

***Urban Aboriginal Creation Stories and History: contesting the past and
the present***

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This paper is based on the 11th annual Doireann MacDermott public lecture presented at the Universitat de Barcelona in November, 2010. It is a critique of discourses and representations in Australian society, and indeed, embedded in all western societies (and many non-western societies I suspect) which support and reinforce artificial binary oppositions which make up social structures and institutions. Binary oppositions reinforce oppositional power dynamics, making one term positive and the other negative, not recognizing categories in-between. Linguistically, for example, the terms 'Indigenous' and 'non-Indigenous' articulate a false dichotomy between people who, empirically, are not two discrete groups, but rather, multiple groups within each category which interact within and between groups in complex and fluid engagements.

The discourses and representations I discuss in this paper articulate imaginary binary oppositions out of social processes and identities which are, in fact, very similar. However, because these discourses and representations are constructed by different social groups with unequal power relationships they are treated as opposites, one with a higher value than the other. In this paper I am primarily concerned with history and myth, and in two related 'stories', the Lachlan Macquarie story, classified as history because it is primarily written and 'belongs' to the dominant Australian society, and the Maria Locke story, classified as myth because it is primarily oral, and explains the emergence and characteristics of a group of Aboriginal people who claim traditional Aboriginal ownership of a large part of what is today called Sydney.

My argument is that history and myth are not binary opposites, but that the two categories are inter-related and tell similar and different aspects of stories with different emphases and foci. I will support my argument by re-telling and analyzing the Macquarie and the Maria Locke stories and demonstrating that unreflexive acceptance

and reproduction of binary thinking reproduces simplistic, one-sided out-comes which support bigotry and prejudice.

Historical Myth and Mythical History

In the context of Aboriginal Australia theorists have regularly reignited debates around what, precisely, constitutes different types of narrative, and, of course, whether a story is classified as a 'Dreaming story' or a historical narrative carries great weight in the practical context of land. This is because according to the *Aboriginal Land Rights NT Act 1976*, many other Land Rights legislation in various Australian states, and, what is arguably the ultimate recognition of Indigenous 'authenticity': a successful native title claim under the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993*, Indigenous Australians are only eligible to claim their traditional lands if they can prove that they are still 'attached' to a

body of traditions, observances, customs and beliefs of Aboriginal people or of a community or group of Aboriginal people, including those traditions, observances, customs and beliefs as applied to particular persons, sites, areas of land, things or relationships.

There are clearly many conceptual, practical and ethical problems with making it necessary for people to prove that they are still engaged, as a group, in practices in which their ancestors were engaged before the British invaded Australia to substantiate their authenticity as traditional owners of the land. Not the least of these problems is that no-one else in Australia is asked to prove their on-going connection to any traditions for any purpose. To make this necessary for Indigenous Australians reinforces the primitive/modern binary. It means that for Indigenous Australians to prove they are 'authentically' Indigenous they need to show that they are the opposite of other Australians. That is, they need to demonstrate that they are still engaged in primitive practices. This situates Indigenous Australians against one of the most fundamental of modern Australian values; progress. Progress has such valency as an Australian value that the two animals on the Australian coat of arms, the kangaroo and the emu, were chosen because neither animal can walk backwards.

Before I go any further it is important, for the purposes of supporting my argument and to introduce the key issues in my examples, for us to consider some of the problems associated with conceptualising the term 'tradition' for Indigenous Australians. Manning Nash (1989:14) insists that although tradition is mostly concerned with the past and is hence fundamentally backward focussed, it does have a future dimension. This dimension involves the commitment of its carriers to preserve and continue traditional practices into the future. However, because of drastic social disruption due to colonisation, many groups of urban Indigenous Australians do not have common cultural traditions on which to draw, so they 'invent', 'borrow', develop and learn 'new' traditions based on fragments remembered and passed down from the past.

But how are 'we' members of the broader Australian society able to understand 'invented', 'new' cultural practices as traditional? Many of 'us', especially Federal Court judges hearing native title claims cannot. As I have already said, because

successful native title claims are arguably the ultimate recognition of Indigenous 'authenticity' by the Australian state, many Indigenous Australians struggle to conform to its demand for cultural continuity. These demands, as Beth Povinelli (2002:39) argues, are very difficult to achieve for any Indigenous community, but are virtually impossible for people who live in long colonised areas like New South Wales. Not only have peoples' traditions changed to the point of being unrecognisable from the early records of colonists, but they have become 'mixed up' with the traditions of other Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. I say more about this below.

Francesca Merlan (1995:65) explains how the incomparability of Aboriginal land rights with other kinds of Australian property rights is legislatively managed in the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act* of 1976. This is done by elaborate codification of what needs to be demonstrated to succeed as well as the creation of a new form of property title. The *Native Title Act* of 1993, however, leaves what 'counts' as 'custom' or 'tradition' for determination by the court. This is necessary because whereas land rights are a new form of land title in Australian law, native title is part of Australia's common law. From a legal point of view the basis for the existence of native title is the presentation of evidence that native title has *always* existed over a given place for specific people. Indigenous Australians can only demonstrate their continuing relationship with a specific place by demonstrating their association with that place in terms of the court's understanding of tradition because it is on the very different traditions from those of other Australians that their distinctiveness is grounded. Indigenous peoples' claims to prior occupation of Australia are based on their difference and their difference is demonstrated in their traditions (Merlan 2006:86). Courts, as Merlan demonstrates, have recognised sufficient evidence of on-going Aboriginal tradition for the purposes of native title using highly 'essentialized' notions of the term. That is, courts have used either an immutable, static model of 'tradition' and 'custom' to demonstrate that claimants have *always* had a 'connection' to the place they claim under common law, or one that recognises some change in the nature of cultural objects but constancy in the underlying social processes associated with those objects: guns instead of spears, acrylic paint instead of ochre for example (Merlan 2006:88). For native title to succeed, 'authentic' Aboriginal tradition needs to consist in static essences and an ontology of fixed and unchanging meanings so as to demonstrate the immutable character of traditional Aboriginal ownership. The trouble with this is that the character of tradition as lived by people in the here and now is not consistent with a model of tradition as fixed, immutable and situated in a primordial moment before the British invaded Australia. Indigenous Australians are faced with an impossible double bind. On the one hand the courts require evidence of Aboriginal tradition and custom as unchanging, on the other, forced and voluntary participation in modern Australian life has required drastic and virtually total change from traditional (pre-contact) life ways.

As Kalpana Ram (2000:259) insists, a metaphysics which understands all change as movement away from 'truth' gains calamitous potential when it is enforced by the same colonial regimes that concurrently inflict unprecedented change. On the one hand the courts demand demonstration of fixed and unchanging traditions being performed by specific people in relation to a particular place to allow native title, yet on the other, it is the Australian state which is primarily responsible for the kinds of radical cleavages with tradition that are used as evidence of a group's alienation from their traditional lands. 'Authenticity' becomes virtually impossible to obtain in such circumstances but

because on-going connection to land is a state-imposed criterion for demonstrating collective identity, questions of 'authenticity' become impossible to avoid. Indigenous Australians who want to be recognised as 'authentic' traditional owners must therefore demonstrate evidence of continuing reproduction of traditions associated with the claimed land even if this means that such traditions could only have survived as a result of being subversively performed during eras when traditional Aboriginal practices were prohibited by Australian law. Such traditions must also be demonstrated even if current social conditions make them passé or otherwise irrelevant. Jeffrey Sissons proposes the term 'oppressive authenticity' for this kind of enforced 'tradition'. State regimes of 'oppressive authenticity' (Sissons 2005:35) only recognise the native title claims of a shrinking category of Indigenous peoples who are considered 'authentic' because they can demonstrate on-going traditional practices in relation to a place and deny the claims of an ever growing group judged 'inauthentic' because they cannot.

As Povinelli (2002) insists, as well as enforcing 'oppressive authenticity' courts rely largely on 'our' (the dominant Australian society's) documentation as the ultimate 'proof' of what constitutes a given peoples' tradition before 1788. That is, it is 'our' historical records, 'our' ethnographies, 'our' reports based on 'our' interpretations of what we are told and what we observe of Indigenous Australians' traditions and customs which mostly provide the evidence on which the claim is based.

Merlan (2006:93) argues that public and academic understandings of Indigenous tradition do recognise that change in the form of adaptations, discontinuities and reconfigurations are inevitable, especially in colonial regimes which inflict unprecedented change¹. Clearly, 'we' (academics and general public) take a different view of the terms 'authenticity' and 'tradition' from that of the courts but, as I argue below, 'we' still retain at the core of our understanding, a conceptualisation of tradition as a continuous link between past and present or the continuation of the past in the present².

Earlier debates surrounding definition of myth, especially Dreaming stories and history revolved around another binary; orality and literacy. The inevitable changes in Indigenous cultures and society that intense colonisation has wrought and the imposition of English literacy on the vast majority of Indigenous Australians has made it inevitable, however, that the question of how to analyse and differentiate among forms of Indigenous narrative is one that no longer depends on orality and pneumatic processes. Terence Turner (1988) argues that 'myth' can be understood as:

the formulation of 'essential' properties of social experience in terms of 'generic events', while history is concerned with the level of 'particular relations among particular events', we

¹ See Merlan (2006) for an argument that a more reflexive view of Indigenous tradition which recognises that Indigenous cultures and social positions are informed by historic and contemporary understandings of accommodation and relationships with people and institutions of White society can provide a better model of tradition than those currently employed by courts.

² See Merlan (2006:86-88), Nash (1989), Williams (1977) and Shils (1971:123) for some useful definitions.

need not restrict ourselves to seeing myth as charter for a social order distinct from Western influence.'

Hill (1988), Beckett (1993,1996) and Macdonald (1998,2003) among many others have contributed to a large literature which illuminates differences between the ways that Indigenous peoples represent the colonial past and the ways in which that past is represented by the dominant culture. This work also serves to problematize the manner in which those differences have been represented and understood historically. These contributions have helped theorists to move on from conceptualizations of 'real' cultures as being rigidly bounded and 'pure'. They have also allowed for the awareness that different peoples present different modes in which to represent the processes, interactions and negotiations of colonial power relations.

So it seems that the binary of Indigenous/non-Indigenous may have been slightly 'smudged', at least in remote, 'traditional' Aboriginal contexts, by a hard won and perhaps grudging recognition that traditional Indigenous cultures can change and still be 'authentic'. This is at least the case when Indigenous stories can still be recognized as Dreaming stories even when they include aspects concerning 'us' (non-Indigenous Australians)³. Binaries, however, have a habit of reasserting themselves in different forms and contexts as the discourses and representations that carry them are supported and embedded in institutions and frameworks at every level of society. There is, of course, a binary that exists within the category 'Indigenous' and that is the remote (authentic) and the urban (inauthentic). Remote Indigenous peoples' stories are much more likely to be recognized as genuine Dreaming stories than the stories that urban people tell, even if urban Indigenous peoples' stories are claimed to be origin myths.

The examples I provide later in this paper compare and contrast a dominant Australian 'history narrative/creation myth' with an urban Aboriginal 'creation myth/history narrative' and demonstrate that there are not clear and concrete separations between categories. I will show that there is not a definite divide between the two stories as one being clearly myth and one obviously history, but that each contains elements of the other. It also demonstrates that urban Aboriginal peoples' cultural representations cannot be categorically separated from either the representations of non-Indigenous people or from Indigenous peoples living in remote, 'traditional' communities.

Story-telling as methodology

My method here is rather academically unorthodox. Rather than quote directly from documentary sources or from interview transcripts I take a story-telling approach which works as a kind of structural analysis. I have chosen, loosely following Levi-Strauss (1958), the main themes of each story, grouped them together and then recounted the secondary themes. This has the effect of making the *form* of the stories very similar allowing for the similarities and differences in the *themes* to be more visible.

My re-telling of the stories cannot help but reflect my own biographical situation as a middle aged, educated, non-Indigenous Australian woman who has spent more than 15

³ See for example Penny McDonald's (1986) film *Too Many Captain Cooks*

years living and working with an urban Aboriginal community. This situation may not be unique, but it is certainly unusual and I doubt that many people would view the stories through my particular cultural lens. Having said that, as a middle aged, middle class, non-Indigenous Australian woman I am very familiar with the 'cult' of Lachlan Macquarie and have spent long periods of my life living in Sydney immersed in the signs and symbols of his veneration. I am also in the extraordinary position of not only being sociologically positioned within the dominant society as a certain target of narratives of progress, but I am also, as a result of long term immersion in an urban Aboriginal society, able to externalize my position and view dominant discourses and representations somewhat from the 'outside'. The very knowledge of the existence of the Maria Locke narrative is not usual among 'mainstream' Australians, let alone familiarity with the details of it.

In re-telling the Maria Locke story I mimic the many theatrical and story-telling performances of the Maria Locke story presented to me by Darug people themselves over many years. It needs to be understood that most non-Darug people do not tell this story and many may not even know this story, it is not part of the national narrative. There are few written records and the verbal story is almost exclusively told by Darug people themselves.

I take this approach in an attempt to, at least some extent, 'even out' the cultural biases that authoritative written sources evoke for western readers. Rather than reinforce preconceived assumptions that because the Macquarie story can be extensively and authoritatively referenced from 'reliable sources' it is more 'true', and the Maria Locke story, because it is largely orally reproduced is less 'true', I present both in my own invented form that I call 'historymyth'.

Sydneysiders

Before I begin my version of the Lachlan Macquarie historymyth, it is vitally important that I describe some of the key features of modern 'mainstream' Sydney society as they are represented in various ways.

Australia, as I argued earlier, is a progressive society and Sydney embodies many of the symbolic and existential features of Australian progress. Sydney has a population of 4.5 million people (ABS 2011) and is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world inhabited by more than 80 different ethnic groups, the most populous of those born overseas being from the United Kingdom (175,166), China (106,142), New Zealand (81,064) and Vietnam (62,144) (ABS 2011). 1.1% or about 40,000 people in Sydney identify as Indigenous. It is the largest city in Australia and has a reputation as an international destination for commerce, arts, fashion, culture, entertainment, music, education and tourism. It is ranked by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network (GaWC) as Alpha + making it among the highest ranked cities for commerce and life style in the world.

The city has undergone rapid urban development since the last quarter of the 19th century until the present and, even during the devastating financial effects of the Great Depression finished the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932. It is also the financial

and economic hub of Australia and is now a wealthy and prosperous city boasting highly original postmodern architecture and open public spaces.

It is also the site of the first British settlement in Australia and this history is recorded on plaques, monuments and statues as well as in heritage architecture at significant places in the city. 30,000 years of Aboriginal occupation of what is now the city, however, is arguably only nodded to in admittedly increasing numbers of appropriate signage, monuments and plaques.

In short, Sydney reflects social values which are related to economic and social progress. It embraces ethnic diversity in pragmatic ways which both celebrate diversity to further support economic and social progress, but also limits its official recognition so that expressions of difference are kept to benign forms such as food, dance and art, for example. To participate as an Australian citizen *all* Australians need to speak English, conform to the nation's legal norms and be educated. In this way, even the recognition of ethnic and cultural difference is made to support the nation's agenda of continuous progress. Sydney is arguably the most progressive of all the progressive Australian cities. The Macquarie historymyth explains where Sydney and, indeed, Australian characteristics and values such as innovation, determination, overcoming of obstacles and economic management to achieve progress originated.

The Macquarie historymyth

Lachlan Macquarie is often referred to as the 'Father of the Nation' for his ambitious programme of public works and for his extensive social reforms to what was no more than a penal settlement before his interventions. During his term huge public building programmes were carried out including new army barracks, three new barrack buildings for convicts, roads to Parramatta and across the Blue Mountains, a hospital, stables and 5 planned towns built above the flood-line along the Hawkesbury River. Macquarie established the Police Fund as the basis of colonial revenue and introduced the colony's first coinage. At the end of 1816, despite the opposition of the British government, he encouraged the creation of the colony's first bank. His most urgent problem, however, was to increase agricultural production and livestock. Despite his efforts to encourage farmers to improve their properties alternate gluts and famines continued to threaten the economy during most of his administration. He encouraged and supported exploration over the Blue Mountains to promote pastoral expansion.

No governor since Phillip treated Aboriginal people as humanely as Macquarie. He established a school for Aboriginal children at Parramatta, a village at Elizabeth Bay and an Aboriginal farm at George's Head. He also hosted an annual feast day at Government House at Parramatta where food and blankets were distributed. Brass plaques were distributed among 'well behaved' Aboriginal leaders as were cast-off military uniforms. Unfortunately, these strategies did not completely fend off hostilities between Aboriginal groups and settlers and Macquarie responded to raids by ungrateful Aboriginal warriors by sending military contingents to 'pacify' them.

Macquarie's term as governor coincided with a dramatic increase in the number of convicts sent to the colony. Macquarie used the convicts to build new buildings, towns and roads and encouraged well-behaved convicts to participate as community members

by introducing tickets-of-leave. This created enormous conflict between Macquarie and an influential, conservative section of free settlers in the colony known as the 'exclusives' who were dedicated to restricting civil rights and judicial privileges to themselves.

Macquarie is today venerated as the symbolic Father of modern Australia and this historymyth is a primary creation story of Australian civilization.

Darug

Before telling the Maria Locke historymyth, it is crucial that I expand on my description of Darug as simply Indigenous people who claim traditional Aboriginal ownership of what is today called Sydney.

In fact, Darug ownership of various parts of Sydney is extremely contentious and strenuously contested by other Aboriginal groups. It is broadly agreed that Darug were a pre-contact language group of Aboriginal people who inhabited parts of what is now Sydney, but their claim to all the land from the Blue Mountains in the west to the sea in the east, and from the Hawkesbury River in the north to Appin in the south are tenuous and based on constantly shifting historico-political academic and popular debates.

The people who identify as Darug today have only emerged in the last thirty years or so as 'a people'. It might be argued that their 'ethnogenesis', which I say more about below, was initially in response to land rights, native title, and other state policies concerning recognition of Indigenous Australians' rights.

People who claim Darug heritage and identity today do so largely because of the genealogical research of biologist, Dr. James Kohen, in the early 1980s. Prior to Kohen's work some of these people lived lives as either unspecified Aboriginal people on the fringes of suburban life, or some may have considered themselves members of a post-contact group of 'Local Aboriginal People'. Two or three hundred people identify as Darug and continue to develop various ideas, values and philosophies about and expressions of their identity. Their culture and society is, in short, fragile, marginalized and extremely difficult to sustain in the face of the over-whelming representations of the dominant society. They are all, however, passionately engaged in the various expressions of cultural renaissance and revival of Aboriginal traditions that characterize Darug (re)emergence. These include the telling and re-telling of their creation historymyth.

According to Barth, the creation of ethnic boundaries depends on the manipulation of cultural attributes. The psychosocial aspect of the emergence of ethnic groups, or ethnogenesis, the collective desire to be a 'we', however, cannot develop without some concrete foundations which are recognized by members of the group and the dominant culture when the group emerges within a nation-state. These foundations are usually determined, not by the group, but by the dominant culture and are often based on genetic descent as the accounts of Blu (1989), Sider (1979, 2003) and Roosens (1989) demonstrate in North American contexts. The emergence of Darug descendants also illustrate that the rules of the Australian state concerning who counts as Aboriginal

determine who is accepted as Darug. These rules are both genetic and social. If one cannot substantiate one's claims to Darug descent genealogically one is not accepted as Darug either by the Australian state or by other Darug descendants.

The concept of ethnogenesis includes attempting to understand the relatively recent (re)emergence of ethnic minority groups that had previously been 'absorbed' into nation states (Diamond 1974:9). Manning Nash (1989:1-9) provides an historical framework for such phenomena arguing that over the last 500 years the nation state has become the most potent, maximal and enduring form of social and political organisation. Nation states, however, have grown from the wreckage of empires, blocks of cultures and 'peoples' which have been 'absorbed' into its borders. This means that nation states are often comprised of more than one 'people' and there is frequently much cultural diversity within one nation state. As Roosens (1989:9) points out, until the early 1970s researchers on social change generally assumed that the kind of direct and continuous contact that different cultures sustain as part of the same nation would result in general acculturation, or more precisely, a 'melding' into the one culture of the nation state: the old 'melting pot' metaphor. The character of change has proven to be much more complex as researchers continue to report that although some cultural differences are, indeed, disappearing, some are persisting in new ways while new differences are emerging.

Very importantly for understanding the Maria Locke historymyth as a Darug creation story that supports their 'ethnogenesis' is Barth's (1969) argument that ethnic groups are a form of social organization in which participants use particular cultural traits from their common past, their common descent, their tradition – which may or may not be historically verifiable – to assert their difference from a dominant group. He insists that ethnic self-affirmation or sometimes denial is always related to social and/or economic interests. That is, an ethnic group will only emerge or disappear if it is in the interests of the group to do so. Ethnic groups are thus always, to some degree, oppositional to a dominant society or to competing groups because they do not identify as part of that society or group and usually have some kind of claim against it.

The mobilisation of an ethnic group depends on the success of its leaders in drawing on affective elements related to descent and in being 'carriers' of a distinctive tradition or heritage to inspire the loyalty and the passions of members of the group. That is, the collective pride in ancestors and group responsibility to 'carry on' traditions of the ancestors are deployed in political ways. Members of the group are 'called to arms' against the hegemony of the dominant society by appealing to their 'common blood' and 'glorious traditions'. The Maria Locke historymyth, as I now demonstrate in the telling, not only explains the current condition of Darug culture and the physical characteristics of Darug people, but explains Darug origins and affirms Darug oppositional positioning to the dominant culture.

The Maria Locke historymyth

Until and during Macquarie's governorship considerable hostilities raged between Aboriginal warriors and the British invaders. The famous Darug hero and Aboriginal guerilla fighter, Pemulwuy, had been killed and his head pickled and sent to England before Macquarie arrived in New South Wales. Aboriginal raids by Pemulwuy's

survivors and British reprisals continued around Parramatta until Macquarie's time. Macquarie initiated a range of strategies which dramatically affected local Aboriginal people. Parramatta and Government House became the centre of Aboriginal-British interactions until the end of Macquarie's term as governor.

The Parramatta Native Institution was established by Macquarie to 'civilise, Christianise and educate' Darug children. Another reason for establishing the school was clear when, in response to Darug raids on farms, Macquarie despatched a military detachment to kill as many Darug people as could be found, and bring back Darug children to be placed in the Native Institution. As well, he developed the strategy of identifying key leaders of Aboriginal groups by forcing them to wear brass breast-plates engraved with their name. This reflected the actual status of certain elders and *koradji* or 'clever men' within each group which ensured their authority to control their relatives. To make sure that these 'chiefs' did the job he had in mind, Macquarie asked each of them to give up one of their children to be placed in the Native Institution. Maria Locke's father, Yarramundi, was one such Darug leader.

Maria, Darug say, was the first graduate of Macquarie's Native Institution. This point is always emphasised in the telling of the history myth. There is great community pride placed in Maria's status as an educated, literate Aboriginal woman at a time when few people were educated in Australia. It asserts the value of education, crucial to the ongoing survival of Darug people today, as a characteristic of the ancestors and one to which today's descendants need to exhibit.

Maria was married to Dicky, one of Bennelong's (a Darug man captured by Governor Phillip in 1788) sons. Dicky had also been in the Native Institution but became ill and died only weeks after the marriage. Two years later she married convict carpenter, Robert Locke, who was indentured to her. It was the first legal marriage between a convict and an Aboriginal woman. This is another point of pride that is claimed as a characteristic of Darug people today. Darug, it is asserted, are light skinned Aboriginal people not because they are 'inauthentic' but because the primary Darug ancestor dominated a white man. It also explains why many Darug leaders are old women rather than men⁴.

In 1831 Maria petitioned Macquarie for thirty acres of land at Liverpool that had been previously granted to her brother, Colebee, in recognition of his service to the colony in leading the explorers, Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth over the Blue Mountains. She was eventually successful and was also granted another forty acres at Blacktown. Maria was not only a Traditional Aboriginal Owner of land in what is now Sydney, but a landowner under British law.

Analysis

The two history myths tell the creation stories of the 'Father of the Australian Nation' and the 'Mother of the Darug Nation'. They are simultaneously complementary and contradictory. They depend on each other, and yet, are usually told in isolation from one

⁴ This is also a fact because Darug men generally have very low life expectancy.

another. They are not opposite stories, but inter-related ones, each telling untold aspects of the other.

The Darug historymyth dovetails with the Macquarie historymyth at the point where the civic and social reforms of Macquarie are lauded by modern commentators (although we know that these were considered unacceptable, misguided, or at least ambiguous for many of his contemporaries). Ambiguity associated with judging 18th century practices with 21st century values, however, is more pronounced when the historymyth turns to Macquarie's approach to 'managing' the local Sydney Aboriginal population. Darug who tell the Maria Locke story today deal with this ambiguity by calling it murder and child abduction rather than 'pacification', 'civilisation' and 'christianisation'.

Ambiguity is not present in the Lachlan Macquarie historymyth when economic aspects of his governorship are the focus of the story. As I have already said, the Macquarie historymyth explains the origins of current Australian traits. The focus on economic management and public works is the dominant feature of the historymyth. Progress enabled by employing convicts in building public buildings, roads, hospitals and whole towns and successful economic control of these projects reflects the dominant Australian value of progress. The Maria Locke historymyth hardly touches on this aspect of Macquarie's story. The only public work that is of interest in the Darug story is the Parramatta Native Institution because that is where Maria became a modern Darug woman by gaining an education. This ancestral characteristic is not made ambiguous by Macquarie's strategies of Aboriginal 'pacification', however, because Maria wins out as an ancestor who is educated, owns land, and whose white husband is indentured to her.

The 'control' of local Sydney Aboriginal people is not a dominant theme in the Macquarie historymyth. Killing and child removal strategies embedded in the story are definitely not practices that would be condoned, let alone venerated by the 'mainstream' Australian public today as public opinion against the Stolen Generations demonstrates. They are, however, recognized as practices that were common in the 19th century colonial context and, perhaps, the domination of the original inhabitants of what are now nation states might be considered, at best, a necessary evil. No matter how they are judged, for better or worse, these strategies are the grounds for Australian occupation of Sydney today and as such are part of our origin historymyth.

The Maria Locke historymyth, contrary to the Macquarie historymyth, puts colonial violence towards Darug ancestors at the centre of the narrative. It also puts ancestral resistance as warfare, first by Pemulwuy and then by his survivors, as a major theme. After this Maria's education, then marriage and finally her landholding status situate Darug resistance as more strategic and sustainable. Darug ancestors, just like Darug today, resist from within dominant Australian institutions.

The reference to Maria's brother, Colebee, in the Maria Locke historymyth is an intriguing one. Reference to Aboriginal participation in the economic development of the colony is absent from the Macquarie historymyth and Darug leadership in the crossing of the Blue Mountains is omitted from the story. It is always noted in the re-telling of the historymyth, however, that Maria applied to have Colebee's land title transferred to her after his death even though it is often said that Colebee was granted

the land in return for leading the first British explorers over the Blue Mountains. Many non-Darug Aboriginal people argue that Colebee was an Aboriginal traitor to have led the British across the mountains where they could then concentrate on pastoral expansion and thereby consolidate their colonization of the land and other Aboriginal peoples. The Maria Locke historymyth does not specifically address this issue, but rather, demonstrates that through both violent resistance and strategic accommodation of the overwhelming force of colonization of their country, they were able to achieve a new, albeit completely changed place for themselves in the new world order that was imposed on them. In fact, the Maria Locke historymyth shows that Darug guerilla warfare resulted in death and pickled heads, accommodation resulted in a certain kind of triumph.

Conclusion

The written/oral binary is supported by the true/untrue binary in situating history and myth as opposites. The logic that written history is true and oral myth is untrue can be demonstrated to be faulty in my analysis of the Macquarie and Maria Locke historymyths. Certainly, the Macquarie story can be substantiated with colonial records, plaques, numerous re-written versions of events. These stories, however, vary in the re-telling depending on the era and political imperatives of the time. The version I recount here is one which reflects recent revisions of the overall history of Australia which acknowledges the (mis)treatment of Aboriginal people by colonial policies to some extent. It is a version that Australian school students might be taught today. Earlier versions, however, including the one that I was taught at school, did not include any mention of Aboriginal people at all. Australia in the 1960s and 1970s (before the Mabo decision of 1993) was still *terra nullius* before the British 'arrived' and the stories of interaction between settlers and Aboriginal people were written out of dominant discourses. This makes the Macquarie story, I argue, a historymyth. It is a story with a truth value that depends on political circumstances and relies on strategic omissions and inclusions.

The Maria Locke story is no less a historymyth for being largely oral. It connects, through Maria's genealogy as Yarramundi's daughter, to a time prior to British invasion and claims an on-going connection to Darug culture and ancestors. Also, although most of the issues it raises are not re-told by non-Darug people, many of the events and the names of people can be confirmed in British colonial records.

My argument that myth and history are not binary opposites is clearly demonstrated in my analysis of the Maria Locke and the Lachlan Macquarie 'stories'. Both stories give inter-related accounts of inter-relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, places and 'things'. The analysis of the stories themselves, the different emphases, inclusions, omissions and foci of the stories also clearly demonstrate that the linguistic binary opposition 'Aboriginal' and 'non-Aboriginal' is a false one. We are not the opposite of each other, but on the contrary, co-contributors to pathways which have produced different yet inter-related identities.

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