

The Limits of Knowledge: A Reflexive Reading of Warlpiri Poetics

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Abstract: Seeking to fully know the other can have the effect of minimising the wholly different *gestalt* of the other's lifeworld. This mode of knowing can thereby be a means of reduction, generalisation, possession, and control. In this essay, the author analyses a contemporary ethnography of Warlpiri women's song-poems, *Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women's Songs from Yuendumu* (2014). This ethnography is theorised as a mode of open text that animates a collision of epistemologies: those of Western settler culture, and those of the Warlpiri women who collaboratively authored the book. The author emphasises the cultural lenses that she brings to the intellectual and emotional work of reflexive close reading, and insists that her own position as whitefella, settler, Westerner, combined with the necessary partiality of the text, renders her incapable of any sort of comprehensive access to the 'total poem,' the ritual situation, which the book represents.

Keywords: reflexive ethnography; open text; Warlpiri poetics; Warlpiri songs; songpoetry; ethnopoetics

Seeking to fully know the other can have the effect of minimising the wholly different *gestalt* of the other's lifeworld. This mode of knowing can thereby be a means of reduction, generalisation, possession, and control. In this essay, I analyse a contemporary ethnography of Warlpiri women's song-poems, *Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women's Songs from Yuendumu* (2014). I read this text to understand how it productively withholds total understanding for a settler reader like myself. I theorise this book as a mode of open text that animates a collision of epistemologies: those of Western settler culture, and those of the Warlpiri women who collaboratively authored the book. I emphasise the cultural lenses that I bring to the intellectual and emotional work of reflexive close reading, reading the work as I read myself in a kind of double dialogue. I insist that my own position as whitefella, settler, Westerner, combined with the necessary partiality of the text, renders me incapable of any sort of comprehensive access to the 'total poem,' the ritual situation, which the book represents.

Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women's Songs from Yuendumu contains ritual songs and stories that are performed as part of the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony. In performing *yawulyu* (ritual songs) in this ceremony, women sing the journey of *Yarripiri*, an ancestral Dreaming figure in the form of a taipan snake who travels northwards through Warlpiri country. The text elements of the book include transcriptions of the *Jardiwanpa* song cycle in Warlpiri and English translation, a narration of the travels of the *Jardiwanpa* ancestor in Warlpiri and English, and commentary and exegeses in Warlpiri and English which elaborate on some of the esoteric meanings of the songs. Photographs and a map supplement the text, and sound recordings of the songs are included in the form of a CD. Anthropologist Georgia Curran worked with Warlpiri women Coral Napangardi Gallagher, Peggy Nampijinpa Brown, and Barbara Napanangka Martin to compile the book, and Curran provides the book's English-language framing material.

I come to this text as an Australian, cis-gendered woman of English, Irish, and Scottish heritage. I speak English as a first language. While in some ways I stand apart from the dominant Australian culture, I know the codes and can speak them fluently. Western systems of epistemology have been, in both passive and active ways, inscribed on my habits of being and knowing. While these

Western modes of knowing are everywhere constructed as self-evident, they are, in fact – sometimes violently – counter to the epistemologies of marginalised people. Danny Butt writes, “the University’s position as the default holder of all knowledge is the result of practices that are not at all ‘universal’, but highly specific to European culture and the institutions and archives that it has built to store and transmit that knowledge – ones that have held certain people and material practices outside the category of ‘knowledge’” (Butt par. 5). The analytical task of this essay is an exercise in being attentive to modes of knowledge that have not always been acknowledged as such. It is also an exercise in being attentive to my own Western, settler, white or *kardiya*¹ lenses, which include my ways of reading and being-in-the-world, my expectations of both narrative and information, and my own unwelcome habits of internalised dominance or privilege, with which I come face to face as I read and analyse. Attending to these habits, while I attend to a personal dialogue with difference, is a crucial aspect of unravelling the inscriptions of privilege, rejecting these habits of thought, and being in open dialogue with challenging and beautiful forms of knowledge and culture that are other to my own.

The contemporary political project of the Australian government is to “close the gap” between settler and ‘Aboriginal’ society. However, Central Desert peoples, *yapa*,² repeatedly affirm their wish not to be like mainstream society, but to be distinct, to be different. Édouard Glissant theorises that at the basis of Western thought is “a requirement for transparency,” for everything to be reduced to something that we can access and comprehend (Glissant 190). Glissant eloquently moves beyond an argument for the right for difference, and demands “the right to opacity” (194). Difference or opacity is often minimised in translations of indigenous song-poetry. This minimisation is connected to the construction of such “spurious [entities]” as ‘Aboriginality’ (Hodge and Mishra 115), the “collective unity” of which is “the product of colonial conquest, which installed the prerequisite of a generalized other” (Wolfe 216). Even self-aware and innovative approaches to translating song-poetry sometimes fall prey to the totalising impulse, as in the work of ethnopoetics pioneer Jerome Rothenberg. In his creative and critical work, Rothenberg exhibits a desire and presumption to be able to cross cultural boundaries and achieve total understanding of the other, through imaginative access to the “total poem” (Rothenberg 96). Stuart Cooke’s contemporary translation work *Bulu Line: A West Kimberley Song Cycle* (2014) is a compelling example of translation work that builds upon yet moves beyond the innovations of Rothenberg, to “[surrender] absolutely the fantasy that they are a means of pure contact with some essence of Aboriginality” (Cooke, “The Poetic in Translation”). The result is creative translation work undertaken under the auspices of productive opacity.

Jukurrpa is the Warlpiri term for Law, or creation, or mythopoesis. It is commonly translated as ‘Dreaming’—another ‘spurious entity.’³ It is impossible to give an easy and definitive translation of *Jukurrpa*. Indeed, the impossibility of such easy definitions is a central concern of this essay. However, *Jukurrpa* involves ceremony, care of country, social law, and the songs and stories

¹ ‘White’ is a term that is both useful and problematic to define and defend. Cultural and educational habits are more than a matter of skin colour, and while ‘white’ has a blunt efficacy in these sorts of discussions, I prefer to use the Warlpiri word for whitefella or non-Indigenous person, which is *kardiya*. My use of the term *kardiya* is an attempt to situate this discussion in its particular context, which is the context of a whitefella/*kardiya* researcher and poet encountering Warlpiri texts and lifeworlds. It is also an attempt—although an unrealisable one—to situate myself as Warlpiri people see me, and to call myself what Warlpiri people call me.

² *Yapa* is the term some Central Australian mobs, including Warlpiri, use to refer to themselves. *Yapa* means Aboriginal.

³ For a discussion of the term ‘The Dreaming’ or ‘Dream-time,’ which Patrick Wolfe calls “a text-effect of anthropology,” see Wolfe or Green.

which tell creation myths. It is *Jukurrpa* that underlies and informs—in ways inscrutable to me—the song-poetry, or *yawulyu*, that is recorded and translated in *Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women's Songs from Yuendumu*.

The difference in the conceptions of 'poetry' between *kardiya* and *yapa* culture give an indication of the very different context that Warlpiri song-poetry is working in, living and breathing in, and being performed in. Often *kardiya* readers encounter *yapa* 'poetry' or 'song-poetry' as only the words of a ceremonial song, translated into English and set down on the page as a poem. However, *yapa* mythopoesis is mostly not at all like the kinds of poems that, for example, I write. These 'poems'—the *Jukurrpa* songs and stories—have dimensions and ritual functions that I could not ascribe to the poems in my own books. They involve painting and drawing and singing and travelling, and place—crucially, they involve place—in a way that is distinct from my understanding of my own poems. The authoring of these song-poems is sometimes attributed to ancestors or spirits residing in country. Further, they are sung and shared from person to person, depending on the relationship. Both the place where they are sung, and the people with whom they are sung, and for whom they are performed, are crucial matters, not merely incidental. This gives a sense of the kinds of distinct thought that such mythopoesis requires: thought that is so different from mine as to be incommensurable. In my experience, *yapa* comprehend this. I believe the *yapa* with whom I have close relationships understand that if they try and share too much cultural information with me at once, it is going to cause a sort of cognitive traffic jam in my mind. Thus, they hold back. They allow some glimpsed insights to arise, over time, within the context of our relationship.

Kardiya conceptions of poetry, therefore, are not comfortably commensurable with Warlpiri song-poetry, where the transcribed and translated words of the song are only one element of what Rothenberg calls the "total poem" (Rothenberg 96). In its totality, ceremonies in which song-poems are performed also involve dance, narrative, rhythm, voice, participation, complex performances of ritual direction and compliance, and presence in particular sites in country. Representations of such 'poetry' in book-form are necessarily partial.

These representations are also sites where epistemologies collide. The text is the site of a performance where *kardiya* and *yapa* languages, habits of narrative, ways of conceptualising country, and physical forms of knowledge transmission intersect and jostle. Josef Horacek theorises that, rather than "providing a transcript of a hypothetical typical performance in the source culture", such transcriptions "enact a performance of their own, a performance that is visibly inscribed into a specific context of the target culture" (Horacek 167). Cooke echoes this idea that translations of song-poems ought not to be "interpreted as static representations of an ideal performance...but as performances in themselves;" Cooke goes on to say, "each translation of a song-poem is an irresolvable nexus of Aboriginal and colonial knowledges" (Cooke, "An Introduction to Dyungayan's Bulu Line" 25–26). The potency of these irresolvable or partial nexuses, Cooke theorises, is activated by the participation of the reader.

Literary theories of 'open' as opposed to 'closed' texts are concerned with the reader's participation, as well as with theories of knowledge. While a 'closed text' is associated with perfect knowledge and an unproblematic correspondence between language and the world, an 'open text' is associated with linguistic opacity, polysemy, and endless indeterminacy (Edmond; Golding, "'Openness,' 'Closure,' and Recent American Poetry"; Golding, "'Isn't the Avant Garde Always Pedagogical': Experimental Poetics and / as Pedagogy"). Lyn Hejinian's definition of the open text describes each linguistic moment standing under an enormous pressure of horizontal and vertical information. Each moment, or linguistic event, is potent with ambiguity, full of meaning, unfixed,

partial, and incomplete. An open text is “form that provides an opening” (Hejinian 41); it invites reading as a form of active participation.

Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women’s Songs from Yuendumu is a productive text to analyse within this framework for several reasons. It is a contemporary ethnographic text that is clearly conscious of some of the more obvious historical critiques of the discipline of anthropology. In contrast to a mono-vocal ethnographic text that is authored solely by a white researcher, this book has been produced in transparent collaboration with the ‘law’ or ‘business’ women who hold the ritual knowledge.⁴ *Kardiya* anthropologist Georgia Curran narrates the process of the collaboration: she works to detail the situation of recording the songs, and to establish and delineate her role in recording, translating, and compiling the text. She briefly acknowledges the strong emotion and sadness of the work, because many of the senior business women who were the last people to know these songs and their ritual significance passed away in the period between recording the songs and compiling the book. The book is also situated as a book *for* Warlpiri—a complex positioning that I discuss below. Certainly, however, there is a genuine awareness of a history of ethnographic research wherein the West adopts or celebrates aspects of indigenous culture, while simultaneously rejecting the people who created and developed that culture (Smith 1). A conscious valuing of the women who hold and have held this knowledge is clear.

I have other, personal, reasons for selecting this text for analysis. My family history and my connection with Yuendumu are key drivers. I get a hot jolt of recognition at many of the photographs of the places and the people. The *Yarripiri* song line also holds memory and significance for me. One of my father’s best childhood mates, Warlpiri law man Harry Jakamarra Nelson, hosted our family on a visit to the *Yarripiri* song line in 2010. We took a couple of Toyotas and camped out at points along the song line. We approached Wirnparrku, a dramatic rock formation crowning a small hill, after days and days of travelling through spinifex country whose undulating subtlety might be mistaken for monotony. This is the site where *Yarripiri* begins his journey. It is the site of inception for *Yarripiri*’s *Jukurrpa* itinerary. Harry, aware of the potency of the site and in keeping with cultural restrictions that he did not articulate and must have known we would not be able to understand, refused to approach the hill, but waved the rest of us forward. He rested under a desert oak and warned us not to climb beyond the base of the hill. Others had gone blind from doing so. All my attempts to convey my internal conversations with this place in prose seem insufficient to me, so I will leave that for poetry. Suffice to say that photographs of such potent sites as Wirnparrku resonate for me partly because of the remembered intensity of these experiences. Ngama is a ‘big deal’ men’s sacred site on this song line, forbidden to women, and, sometimes controversially, photographed in texts of anthropology. When I come across the sight of the snake I know is painted on the cave wall at Ngama, my response to the lurch in my stomach is to slam the book shut.

I read *Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women’s Songs from Yuendumu* as a necessarily partial iteration of a complex mode of ritual poetry that involves many elements beyond the words of the song. It is not an ‘open text’ in the classic sense; the form and language of the text is not shaped by the sensibilities of an individual (Western) writer whose aesthetic compulsions align with a will towards indeterminacy, ambiguity, and polysemy. The text is not ‘art’ in the *kardiya* sense, but it gives shape to *ritual art*, discrete fragments of which have been wrested away from their charged

⁴ ‘Law woman’ or ‘business woman’ are Aboriginal English terms used freely in Warlpiri and other communities, to refer to women who hold the ritual responsibilities and the power to perform ceremony. Similarly, the terms ‘women’s business’ or ‘men’s business’ denotes secret/sacred songs, designs, dance, stories, sites in country, ritual knowledge, and ritual practice.

gestalt and turned into a bounded snapshot that is replete with the intercultural dynamics of relation. Each textual moment in the book is pressurised, in its connection to intricate and, to me, inscrutable systems of indigenous signification that involve kinship, relationship with country, ceremony, mythology, and social law. For me, the text is a “formative fiction” in Joshua Landy’s formulation (Landy 181–184). It is a text that serves as a training ground, provoking a sensuous, active, and efficacious mode of reading.

It is tempting to argue that an ethnography such as this is a fiction not only made, but made up (Clifford and Marcus 6)—inscribed with *kardiya* voice, epistemology, and worldview. However, this is complicated by the fact that Warlpiri people in this case are the ethnographers of their own culture. The law women who collaborated on this work voice their ownership of the material, and their concern that ritual knowledge be carried forward for future generations of Warlpiri. Curran’s editorial voice throughout the book clarifies the collaborative nature of the projects, and elements such as the translation of the songs were carried out under the close guidance of fluent native Warlpiri speakers. It is not the case, therefore, that the ethnographic “fiction” (Clifford and Marcus 6) of the text is a clean example of displacing intersubjectivity, where “the other is reduced to an experience of self,” (Crossley 14)—where the “other” is the Warlpiri subject, and the “self” is the *kardiya* author/editor. The intersubjective dynamics of the text are muddier than that.

While the book is the result of Warlpiri women’s wishes to share cultural knowledge, my engagement with *Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women’s Songs from Yuendumu* involves disorientation and distance. I experience a frustration of access. Perhaps, as I unpack below, I am encountering the resistance of Warlpiri agency. Anthropologist Jennifer Biddle writes, “there is something of a current ethos of ‘not telling’ Dreaming narratives, of ‘not giving’ information” (Biddle 14). My experience of reading the text may be what Biddle terms “a ‘listen to what I won’t be telling you’” (Biddle 14). The felt understanding of this refusal of access triggers humility, and an awareness of the lack of an epistemological bridge between *kardiya* and *yapa*. I must walk away from what Hejinian calls the “rage to know” (Hejinian 52) and sit on the ground in the uncomfortable state of acknowledged ignorance. My initial engagement with the text encounters the withholding, the not giving. Then, with effortful and recursive movements, this affect thickens to accommodate a heightened awareness of the complexity, potency, and beauty of the songs and stories. As a ‘formative fiction’ training ground, the text stimulates an awareness of this potency, but ultimately, the wholeness is withheld. In Cooke’s words, “we as readers are aware of its beauty, but can only imagine it” (Cooke, “An Introduction to Dyungayan’s Bulu Line” 22).

The different text-elements of the book create a complex energy in their interaction, and often do not sit easily beside one another – much like *kardiya* and *yapa* culture. For example, an early section of the book contains a story narrated by Carol Napangardi Gallagher, one of the key business women who collaborated on the making of the book. The story was recorded in a creek bed near Yuluwayi in Warlpiri country in the Tanami Desert. It is transcribed and translated in facing columns of Warlpiri and English. Napangardi’s narrative is placed early in the book. It comes immediately after all the introductory and scholarly apparatus, and before the translations of the *yawulyu* songs.

Napangardi’s narrative, in the words of the editor, “tells of the journey of a snake, *Yarripiri*, northwards from Wirnparaku, near Haasts Bluff. As he travels he burns himself, creating these places across Warlpiri country” (13). Although effort has been made by the editors to frame Napangardi’s story and to establish its location and context—reflecting the *kardiya* impulse to clarify and elucidate the Warlpiri lifeworld—my first encounter with this narrative is one of disorientation. Napangardi’s narrative of the journey of *Yarripiri* begins, seemingly, in the middle

of nowhere. While the narrative is framed as a travelling story, following the journey of this taipan snake ancestor along a significant Dreaming track, it opens with a stopping and a turning back. The first lines, in their English translation, read:

He stopped and burned himself going towards Wardarrka and then after that he turned back.

This Dreaming narrative of “The travels of the Jardiwampa ancestors”—which is the title given to this section, an editorial attempt at framing and contextualisation—begins: “He stopped.” Instead of momentum, I encounter instead an interruption of momentum. The expectations of conventional narrative that I bring to the page are instantly frustrated. These expectations might include introducing the characters, setting the scene, and establishing desire or intention. My conditioning predisposes me to want to begin at A and progress to Z. However, Warlpiri epistemology does not accommodate this desire. Even the place where the narrative is said to begin (*Winparrku*, according to the editorial framework) is unsettled by a progression of clauses that frustrates a pinning-down of place and progression:

He stopped and burned himself going towards Wardarrka and then after that he turned back. He turned back again towards his country, towards Winparrku. Then back at Winparrku he danced, burning himself.

The contextualising editorial-voice gestures towards a clarification of the narrative’s starting point. This clarifying gesture sits impotently next to the opening of Napangardi’s narrative, which vibrates with the pressures of rich mythological and socio-cultural context. This fullness has not been, and cannot be, fully imported to the page.

On the page facing Napangardi’s story is a map of *Yarripiri*’s track, with sites in country named and marked. Sites relevant to the narrative are marked in a bold black font, and sites of secondary importance are marked in grey. The format shapes an expectation that I might keep this two-dimensional map on my left, the *Jukurrpa* story on my right, and trace the travels of the ancestor as I read. In other words, the inclusion and alignment of these two elements—the *kardiya* map and the *Jukurrpa* story—indicate that I will be able to orient this story in country, and relate the phases of a linear narrative to a western map of *Yarripiri*’s itinerary. These elements prompt an expectation that *kardiya* values of accuracy and precision will cohere with the logic of the *Jukurrpa* narrative.

Instead, the story, as transcribed, effects a kind of disorientation. I search the map of *Yarripiri*’s track on the facing page for the place, *Wardarrka*, where *Yarripiri* was “going towards” before he stops and turns back. It is not there. Does *Wardarrka* not appear on the map because it is not a site created by this ancestor? Is it somewhere off-page? What is the cause and effect of this side-loop circling, before *Yarripiri* properly gets going from *Winparrku* to *Lipaya*, the next plotted point on the map? “Now, he stood up and started travelling,” reads the next stanza,⁵ “putting that place there.” My *kardiya* mind, which seeks to locate the exploits of *Jukurrpa* heroes within Western cartography, and reduce the song cycle to a simple oral map, a tidy ‘songline’ (Chatwin 57)—is already disordered.

⁵ I use ‘stanza’ here to describe the discrete segments into which the editor has jointed Napangardi’s story. This convention is useful and meaningful in Western poetics discourses, but is not emic to Warlpiri storytelling.

Readers and writers of poetry like myself should be well-practiced at reading against logic. For almost 150 years, since at least the innovations of Rimbaud, we have been practicing diving into the lake, rather than asking the lake what it means. However, in encountering a book such as this, a collaborative anthropological text-object where the ‘poetry’ is framed and bolstered with maps and prefaces that purport to pin down the track and the meaning of *Jarripiri’s* travels, we—I—still trip over my culturally-inscribed instinct towards clear meaning and linear information. Even the notion that a journey or a trip is linear is a thought habit that this text gently challenges.

The clear plot-points I might expect from such a narrative are productively rattled, although to be clear, this is not a pejorative judgement. As Glissant says, “The opaque is not the obscure, though it is possible for it to be so and be accepted as such. It is that which cannot be reduced” (191). The opaque frustrates an impulse towards “grasping” (191) and reducing, through total understanding, this narrative of Jarripiri’s exploits, and its complex relation to the Warlpiri lifeworld, where *Jukurrpa* shimmers in daily tasks and is formally honoured and invoked in ceremonial performance. Jasmine Musharbash’s analysis of the Warlpiri habit of “hithering and thithering” is an example of a quotidian Central Desert habit that easily frustrates *kardiya* understanding, and *kardiya* peoples’ desires for a planned journey to commence as intended (Musharbash 127). In reading this text, my understanding of the intricate interaction between story, song, painting, Law, and daily life in camp and community is provoked, but not neatly accomplished. It is not *done*.

The friction between western map-making and Warlpiri modes of conceptualising country are similarly expressed when commercial interests like mining companies try to fix the boundaries of sacred sites. Processes like these “aim to lock down information about place in a permanent form—for example, ‘that rock hole is sacred, we won’t mine near there’—whereas in the Warlpiri cognitive framework of layering, mutability, and time, knowledge could be revealed over a long period by different people who had different degrees of knowledge. As a further complication, the more sacred a place to Aboriginal people, the less that could be said about it” (Mahood 146). In Warlpiri culture, the right to speak is governed by complex social systems that are specific to the kinship position, gender, and age of the person speaking (Michaels, “Constraints on Knowledge in an Economy of Oral Information” 505–506, 507). There are restrictions around speaking of those who have died, and around secret and sacred knowledge. These intricate systems of permission and withholding sit uneasily against western philosophies of knowledge acquisition and the archival impulse, which presumes access and seeks closure.

The ancestors in Dreaming stories are typically beset by “traumatic events” and “endless fights”: trickery, deceit, appearances, disappearances, gender politics, and sexual anarchy are all common elements of such narratives (San Roque 51–52). In circling to Wardarrka, the site that is un-plotted, *Yarripiri* might be pursuing, or fleeing. He might be watching, or hiding. He might be interacting in any number of charged, antagonistic, or co-creating ways with other *Jukurrpa* heroes.

There might also be any number of reasons why more of the intricate context connected with this narrative has not made it onto the page. An avoidance relationship with a certain site in country might prevent Napangardi from elaborating on her knowledge about it. A place might be associated with a family member who has died, thus necessitating a *Kumunjayi* restriction where the person’s name and places closely associated with them cannot be spoken aloud (Michaels, “Constraints on Knowledge in an Economy of Oral Information” 506). In the disruption of pre-contact lifeways effected by *kardiya* settlement, knowledge of the site’s location may have been altogether lost. The reason for the omission may be more quotidian: interruptions and competing responsibilities of many kinds, from attending to sorry business, being called to mediate family dramas, or negotiate gifts and obligations of food and money, or the constant daily demands of surviving

camp life, may have intruded on the editor's attempts to clarify the location of Wardarrka. Napangardi spoke this narrative while sitting on the ground near Yuluwayi, with "a small group of business women" in attendance (Gallagher et al. 13). However, even while the narrative is spoken to mature business women who are her peers in *Jukurrpa* knowledge, Napangardi may have withheld many layers of the story because she was being recorded. What I am reading is more than likely a 'top drawer' version, a surface account that is edited and intended for public consumption.

The interaction between *kardiya* and *yapa* epistemologies, which share space on the page, is, for me, unsettling. In the frisson between the incommensurable elements of this open text, there is a pushing and pulling at work: between the *kardiya* wish to know and to document, and Warlpiri modes of knowledge-sharing, the complexity of which underlies and is only slantly articulated in the text at hand. My disorientation is an effect of coming up against the traces of these systems of protection and restriction. I may be encountering the resistance of Warlpiri agency.

The word 'encounter' bears interrogation. A reading mode of encounter is perhaps distinct from a mode of dialogue, where the dialogue is double: with the text, and with myself. The first words that came to mind to describe my experience of disorientation at encountering the opening stanza of Napangardi's narrative were 'the middle of nowhere.' Warlpiri country is far from the cities, towns, libraries and universities—the structures of 'civilization.' What is to be found in the desert? Mere rocks, red sand, spinifex scrub, and desert oaks? My automatic use of this cliché suggests something about the cultural lenses that I bring to this reading work. It flags an inscribed narrative of the emptiness of the desert. My first instincts are, in this way, traitorous to my values. The use of this phrase betrays my participation in the notion that the desert is 'nowhere.' This casual linguistic annulment of the so-called dead heart of Australia serves a broader and more insidious project of invalidating the meanings and lives of Warlpiri peoples whose culture is intimately tied to these 'nowheres.' The phrase "wilderness," which the brilliant Deborah Bird Rose once gently reproached me for using to describe the desert country that has so astonished me, also carries a history of negating Indigenous place making. To be clear, this invalidation of the Warlpiri lifeworld makes my gut churn if I claimed it as my own, but I suggest that it is the result of broader cultural messages that influence the unexamined workings of my mind, and which I seek to challenge. This first, unchallenged hermeneutical reflex is akin to encounter, as opposed to dialogue. In an encounter, a reader glances off the text, with cultural assumptions intact. A dialogue, however, requires both self-reflection and a will to change the patterns of one's mind.

Another element of the disorientation I experience when reading this text derives from the complexity and incongruity of the intended audience. To the editor's credit, Napangardi's narrative has not been scrubbed of its difference in order to make it readily digestible for a *kardiya* audience, in line with dominant translation practices (Venuti 31). However, elements of the text's presentation, with its museum-style explanatory text-boxes and explicative photographs, suggest this is, at least partly, the editors' intentions. Napangardi's narrative is spoken in situ, on country, to a group of fellow business women who are mature holders of knowledge, practicing lifeways that are deeply grounded in *Kuruwarri*, or Warlpiri Law. These women will know Wardarrka. They will understand about the stopping and the turning back. They will understand immediately the meaning of the images of burning that, on a first reading, bewilder me.

Much is withheld from me, necessarily so. In one sense, I am not the intended audience. I am not

a speaker of ‘language’⁶ either, so I approach the ‘total poem’ through its distorted and impoverished English version. To go further, my whiteness implicates me in a history of exploitation and degradation when withholding has not been practiced. I puzzle through a book that is attractively designed to conform to reader’s expectations of an ‘Aboriginal’ text: the dot painting on the cover and the photographs of Warlpiri women painted up in white ochre in its pages signal the book’s exotic content; and yet, for the Warlpiri women who helped to make this book, it is Law. The book functions as a handbook of powerful and pragmatic knowledge, for those who own the knowledge and understand how to activate it.

The fact that I am not the intended audience is made explicit in different moments of the text. Long Maggie Nakamarra White’s foreword clearly expresses the intention that this book of *yawulyu* is intended for the next generation of *yapa*. The translation says, “This is for the young people who don’t know what we’re singing. Poor things, so they can keep it, because we’ll be gone soon. ... We’re singing to show all the school children so they can keep it—the *yawulyu* that belongs to them. So the young people can hold on to them” (v). Curran’s introduction similarly asserts that the book, with all its combination of textual, visual, and audio elements, “is by no means meant to replace traditional means of transmitting this genre of women’s song, but it does aim to provide a resource for future generations of Warlpiri people” (2). These statements are unambiguous. *Kardiya* are not the primary audience.

And yet, the book freely circulates in the *kardiya* world, in universities and libraries, and is available to anyone to buy. An introduction in standard English, and museum-style informational text-boxes throughout, implicitly frame the text for a dominant culture audience. Oral song-texts that circle, repeat, and oscillate in volume and intensity, with many voices carrying and interpenetrating the verses, have been wrangled into single lines and represented with flat musical notation. Paratextual devices like the numbering and titling of verses order and arrange the oral poetry according to dominant culture conventions. Readers who do not speak Warlpiri—the majority—will encounter the song-poems and story in English, not in language.

In Napangardi’s *Jukurrpa* story, *Yarripiri* repeatedly burns himself as he travels through country. For me, the image of burning oneself, at first encounter, provokes connotations of danger, protest, or self-harm. To be burned is to be hurt. It is to be in danger. Perhaps it is a mistake. And if it is intentional, it is sickness or protest. I think of associations that come to mind when seeing photographs of country on fire. I think: bushfire, peril, and risk.

In the text, the editorial voice tells us that the act of burning produces sites in country: “As he travels he burns himself, creating these places across Warlpiri country” (13). In direct contrast with my first reflex, burning is thus a productive, even procreative, activity. It creates *Jukurrpa* places, locations charged with story and kin associations. These meanings directly contrast with the connotations that first arise for me.

Early settlers often misunderstood the Indigenous practice of burning off country. They were baffled by it, or saw it as wasteful: burning off great swathes of country just to flush out a meal of a few creatures. With their image of pastoral England superimposed onto the vastly different Australian landscape, they retained their cultural assumptions. The result is an incredibly biodiverse country suffering from imported pests, salt-poisoned soil, the highest extinction rate of mammals in the world, and the rampant bushfires that are a consequence of country that is left

⁶ *Yapa* use the term ‘language’ when referring to Indigenous languages like Warlpiri, in distinction from English.

‘wild’ (Rose, *Dingo Makes Us Human* 170–174).

Travels with Warlpiri friends through Purlinyano country have thickened my consciousness of the importance and function of burning in the *yapa* worldview. Burning country in the morning makes the tracks of goanna and perentie more visible in the cooling, freshly blackened soil. In tracts of country burned months previous, the fresh green shoots of spinifex attract *marlu* (kangaroo). This little lived knowledge helps me dialogue with my own reading of the text, instead of glancing off, assumptions intact. However, the depth of the *yapa* relationship with fire, burning, and country, is far from fully comprehended.

In many Indigenous worldviews, burning is not merely a pragmatic tool of land management. John Bradley documents the strong emotion associated with fire and burning for Yanyuwa people. To see smoke rise in the distance is to see that land is being cared for, that “the integrity of the landscape” is being maintained (Bradley, “Fire: Emotion and Politics” 26). There is a passionate feeling about the continuity of care that burning can arouse. Burning can also “set memories in motion, memories of the past and of long dead people” (Bradley, “Fire: Emotions and Politics” 27). For Yanyuwa, as for Warlpiri, the work of caretaking, which burning country represents, cannot be peeled away from its cultural, emotional, and familial dimensions.

In the text, references to burning sometimes appear in the song verses themselves, sometimes in the exegeses by Warlpiri law women, sometimes in the contextualising information provided by the editorial-voice. These forms of data accrete to concentrate the significance of *burning*—although the image of burning still retains mystery and opacity. For example, the editorial-voice informs the reader that one of the ritual purposes of the larger *Jardiwanpa* ceremony is to re-open marriage restrictions for widows of men who were associated with the *Jardiwanpa* dreaming: “during this ceremony these women dance in a line and have their pubic hair removed with a hot firestick” (Gallagher et al. 48). This *yawulyu* ceremony, then, which sings the journey of the ancestral taipan snake as he travels through country and burns himself, creating places, also involves a ritual burning of private hair to mark a widow as able to marry again. The acts of *Yarripiri*’s creation reverberate with the way this ritual burning opens the way for *procreation*.

Certain song verses contain slant clues about the form of the ritual dancers as they perform this burning action during the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony. Verse 10 of the cycle, in its English translation, reads: “*At Yuturlpu, burning in a circle. / The yellow ones in a circle*” (34). Here, “The yellow ones” are the ritually powerful dancers painted up in yellow ochre, who, as we learn from the exegesis, are “standing around in a circle” holding the firesticks with which to burn the private hair of the widows. The words of the song verse contain ritual instruction. They signal the shape in which the dancers arrange themselves as they *become*, within the compass of the ceremony, actors of the *Jukurpa*—“the Dreaming ones.” As the exegesis tell us, “*Their hair was smelling from being burned. / Poor things, the Dreaming ones*” (34). This, then, is an example of how, in very compressed language, the words of the song signal a link between ancestral exploits, ritual actions, and the highly-structured systems of kinship in the Warlpiri world. While very oblique, the way the words of the song narrate the ritual actions is still discernible.

Other verses are, according to the exegesis, ostensibly *about* burning, however there is nothing in the language that signals this. The words of verse 22, for example, read: “*At Juturangi, exhausted. / Hiding away with exhaustion*” (53). The exegesis elaborates: “*He says he’s tired from being burned with fire and is sore from all the blisters (on his skin) and is worn out*” (53). *Yarripiri*’s repeated burning of himself, the exegesis tells us, is the cause of his exhaustion. The connection here between exegesis and song verse is further stretched. My puzzling over verses like this creates

a sense of the text in continued, dimensional resistance to my hermeneutical efforts. The exegesis elaborates “some of the more esoteric meanings which are only known to senior business women” (Gallagher et al. 9–10). It offers certain clues of cause and effect. However, electricity buzzes between the textual moments of song verse and exegesis. Rather than offering the closure of explanation, the exegesis functions to suggest instead how *few* of the esoteric meanings of the song are inscribed in the language. A pressure of significance is discernible, though not graspable.

Another example of an even sharper disjunction between song verse and exegesis, while not to do with the image of burning, is found in verse 35. The words of the song read: “*In the really green country. / Shall I carry the seeds.*” To my ear, this is a gem of resistant, evocative image-poetry. In these two lines, I read the beauty of the shining landscape, and the sweetness of the question’s timidity, “*Shall I carry the seeds.*” “*The really green country*” sounds healthy, supportive of and supported by life. Suggestions of caretaking, new growth, and the protection of fresh vitality inhere in the image of “*seeds.*” In this swift couplet, there is a nimble setting of scene – “*In the really green country*”—and the lyric “I” locates a human agent at the centre of the poem.

None of these connotations, however, likely inhere in the song itself. I am thoroughly applying my own poetics. The exegesis introduces information that is nowhere at all to be found in the words of the song verse: “*The Dreaming is saying that the country is green, luscious, and he was sick and trying to vomit. / Just like he was going to vomit*” (78). I can perceive nothing of this context in the words of the song, at all, not the feeling of sickness nor the action of vomiting. In fact, I am jarred—though not unpleasurably—by the disjunction between the pastoral sweetness of the song verse, and the visceral theme of the exegesis. In moving between song verse and exegesis, I sense the withholding that ripples between these various forms of data. I *feel* how much is not included in the text itself.

The opacity I have described here is perhaps not only experienced by *kardiya* readers. Obscurity inheres in *Jukurrpa* song-verses. Their obliqueness is part of their power, in that it enables the open text of the songs to hold much story and significance, and leave space for the listener. In an essay about Warumungu women’s *yawulyu* songs (*Jukurrpa* songs sung by a Central Australian people neighbouring the Warlpiri), anthropologist Linda Barwick writes of an aesthetics of juxtaposition or parataxis. She describes fragments of *Jukurrpa* that are sung “side-by-side without an explicit explanation of the episodes between them” (Barwick 3). Barwick proposes that this process invites “active participation,” allowing the listener or learner “to construct by induction his or her own increasingly precise sense of the underlying being, story or ethos” (Barwick 3).

Eric Michaels’ analysis of Fred Myers’ ethnography of a different neighbouring Central Desert people, the Pintupi, puts forward a different function of obliqueness in such songs. Certainly, *yawulyu* and ceremony is intrinsic to social law, as the example of hair burning and its connection to marriage permissions suggests. However, “the Pintupi obscure to themselves the mechanisms by which the Dreaming reproduces social life (and is reproduced by it)” (Michaels, *Bad Aboriginal Art* 131). The oblique relation of the exploits of *Jukurrpa* ancestors to Warlpiri or Pintupi social law highlights, for Michaels, the incommensurability between an ethnographic purpose of coherent and thorough psychological analysis, and an emic Indigenous worldview: “ethnography and Pintupi cosmology [are] contrastive discourses and historiographies” (*Bad Aboriginal Art* 131). Parataxis, internal contradiction, obscurity, and obliqueness thus appear to be inherent elements of these song-verses.

When I was at Yuendumu in 2015, I visited Wendy Baarda, a linguist and fluent Warlpiri speaker at the Bilingual Resource Development Unit. We chatted, and though her husband has been mates

with my father for decades, I experienced her manner as aloof, almost guarded: probably an impulse of protection against so many *kardiya* visitors, researchers, pseudo-researchers, ‘experts,’ and artists passing through the community, extracting information about Warlpiri culture, and then disappearing for good. We were about to part ways when she told me that, in Warlpiri, there is no word for boundaries, and no word for beginning. This scorched me. *No beginning. No boundaries.* I recognise that situating Warlpiri mythology as ‘timeless’ is a dangerous gesture towards a narrative against the contemporary potency and aliveness of Warlpiri culture. However, the opening of Napangardi’s narrative, the opaque circling of the snake’s movements, and the frustration of the impulse to pin his movements down, to gain a definitive explanation of cause and effect, intention and action, how and why, suggests that Warlpiri mythology operates on notions of time and place that are incommensurable with the ones that guide my own movements through the quotidian world.

To be clear, it is not only *yapa* mythology that operates on a notion of time that is distinct from my own, but the *yapa* everyday. When asking *yapa* for directions, I have found there are usually only two answers to the question of how far away is a particular location: *not far*, or *long way*. While the road between certain locations is known intimately, and is inscribed with stories of past hunting trips or tragedies that are often recounted aloud while driving, gaining a description of that distance in terms of hours or kilometres is all but impossible. I experience *yapa* notions of time as bewilderingly flexible. This difference in our cultural conceptions is challenging for someone like me, who suffers from occasionally acute time anxiety. In fact, in Warlpiri, words for ‘time’ are also words that express movement, location, distance, and space. Concepts that for *kardiya* are absolutely distinct are, for *yapa*, conjoined. Western epistemology’s watertight compartments of past, present, and future do not apply. This is fundamental, and fundamentally unsettling. I find a loud echo of the sometimes confounding experience of living and travelling with *yapa* in engaging with this text.

Further, I wish to hypothesise that the mode of reading I have performed here cultivates my awareness of how I constantly colonise not only Indigenous forms of poetry, but Indigenous worldviews, into my own epistemology. Adam Newton defines ethics, beautifully, as “recursive, contingent, and interactive dramas of encounter and recognition” (Newton 12). Perhaps, though, the drama of ethical engagement involves not only encounter and recognition, but also dialogue and refusal. I have come to understand that I must allow the ‘total poem’ its resistance; it must continue to elude me, to retain its opacity. This text, then, is my training-ground. The disorientation of the reader who cannot know all, access all, understand all, is potent. There is value in submitting to it.

One of my early impulses in engaging with the partiality and insufficiency of song-poem transcriptions was to re-work such texts according to my own poetics. I might redesign the raw materials of already-transcribed *yawulyu* song-poems, in the mould of the ethnopoets such as Rothenberg, selecting phrasings and isolating textual moments to heighten the aesthetic qualities that, to my ear and eye, intensified the poetic effect. Now, however, I feel uncomfortable with the level of power and presumption involved in such play. This power is connected to my ability to move and speak easily in academic discourses that exercise authoritative definitions of what is considered knowledge, and what is not (Butt par. 5). I would be the final word on what I considered ‘poetic.’ I would make decisions around what context to strip away, and what to leave, in the absence of any structure of collaboration with the owners of the knowledge.

This early impulse arose from my understanding of the paucity of translation choices. Words in English struggle and fail to carry the dimensions of the song-poems in language. *Yapa* understand

this: “They know that English strains to capture their ... world” (Bradley and Yanyuwa Families xviii). Further, poets are quite good at making language work harder. What is arguably productive about such an approach is that it is undertaken with a willingness to engage, through play and sensuousness, with an alternative epistemology. When this approach becomes unjustifiable in its power play is when it purports to possess, to channel, or to fully know the other. As a member of the dominant culture who is inscribed with the privileged cultural assumption that all experiences and forms of knowledge are available to me, if I am only willing to pay the price, I believe a more ethical approach is to listen to what is being withheld.

In *Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women’s Songs from Yuendumu*, the editors and translators use the word “special” to convey a rich range of denotations and associations. The first song verse in its English translation reads: “*The special appearance of the feathers on the ritual pole in there. / The special appearance of the feathers in there at Wirnparrku.*” The exegesis tells us that, after the performers of the ceremony put feathers on the ritual pole, “*from Wirnparrku, from behind, the feathers appear to shine in a special way.*” Thus ‘special’ is freighted to convey ritual importance, secret-sacred significance, the shininess of potent super-vitality, and perhaps also something we might call sentience, as the feathers interact with and animate dimensions of *Jukurrpa* time and power.

Poor ‘special’ is under impossible pressure to carry these resonances. In English, it is a word of pretty annunciation, and soft: it gets at the beauty of the shining feathers, although ‘beauty’ and ‘beautiful’ are not words that I have heard *yapa* use. Sometimes I have praised country in these terms—“this is beautiful country!”—and *yapa* have replied to affirm that, yes, it is “*good* country.” Mahood notes that words like ‘fat,’ ‘shiny,’ and ‘healthy’ can all mean beautiful (Mahood 183). Along with visual beauty, ‘special’ suggests a need of care: something to be treasured and looked after. However, connotations of ritually powerful, ‘super-vital’ (Bradley, “Singing through the Sea: Song, Sea and Emotion” 20), and animate are not inscribed. Deborah Bird Rose notes that for Yolngu, *bir’yun*, or ‘shimmer,’ carries resonances of the shiny and the super-vital, the very pulse of life. She writes, after anthropologist Howard Morphy, “*Bir’yun*, or shimmer, or brilliance, is—people say—one’s actual capacity to see and experience ancestral power” (Rose, “Shimmer: When All You Love is Being Trashed”). Beyond an appreciation of mere visual beauty, like the sun glinting on water, in the Yolngu context ‘shimmer’ is freighted with deep resonances that the English translation, encountered in isolation, struggles to carry.

The word ‘yellow’ is another translation choice that strains to carry all that it must. ‘Yellow’ is a pervasive metaphorical and literal symbol that appears again and again throughout *Jardiwanpa Yawulyu: Warlpiri Women’s Songs from Yuendumu*. The editorial-voice tells us:

Karntawarra ‘yellow ochre’ has a special significance. It is prominently used for women’s *yawulyu* ceremonies, which are held after someone passes away. The performance of these *yawulyu* marks the re-opening of the use of the songs, designs and dances associated with the related *Jukurrpa*. In the final part of these ceremonies, the dancers who have lost either a husband or a son are dusted liberally with crushed yellow ochre from the tops of their heads, over their breasts and stomach and their pubic region. (Gallagher et al. 30)

Thus, yellow ochre is essential in the ritual expression of grief, as well as renewal and one’s deliverance from the status of a widow or grieving person.

In some song verses, the ritual actors are named “*The yellow ones*” (34). The exegesis tells us that “*the yellow ones*” are “*the Dreaming ones*”: ceremonial workers or *kurdungurlu* (as opposed to

ceremonial bosses) who dance the *Jukurra*. The yellow one, though, is also *Yarripiri*, the ancestral taipan snake: “*The yellow one is travelling. / The yellow one at Waylilinpa*” (Gallagher et al. 37). Yellow, then, is grief, loss, renewal, and return. It is also rock, snake, ancestor, ceremonial worker. Ceremonial worker is ancestor. How to freight ‘yellow’ with all of this? Paul Celan-style portmanteau words might help English to approach the layered richness, the double, triple, quadruple denotative work the word must do: griefyellow, rituallyyellow, dreamingyellow, ochreyellow, yellowdust, snakeyellow, yellowshine. This string of my own linguistic invention sounds potent to my ears. However, it is important to acknowledge that this is my invention: it cannot grasp, capture, and enclose the Warlpiri worldview, or build a definitive epistemological bridge from the *yapa* song-poem to my *kardiya* brain.

Can a song-poem be translated at all? I wondered this aloud to Alice Nampijinpa Henwood, the Warlpiri elder and matriarch with whom I have spent the most time travelling through country, and her daughter Kelly. I asked whether Alice’s *ngapa Jukurra* (water dreaming) song-poem could be translated, and their answer at the time felt unambiguously negative. Kelly scowled. They both shook their heads no. “In language,” said Alice. “Proper way in language.” I took this as evidence of the very impossibility of translating a song-poem at all. Now, however, I understand that their refusal may have been categorical, or it may have been provisional: it may be at that moment, at that camp at Emu Bore in the winter of 2015, I, a *Nungarrayi*⁷ but a *kardiya* woman who cannot speak Warlpiri with any degree of fluency, am told *no* in relation to this particular *Jukurra* song. In the *yapa* mindset, ‘could’ and ‘would’ are troublesome concepts. Speaking in abstract possibilities is a habit of *kardiya* that does not easily align with the *yapa* worldview. Likewise, story and memory are powerfully tied to particular places. It makes little sense to *yapa* to tell a story when we are not right there in country where the story resides.

The intricate specificity of *yapa* modes of knowledge is central to the epistemological tension in the text under analysis here. In the Warlpiri world, sharing knowledge confers prestige on the teller, and honour on the person told; just because something is shared, however, does not give the person told a right to tell others (Michaels, “Constraints on Knowledge in an Economy of Oral Information” 507). This mode of knowledge-sharing is more akin to an intimate relationship than to an academic mode of research. While academia has its own secret jargon codes, its own systems of exclusion and protection, and its own methods of acknowledgement and homage, academic knowledge systems are not place-bound and relationship-bound in the same way as *yapa* forms of knowledge. In distinction from a transactional exchange, *yapa* stories and knowledge are shared in the mode of a gift economy, which obligates the parties involved to maintain a relationship. I have found that navigating these cultural codes can be difficult and exhausting,⁸ particularly as Warlpiri learn through watching and gleaning pieces of information over time and through activities, rather than through *kardiya*-style instruction. My *kardiya* impulse to ‘get answers’ through (well-meaning) interrogation usually fails. In camp, at night, tucked up in swags, I have listened to stories of a supernatural nature. Sensing that these were not to be repeated, I checked in with the storyteller the next day: “secret one, yeah?” The response was a very subtle confirmation. Pursed lips, then “*yuwayi*” (yes) whispered through an intake of breath. The *yapa* families who shared their knowledge with me would not necessarily say, “do not repeat this.”

⁷ *Nungarrayi* is the skin name assigned to me since birth. My grandfather, who came to Yuendumu in 1950, had the skin name *Jungarrayi*, and my father’s is *Japaljarri*. A system of sixteen ‘skin names’ (eight for males, eight for females) structures Warlpiri kinship law and dictates the complex and particular ways in which Warlpiri people relate to each other, including marriage pairing and ‘avoidance’ relationships. While *kardiya* who are given skin names are not expected to follow these laws, being given a skin name situates a *kardiya* within the Warlpiri web, the Warlpiri life-world, making them visible and relatable.

⁸ I am certain that for *yapa*, navigating *kardiya* systems is often difficult and exhausting too.

Navigating these intercultural dynamics is intimate, electrical, and fully involving.

While my research is fundamentally concerned with how settler and Warlpiri cultures misunderstand each other, I wish to emphasise that if there are moments in this analysis where I slip into constructing a binary, it is down to a failure of nuance. *Kardiya* and *yapa* people relate to each other as individuals, with individual sets of experiences and feelings. While my habits of valuing and understanding are shaped by the dominant culture, and the habits of Alice Nampijinpa Henwood and her family are shaped by the Warlpiri and Pintupi worlds in which they have lived their whole lives, the divide between our cultures is by no means absolute. Cross-cultural intersections of sameness and difference exist on a spectrum. Our ability to empathise with each other's ways of doing and seeing things may be partial and limited, but it is also fluid. Further, it is my conviction that *yapa* understand far more about *kardiya* culture than *kardiya* understand about *yapa*, because *yapa* have been forced into a cultural moment where they are living between the cultures. Televisions, cars, settler systems of bureaucracy, the dark arts of advertising, shop-bought food, mobile devices, social media, video games, lab-made drugs, and more—the vices and pleasures of the settler world—are common fixtures of camp and community life. *Yapa* have also had to attain a degree of fluency in doing things 'kardiya way' simply in order to survive.

I believe a generosity of cultural exchange on the part of *yapa* has been in place since first contact. In sharing knowledge, stories, and songs, *yapa* are offering something—a wish that *kardiya* might understand even a little. There is so much, however, that cannot be fully known by my *kardiya* mind. In Napangardi's opening narrative of *Yarripiri's* travels, there is a moment where the text records her voice dropping to a whisper: "Right here at that place," she says, "he did something" (Gallagher et al. 14). This is beautifully typical: "he did something." The whisper signals potency. *Listen to this*, it suggests. *This is important*. Her narrative continues to its end: "At Katurnu – Banana Bore – turning back that way he burned himself. He was standing there in the north, not looking back, and he burned himself." I can scour the sentences for clues as to what is momentous and singular about *this* act of burning in distinction from all the others. There is nothing to find. Instead, I experience a frisson of contact with the 'total poem.' I do not mean understanding, nor possession, nor an access to essence. I mean a provisional touching, an affective, felt *sense*, of how rich, intricate, deeply situated, and complex is this form of poetry. This contact is inseparable from an acute apprehension of my exclusion from experiencing its fullness.

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