Indigenous Dreaming

Philosophy

# The Dreaming

* The Dreaming is very sophisticated
* Moral point of view (care of the soul)
  + Passed on by stories + virtues (fable)
* Difference from western culture could be because of geography
* Many cultures and languages have collapsed because colonists
* "*Question everything*" might not exist in The Dreaming
* "*The truth will set you free*" is present in Indigenous Australia culture
  + Not about empirical (like Chemistry)
  + Truths about (friendship, family)
* What is a totem???
* There is quite a high knowledge barrier, it is insulated/closed off to other cultures
  + Secretive
  + Thus, there is no good explanation as of yet
* English is not great at representing Aboriginal culture

## Aboriginal Spirituality

### Animism

* Aboriginal Spirituality is animistic, meaning that there are intangible spirits that affect the course of nature
* Nothing is inanimate
* Human = nature = animals
  + Respect
* Respect for spirits creates gain
  + Rain, hunting, eg
* Disrespect causes loss

### Cosmogony

* How the Earth came to be
  + Explored in 'Dreamtime'
    - Many deities (part human (mind), part animal (body), part supernatural (powers)) form the Universe
* Interactions between deities (spirits?) made the Earth the way it is

#### What is the Dreaming

* In the beginning, the world was very "mixed up", very different to what it is now.
* Ancestor (anthropomorphs) brought the world into order (from chaos)
* They made life:
  + Geographical features, animals, and humans, are all descendants of these ancestors

### Earthly

* It is sustainable, strict social contracts for life
  + Respect of kin, of land, and for spirits

### Totemic

* Totems are an inherited thing that represents a spirit
  + Defines person's role in life
* Responsible for the totems
* Very important
  + Can be decided before birth
* Resting places and descendants of the great beings became totems
* Totems create a sense of identity in Indigenous culture
  + through understanding themselves in terms of totems
  + Obligated and responsible for totems
* Through totemism, everything is part of a whole
* Aboriginal culture is more linked to time than place
  + Chronological order based on directions)
* Many ceremonies
  + Increase (ties to land) ceremony
  + Initiation (of people into culture) rites
  + Mourning (spirits to guide them back) ceremonies
  + Healing and harming (others using spirits)

### Oral

* Passed down by oral tradition
  + Lack of writing, lots of speaking

### Hierarchical

* Confusing
* Elders

## Colonial Perspective vs Now

* European colonist describes Aboriginal Australian cultures as:
  + Stone-age-like
  + Pre-literate
  + Undeveloped
  + Rudimentary
* But Aboriginal culture is now widely accepted to the longest continuous culture(s) in the history of the world. (80,000 years)
  + They were able to overcome the risk of over-exploiting nature
* Religious practices inform actions in a Aboriginal person's day to day life.
  + Known as "The Law"