

an other place

The Australian War Memorial in a Freirean
framework

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Declaration

I declare that apart from sourced citations, this thesis is my own original work.

Signed,

Catherine Styles

A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

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Abstract

My thesis is that museum exhibitions developed according to Freirean praxis would constitute a better learning opportunity for visitors, facilitate the process of evaluation, and enact the favoured museum principles of dialogic communication and community-building.

This project constitutes a cross-fertilisation of adult education, cultural studies and museum practice. In the last few decades, museum professional practice has become increasingly well informed by cultural critique. Many museum institutions have been moved to commit to building communities, but the question of how to do so via exhibition spaces is yet to be squarely addressed by the museum field. In this thesis I produce a detailed evaluation of a museum's informal learning program; and demonstrate the potential value of adult education theory and practice for enacting museums' commitment to dialogic communication and community-building.

To investigate the value of adult education praxis for museums, I consider the Australian War Memorial's signifying practice – the site and its exhibitions – as a program for informal learning. I conduct my analysis according to Ira Shor's (Freirean) method for engaging students in an extraordinary re-experience of an ordinary object. Shor's program calls for students to investigate the object through three stages of description, diagnosis and reconstruction. Respectively, I testify to my initial experience of the Memorial's program as a visitor, analyse its signification in national, international and historical contexts, and imagine an alternative means of signifying Australia's war memory. The resulting account constitutes a record of my learning process and a critical and constructive evaluation of the Memorial as a site for informal learning. It provides a single vision of what the Memorial is, what it means and how it could be reconstructed. But more importantly, my account demonstrates a program for simultaneously learning from the museum and learning about its signifying practice. This dual educational and evaluative method would mutually advantage a museum and its visiting public. In a museum that hosted a dialogic program, the exhibitions would invite evaluative responses that staff are otherwise at pains to generate. Concurrently, visitors would benefit because they would be engaging in a more critical and constructive learning process. In addition, the museum would be enacting the principle of dialogic communication that underpins the project of community-building.

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Introduction: An other place

This thesis was born of a personal frustration with museums, deepened by the strength of my conviction that visiting a museum could be an extremely rewarding experience. With the capacity to shape collective histories, identities and therefore futures, the museum is ‘indeed an agency of extraordinary power and brilliance’ (Preziosi, 1996: 109). But as architect Louis Kahn has complained, most museums are so fatiguing that the first thing you want on entering is a cup of coffee. I agree with cultural critic Ralph Rugoff’s explanation for this effect: ‘so many museum exhibits attract our attention only to immobilise our curiosity. Their atmosphere of infallible authority is paralysing. The deal they offer leaves little room for negotiation’ (Rugoff, 1995: 76). In most museums, there is no question of an equal or playful relationship between the exhibits and visitors. Instead, visitors are positioned as passive recipients of the museum’s knowledge. Whether or not the knowledge is received, the experience is ultimately boring. The formal education process has traditionally worked in a similar way. As the editors of a landmark document on Indigenous culture and museums note, education typically functions to domesticate students, to render them docile, ‘like a lobotomy operation or a relentless lifelong dosage of tranquillisers’ (Edwards, 1980: 28). British educator David Head has expressed the authoritarianism of education even more simply: ‘Education is invasion’ (Head, 1977: 127).

Debates on formal education praxis remain within the confines of a paradigm that posits education as a process of information transference. To illustrate this point, I cite a newspaper report on a controversy among Australian historians and teachers as to who and what should be on the list of ‘things everyone should know’.¹ Following publication of the bestselling American book *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*, by Professor E.D. Hirsch, the Victorian Government commissioned a group of Australian academics to identify what Australian students should be taught between Years 6 and 10. Proponents of women’s, immigrant and Indigenous history were critical of the proposed syllabus, arguing that it perpetuates a white, male, middle-class view of history. But no one questioned the principle underlying all sides of the controversy – that education is a process of acquiring information. In an alternative educational paradigm, it is more important that students critically analyse the historiographic process, for example, than that they commit a number of significant

¹ Carolyn Jones, ‘National treasure hunt’, *Australian*, 2 February 1996, p.7.

historical moments to memory. Historiography is more important because students who are conscious of the process of writing history are equipped to identify omissions and biases for themselves. In this paradigm, the precise content of the syllabus is irrelevant because the point is to gain a sense of how history is written. This broader perspective rarely rates a mention in debates on the education system.

Education can be much more than the acquisition of information. It can be a dialogic exchange that is mutually rewarding for both teachers and learners, or in the case of this thesis, museums and their visitors. The renowned Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, conceived of education in such terms, and his work can be productively applied to, or adapted for, the museum context. In this thesis I use Freirean praxis by adapting a teaching technique of New York educator and Freire collaborator, Ira Shor. Shor's technique invites students to engage in an extraordinary re-experience of an ordinary object by analysing it in bigger and bigger contexts. Beginning with a close description, students progress by analysing the object in its social, global and historical contexts. As they consider the object in contexts outside their own initial perspective, students become conscious of the limitations of their initial perspective. Equipped with this new consciousness, the students are ready for the final stage in the process, which is to describe alternative possible futures for the object. For my purposes, the object in question is the informal learning program (or signifying practice) of the Australian War Memorial. It is the Memorial's signifying practices that I describe, diagnose and reconstruct. In doing so I also demonstrate how this kind of method could orchestrate the development of effective dialogic museum exhibitions. In order to explain the notion of 'dialogue', and because it is unusual to consider the issue of museum education within a Freirean framework, a brief introduction to Freire and his pedagogical praxis is necessary before I elaborate the project of this thesis.

Paulo Freire was born in 1921 in Recife, north-east Brazil, one of the country's poorest regions. From the late 1940s until 1964 he worked extensively to promote self-determination among illiterate peasants, developing an educational praxis that was to become internationally celebrated. Imprisoned by the military for 70 days, and exiled for 16 years, he went on to work in Chile for UNESCO; at Harvard University's Center for Studies in Development and Social Change; and in Geneva for the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches. He developed literacy programs for Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Peru and Nicaragua. When he returned to Brazil in 1980 he taught at universities in São Paulo and from 1989 to 1991 he was Secretary of Education of São Paulo. Freire died in 1997 but his influence on adult educators around the world continues. He has been described as the most important educator of the second half of the twentieth century (Carnoy, 1998: 7).

Freire's work is characterised by a passion for justice, critical knowledge, and social change. For Freire, 'teaching and learning are human experiences with profound social consequences' (Shor, 1993: 25). Freirean praxis is radically opposed to what Freire called the banking model of education, in which students are receptacles for teachers to fill, and where a good teaching performance is indicated by students who meekly submit to being filled with more and more knowledge. Where banking education 'attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness', Freire's education 'strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in society' (Freire, 1975: 53, 62). In Freirean praxis, education is conscientisation – a developing recognition that the world is not 'given', but dynamically in the making, constituted through knowledge and practice or, in Freire's terms, through reflection and action. It is this perpetual dialectic between acting and reflecting that, for Freire, offers the possibility of change. 'Because [we] are *conscious beings*', he argues, we can reflect on our limitations, look beyond them, and strive to overcome them (Freire, 1975: 80). His pedagogy is directed, therefore, toward involving students as active agents in the process of their learning. Ideally, they will 'discover themselves as... permanent re-creators' of knowledge (51).

Importantly, Freirean praxis is as productive and enabling for teachers as it is for students. Freire situates teacher and students as equally active collaborators in the ongoing process of interpreting the world around us. For Freire, he and his students are all subjects co-intent on learning about a given reality, 'not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge' (51). A Freirean intervention into the Australian curriculum debate would have sidestepped the entire question of what content the curriculum should cover, in favour of the more critical question of the praxis deployed:

Content cannot be taught, except in an authoritarian, vanguardist way, as if it was a set of things, pieces of knowledge, that can be superimposed on or juxtaposed to the conscious body of the learners. Teaching, learning and knowing have nothing to do with this mechanistic practice.² (Freire, 1998: 72)

The role of the educator in Freire's model, contrary to that of the bearer of wisdom in the disciplinary model, is 'to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is superseded by knowledge at the level of the *logos* (62).³ I understand this opposition *doxa/logos* as invoking the respective static and dynamic aspects of knowledge. Freire's objective is to activate students to

² Michael Bernard-Donals notes that Freire's critique of the banking model of education 'has been something of a commonplace in humanities divisions (despite, perhaps, the lack of follow-through by teachers of that critique) (Bernard-Donals, 1998: 179).

³ *Doxa* comes from the Greek word for belief, opinion, conjecture; *logos* comes from the Greek word for reason, argument, justification, discourse and so on.

participate in the dynamic process of representation, rather than to simply expose them to representation as fixed beliefs, conjectures, doctrines, images, objects and so on. Freirean praxis promotes students' involvement in the process of producing representation. Because it is interested in promoting students' active involvement in their learning experience, Freirean praxis is intrinsically and perpetually subject to critique and adaptation. Freirean learning programs, in other words, automatically generate evaluations. In the context of museums, which are both educating and evaluating constantly and separately, this is a valuable effect.

A useful way to characterise Freirean educational praxis is as dialogic. For Freire, dialogue is an existential necessity (Freire, 1975: 61) and a notion that underpins much of his writing about teaching. Dialogue is a method for overcoming oppression (Peters & Lankshear, 1994: 188) in that it *enables* students, to recognise their agency and capacity to intervene in culture and history. Freire's sense of dialogue resonates with Bakhtin's. Where Freire's focus was the formal education process, and therefore the relations between teacher, curriculum and student, Bakhtin focused on language and literature, and the relations between author, text and reader. For Bakhtin, all utterances are dialogic in that every text operates in tandem with other texts, is addressed to an explicit or implicit listener, and anticipates a response (Bakhtin, 1986: 84–95). But he argued that certain genres – in particular, novels – favour dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981: 273). In a passage on the relationship between dialogue and understanding, Bakhtin's writing calls Freirean praxis directly to mind:

All true understanding is active and already represents the embryo of an answer. Only active understanding can apprehend [the meaning of an utterance]; it is only by means of becoming that becoming can be apprehended ... *All understanding is dialogical* ... Understanding is in search of a counter-discourse to the discourse of the utterer.⁴

For both Freire and Bakhtin, dialogue is essential to the act of learning. In this thesis I ask: How could this notion of dialogue be applied to the museum? How could the producers of museum exhibitions establish dialogic relations between themselves, the exhibitions, and their visitors?

It is my project to explore how museums could facilitate a dialogic form of education via their exhibitions. The current emphasis in museum studies on community-building suggests, and George MacDonald has argued, that the *raison d'être* of museums is to evaluate cultural mythologies (MacDonald, 1992: 162). If this is true – that is, if museums exist in part so that whole communities can evaluate cultural mythologies –

⁴ This quote appears in Tzvetan Todorov's book on Bakhtin's dialogical principle (Todorov, 1984: 22). It was first published in Bakhtin's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*.

then museums are both interested in and obliged to establish and maintain a dialogue on mythologies, in which all may participate. How can museums put an object – a material object, or an object of an exhibition’s enquiry – onto the table between visitors and museum professionals, the two kinds of learning subjects? How can museums meet with visitors around an object for mutual enquiry? Propelled by the resonance of Freirean praxis and poststructuralist visual, cultural and historical theory, as well as the vigorous interest of museums in democratic forms of education, this thesis fuses critical theory and critical pedagogy at the site of the museum. It could also foster an alliance between museum practitioners, cultural theorists and critics, and adult educators around the issue of informal learning at the museum.⁵ Cultural studies could benefit from a closer examination of the museum as a pedagogic site; and museum education could benefit from a cultural studies approach that recognises that representation is constitutive of the real, along with a Freirean sense of learning as a project on which teacher-museums and student-visitors are co-intent. I contend that Freirean praxis, virtually unknown in museum studies, holds the key to a dialogic museum exhibition praxis that would benefit both museums and their visitors.⁶

In practice, implementing Freirean praxis in a museum environment could be difficult. The history of the modern museum as a vehicle of scientific and social instruction⁷ for the ‘respectable’ classes suggests that it is an institution traditionally at odds with the notion of dialogue. A concern with educational praxis is a relatively recent facet of museum work; and the establishment of education divisions alongside and separate to curatorial divisions has not encouraged a focus on the pedagogical possibilities of museum representation. Exhibitions now form the basis for many successful museum education programs, but they are not generally conceived as programs for informal learning in and of themselves, unless ‘education’ is taken to mean the traditional, authoritarian mode of instruction. Educators who are interested in reconceptualising museum exhibitions as a primary vehicle for museum education face the challenge of

⁵ Prominent British museum educator Eileen Hooper-Greenhill has urged museum theorists and practitioners to draw on a combination of textual and audience studies to generate a sophisticated and complex model of museum affect (Hooper-Greenhill, 1995). And according to a UNESCO Institute for Education workshop on museums and adult education, many museum educators believe they have much to learn from adult education theory (UNESCO, 1999: 5).

⁶ Freire would be likely to approve of an attempt to adapt his praxis to the museum environment. In a conversation with US educator Donaldo Macedo, he requested that American educators be told not to import his ideas but to reinvent them (Macedo, 1994: *xiv*).

⁷ Tony Bennett’s book *The Birth of the Museum* is a good reference on the disciplinary tendencies of the modern museum (Bennett, 1995).

intervening to alter the historically constituted hierarchy of the museum institution that privileges the work of curators over the work of educators.⁸

Whether the particular museum of my study – the Australian War Memorial – would be amenable to an application of Freirean praxis is highly questionable, but it is an appropriate test site. As a national museum, the Memorial belongs to the people of the democratic, so-called egalitarian nation Australia. Until the National Museum of Australia opens in 2001, the Memorial remains the only museum to represent both the Australian nation and history. It is the only space, in other words, in which the nation-myth of Australia itself is posited and established, activated and naturalised, and in which all Australians are allegedly represented. The Memorial is obliged, in this sense, to seek out the most inclusive and democratic means of operating. Freirean praxis works in the interests of the common people and in the spirit of social justice. It is a democratic praxis *par excellence*.

As well as being an appropriate site to explore the value of Freirean praxis to museum work and the possibility of dialogic museum exhibitions, the Memorial is an interesting site for such an experiment. Given that museums and nations have both been described as mythic spaces, national museums can be conceived as highly fertile territory for cultivating myths. The Australian War Memorial is further associated with the mythical realm, however, in that this rational, modern museum incorporates a shrine to the dead. The Memorial is a hallowed place, not only for its role as record-keeper of Australians' collective history and identity, but for its role in housing and commemorating the spirits of the dead. It is responsible not only for educating visitors but also, fundamentally, for remembering the dead in an appropriate manner. This unusual combination of responsibilities renders the institution sensitive to any interrogation of its methods. Conscious of its duty to maintain a sense of propriety around its representation, the Memorial tends to stake a proprietorial claim on the material and its interpretation. Where it could interpret its duty as to care for the nation's spirits, it instead favours overseeing them, maintaining its authority as a rational, modern institution. Effectively, it possesses the spirits rather than allowing itself and visitors to become possessed by them. Because the Memorial is a classic modern museum, on the one hand – with its attendant traditional museum hierarchy – and because it is a sacred shrine, on the other – with its attendant concern with propriety – this is a museum unlikely to embrace the principles and practices of dialogic education. Where Freirean praxis is always critical

⁸ Eliean Hooper-Greenhill recommends that museum educators be more involved in planning and production of displays, and notes that this point has emerged in many reports, although it is rarely implemented in museums (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 242).

of prevailing tradition (Peters & Lankshear, 1994: 190), the Memorial's mission is to perpetuate the tradition of war remembrance that began in the years following the First World War.

Whether the results of this thesis are considered useful to the institution under study is ultimately immaterial. The project has value not as a definitive analysis of the Australian War Memorial, but as a demonstration of the potential value of Freirean praxis to museums. Museum exhibitions developed according to Freirean praxis would firstly provide visitors with a better, more enabling learning opportunity. Secondly, such exhibitions would automatically generate valuable and constructive evaluative data and ideas for future developments, which museums are otherwise at pains to produce. Thirdly, by virtue of the first two points, Freirean praxis could be used in the development of more inclusive and democratic – dialogic – museum exhibitions.

My investigation into the Memorial as a site for informal learning begins with chapters that constitute a literature review and a methodology respectively. In the first chapter I survey the relevant literature in museums studies and cultural studies, and open up the space for my project. I explore the resonance between Freirean praxis and poststructuralist visual, cultural and historical theory, and identify considerable support for dialogic practices in museum studies and among museum practitioners. Foucault's notion of the museum as a heterotopic site is useful for understanding the museum and its instrumentality in national culture. Chapter One introduces this notion of heterotopia, and develops it as a relevant and valuable means of linking insights from the various literatures on how the museum operates as a pedagogic site. It is from the English translation of the Latin and Greek word 'heterotopia' that this thesis takes its title 'An other place'. In the second chapter I develop my analytic method which, as noted, is based on Ira Shor's technique for an extraordinary re-experience of the ordinary, and involves reading the Memorial's signifying practices in ever-enlarging contexts. Because I undertake this program in the three stages of description, diagnosis and reconstruction, my narrative culminates in an informed re-vision of the Memorial. My re-vision amounts to a description of another Memorial – an alternative possible Memorial whose signifying practices are more dialogic – and it is to this other Memorial that the title of the thesis also refers.

Having laid out the project and the method, and introduced the Memorial as a particular kind of museum site, I begin my investigation into the Memorial's signifying practices. Following Shor's method, it is undertaken in five lessons, and presented in five parts. The first Lesson constitutes a detailed description; Lessons Two, Three and Four constitute a diagnosis of the Memorial's signifying practices in national, international and historical contexts respectively; and Lesson Five constitutes a reconstruction that

begins with the time prior to the Memorial's establishment and culminates with my utopian vision of its future. During all five stages, my reading attends at strategic points to other related or proximate sites. By way of comparison, this venturing out to examine other sites assists in characterising the Memorial's operation. In particular, I use other sites to focus attention on Indigenous representation at the Memorial, and to identify the exclusionary effects of the Memorial's generic Australian representation.

How the Memorial represents Indigenous Australians is an important question in that the Memorial is a national museum with a duty to represent the experience of all Australians. Attending to this question as a thread throughout all three descriptive, diagnostic and reconstructive phases of the investigation enables a more complex view of how the Memorial constitutes the nation-myth of Australia, and what is obscured in that process. Examining the Memorial's representation of Indigenous people as a particular sector of Australian society is also interesting in light of the historical relationship between museums and Indigenous people in Australia and other post-colonial nations. Given that museums operated in some cases as agents of colonialism, for a long time there has been a tension between museums and Indigenous people. As emerges through the course of my readings, an enormous shift has occurred in how museums relate to and represent Indigenous people, although the rupture between former and current practices is all but invisible to the casual observer.

I should emphasise here that I do not intend to write on behalf of or for Indigenous people. My observations of how the Memorial represents Indigenous people come from my own (white) perspective, and from Indigenous people's own words. Like the project as a whole, these observations are intended as an intervention into dominant Australian culture and museology, to draw attention to the exclusive effects of nationalist representation. They are not intended to enlighten Indigenous people. Also, a note on terminology: In using 'Indigenous people' and the more nationalist 'Indigenous Australians', I recognise that both terms are problematic: they efface the diversity within Indigenous cultures, they fail to locate Indigenous people in their particular country, and they have become meaningful as a result of colonisation. I use them in the absence of a better term.

To sum up the project, I do not attempt to identify how well the Memorial represents history; nor is my objective to identify how well the Memorial enables visitors to learn about history, although this question is an interesting part of the project. Rather, my intention is to identify how well, in a Freirean framework, the Memorial enables visitors to learn about the Memorial as a site of historical representation. Such a goal may be a small part of the Memorial's mission, but from a Freirean perspective it is central to the institution's successful pedagogical practice. In short, the project operates

in two registers – narrative and metanarrative. As a narrative, the readings deconstruct and reconstruct the Memorial’s signifying practices, exploring how the Memorial realises and naturalises the nation-myth of Australia, and how it could do so in a more inclusive and dialogic manner. As a metanarrative, the project is concerned to expose and explore the possibility of dialogic museum exhibitions. Were Freirean praxis to be taken up by museum professionals, it could simultaneously revitalise the three processes of museum exhibition development, museum education and museum evaluation. My reading of the Memorial lays out the possibilities as seen by a single analyst of a single museum, but I hope it suggests that there are many more possibilities. I hope it alerts readers to the possibility that museums could operate more effectively as places for evaluating and re-evaluating cultural mythologies.

The museum as a space for informal learning

This is a cultural studies project about learning at the museum. But none of these three concepts – museum, learning or cultural studies – is self-evident. Some of their attributes are easily clarified in the context of my project. For instance, in the context of this thesis, the museum is the Australian War Memorial. And by ‘learning’ I mean the kind of learning that occurs during the praxis propounded by Freire. In this sense I mean both teaching and learning. This chapter and the next are primarily about the third concept: ‘cultural studies’. Cultural studies was born of adult education, emerging from the theory and practice of teaching and learning. It is a disparate body of work on which I draw to consider teaching and learning at the museum. But what does it mean to do a cultural study of museum learning? There is no singular cultural studies approach to museums or learning, and no standard method for their analysis. In addition, there are multiple, distinct yet overlapping bodies of literature attaching to the objects of my study: to museums and to the process of learning. Precisely what constitutes ‘learning’, or ‘museum’, and especially ‘museum learning’, depends on from which field they are viewed and more particularly on the position within that particular field. In this chapter I relate my understanding of museum learning according to several literatures.⁹ In the next I will develop a method for identifying and accounting for museum learning. Here I lay out key strands of thought to develop the notion of museums as a site of informal learning. The chapter is divided into three sections: ‘Museums and learning’, ‘Cultural studies and learning’, and ‘A cultural studies approach to museums as a site for informal learning’.

In ‘Museums and learning’ my aim is to identify how museum professionals regard museum exhibitions as educational, the extent to which they have taken up the theory and practice of Paulo Freire, and the ways in which his work is compatible with current museum educational praxis. With an emphasis on Australian and other postcolonial contexts, I introduce the dominant model of education and evaluation in museums at the end of the millenium. Most museums continue to privilege an information-driven model of learning, so it would take a paradigmatic shift for them to practice a dialogic form of

⁹ I draw on cultural theory and criticism, museum studies, sociosemiotics and material culture studies emerging from anthropology, and Freire-inspired educators.

signification. But a Freirean praxis is highly appropriate for the museum environment, and it is toward such dialogic forms of learning that many museum professionals recognise they need to move. In part, this is due to the influence of poststructuralist cultural theory and critique, to which I turn in the following sections.

In ‘Cultural studies and learning’ I leave professional museum studies aside to consider the theory and practice of cultural studies as it pertains to learning. I outline Freire’s reception in this field as well as other work that resonates with his pedagogical praxis. The relationship between cultural studies and a revolutionary or empowering form of learning has been intimate since the emergence of cultural studies out of adult education many decades ago. Freire has a devoted following among educators in the United States, and among cultural analysts there has recently been a resurgence of interest in questions of learning. This surge of interest has concentrated on formal educational practices in the academy. Concurrently, however, questions of affect or the effect of representation have emerged as central to cultural studies. These two issues, of pedagogical practice and of representational affect, converge where critics consider objects such as public art, memorials and commemorations such as the Columbus quincentenary or the Australian Bicentenary. It is with this convergence of cultural studies’ interests that my project engages.

‘Cultural studies and museums as a site for informal learning’ is the third and final section of this chapter. Having introduced learning in both museum and cultural studies contexts, here I consider how cultural studies regards the museum as an affective institution. My emphasis is on accounts that are either informed by or constituted as poststructuralist. In a poststructuralist vision, a museum does not only present history. As an assembled and regulated display it works to *produce* history in or in relation to the museum’s image.¹⁰ I draw particularly on Foucault’s notion of heterotopia, but elaborate it and ground it in the wealth of material on museums and culture. In my account the museum emerges as the site of powerful struggles over identity and history, social order and change. In this sense the museum is a particularly appropriate site for the practice of a Freirean-style pedagogy.

i. Museums and learning

This first section constitutes a museum studies perspective on museums as a vehicle for educational practice. How do museum professionals conceptualise the museum’s educational work? In museum studies literature, is dialogue seen as an important

¹⁰ This approach does not deny the genuine value of museum collections or that historians are duty bound to the pursuit of true knowledge.

principle of museum representation? Museum educators – those employed by museums specifically to teach – tend to be informed by educational theories from developmental psychology, and to use these theories to develop educational programs around the museum exhibitions. Museum educators are not generally responsible for exhibition development, which involves everyone from Directors and managers to researchers, designers and editors. Any number of these staff may be committed to dialogic forms of communication and often educators are involved in evaluating exhibits during their development, but it is rare for museums to approach exhibition development from the perspective of education theory and practice. I concentrate on aspects of the museum studies literature that express or suggest a commitment to the general principles of a Freirean praxis. This emphasis is strategic, since it is not my intention to map the whole field of museum education but rather to identify an interest in and the space for this project.

Before turning to the educational practice of museums it is worth considering *who* museums educate, and the kind of relationship museums have with their represented communities. Museums are commonly understood to have emerged as a modern form of representation that replaced or reshaped earlier forms of display such as the cabinet of curiosity and the fair.¹¹ Once intended to represent the wealth, prestige or enterprise of their collector, collections became increasingly accessible to and instructional for visiting publics. The first public museum is popularly understood to have been the Louvre, which became national property during the French Revolution in 1789 (Saisselin, 1992: 134–6). At the Australian Museum in Sydney, ‘respectable’ persons were welcomed many years before the exhibitions became open to everyone. Now, the Australian Museum has established various programs aimed at improving access by certain subsections of the Australian population, such as Indigenous people and young people. In fact, some museum professionals are looking toward theme parks and other populist forms of display for inspiration as to how to popularise their own institution.¹²

Museums did not become more democratic without extensive criticism. Many commentators have recognised the traditional, if implicit, elitism and authoritarianism propelling exhibition practice. In the case of art museums, these critiques have drawn on Pierre Bourdieu.¹³ For example, Nick Merriman argues that museums assume and

¹¹ Tony Bennett’s *The Birth of the Museum* (Bennett, 1995) is again a useful reference point. See also: (Greenhalgh, 1989; Harris, 1990).

¹² See, for instance, Jill Delaney’s paper on the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Delaney, 1992).

¹³ In a cogent critique of the presumption of homogeneity among audiences, Bourdieu writes: ‘Consumption is ... a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering,

thereby reproduce elite categories of people who fit into the habitus of the museum, at the expense of those who never will (Merriman, 1989).¹⁴ In the case of national and ethnographic museums in Commonwealth countries and the United States, postcolonial critique has been deployed as an impetus for transformation. Henrietta Riegel links museums' capacity to regulate visiting populations via particular rhetorical, stylistic and linguistic strategies with the authority they claim over the cultures they depict (Riegel, 1996: 88). Martin Prösler criticises museological discourse for its 'unreflective Eurocentrism' (Prösler, 1996: 23), J. Edson Way regards museums as responsible for opening up a dialogue with indigenous peoples (Way, 1993: 119).¹⁵ In part as a result of such criticism, museums are increasingly seen as having a duty to their (increasingly fragmented) publics (Wright, 1989: 119).

Two Smithsonian Institution conferences, proceedings of which were published in 1991 and '92 respectively, demonstrate that in the late twentieth century museums are rethinking their relationship with their visitors and especially with the communities they represent. More and more museums are articulating their public relationship in terms of belonging to communities rather than constituting an authoritative service to them. The first collection, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, demonstrated the powerful capacity of museums to define people (Karp, 1992a: 1). As its title indicates, the second book, *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, shifted the emphasis more toward the groups of people that museums represent, and considered the ways that museums could enable people to participate in their own definition. Ivan Karp, one of the editors of both collections, defines museums as 'places for defining who people are and how they should act and as places for challenging those definitions (Karp, 1992a: 2). For George MacDonald, ex-Director of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and now CEO of the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne and Director of the Melbourne Museum, museum collections offer 'a sort of yardstick that people could use (if they were taught the skills) to evaluate cultural mythologies' (MacDonald, 1992: 162). In another context, Conal McCarthy understands museums as facilitators of communities (McCarthy, 1990: 66). This burgeoning interest in community relations, along with the proliferation of community

decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. In a sense, one can say that the capacity to see (*voir*) is a function of the knowledge (*savoir*), or concepts, that is, the words, that are available to name visible things, and which are, as it were, programmes for perception. A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded' (Bourdieu, 1984: 2).

¹⁴ Donald Horne makes a similar point, that museums function to alert ordinary people to their ignorance about art (Horne, 1986).

¹⁵ See also Brian Durrans' review of the challenges ethnographic museums must confront in the light of postcolonialism (Durrans, 1988).

museums and cultural centres, constitute a kind of anti-authoritarian movement in museum practice.¹⁶

To express a commitment to community representation and accessibility is one thing; to alter long-established institutional practices that discourage community involvement is quite another. Institutional history is weighty and, relative to other forms of cultural representation, museums are both under-theorised (MacDonald, 1996: 3) and unfamiliar with critique (Porter, 1996: 117). In terms of exhibition practice, there has been a wide-ranging debate as to how museums could adapt to enable a dialogic evaluation and re-evaluation of cultural mythologies. What is striking about this debate is the extent to which its participants agree in theory that museums should reflect on their own representational practice in such a way that visitors can recognise this reflection. A reflexive history museum exhibition would enable visitors to see the process by which the display was put together at the same time as it invited them to be transported through the display into the mythic realms of the past. Bodies of literature on museums and their cultural function are replete with a sense of museums' critical imperative, and call, in various ways, for museums to present material and its meaning as a problem for visitors to investigate, rather than a position for its producers to deliver. Many writers plead for museums to acknowledge the singularity and specificity of their object-presentations and interpretations,¹⁷ implying the desirable result that witnesses will recognise the multiplicity of the field of possible interpretations and be more alert to the politics of interpretation. Others call for museums to reveal their interpretive schematics, how they have acquired, selected, organised and placed objects,¹⁸ to manifest their metatext (Lumley, 1988: 13), to draw attention to the seams of their historical knowledge (Tchen, 1992: 311), or the institution's own history as an instrument of domination and exclusion (Merriman, 1989: 162–3). Several writers point directly to the inevitable outcome of this reflexive imperative: of generating new possibilities for interpretation, promoting criticality in visiting audiences, heightening consciousness, and inspiring a commitment to socially just regimes.¹⁹ Despite these

¹⁶ At the one-day forum 'Redefining the Norm: Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality in the Museum' held in Sydney in 1996, Ann Curthoys confirmed the significance of the early 1990s in transforming historical practices. She argued that a revolution in public historical discourse in 1991 and 1992 permanently shifted the place of Indigenous people in history.

¹⁷ See, for instance: (Gerald, 1990: 18; Horne, 1986: 7; Way, 1993: 110).

¹⁸ See, for instance: (Bennett, 1988: 83; Jones, 1992).

¹⁹ (Jones, 1992; Karp, 1992a; Karp, 1992b; MacDonald, 1996; Silverstone, 1994; Tchen, 1992). James E. Young describes the value for viewers of reflexivity in filmed testimonies of Holocaust survivors, in that it produces a more complex vision of the process of remembering. He also recognises that for 'scientific historians', reflexivity undercuts the authority of the testimony (Young, 1993: 161–4). See also Bill Nichols' work on reflexive techniques in documentary film

calls, an overwhelming majority of museums fail to identify the codes within which their presentations operate. Self-reflexivity is far from a standard *modus operandi* of museums, and remains a rare and courageous contravention.

In a reflexive museum, it is possible to engage simultaneously with the museum's vision of history and that history itself. Recent museum theory here resonates with Freirean pedagogy, whose very purpose is to enable a process of reflection on and action in the world, and to pose the object of study as a problem to which teachers and learners mutually apply themselves. Given this resonance, it is somewhat surprising that Freire has been so neglected by the field of museum studies. His pedagogical praxis in fact bridges the gap between museum professionals' interest in cultural theory and their role as public educators. In addition, Freirean museum praxes share a concern with grass roots community education and empowerment. Increasingly, museums are akin to Freire in that they insist that knowledge belongs to people not institutions.

A recent publication by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) illuminates the current relationship between museums and adult education practice (UNESCO, 1999). This booklet synthesises workshops held at the fifth International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg in 1997.²⁰ Introducing the section 'Are museums in crisis?' it states that cultural education in general, and museums' role in cultural learning in particular, are marginalised in adult education practice, and that conversely, museums 'often perceive their public as passive recipients who need to be told how a collection has to be interpreted' (UNESCO, 1999: 5). Museums have not been closely involved with developments in adult education, although many museum educators 'see the need for acquainting themselves with new teaching methods and believe that they have much to learn from adult education theory' (5).²¹

As a field, 'museum education' is extremely diverse. It ranges across all types of museums (including history and heritage museums, science and technology museums, natural history museums and art museums), incorporates programs for both non-formal and informal learning (non-formal learning is facilitated or organised, via seminars, workshops and so on, whereas informal learning occurs incidentally, as a result of

(Nichols, 1991: 61), and the collection in honour of Greg Denning, of a group of Australian historians gathered around the principle of reflective history (Merwick, 1994).

²⁰ The booklet, titled 'Museums, libraries and cultural heritage: Democratising culture, creating knowledge and building bridges', is available as a PDF file from the UNESCO web site.

²¹ This booklet also introduces some recent museum initiatives that work to foster the relationship between museums and adult education. For example, Cristobal Rochas, a Venezuelan museum of visual arts, visits the public rather than vice versa, going to schools, offices, the streets and local prisons.

learners' experience, in this case of exhibitions),²² and it is directed at both adults and children. I am interested in a very specific subset of this field. This project is concerned with a memorial museum – a particular kind of history or cultural heritage museum; and with informal, adult learning. I am also, as indicated, interested in promoting a particular form of educational praxis: exhibitions that engage people not only in the substance and meaning of the exhibition but also in the process of producing that meaning.²³ Given the breadth of the general field, it is perhaps less surprising that so little work has been done on the particular issue of museum exhibitions as a site for informal adult learning, and that the potential value of Freirean praxis has gained so little recognition.

One excellent collection of articles addressing the issue of museum exhibitions as a site for informal learning was published in 1996 by the British Group for Education in Museums. Edited by Gail Durbin, *Developing Museum Exhibitions for Lifelong Learning* is a compilation of dozens of short articles from over a decade of museum work and critique (Durbin, 1996). As a collection, it raises many of the concerns of this thesis, as well as providing examples of good exhibition practice. It is introduced by prominent museum critic Elaine Heumann Gurian,²⁴ who identifies impediments to learning in traditional museum exhibitions and criticises museum professionals for failing to better exploit available tactics. In 'Educators on exhibit teams: A new role, a new era', Lisa C. Roberts notes that it was as recently as the early 1980s that educators began to be routinely invited to participate in exhibition development, and that the notion of 'exhibit teams' emerged (10). Introducing the section on learning theory, Durbin acknowledges a debt to American research and to scholars outside the museum sector, arguing that 'despite the widespread acceptance by museum staff that education is a core function of museums and research is one of their fundamental responsibilities, in practice the learning process is a low priority' (19). Maureen Matthew's article on adult learners advocates recognising adult visitors' prior learning as a rich resource. When Matthews argues that museum exhibit developers need 'methods to encourage a

²² I thank Lynn Norris for alerting me to the significant difference between informal and non-formal education.

²³ Museums have expended great energy to better engage visitors in the substance and significance of exhibitions. The terms 'infotainment' and 'edutainment' have emerged in part to describe audiences' expectation that museums will cater to their desire for fast-paced, high-tech, multisensory stimulation. This work has also inspired museums to address basic visitor needs for good design, variable representational strategies to match variable learning styles, clear orientation and signage, rest and refreshment areas, and so on. Far less energy has been expended in attempting to engage visitors in the museum's practice of signification.

²⁴ Her contribution is extracted from a paper she presented to the Smithsonian Institution conference that resulted in the 1991 publication *Exhibiting Cultures*.

two-way street of learning' (70), the notion of dialogue emerges as a clear strategic objective. She also warns that '[a]dult learning is intensely personal and private' (70), suggesting that evaluators need to work hard and carefully to identify the effect of an exhibition on adult audiences. A paper by Douglas Worts describes the use of 'Share your reaction' cards posted throughout an exhibition, which solicited much more personal and reflective comments than the traditional visitors' book at the point of exit (126). A general point, made in reference to Britain but applicable in Australia as well, was that 'responsive models of exhibition production are still very rare' (155). Indeed, *Exhibitions for Lifelong Learning* is a rare exploration of the possibility of responsive or dialogic exhibition practices.²⁵

The field of museum studies is abundant. Many recent publications in the museum field have titles suggestive of new models of museum exhibition education and affect. None, however, specifically addresses informal learning in history, heritage or memorial museum exhibitions. Nor does any take quite the radically integrated approach required by a Freirean framework. Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairn's *Thinking About Exhibitions* is concerned primarily with art museums, and mainly addresses issues peculiar to that type of museum. Sue Mitchell's *Object Lessons: The Role of Museums in Education* is concerned with nonformal education programs for schoolchildren. John Falk and Lynn Dierking's (1992) *The Museum Experience* remains a celebrated and often-quoted intervention into professional museum practice. In his foreword to the book Willard L. Boyd, President of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, confesses that throughout 'a lifetime as an educator, in a university and in a museum, I have been amazed by the lack of clearly presented analysis to help educators be more effective' (Falk & Dierking, 1992: ix). Boyd then goes on to acclaim the book's value in redressing that void. In *The Museum Experience*, Falk and Dierking weave anecdotes about visitors' experience into a conceptual framework, 'attempting to account for both common strands and unique complexities' (5). This book is one of the first manifestations of the emerging will among museum professionals to theorise and critique their practice. Almost a decade later, the field of museology has developed, but there remain few monographs that urge museum professionals to consider visitor experiences in terms of the concept and practice of informal learning. Cultural theory has begun to inform museum professionals, but adult education principles and practices continue to be underappreciated as a means of applying the critical theory.

²⁵ Another British book, published in 1995 by the National Organisation for Adult Learning, explores the potential for collaboration between adult educators and museum staff, and incorporates examples of good practice (Chadwick & Stannett, 1995).

What use has been made of Freire, then, in the theory and practice of museum education? For her Masters degree, Lynn Norris²⁶ undertook a project in which she applied Freirean principles to the teaching of museum studies and museum design to students aged in their early teens. To the extent that the project involved the students designing their own museum exhibition, Norris' project was a landmark exercise in constructing an exhibition in a Freirean framework. As a result of his/her participation, one student professed a newfound criticality: 'I've been in so many different museums, but now I look at the space more, actually think about someone designing it, that there is something behind it.' But Norris' emphasis was on facilitated (non-formal) rather than self-directed (informal) learning. She deployed a Freirean praxis to facilitate a program in museology. She did not, therefore, address the question of how Freirean praxis could be applied to exhibitions and their signifying practice.²⁷

Another person to have considered Freirean praxis in the museum context is George Hein.²⁸ In a paper he presented to the International Council of Museums Committee for Education and Cultural Action²⁹ meeting in 1994, Hein identified parallels between Freire and constructivist educational theorists: Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky. Freire and the constructivists, he argues, inhabit the same theoretical position in relation to knowledge and the learning process.³⁰ According to Hein, the constructivists and Freire alike insist that knowledge has no existence independent of people; and that people learn according to their own experience, not from a position as *tabula rasa*. Hein suggests several ways in which a museum might practice a constructivist pedagogy, including flexibility of access and of exhibition pathways; multiple analytic or interpretive modes; juxtaposition of the familiar with the unfamiliar; and exhibits that

²⁶ Norris is Collections Manager at Exploris in the United States, a museum 'devoted to global education' that opened in September 1999. Her unpublished Masters thesis title is *Closing the Circle: Can Museums Learn from Third World Development?*.

²⁷ Norris has recently established a small network of people interested in nourishing the relationship between Freirean pedagogy and museums.

²⁸ Hein is Senior Research Associate in the Program Evaluation and Research Group of Lesley College. His book *Learning in the Museum*, which laid out the field of museums' learning theories and methods, but which did not mention Freire, was published in 1998.

²⁹ CECA is the largest of the 25 ICOM committees. In 1994 it met in Cuenca, Ecuador. Proceedings of the meeting were edited by Lucia Astudillo.

³⁰ In his recent book *The Practice of Theory*, literary theorist Michael Bernard-Donals also connects Freire to Dewey, arguing that both regard science and human praxis as mutually guiding of one another. I return to his engagement with Freire in the following chapter. For a history of various strands of education theory this century see adult educator Griff Foley's 'Teaching adults' (Foley, 1995). Constructivism was also one strand of learning theory featured in two volumes (22 and 23, 1998) of the American *Journal of Museum Education*, dedicated to 'Understanding the Museum Experience: Theory and Practice', along with cognitive development, socio-cultural learning, motivation and aesthetics.

require several visitors' participation and thereby promote social interaction and collaboration among learners.³¹

Undoubtedly, many museums have developed creative techniques for engaging visitors in a dialogue with the material. But the traditional institutional structure of museums tends to work against Freirean principles for learning. Prominent museum studies teacher and prolific author Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has acknowledged the potential value for museums of the problem-posing educational strategies that emerged in adult education circles in the 1970s. She notes the failure of museums to take up these strategies, and criticises them in particular for continuing to regard education as a jurisdiction separate and subordinate to curation (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994b: 138). Many reports and other analyses have recommended that museum educators be more involved in planning and production of displays, but few museums have heeded this call (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994a: 242).³² If a museum maintains a rigid distinction between curators and researchers who interpret the material, on the one hand, and educators whose task it is to present these interpretations efficiently and effectively, it belies its commitment to a dialogic form of communication and of learning. When experts are positioned as authorities on the meaning of an artefact, educators are positioned as couriers of knowledge, and learners as vessels for knowledge, rather than its co-authors. It would be possible for boundaries between experts, teachers and learners to be blurred – for each to be recognised as different kinds of authorities – without reducing the value of the expertise. Perhaps some museum professionals are unwilling to share the authority they have traditionally held in relation to the meaning and significance of material heritage. While many professionals recognise the inadequacy of monologic communication models on both theoretical and ethical grounds, it is obviously difficult for individuals to overhaul their institution's exhibition practice. In short, museum institutions are not conducive to the kind of restructuring necessary to fully embrace audience-participation as a mode of practice.³³

³¹ In addition to Norris and Hein, Conal McCarthy (McCarthy, 1990) has drawn on Freire via Henry Giroux, to whom I return in the following section.

³² Similar concerns over the structural divisions within the museum have been raised by Stephen Weil (Weil, 1990: 61) and Douglas Crimp (Crimp, 1993: 265). According to Tony Geddes, Education Officer at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, one of the organisations to have recommended integrating the educational function into all museum activities is the American Commission on Museums for a New Century (Geddes, 1990: 27). During research for her PhD thesis *Curriculum and the Museum Mosaic* (University of Toronto, 1990), Barbara Soren found a widespread discontent among museum educators with their lack of involvement in the development of exhibitions.

³³ Economic rationalism also has consequences for museum institutional practices. In this era, museums are increasingly tied to their funding bodies, whether it be governments or private sponsors. Well-known American evaluator Randi Korn believes that 'government at all levels

Museums have always practised interpretation and offered instruction, but education and evaluation are relatively new, having emerged as intrinsic to the museum profession only in the 1960s. Adopting a mission to educate their publics, museums were also impelled to adopt a means of measuring the success of this educational mission. Usually, museum educators and evaluators deploy behavioural and developmental psychology as their tool of analysis and mode of operation. In broad terms, these educational perspectives tend to focus on children and the stages they pass through as they develop to the point of achieving an adult relation to the material. In museum education and evaluation, learning tends to be understood as a process of progressive acquisition of the skills necessary for gaining knowledge, and of knowledge itself. Within this model, visitors' acquisition of knowledge is both the aim and the measure of museum teaching. Furthermore, knowledge is often understood as information – facts that can be recited– a definition that ignores other affective, cognitive, social, kinesthetic and sensory knowledge (Korn, 1993: 252–3). Museum educators, in other words, tend to restrict their interest to the transmission of incontrovertible facts; and museum evaluators, to measuring the success of the transmission. In this model, visitors are involved only as vessels for filling and measuring. They are required neither to interpret nor to evaluate the significance of the material. Effectively, this model of education and evaluation keeps visitors separate from their learning process, and docile. Their learning is assessed and the assessment used to adapt the exhibition. No direct feedback on the material or its presentation is sought.

Clearly, the dominant model of museum education and evaluation is at odds with a Freirean pedagogical praxis. To argue this point, and to identify the points of tension between the two models, I turn briefly to a book by three prominent museum professionals, and a session of a conference on museum evaluation and visitor research, in which two of the book's authors participated as speakers.

The book *Meanings and Messages: Language Guidelines for Museum Exhibitions* is by Carolyn MacLulich, Linda Ferguson and Louise Ravelli (Ferguson, MacLulich, & Ravelli, 1995).³⁴ It is concerned with museum exhibition communication practice, and takes a functional linguistic approach to writing exhibition text. The book rests on the sound foundation that exhibition text writers need to consider the structure of the

only responds to quantifiable effects, the learning of facts in the most traditional sense' (Korn, 1993: 253). And David Trend, American artist and writer, has commented that in this cash-driven contexts 'education is typically regarded more as a form of public relations than as a means of enlightenment. Just as museums deliver art to audiences, they also deliver audiences to sponsors' (Trend, 1992: 46).

³⁴ MacLulich is Head of Education at the Australian Museum, Ferguson is Evaluator at the Australian War Memorial, and Ravelli is a linguist at the Australian Museum.

language they use and attempt to anticipate and factor in all the variables of a text's meaning. But as I have argued, it is neither possible nor desirable for authors to control the process of interpreting an object or the outcome of that process: its meaning. Consistent with many museum educators and evaluators, Ferguson, MacLulich and Ravelli assume that the meaning of a text can and should be carefully controlled. Indeed, to close the gap between the interpreter's intent and the exhibit's affect appears to be the book's *raison d'être*. Its authors want museum staff 'to communicate more clearly the messages we wish to convey to our visitors', and urge them to consider 'the ways in which text and language function, and therefore how messages are constructed through the language of exhibition texts' (4). Provision of unequivocal meaning is their collective goal.

A 1998 review of the book by Thérèse Burnett³⁵ applauds it for the same reasons I find it limited. For Burnett, the book addresses a theoretical gap in museum practice. She explains that practitioners have a 'pressing need to communicate meaning to the average museum visitor ... the non-expert, who is unfamiliar with much of the knowledge and information the museum is trying to convey'. Furthermore, Burnett continues, the book provides a means of perfecting the system of message delivery: the authors lay out a strategy for their readers to adopt that 'ensures the meaning created is the one intended'. There is no sense here that meaning is contingent, and no sense in which visitors are an integral part of the process of making it. Rather, the problem facing museum practitioners is understood as one of conveyance: how to deliver fixed messages intact and *in toto*.

Ferguson's contribution to 'The visitor as learner' session at an evaluation and visitor research conference was similarly revealing of the incompatibility of contemporary museum education and evaluation with the principles of dialogue. The conference was that of the Evaluation and Visitor Research Special Interest Group of Museums Australia, held at Old Parliament House in Canberra, 3–5 August 1998. The session on the visitor as learner was chaired by Carolyn MacLulich, co-author of the book *Meanings and Messages*. Ferguson's paper laid out various models for evaluation used in museums today, but a serious limitation of all the models she described is evident in the title of her paper: 'Evaluating learning'.³⁶ To 'evaluat[e] learning' is to assume the possibility of locating and measuring a distinct entity called 'learning', and to thereby

³⁵ Burnett is Manager of Adult and Volunteer Programs at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. Her review appeared in *Museum National* 6(4), May 1998, pp.25–6, the magazine of Museums Australia Inc., the national association for Australian museum professionals.

³⁶ Ferguson had also published a related paper, with the same title, in the Australian journal *Museum National* 5(4), May 1997, pp.15–16.

reduce learning to a set of outcomes, the most important of which is usually considered to be knowledge. In the process, rather than subjecting the learning program to assessment, the process of ‘evaluating learning’ assesses visitors and their educational achievements. Where visitors’ learning outcomes are deemed insufficient, the program is identified as less than successful, but no solutions are apparent. But the purpose of evaluation should be to enable the alteration of museums in such a way that they better facilitate learning. The very principle of ‘evaluating learning’ rather than, say, ‘learning from evaluations of the museum by visitors’, appears to contradict this responsive purpose, by closing off the feedback mechanism that could be intrinsic to the evaluation process. Whatever their theoretical basis, none of the evaluative methods that Ferguson introduced could accommodate the notion that visitors learn *and evaluate* in the act of participating in a dialogue about the signification and significance of the material. Their focus on controlling and measuring the proliferation of knowledge³⁷ actually constrains visitors’ learning and prevents their access to the means of auto-evaluating museum exhibitions.

At the 1999 conference ‘National Museums, Negotiating Histories’,³⁸ there was some discussion as to the best means of establishing good relationships with visitors from diverse backgrounds. Two of the international speakers in particular emphasised the importance of finding alternatives to the traditionally authoritative, authoritarian museum voice. Dr Hans-Martin Hinz, of the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, noted his museum’s efforts to ‘refrain from making conclusive statements’ in order to leave space for visitors to make their own assessments of the material. Dr Lonnie Bunch, of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, argued that ‘the challenge is to recognise that we have to share authority’. In these two statements lie the seeds of a revolution in museum educational practice. But the conference failed to grapple in any serious way with this issue of the relationship museums establish, via their exhibitions, with visitors, or to see this as an issue of educational practice. At one point, an audience member suggested that more market research into the effect of museums on visitors was necessary.³⁹ Such a response to the crisis in museums’ relationships with visitors may prove fruitful, but it could also distract museum staff from more direct means of engaging visitors as active learners. Were museums

³⁷ Again, I should emphasise that these techniques also seek to identify and measure other outcomes, such as motivation.

³⁸ This conference was jointly convened by the Australian National University’s Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, the National Museum of Australia and Griffith University’s Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy. It was held in Canberra from 12–14 July.

³⁹ Not surprisingly, this suggestion came from an audience research consultant.

educational in the sense of enabling visitors to become involved as authoritative respondents, audience research would be unnecessary. Given the opportunity, visitors would indicate their response, and become involved in the production of exhibitions. The National Museums, Negotiating Histories conference missed the opportunity to discuss and to generate terms of reference for the process of reworking museum education practices.

It is not as though museum professionals are unaware of the limitations of traditional approaches to museum education. At the same conference session that Ferguson delivered her paper 'Evaluating learning', Dr Janette Griffin reported on her research into children's formal learning at the Australian Museum.⁴⁰ Influenced by George Hein's work on the idea of the constructivist museum, she undertook her study from the perspective that, to avoid conceiving of learning as acquiring knowledge, '[i]t may be more valuable to consider how visitors *are learning* rather than what they *have learned*.'⁴¹ Her approach was to identify individual and group 'behaviours indicative of favourable conditions for learning', including talking amongst themselves about an exhibit, persevering with a task, showing or explaining something to peers. Griffin's approach is clearly an improvement on those that measure learning according to visitors' recall of information. Consistent with those approaches, however, it maintains a concern with measuring learning outcomes, and using these results as a proxy evaluation of the museum. It does not attempt to suggest a means by which an exhibition can be directly evaluated in terms of the opportunity it provides visitors to produce their own interpretation of the material or in terms of the knowledge that visitors thereby produce.

In the field of museum education, questions remain as to the object of evaluation (What is being evaluated?) and the subject of education (Who is learning?). For most museum professionals, visitors are educated, and it is their education that evaluators evaluate. From a Freirean perspective, by contrast, visitors and museums are co-intent on learning, so that evaluation is a more fluid, integrated and ongoing process. Despite a growing recognition that communication occurs in the form of a dialogue and that meaning is therefore context- and subject-specific, processes of museum education and evaluation are yet to undergo the major overhaul required to integrate this notion of

⁴⁰ Griffin is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Technology, Sydney. At the time of the conference, she had just been awarded a PhD for this research. Her 1998 thesis title is *School-Museum Integrated Learning Experiences in Science: A Learning Journey*.

⁴¹ I am citing her article 'Learning in museums: A personal perspective' published in *Museum National* 7(3), February 1999, p.19, which reports on one aspect of her doctoral research.

dialogue. A museum that embraced dialogue would subject its exhibitions to evaluation by its visitors as an integral part of their education process. It would also learn from and respond to the results of visitors' learning and evaluation. In a dialogic museum curators, researchers, educators and visitors would all be engaged in the act of learning about the material. And in a dialogic museum *visitors*, not expert evaluators, would be competent to comment on the museum's signifying practice and to suggest means of its improvement.

ii. Cultural studies and learning

In the first section I introduced learning from the perspective of museum professionals and considered the space in museum practice for Freirean praxis. Here I consider the same things – learning and Freirean praxis – from the perspective of cultural studies. The field of cultural studies has a great deal of interest in pedagogy of the kind practised and promoted by Freire. But it is rare for cultural studies writers to consider informal learning at the museum. Instead of these adult education terms, cultural theorists and critics tend to think either in terms of formal academic pedagogy or in terms of discourses, ideologies and the powerful effects of practices of signification. But terminology aside, how Freire might have approached museums as a site for learning, and how cultural theorists would approach it, are similar. Following this short section, therefore, I introduce Foucault's notion of heterotopic sites, as a means of distilling cultural studies' interest in museums as a site for informal learning. 'Heterotopia' has currency in both cultural and museum studies, as well as (I will argue) a significant resonance with Freire's pedagogical praxis.

As a field of study, cultural studies has always been concerned with questions of pedagogy and its relation to social change. As Raymond Williams describes, (Williams, 1989), cultural studies was recognised by universities only after it was taken across from Adult Education (162) where students studied material that was relevant to their lives, and brought their own experience to their analyses. In the 1940s these adults were studying visual arts, music, town planning, film, advertising, radio and so on.⁴² Challenging the standard curricula in this way, students and teachers alike began to recognise the association between texts, cultures and the social order. Founding figures of cultural studies – Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, Stuart Hall – all began their intellectual careers in the field of education, outside the university, in extramural departments and adult working-class courses (Grossberg, 1994: 3).

⁴² This list comes from Williams' 1989 paper 'The future of cultural studies' in his *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*. It was cited in (Grossberg, 1994: 2).

As cultural studies grew, so did Freire's influence. His pedagogical praxis has spread and been adapted to many different educational contexts. It is especially popular in developing countries such as Papua New Guinea, but it is also practised in underprivileged 'first world' contexts. For example Ira Shor, on whose method my own interpretive practice is based, teaches poor students at Staten Island College in the City University of New York. As will emerge, however, a Freirean or critical pedagogy can also generate recognition of hegemonic orders and practices among relatively privileged students.

Since the 1980s boom in cultural studies, there has been a resurgence of interest in questions of critical pedagogy. A group of academics renowned for connecting cultural studies and pedagogy, each of whom is informed by or responsive to Freire's work, includes Stanley Aronowitz, Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux, Colin Lankshear, Michael Peters, Lawrence Grossberg and William Stanley. These authors consider pedagogy in both its formal and informal forms: as the cultural practice of teaching, and as an effect of cultural practices such as the media.⁴³ Because most of these writers are located in colleges of education rather than centres for communication studies, their writings tend to concentrate on formal education in the academy rather than on learning that occurs via media.⁴⁴ One exception is the collection edited by Giroux and McLaren, *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, which includes several articles on representation as a form of pedagogy.⁴⁵ Introducing the volume, Lawrence Grossberg describes education as 'one of the most pressing, promising and paradoxical sites of cultural studies to have emerged recently' (Grossberg, 1994: 2). There are also burgeoning movements for cultural and media literacies.⁴⁶ Bell hooks is another prominent figure to have engaged with pedagogy as both a practice and an effect of exposure to representation. In addition to books on the politics and affect of art and literature,⁴⁷ she has written on theories of and strategies for critical pedagogy.⁴⁸ In a

⁴³ See: (Grossberg, 1994: 16). Henry Giroux makes a similar point, that as both an object of critique and a method of cultural production, pedagogy 'works vigilantly to link theory and practice in the service of expanding the possibilities for democratic life' (Giroux, 1996: 52).

⁴⁴ See, for instance: (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Giroux, Lankshear, McLaren, & Peters, 1996; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Trend, 1992). In the Australian context, see: (Muspratt, Luke, & Freebody, 1997).

⁴⁵ See, for instance: (Collins, 1994; Dyson, 1994; Simon, 1994; Trend, 1994).

⁴⁶ See the Media Literacy Online Project homepage, at <<http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/HomePage>>.

⁴⁷ See, for example, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*, and *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (hooks, 1995a).

⁴⁸ See, for example, 'Eros, eroticism, and the pedagogical process' (hooks, 1994), and *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (hooks, 1995b).

book on her own anticolonial, pedagogical praxis – *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (hooks, 1995b) – hooks describes how her ‘struggle against the colonising process’ (46) benefited from her exposure to Freire. She writes:

in its global understanding of liberation struggles, [Freire’s work] always emphasizes that [conscientisation] is the important initial stage of transformation – that historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one’s political circumstance. (47)

What hooks shares with the aforementioned group of critical educators is a commitment to enabling forms of pedagogy. Lawrence Grossberg describes this pedagogy as one of possibilities, that ‘demands of ... students not that they conform to some image of political liberation nor even that they resist, but simply that they gain some understanding of their own involvement in the world, and in the making of their own future’ (Grossberg, 1994: 18).

Although many educators, theorists and critics continue to acknowledge a debt to Freire, it is also clear that the field of critical pedagogy, or popular education, has developed since Freire’s first publications three decades ago, following feminist and other critiques. In the context of recognising Freire’s influence on her, bell hooks describes their somewhat heated but ultimately inspiring first encounter. In his early work Freire consistently used the male pronoun to exemplify both educator and student. During a lecture Freire was giving at the University of Santa Cruz, hooks questioned Freire on his use of gender-exclusive language. Several of hooks’ colleagues intervened at this point to prevent Freire from having to address what they saw as a disruptive question, but Freire insisted that it was a crucial one. He went on not only to answer hooks, but to commit to speaking and writing on the issue of sexism. By engaging with hooks’ criticism, Freire put his critical principles into practice.⁴⁹ In this exchange he also, however, demonstrated his recognition that subjects are not singular but can relate to one another simultaneously from positions of relative privilege and oppression. This is an important realisation, and has expanded the relevance of his practice enormously. The traditional Marxist axis of class, upon which Freire based his work, has been joined by the equally important axes of gender, race and so on, complicating critical perspectives on how people relate to the world. Henry Giroux describes the complexity of this relation, and alludes to its contradictions, as follows. History, he writes, ‘is not an artefact, but a struggle over the relationship between representation and

⁴⁹ Hooks ‘loved him at this moment for exemplifying by his actions the principles of his work (hooks, 1993: 152). This article was subsequently published in: (hooks, 1995b).

agency'. It is 'about critically examining one's own historical location and relations of power, privilege or subordination' (Giroux, 1996: 51–2).⁵⁰ A critical development of Freire's praxis, then, has been the emergence of post-Freirean praxes that are directed equally at learners in marginalised and dominant subject positions.⁵¹

Within this set of scholars interested in both cultural studies and pedagogy, a smaller group specialises in theorising and practising what I will call representational pedagogy: pedagogy as it occurs via the representational practices of art, literature, film and commemoration.⁵² Two writers in particular address the issue of representation and its affect, and deploy the term pedagogy in combination with a notion of counterhegemonic social change. Interestingly, these scholars draw on poststructuralists Bakhtin and Benjamin rather than Freire.

Film theorist Robert Stam draws on Bakhtin and his sense of language as multiple, unstable and historically situated, *alive* 'on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context' (Bakhtin, 1981: 284). Stam has propounded a 'polycentric, multicultural pedagogy' (Stam, 1995). He regards those familiar with both central and

⁵⁰ In the Australian context, and more specifically in the context of education for racial consciousness and reconciliation, a pedagogical model called Anti-Racist Strategies (ARS) has emerged as a response to the inadequacies of former strategies of Racism Awareness Training (RAT) and Cultural Awareness Training (CAT). ARS takes social systems, institutions and history into account in conceptualising racism, where RAT and CAT reduce the scope of both problem and solution to the terms of individual prejudice and cultural difference. See: (Hollinsworth, 1992).

⁵¹ I have not the space here to explore the vast implications of this development, and to my knowledge, very little work has been done on the capacity of Freirean pedagogy to enable privileged students to recognise their privilege. But my application of a Freirean method to analyse a national museum relies on its relevance and effectiveness in transforming dominant cultures as well as empowering marginalised peoples.

⁵² Actually, the size of this group may be enormous if its borders are flexed to include all artists, writers, film-makers, producers of museum exhibitions and so on who intend their work as a kind of counterhegemonic intervention. But those who use the concepts or principles of pedagogy, representation and social change to describe their work are few. Again, bell hooks is prominent, and her books *Art on My Mind* and *Black Looks* are exemplary (hooks, 1992; hooks, 1995a). Those who identify themselves as public or collaborative artists, especially of 'new genre public art', also struggle to use representation to involve their audiences, to inspire counterhegemonic action. The collection *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* is an excellent collection of such work (Lacy, 1995). For a discussion of the burgeoning practice of involving audiences in the production of public art after modernism, and of a shift in the locus of creativity from individuals to dialogic processes, see, respectively, papers by Mary Jane Jacob and Suzi Gablik. Arlene Raven's piece explains how the most moving art works of the last three decades have been those that draw together a community and engage this community of people in the work. Allan Kaprow's describes an educational experiment of the late 1960s that was directed at so-called unteachable illiterates in public schools, and collaborated with them to develop an arts-based literacy program. The book also contains a 93-page compendium of new genre public artists' work.

marginal discourses as bearing an ‘epistemological advantage’ (102–3), and therefore advocates the strategic deployment of Eurocentric self-idealizations, against which alternative perspectives can be played off. The goal is for students in this pedagogical process to situate knowledges and practices in broader contexts, to perceive of the links between different discourses, and particularly between those that are familiar and those that are unfamiliar. ‘Our collective goal as educators, at this point, should be to deprovincialize our students, and this in both temporal and spatial terms’ (103–4).⁵³

Roger I. Simon’s work on history, remembrance and countercommemoration draws on Walter Benjamin – and in particular his ‘dialectical images’ – but the pedagogy he advocates is similar.⁵⁴ In the final chapter of his book *Teaching Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility*, Simon argues that Benjamin was concerned with a kind of curricula practice, with ‘how one might construct and present representations of the world beyond immediate experience so as to dialectically engage that experience and enable the articulation of new human possibilities’ (Simon, 1992: 139). Dialectical images juxtapose the familiar with the unfamiliar, the existent with the possible. They shock the viewer into recognition of the tension between the two and of radical possibilities for transformation.⁵⁵ Simon is here working through his transfixation on a photograph of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police photographer ‘taking the picture of a bulking, impassive First Nations man in full headdress’ (137). The presence of the camera within the frame enables a double reading of the image that the camera is in the process of capturing. Simon writes: ‘taken-for-granted presentations of historical images are used to assert knowledge claims about the truth of the past. A photograph of the process of doing documentary photography breaks this illusion’ (143).

Counterhegemonic intervention, and the notion of learning as an act of personal, cultural and historical transformation, are central to the work of cultural studies. But comparatively few scholars in this field express their project in terms of critical pedagogy, and even fewer in terms of representation as a vehicle for critical pedagogy.

⁵³ William Stanley has argued that Freire and Bakhtin worked in the same Hegelian tradition that stressed reflection and action as ‘irreducible constitutive dimensions of dialogue itself, that is, ‘the word’ (Stanley, 1992: 213). He in turn was paraphrasing J.A. Whitson’s ‘The politics of ‘non-political’ curriculum: Heteroglossia and the discourse of ‘choice’ and ‘effectiveness’ in W.F. Pinar (ed.), *Contemporary Curriculum Discourses*. Peter McLaren also notes that a similar political optic guides Bakhtin’s and Freire’s work (McLaren, 1996: 146).

⁵⁴ Simon works at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

⁵⁵ In another context, anthropologist Michael Taussig identifies Benjamin’s technique as surrealist, arguing that it ‘defamiliarized the familiar and shook the sense of reality in the given order of things’ (Taussig, 1984: 89). In addition, James Clifford has described what he calls ethnographic surrealism, the utopian moment in which the possibility of comparison exists in unmediated tension with sheer incongruity (Clifford, 1988: 146).

Cultural studies could benefit from a closer examination of the museum as a site of critical personal and cultural intervention.

iii. A cultural studies approach to the museum as a site for informal learning

In the remainder of this chapter I advance the notion that a museum exhibition is an affective site, a site with the potential to transform individual visitors and, through them, culture and the course of history. In the first section on museum studies I referred to the museum as a site of informal learning in order to highlight my specific interest in that field. I will return to the idea that the museum is a site from which people potentially learn, but first I introduce the notion that the museum is a representational site that affects people in general. Museums are a particularly powerful site of representation. In Foucault's terms (as I will explain), museums are heterotopic: they establish a space of tension with the real. I end this section and the chapter by drawing together the various terms I have used to refer to museum space: a site for informal learning, a site of representation, and a heterotopic site. Common to all three kinds of site, connecting each one to the other and all to Freirean praxis, is the principle that reflexive representations – those that draw attention to both their signified and themselves as signifiers – promote critical pedagogy. As noted in the first section, museum studies is replete with calls for reflexive exhibitions. The argument I am developing is not, therefore, groundbreaking.⁵⁶ Rather, it illuminates the potential resonance between Freirean and museum practice, and opens a critical space for exploring practical applications of cultural and Freirean theory to museum environments.

For the purposes of understanding the museum as an affective institution, I will view the museum exhibition as fundamentally a representation. Like a curriculum in history or a documentary film, a museum exhibition at the Australian War Memorial refers to something else. It invites visitors to relate not only to the visible material but especially to what it represents. What this material represents is its significance. In claiming that a museum is a site of representation I do not mean to deny that the foundation of a museum is its collection and that collection items are genuine articles, real things in and of themselves. This materialist perspective on museums is valid, but for my project it is insufficient for understanding the power of museum material to affect individuals,

⁵⁶ This reflexive, rhetorical or antifoundational turn has occurred in other academic contexts, notably literary criticism and ethnography, but also in the sciences. See the second half of Michael Bernard-Donals' book *The Practice of Theory* for an analysis of these shifts.

cultures and histories. However compelling an individual collection item, a museum exhibition refers to and invokes something else: a culture or history. In other words, museum exhibitions accrue meaning precisely because of the material's status as a proxy for something that is absent, whether spatially or temporally. Recent cultural theory is replete with this sense of a museum's purpose as precisely to substitute, to exhibit material that refers to and yet is not something else. Art theorist Donald Preziosi states that '[f]or the spectator (the museum subject), in a very literal sense the artwork's materiality and significance are simultaneously present and absent' (Preziosi, 1996: 108). In his book on the emergence of the modern museum, Tony Bennett draws on Krzysztof Pomian's phenomenological work on collections to argue that collections provide access to an invisible realm of significance. He argues that '[t]he visible is significant not for its own sake but because it affords a glimpse of something beyond itself' (Bennett, 1995: 35). It is this 'something beyond', which is close to but not exactly something 'real', that endows an exhibition with its particular potency.

Clearly, there is a complex relation between the material on display, the cultural and historical conditions from which the collection emerged, and the effect of its display on how people understand those cultures and histories. As one museum critic writes, 'the complex dynamic of the interaction of the discursive and nondiscursive ... needs to be understood' (Jenkins, 1994: 270). In poststructuralist terms, it is inadequate to assume that the representation is simply a near-identical simulation of the real. In depicting histories, museums also constitute them. Narratives and artefacts and imagery – historical artefacts and primary historical documents – work in powerful ways to produce the past, which some people then equate with the real or the truth.⁵⁷ The notion of material cultural heritage is itself invested with the idea that objects both represent and constitute cultural identity, as demonstrated by the passion with which people fight to save old things, as if in losing the object they are losing part of themselves.⁵⁸ Poststructuralists contend that a museum exhibit's meaning is both contingent and dynamic, dependent on whom is looking, and is liable to shift at any moment.⁵⁹ Hence the intense disagreements over what objects should be conserved. A consequence of poststructuralist cultural theory is to throw into relief the power and politics of the process of historical representation.

⁵⁷ See: (Jordanova, 1989; Stewart, 1993; Thomas, 1991). The flip-side of this point is also important, that historical representation, by virtue of its selectivity, also effaces certain aspects of the past, that it facilitates cultural forgetting as much as it facilitates collective remembrance.

⁵⁸ Richard Handler makes this point in an essay on the French Canadian notion of *patrimoine* (Handler, 1985: 211).

⁵⁹ This principle emerged most strongly in Russian formalist theories of discourse. See, for instance: (Bakhtin, 1981; Epshtein, 1993).

Despite the familiarity of cultural studies theorists with the notion that the museum is constitutive of (as well as constituted by) history, Michel Foucault's paper on the museum as a heterotopic site remains the sharpest theory of the museum's cultural instrumentality. In what follows I introduce 'heterotopia' as a means of clarifying how museums operate as a site of representation with a complex, productive relation to the real. My particular concern is to explicate the value of Foucault's theory for understanding the museum as a site for informal learning and especially for counterhegemonic transformation. The notion of heterotopia provides a framework for conceptualising how museum sites exercise power and thereby affect relations in the real world. But heterotopia is a generalised concept: a theory. It is therefore necessary to complement it, or elaborate it, using more contextualised accounts from cultural analysts and museum practitioners. In combination with these other accounts, Foucault's heterotopia constitutes a compelling account of the site, practice and potential effect of the museum.

Foucault introduced the notion heterotopia in his book *The Order of Things*, and elaborated on it in the short paper 'Of other spaces' that he presented to a group of architects (Foucault, 1986).⁶⁰ 'Heterotopia' is an anatomical term, describing a condition whereby an organ of the body is for some reason displaced or extraneous. Literally, it means 'other-place'. Foucault applies the concept to cultural places such as museums, cemeteries and libraries. Heterotopias are discrete, cordoned sites of collection and display that operate in relation to, and that intervene in, the ordinary spaces of everyday life. These other-places 'have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect' (Foucault, 1986: 24). In Foucault's account, heterotopic sites are not only representative of culture, they are instrumental to its production. They orient and reorient visitors toward the real. Their meaning and value does not reside within but emerges from their relation to, their engagement with, and their effect on, the society in which they operate. A history museum is heterotopic in that visitors attend and engage with the material on display, then return to their everyday lives with a new or different understanding of the history that the museum depicts. Whatever their reaction to the display, it will shape their understanding of that history, and therefore their relation to and experience of the present.

⁶⁰ 'Of other spaces' was not published in English until 1986 but it has been widely cited since then and has also appeared in Routledge's 1998 *The Visual Culture Reader* edited by Nicholas Mirzoeff.

Heterotopias have a complex effect on culture. Interventions effected via heterotopia are always contingent, never preordained. Foucault described this contingency in relation to heterotopias' tendency to conflate illusion and reality:

[Heterotopias] create a space of illusion that exposes every real space ... as still more illusory [or] create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled.
(Foucault, 1986: 27)

Heterotopias complicate ordinary perceptions of the real world. At an other-place, in the face of such extraordinary order, ordinary conditions can appear disorderly, artificial or absurd. In other words, by juxtaposing and tangling illusion and reality, the actual and the possible, heterotopic sites can cast doubt on the fixity or the reality of an existing social order. Heterotopias illuminate and thereby potentially interrogate the social orders they present. By facilitating a 'simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live' (Foucault, 1986: 24), these places 'suspect, neutralize or invert' (24) the set of real relations they represent. Here again there emerges the idea that a documentary or historical form of representation is simultaneously like and not like its referent, not quite real and yet somehow more realistic. Heterotopic sites enable their witnesses to see social systems anew.

For Foucault, power courses back and forth in a perpetual circuit among all discursive agents, so moments of discipline or moments of resistance are not discrete. It is possible to read into his text 'Of other spaces' the idea that museums exert a hegemonic force, especially when he situates heterotopia in the discourse of modernity and in its project of acquiring a total knowledge:

the idea of accumulating a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity. The museum and the library are proper to western culture of the nineteenth century. (Foucault, 1986: 26)

Postmodern and especially postcolonial critics of ethnographic museums have argued that the modern museum's project is hegemonic. Conal McCarthy, for instance, points out that the world known is the world tamed and possessed (McCarthy, 1990: 64).⁶¹ Given their explicit educational agenda, museums are possibly the most forceful of all forms of heterotopia. But for Foucault, a museum's act of positing a given social order is only equal to its act of bringing that order into question. For Foucault, museums

⁶¹ There is a wealth of critical material on the relationship between museums and indigenous peoples. In the Australian context see, for instance: (Birch, 1992; Bulbeck, 1991; Fourmile, 1989; Healy, 1997).

present a utopian vision of culture in such a way as to assert and yet interrogate an existing one. Heterotopias are, he wrote:

something like counter sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (24)

Museums clearly embody the dual potential to promote and undermine the status quo. This is a point that Kevin Hetherington⁶² urges on his readers, when he describes the capacity of heterotopic sites for social control and transgression: ‘The paradox is that heterotopia can be either or indeed both. Spaces of total freedom and spaces of total control are both spaces of social ordering’ (Hetherington, 1997: 42). Hetherington understands heterotopic sites as a combination of two diametrically opposed kinds of place. This is a useful way to conceive of the impossibility of determining the cultural effect of an other-place. But it is more useful, perhaps, to conceptualise museums as a place for re-evaluation, in which nature and culture undergo perpetual juxtaposition and mutual interrogation. Social orders may become naturalised, yet representations of nature or the naturalness of an existing order may become recognisably social.

The notion that museums affect real cultures and the course of history itself is familiar to cultural theorists and critics. Many critics have described and theorised the capacity of museums to naturalise the social orders they depict. For Chris Healy, museums give ‘practical form to historical imagination’ (Healy, 1997: 7). Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff offer their book *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Sherman & Rogoff, 1994) as ‘a collective critique of the materials and strategies museums employ to naturalize the concreteness of the social and historical processes in which they participate’ (x). In more substantive terms, some writers have highlighted the function of tropes, design and other kinds of artifice that together comprise museum ‘stagecraft’. David Jenkins, for instance, describes exhibition practice in terms of metonymy:

Metonymic displacement, by substituting part for whole, makes a collection physically and conceptually manageable. In the same way that a lump of gneiss represents a mountain range or an insect represents a species, a Hopi basket can be made to represent Hopi culture, a photograph of a Sioux ghost dance can be made to represent Sioux religion, and a life-group display can be made to represent Kwakiutl domesticity. This is a particularly powerful fiction, implicated in the ‘objective’, ‘true-to-life’ rendering of the world in museum displays.⁶³

⁶² Hetherington is the only author, to my knowledge, to use Foucault’s heterotopia as the basis for a monograph: *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (Hetherington, 1997).

⁶³ (Jenkins, 1994: 269). See also Susan Stewart on the difference between the literary devices of the souvenir and the collection (Stewart, 1993: 151), and Toni Morrison on her novels as ‘literary archaeology’ (Morrison, 1990).

Donna Haraway has provided an even closer view of this ‘particularly powerful fiction’ as operative in the African Hall of the American Museum of Natural History (Haraway, 1989). Its taxidermic dioramas of animal ‘families’ embodied the epistemological and aesthetic stance of realism, such that ‘what is so painfully constructed appears effortlessly and spontaneously found, discovered, simply there if one will only look’ (38). In her rich account of this effect, and despite her cogent argument that it is a historically constituted technique, the action takes place on or through the visitor’s, in this case her own, body. She writes:

The Hall is darkened, lit only from the display cases which line the sides of the spacious room. In the center of the Hall is a group of elephants so lifelike that a moment’s fantasy suffices for awakening a premonition of their movement, perhaps an angry charge at one’s personal intrusion. (29)

Dioramic simulations often provide *more* realistic experiences for visitors than the presentation of the genuine article possibly could, rendering the display if not historically authentic then experientially authentic:⁶⁴ not genuine, perhaps, but ingenious.

By drawing attention to the artifice of museum representations of nature, these theorists raise the related point that museums are formidable agents of social control. In his book *The Birth of the Museum*, for instance, Tony Bennett describes the emergence of the modern museum as a project of imposing scientific rationality onto earlier, more erratic forms of public display. In his account, the museum developed as a site that took hold of and moulded visitors’ bodies ‘in accordance with the requirements of new norms of public conduct’ (Bennett, 1995: 24). But it is important not to neglect the other half of Foucault’s argument, that museums exhibit an equal and opposite tendency to enable social and cultural critique.

To the extent that Foucault has been taken up by museum studies, his argument has been reduced somewhat to its structuralist foundations and robbed of its poststructuralist tension and possibility. For instance, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill compares the architecture of museums to that of law courts, police stations, and other repressive agents. She also points out the significance of the security systems operating in museums, which monitor all entrances and exits, and which effectively produce the museum as a prison for objects (Hooper-Greenhill, 1988: 225). It may be true that ‘[i]n the face of such authority, the public does not generally perceive that museums offer only current opinion’ (Way, 1993: 110). There is some evidence to suggest that visitors

⁶⁴ Umberto Eco draws this distinction in his ‘Travels in hyperreality’ (Eco, 1995 (1986): 16) where he writes of Ripley’s ‘Believe it or not!’ museums: ‘Everything looks real, and therefore it is real; in any case the fact that it seems real is real, and the thing is real even if, like Alice in Wonderland, it never existed’.

are conscious and critical of museums' attempts at social regulation. Witness the following statement in John Falk and Lynn Dierking's *The Museum Experience*:

Even the guards in the museum, they come around the corner and they stare at you. My father said he wanted to go up to one of them and tell him to get away, because we weren't going to steal anything, and the more he treated us as if we were there to cause trouble, the more my dad wanted to go and punch him in the nose. (Falk & Dierking, 1992: 86)

Such anecdotes underline the capacity of visitors to resist at least the most explicit forms of social regulation at work in museums. In all likelihood, the more strenuously and obviously museums claim authority, the more visitors will attempt to thwart it. But to recognise the possibility that visitors will refuse to submit to bodily regulation is not necessarily to recognise that visitors, their experience and their responses, are an integral part of the museum's meaning.

Museum professionals may not have fully appreciated Foucault's theory of the museum as a powerfully productive site, but many cultural theorists have arrived at a similar perspective. Numerous scholars have argued for and analysed the dynamic process and by implication the dynamic substance of material culture exhibitions. While these theorists appreciate the museum as a site of cultural and historical intervention, however, their aim is not to posit a scheme for museum practice. In his work on the museum, Andreas Huyssen argues that an object's aura depends on its materiality and opaqueness but also on the live gaze of the viewer:

Objects of the past have always been pulled into the present via the gaze that hit them, and the irritation, the seduction, the secret they may hold is never only on the side of the object in some state of purity, as it were; it is always and intensely located on the side of the viewer and the present as well. (Huyssen, 1995: 31)

Ludmilla Jordanova has written of the role of imagination and fantasy in determining an object's meaning (Jordanova, 1989). Sociosemiotics has also emerged as a discipline based on the principle of the 'life' of objects.⁶⁵ In relation to Lithuanian woven sashes, for instance, Joan Vastokas has argued that objects are 'capable of mobility within a spatial, temporal and social universe' (Vastokas, 1994: 341).⁶⁶ In their own way, each of these arguments insists on the dynamic multiplicity of museum affect.

Another body of scholarship that maintains a sense of tension between museum meaning's fixative and escapist tendencies is Pierre Nora's work on the national memory of France. Similar to heterotopic sites, the objects of his study are sites of memory, *lieux de mémoire*:

⁶⁵ See: (Gottdiener, 1995; Riggins, 1994; Stocking, 1985).

⁶⁶ See also: (Thomas, 1991: 176).

The *lieux* we speak of, then, are mixed, hybrid, mutant, bound intimately with life and death, with time and eternity; enveloped in a Möbius strip of the collective and the individual, the sacred and the profane, the immutable and the mobile. For, if we accept that the most fundamental purpose of the *lieux de mémoire* is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial ... it is also clear that *lieux de mémoire* only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications.⁶⁷

The metaphor of museum meaning as Möbius strip connecting a series of potent binary oppositions goes a long way toward capturing the complexity and dynamism of museum practice. Nora insists on emphasising both facets of the apparently paradoxical function of museum sites – to materialise, reduce and fix the meaning of material and to metamorphose it. Like all the other noted theorists, however, his work is oriented toward diagnosing museums and their potential. He does not use his understanding to imagine new museum or memorial sites.

One group of theorists that both appreciates the dynamic possibilities of museums *and* directs its understanding toward new museum forms belongs to the Russian formalist tradition.⁶⁸ I use Mikhail Epshtein as a spokesperson for this group and in particular his paper titled ‘Things and words: Toward a lyrical museum’.⁶⁹ Epshtein writes of the mutual capacity of museums to objectify and de-objectify things. Traditional museums, he argues, concentrate on objectification, on fixing authoritative meanings. They create ‘a certain epic distance between the Thing and the reality from which it is extracted and which it represents from afar, as if keeping aloof’ (Epshtein, 1993: 157). He does not criticise museums for this, instead recognising the importance of subjecting an object to the tests of time, popular recognition, authenticity and prototypicality. But he argues that ‘another kind of museum work is just as necessary’ (157). It is not the epic value of museum material that interests him, but its lyrical value. This value cannot be confirmed by knowledgeable experts but emerges ‘from within the lives of their owners. A lyrical museum would offer visitors an opportunity ‘[t]o exhibit and to comment on a personal Thing’ (157). Epshtein’s museum de-objectifies its exhibited

⁶⁷ (Nora, 1989: 19). *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, is a seven-volume collection of historical scholarship on the national memory of France, written at the direction of Pierre Nora, which he describes as both historiographic and historical. A considerable body of work has been undertaken on the subject of national memory. See, for instance: (Burgin, 1996; Connerton, 1989; Sturken, 1997); also Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire*, 1925 and *La Mémoire Collective*, 1950.

⁶⁸ This group is clearly descended from Bakhtin who was the inspiration for Robert Stam’s polycentric, multicultural pedagogy via film.

⁶⁹ A footnote to this paper suggests that the 1984 conference ‘Vesch v Iskusstve’ incorporated a workshop in which authors-participants produced a descriptive proposal for a lyrical (dialogic) museum.

material by enabling visitors to participate in interpreting it, and in this sense, his analysis comes very close to describing a museum that embodies a Freirean praxis.

What is clear from all these accounts is that it is impossible to fully account for how a museum will affect people or what meaning it will produce. A museum's meaning will always elude containment, however hegemonic the museum appears. Most cultural theorists refer to this slipperiness as excess. For Huyssen it is a surplus:

No matter how much the museum, consciously or unconsciously, produces and affirms the symbolic order, there is always a surplus of meaning that exceeds set ideological boundaries, opening spaces for reflection and counterhegemonic memory. (Huyssen, 1995: 15)

The space between the museum's vision of the social order and the social order as lived outside – and there is always a space between, as Huyssen suggests – is the locus of a museum's dynamic, potentially counterhegemonic meaning and effect. There is always a tension between these two orders that enables visitors to recognise and reassess the extant order. The more visitors are critical of museum representations, the more museums will 'reveal the process of social ordering to be just that, a process rather than a thing' (Hetherington, 1997: ix). Even where a museum fails to interrogate its discourse, even or especially where it presents an absolutely certain vision of an existing order, visitors can activate tensions in its discourse. If museums facilitate their own critique, this practice can only be enabling for visitors.

Clearly, there is broad support for the idea that museum exhibitions contain a liberatory, revolutionary or counterhegemonic potential. Proponents of Freire's pedagogical practice certainly believe so, as do the theoretical descendants of Bakhtin and Benjamin. And in his conviction that heterotopic sites can invert and contest and unsettle the social order, Foucault exhibits a similar optimism with regard to the power inherent in the act of reflection. Indeed, there is a general consensus that this potency resides in the tension between the representation and the real, between the existent and the possible, in the continuous referral and deferral back and forth along this juxtaposition. Recall that Robert Stam set the goal of pedagogy as deprovincialisation, locating the radical potential of pedagogy in the difference between old and new knowledges. Roger Simon is more explicit in locating the potential or possibility of his recommended pedagogical program. For him, the pedagogical potential of dialectical images lies in 'referentiality, a dynamic that articulates a simultaneous semantic deferral and engagement of each moment with the other' (142). Clearly, a chorus of voices are asserting, in various ways, that reflexive dissonance is the very locus or possibility of pedagogy. In this light, it is worth exploring the similarity between museums' and Freire's practices. It is also necessary to distinguish both from the less realistic practice of utopian visioning.

As indicated, the educators discussed to this point – from Freire to hooks, Stam and Simon – agree that learning occurs at the moment a person recognises the dissonance or tension between their experience of the existing social order, and the order to which they are exposed in a museum, during a film, or via a history curriculum. How a person responds to this experience of dissonance is of course variable and certainly, this effect can occur regardless of the style or emphasis of the representation. The point, however, is that representations are more pedagogic, in this counterhegemonic sense, if they expose the tension that the material can elicit. In other words, a representation facilitates critical pedagogy to the extent that it depicts familiar, obvious, taken-for-granted, dominant or realistic perspectives on a given topic *and* alternative, marginal, novel, radical or utopian perspectives. Again, no representation consistently falls neatly into either side of this opposition, since its meaning is so dependent of the perspective of the audience member. But some representations work harder than others to expose the dissonance between the real and the imaginable, and it is these more tense or reflexive texts of which Freire, hooks, Stam and Simon would perhaps most approve.

In the sense that it exists in real space, and to the extent that it refers or defers constantly to existing social orders (at the same time as it reverts attention always to its own more orderly, more authoritative presentations), Foucault's heterotopic space is intrinsically, perpetually, reflexive. Heterotopias enable visitors to reflect on but also to intervene in culture and history. Here we can recall Paulo Freire's insistence that learning occurs according to a dialectic of action and reflection (Freire, 1975: 48, 69). Both heterotopic sites and critical pedagogy enable people to recognise the existent order so as to imagine and act according to visions of its alteration. Each operates in a similarly bifurcated or dialectic fashion, to present static representations *about* the world, and to incite accordant action and participation *in* it.⁷⁰ If a heterotopic site is intrinsically reflexive, it is also intrinsically pedagogic.

Postcolonial theorist Abdul R. JanMohamed has in fact used Foucault's heterotopia to consider the implications of Freire's pedagogical praxis (JanMohamed, 1994). He begins by stating that Freire's pedagogy introduced illiterate peasants 'to knowledge as power and to the possibility of agency' (242). He then identifies how Freirean praxis enacts the poststructural principle that social ordering and reordering occur via

⁷⁰ One of Freire's classic concepts concerns the integrated, dialectical relationship between the word and the world: 'Every reading of the word presupposes a previous reading of the world, and every reading of the word implies a coming back to the reading of the world, so then to read-world and to read-word are constituted in a movement where there is no rupture, where one comes and goes. And to read the world together with reading the word, in substance, signifies for me a process of re-writing the world. To 'rewrite'... means to transform the world' (Gaudio & Alba, 1994: 127). See also: (Freire & Shor, 1987: 136–7).

representation, through (to use Freire's terms) action and reflection. In JanMohamed's words: 'What is remarkable about [Freire's] procedure is that both the referent and the signifier are subject to similar differential analysis.' (243). Resonating with the previous discussion of dissonance or tension as the locus for pedagogical action, he describes the act of learning in the Freirean paradigm in terms of developing a kind of internal antagonism, or a relationship of nonidentity with one's position. The procedure 'demands a shift away from the deeply cathected inertia of fixed, sedimented identities and toward an engagement in the process of reidentification' (246). JanMohamed argues that the pedagogic site in Freire's work has a utopian character, but suggests that its dimensions become clearer in light of Foucault's heterotopic site:

Like Foucault's heterotopic site ... the pedagogic site is also a social and institutional space ... centrally involved in the production and formation of subjectivity, agency, systems of value, regimes of truth, etc. [Pedagogic sites] are deeply invested spaces for hegemonic and counterhegemonic contestation. (248)

If Freire's pedagogic site is utopian, it is far from unrealistic. On the contrary, its objective – of fostering counterhegemonic imagining and action – is grounded always by continual reference to the actual conditions of the world outside the pedagogic site. For this reason Freire's pedagogic site is more usefully understood as heterotopic than utopian.⁷¹

But what is the difference between the two? Heterotopic spaces represent – 'designate, mirror or reflect' – ordinary social relations. It is their particular relation to the real that distinguishes them from the related space of utopia, the good, wholly imaginary place with no existence outside representation.⁷² Foucault clarified the difference between utopia and heterotopia in his preface to *The Order of Things*:

Utopias afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nonetheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. *Heterotopias* are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language ... This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the *fabula*; heterotopias ... desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences. (Foucault, 1970: viii)

Utopias emerge from and remain in the realm of the imaginary, but heterotopic sites refer and defer always to the world as socially ordered and experienced. Utopias appeal

⁷¹ Citing JanMohamed, Peter McLaren has argued that 'Freire's pedagogic site is inherently heterotopic in that it can transform its institutional and social space into a counter-site through oppositional forms of agency' (McLaren, 1994: 209).

⁷² Kevin Hetherington explains that Thomas More coined the term 'utopia' by joining the Greek 'eu-topia' or good place with 'ou-topia' or no-place, nowhere.

and console in that they are both familiar or imaginable and fabulous, whereas heterotopias arrest in that they bring into light and into question modes of being and relating we might otherwise accept as natural. Both utopias and heterotopias posit certain possibilities, arise out of particular perspectives on the world, represent particular agendas, and orient toward certain outcomes. But where utopias make unproblematic reference to a non-existent future, where they *may* contend with the present social world, heterotopias engage directly with the existing world, and necessarily operate in constant tension with it. This tension is due partly to the fact of heterotopic sites' existence in real space, as real space – because it is possible to go there – and partly to their constant referral or deferral to social orders of the existing world – because in going there visitors are transported both from and to the real world. In the sense that Freirean pedagogy always returns learners to the real world, to action, like a museum it is a heterotopic, not utopian, site.

The pedagogic site of my study is, of course, the museum. It is not only inaccurate to conceive of museums as utopian. It is also somewhat inappropriate, given that they do not have a universally uplifting effect on human communities. Their limiting effect on certain communities is easily visible via a brief foray into the literature on indigenous peoples and museums. For Western imperialists of the nineteenth century, the museum may have promised to accumulate and hold for all time a total set of knowledge. But for indigenous peoples subject to colonial collection practices, and most blatantly in the case of collections of human remains, museums were rather more dystopian.⁷³ But in a more subtle way, museums also confine and delimit everyone they represent. Andreas Huyssen reminds his readers of a point that Adorno made, that 'museum and mausoleum are associated by more than just phonetics'. Huyssen's account points to the significance of museums as a *memento mori*. 'the museum enabled the moderns to negotiate and articulate a relationship to the past that is always also a relationship to the transitory and to death, our own included' (Huyssen, 1995: 16).

In the late twentieth century, museums may be an instrument for critical pedagogy, but traditionally they have educated publics by possessive, authoritarian means.

Traditionally, and in a most palpable sense, museums have practised what Freire

⁷³ Ironically, collections of indigenous peoples' material culture can now operate to generate cultural renewal. In the epilogue to *Hunters and Collectors*, Griffiths relates a story of Connie Hart, depicted in a 1992 exhibition at the Museum of Victoria: 'Women's work: Aboriginal women's artefacts in the Museum of Victoria'. Her mother had refused to teach her culture since 'we were coming into the White people's way of living'. But Connie watched and learned and later, by closely examining an eel net in the Museum of Victoria she made one herself, thereby reviving a forgotten tradition. Other work by Indigenous Australians on their and their ancestors' relationships with museums and other cultural authorities includes: (Best, 1993; Birch, 1992; Fourmile, 1989; Johnson, 1987).

referred to as necrophilia. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he quotes Erich Fromm, whose description of a necrophilous person fixated on *possession* and control – ‘driven by the desire to transform the organic into the inorganic, to approach life mechanically’ (Freire, 1975: 58) – can easily apply to the archetypical nineteenth-century collector of museum specimens, especially of human bodies. Freire comments: ‘Oppression – overwhelming control – is necrophilic; it is nourished by love of death, not life’ (58). His insistence that liberatory pedagogy is nourished by a love of life accords with other work on museums and learning that emphasises the integral part that eros, and love, play in the learning experience.⁷⁴

Freire asserts that love itself – which I understand as a kind of profound respect – is a necessary foundation for dialogue (Freire, 1975: 70) and therefore for both teaching and learning. But by love he does not mean harmony. On the contrary, in a letter to a fellow educator,⁷⁵ he emphasised the political imperative of recognising difference, stating that avoiding conflict ‘undermines the dignity of life’:

There may not be life or human existence without struggle and conflict. Conflict shares in our conscience. Denying conflict, we ignore even the most mundane aspects of our vital and social experience. Trying to escape conflict, we preserve the status quo. (Freire, 1998: 45)

In recognising that points of tension are central to his dialogic, counterhegemonic pedagogy, Freire is poststructuralist. He is, however, a particular kind of poststructuralist. What Freire adds to poststructuralist notions of power and difference – or perhaps it would be more accurate to say what he retains from modernism that many poststructuralists abandon – is a commitment to universal principles of justice and freedom, even as he recognises the impossibility of actually obtaining such goals. Freire’s pedagogic museum site would seek to overcome difference only in the sense that it constitutes marginalisation. In every other sense such a site would seek out or at least recognise, and maintain a deep respect for, myriad differences.

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I have traversed the terrain of cultural studies and museum studies, examining the affective museum site from the perspective of each. I have argued that for the most part cultural studies has overlooked museums as an excellent space through which to

⁷⁴ See bell hooks’ article on the value of eros in the classroom (hooks, 1994). In Freeman Tilden’s seminal and still authoritative text *Interpreting our Heritage* (Tilden, 1957), he ultimately condenses his multiple principles for good interpretation to a single one: love. Leon Wieseltier’s review of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. also emphasises the value of depicting eros and love in Jewish life, particularly in the sense that it is traditionally absent from Holocaust representations (Wieseltier, 1993).

⁷⁵ A collection of such letters was published two years after his death (Freire, 1998).

interrogate and implement pedagogical practice. Museum studies has begun to appreciate the insights of cultural theory and critique, but the impact of such critique has been stifled by the institutional apparatus according to which most major museums operate. In turn, from their marginalised position in the museum institution, educators and evaluators have not recognised the value of Freirean praxis for museums, an especially significant oversight given that museums now profess an interest in establishing dialogues with diverse communities. My main conclusion is that Freirean praxis resonates with poststructuralist, postmodern and postcolonial analyses of and recommendations for museum sites in the late twentieth century. In their own ways and to varying extents, museum educators and evaluators, cultural critics and theorists alike recognise the association between museums as a vehicle for reflecting on and acting in the world, and counterhegemonic intervention. It is clear from this general consensus that the museum is potentially an ideal space for visitors to engage in a post-Freirean pedagogy of possibility. What remains is the question of how it is possible to read and ultimately evaluate a museum in these terms. It is this problem to which I now turn.

Doing it and accounting for it: Learning at the museum

In the previous chapter I identified the space for my project in the broad fields of museum education and cultural studies. I argued that the project is relevant given the identified need to rethink the museum as a site for learning, and the resonance of Freirean pedagogy with the theory and practice of museums as an instrument for cultural production. Having located my project in the field/s, I now turn to the source of my method for reading the museum as a site for informal learning, and to the method itself. How is it possible to account for a museum according to its operation as an educational site? This is my central question here. Initially, I introduce Ira Shor's utopia program, and propose a method for adapting it to read a museum and its pedagogic program. It is a method for learning about the museum itself and for learning about the museum as a space for learning. I undertake it by narrating my own learning experience: a single instance of the museum's learning process in action, which culminates in a description of an alternative possible presentation of the Memorial's material. My dual status as learner and as critic poses a potential problem in authorising the project, and could be seen to undermine its academic credibility. In the second section, therefore, I consider the scope and limits of the project by interrogating the method and identifying its shortcomings. Finally, I introduce the particular 'text' or object of my study, the Australian War Memorial, and the sources for and scope of each of the five readings of the Memorial.

i. A method for learning about a museum's informal learning program

Ira Shor is a New York-based educator and Freire collaborator.⁷⁶ Shor has developed a systematic program for engaging his students in an 'extraordinary re-experience of the

⁷⁶ Shor had a close intellectual and personal friendship with Freire and was deeply affected by the latter's death. At the 1998 Harvard Graduate School of Education forum 'Honoring Paulo Freire: Issues of social justice and freedom' Shor revealed that he was unable to write for two months, and that he still bursts into tears unpredictably. My source for this information is Sherrie Kaminsky's online Learning Synthesis Report for a course in that Graduate School. As well as Freire, Shor cites others including Marx, Raymond Williams, Bertoldt Brecht, John Berger and Stanley Aronowitz as having played a role in his professional development. And in his 1992 book *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* he acknowledges Peter McLaren.

ordinary', which he describes in his book *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life*. The chapter he devotes to this program is called 'Learning how to learn: Conceptual thought in a utopia course' (Shor, 1980). The program is designed to enable students to conceive of new possibilities for ordinary objects. Shor's classic ordinary object, all-too-familiar to American citizens, is a hamburger: the king of fast foods, a source of wages for many students, an object whose proliferation is tied to the suburban dispersal of the American city and the automobilisation of American life. Shor chose the burger because it, the car and the suburbs connect central themes of everyday life (162). To begin the students' extraordinary re-experience of this object, Shor presents the students with a hamburger from a fast food outlet. In three consecutive phases of description, diagnosis and reconstruction, the students are encouraged to examine and re-examine the hamburger, such that they can begin to imagine it not only in a new light, but in a new form.

As a student of Shor's I would first draw entirely on my own perspective, to describe the hamburger's appearance: its components, colours, textures, tastes and so on. The next three steps together form the diagnostic phase of the exercise. In step two, I would situate the hamburger in its immediate social context, and examine its cultural significance – who produces it and under what conditions, who eats it and on what occasions, and so on. In step three, my frame would expand again, such that the burger appeared in a global social system of production and consumption, relying on certain resources and labour for production and sales, and a global market for its consumption. Undertaking the fourth step involves identifying the burger's trajectory. I would consider the depletion of natural resources, saturation of existing markets, development of new ones, and the impending future for the hamburger phenomenon. Finally, in the 'reconstruction' phase of the exercise, I would investigate the conditions in which the burger was conceived and from which it emerged. Having developed a sense of the object's long-term process of materialisation, I would be in a position to imagine multiple possible futures for it. In short, students of Shor's course begin by examining an ordinary object and end by designing their own real-life interventions.⁷⁷

In Shor's program for an extraordinary re-experience of the hamburger, students investigate the hamburger according to an ever-enlarging frame of reference. As soon as they identify its limits in one context, they transcend them to consider its possibilities in another. In this program, an object ordinarily seen in terms of an easy meal option becomes imbued with social, global and historical consequences. Students undertaking

⁷⁷ The extraordinary re-experience of the hamburger that one class had led them to establish a healthy alternative lunch canteen.

the program are lifted out of their familiar experience of a hamburger and into new ones, before being returned to their own *new* position relative to it. Like the most promising notions of postmodern or poststructuralist pedagogies of possibility, Shor's program enables students to deconstruct *and* reconstruct their object of study.⁷⁸ For Shor, diagnosis is the key moment of critical thought, a crucial bridge between description and reconstruction: 'the deep analysis of reality, the problematising moment of inquiry, the animation of consciousness ... Through critical scrutiny, the kind of consciousness needed to design Utopia (transcendence) is achieved' (171). If his second, third and fourth steps are essential to developing a critical consciousness, Shor's fifth step – reconstruction – is the ultimate objective of his pedagogy. Having identified spatial and temporal links and disjunctions in the system of hamburger production and consumption, students are also able to imagine alternative possibilities, and to recognise their own agency, and their capacity to act in accordance with or in resistance to that status quo.⁷⁹ It is a particularly powerful effect for students with marginal identities, who may be more acutely conscious of, and frustrated by, the injustice of the existing social order.

How could a pedagogic program akin to Shor's invitation to extraordinarily re-experience the ordinary manifest in a public museum environment? One option for museums that is consistent with Shor's program, and has been raised by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill in one of her books on museum education, is to attach to art museums enormous art workshops, with classes in carving, ceramics, tapestry, weaving, print-making, painting, silverwork, glassblowing and so on. Such an initiative would establish new relationships between visitors and collections, whereby having reflected on the exhibitions, visitors could become involved as producers (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 246). There are countless means by which museums could and do engage visitors in a Freirean style pedagogy of possibility, as noted in the previous chapter.⁸⁰ It is not my intention to catalogue these methods or to prescribe solutions for museums. My purpose is to contribute to the hybrid field comprising adult education, cultural studies

⁷⁸ For confirmation of the value of this process, indeed of its imperative, see: (Stanley, 1992), especially pages 206–9.

⁷⁹ In the conclusion to their book on postmodern education, Aronowitz and Giroux assert that '[a] critical postmodernism must provide the discursive tools to rethink the project of emancipatory schooling as a language of both critique and possibility' (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991: 190). This is Shor's project. Confirming the value of this kind of project, William Stanley argues that counterhegemonic education must be both deconstructive and reconstructive Stanley, 1992 #640: 206, 209.

⁸⁰ In a sense, the practice of offering internships, which is common to many museums, represents a way of involving visitors in the production of the museum site. But internships are hard to obtain, certain attributes are prerequisite to their award, and many other conditions apply, so they are a somewhat exclusive and limited means of involving visitors in museum production.

and museum practice, by describing, diagnosing and reconstructing one museum's practice of signification relative to a Freirean program for study such as Shor's. By reading the Australian War Memorial according to Shor's program for study, I intend to demonstrate the value of this teaching strategy for museums, and to suggest some means by which aspects of it could manifest in the Memorial.

Shor's program and the museum as a site for informal learning have much in common. Both are intended to educate, to take people out of their ordinary experience and into an unfamiliar, extraordinary one. But museums are peculiar, different from Shor's program or from any other curriculum. The museum is peculiar because, ambitiously and spectacularly, while it is a program for study, it also contains and produces its own object of study. A museum exhibition does not only enable visitors to re-experience something – for example, a war. By virtue of the many genuine artefacts it displays, it is understood to provide visitors with access to the very essence of that war. A museum exhibition is therefore both the object and the program for re-experiencing it: a kind of autopedagogical instrument.⁸¹

A museum exhibition's status as (almost) its own object of study complicates any effort to read its signifying practice. In semiotic terms, its signifier and its signified are conflated. More than any other representation of history, a history museum exhibition is understood, if not *be* the history it represents, to be the closest available thing to it. In pedagogical terms, museums conflate their program for and their object of study. In the context of this project it is clearly inadequate to read a history exhibition solely in terms of its accuracy or capacity to evoke the past. To do so would be to ignore the question as to how the program affects the object. That is, to treat an exhibition as merely a reflection of a pre-existent history is to preclude a central issue of this thesis: how is visitors' learning in museums dependent on the style of the program? But in the same way, to treat a historical museum site purely as a curriculum – an artificial program for study – is to ignore the depth and complexity of visitors' relation to the artefacts on display and via them to history and the dead. Collections, clearly, have a particularly powerful, metonymic relation to the real. More so than any other kind of representation, history museums are understood to invoke, through the medium of an assemblage of authentic artefacts, absent and often otherwise intangible entities such as 'the Australian spirit'. In this framework, museums exert a mythical power, via our imaginative interaction with their material, on the real world. Exhibition material

⁸¹ Similarly, the UNESCO booklet 'Museums, libraries and cultural heritage: Democratising culture, creating knowledge and building bridges between cultures' refers to the museum as 'a place for autonomous learning' (UNESCO, 1999: 8).

becomes equated with that which it represents. In other words, a site such as the Memorial, which refers to the ‘fallen’ or the ‘national spirit’, in some very palpable, authoritative and literal sense, ‘keeps the spirit alive’, as its promotional literature suggests.

To account for a museum’s pedagogical practice it is necessary to investigate both its program for and its object of study. A history museum exhibition, which in my terms is the program for study (though it also contains elements of its object of study), operates in a circuit with history itself. History and the history museum mutually constitute one another. This relationship, and especially how the museum orients visitors toward and thereby works to constitute history, is my object of study. As an object of study, a history museum’s orientation of visitors toward history is dynamic and contingent, and therefore perpetually elusive. It can only be located temporarily, according to the *apparent* forces that exhibition material exert on history, via the bodies of groups of people exposed to it. In a more comprehensive study, my aim would be to investigate the Memorial’s program for learning about Australia’s war experience as it is activated by a range of visitors who, as a result of their encounter with the material, constitute or contest or invert that memory. But my project is limited. Rather than attempting to consider the range of visitor experiences of and responses to the Memorial’s material, by conducting visitor surveys or focus groups, I consider this range through the lens of my own experience and response. (I consider the legitimacy and limits of this approach in the following section.)

To produce my account of the Memorial as a pedagogic site, I situate myself as a student of Shor’s five-step program, undertaking to learn about – to extraordinarily re-experience – the Memorial’s signification of Australia’s experience of war. In my account, I describe, diagnose and reconstruct the Memorial’s signification according to an ever-enlarging frame of reference. Although I can not hope to capture the Memorial’s diverse and contingent affect in my account, I do consider the possibility of its affect from various social and historical perspectives. It is the act of attempting to get outside my own perspective that triggers the extraordinary re-experience prerequisite to reconstructing the object of my study. Having enquired as to the Memorial’s significance in broad social and historical contexts, I am equipped to reconstruct the Memorial’s signifying practice.

In my initial description – what I call Lesson One – my analysis of the program for studying Australia’s experience of war is most concrete, because it is most personal. I know it because it is my experience of how this site invites me to become conscious of certain aspects of Australian culture and history, and how it inspires me to constitute those aspects, either in accordance with or resistance to its apparent meaning. ‘True’ as

my account may be, it is not without contradictions and uncertainties. I try to identify these as I write.

From here, I enter the diagnostic phase of the investigation, attempting to step outside my own frame of reference to consider the museum's significance in broader contexts, to problematise my initial understanding of the Memorial or to set it in tension with new understandings. The object of my investigation throughout the diagnostic phase of Lessons Two through Four remains the public or representational face of the Memorial. I do investigate its internal, authorial process to an extent. But the intentions of those who maintain and develop the site are less crucial to this equation than how visitors relate to the product. My primary concern is to consider the work that Memorial displays apparently perform once they are open and visible to the public. My diagnosis is concerned with how the Memorial's significance is enacted, constituted, contested and inverted through the bodies of visitors and the practices and interpretations of Australians other than myself. My narrative is intermittently conscious of the possibility of difference within the practice of signifying Australia's experience of war. Absences, points of contention, uncertainty, contradiction: these are not only interesting but especially suggestive of the power that flows through the Memorial, circulating between its programmers and its learners, to generate memories of the dead and Australian national history and identity.

In Lesson Two I consider how the Memorial operates in national culture, the various processes in which it is involved, its status and processes of signification. Undertaking this stage will involve addressing such questions as: What is the Memorial's official and popular *raison d'être*? How is it related to and distinct from other memorials and museums in Australia? Who runs it and how? To whom does it appeal? I do not anticipate or settle for singular answers to my questions. My aim here is particularly to identify controversies or conflicts at work in the Memorial's operation, and to consider how these tensions are negotiated in its public face.

In Lesson Three I identify the Memorial program's international relations, enquiring as to the association between this site, its international visitors, and other war memorials and museums outside Australia, and the tensions of these relationships. What distinguishes the Memorial program in the international arena? What is its role in international politics? What appeal does it make to international tourists?

For Lesson Four, which completes the diagnostic phase of my exploration and formally shifts the analysis from the object's spatial dimensions to its temporality, I situate the Memorial's program in its recent historical context. 'Recent historical context' for my purposes means the history of the site from its conception, through its planning and

construction stages, its opening, and its operation for over eighty years. How did the Memorial come to exist? What forces operated to bring it into being? What conflicts were resolved during the process of its establishment? What tensions are ongoing? My account here culminates in an estimation of the Memorial program's impending future.

During the diagnostic phase of my investigation, I approach the Memorial's signifying practice and its affect in contexts outside my own perspective, but I am conscious, and compelled to remind my readers, that I am not outside my account. I periodically refer back to my initial experience, not only to acknowledge that my own interests and limitations structure the diagnosis, but also to return to my focus on the Memorial as a pedagogic site. By referring back to my original text, I can track the points at which I have transcended the limitations of the scope of my original reading. In other words, I can identify where Shor's program has enabled me to understand something about the Memorial or the Australian memory that the Memorial itself did not.

The final phase of my extraordinary re-experience of the Memorial's program is reconstructive. Lesson Five requires me to conceptualise the museum's antecedents and its alternative possibilities. First, I consider the sociohistorical moment in which the Memorial was conceived. What other museums, or like cultural institutions, existed in Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century? Under what circumstances was the Memorial imagined? What need did it promise to address? Answering these questions involves considering the forms of cultural and historical representation that preceded the development of the museum in question. Having explored the period prior to the museum's conception, and by now equipped with a sense of the museum's personal, social and historical signification, I am finally in a position to speculate on alternative trajectories the museum could take. In the final passages of my reading, I offer a utopian re-vision for the Memorial's signifying practice.

Through the course of narrating my study of the Memorial's program I develop an understanding of its products. I learn about Australian history, nationalism and imperialism, and the tensions of representing and not representing trauma and death. I consider these revelations important – they are what makes the project *matter* – but this is not a historical project. Nor, as indicated, do I intend to evaluate how faithfully the Memorial depicts the culture and history of Australia. My primary interest is not 'Australia', its culture and history as emergent from the experience of war; rather it is how the Memorial goes about producing that object.

ii. Interrogating the project method

I have outlined the structure of my readings, and I will elaborate on my reading process and the scope of and sources for each section in the final section of the chapter, where I introduce the Australian War Memorial as a particular kind of museum institution, collection and program. Here, however, I consider the legitimacy, limits and value of the method.

This project – or more particularly, the method I deploy to undertake it – has two interrelated shortcomings. Put simply, my evidence is insufficient and partial, and my account is neither neutral nor entirely expert. If my argument is that overlaying a Freirean program for learning onto that of a museum program is a productive means of evaluating the museum's program, the evidence I gather to make my case is limited. I am the only test subject, and a single testimony as to one person's experience of the Memorial cannot be representative of the diversity of possible experiences. My account is therefore subjective. It is consciously and explicitly structured around my learning experience. Exacerbating the limitations of my evidence is the fact that as an academic researcher into the museum as a space for learning, I can hardly claim the status of an 'ordinary visitor', whatever that might mean. In more concrete terms, I am far too invested in the experiment to be a reliable witness. If my test sample is so small that my results are inconsequential, my dual status as both test subject and overseer threatens to compromise the single set of results I do produce.

It would perhaps have been possible to authorise my account according to more conventional methods. If I located my analysis of the Memorial in the discipline of literary criticism, and adopted the position of expert reader, it would matter far less that I failed to complement my account with alternate opinions and experiences. Texts of literary criticism are authorised not by empirical evidence, but by the author's familiarity with and situation in relation to existing methods and analyses. Good literary criticism emerges from the milieu of literary criticism which, in part, is what authorises it. My account of the museum as a space for learning is not situated in a traditional methodological milieu. It is not supported by alternative testimonies, and neither is it the product of expert reading, at least in the traditional understanding of expertise. I situate myself as a learner about the Memorial, not as a learned reader. Certainly, I am a more expert reader than some, and I strive in the diagnostic phase of my investigation to identify what the Memorial means and how it operates in contexts well beyond my own experience. But this attempt at identifying the objective meaning or affect of the Memorial constitutes only three fifths of my reading; and it is bracketed by more personal accounts. This project is different from literary criticism because my account

of the Memorial's meaning – whether it is persuasive or not – is a means to the end of accounting for its pedagogical praxis.

Alternatively, I could have undertaken to obtain a more representative data set of the Memorial's pedagogical program as activated by its population of visitors.

Questionnaires and focus groups are a valuable traditional means of gathering the breadth of information necessary to evaluate museums, as indicated in the preceding chapter. It would have been better still, given the depth of information I am seeking, to engage a pre-existent group of students – perhaps a museum studies class – in the project. Who else, after all, would be sufficiently committed to the task to produce five separate texts on the signifying practice of the Memorial? Such a task could realistically be expected only of students for who the effort would count toward a certificate or other credential. I did not attempt to solicit the involvement of any such group, in part because it is not my intention to obtain a representative sample of information about the Memorial's signifying practice. Rather, my intention is to apply this experimental method, in a limited and manageable way, to demonstrate the value of the method as a means of generating a critical and constructive evaluation of a museum exhibition. The outcome of my own application is less critical than the process. My purpose is to present a case for the value of the method rather than an authoritative reading or analysis of the Memorial. Having explained that my analysis of the Memorial's signifying practice is incidental to the primary aim of the thesis – to demonstrate the value of the method – the question of the academic legitimacy of such a thesis remains.

Because I limit the test sample to my self, my account appears both partial and inexpert. By situating myself as the sole subject for the experiment, by constituting my account of my own learning process as the evidence of and argument for my case for the value of Freirean pedagogy to museum program evaluation, I set up an inescapable paradox. On the one hand, my claims are authorised by my status as a personal witness to the Memorial's signification. This is my experience and I know it to be true. On the other, the fact that my evidence is constituted by my naïve experience, not my learned expertise, threatens to jeopardise the academic legitimacy of my case. Because I am a witness, I cannot be the judge, and vice versa. I do not seek to resolve this paradox. But I do believe my project methodology is legitimate in terms of the rhetorical turn in the human sciences. In fact it fits well into the materialist counterrevolution to this rhetorical turn, a counterrevolution to which Paulo Freire contributed.

Since the 1960s, the apparatus by which scholars have traditionally produced knowledge has been subjected to widespread criticism. An objective perception of the real world, the argument might go, is one that masks the fact that this knowledge did not emerge of its own accord, that it was subject always to personal, cultural and historical

forces. In Stanley Fish's words, matters of truth, fact and so on 'are intelligible and debatable only within the precincts of the contexts and situations or paradigms or communities that give them their local and their changeable shape' (Bernard-Donals & Glejzer, 1998: 1). A great deal of critical work was produced that identified the masculine, white, and heterosexual biases of theories that claim to be neutral. Not surprisingly, this work coincided with and in many cases emerged from within various social and political movements of people who, in one sense or another, or in many, lack rights and privileges.

It is easier to criticise traditional academic work because it is always subject to the process of its production than it is to produce work that escapes such criticism. This question of what constitutes authoritative knowledge has initiated a paradigmatic shift in the human sciences.⁸² As Michael Bernard-Donals describes, attending to this question was a tumultuous experience:

either wholesale chaos in which scientists and philosophers had to rethink their centuries-old *modus operandi* without so much as a road map; or a fecund multidisciplinary soup, in which the boundaries between traditionally demarcated fields broke down to yield shared methodologies and borrowed metaphysics. (Bernard-Donals, 1998: 95)

Academic responses to this crisis of representation have been abundant; they have varied widely and shifted dramatically. I will not attempt to catalogue this work here, but it is possible to identify some characteristics of recent responses that are pertinent to my own objective and method.

At least three branches of academic writing that have emerged since the late 1970s feed into my own work and assist its claim to legitimacy. The first pertinent direction for academic work after the crisis of representation is reader-response, or audience-oriented criticism. This work can be understood as an offshoot of the general turn, or return, to the rhetorical tradition of the ancient Greek philosophers. Having abandoned the search for a text's intrinsic meaning, audience-oriented critics analyse texts instead from the perspective of actual, potential or 'implied' readers.⁸³ They undertake a systematic interpretation of a text and attempt to persuade their readers as to the legitimacy and

⁸² In the sciences, Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was seminal to this shift. In the human sciences, important work has emerged from structuralists, poststructuralists and postmodernists including Barthes, Derrida, Foucault and Lacan but also many feminist and Black scholars.

⁸³ Jane Tompkins' *Reader-Response Criticism* is a key text here (Tompkins, 1980). See also Susan Suleiman's introduction to the edited collection *The Reader in the Text* (Suleiman, 1980). She identifies six methodological categories of those involved in producing audience-oriented criticism: rhetorical, semiotic and structuralist, phenomenological, subjective and psychoanalytic, sociological and historical, and hermeneutical.

value of this interpretation. Conceptual tools deployed by these critics vary but their mutual goal is to understand how language constructs certain meanings for certain readers, producing culture by shaping readers' understanding of the world.

A second branch of academic work that emerges from the antifoundational revolution and serves to propel my project, like the first, stakes no claim on objectivity. Here I am referring to a group of scholars that specialises in autocriticism, or criticism that is confessional, subjective, engaged, personal, anecdotal, testimonial, narrative, or mixed genre: writing at the crossroads of autobiography and criticism.⁸⁴ Autocritics recognise not only that all accounts are invested and subjective, but also that it is a reader's affectedness as an embodied reader that engages all readers in the object of study: critics themselves and, in turn, their readers. What distinguishes this work is its intention to situate experience as a legitimate form of knowledge. In other words, this work seeks to present readers with localised truths – which are often complex and contradictory – rather than a singular immutable truth. It works to reclaim the value of self-knowledge for the academic enterprise.

A third direction for academic work that has emerged following the crisis of representation is diverse, and not entirely distinct from that of the autocritics. In this work, the insights of antifoundationalism are united with the academy's traditional interest in assembling a genuine picture of the world and identifying the universal forces at work in it. Such work resumes the quest for objective knowledge but it does not ever claim to have found the truth once and for all. Nor is this discovery its ultimate purpose. Rather, scholars producing this work recognise that experience is an essential component of knowledge. They seek not to persuade readers but rather to enable them to embark on their own quest for objective knowledge or the truth. Reflexive ethnography and history fall into this third category, to the extent that its authors demonstrate to readers their personal implication in their object of study, and reveal the seams of their ethnographic or historical narratives.⁸⁵ An example of this form of work,

⁸⁴ (Henderson, 1995: 13). See also Jane Tompkins' 'Me and my shadow' (Tompkins, 1988), Nancy Miller's (1991) *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts* (Miller, 1991), Nicole Ward Jouve's (1991) *White Woman Speaks with Forked Tongue: Criticism as Autobiography* (Jouve, 1991), and the 1996 collection, edited by H. Aram Veeseer, *Confessions of the Critics* (Veeseer, 1996).

⁸⁵ Anthropologists George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer describe their work in terms of a paradox: 'The only way to an accurate view and confident knowledge of the world is through a sophisticated epistemology that takes full account of intractable contradiction, paradox, irony, and uncertainty in the explanation of human activities (Marcus & Fischer, 1986: 14–15). Similarly, for James Clifford, anthropological writing enables a vision of but also constitutes and intervenes in cultural systems: 'Ethnography decodes and recodes ... It describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes' (Clifford, 1986: 2–3).

akin to autocriticism, is constituted by reflexive testimonies about the Holocaust. In these testimonies, the tellers tell their stories but at the same time situate themselves as their own audience, hesitating and appearing to reflect on what they have just said. For James Young, reflexive techniques of representation reveal the complexity of the process of producing memory, although for some historians, such reflexivity is seen to undercut the testimony and possibly discredit the witness: ‘the more dispassionate a text seems, the more rhetorically veracious or authentic it becomes’ (Young, 1988: 161–4).

Importantly, the work of Paulo Freire, Ira Shor and other adult educators also fits into this third category of academic work, which can be termed the materialist counterrevolution to the rhetorical turn.⁸⁶ Paulo Freire is renowned for maintaining dual commitments to the notions of universal freedom and justice, and to the everyday particularities and practicalities of local contexts. His own pedagogical practice and his critical intervention into the field of adult education alike were designed for and applied to diverse situations, but according to the universal theoretical goal of human emancipation. Alternatively, Freire’s work is ‘praxis’⁸⁷ – a scheme for practice – or phronesis, which for Bernard-Donals is ‘a critically self-reflexive study that proceeds not just by interpretation but also by demonstration and observation ... constantly reintegrat[ing] the experientially observed and the conceptually theorised’ (Bernard-Donals, 1998: 177).

My contention is that in order to engage visitors in dialogic learning, the Memorial must invite visitors to reflect on the institution and its signifying practice whilst it involves them in the material and its meaning. By the same token, my own narrative should remind readers of the context for, limits of, and tensions in my account whilst it persuades them of its veracity and value. Taken on its own, the central diagnostic section of my account is not reflexive. But in the sense that this section is contained within my personal experience of learning at and about the Memorial, I achieve an order of narrative reflexivity via the structure of my account. In the sense that it facilitates a kind of narrative reflexivity, my implication in the account I produce of the Memorial’s signifying practice enhances its capacity to demonstrate the possibility of

⁸⁶ Peter McLaren writes: ‘Freires’ work – which stands at the borderline of modernist and postmodernist discourse – can be used as a touchstone for a postmodern materialist politics’ McLaren, 1994 #550: 204.

⁸⁷ Raymond Williams’ provides a good explanation of the difference between theory, practice and praxis in his *Keywords*, under ‘Theory’. He acknowledges that praxis is not quite separate from practice, ‘though the notion of a ‘scheme for practice’ obviously distinguishes it from theory/practice oppositions’. He argues that the modern definition of praxis is ‘in origin late Hegelian, but now especially Marxist, where praxis is practice informed by theory and also, though less emphatically, theory informed by practice’.

dialogic museum praxis. There are gaps in my narrative, and I am unaware of their extent, frequency, and nature. But there is sufficient revelation to inspire the fifth reconstructive stage. Because my account relies on both experiential and analytic forms of knowledge, because it is concerned to influence a practice rather than to identify a thing, it escapes the bind in which some academic work remains caught. Unlike the authoritative voice of traditional academic criticism, but quite like the work of the autocritics, my ‘expertise’ comes, like the word itself, from my experience as a learning subject. Producing an authoritative account of the Memorial’s program is part of but not the *raison d’être* of the work. Rather, my diagnosis is intended as a transit stop during the exploration of how museum practice could be reconstructed.

My project is located in the academic field of cultural studies, which emerged in the midst of this revolution in the human sciences. Unlike established disciplines, therefore, it was less confronted by the crisis of representation than enabled by the deconstructionist arguments that heralded this crisis. From its inception cultural studies has had the opportunity to develop a range of strategies in relation to the ‘new theoretical techniques and the new possibilities opened up by feminism and by Black struggles, as well as the new theoretical positions opened up by postmodernist and poststructuralist debates’ (Hall, 1990: 2). Cultural studies scholars have always undertaken to produce work that is not only engaged with contemporary social and political struggles, but that engaged its readers in those struggles. Both its objects and methodologies are organised around an examination of the formations of consciousness and subjectivity: ‘wherever signifying practices are shaping consciousness in daily life, cultural studies has work to do’.⁸⁸

Because cultural studies emerged at the moment of destabilisation of the human sciences and its techniques of authorisation; because it metamorphosed as an academic field from adult education and critical theory; and because of its intrinsic interest in power and in praxis over and above pure theory: for these reasons it is highly appropriate to return to adult education, and in particular to the counterhegemonic praxis of Freire and Shor, for methodological inspiration. In this sense, the method I have developed following Shor is a cultural studies praxis *par excellence*. It is a constructive analytic method emerging in an antifoundational framework. I use it not to produce definitive knowledge but to demonstrate a means of generating strategies for reconstructing museum practice. The value of my resulting account, therefore, is less as

⁸⁸ This is the broad brief that James Berlin assigns cultural studies, paraphrasing Richard Johnson, former head of Cultural Studies in Birmingham (Berlin, 1998: 391).

a sophisticated interpretation of the Memorial's signifying practice, than it is as a constructive foray into the possibility of dialogic museum praxis.

iii. The Australian War Memorial in five lessons

My method can be used in any museum. In this final section I consider what makes the Memorial an interesting and significant object for this analysis of a museum program for informal learning. I compare its educational agenda with my own. I introduce myself and my relationship with the Memorial. I then turn to the particular emphasis of my reading and explain my reasons for choosing this emphasis over and above others. I end by identifying the sources and limits of my data for each of the five stages of the reading, which I refer to as each Lesson.

The object of my study is the program for informal learning at the Australian War Memorial, comprised of the site and its exhibitions. It is a potent and complex site because of its unique stature, its ambitious mission, and its close association with nationalist discourse. Until the National Museum of Australia opens in 2001, the Memorial will remain the only museum to represent the Australian nation and its history. Its official purpose is to commemorate the sacrifice of Australians who have died in war, but its mission is articulated in broader terms: to enable Australians to remember, interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its impact on Australian society. Due to its status as the national war memorial, and to the mythic nationalist discourse that figures the experience of First World War soldiers as particularly formative of the Australian nation, many Australians relate to this museum site as a medium for the nation itself. Promotional literature for the Memorial in fact asserts that it houses 'the spirit of the nation'. Almost a million people attend the site per annum, and for many Australians it is an important, if not sacred, place. Clearly, the Memorial 'speaks to' many Australians, which suggests that its program has a popular, as well as an official, mandate to mediate national history, identity and spirit.

The Memorial is a museum of the dead. It is a kind of shrine at which visitors can pay homage to the sacrifices made in defence of the nation. But it has also always been a museum, with an extensive collection of material produced for, at the scene of, as a result of and in response to the practice and experience of war. Visitors are expected to worship here, but they are also expected to learn. The Memorial is eclectic and somewhat ambivalent because of its dual function as shrine and museum, and because the collection comprises both tools of and reflections of war. In the galleries, art competes with dioramas, documentary photographs, official documents and guns to impart knowledge. In the shrine, the words on the granite slab inform visitors that an Unknown Soldier lies underneath, and that 'HE SYMBOLISES ALL AUSTRALIANS

WHO HAVE DIED IN WAR'. This museum operates on both rational and spiritual planes. It provides a space for connecting with the dead and for reflecting on the experience of war. This notion that the Memorial connects Australians to the Australian national spirit is central to the Memorial's signifying practice, as will become clear in the course of my reading of the Memorial in the context of national culture. By positioning itself as a house of the Australian spirit as well as a house for learning, the Memorial assumes a great responsibility, and promises Australian visitors an experience that is as intimate as it is potent.

The Memorial does administer a program for learning, but its praxis is not Freirean. In Freirean terms, the Memorial would be co-intent with visitors on learning about the Australian experience of war. Its purpose would be to open up the historical process, to induce people to become historians, to evaluate and become involved in making history. In contrast, the Memorial has a more proprietorial claim on the history it depicts. It is concerned more to impart historical knowledge to visitors than to involve them in its production. To an extent, therefore, I am reading the Memorial's program according to an agenda that on the whole it does not recognise as its own.⁸⁹ But it is not inappropriate to read the Memorial in Freirean terms, given that the object and subject of its program are, respectively, the Australian nation and the Australian people. In other words, the Australian people are well positioned to interpret their history for themselves. In fact, the question of 'propriety' is central to both the Memorial's program and my agenda in reading it. What constitutes a proper or appropriate representation of the Australian experience of war? This question underpins my reading and emerges in various forms throughout. The answer, of course, depends on the particular perspective from which it comes.

My reading and evaluation of the Memorial program begins with and returns to my personal relationship with the site. I am a young white woman, born in the home of the Memorial, the nation's capital, Canberra. My maternal grandfather served in the Second World War, and since before my birth he and my grandmother have lived a short walk from the Memorial. My experience of war has always been remote yet, thanks to the mass media, my exposure to war has been regular. Perhaps because my first visit to the Memorial was so long ago, or perhaps because it had little impact on my development, I cannot recall it. My earliest memories are of climbing on a black submarine outside the building, on Christmas Day, the one day of the year the site interior is closed to the

⁸⁹ I say 'on the whole' because in some ways the institution does recognise Freirean principles. For example, the recent gallery redevelopment was undertaken from a theoretical position that recognised that communication is a dialogic, not monologic, process.

public. When I began researching for this thesis, the Commemorative Area and the galleries were familiar, but I could not recall the last time I had visited. At that point, despite my intellectual awareness of and interest in the site as a historical representation, in my imagination the Memorial was most significant as a sculptural playground, even if the submarine had long since been removed from the grounds.

As an adult student preparing to write on the Memorial's program for informal learning, I approached the site from an ambivalent perspective. It was not unfamiliar to me, but nor had it affected me in any significant way. In the course of my readings, I develop an appreciation of the Memorial's significance for myself, for the diverse community of people who fit into the category of 'Australian', in the international community and in the past. But to reiterate, my analysis is not intended to illuminate the Memorial's significance as if it were either predetermined or static. More specifically, my interest is the Memorial's signifying practice, and the tendencies of this practice to reinforce or disrupt hegemonic social orders.⁹⁰

Because it is important to understand the Memorial as operating in relation to real social orders, it is useful to consider it according to some basic axes of cultural differentiation such as gender and race. My own relationship with the Memorial program is clearly structured by my status as female. Women are vastly underrepresented at the Memorial, and a reading that sought to illuminate the means by which women are excluded from or marginalised within the Memorial's signifying practices would be a worthy and productive undertaking. There are undoubtedly moments in which my gender imbues my reading, but race – and how my experience of the Memorial is structured by my racial affiliation – is the axis I use to focus my learning experience and account.

There are compelling reasons for using the axis of racial differentiation to analyse the Memorial. In part, it is important to consider the Memorial's significance for Indigenous Australians because of the history of museums as a form of cultural representation. Until recently, museum collections of Australian cultural material tended to be constituted by Indigenous material, not that of the settlers. Since then, the balance of Indigenous and settler museum collections has shifted, but museums are still in the process of dealing with the legacy of former practices of collection, which were often devastating for Indigenous communities. The relationship between museums and Indigenous people, then, is in a period of transition.

⁹⁰ Henry Giroux and Lawrence Grossberg have each called for critical representational pedagogies that attend to the production of relations between the margins and centres of power (Giroux, 1994: 50).

Apart from this relationship between Indigenous people and museums in general, however, there is currently a concentration of interest among Australians in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories, and in particular in the history of conflict between, and differential treatment of, Indigenous and settler peoples. In recognition that there was some work to do here, the Federal Government established the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 1991 to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community. Its mission can be understood in terms of seeking to reconcile not only the peoples of Australia but also their histories. In addition to the official discourse of reconciliation, there is currently a broad-based popular movement for reconciliation. In 1998 almost a million Australians signed Sorry Books: documents that constitute a collective apology to Indigenous Australians for the long-term policies and practices of removing Indigenous children from their families. In other words, an equal number of Australians participated in this commemoration as attended the Memorial.

As well as timely, race is a relevant analytic tool to deploy in the context of the Memorial. In the broadest terms, the purpose of this museum is to represent conflicts in which Australians have been involved. Indigenous people have been involved in the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) in every officially declared war in which Australians have participated. But this is only half the picture, since they have also been involved in the long-term officially undeclared war of resistance to and oppression by settler Australians. There are currently no plans to incorporate white Australia's conflict with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into the scope of the Memorial's representation.⁹¹ But the Memorial has figured fairly prominently in reconciliation discourses. Many Australians consider it an appropriate site for recognising the conflict between Indigenous and settler Australians in addition to foreign conflicts.

There is a fourth reason that race is an important analytic tool in this analysis of the Memorial's program for learning: it offers the opportunity to investigate a neglected aspect of Freirean praxis. Freire's dialogic praxis was developed in the context of illiterate Brazilian peasants, and Freire was committed to and focused on teaching disempowered peoples. His dialogic praxis has been appreciated for its capacity to render underprivileged students conscious of the cultural and historical systems that structure their personal experience and condition in relation to others', and to invite them to become active agents for counterhegemonic social intervention in their local

⁹¹ Steve Gower is the current Director of the Australian War Memorial. In his address to the 1998 Annual General Meeting of Museums Australia he suggested that the Memorial's present policy on Indigenous representation was sufficient.

context. But is it not equally important for privileged students to recognise their situation in relation to culture and history, and to join in this counterhegemonic social movement? Can Freirean programs render students conscious of their culpability as well as their capability? By structuring my account according to the racial axis of differentiation, because of my own status as white, I am also able to investigate the potential value of Freirean praxis in a privileged first world context.⁹²

My challenge is to account for the Memorial's program for informal learning in such a way as to demonstrate the critical value of Freirean praxis for museum education. As I undertook this Freirean study of the Memorial, my mission was to follow the learning method consistently and with dedication.⁹³ As I transform my learning experience into writing, my mission is not only to describe my initial experience, account for my critical diagnosis and propose a reconstruction of the Memorial and its signifying practice. The texts that follow should also demonstrate that the method invites a critical and constructive, dialogic engagement with the object of study, and therefore that museums would do well to explore strategies and techniques for initiating such a dialogue in their exhibitions.

Each stage of my readings considers the museum material's signification in a different context, involves different kinds of evidence, and constitutes a different kind of reading. In Lesson One I familiarise myself with the Memorial, interpret it, and identify my position in relation to it. This account constitutes an autocritical reading, where the primary source is myself, my relation to the manifest material and my understanding of its meaning. As noted, this first Lesson of my reading is most precise; but conversely it is also the most partial. In this stage I become more compelled but also more puzzled by the Memorial.

In Lessons Two through Four, as I consider the Memorial's signifying practice from perspectives outside my own, I gain a better understanding of the site's significance and yet also become more detached from it. Corresponding to a sociology or a cultural

⁹² Transplantations of Freirean praxis to the first world are usually justified on the grounds that there are huge wealth and privilege discrepancies within first-world countries: large numbers of urban poor and so on. While I agree with that assessment of its value in Australia, I also think it an equally valuable pedagogy for privileged people. Some anti-racist strategies may resonate with Freirean praxis. See David Hollinsworth's paper on strategies for combating institutional racism (Hollinsworth, 1992).

⁹³ My reading process was complicated but also facilitated, to an extent, by the fact that a substantial redevelopment of the galleries was in progress at the time. The Memorial looks quite different now to how it appeared at the beginning of my investigation. The changes, however, and the process employed to bring them about, were themselves illuminating of the institution's signifying practice.

study, Lesson Two begins the diagnostic phase of my exploration. My task here is to diagnose the Memorial's signification in the national context, by analysing how the Memorial's convoluted and contradictory meaning is constructed in public discourses associated with the institution. Of course, those involved in producing the Memorial site and exhibitions are a key group of people in the process of producing the Memorial's meaning. But this group is not necessarily any more authoritative than any other. In developing my diagnosis, I tried to avoid privileging any one perspective. My evidence for Lesson Two includes public statements in newspaper articles, reviews of the material, the museum's own discourse including promotional material, guides, annual reports and so on, and ceremonies such as the dawn service on Anzac Day. Each of these assists me in building a diagnosis of the process of the Memorial's signification.

Several factors serve to complicate my task of diagnosing the Memorial's practice of signifying Australia's war memory and the Australian nation. The first complicating factor is that this museum itself signifies and works to produce the nation. In the sense that the Memorial is constitutive of the national community for whom it (the Memorial) is significant, the object and subject of my Lesson Two account are conflated: I am reading public discourses in order to diagnose the process by which that public is produced. A second complication is that public discourses clearly privilege some perspectives and marginalise others. Compounding this factor, the material in question concerns trauma and death. It is therefore very potent, so a considerable degree of reticence must be assumed, and at times is apparent, in people's recorded responses. In the context of postcolonial Australian culture, Indigenous people are likely to be particularly reticent in their public responses. I attempt not to solve these problems, but to maintain consciousness of them throughout the readings. I do have some other strategies for rendering my account less prone to the charge of partiality, not least of which is my use of the racial axis as a tool for diagnosing the Memorial's signifying practice. In addition to describing the public discourses surrounding the museum in question, I also describe associated material in other sites, museums, exhibitions, commemorations, monuments, installations and so on. These comparisons work in the vein of intertextuality within the readings of each site. Situating the Memorial in the context of other museums and commemorative sites, which speak back to or can be conceived as interrogating the primary site, it is possible to produce a more sophisticated characterisation of the Memorial's signification in the national context.

In Lesson Three my objective is similar to that of Lesson Two. The context is still the present, and I continue to examine public discourses surrounding the Memorial, using the racial axis as well as describing other equivalent or otherwise relevant sites. Here,

however, the spatial relations I seek to identify are those between the Memorial and other associate nations. Again the emphasis here is necessarily on the public realm, which in the case of international relations and especially in the case of the Australian War Memorial, is often equivalent to official diplomatic associations.

In the fourth, historical, Lesson my evidence is a combination of the institution's own documentation and public responses. As in Lessons Two and Three, I consider the Memorial's dominant, intended or acceptable significance, but also seek out its alternative significance. That is, bearing in mind the difficulty of comprehending the full significance of the material, especially over the duration of the Memorial's operation, I seek out evidence, or at least notice its lack, that suggests the controversies and mutations of the program. Again, I identify the Memorial's apparent meaning in order to investigate the process by which that meaning is constructed.

By now equipped with a sense of the breadth and trajectory of the Memorial's signification, I am ready to undertake a reconstructive reading. I begin at the moment in which the representational assemblage was conceived and travel back to consider prior forms by which it achieved its distinction, and to which it is genealogically related. From here, and in light of the understanding I have developed of the material to this point, I speculate on steps the institution could take to alter its trajectory. In transition from the first to the second half of this stage of the reading, as my narrative crosses the gap between the past of its antecedents and the future of its possibility, it becomes once again personal, more precise or particular, and more partial.

These readings end, then, as they began, in the context of my own experience of learning about the process of the Memorial's affect. To reiterate, this is not a method for reading *the* affect of a museum. More specifically, it is a method for reading the Memorial's signifying practice in a subjective but systematic and constructive way, for gaining a sense of its signification in order to imagine its possible resignification.

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The following account of the Memorial's signifying practice is designed to test the principle and explore the possibility that museums could use Freirean praxis to learn from as well as to teach visitors, thereby engaging them in a dialogic, critical and constructive learning process. It is a study of the Memorial's program for informal learning – its signifying practice – whose outcome is ultimately practical if localised and personal: a strategic vision for resignification. I do not produce a general prescription for museums or even for the Memorial but my account could provide museum designers, educators and evaluators with some conceptual tools to use in their own practice.

The Australian War Memorial

I

Of my experience

My first reading of the Australian War Memorial's signifying practice is a description, written from my personal perspective and inevitably inflected by my relationship with it. My account is composed of three inseparable elements of my experience: the Memorial's manifest presence; my interpretation of its meaning; and the tensions in this interpretation. I describe the building, spaces, objects, images, and texts in the Memorial as well as its techniques, tones, juxtapositions and so on; the meanings, stories and morals it suggests; and any twists or tensions, inversions or contestations, exclusions or excesses that become apparent. By the end of this stage, my readers and I should have a good sense of the Memorial, its meaning and its character, as framed by my individual and personal experience.

The Memorial occupies an impressive site in Canberra, the national capital, at the base of Mount Ainslie. From the summit of the mountain, the Memorial is the foreground site on a direct line formed by the dual carriageway of Anzac Parade, Old Parliament House and the new Parliament House, and broken only by Lake Burley Griffin (Plate 1).⁹⁴ Anzac Parade – along which people march every Anzac Day – is further distinguished by the red gravel that fills the median strip, and the parallel rows on either side of native trees and grasses. Ten separate memorials are also sited along these strips.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ The lake was crafted by damming the Molonglo river and named after Canberra's architect, Sir Walter Burley Griffin.

⁹⁵ In order of their establishment, these are the Australia and New Zealand 1916–1918 memorial (to the Australian Light Horse, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, the Imperial Camel Corps and the Australian Flying Corps); the Air Force memorial; the Rats of Tobruk memorial; the memorial of and to Atatürk; the Navy memorial; the Australia-Hellenic memorial; the Army memorial; the Vietnam War memorial; the Korean War memorial; and the service nurses memorial.

The Memorial is a classic heterotopic site. It occupies a prime position on a central axis of the city: the north-south axis that links Mount Ainslie and Capitol Hill, into which Parliament House is now embedded. The Memorial sits in perpetual relation to the seat of federal government at Parliament House. The government and memorial sites face one another across the mirror of the lake, which both divides them and binds them together. All museums operate as a counter to the everyday spaces of work, leisure, activity and rest, and the Memorial is no exception. It is clearly an other-place, for reflection, mythology and consolation: an instrumental space of reorientation among individuals and social collectivities. The Memorial represents or reflects, but also contests and inverts, the 'real sites' of Australia. But because of its topographical relationship with Parliament House, the Memorial particularly reflects and represents and contests and inverts official political action on a national scale.

The building is a sandstone cruciform structure with an open central shaft formed by a sunken courtyard and two cloistered passages, each of which leads to the domed Hall of Memory at the heart of the cross (Plate 2). Its formality and its monumentality register the institution's cultural authority and suggest a reverent tone is appropriate.

Approaching the building I am conscious of entering a ritual space. As I walk from the carpark at the rear of the building at the top of the cross down its west side to the front entrance, I pass many miniature or metonymic memorials. I do not immediately notice either the massive bronze figure by Ray Ewers⁹⁶ or the Lone Pine⁹⁷ tree, both of which stand some distance from the main building. It takes several visits to notice that every tree along the side of the building has a small plaque at its base, announcing its dedication to the memory of a particular group: a squadron or company, a ship's crew or flyers of a class of plane, the women's services⁹⁸ and so on. But it is difficult to miss the outdoor artefacts, in particular the huge gun painted in pastel camouflage colours and sheltered by an apparently custom-built and matching-painted metal cover. This is the 45-ton, 41-foot barrel of the 28cm Amiens gun, a 'GREAT GUN' used by the Germans in 1918 to shell Amiens from a distance of 15 miles, and captured by the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) when twenty-two Allied Divisions 'BROKE THE GERMAN FRONT', as the plaque announces in the arresting capitals favoured by the

⁹⁶ This sculpture was displaced from the alcove at the north end of the Hall of Memory when the Unknown Soldier was interred in 1993 and four pillars – of glass, metal, wood and stone – were erected in the alcove.

⁹⁷ Lone Pine was the site of one of the first major battles in which Australians fought at Gallipoli. The tree at the AWM was grown from a seed sent home by a young soldier to his mother.

⁹⁸ That the three different women's services – a group of collectives – are dedicated a single tree outside the Memorial indicates something of the Memorial's priorities.

Memorial.⁹⁹ My path to the entrance requests that I walk underneath the barrel of the 8-inch naval gun,¹⁰⁰ and straight past Leslie Bowles' statue of 'Simpson and his donkey'.¹⁰¹ The grounds of this building are saturated with signification. Every object – every artefact, tree or statue – adds an element to the ever-expanding story of which the Memorial has custody.

From the entrance steps, as I join the trail of people embarking on or returning from their pilgrimage, my gaze is drawn from the sandstone monument to the grand, spectacular view back down Anzac Parade, across the lake to the Old and new Parliament Houses, and beyond into the Brindabella Mountains. The site exudes a sense of ritual, rendering the experience of entering slightly daunting. I recall from Foucault's principles of heterotopia that their portal is significant: 'Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable' (Foucault, 1986: 26). The point of entry to the Memorial is clearly defined, and guarded. Two mediaeval stone lions¹⁰² flank the antechamber, sphinx-like, defending the space of the Memorial against unwanted intrusion. I must pass them to enter the formal space (Plate 3).¹⁰³

Through the lions gateway, the vista of the garden court appears, serene and pleasant (Plate 4). But before the Pool of Reflection and its Eternal Flame, free-standing notices request that visitors adopt appropriate behaviour:

Please be quiet and respectful [as this is a] special place of remembrance ... Quiet conversation is acceptable but noise should be kept to a minimum ... Photography is permitted; respect should be shown to both the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and to other visitors [and their] quiet reflection.

⁹⁹ During the redevelopment, the path between the carpark and the entrance, and the position of some of the artefacts, changed. The Amiens gun has been repainted, so its colours are stronger. The new sign attached to it uses sentence case, rather than capitals. It still lists specifications of the weapon, but also provides more context for the object, why it is considered important and how it came to be here.

¹⁰⁰ Again, the redevelopment has altered this path. It no longer goes directly under the barrel, although this gun remains a prominent feature of the grounds.

¹⁰¹ Simpson is the fabled man who carried the wounded from the battlefields to safety until struck down by shell-fire, a particularly heroic figure since he died saving lives, not taking them. The statue was not commissioned as a depiction of Simpson specifically but as a generic stretcher-bearer. It was only in the 1950s that the title 'Simpson' was added (McKernan, 1991: 326).

¹⁰² The lions were donated to the Memorial by the Burgomaster of Ypres in 1936.

¹⁰³ Describing the suburban phenomenon of lions flanking the entry to many Australian homes, Gini Lee writes: 'Lions abound in the suburbs; fixed on posts, on fences, on pathways, on porches ... These are not relaxing lions, never lionesses, they are masculine, upright, formal lions, tamed by civilisation, and are always mounted on some sort of plinth ... the visitor must pass through them in preparation for a formal acceptance (or rejection) into the formal zone' (Lee, 1998).

To read this sign is to be coached in remembrance etiquette, instructed in how to behave appropriately at the Memorial. I pause to wonder at the necessity of the notices, and their effect. As far as behavioural directives go, these are polite, if elaborate. I suppose they were commissioned following concern that some visitors were not sufficiently quiet, respectful, or pensive, and that they are intended to foster an atmosphere appropriate and amenable to a spiritual communion with the dead. They suggest, however, a lack of faith on the part of the Memorial, in either its visitors and their capacity to properly remember, or in the shrine itself, and its capacity to inspire reverence and prepossession in visitors of its own accord. Between this visit and a subsequent one, the notices were removed. An 'Information Assistant', identifiable by his bright red jacket with its 'Information Assistant' breastpin, is not sure why. Some time later, however, new orientation signs were erected at the entrance. At the bottom of these notices, the more subtle request appears: 'Please respect the feelings of those who come to reflect quietly and remember'.

Behind the garden beds and potted plants that line the courtyard, the walls have been carefully decorated. They contain panels of lattice work and 26 stone-carved heads of Australian native animals. Some animals are more easily identifiable than others. Among them is a frill-necked lizard, a snake, a possum, a koala and an eagle. But others look more like mythical creatures, such as a Chinese dragon. At the farthest end of each row, the two heads are human, those of Indigenous men (Plate 5). This backdrop of native icons works to characterise the Australian homeland and to establish an order in which Indigenous men are, by association, part of the fauna rather than humanity, and in which Indigenous women are invisible.

Upstairs in the cloisters, all along the side walls, is the Roll of Honour. It is comprised of hundreds of brass column panels from which protrude over 102 000 names. About 60 000 of them identify people who died in the First World War. The sheer magnitude of the Roll is impressive. I can see that the names are organised according to the battalion in which these people were fighting, but the list provides evidence of little else. A family name and one or two initials are the only markers that distinguish one dead Australian from another. Military ranks have been studiously omitted, although I do not notice this until later. Instead, I notice the gravity of the list, the absence of first names or nicknames – the names by which these people were surely known, if not addressed. Some characters have been visited and a red paper poppy¹⁰⁴ on a wire has been inserted next to their name, in the vertical groove between panels. I wonder how many of these names are never personally visited, how many of the people are

¹⁰⁴ As a visitor brochure informs me, the poppies 'can be purchased from the Memorial shop'.

forgotten. I have not ever been personally acquainted with anyone whose name is on this Roll, and I find it difficult to feel any connection to this patrilineal list of surnames, except to the degree that others, recently, have come to remember some of them. As I stand looking at the columns of names, I wonder. Is the Roll unlimited, a perpetual work-in-progress? I know there is a Supplementary Roll on a computer database, accessible from terminals discreetly placed at the south end of the cloisters. But its purpose and scope, like that of the wall Roll, is not clear. What are the precise specifications or conditions for entry into the Roll? What exactly constitutes death during active service? What actually caused all these deaths? Is every death during active service equally honourable? No contextualising information is apparent.

Conscious of the fact that as I write, Australian troops are posted in East Timor and that this will not be the last conflict in which Australians are involved, and therefore of the ever-escalating number of war dead, this list of brass names seems too fixed, and its goal of paying equal tribute to all the war dead naïve. Names of each major ‘theatre of war’, mounted on the courtyard-side walls of the cloisters, already occupy each available niche. How can the Memorial hope to accommodate the memories of every conflict when there is no end in sight?

At the entrance to the Hall of Memory, I feel slight trepidation.¹⁰⁵ Will I duly appreciate the scene I am about to witness? Inside, the space is impressive. It is composed by a mosaic of six million pieces of glass covering the walls and the dome ceiling, and three large arch windows of stained glass.¹⁰⁶ From the marble floor rise four 9.3-metre-high pillars of glass, metal, wood and stone, and sunk into it is a tomb. As a space it is lush and light, yet it envelopes me in a dense forest of cultural codes. Some are Christian, some are mediaeval British, some are military. I am mostly unfamiliar with all three realms of signification.

The three stained-glass windows in the Hall – one on each of its western, southern and eastern walls – command my attention first. I can see that each window depicts five figures. But it takes reference to my brochure to recognise that the three windows represent five ‘personal’, ‘social’ and ‘fighting’ qualities of the AIF respectively.¹⁰⁷ It is easy enough to distinguish what quality each figure represents: a single word sits at

¹⁰⁵ Another instructional notice was placed here, but is no longer.

¹⁰⁶ Both were designed by Napier Waller.

¹⁰⁷ Pamphlets and booklets available just outside the Hall explain its abundant, often historically specific or otherwise cryptic symbolism.

the base of every panel, underneath the figures.¹⁰⁸ It is also clear that the ‘meaning’ of the various elements has been crafted with precision. This is not abstract art. Each figure stands in front of a pillar containing several unique symbols associated with the quality it possesses. Of the fifteen figures, one is female: a nurse. Central to the southern window representing ‘personal qualities’, she represents (somewhat predictably) ‘DEVOTION’. Her symbols are the Red Cross, the Australian coat of arms, and a pelican feeding her young from her bleeding breast. In the ‘ANCESTRY’ panel of the west window depicting ‘social qualities’, a naval gunner stands beneath a wreath (for reverence for the renowned); a book (traditional knowledge); cricket stumps and ball (traditional recreation); church spire (European tradition of Christianity) and a naval flag that signals ‘Engage the enemy at close quarters’. In the east window representing ‘fighting qualities’, ‘DECISION’ is embodied by a soldier ‘in dress worn at Anzac’. His ‘target, bared sword and emblematic spear all denote directness in carrying out an aim’. Looking at the windows, this could be a cathedral but, for someone raised outside the Christian tradition, it is a resemblance empty of any particular spiritual power.¹⁰⁹ I do sense the same obligation that I feel in churches, here, to believe. My sense of obligation here is in fact stronger. I am not in any practical sense a Christian but I do recognise and use the discursive tag ‘Australian’. This is supposed to be my place. I should identify.

The mosaic covers all the interior walls of the Hall, and its dome. When I look straight up into the cupola, the concentric circles of spirit beings or souls rising up toward the sun are dazzling. I do not need to know that the ring of wattle signifies mourning and that the endless rope signifies the continuity of life: the image is sufficiently arresting and intelligible to work without the accompaniment of textual translation (Plate 6). But surrounded by all the overdetermining figurative and sculptural symbolism, it becomes an elegant part of a confusing environment, its aesthetic disrupted. In addition to the fifteen figures in the stained glass windows, the mosaic depicts four more – representing the Navy, Army, Air Force and Women’s Services respectively – and each of these is invested with its own symbolism, which can be interpreted if not by looking then by again referring to Memorial publications. I don’t find these figures appealing.

The centrepiece of the Hall is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: ‘AN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER KILLED IN THE WAR OF 1914–1918’. I know that the remains of an

¹⁰⁸ The ‘personal’ qualities are resource, candour, devotion, curiosity and independence; the ‘social’ qualities are comradeship, ancestry, patriotism, chivalry and loyalty; the ‘fighting’ qualities are coolness, control, audacity, endurance and decision.

¹⁰⁹ I do not mean to suggest that Christian visitors would necessarily or automatically be interpellated.

Australian man, a soldier, reside under this granite slab and that, like many of those killed on the Western front in the First World War, his personal identity was never established. It is his lack of specificity¹¹⁰ that endows him with the hallowed status of the generic Australian soldier. As the inscription states: 'HE SYMBOLISES ALL AUSTRALIANS WHO HAVE DIED IN WAR.' But apart from the fact that the masculine pronoun belies the soldier's universal Australian-ness, by the generic 'WAR' here the authors mean, specifically, conflicts officially declared and externally fought, until recently by men and not women (although of course there have always been female fatalities: you do not have to fight, to die in war). An unnamed soldier he certainly is, but it requires quite a leap of nationalist sympathy or faith for me to extrapolate his lack of specificity such that he represents all Australian warriors. I can relate to this invisible presence as the spirit of Australian servicemen. But I consider both the 'service-' and the '-men' operative and therefore consistently balk at accepting the legitimacy of the claim of his broader representativeness.

In the Hall of Memory, masculinity may be a dominant characteristic, but in the context of this reading, its whiteness is glaring. Wherever hair is visible, it is blonde. Gazing up again at the cupola, I notice that the depicted spirits of the dead are being handed up to the sun by seven pairs of hands. In the style of the other figures in the mosaic and the stained glass, the hands are monumental, blockish, ultra-masculine,¹¹¹ and white. There are nineteen full figures in the Hall, or twenty if you count the invisible Unknown Soldier. Of these twenty, seventeen are visibly white and male. Two are white and female. Only one – the generic, ordinary, abstracted, Unknown Australian warrior – can be conceived as representing the Indigenous dead.

Seen in isolation, the sunken Tomb is surprisingly anti-monumental. And because of the crowd of symbols in here there is no immediate link, for me, between the Tomb and the pillars of glass, stone, metal and wood that occupy the alcove at the north end of the Hall, opposite the entrance. Both the Tomb and the pillars, however, were designed by architects Tonkin Zulaikha Harford and sculptor Janet Laurence. Once I make this connection, and conceive of the two as a unit separate from the other jostling signifiers, they are each more intelligible. The pillars subtly monumentalise the Soldier's sunken tomb; and the Tomb gives a concrete purpose, a focus, to the pillars. Without this link, the brochure's explanation of the pillars remains abstract:

¹¹⁰ I am ignoring, here, his gender specificity. Masculinity, however, also operates as generic, the standard in language and culture from which women deviate.

¹¹¹ In Napier Waller's gouache, watercolour and pencil sketch of the cupola mosaic, which hangs in the gallery and is visible during one's descent to the lower ground floor, the hands are much less blockish. Instead, they are quite delicate and could conceivably belong to a woman.

glass = water, the sword, courage, all of society
stone = earth, sorrow and rebirth
metal = fire, and change from the physical world
wood = air, the spirit and transformation through death.

This precise explanation – its utter certainty – reminds me of the notices outside the Hall. Indeed, it also accords with the brochures’ explanation of the meaning of the mosaic and stained glass. Evidently, visitors require an interpretation of the Hall. If irritatingly didactic, the brochure at least attempts to unify the mass of signs and symbols here competing for our attention, to connect the pillars to the Tomb and all the glass work: ‘Both Janet Laurence and Napier Waller have explored this theme of the transformation from the material world to the spiritual as the basis for their commemoration of Australia’s war sacrifice’.

Here, then, is the central theme of the Memorial shrine: matter has become spirit, bodies souls, human lives, figures. The Roll of Honour exemplifies this transformation; the pillars imply it; the cupola visualises it; the brochures repeatedly state it; and the Unknown Soldier embodies it. All these elements combine to iterate and reiterate the strange but familiar notion that ‘their spirit’ – which visitors are ever encouraged to equate with the entire, collective, Australian (fighting) spirit, composed of both the living and the dead – manifests and circulates in this space.

In the Memorial’s Commemorative Area, the spirit of the Australian ‘fallen’ is not beheld so much as relayed by an intermediary. Explanations clamour to substitute for an immediate experience of remembering the dead. Anticipating visitors’ failure to remember appropriately, or to appreciate the significance or potency of the site, the Memorial attempts to compensate. Brochures, free-standing notices of instruction and Information Assistants all serve to equip visitors with the knowledge deemed necessary for engaging in an appropriate act of remembrance. But their effect is one of overdetermination. Raucous children are shooshed by their parents and frowned at by Information Assistants. I strive, quite consciously, to cultivate an organic reverence, because in its absence my compliance becomes a docile submission to a code of instructions and meanings and, not being the compliant type, I instead resist.

But the Memorial’s spirituality is not entirely lost on me. I may not sense the spirit of the dead here, but the spirit of the living is evident all around me, in the building itself, in the crowds of people who visit it, take photographs and leave flowers. Although the poppies are an orchestrated tribute in that they are sold in the Memorial shop and fabricated from nylon, the fact that visitors have put them there constitutes each one as a living tribute, if not an organic or spontaneous one. The spirit they invoke is less that of those who sacrificed their lives than the spirit of those who remember them: the pride and pain of those still living.

In addition to the Commemorative Area, the Memorial hosts twenty galleries over two floors. This floor space is insufficient to display the Memorial's entire collection – indeed, much of it resides at the Treloar Centre in Mitchell – but it is enough to display far more than I can hope to discuss here. It is therefore necessary for me to limit my reading of the internal galleries. I concentrate on the First World War galleries because it was the 'Great War' that inspired the Memorial, and to which the second AIF and present-day observers still defer as the conflict in which Australia the nation was forged.¹¹²

Before turning to the internal galleries, I detour briefly back outside the Memorial. My destination is a fairly discreet memorial, the first on the east side of Anzac Parade, the memorial to Atatürk. It is obvious yet curious that this memorial commemorates an old enmity, indeed, a former enemy. For Turkish people Atatürk is modern Turkey's founding father: 'Atatürk' means father of the Turks. He was also the military leader at the time of the Gallipoli battles in 1915, in which 8000 Australians lost their lives and – in nationalist mythology – the Australian spirit was born.¹¹³ It seems curious then, that we would erect a monument to him. On closer inspection, the memorial is both less curious and more.

The memorial is comprised of a garden and a monument. As a sign at the edge of the garden informs me, it was inspired by the Australian government's gratitude for the Turkish government's recognition, in 1985, of the name 'Anzac Cove' for the place the AIF first landed on 25 April 1915. In return for this gesture, the Australian government established the Atatürk Memorial Garden extending part of the way down the east side of Anzac Parade. The sign states that it 'honours the heroism and self-sacrifice that distinguished both the Anzac and Turkish troops who took part in that bitterly fought campaign'. A question that springs to my mind is: if both forces were equally heroic, from what were they distinguished? Perhaps Australia and Turkey were mutually distinguished from the commanding nations – Britain and Germany.¹¹⁴ This 'distinction' or its lack – Australia's union with Turkey – leads me to a deeper issue, to the question of the spiritual substance of this memorial, and the greater Memorial of which it is part.

¹¹² The primacy of the First World War in Australian nationalist mythology will emerge more clearly in the following Lesson.

¹¹³ Anzac Day is a national holiday in Australia. It commemorates the enormous losses of Australian and New Zealand forces at Gallipoli in 1915, when what was planned as a swift campaign to knock Turkey out of the war turned into an eight-month-long slaughter.

¹¹⁴ There was a considerable degree of hostility among Australians to the British generals who commanded the attack.

The monument is at the top end of the memorial garden. It is a walk-in C-shaped wall from which, centre-stage, the sculpted face of Atatürk himself protrudes. Underneath are inscribed his words of 1934, a tribute to the Anzacs who didn't return from Gallipoli, and an assurance to the mothers of the dead of their peaceful rest:¹¹⁵

THOSE HEROES THAT SHED THEIR BLOOD
AND LOST THEIR LIVES... YOU ARE
NOW LYING IN THE SOIL OF A FRIENDLY
COUNTRY. THEREFORE REST IN PEACE.
THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE
JOHNNIES AND THE MEHMETS TO US
WHERE THEY LIE SIDE BY SIDE HERE IN
THIS COUNTRY OF OURS... YOU, THE
MOTHERS, WHO SENT THEIR SONS FROM
FARAWAY COUNTRIES WIPE AWAY YOUR
TEARS: YOUR SONS ARE NOW LYING IN
OUR BOSOM, AND ARE IN PEACE. AFTER
HAVING LOST THEIR LIVES ON THIS LAND
THEY HAVE BECOME OUR SONS AS WELL.

Buried under a plaque in the centre of this circular space is a handful of soil from Gallipoli. His Excellency, Mr Vahit Halefoglu, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Honourable Gordon Scholes, the Australian Minister for Territories, then Acting Minister for Veterans Affairs; and the Honourable Frank O'Flynn, the New Zealand Minister for Defence and Associate Minister for Foreign Affairs all took part in the ceremony inaugurating the memorial.

These mutual collective gestures of remembrance and respect have bound Australia and New Zealand with Turkey. The Johnnies and the Mehmetts have become blood brothers extraordinaire. It is relatively easy to reconcile with so distant a nation, especially when the conflict was by proxy, but this memorial is still intriguing. It is one thing to forgive or to forget past violence, or even to admire the fighting qualities of an opponent in the chivalrous tradition. But it is quite another to establish a memorial for all time to him. It is an ultra-masculine and very odd sort of admiration that flows between men intent on killing one another. Because of the original enmity, this memorial invokes a spirit of mateship more fully and effectively than any description or evidence of mateship *among* the AIF could. At the same time as this gesture suggests the possibility of making peace – appeasing Australian mothers with the information that their sons are

¹¹⁵ These words also appear on the memorial at Gallipoli in Turkey.

resting peacefully in Turkey's bosom – it also suggests, silently, the futility and stupidity of the war itself. But this ironic edge is subdued by the soothing, emotive language of the inscription, which closes the story, sutures the wound, commemorating newfound amity so as to forget former enmity.¹¹⁶

Although there are nine other memorial sites along Anzac Parade, I am particularly interested in another: the small, inconspicuous memorial to Aboriginal service personnel. Separate from this series of major memorials along Anzac Parade, it is located out the back, up toward the mountain. I was first alerted to its existence by a segment of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's 'Blackout' program.¹¹⁷ Wandering along the track from behind the Memorial up Mount Ainslie one day, I expected to notice a sign directing me to it but did not. Another picture of it appeared in the local newspaper during National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week of 1998. I had received verbal directions to the Aboriginal memorial, and failed to find it, twice before when on my third request to the Information Assistants at the front desk, they produced a photocopy of a hand-drawn map of its location. The path to this memorial begins on the main track to the top of the mountain. A short distance along, a wooden post marked only with the words 'VIEW TRAIL' signals a smaller track off to the left, and it is along this track that the memorial to Aboriginal soldiers is located.

Anyone not looking specifically for the memorial would easily miss it. There is no clearing of the grasses and stones that populate this terrain, no flat space or any other attempt at landscaping the area in the formal, manicured style of all the other Memorial memorials. A few metres from the path, this memorial is a simple plaque, perhaps 20 by 30 centimetres, concreted into a large boulder with a flattish face. It reads 'REMEMBERING THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WHO SERVED IN THE AUSTRALIAN FORCES'. At its base are the remains of several wreaths – they must be several months old, as the flowers are long since dead, the ribbons scrappy, and weeds have grown up around them. I pull out the biggest weeds, but there is little that can be done to improve the wreaths. I consider removing them altogether, but do not. Apart from the neglected state of the memorial, which renders the place more melancholy than it would otherwise have been, the location is pleasant. The Memorial is just visible down through the trees, past telephone wires, but the setting feels quite removed from the city. Tall trees, shrubs and wildflowers abound. The traffic hum is

¹¹⁶ K. S. Inglis and Jock Phillips refer to the Atatürk memorial as an act of 'atonement or of gratitude to the enemy without whom there would be no ANZAC' (Inglis & Phillips, 1991: 191).

¹¹⁷ This short video is included in the Memorial Box teaching kit 'Too dark for the light horse', which I discuss in the following Lesson.

distant, the wind through the trees closer. At first, crying baby magpies dominate the aural landscape. But then, as I sit in the shade of a juvenile wattle, a noisy miner descends, squawking, into a branch near my head and continues to squawk in its characteristic scolding manner until its mate arrives and they fly off together, loudly.

From this position, I can just make out Parliament House around the east side of the Memorial, indicating that this site is not directly on the axis between Mount Ainslie and Capitol Hill. Rather, it is a slightly skewed addition to the axis sights. In the grand context of the Memorial, this memorial site is pitifully nondescript. Quite apart from the fact that it has not recently been tended, and possibly contributing to this situation, is the complete absence of any signage relating to this memorial. There is no indication in the Memorial proper that it exists. It has no place in either a printed brochure or the electronic touch screen inside the galleries, both of which direct visitors to every other statue and relic and memorial in the grounds and along Anzac Parade. Hidden away behind the Memorial, almost on the axis but not quite, this memorial suggests the institution's, and the nation's, disregard for Aboriginal people as much as it indicates a scant, begrudging recognition of their contribution to the country's defence.

Through a sliding glass door and a second gateway formed by two donations boxes, and in dazzling contrast to the Aboriginal memorial from whence I have just come, the orientation area of the galleries is brand new, spacious and elegant. To the left is the front wall, which states that 'OVER 102 000 AUSTRALIAN SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN HAVE DIED IN WAR' – and below it, cites the Australian official historian during First World War, Charles Bean:

HERE IS THEIR SPIRIT,
IN THE HEART OF THE LAND THEY LOVED;
AND HERE WE GUARD THE RECORD WHICH THEY THEMSELVES
MADE.

The scene is set: many are dead, here is their spirit. Opposite the information and cloaking desk, a long, flat wall contains a configuration of windows. Some of them form the front of embedded cases displaying objects, while others project audiovisual material. The first and largest screen presents what looks like a promotional video for the institution: narrated footage of the existing Memorial that introduces its various spaces and functions. Next in line, low to the ground, is a case displaying a machine gun. During one visit I observe two boys in front of it, playing at firing it, bodies braced and voices sounding the hail of bullets. The third window is again a screen; it displays footage of the dioramas forthcoming in the First World War gallery. Although I know I am looking at a video of a painted plaster model, I am fooled at times into seeing it as documentary photography from the trenches. Close-up views of dead figures at Pozières are arrestingly melancholy.

At the next set of two windows, in vertical alignment, a fascinating presentation intercedes. Here, another screen projects from a rectangle below a window through to a case that contains a single item: the old wooden sign that hung at the door of the Australian War Records collection depot in France during the First World War. Below the sign, the screen presents a rotating series of still photographs pertaining to the process of collecting for the war museum, from its origins in the First World War to the present day: a weapons stockpile; rooms full of stacks of documents; a man sketching a landscape; a tripod set up on a tank; a comic about war art; the typewriter-printed phrase ‘All Units are required to do their utmost to make the collection of articles for the Australian War Museum a success’; a sculptor working with a model posing with a large container on his shoulder; a man with a movie camera; a painter with several canvases laid out in a jungle; a man with a cache of rifles; and the Gallipoli boat out the front of the Memorial building. The images come from the Western Front but also from New Britain, Libya, Vietnam, Somalia and the Memorial itself. The one seat in this long space is placed in front of this display, enabling me to relax and concentrate my effort at interpreting it. The contrast with the initial screen is dramatic. Where it projects glossy late twentieth-century visuals and the generic voice of a trained narrator, this display is silent, and most but not all of its visuals are ‘historical’, that is, old. It emphasises that the collection process is ongoing and invites me to reflect on the magnitude and complexity of the collecting operation.¹¹⁸ What constitutes a war record? How are records produced or kept? To what extent is the war record determined by the process of war recording? What is not recorded?

The records diptych works in conjunction with the floor-to-ceiling high, and even longer, glass cabinet next to it. Inside is an enticing arrangement of a diverse range of material from the collection: uniforms, gas masks, helmets, hats, boots, patches and daggers; compasses, an artist’s box, walking sticks, pots, jars and tins, and a bible shot through; and stacks of bandages, socks and knitting directions, and children’s dolls in uniform. One outstanding shelf is occupied by an A3-sized poster depicting a soldier’s face and his finger pointing out at the viewer. The confronting subject of the poster references the classic recruitment posters that figured generals (or Uncle Sam) directly hailing men to join up because ‘Your country needs you’. The subject of this poster,

¹¹⁸ The Memorial’s approach to the concept of war records has visibly shifted during the redevelopment. In a previous display of ‘Records of war’, the fact that photographers, artists and historians were active manufacturers of historical evidence was obscured. Instead, they were represented as heroes equal to the troops, denying that their role was entirely different to that of the fighting forces and refusing what, to my mind, was the very purpose of this display – to illuminate the process, as opposed to the object, of remembrance. With regard to the new display in the orientation gallery, my concerns no longer apply.

however, is the object of the poster it references: an ordinary soldier at the front, and his call is apparently directed at the women back home: 'IF YOU GIVE IN TO WEARINESS OR DISCONTENT... FAIL TO CARRY ON... YOU SACRIFICE ME. CLOTHING IS VITAL!'. As a whole, the cabinet works against a notion that dominates the rest of the Memorial, that war is the domain and the experience of the men who fight it. Here, the hail to home-bound sewers and knitters suggests the extent to which civilian bodies were also appropriated for the sake of the war. The abundant packets of bandages delicately allude to the fact that hurt and injury are an integral part of active military service. The paintbox draws my attention back to the process of collecting for the museum, and the dolls suggest the extent of the war's reach, that it involved itself even in young children's play.

A single object occupies the entire last third of this space. It is the Gallipoli boat, salvaged from the beach shortly after the war, that carried some of the Anzac troops from ships ashore, delivering up live bodies to perpetuate that ill-fated campaign. Text on the wall behind the boat, and film footage of men landing, mutually underline the significance of the boat and the Gallipoli experience of which it was part. In case visitors miss the sanctity of this large object in the nationalist scheme, a quote from William Morris Hughes, Prime Minister from 1915–23, is unequivocal: 'Australia was born on the shores of Gallipoli.' I presume I am to understand that the vessel before me is the midwife of the nation. Is it a misogynist process, or only a masculinist one, that transforms a collective slaughter into a collective birth, and a military vessel into that collective's midwife? A small screen to the right of the boat displays a series of photographs of the landing, and excerpts from various diaries. Their words check the grandiose symbolism of the exhibit, reminding me that the men who landed at Gallipoli did not have nationalist pride at the forefront of their minds: 'The noise is hell...'; 'Men were shot around me all afternoon. The uncertainty of when my own turn will come was almost unbearable...?'

A corridor whose right hand wall displays a pastiche of photographs arranged from oldest to most recent connects the orientation area to the rest of the galleries. The series is deliberately inclusive, incorporating images of women and an Aboriginal soldier as well as white male soldiers. This passage has always contained an exit to the courtyard outside, but now it is glass, orienting me in the layout of the building and reminding me of the commemorative function of the site. Another two windows have been cut in the left hand side of this passage – or else a new windowed wall has been built. Either way, it is now possible to see ahead into the First World War gallery.

In the First World War gallery, my first stop is the Lone Pine diorama, a compressed-perspective depiction of the battle that took place there. Because it is the first in a famed series, it is flanked by the introductory notice ‘The diorama’:

Dioramas, or ‘picture models’ as they were at first called, have been a part of the Memorial’s display since its inception shortly after the 1914–18 war. The use of dioramas was suggested by the war artist Will Dyson and the official historian C.E.W. Bean, who wanted to give a more vivid impression of the war than could be conveyed by photographs or paintings.

The Memorial’s dioramas are intended to give visitors ‘a more vivid impression of the war than could be conveyed by photographs or paintings’. This is a curious statement in the context of the late twentieth century conception of photography as a hyperrealist medium. To my eyes, a dioramic battle crafted many decades ago would never look like a vivid depiction of the real thing. It was destined to appear a quaintly outmoded form of documentary art.¹¹⁹

Meticulously and lovingly crafted, Lone Pine dramatically depicts the hand-to-hand combat practically void in (post)modern warfare. It conveys the conditions of the battle, but it is not a horrifying scene, enabling me to imagine myself there, but only in the most measured and romantic way. From the interior of the muddy bunker to the hazy, explosion-filled sky above (a curved, painted backdrop), the figures diminish in size toward the back of the model. Visitors are positioned not on the side of the Allies but inside the Turkish bunker as the Australians attack. This perspective may have been chosen in the interests of greater drama, or of chivalry, as it invites identification with the Turks. Some of the Allies have climbed down into the Turkish bunker, alerting me to the audacity and pluck required to engage in such close combat. Because the encounter is so intimate, at the same time as it is offensive, when I imagine myself as one of the combatants, the fantasy is disturbing. How much more difficult would it be to kill someone at close range instead of by pushing a button from a great distance?

I expect grimacing anguish, but the combatants are curiously subdued. The Australians are charging, and the Turks are under attack, yet all look fairly passive. However suggestive this scene is of the battle conditions, it looks tame. Handcrafted to appear frozen in time, the violence of the scene seems more playful than deadly, reminding me of the Atatürk memorial’s hearty embrace between prior opponents in a mutual killing spree, as if had all been just play. And then I recall the screen images of the First World War dioramas in the orientation gallery, some of which looked much more deathly, as if the film had filtered out the artifice, and not added another layer to it. Despite the celebrated evocativeness of the dioramas, and despite the published conviction that

¹¹⁹ As Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam described the Memorial’s style as ‘fusty’.

Lone Pine shows the opponents ‘engaged in fierce combat’,¹²⁰ to my mind it is exactly this notion of fierceness – of acts of a ‘violent and unrestrained nature’¹²¹ – that this scene lacks. Slumped and twisted bodies are strewn over the scene. Occasional red splotches even dapple the otherwise uniformly grey-brown battlescape. But it is difficult to detect a single instance of a violent act in progress. No one is visibly in the act of harming or being harmed. One man’s arms are splayed – he is shot, I presume – but no killing or mutilation is apparent. Central to the practice of war, but not something in which our nation takes great pride, violence is here subdued.

I pause to interrogate my desire for a more horrifying portrayal. A more graphic representation of the action would not necessarily be better. It is clearly important that adults recognise the harsh realities of history and politics, but exposure to a very graphic representation of history might not be necessary to achieve that recognition and conversely, does not guarantee it.¹²² In addition, it would contravene the Memorial’s obvious interest in depicting the fighting forces in the most mythical and reverent tone. But the easy-looking nature of this scene niggles at my conscience. I try to imagine, had I died there, how I would want my experience to be depicted in a museum. I suspect I would prefer future generations to be outraged by the practice of war (‘ours’ as well as ‘theirs’), and that I would want it to produce some sense of revulsion in visitors. I may want to protect people from knowing the gory details of the experience. But in that case – if my intention was not to invoke a genuine experience, I would not choose a realist genre to depict it. The literal, realist style is incongruous with what I consider to be an appropriate representation of the experience. Realist-ic yet cleansed of its violence, this muddy scene can not look serious.

Two guns in the First World War gallery – a periscope rifle and a water gun – emphasise Australian ingenuity during the Gallipoli campaign. Lance Corporal William Beech (2nd Battalion) invented the periscope attachment in May 1915 ‘for protection against Turkish snipers’, so that the weapon could be fired from within the trenches without endangering the shooter. The water gun was ‘designed by Lance Corporal WC Scarry and Private AH Lawrence of the 7th Battalion’ to conceal the Anzacs’ retreat. A slow-leaking container of water was set up directly above a second container, which

¹²⁰ (McKernan, 1991: 23).

¹²¹ *Collins English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., HarperCollins, 1991.

¹²² Steven Spielberg’s film *Saving Private Ryan* was widely acclaimed for its graphic, horrifically realistic depiction of the Second World War and, according to one reporter, ‘sold as an essential learning experience for young audiences. If you flinch at the violence, the implication runs, you are shying away from the realities of war and dishonouring the generation that saved the world from the Nazis’. Andrew Gummel, ‘Truth the first casualty in Spielberg’s new war blockbuster about D-Day’, *The Canberra Times*, 3 August 1998, p.6.

was tied to the trigger. Only when a sufficient weight of water had transferred into the tin below would it pull the trigger and fire a shot. The water gun celebrates ‘the many ruses’ that the Anzac troops employed ‘to deceive the Turks during the evacuation’. The two guns interest me mainly because I am aware that these mechanical improvisations have achieved iconic status in the nationalist myth. I have no intrinsic interest in these or any of the other tools of war on display in and around this building.¹²³ An abundance of military technology is perhaps inevitable in a war memorial museum. But especially to the extent that the labels detail the weapons’ technical specifications, such exhibits privilege those with military knowledge and those with active military service experience, and alienate visitors with other interests.¹²⁴

Courage, audacity and ingenuity are not unexpected characteristics for a war museum to invoke. But the Memorial also invokes the unexpected, inviting visitors to dwell on the limits of the defence forces’ capacity to endure. Along the same wall as the two guns, in front of the kitsch mannequins of a nurse and a Turk, two small exhibits command my attention. The first is an extract from Nurse Imlay’s diary, written on 11 June 1915 at Gallipoli, from which I in turn extract:

Dressed some terrible wounds and have had a heartache all day. Thank God our Boys people [sic] are too far away in Australia to see or realize the awfulness of this War & its consequences, wholesale murder & mutilation. I must not think, or my nerve will go & I will be useless.¹²⁵

I am moved by the nurse’s private anguish, her acute awareness of both the horrific effects of war, and her need to suppress all her usual faculties of cognition in order that she can maintain her nerve and continue to be useful. Her work, in this sense, was in perfect similitude with that of the men at the line. Both needed to consciously halt normal cognitive processes and emotional responses and engage in an altogether different way with the world around them, in order to fulfil their ongoing duty. In three sentences – in a small enclave of the Memorial – Nurse Imlay invokes a sacrifice different but equal to that of the men at the line. Her text invokes the fundamental ‘awfulness’ of the practice and effect of war, and begins to suggest why and how, despite those circumstances, these people carried on for the sake of ‘Australia’ and the British empire. Reading it, I am aware also of the particular sacrifice of those who

¹²³ By contrast, a male member of a focus group session I attended commented that he was uninterested in the proposed exhibit on the records and recording practice of war. He would, he said, ‘walk straight past that if the next one had a gun or something’.

¹²⁴ In addition to the military technology dispersed throughout the Memorial galleries and grounds, there is a display in the First World War gallery that is dedicated to military technology.

¹²⁵ Part of this quote is also reprinted on the back wall of one of the glass cabinet shelves in the orientation gallery.

witnessed but did not die in the war. Suppressing one's mental faculties was a prerequisite for soldiers and nurses alike. It is a form of sacrifice that endangers one's consciousness rather than one's body (though its effect is often bodily as well, to which the symptoms of shell-shock amply testify). Nurse Imlay's heartache speaks to the heartache and sacrifice of all those who lived through war. When normal cognition is suppressed, heartache remains as a bodily reminder of all the sacrifices that war demands. In a manner that becomes more familiar the longer I spend at the Memorial, my interest peaks here in direct proportion to the ambivalence of the representation.

Just past her testimony, in a small cardboard frame, stands an unassuming trace of a kindred spirit. It is a six-fronded leaf, browned over eighty years, on which are printed 'XMAS GREETINGS' from 'CHARLIE' in 'GALLIPOLI', '1915', to 'BESSIE': as many words as would fit on its six flimsy fronds. A memento of a distant intimacy, it secretes as much information as it releases, and this, I suppose, is its attraction.¹²⁶ We can assume, for instance, that Bessie received the message, but not that Charlie survived the Gallipoli ordeal. The circumstances of their association, and their fate, remain unknown. With the passage of time, these men of Anzac have become mythical. Today, Charlie's greetings are also a memento of 'the birth of the nation'. A private message has become – instead and as well – a memento to a moment most public: both national and nationalist. It is the duality of this love token – as personal message and as national memento – that sustains my interest. Its status as national memento is the reason for its presentation here. But its peculiar intimacy is its value. It is a relief to see evidence that whatever the national commitment of the Anzacs, they had quite separate personal desires as well. And it is reassuring that this token of desire is so fragile, emphasising an understated cost of war. It is not only that Charlie's greetings are printed on a small, biodegradable leaf; it is also that he could not have known whether he would ever see Bessie again.

'Man in the mud' is a single figure in a simple, life-sized diorama. Dressed in muddy fatigues he sits, elbows on knees, face in hands, next to a section of duckboard, surrounded by mud and devastation. Around him, a metal canister and other scraps are half-buried or floating in very realistic puddles in equally convincing mud. The surrounding backdrop is an enlarged glass-plate photograph of a scene near Passchendaele in north-west Belgium during the war. Upturned carts, scraps of wood and a dead horse are the only features on this landscape of mud from the foreground to

¹²⁶ 'It is what is *not* seen that tantalises us. It is what is excluded from the frame that we desire. It is the figure in the photograph with her back to the camera, her face averted, that we cannot forget'. Janette Turner Hospital, *The Last Magician*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992, p.229.

the horizon (Plate 7). I consider that my view of this scene is possibly both bigger and more sharply focused than any such soldier could have afforded at the time. The man appears exhausted and despondent, suggesting that whatever noble, fighting spirit he possessed, it was not unbounded but, on the contrary, absolutely limited. 'Man in the mud' is extraordinary and unexpected, utterly ambivalent, almost anti-heroic. His ambivalence soothes my own: at this single exhibit, I can identify with the Memorial's spirit.

But my identification is simultaneously disturbed – and my ambivalence renewed – by an unfortunate juxtaposition of the 'Man' display with a video terminal just next to it. From this terminal emanate the unnervingly jolly strains of a tinny early recording of masculine voices singing 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. It is a song of hopeful and joyous anticipation of returning home, jarring somewhat with the spirit of the 'Man in the mud'. The overconfident 'Tipperary' theme also contrasts unfavourably with the tenuousness of Charlie's message to Bessie. The latter seems far more appropriate in a war memorial than the drummed-in enthusiasm of a gee-up tune of unquestioning faith in the empire, the end of the war, and a safe passage home. Sustaining one's faith was undoubtedly essential at the time, and such songs were probably palliative. But for me, remembering the war via this memorial rather than experience, this unquestioning faith has the strange effect of anaesthetising the chronic uncertainty of wartime experience, threatening to undermine my still-fresh sense of the fragility and vulnerability of life.

For the most part, artworks in the First World War gallery are realist or documentary in style. For instance, a huge canvas depicts the Anzacs landing at Gallipoli, and conveys the difficult circumstances facing the hundreds of men ascending the cliffs. Another large canvas shows the German ship the Emden 'beached and done for, 9th November 1914'. Portraits are classical in style, and their subjects are strictly commanding officers, Lieutenant and Brigadier Generals, and so on. A series of recruitment posters hover between their status as historical documents and their status as art. My impression of art in the Memorial is that it serves as a backdrop to the 'real' records. I recall Bean's opinion that the dioramas provide a more vivid image of war than paintings. Painting is subordinated here as less evocative of the real than other media. For the most part, the artists whose work is displayed in the First World War gallery seem to have embraced Bean's romanticised notion that realist works best enable visitors to access and understand the real conditions of war. In this scheme, art is

evaluated according to its indexical relation to history, and regardless of its metaphoric, ironic or multivalent qualities.¹²⁷

A small, discreet enclosure at the end of the First World War gallery is headed 'Echoes of the guns: Remembering the Great War 1914–1918'. Dedicated to the aftermath of the war, this is the only exhibit that expresses the experience of those who fought and returned home alive but traumatised, shell shocked or disfigured, but it does so in the context of representing the broad range of the war's impact, as a quote by Charles Bean at the opening of the Anzac Memorial in Sydney in 1934, and printed in large format on the wall, indicates:

There remain today... thousands of diggers for whom the war can never cease – the maimed, the paralysed, the blind... also their wives and children, and the widows and children of men killed in the war.

A nearby panel provides a more detailed catalogue of people whose lives were affected by the war. It includes war widows, bereaved parents, brothers and sisters, returned men, 'legacy' children who lost fathers, men suffering from 'war neurosis', the 'totally and permanently incapacitated', and those interred as 'aliens'. One feature of 'Echoes of the guns' constitutes a rare gesture toward involving visitors in the process of memorialising. A notice invites me 'to remember Australia's war dead by writing an epitaph which may be displayed here', and a box contains forms for the purpose. Under a flat glass surface, layers of filled-in visitor forms are displayed. One of the most prominent offerings is not an inscription but a rebuke of the Memorial for its selective, rather than universal, glorification of the troops, and calls for recognition of 'normal people': 'WHO ARE YOU TO DECIDE WHO OUR HERO'S WERE IN MY OPINION THEY WERE ALL HERO'S EVEN THE ONES THAT MADE IT HOME SO GIVE THEM THE CHANCE TO BE DISPLAYED IN PUBLIC TO'. I share this person's concern that the Memorial subordinates the contribution of those whose service did not kill them to that of the dead.

Clearly, some war experience is seen to endow the nation with more glory than others. In this enclave of the Memorial, limbless soldiers are given considerable space. The Limbless Soldiers Association is represented by a photograph of rows of disabled soldiers awaiting return to Australia. Inside a large glass case is an old wheelchair, crutches, a photo of a rack of artificial limbs, and a poster advertisement for Denyer Brothers, manufacturers, renovators and repairers of artificial limbs (Plate 8). The

¹²⁷ My experience among the Memorial's professional staff revealed that the institution's privileging of the documentary aspect of its collections at the expense of its artistic aspect sustains a chronic difficulty for staff members with an interest in and an appreciation of art. I should emphasise, however, that more abstract and conceptual works appear to have found a place in the galleries since their redevelopment.

commercial nature of this poster exhibit alerts me to the fact that wartime trauma served to boost some industries, and that the companies that benefited during the era of post-war reconstruction were not necessarily Australian. As the advertisement makes clear, Denyer Brothers are the 'Sole Agents for A. A. Marks, U.S.A.'. It is a subtle allusion to the relationship between capitalism and war. I wonder whether Denyer Brothers would also have manufactured an artificial face, if requested. Although they also make trusses, abdominal belts, elastic hosiery, deformity and orthopedic appliances, spinal supports and so on, it is their artificial limbs that feature in this advertisement. In the same way that this poster focuses on limb loss and avoids mentioning more gruesome injuries, 'Echoes of the guns' refuses to allow visitors to engage directly with less palatable injuries, and with less glorious reactions to the wartime experience. As noted, men suffering from war neurosis are mentioned in the catalogue of those affected by the war. Assuming that 'war neurosis' translates into shell shock, this is the only reference to it that I have seen in the Memorial. I recall Nurse Imlay's self-direction not to think too much lest her nerve fail and she became useless. How many soldiers made the mistake of allowing themselves to think? 'Lost a limb for the nation' will never work in the same register as 'died for the nation'. But 'went blind for the nation', or 'went mad for it', and especially, 'was jailed for mutiny because the war became unbearable' seem ludicrous, demonstrating an implicit ranking of trauma from death downward.

As noted, 'Echoes of the guns' does not exclusively refer to the traumatic effects of war. As part of its mission to represent the process of 'Remembering the Great War', it also alludes to the unprecedented sociopolitical effort to forever remember the war. Some text here states that in the 1920s 'the Commonwealth Government offered every municipality a captured enemy weapon'. I am also informed, here, that the size of the gun was commensurate with the population of the municipality. This statement goes some way toward explaining the presence of military relics in so many small town parks in Australia. Evidently, the Australian state was careful to involve the Australian population equally in war commemorations, and considered that the opportunity to host and display an enemy weapon would be appreciated. I find this notion fascinating for several reasons. In the context of a culture so enamoured of the notion of egalitarian 'mateship' – exemplified by the Atatürk Memorial – it seems curious that so many local communities would accept such a symbol of enemy conquest, or indeed that the government would choose this transaction as a means of involving communities in the commemoration of war. I am intrigued by the notion that war remembrance is orchestrated rather than spontaneous. I had always understood the development of the Australian War Memorial and its small-town counterparts to have been propelled by popular support. But this statement suggests that the movement was controlled, and

possibly fuelled, by the precise calculations of those in government. I wonder whether some municipalities, or individual people, refused the offer or objected to it.

Until the redevelopment, the last case before one of two exit points from the galleries was devoted to Charles Bean, instigator of the Australian War Museum. At its new location in the passage connecting the galleries to the Research Centre, this display comprises a large portrait of Bean by George Lambert, as well as several items used in or pertaining to his work: a telescope; his decorations (five medals and a 1914–15 star); his Army uniform, trench boots and canvas kit bag; and his paint box and corona typewriter. Additional items include a letter that Bean wrote regarding Corporal Ernest Bailey, who died whilst chiselling out the remaining explosive from the body of a shell; a chart of the ‘Distribution of Duties in the Australian War Records Section; and a photograph of orderly stacks of war diaries from the five Australian Divisions over a one-month period ‘shewing the improvements since the Section commenced work’. This new display is quite different to the previous one. The older display had attested to Bean’s intimate knowledge of the AIF and its work, emphasising the Memorial’s claim on an indexical relation to the real and Bean’s veracity as the original Memorial agent. In doing so, it had obscured the fact that memorial-making is an artistic process as much as it is documentary. Since I began this account, the contents of this case have altered, and its focus has been broadened slightly. Bean is represented here as the seminal museum collector rather than the Memorial’s heroic founding father. His portrait is centre stage, and his medals, uniform and letter about the collector’s death still serve to align him with the heroic troops, but his personal belongings and his hand-written letter render him more human than before. In addition, the well-used paint box speaks back to the other signs of a more orderly and scientific process of documentation. It would be difficult to come away from this case without a sense that a museum is made according to a specific, deliberate and complex process. It is more clear, in this display, that Bean and his collection were part of a discursive apparatus and that the museum is not simply an index to the whole real experience of war.

That Indigenous and white Australians were at war remains beyond the Memorial’s ken. But in the ‘Colonial commitments’ gallery, unchanged during the recent gallery development, the curatorial voice mentions in passing that British troops were engaged in suppressing Aboriginal resistance to white settlement, as well as guarding convict settlements, pursuing bushrangers and putting down rebellions at Castle Hill and Eureka. Then it goes as far as to equate these internal conflicts, in a sense, with other, more clearly defined wars:

From the mid-nineteenth century Australia’s military concerns turned noticeably from internal threats – of convict revolt, civil disorder and Aboriginal resistance – to involvements in foreign conflicts.

These whispers that ‘Aboriginal resistance’ falls within the jurisdiction of ‘Australia’s military concerns’ is as far as the memorial goes in expressing the racial conflict internal to the nation. The two Aboriginal heads outside in the courtyard were, I presume, intended as part of a proud display of ‘our’ wildlife, and not as a sign of white Australians’ conquest over Indigenous people. But in juxtaposition with this curatorial recognition of Australia’s interracial conflict, what seemed at first merely condescending acquires a more chilling supremacist tone.

Before the redevelopment, the penultimate display related to the latest conflict to be added to the Memorial’s field of representation: the Gulf War.¹²⁸ A single case, the display consists of a pennant signed by the task force commander, Chris Oxenbould, that flew on the HMAS Brisbane whenever he was aboard; an Iraqi anti-nerve gas kit; photos of ships and crews; a dopey-looking uniformed mannequin; and a shiny shell casing from HMAS Sydney, engraved with the names of the crew that served on it during the Gulf War, as well as the name of the engraver. It is a shock to see these uniforms and photographs in a museum, in the sense that I watched this war unfold, via the news media, at the beginning of this decade. The objects and imagery here are crisp and bright in comparison to the First World War material, and appear out of place. The fact that both wars are represented here sets up an equivalence that belies the incomparability of trench warfare and the remote, technologically-mediated warfare of the late twentieth century. The Gulf War case alerts me to the fact that this collection of records grows and will continue to grow with every new conflict in which Australians are involved. In an ironic and harrowing moment, I tune into the fact that whatever the Australian people sacrifice via the military – whether it is lives, energy, resources or ammunition – it all feeds this museum, keeping it alive just as the Memorial keeps alive ‘their spirit’ – that of the sacrificed.

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In the first version of this conclusion to my description of the Memorial’s signifying practices, I had emphasised the Memorial’s authoritarian style but, since the gallery development, such an emphasis is much less appropriate. Since the new orientation gallery has been installed to frame the rest of the galleries, the character of my experience of the Memorial has altered. The Memorial retains a certain proprietorial claim on the historical experience it represents, and the redevelopment has not effaced the institution’s traditional modernist approach to collecting and exhibiting material, but it has rendered the site more eclectic, and opened up the process of memorial-

¹²⁸ This display has since been relocated to the lower ground floor.

making to the scrutiny of visitors. In some respects, however, the site continues to privilege a militaristic, white male version of the Australian experience of war.

The location and the grounds of the building draw visitors' attention to the formality and ritual of visiting the site, It is with slight trepidation that I enter. Once past the Menin Gate lions, I am conscious of an obligation to sense and to revere 'the national spirit' that the Memorial is understood to house. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Gallipoli boat are primary signifiers of the Memorial's quasi-sacred, nationalist mission to honour the war dead and through them the mythical, self-sacrificing, egalitarian nation. The soldier represents all Australians because he could be any Australian, so I am led to believe – although he is clearly not a woman, and not a conscientious objector. In a similarly peculiar way, the Gallipoli boat has come to represent the birth of the nation despite its status as deliverer of thousands of Australian men to their deaths.

The Memorial's continuing adherence to a modernist paradigm of total representation and realism as the most evocative approach is evident throughout the Commemorative Area and galleries. The Roll of Honour apparently recognises everyone who has died serving in the defence forces during every war in which Australia has participated; and the collection grows, and new exhibitions emerge, with each new war. A literal style is employed in the Hall of Memory mosaic and stained glass figures, the dioramas, the many uniformed mannequins, and the emphasis on documentary art over and above more abstract works. Symbolism in the Hall of Memory is precisely explained in brochures, and the labels attached to weapons detail their technical specifications. All of the above serve to suggest that the Australian experience of war is unequivocal, neither ambiguous nor complex or contradictory, and that the Memorial is the expert historian and rememberer.

Of course, the Memorial's representation of the Australian experience of war is also replete with contradiction and ambivalence. 'Man in the mud', Nurse Imlay's diary extract, and Charlie's message to Bessie each speak to the intensely fraught nature of the practice of war. In other ways, it is the Memorial's smoothing over of certain issues, and its refusal to recognise the most violent and traumatic experiences – its silences – that may serve to encourage visitors to question the Memorial's apparent omnipotence as war rememberer. For me, the Atatürk memorial and Lone Pine are endlessly puzzling, the former because it commemorates for all time a former enemy, and the latter because of its mutual intimacy and detachment: its palatable grit.

In many ways, the Memorial has become less authoritarian and acquired elements of a postmodern representational paradigm. Attention to visitor orientation and comfort have

improved: the new signage is very clear, and at times uses sentence case, breaking with the uniformly capitalised former style, and the instructional notices in the courtyard have been replaced by a more brief and subtle note at the bottom of the entry signs; more seating has been installed; new windows and open spaces provide views toward other sections of the galleries, and out into the courtyard; and younger and friendlier staff have been employed. Perhaps more importantly, new displays invite visitors to reflect on the process of memorial-making. The records display commands a prominent place in the orientation gallery, showing visitors the magnitude of the collecting operation, emphasising that it is an ongoing process, and alluding, to an extent, to the politics of the Memorial's collection and exhibition functions. Similarly, this display and that on Charles Bean (now) avoid glorifying those engaged in documenting the war experience as heroes equal to the Anzac troops. The location of the Bean display at the entrance to the Research Centre connects him to the research work that continues to occur at the Memorial, and again invites visitors to look beyond the experience of war to the process of remembering it. In addition, the redevelopment suggests the Memorial's increasing effort to broaden its scope beyond the military experience of war, to encompass its social impact. Items in the orientation gallery glass cabinet are particularly suggestive of how the war reached beyond the lives of those who went to serve in it, to those of the women and children at home in Australia. The new corridor wall of photographs displays a conscious effort at race and gender inclusiveness.

Despite the Memorial's considerable effort to transform from a fusty, didactic place into a slick, welcoming place, in many ways it continues to privilege a militaristic, masculine and white perspective. The contrast between the effort put into landscaping, painting, designing, signing and developing new exhibitions, and the total neglect of the Aboriginal memorial out the back, could not be greater. Where the immediate surrounds of the Memorial are lovingly tended, the grass watered, cut and edged, the memorial out the back is neglected, overgrown, and near-impossible to find without the aid of the photocopied, hand-drawn map, the existence of which few staff are even aware. By inserting photographs of women and of an Aboriginal soldier into the prominent display on the wall of the corridor leading into the galleries, the Memorial has made a concession to undermining the dominant place of white men in the Memorial's field of representation. But the whiteness and masculinity of the glass figures in the Hall of Memory cannot be so easily altered. Nor can the existence of two Indigenous male heads among those of native Australian wildlife be rendered any less offensive. The smiling soldier on the corridor wall cannot undo the message of these heads: that Indigenous people are separate from and subordinate to white Australians, a message that is complemented by the momentary recognition, in 'Colonial commitments', that Aboriginal resistance was one of Australia's first military concerns.

It is via discreet juxtapositions such as that of the Memorial's inclusive yet still exclusive racial representation, that I learn the most about Australian history and identity. At several points during my visits to the Memorial, I tune into something that I suspect the Memorial would prefer I neglected to notice, as the occasional fissure opens in the Memorial's representation of itself as neutral mediator of the Australian experience of war. It is when I consider that the Roll of Honour is never complete; that the First World War is only one of a long line of conflicts represented here, from the Anglo-Maori conflict of 1860–61 to the Gulf War of 1990–91; and when I contrast the abundant military technology with the dearth of horror and violence that they are designed to inflict, and the brief, obscure representation of those who were traumatised by their military experience; it is moments such as these that remind me of the utter rapaciousness of the military machine, and that irrevocably alter my experience of the Memorial. From this perspective, the Memorial does not only honour the dead. From this perspective, the Memorial is an adjunct to the military machine that feeds it with every new military sacrifice. It is the military machine that keeps the Memorial alive and growing just as the Memorial and the people who visit it keep 'their spirit' alive. Of course, it is the federal government across the lake on Capital Hill that makes the decision to go to war, and it is the people, in turn, who elect them. I leave the Memorial conscious that it speaks back to not only the social reality of everyday life in general, but the mechanisms of federal government and global politics in particular.

The Australian War Memorial

II

In Australia

In the second stage of my reading of the Australian War Memorial I shift from descriptive to diagnostic mode. According to Shor's method, the second stage of the reading involves analysing the object in its immediate social context. Here in Lesson Two my purpose is to identify the Memorial's signifying practices in the context of Australian national culture. How the Memorial operates and what it means is determined to a large extent by how the institution operates, so in this chapter I consider the institution's funding arrangements, and discuss its collection, exhibition and commemorative practices. My evidence is constituted by the Memorial's own publications, including brochures and recent annual reports, and statistics and information gathered from Memorial staff. The institution may exert considerable influence on the Memorial's cultural meaning, but it does not control that meaning. To complement this analysis, therefore, and in the absence of the kind of detailed evidence that a survey, focus group or interviews would provide, I use newspaper and television reports, and documentary film from the last eight years. In addition, I draw on theories of nationalism and mythology. This account of the Memorial explores how it participates in producing the myth of the Australian nation, and what exclusions and sacrifices this myth entails.

Because of the peculiar status of the Memorial in Australian culture, and because of the imaginative basis of nationhood as a unified and coherent entity, there is no clear boundary between the meaning of the Memorial and the national culture it helps create. Attempting to identify the Memorial's meaning in national culture is therefore a somewhat circular enterprise. In recognition of this difficulty, at strategic moments I situate the Memorial and its signifying practices in relation to other commemorative sites and practices, and seek out alternative meanings, including resistance and indifference to the Memorial's dominant discourse. I also continue to focus on the

difference between the Memorial's representation of white people and its representation of Indigenous people. What emerges through the course of my analysis is that this monument to Australian nationalism cannot or will not recognise the extant racial tension at the heart of the nation. That the Memorial remains silent on the conflict between Indigenous people and white settlers is not surprising, but the exclusiveness of practices of nation-formation needs to be reiterated.

The Memorial is a statutory authority, a corporation, a program of the Veterans' Affairs portfolio, whose functions and powers are laid out in the *Australian War Memorial Act, 1980*. According to the Act, the Memorial has five functions:

- to maintain and develop the national memorial of Australians who have died in or as a result of active service, or as a result of warlike operations in which the Australian services have been involved;
- to maintain and develop its national collection of historical material;
- to exhibit and lend for exhibition material from that collection;
- to facilitate research into Australian military history; and
- to disseminate information relating to Australian military history, the national memorial, the collection and the Memorial and its functions.

Memorial policies are formulated by its own Council – comprised of ten government-appointed Australians who have made 'notable contributions to public life', and the three chiefs of the defence force staff (Stanley, 1986: 153). Implementation of policies, however, is left to the Director – appointed by the Minister for Veterans Affairs – and to staff. Currently, the Director is Major General Steve Gower.

The Australian War Memorial's commemorative function is enabled by a well-crafted piece of legislation. According to the latest legislation, the *Australian War Memorial Act, 1980*, the national memorial commemorates 'Australians who have died in or as a result of active service, or as a result of warlike operations in which the Australian services have been involved'. The first clause – 'Australians who have died in or as a result of active service' – specifies the general object of the Memorial's commemoration. The first half of the second clause – 'or as a result of warlike operations' – opens the commemorative field out, ostensibly to include such people as merchant seamen, but potentially including people who have died in unofficial or undeclared wars, such as that between Indigenous and white Australians. But as soon as this possibility is opened, it is closed, by the second half of this clause – 'in which the Australian services have been involved'. Since it was not 'the Australian services' in the strictest sense that fought Indigenous resistance to British colonisation, this conflict is excluded from the field of the Memorial's commemoration. It is a fine-tuned sleight of hand by which the Memorial was enabled to commemorate the dead of every war in which Australians have been involved except that which played out here.

Annual reports distinguish the Memorial's mission from its purpose. Its purpose is 'to commemorate the sacrifice of those Australians who have died in war'. This is a less detailed version of the purpose as defined by the legislation. Here, it goes unstated that 'war' means officially declared wars in which Australians have fought or otherwise been officially deployed, whether in a peacekeeping or other capacity.¹²⁹ The institution's mission is 'to assist Australians to remember, interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society'. Essentially, the Memorial exists to forge a connection between living Australians and their 'fallen' ancestors, a connection that can be understood in both spiritual and sociohistorical terms. Commemorating the dead is surely a spiritual act; whereas remembering, interpreting and understanding the experience and impact of war is a more rational process. These two ways of conceptualising the role of the Memorial align roughly with the two aspects of the national memorial itself: the shrine and the museum. Michael McKernan's history of the Memorial identifies its twin aims as commemoration and understanding, or commemoration through understanding, suggesting that the former is a consequence of the latter (McKernan, 1991: *xii*). The Memorial is intended as a place of spiritual communion and a place of education.

Recall from my initial description of the Memorial that along with the houses of parliament, it is situated on the straight line between Mount Ainslie and Capitol Hill. This line is a deliberate feature of the design of the city, prominent on every map (Plate 9). In a 1991 review of the Memorial, Kay Daniels commented on the significance of its position: 'All the resonances here are ceremonial. This most public place, more than any other in Australia, is designed to make a statement about 'the nation'' (Daniels, 1991). That the Memorial makes a statement about the nation is accurate, but possibly this is an understatement – or underestimation – of its power and its effect. In my description of the Memorial I introduced the notion that it operates in heterotopic relation to the spaces of everyday life and especially to the space of federal government policy and practice, since both the old and new Houses of Parliament are situated on this city axis, across the lake from the Memorial. In this chapter I develop the argument that the Memorial operates as a portal to the mythic nation.

Before turning to the Memorial's mythic status in nationalist discourse, I want to further explore the axis on which it is situated and, in particular, to consider the

¹²⁹ It will emerge more clearly in Lesson Four that 'Australians who have died in war' includes Australians who have died but were not officially fighting (for example, merchant seamen) but not those who died fighting wars in which Australia did not officially participate (such as Australian volunteers in overseas wars) or that were not officially declared (such as Indigenous Australian freedom fighters).

presence and significance of two other sites along it: the Aboriginal memorial and the Aboriginal tent embassy. The discreet plaque up on the hill behind the Memorial has become a focus for commemorations on numerous occasions. In 1998, at the end of the dawn service on Anzac Day,¹³⁰ everyone was invited to walk up to the plaque to take part in a further commemoration led by Aboriginal ex-servicemen. About 500 people participated.¹³¹ Later that year, as part of National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, the Defence Department sponsored a service at the Aboriginal memorial to honour Australia's Indigenous servicemen and women. In the local newspaper report of the ceremony Patrick Malone, Manager of Indigenous Broadcasting at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC),¹³² admitted to feeling anger at the idea that Aboriginal people never served. For Malone, this ceremony was 'a start'. The picture accompanying the report depicts a young man not otherwise mentioned in the report, but the caption names him as Dean Freeman. Like so many photographic images of Indigenous people, it seems to express the subject's sentiments in stronger terms than words would. He looks solemn, pensive, and angry or hurt (Plate 10). Another Indigenous commentator on this memorial is slightly more forthright. Appearing on a segment of ABC television's 'Blackout' program, George Bostok, ex-serviceman and writer, responds to the question 'How does it make you feel that this is the only plaque that gives recognition to Aboriginal people?':

I got mixed feelings, really. You know, because the setting's great. I feel real good, that it's here, that we found it.¹³³ But, you know, to be tucked away out in the bush – you know, it's lovely but it'd be nice if it's closer where people can see it.

Despite the significant efforts to commemorate Indigenous service personnel during 1998, this sense that the Indigenous presence at the Memorial is 'tucked away' emerges as a recurring theme in my analysis of the Memorial in national culture.

The Aboriginal memorial's unkempt appearance and poor signage, relative to the rest of the Memorial, is explained by the fact that the Memorial did not found it, and does not consider itself responsible for maintaining it. This memorial was established entirely by

¹³⁰ I discuss the dawn service toward the end of the chapter.

¹³¹ My source for this information is an email message sent by John Bond to the reconciliation network list at <reconnet@listbot.com>.

¹³² Kellie Harpley, 'Recognition at last for indigenous heroes', *Canberra Times*, 8 July 1998, p.2. The photograph was taken by Gary Schafer. It also quoted Glenda Humes, whose family has been involved in the Second World War and those in Korea and Vietnam; and the chaplain who conducted the service, Air Commodore Royce Thompson.

¹³³ I presume he is indicating that, like me, he and the ABC team had trouble locating the memorial.

a local community group.¹³⁴ It is inevitably associated with the Memorial by its proximity and its consonant purpose, to remember dead service personnel. But the Memorial has not embraced this memorial as part of its territory.

A far more visible Indigenous presence, along the same central city axis, is the Aboriginal tent embassy. The tent embassy constitutes a spectacular and potent testimony to Indigenous people's continued exclusion from-yet-within their own country. Those involved in establishing and maintaining the tent embassy are claiming a nationhood and a territory in which to practise their nationality (Beckett, 1988: 204), and in so doing they are demanding public recognition of Indigenous people's state of exile from/within Australia. It is a colourful, antimonumental structure, a living site for Indigenous meetings and celebrations. Directly opposite the grand austerity of Old Parliament House, which in turn is just below the pinnacle of the new House, the tent embassy is a tin shed on a pristine lawn that signals the resilient and creative presence of Indigenous people and culture (Plate 11). In the more than twenty years since its appearance on the lawns opposite Parliament House – and having been disestablished by the Federal Police force on more than one occasion – the embassy has acquired significance for many people.¹³⁵ As well as its ongoing role in national Indigenous political culture, in 1995 the embassy was listed in the Register of the National Estate. Chair of the Australian Heritage Commission Ms Wendy McCarthy said the site had been critical in the history of Aboriginal political culture; and used as a meeting ground before Europeans arrived.¹³⁶ Two years later, Arthur and Rose Kirby were married there in a gesture of respect for the site, from which they have marched many times in protest at Australia's treatment of Aboriginal people.¹³⁷ The visibility of the Indigenous presence at the tent embassy contrasts with and therefore underlines the Memorial's understated commitment to Indigenous representation. Between the Memorial and Parliament House, the tent embassy interrogates the lack of Indigenous representation at both sites.

No other institution is quite like the Memorial. It has a unique status in Australian museum culture. The Canberra war memorial operates as an umbrella organisation for the extensive network of smaller memorials throughout Australia: obelisks, monuments, statues, cenotaphs, arches, avenues of honour, public park 'trophies' in the form of

¹³⁴ I briefly recount the story in the fourth historical Lesson.

¹³⁵ It is also condemned by many as an eye-sore.

¹³⁶ 'Heritage in a tent', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April 1995, p.4.

¹³⁷ The wedding was reported in 'Couple wed at 'sacred' site', *Canberra Times*, 26 July 1997, p.5.

tanks, guns and so on, as well as more utilitarian forms of memorial such as public halls and swimming pools. In the years during and following the First World War they emerged in every region and every city of Australia. Ceremonies in which memorials were unveiled operated as funerals for the dead that would not return home. The Memorial in Canberra therefore operates as a central hub for a nation-wide phenomenon of official commemorations of lives lost during war.¹³⁸ Nominally and practically, it is the national memorial. Its national status is not limited to its memorial function but extends, crucially, to its operation as a museum as well. As noted it is grandly situated in the capital to emphasise its national and heterotopic status and function. It is also, still, the only museum to represent Australia, the nation, and its history. The National Museum of Australia has existed nominally and as a collection since 1980, but construction only began in 1998 and it will not open until 2001. In part the National Museum of Australia was delayed because of Australia's enormous investment in the Memorial as Australia's national history museum. Margaret Anderson and Andrew Reeves, for instance, account for Australian governments' 'scant interest' in Australian history partly by noting how 'a specific construction of the nation and national identity ... all but precluded the need for a general, nonmilitary-history museum' (Anderson & Reeves, 1994: 80). The Memorial, therefore, continues to occupy a special and privileged position in relation to the Australian nation.

But the idea that the Australian War Memorial is a museum for the whole nation, let alone the idea that it is *the* national museum, is questionable. The Memorial's online customer service charter states its commitment to 'all': 'We want to assist all our visitors to understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society. Our outreach programs seek to engage all members of the Australian community.' But annual reports emphasise the special relationship the Memorial has with the military. According to the 1996–97 annual report, the Public Programs sub-program of the Memorial 'identifies major interested groups, their needs and expectations, and evaluates the extent to which those needs are being met' (28). There is no expectation here that the Memorial will cater to all Australians.¹³⁹ Instead, the emphasis is on 'interested groups'. Further on, in the context of the specialist 'familiarisation and education programs developed for the Australian Defence Force', the sub-program report refers to 'the unique relationship between the Memorial and

¹³⁸ Jewish museums that commemorate lives lost during the Holocaust are a significant but separate phenomenon.

¹³⁹ In a section on social justice and equity, however, the report refers to its efforts to welcome visitors from non-English speaking backgrounds and in particular, tourists from China, Thailand and Japan.

Australians in the armed services' (31). Two pages later, veterans' associations are singled out as 'particularly' significant 'key external stakeholders' in the Memorial's gallery development project. If the Memorial is privileged as the national museum, the military is privileged as a key interest group of the Memorial. The implication is that the defence forces can stand for the nation.

This conflation between the armed forces and the nation is a central tenet of the Memorial's discursive operation in Australia, as emerged in the description in the preceding chapter, in relation to the Gallipoli boat's status as sacred deliverer of the nation. It was Charles Bean who found the boat shortly after the war, and indeed, as both official historian of the First World War (in which the nation 'Australia' was 'born') and instigator of the museum that was to become the national memorial, he was pivotal to cementing the association between the Anzacs and the nation. By 1927 Anzac Day had been designated a holiday in all states. The legend of the Anzac Digger became, over the course of the decades following the war, the legend of Australia itself, coalescing into a sense of identity that in turn inspired and continues to inspire thousands, possibly millions, of Australians. The Memorial, of course, is keeper of the myth. Eminent historian Manning Clark said that the Memorial 'shows us what it means to be Australian'. Without questioning the equivalence of the Digger and the quintessential Australian, and somewhat in denial of the fact that it was the British Empire that they were defending, not Australia *per se*, nationalists believe that Australia is doubly indebted to the Anzac Diggers, for defending to the death and simultaneously identifying the Australian people. Conversely, by commemorating the Australian Digger, the myth goes, we commemorate all Australians, and Australia itself.

In rational terms, the notion that the Memorial represents 'Australia' is confusing but not surprising. As much as it is a substantive entity, 'the nation' – any nation, every nation – is a product of the imagination. Nations are myths of united collectivities associated with yet not limited to a bounded land-mass. Since Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), such a statement is hardly controversial. In such terms, Australia is a myth-in-progress. It appears as a bounded and distinctive set of characteristics – a coherent culture – but the character set, the collective identity, the idea of a unified culture; all these are fabricated and sustained through the repetitive deployment of signs and imagery: through representation.¹⁴⁰ 'Australia' did not precede the work of representation that

¹⁴⁰ Anthropologist Michael Taussig argues that mythological principles are necessarily involved in modern state formation (Taussig, 1997: 124).

produced it. Nor has it an existence independent of its representation.¹⁴¹ Nationhood as a concept is magically powered by the fact that people strongly believe in it, and act in its name. But like the notion of ‘the public’ (which disappeared with the agora of ancient Greece and which, even then, served a component of the population, not its whole) (Hartley, 1992: 1), the national collective is a powerful figment of our collective imagination, a character set that both represents and constitutes the set of people with which it is associated.¹⁴² But the nation and nationalism are propelled by myth. As the temporal distance between war and the present increases, the myth surrounding it develops and in the process, as Barthes suggested in his 1973 essay ‘Myth today’, the myth ‘transforms history into nature’ (Barthes, 1972: 129). For Barthes, myth is meta-language, a second language that is used to speak about the first (115). As I will demonstrate, in its use of language to activate and naturalise a particular vision of history, war remembrance is a classic example of a myth-making practice.

But how exactly does this myth come into effect? In his paper ‘Anzac and the Australian military tradition’, Inglis notes the peculiar diction adopted in war remembrance practices to refer to the experience and effects of war:

The phrase ‘They gave their lives’, used of the dead in many countries, is an example of what Paul Fussell¹⁴³ calls the system of high diction in which horse = steed; enemy = foe; actions = deeds; not to complain = to be manly; soldier = warrior; legs and arms = limbs; the dead on the battlefield = the fallen. Romantic, essentially feudal language ... invoked between 1914 and 1918 to conceal, or at least soften, the horrors of that war (Inglis, 1998: 125).

To this list I would add that ‘fights’ is replaced, in this peculiar diction, with the quaint ‘engagements’. The memorials to and from Atatürk, in both Australia and Turkey, work in tandem with this diction, to downplay the violence in order to glorify its perpetrators. Similarly, the term ‘engagement’ is a fitting descriptor for the subject of the Lone Pine diorama, which lacks any sense of aggression between the combatants, and somehow appears clinical.

It is easy to underestimate the power of language. But printed and recited over and over, the strategic choice of words and phrases contributes to the magical, mimetic invocation of war remembrance. As Benedict Anderson writes:

¹⁴¹ Anne-Marie Willis points out that we know of the nation Australia because of repeated encounters with the image of the land mass via maps, satellite pictures, logos and symbols, without which we would never encounter this country as a whole (Willis, 1993: 15).

¹⁴² Importantly, the limits of national membership, (like the borders of many national land-masses) are always contentious. Inclusions and exclusions operate not immutably, but perpetually.

¹⁴³ *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975.

nothing connects us affectively to the dead more than language. If English-speakers hear the words ‘Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust’ – created almost four and a half centuries ago – they get a ghostly intimation of simultaneity across homogenous, empty time (Anderson, 1983: 132).

In Anderson’s terms, the Memorial’s language of remembrance establishes an image of ‘unisonance’ (132), reverent links between the living and the dead, now and then, those here and elsewhere. Printed and recited over and over, the names of Battles (always printed in title case) and the romantic feudal language constitute an endless, invocative litany. Each war, and each major battle within each war, is memorialised, titled and recited, granting it an official identity and those who fought and those who sent them a glorious legitimacy.¹⁴⁴

I have argued that nationalist mythology acquires potency through the development and repeated use of a certain language, but how it wards off criticism requires clarification. Barthes again serves as a useful interlocuter:

Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification (Barthes, 1972: 143).

Obscured in the mythical enactment of nationalist war remembrance are the official, state-driven conditions, needs, protocols and demands on the populace. Instilled ‘through the mass media, the educational system, administrative regulations and so forth’ (Anderson, 1983: 104), governments periodically demand the ultimate sacrifice of ordinary people. ‘The nation’ – the magical reality-effect of the idea of nation – operates as a mask that obscures political practice.¹⁴⁵ Memorials have a unique place among the agents of political practice. As Jay Winter writes, ‘[i]n these memorials, the state affirms its right to call on citizens to kill and to die’ (Winter, 1995: 94). To assert that ‘the nation’, in this case the mythical idea of Australia, is a mask, is not to deny its popularity.¹⁴⁶ Rather, it is to emphasise that while ‘Australia’ draws attention to certain facets of the population’s collective experience, and induces a certain fervour among citizens, it simultaneously cloaks other aspects of their experience. In the minds of its proponents, the fact that myth purifies history and renders it palpable appears to override the fact that it simultaneously obscures politics.

Subscribing to the idea of ‘the nation’, and acting in its name, are equally official and popular practices. The state, the government, the military, soldiers, but also their

¹⁴⁴ Corollary to this point is that if you fought in a conflict that has not been specifically, singly remembered, you fought a ‘forgotten war’.

¹⁴⁵ This idea is Taussig’s, following Philip Abrams: (Taussig, 1992b: 113–14).

¹⁴⁶ But I should emphasise that its popularity is never absolute, as the conscription debates and opposition to involvement in foreign wars indicate.

families, civilians, ‘ordinary’ people – all believe in and claim affiliation to ‘Australia’. As Benedict Anderson suggests, ‘it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love’ (Anderson, 1983: 129). People are prepared to die for their country.¹⁴⁷ What is significant here is not the willingness to sacrifice, so much as the layers of meaning that accumulate around this sacrifice, and in particular the status that accrues to those who have ‘died for the nation’. I cite Anderson again:

Dying for one’s country ... assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International, can not rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at will (132).

For survivors, the death of a loved one in the name of the nation is tragic but also noble, in light of its special purpose. That people will die for the nation suggests just how powerfully the mythology works in real life. Nationalism is *per se* religious (Kapferer, 1988: 5), and a nation is ‘a soul, a spiritual principle’ (Renan, 1990(1882): 19). Given that there appears no higher purpose than to die for one’s country, the nation has quietly usurped God Himself, in the modern, secular state, as the source and object of good peoples’ faith and commitment. As the ‘dramatic enactment of myth’ (Tuan, 1993: 182, 195), it is ritual that sustains ideas of nation. In remembering the experience of those who died for the nation, death is deconstructed. This is a primary function of national war memorials. Jay Winter articulates how war memorials reconfigure, for survivors, the experience of death:

its horror, its undeniable individuality, its trauma, and the ignominy often associated with it, are buried. Then it is reinvested with meaning, as an abstraction, a collective sacrifice remote from individual extinction.¹⁴⁸

Applying this theory to the operation of the Memorial, it becomes apparent that the Memorial is a primary site for the fabrication, reiteration and invigoration of the mythical nation ‘Australia’.

Before turning to read the manifest discourses of the Memorial’s national significance, one further point requires clarification. Because the unified nation ‘Australia’ is imaginative (realistically it is diverse and divided); and because what it means depends on whom is speaking, I must cite multiple perspectives on the Memorial wherever possible. A further complication, however, is that any articulation of the Memorial’s national significance in a sense relies on and reproduces a closed circuit. Since the

¹⁴⁷ In the case of Australia’s role in the First World War, it was the Empire for which the volunteer AIF was committed to and prepared to die.

¹⁴⁸ (Winter, 1995: 94). Incidentally, this book is on the Great War in *European* cultural history. By citing it here I am pre-empting the (obvious) point that nationalism and its associated processes are by no means unique to Australia.

Memorial is understood to contain, reflect or produce the culture of which it is part, the object and subject of its cultural practice are not completely separable. The Memorial's meaning, and the mythical community it helps to create, are essentially one and the same. The bulk of this section describes the manifest practices in which the Memorial is involved. While I assume that its discourses interpollate many Australians, I try to maintain a sense of the multiple possibilities of the Memorial's meaning. But I also need to consider those who as Australians it claims to represent but who have no voice in the Memorial's field of operation, those within its jurisdiction but not part of its traffic. The idea of the nation conceals State or official governmental politics and works to obscure political resistance, but importantly, it also effaces the experience of people within its geographic or political boundary but beyond its ideological reach – what could be termed the nation's excess. I address this problem in part simply by noting obvious absences or silences where I see them, but more importantly, by continuing to consider the Memorial's Indigenous representation and therefore its meaning or potentially its meaninglessness in the context of Indigenous Australian communities, who have only recently been welcomed into the frame of nationalist Australia.

The Memorial has a broad appeal. Guided tours lasting an hour and a half depart five times per day. Coachloads of school children and tourists attend every day. Recently, the New South Wales Premier Bob Carr announced that 'every Australian school student should visit the War Memorial'. Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister Kate Carnell vigorously embraced the recommendation.¹⁴⁹ An extensive audience research project is currently in progress and will be completed by August 2000. Preliminary results – of the first four months of the 12-month project – provide a good picture of Memorial visitors.¹⁵⁰ Although the Memorial's visitor population 'fairly closely' matches the Australian population, the ratio of male to female visitors is 14 to 11. Other features of the statistics also suggest discrepancies between Memorial visitors and Australians in general. Far more visitors come from the ACT, New South Wales and Victoria – the closest states – than from Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Almost three quarters of general visitors (as opposed to school and coach tour group members) have been to the Memorial before. And one quarter of visitors have defence force experience. These figures suggest that the Memorial is most popular with those for whom it has particular relevance, and those for whom it is a convenient destination. About 82 per cent of visitors are Australian residents. Cultural backgrounds of Australian visitors to the Memorial tend to match those of the

¹⁴⁹ Emma McDonald, 'Carnell embraces war memorial idea', *Canberra Times*, 17 April 1999, p.3.

¹⁵⁰ Linda Ferguson, Audience Advocate and Evaluator, kindly sent me her preliminary findings.

Australian population as a whole. About 1.5 per cent are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Again, there is a slight but not surprising underrepresentation of Indigenous people in the Memorial's visiting population.¹⁵¹

Flows of funding in and out of the Memorial provide some indication of the kind of power the Memorial exerts in national culture. The Memorial is primarily funded by the Commonwealth Government, an appropriation which in the 1990s has increased from just over \$15 million to well over \$23 million. Like every other government-funded body, however, the Memorial has recently been required to develop a corporate identity and try to generate its own revenue. The Memorial generates millions of dollars annually from its image and sound copying service; loans of collection items; entry fees at Treloar C;¹⁵² marketing activities; conservation consultancies; education activities; publications; shop and kiosk sales; as well as donations; sponsorships; interest and so on. In turn, part of the Memorial's annual expenditure is funding scholars to assist them to undertake research into Australian military history. In addition to partial research funding, the Memorial awards one or two doctoral scholarships every year (although in the last few years none have been awarded) and subsidises four undergraduate students to undertake summer vacation internships at the Memorial. It also hosts lectures, seminars and conferences, and publishes historical research in scholarly and more popular journals,¹⁵³ educational CD-ROMs and teaching kits including the 'Memorial in a box' series, and promotional and souvenir material on the Memorial itself.

The Australian War Memorial Foundation is the company established for the express purpose of generating funds for a large-scale redevelopment of the Memorial's galleries and displays. A brochure advertising it is a noteworthy example of the Memorial's promotional style, which appeals wherever possible to the Australian public's sense of 'the national spirit'. On a mainly graphic brochure that is three A4 pages in total, the word 'spirit' appears seventeen times. These seventeen spirits combine 'an Australian spirit' (a set of characteristics), 'their spirit' (that of the more than 102 000 Australians who have died in war), 'the spirit of the nation' and finally, the most abstract, simple and generic of all, 'the spirit'. There is no suggestion that the Memorial is actually inhabited by thousands of ghosts of dead Australians. But this 'spirit' is certainly that of 'fallen' Australians, and present-day visitors are invited to remember and connect with

¹⁵¹ According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 1996 there were 386 049 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, as compared to 17 892 423 people in general, which means that Indigenous people make up just over 2% of the population.

¹⁵² Treloar C is the warehouse separate to the Memorial where many of the large collection items are stored.

¹⁵³ These are the *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* and *Wartime*.

these dead people, our ancestors, our past. If not entirely literal, it is important to take the spiritual aspect of the Memorial's representation of the Memorial, and its function, seriously. The Memorial works, or so the brochure claims, to 'keep the spirit alive'. When it appeals to patrons to '[h]elp keep the spirit alive', the concrete form of help requested is financial: it is the institution that needs money. The appeal to 'help keep the spirit alive' simultaneously acknowledges the immaterial, magical work that visitors to the Memorial perform. It is an invitation to continue to visit, remember and pay respect to the fallen. Taken more literally, it is an invitation to visit, worship, and become possessed by the spirit of the dead. Either way, visitors are essential for the Memorial's, and its spirit's, ongoing vitality. The national spirit is obviously not a tangible, material thing. It is sustained not by matter but by the energy and will of human beings. Its portal, or shrine, is maintained materially, and requires a financial commitment. But the spirit itself needs nothing more than living bodies to inhabit. When people visit the shrine and remember the dead, they breathe life into the spirit, making and remaking this mythical entity. The Foundation brochure specifically intends to solicit funds, but it also solicits, and recognises the Memorial's and the Memorial's need for, the remembering bodies of visitors.

A second means by which the Memorial's significance can be read is by examining its collection practices. During the 1990s, many items have been added to the National Collection. Some items were purchased, while others were exchanged or donated. Sometimes donations are made following an appeal on the part of the Memorial to fill perceived gaps in its collection. Appendix One lists items collected for each of the collection areas: art; military heraldry and technology; photographs, sound and film; and archive material for the Research Centre.¹⁵⁴

Several points can be made about the Memorial's recent accessions. First, they indicate a shared interest, on the part of staff in each area of the National Collection, in accumulating items that will render the collection closer to 'complete', or more fully representative. The desire for a 'representative' collection here is doubly operative. It is in part the desire to acquire items that relate to every scene and aspect of Australian military service, every 'theatre of war' or every type of technology. A large number of items are mentioned not individually but because they will 'complement the Gulf War collection', or because they relate to peacekeeping. A Soviet-built MiG-15 was accessioned because it was a 'rare example'. Memorial curators are also seeking to collect every Victoria Cross awarded to Australians, and in November 1998 they

¹⁵⁴ The other area of the National Collection sub-program is Collection Services. It deals with conservation, visitor access, registration and so on.

acquired number 55 of 96.¹⁵⁵ But the desire to be representative is also the desire to display items that relate to the wartime experience of every kind of Australian. Two works by Ellen Jose are unspecified apart from the information that the artist is Aboriginal. Others were accessioned in part because they relate to the social impact of war, such as the 22 etchings by Jennifer McDuff on the impact of the Vietnam War; two works by Bruce Tunks that ‘reflect the ongoing commemoration of Australian involvement in war’; and records of the Vietnam Veterans’ Family Support Link Line. Some items are acquired with particular relish because they serve both kinds of representative-ness. Works by Vietnam veterans will ‘augment the art collection’ but also ‘provide a different point of view to those of the two Vietnam War official artists’. At the time of printing the 1996–97 annual report, the Memorial was also in the process of buying Grace Cossington Smith’s ‘Interior with flag’, describing it as one of the ‘most significant art acquisitions of recent years’. The description of the painting in the annual report reveals its status as especially representative. ‘Interior with flag’ depicts the artist’s wartime living room, in which the Union Jack was prominently displayed. The empty armchair in the painting’s foreground symbolises ‘the absence of a family member, and ... the price of patriotism’. The report writer then explains that the work is of particular value because it ‘fills an important gap in the Memorial’s art collection, representing the war within a domestic context’.

Whether its concern is to fill gaps in the subject matter or the subject positions of its collection, a substantial effort is expended on the project of gap-filling. In this respect, the Memorial is again positioned as a classic modern Western heterotopia, charged with ‘accumulating a sort of general archive’, enclosing ‘in one place all times ... all forms, all tastes’ of the Australian experience of military and civilian wartime experience.¹⁵⁶

Despite its quest for a complete collection, the Memorial’s emphasis overwhelmingly favours the military experience of war, not the civilian one. This emphasis is hardly surprising given that the Memorial’s concern to represent the impact of war on Australian society is relatively recent.¹⁵⁷ The entire military heraldry and technology section is devoted to collecting material used by or bestowed upon those in the defence forces. Photographs, film footage, audio material, papers, manuscripts and so on are also mainly limited to documentation of war or of the active, military servants of

¹⁵⁵ ‘Relief as historic VC finds rightful home’, *Canberra Times*, 10 November 1998, p.2.

¹⁵⁶ Like a nineteenth-century colonial or natural history museum, the Memorial’s goal is ‘to fill in the boxes of a kind of imagined chart of object types – a cross between a map and a periodic table’ (Phillips, 1995: 105).

¹⁵⁷ This concern was brought about by the 1980 legislation, as will emerge in the historical chapter.

war.¹⁵⁸ In addition, several items relate not to the Australian experience but to that of other defence forces. For example, the Memorial has recently acquired an interview with a German pilot; a ‘captured’ German gun; and a Soviet-built MiG-15 aircraft used by Communist forces in Korea.

It is the art collection that carries most of the Memorial’s responsibility to represent civilian experiences of war. The curator’s excitement at the Cossington Smith painting – a far from antimilitaristic work – suggests just how challenging works that represented a less patriotic home front perspective would be. But despite its crucial capacity to render the collection and the institution more representative, in the Memorial’s realist historical paradigm art is devalued as a secondary source of evidence of the Australian experience of war. Because this is a history museum, art stands in contrast to the primary source documents, constituted by any material used or produced by members of the military, but including photographic images, since they can be understood as documentation, not art. Where art depicts anything other than the military forces or the battlescapes, it is doubly devalued, forging a lesser, indirect connection between visitors and ‘the fallen’, unlike relics and primary documents that provide direct access to ‘their spirit’. The devaluation of art in the Memorial’s taxonomic system may be shifting, as the National Collection begins, in the interests of democracy, to acquire material that invokes the broader impact of war on Australian society. The Cossington-Smith painting is one example. In another example, the archives collection recently acquired a set of 11 poems by Mrs Estelle (Elsie) McNaughton, a series of rhyming letters tracing the fictional Private Bill Anybody’s experience of the Second World War until his safe return home. The poems were acquired despite the fact that ‘the archives did not normally accept personal material from the home front’.¹⁵⁹

Complementing the Memorial’s interest in producing a collection that is representative of Australia’s entire wartime experience, recent acquisitions also indicate a parallel investment in items that are uniquely or particularly evocative of the Australian experience of war. Conversely to the rational project of complete representation, this material is valuable in spiritual terms: it is seen to contain the Australian experience in extremely potent concentration. Recently acquired items in this category include footage of the bombing of Darwin; an L5 howitzer that ‘provided fire support at the

¹⁵⁸ Exceptions include the aforementioned records of the Vietnam Veterans’ Family Support Link Line, the Department of Veterans Affairs war stories writing competition papers, and research papers for the preparation of Ken Inglis’ new book *Sacred Places*. Notably, all three were acquired in the 1997–98 financial year, the latest year to be reported at the time of writing.

¹⁵⁹ Gretchen Miller, ‘War poems come out of hiding’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 1998, p.14. Like the Cossington Smith painting, this home front perspective is patriotic. Works that are more critical of the military may be even less readily accepted into the collection.

Battle of Long Tan'; an M2A2 105mm howitzer damaged during the Tet Offensive; an interview with Jack Murray, who piloted 'G for George'; the heraldry of a Battle of Britain pilot; and so on. Bruce Steel Kingsbury's VC, the latest to be acquired, was allegedly purchased at the 'premium price' of \$158 000 'because of its special significance as the only VC awarded for action on the Kokoda Trail, and as the first to be awarded for action on an Australian-administered territory, and the first in the South-West Pacific'.¹⁶⁰ These items are particularly meaningful because of their association with events that are familiar to anyone with more than a passing interest in Australian military history, but especially to those who were actively involved.

But again, the Memorial is selective about which potent material is appropriate for public display. One significant part of the Memorial's collection, that was returned to it in 1992 and that will never be seen on display, is the collection of 150 bottles containing body parts of Australian soldiers killed in the First World War. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*¹⁶¹ explained that the specimens were collected for scientific study by doctors working at casualty clearing stations on the Western Front. They are internal and external organs that illustrate the effects of mustard gas, trench foot and bullet and shrapnel wounds. From the 1930s the collection was housed at the Institute of Anatomy until its closure, when the National Museum of Australia inherited it. But 'because it doesn't fit into any of the themes of the National Museum', in 1992 Acting Director David Lance tried to pass it on to the Memorial. The *Herald* reporter, Catherine Armitage, wrote that the Memorial's then Director, Brendan Kelson, recognised the collection's historical value. According to her, he described it as 'demonstrated evidence of the trauma of the most terrible conflict of the twentieth century', but said the collection was 'not something I would normally imagine that I would wish to display ... for the general public'. According to Armitage, Kelson referred the *Herald* to the Minister for Veterans Affairs as the appropriate person to decide the collection's fate, but when she enquired of the Minister's office, she received no response. The perspective of current Memorial staff on the story of the pathological specimens is quite different. According to Mark Whitmore, head of the National Collection, the collection has always belonged to the Memorial, and was simply on long-term loan to the Institute of Anatomy and housed by the National Museum of Australia. Currently, it is on loan to the University of New South Wales School of Forensic Medicine. Whitmore confirms, however, that the collection will never be accessible to the public.

¹⁶⁰ 'Relief as historic VC finds rightful home', *Canberra Times*, 10 November 1998, p.2.

¹⁶¹ Catherine Armitage, Science writer, 'Organ collection poses problem for museum', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1992, p.2.

These specimens render apparent the limit of the Memorial's desire to invoke the Australian experience of war. Despite its investment in its collection items as authentic artefacts, and its privileging of authentic objects over its secondary or artistic sources, these bottles, whose contents demonstrate the grim effects of trench warfare and chemical weapons on the bodies of the troops, are apparently *too* evocative. As the dioramic battle simulations suggest, actual violence and trauma must be muted because it is potentially too upsetting for veterans' and/or their families. Clearly, the collection's hierarchy of status is not determined solely by the measure of an item's authenticity or its potent containment and expression of the Australian experience of war: it is difficult to imagine anything *more* evocative of the Australian military experience than a foot or an organ afflicted by the commonest of First World War servicemen's complaints. Rather, that measure of an item's value extends only to the point where trauma becomes visible. Items deemed too upsetting are simply banished from the public face of the Memorial.

The Memorial's sensitivity in relation to this material contrasts with museums' former practice of displaying arrays of body parts of Indigenous people, collected mainly during the late nineteenth century.¹⁶² Museum collections of secret, sacred, skeletal and other human material are a particular point of tension between museums and Indigenous Australians. Collectively, Australian museums continue to hold 11 000 secret and sacred objects belonging to Indigenous people, and the remains of 7000 people.¹⁶³ Up to one fifth of these remains are completely unidentified, complicating the already fraught issue of whether and how to return them. The return of Indigenous Australian remains has received considerable coverage in the Australian press. In winter of 1997, for instance, the head of Nyoongah resistance fighter Yagan was exhumed from a grave in England and returned to his country, after much ado.¹⁶⁴ Despite some notable

¹⁶² On the practice and means of procuring Indigenous skeletal remains in Australia see, for instance, the work of Paul Turnbull and Tom Griffiths (Griffiths, 1994; Turnbull, 1991; Turnbull, 1994). Holocaust museums are replete with horrific reminders of the Nazi regime, such as piles of shoes, spectacles and gold tooth-fillings, although these tokens are less horrifying than piles of hair, skin or other actual body parts would be.

¹⁶³ These figures are from the Museum of South Australia, and were reported in Leonie Lamont's 'Dispute no small matter', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 March 1998, p.39.

¹⁶⁴ Initial coverage revelled in the conflict among Western Australian Indigenous people over whether the remains should be exhumed and returned, and if so, by what process. Luke Slattery of the *Weekend Australian* reported that Ken Colbung's 'dogged pursuit' of the head had been 'thwarted by rivalry', in his 'Clan rivalry thwarts mission to retrieve skull', *Weekend Australian* 19–20 July 1997, p.9. The following month the same paper (different writer) complicated the story. Emphasising the resolution reached by the Western Australian Indigenous people, Stephen Brook noted that in his thirty year quest for return of the head, Colbung had had to contend not only with opposition from other Aboriginals but ATSIC politics, Australian government

instances of the return of Indigenous remains to their country, this issue is only beginning to be properly addressed by Australian and other museums.

In making decisions about what to represent and what not to represent in the Memorial galleries, the Council favours minimising the possibility of controversy. Addressing an Annual General Meeting of Museums Australia in February 1999, Memorial Director Steve Gower said that Memorial staff ‘must nip controversy in the bud’, via high quality historical and curatorial work. It was a general principle that he was propounding, and it clearly applies to the previous question of the pathological specimens as much to the Director’s subsequent response, at the AGM, to a question from a young Memorial staffer about Indigenous representation at the Memorial. She wondered whether the Memorial would, in the future, develop its representation of the conflict between Indigenous and settler Australians. The Director answered by assuring her that Council has a policy on Indigenous representation, but refused to state his own position on the matter. The Memorial’s Council has reviewed the issue of recognising the conflict between Indigenous and settler Australians on a number of occasions, most recently in March 1999.¹⁶⁵ From Council’s perspective, the Memorial will neither recognise the conflict between Indigenous and settler Australians, nor acknowledge that it in fact does so – in a minimalist way – in the existing Colonial gallery. It believes that the Memorial continues to adhere to Bean’s vision, which was ‘unquestionably concerned with external conflict in which Australia as a nation was involved’, despite the fact that the scope of the Memorial has broadened far beyond Bean’s vision of a commemoration of the First World War. In defending its position, the Council relies on the very specific definition of active service that appears in the legislative amendment: ‘active service in war or in warlike operations by members of the Defence force’. Members of the Council are not necessarily opposed to recognising those killed in violence between Indigenous and settler Australians, ‘but believe that it should be made in a more appropriate setting such as the National Museum of Australia’. However determined the Council’s commitment to avoiding controversy, the controversy remains, as both the existing references in the gallery to Aboriginals as the object of Australia’s military concerns, and the young staffer’s question to the Director, indicate. As will emerge in the course of this chapter, there are further signs that the Memorial should attend more closely to interracial conflict in Australia, and further instances in which it does.

indifference and Westminster civil service intransigence. ‘Quest for head of Yagan reunites black elders’, *Weekend Australian* 23–24 August 1997, p.11.

¹⁶⁵ Nola Anderson, Council Secretary, kindly sent me some information and an excerpt of a letter addressing this question that the then Chair of Council, General Peter Gratton, wrote in January 1999.

A temporary exhibition was mounted for the Year of Indigenous Peoples, 1993. ‘Too dark for the light horse’ was a photographic exhibition presented jointly with David Huggonson, a longtime researcher into Indigenous Australian military history. It opened in April 1993, remained on display until November, before being taken around the country as a travelling exhibition. It celebrated the particular effort and skill of Indigenous people – both men and women – during the wars of this century. It also acknowledged, most conspicuously by the ‘too dark’ in the title, that the support of Indigenous people had been unwelcome in the Australian military.¹⁶⁶ The irony of Indigenous people’s enthusiastic participation in the Australian military, given their subordinate status within the nation, is quietly suggested. It is fitting that this exhibition hinges on the notion of ‘too dark’. The term ‘dark’ is frequently used in reference to Indigenous people. ‘Private Arthur ‘Darky’ Butler’ is the subject of a 1967 portrait by Bruce Fletcher, official Vietnam War artist that hangs in the Memorial’s Research Centre. Searching the Memorial database of photographs with the keyword ‘darky’, the popularity of this nickname for Indigenous people emerges. Photographs of 13 members of the ADF with the nickname ‘Darky’ appear, in addition to Private Arther Darky Butler.¹⁶⁷ In the same search result, ‘Darky’ identified photographs of an aircraft, a dog and a horse.

The Memorial has an extensive system of outreach into Australian schools. In the last five years it has produced and lent ‘Memorial in a box’ teaching kits on: the reasons for Australian involvement in overseas conflict; the exhibition ‘Poster art 1914–20 in Britain, France and Germany’; the exhibition ‘Peacekeeping’; ‘The conscription debate 1916–17’; ‘Gallipoli and the Western Front conditions’; the social impact of the First World War; and (named after the travelling exhibition) ‘Too dark for the light horse’, about the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the armed forces. The Memorial box ‘Too dark for the light horse’ is concerned to ‘correct the absences in history’ – to fit Indigenous people in to history as the Memorial teaches it, in other words – rather than to interrogate its historical framework. But the ‘Too dark’ kit does contain elements that bring this framework into question. An excerpt from David Huggonson’s article ‘Aborigines in the aftermath of the Great War’ (Huggonson, 1993) raises the spectre of colonial race relations in terms of a war. Huggonson alludes

¹⁶⁶ Although Torres Strait Islanders were allowed into the AIF, Aboriginals were officially restricted from enlisting unless they were ‘substantially of European descent’. This issue re-emerges in Lesson Four.

¹⁶⁷ They are LAC Darky Haughton; Gunner Wilbert Darky Hudson MM; Lance Corporal Darky Poynton; Private K. Darky Hargreaves; Private A. Darky Perini; F/O Darky Sinclair; Darky Archer; Darkie Brooks; G. Darkie Humphreys; Darkie Paull; Darkie Morrison; Sgt Darkie Goodwin RAF (Wireless Air Gunner); and LAC Darkie Connors (Coppersmith section).

to the fact that the British police in Australia were, for Indigenous people, aggressive invaders imposing a foreign rule of law when he writes: ‘Aboriginal groups who resisted British occupation were subjected to British justice. They were treated as rebels against the crown rather than prisoners of war’ (31–32). Another section of this excerpt deals with the removal of Aboriginal children from their families.¹⁶⁸ As government agents, police were again deployed to carry out the removals. Huggonson notes the irony of the practice in the context of the aftermath of the First World War in which Aboriginals had fought alongside white Australians: when Mick Flick, an Aboriginal serviceman who had fought in France for four years with the 19th Battalion, protested against Collarenebri Public School’s refusal to admit his six children, the power of the Aborigines Protection Board was repeatedly invoked to threaten and silence him (33). Potentially, these references to discriminatory practices belie the adequacy of simply adding Indigenous people to the traditional national historical narrative, and problematise the notion of the Digger as the hallowed hero of Australian history. In amongst the more traditional messages of the Memorial box, there are clear examples of the way in which a person’s racial identity is crucial in shaping their experience of Australian society. Huggonson’s article suggests that it is inadequate – and perhaps impossible – to recognise that Aboriginal people have always contributed to Australian culture without also recognising that white Australian culture has in many ways, both systematic and sporadic, attempted to exclude and to denigrate them.

A timeline of significant events is also included in the ‘Too dark’ box. Apart from several odd moments, it reads as white Australia’s gradual progression toward accepting Indigenous people as equal members of the nation. Moments that contradict this story of national progress appear isolated and are easily subsumed by the broader narrative. Of 77 entries in the line, 29 relate specifically to Indigenous people. Of these 29, ten concern achievements in voting, citizenship and political rights; seven relate achievements of Indigenous military service personnel; four concern landmarks in Indigenous peoples’ struggle for land rights; and two proclaim the wins of Indigenous sportspersons. Only the remaining six express – and not always explicitly – ruptures in White Australia’s gradual recognition of the value of Indigenous people:

1912: Members of Parliament, Donaldson and Scobie, say children in camps should be taken from their Aboriginal mothers.

¹⁶⁸ As Huggonson notes, the Aborigines Protection Board had been empowered to take children by regulations passed in 1915, which also denied Aboriginal parents any right of appeal.

1916: Instructions for [enlisting officers] state that: ‘Aboriginals, half-castes, or men with Asiatic blood are not to be enlisted – this applies to all coloured men’.¹⁶⁹

1917: Military Order amended to state: ‘Half-castes may be enlisted in the [AIF] provided that the examining medical officers are satisfied that one of the parents is of European origin’.

1940: The military board advises recruiting centres that the recruitment of non-whites is not ‘desirable’.

1956: First atomic test at Maralinga in the Central Desert of Australia.

1994: [C]athy Freeman causes controversy when she carries the Aboriginal flag during her lap of honour at the Commonwealth Games in Canada.

In the context of the Memorial’s stated objective of filling in the Indigenous gaps in Australian history, it seems unlikely that students would readily identify these six apparently isolated moments as evidence of White Australia’s active exclusion of Indigenous people from national social and political life: as ruptures in the dominant progressive narrative. These 77 disparate events are set in a linear association, arranged as if they had a causal relation, a singular coherent trajectory; but their association – the linearity of these historical moments – is arbitrary. Incorporating a few odd events into this line may resist but cannot alter its sense of an even flow of Indigenous people’s historical achievements. Read in combination with the thrust of Huggonson’s article, or highlighted perhaps by an astute teacher, the timeline and the ‘Too dark’ Memorial box in general could be used to emphasise the recurring theme of a long-term attempt to exclude Aboriginality from national culture. But it is also easy to interpret the material in the kits as evidence that Australian national culture has progressed steadily toward involving and appreciating Aboriginals’ contributions and skills. In general, the kit smoothes over the rupture between Indigenous Australians’ previous exclusion from national culture, and their present inclusion.

I now turn to examine three aspects of the Memorial’s commemorative function: the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which I compare to several other ceremonies to remember the dead; ‘Journeys through time’, the ‘battlefield and cultural tours’ run by the Memorial; and last but by no means least, Anzac Day. In their own way, each constitutes a spiritual union of the living and the dead; and works to compress time into a single mythical space.

The power of the Memorial as a spirit medium or portal between the dead and the living is nowhere as explicit as at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the centrepiece of the Hall of Memory and therefore a presence before almost every visitor to the Memorial.

¹⁶⁹ The rationale for this policy emerges in the fourth, historical Lesson.

As indicated, the Unknown Soldier represents the generic Australian battler.¹⁷⁰ A focal point for annual ceremonies, the Unknown Soldier operates as a token or figure, a physical manifestation that focuses visitors' attention and unites every one of those Australians who died in war with every visitor who attends his generic body: 'He is all of them. And he is one of us.' Those who have come to remember a particular person – and each poppy in the Roll of Honour wall represents one – would each appreciate the generic Tomb. In addition to his role in formal annual ceremonies and informal individual rituals, the Unknown Soldier is also the object of weekly ceremonies. Every week an interested school group, a Member of Parliament and a war veteran congregate at the Hall of Memory to lay a wreath at the Tomb.

The ceremony in which the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was sunk into the floor of the Hall of Memory was represented as conferring the finishing touch onto the Memorial. An elaborate affair on Remembrance Day, 1993, it attracted an audience of 25 000 and was broadcast by ABC national television. It began at 6.30am with a group of school children reading out, over a period of three and a half hours, 1200 of the names on the Roll of Honour. Chief mourner, behind the coffin, was the Governor General, as King George had been in 1920 in England's equivalent ceremony. At 11am, precisely 75 years after the end of the First World War, the coffin was lowered into its Tomb before a group of First World War veterans. A handful of soil from 'The Windmill', a battlefield near Pozières 'once drenched in Australian blood'¹⁷¹ was sprinkled onto the coffin before the traditional two minutes' silence and the sealing of the Tomb. Here is stark evidence of the Memorial's magical fusion of dead and living, past and present, battlefield and shrine.

In the three and a half days before the Tomb was sealed, 50 000 people visited the Unknown Soldier's coffin (Inglis, 1999). Copies of Prime Minister Paul Keating's eulogy – in another link across the divide of history, the speech was written by Don Watson, grandson of a soldier who fought on the Western Front – remain available on request from the Memorial and a framed version is mounted just outside the Hall of Memory. It is difficult to object to the Unknown Soldier or his elaborate interment ceremony. But there were some commentators who urged listeners to consider the incident in a bigger, more critical framework. Humphrey McQueen reminded readers of *The Australian* that the Unknown Soldier was killed by international capitalism; and Ric

¹⁷⁰ I use this word 'battler' to suggest both its literal and its colloquial meanings: to refer to all those who participated in war, and to invoke the expression 'little Aussie battler': a common phrase on the lips of politicians eager to capture the votes of 'ordinary' Australians.

¹⁷¹ Tony Wright, 'Home at last, a soldier with no name', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1993, p.1.

Throssell, son of Hugo Throssell VC, protested in the spirit of Sassoon, Owen and Graves, that 'it does no service to the Unknown Soldier's memory to deny the way that he died, to hide obscenity in the comfort of nicer words' (Inglis, 1999: 457).

It is worth noting the contrast between this homecoming and burial ceremony and another that occurred during the same period. The subject of this other ceremony was Tambo, one of the northern Queensland Aboriginals taken in 1883 to perform in P.J. Barnum's Ethnological Congress. They were collected as 'curious attractions for the great Exhibition',¹⁷² a freak-show or circus that travelled across America and Europe in the late nineteenth century. Tambo died a year after leaving Australia and his body was displayed in Barnum's museum well into the twentieth century. He and his companions are represented in 'Captive Lives: Looking for Tambo and his companions', an exhibition about remembering, forgetting and remembering again. The exhibition was open at the National Library of Australia from 3 November 1997 until 18 March 1998. From there it travelled around Australia to other museums. In its final section, 'Captive lives' relates the story of the rediscovery and return of Tambo's embalmed body to his people, 110 years after he left home. On the last panel of the exhibition, visitors are informed that in October 1993 his embalmed body was discovered in Cleveland, in the basement of a recently-closed funeral home, and that two months later a trio from the Palm Island community¹⁷³ arrived 'to ceremonially release Tambo's spirit from the American limbo where it had been ensnared, and to take him home'. On 23 February 1994 the Palm Island community held a traditional Aboriginal burial and celebration of the return of Tambo's spirit to his native land. As a living museum piece, Tambo was not representing the Australian nation in the way that the Unknown Soldier was during his expedition. By contrast, he was representing a white fantasy of Otherness. But Tambo's experience was comparably traumatic and, like that of the Unknown Soldier, resulted in his untimely death. Furthermore, there is evidence in the exhibition that he was coerced into joining the Ethnological Congress, if not kidnapped. Further warranting a comparison with the Unknown Soldier is the fact of the overlapping timing of the two ceremonies. The Unknown Soldier was entombed in 1993, on Remembrance Day, 11 November. Tamob's body was discovered in October, brought home in December, and buried in February 1994. In other words, the Unknown Soldier's interment at the Memorial occurred between Tambo's rediscovery and his homecoming.

¹⁷² A letter in which Barnum wrote this description, on 27 October 1882, is reproduced in the exhibition.

¹⁷³ Walter Palm Island and his brother Reg are descendants of Tambo. They were accompanied by Kitchener Bligh, a senior elder of the Palm Island community.

Despite the proximate timing and the similar substance of these two homecoming ceremonies – both were occasions for mourning and celebration – the contrast between them is stark. In the case of the Unknown Soldier, his identity had been carefully concealed so that he would come to represent every member of the Australian fallen. In the case of Tambo, his once-effaced identity had been happily restored. Press coverage of the final chapter of Tambo's ordeal was extremely limited, in contrast to the Unknown Soldier's nationally televised and widely reported and analysed homecoming. Prime Minister Keating, whose speech delivered at the Unknown Soldier's interment has become a major focus for the memory of that occasion, was invited to Tambo's burial but sent a letter with his apologies. Robert Tickner, then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, attended in his absence. The Prime Minister is renowned for his sympathy for Indigenous dispossession and commitment to reconciliation,¹⁷⁴ and the ceremony for the Unknown Soldier had been both very recent and very high profile. Keating's absence from Tambo's burial ceremony, and his consequent failure to connect the two ceremonies publicly (the juxtaposition of the two events in media coverage would have been remarkable) meant that an opportunity for national recognition of the legacy of colonial oppression was missed.

Addendum to this story is that of another graveside ceremony, one of many belated remembrances of 'forgotten Aboriginal soldiers'. Until April 1994, the Condobolin grave of George Albert Kennedy, the highest ranking Aboriginal known to have served in the First World War,¹⁷⁵ was marked only with a numbered peg. When the Unknown Soldier was interred in the Hall of Memory, George Kennedy, son of Eliza and George Albert Kennedy, requested that his father's grave be graced with a headstone, 'to remember him with the dignity of his importance not only to [the family] but to the wider community for whom he served' (Donaldson, 1994: 91). The RSL responded, and on 24 April 1994 – 'the day of his birth in 1893 and of his death in 1952' (91). George Albert Kennedy was commemorated in a graveside ceremony, with a new headstone. Footage of the ceremony now resides in the Memorial. Kennedy was officially, appropriately recognised, at the instigation of his son, over 40 years after his death, and almost 80 years after his military service. Forgotten Indigenous warriors have been remembered in a number of small memorials across the country such as honour boards in Aboriginal reserves (Inglis & Phillips, 1991: 190). Ken Inglis describes the memorials to Aboriginal participation in Australian wars as 'few, modest and late'

¹⁷⁴ Keating's recognition of the history of Indigenous dispossession and his belief that Indigenous culture is 'a defining element' of Australian national identity is well-known. See Bain Attwood's analysis of some of his speeches (Attwood, 1996: *xxxii* & *xxxiv*).

¹⁷⁵ He was Farrier Quartermaster-Sergeant of the 6th Light Horse Regiment.

(Inglis, 1999: 445). One example is on Bathurst Island, where Matthias Ulungara was honoured after his death in 1980 by a traditionally Aboriginal coffin pole and a traditionally European plaque, for having, ‘unarmed, on 19th February 1942 on Melville Island captured the first Japanese prisoner (a Zero pilot) to be taken on Australian soil’ (446).

In the next section of this chapter I introduce some highlights of the Memorial calendar, further exploring the popularity of war remembrance in Australia: the annual tours that take Australian tourists to visit sites of major battles; and Anzac Day. Since the end of the First World War individuals and groups have planned and undertaken ceremonial pilgrimages back to the sites of significant battles. Now the Memorial has institutionalised such tours, and runs trips every year to Gallipoli and the Western Front; Vietnam; Borneo; and Europe. Marketed as ‘battlefield and cultural tours’ and ‘journeys through time’, the brochure advertising the tours states that they are designed ‘to bring history to life, while maintaining the focus on remembrance of those who served’. Remembrance here means reliving, taking the spirit of the dead into the bodies of the living, forging a mimetic connection between the present generation of Australians and their ancestors. Through ritualised remembrance, tour participants invoke the suffering and trauma of ‘those who served’ and take it unto themselves. Collectively, these remembrance rituals allow the venting of grief necessarily suppressed during the practice of war. Remembrance can facilitate the process of cognition, or recognition, that Nurse Imlay struggled to halt in order to maintain her nerve and her usefulness during the First World War. ‘Those who served’ had to contain their normal emotional responses but those who now elect (and in this instance pay) to remember are free to release them on ‘their’ behalf. Originally suppressed for the sake of the nation, such emotion now surges forth with renewed vigour. Its expression no longer threatens the mythic nation but, rather, pays it tribute. In the words of a Memorial battlefield and cultural tourist:

I do not believe that I have been as emotionally affected by anything as I was at the dawn service at Anzac Cove, by the school children singing ‘Advance Australia fair’ at Bullecourt or ‘Waltzing matilda’ at Villers-Bretonneux.¹⁷⁶

The intensity of his experience – which echoes the regularly telecast, choked and often teary visages of ex-servicemen involved in commemorations – and the enormous popularity of Anzac Cove as a destination for Australian travellers to Turkey (especially young men), speak to the significance of the First World War for the Australian psyche.

¹⁷⁶ Greg Michael, Elsternwick, Victoria, quoted in the brochure on Australian War Memorial ‘Battlefield & cultural tours: Journeys through time’.

Although Memorial practices recognise that Australian people are essential to the process of war remembrance – that it is a collective, spiritual and in some ways spontaneous act, not altogether official or orchestrated – it also covets its own position as master conduit for rational war remembrance. A phrase in the brochure advertising the ‘Gallipoli and Western Front battlefield and cultural tour’ renders this attitude explicit. As an inducement to readers to join the tour, it assures them of the ‘expertise, knowledge and authority’ of the Memorial historians who will accompany the group on its commemorative mission.

The highlight of the Australian nationalist calendar is 25 April, the day of the first landing at Gallipoli – Anzac Day – and the day that people gather at memorials all around Australia to participate in commemorative ceremonies. Earlier, I explained that the Anzac Day national holiday commemorates the enormous losses of Australian and New Zealand forces at Gallipoli in 1915, when what was planned as a swift campaign to knock Turkey out of the war turned into an eight month long slaughter. Like the Memorial itself, Anzac Day both emerged from and illuminates the status and significance of the First World War for Australian nationalist culture. It is a more potent and more popular national day than Australia Day itself (the day the First Fleet landed in Sydney Cove).¹⁷⁷ General Gration, Chair of the Memorial Council and ex-chief of the defence forces stated:

Anzac Day is not officially designated as our official day but for most Australians it has become the day when, quietly, but with conviction and pride, we feel most strongly our sense of being Australian, our idea of national identity.¹⁷⁸

The Minister for Veterans Affairs, Mr Scott, agrees that ‘it’s more of a national day than Australia Day’.¹⁷⁹ John Bowles, a 24-year-old at the Canberra dawn service, explained his participation by saying that ‘it’s part of being Australian’.¹⁸⁰ It may be true that most Australians have attended an Anzac ceremony on one occasion: at least, the Memorial’s web site confidently asserts that ‘the commemorations follow a pattern that is familiar to each generation of Australians’. The familiarity of Australians with the Anzac myth and ritual is fostered by its currency in school curricula.¹⁸¹ A

¹⁷⁷ A list of more than 20 websites on Anzac appears at www.acn.net.au/articles/1999/Oz/anzac.htm.

¹⁷⁸ He was quoted by Adrian McGregor and staff writers, ‘Older, slower, but pride marches on’, *Weekend Australian*, 26–27 April 1997, p.9.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ He was quoted by Ian McPhedran, ‘Record crowd keeps legend alive’, *Canberra Times*, 26 April 1997, p.1.

¹⁸¹ Michael Taussig describes the flash of memory (back to a primary school class) he experiences in an encounter with an old Anzac called Sid (Taussig, 1992a). And Alan Seymour’s

Commonwealth prize is awarded annually to a Year 9 student for the best essay on what Anzac Day means to them and their country. Winners travel to Turkey to attend the dawn service and other ceremonies there.¹⁸² Through repetition, not only in annual ceremonies but all other arenas of its expression, the Anzac ritual and the myth it invigorates become ingrained.

To appreciate the potency of the Anzac myth and the annual ceremonies, a prior familiarity with the context from which it emerged and the circumstances of its inspiration is necessary. For Australia, the First World War presented a substantial formative opportunity, if that is not an absurdly positive term to apply to a world war. It constituted Australia's chance to distinguish itself in the international arena.

Furthermore, the enormous effort and sacrifice of all those involved, but especially those who died as a result of war – the blood sacrifice is especially potent – attributed them, and by association 'us' (the national collective), with a certain moral grandeur. The 'strength and conviction' of the first Australian Imperial Forces 'forged our identity as a nation and etched Australia's place in history'.¹⁸³ The power of the nation-forming effect of the First World War cannot be underestimated. Australian histories – from Charles Bean's official history of the First World War onward – are replete with the notion of this war as a founding moment for the Australian nation. More so than any former or subsequent conflicts in which Australians have participated, more so than any other Australian mythological activity – sporting, cultural and so on – the First World War is potent with our investment in it as a golden opportunity for national identification: 'Anzac day ... is Australia's most important national occasion',¹⁸⁴ 'the Australian national day above all others'.¹⁸⁵

Anzac Day ceremonies begin at dawn. These candlelit gatherings are followed by marches, later in the day, from the bottom of Anzac Parade to the top, ending at the foot of the Memorial itself. Together, the ceremonies incorporate earthly and spiritual, popular and official aspects: the parade; speeches; poem recitations; hymn singing; the Lord's Prayer; acknowledgement of the presence of dignitaries; wreath-laying; a chaplain's sermon; the Last Post; two-minutes' silence; and finally, the reveille, 'the bugle call sounded at the end of military funerals and commemorative services to

play *The One Day of the Year*, about Anzac Day and its ongoing relevance, was taught in many schools in the 1960s and 70s.

¹⁸² *Canberra Times*, 18 November 1998, p.11.

¹⁸³ Australian War Memorial Foundation brochure.

¹⁸⁴ I am again quoting the Memorial website.

¹⁸⁵ Russell Braddock Ward, *The Australian Legend*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp.116–17, cited in Michael Taussig, 'An Australian hero' (Taussig, 1992a: 66).

signify the resurrection of the body after death, and the awakening of the soul into a new life'.¹⁸⁶ In 1997, the Canberra service 'ended when three Royal Australian Air Force F/A-18 fighter aircraft blasted up Anzac Parade and over the Memorial at low altitude'.¹⁸⁷ After the morning's solemn rituals come 'boozy celebrations, brawls and ostentatious games of two-up' (White, 1981: 136).

For those who join in, Anzac Day is an occasion both solemn and joyous. Every Anzac day every daily newspaper carries the story. The emphasis is always on the 'national unity' that was imagined, and is clearly felt, to have crystallised following the tragic slaughter of thousands of young men at Gallipoli. Typical headlines are: 'A day when they stand as one and the larrikin streak lives on' and 'Nation hails unique Gallipoli soldier'.¹⁸⁸ When Australians remember this slaughter they remember, by extension, every Australian who has died in war. It is an intensely emotional occasion, a fact that is emphasised in newspaper coverage: 'Tears well in rheumy eyes, spilling over the top to perish in the trenches and gullies of century-old cheeks';¹⁸⁹ 'They are becoming older, slower, and fewer. Age is wearying them, and with each passing year, and with each passing of a witness of war, the Anzac Day march becomes more poignant.'¹⁹⁰

Since the 1980s attendance at Anzac Day ceremonies in Canberra alone have surged into the tens of thousands. These thousands are connected, in spirit, to hundreds of thousands of others who attend memorial ceremonies across Australia. Collective remembrance is a powerful act, and the magnitude, quiet and stillness of the crowd add to this capacity. What is effected via this ritual is a triple empowerment of the myth of Australian unity (our national identity), individual participants' sense of belonging (their Australian-ness) and last but not least, the Australian nation-State – the government and the military. All are legitimated and empowered by this collective show of commitment to 'Australia'. Anzac Day is important partly because it is experienced as important by so many Australians. Even those unfamiliar with singing

¹⁸⁶ As Catriona Elder pointed out to me, the ceremony here establishes an association between the 'fallen' and the most sacred of Christian figures, Christ himself.

¹⁸⁷ Ian McPhedran, *Op.Cit.* The fact that war remembrance is still militaristic is evident also in the drama surrounding the name of a park that was intended to unite Canberra with its Japanese 'sister city', Nara. The name 'Canberra-Nara Peace Park' was vetoed by the Federal Government after RSL national president 'Digger' James objected to the word 'peace', suggesting that: 'it was inappropriate to have something so offensive to so many Australians placed in such an important national precinct, launched so close to Anzac Day'. This quote comes from Anne Henderson, 'Time's arrow turns cynicism into respect', *Weekend Australian*, 26–27 April 1997, p.8.

¹⁸⁸ These were titles for articles by Norman Abjorensen, in Broken Hill, and Doug Conway. Both appeared in the *Canberra Times*, 26 April 1997, pp.6 and 1.

¹⁸⁹ Doug Conway, *Op.Cit.*

¹⁹⁰ Fiona Harari, 'The changing of the old guard', *Weekend Australian*, 26–27 April 1997, p.9.

hymns or saying prayers, cynical about nationalism or resentful about the enormous cost of war, can be stirred by the ceremony. It is not only the troops of the First World War that participants in Anzac Day ceremonies remember. Each additional military experience is added to the list of 'engagements' for 'us' to remember. In 1992, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that: 'The spirit of this year's Anzac Day included thoughts of Gulf War troops and Australian peacekeeping forces recently sent to Cambodia.'¹⁹¹

In the mythology of nationalism, spirit-energy surges back and forth in a circuit comprising Anzac diggers and 'Australians all', present-day participants and present-day military forces, nationalist devotion and nationalist duty. Taussig's analysis of a ritual at a Colombian shrine could be applied directly to the experience of remembering the Anzacs, or of visiting the Memorial in general:

Right there, pin-pointed in the *portal*, the gateway, the great metaphor-machine oscillating back and forth between literality and figure in the flare and disappearance of poetry into truth no less than of spirit into body is where sign and substance, the state and the people, for one prolonged, gratifying and alchemical instant, fuse (Taussig, 1997: 40).

During Anzac remembrance, the people and the state, body and spirit, living and dead, myth and reality, all fuse, then separate once again. Always open, the portal of the Memorial allows endless repetition of this mimetic magic, where oppositions momentarily dissolve into one another before reasserting their difference.

I have argued that the relation between the mythic nation-state and its enamoured citizens is neither voluntary nor coercive, but interdependent. From rituals hosted by the Memorial, the people gain a sense of belonging, of pride, of identity; and the state gains a highly committed fighting force. It is easy, in the midst of this huge collective ritual, to sense a patriotic allegiance, and to let lull a more critical distance. Taussig believes that the Anzac mythology, 'resist[s] critique because of the way it ha[s] come to embody patriotism and d[oes] so by making not only sacrifice but failure, into heroic virtues' (Taussig, 1992a: 66). He goes on to describe this effect as a uniquely 'democratic' form of control – one that uses mateship and oppositional practice, for example, 'in such a way that people feel they are doing something natural, not imposed' (77). He reiterates and contextualises, in other words, Barthes' idea that myth naturalises history.

Of course, many Australians choose not to participate in Anzac Day ceremonies. Fred Kelly, who arrived in Gallipoli in October, 1915, is one. In 1997, at 100 years of age,

¹⁹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1992, p.8.

and although he always tunes into the radio or the television for the march broadcast, he had never joined in, and never been a member of an ex-servicemen's association:

'When I got out of the army, I said "That's it, no more army for me ... I had four years. That was enough."¹⁹² It is rare for newspapers to report on those who do not attend. Even more rare is reportage of any criticism of the ceremonies.

In my search of newspaper databases I came across two letters to the editor of *The Sydney Morning Herald* that referred critically to the Anzac Parade Vietnam War Memorial, established in 1994, but there was very little evidence that Australians find Anzac Day business in any way problematic. In the sense that to resist war is to appear unpatriotic and cowardly, it is hardly surprising that such evidence is absent from newspaper coverage of the event. One post-Anzac Day newspaper article provided a history of the Day,¹⁹³ noting the association between Anzac Day and pro-conscription imperialist loyalists (or their claim on it); how the Vietnam War placed Anzac Day 'with the warmongers for a decade'; and how it was subject to a revival in the 80s following the film *Gallipoli*, when numbers of Memorial visitors doubled, RSL membership surged and many books on Australian military history made bestseller status. If its title 'Time's arrow turns cynicism into respect' failed to alert readers to the implicit critique, its opening line may have: 'Lest we forget, Anzac Day was born in the midst of war, not at the signing of a peace treaty.'

Expressions of reverent remembrance serve to silence resistance to war and its glorification.¹⁹⁴ But they also serve to obscure the fact that the Memorial is practically meaningless for many Australians. Most Australians probably know of the Memorial by name. How many, though, have never visited it, and have no intention of ever doing so? Such a question is not easy to answer. Surveys undertaken in 1993 and 1994 indicated that Australians of a non-English speaking background and Indigenous Australians may not visit the Memorial in numbers proportionate to their population size.¹⁹⁵ I can offer

¹⁹² Fred's testimony appeared as a caption to a photograph of him in *The Weekend Australian*, 26–27 April 1997, p.8.

¹⁹³ Anne Henderson, 'Time's arrow turns cynicism into respect', *Weekend Australian*, 26–27 April 1997, p.8. I return to the waning and waxing of Anzac Day's popularity in the history in Lesson IV.

¹⁹⁴ Author David Malouf's contribution to the 1997 publication *War: Australia's Creative Response* describes his resentment at the RSL for 'the claim that it alone spoke for the real Australian values, and the use it made of the dead in order to shame the rest of us into silence' (Rutherford & Wieland, 1997).

¹⁹⁵ This information appeared in a July 1997 document by Linda Ferguson, the AWM Audience Advocate and Evaluator on framework planning for audience research at the Memorial. Ferguson notes, also, that further information is needed regarding rates of participation and non-participation, and reasons for the latter. In the more recent (but preliminary) survey results,

another snippet of evidence to suggest that some people, perhaps some sectors of the Australian community, are altogether indifferent to the national war memorial. I was involved very briefly with a Memorial survey of rural Australians, enquiring as to their relationship with the Memorial; whether they had visited; if so what they thought; if not whether they might and so on. Charged with finding twenty 'rural community groups' to whom the Memorial could mail sets of surveys, I telephoned many different community organisations. Most were happy to accept the surveys. Many mentioned some local veterans who would be particularly interested in responding. One man I spoke to, however, was somewhat incredulous. His was an Aboriginal community organisation in an outback town of New South Wales. He explained that there would be little point in sending the surveys because he doubted that anyone in his community had ever been to the Memorial, and felt it was unlikely, in fact, that they ever would. Canberra, for this community and no doubt many others further afield, is a remote place, geographically and culturally.¹⁹⁶

Given that the Digger is understood by many to be the quintessential Australian, and that Aboriginal people have always been involved in the ADF, it is not surprising that one branch of Australian Indigenous people's struggle for rights has focused on their underrated involvement in the defence forces. The contrast between Indigenous support for the nation and the nation's consistent refusal to accept Indigenous people as citizens, let alone to recognise their particular value, is clear in relation to military history. As Alec Kruger states: 'I went to fight for a country I didn't belong to, according to the government.'¹⁹⁷ In the Brisbane Anzac Day parade of 1994, Aboriginals succeeded in marching together under the Aboriginal flag. Previous attempts had been quashed by resistance from the RSL.¹⁹⁸

Nowadays, white Australians are often very supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen. When in the early 1980s Liberal Member of Parliament Donald Cameron undertook to research the involvement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the defence forces, he used Australian newspapers to call for the names and service details of any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who served in the First and

Ferguson asserts that Indigenous and NESB Australians visit the Memorial in proportions fairly consistent with their proportions of the general Australian population.

¹⁹⁶ I do not mean to equate Aboriginality with indifference to the Memorial. Some White communities may be equally uninterested. Conversely, some Aboriginal people are very interested.

¹⁹⁷ Roderick Campbell, "I went to fight for a country I didn't belong to...", *Canberra Times*, 2 August 1997, p.3.

¹⁹⁸ (Hall, 1995: vi). This was the same year that Cathy Freeman famously, and for some White Australians outrageously, carried the Aboriginal flag with the national one during a lap of honour.

Second World Wars, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam. He received a torrent of mail, now occupying seven files in the Memorial. Many white ex-servicemen professed their admiration for the Indigenous people with whom they had served, and their sincere hope that the research would see an end to their undervaluation.¹⁹⁹ Recall also the tradition of belatedly honouring ‘forgotten Aboriginal soldiers’ such as George Kennedy and Matthias Ulungara.

White Australians are less interested, on the whole, in recognising Indigenous land rights. For some, Indigenous land rights and Australian defence are incompatible. This argument was published in 1982 in Geoff McDonald’s book *Red Over Black: Behind the Aboriginal Land Rights*, in which he argues that the land rights movement is part of a communist plot to undermine national security (Ball, 1991: xx). The book was endorsed in a preface by RSL figure Bruce Ruxton.²⁰⁰ When in 1992 the High Court finally recognised Indigenous prior ownership of Australian land via its judgement on Native Title in the Mabo case – and despite its largely symbolic possible effect on contemporary Australian society – several commentators (including pastoralists, historians, and spokespersons from the mining and energy industries and state and federal governments) denounced the decision. In an address to the Victorian RSL in June 1993, Hugh Morgan charged the High Court with creating a ‘legal, political and constitutional crisis’, and warned that Australia would become ‘a divided nation, no longer in undisputed possession of this island continent, and unable to face with any confidence the external dangers which history teaches us will, inevitably, one day threaten us’.²⁰¹

The Memorial acknowledges the contribution of Indigenous people to the ADF and the nation, but only insofar as that contribution is subsumed within the broader frame of generic, or white, Australians. Memorial discourses do not recognise the enormous influence of Indigenous culture on Australian culture and identity. Many observers regard Indigenous culture as a defining element of Australian culture, whether by

¹⁹⁹ In one letter, the author referred to what a ‘top bloke’ Private Lorraine was, which he evidenced partly by indicating that when the men called him ‘Latrine’ he didn’t seem to mind. These files are in PR 87/078.

²⁰⁰ Ruxton does not conceal his resentment towards Indigenous Australians. In a 1998 letter to the editor, he complains about ‘massive handouts to Aborigines’, at the same time attributing the complaint to his version of the generic Australian: ‘the man in the street’. *Canberra Times*, 28 August 1998, p.12.

²⁰¹ These quotes, and more detail, are in David Hollinsworth’s *Race and Racism in Australia* (Hollinsworth, 1998).

influence or appropriation.²⁰² Prominent Aboriginal spokesperson Linda Burney writes: ‘the well-known Australian egalitarianism comes equally from Aboriginal society in the first place, as any study of colonial accounts will show. And the same applies to most of the other ‘typical Aussie’ characteristics’ (Burney, 1994: 22). Memorial discourses also efface the fact of extensive frontier violence between Indigenous people and white settlers. For example, during the dawn service for Anzac Day 1997, one speaker stressed the familiar refrain that this was ‘a day of national unity’. The typical Aussie characteristic of ‘mateship’, he said, was the reason that there had been no civil war in Australia.²⁰³ Indigeneity has been tucked into the folds of the Memorial fabric. It is present but barely visible, despite its influence on Australian culture. At the recent unveiling of the Memorial’s Merchant Navy Roll of Honour memorial, Governor-General Sir William Deane linked the Memorial’s commemorative practices to Indigenous Australian cultures. In consciously Indigenous terms he described the ritual-in-process as a way of ‘call[ing] their spirits home’.²⁰⁴ Australian national culture may be becoming indigenised but the idea of honouring Indigenous culture as a distinct feature of Australian culture continues to unsettle many white Australians.

Several memorials have been established to counter the Memorial’s monumental silence on the issue of Indigenous dispossession and resistance. I will mention just two here. In the lead-up to the Bicentenary of European occupation of Australia, the Ramingining artists of Central Arnhem Land were commissioned to produce 200 burial poles: one for each year of Indigenous deaths in defence of their country.²⁰⁵ Another pole memorial site is ‘The edge of the trees’, an installation in the grounds of the Museum of Sydney. It is the result of a collaboration between Indigenous artist Fiona Foley and white sculptor Janet Laurence (who also collaborated in designing the four pillars in the Hall of Memory). ‘The edge of the trees’ is a monument to contact, both violent and non-violent, between white and Indigenous Australians. It is a cluster of poles, of wood, metal, stone and so on, amongst which passers-by can wander. The poles bear witness, in the languages of both the Eora and the British, to people, places,

²⁰² See, for instance, the following references: (Boniface & Fowler, 1993: 31; Lattas, 1997: 242; McGrath, 1989; Willis, 1993: 93).

²⁰³ A similar claim is made by the male narrator of the television advertisement for the lead-up to the Centenary of Federation. He suggests that Australians should be particularly proud that our nation was founded peacefully and democratically, neglecting to mention that in this democracy, only white men were entitled to vote for Federation, and in denial of the extensive frontier wars between Indigenous people and the settlers.

²⁰⁴ David McLennan, ‘Memorial honours seamen’s spirits: Deane’, *Canberra Times*, 18 October 1998, p.2.

²⁰⁵ First shown at the Sydney Biennale in 1988, the poles are now on permanent display at the National Gallery of Australia.

and flora of the area. Some names are inscribed, and some are uttered by voices contained within. They stand as testimony to the contesting of names, the jostling of land and worldviews that began at that first moment of contact, and continues today. But as ‘trees’ the poles are dead. They are capped with metal, studded with bolts, inlaid with sand and shells, and planted in gravel. Their resemblance to burial poles invokes the losses that followed colonisation.

Another set of memorials to Indigenous/white contact and violence that ought to be included here is the series of events and tributes that followed the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Report of its Inquiry into the Stolen Generations. This report provided the Australian public with a detailed account, for the first time, of the nature and effect of the government-endorsed practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families. One of its most controversial points was that the practice constituted a form of genocide. Some white Australians rejected this conclusion until they read the testimonies, and were moved to change their minds.²⁰⁶ The Stolen Generations can be seen as lifelong prisoners of war, forced from their family and home to inhabit and adopt the culture of the dominant white group. One of the Report’s recommendations was for a ‘Sorry Day’ as an annual commemorative event. Since publication of the Report, proposals have been tabled for a national memorial or sorry place for the Stolen Generations, or an otherwise fitting tribute such as an annual minute’s silence.²⁰⁷ In addition, over a million individuals signed Sorry Books, as well as almost all State and Territory governments, many local governments, community groups, schools and trade unions.²⁰⁸ Bathurst hosted the first official Sorry Day on 24 August 1997; and the following year, 26 May was designated as a National Sorry Day.²⁰⁹ During 1997, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) organised a ‘sea of hands’ on the lawns in front of Parliament House. Each hand represents a person committed to native title and reconciliation with Indigenous people, and the sea continues to grow, moving from site to site to form what ANTaR calls ‘puddles’ in public space. The many expressions of sympathy and regret to emerge from individual white Australians contrast with the Federal Government’s persistent refusal

²⁰⁶ Raimond Gaita was ‘irritated by the claim in the [HREOC] report ... that the Australian State administrations had been guilty of genocide’. But while reading the report he became ashamed of his own irritation. ‘Peace crimes’, *Weekend Australian*, 5–6 July 1997, p.24.

²⁰⁷ Dr Peter Read, in Jane Dargaville’s ‘Blot that can’t be buried’, *Canberra Times*, 17 May 1997, p.11.

²⁰⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 May 1997, p.41.

²⁰⁹ National Sorry Day was recommended by the HREOC National Inquiry into the Stolen Generations. Canberra events associated with the Day included: a ‘get-together’ for discussion and action; arts performances; a barbecue; a storytelling session; seminars; a guided walk; and formal ceremonies for handing over the Sorry Books.

to apologise to members of the Stolen Generation, wary of accepting responsibility for former governments' wrong-doings, and scathing of the practice of 'black armband history'.²¹⁰

In arguing the case that the Memorial should recognise the history of Indigenous dispossession, some observers have noted how selectively white Australians embrace history. Several commentators have noted in particular the contrast between Australians' strong association with the Digger figure and our disassociation from our imperialist heritage. One *Sydney Morning Herald* writer argues that:

if it were understandable for most Australians to be proud of Australian courage at Gallipoli, it was understandable for most Australians to be ashamed of the ill-treatment of the Aborigines. Australians of this generation might have had little to do with separating the children from their parents; nor did they have anything to do with Gallipoli.²¹¹

In a mediated and televised conversation with two Federal Members of Parliament,²¹² Julie Lavelle, a member of the Stolen Generation, appealed for a more consistent approach to history:

The government looks very highly on maintaining the memories of the past in other areas – in Anzac Day – the whole celebration and remembrance of that is to acknowledge the pain that those people went through, to validate their pain, to make sure that we remember so it will never happen again. Why can't we have the 'lest we forget'?²¹³

The Federal Government's refusal to apologise to the Stolen Generation is especially ironic in the context of the same government's 1997 decision, following RSL pressure, to remove the word 'peace' from the planned Canberra Nara Peace Park. Its reasoning was that Japan should be admonished for refusing to take responsibility, and apologise, for the atrocities of its past. At the same time, the Australian government led by Prime Minister John Howard was not yet prepared to declare peace. Yet in relation to the Stolen Generations' need for a declaration of apology, the government occupies the position of the Japan, the nation it continues to condemn.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ John Howard was elected Prime Minister in 1996, the year before the HREOC report was tabled in Parliament. He has since offered a statement of 'sincere personal regret' for the practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families, but remains opposed to an official apology.

²¹¹ Tony Stephens, 'Sorry', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 May 1998, p.41.

²¹² Respondants to her appeal were Member for Dickson, Tony Smith, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, John Herron.

²¹³ Transcribed from 'Insight', SBS television, 10 July 1997.

²¹⁴ This irony was noted in Michael King's letter to the editor, *Canberra Times*, 17 April 1997, p.8. He writes that Mr Howard has 'lined up with the RSL which says there should be no peace park in Canberra because the Japanese haven't apologised for their part in World War II. Yet Mr Howard and Senator Herron say an apology will not be forthcoming for the removal of Aboriginal children from their families.'

The Memorial represents itself as a portal to a pre-existent Australian national spirit, and operates to assert and establish the myth of ‘Australia’. The Memorial is understood to condense space and time so that the distinctions between past and present, spirit and matter, myth and reality, individual and collective, momentarily collapse. These fusions occur during visits to the museum and at the rituals associated with the Memorial: the Unknown Soldier’s entombment, pilgrimages to former battle sites, and Anzac Day. The myth-making that goes on at the Memorial is of a very modern kind. Memorial discourses posit national spirit possession as one of its primary functions and services – the site holds the records that are, in turn, imbued with the spirit; and as visitors, people can bear witness to and take this spirit unto themselves. But despite its repeated avowal, this premodern form of religious spirituality is also, to an extent, disowned. Whether the Memorial is understood as a portal to the spirit world or as a myth-maker, visitors play a paramount role in sustaining the institution and its discourses. In some senses, as I have argued, the Memorial appears conscious of its debt to its worshipping public. But in the sense that the institution also consistently covets the expertise, knowledge and authority, of its staff, the value of its visitors is also drastically underestimated. Visitors’ role in invoking or establishing the national spirit cannot duly recognised in a museum that continues to privilege its modernist rationality.

Also modern is the Memorial’s quest for a complete representation of Australia’s experience of war. In theory, it is invested with the wartime experience of all Australians. But its collections and exhibitions still overwhelmingly contain and privilege the experience of active military service personnel. There is very little here that indicates the breadth and diversity of Australian experiences of war: civilian experiences, resistance to war, and the impact of war on Australian society are all underemphasised. Yet Australians are encouraged to believe that the Memorial holds the complete, true, authoritative, sacred, national historical record.

The Memorial institution fuels and in turn acquires power from the mythical spirits that circulate around the site. It is the foremost site for reflecting on the Australian national identity, but it is particularly popular with men and with people with military experience. Its popular appeal is indisputable, and obscures its political practice. The institution works in tandem with government, by instilling a sense of duty and devotion in citizens, on whom it will call again and again for support and sacrifice. Any characterisation of the Memorial as a legitimate national representation with a broad base of popular support, therefore, is perpetually offset by its coextensive support for and by the military and the government that sends its people to war. Broad, deep

support for the Memorial also serves to dampen or silence criticism of its signifying practices. In the context of such national devotion, it is easy to appear unpatriotic or even a traitor. It is impossible to determine how many people are disinterested in the Memorial or object to its commemorative style.

The Memorial's signification is replete with twists and tensions. It was founded in the spirit of remembering the absolute horror and futility of war, yet has come to serve the nationalist – and therefore military – cause. It is a Memorial to conflict, yet its policy is to downplay controversy, to 'nip it in the bud'. An 'uncontroversial' militarism has replaced pacifism here, and in this context it is much easier to represent triumph than trauma. Triumph bestows glory on the nation-myth, whereas trauma is always a taint. The Memorial's most potent relics – the pathological specimens – will not be displayed because they are *too* evocative of the horrors of the war that the Memorial's founders hoped would never be forgotten. Another contradiction in the signification is between the the signified concept and the signifier – or between the national spirit that the Memorial claims to house and the Memorial as a site of representation. The national spirit is egalitarian and larrikin; but the Memorial site is authoritarian – authoritative and unquestionable. This contradiction plays out in many ways but most spectacularly in the institution's refusal to openly recognise the history of conflict between Indigenous people and the settlers who dispossessed them of their country. An allusion in one corner of its galleries, some material in the 'Too dark for the light horse' Memorial box, and the heads in the Commemorative Area courtyard do not unsettle its steadfast position on this matter. But signs of Indigenous infiltration into the national psyche are visible – whether in the loud spectre of the tent embassy opposite, the Governor-General's speech at the Merchant Navy Roll of Honour, or the many other memorials that counter the Memorial's silence on the frontier wars.

Including the frontier wars as part of the Memorial's commemorative scope would be popular among part of its visiting constituency. The proliferation of unofficial memorials to this conflict, including Sorry Day, the Sea of Hands, the burial poles at the National Gallery and 'The edge of the trees' at the Museum of Sydney, suggests that many Australians are ready to commemorate Indigenous losses and to bear witness to colonial oppression. But other visitors – and most of the RSL – would be appalled at the suggestion that the Memorial should make such a move. Council policy on avoiding controversy supports the latter position, and overrules the perceived need to face up to the facts of Indigenous historical experience. Officially, the Memorial's purpose is to commemorate Australians who have died in defence of their country, including those who died defending the British Empire before Australia was a nation, but excluding those who died in the frontier wars on Australian soil. It is to this carefully crafted

purpose that the Memorial clings, and that continues to dictate the terms of visitors' experience of the site.

The Australian War Memorial

III

In the world

During the third stage of Shor's course, students examine the object in the context of its global relations. To the degree that the Australian War Memorial is bound up with the Australian *nation*, it is not of immediately recognisable value to consider its international relations, its presence in the global scene outside this national border. How foreigners relate to 'our' memorial or what other national war memorials signify can appear irrelevant, or at least, of little consequence. Conversely, the Memorial is far less likely to appear with a comparable potency of meaning to non-Australians, who are unfamiliar with our particular national mythology. For most of the world's population, it would be fair to say, the Memorial is entirely insignificant. But nations and nationalism emerged only after long periods of imperialist conquest and jostling. They are not self-constituting. National identities are constituted by cultivating a certain distinction from other nations. Australian identity is particularly meaningful in relation to the other nations involved in the First World War: the 'Mother Country', England; our other Allies, especially France and Belgium; and our then Enemies, especially Turkey and Germany. Because identity is constituted through difference, and because Australia is the product of the global phenomenon of colonisation, describing how the Memorial signifies its international relationships is revealing and provides a broader context for its mythical nationalist operation.

In this third Lesson I explore the apparent distinction of the Australian nation and the Australian War Memorial in the context of the international traditions of nationalism and of war remembrance. I then consider the Memorial's relationships with Australia's allies, with the British, and with our former enemies. The Memorial's role in the global village of the late twentieth century is akin to that of an ambassador-at-home. Having described the Memorial and Australia in relation to other nations' war memorials, and briefly discussed international visitors to the Memorial, I turn to consider the relation

between the Memorial and colonised peoples in Australia's neighbouring countries, particularly Papua New Guinea, but also New Zealand and East Timor. Respectively, these countries were colonised by Australia, Britain – Australia's 'mother country' – and Portugal, then Indonesia. In this chapter it emerges that the Memorial's emphasis on the First World War is highly selective in the context of the complex and violent history of invasion and counterinvasion – of imperialism – in the region and around the world. The Memorial obscures the fact that there are many comparable conflicts that it does not commemorate, and in which Australians and Australia are implicated.

The Memorial may grant 'Australia' a certain distinction, but in many ways its character is not unique to Australia but common to many national war memorials, especially those of fellow British colonies that were emerging as nation-States at around the same time. The egalitarianism 'we' embrace as Australian and invest into the national war memorial is hardly unique. The word 'Anzac' derives from the acronym Australian *and* New Zealand Army Corps. Both Australia and New Zealand have established memorials to Atatürk, the enemy to whom we owe the legend of Anzac (Inglis & Phillips, 1991: 191), and these are not the only ways in which Australia and New Zealand share a binational identity. In a book on the First World War in European cultural history, Jay Winter notes that Australia and New Zealand were *both* distinguished from European nations when each opted to commemorate not the commanders of the military forces but the common soldier (Winter, 1995: 82). Here we can recall the Memorial's pride in the absence, from its list of the honourable war dead, of any reference to rank. Even the traits of the much lauded, binational Anzac digger can not really be conceived as unique. Richard White also argues that 'the virtues attributed to him were often claimed for the soldiers of other nations as well'.²¹⁵ Michael Taussig argues this point in relation to the idea of Australian ingenuity, embodied by the water-gun and the periscope rifle:

The talent for mechanical improvisation as mythologized by the legend of the water gun is something one finds highly developed amongst people throughout the Third World. It cannot be said to be the specialty of a particular society or ethnic group. (Taussig, 1992a: 62–3)

Taussig notes, furthermore, an aspect of the Gallipoli campaign absent from his schoolroom lesson on the Anzac legend: allied soldiers who fought at Gallipoli came not only from Australia and New Zealand, but from three other colony-nations – India,

²¹⁵ He cites a Melbourne *Argus* report of the simultaneous distinction of the Australian and Canadian forces (White, 1981: 129).

Senegal and Nepal – as well as England and France (62).²¹⁶ Tony Bennett argues that the Memorial's focus on the ordinary soldier is neither distinctively Australian nor entirely egalitarian: 'Similar tendencies were evident in Europe as the need to recruit the support of a democratic citizenry prompted the development of more democratic modes of public remembrance' (Bennett, 1995: 139). Evidently, Australia's national distinction is mythical: something experienced and remembered, a source of pride and a project for reproduction, but not independent of Australian belief in it. Australia's national war memorial intones and invokes the idea of the egalitarian, mate-oriented, ingenious larrikin, to promote a sense of unity and identity and belonging. And this mimetic simulation produces 'Australia' in a very potent form.²¹⁷ Despite the myth's lack of specificity, many Australians subscribe to it.

Australian national identity is also dubious in the sense that the Memorial, as the national museum, is all about activity outside our national borders. For Tony Bennett, the fact that the nation could only emerge outside of itself, across the other side of the world, renders the idea of the nation vacuous:

in the Memorial, Australia remains evacuated of any historical significance of its own. The nation, so to speak, is historicized only by proxy, only to the degree that it takes part in and joins the longer and deeper histories of Europe. In these respects, the discourse of the Memorial is still colonial or only protonationalist. (Bennett, 1995: 140)

Bennett is right to point out that Australia's nationalist project is somewhat inside out. But this kind of paradox is precisely the stuff from which nations are made. Created in the context of an international encounter, the conceptual space of the Australian nation has become filled with a host of characteristics and tendencies that emerge from historical circumstances but that contemporary observers claim as intrinsic. But in a sense the generic nature of the signifier 'Australia' is as important as any identifying characteristics it might have acquired. It is the very non-specificity of this large-scale notion of collective identity – the absence of the identity (in terms of both elsewhere and nothingness) – that works to both unite Australians and divide 'us' from the rest of the world: to identify us. Ultimately, it is the non-specificity, negativity, or ordinariness of the national character that enables the magical mechanism of nationalist representation to work: it is an emptiness that can be filled by anyone and everyone who chooses to bear witness to and embody the Australian spirit.

²¹⁶ There is a board in the Gallipoli gallery that tallies the dead of most of these nations, but the information that the Anzacs were not the only troops to die at Gallipoli stands somewhat in isolation.

²¹⁷ Despite positioning Australian nationalism in 'the ideological structure of Western Christian civilization', Bruce Kapferer insists that it 'takes its form in egalitarianism and as such is nationalism of a particular cultural kind' (Kapferer, 1988: 139).

There is indeed a certain international – white, Western, rather than global – tradition of war commemoration to which Australia largely conforms. The Memorial's 1993 interment of an Unknown Soldier can be seen as aligning its function more directly with that of other national war memorials. As Anderson writes, these Tombs are 'saturated with ghostly national imaginings', and here nationalism is a generic or multinational drive; not specific to any single nation:

No more arresting emblems of the modern cult of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either empty or no one knows who lies inside them has no precedents in earlier times. (Anderson, 1983: 17)

A 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' is a particularly potent nationalist mechanism. Recall Keating's speech at the interment of the Australian Unknown Soldier. After an explanation of how little we know of the man's life came the chilling then heartwarming refrain: 'He is all of them. And he is one of us.'²¹⁸ The first sentence invokes the magnitude of Australia's loss; and the second honours him and connects him to every Australian.

As well as the Tomb, and as noted in the previous section, Australians engage in the classic remembrance ritual of two minutes' silence in honour of the dead. Instituted throughout the British Empire at the Armistice Day commemorations of 11 November 1919, the King stated that during these two silent minutes, 'all locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the Glorious Dead'.²¹⁹ Here we can recall the (now removed) signs at the entrance to the Memorial's Hall of Memory, coaching visitors in remembrance etiquette. They too requested that visitors become quiet. During these two minutes, participants in war remembrance rituals here in Australia and all over the world are encouraged to attain a quiet, 'perfect stillness'. It is behaviour that bestows on willing participants a statuesque quality, a relative inertia that resembles the death state itself. More particularly, these inert commemorators resemble those in a trance-like state prior

²¹⁸ Anderson writes of these 'arresting emblems of the modern cult of nationalism': 'To feel the force of this modernity one has only to imagine the general reaction to the busy-body who 'discovered' the Unknown Soldier's name ... Sacrilege of a strange, contemporary kind!' The spell of mythic unanimity would be instantly broken.

²¹⁹ Quoted in: (Reid, 1997: 67). Anzac Day commemorations began in 1916, one year after the landing at Gallipoli and have continued to this day. Interest and participation in Anzac Day services surged in the 1980s. According to Memorial legend, journalist Edward George Honey wrote a letter to the *London Evening News* in which he proposed 'five silent minutes of national remembrance' to honour the dead. The idea came to the attention of the King, and was tested before being reduced, because five minutes was 'too long, even for trained guardsmen', to two (Reid, 1997: 66).

to spirit possession, according to Michael Taussig's description of Colombian shrines²²⁰:

The resemblance to the statue is readily apparent in the *velación* where the human body lies spreadeagled in its halo of flame in front of a shrine, so quiet, so unbearably still, this inert body gathering itself as purity defined as pure matter so as to be one day inhabited by a spirit. (Taussig, 1997: 166)

Without overstating this case for a legitimate comparison between Memorial rituals and spirit possession, we can see how imagery of the dead – in the mind's eye as much as in the Memorial's extensive collection of artefacts, exercises a magical, slumbering power²²¹ over the living. In these rituals of remembrance, participants invoke or awaken this power. Momentarily, in this mythological space, the living and the dead become one. Again, the practice of Australian remembrance and its effect are by no means unique to Australia.

Neither is Australia alone in refusing the kind of grand monumentality that has come to be associated with Nazi Germany.²²² The catafalque in Paris, for instance, was removed when Clemenceau and other French leaders objected to its 'Germanic' monumentality. (Winter, 1995: 103) In 1986, the Germans went one step further in this anti-monumentalist drive, producing a 'counter-monument' in Hamburg. John Gillis describes it as:

a lead-sheathed obelisk dedicated to victims of Nazism that invited the public to inscribe their names and messages on its surfaces. As these were filled, the obelisk was lowered gradually into the ground, where it eventually disappeared, leaving as its only trace the living memories of those who visited the site previously. (Gillis, 1994: 16–17)

Certainly, there are instances of war memorials that refuse to glorify war in a far more explicit and thorough sense. Four years before the Hamburg monument was erected, in the United States Maya Lin²²³ won a competition to design a memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War. Hers is a large, obtuse-angled black granite wall. It is set into the ground so visitors descend into it from either end, past the names of the missing and the dead and the personal tributes laid at the foot of the walls, accompanied always by their mirror-image in the highly reflective surface of the memorial. Many commentaries on this memorial have been written, noting its anti-monumental, indeed its counter-

²²⁰ These shrines combine elements of Catholicism, Indigenous cultures and State fetishism.

²²¹ This phrase combines Taussig's ideas from two different contexts (Taussig, 1984: 89; Taussig, 1992b: 48).

²²² In 1924 German Ernst Friedrich produced a 'unique anti-war museum based on his private collection of gruesome photos, which was also published as a book with captions in four languages', and reprinted in 1981. My source for this information is: (Hüppauf, 1995).

²²³ A Chinese American, at the time she was a 21-year-old student of architecture.

hegemonic attributes. Eugene Halton (Halton, 1994) contrasts it both with ‘the great erection of the Washington Monument’ (313) and with the realistic figurative sculpture unveiled two years later directly opposite the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial, testimony to America’s discomfort with the more abstract style of Lin’s design, and its desire for a more traditional memorial. Australia, in short, may take great pride in a certain egalitarianism and a reluctance to glorify war, but as a nation we have no monopoly on these traits.

Australia’s specialty, when it comes to war remembrance, relates to the persistency of its popularity and potency. The First World War had an enormous impact on every country involved, and has been claimed as a nation-forming experience in Canada, Italy and Turkey as well as Australia (Inglis, 1998a: 123–24). Few nations, however, can boast the swelling support for remembrance rituals that Australia can today. In France, for example, the cult of war commemoration has waned:

Today abandoned by the popular fervour that created them, they are merely war memorials, and it is easy to forget that barely half a century ago the confident French Republic invited all its citizens to gather around them as celebrants and objects of their own republican culture. (Proust, 1992: 330)

Australia’s remembrance of wartime experience and loss occurs not once every year but twice, on Armistice or Remembrance Day, the 11th of November, and especially, on Anzac Day, the 25th of April. The numbers of people attending are growing. As noted in the previous chapter, there are annual awards for the best essay on the meaning of Anzac Day, and annual tours to significant battlefields. The Australian War Memorial attracts almost a million visitors every year. Whether by Commonwealth inducement or by popular support, Australian war remembrance continues, and the industries associated with it proliferate.

Australia’s particular investment in remembering the First World War, and the peculiar potency of our rituals of war remembrance, are perhaps best understood as a confluence of several factors. It is not only that ‘Australia’ was ‘born’ on the slopes of Gallipoli, or that the First World War was our debut on the international theatre of war. A largely secular population, the Anzac legend can be seen to provide Australia with a non-denominational transcendental tone (Taussig, 1992a: 54).²²⁴ War remembrance allows us a spirituality, or satisfies our desire for mythical unity, for a sense of community. Furthermore, an experience of enormous suffering also has a far greater capacity to unite a group of people than a shared triumph Renan, 1990 (1882) #590: 19. The

²²⁴ Australia was also unique in refusing to associate war remembrance with any particular religion. Catholics were forbidden by their own church to attend inter-denominational services, and the most famous Australian general (Monash) was a Jew.

Gallipoli massacre was a potent opportunity because the idea of a large-scale blood sacrifice was always already imbued with the status of the mythic. Finally, the national characteristics that Bean and others have identified as central to ‘Australia’ – the primacy of mateship, Australians’ wariness of authority and tendency to defer to the ‘next bloke’ – all these traits designate the ordinary bloke as the ultimate national hero. This national hero’s very ordinariness constitutes the breadth of (his) appeal. The more ordinary the hero, the more likely it is that anyone and everyone can identify with this figure.

Many other factors have been cited to explain the enduring potency of the Anzac legend for Australians, and to assert that Australians engaged in and remember war in a unique way. In the favour of Australian glory are the following: in terms of Allied casualty rates, Australia’s was the highest; Australians tended to be sent ‘over the top’ with greater frequency than other nations’ troops; Australian soldiers had all volunteered, rather than been conscripted; and memorial inscriptions usually honoured the returned as well as the dead. Working against Australian glory, however, is the fact that one quarter of all Allied deserters were Australian, disproportionate to their numbers (one tenth of Allied forces); and Australians were the Allies’ most imprisoned soldiers (which may have been because Australia was the only country not to execute deserters). Certainly, the Australian military took a more lenient attitude toward those whose commitment to fighting waned. Recently, French Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin granted an informal pardon to soldiers who mutinied in the First World War. He wanted to bring them ‘back into [the French] collective, national memory’. He received virulent criticism from right-wing and veterans’ groups for, amongst other things, ‘honouring cowardice’.²²⁵ It is difficult to imagine such a scenario occurring in Australia, perhaps due to the legendary Australian sense of a ‘fair go’.

It is not only Australians, however, who recognise the importance of the First World War to the Australian nation, and who hail the national memorial as a crucial site for the memory of both. Belgium continues to register an appreciation of the significance of this wartime experience for Australia (although again, Belgium’s gesture is partly for the British colonies as a group, not Australia alone). When Australians fought in the mud around Ypres,²²⁶ many not only died but disappeared, their bodies blown apart, damaged beyond identification, or simply sunk into the mud. In 1927 the famous Menin Gate memorial was unveiled, dedicated to the ghostly presence of the many thousands

²²⁵ John Lichfield, ‘Jospin’s pardon for mutiny provokes war of words’, *Canberra Times*, 10 November 1998, p. 5.

²²⁶ Ypres is known in Flemish Belgium as Ieper, but I follow the Memorial’s lead and use the French name, Ypres.

of lost British imperial soldiers. In 1928 the Ypres police chief²²⁷ established a daily ritual that continues to this day, in which buglers play the Last Post at the Gate, every night at 8pm. Still dissatisfied with these gestures of remembrance and gratitude, in 1936 the Burgomaster of Ypres donated the Menin Gate Lions to Australia. Carved from stone in medieval times and standing on either side of the Menin Gate in the walls of Ypres since the 1850s, the lions were damaged during the First World War and removed from their position, awaiting their ultimate transfer to Australia. As noted in the initial description, they now sit, sphinx-like, guarding the entrance to the national memorial (Plate 3). Once they have passed through, a notice explains the origin of the lions to interested visitors, underlining the international status of ‘Australia’ and the Memorial.

In France, another country in which many Australians lost their lives in the First World War, the tributes are similarly continuous, spurred on by the ongoing interest of Australians. Headlines such as ‘Old diggers steal French hearts again’²²⁸ are common in Australian newspapers after Anzac Day. Since 1920, a memorial has stood at Villers-Bretonneux to commemorate the 11 000 Australian service personnel who ‘fell’ on French soil in the First World War and have no known grave. In 1993 Melbourne artist Peter Corlett’s two-metre high bronze figure of an Australian digger was unveiled at Bullecourt.²²⁹ The obligation of these Western Front countries to continue to remember the Australian diggers may be spontaneous, as the newspaper coverage tends to suggest,²³⁰ but it is also encouraged by Australians who flock to the battlefields here and at Gallipoli, and by doing so subtly instil a sense of obligation. Certainly, there is a sense amongst some Australians, that our European allies still owe us. For example, in 1993, Prime Minister Keating ‘blast[ed]’ the French over their attempt to reopen talks preceding a world trade agreement. French farmers were unwilling to accept cuts in subsidies so their government was jeopardising the agreement. Linking the ‘hard trade decisions’ the Australian government had made with the sacrifice of Australian service personnel in France over the course of two world wars, Keating said: ‘We’ve done

²²⁷ His name was Pierre Vandenbraambussche.

²²⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 September 1993, p.3.

²²⁹ At nearby Hendecourt, children are taught ‘Advance Australia fair’ and ‘Waltzing matilda’ which they perform every Anzac Day at the Battle of Bullecourt memorial. So writes Michael Taper in a letter to the editor headed ‘Australian-French relations’ in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 July 1995, p.28.

²³⁰ See, for example, ‘Fighting spirit embraces globe’, *Weekend Australian*, 26–27 April 1997, p.8. Referring to Villers-Bretonneux it states: ‘Locals, amazed that young men from so far away would engage in a bloody and costly struggle to save their town, have long maintained close ties to Australia.’

what's best for Australia and we've played our role as international citizens.'²³¹ Keating's attack aside, in terms of war remembrance Australia and France remain closely allied.

Britain's relationship with the Australian national war memorial is affectionate but more ambivalent. Certainly, it has appreciated the efforts of our forces in both the world wars. Ernie Peddell, an Australian veteran of the First World War, still treasures a handwritten note signed by (King) 'George R. I.', stating that '[t]he Mother Country thanks you for your faithful service.'²³² In 1956 when the Queen included a visit to the Memorial as part of her trip to Australia, she fulfilled 'a pledge given by her father in gratitude for Australia's role in the second world war' (McKernan, 1991: 224). Testimony to the significance of the occasion for the Australian nation, the green oxidised copper dome of the Memorial Hall of Memory was scrubbed clean in preparation for her visit.²³³ A six-page account of the visit that Charles Bean wrote is 'a charming document, revealing Bean's affection for the monarch and his excitement at the occasion' (224). These gestures represent the respect that flows back and forth between England and Australia. Symbolism in the stained glass windows of the Hall of Memory further situates Australia's heritage as British: the cricket stumps and ball, the shepherd's crook, the mediaeval rose, the crown and so on. But a tension exists in this happy kinship between the Memorial and Britain due to the circumstances of the two nation's relationship: Britain was the parent nation from which Australia was breaking away. It was in opposition to the English fighting forces, and to England itself, that the Australian national character and 'way of life' were largely defined. Of course, Bean's comparisons favoured the Australians, to the extent that British historians have called him a propagandist for Australia. I provide two excerpts from his official history:

As they walked among the Cairo crowds, the little pink-cheeked lads from the Manchester cotton-mills ... looked like children when compared with the huge men of the Australian regiments.²³⁴

The British 'Tommy's' among whom [the Australian soldier] afterwards mixed, best-natured of men, extraordinarily guileless, humble-minded to a degree ... looked up to the Australian private as a leader. If he was a good Australian he led them into good things, and if he was a bad Australian he led them into evil, but he always led.²³⁵

²³¹ Bernard Lagan, 'PM blasts French over war sacrifice', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 September 1993, p.3.

²³² Ian McPhedran, 'A special message across the years', *The Canberra Times*, 26 April 1997, p.1.

²³³ Wendy Styles, pers. comm.

²³⁴ This excerpt appears in Inglis' 'The Anzac tradition' (Inglis, 1998b).

²³⁵ This excerpt appears in Taussig's 'An Australian hero' (Taussig, 1992a: 71).

In K. S. Inglis' reading of Bean, the Australian and English troops were not intimate because to the Australians the English seemed 'naïve, unworldly, deferential – in a word, a word which Dr Bean does not actually use – unmanly' (Inglis, 1998b: 21). Amongst the Australians in the First World War, there was certainly a degree of antagonism toward the British. Australian soldiers, like their Canadian counterparts, began collecting for their own war museum partly out of concern that the Imperial War Museum in London would not pay adequate homage to the role of the Australian forces. Australians were consciously involved in the process of recording their nation's history, a move that inevitably involved differentiating and distancing Australia from Mother England.

Australia may have succeeded in distinguishing itself from the British, but we are yet to fully break away and become a republic. Like Bean himself, whose histories proselytise on the virtues of the Aussie digger but who retained an ardent affection for the monarchy, Australia the nation still appears to take some comfort in its membership of the British Empire. Certainly, the Memorial's 'Australia' requires Britain, or more specifically the wars we have fought in its name, for our identity. Our most republican Prime Minister to date, Keating, attempted to shift the emphasis of our national legend from the First World War to the second, from the site of Gallipoli to that of Kokoda, in Papua New Guinea, where we were fighting more clearly for ourselves. He went so far as to kiss a memorial to the 2000 Australians who died at Kokoda, 'rais[ing]', so the report went, 'that campaign to a new eminence in the pantheon of Australian heroism' (Plate 12).²³⁶ And he described his investment in this memorial in almost explicitly republican terms:

though we fought in many conflicts, mostly imperial conflicts, in conflicts where we felt pangs of loyalty to what was then known as the mother country of Britain and the Empire ... This was the first and only time we fought against an enemy to prevent invasion of Australia and to secure the way of life we had built for ourselves ... there can be no deeper spiritual basis for the meaning of the Australian nation than the blood that was spilled on this very knoll, this very plateau, in defence of the liberty of Australia.

In case the Prime Minister's republican message was not clear enough, the writer quoted the treasurer, Mr Dawkins, in support of Keating's call for a new Australian flag, one that 'dumps the Union Jack and breaks 'nostalgic' ties with Britain and Europe'. Despite Keating's efforts, commemoration of the conflict at Kokoda is unlikely to usurp the legend of the Gallipoli Anzacs from its pride of place in national mythology.

²³⁶ Peter Hartcher, political correspondent, 'PM pays homage to heroes with a kiss', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1992, p.2.

The Memorial's relationship with former enemy nations is dependent, it seems, on how central the nation was to the dispute, and whether it has since apologised or otherwise atoned. Turkey, of which the hallowed Gallipoli battlefield is part, is host to as many ceremonies and pilgrimages as the Allied territory of the European Western Front. As emerged in my initial description of the Memorial's grounds, the memorial at the top end of Anzac Parade, on the east side, – the fourth memorial to be established along this strip – is to 'the enemy without whom there would be no ANZAC' (Inglis & Phillips, 1991: 191): Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In 1934 he paid tribute to 'Australia's sons' and embraced them as Turkey's own, establishing a memorial to the fallen of both countries. The Anzac Parade memorial to Atatürk was established after 1985, when the Turkish government named the site of the AIF troops' first landing 'Anzac Cove'. In fact the Atatürk memorial was a condition of the renaming: the Turkish Ambassador had hinted to then Prime Minister Bob Hawke that 'unless the maker of modern Turkey was given explicit honour along Anzac Parade, it might not be possible after all to rename Aribuinn' Anzac Cove (Inglis, 1999: 405). It is not terribly difficult to reconcile with an enemy with whom we had no direct dispute. But even this reconciliation required the further distancing of time to be complete. In late 1919, when cemeteries were being built at Gallipoli, a conscious decision was made to avoid marking the graves with an upright headstone or free-standing cross. Such markers would be highly visible signs of Christianity, and this being Muslim territory the cemetery builders anticipated – and sought to minimise the likelihood of – acts of desecration (Inglis, 1998c). They could not have anticipated Atatürk's tribute to Australia fifteen years later, nor Turkey's additional naming of Anzac Cove in 1985.

It is much more difficult to imagine memorials that pay mutual tribute to the sacrifices of Australian and German forces, or those of Australian and Japanese forces. Primary 'aggressors' in the two world wars, these nations are evidently less easily forgiven. And within their own borders, war remembrance in these two countries is more fraught and divisive. In 1985 German President Richard von Weizsacker apologised for the war, telling his people that '[t]hose of us who close our eyes on the past do so on the present'.²³⁷ When Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl unveiled Germany's national memorial, which pays tribute both to soldiers who fell in the Second World War and to victims of Nazism, an outcry ensued. Head of Berlin's Active Museum of Fascism and Resistance, Christine Fischer Defoy, and spokesperson for the Berlin Jewish Community, Jerzy Kanal, both expressed horror at the notion of a memorial that bestows a joint honour on those who fell fighting for the Nazi regime and the regime's

²³⁷ Ben Hills, 'Anger as top MPs plan trip to Japan war shrine, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1993, p.2.

victims.²³⁸ Evidently, in the absence of widespread recognition of the atrocities committed by members of aggressive nations, any reverent remembrance of their own losses is deemed inappropriate.²³⁹

Closer to home, Japan's national war remembrance is more thoroughly scrutinised by Australians, as newspaper reports of an ongoing controversy over a Japanese shrine demonstrate. The Yasukuni Shrine, established in 1869 as a memorial to those killed in the civil war fought to restore the Meiji Emperor, exists 'to worship the divine spirits of those who gave their lives in defence of the empire of Japan'.²⁴⁰ It also amounts, nowadays, to Japan's national military museum and is host to annual ceremonies in which government officials traditionally participate. Its honour roll includes fourteen 'class A' war criminals, which has prompted a group of Japanese citizens to oppose government involvement in ceremonies at the shrine. Spokesperson for the group, Takashi Ikagawa, criticised the Shrine for glorifying Japan's role in the Second World War. This war, he said, 'was a war of aggression by Japan which murdered many innocent people here as well as abroad... yet this ceremony glorifies that war'. Officials from North and South Korea, Russia, China, Taiwan and other South-East Asian nations have all criticised the Japanese government for its participation in ceremonies at the Shrine. Japanese socialists, peace activists, Christians and Buddhists have issued legal challenges on the grounds of constitutional guarantees separating Church and State. In 1993, Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa declared that he would not attend the Yasukuni ceremony in any capacity.²⁴¹ Other members of his Cabinet went, however, perhaps conscious of the political support they receive from the Japan War Bereaved Association, who also support the shrine.

In 1992, during a visit to Japan, Australian Prime Minister Keating invited Emperor Akihito to visit Australia. The invitation was the subject of some debate in Australian newspapers.²⁴² Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, prisoner of the Japanese during the

²³⁸ Adrian Bridge, 'Anger at new war memorial', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November 1993, p.9.

²³⁹ For an interesting reflection on the intense ambivalence of Germany's national pride, see Jan Morris, 'Split personality', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 1993, Travel and leisure section, p.45.

²⁴⁰ Ben Hills, wrote two articles in two days on the shrine: 'Japan's shrine of dissent' and 'Anger as top MPs plan trip to Japan war shrine', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 1993, p.11, and 14 August 1993, p.2.

²⁴¹ His grandfather, Prince Fumimaro Konoe, was Prime Minister during the war and, avoiding arrest as a suspected war criminal, took a cyanide pill and his own life.

²⁴² My information comes from foreign affairs writer Tony Wright's report 'Australian hero can forgive, but warns against forgetting', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 September 1992, p.5.

Second World War and ‘one of Australia’s greatest heroes’ since his work as a doctor for Australian prisoners working on the Thai-Burma railway, declared that he would not demand an apology from the Japanese for war crimes, but that ‘perhaps [he] would expect’ one. RSL national president Brigadier Alf Garland was more forthright, stating that the Emperor should ‘set the matter straight’ by apologising for Japan’s ‘dreadful acts’ during the Second World War.²⁴³ Since Japanese embassy officials avoided responding to the demand for an apology, the reporter concluded that ‘[t]he issue of an apology has clearly embarrassed the Japanese’.

Japanese embarrassment was also the subject of two articles on the 50th anniversary tribute to soldiers in the Second World War Battle for Singapore.²⁴⁴ The Japanese Ambassador to Singapore was invited to the ceremony in 1992 for the first time in its 25-year history. A small group of Japanese tourists also attended the battlefields and the Kranji War Cemetery, ‘though in deference to Australian sensitivities they ensured they went at a different time’. They came to learn for themselves something of Japanese history they could not learn from books. They would have liked to attend the dawn service at the cemetery, but instead laid flowers later in the day. Fusukiko Ishikawa said ‘I think it is too early; the memories are too fresh’. The sensitivity of these Japanese tourists, and ‘Weary’ Dunlop’s forgiveness even in the absence of an explicit apology, stand in contrast to the insistence by the Australian Federal Government on removing the word ‘Peace’ from the name of a new park aimed at linking Canberra with Nara, its sister-city in Japan, because of the RSL’s outrage.²⁴⁵

Evidently, the aggressor countries of the two world wars are, decades later, humbled where Australia, which commemorates enormous losses in conflicts for which it was not responsible, has gained moral high ground. This moral position in the field of war remembrance is central to Australia’s mythic national identity, and goes some way toward explaining Australia’s reluctance to officially recognise the history of Indigenous dispossession and the role that Australians and Australia have played in

²⁴³ He cited Germany’s apology and suggested, furthermore, that white Australians should apologise to Indigenous Australians for past crimes.

²⁴⁴ Jacqueline Hole, ‘Acts of love mark tribute to soldiers in Singapore battle’ and ‘Singapore: They come to remember and to learn’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February 1992, p.7, and 17 February 1992, p.4.

²⁴⁵ As the debate over the park raged in Canberra, the Legislative Assembly was presented with a 1957 newspaper report quoting then Prime Minister of Japan, Nobusuke Kishi, as saying: ‘It is over 12 years since hostilities ceased and over six years since the formal conclusion of peace, but notwithstanding that passage of time it is my official duty, and my personal desire, to express to the people of Australia our heartfelt sorrow for what occurred during the war’. Brendan Nicholson, ‘Apologies, conditional forgiveness and the whole, sorry mess’, *Canberra Times*, 26 April 1997, p.11.

other colonising projects. As a coloniser, Australia was the aggressor nation, a position that seriously jeopardises the notion of Australians as egalitarian larrikins, along with this country's underdog status. In the final pages of this chapter I will examine some aspects of Australia's practice of supporting colonisation in several countries. But first I introduce the available information about international visitors to the Memorial.

It is difficult to gauge how international visitors relate to the Memorial, but I can offer some statistics and some observations. Over the last few years, international visitors to the Memorial have comprised between 18 and 24 per cent of all visitors. That means that around two hundred thousand foreigners visit the Memorial every year.

International tourists mainly come from Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Japan, China, New Zealand and several European countries. Other than English, the most common first language of visitors is Mandarin (5.1%) followed by Japanese (1.1%) and German (0.9%). Memorial brochures are available in these and other languages. In the 1996–97 annual report, under the heading 'Social justice and equity', the Memorial states its commitment to visitors from a non-English speaking background. Such visitors, the report states, 'may know little of the Memorial's purpose', so the Memorial has taken measures to inform them: 'explanatory brochures in other languages including Mandarin, Thai and Japanese' are available in the Commemorative Area, and 'a multilingual video' has been issued to bus tour operators.

In the last five years, the Memorial has also hosted visits by hundreds of 'VIPs', including Presidents, Prime Ministers, Emirs and Chancellors. Visits by Japanese and German officials are potentially fraught. But perhaps those visits most likely to be tense are also most profoundly emblematic of the Memorial's role as Australia's national go-between, or ambassador-at-home. During many of these visits, a wreath-laying ceremony is held at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Photographs of VIPs at the Memorial are held by the institution and can be read as evidence of the Memorial's role in political and mythical international relations. It is difficult to read very much into any single photograph in this collection. Perhaps their most potent meaning arises from their collectivity. Generally, they depict the familiar ritual scene: rows of solemn, quiet, statuesque figures: the international body language of remembrance and spirit possession. The action is constituted, usually, by a single participant bending to lay a wreath.

A photograph included in the *Australian War Memorial 50th Anniversary Album* is more revealing of the Memorial's role as mythic negotiator. Its setting is the grounds of the Memorial. The building rises up behind the Memorial's much-prized Japanese midget submarine, once involved in a raid on Sydney harbour. In the foreground of the photograph stands 'a friend of' Commander Keiu Matsuo, leader of the raid. Clearly,

the image was staged for the benefit of relations between Australia and Japan. Although he is placing a rose on the submarine behind him, the unnamed Japanese man faces the camera. His mouth is pressed into a frown, but his demeanour is dignified; a complex combination into which can be read both regret and pride (Plate 13). It represents a proxy reconciliation between Australia and Japan.

From here I turn to examine the relationship between the Memorial and Indigenous peoples in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and East Timor. I touch on New Zealand because in the late nineteenth century Australians were engaged to assist British colonists to fight the Maoris; and I mention East Timor because the East Timorese people helped Australians fight the Japanese during the Second World War but were then abandoned to suffer Indonesian occupation – with Australia’s political support – until the turn of the twenty-first century. I concentrate, in this final section, on the relationship between Australia and Papua New Guinea, since it is the only area that Australia – as opposed to its British mother-country – has claimed as part of its territory.

Previously, I discussed a text panel in the Memorial that mentions that Australia’s military concerns turned, in the late nineteenth century, from Aboriginal resistance to foreign conflicts. The rest of this panel introduces the only reference, in the Memorial, to the Australian troops’ nineteenth-century deployment in New Zealand and Papua, where they assisted the colonisation of each. ‘In the 1860s’, the panel states, ‘Australians joined New Zealand forces fighting the Maoris in exchange for grants of land ... In 1883’ – the same year that Tambo and his companions were taken from northern Queensland to the United States – ‘Queensland troops occupied Papua’. In addition to noting Australian forces’ assistance to its sibling colony, New Zealand, this text panel hereby acknowledges to Memorial visitors that before Federation, Australian military forces were securing more and more territory for their own colony, or for particular colonists. It is the only admission within the galleries of Australia’s independent expansionist fantasy and practice.

By 1860, in the southern colonies at least, white settlers had dispossessed Aboriginal people of almost all of their land (Hollinsworth, 1998: 88). It was from this point that Australia’s military concerns turned to external conflicts, initially to New Zealand, where resistance to British colonisation remained strong. Indigenous peoples in Australia, and Maories in New Zealand, were represented and remembered quite differently. As Ken Inglis and Jock Phillips note in their comparative survey of Australian and New Zealand war memorials, New Zealanders have always been willing to acknowledge the history of conflict between Maoris and settlers. In New Zealand in 1900 ten memorials marked those who had ‘fallen’ in the New Zealand Wars (Inglis &

Phillips, 1991: 181). Although these memorials were to white New Zealanders, the Maoris were at least represented as legitimate warriors. This limited recognition may be explained by the fact that Maoris were often credited with being ‘more highly developed’ than Australian Aboriginal people.²⁴⁶ In contemporary white Australia, Indigenous people were not seen as part of the nation, as Inglis and Phillips argue:

In Australia the nation at war is almost everywhere represented as wholly European. There is no imaginable Australian equivalent to the statue of the Reverend Henare Wepiha Te Weinohu at Wairoa, with its inscription ‘Chaplain Major to New Zealand Maori Expeditionary Forces’, or to the obelisk in Wanganui to the Maori war dead ... Aborigines, unlike Maori, did not really belong to the nation and were certainly not expected to serve the nation at war. (190)

Despite its status as the Australian national war memorial, the Memorial gives equal recognition to the Aboriginal and Maori resistance movements, apparently because Maoris were considered more worthy opponents. It is only in referring to the New Zealand wars that the Memorial acknowledges that the prize for fighting the Maoris was land. At other moments in the ‘Colonial commitments’ gallery, it is easy to forget that colonial is the adjective for the period of imperialist conquest.

In relation to Papua New Guinea, the Memorial’s scant recognition is particularly problematic. Not only was this northern island subject to Australian troops’ occupation and to eventual annexation; people from Papua and New Guinea also fought and died alongside Australians in great numbers during the Second World War. In 1884, the same year that Germany claimed the north of what is now Papua New Guinea as German New Guinea, Australia claimed the south as British New Guinea. Interestingly, the annexation was repudiated by the British government since the Empire ‘already had black subjects enough’, and since Queensland was in the process of ridding itself of Aboriginal ‘vermin’ (Nelson, 1982: 11). In 1906, British New Guinea became Papua and was transferred to the newly independent Australia (SBS, 1999). In 1914, at the request of His Majesty’s Secretary of State for the Colonies, the German north came under Australian military rule, and Australians considered the whole eastern side of this island as an Australian Territory until its independence in 1975.²⁴⁷ The number of Papua New Guineans who died in the Second World War is unknown, but in some areas the population was reduced to one quarter of its pre-war number, suggesting that

²⁴⁶ Andrew Markus cites J.A. Carrodus, Secretary of the Department of the Interior: ‘the Maori is a much more highly developed native than the aboriginal’ (Markus, 1983: 51). Phrenology theories around the turn of the century had also placed Australian Aboriginals lowest on the scale of human evolution (White, 1981: 65).

²⁴⁷ Coincidentally, new military recruits for the First World War were trained for ‘a few days’ at Palm Island, Tambo’s home (Nelson, 1982: 25).

they suffered far more losses than Australia. Furthermore, 34 people of Papua New Guinea were executed by the Australian Army for ‘treason’ or for otherwise failing to act in accordance with the latest colonists of their country (Nelson, 1982: 199–200).

In the eyes of the Australian government and military, native Papuans and New Guineans were not dissimilar to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This hypothesis is supported by evidence of their mutual absence at the Memorial. Of the 158 ‘native soldiers’ omitted from the Roll of Honour, 149 were those of New Guineans. Every New Guinean who officially enlisted in the Australian military during the Second World War, and died, was left off the Roll. According to Michael McKernan, they were, as a group, ‘apparently intentionally omitted by the Army due to a misinterpretation of the scope of the Roll’ (McKernan, 1991: 258). The other nine Indigenous Australians may not have been left off the Roll deliberately, but they are united with the soldiers from Papua and New Guinea by the Memorial’s disregard for both groups. When puzzling over how to correct the mistakes on the Roll of Honour, Memorial staff referred to 158 names missing from the Roll of Honour as those of ‘native soldiers’, a generic term that failed to differentiate between Indigenous Australians and people of Papua and New Guinea, a conflation that McKernan repeated thirty years later in his history of the institution.

In subtle recognition of its former disregard for soldiers from Papua and New Guinea, the Australian military and the Australian government have taken some steps to express their appreciation of the efforts of Papua New Guinean people in service of the defence of Australia. When Prime Minister Paul Keating returned to the Kokoda Trail in 1995, he officially opened the construction site for a ‘monument to peace’: a hospital, first aid posts around the area and along the Kokoda Trail, road works, water and sewage facilities, and a school. It is a project that the Australian government agreed to help fund ‘as an acknowledgement of the heroism of local people during the Japanese invasion’.²⁴⁸ Establishment of the Kokoda memorial to New Guineans was not well publicised in comparison to the spectacular visit three years prior, in 1992 – on the 50th anniversary of the Second World War campaign there – by Prime Minister Paul Keating. Recall that during that visit he bent to kiss the memorial to 2000 Australians who died at Kokoda, a moment captured by press photographers who had accompanied the Prime Minister in ‘the biggest airlift to Kokoda since World War II’ (Plate 12).²⁴⁹ Perhaps the more functional memorial to the local New Guinean heroes was inspired by

²⁴⁸ Jim Dickins, ‘Rotary’s PNG mission’, Canberra’s *Chronicle*, 1 September 1998, p.14.

²⁴⁹ Peter Hartcher, ‘PM pays homage to heroes with a kiss’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1992, p.2.

a comment made by the Papua New Guinean Member of Parliament for Kokoda (unnamed in the report by the *Sydney Morning Herald's* political correspondent, Peter Hartcher). In his welcome speech, the MP said that after the war, Australians seemed to have forgotten the people of Kokoda and '[n]ow, he hoped, new bridges would be built'. Evidently the people of New Guinea have not been entirely satisfied with the practice of Australian memory.²⁵⁰

Another Australian commemoration of the efforts of the people of Papua New Guinea appears to have been so fraught that both the Defence Department and the host organisation – the Royal Military College (RMC) at Duntroon, Canberra – initially denied its occurrence.²⁵¹ On Friday 14 August 1998, a small ceremony was held at the RMC memorial to its 'fallen' graduates. Some new names had recently been added to the memorial: those of four Papua New Guinean Defence Force officers killed in the Bougainville conflict.²⁵² The ceremony was held in honour of a visit to Duntroon by the Papua New Guinea Defence Minister, Peter Weieng, who laid a wreath against the four officers' names. Official wreath-laying ceremonies at war memorials are common. The distinctive feature of this one was that it was 'kept quiet', as the *Canberra Times* headline announced. It appears that despite recognising the men on the memorial at RMC, the Australian military is reluctant to draw any attention to this invocation of their honour. A possible explanation for its reluctance is the controversy surrounding the addition of these four names to the memorial: one camp of people object because the place and time of the men's deaths is not recorded on the memorial; the other's objections relate to the questionable legitimacy of PNG Defence Force activities in Bougainville. In a conspicuous absence, no Australian ministers, nor any of their representatives, accompanied Peter Weieng to the ceremony. In addition, the Defence Department at first denied that it had occurred at all. Evidently, the Australian government was unwilling either to support or to oppose the deployment of Papua New Guinean forces in Bougainville.

²⁵⁰ New Guinean soldiers of the Second World War have been fondly, if condescendingly, remembered as Fuzzy Wuzzy angels, especially since the poem of that name by Sapper 'Bert' Beros about the carriers along the Kokoda Trail.

²⁵¹ My knowledge of the site comes from the article by Bruce Juddery, 'PNG additions to memorial kept quiet', *The Canberra Times*, 26 August 1998, p.5.

²⁵² They were A.L. Ai, K.D. Ere, J. Sembisen and Second Lieutenant M.B. Jim. The Bougainville crisis emerged in 1989 when local landowners demanded extra compensation for damage done by the open-cut copper mine mostly owned by the Australian company CRA. Secessionist demands were soon revived and the conflict escalated. Australia was further embroiled when in 1990 it emerged that helicopters donated by Australia had been used as gunships and to dump the bodies of rebels at sea, and in 1997 when then Prime Minister Julius Chan confirmed that mercenaries had been hired to operate against secessionist rebels. The nine-year civil war ended in April 1998 at a cost of 20 000 lives (SBS, 1999).

Consistent with its refusal to adopt a clear position on Papua New Guinea's Bougainville crisis, from 1975 Australia also endorsed Indonesia's occupation of East Timor and Irian Jaya. The land in this region has changed hands many times, and many lives have been lost in the struggle. Indonesia became a nation in 1949. Prior to that, the Netherlands and before it, Portugal, had claimed this territory as their own. When Japan took over in 1942, Indonesian nationalist leaders cooperated, proclaiming independence at the end of the Second World War. In 1963 Indonesia also took possession of Dutch New Guinea (West Papua), calling it Irian Jaya. When the Portuguese moved toward decolonisation of East Timor in 1974, a civil war ensued and East Timorese revolutionaries (Fretilin) proclaimed independence. Indonesian forces invaded soon after, and the territory remained under Indonesian control until 1999 when a referendum to grant East Timor greater autonomy within Indonesia was rejected in favour of outright independence (SBS, 1999). Preferring to remain on good terms with Indonesia, and favouring regional stability over justice, Australia recognised Indonesia's claim on East Timor where the United Nations never did. Many East Timorese and Australians protested over Indonesia's occupation of this territory, finding it particularly lamentable in the sense that during the Second World War, when the East Timorese, like the New Guineans, were fighting the Japanese invaders alongside Australian troops, Australia's pledge was that East Timor and Papua New Guinea would be free from all Asian oppression.

In Chapter Two I noted that the day after Anzac Day in 1997, the *Canberra Times* reported that during the traditional parade a light plane towing a banner reading 'E. Timor, Friends Abandoned Promises Forgotten' circled the War Memorial several times before being asked to leave.²⁵³ Implying that he had spoken directly to the Australian Federal Police, reporter Ian McPhedran paraphrases them: 'the aircraft was interfering with the loudspeaker system and the dignity of the ceremony so they contacted Air Traffic Control.' Curiously, he later stated that '[b]oth the police and air-traffic controllers denied ordering or requesting the aircraft to leave the area'. The story is left unresolved, a fact that inspired Anne Yuille to write to the editor, angry at this 'refusal to tolerate an acknowledgement of [the East Timorese people's] sacrifice in war on behalf of Australians' which, as she notes, is precisely the purpose of Anzac Day. Convinced that the protesters' silencing was politically motivated, she appeals for some answers: how did the aircraft interfere with the loudspeaker system when the

²⁵³ Ian McPhedran, 'Record crowd keeps legend alive', *The Canberra Times*, 26 April 1997, p.1.

military aircraft flying in the area did not? ‘Who’s got the (in)vested interest in silence on East Timor?’²⁵⁴

In light of the regional history of invasion and counterinvasion by Portugal, the Netherlands, Germany, Britain, Australia and Indonesia, and the extensive and severe violence that has taken place during each attempt to take and retain control of land and resources, the Memorial’s emphasis on commemorating the First World War in particular seems rather selective. The only qualitative distinction between the First World War and any other conflict ensuing from an aggressive attempt to invade and occupy territory is the role that Australia and Australians have played in it. At Gallipoli, Australia and Australians were beyond reproach. The Anzacs (and the other soldiers from France, England, Senegal, Nepal and India) were commanded to engage in a losing battle, and they lost. In supporting other conflicts – by which Australians as individuals and Australia as a nation gained land (in New Zealand and New Guinea), secured ongoing access to resources (in Bougainville), or retained ‘regional stability’ (in East Timor) – Australia is not innocent but implicated. It is not the Memorial’s responsibility to commemorate each of these conflicts. But it is surely appropriate for it to indicate the broader context in which conflicts erupt: the long and convoluted history of imperialism and conquest.

∞

I have argued that the Australian character is not unique; that whilst promoting Australia as an independent nation, the Memorial suggests an ongoing Australian commitment to the British post-Empire; and that more radically anti-monumental memorials exist in other countries. Despite all this, the Memorial promotes itself as, and is understood by many Australians to be, the primary site for identification of and with the unique character of Australia, and an exemplary memorial that refuses to glorify war. The Memorial’s enduring power is also due in no small part, and somewhat paradoxically, to the very ordinariness of the heroic national character it embodies. Its status testifies to the awesome power of mythology to structure social and political relations among Australians and between nations.

²⁵⁴ *The Canberra Times*, 30 April 1997, p.8. A Papua New Guinean friend of mine informed me of a recent ceremony at the National War Memorial there. For him, this moment of remembrance was summed up by an Australian digger who, having fought in East Timor during the Second World War, was appalled by the Australian government’s continuing recognition of East Timor as part of Indonesia. This digger felt that his government had let him down by failing to keep the promise it made back then that East Timor would be free from the Japanese and all kinds of Asian oppression. As in Papua New Guinea, the Indigenous people of East Timor have grounds for objecting to the Australian propensity for remembering some of its own people and forgetting all others.

In international politics, the Memorial is a site for staging mateship and reconciliation, and for promoting Australia's independence. In relation to Belgium and France, the Memorial is a vessel via which these countries can register their appreciation of the Allies' support during the First World War – the Menin Gate lions are the most significant European investment in the Memorial – and a medium via which Australia can erect memorials on the Western Front and Australians can participate in commemorative tours. In relation to Britain, the Memorial registers Australia's British ancestry and its nostalgia for things British, but it also registers Australia's independence. Bean exemplified this contradiction by retaining an ardent affection for the monarchy whilst proselytising on the virtues of the manly Aussie digger in relation to the British Tommies. Keating's attempt to shift the focus of Australian war remembrance from Gallipoli to Kokoda was a push for republicanism, but it was unlikely to topple the primacy of the First World War digger in the pantheon of Australian nationalism. In relation to Turkey, reconciliation and mateship come easily, although the Turkish gesture of respect – the name Anzac Cove – was dependent on the establishment of the Atatürk memorial in Canberra. In relation to Germany and Japan, the Memorial is also officially a stage for reconciliation, but tensions continue to underlie commemorative practices. The question as to whether or not Germany and Japan have apologised and atoned for their belligerence continues to occupy people in many countries, their own included. The Commonwealth veto of the name Canberra Nara Peace Park is indicative of the ongoing tension; and the Memorial photograph of Commander Keiu Matsuo's friend, in the Memorial grounds, placing a rose on the submarine that invaded Sydney harbour, illustrates this tension.

In the section of this analysis of the Memorial's international relations that deals with Indigenous peoples, the theme that emerged in Lesson I and carried through Lesson II persists. The Memorial downplays the role of Indigenous people in military history, as participants in the Australian forces but especially as its targets. All 149 of the New Guineans who died fighting for Australia in the Second World War were left off the Roll of Honour. The memorial at Kokoda to the local heroes is functional, but the memorial to the Australians who died there is, for Australians, more potent: the object of a spectacular and well-publicised Prime Ministerial commemoration. Perhaps most tellingly, the recent deaths of four Papua New Guinean graduates of RMC were added to the memorial in its parade ground, honoured and commemorated, but ever so quietly. This strange quietude – in contrast to the more traditional pomp surrounding such ceremonies – also manifested in a report of the East Timorese protest during Anzac Day 1997. But if the Memorial can barely acknowledge Indigenous assistance to the defence forces of their colonisers, it is not surprising that it is incapable of acknowledging the Indigenous losses of life, land and resources to colonists.

The Australian War Memorial

IV

In history

During stage four, students in Shor's utopia course examine the hamburger in its recent historical context. This stage completes the diagnostic phase of their investigation, and prepares them for the final stage of reconstruction. This chapter comprises a lesson in history, in which I explore the Memorial's signifying practices from the point of the institution's conception to the present day, identifying its trajectory and its points of tension. Having produced an account of the Memorial's historical development as the first and foremost national museum, I revisit the period from the First World War to the present to consider how the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people overlays the development of this institution, how Indigenous Australians have been actively excluded from both the ADF and the nation. As I will argue, this story of exclusion goes some way toward explaining how the conflict between Indigenous and settler Australians could be and remain excluded from the Memorial's commemorative scope.

Right from the beginning, the Memorial's position on the axis of Canberra, opposite the seat of federal government, was deliberate, as a 1927 publication indicates:

Parliament House lies athwart this axis on Camp Hill, while the Australian War Memorial is to occupy the magnificent site at its N.E. end, on the lower slopes of Mount Ainslie.²⁵⁵ (Robinson, 1927: 84)

Similarly, the 1968 version of the booklet *The Hall of Memory* explains how the arcaded gallery along the east and west sides of the court (the cloisters, containing the Roll of Honour), 'is absent [on the southern side] so that the Hall looks out along the main axis of the city, to Parliament House and the hills beyond'. Clearly, the site – the

²⁵⁵ In fact the government had allocated this site to the war memorial before the ancillary parliament building was built (McKernan, 1991: 94).

heterotopic position – has always been a feature of the Memorial. But the process by which the Australian War Memorial came to reflect or embody the nation itself is intriguing and not especially logical. In the following pages I relate the story of the Memorial’s inspiration, imagination and materialisation,²⁵⁶ a curious mixture of deliberate and spontaneous national investments. I then describe several controversies or tensions in the story. Next, I suggest the Memorial’s current trajectory, before venturing back to reexamine this story in light of Indigenous Australian experience.

It was C.E.W. Bean who pushed with all his heart for the Memorial’s establishment. Given his status as official historian of the First World War²⁵⁷ and his veritable reverence for the troops, and given the fledgling status of the Australian nation and of nationalism itself, it is possible to understand how a memorial to wartime could gain both official and popular support. This is the story of a war museum that became not only the national war memorial but also the national history museum. A more general tribute to Australian culture might have been built for the new nation imagined by contemporary Australians but instead the Australian War Memorial was formed.

Bean urged the Australian government to make preparations for a war museum. Like the Canadians, the Australians did not trust that the British war museum would give due recognition to the achievements of Australians in France. Following the Canadians’ lead, and after the governors-general of both countries had worried that London would keep the best items, Australia set up a War Records Section (AWRS) in France. The AWRS began operations on 16 May 1917 with Major John Treloar as officer-in-charge (40). AIF Order 1238 (issued 7 September 1917) listed the kinds of trophies wanted by the AWRS: enemy weapons including clubs, daggers, catapults, crossbows; enemy uniforms and equipment, armour and shields; gas equipment including masks and gas alarm devices; tools and cooking appliances, and any ingenious devices made by the Australians; transport signs; German paper money; photos and drawings; models made by the men; German flags; colours and musical instruments; flags used to mark headquarters and captured locations; and more generally, ‘souvenirs from the battlefields’. Units were encouraged to do their utmost to locate suitable items, and duplication, they were told, was of no concern (46). To acquire items from battles prior to the establishment of the AWRS in 1917, collectors were implored to relinquish pieces they had taken from Gallipoli, Pozières and so on. In 1918 the (British) National War Museum changed its name to the Imperial War Museum ‘to emphasise that it

²⁵⁶ For this section I am greatly indebted to Michael McKernan’s history of the Memorial, *Here is Their Spirit*, which he wrote for the 50th anniversary of its opening.

²⁵⁷ His sixteen-volume history is *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, published between 1921 and 1942.

would ‘represent the great Imperial effort’ in which a prominent position would be given to the work of the Dominions’ (39). But it was too late a gesture to stop the Australian collection. Even before the idea for a national war museum was floated in Australia, the AWRS was operating, and there was no looking back.

Bean’s passion for the war museum was neither religious nor entirely secular. He felt a profound ‘obligation to the dead’ (McKernan, 1991: 43); and he deplored the term ‘trophies’ as connoting victory over the vanquished. In his vision, the museum would represent the sacrifice, not the glory, of war. It would keep the memory of the fallen soldiers alive, but it would not by any means promote warfare. What it would promote, if Bean’s vision were realised, was a humanitarian reverence for the soldiers. For him, the most interesting exhibit would be ‘a section of old duckboards which had lain in the bottom of a trench, and were worn by the feet of hundreds of thousands of men’.²⁵⁸ He would undoubtedly approve, as McKernan argues, of the ‘Man in the mud’ exhibit (344–45). Echoing Bean, Treloar’s mission for the museum was to show people ‘the appalling conditions in which the men fought’. He instructed field officer Gallagher to gather twenty complete sets of uniforms and equipment from the men as they came out of the line and to photograph them at that moment: ‘Their uniforms would be covered in mud and torn, he expected, but Gallagher was simply to pack them – he was not to touch them up’ (48).

Bean’s choice of a term to replace ‘trophies’ is significant. He insisted on referring to collected items of military waste and memorabilia as ‘relics’. His museum would be a reverent memorial to Australians killed at war, and would thereby contain ‘the atmosphere, the spirit and the relics of the AIF’.²⁵⁹ In a letter to long-serving Director Major John Treloar, he wrote that his relics were ‘full of the story of the AIF and with as much history and sanctity attaching to them as to the bones of Captain Cook’ (88). Again, the religious (Christian) tradition underpinning the establishment of the war memorial is evident. ‘Relic’ in fact has an interesting set of meanings: something that has survived from the past; something kept as a remembrance or treasured for its past associations; a remaining part or fragment; and for the Roman Catholic Church, part of the body of a saint, venerated as holy.²⁶⁰ By emphasising the sacred aspect of his relics Bean was invoking not only the first three meanings, but the fourth as well. Of course,

²⁵⁸ He reported this idea to the *Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works* in 1928, in the *Minutes of Evidence*, p.4, in AWM 38 3DRL 6673, item number 641. (Note: this reference is hereafter cited only as *Minutes of Evidence*). He first wrote of this idea in his diary on Armistice Day, 11 November 1918.

²⁵⁹ Bean, *Minutes of Evidence*, p.8.

²⁶⁰ *Collins English Dictionary, Op.Cit.*

and as demonstrated by how the Memorial has downplayed the public significance of the body parts collected from the battlefields of the First World War, the Memorial would never fully embrace this Catholic notion of the relic. Going on his comment on Captain Cook, however, perhaps Bean would have been willing to display the collection.

The Memorial was conceived at a time when people all over the world – including many Australians – were putting religion aside. Death, for soldiers in the First World War, therefore required a different kind of meaning, as Benedict Anderson explains:

Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning. (Anderson, 1983: 19)

A typical Australian at the Western front was fatalistic rather than church-going (McKernan, 1991: 15). But the young soldier's self-anticipated death was already invested with a new meaning or purpose, if Bean's oft-quoted line, which he projected into the mind of a young Australian soldier, is anything to go by. He wrote that he

often thought that many a youngster when he was hit out there on the Passchendaele heights – during the last few minutes of his life, when all his prospects and illusions as to the future had suddenly faded out and he knew that the end had come – must have thought to himself: 'well at least they'll remember me in Australia'. (44)

The Memorial emerged on and out of the cusp of Western cultures' new relationship to death. Death may have become more final, but this morbid fact was alleviated by the idea of a national legacy.

The degree to which everyone involved with the Memorial's collection was conscious of making the history of the future is striking. As McKernan noted, Bean, Treloar and Gullett were all sustained by the 'sense of undertaking work of national importance ... imbued as they were with a sense of history and convinced of the war's possible effect on national character' (47). The language of national spirit was used as early as 1918 by administrators of the AWRS. Cabling the Department of Defence, they wrote that 'a nation is built upon pride of race and now that Australia is making a history of her own she requires every possible relic associated with this to help educate her children in the national spirit' (47–48). Later, Bean himself explained his motivation for collecting as follows:

I think that people, even in 100 years' time, will still be interested in this museum. There is always a human interest in these matters. There is a human

appeal in the sufferings, bravery and cruelty of men which makes the memory of them last.²⁶¹

In 1934 Treloar wrote to Bean, describing plans to plant a pine tree in the grounds of the Memorial, grown from a seed sent by a soldier from Gallipoli home to his mother. Again we can discern an overt investment in the present Memorial as the future's history:

the more sentiment there is attaching to the War Memorial and its surroundings the better, and this tree, because of its origin and because of the circumstances in which it was received by the Commonwealth will have an appealing history.²⁶²

It was not only the official collectors who projected their present activities into the historical future. As Treloar explained to a reporter at the *Argus* in Melbourne, 'every man went into action with a pocketful of museum labels'.²⁶³ At the level of the soldiers themselves, a passion for collecting is even more astounding. The Australian troops were renowned for their collection enthusiasm. British authorities expressed their bewilderment to Treloar that more material was being collected by the comparatively small Australian forces than by all the other divisions of the British Army. Bean explained it in terms of good publicity amongst troops of the proposed museum, as well as their own enthusiasm.²⁶⁴ Indeed, when Treloar had issued his request for twenty complete sets of uniforms straight off the troops' backs as they returned from the line, Bean was warned not to inform them beforehand, 'or we shall have them rolling in the mud or something'.²⁶⁵

Reading such statements I was struck by how dutifully these men performed the role in which they were cast not only as soldier pawns of the Empire but also as embodiments of the Australian national spirit. To a certain extent the men consciously anticipated their own deaths, pre-empting Australia's desire for remnants of their experience. Responding to a call from nationalist mythology, they willingly offered their own bodies as a sacrifice to the national spirit. Peculiar to the Australian troops, this passion for collecting was apparently also peculiar to the troops of the *first* AIF. According to McKernan, the second AIF 'deferred to their forefathers as the real makers of Australian military history' so that these 'sons of the Anzacs' had not the same 'quest for booty' (169). In addition, the landing of Gallipoli and the end of the First World War remain the occasions that present-day Australians commemorate as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day respectively. It appears, then, that right from the start the First

²⁶¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, p.8.

²⁶² Letter from Treloar to Bean, 27 March 1934, in AWM 38 3DRL6673, item number 687.

²⁶³ 27 January 1925, in McKernan, p.45.

²⁶⁴ *Minutes of Evidence*, p.4.

²⁶⁵ Letter from the adjutant of the 29th Battalion to Bean, in McKernan, p.49.

World War in particular – not war in general, and not the experience of war for all of society – had been associated with the history of the Australian nation.

In the decade following the end of the First World War, the idea of the war museum as the national war memorial took shape. The War Museum's Committee made repeated pleas for government support for the Museum as the national war memorial, but forces such as the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA, the RSL's precursor) conspired to oppose the Museum's designation as the national memorial. RSSILA favoured a decentralised, less investigative approach to war memorialisation: a dispersed network of memorial halls and other monuments throughout the nation. 'As time dragged on the Committee had to accept that the museum would be but one of a number of competing activities honouring Australia's war dead and survivors' (68). 'Trophies' were distributed throughout the nation in 1921. Throughout the 1920s the war museum produced temporary displays designed to garner public support for a national museum. An Australian War Museum photographic exhibition opened in Melbourne in August 1921. On Anzac Day of the following year the Museum opened the doors of a more comprehensive interim exhibition of artefacts and records in Melbourne. At the opening, government ministers stressed its provision of a 'lesson in the horror and stupidity of war' (88). The Melbourne exhibition attracted 780 000 visitors in the three years it operated, a phenomenal turnout given that the Australian population was at that time between five and six million. In 1925 this display moved on to Sydney, where it remained until 1935, having attracted over two million visitors.

It was 1925 that saw the passage of the Bill that designated the Memorial as the Commonwealth memorial to Australians who died in that 'Great War'. By 1928 the architectural plans had been almost finalised.²⁶⁶ Bean had developed an elaborate and somewhat romantic vision for the Memorial, which he described in a letter to Bazley:

In the centre will be the sanctuary – consisting of an exquisite garden and fountain court, surrounded by cloisters and leading up to a beautiful hall of memory – wherein will be inscribed the names of all Australians who lost their lives through service in the forces of the British Empire ... The building will lie in a park flanked with plantations, and behind it will rise the dark slopes of Mount

²⁶⁶ The design was the result of a collaboration between two architects who had submitted separate entries to the competition held to determine the architecture of the building. None of the original entries met all the criteria for validity – the most difficult limit of which was £250 000, so Emil Sodersteen and John Crust, who had produced the two best entries, were invited to submit a joint design.

Ainslie ... The court will be planted with lawns, bright flowers and shrubs, with a pool and fountain in the centre.²⁶⁷

Over the next few months of 1928, the site and the design of the building were opened to public scrutiny, and newspapers across the country reported on progress for the national war memorial and museum. In the various descriptions of the concept, site and design, a sense of the future memorial as connecting the people with the mythic glory of the nation clearly emerges.

Reports of the concept were mostly favourable, indicating perhaps something of the broad support for and popularity of the Memorial as it appeared in Bean's vision. In *The Herald*,²⁶⁸ a reporter stated that the Memorial would remind visitors 'of all that is best in the Australian character and all that is good in the national life ... If those invisible things for which Australian manhood poured its blood are worth striving for, Australia must be the gainer from so expressive a monument.' *The West Australian*²⁶⁹ reporter suggested that visitors would look beyond the displays of the Memorial, to reflect on both the glory and the trauma of war: 'A war museum can only vaguely suggest the hell of war, as it can only suggest its idealism and its fortitude, but something may be done to indicate both to those active-minded people who can take a hint ... and this is what Bean's conception aims to give.' Bean had informed the Hobart *Mercury*²⁷⁰ that the museum would show 'the hardships and suffering endured by the soldiers and the actual conditions under which they had lived'. This story continued: 'No attempt had been made to glorify war, but rather to encourage people to study the exhibition in a spirit of reverence. Anything that would preach or encourage war was not desired.'²⁷¹ The *Christian Science Monitor*²⁷² revealed the gist of its article in the title: 'Australia's War Memorial to Teach the Lesson of Peace'.

Most commentators were equally impressed by the proposed design of the building, again often on the grounds of its consistency with the spirit of the Memorial and the nation. Bean felt 'quite sure what the verdict of posterity [would] be'.²⁷³ Mr W.

²⁶⁷ Bean, 'In train', 11 March 1928, letter to 'Baz': Mr AW Bazley, Official Historian, Sydney, in AWM 38 3DRL6673, item number 637.

²⁶⁸ 22 March 1928. The clippings cited here, unless otherwise referenced, were included in AWM 38 3DRL6673, item number 620.

²⁶⁹ 26 March 1928.

²⁷⁰ 24 March 1928.

²⁷¹ That Bean's anticipated effect of the display on visitors is one of reverence is interesting, and a point to which I will return.

²⁷² 14 May 1928.

²⁷³ He wrote this in a letter to Major-General Sir CBB White, Chair of the Public Service Board of Commissioners in Melbourne, on 22 February 1928; AWM 38 3DRL 6673, item number 637.

Blackett, President of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, liked the design's 'non-assertiveness', which he saw in contrast to 'the glorification of the military spirit more apparent in monuments of the late German Empire'.²⁷⁴

In the various commentaries on the proposed site and design it is possible to see both popular and official sentiment uniting in support of the concept of the national memorial. While the First World War was still fresh in the national memory, and resentments potentially prevailed amongst those whose loved ones had been sacrificed, there was surprisingly little bitterness over the idea of the Memorial. Whatever their position on the war itself, it seems, it was possible to envisage the resulting memorial as serving their favoured purpose. The people's memorial would be a vehicle for remembering the lives of those lost – for remembering the enormous cost of war, whatever its outcome. Even those adamantly opposed to the war could appreciate this memorial.²⁷⁵ For the state, by contrast, the Memorial would attest to our nation's collective strengths, and remind the men of the future of their value and duty as members of the nation.

Given the circumstances of its manifestation, it is less surprising that Australia's first site for national identification was a war memorial, rather than an institute of the arts or of science. Walter Burley Griffin, Canberra city's designer, approved of the site for the proposed national war memorial despite the fact that it was not quite what he had planned, as he told the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works in 1928:

My mind was concentrated upon a general memorial to commemorate successively the achievements of Australians in literature, science, art, politics, &c. It was to be a continuous memorial that could be extended through the centuries, and not such a specific memorial, the necessity of which has since arisen to commemorate a great event.²⁷⁶

The foundation stone was laid on Anzac Day 1929. Due to various factors including the Depression and Australia's commitment to another world war, the Memorial did not open until 1941. The Hall of Memory glass windows and mosaic were not completed until 1946, and even then construction of the Roll of Honour had not yet begun.

²⁷⁴ *Melbourne Age*, 4 April 1928.

²⁷⁵ The Memorial was not altogether free from criticism. A writer in the *Sydney Worker* had, three years prior to this 1928 debate, condemned the Australian War Museum exhibition on the grounds of its indulgence in exactly that which Bean hoped it would eschew: 'glorification of killing' (McKernan, 1991: 86). Documented criticism of the Memorial is rare and for that reason alone interesting. I return to this piece later in this chapter.

²⁷⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, p.9. Walter Burley Griffin had a fairly troubled relationship with the Australian government after it had refused to retain the integrity of his winning design for Canberra, preferring instead to pick and choose elements of it. He had actually envisioned this public memorial atop Capital Hill, the prime position now occupied by Parliament House. I return briefly to this relationship in Part V.

At the Memorial's 1941 official opening, the intrinsic association between its purpose and the utter purposelessness of the war that inspired it was clear. Lord Gowrie said the First World War caused:

universal destruction, desolation and distress without bringing any compensating advantage to any one of the belligerents. It was a war which settled nothing; it was a war in which all concerned came out losers. (5)

Prime Minister Curtin also spoke at the opening. He had opposed conscription in the First World War, and had been gaoled briefly for failing to register for the call-up. Yet, he saw the Memorial as unquestionably uplifting:

the Parliament of a free people ... cannot but be inspired and strengthened in the performance of its great duty by the ever-present opportunity to contemplate the story ... of the deeds that helped to make the nation. (6)

In the absence of a nationalist consciousness the shift from the first statement to the second would make little sense. Given that this war was dreadful in every possible respect, given that 'all concerned came out losers', why would Australians choose to commemorate it as their nation's originary moment? What pride can we take in such a war? Prime Minister Paul Keating's speech 52 years later, on the occasion of the internment of the Unknown Soldier, to some extent bridges this gap. Having outlined the brutality and waste of the war he said that still, their deaths were not in vain: 'For out of the war came a lesson which transcended the horror and tragedy and the inexcusable folly. It was a lesson about ordinary people – and the lesson was that they were not ordinary.'²⁷⁷ It takes a kind of nationalist faith, a partial subscription to or familiarity with nationalist discourses to comprehend the process of the Memorial's materialisation. Generally, nationalism holds that dying for one's country operates intrinsically to attribute individuals and the nation itself with moral grandeur. Specifically, Australian-ness is a mythic appreciation and willingness to act on behalf of the ordinary 'next bloke'. The First World War was, and the Memorial to it remains, an ideal arena for Australian nationalism to flourish.

As may be apparent, the Memorial was beset from the beginning by contention over a number of issues. In general, these revolve around the polarised question of whether the Memorial is a reverent, military memorial or a potentially critical public museum. But the first tension in the Memorial's story preceded this question, since it emerged before the Memorial's status as the national war memorial had been confirmed.

Responding to RSSILA pressure for the establishment of memorials throughout Australia, Prime Minister Hughes wrote to state Premiers in September 1919 outlining procedures for the distribution of 'trophies'. State committees had wanted 'to base

²⁷⁷ 'Inspiration to all: A nation remembers' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1993, p.4.

distribution on patriotic effort', that is, on state by state rates of enlistment or fundraising effort: the greater the state's 'patriotic effort', the greater its trophies would be. But the federal government vetoed this idea, presumably because of its potential to foster division rather than unity. It decided that trophy allocation would depend instead on population rates (71–72). As noted in Lesson One, text in today's Memorial informs readers that after the First World War the Commonwealth Government offered every municipality a captured enemy weapon, its size commensurate with the municipality's population. What visitors can not learn from this display, however, is that 469 towns declined the offer. Forty six towns indicated they lacked the public space necessary to display them; a further 33 directly refused to accept their share of the booty, though offered no reason for their refusal (72). If this information were included in rather than excluded from the display, it would add to and complicate the spirit of this gesture of the nation-state. Instead, the tension is suppressed for the sake of projecting a harmonious Australian unity.

Australian culture has always been divided over how the war should be represented and remembered, and the Memorial has always been central to these public debates. For proponents of patriotic nationalism and anti-Bolshevism, digger imagery was used to make trade union groups, the working class and so on appear selfish and disloyal by contrast (White, 1981: 139). For a 1925 writer in the *Sydney Worker*, the Australian War Museum indulged in the 'glorification of killing', and should incorporate 'a few live specimens of seriously injured veterans holding out military caps for coppers'. He opposed the clean commemoration of the dead, arguing that the museum should mount displays showing more of the grim reality of war: the maimed, the diseased, vermin, dirt and so on (McKernan, 1991: 86).

Memorial staff also often disagreed over what constituted appropriate representation and remembrance of war. Early on in the Memorial's development, Acting Director Major A.G. Pretty criticised official war artist Will Dyson's drawings on the grounds that they were 'too heavy and stressed the more miserable aspects of the soldier's life'. He firmly believed that '[t]hat sort of thing people want to forget as rapidly as their memories will allow' (85). Bean, however, loved Dyson's drawings, for exactly the same reason that constituted Pretty's objection. For Bean, Dyson 'sensed the futility of war with greater depth than any other official artist' (23).

Bean had his own conflict with another official war artist (although it is anachronistic to name this artist as such). Frank Hurley was an official war photographer with whom Bean clashed over precisely the question of Hurley's professional status. To render his images more realistic and in his mind to better capture the spirit of a battle, Hurley used the technique of montage, connecting images to provide, for instance, a wider

panoramic view (Hüppauf, 1995: 103). Bernd Hüppauf reads the ‘heated debate’ between Bean and Hurley as a decisive turning point in the conception of photography. He argues that although Hurley’s photographs can be criticised as *misrepresentation* and as too beautiful to adequately convey the harsh reality of war, they can also be related to the modern art practice of montage as a means of exposing the artificiality of photographic image-making (103–4). As a documentary maker, Bean was disturbed by the notion of photography as art (McKernan, 1991: 49–50). But as Hüppauf observes, Bean’s ‘naturalist concept of representation’ now seems ‘naïve and hopelessly outdated’.²⁷⁸

Bean and a subsequent Memorial Director, Major McGrath, had a similarly mismatched understanding of their mission. In 1953 Bean must have been dismayed when he saw a Memorial display containing Japanese instruments of torture, as well as tokens of their surrender. Ever sensitive to the servicemen, he felt that the former may distress families of tortured men, who had revealed little of their ordeal as POWs, and that the latter was tantamount to boasting²⁷⁹ (220). He was moved to produce a set of guiding principles, which suggested avoiding ‘wartime propaganda terms (such as ‘Huns’)' and ‘[a]nything savouring of boastfulness’. As noted, Bean favoured the term ‘relics’ over ‘trophies’, since the Memorial ‘commemorates the brave sacrifice of those who fought, not their conquests’. Under the heading ‘Avoid perpetuating enmity’ he suggested acknowledging those qualities ‘which the healing of wounds enables us to appreciate’. Our opponents’ heroic deeds, he argued, should be represented in terms ‘similar to those which would be used concerning our own people’.²⁸⁰

Despite its traditional association with conservative, patriotic, militaristic politics, the Memorial was never intended, by its visionaries, to venerate or glorify the military institution. Rather, that which it sanctified was the willing sacrifice of the ordinary man. The Roll of Honour in the Memorial was planned so that visitors would remember the dead regardless of their rank, as Bean explained in 1928: ‘It was suggested from the very first that no ranks be shown. It was thought that that would be altogether in line

²⁷⁸ Given the Memorial’s ongoing adherence to the idea that art is less valuable as a historical source than photography or than military heraldry and technology, it appears that the Memorial has not yet outgrown Bean.

²⁷⁹ As a result of his objections, the Board removed both exhibits from display. However, when a Liberal MP alleged that the items were removed to avoid offending the Japanese, whose Ambassador was due to visit in March 1953, a public outcry ensued, and the table on which the Japanese had signed their surrender was returned to the exhibition.

²⁸⁰ AWM 38 3DRL6673, item number 620. There are actually very few instances in which the Memorial represents ‘our opponents’ heroic deeds’ at all, to Bean’s potential disappointment.

with the Australian attitude during the war.²⁸¹ Although Bean had imagined the Roll on the walls of the Hall of Memory, it became apparent before the Hall was built that the names were too many to fit in there, necessitating the Roll's shift out into the cloisters. Full time work compiling the 1914–18 Roll did not begin until 1953, by which time the decision had been made and the bill passed to extend the Memorial's commemorative scope to that of all wars in which Australians had participated. There would be more names to add to it in future.

Debate over how to list names on the Roll of Honour, and especially who to include on it, was intense. The idea that the Roll would exhibit the principle of absolute, perfect inclusivity – incorporating the names of all Australia's 'fallen' – created enormous difficulties, which the Memorial Board (precursor to its Council) set up a sub-committee to address, with Bean as its Chair. Precisely who should belong to the category of Australia's 'fallen'? For instance, would a person who was Australian born but had enlisted in London be included?²⁸² What about those who had died after the war but as a direct result of war service?²⁸³ What about members of the Merchant Navy and civilians serving with the Australian forces, such as Red Cross workers, war correspondents and photographers?²⁸⁴ Despite insisting on strict limitations in answering these questions, when it came to deciding the fate of those who had died 'in dishonourable circumstances' – of self-inflicted wounds or after a breach in discipline – the Board was more generous. Of the 60 500 people on the First World War section of the Roll, 94 died of suicide or self-inflicted wounds; 10 died while serving sentences for desertion; six were absent without leave at the time of their death; eight died while attempting to escape legal custody; and one committed suicide after murdering his wife.²⁸⁵ Inaccurate record-keeping compounded the difficulties with which the Roll of Honour project was beset. In 1969 the Board learned that the Roll of Honour contained 1744 errors. Of these, 1279 related to incorrect unit listings. Every single one of the 87

²⁸¹ C.E.W. Bean, *Minutes of Evidence*, p.6.

²⁸² McKernan notes that '[i]n deciding to exclude the service of such individuals the Board created a difficulty for the 1939–45 Roll because many Australian airmen, in particular, had served with British forces and would therefore be excluded if the same rule applied' (McKernan, 1991: 229).

²⁸³ The designated cut-off point for deaths attributed to the First World War was the date of the first AIF's disbandment, 1 April 1921. For the Second World War it was 30 June 1947.

²⁸⁴ The Board 'eventually agreed that those serving in other forces and merchant seamen would only be included on a supplementary roll, to be produced possibly in book form' (McKernan, 1991: 229). In fact, in 1998 the merchant seamen were granted their own memorial when the Merchant Navy Roll of Honour Memorial was unveiled.

²⁸⁵ The Board drew the line, however, by deleting from the honour list a man 'shot while deserting to the enemy after having thrown away his arms and equipment' (McKernan, 1991: 230).

Army panels needed correction; the names of seven officers, one soldier and 158 ‘native soldiers’ had been omitted; and three names should be removed.²⁸⁶ None of these tensions are apparent to visitors to the Roll of Honour. A ‘Supplementary Roll of Honour’ has since been established in the form of a database list of names that scrolls down a screen. Terminals are sited discreetly, at the south end of the cloisters, upstairs. There are no directions to the Supplementary Roll.

Names and naming have great power, as I have emphasised in various sections of this thesis. In the idea of the honour roll; in the utterance of names from the list as part of the ceremony for interring the Unknown Soldier; in Benedict Anderson’s sense of language as that which connects us most affectively with the dead; in all these articulations naming serves to invoke the spirit-power of that which is named, to connect the speakers and the listeners with the absent, the past or the dead. To forget to name any members of this group of the ‘fallen’ is to deny their existence and to erase them from history, both military and national. To forget to name a whole group of people – a group united by their race – is to deny the existence and support of that group, to erase from history the unique support of Indigenous people in Australia’s military activity.

Once the Roll of Honour was no longer part of it, and as architect Sir John Sulman predicted in 1928, the Hall of Memory lacked a clear purpose (McKernan, 1991: 117). The uncertainty of its purpose contributed, no doubt, to the difficulty of interpreting it. Its purpose was clarified somewhat when a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was finally incorporated in 1993. Where names were envisaged as the metonymic incantation of the Australian spirit, a generic body now serves this purpose. Reaching the decision to inter the Tomb took a very long time. In 1922, when the idea was first tabled to install ‘the body of an unknown Australian warrior’, the intention was to render the space more sacred, to ‘surround the museum with a fitting atmosphere of sanctity’. Again, the Roman Catholic notion of the relic is pertinent. Anticipating ‘annual pilgrimage to the resting place of this warrior’, one concern was that the Memorial was still, at that stage, called a museum. To house a dead body in such a place seemed problematic: ‘There is perhaps something jarring in the thought of the remains of a soldier being placed in a

²⁸⁶ Ironically, the same problem beset the Memorial in relation to its Vietnam War memorial, into which was entombed a stainless steel scroll with ‘all’ the names of those who died serving in that war. Donald Murray Clark was last on the list of names faxed to the Australian Vietnam Forces Memorial Committee and his name did not transmit. The Committee apologised to the man’s family and announced that \$21 000 would be spent to slice through the granite to replace the scroll. Tina Diaz, ‘Soldier missing on the scrolls’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1992, p.2.

museum but ... this is an inappropriate name and will be changed.²⁸⁷ Of course, this reverence for the body of a dead soldier contrasts with the macabre yet common contemporary practice of displaying bodies of Aboriginal people in museums in Australia, Europe and America.

Cabinet decided against the proposal to bring an 'unknown warrior' home to Australia in 1922, but the RSL repeatedly called for it, and was eventually rewarded for its efforts. This occurred despite the Board's history of resistance to the idea and its concern, expressed in 1971, that a Tomb would detract from the Hall (262). The Board's opinion was communicated to the Minister for the Interior, leading the government to withdraw a bill it had introduced the year before to amend the commemorative scope of the Memorial (to include merchant seamen and so on) because it had learned that members on both sides of the House would use the opportunity to urge the incorporation of a Tomb at the Memorial in line with a resolution passed at the 55th Congress of the RSL. Nevertheless, the Unknown Soldier was eventually collected in France, shipped home to Australia and interred in the Hall of Memory in an elaborate ceremony in 1993.

Tension over the Memorial's appropriate purpose and expression has manifested in part as an ongoing debate as to whether it is a military or entirely civil institution. An informal requirement that staff have military experience was still practised in 1967, and by 1970 the Board of this non-military institution 'had a preponderance of high-ranking military officers' (McKernan, 1991: 243, 244). It was the Hawke Labor government that bowed to pressure from RSL National President Sir William Keys to transfer the Memorial from the Arts, Heritage and Environment portfolio to Veterans' Affairs.²⁸⁸ In the imaginations of Bean, Treloar and Gullett – the 'triumvirate' of the Memorial²⁸⁹ – veneration for the common soldier was entirely appropriate in the context of the Memorial, but it was certainly not a military institution.

It is not surprising that whether the Memorial is of the military or of the people remains unclear. Quite apart from the RSL's recurring pressure on the institution, the whole concept of the Memorial has been the subject of continual debate. Originally known as a 'Museum', the 1925 Act designated it as a 'Memorial'. Then in 1977, it almost

²⁸⁷ These quotes come from the AWM file on the unknown soldier: AWM 38 3DRL 6673, item number 663.

²⁸⁸ This was done to protect it from the general massive cutbacks to funding for arts institutions; but it 'shattered' then Director Air Vice Marshal J.H. Flemming, who valued the connections the Memorial had forged with other arts institutions (McKernan, 1991: 330).

²⁸⁹ This is a term Michael McKernan repeatedly uses to refer to these three.

became a ‘Memorial Museum’.²⁹⁰ Perhaps even more tellingly, the legislation that first designated the proposed museum as the national war memorial, and through it suggested the Memorial’s commemorative scope, has been changed in every decade since the Second World War except the 1990s. These legislative changes, especially Acts passed in 1952 and 1980, illustrate tensions at the heart of the Memorial, so a reading of the legislation forms the next part of this Lesson.

From 1925 to 1952 the Australian War Memorial commemorated Australians who died in service of the ‘Great War’ of 1914–18. Its dedication to that one war followed a suggestion, which then gathered some support, to include the South African war in its commemorative scope. To the relief of Bean and Treloar, who did not want a general war memorial but a museum of the First World War in particular, the government rejected the proposal (90–91). This Act did not specify in any detail what and who the memorial would commemorate. Even if it had not been altered in 1952, the difficulties over precisely who to include on the Roll of Honour would have arisen. Quite possibly, if the Memorial had opened before the Second World War, its commemorative scope would never have expanded.²⁹¹ But as the war of the Memorial’s conception receded into the past, and Australia became involved in the Second World War, and possibly as Australians began to realise that no war would end all wars – all of these shifting historical circumstances would have contributed to the notion that the Memorial’s scope should not be limited to the First World War. As it was, from 1941, the very year in which the Memorial opened, Treloar sought to generalise its mission to commemorate all wars in which Australians had fought.

The 1952 Act multiplied and thereby drastically altered the Memorial’s commemorative purpose. In 1952 the Memorial’s commemorative responsibilities expanded from simply the First World War – almost unanimously understood as a horrific and pointless exercise – to every war in which Australia participates, regardless of its purpose or character or outcome, from the colonial wars of late last century²⁹² (which served the purpose of displacing Indigenous people from lands valuable in the capitalist economy), to the high-tech ‘hyperreal’ Gulf War in which Australians were to participate in 1991 (which served a similar purpose, of securing access to natural resources, and which required the sacrifice of very few Allied lives) *and beyond*. It was

²⁹⁰ The Board had unanimously agreed to this change (McKernan, 1991: 288).

²⁹¹ So McKernan suggests via analysis of the Board’s meeting minutes and correspondence, pp.160–64.

²⁹² Commemorating pre-Federation wars is odd, for a Commonwealth memorial, to say the least. In combination with the fact that colonial conflicts in Australia and Papua New Guinea remain excluded, the arbitrary nature of this allegedly total representation is obvious.

a watershed moment, when the Memorial was required to represent all these wars, and not only because of the exponential increase in the volume of stories that it was required to represent, or because of the multiplicity of the range of stories. The particularly significant shift that the 1952 Act instituted was in the orientation of the Memorial's representation. It became no longer only a museum of the past, but began to prepare to represent the present as well as the future. How can a Memorial that is prepared to commemorate future wars 'teach the lesson of peace'? By almost anticipating future wars, the Memorial is a grim, dystopian kind of museum.

The 1952 Act instituted a requirement that the Memorial become representative in a far more literal – yet far less sensible – manner. Since its passage, the Memorial has been required to represent the sum total of Australia's war experience, to exclude no one and nothing. This shift was akin to changing the Unknown Soldier into the Soldier Known By The Names Of Every Australian Who Has Died At War. It required the Memorial to begin planning displays for the world war that had ended less than a decade before, in 1945; to consider the war that was then in progress in Korea; and to anticipate and allow space for representation of conflicts that were yet to develop. The Act's legacy is a memorial with a conflicting and ever-incomplete purpose; a memorial that is no longer based on the principle of the futility of war, and that is open to criticism from advocates of every group seen to be underrepresented.²⁹³

The 1952 Act was passed at a time when the Memorial was losing the ardent opposition to military glorification on which Bean, at the peak of his influence, had insisted.²⁹⁴ Recall the growing force of the RSL interest group on the Memorial's politics, and Bean's subdued conflict with Director McGrath the following year. As McKernan argues, by defining the object of commemoration as those who died in service of the three Australian forces, the 1952 Act also *contracted* the Memorial's commemorative scope, excluding Australians who served in forces of other Commonwealth countries, merchant seamen, and civilians serving with Australian forces such as Red Cross

²⁹³ In my time at the Memorial I have witnessed several occasions in which a visitor has been disappointed by the absence, or minimal presence, of sectors of the Australian defence forces to which they belong: veterans of the Korean War, women and so on.

²⁹⁴ Although he does not specify a time frame, Bruce Kapferer might agree. He writes: 'The place, in my view, is being radically 'cleaned up', and the First World War exhibits are beginning to lose their marked symbolic ambiguity, an ambiguity that pointed to the futility of war and its great suffering and also pointed to the transcendence of ordinary Australians out of all that suffering. The Memorial is beginning to glorify war in a manner ultimately refused by many of the Anzacs' (Kapferer, 1988: 241, note 9). Margaret Anderson and Andrew Reeves also argue that the Memorial's close identification with the services and the RSL has precluded it from incorporating alternative histories into its exhibitions (Anderson & Reeves, 1994: 101).

workers, war correspondents and photographers.²⁹⁵ These exclusions were not deliberate, and they were eventually rectified in 1975, but this aspect of the 1952 Act is also consistent with the increasing militarisation of the Memorial. Recall also that those who the 1975 amendment welcomed back into the Memorial's commemorative scope would have been included four years earlier were it not for the planned intervention on behalf of the RSL to sidetrack parliamentary debate on the Act to push for the incorporation of an Unknown Soldier.

Since the 1980 Act, the Memorial has been able not only to commemorate the dead but to facilitate learning, for interested parties, about the impact of war on Australian society.²⁹⁶ This Act detailed, for the first time, the actual functions of the institution, as listed in Lesson Two, and:

expanded the Memorial's scope ... greatly extending the ways in which the Memorial could treat war. Limited no longer to the actual course of wars themselves, the Bill provided that the Memorial could cover the causes and the aftermath of the wars in which Australia had been involved. In other words, the Memorial could embrace social and political history in its interpretation in the galleries and could place military history in an appropriate context. (287)

No longer could the Memorial solely commemorate the experience and sacrifice of servicemen. After 1980, it refers also to the impact of war on the 'home front' and to war's aftermath. The Memorial's mission is now to invoke the experience of those who died but also that of those who returned, traumatised and disfigured, women, conscientious objectors, and so on. It intends for visitors to the post-1980 Memorial to remember the experience and sacrifice of the national collective – society itself – during and as a consequence of war.

The 1980 Act did not institute an onerous requirement for a greater quantity of representation. Rather, it necessitated a shift in the conceptual orientation – the quality – of the Memorial's representation. 'Relics' that once stood only for the experience and sacrifice of the dead, since 1980 stand for the experience and sacrifice of all Australians. Certain items have recently been collected in order to shift the balance of representation a little further toward the civilian experience, and the 1980 Act also paved the way for newly established displays on the 'home front', the particular experience (again, especially the military experience) of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and so on. But the innovation that the Act required was not

²⁹⁵ Treloar himself had noted this exclusion when he read a draft of the bill; but he died before finalising the memorandum in which he objected to it on these grounds (McKernan, 1991: 228).

²⁹⁶ (Stanley, 1986). Since the 1980 Act's passage, the Memorial's official mission is: 'To assist Australians to remember, interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society.'

necessarily a host of new collection items or exhibitions. Rather, it required an interpretive innovation. Where women had found their way into the exhibitions as nurses, mothers or girlfriends of the troops, since the 1980 Act, at least officially, they were automatically included, and equally important. Under this new representational regime, items like Nurse Imlay's diary extract and Charlie's 'xmas greetings' are crucial in that they bridge the experience between the troops with their lives on the line and the others left either at home or on the sidelines, in support roles or mopping up the gory damage that war inflicts on people's bodies.

Both the 1952 and 1980 Acts altered the object of the Memorial's remembrance. In 1925 this object was every Australian to have 'fallen' in the First World War. In 1952 it became every Australian to have 'fallen' from 1788 through the present to the unimaginable future, excluding, of course, those who died in conflicts on Australian territory. Less explicitly, by enabling the Memorial to convey the impact of war on Australian society, the 1980 Act opened the Memorial's commemorative scope even further, to the more simple category of every Australian's experience of war. With the passage of each of these Acts, therefore, the Memorial's purpose has grown exponentially, although the latter Act did not legislate so much as allow space for this growth.

In effect, by altering the Memorial's mission, these Acts each set a new course for the Memorial, courses that may not be reconcilable. In 1925, the mission of the Memorial was not especially clear, although in Bean's mind it was to allow Australians to witness the experience and sacrifice of the ordinary First World War digger. The 1952 Act also failed to specify the Memorial's precise mission, but generally, it was to represent the experience and sacrifice of participants in each and every one of Australia's military actions. Since 1980 the Memorial's mission has been altogether different: to represent the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society. The first half of this mission statement already refuses to privilege the military experience of war. Instead, it is concerned with the generic Australian experience. And the object of the second half of the Memorial's mission statement is not war at all but its social impact. Courses set in 1952 and 1980 send the Memorial in different directions, dispersing its trajectory. On the one hand the institution must strive through collection and exhibition, to be adequately and faithfully representative of each and every one of Australia's military actions. On the other, it has been granted licence to collect and exhibit such that the Memorial is adequately and faithfully representative of the various groups of Australian society. But as long as the prior commitment remains (and recall that this commitment has been legislated, whereas the latter was simply allowed), it is

unlikely that the latest mission will have a great impact on the Memorial's overall character.

For as long as the Memorial has existed there have been tensions over how war should be remembered. There have also been, in the words of Ken Inglis, dissenters from the cult of war remembrance – those who are appalled by the glorification of killing and of death, and who object, therefore, to the pervasive culture of Anzac worship. Inglis argues that socialists, pacifists, Christians, and nationalists have all, at various times and in various ways, refused to believe that the nation was born at Gallipoli, and have occasionally spoken out and shocked the public. But more often, ‘the alienated and the doubters stayed away and shut up, so obligatory had the religion of Anzac become in public speech’ (Inglis, 1999: 463). Inglis cites two instances in particular of people who spoke out against the cult: Hugo Throssell VC, in 1919, and Professor John Anderson, in 1931. Throssell was invited to make a speech from the dais in Northam, near Perth, on Peace Day in 1919. According to a description by his wife, writer Katherine Susannah Pritchard, his speech concerned the feeling within him when, having experienced the horror of war, he was welcomed home by happy faces, and how he had become a socialist and wanted peace. She described the moment of his speech as ‘terrible but magnificent’ (Inglis, 1999: 230). From the mouth of a veteran and Victoria Cross bearer, Throssell’s speech could not be denounced. It was a different story in 1931 when a professor of philosophy subjected war remembrance to critique. Professor John Anderson of the University of Sydney told a meeting of the university’s Free Thought Society that ‘idols such as war memorials [are] fetishes that [block] discussion on the nature of war’.²⁹⁷ State parliamentarian Michael Bruxner called for his dismissal over the statement. The university responded less harshly, although not without an implicit reprimand, by telling him to avoid ‘expressions that transgress all proper limits’ (230–31). Such is the sanctity of war remembrance in Australia, that it is considered improper to question its logic or its effect.

War remembrance propriety has also depended in part on contemporary historical circumstances. If the Second World War and the threat of invasion saw a return to militarism, the Vietnam War was another turning point in the meaning of war in Australian culture. It was the first televisual war, the first one of which graphic, disturbing footage was screened in people’s homes. Among Australians, opposition to our involvement in that war increased as time went on, infected Anzac Day remembrance with a new cynicism, and set new terms for remembrance of this war. As the public grew more familiar with the horror of war, the task of bestowing an

²⁹⁷ These are Inglis’ words (Inglis, 1999: 230).

‘appropriate’ honour on the veterans and the dead became more fraught. Incapable of fully acknowledging the trauma intrinsic to the experience and practice of war, official, collective memory and its agent, the Australian War Memorial, floundered. The effect was to exacerbate the trauma of the veterans.²⁹⁸ It was two decades after Australian troops pulled out of Vietnam that a memorial to that war was unveiled on Anzac Parade in 1992.

In the period during and after the Vietnam War, Anzac Day commemorations slumped. During that period the RSL and possibly the Memorial as well – since the two had become closely involved by that time – came to represent something very different from the heroic, egalitarian, larrikin digger. For David Malouf, the RSL’s proprietorial claim on Australian values was an inspiration to write. The RSL, he writes:

expressed in those days all the forces of intolerant repression, Anglo-Celtic xenophobia, militarism and red-necked philistinism of Queensland in the grip of the Cold War. The RSL was a pressure-group that as a young student I regarded as the enemy (both politically and spiritually) of everything I hoped for in the Australia I was growing up into. What I resented most was the claim that it alone spoke for the real Australian values, and the use it made of the dead in order to shame the rest of us into silence. (Malouf, 1997: 331–32)

This era of critical analysis of the culture of war remembrance was comparatively brief. By the mid 1980s, survivors of the First World War had either died or were very elderly, Anzac Day commemorations and the myth of the heroic, self-sacrificing digger were becoming more popular than ever before.

Currently, an extensive redevelopment of the galleries is almost complete and, as described in Lesson One, the establishment of the introductory gallery marks a significant shift in the Memorial’s signifying practice, from an all-knowing, didactic, proprietorial style to one that invites visitors to look across the entire collection, and to reflect, via the display on records and collecting, on the process by which the collection developed and continues to develop. But the new broad categories for the permanent exhibitions betray the privilege retained by the stipulations of the 1952 Act: ‘Colonial conflicts 1788–1901’ (excluding the wars between Indigenous and settler Australians); ‘First World War 1914–18’; ‘Second World War 1939–45’; ‘Korean and South-East Asian wars 1950–72’; and ‘United Nations and other peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations’. These are clearly broad categories designed to render the Memorial’s displays complete – the unified totality being that of Australia’s military experience of war, not Australia’s general experience. By organising its galleries

²⁹⁸ Philip Cornford cites the director of counselling with the Vietnam Veterans’ Counselling Service to argue this point in ‘The fight for peace: Vietnam the legacy’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 April 1995, p.23.

according to the principle of representing each military operation, rather than thematically, the institution commits itself to being representative of the military over and above being representative of all Australians. One major part of the redevelopment, which is not dedicated to a single conflict but which is militaristic in another sense, is the new Bradbury Aircraft Hall. Its August 2000 opening is listed in the Canberra telephone directory Calendar of Events with the statement that it will comprise 'a wonderful display of military aircraft'. I am not sure that it is possible, within a taxonomy of military experience, for the Memorial to fulfil the social aspect of its mission. But the final category of the list reveals a potential shift in the trajectory of the Memorial and Australian history. If the final chapter of the Memorial's story is 'peacekeeping', and assuming that there remains no new war for it to represent, then its image of the future is less than dystopian. The emergence of peacekeeping as the dominant activity of the ADF suggests a distancing from the practice of war.

That the military experience of war retains prime position in the Memorial's current trajectory was confirmed by Prime Minister John Howard's announcement on 2 September 1998 that the Centenary of Federation Fund would dedicate \$12 million to build a new display hall at the back of the Memorial.²⁹⁹ To be called Anzac Hall, the 3500 square metre hall will contain the restored Lancaster bomber 'G for George', First World War artillery, other aircraft and tanks, as well as the Japanese midget submarine caught in Sydney harbour. Not surprisingly, Howard made the announcement at the RSL's 83rd Congress. In addition, the Department of Veterans Affairs will commission a \$5 million documentary series on Australians at war, 'covering Australian participation in all major wars in the past century'. Patriotic, militaristic nationalism lives, and it continues to rely on and in turn promote the Memorial's militaristic streak. Making the announcement, Howard said: '[t]he Coalition believes that the great sacrifices for our national freedom and way of life made by our veterans constitute one of the important reasons for celebrating Australia's history.'

At this point in my historical analysis of the Memorial's signifying practices, I turn again to focus on Indigenous Australians. By considering the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the military and in the nation in general over the period in which the Memorial has existed, it is possible to see once again how the Memorial represents and pertains specifically to non-Indigenous Australians, and how Indigenous people have long been repudiated in both Memorial and national imaginaries. Indigenous people have never been officially excluded from the

²⁹⁹ Ross Peake, 'Howard announces new \$12 million Anzac Hall for the War Memorial', *The Canberra Times*, 3 September 1998, p.1.

Memorial's commemorative scope, but the government, the military and the Memorial have consistently downplayed and devalued their contribution to the nation, and restricted their enlistment in the ADF. This has been the case despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' valuable knowledge of northern Australian land and waters, on which the military drew considerably during the Second World War. As emerged in Lesson Two, the Memorial's Council has also lately acknowledged the conflict between Indigenous and white Australians, but has so far refused to devote any gallery space to it.

In his book on Mabo, Aboriginals and Australian history, Bain Attwood cites the opening passage of a 1917 school primer on the history of Australia. It is an instructive passage on the status of Indigenous people in dominant white Australian discourse at the time of the Memorial's conception, so I quote it in full:

When people talk about 'the history of Australia' they mean the history of the white people who have lived in Australia. There is a good reason why we should not stretch the term to make it include the history of the dark-skinned wandering tribes who hurled boomerangs and ate snakes in their native lands for long ages before the arrival of the first intruders from Europe... for they have nothing that can be called a history. They have dim legends, and queer fairy tales, and deep-rooted customs which have come down from long, long ago; but they have no history, as we use the word.³⁰⁰

There is a clear division here between 'we' and 'they', a bold proclamatory rejection of Indigenous people from the history of Australia, and a clear sense that white 'intruders' are the righteous inheritors of the land. 'They' may have had no history, but by 1917 'half-caste' Aboriginals were permitted to enlist to fight in the First World War. Many took up the offer, perhaps because the pay for them and their families was guaranteed. Nationwide statistics are not available but in proportion, twice as many Lower Murray Ngarrindjeri men fought in the First World War as did other Australian men (Gammage, 1996: 6). In the discourse of white Australia, Aboriginals lacked their own history but were, in some cases, and under some conditions, free to join 'ours'. Indigenous people's involvement in the First World War as fellow defenders of the nation did not alter the government's subscription to the ideal of a pure white Australia. During the 1920s, Aboriginal people lost more land to the soldier settlement scheme that rewarded veterans with plots of land and ironically, some Aboriginal ex-servicemen

³⁰⁰ W. Murdoch, *The Making of Australia: An Introductory History*, Melbourne, 1917, p.9, cited in: (Attwood, 1996: *xii*).

were denied access to the scheme.³⁰¹ Even where pensions were awarded, access to the funds was sometimes restricted.³⁰²

From the earliest plans for the Memorial building, to proud descriptions of it after its opening, the desire that its facade quite literally represent a white Australia has been maintained. It was 1922 when the proposal to use ‘white Australian marble’ first appeared in correspondence.³⁰³ As time went on, the expense of white marble was recognised as prohibitive, but the idea that a white building would best represent the nation was affirmed in 1928, when the Memorial’s design was being finalised. Commentators agreed that the building facade should be a bright white, so that it would stand out from its setting, that ‘dark mass of Mount Ainslie’.³⁰⁴ One prominent architect, a Mr Ross, criticised the proposal for a sandstone compromise:

it was almost axiomatic that the building should be light in colour. A building of a brown shade would lose most of its vigour on a background itself brown. A pure white would give the most vivid effect.³⁰⁵

If the building could not be a bright white, its setting would be darkened, maximising the contrast. As the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works heard, ‘the area at the back will be planted thickly with trees to form a suitable dark background for the lighter coloured building’.³⁰⁶ The commemorative stone, a metonym for the Memorial but a fraction of its size and therefore its cost, could more affordably be constructed from the coveted white marble. In a seminar in 1953 on the role of museums in education, Assistant Director C.L. Waterman proclaimed: ‘The visitor to the Memorial first sees the fine white marble Commemorative Stone which stands in the garden court just inside the main entrance’.³⁰⁷

In the end, the designers resorted to using the more affordable sandstone, and ensuring a stark contrast between the building and its setting. Both the original desire and the compromise solution suggest the persistence of a colonial imagination. Only a people still alienated from their new land would insist on their memorial’s vivid distinction

³⁰¹ (Hall, 1997: 3). Recall, also, that Australian troops at other times were rewarded with Maori and New Guinean land.

³⁰² See Cyril Spurgeon Rigney’s daughter Aileen’s story in *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs* (Kartinyeri, 1996: 30–31).

³⁰³ AWM 8 3 DRL 6673.

³⁰⁴ *The Sun*, 13 April 1928.

³⁰⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 April 1928; in AWM 38 3DRL6673, item number 637.

³⁰⁶ *Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works Report*, 1928, v, no. 17, in AWM 38 3DRL 6673, item number 641.

³⁰⁷ AWM 8 3 DRL 6673.

from it.³⁰⁸ The landscape, white Australians imagined, should enhance or ‘become’ the fallen, not they it. This desire for ‘white Australian marble’ must also be read in the dual contexts of a Christian association of whiteness with purity, and of the new Australian nationalist discourse proud of its image as racially white. If it seems overly pedantic to focus on this debate about the most desirable colour for the Memorial, a quote from Richard Dyer’s book *White* provides a valuable rejoinder: ‘The invisibility of whiteness as a racial position in white (which is to say dominant) discourse is of a piece with its ubiquity’ (Dyer, 1997: 3).

In the same year that the Commonwealth Government approved the Memorial’s design, newspapers around the country reported on an event that suggested the unofficial war between Indigenous and white people was not yet over. It was three days before Remembrance Day in 1928 that the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported what would become known as the Coniston Massacre. A central Australian police patrol led by Constable Murray, the local Protector of Aborigines, admitted to killing 17 Aboriginal people as a reprisal for the killing of a single white man. An inquiry into the incident found that 31 Aboriginals had been killed. Rumours circulated that the number was closer to 70 (Hall, 1995: 4). White Australian responses were mixed. White employers at this time, particularly in northern Australia, tended to consider violence a useful and necessary technique for controlling their Aboriginal workers, but the massacre outraged many other non-Indigenous people, especially in the south. In many ways the inter-war period was the worst for Indigenous people in terms of repressive legislation and further reduction of opportunities (Hall, 1995: 6). Unlike the blood shed during the mythic moment of Australia’s ‘birth’, Indigenous bloodshed was ongoing, and not universally mourned. Indigenous deaths could not, yet, be commemorated in the public, national arena, at the Memorial or anywhere else.

Events during the following decade – the 1930s – suggest that Aboriginal people were still deliberately excluded from the nationalist story, still cast by many white Australians as the conquered enemy. From 1933 until the the sesquicentenary of British occupation of Australia in 1938, William Cooper³⁰⁹ had been working steadily on a strategy for improving the situation of Aboriginal people in the Australian nation. As

³⁰⁸ Walter Burley Griffin, the American architect of Canberra city, sought to produce buildings that blended into the Australian bush. In this sense it is not surprising that he was unpopular with the contemporary Australian bureaucracy.

³⁰⁹ Cooper was an active member of the Australian Aborigines’ League, a Melbourne-based organisation founded in 1932. In 1938 he was in his late 70s.

part of an extensive campaign³¹⁰ for Aboriginal ‘uplift’ he organised a petition to the King. The petition requested that His Majesty intervene on three distinct counts: to prevent extinction of the Aboriginal race; improve conditions for all Aboriginal people; and finally, afford Aboriginals representation in the Federal Parliament.³¹¹ In the years between 1933 and 1935 William Cooper collected 1814 signatures of Aboriginals in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory.³¹² Cooper sent his petition on 13 September 1937, via the Commonwealth Government. It never reached its intended destination, and its one clear demand – for federal parliamentary representation – was ignored. Perhaps worst of all, the petition itself appears to have been lost and with it, all sign of those 1814 Aboriginal ‘battlers’.³¹³

Files of memoranda and correspondence in the Australian Archives indicate that the government never gave genuine consideration to the demands of the petition, and never intended to send it on to its addressee, the King. In a previous letter Cooper had compared Australian Indigenous political representation unfavourably with that of the Maoris.³¹⁴ But as noted in Lesson Three, white Australians did not regard the natives of both countries equally. J.A. Carrodus, then Secretary of the Department of the Interior, dismissed the comparison on the grounds of Aboriginal inferiority. As to the legal possibility of the Commonwealth Government intervening to grant Aboriginal people representation in the Federal Parliament, the Government sought the opinion of the Solicitor-General, only to ignore it. In the Opinion of S. Knowles, legislation could be

³¹⁰ The Australian Aborigines’ League campaigned toward several broad goals including federalisation of all Aboriginal control, a national policy for ‘uplift’, increased funding, and an end to legal discrimination, both between Aboriginals and White people, and among Aboriginals (‘half-castes’, ‘full-bloods’ and so on). See also its agenda for proposals to discuss at the 1937 conference of Aboriginal Protectors for elaboration, in Australian Archives (AA) file A659/1 42/1/8104.

³¹¹ This was a goal opposed by William Ferguson at the time of the sesquicentenary, on the grounds that Aboriginals should be in every respect equal to White people, and should therefore not need separate representation in parliament. He later changed his mind, however; and the last political action he took before his death in 1950 was to stand as an Independent for Federal Parliament.

³¹² The State-by-State breakdown of the signatures, oft-repeated in government departmental memoranda to one another, is as follows: ‘Approximately one half of the petitioners are resident in Queensland, approximately 550 in Western Australia, about 350 in South Australia, less than 100 in Victoria, less than 100 in New South Wales and 9 in the Northern Territory (Goulburn Island Mission Station).’ Department of the Interior memo of 22 September 1937, AA file A431/1 49/1591.

³¹³ My attention was drawn to the Cooper petition by an article by Andrew Markus (Markus, 1983), but the argument here is mine.

³¹⁴ Having lamented the Australian situation, he wrote: ‘Yet in New Zealand the same number of natives have four members and one minister for Native Affairs’ AA file A659/1 40/1/858.

passed to enable Northern Territory Aboriginals – if not all Indigenous Australians – to elect a Member of Federal Parliament.³¹⁵ But J. McEwen, the Minister for the Interior, considered himself ‘virtually a representative of the aboriginals of the Northern Territory’, and so decided that the proposed change was unnecessary. He presented this decision to Cabinet on 1 February 1938, stating that: ‘It is not seen that any good purpose would be gained by submitting the petition to His Majesty the King, and it is recommended that no action be taken’.³¹⁶

Just five days prior to the final rejection of Cooper’s petition, Australians had variously celebrated, or mourned and protested the sesquicentenary of British occupation. The official sesquicentenary program invited white Australians to rejoice not only in their occupation of Australia but also in Indigenous dispossession. The highlight of the festivities – ‘first in priority and symbolic importance’ (Souter, 1987: 14) – was a less than realistic re-enactment of the arrival of the First Fleet.³¹⁷ Film footage of the re-enactment³¹⁸ is accompanied by dramatic music and narrated: ‘in the face of menacing savages ... a handful of Englishmen took possession of a continent, a vast, unknown, primeval land.’ The group of ‘natives’ that took part in the re-enactment were brought to Sydney from western New South Wales, since, for this role, Sydney Aboriginals were not dark *enough*.³¹⁹ Twenty-one men were brought from Menindee, where they lived in a dilapidated settlement of metal huts on the Darling River which housed 150 Wiradjuri and Barkendji people. Another five were from a community of 380 Muraweri people at Brewarrina (Souter, 1987: 16). While in Sydney for this (unpaid) work they were housed in wooden huts at the police barracks in Redfern, next to the dog kennels.

³¹⁵ S. Knowles considered that although it was impossible to grant Parliamentary representation to Aboriginals throughout Australia because, constitutionally, they were not counted as people of the Commonwealth, section 122 of the Constitution ‘would appear to be a grant of sufficient authority to Parliament to provide that aboriginals in the Northern Territory may elect an aboriginal member for that Territory to represent them as such’ AA file A 461/7 A300/1 part 3.

³¹⁶ Australian Archives file A 461/7 A300/1 part 3. Almost identical statements had appeared in both the first memo prepared, at the request of the Prime Minister, by an employee (whose signature is illegible) of the Department of the Interior, in AA file A431/1 49/1591 and in the memo of the Secretary of the Department, J.A. Carrodus, contained in the same file as the Minister’s Cabinet submission.

³¹⁷ Convicts were notably absent from the entire performance, although over half of the 1487 men, women and children on board the First Fleet were convicts (Souter, 1987: 18).

³¹⁸ My source is the 1983 documentary *Lousy Little Sixpence*, directed by Alec Morgan.

³¹⁹ Some of their names were Hero Black, Archie Boney, Anzac Williams and Jimmy Wongram (Souter, 1987: 13). Gavin Souter’s account of the festival organisers’ struggle to find an appropriate group of Aboriginal actors emphasises their intense concern to maintain racial distinctions: ‘The Aborigines were not easily found. Certainly 280 descendants of Australia’s original population were still living at the La Perouse reserve on Botany Bay ... But the La Perouse people were nearly all products of intermarriage with White Australians, and nothing less than ‘full-bloods’ would do for the re-enactment’ (14–15).

Manager J.R. Milne had issued instructions (received from the APB) that no one be allowed to see them (Horner, 1974: 61). Clearly, the Secretary of the APB was concerned at the possibility of Aboriginal resistance to the planned re-enactment.

It is a doubly powerful act to co-opt Aboriginal people – under threat of having their rations cut off³²⁰ – to participate in the authorisation of their own dispossession. As Paul Connerton writes, ‘to enact a rite is always, in some sense, to assent to its meaning’ (Connerton, 1989: 44). In an ordinary act of replaying their national story, white Australians possessed Aboriginal bodies with the spirit of imperialism and white supremacy.³²¹ Oblivious to the political wrangling behind the scenes, newspaper editorials, special supplements and anniversary films produced in 1938 ‘congratulated themselves on having kept their nation 98 per cent British’ (Souter, 1987: 24). White Australians were also, it seems, oblivious to the irony of this celebration, just twenty years after their own freedom had been threatened. They could revel in their own ancestors’ act of invasion whilst simultaneously decrying as barbaric the same act when practised by the Nazis.

To coincide with white Australia’s triumphant re-enactment of an aggressive imperialist victory, Indigenous people held a national Day of Mourning and Protest. Approximately 100 people participated.³²² It was the culmination of a series of political actions undertaken in the lead-up to the sesquicentenary. Indigenous people had begun to fight back within the legal and political framework of the colonists. Aborigines Progressive Association (APA) members John Patten and William Ferguson had written the manifesto ‘Aborigines claim citizen rights!’ It was an eight-page pamphlet that began with a plea to white Australians to

pause in the midst of your sesqui-centennial rejoicing and ask yourself whether your ‘conscience’ is clear in regard to the treatment of the Australian blacks by

³²⁰ Chika Dixon, narrator of the film *Lousy Little Sixpence*.

³²¹ Recall Taussig’s statement: ‘these stories of the coming into being of the state are not only fantastic history but – and here’s the rub – precisely as fantasy are essential to what they purport to explain such that any engagement with the thing called the state will perform be an engagement with this heart of fiction, the very script of whose real and grave purpose presupposes both theater and spirit possession’ (Taussig, 1997: 124–25).

³²² The following presences were noted in (Horner & Langton, 1987): Jack Patten, Selina Patten and Tom Foster from La Perouse; Bill Ferguson from Dubbo; Margaret Tucker, Douglas Nicholls and William Cooper from Melbourne, Pearl Gibbs from Brewarrina; Jack Kinchela from Coonabarabran, and Helen Grosvenor from Redfern. Jack Horner’s biography of Ferguson also mentions: Bert Marr from Taree; Frank Roberts, from near Lismore; two unnamed men from Cabbage Tree Island; Tom Peckham from Dubbo; Henry Noble; Mrs Adler from Nowra; and Jack Johnson from Bateman’s Bay (Horner, 1974: 63).

the Australian whites during the period of 150 years' history which you celebrate.³²³

It described the conditions of the lives of the estimated 80 000 Aboriginals of Australia, and called for repeal of all existing legislation dealing with Aborigines. Patten and Ferguson argued that: 'The effect of the ... powers of the Aborigines Protection Board is to deprive the Aborigines and half-castes (and other 'admixtures') of ordinary citizen rights.'

In the period just before the Second World War, government policies on Aboriginal affairs shifted from 'protection' to 'assimilation'. By the time of the Depression, all states had powers to confine non-exempt Aboriginals to reserves indefinitely (Hollinsworth, 1998: 128). Despite the appalling conditions on reserves, and against the predictions of white people, the numbers of Aboriginal people were increasing. A new strategy – the assimilation policy – was developed with the aim of affordably reducing the burden of supporting Aboriginal people, and quieting criticism of their treatment (130). At the 1937 Conference of State and Federal Ministers of Native Welfare, Aboriginal people were conceived as two discrete populations – 'full-bloods' who were dying out; and 'half-castes' whose destiny lay 'in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth' (134). This absorption was to occur through training but also through miscegenation, particularly between Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal men, which explains the widespread practice of removing Aboriginal children, especially girls, from their families to institutions. These assimilation practices continued until the 1970s and became, in 1996, the subject of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Children from their Families. The point here is that Aboriginality was seen as a problem that would have no place in the future Australia of its leaders' imagination. This point is further highlighted by the system of exemption certificates established in 1943. Aboriginal people who had exemplary employment and police records, and who were willing to cease all contact with non-exempt Aboriginals other than their parents and children, were eligible for an exemption from their Aboriginal status, and thereby able to gain the rights of non-Indigenous Australians. Needless to say, many did not take up this opportunity (142).

Just before the Memorial's official opening, Aboriginals – especially dark-skinned Aboriginals – were still unwelcome in the ADF.³²⁴ In the winter of 1940, Army

³²³ My source for 'Aborigines claim citizen rights!: A statement of the case for the Aborigines Progressive Association' was Jack Horner's biography of William Ferguson (Horner, 1974: 192–99), in which it was reprinted as Appendix Two.

³²⁴ Many dark-skinned Aboriginals had enlisted in the First World War, prior to the injunction.

headquarters, Northern Command and the Department of Native Affairs issued memoranda stating that the enlistment of Aboriginals was not necessary, not desirable and not advisable.³²⁵ Efforts to exclude Aboriginal people from Australia's defence forces were hampered by the fact that many enlistment centres continued to enlist Aboriginal people after the memoranda prohibiting them from doing so.³²⁶ On the other hand, many near-white men were rejected.³²⁷ Evidently, it was difficult to set a uniform distinction between sufficiently white and too dark.

Despite celebrating the 'national unity' that had emerged in the First World War, the possibility of unity with Indigenous people was simultaneously troubling for white Australians. It was not that the Army had failed to appreciate the efforts of Aboriginal people in the First World War³²⁸ or indeed, that no military commanders recognised the particular knowledge and skill they possessed of northern Australian land and waters.³²⁹ But there appears to have been anxiety among white Australians at the potential loss of supremacy over Indigenous people. Wary of the insurgent influence of other non-whites, the government attempted to restrict the entry of black American troops to Australia, when preparing for a counteroffensive against the Japanese.³³⁰ Further evidence of white Australian anxiety at the thought of Indigenous equality

³²⁵ Army HQ memorandum no. 25837 of 6 May 1940 stated that the admission of 'aliens or of British subjects of non-European origin or descent to the Army is neither necessary nor desirable': AWM 60 200/3/249. A letter from the Director of Native Affairs in Brisbane from Major M. Dowd, citing Northern Command Memo no. 14984 of 25 June 1940, is in the same file, as is a letter from the Director of Native Affairs to the Colonel-in-charge of Administration at Northern Command, of 27 June 1940, affirming that 'the Department of the Army does not in any circumstances desire the enlistment of fullblood aboriginals'.

³²⁶ Memorandum no. 195, to all units, area officers, and area brigade majors, dated 1 July 1940, admonishes guilty recipients for enlisting 'a number of aboriginals of full blood and near full blood', and required area officers to forward reports showing (a) 'What enlistments of persons with any degree of aboriginal blood have taken place' and (b) 'In cases of half or more aboriginal blood, why the Medical Officer has concurred in the enlistment' AWM 60 20/1/73.

³²⁷ Senator P.A.M McBride, Minister for the Army, wrote to the Director of Organization and Recruiting on 19 August 1940 stating that 'there has been much complaint about a number of half caste aboriginals from the Settlement, who are thoroughly educated, a particularly fine class of young man, and much whiter than many who have been enlisted and who were rejected'. In addition, the Director of Native Affairs wrote to Colonel G.P.W. Meredith on 9 June 1941 regarding some 'aboriginals and half castes' at Cherbourg, Woorabinda and Palm Island who had requested to be allowed to enlist' AWM 60 200/3/249.

³²⁸ Having just stipulated that 'fullblood aboriginals' were not to be enlisted in the Army, the Director of Native Affairs acknowledges the support of 'coloured men' in the First World War, who 'proved themselves capable soldiers'. He was writing to the Colonel-in-charge of Administration, Northern Command, 27 June 1940 AWM 60 200/3/249.

³²⁹ Commander of the 4th Australian Division described Indigenous people as essential, on 17 February 1944: 'Navigation knowledge and standard of the white personnel here ... is insufficient for safe navigation. It is essential that Islanders and natives be employed' AWM 54 628/1/1.

³³⁰ See Robert Hall's *Fighters from the Fringe* (Hall, 1995: 52–54).

became apparent when a unit of Torres Strait Islander rank and file was formed (with all officers, Warrant Officers, Staff Sergeants and Sergeants white³³¹), only to be paid at one-third the rate at which white soldiers were paid. As I will argue, the government and the military were concerned to maintain a hierarchy distinguishing not only white from non-white Australians, but also Torres Strait Islanders from dark-skinned Aboriginals.³³²

An initial indication of the potential threat to white supremacy that the Torres Strait Islander unit posed is that news of its formation was suppressed.³³³ A second indication emerges from the government's deliberations when, in protest at their unequal pay and other discriminatory conditions, the unit mutinied for the last two days of 1943. Two months later, an inter-departmental conference convened in Melbourne to reconsider their conditions (Hall, 1995: 34). The conference recognised that the 'natives' were legally entitled to full Army rates of pay, but decided that, since they were 'far above the rates earned by them in civil life before the war – it would cause considerable trouble when they eventually left the army'.³³⁴ They resolved to increase the rate of pay from one- to two-thirds the normal rate, a decision that was then criticised by Army headquarters for the same reason the full rate had been denied the Torres Strait Islanders. Since in peace their rates had been and would be again far less, in war two-thirds of normal Army rates was 'excessive'.³³⁵

Compounding the difficulty of maintaining a rigid separation between white and Indigenous service personnel was the Army's parallel concern to further divide Indigenous people. It was easy enough for the military to distinguish Torres Strait Islanders from white people because of the fall-back marker of skin colour. It is unlikely that the order to refuse any rank higher than Corporal to a Torres Strait

³³¹ AWM 54 628/1/1.

³³² As David Hollinsworth points out, those who were most concerned to maintain a racial hierarchy were those with the most to lose: pastoralists.

³³³ (Hall, 1995: 32). Its existence remains little known. In a 1991 article, renowned, longtime analyst of war remembrance Ken Inglis could write that 'Nobody ever thought of enlisting Aborigines in a separate battalion' (Inglis & Phillips, 1991: 190), in ignorance of both the Torres Strait Islander unit and Bill Ferguson's 1940 appeal to the Prime Minister for the formation of an all-Aboriginal Division (Hall, 1995: 14).

³³⁴ This conference resolution was cited in *Fighters from the Fringe* (Hall, 1995: 34).

³³⁵ Letter from HQ First Australian Army, dated 4 March 1944. Arrears were also denied because White Australians considered Torres Strait Islanders incompetent to manage comparatively large sums of money. It might, they feared, be spent on alcohol or gambling and 'thus cause deterioration'. This comment was made in a meeting on 15 May 1944 between Mr O'Leary, Director of Native Affairs (QLD) and AAG First Australian Army regarding conditions of service for Torres Strait Islanders. Both papers appear in AWM 54 628/1/1. Underpaid Indigenous service personnel were to wait 40 years for recompense.

Islander was breached. But once Torres Strait Islanders were accepted into the Army, difficulties arose in attempting to keep out the most repudiated: dark-skinned Aboriginals. Telegrams specifying the arrangements for enlisting Torres Strait Islanders each stipulated, sometimes in full capitals, that ‘UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINALS TO BE ENLISTED.’ When it emerged that 45 Aboriginals had in fact been enlisted at Cairns along with the Torres Strait Islanders, the Army was unequivocal in seeking their ‘disposal’.³³⁶ As noted, the ADF was similarly beset by the difficulty of establishing a firm standard for accepting or rejecting lighter-skinned Aboriginals.

Despite the Army’s insistence, wherever possible, on maintaining discriminatory practices, and aside from the risks involved, military service was a haven for Indigenous people.³³⁷ Their pay was better, they could travel, and above all, they could experience a sense of mateship with white service personnel usually precluded by the racist culture of white Australia. Early in the war there had been ‘a burgeoning of interest and sympathy towards Aborigines as a result of wartime propaganda against the Nazi concept of a master race’ (Hall, 1995: 49). But in the context of white Australia’s long-term insistence on discriminating against Indigenous people, fears of Aboriginal disloyalty later abounded, particularly in the north of the country.³³⁸

Over the next few decades, consciousness among white Australians of racism grew, as Aboriginal protests and campaigns became more widespread, vocal and organised. In the 1960s, many RSL clubs still refused entry to Aboriginal people whether or not they had served, even though prior service was not a condition of membership.³³⁹ But in 1967, the Australian people voted overwhelmingly in support of the referendum that enabled Aboriginals to be counted in population statistics, and that enabled the Commonwealth Government to legislate on behalf of Indigenous people. In addition, payments to compensate unpaid and underpaid Indigenous service personnel (of the

³³⁶ A major of the First Australian Army AOD wrote to Army HQ: ‘These Aboriginals, I feel certain, would be nothing but an embarrassment to me in the event of any action, as they are not in the same fighting class as the Torres Strait Islanders.’ In his letter of 27 October, the Director of Native Affairs sympathised, and suggested ‘hand[ing them] over’ to Missions at Lockhart River, Mapoon and Weipa AWM 54 628/1/1.

³³⁷ (Hall, 1995). See also the ‘Indigenous warriors’ episode of the ABC ‘Blackout’ program included in the Memorial Box ‘Too dark for the light horse’.

³³⁸ (Hall, 1995: 49–51). See also the ‘Confidential unofficial report’ of Chaplain Bulbeck, 2 November 1942, on the ‘native problem’, proposing that all natives be taken inland in the event of an invasion since: ‘Blood is thicker than water and many coastal half-casts [sic] have Japanese blood. They have been told for years that the Jap is their friend, and that he will one day save them from the white man who has taken their country’ AWM 54 177/2/3.

³³⁹ The first target of the 1964 ‘Freedom rides’ was Walgett RSL.

Second World War) began in the early 1980s, and \$700 million dollars was eventually given to over 800 people (Hall, 1995: vi).

Over the last twenty years many white Australians have noticed the absence of memorials to the conflict between Indigenous and white colonists, and to the losses that that conflict has inflicted, especially on Indigenous people. Interestingly, one of the earliest calls for commemoration of this conflict came directly to the Memorial from a historian it had employed to advise on how it could best update its galleries. In 1979 Geoffrey Blainey³⁴⁰ provided a comprehensive, and from the Memorial's perspective, radical assessment. In it he proposed that 'the Memorial would have to include a section on Aboriginal-European warfare 'within the next decade'' (McKernan, 1991: 293). Rather than take up the suggestion to represent this colonial war, Director Noel Flanagan instead sought further advice from historians, and received that of Alec Hill,³⁴¹ who argued that 'it was inappropriate to use the term 'war' to describe conflicts between white and Aboriginal Australians' (294).

Calls for such representation have continued to come. In 1981 Henry Reynolds noted the irony of Australian national forgetfulness in the context of the oft-repeated call, after the Great War, to remember:

How ... do we deal with the Aboriginal dead? White Australians frequently say 'all that' should be forgotten. But it will not be. It cannot be. Black memories are too deeply, too recently scarred. And forgetfulness is a strange prescription coming from a community which has revered the fallen warrior and emblazoned the phrase 'Lest We Forget' on monuments throughout the land. (Reynolds, 1981: 201)

John Pilger reiterated this extant irony in 1985: 'Today in a land of many cenotaphs and memorials on which invariably is written lest we forget, not one of them stands for those who fought and fell in their own country.'³⁴² In 1991, and two years after Blainey's ten-year time frame for the Memorial had expired, Chilla Bulbeck highlighted historians' interest in reconceptualising Australian national history, but suggested that memorials remain a blunt instrument for cross-racial, commemorative expression. She writes:

as Aborigines have found their own voice, the tension between 'writing Aborigines in' and preserving the unity of the story has become evident ... Only in the last few years have hesitant steps been taken to admit to memorials the bloodshed of the frontier wars. The more subtle message of accommodation in an

³⁴⁰ Blainey was formerly a member of the Pigott Committee established to assess the state of museums in Australia.

³⁴¹ Hill was a military historian and biographer of General Chauvel.

³⁴² John Pilger, 'The secret country: The first Australians fight back', London, Independent Television, 1985.

unequal power relationship has yet to be written on monuments. (Bulbeck, 1991: 170)

The following year, on the occasion of the Vietnam War Memorial's unveiling, Steve J. Spears wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* 'on behalf of every Australian', appealing for a memorial to and 'a healing' of 'the Australian War (1788–1992).³⁴³ Evidently, many Australians recognise the irony of Australian amnesia in relation to Indigenous dispossession and resistance, and desire to redress it.

It was due to the efforts of a white woman that the plaque honouring Aboriginal service personnel was mounted at the base of Mount Ainslie behind the Memorial. Honor Thwaites persistently campaigned for the establishment of the Nature Park in which the plaque is now located. Funds for the park were committed in 1978. Then when a Bicentennial grant was awarded for improvements to the park, Thwaites proposed that part of the grant go toward placing the plaque. She came from a pastoral family, knew that she had benefited from Aboriginal dispossession, and long felt that the Memorial did not adequately recognise the contribution of Aboriginal people. So, with the support of her Aboriginal friends, she made the proposal and persisted until the authorities agreed.³⁴⁴

As emerged in Lesson Two, in 1993 the Memorial established the temporary exhibition 'Too dark for the light horse'. This temporary exhibition emphasised Indigenous people's hitherto underappreciated military contribution rather than the military's or the government's consistent discursive exclusion of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. This exhibition, along with associated teaching kits, some funding for research into Indigenous people in military history, and some photographs and stories of individual Indigenous service personnel, comprise the extent of the Memorial's effort to redress the racial bias of its history. There is no sign that a gallery of the wars within Australia is pending. Remembrance of the one conflict that the Memorial cannot or will not name is enacted by many individual Australians, and several collective rituals or monuments of memory have also emerged – Sorry Books, the sea of hands and so on – but there remain very few officially-endorsed public memorials to the war waged in the name of colonialism, and no national one.

During 1998, support for the idea that the Memorial should commemorate the warlike history of Indigenous-white relations grew. In November, the launch of two books –

³⁴³ He writes: 'Now that the hateful and lying fiction of *terra nullius* has been gonged, when will we grant courtesy and justice to the Vets of the Australian War (1788–1992)? Ourselves. Every black and non-black in this country needs a memorial of this war, too, and a healing. Treaty now.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 October 1992, p.12.

³⁴⁴ John Bond, Reconnet email list, <reconnet@listbot.com>, 26 April 1999.

Ken Inglis' *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, and the second edition of Bruce Elder's *Blood on the Wattle* – became occasions for commemorating Indigenous losses in the Australian wars. The launch of Inglis' *Sacred Places* opened a debate on the issue of the Memorial's appropriate commemorative scope, and in particular whether the Memorial should represent the Australian wars.³⁴⁵ The Governor-General, Sir William Deane, and Professor Inglis both publicly supported the idea, prompting the new Aboriginal Senator, Aden Ridgeway, to agree. But the Memorial and the RSL, via President Major-General Peter Phillips, again rejected it, arguing that pre-federation history and acknowledgement of colonial massacres is the responsibility of the National Museum of Australia, not the Australian War Memorial. The following week, Indigenous deaths in wars on Australian territory were again in the news, as Bruce Elder used the occasion of his book launch to host a ceremony at the Aboriginal memorial behind the Memorial.³⁴⁶ Federal Government representatives were invited but did not attend, although several members of the Labor opposition, and one ACT Minister participated. As if speaking back to RSL President Peter Phillips' relegation of the Australian wars to 'prefederation history', Elder reminded those present that the last reported massacre of Indigenous people took place as recently as 1926.³⁴⁷

A letter to the editor in the same month – November 1998 – identifies a contradiction in the nationalist mythology and points to the crux of the Memorial's resistance to incorporating commemoration of Indigenous deaths. Poet Geoff Page explains that he is disconcerted by a sentence that reporter Norman Abjorensen wrote for the Remembrance Day edition of the paper. It is a familiar refrain and no doubt, for many, stirring. The reporter describes Gallipoli as a 'ghastly ritual, saturated in the blood of those jaunty young men, now forever innocent as their nation was no longer'. It is the idea that Australia was innocent before the First World War to which Page objects, since he is conscious that during over a century of pastoralist expansion, a rarely acknowledged military conflict caused 'what scholars generally agree now to be approximately 20 000 Aboriginal deaths and 2500 European deaths'. In his view, 'in 1915 Australia was already more than 'blooded' in the nastiness of modern imperialism'. He ends his letter with a plea for 'no more of the old 'innocence' myth'. To recognise the wars within Australia as the beginning of the national story is to

³⁴⁵ Naomi Mapstone's report was headed 'New call to record Aboriginal conflicts', *Canberra Times*, 19 November 1998, p.3.

³⁴⁶ Norman Abjorensen, 'Australia's unknown warriors remembered', *Canberra Times*, 27 November 1998, p.2.

³⁴⁷ Actually, it was 1928.

abolish the myth that Australia entered the First World War innocent. Consequently, it is to destabilise the fundamental nationalist myth that there had been no trauma before then, and that Australia was born of the bloodshed at Gallipoli, its spirit egalitarian and larrikin. If white Australians had already waged war on the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders whose land they claimed, the egalitarian larrikin image of the quintessential Australian is forever tainted. Dominant nationalist mythology requires, in short, that its proponents continue to ignore the facts and consequences of Indigenous dispossession.

∞

C.E.W. Bean's vision was a memorial museum that sanctified the effort of Australia's military forces in the First World War, but did not serve to legitimise, let alone glorify, the war itself. But the task of establishing such a memorial has never been simple. Though it is virtually impossible to detect as a visitor, the Memorial has always grappled with tensions over who exactly to commemorate, how best to remember them, how graphically or euphemistically to depict the circumstances and practice of war, and so on. Once the Second World War had begun, it became even more difficult for the Memorial to reconcile the difference between the military advocates' relation to the Memorial and Bean's founding principles for it. In 1952 the Memorial's mission was officially dispersed. When it was charged with commemorating not only that first war but every war in which Australia had participated, the Memorial acquired a heavy burden. Since that time it has been required to ensure fair quantities of representation to every sector and mission of Australia's fighting forces and to keep its collections and exhibitions abreast of current developments in global conflict. Despite the drastic shift in its collection and interpretive functions, it has also needed, somehow, to remain true to the founding principles that Bean formalised during the 1950s out of concern that they would be forsaken. Over time, the Memorial aligned more closely with the increasingly powerful RSL, and did distance itself from its (or Bean's) commitment to representing war as appalling. It became more grandiose and militaristic. When in 1980 it was enabled, in addition, to invoke the impact of war on Australian society, the Memorial's mission became divided. To commemorate the dead of every war in which Australians have participated, and to invoke the experience of all sectors of Australian society as a consequence of all wars; to do all this is a difficult if not confounding task, especially in the context of a militaristic taxonomy of representation.

The Australian War Memorial remains a primary site for national identification and, despite its recent recognition of the diversity of wartime experience and its social impact, its image of Australia continues to privilege the Australian military over and above Australian society. It privileges the military not only because the Memorial's

taxonomy is based on the military experience of war and therefore virtually precludes material that indicates alternative perspectives. The Memorial further privileges a militaristic vision of Australia in that it suppresses from view contention within its representational system, so that its representation appears as not only authoritative but perfectly unified and monolithic. But offsetting the Memorial's didactic, militaristic streak, in a minimalist way (via the audiovisual display on the records of war) the recent gallery redevelopment does invite visitors to reflect on the process of the Memorial's production.

As the second section of the chapter demonstrates, the Australia that the Memorial projects has also always been white. Indigenous people were initially shunned and excluded from the ADF and therefore the Memorial, part of the sculptural 'Australiana' but not recognised among the honourable dead. Over the course of the 1970s and 80s, Australian history began to be rewritten to accommodate Indigenous history. It is perhaps yet to be radically altered by this new perspective, but Australian school history primers do now begin with the original inhabitants. Concurrent with this shift, Indigenous people began to make their way into the Memorial, as equally heroic members of the ADF, equally deserving of respectful commemoration. Their struggle for recognition is duly noted whenever they are, finally, recognised, but the primary exclusion – the memory of Indigenous people's dispossession and displacement and massacre by white Australians – continues to be ignored in the Memorial's signification. The rupture between the Memorial's former and present signifying practices is smoothed over.

The Memorial continues to refuse to bear witness to the interracial colonial conflict – to white hegemony and Indigenous dispossession – despite evidence that many Australians would approve of and be relieved by an official memorialisation of this long-term conflict at this important and highly relevant (because it is a war memorial) national site. It is adamant, I have argued, because of the perceived threat to the Memorial's image of First World War Australia – on which nationalist mythology is based – where Australians are the still-plucky victims/survivors of trauma and not, by any means, its perpetrators. The egalitarian, larrikin spirit that the Memorial and nationalist Australians celebrate relies essentially on the idea that the soldiers and the nation to which they belonged were naïve and innocent. It could only emerge from a war in which Australians were not culpable. This spirit is threatened by recognition of the conflict in which Australians played an active, aggressive role: bearing in mind that this war was waged on people that are now part of its citizenry, the egalitarian larrikin's disintegration and dissipation can seem imminent.

Remembrance of the wars between Indigenous and settler Australians does complicate fundamental aspects of nationalist mythology, but it only compromises that mythology to the extent that the Memorial itself was compromised by the 1952 Act. The memory of those who died in and those who survived an utterly futile war is ill-served by a Memorial that commemorates not only that war but also every other war, indeed any war, in which Australians happen to get involved, except for the original colonial Australian war. Such a Memorial has strayed far from Bean's vision, and is hard-pressed to teach the lesson of peace. By recognising the one war it has always neglected – the war with those once repudiated but now an integral part of the national populace – the Memorial could reclaim its spiritual integrity, and restore honour to *all* the dead. The evidence suggests that it is time to recognise Australian national mythology for what it partly is: a white-centred denial of Australia's colonial heritage, for the sake of a claim on suffering, trauma and a sense of (potential) invadedness. Whether the Memorial will ever assent to such recognition remains to be seen.

The Australian War Memorial

V

Of possibility

In Shor's program, the final stage of the investigation is reconstruction. During this stage students use their extraordinary re-experience to form the basis of a utopian revision of the object under investigation. The first part of this last step, however, involves investigating the long-range history of the object. In this fifth and final section my aim is to envision a new signifying practice for the Memorial in light of my diagnosis of the last three Lessons. But before speculating on an alternative trajectory the Memorial could take, I turn to the Memorial's long-range history. As emerged in the previous Lesson, the Memorial's history begins in 1917, but the history of museums in general is much longer. In this chapter I travel back from before the moment of the Memorial's conception to consider the state of museums and memorials in Australia in the nineteenth century. In this way I examine the Memorial's predecessors, its enabling conditions and the broad shifts in Western culture occurring at that time. It is a somewhat peculiar narrative trajectory in that it goes backward in time, beginning with the impact of the First World War. Only when I have reached the point of the turn of the nineteenth century, at which time a major reorganisation of the relationship between the living and the dead occurred, do I turn to reconceptualise the present-day Memorial.

The Memorial developed when nationalist discourse was just emerging as a global phenomenon. The First World War was a highly significant period in the history of the Australian nation; but its enormous social and political impact was not unique to Australia, as Benedict Anderson writes:

The First World War brought the age of high dynasticism to an end ... In place of the Congress of Berlin came the League of *Nations* ... From this time on, the legitimate international norm was the nation-state, so that in the League even the surviving imperial powers came dressed in national costume rather than imperial uniform. (Anderson, 1983: 104)

‘Australia’ had become a federated Commonwealth in 1901, a process by which it gained distance from the British Empire without snubbing the British sovereign. Australians fought in the First World War at great cost. The military forces and their supporters and propagandists strove to distinguish the Australian nation as a worthy and formidable force. Given this confluence of events, ‘Australians’ were more desperate than people of most nations to don a national costume. Part of that costume, of course, is constituted by a national museum.

A national museum was part of Walter Burley Griffin’s plan for Canberra city, but many aspects of his plan went awry during the process of its approval. One was his idea for a prominent public museum on Capital Hill, which would form the ‘spiritual head’ of the Federation. Both the much-celebrated axis of Canberra city, which locks the Memorial and Parliament House in permanent reflection, and the central city triangle that it bisects, were part of Griffin’s plan for the city (Plate 14). Together with the architectural layout he planned, these elements of the axis and the triangle would ‘express in compelling physical form the will of the people’. (Weirick, 1998: 67) Griffin’s plan and his partner Marion Mahony’s drawings won Griffin the competition to design Australia’s capital but having won, he learned that the government did not intend to use it as an integrated whole but to take some elements of it and disregard others. The architectural layout was sacrificed. As evidenced by his 1912 design, Griffin had imagined a sports and recreation ‘casino’ at the base of Mount Ainslie, and a building of the people on Capital Hill, where it could oversee the federal parliament. This place of entertainment and relaxation at the north end of the city axis was to encourage people to use the full length of the boulevard (now the road Anzac Parade with its red gravel median strip). He imagined the boulevard as a ‘formal plaisance’; a grand pedestrian promenade; a slice of green, mid-city; a natural funnel of activity; a truly vital place. (67) The people’s museum, which he planned to build atop Capital Hill (now the site of Parliament House) would be:

a general administration structure for popular reception and ceremonial, or for housing archives and commemorating Australian achievements ... representing the spiritual head, if not the actual working mechanism of the Federation.³⁴⁸

Parliament was also to be located on this axis, but on a lower spur of Capital Hill – Camp Hill – where the ancillary parliament was later built. Griffin had situated a public

³⁴⁸ This description appeared in his *The Federal Capital: Report Explanatory of the Preliminary General Plan* that accompanied his revised plan in 1913 (Harrison, 1995: 35). James Weirick describes Marion Mahony’s drawing of the building as ‘a temple dedicated to the national spirit, an expression of the collective genius of the Australian people, a creation of the imagination and will of the entire community’. This ‘Capitol’ building ‘would stand at the focal point of the city plan and become the focus of the national consciousness, a physical embodiment of all that was unique and distinctive in the Australian experience’ (Weirick, 1998: 67).

building above the government and bound to the 'Civic' and 'Market Centres' centres at the north and east corners of the city triangle.

When Canberra was built, the central triangle and its bisecting axis were realised, but the buildings erected at these points establish quite a different relation between the government, the military and the people from that for which Griffin had clearly hoped. Contrary to Griffin's arrangement, on the eastern corner of the triangle the planned Market Centre became the offices of the Department of Defence, constituting the corner instead as a Military Centre. Parliament House was elevated to prime position atop Capital Hill, so the public building, which manifested as the Memorial, was relocated to the other end of the axis, substituting for the casino. As I have argued, to some degree the Memorial serves the government and the military, with which it is geographically associated, not the public. When the Memorial was first built it stood directly opposite the ancillary parliament building, on almost the same elevation.³⁴⁹ Since the new Parliament House has existed, however, the government has a distinct advantage over the people.³⁵⁰ As a consequence of both this geography and the Memorial's close cultural association with the military, the Memorial is now doubly overseen by the government. Parliament House also stands over Old Parliament House, which now bears a close relationship to the public, spiritual structure on Capital Hill in Griffin's original plan: it houses exhibitions of material from the Australian Archives, the National Museum and so on. In short, where Griffin had sought to privilege the people over and above both the government and the military, the Australian government chose instead to privilege itself as head of state, and its army. Where the national war memorial might have occupied a more advantageous heterotopic position, with a geographic and cultural advantage, it is instead subject to considerable government and military surveillance and control.

But it was not only Griffin's plans for architectural democracy that fell by the wayside as the city developed. Intentions to make the Memorial building bright white, or at least stand out in vivid distinction from the landscape, clash with Griffin's style of constructing environmentally situated buildings. In Griffin's schema, '[t]he city and the landscape were to act transcendently or organically together, in a conjunction that rendered the landscape monumental'. (Turnbull, 1998: 106) Griffin would never have described the Memorial's mountain setting in such worried terms as the 'dark mass of

³⁴⁹ The Memorial is at approximately 1875 feet and Camp Hill was at 1928 prior to the erection of the ancillary parliament building. These figures come from the 'Canberra Contour Survey' by Charles Scrivener, 22 May 1909 reprinted in Lyall Gillespie's *Canberra 1820–1913* (Gillespie, 1991: 271).

³⁵⁰ Capital Hill, the site of Parliament House, was at 2005 feet above sea level.

Mount Ainslie'. Had his vision for Canberra been realised; had the Memorial been designed to act in conjunction with the land, the building would have better embodied the emergent myth of the anti-authoritarian Australian identity.³⁵¹ But Australia at this stage was still ardently white, proud of its imperialist origins and capacity to conquer the wilderness.

Another point on this axis – where Griffin had imagined the Parliament, and where Old Parliament House now stands – has always been a significant site for Indigenous people. When Canberra city was designated in 1913, this site was a spur on which city site surveyors and workmen camped. It was known, in fact, as Camp Hill. But this spur had been a meeting place in Ngunnawal country long before white surveyors and workmen camped there³⁵² and today, since the establishment of the tent embassy opposite Old Parliament House, it is a meeting place for Indigenous people throughout Australia. The tent embassy's presence at Camp Hill indicates both the Ngunnawal people's prior claim on federal territory and the colony's (and then the Commonwealth's) persistent failure to recognise that claim. Indigenous peoples' reformation of this camp, now on the central city axis, constitutes their presence on this old Ngunnawal camp site as nearly continuous for many thousands of years, despite the major intrusion of white people and their federal capital.

Before either the Memorial or Canberra city had been conceived, white Australians were firmly committed to the notion of a white Australia. Since they believed, at this stage, that Indigenous people were dying out, this commitment was in opposition not to the other within so much as to the others without. Charles Bean himself sympathised, in 1907, with the white Australian fear of having 'his country flooded by Orientals'.³⁵³ As Michael Taussig notes, Bean saw this fear as a coagulant for Australian identity: 'Only in one point was the Australian people palpably united prior to the War, according to Bean, and that was 'in determination to keep its continent a white man's land.' (Taussig, 1992: 72) It was a peculiar time, for white Australians, who by then had a

³⁵¹ Recall that its design was in fact approved on the basis of its 'non-assertiveness', in contrast to more glorifying German architectural styles.

³⁵² Wendy McCarthy, 'Heritage in a tent', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April 1995, p.4. The name 'Canberra', given to it on 12 March 1913, is also Aboriginal. Joshua John Moore's station at Acton was Canberry or Canbery. Pioneer settlers also called the area Kgamburry, Kenbery, Ngambra, Gnabra, Chamberry, and Canbury. 'Canberra' was first used in 1858, and it's generally accepted meaning is 'meeting place' (Gillespie, 1991: xviii–xix).

³⁵³ His statement appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 1907. My source for it was Bruce Kapferer's book on nationalism in Sri Lanka and Australia (Kapferer, 1988: 184).

name and a vague unity in the sense that they had usurped Indigenous people and were opposed to Asians, but no visible, visitable site of, for or about the nation.³⁵⁴

It was not until 1902 that the Australian Library Association called for the establishment of a national museum of Australia in the capital. (Anderson & Reeves, 1994: 80) Prior to federation, there had existed ‘national’ galleries in several states, and ‘national’ museums in New South Wales and Victoria, despite or perhaps because of the absence of an officially united nation-state and especially, a capital. Rivalry between the states had inspired their development more than any organised or well-funded government effort.³⁵⁵ But none of these nineteenth-century museums had exhibited an interest in social history.³⁵⁶ As noted, the Memorial remains the only museum to represent both the nation and social history.³⁵⁷

Museums in nineteenth-century Australia were almost solely interested in the natural history of the continent, the scientific classification of nature, and prehistory – categories into which ethnologists inserted the continent’s Indigenous people, and according to which their bodily remains were collected and studied. At this stage, museums were not particularly interested, even, in Aboriginal material culture:

Lacking the analytic framework that was to develop within anthropology in the twentieth century, nineteenth-century scientists were principally interested in the physical characteristics of the indigenous population, a preoccupation that was strengthened in the later nineteenth century as social Darwinism found wide acceptance. (Anderson & Reeves, 1994: 87)

It was a standard practice in the late nineteenth century for museums to collect skeletal and other remains of Indigenous people’s bodies. It was only as these museums grew in stature, in fact, that the prizes of their collecting practices began to be kept rather than routinely exported back to England: ‘For at least the first sixty years of settlement, Australian scientists cheerfully and uncritically dispatched the most interesting specimens to the country most of them still called home.’ (83) Clearly, this was a time

³⁵⁴ Recall that in 1902 the Australian Library Association called for the establishment of a national museum in the federal capital, whose site itself was not chosen until 1908.

³⁵⁵ So suggested two British museologists, S.F. Markham and H.C. Richards who in 1933 were charged with reporting on the museums and galleries of Australia (Bennett, 1995: 135).

³⁵⁶ A ‘ragtag collection of historical relics’ had become part of the collections of natural history museums toward the end of the century. But these relics, mostly objects associated with explorers and prominent landowning families seeking to ‘perpetuat[e] their significance’, ‘sat uneasily’ with the rest of the collections and were ‘generally viewed as a nuisance’ (Anderson & Reeves, 1994: 100). In addition, Australian social memory in the period before 1901 comprised ‘a paper trail linking the journal writing of Captain Cook, the First Fleeters and many explorers with the paper-based collections of nineteenth-century museums’ (Healy, 1997: 92).

³⁵⁷ This assessment excludes the embryonic National Museum of Australia, whose permanent building is under construction, due to open in 2001.

before the idea of the Australian nation had gathered potency and before the notion of Australian history had become meaningful.

It was also a time when museum collectors had little respect for the Indigenous dead. A 1993 policy document of the Council of Australian Museums Association (CAMA) acknowledged that museums in colonial Australia were intensely interested in Indigenous people:

Since the first contact between Aboriginal peoples and colonising people ... museums have been vigorously collecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage items, including human remains and secret/sacred items ... Museums in Australia, in their early years, played a major role in the colonising process and continued to do so well into the twentieth century. All museums did so! It is well-known that some museums indulged in processes that morally could never be condoned and today would certainly not be undertaken. (CAMA, 1993: 3–4)

Museums collected, preserved and displayed Indigenous bodies ‘well into the twentieth century’. During the nineteenth century, in fact, museums engaged in a frenzied collection of Indigenous relics: their skins, skeletons and so on. And as the CAMA document suggests, museums’ practices were not always beyond reproach. For an essay honouring reflective historian Greg Denning, Tom Griffiths relates the story of Reynall Eveleigh Johns, a collector of Indigenous relics later acquired by the Museum of Victoria.³⁵⁸ Johns was in many ways an ordinary white Australian. His story serves, here, to introduce the Australian Museum’s own collecting policies and practice in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

In 1865 Johns appropriated two Aboriginal skulls from where they lay underground, in graves, along with the rest of the skeletal remains of the two people. Since they are no longer part of the collection, Griffiths’ knowledge of the remains arises from Johns’ diaries which, as Griffiths argues, give readers little indication that the author was at all troubled by his grave-robbing activities, or that they fell outside the bounds of respectable practice.³⁵⁹ His diary records his intention to rob the graves of Peeler and Barney one month prior to the expedition (it also suggests that Johns knew the two Aboriginals before their death, though it is silent as to what befell them), the expedition

³⁵⁸ Having formed his collection of Indigenous material in the 1850s and 1860s, Johns went on to become Victorian Police Magistrate in the late 1880s (Griffiths, 1994). Griffiths provides a fuller analysis of this Victorian collector in his *Hunters and Collectors* (Griffiths, 1996).

³⁵⁹ For instance, on 10 January 1865: ‘Mackenzie tells me he has found the grave of Peeler, the aborigine whose skeleton I want, and will help me plunder it.’ And on 9 February 1865, the night of the expedition: ‘...after a short search we found the aboriginal graves we came to open and at once set to work with pick and shovel by the bright moonlight ... It was a weird-looking scene, and the group at work at the graves was equally wild. The first we uncovered was ‘Barney’ but he was not the one we sought. However we took his skull, which was a good one, and then opened another grave where we found the skeleton we wanted – that of ‘Peeler’, an ex-native policeman. We took his skull which was better than Barney’s and closed both graves.’

itself, his incorporation of the skulls as specimens in his sitting room museum, and his pride and joy at being able to exhibit them to visitors. In Griffiths' view, he was barely conscious of participating in Indigenous dispossession:

Johns received almost all his artefacts second-hand. He was so distant from the act of dispossession that he was rarely confronted by the implications of his collecting. But in his use of terms such as 'trophies', 'prizes', 'ransack' and 'plunder', we can discern some conscious imperialism. (Griffiths, 1994: 403)

Johns' collection is not unique. Rather, it represents a broader phenomenon of collecting Aboriginal remains that accelerated in the 1860s and continued into the first decades of the twentieth century. (Turnbull, 1991:118) His diary does not represent the confessions of an extraordinarily heartless white man so much as an unusually visible instance of the ordinary disrespect of white Australians toward Indigenous people.³⁶⁰

The Australian Museum, Australia's first government museum, opened in 1827 as a collection of 'Australian curiosities'.³⁶¹ Johns' collection grew in the same period that the Australian Museum implemented a system to encourage and administer white Australians' collection of Aboriginal remains. Indigenous remains were displayed at the Australian Museum until the early 1980s. Almost a full century prior, in 1887, curator Edward P. Ramsay published the 3rd edition of a pamphlet for would-be collectors, called *Hints for the Preservation of Specimens of Natural History*.³⁶² It is clear from his pamphlet that Australian Museum staff regarded Indigenous people as more akin to animals than humans. After explaining on the first page that 'SKELETONS of Aborigines are much wanted', he went on:

³⁶⁰ Ironically, collections of material culture can now operate to generate cultural renewal. In the epilogue to *Hunters and Collectors*, Griffiths relates the story of Connie Hart, depicted in a 1992 exhibition at the Museum of Victoria: 'Women's work: Aboriginal women's artefacts in the Museum of Victoria'. Her mother had refused to teach her culture since 'we were coming into the White people's way of living'. But Conne watched and learned and later, by closely examining an eel net in the Museum of Victoria – the very one collected by R.E. Johns – she made one herself, thereby reviving a forgotten tradition. Griffiths comments: 'R.E. Johns, who thought he was memorialising a dying race ... was at the same time unwittingly participating in, even encouraging, a process of local cultural renewal' (Griffiths, 1996: 282).

³⁶¹ It was not quite a public museum, as a notice in the Sydney Gazette in 1830 suggested by inviting 'any respectable individuals who may think fit to call' to inspect it (Anderson & Reeves, 1994: 81). In 1882 fire destroyed the collection of nineteenth-century Aboriginal material. According to Valda Rigg, after that time the Museum concentrated its collection activity in Melanesia, 'the most recently colonised Pacific region', although in 1902 Director Robert Etheridge sought to acquire a lot of material from western New South Wales (Rigg, 1994: 198–99). This assertion, that the Australian Museum's interest in collecting Indigenous Australian material dwindled in the late nineteenth century contradicts Paul Turnbull's notion of a 'frenzy of collecting' in the late 1800s.

³⁶² Here I am drawing on Paul Turnbull's article 'Ramsay's regime': The Australian Museum and the procurement of Aboriginal bodies' (Turnbull, 1991).

In cases where whole *skeletons* cannot be procured, the *skulls*, along with the lower jaw, will prove of great interest and value. Any apparent malformation or peculiarities of the formation of the cranium of the various tribes should be carefully noted.³⁶³

On its closing page, *Hints*' list of 'Special desiderata of the Australian Museum' began with: 'Skins, skulls and skeletons of *Aborigines*, males and females'. (Turnbull, 1991: 113) Between 1880 and 1900, the Australian Museum paid freelance collectors according to its budget and the assigned value of the remains on offer. In doing so, the Museum treated Aboriginal bodies consistently with their treatment of a wallaby corpse or bird skin. (111) The quality of Aboriginal bodies as specimens was articulated in precise monetary terms: 'a Bower-Bird skin in good condition was worth five shillings; a 'racially pure' Aboriginal skull complete with jaw was worth seven shillings and sixpence'. (116)

For Paul Turnbull, Ramsay's pamphlet and the Australian Museum's inducement to white Australians to collect and trade Aboriginal remains were part of the general project to solve 'the central problem of science', to understand human speciation. (110) When they encouraged the procurement of 'racially pure' Aboriginal bodies, curators regarded these bodies as 'a desirable commodity in dwindling supply'. In a letter to James Hector, the Director of the Colonial Museum of New Zealand, Ramsay offered to exchange a few skulls, and lamented their diminishing availability: 'The shooting season is over in Queensland and the 'Black Game' is protected now by more humane laws than formerly.'³⁶⁴ In the Australian Museum's regime of collection, which again must be conceived as part of a general regime, rather than an individual instance, Indigenous people are quite literally regarded as Australian wildlife, the 'Black Game', a target for white hunters just like any other animal. No code of ethical conduct was specified as to how these commodities should or should not be obtained.³⁶⁵ (112)

Despite this evidence that Aboriginal people were sometimes shot for sport or for the sake of museum collections, in terms of memorials to the dead, the landscape of nineteenth-century Australian memory was skewed to favour white people. In their survey of Australian and New Zealand war memorials, K. S. Inglis and Jock Phillips

³⁶³ Quoted in Turnbull's 'Ramsay's regime' (Turnbull, 1991: 113).

³⁶⁴ This letter, dated 28 August 1882, is held by the National Museum of New Zealand Archives, and was quoted in Turnbull's 'Ramsay's regime' (Turnbull, 1991: 115).

³⁶⁵ Turnbull cites another letter to the Australian Museum, in which Francis Lyons enquired as to the buying price of a mummified corpse. These remains had been preserved by the woman's people, ironically after she was shot, and were therefore clearly of great significance and value). In some detail, Lyons described appropriating the remains during a raid on an Aboriginal camp. Apparently, the fact that he had stolen the corpse did not enter his consciousness in any terms other than that he had got hold of it and could now sell it.

argue that although military language was sometimes employed to describe racial conflict, at the turn of this century no war memorial testified to violence between white and Aboriginal Australians. Instead the language employed to describe white victims of Aboriginal spears and clubs categorised the killings as murder: ‘No Briton ‘fell’ fighting Aborigines.’ (Inglis & Phillips, 1991: 181) Aboriginal killings of white people were consistently represented as spontaneous attacks. Mitigating circumstances – whether invasion and dispossession in general, or rapes or resource depletion or whatever else in particular – were obliterated from the scope of memorials, as were reprisals, usually of exponentially greater severity.³⁶⁶ Aboriginal victims of massacre were rarely memorialised.³⁶⁷ By contrast, and in ironic similitude with the number of nineteenth-century displays of Aboriginal bodies and body parts, many memorials remember white victims of Aboriginal people. For example, in 1957 at Hornet Bank Station, near Toowoomba, the Queensland Division of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia erected a plaque for the Fraser family, ‘massacred at the station homestead by Aborigines’. A monument near Port Fairy in Victoria is dedicated to Sheperd George Watmore: ‘speared by blacks 1842’.³⁶⁸ In the Fremantle Esplanade, Western Australia, a memorial stands to the ‘treacherous natives’ who ‘murdered’ explorers Panter, Harding and Goldwyer at La Grange in 1864. A punitive party subsequently killed four Aboriginal people for each of these white deaths. Otherwise silent on this reprisal, the memorial is crowned by a bust of the party leader, Maitland Brown, ‘its eyes fixed in anger towards La Grange’. (Frances & Scates, 1989: 78) In short, when violence between white and Indigenous Australians did figure in white memory last century, it tended to appear as individual cases of brutality by Aboriginal people against whites, and took the physical form of angry monuments.

These memorials were not to, for or about the unnamed, ill-considered Aboriginal people who inspired them. Rather, their makers were quite determined to remember their compatriot victims and to vilify the Aboriginal perpetrators. Similarly, the plethora of memorials that white Australians established in the form of displays of Indigenous bodies, body parts and material culture³⁶⁹ served the purpose of distinguishing white,

³⁶⁶ Recall the ratio from the Coniston Massacre: one white man to 13, 31 or 70 Aboriginals, depending on who was asked.

³⁶⁷ Right up until the 1970s, individual Aborigines were remembered because they were (nameless) killers of white people or ‘faithful’ guides of our intrepid explorers, occasionally because they were exceptional workers, artists or sportsmen, and often because they were the ‘last of their tribe’ (Bulbeck, 1991: 169).

³⁶⁸ Both these examples come from note number 4 of Chilla Bulbeck’s paper ‘Aborigines, memorials and the history of the frontier’ (Bulbeck, 1991: 169).

³⁶⁹ I have not discussed another means by which Aboriginals were memorialised: the long-standing tradition of ‘honouring’ certain people with a metal breastplate that they could wear on a

Western people from the Indigenous people they regarded as their evolutionary predecessors.

Ethnographic museums in general worked to produce and reproduce discrete, naturalised, 'authentic' categories of human that served to legitimise Western hegemony.³⁷⁰ The emergence of the museum as an institution coincided with Darwin's theory of evolution and the peak of the British imperialist enterprise. Darwin provided the scientific or philosophical basis for the production of discrete categories, while the 'Empire' provided the political incentive for such divisions.

But museums were not only agents of imperial legitimisation. By taking possession of Aboriginal lives, remains and material culture as colony-states dispossessed them of their lands, museums were agents of colonialism itself.³⁷¹ The world known is the world tamed and possessed, (McCarthy, 1990: 64) and museums are masters of possession. Ethnographic museums generated a market for the trade in exotic objects, inspiring a frenzy of collection in the late 1800s. (Turnbull, 1991) Even where collection practices were ethically impeccable, the resulting collections favoured the collectors over the collected: 'To have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a trophy'. (Stewart, 1993: 147) As many writers have noted, explicitly or otherwise, the project of museums was the project of possessing the dispossessed: 'the processes of *possessing* Aboriginal people as objects, and later as image and text, were part of the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples'. (Healy, 1994: 44)

Museums burgeoned in the various colonies of nineteenth-century Australia as each colony sought to establish its credentials as a significant modern state. Modernity, of course, involved assembling increasingly scientific, rational, taxonomic displays. The

chain around their neck. The plates ascribed the bearer a title such as Chief, King or Queen, and a name 'to make you wince': Kitten, Jacky Jacky, Gooseberry or Moppy. Geraldine O'Brien, 'Collars of colonialism' *Sydney Morning Herald Good Weekend*, 22 May 1993, p.26. Museums did not initiate this colonial tradition. But having collected images of Indigenous people wearing the plates, and later the plates themselves, they cannot be seen as disinterested in it. At its most grisly, the tradition ascribed the title 'Last of her tribe'. White Australians' tendency to prefigure the deaths of Indigenous people is nowhere more clear. See: (Behrandt, 1993; Best, 1993; Gordon, 1993).

³⁷⁰ The artificial and invisible means employed by museums to create identity categories has been identified and critiqued by many writers (Jordanova, 1989; Phillips, 1995; Sherman & Rogoff, 1994). Benedict Anderson argues in his *Imagined Communities* that racism among bourgeois and petty bourgeois colonists helped to produce and legitimise the hegemonic foundations of imperialism. He writes: 'if, say, English lords were naturally superior to other Englishmen, no matter: these other Englishmen were no less superior to the subjected natives' (Anderson, 1983: 137).

³⁷¹ Nicholas Thomas discusses this aspect of museums' practice in *Colonialism's Culture* (Thomas, 1994).

objective of these natural history museums was, as Foucault suggests, to ‘accumulat[e] everything’, to ‘constitute a place of all times that [was] itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages’, (Foucault, 1986: 26) in fact to immobilise and enclose time in space. The innovation of these museums was their claim on total representation.³⁷² Cabinets of curiosity had comprised arbitrary collections of odds and ends, but museums prided themselves on the rational, taxonomic organisation of their displays. A primary objective was to construct a wholly and perfectly representative display. Gaps in the collection were the bane of the new museums; nothing should be ‘left out’, nothing lost, nothing forgotten. Whole natural histories were to reconstellate within the hallowed scientific space of the museum.³⁷³

Pierre Nora’s notion of *lieux de mémoire* suggests that this monumental cultural effort is driven by a will-to-remember that manifested at the very moment in which Western culture began to forget, or to fear forgetting. (Nora, 1989) It had not been long since Western culture’s relation to the past, to history and to the dead, had undergone a significant shift. Before the end of the eighteenth century, the living and the dead were understood to occupy the same space and time. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the living began to ‘haunt the dead, interring them in elaborately maintained cemeteries, visiting their graves, even attempting to communicate with them through spirit mediums’. (Gillis, 1994: 11) Confirming this time frame, K.S. Inglis notes that ‘the earliest war memorial recording the names of all members of an army killed in battle is the one erected at Valmy, in France, to commemorate the revolutionary forces’ victory over invaders in September 1792’. (Inglis, 1985: 113) Here then was the precedent for the Australian War Memorial’s Roll of Honour. It was erected a century prior, and similarly attentive to the new-found need of Western cultures to haunt the dead, and to their investment in the rational scientific goal of total representation.

Westerners’ shifting relation to the dead and their new subscription to the rational yet imaginary perfect representation together rendered the nineteenth-century museum an ideal vessel for capturing and holding captive the past and its spirits, the dead. By visiting such a museum, a (‘respectable’) person could relate to the past from a uniquely privileged vantage point. They could know histories in their entirety, simply by viewing the displays and assimilating their wisdom, drawing on and gaining from the museum’s knowledge and power. Departing from the museum, visitors would be equipped with a

³⁷² Ruth B. Phillips describes letters by collectors travelling on behalf of ethnographic museums which, she argues, show how their goal was to ‘fill in the boxes of a kind of imagined chart of object types – a cross between a map and a periodic table – in which all functional categories would be represented for all tribal groups’ (Phillips, 1995: 105).

³⁷³ Donna Haraway has written a very good description of this process (Haraway, 1989).

new sense of their relation to history and to the future. It was understood as an edifying pedagogical experience that depended on the absolute authority of the museum. Nineteenth-century museums in Australia and elsewhere sought to systematically track and to keep track of natural history, to assemble it into a thorough and intelligible picture of the past so that present and future generations of visitors might have access and continue to have access to it.³⁷⁴

I have described the emergence, in the nineteenth century, of monumental forms of remembrance in the context of the rise of scientific rationalism, the peak of the imperialist enterprise, and Westerners' gradual, collective loss of a spiritual connection to the past. Having abandoned the idea that the dead remain present, white people began to collect, to memorialise past life. For British colonists of Australia, part of the project of colonisation, of expanding the Empire, was to collect, arrange, display and remember native wildlife, including the people whose demise they believed was imminent. Displays of Indigenous human remains in particular represented the proud, conquering spirit prevalent among white people at that time. Aboriginal bodies became animalised trophies and specimens: scientific evidence of white supremacy. Whites figured Aboriginals as utterly different, prehistoric; and themselves as the new Australians, the race of the future.

Of course, there has never been a universal opposition between Indigenous and white peoples in Australia. Aboriginal people did not exactly represent what whites were not; rather, they represented what white people were no longer. Despite the essential otherness of Indigenous people, a link remained between us and them, a desire of sorts. Indigenous people were not simply *the* past. They were '*our*' past. In museum displays of Aboriginal peoples, a degree of sympathy and sadness can be detected; amongst the presumptuous prognosis of cultural death, a lamentation over the loss. It is as if white Australians were preparing themselves for the day when they could erect a national monument to their Indigenous past. Once the people were dead and gone, they could be duly, appropriately, nostalgically remembered. However callous this process of memorialisation seems, it indicates that white people were loathe to forget Indigenous people. It was natural history and ethnographic museums that embodied the nationalist titles of the 'Australian Museum' and the 'National Museum of Victoria'. Nineteenth-century natural history displays were not only nominally nationalist. In a powerful, palpable sense, by foregrounding the origins of the white race and the environment of

³⁷⁴ Tony Bennett's book *The Birth of the Museum* is a good resource on the political rationality of the museum (Bennett, 1995). Of course, museums have always also operated on the level of fantasy and desire, as some other writers describe. For instance, see Susan Stewart's *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Stewart, 1993).

their new home, they functioned to define the new Australians. Overtly, and powerfully, museums operated to define white Australians in opposition to Indigenous people, and to deprive them of the opportunity for self-representation. But in the sense that Aboriginal material was appropriated by Australian national museums, it became incorporated into the Australian story. It became a part of the nationalist 'us'.

The memorials that embodied this proto-nationalist narrative effected a peculiar twist of fate. White people's combination of angry memorials to nameless Aboriginal killers, and displays of human remains displays, testifies that colonists attributed their own savagery to the colonised, Indigenous people.³⁷⁵ At the same time as the new Australians ascribed their own savagery to the old Australians, in producing the Australian War Memorial as the first national memorial they claimed Indigenous people's sense of belonging and well as their trauma. Although the Memorial favours white-ness and repudiates Indigenous history, it is a shrine to the Australian people's sense of belonging. Having celebrated taking possession of the continent – having conquered – white Australians distanced themselves from that conquering spirit and claimed instead the honour of the colonised: a sense of potential invadedness and the virtue of brave resistance to it. In possessing Aboriginal bodies, white Australians were in turn possessed, perhaps, by the spirits of Indigenous people.

Museums are excellent vessels of national remembrance, but the Australian War Memorial indicates that white Australians have forgotten their imperialist heritage. Consciously or not, however, Indigenous spirits continue to haunt white Australians. As Jeremy Beckett writes, the spirit of Indigenous Australia remains 'an embarrassing ghost at feasts celebrating the forging of the Anzac spirit in the mateship of bush workers'. (Beckett, 1988: 195) This ghost was lurking when, considering the idea of installing an unknown warrior in its proposed museum, Memorial staff expressed the concern that: '[t]here is perhaps something jarring in the thought of the remains of a soldier being placed in a museum'.³⁷⁶ In drawing attention to the blood shed on overseas battlefields, white Australians distracted themselves from the blood shed in their own country. But in mythical terms, the blood of Indigenous resistance fighters will forever mingle with the blood of the battlers of the official Australian defence forces.

³⁷⁵ Citing Taussig, Jeremy Beckett describes the mimesis between colonists' practice and the ascription of savagery to the colonised (Beckett, 1988: 192).

³⁷⁶ This quote is from the Memorial file on the unknown soldier: AWM 38 3DRL 6673, item number 663.

My task in the remaining pages of this chapter is to identify an alternative trajectory for the Memorial. I begin with a general strategy for achieving the objectives of its identified mission without sacrificing the collaborative foundation of its commemorative purpose. I then turn to my specific vision of an alternative Memorial, and note some instances of how such a shift in its orientation could be effected. Such a vision could be elaborated and detailed in the context of an extensive exploration of the Memorial's holdings in all of its collection areas.

The Australian national war memorial is both a museum and a shrine. I have argued that it is a classic form of heterotopia; but it is also a hybrid. The institution intends to fully represent the 'Australian experience' according to rational systems of classification and display. But it also operates as a shrine to the dead, a house for the spirit or spirits of the nation and its people. As both a museum and a shrine it works to stave off forgetting, to maintain a connection between the living and the dead. But how a shrine maintains this connection is quite different to how a modern museum does. The hybridity of its status as museum and shrine accounts, to a large extent, for the contradictory manner in which Memorial discourse avows and disavows its spirituality. In a way, the presence of the shrine at the Memorial serves to further rationalise the galleries and to polarise the rational/spiritual aspects of the Memorial as a whole. The shrine enables commemoration; the galleries provide information, and in these secular times, the rationality of the galleries is ultimately privileged over the spirituality of the shrine. Although it is based fundamentally on a premodern notion of communion with the dead, the Memorial venerates a rational approach to Australian history. Containing displays assembled by teams of experts, its galleries are seen to contain the nation's total experience of war. Despite the explicit appeal to 'help keep the spirit alive', and despite extolling its impressive visitor numbers, any sense in which the Memorial ultimately depends on the vital presence of visitors is subsumed by its rational approach to representation. The Memorial's commemorative purpose may be by definition a collaborative and potentially contentious exercise that relies on public involvement, but in practice the Memorial assumes a didactic pedagogical stance in which the dead are completely possessed by the institution and the visitor is positioned as a passive witness to their spirits, not their medium.

The Memorial could alter this epistemological framework and explore the means by which its signifying practices could become dialogic. It could unsettle the primacy of its claim on rational, instructional authority and embrace the mythical, emotional and spiritual realms in which it equally, intrinsically works in the galleries as much as the shrine. Such a shift would be subtle but significant. It could involve changing the nature of exhibit interpretation, incorporating more non-technical forms such as audio diary

excerpts or poetry, alongside the traditionally authoritative label information. It could involve inviting key people to write their own labels for certain exhibits, and incorporating their responses into a visual array or an aural landscape. Or it could involve leaving some questions unanswered, or some displays with obvious gaps, others messy and decaying rather than neat and carefully preserved. At present, the exhibits with the greatest claim on historical or geographic reality are privileged over exhibits that operate in a different, more artistic or mythical register. But were the realist enterprise to be abandoned, the power of art to do something different to, and possibly more than, realist works would be unleashed. By reconciling the opposition between knowledge and mythology, the Memorial would surrender control over the meaning of the Memorial, involve visitors more actively in both learning and commemoration, and also render the shrine more potent.

Secondly, the Memorial could reconsider what it means to be 'representative' of Australia's experience of war. It currently strives to completely and thoroughly represent Australia's experience of war. But its representation is partial since it is structured according to military engagements, and therefore privileges active military experience. Even if every single Australian had military experience, however, and this structure was thereby potentially representative, the Memorial's current efforts to be representative would be inadequate because of the extent to which violence, trauma and tensions over how the material is most appropriately presented, are downplayed for the greater glory of the dead. To its credit, the Memorial enables visitors to recognise a more realistic gamut of wartime practices and effects than most war museums. Although the fifteen characteristics inscribed in the Hall of Memory windows celebrate military action, for instance, and though it continues to invest in more and more military hardware and in the spaces to display it, in a subtler way, the Memorial also invokes characteristics that interrogate or undermine the primary effort of military action: misery, heartache, deprivation and so on (if not brutality, actual violence, madness or resistance). But on the whole, the Memorial is only shocking to the extent that its image of Australia at war claims and appears to be unproblematic, uncontroversial, tidy rather than impartial and gruesome and incomplete. And then it is only shocking for visitors that manage to resist being lulled into an uncritical faith in the authority of the Memorial's representation.

Failing to recognise the doubly partial nature of its representative exercise, the Memorial strives to contain the total (glorious military) experience of war, going so far as to produce special exhibitions about participation in military activity by women and Indigenous people. But the Memorial does not become more representative to the extent that it acknowledges the effort exerted by participants in the Korean War, the Vietnam

War or indeed, by women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, non-anglo immigrants, homosexuals and so on. Rather, it becomes more representative to the extent that each and every one of its visitors can identify with and imagine themselves part of the depicted history, identity and spirit. Making the Memorial 'representative' requires presenting a simulation that on the one hand invokes the full range of the experience it depicts and, on the other, promotes a mythical unity that is flexible enough, or controverted enough, to be inhabitable by anyone. In order for the Memorial to be representative of the Australian experience of war, it must maintain a perpetual, perfect tension between the centrifugal and centripetal requirements of representation of and for a nation's people. It does not need to specify every single difference in Australia's war experience and it would be naïve to assume such a mission was possible. But it does need to emphasise the existence of such differences in order to enable the mythical unity of the national spirit to emerge. Acknowledging the reality of difference renders the mythology of a national identity acceptable.

The Memorial could broaden the style of its signifying practices, beyond the register of knowledge transmission, so that it operated more effectively in an emotional or affective register and left space for visitors to interpret the material for themselves, and for the sake of aesthetics and attracting visitors' critical attention. The Memorial could admit into its representational array material that invokes the most gruesome end of the scale of wartime experience. It need not go out of its way to expose visitors to the horrors of war by fabricating particularly graphic or literal depictions of violence, trauma, madness and so on. But material that represents war and conflict is often gruesome, and where material does invoke these less glorious aspects of the practice and effect of war, the Memorial should be prepared to show it. Similarly, where there have been controversies over whether or not to accept an item into the collection, or whether or not to incorporate an item into a display, the Memorial could acknowledge the controversy to the visiting public, presenting cases both for and against, and invite opinions as to how the issue could be resolved.³⁷⁷ Finally, the Memorial could endeavour to express the Australian experience of war in as many modes of utterance as possible, thereby disrupting the traditional, passive mode of authoritative instruction. As Ira Shor noted in a conversation with Freire on dialogic education, human voices speak in many modes, including questions, statements, generalisations, specifics, images, comedy, pathos, sarcasm, mimicry, sentimentality and so on, and it is this

³⁷⁷ The Pigott report on Australian museums and national collections recommended that the national museum, where appropriate, display controversial issues and stated that: 'In our view, too many museums concentrate on certainty and dogma, thereby forsaking the function of stimulating legitimate doubt and thoughtful discussion' (Pigott, Blainey, Boswell, Clayton, Mulvaney, Talbot, et al., 1975: 73).

variety of modes that stimulates students' unfamiliar critical attention (Freire & Shor, 1987: 115–6).

Australian adult visitors to the Memorial are not ignorant of Australia's involvement in war, and come to the Memorial with their own experiences, knowledge and perspectives on it. Unless they identify with the Memorial's version of the Australian national experience and identity they will not participate in realising this vision of 'Australia'. One obvious way to increase the probability of gaining all visitors' support for a simulation and its product is to draw the veil from the process of conjuring, to enable visitors to decide for themselves whether the Memorial's strategy for representing Australia's experience of war is appropriate. We need access to the process of producing the Memorial – its policy and practice on collecting, and exhibiting, and the limits of its scope and its knowledge – in order to make an informed choice to participate in or resist the Memorial's own production of the mythical, unified identity 'Australia'. A more self-referential Memorial, a Memorial that was prepared to interrogate itself and to be interrogated by visitors, would be a more inclusive and more interesting Memorial.

A policy of openness would be perfectly fitting for the Australian War Memorial, given Australians' famed distrust of authority. Before his commission as official historian of the First World War, in 1907 Bean had already articulated the fundamental characteristics of the emerging Australian character. He wrote that the typical Australian 'took everything on its merits and nothing on authority'. Ever resistant to discipline, 'even when properly handled he is restless and suspicious of authority'.³⁷⁸ This is a 'uniquely Australian' characteristic with which I strongly identify, and which the Memorial would do well to foster. To enable a questioning of its authority is not to diminish the status of the Memorial or the dead Australians it commemorates. Rather, it is to ensure that the authority accrued by the institution is granted by the will of the people, and that their reverence is emergent from an informed perspective.

In the preceding few pages I have outlined a strategy by which the Memorial could begin to operate as a dialogic museum. In the remaining pages of this chapter, I suggest some specific means by which such a strategy could be implemented at the Memorial. My path is similar here to the path I took in the original reading, beginning with the grounds and the city axis, moving through the Commemorative Area to the galleries.

³⁷⁸ This excerpt from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 June 1907, p.6, appeared in Richard White's *Inventing Australia* (White, 1981: 126).

In the grounds of the Memorial, a single, large disorderly pile of military hardware could be left to decay, in amongst the statues, the Amiens gun and the white marble commemorative stone.

Signage to the Aboriginal memorial could be vastly improved, and the site cared for just as all the other memorial sites are. The Memorial could opt to officially adopt this memorial, and host a ceremony accepting responsibility for its care.

An idea for an additional memorial along Anzac Parade has come from Marcia Langton. She has suggested informally that there should be a Place of Honour for the unprovenanced human remains held by museums. Some Indigenous people, she says, have suggested a site 'near the Australian War Memorial'.³⁷⁹ This memorial to one aspect of the Australian Wars could take responsibility to symbolically address the dilemma facing museums whose collections contain Indigenous human remains. A memorial to all the unknown Indigenous people whose remains were taken by white Australians for 'scientific' and exhibitionary purposes would be a fitting addition to the rows of memorials to particular groups of Australian battlers. Alternatively, the scope of this memorial could be broadened, such that it commemorated the many different aspects of the inter-racial war in Australia, from massacres to the Stolen Generations.

Since the Hall of Memory is the one place at the Memorial with a prerogative to be comforting and beautiful, rather than discomfiting, disturbing or reflexive, it could remain as is. There are several ways in which the rest of the Memorial's Commemorative Area could be augmented to render the shrine more potent. At the Roll of Honour, for instance, the Memorial could indicate the magnitude and the complexity of compiling a full list of the 'fallen'. An introductory panel could contain a statement of the Memorial's intent, to name all the fallen from all the wars, and could acknowledge the decades-long struggle to decide who to include and where to draw the line. It could also acknowledge the variety of causes of death, from most to least common, including killed in action, died as a result of injuries sustained in action, died from disease, committed suicide, died from self-inflicted wounds, shot during the attempt to escape legal custody, and so on. It is not necessary and would be inappropriate for the Memorial to specify who died of what, or to single out those whose deaths might be seen as dishonourable. Any individual tagging of the names contradicts the Roll's ignorance of rank or other differentiation, and in this case would function to shame. But every war has casualties neither intended nor expected, and there is no good reason to maintain public ignorance of this fact. This panel could

³⁷⁹ She was cited in Des Griffin's 'The return of cultural property' (Griffin, 1998: 8).

acknowledge that mistakes have been made, that some names have been omitted, and that the Supplementary Roll contains all the corrections. It could direct visitors to the Supplementary Roll. It could end with a conviction of hope that the list will cease to grow. Contrary to the idea that admission of this information would detract from the Memorial's or the nation's coveted spirit, I believe it would render their efforts and their spirit more profound.

It would also be appropriate for the Memorial to retrieve at least part of the collection of 150 jars of body parts of men who died in the First World War. These jars contain relics of the most potent, evocative and sacred kind. Since they are relics of damaged, traumatised, dead people, they should perhaps be placed in a dimly lit recess in a corner of the cloisters, perhaps even behind a curtain, with a warning sign for unsuspecting visitors. I imagine that the visual access they would provide to the experience of war would upset and disturb visitors, but I can not imagine that it would do the 'fallen' any disservice. On the contrary, I can only imagine that visitors' reverence for the diggers would increase. I imagine, furthermore, that were the dead conscious of the interaction between visitors and these wounded and diseased specimens they would hope that it served to deter living Australians from the practice of war.

In the introductory gallery, I envisage an alcove with a prominent notice that acknowledges the difficulty of commemorating so many dead from so many different wars, and invites visitors to note down, while they are walking through, their ideas as to the meaning of particular exhibits. A box could offer pencils and a simple form with fields for 'exhibit'; 'your interpretation'; 'your suggestions for improving the Memorial'; and a section 'about you'. Either the notice or the form might also ask visitors to consider whether or in what way the Memorial teaches the lesson of peace. Boxes would also be placed near the exit to collect the forms and pencils.

Continuing the presence of dissonant juxtapositions – like the pile of decaying mess of military hardware among the other pristine parts of the grounds – a display in this first gallery could incorporate a series of contrasting items such as Japanese propaganda about the Allies and the photo of Commander Keiu Matsuo's friend laying a rose on the midget submarine in the grounds of the Memorial; patriotic ornaments and anti-war demonstration memorabilia; commanding officers' official directives to take action and soldiers' diary excerpts commenting on their experience of particular actions. Such a display could be better planned having searched through the existing collection. It would be designed to work 'like images in a surrealist poem ... because juxtapositions

make you think'.³⁸⁰ It would constitute what Walter Benjamin might call dialectical imagery, that creates a cognitive dissonance that visitors are potentially inspired to explore.

At the Lone Pine diorama, the visual scene could be complemented by audio or text that renders the scene more emotionally evocative and disturbing. For example, an excerpt from Ion Idriess' diary of his experience at Lone Pine: 'a dead man's boot in the firing posy has been dripping grease on my overcoat and the coat will stink forever'.³⁸¹ Snippets from diary entries could be used much more extensively, at strategic points, throughout the galleries.

At each display of a gun or mortar or tank or gas mask, alongside the cold, detached list of technical specifications, the Memorial could incorporate a quote describing someone's experience of using that weapon or tool. An appropriate kind of quote would be the following, from a Vietnam veteran's recent letter to the *Australian Magazine*. Tony O'Brien remembers the 'shameful hyper-exhilaration' that arises from 'exercising the politically and morally sanctioned right to coldly aim at and kill another'.³⁸²

A display dedicated to shell shock would be a valuable addition to the Memorial's galleries. An excerpt from journalist Philip Cornford's description of the legacy of the Vietnam War would be an appropriate part of the exhibit: 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was once known as battle fatigue. Its symptoms include depression, sleep disturbance, bad memories, anxiety, 'hyper-vigilance' and fear, loss of confidence, social withdrawal, confusion, shame, sadness, anger and survival guilt, often leading to alcohol and drug abuse.'³⁸³

At the 'Echoes of the guns' display on the end of the First World War, where it announces that during the 1920s the Federal Government distributed war trophies across Australia, the additional information could be included that: 469 towns declined the offer of a captured enemy weapon; 46 towns lacked public space to display trophies; and 33 directly refused to accept their share of the booty but offered no reason for their refusal. The Memorial could thereby complicate the spirit of this gesture on the part of the state.

³⁸⁰ Donald Horne, describing a display in his vision for a national museum, in 'The national jewel we might have had', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 January 1995, p.18.

³⁸¹ Ion Idriess, *The Desert Column*, p.42.

³⁸² Tony O'Brien, letter to the editor, *Australian Magazine*, 19–20 February 2000.

³⁸³ Philip Cornford, 'The fight for peace: Vietnam the legacy', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 April 1995, p.23.

At the display on the Gulf War, the terms and practice and consequences of this war could be contrasted with those of the First World War. And at the surely impending display on Australia's peacekeeping mission in East Timor, the East Timorese people's assistance to Australia during the Second World War could feature, with recognition that they were subsequently abandoned to suffer Indonesian occupation for several decades.

A final display could be a collection of racist, or otherwise offensive or problematic material: the kind of material that Bean would have shunned from display because it was boastful or too upsetting, such as the table on which the Japanese surrender was signed, instruments of torture, references to the Nips and Huns, directives banning Aboriginals from enlisting on the grounds of their inferiority, and so on. Such a collection could be presented with questions posed to visitors: What does this material mean to you? What should the Memorial do with it?

The exit could be framed by the famous epitaph: 'I fought and died in the Great War to end all wars. Have I died in vain?'

Another major yet simple intervention the Memorial could make into its signifying practice is to develop thematic tours that would enable visitors to focus on a particular aspect of the Memorial and its history.³⁸⁴ I envisage four in particular: 'War and reconciliation'; 'Ghosts of Indigenous warriors', on evidence of the Australian Wars and colonial history at the Memorial; 'War's havoc', on the most gruesome aspects of Memorial material; and 'The Memorial in question', on the controverted and changeable meaning of the Memorial and its displays.

'War and reconciliation' would embody the Memorial's most utopian point – that conflict is resolvable. It would invite participants to explore several different conflicts – Gallipoli, the Japanese bombing of Darwin and invasion of Sydney harbour, and a colonial conflict between settler and Indigenous Australians – and how each was resolved. It would incorporate symbols in the galleries of friendship across difference, such as the image of Keiu Matsuo's friend placing a rose on the Commander's midget submarine, and culminate with visits to the Atatürk memorial and the new Australian War memorial. The tour would encourage participants to consider how (relative to people in most other countries), for Australians here at this historical moment, war is remote, and how this distance places Australians in a unique position whereby we have the space and the time to *learn* from war. Undertaking this tour could be an exercise in

³⁸⁴ In fact, at the time of the Orientation Gallery's development, a series of about 10 thematic tours was in the planning stage. The topics that had been chosen were different to those I suggest.

spiritual uplift – it could give hope to participants that it is possible to resolve conflicts *without* war.

Overall, the tour ‘Ghosts of Indigenous warriors’ would draw out the irony of Indigenous people’s invisibility at the Memorial given that it is a memorial to belonging, to the indigenisation of white Australians. The tour would be about the present-day Memorial but it would consistently situate the present in the context of the colonial history of Australia. At first, it would draw participants’ attention to ground that, since the exhibition ‘Too dark for the light horse’, is relatively familiar – of Indigenous people’s rates of participation in the ADF, the few (currently existing) exhibits on Indigenous people and so on. It would include extra information such as that after the First World War, Indigenous people lost more land to the soldier settler scheme for which some Indigenous returned servicemen were deemed ineligible. But its focus would be the understated or absent aspects of the Memorial’s representation of Indigenous people: the minimalist ‘Colonial conflicts’ gallery; the AIF (war as an imperialist project); the missing names on the Roll of Honour; how the Memorial would have been a bright white had the cost of white marble not been prohibitive; the last two Australian fauna heads in the Commemorative Area courtyard, of Indigenous men; how when the Memorial was still known as a museum, the idea of interring the remains of a soldier there was unsettling, despite the fact that museums had long displayed Indigenous human remains; how the undeclared ‘Australian War’ overlapped with the wars in which Australians have officially been involved; how the memorial to Aboriginal service personnel was poorly funded and poorly tended until the Memorial officially adopted it as one of its own. Now that white Australians have discovered a sense of belonging to this country, and affirmed Indigenous people’s equality with us, it would be prudent for us to acknowledge our change of heart and our reliance on Indigenous people and cultures for the Australian spirit. Using ironic juxtapositions, the tour could introduce the curious transfer in which white people ascribed savagery to Indigenous people and claimed the trauma of sacrifice in defence of country, and all for the sake of a sense of belonging, of indigenising, of becoming precisely that which was still repudiated. It need not be all black armbands and guilt. The tour could celebrate the fact that nineteenth-century understandings of and predictions about Indigenous people were wrong, rejoice in Indigenous survival, and consign our ancestors’ death-wish forever to history. The tour would end at the new memorial to the Australian Wars, on a prominent site along Anzac Parade. It would culminate, therefore, with a message of reconciliation.

‘War’s havoc’ would provide an opportunity for visitors to sense the more horrific effects of war. In the galleries it would focus on the weapons and their capacity to maim

and kill, from guns, mortars, and tanks to mustard and nerve gas. It would include the display on shell shock, as well as a section on grief, with a collection of particularly expressive statements or artworks (I am thinking of some Australian equivalents to Käthe Kollwitz's sculptural work about her lost son). The tour would be designed to sensitise participants to the horror of war. It would culminate in the Commemorative Area, with the pathological specimen relics, the Roll of Honour and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

'The Memorial in question' would be designed for those with a more intellectual, museological or historical interest in the Memorial. It would begin in the introductory gallery at the alcove inviting visitors to contemplate the project of commemorating so many dead people from so many different wars, and inviting them to contribute their thoughts and responses. A central question of the tour would be: How are Australia's war dead most appropriately remembered? The tour would lay bare some of the difficult decisions the Memorial has made over the decades as well as some of the most interesting controversies over the politics of collection and display. For example, the tour could invite participants to explore the compilation of the Roll of Honour; the dispute between Bean and Director Major McGrath as to whether to display Japanese instruments of torture and tokens of their surrender; the dispute between Bean and photographer Frank Hurley, at the historical moment of a shift in the conception of photography, as to whether montage photography was authentic documentary evidence or a lesser form, of art; and the ongoing debate as to whether the Memorial is a military or civil institution. Some of these are somewhat abstract questions, but they could be made concrete via strategic use of exhibits on display at the Memorial.

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The image of Australia that the Memorial projects is not a work of fiction or an illusion that would be spoiled by the intrusion of reality. But neither is that image of Australia self-generating. Our identity as a nation is both what we seek to divest from the Memorial and what we invest into it. In other words, the Memorial is 'both representative and constitutive of [the Australian] cultural identity'.³⁸⁵ Although the Memorial is a history museum, therefore, visitors' attention should be diverted, at every opportunity, back to the institution's artifice. By keeping the current coursing back and forth between history and the process of invoking it, the Memorial would enable visitors to participate from an informed perspective in its representation, to take the Memorial

³⁸⁵ This quote comes from an article by Richard Handler on nationalism and the French Canadian notion of *patrimoine* – national culture, 'old things' (Handler, 1985: 211). The reference to Australia is mine.

and ‘the Australian spirit’ on its merit, not on the Memorial’s authority. Rather than striving to conceal the holes, the patchiness, the ruptures, twists, seams and the edges of the Memorial’s representational fabric, the Memorial could acknowledge them, and thereby welcome visitors into the process of conjuring Australia’s war experience at the same time as it invites them to bear witness to that experience. In this way, the Memorial would foster a re-cognition of Australian history whilst it invites visitors, less critically, to recognise and absorb it. In this way, the Memorial would become a dialogic museum.

On the one hand the existing Memorial necessarily promotes a unified Australian spirit. On the other, Australia’s experience of war is highly diverse. How this experience is represented is therefore highly contentious, a fact which if suppressed denies the diversity of our experience, but if expressed indicates nothing more than the passion with which people relate to the Memorial. If the Memorial intends to enable all Australians to identify with the Memorial’s spirit, it must acknowledge the tensions that tug it in different directions. There is an opportunity within the Memorial’s grasp to create a national myth that could interpellate all Australians, by way of multifaceted, and probably contradictory, representations of Australia’s war experience. Diversity is not disunity. An alternative Memorial would deal with its dual centripetal/centrifugal obligations by relating the story of Australia’s war experience using a diverse range of voices and modes of utterance; noting rather than hiding tensions both within the story and in the process of relating it; and revealing the scopic limits of the story it presents. In other words the Memorial could relinquish control over the meaning of the story in order to enable visitors to decide it for themselves. Then and only then it would truly be a Memorial of the people, rather than the military.

In terms of Indigenous representation, it is particularly important that the Memorial open itself up for visitors to explore the historically constituted racial division within the Australian national culture it celebrates. This is imperative in light of the genealogy of museums in colonial Australia, as well as the long-term exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the ADF and the nation. As emerged in this chapter, nineteenth-century museums acted as agents of the imperialist and scientific rationalist projects that characterised Indigenous peoples as inferior; and nineteenth-century memorials exacerbated the divide between Indigenous and settler Australians by denying the ongoing war and casting Indigenous resistance fighters as savage murderers. This history is a kind of prehistory to the Memorial and although the Memorial does not engage directly with matters of ethnology or race, it bears many traces of a white supremacist consciousness. It now accepts Indigenous people into the field of its representation to the extent that they have always been equally heroic (if unrecognised)

members of the defence forces. But it must also explore how such a shift came about and, furthermore, begin to address its ongoing silence about the original colonial war within Australia. In light of this reading's emphasis on Indigenous representation, it is hard not to read the Memorial's full name as the Memorial to the Australian War. If at the turn of the twenty-first century, the Memorial refuses to accept that 'Australia' has shifted – that white Australians are more prepared than ever to believe in their equality with Indigenous people and to recognise the injustices of the past – if the Memorial will not rethink its commemorative scope, it should perhaps consider changing its name to the Australian Military Memorial.

C o n c l u s i o n o r w h a t I h a v e l e a r n e d

Writing this thesis, I have learned in three different registers. I have learned (via the Memorial and some other sites of representation) about the Australian experience of war and conflict, trauma and death. I have learned (via Shor's program) about the Memorial as a site for informal learning about the Australian experience of war and conflict, trauma and death. And I have learned (by applying Shor's program to the process of reading the Memorial) about the potential for museum environments to operate dialogically, in the spirit of Freirean praxis. It is not easy to separate the first two registers of learning, because the Memorial's signifier – the representation – and its signified – that which it represents – are enmeshed by virtue of the presented material's authenticity, and otherwise because the content and form of knowledge are interdependent. I do not attempt to divide my conclusions according to an artificial binary. My emphasis has been on the Memorial as a program for informal learning, rather than as a vehicle for accessing history, so I do not attend, here, to the Memorial's meaning, except insofar as to speculate on avenues this work has opened up for future exploration. I begin by recounting my diagnosis of the Memorial's signifying practices, as it developed over the course of my narrative, but I concentrate on the question of what access the Memorial provides visitors to the process of its signification and to the field of its possible signification. I concentrate, in other words, on identifying the Memorial's representational style relative to that of a dialogic museum. Having done that, I turn to consider the third register of my learning. Here I consider the potential work arising from this thesis, and speculate on it ways in which it could inform museum practice.

My diagnosis of the Memorial's signifying practices involved identifying what and how it means in national, international and historical contexts. In Lesson Two I argued that the Memorial activates a powerful myth of Australian national culture, despite the fact that in many ways its representation is militaristic, outmoded and exclusive. In Lesson Three I observed that the Memorial and its mythology are part of the currency of Australia's international relations, and that the colonial history of the region infuses aspects of the Memorial's signification. In Lesson Four I situated the Memorial and its power to define 'Australia' in the context of nationalism as an emerging historical period. The history of the Memorial's development and, in particular, the often contradicting imaginations of its makers explain the ambivalence of its representation – how it vacillates between the militaristic and the anti-militaristic, how it is concerned to

denounce war but avoids presenting material that is shocking or disturbing, and so on. In this history of the Memorial and its signifying practices I also drew attention to the effort expended for the sake of maintaining Aboriginal exclusion from the ADF and the nation, and alerted readers to the existence of an invisible rupture in the Memorial's representation of Indigenous Australians. Where once they were actively excluded, now they are specifically included, but there is no evidence of how this shift came about, or indeed that it is a shift at all. In the first part of the final reconstructive Lesson I identified the magnitude of the gulf between how Indigenous people were represented in museums as objects last century, and how they are represented as subjects today. Before 1900 there was scant interest in Australian social history, and 'national' and other museums concentrated on natural history and ethnology, which involved collecting and displaying the remains of Aboriginal people. Aboriginals were sometimes shot with impunity by settlers, yet Memorials at this time cast Aboriginals as vicious murderers and whites as innocent victims. These were the circumstances of the heterotopic scene into which the Memorial was born; it is only recently that museum collection and display practices have significantly altered. The Memorial's continuing silence on this interracial conflict is striking, and suggests that it represents and constitutes a culture that cannot confront its own history.

In general the Australian War Memorial's signifying practice is centripetal, harmonious and unconscious of its partiality. Elements of this practice that promote a unified, unproblematic, mythic nationalist 'Australia' are proclaimed to visitors; and elements that might destabilise that unity, grapple with, contradict or demystify this idea of Australia are usually banished. The minimalist presence of Indigenous Australians at the Memorial – as part of the ADF – masks the more pervasive absence of an image of Indigenous people as targets of Australian forces (in the long periods of open and subterfuge conflict between colonists and Indigenous people), and as a group collectively excluded from the nation and its fighting forces. This Indigenous presence speaks more to the other idea circulating in Australian culture: that recognising Indigenous historical experience threatens 'national unity'. Although the Memorial posits a unitary myth of Australia's experience of war, there are slips in its signifying practice, indications of discrepancies, and glimpses of tension.

The galleries and commemorative areas of the Memorial laud its significance in the national context. The Memorial configures itself as consubstantial with the mythical 'Australia' that its supporters see in it, positing an enclosed circuit of meaning between itself and the nation, and erasing tension for its sake. Such an approach encourages a faithful or passive acceptance of the Memorial's national significance. The questions 'For whom is the Memorial significant?' and 'In what sense?' are not put. As a national

and nationalist museum of Australian history, it is not surprising that the Memorial invokes an image of a unified 'Australia' or that it seeks to restrict visitors' responses to those that conform to or support this image. It is not surprising because the production of a unified and unifying myth underpins the project of nationalism: of identifying the nation and creating a sense of nationhood. But there is a difference between a centripetal form of representation – one that posits a unified image – and an authoritarian or monologic form – one that claims its position as the singularly appropriate one.

Memorial discourse is structured in proprietorial terms. Claiming an automatic legitimacy and authority on the grounds of its official and popular mandate, it appears to reject any sense that appropriate remembrance is in the eye of the beholder. The question of propriety at the Memorial is an important one: How are the dead most appropriately remembered? But the Memorial conflates one kind of propriety – the importance of appropriateness – with another – the claim of ownership. My time working at the Memorial alerted me to the fact that some staff subscribe to a dialogic model of communication in which meaning is produced through visitors' interaction with the material, but their theoretical position is not apparent to visitors. The Memorial's implicit claim on propriety excludes the positions of those who do not subscribe to the myth, and wards off all other critical responses.

Locked into a circuit of nationalist myth-making, and at pains to present a unified and harmonious image of 'Australia', the Memorial is unable to admit its uncertainties, its limitations, or any sense that there are many ways of representing war or that visitors may relate to the material in a unique, innovative or potentially generative way. It consistently shies from revealing the vicissitudes of the process of orchestrating such a large-scale collective remembrance. Although the Memorial could, if it chose, identify the process of making and confronting representation as an equally vital part of national identification as the real war experience had been – where it could demystify the mythology as it projects it – the Memorial instead promotes the idea that this reality automatically infuses the records. Implicitly, it claims that the Memorial bears as close a resemblance to the whole, accumulated space of the nation as is possible – that it possesses the experience of war – and that it can therefore serve as a near-perfect metonym for this whole entity. It thereby restricts visitors' capacity to engage in a dialogue with the material.

But the Memorial does not present an entirely centripetal image of the Australian experience of war or of 'Australia'. Perhaps, as Bakhtin has argued, all utterances exhibit tendencies toward both unitary language and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981: 272). Inside the galleries, amongst the ever-accumulating military technology and heraldry,

there are fragments that invoke not the heroic, chivalrous, patriotic fighting spirit but those of heartache, fragility, despondency and very occasionally (in proportion to the nature of the material), trauma. In addition, the Aboriginal material can work to belie the myth of a unified national experience. Juxtaposed with the usual exhibits, these fragments check the otherwise mythically unified structure of the Memorial, interspersing it with a kind of dialogue or polycentrism. Visitors may also read the Memorial in relation to other Australian sites. It only takes the vaguest awareness of racial politics in present-day Australian culture to recognise that the Memorial's silence on the 'Australian War' contrasts dramatically with the articulation of growing numbers of other sites and gestures of reconciliation around Australia. The Memorial's and the RSL's persistent refusal to represent and remember the first conflict in which Australians fought, on the grounds that such representation is not proper, only draws attention to the question to which it assumes it knows the best answer, but which it cannot bear visitors to face: what is it proper for the Memorial to represent?

The Memorial's mythology is in fact replete with contradictions. Its tendency to cater to the most sensitive palates – to smooth over tensions and play down trauma – appears to reject its status as a *war* memorial. What can a war memorial that remembers honour and forgets conflict and trauma mean? The Memorial's ironically comforting, tension-smoothing configuration threatens to rupture. There are intrinsic tensions in the notions of a memorial to war and to Australian mateship; a war memorial that denies trauma; and a memorial whose original mission – to commemorate the 'utterly futile' war of the nation's identification – has been exponentially expanded, so that it now commemorates any and every war in which Australians fight. Visitors may well notice these tensions, and find its nationalist spell broken. On the other hand, and as Barthes might have argued, the Memorial's myth may withstand its demystification.³⁸⁶

My answer to the question 'What kind of history lesson does the Memorial offer?' is therefore: a lesson that requires faith on the part of visitors; that cultivates an uncomplicated sense of pride in Australian military history; and that avoids shocking visitors with the harshest realities of war. Consider the Memorial's refusal to consider displaying the jars of diggers' afflicted body parts. In this instance, it rejects the opportunity to augment its commemorative field, to render the display more complete. More significantly, these jars would constitute a powerful recognition of the trauma at the heart of the wartime experience. Providing public access to the jars might also render the Memorial more spiritually potent, more effective as a shrine. But here the

³⁸⁶ In 'Myth today' Barthes writes that the action of myth is assumed to be stronger than the rational explanations that may later belie it (Barthes, 1972: 130).

Memorial's sense of propriety and commitment to palatability prevails. The Memorial is therefore a more comfortable and comforting place than it is discomfiting.

Whether the result of the Memorial's approach to representation is a more or less educational experience is worth considering, and here emerges one of the most interesting issues that the thesis raises. What is the relationship between conceptual shock and learning? Is it through extraordinary, shocking, potentially traumatising experiences that people learn? If so, how should this fact inform educational praxis? Can we learn from others' trauma? Exploring these questions would generate a useful debate for museums in general, and for the Memorial in particular. Other questions about the learning process also come to light. If it is difficult to express, work through and learn from traumatic experiences, how much more difficult is it to learn from trauma inflicted? What is the difference between learning to recognise one's capacity to exercise power and learning to recognise one's capacity to dominate others? That is, what is the relationship between a pedagogy of capability and a pedagogy of culpability? The cross-racial structure of this thesis brought to light the need for both kinds of learning, but the thesis did not grapple with the question of the capacity of dialogic praxis to teach people to recognise their abuses of power.

In addition to raising questions about the process of learning, to the extent that I sought to understand the Australian experience of war and conflict, trauma and death, the thesis constitutes a tentative foray into the issue of the national psyche.³⁸⁷ As a site for commemorating Australia's experience of war, the Memorial privileges the dead over and above the traumatised. Its treatment of trauma is circumscribed by government and military interests. Such circumscription further silences those who already have difficulty in expressing their experience, and works to privilege representation of the triumphs and glories of wartime experiences. In the context of a site bound up with the myth of the nation-spirit, to describe a trauma that resulted from a tour of national duty is potentially offensive. It is therefore no surprise that the Memorial cannot recognise that, for Indigenous people, the nation represents a perpetrator of trauma. Like the soldiers' trauma, the ways in which settler Australians set out to possess *terra australis* and its flora and fauna (including Indigenous people, as the stone heads in the Commemorative Area courtyard attest), and to dispossess Indigenous people of their land and their identity – are forgotten in this national public space. But curiously, over the course of this process of possession and dispossession, white Australian culture has been infiltrated by characteristics of Indigenous people and culture: egalitarianism,

³⁸⁷ Since it was not the primary objective of my thesis to engage with this issue, my point here is speculative, not definitive.

larrikinism, and the status of the underdog. In this sense the Australian national spirit has been possessed by the very spirit of which sought to take possession.³⁸⁸ In national discourse as lived through the Memorial, it was the battle lost at Gallipoli that enabled ‘Australia’ to emerge. But in some ways it was the war won against Indigenous peoples – the act of incorporating ‘them’ into ‘us’ – that has given Australia a core identity. Numerous scholars have alluded to the spiritual or psychic dimensions of museum practices of collection and display, and many have deployed the notion of possession or even spirit possession in describing these practices. But the question of museums’ role in helping national publics, especially postcolonial ones, to recover from collective trauma has not, to my knowledge, been addressed.³⁸⁹

Perhaps the most promising aspect of this thesis is its capacity to bridge cultural theory, adult education and the theory and practice of museums as a site for learning. In particular, the thesis demonstrated how a Freirean learning program can orchestrate critical analysis and generate constructive museum evaluations. In turn, it suggests that elements of such a program could be incorporated into museums. My revision of the Memorial’s signification was designed according to the principle that museums should incite visitors to evaluate what they are seeing whilst they are learning; invite questioning; and encourage feedback. It was, in other words, an exploration of the means by which the Memorial could work toward operating as a dialogic site of representation.

There are good reasons for museums to base their signifying practices on the notion of and a commitment to dialogue. One is an ethical imperative to leave open the representational seams in order that visitors can judge the representation’s veracity and value. Even fictional films sometimes document the making of the film for public viewing, and in some theatrical work, the artifice of the production is allowed to intrude into and disrupt the performance. History museums are concerned with the real and, like traditional history and documentary film, most strive to maintain the deception that their presentation is the real thing: history captured. But the more a representation stakes a claim on the real, the greater the imperative to incorporate diverse perspectives, and to acknowledge both the sources and limits of the information presented. It is the very authority of history museums that obliges them to open their representational

³⁸⁸ I am reminded again of the notion that cultural heritage both represents and constitutes cultural identity. We own objects that in a sense own us.

³⁸⁹ Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs’ book *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation* is a seminal text on the Australian national psyche, but it does not specifically attend to museums. Holocaust museums function as a kind of collective healer, so literature on these museums may inform an enquiry into the spiritual interventions of national museums.

process to visitors' scrutiny. A dialogic museum is a counterhegemonic museum. Its effect is more dispersed, in the sense that it is generative of multiple possible interpretations, yet it is also more specifically directed toward an egalitarian system of social relations, in that it leaves space for visitors to direct their own understanding. A dialogic museum is a heterotopic site at its most radical: 'a kind of effectively enacted utopia'³⁹⁰ (Foucault, 1986: 24) that 'desiccate[s] speech, stop[s] words in their tracks ... dissolve[s] our myths and sterilise[s] the lyricism of our sentences' (Foucault, 1970: *viii*).

A second, related reason for museums to commit to open, dialogic representation is the benefit for visitors in terms of their educational experience. In a Freirean framework, education is a process of becoming actively and critically engaged with the object of study. In these terms, for a history museum to be educational it must enable visitors to become involved with the mimetic process of producing culture and history. To involve visitors in the process of making history, it is necessary that the production process is visible to them, wherever possible. It is not necessary for a museum to present *every* perspective on the material, but it is important that a range of interpretations is presented, indicating the existence of multiple or controverted perspectives. In this way, visitors are required to think about their own position, and to consider new possibilities. It is only in an open, dialogic museum that visitors – regardless of their origins or attitudes – are enabled to evaluate the material from their own perspective and thereby to respond actively and critically to it.

A third reason for museums to commit to a dialogic form of representation is that the project of incorporating dialogic signifying practices into exhibitions would integrate and facilitate the processes of exhibition production and consumption, education and evaluation. History museum directors often conceive of their museum as working in conjunction with the communities to which they belong, and take pride in this close association. This attitude suggests, at least on the theoretical plane, an epistemological equality between museum professionals and ordinary people. But museum exhibitions tend to instruct visitors in history rather than to involve them in its production.³⁹¹ Museum educators are usually trained in traditional, monologic educational practices, and separated from the process of producing exhibitions. In the rare case that an educator is committed to dialogic principles and practices, their capacity to influence

³⁹⁰ Recall the subtitle of the chapter that describes Ira Shor's learning program, on which my own analysis has been based: 'A utopia course'.

³⁹¹ Tony Bennett has argued that in order to break down museums' traditional monologic discourse, curators must learn to assist groups outside the museum to use its resources and to make authored statements within it (Bennett, 1995: 103–4).

the process of exhibition production is limited by their subordinated position, relative to curators and designers, in the structure of the museum profession. Meanwhile evaluators, whose role is to analyse, report on and suggest means of improving museums' educational capacities, are positioned even further from the centre of exhibition development. But involving people in the museum's work and inviting them to evaluate it are not separate from that work. Involving students in their learning program, and inviting their evaluation of both the material and the program, are central to the work of dialogic educators. For Freire, teachers and students, or in this case museums and visitors, are co-intent on learning. Museums that adopted dialogic exhibitionary practices would find that the work of their evaluation sections would be intrinsically facilitated, in that visitors would be encouraged at all times and in various ways to respond thoughtfully and critically to the material on display – to evaluate the material as they learn from it. Whether or not museum exhibitions incorporated actual mechanisms for visitors to feed their responses back into the museum, the visitors would be more active and ready to assist museum evaluators. In a dialogic museum, the work of evaluation would be an integral part of education, which in turn would be an integral part of exhibition production. In the event that dialogic education practices were prioritised in museum professional practice, the idea that museums work in association with members of the community, to foster communities, would begin to shift from the rhetorical to the real.

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Appendix

Recent acquisitions by the Australian War Memorial

The following is not a complete list of items acquired by the Memorial between July 1991 and June 1998, but it includes most of those specified in the annual reports.

Art

- posters from Cambodia, Namibia and Afghanistan;
- works by several Vietnam veterans (that provide ‘a different perspective to that of the two official Vietnam War artists’);
- 22 etchings by Jennifer McDuff on the impact of the Vietnam War;
- two works by Aboriginal artist Ellen Jose;
- 59 works by Second World War official artist Douglas Watson;
- Karl Duldig’s sculpture ‘Mother and Child’, 1942;
- Paul Montford’s sculpture ‘Patriotism’, 1929;
- 80 works on paper by Ivor Hele;
- 20 drawings by Bernard Slavics made as a prisoner-of-war in Poland;
- two works by Erwin Fabian (interned at Tatura during the Second World War);
- two works by Bruce Tunks (that ‘reflect the ongoing commemoration of Australian involvement in war’);
- some works by young Melbourne artist Dragan Kostelnik (that will ‘complement the Memorial’s Gulf War collection’);
- two paintings by Clifton Pugh, non-official artist who served in the Second World War;
- ‘Vietnam body counts’, 1966;
- ‘Japanese surrender’, 1945; and
- drawings by the First World War artist Ellis Silas, a signaller at Gallipoli.

Military heraldry and technology

- uniforms and equipment relating to peacekeeping;

- a First World War 3-ton Leyland truck used by the Army and the Australian Flying Corps;
- a ‘rare example’ of a Soviet-built MiG-15 aircraft of a type used by Communist forces in the Korean War;
- an L5 howitzer that ‘provided fire support at the battle of Long Tan’;
- an M2A2 105mm howitzer damaged during the ‘Tet offensive’ in Vietnam;
- a First World War 9.2-inch howitzer;
- a Japanese-built mortar of a type used by Australians at Gallipoli;
- an Australian-designed and built Dingo armoured car;
- a colonial period Brunswick rifle and bayonet;
- undercarriage components for the Australian-built Beaufort bomber;
- parts for a 3.7 inch naval gun;
- a scale model of a German railway gun ‘captured by Australian troops during the offensives east of Amiens in August 1918’;
- an HMCS Nelson ship model;
- munitions from the Maribyrnong factory;
- a large collection of ‘patriotic and commemorative objects and ornaments’; and
- the decorations and/or medals of Private James Park Woods VC, Air Marshal Sir Ronald Lees (an Australian Battle of Britain pilot), Wing Commander CG Milson DSO and bar, DFC and bar, CPO Jonathon Rogers GC DSM, Sergeant Percy Statton VC MM, Lieutenant-Commander WHV Edgar DSC, Lieutenant-General Sir Leslie Morshead (commander during the siege of Tobruk), Sir Vernon Sturdee, and Sir Walter McNicoll.

Photographs, sound and film

- four weeks’ worth of photography by George Gittoes of Australia’s military commitment to Somalia;
- 200 feet of 16mm black and white film of the Ketty Brovig and HMAS Canberra in action;
- footage of the bombing of Darwin;
- 8mm colour film of men and equipment of No. 79 Squadron RAAF in Ubon, Thailand, 1965;
- 16mm colour film from New Guinea;
- 8mm film taken on HMAS Voyager in 1940;
- photographs of allied airmen in a forest camp while ‘on the run in occupied France’;
- photographs of European and Australian civilians at an internment camp in China during the Second World War; and

- interviews with Fred Heydrich (a German test and fighter pilot), Colonel Steve Ayling (responsible for communications with the United Nations in Cambodia), Sir John Overall (a Second World War veteran), Stanley Chapman, who served on RAAF rescue boats during the Second World War, and Jack Murray, who piloted ‘G for George’.

Research Centre

- prisoner-of-war records of Lieutenant Colonel T. Hamilton;
- records relating to the Vietnam War of the Directorate of Medical Services (Army);
- records of the Vietnam Veterans’ Family Support Link Line;
- the Department of Veterans Affairs war stories writing competition papers;
- draft accounts of war correspondent Talbot Duckmanton;
- letters of Captain Robert ‘Shaggy’ Clampett;
- the field diary of Brigadier General C.F. Cox (Company of 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade);
- diaries of coastwatcher John Keenan (Second World War), Lieutenant Athol Lewis (First World War), and Sergeant John Marsh describing a rescue mission to New Britain, April 1942;
- papers relating to the sinking of HMAS Sydney;
- papers of the Women’s Air Training Scheme, Second World War;
- papers of official historian David Dexter, cinematographer Neil Davis, Sir Harry Chauvel, Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop (25m of shelf space), and Sergeant Len Siffleet; and
- research papers for the preparation of Ken Inglis’ book *Sacred Places*.







