

The literary text at the borders of linguistics and culture: a SF analysis of Les Murray's 'Migratory'

MONICA TURCI
University of Bologna

1. INTRODUCTION: FROM TEXT TO CONTEXT AND BACK TO TEXT

This section is a brief introduction that illustrates the theoretical trajectory of my analysis of "Migratory" (1992), a poem by contemporary Australian writer Les Murray. The trajectory follows a circular path as it begins from the text, the primary object of analysis, continues by connecting the findings of the analysis with the context of the poem's creation and finally returns to the text, in order to show the way it has contributed to the contemporary social and cultural debate.

The joint attention towards text and context in stylistics might appear unusual, as stylistics has been often associated with a mode of inquiry concerned with close reading of the literary text. However, in the present case, the former emphasis is related to the brand of stylistics adopted, one that is firmly grounded in a Systemic Functional Linguistic (henceforth SFL) approach, for which contextual variables are connected to meanings and lexico-grammatical instantiations. Hasan's stylistics, which has provided the most extensive application to date of a SFL approach to what she calls the 'literature text', generates further interest in context and, besides referring to the context of situation and its three variables, also distinguishes different typologies of contexts. More precisely, Hasan talks about 'context of creation' and 'context of interpretation' which refer to the cultural context of the production and reception of the work of art respectively (see Hasan 1989: 100, 101). Considerations pertaining to context are shaped and con-

tained within the principle of the autonomy of literary texts, which means that 'the text itself provides cues for deciding what extra-textual phenomena are relevant to it, [...]' (*Ibid.*: 101). Hasan's theory of the autonomy of literary texts further explains the significance of a context-based analysis. She adds: 'it would be an error to convert autonomy into *anomie*: literature is not a self-motivated activity, divorced from the concerns of the community in which it is created.' (*Ibid.*:101) In short, autonomy of literature makes context a primary consideration to understand text, and, at the same time, keeps a focus on text. Hasan's principle of autonomy underpins my trajectory in which the literary text provides the beginning, end and, more importantly, the point of entry for considering context.

In the first stage of my analysis, logical, experiential and textual meanings in the poem will be analysed in isolation; connections here will be restricted to other poems included in the same collection, in order to clarify questions of reference.

In the second stage, findings of the lexico-grammatical analysis obtained in the previous stage will be used to guide the analyst into selected aspects of the poem's context of creation. Particularly important in this stage is the mechanism of foregrounding and de-automatization commonly used in stylistic analyses that employ a SF method of inquiry, most notably in Halliday's analysis of Priestley's "An Inspector Calls" (1982) and Hasan's work on "The Widower" by Murray (1989). Both these analyses are indebted to Mukarovsky's earlier work. According to Mukarovsky, 'foregrounding is the opposite of automatization, that is, the automatization of an act; the more an act is automatized, the less it is consciously executed; the more it is foregrounded, the more completely conscious does it become.' (Mukarovsky 1964:19) In my analysis, foregrounding provides a bridge between close reading of text and its cultural background: it happens at the level of lexico-grammatical choices and plays an important role in the process of unmasking and de-automatizing that which habit makes predictable and expected, in other words, those world-views and sets of beliefs and expectations that define one's culture. This effect is mainly realized in literary texts (though possible in non-literary ones), where it can be achieved in two ways: through *deviation* from rules and habits, or through extra regularity, i.e. *parallelism* (see Van Peer 1993:50). Quantitatively these strategies are opposed: deviation can be described as too little of something, an isolated instance; parallelism or repetition as too much, an element or cluster of elements that is frequently repeated. However, both have the same effect of drawing attention to language constructions, which, as a consequence, are no longer perceived as inevitable, normal and automatic. In the specific case of this poem, foregrounded elements, achieved through deviation and extreme parallelism, will enable connections with selected aspects, or fragments, of the context of culture in which the poem was written.

In the third and conclusive stage of my analysis, attention will return to the text, in particular to the title of the poem, which can be considered in this case a sort of 'identificatory tag' for the work of art itself. In my reading of Les Murray's poem, the question of what 'Migratory' stands for is related to previous connections between text and selected context of culture. The title proves to be a further example of de-automatization: the word 'migratory', which appears in isolation and yet in close conjunction with the poem, is freed at its "lower level

systems from the control of [its] semantics” (Halliday 1982: 136) and challenges hegemonic and widely accepted meanings concerning migration both from the point of view of a historically situated experience and as a universal and timeless condition of humanity.

2. THE TEXT

‘Migratory’ appeared for the first time¹ in 1992 as part of a collection entitled *Translations from the Natural World* by Isabella Press, a well-known publishing house specialized in fiction and poetry written by contemporary white and native Australian writers. ‘Migratory’ is included in the only section that has a title – *Presences* – and that collects poems dedicated to aspects of the natural and animal world. What follows is the text:

Migratory

1. I am the nest that comes and goes,
 2. I am the egg that isn’t now,
 3. I am the beach, the food in sand,
 4. the shade with shells and the shade with sticks.
 5. I am the right feeling on washed shine,
 6. in wind-lifting surf, in running about
 7. beak-focused: the feeling of here, that stays
 8. and stays, then lengthens out over
 9. the hill of hills and the feedy sea.
 10. I am the wrongness of here, when it
 11. is true to fly along the feeling
 12. the length of its great rightness, while days
 13. burn from vast to a gold gill in the dark
 14. to vast again, for many feeds
 15. and floating rests, till the sun ahead
 16. becomes the sun behind, and half
 17. the little far days of the night are different.
 18. Right feelings of here arrive with me:
 19. I am the nests danced for and now,
 20. I am the crying heads to fill,
 21. I am the beach, the sand in food,
 22. the shade with sticks and the double kelp shade.
- (Murray 1992: 52)

2.1 A LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

2.1.1 THE POEM’S TEXTURE: FROM GRAMMATICAL PARALLELISM TO LEXICAL RELATIONS

In SFL, Grammatical Parallelism (henceforth GP) has been included among structural cohesive devices (see Miller, 2005). Here GP is also considered in its specific

role in relation to the literary text, as illustrated by Roman Jakobson (1987). He sees GP as the empirical linguistic criterion of the poetic function, and consisting in a reiteration of grammatical elements, from the phoneme and morpheme to all higher ranks of syntactic construction, a repetition whose ultimate significance is seen as being contemporaneous semantic parallelism (see Miller 2005:15-16).

Poetic structure is traditionally characterized by parallelism of verses and rhyme, affecting the sound of words and, by extension, their symbolic values. Murray's poem, in line with much contemporary poetry, defies such parallelism and in its place presents syntactic and semantic parallelism. As the detailed analysis below will illustrate, in the first and last four lines GP is so consistent as to make it plausible to define these lines as two quatrains.

Concerning syntactic structures (see also Table 1 on logical relations, in 2.1.3 below) the first and last four lines form a single sentence and present an identical syntactic structure: in each, there are 3 independent clauses – the first two with embedding - connected by an implicit paratactic relation:

1. I am the nest [[that comes and goes]], 2. I am the egg [[that isn't now]], 3. I am the beach, the food in sand, 4. the shade with shells and the shade with sticks. (Sentence I)

19. I am the nests [[danced for and now]], 20. I am the crying heads [[to fill]], 21. I am the beach, the sand in food, 22. the shade with sticks and the double kelp shade. (Sentence VI)

This parallel structure contrasts with the middle section of the poem. Generally speaking, this middle section lacks the syntactic parallelism of the quatrains and it is made up of four sentences. Three of these are long (the first two running to 3 lines, the third to 8 lines):

5. I am the right feeling on washed shine, 6. in wind-lifting surf, in running about 7. beak-focused: (Sentence II)

7. the feeling of here, that stays 8. and stays, then lengthens out over 9. the hill of hills and the feedy sea. (Sentence III)

10. I am the wrongness of here, when it 11. is true to fly along the feeling 12. the length of its great rightness, while days 13. burn from vast to a gold gill in the dark 14. to vast again, for many feeds 15. and floating rests, till the sun ahead 16. becomes the sun behind, and half 17. the little far days of the night are different. (Sentence IV)

and one is short (1 line):

18. Right feelings of here arrive with me: (Sentence V)

This is not to imply that there is no parallelism at all, but that it is created through a different strategy, namely opposition of the antonyms (see Jakobson 1987: 148;

157-58) ‘right’, ‘wrongness’ and ‘right’ in lines 5, 10 and 18. A comparative analysis of the middle section and the first and last quatrains also reveals a change of syntactic relations: from parataxis in the quatrains to a prevalence of hypotaxis in the middle section. The effect created is one of contrast between simple logical relations in the quatrains and more complex ones in the middle section. Moreover, the clause in line 18 ‘Right feelings of here arrive with me’ appears to be foregrounded for the following reasons: qualitatively, it is not connected to any other clauses by either hypotaxis or parataxis and does not contain embedding; it contradicts the simple vs. complex structure of quatrain and middle section, and, finally, in the environment of the middle section to which it belongs, its straightforwardness and shortness contrast with the long and convoluted complexity of the clause complex that comes immediately before.

Parallelism in the poem is also prominent at the level of lexical words (I will deal with repetition of the grammar word ‘I’ in the next section). Patterns of lexical parallelism also contribute to the construction of the above-mentioned poetical structure which distinguishes between the initial and final quatrains on the one hand, and a middle section on the other.

The most repeated lexical words in the poem are ‘shade’ and ‘feeling’, each occurring a total of 4 times: the repetition of ‘shade’ occurs exclusively within the first and last quatrains, while the repetition of ‘feeling’ is in the middle section. Other instances of repetition can only be found in the first and last quatrains, reconfirming from a lexical point of view, the strong syntactic parallelism already noted. Repetitions here include ‘food’ ‘nest’ ‘beach’ ‘sand’ and ‘sticks’, all repeated twice. From the point of view of non-structural lexical relations ‘beach’, ‘sand’ and ‘nest’ are meronyms (see Halliday 1994: 332): the first two of a marine landscape, the last one of birds’ natural habitat. Marine landscape and birds’ natural habitat are in turn meronyms of the natural world which is mentioned in the title of this collection, *Translations from the Natural World*. The semantic field realized by reference to a bird or natural habitat contrasts with that realized by the repetition of ‘feeling’ in the middle section: ‘feeling’ - nominalization of the verb ‘feel’ - refers in fact to a perceptive and/or affective abstract sphere typically associated with the perceptions and emotions of conscious human beings, which contrast with both an external landscape and an animal habitat.

2.1.2 REFERENCE: THE ‘I’ OF THE POEM

There are several reasons for dedicating a specific section to this single item: quantitatively, ‘I’ is the most repeated word in the poem with a total of 8 instances; qualitatively, it is Theme of all main clauses except one (*Right feelings of here arrive with me*, line 18, which, recall, already appeared foregrounded on account of its brevity, independence, and absence of embedding).

‘I’ is also the first Theme in the whole poem and sets up both exophoric and endophoric references. In the environment of the section *Presences* this Theme appears to be a typical choice; indeed, it is not rare to find poems in this section that begin with deictic pronouns such as ‘I’ or ‘They’². These mostly refer anaphorically to the title of the poem, a Noun or Noun Group with which the deictic

pronoun sets up an implicit relation of identification. However, in this poem, an identifying relation is not possible due to the grammatical nature of the title. ‘Migratory’ being a Classifier, the connection between it and the ‘I’ can only suggest an implicit relation of attribution, whereby the ‘I’ is classified as ‘migratory’. Rather than anchoring it to a particular aspect of the landscape, to an animal species, or to nomads or semi-nomadic groups of humans, the title, by providing merely a classification of the ‘I’ leaves unresolved the question of its identification.

The double implicit reference to animal species and people alike is in line with both the quatrains and the middle section which, as already seen, are characterised by lexical items which refer to birds and the sphere of perceptions/affectations, more commonly used for defining human beings. This implicit attributive relation can also be useful to define some ontological aspects of the process of migration. If it is taken to refer to birds, the process of migration is stylistically evoked by parallel constructions of the two quatrains that suggest a cyclical movement; if it is taken to refer to human beings, the lexico-syntactical structure of the middle section suggests a more varied and complex process.

The problems raised here of identification of the ‘I’ and more particularly ontological issues of migration, will be pursued and further clarified in the analysis that follows.

2.1.3 CONJUNCTIONS: THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL ENVIRONMENT OF MIGRATION

Conjunctions are present only in the middle section of the poem, re-confirming the hypothesis of two stylistically structurally distinctive parts. Conjunctions appear from line 5 to line 15 and they all introduce, or can be interpreted as introducing, non-defining relative clauses of the temporal kind, as shown in Table 1 below:

LINES	SENTENCE	LOGICAL RELATIONS
1-2-3-4	I	1 [1a] AND 2 [2a] AND 3.
5-6-7	II	4 <u>in the process of</u> 5 <u>in the process of</u> 6:
7-8-9	III	7 [7A] then 8.
10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17	IV	9 when 10 while 11 till 12 and 13.
18	V	14:
19-20-21-22	VI	15 [15a] AND 16 [16a] AND 17.

Table 1: Logical relations in ‘Migratory’³

The conjunctions and non-defining temporal clauses that follow appear in the same environment of the deictic proximal item ‘here’ that instantiates a spatial dimension in lines 7 ‘the feeling of here’, line 10 ‘I am the wrongness of here’ and line 18 ‘Right feeling of here’. The overall effect produced by the proximity of temporal conjunctions and proximal deictic items of place is one of intersection and interdependency of temporality and spatiality.

2.1.4 TENSE AND POLARITY: THE TEMPORAL DIRECTION OF MIGRATION

Finite verbs are in evidence in the poem: a total of 20 instances (including one case of ellipsis of the Finite) against 5 non finites, as shown in Table 2 below:

Finite	Non-finite
am	
comes goes	
am	
isn't	
am	wind-lifting
am	running
()* am	
stays stays	
lengthens	
am	
is	to fly
burn	
becomes	
are	
arrive	
am	danced
am	to fill
am	

* parenthesis indicates ellipsis of verb

Table 2: Finite and non finite verbs in 'Migratory'

All finite verbs are in the simple present tense, which is also called habitual, as it is used to refer to a recurrent action⁴. From an epistemological point of view, this tense is used to express the truth claim of a proposition. In the context of the poem, the simple present tense and its typical instantiations might be seen to apply to the migration of birds, typically understood as a recurrent and cyclical action that never fails to take place.

However, an analysis of this tense in the lexico-grammatical environment of the poem reveals different, less expected meanings which can be defined as foregrounded with respect to its typical grammar.

As Table 3 below shows, the present tense is mainly used in its typical meaning of habitual present in the first and last quatrains, where, however, in two instances only, it indicates a portion of time here and now (lines 2 and 19). In the middle section, as expected, the use of the simple present tense is different from that in the two quatrains, and acquires some other, unexpected temporal dimensions. These include later time (line 8), precise time (lines 10/11), precise time, extent, further defining precise time in line 10 (line 13) and earlier time (line 14):

LINE	TENSE	MEANING
1.	am,	habitual;
1.	comes, goes	habitual;
2.	am,	habitual
2.	isn't	here and now;
3.	am	habitual;
5.	am	habitual;
7.	() am,	habitual;
7/ 8	stays and stays	habitual;
8.	lengthens	later time (then);
10.	am	habitual;
10/ 11.	is	precise time (when);
	burn	precise time, extent (while); defining precise time in lines 10-11;
14.	becomes	transformation in precise time, earlier time (till);
17.	are	precise time, earlier time because paratactically related to clause 12
18	arrive	habitual;
19.	am,	here and now;
20.	am	habitual;
21.	am	habitual;

Table 3: Temporal setting in 'Migratory'

To sum up, the first and last quatrains, which represent the migration of birds, are prevalently characterized by a habitual and cyclical temporality, while in the middle section, where migration is related to the inner sphere of perceptions and emotions, the temporal dimension is predominantly varied, dynamic, fluid and always connected to a spatial one.

Concerning the mood of the verbs, these are all in the Indicative affirmative, with the sole exception of one instance in line 2 ('the egg that isn't now'). This is a strongly foregrounded element, not only because it differs from all the other mood types, but also because it breaks the syntactic, semantic, and temporal parallelism of the two quatrains, and in so doing the effect of perfect circularity of the whole poem.

2.1.5 VERBAL PROCESSES AND PARTICIPANTS: ON PROBLEMS OF IDENTIFICATION

We have already noted that attempts to define the deictic 'I' at the beginning of the poem through anaphoric reference are, unlike in the other poems of the same collection, only partly successful: 'migratory' merely provides a classification of the personal pronoun, connecting it to the act of migration. Questions of identification however are pursued throughout the whole poem, in which all the verbs in the main clauses are of the relational: identifying kind and have the pronoun 'I' as Identified, Subject and, as previously noted, Theme. It is interesting that in line 18, already foregrounded, there is a shift from a process of identification to an action that describes movement, and from Identified 'I' to Actor 'Right feelings of here'.

3. FROM TEXT TO CONTEXT VIA FOREGROUNDING

The foregoing analysis noted the following cases of foregrounding through extreme parallelism (a,b) and deviation (c-e):

Parallelism

- a) extreme syntactic and semantic parallelism of the first and last four lines of the poem, which, for this reason, have been referred to as quatrains;
- b) partial parallelism through syntactic parallel opposition of antonyms in the middle part of the poem (lines 5, 10 and 18).

Deviation:

- c) line 18 is the only clause that stands alone and is not linked with any other clauses by parataxis, hypotaxis or embedding; also it is the only main clause that does not have 'I' as its Theme;
- d) line 2 is the only example of Indicative: Negative mood;
- e) deviation from the typical grammatical meaning of the simple present tense as habitual present prevalent in the middle section of the poem.

The above-mentioned cases of parallelism and deviation will be considered along with lexico-grammatical findings in order to connect the poem with fragments of its cultural context.

Syntactic and semantic parallelism mentioned in a) are related to the representation of birds' migration. Here, this form of parallelism constitutes a symmetrical structure which symbolizes the cyclical nature of bird migration, which is repeated incessantly. This is also confirmed by the use of the simple present tense in its typical grammatical meaning of habitual present. Connections of this kind are not uncommon in criticism of this poem. For example, Bert Almon in *Antipodes* writes: 'By the end of the poem the bird has made its migration [...] and the life of nests and beaches is unfolded again in terms symmetrical with the opening section. In a way, nothing has changed.' (1994: 125)

However, the case of deviation mentioned in d) above has important repercussions for this assumption. The negative mood in the first quatrain has the effect of breaking the almost perfect parallelism, so if one can say that parallelism

remains in place, at the same time, one cannot posit that 'nothing changes': both quatrains similarly evoke a fertile, rich and living landscape, with the difference that the first one begins by articulating a precarious condition which evolves in a negating structure, while the last one expresses the fullness of presence and the process of palingenesis.

Effects produced by deviation in d) above also concern the middle part of the poem. A perfect circular structure whereby the last quatrain returns to the first one and nothing changes, effectively implies that we disconnect the middle section from its beginning and end, which, by mirroring each other, would function independently of it; in other words, this middle section would represent a simple set of disconnected states. However, if we consider the opening and closing quatrains as the expression of a changing and unfolding reality, the clause complexes in-between are intermediary stages geared toward such a change. Therefore, instead of being structurally disconnected from the rest of the poem and logically disconnected from one another, the clause complexes in the middle section function within a structural and logical transitional stage. My analysis of conjunctions and tenses would confirm this interpretation. Here the simple present tense deviates from its typical grammatical meaning and indicates a variety of temporal states in a continuum, ranging from a precise, circumscribed present to later time and earlier time.

These lexico-grammatical choices represent migration as a dynamic process of changing in which the identification of the 'I' from 'the right feeling of washed shine' evolves into 'the wrongness of here', while continuously partaking of a precise spatio-temporal condition. This process of identification ends with line 18 (c above: 'Right feelings of here arrive with me'), a foregrounded clause which adds a significant last stage. Here the process of identification is replaced by a material action process whose Actor is 'Right feelings of here'. The 'I' – the holonymic and logocentric subject *par excellence* – is here replaced by a meronymic perceptive agent, grammatically and semantically qualified in/through space.

The repeated reference to an inner perceptive sphere, the complex and dynamic identificatory experience that partakes of time as well as space, and the final stage of this experience, where the Actor/ Subject becomes qualified by/through space, point to a process of migration that involves more than the automatic response of birds to seasonal change. All these instantiations stage a complex bond between men and land connecting journeys of migration to the life of nomadic and semi nomadic Aborigines. As it has been shown in the work of anthropologists⁵, for the Australian Aborigines journeys of migration are linked to ancient religious and spiritual ceremonies essential both to their physical survival and also to their spiritual existence.

4. DE-AUTOMATIZATION OF 'MIGRATORY'

In the previous section I have connected lexico-grammatical findings and cases of foregrounding to fragments of the cultural context of the poem. I wish to conclude by briefly pointing to the way in which the poem in question is not merely

the product of its culture, but can also be seen as contributing to its re-shaping. In order to fully understand the impact of this poem for the Australian Aboriginal question, it is necessary to briefly mention its historical context of creation.

In 1992, the year Murray's collection was published, a significant legal ruling about land rights in Australia was finally resolved with the High Court passing legislation which overturned the historical and judicial foundations of land ownership. This effectively meant that indigenous peoples acquired prior claims to lands colonized by the British, a claim which eventually found formal expression in the 'Native Title Act', passed in the same year. This denied the British Empire's claim to land-ownership, which, while having economic and political goals, was culturally grounded: the taking possession of the Australian desert was in fact justified at the time by the belief that colonisation would bring progress, order and civilization into a vast, empty and threatening space which was named by the English *terra nullius* (see Carter in Darian-Smith, Gunner and Nuttall: 1996), an expression used to signify a geographical space that had remained geologically unchanged since it came into existence. This myth was also extended to the native Australians, who were named 'aborigines', a word which according to Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary of English Language* (1879) means 'a beginning', to signify a group of people in a primitive state.

While the 1992 legislation overturned the legal land rights of the colonisers, in the same years, the creative work of many contemporary Australian writers and poets, amongst which Murray, can be seen to contribute to this political process from a cultural perspective⁶. In 'Migratory', the myth of a geographical space, arid and emptied of any form of life is blatantly contradicted by the first and, most especially, the last quatrain, which, as I have noted, both constantly refer to nature as providing sustenance.

However, 'Migratory' does not offer solely a poetic evocation of a living geographical territory; geographical space here comes to encompass social and, most especially spiritual space. As my linguistic analysis has shown, the two quatrains and especially the central part of the poem make an important contribution to the way we understand migration. This process is not described as cyclical and automatic and referring solely to animal species such as birds, but as an experience partaking both of place and most especially of time, shaped and made synchronous with an inner spiritual dimension. This poem re-creates a spiritual journey which, through its lexico-grammatical choices and instances of foregrounding, frees the terms 'migration' and 'migratory' from a set of meanings that had sedimented after years of 'automatic' and unconscious use of this term, meanings that have been documented in Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*: here 'migration' is described as 'L., migratus, pp. of migrare, to wander.' (Skeat 1879: 375). As shown in my analysis, in this poem, the word 'migratory' loses this restricted and basically negatively connoted meaning of senseless and disordered drifting, and becomes a subtle representation of a fragile bond between man and land, a timeless event and a unique experience of movement in time and space, which, in the historical context of creation of the poem, rescues the Australian landscape and its original inhabitants from the primitive void of colonial mythical representations.

1. In the acknowledgements to this collection of poems, Murray lists those poems that had been published previously in various magazines. 'Migratory' is not mentioned. (Murray 1992).

2 Some examples include the first line of the following poems: 'Strangler Fig' ('I glory centennially slow-'); 'Cockspur Bush' ('I am lived. I am died'); 'Puss' ('I permit myself to be'); 'Cell DNA' ('I am the singular'); 'Sunflowers' ('I am even fresh cells who keep on knowing my name'); 'Spermaceti' ('I sound my sight, and flexing skeletons eddy'); 'Stone Fruit' ('I appear from the inner world, singular and many, I am').

3 The symbols in this table are borrowed from Hasan 1989: 30. *AND* means that the logical relation is coordination and implicit. The labels for the subordinating relations are underlined; for example 4 in the process of 5; that part of the sentence that it represents is am (=4) wind lifting (= 5) where the logical relation between the two can be explicitly expressed as '[...] am the right feeling in the process of wind lifting surf [...]'

4 For a discussion of the meaning of the present tense, see Hasan 1989: 34-35. 'The simple present tense is sometimes called *HABITUAL*. This is because it refers not to any one portion of time here and now - i.e. the sensuous present - but rather, to a long stretch of time extending somewhat indefinitely. In fact it is somewhat extraordinary to call it 'present', for it covers part of the time in the past, implies a tendency at the moment of speaking, and an expectation into the future.'

5 This condition applies to all nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples, Australian Aborigines included. As anthropologists have suggested, Aborigines' semi-nomadic habits were linked to spiritual enrichment, and their recurrent journeys were meant to follow the paths

along which the mythic beings of the Dreaming had travelled, and to experience ancient religious ceremonies connected to the land and the ancestors. (Berndt 1973: 232)

6 For this reason these poets, were and are still labelled as 'Identifying Poets', because they 'construct for themselves an identity which allows them to identify or being identified with a particular territory' (Crawford 1993: 3) or, in the case of Murray, to re-state, even renovate, the identity of a particular territory.

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