

Abstract:

This research contends that the singular purpose of the material production of four different types of artefact is to provide a religious function for a discrete society of people located in the Pilbara, Western Australia. Integral to this argument is that these Indigenous people, the Yindjibarndi (pronounced Injar-barndi), practise a religion. Within Australia, none of the 147 religious denominations officially recognised and listed by the Australian government at Schedule 1 of the Marriage (Recognised Denominations) Proclamation 2018, are based upon Indigenous pre-colonial systems of belief. This work argues that by selecting four specific artefacts used by the Yindjibarndi which tend towards singular functionality: depictions of the *Marrga*; ochre on bodies; an assemblage of thirteen stone arrangements; and notches on a *Mirru* (spearthrower); the philosophy which propelled the creation of the artefact is more likely to be revealed. Such an investigation, which relies upon the notion of intelligent design, acknowledges a metaphysical bridge between object and subject, providing an insight into the nature of human existence communicated over time and country by an identified, educated faithful. The Yindjibarndi's religious experience is enriched by personal and communal connection to land and waters via ceremony, ritual, language and reciprocal relationships with their ancestors who, according to belief, eternally inhabit that space. Essentially, this research indicates that an environmentally incarnate perspective personified by an Yindjibarndi epistemology has been successfully implemented and maintained over thousands of years.