

Acknowledgments

This book has been long in the making. I began imagining there was something to say about the circulation of Aboriginal culture in late 1988, having just returned from a period of fieldwork and participating in the Asia Society exhibition *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia*. Don Brenneis's invitation to present a lecture at the Society for Cultural Anthropology's 1989 annual meetings crystallized a broader research project concerned with the ways in which Pintupi people were engaging with the universalizing discourses of the West into a paper of more than one hundred pages that I gradually reduced to speakable length. This became the outline of a research project and the present book.

It has been a work of love as well as of loss. So many of the people about whom I write are no longer with us, and through this book and its research, I have been able to reengage with their legacies and our shared histories. The process has allowed me to maintain the "shared identity" with my Pintupi friends (about which I wrote in my earlier monograph) that has partially made up for this loss.

Like many cultural productions, this book owes much to chance convergences and histories that have forced me to make what I call "intercultural space" the focus of my thinking, beyond the everyday life in remote communities. Perhaps I would not have pursued the project so determinedly were it not for the birth of my daughter and the limitations her medical condition placed on my travel abroad. In every way, I owe the existence of this book to Faye Ginsburg's encouragement to write about what I knew and to accept the value of the present. Her own interest in, and insights into, how people make culture inspired me to try something new. Working and living with Faye has deeply changed the way I think. This book is dedicated to Faye and to our daughter, Samantha. It could not be otherwise.

The list of those who have helped make the book possible is very long. First and foremost, my debt is to the Pintupi painters who welcomed me into their painting camps and entrusted me with their stories, their memories, and their

images. Among the many who helped, in particular, I wish to acknowledge Shorty Lungkarta Tjungurrayi, Freddy West Tjakamarra, Yanyatjarri Tjakamarra, Charley Tjaruru Tjungurrayi, and Wuta Wuta Tjangala for their friendship and help. Although they have now all died, I hope I am able to help carry their messages just a little further.

My thanks to the art coordinators who have shared their knowledge and stories and food with me over the years, as well as life in the bush, and whose work has been so devoted to the development of Aboriginal art. Peter Fannin, Dick Kimber, John Kean, Andrew Crocker, Daphne Williams, Felicity Wright, Christine Lennard, and Paul Sweeney have been friends and supporters as well as informants. A special word of thanks to Dick and to Daphne, who have shared their yarns, their humor, and their knowledge of the people of Central Australia with me for over a quarter of a century as Alice Springs became the “cosmopolitan” place it now is.

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script. Finally, I thank Howard Morphy for his prodigious effort in reading this manuscript more than once and offering crucial editorial suggestions. Howard's support of my transformation into an area he pioneered has been remarkable and typically generous.

Over the years, an ongoing dialogue with my friend George Marcus has been central to the trajectory of this work. This resulted initially in our jointly edited book *The Traffic in Culture* and has extended beyond that into the question of what kinds of subjects and sites should make up a contemporary anthropology. My conversations with him have encouraged me to think that this book has something to offer the future, not just as an example of a multisited ethnography, but because it tracks the "complicity" that brings anthropologists, their disciplines, and their subjects together in changing ways.

That my friend Bobby West and I should have been able to come together in Sydney in 2000 to see his father's painting and those of his elder relatives receiving national recognition is a sign of such changes that mark the transformation of our field and of the worlds of indigenous people. It has been my extraordinary good fortune to know Pintupi people over such a historically significant period. I have learned so much more from them than I can say. They have given me an opportunity to learn from others as the painters—through their paintings and their other projects—entered into a broader set of relationships of indigenous activity in Australia, as in the exhibition in Sydney, curated by Hetti Perkins, whose own father had been taken away from his Aboriginal family to be educated. Hetti's invitation to participate in the project celebrating Papunya Tula painting, and her editorial advice on my essay for their catalog, have made me realize the positive prospects that can exist for indigenous cultural futures and for overcoming what Marcia Langton has called Australia's "culture wars." These new alignments represent the future for indigenous people in Australia, and Western Desert acrylic painting is part of the story. It is my deepest hope that this book will be part of their history and part of a history that indigenous people in Australia will want to have. For them, who have given me so much, I hope this might be a gift worth the waiting.

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