon b. 1942	Children#	Grandchildren#
	Patricia's father b.1940 m. W1 b.1940 Jennifer's mother	W1 – Patricia b.1963 m. husband Jennifer b.1966	Lucy b.1980	Shantoya b.1998
Family F	Molly b.1940 Grandfather	Children# Clem b.1953 Mother	Grandchildren# Children# Adina b.1982 Leanne b.1985 Naomi b.1978	Grandchildren# Rosina b.1999
Family G	Dawn's mother	Joshua b.1936 m. W2 – Dawn b.1958	Leah b.1981 m. Mick's brother b.1981	
Family H	Una 's father b.1923 m. mother b.1937	Una b.1951 Maisie b.1947	Melissa b.1974 m. husband b.1970	Children#
Family I	Jim's mother	Jim b.1953 m. W1 b.1954 George b.1956	Clarrie b.1979 Son b.1982 Son m. Adina b.1982 Nancy b.1987	Grandchildren# Rosina b.1999
Family J		Jane b.1956 m. David b.1946 Veronica b.1961 Wendy b.1965 Kayleen b.1972 m. Clifford b.1968 Louisa b.1959	Children#	Grandchildren#
Family K			Jake b.1983 Darleen b.1987	
		Louisa's sister m. David's brother	Angelina b.1973	Children#

KEY: # Indicating descendents of generation 1 who have been to school but are not 'named' in the thesis.
W1 = Wife 1; W2 = Wife 2 (i.e. co-wives)

Genealogy conventions

In this thesis the following conventions are used to denote kin terms:

M	=	mother
F	=	father
B	=	brother
Z	=	sister
D	=	daughter
S	=	son

Combinations of symbols denote relationships, for example MZ = mother's sister; FM = father's mother; MM = mother's mother, and so forth.

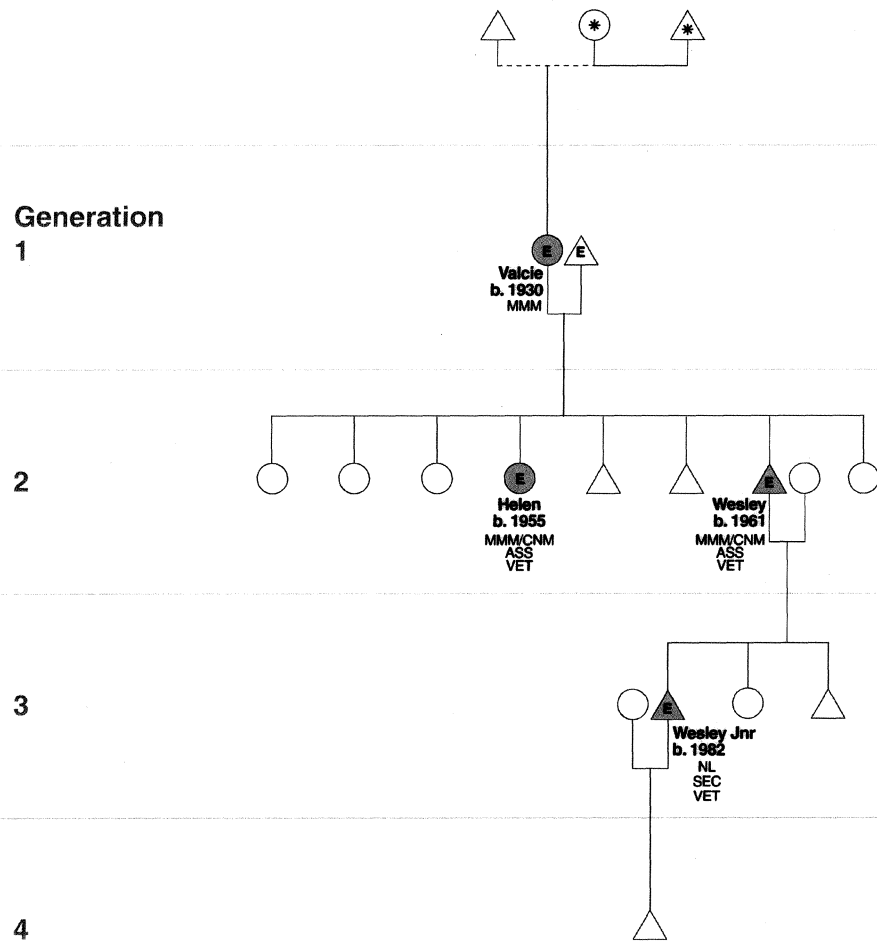
An individual's mother (M) and mother's sisters (MZ) are all termed *ngunytju*, likewise one's father (F) and father's brothers (FB) are termed *mama*. An individual is *katja* – 'son' (S) or *yurntal(pa)* – 'daughter' (D) to all of them. Whereas one's father's sister (FZ) is termed *kurntili* – 'aunt' and one's mother's brother (MB) is *kamuru* – 'uncle'. Similarly, the converse term to *kurntili/kamuru* is *yukari* – 'nephew/niece', although this is not used as a term of address. Reciprocal terminology is applied to the grandkin generation: *kaparli* – 'grandmother / granddaughter' and *tjamu* – 'grandfather / grandson'. In the past marriage was typically polygynous with a man having a 'senior' wife and one or more 'junior wives'. Both a male and female 'spouse' is termed *kurri*, and a co-wife is *nganarti*.

In the family trees the family symbols are used:

○	=	female
Δ	=	male
*	=	nomadics who had not encountered literacy learning
E	=	the (shaded) named individual learned literacy in school or adult education

Named individuals are those whose narratives feature in the Family Narratives A – K. Apart from the nomadics marked with * it is assumed that all other descendents have been to school and or learned adult literacy.

Family A



*	No school nomadics
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
WRM	Warburton Ranges Mission
CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
W	Warburton
NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
Secondary Schooling	
ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
SEC	Secondary (CAPS / Karalundi / Wiltja / Yirara / EGHS)
Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

Family A Narratives

Valcie was born in 1930.

She grew up in the bush around Cosmo Newbery with her mother. Her white father was a returned soldier who held the Cosmo Newbery pastoral lease. Serendipitously Valcie and her family sighted the UAM missionaries Wade and Jackson on camels on their second trip to establish the UAM mission at Warburton Ranges in 1934. When the strange white men on camels sighted the little girl playing in the bush they clothed her in a *sugar bag dress* made from a 170 lb sugar bag with three holes cut in it. In accordance with WA policy regarding children of mixed descent, nine year old Valcie was eventually taken away from her family and placed in the Graham Home dormitory at Mt Margaret Mission in 1939 where went to school for the next ten years.

I say Mt Margaret school was good because the government was against the Aboriginal children being taught, going to school, and the missionaries that came to Mt Margaret, well, they taught us in school, taught us from infants to up. It was only two hours school every day because so many children. And they weren't paid, but they just taught the children...Only two hours of school right up till I finished about 14 I think. And I had to leave school because there were four of us in the school, in my class I mean...One of the girls got pregnant and they didn't wanted me to stay on because there was no other, there was a couple of boys in my class so I had to leave and go and help at the Girls' Home. They taught us spelling, how to spell, dictation it, it's called heading was dictation...they was telling us we had to write it down. And sums, in those days they call it sums. And history, geography and lot anyway they taught us there. It was a good education because they was teaching us something no-one else wanted to teach us. Only two hours every day.

When Valcie finished school at Mt Margaret she started working as a domestic.

We had to help, that's about, over fifty girls in the Home. We had to do washing, ironing, mending, scrub the floor on our hands and knees, there were no mops or anything that time. We had to do the big floors on our knees, yeah, to keep that place clean. It was only a couple of girls employed at Mr Schenk's place, at the Superintendent's place, one girl one week, and following week another girl. And one girl was supposed to go in the Hospital and help over there...two girls they might go to the Boys' Home do their washing, ironing and mending...I stayed at the Home there, Girls' Home.

Valcie married her husband around 1950, 'I got married at age 19...my husband took me away to a station...He was from Mt Margaret too, he went to school there'. He went up to about Grade 3 at Mt Margaret, as Valcie recalls:

...he was a very bright boy on the arithmetic and all that...From the time, that time, till the time before he got sick, he'll work out money, you know, what you call that? Arithmetic and maths and all that. He knows, but I beat him with writing and reading...

As is commonly noted with adults who went through the mission schooling system they were both known to have good handwriting, 'nearly all that mob that been in the Home have that nice, neat writing, the way they been trained to'. The girls with neat handwriting helped in the mission work:

Once a month we go across to old Mrs Schenk's place and she get us to do must be about a thousand or more envelopes to 'Prayer Partners', people who pray in church and they send gifts to the Home. And had to do the envelopes and we daren't write it crooked on the envelopes, we had to go and do it. We had to do it straight and good handwriting. And they had taught us to write us to write properly in school, and with Mrs Schenk.

Valcie joined her husband when he was working at Glenorn Station:

My husband, first he worked at Glenorn Station for 20 years and I was at home bringing the children up and in my spare time I read...I read Bible, I buy books from Leonora, Weekly and all that, Women's day, that type of book...and do letter-writing to friends...and they send me a letter back...They taught us how to write letter too in school and he did the same reading and all...writing to his sister. He brought the kids up by disciplining them, you know, what not to do and what they can do.

After five years, Valcie returned to Mt Margaret so that her two eldest daughters could attend school, and her husband remained at Glenorn.

Still reading whatever, Christian magazines, or that type of thing. I went out and worked in the Boys Home, washing clothes, that type of thing, to help with money a little bit, you know. To feed the kids. If the children bring homework have it at night, we do it after tea. And reading book, they bring books home, like I don't see kids today bringing book home. But those kids, those days they bring a book home and they bring some kind of work or colouring to do or whatever.

Valcie's husband's experiences at Glenorn were to ripple down through the generations in his family. Mt Margaret had given him the confidence to go out and seek work in the European world, but as an Aboriginal station worker he discovered that he had to constantly 'prove himself' equal to the white man. Their daughter Helen gives the following account of her father's experience.

Like our father when he worked on the station out at Glenorn, he had to work hard and he had to sit outside when they used to give him his meal outside in the wood heap. Then he was sitting on the veranda and they used to give him his tin plate, sitting on the veranda eating his meal. Then later on as he worked and all and they kept feeding him on the veranda he was allowed to go into the kitchen with the maids. And from that maid's kitchen, then he was allowed to join the workers in the men's dining room, staff quarters, rousabouts or whatever you call it. He used to be able to sit with them until eventually one day he was sitting with the boss and his wife, eating with them at the table. So he had to work himself up. And then his boss found out he liked tennis and all and he used to play partners with. He used to take him from Glenorn to Leonora to play with him, you know. And he showed others: 'Oh this is a good young bloke, you know'. So they used to play sport together. And after all them years, twenty years eh?

Valcie's husband finished at Glenorn in 1961 and the family moved to Cosmo Newbery so that he could help run the new UAM station that UAMO Inc. had set up as the training and trading arm of the UAM. At that time Cosmo was a thriving proposition, ran 500 head of cattle, 3000 head of sheep and supplied the meat to Warburton Mission and had a successful orchard and vegetable garden.

When Wesley's father was on staff at Cosmo he itinerated in various centres in the Goldfields as a 'follow-up to the Mt Margaret Anniversary'.¹²⁴⁷ The family later moved between Mt Margaret and Laverton. Wesley's father was manager at Mt Margaret for a while and on the Laverton Shire Council for a few years. He was elected Chairman of the newly formed Wongatha Wonganarra Council in Laverton in 1973. With the support of AAPA the Laverton community established 'Wongatha Wonganarra' community council in 1973 and it is still operating today.¹²⁴⁸ These early initiatives in self-management gave local Aboriginal people training and work experience:

He was working in that place for quite a time and getting all the other men all to work with him, you know, supervising them...our father, he wasn't afraid to speak out, speak his opinion.

Wesley's father was a significant leader, amongst other things he fought for Homes West housing for Aboriginal people in Laverton. Nickel was discovered at Mt Windarra near Laverton in 1969 and a mine was established by Western Mining Co. This provided some employment for local Aboriginal workers, but had closed down by 1977. Reduced services in towns like Laverton have impacted on the Aboriginal residents and, unlike in the past, there is now little Aboriginal employment in the towns of the Eastern Goldfields.¹²⁴⁹ As a consequence of the reduced population, Laverton no longer has a high school and so secondary-aged students are sent away to other centres.

Valcie had eight children. The children grew were sent away for secondary schooling in the Eastern Goldfields and Perth. Unlike most Ngaanyatjarra teenagers who boarded in the residential hostels, Valcie's children were supported by the missionaries and boarded in their homes while attending secondary schooling and vocational training. Valcie's two eldest daughters went to Perth where they boarded with missionaries who had worked at Mt Margaret. Valcie sent one son to Esperance High School where he boarded with a Christian family and then around 1973 he went to Carlisle Tech in Perth.

¹²⁴⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* November 1963: 18

¹²⁴⁸ DAA Newsletter (WA) Vol.1, No.7 July 1974: 27–30. Another Ngaanyatjarra man, (whose father was originally from the Kanpa area near Warburton) and his wife were instrumental in establishing Ninga Mia (previously the Eastern Goldfields Aboriginal Advancement Council) in Kalgoorlie as a service delivery agency to assist Ngaanyatjarra visitors to Kalgoorlie (Thomas 2003: 38). Ninga Mia Aboriginal Village Corp. was established in 1983 as a camp for fringedwellers (Howitt 1990).

¹²⁴⁹ Mining is contributing less to the economy of the Eastern Goldfields region, with the closure of Western Mining Company's Windarra Nickel project near Laverton and the Sons of Gwalia mine in Leonora and the introduction of fly-in fly-out contract work for miners. In addition mining companies have now bought and destocked most of the pastoral stations, so two big industries have faded in the region leading to reduced populations and reduced services in towns like Laverton, Leonora and Wiluna (Damian McLean pers. comm. 2004; (Gibbs 2003; Howitt 1990). In hindsight, it can be seen that the 'windows of opportunity' for nickel projects such as Mt Windarra and Agnew were quite narrow, and profitable development depended on rapid progress. The imposition of the company's solution of introducing a large, mainly non-Aboriginal workforce into a previously predominantly Aboriginal community inevitably led to local juxtaposition of social anomalies which contributed to the Skull Creek incident investigated by the Laverton Royal Commission. <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/disp.pl/au/other/IndigLRes/rciadic/regional/wa%5funderlying/230.html?query=mt+windarra>

He went there but these other boys all going there, sort of made him get off the track, you know for going on learning to be a mechanic, I still blame them other boys because they sort of got him to drive around the streets, or do anything you know, you know how young people? Aboriginal boys that I know they put him off the track, he should have been a qualified mechanic today.

This son later worked at Mt Windarra nickel mine near Laverton, then went gold prospecting with his father to earn more money.

Another of Valcie daughters **Helen was born in 1955.**

I started at Grade 1 at Mt Margaret and I came here to Cosmo School till about Grade 4 I think, then I done Grade 4 at Mt Margaret School and came back here till I went to high school. So really I learnt all my...got my education here, at Cosmo. You know Mr Howell...he was one of my main teachers here.

Helen was sent to Armidale High School in Perth. At age 14 after two years in Perth:

I didn't want to go back to Perth, then I went to Kalgoorlie Tech. I was still doing maths, English, social studies and that type of thing, but then I was doing dressmaking course, cake decorating, craft and all that type of thing...all white kids there and all.

Valcie recalls: 'She done two years there and made sure she was in a good home. I didn't want to send her to a hostel in Kalgoorlie, sent her to a good home'. After Helen finished at Tech she went straight to Leonora where she worked as a nursing assistant:

From Leonora came to Laverton and worked at Laverton Hospital for a long time. Then I did a couple of years at the Laverton school, Teacher's Aide, then I went back to the hospital, cleaning and that, then I went to nursing. Then somehow I ended up cooking there at the hospital. Then I ended up at Wongutha Wonganarra working there running the store there for five years, then we ended up out here.

Helen has been a worker most of her life.

I don't know, it didn't seem right to get the dole when you were capable of working...I think in my age group we had to sort of prove that we could do the work, or prove to white people that you can do it. Like sort of there wasn't many...Prove that Aboriginal people could do work. Because when I worked at the hospital and all, when you go to have meals in the staff room, I remember I used to get so angry and it all bottled up inside me, but I couldn't speak out and you hear all of them running Aboriginal people down. And then once I did say to one girl: 'Why is that when you talking about Aboriginal people you're putting them down?' 'Oh but we forget that you're Aboriginal, you're not like them.' They just sort of try and class you, 'you're not like'. But I used to get really angry and say: 'But that's wrong, I am Aboriginal.' 'But your family not like that', they used to talk like that. I used to really hate it...In them days, why I knew I had to work because wherever I lived I had to pay board, like when I was going to Tech it was \$42 allowance for board and your spending. So it used to come in my name and I used to give \$20 to the people I was staying with and I had \$22 to spend on myself a fortnight. So that started me knowing I got to work like that. Then at the hospital they take the board out and when I did come to Laverton and stay with mum and dad I knew how to pay board. Because you've got to work to pay your way, I suppose.

Wesley was born in 1961. He started school at Cosmo Newbery mission school and then when the family shifted, he finished primary school Mt Margaret. He was one of May Miller's students at Mt Margaret: 'I remember that we were taught how to read and write, maths, all the basic things'. Later when the family shifted to Laverton he attended Laverton

High School from Year 7 to Year 10. A high school had opened in Laverton to meet the demand for schooling because of the employment openings with Western Mining at Mt Windarra mine. Wesley went to Perth for further education and stayed with a Christian family. After leaving school he worked at Wongatha Wonganarra in Laverton. Then he travelled to Picton NSW where he worked as a tyre-fitter, before returning to work at Mt Windarra Mines for five years. He was later store manager at Mt Margaret for four and a half years before the family returned to re-establish Cosmo Newbery community in 1989. Wesley has had no formal adult education, his training came through on-the-job training.

DAA had ceased funding Cosmo Newbery by the mid 1980s. However, in 1989 Wesley's family decided to move back and re-establish Cosmo. They brought with them all their accumulated skills and experience and together they have built a strong and sustainable community. With no government support the family had to start again and rebuild from scratch after investing an initial \$2000 in dry goods they started a store and a petrol station so passers-by could refuel and the profit was then reinvested in the community. When they returned there was no school. Wesley's wife had gone to high school in Karratha, in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. She had worked as an AEW at Mt Margaret and started a school for the small group of children at home, initially in a run-down house with no windows. They were assisted with resources from Mt Margaret school and ran distance education classes. At first it appeared that the school was not recognised or supported by the Education Department. Now the Education Department operates a school at Cosmo. In 1990 the new Cosmo community asked for political support from Ngaanyatjarra Council and Warburton community provided money to support a mail run and store supplies. Gradually the community was supported by Ngaanyatjarra Council. The family remains determined to make this community viable.

Wesley has two sons, a daughter and one small grandson. His daughter goes to CAPS for secondary schooling. His eldest son **'Wesley Junior' was born in 1982**. Wesley Junior's parents and grandparents on both sides have been to school. Wesley Junior went to school at Cosmo and did secondary schooling by correspondence. He has undertaken accredited training in Essential Services through Ngaanyatjarra Community College. He has done BRACS training and a BP mechanics course in Laverton. He reads for work, for instance readings at the power station, work reports, notices, flyers and emails. He also reads for pleasure: newspapers, magazines and novels from Kalgoorlie.

Family B Narratives

Katherine and Arthur's father was in the group who made first contact with the missionaries Will Wade and Fred Jackson in 1933 at Mirlirtjarra or 'Old Well', a creek bed a short distance from present the location of the Warburton community. This old man had two wives. Katherine was the daughter of the first wife and her brother Arthur was the son of his second wife.

Katherine was born in 1937.

Her memories provide an insight into the early days at the Baker Home at Warburton Ranges Mission.

I was born when that first missionary came out, missionary came out 1933, born 1937...When I was kid I lived here in Warburton and went to school here...I didn't even see my mother, that's why my father brought me in to the mission. Only father looks after me...It was Baker Home. *Wabykumunu*. It was really strictly one, not allowed to go out, not allowed to swear or anything, we have to get the biggest, biggest hiding, strap, *ngarlutjarra*, put us down flat, can't sit down. [For] swearing, swearing girls, not allowed to.

At school she recalls doing 'reading and writing and must be do *tjinguru* different things'.

And finish school we go back for lunch and go back to school. [In the afternoon] we do like sewing, and that. Sometimes when we finish school we go out and when the meetings on for ladies, we go and looks after the babies. Go out and we pick the baby and we looks after it while they at the meeting.

Katherine also remembers doing other chores;

Before we get up in the morning, before we have breakfast we have to wash ourselves and go out and do work in the morning at staff*ku ngurra*...Go out and wash the dishes, sweep the floor, clean the kitchen out, then go back to breakfast, back to the dining room and have breakfast, and then go along to school.

But on the weekends,

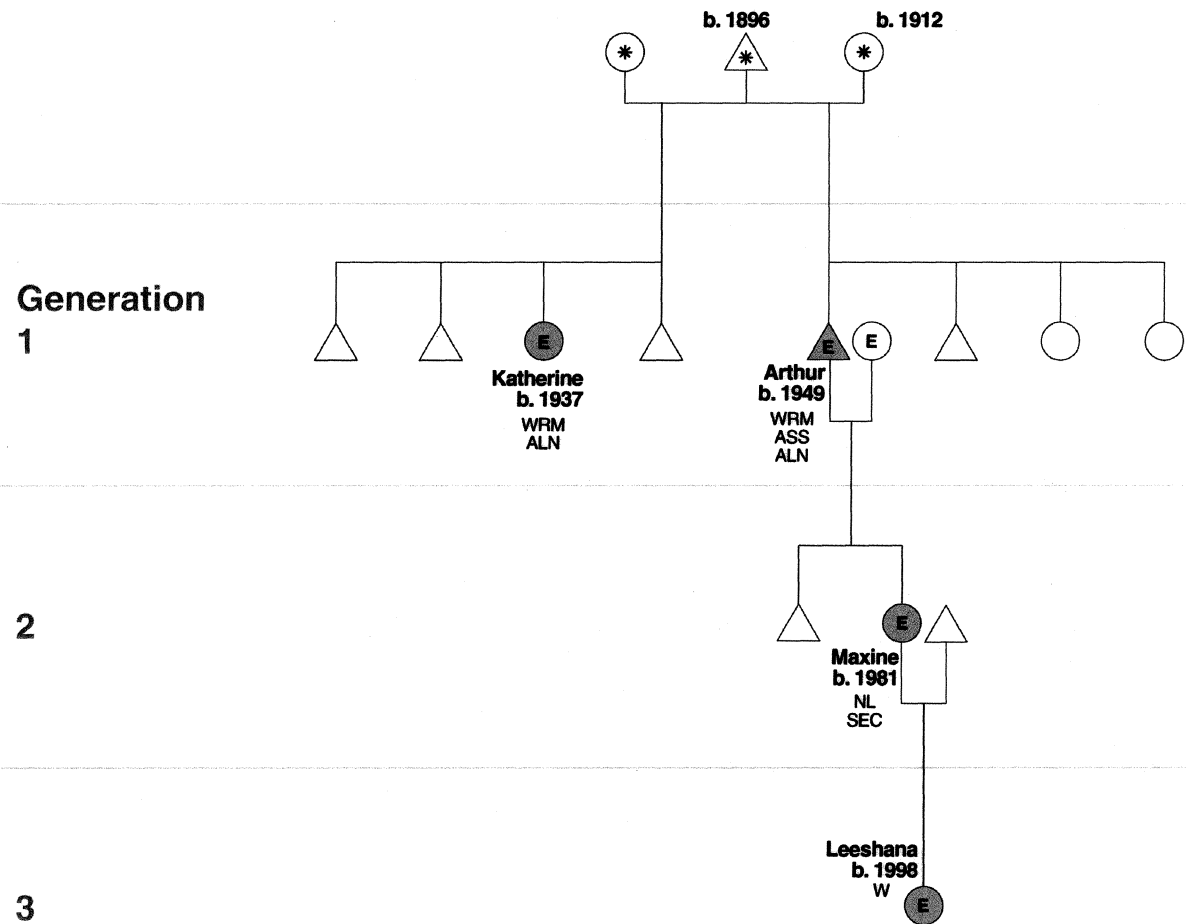
We go out, make a little cubby house, play out *nyarratja* where the roadhouse now got built, right there we used to play, make a cubby house, sit down and then come back for dinner. Sunday, church, no Sunday School, *yawa*, go out Sunday, then after we go for walk, go out for walk and then we come home. Sometimes they take us out in the truck, tea out in the bush.

By '*tjinguru* sixteen or seventeen*pa*' she had finished school, but was still living in the Baker Home. She then married and,

...used to live down there...house was there, brick house, not brick house, the stone one. The youngfellas, all the workers...my brother, Jack, all them used to help build...they used to go out there where the Brown Range that one, they used to get all the *yapu* for the building, they used to get all that and they bring it down and we had a school out of *yapu* and the mud.

She recalls other jobs around that time:

Family B



*	No school nomadics
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
WRM	Warburton Ranges Mission
CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
W	Warburton
NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
Secondary Schooling	
ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
SEC	Secondary (CAPS / Karalundi / Wiltja / Yirara / EGHS)
Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

Going into Laverton on the truck and load the food, come down... We used to learn to cook [from] missionaries. Here, Home... Lot of things I used to do like Murray Wells' mother, she had five kids, Murray Wells and his sisters and brothers, I used to work really hard by hand, think about all them clothes, kids clothes, and sheets and towels... I learn, went to school and learn more and *nintirringu* then *ngayulu* become a teacher and I been teaching all the *tjiti, tjiti pirni* and they now grow up, *wati, minyma*.

She describes how she learned to read English when she was young 'and later on, I went to school for Ngaanyatjarra later on up here with Dorothy, later'. She kept on 'reading all different books and that, and I still like reading. I read my Bible, Ngaanyatjarra, English and Ngaanyatjarra'. She keeps a Bible with her still.

Sometime, I teach the little one, I read to her, and in Ngaanyatjarra, she understand all that Ngaanyatjarra too... I can look at the newspaper and that, newspaper, I read that too. And read the book to [the little girls], their little book, story, storybook *pa*, story about Cinderella... And talk Ngaanyatjarra, in language.

She learnt to write when she was young also but now she says,

Ngurrparna, I forgot... I never been writing, *wiyartu*, but I still, I can write... before I used to write a letter to my friend... missionary.

In the early 70s, Katherine lived in Warburton with her husband:

I was working then, like working in the dining room cooking dinner, doing breakfast for the kids, school kids. Then when they come home for lunch, have dinner, go back school, come back and have tea. Teatime and I was doing lot of work, lot of different things.

Then she went travelling to Port Augusta in South Australia and NSW.

Port Augusta. I was working up there, like first I was cooking for old people, cooking *mayi* for old people. Then I was working at the clinic, go out and bring sick one in and take them to the shower bath, bath them and put their clean clothes on... To NSW then, he went to see his family down there and when we had Christmas with them we came back and we stayed in Port Augusta. Stayed there and I got a job... *walykumunu*. Then we came back and we lived in Jameson and I was working there. Working health, *yuma*. And I used to go out, me and my husband go out to check up on old people in Wanarn, all the old people used to live out there, no *warli*, just waiting for the house to put up. *Yuma*. And I used to take the medicine down for the old people, medicine... cause I want to help people and all that. I like doing work... I been working hard, worked and worked in Jameson, worked there, then I shift back to Warburton.

She describes her desire to work. 'Me I don't want to sit, I want to do work, not just sit around'. But now she says things are different:

Nobody working, even the young people's not learning, learning to cook and all that... They just lazy one, not doing things. They should work, I used to... they not going to school, some of the girls like 10 years old, 10 and 12, 13, they not going to school, *wiya*, they finish altogether. I been telling them "Can you go school, when you sitting round you won't get learn, when you sitting down doing nothing." Go out only night-time and have a good time night-time. Every time they go the college they play around there, can't even go home *wiya*, late, must be about midnight they go home. They learning, little one learning smoking. We wasn't been like that, *wiyartu*, we wasn't been smoking. It's a free *nyaapa* for these young people now. They can do what they like... bad one, really bad... Man and young woman, *kungka*, big girl like must be 14 or 15 or *nyaapa*, they still go out...

Katherine reflects on her own adolescence when she was living in the Baker Home behind the fence erected by the missionaries.

We used to get frightened. We used to go and hide. We used to have high fence around, go out in the backyard, it was plenty room we sit down and tell stories. Yuwa, but now they can go out, mother and father they just sit back and the girls go out, night they go. Now they should see when they go and they should go and bring them home and tell them not to go out night-time wiya. But they just let them go and that's how they get babies...and no father and they don't tell us which one is the father. We ask them proper way tell us who is the father, but they don't tell us.

She thinks school is important for young people.

So they can learn, *ninti purika*...Because they should learn and learn and when they grow up they can do something...Like my *kaparli*, I used to talk to her: 'Don't go out night-time, go for walk and come straight back to me.' I used to see she comes back home. She was going school here, she went to school, highschool little one, then when she finish highschool I was thinking I'll send her away to another school to learn more, so I did. And she go to Wongutha CAPS Esperance, so she did...she's learning more. She want to, when she finish, she'll be coming back and she'll be working.

Katherine thinks it is important for the younger generation to learn traditional culture, but she doesn't know if they are learning much:

Ngurpa, once she went out with them ladies, girls too and she was dancing too, my *kaparli*. She know both ways, *yamangu* way too...*Wangka yuti*, they can talk.

She is proud of her little *kaparli* and tells me:

You know she said to me: 'When I finish school and working, then she'll find a boyfriend.' And she said 'Happy way they live.' She's not going to get married when she's in the middle of the school. And she want to be really strong, you know when they too young having a baby straight away, they not properly growing to be a strong mother. That's why she want to be really strong, that's why find a friend. Really get older, proper way to get older, not too soon.

Arthur was born around 1949 in the bush near Warburton.

The mission had started, but his family remained bush nomadics. Then when he was about eight or nine years old his family left him at the Baker Home.

You know at that time, maybe before my time when I was born, before it was really hard for our families to settle, like to sit down in one rockhole. They wasn't like that, [if] they stay at the rockhole, homeland, well there's trouble, maybe trouble coming up from another tribes come down and maybe do something and go back. Well at that time it was really hard for like my families to be with our parents all the time, see. That's why you know, at the same time missionaries came, you see. Missionaries came and all that *warrmarla* business you know from another tribes come in, like revenge, payback and they go back. So really hard for like when we was small, they can't carry us and run, they wanna be free, just pick up what they need and...

Arthur understands that the revenge parties lessened around the time the missionaries came.

Oh it went down a bit when the missionaries came, yeah went down and when old Mr Wade showed about that cross, about that two man on the side, they understand a little bit, that time.

He recalls that period as a 'hard time'.

They all, like my parents, they didn't want to let me go. I liked walking around travelling with my parents...that time kids go to school all over, so we must do the same too. The government want children to go to school to learn. So they explain about all that and made us to stay.

Although he thought that it was a good Home,

We still loved our mother and father and we wanted to be with them. And that's another part where you are all jammed in like, and you're forced to stay not to go. That was hard too for us, but we gradually learnt what the missionaries looking after us told us.

He reflects on his learning:

Some other people say the missionaries were better [good] for nothing, but in a way get learn, but that time it was different, you know, Different from today...I used to read...I can read better, you know some of us got learnt properly how to read and write, and get to know how talking speaking to anyone we talk...I used to write letters...I still can read letters like this one.

At times his mother and father were camping outside the mission, and at other times they worked around the mission. His father worked on making the cutline for the road to Laverton and getting the rock slabs from Brown Range for the building construction work around the mission: 'I seen my father working, dragging tree along, lifting heavy things like rock'. Arthur remembers the old school building,

...made out of slabs from the Ranges up here, Brown Range and we used to see our parents go down helping, bringing the slabs and cracking it and levelling, starting to build. So we seen that school go up. School and it was a church too, you know, where people worshipped.

Arthur also remembers seeing other people working around the mission, in the hospital and in the store, 'some ladies worked at the Boys Home when it was still going, they wash clothes for the girls, and ladies do the washing for the boys'.

At school,

...they taught us a lot of things. Like Bible, and stories in the Bible, all those things, they sounded strange to us, see. At that time I was growing and knowing, "Oh yeah?" But we didn't know what was up there or down here, and all that, we was slowly learning.

Although he really liked school he also recalls that,

...it was really hard for me, like you can only talk when your parents are down, there, see. But that's when they, when whitefellas was looking after us. And that's why we had to, like, follow up every day, every school day, and we thought at the end of a week, we think it's, well to me, almost forgetting about your mother, and like learning what the white people do. So we had to, I really like school, I did because at the year ahead I thought: 'Oh well, I'm gonna be like this, I wanna learn'. So I like school.

Arthur remembers that the stone slab school room had 'a cement floor, and a door, couple of windows, maybe four windows and a store room where we had books stored away. At school there were pencils and exercise books and.

...many story books...with stories like Waltzing Matilda, Once a Jolly Swagman, that man there, those sort of book. So when we was learning that way, well, we think we're gonna see that Jolly Swagman. But it was story, you know, we liked it.

In the Christmas holiday period Arthur would go out bush with his family.

At the Christmas holiday time we go out. Go out and our parents bring us back to school, not on the right time but, you know... Bring us anytime they coming back this way. Walking and they bring us Home here, and we go back in the Home here, and then we keep going every year, right up.

Around 1961 he did his last exam at the end of the year and finished school.

Between 12 and 13 I used to sort of go through, I think it was the last time we do our exams, exam. For the school teacher, for the government finding out what good, how good we are learning through the school, like the UAM school and we used to have exams every once a year. We knew some things from the school.

By the end of his schooling he reflected that, 'some of us got learnt properly how to read and write, and get to know how talking speaking to anyone we talk'.

Arthur was sent to Pedlar's Hostel in Esperance:

Then from there I went, went out into the...like when we leave school we can't be here...we stayed for a little while and then the missionaries sent us away like for Wongutha Farm or anywhere, you know, where there's missionaries looking after kids.

He'd heard the stories about Esperance from his two brothers who had already been out in the Goldfields. Arthur commenced the farm training program while boarding at Pedlar's:

Farming, all different jobs like shearing, fencing, riding horses. It was really strict at that time, the government, Department of Native Welfare sent us to Pedlar's. Young people from all over went to the one place.

In the 1960s Arthur recalls going to Mt Margaret for a couple of weeks to see family.

My mother's sisters were out there, there were about three of them and they walked because of that *warrmarla* time you know.

While there he observed people coming in for the 'Anniversary'.

Big mob coming in from all over coming in to like Mt Margaret, for church service every once a year, so that's where I was learning like 'where these people come from?' Younger people and older people coming in. One of my parents told me: 'Oh they come in from stations, there's a lot of station around here, anybody can go and work'...Stayed there till, like, I got a chance to move out, so I moved out into the station.

Arthur was moving around and working on a few different stations before 1966:

They needed musterers, shearers, if we hang around town police didn't want people hanging around, police picked us up, if not working do time just for walking around, happened to young people for just walking around. Now law has changed, young people can't be forced to go to work...Like we go to different station, come back then we see oh, the young people that we know and then we go out with them, yeah, where they worked. So we, that's when I found out, oh I like to follow this mob here. So I followed them...Mustering time, anytime the station people ask us, maybe fencing: 'Do you know how to fence?' Or new paddock or shearing time, we go out any time...it wasn't a big pay you know, they paid us little money. Maybe about, um, this was 'pound time', you know, when we was working, we used to get little bit and money sort of changed at that time, you know and station people started paying us like right way. They see us working all the time and they know oh he's a good worker and pay you more. If you not working properly you won't get much. So we really worked hard to earn more.

He worked around different stations for 'a long time'.

Especially when I found out I been around every stations, and you see grumpy man, you know the station bloke, station owner, we didn't like that man, so we moved around till we, till I can see this is a kind man he look after Aboriginal people.

Marlon in his Narrative recalls how he Arthur and Silas were working at Bandy Station with a 'rough' manager and after Marlon got into a fight with the manager, the three men walked off the station. After this, Arthur started working at Mt Weld Station near Laverton where he stayed for many years.

It was a good station next to a creek and that station owner he looked after us...because he teach me, teaching me the right way. Like I started off on the, like the station motors so he taught me how to take the head off, take the sump off, take the engine out of the body. That was like a thing that I really liked, really loved to do. So I kept working and the station man... he taught me lot like welding, windmill, fencing, fixing the motor car, trucks, nearly everything... because of what I do you know, like helping this station man, well I sort of got proud, like, not really proud but excited, but I can do more if I want to. So I stayed at that place all the time and I kept working and my pay got like bigger, yeah. And sometime he buy me a car, like a car to come out here [Warburton] on holiday.

Arthur says he was 'happy all the time' working at the station, sometimes on his own and sometimes with other young fellas, sometimes going into Laverton and maintaining contact with family.

Arthur likens this period of bachelorhood work on the stations to traditional maturational processes: 'little bit the same as what our old people did, like we went, like we followed them'.

He continues comparing the generational shift.

Young men now they don't do it, they don't do things like that. They here, even work you know, can't work, can't even work on their own like with a white man...I don't know, they got different ways I think. Our way was, we was like forced, now it's a sort of free way for anyone to live now...My way was forced, like, just the job part, job part, we have to be forced out, forced out of here, even in town when we run out of job, sometime we like staying with the young people, well police there don't want young people, or anyone, like keeping that, they want to keep that town quiet...You can't live out, only when you're working you can live in town [had to have] special permit so you couldn't hang around...I can't hang around, I have to go...I learnt that way, you know, I had to go. Well, that's why I got that habit, like, you know, if I run out of money, well I got to work. Nowadays young people can't work, it's money there already for them. Like government must have done that or someone.

Arthur is dependent about the next generation.

I don't see young people nowadays doing what I been doing. Can't see that. They just do what they can, you know what they think they can do [do what they like]. That's all. They can't work or learn about anything...There's a lot of things, lot of like a new ideas coming in, like for *Yarnangu* this one, I'm talking about *Yarnangu*. There a lot of danger stuff coming in, whitefella stuff, you know, they might like doing them when they keep at it, and their pays are there all the time, every week. They just keep on doing it. Just can't work...they learnt for a while, maybe a couple of years, and this is when they little too, they can go any time, but they stop schooling, anytime. At our time it was really hard one, strict one, can't hide around anywhere, go bush.

When Arthur was living at the station he filled his leisure-time with activities.

I used to live at the station...sometimes like when we go in [to Laverton] for picture, like movie and we stay there for one night, two night...and I come back...My parents was there at that time, they move into, so they were close, like Laverton not far from the station...I used to be painting, good one, that time and write letter to my sister here [Warburton] all the time,

Arthur describes how he'd get writing paper from the 'station man' and sometimes his sister would write back.

I used to have my case, comics, books something to make bigger things like learning. I still had my letters, you know writing letter all the time...Had pencil, writing pad, envelopes, stamp...And I have my mouth organ or anything like that, keep it in there. Magazines, like comics, remember them old comics, magazine, oh them books you read like that Women's Weekly or that other stuff. From Laverton...that was the only town close, round all the station. This side, this side, north side, all come in.

After many years Arthur finished up at Mt Weld and went into Laverton and got a job at the Shire picking up rubbish while still doing a bit of casual work on other stations around Laverton. In addition to station work Aboriginal people also worked in town:

In town there was a lot of jobs in the Shire and the mailcarter you know, he take mail into Kalgoorlie, Leonora, they needed young people to work so we used to work on the mail too. Like mail carting, going out, picking up stores, they had no train that time, coming into Laverton.

It was while he was living around Laverton that Arthur stopped buying books to read: 'I don't know why, I don't know why I stopped'. Over the years Arthur periodically visited Warburton, during these visits he started to learn a little Ngaanyatjarra literacy.

The translation mob like old Mr Douglas was here and he got older ones to write down there all the language. So at that time I used to see my parents doing it too. So I was someone that can ask all the time, something good. So I have to ask for maybe my brother to read it, so he used to read it in Ngaanyatjarra...with the translation man was here long time, Mr Douglas, Wilf Douglas, he used to do it at the school there or at his place where he lived. He used to get like Silas' father, Jack doing that.

This tradition then carried on with Anee Glass and Dorothy Hackett teaching Ngaanyatjarra literacy.

Those ladies Miss Hackett and Miss Glass they came in when the mission like settled, good transport, plane was coming in at that time, like we didn't have a Flying Doctor, but we had plane was coming in picking sick people up. It was at that time when the translation mob went out, like drive out to Snake Well, or been to the camp where we used to live.

Like many others in his generation Arthur learnt to read and write in Ngaanyatjarra.

I went to, we used to go out, learning, we spent a couple of days or a week with Miss Hackett and Miss Glass and some other missionaries...I went to Darwin, I did that translation there...or we do it here anyway, got time to go out to learn more to write...I learnt a lot.

In the 1970s when the outstations were being set up, everyone knew that Arthur was a good mechanic so they would call him up on the radio to come and do a job, even from as far away as South Australia. This prompted Arthur return to Warburton.

The time when Hunt Oil, you remember all that, looking for oil out here, well that time I was, that's when I came back, 1980 what? Yeah 1980, I came back here.

He was able to find site clearance work with the new mining ventures:

We only went out with the companies, like pegging, pegging lines and cutting trees. Now they got bulldozers, they do it straight, used to use an axe and a peg and one whitefella way up in front telling us to line that peg, even when it's long way you can do that, straight across make a straight line, to blocks, ready for the drilling mob, they came around drilling then. And they went away, came back and started digging.

Arthur also worked in the mechanics workshop: 'I taught a lot of young people how to do the engine. I was a really good teacher to them'. Mainly because of the good training he had had himself 'mostly from working on stations, welding, building and making gates'.

They started working that time... You see them working, some had different job like stock job, that time, they kept [stock] running. That time they used to round up bullock and send them away that time. Some worked in the store, some worked at the workshop, that time you know when money came in, when the government started that working, working for money, not CDEP that other money... At that time it was some of hard for younger people or older people to work. They got to get up, go out and work every work time. Older people and all was working, they used to work around here, till it went for a couple of years and then went down... I don't know why but the changes came in, like you don't have to work and you still got the money coming in, all those sort of changes came, changed it around.

Arthur was also Warburton Community Chairman for a number of years where he had to 'read about everything what's coming in, going out, money being spent, all those sort of ones' and 'over the years most of us tried it with CDEP'. Arthur now considers himself retired, but he is still working, he says he just has the working habit in him and he wants to work to fix up his homeland and train young people to ride horses. But he says: 'when they want me to I use my truck to dump stuff, like for Shire'.

At home he keeps a few books.

Bible, songbook, I had a couple of books about like, different sorts of Aboriginal way of living. I had that one and I used to read that. That was a really good one. You know, if I might go into another place up this way, north way, well I had to read that book to know, if I'm up there I got to be careful, you know. If I'm out here, I do the same, Amata way, mmm. It's only a book you know, might be whitefella's book that one, but it's really good to read.

I ask if he still has it and he laughs, 'Oh you lend it to someone it never come back'.

Arthur and his wife 'grew up' a couple children as their own. He has a daughter Maxine born in 1981 whom he looks after and a five year old granddaughter Leeshana who was born in 1998 and has started going to Warburton School.

Family C Narratives

Mary and Harold's father and Silas' grandfather was in the group that first made contact with the missionaries Will Wade and Fred Jackson in 1933 at *Mirlirrjarra* or 'Old Well', a creek bed a short distance from present the location of the Warburton community. This old man had two wives, Mary and Harold are the children from his senior wife, and Silas' father Horace was born to his co-wife.

Mary was born in 1935.

When she was a child she was left in the Baker Home when she was too big to be carried around. She'd see her family when they came in to get *mirrka* in exchange for 'skintatja, *papa* skin' (dingo scalps) and in the summer they would come and take her bush. She remembers doing schoolwork every morning in the 'timber house', then when the bell rang at dinnertime going back to the Home for lunch. Chores often took up half the day, washing the plates, washing the clothes and all that. At school she recalls,

...chalkangka, writetamalpayi, slate, chalkangka, writetamalpayi, writetamalpayi and scribblemalpayi in the paper. And when we been getting big we come to this 'nother house. Brick house. I was writing good way.

The 'brick house' was the building made of stone that served as both school room and church that opened in 1952. Mary's memories of schooling are positive:

I used to read. Lovely school teacher, Mrs Cotterill used to learn us and Mrs Nash long time ago when we little girl Mrs Mitchell used to looks after us in the school, that's our teacher, Mrs Mitchell. And after, all this other rest.

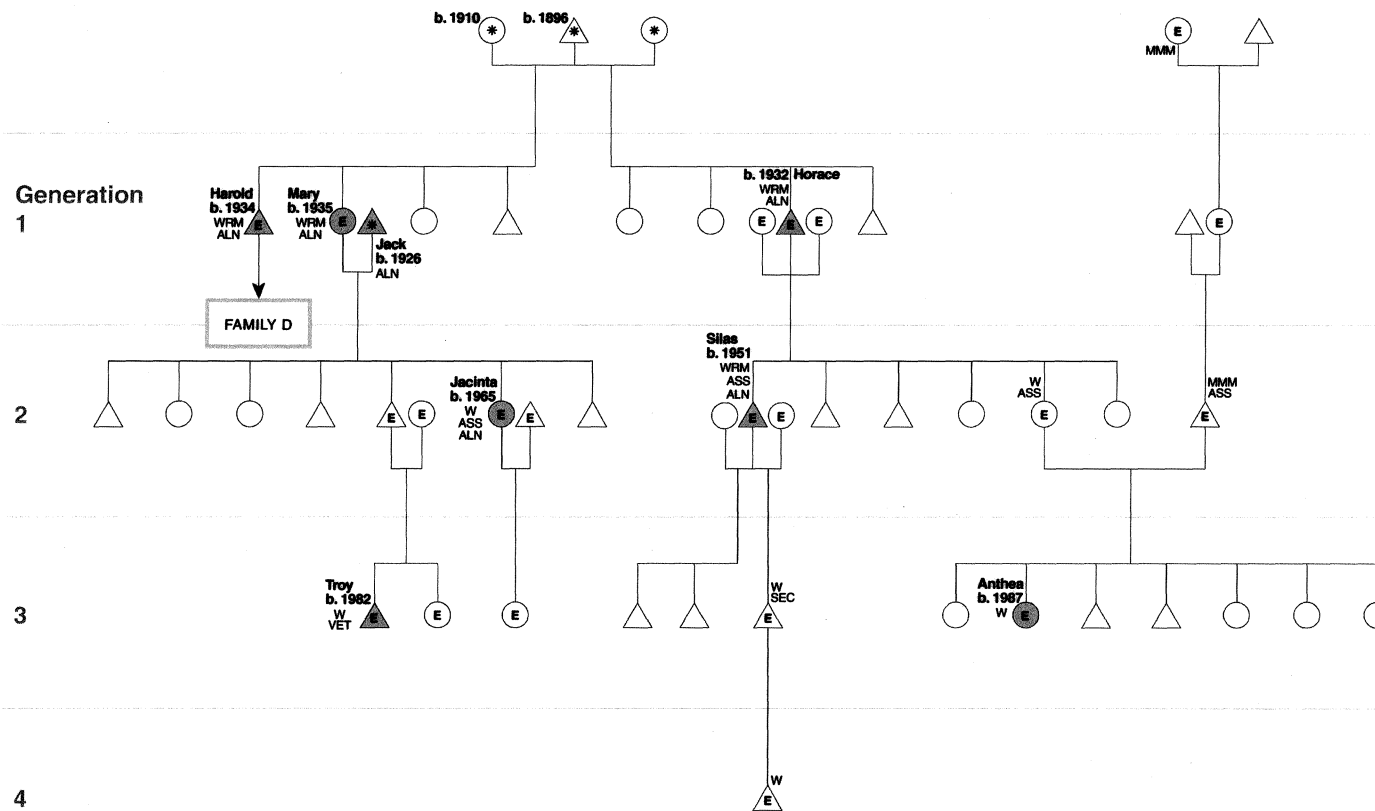
And her sense is that she learned to read and write at school. On the weekends there was more freedom, Saturday was often spent playing on the flat up near *Mirlirrjarra*.

We used to sit down make a *wiltja* and play all day. When we listen to the bell ringing and we all running all the way from that place. Yuwa, *kulilku*...And we was running for *mirrka*. Dinnertime and supper*ku*.

Sundays were not so free as the morning was spent at Sunday School.

Mary finished school around 16 years of age. She continued living at the Baker Home with a few other older girls including Clifford's aunt (see Family J). This cohort, who lived in the Baker Home, were the first real mission school generation. Mary married Jack (b. 1926) in the second Christian marriage ceremony in the mission. Jack was too old to go into the Home when the mission was established. As a young adult he worked around the mission. Although she has had a long and happy marriage to Jack she remembers that the missionaries 'forced her to get married':

Family C



*	No school nomadics
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
WRM	Warburton Ranges Mission
CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
W	Warburton
NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
Secondary Schooling	
ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
SEC	Secondary (CAPS / Karalundi / Wiltja / Yirara / EGHS)
Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

When my mother and father been gone that ways and that missionary been give me to that man Jack. I said: '*Wiyaya*, I don't want him.' 'Oh you gotta get married to him.' *Yuwa*, he was saying that. That missionary used to looks after us in a Baker Home. I said *wiya*...the missionary got sorry for Jack because he been had hard job doing everything house, building house. And he said: 'Oh you got to get married to him.' And I said: 'No, *wiya, wiya*.'

The Christian marriage was an event remembered by many of the community who were present: 'we got married in the Baker Home, we had a big *mirrka*...must be wedding *mirrka*, cake, they had a big dinner... when we get married'.

Mary and Jack then went out bush. They later returned to the mission and began working. Jack was,

...going out getting the wood in a horse cart, horsey cart, bring all the waru, every place, putting all that, in one place...so all the old people can sit down, cut all the wood...*purru*, take it to every house, *waru* for making a dinner, not now.

While Mary was,

...sewing clothes in the machine, sewing machine...I been doing washing, washing the clothes for the missionary. Sister, hospital work I been do it. First one was finish then I been do it...I been doing another job. Miss *Glassku* work, Miss Hackett and Miss Glass...And learning Miss Hackett and Miss Glass language, *yuwa*, every time. Helping her to putting all this *nyaapa* language. *Yuwa, pirni, pirni, pirni*.

Mary talks about how her children went out into the Eastern Goldfields and got educated.

All the girls, *kungka pirniya*. They used to go that way, they don't play around with the *nyaapa*, boys or man. They a good *kungka*...They don't run around man to man, good one *kungka*...they used to go to school that way, Wongutha, and Esperance, long way to Esperance...Must be gone to *ngana*, Esperance, Jacinta and *ngayuku katja*. They went out that way. *Ngayuku tjiiji* been gone to Wongutha, round that area, she used to work there. She *ninti purlkanya, ngayuku tjiiji*. And she came here and she was doing school in this house *ngaangka*. She's a teacher...She know, *ninti, ninti purlkanya*.

When her children were little she remembers teaching them to read. In turn she also taught her grandchildren. Now her grandson Troy read too. Now she says keeps many books at home.

I got a book *pirninya* there. That hymnbook, yellow one [songbook], and like that, brown one [Bible]...Lovely, I like to read all that early days one, when they been doing long, long time. I was reading that. I been open this straight away and I saw this *Mama* God is like that and there's a world in the middle and he's looking after us, like this big *mara*, and there's a world *ngaralanga* middle. I been open this way, I said: 'Oh there's *Mama* God is looking after us.'...*Yuwa*, other Jungle Book, Paul White. I got a book from that way, Mr Blyth been sending me. And this *Biblepa kutju*. This Mr Blyth been sending me, storybook, Paul White, with all that monkey *pirni*, and one man he been cutting the *nyaapa, warta* and that tree fell down, right down...Yeah, I've got books, only few, *Biblepa*, hymnbook *kutjarra*, and this one book from Mr Blyth, *yuwa*.

When asked if she keeps any writing materials at home she laughs and says:

Wiyartu, no, *wiyartu*. When I put a pencil down they come and took pencil away, *tjitjiluya*.

Silas was born in 1951.

The family has been in the Warburton Ranges region 'right from the beginning'. Silas' grandfather left his children in the care of the missionaries while the adults moved between the familiarity of bush life and an increasing dependence on the mission. Silas describes the experiences of the first generation in the mission school.

They used to, schooling was like a bough shed built at Old Well, the school was built in Old Well...they used to line up and they used get like dress-up and they used to go to learning, like Kindergarten, Kindergarten first, you know reading and learning to look at books. And from, from Kindergarten to the first school, and from there they went on and on and they shift from Old Well to the Warburton, to this one now, to this Warburton where we are now. Warburton Mission, Warburton Community and they got a big bigger then. They was learning to read and write at school, but was bit different in that time you know, bit different. Because they used to do that, what they call that in the beads? [abacus]...They used to count that like you know 1, 2, 3. Like that. And they used to write, write in big letters and little letters, big letters and little letters.

Silas' mother and father wed in the first Christian marriage ceremony in the mission. In the 1950s they were the first family to live in a small house at the mission. His father worked in the mission and did 'Bible class, Bible school...right through until he was an adult'. Silas says his father Horace:

He done most of his learning in the language when Noel Blyth came. He got him to do the translation, he got him to do the translating with Noel Blyth. [At home] we used to have...like Christian books, you know.

Silas describes his family:

My families was a little bit different from the people who lived round the mission compound. When they was still in the *wiltja* and still in the bush. My families was a little bit different because they was accepted by the missionaries, they was accepted by the missionaries... my father especially was a tribal, tribal leader. But he balance his Law in a private way, you know the tribal ways, tribal ways and the Christianity. They was living in Warburton and they was like working for the mission, you know, missionaries. My family, my mother especially was working for the mission like washing clothes for the missionaries, and working in the kitchen, cooking bread and doing this and that...for the kitchen side... And my father used to work, used to work for the mission, like going out getting them stores, when they used to go out like on a truck from Warburton to Laverton and even to the, the old siding, other side of Laverton, this side of Leonora. Malcolm railroad, Malcolm siding. And they used to come and camp at Mt Margaret, because Mt Margaret was like a stop, where the Warburton workers, missionary workers go and stop in Mt Margaret. They come home then. Because the missionaries in that time they wanted an Aboriginal person to work for them so they got my parents to work, like learning them to be household workers and washing clothes...My father was doing a little bit of gardening...my father was learning how to...woodwork...like timber, cutting timber.

Horace told him:

'One day we're gonna be finished and you got to stand up on your own two feet.' He wanted the working thing to keep going. He was a Christian man, he was a Pastor and some of my uncles they was Pastor too.

In retrospect, Silas perceives that some missionaries were good and some were bad. Although at first women were washing clothes for some missionaries like 'slaves', later missionaries were better as they 'accepted people into their houses for a cup of tea'. Silas believes that the mission wanted to give Aboriginal people 'hope to go forward into towns and cities and get a good job on that level'.

Silas had a relatively long spell of primary schooling at Warburton after which he was sent away to Wongutha Farm:

I went further, I was going to do two years, but I did one year in Wongutha Farm, Esperance. I was teenager. I wanted to get learn but I get twist off, twist off by some young fellas calling me to go to work in the stations, in the station, you know. At Wongutha Farm we used to do like jack of all trades, like building, carpentry, saddlery, learning further more education like going to highschool there. I never done properly with my arithmetic, you know. That's why I'm a little bit poor in that, on the money side, you know. Reading and writing and talking...

Silas worked at Bandya Station (see Marlon's story in Family E Narratives).

The first thing they put a man on the horse and say it's all yours now, you got to go and do a mustering, you know mustering the sheep and after mustering the sheep, shearing time, catch the sheep and branding time, muster the cattle. It was a good job...and I stayed there for two years and coming back holiday and going back again.

After 'book up' for boots, hat, clothes and 'tin tobacco' were deducted, he recalls getting 'only a little bit of cash...not a proper wage, in that time it was a little bit different'.

Then in the early 1970s Silas returned to Warburton and began working with a Project Officer.

I was accepted working in the store for a while...missionaries were still here, but the government people was coming in then, like coming in then, in the changeover until my uncle found the copper ore and got a job with some people then...When the government people came and they, a lot of people working for, like wage then. Then after that time when that work changed a bit, changed a bit, then I got into that working a bit with, when the builders used to come here before and I used to give them a little bit hand, I was working on the water supply and change along to this government thing now. Now it makes it a bit easier when people can get a government job.

Silas also became a Pastor around 1991. He wanted to do Bible Study at GBTI like some others but this never eventuated. Instead he tells the story about starting reading the Bible and one night he read it through all night, and he opened up to it, it spoke to him and the meaning came inside him. When he goes away to Christian meetings in other places people are surprised that he is Aboriginal as they see him as 'extraordinary', but he says he is not special, he just has no *kurmta* and he always talks to the white people, he is not afraid, and he knows the ways as he has been mixing with white people since he was a child playing with the missionaries' children. He wants to 'look over the horizon and beyond, to further himself beyond the horizon'.

The Pastor job it's very good...Before I became a Christian I used to live a bit...outside a church. But I still had that teaching from when I was a kid. To become a Pastor I dedicate my life, you know dedicated my life and I made that promise with my Lord and I accepted and the missionary came and they accepted as like a Pastor then. And I still balance that.

Silas' children and grandchildren have all grown up and gone to school at Warburton. His grandchildren are now the fourth generation through schooling.

My son, he been to school here. And he went... But my second oldest he went to school here and he finish. But my oldest son he went to Coolgardie CAPS so he done his schooling there and he came back, you know... my grandson, he, the teacher told me that he is doing well, learning English and he writing and writing his like story, diary. And yeah he's going alright and other children too. Like my grandson's age, they doing better too, you know. And my nephew's son I think, we're looking after him too, you know. Well he's a bit bigger and he's getting alright too, you know. And reading and writing and talking, like English.

Silas remains a community leader and worker:

Now I got a government job, looking after people on community-based order, like community people. Instead of going in jail they can do the jail thing in the community, like work. I work with Ministry of Justice and check up on them and make sure they do their community hours.

Jacinta was born in 1965.

She is Mary and Jack's *yurmtalpa*, daughter,

I was born here, and I grew up with my family here... I got four brothers and three sisters. I went to school here. They [Mary and Jack] was working before that, when I was little, but they still was working when I was that big [about 9 years old] when I was going to school.

Then like other adolescents at that time Jacinta was sent to the Eastern Goldfields for secondary schooling:

We went on a plane to Kalgoorlie, lots of girls like Jennifer, Eileen those sort of girls, we all went same time. We went on the bus to Esperance, no we went to Kalgoorlie and that night we catch the bus to Esperance... must be Native Welfare [organise that] or something like that.

Jacinta has the sense that her parents were happy for her to go and that they trusted people.

We were living at Fairhaven, it was a bit, you know, good and when we got homesick sometimes ran away and went back and Jennifer's mum went down there, to stay at Fairhaven, this lady here, to look after all the girls... we always went Project School, sometimes I go Year 9 then go back to Project... that was the big high school down there, that Project School there next to that high school... In the morning we always go Project and we get separated, one each go in the class with all the other kids.

Jacinta was in Esperance for three years, and returned to Warburton for holidays. When she was about 17 she,

...came back one way, here... It was only small, lot of people they had *wilja*, only some houses was built, just a few. My sister was working at school, she was married and she wasn't living with us. The children in the family used to camp there with her, she had a house there, camped there, went to school every morning.

Jacinta's sister worked at the school for about 20 years and was inducted into the Education Department 'Hall of Fame': 'she's got that big thing on her 'Hall of Fame' she got that at Kalgoorlie, she got that up on her wall, it's a really big one'. She was a role model for all the children in the family and had a big influence on them. Jacinta recalls that her nephew Troy 'was good at school'. Jacinta doesn't remember any books at home when

she was young except for 'Bibles, that's all, my mum would read' and the songbook in church. Jacinta can read Ngaanyatjarra and recalls learning from her mother:

When she reads I always see her reading and listening and that's how I got learn...and you know Miss Hackett...I was at Miss Hackett's place and we would learn every afternoon when she was living here.

By the time she left school Jacinta recalls that she could read and write in Ngaanyatjarra and English. But after returning from Esperance she doesn't remember doing much reading or writing.

Sometimes work, sometimes home, mainly home I think. Sometimes at work, I don't remember much, it's been a long time. But at home tape, little small tape, tape recorder, small one...they don't get magazines that time.

When her husband 'was in Boulder Prison that time they don't have no phone, I used to write letters and he used to write back...that time they had no phone that's when I was writing down to him and he'd write back'. Letter writing was private with no whitefella assistance. It was a time when Jacinta was really using her writing. Jacinta laughed when I asked her if she had kept any of those letters.

Jacinta has not worked much, she lives a quiet life.

I don't go round to the school these days because we always stop home, I just go hospital and back and office and shop, that's all.

Yet she has kept her literacy strong. She finds out what is going on around the place by reading the notices on the wall,

...always read them when we go in and in the shop, hospital...all those faxes on the wall...I don't get letters from anybody. Oh yeah, Centrelink, that's all. Now she get magazines from the shop, but someone always come and steal them, must be some people from like store, bought a new one yesterday and it's gone. Someone took it. I don't have any books. I'd love to have a books but people always come in there and take it. I'd like to keep it in my room, locked up...I got a lot of photos there, keep it in little basket I keep it inside...[husband] got old photos...he's got it in his room...And 'nother photo I got is my cousin.

Troy was born in 1982.

He is Jacinta's *yukari*, nephew, and Mary and Jack's *tjamu*. Troy reflects on his family and how they have influenced him. He says his *kaparli* Mary,

...went to school in the mission, she been schooling there in the mission, she became older working there, stopping here, working, nurse. My father he's work self, mechanics, you know fixing old car, that's why I always seen my father fix his own car and my mother she always work in the Woman's Centre...My *tjamu* he know it for English, Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara language, three language. He can read, before he used to read. He read newspaper, dictionary, that old first one, first language.

Troy thinks this is really important. His aunty worked at the school for twenty years.

She always teach me how to clean up the house, rubbish and tell me to clean my plates, dishes. She always tell me to go to school, so I always go school.

Troy liked school and has a sense that he was good at school. He stayed on at school after many in his cohort had dropped out:

Some others was running away from school. Running away and stay at one place, hide away. They return half a day school and run away to the oval, play football. I always watch them, they always tell lies to the teacher: 'Can I go toilet.' And they go toilet and run away from this school here. But me, I don't tell lies, come back straight...I was about 16 when I was going school and when I turned 17 I was still going school...I turned 18 and a teacher had a look...then Advisor came round and he told me: 'Oh, you wanna sign your name for money, wages'. So I write a name and they told me: 'Oh you got the wages.' I get my money now. Then I got a job. Then I went working, I was working at the Roadhouse, cleaning up, putting all the gardens and I was working all day, finish, and back home, still working, working in that truck, one whitefella was working, used to go down there, work, clean all the rubbish. Plant all the trees, it was good, I was working first.

As a young man Troy started to get into a bit of trouble:

And then them other boys my school friends, some of them they was sniffing round. They started, told me, then they forced me and I started sniffing and we got in trouble then and I went to Perth, Juvenile Prison in Perth, to Rangeview and Banksia and only for two months and a half, and came back...It was bit hard 'cause too many others, other Aboriginals...strangers. And I was shy, bit shy.

In Juvenile Detention with eating well, sleeping well and having a routine Troy did well at school:

When I was, went to other school, they put me to other school, biggest mob was there, biggest other peoples, like I was working there. They shift me to other school, to Unit 3, I was starting first Number 1, Number 2, Number 3. Then I got to Number 3...3 was bit harder, but easy was 1 and 2, and Number 3 was harder, you know. Cause I was only..., cause I was know for the easier stuff like maths, maths and, they put to Number 2...I was proud 'cause I was working for money, money and that, went to another school. English was, doing English and all that, was good. So when we was working and see after to lunch break we moved to the workshop...worked there, learn about doing cupboard, shelf, all that. I was learning about doing all that before. And after, went back home time, recess time, cause it was good. I wasn't worrying.

Troy 'got in trouble' again and went to Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison in Kalgoorlie-Boulder:

Fine, cause I never paid for couple of weeks and the cops came round and said: 'You never pay this fine. So you got to do this one, this like six months.' So I went in and done straight, six months straight, for doing that fine thing. Just doing the fine...I been get letter, for fine letter...Cause I was done it first time this, for fighting and drinking round, first time for fight, that's what I got that letter, fine and bail I got. And then I got that fine. Cause when I was read it and I was thinking: 'Oh couple of weeks I'll pay it.' But I forgot it, couple of weeks time to pay it. Then cops come looking around for me and he told me: 'Oh, you didn't pay this fine so we have to 'rrest you.' That's why, Oh I forgot I think. I had a money but I spent it on a drink. That's why I went in, six months, done six months straight...It's a bit easy, but the other prisons like Perth, it's a bit hard. But in Kalgoorlie it's a lot of Aboriginals there like families, uncles and brothers in Kalgoorlie. When I was there I was happy to see them 'cause they had a years, years, must be two years, one years. That's why I went in there done it straight, six months, got out, came away to Warburton.

When he was in EGRP Troy chose to go to the Education Centre because he wanted to learn more.

When I was in there I was going to school, always do about things, words, words and numbers, numbers. 'Cause I was making own story about this place and dreamtime stories and it was good going to school.

He says it is easier to do learning in prison, but in everyday life in the community it is hard. Troy says getting an education is important. Back in the community he wants to work but hasn't got a job.

Job, so work all day no worries. Like, like them boys working over there in the basketball court, like that, cement...I never asked, cause there's biggest mob hanging round there, they'll look at me, laugh at me, they'll talk about: 'Look at Troy, he's working. Got a good job.' They say it like that...They talk about peoples, they talk about peoples, all the young fellas. Like that, they say: 'Oh, look at Troy, what he doing, he got a job.' Like that...That's why I wanna find a job, for money...But when work right through get a big money then sit down for a while, buy a car, buy something like TV, and furnitures, tables, all that. I can get it.

Troy still keeps his reading and writing going in every day life.

Magazine, write puzzles in the magazine book...and reads names, on board [signs and notices]...In a book, write my own stories in a book. Scrapbooks, the little scrapbooks. Write my own stories, write my names. All sort of things. I bought it at the Roadhouse and I always kepted it in my bag, but people going through my bag and stealing, that's why. Somebody stole that, I don't know which one. My own diary, but they steal it, one of my brothers steal it or my sister.

Like lots of the young fellas Troy goes to the college library regularly to read books, use the computers and watch videos. He especially liked doing computer work with the *Nintirringkula* arts project. Like most youngfellas Troy wants to be active and engaged:

I feel sad by myself, it's boring, I feel dopey sit down one place. Them other fellas they come round they talk to me I'll feel happy, sit down quiet. For him what is important for the future is Like learning some...Business, Business and look after them peoples, look after other peoples when they sick.

Anthea was born in 1987.

She is Silas' sister's daughter. Her great grandparents and grandparents were at Mt Margaret Mission. She is in the fourth generation in her family to experience schooling. Her father was at school in Leonora and then Eastern Goldfields High School when his family was living in Kalgoorlie. He left school at 15 years of age and went to college in Kalgoorlie for a year to train as a motor mechanic. He didn't complete his training and went to Laverton. He worked as a musterer on stations, then at Laverton Shire doing rubbish collection and worked on the mines. Then he came to Warburton. Anthea's mother grew up in Warburton and went to school in Warburton until she was sent to Fairhaven in Esperance. After she finished school she continued living at Fairhaven while working cleaning houses.

Family D Narratives

Rosie was born in 1941.

Her father was also in the first group to make contact with missionaries in 1933 at *Mirlirrtjarra* or 'Old Well'. Her family left her in the Baker Home to be cared for by the missionaries in the mid to late 1940s. She recalls her schooling:

Schoolpa *palyalpayi* writingpa [we'd do writing in school]. *Yuwa* writingpa *nintirringkupayi* [learning writing], printing writingpa and little bit learn-*narriku* Englishonepa *palyalpayi* [doing English].

She has positive memories of her childhood living in the Baker Home:

It was *walykumunu*. We play outside, go bush, come back, play *wiltja-wiltja*, bush. When we heard a bell ringing we run, *pijaku*, *kulilku*: 'Hey, ringing the bell.' And *kukurralkulatju* bathku first [we'd run for the bath first]. Bathku, *mayiku*. Have a *mayi* first, have a shower and *nyinama* [sitting] outside... Sunday we used to have Sunday School *turku*. Hear about *Mama* God, *Jesuku* *tjukurpa*, story, *yuwa* every Sunday afternoon, *mungangka* and go back Home *kunkunarriku* [in the evening we go back to the Home and go to sleep]. And father used to go round to the missionaries, ask "Can I take this girl for holiday, bush, little while holiday? Must be two weeks or three weeks come back." *Marlaku* *pijaku* Home-*ngka* *tjarrpaku*, *tirtu* *kanyilpayilanyatju* and schoolkulatju *pijapayi* [We returned to the Home and they kept us for a long time and we'd go to school]. And sometime we used to *milkpalatju* *mulyartarripayi* [steal the milk] . Milk, goats' milk. We used to *milkmanku*, boil it with water, not water, boil him with the fire and *creampalatjatju* *ngalkupayi*, *walykumunu* [we would eat the cream, it was really good]. Sheep and nannygoats separate, sheep shepherd, *nyaapa*, all the men look after the sheep... 'nother lot nannygoats and we used to go bush and milk have a drink *mantjirru*, *milkmanku*. Come back, *pijakulatju*, *nyinaku*.

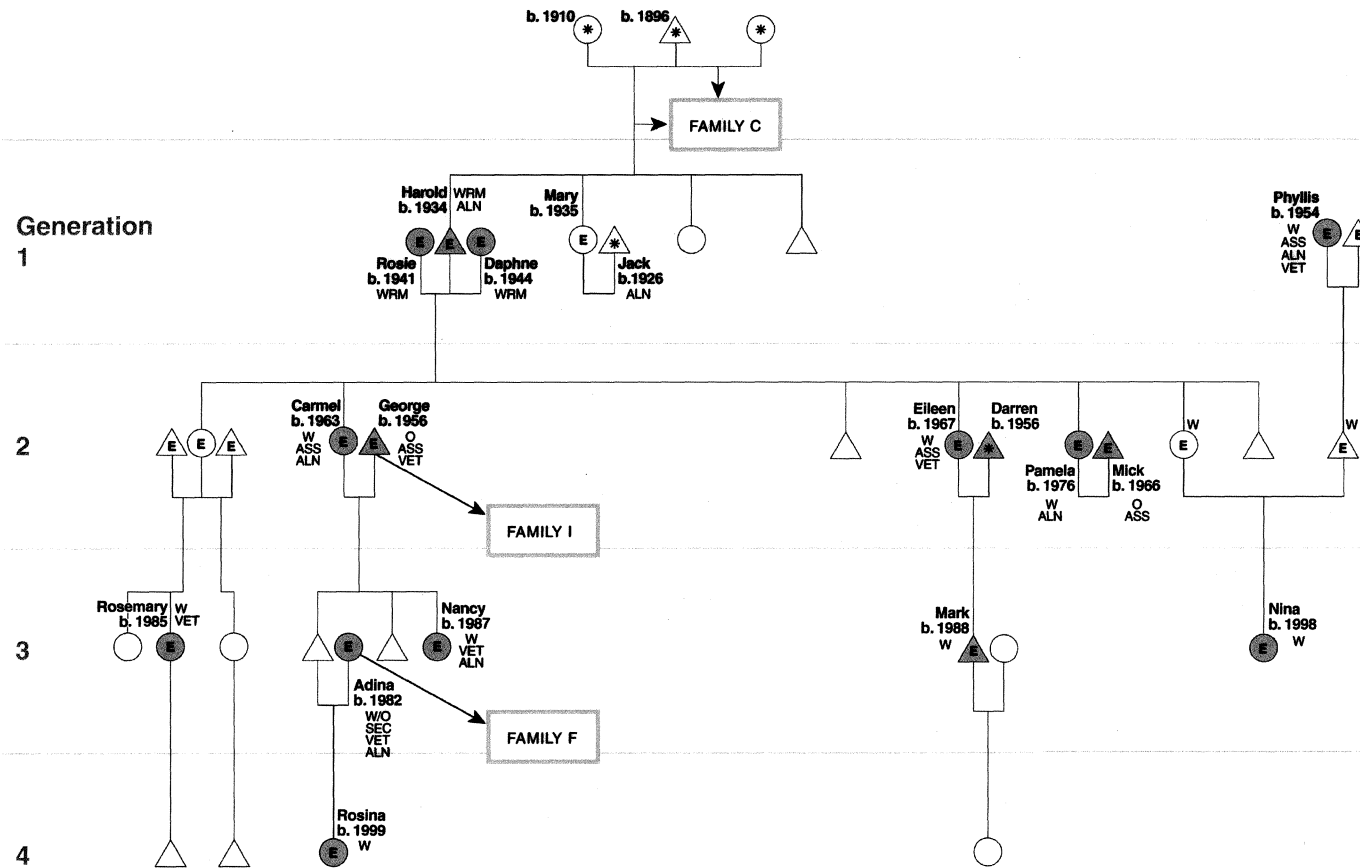
Rosie remembers how at Christmas-time there was a party before the children went out bush with their families for the summer:

Christmastime we used to get a *nyaapa*, *raceimankunpayilatju*, *yurralku*, get a prize, presentpa *mantjilku* [we'd do races and get a prize, get a present]. And after that, after Christmas we used to go bush, must be couple of weeks *nyinarrayilkuuuuuuuuu* [stay for a loooooong time], come back home. *Walykumunu* missionary-*ya*, Mr Wade, Mr Jones, Mr Williams, they used to look after us, Mr Nash, and *paluku* *kurri* and *paluku* two kids [They were really good, all the missionraies... Mr Nash and his wife and his two kids]. *Nyinaapayilatju* *happyonepa*, happy *Mama* Godngalatju *kulilpayi* *kulilpayi*, when we was little girl *kulilpayilanga* *Jesusnga* *tirtu* [we were happy listening to all the stories about God and Jesus].

Rosie recalls being baptised by the missionaries Mr Wade and Mr Green. She finished school around 14 years of age in 1954 and then went travelling to Cosmo, Laverton and Kalgoorlie staying with her family who had travelled out that way. Her parents were at Cosmo and she stayed there for a while. After she was given to her husband Harold (b. 1934) they returned to Warburton when she was about 17 years old. Then around 1963 Harold went away to the Aborigines Inland Mission Bible College in Singleton, NSW for three-six months evangelist training.¹²⁵⁰ Meanwhile Rosie stayed in Warburton working in the mission hospital with Mary.

¹²⁵⁰ Glass and Hackett pers. comm. 2004.

Family D



*	No school nomads
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
WRM	Warburton Ranges Mission
CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
W	Warburton
NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
Secondary Schooling	
ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
SEC	Secondary (CAPS / Karalundi / Wiltja / Yirara / EGHS)
Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

Bush*palatju nyinapayi* we used to go bush *kukaku*, come back. Missionary used to give us little flour, flour little*onepa*. Tea and sugar, *mayi* Sunday *nintilpayi* [We'd go out bush to get meat. Missionary would give us a little flour. On Sunday we'd get tea, sugar and food]. But *ngayulurna* work *palyalpayi*, old hospital*pangka*, Mary*nyarna* help*mankupayi*. [But I worked in the hospital here helping Mary.] Mop the floor, wash all the clothes, put sick people *warmtu*, sheets and blankets and staff*ku puru* wash*mankupayi* clothes [clean all the patients' clothes, sheets and blankets and also wash clothes for the staff].

After Harold returned from NSW he was a preacher along with some of the other men in the emerging Christian community.

Harold*lu* he been doing work *palyalpayi*, he came back from NSW he been telling story about *Mama* God, and some man from here, Jack, Harold's brother, Silas' father, every Sunday they tell a story to the people, they come from the camp they hear about the Lord Jesus and get you know, ticket, little ticket from the missionary for *mirrka*. We used to get a ticket and get a *mirrka* and go back *ngurraku*. Sometime we go bush *kukaku*, come back afternoon, like that.

Rosie had seven children. Three of her daughters went away for secondary schooling in Esperance, Norseman and Kalgoorlie. Rosie says she was happy for them to go.

School*pa palyalpayi*, learning, writing, and *nyaapa*, work*pa*...must be little while, come back Christmas time, Christmas here with the families...school*ku*, we know they going for school...And school teacher*nya* they send'em away for highschool.

Rosie now has grandchildren and great grandchildren going to school in Warburton and one granddaughter has been away at Karalundi School. Harold also has a second wife, Daphne.

Carmel was born in 1963.

She is Rosie and Harold's daughter She remembers her mother and father working for the mission, 'other young kids used to go to the dining room but we don't go for feed, must be because my father was working'. She recalls Harold helping the missionaries to 'build things' and her mother worked with missionary ladies in old hospital, cleaning up. Carmel also remembers milking goats, 'getting rations for bringing in *mirrka*, like kangaroo so missionaries can make stew'. When Carmel was young she also recalls when Anee Glass, Dorothy Hackett and Thelma Roberts were living in Warburton and the children always used to visit them after school to do writing, colouring in and reading. They also used to come into school and do scripture classes as well as Sunday School. Carmel thinks it used to be a closer relationship between staff and people and more literacy-based, whereas now kids don't visit teachers as much. Then all the girls would visit Miss Roberts and put 'silver in the tin' to donate 'money to the poor people' and Miss Roberts ran youth activities for the children. Carmel also recalls:

We had a lovely new house, 'State' house built in 1973. We first lived in a little hut, like a one room tin house, then we shift to the 'State' house, there were only four here then. My father also worked for Western Mining collecting copper. Other families had no houses, they were camped in *wiltjas* in

the other reserve out near the old airport. The Gibson Desert, Docker River, Warakurna mob camped over the creek.

As a teenager Carmel went to Norseman for schooling but soon returned because it was too far. In 1970s when she was 18 she went on CDEP 'wages', and it was 'more money than like sit-down pay'.

Carmel's *kurri* – 'husband' **George was born in 1956**. His story can be found in Family I Narratives. Carmel and George's son is married to Adina (Family F Narratives) and they have one granddaughter Rosina whom they often look after, along with other children in the extended family.

Carmel's *marlanypa*, younger sister, **Eileen was born in 1967**.

She grew up in Warburton and went to school in Warburton.

I remember when we used to come to school we used to line up on front veranda and sing a prayer song and go in dining room and have a *mirrka*, then go to school. After school we go home. I remember my father used to take us for ride in his old car, sedan car, he used to take us bush for hunting. It's different now, don't know why, go out bush less. I remember I used to come and see one old lady, Thelma Roberts, missionary lady. We used to come on weekend and she used to read the book, scriptures to us and we sit and listen and she pray for us...Used to read with whitefellas, she used to read good books about Jesus, not much now, we used to sit down quiet and listen.

When she was a teenager Eileen went to Esperance and boarded at Fairhaven for about two or three months while going to school at the Project Centre. She recalls that her family and teacher told her that she should go: 'people and teacher from Warburton wanted us to go, Grade 7 was highest here then, go to another school for high school'.

She recalls returning to Esperance after a holiday break, however on the return trip she and two other girls ran away 'we been hide away we didn't want to go back to school, long way'. This was in 1979 and Eileen was about 15 years of age. When Eileen was a young woman she started working in Warburton at the school and clinic, cleaning.

Got little bit money, \$80 or \$100. I was reading book *pa* in the school, sweeping in the library, sit down and read book and go home. Nothing much at home. Only done cleaning at the clinic too, old one, sweeping and mopping.

She has recently started Aboriginal Health Worker training (*Certificate III in Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work*): 'Only three I done, I didn't do the other blocks, missed out. I got that other one, have to read a lot, sometimes Sister help me and we do it together'. Eileen sometimes works for the Native Title Unit, 'sometimes the anthropologist asks for old ladies' names and I write them down and I help her drive and we go up the sandhills'

Eileen is married to Darren and has a son Mark. She always used to take him to school every day. But when he turned 13 he,

...went off and on because he was the only big boy, must be he feel shamed when he went self, *kurri* he was going to school. My son plays sport games, basketball. I want him to work...or college, learn like job. I want a working life for him, I want him to work and learn at the college, reading and writing.

Eileen's *kurri*, husband, **Darren was born in the Gibson Desert in 1956.**

This is his story:

I mostly grow up in the Gibson Desert. I was about six or five when we been all come here [Warburton Ranges Mission].¹²⁵¹ We all come here, all families. We was staying at, just near that airstrip, that's only flat, we was camp. I don't know nothing at that time. I was sitting down and they tell me: 'You wanna go school?' So I come here, I was schooling little bit, not much. My mother's sister she went that way, Wiluna way, so we wanna go. I don't know I had a families that way, I just followed them old people...

[W]e went towards Wiluna, my families, we break down with a big truck, near that rockhole...I walk from that place. I was going that way and family came back here. I was walking for two months, I had older people with us, we went to Laverton. We was walking...two months...We got a lift there...got to Mt Margaret Mission. Camped there and got another ride, got to Leonora, stayed there must be another night and we start walking again. And all my families was staying round here, they was still in Warburton, I was the first bloke that followed them old mans, I followed them up, I went with them...When I got to Wiluna they told me: 'Oh you got a families here, your mother's side families.'...So I been stayed there. I must have been seven must be. No must be like, like bit bigger than that.

I never been go to school, I got a job, Desert Farm. I was planting a lot of rockmelons, orange, mandarin, all sort of plant, like peanut, tomato, pumpkins, all that. From there my sister, she told me: 'Oh you want to come station?' I went to one of them station, from there working, mustering sheep. Pay cash. We was getting all the \$2 note, note, not coin and in Desert Farm they was giving us same pay, cash. Good money, yeah, enough money for me. Was enough money before, we get paid like this, early 4 o'clock afternoon, work all day, get paid afternoon like this, go to town, every afternoon in Desert Farm. Oh I been drink too much. I spent \$7 to get a carton, \$7, large bottle, carton, \$7. Not these days, you got to spend \$50. Too much. I went to old prison Geraldton, two month, from Wiluna. Then I went another two months and I went across to one prison just out of Perth.

I come back Warburton 1980...Bit changed to me when I come here, change. Like buildings and school, hospital and all them airstrip...I been come here when they had a little tin house, little tin house, really tiny tin house, no floor, just like this [dirt]...They was working. They was mustering too, they had a lot of bullocks. Mechanic, collecting wood, all that, rubbish. They give me a job plumbing. First I was carting wood, now I just leave, got a different job plumbing...There was heap of jobs here. I done plumbing first, wood first collecting for all the old people. I done Health, I got a certificate for that but they never send it.¹²⁵² I don't like to be chairman I just like to do work. Just to work.

I done little bit [reading and writing] but I don't do much. I listen...I never went high school, I went station to learn...when I was young bloke I been learn, I just start work at Desert Farm when I was a young fella. I got to work, I got to earn some money. I want exercise, working. If I sit down I be lazy all the time, I got to move around...My life has to work. Before my life was just right. I had to drive, drink, headache, go back to work. To me it's different.

My son [Mark], he don't go to work and he don't do much school. Don't go school much. He can write. He learn at school, almost all here... They got to go to school to learn properly and you

¹²⁵¹ As a child 'Darren' was filmed with his family in the 'Desert People' films made during the 1960s by Ian Dunlop and the Commonwealth Film Unit (Dunlop 1966-70).

¹²⁵² *Certificate II in Aboriginal Environmental Health Work.*

know, write properly, read and write properly. And they got to get a good job... Warburton right, it's getting changed when I'm here now, getting big.

Darren also talks about his *katja*, his brother's son Kenny. 'They been schooling that way, Kenny, he went to school that way. All that mob, went Karalundi school'.

Kenny was born in 1972. His family was also brought out of the Gibson Desert in the 1960s. This is his story:

My family they come from somewhere around Patjarr area. They came here first to Warburton then started making their way down that way looking for job... they came in the 60s must be. I was born in 70s, 1972. My father [Darren's *kurta* – elder brother], mother were working on the station, like that. Working round there, station in Leonora. Weebo, Tarmoola, Glenorn, round there.

I used to go school there when I was a little boy in Leonora, stayed in the hostel there [Nabberu]... We was stopping in the reserve, out near the airstrip, airport. They been drinking, they been alcoholic, them mob [parents]. They been working on stations when I was like that little, before I come into Leonora... 'cause I was stopping at the hostel, my parents they went to Laverton, so I tell the Welfare bloke: 'Oh I want to go to Laverton.' So I jumped off in Laverton to see my parents there when I was little. In a Welfare car, I kept coming this way, I was about 6 years old. I came this way to stay with my nanna because my mother and father they was drinking right through. That's why I had to come to my auntie and my nanna. I stayed here, but I never go to school because some boys... they used to get smart, teasing and I tease them back. They tease all this side mob, us lot. So we start a fight. We was trying to go to school, but they was keep on, like teasing. Every day just walk around here. Go school sometimes. But mainly I went to school up that way, Laverton, Mt Margaret, Wiluna.

All the family then shifted to Wiluna to join other families from the Gibson Desert who had gone there (including the families of Darren, Mick, Louisa, and Marrkilyi). Kenny continues his story:

I went there when I was about 12. I went in high school when I was 14, started at Wiluna.¹²⁵³ Oh they tried to send me to another school but I said: 'No, I want to stay.' They tried to send me to Perth. I kept going right up to 16... When I tried going the next year, the school said: 'No, you're right, you can stop, go home... don't worry about coming to school.' I was 16.

The family was working on Bondini Reserve and Village, other side Wiluna. With them old people going back and forwards. People they just keep shifting, Village, back to the Reserve, like that. They was working at Desert Gold, jump on in the morning, go out, come back. In the morning, truck come and pick them up, work truck. And my mother worked in Emu Farm. They keep doing that, like that now, work, alcoholics go to the pub, get the money, go straight to the pub, get a paper like a voucher, do something and go get a feed.

I didn't wanted to stay there much more, all cousin mob they came back this way so I thought I'd follow them, come back this way then. So I kept going to Tjukurla... Tjukurla was just starting '88. I went for auntie, went and stayed with them and then I came back. I stayed two or three years in Tjukurla, three years. I was building that garage, big shed garage, driving tractor, getting woods... Then came back this way to go up to Patjarr. We all moved back then, whole lot... Same

¹²⁵³ Around this time Les Haywood was the principal at Wiluna School and he 'ran a tight ship, didn't tolerate truancy, and ran a meals program based on a 1950s model' (Damian McLean pers. comm. 2004)

thing, wood, get all the wood, sit down, then other work. Then I was doing all the green houses, me and my father, uncle [Darren]. Us lot, we built them houses in Patjarr with them mob.

Kenny gets the 'working habit' from his father:

I just see it in my father, start following him, like this, I work like him. He force me, he told me: 'Oh work, we got to work'. Tell me to help him out, do this, like that. They had to do it themselves as there was no-one to help them.

Kenny was employed by the Shire to work with the Sport and Recreation Officer, training young men to play football and he was so reliable that he was put on the Shire payroll. He worked as a co-sports officer with the football coach, showed a lot of leadership and was like the 'football star'.¹²⁵⁴

The parent generation in Kenny's family never went to school, yet like others his father has held leadership positions. Kenny is in the first generation to be literate in his family and has maintained a high level of literacy competence in English since school. Kenny went to prison for a few years and this also helped him to improve his English literacy:

Most days, I was working there. I was doing the laundry but they kicked me out so I went and done the school. It was like a work, but learning more. I went there just to sit down and look at books and work. They put it something like agenda for work, something. Put my name up there, then we done a bricklaying course like that, done a welding. In the school, all the group, couple of the boys from the school go to welding come back, go to welding, come back, turn and turn. Then I came back and done some in Boulder, like tutoring. When I came back from that way, in Boulder for 7 months. That one lady she was working there, she seen me: 'Ah, you doing things good and quick and you know, we're giving you real easy job, we'll give you this tutoring, literacy, something like that'. Done that. They was helping me to do that thing now. They put me on a computer but I like cramp up, and not enough chance. Finished September '98. Came this way...I brought a paper like this for the college but I threw it away, somewhere in the bush there. I had no chance, that's why, to do it in the college here.

During this period Kenny could see that his literacy was improving and he felt proud. He says he has also kept his English reading strong by 'reading around the place, newspapers and magazines'. But he says he never needs to write anything as there is no opportunity in everyday life. He has never been a regular church-goer, however he has taught himself to read a little Ngaanyatjarra. He claims that because he can speak Ngaanyatjarra and read in English this has enabled him to transfer his reading strategies to Ngaanyatjarra.

I read sometimes in the language one, I read some of those. I was keep reading books but writing and I can't a bit write. I keep reading like book, anything, paper. I get some from the office, like newspapers. Then get a magazine in the store, *That's Life*, *True Stories* and all that. Little bit those. Reading like signs, signs for like on the sign post, like next place, next town, read all them names. Keep reading like that.

But he keeps no reading or writing materials at home and does no literacy activities with his seven year old daughter and he's not sure if his wife can read or write. He is currently

¹²⁵⁴ Rebecca Harslett pers. comm. 2004.

training to be an Environmental Health Worker (*Certificate II in Environmental Health*) and finds the reading and writing level in the course 'easy'. In the 1990s he studied at Pundulmurra College in Port Hedland when he was up staying up north: 'studied at College, same job, Environmental Health at Pundulmurra College, left certificate back there.' He dropped out of the course with only two modules to go. Kenny thinks about being about a Council leader in the future and is preparing now by going to meetings which he believes is better preparation than doing formal governance training: 'sit down, listen to them, how they talk, like that. Go to the meeting, follow them'.

Pamela was born in 1976.

She is another of Harold and Rosie's *yurmtalpa*, daughter, and Carmel's *marlanypa*, younger sister. Pamela went to school at Warburton, and then at Cosmo in the 1980s till she was about 12 or 13 yrs old. She then returned to Warburton with her family and continued at school in Warburton until 1991 when she was about 14 or 15 years of age. Although her sisters Carmel and Eileen went to school in Esperance by the time Pamela was a teenager, secondary students were no longer being sent to Fairhaven or Nindeebai Hostels. She recalls that she was good at school and liked reading especially in the library. She remembers as a child:

We go with one missionary lady Miss Roberts and we do Sunday School. We'd do colouring in and also sewing, all the girls would do sewing at school with machine.

Pamela doesn't remember any reading and writing in her camp as a child, she mainly remembers going out bush a lot with the family. However by the time she had finished school she felt she could read any book or magazine. Later on she worked at the old store mopping the floor and stacking the shelves. She also worked at the Women's Centre when it was in the little building near the college and used to make curtains and pillow cases, and dye t-shirts.

Lately Pamela has also been learning Ngaanyatjarra literacy with Glass and Hackett, and easily has finished the series of Ngaanyatjarra literacy learning readers. She still likes reading and keeps on reading at home, she gets magazines any kind and Ngaanyatjarra or English Bible stories from Glass and Hackett which she reads by herself. She doesn't write very much, doesn't write letters, but sometimes writes little stories at home, sometimes can read official mail at the Office. Pamela is married to Mick and they live in an extended family household. Pamela and Mick's niece Nina and other children are often at their camp. Pamela often reads stories to the children when they are lying down going to sleep, they

say: 'Pamela read story to us'. Nina is the daughter of Pamela's younger sister and Carmel and Harold's youngest daughter.

Pamela's *kurri* - husband **Mick was born in 1966**. His family was brought in from the Gibson Desert in the 1960s and stopped briefly at Warburton Ranges Mission before continuing on to Laverton, Leonora and finally Wiluna. This is his story:

I went to school in Wiluna, I grew up in Wiluna. I born this side of Laverton in the bush and from there I went straight to Wiluna...And when I grew up there I went to school there, schooling there and when I turned 16 I started working. Only us mob and all the families, [Louisa's, Markilyi's] families, all them mob. They stayed there for a little while, but I been living there. My father was used to shift around a lot. We go to school there, stopping in Leonora for a couple of months.

Mick was also boarding at Nabberu Hostel in Leonora for part of his schooling:

Stopping there for long time, [Nabberu] hostel...and when [father] finish he came and picked me up and took me Wiluna...He had too much work. Working and from there he went to Albion Downs Station. He worked there for a couple of months. And they took me out on a school holiday to Albion Down, sitting down and from there I started. From Albion Down I started. And I was thinking they gave me a pick and a shovel to dig a little trench from here to the corner over there, just start me off to work. And I started from there then. And I went to Wiluna started working there, work right through. I dig a little trench, small little trench with a pick and a shovel, it was that deep now, that's how deep it was. First job, I dig that trench all the way and it took me about, took me all day right up to 3 o'clock, dig it and have a rest, dig it and have a rest, dig it and have a rest. Like that, all the way.

My father started working, that's why they stop and I was in Wiluna. When my father started working here I stayed in Wiluna, stayed there for long time and then I came back. When I came back I stopped here for a little while then went back to Wiluna, sitting down there, working, working...Worked there for long time. Worked out in the Village, in the Village, I worked in Emu Farm, I worked there for a couple of months. And I went across to Desert Farm and I worked there for couple of years Picking oranges, Desert Farm, easy job. Picking oranges, cleaning the thing up, all sort of job they was doing, picking up the rockmelons, watermelons, whatever, all sort of things...Went back to Village and I worked there for couple of years. Village was job making all the bricks, stacking them all up. That was hard job, you got to take it across and leave it on the flat to leave it to dry out. It was really hard...I went sandalwood, working out the bush, sandalwood. And I stayed there in the bush for couple of months working in the sandalwood. Pulling all the sandalwood trees down. With a tractor and a truck loading them all on, that's when I was 19, pulling all the sandalwood down. And I went training for mechanic job in Wiluna, started doing all that mechanic job, training in a school, fixing old engine, old Falcon engine and Holden HQ. Started doing all that, engine, just get'em on a table and put'em up, strip'em right down, clean it all out and put'em right back, put it all back, put all the parts back together with the one little piece of paper. Got a little piece of paper like that, just put it up on the side and look at all that and just put it all back together again.

My father come back this way [Warburton], come this way, started working. He come here first, I was Wiluna, he worked, and he got too much work, he died. I come across and I went back after the funeral, I went back sitting down, working, working, working. I been worrying about this place. I was worrying too much. That's why I used to go round, steal, I been go in jail, steal and go in jail, steal and go in jail. Stealing and fighting and stealing and fighting, go in jail and sit down a couple of months and come out. And the last one they warned me, warned me, warned me and they gave me two years in prison. So I was in prison for two years, Canning Vale. I stopped there. When I got out of prison I went across, I was in Wiluna I was tipping my first can up, my first can of beer I was tipping it up and I seen a brown Hilux just pull up. They told me: 'You coming?' I asked them: 'Where you going?' They said: 'We going Ranges.' And I jumped straight on, jumped straight on that Hilux and I was gone...I'm gonna go Ranges and sit down and work.

I come back here and they gave me a job, that was about '99 I think. They gave me a job then, I was working, working, working and I stopped here. The job they gave me was a rubbish job and a wood job. That was no good. And from there I think: 'Nuh, I go back to the mechanic job.' I went back to the mechanic job, working there mechanic in the garage up here, working with that short bloke used to work there long time ago. I work with him and this other bloke, working, working, working. I been working with them right through. Then they gave me this studio job and I been working there in the studio. Studio job, we was recording all those songs for all the young fellas they come in and we record it for them. From there they asked us to put up a first music festival in Kanpa so we put up that first festival. That the first one and the second one in Ranges, number three in Ranges, number four music festival in Kanpa again. And I finish and now from there I sitting down working, working, working. They gave me the Drop in Centre job. Working there, talking in the meeting for all them things in the Drop in Centre there. All the kids made me working for them.

The younger generation

Carmel and George's *yurmtalpa*, daughter, **Nancy was born in 1987.**

Nancy went to school in Warburton until she was about 16 years old. She says she liked school 'we had a lot of sports and working and go for camp, bush, camping out'. She thinks Warburton is a good place for young people: 'at the college, computers and all, DVD...And the Drop in Centre, it's good place to stop from sniffing'. She prefers living in the community rather than town because 'it's my home'.

Most days she likes to 'go for work...go to the college, do some computers. Softball and basketball, every Wednesday night at the oval'. Nancy says she likes 'working doing different things, cooking and computers...when I'm sitting down home, it's boring'.

Nancy also likes going out bush: 'we look for bush tuckers. Honey ants, yellow berries...sometimes I go with my nanna and she show me how to dig honeyants and goanna, how to pull it out. Sometimes Nancy plays cards: 'sometimes, when I get my pay...Only little bit. Must be \$100 then go...I don't sniff, only before'.

She also likes reading 'books and magazines' from the shop. Sometimes she reads Ngaanyatjarra and goes to church. She has worked at the Women's Centre

Paint some cup and plate. Do a little bit thing, little machine and you make a cup and when it's dry, you paint it and take it to the Culture Centre...Last week I was working at the Women's Centre.

She made about \$140, \$150 and gave her mother \$50 for food and saved the rest 'for weekend' for 'anything, take-aways, sometimes buy clothes'. She also likes working with the Youth Transition programme and the youth arts team: 'it's good, fashion, computers. She wants to do more computer work with them.

Eileen and Darren's *katja*, son **Mark was born in 1988.** He says he is proud of his mother who is from one of the old mission families. He is also proud of his father who grew up,

...in the bush, Patjarr, other side of Patjarr. He came from the bush. They were stopping in the bush and they came this way, he was stopping here, he got learn here, then he went to Marnngili Station and he was working. Then he went Wiluna working round all them station up north, then he came back.

He thinks keeping culture and language strong is important: 'because that's our language. Sometimes I talk other way, Wiluna way, all the Martu'.

Mark went to school at Warburton until he was 15 years of age. After he went through the Law Mark went on 'wages', CDEP. He says that when he finished school he could only read and write 'little bit'. He used to be friendly with a 'teacher who used to be here' who helped him learn more.

I go there sit down, afternoon time, write my own book...Reading and sometimes spell all the words right, in the paper, write down'.

Mark thinks Warburton is a good place.

All the people, old people and young peoples. And Drop in Centre it keeps them kids away from juice you know. So they can go Drop in Centre. Keep them away from sniffing and stealing.

He says that some days he works or goes hunting, but most days,

Walk around, go to shop, sometime I go home, sit down, watch TV. Get boring, go back for walk, go walk around, get a smoke. Then go back to home, sit down, watch TV, sometimes go for ride...Sometimes sit down, listen to music. Or go and work with Project Officer, clean up, fix it, fix the toilet, shower. Or play basketball, sometimes I play football.

He likes to spend a lot of time alone.

Sometime I don't talk to people, I walk around self...When big mob, I get shamed you know...When I go in the shop, people stare, I get shamed, that's why I walk round self, sometimes I talk to people if I feel like to talk to people...Sometime I don't work with big mob, I don't work with a lot of people, I work self...sometime I don't worry about other people, walk around self, mind your own business.

He says he likes working... 'it's proud'.

It makes me feel good...I was working at the Shire. I was working, sometimes I get bored, go work with other blokes...And I was working in the college. Then I finished all the job and I'm working with [Environmental Health] now...He told me: 'You can come next year for training.' He told me that; 'If you feel like it you can just come round and see me and we can put you on the list'...Training, like training, you know. To go round and fix other people's house when it's broken.

He doesn't do any reading in everyday life, just writing his name in the office, reading food labels at the store or reading DVD covers. His family still looks after him and when he gets his \$65 sit down money he spends it on 'smoke and cool drink and pie.'.

Rosemary was born in 1985. She is another of Harold and Rosie's grandchildren.

She is proud of her grandparents: 'they was in school, this place and they work, and my nanna...our grandfather he work long way that way...he was building the houses...and my

nanna she used to be like a nurse work in old clinic...my *tjammu* he read and write and he talks English.

Most days Rosemary says she:

Just go for ride, bush, on the weekends, sometimes go to the oval, walk around, take the kids for a walk, sometimes we sit around home tell stories...I like playing softball with some girls, and walking round, going to the Drop in Centre at night. It's got games and play jukebox, watch video, play snooker. There's lot of kids there, young fellas and young girls.

She and her sisters also learn Ngaanyatjarra literacy with 'Miss Hackett and Miss Glass'.

We used to get learn for Lorraine, Mrs Howell and Mr Howell, they used to learn us in the school. When we was going to school, I only know a little bit, I was learning a little bit, writing in Ngaanyatjarra.

The sisters read magazines at home. Their auntie keeps a Ngaanyatjarra songbook at home: 'we know how to sing that Ngaanyatjarra songs...all the songs'. They try to keep other books at home, but 'they took it them kid, too many nuisance kid...I left it in the room, I left it on top of the cupboard, but you know kids, they like looking on top. They must be looking for something and they saw pen and paper and they took it'. At work they read: 'work, paperworks, lists...When they ask you to do or to read [or] fill out the forms, hours, put hours down. Rosemary has worked in the school, at the cultural centre and at the roadhouse: 'only once I was working there, when we start getting wages we working in the roadhouse, cleaning them unit, cleaning those, mopping the floors, cleaning it, so when visitors, tourists, when the tourists come they can stay in it'. She has also done some work with the *Nintirringkula* youth arts project.

Nina was born in 1998 and Rosina was in 1999 (see Chapter 6). These children are the 3rd and 4th generation to pass through formal schooling. Nina is the daughter of Harold and Rosie's youngest daughter. Rosina is Adina's daughter and Carmel and George's granddaughter. Nina's father's mother, is her *kaparli* Phyllis:

Phyllis was born in 1954. She grew up at Warburton Ranges Mission. In the late 1960s when she was about 15, she and Mary's daughter and a few others were learning to read with Glass and Hackett. At that time 'there was nothing on in Warburton, so we all living in *wiltjas* and then we'd come over and learn to read—there were no DVDs or TVs or anything then.' In 1971 Phyllis went away to Esperance and boarded at Fairhaven Hostel for two years. At that time she recalls that she was one of the few young people who could read Ngaanyatjarra. Phyllis could already read some English and she picked up by looking

at texts and working out how to read by herself. During her time at Fairhaven she wrote letters to Glass and Hackett, sometimes in Ngaanyatjarra.

Phyllis told the missionaries at Fairhaven that her goal was also to be a missionary. At this time there were few 'career' options for young people and so the missionaries were role models. Phyllis says she 'really wanted to be something', by which she meant to become a missionary, so she decided to do the Bible Study Course at GBTI for two years. Phyllis was there around the same time as Clem and some of the other men, but she was the only female to do the course at GBTI and the last one from Warburton to study there. She also did a two week intensive Bible translation course at the UAM Language Department in Kalgoorlie. Upon her return to Warburton she found that 'there was nothing to do, then the new things came in like TV'. Phyllis like other Ngaanyatjarra people was keen to explore the world and went on a trip to Swan Hill in Victoria travelling around by herself with some new friends, and then caught the train back to Perth all by herself. Missionary friends helped her to get work in an Old People's Home in Perth for a while. She married in 1975, and has mostly lived in other Ngaanyatjarra communities, not Warburton. Phyllis was also one of the few people to study to be a teacher in the AnTEP training course through Batchelor College in Alice Springs. When she initially returned she was enthusiastic about education and somehow nothing happened. She worked in a community school as an AEW for many years and was committed to teaching in Ngaanyatjarra and used to organise trips with old people. She wanted an inclusive community school however when it never seemed to happen she lost interest. She supported her own children going to school, then lost heart when they finished as she felt that education came to nothing. She never finished the AnTEP training as she had lost interest in teaching. Phyllis changed direction and went into health work and is one of the few senior Aboriginal Health Workers to have completed a *Certificate IV* qualification. Phyllis now works as a health worker in a community clinic. Phyllis has been a strong community leader. Over the years she has maintained her literacy skills in English and Ngaanyatjarra. She reads and writes well in Ngaanyatjarra and both she and her husband have worked with Glass and Hackett on Bible translation work in Alice Springs. Phyllis independently produced a first draft of a translation of Mark's Gospel and the Book of Samuel in the Old Testament. She has also written and translated a number of children's stories including the much loved *Piki-piki kurlunypa marnkurra: The three little pigs* and other stories.¹²⁵⁵

¹²⁵⁵ (Kral and Ward 2000)(Glass and Hackett pers comm. 2005). See (Butler 1993).

Family E Narratives

April's father's father had two wives and three children from his first wife including April's father. May and her twin brother were born to this old man's second wife in 1948.¹²⁵⁶ He is also Patricia's father's father with his second wife and Jennifer's father's father.

May was born near Warburton in 1948.

May was cared for by her birth mother and 'father' until she was taken away to Mt Margaret Mission in 1952. May was a child of mixed descent and her story provides an insight into the only 'stolen generation' story from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

This is her story:

When I was four years old they sent me away to Mt Margaret...they sent me away from here because I was half-caste...we were the only ones here in Warburton, born here, so they thought it was best, the government and the missionaries thought it was...I don't know why they sent me away. When I went to school I was speaking Ngaanyatjarra, no English, so you had to learn English in the mission...After breakfast we go to school, change into our school clothes and go to school and then we all line up, march in, maybe learn your ABC, counting, or whatever you had to do. Then have recess, we used to have milk from the Carnation Milk tins, the bigger kids used to make milk for recess, we go back play outside. Then go back in and do whatever subjects, whatever we had to do, learn or whatever. It was lunchtime, we would go home for lunch. Go back to school, go back after school, half past three or something.

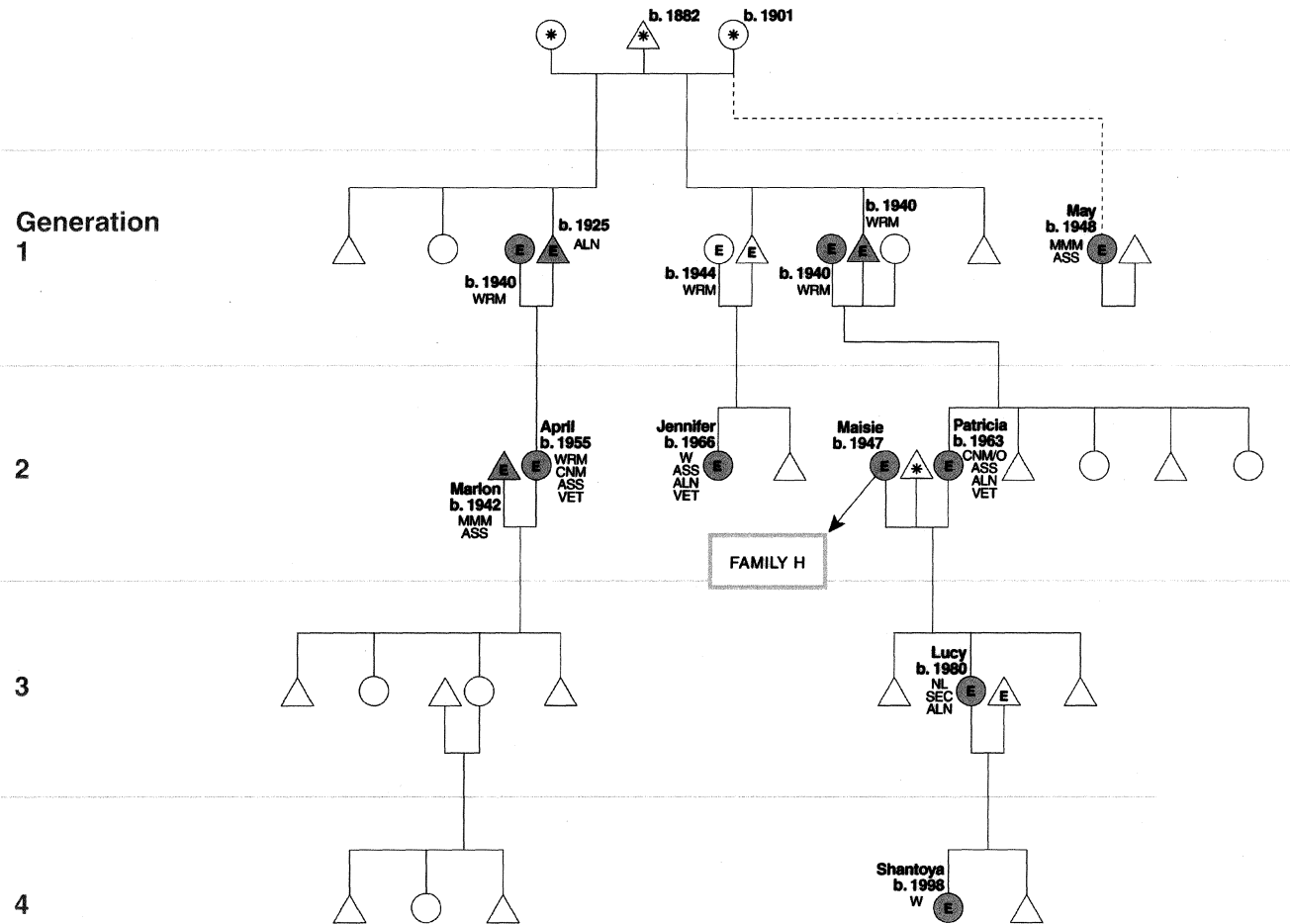
May finished school at Mt Margaret when she was about 13 or 14 years old:

A lot of the kids left, there was a few that went on to high school but not many. The rest just left and probably station work, that was the only jobs for them. Australia was still a racist country and they didn't want Aborigines mixing with whites and so they just get them certain jobs...Some could [go on to highschool] but the people didn't ask, you were told you were going and you went. They made the decisions, we had no say in it. A lot of people they went back to the reserves in town. Some married. A lot married, young. I don't know what the purpose of the missions was for? Just to give them an education. And they drummed the Christianity into them, that's what they wanted. They were there to win hearts for the Lord. They weren't there really for schooling. Yeah, that's how I see it. Because a lot of kids, those who weren't half-caste, a lot went back to the reserves. Lot married older men. There was nothing for them after the mission. All they wanted was to save souls, that's all. That schooling and everything was just a front for them, that's how I see it. Someone else might see it different.

May's narrative highlights the bureaucratic manner in which the mission and the DNW organised the lives of children in their care in the 1950s and 1960s.¹²⁵⁷ As shown in Chapter 2 the Commissioner was the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and 'half-caste' child till the age of 21 and 'May' remained under DNW control until 1966. Her DNW file reveals a labyrinth of bureaucratic forms as she was moved around from Warburton to Mt Margaret,

¹²⁵⁶ 'May' has also told her story in her own autobiography (Powell and Kennedy 2005).

Family E



*	No school nomadics
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
WRM	Warburton Ranges Mission
CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
W	Warburton
NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
Secondary Schooling	
ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
SEC	Secondary (CAPS / Karalundi / Wiltja / Yirara / EGHS)
Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

then to Kurrawang Mission for high school and Fairhaven Hostel for employment. Unbeknownst to her a plethora of memos, letters and telegrams were sent by the DNW controlling her every move. These included:

Application to admit a native ward to a Mission (DNW Regulation 55).

Notification of Admission of Ward (Regulation 55) or an adult Native when Departmental Subsidy is required by the Mission.

Notification of Discharge of Ward (Regulations 56 & 57) or an adult native for whom Subsidy is paid or the death of a Subsidized inmate.

Eligibility forms for the payment of the DNW 'Education Allowance' were added or deleted from lists as children were moved between institutions. Even School Reports and medical forms were lodged with DNW.

At Mt Margaret Mission May had the impression that she was doing well at school. May was at Mt Margaret at the same time as Maisie (Family H) and both girls were transferred to Kurrawang Mission around 1963.¹²⁵⁸ Then May was transferred to Esperance and started working, first on farms, then,

I went into Florrisons, Florrisons had a furniture shop there, and I was working at the house, looking after the kids and cooking and cleaning. In my time only a handful went to high school. We all went to Kurrawang, not all, there was just me, me from Mt Margaret. [Young fellas] were usually sent either out onto the stations or to Wongutha Training Farm in Esperance. They learnt how to work on farms, drive tractors, do the shearing and all those kinds of things. Nowadays, Aboriginal people are encouraged to go to school and learn and get jobs, but in my time I think we were just there for domestic work. I left 'cause they kicked me out of Fairhaven...because I came in late one night...they kicked me out for it, so I went back to this other...old Mr Gurrier-Jones used to be the Superintendent [from Warburton], he was living there at the time. A lot of old missionaries were there [in Esperance]. They took me into their house. Still doing domestic work. Working for the same people in town...Then I just up and left. came back here to Laverton then I came to Warburton, then I went back to Laverton and got a job in the hospital, Laverton Hospital, domestic of course...was nearly all domestic, there was a lot coming from the reserve to work as domestic, washing, cleaning all the same sort of things. At various times over the years May has returned to Warburton, 'I thought I was coming home, but I didn't know the language or anything I've lost all that.'

April was born in 1955.

When the missionaries first came to Warburton April's father was a big boy, too old for school, but her mother was left in the Home at Warburton Ranges Mission. April's family was living around the Mission and she started school at around 6 years old. She recalls spending the long summer break out bush with her family every year. She also remembers how her *tjamu* – 'grandfather' used to go out hunting every day and 'come back with pussycat, kangaroo, rabbit, goanna'.

¹²⁵⁷ As she has noted, the research for the book was the most intensive reading experience of her life and involved reading through her own file '#28/E.D.P.' (Powell and Kennedy 2005: 69).

Her father became 'a Christian man'. Then after Cosmo Newbery was handed over to the UAM the family shifted there and her father was a worker and Pastor.

We was sort of up and down like that from Warburton to Cosmo, Warburton to Cosmo. Sometimes when I was a little baby they used to walk from Warburton to Cosmo, but later in the middle 60s we went and stayed over then, '64 and '65. We went and lived there then, '65 I was nine. Claude Cotterill was the Superintendent and he wanted my father to go and do shearing, every year they go and do shearing, sheep. Mr Howell was the teacher then, Miss Robertson and Mr Armstrong was there, teacher, but I wasn't there when he was teaching, but I went there when Mr Howell was there. There was a little school...the people used to live in all the little round brick houses there, we had a school there, shop, superintendent's house and a teacher's house...we all had a better education then.

There were other families at Cosmo including Patricia's (Family E), Una's (Family H) and Wesley's (Family A). April stayed at Cosmo until 1969. In 1970:

I went to Kalgoorlie for secondary school, high school. Eastern Goldfields High School, we sort of had a little classroom where a few of us Aboriginal children go. But there was some white kids there too, you know white children, mixed together...living at Nindeebai Hostel with other children from Warburton and Cosmo...I was in the low class...must be because we wasn't, you know, understanding of what they was doing, and in that classroom we learn a lot just sitting down and doing...So they put us in there so we can sit and learn properly. But that was a lower class, you know, right down the bottom. In 1970, because I wasn't learning, that's why they put me back down there...[at Nindeebai we had]extra teaching, with the whole lot all together, Wednesday and Thursday nights, twice a week. Learning, teaching about writing and reading, reading writing. Extra, homework classes.

April reflects on her schooling experiences and says: 'I had a real good education, I tell you that, yeah'. Two and a half years later April moved to Fairhaven Hostel in Esperance where she boarded for two years whilst working in the district.

Native Welfare...used to be in Laverton, he came out. He always go out, before Christmas he goes out to Warburton. For the parents to, to explain to them and give the paper to sign, sign the paper for the son or daughter to go down to Norseman, or Kurrawang...I stayed in Kalgoorlie, that Nindeebai Hostel for two and a half years then I moved to Esperance.

I left school, but I just went down there for work. I been working in a motel like ordinary domestic job doing washing, washing dishes all day, morning time and night, that's when a lot of tourists go there and we have to do that...the people who were looking after us at the hostel they give us a job, you know. So we had a little bit doing this and that, I been working on the farm too, but housework mainly, doing housework...we used to do ironing and all, you know ironing the clothes when we got no work outside of the hostel. A lot of ladies who was working they bring in a basket of clothes to iron. But one Christmas holiday I didn't come home, I had to stay back and work. Then during the year I come for holiday but I didn't go back there.

I was doing a little bit of work in the shop in Cosmo in '73, must be 3 or 4 months. Then Mr Cotterill got me another job, I was working Leonora Hospital, you know like cleaning up, making beds and all that...It was a bit frightening for me first, you know, specially when I was living over Leonora there was lot of drunks, just got their thing, you know, Citizen Rights, and the people sometimes annoy you for money...I knew some people there, like girls I went to school with, they was working there at the hospital. But I was long way from home, it's a long way. I thought: 'Oh I better go and start looking for job back at home, Cosmo.' It was alright living over there, but I was a bit homesick, I used to cry a lot when I was by myself in the room, you know, go early to bed...So I

¹²⁵⁸ Myrtle Holland pers comm. Warburton September 2006. Myrtle was at Kurrawang Mission with 'May' and 'Maise' and also attended Eastern Goldfields High School.

came back to Cosmo...Then couple of weeks after they was looking for Aboriginal Education Worker, so I started working in the school with the kids, yeah.

April worked at Cosmo as a Teacher's Aide for around three years. Then she married Marlon and went to live in Laverton for a while, during which time they often travelled back and forth to Warburton. Marlon was working as a Police Aide in Laverton but didn't like the job as there were too many drunks giving him a hard time so they moved back to Cosmo.

Them kids, when them young girls, young men came home after being away for 2 or 3 years being away learning a lot of things, work and everything, reading, writing, and all that. They came back and sort of went down, drinking, they was teaching them the wrong way. Teaching them to drink, instead of teaching them to go out to the station or get a job in small towns like Laverton, Leonora. From that time, you know the ones I went to school with they went down, downhill you know, instead of going up and learning different things, they didn't learn anything after that. We used to live in Cosmo, and when I used to go into Laverton and do shopping and I see all the girls I been to school with, they all drinking and I was the only one, you know, me and XXX. Used to sit down and see this lot getting drunk, which wasn't right, should have been all working, there was a lot of jobs there, for work you know. Like working in the mine, lot of woman, nowadays there's some ladies, they good workers, they work in the mine, they work in the office and work in the hospital...When I was still going to school I used to see a lot of young ladies come back from Kurrawang, come back from Esperance and they work in the hospital, work in the Welfare office, work in the shop, they had jobs everywhere...I think Citizen Rights come in, that just went, wasn't good.

Around 1982 April and Marlon and the family moved to Tjirrkarli.

But we had no school there so I start up for school there, in a little shed, used to teach all the little kids there, mainly I was teaching numbers and writing, yeah and a little bit of reading because they used to bring books down from Warburton School and leave it there. Tiny little shed but it was cramped up, too many children...I start that school off first, but it was in a little shed, teaching them, taking them out you know, once a week take them out bush...But same time I kept on saying: 'We'll have a school here anytime, so you got to learn how to count, learn how to read, and learn how to write.' That was the most important one for kids.

April's children went to school at Tjirrkarli and she worked in the school for a year or so before she became an Aboriginal Health Worker for about seven years. She has completed both *Certificate III* and *IV* in Aboriginal Health Work.¹²⁵⁹

They still want me to work in the clinic, but I want to have a, because I'm doing this, I'm on the Executive for Health Advisory Committee then Women's Council...I'm still working, I like working, my husband keep on saying: 'Hey you wanna leave this job and stay at home!' And I say: 'No'.

April says she got the working habit from 'way back from when I used to do a little bit of work at Cosmo'. During the time that they lived at Tjirrkarli community her husband was Chairman and an active member of the Governing Committee of Ngaanyatjarra Council

¹²⁵⁹ *Certificate III in Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work* and *Certificate IV Aboriginal Health Worker* (provided by Bega Garbarringu AHW Learning Centre in Kalgoorlie).

with a special interest in education issues. Now they have shifted out to a small outstation and their son has taken on the Chairmanship at Tjirrkarli. April and Marlon's grandchildren are the fourth generation to participate in formal schooling. April has always kept her reading and writing strong especially with her work as an Aboriginal health Worker. April has also been very involved in NPY Women's Council having been on the Executive for many years.

I had that book that *Drop in the Bucket*. Read all that and we keep them here. I got a cupboard there and I got all the books there. That's what we got to read when we go for meetings and all that too you know, we got a lot of fax in and books from ATSIC, they send us a lot of books, like bulletin, and newsletter, and newsletter from Women's Council, and from the school. Yeah I do a lot of reading but my eyes getting blurry now, when I'm in there it's too dark, too dark to read, I just have a look for a little while and put it away. I like reading, you know.

April reminisces about her experiences:

It was good education we had, because you know today you can't tell kids. You try and tell them to go to school every day but they wouldn't listen, cause they got all sort of things at home like TV, video, DVD, yeah, playing around all night walking around all night, no sleep. Don't go to sleep until the sun up here, they don't want to go and learn. In those days we didn't have those sort of stuff like DVD, video, TV, walking around all night – we'd be frightened to walk around night times, having a look at, if it's moonlight we just play around close up, then father and mother call us to go to sleep. Nowadays there's lights everywhere... I'd like to see my grandchildren, you know, I'm talking about my two grandson, I'd like to see them two to follow the footstep of me and my husband because we both had good education. Follow in our footsteps.

April's *kurri* – husband **Marlon was born in the bush about 1942.**

When he was very young his family were roaming in the vicinity of Old Well after the missionaries first established the mission. His parents sometimes camped with the other families down the creek and also went out hunting for '*papa minyarra*' dingo scalps to trade for food. They would receive bags filled with flour from Mr Wade. Marlon was too young for school but his eldest brother attended the half-day school and often ran away. At that time his father was given a job looking after the goats. Around that time it was 'desperate times with kangaroos and emus dying' in the drought. People started wondering why others were heading further west and some like Marlon's family followed their tracks and walked into Cosmo Newbery. This was when Marlon was still a child and around the time when Mr Donegan was Superintendent and it was a 'rough place' with 'forced labour and floggings'.

They came straight in from the bush round here in about 1953. They followed everybody into the mission, when the big mob went they followed the *tjina*, followed the track: 'Oh he's gone' and they chase him up from behind. They could have put me in Ranges but everyone was going that way. All from Ranges they went that way too. All went that way too much fight at Ranges I think fight was involved especially when they lose a loved one, don't want to look at the memory.

At Cosmo his father worked as a woodchopper and his mother did domestic work. Shortly afterwards Marlon was taken to Mt Margaret and put in the Graham Home and stayed

there till he was about 16 years of age.¹²⁶⁰ Significantly, he recalls May and her brother being brought into Mt Margaret Mission from Warburton Ranges. Marlon remembers being locked up in the dormitory from around 6.00 in the morning to 6.00 at night and learning by copying what the other children were doing.

I don't remember school, everything was new to me, I didn't know what I was doing there, what they put me in the Home for? It felt like in a cage, you know you put a bird in the cage. I didn't know what I was doing in there, how can I get out of that? I was locked up... We was locked up, can't go that way, had to listen to what they tell you, if you go across and talk to the kungka you get a good hiding, the biggest hiding you ever got, but it never worked. All the things what they do in the mission time you don't see that today. Mothers, fathers loved their children more than the strap, they don't want to see their kids get a hiding, they want to let'em go loose... That hiding and strap made us sort of settle down you know, when we come out we know right from wrong because it's the way we brought up, but young people today they got no control.

I asked Marlon if he had learned to read at Mt Margaret and he replied:

Not really, but we had a good schooling, missionary teachers not government teachers, we gotta sit down and listen. But was much better before 'cause they listened. People who come out are well-educated got good jobs, some nurse, really spokesmen, teachers and all. The best part of the mission was putting them in Homes, today they're fighting against that.

Nevertheless he still perceives that the education he received at the Mission set him up for his working life.

I went to school in the 50s to now, only had six or seven years schooling... In that space of time I was taught everything you know and when I went out to work: 'Where you went to school?' they asked me, 'Mt Margaret'. Squatters and managers said: 'You know how to work better than the rest of the people.' I said: 'Yeah, lot of these people they come straight in from the bush, they don't have that education, they was never shown.' Now that I had that little bit I can come out into the world and get any type of job, you know.

When he left Mt Margaret he was going to go to 'Tech School' in Perth but 'ran away'. Then in 1965 or 1966 he went to Pedlar's Hostel in Esperance and did agricultural training and gained work experience on local farms. 'Just working, didn't think it was training, young people from all over Australia there, lot of young fellas.'

Worked on ten or eleven stations round the Goldfields, working as a team with other blokes, not on your own, doing the mustering. In those days cheap labour, Aboriginal blokes, so long as you got your boots and your clothes that's all you need. Worked hard, in heat and rainy days, on weekends, not like today.

Marlon worked on many stations including some 'bad one' with rough station managers and dreadful conditions.

Go out work hard all day from 5.00 to midnight, low money, not enough sleep, bad food, rude manager, swearing. Go out work till shirt and trousers break, shoes break, no wash, can't go to shop to get new clothes, worked till clothes fall off your back.

¹²⁶⁰ In 1954 children old enough to attend primary school were being transferred from Cosmo Newbery to Mt Margaret Mission (Annual Report CNW 1955: 27).

He recalls that Bandy Station was particularly bad. He once had a fight with the station manager and walked off Bandy with Arthur and Silas who were also working on the station and walked into Laverton two and a half days away. Around 1968 he started work at Yundamindra Station near Laverton, regarded by Aboriginal workers as a 'good station'. Marlon stayed there for many years working as head stockman and overseer and had a good relationship with the manager and was also in charge of all the vehicles and jackaroos. Marlon perceives that he was trusted by the manager to look after the station when he was absent. This experience of trust in the working relationship with whitefellas has framed his expectation of working relationships. He finished up at Yundamindra in 1974 and returned to Cosmo Newbery so that his eldest son could go to school.

Cosmo was a good place, you know Mission school. Education was more important for my boy than me working. I thought I'd better find a job in Cosmo and get my kid in school so he can get more education than me. Me, I only had a couple of years in school. I didn't want him to go to Mt Margaret in the Home like me. Cosmo had more freedom see, I had to hang onto my kid, I wanted to look after my son the way I wanted to look after him and bring him up the way I wanted to bring him up. This was new to me, but over there I was kept in a Home with the missionaries. Mission was still there at Cosmo, better there because closer to my area. Plenty of work in Cosmo, I was a leading hand, still stock cattle sheep, There about 12 or 14 years...till my kids all grown up.

Marlon also worked in Laverton as a Police Aide, at Mt Windarra mine near Laverton, then at Docker River in the NT as a 'third hand' when that community started.

Marlon returned to the Tjirrkarli region in about 1982-1983 with his wife April and their family.

I heard about this Tjirrkarli when the Shell Co. put the bore down, windmill. I come to Tjirrkarli not working, just living out here. When Tjirrkarli was set up, this windmill, we set this place up. They come here with no school, no house nothing we had to go and look for food. We started with nothing. Kids never went to school for six or seven years waiting for a teacher to come out. They were left out of school waiting for the community to be built up, we had to fight hard for a school. We was left behind. But we got it going.

Marlon became a *Yingkarta* – Christian leader at Tjirrkarli after the 'Crusades'. He was Chairman of Tjirrkarli community for many years and has been a strong leader on the Ngaanyatjarra Council, ATSIC Regional Council and has worked for Native Title and Education.

I got used to working and supporting my family, got good money in Windarra mine, I buggared it when I came here, to Tjirrkarli, now I got no money. Came here and watched my family drinking and I started drinking too. From that time to today they made a big mess with 'sit-down' – the government policy when they first gave sit down and the windmill, the damage they done. Before we had to work to keep the family going, that's what we were taught. When we came back to Warburton: 'Don't work, you don't have to everyone said you don't have to worry about it now.' and we got Unemployment Benefit. That was 'government time' and a 'you give me this' attitude started and went right through. I started thinking "If they ask for things then I can too." So we all got into this habit of sitting down, lining up, waiting for the money. Now government say: 'Why you all sitting down?' But it was their stupid idea in the first place, the government policy that caused so many people to sit down and loaf and put their hand out. I changed too, from hard working 6.00 to 4.00, to getting the free money, no sweat at all.

He has now resigned and moved to another community, but his children still live in Tjirrkarli. His son has followed in his father's footsteps and has taken on the chairmanship role. With the benefit of hindsight he perceives that in many cases the Community Advisors don't trust Aboriginal workers to do the job and that they have the same attitude as station managers.

That trust is a big thing when it comes to giving a job or training or teaching, trust is a big thing, it sounds little but it's a big thing and that's the opportunity that our people are not getting. They got to show the way to handle the tools the proper way, safety first, how to use the tool, then they'll get no accident, but walking away with that feeling: 'Oh I wonder if I trust that fella, it's my fault if he gets hurt behind.' The right attitude is to show them properly how to operate that tool or whatever. I was taught differently before I came here, not only here but somewhere else.

'Nothing's changed' he says 'the government, Mr Howard all jumping up and down, saying we're lazy and treating us like crap'.

I can't see any improvement in this school from when I went to school in the 50s to now, only had six or seven years schooling, but in those years I was taught plenty you know, if had keep on going I would have finished up in high school and got a good job, you know...they don't even go to 16, they go to 14, then finish school and they gone. When they get a little bit of whiskers they gone. They run away before they get grabbed for the business...All our children went to school not only here, everywhere, when they finish school they haven't got a good job, they never went to college or high school and all that. We look like all that education has flopped, there's nothing that has come out of that.

Patricia was born in 1963.

This is her story:

My father's family comes from Warburton area. My nanna used to travel around a lot then came to Warburton. My *kaparli* and *tjammu* was born in the bush somewhere near that way, somewhere near Warburton. The missionaries was here already, but my nanna was in the bush, they came and met the missionary, Mr Wade. Must be she had two or three children, then she stayed here for a while, then...My father was born somewhere around Yirlintjitjarra down the creek. He must have went, must be in the Home, and they have to send some down to Cosmo to work there, you know...Must be, yeah he must have went to school.

My mother's family is from somewhere round Blackstone way, my *tjammu* [MF] comes from Blackstone area, Jameson. And my grandmother [MM] comes from somewhere around Warakurna area. They met and they came through Warburton and heard that Mr Wade was here and they put her in the Home. I remember my mother was here at that Baker's Home, she used to stay there. Her father was in the bush, parents was staying down in the bush, just coming down must be visit her, see her, go back. She used to stay here in the Home and then some of the big girls have to go, have to shift somewhere to Cosmo to work...They was big girls like looking after the girls, looking after them. Do the washing for them, something like that, cleaning...For the schoolchildren, looking after them. Father's family shifted to Cosmo...working...Doing like fixing windmills, fixing fence, gates, go around looking at tanks, see if any holes. Fixing up pipes and all on the windmill...My mother went down to Cosmo and stayed and got married in a church... Stayed there for a long time, had children.

Patricia recalls that her parents were the first generation to be given surnames.

I was born in Leonora and one brother must be in Leonora...sister must be in Kalgoorlie, then other brother was born in Kalgoorlie. I stayed at Cosmo when I was a baby, stayed there when I

grew up... At Cosmo we used to go Sunday Schools, and...colour in, reading, just English, no Ngaanyatjarra.

She also recalls that her mother could read and write: 'we lived in a house and spoke mainly English, but just sometimes Ngaanyatjarra'. The family moved to the Laverton reserve when her father 'got a job down the mine, Windarra Mine, outside Laverton'.

That old mine used to be there, so we went there and we used to stay in Laverton. But from, we never used to stay in a house, we used to stay in the camp and go to school, Laverton District School. Stayed there for must be two years or three. We have to take our homework down to the school and do it and we have to take it back the next day in the morning to the teacher...My friends that come down from Laverton, Aboriginal kids from the class, do home work all together and they help me out...sometimes my mother helped me...And we didn't have no houses at that time, never had a house to go to school, just from the camp and my father was working Windarra, come back late.

Although there were no other books or papers in the camp, Patricia recalls her mother reading the Bible.

Then, must be 12 years of age I went to boarding school, hostel you know, staying Kalgoorlie at the hostel, you know, Nindeebai Hostel...I wanted to go...Went to school at Project Centre. Go out bush, ride. Do gardening, cooking. School, maths and all, reading, writing. We have to go...'cause must be because they didn't have higher school for big kids, because we have to go down to Kalgoorlie to do our Year 1, 2 schools.

Later on the family returned to Warburton and camped with her mother's family while her father went to the newly formed community at Tjirrkarli. After a while Patricia married and soon after moved to Warakurna where she worked in the clinic and then in the school. Patricia has absorbed a strong work ethic from her family's earlier working experiences in Cosmo and Laverton.

I want to work, because I like working you know, instead of sitting down, boring. I like working with the little ones. I like working 'cause you can know how to read, read, write, fax papers through, photocopying, all that things. Get learn more... Can't just sit down and do nothing. It's important for people to work.

Patricia also mentions starting and stopping education training courses, an AnTEP course through Fregon TAFE and some training in Kalgoorlie – 'do it and just finished'.

From Warakurna then, stayed there, must be worked three years, then went to Blackstone, must be 4 years. You know that Certificate I got, that's how much years I worked in the school. I did some course, Batchelor College. Never went down to Batchelor, they just sent the papers down, this lady comes down and organise things so we have to come and do the course here. Just did it for a little while, must be three times, then it just stopped.

While Patricia was at Blackstone she also started to learn Ngaanyatjarra literacy.

I used to go to, Miss Hackett and Miss Glass used to come down to Blackstone and I go down and sit down with her and read Ngaanyatjarra. Then they told me to, just that literacy lady Jan, gave all that information what I learnt from Miss Glass and Miss Hackett, then she gave it to us in the school and we start teaching, teaching LOTE in the school, must be two days a week I went to do some translating in Alice Springs for Bible thing, you know.

A few years ago the family shifted back to Warburton. Patricia never returned to classroom teaching in the school but took on a new role as a Ngaanyatjarra language worker at the college. What is interesting about Patricia's story is that when she returned to the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, like George she was speaking mainly English, and she had to regain a fluency in spoken Ngaanyatjarra then learn how to read and write in Ngaanyatjarra. As Patricia was already literate in English she was able to use transfer literacy skills and painstakingly learn Ngaanyatjarra.

I wanted to know how to read in Ngaanyatjarra and write in Ngaanyatjarra, that's my way to learn Ngaanyatjarra. I want to learn more Ngaanyatjarra.

Over the years she has undertaken a number of projects with the Ngaanyatjarra Language Centre at the College in Warburton, including the *Ngaanyatjarra Picture Dictionary*. In the speech that she wrote for the launch of the Picture Dictionary in April 2005 she recalled how difficult it was for her to learn Ngaanyatjarra literacy,

When I first learnt it, it was really hard so I had to go through slowly and learnt alphabetical order and how to pronounce it.

Now she feels that her English and Ngaanyatjarra literacy is at about the same level, although English is sometimes easier. She says that it is important for adults to have bilingual literacy skills.

To read, write, English and Ngaanyatjarra, both ways. To be prepare when people comes along and ask you questions you have to know everything. And to learn the little grandchildren to be strong, you know, leading young peoples. Adults have to be strong in pushing younger ones. They have to have their knowledge and to keep pushing young people to know how to read and write so when they are adults they must be get tired and you know, we want our younger generation to work along too.

Patricia reflects on her own life and the importance of identity, of knowing your family and where they come from.

Most different thing in my life was when I used to be young I used to learn in my younger times you know. Used to work, not work, but know how to read, write and know the family, family lines, family trees, know where my grandparents come from. Then I have to know where my mother and father country is, cause at the beginning I didn't know where my parents come from until my auntie told me where mother come from, and my grandparents.

Patricia now represents Ngaanyatjarra women on the NPY Women's Council Executive. Patricia's co-wife is Maisie (Family G) who has been a childcare worker and is now the co-ordinator of the Best Start childcare programme for the region.

Jennifer was born in 1966. She is Patricia's father's brother's daughter

My mother she was in the Home, they brought her into the Mission here, yeah she came, brought into this Mission here. She used to go school, long time, my father too. Both sides... They was living in the Mission all the time, they was living all them they was living here till they got married... My

father was the first Council here in Warburton. They used to tell me: 'your father used to be a Council and work around this community.' That's when I was going to school. My father and his family used to go bush and do the cutlines out from here to Marrngi, all my uncles they used to joined up and worked together. We used to live out there too. We always have just a one Toyota and just have a tractor and a trailer and that's all. Making the new roads to Marrngi, going through to Tjirrkarli, but we never reached to Tjirrkarli we only went to Marrngi, that's all. Halfway and came back, that's when I came back from there.

The families working on the cutline would wait till the children had finished school before heading out to work on the weekends: 'they used to wait till we get out on Friday, and when we finish school they wait, get their wages, get food, get the kids and all'. Jennifer remembers her family working on the cutline with no whitefella assistance and the road was built following the traditional walking routes traversing the country from rockhole to rockhole. 'The people wanted to because they know which way the rockholes is. They got to get it in their head...they know the rockholes, they go by rockholes to rockholes.' Jennifer also recalls her mother doing domestic work for the missionaries. Her family was a Christian family and she always went to Sunday School and accompanied her parents to church.

Jennifer was at Warburton school during the 1970s: 'I used to like school because I wanted to get learn so I can be a boss'. Then, like many of her cohort she was sent away and did schooling in a number of locations in the Eastern Goldfields. Firstly, she stayed at Nindeebai Hostel in Kalgoorlie and went to school at the Project Centre for one year and then returned.

They asked me if I wanted to go back to Kalgoorlie and I said: 'No', I wanted to go to Norseman. So they sent me to Norseman and I stayed there for another year...other girls was with us...[I wanted to go to Norseman] to learn more...I came back here, had a holiday with my family and that's when I lost my father...only had my mother at that time. I wanted to stay here, but I changed my mind and went to Esperance again. That's the last I went to Esperance, stayed there for another one year, I used to be homesick too...there were other kids, from Ranges in Fairhaven. I went to Project Centre, we used to go every classroom for morning and after lunch we just used to just go do arts and all sort of mechanics for the boys.

I learned lot and when I came back here they told me: 'Oh you want to go?' and I said: 'No, I want to find a job here?' I was 16, no 17, 18, 19 round about there. First of all when I came back I got health work, that's the work I used to do it. I done a couple of months but I moved out, I didn't want to work, I just feel like dropping off. I didn't wanted to do job, you know.

Next job Jennifer found was in the school and she has been working there as an AEW for the past six years. She is literate in both English and Ngaanyatjarra and also teaches the Ngaanyatjarra LOTE classes.

I teach them, Pre-primary and the Kindy all together...I organise kids in the school, when I go in she, the lady in the class, she organise her job first and when she's finished she always just tell me to take it on. I always get the kids, sit them down as a group, talk to them 'Good morning' and all that and in Ngaanyatjarra I always talk to them. I work in Pre-primary, some little kids don't understand,

first time they in class. They in this big huge... and they see a lot first time you know when them kids go in. And I just tell them to settle down...I take my lessons I always do the Ngaanyatjarra, I always tell a story or sing a song...I read, read the books, stories and explain to them in Ngaanyatjarra...Sometime I always have my own school, when maybe a teacher sick or something, I always take them little kids and I do my programs, who comes in and who goes out...I like being in the school working with the kids, among the kids, they special, the kids. They want to learn more about ABC, and 1,2,3, and all, so in future they can run their own life.

Jennifer is devoted to teaching and looking after the children in the community. She would like to learn more about teaching and has enrolled in teacher training courses. Christianity has also remained an important part of Jennifer's life.

I go to church, every Sunday, hear the word of God. I always tell my niece, my families, all family relations: 'Go to church.' And I see my mother, tell her spread the Word around, go to church. They go...my mother always give a Bible reading and have little meeting in the house if she can't make it to the church. Especially at night if she can't walk all the way, she need a car.

Lucy was born in 1980.

She is Patricia's *yurmtalpa* – daughter. Lucy was living in Warakurna when she was little, then started school at Warburton abut later went to Blackstone school when the family was living there for many years. Lucy liked school and thought she was good at school because 'I go every day, school' and because her family encouraged her.

Mr Schinkfield was good teacher because he do some hard work, do the hard work for us like maths, science, writing letters, spellings

She feels that because both her mothers Patricia and Maisie work in education that she was perhaps encouraged more than other children. She sees that she comes from a 'strong family' because they encourage her to: 'speak English, sometime read magazines, and we go bush, out hunting on the weekends...mother writing, like newspaper.' And her mother helped her do homework 'like education, sums, about sums'. Her father is also a strong traditional leader.

My father, telling stories and like I come in and talk to him and Maisie explain him, so we always learn and listen to him when he says. Sometimes I help people in office when they talk to him, I help my father, sometime...help my father, specially my father.

Lucy stayed at school 'up to 15, 16'. Then she went away to boarding school through the Wiltja programme in Adelaide, bit stayed only eight weeks:

They were different...Some white kids and Indian, Chinese, I was thinking they different, came back...I was getting dopey...Homesick.

When she left school Lucy could read and write in English 'a little bit', like write a one page story and read magazines. Since then she says her mother has helped her to keep her literacy strong because Patricia is more literate than Lucy: 'my mother...When she do it I look at her, when she write and read'. Now Lucy reads magazines and does crosswords.

While the family was still living at Blackstone she worked in the community office and did some office skills training.

When I used to work in the office old people come round and ask, so I explain them how that Advisor told them, tell me and I explain them, that's a good thing.

She also worked in the playgroup at Blackstone and now works with her own children at playgroup in Warburton. Lucy hasn't done any training at the College but wants to do more office skills training: 'I still like that'.

Lucy's *yurmtalpa*, daughter, **Shantoya was born in 1998.**

Lucy encourages her daughter to learn and 'speak English with May' and she can 'write her name, self'. When her *kaparli* Patricia gives her paper and a pen 'she write her name, by herself'. When I ask her if she goes up to the school to see her daughter's work she replies: 'nuh, one day I'll go'. She describes her daughter's learning:

Shantoya start speaking English with my mother and me...From my father, he show them, he show her about honey ants, speak language strong.

For her daughter's future she thinks 'work, keep the culture strong' are important. Lucy thinks that education is important so Shantoya can 'speak English to whitefellas and 'write a letter, write names'.

Family F Narratives

Molly was born in 1940.

Her older sister was first wife to one of the senior men in the group to first encounter the missionaries at Old Well in 1933. This is Molly's story:

We used to live round the bush when I was a little girl growing up. Round Wanarn round Mitika, all them places, I grew up there...Where I roam right round there, grew up. We used to travel to Giles and back, anywhere Ngatun, anywhere my father used to travel around, any places.

I had a good education before I went into the home at Warburton, they taught me bush ways. Every year they used to pick us up for holidays every Christmas and take us away as far as Giles, right around in the middle and come back nearly winter time. Walking, we walk around and eat bush tucker all the time. We go out sometimes they leave us in the camp to look after little kids while they go out and get rabbit or goannas, kangaroo anything they can find. They'd tell stories at night, they'd talk to one another loudly and we'd lie down and listen. Anything, dreamtime stories, I know a lot of dreamtime stories in my land, Wanarn.

Then we came to the mission. One of our sisters, was living here, cousin, my cousin was living here and...my sister. They got married to a man from this way. They used to live here, but one used to travel back, I didn't know I had a sister here. But one lady always used to go there with a little bit of clothes for her families, Harold's mother. She brought us back, she told us: 'Come back home, come back. *Tjiti pimi* schooling there.' They was happy, I don't know I can't think what they was thinking. They just brought us and left us in the Home. I must have been just ten years old then. Old man, my old uncle he came over and said: 'This girl want to go in the school.' So they put me in. It was new, we used to sleep on iron bed. I think I felt alright, we had friends there. We had 'Mary' there...our family, that's why I wasn't worried, they was in school there, those big girls. My brother was in the Home too...and my cousin...they was in school. Big mob of them...I was happy because we had a lot of family was in the Home...I had my little niece there...she was in school with her sister...Big family, I know them.

School, was a good school because we learnt to read and write and go there in time. You can't miss out like this when you got to be picked up by someone or force them to school. But we was all in the girls Home...We used to have a bath night time, go to sleep, get up, wash our faces, comb our hair, have breakfast, go to school... At Sunday school go sing hymns, pray and go out...we use our head to sing. No hymnbook in front of us. Like nowadays they have hymnbook. You got to use this one [head] to learn to sing. I lived here for most of my life. Go out on weekend with parents, we all go out Christmas time.

Molly went to Cosmo Newbery Mission and left her mother and father and all the families behind in Warburton.

I was a big girl when I finished school. I still stayed on and then I jumped on the motorcar and we went. We got sent away because the men was chasing us around, chasing me around... They wasn't happy but I put my foot down and said: 'No, I'm going.' They said: 'You've gotta stop' and I said: 'No, I've made up my mind, I want to go.' I was frightened for the man who chase me round all the time...From here we went to a station, you know they put us in a station, long way, Weebo Station. We didn't know this station and we broke one plate and this lady she was getting nasty, growling, growling and we took off, me and [another girl]. We took off. Only me and her...But we walked all the way and one missionary from Leonora, picked us up and took us to Leonora. There we stayed for while...They said: 'You two girls got to go and live in Cosmo.' That was it.

I went to Cosmo, we learned to keep house there, we was doing, about seven of us girls went there staying, learning to do housework, cleaning, cooking. Seeing as no school house was there we used to go to mission for ride, Mt Margaret for ride and we went to Bible study there for about two

weeks. Plenty work. They used to do fence, you know cut all the fencing pole. Put them together like this, all the pole used to stand up like this, you know, they worked hard, tied them together with the wire so they won't fall off. Other lot they used to chop wood for the missionaries. Some go out, the children, boys go out and milk the cows, some in the goats. We used to live on goats milk. And some used to go out shoot *marlu*, bring them in for the missionaries. I think they used to get feed, no money in those days... Young fellas used to work there, they used to go out and muster the cattle, horses. That was training too.

Once at Cosmo, Molly soon rebelled against the restrictions of missionary living.

I stayed in Cosmo, then I think we didn't want to stay there, so a couple of us ran off and got ourselves a man that night. That was all! About time too! I didn't want to stay in Cosmo. I wanted to be free. I wanted to be free to have my own life. I went everywhere with my husband. Station, any station, work for your own living, have money of your own. They get cheque and they change it in Laverton. I stayed in Laverton, there was a big reserve there, big village used to be there...people everywhere...I did many works. I used to get up, you got to be on time, do work, domestic work, anywhere you can find a job you work. In town I used to work in the police station, in the store. I don't know why they picked me.

Then the last job I had was in the hospital, you got to be there in time, otherwise you get sacked. You got to read the paper what they write down and leave it for you on the table at the hospital in Laverton. You got to read because you got to stick to your job. I don't write stories about myself, but I just write down what they want, like keeping up the hours and all that. You got to put your own hours down, what time you arrive and what time you knock off...When I was working in Laverton hospital we didn't have white people behind us all the time, we used to do our own work, sign the paper, sign off and go home. That wasn't in the government days, that was with the white people we used to work. Lot of change 'cause whitefella, why they can't trust the Aboriginal?

There was a lot of jobs. No Centrelink there in those times, you got to earn your own money. I used to work around Laverton area, hospital, domestic, work anywhere to earn money, to keep me going and my husband used to work in the station. We worked to earn our own living, no government money, only child endowment. That's all the free money I know. I used to work in the Laverton Hospital and earn the money. I had already trained a lot to start working, I used to do cooking, mopping the floor. I used to work around the white ladies house, or police station, cleaning, and earn a living, money you know a little bit of money here and there. It was enough, they [men] used to come back with the money and go off again. Then I worked, worked, worked, until we shifted back to Cosmo and I worked in the shop, did the till and all the stores. I was still working until they said you better get an invalid pension.¹²⁶¹

I think people lived on their own, earned their own money. It was better for me anyway. I did my job right through till my husband got sick. Then they told me you got to go on a Pension, Support, looking after your husband. That's when I dropped the job...I lived in town and I never touched a drink. I had my daughter they in Laverton, she grew up in town. She like me she never even touch a grog. She raised all these boys, never drank in her life. Then I came back to Cosmo to live there. When my children was little...When I was in Cosmo I used to be chairlady, help many people, used to go to meeting in Kalgoorlie, Laverton. Helping people all the time, helping then, helping them.

We lived in Cosmo nearly all, halfway through till we heard that somebody was, my husband heard they had a bore in Tjirrkarli and we moved there. There was no houses...and we went there and when they was there they been put their own windmill up there, own tank, dig a hole right up to the top of Tjirrkarli hill, they cleaned their own airstrip, done everything. When I was in Tjirrkarli I was on Pension. We used to go to the Ngaanyatjarra meeting for the ladies all the time...we go to the meeting still. We go to this meeting and they talk about meeting, sometime we tell them.

¹²⁶¹ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000)

I had a lot of kids and I'm really proud of the children I brought up... They grew up there in Tjirrkarli. It was good you know, when the government gave us a land. That's the land. From Cosmo we heard they put up a windmill, we went there and the children grew up, with their own hand they dug that pipe right up to the top. No grader, that's how that made them strong. I brought them up and every one of them...they all got a house of their own, things of their own. I go back to Tjirrkarli, sometimes they pick me up, and see them all happy. Hunting for their own meat. All got their own houses each in Tjirrkarli, that's why [we] moved out, so they can run their own things, learn. That's their own little community...I think I'm really, I done a good job of them...I'm really proud too...They work for their own living, my son he came back and he went home. He said he didn't want to stop, he was the one who cleaned this house out, paint it. He worked in Warburton for a while then he decided he wanted to move back home, Tjirrkarli. They live both ways, they go honey ants, goanna, my granddaughter she do that, she's a health worker there. She goes out *wangkajja* way learn, whitefella way learn. That's I'm really proud of how my children brought up, one of my girls...she lives in her own house, she got her own things...They got their own fridge, frying pan, car, anything they can have, firewood of their own. That's got to be strong, that's how you make them strong to look after their own things.

Clem was born in 1953.

He is Molly's older sister's *katja*, son. His father was in the group that had first contact with the missionaries at Old Well in 1933. This is Clem's story:

When I was a little boy my family died, my mother died when I was a baby. I was taken care of by my grandparents and I lived only a short life of living in the bush life. From when I was first born, then up to when I was five years, five or six years. Then we lived around Warburton here, then up around Wanarn, Warakurna. Then in that time it was very hard, we usually get frightened for white people, especially us. I was just getting my knowledge from my grandparents. My grandparents were afraid of Europeans so I was one of them too. But we came back from Warakurna then in the year of 1959 I think I went to school, I went to the mission school...I think I was the last boy who entered that Home, Boys Home. I used to read Dick and Dora, and learn a little spell. The missionaries used to give us, help us how to pronounce English words. I thought it was a good fun learning this, in school, learning things from them...I didn't know what was going on but it was good and I always looked forward to come to school...because there were a lot of friends there.

Clem recalls going to school in the stone building and he remembers when the children first started sitting on chairs at desks.

The year after that, when the mission was finished, we used to stop in the dormitory...the Native Welfare gave us some few bobs and told us it was all going to be changed. That was in 1960, 61 and we used to go camp now. But our parents used to help us come to school because missionaries always tell them: 'Oh, you got to tell them kids to come to school'. And some of our parents when they used to go out bush hunting, we used to stop with other families, in that way we used to go to school all the time, every week. Every month. And only time we ever had a holiday when it was school holidays...So I found the school was really good for me, because I loved going to school because there was a lot of sports going on, football, lot of new things I picked up help me along and I learned gradually about sports. But I loved to go to school because I used to write, write a lot, I picked up, I pick it up how to read and write, I used to do sums, in that time we call it sums, multiplication and all that. Yeah, my mother was and my father was only working for the missionaries at that time, but all my sisters all went in school and one of my sisters got married a bit earlier. And the other sister, just was, because the missionaries don't want them to get married a bit earlier, some of them was were taken to Cosmo where they was able to, even my young auntie, my mother's young sister [Molly] went over there. They were taught in the white man's way, in other words in the Western world.

Clem felt he was doing well in the exams at school, then when he was about eleven years old he was taken to join his family who had walked out to Laverton in earlier years and started Grade 6 at school in Laverton.

My grandparents, they went there because their family was there and also my grandfather and my grandmother's daughter was there, she was married out there. So I went down there...that's when I heard all these Aboriginal kids talk strong English, so I was able to speak, that when I started to speak what I learn at Warburton I was able to be level with children over there...I felt that I was level, I was able to communicate with them, express myself freely. I was able to mix in with lot of Aboriginal children, white children, half-caste children. Yeah, my reading was [level], because I was doing spelling, the most important we had was spelling in Warburton School, I was doing a lot of spellings and I was able to write it out. And when I was in Laverton School instead of writing it down I was memorising it and I was doing Grade 6 level, we had to say the words and spell the words in letters. I was there for one year.

When Clem was about 12 years old, around 1966, the Department of Native Welfare, transferred him to Kurrawang Mission and he commuted into Eastern Goldfields High School in Kalgoorlie on the bus every day.

They [DNW] organised that. They got all the forms in the school. They were just like parents was, they done all that. Because missionaries were like parents was, we had not only the parents from the when we was born but also we had missionaries, then we had Native Welfare...When I first went there they give us an exam, which level we gonna go in. 1H, 1A, 1E, 1J, like that. Most of my Aboriginal boys and girls that I went to school with they all went into 1J, they was all Aboriginal, but I was a bit smarter than they were and I was put into the class where there was all the white children...I felt nothing, because Mr Cook [Captain Cook] and all that, educating, I didn't know who I was, because they speak to me I speak to them, we went together because it was, only about four years ago that I spoke English after all that time when I went to school in Warburton, all them spellings and writing I had, helped me to get on with them children there. I had a lot of white friends, during that time the teachers were really good. I picked it up that I was a bit different to them...I had some friends because a couple of Warburton people they were there.

My parents used to drive out there, not driving out there, they used to catch a train, they call it mail truck, they used to drive down from Laverton to see us in Kalgoorlie. They go on the train and they get to Malcolm turn off, that's where they get the mail truck, come back driving to Warburton. I stayed one year there [at Kurrawang] but I was going to do the second year there because I was only 13 years old, I was going to stay there but the Native Welfare he told me, he talked me into agreeing to his terms, he say: 'Oh, lot of boys from Warburton there, you want to go?' He wanted me to go to Wongutha. He talked me into going to Wongutha Farm... I was to do the 2nd Year high school, but Native Welfare came and picked me up and took me. And I had dreams of being a builder and I had dreams of doing this and that.

That was in 1967. So I went down there. Then I started thinking: 'Oh we're learning all the farm works looking after cattle when they born, little calves and all' But I was on the shearing side, learning about shearing and they gave me a certificate because I passed this shearing thing. Never taught me how to drive a tractor yet. I stayed there, I didn't like it. I was getting taught about the farming but I didn't want to do it, so I ran away and I thought I'd come to Warburton. I stayed there three months. Boys and girls was there [at Wongutha] then. I ran away too...I wanted to go to school more, learn to write more, all just like university things...But at that time full blood Aborigines wasn't given the privilege to go on to further education. Only half-caste were given that privilege. And I thought: 'Oh well, all my dark people they were stockmens.' So I went and became a stockman and I worked, I was still 14, it was sad. So I wandered around and started working on the mail truck, I used to help this one man, I was helping and the man thought: 'Oh he's a good worker, I'll give him a job.' So I worked the mail truck then went to the station...I worked on Bandy Station, Glenorn and Jidamia near Kalgoorlie.

Well, I always speak English at that time, I spoke English all the time. English was my main language. I could hear because I went to school from Laverton onwards living with people who always speak English all the time, so I became English speaking young man. So I came back Warburton, got married...I had to get to know who my families were. And the brothers and sisters that I left behind and all the children I grew up with, see what they were doing. When I came back here when I was very young I could listen how they talking to me in my language but I can't speak. I really felt that, so it took me about...four years to speak my own language...Yeah when I was 19 I was able to speak, I got back into it again. I had to learn about hunting, learn how to hunt, learn how to live co-operative way and all that. Become an Aboriginal!

I came back here [to Warburton], after all that knowledge I was getting in school and I came back here and I seen most of the Aboriginals weren't given privilege to lean towards this Western way and they were held up by anthropologists. I felt that I should do that work for my Aboriginal people, when the governments started to help Aboriginal people. That money was there for Aboriginal people to help Aboriginal people but it was the white people who helping Aboriginal all the time. And I thought it was a time when the missionaries had, Aboriginal people came in from the bush lived with the missionaries, then the missionaries finished and Native Welfare took it on and when Native Welfare finished DAA was doing the thing. We were still having white people to help us and I thought during that time, I was saying Aboriginal people should be taught the ways of the Western world and so they can, with this knowledge they have, that trainings they have, they can run their own affairs. And I just want to say, because more and more Aboriginal people, we came back from Wongutha Farm, from the highschoools, ladies was sent to Fairhaven and we all came back to Warburton. They didn't give us the opportunity to make Aboriginal people advance towards, advancement.

There wasn't that possibility because we became more and more, we still have to lean towards the European to help us with that. Some of us argued and argued and argued at the Ngaanyatjarra Council office...In the 70s it was very hard when we start talking about this Ngaanyatjarra Council and I thought this could be the, this was going to be the opportunity, we was going run their own affairs, run their own business to help the problems with themselves, like petrol sniffing and build a better facilities, like rehabilitation and all that. You know because we who came from the high school we knew things change for the future, so we thought, I thought we were the people, we were the ones who was going to make it happen. Ngaanyatjarra Council was just the starting point for us to be more independent, running things self...old people looked upon me to be an interpreter because I speak English because I know how to read and write. I started being a main figure in Docker River. I went there in 1970 just because we had more money, once Australia changed for stockmen we can't get paid well, so we all went to South Australia and Northern Territory because we was getting more money than for working than in [Warburton] Laverton, Leonora, all that. In Docker I was supervisor and I was appointed to be a Chairman of the community council.

From there Docker River in 1971 I went to Bible College. I was reading and writing...I went to Gnowangerup for 2 years. I was doing English...I was working differently on the spiritual side, the missionaries was doing that time they was training the Aboriginal to go back to learn about the Bible, teach them in a spiritual way. Reading, memorising, understanding. Interpret, talk about it and discuss it and we used to do our own writing, we got to learn like at the school. I was writing with commas, full stops, exclamation thing, marks. All the word...my own writing, that I learn in the school. Just like writing a diary. We gotta do that to write your own sermon down. Then so you'll take funeral things and do your own sermon from the thing. That was 1972, and 73. Then 1974 I came this way and I'm staying here because Aborigines was given the opportunity to get more money, more money was being spent here, CDEP was gonna start up during the time the [citizenship] rights were given to Aboriginal people and people were drinking at the time too. Well first two place I can think of is Leonora and Laverton where there's a lot of people started drinking all day. Well I still didn't at that time, drinking wasn't the main thing until I got married...but we were able to look after our children. Our children was came number one.

I was busy with the government work, very busy. I used to travel to Perth, Canberra, Alice Springs.¹²⁶² I was Teacher Aide for 10 years at Warburton School, then Teacher Aide at Tjirrkarli, then Cosmo. Then I came back and I was given role as Chairman of Ngaanyatjarra Council. Then later on...I went back onto drinking and I drink myself away. And while doing that I led my children into drinking as well. Not all of them, now they don't drink, they don't take drugs but during the time when there was a petrol sniffing going on heavily, when they was smelling fuel, I always kept an eye on my children, I kept my children away from it. There was a lot of drinking in Warburton. When this office was first built here I was running this office myself. The Advisor gave me all the jobs to do, do payrolls, write people down, cheques, fill in the papers out and all that.

Adina was born in 1982.

She is a granddaughter of one of Clem's father's sons. This old man, Adina's *tjamu* (MF), was one of the creative writers in the 'literary movement' in the 1970s. Her grandfather had been at school at Warburton Ranges Mission 'longer than his peers' and 'hoped and believed that education would help him achieve something'.¹²⁶³ Adina grew up with a foster family and visited Warburton now and then. She went to primary school in Kalgoorlie. She recalls that she was 'really brainy so put in the higher class'. At 13 years of age she started at Eastern Goldfields High School and then was sent to CAPS, Coolgardie which she found a bit boring because it was a long way from Kalgoorlie. 'I go everyday, right through the week, weekdays, and right through the year, and right through the months'. She liked school 'to learn, learn, you know, learn to read and write. So when you get big so you don't have to be like dumb.' She finished school in 1998 after finishing Year 10.

After returning to Warburton Adina married Carmel and George's son (Family D) and they have one daughter Rosina who recently started school. Prior to 2004 Adina had participated in a number of accredited VET courses at Ngaanyatjarra Community College. She says wants to do the *Certificate III* in childcare and wants to work at the school as an AIEO. She has also been involved in the Youth Transitions programme and the youth arts projects where she has been involved as photographer, filmmaker, writer and café worker.

Leanne was born in 1985.

Adina and Leanne are sisters (same mother) and both girls were fostered out to different families when they were young. She is also related to Jim's family (Family I). Leanne grew up at Mt Margaret community and this is her story:

I went to school at Mt Margaret, it was alright. We do sports every morning, fitness and we practice for carnival every day then we go to Laverton for Carnival and they invite every school from

¹²⁶² In 1976 he was appointed a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in an advisory capacity (DAA Newsletter (WA) Vol. 2 No. 5 August 1976: 23)

¹²⁶³ (Douglas 1978: 106); (Glass and Hackett pers comm. 2005).

different community, town. I finished there 12, then I went to Laverton when I was 13, I had to catch the bus.

Leanne says she was good at school, but 'too shy to talk'. At 14 years of age she shifted to Kalgoorlie, then at 15 she started CAPS Coolgardie 'I had to catch the bus to Coolgardie, 8 o'clock in the morning'. She thinks school is important 'to learn, reading, writing'. She finished school at 16 and shifted to Warburton where she lives with her uncle Jim's family.

I like reading magazine or storybook or sometimes newspaper, I like to have a look when I got nothing to do. I get them from my family's house...I just see it on the table. I stay with my uncle and my auntie they got a new house with four bedrooms over there.

Her aunt works at the playgroup. At home they keep, 'books, any story book, kids books, sometimes I read to my little niece. They came from the thing, kindergarten...so she can teach her little granddaughter'. Leanne sees her aunt reading with her grandchildren and says that 'she read her Bible, every Sunday she read her Bible, her and her grandchildren.'

Although she likes reading Leanne does little writing, 'I only just write phone numbers. In the book, but it's at home. I just put the names in any way...I just write my friend's name, all Anthea, name game on the paper'. During the day Leanne, with her friends Anthea and Darleen, 'go for walk, talk on the telephone'. Sometimes she and her friend Anthea 'cruise around in her white car, with all the girls and her tape player'. Leanne listens to the radio in the car for 'music and same time for time so we can tell the time'. At night they go to the Drop in Centre and sometimes write 'names'—graffiti 'on the wall'. Unlike many of the other girls she doesn't play cards. 'I don't play that. I only just watch them from a long way and she saves her money 'I put it in my pocket'. She says the other girls sometimes sniff petrol, but not her.

Because that's too bad. And they might tell the police who was there petrol sniffing. But this morning another girl got picked up for petrol sniffing last week, policeman was talking to her and asking her question. But she have to go to court, Wednesday or Friday. If she don't do it she might get sent away to do a little hours and come back. They might send her Kalgoorlie for little while.

She likes living in Warburton: 'good place because it's got Drop in Centre, and oval. They just buy cool drink, sit down watch video, play game.' Leanne gets \$65 every week sit-down pay and can live off this because her family looks after her. So she spends her sit-down on 'cool drink or I buy a phone card, camera or new clothes'.

Leanne says she would like to work.

I like to work in school or clinic every afternoon or work in the shop or at the clinic or in the little kindergarten or college...I like to work so that I can get big pay. I'll save it so that I can go Kalgoorlie, do shopping down there.

Leanne has also been doing of lot of computer art work with the youth arts group.

Family G Narratives

Joshua was born in 1937.¹²⁶⁴

He started at the mission school at Warburton Ranges Mission with Mrs Nash as his teacher.

We didn't have any papers and all that before, or pencil...I didn't know what was going on but I was only small. Then as I grew, a bit older, I knew what I was doing then.

Joshua's understanding of schooling developed as he grew older.

Education went better then, better and better. I got to the stage where I was learning school and other things...All the missionaries, they helped each other to get these books, books, and pads and pencil and all that, we got better and better. So we knew what we were doing...living conditions was alright...we learnt about *Katungkatjanya* side (Jesus)...that's what the missionary came out for...

Joshua went on learning at school until he was 14 years old.

But all the time we kept on going out bush, meet up with people...from the bush, some was still living, and they never seen a white bloke...no clothes...no blanket...nothing to carry around...just a spear and a fire and...woman had that *piti*...we don't live in one place, only in soak, soak with a water there...so when we went for holiday, we stayed there...we don't bother about coming into the mission, just sit down there...learn things out there, learn things out there...so we was going two ways, in school and in our culture way... that's when I was still little...so I had two ways of living.

In 1956, when Joshua was about 16 he went to Wongutha Farm in Esperance.

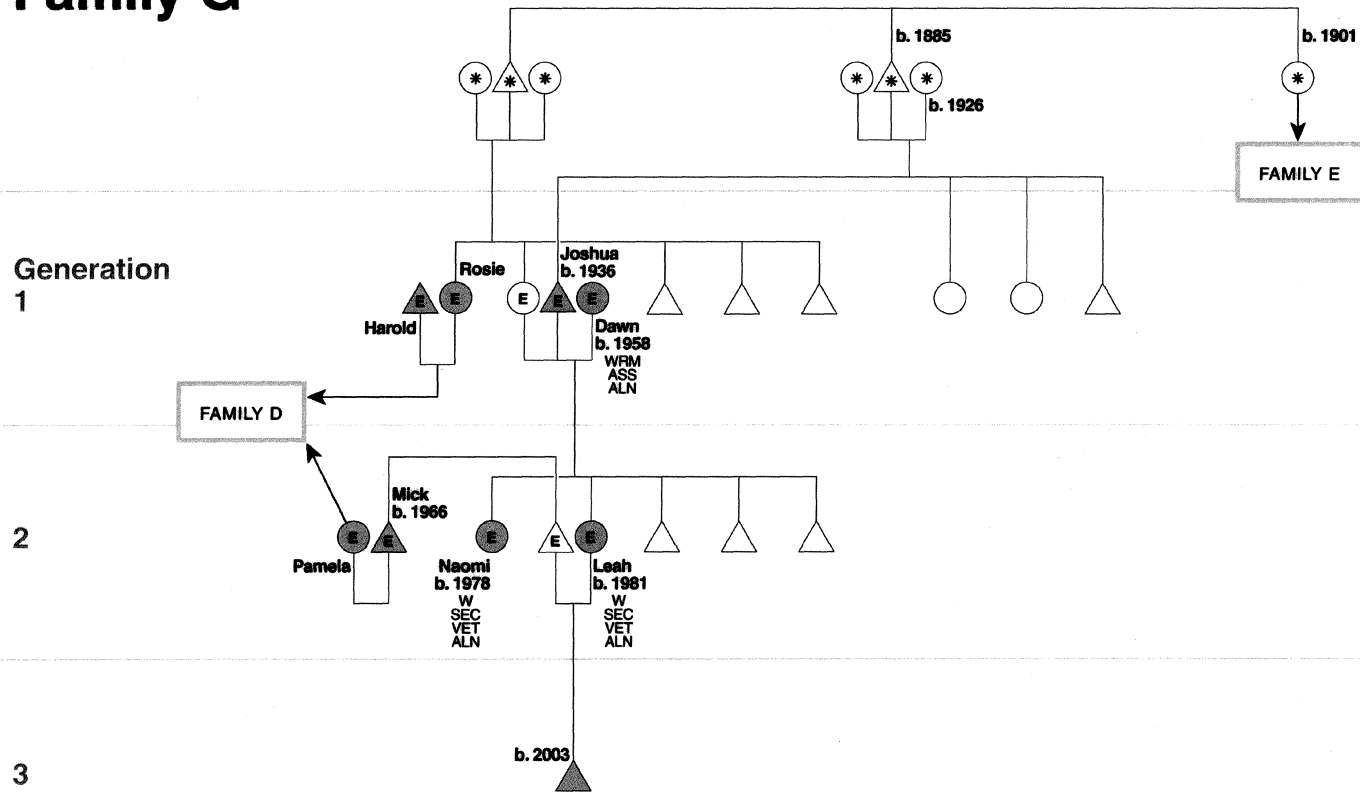
When I went to Wongutha Farm I learnt more, which I didn't know here in the mission...When I got to Laverton, oh there was big roads and I was surprised to see roads like that because I never seen one yet before. That was in 1956. When I got to Esperance, we start working the next day...learning lots of things, what we should do and all. We had a roster up on the wall, saying what we gotta do, this week or the next week coming...our new roster. Weekends we used to go to Esperance...and we formed a football team there...I played football for three years...I was learning a lot of things which I didn't know here in Ranges...did a lot of gardening...I was trying to be a mechanic...I went to places like Gnowangerup, up to Perth...We start building another building, dining room. We went to school there in Esperance, come back and do lecture in the night, learning about farm husbandry...how to run a farm and everything that we wanted to do. There was for young fellas that wanted to learn something.

Unfortunately Joshua was expelled from Wongutha as punishment for smoking cigarettes!

And I came away from Esperance, got a job there in Woolabar Station, south of Kalgoorlie. After two months I went back to Kalgoorlie, and had a job carting wood. I got sick of it...I went to Laverton...When I came to Laverton there was no reserve, just a windmill, new windmill there for the reserve. I stayed in Laverton for about three weeks...and...policeman and Welfare at that time you know, they like to see youngfellas working...everybody had to work...Soon my aunty come around from Bandy Station...she said: 'Oh. You want to come along?' So she took me to Bandy...Every weekend we used to go to Mulga Queen, during the week, *turiku* (ceremony)...*turiku* and all everywhere...And I went to Bandy, shearing time, shearing finished and I did fencing...really worked hard...not like blokes now, they don't know what axe is...That's a

¹²⁶⁴ The information in this section is primarily from an interview transcript included in an exhibition catalogue *Yarnangu ngaanya: Our land—our body* (Warburton Arts Project 1993: 42–50).

Family G



*	No school nomads
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
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CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
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NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
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ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
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Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

really hard labour...But sometime you know, when we do something wrong, we used to get punished, punishment job...There was another station just starting off in Gregory Hill...I worked there, and from Laverton I went to Cosmo...I went out there working...

Sometimes Joshua went into Laverton to see new things in town and to see cowboy movies.

But at that time people not allowed to, young blokes...government didn't want them to hang around...in town, in Laverton, even the police say: 'Lock them up until they, till the shearing and all that over, and we'll let you out.'

In 1957 Joshua met up with other Warburton families and they walked cross country from Laverton back to Warburton. When he returned to Warburton he was 'grabbed'—'they took me to the bush and I came back a few weeks later'.

A lot of things were different...there was no kids...they wasn't in the camp and all, they was still in the mission home, boys and girls in the home. Their parents didn't worry because they were all safe home.

At Warburton Joshua started work on building the new school, then took on a job as a carpenter building houses, toilets and bathrooms on the reserve at Warburton. After a while he went back out to Laverton and did the shearing at Bandy again, then on to a station near Leonora for a few months. For a while he also drove the store truck between Warburton and Leonora. In the 1960s he worked for the DNW Patrol Officer and helped to bring the Gibson Desert mob into Warburton Mission.

So I end up going round to Jupiter Well, Kintore...Tjukurla...Kiwirrkura...In Pollock Hills we seen a lot of people there, naked people, *ngarltutjarra*, still in the bush, didn't know anything about anything...they never seen a motor car, or *piranpa* or *mayi* or anything...They had a *tjukurrpa* alright, big *tjukurrpa*. They was travelling around *kata* full of *tjukurrpa*...So I started working with them, Native Welfare, from Western Australia and Northern Territory...and some of them came from Canberra, Jerry Long and all that...another day in the morning we went to Gary Junction then I took Windy Corner...as we were driving along we seen a fire going up...got closer to Taltiwarra we seen 'Darren' [Family D] and his family...he was only a little boy...so we stayed with them, for a day, two days, gave them *mayi*, flour...Everybody was taken in, from their *ngurra*, leaving everything behind. Now when I can look at them, thinking and think about that, everything *yurra*, it was just left there and some of them didn't return to see it...it was there when I was working with the Welfare...then I went out to Patjarr again...that's when they was doing a film, I was there.¹²⁶⁵ I got married, I lived in Ranges...I worked with them, AAPA then, as a Ranger...I worked with them for four years...I used to keep the sites, look after the sites on the old road.

In 1967 following two weeks training in Kalgoorlie 'Joshua' was employed full-time as a laboratory assistant in a mobile geochemical laboratory operated by Western Mining. He was trained at the School of Mines laboratory in Kalgoorlie and a further twenty men also received training.¹²⁶⁶ In 1967 the Ngaanyatjarra men employed by Western Mining Co. were

¹²⁶⁵ (Dunlop 1966-70).

¹²⁶⁶ Annual Report CNW 1967: 29-30.

paid 'at the award rate of \$10 per day' and a senior DNW Welfare Officer was appointed to the mission to look after people's interest in respect to the new mining ventures.¹²⁶⁷

I was a field assistant, looking at all the *yapu* and all that...it was a good job because I was learning lots of things wherever I went...after that there was another job there in another company, International Nickel, in Wingellina...I was working there only for a couple of months...after that we went *tjilkatja* to Cundelee, the first *tjilkatja* 1971. I came back here to Ranges again, *ngurraku*...I had the job of grading all the road...down to Laverton road...that one down there, Gunbarrel road and people decided to cut a road to Giles, instead of going right round...Then I went and looked for another job. I worked in Laverton in the shop there...and I went back to station again, Bandy Station...worked there...and I thought, ah, I'll go back to Ranges...so I came back...I went to Docker River...Docker River, stayed there for one year, worked there...then I came back to Ranges here...

Joshua then went to Blackstone for two years and married his second wife 'Dawn' (his first wife was Rosie's sister) and returned to Warburton around the time of the Skull Creek incident near Laverton.¹²⁶⁸

You know, with the police...and you know people, how policeman was treating them...they didn't have any laws about, you know, to look after, how to treat people...From there on I thought I would like to get the job in the police force...so I did. I was standing between people, people and the police and I was learning a lot of things from the police, about their job and all how the police was working, doing this and that...bit by bit you know, I was telling them about how to approach people, talk with them and all that...you get a good relationship if you do that with a people and the police. I stayed on there and worked for a while and they start to work really good then.

Joshua was Chairman of the Ngaanyatjarra Council for many years. After this he was voted in as the Director of the Ngaanyatjarra Council, the only person to have held this position. On Australia Day 2001 he was awarded the Order of Australia for his significant contribution and leadership of the Ngaanyatjarra people over many decades. Sadly he passed away later that year.

Joshua has two wives. His second wife **Dawn was born in 1958** near Kanpi.

Yuwa, when I was little my father and mother was staying in Warburton. And I used to doing schooling in Warburton. My father come from like Blackstone area, *yuwa* near Blackstone, and my mother she belong to Blackstone area too. They born *bushpa*. My mother was born at Warlu and *ngayuku* father Blackstone way, old Blackstone. And we used to live here and I was going school, every day school. I was born *bushpa*, I was born near Kanpi. Them two was gone to, from here, them two went to *ngana*, Utju, stayed round there, Utju and Alice Springs, *nyinarrayarnu* and they was coming back to Warburton and I was born somewhere near Kanpi and they was coming in this way. *Ngayuku* father *lurnu mailpa katipayi*, from here, you know Warburton, *Ernabella*, *tjinah* [My father was taking the mail from Warburton to Ernabella by foot]. *Yuwa* when people going into *nganaku*, *Ernabella* to visit the families same time you know, to get a *mingkulpa* [bush tobacco] and they come *pitjapayi* same time. They stayed there.

Dawn doesn't know if her parents went to school, but her mother learnt to read Christian texts in Ngaanyatjarra and easy English from the missionaries as an adult.

¹²⁶⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* January 1967: 3-4.

¹²⁶⁸ See (Woenne 1980).

Ngayuku mother *lu* read *tamalpayi* Bible *tatjanya* Ngaanyatjarra and *nyakupayirna miilu ngunytjulu ngaalu* read *imarra*...you know English easy *onenga*, she can read [My mother read the Ngaanyatjarra Bible, I watched my mother reading]. *Yuwa* mission time. *Ngaangka nyinapayi, ninti* read *tamalpayi* [Staying here, she was clever at reading]

Whereas Dawn's father only speaks Pitjantjatjara: '*tjaa yartaka wangkapayi, tjaa Pitjantjatjara wangkapayi*, not *Ngaanyatjarra*' [he speaks his own language Pitjantjatjara].

Dawn first went to school at Warburton Ranges.

Yuwa tjarrpapayi nya-ngka...nyinapayi, [Yes I came into school here] but during the Christmas holidays people used to go out to Snake Well and when school starts we come in, *pitjapayi marlaku*...We used to walk from the camp, come in and have a shower, there was a big thing there, shower block, come in and have a shower...clothes *tjarrpatjunku, pitjaku* breakfast *ngalku* dining room-*ngka*, then *pitjaku* school [getting dressed, going for breakfast in the dining room then go to school]. School *nyinarra*, then go back for lunch, dining room *angka, mirrka ngalku* [to eat food], come back school *ku*, go back dinner *ku ngalku*, then go home...We used to go and sit down and the missionaries they give us a *nyaapa*, colouring things and *palyapayi* drawing.

I went to Norseman first, must be two or three days stayed in Norseman and they been shift me to Esperance...must be '70s I think, yeah '70s. School *pa palyarayirnu nganala* Esperance *ta* [I did schooling in, what's it called, Esperance]. We used to go in and *palyapayi* like sums, and you know, and sign *ta palyapayi*, typewrite-*ngka palyapayi*. *Palyapayi* typewrite-*ngka*. *Yuwa*, some white kids were there...we homework *palyapayi*, I used to do homework. After school, when I finished school in Esperance...*tjinguru* 16 or 17.

Like many other girls of her age Dawn continued boarding at Fairhaven Hostel once she had finished school and started working. She was employed as a domestic cleaning white people's houses in Esperance. This was organised by the hostel manager.

I used to work there. *Yuwa* and go out for work. Houseworks *palyarnu* [did] you know, every house. *Yuwa*, cleaning and doing washing, ironing *palyapayi* and get little bit of money you know [from] the people that I worked for...And after lunch when I finished the *nyaapa*, you know, housework, I go out after lunch...Boys Hostel work *pa palyapayi*. Boys Hostel, Pedlar's Hostel. *Yuwa*, ironing *palyapayi*, the boys at the hostel, make a bed, *yuwa* and have a *mayi* there and go after tea *ngurraku*...they come round and pick me up from the hostel.

During this period Dawn recollects doing reading and writing activities, including writing letters to family in Warburton.

Yuwa, read *tamalpayi* like books and story, you know book-*ngka kutjupa-kutjupa*. *Yuwa*, like writing letters or, you know, like *turku*. You know, like write-*imalpayi* letter, send some photos *nyakuntjaku*, you know, *mama ngunytjulu*. We used to come by plane *ngurraku*, come on the bus to Kalgoorlie and *pitjapayi nyaangka* aeroplane *ta*, holiday [We used to come home by plane...return here on the aeroplane, holiday]...Holiday *wiyarringkula marlaku yanku purutu, yuwa tjingurna*, three years *palyarnu palu nyaangka*, two years highschool then work *pa palyaranytja* [when the holiday was finished we'd return to school again, maybe for three years I was doing that, two years highschool then doing work].

Dawn finally returned to Warburton in the 1970s.

After doing work in Esperance *pitjangu marlaku palunya* work *ngaangka*, mission *ku*, missionaries *ku* house *pangka palyapayi*, like cleaning and washing, *nyaaku*, Miss Hackett and Miss Glass, they used to

stay in that mission house and work *palyalpayi palunyangka*... a lot of people was working, government time... Did a little bit of *nyaapa* clinic work... *Palyarnu* work *pa* little bit *waningu* clinic-*ngka*, and *nyaapa*, *puru palyalpayi*, like old people *ku* and schoolkids *ku mirrka palyalpayi* together [making meals for the old people and school kids]. Go round and give the lunches for the old people, and put out the *nyaapa* reports in end of the year *tjunku payi* [putting].

Dawn also recalls many people learning to read from Miss Hackett and Miss Glass, including herself:

Tirtu readtamalpayi, you know like must be story book *pa mantjilku ngaangkatja*, *readtamalpayi*. From these two *palunyanguru*... *nintirringkularna* language *readtamarra*... [I was learning to to read language from Miss Glass and Miss Hackett].

Dawn and Joshua had five children: Naomi, Leah and three sons. When her children were young, Dawn says:

I used to story *watjalpayi tjukurpa*, *readtamalpayi* bedtime stories *kuliltjaku* like books *pa*, you know dreamtime stories [I was telling dreamtime stories and reading bedtime stories]. *Watjalpayi yuwa*. *Readtamalpayi*, *tjaa yutihu* and English [I'd tell them in language and in English]. From the, books *pa*, Bible *ku* paper with Miss Hackett and Miss Glass and my kids really liked it. When they come Bible *ku*, we used to take it home and now today my little *tjamu*, he really likes the books, *tirtu nyakupay* and *nintipukulpayirna* [he's always looking and I'm teaching him] teach him how to talk and read and count.

She stills keeps her reading strong and keeps books at home.

Dawn has also been on the Executive of NPYWC.

They started this Women's Council and I went there *nyakulanytja palyara ngaangka nyaapa* like picking all the ladies Chair *ku*, Chairlady and Executive, and *nintirringkulanytja nyakula*. You know, ladies joining in from each of the three states, talking up for their *nyaapa*, like *tjilku pikatjarra*... like that. Other reports when they write it down, *readtamalpayi*, *kulilpayi*, *nintirringkupay* [reading, listening, learning] you know, working together with a Women's Council and talking strongly for young people, so the young people can, you know, take on *nintirringkulatjaku* young people *tu nyakula* [are observing in order to learn].

Dawn and Joshua's daughters Naomi and Leah have spent their formative years '*nyakula nintirringkula*' – observing and learning – from their mother and father and they tell their story below.

Naomi was born in 1978.

She started school at Warburton in the early 1980s when she was about five years old. She recalls the building of the new school which she attended until she was about 13 or 14. In 1992 she went away to CAPS Coolgardie for three years. She says she chose to CAPS because she wanted to and recalls being in the 'good group' there until she finished school half way through Year 10. She returned to Warburton because 'I wanted to come back home to start work 'cause I turned 16'. As soon as she returned she immediately started working in the office then later in the school as a receptionist. Both of these jobs required

literacy. At that time the community radio room was in the school grounds and access to the radio room inspired her to enrol in the BRACS media course. 'I'd done some little bit radio in the school when they had that old radio in the school. Done little bit there and I wanted to do some more, talking on the radio, making video, films. I wanted to learn that as a media worker.' She laughs when asked about reading and writing as a media worker:

There's too much reading and writing! Reading all the instruction, how to use the video, how to use it and same as the radio, especially when I'm on the radio I have to read all the faxes out and the records, read it from the CD covers, read the stereo which one we got to press...same as the radio, got to go through reading and writing too. Before we use the video we got to take like a little test, before we make a film, do a little program...using the computer, like editing, you know, I like it.

Naomi is a confident young woman and pictures herself as a leader. Her father Joshua was a significant leader for Ngaanyatjarra people. He encouraged her to do well at school, work hard and become a leader.

Dad always told me to work and live your own life, work for your own money and that's all. That's where all the advice from, from father...he was telling me, he always tell me: 'Oh Naomi, you keep on doing good things like me. Then one day, girls can easy do that, become a leader, you know, like a Chairwoman.' He always tell me.

Naomi has completed her media training: *Certificate III in Broadcasting (Remote Area Operations)*.¹²⁶⁹

I just want to be a trainer for the media students and a trainer for the, train all the young kids here, especially the teenagers, you know. That new program we got here 'Nintirringkula', I want to encourage all the teenagers, especially the girls, you know. Tell them not to sniff or run around. I like to do all that. Tell the young girls not to get married too young, you know. Just keep on doing what I tell them, that's what I want to do here in Ranges...it's sometimes easy and sometimes hard. It's hard sometimes because when you tell the girls, you know, some of them might think I'm joking, but I'm telling the truth, I want to do that.

When I asked her if she ever gets a hard time stepping forward as a leader, she responded with surprise: 'What they gonna do, give me a hard time for? Nuh, they wouldn't give me a hard time'. Gender distinctions are not a consideration in media work as 'it's anybody's job'.

She says it is 'a good program to keep them busy.'

You know, not to sniff and smoke drugs or drink alcohol, keep them away from that. Young girls you know, too young getting married, having kids. Keep them busy so they are doing their own little things, you know, youth program, working on all that...They like the youth arts program, it's about the fashion, they like dressing up, doing their hair, make-ups...learn about using the computers, cameras, photographs and do a little bit of reading and writing...like art for their own program.

Naomi's *marlanypa* – younger sister **Leah was born in 1981**. She is married to Mick's *marlanypa* – younger brother (Family D). Leah describes her family:

¹²⁶⁹ *Certificate III in Broadcasting (Remote Area Operations)* is a nationally accredited Training Package delivered jointly by Ngaanyatjarra Media and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE).

Both sides, mother and father born in the mission too. They was schooling here and then they went to the CAPS in Esperance, schooling there and my father stayed there and got a job there in the Goldfields, working at the mine. Mining and started in the ATSIC and working at the farms, then he came back this way and got a job here and was working as the JP with the cops, he had the job, he had lots of jobs, but I can't remember. Mother was working at the shop and mostly she like doing cleaning and all that... They been working before, that's why I know how to work, do course. That why I learn from them, by watching them when I was little, been going school right through.

I finish here schooling... I got a job in the school making a lunch for the school kids... then I change my mind to go into collegeing in the town schools... I decided to sign the form to go schooling into towns... went first to Coolgardie CAPS, then a visiting schooling at Wongutha CAPS [for]... two years... then to Perth University I went for a one week visiting.

Leah says her family encouraged her to stay at school and she learned a lot:

Learn how to so, maybe run the community. Go come back and learn the young people back in the communities... Maths and science, reading and writing, cooking.

When she returned to Warburton:

I started working in the school, then went to the clinic doing cleaners then did another job in the shop, cleaning in the shop in the mornings, half days. Then I was working in the Drop in Centre, doing sports and recreation and doing some courses with Steve, then the last job I was doing at the culture centre with Peter, tourism... Because I like doing courses and my friends do, they like it too, so we was all doing the courses. And it was good.

Leah says she likes working:

Make you look busy in the community, working, it's good work... I like to work office, but too much people going there and argue at the counter over money or something, phone. Because that's the main thing office, that's where all the people go.

However, most days now she looks after her young son 'might get a job when he grow up a bit big, then get a job back, some work, maybe at the college, school, office, one of those.

She considers her reading and writing 'pretty good'.

I just get a normal books from the shop, magazines and things like that books. *That's Life* or that Woman's thing, magazine and *How Life* and all that. And sit down and read.

Leah's family do literacy activities at home. Leah buys books for her little son who was born in 2003.

Buy little books and thing, textas in the shop and he sit down and draw, or he copy off his grandmother. See them when they do paintings, he join them, sit down and paint and they give him a little paper and a brush to sit down and paint... Take him for a walk down to the oval, and play with him balls and little football... he go with his grandmother to church.

Leah also reads at church, 'When the pastor read in the Bible, sit down and follow him readings, when they read, something like that'. Leah has also been learning Ngaanyatjarra literacy.

I do thing, language at home. That lady Miss Glass, she go round every afternoon learning that, learning more language. Yeah [I like to] keep the language going... It's important because if you don't do that language, well all the young people they might grow up and they don't know how to

write and spell in their language. That's why... Might be the young people take over, want to go schools.

Leah sometimes likes going to the library in the college to read 'story one, comedy stories and real life and movie story. Good stories [but] some of the words it's hard when you read, the long writing'.

Leah considers Warburton a 'good and big place'.

It's got everything here, roadhouse, kind of like Drop in Centre and culture centre and they got big prison coming up... It's good place so young people can do collegeing in the college, courses, that's why they like it here so much, learning at the culture centre. And the young people they like working, training and all that doing courses. Courses like tourism, cultural awareness and thing, sports and recreation, and courses for the Drop in Centre and all that and the woman centre, some girls they work there, learn how to do the things in the centre. Make them busy in town, instead of you know when they got nothing to do they start sniffing and all that, sniffing or start on the alcohol, going to town. Some young people they go into town, they sit around and drink, some young fellas they like doing jobs at the community and courses, like with Peter. Some just sit around and play cards, young people... you see them, they stay in the house watch video, DVD, walk around, like ask for a smoke around the streets, some cruise around in the car.

Leah thinks education is important:

Because that's the first thing on the list, education, to get learn, for the kids, so when they finish school, some kids know how, when they get a job somewhere else they know how to use the tills and all that, read and write.

For Leah education also includes cultural learning:

Some of the ladies, they learn the young people, last time they was learning all the young people before, but they didn't want to do it. Some of the old ladies [could teach it]. Sometimes they take them to the bush, learn them how to dance, sing, but not very often now today, but before they do that and we used to go and see them... It's different, not much old people here. Learning the young people how to do the culture and all that, in language.

For her future Leah says she wants to 'get a job doing work, make all the people work, something like that... maybe office or college'. But for the moment she's also happy doing the youth arts work.

It's good work, the team might keep it up... Do work like that, do make ups on the girls and all that. And the other team's doing computer, TVs and movies, taking pictures. And it's good.

Family H Narratives

Una was born in 1951.

In 1933 her family was camping around Elder Creek when Mr Wade first came along with the camels from Mt Margaret Mission calling out: '*yamatji muku-muku*' (gentle friend) and handing out lollies to the children. Una's father recalled this event because he was admonished by his father [Una's FF] for taking sweets from the missionary. Una's father was in the first generation of children to experience schooling at Warburton Ranges Mission. Una remembers him telling her early days stories.

I'll talk about my father first, father been going to school... They stop in the mission but I don't think he went to the Home, like staying in the Home, but this was just shifted down from that... Old Well... That first place was the mission came and built that with all the *yarnangu* people. And there was lots and lots of people there because they had the lovely spring water down there. And when that finished up they all shifted camp to that other place where my father was born. And my father was born then. Then they came back and they walk over here somewhere in that mission. And he belong this place but they shifted over there, maybe for some reason, *kukaku*, or just to stay out there... My father, he grew up here... They stayed here, but they used to go out round here hunting and all, camping out and all and coming back.

Her father started school after the mission moved from Old Well to the higher location away from the creek. School was then held in a shed, a timber building erected within the mission compound. She recalls him talking about writing on slates, drawing pictures and counting using an abacus. He was at school at the same time as Harold (Family D).

They been schooling here, next to where the big gum tree burnt down, right there. They used to have a shed, he told me all that story. They used to have them little board thing and they used to draw like people and animals, and they used to count them... And drawing on them little, what they call them thing? Slate... He was a good drawer. He used to draw people and kangaroo and all that... he used to draw on the ground, on the ground about when he was schooling. He used to draw and show us about animals and how they were in that little shed... he never wrote anything, only drew.

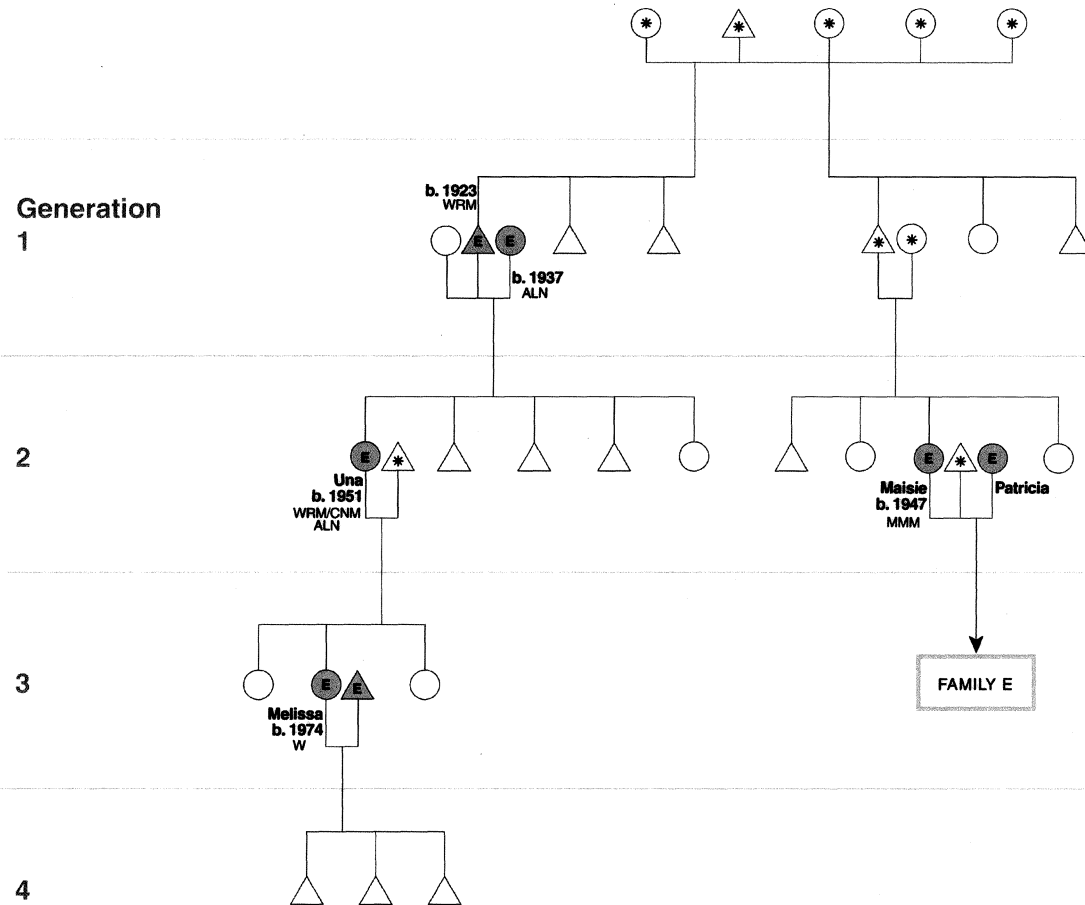
When her father was a young man, and before he married Una's mother, he travelled out to Cosmo Newbery.

He was working, mustering, bringing sheep in and they used to shear the sheep... he was there when he was a young man, working with Mr Cotterill and he used to, they, like as if they were working for *nyaaku*, food, ration.

Una was the second generation in her family to experience schooling and was put in the Baker Home when she was a child. Una remembers lots of children living in the Home, sleeping on the bunk beds and having their meals cooked. Meals were often supplemented with bush meat brought in by hunters.

I was born here that's why they been put me in the Home because they used to, long time, they used to wait for truck to bring food in. But not much, you know, they was sort of waiting. There

Family H



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ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

was plenty of kangaroos, kangaroo things and all that. But it must have been a little bit hard for them...people used to come out, that's first thing in the morning, on maybe five o'clock to, because the mission had to give the gun out to bring some meat for the mission, so they get lucky sometimes, some miss out. Someone comes in early, they take off and bring some *kuka* back, *yuma*, that's for lunch. I was put in the Home in the dormitory where I stayed for like morning and night time we go back in bed.

Una was not unhappy in the Home, but she does remember getting 'the strap' from the missionaries for running away.

There was lots and lots of children from everywhere, we was all put in the school. Some of them ran away, that was before us, some of them were put in the Home, but they didn't like it so they ran away to their parents and went on and on.

She recalls that they were allowed to speak Ngaanyatjarra in the Home.

I remember I was put in the Home first, then from there I used to go to school then, I was learning how to read and write and from there this school I used to write, write, write. And I was learning more and more.

Una recalls that she stayed in Warburton Ranges Mission 'for loooong time'.

There was a lot of older people working like, older people working with the mission in the early days. But my father used to go out that way where that Brown Range is and get some stones to build around all these places here...They used to have houses like that built for the dormitory and for the school teachers and they used to have a big garage over there and school teachers homes and staff to stay in, *yuma*.

Meanwhile her family maintained a relatively nomadic life.

Come back whenever they want to see us...sometimes they come and visit us, you know, outside the fence. They used to come sit down and talk: 'Are you right?' And we always say: 'Yeah we right.' There used to be a big fence right around, we used to be inside the yard. But that gate was open for us to go out and see them. But they was outside, they used to come and see us when they come in to get some ration. We used to go and see them, we used to go out and see all the older people and young people they used to come in and get food and go out.

Holidays we go out and we get blanket, one blanket, woollen one, not a coloured one, but one each and we go out. All our families come and wait for us and they take us out, maybe for four, three weeks. Then we come back and they put us in... When I was about twelve I was just coming to think to myself: 'Oh, maybe my family they outside they must be want to see me'. So we used to go out in the front of the shop. The shop used to be outside the mission house and we used to see lots and lots of people coming in. And we used to stand around and they was just, they wave us and say: 'Oh come here.' And then I'm thinking: 'Oh maybe my family's this person?' I used to chase after [Patricia's FF], I thought he was my father. I used to cry when they used to have...you know, when little kids see something, you know, good, I used to cry, so they used to give me little bit of dripping, and little bit of sugar to make me satisfied. But we used to have lunch, you know hanging around inside the yard, all sort of boring, because we had a big swing out the back where we used to play in this little shed there so we can sit down and read, anything.

By the time Una was around 13 years old her family had walked out to the Goldfields and Una went to join them. After the UAM mission took over Cosmo Newbery station in 1953 Una's family moved there with other families. The missionary Sam Mollenhauer

remembers Una's FF, then in his mid-70s, setting off on foot for Laverton in 1953, a journey of some 600 kilometers.¹²⁷⁰

My aunty came and picked us up. But we used to go out. Like my father and mother used to like going that way to Cosmo and they used to come and take us to Cosmo, walking, not by car. They used to walk and stay there for little while and come back because my grandfather went down to Cosmo, staying there...my aunty was there, but my father's brothers was in Laverton...they were already in Laverton.

Una continued schooling at Cosmo Newbery when Mr Howell was a teacher there. Una stayed only a short time at school in Cosmo. At that time Una was 'still a little bit not properly learnt' and she never went to high school. She then went to join her family to Bandy Station outside Laverton where her father and his brother were working as stockmen. This was prior to 1966 as she recalls that her father would get his pay in pounds in Laverton.

After a while, when I must have been around 13 or 14 we went out that way to Bandy Station then and my father used to work with his brother over there. They used to go out, I used to see them really early in the morning like five o'clock in the morning they go out on the horse till five and come back.

Una describes how when families moved out that way they had to work, if men were caught sitting around Native Welfare would pick them up and take them up and take them to a station to work. Same with children if they were not at school DNW would forcibly take them to school.

Shortly after Bandy, Una returned to Warburton via Laverton and Cosmo. In Warburton she married her promised husband when she was about 15 years of age. At Warburton she began doing Ngaanyatjarra language work, firstly by observing her mother learning. Over time her fluency in Ngaanyatjarra improved and she began to learn Ngaanyatjarra by transferring her literacy skills from English to Ngaanyatjarra.

Una is now one of the more skilled Ngaanyatjarra literates in her community. Although Una can now read well in Ngaanyatjarra, her writing is not strong. Nevertheless she has 'authored' a number of published Ngaanyatjarra stories, contributed to the translation of the published New Testament and is now working with Glass on translating the Old Testament.¹²⁷¹ Una was one of the main contributors to the *Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra to English Dictionary* and the *Ngaanyatjarra Picture Dictionary*. Una has reflected on the skill needed to work on the dictionary.

¹²⁷⁰ (Mollenhauer 2002: 66).

¹²⁷¹ (Richards 1997).

This one was really, really, really hard one, this one, it was not easy because there's millions and millions and millions of little words becoming to be a long sentence, one little word can make a long sentence. Really hard job...Really *purikanya*. *Wangka purikanya*. We used to slowly, she used to talk to me, answer me all the questions about one little word, then I explain Dorothy and Ameer, all that, and it's all written there. They'd give me one little word, maybe like '*nyaaipirinypa*' like that. Then I'd put up, make it into a long sentence, then I'd explain it in English then. Then them two: 'Oh yeah, I got it now'. Really hard job.

Translating is a task that entails a high level of metalinguistic skill and a capacity to reflect on language, as Una says she needed to *marlakukutura nintirringama* – reflect and analyse. One day Una explains the translation work she is doing on the Old Testament. Una reads the English and works out a good translation and this is recorded. Una says it is hard work,

Got to use your brains, only special people can do it. Need to get young people learning how to do it, some do, like Patricia and Maisie, but not enough to pass on the skill. Got to really understand English and how to speak good Ngaanyatjarra.

Una knows that her fluency in English has also given her a special skill as an interpreter.

People came to talk for housing and we sat down in our little group starting to talk and ask for houses. I remember we was sitting down outside the school asking for houses: 'Yes, we want more houses to be built'...And when it came I used to help talk for my father, you know, if any other white man came asking questions about: 'You like this?' And I used to help my father: 'You want this?' And my father said: 'Yes' From me I used to help him...I learnt how to you know, just stand up and talk to people like once there was a Government man came out to Mutitjulu and me and Alice went down and just had a little meeting there. We had a little meeting and we was talking for, to that bloke, down at Mutitjulu. And that's how I used to talk strongly for my people. I used to read them, those books you know. I used to sit down slowly and read them...by myself, without anyone reading it for me...I wanted to do that so I can learn more...It was really important for me to do that because I was thinking to myself: 'Oh one day I might speak to, like, when I get up for any other meeting, you know.' We didn't know there was a Women's Council there for us. And then I heard: 'Oh there's a meeting out that way, for only women.' So I always used to get up and talk for all the Warburton women.

When her children were young Una started going to the early NPY Women's Council meetings and she used to participate in the 'Adult Native Education' classes.¹²⁷²

We used to go out here somewhere, I can't remember because that was long time, we used to do something like sewing, and painting, and all sorts of things...I used to get lots of magazines, you know magazines, Women's Weekly and all that. Sometimes I used to sit down and write letters, we used to buy pads, pens and pads. I used to sit down and write and I used to think: 'Oh what I got to put?' Then I used to sit down and write to friends, you know my friends, I'd send letters to my friends.

Una continued representing the needs of Ngaanyatjarra women and children at NPY Women's Council.

At meetings there were all sorts of things, to read they used to give us, hand out sheets...and I used to sit down, and read, read, read...I used to read them and understand it and explain some of the ladies, some of them who don't know how to read. I just explained them: 'Oh this is this one or this is the ones we got to do like that.'

¹²⁷² See Table 3.1 (Chapter 3) for record of ANE at Warburton. A fulltime ANE officer was still working at Warburton during 1976 with 'limited facilities, and unsuitable buildings to accommodate classes' effort was focused on 'running art and craft activities' (George 1979: 447).

Una and her husband have had four daughters. Two of her daughters have also been learning Ngaanyatjarra literacy.

She's been learning with Miss Hackett and Miss Glass, she's been working on that Ngaanyatjarra *nyaapa*. She's been, I made her to go and, you know, little bit by little bit.

Una is aware that she hadn't had much schooling, yet, as she says, 'everyone think I went to high school and came back' because she confidently stands up and speaks at meetings and because she has good command of spoken English.

Whenever I go out I stand up, not stand up, see someone there and I talk to them and they think: 'Oh this woman she knows a English'.

She comments: 'my kids they been to Esperance and they don't speak like me'. Una's spoken and written English has also improved throughout her adult life through participation in community activities.

Una's daughter **Melissa was born in 1974.**

I grew up here in Warburton. [My mother] used to work in the school, when I was little girl, long time. I went to Warburton school, Used to go everyday little bit. Every morning I always go school to afternoon, knock off, schooling right through. Finished about 16.

Her father,

Never went school, he was in the bush...working mission time. He was doing wood. Now he's getting old. He's working with Land Management, show all the work man all the animals.

When Melissa finished school she says she could read and write a 'little bit'. Melissa has worked a little bit 'I was working little bit in the college, cleaning up, mopping and all that'. She thinks education is important, 'to learn, read and write...so we can talk to anyones like, any white people when they coming in'. However she says she reads and writes nothing at home, only,

...write names, like my name, and them kids...on the ground, with story wire. When I take them kids for to tell stories...sometimes I go for try and get my pay, sometime I put my name, write my name...sometime policeman caught me, policeman, and sometime I put my name [for] driving no license.

If personal mail comes for her she needs 'little bit help, sometimes it's a bit hard'.

Her husband says that if a letter comes for him

I pass it on for my wife, or mother in law, she can read it for me, Una, sometimes I pass it to her.

Melissa is learning Ngaanyatjarra literacy.

I'm learning that Ngaanyatjarra one with Miss Hackett. To learn for Ngaanyatjarra words, for the hard words. Reading about what's on the Bible stories.

Sometimes she reads her mother's Bible at home, but does no reading with her children.

Sometimes we send them to school...I don't know what they, they doing a school, they taught to read and write, teach them so they can know more. Put it on the wall, write'em down, blackboard.

Melissa says that most days she,

...sit down at home, sometime I play card, all day. Sometime I go with kids, tell a stories. Watch TVs something like that.

Melissa's husband was born in 1970.

Mother and father, they lived missionary time, they go school every missionary time, long time ago. Mother and all, father he go little bit schooling...He was a worker, he plant all the vegetables, garden, do everything, look after inside the yard, clean the yard every day, watering...He was a hard working man...they went to Laverton, Leonora, Wiluna, mission...they worked there, they was working with Mr Cotterill, long time ago, yuwa...Station somewhere, somewhere in the station, father working on the station. From there we came back, back home this way, start working again. I don't like sitting around, like working to get tjimarri for the kids. My father was a worker at the mission, doing the garden, vegetables. He travelled around working with that missionary Mr Cotterill. Do it like my father, started from when I was little.

Melissa's husband has had many different jobs over the years including: building, mustering, rubbish collecting, carting wood, packing shelves and gardening. He has also tried land management and health work. But most days:

I just wander around, sit down, no work. I just go for walk, go round to the people, sit down, tell a story. Go for a drive, go for hunting, take them football training or something like that. Or go for ride, long ride.

Maisie was born in 1947.

Una and Maisie have one *tjamu*. Una is *tjurtu*, older sister, to Maisie. During the 1950s Maisie's *mama*, father (*Unaku mamaku marlanypa*) was working in and around Laverton.

First when I was at Laverton mum and dad take up hunting, and in those days didn't have much food, only ration, bush tucker like kangaroo, goanna.

Then they found work in the Laverton area.

Father used to go do watering the garden at the clinic in Laverton, plants, all the flowers then go home. They go out station, station person come and they go out work muster the sheep. They go out, he do part of her work by cooking and my father do work, muster the sheep. The person there tell which part of paddock have to be done by this day, do that paddock the other day, make sure every sheep put it in the yard and count it. And the bloke come out and count it and if there wasn't right number they have to go out again and search for the sheep. He was doing them sort of job. He wanted to do that job because that's the only way to get food. That's just part of my history, story.

In the meantime Maisie was left in the Graham Home at Mt Margaret Mission for schooling. Every summer she returned to Laverton to spend the holidays with her family.

Then went back to school staying at Mt Margaret Mission we are taught to speak English, talk English all the time. It was a good chance when it was with our families, but when we were back at school and at home girl's dormitory...They come and visit, only at the school, like Christmas holidays, the missionaries say to us: 'Alright, you children have to wait for your mum and dad to come and pick you, pack all your things ready.' And they come and pick their child and they go and

they come, we're still waiting for our parents to come and pick us up...they came in their early days car...and my uncle came and pick us up...took us to Laverton we got our toy...and had our Christmas holiday, stayed there. When the school started, went back to Mt Margaret, stayed there.

She tells stories of running away to Laverton and being caught and punished by the missionaries. Maisie was at Mt Margaret at the same time as 'May' (Family E). Christian learning was a crucial formative experience for Maisie and provided the foundation for many of her adult literacy practices. After Maisie finished school at Mt Margaret she was sent to Kurrawang Mission and went to Eastern Goldfields High School along with 'May'. When she had been in school for about six or seven years, the missionaries organised for her to go on a holiday to Melbourne. However her family intervened and gave her away to her promised husband.

Life were different because we didn't had much work but we have to go get married, that's he only way, go live with the man, 'cause there wasn't no job for a woman like me...In those days there's no job, only job you can get was going out and helping husband mustering sheep and cooking, that's all job, and housework.

After Maisie married, she and her husband returned to Warburton and after a while she started helping out in the school. Later on she was living in Warakurna and then Blackstone and continued working in the new schools. In 1996 Maisie started working in the child care centre at Blackstone. This was a turning point in her life and working with pre-school aged children has become Maisie's vocation. She now lives in Warburton with her family. Both Maisie and her co-wife Patricia (Family E) are identified with education and language work. Maisie is the co-ordinator of the Best Start playgroup programme and has taught modules in the *Certificate III in Childcare in Aboriginal Communities*.

By doing this I learnt more and I got to still do it more for the sake of Aboriginal people, my skin because we want to get a better job to earn some more money and get a better home and the kids can look at this person and follow on. That was my overlooking, looking front and looking back, thinking when they grow up.

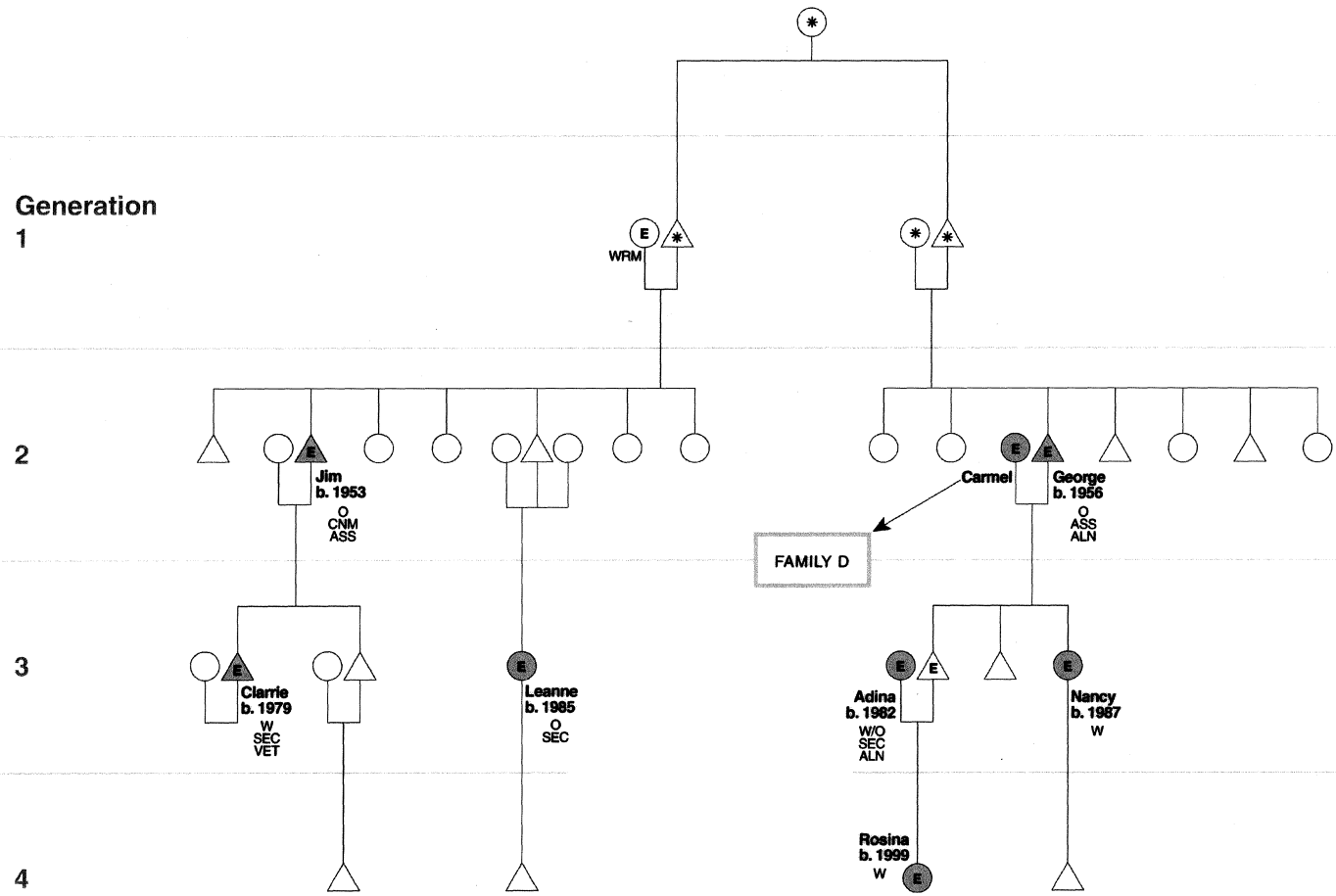
When Maisie was at Mt Margaret she was taught by May O'Brien (nee Miller) who had grown up at Mt Margaret Mission and returned there during the 1960s as one of the first trained Aboriginal teachers in Western Australia (see Chapter 3). May Miller was a role model for Maisie and gave her the confidence to aspire to also teach young children.

I thinking about myself in school when I was learning writing and sums I had the best Aboriginal teacher when I was little she was the one that was my first number one step having Aboriginal teacher at Mt Margaret, thinking about that and how now I can do this work, run playgroup. Now May says: 'Now you're running this playgroup all by yourself.'

Maisie remains a strong Christian, attends church and runs a Sunday School for children which she organises herself, planning and preparing scriptures to read with the children.

I read my Bible. I read it in English and Ngaanyatjarra. I think that help me, reading the Bible and teaching. Once my nanna came and I was reading the Bible of the Two Blind Man in Wangkayi, in language, reading it out loud to her and she was the only one who was with me.

Family I



*	No school nomadics
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
WRM	Warburton Ranges Mission
CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
W	Warburton
NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
Secondary Schooling	
ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
SEC	Secondary (CAPS / Karalundi / Wiltja / Yirara / EGHS)
Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

Family I Narratives

Jim was born in 1953.

When Jim was young he heard stories about his mother being in the first mission school at Old Well at Warburton Ranges:

My mother when she was little she came in here and went to mission school here, Old Well. My grandmother left them there and she went to town too and my mother grew up and when she got a little bit older she chased my grandmother behind. I don't know why they went Laverton way, they must be want to find out what's happening on that side way.

When she was old enough his mother followed the family out to the Goldfields. She met Jim's father in Cosmo and they married. Jim's father had walked out from the desert many years previously and had no schooling. Jim's father and George's father (see below) had the same mother.

Jim had eight siblings. Three of Jim's sisters went to school in Laverton and another sister and one brother went to school at Mt Margaret Mission.

My father didn't want me to go in the Home...so I have to stay with the family so I had to travel at different stations working, following my father around until I was old enough to go to school, they brought me back to Laverton.

Jim started school in Laverton around 1959. While his father was out working on stations mustering cattle and sheep, or fencing, Jim remained with the family on the reserve in Laverton.

They had a reserve there, native reserve, from the reserve we used to go to school. We went to school every day. I think it was...If you don't go to school the Welfare will send you away somewhere, must be down somewhere in the mission home somewhere, Kurrawang or Norseman.

Jim remembers that at the school in Laverton Aboriginal and white children were in the same classes.

So we all mixed together and played in school, went to school together. I think it was a good school, for me. Well in that school we learnt everything they didn't put all the Aboriginal kids one side, white kids one side. We all was there doing the same thing.

Jim moved between schools in Laverton and Leonora while his father worked on different stations in the district.

We stayed at that school for maybe two or three years then my father started working in Leonora and he wanted us to go to Leonora to be close to where he was working so we was schooling in Leonora. Then when he was working in Laverton district we were sent back to Laverton, like that keep going.

While Jim's father was working on stations, his mother looked after the family and supported the children's schooling.

He'd go away and work and she'd stop with us. My mother did a little bit of schooling at Old Well, I remember her writing her name. I think about where she got learn? She must have got learnt in the Home here, in old mission schooling. She used to tell a story, Bible story to us, from a book... must be from the picture, I think.

When Jim was about 14 years of age, around 1967, the family went to Cosmo Newbery.

From that we changed into a mission style education, like in round Warburton, got a bit different. Had a whole year there, then had to go to Wongutha Farm in Esperance, Welfare organised that I think. They let the family know and then they'll pick us up and take us and put us on the train. One of them Welfare ladies I think, took us and put us on the train to Leonora. Travelled to Kalgoorlie and we got to stay at Kurrawang Mission for one night then on the bus to Wongutha Farm and we stayed there training for one year.

Jim was at Wongutha Farm for about one year around 1968.

Training we done like farm work doing fences, and mechanic too, we learned how to shear the sheep, train, training for carpentry, building. And for couple, two days we had to go to Esperance for school, junior high school in Esperance, couple of days there and come back and do training, must be two days every week, go to school in Esperance, come back and stay on the farm. I was 15 I think.

Jim also recalls that both boys and girls lived on the farm in separate dormitories and they'd meet up for meals in the dining room. He understood that he was training to get a job.

Well, I came back for holiday this side, Laverton. Looking for holiday, but went working on the station. From there I went back to Esperance, not Wongutha but Esperance in town, Pedlar's Hostel they call it. Where all the boys go there... That time I was bit young and got in trouble and the court sent me over there. So I stayed there for nearly two years, till I turn 18... instead of going to prison I had to go there and work... Yeah, like they called it 'state ward', till you were 18... Go there and the bloke who run the hostel he found a job for us on a farm. I stayed there for must be year and a half... Managing the farm job, working hand on the farm, shearing, mustering sheep, shearing time, help out with the shearers in the shed, doing some fencing.

By this time Jim could read and write. After Jim turned 18 he thought he was independent, but re-entered the DNW hostel system:

I came to Kalgoorlie hanging round Kalgoorlie in the streets, walking round. And I thought to myself: 'Oh I'll have to get a job'. So I went into another hostel in Kalgoorlie, working boys hostel. So when you go in you just get your own room and you get your meal and all there. So I stayed there and I got a job, I worked at the mine, Kalgoorlie mine, big mine... That bloke was finding job for us, he was looking in the paper, you know... He was from the Welfare I think.

So I got a job in the mine, I used to look after eight big engines. Wake up in the morning early, wake up and go along and sign my name. Not the name, I used to put a number, can't put a name there, number. We have to take the little books where you start working, then when you knock off take it like that. Used to start from one engine, right up to eight, knock off time, then go home. I had to look at it give oil, give it service you know, keep it going, for the people down under, air conditioning, lights, power for them. I had to keep it running good. Check if any oil and clean that oil. They just asked me if I know English and if I read... that was all. Working there I got a certificate to work in any mine in Western Australia. Got paid every weekend.

Stayed must be four, six month. There was some other boys was there too, from this side. They was all getting homesick and I was thinking, well I must be join them and come home too. I wanted to stay and work, same time I was thinking about my family too. From Laverton they moved away and they was here [Warburton]. Around 1970, 1971, 72. Then I worked at Laverton at Wonganarra went

it first started.¹²⁷³ I was building, building work, making slabs, footpath slabs, some new houses coming up so we had to help with the houses too.

Jim remembers Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers working side-by-side in Laverton: 'they work good with us too'. Around this time Jim came out to Warburton: 'I think the mission was still going that time. Mission was still running the place. And when I first came here, old school used to be here, before this new building.'

Jim found that 'no work was round until the mission handed over the thing to government placed turned into a settlement in 1973 or 74'. So he took off again moving with the Business and seeking work again in the Eastern Goldfields and then further afield.

From that time I went away in 1974, yeah. We went on the ceremony and I went that way, went to Wiluna. Then that time they had the cyclone in Darwin, Christmas day I think. And I was up that way working in the station, Murchison way. No-one from here, only some people from that way there. I was travelling, getting to know people and some people knew me and took me out to the station. Yeah, working on different stations then, around Meeka. Then I went up north, Kimberley way, come back.

Jim returned to Warburton around 1977. Soon after, he met his wife, a Warburton girl. His wife was born in 1954, and had grown up and gone to school in Warburton Ranges: 'I stayed here then. Stayed here about 25 years from that time. Then my son was born '79, first one, Clarrie, then the other one 1982 I think.'

With his accumulated knowledge and skills Jim was soon employed in the community:

That time I got the job in the office there. Rapkins told me: 'Oh, you can work doing the pays.' I used to do the pays, give the pays out, do'em up, get the people to sign, sometimes when Rapkins goes away for two to three weeks I used to run that office there. Go and get the mail from the airstrip, sign for the things coming on the plane, the money tin. I worked there for must be eight or ten years I think...I worked in the office 10 years, then I was studio manager for that studio over there for a while, recording studio.

Jim also took on community governance roles:

Then I was Regional Councillor [ATSIC], six years, starting about 1990 to '96 and I been away in that ATSIC time, meetings. Always ask for money, you know, money for buildings, house, community money, education. When I was in the Regional Council that time there was a working party in WA, they called Consultative Group, they picked me to be on that Education Group...working for education, adult education and all, do anything with independent schooling and all that. So I joined them, I was on that team, talked about education every time. Get together and we try and get money for school and place like this one here [Ngaanyatjarra Community College], I think we talking about this building here before and we got some money for this. We talking about Tjirrkarli I think, that time, getting all the buildings, school there.

Jim recalls going to one particular meeting in Perth to discuss education:

¹²⁷³ With the support of AAPA the Laverton community established 'Wongatha Wonganarra' community council in 1973.

And I told them what was happening up this way: 'Oh, we're 20 years behind education, still not catching up'. That's why they started talking then. That time I can see what's limiting that education, some of our young kids, you know, late 80s and 90s kids wasn't learning properly, can't speak good English. They can go back home and can talk language really good, but when it comes to talking English and writing, they can't write their own name properly. You seen that book about that teacher who was here before?¹²⁷⁴ Some of them diaries they write there, they done a bit not good spelling, some of the wordings they got a bit wrong.

Education has remained important to Jim and he has passed this ethos down to his two sons.

Jim has kept his own reading and writing strong through employment, governance activities with ATSIC and Ngaanyatjarra Council and home literacy practices.

At home I would read, read like when my sons was little. And I used to tell them to go to school every day and they do hard work in the school you know, they went to school every day, then they went to CAPS for one year I think. One son, he write music too, make songs for the band, Clarrie he plays guitar.

Jim sees that his sons need to be strong in the Law and learn leadership skills.

They gotta be healthy, and listen to their elders, what they tell them, and be strong. If you listen and respect older people you'll go a long way. Education is very important for young people if you got no education you are nowhere, you'll go nowhere. You need that, it's very important for the future... Sometimes I take Clarrie to Council meeting so he can listen and learn so he can be next time when all these people here all pass on they got to take over and run the Council, talk for the people. They got to learn to talk up in public—what they call it? Public speaking, they should do a course here. And train'em up to be a leader.

Jim is concerned that there is not enough employment for young people: 'when you out this way, not enough job for young people'. Jim's wife works in the Playgroup with Maisie and looks after her grandchildren.

Jim's son **Clarrie was born in 1979**. He went to school in Warburton and then went away to Coolgardie CAPS in high school and finished school in Year 10. His younger brother also did secondary schooling at Coolgardie CAPS. He and his brother have worked at the Land Management Unit and done some land management training. Clarrie has also done a range of other CDEP jobs including wood collecting, plumbing, and work at the Drop in Centre. His passion is playing music and writing songs and has a band with his brother and some of the other Warburton young fellas. Like his father Clarrie is quietly taking on leadership responsibilities by being a band leader and the captain of the football team. He also attends Ngaanyatjarra Council meetings on his own initiative. He has been involved in the youth arts work with his band and as a festival director.

¹²⁷⁴ *Desert School* by Neville Green (Green 1983).

George was born in 1956.

This is his story:

George and Jim have the same FM. Jim's father is George's father's oldest brother, but when George was young he only knew about his mother's family.

His mother's family was from around Kintore way. Most of his mother's family went 'Haasts Bluff way, Papunya way'. His grandfather (MF) had five wives and his grandmother was youngest one and she came 'Warburton way', but continued travelling back and forth 'Tjukurla way' after coming into Warburton Ranges Mission. When his mother and father married the missionaries first gave his family a surname. George had two brothers and four sisters.

His family,

...used to come here and go out bush again, go hunting and come back there with the rest of the families. They used to bring all the dingo skin, they used to sell'em and get all the *mirrka* and go out again. They got flour, tea, sugar, tin of meat. Some other families used to come in and they get some *mirrka* and go back. My older sister went in the Home then, and they spent more time here...they put her in the Girl's Home...my two older sisters they been in the Home here, I never went to school here, I was about two years, one and a half, something like that...my father used to work for the missionary, looking after the sheep and goats. We had some people coming from Laverton for ceremony and my father found out he had families that way, that one he been looking for. So that's when we start travelling that way, to look for families too, that's when my father been seen his brother, Jim's old man...my father's oldest brother.

We moved from here in '58...then the families moved that way first and we went behind. With the camel we walk, we start travelling with the camel, we put our swag on the camel then we walk. Camel used to go, wait for us, when old people, they used to go off the road, do hunting, meet up in that place where we gonna camp. Lot of families travelling that same time. I was about two or three. The family stayed in Cosmo for a couple of years, my old man been working round there, looking after the sheeps. It was mission, cattle, growing vegetables there, garden, school. But I wasn't going to school then I was just doing kindergarten, preschool. Till I went to Laverton when I was about five, start going to school then around 1962.

When George's father went to Laverton 'he did a little bit of job, carting wood for Native Welfare...for the reserve' while his mother looked after the children and his older sister who was about 16 worked in Laverton hospital.

That school building still there today in Laverton, small building. Every afternoon after school our class used to go to the big picture hall, we used to polish the floor, had a wooden floor, grab a bag, put some kids on the bag drag it round, good fun, but we didn't know we was working. We was polishing the floor. White kids in that school too. More *Yamangu*, not much white kids, only few, was working families. We lived down the reserve in Laverton. Still same village, reserve we used to have the old house and there'd be the *wiltja* too. We lived in the *wiltja*, there was bottom end side and top end. About as big as Warburton now. In that time it was big, biggest mob there.

The family lived in a *wiltja* on the Laverton reserve from around 1962 for about four years.

Life was hard for my family when I was little...we had to go to school in the 60s, compulsory schooling – Native Welfare would check. Parents always told me to go to school. People thought there would be jobs at the end.¹²⁷⁵

Around 1967 the family moved to Leonora. While living at Nabberu Hostel the children attended Leonora School.

Leonora School had more white kids than Laverton...Mostly the kids who been living that school had their parents working on stations...It was good, go to school every day, night time we used to do our homework, boss set up little night class where they do a homework with kids...school was good...been winning a lot of awards for best in the class and all...for school work. I remember I won a trip, best boy in the class...I stayed there about '68, '69, then '70 I went to Kurrawang another school, Christian Home. I was about 14 then...I think the Native Welfare decided or, must be someone Native Welfare, because they had some kids my age going that other Nindeebai Hostel, going to the old high school in Kalgoorlie. But I stayed at Kurrawang in 1970.

At Kurrawang George would catch the bus to Eastern Goldfields High School in Kalgoorlie. While George was in Kurrawang his family stayed in Leonora,

...because I had a young brother and sister in Nabberu Hostel, so they was there looking after them. They was staying in the Reserve... [siblings] would go out to stop with the families on the weekends, then after the weekends they go back to the school, go back to the hostel.

In 1971 when George was 15 he was sent to Mogumber Agricultural College.

When Native Welfare tell me I got to go to school and my parents they support that Native Welfare. It make me sad when I go away from the family, but now look back it helped me so I can read and write and talk. But I used to come down holiday, during school holiday I used to come back from Mogumber, they used to send me on the plane straight to Leonora, spend time with my family, then I go back. That time my family was in station near Leonora. Glenorn Station.

George had a lot of education in the Goldfields, but as he notes with all his schooling experiences he 'never went to a mission school'.

In 1972 George was sent to Esperance and lived at Pedlar's Hostel where he started training for farm work.

I was there in Esperance working in the farm. We had like a hostel out on the farm called Condingup. That was owned by the Pedlar's, so out on the farm, instead of going back to Esperance we stayed in that little block of land we had from mission.

Up to ten men would work in the surrounding areas and were paid when they went back to Pedlar's where board was deducted from their pay. In 1973 when he was 17 George started an apprenticeship in boiler-making and lived for a short time at Mt Yorkine hostel in Perth.

I shift to Kalgoorlie that time now, apprenticeship as a welder there working on the building the pipelines for the water, pipeline bringing the water.

He used his literacy at work and in his leisure-time. During his apprenticeship he did a little bit of writing: 'write down all the welding rods and all that, name of the helmet and all that,

¹²⁷⁵ Data from (Kral and Ward 2000).

glass, safety glass'. And reading in his spare time: 'Post magazine, news, Readers Digest, had a lot of good stories in them'.

By 1973, his family had returned to Warburton and George followed soon after.

That's when I come through and went through the ceremony and got man then, '73, late '73. And I still went to work around the station when I go back to Yundamindra, yeah, go back there and work sometimes when I go back into town. Then when they start working here... I got a job working [in Warburton]...building the fence, the yard in Snake Well, stockyard...Like mustering cattle, I built the stockyard here...planting trees, sometime I work in the garage, old workshop. People still lived in *wiltja* right round the area...Mr Howell, when I came back he was boss, for a short time till that government took over then...people start working then and they used to get money.¹²⁷⁶ Lot of money. Like before mission time they used to get not much, you know, little bit, but when they was working they got more.

Then he went 'travelling round everywhere again, to Papunya, Amata, working round there, building new house'.

About that time I was working everywhere, round Northern Territory too...Then I travel to Papunya with my mother's family for work there, on the building, they build a big hospital there, '74, '75. Because I had a work experience, my time, I went in another country. But I spoke good English, they let me in because I could understand them, spoke good English. And I asked for a job and they said yes, and they even give me room to stay in the quarters with the workers, white workers.

After his return to the desert communities George had to regain his fluency in Ngaanyatjarra. George undertook learning Ngaanyatjarra literacy.

I did learning to read the language... used to come round, sit down and read books...in language, learning to read language then...from '74 to '76. Ah, it was hard for me [to pronounce the sounds in language] because in language and I finding it a bit hard to make the sound. So Mr Howell, Miss Glass and Miss Hackett, they help me get all the sound right first...I didn't get any certificate or any level, but I just learning how to read

He continued until he gained a competence in Ngaanyatjarra literacy equivalent to his competence in English. In the meantime George's became involved in church and governance activities that gave him purposeful involvement in regular literacy events.

By the early 1980s when they translating the Bible I was one of the first to read that in the church when they had that handover for that New Testament. I been read that, got a video about that somewhere, yeah...I used to work in the church, like caretaker. Reading Bible and looking after the church side here...Sometime I travel to other community tell the good news.

It was around 1985–1986 that George started to participate in activities that sharpened his capacity for leadership, including doing DAA management training, and joining the Land Rights convoy to Perth.

I was living in Cosmo then with my family. With my wife [Carmel – Family D], we was newly married, we shift that way, all her family so I went with them...I been working there training to be a

¹²⁷⁶ On the RED Scheme (see Chapter 4).

manager, looking after Cosmo... DAA from Kalgoorlie, they was learning us, teaching us...we used to go for course in Kalgoorlie with people from Coonana, Cundelee, Warburton... That's when my son been born there... then my daughter 'Nancy' was born in 1987. When they returned from Perth I came back here from Cosmo, shift here... After we left, it [Cosmo Newbery] was finished, nobody lived there, finished. People, when they start the Council they pick it up again... That's when I start get on the Council talking for land rights now, that's when I got the 99 year lease, I was involved in that too, got the 99 year lease at Warlu.

These years were the formative years for the Ngaanyatjarra Council that formed the solid foundation led by strong Ngaanyatjarra leaders including George who increasingly took more responsibility. He continues his story:

Most of the meeting used to happen at Mantamaru, in the bough shed, yeah. Mainly talked about land rights, how we gonna get land rights and that's when I start travelling to Canberra, go to workshop with other people, other Aboriginal people all over Australia, talking for land rights... Across the border they in South Australia they been get their freehold, Northern Territory, and we trying to do the same. And that's when I got involved. Doing the talking, I was involved in the 99 year lease that we got... I go down to Perth, meeting, talk to the Minister. Sometime we get him out here when Ernie Bridge was Aboriginal Affairs Minister. We used to get him down here. Also during that time I used to work for State Working Party, for petrol sniffing, work for AAPA in Perth with Marion Kickett... We did some books in Aboriginal language, Ngaanyatjarra language for young kids.¹²⁷⁷ We made them books for the kids from around this area... Got some of those books in the library and school. That's when we used to have a lot this one here [makes the hand-sign for petrol sniffing] too many young people passed away. And also drinking, people used to cart the drink every day. Till they made the By-laws... made it safe for the old people, old people to live in peace. Still they brought some drink, but not much, before that By-law it was really worse, people used to fight every night, kids had no sleep, somewhere around '83, '84, '85.

Around this time George began working with other Ngaanyatjarra and lawyers around the ultimate establishment of the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, as discussed in Chapter 4.

I was really happy back home, still we had problems, you know. Like when I got on the Council all our roads never been done, even this one going up to Laverton. So Council decide to put some member from Council to go on the Shire, Wiluna Shire. That's when my uncle, he was the first one [to be elected onto Wiluna Shire]... I remember the next election I took my little son and went to all the community, talked to people so they could vote me in. So we had the election and I was second one [from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands] into that Council, Wiluna Shire. Every month we used to fly down, we had a small plane, Ngaanyatjarra Council and we used to fly in for the meeting. Camp there, come back in the morning. Three of us Aboriginal men on the Shire including Dusty Stephens... We had a lot of problem in the Shire... We been having hard time with them pastoralists, so we decide to resign. We had a meeting in Warakurna to resign, then we had another election and most of all from this end been there. Ngaanyatjarra people mostly. During that time we had a rough time with the pastoralists. We been on the *7.30 Report* where they mention about having our own Shire out this way. During that time when we still on we did some travelling round Queensland to look at other Aboriginal Shire Councils... Went to see how they run their Council, Shire Council, local government. Came back, that's when after that we decide to all resign. After we resigned from the Wiluna Shire we had another Shire election over there in Wiluna. Most of the men was from this end... From there the Minister for Local Government decided that we should have our own Shire... I was Shire Councillor before I became Ngaanyatjarra Chairman but I was still with Ngaanyatjarra Council before I got on the Shire, *yuma*. I was a member of the Executive of Ngaanyatjarra Council, that's when I got into Shire Council there on Wiluna side.

Now I'm the longest Councillor still on Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku now, longer than anybody else. Work is mainly roads, money for roads, budget, get letters from communities or other department letting us know they are coming to visit, talk to Telstra. Sometimes we have the local government Minister come out here. Minutes get sent to the office, get them. Read all the report from the environmental health, who work for the Shire, their report we read. And like from the Youth

¹²⁷⁷ "Karnanyatjarra – 'Proud and Strong' (Groom 1988).

Development Officer, we read their report, yeah, telling how much money they been spend. People elect me as a Chairman for Ngaanyatjarra Council, '95 I think...

George has also played a key role in the Ngaanyatjarra Council.

We was still a bit worried and people needed a strong bloke to work, lead the Council...I had three terms as Chairman, I think. Chairman from 95-99, four years. Before I became a Chairman I used to help Ngaanyatjarra Council form the, you know what them old people get, that pension, cheque with the Saving Plan, help set that up for the old people. First meeting we had about that was in Kiwirrkura in '91. We said that the government gonna get hard when we get older, got to have some extra money so gonna start saving up so we start a Saving Plan so them old people get that cheque, like a top-up. George recalls how he was instrumental in choosing the site for the first cemetery in the Lands.

I was involved in some changes for setting up of the cemetery in Warburton which was the first in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, at that time no communities had cemeteries. Then other communities started having them one by one. I was taking care of the church then and we had the first funeral...All those things what I do I don't get paid. I do it for my people. I been doing it for a long time. I do it for my land and for my people so we can live in a good place. Like with this bitumen we got here, airstrip and all. To make things good to live in the community so people can be happy...I like to help people and make me feel good when I help somebody, people, like talking for the Shire to come up here, I'm really happy about that. And with the Council, a lot of things I did with the Council, make me really happy, I feel really happy inside. And for young people too. *Yuma*.

George and Carmel's son (Family D) is married to Adina (Family F) and they have one granddaughter Rosina (see Chapter 6) whom they often look after, along with other children in the extended family.

Family J Narratives

The 'Carpenter' family became associated with the mission at Warburton Ranges early on. The patriarch in the family had four wives.

Veronica was born in 1961 and Wendy was born in 1965. They have the same father and different mothers. They both recall their childhood in the 1960s, living in the camp with 'no houses that time'. They also remember that school in Warburton was 'good'.

Lots of kids was there, people, had good fun there, playing. We used to have big dining room there...big dining room, have a lunch there...big old building, showers, one boys side, and girl side. Come every morning and have a shower and put uniform on...and go to school...run into the dining room and have a breakfast and go. Have breakfast, line up for breakfast, four rows, four rows of girls, four rows of boys. Have breakfast, wash up, wash up, put things away, go to school...we used to sit down and look at the teacher, doing writings for us, we like school, yeah.

Although the family belonged to the Warburton region they also moved around.

They wasn't working...moving round to places in groups...Laverton, then to Mt Margaret. Backwards and forwards...They always go...They moved for ceremony, come back here, then move. People move around each community. People used to go to Wiluna, come back. Some people used to go to...Cundelee Mission, Mt Margaret Mission, Wiluna. Docker River was the other place, and further on Amata...Kids go to school for a little bit then family come and take it away.

The sisters recall going to school when in other locations. Later on they were sent to Fairhaven Hostel in Esperance.

High school. Fairhaven, we lived there, that was a Hostel, school was in a different area, go by motor, school bus, drop us off at the school...Lots of kids. All mixed, white and black...All in different class each...away for long time. School, want to learn more, come back and teach their kids and their grandkids too...We went for school. We learnt cooking, sewing, riding horses and all. We used to ride little ponies and all...little motorbike. And on the weekend time go for ride on boats...Reading and writing in school...When they homesick or fight with someone. Fight with some of our family, start to run away, worry for mother and father...Running away, getting homesick because family is long way.

They recall especially that lots of the teenagers, themselves included, ran away from Esperance and returned to Warburton.

We didn't come by road, we came by aeroplane. GAS plane from Kalgoorlie, Goldfields Air Service, long time. When we came back we did another work here, school, back same school, we was teaching the kids, Kindies, some girls was working in the dining room helping the ladies dish it out food, dishwashing, wash the dishes, sweep the floor, tidy up the tables... Same job, or clean the house, missionary's house, clean it out. Rake up yard. Help clean the store, stack all the tins up ready for shop. All the girls did that. Boys was free, they don't wanted to work. Just hang around. If the boys worked they would rake the yard, with a wheelbarrow, take the rubbish, empty it to the truck, bring the truck to the yard, go for wood, get some wood for old people. Few jobs, just little bit, not enough people was here, only teachers and some missionaries.

They don't remember any reading and writing in the camp when they were young.

There's no books only school books...Some girls used to write letters. They used to, they didn't have biros and all that, pencil and rubber...them girls would read [the letters]...They used to go

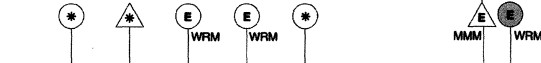
Family J

Generation

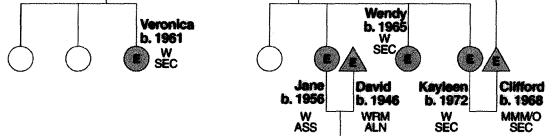
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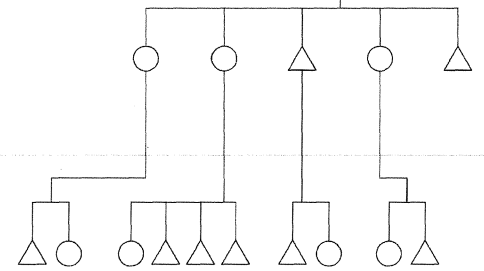
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3



4



*	No school nomadics
E	Education
Primary Schooling	
MMM	Mt Margaret Mission
WRM	Warburton Ranges Mission
CNM	Cosmo Newbery Mission
Primary (& Secondary Tops) Schooling	
W	Warburton
NL	Ngaanyatjarra Lands
O	Other
Secondary Schooling	
ASS	Assimilation Hostels (Eastern Goldfields)
SEC	Secondary (CAPS / Karalundi / Wiltja / Yirara / EGHS)
Adult Education	
ALN	Adult Literacy (Ngaanyatjarra)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Diagram by Clive Hilliker

church. Only, what that book, Christian one, song, English one, Redemption one. [For] them older peoples. They was taught [to read], here somewhere, mission time. We didn't know, we was little kids.

They describe their literacy practices now.

Some books, read books, magazines, Women's Weekly about stories, or mission book...From the library there, college or at some Christian man's house. Office, letters from someone, family or government. From prison or somewhere. Had some [letters from prison] but threw them away...get it [letters] from family, long way family. Get it from government. Somebody can read it for them.

Veronica describes how at home 'I have some books like this Woman's Weekly or them other ones newsletter, about what's this one...or story about them kids, bedtime story'.

They also try and keep a writing pad at home, but storage is a problem.

Cupboard, kids get it quick, *yuma*, big problem, belt them...phone numbers, address, phone numbers to families, might ring to families or write letter to them. Keep them in the bag or cupboard, on shelf.

The two sisters work at the Shire, where they read whatever books or magazines are around or they read for work.

We can read the fax when it comes through, or get a message when phone call, write the message leave it for the. Write anything, stories on the painting, on the back of the painting, write the stories down, type it down, take a picture, measure it. We do all that here. We do it. She do it on the computer. But I measure it, measure the paintings, get the picture, camera, then make it large and put it on the canvas and the story, clip it on, take it to the Warta Shop, put it in for sale. It's all there. We write, every day we do this. Write the stories down, typing it. When people come ladies come with a painting here for sale, ask us...We explain it: 'no money here, or can't give it out, have to leave your painting here till anybody buys it, leave your stories here and painting, painting and story.' So we do it, type put it away...or if some lady is clever she writes it home, bring it self...I seen a lot of ladies do that. Their names there in the gallery, all the artists.

Outside of work the two sisters are busy.

On weekends, do some little painting, painting on canvas. Watch videos yeah. We go out bush on weekend. We travel around, holidays, that's all, come back here for work. We sit down and do *purmu*, artifacts or painting...these ones I make...We don't do much art, we do little bit, painting, yeah we do little bit...Some do it for a living you know, to have money, keep them going... Some families work. Some don't work. They sit down, get pay.

This family is enterprising and work together as a 'family business' to make *purmu* (see Chapter 5). Consequently, they pay attention to notices up around the community because they are looking for that information 'like *purmu* man coming, we can read'.

Wendy's older sister **Jane was born in 1956**. Jane is married to David.

I was living here in Warburton with my family when I was little. Went to school here. At school used to, from camp we used to go to school, camp was all around here because it was flat, no trees, go in *wiltja*, camp, go and have shower at the big shower block, go to the dining room to have a feed then go to school, get together with them other kids and it was really nice going to school. Camping in *wiltja*, going to school and we used to camp with the parents and go in the morning like for shower and go for breakfast then come to school...they been living in the *wiltja*. Only had couple of houses, only few houses, only three houses was put up that time when I was going to school... That was my brother, he passed away long time. And other one was my cousin, only had two house...He

was working out in the Western Mining thing, out in the copper, yeah... At first they don't get money, only feed I think.

When Jane went to school she remembers having her meals in the dining room and a shower before school.

They used to have school clothes like, not school clothes but they used to have those mission clothes. Yeah we had that white dress sort of thing... I went half to like Laverton school, half here. And I went from here to Kalgoorlie. Because my parents was travelling backwards and forwards. For holiday, families, coming back, staying there for a while, going back. In Laverton I think they were getting rations and here too when they come back... Went to Kalgoorlie District High School... I stayed half there in Nindeebai, was good there, lot of kids there from all over, all around... In the morning we just have like maths or writing.

Jane recalls that the teacher told the students that they were being transferred to Nindeebai Hostel in Kalgoorlie. She thinks that her family understood what was going on and that they trusted the teachers.

Teacher tell us tell to the parents and parents say: 'Yuuwa, you right.' Because my sister was there first. My other two... they was there. So I went.

But Jane was lonely at Nindeebai and finished school around 14 years of age and returned to Warburton.

Warburton, families. Nothing happening. Small, little place, old mission small one. Yeah I was living here in that government time, still here hanging around when the government took over... I didn't do the job, nothing I was still sitting around.

Jane has always lived in Warburton.

I work half at the roadhouse for one year, cleaning units. Looking after the units, like cleaning up laundry, toilets, don't like it mopping too much... and I get pain too, so I thought I leave it, then I came back to same job, health... Long time, long time when that Community Health been running that clinic, 'cause I been working for them, but I never been out for training, nothing. That was only when the Ngaanyatjarra Health took over, so I just wait for a while then I went to... *Certificate III* and *IV*... I'm still looking forward to do one next year... It's a little bit hard.¹²⁷⁸ Writing, you know. I need to do it, I like to learn more, writing. [Read] notes, not of the patient, but like little book in there, got to look at it, read it.

Although Jane reads at work she says,

No, I don't keep any books at home... Bible in there for David got it... I got nothing... Magazines, get it from the clinic, they got a lot... I read it in there, I don't bring it here.

Jane's husband **David was born in 1946.**

David is respected for his role as a Ngaanyatjarra literate (see Chapter 4), yet he had little formal schooling. He gained his literacy competence in his own language as an adult.

Some people they read because they know the English newspaper and all that to read. I don't read the newspaper in English, only in the language I read... You know because I never been went right

¹²⁷⁸ Ngaanyatjarra Health Service is a Registered Training Organisation and delivers *Certificate III in Aboriginal Primary Health Care Work*. *Certificate IV Aboriginal Health Worker* is provided by Bega Garnbirringu AHW Learning Centre in Kalgoorlie.

through in the school because I just been left school when I was 15, aged 15 in Ranges here. That's all in Ranges.

When David came into the mission he was put into the Home. He finished his schooling in the early 1960s he began working in the mission.

I was looking at them when I was, some people was working and I know, well I better start working too...I was fine about the work when I was young fella because my nanna is finished and my father is finished and my mother was, I lost my mother when I was a baby, only second mother been looking after me. And that's why I was working myself because no-one feed me, to give me clothes.

So he started working with the missionaries like the Siggs, Wells and Howells.

One time I was a little bit working with the electrician...That was on mission time, putting in lights for the missionaries when we first built that mission power house there.

Electricity first came to the mission when he was working with Mr Lydon at the power station and the missionaries were 'living in the mud brick houses'.

We don't have a house at that time, we was on the *wiltja*. We used to camp long way, see that airstrip other side airstrip and all, right around we used to shift around, because when we make lot of mess we shift to other place, that way or this way or that way. We just keep shifting around you know.

Then David worked in the old store and in the bakery with Laurie Ash making fresh bread for the community.

From there, I heard that there was a new settlement in Docker River being put up. So I went to Docker River for work. Most of the people working at Docker River were from Warburton. One whitefella put me as the foreman, so I was working through the gap, putting up the stockyards for the bullocks, making fences, blocking up all the gaps so no cattle could go out.

Like other Ngaanyatjarra men David ventured further into the Northern Territory following work that had become available as the new government settlements were built across the Central Desert. After this he returned to Warburton and married his wife Jane and they had five children. This was 'government time' at Warburton and he was involved with building work at Warburton and on the new outstations. David's brother was working hard for Pitjantjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra people during the 70s and 80s and was on Wiluna Shire.

Meanwhile David found his own vocation in Ngaanyatjarra literacy and began working with Glass and Hackett.

I couldn't even read my own language because, I was thinking: 'How come? I should be reading my own language.' And these two ladies been give me, teach me how to talk and write...we went up to Darwin, before the Tracey Cyclone went across, I was in the caravan and we always go out and Dorothy and Anee always teach us how to read through like *pa-pa, ma-ma*...and we got better and better. And he told us, right I want you to, he give us a sort of paper like this and we had old *nyaapa*, what that computer? Typewriter, old typewriter and...we been working together like this...And we write down. I was getting learn how to sort of be fast type writer [laughs]. That's learning, when I was good hand before.

David has written, authored and illustrated many traditional Ngaanyatjarra stories, some of which have been published.¹²⁷⁹

And that's the time we was making, writing a stories too, drawing and writing a story. So all the story and painting and all, just making a pictures and that to go on the, *nyaapa*, story. So from there, Dorothy been send away to Sydney to make books. She made all the books, yeah, *tjuma pimirnya* made into a book. So all the tourist been buying all the books in the city over there, Sydney.

David is also a prolific letter writer as discussed in Chapter 4. Although many years ago his writing arm was injured in a fight in Kalgoorlie and he now dictates his texts and they are scribed by literate friends. At home he keeps a Bible and a few papers in a metal cupboard, everything else he carries in his wallet. He tells me that his wife Jane keeps all her,

...paperwork in his [her] bag because [s]he been working in the clinic and all his[her] paper [s]he got. *Yumma*, I don't have a lot of books and papers and all. Only keeping all the photos, family's photo. Other photos there too. Only the paper I got is the Bible.

Precious family photos have been kept in a bag over many years

I just leave them in a bag. If they want to have a look at the photo they can come and ask me and I'll give them the photo to have a look.

He says his children are,

...learning how to read and write, I mean they trying to read and write. If they bigger they might put one over me or they might go to the highschool and learn properly.

He says of his children:

They never went to the high school and all that, *wiya*... They never been go into the school and all... That's why, that's why I was telling them to keep on going in the school, never mind they getting big and they getting *mimijarra*, they got to keep learning, got to keep going to the high school and all and keep learning properly. Like what they look at on the TV and all. The people, all them girls with *mimi*, they still going, like a woman, they still going to the university and learning everythings, if they want to be a carpenter they can go in and learn how to be a carpenter or electrician.

The youngest sister in the Carpenter family **Kayleen was born in 1972.**

She is married to Clifford. Kayleen went to school in Warburton and recalls that it was 'great fun, reading, writing and other things'. When she was older she went to,

Esperance, highschool, lots of white childrens. I went school there, maybe at the Project Centre. Reading and writing. Sometimes go to white people's school, change classes, like cooking and sewing and all sort of things. At the missionaries hostel, Fairhaven. Nice place. Lots of things like trampolines, and going out to the beach on the boat.

She says she only went halfway 'came home and stopped' because she felt homesick at Fairhaven. When she returned to Warburton she started working.

¹²⁷⁹ (Glass and Newberry 1990 [1979]).

At the store. Looking after the clothes and things in the store, stacking foods, cleaning. We doing stocktake at the store. White people gotta write it down and we do it, put tags and numbers. Little bit writing, messages. Then Clinic, cleaning floors, walls, windows.

Kayleen has now been working in the community office for five years. For the first two years she worked in the office reception just answering phones and talking to people. In this job she has to do a lot of reading and writing. 'Centrelink letters, read it' out to the people 'in language, especially the old people'. She understands these letters a little bit and if the English is too difficult she asks the office staff to explain it to her. A few years ago she started observing and asking questions and was given increasing responsibility. Kayleen has been trained on the job to enter and process payroll data over the past year by an office manager. She also writes, sends and receives office faxes and uses the computer.

Do it by myself. Use the password and open it and do work in the computer. Hard like when they ask for money and say no. Sometimes, get tired, but people never get wild with her over money... Count moneys. Do the pays for people in Warburton, in Patjarr and Kanpa. Add them up [hours on the CDEP timesheets], put the money in payslips. XXX helps, do it together. Me and XXX both... Giving cheques out, writing order for people and send their money away to other places when people ring for their money like in Kalgoorlie, Trilby Cooper Hostel. People ring for their money and we send it, write it down and send it... On a order book.

When I asked how she learnt the skills required for the job, she answered, 'I don't know, learn self'. Kayleen is now the certified Centrelink Agent in the Warburton office and works directly with the Centrelink office in town.

Kayleen describes how her family,

They like working... 'Jane's' Health, 'Wendy' and 'Veronica' at Shire... They don't want to sit down and get little money, they want to work to buy some things for their self.

Asked why she works, she answers, 'it's alright, when it's home it's boring, it's happy to work'. The other money work the family does is *purnu* where the family 'go out bush, cut trees' and make artefacts for sale. She doesn't do painting, and only sometimes goes out bush. At home she reads 'magazines... I got lot in the room, newspapers'. She keeps them in her room 'in a basket'.

I've got that big book at home about all the Aboriginal people from the long time ago... Warburton. You know, *Drop in the Bucket*.¹²⁸⁰ I read that every night... Clifford brought it from Kalgoorlie. Someone gave it to him in the prison.

Kayleen likes reading history especially about the 'Mt Margaret stories, about girls been run away'.¹²⁸¹ That one, mission one, blue one'.¹²⁸² She describes how her husband Clifford likes

¹²⁸⁰ (Morgan 1986).

¹²⁸¹ (Dowley 2000).

¹²⁸² (Plant and Viegas 2002).

reading at home too, 'books, magazines and them other books'. But they don't do any writing at home, except for phone numbers which they keep 'in the little piece of paper'. Clifford buys magazines from the store—*Take 5*—for the word puzzles and they've 'got lots, home'. She goes to church sometimes, 'we've got a little red one [Bible], English one. She recollects the Ngaanyatjarra songbook from her childhood, 'my mother used to have it, she still got it'. Kayleen also used to do Ngaanyatjarra reading 'with Miss Glass and Miss Hackett, they go round and ask, I was doing it long time'.

Kayleen's husband **Clifford was born in 1968**. This is his story:

My mother's from Warburton, she was born in Warburton and she never had much schooling, just to third grade.

His MZ was also in the Baker Home along with 'Mary' and some of the other girls. Clifford's mother ran away from a traditional marriage at Warburton in her teens and went to Cosmo in 1955. Her parents had died and there was no-one here to look after her, and her brother had moved down to Cosmo and Laverton to work. So she moved with her cousins, uncles in April and Patricia's family.

So they just, her sister was down there at Cosmo and they just moved down to the mission... They just grew up and just went working I think, the younger people, younger family, but the older members of the family just went down because other family were there, uncles and aunts. All them mob, they was down Cosmo, Laverton.

His mother lived in the UAM mission at Cosmo till 1963.

Dad's from, he was born in Leonora. He went to school in Mt Margaret, they met in Laverton, he never had much schooling either, just basic, Grades 3, 4 something like that... Mum was, after she done her schooling she was doing house, housework and cleaning and things like that at Cosmo. Dad he was, from the early ages, he just went on stations, basically sheep, cattle stations.

His parents met when his father went to Cosmo to do shearing work. Clifford grew up at Cosmo.

I went to school Laverton. I was moving between Laverton, Cosmo, Laverton, Cosmo, Mt Margaret because my parents they was working on stations all the time. They was out at Laverton Downs, out at Bandy, back to Banjawan Station, back to Leonora area. If they was in the Leonora area we'd go to Mt Margaret stay with relatives there, like if they was at Yundamindra working we'd go to Mt Margaret and stay with my father's uncle. So we'd stay with them and when they moved from that station we'd go back to Laverton, back to Cosmo, in between like that. I'd go and stay with relatives at Cosmo when they was at another station or we'd all be there together.

His parents had to work.

Mum was, after she done her schooling she was doing house, housework and cleaning and things like that at Cosmo. Dad he was, from the early ages, he just went on stations, basically sheep, cattle stations. At that time, that era, that stage that was the law I think. But they was, well Aboriginal people weren't accepted in town, I think. That's what I think, so that's why they mostly out on stations. If they went into town, they was just told to move, go out. Even old people tell them go out, work. There wasn't hardly time to hang around town all the time, they was always work on a station, station work, move to another station, sheep station. I think they learned just to work, look

after yourself, put food on the table, something like that. That's all... Well the people who camped around the mission they were sort of cared for, you know? People who worked down that way Cosmo, Laverton, round Laverton, stations, Leonora, they was just, they had to work or else they wouldn't get nothing coming in. They learnt that habit. They had to work.

Clifford recalls that he never stayed on the station with his parents, but would be left with relatives so he could go to school.

We had to go to school all the time. I think it was in their upbringing you know, they thought it was right. I think they thought we had to go to school. So we was always at school, going to school, yeah, different schools. We got sent to Norseman stayed at the Norseman Mission. Oh, mum, she thought that, she grew up in a Christian sort of environment you know, mission thing. So she thought might do them some good, send them to mission. Like a couple of years I done at Norseman, three years I done there, finished about 15, 16. Then I went to that thing, Wongutha, training centre, had a year up there at Gibson near Esperance. Well there was school, school then just working, farm work. Basic yeah. Three Rs, yeah. When I left there I came back to Cosmo and stayed at Cosmo Newbery. Stayed there for a while, worked on the station... long time ago, in '86, '87. Yeah from there I went into town and Windarra was going and so I got a job at Windarra nickel mine. Oh then it was [easy to get a job]. I just walked in and asked: 'Can you give me a job?' and they said: 'Yeah, come back on this day' and I come back and stayed there for a while.

Clifford found it easy to get work at Mt Windarra nickel mine.

Well, I didn't need this doctor's certificate and all this other certificate. I just walked in and gave them what certificates I had from Wongutha, just show'em that, show the CEO. He said yeah, come back after a certain date and after the interview I got it. I was Trade Assistant in the workshop.

After a while 'things got a bit boring so I got up and headed up this way'

I stayed with my uncle and auntie, they was out at Tjirrkarli, they passed away now, Stayed with them for about a year, just working on CDEP then I came up this way after a year at Tjirrkarli. Did CDEP here [Warburton]. I dug that pool there, the pit for it, planting trees round here, most of the trees around that side, on CDEP we done the landscaping at the Cultural Centre, done a lot of work down there. I didn't read, didn't need reading or writing, basically labour, yeah.

Clifford perceives that nowadays it's harder to get jobs 'because you got to show all doctor's certificates and police clearance and all them sort of things'. Clifford works at the Shire. Until recently, he was on CDEP: 'I was doing a gardener's job, mostly just working around here, manual labouring'.

Now Clifford is a Shire employee and is the overseer for all the men who work at the Shire, driving the truck, collecting garbage, and gardening. Clifford claims that he works to 'put food on the table'. He sees that some people get money from playing cards rather than working, but he's not a gambler.

I suppose they can get it the easy way, they play cards or something... I got to work for it. Got to work for your money.

When he's not working he likes, 'fixing cars, if I got a book, read a book, watch television'.

Clifford reckons that his working habit comes from his family.

Little bit from my family, yeah just from them. I don't know I got family here, cousins from mother's side and I been thinking oh they not gonna help me with: 'Here come to my place and give me a feed'. Try and do something, just put food on the table, work, yeah.

Clifford considers himself a good reader, although he says he has never done any jobs where he has needed to do much reading and writing.

[Just] fill out documents, forms. Filling in forms when I first started...Hours, timesheet, how much hours you do.

For Clifford reading and writing is part of the practice of everyday life.

[I read] all sort of books, newspaper—*Kalgoorlie Miner*. Oh sometimes I just have a quick look. Something, oh anything, especially news, yeah. Read signs on the wall, I suppose [in the office] you walk in, just to see what is happening.

He buys the word puzzle books from the store and takes them with him in the work truck and does the puzzles when he has a spare moment. He and Kayleen keep books at home and he particularly likes reading about the history of his family and the region.

Drop in the Bucket and another one there *Through a Silent Land*, that's about those people down around Laverton way, who got sent away down south. Bit of that's in *Drop in the Bucket* too, my grandmother was a little baby in that story, got sent away from Laverton. Yeah, my grandmother was the child in that group of fifteen people who was sent away.¹²⁸³

He says he finds it hard to find things to read in Warburton.

There's nothing here. Oh at that thing there, college they got books there, you can read there. Oh not much. Because I'm always working and weekends they closed. Afternoons I come back tired, sometimes I get straight into bed.

¹²⁸³ The story of the escape of this group from Moore River is remembered by successive generations and has been recorded in the literature: *Through silent country* (Dowley 2000) documents the story of an incident in 1921 when police 'protectors' rounded up a group of Aborigines in Laverton and sent them by train to Moore River Settlement. It is also described in *Mt Margaret: A drop in the bucket* (Morgan 1986).

Family K Narratives

Louisa was born in 1959.

This is her story:

I was born in the bush round Patjarr, roaming around when I was small, when about five came to Warburton...life good up to about 1966, missionaries used to go around and pick people up and bring them to Warburton. Came here and started going to school. My family came from Gibson Desert to Warburton Ranges but only stopped here for a little while. Then stopping with family, camping other side creek, it was little reserve on other side of the creek with little houses, old...iron, just the iron and ground, that's all. Only tanks there.

I went into school, but didn't understand what was going on. School it was just, I thought school, it was fun, but I didn't even really recognise it was school. I didn't know that was the right place to learn, you know, for me. I didn't had no ideas about that. I just went along. The missionaries used to go round and pick us up from the creekbed. And when we got no car we used to walk early in the morning, have a breakfast early, come, have a little shower, used to be a shower block...That's where the boys and girls used to go and shower. In the first, we go shower, put a dress, we used to go to the dinner room, have a breakfast in the dinner room. After that some girls they do washing and dishes in the old dinner room. And we used to go straight to school after that breakfast. Have a dinner. Go back to school. And sometimes we have a sandwiches afternoon, not sandwiches, bun, old bun, stick a bit of cheese, whatever, sultana, all that little early days things.

I was thinking it was good fun, but why these people telling us to go to school. What's school, I couldn't understand what school is, I was a little bit nervous for school. Kids were cheeky to me. Bad kids, I think they don't like me they teased me in the school. Teacher used to go out and pick us up for school. We used to get up early before the sunrise, we had a breakfast and we walked straight to the old school.

I stayed here till seven or eight years old then I went to Laverton school, my grandmother took me there she lived there and she looked after me and put me in the school...I went to Laverton, I went with my granny because I didn't know in the first place, I didn't know Laverton was a town, old town. First time I saw a town. Lots of families went that way...I think they must be early days working there for food sake...I was looking at all the kids playing games and reading books, I used to look at the books 'cause I didn't know how to read. I didn't learn to read until I was about eleven years old at Leonora School. Finished school at about twelve years old.

After school we go play around the big mine, all the school kids...We used to play around the old creek. So when it gets afternoon, we go play around the merry-go-round, Play there and we could just run along home, to the old reserve in Laverton. My granny she took me to mission school [Mt Margaret]. She went to her stepbrother's house, people was there from all that tribe. They was all mixing then in Laverton, old reserve, no, mission. They used to move on to Laverton, move on to mission, move on to Laverton. They used to go up and down. Or go to Leonora, or to old Kookynie. Stop there, because if they don't working old Kookynie, they can't stay in Kookynie. That's the big station used to be. I used to stop with my grandmother at Mt Margaret. Dormitories was a bit finished that time. Was only little school, like cottage school.

Government mob [Native Welfare], that's the time they found out telling us to go to Leonora, to Naberu Hostel, Leonora School. We used to live in the dormitories, boys side, girls side. Two years there. Then family keep on shifting, so we have to go because parents was moving to Wiluna and after that. Then we got to Wiluna and I stayed there two years, and I stayed there, not really two years, just one, couple of half a months, like that and they said: 'We going to Karalundi then'. They went out [across to Wiluna, through Carnegie Station] from Karilwara, Gibson Desert and the Crown Land mob, them people, and this side like...that Tjirrkarli or whatever, that side and all they shift to Leonora...when Tjirrkarli was a nothing, they travelled through. They just came here, some walking in here, some walking went across. Went for business, and big families stayed, They made a big show everywhere: 'Oh we was the family.' And they was introducing everyone, crying to each

other, and they never see your family and you lose it, you came over, what this name and they pass away, you know? They was remembering.

They worked on stations get big money. They shift around Desert Farm or station they can work, or whatever. I was at Karalundi, Marrkilyi was there for few years in the dormitory. I was running amok, used to drink when too young. Welfare found me and said: 'Oh take this girl back to school Kalgoorlie'. They took me back to Kalgoorlie then, ended up over there then. No family never chased me. Stopped at Nindeebai for few years at Project Centre. School in the morning, afternoon, you know what they do? T-shirts or what we want to do, go to the other room. Sometimes I get nuisance so that's why I get a cane, you know.

Louisa remembers how:

At 20 I been working, world was just like free it was'. Came back to Warburton, me and [cousin] training as nurse. Then working YMCA...think one year. Then back to Laverton, I keep on going little bit drink, drink side, come back. Or keep going to Leonora, stay with my other families. Same trip I make it to Wiluna and come back. Come back here. Just get a job, any job. Used to do bits and pieces to get money. It was getting up to CDEP.

I read lot, I get a note from anywhere, you know and just read it with my own... I know how you know. I read it and understand. I have to write my letters to the Indigenous groups, let them know I been enjoying the thing and all that... They told me to put my name on the Internet, but nothing never happen with that Internet about me. I supposed to be in the Internet too...I got all that address for that, phone, email and all that in my office. I train for that Internet, to watch overseas what happening. [I read] note and fax and all that on wall.

I read lot Bible, I read any Chapter or any Prophet who wrote Bible, well I read it. I read but the Bible in bag, suitcase. That's how I get my sense back from reading and all that. Because I don't know the hard word in the Bible, I teach and I read, trying to read it, but I can't read it cause I have to spell it, then I read it. But I pray and like read straight out. Read all the history in the Bible, New Testament, Old Testament. That's what I pray to..., I pray first then I go to the big meeting like Ngaanyatjarra meeting, I pray and I go to any meeting I wanna go to...I read that one and this one [magazines]. I read newspaper.

Got NAATI Certificate for Interpreting. Darwin for leadership course—it was that thing like leader taking the, leading the way to the top, that thing. But lots of others, governance and all that, capacity. It was good. I learn anything like your thing here, there...Different skill, *yuma*. I understand with my knowledge. People speak English, no language, I just interpret straight away. That person say: 'Oh can you explain to me?' But Minister, I always interpret straight when the Minister say everything. I don't need a book or anything, I just put it in the head, all the word, so I can remember what he say. Read it straight out, I pick it up quick. Listen, I like to interpret same, English, what that man say is English, and I say it straight away all this and this and that...No preparation.

I want them to have a good life like I want my kids to train, train, learn, training, learn read. Go to Batchelor College or anywhere they want to go training. Like doing media and all that stuff...they can keep it, European side, you know what I mean, whitefella way, *maru* way. Like that...I want them to go to proper school and when they finish school they can do, you know, study, properly, when they leave school. Study night time, study day time...So they can get more sense, you know, so they can read library, whatever they want to read. Reading you know, giving them more ideas and strong, make them think, you know, tell them what is happening, what gonna happen for the future...I don't want my granddaughter or anybody's granddaughter to grow up lazy way, grow up sit down, no school and not listen to the mother and father...

Louisa has six children including her son Jake and daughter Darleen.

Jake was born in 1983.

This is his story:

My mother she was born in the bush, desert, and my uncles, my mother's brothers... But they went to school, but they smart. My uncle, he a policeman for South Australia, he the cops, he run around with the police Toyota, driving a big truck... I was living at Docker River when I was a baby, went across to, when I got a little bit big, went across to thing, Warakurna there, Giles, stayed there for a while, came this way, stayed here for a while. And we went on the Patjarr truck, old Patjarr truck, we went to Wiluna.

[Later] I came this way, went to Karalundi every year, right up to 2000, close the book. And I came this way, I went '91, '92, '93, '94, '95, '96, '97, '98, '99, 2000 when I came back 2000. I got a little bit of beard, a little bit thing, moustache, came back this way. I went over there when them mans come around and grab me and I went through Law, got free and my age got bigger and they told me to work. They told me: 'Oh you gotta get your pay soon, when you turn 16'. But I really want to go back school... To learn more 'cause you can't just grow up and leave school when you want. All them other like negro and Chinese they go school when they 18, 19 they still go school... Karalundi I was going to school, but, learn about Bible Study, learn all that... When I was at Karalundi when I was 10 I used to go high school 'cause in that little classroom, like 1st class, 2nd class, 3rd, I was the brainiest in them... at Karalundi. When I was nine years old I worked ABCDEFG all that, count numbers right up to 1000, 2000... I was too smart so they put me in high school and people, them students they was more bigger than me. But I used to get up in church and read Bible, preach...

When Jake was about 16 years old the Community Advisor told him,

'You not going school 'cause you getting CDEP work. You get paid, your school is over.' I can go back school, I'll go Perth anyway, go Yirara College Alice Springs

Jake's family takes their responsibilities and obligation in traditional Law seriously and this has been transmitted to the younger generation.

Family... take us out bush... show us how to cook kangaroos proper way, by the Law, and go out bush. I go out with all the mans, learn something from them. All the boys, all the mans, learn culture, come back for lunch, go back, camp. We do everything... all the old people they like say, telling stories about dreamtime and all that... keep culture strong... Because they might get the land off us... They want [us] to learn all them things because they heard about all the Nyoongas on that side, sea side... like them mob there, they lost their culture, they on grog at Perth, lost their stories, taken away from their mother to another place, stolen generation... That make you sad. But only thing in their mind long time is sport, they like playing sport like one fella he played AFL, he was the first Aboriginal man to play out there.

Like many other young men of his generation, Jake has spent time in prison.

Some boys they were in prison and on court time they don't understand what the judge telling them, they get sentence or go in prison for, they get their months, couple of months, they keep on ringing up to the shop, worrying about their children, wife, they keep going in prison. But if they build that prison [in Warburton] they'll get locked up in that prison there, this new one. [I went] Perth, Canning Vale. I was, I jumped onto the wrong car, that was a stolen car, my cousin was driving, he drove us... Cops pick me up at the house, sent me to court, I watched them other fellas, they don't understand lawyer telling them, helping them out. They say dumb way... [But] I understand. He told me: 'Oh you gonna get out in two months time'. I just went [to Canning Vale Prison], I was just doing my fine... No, that was for fine, not fine, that was they'll have to find out if you're really guilty or not guilty [remand].

Jake found that prison was:

Good fun. Sports, play soccer in that other big building, play football in the oval, do gym, everything, canteen, buy a drink, go back in the room, get locked up. They lock you up for 2 hours, let you out, walk around, do your things then come back...I'll go do boxing and all that, some they'll be boring playing pool table...But not much boys out here, only the young boys here...Like my age, but all the big boys there in prison...Too many, some doing life, lifetime. I was in, I seen them youngfellas, I seen them at Tjirrkarli football time last, 8 years ago, but they still in prison. 'Eh' they told me 'Who are you?' But I look at them when they talking, they speak English...Little bit, but they understand you but they been with all the Nyoongar boys. Hanging round with them. When I was hanging round with them they smoke ganja, do speed, aaaye, I walk off, 'Hey come back.' [they said], 'No you're right.' [I replied].

In prison he also met other young men from different cultures.

All the boys, whitefella, Chinese, everyone, negro. My friend he's a negro bloke. They thinking I was a negro bloke walking round, so I put my hat like this, I had a baggy jeans, shirt hanging out and all them Nyoongar boys they was keep staring at me. And all the negro they was staring at me: 'What's up? What's up?' They ask me for smoke, cigarette. They told me: 'Where you from?' 'I'm from Australia, where youse from? I'm from here.'...I learn about negros, play basketball, learn with them. Big fellas. But I was the, they call me Michael Jordan in prison, I have to run, slam it, long way, two step.

Whilst in prison Jake also participated in prison adult education classes.

Education centre, school there. I went in school, there's a big table with the fellas sitting right around. I was desk, they gave us paper each, the screw and the teacher, they go there, all the teacher, every day. When I got there they called me...to the Duty Office and I went: 'Oh what?' and they gave me a card to go down to the school. And I went down to the school, I went to school doing it...You have to go there. They'll find out if you're smart or dumb...Some blokes can't read properly, if you can't read properly you'll be going to school every day till you learn or if, you must be you got one month left, keep going school, get out. If you can read a book then you can go to school once and go out, never go back in...I was reading a book. Read, read, like they gave me the card, like thing, Grade 4, like '*Walykumunu palyarnu*'. Yeah, like that card, I don't know what that word, like excellent 'Grade 4'...No they was saying, "Oh you can read yeah." I was reading...

Jake recalls getting some kind of 'certificate',

That thing now, 'excellent', 'good work'...Yeah, they told me: 'Oh you can take it home, show your mother, families'...Threw it away in the bin in Kalgoorlie when I got out, New Year time I got out. I walked through the streets, seen all the drunken mob here, whitefella and all.

Since returning from prison this last time, Jake has been involved in many community activities in Warburton. He likes working with Mick fixing cars, participating in the Christian Convention and attending early evening Bible reading sessions at the church. Jake has also been participating enthusiastically in the youth arts projects for young people (see Chapter 7).

Louisa's daughter **Darleen was born in 1987.**

I went to school in Blackstone when I was first started pre-primary in Blackstone then we shift here to Warburton then I went school here when I was 6. Then I was still going school here 7 then 8. Then when I was 10 years old I went to Karalundi. My mother been send me. Some kids from Patjarr they go school there before when they had no school in Patjarr.

Gibson Desert families still prefer to send their children to Karalundi:

Because they wanted to, some kids they fight, make trouble, that's why...like my mum used to go there school...Then when I was 13 I stopped going to Karalundi, I don't wanted to go because too

much trouble. People, no, girls looking for fight... Then I was put school here in Warburton... till I was 15 and I went to Esperance, Wongutha CAPS, I went there. Then too much boys annoying me when I was going there. Some girls they look for fight with us.

After Darleen returned to Warburton: 'I was working in the Drop in Centre I was helping Steve for that counter'. She says she doesn't sniff, but spends most days walking around 'just sometimes we cruise around in the car, listen to music... We like going to the Drop in Centre and sometimes when it rains here we like going to the creek when it's full. And that's all.'

Darleen says she would 'like to work in the clinic or office and answer phone when people ring... for money... My mother she work for land management and interpreting... so one of us can, when she pass away we can take over her job'. Darleen describes how her 'favourite thing' is to sometimes 'read Bible with my mother, she got a two Bibles, and it's one youth Bible... young people's, English... because it's got stories in there... I only get magazines from my mother, she buy it and my sister buy magazines.

Angelina was born in 1973. She is the daughter of Louisa's sister and Vincent's brother.

I used to live in Warburton a long time ago, I grew up here and I used to go school here in Warburton. I'm 28 years old and I have five children... I finished my school here, Year 3, 4 and 5 and 6, 7, 8 10, I sent to high school in Esperance and started going school in Esperance, learning to cook recipes, leaning to read and write, painting. I was at Esperance High School and I stayed at Fairhaven Hostel.

She loved living at Fairhaven Hostel.

I wanted to go back I wanted to go there because I love to go school and do fishing and love to have fun, colouring t-shirt, learn about doing the t-shirt colouring the cushion, like dyeing it, lots of things.

She finished at Fairhaven when she was about 15 or 16 years old.

After I finished Fairhaven I came back to Warburton and I came and I was finding out what I'm doing here, where my school life, I lost my school, I was finding out who was organise the person can put me back to the same school... I wanted to learn more and more and more for my kids. I learnt that at school. I learnt to, I learned about how animals lived, how they take over the world, what are mammals, what aren't mammals, what's flying mammals and all sorts, learnt about lots of things. And I learn about going to church in Esperance when I was young, going into church, Sunday School, Bible study, learn about lots... Church is important because it's a life.

In the early 1990s Angelina went to prison for two months for sniffing.

Quit 'cause I don't want to ruin my life, turn around and look... They told me: 'Don't do that again you're a good girl.' And I stopped. Lots of girls used to sniff. Eastern Goldfields was nice, I was sniffing cause I want to go in prison, eat good food, learn, cook, play softball. It was like a hostel on girls side, it was OK nothing wrong. We wasn't really big troublemaker. I wanted fun in the prison, nice bed, shower, nice clothes, softball, that's all I sniff petrol, that's all I went for.

Then she went to Perth with her husband.

When I went to Perth did, when I went to TAFE in Perth...and I learnt about reading book, watching the movie about the world...Taking photo outside, having a cup of tea, reading and writing, math, sums, you know, math...Learn about cooking, learn about computer literacy, learn about going into the city and looking at al the books that Aboriginal people made long time ago...I organised it [course] myself...Because I like it, I like the skill, reading and writing, friend, nice friend, look after you, good friend, girlfriend, boyfriend, not Koori but nice friend, good people.

Angelina has worked as an Aboriginal Health Worker and an AIEO in schools. While she was working in school she was learning language: 'Ngaanyatjarra for kids, kindergarten...I was reading the English, learning the English, I was teaching the English kids, I was also learning myself...Like I want to keep reading.' She keeps up her reading in everyday life:

I like reading cartoon books or ABC, kids book...I read magazine, I read something on the TV. Read anything on the sign when I'm driving past. I read the letters myself [official mail]...I write things like I write my name and when person tell me to write some letter I write some and I ask for help and somebody help me finish my letter. When I'm writing I need a little bit of help from someone.

She keeps her mail:

Keep it, on my, on my bag, safety...I used to look after my reading and writing books and pencil when I used to go TAFE in Perth. I always look after my things.

Most days she,

...clean around, sweep around the verandah, collect the rubbish, burn the rubbish, make my bed up, get ready make dinner. Sometimes, when my time come. I love cooking. I love recipes, vegetable, fruit, but I don't like take-aways. I like cooking it myself... I read and write. But that's help me sometimes. But not really everyday. I listen to music, Celine Dion, reggae song, country gospel. Tambourine, I was using those musical instruments when I was twelve years old at school.

She also likes working:

Work important to me, for everyday life because life is a life, we'll work like everyone work. Some people want to work, some people don't want to work. People work for money because they want to buy food, clothing, fuel to travel.

I ask her if it is important to read and write in English and she answers me enthusiastically.

Yes, because I want to learn lot and lot and lot...Read and write more, learn for, so you can read.

Appendix C Language description

In this thesis I refer to speakers of a number of mutually intelligible dialects in the so-called Western Desert family of languages (within the Wati subgroup of the South-West group of the Pama-Nyungan family of languages).¹²⁸⁴ The Ngaanyatjarra dialect is spoken around Warburton and east towards the Jameson Range. Ngaatjatjarra is spoken round the Jameson Range, Blackstone Range and Rawlinson Ranges. Pitjantjatjara is spoken around the tri-state border region from around Wingellina in Western Australia east to the Mann Ranges in South Australia and into the Northern Territory. Other related dialects include Pintupi which is mainly spoken at Kiwirrkura, a little at Tjukurla and at Kintore in the Northern Territory. Yankunytjatjara is spoken further east of the Pitjantjatjara region in South Australia, and Manyjilyjarra, Gugadja, and Wangkatja are spoken in Western Australia.¹²⁸⁵ Dialect names in the Western Desert have arisen out of lexical distinctions plus the suffix *-jarra* (Ngaanyatjarra) / *-jara* (Pitj./Yank.) meaning ‘having’. For example, Ngaanyatjarra is the language ‘having’ the word *ngaanya* for ‘this’; Ngaatjatjarra is the language ‘having’ the word *ngaatja* for ‘this’ and Pitjantjatjara is the language ‘having’ the word *pitjantja* for ‘coming’.¹²⁸⁶

The letters or digraphs (a combination of two letters) that represent the sounds in Ngaanyatjarra are drawn from the English alphabet system. Ngaanyatjarra has six vowel sounds: short vowels (a, i, u) and long vowels (aa, ii, u). Ngaanyatjarra distinguishes three different kinds of l, n and t sounds (alveolar, dental and retroflex).¹²⁸⁷ The consonant sounds can be grouped as follows:¹²⁸⁸

¹²⁸⁴ (Glass and Hackett 2003).

¹²⁸⁵ (Glass 1997; Glass and Hackett 2003; Goddard 1987).

¹²⁸⁶ The various Western Desert dialects have been described by linguists over the decades. Early references can be found (Tindale 1936; Trudinger 1943). In the 1950s Wilf Douglas from the UAM began describing Western Desert dialects including Ngaanyatjarra (Douglas 1955; Douglas 1964). Ameer Glass and Dorothy Hackett commenced work at Warburton in 1963 and have described Ngaanyatjarra from a structuralist ‘tagmemic’ perspective (Glass and Hackett 1970; Glass and Hackett 1979 [1969]; Glass 1980). In the 1970s Ken and Lesley Hansen described Pintupi (Hansen and Hansen 1978) spoken in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Cliff Goddard produced a semantically-oriented grammar of the Yankunytjatjara dialect in the 1980s (Goddard 1983) and subsequently incorporated theories of ‘natural semantic metalanguage’ (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994). Further descriptive work has focused on Pitjantjatjara including (Bowe 1990) and an analysis by David Rose (Rose 2001) drawing on Michael Halliday’s theory of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday 1978; Halliday 1985). Daniele Klapproth has explored narrative as social practice (Klapproth 2004) and Annie Langlois has studied language change and teenage Pitjantjatjara (Langlois 2004). Various language learning texts have been produced including (Eckert and Hudson 1988) and a learners’ guide series published by IAD (Glass 2006; Heffernan and Heffernan 2000).

¹²⁸⁷ The retroflex sounds rendered as *rl*, *rn* and *rt* in Ngaanyatjarra are represented using diacritics (*ḷ*, *ṇ*, *ṭ*) in other Western Desert dialects e.g. Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1987) and Pintupi-Luritja (Heffernan and Heffernan 2000).

stops:	p	tj	t	rt	k
nasals:	m	ny	n	rn	ng
l-sounds:		ly	l	rl	
other:	w	y	rr	r	

In Ngaanyatjarra (unlike the closely related dialects Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara) ‘y’ is placed in front of word initial open vowels (e.g. *yuuwa* – ‘yes’ (Ng.) and *uwa* – ‘yes’ (Pitj./Yank.). Word final consonants on nominals are unusual and commonly suffixed with *-pa*. Ngaanyatjarra has a different grammatical system from English and employs suffixes to mark case relationships and bound or clitic pronouns (free pronouns are used less commonly). Some verbs also take prefixes and there are four verb classes (-la; -0; -rra; -wa). Ngaanyatjarra commonly employs enclitics for number marking on singular, dual and plural pronouns. There are two verb types, transitive or intransitive, with ergative marking on nouns.¹²⁸⁹

Warburton residents predominantly speak Ngaanyatjarra as their vernacular or first language, although the speech community includes speakers of other Western Desert dialects. A minority of residents speak English as a first language. A range of Englishes along a continuum from ‘Aboriginal English’ to Standard Australian English (SAE) can be heard:

Table AC.1 Language spoken at Warburton 2001

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>ATSI status by sex (Age 0 > 65+)</i>	<i>194</i>	<i>230</i>	<i>424</i>
Speaks English only	9	16	25
Speaks ATSI language (ATSI language spoken at home) and Speaks English (self-assessed):	175	204	379
Very well or well	113	143	256
Not well	51	45	96
Not at all	11	16	27
Not stated	10	10	20
Total no.	194	230	424

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing Warburton (IARE 23015 Community Profile Series)

¹²⁸⁸ (Glass and Hackett 2003: 3).

¹²⁸⁹ See: (Glass and Hackett 2003; Howell 1996; Obata 2003). Also see: (Blake 1977; Dixon 1980).

Appendix D Ngaanyatjarra glossary

Glossary of words or phrases not self-explanatory within the thesis text.

<i>Ngaanyatjarra word or phrase</i>	<i>English translation</i>
<i>kakarrara</i>	east (spatial adverb)
<i>kamurl(pa)</i>	camel (English loan word)
<i>kapi</i>	1. water 2. rain 3. waterhole (noun)
<i>kata</i>	head
<i>kayili</i>	north (spatial adverb)
<i>kuka</i>	meat (noun)
<i>kulilku</i>	will listen
<i>kunmarranya</i>	name for someone who had a similar name to someone who died (proper noun)
<i>kunmarnu</i>	word to replace words like the name of someone who died (noun)
<i>kungka</i>	girl (noun)
<i>kurra</i>	1. bad / wrong way 2. also used as a slang expression meaning 'fantastic' / 'wow' depending on the context
<i>kurri</i>	spouse; husband or wife (noun)
Rosemaryku <i>kurri</i>	Rosemary's husband
<i>kuru</i>	eye (noun) <i>kuru pirni</i> – many eyes
<i>kutjarra</i>	two
<i>kutju</i>	one
<i>kutjulpirtulpi</i>	1. long ago 2. previously / a while ago (time adverb)
<i>lirru</i>	snake (noun)
<i>marlaku pitjaku</i>	will come back / will return
Mama Godku book	Bible (Father God's book)
<i>maku</i>	'witchetty grub' – a type of bush food
<i>mara</i>	hand
<i>marlu</i>	kangaroo
<i>marlu-marlu</i>	pretend hunting game
<i>marlulu</i>	special boy sent on a journey before he is brought to manhood (noun)
<i>marnkurpa</i>	<i>three</i>
<i>mimitjarra</i>	breast + suffix 'with' (i.e. a teenage girl becomes 'mimitjarra')
<i>minyma</i>	woman
<i>mirrka</i> (syn. <i>mayi</i>)	food / vegetable food (noun)
<i>munta</i>	sorry! (exclamation)
<i>munta yuwa</i>	oh yes (mhmm / indeed)
<i>ngaanya</i>	1. here 2. this
<i>ngartutjarra</i>	poor thing (exclamation)
<i>ngayuku</i>	mine / my
<i>ngayuku tjamu</i>	my grandson / grandfather
<i>ngayukutju</i>	my one only
<i>ngula</i>	later, in the future
<i>ngurra</i>	camp
<i>ngurpa-rma</i>	ignorant + 1 st pers. sing. pronoun suffix
<i>ninti</i>	knowledgeable
<i>ninti purika</i>	really knowledgeable (adjective)
<i>nintipukalpayinya</i>	the really knowledgeable one
<i>nintirringku</i>	learn / become knowledgeable (intr. verb)

<i>nintirringkupayi</i>	(always) learning / becoming knowledgeable (habitual)
<i>nyaapa</i>	1. What? e.g. <i>nyaapaku palyala?</i> What [are we] doing it for? 2. thingumabob / whatyamacallit (noun)
<i>nyarratja</i>	there
<i>palunya</i>	1. the end / that's all (particle) 2. that one
<i>palyara</i>	doing
<i>piranpa</i>	1. white 2. white person / whitefella / non-Aboriginal
<i>pirmi</i>	lots of / many
<i>pimiya</i>	many + 1 st pers. plural pronoun suffix: 'many of them'
<i>purtu nyaku kamurl</i>	it can't see the camel
<i>tirtu nyakupayi</i>	always looking / keeps on looking
<i>tawarra</i>	young men's camp (noun)
<i>tawarrangkatja</i>	in the young men's camp
<i>tjilkatja</i>	accompanying a special boy travelling to manhood ceremonies in a ceremonial party (adverb)
<i>tjilkuku turku / nyarnpiku</i>	children's pretend songs / dances
<i>tjinguru</i>	maybe
<i>tjitji</i>	child (noun)
<i>warli</i>	building
<i>warntu</i>	1. blanket 2. clothes (noun)
<i>wangkaratjaku</i>	to talk (verb: purpose different subject)
<i>wanytjatja?</i>	where?
<i>waru</i>	1. fire 2. firewood 3. hot
<i>wati</i>	man
<i>warta</i>	tree/ bush/ plant (noun)
<i>wiltja</i>	1. shade 2. shelter (noun)
<i>wiltja-wiltja</i>	'cubbyhouse' game (i.e. reduplication indicating 'pretend' game)
<i>wilurarra</i>	west (spatial adverb)
<i>wiya / wiyartu</i>	no / nothing
<i>wiyarriku</i>	it will be finished
<i>yapu</i>	1. stone 2. hill (noun)
<i>ywarra</i>	track / road
<i>ywuwa</i>	yes
<i>learnarringu</i> (English loan word)	he/she learned
<i>readtamalpayi</i>	always reading (e.g. <i>jungarralu readtamalpayi</i> – he always reading by himself)
Suffixes	
<i>-ku</i>	possessive or purposive nominal case ending (for, of belonging to)
<i>-lu</i>	ergative ending for a nominal when it is the subject of a transitive sentence (i.e. doing the action) e.g. <i>papa-lu tjilku patjarnu</i> – the dog (subj.) bit the child (obj.).
<i>-nga</i>	ending for name of person or place with word-final consonant e.g. Lorraine- <i>nga</i> , mum- <i>nga</i>
<i>-nya</i>	ending for name of person or place with word-final vowel e.g. Barry- <i>nya</i> (i.e. subject of an intransitive sentence or object of a transitive sentence)
<i>-pa</i>	ending for nominals that are not names with word-final consonants e.g. <i>marlany(pa)</i> , <i>gamepa</i>
<i>-ngka</i>	locative nominal case ending (at, in, by) e.g. <i>ngurrangka</i> – in the camp; <i>songbookangka</i> – in the songbook

Source: (Glass and Hackett 2003; Glass 2006)

Appendix E Population estimates

Table AE.1 Estimated population at Warburton Ranges and Cosmo Newbery 1936–1973

	<i>Warburton Ranges</i>			<i>Cosmo Newbery</i>	
	<i>Estimated population</i>	<i>Children under 16 and attending school</i>	<i>Rations/ subsidies Child Endowment and Pensions</i>	<i>Estimated population</i>	<i>Children under 16 and attending school</i>
1936	--- (Data n/a)	22 ¹	---		
1937	300	20 ²	---		
1940	---	43 ³	---		
1944	403 ⁴	---	---		
1945	370 adults	50 ⁵	---		
1947	---	16 ⁶	---		
1948	120 - 150	27 ⁷	---		
1949	402 ⁸	45 ⁹	---		
1950	500 - 700	87 ¹⁰	---		
1951	-	80 ¹¹	---		
1952	-	-	---		
1953	-	-	66 children, 20 adults ¹²		
1954	-	-	66 children, 20 adults		
1955	250 ¹³	55 ¹⁴	28 children, --- adults		
1956	-	75 ¹⁵	---		
1957	198 ¹⁶	83 ¹⁷	71 children, --- adults		
1958	-	104 ¹⁸	92 children, 21 adults		
1959	300-350 ¹⁹	-	95 children, 27 adults		
1961	400	120 ²⁰	85 children, 8 adults 35 Pensions, £3,000 Child Endowment	12 ²¹	16
1962	450	122 ²²	46 Pensions, £2,000 Child Endowment	16 ²³	
1963	450	100 ²⁴	---	16 ²⁵	12
1964	450	86 ²⁶	---	45 ²⁷	15
1965	450	100 ²⁸	---	25 ²⁹	14
1966	378	101 ³⁰	---	25 ³¹	13
1967	454	118 ³²	---	40 ³³	9
1968	435	118 ³⁴	Pensions & Child Endowment to WRM	43 ³⁵	17
1969	401	120 ³⁶	Pensions & Child Endowment to WRM	54 ³⁷	14
1970	417	136 ³⁸	Pensions to individuals Child Endowment to WRM	46 ³⁹	18
1971	400	104 ⁴⁰	Pensions & Child Endowment to individuals	63 ⁴¹	22
1972	408 ⁴²	104 ⁴³	Pensions & Child Endowment to individuals	50 ⁴⁴	20
1973	435 ⁴⁵	120 ⁴⁶	---	75 ⁴⁷	26

Table AE.2 Estimated Aboriginal population Warburton and Eastern Goldfields towns 1935–1983 (incl. children)

	<i>Warburton</i>	<i>Cosmo Newbery</i>	<i>Laverton</i>	<i>Mt Margaret</i>	<i>Leonora</i>	<i>Wiluna</i>
1935	- (data n/a)	-	790	-	65	87
1936	-	-	700	-	61	76
1937	300	-	700	-	59	74
1944	403 (excl. chn)	150	283	250	262 (excl. chn)	349
1945	420	233	200	114	120	349
1964	450	60	768	96	595	-
1965	450	39	862	-	641	-
1966	378	38	393	100	667	-
1967	454	49	336	86	373	-
1968	435	60	352	63	392	-
1969	401	68	360	92	463	-
1970	417	64	136	143	594	-
1971	400	85	220	233	612	-
1972	408	70	243	167	505	-
1973	435	65	169	70	275	318
1974	438	75	200	73	269	349
1975	251	62	231	107	282	376
1976	273	68	313	130	157	454
1977	350	53	102	151	231	473
1978	350	68	313	140	157	435
1979	230	26	89	126	235	434
1980	400	130	326	170	354	456
1981	400	80	337	176	366	505
1982	573	62	140	173	238	501
1983	453	72	169	151	287	470

Source: Annual Report Chief Protector of Aborigines June 1935–1936
 Annual Report CNA 1937
 Annual Report CNA 1944
 Annual Report CNA 1945
 Annual Reports CNW 1964–1972
 Annual Reports AAPA and ALT 1973–1983

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- ¹ Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines 30th June 1936. Perth: WA
 - ² Report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs (CNA) 30th June 1937. Perth: WA
 - ³ *United Aborigines Messenger*, September 1940
 - ⁴ Report of the CNA 30th June 1944. Perth: WA
 - ⁵ Annual Report of the CNA 30th June 1945. Perth: WA
 - ⁶ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters July 1947 Memo from Bisley Inspector of Natives to DCNA*
 - ⁷ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1948
 - ⁸ WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 30/5/50 CNA to D/Director of Rationing*
 - ⁹ Annual Report of the CNA 30th June 1949. Perth: WA
 - ¹⁰ Annual Report of the CNA 30th June 1950. Perth: WA
 - ¹¹ WA SRO ACC 1419 23-7-3—*Missions UAM Mission Reports Annual Inspection 4/12/51 McLarty (District Officer Central) to A/DoNA Kalgoorlie re report on Warburton Ranges Mission*
 - ¹² Annual Report Commissioner of Native Welfare (CNW) 30th June 1954
 - ¹³ (Grayden 1957)
 - ¹⁴ WA SRO ACC 1419 23-7-3—*Missions: UAM Mission Reports Annual Inspection June 1954–June 1955 Annual Report from UAM to DNA re. Warburton Ranges Mission*
 - ¹⁵ *United Aborigines Messenger* May 1956
 - ¹⁶ WA SRO ACC993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters (April-May 1957 H. Moorhouse Survey Report of the Warburton District)*
 - ¹⁷ WA SRO ACC993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters 4/3/57 Sanitation Inspection Report Warburton Ranges*
 - ¹⁸ WA SRO ACC993 360/56—*Warburton Ranges Matters 18/12/58 ADO Eastern Goldfields report on Inspection of WR Mission*
 - ¹⁹ (Berndt and Berndt 1959)
 - ²⁰ WA SRO ACC 1419—23-7-3 15/162 *letter from CNW to Federal Secretary UAM*
 - ²¹ Annual Report Commissioner of Native Welfare (CNW) 1961
 - ²² Annual Report CNW 30th June 1962
 - ²³ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1962
 - ²⁴ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1963
 - ²⁵ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1963
 - ²⁶ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1964
 - ²⁷ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1964
 - ²⁸ *United Aborigines Messenger* February 1965
 - ²⁹ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1965
 - ³⁰ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1966
 - ³¹ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1966
 - ³² Annual Report CNW 30th June 1967
 - ³³ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1967
 - ³⁴ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1968
 - ³⁵ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1968
 - ³⁶ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1969
 - ³⁷ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1969
 - ³⁸ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1970
 - ³⁹ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1970
 - ⁴⁰ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1971
 - ⁴¹ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1971
 - ⁴² Annual Report AAPA and ALT 30th June 1972
 - ⁴³ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1972
 - ⁴⁴ Annual Report CNW 30th June 1972
 - ⁴⁵ Annual Report AAPA and ALT 1973
 - ⁴⁶ *United Aborigines Messenger* September 1973
 - ⁴⁷ Cosmo Newbery Annual Report—UAM, March 1973, NTU Files

Appendix F Post-primary schooling estimates

The following data is an indication of the number of adults who claim to have experienced secondary or post-primary education. The duration is not included and in some cases it may be as short as a few weeks.

	<i>Young (15–25 yrs)</i>		<i>Middle (26–40 yrs)</i>		<i>Old (41–61 yrs)</i>	
	Government schooling + secondary (1984–1993)		Government schooling + secondary (1969–1983)		Mission schooling > assimilation hostels (1948–1968)	
Warburton	27	14.4%	19	9.0%	---	(nil) ---
Other Ng. Lands communities	50	26.7%	9	4.3%	---	---
Mt Margaret	2	1.0%	---	---	2	1.7%
Laverton	5	2.7%	4	1.9%	1	0.62%
Norseman	1	0.5%	14	6.7%	7	5.9%
EGHS	2	1.0%	10	4.8%	14	11.8%
Boulder Project Centre	---	---	6	2.9%	7	5.9%
Wongutha Farm	---	---	1	0.5%	7	5.9%
Esperance H.S.	3	1.6%	19	9.1%	10	8.4%
CAPS	21	11.3%	28	13.4%	---	---
Karalundi	9	4.9%	1	0.5%	2	1.7%
Multiple hostels or schools, WA	7	3.9%	29	14.0%	12	10.0%
Yirara**	6	3.2%	15	7.2%	5	4.2%
Other NT	6	3.2%	2	0.9%	---	---
Wiltja***	21	11.2%	8	3.8%	---	---
Other SA	---	---	3	1.4%	2	1.7%
<i>No post-primary</i>	27	14.4%	38	18.2%	47	39.5%
<i>Unsure</i>	---	---	3	1.4%	3	2.5%
TOTAL No. *	187	35.5%	209	39.6%	119	22.6%

Source: Ngaanyatjarra Council CDEP Skills Audit 2004

* From total interviews (# 527): twelve adults aged 61+ as they had no primary schooling or no secondary schooling.

** Yirara College in Alice Springs opened as a residential secondary college for Indigenous students in 1973 and in 1993 management of the college was transferred to the Lutheran Finke River Mission Board.

*** The Wiltja program for Indigenous students is annexed to Woodville High School in Adelaide, SA. It was initiated by the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee for students from the Pitjantjatjara Lands, SA.

Appendix G Census household data (2001)

Table AG.1 Indigenous households

	<i>Households</i>	<i># persons in household</i>
One family household	23	107
Multi-family household	37	320
Total	60	427

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing
(Warburton (IARE 23015 Community Profile Series))

Table AG.2 Number of persons usually resident in separate households

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7-9</i>	<i>10+</i>	<i>Total</i>
Separate house:	0	4	3	6	7	10	18	12	60
1 bedroom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 bedrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 bedrooms	3	4	3	6	7	10	17	12	62
4 bedrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 + bedrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing
(Warburton (IARE 23015 Community Profile Series))

Table AG.3 Selected averages for age, income and rent

	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Non-Indigenous</i>
Median age	21	42
Median weekly rent	\$1-\$49	\$1-\$49
Median weekly individual income	\$120-\$159	\$600-\$699
Median weekly family income	\$300-\$399	\$1,200-\$1,499
Median weekly household income	\$700-\$799	\$1,000-\$1,199
Mean household size	6.8	2.6

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing
(Warburton (IARE 23015 Community Profile Series))

Fig. AH.1. Written texts assessed at NRS 1

I like going to school
I like doing Painting.
I going out Bush to get Bush Tucker

NRS 1 Female (late 30s)

Yesterday I was waeking With
the Bobcat was canling
the yaert

NRS 1 Male (late teens)

Fig. AH.2. Written texts assessed at NRS 2

Some time I Go out
to the oval and Do
Som training.
and. Going ^{out} bush trip
and Looking for Kangaroo.
and When I ^{am} at home
I Work IN GDEP
like Rebuilding houses.
and doing SOME Dralings.
and Painting. and
I Work at the college and
Do some combuter work

NRS 2 Male (late teens)

When I feel like to
worker at the playgroup
I like there because
it wonderful to be
in the it is great.
When I was worker
at the college I use
to doing some read
and write. And I always
~~answ~~ answer the phone
and doing like copy
on the paper. And answer
the phone and ~~leave~~ leave
some message on the
Table for Miss Paget and
Pam, ~~and~~ And every
worker finish. I use
to doing go bush for
goanna, honeyant, trukey,
~~kangaroo~~ kangaroo, yellow
berries. And go for ride
~~are~~ with my sisters or
mum round Warburton
bush. And look after my
child name [REDACTED]
She is 2 year old she can
walk and talk Nganyatjara.

NRS 2 Female (late teens)

Fig. AH.3. Written texts assessed at NRS 3

~~the~~ Back in 2001/23 I used to work in the college for C.E.P but in the mean time so many course comes in to Warburton College and I think it good to work with the course and I ask the course member I am thinking of working with all the courses so every course come I like doing because it good and interested job like Hairdressing, firstaid, Tourism and office skills. I got lots of CERT I-III from all the courses Now I got one of them job is the Hairdressing because it good have people coming in paying for the hair dye hair cut trim so people can have healthy here settle in the Ngaanyatjarra Remote Area. Now the Hairdressing Ladie who come in a year also in a months like are week in each community and people like Hairdressing but now I work at the clinic just the small hour job like 8:00 to 10:00 while I wait for Hairdressing Lady to come to the communities.

NRS 3 Female (mid 20s)

Long time ago the missionary looked after us in boys home and girls home. Times went by ^{and} the missionary could not keep us in the home no more. And so we had to go with our family. We used to camp at the old well. It's a place where the missionaries first started living there. The mission still had school at Warburton Ranges. And so we had to walk all the way from old well. If we are not in school the teachers would come out and look for us. At that time the missionaries didn't have cars to come out and look for us. They had one Land Rover and some old trucks. Missionaries still go out and find us and get us back to school again. Things have changed now.

NRS 3 Male (mid 50s)

NRS Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Record Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Place: _____

Reading		Competent or Not Yet Competent?
1.1	Reads and identifies letters in the context of whole words, numbers, signs and symbols relating to personal details and immediate environment.	
1.2	Identifies specific information in a personally relevant text with familiar content which may include personal details, location or calendar information in simple graphic, diagrammatic, formatted or visual form.	
2.1	Reads and interprets short simple texts on a personally relevant topic.	
2.2	Locates specific information relating to familiar contexts in a text which may contain data in simple graphic, diagrammatic, formatted or visual form.	
3.1	Reads and interprets texts of some complexity, integrating (where relevant) a number of pieces of information in order to generate meaning.	
3.2	Displays an awareness of purpose of text, including unstated meaning.	
3.3	Interprets and extrapolates from texts containing data which is unambiguously presented graphic, diagrammatic, formatted or visual form.	
4.1	Reads and interprets structurally intricate texts in chosen fields of knowledge which require integration of several pieces of information for generating meaning.	
4.2	Interprets texts which include ambiguity and inexplicitness where reader needs to distinguish fact from opinion and infer purpose.	
4.3	Interprets and extrapolates from texts containing data which includes some abstraction, symbolism and technicality presented in graphic, diagrammatic, formatted and visual form.	
Writing		Competent or Not Yet Competent?
1.3	Copies letters of the alphabet, numbers, and dates in order to convey personal details such as name, address, telephone number.	
1.4	Writes basic personal details about self or others such as name, address and signature.	
1.5	Writes one or two phrases/simple sentences conveying an idea, message or opinion drawing from a modelled text.	
2.3	Writes about a familiar topic using simple sentence structure and joining ideas through conjunctive links where appropriate.	
2.4	Completes forms or writes notes using factual or personal information relating to familiar contexts.	
3.4	Communicates relationships between ideas through selecting and using grammatical structures and notations which are appropriate to the purpose.	
3.5	Produces and sequences paragraphs according to the purpose of the text.	
4.4	Communicates complex relationships between ideas and matches style of writing to purpose and audience.	
4.5	Generates written texts reflecting a range of genres and using appropriate structure and layout.	

Oral Communication		Competent Not Yet Competent?
1.6	Elicits or gives specific information using gestures, single words or formulaic expressions, for the purpose of exchanging or obtaining information, goods or services.	
1.7	Takes part in short interpersonal exchanges for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and developing relationships; exploring issues; or problem solving.	
1.8	Listens for specific items of information in short contextually relevant oral texts.	
2.5	Elicits and gives factual information or personal details for the purpose of exchanging or obtaining goods and services; or gathering/providing information.	
2.6	Takes part in short interpersonal exchanges, clarifying meaning and maintaining interaction, for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and developing relationships; exploring issues; or problem solving.	
2.7	Listens for relevant information from oral texts.	
3.6	Participates in short transactions, using basic generic structures, for the purpose of exchanging or obtaining goods and services; or gathering/providing information.	
3.7	Takes part in short interpersonal exchanges, demonstrating some awareness of register and interactional strategies, for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and developing relationships; exploring issues; or problem solving.	
3.8	Derives meaning from sustained oral texts.	
4.6	Participates in sustained transactions with flexible use of a range of generic structures, for the purpose of exchanging or obtaining goods and services; or gathering/providing information.	
4.7	Takes part in sustained interpersonal exchanges, demonstrating flexible use of register and a range of interactional strategies, for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and developing relationships; exploring issues; or problem solving.	
4.8	Extracts main ideas and most details from sustained oral texts.	
Numeracy		Competent or Not Yet Competent?
1.10	Locates simple key mathematical information in a familiar real life activity or text.	
1.11	Recognises and uses straight forward mathematical actions which relate to immediate contexts.	
1.12	Uses rough estimation and prior experience to identify purpose and check reasonableness of the process and outcomes of a mathematical activity.	
1.13	Uses everyday informal oral language and representation including familiar symbols and diagrams to communicate mathematically.	
2.9	Locates relevant mathematical information in a familiar real life activity or text.	
2.10	Selects and uses straight forward mathematical actions in familiar and predictable contexts.	
2.11	Uses estimation and prior experience to examine purpose and check reasonableness of the process and outcomes of a mathematical activity.	
2.12	Uses oral and written informal and formal language and representation including some symbols and diagrams to communicate mathematically.	
3.10	Selects appropriate mathematical information embedded in a real life activity item or text.	
3.11	Selects and applies a range of mathematical strategies to solve problems in a number of contexts, which are familiar yet may be interrelated.	
3.12	Reflects on and questions reasonableness and appropriateness of the purpose, process and outcomes of a mathematical activity.	
3.13	Uses oral and written informal and formal language and representation including symbols and diagrams to communicate mathematically.	
4.10	Selects and investigates appropriate mathematical information and relationships embedded in an activity, item or text.	
4.11	Selects and applies an expanding range of mathematical strategies flexibly to solve problems in a variety of contexts.	
4.12	Examines and questions the appropriateness, possible interpretations and	

Appendix I Training estimates

Table AI.1 Training noted in CDEP Skills Audit 2004 (Warburton only)

Courses undertaken:	Young (16–25 yrs)	Middle (26–40 yrs)	Old (41–61 yrs)	Total
Health	1	6	7	
Environmental Health	2	3	2	
Education	1	2	8	
Office Skills	2	4	-	
Essential Services	-	1	1	
Tourism	5	5	3	
Hairdressing	2	-	-	
Media	4	3	-	
Interpreting	-	1	1	
Aged Care	1	1	-	
Forklift, etc	4	5	2	
Automotive	4	6	1	
Governance	-	-	4	
Prison	2	5	2	
General Vocational	-	2	10	
Vernacular literacy	2	1	7	
<i>Total no.</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>'yes' to training</i>	<i>(46%)</i>	<i>(58%)</i>	<i>(71%)</i>	<i>(57%)</i>
TOTAL	57	57	45	159

Source: Ngaanyatjarra Council CDEP Skills Audit 2004 (Warburton only)

This data was compiled from the Skills Audit questions: 'Have you ever done any training?' and 'What kind of training have you done?'. Training of any type could have taken place at any time, for any duration, anywhere. Whereas Table AI.2 (below) contains data collected from Ngaanyatjarra Community College records and is a record of module and full certificate completions of accredited VET courses.

**Table AI.2 Accredited training completed at Ngaanyatjarra Community College
2000–2003**

2000	1 module completed	2 modules completed	3 modules completed	4 modules completed	Full Certificate
Certificate III in Civil Construction	2	2	4	—	—
Certificate III in Business (Office administration)	—	3	2	—	—
Certificate I in Office Skills	1	1	—	1	1
Certificate III in Office Skills	1	1	2	—	—
Certificate II in Business Service	1	—	—	—	—
Certificate I in Remote Community Essential Services	1	—	—	—	—
Certificate II in Australian Land Management	4	—	—	—	—

2001	1 module completed	2 modules completed	3 modules completed	4 modules completed	Full Certificate
Certificate III in Civil Construction (Backhoe)	—	—	—	—	8
Certificate III in Civil Construction (Forklift)	—	—	—	—	8
Certificate III in Civil Construction (Front end loader/skid steer)	—	—	—	—	9
Certificate III in Civil Construction (Grader operator)	—	—	—	—	1
Certificate III in Civil Construction	4	3	4	1	—
Certificate I in Business (Office Skills)	—	—	—	—	1
Certificate I in Office Skills	—	—	1	—	1
Certificate II in Hairdressing	2	—	—	—	—
Certificate I in Remote Community Essential Services	—	1	1	1	5
Certificate II in Remote Community Essential Services Operations (Power)	—	1	—	—	5
Certificate II in Remote Community Essential Services Operations (Water/Waste water)	—	—	—	—	5
Certificate I in Tourism (Cultural Guiding)	3	3	1	2	2
Diploma in Interpreting (Paraprofessional)	—	—	—	—	3
Certificate I in Family & Community Services	—	2	—	—	1

Appendices

2002	1 module completed	2 modules completed	3 modules completed	4 modules completed	Full Certificate
Certificate III in Civil Construction	11	5	—	—	—
Certificate II in Business Service	2	—	—	—	—
Certificate III in Office Skills	1	—	—	—	—
Certificate I in Office Skills	—	—	—	1	1
Certificate II in Hairdressing	4	—	1	1	—
Certificate III in Tourism (Tour Operations)	8	2	1	—	—
Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Remote Area Essential Services)	—	—	—	—	2
Certificate II in Community Services (Aged Care)	—	2	1	—	—
Certificate 1 in Aboriginal Foundation Education	9	—	—	—	—
Certificate II in Aboriginal Preparatory Education	4	—	—	—	—
2003	1 module completed	2 modules completed	3 modules completed	4 modules completed	Full Certificate
Certificate III in Civil Construction	18	12	2	5	—
Certificate I in Business (Office Skills)	—	—	—	—	2
Certificate II in Metalliferous Mining Operations (Open cut)	15	—	—	—	—
Certificate III in Metalliferous Mining Operations (Open cut)	22	—	—	—	—
Certificate I in Automotive	4	—	—	—	—
Certificate III in Tourism (Tour Operations)	12	1	—	—	—

Source: Ngaanyatjarra Community College records

Appendix J Snapshot distribution of CDEP, Warburton February 2004

<i>Type of work</i>	<i>No. working</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Literacy needed</i>
No job	74	46.5%	No
BRACS / Media work	2	1.3%	Yes
College (cleaning, office, library)	8	5%	Sometimes
Cultural Centre (tourism, gallery tours)	2	1.3%	Yes
Environmental Health Work	1	0.6%	Yes
Aboriginal Health Work	1	0.6%	Yes
AIEO in school	5	3.1%	Yes
Arts Project	2	1.3%	No
Women's Centre (ceramics, etc)	8	5.0%	No
Playgroup	6	3.8%	Yes
Land Management	2	1.3%	Yes
Rubbish/wood (community/home)	12	7.5%	No
Project work/Maintenance	4	2.5%	No
Gardening	1	0.6%	No
Cleaning (school, office, clinic, church)	10	6.3%	No
Community Liaison	1	0.6%	Yes
Warden	6	3.8%	No
Home and Community Care	1	0.6%	Yes
Store	2	1.3%	Sometimes
Office	4	2.5%	Yes
Shire truck	2	1.3%	No
Brickworks	3	1.9%	No
Language work/Interpreting	2	1.3%	Yes
TOTAL	159	100%	

Source: CDEP Skills Audit Ngaanyatjarra Lands 2004

This snapshot was compiled when the CDEP Skills Audit was conducted at Warburton in February 2004. It is indicative of the typical community CDEP profile. At this stage a number of work-sites were not operating, including the youth arts work.

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Additional resources

Newsletters

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Reports

Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines 1935–1936
Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Native Affairs 1937–1954
Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Native Welfare 1955–1972
Annual Reports of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA) and Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) 1973–1983

Hansard 'Aboriginal Employment' May 26 1977.

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Extract from Memo from CNW to MNW 21st March 1957—UAM Files.
Report of the trip to Warburton Ranges 14th to 21st September 1962: UAM Files.
R. Hawthorn, Acting Superintendent, UAM District Office Report, Warburton Ranges August 1964 UAM Files.
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School Policy Warburton Ranges 1974—Education File.
Warburton Ranges Special Aboriginal School: School Policy 1979—Education File.

Government records

Written permission was granted by the Assistant Director Information Management, Department of Indigenous Affairs, WA to view archival records from the Western Australia State Records Office (WA SRO) lodged at the Ngaanyatjarra Council Native Title Unit Archives, Alice Springs.

WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 10/8/51 UAM to A/DCNA.*
WA SRO Acc 993 1220/61 17/762—*From CNW to MNW summary of history of Warburton Ranges Mission.*
WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters 21/4/48 Bisley to CNA re. visit to Warburton 1947.*
WA SRO Acc 1733 511/42—*Warburton Ranges Mission native matters (1942–1956) 27/9/56 letter from Middleton CNW to Editor United Aborigines Messenger.*
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- WA SRO Acc 1733 66/65—*Warburton Ranges Native Matters June 1965. Correspondence: CNW to MNW.*
- WA SRO Acc 1733 66/65—*Warburton Ranges native matters Report Superintendent of Economic Development to CNW 1965.*
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- WA SRO Acc 1419 EG 23-1 18/8/54—*ADO Eastern Goldfields to Superintendent Cosmo Newbery Native Mission.*
- WA SRO Acc 1667 444/70—*Central Reserves 1/8/70 notes from DNW Scott Survey Steering Committee.*
- WA SRO Acc 1733 300/64—*Employment Survey Central Reserve and the Eastern Division, inc. Esperance and Kalgoorlie.*
- WA SRO Acc 1667 444/70—*Central Reserves Director General of Education evaluation of Report.*
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