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CONTINUOUS BEING – THE ARTWORKS OF MR WARD



Fig. 1. I am the Nganurti chick, laying down with the spear at Yankaltjungkul. Ian Ward, 2001. Photo: C. Maccarino.

My name is Ian Ward ... Yankaltjunku is a Dreaming story of my past but when I was born I was born at a different place in the bush at Rirruwa, no name but close to it. I was born and stamped with the mark (birthmark), it's like a seal or like a branded man, with the tjukurrpa (a physical feature associated with the time of Creation). I am the nganurti (turkey) chick, laying down with the spear at Yankaltjunku.¹

INTRODUCTION

These are the words that Mr Ward chose to begin his witness statement for an Australian native title legal claim over a substantial proportion of the deserts of Western Australia. It is how he announced his arrival on the earth to strangers in an alien highly prescribed legal process. What did he mean by them?

We came together to write from our shared perspective of having lived and worked for many years with the Ward Family and others at the small desert community of Warburton and the even smaller desert homeland of Patjarr, in

the far east of Western Australia. We are not writing from the perspective of anthropology or the arts, or as *Yarnangu*² (the desert word for humans and pertaining to the local Indigenous cultural world), rather we write and speak from our own experiences of intermingled lives and responsibilities. Wherever possible we have used the words and artworks of Mr Ward to speak for themselves. Our conversation is edited from ten recording sessions made via Zoom between Poland and Australia. We asked permission from Mr Ward's sister Nunykiya/Dorothy Ward, his widow Nancy Donegan and his cousin-sister Daisy/Tjuparntarri Ward. They are always in our minds. As the paper took shape, we recognised how significantly we have been influenced by, guided and are respectful of, two mentors, *Tjamu* (grandfather) Dr John von Sturmer and Dr Marrkilyi "Lizzie" Ellis. We are grateful for the opportunities and encouragement provided by Prof. Suvendrini Perera to express publicly the difficult and often inexpressible.

We explore the challenges faced living in a cross-cultural world for our highly intelligent and sometimes flamboyant friend and colleague, the late Mr Ian Ward, known to us fondly by his nickname, "Ribs". In January 2008, Mr Ward was cruelly left to die, to be "cooked" to death in the back of a prison transport van. A monstrous death and event.³ In the years immediately preceding his tragic death at 44 years of age, Mr Ward was influential in Ngaanyatjarra society as an emerging cultural leader and as a cross-cultural educator *par excellence*. He was an art-maker, a dancer, a navigator, an orator and most importantly a holder of sacred knowledge, sourced from the *Tjukurrpa* (Creation Time)⁴ by an older generation born in the desert who had lived adult lives far from Western contact. Mr Ward was both a conduit of this knowledge to his contemporaries now living in small residential communities on the fringes of mainstream Australian society and to those non-Yarnangu persons with whom he interacted.

This paper has three parts⁵: Pre-Life, as a reference to both Mr Ward's own physical

awakening by the spiritual forces that animated him into existence, and to his family living before settler society contact; Life, as a reference to his 44 years on earth; and After-Life, the continuing presence of his identity, his artworks and his voice.

Part 1

Pre-Life: *Parrkangka ngaralanytja* (among the leaves)

Mr Ward was born into the desert rhythms of foot-walking vast distances, of drinking rainwater from shallow clay pans, crevices in rocky escarpments and underground water from hand dug wells and springs, camping beneath the stars, of hunting and gathering foods, of complex cosmological knowledge. Accompanying the rhythms of seasonality were the rhythms of human aggregation and dispersal; at times it was his father, his father's four wives and their several children, whilst there were also times of visiting kin and following the large travelling ceremonial cycles that continue to unite desert families.

People lived according to the rules of conduct laid down in the *Tjukurrpa*, others may call this The Dreaming or Dreamtime. The *Tjukurrpa* was and continues to be central to all Yarnangu lives. It is everything and it is all-encompassing. It is the time when great events occurred as Ancestral Beings travelled, country and cosmos, shaping the geographic features we see today. Through their behaviour they determined how Yarnangu should conduct themselves, live, and care for the country, family and future generations. The Ancestral Beings created social order (and disorder), cultural behaviours (and misbehaviours) and importantly brought forth the languages to be spoken—the telepathic languages, respect languages, sign languages and spoken languages relevant to specific regions. The *Tjukurrpa* is in the past, it is now and it is in the future. It is embodied, literally inside, each person.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.

Fig. 2. Ward as an infant with his family of birth: Tjakamarra (father); Manupa, Tjungupi and Pulpuru (mothers and co-wives); Napula and Nunykiya, Ruth, Spencer (some of his siblings). Photo: I. Dunlop, 1965.

Fig. 3. Pulpuru (Mr Ward's birth mother) winnowing seed to make flour with Ward's older brother and Ngurapaya looking on. Photo: R. Gould, 1966.

*Each person was something before they was born, that is, in a 'pre-life', and this is their totem... You have to be respectful of your individual totem—for example, by not eating it. Should you eat it, it would be like eating yourself and you would become sick because you have been disrespectful to your own totem.*⁶

Desert life, with rhythms that had beat for tens of thousands of years, was irrevocably changed in the mid-1960s by Australia's participation in a British Nuclear Blue Streak Missile testing programme during the nervous years of the Cold War. This remote part of interior desert Australia was directly in what became known as the "Centreline of Fire". Government patrols established a network of tracks probing deep into the deserts seeking to locate Yarnangu and relocate them to permanent settlements.⁷

From the time of his birth Mr Ward was the subject of ethnographic representation. In 1964 Mr Ward's family were taken by vehicle, some 260 kms from the desert to the nearest European settlement, a Christian mission called Warburton.

Weeks later they were returned to Patjarr waterhole by the filmmaker Ian Dunlop for the staging of what would become an iconic ethnographic film, *Desert People*.

Upon their return to Warburton Mission, less than a year after their first contact with Westerners, the patriarch of the family was dead and his co-wives paired to different husbands. Mr Ward's family of birth was shattered. With her new husband Wiruny and only some of her children, Pulpuru (Mr Ward's birth mother) returned to the desert on foot. The young Mr Ward was once again on his ancestral lands. At the end of 1966 they were met at Patjarr waterhole by a young American couple, Betsy and Richard Gould who documented their hunter-gatherer lifestyle in great detail.⁸ Within a few months, however, there was another, seemingly permanent, relocation to Warburton Mission.

We was living with the rockhole and we were happy, everybody getting kuka (meat), and then whitefella came and they want to drop the bomb, bomb, want to drop the bomb in one certain place. All the Yarnangu pirni (desert people) had to shift

ngurra (camp, home, country) ... We came through the testing of the rocket. It was to gather us to the Mission. The whitefella took all the people into the Mission...⁹.

In the early 1980s “the northerners”, the *kayili* mob, began their journey home, away from the Mission to re-settle at the spiritually significant semi-permanent waters at Patjarr. Families camped with drums of water, replenished from rainwater filled rockholes, and began the arduous task of making a road, in some places where no vehicles had travelled before. They cut the bush with axes, burnt the tree stumps, dragged bushes to clear a “track” or a “cutline”. It was an epic undertaking without machinery.

AV: I remember travelling along the old “cutline” which was made between Warburton and Patjarr. Following a line of rockholes, it was a small, intimate road of beautiful passages which allowed one to travel by 4WD/SUV over the country as if by foot. The track hugged around the country and you felt close to the ground. We would bring out “stores”, food supplies sourced from the shop at Warburton. Rolls of professional artist quality canvas and acrylic paint were also brought there and a makeshift painting camp was assembled. I remember the priming of unstretched canvases, the mixing of paint in the “hot heat” (greater than 47°C) and the initial coats laid down as background colour. Canvases were laid on the ground with little definition between the edge of the canvas and the earth. Dorothy Ward was helpful in this regard. I remember her helping Ngipi Ward (deceased) with dotting parts of the lower section of the canvas.¹⁰ I, too, was being encouraged to lay down some dots. Being new to experiences of this lifestyle, I was coming to see, the social aspects of painting were integral to the making of the work. These works from Patjarr formed the beginning of the Warburton Arts Collection from the women’s and men’s sides.

Note: The establishment of the Warburton Arts Project in 1989 by Warburton Community senior law man Stewart Davies,¹¹ with wife and cultural stalwart Tjingapa Davies (both

deceased) and with inaugural coordinator, painter Gary Proctor and later Viegas, was a time of untrammelled possibilities.¹² The Ngaanyatjarra directive in expressing strength and belief in culture was heeded and recorded. Song, dance, performance were seen as attendant activities in support of a painting initiative.¹³ So too were camping trips out from the residential Indigenous communities to sacred places, often several hundred kilometres distant that had remained unvisited and unattended for more than twenty years. A rock art painting project, a significant part of Ngaanyatjarra cultural practice, re-emerged. The need to sustain the production of “sacra” and support that activity was seen as important.¹⁴ Men and women’s sacra, including paintings on canvas, were kept separate with strict conditions of entry restricted by gender. Alongside painting, the Arts Project took the existing Ngaanyatjarra cultural visual arts, ritual performance and oral values and introduced new technology in the form of recording song and ambient sounds, as well as glass, works on paper, ceramics, fibre works, fashion, photography, film and video, music and multimedia. Artwork productions were displayed publicly in a series of exhibitions and residencies which toured nationally and internationally to great acclaim.¹⁵

In 2000 the Tjulyuru Cultural Centre opened in Warburton Community and presented a changing exhibition programme based on the lifestyles and cultural expression of the Ngaanyatjarra, and for the first time, to a local Ngaanyatjarra audience which meant careful consideration in curatorial terms of local and direct accountability in Ngaanyatjarra exhibition practice. This constituted a new period of the project’s history with attention to commerciality. The Arts Project’s foray into the marketplace placed hitherto unknown challenges on artists unused to culture valuations based on their intrinsic worth rather than external market terms. The challenge became how to maintain a viable arts project with cultural integrity in the face of commerciality and the demands of these imperatives.

Part 2

**Life: Ngukunypa/pina yungarra kulirra
nyinarra (living own way by using own
brain/ears)**

When you look at an art, an object that's an art object or canvas or whatever, when you look at it and you know that Tjukurrpa for that, it takes you to that Creation time, to that sacred time, and that feeling of that sacred time comes through your body, you feel it. Plus, the feelings of your families, that you have seen throughout your life, seeing them practice that tjukurrpa, the going to that place, telling you the story, and dancing those dance for that place and singing the song and design, drawing the designs of those iconographies of that place onto one's body or onto a painting or onto a glass. All those emotions, all combine together, it's all like an infusion, which just comes bursting out. Through. It's a burst of this feeling, that you feel in your body, and it's everything—it's the sacredness, it's the longing for the past, it's the future, it's the now. Future because you have to pass it onto the next generation. It's everything and it's so powerful. People cry when they see that art or seeing that dance, or hearing that story, or hear singing, hearing that song. It's really, really powerful what we have for our tjukurrpa, that's representative in our art (Marrkilyi Ellis, pers. comm.).

JT: Let us begin with his mother and then we can bring Ribs in. Pulpuru is the *Minyma Nganurti*, Mother Turkey, giving birth to her Turkey Chick and he is the *Nganurti* grown to be *Wati Nganurti*, Turkey Man. When we think of *kurntili* (the late Pulpuru, our Aunt and Mr Ward's mother) what would you say?

AV: Industrious, formidable and kind. A force to be reckoned with. Firmly grounded

and whose prodigious energy was matched by few. Uninhibited and would try anything she could lay her hands on.

Despite language barriers, she seemed to have no problems meeting and communicating with whitefellas. *Kurntili* made people feel comfortable around her. She spoke about the time when Maramurtu¹⁶ came to their camp for the first time, while she was harvesting and winnowing bush food. She spoke about hearing the sound of the *yurltu* (car) before seeing it.¹⁷ I can imagine her quite gladly showing him the food she had so skillfully gathered and was happily preparing. All in her stride. *Kurntili* took to painting on canvas with ease. Dotting work was unparalleled in the colour cluster roundels she'd created.

"Pretty flower," she would say. The distinctive dot pattern, placement or "phrasing" and the filling-in of the dots was softly, delicately and deftly applied, as if to do so was to walk softly on carpet as it is to traverse over *tali* (sand dunes), *rirra* (pebble plains) or *pila* (spinifex sand plains). There is a habitus and familiarity of gestures in the way she paints, gathers and prepares bush food, lays down seed cake damper in the ashes, hunts and moves through Country. No scale was too big for her. The idea for a group painting to be made by Patjarr women was raised in the early days of the Arts Project when we were based in Patjarr and (Warburton) Ranges. She assured all that there was no need for others and proceeded to commandeer and render a dazzling work in pink of four by two metre canvas by herself.¹⁸ Anyone else could well have been daunted by attempting such a scale.

JT: Yes, *kurntili* was sure of herself and her place in the world. She had enormous cultural knowledge which provided her with the confidence to proceed and to embrace new technologies, new ways of expressing herself. I think of that time in 2002 when all those paintings, large and small, were taken from storage in Warburton and placed on the desert claypan at Mina Mina. Pulpuru said every painting had a song. The ground resounded with the tapped-out song rhythms. Often the artists and the singers' faces seemed distant, as

if they were transported in time and place to the exact locations they had physically experienced in their youth. Families camped together, campfires burned.¹⁹ Pulpuru was a leader, she certainly took centre stage amongst the women.

AV: It was an extraordinary display in self-announcement and self-presentation. Each person seized the moment to speak, demonstrate, broadcast, sing, “perform” their paintings. You felt as if the world was truly full and lived fully, and to bear witness was to be beyond the perimeters of belief. We were inside it.

JT: Pulpuru shared the same embodied spiritual presence, her *nganurti* (bush turkey) with her son and his son. This shared connection from the *Tjukurrpa*, to events in a Creation-making past, at that specific place Yankaltjunku. A place you and I were so privileged to visit. So far distant, so many high sandhills to traverse, no vehicle tracks, following the direction her lips pointed to as she scanned vegetation and chose paths through dense thickets.

That sense of relief when seeing the *rirra*, the plains of small ironstone pebbles, when a car could get to third gear! The vastness of it all and our awareness that there were so few humans in hundreds of kilometres and yet the human presence is tangible. That sense of getting to a rise and looking at the landscape below, looking at the landscape behind and again looking forward to unmapped locations, remembered so vividly by those who had walked this land. Trusting our safe-being to her rememberings.

AV: *Tjamu* (John von Sturmer) writes in the past when people walked the land, the site (mode) of witnessing varied according to whether one was sitting, standing, laying down, travelling,²⁰ whereas today most people witness the country whilst travelling in a vehicle.

JT: I remember us being at Yankaltjunku so vividly. Stretching out *kurntili*'s four-metre painting on the ground, in the crevice, between the expansive rock formations made in Ribs' words in the epic battle by the Two Bird Men as “they fought, leaving trails of chasms, twisting and turning at every corner, north, south, east, west. They speared

and killed each other and today they are lying as two rock formations, the Emu to the north, and Turkey to the south.”²¹

When I see this particular art glass disc, I think of him and his sisters and mothers at this specific place, the rituals and the reverence, of how animated and engaged in life and culture everyone was. Ribs was empowered by the spiritual *nganurti* contained within him.

AV: You're kind of inserted into the *Tjukurrpa*, and you relive it, and you keep going... to those places, like those first few instances of dancing, or not even dancing, of sitting down at Patjarr. The late-night dancing and those women, it is almost like you are in a haze. All this would be going on all night, and you are sort of in it but you have no idea. You are in this blitzed out space to take in whatever it is and I feel like that again now. I feel I am approaching from afar, do I have a right to say anything? I'm not there. Even though your spirit, your *kurrunpa*, is there.

JT: I know that feeling. That haziness is us in a transformative space, as we talk, as we reconnect from Poland to Australia, as we remember and ponder, as the emotions rise, we too are entering into a transformative state. It is hazy. It is like being on ritual ground. It's foreign but familiar. It is so breathtakingly familiar and yet it is so completely incomprehensible.

AV: All the more reason to see those pieces, those marks as standing for something, standing for a sign, standing for all those things that are mediated.

*The Seven Seals of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands is part of our Dreamtime stories of our land—holding cultural knowledge and responsibility, holding the common seal on the ground for us. I made the glass so that my background of the land I come from won't fade away. The designs and drawings are part of our home where we come from—beyond the next horizon.*²²

AV: How to enter the terrain of the glass objects? In the terrain of identity concealed

(von Sturmer, pers. comm.). Impermeable but transparent. A glazed patina. Veiled, sunken. Marks left by the self. Human faces, animal tracks, movement, a trail. Prints, impressions, trapped in a virtual resin. Was it a scene? An event? The body is split between the human body and an animal form. A doubling up. A mirroring. Appearance, reappearance. Self-appearance. A partial revelation. The image I had of them was a watery memory until I actually saw them again on the computer files recently. Their presence, virtually. It has been some time since I last saw them in real life. In the same year that he passed; in the time of the *kuli* (hottest) season, when temperatures can reach 50°C.

It was sometime in 2001. I remember, he would come to the glassworks studio at night after work and in a burst of energy created these Seven Seals designs. And the square glass, *Warnampi* (See Fig. 9). Over a few nights and it was done. The designs were put down in paint, the shapes cut out and then they were fired in the kiln. The sheet glass had slumped into the fibre roll paper templates. The moulds were placed over a fibre blanket layer which lay on top of repurposed metal plough discs. He was pleased with them when they came out of the firing days later after a slow process of annealing.

JT: You make me think of the kiln,²³ of the intense heat, the days of sealed-in cooling, as a crucible of transformation. As the Ancestral Beings, making their way across vast tracts of lands, themselves transformed from human to animal even to stars and planets. I am reminded of the visceral reality of these Ancestral Beings, embodied in individual humans and released in animal form once more upon human death.

AV: A transformation process underway - from human to animal form or is it the other way around? Single figure, dual forms. Sun side, shade side. The “portraits” are centralised. Almost like heraldry armour. Or are they more like self-representations? Is it complementary or opposite? Healthy dog, mangy dog. The *Wati Kutjarra* are virtually identical. The human male heads and animal forms, Dog, Eagle, Perentie (Monitor lizard), are posed one above the other.

The horizontal cleaving of the Perentie and Senior Male at midpoint between the wiry hair and sinewy shoulders. The markings of the perentie echoing the wavy form at the bottom. The placement of the mouth, the eyes. The marsupial in flight with an aged male in pursuit hidden among lines and tracks. It is a scene. Are we observing different instances in each narrative?

JT: Marrkilyi writes so evocatively of the *Tjukurrpa*. We use the English word “Songlines” to speak of these routes taken by the Ancestral Beings. As a word it does not convey the great cultural knowledge demonstrated in performance and song, the meta narratives.

In that time long ago when nothing existed, these Beings appeared out of nowhere in the form of humans and other creatures. Some beings in the tjukurr [creation] came from opposite directions, met and undertook actions together, whilst others glided past each other with no interaction—perhaps occasionally glimpsing each other, perhaps communicating with each other from a distance. Whilst some travelled together in parallel, others clashed. As these Ancestral Beings traversed time and space, their presence created the features of the environment... These sites became significant as places full of spirituality and sacredness.²⁴

AV: When I’ve seen him perform, it’s like this thing that sort of comes out, it’s like when he would splutter things from his mouth, he would be whatever that being, whatever that thing is. It was a total burst over a few nights. He called them the Seals (Super Heroes Series), but I think it is something else operating beyond that. It’s him. Doing his thing.

JT: I’m interested in where he got the idea of “seals”.

AV: I think it’s also coming from, thinking about his role within the Ngaanyatjarra Council.²⁵ At least that was my understanding. He was taking

on all those roles and in a sense, for me, I saw that those seals were about, it's almost like a whitefella language, these sorts of seals and stamps that he was needing to link into. A way of communicating across to us and to a more outside audience. Often there are people representing Ngaanyatjarra Council, but only he took up things in that way, he himself could only do that.

JT: Yes, when I think of other Ngaanyatjarra political leaders, they kept the *Tjukurrpa* very quiet and operated in a dignified, reserved way in the cross-cultural political sphere. Statesmen. Whereas Ribs is allowing us a brief glimpse of another world. He must have had his reasons.

AV: Using those contemporaneous ideas and technologies. It doesn't matter if it is art glass or singing on a tape so that he had a backing track to perform to in the absence of others/singers.²⁶ It's just what he did, as an individual. He crafts things from materials or the things he has around him. Like "le bricoleur", it didn't matter if it were glass or he hadn't used it before. Remember him dancing at the opening of the Cultural Centre? How he brazenly danced, turning to reveal a pair of scissors in his mouth, for the Premier of Western Australia to cut the ribbon?

*At the opening of the Cultural Centre I did the dance for the Wati Kutjarra (Two Men) and Patupirri (Bat). I've studied a lot with the old men and they taught me up about this area that's why I could dance this one.*²⁷

In making those Seals it would seem that a position was in a sense granted to him but it was only he that could make those marks and to call them Seals.

JT: Ah. Marrkilyi's translation for "Life"—that desert concept, not of being alive as opposed to dead or non-existent, but rather living in one's own way, using one's own brains, using one's own ears. When I look at the glass I see a depth, with *tjukurrpa* inside. It's like looking at something through water. The *tjukurrpa* is there but you can't quite get to it. It has been revealed but it is

also concealed. It is still and yet gently rocked by the human effort involved in holding, it is alive, pulsing with life and I am reminded of Jennifer Deger's writing that the "dappled luminescence of water on an LCD screen can provide Yolngu with a possibility of an experience with the Ancestral".²⁸

AV: Almost as if we were looking down into the rockhole itself. He always made it possible for us to know and he did it with such...

JT: Pizzazz and a twinkle in his voice, in his eye, in his movements.

AV: I've been thinking of all those little moments, but to dance in that moment of the Opening, with scissors in his mouth, to dance up to the Premier, it was not only dazzling, it was so breathtaking.

JT: It was true theatre. I remember him with the senior lawyer for Ngaanyatjarra Council, in your yard. He waited before he held aloft the *Warnampi*.²⁹ Ribs waited for the exact time when the glorious colours of a desert sunset would backlight the glass. Time stopped for we who were watching and listening, allowing us to step through the glass to the *Warnampi*, to the *Tjukurrpa*.

AV: The actual, the real and the virtual. The real image is formed by the intersection of light rays. In the firing process the glass slumps and takes on the shape of the moulds like an after-image and that after-image has a watery misty feature.

JT: Recently, I showed poor quality facsimile paper copies of the Seven Seals to a senior cultural man and a younger middle-aged man and their responses were electric. The older man gasped and became animated. He was looking at something that wasn't glass for him, seeing into the *Tjukurrpa* with an absolute immediacy.³⁰ The younger man became quite emotional, repeating "this is very, very good. This is very, very good." The next day he tried to educate others of his own personal *tjukurrpa*, and how when he passes away, his *tjukurrpa*, will take animal form and be free. Also present was Daisy, who has used the glass in political protest actions. Tjuparntarri just sobbed, aware she was in the presence of the man himself.



Fig. 4. Paintings from the Warburton Arts Collection on the ground at Mina Mina Claypan, north of Patjarr. Photo: J. Turner, 2002.

AV: It never is just about the past. It's always about the present. Whether it's generational or not, things are always remade. And everything is always updated. If you look at the glass, it has this thing of appearing and reappearing. It becomes and re-becomes what that thing is. Virtual reality—the experience inside via dreams, daydreams, the *Tjukurrpa* working from inside and through external means from storytelling to paintings, film, glass, digital media and to immersive virtual reality technology and the metaverse. Visionary experiences of ceremonial and ritual space, somewhere between dream and reality. I guess that's how the *Tjukurrpa* works. And anybody that has that connection, that recognises it, that's the true self, the true one-self.

JT: I turn back once again to *kurruntatja*, the spirit beings embodied in individuals. How they are their own agents. Entering and leaving human bodies, precocious, brazen, wilful, their personalities informing that of the human. Captured for a moment in skin, in glass or words but always moving.

AV: I think about people's sense of the visual, like watching Aunty paint a tree, she doesn't stop at ground level. She paints the roots and everything else. Like a rear-view mirror, like a lens pulled right back to see these things. A concept of space

in relation to the body that is all-encompassing. A certain perspectival lens.

And if the glass is to be performed. I think about those objects people use when they are dancing. And I think of Mr Fox (deceased) who was dancing near the airstrip at Warburton. Dancing with such force and conviction and everybody cried. He was holding his *tjara* (wooden shield), parrying, stomping. It was so moving, all those old men and women just cried.

JT: Marrkilyi speaks often of objects being “Instruments of Power”. Elders from Mr Ward's country are now asking that objects, viewed by the Western gaze as secular, as artefacts, be re-configured, re-imagined as instruments of power, brought into existence in the *Tjukurrpa*, and used in the sacred domain.

AV: Once something is labelled “artefact,” it is killed. Do we privilege objects too much, rather than value ephemera, or people? What are these Deathscapes? What are these Afterlives? I think these objects/productions are sacra.

JT: Yes, but by referring to them as Instruments of Power we are concealing, covering ourselves as women from that which cannot be said.

AV: When you are thinking about different styles of representation, and how to do it, whether

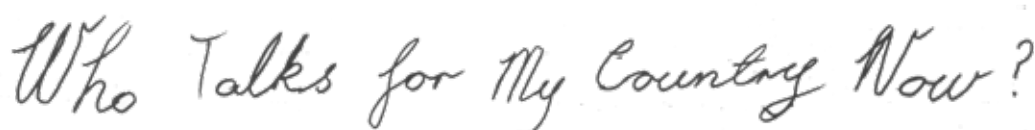


Fig. 5. Handwriting, Ian Ward, 2002.

it be on the body, or a cave or objects, and I think back to those nights that he was making them. What was he thinking of? How was he thinking, communicating this? The fact that we see this pictorial representation going between human and animal form. He is allowing us an in, isn't he? It's for us to see it, that's communicating to us.

JT: He has given us an entrance in, through our own cultural lens, but as Marrkilyi reminded me, his door is only just ajar.

AV: They are emblematic in that specific motifs are chosen. They are in block form, with not too much around. It's almost like strong symbolic forms in order for you to understand it very quickly. They are like a design for a stamp, very large stamps. It goes beyond symbolism. It is him, when he speaks or he does something, when he performs, it goes beyond what he is.

Behind it all there are hidden things. The nature of revelation - what has been revealed but not visible. Such a different approach to making marks.

DEATH, Australia Day 2008, howls of anguish, silence. Coroner's Court. Endless legal enquiries.³¹

AV: How to cite? (See Fig. 5) The words in their original form is a thought text, as spoken thought then becomes a thought image. Part of the Ngaanyatjarra poetic.³²

It also raises questions around writing in texts such as this—how the witnessing of words, actions, images, ephemera performed are engendered and socialised as are our own roles of seeing, witnessing/looking and knowing. You and I are not impervious. We too have become aware of our own sense of belonging to people and country. The ideas have a reproducibility effect which changes us and our thinking. And makes us present. The *tjukurrpa* is working in us, inside us.

Part 3

After-Life: When the *kuurti/ kurrurnpa* (spiritual essence) remains in country and with families

*I was right with him, right up ... [to when he was arrested], going everywhere, hunting, bringing kuka (meat) for us. Since he passed away, we felt lost and we had nothing. Without him, we had no help, me and my mum and my little brothers. So, we left Warburton. We don't have to stay there anymore. He went everywhere for meetings, talking up for every one of the communities, helping them, going overseas and all. So, one day I might be like him. Talk like a knowledge man and work like him.*³³

JT: His widow, Daisy/Tjuparntarri and I sat through two weeks of the Coroner's Inquiry, vacating the Court when the evidence became too intense to bear. I remember afterwards, Daisy asked if she could have one of the glass artworks to hold in Perth during the subsequent months of protest. On the steps of the Western Australian Parliament, she held above her head the *Ngarnurti* glass disc to catch the attention of Prof. James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples. It was August 2009 and her actions were purposeful as she interrupted his state-sanctioned schedule. When she spoke of Indigenous deaths in custody we were in the

presence of the victim himself. Daisy asked Prof. Anaya to ascend the internal steps of the building to witness first-hand the art-glass panels,³⁴ designed by Mr Ward's mother Pulpuru, of their shared country, Yankaltjunku. Desert *tjukurrpa* inserted into the very epi-centre of Western governance! In that brief moment mother and son's glass artworks of their shared place Yankaltjunku were united. Sadly, Prof. Anaya's schedule did not permit this. Tjuparntarri felt the Special Rapporteur might understand, "he must know totems", because he was a First Nations American.

One woman trying to invoke justice against the odds. An Indigenous woman, nearly 2,000 kms from home supported by Mr Ward's cousin-brother Mitchell Biljabu (deceased), and our dear Belle Davidson (deceased), another of his mothers. By the time the press photographer took this shot³⁵ she had lowered the heavy glass disc and was speaking with Prof. Anaya. The image I remember was electrifying as she stood legs apart, elbows locked, holding the glass disc above her, her body extended, enlarged, more grandiose...

AV: On the steps of Parliament House, it's as if Daisy is holding up a satellite dish, the parabolic antenna receiving/transmitting *tjukurrpa* through radio waves.

JT: And again these glass discs channelled the *Tjukurrpa* during all the talk and legal talk about native title. Oh, this hurts. Yes all the *tjukurrpa* criss-crossing the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and yet when it came to the legal determination of native title, a case where Mr Ward had travelled with Brooksie³⁶ to so many places quietly holding meetings to unify the lands and peoples in a single claim, his own country, the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve could not be included. This exclusion, involving dispossession by the gazettal of national parks and nature reserves, arose from a legal precedent elsewhere in Australia. It brings to mind *Tjamu's* comment on native title: "it merely recognises an extant and long enduring state of affairs. Indeed, it might be seen as a secondary form of dispossession, placing the recognition of law, lawfulness, in the hands of outsiders."³⁷

*That was the Super Heroes Series for the seven tjukurrpa representing the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve and the Gibson Desert area. It doesn't have a line or fence. All comes through the Gibson Desert down through here (Warburton) and everywhere. Same tjukurrpa going through.*³⁸

AV: I was thinking about his sister, Dorothy, on the way to the native title ceremony.³⁹ She had made a series of t-shirts with a couple of young people from the Youth Arts Project (now known as Wilurarra Creative, wilurarra.com.au). She always had this unfettered approach to art making, with a heavy metal edge and there were these flame motifs young people were into which she featured on the t-shirts. There was printed text "GIBSON DESERT NR (Nature Reserve) WE GOT NOTHING" and "ANYWAY IT WAS ALREADY OURS". It was like a social action, sort of felt radical. And mummy, Mrs Giles wore one too.

JT: That same day, when the majority of desert people were celebrating a victory in the Western legal system, Ribs was assisting the most senior of cultural knowledge holders, the late Mr Giles and Mr Fred Ward, both non-English speakers, to sign with a cross a legal document for the Nature Reserve. It was typed in legal English, outlining how future talks with Government would proceed in lieu of the granting of native title. It brings to mind the feelings that Ribs expressed in his "thought text" *Who Talks For My Country Now? Nganalu mantaku kartu warralu watjanma?*⁴⁰ The sophistication of his artwork in communicating the foundation of everything, the *Tjukurrpa*, to Yarnangu and non-Yarnangu alike, compared to the incomprehensible legal document.

Of course, governments change and nothing came of that document. A legal challenge was mounted. Albie, I know you were in Poland at this time, but it was as if those years that the *kayili* (northerners) families had been scattered following Mr Ward's horrendous death, were ending. Families came together to present with strength their case that they should be acknowledged as the rightful custodians of the country, taken away from



Fig. 6 The Special Rapporteur for the United Nations and Daisy Tjuparntarri Ward holding Mr Ward's glass on the steps of Parliament House, Perth, 2009. Photo: S. Ferrier.



Fig. 7. Mr J. Giles (seated), Mr I. Ward (standing) assisting Mr F. Ward (seated) to place his mark on a legal document for the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve. Mr P. Sharp, Executive Director of Parks looking on. Photo: I. Kealley, 2005.

them by the gazettal of a huge nature reserve, and that they should have been awarded the strongest form of native title available from the Court. For ten days a battle raged: on one side the people, their spiritual allies and counsel, and on the other barristers and solicitors representing both the Australian and Western Australian governments. It was an ontological clash of cultures.

Our *kurntili*, Pulpuru, nearing ninety years, with the confusions and clarities that come from dementia, was ever present. I want to show you this photo of her sitting in the front row of women singers at the Opening Ceremony of the Federal Court. Deger's words resonate: "Old people are far more closely associated with the Ancestral than children are because they have accumulated not only a discursive knowledge of the sacra and their stories but a viscerally charged knowledge and identity that arises from a lifetime of active and embodied mimetic labor directed to a becoming-in-relation-to the Ancestral."⁴¹

It was Mr Ward's sister Nunykiya who opened the Court proceedings on the day that evidence was heard inside the Tjulyuru Art Gallery in Warburton. I remember she began, as people gathered, even before she was formally sworn in

to give evidence. She stood, alone, in front of the *Seven Seals of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands*, her hand gently caressing the Super Heroes, the Ancestral Beings of the land in question. We were reminded that Ribs was present, the *Tjukurrpa* was manifest. In a trial highly choreographed by legal counsel this day was the people's day, where they could move freely and choose the order of presentation. Nunykiya asserted that her brother should have been leading evidence, but for his cruel death. I feel emotional thinking about her singular bravery.⁴²

The Ward family is resilient. On the final day of the Federal Court hearing at Mina Mina Claypan, men, women and children, beautifully ochred and painted danced as *Warrmarla* (Revenge Warriors). It was dazzling. It was breathtaking and again it was planned, timed and performed by Yarnangu with no external interference. This is the ephemera that is so lightly considered by the Court, indeed, it was inadmissible as evidence and remains formally unrecorded in the Court proceedings.⁴³ Albie, all four of Ribs' sons are in the front row lineup. We were all so proud of them. We cried.

AV: *Ngarltutjarra...* (an expression of compassion)

Seven Seals of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Super Heroes Series)
 Ian Ward, born c.1963–2008
 diameter 65 x thickness 1 cm, concave clear float art glass discs
 Photo: C. Maccarino
 Artworks and text: Ian Ward, 2001



Tjukurpa Nganurti (Bush Turkey Story)

One day, the mother Emu said to the mother Turkey. 'You know what I did? I killed all my chicks.' And you know, Emu always has lots of chicks, and Turkey, had only one. Mother Emu hid all her chicks away and left one running around and told a lie to the father Emu that mother Turkey had killed all the emu chicks. Father Emu said, 'No, that's not true,' Father Emu came in anger looking to fight, stabbed the mother Turkey in the back of the neck. The father Emu got speared by the father Turkey and there they fought, leaving trails of chasms, twisting and turning at every corner, north, south, east, west. They speared and killed each other and today they are lying as two rock formations, the Emu to the north, and Turkey to the south. That place is called Yankaltjunku.



Tjukurpa Papa (Dog Story)

There were many dingos living at a place called Kulya. They used to hunt animals, eat and lived a happy life. One day, Two Men were passing through, they came across dog footprints and they said, 'Let's go and see what's inside this cave'. There they found dingos inside. These Two Men killed and ate up half of the dingos, the others escaped to the north-east, to a place called Tjiirtu. There they lived, safe from hunters and there they remain today.



Tjukurpa Wati Walawurru (Eagle Man Story)

This Eagle Man used to live in the high landmarks. He used to watch over every animal in the land. Every eagle has their boundaries. This eagle always hunts along the high plains of the country. He lived around the Partjatatjarra area in the Gibson Desert. He moves up north and comes down to the south. As he goes higher he draws every place nearer to him, so he can look after them.



Tjukurrpa Marlu (Kangaroo Story)

This old man Kangaroo has travelled a long journey. He lived with different languages, different cultures, different styles. Every place that he travels through, the language changes, every trail mark he makes, the water flows. Every landmark that he comes to, he is welcomed.



Tjukurrpa Wati Ngirtaka (Perentie/Monitor Lizard Man Story)

There was a Perentie Man (Wati Ngirtaka) who travelled from the top of Western Australia. He came through many places, leaving trails of landmarks wherever he went. On his way southwards, he could see different animals going the same direction as he, and in different directions.



Tjukurrpa Yulanya (Story of Old Man Yula)

This is the old man with the bald head, who travelled many miles chasing seven women across different places, different languages. He lived in a place called Kanamara and for a while they were all there together, ladies and all. Yula was one of the men that wanted those women for his wife but he didn't get them. The women flew into the night sky and became stars [the Pleiades constellation]. Today people perform the dance of Yula. A culture dance which many women do and perform activities representing their home countries and places and respectable ways of looking after the land of the Seven Sisters and Yula. Kurrpurrpulu we call them [sisters]. It is a really true story. The places, the marks are there, trees are there and lots of dances and performances are still taking place.



Tjukurrpa Wati Kutjarra (Two Men Story)

The boy used to scratch children with his sharp fingernails and make them cry. Their parents would swear at the man and say: "take your boy away. You are not supposed to be living here. You got this angry boy. Take him to another place, we feel uncomfortable." So he took him on a long journey. In all these places he was welcomed. Now the boy was powerful because he had been taught so much: to look after the rain, people. One day he made his way back. It is a Dreaming Story. It is real. Today they exist in their home. His father wants to stop him getting revenge on the people who hated him.

CONCLUSION

JT: How do we speak of Ribs? The liveliness, his swagger, the kerchief tied jauntily around his neck, the twinkle in his eye?

AV: His body, so lithe when dancing. His body moved, the *Tjukurrpa* activated, ready for action. The time of transformation. The body, “turned on,” changing its status. Poetic shimmer shudder.

JT: Found among the leaves in Pre-Life, fought for, contested and claimed in adulthood. The individual’s journey using one’s own ears, one’s own brain. Released spiritually in death. In so, so many actions, he was, is, the *Tjukurrpa*. The dazzling dance towards the Premier.

AV: Within the Arts Project, he could create a space for himself, a niche that allowed for innovation and performance. In that moment there is an immediacy, it is the moment of nowness, when a performer loses human form to reveal “the one before”, the original creator being. “That one now” becomes “That one ... NOW.”⁴⁴

JT: Sadly, the Warburton Arts Collection is now at risk of removal from desert Country, from the place of its creation, from families and from cultural authority. It could so easily pass from Ngaanyatjarra control. Perhaps to the State.

AV: All those old people. It can’t be for nothing. The *ninti* (knowledgeable) ones. *Tjurtu* (older sister, Tjingapa Davies) was foreshadowing this at my departure. The unspeakable.

JT: The Collection torn from its roots, objectified. How would there be another time when a Tjuparntarri, could raise a glass disc on the steps of Parliament House? When would the *Tjukurrpa* and the man formed of and from *tjukurrpa* ever be demonstrably present again?

AV: His art wasn’t an object but rather a production, as events. What’s going on in the process? There is a mystery, something exists as an idea— somehow it is converted into a painting or such. Today *Tjamu* said that art, painting, turns structure, the *Tjukurrpa*, into commodities. Commerciality destroys history. This history assaults structure and it is hard to fight history.

JT: I’m reminded of Marrkilyi’s profound words: “Our objects are not artefacts. They are simultaneously sacred and everyday. They are Instruments of Power”.

AV: *Tjamu* was raising how wanting everything, objectifying everything creates an objective universe dependent on conflict/claiming which then is part of history.

JT: History, the individual’s Life, lived by one’s own senses, lived respectfully yet vitally pushing ahead to claim, to claim a knowledge, a place. Are we saying that history hovers in a state of tension with the *Tjukurrpa*? Marrkilyi’s revelation to me is that *tjukurrpa* is THE Yarnangu organisation.

AV: In preparing this paper, each of us furthering our discussions with *Tjamu* and Lizzie has been humbling. How generous they are to share ideas long known by them.

This isn’t just about bringing the past (tradition) into the present. Rather, the present reveals that what was claimed in the past is indeed possible: ‘See, we can see with our own eyes, we were not just making this up.’ The present appearance – revelation – shows what was always possible.⁴⁵

JT: Ribs, with his flamboyant, regional vision, cross-cultural skills, was somewhat of a maverick, but arguably one of the best communicators of his time. It is not enough to create paintings or artworks alone. The risk is that artworks become avatars for the real experience of *tjukurrpa* and without human ephemera the country withers. To be with others in specific named places, to live, to visit, to dance, to sing, to drink from the water sources, to sleep with the constellations. Those creative directors of the Warburton Arts Project were *ninti*, they knew this.

Albie, do we dare to speak here of the unspeakable?

How do we speak the unspeakable? How do we say of one who has moved from a fundamental world footwalking through country, from rockhole to rockhole, with families as was done for so so many



Fig. 8. Mr Ward's mother Pulpuru (left) at Mina Mina with women singers at the Opening Ceremony for the Federal Court. Sister Nuny-kiya/Dorothy Ward (standing). Photo: J. Thomas, 2014.

*years before, then ruptured to another world of mission life, outcast and on the fringes, and then becoming a leader and spokesperson, mentor & friend to staff, teacher and guide to scientists of all kinds? A man of law, a song man who had a vision for his families and country. And always speaking for country and reminding us all of the proper ways of respecting people and country. But does this matter when Yarnangu and all Aboriginal peoples throughout history are always the subject of the unspeakable? From chains to prisoner transportation, what has changed?*⁴⁶

JT: As we write Australians are debating the Voice to Parliament, whether Indigenous Australians should have a formalised structure to engage with law-makers. How can we be debating this in 2023?

AV: It is so overdue. Ribs sought recognition. He was so intent on inserting himself at everything.

JT: His ongoing challenges to the existing political *status quo*.

AV: What is shocking is that he was so available. And now he isn't. Only in the shock of that death (von Sturmer, pers. comm).

JT: How can a man of culture, of extraordinary intellect, be reduced/reframed as a criminal by the State?



Fig. 9. Ian Ward holding his artwork at Warburton. *Wati Wamampi* (Watersnake Man). Ian Ward, 2001. clear float art glass panel 91 x 89.5 x 1 cm
Photo: E. Brites, 2003.



Fig. 10. Mr Ward's family, including his four sons and sister, preparing to dance the Warrmarla (Revenge Warrior) Dance at the Closing ceremony for the Federal Court, Mina Mina Claypan. Photo: J. Thomas, 2014.

With our memories we conjure into being the past, the person and the *Tjukurrpa* - that state of continuous being. Let's breathe and finish with Ribs' *Wati Warnampi*, the Watersnake Man, provider of life-giving water, obtained from soaks and wells in the driest of times, resident at the site where he first saw a light-skinned human and what a cross-cultural journey that began...

It's a place called Patjarr, one of the communities that is in the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve. You can see the design representing many soakwaters. He came across and performed many waterholes and soakwaters and moved on to a place called Tartja, north of the Clutterbuck Hills.

He put them through, ladies and men, performing rain dance, making rain. He used to give us water, look after us in the heat, dry water place. The soak now lies there today with plenty of water in it. When I was living at Tartja, it was my first communication with Europeans. I saw them coming over the sandhills. So I thought to myself, I might as well make a design of that place where I first saw a European.⁴⁷

We offer a caveat: One has to be cautious rendering Aboriginal thought or categories, as nothing is even vaguely familiar in the Western world (von Sturmer, pers. comm). As Marrkilyi reminds us, the door to *Tjukurrpa* and “*tjukurrpa* thinking” can only ever be opened slightly. In our grief we bear the consequences of our positions.

Notes

- ¹ Ian Ward in Jan Turner, *Visual Material and Selected Preliminary Draft Witness Statements*, The Peoples of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Vol. 7, report tendered to Federal Court of Australia [WCD2005/002] (Alice Springs: Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2004), 7.
- ² We are using the standardised Ngaanyatjarra orthography for all desert language terms.
- ³ Rangi Hirini, “‘Cooked’ to Death: Ten Years after Shocking Death in Custody, Has Anything Changed?” NITV, 31 January 2018, <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/cooked-to-death-tenyears-after-shocking-death-in-custody-has-anything-changed/fsgf3aujw>.
- ⁴ “*Tjukurrpa*” refers to the Creation Time when a code of living, a system for desert culture was laid down for all forthcoming generations. We use “*tjukurrpa*” to refer to instances where the *Tjukurrpa* is revealed and made visible/known to humans.
- ⁵ We thank the Ngaanyatjarra linguist Dr Marrkilyi Ellis for her translations of these headings and her confirmation that there is no Yarnangu concept of an Afterlife. We refer the reader to her biography: Lizzie Marrkilyi Ellis, *Pictures from My Memory: My Story as a Ngaatjatjarra Woman* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2016), and to Inge Kral and Elizabeth Marrkilyi Giles Ellis, *In the Time of Their Lives: Wangka kutjupa-kutjuparringu – How Talk Has Changed in the Western Desert* (Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2020).
- ⁶ Marrkilyi in Kral and Giles Ellis, *In the Time of Their Lives*, 17.
- ⁷ Jan Turner, “The View from Below: A Selected History of Contact Experiences, Patjarr, Gibson Desert, Western Australia,” in “Culture Contact in Indigenous Australia,” ed. Amy Roberts and Daryl Wesley, special issue, *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia* 42 (December 2018): 13–47.
- ⁸ Jan Turner, “Dr Cool and his Leading Lady: The legacy of the Goulds’ work at Patjarr,” in “Chasing the Rain: The Western Desert as a Marginal Environment,” ed. Paul Monaghan, special issue, *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia* 45 (December 2021): 41–73.
- ⁹ Ian Ward, in Jan Turner, ed., *trust* (Warburton: Warburton Arts Project Press, 2003), 1. Exh. cat.
- ¹⁰ *Wanarmpi Tjalpu-tjalpu*, 1991, Warburton Arts Collection #WAC15(L).
- ¹¹ Stewart’s “father” Wiruny was Mr Ward’s mother Pulpuru’s second husband.
- ¹² For an erudite discussion on art, ritual performance, aesthetics and the Aboriginal lifeworld in a Warburton Arts catalogue, see John von Sturmer, “Devotedly Yours,” in *Yarnangu Ngaanya: Our Land Our Body*, ed. by Gary Proctor (Perth: Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts Press, 1993): 83–89. Exh. cat.
- ¹³ Gary Proctor, “The Project,” in *Yarnangu Ngaanya: Our Land, Our Body*, ed. Gary Proctor (Perth: Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts Press, 1993), 78–81. Exh. cat.
- ¹⁴ 2002 Ngaanyatjarra Arts Strategy. Internal document, Warburton Arts Project. A considerable heritage collection was gathered with enormous community support and resources. It is believed to be the largest collection of community controlled Aboriginal art in Australia. Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, “Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre,” accessed 2 April 2023, <https://www.ngaanyatjarraku.wa.gov.au/tourist-information/attractions/tjulyuru-cultural-and-civic-centre.aspx>.
- ¹⁵ Victoria Laurie, “From Warburton to China: The Aboriginal Art Exhibition Taking China by Storm,” ABC, 25 August 2011, <https://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2011/08/25/3302242.htm>; Victoria Laurie, “Cracking China,” Scoop, 25 June 2014, <https://scoop.com.au/cracking-china/>.
- ¹⁶ Walter MacDougall was appointed a Native Patrol Officer by the Commonwealth Department of Supply to contact and safeguard the interests of Aboriginal people during the rocket tests. His name “Maramurtu” refers to his damaged hand (maramurtu hand-short).
- ¹⁷ Pulpuru Davies in Vikki Plant and Albie Viegas, eds., *Mission Time in Warburton: An Exhibition Exploring Aspects of the Warburton Mission History 1933–1973* (Warburton: Warburton Arts Project Press, 2002), 26. Exh. cat.
- ¹⁸ *Yankaltjungkunya*, 1991, Warburton Arts Collection #WAC 039 (L). Partially represented in Figure 4.
- ¹⁹ This three-day camp allowed artists to present their artwork, held in the Warburton Arts Collection, to their extended families. As artists revealed their own paintings, men and women sang the songs associated with the specific *tjukurrpa* depicted (Songlines and Song cycles). The event was filmed by Brites, Perry and Janicki for the Warburton Arts Project.
- ²⁰ In desert languages, all objects are said to be laying, sitting or standing.
- ²¹ Both bird species are found only in Australia.
- ²² Ian Ward, Untitled and unpublished manuscript (Warburton: Warburton Arts Project, 2001).
- ²³ In 1995, three kilns including a large kiln were installed in Warburton and in 1996 artists began making artworks in slumped glass for the architectural and domestic markets. Gary Proctor, “Warburton Arts Project,” in *Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, ed. Sylvia Kleinhert and Margo Neale (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 731–732.
- ²⁴ Marrkilyi in Kral and Giles Ellis, *In the Time of Their Lives*, 15.
- ²⁵ The legally incorporated body that represents the Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Pintupi, Pitjantjatjara and Manytjiltjarra

speakers who together are its members and live on what has now become known as the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of Western Australia. Information regarding the political context of the times is explained in the following section.

²⁶ A reference to Mr Ward's trip to China, as a representative of Australia, to educate an international audience about Indigenous land management practices. On this occasion he performed a traditional dance to pre-recorded music, emphasising that desert views on contemporary land management practices could not be divorced from the Tjukurrpa.

²⁷ Ian Ward, recorded by Chris Perry in a Research File Note for the Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2004.

²⁸ Jennifer Deger, *Shimmering Screens: Making Media in an Aboriginal Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 225.

²⁹ Glass artwork, see Figure 9.

³⁰ See Deger, *Shimmering Screens*, chapter 4; Fred R. Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 9.

³¹ Jan Turner, "The Impact of a Life (and a Death): Colonial Encounters and Aboriginal Desert Practices," interview with Léopold Lambert, in "The Desert," ed. Léopold Lambert, special issue, *The Funambulist*, no. 44 (November–December 2022): 48–57.

³² Created for the *trust* exhibition. Turner, *trust*.

³³ Tyrone Ward, Statement prepared for inclusion in a Deaths in Custody permanent exhibition space at Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip (2020).

³⁴ These panels were commissioned pieces, created as part of the Warburton Arts Project to be incorporated into internal and external walls and doors.

³⁵ The rights to republish the photograph in the journal and online were acquired from ZRC SAZU, Institute of Philosophy, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

³⁶ Dr David Brooks, lead anthropologist for the Ngaanyatjarra Lands native title claim.

³⁷ John von Sturmer, "Preface," in *Before Time Today: Reinventing Tradition in Aurukun Aboriginal Art*, ed. Sally Butler (St Lucia Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 2010), 18. Exh. cat.

³⁸ Ian Ward, in Chris Perry, File Note, One Claim (2005).

³⁹ Ngaanyatjarra Lands Native Title Determination ceremony, 2005.

⁴⁰ The linguist Marrkilyi notes Mr Ward's use of the continuous/never-ending tense.

⁴¹ Deger, *Shimmering Screens*, 78.

⁴² 23 August 2014 Federal Court proceedings (WAD86/2012).

⁴³ These photographs exist because it was not considered formal evidence.

⁴⁴ John von Sturmer, "To Dance in the Theatre of Absence: Some Remarks about Aurukun Carvings," in *Brought to Light II: Contemporary Australian Art 1966–2006*, ed. Lynne Seear and Julie Ewington (South Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 2007), 410–419.

⁴⁵ von Sturmer, "To Dance in the Theatre of Absence."

⁴⁶ John von Sturmer and Albertina Viegas, "In Memory of Mr Ward," event text as part of the installation *Too Many, Too Few, Not Enough*, Mori Gallery, Sydney, Australia (28 July – 2 August 2009). See also "Deathscapes" case study on Mr Ward and the discussion on "necro-transport."

⁴⁷ Ian Ward, in Jan Turner, *Visual Material and Selected Preliminary Draft Witness Statements*, The Peoples of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Vol. 7, report tendered to Federal Court of Australia [WCD2005/002] (Alice Springs: Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2004), 9.

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Jan TURNER

for thirty years the Ngaanyatjarra and Manyjiltjarra people have generously educated and included Janet's family in their own family networks. As an anthropologist and film-maker, Turner continues to support Yarnangu visions for their future. Together they have travelled deep into desert country. She is currently a PhD student at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia.

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