

United States, the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature in Canada, and the York Castle Museum, York, England. Macdonald cited Disneyworld's Epcot Centre as a particularly important model.

- 22 A useful introduction to the debates is Harrison, "Completing a Circle." See also R. Phillips, "Show Times."
- 23 For an excellent case study, see Butler, *Contested Representations*.
- 24 See Canadian Museums Association (CMA), *Turning the Page*; and Nicks, "Partnerships in Developing Cultural Resources." On the broader context for the revolution in museum anthropology occurring during these years, see Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes*.
- 25 See Nicks, "Partnerships in Developing Cultural Resources," 87–94.
- 26 See Laforet and Webster, "The First Peoples' Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization"; and Andrea Laforet, personal communication, 2005.
- 27 The members of the advisory committee were Kanatakta (Mohawk), Mandy Brown (Secwepemc), Denis Fraser (Metis), Tom Hill (Oneida), Alooook Ipellie (Inuit), Noel Knockwood (Mi'kmaq), Melvin Laroque (Dene), Lee Ann Martin (Mohawk), Emmanuel Metallic (Mi'kmaq), John Moses (Mohawk/Delaware), Tyrone Potts (North Peigan), Nicholette Prince (Carrier), Gloria Cranmer Webster (Kwakwaka'wakw), Tommy Weetaluktuk (Inuit), and Eldon Yellowhorn, (North Peigan). For a discussion of specific models of collaboration in museum exhibitions, see R. B. Phillips, "Introduction, Community Collaboration in Exhibitions."
- 28 Laforet and Webster, "The First Peoples' Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization."
- 29 See Cairns, *Citizens Plus*.

"Unfinished Business"

Public History in a Postcolonial Nation

Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton

THE NEW MILLENNIUM has had particular resonance in Australia for the process of "reconciliation," the national term chosen to mark a putative turning point in the relationship between Australia's indigenous peoples and the continuing legacy of European colonialism. Originally understood as a project that embraced both "the legislative pragmatics of national policy and the moral complexities of national memory and local historicity,"¹ the rhetoric articulated and the actions carried out in the name of reconciliation were intended to focus and corral debate on how much the future of the nation was linked to the now fraught understanding of the colonial past.

A prominent indigenous academic, Marcia Langton, has argued that reconciliation is condemned to remain "unfinished business" while there is no recognized treaty between Aboriginal peoples and white Australians. But "unfinished business" is also an apt description of the attempts so far made to understand or incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in the many sites and institutions that now represent Australia's past to the public. Public history is an increasingly important subfield of theory and historical practice, where its practitioners are often

in the front lines, struggling to come to terms with new and conflicting interpretations of national history.

Public history in Australia has been defined as “the practice of history by academically trained historians working for public agencies or as freelancers outside the universities.”² Public historians may work in heritage conservation, commissioned history, museums, the media, education, radio, film, interactive multimedia, and other areas. They are people who have asked the question: “What is history for?”³ And they are concerned with addressing the relationship between audience, practice, and social context.⁴ Public history, however, is also an elastic term that can mean different things to different people, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

The “democratization” of history making and the rise of professional historians’ associations have also blurred simple definitions. Filmmakers, for example, are not described as public historians because they are usually trained in the techniques of filmmaking rather than history. Yet their work often reaches larger audiences than even national museums. The tension between these two directions—to apply proper standards of expertise and training to those working in the field on the one hand and the increasing number of history-making sites and audiences for public history on the other—has helped shape the field in Australia and led to many contradictions in practice. Professionally accredited public historians, for instance, are not necessarily those most likely to have an important influence on people’s knowledge and understanding of the past.

A number of graduate courses over the last twenty years have made a significant contribution to the training and higher profile of public historians in various arenas, and a reflexive body of literature is emerging in Australian public history. With public history well established in Australia, this exploratory article begins to chart some of the issues emerging at a critical time of our history in relation to race and nation. Many of these issues are echoed in other Western countries at this time. The particular Australian inflections relate to a contemporary context. These include the struggle of indigenous peoples to have recognized a history which acknowledges custodianship of the land before the British invasion, the centrality of land to national discourses of Euro-Australian identity, and the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people by the Australian state since invasion, particularly the “stolen generations” policy, whereby young Ab-

original children were taken from their families and sent to institutions.⁵ For some non-Indigenous Australians, this involves coming to terms with a past in which their ancestors have been responsible for grievous wrongs. These vital issues are being played out in public arenas at a time when Australians are experiencing perhaps the most profound renegotiations of their histories to date.

WHITE AUSTRALIA

It has long been a commonplace in Australian history that one of the most pressing and ever-present dangers perceived to be confronting white races on the vast Australian continent was the potential degradation of their racial inheritance. Immigration programs and policies and official dictates pertaining to land settlement sought both to keep pure the “crimson thread of kinship” that the colonial premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, claimed ran through all imperial veins and to build, as William Charles Wentworth had dreamt in 1823, a “new Britannia in another world.”⁶ As an “immigrant nation”—a “new world” society which emerged from the process of colonialism—Australia’s colonies, transformed in 1901 into a federation of states, were to evolve cultural institutions and public rituals derived almost exclusively from British models.⁷ All of these contributed to a public construction of a colonial and post-colonial history which, officially endorsed and predicated on dominant value systems and ideologies, located a shared past and present—and by implication a secure future—in a broader imperial context. Thus ethnic consciousness was a principal determinant of nationalism. Indeed, it was believed that British blood and stock mixed in the crucible of an ancient, pristine continent would produce a superior British race, the “Australian man.” Such an ideology underwrote the legend of ANZAC (the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) which cast a bronze, loyal, and laconic white Anglo male as the Australian national type after the disastrous First World War military defeat in 1915 at Gallipoli, Turkey, when Australian soldiers sacrificed themselves for country and Empire.⁸ The enormous social dislocation caused by the war, combined with the legend of Anzac, was to generate a flood of war memorials throughout Australian cities, suburbs, and country towns. (See fig. 1.)



1 Detail from a frieze on the monumental Hyde Park War Memorial in Sydney. Photo: Paul Ashton.

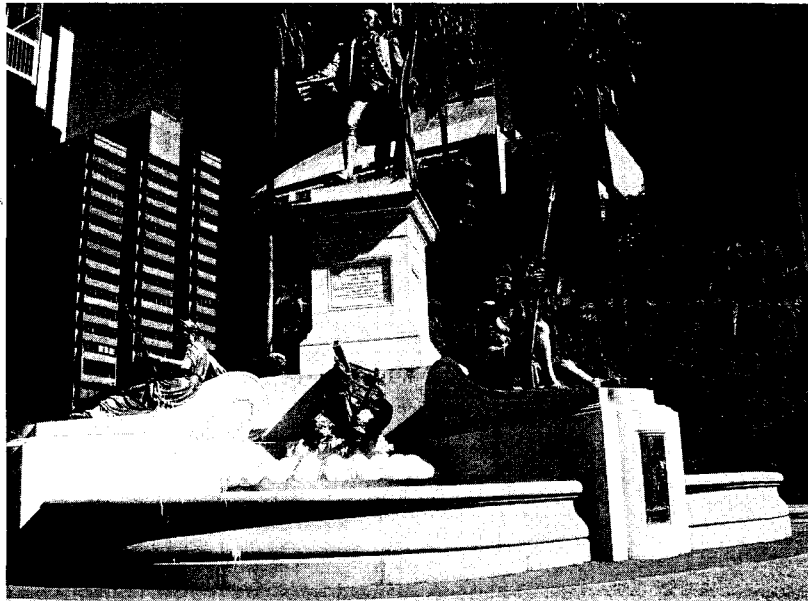
Monuments and memorials, public landscapes, processions, rituals of “social integration,” art galleries, museums, and official histories became part of a process described in the second half of the twentieth century by Donald Horne as “the great drama, endlessly playing . . . of maintaining definitions of the nation and its social orders.”⁹ During the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth, however, this great drama was ultimately an imperial, masculine narrative. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ stories were all but banished while their skeletal remains and artifacts were corralled in repositories of scientific imperialism such as the Australian Museum which, the first of its kind on the continent, was inaugurated in Sydney in 1827.¹⁰ In a modern new-settler society, advancement depended on perceiving the indigenous peoples as “primitive” even while romanticizing them as close to nature.

Grass-roots public history making by Europeans was designed by and large to provide local and regional links in a historical chain of imperial being. Successive generations of pioneers—first pastoral and agrarian, later municipal and suburban—forged bonds of mateship and cooperation on outposts of the British Empire as part of a worldwide (albeit faltering in

the twentieth century) imperial, organic community. This historical narrative was not significantly challenged until the emergence of civil rights movements and the rise of the New Social History in universities during the 1970s, marking the beginnings of critical public history. Imperial historical meanings, publicly inscribed on landscapes and transmitted through cultural institutions and practices, had also to accommodate the rise of Australian nationalism in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth. There were some tensions in that period between the “imperial” and the “national,” though national identity was centrally predicated on race. For the first half of the twentieth century, Australia was kept “racially pure” through the “White Australia policy” (1901), an immigration restriction act and one of the first pieces of legislation passed by the new federal Parliament.¹¹ Independence and individualism, derived historically from the notion of independent Australian Britons, remained the basis of the masculine social type which served as a means of normalizing and managing other definitions of Australianness, even with extensive immigration after the Second World War. Aboriginal and other diverse voices have in recent years challenged traditional and official interpretations of Australian history. But they have yet to change the dominant narrative thrust of what it means to be Australian.

Monuments and memorials of the classical style were initially the primary vehicles for representing colonial versions of a public past. Leaving aside vice-regally inscribed obelisks, columns, and clock towers which were built to impose order and discipline on the landscape and its inhabitants, monuments, albeit in small numbers, began to be constructed in New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land (later renamed Tasmania) from the 1820s.¹² Significantly, the first few of these revered the English “discoverer” of Australia, Captain James Cook (along, in one instance, with Sir Joseph Banks, who accompanied Cook on his voyage). Two decades later, homage began to be paid to governors who had advanced the political interests of free inhabitants in the penal colonies and fostered agrarian and other forms of capitalism.

The earliest governors, tainted with convictism, were to be excluded from such memorialization until the close of the nineteenth century. A monument to the founding governor of New South Wales, Captain Arthur Phillip, was not erected in the City of Sydney until 1897.¹³ Convict origins, however,



2 Part of the statue erected in 1897 in the Botanical Gardens, Sydney, to the first governor of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip. Below an imposing figure of a white woman reclining on a decorative base with the inscription "Commerce" is a small Aboriginal figure, symbolically at the end of a chain of being and literally under colonial rule. Photo: Paul Ashton.

were obscured in this sculptured narrative through a neoclassical treatment that took as its principal themes maritime trade between an industrialized homeland and commodity-rich colonies and an umbilical, if simplistic, cultural and biological connection with the motherland. (See fig. 2, above.)

Exploration and discovery, principal themes in the founding myths of empire, dominated public representations of postinvasion nineteenth-century history. Ironically extending imperial maritime endeavor into arid parts of the continent, many early colonial explorers perished while in search of a supposed great inland sea. Others sought out navigable rivers or exploitable resources. A number of public edifices bore features commemorating and celebrating these men who helped push the frontiers deeper and deeper into Aboriginal territories. Sydney's Land Department building, the first stage of which was completed in 1876, had statues of numerous explorers incorporated into its three-story sandstone façade. Among them were

Charles Sturt, John Oxley, Hamilton Hume, William Hovell, and Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, the intrepid surveyor general of New South Wales from 1828 to 1855. From such icons of Crown land and empire, memorial links spread out to remote parts of the colonies, although there, on occasion, race and empire were configured under a different rubric.¹⁴

Near the tiny country town of Molong in New South Wales, a gravestone marks an individual Aborigine's involvement with one of Mitchell's expeditions:

TO NATIVE COURAGE, HONESTY AND FIDELITY
YURANIGH
WHO ACCOMPANIED THE EXPEDITION OF DISCOVERY
INTO TROPICAL AUSTRALIA IN
1846
LIES BURIED HERE
ACCORDING TO THE RITES
OF HIS COUNTRYMEN
AND THIS SPOT WAS DEDICATED AND ENCLOSED
BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AUTHORITY
IN 1852

Imperial demands—fidelity, courage, and sacrifice—had been reinforced in other ways. While Mitchell was instrumental in having the monument erected, he had also ordered a massacre of local Aborigines to facilitate European appropriation of land.¹⁵ Recently, as a testament to more inclusive times, this site has been added to the New South Wales Heritage Register, with carved trees by Yuranigh's Wiradjuri countrymen surrounding the headstone, in a sign of bicultural respect.

Until recently, Aboriginal figures were largely absent in urban representations of colonization, apart from their role as treacherous menace.¹⁶ A statue to Burke and Wills unveiled in Melbourne during 1865 shows a swaggering and muscular Robert O'Hara Burke standing next to William Wills, his second in command, both staring death boldly in the face. From a landowning Irish Protestant gentry family, Burke, the daredevil son of empire—a "death or glory man . . . [who] achieved both"—entered in 1860 into what the governor of Victoria later called "the glorious race across the continent."¹⁷ Bizarre, perplexing, and ending in disaster, the expedition cost over sixty thousand pounds and the lives of seven of its eight members.

One member of the party survived, having been taken in by local Aborigines. Burke's ignorance and imperious manner, however, led him to fire at Aborigines who were attempting to bring fish to the exhausted explorers.

Those who led parties in search of Burke were to open up fresh lands for profitable pastoral expansion. Publicly, the fate of Burke and Wills provided a tragic element to the saga of colonial progress. Their loss as ultimate sacrifice for King and Country was reclaimed by the nouveau riche colony of Victoria, flush with capital from the recent gold rushes, in two figures of imperial heroism. Filmmaker Bob Weis was to satirize the crazy exploits of this expedition in his film *Wills and Burke: The Untold Story* (1985), alternatively known as "Lost." Much of the significance of the bronze memorial was lost on municipal authorities toward the end of the twentieth century. Burke and Wills perished in the desert. After a number of relocations over many years, the memorial found its final resting place in a Melbourne city square above a waterwall.¹⁸

MEMORIALS

Memorials remain one of the most contested and enduring forms of public history. They are both central objects for cementing shared cultural meanings about the past and blunt statements impossible to ignore. Anachronistic histories evident in nineteenth-century commemorations of explorers, battles, and pioneers now jostle for space in public places with broader, more democratized or diverse forms and monuments. Older memorials have also been contested in attempts to "remake history." In recent years there has been a gradual increase in the number of memorials to groups that were previously marginalized in the national psyche. The absence of earlier memorials to Aborigines, says Bronwyn Batten, is as significant as their increasing presence in the landscape since the 1980s. She refers to a growing desire by Aboriginal people to rework existing memorials or create new ones for memorializing their own people.¹⁹

During the Victorian sesquicentenary in 1984–85, a plaque was erected at an Aboriginal "keeping place" museum at Shepparton, a large country town, to commemorate a group of Aborigines who were massacred at Mount Dispersion—which was named by Europeans to commemorate the clash—during Major Thomas Mitchell's epic overland journey from Syd-



3 This public drinking fountain in the Sydney inner-city district of Glebe was originally unveiled by the governor, Lord Chelmsford, on August 2, 1909, to mark a municipal jubilee. It was restored in 1996 as part of a general refurbishment of the gateway to Glebe. Opened by another state governor, the fountain then took on a new layer of meaning as a memorial to the famous Aboriginal boxer Dave Sands. Photo: Paul Ashton.

ney to Victoria in 1836.²⁰ A public drinking fountain in the Sydney inner-city district of Glebe, erected in 1909 to mark the jubilee of municipal incorporation, was rededicated in 1996 to include a memorial to the popular Aboriginal boxer Dave Sands, who among eighty-seven wins out of one hundred fights had knocked out Britain's Randolph Turpin in the 1949 Empire middleweight championship. (See fig. 3, above; also fig. 4, p. 90) Acknowledging past atrocities by Europeans, a monument erected in 1972 at Polson cemetery in Hervey Bay, Queensland, gives voice to the role of South Sea Islanders in Queensland's development. Sixty-three thousand "Kanakas" were kidnapped between 1860 and 1901; their virtual slave labor underwrote the viability of the state's vital sugar industry. Racial tensions and an underlying culture of violence become palpable through this local monument, which marks fifty-five graves of the "unknown dead." Officially, nevertheless, narratives of conflict are often represented as events remote in time, as tales of disunity now superseded. Stories of nationhood have usually emphasized unity based on a cohesive collective memory. Despite the rhetoric of inclusivity in later years, national history still largely erases oppositional interests and produces some awkward juxtapositions.

There is a memorial to Australia's indigenous people on the pavement in Sydney's Royal Botanical Gardens near the sea wall, a place of leisure and contemplation. It is also in a space that people walk, ride, or run over. It was painted as part of a sculpture walk set up for the 2000 Olympics, along with a number of other creative works decorating the Olympic torch relay route. Though the project was initiated by local authorities, councils, government departments, and other bodies, Brenda Croft, the indigenous artist who created the work, has ensured that the purpose of the memorial is clear, though the meaning of the sculpture leaves much to the imagination. On the side is a commemorative plaque explaining it, in the manner of labels in a museum. Croft's own ambivalence to the state is revealed in her opening reference to the way her mother would embarrass her at school by scribbling in the margins of her (white) Australian history book, "This is not the truth." She uses this metaphor first to describe the installation as perhaps her own way of "scribbling in the margins" but then changes her mind: "or perhaps it's part of the frontline of indigenous history."²¹ This refers to the way she and other indigenous artists like Gordon Bennett and Leah King use their creative visual medium to subvert the traditional written historiography and also to document their own histories and create an interaction between the past and the present.

This is indeed an ambivalent memorial at a number of levels. Croft herself, though an "authentic" indigenous artist, comes from the Northern Territory and is therefore unfamiliar with the intimacies of the "local." (She had to consult with the local Cultural Heritage Officer, an employee of the state). The intention is to create a sanctioned "blackfella site of origin" that reflects a community bound principally by color and race—a "community" equally created by nonindigenous peoples for political purposes that call for "black and white" reconciliation at the national level. Croft aims to overcome the problems of earlier memorials and histories to indigenous people, that of assuming they are "of the past" and not a dynamic, creative society in the present, by drawing a link between the meaning of the site to the traditional local tribe and the role of the site in 1988 as the focus for Aboriginal contestation of the Bicentenary celebrations, two hundred years after the European invasion. In the process we move from a group imagined in the past as having ties to place to a group today who are imagined as a community bounded by race.

Although ostensibly place-centered, this is also a memorial without anchoring—a history that cannot bridge the gulf between traditional localized cultural practices and late twentieth-century genealogies of the struggle for survival, a fracturing so profound it cannot be grafted onto Western understandings of the past and made whole. Like almost all recent memorials to indigenous peoples, this one is about loss yet determined not to be an elegy. Angelika Bammer raises the issue of "the relationship between the experience of cultural displacement and the construction of cultural identity"—a relationship "marked by the tension of the historically vital double move between marking and recording absence and loss, and inscribing presence."²² Croft attempts to overcome that break here with only limited success.

NEW SITES OF CONTENTION

Debates about the past have been circulating through an increasing number of sites in recent years, along with a significant shift to popular culture as the principal forum for playing out these conflicts. Increasingly our notion of public history has broadened: it now encompasses not only traditional institutions such as museums and national parks but also many areas of the media. Newspapers, for example, have become intensely history conscious, highlighting profound changes in our attitude to the past. Journalists and filmmakers often compete with historians to tell the stories of the past. There seems almost to be an excess of history in the public sphere. Historical reenactments are gaining popularity, and cultural tourism, both internal and external, has also exploded.²³

Significant changes have taken place in Australia over the last three decades. Until 1997, under the federal Labour government of Paul Keating—and with a historian, Don Watson, working as the prime minister's speechwriter—there was the beginning of an acceptance of a new narrative of Australian history that recognized a "dark past."²⁴ This interpretation centrally underpinned Native Title legislation, conceived of as a form of compensation for past wrongs. But the conservative federal Liberal government, which was in power from 1996 until November 2006, was strongly opposed to what it calls a "black armband" version of Australia's history, since land claims are predicated on a perception of Aborigines as survivors

of two centuries of abuse under colonialism. Such heated debates demonstrate that both land and the "dark past" remain at the center of national discourses of Euro-Australian identity. Legal challenges—the logical outcome of several years of agitation by Aboriginal peoples themselves as well as white historians and many others—are one of the most recent arenas in the contestation over traditional interpretations of our history. This is particularly evident in native title claims. In the balance is reconciliation as a political cause and a cultural and social reality.²⁵

If nervous courts are reluctant to deal with difficult histories, certainly anniversaries can no longer be the simple uncomplicated "celebrations of a nation" they once seemed to be. The 1988 Australian Bicentennial was called the Year of Mourning by many Aboriginal communities. At the year's opening, some twenty thousand Aborigines—Kooris, Murris, Nyungars, Yolngu, and Anangu—converged on Sydney. They met to lay wreaths at Botany Bay "in remembrance of the deaths of thousands of their countrymen since 1788" and gathered on the foreshores of the bay to protest against the reenactment of the British.²⁶ Joined by non-Aboriginal supporters, they led marches down the main streets of major cities across Australia. In Sydney on the "Day of Mourning"—Australia Day, January 26—one large group marched under the banner "Veterans of the 200-Year War."²⁷ Since then, during public anniversaries the politicized Aboriginal population has consistently contested the traditional version of white history, and the federal government, in the lead-up to the Centenary of Federation, attempted to search for a new National Day that might be less fraught. But the official celebrations surrounding federation, culminating on January 1, 2001, failed entirely to capture the public's imagination. There was little enthusiasm about the uneven process by which dead, white, bearded men had led six squabbling colonies to form a nation. And it was politically difficult to exalt a compact that was in large part forged around the White Australia policy that was as much about controlling indigenous populations as it was about keeping cut unwanted races.²⁸

PUBLIC HISTORY

Two principal concerns characterize the practice of public history across a range of forms, though they affect some forms more than others. The

first is the complex question of representation: how to make indigenous people visible in the historical landscape as a continuous, indeed central, presence without reinforcing existing stereotypes through that representation. This is particularly challenging when previous museum collection strategies, heritage assessment criteria, and the like reflect the dominant culture's hegemony. And it is not just a question of adding people in to existing frameworks. Rather, in many arenas, the problem is how to rethink the European colonizing stories to change traditional categories of historical significance and national meaning.

The second issue concerns the politics of perspective. How can an indigenous point of view be incorporated into interpretation when there are few trained Aboriginal public historians in the field? (Aboriginal people make up about 2 percent of the Australian population, and there are few academically trained Aboriginal historians.) With the best of intentions, consultation with indigenous communities alone, while central to the politics of representation, does not change the institutional structure and culture providing interpretations of the past to the public. This concern is particularly relevant to government cultural institutions such as museums, government departments, heritage and conservation agencies such as national parks, and living history sites, such as Sovereign Hill at Ballarat, Victoria. Nonetheless, there has been a considerable degree and variety of change within individual institutions.

For example, the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, established in 1962 and now incorporated into the Department of Conservation, has made some progress, particularly since the state's Heritage Act of 1977 was amended in 1984 to include Aboriginal "relics." Subsequent legislation and governmental agendas have resulted in a structure particularly oriented to Aboriginal sites: they have focused on physical fabric rather than intangible heritage. This and the fact that National Parks was given responsibility for carrying out all environmental impact assessments across the state, has spawned a whole archeological consulting industry of non-Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Heritage division set up within National Parks to manage sites is one of the few cultural organizations which has an Aboriginal employment strategy and employs many indigenous peoples in various positions, where amongst other responsibilities they develop interpretive material for sites. Since 1996 the Aboriginal Ownership Amendment

to the Heritage Act allows for the handover of national parks to Aboriginal people. This has been particularly successful at Mutawindji, and quite recently in the far south coast of New South Wales the Yuin people took over majority management of the Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks. Nonetheless, there is still much to be done. There has been extensive consultation with local Aboriginal groups about sites since the 1980s, but this tends to position Aboriginal people as just one of many stakeholders. Reformers are working toward more power-sharing partnerships in the consultative process and the establishment of a Social Significance Assessment as a category in the Environmental Impact Statements, to take account not only of historical aspects but also the more emotional factors, such as memory and attachment to place.²⁹

Some forms of public history are particularly resistant to reform. Commissioned history, for example, is by nature specific task-oriented work, bounded by an organization's or corporation's purpose and legal contracts. Public historians undertaking commissions may also face a number of dilemmas. Organizations, groups, or individuals commissioning history are by and large in privileged positions. Less powerful social groups and interests, with their limited resources, cannot generally commission history. Museums, on the other hand, which have seen a remarkable expansion in their number since the 1970s, have responded to shifts in the representational climate with some flexibility. Both the appointment of a generation of university-educated curators to the large museums and an increase in exhibitions with social history content have been instrumental in this context. As Gaye Sculthorpe has argued, the exhibition of Australian indigenous cultures has been the impetus for a substantial redevelopment of many Australian museums during this period.³⁰ New Aboriginal galleries opened at the Australian Museum in 1996 and in Perth in 1999 (with a rare exhibition featuring Aboriginal popular culture). Adelaide and Melbourne opened major new Aboriginal galleries in 2000, and they have been followed by almost every major museum in the country.

But both the form of exhibitions and the circulation modes of the Aboriginal past limit the possible representations. One dilemma is how to "nationalize" Aboriginal culture when it was and remains essentially local, tied to specific places and lands. Another is how to address racial conflict or the history of invasion within the museum context and still make it palatable

to visitors. As well, museums in Australia, like those elsewhere, are still largely driven by objects. Aboriginal people have not left behind a great material inheritance. Given their nonmaterial culture and their entrapment in a cycle of poverty since invasion, belongings tend to be ephemeral. Museum curators have had to be especially creative, therefore, in representing the indigenous past in museums, and the appointment of Aboriginal curators has given impetus to the need for such imagination. Despite the successes at institutions such as the Melbourne Museum and the controversial exhibits at the Museum of Victoria, the results have been mixed. And progressive museum professionals have in recent years been faced with a politics of reaction.

NATIONAL MUSEUMS

Since it opened in 2001 the National Museum of Australia (NMA) in Canberra has averaged about eight hundred thousand visitors per year, both foreign and domestic. These are very good numbers for a country of just twenty million, and they reflect the successful reorientation of the museum sector away from education and toward leisure and tourism in the last few years, as well as the museum's role in the national capital circuit. But the museum has been the object of attacks. There is a kind of inevitability about these set pieces. Initially, there was quite strong media criticism: one reporter insisted that the NMA represented "A Nation Trivialized." Conservatives both in and outside the museum condemned it for its "sneering ridicule at white history." Some visitors claimed that it was "profoundly offensive," "letting the country down, [with] too much 'blackfella history.'" ³¹

One of the most controversial areas is the section in the Gallery of First Australians which deals with dispossession and death and the problematic nature these events pose for object-based institutions in terms of representation. The main caption for this exhibit states: "Guerilla wars were fought along a rolling frontier for a century and a half." This caption reflects almost thirty years of scholarship, but according to Peter Read, a scholar of Aboriginal history, it is, "if anything, a pretty conservative depiction of frontier violence."³²

Conservatives contest what they see as a story of unremitting violence and destruction, particularly the massacres of indigenous people, as the

“black armband” view of our history. Chief among these is Keith Windschuttle, a conservative journalist and author, and while the focus has been on statistics, the “facts” of what happened—how many? is it documented in written records?—his real purpose is ideological, aiming at the explanatory frame for events, the meaning. In this context, he has attacked the NMA exhibit of a massacre at Bell’s Falls Gorge, which is located within the large Contested Frontiers section of the exhibition.³³

This incident illustrates both the number of ways in which memory is articulated at the museum and the challenges to the legitimacy of remembering over documentary history.³⁴ The controversy surrounding this exhibit seems out of all proportion to its size, but nevertheless this was one of the most innovative and risky representations in the museum. It is one wall and a single glassed-in frame depicting a massacre at Bell’s Falls Gorge near Bathurst in rural New South Wales.³⁵ It utilizes local knowledge and oral memory as the only source of knowledge presented about the event and draws on the work of the historian David Roberts, who has researched the incident and published his work in academic journals.

The exhibit does not actually tell the story; it just reports a massacre occurring there in the 1820s in which Aborigines were pushed over a cliff, with an accompanying caption by a Wiradjuri elder: “This is a place of great sadness. Our people still hear echoes of the women and children who died there (Bill Allen 2000).” It is a story owned by both indigenous and European local inhabitants of the region and comes through into written evidence as collected tales from a shearer published in the 1960s and from other people moving around the district, though it is unclear whether it has a continuous genealogy. But it is a story, repeated often but now shorn of specific detail, like many told in rural areas where there are still remnants of community rooted in place over a long period.³⁶ Scholars tell us that the stories about Aboriginal people being driven over cliffs are legion all over Australia. And one might speculate that this would certainly be an easy way of murder, but also a useful dramatic narrative device to deal with being consigned to oblivion. Thus Bell’s Falls Gorge has a symbolic truth—as a way of bringing together two different knowledge traditions, two different understandings of the past. This seemed to be part of the reconciliatory mission of the museum.

Even before the museum opened, David Barnett—a museum council member, a former Liberal party staffer, and the authorized biographer of Prime Minister John Howard—had attempted to intervene in the development of content. The director of the council ordered a review of the labels. The respected historian Graeme Davison took on this task and vindicated curatorial authority. As a result, the majority of exhibits then went ahead unchanged. But after the opening, Keith Windschuttle launched his attack, claiming that the museum was a “profound intellectual mistake.” The “shock jocks” of tabloid talkback radio, who are particularly influential in Australia, went into overdrive. Windschuttle’s views were supported and given further credence by equally conservative opinion columnists in the press. Within two years of the museum’s opening, the council agreed to a review of the exhibitions and public programs. The four-member review panel delivered its report in July of 2003 and recommended changes that would provide a more chronologically based and coherent story of the progress to nationhood.³⁷

Some have since speculated that the debate generated was a deliberate strategy by those in power to position their constituents against intellectuals and the elite culture represented by the museum, and this would certainly explain the strength of the controversy and the degree of outrage. But the vast majority of visitors, who we know from standard visitor surveys and the like are university educated, declare themselves satisfied with it, according to figures presented by the former director Dawn Casey in an article published in 2003. Casey estimates that about 91 percent of reactions to the museum are positive: “I like the way important people and ordinary Australians are given equal emphasis,” says one; “you can really relate to a lot of what is on exhibit.” Another comments that “it’s a courageous museum, and the only one I have visited which both informs and creates a platform for debate.”³⁸

Richard Handler argues that the whole idea of “having a culture” has become central to the rhetoric about nation. The search for distinctiveness is integral to it, and we have a kind of mission to express that which makes us different. The idea of nation has always bedeviled Australians, even when the imagined concept of nation in this case is synonymous with the geography—as an island continent where there have been no border wars;

an immigrant nation constantly worried about population, invasion from the north, and now the poisoned well of the not so distant colonial past. Some have argued that white Australians have always seen themselves as “victims” (those colonized by others), given the nation’s beginnings as a remote British penal colony, making it even more difficult to see themselves as “perpetrators” (or colonizers) in relation to indigenous people. The indigenous historian and writer Tony Birch claims that the history of dispossession and violence in Australia is not a story to be *owned* by indigenous people—that is, as something done to them. It is a shared story. As Ruth Phillips has argued of Canada, “Postcoloniality describes only the official ending of imperial arrangements of governance, not the undoing of centuries of social and cultural intervention.”³⁹

Despite the sophistication of the NMA exhibition and its representation of a darker side to Australian history, the museum still operates within the affirming national frame. Its principal message is to produce a shared vision that reconciles conflicting views and absorbs difference. In some ways, it is a kind of wishful thinking. Australians are *looking* here—and looking away again. And it has not, in John Urry’s words, “broken the spell of a national memory.”⁴⁰ To create a national history museum that discards unitary national narratives as well as causal trajectories (the teleology of the nation)—in effect to subvert the form—is probably impossible.

OTHER SITES OF PUBLIC HISTORY

As many commentators have noted, the expansion of sites of public history since the 1960s has meant an increasing role for public arenas in shaping historical consciousness as well as linking it to the commodification of history and heritage. But a central question remains: How are audience views of the narrative of the nation and its past engaged, challenged, and changed? Ever more high-tech resources do not seem to offer new solutions. For many public historians, the problem is not one of presenting a black-and-white history, but rather of how to indicate history’s complexities within the constraints of their respective form or commissioned brief.

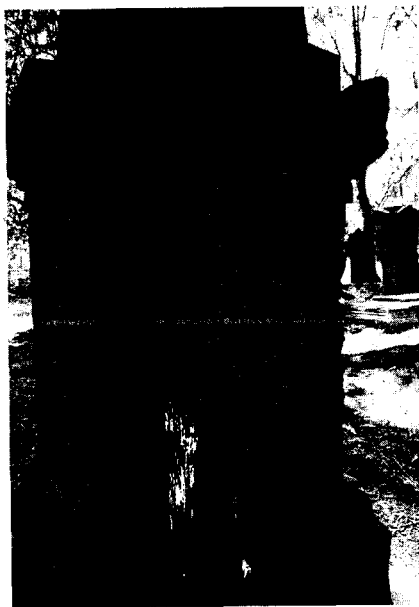
Several elements in the representation of indigenous peoples are common to a range of public history forms, both in mainly institutional contexts and in the public debates. Until very recently, Aborigines were regarded as of the

past with no link to the present. “Authentic” Aboriginal culture is presented as pre-contact or prehistoric. Similarly, the only “real” indigenous peoples are outback peoples of the Centre or the Northern Territory (where a tiny minority of the total Australian population lives). Even rare urban monuments to the conserving and more cooperative nature of Aboriginal social organization have framed Aboriginal people in terms of antimodern Arcadian paradigms, as exemplified by a monument erected in 1944 by the Rangers’ League, an environmental conservationist group in New South Wales.

Consequently, indigenous peoples have been seen as “of the past” and not part of the present and the future. The 1970s and 1980s saw the development of popular understandings of the Aboriginal “dreaming” or “dream-time” as timelessness; a line is drawn across time “where Aborigines end and settlers (and white history) begin.”⁴¹ These understandings are currently being challenged by the Native Title legislation, under which claimants need to demonstrate continuous association with and use of the land. They are also being challenged by largely urban-based indigenous people who have been defending postinvasion sites of significance. These have included the Australia Hall—where a Day of Mourning protest was held in 1938 during the national sesquicentenary celebrations in the City of Sydney—and the Tent Embassy in Canberra. Indeed, the success of the battle over the Australia Hall can be read as an important precedent in environmental law if not a sea change in urban heritage practice.

In recent years aspects of Aboriginality have been appropriated into the nation. Most important, as Bain Attwood and others have rightly insisted, is the claiming of a venerable Aboriginal past to give our culture a depth that it is perceived to be lacking in the rhetoric of a “young country.” Spanning at least forty thousand years—a time frame that is often repeated—the Aboriginal past is seen to be at one with the land. This has important implications for determining heritage significance. Managers of the national estate have emphasized the significance of the Aboriginal past in seeking World Heritage listing for particular places. Tourist operators and government corporations have also been quick to grasp opportunities in the selling of an “ancient” culture to visitors.⁴²

Some arenas of public history have been more successful than others in their conceptualizing of these nationalist myths of origin. This is in part because some areas are more progressive or innovative than others.



4 Monument erected in Sydney's Camperdown Cemetery during 1944 by the Rangers' League of New South Wales to commemorate "Mogo, Perry, Tommy and Wandalina"—four Aboriginal people buried in the cemetery—and "the whole of the Aboriginal race." The effect was to recast Aboriginal people as "noble savages." (Tommy, an Aboriginal boy, had died at age eleven in 1863. Burial records show that his full name was unknown and that his internment had been "common"; his occupation was given as "labourer.") Photo: Paul Ashton.

Narrative strategies and forms utilized by Aboriginal people in telling their stories also tend to work better in such media as film, documentary, multimedia, or oral histories. Penny van Toorn argues that by publishing in popular forms of memory-writing, such as autobiographies or factionalized stories, oral histories, and songs, Aborigines have bypassed canons of historical scholarship, or "tricked" history. Even though the "ascribing [of] historical authority is still largely in the hands of non-indigenous individuals and institutions,"⁴³ many of those stories are now essential readings in Australian history courses in universities and schools and have had a huge national audience. These interventions represent a profound challenge to Western understandings of history, and in the process they are changing many traditional modes of researching and writing history. But much of this has yet to translate into mainstream public history.

In searching for an understanding of Australia as different from other modernist nations of the late twentieth century, some have argued that recourse to traditional whiteness or Britishness as a fount of the national is untenable for a number of reasons. These include the massive postwar immigration program which has made Australia a nation of people from over sixty different nations of origin (many of them nonwhite); attendant govern-

ment policies of multiculturalism; the process of decolonization; and strategic economic alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. The myths of an older nationalism have been exploded by the social changes resulting from the demographic shift of postwar immigration and by protest movements that have mobilized their own versions of the past based partially on scholarly work.⁴⁴ Though a significant monarchist minority continue to worship at the ruins of the British Empire, a new official paradigm has emerged to replace the old. Coinciding with the democratization of history and constructed in the process of making the Australian Bicentenary, the new national identity is predicated on a consensual multiculturalism.⁴⁵ Displacing lost English ancestry for the promise of a republic, a classless egalitarian multiculturalism has become the new nationalism. To be Australian was once to be a patriotic loyalist with an intact British inheritance (though some Irish Australians would disagree). Official dictate now has it that to be Australian is to be multicultural: "We are all wogs," as a saying has it, though this new identity has been welded onto the Anzac legend. With white racism becoming obsolete if not entirely abandoned, Aboriginality has been adopted as a useful framing device and a central image of difference. Likewise, Aboriginal relics were finally afforded legislative protection when governments were "ready to graft a reified version of Aboriginal culture onto the national identity."⁴⁶

Cultural policy directly affecting the historical representation and configuration of national identity in cultural institutions now rests in part on these assumptions. Racial diversity and conflict can now be accommodated in official versions of the past as long as they remain positivist and consensual. Radical rereadings of the past in public places are often censured, however, as in the case of the Migration Museum in the South Australian capital of Adelaide. After visiting the museum early in 1995, an influential member of the federal parliament wrote to the curator, declaring that

Any visitor to the Migration Museum would see immigration as a story of tragedy and disaster. In fact, immigration has been the foundation of modern Australia, which I think is by far the best country in the world in which to live. . . . It seems so unnecessary for a museum . . . to project a sense of shame about what our community has done, instead of pride in our achievement. Compared to most countries, we have very little to apologise for.⁴⁷

Local and regional museums ranging across the country in rural areas face this and other problems. They have made a range of responses to the new narratives emerging about Australia's past, depending on the impact of cultural tourism, local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, and political climates.

Competing accounts of the past are increasingly contesting cultural authority. An example can be found at La Perouse, overlooking Botany Bay, the so-called Birth Place of the Nation. Here, a strong indigenous community vies to have its story heard above British and French imperial narratives, nationalist and racial discourses. Maria Nugent, in her book *Botany Bay: Where Histories Meet*, has examined "Aboriginal people's efforts to limit the power of colonial storytelling to hurt and dehumanise them" through their own interpretation and use of stories about Botany Bay. She is "concerned moreover to show how they use their own forms of historical storytelling to make a place for themselves within local and national communities, from which they have been and at times still are excluded."⁴⁸

Heritage industry practices also reinforce the process of marginalizing or making invisible Aboriginal presence. Complex procedures and official paradigms for ascribing cultural significance effectively mask much Aboriginal history. As Denis Byrne has argued, during the four decades that archaeology has been professionally practiced in Australia, scant attention has been given to the postinvasion Aboriginal existence. "This," he contends,

is reflected in the heritage inventories maintained by Federal and State agencies where pre-contact Aboriginal sites vastly outnumber post-contact sites. Whatever disciplinary fashions have produced this imbalance it is difficult to separate it from the larger European colonial project of possessing and reinscribing the Australian landscape. In quite a real sense the failure to acknowledge the imprint on the landscape of the post-1788 Aboriginal experience has created a vacuum which has been filled by a heroic settler heritage, and increasingly the pre-contact sites are appropriated as "sacred sites" for a white culture which seeks to indigenise itself by discovering a spiritual affinity for the land, a form of white Dreaming.⁴⁹

When the "structures of forgetting" falter or fail, raw political power can come to the fore.⁵⁰ In 1955 the Australian Heritage Commission listed on

its Register of the National Estate the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, which had been nominated for inclusion by the Ngunnawal Aboriginal Land Council. This was the site of the first Aboriginal protest, which took place outside Canberra's old parliament house in 1927. A new Tent Embassy was set up there in 1972, and a continuous presence had been maintained there. With both the Olympic Games and the centenary of Australian Federation then looming, however, Prime Minister John Howard ordered the removal of the Tent Embassy in 1996 on the pretext that log fires there were a hazard.

Unlike the North American or New Zealand experiences, Europeans in Australia did not sign treaties with indigenous peoples. Nor did they enter into formal warfare or negotiated peace settlements. Thus there has not been the official burden of representation as witnessed in other frontier "settler societies." In latter years though, Aboriginal versions of past events have had to be taken into consideration in official investigations when it was politically expedient. Growing concerns and debates in the early 1980s over British atomic tests in remote parts of Australia, for instance, led to radical reassessments of both the context and the impact of these experiments on indigenous and non-indigenous people. These concerns emerged from the establishment of a Royal Commission (the highest-level public inquiry that can be held in Australia) on British Nuclear Testing in Australia in 1984 as well as a substantial history of the tests commissioned the previous year by the Department of Resources and Energy as a "basic reference" for the Royal Commission.⁵¹ After the first British atomic bomb was exploded on the Monte Bello Islands off the north coast of Western Australia on October 3, 1952, the *West Australian* mouthed the official frame for this and subsequent tests. "The real significance of the Monte Bello explosion," the newspaper observed on the following day,

lies at this moment . . . in the simple fact that it has occurred. It gives the world indisputable proof that Britain has the material, the skill and the installations for the independent production of atomic weapons and that she will yield the initiative to none. In a situation of critical doubt whether a third world war can be prevented, that is essential to the military power of the British Commonwealth and to its prestige and influence in international councils.

When in 1956 a sole Australian Patrol Officer, Walter MacDougall, made official his fears for the health and safety of local Aborigines in the lead-up to the Maralinga test, he was reprimanded for his "lamentable lack of balance in outlook" and accused of "placing the affairs of a handful of natives above those of the British Commonwealth of Nations."⁵² Radioactive emissions from tests at Maralinga between September 1956 and October 1957 poisoned and permanently contaminated the surrounding land, leaving Aboriginal people with a brutal legacy of blindness, cancer, and skin diseases.

As a result of the Royal Commission, in 1995 the British government officially apologized to Aboriginal people affected by the tests, and some compensation was awarded. But both the British and the Australian governments had little to lose and much to gain by these gestures in a postcolonial context. As with the Empire, the imperial narrative in which these stories had been incorporated or repressed was defunct. Witness films such as *Breaker Morant*, released in 1980, which portrayed three Australia soldiers who were court-martialed and executed by British authorities during the Boer War as pathetic, albeit heroic, marionettes dancing on imperial strings.

History has been publicly enlisted to address and redress contemporary social injustices with colonial and racial origins.⁵³ And older historical representations of our place in Empire and its relation to race and national identity have been reconfigured, given in part the tutelage of American imperialism from the Vietnam War and the democratization of history making from the 1970s.⁵⁴ At times, however, hysterical debates over Australia High Court decisions such as *Mabo* and *Wik*, strengthening indigenous land rights, shine a light on the darker side of public representations of race and empire that suggest residual yearnings for Sir Henry Parkes's ideal society of white, Anglo-Celtic, independent Australian Britons.

REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING

In the late 1990s Ken Inglis, a well-known historian, published a comprehensive book on Australian war memorials. Both he and Governor-General Sir William Deane, who had launched the project, made comments in their speeches at the Australian War Memorial, and later in print, about the absence of memorials in Australia to the "war" between Aborigines

and European invaders.⁵⁵ Inglis claimed that some form of commemoration had been under consideration by the War Memorial Council for some years but nothing had materialized. He and Deane were supported in their comments by Aboriginal leaders, other historians, and journalists.⁵⁶

The vigorous public debate that ensued was revealing of the many groups who still have much invested in a particular story about the white Australian past and those who now eschew such a narrative. War Memorial representatives claimed that prefederation conflicts were not their brief. For them, this was the role of the National Museum of Australia's new Aboriginal Gallery, then under construction. Major-General "Digger" James, former president of the Returned Soldier's League (RSL)—a powerful lobby group in Australia—criticized the governor-general for his remarks, asserting that such a memorial was completely "inappropriate."⁵⁷ Many other RSL members were also outraged. The "black wars" of the last century were neither officially declared nor fought in uniform in defense of the continent. Aborigines who had served in overseas wars, it was claimed, were properly acknowledged within the memorial's existing framework. Later this position was somewhat modified by another former president of the RSL, Alf Garland, who asserted that a memorial of this nature should be built in the parliamentary triangle—not at the Australian War Memorial—since the "black wars" were akin to a civil war in Australia.⁵⁸ Finally, Prime Minister John Howard reiterated that such a use of the War Memorial was "inappropriate," arguing that, legally, Australia was "settled" rather than "invaded" and that a state of war had not officially existed.⁵⁹

Many letter writers to *The Australian* supported the call by Inglis and Deane for an official memorial to the "black wars." One mentioned the monument already erected by the Yugambeh people of the Gold Coast Beaudesert region "to the Aborigines who have died in defense of their country, whether at the Somme or on the shores of Moreton Bay."⁶⁰ Nicolas Rothwell, a journalist for *The Australian*, suggested, unlike the newspaper's leader writer, that "a war memorial does much more than merely recognise that something very like a war took place here during the settlement era. It points the way towards a salutary new public conception of the Aboriginal people. You fight wars against enemies, not helpless and unresisting victims. You defeat them rather than writing their struggles out of your history."⁶¹

At one level, it was remarkable that such a public debate was possible in Australia less than thirty years after the dismantling of the White Australia Policy. Many have since been able to make a leap of imagination that would have been unthinkable a few years ago and are prepared to contest the state when the stakes will define the nation's future. Nonetheless, a nationalism centrally forged through notions of white masculine sacrifice at Gallipoli and shored up through countless rituals and monuments expressing official versions of the past remains largely unshaken, if slightly tarnished. Today it is being reasserted by a small, emergent group of right-wing nationalist historians who, formerly with the encouragement of the Howard government, exploit the indigenous past not as a vehicle for reconciliation but as a justification for reaction.⁶² Michael Connor, in his recent book *The Invention of Terra Nullius*, published by Keith Windschuttle, concludes wistfully that what Australians need is a touch of "tactful forgetting," as opposed to divisive remembering.⁶³ He had obviously never heard of Baal Shem-Tov's injunction, that "in remembrance lies the secret of redemption."

NOTES

- 1 "Negotiating Difference" (editorial), 9–10.
- 2 Davison, "Public History."
- 3 See Ashton and Hamilton, "Streetwise."
- 4 See Curthoys and Hamilton, "What Makes History Public?"
- 5 From the 1920s until the 1960s, approximately one hundred thousand indigenous children were taken from their families by government agencies. The policy was based on white-supremacist assimilationist ideology. Attempts to thus break up Aboriginal communities have been branded as genocide. In 1997, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission published a report on the "stolen generation" entitled *Bringing Them Home*.
- 6 Cole, "'The Crimson Thread of Kinship,'" 511–25; McQueen, *A New Britannia*, 9.
- 7 See Smith, "State-Making and Nation-Building."
- 8 See Thomson, *Anzac Memories*.
- 9 Horne, *The Public Culture*, 21. On the term "social integration," see Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 263.
- 10 Rigg, "Curators of the Colonial Idea," 188. See also Reynolds, *Frontier*, 194; and Bennett, "The Political Rationality of the Museum."
- 11 See, for example, Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*.
- 12 Davison, "The Use and Abuse of Australian History," 56.

- 13 Henderson, *Monuments and Memorials*, 179–80.
- 14 Ashton, "The Past in the Present."
- 15 Bulbeck, *The Stone Laurel*, 5. See also Bulbeck, "Aborigines, Memorials and the History of the Frontier."
- 16 See, for example, Scates, "A Monument to Murder."
- 17 See Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Burke, Robert O'Hara," *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1978) 3: 302.
- 18 See Davison, "The Use and Abuse of Australian History," 59.
- 19 Batten, "Monuments, Memorials and the Preservation of Australia's Indigenous Past."
- 20 "Memorial Plaque to Murray River Aborigines," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 9, 1986, 8.
- 21 *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sept. 13, 2000, 14.
- 22 Bammer, ed., *Displacements*, xiv.
- 23 See, for example, Grogan and Mercer, *The Cultural Planning Handbook*; Hall and McArthur, eds., *Heritage Management in Australia and New Zealand*; and Hamilton and Ashton, eds., *Australians and the Past*.
- 24 Broome, "Historians, Aborigines and Australia." See also his *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History*.
- 25 Robert Mann, "Whitewashing Our Dark Past," *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 22, 1999, 17.
- 26 *Sydney Morning Herald*, Dec. 31, 1987, Jan. 26 and 27, 1988.
- 27 See Harris, *Australia's Too Old to Celebrate Birthdays*.
- 28 Waterson and Ashton, "Commonwealth Games."
- 29 Byrne, *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Standards and Guidelines*.
- 30 Sculthorpe, "Exhibiting Indigenous Histories in Australian Museums."
- 31 Casey, "Culture Wars."
- 32 Professor Peter Read, interviewed by Keri Phillips, February 20, 2003, ABC Radio National Perspective Program; accessed on the ABC Radio website, www.abc.net.au, Nov. 20, 2005.
- 33 See Windschuttle, "How Not to Run a Museum." For a response to his various attacks on their scholarship, see Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars*.
- 34 See also the account by Cameron, "Transcending Fear." Our interpretation is somewhat different from Cameron's.
- 35 Roberts, "The Bell's Falls Massacres and Oral Tradition."
- 36 Foster, Hosking, and Nettlebeck, *Fatal Collisions*, offer an extended study of such events passed down orally in local communities.
- 37 For detailed accounts of the controversy see Hansen, "White Hot History," which is an insider's response; and Macintyre and Clark, *History Wars*. The report, "Review of the National Museum of Australia, Its Exhibitions and Programs: A Report to the Council of the NMA" (Canberra: NMA, July 2003),

can be downloaded from the NMA website www.nma.gov.au; a summary can be found in Georgina Sale, "Museum Told It's Lost the Plot," *The Australian*, July 16, 2003, 5.

- 38 Casey, "Culture Wars."
- 39 R. B. Phillips, "APEC at the Museum of Anthropology," 183. See also Curthoys, "Constructing National Histories." Richard Handler, "Is Identity a Useful Concept?" in Gillis, ed., *Commemorations*, 27–40; and Tony Birch, "Death Is Forgotten in Victory," in Lydon and Ireland, eds., *Object Lessons*, 186–200.
- 40 John Urry, *Consuming Places*, 3.
- 41 Byrne, "The Archaeology of Disaster," 18.
- 42 Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History*, 3.
- 43 Van Toorn, "Indigenous Australian Life Writing," 46. See also Haebich, "The Battlefields of Aboriginal History."
- 44 See Burgman, *Power and Protest*.
- 45 On the Bicentenary see, for example, Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*; Bennett, Buckridge, Carter, and Mercer, eds., *Celebrating the Nation*; and Janson and MacIntyre, eds., *Making the Bicentenary*. On multiculturalism see, for example, Castles, Cope, and Kalantzis, *Mistaken Identity*.
- 46 Byrne, "The Archaeology of Disaster," 22.
- 47 Quoted in Szekeres, "A Place for All of Us," 61.
- 48 Nugent, *Botany Bay*, 4.
- 49 Byrne, "The Archaeology of Disaster," 21.
- 50 "Structures of forgetting" is Paula Hamilton's term; "The Knife Edge," 13.
- 51 See Clements, *A History of British Atomic Tests in Australia*.
- 52 Quoted in Goodall, "Colonialism and Catastrophe," 55.
- 53 See, for example, McGrath, "Working for the Royal Commission."
- 54 See Ashton and Hamilton, "Streetwise."
- 55 See *The Australian*, Nov. 18, 1998, and "Opinion" column, *The Australian*, Nov. 19, 1998, 15.
- 56 See Paul Turnbull, "No Morality in Denying Aboriginal War Memorial," *The Australian*, Nov. 27, 1998, 15; and Nicholas Rothwell, "A Black Mark in Colonial History," *The Australian*, Nov. 30, 1998, 16.
- 57 *The Australian*, Dec. 18, 1998, 2.
- 58 *The Australian*, Dec. 19, 1998, 3.
- 59 *The Australian*, Nov. 23, 1998, 3.
- 60 F. Beenleigh O'Connor (Queensland), *Weekend Australian*, Nov. 21–22, 1998, 18.
- 61 Nicolas Rothwell, *The Australian*, Nov. 30, 1998, 16.
- 62 See Reynolds, "A New Historical Landscape," 6. The Howard government was defeated in November 2007. One of the first acts of the Rudd Labor government was to formally apologize to indigenous people on February 13, 2008.
- 63 Connor, *The Invention of Terra Nullius*, conclusion.

Colonial Legacies and Winners' Tales

THE THREE ESSAYS in this section focus on how two well-known imperial powers—the United States and Britain—imagine and administer their own foreign and domestic colonial regimes in public spaces. Each site examines the extent to which the nation's colonial past gets represented in museum exhibits that address or overlap with a moment in which imperial ambition was rife. As important, these exhibits from countries where dominant majorities have long figured themselves as "white" provide a brilliant window on the ways in which "whiteness studies" informs museum studies today.

Durba Ghosh's essay analyzes the 2002 exhibition at the British Library in London about the British East India Company. She picks up the theme of commercialism and embeds it in the history of empire both as the circulation of goods and as a problem of citizenship for the British postcolonial subject viewing the exhibit. Thus the essay details the ways in which the commodification of the imperial past, whether in the exhibit itself or in the gift shop, creates a more palatable multicultural present.

Contested Histories in Public Space

MEMORY, RACE, AND NATION

Edited by Daniel J. Walkowitz
and Lisa Maya Knauer

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DANIEL WALKOWITZ is the director of Experiential Education and professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis and the Department of History at New York University. He is the author of *Working with Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-Class Identity* (1999) and *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-1884* (1978). He has edited (with Lisa Knauer) *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space* (Duke, 2004); (with Lewis H. Siegelbaum) *Workers of the Donbass Speak: Survival and Identity in the New Ukraine, 1989-1992* (1995); (with Michael H. Frisch) *Working-Class America: Essays on Labor, Community, and American Society* (1983); and (with Peter N. Stearns) *Workers in the Industrial Revolution: Recent Studies of Labor in the United States and Europe* (1974).

LISA MAYA KNAUER is an assistant professor of anthropology and African and African American studies in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. She edited (with Daniel J. Walkowitz) *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space* (Duke, 2004).

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