Central Australia as a distinct musical area within Aboriginal Australia has long been recognised (A. Moyle 1966), and the styles of musical repertoires within individual languages in the region show both internal homogeneity and distinctions from those of neighbouring language speakers (Turpin and Laughren 2013). Studies of a specific genre within a language area reveal both broad similarities and distinctions presently understandable as encoding different totemic beings (R. Moyle 1986; Ellis 1985). This chapter examines the women’s songs from Tyaw and compares these with the women’s songs of a contiguous landowning group, Antarrengeeny. Tyaw and Antarrengeeny are the names of two estates, which, as well as referring to a tract of land, can also be used to refer to the songs and the Dreamings of that estate. Apart from their use as proper nouns, the words Tyaw and Antarrengeeny have no other meanings in the local language, Alyawarr.

Both sets of songs are of the same performance genre, belong to the same language group and were received by the same person, the late Polly Pwerl (Eileen Bonney’s father’s sister). As is common throughout Central Australia, songs are not regarded as being consciously composed, but are received from ancestral spirits from the estate, usually in dreams (Wild 1987: 2; R. Moyle 1986: 64, 68; 1997: 25, 105; Koch and Turpin 2008: 169). Both song-sets came into existence in the 1940s when
Polly was living on Tyaw country when the Hatches Creek mine was in operation. Polly was well known as a ceremonial leader for these two estates.

To date, the women’s songs of the Tyaw group have not been studied, while those of the neighbouring country Antarrengeny have been described by R. Moyle (1986), Turpin and Ross (2013), and Turpin (2015). There are many textual and musical similarities between the two song-sets, which may reflect the common originator of both song-sets and/or the close association between the people of Tyaw and Antarrengeny. However, two musical features set each clearly apart. While both Tyaw and Antarrengeny employ a three-note rhythmic cell (\(\text{eq q.}\)), only Antarrengeny employs a two-note rhythmic cell (\(\text{eq.}\)). Secondly, while much of the melodic contour is identical in both song-sets, the introductory section of Tyaw is less complex than that of Antarrengeny. A further point of interest is that the earlier performances (from the 1970s) have greater rhythmic and textual diversity than the later recordings (2004 onwards). We consider reasons for this below.

Background

In this article we analyse a set of songs of the women’s performance genre called [aw\(\text{ô} \check{\text{a}}\)], spelt awely in Alyawarr (Green 1992), which involves visual adornments and dancing. Alyawarr is the name of the language and people whose traditional lands lie some 250 kilometres northeast of Alice Springs, NT. The song-set belongs to the Alyawarr land-holding group known as Tyaw [ca\(\text{t}\)], whose own traditional lands lie in the southern part of the Davenport Ranges (see Figure 1). Co-author Eileen Bonney (Figure 17) is a member of this group. This area has some of the largest permanent waterholes in the Alyawarr region, and Tyaw is home to a major rain/water totem. In contrast, the neighbouring Antarrengeny country is characterised by plains and sandhills. Both the Tyaw and Antarrengeny estates belong to the same moiety, which consists of the Pwerl/Kemarr patricouple.1 Their awely songs are also interlinked thematically. The Antarrengeny songs refer to the travels of ancestral women to Tyaw, where upon arrival they are met by a group of local ancestral women. Both groups of women then jointly perform an awely ceremony, which is the subject of many of the Tyaw songs. The visiting ancestral women then

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1 The other moiety consists of the Kngwarray/Petyarr patricouple.
return to their Antarrengeny homelands. Given that this journey involves travelling across two estates, it is not surprising that performances of both song series tend to occur together. A theme common to both song-sets is *awely* performance itself; however, in the Tyaw song-set there are also a number of songs that relate to water, the main totem of the Tyaw estate.

The corpus

Our analysis identifies a total of 24 different Tyaw verses. A ‘verse’ is what we call the repeating text to which a song is set. The 24 Tyaw verses consist of 42 unique lines of text. Katie Kemarr, Eileen Bonney, and the late Mary Kemarr provided explanations of the verses. In the process, Eileen recalled a verse that does not occur on any of the recordings (verse 25 in the appendix). Our analysis is based on five performances summarised in
Figure 2. Three were recorded by Richard Moyle in 1977 in the context of documenting Alyawarr music; and two by Myfany Turpin, one in 2007 and one in 2011, in the context of documenting women’s songs of Antarrengeny. All of the recordings are held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Recordings by Richard Moyle are also held at the Archive of Māori and Pacific Music, Auckland University, and these are the accession numbers referred to in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date recorded</th>
<th>No. of Tyaw song items</th>
<th>No. of Tyaw verses</th>
<th>Archive/accession no.</th>
<th>File name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1977</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>R. and L. Moyle</td>
<td>Aus358 and Aus359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1978</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aus423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1978</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aus447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2004</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>TURPIN-GREEN_01</td>
<td>Armka070404_11 Armka070404_12 Armka070404_13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2011</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(not yet catalogued)</td>
<td>110330Apengakert_03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Recordings of Alyawarr awely performances on which the analysis is based

In these recordings, a total of 104 Tyaw song items were performed. In all but the first performance, the Tyaw songs were part of a performance that included songs from another song-set. Most frequently they followed and/or preceded a selection of Antarrengeny songs. That is, a single performance consisted of both Tyaw and Antarrengeny songs.

In addition to these 24 verses, there is what we argue to be an ‘incorrect’ verse (see verse 6 in the appendix). This was only sung once, between verse 5 and verse 7, and it is a blend of these: it has a line from verse 5 (line 10) and a shortened form of a line from verse 7 (line 12). On playing this song item back to the singers in 2014, it was described as being ‘mixed up’. For this reason, the verse is not included in the analysis (as can be seen by the counts of lines and verses in Figure 3), but it is included in the appendix, as a complete representation of what was sung on the recordings. While there is also only one song item of verse 24, and it too

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2 These recordings were made explicitly for the purpose of producing an audio and visual publication of Antarrengeny women’s songs (Turpin and Ross 2013).
3 Turpin’s recordings are also held at the Endangered Languages Archive Repository.
resembles an extended form of verse 23, there was no indication from the singers that this could be regarded as an error. As such, this verse is included in the analysis.

From Figure 2 it can be seen that many more song items and verses were sung in 1977 than in the more recent performances. In fact, only two verses were common to performances from both the twentieth and twenty-first century: verses 3 and 4, as shown in Figure 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recorded in</th>
<th>No. of verses</th>
<th>Verse id.</th>
<th>No. of song items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/2011</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977/1978</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8–24</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Division of verses and song items by performance era

Notwithstanding the possibility of attrition, the greater diversity of verses in the 1977 recordings may in part be due to the large number of singers from Tyaw country who were present, whereas the latter performances consisted only of singers from Antarrengeny. In addition to the diversity of verses in these earlier recordings is the diversity in metre. The earlier performances involve the use of two metres (fast and slow), as well as polyrhythm where the vocal line is a division into two beats and the accompanying clap beat is a division into three beats. In the later performances, all songs are in a triple metre. These metrical differences are discussed below.

**Song structure**

Myths and dreams are often expressed in verses forming a song-set whose sequence may vary across performances. To understand this variation, it is important to distinguish verses—rhythmic texts—from the organisational units of a performance. Throughout much of Central Australia, performance consists of discrete stretches of singing, which usually last between 30 to 40 seconds. Each of these ‘song items’ (Barwick 1989: 13) consists of a verse that repeats two or three times until the end of the melodic contour. By convention, multiple song items with the same verse are sung before moving on to a different verse. This process
is referred to in Alyawarr as *panty arrerneyel* ‘spreading out’ the verse. Most often there are two or three song items of a verse, but during body painting the number may exceed 20 (R. Moyle 1986: 53; 1997: 83). As has been noted for other *awely*, it is not until the particular body design or dance is complete that a new verse can be commenced (Turpin 2005: 95). A number of scholars refer to the grouping of song items of the one verse as a ‘small song’ (Ellis and Barwick 1987; Ellis, Barwick, and Morais 1990: 105). Figure 4 illustrates this organisational structure by showing the first 20 song items of the February 1978 performance. Here it can be seen that the first small song consisted of three song items of verse 8, the second three song items of verse 9, etc. until the ninth small song, when the performance moved into the Antarrengeny song-set.4

![Figure 4. Tyaw verses performed in February 1978
Source: Recorded by Richard Moyle (Aus447)](image)

The multiple song items of a single verse show variability in how the rhythmic text and melodic contour interlock. This is a widespread feature of Central Australian songs (Ellis and Barwick 1987; Keogh 1995; R. Moyle 1979, 1986, 1997; Treloyn 2007; Turpin 2007b), which will be illustrated further below.

### Melodic contour

Throughout Central Australia, all songs within a song-set are set to the same broad pitch contour (or ‘melody’), which contrasts with that of other song-sets. Thus, melody is often what characterises a song-set as belonging to a particular land-holding group and totem. In Alyawarr *ikwa*, a highly polysemous word that also means ‘taste’, ‘scent’, and ‘subsection’, can also be used to refer to melody. Both Tyaw and Antarrengeny have different melodies used throughout their respective song-sets, thus supporting the claim that ‘melody’ is the ‘essence’ of a totemic ancestor (Ellis 1984).

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4 The verse identification numbers shown here are somewhat arbitrary, as they are determined by the order in which they were first encountered in analysis (in this case Turpin’s 2004 recordings, see Figure 2). By contrast, performers themselves refer to verses by their actual texts.
Like most Central Australian songs, the Tyaw melodic contour consists of a short introduction that begins with a solo singer followed by a much longer main melody that is sung by a group of women. The group section repeats two or three times to complete a song item. These two sections of the pitch contour are referred to here as Introduction and Group. The pitch structure of the Tyaw melody is represented in Figure 5, where the two phrases mark the two sections. The pitches in square boxes are positions that repeat to accommodate texts of more syllables. Not shown in Figure 5 is the relative length of the sections. The group section is usually near double the duration of the solo section. Furthermore, within the group section, the final pitch (which consists of many repeated syllables) is usually more than twice the duration of the first two pitches of this section.

Figure 5. The sequence of pitches in the Tyaw awely melodic (pitch) contour showing the two sections: a solo section followed by a group section that repeats until the end of a song

Figure 5 shows that the Introduction commences with the 7th, moves by step up to the 3rd, and then down to the 5th. The Group section consists of a stepwise descent 3–2–1 with a repeating tonic (B-flat). The similarities with the neighbouring Antarrengenyy awely melodic contour can be seen by comparing Figures 5 and 6. Despite the many more pitches in the Group section of the Antarrengenyy melody, the relative lengths of the Solo and Group sections are similar to that of Tyaw.

Figure 6. The sequence of pitches in the Antarrengenyy awely melodic (pitch) contour

The Introductory sections of the Tyaw and Antarrengenyy melodic contours are identical except that Antarrengenyy accommodates longer texts by repeating 2–1, represented here by the parentheses. The Group sections,
however, differ. Tyaw is a simple descent 3–2–1, while Antarrengeny leaps from the 3rd to the 5th back to the 3rd followed by stepwise movement around 2–1–7–1, with a repeating tonic (B-flat).

Figure 7. A broad transcription of a Tyaw song item (Aus447-item02). ‘A’ and ‘B’ mark the two lines of the verse (verse 8).

As stated above, most song items consist of two or three repetitions of the verse, depending on the length of the particular verse (i.e. number of syllables). As the verse repeats, the beginning of each repetition may be set to a different section of the melodic contour (Melodic section, henceforth ‘MS’). Figure 7 illustrates this with a song item of verse 8 of the Tyaw song-set. This song item consists of 2.5 cycles of the verse. We can see that the first instance of the Group section is a setting commencing with the text ntepinta, and that the second instance of the Group section is a setting commencing with rratyarli. In terms of the verse structure, the beginning of line B, arratyarli, is set to the end of the Introduction, resting on the 6th (G, bar 5). In the next statement of the verse, this same
part of the text commences the second instance of the Group section, on the 3rd (D, MS2, bar 15). When we compare the same verse across song items, we find even more variation in how the rhythmic text and melodic contour align.

**Verse structure**

All but two of the Tyaw verses consist of two lines of rhythmic text, each one repeated in an AABB pattern to form a quatrain (see Figure 7), as is common in Central Australia. Two verses, however, contain only one line, represented as A in Figure 8. One is the verse recalled by Eileen Bonney as described above (verse 6). The other has an exceptionally long line, as will be described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AABB</th>
<th>22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2  (verses 6, 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of verses</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 8. Verse structure in Tyaw awely**

Within the 22 verses structured AABB, it is most common for the lines to be of contrasting lengths, as shown in Figure 9. In most cases, one line has one less bar than the other (2/3; 3/4). For example, verse 8 in Figure 7 has an A line of two bars and a B line of three bars. Two verses have a line that has two more bars than the other (verse 9, 2/4; and verse 5, 3/5; see appendix).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines within a verse</th>
<th>Verse id</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of equal length</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 20, 22, 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of contrasting length</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of AABB verses</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9. Line length within a verse in Tyaw awely**

The percentage of verses with contrasting lengths is higher in Tyaw than Antarrengeny. One possible reason for this is that Antarrengeny has two contrasting rhythmic cells (eqq. or eq.), whereas Tyaw has only one (eqq.). Thus in Tyaw, rhythmic contrast within a verse can only be achieved by varying the number of cells. Note that ‘rhythmic cell’ refers to the smallest recurring rhythmic patterns that recur throughout a song-set.
These are comparable to a ‘dipod’ or ‘foot’ in poetry. A bar, on the other hand, refers to a timing unit or duration, and says nothing about the number or distribution of notes within this timing unit.

**Rhythmic structure**

The 24 verses consist of 41 different text-lines (but, 42 different lines of rhythmic text, see appendix). These 41 text-lines are set to 11 different rhythmic patterns, which are shown in Figure 10. From this it can be seen that rhythmic lines are minimally two bars and maximally seven, with the preferred number being three bars (17 lines). It can also be seen that there are two exceptions to the three-note rhythmic cell: the first bar of 2c and the second bar of 3c consist of a triplet instead of two notes. More will be said about this in the discussion of text below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhythmic pattern</th>
<th>No. bars</th>
<th>No. text-lines</th>
<th>Verse id.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8*, 18*, 12*, 16*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8*, 18*, 23, 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5, 6, 10, 13, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total number of rhythmic text lines** 42

Figure 10. Rhythmic lines in the Tyaw awely corpus. Most lines can be performed in a swung manner (i.e. not strictly), however, those that are shaded are never swung. An asterisk (*) denotes verses that have a duple-metre clap accompaniment. The appendix lists all the lines and identifies their verse and rhythmic pattern (R1, R2, etc.)

---

5 While the term ‘bar’ is used to refer to the smallest recurring rhythmic unit or dipod, this is not meant to imply a metrical pattern of a strong beat followed by two weaker beats (although this is possible).
There are two types of three-note cells. The most frequent is \( \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \), which we refer to as the ‘swung rhythm’, occurring in 20 verses. Less frequent is \( \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \) (henceforth, ‘non-swung’ rhythm), occurring in six verses, shaded in Figure 10 (8, 12, 16, 18, 23, 24). The non-swung rhythm occurs only in the 1977 performance. In some song items, the rhythm appears to be somewhere in between the swung and non-swung rhythm, and it may be that the perception of which of these two rhythms best represents the vocal line varies depending on whether the listener tunes in to the accompanying clap beat or the vocal line. That the latter performances are clearly a swung rhythm may be due to the fact that the performers of these songs are all owners of the neighbouring Antarrengeny estate, whose song series contains the swung rhythm throughout.

Verses in the non-swung rhythm of the earlier performances vary from those in the latter performances in a further interesting way. While the swung verses always have a three-beat clap accompaniment, many of the non-swung verses have two different beating accompaniments (although never in the same song item): a three-beat accompaniment, as can be heard in the more common swung rhythm; and a two-beat accompaniment. Although the durational proportions of the sung notes in each metre are identical—essentially a duple-metre vocal line—the metre of the accompanying clap beats, which is at a constant speed, differs. We refer to the two different beating accompaniments as the ‘fast-triple’ and ‘slow-duple’ metres respectively. Settings of the one text line to the two different percussive metres are shown in Figure 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fast-triple</th>
<th>Slow-duple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} )</td>
<td>( \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \times \times \times \times \times \times \times )</td>
<td>( \times \times \times \times \times \times \times )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tyaw is the best**

Figure 11. Line 15 of verse 18 set to the fast-triple metre and the slow-duple metre

As stated above, it is only in the earlier performances from the 1970s that the slow-duple metre is used. This is never instead of, but always in addition to, the fast-triple. Furthermore, only verses with a non-swung rhythm are ever performed in both metres. In the December 1977
A DISTINCTIVE VOICE IN THE ANTIPODES

performance, both metres are used for song items within the one small song. For example, in the small song of verse 18, the first song item is in slow duple while the second, third, and fourth song items are in fast triple (see Figure 11) (verses 12, 16, and 18). In contrast, in the February 1978 performance, song items within a small song are all either fast-triple or slow-duple (verses 8 and 9).

There does not appear to be any relationship between the five verses that are sung to both metres (8, 9, 12, 16, 18) and the order in which they appear within a performance (henceforth, ‘bimodal verses’. There may, however, be a relationship to their accompanying dance, but the dances that accompanied these verses are not known. However, there is one textual commonality within four of the five bimodal verses in that they all contain the word ‘Tyaw’ (verses 8, 9, 12, 18), the name of the estate to which the songs belong. A further association between this word and rhythmic diversity can be seen in line 15, which occurs in verse 8 and 18: *Tyawant muerra*. In verse 8 it is set to the more common ‘swung’ rhythm (eqq.) (Figure 12), of which there are six song items, and in verse 18 to the non-swung rhythm (ryq.), of which there are four song items. The setting of a single identical line of text to different rhythms is highly unusual in Alyawarr and neighbouring songs.

![Figure 12. Line 15 of verse 8 set to the standard swung rhythm (cf. Figure 7)](image)

It is perhaps significant that this is also the line that gives rise to the name of this song-set: *Tyawant muerra*. Thus, we have a semantically salient topic highlighted through a unique musical treatment. The complete absence of this rhythmic diversity in the more recent performances of Tyaw may be due to a simplifying of the tradition, or it may also be due to an influence from the Antarrengeny singers (or both), as discussed in the introduction.

---

6 Two song items of verse 23 are in the fast-triple, followed by verse 24 in the slow-duple; however, recall that verses 23 and 24 may in fact be variants of a single verse.
A comparison of the Antarrengeny and Tyaw rhythm

The clap beat in the Tyaw song-set makes use of juxtaposing metres within a small song for five of the 24 verses, however, this is only so in the earlier performances of Tyaw. In contrast, the neighbouring Antarrengeny song-set employs only one rhythmic metre throughout, and this is the case in performances also from the 1970s, recorded by Richard Moyle. To our knowledge, no other Arandic awely song series sets a single verse to different beating accompaniments in adjacent song items within a small song. It is, however, attested in a Warlpiri song-set (Turpin 2011). The Tyaw song-set is also unusual in its use of two rhythmic settings for a single text line—albeit only in line 15. To our knowledge this is most unusual in the Central Australian region.

In terms of the number of rhythmic units, Antarrengeny uses two rhythmic cells/dipods: a two-note dipod (\(\text{eq.}\)) and a three-note dipod (\(\text{eq q.}\)), whereas Tyaw uses only a three-note dipod. The use of only one dipod to create rhythmic lines is most unusual in the Arandic and Warlpiri region. A comparison of the organisation of metre (clap-beat accompaniment) and vocal line (in terms of dipods) in the two song-sets shows that Tyaw has a more complex metre (at least in the 1970s), yet less complex vocal line structure, while the converse is the case for Antarrengeny. It may be that complexity in one area of music is achieved at the expense of it in another, or it may simply be a device to maximise contrast both within and across different song-sets.

Unlike melody, which is diagnostic of the song-set for all songs within it, these rhythmic differences are partially diagnostic. For example, the three-note cell is diagnostic of both Tyaw and Antarrengeny, but the two-note cell tells us that the song can only be from Antarrengeny. Similarly, the non-swung rhythm tells us that the song can only be Tyaw. Analysis of further song series will help us to know just how widespread such rhythmic features may or may not be.

Subject matter of the songs

Like the Antarrengeny song-set, most of the lyrics of Tyaw verses refer to performance of awely ceremony itself. Particularly prevalent are references to the ceremonial pole that is placed in the ground at the opening and closing of a ceremony. Words relating to the domain of ‘water/rain',
the main totem of the Tyaw estate, are also common (e.g. rain clouds, fish, frogs). Three verses refer to people—ancestral kwerrimp women and a traditional healer—and two involve human perception (see Figure 13). In both song-sets, the only pronouns used are first person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme of lyrics</th>
<th>No. of verses</th>
<th>Verse id</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>awely ceremony (pole, dancing, design)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water/rain (main totem)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 15, 17, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person/ancestral being</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9, 12, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human perception</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10, 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. The four broad themes of the 24 Tyaw verses

While ceremonies, totems, and ancestral beings are common to both the Antarrengeny and Tyaw songs, only in the Tyaw song-set is there a theme of ‘mistaken belief’/’true, real’ actions (human perception in Figure 10). The word arraty ‘true, straight, correct’ occurs in five lines (L5, 9, 10, 14, and 26), where it means that the event really did happen (in contrast to it just being talked about or a mistaken belief). In lines 14 and 26, it has an additional possible meaning ‘straight’, and in line 5 it primarily means ‘correctly’ (‘I painted the designs correctly’).

If we broaden our meaning of ‘theme’ to encompass not just the words but also the unspecified subject matter, we find that some verses can refer to multiple themes. For example, verses 10 and 19 translate as ‘I thought it was a dream, but it was true’, which can be classed as human perception. However, the unspecified subject is an ancestral being and the referent of ‘it’ can be both ceremonial and totemic. Some singers say that the dream was about women performing awely, and the noise of their dancing woke up the unspecified subject (an ancestral woman). But singers also state that the dream could have been about rain, and when she awoke she found that it really was raining. These two meanings are in fact complementary, as performing the awely from Tyaw is said to bring about rain. While this is not always the primary reason for performing the Tyaw awely, it is generally agreed that a good performance can influence the ancestors who have the ability to bring about rain.
Lexicon

Like the Antarrengeny song-set, most of the Tyaw verses consist of recognisable words and morphemes, and so the lyrics can be translated with relative ease. While most of the words are everyday Alyawarr, some are not. Some of these have cognates in other Arandic languages. An example is *tyarek-tyar* in lines 1, 2, and 32. This is said to be a word that only occurs in song. It is said to mean ‘in the distance’ and may be related to the Kaytetye word *tyay-ek-tyay* ‘faint, barely (audible or visible)’. The words *rayek-aray* and *ray*, a type of frog (lines 11 and 12), are said to be found only in song. Other words also occur only in song, such as *merrper*, which also occurs in a Kaytetye *awely* song (Turpin and Ross 2004) and is said to mean ‘beautifully painted-up chest’; and *irrmarn*, line 8, is said to mean ‘thigh’.

Some words that are everyday Alyawarr have a more specific meaning in song than in speech. For example, *iwe-* is the everyday Alyawarr word ‘to throw’, but in line 3 it means ‘to paint ceremonial body designs’. Verbs meaning ‘throw’ are used to describe the adorning of ceremonial designs in other Arandic languages and Warlpiri as well. The songs also contain a number of words rarely encountered in speech, for example there are various words that describe sounds such as *rimarr* ‘a loud racket’, describing the noise of the frogs in line 13; and *iylparerr*, a clicking sound (lines 16 and 17). Like the Antarrengeny song-set, the Tyaw song-set contains two unusual verbs meaning ‘shine’ (lines 9, 10), and a word that describes a way of dancing unique to *awely* (lines 7, 25).

As in the Antarrengeny song-set, the preferred syntactic structure of the Tyaw lines is a nominal followed by a verb. Only two out of 42 lines do not follow this structure. One consists of a single noun phrase, *aniw-aniwel-arl* ‘the one in the front’ (line 19). The other is the line that gives rise to the name of the song-set itself—*Tyawant mwerr-arl* ‘Tyaw are the best’ (line 15). There is a tendency for parallelism across both lines of a verse, particularly in relation to verbs, as illustrated in Figure 14 where the line-final verb *arrernek* ‘put on’ is underlined.

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8  These words probably refer to the desert spadefoot toads (*Notaden nichollsi*).
Figure 14. Example of lexical parallelism of line-final verbs (verse 12)


Setting words to rhythm

As in many other awely songs, in the Tyaw song-set each word is set to the beginning of a rhythmic cell. In the case of short words such as tha ‘I’, these attach to the end of the previous word—for example, arraty tha (lines 5, 9)—and form a single rhythmic cell. This resembles their treatment in spoken Alyawarr (Turpin 2015). When singing, if one more syllable is required to complete the three-note rhythmic cell, then the monosyllabic enclitic =arl is added to the word. If the word is one syllable too many (e.g. four instead of three), then a triplet can be employed (lines 27 and 28). These are the same principles employed in the Antarrengeny song-set; however, the Antarrengeny song-set has an additional strategy when there is one too many syllables: employ a two-note rhythmic cell, as discussed above. Similar rhythmic treatments of words are also found in other awely (R. Moyle 1986: 355–57; 1997: 88; Turpin and Laughren 2013).

Setting syllables to rhythm

Most words in Alyawarr begin with a vowel, yet sung syllables all begin with a consonant. For all 22 lines that begin with a vowel-initial word, the initial vowel (and consonant coda, if present) is deleted. The following consonant then aligns with the strong metrical position, that is, the first beat of a bar. Some examples of this are shown in Figure 15.

The remaining 17 lines all begin with a consonant-initial word, and these align with the first beat of a bar without modification.
4. ALYAWARR WOMEN’S RAIN SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel-initial word at start of line</th>
<th>Rhythmic setting</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iyleper ‘thigh’</td>
<td>⇒ lepera</td>
<td>L7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anngerrenty ‘spirit’</td>
<td>⇒ ngerrentya</td>
<td>L24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ayeng=arl ‘I=REL’</td>
<td>⇒ yengarla</td>
<td>L3 L4 L23 L28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altyerr-ek ‘Dream-DAT’</td>
<td>⇒ tyerreka</td>
<td>L18 L34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15. Alignment of first consonant on the first beat of a bar through vowel deletion

The Antarrengeny song-set employs a very different strategy to ensure a consonant-initial syllable begins a line: instead of deleting the initial vowel, the final consonant of the previous line is transferred to create an onset for the word-initial vowel of the next line (Turpin 2015: 73; R. Moyle 1986: 221–28). This also occurs in some Alyawarr men’s songs (R. Moyle 1986: 221–28). In both the Tyaw and Antarrengeny awely song-sets, there are no exceptions to these rules for setting a vowel-initial word to musical rhythm. Within a line we see the same two strategies are applied to the respective song-sets. A comparison of these two strategies is shown in Figure 16, where it can be seen that in the Tyaw song-set, the initial vowel of the spoken line ‘a’ (and coda ‘n’) is deleted. In the Antarrengeny line, the initial vowel of the spoken word remains and the final consonant of the line ‘m’ is transferred to the beginning of the line. Within this line, the final consonant of the previous word ‘ty’ is similarly transferred to the beginning of the last word. Text-setting in Tyaw creates an alignment between the stressed syllable (the first CV of a word) and the first beat of a bar, whereas in Antarrengeny it creates a misalignment.

Figure 16. A comparison of the different way in which words are set to rhythm in the Tyaw and Antarrengeny song-sets: Tyaw deletes the initial vowel while Antarrengeny transfers the final consonant, ‘m’, to the front of the line
Antarrengeny uses only consonant insertion, the poetic strategy used in many Anmatyerr and Arrernte songs (Hale 1984; Strehlow 1971). Tyaw, on the other hand, uses only vowel deletion, a strategy not attested in the Alyawarr, Arrernte, and Anmatyerr awely songs studied to date. The rain awely songs from the neighbouring Kaytetye language, however, employ both strategies equally in their verses (Turpin 2007a, 2007b). That song-sets may be specified for a poetic strategy, in much the same way as melody, is even more striking given that the Tyaw and Antarrengeny song-sets are in the same language and are said to have been received by the same singer. In contrast, a poetic constraint, such as ‘a strong metrical position must be filled by a consonant-initial syllable’, may be a feature that relates to language, as this constraint can be seen in many Central Australian singing traditions. Alyawarr, like many Australian languages, does not have contrastive (lexical) stress and prominence falls on the first consonant-initial syllable. As in speech, syllables may require an onset before they can occupy a strong rhythmic position.

Conclusion

Both the Tyaw and neighbouring Antarrengeny song-sets share similar themes, AABB verse structure, flexible alignment of rhythmic text to melodic contour, and alignment of words to rhythmic cells (dipods) and consonant-initial syllables to rhythmic notes. What sets these two song-sets apart is minimal, but encompasses both text and music. Poetically, Tyaw meets the syllable constraint through deletion, whereas Antarrengeny employs ‘consonant transfer’. Musically, Tyaw restricts itself to a subset of the latter’s rhythm and pitch. Both song-sets are usually performed together, and thus the aesthetic of ‘juxtaposition with minimal contrast’ noted in other Aboriginal songs (Treloyn 2007) is evident. The differences between the song-sets suggest that the characteristic features of a song-set also lie in the conventions of how words are put to music, as well as in the melody and rhythm of land-based totemic songs.

The similarities between the two song-sets echo the geographic proximity and interwoven totemic histories of the two estates; but they may also be the hallmark of a single origin, as both were received by Polly Pwerl,

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9 Pitch and, to a lesser extent, duration appear to be significant acoustic correlates of stress in Arandic languages; however, this is far from resolved.
or they may be the hallmark of the linguistic group. These songs are a further example of how music embodies ‘characteristics of the culture of those who create and perform it’ (Wild 1984: 188).

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Abbreviations and symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>acc</td>
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<td>med</td>
<td>medio-passive</td>
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<td>path</td>
<td>do action while on a path of motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pst</td>
<td>past</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix: The Tyaw lines

The layout of the 42 lines is as follows. The top row is a broad emic representation of the rhythm. A bar line ( | ) represents a rhythmic cell boundary, and a dotted double bar line ( ||:....:|| ) shows that the line repeats before moving on to the other line of the verse. Underneath the rhythm, ‘x’ represents the regular hand-clap beating accompaniment. The third row shows the sung text, the fourth row a morphological representation in standard orthography, and the fifth a linguistic gloss (glossing abbreviations are explained above). The italicised line is a free translation. Spelling of Alyawarr words follows Green (1992), although the vowels in the sung line differ in the following ways: ‘i’ is used instead of ‘e’ for sung [i]; and ‘u’ is used instead of ‘we’ for sung [u].

R1

| ||:....:|| |
V1, L1
kurrrpara mpanyarlay tyarekay tyararla nenheka

kurrpara ampeny=arl tyar-ek-tyar=arl rtn-enh-ek
kwerrpar last=REL distant=REL stand-PATH-PST

With the ceremonial boundary pole (they) stopped in the distance on their journey

V1, L2

| ||:....:|| |

yarrpiyarr pilarlay tyarekay tyararla nenheka
aywerp-aywerp-el=arl tyar-ek-tyar=arl rtn-enh-ek
downhill-LOC=REL distant=REL stand-PATH-PST

On the slope, (they) stopped in the distance on their journey

V2, L3

| ||:....:|| |

yengelay merrpera wallheka
ayeng=arl merrper iv-ellh-ek
1sgNOM=REL chest/beautiful throw-REF-PST

I have been painted up beautifully
4. ALYAWARR WOMEN’S RAIN SONGS

I, an ancestral being, stopped on my journey

I painted the designs correctly

With talent, I put them on

Her thighs were shimmering (as she danced)

The girl (from Tyaw) was shaking her thighs

See, I really did make the flood water come rolling in

See, it really is shimmering

The frogs were making noise
All the frogs were making noise:

With their wide mouths they were making noise:

See, the long straight rain clouds have gathered:

The ones from Tyaw:

The one from Tyaw healed (her):

I thought it was a dream, but I woke up (and it was true):

In the front:

It looks as if it’s raining...
4. ALYAWARR WOMEN’S RAIN SONGS

The much-coveted smooth designs were put on

The ones from Tyaw were put on

I displayed my cockatoo-feather headdress

The ancestral woman stood

The girl behind the other danced beautifully

The dew has wet (us) (?)
A DISTINCTIVE VOICE IN THE ANTIPODES

I, an ancestral woman, travelled

(It) made me feel lonely

The landscape shimmered and reflected

The long thin clouds gathered

The ceremonial pole stood in the distance

We thought it was a dream

But woke up and it was true
Where the beautiful headpiece stood

On the ceremonial pole it stood
In the distance the ceremonial pole was placed

I speared some fish
References cited


