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Black Wars and White Settlement: the Conflict over Space in the Australian Commemorative Landscape

Matthew GRAVES and Elizabeth RECHNIEWSKI

Critical research on commemorative landscapes begins with an examination of dominant or hegemonic social memories reproduced through landscape creation, reproduction and practice [...] and then attempts to excavate subaltern narratives suppressed in this process [...]. The strategies either to defend dominant meanings in commemorative landscapes or to challenge those meanings by advancing previously subaltern social memories are inherently spatial. (Hanna and Hodder 210)

- 1 Owen Dwyer writes that “commemoration is fundamentally a process of augmenting or disrupting discourses associated with a scene (=landscape)” (Dwyer 431). The case of the recognition of the ‘Black Wars’ in the Australian commemorative landscape offers a particularly striking illustration of the struggle over commemorative space, as demands to recognise the previously marginalised history of Aboriginal martial response to invasion and colonisation have begun to challenge and disrupt the prevailing, hegemonic narratives of white Australia. The evolution of this conflict can be traced through an examination and comparison of two kinds of commemoration encapsulated in the memorials and plaques erected across Australia over the last two centuries: those that record the killing of white settlers; and those that record the killing of Indigenous people. This study suggests that even today the competing narratives of Australian frontier history are far from pacified: that even where a memorial recognises two versions of an

event, the opposing versions are not reconciled but juxtaposed, in a symbolic materialisation of ongoing conflict. Michel Foucault saw juxtaposition, simultaneity and the side-by-side as defining traits of the contemporary “era of space”. To the extent that these *lieux de mémoire* of the frontier wars simultaneously represent, contest and invert Australia’s foundational narratives, they co-locate aspects of stelae and “counter-sites” (12, 15).

1. Dominant social memories in the landscape: overseas wars and white settlement

- 2 It should first be noted that the Australian landscape is predominantly occupied by two kinds of memorials that do not explicitly address the conflict that accompanied settlement and yet are inseparable from it. The first kind, extensively studied by Ken Inglis, comprises the war memorials raised from the Crimean War to the present day, the largest number centring on commemoration of World War One. In a recent paper (Graves and Rechniewski) we have shown how this commemorative focus on the war that “made a nation” displaces the memory of the foundational conflict from the Black Wars of nineteenth century Australia to the imperial wars fought overseas in fealty to the British.¹ Celebrating the exploits of the Anzacs as worthy representatives of the white and particularly the British race allowed the young nation to affirm the legitimacy of its claim to occupy the continent, while sidelining the role that violence had played in seizing it.
- 3 The second kind of memorial comprises those that commemorate white settlement of the continent. Ken Inglis identified between 4,000 and 5,000 public war memorials in Australia in the mid-1990s (585). The number of memorials to colonisation – if both exploration and settlement are included – also runs into thousands: for the Bicentenary, Beryl Henderson inventoried some 5,000 in the state of New South Wales alone, excluding war memorials (xix). Monuments to explorers are ubiquitous; they complement the monuments to the settlers who followed them to claim the land. The link is explicitly made in some cases: the plaque on a cairn dedicated in 1995 to explorer Sir William Landsborough in Hughenden, for instance, reads:

Landsborough’s report of the fine grazing lands of Western Queensland tripled, or even quadrupled, the extent of territory in Australia available for settlement ... the advantages thus secured for pastoral purposes are beyond all calculation (Besley 39-40).
- 4 Many memorials record the first arrival of Europeans in the area, marking the spread of ‘white civilisation’: a blue granite cairn in Rannes, central Queensland, for example, pays tribute to Mrs Hay as “the first white woman being so far north in Australia” and James Morrill’s grave in Bowen had an extra obelisk added to it in 1964 by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland crediting him as “the first known white resident of North Queensland”. Gibson and Bealey, in their study of Queensland monuments, draw attention to the many raised to “free settlement,” to efface the convict past (Gibson and Besley 70-71).
- 5 Certain terms return constantly on these memorials, notably that of “pioneer”. A rough count on the Monuments Australia website reveals some 450 memorials across Australia that include “pioneer” in their wording: they celebrate categories such as “pioneer women”; “German pioneers” as well as families and individual settlers,² sometimes described through their occupation as pastoralists, craftsmen or local notables. The

etymology of pioneer is that of the foot soldier who prepares the way for an army – not perhaps an archaic use in this case: McKenna notes that pastoral development and settlement generally relied heavily on forced and exploited Aboriginal labour (144).

- 6 Underlying the monuments to white settlement is a narrative of development, productivity and initiative. The role of violence in enforcing Aboriginal dispossession is – as we will see – almost never evoked; rather it is implied that the right to land has been earned through the pioneering spirit of the settlers. The monuments to the explorers who ‘opened up’ the land to development, as some of the explorer memorials explicitly state, complement this pioneer narrative of land won through bravery, enterprise and hard work. The very term ‘settlement’ – a pacific term – found on many white memorials, implicitly contrasts the supposedly nomadic, transitory occupation of land by the Indigenous peoples with the permanent investment of the whites in the development of the country. The memorial to mark the Bicentenary erected on Marine Parade Bellara (Queensland) by federal, regional and local agencies records the “Achievements Since Settlement”.
- 7 Occasionally memorials were erected by whites to “faithful” Aboriginals who had contributed to exploration and settlement. Yuranigh, who accompanied the surveyor-general Major Thomas Mitchell’s expedition in 1846, is mentioned on a plaque unveiled in 1946 as one of a party that “opened up the pastoral lands of central Queensland for general settlement” (“Major Mitchell”).³ His grave site was marked with a headstone in 1852, honouring his “native courage, honesty and fidelity.” Jackey Jackey (Galmarra), one of the few survivors of Edward Kennedy’s doomed expedition of 1848 in search of a site for a port in North Queensland, is commemorated as Kennedy’s “faithful companion” on a cairn erected in 1960 at Bamaga airport. Although he was the only member of the expedition to reach its objective, Port Albany, it was not until 2015 that the Australian Museum acknowledged Galmarra’s status as an “Aboriginal explorer” and its “real hero”.

2. The marginalization of Indigenous memory

- 8 Henderson’s survey of monuments and memorials in New South Wales reveals that a mere 8, or 0.2%, were Indigenous at the time of the Bicentenary. Statistics compiled by Monuments Australia show that this figure had risen marginally to 40, or 0.8% by 2012, however the Aboriginal presence in the state’s commemorative landscape remains negligible.
- 9 It is against this commemorative background that this article studies the far fewer monuments raised that explicitly commemorate episodes in the violent conflict between Aboriginals and settlers. These monuments can be roughly divided into three – overlapping – phases: in the first, lasting well into the twentieth century, the only monuments that explicitly evoked the deaths that accompanied colonisation were those that were raised to the white agents of violence (violence frequently referred to euphemistically at the time as “dispersal”) or those who were victims of Aboriginal violence. In the second phase, from the 1980s, a few scattered memorials began to be raised to commemorate the killing of Aborigines. In the context of a developing debate over the extent of colonial violence, the ‘History Wars’, and the politicisation of the issue of an Apology to the Stolen Generations, the civil society Reconciliation movement began to use memorialisation of the Frontier Wars as a means to bypass official resistance to the recognition of Aboriginal suffering and dispossession. In the third and final phase, in the

last decade, the campaigning by Aborigines has become more prominent and the focus has tended to shift from the Aborigines as the passive victims of massacres, to commemorating the role of their warriors in defence of country.

- 10 Many monuments were raised in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century to whites who had been killed by Aborigines; they are named, and even when civilians, may be described as heroes or heroines⁴, who were “sacrificed” in the advance of civilisation. It is the whites, not the Aborigines who are “massacred”.⁵ In this first phase, the deaths of Aborigines are only rarely recorded and then as the anonymous subjects of justifiable reprisals. On 27 August 2012, in his first land handback ceremony as Governor General, Peter Hollingworth apologised for the massacre of up to 100 members of the Kaytetye people at Barrow Creek in 1874, acknowledging that: “while there are graves here to remind visitors of the tragic killing of two telegraph station employees in 1874, there is no memorial for the subsequent killings of Aboriginal people” (McGuirk).
- 11 It is noteworthy that as late as 1913, monuments were still being raised to whites who had undertaken acts of violence against Aborigines. The Explorers’ Monument in Fremantle, raised in 1913, commemorates the actions of Maitland Brown, who was the “intrepid leader” of a “punitive party” against the Aborigines in reprisal for the killing of the explorers Painter, Harding and Goldwyer. The murderous actions of the natives are generally represented as unmotivated; they may be described as “treacherous” as on the Explorers’ monument, their white victims not killed but “murdered.” The events are decontextualised: what came before or after the incident highlighted on the memorial is unstated, the brutal and indiscriminate reprisals that often followed the killing of whites, undocumented.
- 12 Only the names given to features of the landscape and sometimes parts of towns⁶ record the violence that happened there. Blackfellows Creek in far north Queensland records not a watering hole used by Aborigines but the site where bodies were found after a massacre that took place around 1875. Skull Creek in the Northern Territory takes its name from the bleached bones found there after a massacre in 1874. Battle Mountain (far north west Queensland) records the massacre of the Kalkatunga people in 1884 by a force composed of native police and European settlers.
- 13 As white occupation of the continent was completed, violent confrontation between whites and Aborigines became less frequent, although it continued on the frontiers of settlement into the 1920s as the 1928 massacre at Coniston in the Northern Territory testifies. The middle of the twentieth century saw extensive commemoration of white survival: it is striking how many memorials mark the anniversaries of settlement, whether the centenary, the hundred and fiftieth or the hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary, they represent potent milestones of longevity and successful survival. Noteworthy are the many memorials dedicated to the 150th anniversary, over 50 memorials. Although many memorials to the gazetting or founding of towns were erected between the 1950s and 1970s, they show no concession to awareness of Aboriginal dispossession. Once again, the Aboriginal experience of colonisation is absent.

3. Recovering Aboriginal narratives of frontier conflict

- 14 The second phase in memorialisation of the Frontier Wars, with the gradual and often contested appearance of the first memorials to the Black victims of the Frontier Wars, can

be roughly dated from the 1980s. The 1967 referendum overwhelmingly accorded the Aborigines the right to be counted as citizens in the census, and for the Commonwealth, not the States, to exercise control over Aboriginal affairs. A burgeoning consciousness amongst white Australians of Aboriginal disadvantage in a period of rapid social and political change and a more assertive Aboriginal movement challenged the unofficial apartheid exercised in much of rural Australia.⁷ This period too saw the start of the Land Rights movement, as a strike by Aboriginal stockmen for equal wages in 1966 progressed to a demand that their traditional lands be restored to them.⁸ However white society was very slow to acknowledge – as the 1988 bicentennial slogan adopted by the Aborigines declared – that “White Australia has a Black History”.

- 15 The Bicentenary of 1988 was a catalyst in mobilising the forces of opposition to the long dominant narrative, when, in the face of the unquestioning, celebratory tone of the official commemorations and the neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australia Day celebrations, more than 40,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians from all around the country marched through Sydney to Hyde Park in one of the largest demonstrations the country had seen since the Vietnam moratorium demonstrations. The Bicentenary saw the creation of a large number of monuments and memorials all across Australia that celebrated the nation’s birth through narratives of discovery, exploration and pioneering, but neglected the cost to the Indigenous peoples.⁹ Only the Aboriginal Memorial at the National Gallery in Canberra, an installation of 200 hollow log coffins from Central Arnhem Land, commemorated all the Indigenous people who, since 1788, had lost their lives defending their land.
- 16 A few scattered memorials began to appear in the 1980s erected by Aborigines themselves to challenge the dominant narrative. One of the first, in 1984, was erected by the Kalkadoon/Kalkatunga people, on the centenary of the massacre at Battle Mountain mentioned above, to record their survival. The wording states that the Kalkatunga tribe “fought one of Australia’s historical battles of resistance against a para-military force of European settlers and the Queensland Native Mounted Police” (“Kalkadoon/Kalkatunga Memorial”). Another memorial, erected in the bicentennial year on the initiative of a local doctor in consultation with the Mitakoodi Aboriginal Corporation, celebrated Aboriginal culture and drew attention to “European dispossession”. Explosives destroyed the memorial in 1992, after it had been repeatedly vandalised (Gibson and Besley 53-54).
- 17 To commemorate the Flying Foam Massacre on Murujuga Burrup Peninsula, Western Australia in 1868, local Aborigines created a cairn of standing stones, later marked with a plaque.¹⁰ By 2015, most of the stones had been pushed over or damaged in deliberate attacks by vandals (McKenna 158).
- 18 The Noongar people lobbied the West Australian government for a decade to erect a statue to the warrior Yagan who had been killed in 1833, his head removed and sent to Britain as an anthropological curiosity. That monument, inaugurated on Heirisson Island, Perth, in 1984, was vandalised in 1997 and again in 2002, the head of the statue removed on two occasions before the Yagan Memorial Park was opened by the Premier of Western Australia, Colin Barnett, in 2010.
- 19 The Explorers’ Monument on the Esplanade in Fremantle which commemorates the 1864 La Grange expedition illustrates the growing challenge to the white narrative. The memorial’s 1913 wording reads:

This monument was erected by CJ Brockman as a fellow bush wanderer’s tribute to the memories of Painter, Harding and Goldwyer. Earliest explorers after Grey and

Gregory of this “terra incognita”. Attacked at night by the treacherous natives they were murdered at Boola Boola near La Grange Bay on the 13th November 1864. Also as an appreciative token of remembrance of Maitland Brown one of the pioneer pastoralists and a premier politician of this state. Intrepid leader of the government search and punitive party. His remains together with the sad relics of the ill fated three recovered with great risk and danger from lone wilds repose under a public monument in the East Perth Cemetery. “Lest We Forget”.

- 20 Aboriginal communities protested that the memorial failed to acknowledge the outcome of the settlers’ retaliatory raid: the La Grange Massacre of an estimated 20 Karadjarie people at Injudinah Swamp. In 1994 the municipality placed a new plaque on the monument, with a counter-narrative text juxtaposed to the original:

This plaque was erected by people who found the monument before you offensive. The monument describes the events at La Grange from one perspective only, the view point of the white ‘settlers’. No mention is made of the right of Aboriginal people to defend their land or of the history of provocation which led to the explorers’ deaths. The ‘punitive party’ mentioned here ended in the deaths of somewhere around twenty Aboriginal people. The whites were well-armed and equipped.

Lest We Forget Mapajarriya-nyalaku.

- 21 Over the years since the second plaque was affixed, the monument has been subject to vandalism: the new plaque was stolen in 1995 while on one occasion the head of Maitland Brown was removed.
- 22 The Pinjarra memorial to the Noongar people who died fighting Captain Stirling's soldiers in 1834 has no wording because the Council voted in 1998 that it be described as a “battle”, while the Noongars insisted that it was a “massacre” that included the killing of women and children. In 2010 a compromise was struck: the conflict would be referred to as a “confrontation”, in a text that spoke of the peaceful construction of “a united nation for future generations”, words that Jennifer Harris argues “invoke the familiar, soothing super narrative of Australian progress” (55).

4. The struggle over commemorative space

- 23 These incidents reveal how conflictual the issue of commemorating the Frontier Wars remained in the 1990s and even to the present day. The backlash to the Aboriginal counter-narrative was both political and ideological: the History Wars of the early 2000s centred on the question of the impact of white settlement as historians who decried the “black armband” view of history, led by Keith Windschuttle, denied that there had been systematic or indeed even widespread killing of Aborigines. This claim was fairly comprehensively debunked by many authors, including Robert Manne, Bain Attwood, Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, even if it still occupies a largely unchallenged place amongst the tenets of the right. The debate encouraged historians to research this area, however, and propelled the issue to the forefront of public consciousness.
- 24 Increasingly, historians took up the call for memorialisation of the Frontier Wars. In defence of his call for memorialisation of black/white armed conflict at the Australian War Memorial, Ken Inglis quoted in the 2008 edition of *Sacred Places* from the *Atlas of Australian Wars*, published in 2001 and on display at the Memorial, that refers to the ‘brutal, bloody and sustained confrontation that took place on every significant piece of land across the continent’ until the 1930s, with the characteristics of a civil war (504).

Inglis gave further examples of the use of the term 'war' in contemporary accounts of engagements with the Aborigines of Australia, and commented on the differences with the representation of confrontation between Maori and whites in New Zealand as fully-fledged war. By 1915, he writes, there were some thirty memorials in New Zealand to men who fell in battle against the Maori and "they were inscribed to men who *fell*. Nobody was said to have *fallen* in battle against the natives of Australia" (23).

- 25 The determined exclusion of the Aboriginal wars (or even of acknowledgement that armed conflict took place) from the Australian War Memorial illustrates the inertia of this institution and the obstacles to recognition posed by its legacy. The nation's war memory, education and official ceremonies and commemorations are largely governed by an agenda set by this institution (in a way that is unlike other countries) that is in turn directly subject to government oversight and interference. Its generous budget is the object of a special grant, it is answerable to the Department of Veteran Affairs through annual reports and is subject through the military members of its board to the conservative influence of the RSL and veterans' associations. If the centenary of World War One has seen a flurry of initiatives undertaken by the Memorial to record and highlight the participation of 'Black Diggers' – Aboriginal soldiers - in the regular forces, commemorating the Aboriginal warriors of the colonial conflicts at the Memorial seems as remote as ever.
- 26 Initiatives such as the Reconciliation Movement, the establishment of National Reconciliation week (held at the end of May each year from 1996) and Sorry Day (instituted 26 May 1998), sought, often in the face of official indifference or opposition,¹¹ public recognition and an apology for the suffering of the Aborigines in the course of colonisation. The first was at Myall Creek¹² in central New South Wales where a conference on reconciliation initiated by the Uniting Church in 1998 led to the construction of the monument as "an act of reconciliation".¹³ The inaugural ceremony in 2000 brought together descendants of the victims, survivors and perpetrators of the massacre; it has become an annual event. The Coniston Massacre Memorial Plaque at Arrwek was dedicated in 2003 on the 75th anniversary of the massacre of 60-70 Aborigines in a series of reprisal raids led by Constable William Murray. Once again, it brought together descendants of the Aboriginal people killed and family members of Constable Murray (Liza Dale-Hallett, Murray's great niece). In 2008 a monument was also raised at Baxter's Well, site of one of the reprisals.
- 27 A plaque was unveiled to the warrior Multuggerah in Duggan Park, Toowoomba (Queensland) in 2005 – an initiative of students at Middle Ridge State School who took up the cause expounded by local historian Bob Dansie that Multuggerah was a patriot who fought for his people but had been largely forgotten. The local newspaper, *The Chronicle* commented that "As is usually the way with history, there are two sides to the Multuggerah story, and both, one from the white perspective and the other from the traditional owners, are detailed on the plaque" ("Plaque Honours Aboriginal Warrior"). Renewed community interest in the story led to a campaign to name the planned Toowoomba bypass Multugerrah Way in honour of the Aboriginal warrior (Bradfield).¹⁴
- 28 The Appin Massacre Monument, commemorating the 1816 killing of at least fourteen members of the Dharawal nation, probably many more, was dedicated in 2007 at Cataract Dam, Campbelltown (New South Wales). Once again it is an initiative closely associated with the Reconciliation movement, instigated by the Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group

and sponsored by Wollondilly Council.¹⁵ The wording on the plaque: “we are deeply sorry,” implicitly reflects a white perspective in its assumption of responsibility.

29 These memorials were largely the result of the collaboration of well-meaning local whites and Aborigines in the context of Reconciliation.

30 In the last few years, the issue of memorialising the Frontier Wars has been taken up by Aboriginal activists outside of this context. For the past four years a ‘shadow’ march has followed the Anzac Day march in Canberra to mark the thousands who died in the Frontier Wars. In 2015 and again in 2016 they met with police obstruction and were prevented from laying wreaths at the Anzac monument, or from marching with an Aboriginal flag – even in the case of an Aboriginal ex-serviceman (“‘This Day Is Not For You!’”).

31 The issue has been taken up at a national level by Aboriginal organisations, notably the Tent Embassy in Canberra, which in 2016 launched a petition for an official enquiry to investigate:

the Frontier Massacres of Sovereign Tribal Original People from 1788 until the present day and produce a proper report into the matter. We also ask for an Official National Day of Remembrance to occur every year for the Frontier Massacre of the Original people in Australia from 1788 onwards. This Day of remembrance is to occur on a significant date during colonisation, not ANZAC day, as this is a separate issue.

We also ask that a proper memorial be constructed on ANZAC Parade in front of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra to honour our Ancestors who were slaughtered during the colonisation of Australia. (Locke)

32 It is no longer just white historians demanding recognition for the Black Wars – as had tended to be the case – but Aborigines taking charge of telling their own history and demanding that recognition be paid at the highest, national level, including at the iconic institution that is the Australian War Memorial.

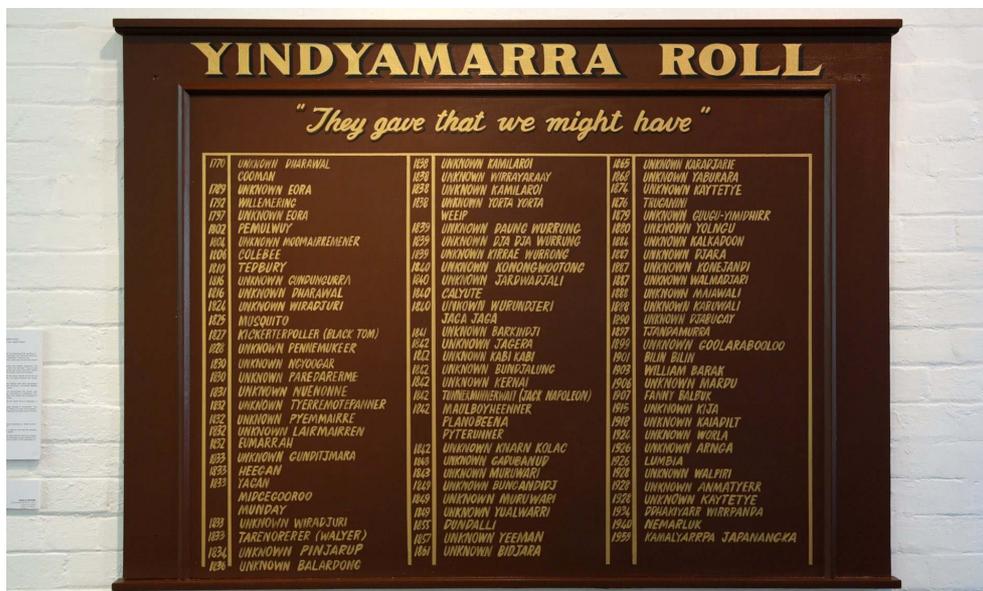
33 Note also the recent shift as Aboriginal protestors and activists demand recognition not only for Aborigines as the victims of massacres, but for the role of their warriors in defence of their lands. A notable example is that of the “Rainbow warrior” Pemulwuy who kept the British army at bay for years around Parramatta and the Hawkesbury in the late eighteenth century. He has been the subject of several recent histories and documentaries by Indigenous writers and film makers and his memory has been invoked by campaigners for Aboriginal rights as “Australia’s first ever Aboriginal resistance fighter”.¹⁶ Aboriginal artist Djon Mundine’s permanent memorial to the Eora nation, an engraving of images of Pemulwuy and Bennelong on the rock between the Opera House and the Botanical Gardens in Sydney, was commissioned by the 2010 Sydney Biennale (Taylor). A plaque to Pemulwuy was unveiled at the National Museum in Canberra in March 2015.

34 Massacres feature prominently in the growing corpus of art work representing Aboriginal history which draw on oral history of conflicts between Aborigines and European settlers undocumented in written histories, including vivid paintings of the Bedford Downs Massacre by Indigenous artists Rover Thomas (Joolama) (1985), Timmy Timms (2000), and Paddy Bedford (Gooomooji) (2001, 2002) which depict the poisoning and killing of a group of Gija and Worla men in the eastern Kimberley region in 1924. It is perhaps an indication of changing attitudes to public commemoration of the Black Wars that Rover Thomas’

Ruby Plains Massacre 1 was unveiled as part of the exhibition “For Country, For Nation” at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in March 2017.¹⁷

- 35 In this vein, the work by Wiradjuri artist Amala Groom: the Yindyamarra¹⁸ Roll (2014) is a powerful statement interrogating and undermining the legacy of colonialism. The purpose of the Roll is to pay tribute to the warriors who died in the Frontier Wars, but also to those – men, women and children – who lost their lives in the massacres that resulted from the depredating impacts of white colonisation. The Roll lists the names of these warriors and those fallen through massacres when ‘known’, and when ‘unknown’ the language groups to which they belonged, to represent the devastation of life, language, lore and culture. Groom’s appropriation of the Honour Roll uses popular and instantly recognisable white Australian symbology to question the lack of recognition of those who resisted colonial invasion, through the contrast with the Honour Rolls in RSL clubs across Australia that commemorate Australian soldiers who fought in foreign, and often imperial, wars.

Amala Groom, *Yindyamarra Roll*, 2004



© AMALA GROOM

5. Conclusion: rediscovery history

- 36 The 150th anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet on 26 January 1938 was marked by the Aboriginal Progressive Association as a Day of Mourning. The term “Invasion Day” gained national prominence during the Bicentennial protests but only very recently has there been a public campaign supported by some of the left-leaning media to change the date of “Australia Day”.¹⁹ The widespread Invasion Day protests on Australia Day 2017 which saw tens of thousands march in the state capitals in support of a date change and the City of Fremantle cancel festivities on 26 January in favour of a “culturally inclusive” celebration two days later, point to memorial conflict coalescing around the official narrative that Australian history began in 1788. The public debate saw a polarisation of opinion around progressives led by Warren Mundine, Head of the Prime Minister’s

Indigenous Advisory Council, who called for a date change to reflect the devastating impact of settlement on Indigenous Australia, and conservative opinion expressed most controversially by the Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce (seconding Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull), who complained of “out of control political correctness” and suggested – in perhaps a dismissive allusion to the growing number of counter-memorials to the frontier wars – that protestors should “crawl under a rock and hide for a bit” (Belot and Holman).

- 37 Changing the date of the National Day is, however, only the most visible tip of a broader, underlying debate over commemorative ellipsis and the dislocation of Australia’s Indigenous past and its history since settlement.
- 38 The current acrimony over the planned memorial to the Frontier Wars in Hobart, Tasmania reveals how fraught the remembrance of the conflict still remains at the national, and also at the regional and local levels. The Museum of Old and New Art (Mona) unveiled in late 2016 the concept plan for a \$2bn waterfront development at Macquarie Point, which would include a Truth and Reconciliation Art Park.²⁰ Some local Aborigines consider they have not been consulted on the design proposed by the contemporary art gallery. They have also accused the conservative mayor of ignorant and offensive remarks because she said the memorial should not be a “guilt-ridden place” (Wahlquist).
- 39 Narratives of discovery, exploration, pioneering and the birth of the nation in imperial wars overseas have tended to conceal the traces of the Black Wars on the frontier for the better part of two centuries. Their partial recovery in the wake of Reconciliation and the Aboriginal land rights movement has been inherently spatial, engaging an historiography of locality which might be termed (after McKenna) “rediscovery history”. It involves reconstructing the deep history of place from an Indigenous perspective while simultaneously inverting conventional readings of place-identity, a process which Foucault sees as constitutive of “alternative spaces”, or heterotopia (15). The sharp juxtaposition of official and alternative narratives in the *lieux de mémoire* of frontier conflict, and their unresolved tensions, speak to the struggle to recover and reinscribe Indigenous history in the Australian landscape and its potential for the political renewal of commemorative space.

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NOTES

1. While a national Boer War Memorial is to be inaugurated on Anzac Parade on 31 May 2017, the 2016 Aboriginal Tent Embassy petition calling for "a proper memorial to be constructed on ANZAC Parade in front of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra to honour our Ancestors who were slaughtered during the colonisation of Australia" has gone unheeded.
2. Memorial tablet erected in 1929, the year of Western Australia's centenary, at the graves of Peter Chidlow and Edward Jones, two "pioneers who were speared to death by Aborigines in 1837".
3. The plaque marks the centenary of the discovery of the site on which today stands the town of Blackall.
4. 1886 Commemorative Fountain in Charlotte Street Cooktown dedicated to "MRS WATSON The Heroine of Lizard Island, Cooktown, North Queensland, A.D. 1881." The fountain commemorates Mary Watson, who died with her baby and a Chinese servant from lack of water after escaping from Lizard Island after an attack by aborigines.
5. Cairn at Hornet Bank Station. Unveiled 1957. Dedicated "In memory of the Fraser family who were massacred at the station homestead by the Aborigines on Oct 27 1857".
6. In the early 1860s at North Bundaberg, at least 15 to 20 Aborigines were killed in a "dispersal" by Native Police. This event, known as "Bierra bong" (meaning many deaths in the local Aboriginal language), later gave the name to Bundaberg's main street "Bourbong Street".
7. The "Freedom rides" of the second half of the 1960s saw young white and Aboriginal activists visit rural and regional towns to challenge the discriminatory practices often enforced in public places such as swimming pools, pubs and cinemas.
8. In 1966, 200 Aboriginal workers walked off Wave Hill pastoral station in a protest over wages that quickly became a claim for the restoration of their lands.

9. One such memorial, The Explorers Park in Ashfield (NSW), is located in Sydney's Inner West at the crossroads of the former Great Western and Hume highways where the explorers set out on their expeditions west and south into the interior.

10. The killing of two police officers and a local workman triggered reprisals in February-March 1868 resulting in the deaths of an unknown number of Yaburrara people with estimates ranging between 15 and 150 dead. The inscription reads: "Hereabouts in February 1868, a party of settlers from Roebourne shot and killed as many as 60 Yaburarra people in response to the killing of a European policeman in Nickol Bay. This incident has become known as the 'Flying Foam Massacre'."

On 17 February 2013, the 145th anniversary of the first massacre, Aboriginal elders and other leaders held the first Flying Foam Massacre Remembrance Day at the King Bay Massacre site. Supporting actions were held at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra, Western Australian Parliament, New South Wales Parliament, Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, and in some regional centres.

11. Prime Minister John Howard refused to make an apology to the Aboriginal people. It was finally made in parliament by PM Kevin Rudd in 2008.

12. Approximately 30 Wirrayaraay people were massacred at Myall Creek in 1830. The subsequent court cases and the hanging of seven settlers for their role in the massacre was the first and last attempt by the colonial administration to use the law to control frontier conflict between settlers and Aboriginal people.

13. The inscription reads: "In memory of the Wirrayaraay people who were murdered on the slopes of this ridge in an unprovoked but premeditated act in the late afternoon of 10 June, 1838. Erected on 10 June 2000 by a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in an act of reconciliation, and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history. We will remember them Ngiyani winagay ganunga."

14. Multuggerah was a spiritual leader of the Jagera people who led resistance to settlement at the Battle of One Tree Hill (Tabletop Mountain) in 1843.

15. Ann Madsen, in a speech at the ceremony for the 200th anniversary held at the Campbelltown Arts Centre on 13 April 2016, declared: "This event is an opportunity for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people to come together, to physically walk together. Through this journey we have learnt that reconciliation occurs through listening (...) and learning from the stories of the people (...) remembering stories never told in history books (...) stories of people whose spirit survives."

16. From Aboriginal film maker Grant Leigh Saunders' two part documentary about Pemulwuy made for ABC TV Message Stick in 2010: *Pemulwuy: A War of Two Laws*.

17. Accounts of the massacres in the region only became known after publication of oral histories collected by the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project (EKIAP, 1989-99). We are grateful to John Potts (Macquarie University) for drawing our attention to these art works.

18. "Yindyamarra" is a Wiradjuri word meaning to "show honour, respect, to be patient and courteous".

19. It is only since 1994 that all states and territories have celebrated this date as an official public holiday. It was of course originally exclusive to the colony of New South Wales where it was known as Foundation Day.

20. The proposal, which has the support of the State Government and some Aboriginal leaders, includes a 650m x 75m art park, a major fire and light installation to celebrate 40,000 years of continuous culture in Tasmania, a Tasmanian Aboriginal history centre, living culture centre, library and education facilities.

ABSTRACTS

The Australian commemorative landscape has long been dominated by memorials to white settlement of the continent and their associated historical narratives of discovery, exploration, pioneering and the extra-territorial war memory of Anzac. This article considers how Indigenous narratives were marginalized or suppressed in the construction of that landscape and it examines, from geo-historiographical and political perspectives, the struggle over commemorative space and the contemporary movement to recover and reinscribe social memories of the Frontier or Black Wars in Australia's geography of remembrance.

Le paysage commémoratif australien accorde une place prépondérante aux mémoriaux à la colonisation blanche du continent et les récits historiques associés à la découverte, l'exploration, l'esprit pionnier, et l'extraterritorialité de la mémoire de guerre « Anzac ». Cet article considère comment la perspective indigène a été marginalisée ou supprimée dans la construction de ce paysage et il examine, d'un point de vue géo-historiographique et politique, la contestation de l'espace commémoratif et le mouvement contemporain en faveur de la redécouverte et la réinscription de la mémoire sociale des guerres de la frontière, ou « guerres noires », dans la géographie du souvenir de l'Australie.

INDEX

Keywords: Australia, commemorative landscape, black wars, white settlement, monuments, geohistory, social space, geographies of remembrance

Mots-clés: Australie, paysage mémoriel, guerres noires, colonisation blanche, monuments, géohistoire, espace social, géographies du souvenir

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