

# 4

## Alyawarr Women's Rain Songs

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### Introduction

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, Antarrengeny. Tyaw and Antarrengeny 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 Antarrengeny 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 (♪♪♪), only Antarrengeny employs a two-note rhythmic cell (♪♪). 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 [awóʎə], 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 [caʊ], 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 Kngwararray/Petyarr patricouple.

return to their Antarrangeny 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.

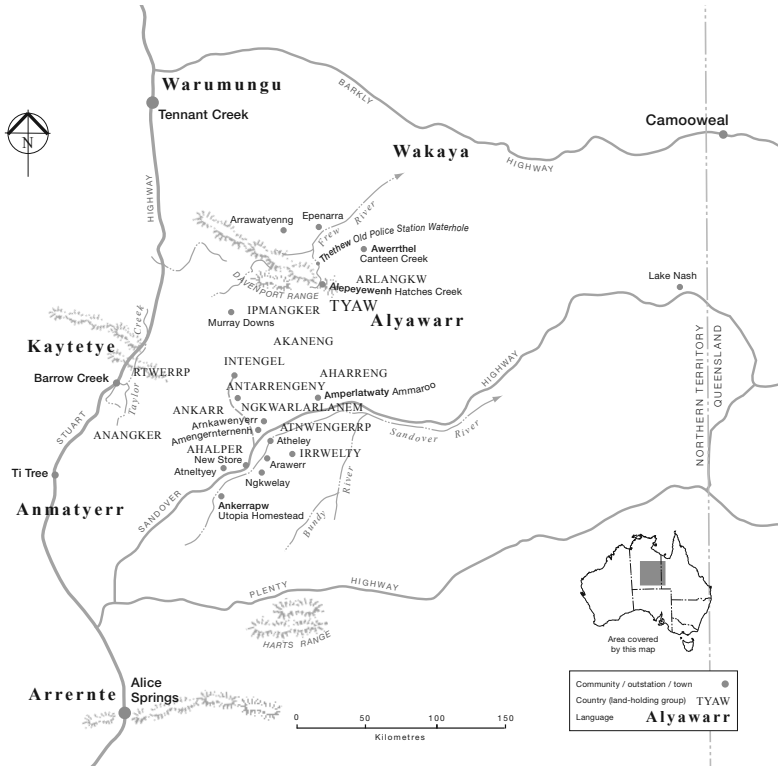


Figure 1. Tyaw country and the Alyawarr region, showing neighbouring countries and languages

# 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 Antarrrengey.<sup>2</sup> All of the recordings are held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.<sup>3</sup> 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.

<i>Date recorded</i>	<i>No. of Tyaw song items</i>	<i>No. of Tyaw verses</i>	<i>Archive/accession no.</i>	<i>File name</i>
Dec 1977	57	15	R. and L. Moyle	Aus358 and Aus359
Jan 1978	6	3		Aus423
Feb 1978	19	10		Aus447
April 2004	14	7	TURPIN-GREEN_01	Arnka070404_11
				Arnka070404_12
				Arnka070404_13
March 2011	8	2	(not yet catalogued)	110330Apengakert_03
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>			

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 Antarrrengey songs. That is, a single performance consisted of both Tyaw and Antarrrengey 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

2 These recordings were made explicitly for the purpose of producing an audio and visual publication of Antarrrengey 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.

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

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.<sup>4</sup>

<i>Small song</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Song item</i>	1-2-3	4-5-6	7-8-9	10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18-19	20...
<i>Verse id</i>	8	9	4	8	10	11	9	4	Antarrengeny verses

Figure 4. Tyaw verses performed in February 1978

Source: Recorded by Richard Moyle (Aus447)

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).

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 Antarrengeny *awely* melodic contour can be seen by comparing Figures 5 and 6. Despite the many more pitches in the Group section of the Antarrengeny melody, the relative lengths of the Solo and Group sections are similar to that of Tyaw.



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

The Introductory sections of the Tyaw and Antarrengeny melodic contours are identical except that Antarrengeny 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).

The musical score is divided into several sections with structural markers 'A' and 'B' above the vocal line. The 'Introduction' section (measures 1-6) features a vocal line with lyrics 'tya wan ta murra rla tyawan ta murra rla rra tya rli' and a hand/clap line with 'x' marks. Measure 6 is marked with a '6' below the staff. The 'Group' section (measures 7-10) has lyrics 'nte pin ta the ne ke rra tya rli nte pin ta the ne ka'. Measures 11-14 are marked with '11' and 'A' above, with lyrics 'tya wan ta mu rra rla tyawan ta mu rra rla'. Measures 15-18 are marked with '15' and 'B' above, with lyrics 'rra tya rli nte pin ta the ne ka rra tya li'. Measures 19-22 are marked with '19' and 'A' above, with lyrics 'ntepin ta the ne ka tyawan ta murra rla tyawan ta murra rla'. The score uses a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (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.

AABB	22
A	2 (verses 6, 14)
<b>Total no. of verses</b>	<b>24</b>

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).

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

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 (♩♩♩.) or (♩♩.), whereas Tyaw has only one (♩♩♩.). 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).<sup>5</sup> 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.




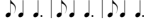

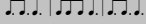




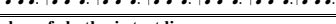


Rhythmic pattern	No. bars	No. text-lines	Verse id.
R1 	2	7	8, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21
R2 		1	15
R3 		2	8*, 18*, 12*, 16*
R4 	3	17	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22
R5 		3	8*, 18*, 23, 24
R6 		1	16*
R7 	4	5	5, 6, 10, 13, 15
R8 		1	12*
R9 	5	3	1, 9
R10 		1	24
R11 	6	1	14
Total number of rhythmic 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 , which we refer to as the 'swung rhythm', occurring in 20 verses. Less frequent is  (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.

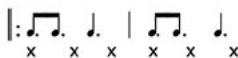

Fast-triple		:  Verse 18, Aus359 items 2–4
Slow-duple		:  Verse 18, Aus359 item 1
	tyawanta      murrarla	
	Tyaw=ant      mwerr=arl	
	place=only      good=REL	
	<i>Tyaw is the best</i>	

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

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).<sup>6</sup> 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 murrarl*. In verse 8 it is set to the more common 'swung' rhythm (♩ ♪ ♪) (Figure 12), of which there are six song items, and in verse 18 to the non-swung rhythm (♩ ♩ ♩), 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.

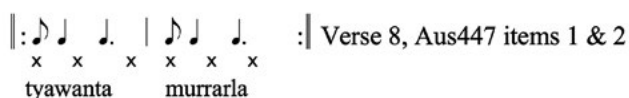


Figure 12. Line 15 of verse 8 set to the standard swung rhythm (cf. Figure 7)

It is perhaps significant that this is also the line that gives rise to the name of this song-set: *Tyawant murrarl*. 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 (♩♩) and a three-note dipod (♩♩♩), 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.

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

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 *arrayty* ‘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 Antarrangeny song-set, most of the Tyaw verses consist of recognisable words and morphemes, and so the lyrics can be translated with relative ease.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 *iyłparerr*, a clicking sound (lines 16 and 17). Like the Antarrangeny 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 Antarrangeny 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 muwerr-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 *arrernernek* 'put on' is underlined.

7 This contrasts with many other Central Australian songs where it is difficult to identify words. See e.g. Clunies Ross (1983: 23), Hercus (1994: 313), R. Moyle (1997: 81), Strehlow (1971: 195), Tunstill (1995), Turpin (2005), and Wild (1984).

8 These words probably refer to the desert spadefoot toads (*Notaden nichollsi*).

Arler-arleramarl anketyeny arrernek  
 Tyawarra arrernek

*The much-coveted smooth designs were put on*  
*The ones from Tyaw were put on*

Figure 14. Example of lexical parallelism of line-final verbs (verse 12)

Parallelism of the line-final verb is common in Arandic and Warlpiri songs (Strehlow 1971: 167, 365ff., 394ff.; Turpin 2015: 80; Turpin and Laughren 2013: 400).

## 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.




Vowel-initial word at start of line		Rhythmic setting	Lines
			
<i>yleper</i> 'thigh'	⇒	lepera	L7
<i>anngerrenty</i> 'spirit'	⇒	ngerrentya	L24
<i>ayeng=arl</i> 'I=REL'	⇒	yengarla	L3 L4 L23 L28
<i>altjerr-ek</i> 'Dream-DAT'	⇒	tyerreka	L18 L34

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.





Tyaw	sung:			:
	spoken:	ngerrentya anngerrenty spirit	nenheka tn-enh-ek stand-PATH-PST	<i>The ancestral woman stood</i>
Antarrengeny	sung:			:
	spoken:	matyuri atywerety beantree	tyarenha ar-enh-em see-PATH-PRS	<i>Bean trees came into view</i>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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).

## Acknowledgements

We thank the Alyawarr *awely* performers, Queenie Kemarr, Polly Pwerl†; Young Biddy Kemarr†, Elsie Kemarr Holmes†, Rosie Kemarr†, Janie Kemarr Morton†, Sandra Kemarr†, Annie Kemarr Morton†, Lilly Kemarr†, Maggie Kemarr†, Dolly Pwerl Kelly†, Ruby Pwerl†, Jenny Pwerl†, Jenny Kngwarrey†, Alice Kngwarrey†, Kathy Matthew†, Nellie (Molly) Petyarr†, Angeline Petyarr†, Hilda Spratt, and especially Katie Kemarr, Mary Kemarr†, Nora Kemarr, Lucky Kngwarrey, and Sarah Kngwarrey, who also interpreted the songs. We also thank Alison Ross, Jenny Green, and Margaret Carew for their collaboration in the field and assistance with translation. We thank Gemma Turner for typesetting the musical notation in Figures 5–7. Responsibility for any errors remains with the authors. This research has been supported by two Australian Research Council grants, DP1092887 and FT140100783, and an earlier grant from the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

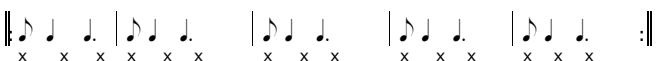

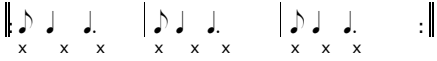
## Abbreviations and symbols

acc	accusative
adj	adjectival
applic	applicative
b.char	bad character
caus	causative
cnt	continuous
dat	dative
emph	emphatic
erg	ergative
inch	inchoative
loc	locative
med	medio-passive
nom	nominative
path	do action while on a path of motion
pst	past

pl	plural
red	reduplicated form
ref	reflexive
rel	relativiser/focus marker
resp	respect register marker
semb	semblative
sg	singular
spat-den	spatial denizen of
†	deceased person

## 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	<p>x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x</p> <p>kurrpara mpinyarlay tyarekay tyararla nenheka</p> <p>kwerrpar ampeny=arl tyar-ek-tyar=arl rtn-enh-ek</p> <p>pole last=REL distant=REL stand-PATH-PST</p> <p><i>With the ceremonial boundary pole (they) stopped in the distance on their journey</i></p>
V1, L2	 <p>x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x</p> <p>yarrpiyarr pilarlay tyarekay tyararla nenheka</p> <p>aywerrp-aywerrp-el=arl tyar-ek-tyar=arl rtn-enh-ek</p> <p>downhill-LOC=REL distant=REL stand-PATH-PST</p> <p><i>On the slope, (they) stopped in the distance on their journey</i></p>
V2, L3	 <p>x x x x x x x x x x</p> <p>yengelay merrpera walheka</p> <p>ayeng=arl merrper iw-elh-ek</p> <p>1sgNOM=REL chest/beautiful throw-REF-PST</p> <p><i>I have been painted up beautifully</i></p>

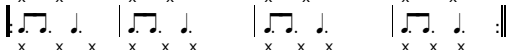
- V2, L4
- |           |             |              |   |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|---|
|           |             |              | : |
| x x x     | x x x       | x x x        |   |
| yengarla  | ngerrentya  | nenheka      |   |
| ayeng=arl | anngerrenty | an-enh-ek    |   |
| 1sgNOM    | spirit      | sit-PATH-PST |   |
- I, an ancestral being, stopped on my journey*
- V3, L5
- |               |                 |           |   |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|---|
|               |                 |           | : |
| x x x         | x x x           | x x x     |   |
| kenya tha     | rretya tha      | nternaka  |   |
| arikeny atha  | arraya atha     | rntern-ek |   |
| design 1sgERG | straight 1sgERG | paint-PST |   |
- I painted the designs correctly*
- V3, L6
- |                          |            |          |   |
|--------------------------|------------|----------|---|
|                          |            |          | : |
| x x x                    | x x x      | x x x    |   |
| nngirtangi               | rintelarla | rrernaka |   |
| anngernt-anngernt-el=arl |            | arern-ek |   |
| talented-ERG=REL         |            | put      |   |
- With talent, I put them on*
- V4, L7
- |         |                                 |         |   |
|---------|---------------------------------|---------|---|
|         |                                 |         | : |
| x x x   | x x x                           | x x x   |   |
| lepera  | lhalharrki                      | lelheka |   |
| iyleper | alhalh-arrk-il-elh-ek           |         |   |
| thigh   | (in dance)-vibrate-CAUS-REF-PST |         |   |
- Her thighs were shimmering (as she danced)*
- V4, L8
- |          |            |                |   |
|----------|------------|----------------|---|
|          |            |                | : |
| x x x    | x x x      | x x x          |   |
| kweyela  | rrmantala  | tnenheka       |   |
| kwey=arl | irmarn=arl | tn-enh-ek      |   |
| girl=REL | thigh=REL  | stand-PATH-PST |   |
- The girl (from Tyaw) was shaking her thighs*
- V5, L9
- |             |                         |         |   |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------|---|
|             |                         |         | : |
| x x x       | x x x                   | x x x   |   |
| rratya tha  | lererra                 | theneka |   |
| arraya tha  | lererr-athen-ek         |         |   |
| true 1sgERG | shimmering-lay_down-PST |         |   |
- See, I really did make the flood water come rolling in*
- V5&6, L10
- |                           |           |                   |          |   |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|---|
|                           |           |                   |          | : |
| x x x                     | x x x     | x x x             | x x x    |   |
| rratyarra                 | tyelartay | yarnpilya         | lherreka |   |
| a) arraya-arraya-il=antay |           | anpely-elh-irr-ek |          |   |
| true-RED-TV(?)=still(?)   |           | shine-REF-PL-PST  |          |   |
| b) =arl=antay             |           |                   |          |   |
| =REL=still                |           |                   |          |   |
- See, it really is shimmering*
- V6, L11
- |             |                       |          |   |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------|---|
|             |                       |          | : |
| x x x       | x x x                 | x x x    |   |
| rayarla     | ngkernela             | rrerneka |   |
| rayeray=arl | angkern-erl-arrern-ek |          |   |
| frog_sp     | make_noise-put-PST    |          |   |
- The frogs were making noise*

# A DISTINCTIVE VOICE IN THE ANTIPODES

- V7, L12
- |                |         |                         |         |   |
|----------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|---|
|                |         |                         |         | : |
| x x x          | x x x   | x x x                   | x x x   |   |
| rayeka         | rayarla | ngkernela               | nenheka |   |
| rayek-aray=arl |         | angkern-erlan-enh-ek    |         |   |
| frog_sp=REL    |         | make_noise-CNT-PATH-PST |         |   |
- All the frogs were making noise*
- V7, L13
- |        |                     |         |   |
|--------|---------------------|---------|---|
|        |                     |         | : |
| x x x  | x x x               | x x x   |   |
| rimara | ngkernela           | rreneka |   |
| rimarr | angkernerl-arren-ek |         |   |
| racket | make_noise-put-PST  |         |   |
- With their wide mouths they were making noise*
- V8, L14
- |           |            |              |   |
|-----------|------------|--------------|---|
|           |            |              | : |
| x x x     | x x x      | x x x        |   |
| rratyala  | ntepinta   | theneka      |   |
| array=arl | intepint   | athen-ek     |   |
| true=REL  | rain_cloud | lay_down-PST |   |
- See, the long straight rain clouds have gathered*
- V8, L15
- |            |           |   |
|------------|-----------|---|
|            |           | : |
| x x x      | x x x     |   |
| tyawanta   | murrarla  |   |
| Tyaw=ant   | mwerr=arl |   |
| place=only | good=REL  |   |
- The ones from Tyaw*
- V9, L16
- |           |                            |          |                     |          |   |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|---|
|           |                            |          |                     |          | : |
| x x x     | x x x                      | x x x    | x x x               | x x x    |   |
| ngangkara | tyerrepi                   | nhelanta | lparerra            | ntenheka |   |
| ngangkar  | altyerr-penh-el=ant        |          | ilyparerr-rntern-ek |          |   |
| healer    | creation_time-SEQ-ERG=only |          | clicking-spear-PST  |          |   |
- I, a traditional doctor, healed (him/her)*
- V9, L17
- |            |          |                     |         |   |
|------------|----------|---------------------|---------|---|
|            |          |                     |         | : |
| x x x      | x x x    | x x x               | x x x   |   |
| tyawanta   | murrarla | lparerra            | ntenhek |   |
| Tyaw=ant   | mwerr=el | ilyparerr-rntern-ek |         |   |
| place=only | good=ERG | clicking-spear-PST  |         |   |
- The one from Tyaw healed (her)*
- V10, L18
- |            |             |                        |          |   |
|------------|-------------|------------------------|----------|---|
|            |             |                        |          | : |
| x x x      | x x x       | x x x                  | x x x    |   |
| ltyerrika  | thenarla    | naltyaltya             | lherreka |   |
| altyerr-ek | athen=arl   | (n)-altyalty-el-irr-ek |          |   |
| dream=DAT  | mistake=DAT | (RESP)-?-?-INCH-PST    |          |   |
- I thought it was a dream, but I woke up (and it was true)*
- V11, L19
- |                  |         |   |
|------------------|---------|---|
|                  |         | : |
| x x x            | x x x   |   |
| niwarni          | wilarla |   |
| aniw-aniw-el=arl |         |   |
| front-LOC=REL    |         |   |
- In the front*
- V11, L20
- |            |             |   |
|------------|-------------|---|
|            |             | : |
| x x x      | x x x       |   |
| tywartaka  | relheka     |   |
| tywa-artek | ar-elh-ek   |   |
| rain-SEMB  | see-MED-PST |   |
- It looks as if it's raining*

#### 4. ALYAWARR WOMEN'S RAIN SONGS

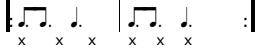
SlowDuple 

FastTriple 

V12, L21 lerale rimerla nkityinya rrerneka  
arler-arler-am=arl ankety-eny arren-ek  
smooth-EMPH=REL greedy-B.CHAR put-PST

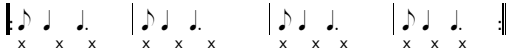
*The much-coveted smooth designs were put on*

SlowDuple 

FastTriple 

V12, L22 tyawarra rrerneka  
Tyaw-arr arren-ek  
Tyaw-? put-PST

*The ones from Tyaw were put on*



V13, L23 yengarl rrkaylpila lewelay lhenheka  
ayeng=arl arrkaylp=arl ilew-elhil-enh-ek  
lsgNOM=REL headdress=REL show-APPLIC-PATH-PST

*I displayed my cockatoo-feather headdress*



V13, L24 ngerrentya nenheka  
anngerrenty tn-enh-ek  
spirit stand-PATH-PST

*The ancestral woman stood*



V14, L25 kurrela tipenya rinyela tharrela lepera lhalharrkey lalhakey  
kwerr=arl artep-eny-areny=arl atherr=arl iyleper alhalharrk-il-elh-ek  
girl=REL back-SPAT-DEN=REL two-REL thigh vibrate-CAUS-REF-PST

*The girl behind the other danced beautifully*



V15, L26 rratyarra tyelarta yarpilya lerreke  
arrayat-arrayat-el-artay arnpely-il-err-ek  
straight-ERG-uncertain shine-CAUS-PL-PST

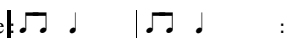
*It really was a line of (water) shining*

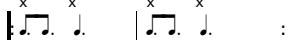


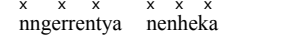
V15, L27 pmerrela tya nterneka  
aypmerr=arl tha rntern-ek  
dew=REL lsgERG spear-PST

*The dew has wet (us) (?)*


# A DISTINCTIVE VOICE IN THE ANTIPODES


SlowDuple:  :||

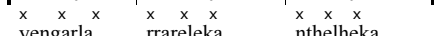
FastTriple:  :||

V16, L24  :||


nngerrentya nenheka  
 anngerrenty tn-enh-ek  
 spirit stand-PATH-PST  
*I, an ancestral woman, travelled*

SlowDuple:  :||


FastTriple:  :||

V16, L28  :||


yengarla rrareleka nthelheka  
 ayeng=arl irrar-il-ek anth-elh-ek  
 1sgNOM=REL lonely-CAUS-PST give-REF-PST  
*(It) made me feel lonely*

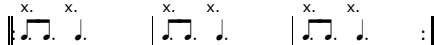
V17, L30  :||

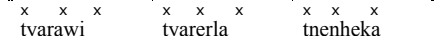
rralyarra lyelartay nenheka  
 arralyarraly-el-artay in-enh-ek  
 mirage/shimmering-ERG-just get-PATH-PST  
*The landscape shimmered and reflected*

V17, L31  :||


niwarra theneka  
 ayniwarr athen-ek  
 cloud lay\_down-PST  
*The long thin clouds gathered*

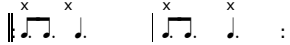
SlowDuple:  :||


FastTriple:  :||

V18, L32  :||


tyarawi tyarerla tnenheka  
 tyarew-tyar=arl tn-enh-ek  
 ceremonial\_pole=REL stand-PATH-PST  
*The ceremonial pole stood in the distance*

SlowDuple:  :||

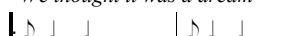
FastTriple:  :||

V18, L15  :||

tyawanta murrarla  
 Tyaw=ant mwerr=arl  
 place=only good=REL  
*The Tyaw (ceremony) is the best*



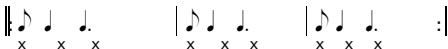
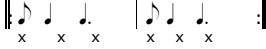
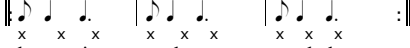
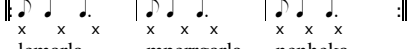
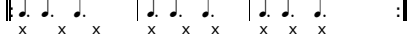

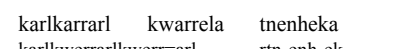
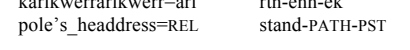
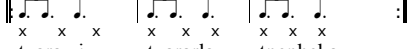
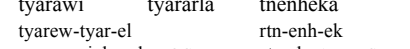
V19, L34  :||

ltyerreka thenarla rerreka  
 altyerr-ek athen=arl ar-err-ek  
 creation.time=DAT mistake=REL see-PL-PST  
*We thought it was a dream*






V19, L35  :||

naltyaltya lheweka  
 (n)-altyalty-elh-iw-ek  
 (RESP)-?-REF-throw-PST  
*But woke up and it was true*






- V20, L36   
 kurrimpi lewelay lhenheka  
 kwerrimp ilew-elhil-enh-ek  
 woman show-APPLIC-PATH-PST  
*The ancestral women showed (them)*
- V20, L37   
 kurrmanti lewelay lhenheka  
 kwerrmanti=arl ilew-elhil-enh-ek  
 string=REL show-APPLIC-PATH-PST  
*They showed the ceremonial hairstring*
- V21, L38   
 nterapi renhela rrenheka  
 anter=inp renh=arl arren-ek  
 oil=ADJ 3ACC=REL put-PST  
*The fat, it was put on*
- V21, L39   
 tyepetya rrenheka  
 tyepety arren-ek  
 story put-PST  
*The designs were put on*
- V22, L40   
 kurrpari renhapa nenheka  
 kwerrpar renh=ap in-enh-ek  
 dancing\_stick 3ACC=EMPH get-PATH-PST  
*The ceremonial pole was taken out*
- V22, L41   
 lemarla mperrgarla nenheka  
 alem=arl amperrng=arl artn-enh-ek  
 liver=REL sadness=REL cry-PATH-PST  
*In deep sadness, they cried*
- R5 Triple   
 V23, L42   
 Duple   
 V24, L42   
 karlkarrarl kwarrela tnenheka  
 karlkwerrarlkwerr=arl rtn-enh-ek  
 pole's\_headdress=REL stand-PATH-PST  
*Where the beautiful headpiece stood*
- R5 Triple   
 V23, L32   
 tyarawi tyararla tnenheka  
 tyarew-tyar-el rtn-enh-ek  
 ceremonial\_pole-LOC stand-PATH-PST  
*On the ceremonial pole it stood*

A DISTINCTIVE VOICE IN THE ANTIPODES

SlowDuple ||  |  |  |  |  :||

V24, L33    tyarawi    renhapa    tyarawi    tyarala    rnkerneka  
 irrtyar-ew    renh=ap    tyarew-tyar-el    rnkern-ek  
 distant-DAT    3ACC=EMPH    ceremonial\_pole-LOC    stand\_up-PST  
*In the distance the ceremonial pole was placed*

V25, L29 ||  |  |  ||

not recorded    renparen    palatya    rntenheka  
 arenp-arenp=arl    atya    rntern-ek  
 fish(?)=REL    1sgERG    spear-PST  
*I speared some fish*



Figure 17. Eileen Bonney adorned for an awely performance at Artetyamper

Source: Jenny Green, 1994

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This text is taken from *A Distinctive Voice in the Antipodes: Essays in Honour of Stephen A. Wild*, edited by Kirsty Gillespie, Sally Treloyn and Don Niles, published 2017 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

[dx.doi.org/10.22459/DVA.07.2017.04](https://doi.org/10.22459/DVA.07.2017.04)