

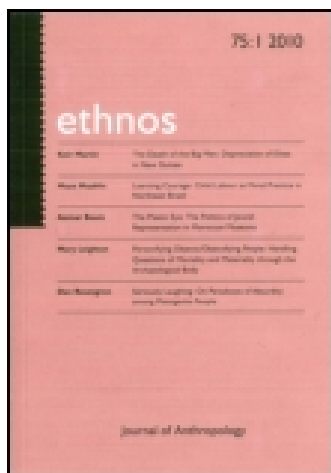
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# Emplacement and Displacement: Perceiving the Landscape Through Aboriginal Australian Acrylic Painting

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**ABSTRACT** *Aboriginal Australian acrylic paintings have long been considered representations of mythologically invested landscape. This understanding has been made problematic by recent writings on 'dwelling'. As common usage of the term 'landscape' seems to prioritize vision, to suggest that the acrylic paintings are landscapes only strengthens the suspicion that they are artifacts of displacement or distancing, rather than examples of the emplacement emphasized in this 'dwelling perspective'. However, this paper will demonstrate that the relationship between acrylic painting and the land is more complex than such an interpretation. It will argue that the Aboriginal objectification of their relationship to the land is not inherently a distancing of the land.*

**KEYWORDS** *Landscape theory, representation, dwelling, emplacement, Aboriginal Australian painting*

## **Introduction**

In this paper, I take up a number of issues involved in the contemporary Western Desert Indigenous activity of producing acrylic paintings identified with various ancestral narratives and places in the landscape. First, I ask whether these hybrid object forms offer an Indigenous perception of the landscape or whether their emphasis on visuality – one sense of 'landscape' much criticized as a distinctively European mode of experiencing place – constitutes an ontological transformation of them. Relatedly, I ask whether the changing formal qualities of the paintings indicate a change in the nature of people's relationships to place.

Indigenous Australian acrylic paintings have long been considered representations of mythologically invested place and landscape. Many painters in the desert communities where the paintings are done continue to regard them as 'revelations' of the ancestral foundation of their country (Myers 1989). A surge of recent writing on people and place has raised questions about the relationship between 'representation' and 'dwelling' (Heidegger 1971; Ingold 1996). The so-called 'dwelling perspective' aims to transcend an over-reliance on discursive constructions of 'place'. Thus, to regard the recently invented genre of acrylic painting as 'representation' would imply a falling away from 'dwelling'. Further, insofar as common usage of the term 'landscape' seems to prioritize vision, to suggest that the acrylic paintings are landscapes would only strengthen the suspicion that they are artifacts of displacement, rather than examples of the emplacement emphasized in this 'dwelling perspective'. Given that part of the mission of early painters was to use their works precisely to claim a distinctive Indigenous identification with place, the irony of equating 'landscape' with distance, in this case, illustrates the need for an alternative theoretical framework with which to think about the Western Desert art movement.

I argue that the Indigenous objectification of relationships to place – in visual form, ritual, or song – is not intrinsically a 'distanced perspective' on the land. Rather, in making visible what the land is, Australian Indigenous painting 'reveals' in two dimensions a complex range of experiences and understandings that are not, themselves, only visual.

This essay engages with the historical trajectory of acrylic painting that I have witnessed, among Pintupi people who only finally gave up a foraging way of life for sedentary residence in government settlements in the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Over time, a change is evident: paintings became more abstract and less iconographically specific. How would understanding these paintings as 'landscapes' – as visual forms engaging with what Casey (2002: xii) defined as 'a portion of the perceived world that lies before and around us' – expand conceptions of this genre of art practice, and also facilitate more complex appreciation of what these paintings do in the lives of those who make them? Three conditions of change will bear on my discussion. First, the prior (and continuing) tradition of Indigenous image-making involved ground designs, body decoration, ritual artifacts, and rock painting – executed in relationship to cycles of seminomadic movement over the land. Second, following sedentarization, in the 1970s, a practice of two-dimensional acrylic painting on flat surfaces developed; the intercultural circulation of these new object forms raised new challenges for painters,

communities, and markets. Third, although the development of two-dimensional paintings did not replace ongoing ritual forms of activity, this objectification created the possibility of commoditization.

The transformation of formal qualities in the images toward greater abstraction results not only from what I call 'censorship from below', but also from shifting understandings of value in national and international art markets. This confluence of circumstances and opportunities for virtuosity has allowed Aboriginal acrylic painting to be taken up as 'fine art'. I have spoken of these transformations as 'unsettled business' (Myers 2002, 2004), as the contexts and practices – no longer tied to the single arena of ritual ('business' in Aboriginal English) – become ever more complex. This characterization shares a sensibility with Thomas's (1991) discussion of colonial collections of 'entangled objects' in acknowledging a complexity of intercultural circulation that does not inevitably lead to compromise and loss. I argue that the shifts in style must not be understood as evidence of a simple transition of Aboriginal people from 'dwelling' to 'displacement'. Conceptualizing such a narrative has important political stakes: characterizations of the ontological relationship of Indigenous Australians to place have had significant value in the allocation of land rights and many painters have discussed their paintings as objectifications of their special relationship.

### **The Situation of Indigenous Land(scape) in Australia**

Landscape in Australia is not a neutral terrain politically or ontologically. The lengthy struggle between Indigenous Australians and the dominant Euro-Australian majority over the land is well known. In a number of major legal and political cases, differences of ontology, power, and understanding have become clear, but they have also been the subject of considerable efforts at mediation and remedy.<sup>2</sup> Even so, in the legislation of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act of 1976 and the Native Title Act (1993), state efforts to represent Indigenous place-relations in Euro-Australian law are inevitably limited.<sup>3</sup>

The dominant model of Indigenous landownership was drawn initially from a seminal paper, in which Stanner (1965) delineated 'estates', 'ranges', and 'domains' as ways of conceiving of different elements of a group's relationship to land. Stanner's model understood 'owners' as 'custodians', individuals or groups who exercised 'primary spiritual responsibility' over Ancestral<sup>4</sup> objectifications. Custodianship extended across ritual forms as well as 'sacred sites',

portions of the landscape understood as embodiments, traces, or transformations of Ancestral activity.

While useful, this model has increasingly been found inadequate in encompassing many Indigenous discourses articulating the relationships between persons and places. One problem has been the apparent separation of 'spiritual' activity from other forms of interaction, a central concern for Ingold (2000).<sup>5</sup> For example, the Stanner model gave little recognition to quotidian political and economic uses of the land, making these activities seem lacking in 'cosmological' significance. As anthropologists and others have sought to find a theoretical framework to engage with the issues posed in land claims, they have been drawn both to concepts of 'embodiment' that eschew the subject-object dichotomy embedded in notions of 'ownership', and to Heideggerian notions of 'dwelling' (Ingold 1996).<sup>6</sup>

Beyond land claims, the incommensurability between a 'dwelling perspective' (Aboriginal) and a 'utility' or 'instrumental' (Euro-Australian, Western, 'modern', or perhaps 'capitalist') orientation has been invoked to challenge more general theoretical assumptions about land as an external object. Criticizing the largely unexamined use of what Heidegger called 'the world picture' rather than Indigenous ontologies of person and place, Ingold (1996) wrote:

hunter-gatherers do *not*, as a rule, approach their environment as an external world of nature that has to be 'grasped' conceptually and appropriated symbolically within the terms of an imposed cultural design, as a precondition for effective action. They do not see themselves as mindful subjects having to contend with an alien world of physical objects; indeed, the separation of mind and nature has no place in their thought and practice. (120)

Indigenous art has been part of such dialogues about land in Australia. In bark and acrylic paintings,<sup>7</sup> people in many of Australia's remote communities have offered paintings as tokens that they insist represent their relationships to places and their sovereignty over them (Morphy 1983, 1991, 1995; Myers 1991, 2002). Most notably, the Yolngu (1963) claim to contest Euro-Australian plans to mine bauxite at Numbulwar, on the Gove Peninsula, was presented to the Australian Parliament in a form that included their clan designs in the famous Yirrkala bark petitions.

It may be ironic, therefore, that broad critiques of dualistic formulations of the relationship of people and land have extended also to critiques of a mode of artistic practice – the landscape – in which qualities of the environment

are perceived as embodying aesthetic value (for some subjects, anyway) as a corrective, perhaps, to the overly utilitarian relationship posed by the economic incentives of mining and development. This mode of apprehension is itself an example of the problematic dualism. On the one hand, the paintings have been celebrated for offering an Aboriginal sense of place; on the other hand, these two-dimensional objects are sometimes considered themselves to be expressions of a colonized subjectivity, a colonial project, reflecting the subject/object duality in their prioritizing of vision. For some critics, this has rendered such paintings inauthentic and for others a product of displacement. In another vein, the analysis of Indigenous paintings of country has sometimes been criticized for considering the paintings as 'representations', reproducing or imposing a duality on them that should be rejected (Biddle 2007). Rather than leaping to judgment, my interest is in understanding what the paintings can and do communicate.

### Acrylic Painting: Objectifying Country in Visual Form

Acrylic painting in Central Australia is a contemporary social practice. It began at the Aboriginal community of Papunya in 1971 under the guiding hand of the Euro-Australian schoolteacher and artist Geoffrey Bardon.<sup>8</sup> It is widely known that most Central and Western Desert painters represent – or perhaps 'indicate' (Ingold 2000) – the events or 'stories' of their 'country' (*ngurra*) that are understood to have occurred in the mythological period known as 'The Dreaming' (*Tjukurrpa*), and that the form of the paintings draws on a ceremonial tradition of image-making as well as on a culturally postulated significant landscape.

To this very point, the painters of these works insisted to me, early in my fieldwork, that the paintings are not just 'pretty pictures'. They meant by such comments that their value did not lie simply in their appearance, but derived from their origin in The Dreaming. Drawing on a repertoire of forms deployed in body decoration, ceremonial objects, and sand designs, the paintings are held to be images that depict, as both icon and index, The Dreaming: the invisible realm in which the visible world acquired its shape and being.<sup>9</sup> What we might call the everyday world comprises literally the object forms that 'make visible' (*yurti*) and knowable these otherwise unknown powers. This process of making visible or (more precisely) sensorily present – objectifying – is a fundamental component of Western Desert cultural practice. To paraphrase and slightly remake Ingold's definition of landscape, the painters regard their works as (partly) revealing, 'the world as it is known to

those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them' (Ingold 1993: 156).

Made in acrylic paint on canvas and produced for sale to an art market that is both national and international, such paintings are valued, locally and interculturally, by virtue of their connection to 'Dreaming-places' and their aesthetic virtuosity (Myers 1989, 1991, 2002). Regarded by their producers as revelations of knowledge of inalienable value, these paintings are nonetheless sold and bought, exhibited and seen by Western outsiders. The visual form of the paintings has changed observably over the last 40 years.

My focus here is on acrylic paintings from Papunya Tula Artists (the Aboriginally owned cooperative in which acrylic painting began) and the implications of their formal change over time.<sup>10</sup> The formal changes were, first, away from figurative forms, and then, subsequently, away from the iconographic styles of the early to late 1970s, and eventually to a variety of what might be considered more 'abstract' visualizations. Thus, in many early Papunya paintings, one often finds no clear separation of Dreaming, Ancestral person, land, and sacred objects within the field of the painting. Figure 1, by



**Figure 1.** *Ceremonial children's dreaming (probably two men at Yurkurramuputjunkunya): Yanyatjarri Tjakamarra (1972). © the artist 2012 licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.*



Yanyatjarri Tjakamarra in 1972, illustrates the lack of distinction between subjects and objects that is common in early work.

The paintings do not objectify Ancestral presence in a simple fashion any more than the ritual production of designs did. As significantly, Papunya Tula paintings are embedded in a complex intercultural world – intended for sale and to communicate with outsiders (Myers 2002). The engagement with an outside presence has raised suspicions not only about the artistic ‘authenticity’ of the works, but also about the relationship of such works to those who paint them. Thus, discussion of the evolution of painting form and content among Papunya Tula painters necessitates consideration of the broader field in which Indigenous landscape and its representations are implicated. This includes continuing issues of custodianship of stories that structure relationships and identities (of gender, generation, and geography) in the Indigenous community. These paintings have been notable for their capacity to represent for some Euro-Australians a possible new relationship with the Australian landscape itself (Myers 2001). Are the changes toward abstraction a ‘distancing’ from some previous ‘dwelling’ perspective? Are they a result, as some argue (e.g. Fry & Willis 1989), of the context of Indigenous/White relations? What would we make of such hybridities?

In seeking to answer such questions, which suggest an ontological change in people’s relationship to place, I rely most strongly on the painters’ own views that, despite outward changes in form, their work continues to reveal their ‘country’ and *The Dreaming*. Further, I suggest that the continuity of a particular relational ontology and the centrality of ongoing processes of identity production – embedded in the processes of objectifying country into form – continues to structure the experience of place and its performance in painting. In this structuring, both experience and discourse are crucial.

### **What is in a painting: Icon and Index, Body and Country**

Insofar as many Western Desert acrylic paintings have been understood, at least partly, as representations of place, it seems obvious that the paintings might be explored for their association with experience of place. But how? Approaching the paintings as ‘story-paintings’, as Bardon (1979) once called them, has the representational problems that a dwelling perspective questions (Myers 2002). Are the paintings simply ‘representational’ forms, and if so, how do they relate to the perception or experience of the landscape of living, acting bodies?

In the early 1970s, the insistence of interpreters on the mythological *content* of painting images succeeded in drawing attention to the fact that these paintings had meaning within Indigenous cosmology, emphasizing the referentiality of the images, although this strategy of interpretation seemed to subordinate discussion of explorations of form. Munn's (1966, 1973) delineation of an iconographic tradition in Warlpiri ritual and sand stories drew attention to the meaningfulness of body and ritual decoration. Designs were never simply iconographic, Munn (1970) insisted, but also bore an *indexical* relationship to the Ancestral beings from whose bodies the design had come. Such indexicality is the link to another framework of interpretation, suggested in the work of Watson (2003) and Biddle (2007): a focus on the performative dimension of painting. The paintings produced in recent years – notably less precise in their iconographic dimensions and focused on optical effects – are understood as performances of the right to reveal these stories. In this formulation, paintings emphasize painters' identification with places and their Ancestral beings, and express the power to evoke The Dreaming in the human perceptual realm.

The Ancestral events commonly depicted in the paintings are signified as activities that are made available to human subjects through ritual, mediated by song, movement, and narrative. In this respect, what is painted on a canvas may be a painting that invokes not only sensuous knowledge or experience of places, but also the rituals associated with those places. Thus, the painting on a cave wall is said to come from the Ancestral bodies who decorated themselves there for ceremony and turned into stone, and the Ancestral event is reenacted in contemporary rituals – of which paintings are a kind of transformation.

Thus, paintings are not only representational devices, but carry a haptic load of bodily experience. In the *Tingarri* tradition, an important Ancestral travel route which has come to dominate Pintupi men's painting, a common melodic line indicates the traveling of the Ancestral men. '*Kurrali kurrali yanana tirrima*', they sing as they move from place to place, the movement indicated by straight lines or paths between circles. In the ceremonial enactment of this line, I have seen the men in line one behind another moving forward to flow into a circle, the line (that is, the Ancestors) becoming a place. The painted line and circle is also the objectification of the song, and of the imagination engaged by the song (see James 2009: 11).

There is enormous pleasure for many Western Desert men and women in making these paintings. They are intrigued with the visual presentation – or visualization – of the broader experience of 'country', as place and as *Tjukurrpa*,

and the early paintings testify to a distinctive Indigenous experience of the desert environment. A good example is the famous painting by the Papunya-based painter, Michael Nelson Tjakamarra that adorned the cover of the catalog of the 'Dreamings' exhibition, held in New York in 1988. In this painting, known as 'Five Dreamings' (Sutton 1988: 103), the dotting stands for the dew on the honeysuckle flowers in the morning. The shimmering dots express the fertility of that land in the spring. This is an exquisitely evocative sensibility, attuned to the particular qualities of a place defined by this vegetation and visited at a particular time of year when the dew is swept up with small dishes to make a sweet drink. However, this perception is not simply an embodied experience, unmediated by traditions, as some readings of Ingold's (1993) embrace of 'dwelling' and rejection of 'inscription' would have it; the presence of this feature in the painting surely responds to a song associated with the Ancestral events that call it to significance as a feature to be known of the place.

### **Not Just Any Place, Not Just Any Time**

When I began my fieldwork in 1973, Pintupi people had come to settle in the Papunya area, a region some few hundred kilometers east of their traditional homelands, in response to drought, demography and new vehicle access (Myers 1986). I always found it difficult to learn much from them about the places and stories associated with nearby Yayayi Creek or the hills in the vicinity. They may not have known these stories well; certainly, they did not have the rights to tell them. But self-evidently, they did not care all that much. Nothing like their discussions of their *own* country, out west, the countries they told me they were painting in acrylics.

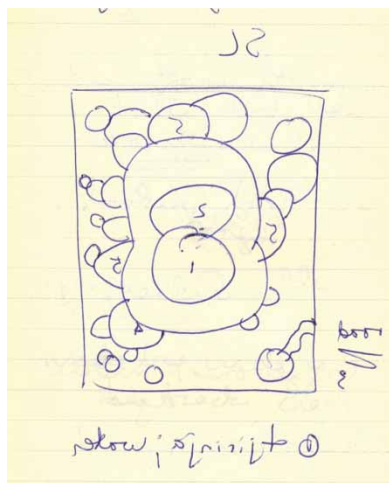
The landscape that interested them became evident in stories about Ancestral beings whose activities created the places we talked about or visited, or in discussions of the paintings they were making in acrylics on canvas board in a restricted area out of the sight of women and children, and sold through their cooperative, Papunya Tula Artists, to any buyer who would have them (Myers 1982, 1986, 1988, 1991, 2000, 2004). But an equally significant dimension of these places and paintings is that they are identified with specific groups of people. The countryside is not quite divided up like a grid, but it is perceived as articulated in relation to persons, and this identification is vital to how it is experienced.

### **Landscape Partitioning: Persons in Place**

It was the capacity of the paintings to *represent* The Dreaming foundation of places that long dominated the anthropological understanding of them.

However, to extend our thinking about the many ways in which people perceive the landscape, it is necessary to trace how Pintupi reckon their *identifications* with place (see Myers 1986), relationships that are equally constitutive of place and its performative visualization. Identifications with place come first and foremost through conception via an Ancestral being at a place, but also through mother/father/close kinsman's conception at a place, parent's death or burial at a place, initiation at a place, birth at a place, or prolonged residence at a place. Povinelli (1993) has suggested that what has been conceived as 'residence' might better be understood through an Indigenous logic of 'labor' in which living on the land involves a relationship with sentient aspects of the landscape, symbolized through 'sweat'. This is not an inheritance model, one that imagines human subjects 'owning' land as property. Instead, it conceives of the relationship between persons and place as embedded in identity-forming (and embodied) exchange: they share substance.

An example from my field research helps to understand the interpenetration of place and people. One of my painter friends, Shorty Lungkarta Tjungurrayi, discussed his 1974 painting of the place Tjirinya (Figure 2) not only with reference to a waterhole directly perceivable in the present (*feature 1*) and a ceremonial ground and fire in The Dreaming story (*feature 2*). He also made reference to a man (deceased at the time) whom he called 'father'. Tiwilnga Tjapangarti, he told me, was from this place and he was identified in a feature (*feature 3*) in the painting that he described as 'my father, in the Dreaming, looking for his



**Figure 2.** Tjirinya: Shorty Lungkarta Tjungurrayi (1974). Fred Myers drawing.

sacred objects. He lost them and is looking around for them'. The man was walking around whirling a sacred object, a common activity of ceremonial life. *Feature 4* is another ceremonial ground where the man walked around, surrounded by the rocks of the site Tjirinya. *Feature 5* represents the circle designs worn on the backs of the men in the ceremonial enactment of the event – the same kind of circles one sees in paintings. The men revealed a small sacred object here, Shorty told me, 'and then went to Pirmalynga'. The small semicircles are the young men (novices), and the bigger semicircles are the middle-aged men, the leaders and 'bosses'<sup>11</sup> of the ceremony. This and more recent examples in the work of Linda Syddick (Myers 2004) illustrate the difficulty of engaging with Indigenous imaginings of the land as not a simple object, but as having some sort of presence (Povinelli 1993).

### Changes in the Form

In turning to what I call the aesthetic trajectory of Papunya paintings, I will describe how they come to be less and less distinct in information, although their subject matter continues to be 'the country' (*ngurra*). A history of Western Desert painting shows a set of changes marked by the *excision* of apparent reference to ritual action and the often-secret form of Ancestral activities and their *replacement* by more 'open' (less secret) versions of these stories. The early paintings and drawings seem to combine the whole range of experiences involved with 'place' in Western Desert practice. The timeline I delineate over the years 1971–1988 and beyond is one that shows a movement from bodies in the landscape and ritual to other forms that are more abstracted.

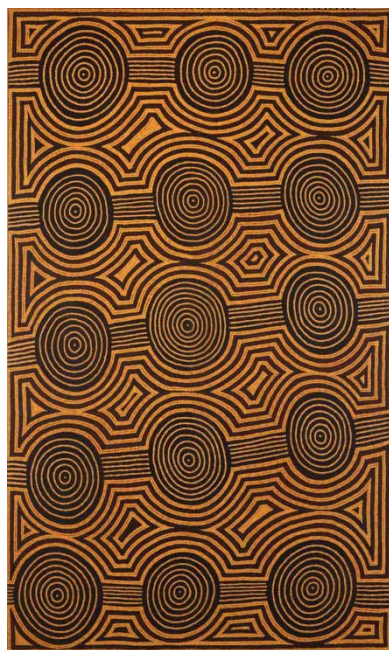
Still, the early paintings were not just simulacra of ritual objects. Sometimes, they presented ritual almost directly – for example, in the work of the Anmatyerre artist Kaapa Tjampitjinpa, in whose paintings the overt depiction of ceremonial forms in distinctive structures of symmetry signaled the ordering power of *Tjukurrpa* and its fascination for those in the grip of this tradition. Another Anmatyerre painter Clifford Possum offered the layered view of a landscape emerging from below the ground in the attempt to communicate to viewers an understanding of The Dreaming. Works from other painters during the early period could also illustrate the change in what came later.<sup>12</sup>

Later paintings from the Western Desert movement seem to engage viewers with various 'effects' of the extension of *Tjukurrpa* power into the world – or its haptic presence on the bodies of women dancers, as in the work of Makinti Napanangka or Eubena Nampitjinpa. Still others present themselves to be engaged with the optical effect, similar to the flashing effect of moving body

paintings illuminated by the flickering fire. Simon Tjakamarra's painting from 1989, 'Tingarri camp at Pillintjinya', with its manipulation of figure and ground and its lack of *specific* reference for the heretofore iconographic circle, stands as an example for much of Papunya Tula painting in subsequent years (Figure 3).

How are we to understand these changes in painting form? From the earliest exhibition of the paintings, there was concern from neighboring Aboriginal people about improperly revealing certain iconography – not so much to whites, but to inappropriate Aboriginal people. Principally these involved ritual objects and paraphernalia that were commonly represented in paintings of the period from 1971 to 1973. As part of their response to these challenges, the Pintupi painters largely restricted themselves to a particular portion of the mythological cycle, which is said to be less dangerous for uninitiated people to see (see also Kimber 1995).

Such experience has shaped the formal practice of painting, toward abstraction and ambiguity. Pintupi painters have further made this acceptable by masking or omitting the more esoteric and secret elements of the *Tingarri* tradition, giving their work some of its characteristically formal focus on design.



**Figure 3.** Tingarri camp at Pillintjinya: Simon Tjakamarra (1989). Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia. © the artist 2012 licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.



Finally, the separation of acrylic images from ritual practice has intensified a segregation of painterly practice from the social life of ceremony – a ceremonial life which continues to take place, if somewhat abbreviatedly, alongside painting. Of course, my capacity to illustrate these changes concretely with images is restricted by the same protocols.<sup>13</sup>

### The Revelatory Regime

Thus, any consideration of ‘perceiving the landscape’ must first come to terms with the *restricted and instructed nature of these perceptions and knowledge*. Indeed, Indigenous perceptions can be said to be formed and transformed through the engagement with revelatory ritual and narrative over the life cycle – as men, for example, are told initially some details about the relationship of environmental features to Ancestral activity, and only later exposed to (if they prove themselves) deeper versions. This makes ‘landscape’ a site of revelation, rather than a perceptual given, as ritual makes immediate everyday perceptions into surfaces whose real foundations must be learned from others.

Indigenous iconography participates in a system of difference – a system I call a ‘revelatory regime of value’ – that (to put it too simply) distinguishes *those with a right to see or learn* about these designs (initiated men and sometimes, more particularly, those from a particular local group) *from those who are still learning* and all of them *from females (who have their own exclusive ritual traditions) and uninitiated males*. In this revelatory regime, structures of visibility and invisibility provide the mechanics of Indigenous visual culture, in which control over the visual is central and in which the fundamental concern is to direct the potential or manifestations of *Tjukurrpa*, objectifications of Ancestral power identified with persons and groups. A variety of objects, designs, and performances in ceremony are considered ‘dangerous’ to show to uninitiated persons. Younger painters may not know or have the authority to represent underlying or more restricted dimensions of Ancestral presence at a site.

These are the constitutive relations of the image. Yet representations of precisely such forms were often present in the initial few years of the Papunya painting movement, as the painters did not imagine that their work would remain within the sensory world of *their own communities*. Its circulation into the whitefella domain, they thought, would be exempt from local contestation.

### Someone’s Story: Shorty Lungkarta and his Paintings

What we see in paintings is, then, not just any Aboriginal person’s perception of a landscape. Rather, a painting is a particular, person’s perception of his/her

places, showing what he or she is entitled to manage or give. In this way, one could say that the paintings are a projection of an embodiment of the landscape. Such a perspective transforms one's sense of the landscape as an undifferentiated scene for vision to a socially organized 'patchwork' or, perhaps, a 'palimpsest' of claims and revelations

The experience of place is organized through the social relations and activities – a practical logic – in which people engage it. The painter Shorty Lungkarta's 'Water Story' works exemplify how paintings are not just representations of landscape, but also indices of a person's specific modes of engagement in a sentient place [??].<sup>14</sup> The first point to recognize is that Shorty painted *his* country, an area stretching south from Lake Macdonald near the Northern Territory/Western Australia border. Second, one gets an idea of what his country evokes for him through knowledge of his life story, particularly in how he relates to the places he visits – including their economically useful qualities, who he saw and lived with there, who died there, and so on. These points of contact – the world as it might be known by Shorty – offer the listener the sense of a landscape redolent with histories of movement, residence, resource exploitation and other uses, burials and initiations, and conceptions. Such are the activities that constitute his relationship to and experience of the places as well as his rights to represent them. First and foremost, in the paintings, one must recognize his right to show them; second, his knowledge of them.

There are numerous levels on which the features of the place operate. Not infrequently, Shorty Lungkarta mapped his 'main country' for me, with marks in the sand. A significant feature of his discussions of movements involves the maintenance of a variety of activities with others around the landscape (from his and other countries), especially in the autumn. This is a time when the rains fall and allow travel along small, temporary surface waters in small groups. Many of these temporary sources were claypans and rockholes. It is also a time in which some relief is experienced from the tension of living in larger groups around the few permanent waters during summer, at Walukirritjinya and Turpalnga in the Turner Hills or further south at Pirmalynga. In autumn, Shorty would likely be found moving at some distance from these main, permanent waters, often to areas with large claypans – such as Lampintjanya, Kanamarapantjinya, and Yüitjiringinya. At these claypans, supplies of the seed plant *mungilpa* (*Tecticornia verrucosa*) were an attraction that gathered together people from distant countries.

At Yüitjiringinya, *mungilpa* seeds grew after the summer rains, becoming ripe and available in large quantities to support large encampments for ceremonies

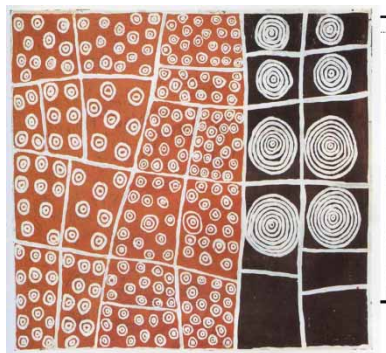


in the winter. The place is associated, therefore, with an intensification of sociality marked by the visits and coresidence of kin and friends. Initiation and other rituals were organized by the logic of social relations and articulated with other dimensions of people's movements as bodies in the landscape. Mere mention of the place associates it with this time determined by the practicalities of food and water.

In this light, I can discuss several features of Shorty's painting as it developed. First, like all the other Pintupi painters, Shorty painted his 'own country' (*ngurra walytja*). The early paintings included the widest range of Ancestral stories and drew on imagery that was closely connected to actual ritual performance, including revelations of Dreaming events of the Ancestral Kangaroo and Emu (Shorty's own conception dreaming). While indexing landscape of his own country, these myths are closely tied to the men's initiatory ceremonial cycle, the most restricted of ceremonial forms. These paintings also involved imagery depicting in realistic and undisguised form many ceremonial objects. By the time I first knew Shorty (July 1973), he had already reduced the range and variety of his paintings from that characteristic of the early days, and had given up painting Kangaroo and Emu. While some of his early paintings included images of ritual paraphernalia and reference to some of his Ancestral Dreamings that are particularly restricted, these do not appear in the period 1973 onward. As this suggests, while such places/stories/designs may be identified with an individual as 'his', others share in the responsibility for and identification with these objectifications of Ancestral activity.

A further dimension of Shorty's paintings over time, therefore, is that the range of subject matter in them is reduced, the reference to sacred objects disguised, and the focus of painting tends more toward a category of ceremonial performance or set of Ancestral stories known as *Tingarri*. In this period, Shorty developed a characteristic style and acquired a degree of attention as a premier Papunya Tula artist. The two [motifs?] I associate with Shorty are (1) the filigree dotting patterns of the paintings on Masonite and later, (2) an emphasis on overlapping circles and semicircles – giving a different effect of potency and multiplicity.

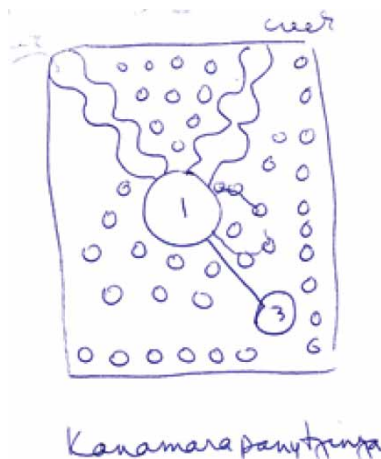
Shorty was very familiar with the claypans and salt lake area around Lake Macdonald, and Figure 4 1972 'Mystery Homeland Story' (Bardon & Bardon 2006: 433), appears to be an image of them. In many of Shorty's 'water stories', there is an emphasis on watercourses as the 'tracks' of Ancestral snakes. In the area of Lampintjanya and Kanamarapantjinya, near the large salt Lake Macdonald, the broad mythological background involves the *Tingarri* story of the Ancestral Native Cat (*Kuninka*), whose two sons are around Lake Macdonald, waiting to punish a group of men who Kuninka is sending to their



**Figure 4.** Mystery homelands: Shorty Lungkarta Tjungurrayi (1972). © the artist 2012 licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.

death (Myers 1986: 63–64). In the area of these claypans, there were also two Rock Python ancestors (*Kuniya*), and the two sons were pursuing these snakes in order to kill and eat them. At Lampintjanya, the two men were sitting at a fire. They put their sacred objects down and began to dig. The creek at Lampintjanya is the result of their movements, pursuing the snakes eventually to a hole (*pirtu*) near a neighboring hill. The features of fire, the sacred objects, and the water pathways of the snakes are central to many of the images of this place. Lampintjanya, Shorty said, was full – wide – with the seed-bearing plant, *mungilpa*.

At Kanamarapanytjinya, as seen in my drawing Figure 5, Shorty indicated, *Kuninka*'s two sons were 'working', gathering stones into piles. The sons



**Figure 5.** Kanamarapanytjinya: Shorty Lungkarta Tjungurrayi. Fred Myers drawing (1974).

were said to bring hail (*kunarta*), which is what killed the Tingarri men later. The center circle (*feature 1*) in the image is a rockhole. Creeks are indicated on the upper right and left with the wavy lines that often signify water. The small circles are hailstones, now visible in the present as rocks and stones. Creeks are depicted running to the lake, the result of Ancestral water snakes going along the paths indicated and having gone 'inside' (below the ground). The actual men named Wirrili (George Tjangala) and Mungilnga (Left Hand Frank Tjangala), Shorty's brothers-in-law, were noted by him as 'bosses' of this place, identified through their conception as Ancestral beings here. What we call their 'conception dreaming' as the two Ancestral boys is an artifact of their own aging father's frequent and prolonged residence at nearby Walukirritjinya – with autumn movement to the claypans, as indicated in Shorty's life history. *Feature 3* represents the two sons gathering the coals and wood of a fire. At *feature 1*, the two sons put up a windbreak around themselves, a feature also of a later painting. After playing a stone target game, the boys 'sang' each other (sorcerized), fighting over *mungilpa* seed cakes. One of the earliest paintings, from 1972, 'Snake Dreaming at Lampintjanya', visually emphasizes the snakes.<sup>15</sup> The movements of the snakes, their home and the bullroarer are all noted by Bardon's documents. As Dick Kimber, writing in the Sotheby's catalog (Important Aboriginal Art 1997: 24) has noted, snakes are 'associated with the formation of creek-lines that flow in a large claypan. Not only is it a long-lasting claypan water, but also about its edge mungilpa grows in profusion after rains'. Visible in this painting, just above the center circle is an oblong with a cross design that, I believe, is a common form of a sacred object – the string cross – carried by the men and indicated by some other paintings.

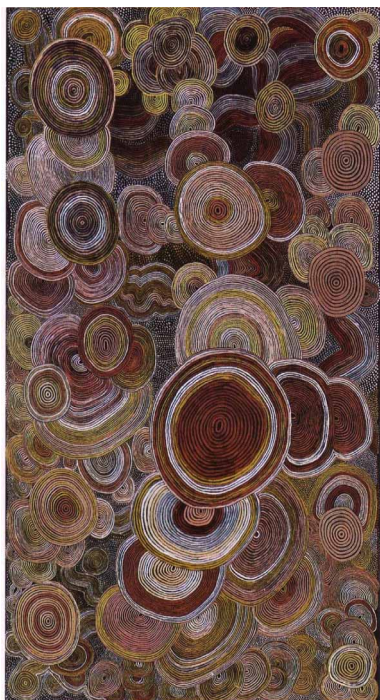
'Water Story 1972' has some documentation available from its original collection in 1972, and it is reproduced in Benjamin (2009: 120). It is thought to be 'probably Lalpinga (Lampintjanya), the artist's birth place. In this painting, the central roundel represents a big water hole with small creeks running into the central water hole' (Important Aboriginal Art 1998: 37). The underlying black motif could be a sacred object, but in a recent conversation I had with surviving Papunya Tula painters, the design was identified as 'hair string' (*puturru*) – perhaps a spinning of human hair on a stick as suggested by the circular shaping of the lines. This is a common way of disguising in public the presence of a sacred object by presenting its more mundane derivative. 'Classic Pintupi Water Dreaming 1972', was also recently reproduced in Benjamin (2009: 122). In this small painting on masonite, 58 × 41 cm, the central roundel represents

a waterhole, surrounded by soakages (small sets of concentric circles), with little creeks flowing into it from a larger watercourse that surrounds. The dark forms at each end represent hills. Again, this site is probably Lampintjanya, as suggested by the identification of a circle with two semicircles in the upper right as two men at the fire. This is Shorty's birthplace; the little creek and big creek routes were formed by the movements of Ancestral snakes, and the hills promote rainstorm runoff into the claypan. The painted overdrawing in dark areas at the top and bottom may represent *mungilpa* seed, blending Dreaming and present situations; Shorty identified the dark areas as 'hills' or 'rocks' (Bardon & Bardon 2006: 200). I should also note that the painting is in the shape of a circular, constructed headdress worn in many men's rituals. Thus, the painting of the claypan is at once the physical place and also the ritual form of that story worn on the head of dancers. In this sense, it could be said to resemble the infusion of Dreaming figures into the landscape of other early paintings.

In Figure 4, the 'Mystery Homeland 1972' painting is likely the big claypan of Lampintjanya. The numerous small white circles on the orange/red background probably refer to *mungilpa*. Commonly, claypans comprise many pot-holes, divided up, with high and low areas, such as those suggested by the rectilinear divisions in this field. The larger circles might be camps on a higher wooded area, represented by the black background that is similar to the dark areas of the previous painting. Most of Shorty's paintings after 1972 are of Tingarri cycle themes, and space does not permit analysis, but they indicate the stylistic evolution toward a more straightforward circle and grid form. After the trouble with the early paintings, Shorty's paintings begin to drop out some overt ritual details, also to move to a frequent use of the five-circle grid model and its variants (Myers 1999), which I found very common in this period – a model that may owe considerably to a body painting form common in Tingarri. In these paintings, the 'landscape' dimension is very tangible, and so also is the inseparability of person, places, and objects.

Shorty's increased uptake of geometric shapes must not be read as a detachment of person from place. Rather, his paintings, as well as those of other Pintupi men, remain closely tied to ritual presentations of country and continue to objectify their authority as those with rights to do so. Indeed, on 12 June 1974, several of Shorty's paintings were of the same events as those just being performed in the initiates' camp in the community. See Figure 6.

These examples illustrate the stylistic evolution of Shorty's paintings, moving to relatively conventionalized forms, depicting abstractly the features of



**Figure 6.**  
Ilingawurrngawurrnga:  
Shorty Lungkarta  
Tjungurrayi (1974).  
Collection of John and  
Barbara Wilkerson. © the  
artist 2012 licensed by  
Aboriginal Artists Agency  
Ltd.

the Dreaming events that he wanted to emphasize. Of course, one must also recognize that his innovations within these forms were regarded, at the time, as particularly creative and compelling.

### **Performance of Autonomy and Difference**

Along with this stylistic evolution of becoming less overtly iconographic, Shorty's later paintings of the same places of the early 'water stories' retain a strong and specific discursive relationship to the places and stories. His last painting of the claypan site of Yitjiringinya is very interesting. It was completed on 15 April 1981, at the short-lived outstation location of New Bore, near Mt. Liebig. It was painted at the height of Pintupi discussions of a return to their own country, further west, from the temporary 'exile' of their early sedentarization at the government settlement of Papunya in the 1950s and 1960s.

The design of this painting of the 'Two Boys at Yitjiringinya' (Figure 7), near to Lampintjanya, looks rather like the outline of a ground painting. One empha-



**Figure 7.** Painting

Yitjtiringinya: Shorty

Lungkarta Tjungurrayi, Fred

Myers photo (1981).

sis of the painting of the two boys, sitting facing each other (and cursing) is the windbreak around them. This he paints as encompassing lines around the circles. As a matter of execution, the painting was initiated with three circles and then Shorty put lines between circles, then in yellow put a line around two of these, then a red line around the yellow. 'This design', he explained:

was done on antbed (*liinjji*) – as a ground painting. It was done at the same time as women do their ritual (*yawalyu*), then we would lie down the initiate and do the ceremony. This was done for the Shield Ceremony when the young boy was sent away, involving body decorations (*yurtalpa*). This is a big initiatory ceremony, for older novices as well as boys. (Shorty Lungkarta, personal communication, 15 April 1981)

The sorcery songs of this story, he tells me, will close the anus of a victim so the excrement comes out somewhere else. 'It is a dangerous ceremony, Tricky. Danger lies there' (*Tulku miilmilpa, tickly. Danger ngarrin*). But there was a point to this information. I should tell whites, Shorty said, that they (Aborigines) 'have dangerous things'. In this control over the dangerous lies a potent source of their autonomy and their difference from the dominant Australian majority.

Shorty's comment here resonates closely with the very first discussions men had with me about their paintings, in which they were explicit in placing these landscapes in the social and political context of a Pintupi displacement from their traditional homelands. They frequently emphasized that the paintings were *turlku*, a word referring to ceremonies, and that the paintings were from their country.

Indeed, the paintings were entangled in – and products of – a vexed history. 'Our grandfather', Charley told me, 'never got any money for his stories; he lost them'. They knew better now, and he was afraid that 'white people might steal their country, steal its stories'. The comments indicate a struggle against the



threat of loss, a struggle to ‘hold’ (*kanyininpa*) rather than to ‘lose’ their country. ‘We belong to that country’, they said. ‘We want to get a windmill, a pump, and go back to the country’.

The paintings have continued to have such values associated with them, as inseparable from the being and history of Indigenous identification with the landscape. Even as paintings become less overtly representational of landscape itself, they continue to index place in manifesting the power invested in places. There were subsequent transformations of the paintings and their style, such as what I have described as the ‘op art’ innovations of Simon Tjakamarra, Joseph Tjaru and Ronnie Tjampitjinpa developed in the late 1980s (see Figure 3). Their paintings took on highly typified forms, of lines and circles on fields of dotting, very focused on the design and design effects with few obvious or specific references to landscape features. Nonetheless, the paintings are regarded fundamentally as extensions of the places, even if the painters had become less likely to discuss these meanings for most interlocutors. Indeed, as the main art adviser, Daphne Williams, was disinclined to ask or record these details, for fear of transgressing – as a woman – on men’s business, the landscape associations were submerged – although distinctly present in the imaginations of the painters.

Even though the generation of painters who had lived closely, as foragers, on the land is largely disappearing, paintings continue to index ideas and uses of place, now experienced in differing ways. They continue to operate as loci of Ancestral power, as sources of human identity – in ritual and painting, at least.

### Changes: Emplacement or Displacement?

Shorty’s paintings are those of an earlier generation. What perceptions of the landscape may exist – and be articulated in the paintings – of subsequent generations? While there may be less engagement with the lived details of place as environment of foraging, places continue to bear the substances of Ancestors, and paintings both represent and constitute painters’ custodianship of Ancestral knowledge, as I have previously shown in the case of Shorty’s adopted daughter Linda Syddick – whose paintings identify the filmic ‘ET and his friends’ with her father and uncles at the sacred site of Walukarritjinpa (see Myers 2004) (Figure 8). Indeed, in a stunning fusion, the generation who grew her up also – like ET – return to their home in the Western Desert.

Discussing the trajectory of Warlpiri painting at the nearby community of Yuendumu, Françoise Dussart has suggested (Dussart, personal communication) that the paintings there are now more abstract, and less related to places. They might only know, for example, the broad story of the Emu Dream-



**Figure 8.** ET and his friends: Linda Syddick (1993). Collection of Margaret Levi and Robert Kaplan. © the artist 2012 licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd

ing, but not its intimate connection to particular places. She conjectures that this could be a consequence of diminished middle-aged people's activity in transmitting knowledge to younger generation and a decline in ceremonial performances. Possibly, too, because the Warlpiri claim to Aboriginal title was so easily and quickly accomplished in the late 1970s, they no longer find the site-specific knowledge exhibited in early paintings to be very important. Politics now are more vested in inter-community contacts.

From other quarters, such as art criticism (Rothwell 2009), commentators have suggested a decline in painting (and religious attachment to place) as the first generation of painters who had lived as foragers on the land have passed away.<sup>16</sup> Fetishizing the earliest Papunya Tula paintings as the authentic view, such critics imagine a kind of inevitable loss of attachment (displacement) and their interpretation of the evolution of the painting tradition follows. There is no sense that relationships to place and experience of it could be culturally (that is discursively) enabled.

This does not appear to be the case, at least yet, in Pintupi communities such as Kiwirrkura and Kintore, where women are still visiting and in contact with important sites they paint. It was also only very recently that the Western Desert people succeeded in their claim for Aboriginal land title in Western Australia, a case that continued to place value on intimate knowledge of land.<sup>17</sup> The same might be said of possible rights to mining royalties as reinvigorating attachments.

Another account of the changes in painting form has emphasized a more non-representational quality in the paintings. Watson (2003), for example, in her discussion of women's painting at Balgo, draws attention to the haptic



quality of the paintings, that they are understood in relationship to practices of painting on the body, on the skin, and the penetration of Ancestral essence into the person. In this regard, the paintings are less representative of landscape form than they are of the more general Ancestral presence that informs landscape, ritual, and persons.

Similarly, Biddle (2007) discusses women's more recent paintings in the Central Desert (particularly Warlpiri and Anmatyerre communities). These seem not to dwell on sites, she maintains. Consequently, she is critical of perspectives which, in her view, 'privilege a Western cartographic visuality over what . . . is a culturally-specific and somatic way of experiencing and being with and in country. Relationship to country is not, primarily, visual' (Biddle 2007: 82). Kathleen Petyarre's canvases, she argues for example, 'do not so much offer perspective as an immersion in a movement that touches and transforms as it crosses surface (country, skin, canvas)' (Biddle 2007:82). This, then, is a critical response to 'the dominant perspectival 'mapping interpretation of these works' as 'aerial views of the bush'.

The fundamental implication of Biddle's discussions – and the attempt to relate the paintings to bodily experience – concern the performativity of painting – what and how they make present, give presence to, or mediate the power (also) revealed in the country. Petyarre's paintings often emphasize the effects, or presence, of *The Dreaming*, rather than the landscape itself. They are, if you will, what the landscape might be understood itself to 'reveal'. They also continue to perform Petyarre's identity and rights.

This is why, I argue, the displacements we observe in the paintings are not entirely ontological changes. If the followers of the 'op art' sensibilities of Simon Tjakamarra and Joseph Tjaru (from the late 1980s onward), the shuffling of foreground and background mentioned previously, may have less personal and intimate experience of the places of their painting, they still lay hold to the underlying formative forces and agencies of those places – the effects of their representation, the forms of existence. These later apparently formulaic, abstract and unspecific Tingarri paintings share in this sensibility. Indeed, in February 2009, on the occasion of the construction of a ground work of a Tingarri site for an exhibition of early Papunya Tula painting at Cornell University, Bobby West Tjupurrula reiterated an insistence on the equivalence of acrylic painting, the ground work, and Ancestral rock paintings: 'The paintings [in the exhibition]', he explained:

are about Tingarri stories, Dreamtime. They are telling a story, but they are putting it down in a painting, dot painting and circles. That's from my ancestors, a long time ago. When you go to Kiwirrkura, or Kintore, somewhere there, in the hill country, you will see the [rock] painting. But that's not from Yarnangu [Aboriginal persons], that's from Dreamtime. It is the same thing that we put down on canvas. (Bobby West Tjupurrula, New York City, 17 February 2009)

Certainly, Bobby's experiences of such places are not identical to those of his father, a man who hunted and gathered over the area in ways that have not been part of Bobby's life after very early childhood. Yet, despite his cosmopolitan experiences of travel and sedentarization, Bobby's history suggests the possibilities of re-habitation, of moving closer to dwellings in place – encouraged and guided by the traditions of knowledge transmitted through ritual. Indeed, the contemporary field officers from Papunya Tula commonly report that paintings get 'stronger', less routinized, when people return – even for a time – to live on their own land. Inspiration from this experience, one that is after all culturally institutionalized in song and dance, infuses their painting, suggesting that the effects of commoditization and circulation are neither simply inevitable nor unidirectional. Indeed, perhaps we can imagine 'representation' and 'dwelling' as co-existing frameworks of engagement in and with landscape.

### **Conclusion: Re-Censorship and contested landscapes**

In Australia, some dimensions of Indigenous claims of cultural ownership and practice have infiltrated the larger polity. For example, many of the early Papunya paintings – objectifying painters' rather cavalier attitude toward the public revealing of esoteric information and prohibited forms – are no longer shown in public galleries, by request of the painters. Despite the commoditization and sale of these forms, they are treated with the same reservation and respect that traditional sacred objects have come to have in museums and galleries – held out of public viewing and restricted to appropriate gender, age and initiatory criteria for access.

In this way, as the painters hoped – and even expected – Indigenous acrylic paintings do assert cultural authority. Indeed, this 'censorship from below' serves to establish the force of the Indigenous perception of the landscape. To put it differently, they insist on the recognition of some essential properties of the landscape. They assert, for example, that some categories of travelers cannot go to a place, cannot see it.

For many white Australians, the existence of an alternative perception of the Central and Western Deserts is important. Aboriginal paintings and formulations of relationships to place challenge longstanding images of Australia's 'dead heart' (as it once was known) and the 'bush' as threatening or hostile. The once-dominant view of Australia's non-coastal interior is that depicted in the film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Weir 1975), ominous and harsh. In contrast, Indigenous attachment to and identification with 'country' resignifies this desert landscape as inextricable from the personhood of its custodians. No longer threatening, the features re-presented in paintings are revelatory of knowledge, culture-sustaining, even life-giving [??].

In other ways, Indigenous relationships – again articulated in the paintings – may be important *politically*, because of the challenge the Indigenous presence poses to Euro-Australian interests and tenure as in the much publicized and controversial land claim cases of development at Hindmarsh Island near Adelaide and Coronation Hill in the Northern Territory. Some commentators have seen these struggles and the broader incommensurability between Indigenous and white Australian perceptions as producing an 'uncanny Australia', a haunting of the nation by the hidden sacred presence (Gelder & Jacobs 1998).

Despite the stylistic changes so obvious in the form of Central Desert painting, we should reject the simple telos of one directional change – from enchantment to disenchantment, from dwelling to distance. There is, I am arguing, a tension between these trajectories. Moreover, they cannot be separated from the ongoing political struggle in which the landscape and people are themselves involved. Longstanding ritualized, performative, and iconographic idioms that evolved synergistically with Indigenous experiences of place have been drawn into the emerging forms of acrylic painting which cannot, therefore, be regarded simply as indexing loss – especially when their aim is to reproduce the relationship with land in a changing context. The use of the visual is not necessarily intended to introduce a perspectival 'world picture'. Rather, it seems that Pintupi painters have deployed two-dimensional images to communicate and express broader, experiential relations to places within such frames. Artistry may be approached through considering the ways in which they do this condensation of senses. After all, the paintings are meant to convey a distinctive, different sense of place in the context of Euro-Australian domination.

And thus, with a turn to history, one also recognizes a persistence of culture. The Dreaming is not simply *experienced*, despite the present tense of Ingold's insistence on hunter-gatherer engagement with place; it is *learned*, a semiosis acquired in social relations with others. The ephemera of songs, imagination,

remembered movements, stories, and the like – the rhythms and sounds that attune them – allow people to reconstitute senses of place, and they offer the possibility (at least) of a two-directional movement. When young men return to their country from town, they may hear the songs and engage the relationships indicated through them. They can do so precisely because of the availability of ‘culture’ – historically transmitted – and of a sociality which are ignored in much phenomenological discourse about sensuous experience and walking on the land. They travel not alone but with the memories, songs, stories, and names of those who went before.

The shift in Shorty Lungkarta’s painting styles suggests that his ties to the land remained alive and well, despite two decades of sedentarization. Indeed, the change in styles owes significantly to the continuation of the relationships organized through land and ritual. If these relationships – with the Warpiri and the Pitjantjatjara – were being severed, their expression of concern about what he revealed in his paintings would not matter. Thus, this example of censorship – and those more recently imposed on paintings owned by museums and collectors (Myers 2012) – offers evidence of the vitality of the painting movement to impose Indigenous experiences and understandings of the landscape on others – even very powerful others.

### Acknowledgments

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### Notes

1. I began field research with Pintupi-speaking people at Yayayi, NT, in July 1973, two years after the acrylic painting movement began at Papunya. I did further intensive field research with Pintupi people in 1979, 1981, 1984, and 1988. Since then, I have had repeated engagements and conversations with Pintupi as well as others involved in the Aboriginal art world (Myers 2002).
2. Famous examples include Coronation Hill (Brunton 1991; Merlan 1991), Hindmarsh Island (Weiner 1995; Tonkinson 1997), and the Gove Peninsula (Williams 1986).
3. See Gumbert (1984) and more especially Povinelli (1993, 2002) for critical discussion of the capacity of the liberal state to recognize Indigenous difference.
4. I use Ancestral, capitalized, to refer to the culturally specific beings described as ‘The Dreaming’ and to differentiate these from some generic notion of ancestry as forebears.
5. See also Povinelli (1993) for an ethnographically Australian critique of the dichotomy.
6. Examples include David (2002), Tamisari (1998), and Vachon (2005).

7. The terms 'bark' and 'acrylic' represent the different media and traditions of Indigenous art in Northern Australia and Central Australia, respectively.
8. For a history of painting in this community and the establishment of Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd as a cooperative, see Bardon (1979, 1991) and Myers (2002).
9. They are 'signs' in the Peircean sense:  
A sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. (Peirce 1958: 2.228.)
10. For a brilliant study of such changes in a nearby tradition, see Carty and French (2011).
11. I am using the term 'bosses' here as a translation of 'mayutju' in Pintupi, a term that refers to those who have ceremonial prerogatives as custodians of a place or ceremony. I do not mean by this usage to refer to the contrast between 'custodians' (*kirta*) and 'managers' (*kurtungurlu*) that are also commonly used among Pintupi and Warlpiri. See Myers (1986).
12. Restrictions on the display of these ritually explicit older paintings prevent me from offering images of them here.
13. Women's painting – which developed in the 1980s at Yuendumu, and in the early 1990s with Pintupi women – has escaped this problem of unintended circulation, having begun after the initial concerns about inappropriate revelation were aired.
14. Shorty Lungkarta Tjungurrayi was one of my closest consultants in my first fieldwork at Yayayi, NT in 1973–1975, at Yinyilingki, NT in 1979, and at New Bore, NT in 1981. Although he left the bush for the ration depot at Haasts Bluff in the late 1940s, he remained fundamentally oriented to the lifestyle and values with which he grew up.
15. This painting was reproduced in Sotheby's Important Aboriginal Art Catalog, 1997: 22).
16. See Jorgensen's (2011: 42) critique of Rothwell's repeated evocation of the passage of Aboriginal artists 'and the end of Aboriginal art as we once knew it'.
17. *Brown v Western Australia* (No 2) [2003] FCA 556 (4 June 2003).

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