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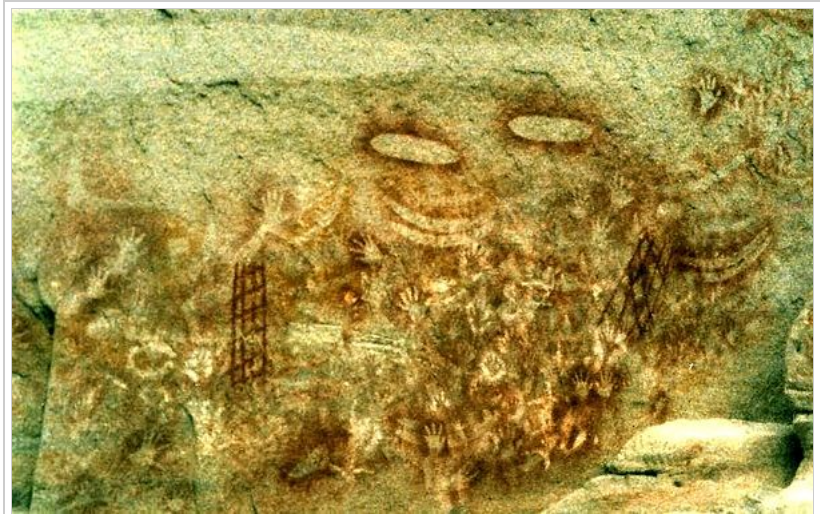
Dreamtime

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In the animist framework of Australian Aboriginal mythology, **Dreamtime** is a place beyond time and space in which the past, present, and future exist wholly as one. Tribespeople could enter this alternate universe through dreams or various states of altered consciousness, as well as death, **Dreamtime** being considered the final destination before reincarnation.

Contents

- 1 The Dreaming in Aboriginal culture
- 2 The Dreaming, tribal law and songlines
- 3 Portrayals in media
 - 3.1 Literature
 - 3.2 Film
 - 3.3 Other media
- 4 See also
- 5 References
 - 5.1 Other sources
- 6 External links



Stencil art showing unique clan markers and dreamtime stories symbolizing attempts to catch the deceased's spirit.

The Dreaming in Aboriginal culture

"Dreaming" is also used to refer to an individual's or group's set of beliefs. For instance, an Indigenous Australian might say that he or she has Kangaroo Dreaming, or Shark Dreaming, or Honey Ant Dreaming, or any combination of Dreamings pertinent to their country. This is because in "Dreamtime" an individual's entire ancestry exists as one, culminating in the idea that all worldly knowledge is accumulated through one's ancestors. Many Indigenous Australians also refer to the Creation time as "The Dreaming". The Dreamtime laid down the patterns of life for the Aboriginal people.^[1]

Dreaming stories vary throughout Australia, with variations on the same theme. For example, the story of how the sun was made is different in New South Wales and in Western Australia. Stories cover many themes and topics, as there are stories about creation of sacred places, land, people, animals and plants, law and custom. It is a complex network of knowledge, faith, and practices that derive from stories of creation. It pervades acts of

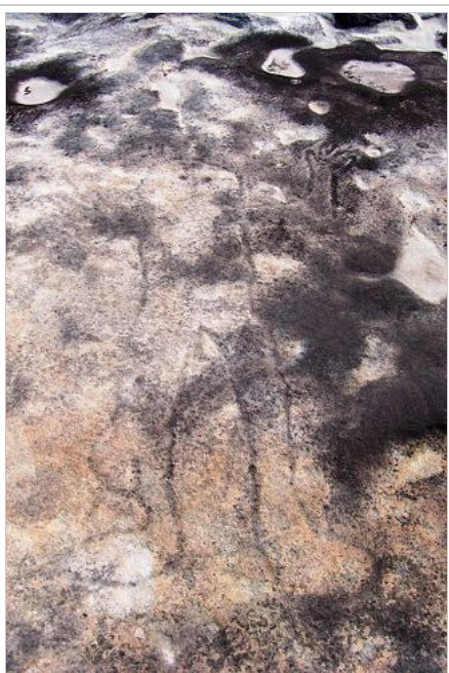
an indigenous Australian's life.

This eternal part existed before the life of the individual begins, and continues to exist when the life of the individual ends. Both before and after life, it is believed that this spirit-child exists in the Dreaming and is only initiated into life by being born through a mother. The spirit of the child is culturally understood to enter the developing fetus during the fifth month of pregnancy.^[2] When the mother felt the child move in the womb for the first time, it was thought that this was the work of the spirit of the land in which the mother then stood. Upon birth, the child is considered to be a special custodian of that part of his country and is taught the stories and songlines of that place. As Wolf (1994: p. 14) states: "A black 'fella' may regard his totem or the place from which his spirit came as his Dreaming. He may also regard tribal law as his Dreaming."^[3]

It was believed that before humans, animals and plants came into being, their 'souls' existed; they knew they would become physical, but they didn't know when. And when that time came, all but one of the 'souls' became plants or animals, with the last one becoming human and acting as a custodian or guardian to the natural world around them.

Traditional Australian indigenous peoples embrace all phenomena and life as part of a vast and complex system-network of relationships which can be traced directly back to the ancestral Totemic Spirit Beings of The Dreaming. This structure of relations, including food taboos, had the result of maintaining the biological diversity of the indigenous environment. It may have helped prevent overhunting of particular species.^[1]

The Dreaming, tribal law and songlines



Ku-ring-gai Chase-petroglyph, via Waratah Track, depicting Baiame, the Creator God and Sky Father in the dreaming of several Aboriginal language groups.

The Dreaming establishes the structures of society, rules for social behavior, and the ceremonies performed to ensure continuity of life and land. The Dreaming governs the laws of community, cultural lore and how people are required to behave in their communities. The condition that is The Dreaming is met when people live according to law, and live the lore: perpetuating initiations and Dreaming transmissions or lineages, singing the songs, dancing the dances, telling the stories, painting the songlines and Dreamings.

The Creation was believed to be the work of culture heroes who traveled across a formless land, creating sacred sites and significant places of interest in their travels. In this way songlines were established, some of which could travel right across Australia, through as many as six to ten different language groupings. The songs and dances of a particular songline were kept alive and frequently performed at large gatherings, organized in good seasons.

In the Aboriginal world view, every event leaves a record in the land. Everything in the natural world is a result of the past, present and future actions of the archetypal beings, whose actions are continuously creating the world. While Europeans consider these cultural ancestors to be mythical, many Aboriginal people believe in their present and future literal existence. The meaning and significance of particular places and creatures is wedded to their origin in the Dreaming, and certain places have a particular potency, which the Aborigines call its *dreaming*. In this

dreaming resides the sacredness of the earth. For example, in Perth, the *Noongar* believe that the Darling Scarp

is the body of the *Wagyl* – a serpent being that meandered over the land creating rivers, waterways and lakes. It is taught that the Wagyl created the Swan River. In another example, the *Gagudju* people of Arnhemland, for which Kakadu National Park is named, believe that the sandstone escarpment that dominates the park's landscape was created in the Dreamtime when *Ginga* (the crocodile-man) was badly burned during a ceremony and jumped into the water to save himself. He turned to stone and became the escarpment. The common theme in these examples and similar ones is that topographical features are either the physical embodiments of creator beings or are the results of their activity.

In one version (there are many Aboriginal cultures), *Altjira* was a spirit of the Dreamtime; he created the Earth and then retired as the Dreamtime vanished, with the coming of Europeans. Alternative names for Altjira in other Australian languages include Alchera (Arrernte), Alcheringa, Mura-mura (Dieri), and Tjukurpa (Pitjantjatjara).

The dreaming and travelling trails of the Spirit Beings are the songlines (or "Yiri" in the Warlpiri language). The signs of the Spirit Beings may be of spiritual essence, physical remains such as petrosomatoglyphs of body impressions or footprints, among natural and elemental simulacra. To cite an example, people from a remote outstation called Yarralin, which is part of the Victoria River region, venerate the spirit *Walujapi* as the Dreaming Spirit of the black-headed python. *Walujapi* carved a snakelike track along a cliff-face and left an impression of her buttocks when she sat establishing camp. Both these dreaming signs are still discernible. In the Wangga genre, the songs and dances express themes related to death and regeneration.^[4] They are performed publicly with the singer composing from their daily lives or while Dreaming of a *nyuidj* (dead spirit).^[5]

Portrayals in media

Literature

Non-native writers and artists have appropriated or been inspired by Dreamtime concepts.

- Joseph Morris, British born writer, has woven many Dreamtime concepts into his fantasy novel 'The Strange Legacy of Jobe McGall' set in South Australia.
- Brendan McCarthy, British born comics artist/writer lived in Australia for many years and created an aboriginal sorceress called Ms Ningiril, (who used dreaming magic) in his Dr Strange series Fever for Marvel Comics.
- Grant Morrison's character King Mob in his comic The Invisibles visits Uluru and speaks telepathically with an aboriginal elder, he remarks that this is possible because he is a 'Scorpion dreaming'.
- Philip K. Dick uses Dreamtime, among a plethora of other concepts, to describe his breakdown in his novel *VALIS*.
- Bruce Chatwin wrote the blended fiction/non-fiction novel, *The Songlines*, in exploration of some



Waugals (yellow triangles with a black snake in the centre) are the official Bibbulmun Track trailmarkers between Kalamunda and Albany in Western Australia. The Noongar believe that the Waugal, or Wagyl, created the Swan River and is represented by the Darling scarp.

important aboriginal concepts.

- Alexis Wright's novel *Carpentaria* weaves Dreaming narrative from the Gulf of Carpentaria through her stories of contemporary Aboriginal characters, a form of Australian magical realism.
- Tad Williams four-volume science fiction epic *Otherland* touches upon Dreamtime and other aboriginal myths.
- Spider Robinson's trilogy *Stardance* touches upon this in the second volume.
- Richard McKenna's 1960 speculative fiction novelette, "Fiddler's Green", also touches upon *Alcheringa*, or Dreamtime.
- Sam Kieth's comic *Maxx* relies heavily on the psychology and concept of Dreamtime.
- Neil Gaiman's graphic novels *The Sandman* are partially set in "The Dreaming", referred to in early volumes as "Dreamtime", and also reference "Fiddler's Green"
- Laine Cunningham's (<http://www.lainecunningham.com/>) suspense novel *Message Stick* (http://www.lainecunningham.com/Message_Stick.php) follows a biracial Aboriginal man searching the outback for his best friend; when he is stalked by an Aboriginal shaman, he finds the heritage he lost as a child. *Message Stick* won the James Jones Literary Society's award as well as the Hackney Literary Award. Her nonfiction book *Seven Sisters: Spiritual Messages from Aboriginal Australia* (http://www.lainecunningham.com/Seven_Sisters.php) provides ancient advice to modern readers on love, war, friendship and family; an excerpt received an award from *Carolina Woman* magazine.
- Jeff Smith says that aspects of his cartoon/fantasy epic *Bone* were inspired by Dreamtime, among other things.^[6]
- Queenie Chan's manga *The Dreaming* takes place in Australia and deals with students from a boarding school who mysteriously go missing. Aboriginal legends feature in the series.
- Joan Lindsay's novel, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, and its unpublished ending deal with some girls who disappear while hiking Hanging Rock, near Melbourne. It is heavily implied in the book and in the ending that the girls disappeared into Dreamtime.
- Sandra McDonald's novels, *The Outback Stars*, *The Stars Down Under* and *The Stars Blue Yonder*, use Aboriginal myth extensively.
- The *Star Trek* novel *Strangers from the Sky* by Margaret Wander Bonanno has Captain Kirk using Dreamtime to investigate an altered reality.
- Betty Clawman from DC Comics' *New Guardians* was an aboriginal girl chosen to be part of the next stage in man's evolution - i.e. the New Guardians. Dreamtime figured in the story.
- In issues #89–90 of DC Comics' *Hellblazer*, John Constantine ventures into the Dreamtime.
- Wildstorm's *Planetary* issue #15 briefly deals with the Dreamtime.
- In the graphic novel *Y: The Last Man*, the protagonist's love interest, Beth, spends time in Australia. Events in the Dreamtime are presented as a possible reason for the worldwide plague that killed almost all male mammals.
- In Patrick Skene Catling's "John Midas in the Dreamtime" the protagonist visits the site of sacred cave

paintings in the middle of the Australian outback, slipping back thousands of years, ultimately finding himself among a prehistoric aboriginal tribe.

- Also, Colby Herchel's new opera "The Dreamtime" tells a story of aboriginals who dream, and the battles fought against the British.

Film

- Peter Weir's *The Last Wave* (1977) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) dealt with Dreamtime.
- *Frog Dreaming* (1986) (renamed *The Quest* when released in the USA) included certain aspects of Aboriginal Dreaming.
- The film *Australia* (2008) included aspects of aboriginal Dreaming (songlines).
- Werner Herzog's *Where the Green Ants Dream* (*Wo die grünen Ameisen träumen*) (1984) posited an Aboriginal protest against uranium mining based on the taboo against disturbing the dream of green ants and thus causing the destruction of the world.

Other media

- British Folk Metal band Skyclad have a polemical song on their debut album *The Wayward Sons of Mother Earth* called *Trance Dance (A Dreamtime Walkabout)* whose narrator is an Aborigine.
- Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* refers to Dreamtime throughout the play.
- Colby Herchel's new opera *The Dreamtime* tells a story of Aboriginals who dream and the battles fought against the British.
- "Project Alchera" from the computer game *Dreamfall: The Longest Journey* draws heavily from the concept of Dreamtime, as well as from other Aboriginal mythologies.
- During the 1980s, the UK band The Stranglers recorded an album called *Dreamtime*, with a title track inspired by the Aboriginal concept.
- In the episode "Walkabout" of the animated series *Gargoyles*, an Aborigine mentor to Dingo teaches him of the Dreamtime. In the same episode, Goliath and Dingo enter the Dreamtime in order to communicate with an AI nanotech entity called the Matrix.
- In Big Finish Productions Doctor Who audio drama, *Dreamtime*, the Seventh Doctor and his companions deal with Aborigine mysticism and Uluru.
- Kate Bush's 1982 album is entitled *The Dreaming*. The title track deals with the upheaval of the Aboriginal people.
- The Cult's 1984 album is entitled *Dreamtime*. The album deals with Aboriginal themes, owing to singer Ian Astbury's interest in the book *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*.
- Steve Roach's 1988 album is entitled *Dreamtime Return*. The album deals with the concept of the Dreamtime.
- The Dreamtime Rugby League team is a team of the best aboriginal players, who play certain exhibition

matches.

- The Finnish band Korpiklaani recorded a track called "Uniaika" (Dreamtime) on the album Karkelo in 2009.
- "In the Dreamtime", a song written by Ralph McTell, was used in Billy Connolly's 'World Tour of Australia'
- In the third Sly Cooper game Sly 3: Honor Among Thieves, Murray is a student of Dreamtime, and his master joins the gang as well.
- In the animated series ExoSquad, two of the main characters talk to an aboriginal aid who explains the nature of the Dreamtime and the cave art are shown depicting their current events.
- Techland's video game, Dead Island, uses dream time to explain the state that zombies are in. Zombies are stuck between real time and dreamtime.

See also

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| ■ Aboriginal mythology | ■ Palmetum | ■ People: |
| ■ Apeiron (cosmology) | ■ Prehistory of Australia | ■ Bruce Chatwin |
| ■ Dreaming (spirituality) | ■ Rainbow Serpent | ■ Charles P. Mountford |
| ■ Dreamtime Village | ■ Religion in Australia | ■ Ainslie Roberts |
| ■ Minka Bird | ■ Tjilbruke | ■ Ted Strehlow |

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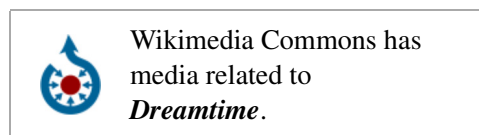
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2. [^] Bates, Daisy (1996), *Aboriginal Perth and Bibbulmun biographies and legends*, Hesperion Press
3. [^] 'Fella' is a colloquial contraction of 'fellow', though like the Australian colloquial usage of 'guys', often refers to women as well as men.
4. [^] Marett, Allan (2005). *Songs, Dreamings, and Ghosts: the Wangga of North Australia* (http://books.google.com.au/books?id=oFhUE_AIE8QC&printsec=frontcover&dq=wangga&hl=en&ei=SRSqTd3MG4XuuAPMu_2QCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false). Wesleyan University Press: Middletown, Connecticut. p. 1. ISBN 978-0-8195-6618-8.
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External links

- Dreamtime stories (<http://www.dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/storylist.htm>) Dead link
- Australian Aborigine Dream Beliefs (<http://www.dreamhawk.com/oz.htm>)
- Northern Territory Official Tourism Site (<http://www.travelnt.com/en/experience/aboriginal-culture/>)
- Educational Resources (<http://dl.filmaust.com.au/tag/The+Dreaming/>) Dead link
- Aboriginal Tourism The Dreamtime (<http://www.ausemade.com.au/aboriginal/resources/dreamtime/index.htm>)



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Dreaming (spirituality)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

(Redirected from Dreaming (story))

The Dreaming is a common term within the animist creation narrative of indigenous Australians for a personal, or group, creation and for what may be understood as the "timeless time" of formative creation and perpetual creating. In addition, the term applies to places and localities on indigenous Australian traditional land (and throughout non-traditional Australia) where the uncreated creation spirits and totemic ancestors, or *genii loci*, reside.^[1] No word in the English dictionary covers the concept; for example, *Anangu* who speak *Pitjantjatjara* use the word **Tjukurpa** and those who speak *Yankunytjatjara* use **Wapar**, but neither means dreaming in the English sense.^[2]

The Dreaming has different meanings for different Aboriginal groups. The Dreaming can be seen as an embodiment of Creation, which gives meaning to everything. It establishes the rules governing relationships between the people, the land and all things for Aboriginal people.^[3]

Contents

- 1 Ownership of Dreamings
- 2 Artists and their Dreamings
- 3 See also
- 4 References

Ownership of Dreamings

The world was created during the Dreamtime. A Dreaming is a story owned by different tribes and their members that explains the creation of life, people and animals. A Dreaming story is passed on protectively as it is owned and is a form of "intellectual property". In the modern context, an Aborigine cannot relate, or paint someone else's dreaming or creation story without prior permission of the Dreaming's owner. Someone's dreaming story must be respected, as the individual holds the knowledge to that Dreaming story. Certain behavioural constraints are associated with dreaming ownership; for instance, if a Dreaming is painted without authorisation, such action can meet with accusations of "stealing" someone else's Dreaming.

The late Geoffrey Bardon's three books on *Papunya* specifically mention conflict related to possession of a dreaming story. He uses as an example the Honey Ant Dreaming painted in contemporary times on the school walls of Papunya. Before the mural could be painted, all tribes in Papunya: the *Pintupi*, *Warlpiri*, *Arrernte*, and *Anmatyerre*, had to agree that the honey ant was an acceptable mural, since Papunya is the meeting place for all tribes. After the mural was painted, one of the senior elders, Long Tom Onion, reminded Bardon that he, the elder, had suggested the mural be painted. Later, Bardon realised Long Tom Onion owned that Dreaming. He comprehended the importance of Dreaming ownership among indigenous Australians, especially those who retain tribal and traditional connections.

Among the Central Desert tribes of Australia, the passing on of the Dreaming story is for the most part gender-related. For example, the late artist from the Papunya movement, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, painted

ceremonial dreamings relating to circumcision and love stories, and lessons for "naughty boys". His daughters Gabriella Possum and Michelle Possum have tended to paint the "Seven Sisters" Dreaming or the Pleiades, as they inherited that Dreaming through the maternal line. Consequently, they have painted their "Grandmother's Country", which is an expression of their inherited ownership of the land through knowledge of the dreamings. Clifford and his daughters have not painted the same subjects; Clifford has never painted the "Seven Sisters Dreaming". By tribal law, his daughters are not allowed to see male tribal ceremonies, let alone paint them.

Dreamings as "property" have also been used by a few Aboriginal tribes to argue before the High Court of Australia their title over traditional tribal land. Paintings of Dreamings, travelling journeys and ceremonies tend to depict the locations where they occur. There have been cases in which 10-metre-long paintings have been presented to the Court, as evidence of the tribe's title deed after *terra nullius* was struck down during the tenure of Chief Justice Gerard Brennan.

Artists and their Dreamings

- Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri had the following Dreamings: kangaroos and honey ant ceremonies
- Gabriella Possum Nungurrayi owns the following Dreaming stories: bush foods, Grandmother's country and the Seven Sisters.
- Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri had the following Dreaming: death ceremony
- E. Kame Kngwarreye had a Pencil yam Dreaming, as well as mountain devil lizard, grass seed, dingo, emu, small plant emu food, green bean and yam seed Dreamings.
- M. Pwerle had a bush melon seed Dreaming.

See also

- Dreamtime, a sacred era in Australian Aboriginal mythology
- Anangu
- Embodied imagination

References

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 - ↑ Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park: Tjukurpa - Anangu culture (<http://environment.gov.au/parks/uluru/culture-history/culture/index.html>) environment.gov.au, 2006-06-23
 - ↑ Source: <http://www.dreamtime.net.au/indigenous/glossary.cfm> (accessed: Friday, 16 March 2007)
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