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# SETTLER COLONIALISM AND (RE)CONCILIATION

FRONTIER VIOLENCE, AFFECTIVE  
PERFORMANCES, AND  
IMAGINATIVE REFOUNDINGS



PENELOPE EDMONDS



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# Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation

Frontier Violence, Affective Performances,  
and Imaginative Refoundings

Penelope Edmonds

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*For Patrick, my luminous and generous friend*



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# Introduction: Performing (Re)conciliation in Settler Societies

In contemporary settler societies reconciliation has emerged as a potent and alluring form of utopian politics. Across the globe, liberal democratic settler nations, generally resistant to formal processes of decolonization, have been compelled to make new and urgent political compacts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to address the legacy of violent pasts, stabilize the present, and imagine new national futures. In former colonies of British settlement, such as Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States of America, where Indigenous peoples and settlers grapple with the pernicious and ongoing effects of colonization, 'reconciliation' has become a political catch cry, and public projects for transformative change have been inaugurated in its name. Here, the utopian politics of reconciliation emerge most powerfully in the realm of public performance and are greatly bound up in a culture and economy of affect, expressing the desire for virtuous compact, unity and redemption under the sign of nation. These affective performances take us into the space of the imaginary as we seek to create mythic covenants, but they also call on the violent past. And like all utopian forms, the politics of reconciliation in settler societies, which demand consensus and often Indigenous volition, can be rejected.

In these settler nations – where issues of genocide; sovereignty; land, maritime, mining and cultural rights; 'stolen' or 'lost' generations; treaty calls and claims; and demands for legal redress and reparation are urgently contested – 'reconciliation' serves multiple social and political functions, and resides within a political language and paradigm that frames processes of redress. Yet settler societies, unlike other colonial societies, have not been transformed by the dramatic rupture of decolonization and the move to a postcolonial state, but rather are

marked by settler colonialism's historical continuity.<sup>1</sup> The foundational violence of settler colonialism, its palpable legacy and enduring structures, perpetually haunts the national psyche, notwithstanding these halting efforts at redress. How, then, do we hold this enduring violence in our consciousness and yet continue to live together in these fraught, mixed, nominally 'postcolonial' settler societies, where we are all here to stay?<sup>2</sup> How are these tensions expressed in public 'reconciliatory' settler cultures, which are shaped by the politics of redress, on the one hand, and the ongoing violence of colonial structures, on the other, as complementary modes of settler governance?

This book examines the performative life of reconciliation and its discontents in settler societies. It explores the affective refoundings of the settler state and reimaginings of its alternatives and, in particular, the way the past is creatively reworked and mobilized in the name of social transformation within a new global paradigm of reconciliation and the 'age of apology'. In search of a new emancipatory politics, the book takes particular account of Indigenous-led refutations or reworkings of consensus politics in public culture that directly confront the ongoing structural legacy of colonial violence. Taking selected case studies across the United States of America, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, I explore the various, polyvalent and sometimes fragmented discourse of reconciliation on the ground and the performative affects of these reconciliations and their refutations in public culture. In settler societies this creative, dynamic process of drawing on the past to forge new alliances and imagined futures is a crucial, if fraught, aspect of the political realm – one that we are jointly acting out together; and it is worked out from the affective and overlapping spaces of heart and horror.

Reaching to clasp hands, Australian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people sat across from each other at long tables to celebrate Reconciliation Week at the University of Adelaide in 2006, and exchanged their personal stories in the name of reconciliation (Figure 1). Created by artist Karen Casey, of Aboriginal and settler descent, the public, participatory art event encouraged people to 'extend a hand beyond their comfort zone and make a genuine connection with another person'.<sup>3</sup> While they did so, the space between their hands was cast in plaster, forming curious 'shell shapes', leaving a record of the encounter (Figure 2). This peace-building performance drew on the paradigmatic act of shaking hands, a ritual and conciliatory gesture of peace and accord with a deep genealogy in Western tradition. This public event, 'Let's Shake: Handshakes for Reconciliation', was attended by over 200



*Figure 1* 'Let's Shake: Handshakes for Reconciliation', Adelaide, 2006, conceived by artist Karen Casey. Clockwise from bottom left: Uncle Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien, Michael Harbison (former Lord Mayor of Adelaide), Professor James McWha AO (former Vice Chancellor and President of the University of Adelaide), Frances Bedford (state MP), Karen Casey (artist), Shirley Peisley AM, Dr Roger Thomas, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG, Dr Duncan McFetridge (state MP). Photograph courtesy Karen Casey

people and reperformed in several Australian cities. The performance occurred in the midst of a federally sponsored movement for reconciliation, guided by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, which urged Australians of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal backgrounds to view the role of national healing not only as a state endeavour but as an everyday, personal and emotional journey, where individual acts of consciousness and the building of trust mattered.<sup>4</sup> In these moving yet potentially risk-laden cross-cultural events, Casey's public performances offered a kind of mythic exchange, and the highly embodied handshake gesture generated a striking emotional response from participants. Sitting and talking while holding hands created a renewed space of encounter for people to come together on a human and individual basis.

In Casey's grassroots, non-state performance, the space in between the connected hands became a site of contact and negotiation in a public ceremony that, for participants, could be unifying, utopic and critical



*Figure 2* *Contact/Converse*, handshake installation by Karen Casey, on display at the Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2008. Image courtesy Karen Casey and the NGV

to the building of trust. As Casey reflected on her own 'Handshakes for Reconciliation' public performances:

I was amazed at how people embraced the process. I thought it would be intimidating, but it was quite the opposite. Judging from the conversations, it really engaged people on a deep personal level ... Until I did it myself, I wasn't aware of what people were actually experiencing. It's not like holding someone's hand for 20 minutes, which I imagine would be quite uncomfortable. There is no skin to skin contact so it's really about the space in between ... Initially, people bonded over the feeling of wet plaster in their hand. It was sloppy and cold. They laughed and said 'ooh-ah'. While they conversed, they connected on a deeper subtle level as the plaster got warm and firm, and this thing formed between their hands. When it solidified it had become a tangible, physical manifestation of the moment shared. The energy of each person's hand, of their connection, had been absorbed in the process. It became much more than a lump of plaster, it had a kind of sacredness to it, this odd little shell-shaped object.<sup>5</sup>

In this moving, embodied reconciliation performance, the space between the hands became a protean and creative space. The shell-like shapes became a form of pure affect and, through a brief process of contact and connection, they came to represent the sacred. Yet not everyone wanted to shake hands. Handshakes can be fraught and entail risk and the sacred. For participants, such an encounter could be both unifying and key to the building of trust, or alternatively might be experienced as discomfiting, or even repressive, in its urging towards connection and reconciliation. The handshake that is so pivotal to Casey's vision of reconciliation is emblematic of the ambivalence of this negotiation in settler societies, and the leitmotiv for this book.

Conciliation may be utopic in its promise of an imagined refounding, yet it can also be coercive and repressive. Conciliation in settler societies is historically and perpetually marked by this critical ambivalence. Tasmanian Aboriginal artist and scholar Julie Gough has rejected conciliation as a unifying, desirable or indeed possible process. 'We are sick of being "conciliated"', she argues, and points to Tasmania's 'genocidal history, [where] ... Tasmanian Aboriginal people have been subjected to the term "conciliation" for generations, but not its practice'.<sup>6</sup> Here, Gough is referring to the 'Great Conciliation' of 1832, a moment of settler triumph which marked the end of the Black Wars in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) between settlers and Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples. She makes explicit the connection between this colonial 'conciliation' and the rhetoric of the contemporary Australian national reconciliation movement, thus rejecting any notion of a break between the past and the present in settler strategies of political diplomacy directed toward Indigenous peoples in Australia. Tasmania is notorious in the popular imagination as a small island that was rapidly and aggressively colonized as a British penal and pastoral settlement and beset by extreme frontier violence, which led to the near annihilation of Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples.<sup>7</sup> The conciliatory handshake was depicted on 'proclamation boards', objects of diplomacy that were handed out to Aboriginal peoples and attached to trees on the island's forests, at a time of extreme frontier violence and martial law (Figure 3). They reveal the central conceit of the conciliation of Aboriginal peoples in colonial Van Diemen's Land, one of many nineteenth-century savage wars of peace waged by the British in newly colonized Indigenous lands.<sup>8</sup> It is little wonder, then, that when Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples are called upon to engage in reconciliation, the historical and emotional stakes are so high.

In Gough's incendiary 2010 performance, titled *Manifestation (Bruny Island)*, a European chair is struck ablaze with a Tasmanian Aboriginal



*Figure 3* Governor Arthur's proclamation board to the Aborigines (detail) c.1829, © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 72-21-70/6500, detail (digital file #99210002)

(*Palawa*) spear on the rocky shores of the Tasmanian coastline, symbolically recalling the violent land wars of the Van Diemen's Land frontier and the effective guerrilla tactics of Aboriginal people who used fire to attack settlers' huts (Figure 4). The chair is suggestive of the settled and the interior life of European invaders, and their acts of domestication and of making home on Aboriginal land. Sited on Bruny Island, the performance also references the small, short-lived mission and ration station set up to conciliate, domesticate and civilize Aboriginal people by George Augustus Robinson, who would later be referred to by settlers as the 'Great Conciliator'. Still burning, the incendiary image conveys anger and resentment, and exposes the violent legacies of the past. The enactment points to the repressive tendencies of the reconciliation paradigm, one that in this case is especially potent in Tasmania, with its highly intertwined historical discourses of violence and conciliation. So different to the handshakes of 'Let's Shake', Gough's performance is an act of Aboriginal refusal of European conventions, and articulates a resistance to the heavy narrative or script of consensus within the settler state that reconciliation often demands.



Figure 4 *Manifestation* (Bruny Island), 2010, artist Julie Gough. Photograph courtesy Julie Gough

How can reconciliation occur in the shadow of violence and, in some cases, genocide in settler societies? Performances of reconciliation can offer hope for a future created through imaginative refoundings, which give rise to feelings of honour, obligation and togetherness. Public performances in the name of reconciliation, such as mass public handshakes, thousands of people crossing a bridge together or paddling jointly down a river, are extraordinary, embodied and highly affective cross-cultural collective events. They are marked by intense feelings of goodwill, cross-cultural unity and generosity, pride, relief and hope; such feelings are eudaimonic emotions that bespeak something social, of what it is 'to live well' and which proffer valuable unity and 'mutual relations of civic or personal love and friendship'.<sup>9</sup> These events are an important site of social experimentation and negotiation. The 'handshakes' and other collective performances offer hope of a *modus vivendi*, a new way of being together. As performance theorist Marvin Carlson affirms, 'performance can work within a society ... to provide a site for exploration of fresh and alternative structures and patterns of behaviour'.<sup>10</sup> These reconciliation performances often draw selectively on specific cultural traditions and gestures of goodwill and diplomacy from the colonial past – for instance, the European and universal gesture of the handshake, or the North American symbols of exchange and agreement, such as the Native



wampum belt or the cross-cultural tradition of the covenant chain – and, importantly, may also selectively recruit and revision ‘conciliation’ or treaty moments from the colonial past into the enactment. As I explore in this book, these collective, unifying reconciliation performances seek transition to a new moral order and may be understood as critical rites of passage in settler societies, transformative moments embodied in specific local and cultural repertoires and traditions.<sup>11</sup> In this way, reconciliatory and public acts are enlisted for powerful and affective processes of social transformation and are testament to the urgent and genuine desire of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike in present-day settler nations to enact a compact or covenant in hopefulness and unity, and to forge different relationships with each other to create new cross-cultural and equitable futures. Such performances are thus crucial to the radical political work of reconstructing history for the purpose of building affective engagement between people and, when authorized at the national level, between citizens and the state, in moves towards new postcolonial socialities.

While state-based pronouncements on formal reconciliation may always possess levels of controversy, the genuine move towards positive resistance and peace-building by artists such as Casey and participants alike, and their emotional experiences of such reconciliation performances, cannot be underestimated. I want to recognize and honour the hard political and emotional work of Indigenous peoples and allied others towards such reconciliatory initiatives. Such social action as a diverse form of praxis has a critical role in decolonizing approaches in the present in its work towards social transformation and new settler postcolonial socialities.<sup>12</sup>

But for many Indigenous peoples and allied others in settler nation states today, ‘reconciliation’ has become a dirty word. Reconciliation as a state-based and top-down social program, and its associated performances, can be repressive and reinforce colonial hegemonies as a poor symbolic substitute for actual and substantive reparations. It is also problematic as an ideological and temporally sequenced narrative of social unity that ask us to forget the systemic nature of settler colonialism and accompanying violent acts against Indigenous peoples and the dispossession and expropriation of Indigenous lands. Political activists such as Gough use performance to challenge and reject the process of reconstructing the past that, I will argue in this book, is so crucial to the work of reconciliation in settler colonial societies today. As Gough’s fiery enactment reveals, by recalling frontier violence and Aboriginal resistance in Van Diemen’s Land and staking out the dissonance

between invasion and settler home-making, such a performance has the ability to ‘materialize temporal and spatial connections’ of past and present as they coalesce in the ‘moment of the theatrical event’, thus rupturing the politics of consensus to force ethical, relational and Indigenized accounts of the past.<sup>13</sup> When Indigenous performances re-enact or subversively replay frontier violence they reveal the limits of the reconciliatory paradigm with its linear push to forget and move forward; rather, they expose the historical continuity of invasion and the recursive nature of oppression.

A burgeoning body of scholarly work has begun to address the contemporary and pressing legal and political aspects of formal state-sponsored practices of ‘reconciliation’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within individual multicultural and postcolonial settler nations today including Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States.<sup>14</sup> Yet reconciliation, as we see, can take many varied, multivalent and unexpected cultural and political forms, outside formal state practices, and these demand critical attention. Further, little scholarship has considered the rich interconnected legacies and histories of conciliation as cross-cultural, historical and performative phenomena within settler colonial and, subsequently, national and postcolonial ‘reconciliatory’ contexts. Far more critical attention must be given to the ways that historical narratives of conciliation and ideas of a settler–Indigenous compact, treaty, or a mythic exchange have circulated within the popular settler historical imagination, where their cultural meanings have been reworked over time and expressed in forms of public history-making such as re-enactments, commemorations and other performances in the transition to apparently new postcolonial and emancipatory moral orders.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout these chapters I consider the cultural genealogies of conciliation and violence in settler societies and explore how selected conciliation moments or repertoires are recruited imaginatively and reworked in the service of affective ‘refoundings’ of the settler nation. In this way, I look to the ‘prehistory of reconciliation’s present’ in the contested public and performative historical imagination of present-day settler states, a critical political process which is especially salient where formal decolonization cannot occur.<sup>16</sup>

Over Australia’s decade of formal reconciliation, like thousands of others, I walked on marches and across bridges, as part of the federal government’s initiative, billed as a national journey of ‘Walking Together’. In 2000 I took part in Melbourne’s reconciliation march attended by over 200,000 people. I stood on a fire hydrant and, from

this vantage point, took photos of the huge crowd of walkers, and both felt and observed the highly charged cross-currents of emotion in this peace-building performance, reflective of the state of the nation. In the crowd, the good feelings of togetherness, hope and optimism were mingled with feelings of anger and shame, and defiant chants and banners calling for ‘Treaty!’, and proclaiming ‘Sorry’, a demand for a formal state apology to Aboriginal peoples.<sup>17</sup> These intense and contrapuntal emotions interrupted the good feelings of consensus and were a sobering call to account for past and ongoing violent policies of the state. Like other marchers, I experienced the bad feelings of disappointment and anger, as the country’s reconciliation journey seemed to go badly off course and did not live up to its promise. So too, as a non-Indigenous historian of colonial Australia and empire, I sit in archives and read multiple accounts of devastating frontier violence, and its complementary workings with conciliation, which perpetually haunts the settler state and lives on in multifarious guises within it. Such work can never be devoid of emotional, reflective and moral practice. Therefore, this book brings both an explorative postcolonial scholarly attention and a personal and emotional investment in these problematic histories, which drives me to ask the question: how do we come to terms with that which is seemingly unresolvable, the perpetual violence of colonization, in these nominally postcolonial times, which persists, elemental and deeply disturbing in our national and personal psyches? What might an Indigenous-led emancipatory politics and a truly postcolonial sociality look like? What are its limits and possibilities within this fraught paradigm, the double bind of reconciliation?

Reconciliation does not spring fully formed as a ‘postcolonial’ phenomenon, nor is it a ‘clean slate’ where the past can be wiped away. Likewise, it is not a linear process of truth telling, forgiveness and resolution in the Abrahamic tradition. This book takes an expansive reading of reconciliation, one that is always cross-cultural, spiralling and dialogic, and which marks out the critical space of the political – a space that must always remain open. The path to reconciliation is contingent, and efforts to arrive at friendship are proximate at best, spiralling through competing or complementary narratives of identity and history. *Reconciliation*, or (re)conciliation, necessarily has a potent relationship with the past, from which it cannot be unmoored. In its imaginative expression in the present, it will always selectively draw on past politics and repertoires of contestation. Unifying and eudaimonic peace-building dramas and national ‘refounding’ performances of consensus and reconciliation are invariably intertwined with the contrapuntal, innovative and subversive

performative acts of anticolonial refusal and Indigenous resistance, which rupture the politics of consensus so often demanded by the settler state and into which Indigenous peoples are interpellated. As we will see in the following chapters, such refutational moments may emerge in the very midst of enactments of consensus, as unruly ruptures, or as part of the public debate that swirls around them. Thus, a performance's public life resonates on many levels, inciting reaction, opposition and interrogation, either in symbolic form or in media debate.

We must not be seduced by reconciliation's utopian politics, yet neither can we reject it altogether. To some, the idea of utopia may signify first and foremost a special kind of political and abstract fantasy; however, it must be recognized that utopianism is a 'key ingredient of the whole process of modern politics'.<sup>18</sup> Harnessed by the settler state for processes of social stabilization and as a peace-making paradigm, where tensions are high and trust is low, and emotively brokered as a form of national cross-cultural covenant, reconciliation, I argue, must be taken seriously as a critical social phenomenon across contemporary settler societies that at once manifests nationally and at the same time forms part of a transnational movement driven by the global politics of redress and the 'age of apology'. We must explore settler colonialism's distinctive forms and effects, especially this progressive, transformative program called 'reconciliation', and study its particular temporal syntax, form and lexicon, and its associated repertoire of performance and affect as a specific genre. Too often reconciliation is debated and studied exclusively within national bounds. But as new transnational histories reveal, in a global groundswell multiple Indigenous nations have rejected the boundaries of the settler state, radically troubled the state's deployment of reconciliation, and contested its language of consensus under the badge of nation, which seeks too often to draw Indigenous polities into the state and 'reform' them, thus erasing difference and 'political distinctions between colonizer and colonized'.<sup>19</sup> In line with a growing counter-colonial politics, reconciliation's coercive operations are now confronted through a critical trans-Indigenous scholarly politics of refutation in settler nations. I want to signal the vital importance of this critical activist work in forcing the space of the political open, and alerting us to the 'cunning of reconciliation', and the false promise and problematic directions of state-based forms of reconciliation into which Indigenous peoples and settlers can be affectively interpellated in this age of apology.<sup>20</sup> I offer a study that may be considered a form of comparative transnationalism, which allows for an understanding of both deep and local political specificities and Indigenous cultural and political tactics,

but also reveals dynamic transnational flows of critical counter-colonial political ideas that are now enacted globally.

Indigenous performative political action within the settler state and within postcolonialism more broadly remains understudied, thus passing over a major aspect of the global political order. Remarking on the lack of attention to Indigenous performance as political practice, Peter Phipps argues that too often ‘international rights based institutions’ have been privileged over ‘culture’ as a ‘space to be attained and protected for the struggle for [Indigenous] rights’.<sup>21</sup> Far from being marginal, Indigenous performance is a complex transnational phenomenon of critical importance, addressing key ideological and political issues of sovereignty and the national and global order. As Helen Gilbert points out, Indigenous performance is analytically central to and permeates social, legal, cultural and political spheres, as ethnographers have long maintained. Identifying a crucial gap, Gilbert argues that mainstream postcolonial studies have had ‘a great deal to say’ about Indigeneity as an ‘intellectual conceptualization’, but have not attended to performativity and less so performance. Conversely, the realms of dance and theatre studies have been ‘less nimble’ in analytically connecting the realm of performance to postcolonialism.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, until recently, some scholars have been slow to engage with Indigenous-led political performances, neglecting these critical spaces of cultural interchange, possibly because these ‘bear the border-crossing taint of “inauthenticity” that haunt tourist and ethnic arts’, observes Phipps. Until recently, this dimension of Indigenous cultural assertion has been misread and ‘under-theorized through the lens of either romanticism or “salvage anthropology” as cultural revival and survival, rather than as a seriously political and ethical practice’.<sup>23</sup> Crucially, this study seeks to enrich this field of work, by highlighting the specific dynamics of Indigenous performative and cross-cultural political action as praxis within settler states and the ways that such actions variously work with, through and against reconciliation.

In this book, I consider the very distinct reconciliatory politics of three settler societies. Offering local case studies, I look at the contestation between settler states and the Haudenosaunee on the east coast and the Lakota of the midwest, United States. While there is much scholarship on Canada, there is very little scholarship that directly addresses the fraught life of reconciliation in the United States.<sup>24</sup> Here, local and state-based discourses of reconciliation prevail, though they are fragmented and contested in a nation that does not recognize itself as a settler colonial formation, and where there is no formal federal program of reconciliation between the US government and Native

tribes. Yet in 2012, the UNHRC Special Rapporteur on Indigenous peoples and the United States declared that ‘the open wounds left by historical events are plentiful, alive in intergenerational memory if not experience’, and the report called for ‘a determined action within a programme of reconciliation’.<sup>25</sup> In Australia, beginning in 1991, a formal federal government program of reconciliation, highly symbolic, but without a truth commission, treaty or substantive forms of reparation, occurred. Especially salient is that Australia is a settler society where no form of Aboriginal sovereignty, however delimited, was admitted and with no history of formal treaty or covenant-making, which affects the nature of claim-making in particular ways. This is especially true for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live with the spectre of deep histories of colonial violence and the requirement for multiple forms of redress. I consider the ways that Weraera people of New South Wales, and Tasmanian Aboriginal, or Palawa, peoples have confronted these histories. In Aotearoa New Zealand a reconciliatory politics often referred to as the ‘settlement’ prevails, where national consensus is built through the re-enlivened Treaty of Waitangi of 1840, though not without controversy. Māori *iwi* (or tribes) who did not sign the Treaty, and others who reject the terms of the settlement, such as the Tūhoe in Te Urewera region of Aotearoa New Zealand’s North Island, contest the postcolonial politics of national consensus. The chapters that follow explore the global picture of the emergence of the politics of redress across settler societies, and the local and fraught journey of reconciliation’s performative life, where public reconciliation discourse is multivalent, highly fragmented, and may be both reparative and coercive.

### **Coercive conciliation: reconciliation, anger and the politics of refusal**

The requirement of nation states across the globe for reconciliation has become part of an international lexicon and a prominent feature of late liberal modernity. Over the last three decades, there has emerged a heightened attention to historical wrongdoing and reconciliation. State apologies and various forms of commemoration and restitution have become intense areas of scholarly enquiry. Indeed, some scholars have argued this phenomenon of apology is one aspect of a recent call for a new international morality, and in settler societies has been described as part of the politics of redress.<sup>26</sup> As the counterpart of this global turn to apology and aspiration for restitution, ‘reconciliation’ came to be the preferred terminology to refer to a broad and diverse

process of peace-making and redress, especially when dealing with the aftermath of civil wars or violent authoritarian regimes, such as in El Salvador, Argentina, Rwanda or Cambodia, where populations have experienced profound social, ethnic and moral division.<sup>27</sup>

In the midst of this new international morality and the age of apology, there has also been a marked rise of scholarship on political trust and the politics of recognition within liberal democracies.<sup>28</sup> Here, the issue of whether the institutions of liberal democratic government should recognize distinctive ethnicities and cultural traditions is a key debate. In this context, Indigenous challenges to the settler liberal democratic state and calls for the acknowledgement of Indigenous sovereignties and for a differentiated citizenship are of crucial global importance. Yet despite a burgeoning literature on reconciliation, transitional justice, truth commissions and official apologies, much scholarship until recently has tended to ignore the specific conditions of settler states, where reconciliation has been used to address, stabilize and sometimes nullify the demands of Indigenous peoples.<sup>29</sup> While there is a growing literature on reconciliation theory and practice, it is often nation-based, and it too often fails to address settler colonialism as a specific analytic category.<sup>30</sup>

Reconciliation, it is clear, is a term whose complexity is often greatly underestimated. As an aspirational concept, reconciliation must be understood within its historical, geographical and political specificities. It is expansive and malleable, moving at once between the structural and the symbolic, and may refer to the creation of both new legal and structural as well as cultural and emotional accords. Taking many forms, reconciliatory approaches in settler nations may be in concert with or without treaty processes, and may also include strategies for legal, constitutional, political and social redress, financial reparation and the provision of replacement lands. Reconciliation may also embrace active pathways including restorative and transitional justice and, in some cases, health and wellbeing outcomes for communities are sought.

Australia's reconciliation movement was initiated by government in 1991, in response to a long-overdue recognition of Aboriginal disadvantage, past colonial violence and Indigenous political mobilization, and partly in response to an active treaty movement throughout the 1980s, towards a treaty that did not ever eventuate.<sup>31</sup> South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), inaugurated in 1995, sought to offer a way forward towards national healing in the aftermath of an entrenched system of violent apartheid. In 1998 the Canadian Government issued a Statement of Reconciliation in which it expressed

regret for past policies that harmed Aboriginal people, including placing Aboriginal children in residential schools. In 2008 Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.<sup>32</sup> In Aotearoa New Zealand the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, yet left to languish for well over 100 years, was legally and culturally enlivened post-1975 by the Waitangi Tribunal. The 'spirit of Waitangi' now suffuses civic and legal life, and its 'settlement' promotes a way forward at multiple social and political levels in a bicultural society, and has also been described by scholars as occupying the political lexicon of reconciliation and truth telling.<sup>33</sup> In the last decade or so, many of these settler nations have made formal apologies to Aboriginal and Native peoples, and here the languages of reconciliation and apology are heavily intertwined.<sup>34</sup> Such national apologies for past violence and grievances offered by these settler nations to Indigenous peoples have also become a powerful and indeed necessary component of the political platform of reconciliation policy and practice.

In Australia, one of the few settler nations without a formal treaty process, perhaps invented handshakes are all that we have. Since 1803, when Jeremy Bentham argued there was 'no wampum', lamenting the lack of treaty in Britain's new Australian colonies as a 'universal sore' that could never be healed, the promise of treaty has persisted in the political imaginary.<sup>35</sup> Treaty is perhaps the 'impossible performance', a mythic exchange and virtuous covenant that has never occurred but someday might be realized.<sup>36</sup> Without a treaty culture, Australia has few longstanding or formal conciliatory traditions to draw upon from the past which might be enlivened – as is the case with the Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand or the many treaties of North America – and recruited to the present towards a politics of redress and reconciliation. The reconciliation movement in Australia has been described as a social peace paradigm which became part of the nation's narrative of redemption.<sup>37</sup> Yet Australia's processes of reconciliation, first through the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991–2000) and then through Reconciliation Australia as the 'People's Movement' (2000 onwards), have also been criticized acutely for legitimizing the primary structures of the settler state, and continuing and reduplicating former colonial patterns of dominance. Aboriginal activists and scholars, and other political commentators, have been highly critical of such a political paradigm, describing it as 'coercive reconciliation', a process which has not delivered substantial land rights, reparation, political redress, sovereignty or treaty to Aboriginal peoples of Australia.<sup>38</sup> Others have



pointed to the ‘historical vacuity’ of Australia’s reconciliation processes, the movement’s tendency towards history-less-ness and reluctance to squarely address the wrongs of the past.<sup>39</sup> Drawing attention to the privileging of the symbolic at the expense of substantive legal redress and reparations in Australia, Australian Aboriginal political activist and academic Gary Foley has consistently argued that ‘Native Title is NOT Land Rights, and Reconciliation is NOT Justice!’<sup>40</sup> While Canada, the United States, and Aotearoa New Zealand are steeped in a treaty culture, around which legal and performative claims can be made and acts of re-covenanting can occur, Australia, with a culture shaped by treaty absence, has a state-authorized public reconciliation discourse that has emerged in its wake, resulting, as I will show, in very different public performative discourses, such as ‘Sorry Day’, as opposed to a more celebratory and defiant ‘Treaty Day’ in other settler nations.

The false promise of reconciliation has rightly become a cause for much concern; activists and scholars have begun to excavate its political operations and coercive malleability, and the ease with which reconciliation and consensus-building rhetoric may be co-opted by governments. Not least, opposition arises from those who argue that there was no original conciliation, no exchange to begin with, to which present reconciliation politics might gesture or build on. But more than this, the politics of redress and consensus performed at official state levels can become authorizing state narratives, especially when coupled with a rubric or script of ‘moving forward’ or ‘putting the events of the past behind us’, and may shut down opposition and continuing dialogue.<sup>41</sup> As Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham point out, when speaking of reconciliation performances in settler nations such as Canada, the problem ‘at the level of relations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous institutions in Canada is not one of inadequate closure ... but one of repeated, pre-emptive attempts at reaching closure and “cure”’.<sup>42</sup> The contemporary impetus for reconciliation to ‘move forward’ and ‘put the past behind us’ is, then, to some degree continuous with the politics of consensus evident in the treaty handshake of conciliation, as a strategy of appeasement and domination.<sup>43</sup> Settler colonialism’s staged and temporally sequenced deployment of reconciliation thus constitutes a ‘vanishing end point’ where reconciliation ‘engineers a transformative moment in the present’ argues Elizabeth Strackosch. It marshals ‘diverse actors towards an historic exchange that will dissolve the problematic relations of colonialism’. But the transformative moment is always about to occur, and bounded within the political lexicon and itinerary of the settler state, the ‘colonial endpoint proves elusive’.<sup>44</sup> According to French philosopher Jacques Rancière, post-millennium consensus

politics are far from a model of 'social peace'. Rather, they may suppress the struggle constitutive of the political (*la politique*), destroy the space of the political (*le politique*), and 'produce various forms of identitarianism, and gloom, as their flip side'.<sup>45</sup> 'Consensus reduces people to populations, and rights to facts, and incessantly works to fill in the gaps between things, denying what makes them different', argues Rancière.<sup>46</sup> In contemporary postcolonial and culturally diverse settler nations, where formal decolonization remains unforeseeable, state-sponsored formal conciliation activities and public performances also work incessantly to 'fill in the gaps between things', to build a 'peace paradigm' often through the revisioning of an acceptable past. Here, the politics of recognition threaten to become the politics of consensus, and under the sign of nation, reducing political distinctions between colonizer and colonized, and may shut down the dialogic and necessary space of the political. Thus, much-lauded reconciliation initiatives, including many state-based apologies, may be symbolic only and serve to elide past injustices, and impose a closure upon future Indigenous resistance.

In North America, Pauline Wakeham has pointed to the rise of reconciliation in the 'age of apology' and its imbrication with strategies of terror in the management of Indigenous resistance, and has shown the dual face of the settler state as one of reconciliation and terror. Wakeham instructively observes that reconciliation and terror may converge as 'complementary logics of contemporary settler colonial power' in settler nation states, and foregrounds the ways that 'reconciliation and terror intersect around the management of a third term: indigenous resistance'.<sup>47</sup> Further, writing on Canada's formal reconciliation process, she argues that a fantasy of national benevolence is perpetuated in the nation's imaginary, since such reconciliation processes are based on colonial ideas of white civility, which continue to 'overwrite ongoing power asymmetries and gross inequities'. In this way, reconciliation becomes part of the nation's teleological narrative of its own beneficence.<sup>48</sup> Glen Coulthard has argued that the language of transitional justice cannot take effect in non-transitional situations, that is to say, in settler colonial settings where settlers do not go home and we are all here to stay. He likewise rejects reconciliation and its basis in the 'politics of recognition', arguing that this too can be harnessed coercively by the settler state and effect little real change. Coulthard argues that for First Nations peoples, 'what is treated in the Canadian discourse of reconciliation as an unhealthy and debilitating incapacity to forgive and to move on is actually a sign of a *critical consciousness*, of our sense of justice and injustice, and of our awareness of and unwillingness to reconcile'.<sup>49</sup> We must take these 'negative' emotions seriously, as 'in the

context of ongoing settler colonial injustice', the anger and resentment of Indigenous peoples should be understood as a justifiable 'sign of moral protest and political outrage'.<sup>50</sup> He rejects the paradigm of reconciliation based on 'mutual recognition' as merely an extension of the settler project, and instead calls for a reinvigorated Indigenous politics recognizing Indigenous cultural traditions and sovereignty.<sup>51</sup>

Miranda Johnson has described reconciliation, when harnessed by the state, as a form of affective 'national refounding'. Far from granting political autonomy to Indigenous peoples, reconciliation, Johnson argues, only re-entrenches settler belonging through an affective attachment to national renewal and has little to do with Indigenous rights or sovereignties.<sup>52</sup> In Australia, the federally sponsored 'reconciliation' movement apparently offered some form of utopic, progressive national politics, a form of coming to terms with the past that was long overdue. However, this reconciliation process was widely critiqued for its resistance to any decolonizing action. As a stabilization strategy, it placed a 'colonial ceiling' on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations, by privileging 'national unity and nation building', as Damien Short observes. Affording highly delimited recognition, reconciliation in Australia offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 'a right to be incorporated into the Australian nation but not a right to refuse'.<sup>53</sup> Fifteen years later we are now in many ways in a post-apology and post-reconciliation period, where the business of the settler state carries on as usual. The great reconciliation moment has well and truly passed. The recent national movement titled 'Recognise', which calls for Aboriginal recognition in the Australian constitution, has been widely framed as another step in the long national reconciliation journey. While many Aboriginal people and others support the 'Recognise' movement, arguing that Aboriginal Australia needs first to experience a form of state recognition in order to then reject it, others, such as Gary Foley, oppose it. As he argues, 'The fact is that a clear majority of ordinary Aboriginal people are NOT interested in constitutional recognition! It is regarded by most Aboriginal people as a meaningless token gesture that will do nothing to alleviate the appalling imprisonment rates, shocking health statistics and complete lack of land rights and self-determination'.<sup>54</sup> Like Coulthard, Foley points out the empty rhetoric of mutual recognition and its role in a broader reconciliation movement that has turned out to be one of false promise. Aspirational calls for unity under the rubric of reconciliation, then, are sorely deficient when substantive redress is denied and settler authority is simply reaffirmed. The settler colonial state persists in the long reconciliatory moment, and yet the end of colonialism remains, as ever, elusive.

## Imperial grammars: the handshake as conciliation and the mythic exchange of liberal empire

Though widely understood as a postcolonial phenomenon, reconciliation in contemporary settler nation states did not emerge fully formed, but has its historical roots in past practices of conciliation, as both an intellectual idea and an imperial repertoire. Reconciliation belongs on a continuum of peace-making efforts, and under the rubric of the handshake, forms part of a distinctive European genealogy of diplomacy and conciliation that used particular performative repertoires in colonies of settlement. On violent colonial frontiers and in the midst of savage wars of peace, whenever Europeans invoked conciliation the handshake symbol invariably appeared. It was used as a shorthand vernacular, part of empire's potent repertoire, emblematic of the desire for the cessation of violence, appeasement and accord and offering a form of covenant between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Distinctive to settler national formations is the requirement for peace-making and accord to elicit Indigenous volition and cooperation in the face of unrest, violence and the expropriation of Indigenous lands and resources. As we shall see, the handshake or clasped hands motif, suggesting liberal empire, humanitarian benevolence, mutual accord and, importantly, Indigenous volition, was the symbol *par excellence* of the shifting, contested and constantly negotiated settler-Indigenous compact.

It is the contention of this book that the contemporary political context of reconciliation in late-modern settler states cannot be understood without exploring the political, historical and colonial genealogies of the strategy and practice that the British (and other European powers) repeatedly termed conciliation. Reconciliation is derived from the Latin 'conciliare' – to bring together, unite in feelings, make friendly, to unite physically or in thought or feeling, to make friendly or agreeable – and from 'concilium', or council. It is defined as the 'action of bringing into harmony; harmonizing, reconciliation'.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the handshake motif also has its origins in Roman antiquity. The clasped hands motif can be found on coins and was referred to as 'Fides', meaning trust, fidelity or political reliability between two parties, and was used especially in Vespasian's time (AD 69–79) as a political symbol. Fides was linked with the concept of Concordia, the goddess of harmony, agreement and understanding. It was used between individuals, but was also depicted on coins created by an emperor who wanted to emphasize his harmony with the military.<sup>56</sup> Taking a cultural approach and attending to ritual and affect in the early modern period, Kiril Petkov has shown

the movement of Roman peace rituals into Germanic medieval high culture – such as the kiss of peace and the handshake – and has traced the highly political and strategic ways rituals of reconciliation were used.<sup>57</sup> The Christian influence within the etymology of reconciliation is also profound, understood to be the action of restoring humanity to God's favour, humans to each other, or a person to the Church, where reconciliation is presented as a 'form of sacrament'.<sup>58</sup> Petkov charts the development of legal transactions through this period, and the ways that the Roman ritual, especially 'fides', is taken up in the Germanic medieval period in rituals of reconciliation. The Frankish *fides facta* drew on Roman custom and infused fides with both religious and legal connotations.<sup>59</sup> The handshake and the kiss were often used together in peace pacts in this period, becoming part of legal ritual. Petkov examines the tension between the secular and Christian meaning of the kiss and the handshake, and how they eventually become fused, along with the idea of 'Amatricia', connoting more than friendship, but actually defined as a bond or legal contract. Importantly, he considers the extent to which, by the late medieval period, such rituals acts could constitute the contract or peace pact itself. Though Petkov provides a finely wrought study, he does not consider how these rituals of reconciliation were transported outside of Western Europe to the New World. This study considers the ways that these rituals of peace moved to the New World and how they were translated and harnessed by liberal humanitarianism in new ways on violent frontiers, becoming fused with Indigenous diplomatic traditions for peace-building, and emerging in present performances.

Settler states' pursuit of reconciliation has a deep lineage within the liberal democratic project. Likewise, the handshake motif has a long historical lineage within the visual lexicon of the British empire and remains highly reflective of key aspects of British Enlightenment thought as part of a developing international and imperial visual vernacular concerning liberalism, humanitarianism, amelioration and conciliation. The clasped hands motif represented the humanitarian handshake of friendship, peace and goodwill, and featured on antislavery tokens of the late 1790s, and by the early 1800s, was used to depict benevolent dealings with colonized and enslaved peoples alike.<sup>60</sup> Repeatedly in imperial and Indigenous repertoires hearts and handshakes emerge as powerful yet ambivalent symbols: handshakes as the contract, deal or covenant and hearts as emotion, bone fides, 'good faith', are evoked throughout the chapters. But they also contain the seeds of their own betrayal.

In 1793 Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States and principal author of the Declaration of Independence, spoke of the distribution of 'peace' medals to Native peoples as part of 'an ancient

custom from time immemorial, with its origins in European practice'. The medals, he wrote,

are considered as complimentary things, as marks of friendship to those who come to see us, or who do us good offices, conciliatory of their good will towards us and not designed to produce a contrary disposition towards others. *They confer no power*, and seem to have taken their origin in the European practice of giving medals or other marks of friendship to the negotiators of treaties and other diplomatic characters or visitors of distinction.<sup>61</sup>

The Jefferson peace medals were distinctive. They featured the handshake, a popular motif that by the early 1800s had become part of the visual vernacular of empire. The medals made under Jefferson's presidential aegis were inscribed with the aspirational message 'peace and friendship'. One hand displayed a military cuff on its wrist, symbolizing the American government, while the other wrist showed a silver band with a beaded border and an engraved American eagle, symbolizing the 'peaceful Indian' who had pledged allegiance and friendship to the United States. Above the handshake was the crossed peace pipe overlying the hatchet of war (Figure 5). On the reverse side was the bust of President Jefferson. Indian agents on the frontier distributed the Jefferson peace medals to thousands of Native peoples in the east and then throughout the American west under the auspices of the United States War Cabinet.<sup>62</sup>

As Jefferson stated, the bestowal of medals upon Native peoples was an 'ancient practice' from 'time immemorial'. Yet these marks of friendship were symbolic only, to be used as 'complimentary things' for the purpose of gaining Native goodwill; they 'confer[red] no power'. The medals offered neither authority nor rights, and despite the handshake motif suggestive of equality and agreement, the medals did not recognize Indigenous sovereignties. As Jefferson noted in 1791 in regard to Native peoples whose lands were coveted for the creation of a new American nation, 'the most economical as well as humane conduct towards them is to bribe them into peace, and to retain them in peace by eternal bribes'.<sup>63</sup>

Jefferson's use of peace medals was represented as a 'humane' and affective, if paternal, social stabilization strategy in the new American republic. Such practice reveals the ways that the dynamics of settler colonialism have constituted an organizing grammar that was at the 'heart of a civilising mission', which too often represented invasion in terms of benevolence and white civility.<sup>64</sup> It was therefore in the colonies of settlement that the entwined projects of liberalism and empire took on a particular and potent character.



*Figure 5* Peace and friendship medal Thomas Jefferson, 1803, reverse side. Reg. No: NU 36525. Photograph courtesy of Museum Victoria (see also Figure 15)

Since settlers came to stay, questions of universalism versus difference more than in any colonial formation had to be worked out on the ground. Thus liberal empire's fraught nature constituted what Duncan Bell describes as 'the product of loaded encounter between abstract universalism and the concrete life worlds of other people'.<sup>65</sup> By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the handshake motif took on distinctive meaning as an affective liberal humanitarian covenant, or mythic exchange, offering apparently a new order between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. After the abolition of slavery, abolitionist humanitarians began to turn their attention to the fate of Indigenous peoples in the colonies of settlement, and questions of moral empire and the possibility of humanitarian governance grew to prominence. The handshake thus came to represent the settler compact in human frame. More than friendship, this motif was understood as a sacred covenant, Pax Britannica, a conciliatory agreement or settlement which proffered civilization and uplift for Indigenous people, as they in turn exchanged their sovereignty in the bargain. As the following chapters show, the ritual performance of the handshake became part of the affective visual lexicon of empire that criss-crossed settler colonies, and featured not

only on Jefferson's peace medals, but also on Canadian treaty medals, in Van Diemen's Land and in the imagery and coinage celebrating New Zealand's Treaty of Waitangi. The clasped hands promised the utopic and affective founding of liberal empire, the 'dream machine', which, as Bell argues, found its high watermark in the colonies of settlement.<sup>66</sup> Yet liberal universalism's high tenets would manifest in these settler colonies through a thoroughly hierarchized and brutal means of operation. The story of conciliation and its much later and differently inflected contemporary successor, reconciliation, is one of the emergence of liberal humanitarian governance and an assimilationist governmentality. It is a story of the settler state's trajectory in its management and governance of Indigenous peoples through a peace paradigm that serves to politically stabilize a potentially incendiary state, in the midst of invasion. Here settlers stay and Indigenous peoples must be accommodated and internalized within settler jurisdiction and sovereignty.

Conciliation and reconciliation must be respected as distinct features and afforded historical and analytical distinction as representative of very different periods of the settler state. Conciliation was frequently invoked on unstable and violent frontiers in the establishment of nascent settler formations in the often-expedient establishment of a settler compact and was diplomatically marked by handshake or treaty. (Re)conciliation is a feature of the internal colonialism of late liberal settler democracies, post-frontier societies, where the state seeks to incorporate Indigenous within the idea of one nation, and where Indigenous people are often legally configured as non-sovereign in their own territories. But there are clearly resonances and continuities between the two, something which eschews the notion of a clear break in practice between the colonial past and a nominally postcolonial present. At times the affective language of liberal humanitarianism re-emerges in the parlance of contemporary reconciliation discourse. Both conciliation and reconciliation are performative and seek to interpellate Indigenous peoples and settlers into a relationship, compact or covenant marked by hope for a new moral order and a new relationality. As I show, this continuity allows reconciliation as an expressive and performative repertoire to selectively call forth and revision conciliation as an echo in the present.

### **Affective performances: ritual, risk and the cultural politics of emotion**

In the aftermath of conquest and the seizure of their homelands, Indigenous peoples have not surrendered their sovereignties. Rather,



the modes through which they assert those sovereignties have shifted, from armed conflict to the realms of culture, politics, bureaucracy, and political performance. Indigenous-led cross-cultural performances of reconciliation, resistance and cultural reclamation which contest and rework the handshake of consensus are foregrounded in the chapters that follow. I trace the various and innovative ways Indigenous people both refute and revision reconciliatory performances in order to assert and re-enliven the historical and cultural dimensions of their sovereignties, and work them into new forms of political action in the name of peace-building and counter-colonial resistance. These performances frequently shift between the local, the national and the global. While some events remain resolutely grounded in specific local concerns, others address issues of the national via localized issues and practices, while yet others 'self-consciously position themselves' within and draw upon globalized communication networks of media and political action in order to strengthen their presence within a discourse of global rights and within rights-based institutions.<sup>67</sup>

In a perceptive exploration of the encounter between history, performance and colonialism in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor argues that performance 'transmits memories, makes political claims, and manifests a group's sense of identity'.<sup>68</sup> Drawing attention to the asymmetries of political and public culture in colonized societies and her quest to examine the relationships between 'embodied performance and the production of knowledge', she argues that 'if performance does not transmit knowledge only the literate and powerful could claim social memory and identity'.<sup>69</sup> Such work speaks directly to the tensions between Indigenous voices and experiences, and their material and oral histories, as opposed to text-based European accounts of the past, where 'writing has become the guarantor of existence itself'.<sup>70</sup> Taylor reminds us of the critical political and interventionist work of Indigenous performance. Posing questions that are highly suggestive for this book, in line with Taylor, I consider the ways that historical and social memory and cultural identity are reimagined through affective embodied performances both with and against the state. As Taylor asks, if we 'look through the lens of performed, embodied behaviors, what would we know that we do not know now? Whose stories, memories, and struggles might become visible? What tensions might performance behaviors show that would not be recognized in texts and documents?'<sup>71</sup>

Attending to these performances, we see through the following chapters that not only do matters of reconciliation in settler societies have a fraught and recursive dialogue with the past, but much is at stake in

these expressive re-enactments and retellings. Whose stories, memories and struggles might become visible? And what tensions emerge? Performances of reconciliation are inherently about border-crossings, trust and risk. Here, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples frequently stand in for their own ancestors as they face past violence together. Roxana Waterson alerts us to the intersubjective, experimental and precarious nature of such performances, where 'we are at the extreme end of the risk continuum, since these are rites in which the stakes are high, there are no comforting precedents to fall back on, some might be at best reluctant participants' and we cannot know the outcome of the success of a performance in advance.<sup>72</sup> As a relatively new genre, then, such performances therefore emerge as new cross-cultural sites of negotiation, which draw on complex and nuanced genealogies of Indigenous diplomacy, culture and knowledge, just as they draw on a European cultural repertoire of diplomacy. These are not unmoored performances, out of time and place. Such enactments emerge as emotionally supercharged retellings or subversions of specific local histories, and are grounded in community, and in deep genealogies of family, communal memory and place. The role of local cultural practice and ritual in crafting meaningful reconciliation performance in contrast to those directed by the state are writ large in the chapters that follow. As Waterson observes, 'in each context, the cultural resources that people have to draw on in processes of reconciliation must be different'. We cannot assume, she argues, that one universal model will work for everybody; rather we must 'pay attention to the local dimensions of what must always, in any particular instance, be a cultural process'.<sup>73</sup>

The co-mingled emotions of anger, threat, shame, mourning, elation, optimism, good feeling and togetherness are part of the repertoire of feeling that arise in many of the performances which appear in the following chapters. In line with the scholarly turn to the history of emotions, we must do more than catalogue such emotive expressions; rather, we must be critically alert to the 'cultural politics of emotion' and their 'affective economies', in line with Sara Ahmed's important injunction.<sup>74</sup> This means interrogating the emotional work such reconciliatory performances do in settler societies, including the way state-based enactments may direct us towards a tidy politics of consensus, while others may unsettle us into a more creative, dissenting and unruly political place.

Embodied, affective performance, then, as praxis constitutes a site of risk and exploration and exists as an important alternative to traditional linear, legal and text-based renderings of history. In line with Taylor and Gilbert, I seek to foreground the 'participatory, phenomenological

thickness' of such Indigenous-led performances as a means of communication where the emphasis on praxis treats performance not only as an 'aesthetic medium' and a way of fashioning and declaring identity, but also as 'a system of learning, storing and transmitting knowledge'.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, I have been drawn in particular to reconciliation's performed dialogue with the past. Here, as Gilbert observes, 'communal memory, a key concern in many Indigenous societies, builds contingently from such knowledge systems, reiterating the embodied basis of cultural transmission'. In these ways, then, such powerful, embodied performances can reveal 'the disparity between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences'.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, the tension between national narratives of consensus and more complex, local experiences based on Indigenous memory and oral tradition become ever more apparent. Prompting ethical and Indigenous accounts of the past, here we see the determined expression of an emancipatory politics. Nevertheless, performances that reject and subvert authorized state narratives of conciliation and the past constitute both critical reclamation histories and make political claims, and are marked by a high level of risk at the national and the global level. Some, as we shall see, may be read by the state as acts of threat and even terror.

I begin each chapter with a contemporary performance, and then unpack its historical meanings, moving recursively between the historical archives and the repertoire of performance, revealing the way the past shapes and, in some cases, erupts in the present as a 'truth event'. The 'truth event' that Henderson and Wakeham propose is of particular salience where attending to the 'politics of truth in settler societies, [and] where the difficulty of establishing the truth of settlement's violence cannot be underestimated'.<sup>77</sup> Accordingly, we may understand these ruptures to consensus as performative 'truth events', which make visible and legible that which the official discourses have repressed.<sup>78</sup> Truth events can be performed in public, emerging as embodied enactment or re-enactment of moments of violence, interrupting conventional settler narratives of consensus. Each chapter therefore engages with performances and their histories that both affirm and reject the politics of the imagined exchange embedded within reconciliation narratives. Finally, in the midst of reconciliation's double bind, we must continue to recognize the powerful desire by Indigenous peoples and allied others to make the world anew, to move to a new moral order marked by their desire to recreate or hold the state accountable to a virtuous cross-cultural covenant in exchanges that may be both reconciliatory and decolonizing. In our nominally postcolonial settler societies, it is this fundamental ambivalence, and a spiralling

between consensus and dissent, that structures the ways within which we engage creatively with the colonial past.

In the first chapter, I trace the ‘Two Row Wampum Renewal’ celebrations in 2013 when Native Haudenosaunee and their supporters and friends paddled down the Hudson River from Albany to New York City to re-enliven Native diplomatic protocols and a treaty from 1613 as a model of social reconciliation and recuperation. This was a reconciliatory, cross-cultural enactment based on Indigenous protocols, which made decolonizing claims on the state and demanded the honouring of treaties, as well as environmental reform, and appealed beyond the state to the United Nations. Looking more deeply into the past, we see that the motifs of friendship the performance drew on – the wampum and Covenant Chain – are symbols that have been variously reinvented for both emancipatory and repressive ends within the US settler state. Turning to the fertile politics of resentment and outright refusal, I consider the Lakota rejection of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial reenactment in the American West, and the great challenges of reconciliation between Lakota and the state in the face of the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890, and its fraught historical legacy, which has given rise to interlocking forms of protest, remembrance and reconciliatory practice. While a reconciliatory program between the state and the Lakota may have faltered, the highly affective ‘Future Generations Ride’, a collective journey of Native and non-Native participants traversing 300 miles on horseback, part commemoration, part pilgrimage, offers an alternative politics that privileges Lakota history and culture, asserting Lakota survival and reconciliation with their own histories. Moving to Australia, I consider two affective performances of ‘walking together’, originating in the year 2000, which emerged from Australia’s decade of formal reconciliation: the state-directed Sydney Harbour Bridge Walk for Reconciliation, in which over 300,000 people participated, and the much smaller, community-based Myall Creek massacre commemoration service, which has been held annually now for 15 years. Through ideas of a cross-cultural journey, of ‘walking together’, each event came to represent an affective, embodied but nonetheless very different order of political ‘refounding’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within the national polity. One characterized by its history-less-ness, the other directly facing the past, and drawing on cross-cultural community reparative efforts, and led by Aboriginal communal knowledge and protocols. In the next chapter, I look at the way Aboriginal Tasmanians today, with the heavy dual narrative of genocide and conciliation have participated in state and federal formal

reconciliation events such as bridge walks and 'Sorry Days', but also creatively transformed the coercive and heavy politics of conciliation through political community-based performance. Led by Aboriginal elders, the Black Line ceremony held in Tasmania's Three Thumbs Reserve in 2001 was an affective community performance that recalled the violence of the past in order to transform it, ritually, into a story of Aboriginal survival. In the final chapter, I turn once more to the creative politics of anger and refusal, and examine the ways in which a postcolonial consensus politics is performatively made and unmade through various forms of re-enactment in Aotearoa New Zealand. I look at Māori activist Tame Iti's powerful 2005 re-enactment of the nineteenth-century land wars, and the assertion of Tūhoe sovereignty in the broader context of a dominant bicultural national narrative through the Treaty of Waitangi that is premised on consensus. Tame Iti rejects this narrative, arguing that Tūhoe did not sign the treaty. Instead, he led a re-enactment by Tūhoe activists of the 'scorched earth' policy of the settler government and the confiscation of their lands as a truth event, rupturing the syntax of state-led reconciliation. Since then, the recent and historic Tūhoe land settlement has demonstrated that matters of history are of paramount concern and the opening of the space of the political has paid off.

Seeking to link the past to the present, the book illuminates the transnational structures, political practices and enduring rituals and narratives of (re)conciliation – crucial transhistorical work that hitherto has not been adequately addressed by scholars. The reconciliation handshake of Karen Casey's 'Let's Shake' as a political performance is emblematic of the settler–Indigenous compact, or a historically imagined mythic exchange, the much hoped for connection that reflects the fraught and centrally ambivalent relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in settler societies. The space between the hands, as Casey creatively foregrounded, may be one site from which novel forms of postcolonial sociability may emerge. Yet, only if we remain alert to reconciliation's coercive repertoire and deconstruct its organizing grammar and performative script, can we bring a new critical attention to reconciliation's coercive pull in the realm of public culture. Across the globe, the multifarious and innovative Indigenous rejection and rescripting of reconciliation, within this sweeping paradigm of redress, offers a pathway to a critical emancipatory politics, and glimmers of new postcolonial futures, however temporary, sometimes appear.

# 1

## ‘Polishing the chain of friendship’: Two Row Wampum Renewal Celebrations and Matters of History

On a 13-day ‘epic canoe trip’ members of the Haudenosaunee nations and other Native peoples paddled side-by-side with their non-Indigenous friends and supporters down the Hudson River, from Albany to New York City in July–August 2013. Approaching the George Washington Bridge, the participants raised their paddles in a potent salute, signalling a sense of connection, hopefulness and their political intent (Figure 6). Part of the ‘Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign’, the canoe trip was a symbolic enactment of what is known as the Tawagonshi Treaty, or, in the Iroquoian oral tradition, the Two Row Wampum Treaty (or Guswenta Treaty). This was a trade agreement said to have been struck in 1613 between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee (the Iroquois confederacy of Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk peoples) on the Hudson River in Mohawk territory.<sup>1</sup>

‘We will bring the treaty to life!’ announced the canoe journey organizers. ‘These two equal, but separate rows of paddlers will demonstrate the wise, yet simple concept of the Two Row Wampum Treaty.’<sup>2</sup> The Native and non-native paddlers represented the ‘two rows’ of shell-beads of the wampum (a type of ceremonial belt) believed by many Iroquoian people to commemorate the 1613 agreement.<sup>3</sup> In 2013 this treaty from the early seventeenth century was commemorated and radically reimagined as the basis for a progressive series of social and environmental reforms, and participants signed the ‘Two Row Declaration of intent’.<sup>4</sup> The Two Row Wampum campaigners aimed to use community-based initiatives to draw attention to Native sovereignty rights, land rights and environmental concerns, brokered and publicly performed through an agreement made four centuries ago. The canoe journey ended in New York City on 9 August 2013, where paddlers were welcomed by local dignitaries and Dutch Consul General Rob de Vos. They then



*Figure 6* Paddles raised in salute at the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign 2013. Hudson River, George Washington Bridge, New York. Photograph by Jessica Hallenbeck

marched to the United Nations to take part in the International Day of the World's Indigenous People.

Interviewed towards the end of the journey, Chief Jake Edwards spoke to filmmaker Gwendolen Cates: 'It's getting exciting ... we are looking forward to delivering our message to the United Nations and to see who's going to accept it ... every village, every town we've been to have been pretty responsive ... they've welcomed us and fed us.'<sup>5</sup> The campaign manager, Lena Duby of the Onondaga Nation, remarked that she had discovered many people had not known who the Onondaga were, but that the campaign had been successful in creating a new sense of unity between Native and non-Native peoples: 'It's new territory for them ... [but] we are all people ... we make jokes, we make friends ... we're all just people and it doesn't matter how brown we are.'<sup>6</sup> For organizer Jack Manno, there was powerful – and important – emotional work taking place in bringing the treaty to life and giving it new meaning by paddling down a river to mobilize, through bodily performance, reconciliatory feelings of harmony, accord and goodwill: 'There's this incredible generosity that we've somehow tapped into ... there's something [here] that allows people to really open up their generous hearts and spirits ... it's been really moving, you know.'<sup>7</sup>

This chapter explores the work of reconciliation, cultural reclamation and sovereignty assertion of the 2013 Two Row Wampum Campaign, organized by the Onondaga Nation and Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON) in the United States. This event commemorated the 400th anniversary of the 'Two Row Wampum Treaty', said to have been struck between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch in 1613. I consider this commemorative event and its genealogy as an Indigenous diplomatic tradition based on Native principles, rather than an originary settler compact, accord or paradigm. With a focus on the political, emotional and embodied, or affective, aspects of the performance, and the tensions between oral and performed versus text-based histories, I argue that the Two Row performance was a potent vehicle for re-founding, stabilizing and re-visioning political relations between Native peoples, settlers and the state within a postcolonial settler paradigm. Yet I also acknowledge the fraught colonial histories and politics around the emergence of the Two Row tradition and examine its place within the broader 'Covenant Chain' tradition of Native accord with the Dutch and English. This history reveals the ambivalent trajectories of the wampum and Covenant Chain as symbols of friendship that have been (and continue to be) variously reinvented for both emancipatory and repressive ends.

Wampum were in use among the Five Nations Iroquois and other Native groups at the time of contact with Europeans and comprised small, cylindrical-shaped quahog clam shell beads (purple wampum) and whelk shell beads (white wampum) strung together.<sup>8</sup> The purple and white shells of the wampum (also called *guswenta/kaswentha*) travelling in two rows is commonly understood as a metaphor of the Native birch canoe and European ship journeying together down a river, and the parallel political processes of two nations. Implicit in this symbolism is the idea of each party's mutual acknowledgement of and respect for the other's sovereignty. Wampum were held in great esteem by the Iroquois and other Native peoples of the Atlantic coast and used for social and ceremonial exchange.<sup>9</sup> The connections between wampum and diplomatic rituals of consensus and peace-making are well established in Iroquoian tradition. Wampum have a unique place in the very origins of the creation of the League of the Five Nations, or Haudenosaunee confederacy, also known as the League of the Longhouse. Hiawatha and the prophet Deganawida, or 'Great Peacemaker', are said to have used wampum to bring peace to a divided Native society in the creation of the League of the Longhouse. The two are reputed to have 'established ongoing and annual rituals that incorporated wampum and



were designed to provide a means of the airing of future grievances', as Otto relates.<sup>10</sup> Wampum are significant, then, as both emblematic of the Haudenosaunee 'Great Peace' and its symbolic role in effecting and mediating dialogic exchange.

The Dutch document verifying the Two Row or 'Tawagonshi Treaty' records the exchange of wampum for a silver chain, although there is some dispute over the document's historical reliability. As related by historian Paul Otto: 'ende als een bewijs van Eere ende Toegeneeghenheydt verruylen wy eene silver ketting voor een vaedem Seewant' ('and as evidence of the honour and goodwill we exchange a silver chain for a fathom of beadwork [wampum]').<sup>11</sup> The Two Row campaigners asserted that the Two Row Wampum Treaty with the Dutch became the 'underlying basis' for all future Haudenosaunee relationships with Europeans and formed a 'foundational philosophical principle' of 'reciprocal relations of peace, friendship and respect between different entities', especially nation-to-nation relationships.<sup>12</sup> The philosophical vision of the agreement is therefore multivalent in its possibilities, by turns commemorative, conciliatory, engendering of mutual respect, but also decolonizing. As the campaign organizers noted, it 'serves as a framework for decolonization right across Turtle Island [North America], since holding true to the Two Row means supporting the right of Onkwehonweh [Native] people to maintain themselves on their own land bases according to their own systems of self governance and self organization'.<sup>13</sup> Onondaga Nation Faithkeeper Oren Lyons described the 'famous Guswenta'<sup>14</sup> or Two Row Wampum Treaty's diplomatic significance: 'This Treaty is important because it established for all time the process by which we would associate with our White brethren.' The agreement, he explained, highlights that

we will call one another brothers. This row of purple wampum on the right represents the ongwahoway or Indian people; it is their canoe. In the canoe along with the people is our government, our religion or way of life. The row of purple on the left is our White brethren, their ship, their government, and their religions for they have many. The field of white represents peace and the river of life. We will go down this river in peace and friendship as long as the grass is green, the water flows, and the sun rises in the east.<sup>15</sup>

With the slogan 'Honoring Native Treaties and Protecting the Earth' (Figure 7), the campaign was developed as a partnership between the Onondaga Nation and Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON),



Figure 7 The Two Row Wampum Campaign motif: '1613–2013 Honoring Native Treaties and Protecting the Earth'. Courtesy of Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation

and sought to 'achieve justice by polishing the chain of friendship established in the first treaty between the Haudenosaunee and European (Dutch) settlers'.<sup>16</sup> Environmental clean-up and preservation were also 'core components' of the initiative, as the treaty's ethical foundations were understood to recognize the mutual dependence of the social and the ecological. Significantly, the Two Row campaign was spurred by the dismissal of the Onondaga's land rights case, which was filed in 2005. The Onondaga claim that New York had illegally obtained around 4,000 square miles of land in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including most of Syracuse.<sup>17</sup> This dishonoured the Treaty of Canandaigua, which was signed at Canandaigua, New York on 11 November 1794, after the American Revolutionary War between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and President George Washington on behalf of the United States of America.<sup>18</sup>

The Two Row Wampum Treaty 'provides an inspirational vision for peaceful co-existence of different nations living on and caring for the same land'.<sup>19</sup> The Two Row Treaty wampum re-enactment was thus an 'innovative project to take *the vision of the Two Row* directly to the people of New York State.'<sup>20</sup> The self-conscious settlers and allies of NOON called on the government to honour a compact: 'We aim to use the 400th anniversary to build public support for US governments and peoples *to begin to keep up our side of the agreement*.'<sup>21</sup> Later, campaigners travelled to the Netherlands, where a ceremony in honour of the Two Row Wampum's 400-year anniversary and the five-year anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was held at The Netherlands Centre for Indigenous Peoples in The Hague, Netherlands.<sup>22</sup>

Many groups – including the New York History Blog, which billed the event as ‘Paddling through History’ – followed the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign with great interest. Yet heated public debate driven by the treaty’s controversial relationship to recorded history quickly ensued. As the New York History Blog explained, the original wampum belt was lost and the Dutch document that attested to its existence had been claimed to be a forgery.<sup>23</sup> Nearly two decades earlier, in 1987, historians Charles Gehring and William Starna had argued that the 1613 Tawagonshi Treaty document ‘discovered’ by Lawrence Van Loon, a physician, was a fake.<sup>24</sup> More recently, Dutch scholars confirmed that ‘the anachronisms and anglicisms in the Tawagonshi Treaty demonstrate without doubt that the text was forged in the twentieth century’.<sup>25</sup> Gehring and Starna contacted the Two Row Wampum committee to remind them of this point. The *Syracuse Post-Standard* reported Starna’s objections: ‘It’s our responsibility to point out to people who apparently don’t know it’s a fake that it is. If the paper treaty is fake ... so is the idea of any formal agreement made in 1613.’<sup>26</sup> What followed became an intense and emotionally charged debate about the past and matters of history, and indeed the remaking of history, a debate that drew in not only Haudenosaunee and other allied Native groups and their supporters, but also the Dutch.

Despite this, the Haudenosaunee have observed this treaty for centuries, and they argue it has been ‘firmly established for hundreds of years in the oral tradition of the Iroquois’.<sup>27</sup> As campaign organizer Manno argued, whether or not the document was a fake or a badly transcribed copy of an earlier document, ‘it doesn’t say anything about the validity or meaning of the agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch sometime in the early 1600s that is part of the Haudenosaunee memory and knowledge recorded in their wampum belts’.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Otto suggests that the forged document does not necessarily invalidate Iroquoian insistence on an agreement with the Dutch in this period. Otto points out that while the Two Row belt as described in the Tawagonshi document would not have existed in 1613, it is possible that an earlier form of it did exist and was later memorialized by the Two Row belt.<sup>29</sup>

This tension between oral and written history lay at the heart of arguments over the treaty’s authenticity and was the reason why Manno raised objections to the *Syracuse Post-Standard*’s articles contesting the validity of the 1613 treaty. Calling these articles ‘non-stories’, Manno contested the paper’s exclusive attention to the Van Loon document, attributing this focus to a ‘long history of dismissing Haudenosaunee

traditional oral history and belittling those who retell that history as part of their traditional responsibilities'.<sup>30</sup> He continued:

For colonial powers eager to take land, and for those who are dismissive of it now, it was best that the early agreements be forgotten. ... What is celebrated is a sacred story and a rich message more than a particular moment in history, the moment when the meaning and the stories of two very different cultures came together as they tried to find a way to live side by side in peace.<sup>31</sup>

Referring to the search for new ways to live together, or *modus vivendi*, Manno closed with the following:

We are commemorating an understanding of what it means to live together respecting each other's sovereignty. We are asking New York state and our federal government to seriously consider how it would behave ... if it honored, in word and deed, the Two Row Wampum Treaty. ... We are asking each person to explore the meaning of the Two Row and subsequent treaties for themselves. This is what we commemorate, not some paper record written in the Old Dutch language but a continuing agreement with this area's original people.<sup>32</sup>

Manno called on the state and federal governments to consider their obligations to honour the Two Row agreement in 'word and deed'. He also pointed to the crucial intersubjective dimensions of Native and non-Native peoples living together in settler societies, asking his audience to do the important, self-reflexive and imaginative work of reconciliation and decolonization at the personal and emotional level. For the participants in the campaign, the re-enactment was performing much more complex intersubjective political work than the steadfast champions of an 'authentic' history could ever allow.

Public interest in the authenticity of the treaty and coverage of the debate in the media led to a special issue of the *Journal of Early American History* in the same year (2013) seeking to explore the issue.<sup>33</sup> Scholars in the journal issue engaged in earnest debate, and addressed matters of historical and textual analysis and orthography. Yet few commentators, including the special issue's editors, went so far as to draw out the larger significance of the Two Row Renewal movement. That is, to interrogate the public, reconciliatory and affective work this treaty from 1613 was recruited to perform in the present.

In her perceptive examination of the encounter between history, performance and colonialism, Diana Taylor argues that performance 'transmits memories, makes political claims, and manifests a group's sense of identity'.<sup>34</sup> In her goal to explore the relationships between 'embodied performance and the production of knowledge' and paying close attention to the asymmetries of political culture in colonized societies, Taylor argues that 'if performance does not transmit knowledge only the literate and powerful could claim social memory and identity'.<sup>35</sup> Such work speaks directly to the tensions found here between Haudenosaunee voices, experiences, communal memory and their material and oral histories as opposed to text-based European accounts of the past, where, as Taylor states, 'writing has become the guarantor of existence itself'.<sup>36</sup> Taylor reminds us of the critical political and interventionist work of Indigenous performance. She asks:

If ... we were to reorient the ways social memory and cultural identity in the Americas have traditionally been studied, with the disciplinary emphasis on literary and historical documents, and look through the lens of performed, embodied behaviors, what would we know that we do not know now? Whose stories, memories, and struggles might become visible? What tensions might performance behaviors show that would not be recognized in texts and documents?<sup>37</sup>

The Two Row Wampum commemoration made visible Native participation and knowledge in the making of North American (Turtle Island) history. But more importantly, as a joint Indigenous-settler performance, it insisted that the struggle for Indigenous sovereignty be shared, just as the land itself is shared. This performance demonstrated that a toleration approach, which recognizes Indigeneity insofar as it does not disturb white hegemony, is not sufficient. It demanded that non-Indigenous people recognize themselves as part of a shared problem of historical inequality. The feeling of hope and determination to create change through togetherness was a powerful point of affective convergence that called the state to account.

The Two Row Wampum campaign carried out the critical and imaginative work of refounding, stabilizing and revisioning political relations between Indigenous peoples, settlers and the state. This type of commemorative reconstruction of moments of conciliation through performance is, I argue, significant to the composition of contemporary expressions of reconciliation and is crucial to the radical political work of reconstructing history for the purpose of building affective engagement

between people, and between citizens and the state. Emerging out of grassroots cross-cultural and community activism and the politics of positive resistance, the Two Row Wampum re-enactment was the literal embodiment of a contested history which forced acknowledgement of (at least) two peoples and two claims to sovereignty.

The feelings of cross-cultural unity and generosity described by Jack Manno constituted an embodied and emotional space which raised possibilities for entreating with the state. In these performances both affect and feelings are at play. Affect and feeling (or sentiment) tend to be used interchangeably, yet affect, according to Shouse, is not a personal feeling or sentiment, rather, it is related to the physical properties of bodies, to proximity. He draws on Brian Massumi to explain that affect is a 'prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another' and 'an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body',<sup>38</sup> whereas an 'emotion is the projection/display of a feeling'.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, notes Shouse, 'affect' can seem abstract because it 'cannot be fully realized in language, and because affect is always prior to and/or outside of consciousness'.<sup>40</sup> The 'transmission of affect does not mean that one person's feelings become another's', but concerns the way bodies affect one another. Emotion concerns the cognitive and social arrangement of feeling, where 'feelings are personal and biographical, emotions are social, and affects are prepersonal'.<sup>41</sup> As Martha Nussbaum describes them, feelings of unity, affection, and hope are eudaimonic emotions that bespeak something social, of what it is 'to live well' and which proffer as valuable 'mutual relations of civic or personal love and friendship, in which the object is loved and benefited for his or her own sake'.<sup>42</sup> Through recalling (or reconstructing) a memory of an old friendship and its associated political obligations, the Two Row Wampum re-enactment harnessed both affect (paddling together) and the emotions of attachment, unity and hope between the Haudenosaunee people and their allies, allowing them to jointly make a claim on the state (Figure 8).

What makes performances of reconciliation (including this one) so enticing – and indeed powerful – is the affective sense of connection, and associated emotions of unity and hope. The participants were paddling the waters of a supercharged history, rich with mythic potency. But more than this, paddling together, like 'walking together' – the catch-phrase of Australia's official Council for Reconciliation – became a cross-cultural pilgrimage, an embodied ritual or journey of spiritual dimensions that acknowledged the past and pointed to the future. As in Australia's famous Bridge Walk for Reconciliation in the year 2000,



*Figure 8* Hickory Edwards at centre and Peter Edwards at right reach the shore of Onondaga Lake in their traditional dugout canoe, as part of the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign cultural festival that was held at Willow Bay Tuesday. *The Post-Standard*. Photograph by Mike Greenlar

which crossed Sydney Harbour, the crossing of a body of water was the element that brought people together. Water in the New World/colonial contact period was the space of encounter. Beaches and rivers are spaces of trade and first contact: they are transitional spaces. For the Haudenosaunee campaigners, the river is a connection to history and memory of a different order to the written record. It is a material, rather than textual, witness to history.

The theme for the opening event of the Two Row Wampum campaign was 'Sharing the River of Life'. The paddling coordinator, Hickory Edwards, explained that the campaign provided the opportunity to 'share all the things that aren't archived in history books, from an Onondaga perspective'.<sup>43</sup> The river journey as a rite of passage thus brought the 'treaty to life' through a process of renewal and culturally specific resacralization. Paddling down a river, walking together and crossing bridges are transformative journeys taking place within a relatively new global paradigm of apology and reconciliation. These are bodily performances that are simultaneously event and process, and critical rites of passage. Rites of passage, suggests Arnold van Gennep, may be a performance of 'in-betweenness' and function as a transition between two states of more settled or conventional activity, giving us the image of performance as a border or margin, or a site of negotiation.<sup>44</sup>

To recall Taylor's provocative question, what would performance behaviours show that would not be recognized in texts and documents? Paddling together over this long journey is a profoundly corporeal ritual act enacted through the comingling of many bodies – whether they are human bodies or bodies of water and land. Such a performance builds on, but also goes beyond, what people feel emotionally, or the eudaimonic emotions of good feeling they experience; it enters the realm of embodied knowledge that cannot be expressed through text, only through lived experience and the enlivened treaty.

We see here through performance the embodied and affective calling forth of the mythical exchange of the Indigenous–settler compact, where Indigenous peoples and settlers jointly reinvest and recommit themselves to a past compact, for the future within the ontological space of the river. These affective performances, collective cross-cultural acts in the name of positive resistance and peace-building for social transformation, should not be underestimated. Above all, these potent performances remind us of the great social need for a foundational conciliation narrative and an imaginative refounding, for the desire to reforge a virtuous compact with its attendant obligations. This is critical and important for many peoples, Native and non-Native, who seek an accord for the future, including those who signed the Two Row Wampum Declaration of Intent.

### **The Covenant Chain: the Dutch legacy**

Like the wampum, the 'Covenant Chain' is a trope of cross-cultural alliance and peace-making and a historically and mythically significant symbol of the Haudenosaunee–European compact. Both wampum and Covenant Chain have a local and powerfully mythic currency in North America, especially with Native peoples, as exemplars of Native American diplomacy.

The Covenant Chain is the symbol of a pledge of friendship and alliance, and over four centuries it has come to mean much more.<sup>45</sup> Some historians state that it emerged from Haudenosaunee alliance with the English in 1677, and that it signified a different order of alliance from that first made with the Dutch affirmed by the Two Row Wampum.<sup>46</sup> Others suggest that the Covenant Chain is a Haudenosaunee concept of alliance that predates European contact, though it was subsequently used, from 1613, for all negotiations with the Dutch, the French, the English and the US.<sup>47</sup> It was depicted symbolically as a Dutch ship tied to a tree, first with a rope and later with an iron chain.<sup>48</sup> The Covenant



Chain endured as a political symbol of cross-cultural alliance in this region, although the British would defeat the Dutch and go on to form a network of alliances with the Haudenosaunee in the mid-to-late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Over time, the iron chain became a silver chain within this shifting political and symbolic lexicon of exchange that depended on trade and alliance. Perpetual renewal of the Covenant Chain was required, with a formal ritualized exchange of gifts and goods as a token of alliance and goodwill. Such ceremonial practices were known within Iroquois–British relations as ‘brightening the Covenant Chain’.<sup>49</sup>

The wampum and the Covenant Chain have become powerfully emblematic of the ‘middle ground’, a world of cross-cultural alliance and trade which foregrounds Native American agency. The world of the middle ground, eloquently evoked by historian Richard White, was one where alliance-building and rituals of mutual invention enabled a kind of peace and ‘depended on the inability of both sides to gain their ends through force’.<sup>50</sup> White was not talking about ‘acculturation’ where ‘a dominant group is largely able to dictate correct behaviour to a subordinate group’. Rather, he sought to trace a process of ‘accommodation’, which certainly involved cultural change, but which took place in ‘the middle ground’ as a ‘place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the non-state world of villages’. Europeans needed Native American allies, he argues, ‘as partners in exchange, as sexual partners, as friendly neighbours’, and could not ‘dictate terms to them or ignore them’. But he noted that ‘it should not be romanticised ... indeed, it could be a violent and sometimes horrifying place’.<sup>51</sup> White’s middle ground explored the particular world of the *pays d’en haut*, or the Upper Country, a vast territory west of Montreal, covering the whole of the Great Lakes north and south. This world was created by many of the Native groups who were attacked in great wars by the Iroquois after first contact with Europeans, which forced them west, causing further disruptions to other Native groups. White described them as refugees forced to forge new alliances, through marriage ties and adoption, to create a world made through a process of ‘mutual invention by both the French and the Algonquins’.<sup>52</sup> This middle ground formed according to a necessity for people to ‘find a means, other than force, to gain the cooperation or consent of foreigners’.<sup>53</sup> Here, success and survival meant that parties had to interpret the logic of others in order to assert their own interests, which often resulted in the invention of new, mutually arrived-at conventions.<sup>54</sup> It was a place, argues White, ‘where many of the North American subjects and allies of empire lived’, residing

'between the historical foreground of European invasion and occupation and the background of Indian defeat and retreat'.<sup>55</sup>

This liminal place of accommodation can also be a way to conceive of earlier encounters between Native American and Dutch peoples. Describing Dutch traders as quintessentially 'alongshore people', historian Donna Merwick argues that they did not see themselves as colonists, noting their remark that '[w]e are here ... precisely not as Spanish conquistadores but as *cooplieden*, merchants. ... We mean only to trade.'<sup>56</sup> The Dutch came as fur traders with headquarters and interests back at home or at other locations overseas, although later they would seek to create more 'elaborate longshore facilities for their extractive and sea borne mercantilism'.<sup>57</sup> Merwick describes this 'staying alongshore' as an 'adjacent' mercantilism, whereby the Dutch were not settler colonists, and argues that they accepted their adjacency 'in favour of the main game', that is, land-based colonization.<sup>58</sup> Yet, she continues, Dutch adjacency was not powerlessness: in this case it was an 'awareness of margins [that] was a way of exerting power, and if necessary, the violence of power'.<sup>59</sup>

On the island of Manhates (Manhattan Island), the West India Company directors first ordered their men to 'negotiate treaties and accords without force', writes Merwick. In order to ward off other European powers who sought trade in furs, company officers were directed to make contracts with Natives from other areas. Offering reasonable prices for furs would encourage Natives to grant exclusive rights and share trading knowledge. Ideas of peace and prosperous trade with the Native peoples were promoted between 1625 and 1640, and members of the company appeared to have established 'an amicable' presence among the Natives of New Netherland. In line with the Dutch tradition, they expanded their commercial networks but took up very little Indigenous land.<sup>60</sup> In this early period 'the traders were there ... only with the permission of the Natives', Merwick remarks, a position that was nevertheless 'ominously fragile'.<sup>61</sup> This 'middle ground' was based on an Iroquois form of peace dependent on the observance of protocols for trade and diplomacy. At this time 'trade and peace were one thing', writes Daniel K. Richter, highlighting diplomatic reciprocity.<sup>62</sup> The Iroquois's main source of European tools, cloth and weapons was Dutch New Netherland; indeed, the Dutch were known to the Iroquois as 'Kristoni', which can be translated as 'I am a metal maker', and the 'Hudson river colony was key to the Five Nations' mid-century fate', writes Richter. So too, the Five Nations were the 'economic life line to the Dutch'.<sup>63</sup>

In the inland trade that emerged, exchange of wampum was the accepted currency between Natives and Dutch during this period. 'For the Dutch strangers wampum was the shining comet whose inland trajectory was already there to follow', writes Merwick evocatively.<sup>64</sup> Although there is evidence that wampum were used before the arrival of Europeans, Richter notes that 'true wampum' were a cross-cultural product of European-Indian contact, since they could only be made with iron tools. These early wampum made their way through traditional networks of native exchange to Iroquoia in the sixteenth century.<sup>65</sup> Later, these shell beads became a principal item of commerce on the upper Hudson River and circulated as currency; the beads were traded with the Dutch for European goods and could be made into wampum and traded for fur, which could then also be exchanged for European imports.<sup>66</sup> By the 1630s wampum were exchanged in measured lengths. For the Dutch, Native peoples were perceived as either makers or consumers of wampum: the southern coastal or tidewater villages made them, while those of the central and northern interior would trade furs for them. But, far more than trade goods, the Dutch also understood their ritual significance.

The alleged 1613 Haudenosaunee treaty with the Dutch, retrieved from the past and made a touchstone of alliance and conciliation, signified by the Two Row Wampum, is in part a result of Dutch acknowledgement of Native sovereignty in this initial period of trade. Dutch and English attitudes to Native American sovereignty were very different. Unlike the English, who accepted only one sovereignty (that of the Crown), the Dutch accepted a 'multiplicity of sovereignties', comparable to the organization of the new United Dutch provinces at home. In 1632, in order to ward off English claims that New Netherland was part of Virginia, they defended Native Americans as rightful owners 'legally independent of European powers'. They argued that Natives were 'free men' and 'free to trade with whom they chose'.<sup>67</sup> Alternatively, this may represent merely different means to the same ends, since the Dutch acknowledged Indigenous rights to land and resources in order to buy them.<sup>68</sup>

At the mythic and performative level, then, the putative 1613 treaty moment placed Indigenous peoples on water in a transnational space of encounter, yet with their own cultural protocols intact. The treaty revival in many ways memorializes the Dutch-Haudenosaunee contact moment because it recalls a moment of exchange prior to the extensive land wars most often associated with English settlement and,

eventually, the settler New Republic. In this historical light, the 1613 treaty's 'enactment' or re-enactment may appear as a wistful enterprise that has more in common with trade alliances than the vicissitudes and violence of settlement and land confiscation. The performance of nation-to-nation respect and alliance also functions to strategically bracket the darker side of the Dutch trade alliance, exemplified by the Pavonia Massacre of 1643, in which up to 1,000 Native people were killed.<sup>69</sup>

The wampum could be a powerful instrument of coercion as much as a broker of conciliation, trade and diplomacy. In the colonial period it could be turned to both utopic and repressive ends, and this lingering ambivalence is to be found in its invocation in various public and oratory performances today. Shortly after the 2013 Two Row Wampum celebration, Steven Newcomb (Shawnee-Lenape) wrote to the newspapers rebutting the idea that reconciliation might be achieved through the Two Row Wampum campaign. Arguing for historical accountability, he acknowledged that the journey was a 'remarkable 380-mile canoe trip', but 'When I read that Mr. de Vos [Dutch Consul-General Rob de Vos] attended the event, I immediately thought of our own Lenape Nation and our bloody experience at the hands of the Dutch government in our traditional territory on Manhattan Island.'<sup>70</sup> Referring to the violent repression of the Native peoples by the Dutch in the Pavonia Massacre, he went on to explain the details of the event with an extended historical quotation from eyewitness David Pietersz de Vries. 'I wonder,' noted Newcomb, 'What does Dutch Consul-General Rob de Vos have to say about this Dutch massacre of our ancestors at the direction and instigation of the Dutch Governor?' Citing the 'centuries-long perpetration of genocide against our nations and peoples by Christian European colonizing powers', Newcomb rejected reconciliation:

There has been no foundation of conciliatory or friendly relationships that existed between our nations and peoples and the dominating societies, which fell apart as a result irreconcilable differences. Thus, it is a misuse of the English language to talk about the need for re-conciliation as if there is a need to repair what was once a positive relationship. That underlying falsehood is perpetuated every time the word 'reconciliation' is used to talk about what needs to be done in terms of the 'relations' between our nations and peoples with the dominating societies. ... We have no need to 'reconcile' ourselves to an imposed system of domination because that is nonsense.<sup>71</sup>

Rather than reconciliation, Newcomb called for more radical forms of political decolonization:

[W]e need to liberate ourselves from the resulting domination, not reconcile ourselves to it. Healing for our nations and peoples involves meticulously sorting out how we got into the predicament we're in, while working diligently to liberate ourselves from systems of dominance through the revitalizing our languages, cultures, and spiritual traditions, as well as our political identity of original independence.<sup>72</sup>

Newcomb's protestations serve as a warning that performances of reconciliation as staged moments of imagined exchange are, like the histories they re-enact, double-edged. Symbols of exchange such as the wampum and the Covenant Chain can signify shared sovereignty, but they can also reference a false friendship marked by the exigencies of colonial expansion and violent repression of Indigenous peoples. For Newcomb, claims to a foundational friendship are undermined by the continual breakdown of relations put under strain by a colonial dominion that refuses to recognize Indigenous sovereignty, illustrated by the breakdown in trade relations leading to the Pavonia Massacre, and the taking of Native land that followed.

In 1639 Dutch Governor William Kieft sought to impose taxes on Raritans and other Algonquin-speaking peoples in New Netherland, with tributes or levy 'either in pelts, maize, or wampum'.<sup>73</sup> Tribes were forced to contribute, causing tension and Native hostility. Native groups resisted, including killing farmers' pigs, and a cycle of retaliation ensued. At this time, there was an influx of Dutch immigrants and the number of Dutch colonists had doubled, exacerbating tensions. Antagonisms mounted further as the availability in furs declined and the West India Company threw open its trade to all colonists, thus ending its monopoly.<sup>74</sup> Kieft was unable to restrain violence on the part of colonists not employed by the West India Company, and soon the Dutch were at war with 'at least twelve' Algonquin-speaking peoples living near Manhattan Island over a period of five years.<sup>75</sup> Wampum were used as both bribes and bounties. After four Dutch were killed by Native Raritans in 1641 at a farm on Staten Island, Kieft sought to use other Native groups as allies by offering a bounty of ten fathom of wampum for every Raritan's head, and twenty if they were brought in alive, notes historian Evan Heafeli.<sup>76</sup> After further violent skirmishes, and what Kieft perceived to be an affront to his honour and authority from Native chiefs or *sachems*, he was determined to force submission, and against

the wishes of the colonists and without the approval of his advisory council he ordered retaliation, resulting in a series of horrific massacres of Native peoples by the Dutch. 'Kieft's War', or the Pavonia Massacre of 1643, as it has been dubbed, has been described as one that was particularly violent, and was surrounded by much political controversy at the time.<sup>77</sup> The eyewitness account written by Dutchman David Pietersz de Vries recorded the mutilation and massacre of at least 80 Hackensack Indians at Pavonia on 25 February 1643:

[A]bout midnight I heard a great shrieking, and I ran to the ramparts of the fort, and looked over to Pavonia. Saw nothing but firing, and heard the shrieks of the savages murdered in their sleep. ... When it was day the soldiers returned to the fort, having massacred or murdered eighty Indians, and considering they had done a deed of Roman valor, in murdering so many in their sleep; where infants were torn from their mother's breasts, and hacked to pieces in the presence of their parents. ... Some were thrown into the river, and when the fathers and mothers endeavored to save them, the soldiers would not let them come on land but made both parents and children drown – children from five to six years of age, and also some old and decrepit persons.<sup>78</sup>

Even after the battle, the soldiers showed no mercy, and de Vries told of Native peoples with 'their hands and some with their legs cut off, and some holding their entrails in their arms, and others had such horrible cuts and gashes, that worse than they were could never happen'.<sup>79</sup> A winter of violence ensued, until in March, an attempt at peace was made not by the Dutch, but by Native chiefs. Although the Canarsees on Long Island had been subject to violence weeks earlier, they approached the Dutch 'under a small white flag', writes Heafeli.<sup>80</sup> Later, the Hackensacks, the Tappans and the Wecquaesgeeks brokered peace with Kieft. At the signing of the peace treaties, Kieft sought to gesture towards Native diplomacy and gave the chiefs some presents, but not nearly enough, notes Heafeli.<sup>81</sup> Given the extensive violence, Native people felt that the required cultural protocols of gift-giving to appease had never been properly met. This fragile peace collapsed by April 1643, as unrest erupted and the Dutch enlisted the English to carry out more 'scorched earth' activities, destroying crops and native villages.<sup>82</sup> With Englishman Captain Underhill, a veteran of the Pequot war with the English (1637), Kieft's West India Company soldiers, Dutch militia men and English soldiers conducted extensive raids of other Native villages,

leading, by the close of 1643, to the deaths of at least 500–700 women and children.<sup>83</sup> Native groups once again sought to broker peace and Kieft carried out a ‘peace ceremony’ affirming a ‘firm and inviolable peace’ on 30 August 1645.<sup>84</sup>

Heafeli argues that a ‘clash’ occurred between European and Native American cultures of violence. Kieft misunderstood ‘the role of violence in Native American society’, including the strict protocols of retribution for the maintenance of peace. Kieft mistakenly thought that violence would quash Native resistance; instead, it fuelled retributive violence and escalated antagonism between Indians and Dutch.<sup>85</sup> Heafeli argues that it was the Native Americans who brokered an end to the warring: ‘The final treaty was not concluded until Native American values, in a mixture of diplomacy and discreet acts of violence, were satisfied enough for the sachems to establish peace in their villages.’<sup>86</sup> Kieft’s War was the defining event in the colony’s history, as well as a point of no return.<sup>87</sup> By 1659, as Richter observes, the Iroquois were under no illusions regarding their relations with the Dutch. As an orator remarked to local magistrates in that year, ‘the Dutch say we are brothers and that we are joined together with chains ... but that lasts only as long as we have beavers. After that we are no longer thought of.’<sup>88</sup>

Reconciliatory politics in postcolonial settler societies requires truth telling, including the acknowledgement of shared and violent histories. With this, too, comes the emotional commerce of such reconciliatory practices. On the part of the colonizer, or present-day ‘settlers’, feelings of remorse and shame arise through performance. Attending to the way these histories are mediated in the present is central to this book. If Heafeli understands the Dutch–Native encounter as a ‘clash’, a misunderstanding of the cultural and diplomatic protocols of violence, Merwick recasts the story through the lens of shame: Dutch shame. Merwick brings a poetic and ethnographic sensibility to her exploration of the complex moral world of the Dutch–Amerindian encounter, and the 1643 massacre, and examines the emotional and political dimensions of its textual aftermath in the Netherlands. In Merwick’s view, growing calls for land and dominion overtook the essentially peaceful intentions of the Dutch. With her evocative title, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, Merwick engages in an explorative postcolonial politics of a remorseful tenor, charting the complex emotional waters of shame, sorrow and redemption. Her narrative depiction of Dutch as ‘along-shore people’ implicitly constructs them as essentially decent people of high ideals, who wanted peace. Pursuing the theme of Dutch colonial shame in the immediate aftermath of the event, she argues that they

'betrayed themselves' as much as they inflicted barbaric violence and a form of scorched earth tactics on Native peoples. Merwick's meditation on Dutch shame and sorrow recounts Dutch concern that this violence 'happened before the world'.<sup>89</sup> The failed trade relations, erupting in sustained violence, and the damage done to Native lives, as well as the Dutch reputation, laments Merwick, were 'the shame and the sorrow' of New Netherland.<sup>90</sup>

As Merwick rationalizes, in 'enacting such a culture of dominance, the Dutch acted out a betrayal of ideals and accepted values: betrayal of themselves and others. They reaped the shame and sorrow.'<sup>91</sup> Indeed, Merwick takes this chasm between ideals and reality very seriously, 'so seriously', writes Cynthia Jean Van Zandt, that 'she offers it as the central interpretation' of Dutch activity in New Netherland.<sup>92</sup> Her work explores colonial violence and is in part a textual 'working through' of colonial trauma: but it privileges Dutch colonial trauma and its repercussions in the Netherlands. While her final chapter, titled 'No closure', permits a certain amount of doubt and moral ambivalence, it refers primarily to the Dutch. Merwick's focus is less on Indigenous diplomacy and trauma, and, as one reviewer argues, Native peoples tend to be one-dimensional, more as 'sufferers and wronged parties'.<sup>93</sup>

By contrast, the Two Row performance, including the criticisms made of it by Newcomb, foregrounds Indigenous agency and brings shame to the surface in complex and multivalent ways. For proponents of the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign, shame is woven through the rhetoric of the dishonoured treaty, while critics such as Newcomb locate shame in the violent assertion of colonial power and quest for domination. Just as Merwick put a mirror to Dutch accountability and shame, Newcomb's question to Governor Vos in the media – 'What does Dutch Consul-General Rob de Vos have to say about this Dutch massacre of our ancestors at the direction and instigation of the Dutch Governor?' – also called for Dutch public accountability and truth telling in the Two Row story. The dialogic emotional demonstrations which are part of this reconciliation performance demand a declaration of accountability, remorse and shame on the part of the perpetrator. Certainly, the perpetrator's experiencing of shame can lead to a coming-to-terms with the past for both parties and pave the way for reconciliation. Yet while the declaration of shame can lead to a reconciliatory politics and eventual healing, Sara Ahmed argues that 'shame' also comprises very much a settler presence-to-self dynamic, where settlers work through *their* shame in order to become reconciled with themselves and the aspired (settler) nation.<sup>94</sup> Such a declaration restores the colonizer's



idea of themselves as 'good', and can offer moral redemption, and when performed collectively can thus reinscribe the hegemony of the settler nation state.

Newcomb's refutation of a consensus-based conciliatory narrative of the Two Row/Tawagonshi, his insistence on historical accountability and call for liberation from the imagined exchange, rather than reconciliation to it, thus represents a powerful departure from the moral dimensions of the reconciliatory covenant, into which Indigenous peoples can find themselves too easily pulled. Yet the shame of a dishonoured covenant is also threaded through the Tawagonshi and the Covenant Chain stories. Native peoples rightly describe situations as shameful and call forth the feeling of shame. The presence of shame thus perpetually haunts the call to obligation that we see in contemporary political uses of the wampum accord, where political claims on the state are made on its behalf.

### **The Covenant Chain: the British legacy**

The English first took up the 'Covenant Chain' metaphor in 1677, shortly after they defeated the Dutch by conquering New Netherland.<sup>95</sup> They soon replaced the Dutch in alliance and trade with the Iroquois Five Nations, particularly the Mohawk, who lived nearest Albany, a site that was strategically important to the English fur trade and hub for Indian diplomacy.<sup>96</sup> The argument, such as that expressed by Newcomb, that the pact of the 'Covenant Chain' is a fantasy undermined by the realpolitik of coercion and at times violent subjection on the ground is supported by scholarship that has placed the covenant under considerable scrutiny. As historians Alan Taylor and Richard Aquila have suggested, the Covenant Chain enabled the English to use their collaboration with the Five Nations to expand their imperial interests and control trade routes.<sup>97</sup> In turn, the Five Nations 'collaborated to build their respective power at the expense of other weaker native groups'.<sup>98</sup> New York's Governor and broker of the 1677 Covenant Chain, Edmund Andros, initially enlisted the Five Nations to 'intimidate coastal Algonquian peoples who resisted English colonial expansion'.<sup>99</sup> Andros forged the alliance to avert a Native uprising on the colonial frontier and in 'return for help Iroquois achieved recognition as England's most favoured nation'.<sup>100</sup> By claiming authority over the Iroquois, Andros asserted that the English empire owned their western conquests by proxy, something disputed by the French.<sup>101</sup> Geographically, the Iroquois were a strategic buffer between New England and New France,

thus they were useful to Andros; but they also carried a reputation for being 'shrewd diplomats and invincible warriors'.<sup>102</sup> The English colonizers were aware that they needed the Five Nations for 'protection against French and Indian enemies, as well as for diplomatic and economic reasons'.<sup>103</sup> The alliance aided Britain's competition with France for dominance in trade while giving the Iroquois advantage over other Native groups.

By the mid-eighteenth century there was an established tradition of Covenant Chain protocols between Native people and the English. Native chiefs were presented with certificates, medals and gorgets to signal their status as 'gorget captains' or 'great chiefs'. The engraving depicted in Figure 9 is part of a commission document and shows a gathering of members of the Iroquois League and British officials standing under a European image of the Iroquois Tree of Peace. The silver chain of friendship, or the Covenant Chain, hangs from the tree secured with a heart-shaped locket. An Englishman presents a



*Figure 9* Commission certificate given by William Johnson to Native allies which shows a gathering of members of the Iroquois League and British officials standing under Iroquois Tree of Peace. The Covenant Chain secured with a heart-shaped lockets hang on the Tree of Peace. Indian Testimonial given to N.Y. State Indians by Sir William Johnson in the 18th century, engraved by Henry Dawkins, April 1770; restrike 1946; neg. #27844. Photograph © New-York Historical Society

medal to a Native man across the council fire.<sup>104</sup> This pictorial representation of the Covenant Chain draws on similar tropes appearing in earlier examples of English emblems. By the mid-seventeenth century gestures of virtuous contract based on hearts and clasped hands demonstrated two forms of social affiliation. The emblem for *bone fides* (good faith), for example, showed 'clasped hands around a flaming and crowned heart as an image of friendship conceived as the willing connection of two loving and sovereign selves'.<sup>105</sup> The iconography is thus a hybridized or cross-cultural union of Native and European symbolic repertoires.

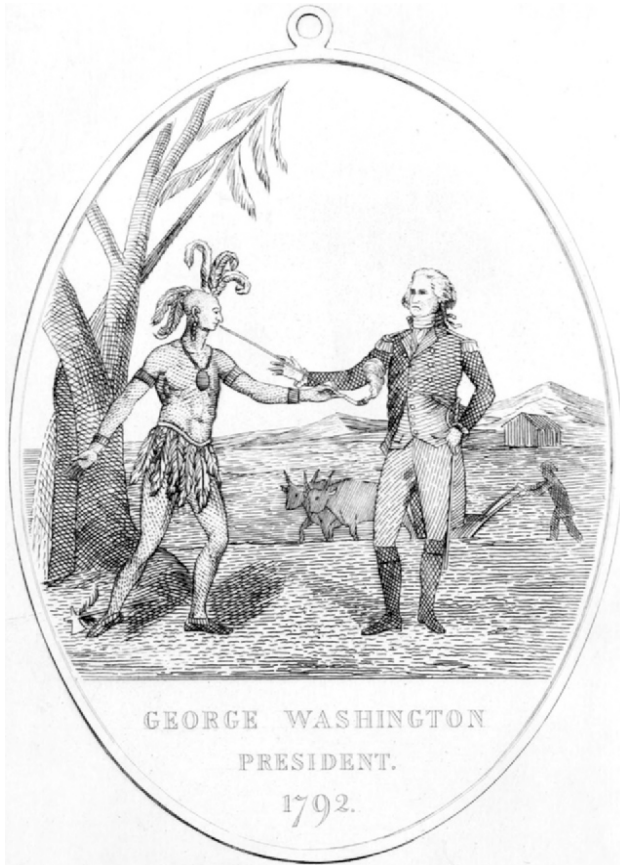
After the American Revolutionary War, President George Washington would inaugurate relations that were far less about a middle ground of mutual accommodation; rather, they would require Native assimilation under the new 'Great Father'. In 1794 the Treaty of Canandaigua established 'friendship' between the United States of America and the Six Nations and apparently affirmed Haudenosaunee land rights in the state of New York.<sup>106</sup> On 11 November 1794, the treaty was signed by 50 Haudenosaunee leaders and Timothy Pickering, George Washington's envoy. Later, Washington signed a piece of paper sewn to the bottom of the treaty for its ratification.<sup>107</sup>

Two years earlier, the Seneca chief and orator Red Jacket, or Sogoyewapha, advocated for the rights of his people and played an important role in negotiations with the new United States Government after the war. In 1792 he led a delegation of 50 people to Philadelphia. The US president, George Washington, presented Red Jacket with a 'peace medal', a large oval of silver plate engraved with an image of Washington on the right-hand side, shaking Red Jacket's hand.

Following the practice of the French, Spanish and British, after 1776 and the American War of Independence, the newly formed United States Government presented medals to important chiefs and warriors as symbols of attachment to the new nation.<sup>108</sup> Within Native groups medals became highly valued diplomatic possessions and came to designate marks of rank. As Melville Jamieson writes, by the early eighteenth century medals, flags and monetary compensation became the *sine qua non*, or prerequisite, to the signing of any treaty.<sup>109</sup> While treaty medals were valued, used and adapted within Native cultures, they nevertheless depicted the official perspectives of the British (or later American) military, political and religious elite. The medals simultaneously helped to induce, effect or cement an agreement, treaty or allegiance, but they also represented the agreement in real time, so to speak, and endured as tangible evidence of the agreement, thus also possessing

commemorative and archival qualities. Often left to the realm of numismatists, such medals can proffer rich historical insight into changing political relations between Europeans and Native Americans, or, at least, into these relations as they were depicted by Europeans at the time.<sup>110</sup> They not only tell us much about diplomatic efforts in the midst of Indigenous dispossession, but also assist in illuminating the multifarious aspects and cultural strategies which served to effect the European divestment of Indigenous lands.

After the American Revolutionary War (1775–83) several popular American medals employed the image of a European allegorical or military figure meeting, passing objects to, or shaking hands with a Native American chief, and by the close of the eighteenth century and beyond, this would become an enduring and highly familiar motif. The Red Jacket Medal of 1792, also known as the George Washington medal, shows Red Jacket on the left, with President George Washington on the right (Figure 10). In this medal the new President is the ‘Great Father’ with whom Native peoples will have to parlay.<sup>111</sup> The chief Sagoyewapha (Red Jacket) appears to be stepping forth from a tree, perhaps the woods of the hunter-gatherer, while behind the open-handed figure of George Washington a European man ploughs fields. Washington as the Great Father invites Red Jacket to step from one stage to another, and transformation of the Native subject is explicit here: this is quite different from the Two Row Wampum, which acknowledges two cultures and two sovereignties. In the mid-ground, a house and a man ploughing a field with oxen are emblematic of the tilling of the soil and of European settlement. These pictorial features reinforce ideas of European agriculture and settlement, which are key to stadial or four stages theory: the view that the age of hunters would rightly be superseded by the age of pastoralism, farming and then commerce, a prevalent and central rationalization for settler colonialism.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, stadial theory not only concerned the means of production of human societies, but was also concerned with the notion of evolving, improving law. Likewise, this transformation suggests the movement of Native peoples to European ‘highest’ law, that is, as settled, civilized, clothed and domesticated individual subjects, not wild, communal men of the woods. In this medal, the complete rural scene suggests the domestication of land and peoples. Pacified, Red Jacket smokes the ceremonial peace pipe and wears an oval peace medal; he is engaged in the process of peace and conciliation. As Karl Lubbers has observed, for Native peoples the lessons of these didactic objects are clear: first, to learn peaceableness, and second agriculture.<sup>113</sup>



*Figure 10* Etching of the front side of an Indian Peace Medal given to Seneca chief Red Jacket by President George Washington in 1792. *The Medalllic History of the United States of America, 1776–1876*, Joseph Florimond Loubat, 1878, plate XVIII. Etching by Jules Ferdinand Jacquemart, Wikicommons[PD-US]

Two years later, in 1794, 59 sachems and warriors, including Red Jacket, Cornplanter and Handsome Lake, took part in the signing of the Treaty of Canandaigua.<sup>114</sup> The 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua was one of the first treaties the United States entered into, and at the time was deemed to be a solemn agreement between nations.<sup>115</sup> George Washington commissioned a wampum belt to mark the event. Yet the terms of the treaty that the US federal government would respect Iroquois sovereignty were violated as soon as it had quelled Indian resistance in Ohio and Indiana. Henceforth, Haudenosaunee land became vulnerable to acquisition by

speculators, settlements and state governments 'based on agreements made earlier between the northeastern states'.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, at the time of its signing, the treaty was important for the Six Nations as it repatriated Indigenous land ceded in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix and promised federal recognition of Haudenosaunee sovereignty.<sup>117</sup> After the Revolutionary War the Iroquois confederacy was neglected by its former allies, the British, and 'pursued by American land speculators, invaded by squatters and besieged by the governments of New York and Pennsylvania', writes Fred Anderson.<sup>118</sup> Likewise, the US Government needed the support of the powerful Iroquois confederacy, who, in a show of the diplomacy for which they were known, treated with the United States by which they obtained recognition of their sovereignty over tribal land in the state of New York; a \$10,000 payment; the annual delivery of trade goods as a sign of an enduring contract; and the pledge that any future land sales would go through the federal government only.<sup>119</sup> Yet as Robert W. Venables notes, the particulars of exactly how the central government would intervene to protect Indian interests were vaguely expressed, such that this promise later became vulnerable to exploitation by New York State.<sup>120</sup> The treaty terms required that the Haudenosaunee, in return, pledge peaceful relations with the United States, cede any claims to land outside the state of New York, and allow American citizens passage through their territories.<sup>121</sup> The agreement is also called the Calico Treaty, as the Six Nations in New York are still in receipt of cloth (the original agreement stipulated calico) as recognition of the continuing obligation of the United States to the terms of the treaty.<sup>122</sup>

In 2000 Seneca scholar G. Peter Jemison called for the 'Haudenosaunee Chiefs ... to meet face to face with the president of the United States and remove the rust from the silver covenant chain of peace and friendship'. Since the signing of the treaty, the Haudenosaunee lost most of their lands to 'fraud and irregular sales', writes Jemison. Some violations of the treaty are 'grievous', including the construction of the Kinzua Dam, south of the Allegany Reservation, which flooded 9,000 acres of Seneca land in 1965.<sup>123</sup> While the US Government still upholds the most basic and material aspect of its obligation to treaty goods – for example, it still delivers cloth worth \$4,500 annually to the Iroquois – any premise of Haudenosaunee sovereignty has been disregarded and little has been done to protect their lands from encroachments.<sup>124</sup> As Jemison observes, many Americans barely understand the meaning of treaties and often regard them as 'obsolete relics of a distant past'. But the Onondaga continually refer to the federal treaty between Haudenosaunee and the United States as a 'living' agreement, and commemorations occur annually.<sup>125</sup>

In 2010 the Onondaga land claim was dismissed by a District Court. In NOON's view this demonstrated there would be 'little chance for justice and reconciliation for the Onondaga through the US legal system'.<sup>126</sup> In 2012 Onondaga campaigners travelled to Washington DC to file a legal appeal for their land rights case and to 'publicly appeal to the people of the United States *to hold our leaders accountable for the treaties that the US has signed*'.<sup>127</sup> At the National Press Club they publicly displayed the original wampum belt commissioned by George Washington to mark the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua, for the first time in over two decades. This 218-year-old wampum belt symbolized a peace and friendship treaty between the United States and the Haudenosaunee and guaranteed the 'free use and enjoyment' of their land.<sup>128</sup> The performative unfurling of the 1794 wampum belt was a material, embodied re-enactment of the past and an assertion for the future (see Figure 11). The display of the belt – at least three times for this Onondaga campaign – was thus a significant memorializing and archiving act by the Onondaga leaders. The 1794 wampum was material evidence of their treaty and thus the basis of their claim on the government. Importantly, as the belt had only been repatriated from the State Museum in October 1989,<sup>129</sup> it was a key artefact of material heritage, cultural knowledge and testimony that enfolded the sacred meaning of the historic Haudenosaunee agreement with President Washington, something that that would not have been possible prior to its repatriation to the Onandaga from the state. In press interviews the Haudenosaunee leaders made their public claims on the state using the language of promise-keeping and accountability. In one interview Onondaga Faithkeeper Oren Lyons argued that all Americans should be outraged by the 2010 decision to reject the Onondaga land rights claim: 'You can't go around the world proclaiming democracy when you can't take care of what's at home', Lyons remarked.<sup>130</sup> He deftly interpellated non-Indigenous North Americans back into the exchange or compact:

*It's your duty to uphold that treaty ... We do not concede to the court. We do not concede. We will fight on. But we would hope to secure the help of the US people. Remind your leaders: If you can't keep your promise, and you can't keep George Washington's words, whose words can you keep?*<sup>131</sup>

The Onondaga Nation's general counsel, Joseph Heath, stressed the legitimacy of their claims, remarking that 'the facts are not in dispute. ... New York does not even dispute that the land was taken illegally. ...

What the Onondaga and Haudenosaunee people are asking for is truth and justice.' In this performance and presentation of the historical wampum, the Onondaga activists made their political claim by pointing to the shame of the past and of dishonoured treaties, and called for truth and justice.<sup>132</sup> But by October 2013, after eight years of legal deliberations, the final appeal was rejected, to which the leaders responded: 'Today's denial is but the last step on a shameful path of injustice and inequity which the Supreme Court has engaged in for almost 200 years. ... This is just another example of the shameful history of broken treaties, land thefts, forced removal and cultural genocide.'<sup>133</sup>

### **Tweeting Obama: reconciliation, apology and the Covenant Chain**

In November 2013, only a month after the Haudenosaunee legal appeal for the Treaty of Canandaigua to be honoured was quashed by the US Government, President Barack Obama spoke at the signal Tribal Nations Conference in Washington DC, attended by 566 tribal groups. Adding to the sense of historical occasion, Obama praised the wampum and evoked the Covenant Chain, the lexicon of accord initially emerging from Native diplomatic protocols in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and acknowledged broken promises:

Now, after I became President, I said that *given the painful chapters and broken promises in our shared history, I'd make sure this country kept its promises to you ... [and would] build a new relationship with you based on trust and respect. ... I know we've got members of the Iroquois nation here today. And I think we could learn from the Iroquois Confederacy, just as our Founding Fathers did when they laid the groundwork for our democracy. The Iroquois called their network of alliances with other tribes and European nations a 'covenant chain'. Each link represented a bond of peace and friendship. But that covenant chain didn't sustain itself. It needed constant care, so that it would stay strong. And that's what we're called to do, to keep the covenant between us for this generation and for future generations.*<sup>134</sup>

Obama went on to outline 'four areas in particular where I think we need to focus ... *to keep our covenant strong*'. These were, he explained, 'standing up for justice and tribal sovereignty; increasing economic opportunity; expanding quality health care; protecting native homelands – this is the foundation we can build on. This is the progress that we can make together.'<sup>135</sup>



Although in his speech Obama did not use the term 'reconciliation', he invoked the Covenant Chain as a reconciliatory practice acknowledging that the covenant made sometime in the distant past was one that had fallen apart, and whose promise had been unfulfilled. Obama spoke of 'painful chapters and broken promises in our shared history'.<sup>136</sup> President Obama's oratory, like that of the Haudenosaunee, reached into the past to use a metaphor for peace and alliance-building that is historically particular to North America, invoking the idea of the 'covenant' and of the 'golden chain of friendship'. He made it clear that the covenant is one that has to be worked for and sustained, a golden chain that must be 'polished', as in 'polishing the chain of friendship', as the Haudenosaunee put it. As Obama related, the covenant needed 'constant care, so that it would stay strong'. Implicit here are modern ideas adapted from the idiom of interpersonal and transformational psychology that relationships – 'covenants' – need emotional (and political) care and attention. Further, alluding to the providential purpose, or higher calling for the United States, that the maintenance of such a covenant entails, and its future import, Obama stated, 'And that's what we're called to do, to keep the covenant between us for this generation and for future generations.'<sup>137</sup> Obama's speech played on the emotional obligation to care for one another. But above all, he substituted the mythic and symbolic for the legal, sidestepping issues of Native sovereignty implicit in the contestation over the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua, and instead offering practical solutions outside the formal treaty agreement. The symbolism of the Covenant Chain did not manifest in any substantive redress for Onondaga within the terms of the Treaty.

Such issues of history, recognition and the honouring of treaties – and the discourses of sovereignty that coalesce around these issues – go to the heart of liberal settler democracies, where calls for reconciliation, apology and national healing are now prominent. Only four years earlier, in 2010, Obama's government had finally made an apology to First Nations peoples, using the language of reconciliation and signalling the need for symbolic, if not material, redress. This was part of a global reconciliation moment in 'the age of apology'. But it was to be a hollow affair. The apology was never formally announced or publicized, but buried in a Defense Department Appropriations Act (2010). Those to whom the President apologized thus could not formally acknowledge it, and the majority of Native Americans were entirely unaware that they had been addressed in this way.

Only recently, several settler nations have made formal apologies to Aboriginal and Native peoples. In February 2008 Australia's then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, made an official apology to Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander people who had been removed or stolen from their parents and placed in care or domestic service (these people are referred to as being part of the 'Stolen Generations'). Indeed, a lack of apology was widely viewed as an obstacle to the reconciliation process in Australia and became a key and divisive point of contention for the nation. In June 2008 Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, made an official apology for the abuse suffered by Aboriginal peoples who had been placed in the Residential School system. Although the US Government apologized to Native Hawaiians for overthrowing the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1993, a similar apology to Native Americans was a long time coming. When it was first put to Congress in 2004, the Native American Apology Resolution did not pass. It was then reintroduced five years later, and President Barack Obama signed the resolution into law in December 2009.<sup>138</sup> The apology sought to acknowledge 'years of official depredations, ill-conceived policies, and the breaking of covenants by the United States Government regarding Indian Tribes', and 'apologizes on behalf of the people of the United States to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States'. It was unambiguous in its use of the language of reconciliation, proposing to 'move toward a brighter future where all the people of this land live reconciled as brothers and sisters' and 'bring healing to this land by providing a proper foundation for reconciliation between the United States and Indian Tribes'. It also 'commend[ed] the State governments that have begun reconciliation efforts with recognized Indian Tribes'.<sup>139</sup> The quandary is that in many ways this history of colonization is no longer hidden, yet official recognition is partial and full public discussion and acknowledgement is barely forthcoming, highlighting the countervailing forces of erasure and recognition that prevail in contemporary settler societies. Despite President Obama's signing of the Native American Apology Resolution into law, to date no official US announcement has been made of this historic signing, no federal or official ceremonies have been held, and many Native Americans remain entirely unaware that the US President has apologized to them. Only in 2012 did the United States embark on a formal program of reconciliation, after a commitment to reconciliation with Native Hawaiians (2009).<sup>140</sup> In 2012 the UNHRC Special Rapporteur concluded the following:

Indigenous peoples in the United States – including American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian peoples – constitute vibrant communities that have contributed greatly to the life of the country; yet they face significant challenges that are related to

widespread historical wrongs, including broken treaties and acts of oppression, and misguided government policies ... Moreover, new measures are needed to advance toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples and address persistent deep-seated problems related to historical wrongs, failed policies of the past and continuing systemic barriers to the full realization of indigenous peoples' rights.<sup>141</sup>

Specifically highlighting stolen lands, the report noted, 'It is a testament to the goodwill of Indian nations that they have uniformly insisted on observance of the treaties, even regarding them as sacred compacts, rather than challenge their terms as inequitable.' Declaring that 'the open wounds left by historical events are plentiful, alive in intergenerational memory if not experience', the report called for 'a determined action within a programme of reconciliation'.<sup>142</sup>

Within the settler paradigm the divergence between the realpolitik of the nation and the symbolism of the Two Row and the Covenant Chain becomes ever more stark. Reparation and justice cannot occur outside Western law, and the principles of the Two Row Wampum agreement or model, though performative, were not textual and were never translated into law. This is the dilemma of the gradual translation of Indigenous claims into Western legal frameworks.<sup>143</sup> The Haudenosaunee continue to promote the principles of the Two Row, and insist that the Treaty of Canandaigua was built on the premise of recognition of their sovereignty, yet this model of joint sovereignty would never be enshrined in legal doctrine within the settler nation, which always demands perfect or complete sovereignty.<sup>144</sup> Under such conditions, it is hard to see how reconciliation efforts could ever fully support Native sovereignty, yet this is nonetheless the difficult work that the wampum and Covenant Chain are called into service to perform.

In April 2014 Onondaga leaders filed a petition with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, accusing the United States of human rights violations for taking their land, claiming that 2.5 million acres of Onondaga Nation land had been taken unlawfully since 1788 by New York, despite the signing of at least three treaties with the United States. Arguing that they never got their day in court, the Onondaga petitioned a 'higher moral authority'<sup>145</sup> to recognize their right to reparation. Onondaga Nation Chief Sidney Hill and Faithkeeper Oren Lyons stood at the front of the Society of Friends Meeting House in Washington DC to symbolize the presence of Quaker intermediaries in the 1794 treaty process. Here, they held a news conference to announce the filing of their petition with the international panel, claiming the

United States had violated the Onondaga Nation's human rights by taking its land and refusing to honour the treaty commemorated by the wampum belt.<sup>146</sup> 'Because there is no justice in the US courts, we are taking this petition to an international forum', said Onondaga Nation lawyer, Joe Heath.<sup>147</sup> Once again, as material evidence, activists displayed the George Washington Wampum Belt created to mark the Treaty of Canandaigua (Figure 11). Now the Onondaga wanted to take this 'vision' of the Two Row 'directly to the people of New York State'.<sup>148</sup> 'It's important for the people of the United States to know that the first president made a wampum belt', stated Onondaga Nation Faithkeeper Oren Lyons. 'This commemorates peace and friendship between the United States and the people of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois).'<sup>149</sup> The Onondaga Nation encouraged its supporters to take photos of the wampum belt and send them via Twitter to President Barack Obama with the message: 'In 2014 the #OnondagaNation still seeks the justice promised by George Washington in 1790. @Barack Obama.' Indeed, this digital delivery of the powerful wampum through social media – as



*Figure 11* Onondaga Nation Chief Sidney Hill, left, and Faithkeeper Oren Lyons display the George Washington Wampum Belt (replica) created to mark the Treaty of Canandaigua. *The Post-Standard*. Photograph by Mark Weiner

historic testimony of the agreement – bombarded the President with the material evidence of his predecessors' agreement.

## Conclusion

The Two Row Wampum campaign and paddling journey sought to reimagine a 400-year-old treaty, based on Native protocols, as a new kind of accord or reconciliatory relationship, and to call for Indigenous sovereignty and land rights, respect of treaties, and for environmental care. Through the enunciating and revisioning of historical metaphors of alliance and peace-making, Indigenous peoples and their allies sought to engage the state in a new dialogue and to appeal to and broker new reforms. But equally important is that such claim-making is made in the public domain, in the 'court of public opinion', such that the Onondaga could seek to advocate their case beyond the nation state at the global level and through international organizations such as the United Nations.

The constant invocation of 'polishing the chain' reveals the ongoing and urgent need for social models of reconciliation, trust-building and redress – and for imaginative refoundings. This is crucial to the radical political work of reconstructing history for the purpose of social transformation and building affective engagement between people, and between citizens and the state. Such enactments are highly significant in the creation of new postcolonial socialities. Yet these performances that call on the past are multivalent and complex in their expression. Historic rituals and diplomatic 'conciliatory' protocols may be recruited in the present, and can be called upon to serve entirely different ends. On the one hand, these historic events are recalled to the present to attest to Indigenous self-determination and radical emancipatory politics – for example, the Two Row Wampum campaign – for agendas of peace-building and positive resistance, where the wampum and also Covenant Chain are evocative of a 'middle ground' and enlisted as a call to obligation. On the other, they have been and (continue to be) evoked by the state for entirely other means, as a form of violence, colonial exigency, assimilation and social stabilization, which has the effect of only perpetuating the settler project. The originary wampum, so emblematic of the middle ground, symbolizes something quite different to the conciliatory handshake that later would be depicted on 'peace and friendship' medals, the hallmark of Thomas Jefferson's new American republic and the settler compact, distributed to Native American peoples on an ever-expanding and violent frontier.

## 2

# ‘This is our hearts!’ Unruly Re-enactments and Unreconciled Pasts in Lakota Country

On the banks of the Missouri River at Chamberlain, South Dakota, in September 2004, members of the Lewis and Clark expedition re-enactment (Figure 12), dressed in early nineteenth-century period costume, and protected by local and federal police, stood before the tribal members from Lakota, Dakota, Ponca, Kiowa and Diné Nations.<sup>1</sup> The tribal leaders demanded that the re-enactment expedition turn back and proceed no further into Yankton Sioux territory, stating that the Lewis and Clark re-enactors were perpetuating the lies of American history.<sup>2</sup> Ponca activist Carter Camp claimed the ‘Indians here did not like the first Lewis and Clark and they sure don’t like the second ones.’<sup>3</sup> The Lewis and Clark expedition represented the ‘dawn of genocide’ for Plains Indian Tribes, argued the tribal leaders.<sup>4</sup> ‘You are re-enacting the coming of death to our people’, Camp told the expedition members. ‘You are re-enacting genocide.’<sup>5</sup>

The nationally vaunted and much publicized bicentennial re-enactment sought to commemorate the ‘Voyage of Discovery’, the expedition led in 1804–6 by Captain Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson, it was the first American expedition to cross the western United States. The expedition, which departed in May 1804 from near St. Louis on the Mississippi River, made its way through the heart of vast Lakota (formerly named Sioux) territories to the Pacific coast. The ‘Voyage of Discovery’ re-enactment soon became a tense political stand-off and attracted much media attention. Tribal leaders, many of whom were veteran Native rights activists, including Alex White Plume, Floyd Hand, Carter Camp, Alfred Bone Shirt, Russell Means and Vic Camp, wanted the Lewis and Clark Expedition re-enactors to cancel their re-enactment journey of an expedition that they claimed ‘began 200 years of genocide, land theft



*Figure 12* A Lewis and Clark re-enactor grasps his gun while a Lakota woman holds her beaded necklace, at one of the staged meetings between re-enactors and Lakota at the Lewis and Clark commemorations at Stanley County Fairgrounds, 25 September 2004. *The Denver Post* via Getty Images. Photograph by Brian Brainerd

and resource exploitation from the Plains tribes'.<sup>6</sup> Standing firm by their police escorts, however, 'Lewis' and other re-enactors insisted that the tribal leaders could not 'change history and turn back time', and argued that the leaders had no authority to stop them.<sup>7</sup>

The actors offered the tribal leaders the tomahawk pipe, an object emblematic of a Native diplomatic and conciliatory tradition used to broker peaceful relations, in an effort to replay a moment from the expedition's first relatively peaceful meeting with the Yankton Sioux (Figure 13). But the protest leaders refused to smoke it with these unwelcome performers, and they would not participate in the illusion of an historic conciliation, nor its beguiling re-enactment. While seated in a circle to confer, the Native delegation of elders gave 'Lewis' and the other re-enactors three days to go home. If the re-enactors did not turn around, the tribal leaders vowed they would stop the expedition.<sup>8</sup>

The Lewis and Clark voyage sits deep in the national story: the US cultural and physical landscape commemorates their expedition with 'ubiquitous roadside markers, interpretative centres, hotel signs and restaurant logos', writes Cindy Ott. Likewise the 200-year anniversary attracted thousands of additional tourists to the region.<sup>9</sup> Until it



*Figure 13* Pipe tomahawk. Lewis's expedition lists notes that 50 pipe tomahawks were taken on the expedition, with one end of the pipe representing peace and the other the axe of war. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (023330.000). Photograph by NMAI Photo Services

reached Chamberlain, South Dakota, the Lewis and Clark re-enactment had progressed smoothly. A few weeks earlier, in August, the expeditioners had re-enacted the 'Council Bluffs' event, in which Lewis and Clark met with a group of Oto and Missouri chiefs, gave them peace medals, and advised them that they had new 'fathers' who owned these territories.<sup>10</sup> But at Chamberlain, the Yankton Sioux refuted the journey and its re-enactment with its authorizing narrative of colonization. The Native protesters rejected the politics of consensus implicit within the re-enactment and into which Native peoples were coercively interpellated to join a replay of their own traditional, diplomatic rituals. Rather, they argued that they wanted the federal government to honour treaties it signed in 1851 and 1868 to protect Native lands. In this performative exchange, the Native 'resisters' refused to smoke the peace pipe, but instead gave the re-enactors blankets symbolic of smallpox.<sup>11</sup>



In this tense performance, which played out the contested histories of possession and dispossession, one group enacted an authorized mainstream narrative of American exploration and colonization based on the doctrine of discovery, while the other reflected Native response and experience. Some newspapers played on historical tropes of native 'savagery'. The *Union Tribune San Diego* opined, the 'expedition has proved historically accurate in at least one respect: The adventurers have encountered hostile Indians.'<sup>12</sup> Another newspaper observed that the expedition had begun to 'unravel'.<sup>13</sup> And indeed it had. Rejecting the imaginary exchange of the smoking ceremony, the tribal resisters instead demanded the actors take off their costumes, interrupting the illusion of the performance and its portrayal of a peaceful negotiation, which signalled a benign entry into and settlement of the West. Camp insisted that Lewis and Clark were part of the American lie. Referring to their costumes, Camp said, 'You guys probably believe that lie. That is why you are dressed so funny today.' Breaking the illusion of consensual dealings, Camp demanded: 'Take those silly clothes off and come back dressed like a normal human being. ... This is the way our people dress everyday [sic]. We are not trying to play a game. ... Go home and try to re-enact some truth for the rest of your life.'<sup>14</sup> And when Floyd Hand suggested the re-enactors 'find out who they are and live who they are', he was demanding that they be 'self-conscious' settlers, to recognize that they were the beneficiaries of settler colonialism.<sup>15</sup> The 'Americans', said Camp, 'portray Lewis and Clark as intrepid explorers in an attempt to cover-up the true intent of exploitation'. Invoking President Jefferson, as the commissioner of the journey, he argued, 'Jefferson lusted after the wealth of our Nations in exactly the same way the King of Spain did those Nations of our eastern shore and they each sent their "explorers" as a prelude to invasion and conquest.'<sup>16</sup>

An awkward handshake occurred at the meeting, between the reluctant Native representative and a re-enactor, who clutched his counterpart in a more enthusiastic double-handed grasp. Peyton 'Bud' Clark, the great, great, great-grandson of William Clark, thanked the Yankton Sioux leaders for being open and candid. 'We will be honest with you', he said, arguing that the expedition was a commemoration not a celebration, and a 'way of listening to Indian people along the river'. In Clark's view, the re-enactors were the 'catalyst' for an 'honest' exchange that he believed would lead to national 'healing'.<sup>17</sup>

Yet Native resister Ahmbaska persisted 'This is not a show, this is our hearts!' In the emotionally charged stand-off the theme of 'heart' came up on both sides of the confrontation: Peyton Clark invoked 'heart' in

the context of 'open heart' as 'bone fide' or good faith and open dialogue. In reply, one of the Native protesters invoked 'heart' – 'this is our heart' – as a form of conscience and raw emotion. Ahmbaska recounted for the re-enactors a story of trauma: the destruction of tribes, languages and cultures now extinct, and mass murder. He related that his people, the Missouri, were exiled to Oklahoma, alienated from their ancestral lands. 'My people have never seen this Missouri River which was named after us.' He pointed out that on the Rosebud reservation, his people were still dying from whooping cough, a curable illness in white societies.<sup>18</sup> By invoking the heart and refusing the spectacle of re-enactment, Ahmbaska refuted the confection of a performance, and sought to convey the sense that history was not done, but ongoing, and importantly, that the effects of violent settlement continued on in the real, material lives of Native peoples. For Ahmbaska, there could be no 'heart' in a performance so naïve as to be emptied of the consequences of Native submission to the unequal terms of the agreement offered up to them. Revealing the ambivalence of political feeling, Native activist Carter Camp deliberated openly to the group on whether they should join the performance or halt it: 'Should we join their celebration so we can "tell our side" as they are suggesting to our leaders? Or should we stand as one red nation and send the celebrants back down the river where they came from ... as we should have done so long ago?'<sup>19</sup> The re-enactors pressed on and were escorted by police to the next location at Fort Pierre, where the 'Bad River Gathering' had occurred, one of the last of South Dakota's National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Events. But in fact, this was a replay of the meeting with the Teton Sioux that in 1804 nearly ended in violence.<sup>20</sup>

The perennial question remains: how can reconciliation be performed the face of a protracted history of frontier violence, invasion and genocide? And, as Winona LaDuke asks: 'How can people recover or heal themselves without reconciliation, without apology, and without addressing the crime?' This is especially true when the government is the perpetrator. It is a question, she writes, which is 'directed from Wounded Knee but echoed in the heart of Native America'.<sup>21</sup>

### **Facing the past? Reconciling, unity and unruly performances**

A 'Year of Unity' was officially proclaimed between the Native and non-Native peoples in South Dakota in 2010. It marked the twentieth anniversary of South Dakota's first 'Year of Reconciliation', proclaimed in 1990. The Year of Unity aimed to build upon the legacy and work

of leaders who 'moved the state forward in the Year of Reconciliation', said the Governor, Mike Rounds, and aimed to 'improve understanding, cooperation and peace among all races and cultures in South Dakota'.<sup>22</sup>

The theme for the 2010 annual Black Hills Powwow was 'Celebrating Unity and Reconciliation'. The Powwow, attended by thousands of people and held in Rushmore Civic Plaza Center, Rapid City, was billed as 'one of the premier American Indian cultural events in the United States'. The theme, 'Celebrating Unity and Reconciliation', was promoted as 'an idea everyone can value regardless of heritage. The Powwow is about joining different groups of people together in a collective appreciation of American Indian culture, and presents a unique opportunity you won't want to miss out on.'<sup>23</sup>

Yet, as shown, over the past 25 years efforts towards unity and reconciliation in South Dakota have remained fragmented and contested. The birth of the state of South Dakota commenced with bloodshed of Native Lakota peoples.<sup>24</sup> A year after the state of South Dakota was admitted to the union on 2 November 1889, the Wounded Knee massacre occurred. In late December 1890, Chief Spotted Elk (known also as Chief Big Foot) led a band of around 400 Lakota peoples from central South Dakota on a 300-mile trek in the snow to seek refuge at the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in southwest South Dakota. On 29 December, up to 300 people, nearly two-thirds of whom were women and children, were brutally massacred in the snow by the 7th Cavalry Regiment of the US military near the Pine Ridge reservation. Their bodies were plundered of clothes and belongings and then buried in a mass grave.<sup>25</sup> Many Lakota view this as 'a crime of genocide stemming from illegal actions, including the theft of the Black Hills, a violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty', observes Michelene Pesantubbee. It is a view which recognizes directly the 'culpability' of American settler expansionism.<sup>26</sup>

Today, 125 years after Wounded Knee, the will to create a covenant or accord, or to reconcile – or even to commemorate – remains a complex and politically fraught process. The 2012 UNHRC Special Rapporteur's statement on the United States and its relationships to Native Tribes declared that 'the open wounds left by historical events are plentiful, alive in intergenerational [Native] memory if not experience' and called for 'a determined action within a programme of reconciliation'.<sup>27</sup> Yet there has been no formal apology for the massacre at Wounded Knee by the United States Government and little or no reparation. In 1973 the 'Wounded Knee occupation' by Lakota activists and members of the American Indian Movement at Pine Ridge reservation, lasting 71 days, was answered as a form of 'civil disorder' with heavy government force, and the arrest and trial of Native activists and their allies. Although

the activists' demands were not met, the site became one associated not only with death but with defiance and survival. Nevertheless, the occupation which came to be known as Wounded Knee II, coupled in the minds of many with the original Wounded Knee, was a testament to the state's violent and continuous repression of Native resistance.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, many Native resisters to the Lewis and Clark re-enactment had seen invasion of their lands before and in their own lifetime; several had been at Pine Ridge in 1973 at the Wounded Knee occupation.

Despite the renaming of 'Columbus Day' to 'Native America Day' in South Dakota, a 1990s initiative of Governor George Mickelson, there is much unfinished business. Although there has been a fragmented reconciliation discourse, subjects omitted from the framing of a this dialogue include the return of the Black Hills to the Lakota Nation, a congressional apology for the Wounded Knee massacre, revocation of army medals awarded to the military for the massacre, and the return of items and clothing stripped from the bodies at the massacre site.<sup>29</sup> This unfinished business has generated multiple acts of protest and refusal, anticolonial performances that draw attention to the disavowal of the massacre by the US military and related suffering that has not been properly acknowledged, mourned, or dealt with through substantial redress (see Figure 14).



*Figure 14* The Wounded Knee massacre monument. Photograph courtesy of Julie R. Pine Ridge Indian Reservation at Wounded Knee Monument

This chapter considers the fraught performative life of reconciliation between Lakota and the state, and the entanglements with the colonial past, beginning with American expansion at the behest of Thomas Jefferson and the remediation of the past, which occurs in particular and curious ways. Scholarship abounds on the Lakota and their entanglements with the United States, particularly around the frontier politics and history of the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890.<sup>30</sup> I do not seek to reprise the Wounded Knee event itself in detail; rather, I consider its fraught historical legacy, which has given rise to interlocking forms of protest, remembrance and reconciliatory practice. While formal 'reconciliation' is rarely invoked at the US federal level, it is intermittently raised by Native peoples and state governments. Some Native spokespersons reject it entirely, while others continue to call on the promise of 'reconciliation' as a real and legislated agreement between 'whites' and Lakota people.

In this way the chapter charts the cyclical tension between ways of representing and engaging with the past: reconciliation, sovereignty assertion and cultural reclamation. These concepts, as suggested throughout this book, are always in communication with each other, in a constant spiral towards and away from friendship and domination, and recognition and refusal. Crucially, the chapter explores the affective and charged performances of reconciliation and its refutation, which carry the difficult emotions of anger, resentment, sorrow, shame and indignation. It is less concerned with the emotions of good feeling and unity; rather, these are decolonizing performances, or 'truth events', that *interrupt* the politics of consensus. Here, Lakota peoples hold the past and the settler state and its members as the beneficiaries of the past to account in difficult and confronting ways. Where settler politics of consensus may threaten to close off the space of the political, these performances of refutation have the power to unravel the ideal of happy unity. In this way, they force open the space of the political, contest authorized understandings of the past, shift the settler worldview and demand a new dialogue with the state. These are decolonizing performances that exist in constant tension with performances of reconciliation. The circuitous course of reconciliation is, then, not a linear process, but a spiralling or circling towards and away from the imagined exchange in ways that create new modes of being and new relationships. The emotions of grief and anger, for example, contest settler right by demanding acknowledgement of pain, which, in turn, creates the potential for new forms of engagement to emerge.

The bicentennial Lewis and Clark re-enactment of 2004, which the Lakota protested as the opening of the 'door to genocide', paid tribute

to an 1804 expedition led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, conducted under the aegis of Thomas Jefferson, the President of the new American settler republic. In part, its purpose was diplomatic and represented Jefferson's 'peace and friendship' pledge, which sought to establish a covenant between Native peoples and the 'Great Father', as depicted on the Jefferson peace medals. This settler-Indigenous compact is illustrative of what I term 'coercive conciliation': a formal effort at exchange that carries the explicit expectation of Indigenous submission to the expanding state.

Settler historical narratives of exploration and possession, such as the re-enacted 'Lewis and Clark Voyage of Discovery', take on mythic properties in settler nations, reprising the trope of discovery and conquest. Such narratives do their best work when they 'accrue over time' until they create a body of 'connected and shared tales in which a people can find a home for themselves, thereby creating what can be called a storied community.' This occurs by an 'active process of forgetting as well as remembering', which represses the 'historical fact' that white exploration effected the theft of Indigenous lands.<sup>31</sup> By paying attention to 'narrative accrual' and the ways in which the work of historical remembrance is organized, we may observe the emergence of a 'long and repetitive chain of storytelling' that underwrites settlers' claims to the possession of territory.<sup>32</sup> Importantly, these narratives of possession are indivisible from those of conciliation, where Indigenous volition and agreement is either assumed or fabricated in the service of a politics of consensus that obscures conflict and Indigenous opposition. In the Lewis and Clark performance, re-enactors implied that they were providing an opportunity for reconciliation – or, in their words, open-hearted dialogue – through the offer of the tomahawk pipe, which the resisters refused. The re-enactors' decision to ignore the request to turn back sustained the powerful narrative of pre-emptive closure the re-enactment performed in the first place. Indeed, the re-enactors were adamant that the protesters could not change the course of history and 'turn back time'<sup>33</sup> – (re)conciliation, they assumed, was a foregone conclusion. But the Native interlocutors intervened by questioning the inevitability of the settler narrative – in their rejection of the re-enactment – and insisting upon the importance of living history. In effect, they advanced a counter-narrative subverting the permissive settler account of possession through alliance: that is, their contestation of the historical entitlement of the re-enactment made visible the operations of coercive conciliation, which assume Indigenous consent and submission to the settler state.

Re-enactments of possession and conciliation are complex cultural productions, writes Maria Nugent: 'On the one hand, re-enactors seek to relate history with careful, almost obsessive, attention to detail. On the other, their performances of the past often diverge from, or range beyond, known historical facts and recorded details, particularly as they engage with contemporary concerns and desires, including the wish sometimes that the past had been otherwise.'<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Lamb has pointed out that while there is an emphasis on realism in re-enactment, there is also the 'germ of something' that can 'skew the whole performance and leave it looking as we had not quite expected'.<sup>35</sup> A 'kind of double vision' is therefore required, argues Nugent: the 'ability to see [re-enactments] as historical reproductions and as historical revisions'. Likewise, she asserts, 'revisionism can occur within the performance, but it is just as likely to find expression in the public discourse that the re-enactments so often provoke.' In settler societies, of course, such themes are frequently around the 'twin themes of possession and dispossession' and we must pay heed to the particular forms of cultural or political work such re-enactments perform.<sup>36</sup> The re-enactors' careful attention to detail, as displayed in the Lewis and Clark costumes, the faithful planning of their route and historical rendering of their boat and equipment, stands in stark contrast to the Yankton Sioux's demand that the intruders ask their permission, and that re-enactors listen to the story of the colonization of the Sioux people – in other words, to see the other side of the frontier. The giving of blankets symbolic of smallpox and the outright rejection of the voyage by Native protesters radically altered the very empirical and moral foundations of the re-enactment, including its forward journey, forever. This was far more than a 'germ' of something uncalculated. The gifted blankets marked a 'truth event': a radical performance which reveals the trauma of colonial violence brought back into memory.<sup>37</sup>

The re-enactment event speaks to the unruliness of performances of conciliation and reconciliation in settler societies and the perpetual reality of the uncalculated moment that disrupts settler self-identity – that is, one in which Indigenous people exist and object. In this sense, such performances always contain the seeds of refusal. This is the 'risk' and, indeed, the innovation of conciliatory enactment in settler societies: Indigenous peoples push against or intervene in the renegotiation of the past in the present to create new kinds of performances that subvert and critique the narrative of settler right. In the Lewis and Clark re-enactment, the Yankton Sioux asserted their right to revise an authorized settler history in light of what had occurred in the intervening 200 years. Thus, the re-enactment's carefully crafted 'authenticity' and implicit presumption of consensus unravelled in the most profound terms.

To understand these complex and divergent performances we need to excavate the deep contextual understandings of local history and politics of settler invasion of the Lakota and their culture, traditions and strategies of diplomacy, reaching back to Jefferson. The story of the history of the Lakota is not a story of the 'middle ground' of mutual accommodation, as discussed in Chapter 1 on the Two Row Wampum Treaty, which sought to revivify Haudenosaunee protocols of cross-cultural diplomacy. It is, rather, a story of the formation and consolidation of the United States's power in the new American settler republic and the ways that the Lakota have been subject to and defied the power of the United States from the 1800s to today.<sup>38</sup> Native responses to colonialism, whether confrontational or conciliatory, were 'adaptive strategies to resist total assimilation into a dominant social system and a loss of cultural integrity', argues Beatrice Medicine.<sup>39</sup> The Lakota deployed a range of strategies to cope with colonization, yet interaction between them and United States, from the very beginning of contact with the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804 sent out under the aegis of President Thomas Jefferson, would be coercively brokered through a very particular Jeffersonian compact.<sup>40</sup>

Lastly, I look at the Lakota 'Future Generations Ride' – formerly 'Big Foot's Ride' – as a response to the unfulfilled promises of state-based reconciliation efforts and the failed promise of friendship, and an enactment of Native cultural reclamation, sovereignty and empowerment. The event marks Chief Spotted Elk's attempted escape to the Pine Ridge reservation and the subsequent massacre of Native peoples at Wounded Knee. The Future Generations Ride presents an alternative politics that privileges Lakota history and asserts Lakota survival: the commemoration of suffering demands a different kind of reconciliatory dialogue with the state. This is not a performance that seeks to enliven a former or dishonoured treaty, as we saw in Chapter 1, with the Two Row wampum protocol between Haudenosaunee and others. Rather, in drawing on the past to articulate pain, the Lakota re-enactment recrafts the historical event as a form of empowerment and renewal for future generations, and as a performance of mourning that commands the settler to step back and listen.

### **'To bribe them into peace': Jefferson's settler compact and coercive conciliation in the new settler republic**

After the Louisiana Purchase in April 1803, an act which transferred from France to the newly formed United States of America a vast swathe of lands stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to Rupert's Land in the



north, the establishment of a new American sovereignty over Native peoples was paramount. Jefferson authorized the Lewis and Clark expedition (1804–6), which crossed the Missouri River and ‘opened up’ the vast American West through to the Pacific coast for the new nation, a crucial part of Jefferson’s plans for a continental American empire. Lewis and Clark were formally authorized to extend American power up the Missouri and towards the mountains. As part of their mission, they distributed peace medals and flags to the Native American groups they encountered (Figure 15). The expedition was pivotal in ‘announcing American sovereignty to native people’ once the Louisiana Purchase had become a diplomatic reality, writes James P. Ronda.

Jefferson was well aware that the powerful Sioux nations east and west of the Missouri River occupied critical position as middlemen in the region’s trade, and were key to the eventual opening of the West.<sup>41</sup> In respect of the Sioux, Jefferson recognized that special care around diplomacy was required, as they were central to Missouri Valley trade and politics, and in this way, held the key to an American fur trade empire. As Ronda relates, Jefferson understood that the Sioux Nation exerted influence over the Missouri and could stand in the way of the United States’s fur trade based in prosperous St. Louis, which received furs via the Missouri River. ‘On that nation’, Jefferson instructed Lewis,



*Figure 15* Peace and friendship medal Thomas Jefferson, 1803, reverse side. Reg. No: NU 36525. Photograph courtesy of Museum Victoria (see also Figure 5)

‘we wish most particularly to make a favorable impression, because of their immense power.’<sup>42</sup>

After the 1803 Louisiana Purchase and the expansion of the West beyond the Mississippi, possession was far more tenuous and settlers were greatly outnumbered in vast Native American territories. Using time-honoured ‘peace medal’ techniques of diplomacy, the Lewis and Clark expedition to the West replicated diplomacy in the East. On 30 August 1804, Charles Meriwether Lewis, under the aegis of President Jefferson, presented the Yankton Sioux with peace medals, flags and army uniforms and gave a speech to them during the council at Camp Calumet Bluff. Lewis counselled Native peoples to look to their new ‘Father’, Thomas Jefferson, who offered them the hand of friendship, and advised them that their old friends the Spanish and French were now gone and that they must give up medals or flags of these other, now illegitimate sovereigns. Lewis, referring to Jefferson as ‘The Great Chief of the Seventeen Great Nations of America’, informed them:

Children ... the Great Chief of the Seventeen Great Nations of America has become your only father; he is the only friend to whome you can now look for Protection ... Children! Know that this great Chief as powerful as he is just ... has commanded us his war chiefs to undertake this long journey in order to Council with you, and his other red children on the troubled waters ... to clear the road ... and make it the road of peace between himself and his red children in this quarter ... Children! Your Great Father has sent you those things [medals and clothes] to be kept by you as a pledge of his sincerity with which *he now offers you the hand of friendship he has commanded us to tell you when you accept his flag and medals, that you receive these with his hand, which will never be withdrawn from yourselves and the Soues nation [sic]* so long as you continue to follow the councils which he may command his Chiefs to give you.<sup>43</sup>

The tribes should cease warring with other tribes, Lewis continued, ‘live in peace with all white men’, and permit traders to enter their country. But, came the warning, if ‘lest by one false step’ they would bring upon themselves the displeasure of the Great Father, he could ‘destroy you and your nation as the fire destroys and consumes the grass of the plains’.<sup>44</sup>

The medals bestowed under Jefferson’s presidential aegis were inscribed with the bold and aspirational message ‘peace and friendship’ with the prominent handshake or clasped-hands motif. One hand

displayed a military cuff on its wrist, with three braided chevrons, symbolizing the American government. The other wrist wears a silver band with a beaded border and an engraved American eagle, symbolizing the 'peaceful Indian who had pledged allegiance and friendship to the United States'.<sup>45</sup> The crossed peace pipe and hatchet are displayed. On the reverse is the bust of President Jefferson, surrounded with the inscription TH. JEFFERSON PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. AD. 1801.

The compelling and emotive clasped-hands symbolism of peace and friendship was built into performances of the settler-Indigenous compact, repeated and rehearsed in bodily acts of exchange, and in speeches across the American frontier, Jefferson's new 'empire of liberty', as he termed it. The handshake may also be envisaged as a sovereignty exchange, not only between France and America, but also between Native groups and the emergent state, as vast tracts of Native American lands were now transferred to the new republic. French sovereignty claims over these Native lands and peoples were effectively replaced by those of the new American Republic as part of its agrarian and expansionist design. The 'peace medals' and flags bestowed to Native American groups by Lewis and Clark were manufactured for this purpose under the auspices of the War Department.<sup>46</sup> Indian agents, as well as Lewis and Clark, distributed the medals to Native peoples on the frontier. Distinctive for their design and large size, the medals were replicated many times over for various US presidents thereafter.<sup>47</sup>

In 1793 Thomas Jefferson, principal author of the Declaration of Independence, and the man who would become the third president of the United States (1801-9), spoke of the distribution of medals to Native American peoples as part of 'an ancient custom from time immemorial, with its origins in European practice'. The medals, he wrote,

are considered as complimentary things, as marks of friendship to those who come to see us, or who do us good offices, *conciliatory of their good will towards us and not designed to produce a contrary disposition towards others. They confer no power, and seem to have taken their origin in the European practice of giving medals or other marks of friendship to the negotiators of treaties and other diplomatic characters or visitors of distinction.*<sup>48</sup>

Later, on 25 September 1804, Lewis and Clark met with the Teton Sioux at the mouth of the Bad River, near present-day Fort Pierre. At this meeting, Lewis's men 'marched in military uniform behind their flag' and he distributed gifts to the Sioux leaders.<sup>49</sup> When the Sioux complained

that they hadn't received enough goods, Lewis sought to intimidate them by firing an airgun 'several times'.<sup>50</sup> Later, when the Sioux tried to stop one of the expedition boats, or pirogues, from leaving the shore, Lewis instructed his men to take up arms. Clark threatened the Sioux, warning that 'he had more medicine aboard his boat than would kill twenty such nations in one day'. In a different account, notes Ostler, he vowed to write to the 'great father the president of the US [and] ... have them all destroyed [*sic*] as it were in a moment'.<sup>51</sup> The dispute, which almost resulted in outright conflict, occurred over tobacco: the Sioux wanted more and Lewis and Clark at first refused. But once they threw some tobacco, the Sioux released the bowline to let the boat go. As Ostler writes, 'Although Lewis and Clark had tried to intimidate the Sioux ... it was the Sioux who remained undaunted. Frustrated by the expedition's failure to establish dominion over the Teton Sioux, Lewis later pronounced them the "vilest miscreants of the savage race"'.<sup>52</sup>

As much as it was an emblem of goodwill, friendship, conciliation and paternal protection with the Great Chief of the Seventeen Great Nations, the handshake medal could be a violent calling card. On July 1806, during their return trip and accompanied by a small party, Lewis and Clark journeyed into the Marias River in north-central Montana. They surprised some young Piegan Indians who tried to steal their horses and guns; Lewis shot and killed one young man, while wounding others, as Ivy Schweitzer relates. They were by now very familiar with the 'power of symbols in Indian country', and Lewis 'stripped the sacred amulets from the Indians' shields, burned their weapons, and hung a peace medal around the neck of the corpse'. As Lewis remarked in his journal, this was done so that 'they might be informed who we were'. As Schweitzer notes, 'in this single gesture, Lewis identified the new United States not with the noble abstractions boldly engraved on the medals he was dispersing but with the violence of an imperial agenda'.<sup>53</sup>

Almost two decades after the Declaration of Independence (1776), the expansionist endeavours of the new American republic were well underway. By this time, Jefferson was at the lead of a populist movement that had swept to power by interpreting the American Revolution as heralding the undoubted right of settlers to acquire property, key to the foundation of individual independence.<sup>54</sup> In 1802 Jefferson met the Iroquois leader Handsome Lake. Americans were 'always ready to buy land', Jefferson informed the chief, but he insisted 'we will never ask but when you wish to sell'.<sup>55</sup> Jefferson sought to assure Handsome Lake and the Iroquois that Native peoples should not be concerned

about dishonest buyers because land transactions would be supervised by agents of the federal government to ensure 'that your consent is freely given' and 'a satisfactory price paid'.<sup>56</sup> Jefferson's eloquent assurances suggested a 'judicious and orderly process', when in fact the fast expansion of the new American republic made it 'almost impossible for Indians to act freely', writes Andrew Cayton.<sup>57</sup> This approach, a performance whereby Jefferson elicited the apparently free consent of Native Americans in the midst of a wider pattern of often harsh coercion was emblematic of the essential conceit threaded through Jefferson's policy towards Native Americans during his presidential term, and set the new settler nation's conditions for relations with them well beyond.

The handshake between Jefferson and Native peoples depicted on peace medals was very different to the Two Row wampum, which was based on Native protocols of diplomacy. By contrast, the Jefferson handshake was imaginatively performed and reperformed across the West in affective bodily exchanges that produced and instated relations of power that overtly established settler entitlement. The paternalistic and emotive settler-Indigenous compact was enacted through the authority of the 'Great Father' and required Native transformation and assimilation to European ways, the almost total relinquishing of lands and, if refused, astounding violence. Conciliation and violence, as Jefferson warned the Sioux through Lewis's speech at Camp Calumet, would be two sides of the same coin.

The term of Jefferson's presidency marked a crucial shift from new republic to American empire, and is of central interest in understanding the emergence of what would become a peculiarly Jeffersonian settler compact in North America. Under the terms of this 'alliance', vast Native territories could be obtained with the specious notion of Indigenous volition or consent, and this could be rationalized as a covenant – with the handshake as the organizing symbol of the contractual space – in accordance with ideas of honourable expansion. Ritual and rhetoric were essential to the Jeffersonian technique of coercive conciliation in the shift from new republic to the imperial expansion of a settler-agrarian empire.

The imperial and agrarian expansionist aims of the new republic have been well articulated by scholars. Above all, Jefferson's conception of the new American nation celebrated the idea of the virtuous yeoman farmer. In his inaugural address, Jefferson looked westward to the 'chosen country', and with these resilient patriot settlers in mind, prophesied the millennial abundance of a new settler nation where there was 'room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and

thousandth generation'.<sup>58</sup> Jefferson's political views on liberty and equality of rights were based on ideas of economic rights: that is, equality of access rather than inherited rights to land.<sup>59</sup> Born into the wealthy Virginian planter class, yet always siding with the hardy yeoman settler, Jefferson displayed, argues Cayton, 'a lifelong sympathy' for settlers on the frontier and, as president, was 'committed to obtaining Indian lands for them, at almost a cost short of unprovoked wars of conquest'.<sup>60</sup> His deeper political motivations for siding with the settler were based on ideas of creole patriotism (that is, first-born settler patriotism) and a homogeneous Anglo Saxonism. He also adhered to key principles of colonization indebted to the Lockean concept of moral improvement through the cultivation of the land. Indeed, crossing west over the Appalachians was seen by many settlers as an act of defiance against the British Crown's blanket claim of pre-emption established after the Seven Years War in 1763. As Jefferson did not wish to lose these settlers as constituents, he supported them, argues Cayton.<sup>61</sup>

Jefferson and his policymakers, however, did not disregard Native American peoples whose lands they coveted. Indeed, Jefferson acknowledged Native American sovereignty in delimited form. Such acknowledgement was not new. Questions of Indigenous land ownership and sovereignty with respect to the colonization of North America had been vigorously debated from the late sixteenth century onwards. By the nineteenth century Britain and the United States, writes Stuart Banner, were 'committed to a formal policy of recognising American Indians as the possessors of some form of property rights in their land. Both normally acquired Indian land in transactions structured as consensual treaties.'<sup>62</sup> In practice, however, encroachment of settlers onto Native American lands was widespread with many of the treaties brokered 'more by compulsion than by consent', writes Banner.<sup>63</sup> As Bragshaw observes, this was inconsistent with his political idealism, by which he claimed to support Indian sovereignty and the opportunity for citizenship. Bragaw suggests, however, that such views had to be pragmatically set aside for the sake of consolidating the union and maintaining the support of his political party.<sup>64</sup> This approach had lasting consequences. Even after Jefferson's retirement from office, 'those who directed the government's relations with the tribes acted under the aegis of Jefferson theory and policy', notes Sheehan. While Native removal policies were diverse in 'politics and ideology', with regard to the question of Native peoples' relationship to civilization, 'they were substantially Jeffersonian'.<sup>65</sup> Thus, Jefferson emerges as a key architect in the shift from new republic to empire, and the subsequent policies

of the United States towards Native peoples as brokered by various presidents remained positively Jeffersonian.

Legal scholar Robert J. Miller recounts that Jefferson was the first president to propose the idea of a formal Indian Removal plan. His first such act as president was to make a compact with the state of Georgia to extinguish Indian title within its boundaries, if it would release its legal claims to discovery in lands to the west, which led to the eventual removal of the Cherokee people from Georgia. At the time, the Cherokee had a treaty with the United States Government that guaranteed them the right to their lands, which was thus violated in Jefferson's deal. As Miller argues, Jefferson's first promotions of Indian Removal were between 1776 and 1779, when he recommended forcing the Cherokee and Shawnee tribes to be driven out of their ancestral homelands to lands west of the Mississippi River.<sup>66</sup> By the early 1800s as Euro-Americans rapidly pushed west across the Appalachians, they came to see Native Americans as obstacles to the 'fulfilment of the democratic promise of the American Revolution', writes Cayton. These supporters of Jefferson wanted governments to remove Native Americans by any method, 'including war', as well as to 'neutralize their British and Spanish allies'.<sup>67</sup>

When Lewis and Clark claimed sovereignty for the United States over Plains Sioux lands in 1804, President Jefferson envisioned yeoman farmers eventually extending liberty on to the 'open' spaces of the Great Plains'.<sup>68</sup> It was thought that through relocation, Indian tribes could be better managed and assisted in adjusting to the requirements of civilization.<sup>69</sup> In 1804 Jefferson gave the following instructions to Lewis and Clark: 'In all your intercourse with the natives, treat them in the most friendly and conciliatory manner which their own conduct will permit.'<sup>70</sup> The handshake of friendship and the golden chain, or covenant chain, were part of his conciliatory repertoire, following English tradition of entreaty (as we saw in Chapter 1). As Jefferson put it himself, nearly a decade earlier, the logic of expansion required complementary strategies: both disciplinary violence, or 'drubbing', and conciliation. To Charles Carroll Philadelphia, 15 April 1791, he wrote:

Our news from the westward is disagreeable. Constant murders committing by the Indians, and their combination threatens to be more and more extensive. I hope we shall *give them a thorough drubbing this summer, and then change our tomahawk into a golden chain of friendship.* The most economical as well as most humane conduct towards them is to *bribe them into peace, and to retain them in peace by eternal bribes.*<sup>71</sup>

In the passage above, it was a conciliation strategy – a bribe – that that could be enacted after punitive violence. Once a group was weakened by violence, they too often would be willing to conciliate on any terms. The tomahawk followed by the golden chain of friendship enabled pacification, and it was in this sense that Jefferson evoked the golden chain or covenant chain.

The Jeffersonian handshake of the state served to prepare the way for later colonial expansion into Sioux territories, beginning in earnest with settler encroachment into Black Hills land during the gold rush there, and coming to a head with the Black Hills War of 1876. The violent assertion of colonial force culminated in the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890. As Winona LaDuke argues, ‘in many ways Wounded Knee and the Black Hills, intertwined, remain central and symbolic of all that is wrong with an unreconciled past’.<sup>72</sup> Thus, when Native activist Carter Camp told the Lewis Clark re-enactors ‘You are re-enacting the coming of death to our people’, he signalled a 200-year history of struggle, marked by the largest massacres in United States history outside the Civil War.

### **The theft of the Black Hills and the massacre at Wounded Knee**

The story of the Sioux is one of repeated encroachment into their territories in the push in the West by settlers and gold seekers, the building of railways and by government and venture capital in the search for minerals. While trade in the 1820s and 1830s had not seriously threatened Plains Sioux, by the 1840s they began to experience the effects of agrarian expansion as a growing number of settlers moved into their territories. These ‘Jeffersonian trespassers’, writes Ostler, ‘would soon be joined by Mormons, following their own visions of Zion ... and then by people pursuing a novel dream that American’s founders had not foreseen: Californian gold’.<sup>73</sup>

In 1849 with the discovery of gold in California, overland travellers who were en route to gold fields began to cross through Lakota territory. The Sioux were severely weakened by incoming European diseases, including measles, smallpox and cholera.<sup>74</sup> Amidst this rush for gold, and increased settler and government pressure for lands, the Lakota sought to manage further encroachment onto their lands by signing the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851 and of 1868. At Fort Laramie in 1851, the federal government brought many of the Plains tribes together, including many Lakota and Dakota bands, seeking to establish



peace among the tribes so settlers could continue to travel safely across these territories. In addition, Native peoples were to be protected and tribes were assigned a defined territory where they were to remain.<sup>75</sup> The treaty was signed on 17 September between United States treaty commissioners and representatives of the Cheyenne, Sioux, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboine, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara nations.<sup>76</sup> Article 1 of the treaty stipulated that 'peaceful relations' should be established among tribes who were parties to this treaty.<sup>77</sup> Article 7 offered annuities for adhering to the treaty stipulation, for the 'maintenance and the improvement of their [Native] moral and social customs' and for any 'damages' occurring to tribal nations.<sup>78</sup>

Despite the treaty, travellers and railroad workers increasingly passed through these defined Native territories. The Lakota repeatedly objected to treaty violations and intrusions in their territory, and demanded government recognition of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. Of major significance is the Black Hills region, comprising a group of low pine-covered mountains sacred to the Lakota and known to them as the *He Sapa* or *Cante Ognaka*, or the Heart of Everything That Is.<sup>79</sup> Once gold was discovered in the Black Hills, settlers increasingly began to encroach onto these lands, while Native peoples were forced to remain on the Sioux reservation. Repeated violations led to the Black Hills War.

The Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851 and 1868 (also called the Sioux Treaty of 1868) had guaranteed Lakota ownership of the Black Hills. Yet the Black Hills War, and then ongoing disputes throughout 1876 and 1877, saw the Lakota and Northern Cheyenne in conflict with the United States. As LaDuke notes, in 1876 the federal government set up a commission headed by a federal treaty negotiator, who had just 'negotiated' the transfer of much of the copper and iron ore country of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, which belonged to the Ojibwe. There was division among the Lakota; some agreed to relinquish them, but largely because of the threat of starvation. Ration cuts were used to coerce the Sioux into negotiating; it was a 'starve or sell' strategy, writes LaDuke.<sup>80</sup> Some stood firm, but 'unimpressed by the display ... the government took the land anyway'. Despite this illusion of consent, the conceit of the treaty was made ultimately made clear in the United States's confiscation of the Black Hills in 1877.<sup>81</sup>

The 1877 loss of the Black Hills led directly to Wounded Knee, argues LaDuke. In the 13 years before the 1890 massacre, marking the period between theft of the Black Hills and the Wounded Knee massacre, more than one-third of the Lakota has 'perished from disease and starvation'.<sup>82</sup>

Chief Sitting Bull pointed out the hypocrisy of forcing assimilation, and that the Sioux should live like white men, but without adequate food and tools to make a living to survive. In 1883 he said to negotiators: 'The Great Father owes us money now for the land he has taken from us in the past. ... I see my people starving ... I want to tell you that our rations have been reduced to almost nothing, and that many of our people have starved to death.'<sup>83</sup>

A series of events led to the Wounded Knee massacre. Six weeks earlier, writes Ostler, the United States Government had decided to use 'massive military force to suppress the Ghost dance on Lakota reservations. The Ghost dance originated in the teaching of Paiute prophet Wovoka, living on the Walker river Indian Reservation in Nevada.'<sup>84</sup> In 1889 word had begun to spread of a messiah, Wovoka. The news was incendiary for the desperate survivors of settler invasion and war throughout the West. Wovoka, a Paiute man with strong spiritual powers, prophesied that ecstatic dancing and right behaviour would return their losses, bring back the dead and restore peace. His message promised peace and that the buffalo and other game would return. In his prophecy he foresaw that 'the dead are all alive again ... there will be no more sickness and everyone will be young again'.<sup>85</sup> There were also references to an apocalypse: 'when the earth shakes do not be afraid', 'do make any trouble with [the white] until you leave them'.<sup>86</sup> Ostler has discussed the various interpretations of Wovoka's words and surmises that he did prophesy an apocalyptic event where Europeans would be removed.<sup>87</sup>

Various attempts were made by the government to suppress this new and subversive performance, the Ghost Dance, which was deemed threatening to the government, potentially violent and anticolonial. A large-scale military operation was launched to intimidate the Lakota into halting the Ghost Dance. On 12 November 1890, the Indian agent stationed at Pine Ridge, Daniel F. Royer, sent a telegram to Acting Commissioner Robert V. Belt urgently requesting a meeting in Washington, as he feared a violent outbreak by the Ghost Dancers. 'The Police force are over-powered and disheartened. We have no protection and are at the mercy of these crazy dancers', he wrote.<sup>88</sup> Belt responded by recommending referral to the military. While they deliberated, Royer sent a further final appeal, frustrated at the official delay: 'Indians are dancing in the snow and are wild and crazy. ... We need protection and we need it now. ... Nothing short of one thousand soldiers will settle this dancing.'<sup>89</sup> Finally, President Benjamin Harrison authorized Major General Nelson Appleton Miles to intervene and ordered a dispatch of troops to Pine Ridge, Rosebud and the Cheyenne

River. From 19 November, nearly 3,000 cavalry and infantry occupied Sioux country, surrounding the Pine Ridge reservation and the Cheyenne River.<sup>90</sup>

On 15 December 1890, police moved in to seize Chief Sitting Bull at his cabin on the Grand River, after learning of his invitation to meet with Ghost Dancers at Pine Ridge. A key insurrectionist and presumed architect of the Ghost Dance movement, Chief Sitting Bull became a prime target for anxious police and military forces and was subsequently killed in a scuffle between his followers and police while being arrested.<sup>91</sup> Sitting Bull's surviving followers fled south to Chief Big Foot at Cheyenne River Indian reservation. On 23 December Chief Big Foot's band, seeking safety, shelter and supplies, set out for Pine Ridge to summon the help of another Lakota leader, Red Cloud. Chief Big Foot was also a respected negotiator, and it is suggested that he had been asked to go to Pine Ridge by those living there. Five days later, on 28 December, Big Foot's band was intercepted by the military and taken into a military encampment at Wounded Knee.<sup>92</sup> Chief Big Foot's band was aware of increasing military presence on their land and appraised the armed soldiers surrounding their camp. On the morning of the 29 December soldiers demanded they surrender their guns or forfeit their rations. As the cavalrymen searched and confiscated all weapons, leaving the gathered Lakota defenceless, a fight then broke out between a soldier and a Lakota who refused to surrender his rifle.<sup>93</sup> The scuffle escalated, and a shot was fired, which led to around 300 Lakota men, women and children (of a group of around 350) being killed by the 7th Cavalry Regiment under the command of Colonel James W. Forsyth.<sup>94</sup> There was little chance of escape for the Lakota, as they were surrounded and fired on with Hotchkiss machine guns. Some were killed in their tepees. Twenty-five cavalrymen were also killed, most likely by friendly fire. Afterwards, the troops stripped the dead Lakota of their valuables and packed the bodies into a mass grave.<sup>95</sup> This would be the last massacre of Native peoples in American history and mark the end of the so-called 'Indian Wars'.

### **Performing survival and reclamation: the Future Generations Ride**

In February 1990, a century after Wounded Knee, Sioux tribal leaders and Republican Governor of South Dakota George Mickelson sat in a circle in the State Capitol building, South Dakota, and smoked the peace pipe.<sup>96</sup> In collaboration with the leaders, Mickelson proclaimed a Year of

Reconciliation across the state to acknowledge Native Americans and to work towards cultural understanding, trust and respect between Native and non-Native people. With the heading 'Governor, Sioux leaders start year of reconciliation', the *Argus-Press* reported that Mickelson sought to recognize 'the hurt suffered by Indians' a century after the massacre: 'The governor and representatives of eight Sioux tribes drew deeply and passed the pipe ... as they sat in a circle around a buffalo skull and other items in the center of the State Capitol rotunda.' Afterwards they signed a proclamation 'designating 1990 as a time for healing wounds that have festered between Indians and non-Indians for a century', and 'members of the South Dakota Legislature and hundreds of other spectators applauded' at the close of the ceremony.<sup>97</sup>

But others queried the earnestness and meaning of the term reconciliation. As the *Chicago Tribune* reported in 1990, 'some South Dakotans have questioned how effective and sincere the effort would be, and whether it should extend beyond year's end. 'What means this word, "reconciliation"?' asked Sidney Keith, a Cheyenne River Sioux, in the *Lakota Times*.<sup>98</sup> Revealing the multiple perspectives on the fraught question of reconciliation amongst members of tribes as well as non-Native peoples, Belva Hollow Horn, archivist at Oglala College on the Pine Ridge reservation, stated: 'Without [addressing] the real issues, the Year of Reconciliation is just a lot of hot air.'<sup>99</sup>

Later that year, in December, an entirely different kind of centenary commemoration mourning the events at Wounded Knee was held. The spiritual ceremony, conducted in Lakota, was attended by 100 horseback riders and another 100 people, to set the souls of the dead free in sub-freezing temperatures at the gravesite of Native peoples killed by US military. 'The ceremony ... brought tears and sobs to the mostly Indian crowd, who braved temperatures of 25 below and a wind chill of 60 to 70 below', reported the *Philadelphia Enquirer*. 'We are here to wipe away the tears, to mourn the dead ... something that should have been done 100 years ago', said Native leader Birgil Kills Straight. 'We want Wounded Knee to be remembered', added Mario Gonzalez, attorney for the Wounded Knee Survivors Association, 'so it will never happen again'.<sup>100</sup>

Originally called the Sitanka Wokiksuye (Big Foot Memorial Ride), the first of these powerful commemorative horse rides through the snow took place in 1986. The 1990 ride was also referred to as 'the Mending of the Sacred Hoop Ride' (Figure 16). The rides that have occurred since then are now referred to as the Future Generations Ride/Oomaka Tokatakiya Ride, or the 'annual peace and unity rides'.<sup>101</sup> Each ride



*Figure 16* The ride to Wounded Knee, 29 December 1990. Photograph by James Cook

follows the same route taken by Chief Big Foot and his band, and marks the exact dates in December. This collective ride, with participants traversing 300 miles on horseback, is part commemoration, part trial and part pilgrimage. It begins at Standing Rock, where Chief Sitting Bull had been killed on 15 December 1890, and ends at Wounded Knee on 29 December, at the site of the massacre. It passes over prairie and rocky terrain, roads and private property.

In 1985, Alex White Plume and Birgil Kills Straight thought it would be fitting to recreate the journey undertaken by Big Foot and the Lakota, to try to 'help families work through the grief and trauma passed through the generations like an unwelcome gene'.<sup>102</sup> The original idea to start the ride initially came to Lakota medicine man Curtis Kills Ree in a dream or vision that, it is claimed, soon spread to other Lakota members.<sup>103</sup> According to James Kleinart, 'Curtis Kills Ree foresaw many Lakota people riding together to release their grief at long last. And in the winter of 1990 the people came together and the journey began. The journey would be called "the Mending of the Sacred Hoop ride"'.<sup>104</sup> In 1986, nineteen riders took part. Currently, around 250 people participate each year.<sup>105</sup>

Alex White Plume, speaking on September 1990, before the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs states why the ride was initiated:

Sitanka Wokiksuye was established in 1986 for two purposes: 1) to build character in our membership by *making them aware of the hardships our people had to endure* in the 1800s and 2) to *bring the descendants of the 1890 Massacre victims out of 100 years of mourning*. For the past four years, members of Sitanka Wokiksuye have been retracing Chief Big Foot's flight from Cherry Creek to Wounded Knee. They arrive at Wounded Knee on December 28th of each year for special prayers. This enables them to experience the hardships our people had to endure a century ago and makes them better appreciate the meaning of life as an Indian person. 1990 will mark the fifth year we have retraced Big Foot's trail.

On December 29, 1990, the riders will honor the descendants of the 1890 Massacre victims. This will mark the end of 100 years of mourning. The spirits of Chief Big Foot and the men, women and children killed by the Seventh Cavalry will be released, in accordance with sacred Lakota ceremonies. The 'Wiping of the Tears' will take place when the spirits are released.

Black Elk said that the sacred hoop of the Lakota people was broken by the 1890 Massacre. He prophesied that the Seventh Generation of Lakota would mend the hoop and rebuild the Nation. We are the Seventh Generation and we are making his prophesies come true.<sup>106</sup>

The ride is open to all, irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity. Elders hoped that similar journeys would be undertaken in other nations, in an expansive and unifying global vision of peace for 'all the peoples of the world'.<sup>107</sup> This inclusivity is significant in that it creates an emotional connection that is not restricted to the Lakota community, but embraces and promotes peace worldwide, with the aim that by remembering Wounded Knee, no country would ever let such an event happen again.

The key element in this embodied performance is the movement itself, the means of movement (via the horse) across a sacred space, and the timing of the movement, which seeks to replicate the 1890 journey as closely as possible. The journey takes place between two important sites (Standing Rock and Wounded Knee), and the track between these two sites used in 1890 also becomes through the ride a sacred space, an historically significant emotional landscape through which these riders can reconnect with the past. The ride occurs on traditional Native land,

'even though interstate highways, public and private lands now overlay its sacred circuits, spanning steams, prairies and hillsides'.<sup>108</sup>

George Greenia uses the term 'solemn re-enactments' or 'ritual historicising'<sup>109</sup> to refer to the ways in which some cultures use 'remembered pilgrimages as part of their legitimate attempts to sustain traditions in a new and perhaps unwelcoming environment'. He takes the Future Generations Ride as one example of 'important and very deliberate manifestations of collective will to make travel reverent, restorative and even sacred'.<sup>110</sup> The performance of replicating a specific journey of the past offers possibilities for reflection and contemplation, where participants can imagine the journey and suffering of the people who performed the journey before. 'It allows me to feel what my ancestors felt a hundred years ago. To feel the wind in your hair as you rider across the Prairie. To feel connected to the earth', explains Ron His Horse is Thunder (Great-Grandson of Sitting Bull).<sup>111</sup> The mix of emotion and embodied experiences and particularly suffering is a critical element of the journey in the process of gaining knowledge of what the Lakota ancestors endured. The bodily suffering of the riders on this journey, especially the extreme cold and biting wind, becomes a means of reconnecting with the past. These are not eudaimonic emotions of simple good feeling, but binding feelings of unity engendered through individual and collective pain. As Seventh Generation rider and actor Tokala Clifford observed:

When I went on that ride ... it was exactly a hundred years from when the massacre at Wounded Knee happened, and it happened to be that ... it was about the same temperature. And I almost froze to death. It was an experience that made me understand how strong those people had to be; how my ancestors had to be. I felt *like I had, for an instance, reached through all the barriers of time that separate my life from my ancestors' life, and I was there with them. I felt the freezing cold, and I could almost feel the sheer desperation they must have felt, trying to just run away and survive. To be able to let their children live another day.*<sup>112</sup>

Pain in this pilgrimage is realized in and through the interaction of landscape, weather, wind, horses and human bodies. The horses are envisaged by the Lakota as carrying the spirit of the message of peace. Seventh Generation rider Annette Lee explains that 'the horse is like a bridge between the spirit world and our material world. And when we sit on the horse in the ceremony, the horse carried our bodies, but they also carry our prayers and our spirits'.<sup>113</sup> Each ride ends at the massacre memorial with a 'Wiping of the Tears ceremony', a ritual of mourning traditionally

held one year after the loss of loved ones and to usher mourners back into society and out of the mourning period. This ceremony was particularly important in 1990, where 'riders joined other Lakotas at the mass grave site and performed a ceremony in which they released the spirits of those who had died at Wounded Knee and wiped away their own tears'.<sup>114</sup> At the conclusion of the ride in 1990 'many ... rode in silence and fasted without food or water for four days'.<sup>115</sup> The riders would also have suffered severe discomfort after 300 miles of riding bareback or with only saddlecloths. The ride is not merely a staged, representational event made safe to create distance from the object of pain; it is a 'truth event' that recalls trauma through embodied experience.

The Wounded Knee massacre, argues Pesantubbee, has become 'a powerful symbol for the cultural rebirth of the Lakota. The Lakota, in particular, invoke memories of Spotted Elk and his band to inspire Native people to continue to struggle against cultural loss'.<sup>116</sup> 'The healing must pass on to the next generation', expresses Percy White Plume.<sup>117</sup> Wounded Knee is also a site of ongoing historical contestations, as the Lakota remembrance of the dead refutes official state narratives of American history. For Pesantubbee, 'this change in the meaning of Wounded Knee has been an important part of Lakota efforts to resist colonization and to facilitate continuity of culture'.<sup>118</sup> Such reinvented rituals allowed the Lakota to reinterpret the Wounded Knee tragedy within their own ethical frameworks, providing a sense of autonomy over the incorporation of the event into contemporary Indigenous cultural practice and identity.

The Future Generations Ride therefore stands as an enactment of Native empowerment. Rather than representing reconciliation with the settler state, it is a way for contemporary Lakota to reconcile with their own history, with the Wiping of the Tears ceremony a powerful assertion of survival. Although the ride draws on a past event – Big Foot and his band's attempted escape to the Pine Ridge reservation – this is not a performance that seeks to enliven a former or dishonoured treaty. It is instead a ritual of mourning, survival, and letting-go that is recrafted as a form of empowerment and renewal for future generations.

## **Conclusion**

The unfinished business of formal state reconciliation with the settler state remains. While the Lakota have begun the process of reconciling with their own history to transform it, still, relations between Lakota and the government are unresolved. Amidst scrub and gravel at Fort Pierre stands the half-built Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place, a place that



represents the hopes of many (Figure 17). Wakpa Sica is the Lakota name for 'Bad River', and refers to the junction of the river where Sioux leaders met members of the Lewis and Clark party. Designed in the shape of a giant eagle, the Wakpa Sica building was to be the powerful symbol for a Lakota cultural and judicial centre. But still, the eagle has only one wing. In the 1990s federal funds were earmarked for the development of Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place at Fort Pierre, estimated at the time to cost US\$18 million. The centre was championed by Tom Daschle, the then South Dakota senator and Senate Democratic leader. Daschle recalled feeling 'a rush of momentum and hopefulness' at the 2002 'blessing ceremony' for Wakpa Sica. There were high hopes for the centre, which was envisioned to fulfil a number of goals: 'to tell the history of American Indians and this country in South Dakota; to further reconciliation with the state's nine tribes; and, perhaps most uniquely, to create a legal model, a court system and a high court that would make non-Indian businesses more comfortable in Indian Country.'<sup>119</sup> However, as LaDuke notes, the handshake only extended so far: in the meantime, Daschle was allowing access to, and selling, Lakota-owned lands.

The project was initially promised US\$1.3 million per year, but when Daschle lost his seat in the Senate in 2004, the earmarked annual funds



*Figure 17* An incomplete Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place. Richard Rangel, the construction manager at the Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place, says he is looking for ways to stretch money. © Keith Bedford / The New York Times / Headpress

for the half-finished project ran out and the centre faltered. By 2007 the budget for the centre had blown out to an estimated US\$25 million, and federal funds had run out.<sup>120</sup> The venture had 'eroded', said Daschle in 2007. 'The half-eagle is a perfect metaphor for the half-commitment we're now getting from government.'<sup>121</sup>

Abandoned, the centre is still incomplete, largely a shell, with ceilings and fittings unfinished. Surrounded by weeds growing around it, Wakpa Sica is emblematic of the unfinished business of reconciliation. While state-sponsored attempts at reconciliation are filled with empty promise, the Lakota labour, nonetheless, towards self-healing and self-determination in the 'Future Generations Ride'. Where state-sponsored reconciliation activities have failed, Indigenous performance reclaims and shapes anew the political space of failure.

Rather than enacting a politics of 'mutual recognition' which can serve to reduplicate and affirm the settler project, the Lakota create what Coulthard and Simpson and others have called a 'reinvigorated indigenous politics that recognises indigenous sovereignties ... [and] seeks to revalue, reconstruct, and redeploy Indigenous cultural practices'.<sup>122</sup> Reconciliation is not a 'clean slate' where the past can be wiped away. It is not a linear process of truth telling, forgiveness and resolution in the Abrahamic tradition. Instead, the path to reconciliation is contingent, and efforts to arrive at friendship are proximate at best, spiralling through competing or complementary narratives of identity and history. It was important for the Lakota to repudiate the false hand of friendship through performances enacted on their own terms, and through their own cultural traditions and values, weaving past and present together. In the Future Generations Ride, Native peoples honour, mourn and reconcile their own history in order to be empowered for the future. Friendship or reconciliation is never really arrived-at, but is an imaginary process of negotiation that moves between repudiation and celebration in the social and emotional theatre of historical remembrance. What binds these seemingly disparate performances is the relational terrain of affect. Like the paddlers in the canoes re-enacting the Two Row Wampum Treaty, the Future Generations riders are engaged in an embodied performance that calls the state to account. While the river of life and the wampum belt stand in as material witnesses to the mythic Two Row Treaty, the horse ride recalls Native experience of the broken promise. Through embodying the memory of pain, the Lakota riders are able to recuperate Native identity and sovereignty, and remind the settler state that there is no going forward without looking back.

# 3

## ‘Walking Together’ for Reconciliation: From the Sydney Harbour Bridge Walk to the Myall Creek Massacre Commemorations

At the Australian ‘People’s Walk for Reconciliation’ on 28 May 2000 (Figure 18), more than 300,000 non-Indigenous and Indigenous people crossed the Sydney Harbour Bridge together in support of Indigenous Australians and reconciliation.<sup>1</sup> For over six hours the tide of walkers, forming a ‘human sea of goodwill’, made their way across Sydney’s most iconic bridge in what became known as the great ‘Bridge Walk’.<sup>2</sup> After almost a decade of a formal federal government reconciliation programme, beginning in 1991, the Bridge Walk was promoted by its organizers, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR), as a new beginning and a turning-point for the nation. The Council issued a general invitation through the media and in printed pamphlets, which read: ‘On Sunday May 28 [2000] you are invited to join thousands of Australians on an Historic People’s Walk for Reconciliation across the Sydney Harbour Bridge.’<sup>3</sup> The Council asked that people bring ‘bells, whistles, drums and colourful dress or other props to add to the fun’ and ‘a gold coin donation to Reconciliation Australia’.<sup>4</sup> In this choreographed national mass walk the new body, ‘Reconciliation Australia’, would henceforth carry forward the work of reconciliation for the nation as a ‘people’s movement’.<sup>5</sup> The historicity of the occasion was also made clear to the walkers in the promotional material: the mass Bridge Walk would be a new start. It would inaugurate an affective and powerful national refounding, and participants were to be part of this crucial moment in the life of the nation.

There were people in wheelchairs, and children in prams; there were countless Aboriginal flags and banners. The vast number of people and the physical act of walking together provoked charged emotional responses. Evelyn Scott, chairwoman of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, described the day as ‘awesome’ and ‘emotional’.<sup>6</sup> On



*Figure 18* 'Unity ... a boy and his mother carry the Aboriginal flag as they cross the Sydney Harbour Bridge'. Photograph by Rick Stevens. © Reuters / Picture Media

the day, Aboriginal chairwoman of the NSW State Reconciliation Committee, Linda Burney, said: 'A week ago, I was despairing about living in this country. Today, I feel great!'<sup>7</sup> Suzanne McCourt, a non-Aboriginal participant on the Bridge Walk wrote afterwards:

Was it worth it, people have asked me? Unequivocally yes! ... long before I sighted the bridge, I was overwhelmed by the huge numbers participating ... the air of goodwill and camaraderie was palpable. ... when I saw the river of people pouring onto the bridge, the helicopters, media crews, banners and balloons, I knew I was part of an historic occasion. ... We walked in an icy breeze, Australians of every descent ... I felt, for the first time, the full breadth of our multi-cultural heritage. And I felt such pride that tears came to my eyes.<sup>8</sup>

The symbolism of walking together over the monumental Sydney Harbour Bridge was striking. The bridge has powerful national associations; it is often used as a symbol of 'Australia'. Bridges joining two pieces of land offer an easy metaphor for the joining of two cultures, suggesting a bridging between cultures, 'bridging the gap', bridging

over difficulties to unite two areas, between peoples and nations. Water, too, is mythically equated with emotion, so crossing the harbour's enormous body of water only added to the dramatic, highly symbolic, affective and experiential qualities of the Bridge Walk against a blue Sydney sky. In this way, the walk across the bridge was envisioned by CAR as a shift or transformation from one way of being to another way of being, and the bridge was imagined as a transitional, explorative space of ritual, a crossing point, in this choreographed and celebratory national refounding (Figure 19).

The Bridge Walk followed Corroboree 2000, a large gathering at the Sydney Opera House the previous day. This event was described as 'a ceremonial gathering of Australians *to exchange commitments* in the lead up to the centenary of Federation in 2001'.<sup>9</sup> Here, the state offered the possibility of swapping commitments; it was planned to be an emotional mythic exchange in a space designated as a 'Corroboree', which borrowed from the Aboriginal ritual and dance often involving an exchange or meeting of tribes. At Corroboree 2000, a formal 'Declaration for Reconciliation' document was supposed to be delivered by the CAR, but the language of the final document was watered down to a 'Declaration Towards Reconciliation'.<sup>10</sup> The year 2000 marked the



Figure 19 'Walking Together'. Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. c.2000. Photograph by Paul de Leur

moment when the CAR handed over its formal direction to a new body – ‘Reconciliation Australia’ – as a ‘people’s movement’. But like the formal decade of reconciliation, which had just occurred, it would be a movement without a truth commission or substantive legal or reparative measures, and without a formal treaty process. Indeed, as some commentators have argued, the Vision Statement of the CAR had ignored key issues such as Aboriginal sovereignty, land rights, self-determination and a treaty, matters which could not be fitted into a settler nationalist framework of reconciliation.<sup>11</sup> Crucially, the mass Bridge Walk as choreographed did not countenance the past or permit any form of coming to terms with trauma around the violent means of Australia’s colonization. In upholding a nationalist framework of reconciliation, the great Bridge Walk as mythic, embodied re-founding elided the past and failed to address, in any coherent fashion, ongoing structures of violence.

This chapter considers two very different affective performances of ‘walking together’ that emerged from Australia’s decade of reconciliation: the Sydney Harbour Bridge Walk for Reconciliation and the community-based Myall Creek massacre commemoration service and walk, which takes place near the small town of Bingara, New South Wales. The Myall Creek commemoration was also initiated in the year 2000, two weeks after the Bridge Walk, and has continued annually for 15 years. Through ideas of a cross-cultural journey, of ‘walking together’, each came to represent an affective, embodied but nonetheless very different order of political ‘re-founding’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within the national polity. Each has possessed different and complex orders of affect, and has received very different commentary. First, I examine the background to the Bridge Walk as a ‘top-down’ settler state-sponsored performance, with its logo ‘walking together’, suggestive of a unifying, cross-cultural journey or pilgrimage towards mutual understanding, renewal and an hopeful national re-founding, in which many took a genuine and enthusiastic part. Attending to the ‘affective economies’ and the ‘cultural politics of emotion’, as Sara Ahmed has termed them,<sup>12</sup> I examine the collective and national eudaimonic work of good feeling that the Bridge Walk was called upon to perform in Australia as a non-treaty culture. I argue that not only did it fill a yearning for exchange and virtuous covenant under the sign of nation, in an unstable climate of widespread reticence in coming to terms with ‘bad feeling’ or shame. The Bridge Walk also sought to build and publicly exhibit mass consensus, through the politics of mutual recognition, in a country with a long

history of racial inequality and denial of such inequity. To some degree it was also a response to the emerging 'history wars', a series of intense public debates over the extent and severity of white colonial violence against Indigenous people and assimilatory practices of the state.<sup>13</sup> But although it took place in this decade of reconciliation, which required confronting the nation's past wrongs and, indeed, its shame, the Bridge Walk was a performance that did little to acknowledge the violent legacies of the past. As an imagined exchange, the Bridge Walk was part of the state's political work of building consensus, but it was cross-cut with reactions of deep ambivalence, dismay and, in some instances, outright rejection and anger by Aboriginal groups and others, who saw it as an inadequate substitute for a real covenant or treaty that would offer demonstrable and concrete reparations. Its nationalist aspirations also meant that the cultural difference it sought to address would be subsumed under the banner of the nation, which was already defined as such through settler belonging.

By contrast, the Myall Creek massacre commemoration ceremonies, which also emerged from this same public reconciliatory paradigm, do much more to break open the silencing of history that the 'history wars' represent. Commemorating one of the most significant acts of violence against Aboriginal people in Australian history, these ceremonies too are a form of imagined exchange, although they constitute a very different kind of postcolonial relationality to the problematic desire for national unity embedded in the Bridge Walk. In this chapter, I consider how the Myall Creek ceremonies speak directly to the entwined nature of violence and conciliation in the frontier wars of colonial New South Wales, and the work they do in creating new moral accords and new Australian postcolonial socialities. Through truth telling and ritual, descendants of victims and perpetrators mourn, acknowledge and share the past, and make new stories for themselves. Where the grand national re-founding of the Bridge Walks have faltered, at Myall Creek, shared, local, traumatic histories and personal relationships continue to be reworked and reimagined, though not without risk and challenge, and can offer new ways of being together in the name of reconciliation.

### **Contrapuntal interruptions: 'Sorry and Treaty' at the Bridge Walk**

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation had worked hard to build enthusiasm towards demonstration of consensus through mass public

reconciliation walking rituals taking place across the country, and the genuine participation of so many people (including myself) must be recognized. The suggestions to walkers issued by the council reflected a desire for the public walk to be a positive, even carnivalesque, celebration and a multi-sensory performance that incorporated many levels of experience – sight, sound and vision – through the encouragement for participants to make music and wear bright clothing. Participants in the Bridge Walk spoke about their emotions to describe their experience, recalling the eudaimonic feelings of hope, enthusiasm, goodwill, awe, pride and joy.

There were other walks across the nation, with estimates that around half a million Australians marched in total. In Melbourne, 350,000 people marched from Flinders Street Station to the Shrine of Remembrance, in Brisbane, 70,000 people walked across the William Jolly Bridge, in Adelaide, 55,000 people crossed the King William Street Bridge, in Perth, 40,000 people marched over the Causeway, and in Hobart, 25,000 people walked over the Tasman Bridge.<sup>14</sup> Reconciliation Australia has since described the Bridge Walk in Sydney as a great success, noting ‘it has left a wonderful legacy. The Bridge Walk is more than just a political statement – it is a physical embodiment of people’s commitment to justice and healing.’<sup>15</sup> Kim Bullimore, an activist with the Indigenous Student Network, spoke to the *Green Left Weekly* and said she was ‘heartened by the huge size of the march and the strong sentiment in favour of justice for Aborigines, even if reconciliation still meant many different things to many different people’. Bullimore registered the power of feeling to move people to change through acknowledgement of the past: ‘I think there is a sentiment we can build on. ... The reconciliation process has brought a recognition to many people that there have been these past wrongs which have to be dealt with.’<sup>16</sup>

For some, the Bridge Walk was more protest than celebration. Many people walked in silent reflection. Amidst the sea of good feeling and consensus, one significant word stood out as a reminder of a deep and uncomfortable division underpinning the event. Floating across the blue winter Sydney sky and over the 300,000 people at the Bridge Walk was the colossal word ‘Sorry’ (Figure 20). This call for apology referred directly to the major protest around the then Australian Prime Minister John Howard’s refusal to apologize to Aboriginal people for the ‘Stolen Generations’. A plane was hired by a group of citizens, writing large the word that that the Prime Minister refused to utter.<sup>17</sup> Bridge Walk participants also paraded placards and banners bearing the word ‘sorry’ and some in the crowd sang the ‘Treaty’ song by Aboriginal rock band





*Figure 20* ‘Sorry’ appears in the sky as truth event at the Corroboree 2000 reconciliation march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, 28 May 2000. Photograph by Mike Bowers, *Sydney Morning Herald*

Yothu Yindi, demanding ‘Treaty now!’ The number-one hit song, which gained huge public exposure, was the ‘first ever to be sung in a Yolngu language’, explained the well-known band member Mr. Yunapingu, at the time.<sup>18</sup> These actions were mounted in opposition to conservative Prime Minister Howard’s dogged refusal to deliver a ‘national apology or consider a “divisive” treaty, instead favouring what he termed “practical reconciliation”’.<sup>19</sup>

The sorrow captured in these various expressions of the word ‘sorry’ to some degree broke the mass good feeling and ruptured the emotions of elation, pride and release in subversive ways. I argue these were ‘truth events’, which insisted upon another order of politics and truth telling. The ‘truth event’, as Ian Baucom theorizes, ‘demonstrates the repressed or previously unrecognizable truth of a historical situation’.<sup>20</sup> The inscription of ‘Sorry’ in the sky can be read as a ‘truth event’, a reminder of historical and ongoing suffering that stood in counterpoint to the celebration of national unity. This performative signal to attend to the wrongs of the past (apology, treaty), and to account for ongoing violent policies of the state, despite its brief moment in the sky, served to suture the good feeling of hope and togetherness to the bad feeling of shame and frustration of unfinished business and the anger

and indignation towards the Prime Minister. This was a form of urgent protest that demanded reconciliation on terms other than those set by the state in its demand that the nation reflect on and take account of its historical legacy.

The Bridge Walk thus became a dense site of performative and emotional contestation concerning Australia's history, and given its ambitious scale, it was expected to do enormous symbolic, affective and political work. The collective and emotional cross-currents of pride, honour and shame, frustration, anger and shame's release, that attend the question of the colonization of Australia as invasion or settlement sat at the very heart of the 'decade of reconciliation' in which the Bridge Walk took place, and were fought out in the 'history wars' debates. The Bridge Walk thus carried these many diverse and ambivalent emotions, and in the eyes of the national and international media, it also offered a forum for claim-making and a space for counter-political narratives in the demands for apology and treaty.

### **Emotional triumphs and unfinished business in the decade of reconciliation**

In 1991 the Hawke Labor government, instead of land rights and a treaty, proposed a state-sponsored and popular movement for Reconciliation, which aimed to reconcile Indigenous and non-Indigenous people by implementing a ten-year reconciliation process, and was intended to conclude at the centenary of Federation in 2001.<sup>21</sup> The federal Reconciliation programme had three broad goals: 'education of the wider community', tackling 'Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage', and to produce 'a document of reconciliation.'<sup>22</sup> To be sure, the following decade of reconciliation saw some significant achievements. The Australian community developed a much greater awareness of Indigenous issues, and 'hundreds of community reconciliation groups were established. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in the Reconciliation Walks in 2000.' Business, government departments and community organisations took on 'RAPs' (Reconciliation Action Plans).<sup>23</sup> But the promise of reconciliation at a political and legal level unravelled after the conservative Howard government came to power in 1996.<sup>24</sup> As Peter Read has observed, this was a state-based 'Reconciliation-without-a-history' in the Howard years. Despite the 'Reconciliation Council' having some 30 members, half of them Indigenous and with an Indigenous chair, and 'while theoretically independent', its meetings were 'monitored by government observer and its funding remained in

government hands'. The Reconciliation Council was 'short on history', and the Final Reconciliation Report was 'not enjoined specifically to investigate the past'.<sup>25</sup> By 2000 the Bridge Walk was choreographed and highly symbolic, yet the result of a process that was empty of history and meaningful legal pathways for political change and redress.

There is little doubt, looking back, that the structural and legal gains of the reconciliation process were deficient, if not mostly absent. But we must investigate also the 'cultural politics of emotion',<sup>26</sup> as Ahmed puts it, around these public performances and ask, What work did these emotions do for the state and the national polity in providing an embodied, mythic exchange and national refounding through instigating a set of new 'good' cross-cultural feelings? Taking Ahmed's lead, we might ask, What work did these emotions of goodwill and especially these eudaimonic reconciliatory performances do? On one level they had the potential to build trust, and to lead to emancipatory futures. When Bullimore expressed that 'I think there is a sentiment we can build on', she was referring to the power of emotion in moving people to change. How could the nation countenance and come to terms with its foundational history of violence and its shame? Reconciliation could offer pride and hope to people, many of whom genuinely wanted a new moral covenant. Yet such good feelings, which engendered relief, hope and pride, were also heavily entwined with the politics of shame and shame's release: that is, the desire for a new covenant for the purpose of overcoming settler shame.

As Ahmed explains with reference to the 'Sorry' books of the 1990s and 2000s, where thousands of Australians signed their names and apologized for past wrongs, we must ask ourselves to what cathartic end these performances were directed. She argues for attention to these 'affective economies' of emotion, where settlers work through their shame in order to become reconciled with themselves and the aspired (settler) nation, thus reinscribing its hegemonies.<sup>27</sup> Ahmed posits 'shame' as comprising very much a colonizer presence-to-self dynamic, where colonizers work through their shame in order to become reconciled with themselves and the aspired (settler) nation.<sup>28</sup> 'The recognition of shame – or shame as a form of recognition', she writes, 'comes with conditions and limits.' For those who feel shame (the colonizers), 'shame becomes not only a mode of recognition of injustices committed against others, it is also a form of nation building'.<sup>29</sup> Ahmed argues that those 'who witness the past injustice through feeling "national shame" are aligned with each other as "well-meaning individuals"; if you feel shame, then you mean well'. And, since we 'mean well' we can 'work

to reproduce the nation as an ideal'.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the feeling of shame may serve to reconcile the colonizer with their preferred idea of themselves. Shame can thus be recuperative of the offender, not of those offended. Ahmed thus articulates the ways that shame can ultimately be transformed into a form of pride, entailing a reduplication of repressive national norms. Taking her reading of the Australia context, she notes that 'non-Indigenous Australians express sorrow, sympathy and shame in order that they can "return" to their pride in the nation'.<sup>31</sup> Formal reconciliation in Australia and its performances, such as the walks for reconciliation, served to release the shame which had accrued through the decade of reconciliation and the 'history wars'. Indeed, we might call this formal decade of reconciliation a decade of shame, or rather, of the emergence of shame and 'bad feeling',<sup>32</sup> as settler Australia was forced collectively to come face-to-face with its racism and violent treatment of Aboriginal peoples, and their stark legacies in the present.

These were decades of both of shame and reconciliation. In 1992, only a year after Reconciliation's commencement, the judges in the *Mabo* High Court of Australia ruling had determined that Australia was not *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one) but inhabited and owned by Aboriginal peoples. In the words of the two High Court judges, the doctrine of *terra nullius* underpinned Australia's parlous treatment of its Indigenous peoples and was 'a national legacy of unutterable shame'.<sup>33</sup> In 1997, three years before the Sydney Bridge Walk, the *Bringing Them Home* report on the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, referred to as the Stolen Generations, had been delivered to government, revealing the extent of child removal and abuse at the hands of the state.<sup>34</sup> Under the new conservative Howard government, intense debates ensued about the course of history and national and individual culpability, as part of the 'history wars' debates. This was only heightened by Prime Minister Howard's refusal to make a formal apology to the Stolen Generations at the 1997 Reconciliation convention. Participants at the convention famously turned their backs on the Prime Minister, an act which publicly shamed him as both a dishonourable individual and state figurehead.

The question of whether honourable colonization of Australia was possible has been perennially fraught, and has been taken up in European debates and refuted by Aboriginal peoples since the time of European arrival. The collective emotions of honour and shame that attend the question of the colonization of Australia as invasion or settlement sat at the very heart of the 'history wars' debates in Australia.<sup>35</sup> Later, Howard's 1999 Sir Robert Menzies lecture revealed how deeply

entwined and entrenched were the emotions of national pride, honour and shame when he stated that we must 'ensure that our history as a nation is not written definitively by those who take the view that we should apologise for most of it ... I believe that the balance sheet of our history is one of heroic achievement and that we have achieved much more as a nation of which we can be proud than of which we should be ashamed.'<sup>36</sup>

The collective eudaimonic feelings of the Bridge Walk, therefore, did important emotional and affective work. After so much shame, the nation required a narrative of redemption, wrought in part through reconciliation and a return to good feeling. The collective bad feeling, and lingering sense of injustice, thus provided the conditions for the politics of reconciliation, especially for non-Indigenous peoples, and enabled an 'affective refounding', as described by Miranda Johnson, for the future postcolonial state.<sup>37</sup>

Left-wing magazine *Crikey's* comments were made in the same vein. Just days after the Bridge Walk, *Crikey* asked, 'Who were the real winners from the great Harbour Bridge walk for Corroboree 2000?' before answering, 'John Howard, the International Olympics Committee, and the white marchers'.<sup>38</sup> The celebration of victory was by the 'real winners of reconciliation: white Australians'. *Crikey* argued:

It is they who have taken the opportunity to rid themselves of what Henry Reynolds calls 'this whispering in our hearts': the denied knowledge that you personally are the beneficiary from the dispossession of Aboriginal people. By saying sorry and walking for reconciliation we, white Australians, can again be proud to call ourselves Australian. This is what white people wanted in 1988 when massive Aboriginal protests marred Bicentennial celebrations.<sup>39</sup>

But in this time of shame and political turmoil, where did the desire for national redemption leave Aboriginal peoples? As noted by the *Green Left Weekly*, the Bridge Walk's goodwill had neither lessened racist discrimination nor effected any real or meaningful change in the status of Indigenous citizenship.<sup>40</sup> Raising the notion of heart and good faith, Joel Bray from the Indigenous Student Network, which held a protest on 27 May, outside the Sydney Opera House during Corroboree 2000, said:

For a huge number of Australians, *reconciliation is the genuine heartfelt attempt* to express their solidarity with Aboriginal people ... But the reconciliation process was quite a deliberate tactic from the Howard

government to channel that solidarity away from anything that would require a concrete commitment from the government.<sup>41</sup>

Isobel Coe, who was one of the founders of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra, also argued that the Reconciliation walk was a distraction from the larger problem of political inaction: 'We can't have reconciliation while there is still no justice.' She suggested further that the hope invested in the Bridge Walk was misplaced: 'The government led people up the tree, then cut it down ... The reconciliation march was only a "feel good" exercise.'<sup>42</sup>

Lyll Munro, who was then a spokesperson for the Sydney-based Metropolitan Land Council, rejected the Bridge Walk entirely: 'The whole concept of reconciliation was an imposition on Aboriginal people' and a 'bastardisation of calls for a treaty or an Aboriginal bill of rights'. He told the *Green Left Weekly*: 'Reconciliation was a complete waste of time – 12 years, millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, of Aboriginal money.' Munro felt that most people participated 'to protest against governmental racism, not to celebrate a process which had ended it'.<sup>43</sup>

While for many it was enough to take pleasure in simple messages of reconciliation and hope, others insisted that such symbolism was empty unless the substantive issues of structural discrimination, an apology and the issue of a treaty were addressed. Aboriginal participant Lindsay Stanford, who in 2000 was 22 years old, remarked ten years on that 'I don't think it had a massive impact on the government.' Now, fifteen years later, the promise of reconciliation in Australia made emblematic by the mass Bridge Walk is highly dubious. As Aboriginal author, historian and activist Jackie Huggins, a member of CAR, wrote: 'The emotional triumphs of the bridge walks gave some people the sense that reconciliation had arrived. But the reality was that, significant as they were, the walks masked the harsh reality of a lot of what we call unfinished business.'<sup>44</sup>

Historian Henry Reynolds has judged that the walks for reconciliation were an 'end', rather than a beginning. The great marches, he argues, were a closing off, not an opening towards further political debate or change. In 2008 he wrote: 'This enormous effort, the manifest goodwill – achieved so little. The great marches, it increasingly appears, *marked the end of an era of reform, not the opening of a new one.*'<sup>45</sup> According to Reynolds, the Reconciliation movement achieved very little as, following successive electoral victories, the conservative Howard government became increasingly hostile to the aim of Indigenous

self-determination, favouring instead the familiar terms of assimilation.<sup>46</sup> While Ahmed is highly sceptical of reconciliation, in contrast, for Reynolds, reconciliation is recuperable if backed by substantive legal state support. Importantly, as Reynolds explains, its key platform as articulated by Aboriginal spokespeople, and which was not fulfilled, 'was a desire to gain acceptance of their view of the nation's history, not with the intention of promoting guilt on the part of whites but to receive acknowledgement of their loss and suffering'.<sup>47</sup>

The Bridge Walk, I suggest, as a symbol of state-based reconciliation faltered not only because of lack of support from government to respect claims to Indigenous sovereignty. As Ahmed points out, the attempt to rebuild the nation through the ideal of biracial unity may very well have failed to honour Aboriginal experience in its historical specificity. Indeed, Rev. Grant Finlay of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in Hobart has observed that the Bridge Walks, including the walk in Hobart, lacked purpose because there were no historically located symbols to draw from:

I think the 'top-down' larger public events are difficult to perform with deeper symbolism because in 'reconciliation' encounters there is a lot of ignorance, and as a community *I don't think we have powerful symbols that link us together in a deeply mythic way*. I don't recall the bridge walk having any other symbolic ceremony or event or specific *remembering of any historical experience*. The walk itself was the main focus. There were speeches at the stage on the domain afterwards but I don't remember any particular people or words.<sup>48</sup>

Non-Indigenous Australian writer Kate Grenville would also reflect on how the Bridge Walk event's vague sense of purpose provided a feeling of camaraderie and triumph that, for her, would turn out to be empty of historical significance. She wrote: 'The walk itself promised to be another big symbolic thing. Its aims were large and vague enough to make us feel cosy in spite of the bitter westerly wind. Everyone was smiling. We were all pretty pleased with ourselves.'<sup>49</sup> But, like the giant 'Sorry' in the sky, her joy quickly faded when she realized that nothing had been risked, sacrificed or properly confronted. She recalls that after having exchanged warm glances with an Aboriginal woman, a 'sudden blade of cold' ruptured her good feeling as she began to question seriously her sense of ancestral belonging. Contemplation of who her settler forebears were and what they might have done cut through any

sense of pleasurable affinity, inspiring her to research her own complicit heritage:

I wanted to get away from it all now: the smiles, the benign feeling of doing the right thing, the shuffling crowd of people whose pleasure in the moment hadn't been sliced open. ... The imagery of our walk, across a bridge, suddenly seemed all too easy. We were strolling towards reconciliation – what I had to do was cross the hard way, through the deep water of our history.<sup>50</sup>

Arguably, the Bridge Walk acted as a symbolic replacement, a newly invented covenant, for the treaty that was never made between Aboriginal and European peoples in its attempts to arrive at a comfortable unity; yet this was disrupted by the sorrow of violence that the demand for apology implied. In a way, the Bridge Walk is emblematic of the fraught relationship to history that is peculiar to Australia's non-treaty culture. The problem of diffusion, or lack of historical clarity, that Rev. Finlay and Grenville identify signifies a broader national discomfort with the colonial past. The difficulty of this kind of reconciliation event to represent the trauma of Aboriginal injury and colonial violence was also reflected in the 'history wars' that began to rage at the time of the Bridge Walk.

The 'history wars' debates of the late 1990s and 2000s were not only concerned with the contentious notion of whether Aboriginal people were 'stolen' or 'removed', but also about crucial issues about sovereignty, lack of treaty and, importantly, heated debates about 'invasion' or 'settlement' in Australian history. A central debate in the 'history wars' concerned the extent of frontier violence and the fraught question of the genocide of Indigenous peoples. As Lorenzo Veracini notes, this debate of the early 2000s – on the genocidal nature of Australia's political record or the dismissal of such a claim – has acquired an 'unprecedented significance and become a paradigmatic feature of Australia's historiographical landscape. ... In summary, during the last two decades historians have followed a complicated intellectual itinerary and wrestled with questions of Aboriginal agency, white responsibility, destruction, and survival.'<sup>51</sup> Therefore, in these decades of both shame and reconciliation, the 'history wars' which ensued, driven in part by the conservative Howard Government, meant that the ability of people to understand and confront a shared and foundational past of frontier violence was made complex and fraught.



In the year 2000, therefore, the Myall Creek massacre commemoration ceremony was of signal importance. Through public ritual it went to the heart of the 'history wars' debates. The history wars had been fuelled in part by denialist writers, notably Keith Windshuttle and his sweeping disavowal of massacres on the Australian frontier.<sup>52</sup> But such denial is potently rebutted by the testimony of Aboriginal people and the palpable fear they express around the continuity of physical and structural violence in this nation of unfinished business. Elder Sue Blacklock, who led the Myall Creek massacre commemoration ceremony, has reflected on first hearing of the massacre of her people as a girl, and of being 'unable to shake a deep-seated fear' that it would happen again. 'We were always taught not to trust anyone, especially white people. And we just had that fear embedded in us that they were going to do the same to us as kids that they did to our ancestors.'<sup>53</sup> The Myall Creek ceremony, directed by the descendants of victims and perpetrators, thus became a direct act of powerful exchange that addressed the past and rebutted the history-less, 'white blindfold' agenda of some historians and commentators. In the next section, I consider the legacy of performances of diplomacy that were shaped in the absence of a treaty amid violent frontier conflict in Australia's colonial past, such as the Myall Creek massacre. I then examine the embodied, affective, joint commemoration 'walk' of the Myall Creek ceremony as a point of contrast to the problematic ahistorical politics of consensus evident in the Bridge Walk performance.

### **'No wampum': conciliation and violence in colonial New South Wales**

In 1803 Jeremy Bentham, prominent British philosopher and utilitarian, wrote 'feverishly and at length' on the colonial penal settlement of New South Wales and its defects, arguing for its unconstitutional status in his essay 'Plea for the Constitution'.<sup>54</sup> He spoke of the 'host of follies' entailed in this 'distant possession', and of the ambiguity of the settlement's founding as a colony without laws and charters. He argued:

It is needless to enquire, what on this occasion might have been the virtue of a string of wampum: no wampum, nor any substitute for wampum, has either been received or given in New South Wales. When from their immense continental island, *Benillong* and *Yemmerra-wannie* did us the honour to bestow their glance upon this our little one, it was in the character of private gentlemen, travelling for

their amusement, or at least for ours: they signed no *treaty* with his Majesty, nor brought with them any diplomatic powers.<sup>55</sup>

Arguing that New South Wales was a colony obtained by conquest, he continued: 'the flaw is an incurable one ... No charter ever could, can now, or even can be granted. It is not a case for charters: all the wax – all the parchment in the King's stationary [*sic*] office – all the law on all his woolsacks – would not make one. A charter, make it of what or how you will, must have somebody to *accept* it.'<sup>56</sup> He spoke of the unconstitutionality of convicts brought to the colony by 'force *under* the law' and kept there by 'force *against* the law', and of the absence of 'consent on the part of the colonists as to their subjugation to such papers', as well as the lack of treaty with Indigenous peoples. With this, he concluded that 'no parchment, no wax, no cement can patch this no-constitution'. The very founding of the colony was dishonourable and unconstitutional, and a 'universal sore' that could only be corrected by the 'all-healing hand of parliament'.<sup>57</sup>

In this passionate letter, Bentham prominently signalled the profound lack of negotiated exchange in the British colonization of Aboriginal lands in New South Wales, and gestured to the wampum belt ceremonies, part of a rich tradition of diplomatic cross-cultural performance which had developed in the North American colonies over at least two centuries, as a metaphor for negotiated settlement and in particular, for Indigenous volition and consent. As we have seen in Chapter 1, shell wampum belts were held in great esteem as objects of political diplomacy by Native peoples of the Atlantic coast, and were used, in the earliest contact with Europeans, for social, political and ceremonial exchange.<sup>58</sup> In gesturing to the 'wampum', Bentham invoked the idea of a virtuous covenant between sovereign nations, something entirely missing in the new colonies of Australia. The absence of 'wampum', an exchanged accord or treaty, was, in his words, a 'flaw'. Such treaty absence and the lack of Indigenous volition in the process of colonization was something that could not be mended, an unconstitutionality that was a 'universal sore'.<sup>59</sup> Bentham's 'Plea' was based on a pamphlet he 'chose to circulate privately for fear of setting the colony in a flame', concludes R. V. Jackson, and went to very core of the problem of British colonization of the Australian colonies: the lack of a negotiated treaty between sovereign nations.<sup>60</sup> Significantly, this was not just a problem of morality, constitutionality and international law, but one of honour in the minds of many. When Bentham invoked the 'virtue of wampum', he was gesturing to a nearly 300-year-old tradition of treaty-making in

North America, a standard way of arranging the relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples with various European powers.

New South Wales was an experimental penal colony formed in the midst of Aboriginal Eora country at Port Jackson (now Sydney), in 1788. It was followed by the establishment of a penal colony in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) in 1803. The British brought a rich genealogy of colonizing strategies with them – but no treaties. At contact Australian Aboriginal peoples comprised around 250 language groups, and around 500 clans, diverse and rich cultures across a vast southern continent. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, interaction between Aboriginal peoples and Europeans was localized along coastal regions of the continent. In 1787 the Crown's formal Instructions to Governor Phillip were to 'endeavour by every possible means to open an Intercourse with the Savages Natives and to conciliate their affections', 'to live in amity and kindness with them', and to 'punish' those who would 'wantonly destroy them'.<sup>61</sup> Small British military garrisons and coastal settlements were unstable contact zones in which rituals of diplomacy could mix easily with aggression. Contact, conciliation and conflict would always be closely intertwined.<sup>62</sup> Over the next four decades on unstable colonial frontiers with no treaty or formal agreements stuck, frontier violence was extensive, including sometimes tacitly condoned settler violence and state 'disciplinary' violence by the military. In lieu of treaties, conciliatory performances of diplomacy occurred in the midst of ongoing, brutal frontier warfare.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie, governing from 1809 to 1822, had initiated strategic manoeuvres to 'pacify' and govern Aboriginal peoples of the greater Sydney region in the midst of rising conflict. He was keen to foster good relations between Europeans and Aboriginal peoples, but in the Appin area south of Sydney such relations became most strained.<sup>63</sup> In 1814, in this region near the Nepean River, Aboriginal peoples raided settlers' corn crops, likely due to the loss of lands and the severe drought in the area that placed intense pressure on food supplies. In a series of retaliatory acts Aboriginal people and settlers were killed.

On volatile frontiers conciliation and violence went hand-in-hand in linked acts of pacification and retribution. Macquarie counselled conciliation and forbearance to settlers, and stated that he would punish in an exemplary manner any further aggressiveness by settlers or Aborigines.<sup>64</sup> He sought to impose British authority through peaceful means, including the instruction of Aborigines through his 'experiment in civilisation', as Kate Darian-Smith notes. In May 1816 he held a 'Native Conference' at the marketplace at Parramatta, and invited

Aboriginal people to feast on roast beef and beer, and distributed blankets and clothes to them. Macquarie urged Aboriginal people to abandon their 'wandering predatory habits', and that he might 'grant small portions of land' to those that would become 'regular settlers', and they should relinquish their children to the new Native Institution.<sup>65</sup> Macquarie's approach was one of Indigenous transformation: that is, successful conciliation would be that the Aborigine should be 'fully resolved to become a settler', and adopt a settled way of life, take up a yeoman style of farming, and be schooled and notionally protected by the Crown, not dissimilar to that of Jefferson's insistence upon the transformation and assimilation of Native peoples to resemble yeoman farmers in the same period in the newly formed settler republic of the United States.<sup>66</sup> In December 1814, with a view to improving conditions for Aboriginal people, Macquarie had established a 'Native Institution' at Parramatta for the education of Aboriginal children to 'effect the civilization of the Aborigines of New South Wales',<sup>67</sup> followed in 1815 by an Aboriginal farm at George's Head, Sydney, and a village at Elizabeth Bay in 1820, for the 'Sydney Tribe'.<sup>68</sup>

Although Governor Macquarie developed a range of strategies to bring about peaceful relations between settler and Aboriginal peoples, including rewarding friendly Aboriginal people, those who defied the invasion of their lands were ultimately treated with harsh and punitive actions. By April 1816, in the face of Aboriginal raids and resistance and rising settler fear and violence, Macquarie announced, 'tho' unwillingly', that he had come to the 'painful resolution of chastening these hostile tribes, and to inflict terrible and exemplary punishment upon them'.<sup>69</sup> Such actions entailed 'Punishing the Hostile Natives, by clearing the Country of them entirely, and driving them across the mountains'. Macquarie ordered three military detachments to Windsor, near the Hawkesbury River, Liverpool, and Cowpastures (now Camden), near Appin, with instructions to hang 'guilty' Aborigines in the trees 'in order to strike the greater terror into the Survivors'.<sup>70</sup> At least sixteen Dharawal people were killed by the British military near Appin.<sup>71</sup> Macquarie rewarded 'two European Guides and three friendly Natives' who had, with the 46th Regiment, 'scoured' the country for hostile Aborigines. To 'Whites' he gave seven days' provisions and currency; the 'Black guides' he gave seven days' provisions and a blanket for each of their Aboriginal women. He rewarded one in particular with breastplates and land:

I invested Nurragingy (alias Creek-Jemmy) with my Order of Merit by presenting him with a handsome Brass Gorget or Breast Plate, having

his Name inscribed thereon in full – as Chief of the South-Creek-Tribe. I also promised him and his friend Colebee a Grant of 30 acres of Land on the South Creek between them, as an additional reward for their fidelity to Government and their recent good conduct.<sup>72</sup>

Two months later, with continued Aboriginal resistance, Macquarie issued a proclamation, noting it was necessary to ‘reclaim [Aboriginal people] from their barbarous practices and to conciliate them to the British government’. The proclamation, one of the first to effect a formal spatial segregation, proscribed Aboriginal entry to towns and initiated a pass system. While he pardoned some Aboriginal people for their hostile conduct, at the same time, from 4 June 1816, ‘no black native or body of natives must appear within one mile of any town, village or farm occupied by British subjects, while armed with weapons of any description ... on pain of being considered in a state of aggression and hostility and treated accordingly’.<sup>73</sup> No more than six Aboriginal people could be present near farms of the interior, and settlers were permitted to drive them off by force. Aborigines who desired the protection of the British Crown would be issued ‘passports or certificates signed by the governor’ which would ‘protect them from being injured or molested’ if they conducted themselves peaceably and did not carry weapons.<sup>74</sup> In July 1816 Macquarie proclaimed ten named Aboriginal men to be in a ‘State of Outlawry’ and unworthy of government protection. He gave permission for ‘every of His Majesty’s Subjects, whether Free Men, Prisoners of the Crown, or Friendly Natives’ to capture them and, failing that, authorized that they could ‘kill and utterly destroy them as Outlaws and Murderers’ with a reward of ‘Ten Pounds Sterling’ for proof of each Aborigine killed.<sup>75</sup>

On 28 December 1816, six months after the military’s retaliatory violence in the Appin region, Macquarie held another ‘Native Feast’ at the marketplace in Parramatta for Aboriginal people from the wider region. Once again, in British North American style, at this strategic gathering, he bestowed ‘badges of distinction’, breastplates or gorgets similar to those used in North America, on a select group of Aboriginal men to designate them as ‘chiefs’, partly to pacify them in the wake of the Appin massacre, and to create an Indigenous hierarchy, a political manoeuvre to facilitate governance and improve relations.<sup>76</sup>

These ‘Native Conferences’, as Darian-Smith observes, were performances which resembled the gift-giving ‘congresses’ held in North America between Native American tribes and French or British settlers, and served to strengthen alliances, but also to reward loyalty. Crucially,

they demonstrated the authority of the British Crown over Aboriginal people and their leaders.<sup>77</sup> But the breastplates bestowed on Aboriginal people were not wampum, which in North America were symbolic of the mutual recognition of sovereignty; rather, they were unilinear devices and they came with no treaty. No virtuous covenant would be struck on the pastoral frontier of New South Wales. These very early rituals of consensus and alliance-building occurred in the midst of permissive settler violence and disciplinary actions by the British military. By 1825 Macquarie's Native Institution had failed and Aboriginal people had abandoned their farms.<sup>78</sup>

Conflict continued as the British expanded further into inland New South Wales, and settlers crossed west over the Blue Mountains, and onto the Bathurst Plains. Wiradjuri warriors resisted them, led by leader Windradyne, and they killed or wounded stock-keepers and damaged stock in what became known as the 'Bathurst wars'.<sup>79</sup> Governor Thomas Brisbane (1822–5) proclaimed martial law on 14 August 1824 on the Bathurst Plains after some of the most violent frontier incidents of the period, including the killing of seven stockmen by Aborigines in the ranges north of Bathurst and the murder of Aboriginal women and children by settler-vigilantes in May 1824. Like other frontier areas across the country, settler fear was high and war was often publicly declared. The *Sydney Gazette* announced 'Bathurst with its surrounding vicinity is engaged in an exterminating war'.<sup>80</sup> The frontier, in this sense, was a place of 'lawlessness', yet as legal scholar Julie Evans has argued, the declaration of martial law served to legitimize the frontier as a legal space of violence.<sup>81</sup>

The entwined nature of disciplinary violence and conciliatory gestures towards Aboriginal peoples, as political strategy, was exemplified once again by Governor Brisbane. Brisbane established the first New South Wales Mounted Police, originally his 'Horse Patrol' which was to increasingly prove a tool chilling in its effectiveness in the pacification and violent subjugation of Aboriginal peoples, especially in the quelling of attacks by Wiradjuri people, a form of state-sponsored disciplinary violence in an ever expanding pastoral frontier.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, Brisbane also permitted breastplates or decorative gorgets to be distributed directly by the private pastoral companies and individual colonists who were taking up Aboriginal lands.<sup>83</sup> As Darian-Smith observes, during the 1820s and 1830s, the non-government use of breastplates grew greatly, reflecting the 'increased, localised autonomy of settlers in their political negotiations with Aboriginal people over land, labour and other resources'.<sup>84</sup> Such instruments of diplomacy were coercive – if

Aboriginal people did not conciliate and become pacified, they would get war, often in form of mounted horse patrols.

The shifting ground between conciliation and violent retaliation reflected the growing tension between an emergent liberal humanitarianism based on ideas of compensation and protection for Aboriginal peoples alienated from their lands alongside the brutal realities of colonization where retaliatory aggression and martial violence came under the rubric of civilizing discipline.<sup>85</sup>

### **Myall Creek: violent hearts and frontier massacre**

In 1838 in the New England region, northwest of Sydney, two of the most infamous massacres of Aboriginal people in Australian history occurred: the Waterloo Creek massacre and the Myall Creek massacre of Kamilaroi peoples. In this period the occupation of Aboriginal lands was strongly resisted by Kamilaroi peoples, and an extended conflict ensued between them and colonists for possession of the 'Big River', now known as the Gwydir River.<sup>86</sup>

Traversing the country of the Kamilaroi were the Weraerai (Wirrayaraay) and Kwiambal Aboriginal groups. The former lived on the lower Gwydir and Namoi Rivers, the latter lived along the upper Gwydir River, Myall Creek and the Macintyre River to the east, notes historian Lyndall Ryan. By the mid-1830s, the Weraerai were already a shattered people. By June 1836 around 80 Kamilaroi people were 'cleared out' by the New South Wales Mounted Police from the area between Barraba and the Gwydir River.<sup>87</sup> Later, the conflict moved further downstream of the Big River, where, notes Roger Milliss, a massacre at Gravesend Mountain occurred in 1837 in which, 'so Edward Mayne alleged, as many as 200 Aboriginal people were killed'. Repeated acts of retaliation and 'unspecified atrocities' had occurred in the area, as recorded by missionary Edward Threlkeld.<sup>88</sup>

In the summer of 1837–8, Major James Nunn, the newly appointed Commandant of the Mounted Police, was dispatched from Sydney to the Liverpool Plains district to track down the Namoi, Weraeri and Kamilaroi peoples who had killed five stockmen in 'separate incidents on recently established pastoral runs on the Gwydir River area of NSW'.<sup>89</sup> He brought with him a group of five officers and 20 troopers. On 26 January 1838 (on the day known as 'Foundation Day', the precursor to Australia Day), towards the end of a six-week campaign, Major Nunn and his group massacred a large group of Aborigines camped by a lagoon at Waterloo Creek (Snodgrass Lagoon), resulting in what

most historians agree were the deaths of at least 30 Aboriginal people.<sup>90</sup> Stockmen and vigilante-settlers were encouraged by Nunn's campaign, and continued it, riding the country shooting Aboriginal people they could find, in what Muswellbrook Magistrate Edward Denny Day would come to call a 'war of extermination'.<sup>91</sup> As Milliss has traced, once Major Nunn left that area, stockmen launched their 'Big Bushwhack' along the 'length and breadth' of the Big River, and it reached its climax with the massacre at upper Slaughterhouse Creek in May 1838.<sup>92</sup>

Violence continued on the Big River. Five months later, on the afternoon of Sunday, 10 June 1838, a gang of at least 11 stockmen and convict-shepherds arrived at Myall Creek station, the cattle station of absentee landlord Henry Dangar, near Bingara. The station manager, William Hobbs, was absent as he had travelled to another of Dangar's properties around 100 kilometres away. The only two white men left at Myall Creek station were two assigned convicts: Charles Kilmeister, the station stockman, and George Anderson, the hut keeper. The Weraerai, who had sought refuge on the station several weeks earlier, were camped by their fires near the convict huts, preparing their evening meal. The mounted stockmen, led by a squatter, John Henry Fleming, and carrying pistols, short muskets and swords, surrounded Weraerai Aboriginal men, women and children, and herded them into a hut. Terrified, they 'were crying and weeping calling out to Kilmeister', whom they believed to be their friend, to save them.<sup>93</sup> Their hands were bound and the group was tethered together with rope, and led away by the horsemen to Myall Creek, where they were slaughtered and their bodies beheaded. They also violently sexually abused two small Aboriginal girls. Two days later, on the Tuesday, the gang burned the decapitated bodies in order to hide the evidence.<sup>94</sup>

After many months, an investigation took place, where Anderson gave evidence. Governor Gipps, an evangelical humanitarian, was determined to prosecute, and quickly placed eleven of the offenders on trial for murder and, when they were acquitted, ordered a second trial. Despite intense public outcry, and after a second trial, seven white men were hanged in December 1838 in one of the few instances when white men were tried, convicted and hanged for the mass-killing of Aboriginal people.<sup>95</sup> Settlers were enraged by the hangings. Such frontier violence, with and without government sanction, had become so common that it was barely regarded as a crime. As Tracey Banvanua Mar and I have argued elsewhere, the 1838 trials highlighted the opposing forces that would govern race relations in the Australian colonies of the remainder of the nineteenth century. While humanitarians emphasized the 'moral imperatives of a humane colonization, pastoralists and agriculturalists



insisted on have access to cheap labour and land'.<sup>96</sup> The dominant Christian ethos of the time often framed humanitarian appeals to the heart, especially in attempts at conciliation that followed outbreaks of intense violence. When His Honour Judge Burton passed sentence on the men involved in the Myall Creek massacre, he spoke to them directly: 'I sincerely hope that the grace of God may reach and penetrate the hardened hearts that could surround a funeral pile lighted by themselves, and gloat on the tortures and sufferings of so many of their fellow beings.'<sup>97</sup> Judge Burton spoke of the 'atrocious circumstances' of the crime, and described, 'Men, women, children, even babes hanging at their mothers' breasts, not less than 30 altogether of these unfortunate defenceless blacks' sitting quietly by their evening fire, and 'believing themselves safe in the friendship of one of you, were suddenly surrounded by a party of horsemen.'<sup>98</sup> Emphasizing the planning of the massacre, he noted that the crime had been committed with the 'greatest consideration and premeditation; all the plans were carefully laid; days before you were seen, some 8 or 9 of you, at some distance from Mr. Dangar's preparing yourselves for the guilty consummation of your purpose.'<sup>99</sup>

By the 1850s remaining Aboriginal people in the area continued to seek protection on pastoral stations where they could, with men and women often working as shepherds and stockmen. In 1853, in reference to Goonal and Myall Creek stations and others in the area, Reverend William Ridley would express humanitarian concern at the 'murderous spirit in which not a few rejoice in the frequent slaughter and anticipated extinction of the blacks' and predicted God's bloody vengeance on a 'nation where such crimes are winked at'.<sup>100</sup>

But murderous spirits and the politics of heart and compassion could mix uncomfortably together. Within a decade of the massacre, a curious performance of conciliation occurred. A heart-shaped breastplate (Figure 21) was given as an object of diplomacy to 'U. Robert King of the Big Leather and Big River and Tribes', by an unknown settler at Goonal station. The station had been established in 1843 on the Big River, within only five years of the Gravesend, Waterloo, Slaughterhouse Creek and Myall Creek massacres. The breastplate is clearly part of the widespread tradition in southeastern Australia, as described, of bestowing breastplates to Aboriginal people for alliance and pacification, on a continent where there were no formal treaties. Yet its heart-shaped form makes this one exceptional. At the top – between an emu and kangaroo – are displayed an intriguing motif of crossed spears and gum boughs, similar in style to North American 'peace medals' given to



*Figure 21* Aboriginal breastplate for U. Robert King of Big Leather and Big River Tribes, National Museum of Australia. Photograph by Dragi Markovic

Native Americans that displayed a crossed hatchet and peace pipe, suggesting pacification or the halting of violent relations, as discussed in Chapter 2. The breastplate given out to ‘U. Robert’, King of Big River – probably a senior Aboriginal man and possibly a shepherd – within a period of widespread massacre, is a greatly unsettling object. Bestowed all too late, it appears to represent a supreme conceit, given the pernicious unrelenting settler violence that occurred in the region as settlers pushed into the region to take up Aboriginal lands. Indeed, Aboriginal artist Andrea Fisher has critiqued the coercive sentiment of the breastplate tradition with her reworking and subversions of the breastplate motif in her works ‘Blood’ and ‘Heart’ (Figures 22 and 23).

But the heart-shaped breastplate may be suggestive of other meanings and valences. While I have not traced it to an individual settler, the breastplate is linked to Robert Brown, the owner of Goonal station and a devout evangelical Christian. Brown became afflicted with mental



*Figure 22* 'Blood' breastplate by Andrea Fisher (ProppaNow Brisbane artists).  
Museum of Australian Democracy



*Figure 23* 'Heart' breastplate by Andrea Fisher (ProppaNow Brisbane artists).  
Museum of Australian Democracy

illness and declared a 'lunatic' in 1862. He died a year later in an asylum. Did he commission this breastplate for the Aboriginal people living and working on Goonal station, their region only so recently invaded and beset by violence? Was this the folly of a madman, or was it given in the name of friendship, reward, pacification, coercion or some form of conciliation with 'U. Robert' and his family group? Did the whispering in Brown's heart drive him mad? We may never know.

This intriguing object of conciliation is representative of the ambivalent colonial frontier. A symbol that is both utopic and coercive, it reflects the twin tensions of the mythic exchange as one that could be both genuine and feigned, full of heart and fury. The question it poses to us is, How do we hold the horror and the heart together? It is a question, as I argue in this book, that goes to the core of contemporary performances of reconciliation. Compassion, heart, forgiveness, trust and hope exist in tension with violence, horror, loss, betrayal and suffering.

At the Harbour Bridge Walk for Reconciliation, the word 'Sorry' interrupted the triumphant feelings of unity, yet it may also have been recaptured by a white politics of redemption (or display of heart) in the context of an exercise that, according to Ahmed, served only to re-establish love and trust in the settler nation. Perhaps the potent reparative historical symbol sought by Rev. Grant Finlay can be found instead in Myall Creek. In contrast to the Bridge Walk, the Myall Creek massacre reconciliation ceremony is a performance that attends to 'the politics of truth'<sup>101</sup> in explicitly asserting the fact of colonial violence at the very place in which one of the most violent episodes in Australia's history unfolded. As a performative 'truth event', it makes legible that which the official discourses have repressed,<sup>102</sup> or, as in the 'history wars', tried to bury by claiming that frontier violence was exceptional and exaggerated, and not structural or systematic to the project of colonial expansion. In the next section, I turn to the Myall Creek commemoration ceremony to explore a performance that faces the past directly, thereby challenging the historical amnesia so deeply embedded in the Australian national identity.

### **Disturbing locations: Myall Creek massacre commemoration ceremonies**

How can reconciliation take place today without acknowledgement of the widespread violence across Australia's frontier, and in particular in the face of genocidal acts, such as the massacres of Kamilaroi, Weraera (Wirrayaraay) and Kwiambal Aboriginal peoples? 'Heart' can mean

conscience, and it can also mean hope and ‘bone fides’ or acting in good faith. Every year, for 15 years now, commemoration ceremonies have been held at the site of the Myall Creek massacre, near Bingara in northern New South Wales. Here, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, some of whom are direct descendants of Aboriginal victims and settler perpetrators, come together in good faith as part of a major community-based reconciliation project.

Every year several hundred people gather from the local area and across Australia to attend the Myall Creek massacre service to commemorate those who were murdered. Addressing the past and its legacy directly, the annual commemoration service at Myall Creek takes the participants through an embodied ceremony and ritual, at the very site where the massacre occurred (Figure 24).



*Figure 24* Elder Sue Blacklock speaking at the Myall Creek Memorial Service of Commemoration in 2012. Photography courtesy of the *Inverell Times*

In 1998, after community discussion and at the suggestion of Aboriginal Elder Sue Blacklock, the Uniting Church held a conference on reconciliation at Myall Creek. This led to the creation of the Myall Creek Memorial Committee, including members Sue Blacklock and Uniting Church minister John Brown. In 2000, 162 years after the massacre, the Committee opened the Myall Creek Memorial 'in an act of reconciliation and in acknowledgment of the truth of our shared history'.<sup>103</sup> This memorial brought together the descendants of the victims, survivors and perpetrators of the massacre.

In contrast to the Reconciliation Bridge Walk with its ambitious national refounding agenda, the Myall Creek commemoration ceremony began as a very different kind of walk. At the site for the Myall Creek massacre, Indigenous peoples and settlers, victims and perpetrators, recall their own ancestors and the events of the past. While the 2000 Bridge Walk across Sydney Harbour heralded a hopeful future, without any real acknowledgement of the past, the Myall Creek commemorative service, which began in the same year, is instead a walk into the past in order to revision the future.

Importantly, the Myall Creek memorial service is not a state-based, top-down ceremony, but originated as a grassroots, community-inspired ceremony. While it emerges from a reconciliation paradigm, it is a community ceremony that is structured largely by *Indigenous* epistemology, combined with some elements of European and Christian ritualism.

The participants begin their pilgrimage by meeting at the Myall Creek hall for tea and cake. They are welcomed by the Indigenous Elders and others. A welcome dance is performed, followed by a smoking ceremony, as cleansing marks the beginning of the ritual event. The group commences along the memorial walkway. The walk is part pilgrimage, part re-enactment – they walk in the footsteps of victims, taking the route by which they were led to their deaths at Myall Creek. It is also commemorative and educative: throughout the walk, various plaques take the participants through the story. The group gathers at the memorial rock and everyone brings a stone to place at the memorial, reminiscent of the practice of shiva, the Jewish custom which both marks that the site has been visited and commemorates the deceased (Figure 25). The stones symbolize the permanence of memory, and the memorial itself becomes a shrine.<sup>104</sup> Elder Sue Blacklock welcomes people to the ceremony, a time of respectful contemplative silence, and the bullroarer sounds, 'invoking the presence of spirits'.



*Figure 25* Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site, Mark Mohell. © Department of the Environment, Australian Government

In the original 2000 ceremony, at the gathering at the rock after a time of silence a prayer was recited by John Brown:

We acknowledge the dismemberment of our relationships over the past two centuries. As we remember those good people who died here and in other places unnecessarily and shamefully, and those good people – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – who during our history together in this land have worked hard for justice, respect and understanding, unite us in our peace-making. Soothe our troubled breasts. May this ceremony bring hope and healing to all.<sup>105</sup>

The ceremony was then broken into parts, where descendants of victims and perpetrators spoke directly to one another in the ritual space:

BEULAH ADAMS AND DES BLAKE: 'We are the descendants of, and represent, all those who carried out murder and mayhem on the slopes below.'

SUE BLACKLOCK AND LYALL MUNRO: 'We are the descendants of those who those who survived the massacres.'

ALL: 'We acknowledge this our shared history; we seek reconciliation between our peoples, and healing of the wounds of the past.'

(The four embrace)

ALL: 'This is the history of every one of us; we are all heirs and survivors, beneficiaries and victims of its injustices and misunderstandings. We too want reconciliation and healing.'<sup>106</sup>

In this example we see a performance structured with elements of Christian ritual, based on a model of confession and truth telling, and then resolution through forgiveness with a move to a new relationship based on honesty and a new moral order. Lisa Schirch has called such events 'peacebuilding dramas'.<sup>107</sup> Rather than direct and confrontational negotiation across a table, the approaches described by Schirch may involve 'ritual and symbolic acts that engage the senses, passions, and emotions to create a "unique social space" that includes cooperative images and activities'.<sup>108</sup>

Native American Polly O. Walker recounted her participation in the ceremony, beginning with the painting of foreheads with ochre and ashes, and the cleansing ceremony. She describes how she read plaques on 'the history of the massacre' and the 'wars waged against Aborigines', and gathered with other participants at the monolith above the massacre site and listened to the sound of the bullroarer.<sup>109</sup> The bullroarer ends the ceremony, and a blessing is given. As she observes, 'We are not here to say fine words, shake hands and walk away ... we will continue on our journey, searching our own hearts and reflecting on our own attitudes which alienate us from one another'.<sup>110</sup>

These are both peace-building dramas and, as Polly O. Walker writes, transformative rituals that 'challenge the status quo' and create the possibility for a 'respectful engagement with indigenous epistemologies'.<sup>111</sup> The non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal participants in the reconciliation ceremonies at Myall Creek have described 'a great lifting', and that they felt 'set free' when they acknowledged the violence of their shared past.<sup>112</sup>

Structured in a cross-cultural fashion, blending Indigenous and Christian cosmologies, the Myall Creek commemoration event is highly innovative in the way it enacts a new postcolonial sociality. Crucially, it entails the key element of 'risk'. Roxana Waterson argues that the creation of new political frameworks through radical forms of ritual exchange involves a high degree of risk because such rituals 'are aiming to achieve something that has never been tried before in that society. Hence they demand a great deal of innovation, and their outcomes



are necessarily uncertain.<sup>113</sup> In this way, Waterson observes, reconciliation performances sit 'at the extreme end of the risk continuum' because they cannot be forced. 'These are rites in which the stakes are high, there are no comforting precedents to fall back on, some might be at best reluctant participants and efficacy cannot be determined in advance.'<sup>114</sup> Further, there is nothing inherently good or emancipatory about ritual in and of itself, as Schirch points out: 'ritual does not solve problems by negotiating the best solution, but by creating a new frame for interpreting the problem.'<sup>115</sup> Ritual is valuable only through its capacity to create new frames of understanding. Crucially, there is in such rituals the requirement for both 'risk' and the 'sacred' as key elements for success. Such performances thus become critical rites of passage. Such rites of passage, suggests Arnold van Gennep, may be a performance of 'in-betweenness', and function as a transition between two states of more settled or conventional activity, giving us the image of performance as a border or margin, or a site of negotiation.<sup>116</sup> Although elements of ritual structure and sacredness might be necessary to success, as Waterson observes, this must be 'held in balance with a certain necessary openness'. As she continues, 'the most genuine gestures in this direction, if they occur at all, are likely to be spontaneous and unpredictable. If the ritual were to become too choreographed, it might seem to offer nothing but hollow rhetoric and thus defeat its own purpose.'<sup>117</sup>

The obvious marker of risk and the high stakes of such a memorial in Australia is the fact that several acts of vandalism have occurred at the memorial rock.<sup>118</sup> Acts of vandalism occurred in 2003 on Australia Day and later in 2005. Cultural Studies scholar Katrina Schlunke terms the act of vandalism an 'anti-pilgrimage', or anti-performance. Such acts reveal the threat of such ceremonies for certain individuals who do not wish to accept this version of the past, and seek to 'undo the powerful work of the Myall Creek commemoration as a process, that has been embraced by so many'.<sup>119</sup> We see, therefore, how attempts to cross-culturally resolve the past can be so quickly made and unmade. Indeed, the long-term silence around frontier massacres in Australia makes the Myall Creek commemoration, as a 'truth event', a risky practice of the highest order.

In contrast to one of the most famous icons of European settlement – the Sydney Harbour Bridge – the massacre site of Myall Creek is a far more confronting performance space. For some white Australians, it threatens established narratives of belonging and peaceful settlement, a threat which was not present, or quite so palpable, in the Harbour Bridge Walk. At Myall Creek, the space itself bears witness to the history

that the official stories of nationhood have endeavoured to silence; but it is also crucial ground upon which new relationships can be forged through remembrance. The plaque on the stone memorial at the Myall Creek massacre site reads:

Erected on 10 June 2000 by a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in an act of reconciliation, and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history. We remember them. Ngiyani winangay ganunga.

Risk is likewise amply apparent for Aboriginal people. Direct acts of vandalism to the monument, and Elder Sue Blacklock's expression of being 'unable to shake a deep-seated fear' as a girl that violence such as the massacre would happen again, reveals the precarity and courage of such public performative acts, in the face of those would continue to aggressively deny history.<sup>120</sup> Blacklock approached the Uniting Church to begin commemoration of the Myall Creek massacre. She recounts that after descendants of the perpetrators came forward, they began meeting with a view to commemoration and for community reconciliation. As Blacklock says, when descendant (of one of the perpetrators) Beulah Adams 'asked me to forgive them, and I said yes, well ... I just wanted to cry. Because it was so emotional, you know? Just to know that somebody would come back to ask me to forgive them. It's always the other way around. We had to forgive and say that we were sorry for what they'd done, you know? It's really touched me. I was touched by that.' Of the reconciliation process she says 'it has lifted a burden off of my heart and off of my shoulders to know that we can come together in unity, come together and talk in reconciliation to one another and show that it can work, that we can live together and that we can forgive. And it really just makes me feel light. I have found I have no more heaviness on my soul.'<sup>121</sup>

Reverend Grant Finlay has reflected on the difference between the Bridge Walks and an event such as the Myall Creek commemoration ceremonies, raising the issues of narrative, mythic power and of ritual coherence:

The Bridge walk was such a broad and diverse public event and I don't think the underlying mythic symbolism was a crucial factor in the preparations, so I don't think it could have achieved the necessary narrative power, other than the experience of a large number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people walking together in the

one direction. So I think it was effective in providing an opportunity for Aboriginal people to see just how many non-Aboriginal people there were at that time who were willing to publicly express their support for the broader reconciliation movement. ... I think an underlying issue in these ceremonies, whether they are 'top-down' or 'grass-roots', is about the presence and voice of a powerful narrative/mythology that acts as the magnet, or names something people resonate with deeply. I think it is difficult for a politician to do because of all the other messy business of parliament and government, and sometimes a broad topic, like 'reconciliation' lacks sufficient definition or coherence whereas a more particularly focussed event can still touch upon those broader themes but gains more *mythic coherence because of its particularity*. So an event like 'Three Thumbs' (Tasmania) or 'Myall Creek' can be more mythically powerful for its participants and also as an ongoing story/symbol for others because of its particularity.<sup>122</sup>

Unlike the Harbour Bridge, which belongs to the settler paradigm of modernity and triumph over nature, Myall Creek is a powerful testament to the pain of Aboriginal subjugation and is a space that infuses the performance of reconciliation with a radically different significance. According to Gay McAuley, 'real places ... have the ability to carry memories of events that occurred there, but, in order for such memories to be triggered, some kind of performative act is also needed'.<sup>123</sup> Schlunke, who has attended the memorial service, argues that the ceremony offers 'innovative ways to be Australian'.<sup>124</sup> The Myall Creek memorial service is, she argues, a postcolonial performance and a 'place of possibility', where the commemoration service acts as 'an opening' to a 'multi-dimensional memorial'. It is 'multi-timed', in that 'the past here is not so much "known" as performatively embodied'. It is a counter-site, where 'non-Indigenous Australia ... halts within Indigenous order'.<sup>125</sup> Schlunke argues further, that because the site is a 'rarity' then 'its very existence is a provocation, particularly to non-indigenous Australians on how to be or become postcolonial'. That is, acknowledgement of the massacre site forces the question of 'how to actively and ethically live with the knowledge of massacre undertaken to "secure" settlement for white Australians'. This is a question, she writes, that is particularly tested in the annual performance of the memorial space.<sup>126</sup>

Just as the Bridge Walk had to perform the ambitious work of refounding at the emotional, symbolic, collective and political levels,

the 'work' that the Myall Creek memorial service has to do is also enormous, notes Schlunke, in that 'as one of the only memorials to colonial massacre, it has to stand in to some extent for all the massacres that sustained the settlement of Australia'.<sup>127</sup> Myall Creek is also viewed as 'the site where colonial law first "worked" for black and white', unlike Waterloo Creek, where the key perpetrators were never charged. Myall Creek is symbolically amenable as one of 'active' reconciliation where 'descendants of the Indigenous victims and non-Indigenous perpetrators are bought together at the annual memorial service'.<sup>128</sup> Lyall Munro, participant in the inaugural year 2000 Myall Creek ceremony, and also critic of the Sydney Bridge Walk, commented that Myall Creek was the 'first place white man's justice [has] done some good. Right across Australia, there were massacres. What makes Myall Creek real is that people were hanged, see. That was the difference.'<sup>129</sup> Australia's Heritage Council concurs, and likewise states that the significance of Myall Creek in Australian history is that it was the only time Europeans were punished under colonial law for the murder of Indigenous people. For the Heritage Council, Myall Creek has also become emblematic of 'the "great Australian silence" on Indigenous issues from the 1830s to the 1950s and [...] was used to educate people on Australia's Indigenous history during the 1960s–80s'.<sup>130</sup> It is now an integral site for reconciliation performances, with the first commemoration event described as an 'act of reconciliation and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history'.<sup>131</sup>

## Conclusion

Like the Two Row Wampum canoe journey, where people paddled together, the Harbour Bridge Walk of 2000 was a newly invented ritual that became a rite of passage in Australia's settler society, and an event understood to be crucial to national healing, where the past had been strewn with conflict and trust needed to be recreated. Like the canoe trip down the Hudson River, the Sydney Bridge Walk was an emotional and affective event that brought people together through their bodily occupation of a transitional space (the bridge). The great Bridge Walk, and the other mass bridge walks around Australian cities, offered an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of people to demonstrate their goodwill and genuine commitment to a reconciliatory future, which I wish to acknowledge. It was in some ways a new or neutral ground, highly symbolic of nationalism but removed from the field of violence. It thus represented ideas of difference being bridged with two

worlds coming together, and ushered in the promise of new, socially transformative relationships through a national re-founding.

Like the Two Row Wampum commemoration, the Bridge Walk was designed to be a joint Indigenous-settler performance, but it was choreographed by a state-based, formal process of reconciliation. Unlike the Two Row, it did not call on the past to use or enliven traditional Aboriginal emblems of diplomacy, as the wampum belt of Native America was used, nor did it make political claims, as did the Two Row ceremony. It did not contain elements of commemoration, re-enactment or ritual historicizing, or call on the past in any meaningful way. It was a ritual invented to create good feeling and consensus in a non-confrontational way, as an avenue for people to publicly show their legitimate commitment, in embodied solidarity, to state-based processes of reconciliation.

The 2000 Bridge Walk was experienced as a moral and emotional turning point for some people, and likewise remains a touchstone of 'good feeling' for some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike; but for others, it was a time of concern and deep ambivalence, of absolute rejection of the terms of this 'reconciliation'. Some, in line with Ahmed, were sceptical of the emotional work that such a 'feel-good' eudaimonic performance enacted. As Ahmed argues, such events work to recuperate the idea of a civil settler nation, especially in the glare of international media attention and in anticipation of the 2000 Olympic Games that were to be held later that year. Calls for apology and a treaty to some extent ruptured the sense of celebration of national unity, threatening to break open the closed space of consensus that the event arguably promoted. 'Sorry' appeared in the sky as a truth event: unplanned and counter to the official choreographed walk; it gave voice to the apology to the Stolen Generations that people wanted to hear from the Prime Minister. In this sense, it revealed that which had been repressed.

Through 'walking together' then, these performances represented affective, embodied but nonetheless very different orders of political re-founding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, possessing their own complex, affective economies. In the Myall Creek reconciliation walk, the practice of acknowledgement, and enunciation of 'sorry', is part of the ceremony itself. It is an example of a grassroots commemoration that mourns, reflects and honours to build a new peaceful accord. Myall Creek carries the representational burden of standing in for colonial violence on the frontier generally, but its narrative and locatedness in time and place gives it potency as a meaningful symbol for the painful labour of national reconciliation. The Myall

Creek memorial performance also belongs to a different order of politics than can be seen in the Bridge Walk because of the way it privileges Indigenous space, epistemology, ritual and perspective – and in the very specific way it addresses itself to the past. In this, the Myall Creek memorial works directly to challenge the juridical doctrine of *terra nullius*, which, coupled with the absence of a treaty, has given rise to complex historical relations in Australia strongly defined by the silenced and hidden trauma of Indigenous injury.

# 4

## ‘Our history is not the last word’: Sorry Day at Risdon Cove and ‘Black Line’ Survival Ceremony, Tasmania

In May 2001, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people met at Risdon Cove on the banks of the Derwent River in Hobart as part of National Sorry Day commemorations (Figure 26). The event was organized by various reconciliation and church groups, and attended also by school children. As Aboriginal Elder Aunt Brenda Hodge recalls, there were nearly 150 people present at the commemoration. ‘We all walked together through the pyramid structure on the site, and everyone was given a piece of black twine and white twine to represent black and white people coming together. We then walked slowly over a bridge together and up to the slope where the violence had occurred. We then came back to form a large reconciliation circle.’<sup>1</sup>

The Risdon Cove conflict, or ‘Risdon Cove massacre’, as it is also called, is notorious as a site of foundational British colonial violence against Aboriginal peoples in Tasmania. While many Sorry Day ceremonies in Australia have been tied to the Stolen Generations, in Hobart the 2001 ceremony explicitly addressed the conflict that had occurred on the hillside at Risdon Cove.<sup>2</sup> Risdon Cove is important as the site of first British settlement in Van Diemen’s Land (now Tasmania) in 1803, and is now part of the present-day city, Hobart. On 3 May 1804, Lieutenant William Moore, the commanding officer at the small settlement and garrison, ordered troops to fire on Moomairremener Aboriginal people, a band of the Oyster Bay people, who were passing through on a kangaroo drive, initially killing at least two members of the group. The soldiers also fired a small four-pounder cannon loaded with grape and canister shot. Although accounts are conflicted, the Aboriginal group was ‘dispersed’, and soldiers then chased them ‘some distance up the valley’ where ‘more were wounded’, possibly up to 40 or 50 people.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 26 National Sorry Day reconciliation circle, 26 May 2001, Risdon Cove, Hobart, Tasmania. Photograph by Grant Finlay



Reverend Grant Finlay from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, who has had longstanding ties with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and assisted in the creation of the Sorry Day reconciliation ceremony, described the day and what he thought the circle meant:

It was closer to a 'classic' reconciliation event, but ... it didn't have a 'confessional' element to it other than in very general terms. An Elder, Dorothy Murray from the Aboriginal Elders Council in Launceston, spoke, and then the leaders of the Anglican, Catholic and Uniting churches responded. I don't recall any church leaders making any specific 'confession' or expression of 'remorse'. It was more about a general acknowledgement of history and a commitment to supporting reconciliation.

The forming of the circle was the only symbolic action. It is complicated even for Christian churches to do some combined symbolic actions! I think the idea was to represent that we are all part of the community together, and in a place where a number of Aboriginal people had been killed in 1804, forming a circle of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal together was an attempt to give a different picture than one group chasing, shooting another.<sup>4</sup>

The Risdon Cove ceremony offered a different kind of togetherness compared to the warm celebratory feelings of the Hobart Bridge walk, one of many bridge walks of reconciliation held around the country a year earlier. At Risdon Cove, on this site of first conflict, the mood was sombre and reflective. The invented ritual of handing participants black and white twine marked an effort to offer the tangible symbolism of overcoming racial divides: it was 'something people could take home and think about', noted Finlay.<sup>5</sup> The formation of the circle was a deliberate effort towards unification. Holding hands in a circle generated an embodied connection, the feeling of mutual support and, for some, silent communication as heads were bowed in prayer. The circle signified a joint cross-cultural effort to rewrite this history of oppositional division, or, as Finlay put it, of 'one group chasing, shooting another'.<sup>6</sup> For Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Christians at this service, the circle formation also signified the Christian notion that all are equal before God. The acknowledgement of the violence of colonization on the very site of this violence anchored the ceremony as one that was commemorative as well as reparative of social relations. The bad feelings of sorrow and shame connected people in palpable ways to a specific historical location. In Finlay's words it was a public declaration and

'acknowledgement of history and a commitment to supporting reconciliation'.<sup>7</sup> It was a ceremony that dealt with a single early episode of colonial violence, one of many in Van Diemen's Land.

The charged and ambivalent nature of reconciliation is particularly marked on the island of Tasmania. The question of whether reconciliation is possible, and if so, how and on what terms this might be brokered, in the face of extreme frontier violence and genocide on one hand, and a mythic nineteenth-century 'Great Conciliation' of Aboriginal peoples and an erroneous 'extinction' narrative on the other, endures as highly troubled, and indeed contrapuntal, discursive terrain. Debates over whether the British violence against Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples can be defined as genocide have been long running and heated. Historian Ann Curthoys has pointed out the paradox that while a Tasmanian genocide has been internationally accepted, in Australia such a characterization has rarely been adopted.<sup>8</sup> Historian Henry Reynolds is sceptical that the term 'genocide', as it has been legally defined by the United Nations, applies to Tasmania, while genocide scholar Tony Barta argues, to the contrary, that Australian society is 'founded on genocide'. Barta has insisted that since appropriation of the land is fundamental to Australian history, "all white people in Australia" have a relationship to genocide of which nevertheless they are rarely or barely conscious.<sup>9</sup> Genocide scholar Tom Lawson has recently argued that that an 'ethnic cleansing' occurred in Van Diemen's Land. Indicting British imperialism directly, Lawson found that the 'interactions between genocide in Tasmania and British history were so intricate, multi-layered and long-standing that that case alone demanded a specific book'.<sup>10</sup>

But these histories of violence and debates over genocide cannot be the last word. In this chapter I consider the heavy burden of Tasmania's history and the challenge of reconciliation in Tasmania, given the 'indelible stain' of its fraught and genocidal colonial history, which resurfaces in the contemporary and diverse performances of reconciliation in Tasmania today. I explore the way Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples and their allies have engaged with, through and against reconciliation as a political and cultural script and a site of experimentation by contrasting two very different local responses to the problem of accounting for the past. The first, the 2001 'Sorry Day' performance at Risdon Cove, Hobart, invites consideration around the politics of 'Sorry Days' in Tasmania (and in Australia more broadly), and the affective work it does, for whom, and the ways in which the emotional economy of remorse and forgiveness dominant in the Christian tradition can be contested by those who refuse to forgive. The problem with the model of reparative justice is that it may deny victims the right to refuse to be reconciled with the perpetrator, which is, in this case, the state.

In 2001, in the same year, a very different ceremony was held in the form of the 'Black Line' memorial ceremony, in the Three Thumbs forest reserve, at Orford on Tasmania's east coast. Three Thumbs Lookout was one of the key sites of action at the notorious 'Black Line', a 15-month military-style campaign waged by the British military and settlers against Aboriginal people in 1830–1, as part of the 'Black War', and the largest force ever assembled against Aboriginal people in Australia.<sup>11</sup> While the Risdon Cove event, springing from Australia's National Sorry Day movement, sought to remedy past violence that occurred there with a cleansing 'circle' of clasped hands, bringing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together, the Three Thumbs ceremony took place independently of state-authorized reconciliation. Both performances were held on actual sites of past violence, and through an affective repertoire of performance, including Christian ritual and precepts addressed frontier violence directly; but they possessed different terms and political economies, and distinct audiences and orders of affect. As I will show, the Aboriginal-led Black Line ceremony at Three Thumbs Lookout sought instead, through a form of ritual historicizing, to remember and transcend past violence to reaffirm Indigenous survival. In this way, the 'Three Thumbs' ceremony at Orford arguably did far more radical and decolonizing work than the Risdon Cove event, and can be conceptualized as a counter-colonial, resacralizing performance. Crucially, it placed Aboriginal people and their experience at the centre of the narrative.

Despite their differences, the two ceremonies can also be considered as complementary affective performances – operating in different registers – that materialize reconciliation as an ongoing process of reimagining raced relationships in a postcolonial setting, where forms of symbolic exchange are creatively imagined, negotiated, rearticulated or rejected. In order to chart the historical conditions undergirding the mythic dimensions of contemporary reconciliation, I turn once again, as with other chapters, to the archive and the text-based histories of the past to examine how present politics call on this difficult past of conciliation and violence in a range of ways that are crucial to making sense of the postcolonial present.

### **The politics of refusal: Sorry Days, anger and compulsory compassion**

Sorry Day at Risdon Cove in Hobart in 2001 was one expression of public reconciliation in Tasmania organized to coincide with National Sorry Day. It occurred during a period in the life of the nation when

many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia urgently desired to hear the word 'sorry' publicly declared. Across the country, people wanted a full and formal apology by the Prime Minister John Howard, as representative of the nation, to Aboriginal peoples of the Stolen Generations. An apology from Howard was never forthcoming. The 'great' Sydney Bridge walk, and others around the nation in 2000, as I have described in the last chapter, was a heady emotional mix; Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike expressed hope in the future of reconciliation, but also reported feelings of intense sadness and shame at past practices, and dissatisfaction at the unfinished business of a genuine, substantive reconciliation. The eudaimonic emotions of collective good feeling, unity, hope and celebration were entwined with an intense undercurrent of anger and frustration at the conservative policies of the contemporary government. The Prime Minister had refused to make a formal national apology to the Stolen Generations, and he would not walk across the bridge. The desired apology became an act which only accrued further symbolic weight as the stand-off continued, and it came to be understood, politically, as a crucial affective step in the maturity of the nation. At the crowded Sydney Opera House at 'Corroboree 2000', highly respected Aboriginal activist and former public servant Charles Perkins articulated the anger of many when he shouted at Prime Minister Howard 'Say sorry you bastard!' to great applause.

As part of Australia's reconciliation program, National Sorry Day was instituted on 26 May 1998 to recognize and memorialize the Stolen Generations. This was the first anniversary of the day that the *Bringing Them Home* report was tabled in the Australian parliament. This key report, produced by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC), recommended changes in laws and practices surrounding the forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their parents and communities in the past and today. The report proposed that a 'national "Sorry Day" should be held each year to commemorate the history of forcible removals and its effects'.<sup>12</sup> The HREOC called on all Australians to 'heal the wound that affected contemporary Australians, whether they were harmed by the past, or considered responsible for it. The responsibility for the past falls on the state and its citizens.'<sup>13</sup> The Sorry Day Statement provided the following account:

The Report recommended that a Sorry Day be held – a day when all Australians can express their sorrow for the whole tragic episode,

and celebrate the beginning of a new understanding ... The National Indigenous Working Group on Stolen Generations has invited non-Indigenous people to join them in a National Sorry Day. They encourage the wider Australian community to remember and commemorate those affected by removal, so that the nation can continue the process of healing together ... Sorry Day offers every community the chance to shape a ceremony which, by the frankness of its acknowledgement of past wrongs towards the stolen generations and by the sincerity of its commitment to overcome racism, unites the community. Such a ceremony cannot be prescribed. It must come from the hearts of local people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.<sup>14</sup>

For the Sorry Day Committee, the day marked a moment 'when all Australians can express their sorrow for the whole tragic episode, and celebrate the beginning of a new understanding ... as a means of restoring hope to people in despair', stated Eleanor Bright Fleming.<sup>15</sup> In the frame of universal human dignity, the Sorry Day was a visible and symbolic way for Australians to accept the obligation to repair their past, regardless of the inclination of the federal government. Aboriginal leader Dr (now Professor) Mick Dodson, co-author of *Bringing Them Home*, said, emphasizing unity and diversity: 'We're all Australians and we call this place home. Let us rejoice in our diversity and difference because it's they that will ultimately enrich us as peoples. So let us begin this journey, a journey of healing, healing the body, the soul, our hearts and the spirit of our nation.'<sup>16</sup>

There is little doubt, therefore, about the great affective climax of the Sorry Day events around the country in their early years. The first Sorry Day was well attended, and 'over half a million people responded, signing Sorry Books and taking part in ceremonies on Sorry Day'.<sup>17</sup> People were able to record personal messages and feelings in 'Sorry Books', which were then presented to members of Aboriginal communities.<sup>18</sup> It was in the midst of this climate that Sorry Day at Risdon Cove occurred in 2001.

Critics of Sorry Day, however, point to the absence of a full historical perspective and explicit discussion of ongoing, structural colonizing violence. For instance, Peter Read has expressed concern for the way Australia's 'Sorry Day' produces the 'Stolen Generations' as a decontextualized example plucked from a much longer history of colonial conquest. He dubbed Australia's state-based reconciliation initiative 'Reconciliation-without-history', especially in the years of the Howard government (1996–2007),<sup>19</sup> in which John Howard famously refused to acknowledge

past hurt continuing into the present by saying 'sorry' – which he saw as apportioning 'blame and guilt for past wrongs' – preferring instead to emphasize the building of a 'shared future'.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, as Heidi Norman has argued, it is 'extremely limiting and problematic' that reconciliation came to be linked with the Stolen Generations, and that 'sorry' in turn came to be linked with them; the Stolen Generations became the overarching framework for unjust treatment of Indigenous peoples, obfuscating the systemic nature of colonization itself.<sup>21</sup>

Cultural studies scholar Sara Ahmed has critiqued the affective agenda of 'sorry' politics within the settler state's reconciliation movement, interrogating the work that the emotion of remorse performed in recuperating the settler self as moral and virtuous, as I have outlined in the previous chapter. The self-reflexive aspect of 'Sorry Day' identified by Ahmed has not been lost on others. Michael Mullins has argued that Sorry Day is not a day to focus on 'the needs and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians'; rather, he argues that it is 'instead a day for non-indigenous Australians to dwell on themselves and their failures'.<sup>22</sup>

In Tasmania, federal, state-sponsored and community reconciliation acts and ceremonies have occurred. In 1995, after many decades of Aboriginal agitation and struggle for recognition of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their land rights, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 acknowledged the dispossession of Tasmania's Indigenous people, and the Tasmanian government 'returned to the Aboriginal community thirteen parcels of land'.<sup>23</sup> Yet, in reality, these small parcels of land represented less than 1 per cent of Tasmania. Nevertheless, the significance of this moment was twofold, connecting recognition, identity and land in key ways: 'It [was] the first such legislation in Tasmania, where the assumption that no Aboriginal people remained after the first 50 years of the Colony meant the issue of reconciliation in law was ignored.'<sup>24</sup> Recognition, then, for Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples is tied to a history of wilful misrecognition and a pervasive yet erroneous narrative of their extinction. The opening lines of the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 states that it is '*An Act to promote reconciliation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community by granting to Aboriginal people certain parcels of land of historical or cultural significance*'.<sup>25</sup> In 2000, along with the great Bridge Walks of other major cities, over 25,000 people walked over the Tasman Bridge at the Hobart reconciliation bridge walk.<sup>26</sup>

Sorry Day at Risdon Cove did address past colonial violence directly, and was also performed as a reconciliatory act. But its aim was not

centred on Aboriginal experience or Aboriginal cultural reclamation; it was therefore not, at its heart, centrally a decolonizing experience. As a public event attended by church groups and school children, it was as much about consciousness-raising for settlers, as it was about mourning and commemoration. Its aims were broad enough for it to be a cross-cultural and symbolic coming together to generate friendship, however temporary. The work of 'sorry' may offer emotional releases for both parties, build trust, and genuinely assist in forging new relationships; but its attendant politics can once again firmly position the settler at the centre of the narrative of redemption and moral recuperation, something which may seal off discussion of the past and work against struggles to gain Aboriginal rights and sovereignties in the present.

Crucially, Indigenous peoples have the right to refuse the coercive politics of sorry, part of the broader program of reconciliation, with its Christian principles of restorative justice based on linear ideas of confession, forgiveness and moving on. As I have been arguing throughout this book, reconciliation is both utopic and coercive, and perpetually structured by ambivalence. Both national and local reconciliation events signal the urgent and genuine desire of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to symbolically forge new friendships. And yet, at the same time, reconciliation efforts draw Indigenous peoples into an affective script of refounding a settler nation that cannot by its very construction admit Indigenous sovereignty. I suggest that local efforts organized by local Indigenous people, communities and groups are better able to creatively engage with the lofty and often diffuse aims of reconciliation by being attentive to specifically Indigenous histories and rituals.

In its coercive aspect, reconciliation places a hefty psychic burden on Aboriginal peoples to forgive – but without the benefits of meaningful reparation. Such an affective script is at work in the Christian principles of restorative justice, where victims and perpetrators are encouraged to meet together for the expression of remorse and forgiveness to encourage healing on both sides. Annalise Acorn calls this 'compulsory compassion'.<sup>27</sup> As Acorn writes, restorative justice can be hypocritical because it 'lacks authenticity, fails to accommodate people's natural needs to give wrongdoers their just deserts, [and] expects compassion in circumstances where this is unreasonable and oppressive'.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, Roxana Waterson has cast doubt on whether the Christian emphasis on forgiveness and mercy can allow for the right of the victim to refuse to be reconciled with the perpetrator.<sup>29</sup>

For critics of reconciliation processes, then, what is at stake is the right to reject a politics that requires Indigenous assent and assimilation to a non-Indigenous desire for forgiveness and restoration of honour. Scholars Pauline Wakeham and Glen Coulthard both argue that formal state-based reconciliation can work to recuperate and re-establish settler hegemony.<sup>30</sup> Arguing for the productive and political force of anger and resentment as emotions, and critiquing the Canadian politics of reconciliation, Coulthard contests the way in which Indigenous expressions of anger and resentment are too often represented ‘as “negative” emotions that threaten to impede the realization of reconciliation in the lives of Indigenous people and communities on the one hand, and between Indigenous nations and Canada on the other’.<sup>31</sup> Coulthard continues:

More often than not defenders of reconciliation represent these emotional expressions in an unsympathetic light – as irrational, as physically and psychologically unhealthy, as reactionary, backward looking, and even as socially pathological. In contradistinction to this view, I argue that in the context of ongoing settler-colonial injustice, Indigenous peoples’ anger and resentment can indicate a sign of moral protest and political outrage that we ought to at least take seriously, if not embrace as a sign of our critical consciousness.<sup>32</sup>

Coulthard suggests that anger and the ‘politics of resentment’ are a productive force and a form of political practice for Indigenous peoples. Following Franz Fanon’s assertion that the colonial state apparatus cannot produce emancipatory effects but rather reduplicate patterns of domination, Coulthard is sceptical of reconciliation and the politics of recognition around which sorry and forgiveness are based. He argues, rather, for a ‘host of self-affirmative cultural practices that colonized peoples often critically engage in to empower themselves, as opposed to relying too heavily on the subjectifying apparatus of the state or other dominant institutions of power to do this for them’.<sup>33</sup> Within a settler-colonial logic, to reconcile is to be a ‘good’ and compliant citizen of the settler state; to refuse to reconcile renders Indigenous peoples as non-compliant and unwilling to be part of the nation.

Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Julie Gough has declared, ‘We are sick of being “conciliated!”’ In her performance art piece *Manifestation (Bruny Island)*, a European chair is set alight with an Aboriginal spear. Burning on the rocky shore of Bruny Island on the southeast coast of Tasmania,



the chair aflame references the frontier past and the guerrilla tactics of Aboriginal peoples' war of resistance and their use of fire to burn the houses and crops of colonists. The chair is an emblem of domesticity and domestication, which, as Ghassan Hage has argued, is a crucial element in the construction of the settler-colonial fantasy of 'home' and the creation of homely spaces.<sup>34</sup> The chair is symbolic of a settler identity establishing itself through domesticating alien difference under the sign of familiarity. It also makes reference to the efforts of the Bruny Island mission, instated by George Augustus Robinson, to conciliate and civilize Aboriginal people – to *domesticate* them – through familiar Christian principles. *Manifestation* is emblematic of Gough's anger at the colonial past and expresses the right to refuse the reconciliatory politics of 'sorry' and the pressure to forgive, to reach settlement and 'move on'. Gough's anger is neither unproductive nor irrational. Rather, in line with Coulthard's position, her stance is a form of political outrage and a sign of critical consciousness.<sup>35</sup> Gough rejects the rubric of reconciliation in the face of Tasmania's 'genocidal history, [where] ... Tasmanian Aboriginal people have been subjected to the term "conciliation" for generations, but not its practice'.<sup>36</sup> In this refutation, Gough eschews any notion of a break between the past and the present, and links the contemporary reconciliation movement to the 'Great Conciliation' of 1832, a moment of settler triumph that marked the end of the Black Wars in Van Diemen's Land between settlers and Aboriginal peoples.<sup>37</sup> Gough's declaration also speaks to reconciliation fatigue, with the suggestion that it is an exhausted politics with sorely diminished returns. For Gough, the 'genocide' of Aboriginal people in Tasmania renders reconciliation impossible.

The Black War resulted in the almost wholesale slaughter of Aboriginal peoples on the island in a settler land war that many have argued was indeed genocidal. At the time of contact in 1803, it was estimated that around 6,000–8,000 people lived on Trowunna (the Aboriginal name for Tasmania), but that number was rapidly reduced to a remnant population. By 1838 only around 60 people had survived, mainly to be exiled against their will to northerly Flinders Island in the Bass Strait.<sup>38</sup>

As the cover image of this book shows, Gough's artwork *Manifestation* delivers an incendiary performance of resistance. Gough points to the repressive tendencies of the reconciliation paradigm, one that, in this case, is especially potent in Tasmania, with its highly intertwined history of violence and conciliation deployed as complementary modes of colonial governance, a theme to which I now turn.

## **'Failing in every endeavour to conciliate': violence and coercive conciliation in Van Diemen's Land**

In 1803, the same year that Jeremy Bentham lamented the absence of a treaty with the original inhabitants of the colony of New South Wales, Britons arrived in the new Australian colony of Van Diemen's Land.<sup>39</sup> The middle ground or any form of mutual accommodation between settlers and Aboriginal peoples in Van Diemen's Land was short lived. By the late 1820s a violent frontier war had ignited between them. This extended conflict between 1824 and 1834 was known as the Black War. During this time, Governor Arthur was under a great deal of pressure from settlers to eradicate Aboriginal people, while instructed by his superiors to conciliate them.<sup>40</sup> Throughout his stewardship, Arthur vacillated between punitive and conciliatory measures, part of a complementary logic, to manage fragile relations on the frontier and ultimately to subject Aboriginal people to colonial law.

With the encroachment of an aggressive new pastoral economy in the late 1820s, free settlers began an extensive land-grab, greatly escalating tensions with Aboriginal peoples. As competition for food increased, and with the abuse and kidnapping of Aboriginal women and children, people resisted settler incursion with widespread guerrilla raids on shepherds' huts and farms. Settlers retaliated violently, often with night attacks on Aboriginal camps.<sup>41</sup> In 1824, Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur issued a proclamation warning against the settlers 'maliciously and wantonly firing at, injuring, and destroying the defenceless Natives and Aborigines of this Island'. The 'Natives', he insisted, should be considered as under British and Government protection. He encouraged 'all measures which may tend to conciliate and civilize the Natives' and promised 'to forbid ... and punish any ill treatment of them'. They should be treated with 'utmost kindness and compassion', he urged. Anyone charged with 'killing, or committing any act of outrage or aggression on the Native People [shall be] prosecuted ... before the Supreme Court'.<sup>42</sup> Yet as European settlers claimed ever-expanding areas of land around Launceston, in the north of the island, and through the midlands near the Oatlands and Bothwell districts, north-west of Hobart, attacks by Aborigines of the Ben Lomond and Big River bands increased. Settlers retaliated aggressively, often with firearms.

Tensions escalated, and in April 1828 Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur issued a proclamation dividing the island into settled and unsettled districts, and forbade Aboriginal people to enter into 'settled areas' unless they possessed a pass granted by the governor. Like his

counterparts on the mainland, Arthur used partition to protect settlers and 'bring about a temporary separation of the coloured from the British population' to avert conflict.<sup>43</sup>

By November 1828, amidst escalating frontier violence between Aboriginal peoples and European settlers, and intense settler pressure to respond to increasing incidents of Aboriginal attack, Arthur declared martial law against the 'Black or Aboriginal natives' within the Settled Districts of the island.<sup>44</sup> Arthur's first action after the declaration of martial law was to encourage settler parties to seek out and capture Aborigines in the Settled Districts, as Ryan notes.<sup>45</sup> These civilian parties pursuing Aboriginal peoples would come to be known as 'roving parties', usually a group of 10 or 12 men who knew the terrain well, and were under the control of the military. Throughout the Australian colonies, calls for conciliation had come most often at times of severe violence: conciliation and capture would go hand in hand.

While the removal of Aboriginal peoples from the settled areas was Arthur's primary aim, he also sought some form of communication with them. And, like other governors in these early years of the Australian colonies, he did not stop short of kidnapping to do so.<sup>46</sup> Arthur's despatches record the capture of many Aboriginal peoples, and his efforts to convince them of his conciliatory intentions. In one despatch, for example, he related that three Aboriginal women were captured and kept for over a year 'with utmost kindness', then 'deputed to go out with presents to their Tribe and assure them of the friendly feeling of the government and invite them to be conciliated'. The women were released to their people on the condition that they convince them of the goodwill of the government, but it was to little avail. The women soon absconded.<sup>47</sup> Arthur also sought to negotiate with those 'chiefs' he could find. The Aboriginal leader 'Umarrah'<sup>48</sup> (or Numarrow), the 'Chief of the Stony Creek tribe', as Arthur referred to him, was captured by Gilbert Robertson, chief constable at Richmond, on 22 November 1828. The capture of Umarrah, the leader of the North Midlands nation, was celebrated in the settler press. 'White people had been murdered', Umarrah told his captors, 'because they had driven his people from their kangaroo hunting grounds'. His 'determined purpose' was to destroy as many white people as he could, which he 'consider[ed] his patriotic duty'.<sup>49</sup> Arthur imprisoned the Aboriginal leader in Richmond gaol for more than a year, and later attempted to persuade him to convince his people of the government's good intentions. Refusing, Umarrah escaped at the first opportunity.<sup>50</sup>

Around three months after the declaration of martial law, on 4 February 1829, George Frankland, Surveyor General of the colony, suggested to Governor Arthur that communication with Aboriginal people might be made possible through pictures, writing that 'in the absence of successful communication with these unfortunate people with whose language we are totally unacquainted ... it might be possible ... to impart ... the real wishes of the government towards them'.<sup>51</sup> These 'proclamation boards', or 'conciliation boards', as they are now known, were illustrated with dramatic images of friendship, equality before the law and mutual punishment for Aborigines and Europeans alike, and were created as apparent British humanitarian entreaties to conciliation, and for the cessation of frontier violence (Figure 27).<sup>52</sup> Around 100 boards were fastened to trees in frontier areas where it was hoped that Aboriginal people would see them and discern their visual messages.<sup>53</sup> The proclamation boards thus represent an act of 'conciliation' in Van Diemen's Land, made within an atmosphere of violent and prolonged frontier conflict.

George Frankland was known as a linguist, artist and former military man. Frankland has also been described as an 'indefatigable and lively sketcher',<sup>54</sup> and his observations on Aboriginal culture and landscape reveal an interested and keen eye. Frankland desired a resolution to frontier conflict in Van Diemen's Land, and he wrote to Governor Arthur from the Survey Office on 4 February 1829:

Sir – I have lately had the opportunity of ascertaining that the Aboriginal natives of Van Diemen's land are in the habit of representing events by drawings on the bark of trees ... In the absence of all successful communication with these unfortunate people with whose language we are totally unacquainted, it has occurred to me that it might be possible ... to impart to them to a certain extent, the real wishes of the government towards them, and I have accordingly sketched a series of groups of figures, in which I have endeavoured to represent ... the actual state of things (or rather the origins of the present state) and the desired termination of hostility ... It is at best an experiment, but as it will be attended by neither expense or inconvenience, your Excellency may consider it with trying.<sup>55</sup>

Intrigued by this 'newly discovered faculty', Frankland sketched a series of Aboriginal and European figures, showing friendship and equality before the British law. In another letter, written five days later to his associate Under-Secretary R. W. Hay of the Colonial Office, Frankland

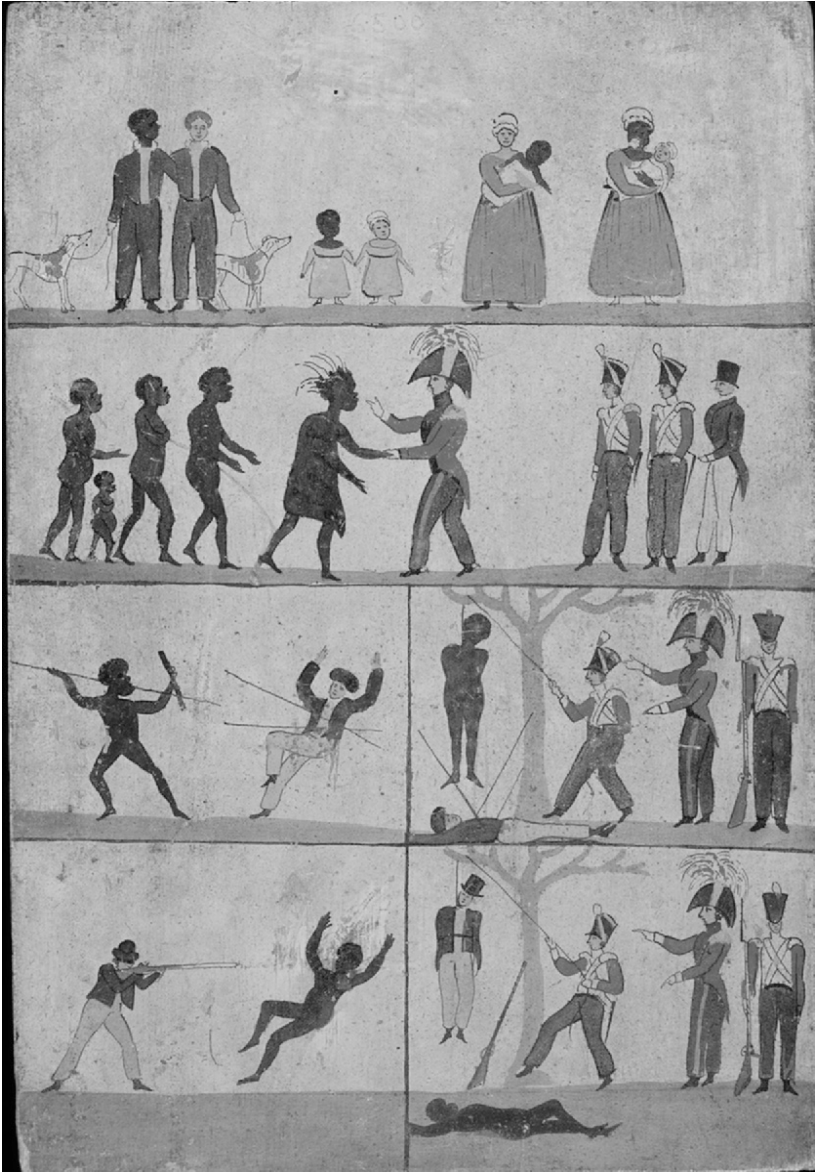


Figure 27 Governor Arthur's proclamation to the Aborigines. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Ethnology, Harvard University, Boston, USA

wrote compassionately of the plight of Aboriginal people and spoke further of his plan for communication with them:

You will have been distressed at the accounts of the poor Natives against whom the Govt have judged it necessary to declare Martial Law. When we consider where the fault originated, and remember the friendly disposition of these poor creatures before they were slaughtered with grapeshot and outraged and massacred in every direction by those far greater savages the convict Stock-keepers, one cannot but lament the present state of things. I have no doubt that they might be reclaimed if communicated with! But no communication has yet been had with them, as we are unacquainted with their language ... I have proposed to Col Arthur to endeavour to make them understand the cause of the present warfare and its desired termination by the medium of pictures, to be nailed against trees in those remote parts of the Country where they are most likely to see them. *It is but an experiment, but everything ought to be tried to accomplish a reconciliation.*<sup>56</sup>

In the same letter, however, Frankland wrote ardently of his surveying work 'to open the South Western County which is as yet unexplored', never apparently connecting his own enterprise as Surveyor General with the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from their land, a clear motivation for their attacks on settlers on the frontier.<sup>57</sup>

It is worth considering closely the visual messages of the boards. Organized in instructive, narrative registers, moving from left to right, four scenes are depicted. In the first scene Aboriginal people in European dress and white settlers mix casually, in a familial style. The men have their arms around each other with brotherly affection, the women hold each other's children, and children hold hands, all suggesting humanitarian ideas prevalent at the time of the brotherhood of man. Domesticated dogs often signify fidelity, and the obedient, leashed hunting dogs held by both men suggest brotherly fidelity and domestication. No longer clustered in their tribal collectivity, Aboriginal people stand as individuals alongside their European counterparts. The familial, communal and gendered aspects of this scene are also of interest. Women nursing each other's babies and the children holding hands suggests an aspiration for mutual trust and affection, which is pertinent in that by the 1820s many Aboriginal women were unwilling to bring their children into Hobart for fear that they would be stolen. Indeed, several governors had attempted to halt the theft of Aboriginal

children by settlers.<sup>58</sup> The Aboriginal people are clothed, civilized and domesticated, and transformation of Aboriginal subjects is a key theme in this scene.

The second scene represents a classic contact or conciliation scene. Aboriginal men, women and an Aboriginal child approach Governor Arthur to shake hands while two British soldiers look on. The third European appears to be a wealthy landowner or perhaps an administrator, with a top hat, tailored long coat and white trousers. The feathered headdresses and regalia of both lead men suggest the meeting of chiefs, the encounter of two kinds of power; they shake hands. One of the Governor's hands is raised in proclamation. This I consider to be the central vignette of the boards, which will be examined in more detail later. In the third scene, an Aboriginal man attacks a white male convict or ticket-of-leave man with a spear and is hanged promptly from the bough of a tree by the British military as Governor Arthur looks on. In the fourth scene, a hostile white convict or ticket-of-leave man shoots an Aboriginal man and is also hanged by the military in the Governor's presence. As noted, the boards were made after the 1828 declaration of martial law by Governor Arthur, and the hangings from the boughs of gum trees (rather than scaffolds) suggest a spontaneous military justice in the form of summary execution. The trees-as-scaffolds tell us that this is martial law on a violent frontier, where ordinary law has been suspended. The boards do not concern 'rule of law', as some scholars have argued,<sup>59</sup> but martial law on a violent frontier.

In the first two scenes, a clear visual symmetry is suggested by the position, mutuality and equivalence between Aboriginal people and Europeans. Yet the hanging scenes reveal a crucial asymmetry. In both hanging scenes it is the British Governor who oversees the administration of apparent justice in the form of capital punishment. If mutual sovereignty of both groups had been acknowledged, then the Aboriginal chief should rightly preside over the execution of the convict in the final scene. Themes of class and convictism are clearly apparent here also. The clothing and colour scheme of blue or grey jackets and yellow trousers chosen repeatedly to depict hostile Europeans is clothing highly suggestive of convictism or ticket-of-leave men.<sup>60</sup> The intended audiences for the proclamation boards were both Aboriginal peoples and convicts, many of whom were illiterate. As the boards convey, convicts, like Aborigines, are the subjects who commit violence and receive punishment for it. In this sense, the boards are didactic and aspirational devices, instruments of diplomacy designed to convey the best British humanitarian entreaties to friendship and

equality, promising the rule of law, cessation of frontier violence and conciliation. The boards represent one of Arthur's various attempts at what he and the colonial office repeatedly termed 'conciliation'. Yet this performance of conciliation was given all too late and after much of the violence had occurred.

Throughout the Australian colonies, calls for conciliation came most often at times of severe violence. In 1830 Arthur appointed George Augustus Robinson to the post of 'Protector of Aborigines' in an attempt to communicate and convey his conciliatory intentions.<sup>61</sup> A Christian man who believed that conciliation was possible, Robinson carried proclamation or 'conciliation' boards with him on his 'friendly mission' in six extensive journeys across Van Diemen's Land to contact Aboriginal groups in the interior.<sup>62</sup>

Little is recorded about how Aboriginal people themselves received these messages or what they did with them. There was one 'success' story reported in the *Tasmanian* newspaper on 26 November 1830, but it is highly likely this was a colonial propaganda piece. The newspaper reported that when Aboriginal leader Umarrah was finally released from Richmond gaol, he was given a copy of one of Frankland's diplomatic sketches:

Mr Frankland presented him with a little sketch, executed with much spirit, of the consequences of the Aborigines adopting a peaceable demeanour, or of continuing in their present murderous and predatory habits. In one part of the sketch, the soldiery were represented firing upon a tribe of the Blacks, who were falling from the effects of the attack. On the other part were seen, another tribe, decently clad, receiving food for themselves and families. *This sketch Numarrow prized very highly, he spoke of it repeatedly, and carried it with him when he went away.* It is not therefore impossible that he may yet intend to conciliate his sable brethren, rather than stimulating them ... to fresh depredations.<sup>63</sup>

The passage above represents one of the very few references to the actual receipt of the images, or versions of them, by Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Based on the description above, this sketch was clearly different to those we recognize on the boards. Aboriginal people 'decently clad', presumably clothed and civilized, received food from the government in return for peaceable behaviour. This early sketch may have been inspired by Robinson's earlier attempt to set up a mission at Bruny Island, where Aboriginal people received rations at a



feeding depot in return for compliant behaviour.<sup>64</sup> Clearly Umarrah did not regard the sketch as instructive at this time. He escaped at the first opportunity, and Arthur feared he had 'rejoined his Tribe with the most hostile intentions'.<sup>65</sup>

Apart from this example of Aboriginal receipt of British conciliation imagery, historical Indigenous readings of and responses to the boards have largely been unrecorded. What did Aboriginal peoples make of the boards, and how did they relate to these pictograms? The story of the boards is often told unilaterally, with Europeans as principal actors and Aboriginal peoples as recipients, ignoring Aboriginal agency in contact and conciliation. The intended Western sequence of reading in which the boards are arranged from left to right and from top to bottom may well have been radically different from the way that Aboriginal people made sense of the boards. Elusive snippets and quotations in the colonial archive, as above, suggest that the images may have been of value to some Aboriginal people, but this may well have been a colonial fantasy.

Governor Arthur issued proclamation boards to serve as tokens of conciliation in the hope of securing a final Aboriginal pacification, in a colony with no treaties, but by this time in early 1830 the majority of Aboriginal peoples had been slaughtered. Much scholarship to date has tended to view the boards within a tradition of inward-looking Vandemonian or Tasmanian exceptionalism. As historian Cassandra Pybus has argued, however, we must also look to the 'complex interconnections and interactions' that make Tasmania 'in some way part of every other history', and overcome geographic isolationism to consider the Australian penal colonies as integral parts of an interconnected global empire.<sup>66</sup> While the proclamation boards express the local historical specificities of colonial Van Diemen's Land and are in many ways unique in their Australian format and extended narrative, they must also be understood as 'instruments of diplomacy', which, despite their obvious failure to effect a conciliation, share a rich visual, intellectual, and trans-imperial lexicon concerning the cessation of violence, conciliation and Indigenous transformation. Such imagery reflects emergent liberal, British evangelical and humanitarian ideas of the late eighteenth century, and these themes may also be found in the iconography of other political objects made during this period, such as in British anti-slavery medals and North American 'peace' or treaty medals (as discussed in this book, for example). These objects were chiefly concerned with the governance and management of colonized Indigenous peoples and slaves in British colonies.

In the central vignette of the proclamation board, the classic contact or conciliation scene shows the British Governor meeting the Aboriginal chief. The chief approaches from the left, while the Governor approaches from the right, and the Aboriginal chief wears a headdress that is highly reminiscent of the headdresses of the North American 'Indian' chiefs depicted on the George Washington (Red Jacket) medals of 1792, and Thomas Jefferson's Peace medals (see Chapters 1 and 2). The cessation of violence is a consistently common theme, as is a shared emphasis on the pacification of Indigenous peoples and, importantly, the inevitable transformation of Indigenous peoples to another stage of civilization and law. While it is difficult to ascertain any direct correlation between the production of these kinds of images in medal form in North America with the proclamation images, there is certainly an international lexicon or emergent vernacular at work here concerning liberal humanism and the colonization, transformation and governance of Indigenous peoples.

As we see, settler societies require both a political narrative and the associated symbolism of conciliation and accord to rationalize the impact, transformation and often devastating effect on Indigenous societies and lands that colonization inflicts. The handshake, suggesting humanitarian benevolence, mutual accord and, importantly, Indigenous volition, was often the premier emblem of this peace or conciliation narrative. Enlightenment ideas of humanitarianism, equality and the brotherhood of man emerged alongside and supported the expansion of Britain's empire and the establishment of settler societies. Here, conciliation and violence, peace and war would always be mutually imbricated. Political and symbolic objects such as the proclamation boards and treaty or 'peace' medals were ultimately expressions of the difficult tensions between liberal humanitarian aspirations and the coercive and pragmatic brutalities of colonization on the ground.

### **The Black Line: 'a grim success'**

In November of 1830, in a despatch to Sir George Murray, Colonial Secretary, Governor Arthur wrote of the government's 'failing in every endeavour to conciliate ... the outrages of the Savages being more daring and their murders and robberies more systematically conducted'.<sup>67</sup> Arthur's proclamation boards were created between two key historical moments in Aboriginal-European relations in early Van Diemen's Land: the declaration of martial law in 1828 and the notorious Black Line of 1830. For Arthur, the boards and other efforts towards what he

described as conciliation, in the midst of a violent colonial campaign, had clearly not delivered on their promise. By late 1830 he had lost faith in the possibility of conciliation. In a war of resistance, Aboriginal peoples raided settler huts for weapons, blankets and stores, speared stock, burnt haystacks, huts, fences and homes, and annexed or razed grazing areas. Settler fear and anxiety was intense, and some were so fearful they sought to give up their land grants. In February 1830, settlers of the Clyde Valley met and moved an address to Governor Arthur, claiming that these Aboriginal raids were 'affecting not only the lives of Colonists', but 'threatening the extinction of the Colony itself by firing our Crops and Dwellings'.<sup>68</sup>

On 1 October 1830 Arthur had extended martial law to the whole island to enable an 'active and extended system of military operations against the natives', known as the Black Line.<sup>69</sup> This 'levee en masse' against the Aborigines – the 'largest force ever assembled against Aborigines anywhere in Australia', as Ryan notes – was a joint military-settler offensive aimed to capture or force Aboriginal people into the Forestier and Tasman Peninsulas at the southeastern reaches of the island. Certainly, this goal was acknowledged in the *Hobart Town Courier*. Nearly three weeks into the offensive, at the end of October 1830, correspondent 'H. R.' reported from the Black Line that the military forces had 'thoroughly scoured and beaten the bush around that difficult country from Jerusalem downward to Bushy Plains and Sorrell', in the southeastern part of the island. The aim, he wrote, was to 'beat the bush and alarm the Blacks as to induce them to fly before [the line] until they were driven into the Peninsula'.<sup>70</sup>

To launch the offensive, Arthur had collected around 2,200 men, 550 of which were troops, the rest civilians.<sup>71</sup> It was a call to which the non-Aboriginal community responded with enthusiasm. This military-style campaign by the British is commonly agreed to have been waged from 7 October to 24 November 1830.<sup>72</sup> But historian Lyndall Ryan has argued recently that, in fact, it endured for far longer, and rather than a six-week folly was a 15-month campaign that was far more successful in its goals of Aboriginal eradication than many realize. Moreover, Ryan has persuasively argued that the line was in fact three lines, and these enabled constant military harassment and violent clearance of Aboriginal peoples, and eventually resulted in 'the forced surrender of the Big River and Oyster bay people'.<sup>73</sup> As she rightly asserts, the Black Line was a 'grim success' for the Government.<sup>74</sup> It forced the surrender of terrorized and exhausted Aboriginal peoples into government protection, under the aegis of George Augustus Robinson the 'Conciliator', or

else they faced being hunted down and killed.<sup>75</sup> The Black Line then was neither a folly nor an 'aberration on Arthur's part', as some historians have argued, but a 'common strategy widely used in other parts of the British Empire to forcibly remove indigenous insurgents from their homelands'.<sup>76</sup> The enduring historical narrative that has maintained that the Black Line was an expensive folly has served to obfuscate its violent intent and critical importance leading up to the so-called 'Great Conciliation', which was, in reality, a surrender of remaining Aboriginal clans into government protection.

While Ryan is correct to say the Black Line was Arthur's 'brain child', the man who most greatly enabled the line's execution was Surveyor General George Frankland, the author of the proclamation boards. Indeed, Frankland is popularly reported to have been Governor Arthur's 'right hand man' in the Black Line, a description that is more than apt. Frankland and his department became 'so intimately involved with the detail of the operation that some referred to it as "Frankland's plan"', writes John Connor. Former military officers occupied many civil appointments, and Frankland had served in India with the 24th regiment.<sup>77</sup> Frankland and his Survey Department were crucial to the planning and execution of the 'Black Line' as a strategic military operation. 'During September', writes Connor, 'members of the Survey department assisted Arthur in finalising his plan and worked with officers and police magistrates to devise the best lines of march for the various parties'. Frankland devised the field plan of movements of the military.<sup>78</sup> Further, his assistant surveyors coordinated the transport of ration to depots on the Black Line, as well as the purchasing of initial supplies of flour and fresh meat for each man.<sup>79</sup>

Aboriginal people were able to break through the Black Line, often at night, and they did so at 'Three Thumbs' on the east coast. In late 1830 there were around 250 Aboriginal peoples remaining in the Settled Districts at the time of the Black Line, although Governor Arthur believed there were far more.<sup>80</sup> These were grouped into three main clans, states Ryan. The first comprised around 60 Big River people, who 'crossed the line on October 16 at a narrow mountain pass known as Miles Opening, 32 kilometres west of Oatlands, and made for the Great Lake' on Tasmania's central plateau. The second group, of around only around 30 people who came from North Midlands and Ben Lomond Plateau/Oyster Bay, was led by the chiefs Mannalargenna, Umarrah and Wareternatterlargener. On the eastern coast was a third group of Oyster Bay and Big River people, led by Aboriginal chief of the Oyster Bay tribe, Tongerlongter.<sup>81</sup> Members of this group would breach the Black Line at Three Thumbs.

As the correspondent 'H. R.' would write at the end of October 1830, colonial military forces were closing in Tongerlongter's tribe, who were now 'hemmed in', and soldiers maintained a vigilant watch, as they expected that the tribe, in knowing of their desperate situation, would 'make their attempt to break though the line more frequent and daring'. The soldiers were under firm instructions to stay silent and watchful, to make sure 'no bugles are sounded', with sentries posted at night ready to sound the alarm if they should catch sight of their quarry.<sup>82</sup>

At this time, two of the three military divisions had 'met and formed a continuous line stretching 50 kilometres east from the town of Richmond through the forests to Spring Bay on the east coast', writes Ryan. Sentinel fires were lit on each hill along the line to ensure communication as the line moved forward. The line reached Prossers Plains two days later, but was halted by heavy rain. To reinforce the line, Arthur ordered that brush fences and 'chevaux -de-frises', or obstacles of projecting spikes, be put up to prevent Aboriginal people from breaking through the line and sent out five 'skirmishing parties', each composed of ten men, to seek out the Big River and Oyster Bay tribe, as they hoped to capture its members at East Bay Neck.<sup>83</sup>

Tongerlongter's people first tried to force their way through the Line at Three Thumbs one early morning, but were pushed back. Later, a skirmishing party led by Captain Edward Walpole saw the Aborigines hunting south of Three Thumbs at Wielangta Forest. Walpole reported to the Colonial Secretary that the party watched the Aborigines for some time and camped for the night in a deep, forested ravine, some distance away from the Aboriginal camp, where they waited undetected in order to attack. Walpole recorded:

[We] crept to one of the Natives, without being perceived by any of the others in the windbreak and there caught [one that was sleeping] by the leg. There were five men in the windbreak, and the other four rushed away, while others of the party were stooping to catch them. One, however, was caught, after he had fallen into the creek, and the two were shot. There were five other windbreaks across the creek, and in the centre of a very thick scrub.<sup>84</sup>

In this attack, two Aboriginal men were shot dead, and the two men captured were Wymerbunner and a young boy around 13 years old, named Tremebonener. As Ryan notes, they were quickly deployed to the skirmishing parties as guides in the rough terrain.<sup>85</sup>

Two days later, at night and in the midst of a storm, at least seven others from Tongerlongter's group forced their way through the Black Line. The correspondent H. R. remarked on the 'cunning of the Black' to choose a 'tempestuous night of Monday to attempt escape as remarkable'.<sup>86</sup> Later, some of this party made it further north to Little Musselroe River in the northeast, where they joined some of Aboriginal leader Mannalargenna's people before they surrendered to conciliator and government agent George Augustus Robinson on 1 November 1830. We have a sense of the extreme terror these people faced. As Ryan reveals, one woman, Luggernemenener, 'told Robinson that she had seen the soldiers, "and had been inside the Line and had run away again, coming out in the morning"'. Luggernemenener 'described the soldiers as extending for a long way and that they kept firing off their muskets' and said that there were 'plenty of Parkutetenner [horsemen], plenty of soldiers, plenty of big fires on the hills'. Luggernemenener had made it through the Black Line, avoiding musket shot and soldiers on horseback. As Ryan observes, she 'knew that she had had a lucky escape'.<sup>87</sup>

But the Line did not end with the surrender of Tongerlongter's group. It continued for at least for another year. Military, settlers and police continued to comb the bush around Three Thumbs, and military patrols, with assistance from settlers, carried on their operations, making two new lines over the following year in their continued attempt to capture Aboriginal peoples. Later, Captain Edward Walpole, whose party had shot and killed at least two Aboriginal men, and captured Wymerbunner and the young boy Tremebonener, was granted 1000 acres south of the Prosser River for his efforts.

In this way, the Black Line aided G. A. Robinson's so-called 'friendly mission' in its objectives. From October to December 1831, Robinson was moving through central Tasmania searching for the feared Big River and Oyster Bay groups, who had terrorized the settled districts. When Robinson and his Aboriginal negotiators finally made contact with the Big River people on 31 December, only 24 of its people remained.<sup>88</sup> Robinson met with these war-weary Aboriginal people near Lake Echo and persuaded them to travel to Hobart with him. On their way there, they performed a final corroboree outside the Castle Hotel in Bothwell in January 1832. Robinson's return to Hobart with these Aboriginal people has been described as a Roman triumph. They were paraded through the streets to the strains of a military band, and hundreds of settlers came to see them.<sup>89</sup> The so-called conciliation of the Big River people in December 1831 was, in reality, an Aboriginal surrender into government

protection; it was the final chapter in Robinson's 'friendly mission' and marked the end of the Black War, at least in the minds of settlers.<sup>90</sup>

In 1832, after the peak of violence in Van Diemen's Land, Arthur lamented too late that 'a treaty was not entered into with the Natives', stating that the results of such devastation and loss of Aboriginal life 'must ever remain a stain upon the colonisation of Van Diemen's Land'.<sup>91</sup> By August 1834 the Aboriginal 'problem', as the colonists perceived it, had been settled.<sup>92</sup> The story of the final 'conciliation' is well known and has been popularized in visual and literary culture. By 1840 the painter Benjamin Duterrau would also celebrate and memorialize the mission of George Robinson in the grand painting *The Conciliation*, which included members of the Big River group posed around the 'Protector of Aborigines', and judged to be one of Australia's first monumental history paintings. Duterrau replicated these images of the Big River people, the conciliator Robinson and his Aboriginal negotiators many times over, including in pencil sketches, oil and plaster casts. Such work served to mythologize Robinson and the 'final conciliation' of the Aboriginal people of Van Diemen's Land.

Less well known is that Bothwell's settlers sought to publicly express their gratitude to Robinson for his mission. In 1835 the residents of Bothwell commissioned an ornate, double-handled silver cup to mark the success of his 'friendly mission' (Figure 28). The *Hobart Town Courier* reported, 'We have just seen a splendid specimen of colonial workmanship ... to be presented by the inhabitants of the Bothwell district to Mr. Robinson, in commemoration of his services in conciliating the hostile Blacks.'<sup>93</sup> The inscription on the cup reads: 'Presented to Mr. G. A. Robinson, by the inhabitants of the District of Bothwell, Van Diemen's Land, in testimony of their acknowledgement of the benefit the Colony has derived from the successful conciliation of the Aborigines of the Island, effected by him 1835.'<sup>94</sup>

The cup is a passionate settler memorialization of the conciliation as a successful and virtuous service to them. The commemorative cup form has a long history. Such objects both mark an event and memorialize it, and thus possess mnemonic and archival properties. The silver cup shows the great importance settlers gave to the wholesale removal of Aboriginal people, and their efforts to triumphantly mark the end of the 'Black War'.

Today Tasmanian Aboriginal people engage in a very different form of memorialization, which foregrounds and commemorates their escape, defiance and survival of the Black Line, and seeks to overcome the trauma of the line and the heavy weight of history.



Figure 28 Engraved sterling silver Bothwell cup, 1835 by David Barclay, Hobart. Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

### Disturbing locations: crossing the Black Line

In gathering here, we say that our history is not the last word. The Black Line is not the only movement across this land. There is another movement, a movement of survival, of renewal, a movement of healing. And rather than being organized by a government, the Spirit is stirring within people's own lives, among families and communities.

Aunt Ida West/Grant Finlay, Three Thumbs ceremony,  
Orford, Tasmania, 28 October 2001

In October 2001, in a clearing amid bushland at Three Thumbs Lookout on the east coast of Tasmania, a group gathered to hold a quiet and deeply felt ceremony of remembrance, survival and healing (Figure 29).





*Figure 29* 'Three Thumbs' Black Line ceremony, Orford, Tasmania, 2001. Elder Ida West sits at the centre of the ceremony in the foreground. Courtesy Elder Brenda Hodge, Riawunna Aboriginal Centre, and thanks to Mark West, Sally Blanden and Wendy Moore

At this popular picnic spot, with its expansive views over Prosser Bay, and a year after the Australia's nation-wide bridge walks for reconciliation (2000), this cross-cultural performance called on Tasmania's violent colonial past in its remembrance of the notorious 'Black Line'. As shown, Three Thumbs is significant as a place at which Aboriginal people breached the military cordon during a night of storm and rain. The site therefore represents a moment of escape, of breaking through a government-sponsored and deadly military offensive against them. But it is also a site of mourning: at least two Aboriginal men were killed and two were captured in their attempt to break through the Black Line.

Although the 2001 'Black Line ceremony' emerged out of a reconciliatory moment in Australia, it did not exclusively feature reconciliation *between* settlers and Aboriginal peoples. Rather, it was a performance directed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, led and conceived by Aboriginal Elder Aunt Ida West (1919–2003), in conjunction with Reverend Grant Finlay from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC Tasmania), and designed with cross-cultural Indigenous–Christian rituals.<sup>95</sup> Aunt Ida West was born on the Aboriginal Reserve at Cape Barren Island, in the Bass Strait, and later

her family moved to Killiecrankie, on Flinders Island, where she was raised. Her determined action to create 'services' or commemorative performances, sometimes with a small group, at other times with the larger Glenorchy Reconciliation Group or church groups with which she worked over the years, reveals her passionate determination to promote cultural understanding in acts that were both reconciliatory and, by turns, radically decolonizing. Aunt Ida has been described as an activist, ambassador and prominent Elder.<sup>96</sup> Her fight for land rights, with other Aboriginal activists, resulted in the handing over of the title deeds to Wybalenna (the former settlement) on Flinders Island to the Aboriginal community in April 1999.<sup>97</sup>

Ida West was an Aboriginal matriarch. She was 'a strong, outspoken woman who was prepared to fight for justice for her family and her community', writes Jim Everett. 'Ida only ever wanted to see justice and fairness for all ... In her later years before her death, her energy amazed most people who came to know her. Aunt Ida was always on the move, talking with politicians, church people, Aboriginal community leaders and young people. Aunt Ida had her vision for the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, and she also had a clear understanding of the wider white community and its problems.'<sup>98</sup>

Aunt Ida West led the Hobart Walk for Reconciliation in 2000, crossing the bridge over the Derwent River with 25,000 other people to show her commitment to Australia's formal reconciliation movement. She was a founding member of the Glenorchy Branch of 'Australians for Reconciliation'. But she also created her own performances at sites of importance to Aboriginal history and identity. As Grant Finlay recalls:

Aunty Ida had an interest in visiting sites around the state where conflict, massacres ... had occurred, and for us to have a 'service' there. Over a few years we also had 'services' at Risdon Cove, Putalina [Oyster Cove former Aboriginal settlement], and some midden sites along the Derwent river. I think it was in 2002 that she went to the Woolnorth property in the northwest [of Tasmania] and visited Cape Grim [where a massacre had also taken place] ... this occurred before Aunty Ida died in September 2003.<sup>99</sup>

At Three Thumbs, as Finlay recalls, the 'ceremony happened because it was [Aunt Ida's] idea and she had a group (our 'congregation') who were interested in it ... The other helpful issue about it being small-scale was that she could decide where it was and mostly what happened in the ceremony.' Unlike 'top-down' state events, says Finlay, these ceremonies

were inspired by Ida West herself, as a highly respected Aboriginal Elder, and her personal 'desire for something "ceremonial" to happen at these sites ... So people came largely because of her invitation.' As Finlay relates, 'Aunty Ida and I talked about "what she wanted to have happen". For example, the "Deeper River" song we sang was a favourite of her daughter's and we sang it pretty regularly in our Sunday services.' At Three Thumbs, there were around 40–50 participants in total, fairly evenly split between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.<sup>100</sup> Finlay explains the importance, for Aunt Ida, in affirming hidden Aboriginal historical narratives through their re-telling:

The Thumbs was, for Aunty Ida, about visiting a site where conflict between Aboriginal people and colonialists had occurred. It was linked with her desire to visit other sites. I think it was about remembering what happened. She had a strong sense of these kinds of stories being forgotten, or suppressed, and the importance of visiting the places as a way of honouring the people and their experiences, and that somehow by being there, remembering and honouring the people that it did something to how people today remember the story.<sup>101</sup>

On a cold October morning in bushland, surrounded by tall trees, members of the Glenorchy Reconciliation group and others, wrapped in coats and beanies, gathered together for a ceremony led by Aunt Ida, other Elders of the UAICC, and the Reverend Grant Finlay. The purpose of the occasion and welcome speech in the guide booklet for the event are reproduced here as follows: 'We gather to remember the people who lived in this area, those who evaded the Black Line of 1830, and others who died in the conflict of the colonial years. We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional land of the Portmairremener people who were part of the Oyster Bay group.'<sup>102</sup> The group sang the hymn 'Holy Ground', with its refrain, 'This is holy ground, we're standing on holy ground', emblematic of the desire by Aunt Ida, other Elders, and the rest of the reconciliation group, to reclaim and resanctify ground on which took place violent military-settler actions against Aboriginal peoples seeking to escape the Black Line.

As part of the process of remembering, Aunt Ida spoke to the group about the reason for their gathering: to remember the story of the Black Line as emblematic of violent repression and land theft, but also of Aboriginal survival.<sup>103</sup> It is of interest that the foundational work of historians Lyndall Ryan and Henry Reynolds was used in the ceremony

to describe some aspects of Aboriginal life at contact, and then the violence to which they were subjected.<sup>104</sup>

As the ritual began in the crisp, foggy air, participants rolled out a strip of black cloth to symbolize the 'Black Line', and it was passed over people from the back to the front of the group 'to remind us of the Line that moved across the land'.<sup>105</sup> The participants stepped over and under a length of black cloth, a figurative Black Line which stretched out before them, and commemorated the violence of the Black Line suffered by Aboriginal peoples. The leader of the ceremony then spoke:

This black line is a sign of different things in the history of this land. It reminds us of the racism that motivated the colonisers, and their attempts to clear the land of its rightful custodians. It also reminds us of the free people who eluded the Line, who probably laughed at the stupidity of the idea, and who continued to survive.<sup>106</sup>

The black cloth was gathered in the front near the fire, and the group shared a moment of silence to 'remember the people of this area, and others who were killed in those years, or died as a result of the loss of their lands'. After another prayer, Leroy Hart, Aboriginal dancer, performed for the ceremony.

This was followed by another prayer, led by Bishop John Harrower of the Anglican Church, and then the leader of the ceremony explained the failure of the Black Line:

Later in the following years in the early 1830's, many joined the negotiated settlement with G. A. Robinson, about a move to one of the Bass Strait islands, eventually being at Wybalenna on Flinders Island. Those who moved to Wybalenna did not return home here. But others survived, and not only survived but grew, on the islands in the Furneaux group where they lived independently. Others survived Wybalenna and moved to Oyster Cove and other parts of southern Tasmania, so that the community continues to grow today.

In gathering here, we say that our history is not the last word. The Black Line is not the only movement across this land. There is another movement, a movement of survival, of renewal, a movement of healing. And rather than being organised by a government, the Spirit is stirring within people's own lives, among families and communities. Just as the majority of the people of this area eluded the Black Line, so too many in the Aboriginal community continue

to practice culture and to pass on stories and traditions to younger generations.<sup>107</sup>

Following traditional Aboriginal practice, which used eucalyptus as a remedy for illness, and ritual smoking ceremonies, eucalyptus leaves were burned in a bowl to signify healing and cleansing. Another bowl held blue ribbon, which was passed to participants, who were to 'step over the [cloth] Line' to take up the offering. The ribbon signified 'the healing waters of grieving tears', perhaps a baptismal reference, and marked the taking of new steps in the present towards a different future.<sup>108</sup> As Finlay would recollect 15 years later, 'Aunty Ida liked the colour blue and it represented "healing" for her. The blue colour worked well with the symbol of water and cleansing.'<sup>109</sup> The ceremony concluded with the performance of traditional dance to the song *Deeper River*, and a final closing prayer.<sup>110</sup>

In this potent and embodied ritual, the Black Line, a cordon of violence and part of the war on Aboriginal people, was transformed into a threshold line, where stepping over it became a rite of passage. In honouring Aboriginal efforts to break through the military line, the ritualized crossing became an embodied transformation – a physical passage from one state to another. This was a transformative and affective cross-cultural performance brought about by Ida West's urgent desire to conduct 'services' at many sites of violence across the landscape of Tasmania in the years before she passed away.

## Conclusion

Combining Aboriginal and European ritual, the Three Thumbs performance addressed the Aboriginal past, overturned accepted colonial narratives to reveal the 'other side of the frontier', and reached into the mythic to build community survival and empowerment. What is impressive about Ida West's work is that she and her group visited sites of violence around Tasmania, including holding a private ceremony at Cape Grim, a colonial massacre site in the north of the Island, in a deliberate process of ritualized healing of people and landscape. The performances thus constituted a radical form of localized Aboriginal counter-mapping, where each site of violence was physically visited, ceremonies performed, and thus landscape resacralized, or returned to the sacred. These 'services' as forms of ritual historicizing at sites of violence thus had a great amount of symbolic and political work to do, so much more than memorialization. The affective work allowed

that these dark sites could become spaces where new and ‘innovative ways of being’, new postcolonialities could be forged, and thus offer the potential for a ‘different order of politics’, as Katrina Schlunke has observed.<sup>111</sup> Perhaps this too is a form of reconciliation on the ground, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people collectively go through a truth telling and healing process, in the name of forging new socialities.

The Black Line ceremony created by Aunt Ida West is an example, I suggest, of recuperative grassroots activism that is decolonizing in its effort to privilege Aboriginal knowledge and memory through retelling stories that have been submerged or silenced by dominant settler narratives. But it is also an example of a hybridized ritual form that reflects a desire for reconciliation and renewal. Such events are ‘peacebuilding dramas’ writes Polly O. Walker, as well as transformative rituals that confront the ‘status quo’ and in this way create the possibility for a ‘respectful engagement with indigenous epistemologies’.<sup>112</sup> It has been argued, most notably by Glen Coulthard, that ‘Reconciliation’ (with a capital R) itself is a hegemonic settler narrative. As ‘Reconciliation’ is embedded in a flawed politics of recognition, he argues, it can only reduplicate the colonizing relationship. He argues instead for a ‘*resurgent politics of recognition*’ premised on self-actualization, direct action, and the resurgence of cultural practices that are attentive to the subjective and structural composition of settler colonial power’.<sup>113</sup> As Aboriginal performances of resistance such as Gough’s *Manifestation* have demonstrated, state-sponsored reconciliation efforts too often cycle back to the false hand of friendship, such as that proffered by the Great Conciliator, George Augustus Robinson. Certainly, when Ida West declared, ‘Our history is not the last word’, it was an affirmation of Aboriginal survival and a rejection of the heavy historical narrative of both a ‘Great Conciliation’ and an (erroneous) Aboriginal extinction; but it also pointed to an as yet unwritten future.

Activist performances, such as that at Three Thumbs, demonstrate the powerful desire for a form of decolonized reconciliation based in local geographies and draw on local Aboriginal cultural histories and protocols and cross-cultural symbols. As I argue in this book, these ritual performances constitute the labour of working through the historical present by symbolic means. They are an effect of the ambivalent condition of postcoloniality as performances that actively work through the dialectical relationship between violence and friendship, pulled, as it were, in opposite directions simultaneously.

While the politics of resentment and rejection, as outlined by Coulthard, are vitally important and productive, the space of the

political may be far more messy on the ground. Indigenous people with allied others engage in practices that are by turn reconciliatory and decolonizing, and sometimes they are both. If living in a postcolonial society means that Indigenous and settler lives are inextricably entangled, then we do need to take seriously the possibility that the creative symbolic work of revisioning the past through performance is reconciliatory to the extent that it seeks to actively transform those relations. As is reflected in the entangled relationships of settler states like Australia, reconciliation performances can erase Aboriginal experience by reaffirming the settler self (for example, through restorative justice strategies demanding forgiveness), but they can also authorize Aboriginal experience through Aboriginal-led memorial rituals. The Black Line memorial ceremony – as in the Myall Creek memorial (Chapter 3) – is a more radical approach than state-led events for the way it centralizes Aboriginal identity and historical experience. But this doesn't necessarily make it a more perfect politics. Activists like Ida West must always work from within the overlapping spaces of horror and heart. As Ida herself said, 'I've been a radical ... I suppose ... but I've also tried to see things from both sides.'<sup>114</sup>

The heavy historical narrative of violence, genocide and ostensible extinction of Aboriginal peoples, but also a mythic 'great conciliation', perennially haunts Tasmania. But there is also the story of survival of Aboriginal peoples, important counter-colonial histories, which shows the transcending of a tragic history against difficult odds, ongoing efforts towards cultural reclamation, and a political refusal to be locked into a narrative of genocidal history. Aboriginal people say 'Our history is not the last word'.

# 5

## ‘We did not sign a treaty ... we did not surrender!’ Contesting the Consensus Politics of the Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand

On a hot January day in 2005, six Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal members wearing sun hats sat on a wooden dray drawn by large carthorses. They were carried slowly down a dirt road, past upturned burning cars and smoke, passing the outlines of bodies in white chalk, and through a ring of fire to cross the ‘confiscation line’ into Tūhoe land. This confiscation line was the boundary made by the British Crown to designate Māori lands taken by the Crown in 1866.<sup>1</sup> At the line the tribunal members were met by Māori warriors on horseback, their horses painted blood red, circling around the cart.<sup>2</sup> The group had travelled to Tūhoe lands in Te Urewera region of Aotearoa New Zealand’s North Island for a week of hearings into Treaty of Waitangi claims. Television cameras were there for this nationally significant meeting. A *pōwhiri*, or ceremonial welcome, at Rūatoki was organized for the tribunal members at the meeting house on the *marae* (meeting ground). Once at the meeting ground the tribunal members were confronted by the *wero*, the traditionally aggressive Māori challenge of the visitor at the beginning of a ceremony, and the most spectacular part of any *pōwhiri*.<sup>3</sup> But the *wero* had been blended with a dramatic replay of the past, accompanied by the confusion of smoke, loud chanting and turning horses. The Tūhoe re-enacted the 1860s ‘scorched earth’ policy of the settler government and the *raupatu*, the confiscation of their lands. In a deliberate piece of history-making and mediatized protest – part play on the ‘savage’ spectacle, part counter-colonial intervention, part retelling of the past – the Tūhoe recreated the chaos of the colonial theft of their land and the burning of their homes and crops in the 1860s and 1870s as part of New Zealand’s East Cape War.<sup>4</sup>

At the entrance to the meeting house, amid the noise and smoke, veteran Māori activist Tame Iti, dressed in the nineteenth-century



bushfighter's plaid kilt and military cap, held a shotgun and stood before tribunal members and an audience of over 50 members of the Tūhoe tribe. He walked to the flag on the ground, directly in front of the tribunal members, and shot it three times (Figure 30). He then spat on the ground in front of the Governor-General of Aotearoa New Zealand. As the scene ended, Tame Iti spoke directly to the television cameras: 'We wanted them [tribunal members] to feel the heat and smoke, and Tūhoe outrage and disgust at the way we have been treated for 200 years.'<sup>5</sup>

Tūhoe re-enacted and renarrated the terror their forebears had experienced during the colonial period in a spectacular and fiery performance of *iwi* (tribal) sovereignty with Waitangi Tribunal members (who were both Māori and Pākehā, or of European descent) and the media as witnesses. The event made national news, and the footage of Iti shooting the national flag of New Zealand was replayed around the world.<sup>6</sup> The *New Zealand Herald* reported that tribunal members had 'found themselves in the midst of a Tūhoe re-enactment not to be forgotten', labelling Iti's performance an act of 'shot gun diplomacy', and discrediting his actions as violent strong-arm tactics, a form of illegitimate action as opposed to acceptable methods of political diplomacy.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, other accounts described the actions of Iti as theatrical gimmick, equally discrediting the political performance as a mere sensationalist stunt. One journalist dubbed Iti the 'accidental terrorist', asking if



Figure 30 Tame Iti shoots the flag, January 2005. Image courtesy TVNZ

he was more 'thespian than terrorist'.<sup>8</sup> Tame Iti was later found guilty of two charges of unlawfully possessing a firearm, and fined.<sup>9</sup> In late 2005, as Iti sat in his backyard and was interviewed by a Spanish activist television station, he reflected on the day, invoking both colonial warfare and the Treaty of Waitangi: 'There are two things that the state accuse me of ... for holding a firearm without a licence and discharging a firearm ... This occurred on January 16, 2005, this year as a result of a re-enactment of the atrocity that occurred here 150 years ago.'<sup>10</sup> He continued: 'The thing people need to know – we did not surrender – we did not sign a treaty with the Crown – we did not surrender.'<sup>11</sup>

If we are to be attentive to the politics of Aotearoa New Zealand as a formally bicultural nation marked by struggles for authority and competing understanding, historians must become 'bihistorical', stated the late historian Judith Binney. Such a bihistorical understanding, Binney argued, requires recognition 'not simply that there are alternative accounts of the same events, but alternative cultural codes which give conflicting accounts of what authority is'.<sup>12</sup> Essential to this bihistorical endeavour is the consideration of the long history of Māori political assertion of autonomy and sovereignty in Aotearoa New Zealand, including Māori remediations of the past in the form of protest and performances that seek to contest, subvert or renarrate mainstream settler political processes of history-making. Far more than 'shotgun diplomacy' or mere gimmick, such political protests and bodily performances challenge the making of public culture in nominally postcolonial settler societies like Aotearoa New Zealand in profound ways.

This chapter considers Māori public performance and re-enactment that truly tests these cultural codes and conflicting accounts of authority in the context of a postcolonial settler statecraft which works towards a national politics of consensus and reconciliation through the aegis of the re-enlivened Treaty of Waitangi. Reflecting, importantly, on themes of *iwi* (or tribe) versus nation, I consider the ways in which a postcolonial consensus politics is performatively made and unmade through various forms of re-enactment. I look at Māori activist Tame Iti's powerful 2005 re-enactment of the nineteenth-century land wars of the East Cape, and the assertion of Tūhoe sovereignty, in the broader context of a dominant bicultural national narrative that is premised on consensus, built, in part, through the Waitangi Treaty Day centenary re-enactment of 1940. I examine the 1940 Treaty of Waitangi Day re-enactment to explore the multivalent ways in which this national founding consensus discourse, promulgating a nationalist mythic exchange, was enacted and maintained through the promotion of ideas

of bicultural equivalence and social inclusion through historical performances. By the 1980s Waitangi Day would become a site of ongoing protest by Māori around issues of the treaty and return of lands. While the Waitangi Day commemoration today is, of course, a morally contested and performative terrain within a bicultural and multicultural nation, nevertheless, performances of consensus engendered from the 1940 re-enactment continue to resonate and create meaning in the present.

These two performances are divergent: for instance, while the Treaty of Waitangi re-enactment in 1940 sought to promote national consensus based on the idea of the unity of two races, in 2005 Tame Iti rejected consensus through his rendition of the violent colonial past, thus problematizing and creatively forcing a new relationship with the state before the tribunal members. Yet in both performances the powerful theme of *raupatu* or land confiscation emerged. I reflect on the ways that Tame Iti's retelling of the 'atrocities' of the colonial scorched-earth policy of Tūhoe lands wholly ruptures the treaty's nation-based compact by foregrounding *iwi* experience, history and sovereignty over national bicultural imperatives. In the mid-2000s this anticolonial and powerfully decolonizing performance was either derided as a form of illegitimate history or seen as a destructive 'antidiplomacy' within the framework of the settler nation, with some counter-colonial activities being redescribed and forcefully suppressed as a form of globalized 'counterterrorism'. Yet alternative readings of Iti's re-enactment show that it opened a new performative space for a renegotiation of contemporary relationships with the past, and of Tūhoe with the state. Since then, the recent and historic Tūhoe settlement has demonstrated that matters of history are of paramount concern and the opening of the space of the political has paid off.

### **The treaty: performing conciliation and the problems of consensus politics**

As previous chapters have shown, the promotion of the politics of consensus and reconciliation is important in moves towards a new postcolonial sociality and takes on specific national meanings. Settler societies often require a narrative of conciliation or consensus, which demands at least the appearance of Indigenous participation, to rationalize past and ongoing conflict, and to develop a peace paradigm or stabilization strategy, in order to build political trust that is notoriously strained. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi – signed in 1840 yet left to languish for well over 100 years – was legally and culturally

enlivened in 1975 by the Waitangi Tribunal. The ‘spirit of Waitangi’ now suffuses civic and legal life, and promotes a way forward at multiple social and political levels in a bicultural society. Often described as the ‘settlement’, this process exists within the political lexicon and framework of reconciliation.<sup>13</sup>

As outlined in my Introduction, reconciliation occupies an uncertain and shifting space between the hope of a reimagined equitable future wrought from the tragedies of the past and the defiance of any such tryst already undercut and defined by violence and coercion. The narrative of conciliation thus can offer hope for a genuine exchange, yet can also be coercive. Todd May explains that consensus politics – as Jacques Rancière described it – ‘envisions a seamless world with no room for disagreement or dissensus’<sup>14</sup> and seeks to manage populations by forcing allegiance to a common identification determined by the nation. In contemporary postcolonial, bicultural nations like New Zealand, where settlers do not go home and formal decolonization is not possible, state-supported, commemorative reconciliation events may work to silence difference. They function as a ‘law of consensus’ that, as Rancière argues, assumes universal inclusion, such that claims to exclusion cannot even be voiced or represented because they are already rendered mute and invisible.<sup>15</sup> This chapter examines Tame Iti’s protest as an important disruption to the narrative of conciliation, where the past, cleansed of conflict, is revisioned to uphold the semblance of a unity that in fact disrespects the biculturalism it ostensibly aims to celebrate.

The Treaty of Waitangi was first signed between the British Crown and Māori at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands on 6 February 1840, and then at numerous other locations throughout the North and South Islands. Over 500 Māori men and some women placed their mark to the treaty or a copy of it.<sup>16</sup> Today many Māori honour the political acumen and agency of their ancestors in negotiating the treaty. Some prominent chiefs and groups of Māori chose not to sign, however, among them Te Whero Whero of Waikato, who would later become the first Māori king in 1858.<sup>17</sup> Significantly, the Tūhoe did not sign the Treaty of Waitangi. Instead, they became a ‘tribal enclave’, an ‘area of recognised Māori self-government that coexisted in law’, at least for some time, with the settler nation state.<sup>18</sup>

The Treaty had apparently affirmed Māori *rangatiratanga* (independence, chieftainship) and promised Māori the same citizenship rights as other New Zealanders under the British Crown, yet it was quickly dishonoured by the British. As is now well known, disputes centred on two versions of the treaty and their respective translations: the

English version and the different translation in *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language), the text which was signed by the majority of Māori. The issue of sovereignty is one of the key points of contention between the two versions. While the first article in English transferred sovereignty to the Crown, in the Māori-language version Māori relinquished *Kawanatanga* (governance or governorship) to Queen Victoria, while retaining *te tino rangatiratanga* (absolute chieftainship) over their various forms of property.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the treaty was considered by the colonial government to have little legal status. At the time of the treaty signing, New Zealand was part of the colony of New South Wales. By November 1840, New Zealand had become a separate British colony, and an influx of settlers had already begun. Only a year after the signing of the treaty, a New Zealand Company official described it as a mere convenient ruse, 'a praiseworthy device for pacifying the natives at the moment'.<sup>20</sup>

The gradual remobilization of the spirit of the treaty began to occur based on longstanding Māori activism and, significantly, with the formation of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975, a permanent commission of inquiry charged with redressing breaches of the Crown regarding the treaty. Since then the treaty has been enlisted by the state to negotiate a covenant for a radical national refounding and as a guiding agreement or accord for reconciliation between Māori and Pākehā within a formally bicultural, postcolonial nation.<sup>21</sup> Reflecting shifts that are truly socially transformative, Ingrid Huygens believes, in what is an aspirational reading, that with this process many Māori and Pākehā now honour the treaty as a new social and even sacred contract. In this social contract Māori are identified as *tangata whenua* or 'people of the land', a term with longstanding cultural meaning, and Pākehā as *tangata tiriti*, or 'treaty people', a far more recent appellation. In this way, notes Huygens, 'treaty people', that is, people transformed by the treaty, 'become legitimate and legal treaty people or partners within the context of the honoured treaty relationship'.<sup>22</sup> In what might be described as a postcolonial covenant, the enlivened treaty as mythic exchange has thus become a 'platform for civic education, constitutional change and an honoured relationship between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti', argues Huygens.<sup>23</sup>

This state-based and formal reconciliation or consensus politics is recursively performed and reaffirmed in the various re-enactments surrounding Aotearoa New Zealand's Waitangi Day, although it arguably remains a diverse and morally disputed field. During the 1980s, Waitangi Day would become a site of major and ongoing protest by Māori and

others around issues of the status of the treaty and demand for return of lands. Nevertheless, consensus narratives were performed and inscribed in the social imagination, in particular, through the earliest re-enactment of events at Waitangi since the 1940 centenary of the treaty, and they continue to be enacted. Yet contested pasts continually irrupt present narratives of conciliation, and the politics of consensus presents numerous problems and paradoxes for postcolonial settler societies. Iti's subversive re-enactment – his shooting of the flag and dishonouring of the Governor-General – discredited the two most prominent symbols of the state. His spectacular replay of the nineteenth-century land wars radically ruptured public and national consensus-making, revealing its tensions and helping to force a new public dialogue with the state.

### **The East Cape War: colonial violence and 'scorched earth' policy at the Bay of Plenty**

Māori grievances over the treaty date from soon after its signing in 1840. Loss of land and economic status, and lack of representation caused major Māori opposition. One of the first signatories of the treaty, Hone Heke, began to protest in the early 1840s. In a dramatic and highly symbolic protest he cut down the Maiki Hill flagstaff and its British flag at Kororāreka, now Russell, in the Bay of Islands, four times. After the fourth felling, Heke and his warriors attacked Kororāreka. The small town was destroyed in the conflict and a number of settlers were killed, contributing to the beginning of the northern war.<sup>24</sup> As early as 1843, further conflict arose, leading to the New Zealand Wars or 'land wars', which lasted from around 1843 to 1872. A major cause of conflict was undoubtedly the sudden influx of new settlers from Europe. While dispute over land was the critical factor in the outbreak of war, also contested was the issue of sovereignty surrounding the Treaty of Waitangi. The land wars led to massive confiscation and loss of Māori lands. While some Māori groups (such as the Te Arawa) were closely allied to British forces, those who rebelled were punished with land confiscations. The operations of settler colonialism are amply apparent here: troops from the British colonies, including two regiments from Australia, were brought over to fight Māori for their land. Aptly termed 'military settlers', these soldiers were in turn rewarded with Māori lands.

The most sustained and far-reaching campaign was the conflict between the British and the Māori king fought in Taranaki, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty in 1860–4. In the last period of the wars, from 1864 to 1872, fighting took place largely between colonial troops and their Māori

allies against followers of Māori prophetic leaders. These wars occurred in Taranaki, the East Coast, and the central North Island. A series of conflicts fought in New Zealand's North Island from about 13 April 1865 to June 1868 are known collectively as the East Cape War.<sup>25</sup>

The past that Tame Iti performatively invoked in his political re-enactment was the contested history of Te Urewera. Iti's people of Te Urewera country lost their lands to the settler state in the massive land confiscations at the eastern Bay of Plenty, part of the East Cape War.<sup>26</sup> As Binney relates, Te Urewera lands were inaccessible to settlers and, in the European imperial imagination, a primordial, concealing landscape, 'the heart of darkness'. By the 1860s, the people of Tūhoe were perceived to be 'men of the mountains: defiant, untamed, resilient, poor ... and shy', embodying the 'final bastion of an entrenched mana Māori' because they defended their land until they were physically removed from their mountainous home into temporary camps or, in some instances, into permanent exile.<sup>27</sup> Violent resistance to colonial authority attributed to the Tūhoe culminated in 1865, with the execution of missionary and government informant Carl Völkner of the Church Missionary Society near his church at Opotiki, near the coast.

In a move designed to force Tūhoe into submission and to open land to settlers, the colonial government ordered a full-scale military occupation of the eastern Bay of Plenty in September 1865. Land was confiscated at Opotiki and around coastal areas of the bay.<sup>28</sup> Martial law was imposed for around 18 months, and any resistance was considered rebellion. On 16 January 1866 all low-lying and fertile lands at the northern edges of Te Urewera were confiscated. This was a punitive action, but was also aimed to compensate for the escalating cost of the land wars. The government-gazetted confiscation line was redrawn and finally established on 11 September 1866, excising a large portion of Tūhoe land. This line was rendered by Tūhoe as not only the marker of hundreds of acres taken by the British, but also as *aukatī*, a traditional defensive line that none with hostile intentions could cross without reprisal. The East Coast Land Titles Investigation Act, 1866 was an instrument used to enable the confiscation of lands belonging to those considered to be rebels.<sup>29</sup> A Compensation Court was established, charged with distinguishing between 'loyalist' and 'rebel' Māori. This began the process of breaking up Māori collective ownership in favour of individual Māori land title, undermining *hapū* (clan) and tribal cohesion. The confiscation of Tūhoe land, surmises Binney, 'created rebellion where there had been none'.<sup>30</sup>

While several Tūhoe chiefs attempted to maintain peace in order to avert full-scale military invasion of Te Urewera, some small groups of

Tūhoe did not comply with the agreed strategy of non-involvement outside the *aukati*. Instead they crossed the confiscation line and conducted guerrilla raids, harassing and killing small groups of military settlers to contest land claimed by them or awarded to them by the Compensation Court.<sup>31</sup> Tūhoe also resisted their land being surveyed by taking up survey pegs. Nevertheless, at several meetings in 1867 Tūhoe leaders 'issued clear statements they wanted peace'.<sup>32</sup> By January 1868 many Tūhoe were stricken by an influenza-like epidemic. Resident Magistrate at Opotiki, William Mair, reported: 'A disease has appeared among them lately of which many of them have died'; many were poor, severely ill from the disease, and 'wretchedly in want of clothing'.<sup>33</sup> After more skirmishes over land, and suspicions that an attack would be made on the town of Opotiki, a military party led by Major J. H. St John pushed into Te Urewera, with Te Arawa soldiers in the lead. As they pulled back, they used 'scorched earth tactics' to destroy all crops. Later, on another foray, the settler force destroyed potato storage pits and, later again, burnt all food supplies so that the *aukati* line could not be extended. As Binney remarks, St John had 'learnt that starvation was his best ally in this war'.<sup>34</sup> This was the colonial scorched-earth strategy that the Tūhoe re-enacted in their protest in 2005.

By 1869 the Tūhoe, pushed off their coastal lands, sheltered government fugitive Te Kooti, who had escaped from prison on the Chatham Islands, and once again the government took punitive action against them. By this time Tūhoe, under severe duress, were forced to come into coastal areas to sell their land. Finally, in 1871 the Tūhoe gave their allegiance as a tribe to the government, and in 1886 they were promised a 'separate district' in the Urewera. Yet, poverty stricken and unable to pay Land Court costs, the Tūhoe lost even more land, and at times sought to obstruct surveyors and ward off encroachments by gold seekers. In 1896 the Urewera District Reserve Act was passed, giving the Tūhoe a form of autonomy, but also limiting land sales only to the government.<sup>35</sup> Binney has argued that Tūhoe self-government might have worked but it was effectively denied. Between 1909 and 1921, driven by a fear of Native self-government and a wrongly held belief that Te Urewera was mineral-rich, much Tūhoe land was illegally purchased, and Tūhoe autonomy undermined.<sup>36</sup>

## Treaty Days and conciliation narratives

In 1877 Chief Justice Prendergast described the Treaty of Waitangi as 'a simple nullity', and for almost a century it existed in a 'sort of



judicial limbo'.<sup>37</sup> Although the 1840 treaty was the founding accord of the colony of New Zealand and had promised to protect Māori rights to land and fisheries, large tracts of land, forest and foreshore were alienated, with scant chance of redress until the Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975. Notably, until 1975 the treaty could not be used directly by commissions of inquiry or the courts as a test of the government's historical policies in dealing with Māori, as Michael Belgrave relates.<sup>38</sup> Since then, the tribunal's findings of breaches of the treaty and its 'principles' or spirit have led to some landmark decisions in favour of Māori, accompanied by substantial financial compensation.

Despite its longstanding legal dormancy, the treaty – at least in the settler imagination – indexed a mythical exchange as a providential covenant, and was increasingly deployed as a popular and historic conciliation narrative legitimating colonization. By 1898 historian William Pember Reeves had used the phrase the 'Māori Magna Carta' in his influential book *The Long White Cloud Aotearoa*, promulgating the popular notion that the treaty was a cultural and political emissary of English rights and liberties magnanimously bestowed upon Māori peoples, a celebratory notion which shaped settler understandings of the treaty and persisted into its centenary year. The 'Māori Magna Carta' had been used before, but Reeves 'secured its place in public rhetoric', writes William Renwick.<sup>39</sup> Of course, the Magna Carta is widely viewed as one of the most important legal documents in the history of Western democracy. The transference of 'English liberties' overseas to colonial Britons and colonized Indigenous peoples has been a persistent theme in the history of British colonial expansion, yet it is clear that the extension of liberal traditions to overseas Britons frequently resulted in the denial of liberty to subordinated peoples throughout empire, who were bestowed only exclusionary liberties, delimited rights and containments.<sup>40</sup>

The notion of the treaty as sacred covenant and its imaginative rendering as 'Māori Magna Carta' with its attendant narrative of complete Māori volition and consensus, which interpellated them as both imperial and national subjects engaged in a new social compact, would be celebrated in literary and visual culture. In 1905, Alfred Drury, a major British sculptor trained in classical iconography, made a bas-relief of the treaty signing for the Queen Victoria monument in Wellington. This too became an iconic and highly influential image. It remains a powerful visual metaphor, which recreates the climax of William Hobson's mission, the signing of the treaty by which, at least in the English version, the assembled Māori *rangatira* (or chiefs) ceded the sovereignty of New Zealand to Queen Victoria.<sup>41</sup> Governor Hobson is upright and

in full naval uniform, the 'personification of authority'; yet he is also benign as 'he looks down approvingly on the [chief] who painstakingly stretches across to sign the treaty ... in a moment [the Governor] will shake hands and say "he iwi tahi tatou [we are now one people]"'.<sup>42</sup> The handshake joining the two peoples, Māori and Pākehā, sits at the very centre of the image. At the turn of the century Drury's iconic image took hold of the public imagination, and was replicated many times. Pember Reeves's phrase 'the Māori Magna Carta' and Drury's image of the treaty signing were used in history textbooks and in multiple forms in public culture: on coins, medals, stamps and bank notes, profoundly shaping New Zealanders' consciousness of the treaty and its history.<sup>43</sup>

Echoing Drury's bas-relief, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi was re-enacted in 1923 for the East and West Missionary Exhibition in Wellington. The photograph of the re-enactment formed part of a five-piece photographic tableau series illustrating key historical moments between settlers, missionaries and Māori peoples over the life course of the nation, organized by the Anglican Church Missionary Society. Frank J. Denton and Mark Lampe, professional photographers of the region, are believed to have taken the photographs. The stated aim of the exhibition was 'to Interest, to Instruct, and to Inspire. It is a means of bringing home to people the great fact that the Church's Mission is Mission.' In particular, the exhibit reflected the didactic tradition of religious instruction, which used visual means for both Christian instruction and the building of nation, in line with nineteenth- and early twentieth-century traditions of teaching by the eye: 'The Exhibition will afford opportunity of showing, in a pictorial way, the actual work of Missions in the Mission Fields.' In the 'Main Hall Platform' there were to be many 'Pageantry Processions, Tableaux, Exhibitions Choir, Excerpts from Maori Entertainment'. In particular, the

MAORI HISTORICAL TABLEAUX, illustrating scenes of the greatest importance and interest in the early life of this Dominion, will be presented by the great MAORI CONCERT PARTY, under the direction of the Revd. F. Bennett, Superintendent of the Maori Mission in the Diocese of Waiapu. The Landing of Samuel Marsden, the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the Wonderful Story of Tarore's Testament, and other scenes will be included.<sup>44</sup>

The treaty-signing tableau (Figure 31) shows a Māori chief signing the treaty, reminiscent of Drury's bas-relief, while centrally featured in the mid ground, a missionary shakes another chief by the hand.<sup>45</sup> A photographic



*Figure 31* Tableau, re-enacting the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, at the East and West Missionary Exhibition, Wellington Town Hall. Tesla Studios: Negatives of Wanganui and district taken by Alfred Martin, Frank Denton and Mark Lampe (Tesla Studios). Ref: 1/1-017341-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

representation of the settler–Indigenous compact, the theatrical still-life tableau references a rich repertoire of imagery and symbolism related to empire, consensus and conciliation with colonized Indigenous peoples. The humanitarian handshake, a recurring motif in imperial iconography and powerful symbol of the settler–Indigenous compact, appears again in this tableau. To present-day eyes, the scene seems askew: Governor Hobson sits on a Māori cloak, a symbol of *mana*, that is, power or prestige. Therefore, rather than an affirmation of Māori *rangatiratanga* (independence, chieftainship) as apparently upheld in the original treaty, the 1923 tableau forcefully suppresses *rangatiratanga*. Likewise, the Māori chief stretched uncomfortably to sign the treaty documents suggests that Māori change and assimilation was an implicit part of the agreement.

In 1935, the New Zealand Numismatic Society approached the government to suggest the striking of a new coin to mark the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Figure 32). Once again, the imagery shows Governor



Figure 32 'Waitangi' coin, crown (5 shillings), New Zealand, 1935. Mint: Royal, London, reverse side, Reg. No: NU 33679. Photograph courtesy of Museum Victoria

William Hobson and Ngāpuhi chief Tāmāti Waka Nene shaking hands to seal the treaty as sacred covenant above the indexical inscription, 'Waitangi'.<sup>46</sup> The icon and inscription referring to the 'crown' indexes both the coin itself and British dominion, as the crown circulated as British currency of the day. The crown icon floats above and between the figures representing two peoples – Māori and Pākehā. It frames their union under the unifying concept of nation, indexed by the inscription, 'New Zealand'.

These repeated handshakes alert us to the heavy consensus-making of the early twentieth-century state. As Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham point out, when speaking of official and institution-level reconciliation performances in settler nations such as Canada, the problem is 'not one of inadequate closure ... but one of repeated, pre-emptive attempts at reaching closure and "cure"'.<sup>47</sup> This repetition of state performances of resolution indeed works to 'fill in the gaps', as Rancière put it, and shut down the space of the political. The contemporary impetus for reconciliation to 'move forward' and 'put the past behind us' is, then, shown with the politics of consensus evident in the treaty

handshake of conciliation, as a strategy of domination.<sup>48</sup> The themes and gestures of conciliation, forming a repertoire of consensus, would be played out in public and highly embodied performances at the 1940 centenary of the treaty at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. But they would also be interrupted and subverted by some *iwi* who had suffered massive land confiscations in the nineteenth century, and others who would refuse to participate entirely.

### **Founding ships and *waka*: the 1940 Waitangi centenary re-enactment**

The 1940 Treaty of Waitangi centenary celebration was a highly choreographed and planned event. The Archives of New Zealand hold rich files on the plans for the centennial celebrations leading up to February 1940, and tell us much about the official national agenda in shaping and representing the past.<sup>49</sup> As early as 1936 a 'National Centennial Committee' was formed. Members were addressed by the Minister of Internal Affairs with regard to 'fitting celebrations ... of the first hundred years of our national existence'. The Minutes of the National Centennial Committee noted that members agreed the 'event would be celebrated' in the following ways: '1. By permanent memorials, including a national memorial to be erected by the govt; 2. By a series of historical surveys of the first hundred years of our national life; 3. By suitable celebrations, both national and local, throughout the year 1940'.<sup>50</sup>

Within the next few years, however, New Zealand would be enmeshed in the global events of World War II. In 1939 serious questions emerged about whether the centennial should proceed in a time of war, based on issues of both national priority and expense. The Centennial Committee argued that the centennial must proceed; it would function as a strong nation-building tool, a corrective to doubt and fear in a time of war. The minutes of the committee noted that it 'should, under no circumstances, be postponed (but should proceed on the due date as originally fixed by the Government before the outbreak of War)'.<sup>51</sup>

The 1940 centennial was celebrated as a national coming of age.<sup>52</sup> Significantly, as part of an assertion of Māori cultural and political renewal, there were two committees: the National Centennial Committee and the National Māori Centennial Committee, and they approved seven national events to commemorate the treaty, the official beginnings of British settlement, and government in New Zealand.<sup>53</sup> By the 1920s there was increased Māori political presence, and in what has been described as a 'renaissance' in Māori culture, Māori leaders Apirana

Ngata and Taurekareka Henare sought to promote Māori understandings of the treaty's symbolic importance, and desired that these have equal public place with those of Pākehā.<sup>54</sup> A member of the Young Māori Party, Apirana Ngata, believed the future for Māori lay in their modernization and participation in the settler contract. As both a prominent Māori politician and lawyer, Ngata became known for his work in promoting and protecting Māori culture and language. In 1922, he observed 'at the present time the treaty is widely discussed on all maraes. It is on the lips of the humble and the great, of the ignorant and of the thoughtful.'<sup>55</sup> Yet scholars argue that Ngata, along with fellow Māori MP James Carroll, had earlier undermined the 1896 Urewera District Reserve Act and its autonomy, through their belief in Māori modernization, which led them to assist the government in the alienation of communally owned Māori land. Ngata sought to open up Tūhoe land to European settlement and to maintain only a 'tribal core' of communally owned land; this resulted in 'direct and illegal purchasing in the Urewera'.<sup>56</sup>

After leaving parliament, Apirana Ngata was key to organizing celebrations of the Treaty of Waitangi's centenary in 1940.<sup>57</sup> To reflect bicultural sentiment and, importantly, to ensure Māori participation, two ceremonies were held. The 'Centennial Pageant at Waimate North', held first, was wholly concerned with re-enacting the landing of British settlers; the second ceremony was 'The Waitangi Centenary'. Both were overseen by the National Director of Pageantry, W. S. Wauchop, under the auspices of the New Zealand Government's Department of Internal Affairs. An apparent organizational mix up, as Renwick relates, meant the first event to be enacted was 'the arrival at Maketu of the Arawa people six hundred years earlier'.<sup>58</sup> This re-enactment 'became the first major gathering of Māori people for the centennial year ... and memorialized the beginnings of Māori settlement in Aotearoa and gave prominence to Māori as the country's original pioneers'.<sup>59</sup> The Te Arawa people, who had fought alongside the British in the land wars and accompanied St John on his scorched earth campaign against Tūhoe, were thus given 'first settler status'. In 1940, more broadly, Māori were billed as the 'Vikings of the Pacific'<sup>60</sup> and accorded status as 'first' settlers (with Europeans as 'second' settlers), which was inscribed within an array of events. Māori were depicted as 'great explorers in their own right, pioneers who could claim kinship with their Anglo-Saxon countrymen'.<sup>61</sup>

With the leading headline 'Authentic Reenactment at Waitangi', the *Northern Advocate* detailed the 1940 centenary's proceedings. Canoes and boats arrived, with settlers dressed in nineteenth-century period costume. Māori in period costume awaited the landing of Governor

Hobson by whale boat from *HMS Herald*. Governor Hobson stepped ashore, and led a party including settlers, missionaries and Māori up the hill to the Treaty House, where the treaty discussions ensued and the treaty was signed. On the lawn in front of James Busby's house, Chief Hone Heke stepped forward to be the first to sign the treaty.<sup>62</sup>

The souvenir program noted that 'Canon Williams and all Māori members of the cast are descendants of the person whom they represent'.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Māori 're-enacted' or stood in for their own chiefly ancestors (20 chiefs were represented) or Māori involved in the original treaty, and clearly had passionate and personal investments in how their forebears were recovered, revered and represented as key political players in the nation's founding historical moment. The Waitangi Day pageant souvenir program ran to 25 pages and included a full script of the play and speeches for the entire treaty re-enactment, based on Reverend William Colenso's historic rendering of actual events at Waitangi. Local newspapers described the treaty as 'The Dominion's Magna Carta' heralding the 'Dawn of civilization'; the Waitangi grounds were the 'cradle of a nation'.<sup>64</sup> The re-enactment was billed by the *Northern Advocate* as the 'spectacular pageantry of century-old drama' where 'history lives again'.<sup>65</sup>

Māori cultural and political presence was to be featured in the centenary celebrations at Waitangi, and this was organized by Apirana Ngata and other members of the National Māori Centennial Committee. A carved Māori meeting house (Te Whare Runanga) was built on the Treaty Grounds and was presented to the people of New Zealand at the centenary in 1940. It was considered the Māori counterpart to the Treaty House and part of Māori integration into modern New Zealand.<sup>66</sup> The giant ceremonial *waka* (canoe), *Ngatokimatawhaorua*, was launched, inspired by Princess Te Puea Herangi of Waikato. Known as 'Ngatoki', this was one of the largest ceremonial *wakas* in the world: at thirty-five metres long it was made from three kauri trees and carried up to eighty paddlers. The giant *waka* was itself a re-enactment, a replica of the first voyaging canoe and a metaphor for the founding voyage of Kupe, the original Māori explorer.<sup>67</sup> In Māori tradition, the *waka* represented the great ocean-going, voyaging canoes used in the Pacific migrations that settled Aotearoa New Zealand. Through performance, the giant canoe was (and continues to be) enlivened, and the Māori founding voyage of first settlement re-enacted and affirmed through ritual, performance and objects. There are analogies here that are very familiar: ideas of the first 'fleet' and first settlers. Indeed, 'Kupe' is sometimes promoted as the 'Māori Cook',<sup>68</sup> but Cook's first landing could not be directly referenced with ease. Although Cook had far more extensive contact

with Māori than he did with Australian Aboriginal peoples, Cook's first landing at Poverty Bay in 1769 was a visitation filled with bloodshed: at least eight Māori were killed in several skirmishes.<sup>69</sup> In Aotearoa New Zealand, narratives of unity and conciliation are enacted through the treaty of 1840, not Cook's inauspicious and violent arrival.

Pageant organizers knew that Māori support and participation was crucial for the day, as well as strategically important for the war effort. The Māori Rifle Battalion and a group of Māori actors were selected to attend the centenary. In a private letter to Labour Minister William Parry, who was in charge of the centennial, Tai Mitchell, Māori leader and chairman of the Te Arawa Trust Board, argued that the treaty was an 'important land mark in the history of New Zealand both to the Māori and Pakeha, and should be appropriately observed'. Further:

It is essential, therefore, that both Races and in particular the Māori Race, should be allowed to figure prominently in the commemoration service on the anniversary date ... That objective can be reached fully and effectively if the Māori Race is represented by the Māori Rifle Battalion, the members of which are drawn from every tribe in New Zealand ... Whereas in 1840 the Māori Chiefs in all their primitive pride and dignified bearing foregathered at Waitangi before the Queen's representative, accepted Britain's word of honour embodied in the Treaty with all its implication ... [now] on the same hallowed soil, the flower of Māori manhood, the descendants of the foresaid Chiefs, should take their place before Britain's Representatives to declare the loyalty and allegiance of the Māori Race to their King and Country.<sup>70</sup>

In the midst of World War II, troops were selected to represent the Māori body politic. On the day, 500 officers and men of the Māori Battalion stood in formation at the treaty re-signing, ready to board warships. Newspaper headlines noted the war had 'Heightened Deep Emotional Feelings' and photographic scenes of the war abroad and on the British home front were featured. 'Following the path which their ancestors trod to discuss the Treaty of Waitangi 100 years ago today, 500 officers and men of the Māori battalion marched into the Waitangi Marae this morning.'<sup>71</sup> According to the Prime Minister, the treaty symbolized Māori and Pākehā unity as one people in the face of a new common enemy. Other headlines proclaimed the '[Māori] Tribal pledge to keep the ranks filled'.<sup>72</sup>

Commemoration always tells us more about the present than the past. Such re-enactments reveal how formative conciliation moments



are reconfigured and enshrined over time, and are harnessed to new national political and social agendas. In the cartoon from the *New Zealand Herald* on 7 February 1940 (Figure 33), Māori and Pākehā troops stand together under the New Zealand flag. Above them a Māori chief and Hobson stand together, personifying the unifying Spirit of Waitangi, the nation's founding moment. Scholars have remarked on the promulgation of a theory of 'two noble races' in such Waitangi rhetoric and performance. The mythical version of the colonization of New Zealand involved the 'fortunate meeting of two races ideally suited to their roles in the colonial story, as sea farers and warriors', observes Mark Williams.<sup>73</sup>

Through the aegis of the treaty and its performative back-telling, Māori and Pākehā participation in World War II was constructed as an effort based on national biracial consensus. As Williams notes, Māori-settler relations were 'configured in a narrative of struggle and displacement [that Māori] were encouraged to see as a re-enactment of their own warrior traditions; their status in the present was dependent upon the idealization of that past by those who now owned the present'.<sup>74</sup>

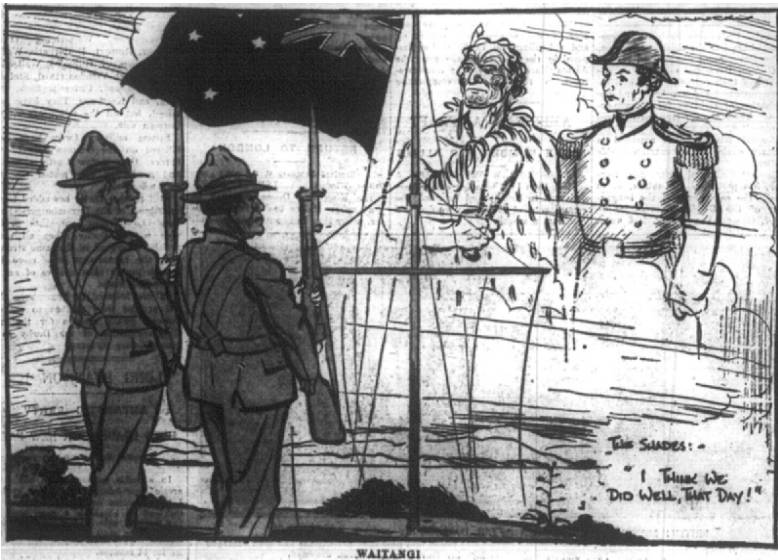


Figure 33 'Waitangi' by Gordon Minhinnick, *New Zealand Herald*, 7 February 1940. Photograph courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library. Image used with permission of the *New Zealand Herald*

A narrative of joint warriorship in service to an authorized national violence in the form of warfare was prominent, accompanied by exhortations that to enlist in service was key to the flowering of Māori manhood. Throughout the proceedings, the loss and violence of the land wars in New Zealand were largely ignored in official representations. Indeed, the idea of a centennial survey volume on war was rejected largely because it was not possible to produce without reference to the New Zealand Wars, and James Cowan's survey volume, *Settlers and Pioneers*, omitted discussion of the Waikato War for the same reason.<sup>75</sup> As Minister for Native Affairs, Mr Langstone, emphasized in his official address on Waitangi Day 1940: 'The Treaty had been completed ... not by conquest but by common agreement ... the land was not snatched'.<sup>76</sup>

In spite of the centennial commemoration's unifying aims, the enduring issue of land confiscation emerged as a strong thread of discontent. Some *iwi* – who had suffered confiscation in the nineteenth century – refused to participate and the Māori king Koroki did not attend the events. On 2 February 1940, in the lead-up to the treaty re-enactment and celebrations, the *Northern Advocate* reported that King Koroki and the 'Waikato Māoris' would not attend, noting there 'will be no representation of the Waikato and allied Tribes' at the centenary celebration, affecting more than 8,000 people. It is reported that although Princess Te Puea had 'just returned from Waitangi where she fulfilled the Waikato's obligation in handing over the last canoe [*Ngatokī*] to be finished for the celebrations', she declared that there were 'deeper reasons' for the Waikato tribes' boycott. 'As she explained to Lord Galway', it was the 'longstanding Waikato confiscation problem ... Successive governments have promised redress [but] such gestures have not been followed by any action.' The princess added that her cousin, the late Tamate Mahuta, who conducted these negotiations, 'was a very disappointed man and ... went to his rest with the confiscation on his lips'.<sup>77</sup> Although the Native Affairs Minister would insist that the land had 'not been snatched', some Māori would not allow the historic issues of land confiscation to pass without public declamation. The government had failed to address their 'legitimate grievances', argued Princess Te Puea, and although the Governor-General urged her to look to the future, she responded: 'The Waikatōs could not forget the past'.<sup>78</sup>

Ngāpuhi peoples attended the 1940 ceremony, but displayed red blankets in protest against the compulsory acquisition of what the government described as 'surplus lands' in Northland.<sup>79</sup> Reverend T. Moki joined in raising the issue of confiscated lands. He expressed his views in the *Herald*, under the headline 'Cause of Grievance Confiscation'.

The Taranaki Māori gave their support to the Waikato Māori in not attending the celebrations, he said, because ‘no longer have the Māori any confidence that the ... Government will rectify any past injustices’. The ‘real cause’ for their absence was that the ‘Treaty of Waitangi had not been kept’. Many ‘Pakeha say that every acre was bought and paid for [but] nearly 500,000 acres were confiscated in the Taranaki district alone ... Their pas, cultivations, and above all the resting places of the bones of their ancestors had all vanished ... 750,000 had been lost from the Waikato.’<sup>80</sup>

The commemorative landscape of settler nations is typically dominated by landing and founding ceremonies, and far less by the replay of events that occurred later on unstable frontiers. At the 1940 treaty celebrations, through the privileged and recursive performance of the arrival of *waka* and European ships, Māori were rendered as first settlers and Europeans second settlers. Indeed, the *waka Ngatoki's* powerful re-enactment continues to assert Māori first settler status. While Māori attest to their Pacific histories and genealogies, an equivalence is also rendered by effectively entering the European discursive space and language of ‘settlement’ and ‘settler culture’. Moreover, as a range of scholars has demonstrated, settlers gain through this performance of equivalence as ‘second settlers’. For Stephen Turner this claiming of second settler status is ‘remediated history’, which ‘works to relocate and resettle second settlers’; it renders them as ‘indigenous as first peoples’. Turner explains: ‘While Pakeha in the first instance stepped ashore in somebody else’s country, the reenactment of this moment has them stepping ashore in their own country – the country of New Zealand. In reenactment scenarios settlers are already at home.’<sup>81</sup> Such a shift is akin to Lorenzo Veracini’s ‘settler transfer’, where the settler becomes native.<sup>82</sup> Like history writing, such public and bodily performance works consensually and imaginatively to locate settlers in the new country. In this way the ‘originary status of second settlers is produced in and through the reenactment’.<sup>83</sup> Thus, concludes Turner, the real importance of the treaty re-enactment is that it ‘provides an historical platform or proscenium arch for the presence-to-self of New Zealanders to New Zealanders’.<sup>84</sup>

## **Terror, reconciliation and matters of history**

Tame Iti’s dramatic and carefully choreographed political performance of Tūhoe experience at the confiscation line at Rūatoki in January 2005 challenged the consensus politics and unexamined self-presence of the contemporary New Zealand settler-state. Part martial re-enactment, part

political theatre and subversive carnival, Tame Iti had transported the tribunal members back in time and place to the frontier land wars, to the scene of the injustice – the confiscation line – compelling them to be involuntary witnesses to the ‘atrocities’ of the colonial scorched earth policy and land seizure suffered by Tūhoe. He had thus materialized the ‘temporal and spatial connections’ of past and present in the ‘moment of the theatrical event’, thus breaking the politics of consensus to force an ethical, relational and Indigenized account of the past.<sup>85</sup> Iti’s incendiary re-enactment did not engage in the closed logic of a hierarchized settler status, which tacitly implies supercessionism. Rather, it disrupted the performed teleology of a bipartisan conciliated nation built into the recursive performance of first and second settlers arriving. Iti’s re-enactment forced open the political space of action which exists between settler-arrival and settler-becoming. It was a re-enactment that made boldly apparent the real operations of settler colonialism and compelled tribunal members to witness the past in the present.

The event was also a global media performance, made in a post-9/11 climate and in the midst of the international ‘War on Terror’. Drawing on a longstanding repertoire of counter-colonial activism reaching back into the early nineteenth century, and a more recent global Indigenous rights movement, in 2005 Tame Iti spoke to the Spanish media and drew parallels between the then recent invasion of Iraq by ‘imperialist’ America and its coalition forces with the British invasion of Te Urewera:

So here we are ... in a place of land confiscation. Around the mid to late 1860s, this part of the world was invaded. I guess the difference between that invasion, the invasion of British imperialists, and the invasion of American imperialists in Iraq is that they didn’t have media ... So [with] the invasion of our country 150 years ago BBC and CNN weren’t around then.

The Tūhoe performance and renarration of the past is here framed as a political act of reclamation and documentation, with the clear intention of ensuring national and global media coverage. Iti referenced a revisionist impulse to archive the event, to insert it into media memory alongside more recent imperialist injustices, such as the invasion of Iraq. He actively and politically redescribed the violence that occurred to Tūhoe by way of comparison to the events in Iraq, which he framed in terms of violent dispossession and loss of sovereignty. Iti used terms such as ‘invasion’, ‘terror’ and ‘atrocities’ deliberately, thus invoking global orders of violence and the language of international human rights.

The War on Terror and its associated discourse would rebound on some Tūhoe in unexpected ways. On 15 October 2007, Tūhoe were 'reminded of their colonial persecution' when armed police set up barricades on the 1866 confiscation line and stormed homes in Rūatoki and around the North Island.<sup>86</sup> Police conducted a series of early morning raids deploying special powers conferred on them by the Suppression of Terrorism Act. Under this Act, used for the first time in New Zealand, Iti and his fellow activists were accused of 'counterterrorism' activities and of being involved in a military-style 'training camp' to assassinate New Zealand and United States political leaders. It was also claimed they planned to establish an independent state on Tūhoe land. Tūhoe argued that Iti was teaching the young how to survive in the bush. Solicitor General David Collins subsequently ruled that all charges on that day did not constitute terrorism-related crimes under the 2002 Act, and eventually four individuals were convicted of firearms charges. Iti would spend nine months in gaol on firearms charges for taking part in this 'paramilitary' training group activity.<sup>87</sup>

The counter-colonial protest and land rights activities of Iti and others on Tūhoe land had been criminalized in an entirely new way. As Pauline Wakeham has traced, by this time a pervasive global discourse of terror and the 'War on Terror' had been domesticated by settler states such as New Zealand and Canada. New legislation on homeland security ensured that what would otherwise have been legitimate counter-colonial activity was redefined and suppressed as 'counterterrorism'.<sup>88</sup> This shift has delegitimized Indigenous resistance in New Zealand and Canada, notes Wakeham.<sup>89</sup> Further, she argues that the rise of such 'counterterrorist' initiatives upon Indigenous peoples in settler states has an intertwined relationship with the rise of formal state reconciliation initiatives and the broader 'Age of Apology'. Examining the ways that reconciliation and terror may converge as 'complementary logics of contemporary settler colonial power' in settler nation states, Wakeham incisively foregrounds the ways that 'reconciliation and terror intersect around the management of a third term: indigenous resistance'.<sup>90</sup>

At one level, the performed consensus discourse is deeply invested in a rendering of the Treaty of Waitangi as a display of a transcendent nationalism that features and yet overcomes cultural and historical difference. Yet as the multiple histories of Te Urewera invasion makes clear, such unity has come at the cost of Indigenous sovereignty. The capacity for the treaty to bind its peoples to a higher 'bicultural' identity in an imagined and unifying exchange is, then, double-edged. It allows recognition of two ontologies, but only on condition that colonial violence

be written out of the recreated bicultural encounter, while the authorized national violence engendered through joint participation in World War II is enduring and permissible. This produces acts of Indigenous resistance to the conciliatory model as profane and unlawful. When Indigenous political action is interpreted by a defensive reconciliation agenda as threatening, any declaration of sovereignty becomes meaningful only as a direct assault on the consensus discourse. This both reveals and explains the problematic close relationship that the vaunted state discourse of reconciliation has with the 'criminalisation of counter-colonial activity'.<sup>91</sup>

Eight years after the Tūhoe re-enactment at the confiscation line, and after long-running negotiations through the tribunal, the historic signing of the Deed of Settlement occurred between Tūhoe and the New Zealand government at a ceremony in parliament on 4 June 2013. In this settlement Tūhoe received a redress package worth NZ\$170 million, and the return of more than 200,000 hectares of Te Urewera, removing its national park status and creating a new legal identity, eventually to make the Tūhoe the 'governor and guardian of the land'.<sup>92</sup> A formal apology was also made to Tūhoe by the government for what Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations Minister Chris Finlayson described as a 'brutal military campaign'. After many years, 'Ngai Tūhoe and the Crown have finally reached a new beginning', Finlayson remarked after the historic signing. The 'past breaches against Tūhoe are some of the worst in the story of our nation'.<sup>93</sup>

On 8 May 2014, in an act of practical and symbolic reconciliation the final bills were read to legally enact the final treaty settlements for Ngai Tūhoe and other *iwi*. The preamble to the official summary of the Deed of Settlement began by first acknowledging that Tūhoe had not signed the Treaty of Waitangi, and the Crown had no official presence in Te Urewera before the 1860s. It related that 'Tūhoe remained in full control of their customary lands until 1865 when the Crown confiscated much of their most productive land, even though they were not in rebellion and the confiscation was not directed at Tūhoe'.<sup>94</sup> The Crown apologized to Tūhoe for the 'indiscriminate raupatu, wrongful killings and years of scorched earth warfare'; for 'denying Tūhoe the self-government it was promised in 1896, [and] excluding Tūhoe from the establishment of Te Urewera National Park over their homelands'.<sup>95</sup> MP Pita Sharples said of the Te Urewera Tūhoe bill that Tūhoe would now have self-government, with responsibility for their own 'health, education, housing, planning, justice and other infrastructural needs'.<sup>96</sup> As well as the years of hard political work and negotiations through the Waitangi Tribunal, some

Tūhoe believe the public outrage at the injustices of the Urewera raids helped lead to a settlement with the national government.<sup>97</sup>

Tame Iti's 2005 performance of the 'scorched earth' policy may have been derided as mere theatrical gimmick, or a form of violent anti-diplomacy, but for the historic settlement, these matters of history would be all important. The first listed item of the settlement package was 'an agreed historical account'. Tame Iti had opened the space of the political to insist on a new reading of the past and, with the hard work of other activists, to creatively force a new relationship with the state. Yet this settlement also represents a closing off, being the final allowable settlement between the Tūhoe and the state. Such a settlement was not achieved by consensually 'filling the gaps', or denying or eliding past events, but by acknowledging the contestations of a bihistorical past and its difficult and different authorities.

# Conclusion

Across settler societies, conciliation and violence perpetually haunt our nominally postcolonial present. In these troubled nations, reconciliation has emerged as a utopian politics promising a new and deeply affective social covenant and national refounding. But it is often a feigned deal. Too often state-based reconciliation efforts and their attendant public performances are choreographed around the problematic effect of 'toleration', and parallel belonging where Indigenous identity is recognized insofar as it does not disturb settler hegemony. The problem at the heart of reconciliation, as a politics of recognition, is that Indigenous people can petition for justice on the condition of submission to the legal, institutional and cultural framework of the settler-state, yet this is itself founded upon the negation of Indigenous sovereignty. This impossible politics of recognition so evident in contemporary state-based reconciliation celebrations within settler nations is embedded, as I have shown throughout this book, in a long genealogy of historical peace deals with Indigenous peoples that have been negotiated through and ratified by the state apparatus. The repeated and national histories elaborated of hands extended in false friendship to smooth the way for imperial expansion, of a desperate need on the part of colonizers for honourable colonization, of terrible frontier violence, reprisals and punishments, and of Indigenous strategies of engagement, evasion, resistance and protest serve as the historical location for reconciliation in contemporary postcolonial settings.

In former colonies based on extraction, a progressive, transformational and national narrative of colonization–decolonization–postcolonialism has been promulgated, though not without controversy.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, settler societies have not been transformed by the dramatic rupture of decolonization and the move to a postcolonial state. Therefore, in



these societies, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is offered as a peace paradigm, a virtuous exchange, forming part of a hopeful, progressive, transformational politics possessing a linear, social schema of colonization–reconciliation–postcolonialism, and which persists in the political imagination. As I have shown in this book, reconciliation in settler colonial societies therefore has a distinctive politics that must be recognized, and possesses a temporal syntax and a lexicon with its attendant performative repertoire and expressive, public regimes of affect. The temporal sequencing of settler colonial reconciliation too often asks us to move on and move forward, and can be characterized by a history-less-ness, obscuring foundational violence and settler colonialism’s historical continuity.

It is easy to see why Indigenous theorists and activists would reject state-orchestrated reconciliation days, ceremonies, celebrations and activities, and acts of apology that fail to address the violent past and offer material reparations. Yet there are many instances of vibrant and creative local grassroots activist events that express a strong desire for reconciliation, apology and recognition in performances that simultaneously call the state to account (as in the Two Row Wampum celebrations in North America) or memorialize episodes of colonial violence to assert Indigenous sovereignty through survival (as in the Myall Creek massacre commemorations in Australia, or the Lakota Future Generations Ride which Lakota have opened to non-Native peoples). These are Indigenous-led cross-cultural performances that are reparative and full of risk, but are based on Indigenous experience and protocols, and always maintain their critical and liberatory politics.

The need for national acknowledgement of violent dispossession through remembrance is especially urgent in Australia, where the singularly important principle that defines the nation and upon which it was founded – *terra nullius* – is continually played out in debates that erase and obscure the historical processes of colonization that sustain white settler privilege. Here too, treaty is always held out as a mythic national covenant, as the impossible performance, always-yet-to-occur. How, then, are we to read local activist performances that display a strong desire for renewed and changed relationships, or that envision different futures – in short, a desire for reconciliation – within a nominally post-colonial context in which we are all bound together by history?

In this book, I sought to resist the temptation to read such performances through the lens of false consciousness. Awareness of the perpetual ambivalence of conciliation – as both utopic and coercive – is crucial. This study, a form of comparative transnationalism sought to

consider deep local histories in the broader context of transnational flows and political ideas of reconciliation and redress that are currently enacted globally across settler societies. I wanted to foreground powerful, local examples of the radical and fertile politics of Indigenous rejection, refutation and anger around the heavy politics of consensus that characterizes too many state-based performances of reconciliation. At the same time, I sought to critically explore the possibility that the unifying, and eudaimonic feelings in performances of solidarity may be as valid and politically useful as anger and the radical rejection of expressions of unity. What makes the performances of unity so enticing – and indeed powerful – is their affective sense of connection and their hopefulness. These collective cross-cultural acts in the name of positive resistance and peace-building for social transformation should not be underestimated. Above all, these potent performances remind us of the great social need for a foundational conciliation narrative and an imaginative refounding, for the desire to forge a virtuous compact, a mythic exchange, with its attendant obligations. However utopic, this is critical and important political work for many peoples, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, who seek an accord for the future.

Above all, reconciliation performances are symbolic negotiations, forms of mythic exchange that reflect the struggle at the heart of the postcolonial condition itself: that is, as a working-through of the ambivalent relationship between domination and friendship in which the Indigenous-settler relationship is inevitably entangled. This book has sought to pay attention to how these tensions are dealt with politically today in the realm of public culture. How do we hold this perpetual violence in our consciousness and yet continue to live together in these fraught postcolonial settler societies, where we are all here to stay? How can reconciliation occur in the shadow of violence and, in some cases, genocide, in settler societies? How do we come to terms with that which is seemingly irresolvable: a foundation of violence which persists, elemental and deeply disturbing, in our national and individual psyches? What might an emancipatory politics and revised postcolonial sociality look like, and what are its limits and possibilities? How are these tensions expressed in public 'reconciliatory' settler cultures, which are shaped by the politics of redress, on the one hand, and the ongoing violent legacy of colonial structures, on the other, as complementary modes of settler governance?

Such a utopian politics will always reach for the realm of imagination, but ineluctably draws on the violent past. As a historian concerned with the historical imagination in our fraught settler societies, I discovered

I could not confine myself, or my study, to the textual realm. The performances that so urgently and selectively drew on and reimagined the past through the entwined repertoires of conciliation and violence pushed themselves to the fore: I could not ignore them. I became fascinated by the embodied, emotional and motile nature of the performances, re-enactments and commemorations described in this book, and how they crucially negotiate togetherness and consensus, rejection and refusal. In these impassioned, collective acts – handshakes, bridge walks, canoe journeys, horse rides, flag-shooting and line-crossing, and the ‘chair as home’ set ablaze – we see a vitally creative social phenomenon at work. These are all examples of reconciliation’s performative life and its discontents; but, most crucially, they represent the ways that matters of history continually erupt in the present. That is to say, reconciliation in the present is haunted by the echo of conciliation in the past. These are supercharged histories and, at times unruly, performances that emerge from the overlapping space of horror and heart and hope foundational to settler nations.

Taking these critical tensions into account, this book has sought to explore the public, performative life of reconciliation in settler societies. It has charted local case studies across three settler states, which have drawn upon deep repertoires of historical action, and examined the way they are called into the present in affective refoundings of the settler state. I have traced the way Indigenous peoples and allied others creatively mobilize, rework and enlist the past in the name of social transformation within a new global paradigm of reconciliation and the ‘age of apology’. Each chapter has considered performances, and their histories, that both partake of and reject the process of imagined exchange necessary to the life of reconciliation. In postcolonial settler societies, this ambivalent spiralling between consensus and dissent structures the ways that we engage symbolically with the colonial past.

In elaborating the materialization of memory in the places and objects of history, as well as the styles of bodily occupation of symbolically and historically significant spaces, this book has revealed the complexity and diversity of Indigenous-led cross-cultural performances and protests, and their continuities and genealogies, which spring from the ambivalent paradigm of reconciliation. In this project, I have been inspired by Taylor, who asks the vital question: If we were to ‘look through the lens of performed, embodied behaviors, what would we know that we do not know now? Whose stories, memories and struggles might become visible? What tensions might performance behaviors show that would not be recognized in texts and documents?’<sup>2</sup>

Reconciliatory enactments reach for a coming-to-terms with historical injustice through multivalent forms of performative reconstruction and commemoration that embrace a conciliation or friendship narrative often drawn from the past, using historically meaningful cultural symbols and artefacts. Likewise, counter-colonial performances draw on the past in their refutation of consensus and conciliation rhetoric, which has too often been crucial to the benevolent narrative of the settler state. Calling on the past in the present within the affective and theatrical realm, these enactments rupture the politics of consensus to force ethical, relational and Indigenized accounts of the past, and thus keep open the vital space of the political.

I looked to these performances as intentional, subversive and decolonizing innovations, and as critical forms of praxis, which make legible the historical and ongoing structures of the settler state. Both types of performance might be described as a form of political and highly affective commemorative work, and for Indigenous peoples, this is a critical form of activist remembrance and emancipatory politics, as well as a deliberate and political act of forcing a new dialogue with the state.

The preceding chapters have shown that Indigenous peoples and their allies have engaged with, through and against reconciliation as a political and cultural script and a site of experimentation – and, importantly, that this is precisely where ‘the political’ is happening. Reconciliation narratives involve the invention of new postcolonial socialities and imagined futures, as well as the creative reinterpretation of past events. Moreover, even the most highly stage-managed of performances can break down or become something other than what they set out to be, such as occurred at the Sydney Harbour Bridge Walk, which was interrupted by the ‘Sorry’ in the sky and became a ‘truth event’, revealing the unspoken operations of the settler state. To recall Karen Casey’s plaster shell shapes, these performances are only made from risky engagement in the ephemeral and protean space between the hands.

In the theatre of public politics, reconciliation performances do crucial contestatory symbolic work: some participate in the politics of consensus, inviting defiant counter-performances that reject the assumption of Indigenous compliance; others are Indigenous-led cross-cultural enactments, which are potent sites of experimentation. Such embodied, ritual forms offer entirely new ways of being and provide a vista of what an Indigenized settler nation might look like, offering suggestive glimmers of hope for new postcolonial socialities. All of them draw selectively on repertoires of the past.

This book, then, reframes 'reconciliation' to provide a more expansive concept that embraces both conservative and decolonizing political actions. Significantly, the reading offered here takes serious account of Indigenous-led activism, that goes far beyond cultural reclamation, to one that politically reconfigures raced relationships by drawing on the past to centralize Indigenous experience in the national narrative. Reconciliation performances and counter-performances are played out within a political theatre that attempts to invent new kinds of post-colonial sociality. What makes some performances more radical (or decolonizing) than others is not that they are *outside* the politics of reconciliation and redress, but that they critically draw on the past and engage with it using local and deep cultural repertoires that position Indigenous history and memory at the centre.

In settler colonial nations like Australia, where there was no formal treaty process, or the 'flaw' of 'no wampum', as Bentham so presciently put it, reconciliation is brokered through reinvented or new cross-cultural traditions and rituals of alliance (handshakes, bridge walks, smoking ceremonies, Sorry Days, for example), in order to imagine a space for genuine exchange. But in nations with what we may call a 'treaty history' and culture, reconciliation performances often recall and re-enliven a prior treaty or agreement, as can be seen in the Two Row Wampum treaty renewal example (see Chapter 1). Common to performances of reconciliation in these differing national contexts is the adoption of a process of imagined, or mythic, exchange. In its best form, as Pauline Wakeham argues, 'reconciliation entails not a forgetting of the past but, rather, an active historicizing of the present'.<sup>3</sup> This requires us to understand both the historically violent conditions in the production of the present in settler societies and the practices of alliance and peace-building that were concomitantly forged in the midst of this violence as the tensions of liberal empire: we must also recognize how this tension plays out today in the ambivalent public life of reconciliation.

Reconciliation does not necessarily present a *tabula rasa*, where the past simply disappears; and it is not always an end-point of the truth, where repentance demands forgiveness and enlightenment ensues. Rather, it is a process of imagined exchange built upon fragile and shifting relationships indelibly marked by history.

# Notes

## Introduction: Performing (Re)conciliation in Settler Societies

1. Elizabeth Strakosch and Alissa Macoun, 'The Vanishing Endpoint of Settler Colonialism', *Arena Journal* 37/38 (2012): 40–62.
2. Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (London, Cassell, 1999); Patrick Wolfe, 'Structure and Event: Settler Colonialism, Time and the Question of Genocide', in A. D. Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).
3. The 'Let's Shake: Handshakes for Reconciliation' participatory and public art events were created, conceived and organized by Melbourne-based artist Karen Casey. The project came about during the development of a permanent artwork promoting reconciliation commissioned by the University of Adelaide in 2006. Inspired by the notion of the space contained within a handshake, the idea was conceived by Karen Casey and developed in collaboration with sculptor Darryl Cowie.
4. In Australia, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established under the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991 and was charged with the mission to 'promote a process of reconciliation between Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider Australian community'. See Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991, Section 5. In 2001, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was replaced with a new private body, Reconciliation Australia. Reconciliation Australia is the current peak national organization charged with building and promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. See Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, *Reconciliation: Australia's Challenge*. Final Report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Parliament (2000), chap. 6; Damien Short, *Reconciliation and Colonial Power: Indigenous Rights in Australia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 27–8; Australian Government, 'Reconciliation', [australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au), 9 August 2013, <http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/reconciliation>.
5. Karen Casey, interview by the author, 24 November 2014. I wish to thank Karen Casey for her generosity and for sharing images of 'Let's Shake: Handshakes for Reconciliation' performances in the writing of this book.
6. Julie Gough, personal communication with the author, 2010. I wish to thank Julie Gough for her generosity and for sharing images and many discussions for this book.
7. Lyndall Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A History since 1803* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2012); Penelope Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate": Governor Arthur's Proclamation Boards to the Aborigines, Australian Conciliation Narratives and Their Transnational Connections', *Journal of Australian Studies* 35.2 (2011): 201–18.

8. Edmonds, "Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate".
9. On eudaimonic emotion see Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 32–3.
10. Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 15.
11. Roxana Waterson, 'Reconciliation as Ritual: Comparative Perspectives on Innovation and Performance in Processes of Reconciliation', *Humanities Research* 15.3 (2009), <http://press.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Humanities+Research+Vol+XV.+No+3.+2009/5051/ch02.xhtml>.
12. Beth Blue Swadener and Kagendo Mutua, 'Decolonising Performances: Deconstructing the Global Postcolonial', in *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, ed. Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008), 40. See also Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Maryrose Casey, *Telling Stories: Aboriginal Australian and Torres Strait Islander performance* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012).
13. On 'temporal and spatial connections in the brief moment of the theatrical event to catalyse ethical, relational accounts of the past', see Helen Gilbert, 'Indigeneity and Performance', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 15.2 (2013): 173–80 (176).
14. See for example Short, *Reconciliation and Colonial Power*; Jon Altman and Melinda Hinkson, eds., *Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia* (Melbourne: Arena Publications, 2007); Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham, eds., *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press); Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Richard Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
15. See for example Kate Darian-Smith and Penelope Edmonds, eds., *Conciliation on Colonial Frontiers: Conflict, Performance and Commemoration in Australia and the Pacific Rim* (New York: Routledge, 2015).
16. On the 'prehistory of reconciliation's present', see Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning, National Reconciliation? First Peoples and the Culture of Redress in Canada', *English Studies in Canada* 35.1(2009): 1–26.
17. This call for apology referred to the major protest around the then Australian Prime Minister John Howard's refusal to apologize to Aboriginal people for the 'Stolen Generations'. The term 'Stolen Generations' refers to state-sponsored policies in the early twentieth century under which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were removed or stolen from their parents and placed in care or domestic service. See Commonwealth of Australia, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997), <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/bringing-them-home-stolen>.

18. Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 9.
19. Strakosch and Macoun, 'The Vanishing Endpoint of Settler Colonialism', 41.
20. Pauline Wakeham, 'The Cunning of Reconciliation: Reinventing White Civility in the "Age of Apology"', in *Shifting the Ground of Canadian Literary Studies*, ed. Smaro Kamboureli and Robert Zacharias (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012). See also Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).
21. Peter Phipps, 'Globalization, Indigeneity and Performing Culture', *Local-Global* 6 (2009): 28–48 (28).
22. Gilbert, 'Indigeneity and Performance', 174.
23. Phipps, 'Globalization, Indigeneity and Performing Culture', 28–30.
24. See Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
25. United Nations General Assembly, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya', 30 August 2012, [http://unsr.jamesanaya.org/docs/countries/2012-report-usa-a-hrc-21-47-add1\\_en.pdf](http://unsr.jamesanaya.org/docs/countries/2012-report-usa-a-hrc-21-47-add1_en.pdf), accessed 22 July 2014.
26. See Mark Gibney, Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Jean-Marc Coicaud and Niklaus Steiner, eds., *The Age of Apology: Facing Up to the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, 'Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 2.2 (2000), 173. On international morality, see Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000). On the politics of redress, see Henderson and Wakeham, *Reconciling Canada*.
27. Alexandre Sauvage, 'Reconciliation, the Australian State and Durkheim's Moral Renewal', <http://www.westpac.paris4.sorbonne.fr/SPIP/spip.php?article43#nh11>.
28. Anthony Moran, 'Trust and Uncertainty in a Settler Society: Relations between Settlers and Aborigines in Australia', in *Trust, Risk, and Uncertainty*, ed. Sean Watson and Anthony Moran (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
29. Dirk Moses, 'Official Apologies, Reconciliation, and Settler Colonialism: Australian Indigenous Alterity and Political Agency', *Citizenship Studies* 15.2 (2011): 145–59.
30. For example, Colleen Murphy's *A Moral Theory of Political Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) seeks to analyse political reconciliation after conflict and the 'establishment or restoration of democratic relationships critical to the pursuit of peacemaking globally' (1). It does address South Africa, yet its index does not list the terms 'Aboriginal', 'settler' or 'colonialism'. Likewise, *Dilemmas of Reconciliation: Cases and Concepts*, ed. Carol A. Prager and Trudy Govier (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003) examines the 'challenges that must be faced in the aftermath of genocide or barbarous civil wars'. Chapters traverse regions such as Russia, Cambodia, Guatemala, South Africa and Canada, yet the volume does not address the specific analytical frame of settler colonialism.



31. Julie Fenley, 'The National Aboriginal Conference and the Makarrata: Sovereignty and Treaty Discussions, 1979–1981', *Australian Historical Studies* 42.3 (2011): 372–89.
32. Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning', 7.
33. Meredith Gibbs, 'Justice as Reconciliation and Restoring Mana in New Zealand's Treaty of Waitangi Settlement Process', *Political Science* 58.2 (2006): 15–27; Alistair Reese, *Naboth's Vineyard: Towards Truth and Reconciliation in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Saarbrücken: Verlag, 2008).
34. Many of these settler nations have made formal apologies to Aboriginal and Native peoples only recently, and here the language of reconciliation and apology are heavily intertwined. In 1995 Queen Elizabeth II apologized for colonial injustices suffered by the Māori people in New Zealand and gave the royal assent to a New Zealand Act of Parliament explicitly acknowledging the injustices suffered by a Māori tribe whose lands were confiscated following a treaty signed by her predecessors. In February 2008 Australia's Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, made an official apology to the 'Stolen Generations', Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were removed or stolen from their parents and placed in care or domestic service under state-sponsored policies throughout the twentieth century in Australia. Indeed, a lack of apology was widely viewed as an obstacle to the reconciliation process in Australia and became a key and divisive point of contention for the nation. In June 2008 Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, made an official apology for the abuse suffered by Aboriginal peoples who had been placed in the Residential School system. And, although the US government apologized to native Hawaiians for overthrowing the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1993, a similar apology to Native Americans was a long time coming. First put up to Congress in 2004, the 'Historic Resolution of Apology to Native Peoples' did not pass. It was then reintroduced in 2009, and President Barack Obama signed the Native American Apology Resolution into law in December 2009.
35. Jeremy Bentham, 'Plea for the Constitution', Letter to Lord Pelham, in Section VI, 'Nullity of legislation in New South Wales, for want of an assembly to consent', in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. 4, ed. John Bowring (Edinburgh: W. Tait, 1843).
36. I thank Katrina Schlunke for her wonderful idea of treaty as the 'impossible performance'.
37. Short, *Reconciliation and Colonial Power*.
38. Altman and Hinkson, *Coercive Reconciliation*; Blackburn, 'Producing Legitimacy'.
39. Peter Read, 'Reconciliation without History: State Crime and State Punishment in Chile and Australia', in *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*, ed. Frances-Peters Little, Ann Curthoys and John Docker (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010).
40. Gary Foley, personal communication with the author, 2015.
41. Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning', 14.
42. Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning', 7.
43. Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning', 7.
44. Strakosch and Macoun, 'The Vanishing Endpoint of Settler Colonialism'.

45. A. Chr. (Tina) Engels-Schwarzpaul, Ross Jenner and Albert Refiti, 'Introduction: Consensus versus Disagreement', *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts* 8 (2000), 4.
46. Engels-Schwarzpaul, Jenner and Refiti, 'Introduction', 4.
47. Pauline Wakeham, 'Reconciling "Terror": Managing Indigenous Resistance in the Age of Apology', *American Indian Quarterly* 36.1 (2012), 9.
48. Wakeham, 'Reconciling "Terror"'. See also Wakeham, 'The Cunning of Reconciliation', 209–10.
49. Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 8.
50. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 22.
51. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 1–24.
52. Miranda Johnson, 'Reconciliation, Indigeneity and Postcolonial Nationhood in Settler States', *Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 14.2 (2011): 187–201.
53. Short, *Reconciliation and Colonial Power*, 162; Damien Short, 'Reconciliation and the Problem of Internal Colonisation', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26.3 (2005): 267–82 (247), cited in Sarah Maddison, 'Twentieth Century Australia', in *The Routledge Handbook of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Lorenzo Veracini and Edward Cavanagh (New York: Routledge, 2016).
54. Gary Foley, personal communication with the author, 22 July 2015.
55. 'Conciliation', *Oxford English Dictionary* online.
56. William Metcalf, *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Coins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 531, 500, 556.
57. Kiril Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace: Ritual Self and Society in the High and Late Medieval West* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).
58. 'Reconciliation', *Oxford English Dictionary* online; Bernard Cooke and Gary Macy, 'Rituals of Reconciliation', in *Christian Symbol and Ritual: An Introduction*, ed. Bernard Cooke and Gary Macy (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 109, 110.
59. Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace*, 45, 46.
60. Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate'", 209–11.
61. Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael and William Short, the US Commissioners to Spain, 30 June 1793, emphasis added. See Thomas Jefferson, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892–99), 6:336. See also Paul Russell Cutright, 'Lewis and Clark Indian Peace Medals', *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 24 (January 1968): 160–7.
62. Francis Paul Prucha, *Indian Peace Medals in American History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 91.
63. Robert J. Miller, *Native America Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clarke and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 86.
64. Gilliam Whitlock, 'Active Remembrance: Testimony, Remembrance and the Work of Reconciliation', in *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*, ed. Annie Coombes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 28.
65. Duncan Bell, *Remaking the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 9.
66. Bell, *Remaking the World*, Introduction.
67. Phipps, 'Globalization, Indigeneity and Performing Culture', 28.

68. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2003), xix.
69. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, xvii.
70. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, xix.
71. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, xvii.
72. Waterson, 'Reconciliation as Ritual'.
73. Waterson, 'Reconciliation as Ritual'.
74. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
75. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16; Gilbert, 'Indigeneity and Performance', 175.
76. Gilbert, 'Indigeneity and Performance', 176, cites Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 26.
77. See Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning', 5–7. Ian Baucom theorizes the truth event as a singularity: insofar as it appears as an exception or anomaly, it 'demonstrates the repressed or previously unrecognizable truth of a historical situation'. Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 120–1. Baucom draws his ideas of the truth event from French philosopher Alain Badiou and his work on being, truth and the subject. Cited in Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning'.
78. See Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning', 5–7.

## 1 'Polishing the chain of friendship': Two Row Wampum Renewal Celebrations and Matters of History

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## 2 'This is our hearts!' Unruly Re-enactments and Unreconciled Pasts in Lakota Country

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85. Banivanua Mar and Edmonds, 'Indigenous and Settler Relations'.
86. Lyndall Ryan, "'A Very Bad Business": Henry Dangar and the Myall Creek Massacre 1838', University of Newcastle, <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/chov/conferences/dangar-park-and-the-myall-creek-massacre>. Ryan cites Alan Atkinson and Marian Aveling, eds., *Australians 1838* (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1987), 54–60. See also R. H. W. Reece, *Aborigines and Colonists: Aborigines and Colonial Society in New South Wales in the 1830s and 1840s* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974); Brian Harrison, 'The Myall Creek Massacre', in *Records of Times Past: Ethnohistorical Essays on the Culture and Ecology of the New England Tribes*, ed. Isabel McBryde (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1978), 17–51.
87. Ryan, "'A Very Bad Business"', 4; Atkinson and Aveling, *Australians 1838*, 38–45.
88. Milliss, *Waterloo Creek*, 279.
89. Lyndall Ryan, 'Waterloo Creek, Northern New South Wales', in *Frontier Conflict*, ed. Foster and Attwood, 36.
90. Milliss, *Waterloo Creek*, 279, 281; see also Ryan, 'Waterloo Creek'.
91. Roger Milliss, 'Australia Day Massacre Swept under the Mat', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January 1988. See also Milliss, *Waterloo Creek*.
92. Milliss, *Waterloo Creek*, 279, 281.
93. Milliss, *Waterloo Creek*, 293.
94. Milliss, *Waterloo Creek*, 293.
95. Banivanua Mar and Edmonds, 'Indigenous and Settler Relations', 350.
96. Banivanua Mar and Edmonds, 'Indigenous and Settler Relations', 350.
97. 'Supreme Court – Criminal Side', *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 6 December 1838.
98. Judge Burton 'Supreme Court – Criminal Side', *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 6 December 1838.
99. Judge Burton 'Supreme Court – Criminal Side', *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 6 December 1838.
100. Lecture by Reverend William Ridley, 'On the Kamilaroi Blacks', *Empire*, 3 December 1853, 3.
101. Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning'.
102. See Henderson and Wakeham, 'Colonial Reckoning', 5–7. On 'truth events' see Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*, 120–1. Baucom draws his ideas of 'truth event' from French philosopher Alain Badiou's work on being, truth and the subject.
103. See Ted Stubbins and Pauline Smith, *The Myall Creek Massacre: Its History, Its Memorial and the Opening Ceremony* (Bingara: Myall Creek Memorial Committee, 2001), 1–11; 'National Heritage Places – Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site, New South Wales', Department of the Environment, Commonwealth of Australia, <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/myall-creek>.
104. <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/putting-stones-on-jewish-graves/3/>.
105. Stubbins and Smith, *The Myall Creek Massacre*, 16.
106. Stubbins and Smith, *The Myall Creek Massacre*, 16.

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108. See Janine Minkler, review of *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*, by Lisa Schirch, *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 2.2 (2007): 195.
109. Polly O. Walker, 'Creating a New Story: Ritual, Ceremony and Conflict Transformation between Indigenous and Settler Peoples', in *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict. Volume I: Resistance and Reconciliation in Regions of Violence*, ed. Cynthia E. Cohen, Roberto Gutierrez Varea and Polly O. Walker (Oakland: New Village Press, 2011), 230.
110. Walker, 'Creating a New Story', 233.
111. Walker, 'Creating a New Story', 225, 240.
112. 'Myall Creek: A massacre and a reconciliation', 7 June 2013, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/06/07/myall-creek-massacre-and-reconciliation>, accessed 11 May 2015.
113. Roxana Waterson, 'Reconciliation as Ritual: Comparative Perspectives on Innovation and Performance in Processes of Reconciliation', *Humanities Research* 15.3 (2009): para. 2, <http://press.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Humanities+Research+Vol+XV.+No+3.+2009/5051/ch02.xhtml>.
114. Waterson, 'Reconciliation as Ritual', para. 4.
115. See Minkler, review of *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*, by Lisa Schirch; Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*.
116. Carlson discusses ideas from Arnold van Gennep's work; see Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996, 2nd edn. 2004), 16, 17.
117. Waterson, 'Reconciliation as Ritual', para. 4.
118. Katrina Schlunke, 'More than Memory: Performing Place and Post-coloniality at the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial', in *Unstable Ground*, ed. McAuley, 182.
119. Schlunke, 'More than Memory', 182.
120. 'Myall Creek: A massacre and a reconciliation', 7 June 2013, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/06/07/myall-creek-massacre-and-reconciliation>, accessed 11 May 2015.
121. 'Myall Creek: A massacre and a reconciliation', 7 June 2013, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/06/07/myall-creek-massacre-and-reconciliation>, accessed 11 May 2015.
122. Rev. Grant Finlay, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Hobart, Tasmania, personal communication with the author, 15 October 2014, emphasis added.
123. Gay McAuley, 'Remembering and Forgetting: Place and Performance in the Memory Process', in *Unstable Ground*, ed. McAuley, 151.
124. Schlunke, 'More than Memory', 178–9.
125. Schlunke, 'More than Memory', 180–1.
126. Schlunke, 'More than Memory', 178.
127. Schlunke, 'More than Memory', 178.
128. Schlunke, 'More than Memory', 178.
129. 'Myall Creek: A massacre and a reconciliation', 7 June 2013, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/06/07/myall-creek-massacre-and-reconciliation>, accessed 11 May 2015.

130. 'Australian Heritage Council, Final Assessment Report: Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site', Department of the Environment, Commonwealth Government, <http://www.environment.gov.au/node/19193>.
131. 'National Heritage Places – Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site, New South Wales', Department of the Environment, Commonwealth of Australia, <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/myall-creek>.

#### 4 'Our history is not the last word': Sorry Day at Risdon Cove and 'Black Line' Survival Ceremony, Tasmania

1. Brenda Hodge and Sally Fuglsang, personal communication with the author, 11 November 2014.
2. The 'Stolen Generations' refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were removed or stolen from their parents and placed in care or domestic service under state-sponsored policies throughout the twentieth century in Australia.
3. Various accounts exist of the number of Oyster Bay people killed, and this continues to be debated. In Collins's despatch to Governor King in Sydney on 15 May, he wrote that three Aboriginal people had been killed. Later, after an enquiry, some testified that five or six had been killed, while a following report stated that 40 or 50 Aboriginal people were killed. See Lyndall Ryan, 'Risdon Cove and the Massacre of 3 May 1804: Their Place in Tasmanian History', *Tasmanian Historical Studies* 9 (2004): 107–3.
4. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by the author, 15 October 2014.
5. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by the author, 15 October 2014.
6. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by the author, 15 October 2014.
7. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by the author, 15 October 2014.
8. See Ann Curthoys, 'Genocide in Tasmania: The History of an Idea', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 229–52; Tony Barta, 'Relations of Genocide: Land and Lives in the Colonization of Australia', in *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death*, ed. Isidor Wallimann and Michael N. Dobkowski (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 237–51; Henry Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain? The Question of Genocide in Australia's History* (Melbourne: Viking, 2001); John Docker, 'A Plethora of Intentions: Genocide, Settler Colonialism and Historical Consciousness in Australia and Britain', *The International Journal of Human Rights* 19.1 (2015): 74–89.
9. Docker, 'A Plethora of Intentions', 75.
10. Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), xviii.
11. Lyndall Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land: Success or Failure?', *Journal of Australian Studies* 37.1 (2013): 3–18.
12. See Eleanor Bright Fleming, 'When Sorry is Enough: The Possibility of a National Apology for Slavery', in *The Age of Apology: Facing Up to the Past*, ed. Mark Gibney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 102; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC),

- Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: HREOC, 1997), <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-appendix-9-recommendations>.
13. Fleming, 'When Sorry is Enough', 102.
  14. HREOC, 'Appendix 3: Text of Sorry Day Statement', in *Social Justice Report* (Sydney: HREOC, 1999), <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/social-justice-report-1998-appendix-3-text-sorry-day-statement>.
  15. Fleming, 'When Sorry is Enough', 102.
  16. Fleming, 'When Sorry is Enough', 102.
  17. Damien Short, *Reconciliation and Colonial Power: Indigenous Rights in Australia*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 115–16.
  18. See apologies at Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Online Exhibitions Archive, 'The Sorry Books', accessed 8 August 2015, [http://aiatsis.gov.au/archive\\_digitised\\_collections/sorry\\_books/introduction.html](http://aiatsis.gov.au/archive_digitised_collections/sorry_books/introduction.html).
  19. Peter Read, 'Reconciliation without History: State Crime and State Punishment in Chile and Australia', in *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*, ed. Frances Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys and John Docker (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010).
  20. John Howard, Opening Address to the Australian Reconciliation Convention, Melbourne, 26 May 1997, <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/transcripts/00010361.pdf>, pp. 2, 4.
  21. Heidi Norman, 'An Examination of the Limitations of Reconciliation as a Framework for Aboriginal Social Policy Development', *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* 5.2 (2002): 10–17. Also cited in Read, 'Reconciliation without History'.
  22. Michael Mullins, 'Paul Keating and Sorry Day's Indulgence with a Purpose', *Eureka Street* 23.10 (2013): 20–1.
  23. Alison Alexander, 'Aboriginal Land Rights', in *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, ed. Alison Alexander, 2006, [http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion\\_to\\_tasmanian\\_history/A/Aboriginal%20land%20rights.htm](http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Aboriginal%20land%20rights.htm). Parcels of land returned included those in Risdon Cove, site of the 1804 massacre, and Oyster Cove, to which the 47 surviving Aborigines of the failed Wybalenna settlement in Flinders Island were transferred in 1847. The Act passed ownership and management of the lands to the Aboriginal Land Council.
  24. Aboriginal Lands Act 1995, <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/item-did-79-aid-7-pid-66.html>.
  25. Aboriginal Lands Act 1995, Royal assent 14 November 1995, <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/scan-sid-732.html>, emphasis added.
  26. For participant figures, see Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, *Reconciliation*, chapter 6; 'The Melbourne Reconciliation Walk', Victorian Trades Hall Council, 9 May 2015, <http://vthc.org.au/news-archives/latest-news/2000-latest-news-archives/2016-the-melbourne-reconciliation-walk>; Anne Buggins, 'Building Bridges, 40,000 March for Reconciliation', *West Australian*, 4 December 2000, p. 1.
  27. Annalise Acorn, *Compulsory Compassion: A Critique of Restorative Justice* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

28. Acorn, paraphrased in John Braithwaite, 'Narrative and "Compulsory Compassion"', *Law & Social Inquiry* 31.2 (2006): 425.
29. Roxana Waterson, 'Reconciliation as Ritual: Comparative Perspectives on Innovation and Performance in Processes of Reconciliation', *Humanities Research* 15.3 (2009): 27–47.
30. Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 2014), 1–24; Pauline Wakeham, 'Reconciling "Terror": Managing Indigenous Resistance in the Age of Apology', *American Indian Quarterly* 36.1 (2012): 12.
31. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 22.
32. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 22.
33. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 22.
34. Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 167, 168.
35. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 22.
36. Julie Gough, personal communication with the author, 2010.
37. Carole Pateman and Charles W. Mills, *Contract and Domination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 35–78.
38. Lyndall Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A History since 1803* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2012), 14; Norman James Brian Plomley, *The Aboriginal/Settler Clash in Van Diemen's Land, 1803–1831* (Hobart: Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in association with the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, 1992), 10.
39. Jeremy Bentham, 'Plea for the Constitution', Letter to Lord Pelham, in Section VI 'Nullity of legislation in New South Wales, for want of an assembly to consent', in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. John Bowring, volume 4 (Edinburgh: W. Tait, 1843).
40. John Connor, 'British Frontier Warfare Logistics and the "Black Line", Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), 1830', *War in History* 9.2 (2002): 146; Vivienne Rae-Ellis, *Black Robinson, Protector of the Aborigines* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1988), 21.
41. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 87–105; Henry Reynolds, *Fate of a Free People: The Classic Account of the Tasmanian Wars* (Melbourne: Penguin, 2004). Penelope Edmonds, '"Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate": Governor Arthur's Proclamation Boards to the Aborigines, Australian Conciliation Narratives and their Transnational Connections', *Journal of Australian Studies* 35.2 (2011): 201–18.
42. 'Proclamation Colonel George Arthur, Lieutenant Governor of the Island of Van Diemen's Land and Its Dependencies', *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 25 June 1824.
43. 'Proclamation, 15th April 1828, By His Excellency Colonel George Arthur, Lieutenant Governor of the Island of Van Diemen's Land and Its Dependencies', *House of Commons Papers*, vol. 19 (1831): 22–4; Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 101. See also Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, 'Indigenous and Settler Relations', in *The Cambridge History of Australia*, vol. 2, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 342–66.
44. 'Governor's Proclamation, 1 November 1828', *British Parliamentary Papers*, 184, 192. Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur took up office in Hobart, Van



- Diemen's Land in May 1824. See A. G. L. Shaw, 'Arthur, Sir George (1784–1854)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 2006–2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/arthur-sir-george-1721>.
45. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 107.
  46. For example, in the early colony of New South Wales, Governor Phillip was so desperate to effect communication with local Aboriginal people around the Sydney Cove area that in 1788 he ordered the kidnap of the Aboriginal man Arabanoo, who later died of smallpox. A year later Governor Macquarie's military captured the Aboriginal men Bennelong and Colbey in an effort to exchange languages with them. Rob Amery and Peter Mülhäusler, 'Pidgin English in New South Wales', in *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia and the Americas*, ed. Stephen A. Wurm, Peter Mülhäusler and Darrell T. Tryon (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 33–4.
  47. Lieutenant Governor Arthur, despatch to Sir George Murray, Colonial Secretary, 20 November 1830, microfilm, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart.
  48. Ummarah was also known as Numarow or Eumarrah. See Michael Roe, 'Eumarrah (c. 1798–1832)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 2006–2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/eumarrah-12905>.
  49. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 107.
  50. Roe, 'Eumarrah', 117–18.
  51. George Frankland to Governor Arthur, letter, 4 February 1829, LSD 17/1, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart.
  52. Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate'". See also Gaye Sculthorpe's discussion of the provenance of some of the boards in 'The Ethnographic Collection of George Augustus Robinson', in *Memoirs of the Museum of Victoria, Anthropology and History*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Melbourne: Museum of Victoria, 1990).
  53. Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate'". This figure (100 boards) is based on a note from collection files at Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania.
  54. Joan Kerr, 'Early Effort – Art in Australia', in *Tasmanian Insights: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Thomas Stilwell*, ed. Gillian Winter (Hobart: State Library of Tasmania, 1992), 104.
  55. Letter from George Frankland to Governor Arthur, 4 February 1829, LSD 17/1, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart; also see Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate'".
  56. George Frankland to R. W. Hay, Hobarton, Van Diemen's Land, 9 February 1829, letter, in *Five Letters From George Frankland in Van Diemen's Land* (Adelaide: Nag's Head Press, 1997), emphasis added; also see Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate'".
  57. George Frankland to R. W. Hay, Hobarton, Van Diemen's Land, 9 February 1829, letter, in *Five Letters From George Frankland in Van Diemen's Land* (Adelaide: Nag's Head Press, 1997); also see Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate'".
  58. Governor Davey (in office between 1813 and 1816) attempted to halt the practice of Aboriginal child theft by settlers. Plomley, *The Aboriginal/Settler Clash in Van Diemen's Land*, 7.

59. Desmond Manderson, 'Not Yet: Aboriginal People and the Deferral of the Rule of Law', *Arena Journal* 29/30 (2008): 219–72.
60. By the 1820s and 1830s a distinction between free and convict was increasingly called for as penal settlements became colonial societies. As Margaret Maynard notes, in 1826 Governor Arthur instituted seven classes of male prisoner in Van Diemen's Land. Traditionally, in Europe, blue signified the working classes, while yellow was the 'colour of disgrace'. Rough yellow cloth 'became synonymous with Australian convicts in the 1820s and 1830s'. Combinations of blue or grey jackets and yellow trousers thus signified convictism. See Margaret Maynard, *Fashioned from Penury: Dress as Cultural Practice in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20–1.
61. Norman James Brian Plomley, ed., *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson, 1829–1834* (Hobart: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, 1966).
62. Edmonds, "'Failing in Every Endeavour to Conciliate'".
63. *The Tasmanian*, 26 November 1830. See Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 108n66, emphasis added.
64. Rae-Ellis, *Black Robinson*, 18.
65. Lieutenant Governor Arthur, despatch to Sir George Murray, Colonial Secretary, 20 November 1830, microfilm, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart.
66. Cassandra Pybus, 'Vandemonian Vanity', *The Australian*, 2 April 2008, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/vandemonian-vanity/story-e6frg8px-1111115885564>.
67. Lieutenant Governor Arthur, despatch to Sir George Murray, Colonial Secretary, 20 November 1830, microfilm, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart.
68. Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006), 114.
69. Connor, 'British Frontier Warfare Logistics', 153.
70. H. R., *Hobart Town Courier*, October 1830.
71. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land'; Connor, 'British Frontier Warfare Logistics', 150.
72. Connor, 'British Frontier Warfare Logistics', 153.
73. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 14.
74. 'A grim success' is Lyndall Ryan's phrase. See Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 15.
75. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 14.
76. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 5.
77. Connor, 'British Frontier Warfare Logistics', 151.
78. See Connor, 'British Frontier Warfare Logistics', 151–2. Connor cites Scott's annotation on Letter from Gilbert Robertson, Chief Constable, Richmond, to Scott, 19 October 1830, SLNSW ML A1055, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Frankland's field plan is held in the State Library of Tasmania. See George Frankland, *Military Operations against the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land No. 9, Field Plan of Movements of the Military* (Hobart: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, 1971).
79. Connor, 'British Frontier Warfare Logistics', 152.

80. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 9.
81. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 11.
82. *Hobart Town Courier*, 30 October 1830.
83. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 12.
84. Walpole to Colonel Secretary, 27 October 1830, CSO file 1/332, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart. Cited in Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 12.
85. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 13.
86. *Hobart Town Courier*, 30 October 1830.
87. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land', 13. Ryan cites Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 311.
88. Ryan, *Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 158; see also 'Robinson, George Augustus (1791–1866)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 2006–2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robinson-george-augustus-2596>.
89. 'Robinson, George Augustus (1791–1866)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 2006–2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robinson-george-augustus-2596>.
90. 'Robinson, George Augustus (1791–1866)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 2006–2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robinson-george-augustus-2596>.
91. George Arthur to Secretary Hay, September 1832, CO280/35, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Hobart.
92. 'Robinson, George Augustus (1791–1866)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 2006–2015, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robinson-george-augustus-2596>.
93. *Hobart Town Courier*, 8 April 1836.
94. *Launceston Advertiser*, 21 April 1836. The Robinson cup is held in the collections of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston.
95. Aboriginal Elder Aunt Ida West passed away in 2003. I thank her children for permission to use the Black Line ceremony image. I am also grateful to photographer and Elder Aunt Brenda Hodge, Riawunna Aboriginal Centre, University of Tasmania, and for our conversation about the Black Line ceremony.
96. Ida West, *Pride against Prejudice: Reminiscences of a Tasmanian Aborigine* (Hobart: Montpelier Press, 2004); 'Aunty Ida West: Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder', *Splash*, ABC, 1 November 1995, <http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/153584/aunty-ida-west-tasmanian-aboriginal-elder-1995>.
97. 'Ida Amelia (Aunty Ida) West AM', Honour Roll of Women, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmanian Government, accessed 8 August 8, 2015, [http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/csrt/programs\\_and\\_services/tasmanian\\_honour\\_roll\\_of\\_women/inductees/2005/ida\\_amelia\\_aunty\\_ida\\_west\\_am](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/csrt/programs_and_services/tasmanian_honour_roll_of_women/inductees/2005/ida_amelia_aunty_ida_west_am).
98. Jim Everett, 'Aunt Ida West', in Alexander, *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, [http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion\\_to\\_tasmanian\\_history/W/West%20Ida.htm](http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/W/West%20Ida.htm).
99. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by the author, 15 October 2014. I am also grateful to Grant for his generous conversations about these ceremonies.
100. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by the author, 15 October 2014.
101. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by the author, 15 October 2014.

102. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet, Sunday, 28 October 2001, Wielangta State Forest, Tasmania, courtesy of Reverend Grant Finlay.
103. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet.
104. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet. They drew on Lyndall Ryan, *Aboriginal Tasmanians* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 17, 19.
105. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet.
106. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet.
107. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet.
108. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet.
109. Reverend Grant Finlay, interview by author, 15 October 2014.
110. Elders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Three Thumbs ceremony booklet.
111. Katrina Schlunke, 'More than Memory: Performing Place and Post-coloniality at the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial', in *Unstable Ground: Performance and the Politics of Place*, ed. Gay McAuley (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006), 182, 183.
112. Polly O. Walker, 'Creating a New Story: Ritual, Ceremony and Conflict Transformation between Indigenous and Settler Peoples', in *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict. Volume 1: Resistance and Reconciliation in Regions of Violence*, ed. Cynthia E. Cohen, Roberto Gutierrez Varea and Polly O. Walker (Oakland: New Village Press, 2011), 225, 240.
113. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 24.
114. 'Aunty Ida West: Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder', *Splash*, ABC, 1 November 1995, <http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/153584/aunty-ida-west-tasmanian-aboriginal-elder-1995>.

## 5 'We did not sign a treaty ... we did not surrender!' Contesting the Consensus Politics of the Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand

1. Judith Binney, *Encircled Lands: Te Urewera, 1820–1921* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2009), 113.
2. See Binney's account of the re-enactment in *Encircled Lands*, 2.
3. The *wero* is a traditional challenge of the visitor at the beginning of the *pōwhiri* or welcome ceremony. Three Māori warriors advance cautiously towards the guests with ceremonial weapons, perform threatening gestures and call out battle screams. Historically, this performance demonstrates the martial prowess of the *iwi* (tribal) warriors and tests the steadfastness of the visitors. By accepting a symbolic offering, such as a leaf or carved effigy placed on the ground by the leader before the visitors, this part of the ceremony is concluded.

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## Conclusion

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