

Australian Aboriginal Spiritual Beliefs



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While it is now taken as a matter of course that indigenous Australian spirituality has a place in any encyclopaedia of world religions, it must be remembered that this facet of indigenous Australian life was not given due recognition until fairly recently. W. H. Stanner's seminal article *The Dreaming* first published in 1956 can arguably be regarded as the watershed which put the spirituality of indigenous Australians on the map. Prior to that, and as a direct outcome of the colonial mind set of the British and nineteenth century evolutionary thinking, Aboriginal spirituality and cosmology were regarded as either non-existent or at best a form of magic which reflected the so-called "primitive" lifestyle of people whose existence was then considered