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Travelling from Warlpiri country into Anmatyerr country: examples of song texts from a Warlpiri initiation song cycle

Abstract

Many song cycles from Central Australia follow itineraries that travel long distances across the country. The content of these songs often revolves around descriptions of environmental features and Dreaming events at the places which the song cycle passes through. These are often metaphoric representations of aspects of the core themes of the song cycle. In this poster I will present some examples of songs performed as part of the initiation ceremonies held each year in Yuendumu. The subjects of this song cycle are ancestral women who travel from a place in the far west of Warlpiri country towards the east. As they do so they continually meet up with women from the country they are travelling through. A main theme in this initiation song cycle is thus bringing together different people from different places. Towards the end of this song cycle these women cross from Warlpiri country into Anmatyerr country and are joined by Anmatyerr women with whom they perform a large ceremony. The examples presented on this poster will highlight some of the changes that occur in the language of the songs as they move from Warlpiri to Anmatyerr country and explore how this type of comparison can help throw light on some of the esoteric meanings of the songs.