

relationscapes

*How Contemporary Aboriginal Art Moves
Beyond the Map*

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— THREE EXAMPLES

1.

Mina Mina (Dorothy Napangardi Robinson, 2005) measures almost two metres in height (198 × 122 cm). Black on white, its white emergent through the black dots, it encourages us to look-across, to move-with the fragile dotted lines that compose its labyrinths. 'Looking at' is too stable for this shifting landscape that moves, already, in many directions at once. This movement-across is not a symmetrical one that would obediently follow a horizontal or vertical perspective: it is a vibrating movement, a resonance that forces itself upon our vision, transforming it into a politics of touch. This is a politics of touch because what the painting compels is not a static viewing but an activity of reaching-toward that alters the relation between body and painting, creating a moving world that becomes a touching of the not-yet touchable. This touching is rhythmic. It occurs not on the lines or with the points but across the vista the painting elaborates, an experiential vista that is already more-than the space of the canvas can convey. These are more than traces, they are material becomings toward a worlding immanent to the experience of viewing. The becoming-world called forth by this black and white painting is a creation of an event of which I am part. It takes me not somewhere else, but right where I can become, to a force-field that is an eventness in the making, an exfoliation of experience.

The painting envelops space, creating new spacetimes of experience, new viewing bodies. It literally quivers with its dissonant becomings. This is not a metaphor. Spacetime is ontogenetically re-created through the process. The painting has incited me to move, and

with the movement I have altered the dynamic of viewing initially set forth by this viewing experience. I become part of the composition, part of the activity of relation through which the painting achieves its morphing form. I feel its limits, its openings, its diagram.

Deleuze writes: 'We do not listen closely enough to what painters have to say. They say that the painter is already in the canvas, where he or she encounters all the figurative and probabilistic givens that occupy and preoccupy the canvas'.¹ A painting's diagram is expressed in this already-thereness, in the virtual event out of which the painting emanates. James calls this a terminus, by which he means the end-point that virtually envelops the beginning, creating the potential for the event to take place. *Mina Mina's* diagram comes together through the dotted black line on the upper right side of the canvas, a line that almost cuts off the corner from the rest yet embraces the painting as a whole. This self-embracing gesture is not only a compositional device, it is the painting's imminent force, a tension that constrains the experience to the singularity of its own eventness, a shapeshifting process.

Mina Mina speaks of salt lines, a mapping not of a territory but its passages, the traces it leaves in the landscapes it uncovers. A map is discovered here, not uncovered. This is a durational event, an *activity* of mapping that directs our bodies not toward its representation but toward its liveliness. This mapping is a creative vector of experience: it maps the future, not the past, leading us toward a recomposition of experience, a collaborative striation that smoothes the space of encounter.

2.

Alhalkere (Emily Kame Kngwarreye, 1991) covers the whole wall. Three metres wide, it is powerful in its vivid evocation of the land, dancing with both grace and force. A-signifying traits merge to create a nonrepresentational, nonillustrative and nonnarrative field: 'marks that no longer depend on our will or our sight'.² The diagram can be felt emerging from the deep reddish burgundy spilling from the top left-hand corner of the painting. It is as though the rest of the painting overflows from this dark corner, merging into a transformative activity of dot-painting, overpowered, finally, by yellow dots that transfuse with the surface, becoming surface, dense and airy at once. This quality of yellowness becomes the asignifying trait that propulses the canvas into an event. This event is rhythmical: it moves between the red and the yellow, creating a quivering that dances the passage from the dot to the surface to the rhythm in between. For diagrams are 'a chaos, a catastrophe, but [...] also, a germ of rhythm in relation to a new order of the painting [that] [...] unlocks areas of sensation'.³ Felt in *Alhalkere* is the very act of painting, the materiality of rhythm.

Alhalkere activates time-lines that are like plateaus of experience. Refuting the 'purely optical', *Alhalkere* makes palpable the immanent materiality of colour and shade, of movement

and rhythm. Demanding an active listening, it breathes surface and depth, noise and calm even while it carefully creates a minimalist gesture, a diagram of restraint that covers not the space as such but a sensation that is clear and precise. This precision is what allows the body—of the painting, of the viewer—to evolve with every encounter. It is what allows the painting to be both here and there, alive in its Aboriginal context in and beyond Australia. This precision, it seems to me, catches us by surprise in each of Kngwarreye's paintings. It is felt like a colour, but really it is a force that holds the painting to itself and allows it to be much more than a painted surface. *Alhalkere* takes form through the activity of Dreaming, its diagram culminating in the almost uniform yellow that invites us to weave our own stories, to dance the eventness of the layerings of experience.

A map? Only if we conceive it as a layering-in, a dotting-to-infinity, where the folding-in is also a folding-out. Not a direction, but a dance, a palimpsest alive with the resonances it creates. It leads us nowhere in particular, capturing us in its passing.

3.

Arnkerrthe (Kathleen Petyarre, 2001) speaks to the movements of a Mountain Devil Lizard. But this square painting, asymmetrically symmetrical, does much more than that. One metre twenty squared is a forceful enclosure for a becoming-movement. Squares seem to seek diagrams that conform to their limits. Petyarre resists these limitations, creating a becoming-body of movement-across that subtly emerges on the right quadrant, shading down through the otherwise almost-straight lines. There is a shadow here, a passage not yet quite actualised, that challenges the structure, bringing a fragility to its inner limits. On the lower left hand quadrant, the line thickens and there is a sense of duration moving toward a tremulous centre point. This point is not fixed: it is the pulsation of an activity of duration that envelops the whole painting. A meeting point, rather than a vanishing point. This point is what Deleuze would call haptic, evolving from a line to a touch that is distinct from its purely optical function. The Mountain Devil Lizard's passage is not one simply to be followed, but one to be lived via a politics of touch that must remain a reaching-toward, a touching untouchability. Touching here is completely interwoven with the painting's diagram which emanates from the elastic point at its center, scrambling the painting's parameters, shifting the constraint from the square to the triangle, from the triangle to the parallel line, from the parallel line to the shadow to the speed of the dots to their fragile mergings into new spacetimes of experience. Passages already travelled, actualised in their transformations, alongside passages set as markers for future explorations. The movement is squared with a difference, a differential becoming-elastic moving across the formation, a becoming-form barely visible yet felt. If this is a map, it is not a topography. Its diagram is the process active between these

directional tendencies and between their textures. The diagram is the evolution of the shadow that moves-with, its lizarding creating relational matrices, circles in the square.

— THAT DREAMING BEEN ALL THE TIME⁴

To paint the landscape with acrylics is a relatively new form of art for the Aborigines of Australia. Until the early nineteen-seventies, the creation of the land through stories was narrated mostly on other media—sand, bark, wood. In the desert, the sand paintings marked trajectories not only on the sand, but with/in it. Today, acrylics produced in the desert are a voice of transition, marking the uncanniness of the future-past of the land, its mappings, its dreams, creating presents in the making.

Dreamings—Jukurrpa⁵ are an integral aspect of life in Central Desert society and it is in the main these Dreamings we experience through Aboriginal art.⁶ Stories told for more than 40 000 years, Dreamings not only speak about the landscape and its vicissitudes, they create spacetimes out of which landscapes are prehended and lived. This creative alchemy sustains not only a reciprocal relationship to the land, it is also an enactment of the Law. Dreaming evokes the lived landscape as mythology, spirituality and lived experience as all of these coexist with the Law that upholds them. To dream is to take response-ability seriously. I turn to the Dreaming here to explore how the Dreaming-as-event takes form in the work of contemporary Aboriginal artists, creative mappings of a future-present. Returning to what the Dreaming does in Aboriginal culture will clarify what it can do in the context of more abstract renderings of its lived potential.

Life is Dreaming in the sense that the coordinates of spacetime out of which everyday lives emerge are significantly in line with creation and recreation of the land and its Laws. But even this is too simple: the land is not an extension of the Aborigines—it is them. To be the land is to *become* in relation to it, in relation not to space itself, but to the strange coordinates of a topological relationscape that embodies as much the Law as it does the grains of sand that symbolise it. The land and the Law are not two, are not juxtaposed. They are not sustained in a present–future symbolism. They are one: a becoming multiplicity.

The challenge to a spacetime of the Dreaming is a performative one that in turn alters all dimensions of experience. To understand a Dreaming as a story of creation is to touch only one aspect of the concept. Dreamings are mythological and cosmogenic stories that are not simply stories of creation (with all attendant dramas and misunderstandings, love stories and disappointments) in the Biblical sense, they are also stories of the creation of the future-present. For a Dreaming to be perpetuated the community must re-create it—it must be sung, drawn, danced. Ritual performances are not concerned simply with remembering the Dreaming, but living it, keeping it alive as it keeps them alive.

All Dreamings are sustained by multiple guardians. Members from different clans are Kirda and Kurdungurlu for the Dreaming,⁷ which means for instance that while one person is responsible for the iconography of the Dreaming's location, another will be responsible for parts of its story. An individual cannot single-handedly decide to paint a Dreaming, even if he or she is Kirda for that Dreaming. The Kurdungurlu must be included in the process. Relation is already inscribed in the Dreaming whose pastness the present activates. The trajectories of the songs that populate the spacetime of the Dreamings is similar. No one ever owns a complete trajectory. For songs to be sung, communities must be assembled, sometimes even inter-tribally. The Law is played out in this relationship of reciprocity. A sharing of the land is not simply a theoretical concept for the Aborigines, it is a performance that creates a present-passing.

To paint a Dreaming is at once to regenerate one's forces and to connect the object or the person to the earth and to the spacetime of the hero who "dreams" the life of people and their environment'.⁸ To dream is never an individual affair. Even night dreams in Aboriginal communities are extended beyond the individual body: my dream may be your dream experienced through the vessel of my becoming-form. The earth-as-body is the support not only for the traces of ancestral bodies, but for the metamorphoses of experience in the present, a mnemonic for the Law of the Dreaming. To dream is to be in contact with others, to dream their dreams: 'The agreement of others is necessary. An oniric vision is attested as "real" only on condition that it is connected to pictorial forms and narratives [...] that have been transmitted for hundreds of generations'⁹. There is never a single version that works for all Dreamings, but as many versions and contexts as are necessary for the story to be composed again.

Associated with the Dreaming is a certain birthright. In Aboriginal Central Desert society, you are born where the Dream enters you. To be born in Warlpiri is 'palkajarri—becoming body'.¹⁰ A virtuality actualises itself in the birth, a virtuality that is crystallised through a verse of a song that will be sung for generations to come. This song will 'belong' to the becoming-body in the form of a Dreaming for which he or she will remain Kirda. To become-body is to materialise as song, as Dream, as rhythm.¹¹ It is not to materialise individually but to be sung again, to become as a multiple body of communal experience. 'Warlpiri philosophy does not oppose images to the substance or the essence of things. The two are indissociable.'¹²

The cosmology of the Dreaming must be understood as both actual and virtual.¹³ It can be thought as an overlapping of the two, where reality and dream are not opposed but superimposed. Aborigines of the Central Desert animate time in space. In their rituals, the present is ancestralised not as a nostalgia for the past but as a becoming-present. The past and future, the actual and the virtual are traces of becoming whose dimensions are experienced in shifting continuity as through the spiral of Nietzschean eternal recurrence. When time is activated

in this way what emerges is a time-line that is not linear. The present is always in the mode of performance not of a forgotten past but of a remembering future-present.

— EXPERIENCING-WITH FROM AFAR

Arnkerrthe, *Mina Mina* and *Alhalkere* are prehensions of Dreamings. Prehension is a Whiteheadian term that draws perception into activity, transforming the oppositional model of viewer/receptor into a directly relational experience. To ‘prehend’ the Dreaming is to move-with it, composing with it an experiential world. Prehension turns perception into an event, ridding perception of its dependence on essence or representation. To prehend the Dreaming involves more than narrating an instance of it. It is to call forth the activity of the land’s eventfulness and to pull this eventfulness into the present-passing such that a new actual occasion—a world—emerges.

This is not a pre-mapping of experience. Prehensions populate actual occasions in an activity of relation whereby perception cannot be separated from experience, nor experience from the world. Prehending the Dreaming, paintings such as *Alhalkere* feel the resonance of what a Dreaming can be, drawing its eventness onto the canvas. Transversally political, these paintings call forth a new way of seeing, a seeing-with that moves the body. This elicited movement-with is affective: its tonality (its modalities, its resonances, its textures) alters both what a body can do and how the world can be experienced.¹⁴ To experience *Alhalkere* is to feel the recomposition of a living landscape that is not separate from my viewing body, that in fact repositions my viewing body in the living landscape it conceptually proposes. *Alhalkere* is the Dreaming insofar as it incurs concern for the event that is the shapeshifting of experience. Moving-with its own eventful becoming, *Alhalkere* becomes a metastable system that cannot be thought outside the experiential field it opens. Whether here or there, what *Alhalkere* does is ask that we have concern for the Dreaming.

Concern is not an identity-based practice. Concern for the Dreaming is an ethics of encounter with the unknowable—an event in the making—that far exceeds the specificity of a specific piece of land. This is not to dismiss the importance of land-claims in Aboriginal politics nor to romanticise space as ephemeral. It is to take the immanent materiality of the Dreamings seriously and to believe that what paintings such as *Alhalkere* do exceeds the parameters of their landmarks. This concern is for an event, not a pre-determined location. It is not based on an identity politics that would promote an exclusive dialectics of inside/outside. Experience itself is at stake, *in the making*. The fluidity of experience does not speak of an empiricism guaranteed simply by pre-informed historical circumstances. It speaks, also, to a kind of radical empiricism, where what is to be felt is also to be invented. Because Dreamings are never there once and for all: as Jennifer Biddle points out, ‘Dreaming stories and “icons”

[do] justice to the force and effect of these paintings in the material terms they themselves effect'.¹⁵ The immanent materiality of these paintings call forth an empiricism that is directly experienced, that is directly relational. And that is how they reach me, 10 000 miles away.

For James, the relation must be 'accounted as "real" as anything else in the system'.¹⁶ The relation is not composed after the fact, it is immanent to the event. The event cannot be predicted because it is different each time. Prehensions are infinitely variable and produce an infinity of actual occasions. As events of concern for the Dreaming, these paintings ask to be lived again. The repetition of the act—the painting of the dots, one at a time, for hours on end—is a differential living-with that belongs to the territory of Aborigines even as it exceeds the very notion of stable territory, calling forth worlds that extend far beyond what geography can map.

To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced'.¹⁷ Radical empiricism is a practice that Aboriginal 'dot painting' makes felt. The intimacy of relation is experienced in the pulsations of the dots, in the rhythms of the layered surfaces at play, of intensities interweaving. These paintings ask us to move (move away! come closer! look again!), figuring movement such that what is felt is not the representation—the figure—but the act of feeling itself, its affective tone. These felt relations create conjunctions *and* disjunctions, asking, as Kngwarreye is famous for saying, 'a whole lot', calling forth a directly perceived relation with their own materiality that succeeds the dichotomy between unity and disconnection, bringing to the fore the force of the event rather than simply its putative content. They map not a place but a diagram out of which a taking-form emerges.

— OF MAPS AND DOTS

To speak of maps is always to return, in some sense, to the evocative work of Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri (c. 1932–2003). Clifford Possum's art has been revered for its precision and breadth, which is not surprising as he was one of the more experienced artists amongst those who painted in the early years of the Papunya Tula movement. Clifford Possum's map series, created between 1976 and 1979 are well-known in their emphasis on Aboriginal practices of map-making.¹⁸ These 'maps' draw out the challenging reorganisation of spacetime the Dreaming makes possible even while ostensibly doing so within the vocabulary of a Westernised concept of a map. In these early acrylic paintings, Clifford Possum sought to clarify both his relation to the land and the interrelatedness of the Dreamings for which he is custodian. In the Central Desert, a particular individual is identified not only with a network of trails, animals, food and landmarks passed down through patrilineal descent, but with myriad interrelated components that keep all of these categories open. A person's birthplace, where their parents or grandparents were born or initiated, extended residence networks,

all of these factors influence the positioning of the individual with/in his or her Dreamings. To think of Dreamings as discrete spaces is both to underestimate the ways in which Dreamings challenge linear spacetime and to forget the relational aspect of ownership within Aboriginal culture. The Dreamings no more belong to the land than they do to the people. The people and the Dreaming are co-extensive, they are ontogenetic networks of reciprocal exchange. A Dreaming is not an entity, not a place. It is a movement, a song and a dance, a practice of mark-making that does not represent a space-time but creates it, again and again.¹⁹

To assume a regular passage from past to present to future is to be imprisoned within Cartesian coordinates which have little to do with Central Desert culture. For Aborigines of the Central Desert, the past is *activated* in the present, not passively remembered. Culture and politics in the Central Desert are there for the (re)making, challenged and expressed by an opening to certain stories of creation that intertwine in complex and infinite ways the present and the past, the human and the animal, space and time. The collective memory of the past-future is passed on from generation to generation through sand paintings, dances and songs that shift the story in spacetime. To think of the future as a linear progression in time is to underestimate the ways in which time passing entails an actual shift in space and vice versa. The Aborigines today are not reliving their past. They are re-creating their present, endlessly, making use of a topological structure in which time is embedded in shifting space.

The itineraries of the Dreaming must be seen not as a plane that can be adequately captured on a two-dimensional surface, but as functioning in many dimensions at once. As Clifford Possum paints them, the Dreamings are like knots where the actual meets the virtual in a cycle of continuous regeneration. The itineraries of the Dreaming are rule-bound but not fixed: these knots of experience are always shapeshifting across spacetime. Timespace is at the heart of this complex art as are conceptual slidings, performative experience, rituals of emergence and disappearance. This timespace is not haphazard: Dreamings must be performed lest they disappear into disuse, their songs forgotten or unsung.²⁰

The country for which Clifford is response-able forms a wide arc with a radius of some 100 km centered approximately 200 km northwest of Alice Springs. It stretches from Waltunpunyu, west of central Mount Wedge in the south, up through Napperby and Mount Allan stations, north-west as far as the blue hill of Wakulpa just north of Yuendumu, and north-east across Mount Denison and Conisten Stations.²¹ This is Anmatyerre country from the perspective of a Cartesian geography. Topologically, Anmatyerre country is more complex.²²

Topology departs from the angle-line coordinates we have learnt to rely on in our perspectival teachings about the landscapes we inhabit. The learnings that allow us to conceive of landscapes as perspectival entities operational *in* time space are in the main Euclidean. In Euclidean geometry, we know one space from another not primarily by the ways in which

our bodies *create* that space but by the ways in which we *inhabit* or *enter* it. Space becomes an inarticulate container. By privileging inhabitation (where space always pre-exists experience), Euclidean geometry enables a rendering-abstract of space: it is abstract in the sense that it is empty before our arrival. Because of this abstraction of space, what is measured in Euclidean geometry is considered concrete: planes and contours are concretely categorisable as entities beyond and unaffected by the extensions of my body. This means that I do not associate the landscape with my body. My body and the space are not one: they are always two, $1 + 1$, body + space. It is due to this linear grammar of geometry that the coloniser is able to assert that seemingly empty space is uninhabited.

Topological spacetime refutes this dichotomy between the abstract and the concrete. Topological spacetime is not $1 + 1$ but $n + 1$, always more-than. This more-than can be conceptualised as the Dreaming: it is the conceptual event of locating land, body, space, time, experience all in one moment, one moment that embodies the perpetual movement of time. Topological rendering connects relationally nature and existence where no single element of nature is a permanent support for changing relations. In this relational network of experience, *innovation* is at stake even while the traditions of the past carry weight in the present. Innovation does not mean the erasure of the past. It means creating a foundation for the shifting relations of past and future in the present. Ontogenetically, through the Dreaming (which means through the land *and* the Law), the multiplicity 'the many become one and are increased by one'.²³

Topology refers to a continuity of transformation that alters the figure, bringing to the fore not the coordinates of form but the experience of it. Topologies suggest that the space of the body extends beyond Euclidean coordinates to more abstract spacetime. In topological geometry, I am both here and there, actual and virtual, real and abstract. Topology potentially deforms linear progression, rendering the concrete abstract. Topologies are as current as are Euclidean geometries. Even our bodies are topological. As Massumi asks, 'What if the body is inseparable from dimensions of lived abstractness that cannot be conceptualised in other than topological terms?'²⁴ To think topologically is to begin to think beyond coordinates. It is to envisage the body in metamorphosis, a body that is continuously qualitatively altered by the worlds it creates.

Journeying from Dreaming to Dreaming requires an abstract relation to spacetime that departs from Euclidean geometry. To engage the Dreaming topologically is to break down the dichotomy between the abstract and the concrete, setting them side by side as aspects of a singularity. The Dreaming does not function wholly abstractly or wholly concretely. It lies somewhere in between, with moments that are performatively actualised and moments that remain virtual. This continuity of the actual and the virtual creates a Law of alliance

which is neither concrete nor abstract. This Law of alliance rests on an implicit understanding that spacetime is as spiritual as it is physical, as topological as it is geographic. The landscape moves, and with it, the Dreamings shift and bodies metamorphose.

A map of the landscape that relies on x/y coordinates asks me to already be able to position myself in space. Turn your body this way, it says, face this direction. To read a Cartesian map is to ask a pre-formed body-concept to conform to its gridding. Topological spacetime works otherwise. This is why Clifford Possum did not always render the Dreamings in a 'geographically accurate' way. To understand the 'geographically accurate' we must already have had the experience of the x/y grids of the mapping of Euclidean space that takes for granted that our journeys begin and end in directions that can be pre-gridded. It is to suppose that a body never shape-shifts, that it always sees from the same perspective and within the same conglomerate of potential relations.

Clifford Possum's maps do not ask to be read in this way. This is because he painted his great map series by moving the canvas around him. The land shifted and with this shift so did its relations. Instead of strictly linking locations in gridded geometrical space, the canvas's attention turns to the Dreaming's intensive movement on a painted surface. This immobile voyage moves toward experience rather than location: Possum takes his bearings not with a concept of due north but with the living relation between Dreamings. 'The sites and journey lines relating to each narrative strand are correctly positioned in space and with respect to one another, and also to at least one other strand, so that two or more Dreamings tie in with each directional re-alignment'.²⁵ What is at stake in Clifford's maps is not the omnipresent observer's bird's eye view of the landscape operating according to pre-established coordinates of spacetime, but the relation between one Dreaming and another from the standpoint of the painting (dreaming) body. Like a tracker who continuously updates his or her bearings and alignment in space with each change of direction in the chase, Clifford Possum is not creating an archival representation of his land, he is creating his land/ his Dreaming in relation to his communal painting body. He is not *representing* the Dreaming but *indexing* it in the passage from the virtual to the actual.²⁶

The Western tradition of landscape art has taught us to read paintings (and most perspectival visual phenomena) as maps. Perspective is not innate, however: it is taught. Recent research in fact suggests that humans orient more by the shape of the space than by its visual cues. That means that we orient rhythmically, responding to the movements of topological twistings and turnings.²⁷ This way of feeling space as duration foregrounds the proprioceptive sense, inverting the relation of position to movement. When movement is no longer indexed to position (when mapping becomes an event), position begins to emerge from a relation of movement itself. For Clifford Possum, Dreamings emerge relationally. Whether

or not they are all spatially 'correct' in relation to pre-given landmarks is not an issue to him because what matters is not the position—not where they lie as such—but what they are capable of *in relation* to the emergent bodies the Dreamings make possible.

A fissure emerges between cognitive mapping and orientation. What Clifford Possum is trying to do with his great maps is to orient the Dreamings in relation not to a void, but to a becoming-body of the future-past. To orient is to actively engage in the process of mapping. It is to make maps even as we read them. This has for thousands of years been the practice of the Aboriginals of the desert, a practice that has taken the form, amongst others, of drawing in the sand. These traces—the shapes in the sand—were used to teach people about time and space as they intersect. To draw a circle could mean many things: a campfire, a water-hole. What is important—and how their 'meanings' are read—depends on the direct perception of relation as it takes form. What such mappings teach is to locate an intensity of reaching-toward, not an entity. The landmark is not outside but part of my becoming-body, a worlding.

What is calculated in the mapping is not distance (if you ask Clifford Possum about distance he will speak in terms of walking days, or car hours). What is calculated is experience + ability. How do I get there? The 'how' of directionality creates a permutation such that spacetime shapes itself around continuous shiftings. The ground trembles. The desert is not one space: it is the many overlapping spacetimes of experience that Aboriginals call Dreamings. These Dreamings can be drawn into maps, but such maps will never lead us anywhere if we expect them to do the walking for us. At most, these maps will help us back-grid our experience.²⁸

— LANDING SIGHTS

Clifford Possum has described his map series as land titles. This series of paintings followed in the wake of important protests claiming Aboriginal rights to land at a time when outstations were not yet the norm and Aboriginals of different tribes were forced to live together in imposed centres such as Papunya. As a political statement, his maps could be seen to perform a kind of active reading of the land, using the Dreamings (as would be done often subsequently to challenge the destruction of land by mining and road building) as a way to position himself and his people within the land rights movement of the Central Desert. But to understand this as a straight-forward reclaiming would be misleading, because it would imply that the land as such was what was at stake. Clifford Possum was not delineating landmarks on a cognitive grid. He does not own the land, nor would he claim to. What he owns is a particular relation to the land. Aboriginal understanding of land must by extension alter what is usually meant by land titles. It is not the space-itself that the Aboriginals are

calling for through their art, but the topologies of spacetime the land incites in relation to Dreamings of which they remain an active part.

Land rights as painted by Clifford Possum are dimensions of experience. The folds of this experience are the rituals that make up the re-living of the eventness of the Dreamings. Synesthetically, through a dynamic interference of the senses, Aboriginal rituals call forth new sense-dimensions directly emergent from the land. To touch is not simply to touch, it is to reach-toward the experience of sensing-with²⁹ that is the Dreaming. Clifford Possum's paintings are alive in their multi-dimensionality, not only as examples of 'abstract' art that has 'content' but as a rethinking of abstractness itself. Clifford Possum's maps engage the concrete by means of the abstract, synesthetically creating an experience of land whose claim is not for ownership, but for the eventness of experience.

The spacetimes of experience created through Clifford Possum's map paintings can be thought as a topological hyperspace of transformation. It creates relays that are not simply geographic but experiential, proprioceptive, where space and time fold into one another.³⁰ Space here is performed, folding into durations that become part of the materiality of the painterly event. Be it the land 'itself' or acrylic, the point of the Dreaming is that it is not a location or a representation. It cannot 'exist' in a Euclidean spacetime, but must always move topologically, situating itself in relays that are changeable depending on seasons and moods.³¹

Although most topologies are non-Euclidean, topologies are not necessarily non-Euclidean. The effort here is not to create a dichotomy that would suggest that there are specific experiential states to which the Central Desert Aborigines have direct access as opposed to the spiritually impoverished urban dweller who can only think in terms of Euclidean coordinates. The point is rather that experiential space is topological and gets re-gridded within Cartesian coordinates in part because such geometric grammars seem easier to capture. To think topologically is to think dynamically: it is to situate the movement of thought at its transformational vector, deforming it into its potential. When we re-render the form static, when we stop the process, we are shortchanging the experience.

Within topological transformation, an infinite number of static structures can emerge. This would begin to explain the complexity of Aboriginal life today. To suggest that Aboriginals live exclusively in transformation would be as senseless as to say that all urban dwellers are only sustained by Cartesian maps. The potential of experiential space is everywhere present. The question is how we map it, how we live it, how it transforms us. The transformation of a topological figure into a static instance creates an object. This object—be it a doughnut or a coffee cup, both of which belong to the same topological figure because their shapes can be deformed into each other without cutting—stands for itself. What is interesting about it is not necessarily its shape but its process: the fact that its ontology is one of continuous deformation. To create an object is one thing—to create a relationscape another.

The creation of relationscapes brings us back to the work of Emily Kngwarreye, Dorothy Napangardi and Kathleen Petyarre. Kngwarreye's work in particular propels a sensing-across that prehends the viewer into a velocity of experience that far exceeds the breadth of the painted surface, perpetuating a tradition of map-making already alive in the 'dot painting' movement. Born and raised in Alhalkere, a country that extends northwest of the Utopia boundary onto Mount Skinner station, Emily Kngwarreye's art is known for its abstraction and its resistance to the specificity of content.³² Kngwarreye started painting when she was eighty years old. At Utopia, the main focus had been batik, a practice in which Emily Kngwarreye had been an adept for at least ten years previous to her taking up acrylic paints.³³ Already in her first paintings, Kngwarreye's work was cast amongst the great works of the twentieth century, lauded as some of the most important landscape art ever produced. As Margo Neale writes: 'Kngwarreye was arguably Australia's greatest painter of the "landscape"'. No artist has painted the country the way she has, inflecting it with her personal vision and innovative style. [...] Hers is not a view of the Law, but rather an experience of it. She rescales the landscape to a cosmic dimension—more akin to the holistic landscape of the Aboriginal mind.'³⁴

To speak of Emily Kngwarreye's work in this way only begins to get at the richness of the experience vividly and brilliantly created through her work. What is at stake for Kngwarreye shifts far beyond representation, beyond the figural and even the Dreaming as such, toward an abstraction that embraces the passage of the actual into the virtual, an abstraction that radically recasts the figure in an attempt to undermine the fundamental schism of Euclidean geometry: the abstract and the concrete. To engage Kngwarreye's potential is to explore the interval that is the *movement between* her paintings as much as the intricacies of each single canvas or series.

In Emily Kngwarreye's paintings, the paint moves at great speed beyond the edges of the canvas³⁵ in an exploration not of the beyond but of the here and now, a present which is always more than that which we can actually perceive. Her art runs, breathless, exhausting her in her attempts to prolong the movement of topological spacetime.³⁶ This prolongation is not an extension of the concrete (which explains why she could only ever say that her paintings did 'a whole lot'), but an engagement with the abstract as real. When the abstract becomes real, the concrete becomes abstract. This is at the heart of the works of Emily Kngwarreye: the experience of sensation as that which moves beyond the landmark, beyond the location or the object of study, toward a direction that is always becoming toward a rhizomatic network shapeshifting from lines to dots, from shade to shade in a living relationscape.

Two series stand out for me—though it might be possible to speak of Kngwarreye’s whole oeuvre as a giant, modulating, dancing series—because of the activity of relation felt across the planes of intensity that are the conceptually connected panels. The first of this series is entitled *Utopia Panels*, made in 1996, and comprises six panels of black horizontal lines on a white background.³⁷ What is eerie about this series is the fact that although the black paint is applied to the white surface, the black and white interweave such that the white ‘background’ folds forward into the black lines, thus foregrounding itself. Background here takes a more Whiteheadian meaning, referring not to a pre-determined state but to an activity of relation that is virtually emergent. A virtually emergent state is one that has not yet appeared as such yet holds within itself the potential for transformation. This potential is entirely relational: a background is a nexus of past actual occasions poised to be reactivated into appearance. Whitehead explains this incipient pastness through the concept of non-sensuous perception which he equates with a virtual emergence which can always be activated in the present but otherwise remains relegated to the past. He writes: ‘We can discern no clean-cut sense-perception wholly concerned with present fact [...]. The evidence on which these interpretations are based is entirely drawn from the vast background and foreground of non-sensuous perception with which sense-perception is fused, and without which it can never be’.³⁸ Sensing here is more than feeling the actuality of the world: non-sensuous perception evokes the has-been of the not-quite-yet. Non-sensuous perception thus refers to the activity of pulling pastness into the future-present. This prehension of pastness is a direct perception of a relation that is barely actual. In *Utopia Panels*, the becoming-white of the black lines evokes the perishing of the discreteness of past and present, white and black. ‘The present moment is constituted by the influx of the other into that self-identity which is the continued life of the immediate past within the immediacy of the present’.³⁹

Blackness and whiteness transduce into one another such that what becomes emergent is not simply the line as such but the surfaces entwining, creating a complex layered resonant surface of lines and depths. If non-sensuous perception is ‘the immediate past [...] surviving to be again lived through in the present’,⁴⁰ what is perceived here is not the line *per se* but its activity—its worlding—via the metastability created by both the survival and the perishing of whiteness and blackness. But it’s also more than that. These are not simply straight lines. The lines breathe, dancing not only their duration, but the perishing of their process. For each line comes to a halt, sometimes halfway across an individual canvas, sometimes across two canvases. These lines are occasions of experience that create their own patterns within the vaster event that is the full series. Lines dance into one another such that the movement of the paintbrush, moving again across the canvases, can almost be felt. There is a sense of effort here, but with it comes also a sense of speed. Driven intensity, absolute movement. There is no time to return to the line, the line must draw the movement, the

gesture itself must become line. One pass with the paint and that's all. Move the canvas. The result: a vastness of localised movement. A movement-across that is at once microscopic and macroscopic. A line of flight invested in the microperceptions alive in the activity of relation that populates the metastable in-betweenness of the black and white. A folding-in of foreground and background.

The second series is called *Untitled*, also comprises six panels, and is made one year earlier, in 1995. The activity of paint is similar here, drawing the background into the foreground, creating a direct perception of the activity of relation felt through the heavy, impatient line. As with *Utopia Panels*, there is a sense of paint exhausting itself (and the canvas) by the end of the series—as though Kngwarreye's brushstrokes used all the paint the brush could hold, in one infinite gesture. In this series, the colours range from white to red to yellow, creating a pink-orange-brown-blue-greenness emergent in the mixing of the paint. Again, the lines are danced, materialised from the range accessible from shoulder to hand in a single movement that doesn't dissociate the shoulder from the body: each line moves a body.

The first of the six canvases of *Untitled* (1995) backgrounds the yellow, creating an almost uniform surface of whitish-pink strokes across, up and down. These strokes are fierce but relatively constrained, short in length as though staccato, marking the surface without giving in to it. This panel bleeds yellow into the next canvas. The second panel—in shades of white on a brownish yellow-green—is less controlled, mad with layering, a mix of colours that seep into the background, creating a brownish-yellow-green. The lines here are mostly whitish, continuous with the first canvas, but more complex due to the thickness of shades out of which the lines emerge. The background colouring caused, probably, by paint mixing before it dries. This is an impatient canvas, lines of differing widths no longer simply moving across and down but spiralling as well. Unlike the first panel, which seems to be what it proposes, the second panel is disruptive, continuous with the first and yet disjunctive, thus forcing the body to keep moving-toward the next panel. Here and throughout the rest of the canvases, there appears to be some non-painted canvas showing through, creating an inner connection between these divergent but connected pieces. The third panel's lines are again pinkish and the composition more staid, though now the unpainted space is clearly present on three sides, creating a sense of an inner diagram functioning through a layering of backgrounds and foregrounds, as though the white lines and the white background resonated together. This whiteness of the canvas showing through is on all the subsequent panels, though only on the inner top and bottom corners of the last one. The fourth panel is violent in its explosion of energy. The whole body—a *whole lot*—feels emergent here, animating the painting's diagram, culminating in the last canvas. Red against white against the brownish-green mix of background-becoming-foreground, the lines are wild, creating incipient topological forms on a surface that no longer feels flat. The fifth panel seems again

more composed—more restful, the lines continuous up, down and across, mostly white with a bit of red, always, as in the other canvases, creating a sense of an emergent pink, a drawing across of shade that creates an affective tone rather than simply a colour, for pinkness seems anathema to the ferocity of these active lines. In the last panel, the paint begins to run out, as though we were left with the dregs of the effort that constitutes the event of the series. And yet there is also a new component, already emergent in the bottom left corner of the fifth panel, a mysterious slate blue, strangely discontinuous with most of the already apparent shades, yet co-constitutive of them. This blue seems to foretell the condescence the series, holding the event to itself even while it proposes its continuity elsewhere. Bringing futurity into the mix, the sixth panel seems to virtually contain all the other canvases, holding the series together even while it exhausts it, the paintbrush squeezing out its last drops of colour. In Whiteheadian terms, the subjective form has coalesced (concesced). This last panel draws the painting together as a whole even while it dismantles it. It is the event that composes it as a series even as it marks the beginning of its perishing. The hands say it all: white hands multiplied in the right bottom corner, letting the series go rather than holding on to the event that is already passing. Having reached its culmination, the series makes use of the frenzied crescendo of this diagrammatic finale to foreground the active disjunction out of which a revirtualisation of potential is born—felt, particularly, in the blue-grey island—that marks the opening for the next actual occasion to begin to take form. The painting begins and ends in one and the same (multiplicitous) gesture.

This is an energetic finale. ‘The notion of physical energy, which is at the base of physics, must then be conceived as an abstraction from the complex energy, emotional and purposeful, inherent in the subjective form of the final synthesis in which each occasion completes itself. It is the total vigour of each activity of experience’.⁴¹ Energetic is the word for these dancing lines, but an energy of composition, not transcendence. These paintings are of the world, in the world and for the world. As with the last series—*Utopia Panels* 1996—the world cannot be thought outside the eventness of the work. Sensing-across is an activity of worlding where ‘the world within experience is identical with the world beyond experience, the occasion of experience is within the world and the world is within the occasion’.⁴²

In a Deleuzian vocabulary, what Emily Kngwarreye creates is an artistic plane of composition which engages the philosophical plane of immanence. Her work is that of potential, of sensations that are always at once percepts and affects. In *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari explain: percepts are not perceptions, and affects are not affections (feelings). Percepts are ‘independent of a state of those who undergo them’ and affects do not arise from subjects but pass through them.⁴³ Affects are becomings-other of sensation. Emily Kngwarreye’s art moves the body through the interpellation of increasingly complex sensations that are connected not to one final event but to the perpetuation of events alive in the ‘whole’.

Compositions of forces are alive in her work, creating sensations as movements-toward that do not capture the Dreamings but set them in motion, rendering the imperceptible perceptible and the perceptible imperceptible. Her paintings do not call forth the songs of the Dreamings, they dance them: 'The refrain in its entirety is the being of sensation'.⁴⁴

Kngwarreye's works are not simply visual events. They are physically overwhelming experiences that capture the passing of the material substrate into sensation. Sensation is not projected: movement is felt as the canvas becomes a point of departure in a vast network of alliances of which the human body is but one aspect. Metamorphoses of forces, exfoliations of experiences, these are what is at stake in Kngwarreye's 'whole lot'. The 'whole lot' is not really a subject, it is the plane of immanence itself, the combinations of speeds, of affects and percepts in which 'the One expresses in a single and same sense all of the multiple, [where] Being expresses in a single and same sense all that differs'.⁴⁵ Her paintings are topological hyperspaces, absolute surfaces where all points are virtually co-present. They are trans-spatial, trans-media events where distances (of thought, of movement) defy the limits of physical spacetime.

To look at the desert paintings produced in the era of acrylic dot painting is to have a sense of *survol*, of seeing the landscape from above. In Aboriginal terms, this reflects not a passive observation of a landscape below but a way of life where above and below fold into one-another. To see the landscape is to experience it, to live it, passing at infinite and finite speeds through it, engaging all surface points at the same time, virtually, actually. Ruyer writes: 'Every self-forming form, as ongoing self-shaping, self-sustaining, and self-enjoying activity, is a theme of development in infinite *survol* across its own absolute surface'.⁴⁶ To become is to become-with from within as much as from above, experiencing the Dreaming not as an outsider to the everyday but as the potential of metamorphosis that comes with an engagement with spacetime that refuses to privilege the above or the below, the close or the far. As Glowczewski writes, '[Aboriginal] cosmology defines itself as a movement of coming and going between Kankarlu (the above) which refers to the present and everything which constitutes the terrestrial and celestial environments, and Kanunju, the "below", which refers to the past, to the underground, to the interstellar and everything that can happen'.⁴⁷ The manifest and the latent, the actual and the virtual: these are the concerns of Aboriginal cosmology.

Emily Kngwarreye's paintings are sensing concepts, absolute surfaces or volumes which 'have no other object than the inseparability of distinct variations'.⁴⁸ The Dreaming is a concept of the most extraordinary kind, a concept that speaks not of unity but of wholeness, that lives the virtuality of its concreteness trans-spatially in a dimension of spacetime that always remains to be invented. It runs like the trees, living at infinite speeds, a plane of immanence

which makes thought possible, where thought is a movement of potential that is never distinct from experience.

Kngwarreye's genius is her ability to convey this movement of thought. Her sensory paintings emote vibrations that are rhythms, themselves singing the songs of spacetime. To create these songs, what Kngwarreye seeks—in continuity with painters such as Clifford Possum—is the annihilation of the figural. She does tell stories, but these stories rely on synesthetic experience, on a coming together of elements that are in infinite patterns of reachings-toward spacetimes of experience.

The tradition of landscape painting in the West has been obsessed with the figurative and its representation. It is in large part the figurative that has sustained the appropriation of the landscape for the colonising gaze. What would it mean to wrest the figure from the figurative? In Emily Kngwarreye's work, the figure is the movement of becoming itself.⁴⁹ Her paintings are topological deformations that make sensible the untouchable. The bodies at hand—the root systems, the Dreamings, the animals—extend beyond their coordinates in a Euclidean timepace, immanent to the spacetime of creation. Kngwarreye creates not by imposing form onto the canvas or by representing space, but by engaging the running as it runs.

— DANCING THE DREAM

Deleuze speaks of marks made accidentally. These accidental marks are free—free of the medium, free of the context of their representation. They are not unconscious but hyper-conscious. They are marks out of which new concepts are born. To watch Kngwarreye paint was to watch a woman dancing, her whole body engaged in the act, the plane of composition emerging directly from her shoulder along the elbow, wrist held firmly, painting with both hands.⁵⁰ She was not a writing woman, she was a dancing woman, her wrists taut with the activity of reaching-toward and moving-with. Her paintings reflect this intensity of movement, the wholeness of the emergent line or dot, its activity of creating the becoming-form of the body-land-canvas. In this movement-with, she creates the improbable, unspeakable not because she cannot articulate it, but because its dimensions are as infinitely complex as the Dreaming she evokes.

Kngwarreye paints the reaching-toward out of which dancing dreams are composed. This reaching-toward is an almost-touch: it touches the not-yet through which futurity will emerge. Painting the untouchable is an event that instills time in space. It is to pre-paint, to pre-accelerate the urgency of the taking-form these extraordinary paintings propose. This suggests a noncoincidence always present in the act of mark-making, a rhythmical disjunction that recalls the latency or the virtual in any actualisation. To actualise in this sense is to make-present both the future and the past. This potential is always within the act of painting

as a concrete aspect of creation.⁵¹ Unfortunately, the untouchable too often becomes articulated as the unconscious (the has-been-touched). Emily Kngwarreye's art is not unconscious. What she paints is absolutely real, eventful, its untouchability always an incitation to touch.

It is the rhythm of the land I see in Kngwarreye's relationscapes, a rhythm that refuses to subjugate the image to the text, the dance to the music. The rhythm is all around, it is the 'whole lot': the weather, the seasons, the births and deaths, the rituals and performances, the body painting and batiks, the Dreamings eventfully pursuing the journeys that will create future spacetimes of experience. These rhythms are sensations of the boldest kind, sensations that alter the very core of what it is to sense. There is no inside/outside to the sensations: they are as much of the body as of the land, extending synesthetically beyond all comprehension of three-dimensional spacetime, leading us not toward a dimension as such but toward a topological hyperspace of relationscapes, to an immanent transcendence that is profoundly of the land, of the here and now.

Experiential work defies description. As lines become planes become topologies, the singular mark synesthetically transforms the whole. The colours reflect not only off one other but within the shades they help create. These shades are events: Dreamings in the making.

Topological geographies create new art histories. Red against yellow, black against brown, dots, lines, circles, footprints, all of these gestures toward the Dreaming extend themselves beyond a body or a canvas, creating a movement of thought. This movement of thought provokes response-ability: I cannot but move. I cannot but sense the shades of difference that create the activity of the land. I cannot but respond relationally. I cannot engage and then refuse the immanence of the 'whole' these paintings generate.

This is the power of contemporary Aboriginal art. It incites cross-cultural transformation at an artistic as well as a political level, asking us to rethink the map, the landmark we presumed we could locate, the direction we thought we knew how to follow. In the end, we remain foreign yet politically—relationally—charged. A qualitative change has occurred shifting us from the realm of the passive observer toward the political: the topological hyperspace we encounter through Aboriginal art has qualitatively altered our capacity to relate on shifting ground.

Relationscapes abound. They are not strictly relegated to the Aborigine and their experience of the Dreaming. Emily Kngwarreye was not the first to annihilate figuration. What art such as that of Kngwarreye, Napangardi, Petyarre or Possum does is create a movement of thought, a movement that is *marayin*, at once painting, song, dance, sacred object and power word. Through their work, we move toward a topological hyperspace of experience, asking once again how emptiness is configured, how topologies extend our worlds, rhythmically

(de)forming them, and how maps that sense-across create durations which eventually alter what experience can be.

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1. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, 2003, p. 81.
2. Deleuze, p. 82
3. Deleuze, p. 83
4. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri in Vivien Johnson, *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2003, p. 16.
5. Jukurrpa was earlier referred to as 'Dream Time'. It means both Dream (story) and Law.
6. Many of these observations are also valid for other Aboriginal peoples. Rather than make wide claims about Aboriginals as a whole, however, my focus here is on the Aboriginals of the Central Desert and the ways in which their art practice continues to sustain the Dreaming.
7. Kirda 'own' given countries and have primary economic and spiritual rights as regards these spacetimes. Kurdungurlu are guardians for the countries owned by the Kirda. Kurdungurlu ensure that Kirda fulfill social and ritual obligations associated to the Dreamings in their care. They also affirm that the Kirda maintain the responsibility of associated sites and access to economic resources of their country. In ceremony, Kirda and Kurdungurlu interact closely. Their roles are complimentary: when Kirda have their bodies painted for ritual purposes, Kurdungurlu grind the ochres, do the actual painting and give advice on appropriate symbols. The roles are reversed for other sites and Dreamings (Christopher Anderson and Françoise Dussart, 'Dreamings in Acrylic: Western Desert Art' in Peter Sutton (ed.), *Dreaming: The Art of Aboriginal Australia*, Viking Press, Ringwood, VIC, 1988, p. 95).
8. Barbara Glowczewski, *Les rêveurs du désert: Aborigènes d'Australie*, Plon, Paris, 1989, p. 83. (All of Glowczewski's work is originally in French. My translations throughout.)
9. Glowczewski, *Les rêveurs du désert*, p. 151.
10. It can also happen that the birth of a child happens in a 'no man's land', a zone that is not part of that clan's Dreaming itineraries. In this case, the person will create his own clan in relation to the dream of conception associated with his passage from the virtual to the actual (Glowczewski, *Les rêveurs du désert*, p. 206).
11. For the Yolngu, a single word, marayin, designates at once painting, songs, dances, sacred objects and power words (in Barbara Glowczewski, *Rêves en colère avec les Aborigènes australiens*, Plon, Paris, 2004, p. 311).
12. Glowczewski, *Les rêveurs du désert*, p. 212.
13. To consider the Dreaming as a finished narrative is to overlook the fact that for each Dreaming site there is the potential of emergence of other associated Dreamings. Dreamings by definition are mobile, leaving traces that remain to be deciphered and performed. To perform is not an accessory of the Dreaming. It is the way the Dreaming affirms itself and is actualised. Dreamings are sites of negotiation rather than entities. As with the sand drawings, the creation of stories demands a continual erasure. To create is to start again. As a member of the Warlpiri at Lajamanu states: 'Our Law is not written. It is firm, like a rock, a becoming trace, like the sea that rises, that ebbs and flows' (in Glowczewski, *Rêves en colère avec les Aborigènes australiens*, p. 302. For an excellent reading of virtuality, see also Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Affect*,

- Movement, Sensation*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2002).
14. Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, Free Press, New York, 1933, p. 176.
 15. Jennifer Biddle, 'Country, Skin, Canvas: The Intercorporeal Art of Kathleen Petyarre', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art—Indigenous Art of Australia and the South Pacific*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2003, p. 61.
 16. James William, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, Longman Green and Co, New York, 1912, p. 42.
 17. William, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 42.
 18. These paintings are entitled 'Warlugulong' (1976 with Tim Leura), 'Warlugulong' (1977), 'Kerrinyarra' (1977), 'Mount Denison Country' (1978) and 'Yuutjutiyungu' (1979).
 19. 'Without the story, the painting is nothing' (Michael Jagamara Nelson in Vivien Johnson, *Michael Jagamara Nelson*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1997, p. 133). This notion of story has been quite difficult for ethnographers, curators and consumers of Aboriginal dot painting to understand. Johnson writes: 'The "correct" ascription for a particular design element in a painting is in fact not always so readily determined—not even by the artist himself' (Johnson, *Michael Jagamara Nelson*, p. 134). The imposition of truth misses the point of the Dreaming. The stories themselves must be told correctly, but how they are performed varies greatly. A story told by the wrong person is unauthorised, a concept far more important than the 'inauthentic'. Copying or standard forms of authorship are not the issue. What is at stake is working out the correct relation between the Kirda and the Kurdungurlu as well as being able to recount the stories by singing their trajectories: most paintings are sung even while they are being created. To criticise a painting on aesthetic grounds is to criticise the artist's Dreaming—the artist's very Becoming.
 20. Dreamings can fall into misuse due to the death of a Kirda, or they can re-manifest themselves in a dream. Dreams, shared in performative rituals with the members of a community, can re-become Dreamings this way, creating geographies that re-stratify in time, creating new lines of flight.
 21. Vivien Johnson, *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2003, p. 21.
 22. Topology refers to mostly non-Euclidean geometry where figures are subjected to deformations so drastic that all their metric and projective properties are lost, creating an elliptical geometry that challenges the very notion of stable form (Richard Courant and Herbert Robbins (eds), *What is Mathematics: An Elementary Approach to Ideas and Methods*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, p. 235).
 23. Alfred North Whitehead in David Ray Griffin, Donald W. Sherburne (eds), *Process and Reality*, Free Press, New York, 1978, p. 26.
 24. Massumi, p. 177.
 25. Vivien Johnson, *Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2003, p. 92.
 26. Biddle also makes this point in her very interesting article 'Country, Skin, Canvas'. She writes: 'The potency of Petyarre's work arises, arguably, from the very materiality of marks made in the Central and Western Desert context. It is not *what* these marks represent but *how* they are made that is determinative. To stay within the Piercian framework, these marks are not so much "icons" (signs which look like what they represent) as they are "indexes" (signs which remain existentially tied to what they "represent"). Central and Western Desert marks are "indexes" in so far as they embody original Ancestral potency. This potency does not simply arise. It must be enacted by precise repetitious and regulatory operations—what might otherwise be called Law' (p. 64).
 27. The Möbius strip is a type of topology.
 28. For a more on back-gridding and its relation to movement, see Massumi.
 29. For a more detailed exploration of the conception of sensing-with or reaching-toward, see Erin Manning, *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty*, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, 2007.
 30. Brian Massumi writes: 'The folding of the Euclidean and non-Euclidean into and out of each other is itself understandable only in topological terms. This hinge-dimension between quantitative and qualitative space is itself a topological figure—to the second degree, since topology already figures in it. It is a topological hyperfigure. The non-Euclidean, qualitative, and dynamic is more encompassing than the Euclidean, quantitative and static, by virtue of this double featuring' (in *Parables for the Virtual*, p. 184).
 31. I am not saying the Dreamings themselves walk away. To understand the landscape of the Dreamings as topological it must first be clear that we are not talking about points on a grid. Uluru remains Uluru. What changes is the intensive movement of the relationscape. By intensive movement I mean the relational network between my prehension of Uluru and its condensation in spacetime. To say that Uluru is stable is to suggest that space is there to be encountered (and left behind). The point of Aboriginal land claims is that space is alive.

32. As mentioned before, she refers not to particular sites or Dreamings as such. Her expression is that what she paints is a 'whole lot'.
33. With regard to the role batik plays in the art of painters from Utopia, see Biddle, 'Country, Skin, Canvas', pp. 61–76. She suggests that batik taught these women to 'conceptualize in advance the space left over from any mark; that is, to conceptualize the trace itself first, for what is marked first with wax comes out, after the fabric is dyed, as unmarked' (p. 67). Biddle develops an analysis of the workings of the trace based on this idea of marking, suggesting that marks are 'made in not on a surface' and therefore neither secondary nor ancillary. The trace, Biddle argues, 'is what re-activates Ancestral presencing' (p. 67).
34. Margo Neale (ed.), *Emily Kame Kngwarreye—Alhahere: Paintings from Utopia*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1998, p. 31.
35. Kngwarreye's paintings are often recognisable by the patterns she creates on the folded-over edges of the canvas.
36. The intensity of painting, of dancing the line seems to take a toll on her health and energy. There are many instances when Kngwarreye seemed on the verge of stopping to paint. In line with the beliefs of her peoples, she believed it was time for the younger generation to take over. Her position as a prominent moneymaker *and* as an elder was at odds with tradition.
37. This differs from the standard practice, where dark colours are gessoed onto the canvas.
38. Whitehead, p. 181.
39. Whitehead, p. 181.
40. Whitehead, p. 182.
41. Whitehead, p. 227.
42. Whitehead, p. 228.
43. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p. 169.
44. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 18+.
45. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, 1987, p. 254.
46. Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, Routledge, New York, 2003, p. 173.
47. Glowszewski, *Les rêveurs du désert*, p. 213.
48. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 21.
49. Gilles Deleuze suggests that the figure need not be conceived as the figurative. For a more detailed explanation, see his work on Bacon in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, 2002.
50. Videos exist of this experience of dancing-while-painting or painting-while-dancing.
51. Deleuze writes: 'So the act of painting is always shifting, it is constantly oscillating between a beforehand and an afterward: the hysteria of painting.' (Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, 2003, p. 80).