

Not Welcome in My Country – a case of *Lac Macropi Gigantei*

Her Past

A lady (44 years of age), daughter of a migrant father from Europe, who settled in Australia after WWII, and an Australian mother, has touched base with me from time to time over the period of a decade, for assistance with pregnancy and lactation issues.

When she was 20 (and drifting), the share house in which she lived, burnt down. She lost all her possessions and that was the beginning of a spiritual awakening in her. She then completed a B Music majoring in piano and voice and eventually established herself as a teacher of music.

She married; and, after her second baby, went through a period of “not being able to find myself”, so focused more on her singing and produced a CD of Lullabies and started a choir. While this was very fulfilling it pushed her into a well of vulnerability as “It meant putting my artistic self on the line”. There was anxiety about being able to perform; of being observed while putting herself out there.

During this time she had lots of “ocean dreams”. She grew up near the water in northern New South Wales (NSW) and loves the ocean. “It’s important to me (the ocean) as it represents my roots. In my mid-twenties, it was during a walk on the beach near my parent’s place, that I first had a Knowing of The Oneness”. A dose of *Calc Carb* 1M (her constitutional remedy) fortified her during that transition.

Big changes then eventuated with a decision to sell their house in Brisbane and leave her pupils and move back to northern NSW and build their dream home on a bluff 1.5 km back from her favourite beach, to be closer to family and the ocean. Problems arose with the build and they had to live for an extended period of time in a granny flat below her parent’s home. It left her feeling displaced. “I’ve been teary lately. I feel out of place here. I’m between two worlds with travelling back to Brisbane every Sunday to conduct my choir, and helping my husband with building our house. It irks me that I’m known here as the daughter of my parents. I feel that I have no identity and that I left that behind in Brisbane. Life is unravelling. I can’t make sense of it and I need grounding!”

With the need for “grounding” and, since this was a matter of a new beginning (new house; mansion of the soul) in her life, a single dose of *Lac Maternum* 1M balanced her out. Her husband completed building the house and they had another baby and I didn’t hear from her again for 6 years. A call for help surfaced again in early January 2014.

As it eventuated, she had decided in 2010, when she had finished breastfeeding her last child, that it would be a good time to do something special and to give the children an experience of life in central Australia away from the coast. So she applied for a job as a music teacher in outback NSW. She got a post in a school which went from kindergarten to grade 12 in a predominantly Aboriginal town near Broken Hill.

Her Story

It just felt so right in the beginning but our kids were bullied and my husband could not find his place/acceptance in the town. So after two years of trying to 'connect', we took the decision for him and our children to relocate to Broken Hill and place the children in school there and we bought an old house for him to renovate and I came home at weekends, while the family lived between two houses and towns.

An additional complication arose when there was a change of leadership in the school as the new principal does not share the same perspective as the former principal who knew what I could contribute. Now, it seems they do not want what I have to share. I went there to try and make a difference in the lives of the children through Music; to try and foster feelings of enhanced self-esteem through participation in choral activities, amongst other things. Fostering individual achievement is not part of the Aboriginal culture as the family/the "mob" takes precedence over individual participation.

I know that they have mixed feelings, including frustration and negativity about government schools, and I know that I cannot fix the past but I'd really hoped to engender a new perspective among the children regarding what is possible in terms of education. In my third year there, I constructed a musical within a fairy tale framework catering for the skill level of the students, and the musical tastes of the community as well as (sensitively) incorporating 'Modern Aboriginal' cultural elements. I think it was the first one ever for the school; and, in many respects was a significant event which allowed their talents to shine. However, when I was producing the musical for the school, I developed chronic conjunctivitis. My eyes were so swollen and pussy I could barely see through them for about two weeks. This musical was one of the significant events for which I received almost no recognition.

It's all so different from when I first arrived there. Then, I was on such a high, like it is when you first fall in love! I felt part of a team trying to make a difference. However the new principal seems to be totally indifferent to my vision; his vision being difficult to grasp, as he always seems to be 'snowed under' possibly by the demands of learning his role. For me, it's a need to foster a feeling of positivism in these children, and I'm doing some innovative stuff around communication but get no acknowledgement.

I recently went to a ground breaking education conference and came back enthused and wanting to share it with the staff. He allocated one hour for me to do this, and didn't even bother to turn up himself! Not that I should be so surprised, as it's not the first time he's ignored any contribution from me. It devalues my sense of what I have to offer.

It seems that he's been promoted beyond his level of competence and he's not coping! Teachers come and go here; and since his arrival, fewer and fewer women are part of the team. This principal seems to be hiring men more often. For a number of reasons, there's a high level of mistrust among staff members. This predominance of male energy is not helped by the fact that a powerful family dominates the running of the town, in particular the school. There are two other large mobs in town who often disagree with the powerful family, and tension is high. Destabilisation in the community gives the men who dominate in the school, more power. A sense of nepotism prevails. It's a volatile situation and I'm often very scared; scared I have said the wrong thing, or will do the wrong thing. I feel afraid, and lack strategies to deal with the situation. For my first two years there, I often seemed to upset the families, even with the best of intentions. And although my relationship with the locals has grown, I still get stressed and anxious about their responses to me/my work. I need to be able to work through this. They often don't approve of my creative focus with the children. I feel completely in a vacuum; excluded and alone in trying to change the agenda.

I am not viewed as part of the community and feel completely between two worlds. However, just before we broke up for the Summer holidays, one of the senior female Elders, a significant Aunty, let me know that, in the New Year she'd like to have a chat as she's pleased with what I'm attempting to do. That, plus a dream I had two weeks ago suggests that there may be hope. In the dream the girls in the school's Cultural Dance Group were dancing and one said... "Miss...look, we've learnt your moves; we can do them!" The girl who spoke in the dream is a daughter of one of the powerful family members who also works in the school. However, another dream I've had since profoundly disturbed me; in it, I'm holding a six month old baby who is crying and arching its back. It bent back too far and went suddenly limp and blood streamed from its eyes....I woke up distressed.

So there I was at the end of my third year at the school, always with tears under the surface, without being able to 'heal' the pain, and knew that it was time to contact you again to help me get some balance around this situation. I have decided to stay another year, and want to survive and continue with my work there, and to develop the relationships with my students. I still feel I have more to learn. If I can begin the new academic year feeling more positive I know the relationships I have within the community will have a chance to grow more.

What To Do?

As it was the end of January and she was to return to the school and township the following week to begin the new school year for 2014, I prescribed an immediate, single dose of *Lac Macropi Gigantei* 1M, as her state was one of mental and physical exhaustion and her story corresponded so exactly with the three main **Themes** of that remedy:

- **Communication/Miscommunication**
- **Possession/Dispossession**
- **Patriarchy/Matriarchy**

along with a minor theme of **Belligerence**.

It's been my clinical experience that a person needing *lac-mac* is, essentially, a blow-in. That is, is someone who has come to Australia from another country/culture and is attempting to integrate. There can be a sense of displacement; a loss of one's roots and confusion regarding adapting to or accepting the other way of life. This adaptive process can be either cultural or environmental.

This situation is consistent with the story of the kangaroo itself as it has been defined through the **Dreamtime** stories. According to these myths, the kangaroo was blown onto the continent by a violent windstorm so extraordinary that it uprooted trees and shrubs as it blew across the land leaving the kangaroo exhausted and with extra-long hind legs grown in an attempt to gain a foothold on the land. This story is congruent with the observation that **Exhaustion** is often a key **Generality** in a *lac-mac* case, and it's interesting that many of the provers reported experiencing cramps in the calves, > stretching.

The problems associated with integration can be due to poor communication; therefore **Communication** (or lack of it) is a key issue in *lac-mac*. The Australian Aborigines have an ancient traditional oral history (which is why I've chosen to present this case in story format, in order to demonstrate congruence with the aboriginal way of communicating). This rich history continues to live on in their songs and dances, now that the traditional use of their languages (there were about 300 different languages at the time of white settlement) is all but extinguished. So it is somewhat ironic that this woman is attempting to hone her students' communication skills through song and dance and is reaching out, but is not being heard:

- **Ears:** blocked; deaf; s/if: is switched off

Her predominant **Delusions** are:

- Talking ill about him; people are
- Time; running out of time

And several **Mind** symptoms also match well:

- Motivated; energetic
- Sticks to the task at hand
- VS
- Self-doubt, feelings of; that the dream of being successful will not be achieved
- Self-doubt; confidence, lacks
- Anxious

anticipation anxiety

of some impending misfortune and then sudden despair, with

- Fear; accident, will have
- Lonely; feelings of being left out
suspicion of others talking about me behind my back, with
- Vulnerable; feelings of self-doubt and frustration, with; > weeping
- Company, aversion to; desire for solitude
feelings of being taken for granted, with
- Company, males; averse to
- Confront; unable to

Additionally, I considered this striking physical symptom, which rounds out the case nicely:

- **Eyes:** burning, itching, red, swollen

The positive dream of “teaching women to dance” and making a significant connection to a “decent and capable woman” as well as the nightmare of loss of innocence (the baby) with an aura of violence associated with it, cemented my decision.

Follow Up

I heard from her again, via email, three months later during the Easter break at the end of the first term. She wrote:

Shortly after our consultation, I undertook a voluntary food cleanse, and vowed to take better care of my sleep patterns, and exercise. It became apparent to me that there was a need for me to place a direct and concentrated trust ‘in Life’, free from worry, and focus just on whatever was happening in any given moment. It seemed that this was what I was meant to be doing; developing a ‘heightened sense of awareness’ and the feeling lasted for several weeks. However, my commitment to sleep, health and general well-being, continues.

Then, in early February, I was asked to collaborate on a paper with a University professor acquaintance (Aboriginal) on my work in the school. I will present this paper at the Australian Association for Research in Education in Brisbane in November 2014.

Shortly after this, my sister rang and said she was moving back to our country after nine years abroad. I am very close to her, so this was excellent news.

During this term, there has been a new level of warmth between myself and the children and community in general. Some have even called me 'Aunty' at times. There was breakthrough on all levels, including the extremely powerful and political Aboriginal family I had previously mentioned.

The breakthroughs in approach to curriculum continued, including genuine team teaching with Aboriginal colleagues, and getting my Year 10 English class of Aboriginal boys to see their approach to storytelling as a valid structure for 'assessment' in traditional schooling.

Within the school, I was also 'given' the role as a Learning and Support Teacher, by the principal. (Though he let me know he was very uncertain it would work). During the three months in this role, through my research, discussion and programming, I came to really see the enormity and depth of the issues that my students and the community in general are facing. So the role has given me some scope to engage more closely with the heart of my students' struggles.

One document which became of huge significance at this time was a booklet called "Calmer Classrooms", a guide to working with traumatised children. Through my initiative, I was able to somehow get this out to all staff. It was the first time I have taken something to the principal and urgently asked for permission to disburse, and he has agreed. This happened in the week I finished up at the school.

At the end of the term I was invited to apply for a position in Broken Hill as an Assistant Principal in Learning and Support. I was successful in securing this position because of my experience in Aboriginal Education, but also, due to my long experience of using Music in education and as a therapeutic tool. So, it means that I am able to move back in with my family full time, and will be working across all schools in the region, in varying capacities. I will continue to also be working at my former school on occasion.

Interestingly, the new team I am part of is all women, and I am 'the baby' of the group. This is a big change from my former situation where I was working mainly with men my own age, and with very little 'validation'.

Throughout this time, there have been significant dreams, and little signs everywhere that some deep 'shifting' was taking place.

As yet I have not been able to connect with I....., the female Elder whom I felt was reaching out to me, as I mentioned to you when we last spoke. As luck would have it, on the second day after I left the school, I happened to catch a documentary on the Tiwi Island Mission, where she spent a large part (possibly all) of her formative years. This gives me a perfect opportunity to get in contact with her, to give her a copy of a piece of her history, which she misses so dearly. (She is too old to travel back there now).

That's the main gist of what has been happening. I could share other little stories about coincidental circumstances, but have a feeling there is enough of a picture here.

I found our last consult very significant; and a real turning point for me.

Thank you for being there.

So, another remedy was not needed at the follow up. It seems that the use of the remedy that reflects “the story” of Australia’s first peoples and their struggle to hold onto their traditional ways, in what has predominantly become a “whitefella’s” culture, gave balance to this situation; a good outcome.

Bibliography

Hatherly P *The Lacs a Materia Medica & Repertory* AEN Pty Ltd, Brisbane 2010

Abstract: A proving is a document full of possibilities that can only be confirmed by clinical cases. This case of *Lac Macropi Gigantei* has it all... it encompasses the key themes of possession/dispossession; patriarchy/matriarchy and communication/miscommunication as this well-intentioned trespasser attempts (through music and song) to construct a path which will assist with integration into another culture.

Keywords: Country; Belligerence; Aboriginal; Communication; Song; Dreamtime.