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Marungka Tjlatjunu (Dipped in Black)

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Abstract
This is a film review of Marungka Tjlatjunu (Dipped in Black) (2023), directed by Matthew Thorne and Derik Lynch.

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Marungka Tjlatjunu (Dipped in Black) (2023), dir. Matthew Thorne and Derik Lynch

Derik Lynch is an Anangu person who grew up in Aputula, a small village in the Northern Territory of Australia. He moves to the city where he does not feel at home. Early in the film Lynch says: “I know my country, because I know my stories.” Unfortunately, he does not know the stories of the urban environment. Lynch was told by his grandmother that he would live in two worlds. We understand this to mean a rural (hometown) world and an urban environment. But we also see that Lynch lives as a man (during the day), and also lives as a gay man (at night).

This duality causes Lynch to suffer. So, he returns to Aputula to participate in an inma ceremony. The inma is a healing ceremony for women, a form of storytelling that includes visual, verbal, and physical elements. Lynch participates in the ceremony by dancing for other women, dressed like Tina Turner; something he has always wanted to do. And the healing begins.

This film shows us how important rites and rituals are in our lives. The religions of the world are filled with rites and rituals, some of which are designed, like the inma ceremony, to bring about healing.