Reading #1: British-Aboriginal relations, 1788-1820

First contact

The British had hoped to assimilate (absorb) the Aboriginal peoples into the British culture and make them work in the new colony. At first, the Aboriginal peoples avoided the British settlers; but as the number of settlers increased and more land was being taken, contact became unavoidable. Governor Phillip wanted to avoid unnecessary conflict with the Aboriginal peoples by treating them with kindness and ordering his soldiers not to shoot at them. He captured several Aboriginals, including Bennelong. Phillip wanted them to learn English and act as translators between the Indigenous groups and the British.

Soon, however, there were clashes over land and culture. Phillip started ordering his soldiers to fire at the Aboriginal people, as his efforts to 'civilize' them and assimilate them into the British culture and society was not working as he had hoped. The Aboriginal peoples saw that the British settlers were clearing the land, putting up fences, restricting access and introducing different animals; so they started to retaliate against the invasion.

'Line of blood'

The conflict around Sydney Harbor and Parramatta foreshadowed the conflict that broke out as the settlers moved into the Hawkesbury Valley, and eventually across all areas of Australia.

By 1797, attitudes and policy toward the Indigenous peoples had changed. No longer did the government hope to assimilate the Indigenous peoples, but rather the policy was to 'keep them out'. In 1800 Governor King (the third governor of New South Wales) had reported to the British government that the advance of the British settlement was marked by a 'line of blood', and that the number of Aboriginal peoples killed in fighting was far greater than the number of British people killed.

Punitive expeditions

In the 1790s and the 1800s the common response of the government to Aboriginal resistance was to send out expeditions of soldiers to punish any groups that threatened farms and settlers. These soldiers hunted down and killed groups of Indigenous people that were thought responsible for stealing stock or food or
generally harassing the settlers. Government instructions after 1800 were to fire at Indigenous peoples until they were far away from British settlements.

In 1816, Governor Macquarie announced that if any Indigenous peoples approached British settlements or were unwilling to leave British properties, then the settlers could drive them away with the use of firearms. Similar encouragement by the government was given in Tasmania and Western Australia, and in most other areas of Australia.

**Aboriginal resistance**

The Indigenous peoples generally resisted the settlement of their land, but they had little resistance against the guns of the British settlers. One Aboriginal warrior, named Pemulwuy, led the Aboriginal resistance around Sydney Harbor from 1790 to 1802 and was feared by many British settlers.

As the British settlement grew, the Indigenous peoples lost more of their land and many of their family members. They became more reliant on the British settlers to provide them with food, water and shelter. As their traditional way of life was slowly eroded, many Aboriginal people started living on the outskirts of towns or started working as servants in the British settlements. This further consolidated the European view of the time that Indigenous peoples were inferior, and were unable look after themselves or the land.

Not all contact with the British settlers was violent. At times there was peaceful and friendly contact. Some Indigenous peoples voluntarily became part of the British society. There is also evidence that groups of Indigenous peoples helped Europeans when they were in trouble; which was quite often, as life for British settlers was very hard in the early years of the colony.

Reading #2: British-Māori Relations

Traditional Culture
Pre-European Māori culture was oral, and based on small autonomous sub-tribes living in valleys, harbors and other localities. Tribal histories are rich with stories of armed conflict, and New Zealand’s many sculpted hills and ridges – the relics of fortifications – are evidence of the importance of warfare in traditional Māori society. Cannibalism was a feature, as was polygamy. Technology was limited to tools made of naturally occurring materials such as pounamu (the South Island’s greenstone) and tūhua (obsidian); flax was used for weaving and other purposes. There was extensive trade in these goods, usually in the form of gift exchange.

Communal Relationships
The values of the society arose from its communal nature. Individuals were seen as the repository or the voice of the group. There was a tapestry of intricate genealogical relationships, and the notion that what affects a part also affects the whole was strongly upheld. Similarly there was a belief that humans were part of nature – the forests, seas and waterways. People saw themselves in a sacred relationship with the natural world, and the exploitation of natural resources was conducted under strict regimes of tapu (sacredness) and mana (spiritual authority) administered by tohunga (priests). By the time of European arrival, Māori had settled the land, and every corner came within the interest and influence of a particular tribal or sub-tribal grouping.

The Arrival of Europeans

Goblins from the Sea
With the arrival of the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in 1642 and subsequently the British explorer James Cook in 1769, the European world made its entry into tribal New Zealand. Tasman journeyed up the west coast of the country but did not go ashore. Cook did, however, and his time in New Zealand is well documented and recorded. The Māori response to his arrival is less well Māori known, except for fragments of stories recorded in 19th-century literature. Perhaps the best known example is that attributed to Te Horeta Te Taniwha of Ngāti Whanaunga (of the Coromandel Peninsula). The story is said to have been told while Horeta was an old man. Here he recalls the conclusion of his elders that the Europeans must be some kind of goblin, because they rowed their boats backwards:
“We stayed at Whitianga and their ship arrived. Our elders saw their ship and said that it was a god and that the crew were goblins. The ship anchored and a boat started to row to shore. Our elders then said, ‘Indeed they are goblins as they have eyes in the backs of their heads. That is why they row with their backs to the shore.”

The Early Period
The period from approximately 1800, when Europeans began to settle, to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, is distinguished by major upheaval in the Māori world. Conflict between rivals grew, fuelled by the introduction of new technology – notably new modes of transport, literacy and, of course, the musket. This was the period of the wars between antagonistic tribes. In the 1830s Christian missionary work, first begun in 1814, began to affect Māori. Schools and mission stations were established in an attempt to bring the Christian message. Some tribes became involved in trade with Europeans, exchanging potatoes, pigs, timber and flax for muskets.

The Treaty of Waitangi
In 1840, a treaty was signed by representatives of Queen Victoria of England and more than 500 Māori chiefs representing numerous tribes throughout the country. The effect of the Treaty of Waitangi was to bring intertribal conflict to an end, and to provide a constitutional basis for the establishment of British law and government in New Zealand. The English version of the treaty stated that sovereignty was ceded to the Queen of England. However, the Māori version said that the treaty guaranteed ‘tino rangatiratanga’ or chieftainship of New Zealand to Māori. The debate continues today.

Reading #3: Culture of the Māori & Aboriginals

Australia and New Zealand are both home to indigenous tribes that have struggled for years to retain their culture and people. Both the Aboriginals of Australia and the Maori of New Zealand share an unfortunate history of colonization. However, their cultural facets, from their origin to their language, are vastly different. These differences are prominent in the modern cultures of Australia and New Zealand and reflect the countries; histories.

History
Dating back 60,000 years, Aboriginal culture is the oldest surviving culture in the world. Throughout the years, Aboriginal people divided into large groups of different tribes, with a wide variety of cultural differences, including more than 250 dialects. The first British settlers landed in Australia in 1788 with the sole purpose of establishing the country as a penal colony. Within the 18th century, a trickle of convicts from Australia migrated to the nearby island of New Zealand, where they were introduced to the Maori people. The Maori are indigenous Polynesians who arrived from East Polynesia around the late 1200s. Unlike the multi-cultural Aboriginals, the Maori are mono-cultural, meaning they share similar cultural significances like language.

Beliefs
The Maoris and Aboriginals preserved their belief systems through oral traditions. In the Aboriginal culture, deities do not have one role, but rather, fulfill a variety of roles. and are categorized as Creation Beings, Ancestral Beings and Totemic Beings. the important creation story; according to the Aboriginal beliefs, dreams are interpreted as memories from the creation period. Maoris, on the other hand, believe all natural elements and living things are connected by a common genealogy. Maori folklore describes the creation of mankind from the violent separation of the original couple, Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatuanuku (Earth Mother), by their children.


Aboriginal Walkabout Ritual
“Walkabout” refers to the rite of passage for adolescent males in the Aboriginal culture. Walkabouts can last up to six months; in this ritual, young boys walk around aimlessly with the sole purpose of connecting with the spirits. The journey through the desert and living off the wilderness is aided by ancestral spirits, who guide the young men safely back home.

Maori Moko Ritual
Traditionally, the Maori tattoo is first commenced at puberty as a rite of passage. Throughout the years, additional tattoos are added to signify important life events. Women receive facial tattoos, which are limited to their upper lips and/or chin. The men’s moko are far more detailed and represent their ancestry and status.

Arts
The didgeridoo is a wooden, wind instrument created nearly 1,500 years ago and used in Aboriginal rituals and ceremonies. Typically made out of eucalyptus trees, the conical instrument is 3 to 10 feet long. The player uses a circular breathing technique and continuously vibrates his lips to produce a drone sound. “Kapa haka” is the traditional performance art that includes chants and songs, haka (posture dance) and poi (the rhythmic movement of a light ball attached to a string, with accompanied singing). Kapa haka is performed by both men and women and involves unique facial expressions and warrior-like dance movements.
Reading #4: Culture & Politics of Oceania

Cultural Geography

Historic Cultures
Indigenous cultures shaped, and were shaped by, the geography of Australia and Oceania. Polynesian culture, for example, developed as Southeast Asian sailors explored the South Pacific. This seafaring culture developed almost entirely from its geography.

Beginning about 1500 BCE, sailors began moving east from the island of New Guinea. The farther they traveled, the more advanced their navigation became. Polynesians developed large, double-hulled vessels called outrigger canoes. Outrigger canoes could sail very quickly across the Pacific, but they could also be easily maneuvered and paddled in rough weather. Along with outrigger canoes, historic Polynesian culture relied on a sophisticated navigation system based on observations of the stars, ocean swells, and the flight patterns of birds.

Polynesians were able to domesticate plants and animals, and transport them to islands that lacked native flora and fauna. This allowed Polynesians to establish stable, permanent communities throughout the islands of the South Pacific. By 1000 CE, these seafarers had colonized the islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. In the process, they established a unique, ocean-oriented culture that persists today.

Political Geography

Historic Issues
The European colonization of Australia and Oceania defined the continent’s early political geography. Exploration began in the 16th century when Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed on the Mariana Islands. European colonization was fueled by a desire to defend nationalist pride, increase trade opportunities, and spread the Christian faith. England, France, Germany, and Spain became the most important
colonial powers in the region. Today, many countries, especially Australia, New Zealand, and New Caledonia, have majority European populations and a strong European culture. English is the dominant language throughout most of the continent.

Indigenous populations were treated harshly during the colonial period. European powers claimed Australia and Oceania’s lands as their own because they considered them *terra nullius*, or a “no man’s land” inhabited by heathen natives. Colonizers implemented their own systems of governance, land management, and trade. These efforts had severe consequences that continue to affect indigenous groups and their cultural systems today.

Image from: http://www.ilibrarian.net/flagmaps/oceania_cultural_areas_map.jpg