Mapping Australian Literary Commemoration in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra: Problems and Prospects

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This paper draws on a digital mapping project the authors conducted in 2014–15: *Words in Place: A Digital Cartography of Australian Writers and Writing in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra* (http://wordsinplace.net/). The project mapped commemorative public areas and/or objects (plaques, sculptures, writers' walks, statues) associated with Australian authors in three major Australian cities. Using archival, visual, oral and geocoding methods, our purpose was to consider the materiality of literary commemoration: whose literature, whose memory, what forms, and in what places? Literary geographies and cartographies are currently enjoying a resurgence of interest amongst researchers in geography and literary studies (Saunders 437). However, sites of literary commemoration remain an understudied aspect of the nexus between writers, writing, heritage and place. The objects and sites of literary commemoration collected in the project were plotted onto a searchable Google map, hosted on the *Words in Place* website with instructions for filtering searches by author, city, genre or type of commemorative style (e.g. fountains). The narrative that follows is a critical reflection on the project and the ambivalent spaces and imaginaries that making a map of literary commemoration produce. We found that making a digital map of literary commemoration presents a paradox situated at the interfaces of networked, hybrid spaces where applications of geotechnologies can create new experiences of Australian writers and writing in place, and reconstituted colonial performances of literary memorialisation overwhelmingly marked by inscriptions dedicated to writers of European descent (Davidson and Potts). We conclude by considering where a *Words in Place 2.0* might take us and calling for a more participatory and inclusive approach mapping the rich diversity and contributions of Australian writers.

Digital Literary Cartographies: Still 'Deconstructing the Map'

Words in Place represents an initial foray into mapping literary commemoration in Australia. The map is not intended to be definitive. The project comes at a time when digital and geohumanities are exploring relationships between writers, writing, memory and place and reconfiguring these relationships into more 'malleable' and 'networked' forms (MacDonald, Couldry and Dickens 120). Excluding gravesites, *Words in Place* documented a wide range of temporal and spatial commemoration practices such as: plaques, statues, public artworks, fountains, dedicated gardens, parks, roads, writers' walks, writers' houses and other sites of permanent civic recognition. The temporal and spatial layers of literary commemoration reflect particular cultural politics and practices. Australia was slower to embrace what the *London Times* in 1855 called 'monument mania' (Ashton and Hamilton 1). Other than occasional anomalies such as the John Dunmore Lang Statue (Sydney, 1891), early memorials to Australian writers mostly date from the Depression era, prominent among them the Henry Lawson Statue at the Domain (Sydney, 1931), the Adam Lindsay Gordon Monument (Melbourne, 1932), and the Henry Kendall Seat in the Domain (Sydney, 1940). Pre-WWII writers are best represented, far outnumbering their postwar counterparts. There are noticeably fewer female pre-WWII writers than male, but those represented are usually represented in multiple ways, with Miles Franklin, Mary Gilmore and May Gibbs leading the charge. In *Words in Place*'s data set of sixty sites totalling ninety writers, only 1973 Nobel Prize-winner Patrick

White (four sites) and poets Judith Wright and A.D. Hope (four apiece) can match their pre-WWII counterparts, in particular Henry Lawson (eight), Miles Franklin (four), May Gibbs (four), Dorothea Mackellar (three), A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson (three), Norman Lindsay (three) and Christopher Brennan (three). This skewing towards the first half rather than the second half of the twentieth century disenfranchises Indigenous and multicultural authors, who are predominantly found in the latter.

The representation of early 20th century writers highlights how memory and power normalise whiteness in Australian cultural identities and heritage practices (Byrne and Houston). Euro-centric cultural imaginaries underpinning the social and creative production of places have been the subject of much geographical and literary critique in the latter part of the twentieth century—Gelder and Jacobs, for example, note the permanently unsettled conditions entangling 'sameness' and 'difference' in contemporary Australian stories and places (120). Neither the process of mapping Australian literary commemoration nor the unsettled geographies of heritage inscriptions marking writers in place ought to be taken for granted. *Digital* literary cartographies further complicate these already contested fields—not least because the definitional parameters of literary cartography are vague (Luchetta 4). Literary cartographies register a range of interdisciplinary foci on the relationships between literary texts, maps and mapping. Luchetta's review is instructive. She identifies several key strands: the presence maps and mapping devices in literature; maps as analytical tools for reading geographies of literature; topographies of literary worlds; and the development of geotechnologies for mapping artistic representations of space and place, including reader generated maps and 'everyday mapping practices' (3–4, 17). Literary cartographies are highly mediated textual interspaces, assembling a range of critical reading and mapping practices that do not exist in cultural or political voids. The materialities and relationalites of mapping online create new opportunities for rethinking 'the power of maps' (Harley 1). J.B. Harley's (1989) seminal essay 'Deconstructing the Map' encouraged people to look beyond the authority of maps as instrumental tools of cultural power to: 'deconstruct the map' by looking 'in the margins of the text'—and through its tropes to discover the silences and contradictions that challenge the apparent honesty of the image' (3). Here we are encouraged not only to ask questions about whose memory is represented, but how the visuality of the map itself asserts particular cultural and spatial orderings. This is especially important for thinking critically about the power of making an online map of literary commemoration, the presences and absences it produces, and where alternative and subaltern mappings of Australian writers in place might flourish.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS), particularly geocoding and GPS mapping, are having a profound effect upon research in the humanities. In the recent past, maps of the imagination have been a key interest of literary geography, while maps of the public commemoration of writers have been less favoured. This can be seen in Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel*, Cooper and Gregory's literary GIS project of England's Lakes District (*Mapping the Lakes*, 2010), and University of Queensland's *Cultural Atlas of Australia* (Stadler, 2012), which catalogues and GPS-maps 'Australian places and spaces' represented in one-hundred and fifty contemporary films, novels and plays (Stadler par 1). Mapping commemorative, rather than imaginative, literary sites is far rarer in both literature and literary geography, although examples of both can be found in the Cooper et al. groundbreaking book *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age*. One country in which it doesn't break ground, unfortunately, is Australia. It is fair to say that this area of research in Australia is still emerging and arguably that the Australian public commemoration of its writers is itself still emerging. The aim of the *Words in Place* map is to facilitate this research with GPS-pinpointed, quantified and catalogued examples of how Australian authors are remembered in public places and how the traditional model of plaques,

states, parks, roads and writers' houses is being surpassed by a dynamic model far more interested in interactive and reflective responses to place, notably in writers' walks, literary-themed public art and new forms of architecture. The most extensive online map to date, *Monument Australia*, does not cover many of these newer forms because they are often engaged with *the writing* as much as with *the writer* and so do not necessarily fulfil the memorial function requisite to monuments (Watson and Watson). The memorial function is also challenged by the gradual trend towards the representation of living writers, for example in the 1991 Circular Quay Writers' Walk or Balmain's 2009 sculpture 'Tank 101' which features a couplet from Les Murray's poem 'The Death of Isaac Nathan' cut into the curved steel of a huge Depression-era oil tank.

Mapping Presence: Plotting Australian Literary Imaginations

The politics of literary memorialisation relays past and present anxieties over the place of literature in mainstream Australian culture. Short story (or 'bush yarn') writer and poet Henry Lawson (1867–1922) is by far the most represented in Australia; his late colonial ethos of stoicism, solidarity and larrikinism provided a young country with a distinct Australianness, and a distinctly Australian writer to which they could lay claim. This process of civic claiming of a dead writer has never been so brutally, or accurately, depicted than in Richard Nile's *The Making of the Australian Literary Imagination* (2002) which recounts an incident at the site of one of Lawson's earliest, and grandest, statues in the Domain, Sydney:

> Lawson's death was seen as the passing of an era in Australian writing dating back to [colonial poet] Henry Kendall. According to [poet David] McKee Wright, Lawson belonged to a 'past of struggle, pain and triumph, when a country was in the making.' Such statements soon became articles of faith, literary and cultural clichés whose incantations were repeated so often as to attain the status of being self-evident truths . . . Years later, as a new generation of image makers congregated at the Sydney statue, carrying out the ritual of remembrance, the eldest Lawson son, perhaps also like his father sadly afflicted by alcohol, broke from the ranks and attacked the assembled speakers. 'My father seems to have plenty of friends now that he is dead,' he yelled, 'He didn't have many when he was alive.' Too late. The custodianship of his father's memory had long since passed out of the family. The police were called. The interjector was removed. The ceremony continued. (53)

As Nile shows, the lavish funeral given to 'the nation's favourite literary son' contrasted sharply with the poverty in which he lived and died. Among his posthumous patrons there were vested interests, including that of his publisher, in keeping Lawson prominent in public memory, which was increasingly nostalgic and literate in a quickly-urbanising Australia. The one-off government grant of £100 paid to the Lawson family after his death seems a somewhat ironic result for a writer who called for Red Revolution in 1905's 'Faces in the Street' and whose advice to young writers was, as Nile puts it, 'to emigrate or suicide rather than suffer the humiliation of living as a writer in Australia' (55). The Australian state has historically played a role in that humiliation through neglect, censorship and, for a select few, as Fiona Capp's *Writers Defiled* has extensively detailed, imprisonment or ASIO surveillance. Communist writers were especially targeted, but Lawson's personal and political wanderings were varied enough to be superseded by his reputation as the first great observer of a uniquely Australian character, language and ethos. Marilyn Lake's anthology *Memory, Monuments and Museums: The Past in the Present* (2006) grapples with key questions of national commemoration. Lake

contrasts the modicum of Federation memorials with what she calls the 'superabundance' relating to the 'cult' of Anzac, consisting of roughly five thousand sites according to Ken Inglis's seminal *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Lake 45). There is, as Inglis's title suggests, a sacredness of meaning, ritual and place to these sites, but also a series of displacements—the mourned displacements of those of soldier-citizens who never returned, the less remembered displacements of those who returned vastly changed and the impact on their families, and the rarely remembered displacement of Aboriginal sovereignty and identity. From a literary perspective, there is one further displacement, namely the almost total lack of Australian war (or other) writing on these markers and shrines. The Australian War Memorial in Canberra, partly designed by the legendary war correspondent C.E.W. Bean, offers no permanent examples of Australian war writing despite the wealth of available candidates in its bookshop, for example Chris Wallace-Crabbe and Peter Pierce's 1984 anthology *The Clubbing of the Gunfire: 101 Australian War Poems*. For Australian writers, this commemorative avenue appears closed for now.

Lawson valorised, and validated, a late colonial era in which most Australians grew up in the bush. His less memorialised mother—writer, editor and pioneering feminist Louisa Lawson (1848–1920)—is only occasionally mentioned in connection with the public image of Lawson, while his absent Norwegian father and his deafness from age fourteen are even less widely known. The Lawson of public memory reminds Australians of the colonial attributes they would prefer to dwell upon—stoicism, mateship, adaptability, larrikinism and egalitarianism.

Figure 1: Henry Lawson statue at the Domain, Sydney

The grandness of the 1931 Domain statue might contradict these qualities, but contradiction is at the very heart of memorialisation, in which the dead past returns to give the present pause, but also to symbolise and demarcate separation from the past and thereby cultural or national advancement so that the present is implicitly venerated in an act of collective pride, even self-worship. No one depicts these contradictions better than writers themselves. For Austrian novelist Robert Musil, best known for his 1943 modernist masterwork *A Man Without Qualities*, 'There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument . . . they are impregnated with something that repels attention'; worse still, they could become 'a carefully calculated insult' (Musil 346). Patrick White is just as scathing in *Voss*, where the unveiling of the explorer's statue in Sydney's Domain lets the public 'satisfy their longing to perch something on a column, in a square or gardens, as a memorial to their own achievement. They did, moreover, prefer to cast him in bronze than investigate his soul, because all dark things made them uneasy' (White 107).

Heritage scholars, unsurprisingly, tend to take a less cynical view. For Ian McShane, text-based commemoration, including plaques, facilitates both basic literacy and what he calls the 'legibility of cities' (43). Like Ashton and Hamilton, McShane observes 'the shift in the ethics and aesthetics of commemoration from the figurative and ornamental, to utilitarian' in contemporary Australian cities (43). The bronze Lawson of 1931, flanked by a bearded bushman and a dog, stands atop a huge stone base which proclaims: 'HENRY LAWSON 1867–1922 POET AND SHORT STORY WRITER' (see Figure 1). Lawson had lived nearby, but just *why* the memorial is where it is remains assumed knowledge. A more updated, nuanced response to place, one representative of several new trends in literary commemoration, can be found a short stroll away up Mrs Macquarie's Road towards the Art Gallery of NSW. Janet Laurence and Jisuk Han's *Veil of Trees* (1999), one of ten works in the pre-Olympic Sydney Sculpture Walk, is promoted by the City of Sydney as 'a one hundred metre curvilinear passage of new red-gums, native grass plantings, and glass panels' which explicitly responds to its location (City of Sydney par 1). Twenty-one rectangular glass panels in two elongated groves offer seeds and excerpts from predominantly post-WWII poetry about the life of trees, braiding science with art. The plaque at the site states:

> The creation of a passage of reflection, a space where memory is gathered.
>
> Memory is embodied within each glass panel—traces of minerals, ash and seeds of indigenous trees are enclosed together with excerpts of Australian poetry and texts selected for their evocation of the nature of trees.
>
> Amidst the translucent glass panels a ribbon of one hundred Red Forest gums—*eucalyptus tereticornis*—which once forested this site have been planted, each tree grown from the seed of the original Red Forest gums which existed prior to European settlement. Weaving either side of the ribbon of forest and panels clumps of native grasses define the linearity of the passage, engaging the visitor into, along and through this site of regeneration.

In its botanic and symbolic attempt to restore a measure of precolonial sanctity, *Veil of Trees* reasserts an old threshold in place, illuminated by LED lights at night or the morning sun over Wooloomooloo. *Veil of Trees* also tightly juxtaposes its extracts to create one long wave pattern from Robert Gray at one end to Christina Stead at the other, with two poems per pane (one facing east, one west). Visitors literally see through the poems, prompted to move around them as they, potentially, are emotionally moved. Some panes are near-illegible, while others are

almost beautified by discolouration and rust. The time of day may also determine which poems might prove more enticing or readable, and this is the most fascinating, dynamic dimension of the installation, its comingling with cycles of light and shade, as well as its botanic and aquatic surrounds. Also at play is a modern, outdoor version of ecclesiastical stained glass, as Rosemary Dobson's 'Moving in Mist' extract suggests: 'They glow and flicker in and out of shadow / Like poetry behind the print on pages.' All this beside a moreton bay fig on the roadside strip between the Art Gallery of NSW and the gardens of the Domain.

Figure 2: Janet Laurence and Jisuk Han *Veil of Trees* (1999), Sydney

Of the eighteen writers featured, two—Christopher Brennan and Peter Porter—have shattered panels rendered virtually illegible (see Figure 2). Given that they have not been replaced, they might be considered regenerated rather than ruined, part of the overall theme of the natural cycles of destruction and return; they could even be read as elementally reinterpreted into tiny, refracted, or partially-redacted pieces.

Veil of Trees' selections are rare in Australian literary commemoration for their insistence on post-WWII poets, with the exceptions of Charles Harpur, Kendall, Brennan, Kenneth Slessor and New Zealand poet Mary Corbonne-Veel. Three novelists—Murray Bail, Christina Stead and Patrick White—also appear, the last mourning the destruction of bush 'folded into one' for suburbia in 1955's *The Tree of Man*. In a decision that seems to run counter to the postcolonial objectives of the site, no Aboriginal poets are included. How Kevin Gilbert's 'Tree,' to cite just one example, was excluded is baffling and cannot be explained away as process or accident if we are impelled to refute such excuses in regard to colonial ecological destruction or indeed cultural memory—*Words in Place* found no Indigenous representation beyond Canberra street names and the Circular Quay Writers' Walk. If Laurence's 1995 work *Edge of the Trees*, which includes recordings of Koori voices at the Museum of Sydney, is intended to complement *Veil of Trees*, this is not made explicit. Like the Circular Quay Writers' Walk, *Veil of Trees* featured living writers upon completion in 1999, with Murray Bail, Judith Wright, Robert Gray, Les Murray, David Malouf, Rosemary Dobson and Peter Porter all included. This relatively recent trend (Canberra's writer-themed of suburb Garran aside) is one way the historical privileging of the late colonial and post-war authors can be countered. It is also how the representation of multicultural and Indigenous Australian authors can be accelerated, though *Veil of Trees* largely fails the first category and entirely fails the second.

Mapping Absence: The Under-Representation of Indigenous Writers

Of the sixty locations in *Words in Place*, only four (6.7%) represent Indigenous authors, namely Circular Quay Writers' Walk (Oodgeroo Noonuccal), Walsh Bay's Theatre Walk (Bob Maza) and Canberra's suburbs of Franklin (Oodgeroo Avenue, Bellear Gardens) and Ngunnawal (Unaipon Avenue, Patten Street, Ferguson Circuit). There is a pattern, reinforced by wider examples such as Oodgeroo Noonuccal at University of Queensland's Wordsmiths Cafe and Kim Scott in the fledgling Fremantle Writers' Walk, for Indigenous authors to be included only as part of a series, rather than with a stand-alone site dedicated to one or multiple Indigenous authors only. The argument that this hangover of White Australia should be left to eventually correct itself is especially shaky now that living authors of this golden age of contemporary Indigenous writing and film are in contention, as are recovered and reconceived Indigenous authors from the past. New commemorative works will, no doubt, be built and a few of the existing ones (such as the writers' walks) extended and updated, but the larger issue at play is whether or not the Australian public imagination can accept itself and its origins as diverse. *Bulletin* founder J.F. Archibald's fountain in Hyde Park (falsely identified by the *Daily Telegraph* in 2017 as 'under threat' because of the *Bulletin*'s long-printed banner 'Australia for the White Man') emphasises classical Western antiquity as one origin (Benns and Godfrey 8). Meanwhile, Henry Lawson's statue proposes more a more independent, proletarian foundation myth of not just Australia, but of a strange new thing called an Australian and, indeed, Australian writer, flanked by a swagman and a dog.

The oldest, but last origin story to be publicly commemorated is an Indigenous one, though this remains all-too rare in regard to Indigenous writers who feature less than famed Indigenous political, artistic and sporting figures. The lesser public fame afforded to writers plays a role here, but so does a wider reluctance about facing the uncomfortable truths exposed by these writers, and Indigenous perspectives more generally. In Kim Scott's *Meanjin* essay 'Covered Up with Sand,' composed while researching his Miles Franklin Award-winning novel *That Deadman Dance*, Scott argues that Australia shouldn't rush to call itself 'postcolonial' just yet:

> The preferred imagery representing Indigenous Australia—whether the grand stuff of public spectacle and art or in advertisements—is usually that of an ancient and continuing culture, of traditional practices, of a remote and exotic 'other' . . . Many Indigenous societies *do* demonstrate a remarkable continuity from pre-colonial times to now, and there's no doubt that the *desire* of many Indigenous people to remain part of one of the world's oldest continuing cultures is very real. And increasingly, it's a story many other Australians want to hear. Not so attractive, however, is the story of Indigenous Australia's continuing legacy of oppression, racism and injustice. This story focuses on loss and dispossession, on disconnection from country, language, and family. Its themes are exclusion, shame and resentment. The imagery is far less appealing, as is the national identity it suggests. (Scott 121–22)

The creation of public art which draws upon published writing or traditional language is increasing, and so is the number of Indigenous artists. That said, there is a pre-established and ongoing resistance to Indigenous commemoration to contend with, most recently outlined in Matthew Graves and Elizabeth Rechniewski's 'Black Wars and White Settlement: the Conflict Over Space.' Graves and Rechniewski identify the Australian War Memorial's refusal to recognise the Frontier Wars (or Black Wars) as emblematic of a deeper level of denial of Australia's true origins—or, more pointedly, the story we show ourselves and the world about

these origins—within governmental and cultural institutions, which relegate Aboriginal experiences, memories and stories to the status of 'alternative,' rather than 'official' history. So it is with resistance to changing the date of Australia Day, which, for Graves and Rechniewski, is 'only the most visible tip of a broader, underlying debate over commemorative ellipsis and the dislocation of Australia's Indigenous past' (par 37).

The *Words in Place* project must likewise scrutinise its own ellipses, its own definitional and operational gaps. Even in Sydney, where thirty-five commemorations of Australian writing are pinpointed by satellite, nothing of the order of an authoritative survey of both traditional and cutting-edge commemorations has been devised or conducted just yet. Larger questions abound, not least 'What counts as Australian writing?' This is also reflected in the process of mapping sites of literary commemoration, a process which is something of a mirror and a paradox. The mirror reflects the 'selected memories' of the literary canon back to us (Hoelscher and Alderman 349). In the three-city version of *Words in Place*, we were both enabled and constrained by the literary canon; we were informed by authoritative texts such as Anita Heiss and Peter Minter's *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Aboriginal Literature* (2008), but also constrained by a paradoxical reliance on the presence of heritage inscription. This raises the question of the extent to which the mirror (the canon) and the paradox (the practice of inscribing writers and writing in place) reinforce each other. Certainly, the national version of *Words in Place* (hereafter *Words in Place 2.0*) will be more generous and generative, expanding to plot permanent, publicly-displayed nonfiction, oral and traditional narratives, with the standard exceptions of gravesites and culturally-sensitive or restricted areas.

Performing the Literary Map: The Challenge of Pictorial Literacies, Legacies

Were a GPS-guided literary tourist to take the short walk around from the Henry Lawson statue to the Eastern End of the Circular Quay Writers' Walk in the Opera House forecourt, they would encounter Gurindji artist Brenda L. Croft's *Waganmagulya (Farm Cove)*. This ground-based work claims on its plaque to depict figures from Sydney Aboriginal rock carvings, some of which no longer exist, in colours that reference the natural elements of the surrounding environment. The names etched in red along the pathway kerb are of women and men, places, animals, tools and rituals from the many clans and language groups of Indigenous people in the Sydney area. *Wuganmagulya (Farm Cove)* pays homage to the local Yura and to the Indigenous clans who travelled great distances to attend ceremonies at present-day Sydney Cove. It also acknowledges contemporary Indigenous history such as the 1988 Bicentennial protests and celebrates the survival of Indigenous culture. The growing use of writing and text by visual artists in public works challenges conventions of how Australian literature is conceived, received and defined. Is permanent installation in a public space an especially democratic form of publishing? Is any creative, informational or lexical arrangement of words enough to qualify as 'writing,' or does there have to be an identifiable narrative or technical mastery of language? Rather than one set rule, it seems logical to operate on a case-by-case basis, contacting and consulting authors where possible to understand their literary sensibilities and public or scholarly reception.

The protest literature of colonial-era figures such as Bennelong and Barak feature in both the *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Aboriginal Literature* and the *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature*, but Bennelong Point and Barak Drive are not yet plotted by *Words in Place*. More commemorations of protest writers and newer forms of commemoration representing writers from the world's oldest culture will need to be sought in future. One new form appeared in 2010, when the William Barak Apartments opened in central Melbourne. The

face of the great Wurundjeri leader, campaigner and artist (1824–1903) stares out from the thirty-one stories not far from the Victorian Parliament, where Barak journeyed to petition for the rights of Corranderrk in Healesville, the subject of Andrea James and Giordano Nanni's 2011 play *Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country* and Tony Birch's 2008 poetic sequence 'The True History of Beruk.'
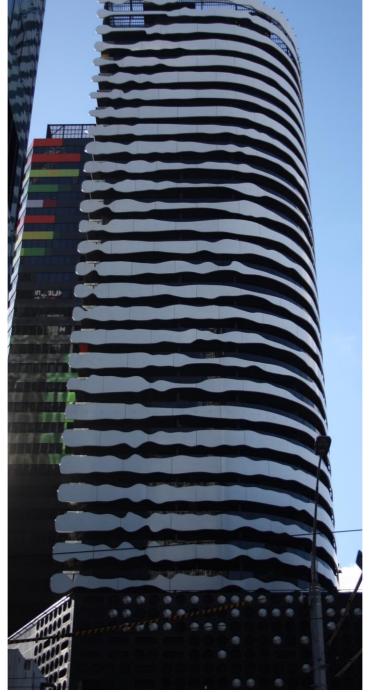

Figure 3: William Barak Apartments

According to their own narrative about the project, architects ARM worked in consultation with Wurundjeri elders, reinterpreting the location, the site of an old Carlton brewery, and its proximity to two traditional sites of Anglo-Australian political and military power, the site of the first Federal Parliament and the ANZAC Shrine across the Yarra. As Linda Cheng of *ArchitectureAU* reviewed it:

> The Shrine, built merely decades after Australia's federation, represented the dawning of a new nation. Their work at the opposite end of the axis had to be complementary . . . The architects used a xylographic technique, and digitally reduced a greyscale image down to a bitmap line drawing, which was then translated into 3D molded panels for the balustrades . . . At the base of the tower, the carpark podium is faced with a grid of circular portholes, some of which are filled with aluminium discs that form a pattern spelling out 'Wurundjeri I am who I am' in Braille. (pars 3, 5)

Significantly, the eighty-five-metre-tall image of Barak (see Figure 3) is designed to best be seen across the Yarra at the Shrine of Remembrance, a vivid reminder of his resistance during the Frontier Wars, the Mission system and the Stolen Generations that ravaged his people. The inclusion of Braille as a mixture of art and artifice is a twenty-first century phenomenon which suggests multiple ways of reading, translation and perception. It is not made clear on the building itself if 'Wurundjeri I am who I am' are Barak's written or spoken words, or a message chosen during their consultations with Wurundjeri elders and Barak's descendants. Yet the innate contradiction of naming luxury inner city apartments after the leader of a people who were stripped of their land was too much, however, for critics such as environmental humanities scholar Christine Hansen. In a 2015 article in *The Conversation*, Hansen argues that beneath this 'astonishing architectural achievement' lies a 'cruel juxtaposition' and a 'backhanded tribute' that belies the project's stated intentions (Hansen pars 2, 8, 10). For Hansen, the pricing of the apartments at a level prohibitive to most Indigenous people only affirms the socioeconomic exclusion and dislocation from Country which flowed from the frontier violence of the nineteenth century. This violence has itself been the subject of geocoding and GPS-plotting in the *Colonial Frontier Massacres in Eastern Australia 1788–1872* map launched by historian Lyndall Ryan in 2017 (Ryan). Despite the validity of Hansen's critique with regard to apartment prices, new digital resources such as Ryan's can assist Melbournians or visitors who see Barak's image or name to better comprehend the Frontier Wars with cartographic and descriptive precision.

Expanding and Re-purposing the Map

Words in Place plots material and imaginative intersections between writers, writing, place and memory in contemporary Australia, creating a digital archive of diverse forms of literary commemorative practice which can be substantively expanded in future. Inventories and archives are often regarded as static repositories of accumulated power and knowledge but, as Cresswell notes, 'expanded considerations' of archives as lived, and as being enacted in place, offer up new possibilities and technologies of memory-work, care, and knowing (167). Gelder and Jacobs suggest in 'The Postcolonial Ghost Story' that reading against the grain of 'settled' cultural and literary practice can produce 'uncanny effects' as well as new works (197). An example of the latter is Leah Purcell's 2016 restaging of 'The Drover's Wife,' which gives new life and meaning to Lawson's iconic short story and suggests how existing sites of literary commemoration might be re-purposed, unsettled and updated. In the third scene of Purcell's play, she sings a song, 'Run Daisy Run,' in English and in her grandmother's language: 'Wondah yarrmun taia nunni kurra mulli kai ngun ngun tulla yani yani.' ['White man on horseback come and took my baby, where all I can do is cry.'] (Dow, par 7). The absence of Aboriginal literary commemoration in Australian landscapes is part of a larger, historical displacing of Aboriginal agency, language and authority. Gelder and Jacobs remind us that all too often fantasies of 'one nation' are based upon the integration of difference and otherness, 'where all the bad memories have been laid to rest'—a fantasy threatened by creative and non-

fictive reminders of Australia's unfinished business (Gelder and Jacobs 120). Yet it is also a fantasy that is currently supported, however unintentionally, by the over-representative whiteness of Australia's publicly commemorated writers.

As a project that straddles the imaginative, contested and material contexts of memorialisation and the emergent possibilities for inclusion of more diverse Australian literatures in interpreting contemporary places, *Words in Place* carries a great deal of potential to explore, expand and experiment with more malleable, networked, participatory and engaged practices of literary commemoration. Such generative possibilities are exciting and open to emergent and public forms of literary performance and practice, possibilities that are less certain about authors and authority, but which nonetheless expand our literary cartographies by telling a more complex story about Australian writers and writing in place than has hitherto been known, so that it can be learnt from and responded to in a quantifiable, targeted manner. It may well be the case that it is not until the national map is complete that a more inclusive commemoration of the nation's writers can begin to take place in an organised, strategic manner rather than the existing pattern of fits-and-starts around surge years such as the 1988 Bicentenary, 2000 Olympics or 2001 Centenary of Federation. At the very least, the nationwide field data disseminated online will make it that bit harder to proclaim (and maintain) a state of ignorance about the inherent whiteness of Australian authors enshrined in place and the inherent message which it sends to the public, that in Australia, writers are white. And yet, we must also be attuned to the 'liabilities' of maps—which Harley famously noted have the tendency to 'acquire an authority that may be hard to dislodge' (13). Nonetheless, the global trend towards the commemoration of living writers and engaging text (and maps) artistically, for example through mobile-scannable public sculpture, means that we don't have to wait for another generation to enshrine the authors we actually have, through new works which help visitors mediate and reinterpret creative connections and spatialities of writers and place.

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