

Linda Barwick
University of Sydney

Barwick, Linda. (2005). Performance, aesthetics, experience: thoughts on Yawulyu mungamunga songs. In E. Mackinlay, S. Owens & D. Collins (Eds.), *Aesthetics and experience in music performance* (pp. 1-18). Amersham, Bucks: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Postprint version, with page numbers edited to match the published version.

Performance, aesthetics, experience: thoughts on *Yawulyu Mungamunga* songs

Introduction

In 2000 a CD of Warumungu women's *Yawulyu Mungamunga* songs was published by Festival records (Papulu Apparr-kari Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre & Barwick, 2000, 479), and launched in Tennant Creek and in Sydney at the National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia. In Sydney a large audience of musicologists and academics witnessed the launch of these songs into the national and international arena, an event marked by speeches and ceremonial exchanges of gifts as well as a performance of the songs with dancing by a group of women who had travelled to Sydney for the occasion (see Figure 2.1).

The Sydney CD launch was just one in a long line of performances that Warumungu people have presented for outsiders, and in a canvas painted by E.G. Nakkamarra to celebrate the launch of the CD, cultural precedent was invoked to situate the publication of the CD as *ngijinkirri*, a Warumungu tradition of ceremonial sharing of food and performances with outsiders (I will say more about this painting later in this article). For centuries, Warumungu people have performed their ceremonies in exchange with neighbouring Aboriginal groups, and ever since the Overland Telegraph Line was established north of present-day Tennant Creek in the 1870s, performances have also been mounted for *papulanji* (the Warumungu language word for non-Aboriginal people) (Giles, 1871; Spencer & Gillen, 1904 (1969), 1899; Basedow, 1926; Elkin & Jones, 1958). These instances demonstrate that Warumungu people expect their performances to have social and aesthetic power for outsiders as well as for cultural insiders. This article reflects my own aesthetic engagement with these *Yawulyu Mungamunga* songs, which I first recorded near Tennant Creek in 1996.



Figure 2.1: Warumungu women D.W. Nakkamarra, K.F. Nappanangka and E.G. Nakkamarra lead singing of *Yawulyu Mungamunga* songs at the launch of the CD, Musicological Society of Australia, 2000. C.F-S. Nakkamarra, Linda Barwick and Prof. Marcia Langton assist. Photograph: University of Sydney News.

Adorno, parataxis, constellation

I have taken Theodor Adorno's work on aesthetics as a point of departure for my discussion here, not only because of its pertinence to the conference themes of performance, aesthetics and experience, but also because in approaching the ceremonial performances of indigenous Australia, which typically comprise many small songs relating to a particular theme, I find it stimulating to engage with his thoughts on parataxis, literally 'placing side-by-side', a literary and compositional technique which places independent elements alongside each other without specifying the nature of their relationship (Lanham, 1991, 108). Adorno was interested in the potential of this 'placing alongside' to point beyond the artwork itself:

The truth of a poem does not exist without the structure of the poem, the totality of its moments, but at the same time it is something that transcends this structure, as a structure of aesthetic semblance; not from the outside through a stated philosophical content, but by virtue of the configuration of moments that taken together signify more than the structure intends. (Adorno, 1992, 112-113)

This configuration of moments is what Adorno, following Walter Benjamin, developed further into the concept of ‘constellation’ – ‘a juxtaposed rather than integrated cluster of changing elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle’ (Jay, 1984, 14-15). Adorno struggled to implement this technique in his own writing, to resist the linearity traditionally associated with the book and to create:

... a series of partial complexes which are concentrically arranged and have the same weight and relevance. It is the constellation, not the succession one by one, of these paratactical complexes which has to make sense. (Adorno, 1984, 496)

Here I want to develop further my own previous discussions of aspects of Australian indigenous song that point to an aesthetics of parataxis or juxtaposition (Barwick 2000 (Barwick, 2000, 2003). By presenting sung episodes side-by-side without explicit explanation of the relationships between them, the leaders of a Central Australian ceremony allow the learner or listener to construct by induction his or her own increasingly precise sense of the underlying being, story or ethos. It seems to me that this process of active understanding has much in common with the ideal of aesthetics proposed by Adorno:

aesthetics deals with reciprocal relations between universal and particular, where the universal is not imposed on the particular from the outside but emerges from the dynamic of particularities themselves. (Adorno, 1984, 481).

The spaces between the ‘stars’ of particularity give birth to conceptions that cannot be expressed in the language of particularity itself and yet are defined by its configurations. As Eagleton has pointed out, the principles of filiation suggested by Adorno’s paratactical aesthetics approach the figurative mode of allegory, ‘which relates through difference, preserving

the relative autonomy of a set of signifying units while suggesting an affinity with some other range of signifiers' (Eagleton, 1990, 356). Allegory's cousins, metaphor and analogy, also depend on inductive reasoning.

In what follows, I will be interrogating my own aesthetic responses to *Yawulyu Mungamunga* songs. I will seek 'to respond consciously to what [these] art works say and what they keep to themselves' (Adorno, 1984, 474): firstly, by engaging with their particularity through analysis of the content and form of the songs and associated expressive media; and secondly, by reflecting on the ways in which the songs 'point beyond [their] monadic constitution' (Adorno, 1984, 258) through their paratactically arranged constellations. First I will set out some of the ways in which the songs are situated socially, for after all, as Adorno states, '[i]n the last analysis art cannot be understood when its social essence has not been understood' (Adorno, 1984, 478).

***Yawulyu Mungamunga* between the *Wirnkarra* (Dreaming) and the everyday world**

Yawulyu is the name for women's ceremony in Warumungu and several other Central Australian languages, and the term applies not only to songs but also to the ceremonial objects and actions that surround their performance. *Mungamunga* is the proper name for this particular set of *yawulyu* songs, which in around 1930 were given to two Warumungu women of the Nappangarti skin by Mungamunga, Dreaming women who continue to interact with humans today.¹

Mungamunga women are profoundly ambiguous beings, who operate in the liminal zone between the *Wirnkarra* (Dreaming) and the everyday world. In the powerful Dreaming utterances and actions recounted in the songs, the Mungamunga women travel around the country finding water, naming places and performing ceremony. In performance of those songs today, real women mirror the Mungamunga women's utterances and actions in order to effect change in the social world, by attracting or sending away sexual partners, healing the sick and negotiating changing social relationships between groups of people on such ceremonial occasions as launches of new public facilities (like the opening of the new Nyinkka Nyunyu Cultural Centre in Tennant Creek in 2003). Mungamunga women

are not confined to the past: they continue to interact directly with human beings today. Sometimes glimpsed in the distance at dawn or dusk, they may cause people to become lost, steal children, punish those who displease them by refusing to perform their ceremonies, or appear in dreams to give new songs and dances.

Although the majority of these songs were composed in the 1930s by the two Nappangarti women, new songs continue to enter the repertoire from time to time. Typically, new songs and dances are received while a person (man or woman) is asleep, unconscious or delirious. The Mungamunga women may appear directly to instruct the dreamer, or more commonly an intermediary figure appears to pass on their instructions. In the cases I am aware of, these intermediary figures are the ghosts of deceased relatives or the spirit of a living 'clever' man or woman (*yurrkurlu-jangu*). Whoever receives Mungamunga songs should pass them into the custody of the women's ritual leader. In the case of two of the examples I will be discussing here, the songs were dreamt directly by the women's ritual leader herself. The Mungamunga women appeared to her in her dream and taught her the songs. Her daughter, who was sleeping in the same room, witnessed her singing in her sleep.

Yawulyu Mungamunga in the contemporary social world

In order to understand the social world into which these songs were born, it is necessary to be aware of the Warumungu *punttu* 'skin' kinship system. Many Australian societies have a 'skin' system, which divides all of society into kinship classes depending on parentage and determines proper behaviour and marriage partners. Warumungu society has a subsection system of eight 'skins' which are grouped into two named patrimoieties, Wurlurru and Kingili.

In the evening we see the dark and the red glow. These were divided by the Dreaming into the two groups of skin names: Kingili and Wurlurru. The red are Wurlurru and the black are Kingili. (M. Jones Jampin, in Nyinkka Nyunyu, 2002)

There are many ways of presenting the complex web of relationships embodied in the *punttu* system (discussions can be found in Nyinkka Nyunyu, 2002; and Simpson, 2002, 29-36; detailed analysis of the similar

Warlpiri kinship system is in Bell, 1993, Appendix 2). In Figure 1, I have chosen to present the taxonomy of Warumungu skin names from the point of view of the close *kartungunyu* (sister-in-law) relationship, because that is my classificatory relationship with K.F. Nappanangka, the lead singer of the *Yawulyu Mungamunga* series.

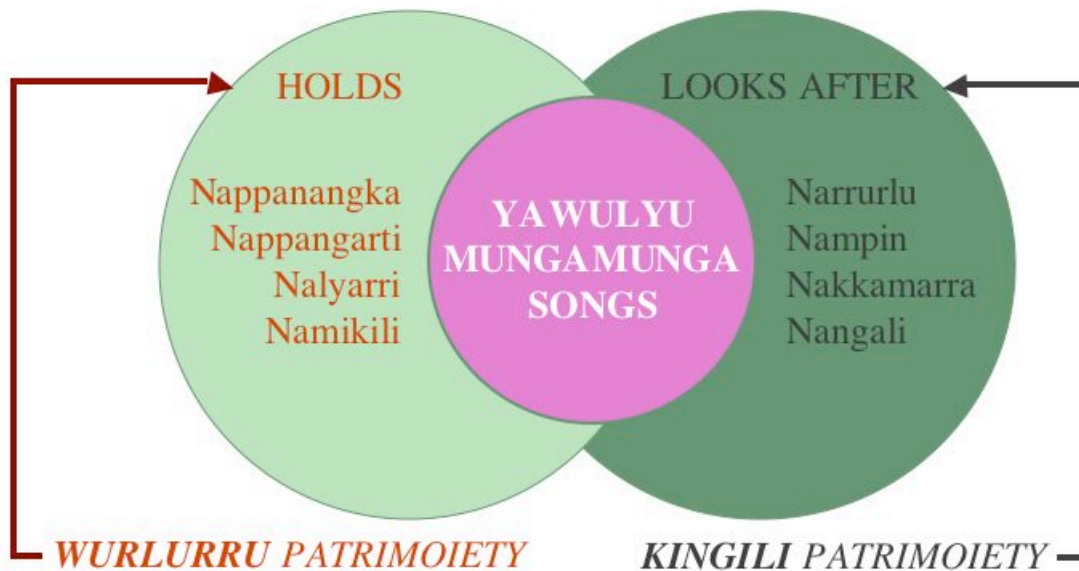


Figure 2.2: Women’s skin names in the Warumungu *punttu* kinship system, arranged to highlight *kartungunyu* (sister-in-law) relationships, also termed *panji* or ‘mate’

Because affiliations to country and associated Dreamings are inherited patrilineally, sisters-in-law provide daughters to carry on each other’s Dreamings. Nappanangka’s Nakkamarra daughters inherit their aunty Narrurlu’s Dreamings while Narrurlu’s Nappangarti daughters inherit their aunty Nappanangka’s Dreamings.

Although the Mungamunga women themselves do not have Warumungu skin names, as soon as the songs are dreamt they must enter into the everyday world governed by *punttu* laws. The two patrilineal groups have complementary roles in holding and maintaining the songs (see Figure 2). These roles of ‘owner’ (*mangayi* or *kampaju* in Warumungu) and ‘manager’ (*purlungalkki* or *kurtungurlu* in Warumungu), have been described in many other accounts of central Australian ceremonies. For example, they are known respectively as *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* in Warlpiri (Meggitt, 1962; Bell, 1993, 20).

Wurlurru women (of the Nappanangka, Nappangarti, Nalyarri and Namikili skins) are the owners of the songs. They must hold the songs and lead the singing. One of the most important things that Warumungu women included in the documentation for the CD was the line through which the *Yawulyu Mungamunga* songs had come to be handed down to the present owners and performers. This line of transmission of ritual authority gives the present owners the authority to make decisions about how to hand on knowledge of the songs, including choosing the songs to be included in the CD and the accompanying documentation of them.

Transmission of ownership of the series occurs only between women of the Wurlurru moiety (the cases known to me include Nappangarti, Nappanangka and Nalyarri women -- as outlined in Figure 2, Namikili women are also eligible to hold the songs, but I was not told of any instances of this). The *Yawulyu Mungamunga* series was first received by an old woman of the Nappangarti skin, via the spirit intermediary of her husband, a well-known *yurrkurlujangu* 'native doctor'. In the act of receiving the songs in dream she herself became *yurrkurlujangu*, and she and her sister subsequently received further songs directly from the *Mungamunga* women themselves. When she became old and sick, she passed the songs on to two women of the Nappanangka skin. One of these, L.F. Nappanangka, was the women's ritual leader at the time. In the 1970s this woman passed the songs to W.F. Nalyarri and H.J. Nappanangka, both close relatives, by means of a special ceremony. Although K.F. Nappanangka, the current owner of the series, was not present at this ceremony, she also received authority to hold the songs via a tape-recording of it. Before their deaths, the other two owners, W.F. Nalyarri and H.J. Nappanangka, passed their songs to her. K.F. Nappanangka herself has since dreamt new songs for the series.

It is the role of Kingili women (of the Narrurlu, Nakkamarra, Nampin and Nangali skins) -- whose Wurlurru moiety mothers, daughters and sister-in-laws own Mungamunga ceremony -- to look after the songs and ceremonial enactments, to ensure that they are performed correctly and to manage the practicalities surrounding the performance. When we were making the recordings for the CD, the Kingili 'managers' E.G. Nakkamarra and D. Nangali were frequently consulted by the song leader K.F. Nappanangka to make sure that the songs were being sung in the correct order. Because, having Narrurlu skin, I belong to the Kingili 'manager' group, I helped my Nakkamarra 'aunties' to prepare for the

performances at the two launches of the CD. While my sister-in-law Nappanangka crooned Mungamunga songs, I was taught how to paint traditional body designs onto the black t-shirts the performers wore for the two launch performances. My participation in organising the recording and publication of the CD was another appropriate expression of my responsibility to look after the songs.

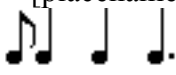
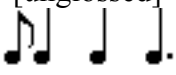
Aesthetics of complementarity in *Yawulyu Mungamunga*

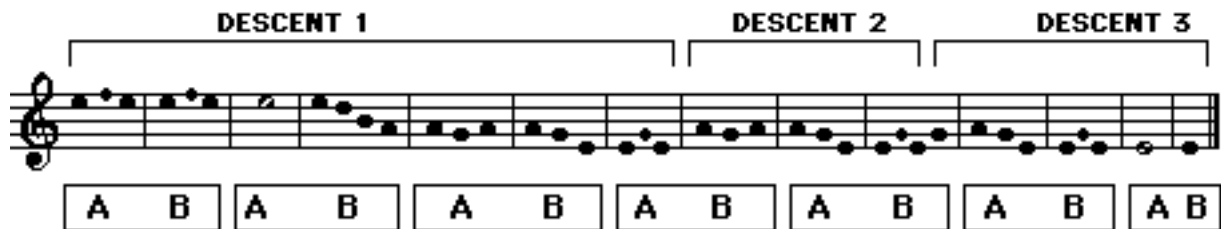
The complementarity of difference I have outlined above in social roles surrounding *Yawulyu Mungamunga* also finds expression in the form and content of visual arts, songs, and dances. I am far from the first to suggest that the parallelism and symmetry evident in the formal structures of Central Australian music, dance and visual design mirror social values that emphasise balance and complementarity (see Munn, 1973; Wild, 1984; Ellis, 1985). Before discussing two songs dreamed by K.F. Nappanangka, I will outline instances of parallelism, symmetry and complementarity in songs, dances and visual designs associated with *Yawulyu Mungamunga*.

Parallelism pervades the musical construction of performances. For example, in song 22 on the CD the two words of the text are 'Jipan-jipan' (the placename) and 'talyaralya' or 'talyaralyan' a word in Mungamunga language that, typically for this series, has no direct equivalent in Warumungu, although the song as a whole is about the Mungamunga women going along poking a stick in the ground looking for water. Note that each four-syllable word is set to an identical rhythm. In performance this text is sung over and over until the whole melodic contour has been completed (see Figure 2.3). The song is in a style termed *warlinginji* 'slow one', characterised by rhythmic patterns starting with a single short note followed by a succession of longer notes, and a pentatonic melody using a minor third above the tonic note.

Parallelism also operates between successive songs. *Warlinginji* songs are often followed by fast songs presenting thematically-related text in the other style, *kulumpurr* 'fast one', characterised by rhythmic patterns starting with two short notes set to a hexatonic melody using a major third above the tonic (see Figure 2.4).

Song 22 on CD:


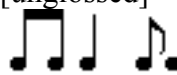
Jipan-jipan [placename]	talyaralya(n) [unglossed]
	
textline A	textline B



The musical score for Song 22 is presented on a single staff in treble clef. It is divided into three sections labeled 'DESCENT 1', 'DESCENT 2', and 'DESCENT 3'. Below the staff, a rhythmic pattern is shown as a series of seven boxes, each containing the letters 'A' and 'B' in a specific sequence: [A B] [A B] [A B] [A B] [A B] [A B] [A B].

Figure 2.3: Text, rhythmic setting and melody of song 22 ‘Jipan-Jipan’.

Song 23 on CD:

Jipan-jipana [placename]	yarramayarra(n) [unglossed]
	
textline X	textline Y



The musical score for Song 23 is presented on a single staff in treble clef. It is divided into three sections labeled 'DESCENT 1', 'DESCENT 2', and 'DESCENT 3'. Below the staff, a rhythmic pattern is shown as a series of seven boxes, each containing the letters 'X' and 'Y' in a specific sequence: [X Y] [X Y] [X Y] [X Y] [X Y] [X Y] [X Y].

Figure 2.4: Text, rhythmic setting and melody of song 23 ‘Jipan-jipana’.

Song 22’s pair is Song 23, which tells of the Mungamunga women happy to find water. In song 23 as for song 22, we see internal parallelism in the identical rhythmic patterning of the two text words, here with a five-syllable pattern. In discussing this pair of songs with me, K.F. Nappanangka used the expression ‘they are mates for each other’, emphasising that the difference between the songs was complementary, as is the relationship between husband and wife, or between sisters-in-law (both relationships are termed *panji* or ‘mate’ in Aboriginal English).

Parallel and complementary structures also pervade the dancing that is an integral part of the *Yawulyu Mungamunga* ceremony. The dancers are organised in lines by moiety -- Wurlurru in one line, and Kingili in the other -- and their movements are mirrored across the dance ground. For example, in one song the two lines of dancers emerge simultaneously from opposite sides of the dance ground, cross over in the middle, and retire at the end of the item to the opposite side. In the next song the relative positions of Wurlurru and Kingili are reversed, with the lines of dancers executing identical movements, but starting from the opposite side of the dance ground before returning to their original position. Within each danced item, alternating movements are often performed (for example, a dancer may look alternately left and right; or execute alternate travelling and stationary dance phrases). Similar formal structures have been noted in other Central Australian women's dance styles (Ellis, Barwick, & Morais, 1990);(Morais, 1995).

Symmetrical patterns are also found in the visual arts. The example I will take here is E.G. Nakkamarra's canvas 'Ngijinkirri', painted in 2000 to mark the launch of the CD, and used during the Tennant Creek launch to explain and justify the publication. The painting's title, *ngijinkirri*, means 'ceremonial food exchange' (also translated by the artist as 'festival', perhaps not coincidentally the name of the company that published the CD). The painting depicts four women seated in the middle of the painting, surrounded by ceremonial digging sticks. On the lower left and upper right corners of the painting are coolamons containing traditional bush foods (the ceremonial food exchange to be shared as part of a ceremony) and in the upper left and lower right corners are depicted ceremonial coolamons of the Mungamunga women. This diagonal axis is further defined by two sets of footprints leading from the seated women to the Mungamunga objects and back again (Figure 2.5).

The explanation of the painting given to me in 2000 was that the two Nappangarti who originally dreamt the songs are sitting down with their daughter Nangali (the senior Kingili 'manager' for the series) and their niece Nappanangka (the present Wurlurru 'owner' of the series). They are thinking about what to do for the corroboree, to keep it (Barwick fieldnotes, 2000).

The painting delineates the conceptual space within which ritual authority to decide the future of the ceremony operates. This authority is founded in an exchange relationship: the Mungamunga women give ceremony to living women, and in return the women's ritual leaders, Kingili

and Wurluru alike, uphold the ceremony and ensure that it continues to be performed to honour and sustain the Mungamunga. The continuity of tradition in the Warumungu social world is invoked by the presence in the central group not only of those who maintain the ceremony in the present day, but also of the pair of women who originally received the ceremony. The coolamons on the other diagonal suggest a parallel between bush food and song -- genuine products of Warumungu country and its people, carefully chosen and artfully arranged -- while the title of the painting further appeals to the longstanding cultural precedent of sharing food and ceremony between traditional owners (*manu warlji*) and *jala jarttu* ('other mouth', that is, people with different languages). What is pointed to, but not depicted, in the painting is the extension of these principles of exchange and complementarity outside the Warumungu world of the painting, to the entry of Mungamunga songs and other Warumungu knowledge into the twenty-first century commercial world. One implication is that by buying the CD outsiders enter into a complementary exchange relationship with Warumungu traditional owners.



Figure 2.5: "Ngijinkirri" painting by E.G. Nakkamarra 2000, to celebrate the CD launch. Held by University of Sydney Music department. Photograph by Linda Barwick.





New songs by K.F. Nappanangkaⁱⁱ

While K.F. Nappanangka is one of the most fluent speakers of Warumungu language and has strong ties to Warumungu country through birth, residence and ceremony, her own language group affiliation is Warlpiri (a neighbouring language to the west of Tennant Creek). Because of this, she stated to me that she is looking after Warumungu songs until a younger Warumungu woman is ready to take over as song leader. Texts of two songs dreamed by Nappanangka (songs 20 and 21 on the *Yawulyu Mungamunga* CD) reflect something of the complexities of her lifelong relationship with the Mungamunga series (see Figure 5). When K.F. received these songs in dream the Mungamunga women told her to sing a mulga tree both ways, in Warumungu and Warlpiri languages. I was told that these songs refer to a particular dry mulga tree situated on the black soil plains north of Tennant Creek, in a women's area of Warumungu country where men are traditionally not allowed to go.





In song 20, everyday language words – the Warlpiri word *wartiji* ‘mulga’ (scientific name *Acacia aneura*), and the Warumungu placename Ngurrku-ngurrku -- alternate with the unglossed word *larrarna* (sometimes shortened to *larra*), which I was told is in Mungamunga language and used only in song. I read this alternation of everyday human language and Mungamunga utterance as calling into play the common ground between human women and Mungamunga women that referred to in Nakkamarra’s painting. This reading is further pointed up by the particular references made in the song, which interweave the complex historical relationships of Warlpiri and Warumungu people in the country north of Tennant Creek where K.F. Nappanangka was born and brought up. The *wartiji* ‘mulga’ used in the song refers to the particular mulga tree growing north of Tennant Creek at a site of shared ceremonial activity by both Warumungu and Warlpiri women. The second word in song 21 is the placename Ngurrku-ngurrku, a hill in Warumungu country near the old Telegraph Station north of Tennant Creek. I was told that as children, K.F. Nappanangka and her sister ran away to Ngurrku-ngurrku to escape the policemen who came to the Old Telegraph Station to take children away.

Song 20:

Mixed Warlpiri (WLP) and Mungamunga language (*MM*)

wartiji	<i>larrarna</i>	wartiji	<i>larra(rna)</i>
mulga [WLP]	[*MM*]	mulga [WLP]	[*MM*]
			

[repeated]

Ngurrku-ngurrku	<i>larrarna</i>	Ngurrku-ngurrku	<i>larra(rna)</i>
[placename]	[*MM*]	[placename]	[*MM*]
			





[repeated]

Song 21:

Mixed Warumungu (WRU) and Mungamunga language (*MM*).

wakiriji	<i>larrarna</i>	wakiriji	<i>larra(na)</i>
mulga [WRU]	[*MM*]	mulga [WRU]	[unglossed *MM*]
			

[repeated]

mangkkuru	<i>larrarna</i>	mangkkuru	<i>larra(rna)</i>
black-soil plain [WRU]	[*MM*]	black-soil plain [WRU]	[*MM*]
			

[repeated]

Figure 2.6: Texts and rhythmic settings of two *Yawulyu Mungamunga* songs dreamed by K.F. Nappanangka (songs 20 and 21 on the CD). Mungamunga language words are printed in bold italic.

In song 21, two Warumungu language words (*wakiriji* 'mulga') and *mangkkuru* 'black soil plain') occur in the same structural positions as do

wartiji and ‘Ngurrku-ngurrku’ in song 20. Treeless black-soil plains define the northeastern part of Warumungu country, while mulga trees grow everywhere else, particularly in the south (p.c. Jane Simpson, 2003). The parts of Warlpiri country abutting Warumungu country near Tennant Creek are also defined by the presence of mulga, whose seeds are an important traditional food source for both groups and whose wood is used for making implements (Latz, 1995, 88-91). The occurrence of the Warumungu word *wakiriji* ‘mulga’ thus functions two ways: to define that part of Warumungu country, and also to refer to the same particular mulga tree associated with women’s ceremony as referenced by *wartiji* in song 20. Similarly, *mangkkuru* ‘black soil plain’ both defines an area of Warumungu country, and also evokes the Mungamunga women, who came from that direction. Parallelism in the placement of the two words within the text structure invites consideration of their connection or equivalence.

The second song can be read as emphasising the Warumungu ancestral landscape, while the first song, in naming the same mulga tree in Warlpiri language and linking it with a nearby place of particular significance in K.F.’s personal history, suggests the role of ongoing experience and change in keeping the ancestral landscape alive. The evocation of Nappanangka’s personal story within the ancestral landscape does not efface other meanings of that place, but rather adds to the denseness of signification, creates more possibilities for ‘the drawing of many lines’ between the points of the constellation (Brün, 2003). These two aspects, the ancestral and the temporal, are juxtaposed in the two songs both through structural parallel between them and also within each song through the regular alternation of human language words with Mungamunga language words. As we saw in the *Ngijinkirri* painting, the worlds of the Mungamunga and humans interpenetrate: everyday actions have ancestral consequences and vice versa.

Rhythmic notation placed under the text in Figure 2.6 helps to show how textual and rhythmic structures highlight the thematic parallels within and between the two songs. Each word in each text occupies exactly two $\frac{3}{8}$ beats. It is worth noting that this $\frac{3}{8}$ metre and the complex repetition pattern of the text cycle (AABB) occur in no other recorded Mungamunga song, marking Nappanangka’s contribution to the series, a contribution that has introduced new musical material into the song series along with new song topics. A third new song, sung to me by Nappanangka but which I have never heard performed in public, makes even more explicit the

complementarity of Warlpiri and Warumungu in the Mungamunga women's instructions to her to 'sing the mulga tree both ways' (Warumungu *larrarna* Warumungu *larra(rna)* / Warlpiri *larrarna* Warlpiri *larra(rna)*). This song, set to the same distinctive rhythmic pattern as songs 20 and 21, exists outside the public performance tradition but points to it, being used by Nappanangka to explicate her own composition.

Conclusion

The aesthetics of juxtaposition or parataxis I have been outlining for these songs establishes relationships between elements by structural parallel and/or contiguity, but this inductive space between the stars of the constellation also leaves room for ambiguity and slippage. In song, the word for mulga can denote a particular mulga tree, and at the same time stand for any and all of the other rich cultural connotations of mulga. Which of these meanings emerges more prominently on any one occasion depends on the sequence of songs, the spoken exegesis surrounding the song texts, and the cultural awareness of the learner.

Certainly outsiders who do not know the country or the people involved may well find it easier initially to develop an aesthetic appreciation of the formal qualities of the texts, since these are more immediately related to our experience as audience and musicologists. My own experience has been that the quest to understand these formal qualities has inevitably led not only to further elucidation of the unspoken concepts external to the songs, but also to greater memorability of those concepts: the very particularity of the songs providing both a spur to further cultural engagement and an aide-memoire in assimilating a new and complex web of relationships and knowledge.

But our experience, as Adorno argued, in itself cannot be enough, for 'only when experience is charged with thought does it understand the artistic phenomenon.' He goes on:

True experience of art must include an awareness of the inherent antagonism between the inside and the outside of art. It is not enough to describe aesthetic experiences, theories and judgments. Nor is it enough to bring ideas to bear on art from outside. ... Every art work is both the product shaped by its own consistent logic and an element in the complex of spirit and society. These two moments cannot be kept apart clearly and

antiseptically. Where there is internal consistency in a work there is also an accurate awareness of the external. (Adorno, 1984, 479)

So does the relative lack of knowledge of Warumungu country and society by most *papulanji* (non-Aboriginal) audiences exclude us from aesthetic engagement with *Yawulyu Mungamunga*? No, because the 'outside' of these artworks is not only Warumungu. We all are now part of 'the external' of these artworks, and implicated in them. By bringing *Yawulyu Mungamunga* to the Musicological Society Conference in 2000, and by releasing the CD on the national and international marketplace, the performers engage us and challenge us in the world that we all share. My intention here is to encourage all my readers to explore this common ground.

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Notes

ⁱ For further details see the booklet accompanying the CD (Papulu Apparr-kari Aboriginal Language and Culture Centre & Barwick, 2000).

ⁱⁱ An earlier version of this discussion is published elsewhere (Marett & Barwick, 2003).