Identity, Belonging and Cultural Diversity in Australian Museums

by

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BA (Hons) & MA (Public History)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University

May, 2016
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Abstract

This dissertation seeks to understand the ways in which objects have mediated relationships between people from culturally diverse backgrounds in Australian history and society. It does this by focusing on the ways in which museums, through their collection and display of particular objects, have played a role in supporting processes of inclusion and exclusion in Australian society over time.

Museums in Australia were amongst the first in the world to promote cross-cultural understandings in a culturally diverse society through the collection and display of objects. They did this purposefully after the introduction of multicultural policies by the national government in 1978, though there are examples of objects that embody the histories of culturally diverse people in their collections before this time.

By tracing the lives of three collected objects and situating them within the networks of people, institutions and government policies that managed immigration and cultural diversity in Australian society, this dissertation seeks to create a history of contact between people from culturally diverse backgrounds before and after the introduction of multicultural policies, as mediated by these objects. It also seeks to track the roles that museums have played in these relationships over time. In doing so, this dissertation examines how these objects mediate what sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis (2010) has described as ‘identity relations’.
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## Abbreviations

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEAC</td>
<td>Australian Ethnic Affairs Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGPS</td>
<td>Australian Government Publishing Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHEP</td>
<td>Australian Ethnic Heritage Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIA</td>
<td>Australia-Indonesia Association</td>
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<td>AMAC</td>
<td>Australian Multicultural Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANMM</td>
<td>Australian National Maritime Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>APEAC</td>
<td>Australian Population and Ethnic Affairs Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCCA</td>
<td>Chinese Community Council of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHAA</td>
<td>Chinese Heritage Association of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Communist Party of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>The Canberra Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FECCA</td>
<td>Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Immigration Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRAHS</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAMRC</td>
<td>Latvians Abroad - museum and research centre</td>
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<td>LFFM</td>
<td>Lambing Flat Folk Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNP</td>
<td>Liberal National Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHC — NMA</td>
<td>Migrant Heritage Collection, National Museum of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHC — NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales Migration Heritage Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAAS</td>
<td>Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAMU</td>
<td>Music Archive of Monash University</td>
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<td>NMV</td>
<td>National Museum of Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMA</td>
<td>National Museum of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRRA</td>
<td>United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWF</td>
<td>Waterside Workers Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YDHS</td>
<td>Young and District Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>YHS</td>
<td>Young Historical Society</td>
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<td>YSC</td>
<td>Young Shire Council</td>
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<td>YW</td>
<td>Young Witness</td>
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Introduction

A national dress is a symbol for me, is a symbol for some other Latvians. It is a symbol for the whole nation of Latvia ... But it is like, ‘what do you think of the Australian flag?’ That is my question to you. It is more or less the same, [as] what I think of a national costume.¹

In 2006 when I interviewed Guna Kinne about her Latvian national dress while working at the National Museum of Australia (NMA), she sometimes turned my questions around on me. She made me very conscious of her own purpose in donating the dress and how she wanted her story to be understood and told by the NMA. In the quotation above, she was reaching out for understanding and a connection. I had asked what her national dress meant to her and she appealed to what she thought was my own sense of national identity as someone who was born and grew up in Australia. That national dress mediated our conversation and the interpretation of it in the NMA’s exhibition Australian Journeys which opened in January 2009. This exhibition was about the transnational connections of Australia with the rest of the world. It was an explicit move away from earlier conventions of displaying migration history and emphasised the links between migrants, their countries of origin and their impacts on Australian society. Objects, and indeed object biography, were

central to the framework of the exhibition. I was responsible for curating the section on post-World War II migration and Guna Kinne was a Latvian Displaced Person who had migrated to Australia in 1948, bringing her national dress with her.

Kinne’s dress also mediated the relationship between herself and curators when it was collected by the NMA in 1989. At that time the museum was consciously creating a Migrant Heritage Collection which would represent ‘Australia in all its cultural diversity’ in response to the changing demographics of Australian society and the introduction of multicultural policies by national and state governments from the 1970s onwards. The Museum wanted to represent migrants and collected many objects to illustrate Australia’s many ‘others’ as part of the national ‘us’. The museum files show that Kinne was very clear about what donating the dress to the museum meant to her. As she had no daughters to pass the dress on to, she offered it to the museum. She had written: ‘To part with one’s Latvian national dress is similar to putting aside an important banner from the past. ... It is a symbol of one’s ancestry.’ In other words, she wanted her own life story and a piece of her beloved nation of origin, Latvia to be preserved. Kinne was defining herself as different, as one of the

_____________________________________________________________________


4 Guna Kinne quoted in Karen Schamberger, ‘Guna Kinne and her Latvian national dress’.
many ‘others’ in Australia and that difference was important to preserve and explain to the dominant or mainstream ‘us’.

As a curator, I enjoyed working with both objects and the people associated with them. As a person who was born in Australia to migrant parents, interviewing people like Guna Kinne was also helpful for me to understand some of parent’s experiences of migration and settlement in Australia, even though the countries of origin and time periods were different. Through studying ‘others,’ I could understand myself and my own family. It is these experiences as a curator that have led me to be interested in the ways that museums have dealt with cultural diversity and particularly, how these relationships between museums and people of culturally diverse backgrounds function. When I use the term cultural diversity, I am referring to the demographic composition of Australian society where people from many different national, cultural, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds are living together as Australians.

**Context of the Study**

Australia’s population did not become culturally diverse because of the policies of multiculturalism introduced in 1978. Australian governments introduced multicultural policies in order to manage the migration and settlement needs of migrants as well as their integration into Australian society. Post-World War II migration had greatly increased the cultural diversity of the population. Managing a culturally diverse society often involves both inclusive and exclusionary practices, which people from all cultural backgrounds in that
society engage in. The history of these practices in Australia is outlined in chapter two.

A number of Australian museologists, historians and curators, such as Andrea Witcomb, Ian McShane, Viv Szekeres and Eureka Henrich have discussed the ways that that Australian museums consciously engaged with culturally diverse members of Australian society after the introduction of multicultural policies in 1978. The literature focuses on this period and on exhibitions or the creation of migration or culturally specific museums rather than the creation or maintenance of collections. Where collections have been used to explore relations between museums and people from cultural backgrounds different to the dominant culture is in the case of ethnographic and archaeological objects, particularly relating to indigenous peoples.

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Motivation for Study

In this dissertation I seek to understand the ways in which Australian museums have dealt with cultural diversity and engaged with the processes of inclusion and exclusion before and after the introduction of multicultural policy through their collections. I will only examine exhibitions which displayed the objects under investigation. While museum staff did not consciously seek to represent Australia as a culturally diverse society before the 1970s they did collect objects relating to people from culturally diverse backgrounds. These objects were usually collected for reasons not related to migration or settlement and can be found in technological, ethnographic and historical collections.7 Focusing on individual objects will enable me to create a history of contact between people of different cultural backgrounds in Australia both before and after the introduction of multicultural policies and understand the ways that museums have mediated and acted in those relationships over time.

I follow Susan Pearce’s view that ‘[c]ollecting lies near to the hearts of many of us, and close also to our social mind and our ability to understand ourselves and the world we live in’.8 I also share her view that:

*Objects are not inert or passive; they help us to give shape to our identities and purpose to our lives. We engage with them*


in a complex interactive or behavioural dance in the course of which the weight of significance which they carry affects the way we think and feel and how we act.⁹

This means that in this dissertation I seek to understand the ways in which objects have mediated relations between people of different cultural backgrounds in Australian society through their entanglement in museum collecting and display practices.

In order to do this, I will analyse the ways in which objects are implicated in people’s identities, feelings and behaviours, including the feelings and politics of belonging, especially the processes of inclusion and exclusion. Experiences of identity formation and belonging are commonly found in the literature around migration and settlement. Gender and cultural studies academic Elspeth Probyn ‘slide[s] from “identity” to “belonging”’ because for her

the latter term captures more accurately the desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places, or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state.¹⁰

⁹ ibid., p.18.
There is another way of understanding this ‘desire for some sort of attachment,’ however, particularly when it comes to understanding relations between people. In Nira Yuval-Davis’ work, this overlap or slippage between identity and belonging is described as ‘identity relations’. She outlined four sets of relations: ‘me’ and ‘us’, ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘me’/ ‘us’ and many ‘others’ and ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’.\(^{11}\) The first set of relations, ‘me’ and ‘us’ suggest an individual’s sense of belonging to a group; they are inclusive. The second set of relations, ‘me’ / ‘us’ and ‘them’ are an antagonistic and sharply defined set of relations that forcefully exclude people who are different to ‘us’. The third set of relations, ‘me’ / ‘us’ and ‘others’ are the broadest set of relations. They describe the ways in which people deal with difference, ranging from positive, through indifference and including the negative relations between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Lastly, the relations of ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’ describe relations which are an alternative to identity politics as they aim to create collective solidarity across boundaries, based on ‘common emancipatory values’.\(^{12}\) My suggestion is that objects and collecting are connected to these ‘identity relations’ because as Pearce noted above, collections are close ‘to our social mind’.

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\(^{12}\) ibid., pp.277-78.
Aim

This dissertation will seek to use the biography of a selection of objects in museum collections to understand the changing nature of the relationships between people from culturally diverse backgrounds in Australian society. In doing so, I will analyse the ways in which museums have played a role in supporting processes of inclusion and exclusion and thus had an impact on the shaping of ‘identity relations’ in Australia. The objects used in this study will range in age and come from a variety of cultural groups relating to specific points in Australian history and in the history of the relevant collecting institution. Beneath this broad aim are four specific questions relating to the relationships between culturally specific communities and museums.

Research Questions

1. How have people and museums used objects to mediate Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’ — ‘me’/‘us’, ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘me’/‘us’ and many ‘others’ and ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’?
2. How have public and local museums understood and interacted with people from diverse cultural backgrounds?
3. What motivates people from culturally diverse backgrounds to donate to, collaborate or not collaborate with a public or local museum?
4. What do the answers to these questions tell us about the relationships between material culture, museums and Australian society?
Limitations

This study excludes material culture from culturally specific museums in Australia because I decided to focus more on the relationships that people of culturally diverse backgrounds had with museums that represented the dominant ‘us’ position in Australian society. Culturally specific museums were created in many different ways in Australia. The earliest culturally specific museums were set up by and for their communities, possibly fulfilling similar roles to community associations. Examples of this type of culturally specific museum include a Lithuanian Museum (Adelaide, 1961), Latvian Museum, (Adelaide, 1970), Ukrainian Museum (Adelaide, 1979), and the Jewish Museum of Australia (Melbourne, 1982).13

The tourism potential of culturally specific museums sometimes encouraged state and local governments to fund community-run museums such as the Museum of Chinese Australian History (Melbourne, 1984), The Golden Dragon Museum (Bendigo, 1991), and Wing Hing Long Museum (Tingha, 1998).14 At other times, policies around social cohesion and multiculturalism led to the

funding of culturally specific museums, for example, the Islamic Museum of Australia (Melbourne, 2014).¹⁵

According to former Migration Museum director, Viv Szekeres, culturally specific museums enable particular communities to deal with self-definition in a pluralist society as well as being ‘an agent in identifying and preserving key elements in a particular culture and transmitting these to future generations’.¹⁶ However, these museums are not just about preserving elements of culture, but also about demonstrating a living heritage. Culturally specific museums are also able to bring issues to the notice of the wider community according to both Szekeres and Helen Light, former curator and director of the Jewish Museum of Australia.¹⁷ During the course of this study, I realised that these aspects of culturally specific museums would be better explored in more detail in a future study.

This study also excludes material culture from Indigenous communities in Australian museums for a number of reasons. The relationship between indigenous and migrant discourses and the way it has been represented in


museums merits a study of its own and has been the subject of an Honours thesis by Katrina Hodgson at the University of Melbourne in 2010.\(^{18}\)

There are some sensitive issues around including indigenous people’s material culture as just one of a number of culturally diverse groups. As Michele Langfield argued, ‘Indigenous peoples have special rights, over and above cultural minorities within nations in general’.\(^{19}\) She based her arguments on international legal developments which came into effect from the 1970s onwards, as well as the passing of the *Racial Discrimination Act* in 1975 and various other laws, federal and state government policies and court judgements such as the Mabo decision in 1992. The legal arguments that are embodied in these acts and decisions were a direct result of Aboriginal political activism, part of which includes resistance to inclusion in a multicultural model of society. Aboriginal activists prefer that Aboriginal peoples are seen as nations set apart from other Australians and not simply treated as another ethnic group.\(^{20}\)

Ann Curthoys studied the way that the discourse around the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and the impact of colonisation has mostly been separate to but parallel with the discourse surrounding the non-British immigrant and multiculturalism. She argued that


these two discourses cannot remain fully distinct but also cannot be conceptualised together.21 This separation and also parallel developments in indigenous discourse and multicultural discourse can also been seen in museum practice and literature. According to Szekeres, museums became increasingly aware of the Reconciliation movement and Indigenous history in the 1980s leading up to the 1988 Bicentenary at the same time as they became aware of immigration and multiculturalism. Museums largely ‘sidestepped’ the issue by creating separate exhibitions for Aboriginal people and for non-British migrants. However, after the year 2000, museums began to exhibit the ways in which migration has impacted on Aboriginal people and how Aboriginal people and their cultures have survived and contributed to Australian society.22 Drawing the two discourses together in this study, however, would have extended the scope of this study beyond what was possible as I would have needed to review indigenous specific literature, particularly in the field of museology as well as engage with a different range of case studies.

**Significance**

This study has uncovered the complex ways in which objects have mediated relations between people from culturally diverse backgrounds in

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22 Szekeres, ‘Museums and multiculturalism’
Australian society between the nineteenth century to the present and between people from culturally diverse backgrounds and public and local museums from the 1940s onwards. Over time, the employees of museums in Australia have imagined and commissioned, acquired, borrowed, displayed and disposed of objects which are associated with culturally specific communities according to institutional collection and exhibition interests and the policies of various governments. Likewise, individuals and groups from different culturally specific communities have engaged with museums through objects for their own reasons as well, such as for preservation and cultural maintenance, political and promotional reasons. This dissertation seeks to challenge the notion that non-Indigenous cross-cultural relations between people and museums in Australia have only occurred after the formal introduction of multicultural policy in 1978.

This study contributes to new empirical knowledge of the history of museum collections by extending our knowledge of the ways in which Australian museums have engaged with cultural diversity through their collections both before and after the introduction of multicultural policy. Usually, museum objects are studied in the context of their use and meaning before they enter the museum and also when they are on exhibition. However, this study will take an object biography approach to reveal the meanings and relationships which revolve around objects in a collection including when they are displayed in

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different contexts over time.\textsuperscript{24} The objects offer different insights into the
history of public and local museums, revealing the varied ways in which people
of culturally diverse backgrounds demonstrate agency in their relations with
people from dominant groups as well as with museums in Australian society.

While it is known that the relations people have with objects are related
to identity formation, linking this to specific sets of Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity
relations’ has not yet been done. When studies relating to museums and cultural
diversity in Australia have dealt with issues of belonging, the focus has tended to
be on the way that museums have tried to be inclusive of cultural differences
through their exhibitions and other public programs. This study, however,
focuses on the ways that collections have been used in Australian museums and
society for the purposes of exclusion and inclusion, both consciously and
subconsciously. It is for this reason that I focus on the biography of specific
objects in selected Australian museum collections.

Overview

This dissertation is divided into two parts — the first part being the
background chapters and the second part, the three case studies. This chapter
introduces the study, its aims, scope, limitations and my research questions.
Chapter one undertakes three tasks: an outline of the history of multicultural

policies at the national level, a review of the literature on multiculturalism, cultural diversity and migration in Australia and an analysis of the collecting sector’s response to multicultural policies. The collecting sector includes museums, libraries, art galleries and archives.

Chapter two introduces the development of the New Museology and the way it has influenced international and Australian museums’ understanding of their social roles. Then, I discuss the ways that Australian museums have participated in inclusionary and exclusionary social practices when dealing with culturally diverse communities both before and after the introduction of multicultural policies.

Chapter three provides a discussion of my methodology and theoretical framework. Here I am concerned with understanding why people collect, including the relationship between objects and identity formation. My particular focus is on identity relations which sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis defined as being between ‘me’ and ‘us’, ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘me’/ ‘us’ and many ‘others’ and lastly, ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’. I framed my analysis of these ‘identity relations’ with Susan Pearce’s adaptation of James Clifford’s ‘Art-Culture System’ which illustrates the ways that objects are collected and valued in the European tradition and thus, the ways that collecting and categorising objects denote our relationship to difference.25 I further theorise the unequal power relations embedded in these ‘identity relations’ and the ‘Art-Culture System’ as an

example of a museological ‘contact zone’.\textsuperscript{26} This focus leads me to propose a
methodology that uses object biography to assemble the relationships between
people, objects, policies and institutions over time. I end the chapter by
introducing my three case studies which are arranged in chronological order
according to the age of the object.

Chapter four is a discussion of the first case study which consists of an
object that pre-dates the formation of the Australian nation, a banner created
for use during anti-Chinese riots in 1861. This object is now located in a local
museum, the Lambing Flat Folk Museum in the town of Young, New South
Wales. I heard about the banner when I was a committee member of the
Chinese Australian Historical Society between 2004 and 2008 — a society which
appealed to me as a person with Chinese Australian heritage. My personal
connections to particular Chinese Australian community members piqued my
curiosity in the contemporary Chinese Australian interest in the banner and the
historical anti-Chinese riots. Throughout its life, the banner has been used to
represent the antagonistic relations of ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘them’ but what this has
done, as I will argue, is hide the possibilities of a historical and contemporary
alternative ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’ narrative.

Chapter five is the second case study which is built around a gamelan — a
set of musical instruments from Indonesia — made in 1927 and brought to
Australia by Indonesian political prisoners of the Dutch East Indies Government

\textsuperscript{26} J Clifford, 	extit{Routes: travel and translation in the late twentieth century}, Harvard University Press,
in 1943. These instruments have moved through four institutions: National Museum of Victoria, Monash University, the NMA and the Australian National Maritime Museum. In the process they have been used to emphasise different sets of ‘identity relations’ in each context. I came across these instruments as a curator working on the *Australian Journeys* exhibition at the NMA between 2005 and 2008. The object biography interpretive approach taken in this exhibition allowed me to explore the complex history of this object and recognise its multilayered history. The experience, as will become clear, has helped to shape the interpretive approach I have taken in this dissertation as well as my politics.

The third case study is analysed in chapter six. It consists of two weaving looms made in German Displaced Persons (DP) camps after World War II by Latvian refugees and brought to Australia in 1950. The looms were made for people who were inspired by a sense of nationalism, partly manifested in ethnographic museum collections of traditional Latvian handicrafts in Latvia. Once the looms were made they moved through refugee camps, migrant homes in Australia and two museums — Museum Victoria (MV) in Melbourne, Australia and the Latvians Abroad — museum and resource centre in Latvia. I came across the story of the looms while researching the story of Guna Kinne, the Latvian migrant mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, for the NMA in 2006. Later, I was fortunate to be working as a curator at MV when one of the looms was deaccessioned to the Latvians Abroad — museum and resource centre (LAMRC) in 2010. This case study deals most strongly with the ‘me’ and ‘us’ relations when they are defined under the threat of an external ‘them’ and ‘me’/‘us’ and
many ‘others’ identity relations in Australia. It also highlights the ‘problem of similarity,’\textsuperscript{27} or the return migrant’s desire to have ‘me’/ ‘us’ identity relations in the country of origin. This is a desire that remains unfulfilled due to the changes that have taken place in the country of origin and within migrants themselves while they or their ancestors have been away. Through the entwined narrative of the looms’ owner who ‘returns’, like one of the looms, to Latvia, we can see the juxtaposition of a ‘racial’ similarity but a ‘cultural’ difference which leads to identity relations of ‘me’/ ‘us’ and many ‘others’.

The concluding chapter summarises why these identity relations are important to understand and suggests directions for further research.

Part One

Cultural diversity, museums and methods
Chapter 1: Managing cultural diversity in the colonies and the nation

He had always opposed the introduction of Chinese into the colony, because he felt that if they were permitted to come here, their being here would, in a short time, cause the existence of a separate and distinct class in our community. ...

The colony had always made a boast of the equality of all its denizens before the law, but how was this boast to be maintained if they took one class of the community and pointed out to them the spot on which only they should be allowed to work.  

When they come here we must receive them as Australians... We must say to them, in effect, that whatever may be the circumstances of the past, when they have lived here for a few years they will all be Australians, they will all be British, and they will all be, as we are, the King’s men and the King’s women.

Multiculturalism is about diversity, not division — it is about interaction not isolation. It is about cultural and ethnic differences set within a framework of shared fundamental values which enables them to co-exist on a complementary rather than competitive basis. It involves respect for the law and for our democratic institutions and processes. Insisting upon a core area of common values is no threat to multiculturalism but its guarantee, for it provides the minimal conditions on which the well-being of all is secured.30

This chapter reveals the connections between the history of immigration policies, scholarship on migration and cultural diversity and the collecting sector (museums, galleries, libraries and archives). I do this by integrating a summary of the different ways that the Australian colonies and then the Australian nation managed the cultural diversity of its population with the emergence of a growing body of scholarship on race, ethnicity, cultural diversity, migration and cross-cultural relations. I then examine the ways in which the collecting sector responded to the changing demographics of Australian society, accompanying changes in policies concerning the management of cultural diversity and the

growing challenges to traditional ideas of Australian identity posed by this scholarship.

The three quotations above represent three very distinct moments in the management of Australia’s cultural diversity and their relationship to changing immigration policies as well as historical contexts. The policies of exclusion and restriction are demonstrated by the quote from Henry Parkes, a politician and journalist in the colony of NSW. He expressed his opposition to the 1861 Goldfields Act which restricted where aliens (non-British miners), could mine for gold in the first quotation above. The gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s in the colonies of Victoria and NSW attracted people from all over the world and placed them in competition with each other on the goldfields, leading at times to conflict. This Act effectively put into law what local authorities were doing on the Lambing Flat goldfields in NSW by segregating Chinese miners away from the European miners in order to reduce tension and conflict. Parkes preferred to restrict immigration to people of British origin in order to prevent the creation of two unequal groups of people in society. Parkes’ position on this piece of legislation demonstrated the ways in which the increasing population and cultural diversity of the colony of NSW challenged politicians who had to work out how to manage that increasing diversity and any conflicts arising from it. This first phase of managing cultural diversity in the colonies vacillated between overt exclusion and periods of inclusion when Chinese (and other non-European) people were not seen as a threat. In the lead up to Federation, however, sentiment turned to exclusion as Australian national identity began to
coalesce and this was formalised in legislating the restriction of Chinese immigration in all the British colonies from 1888 and after Federation in 1901 through what became known as the White Australia Policy.

The second quotation above illustrates the policy of assimilation. In 1950 Prime Minister Robert Menzies stressed the importance of becoming not just Australian, but also British. After World War II, the Australian government developed a policy position that involved the defence of Australia to a perceived threat by increasing the population through migration. The Curtin government instituted a large migration scheme, at first consisting of European Displaced Persons. In order to manage these new non-British migrants, the government turned to the policy of assimilation where these migrants were expected to shed their former traditions, cultures, beliefs and languages and become indistinguishable from the dominant British-descended Australian population.

The third quotation is from Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser in 1981 describing the policy of multiculturalism, formally introduced in 1978. This policy was introduced after much lobbying from ethnic community groups as well as the realisation by governments, academics and the broader Australian society that the post-war migration boom had irrecoverably changed the composition of Australia's population. As we shall see, the collecting sector embodied each of these shifts into its collecting and display practices, reflecting not only changing governmental contexts but also the emergence of new ways of thinking about Australian society.
Separating ‘us’ from ‘them’

Policies of exclusion and separation

Ann Curthoys, following political theorists such as Will Kymlicka and Barry Hindess, has argued that exclusion is an integral part of liberal democracy and that British colonisation in Australia since 1788 provides an example of the exclusionary aspects of liberalism.\footnote{A Curthoys, ‘Liberalism and Exclusionism: A Prehistory of the White Australia Policy’ in L Jayasuriya, D Walker & J Gothard (eds.), Legacies of White Australia: Race Culture and Nation, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2003, pp.9-10.} For Curthoys, forms of colonisation take place along a spectrum from colonies of exploitation to colonies of settlement. In colonies of exploitation the ruling colonial elite extract economic value from the natural and human resources of the country; and in colonies of settlement the colonisers take the land from the pre-existing Indigenous population — destroying their economy and culture while introducing another labour force. In Australia, the colonisation of the north was more like that of exploitation, while the colonies of the south were colonies of settlement. And it was the southern colonies which developed the strongest policies of exclusion through the influence of the British government and the colonists themselves.\footnote{ibid., p.10.}

A total of about 160,000 convicts were sent to the Australian colonies from Britain. Most of them were of English and Irish origin and arrived in the eastern colonies before the gold rushes of the 1850s. Amongst them were 4239 convicts who were not Anglo-Celtic in origin. These included Jews, Afro-Asians...
and British-born people of African descent.\textsuperscript{33} During the 1830s and 1840s, the end of slavery in the British Empire paralleled the end of convict labour in the Australian colonies. Pastoralists in the colonies were agitating for new sources of cheap labour and they suggested introducing Indian indentured labourers into the colony of New South Wales (NSW). The British authorities viewed indentured Indian labour as ‘slavery in another guise’\textsuperscript{34} and also saw the colonies as attractive places for free British emigrants. They thought that the presence of Indian labourers would discourage free British migration and that the Indian labourers would inevitably form a lower ‘caste’ in colonial society. They also feared that racial mixing would degrade the British race and did everything to prevent the introduction of Indian indentured labour to NSW. However, between 1847 and 1852 the influence of pastoralists in NSW saw the introduction of indentured Chinese labour despite both the British authorities’ position and the fears of local politicians such as Henry Parkes who remained a leading political figure for the remainder of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Parkes was instrumental in ending Chinese indentured labour and continued to oppose its reintroduction.\textsuperscript{35}

It was during the gold rushes, in the 1850s and 60s that settlers in the south eastern Australian colonies strongly repeated the desire for an exclusively


\textsuperscript{34} Curthoys, ‘Liberalism and Exclusionism’, p.11.

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{ibid.}, pp.11-17.
British white identity and a preference for European migrants. The colony of Victoria was the first to pass an act restricting Chinese immigration in 1855. The Act imposed an entry tax of £10 per Chinese passenger and the limitation of one Chinese person per ten tons of a ship’s register. The parliament in the colony of NSW eventually passed a similar act restricting Chinese immigration in 1861 after the Lambing Flat riots and also passed the 1861 *Goldfields Act* enabling local authorities to restrict alien and Chinese miners to marked portions of goldfields.

In the south eastern colonies, the immigration restriction acts were repealed during the 1860s and were not reintroduced until 1880 after another influx of Chinese people, this time as crews on steamships and as competitors in the furniture trade. The Premier of NSW, Henry Parkes, called for an intercolonial conference which was held during 1880-1881 where the subject of restrictive immigration was discussed. In the following years, the colonies of NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland reintroduced or strengthened legislation that restricted Chinese immigration. A second intercolonial conference was held in 1888 leading to the colonies of Western Australia and Tasmania agreeing with the other colonies to restrict Chinese immigration, preparing the way for immigration restriction and the White Australia policy after Federation.36

The Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed on 1 January 1901 and within a year the new Federal Parliament passed the two founding acts of the White Australia Policy which were the *Immigration Restriction Act* 1901 and the *Pacific Islander Labourers Act* 1901. The *Immigration Restriction Act* aimed to restrict immigration to European, preferably British and not Chinese migrants while the *Pacific Islander Labourers Act* aimed to deport Pacific Islanders who had been employed as indentured labourers on northern, mostly Queensland cane fields since the 1860s. Australia was not alone in placing restrictions on Chinese immigration. Canada, the United States of America, New Zealand and South Africa all introduced similar legislation in the late 1800s and early 1900s. However, according to John Fitzgerald the legacies of these policies have not been incorporated into a sense of national identity in those countries as strongly as in Australia.37

**Historiography of exclusionary policies and culture**

Aware of the rising anti-Chinese sentiment during the late 1870s, two Chinese merchants of Melbourne, Lowe Kong Meng, and Louis Ah Mouy and the evangelist Cheong Cheok Hong, published a pamphlet *The Chinese Question in Australia* in 1879. They wrote about the British Empire forcing China into treaties which opened up Chinese ports to trade in 1842. The British brought trade and

their ideas and principles which the writers state, were similar to their own Confucian beliefs. They were thus critical of anti-Chinese immigration legislation and argued that they had a right to settle anywhere in the British Empire.\(^3\)\(^8\) As Paul Macgregor argued, these men wrote when the Australian continent was still being explored and settled by the British and when the British Empire was expanding into China, South East Asia, Melanesia and northern Australia. It was also a time when Chinese people were expanding labour and trade through the Pacific. Thus, Lowe Kong Meng, Louis Ah Mouy and Cheong Cheok Hong ‘demonstrated a clear commitment to a vision of Australia which was multicultural and internationalist, with a free movement of people, a sense of hospitality and welcome, and the creation of a society combining the best of many cultures’.\(^3\)\(^9\)

However, these perspectives were not reciprocated at the time. As David Walker noted, Australia was coming to nationhood at the same time as Asian powers were rising in world politics from the 1880s.\(^4\)\(^0\) While Lowe, Louis and Cheong saw opportunities and a positive set of circumstances in these developments, legislators, politicians and others saw a threat. Two ‘White Australian’ writers published pieces concerned with China and the Chinese...


\(^{39}\) P Macgregor, ‘“Before we came to this Country, we heard that English laws were good and kind to everybody”: Chinese Immigrants’ Views of Colonial Australia’ in A Broinowski (ed.), Double Vision: Asian Accounts of Australia, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2004, p.54.

\(^{40}\) D Walker, Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1999, pp.4-5.
presence in Australia in 1888, the same year as the second intercolonial conference. Frances Adams’ article ‘What the Chinese can teach us?’ was published in the Queensland labour movement paper *Boomerang*. Adams believed that European domination of the world was coming to an end, Asia was a rising threat and that because of Australia’s geographical location it would be forced to participate in the coming struggles.41 William Lane came to a similar conclusion in his *Boomerang* article ‘White or Yellow? A Story of the Race War of 1908’. According to Walker this ‘was the first sustained account of an Asian invasion in Australia and it served as a precursor to a number of invasion narratives in which Asia ...threatens Australia’s future as a homogenous white nation’.42 Chinese people were treated as a ‘them’ against whom Australians of British or European descent came to define their national identity.

According to Richard White, the emergence of the White Australia policy in 1901 and its longevity was linked to the invention of a national identity based on the purity of the White British race which was shared by all Australians.43 This is evident in the historiography which was almost wholly supportive of the White Australia Policy at this time. An example was Myra Willard (1923) who justified the development of the White Australia policy by determining that Chinese and

41 ibid., pp.40-41.
Europeans could not live peacefully together. Walker found that there were only two locally published books critiquing the White Australia policy between 1901 and 1962 when the Immigration Reform Group published *Immigration: Control or Colour Bar?* These were E.W. Cole’s *White Australia Impossible* (1st edition 1898) which argued that white people would become coloured due to Australia’s climate and E.W. Foxall’s *Colourphobia: An Exposure of the White Australia Policy* published in 1903 under the pseudonym Gizen-No-Teki. Foxall was also a proponent of the view that the Australian climate was not suited to white people.

The conceptual separation of Chinese and Australian in the academic literature has continued until relatively recently. During the 1960s and 70s, when academics began to critique the White Australia Policy, they produced histories of the ways that opposition to Chinese migration in the 19th century shaped Australia and emphasised a clash of cultures between Chinese and European Australians. In 1984 the American Sinologist Jennifer Cushman noted that accounts of Chinese Australians were often ‘less concerned with the community on its own terms and more with Australian attitudes towards Chinese’. She also made her often quoted call for scholarship to examine Chinese Australian

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45 Walker, ‘Race Building’ pp.33-34.
histories on their own terms but even she characterised the discourse as being between Chinese and Australian.\textsuperscript{48} It was not until the 2000s that historians like John Fitzgerald and Mei-fen Kuo challenged the apparent dichotomy between Chinese and Australian and embedded Chinese Australian stories within Australian history at the transnational, national and local levels.\textsuperscript{49}

\textbf{Transforming ‘others’ into ‘us’}

\textbf{Post World War II migration and the policies of assimilation and integration}

The race-based model of White Australia had become untenable by the late 1940s due to the recognition of the disastrous race-based policies of Nazi Germany during World War II and the increasing recognition that Australia needed to develop productive relations with its northern neighbours. According to Anna Haebich, the Curtin Labor government planned a program of mass immigration in 1945 for the purposes of national security following the successes of Japan in the Pacific region during World War II.\textsuperscript{50} They wanted an annual population increase of two percent or 140,000 from the combined migration and birth rates. While British migrants were preferred, the government expanded the program to include Displaced Persons from Europe. As their numbers

\textsuperscript{48} ibid., pp.100-13.


dwindled, Australia turned to Southern European migration and this extended to Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey. East Asians, though, were still seen as a ‘them’.

The preferential treatment accorded to British migrants continued during settlement in Australia as British migrants were expected to find Australia to be similar to Britain. European migrants were subjected to the policy of assimilation into an alien culture where they were expected to give up their cultural practices, traditions and birth languages and blend into the British-derived Australian culture and only communicate in the English language. They were not seen as equals. European migrants had different pathways to citizenship and different work contracts to British migrants. By 1961, about 1.3 million people had migrated to Australia and a third of these were from the British Isles, one quarter from Southern Europe (Italy and Greece), one fifth from Eastern Europe (Poland, Baltic States, Yugoslavia) and one fifth from Northern Europe (Germany, Netherlands).

Large scale European migration challenged what was perceived to be British racial and cultural homogeneity and increasing awareness of Indigenous Australian civil rights forced the government to rethink its strategy for managing a culturally diverse society without directly confronting entrenched racism which would have led to a public backlash. According to Haebich, the government

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52 Haebich, pp.69-70.
53 *ibid.*, p.38.
contained ‘change within the parameters of a modified White Australia that would be unified by cultural homogeneity rather than racial exclusivity and that included equal citizenship within the generalised model of the dominant Anglo-Celtic settler culture’. Assimilation policies were used to manage both the Aboriginal and European migrant populations during this period. However, in this dissertation I only focus on the European migrant populations who were expected to culturally assimilate with the dominant British-derived culture.

Assimilation policies, however, did not work. By the late 1950s, the government realised that migrants had higher than average levels of poverty, physical and mental stress, many desired to return to their homelands and the take-up of citizenship was low. According to Mark Lopez, the shift to integration ideologies was evident from the 1959 Citizenship Convention where organisations which dealt with settlement favoured the term integration because ‘assimilation’ had become associated with prejudice. One delegate expressed the view that it was better to build unity between both old and new Australians rather than forcing newcomers to lose their cultural practices and identities and take on the identity and practices of the longer established and dominant population. This led to the development of an integration ideology which existed alongside assimilation from the late 1950s to 1960s.

54 ibid., p.81.
55 ibid., p.347.
Researching the many ‘others’

Discussions around assimilation and integration also circulated in academia. People of non-British descent began to be studied from the perspectives of many disciplines including demography, sociology, history and anthropology. The first to study them were demographers such as Wilfred Borrie and Charles Price who were assimilationists.\(^{57}\) In one of Borrie’s early works he examined the process of assimilation of two non-British groups who had arrived prior to World War II — Germans whose ancestors had arrived in South Australia in the 19th century and Italians who had arrived in the 1920s and 30s. He chose to study the ‘assimilation process of earlier-settled groups’ because he wanted to ‘assess the factors which have historically facilitated or prevented the attenuation of differences between Australians and non-Australians’.\(^{58}\)

Anti-assimilationists soon appeared in academia. The first was the sociologist Jean Martin (nee Craig), who pointed out in a paper she delivered at the Political Science Summer School in 1953, that assimilationist policies were leading to the isolation of migrants and identity problems. She thought that assimilation was an unreasonable expectation because ‘[w]e do not know what is the “Australian way of life”: it is diverse. Perhaps the type of Australian way of life that most people want migrants to accept is one that few Australians can


\(^{58}\) Borrie, p.xiii.
achieve themselves’.  

Martin found little sympathy in academic circles for her ideas until she met Jerzy Zubrzycki in 1957.

Zubrzycki, a demographer and sociologist was also anti-assimilationist in his views. He was a Polish Displaced Person who had migrated to England and begun a career as an academic, taking up an appointment at the Australian National University in Canberra in 1956. He published his first major work on migrants in 1960. This was a demographic survey based on the 1954 census but it was not until later in the 1960s that he began to use his empirical research to theorise about alternative ways of social organisation in a culturally diverse society. In 1968, he delivered a paper at the Citizenship Convention where he argued that equality of opportunity was important, noting that Southern Europeans were over-represented in the lower economic levels of society and that the government ought to assist them in the settlement difficulties they encountered. Jean Martin, in a paper presented at the Meredith Memorial Lecture at La Trobe University in 1972 took this idea further and called for ‘[p]ositive discrimination in favour of migrants who are disadvantaged on arrival... or who become disadvantaged after arrival’ to counteract the inequality of ethnic groups and individuals. She then outlined what Lopez called the

60 Lopez, p.55.
61 J Zubrzycki, Immigrants in Australia: A Demographic Survey Based upon the 1954 Census, Melbourne University Press on behalf of the Australian National University, Parkeville, 1960.
earliest model of multiculturalism in Australia through her description of ‘ethnic structural pluralism’. There were three elements to this pluralism:

1. An acknowledgement and desire to work with the structure of groups and networks in the community.

2. A recognition that ethnic groups are not homogenous.

3. A desire for participation by ethnic groups in the mainstream political processes.

Through the work of academics, social workers and ethnic community representatives who had integrationist, anti-assimilationist and multicultural leanings, government departments began to adapt welfare policies for migrants and there was an increasing recognition that migrants were a potential source of votes. The most influential theoretical work on cultural pluralism and multiculturalism through the 1960s and 70s was done by Jerzy Zubrzycki and Jean Martin as we have seen above as well as by sociologist and educationalist Jerzy Smolicz. Other academics whose research on migrants influenced the development of cultural pluralism and migrant welfare policies included the political scientist James Jupp and the sociologist Andrew Jakubowicz. The

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64 Lopez, p.170.
election of the Labour government led by Gough Whitlam in 1973 enabled the
‘multiculturalists’ to gain the ear of Al Grassby, the new Minister for
Immigration.

Many ‘others’ make the national ‘us’

Multicultural policies and the collecting sector

In 1973, in a speech entitled *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*,
Grassby, called for a more inclusive approach to migrant services that
emphasised social justice and equal access for all as well as the right to maintain
one’s cultural heritage and language.\(^{68}\) He displayed a basic understanding of
what community activists and academics had attempted to explain to him but
came up with his own concept of a ‘family of the nation’. Grassby as a former
journalist understood the need to communicate his new vision for Australia to
the general public so throughout 1973 he developed strategies to educate
school children, the Australian-born population and migrants about Australian
society and citizenship. One of these strategies was to commission a history of
immigration and its social impact on Australia’s post war development as none
had been written by 1970. This never eventuated as Grassby lost his seat at the

\(^{68}\) A Grassby, ‘A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future’, paper presented to Cairnillar Institute’s
Symposium *Strategy: Australia for Tomorrow*, Melbourne, 11 August 1973, AGPS, 1973, p.9,
next election in 1974 and the Department of Immigration and Labour was abolished.\textsuperscript{69}

However, Grassby’s other strategy to create a museum of migration was more fruitful. In May 1973 Victorian Labour parliamentarian and medical practitioner Henry Alfred Jenkins made the suggestion of a museum of immigration to preserve and display the documentary and photographic sources and relics of migration history. Grassby adopted the idea which was to be a ‘monument to migrants’\textsuperscript{70}. Jenkins had been inspired in 1970 by the Ellis Island ‘Master Plan’ created in 1968 and this included a museum to be established at the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York.\textsuperscript{71} In July 1973, Grassby proposed that a folklore museum be established in Canberra to show ‘a compilation of documents and material recording the history of Australia’s immigration and citizenship’.\textsuperscript{72} The building would have had exhibitions of arts and crafts, artifacts from the history of Australian communications and transport and an open-air section where reconstructed and furnished dwellings of Aborigines or the first European settlers would be displayed. Grassby imagined that such a museum would be a complement to the Australian War Memorial and suggested


\textsuperscript{70} Al Grassby quoted in Jordens, p.236.


\textsuperscript{72} Al Grassby quoted in Jordens, p.236.
that once a new Parliament House was built on Capital Hill that the old building could become a migration and citizenship museum.\textsuperscript{73}

This was not to be and the concept became incorporated into a broader proposal for a national museum. The Pigott inquiry of 1974 into the development and coordination of collections and museums noted that there was no national museum of history and suggested that one be built in Canberra with three themes of People and the Australian environment; Aboriginal history and the history of Europeans in Australia.\textsuperscript{74} While the Pigott report itself did not specifically recommend the inclusion of migration and ethnic material, the Department of Labour and Immigration had made a submission to this inquiry which advocated for the inclusion of substantial migration and ethnic material in the proposed national museum. It was the Department’s view that migration material was ‘of great significance in the story of the nation, and the Australian cultural heritage to be particularly composed of strands drawn from ethnic cultures’ and that ‘the issue would seem to be one of great potential value in our longer-term community relations planning’.\textsuperscript{75} Museums, from the very beginnings of multicultural policy development were seen as vehicles for the government’s communication of policies and information to the dominant ‘us’ of

\textsuperscript{73} Jordens, p.236.

\textsuperscript{74} PH Pigott & Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections & Planning Committee on the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia, \textit{Museums in Australia 1975: report of the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections including the report of the Planning Committee on the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia}, AGPS, Canberra, 1975, pp.70-71.

\textsuperscript{75} JH Houston, senior migration officer National Groups to G Kiddle, 02.05.1974, NAA(ACT): A446/51, 73/77724 quoted in Jordens, p.237.
the general public — and it was the many migrant ‘others’ that the public needed to be educated about.

In 1974 Grassby also sought to influence the study of Australian social history by announcing the Australian Ethnic Heritage Program (AHEP) to document and preserve collections of cultural and archival material in local ethnic communities and to commission histories of various ethnic groups — the latter project was completed in the 1980s. During 1974, the AEHP conducted a survey of community groups such as the Latvian and Lithuanian communities in Adelaide to collate a list of materials suitable for inclusion in a national museum. Exhibitions about the ‘family of the nation’ were to be staged using cultural, photographic and audio-visual material as the Department wanted to ensure that ‘the unique contribution of ethnic groups to the life of the Australian nation be fully recognised and interpreted to the whole community’.76 The Department was inspired in these programs by the Canadian government which, since 1971 through the Canadian National Museum of Man, the Public Archives, the National Film Board and National Library had held exhibitions to sensitise ‘the majority groups in Canadian society to the cultural riches within the country’.77

While Grassby’s strategies and programs set a governmental context for museums to interact with migrant ‘others’ over their heritage and ways for museums to communicate that heritage to the public and national ‘us’, it was

76 Submission by the Department of Labour and Immigration to the Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections, 23.07.1974, NAA (ACT): A446/51, 73/77724 quoted in Jordens, p.237.

77 ibid., quoted in Jordens, p.238.
not until 1978 that multiculturalism formally became government policy. In 1976 the Fraser Liberal National Party government had formed the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC) to advise it on ethnic affairs policy and Jerzy Zubrzycki was appointed chair. A committee of inquiry into multiculturalism was set up in 1977 under a Melbourne barrister, Frank Galbally. Zubrzycki, with the assistance of Jean Martin, submitted the paper *Australia as a Multicultural Society* to the inquiry.\(^7\) This paper outlined a version of multiculturalism as a policy to manage an increasingly culturally diverse society within the British-derived political and social structures of the nation. It described three key social issues or principles for a successful multicultural society:

1. Social cohesion
2. Equality of opportunity and access
3. Cultural identity.\(^9\)

The Galbally report drew substantially from the AEAC paper and placed emphasis on the preservation and social management of ethnic cultures, equal access to programs and services and providing specific support services for migrants.\(^8\) In 1982, Zubrzycki, as Chair of the Ethnic Taskforce in the AEAC successor body, the Australian Population and Ethnic Affairs Council (APEAC),

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\(^7\) Lopez, p.444.


produced a discussion paper arguing that multicultural policy was applicable to all Australians. ‘I believe that the days when multiculturalism was discussed exclusively in the context of “ethnic affairs”, defined until recently as something concerned with non-English-speaking minorities in Australia, are over... My firm belief is that multiculturalism is for all Australians.’\textsuperscript{81} To reflect this shift, a fourth principle of multiculturalism was added: ‘equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society.’\textsuperscript{82} So the many ‘others’ made the national ‘us’. The Federal government until 1989 directed multicultural policy at welfare, employment, education, health and housing and much funding for the culturally diverse population was directed towards research and the collection of data around these concerns.

The introduction of multicultural policies by Australian governments occurred at the same time as interest in Australian social history was about to peak. According to museum curator and director Margaret Anderson,

\begin{quote}
[t]he decade from 1979 to 1988 was an extraordinary one in Australia, as state after state celebrated the sesquicentenary of European invasion, leading up to the Bicentenary of 1988.

Never before had there been such widespread interest in the
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{81}{Letter from J Zubrzycki as Chair, Ethnic Affairs Task Force, ACPEA to I Macphee, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in ACPEA, \textit{Multiculturalism for All Australians: Our developing nationhood}, AGPS, Canberra, 1982, p.x.}
\footnotetext{82}{\textit{Ibid.}, p.12.}
\end{footnotes}
past — or aspects of it. Never before had there been so many major new exhibitions and museums planned.83

The state museums of NSW (1984), Victoria (1985) and South Australia (1986) were the first to include migrants and migration in their social history exhibitions, followed soon after by the National Museum of Australia (1988) and the Australian National Maritime Museum (1991). They did so as the sesquicentenaries of Victoria (1984-5), South Australia (1986) and the Bicentenary in NSW and the nation (1988) provided the motivation and finances for these state and national governments to recast Australia’s identity as a nation of immigrants. Collecting institutions were seen as vehicles for communicating this idea to the general public and I explain the relevant museum activities in chapter two.

The Bicentenary was a way for the Fraser and then Hawke governments to communicate their new visions for Australia. While different, both saw multiculturalism at the heart of Australian nationalism. The Bicentennial Authority developed a set of planning objectives which included celebrating ‘the richness of diversity of Australia’ and encouraged all Australians ‘to recognize and preserve their heritage, recognize the multicultural nature of modern Australia, and look to the future with confidence’. The list of activities that

83 M Anderson, ‘Engendering Public Culture: Women and Museums in Australia’ in Images of Women: Women and Museums in Australia, an edited account of the Images of Women Conference conducted by the National Museum of Australia 11-13 October 1993, NMA, Canberra, 1994, p.120.
Australians were encouraged to participate in included planning ‘to have a meal from a different culture at least once a month’.\textsuperscript{84} Governments, however, were not alone in attempting to recast Australia as a nation of immigrants. The Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia (FECCA), founded in 1979, saw the 1988 Bicentenary as an ‘opportunity to acknowledge that immigration has immensely enriched this country culturally, and that this diverse cultural heritage should be recognised and reflected in all areas of arts and culture’.\textsuperscript{85} They used their First National Congress in 1984 to create an Arts and Culture policy. The first resolution was that

\begin{quote}
[FECCA] should ask the Australian Bicentennial Authority to establish an integrated approach relevant to ethnic communities to utilise the services and facilities of institutions such as: Museums, Libraries, Archives and Resource Centres, etc. to create a network for the collection, maintenance and presentation of material for ethnic communities.\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quote}

Government departments, including collecting institutions were interested. The Office of Multicultural Affairs agreed to cooperate with the

\textsuperscript{84} Australian Bicentennial Authority, \textit{How to Make it Your Bicentenary}, 1987.

\textsuperscript{85} FECCA, \textit{Proceedings of the First National Congress, Sixth National Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia Inc. 3-9 December 1984, University of Melbourne, Canberra}, 1984, p.293.

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{ibid.}
Bicentennial Historic Records Search at the National Library of Australia in order to document paper-based material relating to Australians of non-English speaking background and later agreed to partner with the Australian National Gallery to document examples of privately-held material culture from Australians of non-English speaking background.\textsuperscript{87} Changes in curators and the gallery’s agendas as well as a loss of funding meant that the Australian National Gallery did not continue systematic collecting of artworks from Australian artists of a non-English speaking background. In the meantime, Margy Burn noted that the National Library of Australia included cultural diversity in its collecting policies and practices through programs like the Multicultural Documentary Heritage Project in 2003-4.\textsuperscript{88}

Slowly, though, because of sustained criticism, multicultural policy became more of a statement about loyalty to the state and changed to a citizenship model after the recommendations of the Fitzgerald Report. Former diplomat and academic Dr Stephen FitzGerald was asked to chair the Committee to Advise on Australian Immigration Policies in 1987. His report recommended that ‘Immigration policy must be unashamedly Australian and for all those who, in the Prime Minister’s [Bob Hawke] Australia Day definition, have “a commitment to Australia and its future.”’\textsuperscript{89} To increase commitment to

\textsuperscript{87} J Winternitz, \textit{Australia’s Hidden Heritage}, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, p.viii.

\textsuperscript{88} M Burn, ‘Libraries and Cultural Diversity’, \textit{Collecting Institutions, cultural diversity and the making of citizenship in Australia since the 1970s}, Workshop, Deakin University, Melbourne, 27-28 November 2014.

\textsuperscript{89} S Fitzgerald, \textit{Immigration: A commitment to Australia}, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.10.
Australia, the report recommended that migrants should be encouraged to become Australian citizens, by programs demonstrating ‘the worth of Australian citizenship in a material sense, by linking benefits, welfare entitlements and privileges to the taking of citizenship’.90

At the same time the first coordinated official interaction between the whole of the collecting sector and multicultural policy came in 1988 at the conference, New Responsibilities: Documenting Multicultural Australia.91 Collecting institutions from each state and territory including libraries, museums, archives, historical collections and other cultural institutions discussed ways to collect and exhibit objects and stories from the entire population of Australia. This conference and its publication were to inform the Federal government, through the Office of Multicultural Affairs in its development of the agenda document National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia in 1989.

Reflecting the Fitzgerald report, in 1989 the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia noted that within Australian society there was a lack of understanding of the concept of multiculturalism and there was a need to communicate its meaning and the content of government policies more effectively. One of the initiatives contained in the National Agenda was an attempt to develop a plan to co-ordinate efforts by cultural heritage institutions

90 ibid., p.12.
such as museums and libraries to reflect Australia’s cultural diversity in their collections and practices.92

As a consequence of this Agenda, the Minister for Arts, Tourism and Territories established a Consultative Committee to create a plan for cultural heritage institutions including libraries, museums and art galleries to reflect the diversity of the Australian population in their collecting activities. A Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions to Reflect Australia’s Cultural Diversity was released in 1991. The Plan noted that what cultural institutions chose to collect, preserve, interpret and display reflected Australia’s cultural diversity.93 While it was strong on rhetoric, it lacked detail of how cultural institutions should implement practical programs. Szekeres noted that the Plan provided ‘some guidance, a useful framework, a check list...which can be referred to when planning programs and exhibitions’ and also was ‘a policy mandate to be inclusive and thoughtful in our representation of culture and diversity’.94

The Federal government found it easier to influence libraries and museums than art galleries. It was a regional art gallery, the New England...
Regional Art Gallery under the directorship of Israeli-born Joe Eisenberg that consciously sought donations of art from artists of a migrant background between 1984 and 2004. Whereas, the state and national art galleries have made few concerted attempts at collecting and exhibiting works from culturally diverse artists. In 1991, still in the afterglow of the Bicentenary, the newly appointed Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, James Mollison outlined a plan to make an access gallery space available for culturally specific communities to install their own exhibitions and displays. However, this did not happen. The Gallery wanted to appeal to new audiences but was ambivalent about collecting from culturally diverse artists. He said that

artists who are using their ethnic background to provide the meaning of their work probably don’t have any chance of moving us at all, because they are not originating anything – a brush painting on silk is a brush painting on silk, unless the person can raise this to a new level of excellence.

The National Gallery of Victoria, like its other state equivalents and the National Gallery of Australia chose then, and continues to choose to engage with cultural diversity primarily through collaborations with international institutions or artists, for example, collecting and displaying Asian art created by Asian artists in Asia and through audience development. The primary reason for collecting art


was aesthetics, as noted by Susan Abasa of the Art Museums Association of Australia in 1988.\textsuperscript{97} This continues to be so as Ien Ang wrote in her analysis of exhibitions and projects at the Art Gallery of NSW in 2001 and the Museum of Contemporary Art in 2007.\textsuperscript{98} This is a marked difference from the approach taken by other institutions in the collecting sector such as museums, libraries and archives.

In 1996, in response to an invitation from the Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, John Thompson then at the National Library of Australia wrote about cultural diversity in Australia and its implications in implementing the National Conservation and Preservation Policy for Movable Cultural Heritage issued in 1995. However, Thompson pointed out that ‘there has been a tendency for governments and policy makers to assert the importance of policies of inclusion without considering the complex issues and costs of implementation if institutions are to achieve more than token recognition of the cultural diversity of the Australian community’.\textsuperscript{99}

By this time, however, the Australian government’s interest in multiculturalism was waning. The Liberal Party under the leadership of John Howard won the federal election in 1996 and promptly abolished a number of

\textsuperscript{97} Reported in ‘Role of State Institutions Discussion Session’ in Birtley & McQueen, p.136.

\textsuperscript{98} I Ang, ‘Change and continuity: Art Museums and the reproduction of Art-Museumness’ in The International Handbooks of Museum Studies vol. 2, no. 11, 2015, pp.211-38.

\textsuperscript{99} Thompson, ‘Cultural Diversity in Australia’.
key agencies such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research. Spending on welfare and services was reduced, ethnic organisations like FECCA were marginalised and controversially, Indigenous Affairs was merged into the portfolios of Immigration and Multiculturalism. The 1996 election also saw the entry of Pauline Hanson into Federal Parliament, on a platform that was anti-Asian, anti-multicultural and highly critical of Indigenous issues such as land rights.¹⁰⁰

The abolition of key multicultural agencies and a cooling of interest in multiculturalism from the conservative government encouraged the National Multicultural Advisory Council, established in 1994, to call for leadership in defence of multiculturalism in its 1999 report Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness.¹⁰¹ In response, the Howard Government launched A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia in December 1999.¹⁰² The New Agenda took up the term ‘Australian multiculturalism’ in recognition of the unique way that multiculturalism as implemented reflected Australia’s cultural diversity, heritage, democracy and identity. There was more emphasis on citizenship ‘which is built on a set of common civic values, rights and obligations

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¹⁰² Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, A new agenda for multicultural Australia, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Canberra, 1999, p.3.
that can unify Australians’. However, this did not lead to a transversal ‘us’ set of relations as particular groups, for instance asylum seekers, were singled out for not displaying these civic values. In 2001, during a hotly contested election, asylum seekers were constructed as a cruel and dehumanised ‘them’ to be kept out, especially through one incident when they were falsely accused of throwing children overboard in order to pressure the Australian navy who had detected them, to save them from drowning and bring them to Australia.

It was during this time of uncertainty around migration and multiculturalism in 2002 at the annual conference of the Australian Society of Archivists that Margy Burn of the National Library of Australia decided to review the recommendations from previous conferences and papers and noted that not much had changed since the 1988 conference *New Responsibilities: Documenting Multicultural Australia*. She surveyed the national and state institutions and noted that cultural diversity was better represented in pictorial and oral history collections than in the private record groups of papers of individuals or community organisations. Burn’s paper, with more emphasis on archives, is the most recent analysis of cultural diversity and the collecting sector

103 *ibid.*, p.6.


as whole. However, museums, libraries, archives and art galleries in Australia have continued to engage with cultural diversity in various ways until the present day despite the changing fortunes of multicultural policies.

In 2003, the Howard government issued a new policy statement

*Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity: Updating the 1999 New Agenda for Multicultural Australia: Strategic directions for 2003-2006.* The updated agenda showed a shift in focus to unity and social cohesion in response to the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA and the radicalisation of Islam around the world.106 Religion, specifically Islam, came to the fore in the updating of multiculturalism and Muslims particularly began to be characterised as not just an ‘other’ but more of a ‘them’. The Howard government announced no further multicultural policies and renamed the Department of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in 2007.

The Rudd Labour government was elected in 2007 and in 2008 the government announced the creation of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC).107 AMAC was able to advise the Gillard Labour government when it formulated a new multicultural policy *The People of Australia* in 2011.


This policy emphasised social cohesion, the economic benefits of multiculturalism, citizenship, equity and a new anti-racism strategy.\textsuperscript{108} However, this revived interest in multiculturalism was short-lived.

In 2013 when the Tony Abbott led Liberal National Party (LNP) coalition government was elected, it downgraded the ministerial multicultural portfolio so that it only became concerned with welfare and moved the portfolio to the Department of Social Services.\textsuperscript{109} The many ‘others’ were no longer important to incorporate into the national ‘us’ and a much more aggressive stance was taken against those perceived as a ‘them’— asylum seekers and Muslims. In 2015, the Department of Immigration and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service were merged and renamed Australian Border Force, Department of Immigration and Border Protection reflecting a change in emphasis towards security and tighter migration regulation.\textsuperscript{110} After a change in leadership, the new LNP Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull promoted Concetta Fierravanti-Wells from Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Services to the position of Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs. In the list of the new Ministers, this position was placed alongside the Attorney General, the Department of


\textsuperscript{109} ibid. and Andrew Jakubowicz, “‘In the beginning all is chaos...’: Roaming the Dystopic Realm in Australian Multiculturalism’ in S Castles, D Ozkul & M Cubas (eds.), Social Transformation and Migration: National and Local Experiences in South Korea, Turkey, Mexico and Australia, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke & New York, 2015, p.221.

Immigration and Border Protection as well as the Department of Social Services reflecting her role in promoting citizenship, and helping to coordinate settlement services with immigration.\(^{111}\) On 13 February 2016, Craig Laundy became the new Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs but the previous government’s multicultural policy has not been updated.\(^{112}\)

**Reconfiguring relations between ‘us’ and the many ‘others’ through research**

The introduction and modification of multicultural policies continued in tandem with the growing scholarly interest in the nature of Australian society that was emerging as a result of post-World War II migration. There were two strands of study which intersect and influence each other — research and writing on immigration and multicultural policies and the study of individual migrant or ‘ethnic’ groups and personal narratives.

Shortly after multiculturalism became government policy, some prominent academics engaged in public criticism of the policy on the basis that Australia could be made up of many ‘others’ because those ‘others’ were too different. Most famously, Geoffrey Blainey argued that Asian immigration was


too high for Australia and it threatened ‘social cohesion’ in a speech to a Rotary club in Warrnambool, Victoria in 1984. At that time Asian immigration was primarily made up of Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian refugees fleeing conflict and repressive regimes in their countries of origin. Blainey expanded his ideas in a book published the same year, *All for Australia*, where he argued that ‘[i]n the gold era, Australians had also experienced what is now called a multicultural society. Their experience convinced them that such a society didn’t work; and at that time clearly it didn’t work’. He also thought that multicultural policy was ‘quietly anti-British’. Blainey’s view was refuted in the press and by historians who argued that he misunderstood and misrepresented Asian migrants in his work as well as the differences between the Australian colonies in the 19th century and the Australian nation in the early 1980s.

Rather than analysing multiculturalism through a focus on migrants, Ghassan Hage turned the spotlight onto the dominant ‘White’ culture and its experience of multiculturalism. Hage argued that ‘both White racists and White multiculturalists share in a conception of themselves as nationalists and of the nation as a space structured around a white culture, where Aboriginal

115 *ibid.*, p.155.
people and non-White ‘ethnics’ are merely national objects to be moved or removed according to a White national will’. He pointed out that ‘White multiculturalism’ as a political ideology is all about ‘gains’ to society and there is no room for discussion of ‘loss’ so when some ‘White people’ do experience ‘loss’ there is ‘no mainstream political language with which to express it’. Hage cited the example of Pauline Hanson who rose to notoriety because she voiced that ‘loss’ with her maiden speech in Federal Parliament criticising Asian immigration and Aboriginal land rights. Hage critiqued the multicultural discourse of ‘cultural enrichment’ as it not only ‘places the dominant culture in a more important position than other migrant cultures’, but it also makes migrant cultures ‘exist for’ the White dominant culture. And it is ‘White’ people and their institutions, like museums that control how migrant cultures exist in Australian society. As Hage explained

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\text{if the exhibition of the “exotic natives” was the product of the power relation between the coloniser and the colonised in the colonies as it came to exist in the colonial era, the multicultural exhibition is the product of the power relation between the post-colonial powers and the post-colonised as it}
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\[\text{118 ibid.}\]
\[\text{119 ibid., p.22.}\]
\[\text{120 ibid., p.121.}\]
developed in the metropolis following the migratory process that characterised the post-colonial era.\textsuperscript{121}

Works critical of Australia’s immigration policies from the point of view of refugees and asylum seekers continue to be published through the 1990s to the present. They include historical studies of particular groups of refugees, such as Glen Palmer’s study of unaccompanied refugee and evacuee children just before and during World War II.\textsuperscript{122} Another more recent work is Klaus Neuman’s history of Australia’s response to refugees, which analyse historical polices and events with the intention to counteract the demonization of asylum seekers, particularly since 2001 analysing policies and events.\textsuperscript{123}

Another strand of study, about particular ethnic groups, has a particular set of approaches identified by Barry York. These are:

1. Gathering information and telling the stories of particular groups which can be defined ethnically.

2. Relating the historical experiences of particular groups to wider Australian society.

\textsuperscript{121} ibid., pp.160-61.


3. Placing Australia in a world context through the study of the diverse societies where migrants have come from.\textsuperscript{124}

According to Hsu-Ming Teo, the earliest ‘ethnic’ studies were of the Irish during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and early twentieth century and then historical work on the Greeks and Chinese during the 1960s and 70s.\textsuperscript{125} The sharpest rise in ethnic histories, however, happened in the 1980s, particularly in the lead up to the Bicentenary.\textsuperscript{126} Michael Cigler’s \textit{Australian Ethnic Heritage Series} is a prime example. The series was made up of 16 books published from 1983 to 1987 about specific communities, including studies of the Cornish, Czech, German, Lebanese and Austrian communities. Each of these books provides a short history of the country of origin and the reasons for emigration. They also detail pre-World War II and post-World War II migration, profile prominent individuals and provide case studies of particular suburban populations. Topics like culture, sport, religion and politics are also explored. As Teo pointed out, the definition of ethnicity is problematic in this series. There is no consistency in the use of the term with the Americans being counted as a specific ‘ethnic’ group, the culturally diverse Scandinavians being placed in one volume, while the Cornish who are an


\textsuperscript{126} Teo, p.145.
ethnic group within Britain are treated as a separate ethnic group.\textsuperscript{127} Many of these writers also went on to contribute to James Jupp’s Bicentennial project: \textit{The Australian People: The Nation, Its People and Their Origins} first published in 1988 and then revised and reprinted in 2001.\textsuperscript{128}

Former Director of the South Australian Migration Museum, Viv Szekeres stated that during the 1980s as the museum was starting its work, there was little secondary literature beyond what was written by James Jupp, Jerzy Zubrzycki and Mary Kalantzis, on post-war migrants so the Museum had to conduct its own primary research when dealing with culturally diverse communities.\textsuperscript{129} This may explain why the museum published not just exhibition catalogues but also a directory of ethnic communities in South Australia in 1995.\textsuperscript{130}

More detailed works on the Greek, Italian and Chinese Australian histories began to appear in the 1990s. These included: Hugh Gilchrist’s two volumes of Greek-Australian history, Chinese Australians in the defence forces and the Chinese presence in various parts of Australia such as Darwin, by Diana

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{127} ibid., pp. 145-46.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Migration Museum, \textit{From many places: the history and cultural traditions of South Australia}, Migration Museum History Trust SA, in association with Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 1995.
\end{itemize}
Giese and Sydney by Shirley Fitzgerald. According to Teo, Chinese Australian history followed Barry York’s outline of approaches to multicultural histories: ‘from stories of settlement to more complex considerations of Australia’s historical relations with other nations. In doing so, it provided a vital counterpart to historical works focusing on Australian perceptions of and relations with Asia’.  

What also happened through the 1980s and 90s with these histories was a form of *ethnicisation* as Teo termed it. This is ‘a process bound up with migration and settlement, geographical location, identity attribution by the dominant culture, and voluntary identification as a statement of solidarity and difference’. According to Teo, historians Jan Ryan, James Jupp and Joseph Pugliese argued that ‘ethnic groups’ are constructed from many different peoples who end up with the label of ‘Chinese’ as in Ryan’s example. Jupp made the point that ethnicity changes over time in response to changes in society. While Pugliese argued that ethnicity does not exist ‘as something fixed, absolute, and scientifically quantifiable’ rather, that an individual ‘only ever becomes ethnic’. This concept and description of the process of *ethnicisation* can

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132 Teo, pp.146.

133 *ibid.*, p.148.

unintentionally place ‘ethnic people’ as objects for the consumption of ‘White cosmopolities’. Hage described these people as ‘white’ Australians with ambitions to cosmopolitan ideals who appreciate and consume cultures, ‘including “ethnic” culture’.135

Teo also highlighted a different approach to cultural diversity found in Shirley Fitzgerald and Gary Wotherspoon’s edited volume, *Minorities: Cultural Diversity in Sydney* (1995) which was published by the State Library of NSW. This work revealed the way the city of Sydney was claimed and transformed by minority cultures which included not just Greek, Irish and Jewish Australian communities, but also people with physical disabilities, different languages, subcultures and alternative religions,136 giving a sense of the transversal ‘us’ relations based on the commonality of place but this is unusual.

At the time Teo wrote, in 2003, she also noted that there were few works which dealt with Aboriginal – ethnic relations;137 two ‘others’ in Australian society. Since her chapter was published however, a small number of books were published relating to this theme and they include Penny Edwards & Shen Yuanfang eds. *Lost in the Whitewash: Aboriginal-Asian Encounters in Australia, 1901-2001* (2003), Regina Ganter’s *Mixed Relations: Asian and Aboriginal* and Minorities’ in S Fitzgerald and G Wotherspoon, *Minorities: cultural diversity in Sydney*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1995, p.195 in Teo, p.149.

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137 Teo, p.150.

The studies of groups were increasingly complemented by biographies of migrants and their children. These narratives reflect complex minority group identities as they reflect an ability to define themselves within the broader national ‘us’ while also revealing their own reliance on stereotypes that were understandable and acceptable to the dominant ‘us’. The editors of one book published in 1992 noted that there were numerous studies of the lives of second generation migrants but they were from the point of view of the observer, and they ‘wanted to know how second generation immigrants perceive themselves: do they see their situation as problematic?’ The editors argued that to ‘get beyond discussions of ethnicity as either food or folk dancing (those elements which the host society can easily consume) or as problems (those elements which it cannot)’ so that we could ‘build a more complex notion of ethnicity, informed by a range of factors including gender’.

Fitting with Barry York’s third category of approaching multicultural histories which place Australia in a world context is the turn to transnational histories, especially from the 2000s onwards. Included are works about the return visits of second generation migrants such as the 2001 study by Loretta


140 Ibid.
Baldassar.141 This book explores the transnational relationships established over time between migrants in Australia and their families in the Veneto province of Treviso focusing on return visits. Another addition to multicultural histories is the study of transnational organisations and their Australian connections such as Mei-Fen Kuo and Judith Brett’s *Unlocking the History of the Australasian Kuo Min Tang 1911-2013* (2013).

Placing Australia’s history and society in a world context through studies of Empire and ‘whiteness’ became increasingly important with studies like Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men’s Countries and the Question of Racial Equality* (2008). The book charted ‘the spread of “whiteness” as a transnational form of racial identification, that was...at once global in its power and personal in its meaning, the basis of geopolitical alliances and a subjective sense of self’.142 Lake and Reynolds realised that studies of immigration policy have mostly been told as national stories. However, some studies like that of Charles Price in 1974143, identified parallel developments in Australasia, British Columbia, New Zealand and the west coast of the United States but their stories were not ‘dynamically interconnected and


143 Price, *The Great White Walls Are Built*. 63
thus mutually formative’. Their book is very much one of the times as they mention the challenges of mobility in a global era where

*the United States plans to build a fence along its Mexican border, Australia imprisons asylum seekers on offshore islands and riots engulf French cities that are home to thousands of Muslim immigrants from Africa. As Europe is drawn into the New World so multiculturalism loses its appeal in countries with immigrant minorities; everywhere there is renewed talk about national values, social cohesion and the necessity of border protection.*

**Conclusion**

We can observe this tension today, between increasing global mobility, the hardening of borders and world-wide increase in nationalism; between ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘us’ and the many ‘others’ and between ourselves and the transversal ‘us’. In Australia, we can trace the periodic discomfort with particular ethnic, cultural or religious groups and the more contemporary discomfort with multiculturalism directly to our colonial past when the colonies and then the nation enacted policies of exclusion and segregation and then assimilation and integration. At the same time, we can trace the ways in which those that have

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144 Lake & Reynolds, p.5.
145 *ibid.*, p.12.
occupied the position of outsiders have dealt with their experiences of exclusion.

The explanation according to Curthoys is ‘cultural’:

> When we ask how it is that a liberal-democratic state like that in Australia— with a history of diverse large-scale migration and a formal commitment to racial equality and multiculturalism— can continue to entertain strong desires for racial homogeneity, exclusion and assimilation, I think our answer must be, at least in part, cultural. These desires flow directly from the colonising project, the desire to establish a new society in place of the old societies both of this continent and of Europe. Such desires are an essential part of creating a new sense of ‘us’, or peoplehood, on someone else’s land.¹⁴⁶


The collecting sector was subconsciously and consciously involved in creating this sense of ‘us,’ both before and after the introduction of multicultural policies in 1978. Since then we have seen just how vital the relationships between government, ethnic organisations like FECCA and collecting sector organisations were to the communication of multicultural policies and the engagement of museums, libraries, archives and galleries with cultural diversity. Scholarship about migrants and people of culturally diverse backgrounds and multiculturalism as a theory and policy to manage cultural diversity also
developed at the same time. And more recently, museums have become more critical of government policies towards people of culturally diverse backgrounds in their exhibitions as we shall see in the next chapter.
Chapter 2: Cultural diversity and museums

Within the museum context, social responsibility requires an acknowledgement not only of the potential to impact on social inequality, but also of the organisations’ obligation to deploy their social agency and cultural authority in a way that is aligned and consistent with the values of contemporary society. 147

The act of mounting a display in a museum or of collecting cultural material in any institution is a political enterprise. It is a most powerful tool in the way our society constructs its cultural meaning. Until recently the fact that museums, libraries and archives neither collected nor interpreted any aspect of Australia’s multicultural heritage, was a statement that this aspect of Australian culture was not important and not worthy of preservation. The fact that there are now some museums and libraries collecting cultural material which does

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reflect Australia’s diverse society is beginning to change that cultural message.¹⁴⁸

...there exists an urgent need to reassess the material held within existing collections. Items collected by museums in the past for their technological (and possibly their ethnographic) significance, can now provide insights into the material culture of migration to Australia.¹⁴⁹

As these three quotations foreshadow, this chapter will examine the influence of the New Museology on the development of interest in collecting and exhibiting cultural diversity internationally and in Australia. The growing awareness of the need to be more inclusive in the ways in which museums represent social and cultural diversity was not unique to Australia. As Sandell helps us to recognise, the idea that museums have a ‘social responsibility’ to ‘impact on social inequality’ is a widespread one. A central platform of the New Museology, a movement that sought to ask why museums did things in the way they did in an effort to reveal their political function, the idea that museums have a social responsibility is also a response to the challenges posed to museums by the social movements of the 1960s and 70s. Like everything else,

¹⁴⁸ V Szekeres, ‘The Problems of Collecting and Interpreting Our Multicultural Heritage’ in Birtley & McQueen, pp.78-79.
¹⁴⁹ A Reeves, ‘The Role of National and State Museums’ in Birtley & McQueen, p.126.
museums came to be recognised as political institutions and hence as having responsibilities to their constituents. For many within the New Museology movement, this meant that museums should use their ‘social agency’ and ‘cultural authority’ to enact social change. Within Australia, this was most keenly felt, as the other two quotes indicate, as a need to address imbalances within the ways in which museums represented social and cultural diversity. That this was so, should not be a surprise, given the tight integration between shifts in immigration policy, the growing recognition of the need to manage Australia’s cultural diversity and the emerging scholarship discussed in the previous chapter. As a consequence, this chapter will look more specifically into how this changing landscape impacted on the ways Australian museums engaged with migration history and cultural diversity before and after the introduction of multicultural policy.

From the ‘Old’ to the ‘New’ Museology

As Sheila Watson argued, ‘[m]useums reflect the concerns of the society in which they are located, and their relationship with the communities they serve is renegotiated and reinvented as their purposes develop and change’.  

Museums, as they developed during the 19th century, were an essential part of the formation of the modern state and, with galleries and other cultural

institutions, were educative and civilising agencies.\textsuperscript{151} They were designed to ‘induct the visitor into an improving relationship to the self’ and create a citizenry that would progress civilisation; the museum ‘was envisaged as a place in which the working classes would acquire more civilised habits by imitating their betters’\textsuperscript{152} The 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century collections and exhibitions of material relating to culturally diverse communities reflected an imperial ideology around technological advancement and the beginnings of nation building as well as ideas about ‘civilising’ the visiting public. It was about using the material culture of geographical and cultural ‘others’ to inform the metropolitan ‘us’.

Collections and exhibitions in Australian museums formed since the introduction of multicultural policy in 1978, however, reflect a shift to the ‘New Museology’. The ‘New Museology’ was influenced by the civil rights movements and radical politics of the 1960s. These events and ideas encouraged museum professionals to be more aware of ‘the social purpose of museums’ and to examine the role of museums in society.\textsuperscript{153} Elaine Heumann Gurian outlined a list of questions around collections, exhibitions, institutional philosophies, public programs, research, the physical building and in administration for museums to work out how socially responsible they were. Her interest in power relations led


\textsuperscript{152} ibid., p.47.

\textsuperscript{153} Watson, ‘Museums and their Communities’, p.13.
her to ask ‘who decides?’ in response to each question on her list. Likewise, for Watson, power still rests at the institutional level and publicly funded museums ‘reflect the aspirations of the state’. More than places of study, education and entertainment, museums also came to be understood as political institutions with particular ideological purposes and influences.

For Rhiannon Mason, the New Museology shares much of the concerns of contemporary cultural theory which ‘tends to approach culture from a pluralist perspective’. According to her, cultural studies is interested in ‘cultures rather than Culture and cultural analyses often focus on cultural differences’. Through the sharing of ‘a certain amount of knowledge and understanding about our environment with others’ we make ‘judgements about cultural practices or products, their value, status, and legitimacy’. The act of display is the material manifestation of those judgements which also ‘confers or denies value and status’ to the ‘producers, owners, and consumers’ of cultural practices or products. This resonates with the observation of Viv Szekeres at


155 Watson, ‘Museums and their Communities’, p.15.


158 ibid.

159 ibid.

160 ibid.
the beginning of this chapter where she noted that collecting and display were powerful tools ‘in the way our society constructs its cultural meaning.’

Writing from the visitor’s point of view, Lois Silverman argued that museums ‘offer interactive social experiences of communication in which relationships are activated and people make meaning of objects’. She explained that people benefit in a number of ways from this communication. It could enable people to work on their self-esteem and self-actualization; change their values, knowledge, skills and behaviour and construct and enhance social relationships as well as ‘promote social justice and equality’. These benefits, Silverman argued, could be for the individual, groups and society as a whole and ‘through museum communication, people enact, share, and alter key elements of culture that shape the very operation, quality, and experience of social life’.

Other scholars like Ivan Karp and Laurence Gouriévidis, have argued that heritage sites and venues like museums are sites where performances of the past produce a sense of belonging and collective identity. This happens as a cultural process where the selection and meaning of events, people or processes to be preserved, commemorated and interpreted influence people’s meaning making, values, shared memories and experiences and social identity.

161 V Szekeres, ‘The Problems of Collecting and Interpreting Our Multicultural Heritage’ in Birtley & McQueen, pp.78-79.
163 ibid.
164 ibid.
Museums also erect boundaries and define the ‘self’, ‘others’ and ‘them’ through their collecting policies and exhibitions. While this differs according to geopolitical situations and national trajectories, it is enmeshed in the development and maintenance of nation states and, in the case of Australia, the experiences of colonization and decolonisation.\textsuperscript{166} This tension between inclusion and exclusion in museums occurs in contemporary culturally diverse societies where competing points of view around contemporary uses and interpretations of the past can result in what Tunbridge and Ashworth have called ‘dissonance’.\textsuperscript{167} According to Ashworth and Graham, this is ‘a condition of the construction of pluralist, multi-cultural societies based on inclusiveness and variable-sum conceptualisations of power’.\textsuperscript{168} Museums have moved from being institutions that project grand, national and imperial narratives which erase differences to ‘places of contest, where master narratives can be unsettled and questioned and where alternative viewpoints can be projected’.\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{166} Karp, p.15; Gouriévidis, ‘Representing migration in museums’, p.4.
\textsuperscript{169} Gouriévidis, ‘Representing migration in museums’ p.3.
International comparisons

Many museums around the world have faced these challenges and made these changes whether they are in settler-colonial nations like Canada, United States of America, Australia and New Zealand; or dealing with the effects of European colonisation such as in Central and South America or in European countries where they are dealing with internal minorities, post-colonialism and emigration as well as more recent immigration.170

Ellis Island in the port of New York and New Jersey in the United States was an immigration station where about 12 million migrants were processed between 1892 and 1954. The Statue of Liberty National Monument took over management of Ellis Island in 1965 with the intent on preserving the buildings and developing them into an immigration museum which opened in 1990. The museum told a site specific story in the broader context of American immigration history, encouraging visitors to think of themselves as immigrants.171 This ‘imagining’ of the nation as a nation of immigrants also happened in Australia as will be discussed below.

In Central and South America, the legacy of European colonisation has challenged museums to rethink their epistemologies derived from Eurocentric ways of thinking. In Venezuela, for example, anthropologist Luis Adrián Galindo Castro understood ‘multiculturalism and cultural diversity as not just a plurality

170 ibid., pp.4-5.
of cultural expressions or ways of making culture, but different epistemologies, ways of knowing, interpreting and explaining reality that differ from one another’.\textsuperscript{172} What he and other Latin American academics were theorising and attempting to develop in Latin American museums were ways to incorporate these different epistemologies together.

In Europe, the nationalisation of migration histories has taken a different path with a focus on emigration and only more recently have there been attempts to focus on immigration. We can see this in Irish and Northern Irish migration exhibitions which have been examined by Elizabeth Crooke. One of these exhibitions \textit{Stories in a Suitcase} (2004) utilised the ‘suitcase’ as a metaphor, which, she argued unites a mutual experience of migration. It also represented a ‘rebirth’ narrative where a new life starts for the migrant in a new land.\textsuperscript{173} These two narratives can also be found in Australian museums as will be discussed below. Another exhibition \textit{Destination Donegal} in 2011 used the place of Donegal as a way to connect migrants who had arrived in that city from different parts of the world, enabling the participants to find a sense of belonging across cultural differences.\textsuperscript{174} In Northern Ireland, two narratives are presented in migration exhibitions; the first is that migration is not a new concept and the second, that ‘we are all immigrants’ thereby making

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\item \textsuperscript{173} E Crooke, ‘The Migrant and the Museum: place and representation in Ireland’ in Gouriévidis (ed.), \textit{Museums and Migration}, p.191.
\item \textsuperscript{174} \textit{ibid.}, pp.191 -94.
\end{itemize}
connections between Irish emigration and non-Irish immigration into Ireland, or what Crooke called ‘solidarity of experience’. 175

Other European nations have re-examined ethnographic collections in light of cultural diversity policies and post-colonial approaches. Gouriévidis briefly outlined the changes to French museums, which, from the 1930s, had very clearly differentiated between the heritage of the metropolitan self and those of others. The new Musée Quai Branly, a museum of the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas which opened in Paris in 1995 ‘sacralized and aestheticized the notion of “otherness”’ 176 but it also began a process of rethinking other national collections. This led to the creation of the first national immigration museum in Europe, the Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration in Paris in 2007 which attempted to inscribe the history of immigration within the national narrative. It sought to reframe national identity as ‘transcultural’ and it was supposed to improve social cohesion by integrating the stories of migrants from France’s former colonies into the national framework. A change of government, however, meant that the museum lost political support because of a return to a more conservative approach to French national identity and harsher approaches to immigration.177 Australian museums too, have faced this problem as will be noted below.

175 ibid., p.194.
176 Gouriévidis, ‘Representing migration in museums’ p.6.
177 ibid., p.6.
The increasing interest in representing migration in European museums has been examined through the MeLa *European Museums in an age of migrations* project which brought together nine teams of researchers from several different European countries. As part of this project Christopher Whitehead, Susannah Eckersley, Katherine Lloyd and Rhiannon Mason examined several museums by using place as a ‘fundamental epistemological structure and referent within museums’ because ‘migration and related issues such as ideas of belonging, disadvantage and prejudice can be presented as historicized phenomena that involve antagonisms to be faced in the present’.\(^{178}\) According to them, place can illuminate the problematic and potential political agency of museums, encouraging them to engage in socio-political debates. This is in accordance with the ‘New Museology’.

They demonstrated how place is involved in identity work in two ways. Firstly, using examples from the Museum of Skye and National Museum of Scotland, they showed how ‘museum representations may confer identity characteristics upon the inhabitants of places’.\(^{179}\) At the Museum of Skye locally produced objects were used to demonstrate local resourcefulness and independence. At the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh a film ‘One Nation, Five Million Voices’ was commissioned in 2008 for the permanent gallery *Scotland: A Changing Nation* which utilised ‘talking heads’ to discuss Scottish


\(^{179}\) ibid., p.9.
character traits. These two approaches suggested questions around how place confers common traits — are they inherited and caught up in racial or nativist ideologies or are they learned, so that migrants and non-natives are able to share in these common traits?180

The second way that museum visitors

*may encounter representations and reminders of places that
have been or are part of their own personal histories, bringing
into play affective responses, such as feelings of belonging or
non-belonging, interrelated with memory work such as
remembering, reminiscing or indeed seeking to forget.*181

As noted by Whitehead, et al, institutional representations and individual understandings of place identities inform each other but are not necessarily reciprocated. Some city museums, for example, omitted ‘reference to neighbourhoods with significant populations of migrant descent or minority groups’.182 Political factors can also play a role in the representation or non-representation of ‘places that might perpetuate dissent, discomfort or encourage the exercise of ideologies that are no longer accepted by dominant groups’.183 For example, the authors compared ‘the long-standing absence of memorialization of the *Führerbunker* beneath Wilhelmstraße in Berlin’ and the

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180 *ibid.*, pp.8-9.
181 *ibid.*, p.10.
182 *ibid.*
183 *ibid.*
'spectacular and celebratory museumization of another bunker – the Churchill War Rooms in London'. These two ways that place is entangled in identity work in museums also appear in Australian museum collections and displays of cultural diversity which will be discussed below.

Identity relations before multicultural policies in Australian museums

Public museums were established in each capital city of each Australian colony by 1891 and their purpose was to ‘represent “the world” and to instruct citizens’. Some were natural history museums which included anthropological collections of ‘other’ peoples from around the world, some were museums of technology and others incorporated libraries and art collections. As noted by Chris Healy, Australian museums were both colonial outposts of metropolitan centres (outposts of the British Empire) as well as colonising institutions, especially in relation to ‘other’ peoples such as Indigenous Australians, people from Papua New Guinea and other places in the Pacific. Ordering and making sense of the ‘natural world’ of Australia was as important in museums and in international exhibitions as displaying copies of European artworks. Museums ‘functioned as antipodean “homes” for European objects’ which the colonies lacked. Despite the ‘vision of museums as spaces of exchange’ during the

184 ibid.
185 Healy, From the Ruins of Colonialism, p. 84.
186 ibid., pp. 84-86.
nineteenth century and much of the twentieth, Australian museums were not historical in focus nor did they have a concept of the nation. European museums on the other hand, had a strong sense of history as well as a strong sense of the nation state. Historical objects in European museums were related to classical antiquity, royalty, imperial conquest, nation formation and war. Whereas it was not until World War I that Australia had any comparable experiences it could harness in its museums, given it did not recognise the colonial encounter as furnishing such materials.\textsuperscript{187} Regional historical societies, on the other hand, collected items of historical value, which mostly had connections to early explorers, pioneers or prominent local families who wished to legitimise their family by giving it social significance.\textsuperscript{188} Sometimes this could include objects relating to people from culturally diverse backgrounds as will be discussed below.

\textbf{Making the colonial and national ‘us’}

Displays of Australian colonial history occurred outside museums during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. An example can be found in the 1890s catalogue of exhibits at the Melbourne Exhibition Building which portrayed a ‘digger’ washing his gold

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\textsuperscript{187} \textit{ibid.}, pp. 86-87.
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near an Aboriginal camp. As noted by curator and museum director Margaret Anderson, historical objects were collected and exhibited by public museums and other cultural institutions from the nineteenth century onwards. These objects often related to technology, such as mining and relics related to important pioneers.

Some of these objects and collections, both intentionally and unintentionally also documented the cultural diversity of the colonies. For example, Professor Frederick McCoy, founding director of the National Museum of Victoria (NMV), commissioned Swedish miner Carl Nördstrom to create a collection of ten mining models (c.1857 – 1860) to illustrate the variety of techniques of gold mining in Victoria and these included techniques associated with particular cultural groups. He specifically gave instructions to include the representation of Chinese miners who appear in a model showing alluvial mining called ‘Surfacings’. Another collection, the Historical Relics collection, now managed by the Migration Museum and the South Australian Maritime Museum on behalf of History SA represents early pioneering history, colonial government and explorers. It records early migration to South Australia by people from England, Cornwall, Chile, Germany, Ireland and other places. This collection was

possibly started in 1836 at the founding of Adelaide in relation to the South Australian Company in England and at first included archival material and then ‘relics’. The collection passed through many different owners until finally being transferred to the History Trust of South Australia, now History SA in 1984.\textsuperscript{192} Many of the objects in this collection were exhibited as part of the centenary of foundation of South Australia in 1936 so the collection was very much about the pioneering ‘us’.\textsuperscript{193}

The British Empire remained important during the early twentieth century in the ways that Australian museums were examined, especially in respect to the ways in which the Australian ‘us’ became, in the words of Andrew Carnegie, a part of ‘the English speaking race’.\textsuperscript{194} The Carnegie Corporation of New York inquiries into museums of the British Empire during the 1930s, included an inquiry into Australian museums in 1933. As Ian McShane noted, the Carnegie museum inquiry in Australia was framed by concerns around the ‘education and civic deficits of the settler population’.\textsuperscript{195} Then, as in the Pigott


\textsuperscript{193} Personal communication, Catherine Manning, Senior Curator, Migration Museum, Adelaide, 31 January 2012.


\textsuperscript{195} McShane, ‘Transnational cultural ties in a settler colonial world’, p.292
report in 1975, local museums were found to be the custodians of historical items and there was a call for greater attention to be paid to early settlement.\(^{196}\)

While in the early twentieth century the Carnegie inquiry framed the examination of Australian museums in terms of improving the ‘English speaking race’\(^{197}\) of the British Empire, the actual development of museums of Australian history at that time is linked ‘with the emergence of an Australian national identity apart from that of Empire’\(^{198}\) according to social history curator Kimberly Webber. She argued that the acquisition of Vaucluse house in 1911 as the nation’s first historic house, followed by the establishment of the first national history museum, the Australian War Memorial in 1918 were both about creating pride and reverence for Australia’s past heroes and history and creating a national identity.\(^{199}\)

**Using historical and cultural ‘others’ to define ‘me’/‘us’**

The 1975 Pigott report into museums and national collections noted the absence of social history in the major museums and that the history of European settlement could be found in the local museums mostly developed in the 1960s due to the rise of popular interest in Australian history.\(^{200}\) Indeed, in 1968, Eric

\(^{196}\) *ibid.*, pp.299-300.

\(^{197}\) Nasaw, p.454, quoted in McShane, ‘Transnational cultural ties in a settler colonial world’, p.292.

\(^{198}\) Webber, p.157.

\(^{199}\) *ibid.*, pp.161-69.

\(^{200}\) Pigott, pp.15-21.
Dunlop wrote a practical guide to organising a local history museum influenced by his study of European historical museums for the Royal Australian Historical Society.\textsuperscript{201} According to Dunlop, local history museums, sometimes known as folk museums ‘are museums for the people (or folk)’ which have the ‘specific purpose of showing the people of to-day how the people of other days lived’.\textsuperscript{202}

In some local museums ‘people of other days’ included people of different cultural backgrounds and they were represented in a variety of ways.

Janis Wilton pointed out that sometimes objects were acquired by these local museums because of their relationship to the locality rather than a conscious effort to represent non-British migration and/ or cultural ‘others’.\textsuperscript{203} Some local history museums did not recognise material in their collections from culturally diverse communities or they misunderstood them. As an example, Wilton found that the local museums in the New England region either did not realise they had Chinese Australian material culture or had mislabelled it. In their exhibitions, objects were exoticised, often representing stereotypical attitudes towards the Chinese. Wilton borrowed from the work of oral historian Alessandro Portelli to illuminate and examine collective mistakes made when remembering past events or experiences. From the mistakes and mislabelling in local museums: ‘what we learn is that the current custodians of these objects — the staff and volunteers at local museums — are conveying long held local

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\textsuperscript{202} Dunlop, p.2. Author’s italics.
\textsuperscript{203} Wilton, \textit{Different Sights}, p.117.
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attitudes and views of the Chinese presence’.\(^{204}\) Wilton went on to argue that the incorrect labels are themselves artefacts of interest that need to be contextualised and understood while also arguing that they should be replaced. She also gave examples of approaches in international and Australian museums that incorporated both the correct information and the misremembering through text, interactive exhibitions and through tour guides.\(^{205}\)

The feeling of being an ‘other’ could provoke an interest in both historical and cultural ‘others’. This happened in the case of the first local history museum in South Australia: The Lobethal Museum and Archives which opened in 1956. It documented the lives of Prussian Lutheran settlers in the area during the 19th century and was started by a Lithuanian Post World War II migrant Jonas Vangas who lived in the area and became interested in its history.\(^{206}\)

The Jindera Pioneer Museum (1967) is one example that represented everyone as a part of local pioneering history regardless of cultural background. What was important was their contribution to the town and the local ‘us’. The museum was created by two local enthusiasts — Mrs Wehner, granddaughter of P. C. Wagner who was one of many German migrants who moved to the area from South Australia in 1874 and Mrs Clark who had visited Scandinavian folk museums and saw the potential to develop a similar type of folk museum at


\(^{205}\) ibid., p.61.

Jindera. Not only did they preserve and utilise P.C. Wagner’s general store for the museum, they also painstakingly researched and recreated the Wagner room settings which resulted in ‘tasteful, truthful and uncluttered reproductions of Australian living about the turn of the century’. Aware that the Wagner residence recreated the life of an affluent family, they also recreated a simple log hut to demonstrate the basic conditions of living in the area before P.C. Wagner’s arrival. Keith Swan advised that more than one regional museum was good because ‘they must differ in order to reflect the diversity of the [Riverina] region and the differences in dominant and minority groups’. Furthermore, ‘each museum faces the problem of how it can reflect the richness, diversity and changing nature of regional life’ in order to enable ‘regional and national historical understanding and for bringing the past to life again’. Diversity, as Swan understood, was broader than cultural diversity. He encouraged local museums to reflect diversity in terms of class, gender and experiences as he was writing at a time when Australian historical research was discovering and including previously hidden histories. After multicultural policies had enabled Australian communities to explicitly take pride in their different cultural backgrounds, the Jindera Pioneer Museum stated that it collected and

208 ibid., p.158.
209 ibid.
210 ibid., p.166.
211 ibid.
displayed objects ‘used in the everyday life of the people of the pioneering period of the 19th century in this district’ from people ‘mainly of English, Scottish and German blood’.212

Making the minority group ‘us’

The feeling of being ‘other’ can awaken an interest in the collective minority ‘us’. This was the case, for example, with Jonas Vangas’ second museum, which he began in response to the Lithuanian community’s request for their own museum which opened in Adelaide in 1961.213 In South Australia, there is also a Latvian Museum created by the Latvian community in Adelaide in 1970. According to Szekeres, both were founded by post-World War II refugee communities who had a strong sense of cultural and national identity and dreamt of returning to their respective countries of origin. Likewise, in New South Wales, the Estonian community established the Estonian Archives of Australia in 1952. As these Baltic communities became more established in Australia, they, sought to use their community led collecting institutions to relate to the broader Australian society.214

214 Szekeres, ‘Museums and multiculturalism’
Multicultural policies and the recognition of ‘others’ in Australian museums

The concurrent development of social history and multicultural policy meant that Australian museums tended to represent migration history and cultural diversity together. The Western Australian Museum (1970) and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (1973) were the first Australian museums to employ curators of history and the Fremantle branch of the Western Australian Museum opened its first history exhibition in 1970.215 As noted by Viv Szekeres, both the Pigott Report *Museums in Australia* (1975) and the Galbally Report on *Migrant Programs and Services* (1978) were seminal influences on Australian museum engagement with migration history, multiculturalism and cultural diversity.216 Janis Wilton argued that a growing interest in family histories from the late 1970s onwards also encouraged some local museums to acquire, display or re-display objects as a conscious effort to recognise the different perceptions and experiences of non-British migrants.217

According to former NMA curator Ian McShane, museums and particularly their exhibitions became another possible vehicle for the Department of Immigration’s promotional programs. Indeed, the Department sponsored some museum programs, leading McShane to agree with Hage’s argument that museums have acted ‘as white national managers of

215 Pigott, p.74.
216 Szekeres, ‘Museums and multiculturalism’
217 Wilton, *Different Sights*, pp.112-17.
multiculturalism’. McShane argued that many of these early migration exhibitions of the 1980s and 90s comprised particular standard narratives such as a ‘rebirth’ narrative where a new positive life starts upon arrival in Australia or an ‘enrichment’ narrative where migrants ‘enrich’ Australia through their cultures. While McShane was reluctant to be ‘overly critical’ of these exhibitions he mentioned Hage’s critique that the ‘enrichment’ discourse created a dichotomy between those being enriched and those doing the enrichment. He also followed Hage in suggesting that these narratives sustain the ability of the dominant group in society to consume the ‘other’.

Andrea Witcomb used the tropes that McShane had identified to produce a short history of migration exhibitions. In it, she examined the ways that McShane’s own exhibition, *Horizons* attempted to move beyond these narrative tropes by developing a critical interpretation of the history of immigration policies. This exhibition became the subject of intense political scrutiny which resulted in the development of a new exhibit *Australian Journeys* which, Witcomb argued, avoided controversy by avoiding any direct critique of migration or settlement policies. My second case study, delves into the development of this exhibition further.

Building on McShane’s work, Katherine Goodnow also analysed migration history exhibitions in New Zealand and Australia and proposed that museums

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218 I McShane, ‘Challenging or conventional?’, p.125.
219 ibid., pp.128-29.
220 Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’
had moved away from McShane’s standard narratives in the following 6 ways: staying with the standard metaphor but adding to it; adding a negative side to migration, moving away from separate narratives for groups and spaces, and moving beyond ‘frozen’ identities, for example, by adding youth voices.221

Utilising and also challenging McShane, Witcomb and Goodnow’s work, Eureka Henrich, in her PhD thesis on representing migration history in Australian museums, divided the period between 1984 and 2001 into two phases — ‘inventing a nation of immigrants’ and ‘democratising the nation of immigrants’.222 For my purposes here I have collapsed these phases into one section.

In Witcomb’s latest work on migration history and Australian museums, she and Mary Hutchinson identified three approaches to museum engagement with the topic of migration in Australia from the 1980s onward, all of which are influenced by the introduction of multicultural policies, increasing academic scholarship around cultural diversity and migration as well as the development of the New Museology in museums internationally. The approaches are ‘creating a space for the maintenance of culture within multiculturalism’, representing cultural diversity as integral to national identity through a ‘focus on the value of being different — that is non-Anglo — ethnic cultures’223 and an approach that

221 Goodnow, ‘Traditional Methods and New Moves’, p.32.
222 Henrich, Whose Stories Are We Telling?, p.43.
‘focuses on how cultural diversity has been experienced, understood and used, and what this means for how we engage with one another’.\textsuperscript{224}

While I have utilised all of these sources and approaches, my organisation of the subject matter reflects my focus here on ‘identity relations’ and the subject of cultural diversity rather than migration, although the two overlap in Australian museums. I use the concept of ‘ethnicisation’ to analyse these relations.

\textit{Ethnicisation is created not only through shared language and culture, but also through experiences of discrimination. It is reinforced through official and unofficial political and cultural institutions — the official policy of multiculturalism, for instance, and its reification of ethnic groups.}\textsuperscript{225}

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Hsu-Ming Teo suggested that instead of analysing histories of ethnicity, she found it more fruitful to examine histories of ethnicisation. Teo analysed academic literature and in this thesis I propose that a number of state and national museums in Australia developed and reinforced histories of ethnicisation, particularly through reifying ethnic groups in order to counter the domination of British Australian centred histories and reinvent Australia as a nation of immigrants. As we can see from Teo’s quotation above, ‘ethnicisation’ can be a way for minority groups to claim the position of the

\textsuperscript{224} ibid.
\textsuperscript{225} Teo, p.149.
‘other’ for their own purposes and it can also be a form of ‘othering’ performed by a dominant ‘us’, and ‘reinforced through official and unofficial political and cultural institutions’.

**Many ‘others’ have contributed to a multicultural ‘us’**

The lead up to the sesquicentenaries of the founding of Victoria in 1984-5 and South Australia in 1986 as well as the Bicentenary of NSW and Australia in 1988 enabled state-run museums in these three states, as well as two national museums in Canberra and Sydney to recast their respective state and national identities as being inclusive and pluralistic. Chris Healy viewed the Bicentenary as the culmination of the long rise of social history from the 1960s onwards which had democratised the practise of history in that it included previously ignored groups such as the working class and women as well as migrants.226

In the state of Victoria in 1980, both the NMV227 and the Science Museum were discussing ways of contributing to the state’s sesquicentenary celebrations. That year, the Arts Minister, Norman Lacy made an overseas tour and returned with an interest in ‘integrated museums’. These factors, combined with the results of the 1975 Pigott report into museums and the realisation that social history in local museums was generating tourism revenue, encouraged the


227 The term ‘national’ used in the name of this museum is typical of British colonial institutions and generally meant public and secular.
state government to consider amalgamating the two museums, which it did in 1983, to form the Museum of Victoria (MV). 228 The new institution was to have ‘a vision of social history in terms of natural resources, the development of technological solutions to practical problems and the social and political influences on the shaping of Victoria’s multi-cultural society’.229 This vision was reflected in the first social history exhibition *Story of Victoria* (1985-1992) curated by Elizabeth Willis and funded through the sesquicentenary fund.230

The exhibition included sections on the impact of European colonisation on indigenous people, ecological degradation and the 1930s Depression. Few of the Museum’s collections had a strong Victorian historical provenance so the exhibition was theme-led rather than collection-led. However, it included the Carl Nördstrom’s 1860 model showing European and Chinese miners engaged in alluvial mining.231 A section called ‘Between Two Worlds, With Courage and Hope: Migration to Victoria’ dealt with migration and cultural diversity and the exhibition guide declared that ‘Australia is a nation of immigrants’. This display included ‘a series of filmed interviews with migrants from a variety of backgrounds; a mural painted by migrant children in Melbourne...and three

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228 Rasmussen & MV, p.313 & p.329.
229 Quoted in Rasmussen & MV, p.329
showcases focusing on the experiences of three migrants who now work at the Museum’. 232

At the same time, in South Australia, the lead up to this state’s sesquicentenary provided the momentum for increased government support for the South Australian Museum and a recommendation for the creation of the History Trust of South Australia so cultural heritage could be preserved and developed. 233 According to Henrich, after the Pigott report into museums in 1975, the South Australian government commissioned a report into the South Australian Museum by anthropologist Robert Edwards. The First Interim report noted that the upcoming sesquicentenary of British settlement in South Australia provided a good opportunity to educate the public in the ‘multi-racial’ origins of their state. 234 The Final Report released in 1981, recommended the creation of the History Trust of South Australia to manage a newly created ‘Ethnic Museum’. The Edwards report emphasised the important role that museums have in educating the general public about South Australian history and culture as well as migrant histories and ‘ethnic’ cultures. 235 Almost immediately after its creation the History Trust of South Australia decided to change the name of the ‘Ethnic museum’ to the Migration and Settlement Museum as they worked


234 Henrich, Whose Stories Are We Telling?, p.62.

235 Edwards, p.xiv.
towards opening for the sesquicentenary of 1986. Removing the word ‘ethnic’
was an attempt to enable all South Australians to identify with the museum and
reflected tensions at the time over catering to the needs of migrant communities
and incorporating their narratives within the mainstream South Australian
narrative.236

Running parallel to the Victorian and South Australian developments, was
interest in the NSW and Australian Bicentenary of 1988 which saw a suite of
museum related projects funded by the NSW state and national governments.
The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) funded by the NSW state
government gained a social history department in the early 1980s in anticipation
of the Bicentenary and also because of the emergence of professional historians
who were graduates of university Australian history courses.237 Its first social
history exhibitions were at Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney in 1984 which
emphasised New South Wales history. The exhibitions were about ‘the people’,
primarily the urban people of Sydney and provided a critical reflection on the
relations between past and present social conditions.238 One exhibition was
Bound for Botany Bay which told the story of the successive ways of immigration
to Australia through a series of individual narratives.239 Another exhibit The

236 Henrich, Whose Stories Are We Telling?, pp.63-65.
237 R White, ‘Imagining Representing Australia’, in G Davison & K Webber (eds.), Yesterday’s
238 T Bennett, ‘Museums and “the people”’, in R Lumley (ed.), The Museum Time Machine,
239 ibid.
Changing Faces of Sydney examined migration to Sydney and included convict history as well as the personal story of Quong Tart who was a Chinese Australian merchant (1850-1903), and an ‘assimilated migrant’. This exhibition also included a section called ‘Puglia in Sydney’ which was about Italian migrants in Sydney between 1923 and 1953.\textsuperscript{240}

The NSW government also funded and opened a new venue of the MAAS, the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo in 1988 with a suite of five permanent social history exhibitions as well as a community focus area including histories of groups that had previously been left out of Australian history — migrants, women and Indigenous Australians.\textsuperscript{241} The Australian Communities gallery included a section on post-war migrants and sought to recast diversity as the centre of Australian national identity.\textsuperscript{242} While many of the individual displays in the Australian Communities gallery related to specific ethnic groups or local histories, the Museum’s collection policy was focused on two main areas: Race Relations in NSW and Migration.\textsuperscript{243} This reflected the existing historical scholarship at the time around race relations particularly during the nineteenth century and during the White Australia Policy as well as the demographic and sociological literature on migration and migrants. It was not just about representing ‘others’ to a mainstream ‘us’. It was also an effort to

\textsuperscript{240} The Changing Faces of Sydney exhibition catalogue in MRS 259/ 1:15 Exhibition catalogues & brochures — Hyde Park Barracks 1984-1987, Archives of MAAS.

\textsuperscript{241} White, ‘Imagining Representing Australia’, pp.138-39.

\textsuperscript{242} Henrich, Whose Stories Are We Telling?, p.73.

\textsuperscript{243} V Northey, ‘The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney’ in Birtley & McQueen, p.34
critically examine relations between ‘us’ and ‘others’ and ‘them’ in Australian history and society in order to consolidate a more inclusive and pluralistic state and nation.

Also as a result of the recommendations of the 1975 Pigott report and the lead up to the Bicentenary was the development of the National Museum of Australia (NMA), founded by an act of parliament in 1980. In December that year, a Museum Interim Council was appointed, including Jerzy Zubrzycki, who as Chair of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC) had influenced the 1978 Galbally report. By 1982, Zubrzycki had also been appointed to the AEAC successor body, the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs which produced the publication *Multiculturalism for All Australians.* Both this document and the Museum Interim Council’s *Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia* contained a revised definition of multiculturalism — making it a policy for all Australians, not just migrants or those from non-English speaking backgrounds as had been the case previously. According to the Museum’s Charter ‘[t]he Museum will reflect the development of the Australian nation in all its cultural diversity’.

In the Plan, the proposed exhibitions included ‘a scene in an immigrant ship of the early 19th century’, thus treating everyone who arrived post 1788 as immigrants. The proposed *Way of Life* exhibition included themes of ‘[e]thnic makeup, the Australian middle-class, ethnic diversity’.

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246 *ibid.*, p.18.
migration patterns, relations with northern neighbours, class and sexual division’. Likewise, the NMA’s first exhibition *On the Horizon* (1986) gave a hint that the museum was interested in ‘more recent migration’ and the guide to the second exhibition, *Survival* (1988) explicitly stated that ‘Australia is a culturally diverse nation’.

Another project associated with the 1975 Pigott Report and 1988 Bicentenary was the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) which opened in 1991. The *Passengers* gallery divided people arriving in Australia into settlers and ‘migrants’. The latter were people of non-British descent leaving behind persecution or economic difficulties. The gallery introduced the theme of migration by focusing on the sea journey as is to be expected in a maritime museum, rather than on settlement. The exhibition was also an example of the ‘rebirth’ or ‘redemptive’ narrative whereupon arrival in Australia, a new positive life starts for migrants. McShane noted that the limitation of this approach was that it reduced individual agency in making one’s own life story. It also froze a person’s experience in time, making them forever migrants.

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247 *ibid.*, p.19.
251 Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, p.53.
252 *ibid.*, p.53.
253 McShane, ‘Challenging or conventional?’, p. 129.
are always ‘others’. This also meant that there was no room for analysis of the policies of assimilation and other settlement challenges faced by migrants.\textsuperscript{254}

During the 1990s, the interest in migration and cultural diversity continued to grow at the MV with the creation of a Migration and Cultural Diversity collection in 1990\textsuperscript{255} and two exhibitions – \textit{Between Two Worlds: Jews and Italians in Carlton} (1992) and \textit{An Australian Pilgrimage: from intolerance to multiculturalism? Muslims in Australia 1860-1990s} (1992). Eventually, support was found to create a separate venue, the Immigration Museum (IM), which opened in 1998 and coincided with Melbourne’s hosting of the triennial conference of the International Council of Museums.\textsuperscript{256} The focus of the IM was to define migration as a shared experience of all non-indigenous Australians.\textsuperscript{257}

In NSW at the same time, the government favoured a virtual migration museum and in 1998 the NSW Migration Heritage Centre (MHC-NSW) was established. Its purpose was ‘to research and promote the contribution made by immigrants to the State and nation’s life’ and was ‘to reach beyond the notion of a static museum of immigration’.\textsuperscript{258} The Centre was a strategic project based in the NSW Premier’s Department as a response to community leaders’ concerns about the aging population, and consequent loss of memories and heritage, of

\textsuperscript{254} Henrich, \textit{Whose Stories Are We Telling?}, p.175.
\textsuperscript{256} R Gillespie, ‘The Immigration Museum’ in Rasmussen & MV, p.364.
\textsuperscript{257} Henrich, \textit{Whose Stories Are We Telling?}, p.43.
post-World War II migrants. The Centre began with a research grants program and a limited website, and in 2003 was moved to the Powerhouse Museum (MAAS), re-established with a strategic plan to document collections, places and associated memories of migration and settlement. The MHC-NSW worked with local museums, such as the Lambing Flat Folk Museum which appears in the first case study, local historical societies and sometimes specific cultural groups to document and display culturally diverse stories of a particular locality or cultural group both in physical exhibitions and online. The physical objects are distributed throughout the state of NSW in private hands and also in local and regional museums.\(^\text{259}\) Once it established relationships with local museums, the MHC-NSW could also access the stories and objects for its own projects. One of these projects was the *Objects Through Time* website which was developed between 2005 and 2011. The online exhibition ‘explores important places and events in Australian migration history and introduces the people who have shaped Australia’s rich and diverse cultural identity’.\(^\text{260}\) While the exhibition endeavoured to tell a national story, most of the featured objects related to NSW history. The MHC-NSW funding was cut in 2011 and it was amalgamated into the new MAAS Programs Team in 2013.\(^\text{261}\)

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\(^{259}\) Petersen, ‘Though This Be Madness’, p.35.

\(^{260}\) ‘Objects Through Time’,

Museums and the making of ethnicity

In order to recognise and value migrant contributions to the collective local, state or national identity, public museums began to ‘ethnicise’ their subjects. An example of this is the opening temporary exhibition of the Migration and Settlement Museum in 1986: *Textile Traditions: Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia*. This exhibition displayed costumes and household textiles. As Witcomb and Hutchison noted, this exhibition was an explicit move to rebalance the British centred bias in Australian collections, represent previously unrepresented material and work cooperatively with the relevant communities to display that material.\(^{262}\) This was followed by a series of temporary exhibitions which were culturally specific or worked with several cultural groups brought together under a common theme.\(^{263}\) The community access gallery, called the Forum was also used by various community groups, ‘who wish to present their stories of immigration and settlement — in their own way’.\(^{264}\)

There are varied reasons why some people from particular cultural, ethnic or religious communities work with a public museum. Often, it was the more organised groups who approached these museums. For instance, in 1987 the umbrella organisation for Jewish community groups in NSW, the Jewish

\(^{262}\) Hutchison & Witcomb, pp.232-33.

\(^{263}\) These included *Memories and Dreams* (1986) which was an exhibition of banners made by different communities to represent their experience of migration and settlement and *Passengers from Hamburg* (1988) which portrayed the history of nineteenth century German settlement in South Australia.

Board of Deputies, proposed an exhibition *Old Songs in a New Land* about the first century of Jewish life in New South Wales. This exhibition was held at the Hyde Park Barracks, a venue of the NSW MAAS. The exhibition was proposed as the Jewish community of NSW’s contribution to the Australian Bicentenary celebrations in 1988. The exhibition’s aims were ‘[t]o depict early Jewish settlers through both their efforts to establish a religious community and their manifold contributions to Australian society’ and ‘[t]o present the earliest Jewish settlers as the first non-Christian segment of Australian Society after European migration to Australia began’. In other words, the exhibition was a way to ‘self-ethnicize’ in order to insert themselves into the national story as told by government institutions like museums. The exhibition was also for Australians of Jewish heritage to learn about their cultural heritage.

Not all communities, however, were interested in being represented as a homogeneous ‘ethnic’ group. One proposed display in the *Australian Communities* gallery was on the Chinese in Haymarket, Sydney. However, what curators found was that not only was there little identifiable material culture, but also the political, cultural, linguistic, religious and occupational diversity of people of Chinese descent in Haymarket made it difficult to represent one homogenous community. One of the handwritten notes on file stated that the ‘Chinese community does not like being regarded as a homogenous group’. The

265 Desmond Freeman Associates: Museum Group for The New South Wales Board of Deputies, *Old Songs in a New Land* exhibition proposal, Jewish community curator research file, MAAS
266 *ibid.*
Museum’s solution was to broaden the display to focus on place — the suburbs of *Ultimo and Pyrmont* (1988) which would include some Chinese Australian stories from Haymarket.267

Cross-cultural exhibitions where more than one cultural or ethnic group participated in a thematic or place based exhibition was another way of creating the ethnic ‘other’ but also show commonalities and interactions between groups. The most written about example in the literature is the exhibition *Bridging Two Worlds: Jews and Italians in Carlton* (1992) which was developed through a partnership between the MV, Jewish Museum of Australia, CO.AS.IT Italian Assistance Association and the Italian Historical Society. This exhibition explored the experiences of two migrant groups in a suburb of Melbourne. According to Hutchinson and Witcomb, the exhibition was both a celebration of the contribution of these two groups to cosmopolitan culture in Australia as well as how to accommodate cultural differences in order to become multicultural.268

One of the problems with trying to rebalance the representation of non-British migrants in public museums was that this strategy could exclude the experiences of British migrants. This was the case for example, with the national Migrant Heritage Collection at the NMA (MHC-NMA). In 1986 the NMA commissioned sociologist Jerzy Zubrzycki for a collecting project which became the MHC-NMA. According to curator Glen Cook and Zubrzycki himself, the MHC-

267 ‘Chinese Community’ curator research file, MAAS.
268 Hutchison & Witcomb, p.235.
NMA was strongly focused on post-World War II migrant stories and objects and lacking in Asian and South American migrant representation.269 There was also a division between ‘migrants’ or ‘ethnics’ and settlers who were from the United Kingdom so the collection had few objects relating to English migration and none relating to Irish migration.270 These limitations were a direct result of the original brief as well as Zubrzycki’s list of desired objects, which included handicrafts, costumes and religious objects.271 ‘Ethnicisation’ was necessary to get these objects and their associated stories into the museum collection but it led to unintended imbalances and ‘othering’ of those migrants. The audience for these collections and exhibitions was assumed to be the dominant homogenous pre-war population who needed to be educated about this newer ‘other’272, a feature that not only contradicted Zubrzycki’s desire in policy documents to make multiculturalism relevant to all Australians273 but which made it very difficult for the NMA to represent the history and experiences of British and Irish Australians and their descendants.

This was a problem that the Immigration Museum in Melbourne wanted to address when they opened in 1998 as they were aware that ‘[t]he focus on multiculturalism had had the unintended consequence of displacing the

270 McShane, ‘Challenging or conventional?’, p. 128; see also Cook & Zubrzycki, p.14.
273 ACPEA, p.x.
experiences of British and Irish immigrants from mainstream immigration history’. Henrich pointed out that this sensibility was also a part of a broader shift in Australian society at this time. John Stratton argued that ‘British self-ethnicization’ began to happen in the late 1990s in response to the removal of pre-existing privileges for British Australians and a refocusing on the Asia Pacific region in foreign affairs. ‘Self-ethnicization’ was a way to reclaim some status as one of a number of ethnic groups in Australia. This ‘British self-ethnicization’ could also explain why it was only in 2001 that the Migration Museum in Adelaide was able to collect an English banner as part of the Community Banners project, started in 1985, which had encouraged different ethnic groups to make a banner representing their migration memories and cultural identity.

Local museums, too, rediscovered ‘ethnic’ objects in their collections and ethnic family stories in their local area, which were often interpreted as stories of ‘enrichment’ and ‘contribution’ to local communities. One example that Witcomb described was the 2007 exhibition From All Four Corners: Stories of migration to Wagga Wagga supported by the MHC-NSW and created by the Museum of the Riverina at Wagga Wagga.

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274 Gillespie, p.364.
275 Henrich, Whose Stories Are We Telling?, p. 212.
278 Wilton, Different Sights, p.117.
279 Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, pp.54-55.
Sometimes people were represented as ethnic groups rather than individuals. An example of this is the Beechworth History Precinct, launched in 2001, which had a special Chinese Museum that portrayed ‘the Chinese’ in a generic fashion and failed to mention any of the Chinese people that lived in Beechworth during the region’s 19th century gold rush days or after, nor any significant Chinese people that passed through.\textsuperscript{280} Tseen Khoo took this point further by comparing the individualised representation of the notorious bushranger Ned Kelly, who had been gaoled several times in Beechworth with the group representation of ‘the Beechworth Chinese Community collection’ being a ‘must-see’ item at the Burke Museum.\textsuperscript{281} This parallel history between an individual bushranger and Chinese groups, who co-existed in the same time period, was not cross-referenced in the available tourism literature. It was merely enough to ‘site’ the Chinese presence in pioneering regional communities which meant these communities could avoid ‘charges of parochialism, particularly in smaller towns keen on presenting cosmopolitan or multicultural credentials’.\textsuperscript{282}

Sometimes contemporary international relations influenced the ways in which particular groups were ‘ethnicised’. An example of this is the Gum San Heritage Centre, opened in 2001 in the Victorian regional town of Ararat. In 1857


\textsuperscript{281} T Khoo, "We Are One But We Are Many": Representations of Chinese Australian Heritage’ in D Haskell, M McKinlay & P Rich (eds.), \textit{Beyond Good and Evil? Essays on the Literature and Culture of the Asia-Pacific Region}, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2005, p.125.

\textsuperscript{282} ibid.
Chinese miners, mostly from the southern parts of modern day China, discovered gold at what is now the town of Ararat in Victoria but they were eventually chased away by European miners. The local government created the Centre to celebrate this and claimed that Ararat was the only town in Australia to be founded by Chinese people. In order to create this museum and encourage overseas Chinese tourists to visit, the local government cultivated a relationship with the Chinese Consulate General in Melbourne, Communist Party Secretaries in China and Chinese businesses, including tour companies. The Chinese government even donated exhibition panels about traditional Chinese architecture and culture. The Centre relied upon ‘authentic’ generic representations of Chinese people and culture and failed to include any historical or contemporary individual local Chinese Australian stories. Visitors were invited to learn Chinese calligraphy and view Chinese handicrafts as well as view representations of Chinese miners and a recreated mine.

Other local museums sought to act more as facilitators and collaborators in the representation of groups and cultural diversity in their local area. Ricardo Peach, curator at the Liverpool Regional Museum (2000 – 2003) developed the facilitation and collaborative strategies for dealing with culturally diverse communities which he located within the theoretical framework of the New Museology. The Museum was established in 1989 as part of a Bicentennial

project and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre which often collaborated with the Liverpool Museum, opened in 1994. Peach noted that there was a need to ‘both represent diversity and facilitate self-representation’ and that

*Self-representation by communities did not automatically mean diversity was engaged with, given the various asymmetrical power relations at play. The interaction between the Museum and the communities in negotiating this dual discursive, resulted in what I term the co-representation of exhibitions. Co-representation acknowledges that complex interactions between museums and communities take place which affect the development and outcome of exhibitions.*

Peach found that some of the communities were reluctant to accept internal differences and this caused a fracturing of community identities. One example he highlighted was *Leaving the Crocodile: The Story of the East Timor Community in Sydney* (25 August – 15 December 2001). Young East Timorese residents were asked to be a part of the curatorial process and received appropriate training. However, there were

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Questions of who were qualified to speak, what should have been the focus of the exhibition and what should have been shown, illuminated the fact that individual communities themselves are very diverse and that an understanding of what culture is, differs from group to group.287

This came down to two different views of ethnicity, one essentialised and the other fluid and negotiated as a part of the social process. As the Museum was making decisions about who to include and how to go about representing stories, it was implicated in the political process.

Sometimes particular groups attempted to monopolise who could be included as being of their ‘ethnicity’ as the Casula Powerhouse and Vietnamese Australian artist, Mai Long found. The 2006 Casula Powerhouse travelling exhibition I Love Pho attracted significant condemnation from the Vietnamese Community Association in Western Australia because one artwork contained the North Vietnamese flag. They demanded that the artwork be destroyed but the artist and museum refused.288 Mai Long, the artist of the offending work explained that ‘[w]hat happened in Perth made me feel like I was facing personal annihilation. I felt like a certain group in Australia was trying to command a “monopoly” over the definition of “Vietnamese Australian”’.289

287 ibid., pp.15-16.
The experiences of Mai Long and the Casula Powerhouse bring to mind the questions posed by Viv Szekeres when she described the workings of the Migration Museum’s Community Access Gallery. She raised the question of ‘who exactly constitutes community. Who is it that the museum works with when we say we are working with the Slovenian, Indian or Cornish community?’\textsuperscript{290} She described the intricate negotiations required when working with community associations and individuals from the same community group when there are different interpretations of what was important and what was not. Staff could also be implicated ‘wittingly or unwittingly, in matters of legitimising and promoting certain aspects of a past, whilst keeping silent about other aspects’.\textsuperscript{291} As Witcomb found when working with members of the Portuguese community to create a community exhibition in Fremantle, museums are also involved in the production of community as well as being communities themselves.\textsuperscript{292} Museums have also been implicated in the processes of becoming and making the ‘ethnic’.

The relationships that are established between museums and communities are more complex and more specific than they may seem at first glance. In fact, what the example from Casula Powerhouse discussed above showed, is Sheila Watson’s point that ‘[m]useums do not work with communities

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\textsuperscript{290} V Szekeres, ‘Representing Diversity and Challenging Racism: The Migration Museum’ in Watson (ed.), \textit{Museums and Their Communities}, p.239.
\textsuperscript{291} \textit{ibid}. p.241.
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but with individuals within those communities. Those individuals do not
establish partnerships with the museum but with individuals within that
institution’. 293

Reinventing ‘us’: rebirth narratives and multicultural foundation myths

According to Paul Ashton, after the introduction of multicultural policy,
there were efforts to embed multiculturalism as part of the national identity
through government led ‘retrospective commemoration’ of the contribution of
migrants to the Australian nation and ‘participatory memorialisation’ through
the creation of vernacular memorials or monuments by groups or individuals in
order to find a place for themselves in the broader national narrative. 294

One site dubbed ‘the birthplace of Australian multiculturalism’ is the
museum and interpretive centre at the site of the Bonegilla Reception and
Training Centre which opened in 2005. Jayne Persian used Paul Ashton’s
framework to critique this foundation myth at Bonegilla. 295 Between 1947 and
1971, over 300,000 migrants passed through the Bonegilla Reception and
Training Centre, which was the largest and longest lived migrant camp in
Australia. 296 Persian critiqued efforts to memorialise Bonegilla in a celebratory

293 Watson, ‘Museums and their Communities’, p.18.
294 P Ashton, ‘“The Birthplace of Australian Multiculturalism”? Retrospective commemoration,
Participatory Memorialisation and Official Heritage’, International Journal of Heritage Studies,
vol.15, no.5, 2009, p.382.
21, no.3, 2008, p.27.
multicultural narrative, especially on a national scale. She argued that the interpretive site and museum failed to attract visitors who are not personally attached to Bonegilla in some way. Persian’s research showed that the inclusion of Bonegilla ‘in a celebratory narrative of multiculturalism [has] been problematic for the state and for the post-war migrants and their children’. According to Persian, ‘[h]omogenising the migrant experience has not worked’. Alexandra Dellios, however, took a slightly different stance, arguing that migrants and their descendants themselves participated in the multicultural myth-making both for their own foundational narratives and to feel a sense of belonging to Australia. At the same time, they continued to remember the difficulties of life at Bonegilla and the difficulties of settlement. This is what she described as ‘Bonegilla’s public multi-vocality’ which is an ongoing process.

Making and rejecting ‘others’

At the same time as some local and regional museums were attempting to include migrant stories and objects relating to culturally diverse people in their region, other museums were being established in order to reassert a homogenous British dominated pioneering identity. In 1985, academic Donald Horne visited the regional Queensland town of Longreach where the $6 million

298 *ibid.*, p.64.
299 *ibid.*, p.80.
The privately run Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame was being constructed. The man who led him to the site remarked ‘[w]ith all these...migrants around...people are forgetting the true Australian national identity’. Unlike Horne, John Fitzgerald did not see this museum’s creation so much as a rejection of migrants, but as a rejection of those migrants who settled in the big cities and did not choose the physical hard work of rural life. By the time Fitzgerald wrote his 2001 article, he could see attitudinal changes towards cultural diversity in regional and local museums and suggested that Chinese cooks and storekeepers and Afghan camel herders would soon be nominated for the Hall of Fame, based not on their ethnic identity but on their regional identity. ‘Regional heritage centres are discovering not ethnicity, but regional ethnicity’.

Likewise, the Fairfield City Museum, in western Sydney, launched in 1983 was founded as a reaction against increasing cultural diversity in the local area. In the years after its launch, it came under the control of the local council, was able to attract funding from private benefactors and the NSW State and Federal governments. It was also able to employ professional staff. Graham Hinton, museum director in 1990, stated that:

_The people who founded Fairfield City Museum Village have lived in the district most of their lives. They range from people who came there from England in the 1930s to people whose_

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303 ibid., p.61.
families have been there for five or six generations. ... The museum was founded because of a justifiable concern that their cultural heritage was being swamped.  

The post-World War II industrial development which employed successive waves of migrants had transformed Fairfield’s landscape, architecture and demographics. In 1995, 41% of Fairfield City residents were born in non-English speaking countries. Like Fitzgerald, Hinton believed that the local area’s history was an important base to work from in order to create an inclusive community centred museum. In doing so he resisted suggestions to turn Fairfield Museum into a ‘museum of migration’. Hinton’s role was to enable both old and new residents to ‘have a sense of permanence through continuity — a sense of place through a shared heritage’. This required the establishment of several community networks which led Hinton to believe that the museum had ‘built our bridges and we are now just starting to function as a museum which really takes account of the cultural diversity of its community’. 

305 ibid.
306 ibid.
307 ibid., p.291.
Challenges to the multicultural ‘us’

Chris Healy argued that the 1988 Bicentenary marked the endpoint of the phase of including previously ignored narratives because the inclusion of diverse narratives through public commemoration and heritage practices failed to provide a coherent replacement to the ‘pre-existing “myths” of Australian heritage’ that it critiqued. Indeed, he proposed in 2001, that Australia was in the midst of a heritage crisis.\textsuperscript{308} Not only was there a heritage crisis, multiculturalism had come under renewed attack. The 1996 election saw the rise of Pauline Hanson who used her Parliamentary maiden speech to voice anti-immigration and anti-Aboriginal land rights views. The conservative LNP government led by John Howard (1996-2007) attempted to change the public discourse of Australian culture from one based on a multicultural society and cultural diversity to one where British culture and values were dominant.\textsuperscript{309} Australian museums however, did not follow his lead. While museums in Australia continued to utilise both enrichment and rebirth narratives, they also expanded on them and introduced more critical views, sometimes to the consternation of the Federal government.

The NMA finally opened in 2001. One of the opening exhibitions was \textit{Horizons: The peopling of Australia since 1788}, which looked at migrants as workers. As explained by the exhibition’s senior curator, Ian McShane ‘[t]his

\textsuperscript{308} Healy, “Race Portraits”, p.279.
\textsuperscript{309} Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, p.49.
approach places migration in the broader scope of an individual’s life and provides an opportunity to identify some distinctive elements in the history of migration in Australia’. McShane, ‘Challenging or conventional?’, p. 129. *Horizons* was divided into five themes: Keeping Guard, Marketing Migrants, Coming to Work, Prisons Without Walls and the Peopling of Australia since 1788 and it looked at how migration shaped Australia and the role that governments have played, especially in regulating immigration. It closed in October 2007.311

McShane ensured that the exhibition’s direction and stance was different from previous migration exhibitions. The exhibition portrayed three types of immigration regulation — restriction, quarantine and censorship and showed how they impacted on each other as well as on individual lives. Many of the personal stories told in the exhibition, however, fitted either the ‘enriching’ or ‘rebirth’ narratives. There were other stories, though, which focused on the difficulties of settlement, especially highlighting the difficulties of seeking employment equivalent with one’s overseas qualifications. Visitors were encouraged to think about the regulations, why they were in place, who was allowed to enter and how this changed over time.312

Witcomb analysed the way that the Howard government shifted the premise of a multicultural society back to one based solely on British values and

310 McShane, ‘Challenging or conventional?’, p. 129.
312 Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, p.57.
shows that this political rhetoric prompted the 2003 Carroll review of exhibitions at the NMA. The review wanted the NMA to concentrate more on themes from the period from European discovery to Federation and recommended that these themes could be addressed in the *Horizons* gallery. The review recognised the importance of representing the different waves of migration and argued that ‘the National Museum must convey some sense of the kaleidoscope of experience and contributions of those immigrants occupying this “New World”’. However, *Horizons* was critiqued for implying that ‘Australians, once in the country, have, via their institutions, concertedly made laws and erected barriers designed to keep others out’. As Guy Hansen, formerly a curator at the NMA, has noted, the review did not challenge the facts of the exhibition but rather, whether it was appropriate to include this information in a national museum.

Meanwhile, the IM in Melbourne renewed one of its permanent galleries, now called *Getting In*, which opened in 2003. Like Horizons, *Getting In* provided a history of Australia’s immigration policies and encouraged visitors to understand how cultural diversity was managed in the colony of Victoria and in

313 *ibid.*, pp.49-50.
315 *ibid.*, p.25.
316 *ibid.*, p.36.
Australia through the White Australia policy up to the present day. It also engaged with contemporary debates around asylum seekers. Its interactive experiences included inviting visitors to undertake the Dictation Test which was administered as part of the White Australia Policy and a room where visitors could play the role of an immigration official who made decisions about potential migrants at various times in Australia’s history in accordance with the criteria of the day.318

Both the IM in Melbourne and the Migration Museum in Adelaide were also staging temporary exhibitions which took a political stand around contemporary migration issues. Sara Wills wrote about the political attacks on asylum seekers at this time highlighting the way that the IM used the motif of loss to garner empathy from its audiences through two temporary exhibitions In Search of Freedom: Refugee Journeys and Lost and Found.319 The Migration Museum in Adelaide held an exhibition Survivors of Torture and Trauma between 6 September and 30 November 2001 that explicitly stated that it ‘aimed to help people understand the experience of survivors, who have often come as refugees and faced difficulties in Australia also’.320 The NMA, the IM and the Migration Museum were entering into public debates with their respective

318 Goodnow, pp.42-43 and Hutchison & Witcomb, p.238.
320 Exhibition text quoted in Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, p.58.
exhibitions at this time; however, it was only the NMA that was attacked for doing so.321

Transnational approaches: Beyond the national ‘us’

The response from the NMA to the Carroll review mentioned above, was to redevelop three out of the five permanent galleries — the introductory film Circa (2009), the Australian Journeys gallery (2009) and Landmarks (2011). Transnationalism was current in scholarly circles at the time of the exhibition’s development and the Australian Journeys exhibition team was encouraged to read widely on the subject.322 The Australian Journeys brief emphasised the interest in place, ethno-history and transnationalism. The gallery showed Australia’s connections to the rest of the world through connections between particular places.323

This transnational approach in Australian Journeys has been read as an avoidance of taking a political stand and an avoidance of analysing the role that governments have played in migration and settlement in Australia.324 As Hutchinson and Witcomb put it, Australian Journeys

321 Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, p.58.
323 NMA File: 05/ 1390, Exhibition Brief, pp.2-5.
324 Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, p.62.
speaks to the global flow of people, to the hybrid nature of contemporary cultural identities and perhaps to a depiction of Australian society as cosmopolitan from its very beginnings. The frame of the nation and the problem of defining its cultural identity has all but disappeared.\textsuperscript{325}

Reflecting on the ‘self’ and relations with people like ‘us’, ‘others’ and ‘them’

Lastly, the IM’s latest long term exhibition which opened in 2011 \textit{Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours} explored what it meant to live in a culturally diverse society.\textsuperscript{326} I also worked on this exhibition and its aim was to encourage the exploration and discussion of personal rather than national identity. There was more emphasis on youth, second generation migrant experiences and the exhibition includes indigenous stories that are about identity in contemporary Australia. It was not about the impact of colonisation and settlement, as was previously the case in migration exhibitions. It was also explicitly not about migration history. The exhibition was clearly political in its stance and encouraged the exploration of prejudice and discrimination.\textsuperscript{327} \textit{Identity} began with an exploration of personal identity then moved on to ‘questions about how a society defines its identity by

\textsuperscript{325} \textit{ibid.}, p.238.
\textsuperscript{326} \textit{ibid.}, p.239.
defining boundaries between self and other’. Instead of leading to the validation of the self through recognition, this exhibition asked visitors to question their responses to racist situations.

Conclusion

Working on the Identity exhibition at the IM, deepened my interest in understanding what informs relations between people and what role museum collections and exhibitions can have in shaping these relations. This made Yuval-Davis’ concept of ‘identity relations’ particularly useful for teasing out the various possibilities and how they work. This concept, however, can be discerned in the way that museums have always operated. Public museums have long used geographical and cultural ‘others’ to inform and create the dominant group ‘us’. However, at times, these cultural ‘others’ could be included as ‘us’ — for instance when representing technology or the history of a place. After the introduction of multicultural policies, the states of Victoria, South Australia and NSW as well as the nation recast their collective identities to include non-British migrants and their descendants. In order to do this, they had to define and create ‘ethnicity’, reifying non-British ethnic groups, thereby making ‘ethnicity’ into the attraction for visitors. These ‘ethnic’ exhibitions and collections can be categorised in the same way that Barry York categorised ethnic histories.

328 Hutchison & Witcomb, p.240.
329 ibid.
These categories overlap and are not necessarily a chronological development. The first category was gathering information and telling the stories of particular groups —making the ethnic ‘others’. These include exhibitions and collecting programs at Victorian, South Australian, NSW, NMA and ANMM between the 1980s and 90s as well as many local and regional museums. The second category relates the historical experiences of particular groups to wider Australian society which all public and local museums have done in some way. This is the relationship between ‘us’ and ‘others’, often about making the multicultural ‘us’. The last category from York is the most recent development that is placing Australia in a world context through the study of the diverse societies where migrants have come from. This is represented by the turn to transnationalism with the *Australian Journeys* gallery at the NMA which attempts to go beyond the collective or national ‘us’.

Another category of museum exhibition is one that explicitly deals with ‘identity relations’ in Australia. Two examples of this are museums which try to break down the ‘us’ and ‘others’ relationship by co-producing exhibitions with members of ‘ethnic’ communities in an attempt at sharing power and the *Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours* exhibition which encourages self-reflection about ourselves and our own ‘identity relations’. For museum curators working with people from cultural backgrounds different to their own, then, it is worthwhile finding out who is positioned as ‘me’, ‘us’, ‘others’ or ‘them’ and why? Who is included and who is excluded? Through three case studies, my dissertation will explore these questions in some detail.
Chapter 3: Approaches and methodology

Multiculturalism as a bipartisan policy involves ... the principle of using the authority of the state to promote diversity and equality within it. In practice, this means the use of public funds to foster cultural identity or the sense of belonging and attachment to particular ways of living associated with the historical experiences of a particular group of people.\textsuperscript{331}

Collected objects are possessed of a kind of freedom, a poetic licence, which gives them transforming power across this world. They can help to construct the relationships between ‘I’ and ‘me’ which create individual identity, between the individual and others, and between the individual and the finite world of time and space.\textsuperscript{332}

Jerzy Zubrzycki, an Australian sociologist with a keen interest in immigration and multiculturalism influenced the development of multicultural policy in Australia. He also directed the Migrant Heritage Collection project at the NMA between 1986 and 1992. His quotation above describes how, from the

\textsuperscript{332} Pearce, pp.176-77.
1970s onwards, Australian governments used ‘public funds’ to promote cultural diversity more broadly in Australian society to ‘foster cultural identity or the sense of belonging’ of particular groups of people. Museums, through their exhibitions, collections and public programs, were one of the institutions that have accepted ‘public funds’ from governments for these purposes. As shown in the previous chapter, the scholarly writing on Australian museums and cultural diversity primarily referred to museum exhibitions from the 1980s onwards that intentionally represent histories of migration and settlement in Australia and the stories of people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This dissertation instead focuses primarily on the processes of collecting and the relationships between the ‘source’ community or individual and the museum and seeks to examine these processes both before and after the formal introduction of multicultural policy in 1978.

Zubrzycki’s theoretical thinking around multiculturalism also directly influenced multicultural policy as it was introduced by the Federal Government in 1978. In a submission to the Federal Government’s Green Paper on ‘Immigration Policies and Australia’s Population’ on behalf of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (AEAC), Zubrzycki defined multiculturalism as follows: ‘What we believe Australia should be working towards is not a oneness, but a unity, not a similarity, but a composite, not a melting pot but a voluntary bond of dissimilar people sharing a common political and institutional structure.’

Zubrzycki outlined in his submission was the desire for the integration of people from different cultures into Australian society while respecting their differences where those differences were compatible with the ‘dominant Australian culture’.\textsuperscript{334} He viewed multicultural policy as a way for governments to manage cultural diversity within the current ‘political and institutional structure’ which was derived from British political and institutional structures. This definition of multicultural policy and its implementation in Australian society is revealed in an analysis of the ways that the material culture of culturally diverse communities has been represented in Australian museums since the 1980s.

Central to those representations are collections of objects. As Susan Pearce, a museologist interested in material culture argued, collected objects are linked with concepts of identity both for individuals and for groups. They also help to ‘construct the relationships’ between people and ‘between the individual and the finite world of time and space’ as we see in the second quotation above. She also argued that the ‘ability to make things and the ability to say things... stand at the roots of human culture’.\textsuperscript{335} The ‘European tradition’ which Pearce described in her book \textit{On Collecting} can also be applied to collecting around cultural diversity in Australia in the colonial and post-colonial contexts as the dominant culture and institutions, since 1788, are primarily derived from Britain. In her book she investigated

\begin{footnote}{334} \textit{ibid.}, Part A. \end{footnote}

\begin{footnote}{335} Pearce, p.14. \end{footnote}
collecting as a set of things which people do, as an aspect of individual and social practice which is important in public and private life as a means of constructing the way in which we relate to the material world and so build up our own lives.  

In this study, I place collecting as an ‘individual and social practice’ both inside and outside the institution of the museum in order to reveal individual and collective constructions of identity — particularly as a form of relations between the individual and collective selves and others and thus as a praxis that embodies the politics of belonging. This means that I understand the work of collections as being concerned with memory, with the politics of identity and belonging, as well as embodying the feelings and emotional landscapes of those involved in shaping the collections and its meanings. In order to explore these aspects of objects and collections I have developed an explanatory framework for this dissertation that includes the concepts of memory, identity, belonging, relationality and agency.

Identity

Here, I turn to the theorization of identity as well as the relationship between identity and material culture. There are three aspects to identity according to sociologists and social psychologists: the first is social or objective

336 ibid., p.4.
identity which refers to the various groups individuals belong to, e.g. gender, class or race; the second aspect is Self or subjective identity which refers to an individual’s personality traits, personal features and preferences and the third is Ego identity which refers to the feeling that an individual knows who they are, how they ‘fit in’, and provides them with ‘a sense of stability and continuity that helps sustain their outlooks and actions’. In reality, though, separating these aspects of identity is difficult. According to Ian Woodward, the expressive capacity of objects enables individuals to articulate parts of their self-identity through material engagements. ‘Objects do “social work”’. They can signify a person’s wealth, occupation, participation in a recreational activity or a cultural group for instance — all aspects of social identity. Objects can also relate to subjective identity through the personal, emotional and cultural meanings that people attach to them. This means that objects can facilitate interpersonal relations as well as enable individuals to act upon themselves. Often, it is the possession of an object, rather than its qualities, which is important for identity work.

How then, does identity and the relationship between identity and material culture work in culturally diverse societies? Stuart Hall argued that identity should be understood as a “production” that is never complete and is

338 ibid., p.135.
339 ibid.
always constituted within, not outside, representation’. In the context of the mass migrations and increasing globalisation of the modern world, and in particular, his own experience as a Jamaican living in Britain, he described two views of ‘cultural identity’. The first is one ‘which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common’. This way of thinking about cultural identity ‘played a critical role in all the post-colonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world’. This was also the kind of cultural identity represented in many of the Australian public museum exhibitions about migration in the 1980s and 1990s as shown in the previous chapter. The second way of thinking about cultural identity is related to the first but recognises both the many points of similarity but also the ‘critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute “what we really are”; or rather — since history has intervened — “what we have become”...Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of “becoming” as well as of “being”’. It is through the second meaning of cultural identity that the trauma of ‘the colonial experience’ can be understood as the process through which Indigenous people become ‘black’ people in both places of origin and diaspora and, as argued by Hall, positioned as the inferior ‘other’. This understanding of cultural identity, therefore, is also about power relations. There is also difference within as well as difference outside the self as

341 ibid.
342 ibid.
343 ibid., p.225.
cultural identities are unstable and always involve a ‘positioning’. There is always a politics of identity and as Hall states ‘identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render “outside”, to abject. Every identity has at its “margin”, an excess, something more’.

**Nira Yuval-Davis on Identity**

More recently, sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis, sharply differentiated ‘between identity and identity politics, describing the first as one analytical dimension in which belonging needs to be understood, and the second as a specific type of project of the politics of belonging’. Yuval-Davis also noted that belonging also required boundaries so, like identity, it is both inclusive and exclusive. She positioned theoretical conceptualisations of identity in relation to the concept of belonging and the politics of belonging as well as the schools of thought ‘that construct identity as a mode of narrative, a mode of performativity or as a dialogical practice’. By using identity as a narrative, as the theoretical framework, she was able to reveal ‘how identity signifiers operate in particular social settings, how they construct, contest and authorize different meanings’.

344 ibid., p.226.
346 Yuval-Davis, p.266.
347 ibid., p.262.
348 ibid., p.265.
Yuval-Davis used ‘participatory theatre as a sociological research tool’ to demonstrate ‘the multiplex ways that identity relationality works’. In this dissertation, I am using the processes of possessing and collecting objects in order to reveal some of the ways that ‘identity relationality works’.

Yuval-Davis understood identity ‘as specific forms of narratives regarding the self and its boundaries’. She countered Judith Butler’s argument in *Bodies that Matter* that all identities depend on exclusion with the work of Jessica Benjamin in *Shadow of the Other*, to point out that ‘by incorporating identifications into the notion of a subjective self, psychoanalysis has put into doubt the clear separation of self and non-self’. Yuval-Davis went on to argue that the in-between of ‘becoming’ of the dialogical approach to theorisations of identity also blur the total separation of the ‘self’ and ‘non-self’. Contrary to this however, is the psychoanalytical theorization of identity which also places importance on the moment that a baby or child recognises the separation of ‘self’ from the ‘m/other’. According to Yuval-Davis, Lacan argued that this is the ‘mirror stage’ where the mother or parental figure holds a mirror to face the child and the child recognises the difference between the ‘self’ and the ‘m/other’

349 *ibid.*
350 *ibid.*, p.272.
353 Yuval-Davis, pp.272-73.
354 *ibid.*, p.273.
as the ‘non-self’ which is fictitious because the moment is frozen in time and does not take into account the changing child.\textsuperscript{355} Yuval-Davis extended this idea by arguing that the mother embodied the mirror which teaches the child about sexual difference, and that this image also informs us about other embodied elements of social difference, such as ethnicity, race, class and age. She also argued that the need for ‘self understanding via the gaze of the Other’ comes about because ‘a person cannot reflect on her beginning (birth) or end (death)’ and that ‘identity narratives can... only be told to a person by others’. In this there is also ‘the desire to hear one’s story from others ... as central not only to constructions of identity but also to social relations’.\textsuperscript{356}

Once there is recognition that there is an ‘other’, the ‘self’ also needs to assess how and to what extent one is different from the ‘others’ as well as making a decision about how to treat those ‘others’. Recognition, Yuval-Davis argued, is a double-edged sword because both rejection and acceptance of ‘others’ is possible. Recognition also constructs boundaries between the self and constructions of ‘us’, ‘me/us’ and ‘them’. These relations are neither homogenous, nor are they necessarily mutual and they are continually shifting and contested depending on ‘power positionality’. Yuval-Davis described four sets of identity relations: ‘me and us’; ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘them’; ‘me’/‘us’ and


\textsuperscript{356} Yuval-Davis, p.274.
‘others’ and ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’. 357 She complicates the position of the ‘other’ or ‘otherness’ which post-colonial scholars such as Edward Said used in his research on the construction of marginality. 358 The term refers to everything that the centre or dominant ‘me’ wishes to deny or repress in themselves. Yuval-Davis’ argument is that ‘[e]xcept for specific historical conditions and political projects, the realm of “not me” is much more multiplex and multilayered, in which different “not me’s” go about their business without necessarily constituting a relational role, let alone an antagonistic role vis-à-vis the self’. 359

Identity Relations and Belonging

In this section, I will outline the ‘identity relations’ which Yuval-Davis describes while interweaving relevant aspects of Australian scholarship on multiculturalism, other theories of belonging, and the processes of collecting and object biography.

‘Me’ and ‘us’

Yuval-Davis described the relations between ‘self’ and ‘us’ as being a ‘sense of belonging, of feeling at home’ which reflects

357 ibid., pp.274-75.
359 Yuval-Davis, p.279.
a permeable boundary between ‘self’ and ‘us’, that by
definition is not imagined as exclusionary. There can be
occasions in which the crucial boundaries for identity
construction are those around ‘us’ rather than those around
the individual self, and the boundaries between ‘me’ and ‘us’
can even disappear altogether.\(^{360}\)

From a psychological viewpoint ‘belonging is an internal affective or evaluative
feeling, or perception’.\(^{361}\) This ‘sense of belonging’ is ‘a person’s experience of
being valued or important to an external referent and experiencing a fit between
self and that referent’.\(^{362}\) This is the ‘sense of belonging’ which Zubrzycki
referred to in his 1977 submission *Australia as a Multicultural Society*.

> One of man’s basic needs is a sense of belonging. The more
secure we feel in one particular social context, the more free
we are to explore our identity beyond it. Ethnic pluralism can
help us overcome or prevent the insecurity, homogenisation
and loss of personal identity of mass society.\(^{363}\)

Zubrzycki wanted people from culturally diverse backgrounds to feel ‘a sense of
belonging’ both to their own ethnic group and to Australian society for the sake

\(^{360}\) *ibid.*, pp.275-76.

\(^{361}\) BMK Hagerty, J Lynch-Sauer, KL Patusky, M Bouwsema & P Collier, ‘Sense of Belonging: A Vital

\(^{362}\) Yuval-Davis, pp.275-76.

\(^{363}\) AEAC, *Australia as a Multicultural Society*, p.17.
of their own mental health and sense of self-identity. This is related to the sociological meaning of belonging which ‘connotes membership in groups of systems’. Hage labels this ability to feel at home and ‘benefit from the nation’s resources’ as passive belonging and it is the first mode of belonging to the collective nation. However, the psychological and sociological forms of belonging are not necessarily stable as Elspeth Probyn noted. She suggested that ‘belonging expresses a desire for more than what is, a yearning to make skin stretch beyond individual needs and wants’. It is often this ‘longing to belong’ as Probyn has termed this desire, that encourages people to engage in the politics of belonging, especially in the processes of inclusion and exclusion. According to psychologists, there are two other aspects of belonging. These are the physical sense involving ‘the possession of objects, persons, or places’ and the spiritual sense where ‘belonging depicts a metaphysical relationship with a being or place that exists at a universal level’.

Yuval-Davis provided two extreme examples of these ‘me’/‘us’ relations as being a soldier willing to die for his homeland and a parent willing to die for the survival of their child where the identity narrative of ‘self’ is only ‘constructed in relation to and as part of the familial or the national “us”’.

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364 Yuval-Davis, pp.275-76.
365 Hage, White Nation, pp.45-46.
367 ibid., p.8.
368 Yuval-Davis, pp.275-76.
369 ibid., p.276.
identity narrative of the self includes the death of the individual ‘rather than the contemplated threatened end of the collective self’.370

This set of relationships, based as it is on the mortality of human beings, reveals the emotional attachments and agency of individuals and collectives in possessing and collecting objects. It is ‘the material nature of objects [which] means that they, and they alone, have the capacity to carry the past physically into the present’.371 This enables objects to be collected, preserved and passed down through family and community generations or into museums. For some people, objects and collections can ‘create a sense of immortality, of life extended beyond the individual’s death’.372 This explains the importance of family heirlooms that embody this set of relationships. These objects and collections reflect the ‘permeable boundary between “self” and “us”’ which can also extend to ‘imagined communities’373 such as those based on location, communities of interest or nations. This is why some individuals offer their personal or family collection(s) to museums which

are the modern representatives, of deep-rooted
preoccupations in the European psyche which revolve around
the capacity of material to create relationships between gods
and men, the sacred significance of relics, and the need for a

370 ibid.
371 Pearce, p.170.
372 ibid., p.248.
building in which sacred wealth can be set aside on behalf of the community.\textsuperscript{374}

As noted by Ian Woodward above, objects can mediate interpersonal relations as well as enable individuals to act upon themselves.\textsuperscript{375} They are created and used, in part, because of that desire to belong and become a part of an ‘us’. They can include objects that were made and used by individuals who felt connected to and wanted to promote their own interests and culture, including when they perceived that their interests and culture are under threat which leads to the next set of ‘identity relations’.

‘Me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’

This set of relation is the most extreme and negative form of ‘othering’. According to Yuval-Davis, the ‘dichotomous, zero-sum way of constructing a boundary between ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘them’ is, indeed, characteristic of situations of extreme conflict and war in which an individual’s fate is perceived, at least by hegemonic discourses of identity, to be closely bound with their membership of a particular collectivity’.\textsuperscript{376} An individual’s agency, value system, location within the collectivity and/or actions may be regarded as irrelevant by one or both sides and these degrading and exclusionary identity boundaries can also exist within

\textsuperscript{374} Pearce, p.249.
\textsuperscript{375} Woodward, p.135.
\textsuperscript{376} Yuval-Davis, p.276.
the psyche.\textsuperscript{377} This set of relations is built on the previous set, particularly on the ‘permeability’ between ‘me’ and ‘us’ which lead to Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’.\textsuperscript{378} This highlights the politics of belonging, in particular the practices of exclusion and demonstrates Hage’s second mode of national belonging which he calls ‘governmental belonging’. This involves

\begin{quote}
the belief that one has a right over the nation, involves the belief in one’s possession of the right to contribute (even if only by having a legitimate opinion with regard to the internal and external politics of the nation) to its management such that it remains ‘one’s home’.\textsuperscript{379}
\end{quote}

The kind of material culture that embodies these types of relationships often fall into the category of what Sharon MacDonald has called ‘difficult heritage’\textsuperscript{380} or what Pearce termed ‘deviant and sinister’.\textsuperscript{381} Collecting objects has to do with the desire to dominate and control — selecting, naming and classifying is an exercise of power. It is a political act. The position of power in these sorts of ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’ relationships changes depending on who possesses the object or collection. Pearce uses the collecting of Nazi

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{377} ibid., p.277.
\textsuperscript{378} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}.
\textsuperscript{379} Hage, \textit{White Nation}, p.46.
\textsuperscript{381} Pearce, p.195.
\end{footnotesize}
memorabilia as an example. If the collection forms part of a Jewish Museum’s collections it is used ‘as historical evidence of events which happened in the 1940s, in order to assert a moral conviction about the fundamentals of good and evil, and their implications for the future’.\footnote{ibid.} Whereas for a Nazi memorabilia collector

\begin{quote}
the issue appears as one not of ethics but of personal identity;
his relationship to his material is that of worshipper to relic,
who hopes that his possession will bring about the magical transformation of himself into something closer to his hero.\footnote{ibid.}
\end{quote}

For people who inherit this ‘deviant and sinister’ material from a perpetrator or dominant-culture ancestor, without having the relationship of ‘worshipper to relic,’ it can be difficult to understand and come to terms with this material. This is what Tunbridge and Ashworth call ‘dissonant heritage’ which involves, in part, the psychological concept of ‘cognitive dissonance’ where a person simultaneously holds mutually inconsistent attitudes or whose behaviours and attitudes contradict each other. Usually a person will try to reduce that dissonance by adapting to an existing frame of reference.\footnote{Tunbridge & Ashworth, p.20.} When this existing frame of reference opens up a broader and more complex range of relations between people as in the next set of relations described below, there

\footnote{ibid.}
are difficulties in adapting. While the inheritors have the power of possession, it is not realistically possible for them ‘to assert a moral conviction about the fundamentals of good and evil’ without changing the relationship between the present ‘me’/ ‘us’ and their ancestral ‘me’/ ‘us’ to an ancestral ‘them’, effectively creating a temporal distance between them. This can be problematic because it sustains the ‘cognitive dissonance’ rather than enabling people to come to terms with their difficult histories. This will be explored further in chapters four and five.

'Me’/ ‘Us’ and the many ‘Others’

Yuval-Davis found in her study that in most everyday situations identity narratives did not require such dichotomous divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’. People’s relations were complex ‘with a whole range of distinctions and relations between people, from close identification and association, to total indifference, as well as rejection and conflict’. 385

This is the broadest set of relations, encompassing both sets of relations described above. These relations are represented in a broad range of objects and collections relating to cultural diversity found in Australian museums. Historically and up to the present, this set of relations is mostly but not wholly represented

385 Yuval-Davis, p.277.
by ethnographic or anthropological collections and culturally specific art collections where the ‘me’/ ‘us’ learns about itself from viewing ‘others’.

These relations in a multicultural society can also involve Hage’s ‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’ where ‘cultural spaces of inclusion’ are opened ‘as a substitute’ for ‘inclusion in mainstream political processes’.386 We can see this play out in existing museum collections as well as the creation and display of migration collections and specific migration museums after the introduction of multicultural policy in 1978.

This set of relations reflect the agency of museums (positioned as ‘us’) in creating collections and exhibitions specifically to explain and mediate between the many ‘others’ and ‘me’/ ‘us,’ as well as the agencies of the individual or culturally specific collectives who create, offer and withhold objects and collections from public and local museums and collaborate with them because there is ‘the desire to hear one’s story from others,’387 whether those ‘others’ are like ‘us’ or not.

For instance, the Museum of Northern Arizona exerted power over the creative direction of a number of Hopi silversmiths, potters and textile weavers over a period of about 120 years. By focusing on the relationships between the artisans and museum, the specific details of the museum’s directions and advice are revealed as are the ways that individual artisans asserted their own identities

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387 Yuval-Davis, p.274.
through choice of design and hallmarking. As time moved on, the museum formed more influential relationships with buyers of Hopi arts and crafts by advising buyers about the background to designs and how to care for the artefacts.388

The subjects of study may also withhold particular kinds of objects or demand the return of objects taken without permission. For instance, between 1895 and 1913 a study of catalogues of Papuan ethnographic material offered for sale in British auction houses found that most items were very ordinary objects used in everyday life. ‘Spiritual’ or ‘art’ objects were very rare, as were items used in traditional forms of exchange such as strings of shells commonly used as currency. As Robin Torrence has argued, ‘[t]he withholding of objects not only signals indigenous agency at work but also, more importantly, provides insights into how local communities viewed and interacted with westerners’.389

This study investigates the ways in which the museum and both the minority and majority culture ‘self’ and ‘us’ operate in this network of relations in a culturally diverse Australia. I also touch on the way that an emigration museum or museum of the diaspora in the country of origin also collect around


and represent these relations where the museum and the diasporic and returnee identity narratives see each other as both ‘us’ and ‘other’.

‘Me’ and the transversal ‘us’

According to Yuval-Davis, ‘transversal politics developed as an alternative to identity politics and are often aimed at establishing a collective “us”, across borders and boundaries of membership, based on solidarity with regard to common emancipatory values’.\textsuperscript{390} They are based on the understanding that the world is seen differently from each positioning, so that dialogue between people from different positionings is necessary to approach ‘truth’ or a more complete view of the world. Differences are important and they are contained but not replaced by equality. Differences in social, political and economic power are respected. Transversal politics also differentiates between social location, identity and values. ‘The boundaries of transversal dialogue are those of common values rather than those of common positioning or identifications.’\textsuperscript{391} This is also a way around the ‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’ that plague relations between ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘others’ outlined above.

The material culture collected around this set of relations in Australian museums can be found in a wide range of collections including local museums and the social history, ethnographic and technology collections of public

\textsuperscript{390} Yuval-Davis, pp.277-78.
\textsuperscript{391} ibid., p.278.
museums, although the transversal ‘us’ may not always be recognised as such. Sometimes this material culture has been collected around particular themes such as ‘work’ or ‘political protests’ or the collections relate to particular places or events where people from different positions, including class, ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds, have worked together for common goals.

In order to illustrate how I understand these different ‘identity relations’, I have drawn them as a series of concentric circles moving outwards from the position of ‘me’, to ‘us’ and ‘others’ (Fig.1). The dotted line indicates that the position of ‘others’ includes the position of ‘them’ which is the position furthest away from ‘me’.
Figure 1: Diagram of Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’.

Methodology: ‘Things in motion’

So far I have discussed how the concepts of belonging, identity and relationality work in relation to material culture. I now need to look at this relationship from the other side — how can objects inform social relations?

As Pearce argues, since objects are physical, they also have specific life spans which make them exist in ways that are different from other social processes. Some objects
are with us and of us in a particularly intimate fashion which is approached otherwise only by close members of the family or particularly favoured pets. They are woven into the fabric of our lives, a common simile which... makes its point precisely by linking our lives with our material goods. 392

This makes object biography a useful tool to ‘address the way social interactions involving people and objects create meaning’ and to understand how these meanings ‘change and are renegotiated through the life of an object’393 as well as during the life of a person and/or an institution. In tracing the biography of an object one asks questions similar to those asked about people, for instance, ‘[w]here does it come from and who made it?’; ‘[h]ow does the thing’s use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?’394 Objects, like people, can have many different biographies but a culturally informed biography looks at how to contextualise the object within the systems that gave it meaning. Such biographies would view an object ‘as a culturally constructed identity, endowed with culturally specific meanings and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories’. 395

392 Pearce, p.170.
395 ibid., p.68.
Such an approach recognises that objects accumulate histories and meanings through space and time both before and after entering the museum for collection and/or display and can be better understood by analysing the processes and cycles of production, acquisition, exchange, exhibition, and deaccession as a whole.

According to the anthropologist Alfred Gell, the agency of objects is ‘exclusively relational: for any agent, there is a patient, and conversely for any patient there is an agent’. 396 Agency is related to any transaction where one agent is acting with respect to another agent; and the ‘patient’ is momentarily the object or person ‘which is causally affected by the agent’s action’. However, the ‘patient’ is not entirely passive as the concept of agency implies the overcoming of resistance. 397 While Gell’s theory is mainly applied to art objects, it can also be applied to non-art objects because the origins of any object lie in its manufacture and through its manufacture we can discover something about its maker. Manufactured objects are ‘caused’ by their makers. So in this instance a ‘manufactured object, is in the “patient” position with its maker, who is an agent, and without whose agency it would not exist’. 398

An object also has a relationship with its intended audience or ‘destination’. Objects are made for a reason and in the course of their lives may

397 *ibid.*, pp.22-23.
398 *ibid.*, p.23.
have many ‘destinations’ and audiences. Its original or intended ‘destination’ can be incorporated as a part of its current, non-intended destination. ³⁹⁹ These different audiences are in social relationships with the object either as ‘patients’ in that the object causally affects them in some way (e.g. triggering personal memories and/ or emotions) or as ‘agents’ because without them, the object would not have come into existence (e.g. they have caused it, collected it, deaccessioned it and put it on display). Objects can continue to ‘live’ and affect people who come into contact with them throughout their lives whether they are held in personal or institutional collections.

One of the ways that objects can affect people who come into contact with them is by triggering nostalgic feelings. Hage argues ‘nostalgic feelings are affective building blocks...used by migrants to engage in home-building in the here and now.’ ⁴⁰⁰ Hage went on to note that nostalgic feelings are a part of everybody’s efforts to ‘guide home building in the present’. ⁴⁰¹ These feeling of nostalgia are experientially triggered by an absence — what Hage calls ‘negative intimation’ or by a presence — a ‘positive intimation’. ⁴⁰² The former is ‘triggered by a direct experience of lack of homely feeling of familiarity... and lack of communality’. ⁴⁰³ It is depressive and can lead to homesickness. The latter is

³⁹⁹ ibid., p.24.
⁴⁰¹ ibid.
⁴⁰² ibid., p.421.
⁴⁰³ ibid.
triggered when a person encounters ‘an object that creates both a yearning for a past homely experience associated with it and, in that very process, a feeling that the object was lacking.’  

404 In Hage’s example, it is a singer’s voice that ‘stands in for a totality that does not and never has existed but is imagined as a homely totality from afar’. 405 My focus, however, is on the ways in which physical objects can offer hints of this imagined homely experience in the past. Rather than a desire to return to the place of origin, this kind of positively experienced nostalgia ‘is a desire to promote the feeling of being there here’. Thus, people use objects to produce positive intimations of nostalgia in order to ‘foster intimations of homely feelings’ as they are imagined to have been experienced in the place of origin. 406 People may continue to uphold particular laws, surround themselves with socially and culturally recognisable practices, sounds, languages and objects for example. The making and collecting of objects is also a part of this process. Objects, then, if we follow Gell’s reasoning can be both ‘triggers’ of these nostalgic feelings and memories as well as ‘products’ of these nostalgic feelings and memories.

According to Lynn Abrams ‘[m]emories are formed by means of a neurological process in the brain but thereafter, as memories are accessed and narrated, they are subject to social influences.’ 407 Abrams argued that memory

404 ibid.
405 ibid.
406 ibid.
narratives are used by people to construct a sense of self in relation to the social world.\textsuperscript{408} Thus personal or individual memory, where an individual reconstructs events or episodes in one’s life with the belief that they have been personally experienced can be linked with collective memory which refers to memories of an event or experience shared by a group. There is also popular memory where everyone is involved in the production and shaping of memory of events or experiences.\textsuperscript{409}

Writing about the politics of memory with regard to Vichy France in the post-war period, Henry Rousso coined the phrases ‘vectors of the past’ and ‘vector of memory’\textsuperscript{410} to describe the ways that collective and popular memories are transmitted between people across time and space. He describes four types of vectors of memory: Official carriers — which are local or national government organised ceremonies, memorials and monuments that carry unified memories resulting from compromises between several groups. This can include court proceedings. Organisational carriers — groups of people associated with the original event or experience and ‘others who join organisations for the purpose of preserving and unifying the personal memories of group members’.\textsuperscript{411} The people in these groups produce more specific memories of the past which Rousso argued are often more static over time. Cultural carriers — such as film

\textsuperscript{408} ibid., p.90.
\textsuperscript{409} ibid., p.94.
\textsuperscript{411} ibid., p.220.
and literature which transmit individualised views of the past and implicit rather
than explicit messages. Finally, scholarly carriers of memories reconstruct facts
with the purpose of interpreting them. These are often histories which influence
school curricula and textbooks which are the main transmitters of memories
between generations. As demonstrated in the three case studies, objects can
be used as mnemonic tools through any of these four types of carriers of
memory because, as Pearce argues, objects have a physical presence and ‘always
retain an intrinsic link with the original context from which they came... no
matter how much they may be repeatedly reinterpreted’.

According to Susan Crane, when objects are collected by museums they
become ‘valued and remembered institutionally’ and when they are displayed
they become ‘incorporated into the extra-institutional memory of the museum
visitors’. This is because ‘museums represent an organizational principle for
the content of cultural identity and scientific knowledge’ and people have a
‘shared “museal consciousness” that understands the significance of collecting,
ordering, representing, and preserving information in the way that museums
do.’ Museums, then, are also carriers of memory — government museums are
official and often, scholarly carriers while community-managed museums are
organisational carriers. However, as Crane argued, the interaction between the

413 Pearce, p.14.
414 S Crane, ‘Introduction’ in S Crane (ed.), Museums and memory, Stanford University Press,
Stanford, 2000, p.2.
415 ibid.
museum and individual visitor memories ‘in the production of personal expectations and collective representations’, is ‘an ongoing, reciprocal mediation’.\(^{416}\)

Memory making and collecting is carried out at the intersection of the past and the present to create individual and collective meanings. It is also at this point that ideology and politics come into play. Objects have symbolic value. Pearce asked, ‘[h]ow are material values created? And what do they mean for people, institutions and society?’\(^{417}\) According to James Clifford, since the beginning of the twentieth century, objects collected from non-Western sources were divided into two categories: cultural artifacts valued for scientific reasons or art works valued for aesthetic reasons.\(^{418}\)

\textit{The plural, anthropological definition of culture (lower-case c with the possibility of a final s) emerged as a liberal alternative to racist classifications of human diversity. It was a sensitive means for understanding different and dispersed ‘whole ways of life’ in a colonial context of unprecedented global interconnection.}\(^{419}\)

\(^{416}\)ibid., p.7.

\(^{417}\)Pearce, p.285.


\(^{419}\)ibid., p.234.
While ‘culture’ became relativised, less elitist and less Eurocentric, it still maintained some assumptions from older definitions. It was seen as ‘enduring, traditional, structural (rather than contingent, syncretic, historical)’. At the same time, art as a concept was broadened to include some non-Western created objects, which were seen to be ‘equal in aesthetic and moral value with the greatest Western masterpieces’. Other objects, such as mass produced commodities, souvenirs and tourist art were less systematically valued, sometimes finding a place in displays of ‘technology’ or ‘folklore’. Clifford designed a ‘map of a historically specific, contestable field of meanings and institutions’ to demonstrate how objects are located within and travel between four semantic zones — ‘The Art-Culture System’. Pearce adapted this system which offers, ... the sketch of a politics of aesthetics, implicit in the words like ‘art’, ‘masterpiece, and ‘cultured,’ ...an idea of a politics of knowledge, implicit in the words like ‘authentic’, ‘real’, and known. These together add up to a politics of value as this is presented in the realm of objects and collections. At the same time it can be read as an image of ‘us’ and ‘them’ where ‘we’ are normal, authentic, important and so forth, and

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420 ibid., p.235.
421 ibid., p.235.
422 ibid., pp.223-24.
‘they’ are odd, lack proper roots, uncultured and so on. It is... a mechanism for endorsing distance and difference.\textsuperscript{423}

Pearce’s adaptation of Clifford’s ‘Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2) demonstrates the value system of material culture when collected in the European ‘tradition’. It consists of four quadrants divided into the authentic masterpiece, authentic artefact, non-authentic (spurious) masterpiece and non-authentic artefact that structure ‘our notions about quality and rubbish, art and non-art, and knowledge and non-knowledge’.\textsuperscript{424}

\textsuperscript{423} Pearce, p.267.
\textsuperscript{424} Ibid., p.288.
The system indicates the politics of value in relation to museums with the top half of the image consisting of the words ‘art’, ‘masterpiece’ and ‘authentic’ and the bottom half, assumed to be outside the museum, consisting of the words ‘not-art’, ‘non-authentic’ and ‘uncultured’. Implicit in the system are the ways in which we construct our relationships to difference, both spatial and temporal.

*This construction of self and other, or home and exotic, begins for both time and space with “me”, and gradually moves out to a final “them” and a distant “past” ...both notions of distance encompass a fault line, above which the European “I” acknowledges a certain kinship or familiarity (in both senses) and below which much becomes truly different.*

The relations outlined by Yuval-Davis, between ‘me’ and ‘us’; ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’ and ‘me’/ ‘us’ and the many ‘others’ as well as the ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’ are encompassed by Pearce’s system. Lastly, the whole system ‘is in perpetual motion at every level of detail’ and objects and collections can and do move between quadrants. This accords with the view of the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai who noted that ‘from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the

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425 *ibid.*, pp.288-89.
426 *ibid.*, p.289.
things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context’ so that ‘[i]t is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculation that enliven things’.427 This is what this dissertation will do through the analysis of three object case studies as the objects that travel between museums and culturally specific communities and individuals also move between the quadrants in the object value system outlined by Pearce. They can thus be seen as mediators of contact between of individuals and groups from culturally specific communities, museums, governments and visitors.

Using object biography and assembling the connections between objects and people, institutions and policies can also reveal the ways that people belonging to marginalised or minority groups have agency in these relationships. Marie Louise Pratt, a literary theorist, uses the term ‘transculturation’, ‘to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture’.428 She goes on to ask ‘What do people on the receiving end of empire do with metropolitan modes of representation? How do they appropriate them? How do they talk back? What materials can one study to answer those questions?’429 This study aims to

429 ibid., pp.7-8.
reveal some of the ways in which ‘subordinated or marginal groups’ respond to institutional inclusion and exclusion of their stories, objects or perspectives.

By focusing on objects and their changes in meaning through time, my project also reconstructs a history of contact between some museums and culturally diverse communities in Australia. I use Clifford’s description of museums as ‘contact zones’ where there are ‘a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull. ... The museum, usually located in a metropolitan city, is the historical destination for the cultural productions it lovingly and authoritatively salvages, cares for, and interprets’. Clifford builds on Pratt’s concept of ‘contact zones’, which she describes as ‘the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict’.

This kind of approach is similar to that of Conal McCarthy who traced ‘how the meaning of Māori things in New Zealand museums has been transformed at different times, shifting from curio, to specimen, to artefact, to various forms of art, to taonga’. Through concentrating on the objects as they are displayed, he explored the change in the position of Māori people and the changing social context of display from exotic spectacle to ‘a showcase for

431 Pratt, p.8.
While McCarthy focused only on objects that are on display, I have used object biography which enabled me to follow them from their creation to their collection, display and even disposal. This enabled me to examine how the meaning of objects which depict or originate from culturally diverse people in Australia has changed in Australian museums and reflect changes in Australian society from the complexity of race relations in the colonies during the nineteenth century, through the White Australia policy, post-World War II assimilation policies to multiculturalism in contemporary society. In the section below, I describe the research methods and the choice of case studies which illuminate these relationships between ‘self’, ‘us’, ‘others’ and ‘them’.

**Research Methods**

In order to capture the movement of objects across time, space and multiple actors, I have chosen to take a case study approach which helps me to place some boundaries on my analysis of objects in motion. My study is focused on three object case studies and the network of actors with which they come into contact which include human beings, social organisations and systems such as law enforcement agencies and the military, and museums and a university as collectors or keepers of material culture as well as the knowledge systems that underpin them. The Australian museums are national, state, and local/

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433 *ibid.*, p.2.
community institutions across two states and one territory — New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. One case study also included an Australian university archive (Music Archive of Monash University) and another case study included an international private museum (Latvians Abroad - museum and research centre). This range of collecting ‘actors’ enables the study to reveal personal and emotional processes of identity formation and sense of belonging that arise from collecting as a social process as well as institutional and collective processes, exploring both the politics and poetics of these processes.

All three case studies involve the ‘identity relations’ described by Yuval-Davis and the relational spectrum, which, as described by Pearce involves a movement from ‘me’ to ‘us’ to ‘them’ from the dominant British-European perspective of Australian museums and society. The case studies reveal the ways in which people who are ‘others’ or the minority ‘me’/‘us’, initiate and reject relations with mainstream institutions and the dominant population and why they might set up their own museums. The case studies also involve ideas about authenticity, and disciplinary boundaries or knowledges. The three case studies in this dissertation represent different kinds of collections in Australian museums where objects relating to culturally diverse people can be found — historical collections, particularly those relating to local or pioneering history, which were formed before the introduction of multicultural policy; ethnographic collections and social history collections formed at the same time as or after the introduction of multicultural policy, in public museums. They range across ‘difficult heritage’ or contested histories, through to the celebration of
multiculturalism and more recent attempts at telling transnational stories, diplomatic relations between Australia and other countries and the influences of international museums on identities carried to Australia by migrants and carried back to the country of origin by descendants and interpreted in museums there.

For each case study I interviewed relevant staff — both past and present — as well as relevant community members. This means that recent periods, from the 1990s onwards, are better documented. Permission was sought from institutions to interview community members associated with the object in the relevant case studies. Also, I utilised the relevant museum archives and collection database records as well as primary and secondary source material held in the South West Regional Library in Young, State Library of Victoria, State Library of New South Wales, National Library of Australia, Monash University Archives and the University of Melbourne Archives. The further back in time, the more limited the records were.

**Selection criteria for the case study objects and institutions**

1. Objects and collections needed to have entered an Australian museum (public or local) collection at some point in their history.
2. There was documentation or people to interview (from the museum and relevant individuals) for all objects.
3. Objects were placed in different types of collections in Australian collecting institutions.
4. Objects were collected at key points in the lifetime of each institution.

5. Some objects were loaned to other institutions.

6. Some objects were deaccessioned or permanently transferred to another institution.

7. All objects were displayed at some point, preferably more than once.

8. As a group, objects were created at different times between the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

9. Objects were created and/or used by people from different cultural backgrounds in Australia.

10. All object biographies needed to involve two or more sets of Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’ — ‘me’ and ‘us’, ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘me’/‘us’ and many others and/or ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’.

Criteria 1 - 4 were practical considerations and also provided the scope and some limitations to my study. There needed to be some documentation available for this study to take place. Some outcomes were limited with older objects because of gaps in the available documentation. I did not analyse objects that museums rejected or were unable to collect. I also did not analyse objects that people from culturally diverse backgrounds retained in private homes without ever interacting with a museum. By including a range of collection types in different institutions and objects collected at different times, I was able to analyse the ways that disciplinary boundaries and histories affected the interpretation of the objects. The range of objects selected under criteria 5-7
also enabled me to create detailed object biographies that illustrated changes of interpretation and interactions between institutions and people of the relevant cultural group with the same object over time and in different institutions. Criteria 8 and 9 were necessary to ensure a broad variety of objects originating from different cultural groups and time periods in Australia. Criterion 10 was necessary to answer all of the research questions (see below), and especially the first.

**Research Questions**

1. How have people and museums used objects to mediate Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’ — ‘me’/ ‘us’, ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘me’/ ‘us’ and many ‘others’ and ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’?

2. How have public and local museums understood and interacted with people from diverse cultural backgrounds?

3. What motivates people from culturally diverse backgrounds to donate to, collaborate or not collaborate with a public or local museum?

4. What do the answers to these questions tell us about the relationships between material culture, museums and Australian society?

The case studies and the ways that they meet the selection criteria are in the tables below. A more detailed discussion of the case studies follows.
### Case Studies and the Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Studies</th>
<th>Source material</th>
<th>Collection type</th>
<th>Displayed</th>
<th>Lent</th>
<th>Deaccessioned</th>
<th>Date of collection by institution</th>
<th>Date of creation</th>
<th>Cultural background</th>
<th>Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861 ‘Roll up, Roll Up No Chinese’ banner — LFFM, Young, NSW.</td>
<td>Archival documentation, LFFM and State Library NSW; interviews with museum volunteers, local residents and Chinese Australian community members.</td>
<td>Historical collection, local museum.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1964 Young Historical Society</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Chinese and European (e.g. British, Irish, German, Scottish, American, Australian-born)</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamelan Digul orchestra — NMV and Monash University, Melbourne Victoria.</td>
<td>Archival sources at MV archives, Monash University, NMA. Interview with relevant staff member at Monash University.</td>
<td>Ethnographic collection, public museum and university.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NMA 2009 and ANMM 2015</td>
<td>1976 NMV to MAMU</td>
<td>1946 NMV; 1976 Monash University</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Latvian weaving looms— MV, Melbourne, Victoria.</td>
<td>Archival records, MV. Interviews with current and past staff at MV and the LAMRC, Latvia and donor.</td>
<td>Social history collection formed after 1978, public museum.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No, in Australia; Yes, in Latvia</td>
<td>2010 – Loom 1 deaccessioned to the LAMRC, Latvia</td>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>Latvian</td>
<td>‘me’/ ‘us’; ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’; ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘others’.</td>
<td></td>
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Case Studies and their Relationship to the Research Questions

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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Studies

1861 ‘Roll up, Roll Up, No Chinese’ banner — Lambing Flat Folk Museum, Young, NSW

This banner was created and used by European, American and Australian-born miners during the Lambing Flat anti-Chinese riots in 1861. The banner was kept by an Irish-born miner and passed down through his family before being sold to the Lambing Flat Folk Museum in 1964. The Museum has displayed the banner ever since. From the 1980s onwards, the museum and the Young Shire Council have had some engagement with the Chinese Consul, overseas Chinese and local Chinese Australians in relation to the creation of the Chinese Tribute Gardens (1997). In 2011, on the 150th anniversary of the riots, some Chinese Australians called for an apology for anti-Chinese legislation and the White Australia policy which have long been linked to the riots. This case study examines the way the banner mediated processes of inclusion and exclusion from the ‘power position’ of the dominant ‘me’ and ‘us’, with people who were treated as ‘others’ or ‘them’. It also highlights the possibilities of the ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’ relations which have been hidden.

Gamelan Digul orchestra — Department of Music, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria

This gamelan, made by political prisoners of the Dutch East Indies government in what is now West Papua in the 1920s, was transported to Australia during World War II and donated to the NMV in 1946 when these
Indonesian political prisoners of the Dutch were deported back to Indonesia. In 1976 Monash University accessioned the instruments into their Music Archive and it was only then that the full story of these instruments was recovered. This case study also examines the processes of inclusion and exclusion as well as all of Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’. Before entering the museum, the instruments mediated relations with the dominant ‘them’ from the perspective of the minority ‘me’/ ‘us’. In Australia, they also mediated relations between the ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’. After the object entered the museum it mediated relations between ‘me’/ ‘us’ and the many ‘others’ and was used to symbolise ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’ relations.

Two Apinis family weaving looms — Museum of Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria.

These two looms were made in Displaced Persons (DP) Camps in Germany in the 1940s just after World War II. They were made for two different Latvian weavers but later ended up with the Apinis family who migrated to Australia in 1950. The two looms were used in the DP camps and in Australia to weave materials for the Latvian communities in the camps and then in Australia. The first loom was donated to the MV in 1996 and the second loom in 2006. The first loom was then deaccessioned to the Latvians Abroad —museum and resource centre in Latvia in 2010. This case study examines the processes of individual and collection identity formation as well as inclusion and exclusion. Before entering the museum, these looms mediated the relations between the
relations of ‘me’ and the Latvian national ‘us’, especially against the Russian ‘them’. After they entered the Australian museum they mediated relations between the Latvian Australian ‘me’/ ‘us’ and the many Australian ‘others’ and after one loom entered the Latvian museum, it mediated relations between ‘me’ and ‘us’ and ‘me’/‘us’ and the many Latvian ‘others’.

Conclusion

*Most collections, and certainly most museum collections, do not make explicit the stories of their collecting or what we might think of as their historical embeddedness. These stories are usually hidden away in card files or acquisition registers, which record how objects came into the museum. More often than not, these stories are hidden by the various technologies of display.*

The museum visitor rarely discovers the reasons for the acquisition, loan, display, or deaccessioning of particular objects in the exhibitions they see and experience. Nor do they often find out about the intricate relationships that surround the object through its biography inside and outside of the museum. And, as Chris Healy points out, these stories are not unknown but they are hidden from general view by being part of the oral culture of museum

434 Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism*, p.79.
curators. An object centred approach enabled me to use these three case studies to illuminate the processes by which museums, government policies and individuals from culturally diverse communities have interacted with each other over time and participated in the processes of inclusion and exclusion and ‘identity relations’ in the ‘contact zones’ of Australian museums and in Australian society. The case studies are arranged in chronological order from the oldest to the youngest objects, beginning with the Lambing Flat Banner.

\footnote{ibid.}
Part Two

Objects, museums and ‘identity relations’
Chapter 4: Exclusion and a call for justice — The
Lambing Flat banner 1861-2016

Figure 3: ‘Roll Up, Roll up, No Chinese’ banner, Lambing Flat Folk Museum. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.
Roll Up! Roll Up! The diggers cried. The Miners Protection League declared:

*We invite men of all nations, except Chinamen to enrol themselves as members of the League; and lastly, we call upon every man whose spirit yearns for equality, fraternity, and glorious liberty. Let us then unite, organise, and go hand in hand in our grand struggle for the advancement of our race,— let us lift up our voices and exclaim ‘Fair play for all’ in one grand harmonious shout that will be echoed from the north to the south, from the east to the west, until the deafening sound is responded to by an acknowledgement of our rights as free born men, the descendants of the patriots of the old world. 436*

On the 30th of June 1861, between 2000 and 3000 European, North American and Australian-born gold miners assembled behind this banner on foot and horseback (Fig.3). They attacked about 2000 Chinese gold miners at Lambing Flat near present day Young in New South Wales (NSW). A number of Chinese miners petitioned the government for compensation for losses incurred during the riots. Tom Me, What Young and Que Yue said that

*certain of the gold diggers and other evil disposed persons

...being armed with bludgeons, fire-arms, and other weapons,

436 ‘Prospectus of the Miners' Protection League’, *Lambing Flat Miner and General Advertiser*, 6 March 1861.
and carrying banners or flags inscribed with the words ‘Roll Up,’ ‘No Chinese,’ attacked your Petitioners and the rest of the Chinese, at and near Lambing Flat..., and after having beaten and otherwise cruelly ill-treated..., and subjecting your Petitioner, Tom Me, to the indignity of cutting off his hair, drove your Petitioners, and the rest of the Chinese, from the said diggings.

... your Petitioners, to save their lives, were compelled to abandon their said property, and that your Petitioner, Tom Me, was knocked down, and one hundred and twenty-five ounces fifteen pennyweights of gold forcibly taken from his person.

... the tools’ tents, stores, apparel, and property of every description, belonging to your Petitioners, were either appropriated by their assailants, or wantonly and maliciously destroyed by fire.

... your Petitioners were at all times, prior to the said attack, quietly and orderly in their conduct, and had, in all respects, complied with the Government Regulations.

.... Your Petitioners, therefore humbly pray that due inquiry may be made into the above facts and circumstances, and that
such steps may be taken in the premises as justice requires,

and to your Honourable House shall seem meet.⁴³⁷

The riot on 30 June was the worst confrontation in a series of anti-Chinese riots at the goldfields around Lambing Flat that occurred between November 1860 and July 1861. According to Andrew Markus, the Lambing Flat riots, as they are known, were the largest anti-Chinese riots on both the goldfields of California and Australia and they involved more people than the Eureka rebellion which had occurred six years earlier.⁴³⁸ The riots themselves and the narratives about them are a study in how a goldfield, a colony and then a nation came to define itself by who it excluded and also the ways in which the excluded, insisted that they belonged.

Ann Curthoys, following political theorists such as Will Kymlicka and Barry Hindess, has argued that exclusion is an integral part of liberal democracy.⁴³⁹ This is demonstrated in the prospectus, of the Miners Protection League quoted above, which was formed on the Burrangong goldfields in January 1861. They appealed to the values of ‘equality, fraternity and glorious liberty,’ while


⁴³⁸ A Markus, Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1979, p.41. In 1854 at the Ballarat goldfield miners rebelled against the colonial authorities over the cost of Miner’s Licences. The miners felt that they were being taxed without having proper representation in the Victorian colonial government. Miners who did not own land were excluded from voting in government elections. See Claire Wright, The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka, Text publishing, Melbourne, 2013.

excluding Chinese people from the possibility of participating in these ideas as ‘free born men’ and ‘patriots’ because of their ‘race’. The men behind the banner accepted ‘Americans, Germans, Laplanders and even Africans’ but not the Chinese, defining an ‘us’ against the Chinese miners who were ‘them’. At the same time, despite, or maybe because, Tom Me, What Young and Que You saw banners with the phrases ‘Roll Up’ and ‘No Chinese’, they asserted their right to be present and safe at Lambing Flat under British law in the colony of NSW. They argued that they were entitled to ‘justice’ and hence, equality before the law. Their petition emphasised the fact that they had been ‘quiet and orderly in their conduct’, thus respecting law and order.

As John Fitzgerald has argued, however, the Chinese miners’ fraternal cooperation on the goldfields was on a scale and in a style that was unfamiliar to the European miners and it was the scale of their cooperation that scared the Europeans. These Chinese men had ‘arrived in parties of fraternal brotherhoods that were egalitarian, democratic and in many cases anti-monarchical in character’. Ironically, the values and ideals of both groups of miners were similar but the banner is evidence that the non-Chinese miners were mostly oblivious to this as were those who dealt with the Chinese miners’ petitions. William Campbell, the Secretary for Lands, examined 1,568 Chinese claims


441 Fitzgerald, Big White Lie, p.222.
totalling £40,623 9s 8d for damages incurred during the 30 June riot. He struggled to identify all the claimants and to identify European witnesses who were not involved in the riots so only £4,240 0s 8d was paid to 706 individuals. This paltry sum however, is also the result of his particular beliefs about the Chinese for he came to the conclusion that ‘I cannot imagine, that amongst a people whose regard for truth is so very questionable, and who have shown themselves so ingenious in devising frauds, every case of this nature has been discovered’.442

After the riots, politicians, unionists, historians, writers and others used the Lambing Flat riots as an example of what would happen if immigration was not restricted to British or at least European migrants. The riots led directly to the implementation of the New South Wales *Chinese Immigration Act 1861*. This law was one of a number of similar laws in the Australian colonies which are often interpreted as precedents for the national *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901*. This was one of the founding pieces of legislation for the nation and the White Australia Policy. Thus, the banner represents the prejudices of the non-Chinese miners and the NSW colonial government and later, the Australian nation when the riots become remembered as the ‘Birth of White Australia’. It also represents the Chinese miners’ demands for justice in the face of prejudice. As a symbol of the riots and their legacy in Australian history and society, the

banner is therefore an intensely emotive object whose difficult heritage is hard to contain and negotiate. Following its biography is like reading a barometer of Australia’s emotional engagement with those it has considered to be outside of the national imaginary — a journey that encompasses outright rejection, attempted assimilation and uncomfortable attempts at reconciliation. At the heart of the story is also a history of the ways in which difficult histories shape the collective memories and imagination of the nation.

According to Henry Rousso, ‘memory is plural, moreover, in that distinct memories are generated by different social groups, political parties, churches, communities, language groups and so on’. Writing about the politics of memory of Vichy France in the post-war period, his insight allows us to trace the different ways in which the banner plays a role in the ways the riots are remembered and commemorated from the moment the riots became history by a wide variety of groups and individuals. Thus, Timothy McCarthy, an Irish born miner involved in the riots, kept the banner and passed it on to his descendants who owned it for 100 years before it was acquired by the Lambing Flat Folk Museum (LFFM) in the town of Young. The McCarthy family played a key role in continuing the memory of the riots by recalling their versions of the events and displaying the banner publicly at particular points in time. But their versions of events were not the only ones circulating in Australian society. The riots were actively silenced in official histories of the time, recalled in newspaper articles,

443 Rousso & Goldhammer, p.2.
memoirs, historiography, fiction, art, film and commemorations which Rousso categorised into official, organisational, cultural and scholarly carriers of memory\(^\text{444}\). I trace the ways that the banner appears and disappears in these texts to explain how the object helps to sustain the memory of the riots in the public imagination, before I turn to the history of its collection and display at the LFFM. Using object biography\(^\text{445}\) to trace the life story of the banner, an object that meets Susan Pearce’s description of ‘deviant and sinister’\(^\text{446}\), this chapter will explore the ways in which the LFFM and the town of Young have dealt with what Sharon Macdonald termed ‘difficult heritage’\(^\text{447}\). In this case study, both the Museum and the town of Young become ‘contact zones’ where the ‘push and pull’ of exchanges and interpretations of objects and their meanings happen\(^\text{448}\).

**The Banner**

The ‘Roll up, Roll up, No Chinese’ banner (Fig. 3) was used at least three times during the riots — on the 18\(^\text{th}\) June 1861\(^\text{449}\) at the notorious 30 June 1861 riots\(^\text{450}\) and at the funeral of William Lupton, a bystander, who was accidentally

\(^\text{444}\) *ibid.*, pp.219-21.
\(^\text{445}\) Kopytoff, pp.64-91.
\(^\text{446}\) Pearce, p.195.
\(^\text{447}\) Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage*.
\(^\text{448}\) Clifford, *Routes*, pp.192-93.
\(^\text{449}\) ‘Riot at Lambing Flat’, *SMH*, 20 July 1861
shot by police during the 12 July 1861 riot.451 There are no contemporary accounts from the maker of the banner or the European miners about its creation and use — perhaps reflecting unease at the time and the desire to not get into trouble from the police. According to Anthony Burton, secretary of the Flag Society of Australia, the banner was painted on a square piece of tent canvas and is likely to be the work of a ‘master sign writer’.452 That description of the maker’s skill could almost put the banner in segment 1 of ‘The Art-Culture System’, as a masterpiece or work of art but its use in a series of riots and subsequent disappearance places it into segment 3 — the place of provocative and unusual items (Fig.2). At the centre of the banner is a white St Andrew’s cross on a blue background, like the flag of Scotland. There is one five-point star in the centre and a five-point star in each of the blue segments — making up the constellation of the Southern Cross. The colours and configuration of the stars may echo the Eureka flag made 15 years earlier and ‘imagined from hearsay’ even though the Southern Cross stars have five points, like the stars on the USA national flag, rather than the eight point stars on the Eureka flag.453

453 ibid., p.177. The Eureka flag was flown by a rebel garrison at Bakery Hill, now Ballarat in Victoria during the Eureka rebellion or Eureka Stockade in 1854. The flag has a blue ground and five stars representing the Southern Cross joined by a large silver cross in the centre.
‘No Chinese’: From Goldfield to Nation

Between 1861 and 1900, the banner disappeared from public view. At first, historians and people who witnessed the riots or their aftermath condemned them. In later official and scholarly carriers of memories such as histories, the riots were either completely omitted from official accounts of NSW and Australian history or the events were wilfully distorted to portray Premier Cowper’s visit to Lambing Flat in March 1861 as being sufficient to calm the miners, something we know not to be true.

According to Curthoys, the years after the riots were a period of relative calm and co-existence between Chinese and non-Chinese people in NSW. By 1867, all of the colonies had abolished their anti-Chinese immigration restriction laws and Chinese men were able to vote. Chinese people were treated as ‘us’ or ‘others’ but mostly not ‘them’. It was another group of Chinese people—crews on Australian steam ships and furniture makers in Melbourne who


458 Markus, p.74.

competed with the Europeans for labour — who reignited anti-Chinese sentiment from 1878 and provided the impetus for the reintroduction of anti-Chinese immigration legislation in the colonies.460

Reflecting the revived anti-Chinese sentiments driven by the press,461 collective and popular memories of the Lambing Flat riots resurfaced from the 1880s primarily through cultural carriers of memory. Recollections in newspapers and literature ranged from sanitising the riots,462 excusing the Australian-born, American and European miners for their violence,463 or using the story of the riots as an example of the bad characters of many of the gold miners by exaggerating the violence.464 While it disappeared from public view, the banner and the words on it were included in occasional narrations of the riots.465

According to Mei-fen Kuo, another factor in the rise of anti-Chinese sentiment at this time may have been the increasing urbanisation in the eastern colonies and the increasing concentration of Chinese people in particular parts of Sydney and Melbourne as they moved away from former goldfield towns in

460 Markus, pp.81-87 & pp.92-97.
461 ibid., pp.103-105.
These changes may have awakened popular memories of the Lambing Flat riots. In 1878, a crowd again used ‘the old Lambing Flat cry ‘Roll up! No Chinese!’” during anti-Chinese riots in Sydney.467

Pride and the Birth of White Australia

After the six colonies united as the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901, there is a distinct change in the way the riots are narrated and the physical reappearance of the banner is central to that change. Perhaps it was the reappearance of popular memories of the riots that encouraged Timothy McCarthy to bring the banner to public attention again in 1900, showing it to people who asked to see it.468 This act changed its meaning from a ‘provocative’ and shameful object, in segment 3 of ‘The Art-Culture System’ to a historical relic, which moved it into segment 2 (Fig.2). When he died in 1909, the Lambing Flat riots were described as ‘the first battle for White Australia’ in his obituary.469

According to Stuart Hall, the nation state is created and sustained by shared cultural meanings that bind individuals to a larger national story.470 Within the first year of Federation in 1901, Parliament passed two pieces of

466Kuo, pp.17-18.
468 ‘A Flag with a History’, The Gundagai Independent and Pastoral, Agricultural and Mining Advocate, 6 June 1900, p.2.
legislation, the *Immigration Restriction Act* and the *Pacific Islander Labourer Act*, which lay the foundation for the White Australia Policy. However, legislation and government policies were not enough to create a shared sense of national identity. This requires collective memories and sometimes, collective myths to bind people to the ‘imagined community’ of the nation.471 We share memories, not just of our own personal experiences but also the experiences of our families, past generations and broader society. These collective memories help us understand our world and our past and are ‘reflected and reinforced through culturally and temporally specific activities and behaviour, such as rituals, commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices’.472 The past can be re-imagined in a series of collective myths that become part of the popular understanding of our history and public commemorations.473

By Federation, the emergence of a ‘monumentalist’ perspective on Australian history which narrated significant events as the building blocks of a new nation474 ensured that the interpretation of the Lambing Flat riots had swung from mostly denial and shame to pride in some sections of the community. While some scholarly carriers of memory such as academic historians Ernest Scott, Brian Fitzpatrick and Max Crawford continued to ignore

471 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
473 ibid., pp.1-2.
the riots in their accounts of Australian history, others used the riots as an apologia for the creation of White Australia repeating the argument that Europeans and Chinese could not live together peacefully. Cultural carriers of memory, such as memoirs of miners like Mark Hammond also used the riots to justify the restriction of Chinese immigration. Others continued to downplay the violence and/or blamed the government for not controlling the fields. The European, British, American and Australian-born miners became ‘ethnicised’ as ‘white’. It was only after 1900 that they were described as ‘white miners’ or ‘white diggers’. Some memoirs glorified the non-Chinese miners and re-imagined the riots as a war where White British men defeated a Chinese enemy to form the Australian nation. The glorification of the non-Chinese miners also resulted in exaggerated dramatic accounts that were retold by popular writers

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479 E.g. ‘Lambing Flat by “Gossip”’, The Sydney Stock and Station Journal, 21 September 1906, p.2.

480 C MacAlister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South. Chas. MacAlister Book Publication Committee, Goulburn, 1907.

such as Ion Idriess, Frank Clune and Mary Gilmore. These excluded not only Chinese people from the nation, but also Chinese miners’ agency on the Lambing Flat goldfields. Chinese people became a ‘them’ against which Australian national identity was being defined.

At this time, the residents of Young became nostalgic about the gold-rush period. Local amateur historians documented the pioneering days and sometimes included stories about Chinese Australians who had lived in the area. An example is a retrospective article about the Lambing Flat gold-rush days which mentioned Su San Ling Doh and his petition for compensation for losses incurred during the riots. These local historians also noticed the diminishing numbers of Chinese men in their rural towns as they moved to urban centres, died or returned to China. Sophie Couchman examined the myth of ‘the last Chinaman’ through photographs which were taken in rural areas from the 1890s through to the early part of the twentieth century that were a part of documenting and yearning for this romanticised past. In Young, it was newspaper reports headlined ‘Death of a Chinese’ that signalled the myth of ‘the last Chinaman’. To the local population in Young, Chinese people were dying out and a curiosity of the town’s past. This gave the words ‘No Chinese’ on the

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The banner took on a new meaning when it reappeared in public view. Where the non-Chinese miners had expressed a desire that ‘No Chinese’ should be allowed on the goldfields, non-Chinese townspeople and NSW residents were imagining a present and a future with ‘No Chinese’ people in Australia.

This nostalgia for the gold rush days in Young, the location of local Chinese people in this fading past and the national pride in White Australia enabled the banner to be exhibited with pride twice during this period. Members of the McCarthy family who continued to live in nearby towns were keen to suggest and contribute to these displays. In 1921 McCarthy’s nephew Alfred Bennett offered the banner to the town of Young for display.\footnote{A Bennett, ‘In the Roaring Days, T.F. McCarthy’s Memoirs’, \textit{YW}, 11 January 1921.} The town accepted his offer and displayed it with other historical relics at the Young Jubilee Show to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Burrangong Pastoral and Agricultural Association show.\footnote{‘The Fiftieth Young’s Jubilee Show,’ \textit{Evening News}, 6 September 1921, p.4; ‘Relics of the Past’, \textit{Forbes Advocate}, 26 August 1921, p.6.} John McCarthy, Timothy McCarthy’s son, offered the banner for display to Young in 1938 and it was paraded down the main street as part of the sesquicentenary celebrations of the founding of NSW and Australia.\footnote{‘A Canvas Town of Long Ago To What It Is Today’, \textit{YW}, 11 March 1938; ‘A Fine Procession Commences Young’s Gala Week’, \textit{YW}, 24 March 1938.} The importance of the banner as a historical relic for Young and the region ensured that it would not be forgotten, even upon John McCarthy’s death in 1945. In his obituary, it was noted that ‘[t]his tattered and torn historic relic, with its large Maltese Cross and five stars, is in the possession of J.T.V.'
Although, the banner is misremembered, the fact that the newspapers make the effort to track who is in possession of the banner shows how important a mnemonic tool this banner is in relation to remembering the riots and the town’s history and identity.

In NSW and particularly in Young, the riots became remembered as one of the building blocks of the new nation, and the townspeople of Young attempted to fashion them into a foundation myth for both the town and the nation using cultural carriers of memory like film and newspaper commemorations which influenced popular memories of the riots in NSW. According to Graeme Davison, a foundation myth ‘turns around ideas of legitimacy and pedigree’ and its ‘essential purpose’ is ‘to instil in the citizenry a reverence for the city’s original, and fundamental, ideals’. At the time, these ideals centred on a ‘white’ Australian national identity. In 1927 Phil K. Walsh and his company Dominion Films, formed in Young, and created a film called ‘The Birth of White Australia’ which was ‘to provide a version of the epic story of the pioneers, explorers, and statesmen who moulded the history of the nation’. It traced the development of Australia from Captain Cook’s landing. In a move that was to reoccur in the future, the film used local people to re-enact the mining days at Lambing Flat, especially the riots. ‘Alexander the Yankee’, an African

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489 ‘Notes from the City’, The Scone Advocate, 27 November 1945, p.3.
490 Davison, p.58.
491 ‘An Australian Film. Production At Young’, SMH, 23 May 1927, p.16.
American, who discovered gold at Lambing Flat in June 1860, was whitewashed into the character of ‘Portuguese Dick’. Chinese people were portrayed by European actors in yellow face as ‘bad’ individuals to contrast with the ‘good’ white people. Chinese people were never shown taking a direct part in the riots which are portrayed as being between the European miners and the police, effectively silencing their role in mining and the riots, as well as denying the brutality of the European miners (Fig.4).

Figure 4: Re-enactment of 30 June 1861 riot in PK Walsh, ‘The Birth of White Australia,’ Dominion Films 1928.

The trend to portray the riots as being between non-Chinese miners and the colonial authorities continued in 1935, with a double-page spread in the

Sydney Mail newspaper commemorating the 75th anniversary of the riots (Fig. 5). It directly compared the riots to the Eureka Rebellion:

In December 1860 there occurred at Lambing Flat near Young, the initial incident in what was to develop into one of the most sensational events in the history of New South Wales — an event which for its drama and violence, and its close approximation to civil war is only comparable in Australian records to the tragedy of the Eureka Stockade.  

Figure 5: ‘1860 — The Riots at Lambing Flat in the Young District,’ New South Wales, The Sydney Mail, 10 July 1935.

493 ‘1860 - The Riots at Lambing Flat in the Young District, New South Wales’, The Sydney Mail, 10 July 1935.
The comparison with the Eureka rebellion in Ballarat in 1854 is significant as the historical Eureka rebellion had become overshadowed by its own collective mythology in the lead up to Federation. It was interpreted as having installed democracy and the birth of trade unionism. The people of Young and New South Wales also needed a nationalistic foundation myth and the Lambing Flat riots were turned into one. In the newspaper illustration, the riots were re-imagined as a typical battle scene often found in European art with the ‘good’ European miners, light in colour holding the misremembered banner ‘Down with the Chinese’ as the darkly coloured and better armed ‘bad’ police confront them. Below the main scene, and hence, not as important, a more correctly remembered banner ‘Roll Up No Chinese’ is carried by the European miners chasing the Chinese miners. The comparison with the Eureka Stockade also entered into the imaginations of politicians including a staunch advocate of the White Australia Policy, John (Jack) Lang, Premier of NSW 1925-27 and 1930-32 who claimed in his autobiography that ‘Lambing Flat is in fact just as significant in the history of the Labor Party in this State as the Eureka Stockade was in Victoria’.

494 Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism*, p.155.
Coping with dissonance: Lambing Flat Folk Museum and Young

By the time the banner reappeared into public view on the 100th anniversary of the Lambing Flat riots in 1961, the collective myth that the Lambing Flat riots were the ‘The Birth of White Australia’ had either disappeared or was no longer spoken of with pride. What remained, however, was a strong collective memory linking the creation of the White Australia Policy to the riots. The horrors of World War II saw the international community, including Australia, take various actions to condemn and outlaw racism, such as the 1963 International Covenant on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Australian government began to slowly dismantle the White Australia policy from 1949. What did this mean for Young and for the banner? Tunbridge and Ashworth’s concept of ‘dissonant heritage’ is useful to examine the understanding of the riots, the banner and the remembered connections to the White Australia Policy.496 Here I particularly want to use the psychological analogy of ‘cognitive dissonance’ where a person simultaneously holds mutually inconsistent attitudes or whose behaviours and attitudes contradict each other.497

The centenary of the Lambing Flat riots in 1961 brought both family and town memories together again with the desire to preserve and commemorate the riots at Young. John McCarthy, grandson of Timothy McCarthy revealed the

496 Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996.
497 ibid., p.20.
Lambing Flat banner publicly to a Sydney journalist, Frank O’Neill because ‘this year is the centenary of the riots which had such tremendous repercussions in Australian history’. Jack Giuliano of the *Young Witness* negotiated to have the banner displayed in an exhibition organised by the Young Historical Society and the newspaper raised the funds to transport the banner to Young. It remained on display at the library and the Young Historical Society purchased the banner in 1964. For the Historical Society:

*It is a matter of National Historic importance that we were able to retain the ‘Roll up banner’ carried in the Gold Diggers March at Lambing Flat over 100 years ago prior to the Anti-Chinese riots. An event credited as the beginning of the White Australian Policy.*

A sense of pride in Young’s pioneers gave the Historical Society and the town the desire for a museum in which to commemorate them. The museum became an organisational carrier of memory in the town. By the end of 1963, the Services and Citizens Club offered a building on the corner of Lynch and Marina Streets to the Historical Society for the purposes of a Museum and the Historical Society began preparations to open it as a Museum.

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500 Young Historical Society Minute Books, President’s Report to Meeting on 29 May 1964.


502 *ibid*, Minutes of Meeting 29 November 1963.
According to Linda Young,

*a local museum is a repository for goods that have meaning beyond the small world that is the present environment. Such meaning may derive from another time, or another place; or the combination of another time and place may introduce meanings of another class, another world view, another set of values.*

This is reminiscent of the way that patriarchal local historians, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were recording and commemorating the past of their pioneering forefathers. By the 1960s Chinese people and the riots, were located in a still romanticised but more distant past — in ‘another time’ to use Linda Young’s words. The Museum opened in 1967 and the banner was one of its prized objects because of its association with an important historical event dating to the foundations of the town. The banner remained in segment 2, ‘authentic artefact’ of ‘The Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2). For the Museum, the banner was representative of ‘another time and place’ and particularly represented ‘another set of values’. This ‘othering’ process enabled the museum volunteers to cope with the cognitive dissonance of dealing with the banner and the riots — it provided distance.

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504 Davison, pp.202-203.
While this museum is an organisational carrier of memory, it creates, collects and uses cultural carriers to transmit its version of history and memories to wider audiences. To cater to tourists who wanted a souvenir, the Museum reproduced coloured and embellished postcards of the banner (Fig.6). The back of the postcard described the ‘Roll-Up Flag’ as ‘one of the most valuable historical souvenirs of its kind in the world’. It details the banner’s use during the riots, the reasons why ‘white miners’ were resentful of the Chinese miners and the acquisition of the banner by the Young Historical Society. It is critical of the non-Chinese miners and does not mention the anti-Chinese immigration legislation that passed soon after the riots in NSW or the White Australia policy.

Figure 6: ‘Historical Souvenir of Young,’ Postcard, Lambing Flat Folk Museum, 1967.

Figure 7: Hella Gergas, Back Creek at the time of the Anti-Chinese Riots, 1964. Lambing Flat Folk Museum.

At this time a painting, Back Creek at the time of the Anti-Chinese Riots (Fig.7) by Hella Gergas of the 30 June 1861 riots was displayed in the same room as the banner.\textsuperscript{506} There is no emotion portrayed on the faces of any of the men — Chinese or non-Chinese. It is difficult to know whether this was intentional or not but it has the effect of keeping the viewer at an emotional distance. The eye is drawn to the lighter colouring of the ‘No Chinese’ banner and perhaps that is Gerges’ point — by the date of its acquisition it was better for the people of

\textsuperscript{506} Bayley, p.204.
Young to focus on the banner as a historical relic and distance themselves from the people involved in the riots. The painting was and is again in the same room as the banner and it also has the effect of distancing the visitors from understanding any of the miners — Chinese and non-Chinese. The postcard and the painting signal the Museum’s pride in owning the banner as well as its discomfort with the riots.

A Fellow of the Royal Australian Historical Society, William Bayley, was commissioned to write a local history to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Municipal government and the jubilee of the Shire of Burrangong in 1956. Bayley was critical of the miners’ actions but was supportive of the NSW Chinese Immigration Restriction Act of 1861, linking the riots to the White Australia Policy which he approved of.\textsuperscript{507} The \textit{Young Witness} journalist Giuliano played down the seriousness of the riots in his publication for the 100th anniversary of the riots.\textsuperscript{508} The willingness at a local level to commemorate the riots was in contrast to the continuing silence on the topic by some academic historians during the 1960s such as Douglas Pike, Russell Ward and Robin Gollan.\textsuperscript{509} Other academics and popular writers though, were more than willing to write about the riots.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[507] ibid., pp.22-36.
\end{footnotes}
The dismantling of the White Australia policy between 1949 and 1973 coincided with the rise of social and critical history between the 1960s and 1980s, the increasing recognition of cultural minorities, eventually expressed in the development of an explicit multicultural policy, as well as the beginning of diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China in 1973. Scholarly carriers of memory, such as critical accounts of the riots were written by some historians and the journalist Frank Cayley. In the main, they tended to argue that the riots were a particularly shameful episode of Australian history which led to the White Australia Policy. An exception was Ann Curthoys whose dissertation critically examined race relations in NSW, including Chinese and British colonist relations during and immediately after the riots. She found that between 1862 and 1878 Chinese and non-Chinese people co-existed with little conflict because they were not in competition with each other. Other historians still attempted to justify the actions of the European miners. A few of these pushed back against the critical history then emerging, by claiming that the Lambing Flat riots were an example of what would happen to Australia if the then current rate of Asian immigration was not slowed. A key figure in this

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511 Curthoys, Race and Ethnicity, p.374.

regard was Geoffrey Blainey.\textsuperscript{513} In \textit{cultural carriers} of memory such as the field of literature, the question of how to interpret the riots also re-emerged. A Hungarian born novelist, David Martin narrated the riots from the perspectives of both Chinese and European miners.\textsuperscript{514} His short story ‘Plenty Got Killed Here’ critically examined the local collective memories around the Lambing Flat riots.\textsuperscript{515} Nina Syme created new ‘white’ heroes such as the interpreter James McCulloch Henley and fictional non-Chinese miners who had attempted to help the miners. She portrayed the Chinese miners as hapless victims with no agency and little ability to fight for themselves.\textsuperscript{516} This was in contrast a novel written by Chinese Australian author Brian Castro, which narrated the riots through the eyes of a fictionalised Chinese miner and gave the Chinese miners their own agency.\textsuperscript{517} Local histories, however, continued to be written in ways that were not overly sympathetic to the European miners, but not overly sympathetic to the Chinese either.\textsuperscript{518}

\begin{itemize}
\item G Blainey, \textit{All for Australia}, Methuen Haynes, North Ryde, 1984, pp.71-72.
\item B Castro, \textit{Birds of Passage}, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983.
\end{itemize}
Dissonance, Justice and the Dialectic of Inclusion and Exclusion

To examine the LFFM’s perspectives during the 1980s, I want to return to Linda Young’s concept of a local museum understanding its local identity by focusing on its difference from ‘others’ — in terms of people, place and time.⁵¹⁹ This structural quality of local museums, which also comes from the structures of patriarchal local history writing, continued to help the LFFM’s volunteers deal with the banner and the riots. The Museum produced two pamphlets in the early 1980s detailing the general history of the area, historic sites and the items that could be found at the Museum.⁵²⁰ In the leaflet called ‘Lambing Flat Folk Museum’, the ‘early settlers and goldfields’ and ‘the Roll Up Flag carried by the miners during the 1861 riots’⁵²¹ are representative of what Linda Young describes as ‘another time’ and ‘another place’ which the visitors are assumed to have heard about — they are ‘famous’. Visitors are assumed to be from outside Young and they are also assumed to be ‘white’ and like the volunteers — interested in history that is of importance to a pioneer identity.⁵²² Indeed, Lyster Holland, then President of the Young Historical Society, wrote in a second leaflet that ‘the Roll Up Flag ... is now displayed with pride in the Lambing Flat Folk Museum’.

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⁵¹⁹ Young, p.306.
⁵²⁰ Both leaflets were donated to the Mitchell Library in 1985 but it is not known how long they were used for. Lyster Holland was President of the Young Historical Society from 1975 to 1990.
⁵²¹ L Holland & YHS, ‘Lambing Flat Folk Museum’, YHS, Young, 198-?
⁵²² ibid.
Pride in the banner is complicated by the riots and the White Australia Policy and Holland’s cognitive dissonance showed when he wrote in the same pamphlet that ‘[w]hile we might frown on this policy, we can thank the miners of Lambing Flat that we are not today faced with the problems found in many other countries’.  

While ‘cognitive dissonance’ was registered in these ways in the Museum, contemporary Chinese Australians in Young remained mostly unrecognised within the town, even by the local historians. In an interview about Young’s history by Geraldine O’Brien, a Sydney based journalist, Holland stated that there was ‘no trace’ of the Chinese miners in the area around Young. He claimed that there were not even any Chinese graves in the local cemetery. This is not true. Even Keith Price, a Shire Clerk remarked how surprised he was about the few Chinese people in Young when he had arrived there fifteen years earlier. However, O’Brien, found descendants of goldfields interpreter William Seng Chai and gold miners Ah Yung and Hay Ng still living in Young. Everyone had stories of racism and ways of assimilating. Max Quay, the descendant of William Seng Chai said that ‘[t]here was nothing hereditary in our household... We went to the piccies (sic) of a night and I played a bit of football, just normal things...But

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523 L Holland & YDHS, Young and District Historical Society, the Custodian of Lambing Flat Folk Museum Present ‘As It Was in the Beginning’, YDHS, Young, 1981.
524 ibid.
525 Tunbridge & Ashworth, p.20.
526 G O’Brien, ‘Young: Birthplace of the White Australia Policy’, SMH, 25 August 1988. A search of the Australian Cemeteries Index http://austcemindex.com/, revealed a small number of graves of Chinese people at the Young General Cemetery e.g. William Seng Chai who was an interpreter on the Lambing Flat goldfield, who died in 1897.
as you can well imagine, I’m sorry now I didn’t go into it more’. Quay describes his life in Young as ‘a normal suburbia type of life. I don’t think most of the people would even know I’m Chinese’. Being Australian meant that Quay was forced to sacrifice and hide some of his cultural Chineseness. Aspects of a Chinese identity that he retained were aspects that could be practised inside the safety of the family home and had, by 1988, become acceptable and to some extent stereotypical markers of being Chinese Australian in a multicultural Australia. ‘We didn’t speak Chinese at home but dad loved his Chinese food and I can use chopsticks of course.’ O’Brien also interviewed newer Chinese Australian residents of Young, such as Kevin Wu who had recently migrated from Hong Kong to help in his brother-in-law’s new restaurant. These stories of Chinese Australian residents of Young, though, were yet to be recognised in Young as part of Young’s identity.

By the late 1980s, multicultural policy was reoriented towards emphasising the economic benefits of cultural diversity. This change was a neo-liberal response to rapid globalisation, a greater economic relationship with Asia, increasing cultural diversity and expressions of anxiety over immigration and multiculturalism, often represented by Geoffrey Blainey’s 1984 speech criticising the level of Asian immigration. This shift is demonstrated in the Fitzgerald Report in 1988 in which it is argued that immigration policy needed more of an

527 ibid.
528 ibid.
529 ibid.
economic focus and also in the 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, which emphasised both social justice and economic efficiency.530

Regional towns also rediscovered their own regional ‘ethnic’ histories due to the interest in multiculturalism and an increasing emphasis on its economic benefits. According to John Fitzgerald, ethnicity is often used to refer to cultural groups rather than to named individuals who lived in the area and this was sometimes used for the purposes of attracting tourists. ‘The appearance of Chinese in this or that region provides a fortuitous link between the region and “Asia.”’531 In Young, this ‘fortuitous link’ is made complex both by the anti-Chinese riots of 1860-61 and the development of Young’s identity as the mythical birthplace of White Australia. It is also around this time in the late 1980s that Hage places the appearance of the ‘White cosmopolite’ who

*is a class figure and a White person, capable of appreciating and consuming ‘high-quality’ commodities and cultures, including ‘ethnic’ culture. That is, it is a class figure in a cultural sense. There are some traditional and provincial middle and upper classes who would not rate highly as possessors of cosmopolitan capital.*532


532 Hage, *White Nation*, p.201.
It is both the rediscovery of ‘ethnic’ histories in regional towns combined with multicultural policies that encourage ethnic cultural consumption, including through tourism that the town of Young became a ‘contact zone’, where people from different geographical and temporal locations came into contact with each other and established complex, unequal and ongoing relations.\textsuperscript{533} We can see an increasing interest in the historical Chinese presence from the ‘White cosmopolite’ attitudes and activities of the Young Shire Council and the Young Historical Society as well as increasing interest from overseas Chinese people in Chinese Australian history at Young. Between 1987 and 1990 Chinese artists visited Young, including the Museum on their tour; the Council’s Tourist Officer, Shire President and the Young Historical Society President visited the Chinese consul in Canberra; and the Chinese consul visited Young, including the Museum.\textsuperscript{534} Mo Yimei, a Chinese student at the Australian National University, proposed the idea for a scroll that would depict Chinese Australian history from 1788 to 1988 to the Australia-China Friendship Society who sponsored it as a Bicentennial project (Fig. 8 & 9). Mo Yimei conducted the research while her brother, Mo Xiangyi and his assistant Wang Jingwen painted the scroll.\textsuperscript{535} The \textit{Harvest of Endurance Scroll} was first displayed in December 1988 at the Chinese

\textsuperscript{533} Clifford, \textit{Routes}, p.192.

\textsuperscript{534} YHS Minute Books, President’s Report 1987; Annual Report 1988; Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Tuesday 19 May 1990.

Museum of Australian History in Melbourne and then acquired by the National Museum in 1992.\textsuperscript{536}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{harvest_of_endurance_scroll_anti_chinese_violence}
\caption{Harvest of Endurance scroll: ‘Anti-Chinese Violence’, 1988.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{harvest_of_endurance_scroll_lambing_flat_riots}
\caption{Harvest of Endurance Scroll: ‘Lambing Flat Riots’, 1988.}
\end{figure}

The scroll includes painted images of the Lambing Flat riots and the Chinese miners are the focus. The Lambing Flat banner is depicted in the background with the Europeans. Also depicted is the flag ‘Down with Chinese’ which appears in the 1935 image of the riots in the *Sydney Mail* discussed above. The Chinese miners are in the foreground, fleeing. Finally, they are the focus of the narrative but it takes a person of Chinese descent outside of Young to do this.

According to Hage, ‘[w]hite multiculturalism activates a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion... in order to position Third World-looking migrants in the permanent spatial in-between where their will is excluded, while their exploitable ‘savage’ body/ culture is included’. One feature of ‘White multiculturalism of the state is the way it opens up cultural spaces of inclusion as a substitute to effective inclusion in mainstream political processes’. This effect can be clearly seen in the cultural policies developed in Young at this time. The Young Shire Council acted as the ‘White cosmopolite’ to create an *official carrier* of the memory of the riots and Chinese presence in Young — the cultural space of the Chinese Tribute Gardens in 1997 (Fig. 10). The gardens were built with funding from the Federal government and external Chinese sources like the Chinese Embassy and the Sydney Chinese community and dedicated ‘in recognition of the contribution of the Chinese community to the settlement of

537 ibid.
539 ibid., p.138.
Young in the 1860’s and the ongoing contribution of the Chinese community to Australia as a nation’. In order to reproduce an ‘authentic’ Chinese garden, Chinese and Chinese Australian people and culture had to be defined as different from Australian people and culture — they were socially excluded. The presence of locally born Chinese Australians could not be imagined. In a 2003 interview, Max Quay, was asked about the Chinese Tribute Gardens and he said that ‘[p]ossibly people that have or are the organisers of the gardens, doing the arrangements to have it beautified and the monetary part of it, they possibly don’t even know I come from a Chinese background. Well, most likely don’t’. 

Figure 10: Chinese Tribute Gardens, Young, 2014. Photo: Karen Schamberger.

541 R Gilchrist, MHC-NSW & LFFM, Real Stories: Migrating for Work Final Report, MHC-NSW, Sydney, 2003. The page numbers of the report are inconsistent and Max Quay’s interview transcript has no page numbers.
During this period from the 1990s to 2000s, scholarly and cultural carriers of memory vacillated between critical perspectives written by popular historians, Chinese Australian community members, academics in the fields of history, cultural studies and literature and perspectives from threatened ‘white’ historians who reiterated the idea that the riots occurred because Europeans and Asians could not live together harmoniously. Anthony Burton, Vice President of the Flag Society of Australia, examined the banner for its symbolism and assumed that an apology from the local council indicated that the town of Young had dealt with its nasty past. Andrew Simpson critiqued the differences in treatment between the Eureka flag and the Lambing Flat banner —one an iconic national symbol, taking pride of place in Ballarat and the other, equally significant in aesthetic, social and historical ways but a lot less ‘palatable’ and certainly not celebrated. Independent historian Carol Holsworth was deeply critical of the European miners and the authorities on the Lambing Flat goldfields but raised McCulloch Henley to the status of hero, at the


546 Burton, pp. 169-79.

expense of the Chinese miners’ agency.\textsuperscript{548} A number of fiction and children’s book writers also used the riots to explore cross-cultural relationships or enabled Chinese miner’s agency on the diggings.\textsuperscript{549} The riots also featured in the documentary series \textit{The Great Australian Race Riot} (2015) where they were interpreted as being more organised than the Buckland River anti-Chinese riots in Victoria (1857) and also as the beginnings of the White Australia policy. According to Alex Haslem, a riot psychologist on the documentary ‘the policy was made on a small piece of canvas untidily painted by some rioters and in many ways the flag symbolises...all the legislation, all the policy...that were to follow’.\textsuperscript{550}

The Lambing Flat banner continued to be interpreted critically outside of Young through \textit{official carriers} of memory such as government run museums. The NMA acquired the \textit{Harvest of Endurance Scroll} (Fig. 8 & 9) in 1992, in part, because ‘it shows that multiculturalism is not a recent development’.\textsuperscript{551} A year later, the NMA displayed the Scroll, including the section about the goldfields and the Lambing Flat riots in the exhibition \textit{Landmarks: People Land and Political Change} which tackled the White Australia policy, the Franklin Dam dispute and the Mabo case. These three controversial case studies were in line with the


\textsuperscript{551} Macklin, 1992.
critical school of historical thought then current. One criticism of the exhibition, which was otherwise highly praised, was that ‘it presents a comfortingly consensual view of nasty values that have changed, as if all Australians are now in accord about racism, land rights and the environment’.\(^5\)\(^5\)\(^2\) Linda Young’s comment was prescient for both Australia\(^5\)\(^3\) and the town of Young. Janis Wilton also continued the same line of critical interpretation as the NMA through her touring exhibition (2001-2004) and online exhibition (2004) *Golden Threads: The Chinese in Regional New South Wales 1850 – 1950* which was sponsored by the Powerhouse Museum. The online exhibition interpreted the banner as being an example of hostile attitudes of non-Chinese towards the Chinese presence on the goldfields.\(^5\)\(^4\)

In the meantime, the LFFM, beginning to work consciously as a ‘contact zone,’ was working out how to reconcile its mostly homogenous pioneering identity with the cultural diversity of the local population of Young. Like many local museums, they took an approach that gave everyone a migrant history and a ‘contribution’ narrative, enabling many ‘others’ to make the ‘us’ of Young. The New South Wales Migration Heritage Centre (MHC-NSW) and the Museums and

\(^5\)\(^2\) L Young, ‘A Radical and Brave Presentation’, *CT*, 1 August 1993, p.27.

\(^5\)\(^3\) The NMA opened at its permanent site in 2001 and was quickly embroiled in a controversy known as the ‘History Wars’ where critical perspectives in the NMA’s exhibitions were challenged. This resulted in the Carroll Review (Carroll, Longes, Jones & Vickers-Rich, 2003) that led to the redevelopment of three long-term exhibitions.

Galleries Foundation of New South Wales worked together with the Museum on the temporary exhibition *Moving for Work: Migration and Working Lives* which opened in 2004. Six communities including the Wiradjuri (local indigenous), English, German, Lebanese and Chinese communities were targeted for family or individual stories to be included in the exhibition. This was the first time that Max Quay and his family story were included in the Museum and he soon became a volunteer there.555

The Lambing Flat banner was also included as one of 100 objects that highlighted Australia’s historic and contemporary cultural diversity on the *Objects Through Time* website that was developed by moveable heritage curator Stephen Thompson from the MHC-NSW.556 The interpretation took a critical stance, stating that the imagery of the object together with contemporary written sources provide us with ways to understand the ‘racist logic’ of the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 as well as being able to ‘recognise and acknowledge the violence and racism’ that was directed at the Chinese.557 The MHC-NSW was making the point that migrant stories also included stories of exclusion and that the exclusion of some groups in Australia is complex and...
ongoing. ‘The banner represents the ever present undercurrent of racism in Australian history.’

At this time, towns in the South West region of NSW were working out ways of attracting tourists. Cultural and scholarly carriers of memory, such as literature, newspaper reports and academic histories were used to recast the interpretation of the riots in the region through official carriers of memory, like government-funded tourism signage. Inspired by his experience of gold fields tourism in the neighbouring state of Victoria, Kim Johnson, one resident of Harden-Murrumburrah, near Young, suggested that the local councils in the region cooperate to create the Gold Trails project. The NSW government agreed to fund the project which created a series of trails that tourists could follow to explore the gold-rush and bushranger history of regional NSW. Johnson’s understanding of local history was influenced by popular histories of bushrangers, newspaper reports of the riots and Nina Syme’s novel about the Lambing Flat riots. In 2009 Johnson brought a mixed Australian and Chinese film crew to Young and Harden-Murrumburrah with the intention to make a film about the Lambing Flat riots. The film was to highlight the actions of James Roberts who was asked by the Sub-Gold Commissioner George O’Malley Clarke to shelter the Chinese miners who fled the 30 June 1861 riots at Lambing Flat, on his property, ‘Currawong’, which is located closer to Harden-Murrumburrah than

558 ibid.
This creation of a new white pioneering hero, who fitted the social and political framework of modern Australian multiculturalism, enabled the twin-towns of Harden-Murrumburrah to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the riots and ‘the sheltering of more than 1,200 Chinese miners by Mr. James Roberts on his property “Currawong”’ at their local Gold Trails pioneer festival in 2011. This coincided with the moment that some contemporary Chinese Australians demanded justice and an apology for discriminatory policies. The riots continued to be linked to the White Australia Policy in their demands and the banner appears in some of their interpretations of the riots, and symbolised the discriminatory legislation that Chinese people faced in Australia until the 1970s. An exploration of their demands shows the complexities involved in identifying as Chinese Australian today, the challenges of accepting diverse ways of being Chinese Australian and the different ways of managing relationships with the dominant, mainstream population and organisations.

The Chinese Community Council of Australia – Victorian Chapter (CCCA) held its first national conference ‘Finding the Chinese Australian voice’ in 2011. The CCCA, influenced by popular memory as carried through literature and some academic histories, decided ‘to look into the Lambing Flat incidents and discriminatory policies against the Chinese, with a view to asking the Australian Government for an apology together with acknowledgement of the

560 ‘Film producers strike gold at Currawong’, Harden Murrumburrah Express, 16 April 2009, p.1.
contributions of Chinese Australians’.\(^{562}\) As an alternative to an apology, the CCCA suggested that a trust fund be set up for educational and cultural purposes to ‘acknowledge Australia’s history of racial discrimination against Chinese migrants’.\(^{563}\) One of the suggested educational programs was a ‘long term exhibition of the Lambing Flat *Expulsions*, preferably in the National Museum of Australia’.\(^{564}\) This unfortunate choice of exhibition title would have continued the perception that there were no people of Chinese descent left in Young after the riots. The issue though, illuminates the lack of knowledge from within Chinese Australian communities themselves and the complexities involved in addressing this past for today’s Chinese Australians. According to the convenor of the conference Chek Ling:

There is no record of how these early Chinese felt about the organized violence inflicted upon them, on that day or during the decades thereafter, nor any inkling of what they might have ever considered as appropriate redress, for the memory of themselves or for the destiny of the homeland of their descendants, of one hue or another.\(^{565}\)

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\(^{564}\) C Ling & CCCA Victorian Chapter; see also Hyland, 2012.

\(^{565}\) Ling, ‘Move on’, pp.7-8.
Ling arrived in Australia in 1962 as a Colombo Plan student from Sarawak, Malaysia. For him, the descendants of ‘these early Chinese’ were ‘others’ who had ‘passed into White Australia a generation or two back’. Like many Australians, Ling believed that the Lambing Flat riots were the start of the White Australia Policy. Even if there were Chinese people around after the riots, he believed that they had completely assimilated into the dominant population and therefore could not speak for themselves as Chinese people. Ling’s opinions demonstrate the difficulties of trying to create a unified ‘Chinese Australian voice’, a minority group ‘us’ in Australia, because this leads to the following questions: ‘who is Chinese/ Chinese Australian?’, ‘who decides who or what is Chinese/ Chinese Australian?’, ‘how is Chineseness and Chinese Australianness constructed?’ and ‘for what purposes?’ Many people, including those with Chinese heritage and those without, conflate a variety of ways of being Chinese or Chinese Australian into one or attempt to assert their own viewpoint as representing Chineseness and Chinese Australianness as we will see below.

A member of the Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, Robyn Atherton who had researched the Chinese presence in the region invited the Chinese Women’s Association of Australia and the Chinese Heritage Association of Australia (CHAA) to participate in the 2011 festival. Daphne Lowe-Kelley, then

566 ibid., p.1.
567 ibid., p.7.
568 R Atherton, They were more than just gold diggers: The Chinese of Murrumburrah and surrounding districts 1860s – 1960s, 2nd ed., Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, Harden, 2011.
President of the CHAA and a member of CCCA, helped to organise a tour for the two Chinese Australian organisations and organised Chinese elements of the festival.\textsuperscript{569} This included a play called \textit{The Quiet Brother} by Ivy Mak, a Chinese Australian playwright. It was set in the 1880s and had the Chinese characters recalling their experiences of the Lambing Flat riots.\textsuperscript{570} The cover (Fig.11) of the play script portrayed the Lambing Flat banner with its edges burning. This could be read as an allusion to the burning tents of the Chinese miners during the riots in 1861 which is re-configured in the present to burning the banner and the racism it represents. It is a statement that Chinese Australians exist and are Australians.

\textbf{Figure 11:} Ivy Mak, \textit{The Quiet Brother}, 2012.

\textsuperscript{569} Interview with Daphne Lowe Kelley, Sydney, 03 April 2014.

\textsuperscript{570} I Mak, \textit{The Quiet Brother}, Australian Script Centre, Hobart, 2012.
The tour also included a trip to nearby Young to see their pioneer festival which was held on the same weekend. The Lambing Flat Festival had been held in Young for a number of years and was primarily a celebration of Young’s pioneering history and the Chinese presence was treated as a thing of the past.\textsuperscript{571}

What the Chinese Australian tour group saw influenced their interpretation of the historical events at Lambing Flat. William Yang, a well-known Chinese Australian photographer participated in the tour and produced a photograph of himself imposed on the Lambing Flat banner which is in turn imposed on an image of Blackguard Gully\textsuperscript{572} — the site of anti-Chinese riots on 18 February 1861 and the site where the Chief Gold Commissioner Cloete segregated the Chinese miners in an effort to calm the situation.\textsuperscript{573} When I first saw this photograph, it opened up questions about other kinds of Chinese Australian personal narratives that could be told about the riots and their memory. Yang is third generation Chinese Australian but his family are not from Young\textsuperscript{574} and he does not live there so in this photograph he contradicted the words on the banner by creating a temporary ‘return’ narrative. If he had found

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{573} ‘Lambing Flat,’ \textit{SMH}, 21 February 1861, p.4; ‘Lambing Flat by our Special Correspondent,’ \textit{SMH}, 12 March 1861, p.4.
\end{flushright}
a current Chinese Australian resident of Young to use in this image, it could be a permanent ‘return’ or ‘renewal’ narrative. Or alternatively, if he had found someone like Max Quay or another descendant of early Chinese settlers in Young to place on the image, it could be a ‘survival’ or ‘resistance’ narrative. The cognitive dissonance involved in remembering the riots as well as the forgetting and assimilation of Chinese Australians into the dominant European descended population in this area has mostly prevented these possible alternate narratives from being researched and retold.

After the tour, on the 150th anniversary of the worst of the Lambing Flat riots —30 June 2011, Daphne Lowe Kelley made her own call for an apology for the anti-Chinese legislation in Australia:

Surely we do not have to wait as long as the first citizens of this country to get an apology and be recognised for the contributions we have made to the country we call home. It is only now that there are stirrings in the Chinese Australian community to have past wrongs recognised for what they were... I would like to think that history is important and that the Chinese at Lambing Flat did not suffer in vain.\(^{575}\)

Lowe Kelley’s father was subjected to the White Australia Policy when he attempted to migrate to Australia in the 1920s and Lowe-Kelley herself was

subjected to it, when she migrated from New Zealand in 1964. Her intention for the bus tour of Harden-Murrumburrah and Young, was to bring Chinese Australians into the area both to educate them about their history and because ‘there’s hardly any Chinese left living in these areas’.\textsuperscript{576} Since that tour, she met with Max Quay in Young and discovered a distant family connection. If a trust fund were set up she would want it used to further research into Chinese Australian history as well as for educational purposes.\textsuperscript{577} Her desire for an apology is, therefore, both personal and political. In the hope of getting an apology from the Federal government, Lowe Kelley collaborated with people and organisations she felt were able to help her interests, playing into cosmopolitan ideas about Chinese culture.

In June 2013, Lowe Kelley came a step closer to the apology she wanted. A Labour Member of Parliament, Michelle Rowland\textsuperscript{578} declared that

\begin{quote}
the 44th Parliament must recognised the injustices of the past and acknowledge the discriminatory treatment of Chinese people in Australia throughout our history.... This government has made China a major focus, both socially and economically.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{576} Interview with Daphne Lowe Kelley. \\
\textsuperscript{577} \textit{ibid.} \\
\textsuperscript{578} Michelle Rowland is currently Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism, 11 March 2016.
This is evident in the new strategic partnership with Beijing and the Asian century white paper.579

While continuing to separate Chinese people from Australians in her speech, Rowland linked a possible apology to Chinese Australian communities with Australia’s potential economic and trade policies with Asia as outlined in the Labour government’s Asian century white paper.580 A Liberal National Party coalition formed government in September 2013 so the campaign for an apology continues with the Labour Party opposition.581 If ever there is a national apology for the discrimination faced by Chinese Australians it may well come from a ‘White cosmopolite’ government who wants to include ‘Chinese’ people for Australia’s economic benefit.

In the meantime, Johnson continued with the Gold Trails project bringing Young Shire Council on board and recreating tourism signage around the town, bringing with him Harden-Murrumburrah’s solution to the difficult history of the riots. The new sign at Blackguard Gully and the tourism brochure produced in 2013 included an image of the banner. Its overt racism, and thus its affective power, was neatly subverted by the story of Roberts’ kindness but we read nothing about any Chinese miners’ perspectives, their claims for compensation


581 Interview with Daphne Lowe Kelley.
and the colonial government’s response. \(^{582}\) This method of creating Roberts as another white pioneering hero has continued at Harden-Murrumburrah through the Gold Trails Experience Museum which opened in September 2015. \(^{583}\) However, unlike the signage in Young, local Chinese Australian experiences were included as a result of the local history research done by Atherton. \(^{584}\) But there are no personal stories of Chinese or any other residents who witnessed or participated in the riots.

Johnson and the Young Shire Council also formed a working relationship with Lowe Kelley and they cooperated to organise the 2014 Lambing Flat Chinese Festival (Fig.12). Faced with a pioneering festival that was dying, David Newberry, the Tourism Officer for the Young Shire Council decided to give the 2014 festival a Chinese theme in order to attract Chinese tourists to Young outside of the cherry season. This is an Australian example of a phenomenon described by UK sociologist and tourism researcher John Urry where ‘certain ethnic groups have come to be constructed as part of the “attraction” or “theme” of some places. This is most common in the case of Asian groups’. \(^{585}\)

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\(^{582}\) ‘Lambing Flat 1861: visit and understand the anti-Chinese riots that divided the goldfields communities,’ *Gold Trails: Discover NSW’s Rich Gold Heritage Vein*, Young Shire Council and Harden Shire Council, n.d., collected 2014.


\(^{584}\) Atherton, 2011.

Newberry wanted to include Chinese Australians for economic reasons but had to socially exclude them by defining them as different. As an outsider to Young and a firm believer in multiculturalism, his response to the cognitive dissonance of the difficult history of the riots was to avoid them and concentrate on celebrating Chinese culture in Young.

*The Chinese dimension has enabled us to bring about a lot more vibrancy and colour into the event itself. We’ve got the food connection. We’ve got the beautiful Chinese lion dancing. There’s so much more light and energy and colour in many Chinese events and I thought it was showing respect to that culture.*

The economic imperative to revive the festival and bring tourists to Young in the quiet season was understandably important. However, this meant that

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586 Interview with David Newberry, Young, 07 April 2014.
Newberry could not see the ways in which this focus was ‘othering’ the very people and culture that he wanted to ‘respect’. Newberry enlisted the help of Lowe Kelley who also has a professional background in tourism. She brought both Vietnamese Australian and Chinese Australian performers, including lion dancers (Fig. 13), performers of Tai Chi and Martial Arts to Young from Sydney. Interestingly, only the Chinese Australian organisations were named on the program. The Vietnamese Australian Đồng Tâm Martial Arts Association was labelled ‘Spectacular Chinese Lion Dancers, Martial Art and Chinese Fireworks Display’. The emphasis on celebrating Chinese culture had the unfortunate consequence of reinforcing the stereotype that all Asians are the same rather than acknowledging that many different Asian cultures share similar traditions. This emphasis on importing culture from Sydney came at the expense of developing a local Chinese Australian (and/or Vietnamese Australian) culture and identity in Young which could have begun to happen had there been collaborations between the Sydney and locally based performers.

The program was divided between Chinese performers from outside Young and local performers — many of them school children interpreting Chinese culture and the Chinese presence at Lambing Flat, including the riots. There was however, a lack of involvement of a local Chinese Australian community beyond the single Chinese food stall. This presented a problem which Tseen Khoo highlighted in her critique of the Nundle Chinese Festival. 588 The difficulty with importing much of the Chinese cultural performances,

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decorations and bussing in Chinese Australian visitors is that it risks temporarily transplanting cultural resources without any or little long term development of Chinese heritage material in Young. It reduces its \textit{regional} authenticity.\textsuperscript{589} For Young, this is demonstrated in the way that the Festival activities were reported by the Chinese Australian groups involved. One example is the Pei Lei Wushu Association in Sydney who performed Wushu and Tai Chi at the festival. ‘In particular, the festival had tremendous support from the Chinese communities/associations in Sydney and Canberra, and attracted an estimated 3000 to 5000 people, which organisers said they couldn’t be happier with.’\textsuperscript{590} However, they do not mention any interaction with the local community. The relationship between performers and audience is one between the observer and the observed, reinforcing an ‘us’ looking at ‘others’ interaction rather than a more collaborative ‘we’/ ‘us’ interaction which had the potential to occur in collaborative performances between local and non-local performers.

Newberry defines Chinese Australians as being different, unintentionally excluding them from his definition of Australian, perhaps not realising how it is possible to be both Chinese and Australian.

\textit{...it was important to celebrate the Chinese contribution in Young and Lambing Flat as it was then, and also sort of turn it on its head from what was a very tragic event in Australian...}

\textsuperscript{589} ibid., pp.498-499.

history, which brought about the now discredited White Australia Policy. We just turned the whole of that on its head to make it a celebration of the Chinese contribution in the making of a modern, dynamic Australia.\textsuperscript{591}

The ‘Chinese contribution’ in Young or in Lambing Flat is never explicitly explained. While Newberry does acknowledge the ‘tragic event’ and the ‘discredited White Australia Policy’ he cannot explain how celebrating the ‘Chinese contribution’ actually turns everything ‘on its head’. By avoiding the detail of the riots and by avoiding any articulation of the experience of Chinese miners at Lambing Flat whether positive or negative, Newberry and Young can distance themselves from the events and the people responsible for them as well as from the victims of the violence. It is ‘othering’ of both the non-Chinese miners who are treated as a ‘them’ and Chinese miners as well as contemporary Chinese Australians because it is placing these ‘others’ on a pedestal as if they can represent all Chinese people. The intended irony then, does not quite work:

\textit{It’s a kind of sticking fingers up at those people that caused so much ... mayhem and violence towards those Chinese people that were here. If they could see now what we were doing in honouring those Chinese that came here, then I think ... it’s very ironic.}\textsuperscript{592}

\textsuperscript{591} Interview with David Newberry.
\textsuperscript{592} \textit{ibid.}
The connections between commemorating Chinese culture and encouraging trade with China and Asia were clearly articulated at the festival by the local Federal Member of Parliament Angus Taylor. He ‘said it was significant the festival came at the same time Prime Minister Tony Abbott and the trade minister were visiting Asia, including China’. The Young Shire Council ‘White cosmolites’ used a ‘culturally inclusive’ space to include these Chinese Australians for its own economic benefit, mirroring the Federal government’s economic agenda. At the same time, Lowe Kelley was building alliances with apparently sympathetic ‘White cosmolites’ and attempting to use ‘cultural spaces of inclusion’ to access ‘mainstream political processes’.

It is not just the White cosmopolitan elite who control the ‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’. Returning to the 2014 festival, a key cultural carrier of popular and collective memory, we can see a pioneer perspective that overlaps with a White cosmopolitan one where, according to Hage, the aim is to include the ‘other’ just enough to give them some feelings of participation but to exclude them from any position of agency. The festival contained another powerful cultural carrier of collective memory — a re-enactment of the 30 June 1861 riot led by Kim Johnson (Fig. 14 & 15). Again he brought the Harden-

594 Hage, White Nation, p.138.
595 ibid., pp.242-243.
Murrumburrah solution of elevating James Roberts to hero status as a way for Young to resolve its cognitive dissonance about remembering the cruelty of the riots. But this produced other problems. Johnson included Chinese Australian performers from the Sydney groups Lowe Kelley brought to Young in the re-enactment — however, they did not have speaking parts.596

Figure 14: Re-enactment of the 30th June 1861 anti-Chinese riot, Young, NSW, 12 April 2014. Photo: Karen Schamberger.

596 The DarkHorse853, Riot Re-enactment (Complete) from The Lambing Flat Chinese Festival@ Anderson Park Young NSW, 17 April 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efvot2J5bZQ, retrieved 10 March 2016.
According to Johnson, two of the professional Chinese Australian actors who had seen the script wanted to change it. One of them empathised with the non-Chinese miners:

*I think it was [actor name] who said “Well I think in a way you can understand the rioters ... they were only trying to protect their families and feed them.” He’d been reading the Charles Stewart speech. That’s bullshit. Why didn’t they have a riot? The Chinese had as much right to be here. Now here’s a guy*
**from Chinese heritage saying that, understanding the European point of view. That surprised me.**

The lead Chinese Australian actor, unable to change the script, declined to participate at the last minute and was replaced by an actor with mixed Vietnamese, English and Irish heritage.

During the re-enactment of the riot, a replica of the original banner played a central role. While it did not rally the town’s people against Chinese people this time, it did act as a mediator in the ‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’ because while historical and contemporary Chinese Australians were physically included, their ‘will’ and voices were excluded. The intention of the re-enactment was to make the people of Young remember the riots but it had the effect of reinforcing perceptions of the Chinese miners as being passive victims. The problem was not only one sided however, as the brutal actions of the European miners were not explained which made it easier for audience members to distance themselves from ‘them’ and be comforted by the actions of a ‘white hero’ James Roberts who, we were told, sheltered the Chinese miners at the end of the re-enactment. He represented the contemporary multicultural-loving ‘us’. The re-enactment did not enable the audience to understand the European miners’ motivations for attacking Chinese miners or enable the audience to understand how they, themselves might also perpetrate racism consciously or unconsciously in the present.

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597 Interview with Kim Johnson.
After the re-enactment, however, Harry Tseng, one of the Chinese Australian actors who did not participate in the re-enactment, spoke on stage and undermined the ‘exclusion’ of Chinese Australian agency during the re-enactment:

Seeing my ancestors go through such pain, brutality, injustice and suffering with such senseless violence, really does tear up my soul ... I truly believe that this re-enactment will spark conversation about the history of my people and the history of our Lambing Flat. ... I thought I knew what it was to be a Chinese Australian, until I came back to Young, until I stepped foot on this soil, the soil that my ancestors walked through...

To see how hard that they worked to bring back money to their families, like everyone here.... There’s more to Lambing Flat than what we saw today and that’s why I’d like to thank Kim for making this re-enactment possible... but also David Newberry for giving us this chance to come up and voice our opinion, our voice, and our views of what has happened...We can start seeing the reconciliation of what it is to be an Australian, for what it is to come back together whatever colour you are.598

598 The DarkHorse853, Riot Re-enactment
Tseng drew attention to similarities between people of different cultural backgrounds and between people from the past and people in the present, which, for him is what it means to be Australian. He asked for a reciprocal understanding of ‘what it is to be an Australian’ from the audience, wanting everyone to begin seeing Chinese Australians as a part of the national ‘us’ despite the Lambing Flat riots and the re-enactment of them. Unable to change the re-enactment script, he and another Chinese Australian actor who spoke on stage, were able, with the assistance of David Newberry, acting as the ‘white cosmopolite’, to momentarily shift the balance of power in their favour. However, when Tseng’s speech was reported in the local newspaper, there was an emphasis on the pain of witnessing the re-enactment as well as ‘seeing the reconciliation of what it is to be Australian’ but there were no comments from local people about how they understood the riots, the re-enactment or what they thought about ‘the reconciliation of what it is to be Australian’.

According to Hage, it is convenient that ‘those respectable White Australians have an interest in someone else perceived as “irrational and/or immature” doing the exclusion for them’. Historically, the ‘irrational’ White Australians were the European miners who brutalised the Chinese miners. At times, the ‘irrational’ White Australians also include the volunteers of the LFFM because they represent a White pioneering identity. The Chinese theme enabled

600 Hage, White Nation, p.246.
the festival site to be moved from the Captain Cook Weir Park next to the Museum to the smaller Anderson Park next to the Information Centre.

Figure 16: Private collector’s stall at the 2014 Lambing Flat Chinese Festival. Photo: Karen Schamberger.

At the main festival site, it was a private collector who had a stall with gold rush relics and a photo of the Lambing Flat banner (Fig.16). The Museum did not have an official presence there, although the private collector directed people to the Museum if asked about the banner. Metaphorically erasing the museum and its pioneer narratives in this way made it possible for the Council to monopolise ‘cultural spaces’ for the inclusion of Chinese Australians, rather than share it with the ‘White pioneer’ identifying Museum volunteers. This made it
harder for Chinese Australians from outside of town to see the unequal power relationship between themselves and the Council. They would only see the Museum as being less inclusive than the Council.

Figure 17: China exhibition, Lambing Flat Folk Museum, April 2014. Photo: Karen Schamberger.

During the Festival, the Museum volunteers attempted to counter this move by creating a ‘cultural space’ for inclusion of Chinese Australians with a temporary China exhibition in the Museum (Fig.17). However, while they could copy the cosmopolite technique of valuing culture they did not have access to the ‘political spaces of inclusion’ that Lowe Kelley and some other Chinese Australians want. But the Museum did represent a kind of ‘regional’ authenticity by including objects, particularly souvenirs, from the volunteers and books about the historical presence of Chinese people in Young and the region. One of the
newer volunteers who initiated the *China* exhibition, Marilyn Stemm, also expressed an interest in researching Chinese Australians in Young which would further develop the representation of regionally authentic Chinese Australian history in this museum.  

The pioneer identifying Museum volunteers also worry about another group of people who share an Australian pioneer identity and use imagery from the banner. Sandra Jenner, the 2014 Secretary of the Young Historical Society is particularly aware of the danger that the banner represents. She does not ‘have a problem as long as we haven’t got all of the Nazis or something running through the place saying “No Chinese.”’ It is these modern-day racists that the museum volunteers construct as a contemporary ‘them’. Jenner’s fears are justified as at least one far right political group does use imagery from the banner in order to justify their racist views. For them, the banner triggers ‘positive intimations’ of nostalgic feelings and memories for an imagined and idealised past when ‘white’ people removed Chinese people from Australia and acts as a call to action. Jim Saleam, the leader and founder of National Action, a far right political party that had protested against the Chinese Tribute Garden in 1996 and 1997, formed the Australia First Party (AFP) in 1996. An offshoot of

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601 Interview with Marilyn Stemm, Young, 9 April 2014.
602 Interview with Sandra Jenner, Young, 07 April 2014.
603 Hage, Migration, ‘Food, Memory, and Home-Building’, p.420.
the AFP, the Australian Protectionist Party was created soon after. On a website *Ironbark resources* set up in 1998 and now run by the Australian Protectionist Party, there are ‘educational’ resources about Australian national identity and culture which ‘offer criticism of mass immigration, multiculturalism, Asianisation and Islamification as major threats to our environment, our people and our way of life’. One of those educational resources is an extract of Frank Clune’s *Wild Colonial Boys*, which is titled ‘The Birth of White Australia — The Battle of Lambing Flat’. This harks back to the early 20th century when the collective foundation myth of the riots being the Birth of White Australia was created in order to inspire collective pride in a White Australian national identity for the people of NSW and particularly the town of Young.

The image used on the title page of the extract uses the imagery of St George and the Dragon from Eastern Orthodox Christian origins, to portray the battle between the ‘white’ miners and Chinese miners in an Australian bush setting. The imagery also includes convict markings like the broad arrow placed to the left of the words ‘The Birth of White Australia’. The crossed pickaxe and shovel to the left of ‘The Battle of Lambing Flat’ represent mining and the crossed swords to the right represent conflict or battle. The Chinese miners in this image are not even people, they are a ‘them’ represented by a


607 *ibid.*
stereotypically designed Chinese dragon. The ‘white’ miners are represented by a white muscular man wearing a Ned Kelly style helmet on a horse. He carries a flag featuring the St Andrew’s cross and the four stars of the Southern Cross that make up the centrepiece of the Lambing Flat ‘No Chinese’ banner. He uses it to slay the Chinese dragon—metaphorically defeating and removing Chinese people from Australia.

This image, appropriating the banner’s central design, indicates just how strongly symbolic the banner and the riots have become for a vision of an imagined white Australia and the desire for a white Australian national identity amongst some Australians with a pioneer identity. Both the local council as a ‘white cosmopolite’ and the Museum as representing a pioneer identity condemn and distance themselves from this group of Australians.
The display of the banner at the Museum is no less complex however, as an analysis of this history makes clear. While the volunteers did their best to ‘other’ the riots and the banner in order to cope with their cognitive dissonance they also engaged in their own ‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’ through their exhibitions. The banner was placed in this specially constructed exhibition case in 1983 (Fig.18) after advice and assistance from the Museums Association of Australian Inc. and paintings, objects and labels were added to the display over the years by the volunteers, including a Chinese translation of the story of

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the riots in the early 2000s. There were also reproductions of images from the *Harvest of Endurance Scroll* near the door (Fig. 18).

There was a handwritten label above the ‘No’ on the banner, possibly from 1983 or earlier, which gave a summary of its use and the reasons for why the European miners rioted and included a description of the worst of the riots in June 1861 (Fig. 18). On this label the Museum called the miners a ‘militant mob’ — distancing the Museum and visitors from ‘them’. This displaced responsibility for the violence away from the leaders of the Miners Protection League. ‘A militant mob took the proceedings out of the hands of the leaders.’ The label also did not hold back in detailing the violence meted out to the Chinese miners. ‘The mob set upon the Chinese, handling them roughly whilst their pigtails were cut off. Their tents, clothing and furniture were set afire and their mining implements destroyed.’ The riots and the banner were included in the exhibition but the ‘militant mob’ and Chinese miners were distanced from being like the volunteers and the visitors to the Museum.

The volunteers also expressed cognitive dissonance when talking about the banner in 2006, when this photo was taken. In explaining why the Museum applied for and received a Community Heritage Grant to preserve the banner, Joyce Simpson, then President of the Young Historical Society said that the banner should be preserved ‘not for what it once represented, but as a symbol

\[610\] Interview with Barbara Brennan, Young, 8 April 2014.
of “the rubbish we left behind”. A few days later in the Young Witness newspaper she was quoted as saying

I’ve been trying to figure out what the flag means. To me it means friendship with these people, a shared experience. Everybody’s equal. I hope that’s how people see it today. We have to tell this end of the story, that we’re glad to have the flag and the benefits it’s had making a bond between us and the Chinese.

We can see Simpson’s cognitive dissonance between wanting to leave the unpleasant events behind — in ‘another time’ and wanting to be able to have pride in having the object that symbolises ‘a bond between us and the Chinese’. She wanted it to symbolise friendship because that is how she understood she should treat the ‘other’ under the social and political framework of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, as it is currently practiced in Australia, does not provide any guidance on how to deal with negative cross-cultural interactions in the past or present. The problem here is that the banner does symbolise ‘a shared experience’ between Chinese and non-Chinese people but that experience is not friendship. The words ‘No Chinese’ on the banner cannot allow this. The people of Young, including the museum volunteers and the Young Shire Council, are left to work this out for themselves, so far resulting in Hage’s

611 O’Malley, ‘Flagging Fortunes of a Banner to Barbarism’.
‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’ based on the difficult binary relations of ‘us’ and ‘others’ and sometimes ‘us’ and ‘them’. Indeed, it is this unequal power relationship that Tom Me, What Young and Que You wanted to challenge in their 1861 petition for compensation and it is also this unequal power relationship that Lowe Kelley and other Chinese Australians wanted addressed when they called for an apology for the anti-Chinese immigration legislation.

The volunteers of the Museum continued to engage in their own ‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’ through the new exhibition about the early mining days of Young, ‘Raising the Colour’ – redeveloped by a professional curator in 2007. Sandra Jenner, the 2014 Secretary of the Young Historical Society explained the dissonance of this heritage and the banner for her.

I found it terribly awkward up there when I first started to volunteer. When you walk into that room and here’s this ‘Roll up, Roll up, No Chinese’ specially when Chinese people came in...

...But I just say to the Chinese people when they come ‘this is our history, this is not how we feel now, you are most welcome’ and make a joke of it, sort of thing. But I’m sure that must hurt them. I mean, if I walked into a place and it says “Roll up, Roll up, No Australians.” I’d be put out; you would be too, wouldn’t you?613

613 Interview with Sandra Jenner.
Jenner feels awkward about the banner. Like Simpson, Jenner, deals with the cognitive dissonance between the riots and the political framework of multiculturalism by ‘othering’ the events when she said that ‘this is our history, this is not how we feel now, you are most welcome’. Jenner’s statement also reiterates another continuing problem — the division between Chinese and Australian. Jenner and Simpson, like many people in Young, including the Young Shire Council, find it difficult to understand that it is possible to be both Chinese and Australian at the same time.

Aware of the multicultural framework that the Museum needs to operate within, volunteers at the Museum interpret the banner with a great degree of caution. The awkwardness and perhaps the awfulness of having to interpret the banner also shows in the way it has been reproduced on the Museum’s most recent postcard (Fig. 19). Jenner described the occasion when she was asked to create postcards of the banner and the reason she chose to put the ‘Roll Up’ phrase at the top — ‘I couldn’t even put it around the way the Chinese read.’ Jenner appears to have found the words on the banner so repulsive that turning it sideways was her way of controlling its power. ‘I don’t like to hurt people ... there is good Chinese and there’s bad Chinese but the majority of them are damned good and I don’t want to hurt their feelings, that’s how I feel.’ However, it includes an image of a ‘white’ digger but not a Chinese one so the words on the banner magnify the erasure of a Chinese presence at Lambing Flat.

\[614\] ibid.
\[615\] ibid.
again. The back of the postcard interprets the riots in a critical way but it also is detached in tone and like the current exhibition provides a safe and non-emotional description of the events, the banner and its acquisition by the Young Historical Society.

Figure 19: ‘Greetings from the Lambing Flat Folk Museum’, postcard, 2000s. Source: Lambing Flat Folk Museum.
In the 2007 exhibition the racism of the banner is also dealt with by turning it sideways so that visitors read the introductory panels and timeline before turning around to be confronted with the words ‘No Chinese’ (Fig.20). It is both included in the exhibition space by displaying it with information and excluded by physically reducing its affective power. This demonstrates the continuing effect of collective and popular memory and the cognitive dissonance involved in attempting to communicate the banner’s significance and place in
Young’s history while, at the same time, attempting to contain the banner’s overt racism.

In the current exhibition, there are eight panels that describe Young’s development from a goldfield to a town. The panel called ‘Xin Jin Shan – New Gold Mountain’ attempts to explain why the Chinese miners were subject to violence and racism. By stating that racism was generally common in the 19th century and not acknowledging how this affects the present day, the panel makes it easier for both the museum and the visitor to cope with these terrible events because they are located in ‘another time’. The Chinese miners are described as hard workers — a quality that visitors are assumed to value — so the Chinese are included for their work ethic but their voices are not. The non-Chinese miners are almost excused of their actions because of their ignorance — they show ‘another set of values’.

The voices of Chinese and non-Chinese miners also do not appear in the exhibition panels. First person quotations come from authorities like the NSW government — condemnation the actions of the rioters. This ‘others’ the rioters and makes it impossible for the visitor to critically examine everyone’s role in the riots — including the government. While the diggers used picks and shovels as weapons, the government and police used the law to segregate the field, failed to enforce protection of the Chinese which they were entitled to under British law of the day and accused many Chinese miners of fraud when they petitioned for compensation for damages incurred during the riots.
The panel includes recollections of Chinese people by the museum volunteers — both past and present but there is nothing included from a Chinese person in Young — either a historical perspective or the perspective of a descendant. While Max Quay, whom I mentioned earlier, is a member of the historical society, he no longer volunteers at the Museum due to his health. However, like the pre-2007 exhibition, the Museum volunteers have added to the current exhibition or put back objects, images and other information relating to gold, the early days or Young and the Chinese. This includes a Chinese Australian perspective from outside the town in the reproduction of scenes from the *Harvest of Endurance Scroll*. Amongst a pile of laminated photocopies on a table in the exhibition is a petition for compensation by Kew Loong Pow for damages incurred during the December 1860 riot.\(^{616}\) In 2014, it was the only acknowledgement of a historical and local Chinese voice in the Museum and in Young. The professionally laid out exhibition did not include Chinese perspectives but the antiquarian nature of the Museum volunteers collecting and display practices did. Since I undertook fieldwork for this dissertation, the *Gold Trails* website has been updated and in a section on Chinese heritage in Young it mentions ‘Ah Geang, Quey, Ah Sing and Seng Chai’ who were ‘the first freehold title holders of land within the town of Young and surrounding areas’. The website also mentioned that some Chinese men stayed on in Young and

‘[t]heir descendants are members of our society today’. So perhaps things are
beginning to change.

Conclusion

The Museum in its exhibition in 2014, like the Young Shire Council in its
Festival, and Tribute Gardens, participates in the ‘dialectic of inclusion and
exclusion’ developed through multiculturalism without fully enabling local and
historical Chinese Australian perspectives to be heard on their own terms,
although the volunteers’ collecting methods and the Gold Trails website
contradict that in a limited way. It is through including the multiple perspectives
of the all the historical actors involved in the riots — Chinese and non-Chinese
miners as well as government authorities and police — that the ‘us’ and ‘them’
relations that the banner reinforces can be examined in the present and the
possibilities of me and the transversal ‘us’ relations could be explored. From the
1980s onwards we see the town of Young becoming a ‘contact zone’ where
successive contemporary Chinese Australian ‘others’, meet with contemporary
‘white cosmopolites’ and ‘white’ pioneers and establish ongoing, unequal and
complex relations both in the museum and outside of it — culminating in the
Lambing Flat Chinese Festival and the riots re-enactment in 2014. There is still a
tension between the people who control the ‘dialectic of inclusion and exclusion’
and the ways in which those who are being included and/ or excluded work with

chinese-heritage/, retrieved 6 February 2016.
and against this ‘dialectic’ in order to claim their rightful place as Australians. The banner, as a physical reminder of these riots, acts as a mediator in these relations over time, moving from being a provocative and shameful object in zone 3 in ‘The Art-Culture System’ into zone 2 where it is still shocking but valued simultaneously as a historical relic of the riots. The Museum, like the Young Shire Council, avoids explaining how the riots have become linked to the White Australia Policy. The people of NSW mythologised the Lambing Flat riots as the birth of White Australia shortly after Federation primarily through cultural carriers of myth like film, memoirs, art and literature. But after World War II this became an inconvenient and dissonant foundation myth which troubled official, scholarly, cultural and organisational carriers of memory. This foundation myth was almost totally and collectively discarded, much like the White Australia Policy itself. But the collective and popular memories of this myth, just like the legacies of the White Australia Policy and the Lambing Flat riots, haunt this nation still. The banner will not let us forget.
Chapter 5: Culture, history, politics — The gamelan Digul 1927 – 2016

Figure 21: The remaining instruments of the gamelan Digul, arranged in playing position by Dr. Aline Scott-Maxwell, Monash University, 1998. Photo: Shannon Mattinson, Monash University. In Kartomi, The Gamelan Digul, p.38.

A Mr W.J. Morrison, 180 Exhibition Street, Melbourne offers to present a series of Indonesian native musical instruments.

Mr Keble to inspect the same on Monday Aug 26, 1946.

To please phone Mr. Morrison on 26.8.46 before calling at the address recorded above.

M.J.M 24.8.46

The gamelan’s arrival in Australia occurred at a major turning point in Australian-Indonesian relations, when the two neighbouring peoples discovered each other for the first time under severe wartime conditions. Australian support for the Indonesian struggle against colonial rule brought the two peoples closer together. Thus the gamelan Digul may be regarded as a potent symbol of friendship between the peoples of Australia and Indonesia. It is hoped it will long continue to remain so.\(^{619}\)

Post-World War II refugees from Europe found new homes in Australia. Their arrival was a counterpoint to the departure of sojourners and Indonesian refugees who had spent the war years in Australia after fleeing Japanese troops.\(^{620}\)

This exhibition outlines Australian support for the Indonesian Republic between 1945 and 1949. This period of strong connections between Australia and Indonesia has often been forgotten in both nations since.\(^{621}\)

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\(^{620}\) NMA File: 05/1390, Exhibition Brief, section 5.3.3.

\(^{621}\) Introductory text panel, *Black Armada*, ANMM, August 2015.
There is only one page in the records of the former National Museum of Victoria (NMV) that refers to the acquisition of the ‘Indonesian native musical instruments’. These are a set of musical instruments known in Javanese as a gamelan. The people mentioned on the Museum note were W.J. Morrison who was a member of the Communist Party of Australia at the time of the donation and Mr Keble who was the Museum’s geologist and palaeontologist who accepted the instruments into the collection. M.J.C. Malone (M.J.M.), who is also referred to in the note was the Museum’s clerk.

The second quotation is from a book written by Professor Margaret Kartomi who is an ethnomusicologist specialising in the study of Indonesian traditional music. She acquired the gamelan for the Department of Music at Monash University in 1976. Using information from Indonesians in Australia and in Indonesia she reassembled three intertwined stories concerning the gamelan, its maker and the beginnings of complex and ‘sometimes fluctuating’ cultural and political ties between Indonesians and Australians from the 1940s that continue to today.622

The third quotation is from the Australian Journeys Exhibition Brief at the National Museum of Australia (NMA). The Museum’s Exhibition Brief set out the exhibition’s themes and storylines in a loosely chronological order which the curators would research and identify objects to illustrate. The NMA borrowed two instruments from the gamelan orchestra for its long term exhibition,

622 Kartomi, *The gamelan digul*, p.73.
Australian Journeys (retitled Journeys in 2013). Before its retitling, this exhibition traced ‘the passages of people to, from and across the Australian continent and examine[d] how migrants, sojourners, tourists and travellers have built and maintained connections between places in Australia and places overseas’.  

The last quotation was part of the introductory panel in the Black Armada: Australian support in upholding Indonesian independence exhibition at the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM), which opened in August 2015. The exhibition focused on celebrating the 70th anniversary of the declaration of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945 and highlighted Australia’s role in supporting Indonesian independence particularly through maritime trade union blockades of Dutch ships in Australian ports from late 1945. The ANMM borrowed one instrument from the gamelan Digul to demonstrate this connection between Australia and Indonesia.

In this case study, there are four institutional ‘contact zones’, in James Clifford’s terminology, where the ‘push and pull’ of exchanges and interpretations of objects and their meanings happen — the NMV, the Department of Music at Monash University, the NMA and the ANMM. In the ‘contact zones’ of each of these institutions, according to literary theorist Mary Louise Pratt, a number of actors from geographically and historically different locations encounter each other and establish ongoing unequal and often


624 Clifford, Routes, pp. 192-193.
conflicting relations. These actors include people and organisations as well as government and institutional policies and requirements, all of which constitute a network of actions that embed the gamelan and each other within a complex field of power relations.

This chapter will reassemble the object biography of this gamelan by following the people, organisations and government and institutional policies and practices with which it has come into contact through its journey in and out of the institutions of the NMV, Monash University, the NMA and the ANMM. At all four institutions we can see the ways in which ‘culture’ is defined and used to interact with and represent the ‘other’ and thus relations between what Yuval-Davis describes as ‘me’/‘us’ and the many ‘others’. Sometimes this is at the expense of history which can reveal different types of identity relations, such as antagonistic ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘them’ or cross-cultural connections — ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’ relations.

Ethnology and the National Museum of Victoria 1946-1976

According to Lila Abu-Lughoud, ‘[c]ulture is the essential tool for making other. As a professional discourse that elaborates on the meaning of culture in order to account for, explain, and understand cultural difference, anthropology also helps construct, produce, and maintain it’. When the gamelan arrived at

625 Pratt, p.8.
the NMV, it was accepted on the basis of its cultural attributes as an example of ‘Indonesian native musical instruments’. The gamelan was placed in the Ethnology collection at the Museum. Ethnology is the comparison of the characteristics of different cultures. It uses the information gathered by ethnographers about specific cultures. Ethnography and ethnology are branches of anthropology which were used to frame objects and collections from other cultures in museums. Most of the items that the NMV located in the Ethnology collection were collected in the field amongst Australian Aboriginal communities, in South East Asia, the Pacific, Africa and other parts of the world as well as the result of exchanges with other museums in other colonial countries.627 Like most Australian museums at the time, the NMV, was narrowly scientific and did not concern itself with the history or culture of its own communities, but often represented other cultures as primitive or exotic.628 This explains the use of the word ‘native’ in the note quoted above. These types of objects were collected to educate the Australian population about themselves and they contrasted the collective and civilised ‘us’ with the many less civilised ‘others’. The placement of the gamelan in the Ethnology collection indicates that it was seen as a specimen of a culture and a people from somewhere else, despite its continued use in Australia. Its historical attributes (discussed below) were not recorded and were thus forgotten. The materials used to make the gamelan, which are unusual,


being made of food tins and recycled timber and not delicately carved timber with brass or iron keys and gongs indicate that it was not an object that an ethnographer or an ethnologist would usually have collected at this point in time as they were interested in the typical representative object not the unusual one. Nor is it the usual ethnographic artefact to be located in another colonial museum. So how and why did it enter the NMV’s collection?

The Museum was understaffed and underfunded at the time of the gamelan’s acquisition and Australian Ethnology was the main focus of the Museum.629 There was no ethnologist on staff during World War II. The note quoted at the beginning of this chapter is a phone message to Alexander Robert Keble who was a geologist and palaeontologist at the NMV between 1928 and his retirement in 1949. While he had an interest in music, liking the musicals of Gilbert and Sullivan, he did not demonstrate expertise in musical instruments of other cultures or in ethnographic or ethnological collections.630 It is likely that Keble was the only curatorial staff member around at the time of the offer of the gamelan. Perhaps he accepted the gamelan, thinking that when an Ethnologist was employed at the museum in the future, they would know what it was and how to interpret it. In 1949, the NMV appointed its first university educated

629 ibid, p.208.
ethnologist, Donald J. Tugby. His interest at this time was on collecting artefacts from and studying Australian Aboriginal people and their cultures. As was typical of the time he was interested in collecting artefacts and interviewing elders because they were dying out. He was also interested in Indigenous peoples of South East Asia. However, he did not appear to have been interested in the collection of unusual-looking Indonesian musical instruments in his institution’s collection.

W.J. Morrison, known as Jim or Jack, who is mentioned in the note as offering the Museum the ‘Indonesian native musical instruments’, was a member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and was also a Secretary of the Australia Indonesia Association (AIA) in 1946. He was ‘one of the first victims of the mass sackings of the early depression days in 1930’. This experience encouraged Morrison into political activism and membership of the CPA. He stood as the CPA candidate in a NSW by-election in 1931 and Federal and Victorian Municipal elections in 1934, 1953 and 1955. As a CPA candidate, he

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635 ibid.

636 ‘Annandale Seat’, SMH, 16 April 1931, p.9; University of Melbourne Archives, Communist Party of Australia, Victorian State Committee, 1976.0028, Item 22/1 CPA Local Government:
advocated for the ‘a seven hour working day and a five day working week’, an increase in wages and the ‘abolition of the White Australia Policy’. He appears to have been interested in activism and solidarity amongst working class people across cultures and countries — Yuval-Davis’ ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’ relations.

According to the note in the Museum’s archives, the instruments were to have been picked up from Eureka Hall which belonged to the CPA. The AIA, whose name was also written on the note and the CPA worked closely together. Indonesian nationals in Melbourne and some sympathetic Australians established the AIA (Victorian Branch) in response to Soekarno’s declaration of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia on 17 August 1945. The stated aims for the AIA were to assist Indonesians in their struggle for independence. There were three arguments put forward by the AIA, CPA and the Indonesian Independence Committee to encourage Australians to support Indonesian independence. These were

*A strong, free, democratic Indonesia is essential to Australian defence. You remember how the Japs advanced with little resistance in 1942. Why? Because the millions of colonial peoples were neither armed nor free.... Freedom for Indonesia means strong Indonesian trade unions... A free Indonesia, and


638 MV Archives, File CM/087/36, Telephone message from M.J. Malone to Mr Keble, 24 August 1946.
better standards of living there would also mean markets for
Australian goods and jobs for Australians....Today we support
Indonesian trade unionists, tomorrow we may want them to
support us.639

The expressions of solidarity by the unionists, Communists and Indonesian
Nationalists were founded in similarities based on class and position as workers.
By using only culture as the interpretative frame through which to view the
gamelan, the NMV missed the historical expression of solidarity between
different peoples, and failed to document the perspectives of these different
peoples involved in transversal ‘us’ relations. In the process it also continued to
‘other’ the presence of non-British people on Australian soil by focusing on their
difference rather than recognising points of contact.

W.J. Morrison, possibly met Jack Zackaria, the only Indonesian mentioned
on the Museum note above, through the AIA. Zackaria was a leader and
organiser of the Melbourne branch of the Indonesian Independence Committee
which was formed in 1944. The Committee organised and participated in many
public meetings which attracted a lot of public attention and support for
Indonesian independence.640 Both Morrison and Zackaria spoke at these

639 University of Melbourne Archives, Communist Party of Australia, Victorian State Committee,
Indonesian Independence’ Authorised by FD Kelley, Acting Secretary Labour Council NSW Trades
Hall Sydney, 194?. Bold italics in original document.

640 G Erbacher, ‘From Prison Camp to Monash’, Australia Indonesia Association Journal, August
1981, p.9
events.\textsuperscript{641} It is through the relationship between Morrison and Zackaria that the offer of the gamelan was made to the Museum. The typed note has handwritten additional information in which

\begin{quote}
Mr Morrison states that he will arrange with Mr Zackaria ...

one of the Indonesians, to call at the museum and show us

how the instruments are set up if we contact him before

Friday. After that date we can communicate with Mr Zackaria himself.\textsuperscript{642}
\end{quote}

Zackaria had been imprisoned by the Dutch East Indies government for his role in the 1926 Java uprising against Dutch rule.\textsuperscript{643} He had arrived in Australia in 1943 as part of a group of political activists who had campaigned against Dutch colonial rule. They had been imprisoned by the Dutch East Indies government at Tanah Merah, in what is now West Papua and evacuated to Australia when Japan invaded the Dutch East Indies. In Australia, they continued their political activities. However, after the end of World War II, the Indonesians were expected to leave Australia as the White Australia Policy was still in place. The government considered the Indonesians as ‘them’ — people who did not

\begin{itemize}
  \item MV Archives, File CM/087/36, Telephone message from M.J. Malone to Mr Keble, 24 August 1946.
  \item Erbacher, p.9.
\end{itemize}
belong in White Australia. Zackaria had been issued with the deportation order in 1945 after failing a Gaelic language test, administered under the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*.644

It was while in this predicament, that some of the Indonesians, including Zackaria made the decision to leave the gamelan in Australia. We can speculate that perhaps because the Indonesians were leaving willingly in some cases or being deported in other cases to an uncertain fate in Indonesia, they chose to leave the gamelan in a safe place. The gamelan would have been highly valued by the Indonesians because of its spiritual power and also because they deeply respected its maker.645 Placing it at the Museum could also have been a political act — it was made and used by Indonesian independence activists who were returning to an Indonesia still partially under Dutch occupation. As Pearce stated, it is the desire for immortality or to prevent forgetting of themselves, events or experiences, that that inspire people to collect and preserve objects.646 Perhaps the Indonesians wanted their political actions and their presence in Australia to be remembered. Perhaps there were afraid that the Dutch authorities would damage or destroy the instruments when they returned to Indonesia. It is also possible that there was no-one left with the expertise to continue using the instruments or the ability to carry these instruments back to Indonesia. They might have known about the NMV and turned to their

645 *ibid.*, p.83.
646 Pearce, p.248.
Australian-born friends like Morrison to assist them. Or possibly Morrison or another member of the CPA may have suggested the NMV as a safe place to deposit the gamelan. Morrison, as a person born and brought up in Australia would have had what Crane termed, ‘a shared “museal consciousness”’ and understood that museums were places of preservation. He may have known that the NMV had ethnographic collections and displays of cultures from Asia and the Pacific. So Morrison called the Museum, they picked up the instruments and in November 1946 Zackaria advised the Museum on how to set up the instruments.

In December 1946, Zackaria was arrested and deported to Indonesia. His Australian-born wife Jean was not officially advised of his arrest, nor was she allowed to return to Indonesia with him. She was not officially informed of his death from natural causes soon after his return to Indonesia. The White Australia policy, which Morrison and the Communist Party opposed, ensured that almost all of the Indonesian political prisoners who were in Australia at the time, were compulsorily repatriated or deported, denied residency and citizenship in Australia. Their musical instruments remained in Australia, disconnected from the community that had made and used them.

Museum staff at the time of the gamelan’s donation did not have the knowledge, expertise or possibly interest, to understand its history and significance. The story of its arrival was not recorded and the instruments were

647 Crane, p.2.
never formally accessioned into the Museum’s collection. But the Museum did understand some of its cultural significance. The staff knew that the gamelan was from Indonesia. They knew that it came from Indonesians who had lived in Australia and they knew how to set up the instruments. However, they did not know where in Indonesia the instruments had come from. Nor did they know who made it, the circumstances of its creation or why it was created. They also did not know who used it or what it was used for. There was thus no way for museum staff to understand its meaning because of this lack of documentation. At this point in time, museum staff did not have the imagination to inquire outside the standard intellectual frameworks of anthropology, ethnography and ethnomusicology. While in the NMV’s collection store, the gamelan instruments were not played, displayed or given any conservation treatment. They had no official status and because of the lack of documentation and the lack of staff members’ curiosity, the Indonesian political activists and any understanding of the gamelan’s historical and political significance were forgotten. The instruments, too, were forgotten until 1976. That changed when the gamelan became an object of interest to an ethnomusicologist then researching Indonesian music and setting up a new Music Archive at Monash University.

Perhaps it was because of the reputation of the Monash University Department of Music’s collection as well as the concerts of Indonesian music organised by the Department, that the NMV asked the Department of Music to inspect the instruments in March 1976. When Margaret Kartomi, an
ethnomusicologist from the Department inspected the gamelan instruments she found that

\[\text{it is an incomplete group of improvised instruments made partly with old gerry cans and pots. As such it is not representative of a real bronze gamelan orchestra such as the one we possess at Monash. It is not suitable for display as a gamelan, nor are the individual instruments suitable for display.}\]  

Kartomi, an Ethnomusicologist specialising in Indonesian music, immediately understood that these instruments were not strictly ‘Ethnographic’ or ‘Ethnological’ objects in the traditional sense. The following photo (Fig. 22) illustrates the difference, with an instrument from the gamelan Digul on the left and the bronze version of the instrument on the right.

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\[649\] MV Archives, File CM/087/36, Letter from Margaret Kartomi to Director, Museum of Victoria, 5 March 1976.
At the time, the curator of anthropology at the NMV wrote that ‘[t]he gamelan does not appear to be registered. It is a non-traditional item and is taking up valuable space. I suggest that we arrange for the piece to go to the Monash Music Department’.\textsuperscript{650} He later recalled that ‘I think it was a fairly modern gamelan and we were then still in the groove of things having to be “old” to warrant being in the collection’.\textsuperscript{651} Both Kartomi’s and the curator’s comments point to ideas about tradition and the value of ‘old’ things common to

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{650} \textit{ibid.,} Note from Curator of Anthropology to Director, Museum of Victoria, 9 March 1976.
\item \textsuperscript{651} \textit{ibid.,} Email from former Curator of Anthropology to then current museum staff member Tue 22 December 1998.
\end{footnotes}
scholarship within museums at the time as well as to notions of authenticity. A non-traditionally made gamelan was thus not authentic. It would fall into the inauthentic half of ‘The Art-Culture System’, particularly into segment 3 which is ‘not-culture’ and includes fakes, inventions and ready-mades (Fig. 2). Kartomi’s comments particularly point to an interest in objects from the elite — bronze gamelans come from the royal courts of various cities in Indonesia; while iron gamelans were made for and by ordinary people. The gamelan Digul appeared to be neither.

The NMV did not employ a social historian at the time of the disposal of the gamelan and this is reflected in the comments and the understandable interests of the curator of anthropology who was concerned about a lack of space and did not know about the historical significance of the gamelan. This was not unusual at the time. As the Pigott report into Australian museums in 1975 noted, there was an absence of social history in the major museums. However, historical objects had filtered into public museums throughout their history but were often not catalogued to the standard that the Pigott report recommended as can be seen in the case of the gamelan. While the themes of migration and cultural diversity were picked up in the general awakening of interest in Australian social history in museums from the late 1970s, it was not until the 1980s that the Museum of Victoria (the institution formed by the

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652 Pearce, On Collecting, p.288.
Kartomi, however, did see a use for the gamelan orchestra for teaching purposes. ‘At Monash we could possibly renovate some of the frames and add bronze kettles to make it a playable set, although this may take years of work.’

As the gamelan had never been formally accessioned into the collection at the NMV, it was not formally de-accessioned. The gamelan had come to the NMV as a set of 19 musical instruments and it left as a set of 15 instruments. The remaining instruments of the gamelan were transported to the Department of Music in 1976. When the gamelan arrived at Monash University it was missing a rebab (bowed string instrument), a kendhang (larger drum), a ketipung (smaller drum) and suling (bamboo flute) and a saron demung pelog. It is unclear exactly which instruments went missing from the NMV.

Kartomi is the link between the two institutions or ‘contact zones’ of the NMV and the Music Archive of Monash University (MAMU). The act of moving the gamelan is then a node which connects the actors — Kartomi as an Ethnomusicologist, the Department of Music at Monash University, including MAMU, the curator of Anthropology, and also the NMV within ‘The Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2).
Politics and ‘identity relations’: Department of Music, Monash University 1976 - present

It was only when Kartomi brought the gamelan to Monash University that the history of its creation and use became understood. Through her personal and the university’s connections with Indonesians in Melbourne she was able to reassemble the biography of the gamelan and give weight to both its cultural and historical significance. It is her research and activities that move the gamelan from the inauthentic zone in ‘The Art-Culture System’ into the authentic zone and thus enables the gamelan to be valued for the knowledge or history that was embodied within it (Fig.2). By documenting and publicising both the gamelan’s cultural and historical significance, Kartomi also re-invigorated the political dimensions of the gamelan Digul. As scholarly carriers of memories, her publications and exhibitions of the gamelan through Monash University recovered and shaped cultural and collective memories of the gamelan’s maker, the Indonesian independence movement and Australia’s role in Indonesian independence.

Cultural significance

The instruments themselves revealed their cultural significance and also hinted at their historical significance. In 1977, various instruments from the
gamelan were repaired\textsuperscript{658} and Kartomi continued her research. To understand the gamelan’s physical features Kartomi employed her own understanding of Indonesian instruments as well as BP Poedijono, a Monash University gamelan lecturer, Dr. Aline Scott Maxwell, a Monash University ethnomusicologist and BP. Al Suwardi, a gamelan teacher from Sekolah Tingi Seni, Indonesia to assist with identifying and arranging the gamelan instruments into various playing positions. BP Poedijono also taught some of the students to play the instruments. BP Poedijono and BP Al. Suwardi played the instruments individually in 1981 and 1999 respectively, and these performances were recorded. BP Sudarsono a gamelan musician of Krajan, Solo Jebres also advised Kartomi about the layout and condition of the instruments and identified some of the difficult instruments. Also in 1979, BP Poedijono arranged the instruments in one possible playing position, shown in the photograph at the beginning of this chapter (Fig.21). \textsuperscript{659}

Kartomi found that the orchestra provided evidence of the construction of iron gamelans in the 1920s. The instruments are tuned to two different pentatonic tone-systems called \textit{slendro} and \textit{pelog}. It also has a high-pitched tuning called \textit{tumbuk 6} which is commonly used in the gamelans in the villages around Surakarta. No two gamelans are tuned exactly alike but there are similarities within particular regions. According to Kartomi, the tuning is very


\textsuperscript{659} Kartomi, \textit{The gamelan digul}, pp.80-85.
similar to the new gamelan that the Department of Music purchased in Surakarta in 1973. The gamelan was probably tuned regularly because the tunings of gamelans take time to stabilise but, as she realised later, it was unlikely that it was tuned after the maker left it in 1932. This is because of the deep respect with which the gamelan and its maker were held and also because gamelans are thought to emit a spiritual power. The quality of its tuning is such that it remains a rare example of the tunings of gamelans made in Surakarta in the 1920s by master gamelan makers. However, the strange appearance of the gamelan — made out of found objects like pots and timber from packing cases indicated that it was more than just an example of a 1920s Surakarta iron gamelan.

**Historical significance**

Monash University already had a link to the person who knew some of the gamelan’s history. In 1969, Herbert Feith, a political scientist in the Centre of South East Asian Studies at Monash University organised a conference about the Indonesian revolution and lead up to independence from Dutch colonial rule in 1945-49. Raden Moenander who had been a member of a nationalist youth organisation in Indonesia in the 1920s was one of those speakers. He was arrested by the Dutch colonial government in 1930 and then interned at Boven Digul, now in West Papua, in 1931. Tanah Merah was the main camp at Boven

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660 *ibid.*
Digul and Moenander remained there until evacuated with other Indonesian prisoners to Australia in 1941. As part of his presentation, Moenander spoke about life in Tanah Merah and mentioned that

the gamelan played almost every Saturday and at any other time if the players felt like it. Yes, sometimes I could forget that I was interned when I sat on my front verandah listening to the soft melodious sound of the gamelan deep in the night.661

The gamelan at Bovel Digul gave the Indonesian political prisoners a sense of comfort and solidarity with each other, consolidating the bonds between ‘me’ and ‘us’ during their imprisonment. He also talked about the move to Australia and the activities of his fellow Tanah Merah prisoners in Melbourne: ‘the gamelan was taught by a Javanese expert who in 1943 led his group in giving a recital at the Hotel Metropole in Melbourne’.662 This comment was a hint of the existence of the ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’ relations which Kartomi would soon uncover.

In 1969 and also in 1976 when Kartomi spoke with Moenander, he was working for the Indonesian section of Radio Australia. As the only Indonesian political prisoner who had remained in Australia, Moenander provided Kartomi

661 R Moenandar in Indonesian nationalism and revolution; six first-hand accounts: Addresses given at the one-day seminar on Indonesian history held at Monash University on 12 July, 1969, Monash University, Clayton, 1971 repr., p.8.

662 ibid., pp.8-9.
with the first clues of the history of the gamelan and the reason for its strange appearance. Kartomi’s notes from their conversation are as follows:

A Mr. Pontjopangrawit, well-known musician from Surakarta, Central Java, and a member of the Indonesian Communist party, was exiled by the Dutch to Digul, and prisoners were able to move in and out of the surrounding jungle (which meant, by the way, that some were able to escape).

Over his years in exile, Pontjopangrawit collected pieces of metal, mess bowls, and timber and bamboo from the jungle. With these materials, he made a small gamelan pelog, consisting of a substitute gong (a resonating box with two metal slabs of low pitch which, when struck simultaneously, produce musical beats), gambang, gender, bonang, saron and a pair of drums. They are uncarved, painted green and yellow and rather rough in appearance.

My O. van der Plas of the Dutch East Indies High Commission in Melbourne brought Pontjopangrauit (sic) and a few other musicians, together with the gamelan, to Melbourne in 1942 (sic). They played gamelan on Saturday nights at the Hotel Metropole, Burke Street.

In 1946, the musicians were returned to Indonesia, which was controlled by then by Indonesian nationals. The gamelan was
presented without documentation to the Victorian Museum

where it was held until 1976.663

The gamelan’s creation and life in Indonesia 1928-1942

To uncover the story of the gamelan’s creator, Bp Pontjopangrawit, Kartomi spoke with members of his family, his former students and colleagues, Indonesian musical organisations like the Konservatori Karawitan (Kokar) and the Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia in Surakarta. Also, to uncover more about the Tanah Merah camp and the lives of the prisoners, Kartomi spoke with Pontjopangrawit’s colleagues in Yogyakarta, as well as ex-Digulists in Jakarta and in Melbourne.664

In order to understand the context of the prison camp and the political activities of Pontjopangrawit and the other prisoners, it is useful first, to provide a brief summary of Dutch rule and the development of the Indonesian nationalist movement. The Dutch ruled over the East Indies (parts of present day Indonesia) from the early seventeenth century until the 1940s. At first their main interest was trade, especially in spices, conducted through the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) which was eventually taken over by the Dutch government. The exploitation of land and labour left much of the Javanese


664 Kartomi, The gamelan digul, pp.xix-xxi.
population impoverished but provided the Dutch with large profits. As a consequence, the local population desired to return to their own ways of life within traditional social structures, independent of foreign rule. During the nineteenth century there were local and unsuccessful uprisings.665

The first phase of Indonesian nationalism between 1908 and 1928 was characterised by the transition from local revolts to an independence movement based on the concept of a larger Indonesian society. The Indonesians were forming a collective identity, the ‘me’ and ‘us’ set of identity relations as a rejection of the colonial rule of the Dutch who were seen as ‘them’. A number of political movements and parties emerged such as the SI (The Islamic Union) and the PKI (the Communist Party of Indonesia). In 1926-27 there were violent PKI-instigated rebellions in west Java and west Sumatra that were swiftly put down by the Dutch East Indies government.666 Pontjopangrawit and Jack Zackaria were arrested in the aftermath of these riots.

Pontjopangrawit was born in 1893 to a relatively poor family in Surakarta in Central Java. He became a court musician at the Karaton Surakarta Hadiningrat at the age of twelve. Many of his fellow court musicians had lived in the main gamelan-making district of Kemlayan and he was taught the practical techniques of constructing and repairing gamelan instruments for the palace. In 1914, he also became one of the founding members of the first organisation to

666 *ibid.*, pp.62-63.
revise and reform the practices and rituals of court performing arts — the Pananta Dibya. This organisation combined both of Pontjopangrawit’s passions — music and politics. Pananta Dibya became known for its anti-Dutch feelings, activities and its radicalism and from about 1920 many of its members organised or attended communist and nationalist organisations, including the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), founded in 1920. There were a number of anti-colonial parties during the 1920s and they grew impatient for change, culminating in violent strike actions and revolts in 1926-27. It appears that Pontjopangrawit was not directly involved in the riots but his anti-colonial views were known to the Dutch authorities, so he was arrested in March 1927 and sent to exile in the administrative district of Boven Digul with 1,307 other prisoners.\textsuperscript{667}

Tanah Merah prison camp was at the centre of Boven Digul, about 450 km from the Merauke at the mouth of the Digul River in then Dutch New Guinea. It was inaccessible and isolated in dense jungle. The internees were given food and items like kettles, bed sheets, mosquito nets and kerosene when they arrived at the barracks built for them. They were given tools and told to build their own dwelling on a plot of nearby land, using timber cut from the jungle. They were expected to farm for a living and also to begin building accommodation for more internees. Their families were encouraged to join them in exile.\textsuperscript{668}

\textsuperscript{667} Kartomi, \textit{The gamelan digul}, pp.15-23.
\textsuperscript{668} Lingard, p.65.
According to Kartomi, the Dutch approved and may even have supplied some of the materials to Pontjopangrawit to make the gamelan as it would be a form of ‘domestic entertainment’ in the camp which would supposedly distract the prisoners from their ‘political ambitions’. This may also be why the gamelan was brought to Australia. She also noted that the Dutch may have seen the gamelan as a way to emphasise cultural divisions between the Javanese and non-Javanese in the camp. The gamelan, then, from the Dutch point of view was meant to create ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations between the prisoners. But for the prisoners, the gamelan gave comfort and only served to cement Indonesian ‘us’ versus the Dutch ‘them’ relations.

The gamelan remained at Tanah Merah while Pontjopangrawit was allowed to return home to Java in 1932 and was accepted back into the palace as a musician where he remained until 1948. In the early 1950s, he was honoured by President Soekarno as a perintis Kemerdekaan (freedom pioneer or hero of the Revolution).

The gamelan’s move to Australia 1942 – 49

Utilising Dutch language sources and contacts in the Indonesian community in Australia, including Raden Moenandar and members of the first Australia-Indonesia Association and the meagre documents of the NMV as well

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669 Kartomi, The gamelan digul, pp.32-33.
670 ibid., pp.42-56.
as ex-Digulists in Jakarta, Kartomi was able to piece together the narrative of the Australian connection to the gamelan.

During World War II the Indonesian nationalists were willing to work together with the Dutch. However, it soon became apparent that the Dutch were determined to hold on to their colony, leading to tensions with the Indonesians just as the Japanese invaded. The Netherlands East Indies government surrendered to the Japanese on 9 March 1942, then fled to Australia taking several thousand Indonesians with them, including political prisoners interned at Tanah Merah. The White Australia policy was temporarily waived on the condition that the Indonesians would leave at the Australian government’s expense by six months after the end of the war. The Australian government assisted the Dutch government-in-exile by providing military camps, housing, armaments and officers to train its armed forces, and the Dutch government in exile established a base just outside Brisbane.

For propaganda reasons, the Dutch labelled all of the Digul internees as ‘communist’. This was not strictly true as Digul was used to intern anyone that the Dutch considered a threat. This label was used to hide the fact that there were civilians amongst the prisoners (women and children) and also to ensure

671 Lingard, pp.61-62.
674 Lingard, p.69.
that the Australian government would agree to the detention of political prisoners of a foreign country on Australian soil.\textsuperscript{675}

In total there were 502 Indonesian men, women and children evacuated from Tanah Merah. All the political prisoners arrived on Horn Island Quarantine station in the Torres Strait and there, they exchanged any money for Australian currency and their belongings were placed on a cargo ship, including the gamelan Digul.\textsuperscript{676} The prisoners themselves were placed on Dutch ships and taken to the port of Bowen in north Queensland. Despite their status as prisoners, the Indonesians attempted to change their situation twice by dropping notes to Australians along their journey. The second note was passed on to Mrs Laura Gapp of the Civil Rights League. Gapp and her trade union friends traced the Tanah Merah exiles with the help of Australian soldiers to the Liverpool area internment camp as well as to Compound D of the prisoner of war camp at Cowra.\textsuperscript{677} This action would create the basis of cooperation between Australian and Indonesian people, transversal ‘us’ relations, with the common goal of Indonesian independence.

According to Ibu Ali Dahlan the inmates played the gamelan at Cowra in order to obtain the strength they needed to deal with their situation and maintain their collective identity.\textsuperscript{678} In the meantime, Gapp visited the office of

\textsuperscript{675}ibid., p.74.
\textsuperscript{676} Kartomi, \textit{The gamelan digul}, p.258.
\textsuperscript{678} Kartomi, \textit{The gamelan digul}, p.64 and Lingard, pp.82-83
the Minister for External Affairs and Attorney-General Dr Herbert Evatt who encouraged her campaign for the Indonesians release, which she did. The Australian government realised that it had illegally imprisoned the Indonesians. Misled by the Dutch about the former prisoners from Digul, the Australian government released the prisoners after six months in December 1943.679

A large number of the Indonesian internees were sent to Melbourne to work with other Indonesians for Dutch or Australian organisations, including the Australian army. They were housed at Dutch expense in the Roemah Indonesia (Indonesia House) of the Hotel Metropole near the corner of Elizabeth and Bourke Streets in Melbourne. The gamelan Digul remained with this group of former internees, and as Moenander recalled, was used in performances of Javanese gamelan music, dance and theatre which were regularly presented at the Hotel Metropole, mostly on Friday nights. These performances reinforced the Indonesian’s own cultural practices and experiences, their sense of a collective national ‘us’, while also introducing Australian audiences to Indonesian culture and the campaign for independence.680 The Indonesians used culture to reach out across cultural and ethnic boundaries to communicate their political aims and it worked.

The Indonesians were assisted by Australian citizens such as members of the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) and the CPA, like W. J. Morrison. The

CPA assisted the Indonesian political prisoners, many of whom were Communists, in illicitly re-establishing the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), an Indonesian Communist Party in Australia.\textsuperscript{681} The WWF supported the Indonesian independence activists through a ban on Dutch shipping along the Australian coast in September 1945. This ban involved waterside workers as well as members of 30 other trade unions, including the Chinese Seaman’s Union. The ban was lifted by the WWF in November 1949 after the Dutch agreed to transfer sovereignty to the Indonesian Republic. A total of 559 vessels were held up in Australia over the four year period.\textsuperscript{682} It was not just Indonesians, Chinese and Australians who cooperated in boycotting Dutch shipping because of their desires for ‘international equality of access to justice and fair working conditions’.\textsuperscript{683} Heather Goodall also revealed alliances between the Indian shipping crews and the Indonesians which were based on the commonality of their Islamic faith as well as their desires to throw off their respective colonial masters and become independent nations.\textsuperscript{684}

This solidarity between the Indonesians, Indians, Chinese and Australian people though, was not completely matched by the actions of the Australian government. While the Australian government eventually supported Indonesian

\textsuperscript{681} Lingard, p.104.
\textsuperscript{682} Beasley & ANMM, pp. 127-29.
\textsuperscript{684} \textit{ibid.}, pp.183-89.
independence, it could not support the presence of Indonesian, Chinese and Indian people within Australian borders. They were not just ‘others’, but a ‘them’. At the end of World War II the Australian government enforced the White Australia Policy, deporting many of the Chinese and Indian seamen. A total of 3,768 Indonesians were repatriated to Republican held territory where many continued the struggle for Indonesian independence. These repatriations were sometimes forced, such as the case of Jack Zackaria who had advised the Museum on setting up the gamelan instruments in November 1946. It was because of this historical context that Kartomi felt she could add to its cultural meaning by giving it the name gamelan Digul: ‘Most gamelans have got proper names ... we just refer to it as the gamelan Digul, meaning it’s shorthand for the story of how it was made there and left for Australia.’

Margaret Kartomi’s personal history

Margaret Kartomi in many respects was the ideal person to reconstruct the biography of the gamelan both as an ethnomusicologist and through her social and political awareness which came from her upbringing. As a child in a Quaker family she ‘learnt that Quakers reject judgements of others based on race, class, creed and gender, and that many are pacifists who believe in non-violence, freedom of conscience, and working in the community for peace and

686 Interview with Margaret Kartomi, Monash University, 2 December 2013.
justice’. Her parents took in post-war migrants as boarders from 1950 in order to supplement their income. This included the Yugoslav Imam of the Little Gilbert Street mosque, Ahmed Skaka who introduced them to many international visitors including Indonesian students and Kartomi’s future husband, Hidris Kartomi.688

Students from Indonesia, Malaysia and India began studying in Adelaide from 1951 due to the introduction of the Colombo Plan which was an inter-governmental plan for socio-economic development in the Asia-Pacific region. After World War II, Commonwealth nations became focused on the Asian region for a number of reasons including the threat posed by Communism and a number of South East Asian countries, including Indonesia, fighting for independence from their European colonial masters.689

Richard Casey, as foreign minister from 1951 to 1960, was given the task of incorporating the Colombo Plan into Australian foreign policy. He took a great interest in Asia and understood the value of cultural exchange which would be facilitated by the Colombo Plan’s scholarship program. Through this program he realised that there was the potential to change the way that Australians thought about Asia and about themselves.690 ‘We need to understand and be understood

688 ibid., p.304.
690 ibid., pp.91-93.
by the countries of South and South-East Asia’ and he wanted Asian students ‘to see Australia at an impressionable stage of their lives and to exchange views at our universities and with our officials should do a great deal to break down prejudices and misunderstandings on both sides’. In other words, the program was to increase understanding between ‘us’ and the many Asian ‘others’.

Kartomi’s upbringing and personality made her open to Casey’s ideas, even though it is unlikely that she would have had direct knowledge of them at the time. Her parents too were open to cultural diversity and the family travelled to Indonesia in 1959 where they visited the families of some of the Indonesian students they met in Adelaide, including Hidris Kartomi. Her personal history demonstrates the ways in which solidarity and empathy between culturally different peoples can develop, echoing the solidarity between the Australian Communists and unionists, Indian and Chinese seamen, and Indonesian political prisoners during and just after World War II. From an early age, she was open to both Yuval-Davis’ ‘me’/ ‘us’ and many ‘others’ and ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’ sets of relations.

Margaret Kartomi and Ethnomusicology

It is this empathy with, and interest in, the ‘other’ that led Kartomi to specialise in Indonesian musicology in her career. She completed her doctorate at Humboldt University, Berlin, on this subject. She arrived at Monash University in 1969 and returned to the study of Indonesian music in 1970.693

As Victoria’s second university, Monash was founded with the intention of being outward looking and modern in 1958 and students took their first classes in 1961.694 The University also was interested in studying and understanding the many ‘others’, particularly the Asian ‘others’, appointing academics in Asian languages, politics and history and creating a Centre of Southeast Asian Studies in 1964.695 The Department of Music at Monash University was established in 1965 and under its Foundation Professor and Chair, Trevor Jones, its staff began collecting materials such as recordings of lectures and talks, theses, and recordings of non-Western music — specialising in Ethnomusicology.696 According to Kartomi,

*Ethnomusicology is the study of the music of the world... many times, I’ve thought we should actually call ourselves musicologists because we also study western music. It’s just a

693 Interview with Margaret Kartomi.
695 *ibid.*, pp.159-60.
Kartomi displays here a desire to get around the ‘othering’ nature of culture and anthropological research.

**Margaret Kartomi, the Department of Music and the gamelan Digul**

After the Department of Music acquired the gamelan Digul in 1976 it was placed in the Music Archive of Monash University (MAMU) which was established in 1975 with a part-time archivist. Now the archive contains historically and culturally significant recordings, print and instruments from Australia and from South, Southeast and East Asia.

The gamelan Digul was used in exhibitions and in performances organised by the Department of Music at Monash University. The first was an exhibition *Musical Instruments of Indonesia* at the University of Melbourne from 6 to 30 August 1985 in collaboration with the Indonesian Arts Society. For the Department of Music, this was a primarily ethno-musicological exhibition as it included the four main categories of instruments found in Indonesia and demonstrated the ‘me’/‘us’ and many ‘others’ set of relations. The exhibition aimed ‘to provide an introduction to some of the main musical instruments and

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697 Interview with Margaret Kartomi.

ensembles found throughout the archipelago’. The gamelan Digul is noted as an item of ‘special interest’. Its cultural significance was described first: ‘A complete Javanese gamelan, made in the 1920s’ and the individual instruments and their tunings are named but more space is allocated to the historical narrative about the political prisoners who made the gamelan and their journey to and activities in Australia. There was also one performance of the gamelan at the exhibition.

The Indonesian Arts Society saw the exhibition slightly differently, emphasising the aesthetic or artistic elements of the instruments as well as the cultural aspects. While such a perspective still involved a process of ‘othering’, the aim was to create cross-cultural friendships, or, at the very least, to develop an appreciation of Indonesian cultural expressions. ‘Looking at musical instruments is no substitute for hearing them being played. Nevertheless, as this exhibition of Indonesian examples demonstrates, they can be extraordinarily beautiful.’ As is often the case, an appreciation of beauty was linked to cross-cultural understanding. The Indonesian Arts Society mounted the exhibition ‘in the hope that Australians and Indonesians will come to understand each other’s cultures with greater insight’.

699 MJ Kartomi, Musical Instruments of Indonesia, Indonesian Arts Society, Melbourne, 1985, p.60.
700 ibid., p.31.
701 ‘Campuses combine to exhibit rare instruments’, Monash Reporter, 19 August 1985, p.8
702 MAMU, The Indonesian Arts Society in association with the Department of Music, Monash University, Musical Instruments of Indonesia, exhibition leaflet, 1985.
703 ibid.
In the years following this exhibition and as Kartomi found out more about the gamelan, its historical aspects were emphasised more. Some of the instruments were played in 1990 in a music-drama production ‘The Amazing Story of the Gamelan Digul,’ presented at the Alexander Theatre by students and staff of the Music and Asian Languages and Studies Departments of Monash University. Barbara Hatley and Poedijono conducted this performance based on the history that Kartomi was researching.\(^{704}\)

By recovering and emphasising the historical narrative of the gamelan, Kartomi’s research attracted interest in the gamelan Digul from prominent Indonesians but not much interest from Indonesian Australians.\(^{705}\) On 2 June 1997 she wrote to the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta, asking for advice and informing him of the visit of people from BAPPENAS (Indonesian Ministry of National Development and Planning) and that Bapak Probosutedjo, President Suharto’s younger brother,\(^{706}\) was planning to visit Monash University as he was interested in acquiring the gamelan Digul.\(^{707}\) This high-level Indonesian interest in the gamelan needed to be treated with care. While Kartomi said she would ‘like to keep the gamelan here, as we do play it in concerts sometimes. It has a strange appearance (made of kitchen pots and pans, etc) but has a nice tuning

\(^{704}\) Kartomi, *The gamelan digul*, p.85.

\(^{705}\) Interview with Margaret Kartomi.

\(^{706}\) President Suharto was the second president of Indonesia (12 March 1967 - 21 May 1998).

\(^{707}\) MAMU, Letter from Margaret Kartomi to HE the Ambassador Mr J P McCarthy, Australian Embassy, Jakarta, 2 June 1997.
and sound’ she recognised ‘that it was made by Indonesian tapol\textsuperscript{708} of the Dutch’ and understood the desire of Indonesians to acquire the gamelan.\textsuperscript{709}

Worried that the gamelan would be placed in a private institution in Indonesia rather than a government run national museum, Kartomi applied for a grant from the Australia-Indonesia Institute to write a book, conserve the gamelan and display it in museums, if possible in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Darwin and Jakarta, after which it would be returned to its custodian, Monash University. The Australian Ambassador to Indonesia and others see it as an important project to draw the attention of the Australian and the Indonesian people, through its symbolic meaning, to the history of friendship and sympathetic co-operation between the two peoples.\textsuperscript{710}

The Australia-Indonesia Institute is a part of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and part of its mission is to develop relations between Australia and Indonesia by promoting greater mutual understanding. This was an

\textsuperscript{708} Tapol is an abbreviation of tahanan politik, the Indonesian words for ‘political prisoner’.

\textsuperscript{709} MAMU, Letter from Margaret Kartomi to HE the Ambassador Mr J P McCarthy, Australian Embassy, Jakarta, 2 June 1997.

\textsuperscript{710} MV Archives, File CM/087/36, Letter from Professor Margaret Kartomi to Acting CEO Museum Victoria 27 October 1998.
ideal project and a diplomatic way of dealing with Indonesian interest in the gamelan.

Kartomi noted the interest of Indonesian media as recently she had ‘appeared on national Indonesian television about the Gamelan Digul; and press reports appeared in the *Kedaulatan Rakyat, Kompas* and elsewhere’. The Indonesian government:

*have shown great interest in it and one suggested it be sent back to Indonesia to be dimuseumkan (museumized) in return for giving Monash University a similar musical ensemble such as a Minangkabu talempong orchestra. The Department already has a complete Javanese gamelan, various Sundanese ensembles, etc. and other Asian ensembles. However, the Indonesian side has not presented a concrete plan for such an exchange.*

The Indonesians had proposed an exchange for a culturally specific but replicable object ‘such as a Minangkabu talempong orchestra’. However, the value of this particular gamelan for both the Indonesians and the Australians was its historical significance which could not be replicated by another gamelan, as subsequent events make clear.

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712 ibid.
On the Indonesian side the story is a complex one, involving the desire to re-write history as much as to represent it given the communist provenance of the object. President Suharto came to power in the months following a violent coup d'état against President Soekarno on 30 September 1965. Many Indonesians, especially those with communist sympathies were killed during the violence. Pontjopangrawit, the maker of the gamelan Digul was one of the Indonesians who disappeared during the violence. Kartomi’s research found that his gravestone ‘appears to promote an officially sanctioned deception’ that he died in 1971. After having spoken with members of Pontjopangrawit’s family, colleagues and former students and examining the language used on the gravestone, Kartomi came to the conclusion that

*The evidence taken as a whole strongly suggests that Pontjopangrawit was arrested and killed in prison forty days after the so-called attempted coup d'état on 30 September 1965; and that his grave in Gurawan has been ‘restored’ by the local Government out of its embarrassment that a hero of the revolution was murdered on Heroes’ Day 1965.*

If this is so, then it would not be the only time that the New Order government of President Suharto used a monument to distort or rewrite history.

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713 Kartomi, *The gamelan digul*, pp.54-56.
714 10 November
715 Kartomi, *The gamelan digul*, p.56.
It is possible therefore that Bapak Probosutedjo’s motivation for wanting to acquire the gamelan Digul was to continue rewriting Indonesian history in order to distance Suharto and his regime from being seen to be responsible for the disappearance and probable death of *Pontjopangrawit Perintis Kemerdekaan* (Pontjopangrawit Pioneer of Independence). In this way, these instruments could have been used to erase the historical ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations between President Suharto and the Communists and rewrite an uncomplicated collective Indonesian ‘us’ set of relations.

One concession to the Indonesian desire to bring the gamelan back to Indonesia was to tour the gamelan there as part of the grant to conserve the gamelan, however the project ran out of money before this was made possible. Kartomi was interested in the gamelan’s historical significance as well and the grant was a way of acknowledging the importance of the Indonesian historical narrative and documenting the Australian side of the relationship, while keeping the gamelan under Australian control.

*The idea was that if it went to Indonesia, to a private collection, what would happen to it? ... the recognition of the*

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716 These words were part of the original inscription on Pontjopangrawit’s gravestone including the old spelling of his name with a ‘tj’. The second inscription uses new Indonesian orthography (adopted in 1972) replacing the ‘tj’ with a ‘c’ in Kartomi, *The gamelan digul*, p.p.54.

717 Interview with Margaret Kartomi.
Australian Indonesian relationship would be lost then. In any case, I was quite pleased that I was ordered not to sell it.  

A steering committee consisting of conservators from the University of Melbourne, representatives of MV, staff from the Department of Music, Monash University, Indonesian diplomatic staff, Indonesian musicologists and also Pontjopangrawit’s family considered two possible ways of conserving the gamelan. The first was to restore it to playing condition which is commonly what would be done to objects in an ethnomusicological collection used for teaching purposes or to stabilise the remaining instruments and preserve its historical significance. Kartomi had met members of Pontjopangrawit’s family in Solo, Indonesia and they stated to her ‘[i]f the gamelan were to be brought to Surakarta for museum display, they said, they would be proud to be associated with it, but given its fragility and its significance, they would not want it to be played’. The steering committee concurred and the gamelan was stabilised. It will not be played again.

At this point, I would like to return to ‘The Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2) and discuss what happened to the gamelan Digul during these processes. While at the NMV, the gamelan Digul moved from segment 2: culture – traditional and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{718} ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{719} MV Archives, File CM/ 087/36, Minutes of the gamelan conservation steering committee meeting – rational for planned conservation of the gamelan Digul, Monash University, Thursday 18 March 1999.}\]
collective; to segment 3: not-culture, new and uncommon. When it was transferred to Monash University, Kartomi’s research moved the gamelan from segment 3 back into segment 2 – culture – tradition and history/ knowledge where it stayed. However, it became valued as a unique set of objects for its historical significance and not so much for its cultural or artistic significance. This interest in it as a historical object was reinforced when it was used for political purposes on behalf of the Australian government in maintaining relations with Indonesia.

The restored gamelan Digul with historical photographs was displayed from 31 August to 11 September 1999 at the Monash University Museum of Art — the Department of Music and the MAMU did not have its own display space so while the building provides an ‘art’ context, the content of the exhibition is primarily historical and cultural. There were gamelan performances as well as a display of a contemporary bronze gamelan. The exhibition catalogue describes the significance of the gamelan in the following way:

The gamelan is a rare antique which preserves our knowledge of Surakarta iron gamelans made in the 1920s, despite its having had to be made from kitchen utensils and any other materials found at hand in a sorely deprived prison camp. It has now been professionally conserved as a historical object, ready to be displayed in this exhibition as a symbol of the
By continuing to emphasise the gamelan Digul as ‘a symbol of the continuing friendship between the peoples of Australia and Indonesia’ Kartomi shifted the historical and contemporary political framework around the gamelan to de-emphasise the ‘dissonant heritage’ of Australian government’s vacillating and complex approach to the Indonesian political prisoners. The historical narrative provided in the exhibition booklet does not mention that the Indonesians were interned in Australia and states that most were ‘repatriated to Republican held areas of Indonesia’. In the grant application, the emphasis on the gamelan being a symbol of friendship between the two countries is understandable as Kartomi was asking for funding from the Australian government — she had to adjust her application to an existing frame of reference of diplomatic relations with Indonesia.

At the level of individual exhibition labels, though, Kartomi could be more frank and nuanced, revealing not just the transversal ‘us’ relations between Australian labour groups and the Indonesian political activists, but also the ‘me’ and ‘us’ relations between the Indonesians themselves; the ‘us’ and many ‘others’ relations between the Indonesians and Australian people and government, as well as the ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations between the Indonesians

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721 Tunbridge & Ashworth, p.20.

and the Australian and Dutch East Indies governments when they were at first imprisoned and later repatriated and deported. At Cowra the Indonesians were ‘illegally imprisoned because of false information given to the Australian Government by Netherlands East Indies officials’; on Australian interest in Indonesia: ‘Indonesia’s independence struggle caught the imagination of many Australians, despite the fact that the Australian government at that time officially supported the Dutch’ and on the repatriations of Indonesians:

Not all departures from Australia were voluntary, and the compulsory repatriation — even deportation— of some ex-Digulists after the war introduces a jarring note into this part of the story. Australia’s White Australia immigration policy stood in contrast to official government policy, which moved at this time to support the independence struggle.  

The opening of the exhibition also revealed a contemporary Indonesian perspective. While the Indonesian Ambassador Wiryono Sastrohandoyo was unable to make it to the launch of the exhibition, he sent Ms Musma Abbas, his Deputy, to read his speech. After outlining the history of Indonesian and Australian relations and agreeing with Kartomi that the gamelan symbolised them, Wiryono and Abbas then emphasised that the gamelan was a symbol of

723 ibid., pp.8-9.
national identity for Indonesia, emphasising the importance of Indonesian ‘me’ and ‘us’ national relations.

For Indonesia, Gamelan Digul is valued as a cultural and historical product created by the Indonesians who struggled for our independence. Indeed they had suffered much during their exile, but also left and given more to their country (sic), to the freedom of Indonesia. The Gamelan Digul is a reminder to us all of the indomitable spirits of freedom and the artistic and cultural strength of Indonesia.724

The gamelan continued to mediate diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Australia so transversal ‘us’ relations continued to be highlighted over the ‘dissonant heritage’ of the deportation of these Indonesians after World War II. When engaging in these diplomatic relations Indonesian officials continued to highlight the gamelan as a symbol of the Indonesian national ‘us’. This is demonstrated in Kartomi’s 2002 book725 and its 2005 translation due to ‘interest among Indonesians in the story of the Gamelan Digul and the

724 NLA MS 9921/1/30, Papers of Margaret Kartomi, File: Correspondence 1997-1999, Indonesian Ambassador Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, Speech read by Musma Abbas, Deputy to HE Wiryono, 31 August 1999, p.6.

725 Kartomi, The gamelan digul, p.73.
Indonesian government’s interest in the gamelan as a symbol of the country’s independence struggle’. 726

The gamelan Digul was next displayed at the International Musicological Society conference at Monash University in 2004 as a way of highlighting the Music Archive’s collections,727 again representing ‘others’ through culture.


The next external institution to display the gamelan Digul was the NMA. When the Museum opened in 2001, one of the exhibitions which dealt with the theme of migration was *Horizons*. The conservative government commissioned the Carroll review to critique the museum as a whole and *Horizons* was critiqued for its inclusion of a history of immigration restriction policies.728 The response from the NMA was to redevelop three out of the five permanent galleries, one of them becoming the *Australian Journeys* gallery which opened in 2009. In 2005, I was employed to work as part of the curatorial team that developed *Australian Journeys*. According to the brief, this exhibition would represent ‘voyages of discovery, exploration and settlement of the Australian continent. This included


727 Interview with Margaret Kartomi.

728 Carroll, Longes, Jones & Vickers-Rich, p. 36.
the settling of Australia by migration from Britain, Ireland, continental Europe and Asia, and the journeys of Australians to other parts of the world’.729

The exhibition brief consciously combined both an historical and cultural rational for the gallery, although there was more of an emphasis on history. An emphasis on place was supposed to maintain ‘narrative unity while encompassing different experiences’ as well as introduce the concept of transnationalism which would ‘connect Australian experience to international interests and circumstances’. 730 We combined historical and cultural approaches through ethnohistory or ethnographic history, which according to the brief ‘encourages examination of particular experiences in their place or location’. 731

This combination of approaches, especially ethnohistory, was a response to the NMA’s mandate that it ‘engage its audiences with the complexities of living in a pluralistic democratic society’. 732 Australian Journeys thus

connects visitors to the richness and detail of others’ life

worlds, ... invites visitors to engage imaginatively with others’ subjective experiences and understandings and ... asks visitors to consider how those experiences and understandings have

730 ibid., p.3.
731 ibid., p.4.
shaped and been shaped by broader socio-historical contexts. \(^{733}\)

In other words, it was the Museum’s role to represent and examine the many ‘others’ in Australia and the places and contexts from which they came. The critiques of this framing of cultural diversity and pluralism in relation to transnationalism have been many, including the way that it ‘evades’ engaging with the ‘politics of narrative’ of migration in Australia. \(^{734}\) It hid Australia’s dissonant migration history and the difficult ‘me’/ ‘us’and ‘them’ relations in Australian history and society. According to Ien Ang,

*By merging migrants, traders and travellers into a singular category of people and objects on the move, the peculiarity of Australia’s immigration history—in social, geographical and political terms—disappears from view. The result is a depoliticised representation of cultural diversity, shaped by a virtually unhindered mobility in which Australia’s cosmopolitan connections seem limitless and unproblematic.* \(^{735}\)

Rather than use objects to illustrate historical themes or stories of migration as previous exhibitions had done, senior curators developed a

\(^{733}\) *ibid.*

\(^{734}\) Witcomb, ‘Migration, social cohesion and cultural diversity’, p.62.

methodology that centred on objects as being ‘the primary carriers of
information or creators of meaning within displays’.\textsuperscript{736} Visitors, through their
engagement with objects in the exhibition, would be invited to empathetically
engage ‘with others’ life worlds and experiences across time and space’.\textsuperscript{737} This
is not unproblematic as

\begin{quote}
[t]he fact that we share with others a similar body, and
conssequently similar physical modes of engaging with objects,
does not necessarily mean that we share the social and
cultural frameworks within which our bodies and ourselves are
enmeshed. \textsuperscript{738}
\end{quote}

Context, then, is just as important as the object in the exhibition and the
intention was to raise questions, in the visitors’ minds, about understanding
‘others’ experiences. The exhibition was supposed to be ‘a kind of inter-
subjective arena, in which visitors were engaged in constantly grasping
something of an other’s subjectivity and simultaneously becoming aware of how
their own understanding and subjectivity differed’.\textsuperscript{739} This is not as
straightforward as it looks. The experiences and subjectivities of ‘us’ and ‘others’
are mediated by individual curators as well as the broader exhibition team in the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{736} Wehner & Sear, ‘Engaging the material world’, p.144.
\textsuperscript{737} \textit{ibid.}, p.153.
\textsuperscript{738} \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{739} \textit{ibid.}, p.154.
\end{flushright}
choices of key and supplementary objects, images, audio-visual material and text as will be demonstrated below.

In terms of design the exhibition was made up of forty small exhibits of collections of objects that relate to a person or a group of people. Each individual exhibit

*is built out from a key object, prominently positioned and lit to mark it as the central node of the display and then associated with groups of objects evoking different threads of the transnational histories of the collection and the people whose lives it has mediated and embodied.*

Key objects were chosen on the basis of their ‘aesthetic qualities, their cultural resonances, or by virtue of what we already knew about the drama of their individual stories’. Visitors, it was argued by the senior curators, would gain ‘object knowledge’ which was ‘embodied knowledge’ when they interacted with the objects on display. Visitors would use their senses to understand how an object was made, felt, smelled and so on. ‘These sensory engagements are relational and interactional.’ They constitute a form of knowledge that, it was argued, encouraged visitors to move from interrogating the form of objects to investigating the experiences of living in the world.

740 *ibid.*, p.155.

741 *ibid.*, p.145.

742 *ibid.*, p.151.

743 *ibid.*, p.152.
Objects, like images, invite us to observe and understand the material conditions of existence in particular times and places and further to imagine the meanings, sensibilities and experiences produced as people engage with those material conditions. Objects, potentially at least, invite an empathetic engagement with others’ life worlds and experiences across time and space.744

There was a loose chronological structure to the exhibition, and in the exhibition brief it was divided into three main themes: *Round The World*, dealing with the lead up and early colonisation of the continent; *New Beginnings*, which highlighted the agricultural and gold-rush migrants and Australian international travellers of the 19th century through to Federation and World War I; and *Global Connections* which traced migration and travel from the Second World War to the present day.745 However, these themes are not reflected in any kind of visitor signposting (textual or otherwise) on the exhibition floor because of the curatorial desire that visitors focus on the objects and their particular stories, even if individually situated in a broader context. The curatorial process then is obscured to the visitor, making cognitive understandings of the exhibition as a whole a little more difficult. This probably led to Linda Young’s criticism that the

744 ibid., p.153.
745 NMA File: 05/ 1390, Exhibition Brief, section 5.3.
gallery is ‘shallow’ and that the individual stories ‘have become separated from purpose or narrative connection’.746 The lack of an overarching ‘narrative’ is also what Ang found disturbing as the structures of Australia’s immigration policies and history appear ‘unproblematic’ and ‘disappear from view’ because of the focus on individual stories.747

In 2005, I began working on the Australian Journeys exhibition as part of a large curatorial team. I was responsible for researching and developing storylines in the third theme of the exhibition brief — Global Connections. Within this theme were several storylines including:

*Post-World War II refugees from Europe found new homes in Australia. Their arrival was a counterpoint to the departure of sojourners and Indonesian refugees who had spent the war years in Australia after fleeing Japanese troops.*748

The careful wording of this storyline, mentioning the ‘departure ...of the Indonesian refugees’ rather than repatriation or deportation, was a way of burying difficult migration history while at the same time enabling curatorial research into this topic because it satisfied the Museum Council that curators were responding to the Carroll review’s point that it was not appropriate to


748 NMA File: 05/ 1390, Exhibition Brief, section 5.3.3.
include the ways that Australia kept people out of the country in an
exhibition.\textsuperscript{749}

It was while researching this storyline that I came across Kartomi’s
publications and exhibitions of the gamelan Digul. These \textit{scholarly} and in the
case of the 1999 exhibition \textit{official}, \textit{carriers of memory} influenced the way I re-
interpreted the gamelan in the \textit{Australian Journeys} exhibition, which became an
\textit{official carrier} of memory about this object and the historical events and people
connected to it. In this section of the chapter, I re-examine my own role in this
re-interpretation. The gamelan Digul is the kind of object that the Carroll review
described as being compelling in itself, not because it is beautiful, but because of
its significance\textsuperscript{750} and I chose it particularly for the drama of its history (Fig.23).

\textsuperscript{749} Carroll, Longes, Jones & Vickers-Rich, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{750} \textit{ibid.}, p. 7.
Figure 23: Gamelan Digul display, Australian Journeys, National Museum of Australia, 2009.  

A desire to represent the historical Australian aspects of the gamelan’s story, particularly as it related to the experiences of the Indonesian ‘others’ in Australia and the support displayed by Australians for the Indonesian independence movement, what I now understand as the transversal ‘us,’ meant that I chose supporting objects from the Cowra Prisoner camp and material relating to the Waterside Workers Union. These included cap tokens of the type used by the Indonesian political prisoners and also cutlery used at the Cowra prisoner of war camp around 1944 when the Indonesians were imprisoned there. From the National Museum’s collection there was a bale hook used by the Waterside Workers union in the 1950s and 60s (Fig. 23). As is stated in the Australian Journeys brief, the exhibition was to emphasise ethnohistory so I was
also directed not just to conduct historical research but also ethnographic research. To represent the Indonesian cultural context within which the gamelan Digul was created, the NMA borrowed ten wayang golek puppets thought to have belonged to Sultan Mangkunegran VII of Surakarta in Central Java around the 1930s from the National Gallery of Australia. These puppets, from a Surakarta courtly tradition, represented the environment in which Pontjopangrawit was educated and worked. The idea was that this was what he was imagining when he created and used the gamelan in the Tanah Merah prison camp and the puppets would ‘illuminate the musical and courtly traditions that underpinned the gamelan’s Australian performances’.751

![Figure 24: Gamelan Digul display, Australian Journeys, National Museum of Australia 2009. Photo: George Serras. Image Courtesy National Museum of Australia.](image)

751 NMA File 07/1782, Letter to the National Gallery of Australia from the NMA to request the loan of eight Wayang golek puppets, 26 November, 2007.
When a visitor wanders up to the gamelan Digul display, they first encounter the gamelan instruments and the puppets, the latter particularly because they are visually striking and are placed at an adult’s eye level (Fig.24). The main object label for ‘Instruments from the gamelan Digul’ only includes cultural information: ‘These two musical instruments are part of the gamelan Digul, an Indonesian orchestra that originally included 19 instruments tuned in the high-pitched style known as tumbuk 6, common in villages around Surakarta in central Java.’ Likewise, the main label for the puppets also emphasises the cultural aspects of gamelan performances: ‘Gamelan orchestras traditionally accompany dances, rituals, ceremonies or wayang puppet performances. The musicians work closely with the other performers as gamelan music is generally played from memory with timing and cues dictated by the dancers or puppeteers.’ Only the object labels for the objects representing part of the Australian side of the story, give any sense of the historical aspects of the gamelan Digul. The visitor needed to read the story panel to understand the historical reasons for its location in the *Australian Journeys* exhibition.

There were at least two types of supplementary objects that were left out which have consequences for both the ‘object knowledge’ and the ‘embodied knowledge’\textsuperscript{752} that visitors were supposed to enact through observing and interacting with the objects on display. There are no objects representing the repatriation or deportation of the Indonesian political prisoners.

\textsuperscript{752} Wehner & Sear, ‘Engaging the material world’, p.151.
at the end of World War II or objects which represent the historical and political Indonesian aspects of the gamelan Digul’s story. It was left to the story panel and images and text in the flipbook to provide the detail about these aspects of the gamelan Digul’s biography. This is problematic as the emphasis on ‘object knowledge’ leading to ‘embodied knowledge’ in the exhibition as a whole and in each individual exhibit means that there is a hierarchy of knowledge and communication which can make it difficult to empathise with ‘others’ life worlds when they are not able to be represented as large images or in three-dimensional forms. The key object is the only object which embodies the story as a whole and supplementary objects communicate different aspects of the key object’s story. When there are various objects to tell different aspects of the Australian historical context but none to represent the deportation of the gamelan’s users and no objects to communicate different aspects of the Indonesian historical context how are visitors to gain an ‘embodied’ understanding of either aspect of the story, before they get a cognitive understanding if and when they read the story panel or flipbook? The only Indonesian supplementary objects are ones that enable a visitor to understand a particular (courtly) cultural context. Culture could distract from the ‘difficult heritage’ contained within the flipbook. This unwittingly repeats a common fault of previous migration exhibitions where ‘other’ people are ‘included’ or valued for their cultural practices which ‘enrich’ the dominant culture but their agency,

753 ibid.
represented here by the Indonesian resistance to Dutch colonial rule both in Indonesia and Australia is excluded.\textsuperscript{754}

The display also included some imitation keys of the gender similar to the one on display that visitors could play themselves as well as audio recordings situated on the audience side of the gamelan Digul showcase so visitors could physically imagine the gamelan being played in front of them as they listened to its sound (Fig.24). As the pairs of instruments were changed over every two years, some of the supporting text and images also changed. In 2013, with the third changeover of instruments to the pair of bonang instruments with kettles made from food containers, the imitation keys of the gender were removed because they did not relate to these instruments. The keys were replaced with a large image of a courtly gamelan performance from the 1930s, again strengthening the Indonesia ‘cultural’ aspects of the gamelan Digul interpretation (Fig. 25 & 26).

\textsuperscript{754} See McShane, ‘Challenging or conventional?’, pp. 122-33 and Hage, \textit{White Nation}, p.121.
The display also included audio recordings situated on the audience side of the gamelan Digul showcase so visitors could physically imagine the gamelan
being played in front of them as they listened to its sound. However, it is quite common to walk around and even amongst gamelan orchestras during performances in Indonesia. The constraints of showcase design meant that this flexibility and more interactive relationship between performer and audience were not obvious to a Western audience. The communication objective in the Multimedia Production Brief is partly historical, but predominately cultural: ‘To communicate what the two instruments sound like. To communicate the different scales used in the Javanese gamelans, the two different traditions of Surakarta and the influences of the gamelan in Australia.’

Visitors have a choice of listening to recordings of individual gamelan Digul instruments (both historical and cultural aspects); a recording of the maker Pontjopangrawit playing a rebab (an instrument usually part of a gamelan orchestra and of cultural significance, but the recording of the maker is of historical significance); a recording of a full gamelan orchestra (so visitors understand the cultural context of the instruments they see) and also recordings of contemporary music from Australian composers Peter Sculthorpe and Percy Grainger who had been influenced by Indonesian gamelan music. This last option falls into the category of what Hage terms ‘cultural enrichment’ where other cultures ‘exist for’ the White dominant culture and are consumed by them. Admittedly, ‘cultural enrichment’ was what I had in mind when I included it. This was an expression of my own privilege, as a second-generation migrant mostly assimilated into the

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756 Hage, White Nation, p.121.
dominant culture, to not be aware of the power-relationship that ‘cultural enrichment’ narratives entailed.

Text and graphics were located predominately outside showcases on an interpretive ‘ribbon’ running along one side of the showcase including a story panel, place images, eight-page flipbook, and most object labels (Fig.27). They combined both historical and cultural interpretations of key objects and, in this case, enabled the historical agency of both the Indonesian political prisoners and the Australians who assisted them to come through more than it does through the objects themselves, albeit not in first person narratives. I was asked to look for first person quotations from the Indonesian prisoners but failed to find them in time for writing the exhibition text. The lack of this first person voice creates a
distance between visitors and the Indonesian political prisoners they are
supposed to empathise with. The story panel introduced both the Indonesian
and Australian historical aspects of the gamelan Digul and the place images
connected the Dutch East Indies political prisoner camp of Tanah Merah in 1936
with the Cowra prisoner-of-war camp, NSW in 1944. The eight-page flipbook was
arranged chronologically, interweaving historical and cultural aspects of the
gamelan Digul’s story. It began with a short biography of ‘a great artist’
Pontjopangrawit which is next to a page explaining what gamelan orchestras are.
The next double page spread contained information about the Dutch East Indies
political prison camp of Tanah Merah and the materials of the gamelan and how
the prisoners had made the instruments from found materials. The next two
pages were focused on the Australian historical story —the gamelan Digul’s
journey with the political prisoners to Australia and the prisoners’ continuing
struggle for Indonesian independence in Australia, using the gamelan Digul. The
final two pages detailed the deportation of the Indonesians under the White
Australia policy and the journey of the gamelan Digul to NMV and Monash
University and how it received the name gamelan Digul.

For Ien Ang, the gamelan Digul exhibit was one redeeming story in the
Australian Journeys exhibition because it was the only place where Australia’s
immigration laws and policies were mentioned in a critical light.

*One particularly poignant story features a group of Indonesian
independence activists who brought their gamelan digul to
Melbourne during World War II. We are casually told, in the*
accompanying written narrative, that these Indonesians were subjected to the infamous White Australia Policy dictation test after the war, and subsequently deported.\(^{757}\)

However, unlike *Horizons* where the White Australia policy was given significant presence and any visitor would stumble upon it, in *Australian Journeys*, only the most attentive visitor is likely to find it as they would have to flip through the pages of the gamelan exhibition ‘Flipbook’. This is intentional as Kirsten Wehner noted that after the Carroll Review and during the Museum’s redevelopment phase curators became ‘more experienced in finding ways to create exhibitions that both address at one level expectations about national history and narrative coherence and that sustain and communicate a sense of the complexity and diversity of Australian experience’.\(^{758}\) This works to a degree in the exhibition space where curators have more interpretive control, but it does not always transfer into other museum programs or products. For instance, the museum’s website features ‘Gallery highlights’ and the webpage about the “‘Gender barung pelog’ from the Gamelan Orchestra” includes the migration story of the Indonesians to Australia but not the story of their deportation.\(^{759}\) This reflects a way of thinking in other areas of the Museum which is still contained by

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standard migration narratives, even though the individual display and the exhibition as a whole is about with transnational connections, that can include ‘difficult histories’ like deportation.

**History and transversal ‘us’ relations: Australian National Maritime Museum 2015-2016**

*Figure 28: Bonang from the gamelan Digul in Black Armada: Australian support in upholding Indonesian independence, Australian National Maritime Museum, 30 August 2015. Photo: Karen Schamberger.*
One of the gamelan instruments, a *bonang* also appeared on display in the temporary exhibition *Black Armada: Australian support in upholding Indonesian independence* at the ANMM in Sydney which opened on 20 August 2015. This exhibition was located in the Tasman Light Gallery which consisted of one wall of nine panels of text in English and Bahasa Indonesian with images, a video and one showcase to the side of the wall (Fig. 28 & 29). The ANMM opened in 1991 and like the NMA was the result of a recommendation from the Pigott report of the 1975 inquiry on museums and national collections.\(^\text{760}\) It is

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\(^{760}\) Pigott, p.4.
thus, like the NMA, an *official carrier* of memory. The ANMM is ‘Australia’s
national centre for maritime collections, exhibitions, research and
archaeology’.\(^{761}\) As noted in chapter two, the museum has a permanent gallery
space *Passengers* which is dedicated to the theme of migration. However, it was
not the Post-Federation Immigration curator who curated *Black Armada*.
Instead, because of the focus on the ‘black bans’ or boycotts of Dutch ships by
the Australian maritime workers, Stephen Gapps, formerly responsible for the
collecting areas of Environment & Industry, was the curator. The exhibition’s
origins lie with Anthony Liem, the Indonesian son-in-law of Fred Wong, a Chinese
seaman who supported the Indonesian independence movement in Australia. He
approached the ANMM and the Museum Benteng Vredeburg in Yogyakarta and
suggested an exhibition about these historical events in 2008. Gapps was
interested because he ‘thought it was an excellent story about the maritime
connections between the two countries that has almost been forgotten in the
public consciousness’.\(^{762}\)

These ‘maritime connections’ and the narrative of friendship between
the two nations frame this exhibition which is about ‘Australian support for the
Indonesian republic between 1945 and 1949’ according to the exhibition’s
introductory label. This follows Kartomi and Monash University’s interpretation


and use of the gamelan Digul to symbolise the friendship between Indonesia and Australia. This diplomatic nation to nation relationship framework is reinforced by the support for the exhibition from the Australia-Indonesia Institute of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Embassy of the Indonesian Republic, Canberra. An Indonesian version of the exhibition *Armada Hitam — Dukungan Australia Dalam Mempertahankan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* was held simultaneously at the Museum Benteng Vredeburg in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The Museum Benteng Vredeburg is categorised in Indonesian museology as *Museum Perjuangan* or a Museum of the National Struggle which means that its permanent displays present and interpret aspects of Indonesian history that are linked in some way to the struggle for independence. It is run by the Indonesian Department of Education and Culture. It is a museum about the national ‘us’. The display at the Museum Bentung Vredeburg included the same text and image panels as the ANMM display as well as the same segment of the film *Indonesia Calling*, but it had no objects. The Museum Bentung Vredeburg also complemented the ANMM exhibition with a temporary one of their own which told the broader context of the Indonesian independence struggle and included both the Australian maritime workers and the ‘critical actions and support of the Indian and Chinese Seaman’s Unions based in

Australia’. Usually in Indonesia, Australian, Chinese and Indian support for the independence struggle is omitted in displays about this time period, signalling, that the national ‘me’ and ‘us’ relations are more important in Indonesia than alliances with these other peoples and Australia’s ‘symbolic friendship’.

The display at the ANMM also includes the cultural diversity of people involved in supporting the Indonesian independence movement by mentioning the support of the Indian and Chinese Seaman’s Unions in Australia. This is an aspect of the historical episode which is not mentioned in Australian Journeys at the NMA, or in the Monash University exhibitions and reflects more recent scholarship from Heather Goodall.

The emphasis in both the current Indonesian and Australian exhibitions on the friendship between Indonesians, Indians, Chinese and Australians is, in Yuval-Davis’ terms, an emphasis on the relations between ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’. The text panel at the ANMM, ‘Our Struggle in your land’, mentioned that ‘Indonesian gratitude for Australian support was heartfelt’. President Sukarno paid tribute to the ‘freedom-loving’ stand taken by the labour movement. And the same panel quoted the Brisbane based Central Committee of Indonesian Independence who wrote that:


765 See Goodall, ‘Shared Hopes, New Worlds’.
The understanding and support given us by the Australian people will never be forgotten, and we will convey this history of our struggle in your land to our countrymen at home. We hope that the friendship between our two peoples may become stronger and endure in the best interests of democracy.

Emphasising the ‘me’ and the transversal ‘us’ relations of the Australian maritime workers, Indian and Chinese seamen, and the Indonesian political activists was a result of setting this exhibition in the ANMM and the support for the exhibition from both the Australian and Indonesian governments who wanted to engage in contemporary ‘us’ and neighbourly ‘other’ relations, as well as being a strategy to deal with difficult history. As noted above, due to the White Australia policy, the Australian government repatriated most of the Indonesians back to Indonesia. And as noted in this exhibition, the Australian government paid for their repatriation to rebel held areas. What this exhibition does not mention at all is that the White Australia policy was the Australian government’s reason for repatriating the Indonesians whether they were willing to leave or not. The text panel about the gamelan Digul (Fig. 30) again reveals the tension between representing the ‘other’ through culture and history as it explains what a gamelan orchestra is but there is more emphasis on the history of the instruments as it provides a brief history of the object from its creation by Pontjopangrawit in a prisoner camp in 1927 to its journey to Australia and its use in performances by the Indonesian activists in Melbourne and its donation to the
NMV in 1946 and to Monash University in 1976. However, the gamelan is described as ‘A gift to Australia’ and the story of Jack Zackaria’s deportation due to the White Australia Policy is not mentioned. Here the historical and contemporary diplomatic ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’ relations erase the difficult historical ‘me’/‘us’ and ‘them’ relations.

Figure 30: Gamelan Digul label, Black Armada: Australian support in upholding Indonesian independence, Australian National Maritime Museum, 30 August 2015. Photo: Karen Schamberger.

This erasure of the White Australia policy and its difficult history is not a uniform policy across the museum, as a section of the permanent Passengers gallery illustrates. The museum displayed the personal story of Tony Ang, a Chinese seaman who was one of 2000 Chinese seaman like the Indonesians, stranded in Australia during World War II. These Chinese seamen were given
temporary refugee status and were temporarily exempted from the White Australia Policy. Tony Ang married an Australian woman, Marjorie, and was one of 300 of these Chinese seamen who wanted to remain in Australia after the war. He and his family were deported to Hong Kong under the Wartime Refugees Removal Act 1949 but were able to return after Marjorie’s protest letters to the government and legislative changes in 1950. Perhaps it is possible to include this deportation story in the museum because it had a happy ending unlike the deportation story of Jack Zackaria, or perhaps it has something more to do with the diplomatic framing of the Black Armada exhibition as a story of friendship between two nations. Indonesia may not be interested in telling the stories of Indonesians who were reluctant to return in the context of the independence struggle and Australia may wish to omit stories of forced deportations of Indonesians because it did not fit with the contemporary desire for a friendship narrative between two neighbours.

The ANMM also introduced another set of relations into the Black Armada exhibition by placing a panel about the Museum’s Welcome Wall, which ‘is a tribute to you and your family who have migrated to Australia’ on the other side of the gamelan showcase. The panel’s placement in the same space as this exhibition reminded visitors of the migrant many ‘others’ in Australia. The panel was clearly aimed at Indonesian migrants as it was titled in English and Bahasa Indonesian ‘Have you migrated to Australia? Apakah Anda telah bermigrasike Australia?’ ‘Visitors were encouraged to ‘Celebrate your heritage/ Rayakan warisan budaya Anda’ by ‘inscribing your name on the Welcome Wall’. In
September 2015 it cost $150 to inscribe one name and $290 to inscribe two names on the ANMM Welcome Wall.\textsuperscript{766} The Welcome Wall itself sets up a power relationship between the Museum acting as the national ‘us,’ asking the migrant ‘others’ to pay to be ‘welcomed’ and have their heritage and journey to Australia celebrated by the national ‘us’. There are, of course, migrants or descendants of migrants who have cooperated with the museum and paid to have their or their ancestor’s name(s) inscribed on the Welcome Wall for their own reasons, which I cannot explore here.

The panel about the Welcome Wall also featured a personal story and photograph of Herman Gunadi who arrived in Australia from Indonesia in 1989 on a skilled migrant visa and who had his name inscribed on the Welcome Wall in 1999. This is a contrast to the omission of Jack Zackaria’s story — his forced arrival in 1943, separation from his Australian wife and deportation in 1946 because he failed the Dictation Test as it was administered under the White Australia Policy. He was not welcome and his story is not mentioned because it could remind the Museum, in the role of the national ‘us,’ and any visitors, of a time when Indonesians were not just ‘others’ but a ‘them’. This would not fit with the diplomatic framework and Australian and Indonesian government support of the exhibitions at the ANMM or at the Museum Benteng Vredeburg.

Conclusion

Through all four Australian museum ‘contact zones’ where the ‘push and pull’ of exchanges and interpretations of objects and their meanings happen, the difficult historical ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations which developed because of the White Australia policy are minimised, covered with an emphasis on the cultural aspects of the gamelan or completely omitted while the relations of ‘us’ and the many ‘others’ or the transversal ‘us’ relations are emphasised. In the first ‘contact zone’, the NMV, it was the very real threat of the White Australia Policy that contributed to the gamelan’s deposition there but museum staff at the time did not understand its historical meaning and did not record it. This reflected the disciplines of anthropology and ethnology in Australia in the 1940s, where objects from non-European people were treated as representing ‘culture’ or semantic zone 2 in ‘The Art-Culture System’ and the gamelan Digul, because of its strange appearance seemed to be an ‘inauthentic’ object, which should have been in zone 3 (Fig.2).

After the gamelan moved to Monash University, its historical significance was recovered through research and publications — scholarly carriers of memory which then influenced official carriers of memory like the government funded exhibitions at Monash University, NMA and ANMM. Kartomi, as an ethnomusicologist wanting to promote and continue her and Monash University’s research in Indonesia, used the historical significance of the gamelan

767 Clifford, Routes, pp.192-93.
as a ‘symbol of friendship’ which brought successive Australian and Indonesian
governments into the Monash University ‘contact zone’. There, as Pratt noted,
they established ongoing unequal and complex relations.768 For the Indonesians,
the history of the independence struggle required an emphasis on the ‘me’ and
‘us’ relations of collective national identity and the transversal ‘us’ relations with
Australians were not as important. In Australian institutions, however, it was
important to emphasise the transversal ‘us’ relations around the gamelan and
this is how Monash University and Kartomi prefer to see the instruments.

In each of the ‘contact zones’ there is a constant visual, aural and textual
tug of war between culture and history and this is most obvious at the NMA in
Australian Journeys. As we have seen, emphasising the cultural significance of
the gamelan excluded the agency of the Indonesians in their resistance to Dutch
colonial rule and it buried an examination of Australia’s immigration policies and
role in deporting them — at both the NMA and ANMM. The entanglement of
culture and history at both institutions meant that it was difficult to change their
approaches to intercultural relations, which are still fixed in the ‘migration
history’ framework as shown on the NMA webpage and the addition of the
Welcome Wall panel and an unrelated personal story of a later Indonesian
migrant. This echoes the problem for ethnologists at the NMV between 1946
and 76 who could not imagine the gamelan Digul as either an ethnographic or a
historical object. The gamelan Digul then, remains a set of unusual musical

768 Pratt, p.8.
instruments whose meanings travel between culture and history, between forced migration and deportation, between ‘us’ and ‘others’ and ‘them’, and finally between Indonesia and Australia.
Chapter 6: Cultural nationalism — Two Latvian weaving looms 1945 – 2016

Figure 31: Anna Apinis’ Countermarch floor loom, c. 1945. Source: Museum Victoria

Figure 32: Anita Apinis-Herman weaving on the Kivicka Loom, Latvians Abroad— museum and research centre, 2010. Source: Museum Victoria. Used with permission from Anita Apinis-Herman and LAMRC.
Anna exhibited her works at various international exhibitions arranged by the IRO (International Refugee Organisation) and Latvian organizations in exile. While at the camp in Memmingen she was asked to weave a Latvian national costume of the Nica district for Princess Elizabeth, now Queen of England, to be presented as a gift for her wedding. She also wove national costumes for other women while living and working at the camp. To assist her in her work she had a weaving loom made from wood found in the ruins of the German airforce barracks at the camp.769

In May 1992, the History Departments of the Museum of Victoria and Monash University initiated a research project entitled “Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity”. Funded by a grant from the Australia Council of the Arts, it aims to explore the material basis of cultural identity and document the process of cultural adaptation through the contemporary practice of craft. The changing forms of craft practiced by

immigrants, and the role of women in framing and expressing
cultural identity, form a strong focus for the project.770

This loom, made in a refugee camp in Germany after the
Second World War, has belonged to four different Latvian
weavers. It has been used for 50 years to weave fabrics for folk
costumes for Latvian exile communities. The loom reveals a
story about the desire of Latvians to maintain their cultural
continuity, whatever the circumstances, even when the
maintenance of culture would seem to be the last thing a
person should be thinking about.771

This case study begins with the story of Anna Apinis, a Latvian weaver
who maintained some of the traditions and cultures of her nation through
weaving in a German Displaced Persons Camp and in Australia. Anna was forced
to flee Latvia during World War II as her homeland was invaded and occupied
successively by Soviet and German armed forces. Shortly after the war,
Displaced Persons Camps were set up in Europe and Asia to feed, shelter and
rehabilitate refugees who had lost or been driven from their homes as a
consequence of the war. Anna and her family were among these refugees and

found themselves in the Memmingen camp in Germany where Anna
commissioned her weaving loom. Another Latvian weaver named Elga Kivicka
also commissioned a timber loom in the Fischbach Displaced Persons Camp,
Germany. She migrated to Scotland but her loom was left to a friend who
migrated to Australia. The Apinis family migrated to Australia in 1950, bringing
Anna’s loom with them. Anna acquired the Kivicka loom from another Latvian
weaver in Australia in 1970 and used it as a second loom, to make shawls. Anna
continued to weave traditional materials for the members of the Latvian
communities in Sydney and elsewhere in Australia. Anita Apinis-Herman learnt
Latvian weaving techniques from her mother, Anna, wove on both looms and
exhibited her own weavings in Australia. The loom represents relations between
‘me’ and ‘us’, firstly through familial connections between Anna and Anita and
then between Anna/ Anita and Elga who asserted their belonging to Latvia and
hence the Latvian communities in the Displaced Persons Camps and in Australia.

In 1992, the Museum of Victoria (MV) began the *Contemporary Craft and
Cultural Identity* project referred to in the quotation above. This project defined
two ‘others’ to be the subject of study — immigrants, assumed to be culturally
different ‘others’ and the gendered ‘other’ — women. Anita Apinis-Herman and
her mother were identified and interviewed during this project. This was the
beginning of a long, collaborative and still current relationship between Anita
Apinis-Herman and MV. Apinis-Herman donated the Kivicka loom to the
museum in 1996 and then donated her mother’s loom in 2006. Both looms were
displayed at the Immigration Museum (IM), one of four venues of MV. The
museum, acting from the position of the dominant ‘us’ wanted to productively engage with and represent the many ‘others’ in Victorian society to the dominant ‘us’ and many ‘others’. Simultaneously, some of these ‘others’ were interested in preserving and sharing aspects of themselves with many ‘others’ in Australian society, including the dominant ‘us’.

MV, not requiring two looms, deaccessioned the Kivicka loom in 2010 to the Latvians Abroad—museum and resource centre (LAMRC) in Latvia, which is where the third quotation at the start of this chapter is from. Since the 1990s Maija Hinkle, a Latvian American, has been collecting stories of Latvian Americans in order to document their experiences and ‘return’ their stories to the ‘homeland’. Around 2006, she realised that ‘what we needed in Latvia was a central research center for emigration issues, a place where we could research the various emigrations, preserve emigration artifacts and show the emigrant experience’.772 So the idea for the LAMRC was born. The intention of the LAMRC was to explain the experiences of the many ‘others’ of the Latvian diaspora to the Latvian ‘us’ who had remained in their country of origin.

By tracing the entwined stories of Anna Apinis, her daughter Anita Apinis-Herman and the two looms, this case study reveals the ways in which ethnography and culture were used to represent the ‘self’ through institutions like museums and schools in Latvia between the two world wars and the ‘other’

through museums in Australia and in Latvia, post 1991 independence. There are two museum ‘contact zones’ — the MV/IM and the LAMRC where actors from historically and culturally different locations established ongoing and unequal relations with each other over the interpretation of their stories and objects. We can see the ways in which the minority ‘us’ — Latvian Displaced Persons, ‘appropriate’ the ‘metropolitan modes of representation’ in Australia for their own purposes, then attempt to take these ‘modes of representation’ and adapt them to Latvia. The Latvian diaspora become the perpetual ‘other’ despite continuing cultural practices that had originally defined the ‘self’. On this journey, the two looms move between Germany, Australia and Latvia, between the periphery and metropolitan, different museum ‘contact zones’ and between different segments of ‘The Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2).

**Family and nation: Weaving and the Liepāja Ethnographic Museum before World War II**

*The museum was located next to the school and Anna would often visit the colourful exhibits of national folk costumes and Latvian weavings. She would painstakingly sketch the costumes and take notes on the techniques and colours used.*

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774 Pratt, p.8.
775 *ibid.*, pp.7-8.
Anna Apinis (nee Strauss) was born to Made Strauss, also a weaver, in 1913 in Liepāja, Latvia. The Liepāja Ethnographic Museum opened in 1924, next to Anna’s school and it was, in part, through studying and ‘sketching’ the ‘national folk costumes’ in the museum as well as in the classroom that Anna Apinis learnt about and formed a sense of Latvian national identity. For the generation of Latvians who grew up between the two world wars, this was one of the Latvian government’s intentions.

The territory that we now know as Latvia consisted of five multi-centric Baltic tribes with no state structures or a common identity before they were incorporated into successive European Empires from the 1300s until Latvian independence was declared on November 18, 1918. During the nineteenth century, intellectuals began to develop ideas around a Latvian national identity. However, it was not until independence from the Russian Empire in 1918 that political leaders had the means to implement a program of nationalisation. The early years of the first Latvian republic saw the development of many national institutions such as libraries, museums, a national theatre and a national school system. For Latvians interested in independence, it was their successive occupiers Germany and Russia who were perceived as ‘them’.

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776 Apinis-Herman, p.9
Latvia was not alone in seeking to create a national identity at this time. Between 1850 and 1914 as the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires collapsed, places like Poland, the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Ukraine and the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia agitated for independence. They all sought to create and reinforce a national identity through cultural expression inspired by ‘peasant’ cultures. These cultural expressions included literature, music, art, theatre, architecture, dress and design. The issue of national identity encouraged states to record and celebrate folk songs and tales, collect patriotic writing, celebrate village buildings and value embroidery while also collecting and forming ideas about what constituted national dress. In Eric Hobsbawm’s terms they ‘invented tradition’ in order to define themselves from each other, their previous rulers and also to imply a continuity with a particular national historic past.

National governments created various institutions, including museums, in order to ‘invent’ and reinforce these traditions. According to Kenneth Hudson, there were four stages of historical awareness that influenced the interpretation of history in European museums around this time. The first stage of historical awareness, beginning in the 18th and 19th centuries, was an interest in the archaeology and antiquities of ancient Greece, Rome and the Middle East during the Biblical period. The second stage was characterised by nationalism, interest

in national traditions, achievements, heroic legends and myths. The third stage was an interest in ‘peasants’ or ‘the rural common man’. Hudson argued that increasing industrialisation in the second half of the 19th century was undermining rural ways of life. There was, therefore, a desire to record and preserve these ways of life, arts and crafts before they disappeared. The fourth stage was founded on the belief ‘that everything that has happened in the past is potentially interesting and significant’ and that local history was just as important as national and international events and trends.  

These four stages of historical awareness influenced the creation of different types of history museums. For this case study, the Skansen Open Air Museum in Sweden is most relevant because of its interest in preserving folk traditions for the purpose of celebrating Swedish national identity. Artur Hazelius, a teacher and specialist in Scandinavian languages, travelled extensively in his homeland of Sweden in the 1850s and 1860s. He noticed that increasing industrialisation was destroying older forms of village life so he began collecting Swedish national costumes and handicrafts and exhibited them in Stockholm during 1872 and at the 1878 International Exhibition in Paris. In 1891 he bought the first part of the site known as Skansen and began to acquire farmhouses, huts and other ‘traditional’ buildings from Sweden as well as one from Norway. Hazelius created an open-air museum as he wanted to demonstrate traditional ways of life in appropriate environmental settings as

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well as making Skansen a centre for national celebrations. Hazelius also founded
the Nordic Museum which portrayed the history of Scandinavian but mainly
Swedish culture in the more usual setting of a museum building.\textsuperscript{781}

Other countries in Europe also built open-air museums and created
ethnographic museums portraying the lives of their rural populations. Latvia was
no exception. The Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum, based on the same
principles as Skansen, opened in the capital city of Riga in 1924. That same year
the Liepāja Ethnographic Museum opened in Liepāja which was located next to
the Latvian State Secondary School for Applied Arts. Anna had fond memories of
her weaving teacher Mrs L. Cirulis and her design teacher Mr. Janis Sudmalis
(1887-1984) who founded and managed the Liepāja Ethnographic Museum.\textsuperscript{782}
This Museum demonstrated some of the four stages of historical awareness that
Hudson identified — that of an interest in the distant past through
archaeological material, the influence of nationalism and a focus on ‘folk’
traditions and rural life. At the Liepāja Ethnographic Museum the collections of
archaeological material were from the Stone and Bronze Ages and a Viking
settlement, while ethnographic costumes and historical photographs came from
the Liepāja Antiquity Society founded by the Germans who occupied Latvia in
1911 and the Liepāja Latvian Society.\textsuperscript{783} The museum and the neighbouring

\textsuperscript{781} ibid., pp.120-22.
\textsuperscript{782} Apinis-Herman, p.9
school, which Anna attended and graduated from in 1933, were intimately connected through Janis Sudmalis and educational excursions encouraged by Latvia’s education policy.

By the end of World War I, Latvia was the most educated and literate nation that emerged from the collapse of the Russian Empire. This meant that the government of the newly independent Latvia could reach the majority of the population with its national education policy through already established networks of urban and rural schools. Teachers were retrained and new textbooks were written to suit the national curriculum, which enforced Latvian as a first language and ‘Latvianized’ other subjects such as history, geography and literature. Latvian folk culture was introduced through singing hours and applied arts. Handicrafts were taught ‘in a national spirit’.

Elga Kivicka, the owner of the second loom was also a part of the revival of traditional handicrafts. She set up and directed the weaving workshop at the Riga Artisan Craft School and wrote a number of books, including texts on Latvian folk costumes with examples from the collection of the State History Museum. Kivicka supervised the collecting of folk arts for the school and also

784 Apinis-Herman, p.9
785 Lacombe, pp.310-14.
786 ibid.
participated in a 1934 visit to art schools in Warsaw, Prague and Vienna where the Latvian teachers learnt about the development of new European national art schools which combined traditional forms of folk arts with modern applied art.  

For Anna, weaving was both a family and a national inheritance. When she was interviewed for MV in 1997, she said ‘it was a Latvian tradition ... I remember my grandmother had a big loom like this one, where I could walk right underneath them at my full height, with no problems’. During the 1920s and 1930s, the textile arts were the most popular form of applied art. In 1925, a number of Latvian artists including Janis Sudmalis, exhibited their textile work at the international exhibition of decorative art in Paris. Art trade schools were established in various cities, including the Liepāja School of Arts and Crafts in 1926, where students studied and were encouraged to creatively use Latvian ethnographic materials (Fig.33). Aleksandra Dzervite who published books about embroidery and Latvian national costumes, said that the connection between drawing and handicraft production ‘would promote education of our new generation, that would have far-reaching consequences in cultural life,


790 MV, RF 629, Research File - Anna, Ervins & Anita Apinis, Latvian Migrants, M Auliciema, Translation of interview with Apinis family 6 October 1997, 3 November 2006, p.3.

791 Urdziņa-Deruma, pp.33-34.
underlining Latvian (sic) way of life’. In 1932 the school was renamed the Liepāja Secondary School of Applied Arts and the subjects prioritised the maintenance and development of ethnographic art traditions. The art education guidelines were created by Janis Sudmalis who focused on the folk art tradition foundations and H. Aplociņš who focused on free composition and the fine arts. Students exhibited their works at the school and at the First Latvian Exhibition of Decorative Art, as well as international exhibitions in Brussels, Paris, Munich, and Prague. Through this revival of folk traditions in both schools and museums ‘Latvian leaders hoped to promote within the young generation a sense of belonging to this new state, and a greater sense of love and pride centred primarily on the nation’.

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792 Quoted in Urdziņa-Deruma, p.33.
793 Oļehnoviča, No page number.
794 ibid.
795 Lacombe, p.320.
The Apinis family story across two generations and the story of the two looms created in German Displaced Persons Camps, enable us to track how these folkloric traditions and handicrafts reinforced a national cultural identity and sense of belonging to the ‘imagined community’ of the nation even after this nation was taken over by another. The Apinis family story allows us to see how this sense of nationalism influenced the creation of Latvian activities and exhibitions in the Displaced Persons Camps and in Australia. We can also trace how a family from the Latvian Australian community interacted with a state-funded museum that showed interest in their stories and culture, after the advent of multiculturalism in Australia. The Latvian Australian community’s nationalism also influenced their desire to return themselves and their ‘culture’,
in part through collections and museums, to the ‘fatherland’ once it had regained independence. ‘Returning’ to the homeland, though, was not as straightforward as they had imagined.

**Strengthening ‘me’ and ‘us’ relations: Displaced Persons Camps, Germany 1945-1950**

Anna married Ervins Apinis in 1938 and they had a son Eriks. World War II intervened and the occupying German forces conscripted Ervins into the German Army. Anna fled Latvia with some of her family and by 1945 had found her way to Memmingen Displaced Persons Camp in Germany where she was reunited with Ervins. This forced separation from the homeland, combined with a strongly nationalistic education, profoundly influenced the kinds of activities that Displaced Persons like the Apinis family took up in their places of exile in order to rebuild their lives. Life for people, who remained in the countries of origin, also changed over time, creating different but related national identities that developed in parallel. Like Sandra Dudley’s observations on the moment of displacement of Karenni refugees from their place of origin, for the Apinis family and other Displaced Persons

*it is as if the trajectory of life both divides to take separate directions (with refugees taking one metaphorical road and*

those who remain, the other) and doubles to move in parallel
(with refugees remaining essentially the same people as those
who stayed, living in the same time and as far as possible in
the same way, in a different place).\textsuperscript{797}

Here we follow the ‘metaphorical road’ of the Apinis family as they live as Latvians ‘as far as possible in the same way, in a different place’.

In early 1942 discussions between British and American officials about ways to provide relief for the devastated areas of Europe once the war ended resulted in the creation of the United Nations Refugee and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). By November 1943, forty-four nations, including Australia had signed the new agency’s charter.\textsuperscript{798} Between 1943 and 1954 UNRRA and its successor the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) created and administered Displaced Persons Camps in order to feed, shelter and rehabilitate the 16 million refugees who had fled their homes as a consequence of World War II. Camps were located mostly in Germany and also in Austria, Italy, the Middle East and China and most of the refugees were Polish, Jewish, Yugoslav, Ukrainian, and from the Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.\textsuperscript{799}

As its name suggests, UNRRA was formed to provide relief — food, clothing, shelter and medicine — to the people affected by war. Its second priority was rehabilitation — building up each war-torn nation’s economy and to give the population the tools to begin helping themselves.\textsuperscript{800} Relief and rehabilitation were therefore interlocked, and came together in the Displaced Persons camps where people were given the basic necessities of life as well as encouraged into employment, university study and vocational training. In almost every camp, training centres were organised, falling into two categories: those types of activities suitable for apprentice training, such as shoemaking, dressmaking and carpentry; and those which required more rigid training including bookwork as well as practical training such as cabinetmaking and mechanical work.\textsuperscript{801}

Many Displaced Persons were repatriated shortly after the end of the war but a substantial number, particular those who identified as Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian refused to be repatriated to their places of origin because of fears of political or religious persecution, economic instability and a rejection of Soviet-dominated governments. Their individual and collective refusal to be repatriated forced Western nations to keep the Displaced Persons camps open and consider alternatives like resettlement in new countries.\textsuperscript{802}


\textsuperscript{801} Woodbridge, pp.526-27.

Between 1947 and 1954 over one million displaced persons from Europe were resettled, mostly overseas.803

The Displaced Persons refusal to be repatriated to sovereign states challenged the theories of democratic citizenship that defined the modern state at the time. They made ‘a distinction between citizenship, as a relationship between an individual and a state, and nationalism, as a sense of ethnic or cultural identification’.804 This is what Laura Hilton described as ‘cultural nationalism’ which she defined as ‘the process of creating strong, common bonds through education, literature, art, language, folk traditions, religion, and history’.805 This is precisely how successive Latvian, and other Eastern European, governments between the two world wars had ‘invented’ their nation and educated the population to feel a sense of belonging and loyalty to it. The refugees who fled their homelands because of World War II carried these ideas with them. In order ‘[t]o cope with the reality of being displaced, the DPs saw their newly formed communities as cultural nations’.806

Displaced Persons utilised the formal training programs organised by UNRRA and organised activities for themselves based on nationality. They revived their sense of cultural nationalism in the camps through organisational and cultural carriers of memory such as schools, language classes, culturally

804 Hilton, p.287.
805 ibid., pp.281-82.
806 ibid., p.287.
specific newspapers, art and craft groups, musical troupes and performances. These built community connections despite differences in social, economic, educational and political backgrounds. At the same time, they excluded ethnic minorities who had lived within the physical borders of their respective nations. Their ‘cultural nationalism’ also enabled them to present a positive image as potential immigrants to Western countries through the acquisition of new skills, displaying a strong commitment to democracy and Christianity while wholly rejecting Communism. They created idealised memories, akin to Hage’s positive intimations of nostalgia\(^{807}\), of their respective country’s past in order to oppose Communism and imagine their nation’s future. These ‘exile missions’ were pursued both in the camps and later in the countries they migrated to.\(^{808}\) This became a significant factor in return migration once Latvian independence was gained in 1991. These were methods of remembering and attempting to re-create a home in the camps, but as Dudley noted about the Thai refugee camps of the Karenni people from Myanmar, ‘the camp is in aspects at least perpetually becoming more like home as it is remembered and imagined, it will never quite be it’.\(^{809}\) This sense of ‘becoming more like home’ but never being quite home, also continued in the refugees’ countries of settlement. Material objects which come from or are created to be like those in places of origin are also part of this becoming.

\(^{807}\) Hage, ‘Migration, Food, Memory, and Home-Building’, p.421.
\(^{808}\) Hilton, pp.282-86.
\(^{809}\) Dudley, p.157.
As Zeynap Turan argued, individuals are able to reconstruct memory and reclaim identity through forming attachments to objects in the aftermath of displacement. In Turan’s case studies, the objects were brought from people’s homelands.\textsuperscript{810} Some of the Displaced Persons did manage to bring objects like national dresses with them which Anna was able to document in her weaving design notebooks which she had brought with her. She ‘transcribed onto graph paper, the designs and colours of costumes shown to her by many of the Latvian refugee women, who had taken these most precious possessions with them from Latvia’.\textsuperscript{811} Anna acted as an ethnographer of her own national culture, harking back to her school days, documenting national dress designs for her own collection so she could teach from them and create a feeling of almost being at home in the camp. While no longer a Latvian citizen because she had fled Soviet rule and rejected Communism, she defined herself as continuing to be ethnically and culturally Latvian. According to Anna, ‘[w]eaving and thread and designs, they were very dear to me. … And every free moment I have devoted to finding new designs. Latvian designs’.\textsuperscript{812}

Not all the objects that help people to reconstruct memories and reclaim their identity, however, could be physically carried from their country of origin. David Parkin noted that when people are forced to migrate either through

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{811} Apinis-Herman, p.9
\textsuperscript{812} MV, RF 629, Auliciema, Translation, p.22.
\end{flushright}
urgent flight or more calculated means there are particular kinds of objects they take in their hands and in their heads. It is through the objects and skills they take that they shape their future. The future for Anna, lay in her past as a trained weaver, a keen student of traditional weaving designs and in her sense of Latvian cultural nationalism developed through her family, schooling and visits to the Liepāja Ethnographic Museum. While she was reconstructing her own cultural identity through documenting Latvian weaving designs, she also desired to use her own professional identity as a weaver to reproduce and continue her cultural and national identity in the camp. Her husband Ervins, saw her motivation and used his professional engineering skills to help her. According to him:

All her weaving work began when she left – in the camp. In Memmingen camp when we had been thrown out of our lives and work places, I was no longer an engineer, I was nothing, and also my wife was nothing, and the activities were all self-motivated.

The Displaced Persons formed theatre groups and choirs grouped by nationality so national costumes were required. In order to provide other Latvian women with Latvian national costumes, Anna needed a loom (Fig. 34). Ervins, designed one and it was made by other Latvians in Memmingen out of any

814 MV, RF 629, Auliciema, Translation, p.11.
materials that could be found in the former German Airforce Barracks. This loom consisted of 17 shafts which enabled her to weave the more complex designs of the Zemgale district costumes and these proved very popular in the camp.\textsuperscript{815} Anna unravelled old pieces of fabric to thread her loom as UNRRA could not supply wool or cotton.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image34.png}
\caption{Anna Apinis teaching weaving at Memmingen Displaced Persons Camp, 1948. Source: Museum Victoria. Used with the permission of Anita Apinis-Herman.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{815} Apinis-Herman, p.9.
According to Dudley, knowledge and information about past forms of culturally significant material objects and practices are ‘treated as cultural knowledge, possession of and authority over which is a desirable currency and marker of status and power within the community’.  

This is often given more importance by ‘the forced removal from its geographical base’. Re-enacting and perpetuating ‘authentic’ forms of this cultural knowledge can also reinforce status and power. The loom and her knowledge of weaving gave Anna some status amongst the Latvians at the camp. It enabled Anna to work as an Art Weaver and a lecturer in the weaving course at the Latvian Artizans’ (sic) Association at the Memmingen camp, from March 1946 to September 1949. It was her knowledge of weaving, as well as being a well-known authority on Latvian weaving, that also enabled Elga Kivicka to commission a timber loom in the Fischbach Displaced Persons Camp, Germany and teach there (Fig.35). She left this loom to Karlis Gulbergs who brought it to Australia. As she did not have family, Elga was given the opportunity to leave the camp not long after the end of the war in 1947 and she moved to the United Kingdom where she worked as a domestic in a hospital. In the UK, she continued teaching weavers in a craft group in her spare time. Both the Apinis and Kivicka looms, began their lives in

816 Dudley, p.162.  
817 ibid.  
818 ibid.  
819 MV, RF 629, Certificate from the Latvian National Committee, D.P. Camp Memmingen, 6 September 1949.  
820 LAMRC, Weaver Elga Kivicka.
segment three of ‘The Art-Culture System’ as they were tools or technology which enabled their owners to make cultural objects (Fig.2). However, because these looms were essential to making these cultural objects, they also become associated with cultural practices and national/cultural identities.

Artisans and craftspeople amongst the refugees were encouraged to sell their products in the camps or in the surrounding towns. Many products were useful in the camps and sometimes achieved a high artistic level. UNRRA collected some of these products, including both the beautiful such as embroideries and inlaid boxes, and the practical and simple such as ladles and

Figure 35: Elga Kivicka teaching weaving in the Fischbach Displaced Persons Camp, c.1947. Source: Latvians Abroad — museum and research centre.

\textsuperscript{821} ibid.
sieves made from old tin cans. These items were given to the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) and exhibited in Washington D.C. in February 1949 by the World Information Center.\textsuperscript{822} Anna also exhibited weavings made on her camp made loom at international exhibitions organised by the IRO and Latvian organisations in exile, including in the PCIRO Area 2 International Exhibitions at the \textit{Altes Schloss} (Old Castle) in Stuttgart. Her weavings appeared in both the Trades and Handicraft and Art exhibitions held in April and May 1948.\textsuperscript{823} For the Displaced Persons, like Anna, these exhibitions reinforced their nationalised cultural identities and could promote their skills to the Western countries they wanted to migrate to. Exhibitions like these may also have been a way for UNRRA and the IRO to demonstrate the skills and value of these ‘rehabilitated’ refugees to the officials of countries funding UNRRA and the IRO, as well as to the officials of countries of potential resettlement. This is not so different to the ways in which Australian museums portrayed migrants to the mainstream Australian population nearly forty years later. Nor is it so different from the activities these migrants engaged in when creating their own culturally specific museums and/or willingly collaborated with public museums in order to reinforce, preserve and promote their nationalised cultural identities in their places of settlement.

\textsuperscript{822} Woodbridge, p.529.

\textsuperscript{823} MV, RF 629, Certified copy of Certificate No. 126, from the IRO, 29 December 1948.
Maintaining the collective ‘us’ amongst ‘others’ in Australia
1950 - 2016

The Apinis family, consisting of Anna, her father Ernest, her husband Ervins, and son Eriks, arrived in Australia in 1950. They were amongst the 170,000 refugees from Displaced Persons Camps who were resettled in Australia under the Mass Resettlement Scheme between 1947 and 1954 — the second largest intake, after the United States of America. World War II had begun to change the foreign policy outlook of Australia. Officials linked national security and economic progress to peace in the world and participation in world affairs. Officials also worried about Australia’s relatively small population for such a large land mass in close proximity to an ‘overpopulated’ Asia so a large scale immigration program was developed. British migrants were still the first preference. However, because of their lack of availability the program was expanded to include European migrants. The White Australia policy remained intact. Baltic people (Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians) from the Displaced Persons Camps were given priority.

Anna was allowed to bring the loom as Australian officials liked the idea that she could teach weaving in Australia. The sales of Anna’s traditional Latvian woven textiles, mostly to other Latvians in Australia, helped to support the

824 Kunz, p.43.
825 G Tavan, The long, slow death of White Australia, Scribe, Carlton North, 2005, p.32.
826 ibid., pp.33-35.
827 Kunz, p.42.
family for the next forty or so years. She started weaving at the migrant hostel in Parkes not long after her arrival, on table looms provided by the camp authorities and exhibited and won prizes for her weavings at the annual Parkes Royal Show.\textsuperscript{828} Ervins was sent to work as a railway labourer at Chullora.

It was at this time that the Apinis family met the Silins family who were also living in Parkes. Both Mr and Mrs Silins had been teachers in Latvia. In Australia Mr Silins organised choirs and Elza Silins organised theatre groups and performances. Mr Silins later founded the Latvian Society in Sydney. The Apinis and Silins families shared their earnings to buy a house together in the Sydney suburb of Chullora. Elza Silins purchased the Kivic\v{\i}ka loom from Karlis Gulbergs in Sydney and began learning to weave under Anna’s supervision. In 1970, after Elza Silins’ death, her daughter sold the loom to Anna. It was through Anna’s work as a weaver that the Apinis family participated in Latvian cultural life in Sydney.\textsuperscript{829}

In exile in their places of resettlement, Latvian cultural nationalism continued to be important to preserve, perform and pass on to the next generation. In her study of Latvian Americans, Maija Hinkle found that the experiences of camp life in Germany gave Latvian-Americans the social networks and the skills to organise themselves in the USA. She also found that within a few years of settlement there was ‘a more or less unified, powerful narrative about

\textsuperscript{828} Apinis-Herman, p.9.

\textsuperscript{829} MV, RF 629, Auliciema, Translation, pp.32-34.
the collective experiences of exile’ which was that ‘Latvians in America are duty bound to preserve their national identity’. Just like in the Displaced Persons Camps of Europe and in the USA, some Latvians in Australia organised themselves with schools, choirs, musical ensembles and of course, cultural festivals where they would wear national dress, so Anna’s work continued to be in high demand. The cultural knowledge of Latvian weaving designs and the loom which had given Anna some status in the Displaced Persons Camp at Memmingen also gave Anna some cultural authority within the Latvian Australian community. She wove national costumes, hangings, cushion covers, curtain material and other items for the home and exhibited her weavings at numerous Latvian Cultural Festivals including the first one in Sydney in December 1951. In 1964 she held a joint exhibition of her work with the Latvian photographer A. Grapmanis at the Sydney Evangelical Lutheran Congregational Hall.

Anna also participated in non-Latvian specific exhibitions. From 1953, she participated in several Royal Easter Shows in Sydney and the 1981 Canberra Show, always receiving awards. According to her daughter, Anita, ‘she did that because she wanted to get involved in the weaving scene here and she was surprised that there were many weavers in Australia that were Australian

831 Apinis-Herman, pp.9-10.
832 *ibid.*
people’. While Anna was recognised for her skill in weaving textiles at these shows most of the people who bought her work were other Latvians in Australia. This reinforced her sense of Latvian ‘us’ identity, despite the assimilation policies of the government.

The demographic reality of a growing population of non-British descent encouraged Australian officials to abolish the White Australia Policy and replace it with a multicultural policy in 1978. Multicultural policy at this time emphasised the preservation and management of ethnic cultures, welfare, social justice and equal access to programs and services. In order to sell multicultural policies, governments promoted multiculturalism as the centre of national identity with many ‘others’ contributing to the national ‘us’, particularly in the lead up to the NSW and Australian Bicentenary. As well as interest from cultural institutions, there were state sponsored cultural festivals such as the NSW government’s Pageant of Nations in 1988, which treated cultural and national identities as interchangeable. This was a multicultural festival in Wollongong that brought people from many different ‘national’ backgrounds together from all over NSW, including Anna Apinis who displayed her traditional Latvian weavings.

833 Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman, Melbourne, 1 April 2015.
834 ibid.
835 Galbally, pp.1-2.
836 Australian Bicentennial Authority, How to Make it Your Bicentenary.
837 Apinis-Herman, p.9
Anna’s passion for weaving influenced her daughter, Anita, to try weaving at age ten.

*I think the Latvian designs were very appealing...my mother’s weaving loom was next to my bedroom and I could hear it every morning when my mother got ready to go to work. She would be weaving before she left.*

For Anita, weaving, being Latvian and her relationship with her mother are emotionally intertwined. Anita attended the Sydney Latvian School, participating in the choir, kokle (zither) ensemble and needlework groups. She then studied a Bachelor of Fine Arts and worked as a high school art teacher. Anita’s enthusiasm for weaving continued and she bought her first four-shaft table loom in 1979. When she married she moved, with the Kivicka loom, to Melbourne and completed a weaving course at the Melbourne College of Textiles in the late 1980s. Anita was taught there by Pat Jones who had studied weaving under Lidija Duks, another Latvian migrant of the same generation as Anna. For Anita ‘it was all leading to Latvia’.

Anita recognised the need to document her mother’s work so she compiled a book called *Latvian Weaving Techniques* from her mother’s notebooks which was published in 1993. Like her mother, Anita

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838 Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
840 Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
exhibited Latvian weavings at various Latvian Culture Festivals around Australia from the 1970s onwards and also in Canada (1996) and the USA (1999).\footnote{ibid.}

However, unlike her mother, Anita experimented with non-Latvian weaving designs. In 1997 Anita participated in an exhibition called *Turn The Soil* where the premise was that participating artists needed to design an artwork that would show what Australia might be like if another country, in this case Latvia, had colonised Australia.

*I started thinking about wildflowers, Australian wildflowers, because Latvian patterns are based on daisies and roses and things that are very English and Latvian and European so I thought of the wattle flower, the waratah and the flannel flower.... I had three flowers which were meant to be symbols of Australia and three patterns that were Latvian which were contrast symbols of Latvia ... I was saying that if Latvians had discovered Australia we would use elements of nature in our fabrics just like Europeans used elements of nature in their fabrics.*\footnote{ibid.}

This signals a generational shift. While Anna and her husband, Ervins identified themselves as Latvian through cultural nationalism, Anita identified as both

\footnote{ibid.}
Australian, through citizenship and culture, and Latvian through an inherited sense of cultural nationalism.

However, it was Anita’s maintenance of Latvian weaving that attracted the attention of the curators at the MV who were working to the multicultural policy framework set up by Federal and State governments. In 1992, Anna and Anita held a joint exhibition with author and Latvian Australian jeweller Maris Purens at the Old Cheese Factory Gallery in Berwick, Victoria.\textsuperscript{843} Anita remembered curator Deborah Tout-Smith visiting the exhibition and being very excited by what she saw there because it fitted within the guidelines of the project she was working on.\textsuperscript{844} Like her mother in 1988, Anita was happy to cooperate with a mainstream organisation to further her aims of preserving what she and her mother had learnt about Latvian weaving designs and national costumes. Anita had what Crane called, ‘a shared sense of “museal consciousness”’.\textsuperscript{845} She had inherited her mother’s understanding and experience of museums as collectors and interpreters of culture.

\textsuperscript{843} Apinis-Herman, pp.9-10.
\textsuperscript{844} Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman\& Interview with Deborah Tout-Smith, Melbourne Museum, 16 March 2015.
\textsuperscript{845} Crane, p.2.
Sharing ourselves and collecting the many ‘others’: The Apinis family, Museum Victoria and the Immigration Museum 1992-2016

The MV was the result of an amalgamation of the Science Museum and the NMV in 1983. The Social History department was created at the Museum in the early 1980s and the first social history exhibition, The Story of Victoria opened in 1985. Curatorial appointments and collections reflected the growing academic interest in social history of people who had previously been left out of accounts of Australian history, such as Rural Life, Trade Unions and Working Lives. At this time in the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, there was bipartisan support for migration and multiculturalism at both the Federal and Victorian government levels. So it was within this academic and political context that Anna Malgorzewicz was appointed as Curator of Migration and Settlement in 1990.

Malgorzewicz had previously applied her methods of community engagement at the Migration Museum in South Australia when it opened in 1986 where she had been the founding Social History Curator. Margaret Anderson, who had been the founding director of the Migration Museum in South Australia when it opened, was, by 1992, teaching in the Public History program at Monash University. According to Tout-Smith, Anderson was very

847 Interview with Moya McFadzean, Melbourne Museum, 16 March 2015.
closely involved with MV at the time. Together Anderson and Malgorzewicz applied for and received funding from the Australia Council for the Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity project and Deborah Tout-Smith, a Master’s degree student in the Public History course at Monash University and a museum volunteer was contracted to carry out the research in 1992. The collaboration between the two institutions demonstrated ‘the Museum of Victoria’s commitment to collecting, exhibiting and researching evidence of Australia’s multiculturalism and Monash University’s pioneering MA course in Material Culture/ Museum Studies’.

The Museum and University wanted ‘to improve public access to important aspects of cultural diversity’. In other words, the audience was the majority non-migrant population and the museum would be an official carrier of memory, informed by scholarly, organisational, cultural and individual carriers of memory. The project aimed to document ‘the changing forms of craft practised by immigrants, and the role of women in framing and expressing cultural identity’. While the project was not limited to women craft workers they feature prominently in the project. The two ‘others’ were defined because ‘[a] recurring theme in the oral documentation of cultural diversity in Australia is the

848 ibid.
849 Tout-Smith, p.207.
851 Tout-Smith, p.207.
perceived significance of women as “cultural carriers”.\textsuperscript{852} According to Tout-Smith, this cultural and gender bias came from the practices of social history in the 1980s which emphasised the study of groups that had previously not been studied such as the working class, migrants and women.\textsuperscript{853}

While Malgorzewicz had already collected a small number of objects for the Migration collection, this project was a chance to document the material culture associated with cultural identity in a social, historical and cultural context. The project report noted that multicultural artists had attained greater prominence in recent years but there was ‘little attempt to chart the development of new craft forms from traditional techniques’ and that ‘[r]esearch in Australia to date has also seen little use of material culture as evidence of cultural identity or of cultural development/adaptation’.\textsuperscript{854} The project’s scope was

\begin{quote}
 to focus on artisans born and raised overseas; that their work
  should be of a high technical quality; and that their skills
  should have been acquired within the context of their cultural
  origin, in which the work was meaningful to its fullest
  extent.\textsuperscript{855}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{852} Tout-Smith, Malgorzewicz & Anderson, p.7.
\textsuperscript{853} Interview with Deborah Tout-Smith.
\textsuperscript{854} Tout-Smith, Malgorzewicz & Anderson, p.7.
\textsuperscript{855} \textit{ibid.}, p.11.
The Museum did not wish to separately define art and craft so the subjects of study were known as ‘artisan’ or ‘worker’ as Tout-Smith wanted to include ‘grassroots’ creators.\footnote{Tout-Smith, p.208.}

During the six-month study, Tout-Smith contacted 67 community-based organisations, representing 34 cultural/geographic groups.\footnote{ibid.} From their responses, she identified about 56 artists and craftspeople and chose 10 for close study. ‘Their work was documented, research completed on its development and significance in cultural terms, and a selection of appropriate pieces for photographic recording and exhibition made.’\footnote{Tout-Smith, Malgorzewicz & Anderson, p.7.} According to Tout-Smith, the response from community organisations and individuals was very positive and many were interested in co-operating with a state museum that was interested in them.\footnote{Interview with Deborah Tout-Smith.}

According to Anita, being involved in the project and later at the IM was important for preserving and sharing the family’s story and memories, as well as continuing Latvian culture through weaving.

\begin{quote}
I think I was just swept into it because I wanted to have a place where I could do my art, my weaving and I knew my parents had a story to tell because they were always talking and showing, my mother especially, showing me her albums of
\end{quote}
how they lived in Latvia and now how they lived here and
more than anything my mother loved her loom.\textsuperscript{860}

For Anita’s parents and particularly Anna, being involved with the museum meant recognition, not just of their own personal history, but also the cultural identity and history of the nation of Latvia. ‘I don’t think she just thought it was her work that was getting recognised, I think she thought... that it was... little insignificant Latvia is... advertising it as a wonderful cultural place.’\textsuperscript{861}

As Tout-Smith realised, continuing Latvian culture through weaving in exile was a method of resistance against Soviet (them) rule over their homeland.

\textit{During the period of Soviet rule, a policy of ‘Russification’ was seen to be pursued by the authorities, and many expatriate Latvians began to perceive themselves as bastions of threatened Latvian cultural traditions. This has continued into the present day, when the ‘threat’ has become the encroachment of mass Western culture. Inevitably, Latvians now see expatriate Latvians as conservative and old-fashioned; and expatriate Latvians such as Anita, have effectively established a new, meaning-general form of traditional Latvian types.}\textsuperscript{862}

\textsuperscript{860} Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
\textsuperscript{861} \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{862} Tout-Smith, Malgorzewicz & Anderson, p.16.
The Apinis family story was a fairly typical migrant narrative that fitted well within the government policy framework of multiculturalism that aimed to enable people to continue their cultural practices in Australia. It was not a narrative that challenged preconceptions about migrants and people from culturally diverse backgrounds, nor did it seek to challenge the power structures contained within the multicultural framework, which, according to Hage, made migrant cultures ‘exist for’ the consumption of the dominant White culture.\(^{863}\) Indeed, the Apinis family appear to have been aware of this power structure and used it for their own purposes, by preserving, continuing and promoting their understanding of Latvian culture to the wider Australian public first, through the *Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity* project and then later, through the Museum’s collections, exhibitions and public programs.

By 1994, the Museum had produced a Migration and Settlement Collection Policy which had several aims including ‘[t]o reflect the history and process of migration and settlement of all immigrant groups and their descendants in Victoria, from initial settlement to the present’ and ‘[t]o redress the imbalance, or lack of emphasis, on non-Anglo Saxon cultural heritage that presently exists within the Museum’s collections’.\(^{864}\) The principal collecting areas included immigration, internal migration and settlement and cultural

\(^{863}\)Hage, *White Nation*, p.121.

diversity. In order to collect objects from culturally diverse communities the policy suggested that

An interdisciplinary approach [was] to be adopted. Although
many aspects of historical methodology are appropriate to
collecting practices i.e. class, gender or chronological analyses,
often other disciplinary approaches, such as those of social
anthropologists and ethnographers are relevant also.\textsuperscript{865}

While emphasising the importance of building and maintaining community relationships, the policy also aimed ‘[t]o personalise documentation and interpretation’ by focusing ‘on individuals and families’ as ‘this will help mitigate against perceptions of immigrant communities as faceless, stereotypic or uniform enclaves’.\textsuperscript{866} The groundwork for building and maintaining relationships with community members like Anna and Anita had been laid as had the ‘interdisciplinary approach’ to collecting objects from culturally diverse communities and the consistent emphasis on personal stories represented throughout the future IM exhibitions.

Malgorzewicz left the Museum in 1995 and Moya McFadzean began as Senior Curator, Migration. One of her first tasks in her new role was to write to Anita about the second stage of the \textit{Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity Project} where ‘the Museum received federal government funding which, along

\textsuperscript{865} \textit{ibid.}, p.28.
\textsuperscript{866} \textit{ibid.}.
with matching Museum funds, will be used to acquire significant pieces which
tell us more about the transporting of contemporary craft culture from one
country to another’. 867

A Curator of Contemporary Craft was employed to assist with the second
stage of the project and guidelines for what became known as the Artistic
Practice and Cultural Identity collection were drawn up. In it, we can see the
importance of recording the process of creating the art object and the influence
of the social history framework which also emphasised the development of
ongoing relationships with the participants.

_The collection aims to utilise material culture, specifically
artistic works and practice to explore contemporary cultural
identity and immigration experiences in Victoria and the
development of culturally specific forms of artistic practice._

_The collection consists of art/craft works, objects which
illustrate the artistic process, support material relating to the
art/ craft works and a research archive containing oral
histories, photographs and other documentation of
participating artists. The project seeks to develop ongoing
relationships with participating artists rather than simply_

867 MV, RF 629, Letter from Moya McFadzean to Anita Apinis-Herman, 10 July 1995.
acquiring art/craftworks. This principle should be maintained in any ongoing collection development.868

Documenting and collecting objects relating to people’s stories within a social and cultural history framework meant that the artisan or worker’s process was as important as the aesthetic quality and cultural significance of their work. This enabled objects that were collected during the second stage of the project and also later for the Immigration and Artistic Practice Collection to be used in different ways. According to Senior Curator, Migration and Cultural Diversity, Moya McFadzean:

*We don’t collect artworks for aesthetic purposes per se because that is what an art gallery does so our social historical frame around that collection is really important and it was an enabler in terms of being able to explore identity and about cultural maintenance or adaptation…it’s made a collection that we’ve been able to use in different ways…like we’ve been able to use it in Identity869 because it explored some of those themes. And it also was important because of that social*


historical framing we didn’t just collect the artefact itself, the end product, but also [documented] the creative process. \(^{870}\)

Some of Anita’s and Anna’s weavings were purchased for the collection with the money from this second grant and Anita offered her mother’s second loom for donation. \(^{871}\) McFadzean used the social history framework to argue for acquiring what became known as the Kivicka Loom.

*The loom extends our collection of the tools and materials of the artists represented in the collection. Moreover the loom provides an excellent focal point in any exhibition of the craft material, particularly as an organising metaphor for exploring the intersections of life stories, social meanings, objects, etc. through the association of weaving and the creation of meaning.* \(^{872}\)

When MV acquired the Kivicka loom, the emphasis on its meaning as a technological object changed to emphasise its historical significance and association with cultural production and maintenance, moving it from segment 3 of ‘The Art-Culture System’ to segment 2, the space of culture and history (Fig.2).

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\(^{870}\) Interview with Moya McFadzean.

\(^{871}\) MV, RF 629, M McFadzean, Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity Meeting Summary, 19 November 1996.

\(^{872}\) *ibid.*, Division of Research and Collections, Department of Social History, Object considered for Acquisition: Countermarch floor loom, 1996.
The Apinis loom continued to be owned by Anita Apinis, so it remained in segment 3.

During the course of the second stage of the project, in August 1996 Jeff Kennett, Premier of Victoria announced the creation of the IM.873 When it opened in 1998, Vicky Kyriakopoulos from The Bulletin wrote that

The museum gives a historical snapshot of Victoria, while focusing on the common dimensions of migration experience—leaving, journeys, arrivals, settlement. It explores why people left, who they were and why they came here. It also acknowledges the impact of immigration on Australia and its indigenous people.874

Most of the objects in the opening exhibitions were loans. Indeed, it appears that the creation of the IM spurred collecting in the Migration and Settlement area after the museum opened because the opening displays highlighted the absences in the Museum’s collections and visitors could see the kinds of objects the museum was interested in.875

McFadzean also described how important having a display venue for the Migration collection was for collection development and expansion.

875 Interview with Moya McFadzean.
I think the Immigration Museum has given the Migration collection a very fortunate position of actually having a place where that material has a fair chance of getting out on display. Not many other curators have that opportunity, you know, if it hadn’t been for the Immigration Museum, I don’t know when the loom would’ve ever come out.876

However, according to Tout-Smith, having a specific venue for the themes of migration and cultural diversity could also make it more difficult to argue for the integration of these themes into non-migration specific exhibitions at the main venue of Melbourne Museums.877

Marianna Auliciema, an assistant curator at the MV, who happened to be of Latvian descent, interviewed the Apinis family in Latvian, assisted with the acquisition of textiles and the interpretation of the Apinis story, amongst others in the opening exhibitions. According to Marianna,

The loom was visually and spatially very interesting, it had the opportunity for demonstrations and ‘human participation’ during the exhibition, and the accompanying textiles and plans were also visually attractive – and thus I was convinced that we needed to include it in the initial exhibition.878

876 ibid.
877 Interview with Deborah Tout-Smith.
878 Email interview with Marianna Auliciema, Riga, Latvia, 31 March 2015.
The Museum opened in 1998 with Anna Malgorzewicz who had returned as the founding director. The Apinis family story and the Kivicka loom was front and centre of the publicity, being one of five in-depth personal stories featured in the Museum at opening. These were located in Gallery 2 with the Immigration Timeline. The text and photos explained the family’s displacement from Latvia to Memmingen Displaced Person’s camp and then Australia and weavings and Anna’s drawings of patterns provided a cultural context. The centrepiece of the exhibition was the loom and the interpretation emphasised its role in maintaining Latvian cultural traditions and emotional connections to Latvia.

*The loom was a blessing which eased the pain of displacement and separation that Anna and Ervins felt in their new land.*

*Anita, their daughter, has continued to weave Latvian textiles on this loom — a living testament to the preservation of cultural traditions by the next generation.*

The Museum consulted and informed the family about the exhibition plans and process (Fig. 36 & 37). Anita’s parents

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879 Kyriakopoulos, p.49.
were sent information and invitations and we were shown how it would be set out, the floorplan. We were invited ... to look at the floor plan before my weaving loom went in. And we were involved in setting the scene for the space. My father was asked to provide photos, my mother had photos...The entire wall was this picture of the impoverished yard of the barracks where they lived in Memmingen and on the back wall was the plan of the loom, my father’s engineering drawings and I think they were very thrilled with that whole concept of the design, how it was going to be displayed. They understood that it was a really good venture. That it was going to benefit Australians who came in to see how we lived.\textsuperscript{881}

\textsuperscript{881} Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
Figure 36: Photo of the Displaced Persons Camp at Memmingen where the Apinis family lived, Immigration Museum, 2007. Photo: Karen Schamberger.

Figure 37: Ervins Apinis’ engineering drawings for the loom, Memmingen Displaced Persons Camp, c. 1947 on the wall behind the weaving loom, Immigration Museum, 2007. Photo: Karen Schamberger.
For the Apinis family, sharing their story was both a way of defining themselves as different from, as well as a way of interacting with, the wider Australian community by inviting ‘Australians’ to understand them as Latvian ‘others’ who had maintained their cultural and national identity despite war, displacement and migration to a new country. Anita took that sharing a step further by weaving on the loom periodically in the exhibition space which meant that its meaning was constantly moving between segments 2 and 3 of ‘The Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2). She said

*it was perfect because then I was weaving and displaying the weaving, doing weaving shows which was really fun. I used to enjoy the kids coming in, that was the best part because I’m a teacher, I think that attracted me to doing that.*\(^\text{882}\)

The loom — and Anita’s act of weaving in the exhibition space — triggered nostalgic feelings and memories in visitors who were migrants themselves or sometimes children of migrants. These nostalgic feelings, as Hage noted, are about home-building in the present and the desire to create the feeling of being in the country of origin at the same time as being in the present location.\(^\text{883}\)

*A lot of Greeks came in and a lot of Italians would share their stories while I was weaving and I just loved that. The weaving*

\(^\text{882}\) *ibid.*  
loom reminded them of their time back home, in their countries.\textsuperscript{884}

She also recalled a Bonegilla reunion day held at the museum.

*My parents weren’t at Bonegilla, they were at Bathurst and then Parkes and then Greta but it was a very special day because Bonegilla people had all the same sort of experience...The emotions in the room. It was just buzzing. I’ve not experienced that since.* \textsuperscript{885}

Anita did not have to weave on the loom to derive comfort from it, just seeing and hearing the soundtrack of the loom in the exhibition space was enough to trigger these nostalgic feelings and memories. Like her mother, the loom and weaving gave Anita a sense of home regardless of the actual physical location:

*when I’d go there and I was just standing there looking at the loom, I wasn’t weaving and I heard the weaving loom noises. It just made me cry. ... That sound actually pulled me back. If I was having hardship in my life, if something that was happening, some sort of crisis, I could just go to the museum and I’d be totally settled. ... It was a very emotional experience*

\textsuperscript{884} Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.

\textsuperscript{885} ibid.
... It was like having my mother still alive, like a comfort, not just to work on it ... because in Latvia wherever there’s a loom in the house you walk in, you see it and you feel immediately at peace.  

For Anita, the physical and aural presence of the loom at the museum was a source of comfort, bringing back memories of her mother, reinforcing familial ‘me’ and ‘us’ relations and enabling her to build a sense of home in the present. It also enabled her to make connections with people who had similar migration experiences to her family, giving her and possibly also other migrants who visited a sense of belonging together through the similarity of experiences and shared nostalgic feelings. Anita’s own emotional response to the sensory aspects of the display mirrors the emotional connections that the Italian and Greek migrants made with her family’s story and the loom. This was the Museum’s intention.

The Museum wanted to engage visitors’ empathy through personal stories, as noted earlier in the 1994 Migration and Settlement Collection policy. Also, according to the IM’s Visitor Experience Brief in 2007, ‘[t]he programmes of the museum call upon memories, emotions and stories to powerfully evoke the experiences of immigration and involve the visitor’. Having Anita in the space weaving on the loom activated the object and maximised ‘its communication

886 ibid.

potential’ with visitors to the Museum.\textsuperscript{888} This also fitted with the intention of the Museum to develop and maintain long-term relationships with participants in the \textit{Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity Project} and paying Anita for weaving in the space respected her professional skills.

For the Museum, Anita has ‘been involved in different ways, as a donor, as a lender, as a provider of information, for storytelling, photographs and of object activation, in terms of the loom itself’.\textsuperscript{889} The Apinis family story has also been used in a number of different formats besides exhibitions, by MV. In 1996 an educational CD \textit{Waypoint 1} was produced and it introduced key elements of the museum’s collections, including the immigration and artistic practice theme, featuring the Apinis family story. The Education team developed an early web presence called \textit{Hear Her Voice} which included Anna Apinis as well as other artists whose work featured in the \textit{Immigration and Artistic Practice} collection.\textsuperscript{890} The Kivicka loom and the Apinis family story were also included in the 2004 \textit{Treasures of the Museum} book.\textsuperscript{891}

The maintenance of the relationship between the Museum and the family over such a long period of time came down to the strength of the relationship between the curator Moya McFadzean and Anita Apinis-Herman which proves Sheila Watson’s point that museums work with individuals in

\textsuperscript{888}MV, RF 629, Loom Meeting Minutes, 7 October 1997.
\textsuperscript{889} Interview with Moya McFadzean.
\textsuperscript{890} \textit{ibid}.
communities who make personal connections with individuals in museums.\textsuperscript{892} According to McFadzean,

\begin{quote}
\textit{There were other intermittent donations and our public programs people were in touch with Anita who did demonstrations on the floor in the exhibitions. She was also involved in a Latvian Symposium gathering that she was one of the co-ordinators for, liaised with the Museum to be able to hold an event there. There was that kind of connection. There were visits to Williamstown over the years taking back weavings and borrowing new stuff for changeover because it [the family story] was on display for 12 years until 2010.}\textsuperscript{893}
\end{quote}

In 2006, Anita Apinis-Herman offered her mother’s original loom to the Museum and they acquired it in 2007 in order to replace the Kivicka loom, moving the Apinis loom into segment 2 of ‘The Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2). The interpretation in the display changed slightly to refer specifically to the Apinis loom and it was displayed at IM until 2010. In 2007, the Apinis and Kivicka loom and Apinis family story were recorded on the Culture Victoria website which was a project driven by the State Library of Victoria.\textsuperscript{894} The narrative of the Apinis family story on the website clearly differentiates between the two looms and

\textsuperscript{892} Watson, ‘Museums and their Communities’, p.18.

\textsuperscript{893} Interview with Moya McFadzean.

\textsuperscript{894} Culture Victoria, \textit{The Apinis Loom}. 
goes into some depth about Anna’s notebooks and the actual weavings themselves. Finally, in 2008, Anita made the decision to donate her mother’s notebooks which McFadzean described as

\begin{quote}
\textit{a watershed moment because those were so precious to her...}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{I think that demonstrates the building of that relationship and trust that she felt she could give those up because she wasn’t doing that at the beginning and I don’t blame her.}\textsuperscript{895}
\end{quote}

That trust was necessary when McFadzean broached the subject of deaccessioning the Kivicka loom in 2007. The Museum could not keep both looms and the Museum committee that makes decisions about deaccessioning collection objects noted that ‘[t]he opportunity has now arisen to acquire Anna’s original loom. It is considered that the original loom is a stronger object with better provenance, and that it is unnecessary to retain two similar looms in the collection’.\textsuperscript{896} Both Anita and Moya decided to keep the ‘original’ loom at MV. As Anita put it ‘we decided ... to have the original loom there which the story really is about, the one my father helped design and that was built in Memmingen’.\textsuperscript{897}

\textsuperscript{895} Interview with Moya McFadzean.
\textsuperscript{896} MV, RF 629, Executive Management Team Meeting Submission, Subject: Deaccessioning of Countermarch Loom SH961595 – for approval.
\textsuperscript{897} Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
It was Anita, in consultation with McFadzean who decided that the Kivicka loom would be deaccessioned to the LAMRC in Latvia. According to McFadzean,

*it suddenly seemed like a really great thing to do, to send a loom home, particularly when Anna’s agenda had been so much about cultural maintenance or Mrs Kivicka for that matter. I can’t imagine that they would not have been really happy with that. It felt like we were doing all the right things and that it had started its life as a transnational object and it was continuing on that journey and that Anita was there to almost accept it home again.*

Part of the context for this decision was Anita’s own decision to return to Latvia herself as well as her recognition that the loom’s association with Elga Kivicka was important in Latvia’s cultural history, particularly to the profession of weaving:

*I was going to Latvia and so could it be sent there and made into a museum piece in Latvia as part of the story in Latvia?... It’s come from a camp in Germany to Australia and gone back to Latvia so it’s really special because they appreciate it in*

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898 Interview with Moya McFadzean.
Becoming ‘other’ at home: Latvians Abroad — museum and research centre 2010 - 2016

The founder of the LAMRC, Maija Hinkle, described its mission as being to research, interpret, preserve and disseminate the histories and cultures of Latvians abroad as an integral part of the history of Latvia, to build bridges between Latvians in Latvia and Latvians abroad and their host countries, and to add Latvia to the international discussion on migration.

The Museum’s mission to ‘build bridges between Latvians in Latvia and Latvians abroad and their host countries’ recognised the differences between the diaspora and those who remained at home. Bridges connect but also separate people and places. The Museum’s mission is to attempt to reconcile the two groups especially when they encountered each other after the break-up of the Soviet Union through revived social networks and return migration. According to Russell King and Anastasi Christou, we can understand these movements of return as consisting of several types of ‘return mobilities’. The term return can encompass repatriation, which is forced return; return through short-term visits

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899 Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
such as holidays; as well as return migration which is the physical relocation of the migrant to their place of origin with the intention to stay for the long term.\textsuperscript{901}

According to Takeyuki Tsuda, there are generally two types of diasporic return. The return migration of first-generation diasporic migrants and the ‘ethnic’ return migrants who are later-generation descendants of diasporic peoples who ‘return’ to their ancestral countries of origin after more than one generation has lived outside it.\textsuperscript{902} The reasons for return migration include economic pressures, ‘ethnic ties to ancestral homelands, a nostalgic desire to rediscover ethnic roots, and the efforts of homeland governments to actively encourage diasporic descendants living abroad to return ‘home’ through preferential immigration and nationality policies’.\textsuperscript{903} However, both types of diasporic return migrants face problems when they return to their natal or ancestral homelands due to what has been called ‘the problem of similarity’\textsuperscript{904} — the expectation that presumed ethnic affinities between the returned migrant and the host culture would make integration easier than other types of immigration:

\textsuperscript{901} R King & A Christou, ‘Of Counter-Diaspora and Reverse Transnationalism: Return Mobilities to and from the Ancestral Homeland’, \textit{Mobilities}, vol.6, no.4, November 2011, p.452.


\textsuperscript{903} Tsuda, p.3.

\textsuperscript{904} D Cook-Martín and A Viladrich, pp.133-58.
The transnational ethnic affiliation of diasporic descendants with their ethnic homelands is based primarily on shared racial descent and ancestry. However, when they return-migrate, many of them become marginalized in their ancestral homelands as ethnic minorities because of their alien culture, a product of their foreign upbringing. As a result, the definition of ethnicity shifts from race to culture during the migratory process, as initial ethnic inclusion on the basis of race leads to ethnic exclusion on the basis of culture.905

This was what happened to many Latvian Americans when they ‘returned’ to Latvia. While their goal had been to preserve Latvian culture until they could return to their homeland, Maija Hinkle found that few Latvian Americans actually returned to Latvia after independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. While there were some practical reasons, Hinkle also found ‘more complicated psychological, sociological and cultural reasons’ that her interviewees gave for not returning to Latvia permanently.906 These reasons were:

*firstly, the dissonance between the reality of present-day Latvia and the idealized version that some émigrés carried in

905 Tsuda, p.7.
their hearts throughout the period of exile; secondly, misunderstandings and sometimes feelings of rejection between the diaspora and Latvian communities; and thirdly, the cultural differences between the diaspora and Latvian communities that have developed through the fifty years of separation and living in very different societies.\textsuperscript{907}

As noted by Sandra Dudley, displacement created multiple temporal and spatial zones where refugees and those who remained behind were still the same people but had lived parallel lives.\textsuperscript{908} The sense that they were the same people was passed on to the second generation of Latvians, who were often the ones to ‘return’ and find this ‘problem of similarity’ disorienting. Hinkle was the daughter of Latvian refugees who had fled Latvia during World War II to the DP camps of Germany and then to the USA and describes herself as growing up in two cultures, Latvian and American.\textsuperscript{909} She became interested in studying the Latvian American communities because of her contact with Māra Zirnīte. Zirnīte grew up in Latvia while it was a part of the Soviet Union. She became frustrated with increasing Russian migration and Russification in Latvia and the silences around ordinary Latvian experiences of living under Soviet rule. While she was an employee of the Ventspils Museum, an open-air ethnographic maritime

\textsuperscript{907} ibid., p.56.

\textsuperscript{908} Dudley, p.160.

\textsuperscript{909} Hinkle, ‘Latvians Abroad’, p.245.
museum established in 1954, she secretly collected stories of Latvians living under Soviet Occupation.\textsuperscript{910} Other Museum staff shared her concerns they recorded stories and collected objects, such as a walking stick that had come from a person who had been in a labour camp in Siberia even though they could not display such an item.\textsuperscript{911} Her aim and possibly the Museum’s covert aim at the time, was to collect people’s first-hand accounts ‘to serve as testimony for the silenced years during the Soviet regime’.\textsuperscript{912}

Māra Zirnīte continued collecting Latvian life stories after the break-up of the Soviet Union as part of what became the National Oral History Project, visited diasporic Latvians in England and the USA and met Maija Hinkle who set-up a sister organisation in the USA to collect stories from the Latvian diaspora. The collaborative relationship between Hinkle and Zirnīte enabled members of the Latvian diaspora in the USA to make annual trips to Latvia in order to interview Latvians who had lived under Soviet rule.\textsuperscript{913} Their combined project was about interaction between the Latvian diaspora and the Latvians remaining in Latvia which was supposed to lead to reconciliation.\textsuperscript{914}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{911} ibid., p.84.
\textsuperscript{912} ibid., p.56.
\textsuperscript{913} ibid., pp.56-59.
\textsuperscript{914} ibid., p.v.
\end{flushright}
It was while she was undertaking this project with Zirnīte that Hinkle came up with the idea for the LAMRC. She attended a conference on oral history and migration at the Norwegian Emigrant Museum in 2003 and realised that Latvia ‘needed a museum and a research center modelled on that in Norway and that dealt not only with the migration during WWII, but with a much broader time frame’. 915

The Norwegian Emigrant Museum was established in 1952 as part of the Norsk Folkemuseum or Norwegian Cultural History Museum, an open-air museum founded in 1894 which is similar to Skansen in Sweden. In 1988, the Norwegian Emigrant Museum became administered as a separate national institution. 916 The Museum aims ‘to be a symbol for all Norwegians and their descendants at home and abroad, and a place where they can confirm their identity and their connections to Norway’. 917 The Museum’s structure and themes have also influenced Maija Hinkle’s vision for the LAMRC, which is also imagined to be an open-air museum and a research centre. The LAMRC would focus on

*the history of the emigration, motivations for leaving of the emigrants, Latvian immigrant communities, their culture, activities and organizations in each country of residence,*


917 The Norwegian Emigrant Museum.
influence of host country on immigrant communities,
emigrants’ contributions to the world and to Latvia,
contemporary status of Latvian immigrant communities and
return migration and its consequences.918

This is not unlike the aims of Australian museums and exhibitions which focused on the contribution of migrants to Australia and the influences of their countries of origin. Both focus on culture and history and construct the immigrant/emigrant as an ‘other’. At the same time that Hinkle was thinking about this museum, the Latvian government was concerned about the high numbers of young professionals emigrating abroad for economic reasons, particularly after Latvia became a member of the European Union in 2004.919 This meant that the Latvian government was sympathetic to Hinkle’s ideas, even though it was not in the position to provide much financial resources.

By June 2007, Hinkle had created a working committee of 15 people from the USA, Sweden and Latvia and then she needed to found the organisation in Latvia ‘because even though the idea of the center and museum came from the emigre community, we wanted the people in Latvia to feel that it was their museum, too, that they were an integral part of it’.920 Thus, the LAMRC was founded as an organisational carrier of Latvian diasporic memory with input and influences from scholarly, organisational, official and cultural carriers of

919 ibid., p.247.
920 ibid., p.250.
memory. The museum was formally launched in September 2007 and was supported by the American Latvian Association, Director of the Latvian Museum Board, the Integration Ministry’s Department for Special Tasks Regarding Latvians Living Abroad and the Latvian Cultural Minister. By 2009 they had secured start-up funding from the European Economic Area (EEA), Norway Grants and the Latvian Societal Integration Fund which enabled the museum to open an office in Riga, hire two part-time employees, start collecting and continue searching for a museum site.921

One of those part-time employees was Marianna Auliciema who had been the assistant curator at MV in Melbourne when she had interviewed Anna and Ervins Apinis in 1997. Marianna and her family were ‘return migrants’, having moved permanently to Latvia in 2000.

*My husband and I had already travelled to Latvia quite a lot since Latvia regained independence in 1991, and we felt that it was a very interesting place, providing many creative and professional opportunities. Both of my parents had fled Latvia as children during WWII and had grown up in the Latvian diaspora with the mantra: “When Latvia is free, we are going home”. I was raised in Brisbane, Australia, but with a very strong Latvian diaspora identity — we spoke Latvian at home, I attended Latvian school, was involved in Latvian diaspora*

921 *ibid.*, p.251.
cultural activities such as song festivals, folk dancing, choirs etc. My parents and my brother had already moved to Latvia in the 1990s, and I followed some years later. Part of this decision was also based on a sense of responsibility for the emerging free Latvia, a wish to be a part of rebuilding a nation which was so much part of my own heritage.922

Marianna’s sense of ‘responsibility for the emerging free Latvia’ and her professional museum experience made her an ideal person to become involved with the LAMRC. In 2010, the Kivicka loom was accepted into the collection of the LAMRC when it arrived in Riga, Latvia. Both Anita and Marianna were there to unpack it. For Marianna, accepting the Kivicka loom on behalf of the LAMRC was an exciting prospect.

Moya contacted me about the deaccessioning of the loom. It seemed like a rational step, considering Museum Victoria had the opportunity to collect another, possibly more significant loom belonging to the Apinis family. The Museum would not be losing anything by deaccessioning this loom, and our museum would gain a significant object which we could use as a ‘star’ in our first real exhibition. I felt excited at the prospect of having the loom transferred to the care of our museum, and confident that Museum Victoria had made the right choice in

922 Interview with Marianna Auliciema.
offering it to us. This decision was also helped by the fact that Anita Apinis was also living in Riga at the time. She was very ‘connected’ to the loom still, and was able to assist us in technical matters — assembly of the loom, which is a complicated procedure.\textsuperscript{923}

The transport of the loom relied upon Marianna’s connections within the Latvian diaspora in Australia and New Zealand. Many migrants send remittances of money, and sometimes objects, to their families in their countries of origin or in places of refuge. For the Latvian diaspora in Australia and New Zealand, this has been formalised into a yearly shipment of ‘humanitarian aid’ to Latvia. The loom was placed in the 2010 shipment,\textsuperscript{924} signalling the importance of culture and particularly, returning culture to the homeland, to the Latvian diaspora in Australia and New Zealand. Indeed, some of their descendants like Marianna and Anita have returned to Latvia themselves.

Anita and her husband wanted to live and work in Latvia after it had gained independence. Anita had been teaching part-time at a Steiner School in Melbourne in the early 2000s but was looking for a full-time art teaching position. She found one at a Steiner School in Riga and worked there from 2009 to 2014. Anita ‘returned’ to Latvia for what Tsuda described as economic reasons

\textsuperscript{923} ibid.
\textsuperscript{924} ibid.
and her ‘ethnic ties to ancestral homelands’. There, she experienced ‘the problem of similarity’. She was ‘racially’ like the Latvians who had stayed in Latvia but ‘culturally’ and historically different from them. Being an art teacher trained in Western art history she found it frustrating when she taught art to Latvian high school students who were unfamiliar with Western art. When asked about her identity she said that:

I find that I’m disorientated because although I was born here, because of my Latvian heritage and language I feel Latvian but also Australian as I’ve grown up in Australia but it feels like a time capsule in Latvia. I didn’t even feel quite 100% Latvian because I was told I speak like my grandparents ... because their language has changed with the Russian and German influence and my language as it was spoken to my parents is still from the 1940s so I wasn’t accepted fully there and then I’ve had difficulties with my Latvian traditions here, although they’re more accepted here but still there’s a sense of you’re neither from one place or another, you just don’t fit in anywhere.

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925 Tsuda, p.3.
926 Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
927 ibid.
Anita’s desire to work through and explain these cultural differences influenced her involvement in the LAMRC. She is assisting Marianna to find more Latvian diasporic material in Australia. Communicating Latvian diasporic stories in Latvia to Latvians is important because those who stayed behind do not understand why people like her family fled. ‘In my family, other relatives are still in Latvia... They stayed behind and others escaped or fled for their lives really, because they didn’t want to be sent to Siberia. We need to tell that story.’\(^9\) This is what the LAMRC has done in the text about WWII refugees in their online exhibition *Latvian Footprints Around the World*.

*Reprisals, arrests and deportations during the first Soviet occupation of Latvia from 1940 to 1941 deeply shocked many Latvian inhabitants. As a result, in 1944 when the Soviet army was once more approaching Latvia with the threat of repeated occupation, more than 200,000 (around 10%) Latvian inhabitants left their homes, risking their lives to search for a safe place in the West.*\(^9\)

Interestingly, the German occupation of Latvia (1941-1944) is not mentioned in this section about WWII refugees. Unlike the interwar period of Latvian nationalism, where both Russia and Germany were perceived as a ‘them’ here it is only Soviet occupation that is remembered as traumatic. The intended

\(^9\)ibid.

audiences for this exhibit are the Latvians and their descendants who remained and lived through Soviet occupation, as well as the Latvian diaspora in western countries because it reinforces their connections to the West. Different, but related national identities that developed in parallel from the moment that some citizens fled war have met again in the ‘contact zone’ of a museum in the country of origin, establishing complex ongoing relations which continue to be influenced by changing global and regional politics.

Anita was present for the unpacking of her loom in Riga in the grounds of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in 2010 where it was installed in the first temporary exhibition of the LAMRC called *Latvians Abroad — three stories about war refugees*. This exhibition was about Latvian refugee experiences in the twentieth century and included stories of refugees who had fled Latvia in both World Wars centred around three iconic objects including the loom.\(^{930}\) The other objects were a suitcase used by a family that fled Latvia during both world wars and a boat used by a family to flee Latvia during World War II. In this context, the Kivicka loom remained in segment 2, of ‘The Art-Culture System’, as a historically significant object (Fig. 2).

Like the LAMRC, the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 1940-1991 is a creation of diasporic Latvians. A Latvian American history professor Paulis Lazda founded the Museum, shortly after Latvian independence in 1993.\(^{931}\)

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to Aro Velmet, its goal is to ‘Show, Remind and Remember’ and it ‘tries to subvert deliberate or accidental misinformation that dominates nationalist Russian discourses about the Latvian occupations’. 932 In this aspect it is similar to that of the LAMRC.

As the LAMRC had little storage, Anita kept the loom at her house and this meant she could weave on it and the Museum was able to record her doing so, while she explained her story in the Latvian language. According to Auliciema,

We agreed that the loom was a ‘living’ item, and that Anita could weave on the loom to keep the parts in working order.

While the loom was at Anita’s house, we filmed a short documentary interview about the story of the loom with Anita, and included the loom in an online exhibition ‘Latvian Footprints’... in 2011. 933

The online exhibition Latvian Footprints Around the World is about emigrants who left Latvia as early as the 19th century for ‘a better life’ as well as those who were exiled and fled for their lives: ‘Among these emigrants, there have always been some people who have returned to their homeland. However, most have remained living their lives far away.’ 934 The loom’s display in Melbourne and then

933 Interview with Marianna Auliciema.
return to Riga to be displayed there are detailed as part of the online exhibition.

Anita’s return migration story is told without the emotional tension that she feels as a second generation returned migrant: ‘Anita moved to Rīga to live in 2009, where she teaches weaving and art at the Ādažu Brīvā Valdorfa skola [Ādaži Free Waldorf School]. She still occasionally participates in Museum exhibitions, continuing to demonstrate weaving on her mother’s heirloom’.935

Another object and their associated personal story in this online exhibition does however, hint at the disorientation that comes with returning to one’s place of origin after many years. Vera Puķe-Puķite also fled Latvia during World War II and settled in Sweden where she realised she needed to stay.

I travelled to Rīga. Oh! Rīga! How pleasant! A sort of very warm feeling came over me. But then again... No, that isn’t my Rīga any more. It’s different. When I return, I think – well, yes,

I must be destined to remain here, in Sweden. Looks like that’s how it is.936

Another difference between the IM and LAMRC interpretations of the looms is the greater emphasis on Elga Kivicka’s story because, according to Auliciema she was a co-author of a well-known series of books about Latvian folk costume, and is a known figure in the history of applied art in Latvia. For example, Kivicka is known to have

woven designs by famous artist Ansis Cirulis in the first period of Latvian independence – some of these textiles were used in the furnishing of the presidential palace in Riga. ⁹³⁷

In 2012 the loom’s story and video but not the loom itself, were included in a temporary exhibition *Pathways: refugee stories and objects* at the University of Latvia in association with the conference ‘Oral history: dialog (sic) with society’. This exhibition then travelled to the Tukums History Museum with the loom in early 2013. According to Auliciema,

> [t]he Tukums museum has a weaver’s workshop, with a working collection of historical looms, and the Kivicka loom is now on long-term loan to the Tukums museum, and being used in the workshop, until ‘Latvians Abroad’ is able to house the Kivicka loom appropriately. Our long-term plan is that our museum will find a permanent building in which the loom can be on more-or-less permanent display. ⁹³⁸

The loom was displayed in an ethnographic context as a working loom, remaining in segment 2 in ‘The Art-Culture System’ as an ‘authentic’ cultural object but also simultaneously located in segment 3, due to its technological significance (Fig.2). It represents Latvian weaving practices from the 1930s,

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⁹³⁷ Interview with Marianna Auliciema.
⁹³⁸ ibid.
continued in the Latvian Australian diaspora. Anita discovered a slight change in the way that looms are currently threaded in Latvia, leaving out a step that her mother and her weaving teacher in Australia had taught her. For Anita, the display of the loom in the Tukums Museum has just as much emotional resonance as it did at the IM in Melbourne and if she had lived closer to Tukums, she would have visited it every weekend. ‘I felt very happy there. I could’ve slept underneath it. You sort of just get so attached to a loom. ...It’s still there waiting for me.’

Weaving and teaching gives Anita emotional comfort in both Australia and in Latvia but the economic and political situation in Latvia made her life there uncertain. For Anita, in Latvia

it was doing exactly what I love weaving, teaching art,

*teaching English and some photography... except the pay was more like labourer’s pay than a teacher’s pay which I was shocked about. So I worked there for five years. I couldn’t stand the poverty and the lack of infrastructure in the society. There’s no Medicare or infrastructure for when you’re sick or have to go to hospital...People just work... and don’t ever relax. And life was just getting a bit hard and uncertain, very uncertain so I came back.*

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939 Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
940 ibid.
941 ibid.
Anita returned to Australia in 2014. ‘The problem of similarity’, the socio-economic situation and to a certain extent, the political situation made it difficult for her to stay in Latvia but it is her weaving and the loom which make her want to return to Latvia. She said: ‘I’d like to continue going back and weaving on my loom in Tukums.’ Maria, by contrast, remains in Latvia working with the LAMRC despite some difficulties. This is possibly because her entire family ‘returned’ to Latvia whereas Anita’s daughter remains in Australia.

The future of the LAMRC is tenuous, being reliant on project funding. However, they recently were able to secure collection storage at the new Latvian National Library and they are working towards official accreditation by the Ministry of Culture of Latvia which would mean that the Latvian state would take ultimate responsibility for the maintenance and care of the collection. Ultimately, the Latvian diaspora who were responsible for creating and developing the museum want to ‘return’ the collection and the responsibility for it to the government of Latvia, making it an official carrier of national memory.

For Marianna, there was little difference between developing the collections and exhibitions at the IM in Melbourne and the collections and exhibitions at the LAMRC ‘because in both we are interested in the activities of the diaspora, and the experiences of leaving the homeland’. However, there is a difference in audience. At the IM the Latvian immigrant is presented as an official carrier of national memory.

\[942\] ibid.
\[943\] Interview with Marianna Auliciema.
\[944\] ibid.
‘other’ to the non-Latvian Australian audience — their lives in Latvia and the Displaced Persons Camps their cultural practices and their journey to Australia and early years of settlement need to be explained. In the LAMRC exhibitions, however, the Latvian emigrant is presented as similar but still ‘other’ to the majority Latvian population who remained in Latvia. Their reasons for leaving Latvia and their lives in Displaced Persons camps and in countries of settlement like the USA, Brazil, Australia or Sweden need to be explained but the details of continued cultural practices, like weaving patterns do not require explanation.

While Dudley described two parallel directions for Karenni refugees in Thailand and Myanmar, however, we see here that this has become multiple parallel directions due to the multiple places of refuge and the multiple countries of settlement. The LAMRC also collects and displays stories of Latvians who emigrated at different moments in history, suggesting that these multiple parallel directions for particular ethnic, cultural or national groups also have a temporal dimension. The LAMRC can explore and explain these nuances of migration and multiple Latvian national/cultural identities because they are important to convey to the Latvians who remained behind. For the IM in Melbourne, though, these particular nuances may not be relevant to convey to the broader Australian community in an exhibition about migration to and settlement in Australia. Communicating what it is to be Latvian Australian is important to both Latvian and Australian audiences and communicating Latvian

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945 Dudley, p.160.
American identities is important for both Latvian and American audiences but only in Latvia do we see these doubly-nationalised identities represented side-by-side.

Conclusion

The LAMRC acts as a ‘contact zone’ and is itself an actor in the ‘contact zone’. Here the Kivicka loom mediates the ways that Latvians and diasporic Latvians ‘come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations’ however unequal, complex and conflicted they may be.946 The Museum is also an actor in the space of shifting alignments of the Latvian government between Russian and Western powers after leaving the Soviet Union in 1991. The establishment of the LAMRC, led by a Latvian American and funded in part by the European Economic Area, Norway Grants and the Latvian Societal Integration Fund, all of which are associated with improving relations within the European Union, can be seen as part of the attempts to move Latvia closer to the Western world. This in part, may be driven by the cultural differences and desires of some of the Latvian diaspora and return migrants, like Anita whose cultural reference points are derived from a Western education. It is a diplomatic way of making a national and Western ‘us’ by moving away from the Soviet/Russian ‘them’.

946 Pratt, p.8.
The Apinis family, at IM were represented as Latvian migrant ‘others’ continuing their cultural practices in Australia because that is how they presented themselves to the Museum — it was their way of appropriating ‘metropolitan methods of representation’. This suited the Museum when it started the Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity project in 1992 and the IM when it opened in 1998. The hybridity involved in being Latvian Australian is demonstrated through the interactions that Anita Apinis-Herman had with visitors in the exhibition space at the IM where she felt a sense of belonging with other migrants who had similar experiences to her family. In neither museum, can Latvian Australians like Anita Apinis-Herman or Marianna Auliciema ever be presented as the ‘self’. This might be possible in a Latvian Australian museum or exhibition whose audience was primarily made up of other Latvian Australians.

The two looms in Melbourne and in Tukums embody Anita Apinis-Herman’s emotional connection to both Australia and Latvia and to her parents, particularly her mother— the familial ‘us’. They connect back to state institutions such as the Liepāja Ethnographic Museum created to impart a sense of cultural nationalism to the population of the newly independent Latvia in the 1920s — something that many Latvians like Anna Apinis, carried with them when they fled during World War II. The two looms created by refugees in Displaced Persons camps were not just tools for the making of cultural objects, but became symbolic of Latvian cultural nationalism in the ‘me’ and ‘us’ set of identity

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947 ibid., pp.7-8.
relations. In so doing, they move between and sometimes simultaneously occupy zones 2 and 3 of ‘The Art-Culture System’ (Fig.2). By the time the Kivicka loom returned to Latvia, Anita could provide a ‘return’ narrative to the LAMRC but it is a narrative that is devoid of emotion so it does not explain ‘the problem of similarity’ for Anita when she ‘returned’ to Latvia. It does not explain for a Latvian audience, what it means for Anita to be both Latvian and Australian. In her own words, ‘I am really Australian in my thinking... but in my emotions, maybe I’m more Latvian’.

948 Interview with Anita Apinis-Herman.
Conclusion: Objects, museums and ‘identity relations’

One day, during April 2014 between interviews and working through filing cabinets at the Lambing Flat Folk Museum in Young I walked into the ‘gold room’ as it is colloquially known by the volunteers. I was alone. I had seen the Lambing Flat banner a number of times during this week-long stay in Young and had kept some distance from it. This time, though, I looked closely, tracing the lead pencil outlines which organised the letters and decoration, and guided the painter. That day, the words ‘No Chinese’ on the banner confused me. Which side of this banner do I stand on? If I could travel back in time to Lambing Flat on 30 June 1861, I would have been a target of the rioters because I am of mixed-race. My mother is of Chinese descent from Malaysia and my father is from Austria. My mother, as someone who is visibly Chinese, would have been chased from the field. My father would also have been chased because of his association with us. But if he was not associated with us, as a European, it is possible that he would have chased my mother and I from the field.

In 2014, standing in front of the banner that demanded a sharp division between ‘us’ and ‘them’ I wondered if I could cut myself in two. The accumulation of both personal and collective histories, memories and myth mean that I long for belonging to an ‘us’ whether that is Australian, Chinese, Asian, Austrian, European or based on common values (transversal); but, also within me, I contain potential ‘others’ and ‘them’. I am always becoming. As a museum curator, when I work with an object, I am also working out my own and
my institution’s relations with people who are associated with the object over time. Likewise, the people associated with the object, whom I deal with in the present, are working out their relations with me and the institution I represent. The object(s) in question mediate our relations because each person forms their own understanding of and relationship with the object(s). These relations are not necessarily reciprocated and they change over time.

These issues are, of course, behind the research questions with which I began my explorations for this dissertation. In this concluding chapter, I will therefore, like Ariadne, weave my way through my findings in order to answer them. To answer my first research question, I will outline how people and museums have used objects to mediate Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’ through the three case studies which have assembled the object biographies of the Lambing Flat banner, the gamelan Digul and two Latvian weaving looms. Given these objects also mediate relations between museums and people I will also interweave answers to research questions two: ‘How have public and local museums interacted with people from different cultural backgrounds?’ and three: ‘What motivates people from culturally diverse backgrounds to donate to, collaborate or not collaborate with a public or local museum?’ into the discussion. At the end I will sum up what this means to answer my last research question about the relationships between material culture, museums and Australian society.

All three case studies reveal ways that the creation and possession of objects mediate relations between ‘me’ and ‘us’. As noted in chapter three, it is
in this set of relations where people begin to engage in the politics of belonging, especially in the processes of inclusion and exclusion. This is because of the desire to belong to and define a particular group, such as a nation. The Lambing Flat banner, for instance, began as a call to unite European miners as ‘descendants of the old world’949 as they rioted to exclude Chinese miners from the Lambing Flat gold fields. However, in NSW and particularly in Young, the banner came to represent collective memories and a collective foundation myth that the riots were the birth of White Australia. This could be read as a form of ‘self-ethnicisation’, where many people born in the colonies and in Australia, especially from British and sometimes European heritage, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries envisaged themselves as being ‘white’. This has continued to be the default position of the majority or dominant group in Australian society despite attempts to change Australian national identity into one of a ‘nation of migrants’ after the introduction of multicultural policies in 1978.

Some people of Chinese Australian heritage today also ‘self-ethnicise’, particularly in relation to remembering the Lambing Flat riots, calling for an apology for the White Australia Policy and when collaborating with the Young Shire Council for the creation of the Chinese Gardens in 1997 and then later for the Lambing Flat Chinese Festivals in 2014-16. It is a strategic decision to utilise their ‘ethnicity’ in order to participate in Australian society. This ‘self-ethnicisation’ through culture however, creates problems for people of Chinese

949 ‘Prospectus of the Miners’ Protection League’. 
descent, particularly those living in Young, who have supposedly assimilated into mainstream Australia as they are not always understood as being Chinese enough to be considered really ‘Chinese’, or included in narratives about the riots and in commemorations like the festivals.

The gamelan Digul case study also showed a form of ‘self-ethnicisation’ where ‘ethnicity’ became equal to nationality. This case study demonstrated the political prisoners’ desire to create an independent Indonesian nation while under Dutch colonial rule. Since becoming aware of the existence of these instruments, the Indonesian government views them as symbolic of Indonesian nationalism and independence.

The ‘self-ethnicisation’ process is also demonstrated in the last case study. Museums, like other government institutions, in Latvia, were engaged in processes of ‘self-ethnicising’ the population of a newly emerging nation in the early 20th century in order to create ‘me’ and national ‘us’ relations. For Latvians who grew up and were educated in this period and fled during World War II, this ‘self-ethnicisation’ process continued in Displaced Persons Camps and in their new homelands through cultural practices as well as the creation of objects like weaving looms and national costumes, as a way of remembering and preserving the homeland. Laura Hilton called this ‘cultural nationalism’ where common cultural practices were more important than citizenship to define national belonging.

Hilton, ‘Cultural nationalism’.
The objects in this dissertation have also demonstrated a number of different ways to create and maintain relationships with ‘others’, mostly staying within section 2, ‘authentic artifact’ of the ‘Art-Culture System’ (Fig. 2). This is particularly so in museological ‘contact zones’ where cross-cultural relations involve negotiation and contestation and unequal power relations. One way of creating ‘others’ is to emphasise cultural and geographical distance. Up until the 1970s, Australian museums represented ‘other’ cultures through their anthropology collections and exhibitions. The gamelan Digul was collected by the NMV and placed in its Ethnology collection as an example of ‘others’ outside of Australia. The historical significance of the gamelan was forgotten until researched and publicised by Margaret Kartomi at Monash University. From that time the instruments’ were valued for both their ethnographic significance as representing cultural ‘others’ but also for their historical significance, particularly the transversal ‘us’ relations between the Indonesian political activists and the Australian unions, civil libertarians and Chinese and Indian seamen. This still has implications for how the instruments are displayed in different contexts. When displayed at the NMA, in the Australian Journeys exhibition, it was the interest in ethno-historical interpretation, which emphasised the cultural aspects of the gamelan that ‘othered’ the Indonesian independence activists.

‘Others’ are also created by emphasising temporal differences. For the people of Young, including the volunteers who manage the LFFM, the shifting policy frameworks of assimilation, integration and then multiculturalism affected how they understood the banner. As pride in the riots, turned to shame and
embarrassment, people in Young distanced themselves from the miners who rioted. These miners became ‘them’ and their Chinese miner targets became ‘others’. For people who identified strongly with multicultural policies, such as the Young Shire Council, the mostly retired volunteers at the LFFM could also seem old-fashioned and could be treated as ‘others’ for the purposes of dealing with Chinese and Chinese Australian groups from outside of Young, particularly for the renewed Lambing Flat Chinese Festivals in 2014-16. The most recent groups of Chinese Australians from outside of Young who collaborated with the Council have mostly viewed the museum volunteers in the same way.

As argued in chapter two, museums in Australia have been involved in a process of ‘ethnicisation’ or creating ethnic identities in order to include or exclude objects and stories relating to them in their collections. In Young, it was the town, Shire Council as well as the LFFM, which ‘ethnicised’ Chinese Australians as ‘others’ during the Lambing Flat Chinese Festival in 2014 — through importing performers of ‘traditional’ Chinese culture like Tai Chi and lion dancing as well as through the China exhibition at the LFFM. This is due to the way that multiculturalism is practiced in Australia, which, according to Hage, creates ‘cultural spaces of inclusion as a substitute to effective inclusion in mainstream political processes’. ‘Others’ can be included for their exploitable aspects such as cultural practices and performances but their ‘will’ continues to be excluded.951 This is what Hage described as the ‘dialectic of inclusion and

951 Hage, White Nation, pp.136-38.
exclusion’. 952 This dialectic continues in Young as in 2015 and 2016 the Council moved the Lambing Flat Chinese Festival to the weekend closest to 21 March, which, in Australia is called ‘Harmony Day’ 953 in order that it could be a multicultural-framed celebration of the Chinese contribution to Young. 954

This process of ‘ethnicising’ Chinese Australians from outside of Young introduced ‘cultural authenticity’ to Young but did not develop ‘regional authenticity’ which could be achieved through the inclusion of local Chinese Australians in the festival and at the LFFM. Max Quay, a descendant of William Seng Chai, participated in the Moving for Work: Migration and Working Lives exhibition, held at the LFFM with assistance from the MHC-NSW in 2004. He participated in the exhibition as one of many ‘others’ who made up the local ‘us’ and then volunteered at the LFFM as one of the local ‘us’. It is this kind of collaboration with local people of culturally diverse backgrounds that the museum and the Shire Council could engage with more in order to solve the structural problems I have identified.

The process of ‘ethnicisation’ also occurred with MV’s collection of the Latvian weaving looms. The Museum, following the combination of

952 ibid.
governmental policies of multiculturalism and an intellectual interest in social history, sought to collaborate with and represent the many ‘others’ who made up the Australian nation. This is first shown by the *Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity Project* which identified the Apinis family and their continuation of Latvian weaving practices and then, by the creation of an IM which displayed this family story and the looms successively for twelve years. The Apinis family agreed to collaborate with MV because this would promote not just their own personal stories but also Latvia. They wanted to show the non-Latvian Australian audience ‘others’ something about the Latvian-Australian ‘us’. This ‘self-ethnicising’ process for the Apinis family was also a strategic way of participating in Australian society more broadly and the museum was one of a number of different platforms for doing so. At the Museum, Anita connected with other post-World War II migrants, who, like her, are considered ‘others’ in Australian society. Anita’s willingness to collaborate with museums continued when the Kivicka loom was transferred to the LAMRC in Latvia. Anita’s purpose for collaborating with them was to show people who were racially or ethnically similar to her, what the Latvians who fled during World War II had endured and how Latvians had maintained traditions and practices in exile and in Australia. In modern day Latvia, however, these diasporic Latvians are cultural ‘others’ as Anita found. The objects and personal stories connected with them in the LAMRC exhibitions serve to explain that ‘otherness’ to the Latvians who stayed behind.
‘Othering’, whether cultural, geographical or temporal, can have an antagonistic, exclusionary aspect to it particularly when there is a perceived threat to national, ethnic or cultural group identity. This is demonstrated by the identity relations of ‘me’/ ‘us’ and ‘them’. These are the most difficult set of identity relations for museums to deal with over a long period of time as the social and political frameworks change, creating cognitive dissonance for those who have to reinterpret the material culture of past conflicts. The words ‘No Chinese’ on the banner remind us that Chinese people were undesirable miners at Lambing Flat, undesirable citizens in White Australia and pose an exotic but awkward addition to a multicultural Australia. In the town of Young, this has resulted in minimal attempts to incorporate the Chinese miners’ perspectives in narratives about the riots, including at the LFFM. After World War II when the town’s pride in being the site of the riots and the mythological birthplace of White Australia had mostly faded, the European miners who rioted against the Chinese miners became ‘them’. People in the town did not want to identify with them. This situation has continued to be so from the 1980s onwards after the introduction of multicultural policies. It has resulted in their exclusion — neither the museum, nor the tourism signs and brochures include the voices of the European miners.

The gamelan Digul also mediated antagonistic relations, but was created from the position of the oppressed. It began life mediating relations between the Indonesian political activist ‘us’ and the Dutch colonial government ‘them’. The Dutch East Indies government, likewise, saw the Indonesian political prisoners as
a ‘them’ by exiling them and their families to Tanah Merah. The Dutch continued to position their political prisoners as a ‘them’ in order to gain the co-operation of the Australian government to imprison them in Australia during World War II. The Australian government, for its part, continued to view the Indonesians as a ‘them’ when it repatriated and deported them to Indonesia after the war. Monash University and the NMA do include a recognition of these exclusionary ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations in their interpretations of the gamelan but they are not at the centre of their narratives. They are buried in text labels that are low in the exhibition text hierarchy in the 1999 Monash University exhibition and at the end of the exhibition flipbook in the 2009 NMA exhibition. For both institutions, burying this information was a way of staying true to the museum staff’s convictions that these events happened and that they should be publicly acknowledged, while at the same time not drawing the attention of the relevant funding body, the Australian government, to the fact that the exhibitions included this information. The interpretation at the ANMM and the simultaneous exhibition at the Museum Benteng Vredeburg in Yogyakarta, Indonesia did not mention the deportation and thus, the ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations at all, perhaps also due to both the Australian government and Indonesian Embassy’s involvement in sponsoring the exhibitions.

The museums which displayed the Latvian weaving looms, however, explain the historical ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations but do not overtly explain how these continue to the present day. The two looms were made to remember the Latvian cultural identity in exile as a form of resistance against Soviet rule. Anita
inherited this sensibility and cooperating with the LAMRC for her is about countering Russian influence in Latvian society by explaining why her family left. This intention is mostly reciprocated by the LAMRC, founded by a Latvian American with the support of sympathetic Latvians and Western institutions like the European Economic Area, Norway Grants and the Latvian Societal Integration Fund. In the MV’s *Contemporary Craft and Cultural Identity* project these relations of a Latvian ‘us’ and Soviet/Russian ‘them’ were well known. Once the looms went on display at the IM these difficult and antagonistic relations are only mentioned in the context of the Apinis family escaping World War II. It is not seen as relevant for this museum to explain the continuing tensions in Latvian diasporic communities and in Latvia to the non-Latvian Australian ‘us’ audience.

Only two of the case studies demonstrated the possibilities of ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’ relations, while the last case study may have the potential for transversal ‘us’ relations depending on the future activities of Anita, MV and the LAMRC. The institutions in this dissertation that interpret objects that mediate this set of relations do so in different ways. The gamelan Digul mediated relations between the Indonesian independence activists, Indian and Chinese seamen and the Australian civil libertarians and unionists who worked together to campaign for Indonesian independence. These transversal ‘us’ relations were emphasised by each collecting institution in different ways. Both Monash University and the NMA emphasised the transversal ‘us’ relations between the Australians and the Indonesians while only the ANMM recognised that these
transversal ‘us’ relations also included the Indian and Chinese seamen. Monash University, the ANMM and successive Australian governments used the gamelan Digul and the historical transversal ‘us’ relations between Australian and Indonesian people to mediate contemporary diplomatic relations with successive Indonesian governments. Indonesian governments have accepted this as part of their diplomatic relationships with Australia. It is clear, however, that the gamelan is important to them because of the collective Indonesian identity and the ‘me’ and ‘us’ set of identity relations. Opportunities to interpret this period of Indonesia’s history in Indonesian museums do not usually mention the actions of Australian, Indian or Chinese people at all.

As a contrast the possibilities of transversal ‘us’ relations are not recognised in any interpretation of the Lambing Flat banner. From the Chinese miners’ perspectives and through later Chinese Australian eyes, there has been a constant struggle to be recognised as part of the Australian or transversal ‘us’. This is demonstrated through petitions for compensation for the riots, publishing arguments which sought to demonstrate similar values between Chinese and British Australians, negotiating relations with Chinese and Australian governments, assimilation and a call for an apology for the White Australia Policy. It is the possibility of ‘me’ and transversal ‘us’ relations that has been forgotten or is unnoticed by the LFFM, the town of Young, the Shire Council and until recently, much of the scholarship around the riots. Likewise, other institutions like the MHC-NSW and the NMA have used images of the banner and
descriptions of the riots to demonstrate conflict between ‘us’ and ‘them’ relations but not the possibilities of a transversal ‘us’ based on common values.

According to Arjun Appadurai, it is humans who give objects meanings and we can see this demonstrated in Pearce’s adaptation of Clifford’s ‘Art-Culture System’, which explains the ways that we relate to difference through the categorising of objects (Fig.2). By assembling the life story of objects from their creation to the present day, including the ways museums collected, loaned, displayed and deaccessioned them, I can demonstrate Appadurai’s point that ‘it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context’. We can see how objects move between the different segments of the ‘Art-Culture System’ over time and sometimes occupy more than one segment simultaneously depending on the way people have understood and used them. This movement within the ‘Art-Culture System’ also illuminates the ways in which objects mediate Yuval-Davis’ ‘identity relations’ between people from different cultural backgrounds, including when they meet and establish ongoing relations, however complex, in a museological ‘contact zone’. Objects then, reveal much about personal identity (me) and the relations with a collective or national identity (us), with people who are different (others), with people who are different and actively disliked (them) and with people who are different but respected and valued as equals (transversal us) in Australian society and across national boundaries. These case studies have also hinted at ‘identity relations’ in

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Indonesia and Latvia. The methodologies used, are not just applicable to cultural differences, they could also be applied to other kinds of difference such as those based on abilities and sexualities.

These categories of ‘identity relations’ are useful for curators and other museum workers who are looking to work with people from different backgrounds and interpret events and associated material culture of cross-cultural encounter, relations and conflict. They can be used to identify difficult and dissonant aspects of a narrative, as well as previously unknown or unexplored relationships. This dissertation has also demonstrated that it is possible to recover the agency of minority or non-dominant actors in shaping these relations in society and in the ‘contact zone’ of museums. Museum staff can use this information to reflect upon the ways that they represent difference through the collection, interpretation and exhibition of objects and in other public programs. Curators may then be able to look for, collect and display previously ignored or forgotten perspectives. In doing this, museums can also demonstrate to their audiences the variety of ways that we can and do relate to difference. Museums can remind us all that we bear responsibility for our choices.
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