THE GRAINGER MUSEUM
IN ITS MUSEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the Grainger Museum at the University of Melbourne in the context of the history of museums, particularly those in Europe, the United States and Australia, during the lifetime of its creator, Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882–1961).

Drawing on the collection of the Grainger Museum itself, and on both primary and secondary sources relating to museum development in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, the thesis demonstrates that the Grainger Museum reflects many of the concerns of museums of Grainger’s day, especially of the years prior to his relocation to the United States in 1914. Many of those concerns were products of the nationalistic endeavours arising from political upheavals and redefinitions in nineteenth-century Europe, the imperialism which reached its zenith by the First World War, and the racialist beliefs, hierarchies and anxieties accompanying that imperialism. In particular, Grainger’s lifelong concern with racial identity manifested in hierarchical and evolutionary museum interpretations typical of his earlier years. I explore the paradox of Grainger’s admiration for the musical and material culture of the racial ‘other’ and his racially supremacist views, and the way he presented these two apparently conflicting ideologies in his Museum.

In elucidating Grainger’s motives for establishing a museum, I argue that Grainger was raised in a social and cultural milieu in which collecting, classifying and displaying cultural material was a popular practice. Grainger’s concern with preservation and memorialisation, although in his case taken to an extreme degree, was part of his family and broader heritage. Grainger also enjoyed visiting museums and exhibitions from a young age, the first three decades of his life coinciding with the ‘golden age’ of museums.

Although Grainger’s creation of an autobiographical museum was unusual, it is neither unique nor unprecedented. I examine several other autobiographical museums established by creative individuals, mostly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like these other collectors, Grainger felt compelled to leave a legacy for future generations in the form of a permanent and tangible record of his family heritage, artistic influences, creative achievements, personal beliefs and aspirations. Grainger, and some of these other museum autobiographers, also used objects and collecting as a way of dealing with the
passage of time and feelings of uncertainty and loss, particularly, in Grainger’s case, following the death of his mother.

Through his museum project Grainger also attempted to position himself as both part of international musical modernism and Australia’s first (great) composer. He argued that white Australia had a worthwhile cultural life and future, in which he stood at the vanguard, and which merited preservation and communication to future generations through a museum. By surveying the emergence of cultural collecting in Australia, I demonstrate that in this sense Grainger was ahead of many of his contemporaries. Grainger accumulated, acquired and preserved material types and subject matter not then widely collected, and created his Museum at a time when museums, libraries and other collecting institutions placed little emphasis on non-indigenous Australian cultural activity.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, illustrations, bibliographies and appendices.

Belinda Jane Nemec

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I received funding from the Faculty of Arts Travel for Research in Postgraduate Study scheme, and additional funding from the Australian Centre, to travel to White Plains in October 2003. This enabled me to visit Grainger’s house and inspect the collection of the Percy Grainger Library Society. Mr Stewart Manville, Archivist of the Society, was helpful and hospitable throughout my visit, and subsequently responded obligingly to further requests for information. I am indebted to Mr Manville and the Board of the Society for granting permission to copy Grainger’s Museum Legends.

I thank my family, friends and colleagues for their patience during the writing of this thesis, including my managers at work: Ian Pausacker at the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Robyn Sloggett at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, and Michael Piggott in Information Services, University of Melbourne. My parents Jane and Danilo Nemec have encouraged me in this as they have in all my undertakings, while my husband Jason Kreitner has been unfailingly supportive, patient and helpful in a thousand ways. I certainly could not have completed this project without him.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Percy Grainger’s written expression is idiosyncratic and inconsistent. In quoting from his letters and other unpublished writings, I have generally preserved his spelling and idiom, with the exception of correcting obvious minor errors. Grainger variously used single, double or triple underlining to emphasise a word or phrase; all have been replaced with italics. Grainger’s use of upper case for emphasis has been retained.

Italics in quotations by other authors are from the original unless otherwise stated.

Grainger used single or double square brackets or parentheses inconsistently. I have changed these to single parentheses, with the exception of double parentheses where Grainger has enclosed a translation of a ‘blue-eyed English’ term. I have reserved square brackets for my own editorial interpolations.

All correspondence, diaries and archival sources referred to in this thesis are from the Grainger Museum collection, unless otherwise stated. Wherever possible I have consulted the original sources, other than those published in the two anthologies of Grainger’s correspondence: Kay Dreyfus (ed.), *The farthest north of humanness: letters of Percy Grainger 1901–14* (Macmillan, 1985) and Malcolm Gillies & David Pear (eds), *The all-round man: selected letters of Percy Grainger, 1914–1961* (Clarendon Press, 1994).
INTRODUCTION

The Grainger Museum at the University of Melbourne preserves the material evidence of the multi-faceted life of its creator, the Melbourne-born composer, pianist, folklorist, educator and self-described 'all-round man', George Percy Grainger, known as Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882–1961). Grainger was born in Melbourne to the English-born John H. Grainger (1855–1917), a successful architect and engineer, and Adelaide-born Anglo-Irish Rose Grainger (née Rosa Annie Aldridge, 1861–1922), a talented amateur pianist. Percy showed early talent both as a visual artist and musician and made his successful public debut as a pianist in Melbourne in 1894. The following year, with support from Melbourne’s musical community, Percy and his mother travelled to Frankfurt to continue Percy’s musical education. By this time his parents had been separated for about five years.

Grainger became known as one of the ‘Frankfurt Group’ of mostly English composers studying at the Hoch Conservatorium at that time, whose works Grainger continued to promote throughout his life. In 1901 Rose and Percy moved to London where Percy established himself as a professional pianist. His main enthusiasm was for composition but performance and teaching were necessary to support himself and his parents, whose health was not strong. During his London years 1901–1914 his reputation as a performer grew and he toured regularly throughout Europe and twice to Australia and the Pacific. He collected English folk-song which served as source material for many of his compositions and arrangements. He also developed a love for Scandinavian languages, culture and people, and formed a romantic relationship with Karen Holten, a Danish piano student, with whom he was able to express his sado-masochistic, flagellantic sexual orientation.

By the outbreak of the First World War Grainger was becoming known as a composer, his most cherished ambition. He and Rose moved hastily to the United States however, to

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avoid possible military service. They lived in New York for the remainder of their lives. Grainger enlisted in the United States Army in 1917 and became an American citizen. He was highly successful as a concert virtuoso in America during this early American period. But a major psychological rupture was caused by his mother’s suicide in 1922. After travelling to Europe where he collected Scandinavian folk music and also to Australia and the Pacific, in 1928 he married Ella Ström, a Swedish artist and poet. The couple had no children together.

In the 1930s Grainger proposed to the University of Melbourne that he would pay for the construction and upkeep of an autobiographical museum. Grainger was well-known by this time, both in Australia and abroad, and the University was happy to donate the land for the Museum. The stated aim of the Museum was to illuminate the processes of musical composition (rather than performance) from about 1880 onwards, a period in which Grainger believed that Australia had been prominent in music. Construction took place in two phases: 1934–1935 and 1938–1939, but after this time the Second World War and subsequently his professional engagements and health problems kept Grainger away from Australia until his last visit in 1955–1956, during which he and Ella worked intensively on setting up displays based on collection material he had been regularly despatching from New York and Europe.

While the War had revived Grainger’s career somewhat, his later years were characterised by performing in mostly small-town and college venues, his efforts focussed on ensuring the performance of his own compositions and those of his artistic circle, and on pursuing at home his highly innovative ‘Free Music’ experiments which I discuss later. He died in White Plains, New York, in 1961 after many years’ battle with the effects of cancer.

Grainger was a man of many interests and enthusiasms: composition, folk-song collecting, early music, Scandinavian and Pacific languages and cultures, literature, visual arts, and

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sexual sado-masochism. He had a wide circle of friends and professional acquaintances with whom he corresponded regularly. Best known for several lightweight works such as *English country gardens*, his aspiration to be taken seriously as a major composer was never quite fulfilled in his lifetime, much to his frustration. The remarkable breadth and diversity of Grainger’s interests are reflected in the considerable size and variety of his collection of letters, scores, books, pictures, garments, ephemera, decorative arts, musical instruments and myriad other types of material which over his lifetime he accumulated or deliberately acquired, and then preserved. This breadth is belied, however, by the modest scale of the Museum building and the relatively limited subject matter of the didactic panels or ‘Legends’ that Grainger created to communicate his ideas to visitors. The exhibits set up by Grainger focussed on his own family history and the family histories of the Frankfurt Group of composers; his compositional achievements; racial background; and those individuals who had influenced or supported him in various ways. They dealt also, although in less detail, with his Free Music, early music revival work, and folk-song collecting.

Grainger held strong views, sometimes idiosyncratic or contradictory, on a wide range of subjects, musical and extra-musical, and these are represented in various ways in his Museum. The varied nature of Grainger’s interests, together with his often forceful mode of written and spoken expression, a cultivated eccentricity of public demeanour and an unconventional private life, has led many commentators, both during Grainger’s lifetime and since his death, to characterise Grainger as *sui generis*, supposedly misunderstood by ignorant contemporaries and critics.

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4 See Appendix for full documentation of the Museum Legends.
5 Some of Grainger’s writings have been published in Gillies & Clunies Ross (eds); and Teresa Balough (ed.), *A musical genius from Australia: selected writings by and about Percy Grainger* (University of Western Australia, 1982; 1997). A discussion of Grainger’s philosophies and creative aims is Teresa Balough, *The inner fire: spirit and evolving consciousness in the work of Percy Grainger* (University of Western Australia, 1993). Explorations of Grainger’s principal preoccupations are in Frank Callaway (ed.), *Percy Aldridge Grainger symposium* (University of Western Australia, 1997).
ways in which he was very much a man of his time have been often overlooked. Only more recent research, led largely by Malcolm Gillies, has better placed Grainger’s life and music in their broader cultural and historical perspectives. Four significant volumes ‘help to locate Grainger more perceptively and accurately within the most appropriate racial, national, sexual, physical and artistic milieux.’ These works are invaluable in contextualising Grainger and deconstructing some of the myths of his supposed eccentricity, uniqueness and originality, because as David Pear observes, ‘much of his profundity is borrowed profundity.’ These publications draw upon the Museum collection as their principal primary source, particularly the correspondence and Grainger’s essays. But they are not concerned with discussing in depth the Museum itself. The authors’ interests lie principally in Grainger the composer, performer, folklorist, writer and educator, rather than in Grainger the museum-maker. This thesis aims to fill that gap in this most recent phase of Grainger scholarship. It demonstrates that an understanding of Grainger’s purpose, sources and methods in creating his Museum is crucial to positioning Grainger in his historical context.

Pear’s doctoral thesis demonstrates the Museum’s importance in Grainger’s educational program, but does not examine his collecting or museum work in detail. Reeves’ thesis documents the Museum project, and Thacker’s thesis includes useful factual information on the Museum project, but neither places the Museum in the broader history of museums. My thesis discusses Grainger’s Museum in its wider museological context,

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7 An early exception, in my view, is E.C. Thacker, whose doctoral thesis includes some astute observations on Grainger and his context. Access to this thesis was restricted however, so it did not have the influence it might otherwise have had. Eric Charles Thacker, ‘George Percy Grainger (1882–1961), professionally known as Percy Aldridge Grainger: a biographical estimate’ (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1970).
8 Malcolm Gillies & David Pear (eds), The all-round man: selected letters of Percy Grainger 1914–1961 (Clarendon Press, 1994); Gillies & Clunies Ross (eds); Malcolm Gillies & Mark Carroll (eds), Australasian music research (no.5, Percy Grainger issue, 2001); Malcolm Gillies & David Pear (eds), Portrait of Percy Grainger (University of Rochester Press, 2002).
13 Thacker.
demonstrating that although unusual as an autobiographical museum, it has much in common with museums of Grainger’s earlier decades, which in themselves reflected widely-held attitudes about culture and race. I acknowledge that although Grainger—as an amalgam—was unique, most of the ideas and enthusiasms represented in his Museum reflected attitudes current at various stages and places in his life. In this way Grainger’s Museum can illuminate not only the mind of one unusual Australian but also many aspects of the time and places in which he lived, particularly prior to his move to America in 1914.

Grainger was, for example, acclaimed as a folk-music collector and he placed the results of that collecting in the Museum. While some authors have attempted to position Grainger almost as a visionary pioneer in this field, in fact such collecting was a Europe-wide movement in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was both a symptom of nationalism and a reaction to social changes caused by industrialisation and urbanisation. Similarly, Grainger’s idiosyncratic invented language ‘blue-eyed English’ should be placed in the context of nineteenth-century language reform activity which also grew out of that nationalist trend. Grainger’s interest in the arts of Pacific and other non-western cultures relates to the primitivism current in the arts, including popular culture, in the West around the turn of the century, as well as to the consolidation of anthropology as a legitimate academic and museum discipline. Grainger’s views on racial hierarchy were influenced by nineteenth-century Social Darwinism, the eugenics movement and Nordicist writers, while his ‘Nordic’ obsession began with his early contact with the work of that nineteenth-century ‘all-round man’ William Morris and historians such as E.A. Freeman. Just as Grainger’s innovations as a modernist composer before the First World War occurred at a time of musical revolution, his seemingly bizarre towel clothes can be seen as

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17 Grainger was convinced of the physical, moral and artistic superiority of fair-haired, blue-eyed people of Scandinavian origin. He saw himself as inheriting these characteristics from his fair-haired (although not actually Scandinavian) mother, although supposedly tainted somewhat by his inheritance from his dark-eyed, dark-haired father.
rebellion against Edwardian propriety, as sharing concerns with nineteenth-century dress reform (of which Morris was a proponent),\(^\text{18}\) and as demonstrating awareness of the costume designs of the Ballets Russes\(^\text{19}\) and Isadora Duncan.\(^\text{20}\)

While many such aspects of Grainger are now more broadly contextualised, this has not yet been done with his Museum. I will demonstrate that the Grainger Museum reflects broad trends in museums generally in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This should come as no surprise. As Krzysztof Pomian argues, ‘the collections of a given country at a given time are, taken as a whole, the co-extension of that country’s culture at that particular time. They incarnate this culture and make it visible to us.’\(^\text{21}\) Museums were integral to nineteenth-century nationalism, the forming of nation-states and the growth of empires.\(^\text{22}\) The Australian nationalism expressed in Grainger’s Museum is therefore unsurprising. Thus, while Grainger’s Museum is unique in Australia and unusual internationally, in being an autobiographical museum and archive commissioned and paid for as a publicly-accessible museum (rather than initially as a private home) by the individual concerned during his or her active years, it should not be dismissed as having little relevance to museums generally. I also compare several other examples of autobiographical collecting and museum-making to Grainger’s.

On the other hand, Grainger’s collection is unusually diverse; he was collecting some types of material, particularly the ephemera of his own life, before such things were generally acknowledged as having research, historical or interpretive value in museums and other formal or high-status collections. In acknowledging the importance, or at least the potential, of this material by preserving, documenting and displaying it, was Grainger


ahead of his time? Grainger saw himself as a leading figure in Australia’s cultural history—a pioneer in a new land. While in this respect he reflected a broader Australian nationalism which accompanied Federation at the turn of the twentieth century, his Museum was an early example of specifically addressing non-indigenous Australian culture. Earlier historical collections (located mostly in libraries and historical societies) comprised documents and pictures relating largely to the exploits of Australia’s immigrant ‘pioneers’ such as explorers and pastoralists. While art museums did collect and display some Australian painting from the 1880s, neither type of institution—even by the 1930s when Grainger built his Museum—dealt in an analytical way with Australia’s cultural life and achievements, or placed it in an international cultural context, in the way Grainger did.

Methodology and literature review

This thesis is based principally on the examination of documents and artefacts in the Grainger Museum collection and of published writings by and about Grainger, supplemented by reading of primary sources and recent secondary literature on museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and on personal collecting.

Among Grainger’s writings, those relating to his Museum are mostly contained in his published and unpublished letters and his presently unpublished autobiographical essays. These include observations on museums he visited, and his comments on items acquired or accumulated for his collection. I have also examined Grainger’s documentation on the creation and organisation of the collection, such as his explanation of his method of numbering his correspondence, shipping lists for consignments sent to Melbourne, and tags he attached to certain artefacts, as well as the relatively few photographs of the Museum taken during Grainger’s lifetime.

In examining artefacts in the Museum I have focused on the Legends (Grainger’s term) and documentation surrounding their creation. Grainger created this series of fifty-eight didactic display panels specifically for his Museum. Some were ready for the official


24 See Bibliography, section 1.2.
opening in 1938 but most were made almost two decades later, during his final visit to Melbourne in 1955–1956. Although displayed for decades, some until 2003, they have not previously been documented in detail or published, although their texts have been a valuable source for scholars.\textsuperscript{25} The Appendix to this thesis comprises a list of all the Legends, each with a brief physical description, photograph, transcription, and actual or attributed date of creation. In the introduction to the Appendix, I have attempted to reconstruct in broad terms Grainger’s placement of the principal Legends, to illuminate his intentions for the Museum interior.

The Legends are an important source, as they are Grainger’s main interpretive tool for his Museum, and I argue that through their inclusions and exclusions they indicate Grainger’s priorities in communicating to the public, as represented by the future Museum visitor. Although his collection overall is catholic and broad in scope, the subject matter of the Legends, and therefore of the most public face of his Museum, is comparatively narrow, restricted largely to Percy Grainger as modernist ‘Nordic’ composer and musical pioneer, and his place in both Australia’s cultural history and the western musical pantheon. I discuss the Legends throughout as they relate to the themes of each chapter.

Another source for this thesis is the collection housed at 7 Cromwell Road, White Plains, New York, where Grainger lived from 1921 until his death. Now the headquarters of the Percy Grainger Library Society, and managed by Mr Stewart Manville, the second husband of Grainger’s widow Ella Grainger (née Ström, 1889–1979), it houses a large although mostly uncatalogued collection of documents, particularly scores,\textsuperscript{26} as well as the domestic contents of Grainger’s occupation (and subsequently of Ella’s). Although constrained by the lack of finding aids, my examination of this collection—together with discussions with Mr Manville and evidence in correspondence in Melbourne—indicated that most material

\textsuperscript{25} Most of the Museum Legend texts are listed in David Pear, ‘Appendix: list of Grainger’s writings’, in Gillies & Clunies Ross (eds) pp.377–385; one text ‘Free music’ is reproduced in full, pp.293–294. The Legends are registered on the Grainger Museum’s database catalogue (which is not available to the public) but are not catalogued there in detail. The Legends are not publicly displayed at the time of writing, as the Museum building is closed for conservation work, but may be inspected upon request.

\textsuperscript{26} A list of scores at White Plains is in Thomas P. Lewis, \textit{A source guide to the music of Percy Grainger} (Pro-Am Music Resources, 1991) pp.109–113.
relating to the establishment of the Museum was transferred to Melbourne, either by Grainger or his heirs.  

Regrettably, the Grainger Museum collection remains only partly catalogued, and the catalogue database is not available to researchers. Only the book collection is searchable online, while several older printed catalogues are useful, particularly in navigating the music collections. For guides to other material such as correspondence, clothing, photographs, paintings, decorative arts, furniture, ephemera and ethnographica, I was dependent, with a few exceptions, on Grainger’s own documentation, responses to queries by Grainger Museum staff, and catalogues of past exhibitions. Although these exhibition catalogues reveal aspects of the collection in the absence of a comprehensive database, I contend that the exhibitions they recorded provided little critique or insight into Grainger’s philosophies, collecting activity or Museum, beyond that which he himself explicitly offered. The main exceptions to this shortcoming were more abstract and ephemeral in nature: those more creative exhibitions inspired by Grainger’s collection, initiated in the late 1990s.

In other words, most exhibitions to date have taken the Grainger Museum at its creator’s own evaluation. Although useful in making data publicly available, these exhibitions failed to move significantly beyond Grainger’s own statements and claims. This is consistent with much of the earlier writing on Grainger’s life and works, including the three published

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27 See Bibliography, section 1.4, for list of relevant material still located at White Plains.
29 See Bibliography, section 3.1
30 See Bibliography, section 3.2.
biographies. Thus, research on the Grainger Museum as represented by the exhibition-generated literature is yet to reach the next phase of critical insight represented by the work on Grainger’s philosophies and music by authors such as Gillies and his cohort. This thesis addresses that lack, particularly by examining Grainger’s collecting and valuing of material culture, interpretive approach and display methods in the light of the more theoretical and reflexive approach which emerged with the new museology from the 1970s–1980s. This more critical, pluralist view of museums developed in the context of post-modernist thinking, which as Susan Pearce explains, challenges the certainty and authority of grand modernist narratives, institutions and meanings attributed to objects and knowledges.

While this approach is now ubiquitous to contemporary museological-academic debate, there are still ongoing tensions in actually applying it in many museums, including, I contend, the Grainger Museum.

Given the long time-span of Grainger’s career, and the breadth of his interests which is reflected in the diversity of his collection, I have found it necessary to draw upon a wide range of literature, reflecting the analytical approaches of many authors, in order to put the Grainger Museum in its museological and historical contexts. No single analytical or conceptual framework would be adequate to the task. On the history of museums from about the 1880s until the 1950s, I examined contemporary sources such as journals and newsletters of the museum profession in the United States and the United Kingdom (whose subscribers included museum workers from dominions such as Australia), as well as surveys of museums in various countries undertaken in the 1930s, mostly under the

12 Slattery; Dorum; Bird.
13 Although the term ‘new museology’ was popularised by Peter Vergo through his edited volume, *The new museology* (Reaktion Books, 1989), it applied to an existing trend and had been used in Canada at least in 1984. Macdonald & Fyfe (eds) p.15 (note 8).
16 *Museum news* (twice-monthly publication of the American Association of Museums, commenced January 1924).
17 *Museums journal* (the organ of the Museums Association, London; journal commenced 1901).
sponsorship of the Carnegie Foundation,\(^{38}\) and publications by leading figures in the museums sector such as Laurence Vail Coleman,\(^{39}\) Benjamin Ives Gilman\(^{40}\) and Thomas Ritchie Adam in America,\(^{41}\) and David Murray\(^{42}\) and Frederick George Kenyon\(^{43}\) in the United Kingdom. I also consulted contemporary journals and books on library and museum architecture, particularly from the 1920s–1930s.\(^{44}\)

Secondary sources include texts which reflect the major strands which together have been characterised as the new museology: all involve a critical re-examination of collecting and museums, particularly their role in the relationships between colonising powers and indigenous peoples,\(^{45}\) and in their creation of aesthetic canons in fields such as painting and sculpture.\(^{46}\) Vergo’s anthology reflects dissatisfaction with the older museology’s preoccupation with museum methods over purpose,\(^{47}\) while the broad approaches advocated by proponents of the movement are outlined in the influential works of Kenneth


\(^{46}\) Ross, ‘Interpreting the new museology’; Vergo (ed.).

\(^{47}\) Vergo (ed.) p.3.
Hudson and Stephen Weil. These and other writers critiqued the assumptions on which older ways of museum creation were based, making explicit and challenging the elitism, divisiveness and monolithic, ideological narratives of empire, class, race and science perpetuated by most traditional museums. Consistent with the new museology’s more reflexive approach, western ethnographic collecting and interpretation of indigenous material culture were examined by Michael Ames, James Clifford and George Stocking, and in Australia by Tom Griffiths and Tony Bennett.

Nationalism, national identity and museums form one of the grand narratives deconstructed by the new museology. Australian and European nationalisms formed much of the backdrop to Grainger’s efforts to portray himself through his Museum as Australia’s first great composer. Nationalist narratives are touched upon in many museum histories but specifically in a series of case studies including one from Australia contained in a volume.

49 Stephen E. Weil, Rethinking the museum and other meditations (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990); A cabinet of curiosities: inquiries into museums and their prospects (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Making museums matter (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).
50 Ross, 'Interpreting the new museology', p.85.
53 George W. Stocking (ed.), Race, culture, and evolution: essays in the history of anthropology (University of Chicago Press, 1982); Objects and others: essays on museums and material culture (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); George W. Stocking, Victorian anthropology (Macmillan, 1987).
edited by Flora Kaplan and an anthology compiled by David Boswell and Jessica Evans. James Gore’s thesis illuminates the Australian context.

The changing role of museums in the creation and dissemination of knowledge is examined by Steven Conn, Sharon Macdonald and Susan Sheets-Pyenson. This is relevant to Grainger’s choice of a museum for his most lasting statement; he chose a medium which by the 1930s was no longer leading the way in creating new knowledge but which focussed rather on the dissemination of existing, often outdated, theories.

The psychology of and motivations behind personal (as opposed to institutional) collecting have been examined by a number of writers, including the wide-ranging work of Susan Pearce, and anthologies of collectors’ own writings. Jean Baudrillard posits collecting as a way of controlling the relentless passage of time from birth to death. Walter Benjamin’s insight into his private motivations for book collecting contrasts with Werner Muensterberger’s more clinical, psychoanalytical approach to what he characterises as the collector’s ‘obsessional infatuation’. Collecting in contemporary consumer culture is examined by Russell Belk, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and his collaborators, and some of

57 David Boswell & Jessica Evans (eds), Representing the nation: a reader in heritage and museums (Routledge, 1999).
62 Susan M. Pearce & others (eds), The collector’s voice: critical readings in the practice of collecting: volume 1: ancient voices; volume 2: early voices; volume 3: imperial voices; volume 4: contemporary voices (Ashgate, 2000, 2002).
Pearce’s work. 68 Elsner and Cardinal’s anthology includes case studies of European collectors including Sigmund Freud69 and Sir John Soane. 70 I apply the more self-conscious and reflexive approach, and more historically specific analyses, of these and other authors to Grainger’s Museum.

Outline

Chapter One begins by considering the question, ‘A museum of which time?’ Although Grainger conceived the idea of his Museum in 1922, built it in the 1930s, and undertook much of the exhibition work in 1955–1956, its philosophy in many ways reflects ideas from the first twenty or thirty years of his life. This is consistent not only with Grainger’s life trajectory: a precocious musical development preceding reduced creativity following his mother’s death in 1922, but also with the history of museums in the first half of the twentieth century. By the 1920s, when Grainger mooted his museum idea, museums were no longer the primary locus of the production of new scientific knowledge; this role had shifted largely to universities. 71 Due to changes in research focus and ways of understanding, much research had moved to laboratory-based work for the natural sciences and kinship and social inquiry for anthropology, which no longer required the large museum collections essential to earlier, morphological and taxonomic approaches. As a result, many museums began to display less up-to-date ideas, as they continued to be based on a nineteenth-century ‘objects-based epistemology’. 72 Grainger’s formative years coincided with that earlier period in which the object held sway, whether in the home, department store, museum or international exhibition; his most influential years of

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72 Conn, p. 4.
museum and exhibition visiting occurred in imperial centres in Europe and some of its colonies from 1888 until 1914. This is the period best reflected in his Museum collection.

Chapter One then discusses the Grainger Museum’s place in the emergence of museums dealing with Australia’s artistic and cultural history. Although libraries and historical societies collected Australian historical documents and pictures from the nineteenth century, the first significant museum of Australian history is widely held to be the Australian War Memorial, initiated in the First World War but not coming to fruition until the Second.73 It has been argued that non-indigenous Australians long felt that they had no local history worth speaking of; their history was important only as part of British imperial history.74 Academic history and publishing reflected this, as did public commemorations and collecting. Early efforts to commemorate Australian history emphasised the pioneering spirit; for example monuments to those white men hailed for bravely exploring and conquering the vast Australian land.75 Grainger however from a young age had a strong sense of a worthwhile Australian cultural history. He made connections between Australia’s musical development and that of ‘Nordic’ Europe, envisioning a bright and innovative musical future for the land of his birth, himself bearing the standard. This is not to say that Australian patriotism had had no cultural manifestations before Grainger; nationalistic Australian writers thrived from the second half of the nineteenth century as did the Heidelberg School of painters from 1885 and some popular songs had patriotic lyrics. But for the most part, their work was not analysed or presented historically in academia or museums until decades later. I argue that in this particular sense, Grainger was ahead of many of his contemporaries.

Chapter One concludes by examining the design of the Grainger Museum building in the context of developments in museum architecture, lighting, interior layout and display in

the early decades of the twentieth century, particularly in the United States, which from about the 1930s was acknowledged as the leader in this field. I argue that the building, although by no means avant-garde, reflected contemporary architectural concerns in attempting to address the inadequacies of nineteenth-century historicist-style museum buildings.

Grainger’s eye was on the future visitor. But a major concern of his Museum, as of most museums, was to remember the past; to preserve things or memories of people long gone. It was the suicide of his beloved mother Rose in 1922 that prompted Grainger to set down in writing his desire to create a memorial and autobiographical museum. Chapter Two examines the effect on Grainger of that bereavement in terms of his collecting and museum plans, and also considers his broader attitude to the past, the dead and the disappeared. Although he considered himself in the musical avant-garde, he saw the past as a rich, teeming source of ideas, inspiration and emotion, and perceived the prospect of death as a catalyst for action. This understanding led to a sense of ‘cultural duty’ to preserve the physical manifestations of the past, which Grainger took to the unusual extreme of establishing a museum. He was not alone here, however, and I explore the similarities between Grainger and another artist, who created a personal legacy in the form of an autobiographical museum: Gustave Moreau, whose museum project was also triggered by a sense of personal loss and bereavement, forcing him to contemplate, at a relatively young age, his own mortality.

I then consider Grainger’s habit of collecting, classifying and arranging—which he shared with his parents and which was a popular and respectable past-time for middle-class children and adults when Grainger was a boy76—in the light of theoretical literature on people’s motivations for collecting. Not only is collecting a way of creating a local environment of relative stability in an unstable wider world, but it has also been analysed as part of identity creation, and as an attempt by the individual to control the passage of time, or to displace real time.77 I argue that although Grainger collected a wider range of object

76 Pearce & others (eds), Collector’s voice 3: imperial voices, p. 86; Asa Briggs, Victorian things (Batsford, 1988) p. 47.
77 Belk, Consumer society; Baudrillard.
types than most people of his own time, or of today, and invested more than the usual amount of time and resources in preserving his collection, he shared many of the common motivations for collecting, as examined by Pearce, Belk, Susan Stewart, and Elsner & Cardinal. These include stress on family life in a rapidly changing and modernising world; personal insecurity caused by frequent changes of domicile; financial insecurity (particularly, for Grainger, before the 1920s); nostalgia and a need to maintain a connection with the past; the need to consolidate one’s personal identity, or one’s place in a professional, cultural or national tradition; and the desire to leave a tangible legacy for the future. I also examine Grainger’s collecting in the light of research on the gendering of collecting, particularly that of Pearce and Belk, and conclude that Grainger did not fit the traditional ‘male’ collecting mould, but shared some of the typically ‘female’ collecting characteristics, due probably to the unusually close intertwining of his life with his mother’s. Grainger’s collection began in the domestic sphere and in this he reflected the late Victorian and Edwardian fascination for material possessions which resulted in the crowded interiors of that time, as did his adoption of features of the period room and house museum. In moments of crisis such as the outbreak of war, when domestic safety or harmony were at risk, he made great efforts to safeguard his most treasured items. I also consider another autobiographical domestic collection which, however, became a museum only posthumously: that of Pierre Loti, who coped with his lifelong nostalgia and sense of impending loss by preserving and displaying personally-significant objects, and creating fantastic domestic interiors filled with exotic artefacts.

It was during Grainger’s Melbourne boyhood, formal musical education in Frankfurt, and emerging professional life in London, that he developed or adopted most of his ideas, philosophies and interests. He continued to pursue these through the rest of his life and

78 Pearce, Collecting in contemporary practice; Pearce, On collecting.
79 Belk, Consumer society; Belk, ‘Possessions’.
80 Susan Stewart, On longing: narratives of the miniature, the gigantic, the souvenir, the collection (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).
articulated them in his Museum. These formative years coincided with the peak of European imperialism. Unsurprisingly therefore Grainger shared many prevailing attitudes, including a racially hierarchical world-view. He saw a ‘Nordic race’ of which he considered himself a member, at the top of that hierarchy.\(^8\) Grainger was a lifelong propagandist for most of his theories, whether sound or otherwise, and a major purpose of his Museum was to disseminate those ideas to future generations. Grainger’s abiding preoccupation with race is one of his most repellent traits. Although he pursued the subject to a further extreme than did his average contemporary, it was less unusual, particularly between the World Wars, to be so open in articulating racial prejudices than it is today.\(^4\) While the roots of his racism lay in views held by some family members,\(^5\) they were nourished over the years by many cultural influences, especially, in the 1920s, by his discovery of the Nordicist writers.\(^6\) Chapter Three surveys Grainger’s views on race, nationality and Australian identity, and examines another nationalistic autobiographical museum: Gabriele D’Annunzio’s *Vittoriale degli Italiani*.

I then argue that the Grainger Museum can be understood as the metaphorical centre of Grainger’s empire of ideas on race, nation, identity and other issues. Although Grainger generally disapproved of real-world imperialism, his zeal in promoting his own opinions and his imaginary Nordic community made him an imperialist in the realm of ideas. Seen in this light it is unsurprising that Grainger chose the museum format as his primary ‘educational’ medium, as museums were a major force in justifying to audiences both at home and abroad the real European imperial project, and in demonstrating the superiority of the conquering race over the conquered.

Chapter Four discusses Grainger’s racism in the context of his apparently universalist enthusiasm for the music and material culture of Pacific Island and other non-western

\(^8\) Such a view was at the turn of the twentieth century considered ‘factual, free of prejudice and generally pertinent to social and political analysis’. Barkan, p.2. See also Ruth Clifford Engs, *The eugenics movement: an encyclopedia* (Greenwood Press, 2005) pp.162–163.


societies. I argue that Grainger’s collecting of artefacts from these ‘exotic’ cultures was a typical activity of middle-class westerners of his time, with most acquisitions made in the context of tourism and souvenir shopping, and not as a result of any mutually meaningful encounter with the indigenous creators themselves. I contend that it was this very lack, or at least superficiality, of relationship that enabled Grainger, and many collectors of his day, to admire and covet the creations of people of other cultures, while holding in relative contempt the people themselves, based on their supposedly inferior race. I contrast these attitudes with Grainger’s more sustained engagement with the sources of the English and Scandinavian folk-songs he collected, mostly elderly rural men. Although Grainger’s understanding was limited by the same preconceptions held by most of his folk-music collecting contemporaries, he made some effort to construct an ethnographic profile of his informants by attempting to understand the context of the songs, principally by noting the singers’ appearance, clothing, occupation, habits and dialect. He seemed to feel some affinity with these people, partly because he saw them as his racial antecedents. Again, Grainger’s response to this culture was to appropriate it, but in this case through incorporation into his musical creations. Grainger’s use of English and Scandinavian folk-music in his musical creations is well known and was, I will argue, a more meaningful and productive type of appropriation than his relatively superficial attempts to recreate some aesthetic aspects of the non-western cultures he had encountered.

Folk-music collecting also reflected Grainger’s nostalgic view of the past; in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, traditional rural singers were seen as the last representatives of a disappearing pre-industrial utopia. In concluding Chapter Four, I note that museums at that time were also attempting to preserve the manifestations of that vanishing way of life and its supposedly loftier social values. The emergence of the folk museum, originally in Scandinavia in the 1870s–1880s, was part of that project. Grainger was familiar with and influenced by this museum type.

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87 Bearman.
Chapter Five examines the Grainger Museum as autobiography. It compares Grainger’s stated ambition for his Museum to be ‘all-sided’ and comprehensive—which is largely fulfilled in the diverse collection—with the narrower scope of the Legends’ narrative. His emphasis on seemingly trivial aspects of family inheritance, including physical characteristics, may strike us as odd today in the museum context, but in fact reflects the ‘biologisation of history’\(^89\) prevalent until the Second World War, illustrated in museum exhibits such as those accompanying international eugenics conferences. Like Grainger’s Museum narrative, such displays attributed much of the success of eminent citizens to their genealogy, which was in turn thought to be reflected in their physical appearance. In this chapter I discuss such eugenics displays, thus emphasising the point that Grainger’s autobiography cannot be separated from his racial views and that this conflation was also made in other, often influential museums. Prior to this I consider a number of other museums which can, to varying degrees, be considered autobiographical.

One of Grainger’s principal museum objectives was to create a legacy which positioned him as Australia’s first composer. I discuss how Grainger supported this claim, and also characterised himself as an international musical innovator. Specifically, I examine the Legends which discuss his own work as a composer and the lives, works and influences of his mentors and contemporaries. Grainger’s exclusions from the Legends are just as telling as his inclusions in understanding his aims.

The thesis concludes with a brief discussion of the Grainger Museum today. Returning to the philosophies of the new museology, I argue that if adequately resourced this small but unusual museum could play a unique educational role. At a time when museums are central to the cultural life of most cities and absorb significant public resources,\(^90\) an autobiographical museum, initiated in the early twentieth century by an eclectic figure who absorbed many of the social and cultural ideas of his time, has much to teach us about a variety of subjects including racial attitudes, Australian cultural nationalism, and the prevalence and personal meanings of collecting. Today we are left with the legacy of the


‘golden age’ of museums of approximately the 1880s to 1914. Despite efforts in these post-colonial times to review the interpretation of collections created as part of the imperial project, in many ways visitors still regard museums as representing anonymous, institutional intellectual authority. Grainger’s small and approachable museum, which reveals the personality and intentions of a well-known, slightly controversial Australian figure, not only has the potential to attract people to it, but to enable them to examine the museum as an institution from the inside, and to understand those forces that created the ethnographic and historic collections that we see today.
CHAPTER ONE:
A museum of which time?

This chapter examines the degree to which the Grainger Museum reflected contemporary museum trends and developments. Was the Grainger Museum typical of museums of its time, or an anachronism? I argue that although built in the 1930s and fitted out mostly in the 1950s, the Grainger Museum’s collections and displays largely reflected late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century racial and evolutionary ideas. Although Grainger continued working on his Museum almost until his death, he was articulating concepts originating in his first thirty years, rather than new ideas or discoveries. This is, however, consistent with the development of Grainger’s ideas generally, which took shape at an early age, remaining largely unaltered thereafter. It is also consistent with the heyday of museums in Europe, Australia and North America. These institutions reached their peak of scientific, educational, political and popular authority during the peak of European imperialism: approximately from the 1880s to the First World War.

Grainger was, however, advanced in perceiving Australia as having a cultural history and future worthy of collection, preservation and display in a museum. Even by the 1930s when Grainger was building his Museum, much of white Australia believed that it had little or no real history; that Australian events since 1788 were but a thread in the greater narrative of British imperial history.1 Grainger however from a young age saw himself as part of a worthwhile Australian cultural history, and to demonstrate this point I present a brief chronology of the representation of history and culture in Australian collecting institutions.

I then consider the Grainger Museum building in the context of museum architecture in the 1930s, showing that here, where Grainger had the benefit of collaboration with a professional, the result reflected many of the concerns of museum designers and curators of its time, particularly in the United States. The exhibits themselves, however, created and positioned mostly by Grainger, formed a clutter of disparate objects, held together by the

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1 Bennett, Birth of museum, p.122; Bann, ‘A new country’, p.103.
racially hierarchical and social-evolutionary narrative of the Legends, a thread I take up in later chapters. Grainger’s presentation of himself through his Legends—as Australia’s first great composer and as part of an international modernist lineage, at the vanguard of the onward march of culture in the civilized world—drew upon philosophies underlying most museum interpretations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A late Victorian museum in the 1930s?
Although a collector and museum visitor from at least the 1890s, it was not until 1922 that Grainger first wrote of his desire to establish a museum.NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE BEGAN IN 1932 AND DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TOOK PLACE IN TWO STAGES: 1934–1935 AND 1938–1939, ON LAND WHICH THE UNIVERSITY SET ASIDE FOR THE PURPOSE AT NO COST TO GRAINGER. GRAINGER MET ALL THE CONSTRUCTION, AND LATER STAFFING, COSTS. HE BEGAN ARRANGING THE DISPLAYS, INCLUDING PRODUCTION OF SOME LEGENDS, IN 1938, ALTHOUGH MOST LEGENDS DATE FROM HIS FINAL VISIT TO MELBOURNE IN 1955–1956.

Thus the Museum was a product of the period 1934–1956. By 1934 Grainger had reached his fifties, was financially independent, and had travelled widely. He had known public acclaim as a pianist and composer, and his most innovative compositional experiments, other than his Free Music⁴ were largely behind him. ¹ He continued to mourn the death of his mother, but he was happily settled with his wife Ella. I contend however that the ideas reflected in the Museum date not from this time of maturity, but mostly from his Melbourne childhood (1882–1895), Frankfurt student years (1895–1901) and London

² Grainger to Henry Balfour Gardiner, 3 May 1922, in Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round-man, pp. 55–60, discussed in Chapter Two.
⁴ Grainger coined the term ‘Free music’ to describe music that would be free of the restrictions of scales, metre, rhythmic pulse and harmonic procedures. It would feature gliding, sliding tones, irregular rhythms, and non-harmonic combinations of tones. Grainger began to imagine such a music in his childhood, inspired by the sounds of water lapping against boat or shore, and wind whistling through telegraph wires, but worked most actively in this area in the 1950s. See Grainger, ‘Free music’, Museum Legend, 6 December 1938 (Appendix pp. 53–55).
years as an emerging pianist and then composer (1901–1914). This is not surprising, as most of Grainger’s beliefs emerged early in life. He prided himself on maintaining his opinions on matters racial, cultural and artistic, just as he took lifelong pride in his early compositional achievements and direction. What became the Museum’s principal purpose and narrative—to portray Grainger as ‘Australia’s first great composer’ and to justify a Nordic racial hierarchy—were evident from Grainger’s early years and continued to his death. Aged fifty Grainger wrote:

[I] got interested in the Anglosaxons & Scandinavians when about 10 years old & have married a Swede; have never altered my views on Bach, Kipling, Walt Whitman, etc.; have kept up a steady propaganda for British, Scandinavian & American music for over 30 years […] / I am the only composer I know who has not been affected by fashions & modes.

Grainger could be argumentative, perverse and contradictory, but his opinions strengthened over the passing years, rather than being significantly changed or moderated by life’s experience. Simon Perry argues that in his autobiographical writings Grainger’s ‘selective memory’ privileged the years to 1914, and Reeves observes that most of Grainger’s aesthetic ideas were formed in his London years. I contend that his Museum privileges the same period, both in its intellectual content and in its physical expression, despite the fact that the collection was accumulated throughout his life. Grainger was by no means insular, however. Particularly when young, he was eclectic and impressionable, embracing new experiences with zest. But as he began to form an opinion on a subject, it tended to set in one direction, and any newly-encountered influences self-selected to confirm rather than challenge it. Young Grainger took up new interests energetically and often uncritically. He would sometimes drop an activity as something else caught his eye, other times continue with it, but often not bring it to fruition or tangible result. But when

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7 Grainger, ‘The Aldridge-Grainger-Ström saga’ (manuscript, September 1933–January 1934) p.149.
8 Grainger to D.C. Parker, 26 April 1933, in Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, pp.116, 120.
12 Dreyfus (ed.) p.xiii.
sending crates of material to his Museum in the 1930s and 1950s, he did not edit out the paraphernalia of those early interests. Rather, he included and documented the lot, thus acknowledging an underlying continuity. Similarly, years or even decades could elapse between the commencement and completion of a composition or its arrangement into different versions, and Free Music was a preoccupation from childhood to death.\textsuperscript{13} A museum, apparently immutable, was therefore the perfect vehicle to communicate Grainger’s views: ‘the chief object of my museum is to furnish a PERMANENT DISPLAY of the things & personalities I have (rightly or wrongly) considered great in art in a frame that the public, with its veering tastes, cannot fiddle about with.’\textsuperscript{14}

Grainger attended at least two major international exhibitions before the age of twenty and during his London years he visited house- and birthplace-museums, folk- and open-air museums, and encyclopaedic institutions covering art, ethnology, ancient civilisations, science and technology. Through all these display types, Grainger was exposed to an ‘objects-based epistemology’ during the time of a ‘widespread Victorian fascination with “stuff” of all kinds’ in which, as Conn explains, objects could tell stories and be the sources of knowledge and meaning. A museum object represented all objects of its type and also stood for part of a larger body of knowledge. Further, when used in a ‘deliberate, self-reflective act of symbolic interpretation’, such as in a museum, objects were thought to convey abstract meanings.\textsuperscript{15} The advantages of physical objects over documentary accounts in providing information about the past was strongly emphasised in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{16} Grainger’s encyclopaedic collection included every possible object type relating to every facet of his life, representing uncensored (he claimed) the ‘all-roundedness’ to which he aspired and the many influences which had made him the man he was. In everyday life Grainger largely rejected middle-class materialism and consumer culture, particularly after moving to America, by living, dressing, eating and travelling modestly. But by collecting, and creating a museum, he remained more typical of his time. By focussing his

\textsuperscript{13} See for example Grainger to Hammond Instrument Co., 10 May 1948.

\textsuperscript{14} Grainger to Claude Menpes, 21 November 1953.

\textsuperscript{15} Conn, pp.4–5, 13–14.

acquisitive energies into a museum, he was perhaps attempting to legitimise his collecting activity,\textsuperscript{17} or to reconcile his collecting urge with his otherwise ascetic, counter-consumerist stance.

In nineteenth-century museums, race and culture were closely linked.\textsuperscript{18} Entire cultures, represented by objects, were classified hierarchically. Although the intricacies of each classificatory scheme shifted in emphasis over time as the museum creators’ perceptions changed, the underlying principles of comparison and hierarchy continued, often well into the twentieth century. Modern European culture, considered superior to all others, was thought to have derived from the ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilizations. Their material culture therefore belonged in art museums, which occupied the top of the museum hierarchy. ‘Primitive’ cultures, which included both contemporary indigenous communities and ancient non-literate or ‘stone-age’ societies, were the concern of the archaeologist and the anthropologist—whose work was related to biology—and were thus usually displayed in natural history settings.\textsuperscript{19} In France for example, the Louvre received ‘treasures’ from Italy, Greece, Egypt and the Orient; the Musée Saint-Germain housed French prehistoric archaeology and Gallo-Roman antiquities; and the Musée d’Ethnographie held the exotic ethnographic collections.\textsuperscript{20}

Hierarchies might vary between museums or over time, but museums’ underlying faith in comparative hierarchies \textit{per se} remained largely unchallenged. Clunas describes for example how in 1753, Chinese objects were displayed in the British Museum under the category of ‘ethnography’, but a century later there was pressure to separate the antiquities of China, India and Japan—courty societies being considered more advanced than tribal ones—into

\textsuperscript{17}As described by Belk in relation to other collectors and hoarders. Belk, ‘Collectors and collecting’, in Pearce (ed.), \textit{Interpreting objects and collections}, p.320.


\textsuperscript{20}‘Speeches delivered at the inauguration of the Musée Ethnographique des Missions Scientifiques, 24 January 1878’, in Pearce & others (eds), \textit{Collector’s voice 3: imperial voices}, p.67.
Chapter One: A museum of which time?

their own rooms. By the early twentieth century, Indian, Chinese and Japanese cultures were seen to have ‘crossed some invisible threshold’, their objects ‘revered as true art’, ‘elevated’ from the category of primitive.

Since the eighteenth century, such taxonomies, being divisions based on a ‘science of order’ emphasising differences rather than similarities, had been gradually replacing the more broadly conceived groupings—such as eye-pleasing symmetry, or naturalia versus artificialia—of the earlier cabinets of curiosity. Art museums came to be organised into art-historical sequences to demonstrate each national school’s ‘progress’ or evolution towards a set ideal of beauty, as opposed to earlier arrangements, for example at the pre-Revolution Louvre, determined by theme, material or size. This emergence of a ‘historical frame’ for artefact display occurred concurrently with other practices—such as the historical novel and the establishment of history as an empirical discipline—which ‘aimed at the life-like reproduction of an authenticated past and its representation as a series of stages leading to the present’. The art-historical approach was used to illustrate relative cultural progress in different societies or epochs, and thus implied national hierarchies.


22 Ripley, pp.78–79.


28 Bennett, Birth of museum, pp.75–76.

29 Duncan, p.25; Errington, pp.21–22.
With the formulation of the stone–bronze–iron-age system based on Scandinavian museum collections, chronological stratigraphy in geology from the 1830s and Darwin’s theory after 1859, these taxonomies took on an even greater evolutionary character. The founder of Britain’s first specifically archaeological and ethnological museum, the ardent Darwinist Augustus Lane Fox (later Pitt Rivers), was a key figure here, interpreting sequences of tools and weapons as representing the development of human culture worldwide. He applied natural history principles to human activity: ‘Human ideas, as represented by the various products of human industry, are capable of classification into genera, species, and varieties, in the same manner as the products of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and in their development from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous they obey the same laws’. More complexity, or ‘advances’ in design, were seen to represent a higher level of civilisation in the originating society. Objects of a particular function or type but from different cultures and epochs were arranged into sequences moving from simple to complex or sophisticated, sometimes even displayed from left to right, suggesting the sequence of a text on a page. This evolutionary meta-narrative—from savage, through barbarian, to civilised—created or perpetuated a progressive and hierarchical view of the world. Such Social Darwinism came to predominate museums’ interpretations of cultural material, not just the biological specimens which had actually informed Darwin’s work. The nineteenth century’s two dominant historical concepts—evolutionary theory (based on random variation) and the idea of progress (implying an underlying order or direction)—were actually contradictory but came to be seen as synonymous.

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51 Ibid., pp.85, 105; Griffiths, p.20.
53 Ibid., pp.293–308.
54 Ibid., p.295.
55 Conn, p.5; Errington, pp.12–14.
57 Griffiths, pp.10–11.
Pitt Rivers’ sequential displays remained in place upon the transfer of his collection to his
eponymous museum at Oxford University, where the young Baldwin Spencer learnt the
typological method which he later applied to Australian indigenous collections.38 Spencer’s
ethnographic displays in the National Museum of Victoria, an institution which Grainger
probably visited in 1909 and in the 1920s and 1930s, showed Pitt Rivers’ influence in their
system of classification by object type, arranged in deliberate series. Spencer argued that:
‘Each specimen has a definite place and meaning in the series in which it occurs.’39 Like Pitt
Rivers, Spencer also applied this approach to human remains. And even factory-produced
items such as rifles could be categorised into ‘species’ which ‘evolved’ from an early,
supposedly primitive, state, to a modern, sophisticated one.40

Given this type of museum interpretation to which he was exposed from childhood, it is
unsurprising that Grainger too understood the world in evolutionary and hierarchical
terms. Grainger met Baldwin Spencer in 1909,41 and visited the Pitt Rivers Museum in
1936.42 As late as 1955, his statement on the aims of his Museum emphasised racial
hierarchy, and, despite a gesture towards universalism, the overriding significance of
modern ‘progress’ achieved through experimentation:

While studying music at the Hoch Conservatorium […] I was struck by the fact that
the most gifted composition-students were all from the English-speaking and
Scandinavian countries. I foresaw that a period of English-speaking and Scandinavian
leadership in musical originality and experimentation lay just ahead […] / It would
seem only natural for Australia to become a centre for the study of musics of the
islands adjacent to Australia […] Some of the world’s most exquisite music is found
in this area. Yet none of these exotic musics, however charming, should draw
Australian musicians away from intense participation in the all-important
developments of experimental music in the white man’s world.43

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Stocking (ed.), Objects and others, p. 37; Bennett, Pasts beyond memory, p. 34; Griffiths, p. 68.
39 Walter Baldwin Spencer, Guide to the Australian ethnological collection exhibited in the National Museum of
40 Carolyn Rasmussen, A museum for the people: a history of Museum Victoria and its predecessors 1854–2000 (Scribe
Publications & Museum Victoria, 2001) p. 156. The same evolutionary approach was adopted in American
museums. Bronner.
41 Dreyfus (ed.) p. 297.
43 ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
Grainger applied Darwinian evolutionary concepts to music: ‘The evolution of man, the progress of art & thought, go forward thru what are called “sports” in natural history—thru individuals who take some strange not-done-before leap, or think some original not-thought-before thought. Then these new leaps & thots have to be digested, dissimulated, by mankind at large.’ Similarly, although Grainger’s advocacy for ‘all-sidedness, side-rights, and cross-references’ in museums was fulfilled in his diverse collection, this effect was overwhelmed in his Legends narrative: the compositional superiority of the ‘Nordic’ race, and the influences which had led inevitably to the creation of the modernist pioneer, Grainger. Ultimately, Grainger’s hierarchy was not only racial and nationalistic but cultural and personal, just as evolutionary exhibition narratives promoted both national and personal narratives of self-betterment among nineteenth-century museum visitors.

On the other hand, Grainger’s understanding of context in relation to the creation of art, including social context, is a remarkable feature of his Museum. While the Legends taken as a series tell an evolutionary and hierarchical tale, the collection itself, some of Grainger’s object displays and even some individual Legends reveal that Grainger did not think of his collection primarily according to object type but thematically. Here Grainger’s approach is more typical of personal than institutional collecting. Belk observes that ‘most collectors see the items in their collections not as objects occupying a cell in a taxonomy, but as packages of memories’. Grainger’s collection also reflected the twentieth-century move towards thematic, contextual displays, particularly in human history where as Pearce explains, systematic or type classifications had never dominated to the same extent as elsewhere. This more contextual approach originated from nineteenth-century displays such as 1870s Scandinavian folk life tableaux and 1880s natural history dioramas, and manifested in Franz Boas’ functional ethnographic displays.

Grainger, in interpreting his collection through Legends and artefact displays discussed, albeit within his ultimately progressive tale, the social relationships that had influenced him as a composer. Grainger’s

44 Grainger to Cyril Scott, 2 December 1947.
45 Grainger to Henry Balfour Gardiner, 7 June 1941.
47 Belk, Consumer society, p.92.
48 Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, pp.109–112.
intuitive interpretation of ‘high’ art as socially created was unusual for museums of his
time, when paintings and sculptures were typically displayed ‘in splendid remoteness from
the daily round.’
Museums have continued to attract criticism for divorcing art from the
context in which it was created.
Thus Grainger was applying approaches from both
natural history and ethnography displays to his own cultural and class milieu. He may have
been influenced in the latter by the diffusionist approach to anthropology which towards
the end of the nineteenth century challenged evolutionist narratives with ideas of contact
and borrowing between cultures.
Whether Grainger was entirely successful in
communicating this social context through his displays is a different question, particularly
as the social and thematic interpretations are, in my view, subordinate to, or used as
illustrations of, Grainger’s primary, evolutionary narrative.

Thus the Grainger Museum, built in the 1930s, with displays created largely in the 1950s,
reflected the evolutionary and hierarchical underpinnings of nineteenth-century museum
philosophy. It is important to note, however, that these underpinnings continued to
manifest themselves in twentieth-century exhibits. For example, an observer of
Stockholm’s pioneering outdoor museum Skansen described it in 1934, more than forty
years after its opening, as ‘sign-posted in such a manner as to enable the visitor to proceed
down the centuries, noting consciously or subconsciously the improvements in
construction and the growth of civilization.

Even some museums established in the
twentieth century such as Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village perpetuated this evolutionary
approach: ‘Farm machinery evolves before our eyes from wooden spades, hoes, mattocks,
and plows to the most highly improved implements designed for use with a modern
tractor; from the primitive scythe and flail to the modern combined reaper and thresher.’
Existing exhibits were re-arranged into evolutionary narratives; one writer observed in

49 Ibid., pp.116, 203.
50 Wright, ‘Quality of visitors’ experiences’, p.141; Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: a social critique of the
judgement of taste (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984) p.30; Susan Vogel, ‘Always true to the object, in our
fashion’, in Ivan Karp & Stephen D. Lavine (eds), Exhibiting cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display
(Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) pp.191–204; Spencer R. Crew & James E. Sims, ‘Locating authenticity:
52 Cyril Fox, ‘Open-air museums’, Museums journal (vol.34, no.4, July 1934) p.112.
1929, ‘An evolutionary order within single departments has now become almost universal; even the painting galleries of the Louvre have been rearranged since the war more strictly by periods and schools.’54 These arrangements continued at least to the 1980s, emphasising ‘quality’ and justifying a triumphalist canon which constituted ‘The History of Art.’55 Many ethnographic series continued to be arranged from ‘simple’ to ‘complex’.56

The museum, as an overwhelmingly visual undertaking,57 no doubt resonated with Grainger’s strong visual sense and the emphasis he placed on appearances. Grainger was a highly visually perceptive and artistic boy,58 and visual impressions continued to mean a lot to him, whether judging an artefact or a person. This is particularly evident in his obsession with physical characteristics, supposedly indicative of a person’s race and hence character and artistic expression. Grainger’s reliance on the visual—despite his aurally-based profession—is reflected broadly in his decision to create a museum, and specifically in his Legends. Grainger wrote most of the texts for these himself, chose photographs, scores, objects, concert programs and other material and assembled the panels into wooden frames, in some cases painted in bright ‘Scandinavian’ or ‘South Sea’ colours or with similarly coloured paper backings. They include some ethnographic-style displays which are expected to work purely pictorially upon the visitor.59 Although some Legends include detailed text, there is still a strong reliance on the supposed ability of objects (in this case mostly photographs) to speak for themselves.

54 Kimball, p.565.
55 Wright, ‘Quality of visitors’ experiences’, p.122.
Similarly, Grainger commissioned colour photographs of composers’ eyes, to illustrate the supposed link between blue-eyedness and compositional superiority (discussed in Chapter Five). Although Grainger discussed his ideas on this subject in various places, the fact that he thought it worth commissioning and displaying these (expensive) images, rather than simply noting the fact that a certain composer had eyes of a certain colour, indicates his belief in the power of the visual, and in his need for the preservation of material evidence. Grainger, typical for his time, could ‘read’ objects, in the way propounded by museum founders of the Victorian era.⁶⁰

Some of the later Legends depend less on objects or pictures than on lengthy texts.⁶¹ In such cases, the inclusion—either within the Legend or in the accompanying display—of object-types usually deemed trivial brings to mind Barbara Stafford’s description of museums where ‘artifacts of little intrinsic merit are put in the service of a theoretical distribution as tokens of an immaterial age, culture, or social system’.⁶² That is, objects are used as a mere touchstone or illustration.⁶³ As in many later nineteenth-century museums in which ‘Curators were to objectify texts and textualize objects’,⁶⁴ Grainger’s displays, like all ideologically-based museums (arguably all museums), uses or exploits objects to tell a predetermined tale. Grainger was simply less skilful than most professional curators in disguising this fact through sophisticated display techniques that integrate object and text more subtly. Grainger tells much the same story in his Legends as in his essays and letters. Despite his claims to a ‘scientific’ museum, he did not rely on the collection as data, evidence or source material; rather he used it as ‘proof’ of pre-existing convictions. Like most museum creators in the nineteenth-century tradition, Grainger saw ‘science’ as

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represented in the museum format as separate from culture (the museum’s content); something which could be used to objectively analyse and understand culture.\textsuperscript{65}

This leads us to why Grainger chose a museum as the medium through which to make his grandest statement on his central narrative of compositional development. Lectures illustrated with musical examples (of which Grainger was an enthusiastic proponent in his more mature years)\textsuperscript{66} would probably have been more informative, but Grainger was searching for a permanent medium. Of course books are permanent; a detailed text with musical illustrations, possibly accompanied by recorded musical excerpts, would be more coherent and easily understood than a museum display and largely unsynthesised heterogeneous collection. Grainger published many articles but his plans to write books on his musical career and ideas never eventuated.\textsuperscript{67} Further, a collection is open-ended (although a display is usually less so), enabling many possible interpretations, whereas Grainger wanted to dictate his own story. Museums have significant limitations; their reliance on objects places many abstract subjects—philosophy, mathematics, law (and arguably the process of musical composition)—beyond their capability.\textsuperscript{68}

But museums reflect ideals and fantasies rather than realities, and they imply approval.\textsuperscript{69} This becomes most obvious when exhibits on controversial subjects result in accusations of bias.\textsuperscript{70} Elaine Heumann Gurian argues that a museum’s essence is found in its physicality and its spiritual qualities as ‘a place that stores memories and presents and organises meaning in some sensory form’.\textsuperscript{71} Grainger needed to build a place for this purpose, and he chose his birth-town as its location.

\textsuperscript{65} See Macdonald (ed.).
\textsuperscript{67} Grainger to Macmillan Company, 20 October 1920; Grainger to Tonie Morse, 20 July 1943.
\textsuperscript{68} Holmes, p.354; Weil, \textit{Cabinet of curiosities}, p.xv.
\textsuperscript{69} David Lowenthal, \textit{Antipodean and other museums} (University of London, 1991) p.2.
Recent history suggests that Grainger did choose the right medium; despite public indifference, and neglect by the University of Melbourne, his Museum has played a major role since Grainger’s death in the increased acknowledgment of his significance as a composer and thinker, not as a shrine but as an unparalleled source of data on which scholars have based their (re)assessments. Such scholars may not all have drawn the conclusions that Grainger would have liked, but he has not been forgotten.\textsuperscript{72} If his collection had been incorporated into an existing institutional archive or museum, rather than standing alone in a place of Grainger’s creation, it would have received less attention.

For a start, it would have, by administrative necessity, been split according to materials type as was Sir Russell Grimwade’s later bequest to the University of Melbourne.\textsuperscript{73} Its unique comprehensiveness might have been lost. As it was, a quantity of material remaining at White Plains after Grainger’s death was dispersed to various libraries; only the efforts of the Grainger Museum Curator, Dr Kay Dreyfus, in the 1980s facilitated further transfers to Melbourne.

\textbf{A scientific museum?}

Grainger believed that his Museum was ‘scientific’ in that conclusions could be based on facts embodied in the objects and documents themselves. Grainger’s Museum was thus a late nineteenth-century one in two related senses: it reflected the emerging ‘scientific’ approach to history, German in origin, which was based on the examination, sifting and

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\textsuperscript{73} Grimwade (1879–1955) was an industrialist and philanthropist whose collection reflected his interest in the history of the developing colony of Victoria, which had enabled his family to generate significant wealth and status. His art collection went to the University of Melbourne Museum of Art (now the Ian Potter Museum of Art); his books to the University’s Baillieu Library; and his papers, photographs and memorabilia to the University of Melbourne Archives. The furniture remained in his house ‘Miegunyah’ until it was sold by the University, when some was scattered among University departments, the remainder placed in storage. Significantly, these separate collecting departments did not exist when Grainger was building his Museum: the University’s library collections were administered separately by the relevant academic departments; the art collection was scattered across campus, and the Archives was not founded until the 1960s. Grimwade framed his bequest in 1949 but the transfer occurred after the death of Lady Grimwade in 1973. Michael Piggott, ‘The University of Melbourne Archives’, in Lisa Sullivan, \textit{A collection and a cottage: selected works from the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest, the University of Melbourne} (exhibition catalogue, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2000) p.2; Heather Gaunt & others, \textit{Potter: the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne} (Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 1998) n.p.; ‘The Russell and Mab Grimwade bequests’ (University of Melbourne statutes), \url{http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/Statutes/r7236.html} accessed 31 December 2005.
\end{footnotesize}
testing of documentary evidence, and it also reflected the fact that much scientific knowledge was in the nineteenth century created by the observation, measurement, documentation and description of physical objects, rather than through abstract theorizing or laboratory experimentation. Museum collections were essential here; many universities established or became affiliated with museums or the two institutions were co-located, while in some colonies such as New South Wales and New Zealand, museums were initiated before universities. In 1856, Melbourne’s new university, needing a collection for science teaching and research, took over the Philosophical Institute’s embryonic museum, moving it from the city to the campus, where it remained until 1899. In the natural sciences, the development of systematic collections was integral to the development of the intellectual framework itself; collections were conceived in terms of display, and as a ‘diagnosis of an underlying reality.’ Research focussed on morphology—creating taxonomic classifications and series based on visible physical similarity and difference. Because such research required large collections, museums were the primary place where new knowledge could be created and given order. Some technological museums included laboratories for research in fields such as applied chemistry and metallurgy. Scientific teaching occurred predominantly through lectures which included demonstrations of apparatus and specimens.

77 Pearce, *Museums, objects and collections*, pp.84, 87.
79 Richards, pp.45–46.
80 Kohlstedt, p.8.
81 Conn, pp.15–16.
From the late nineteenth century however, the locus of scientific research began moving away from museums to the university laboratory; biological studies began to shift from the whole organism to the cellular and then genetic level, and knowledge was becoming increasingly specialised and professionalised. The synthesis of natural history, geology, archaeology and anthropology into the unified historical narrative which had dominated the second half of the nineteenth century was falling apart. As a result of this shift, largely complete by the 1920s, museums, although greater in number, had lost their leading role in the creation of knowledge, and now focussed on its dissemination to the general public. Although education had always been an important part of the museum’s role, in the 1920s and 1930s professional museum educators were recruited. Their work was aimed not at scholars but at the general public, and often communicated out-of-date ideas, a situation entrenched by the expense and logistics of updating exhibitions. Many museums shifted their audience focus to children, because it was thought acceptable to give children outdated information. Grainger himself observed in 1955 at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, ‘I can see nothing wrong with such a museum, except that no grown-ups seem to bother about it. (There was an educationalist, in charge of some wild boys).’ In the applied sciences, nineteenth-century technology displays were an important source of current information for mechanics, engineers and inventors, but from the early twentieth century such information came to be communicated more formally, through training colleges. Many exhibits became de facto museums of the history of technology.

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85 Bennett, Pasts beyond memory, pp.31–63.


89 Conn, pp.18–22.

90 Grainger to Elsie Bristow, 30 September 1955.

A parallel shift occurred in anthropology, one of the principal subject matters of the museums which Grainger visited in his youth. The period from about 1880 to 1920 was considered the 'museum age' of anthropology, a discipline then seeking academic, professional and popular credibility. Museum displays and international exhibitions—all based on objects—were used to promote this new 'science' and also benefitted from anthropology's scientific veneer. In Britain, 1870–1920 was the period of 'armchair' anthropology, where curators and scholars were largely dependent on amateur collectors such as colonial administrators to acquire objects and associated information. But as research emphases moved into areas such as social structures and knowledge systems, which depended not on artefacts but on extended fieldwork documenting the practices and beliefs of a single society, ethnography in museums began intellectually to lag behind that undertaken in universities, and museum objects' status decreased in the eyes of anthropologists. An early example was Franz Boas, who in 1905 rejected nineteenth-century classificatory and hierarchical anthropology and, frustrated with museum displays' limitations in communicating his ideas, resigned from his museum post to concentrate on university research. He had concluded that objects, rather than representing cultures, were incidental expressions of complex mental processes; two physically similar objects from different cultures could have totally different meanings. At the time however Boas’ more
relativist, anti-evolutionist, anti-racist and democratic conception\(^98\) influenced few museums,\(^99\) not even his own; his resignation had been partly forced by the Trustees wanting to continue evolutionary displays.\(^100\)

By the First World War, objects continued to be used for teaching the general public about the cultures of the world, such as in Scandinavian-style folk-life displays (discussed in Chapter Four) but they were less relevant to new anthropological research,\(^101\) of which the most influential practitioner was Malinowski.\(^102\) Some museums began to incorporate into their displays oral and photographic evidence derived from methodical fieldwork,\(^103\) but as intellectual institutions they had lost their leadership role, and most displays continued to be dominated by outdated evolutionary anthropology, some until well into the 1950s or 1960s.\(^104\) Similarly in physical anthropology; in 1933 for example, Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History installed 101 bronze sculptures depicting the world’s ‘racial types’, hierarchically arranged with Europeans and white Americans at the peak. These were claimed to be both artistic and scientific.\(^105\) But the museum was giving permanence and authority to outdated scientific ideas.\(^106\) The exhibition remained in place until the 1960s and was reconfigured, but not removed, in the 1970s.\(^107\) In some of America’s largest museums, turn-of-the-century ethnographic displays remained in place for fifty or sixty

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98 González & others, p.108.
100 Pearce, *Museums, objects and collections*, p.113.
101 Margaret Mead (1901–1978) throughout her career held a curatorial post at the American Museum of Natural History and created exhibits between fieldwork. Her exhibition style suggested however an understanding of the intellectual limitations of the medium: ‘labels were minimized, reflecting her view that a library is a place to read; a museum is a place to relate to objects’. David Hurst Thomas, ‘Margaret Mead as a museum anthropologist’, *American anthropologist* (vol.82, no.2, June 1980) pp.354–361.
105 Teslow, pp.53–59.
106 Conn, p.113. See also Días, p.44, regarding earlier displays of busts (in nineteenth-century anthropological exhibitions).
107 Teslow, p.73.
years.\footnote{John C. Ewers, ‘Problems and procedures in modernizing ethnological exhibits’, \textit{American anthropologist} (vol.57, no.1, part 1, February 1955) pp.1, 8.} Grainger’s equivalent of the bronze sculptures was the numerous postcards he collected, depicting different ‘racial types’.

In Australia, ethnology confirmed its place in academia from the 1920s, later than in much of Europe and North America,\footnote{The establishment of university-based ethnographic fieldwork occurred later in France for example than in England and North America. Clifford, \textit{Predicament}, p.24; in 1932 the Musée du Trocadéro was more rigidly divided into a section for public instruction and another for scientific research, thus showing that although ethnographic research continued there into the 1930s, its separation from exhibition activity was acknowledged. ‘News from the museums: Paris, Trocadéro Museum’, \textit{Museums journal} (vol.32, no.1, April 1932) p.36.} but was still considered an important subject for museums; in 1928 for example a government report recommended that a proposed national museum should include an ethnological division.\footnote{Libby Robin, ‘Collections and the nation: science, history and the National Museum of Australia’, \textit{Historical records of Australian science} (vol.14, 2005) pp.255, 258.} In the natural sciences, collections remained necessary to applied research, well into the twentieth century, as many Australian minerals, plants and animals were yet to be identified and classified and their economic potential exploited. Much research responsibility shifted however from museum curators to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research; by the 1950s, museum and research scientists had concluded that such systematic scientific survey work was incompatible with ‘museum work’: creating exhibitions for entertainment and public education.\footnote{Ibid., pp.253, 262–271. Roy MacLeod & Kimberley Webber, ‘Empowering: applied research and the commercial museum 1880–1978’, in Davison & Webber (eds) pp.97–109; Allison-Bunnell, pp.77–97.}

Thus Grainger, working most actively on his exhibits between 1938 and 1956, adopted a medium—the museum exhibit—which was largely intellectually obsolete in the field most closely related to his own agenda—the comparison of races and societies through their physical characteristics, cultural practices and material culture. It was however a medium which had reached its zenith during the period 1880–1914, which encompassed the part of his life in which most of his ideas originated, much of his musical originality manifested, and when he visited many museums. The museum genre was not intellectually obsolete in regard to modern western history however; in fact even by the 1930s it was yet to fulfill its role here, a point which I discuss shortly.
Chapter One: A museum of which time?

Grainger’s choice of a university for the location of his Museum is therefore rather ironic, as he felt ambivalent towards universities, generally disliked professional scholars and declined offers of academic positions and honors, completing only a one-year appointment at New York University in 1932.112 Professor Marshall-Hall at the University of Melbourne had helped young Grainger travel to Frankfurt to further his studies, and Grainger renewed links with the University in 1926 through the Lady Northcote Permanent Orchestra Trust113 and in subsequent dealings with Professor Bernard Heinze regarding concert tours.114 But most importantly, Grainger’s choice of city reflected his childhood attachment.

Sir James Barrett (1862–1945), Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne from 1931, Deputy Chancellor from 1934 and Chancellor 1935–1939, was an active supporter of music, museums, anthropological studies and historical commemoration.115 He and his friend, brother-in-law and colleague,116 Bernard Heinze, Ormond Professor of Music, championed the establishment of the Grainger Museum at the University. Australian universities before the Second World War were small, provincial, and mostly undergraduate, and not being generously financed they required a benefactor for most major initiatives.117 The University of Melbourne had lost the National Museum of Victoria in 1899. By 1935 it possessed smaller geology and zoology museums and a fledgling herbarium, but Leonhard Adam’s anthropology collection was not commenced until 1942,118 while artworks were scattered across campus; until the donation of the Ewing

113 Grainger to Lady Northcote Permanent Orchestra Trust, 20 October 1926.
114 Correspondence folder, Bernard Heinze to Grainger 1929–1947.
Collection of Australian Art in 1938\textsuperscript{119} there was no ‘art collection’, and no art museum until the 1970s.\textsuperscript{120} So the Grainger Museum could have been a significant addition to the cultural facilities of the campus, although Grainger’s lack of interest in public access, and the University’s minimal support, prevented it from fulfilling its potential.\textsuperscript{121}

Cultural history in Australian collections

Many authors have argued that until well into the twentieth century, white Australia perceived itself as a young country with no history worthy of preservation, display or commemoration.\textsuperscript{122} This was reflected in Australia’s museums. Although museums began in Australia in the 1820s\textsuperscript{123} and proliferated from the 1850s, until the First World War none of the larger public museums held a significant historical collection,\textsuperscript{124} unlike many of their European and North American counterparts.\textsuperscript{125} Most of the non-indigenous historical material that was collected in Australia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries comprised documents and photographs, thus falling under the aegis of libraries, archives and historical societies rather than museums. This predominance of paper reflected the view that what did exist of Australia’s history was ‘constituted by the lives of eminent persons’ such as explorers, governors and merchants, who generally left a legacy of documents, rather than artefacts.\textsuperscript{126} Bennett suggests that the major episodes of Australian history did not conform to Eurocentric norms of the historical event, and that in

\begin{itemize}
\item According to Ella Grainger, Barrett’s death [1945] and Heinze’s move to Sydney [1956] left the Museum without University support. David Josephson, ‘Conversations with Ella Grainger’, \textit{Grainger Society journal} (vol.11, no.1, July 1993) pp.64–65. Richard Fowler commented that the new Vice-Chancellor, Sir John Medley, was ‘nowhere nearly as enthusiastic about the G.M. as was the late Sir James Barrett.’ Fowler to Grainger, 15 December 1949.
\item Bennett, \textit{Birth of museum}, p.122; Bann, ‘A new country’, p.103; Griffiths, pp.158–159.
\item Gore, ‘Historical collections’, p.39; Kohlstedt, p.2.
\item Gore, ‘Representations’, p.81; Chris Healy, \textit{From the ruins of colonialism: history as social memory} (Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.86.
\item Webber, p.155.
\end{itemize}
establishing itself as a discipline, history favoured written documents over artefacts as its source.\textsuperscript{127} Australian museums also lacked a representation of the nation-state. This was understandable before Federation,\textsuperscript{128} even though many colonial museums were titled ‘national’.\textsuperscript{129} This was also despite the fact that most Australian museums were founded by governments, contrasting with the mostly private origins of American museums.\textsuperscript{130}

Nineteenth-century Australian museums were concerned initially and primarily with natural history and to a lesser extent Aboriginal anatomy and artefacts.\textsuperscript{131} Aboriginal society was perceived by institutions as pre-historic or outside history,\textsuperscript{132} except that the original Australians’ demise was ‘evidence’ of European historical progress.\textsuperscript{133} By the 1860s some mechanics institutes contained a museum as an adjunct to the more common library, but these focussed on natural history, very local history, or on Empire; some included exotic ethnographic items.\textsuperscript{134} The small artefact collections attached to pioneer societies and other organisations before 1900 were often unsystematically collected and poorly documented, featuring objects associated with significant local people or events.\textsuperscript{135} Australian museums wishing to address historical issues often turned to Europe, collecting for example originals or copies of classical antiquities.\textsuperscript{136} Those colonialists who did see themselves as making history may have imagined themselves immortalised in a metropolitan museum, not a

\begin{footnotes}
\item Bennett, ‘Museum and citizen’, p.12; Griffiths, p.5. This dependence of historians upon documents rather than objects was of course not limited to Australia. See Pearce, \textit{Museums, objects and collections}, p.196; Conn, p.151.
\item Healy, pp.86–87, 92–93.
\item For example, National Museum of Victoria, now part of Museum Victoria; National Art Gallery of New South Wales, now Art Gallery of New South Wales; and National Gallery of Victoria, which has not changed its name. Colonial Museum in Sydney became Australian Museum by 1834; see Robin, p.251.
\item Kohlstedt, pp.15–16.
\item Griffiths, p.5.
\item Gore, ‘Historical collections’, p.42; Healy, pp.103–104; Griffiths, pp.40, 49, 60–62.
\end{footnotes}
Edward Hargraves for example, upon discovering gold near Bathurst in 1851, told his companion: ‘This is a memorable day in the history of New South Wales. I shall be a baronet, you will be knighted, and my old horse will be stuffed, put into a glass-case, and sent to the British Museum.’

Some of the earlier general Australian museum and library collections included pictorial works, but dedicated art museums emerged from the 1860s, peaking in the 1880s–1890s. Early acquisitions included sculptural casts and copies of ‘old master’ paintings as well as contemporary works, the latter dominated by European art. By the 1870s, museums and colonial expositions included applied arts, sciences and technology, but these shared a largely practical and commercial aim of ‘improving’ and ‘guiding’ public taste rather than having an explicitly historical role. The ‘Museum’ at the Aquarium in Melbourne’s Exhibition Building from 1885 to 1953 included science, technical, art, ethnography and history displays but in a populist, commercial attraction, rather than in a scholarly institution.

Local historical societies, established from the 1880s, focussed on foundations, exploration, pioneering and genealogy; the Royal Australian Historical Society was founded in 1901. But even by Federation there were no formal government record offices; parliamentary and State libraries, and later the Australian War Memorial, filled this role to a limited extent, while many records had found their way to London’s Public Record Office.

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137 Quoted in Macintyre, Concise history, p.85.
140 Gore, ‘Historical collections’, p.40; Fennessy, pp.45–64.
first Commonwealth archivist was not appointed until the Second World War. The Public Library of Victoria’s archives and historical collections comprised predominantly government records and the papers of explorers, early settlers and colonists. In 1914 the Library mooted a ‘Victorian Historical Museum’ but no display was created until 1929; this was expanded in 1934 for Victoria’s Centenary celebrations. Historical lectures at the Library in 1934 included, for example, one on ‘Musical Melbourne’. Highlights of the 1934 displays were portraits and other pictures, a globe used by Captain Cook, a water cask from Victoria’s first white settlement, firearms, a tram, and pioneers’ furniture.

Similar random assemblages of historic objects accumulated as adjuncts to the paper collections at other institutions.

The first museum to deal substantially with Australian history was the Australian War Memorial, which although initiated in 1917 and displaying temporary exhibits from 1922, did not open permanently until 1941. Australians’ Gallipoli experience had made history and historical collections a focus of national identity. The stated aims for the Memorial’s collection were racial, nationalist and educational. Artefacts were collected not always as factual sources about warfare, but often as trophies or relics, the latter having ‘as much history and sanctity attaching to them as the bones of Captain Cook.’ Ironically, the Memorial’s existence further delayed the establishment of a true museum of Australian history by effectively defining ‘history’ as war history.

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149 Anderson & Reeves, p.100; Healy, p.90.  
150 Willis, pp.37–38.  
152 Webber, p.162.  
154 C.E.W. Bean, quoted in Webber, p.167.  
155 Anderson & Reeves, p.101.
In 1933 a survey noted that Australia had only three historical museums: the Australian War Museum (then still in temporary premises in Sydney), Vaucluse House, and the historical collection in Canberra’s Parliament buildings.\textsuperscript{156} It acknowledged however that many museums owned small collections relating to their own town, thus by implication defining history as ‘national’, not local.\textsuperscript{157} Other avenues for historical commemoration included monuments, memorials, genealogy, cinema and radio, and celebrations of national events or anniversaries.\textsuperscript{158} James Barrett was a prime mover behind a major program from about 1910 to the 1940s of memorialising the achievements of Australian explorers and pioneers through the construction of numerous cairns, markers and monuments.\textsuperscript{159} Federation celebrations included pageantry, street decorations and re-enactments.\textsuperscript{160} Victoria’s and Melbourne’s 1934–1935 centenaries saw some 250 special events\textsuperscript{161} and the publication of four histories of Victoria;\textsuperscript{162} but the emphasis of this celebration remained on white explorers, pioneers as squatters and selectors, and diggers.\textsuperscript{163} Russell Grimwade organised the relocation of Captain Cook’s cottage to Melbourne in 1934,\textsuperscript{164} the year in which Grainger commenced working on the design of the Grainger Museum. Being in Melbourne he and Ella were aware of the Cottage project\textsuperscript{165} (he also would have been aware of the dedication of Melbourne’s Shrine of Remembrance that year). Melbourne’s State Library, Royal Exhibition Building and National Gallery all held historical exhibitions, but as McCubbin points out, history was distanced; the Library exhibition for example stopped at 1880.\textsuperscript{166} Sydney’s festivities to mark the 1938 sesquicentenary of the First Fleet included imported history—British antiquities donated by London’s Guildhall

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{156} Markham & Richards, \textit{Museums and art galleries in Australia and New Zealand}, p.44.
\item \textsuperscript{157} Healy, p.102.
\item \textsuperscript{158} McCubbin, ‘Object lessons’, pp.4, 28, 42, 107; Garden, ‘Historical societies’, p.318.
\item \textsuperscript{159} Daley & Barrett; Griffiths, pp.158–161.
\item \textsuperscript{160} Anderson & Reeves, p.79.
\item \textsuperscript{161} Sullivan, p.13.
\item \textsuperscript{162} McCubbin, ‘Object lessons’, p.110.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Maryanne McCubbin, ‘Cooked to perfection: Cook’s Cottage and the exemplary historical figure’, \textit{Journal of popular culture} (vol.33, no.1, Summer 1999) pp.35–48.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Grainger to Sigurd Fornander (postcard of Cook’s Cottage), 1 August 1935. Grainger was personally acquainted with Grimwade by at least 1938. Grainger, Day-book 1938, entry for 23 August.
\item \textsuperscript{166} McCubbin, ‘Object lessons’, pp.111–112.
\end{itemize}
Museum—\(^{167}\) and ‘an enormous pageant of 120 floats […] covering seemingly every aspect of Australia’s past: governors, explorers, mineral and agricultural resources, histories of various public services, significant events. The only people missing were the convicts who were still considered undesirable.’\(^{168}\) Also missing were composers, writers, painters, architects and other creative artists.

After the Second World War a growing public interest in heritage and the past led to the founding of environmental and heritage preservation movements, including the State-based National Trusts which soon established house museums.\(^{169}\) Small local historical museums also proliferated\(^{170}\) but as late as 1955 Eric Dunlop noted the absence of a major historical museum, still dismissing as myth that ‘foolish objection’ that Australia had no past to preserve.\(^{171}\) The first Australian writer to give their entire archive to a collecting institution was Miles Franklin, in 1954.\(^{172}\) In 1956 the Public Library of Victoria published a centennial volume, featuring ‘fifty works of outstanding interest’ from its collections. Even at this relatively late stage, the Australian highlights related to exploration, settlement, pioneer and goldfields life and natural history; the only specifically Australian cultural item was ‘the first volume of poetry by an Australian native’.\(^{173}\) The only musical items were a medieval manuscript and the works of J.S. Bach,\(^{174}\) even though the Library now held an extensive collection of Australian sheet music.\(^{175}\)

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\(^{169}\) Clark, In trust, pp.8–12; Tim Jetson, In trust for the nation: the first forty years of the National Trust in Tasmania 1960–2000 (National Trust of Australia (Tasmania), 2000) pp.7–12.


\(^{173}\) i.e., a person of settler descent born in Australia.

\(^{174}\) [McCallum], pp.47–147.

From around the mid-1970s Australian history developed as a significant field of activity in Australian museums, although the National Museum of Australia did not open until 2001, the centenary of Federation.

**A museum dedicated to Australia’s bright cultural future**

In contrast with this late recognition of Australian cultural potential, and late presentation of history in Australian museums, from early in the twentieth century Percy Grainger saw significant Australian cultural innovation and leadership immediately ahead, indeed already happening, and himself at the vanguard. Most significantly, Grainger considered this history worthy of preservation in a museum. Convinced from an early age that he held an important place in Australian, and world, musical history, Grainger wasted no time in taking steps to preserve its physical evidence. In 1908, aged 26, he wrote to his Danish girlfriend Karen Holten: ‘So the little sweetie thinks she can take all my extremely interesting letters to the grave with her, if she dies. My letters shall be admired by a yet-unborn generation; can’t you see that I always write with an eye to a possible public? […] I always hope that my letters will be handed over to immortality one day.’ Grainger’s early vision of Australia’s bright cultural future and his desire, clearly stated by 1922, for a museum to preserve and interpret his vision was therefore advanced in the Australian context.

Grainger’s childhood occurred in the first decades in which locally-born whites dominated Australia’s population, Serle’s ‘springtime, adolescent period of Australian history’, boom years in which Australia’s destiny was seen as a utopia peopled by a chosen white race, free of Old World vices. Although many strove to recreate aspects of British society, some individuals such as writers ‘Rolf Boldrewood’ (T.A. Browne, 1826–1915) and Bernard O’Dowd (1866–1953)—like Grainger, a fan of Walt Whitman—perceived Australia as

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177 Grainger to Karen Holten, 12 February 1908, in Dreyfus (ed.) pp.187–188.
178 Gillies & Pear (eds), *All-round man*, p.2.
having intrinsic potential. \(^{179}\) An emerging younger generation of Australian-born writers and artists, although actually city-based, proclaimed 'bush' values. \(^{180}\) The *Bulletin* magazine promoted popular writing on Australian themes and writers such as Henry Lawson and ‘Banjo’ Paterson met with success in the 1890s. \(^{181}\) Australian graphic design, architecture and poetry incorporated indigenous floral and faunal symbols and composers imitated native bird calls. \(^{182}\) In the fine arts, the Heidelberg school—whose members attempted to depict the distinctive qualities of Australian light and landscape—emerged during Grainger’s childhood and the Graingers were among their early admirers, and personal acquaintances. \(^{183}\) Like Grainger, these artists considered themselves part of an international modernist movement, but were also nationalistic, emphasising the landscape rather than urban subjects, and replacing the Aboriginal figures who had inhabited the margins of colonial paintings with pioneering Europeans. \(^{184}\) Given his early familiarity with that burgeoning nationalist school, it is unsurprising that not only in music, but in the visual arts, did Grainger predict a bright future for his homeland. \(^{185}\) Although public art museums acquired Heidelberg school works from the 1880s–1890s (Sydney preceding Melbourne in this regard), \(^{186}\) and they were exhibited at Melbourne’s Centennial Exhibition in 1888, \(^{187}\) such works did not become really popular, or identified as a national school, until after the First World War. \(^{188}\)

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\(^{180}\) White, pp.86–101.


\(^{182}\) White, pp.73–75; Macintyre, *Concise history*, p.146.

\(^{183}\) Bird, pp.9–10,18; Dorum, p.9.


\(^{185}\) See for example Grainger to Ernest Thesiger, 10 December 1903, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.31; and Grainger’s use of gum-leaf motifs in his design for the covers of scores such as *Country gardens* (Schirmer, 1919) and *Two musical relics of my mother* (Schirmer, 1924), discussed in Allison, *Half a painter’s nature*, n.p.


\(^{187}\) Palmer, p.13; White, p.87. Willis, p.25.

\(^{188}\) McMinn, p.118; Gibson, *Uses of art*, pp.45–46.
Grainger’s vision of Australian cultural history looked back only as far as his own birth. His 1955 Museum manifesto discussed ‘the period in which Australia has been prominent in music—say from about 1880 on.’ But this was probably further back than many Australian commentators had looked when Grainger built his Museum, despite the existence of nationalist arts practitioners mentioned above. Grainger in 1908 expressed to Karen Holten his plans for archiving his letters; Keith Hancock as late as 1930 was still sceptical about Australia’s cultural future: ‘It is picturesque, but misleading, to imagine the citizen of Melbourne or Adelaide with “his foot upon the Future’s verge.” His ideas are—necessarily [...] behind the times. He inherits, sartorially and intellectually, last season’s fashions. [...] Amidst this foreign din, how can Australia’s voice be heard?’

Regarding literature, although acknowledging some individual writers, Hancock saw the potential for a worthwhile Australian literature as still some way off: ‘In the long run, the remedy is with the Australian writers. If they make their novels good enough the public will have to read them.’ At the same time, some Australian artists and critics were acting to protect Australian culture against foreign contaminating influences. While this might suggest a sense of local cultural identity, it also indicates insecurity. A lack of confidence in local literature was observed between the wars by artists, writers, academics and critics including Nettie Palmer, Will Dyson, P.R. Stephenson, and Basil Burdett and the Jindyworobaks. In the visual arts, although noting the local success of Australian impressionists, Hancock described Australian painting as ‘trailing after European progress.’ He did not even discuss music. Hancock’s conclusions: ‘Nations do not bring

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189 ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
190 Keith Hancock, Australia (Ernest Benn, 1930) p.285.
191 Ibid., p.304.
192 White, pp.146–147.
194 Hancock, p.306.
195 Early works on non-indigenous Australian music were Isabelle Moresby, Australia makes music (Longmans Green, 1948) and W. Arundel Orchard, Music in Australia: more than 150 years of development (Georgian House, 1952).
forth abundantly the flowers of civilisation until their roots have struck deep. The Australians, like the Americans of a century ago, are still preoccupied with useful things.\(^\text{196}\)

Although common, this view was not unanimous. Russell Grimwade, for example, commented in the context of Victoria’s 1934 centenary celebrations: ‘If it be true that the progress of a people may be measured by the advance it has made along the path of artistic achievement, then Australia is well on the way to nationhood.’\(^\text{197}\) In the establishment of cultural institutions, Australia had not been tardy; public libraries, museums, mechanics institutes and universities were established by mid-nineteenth century.\(^\text{198}\) But the benchmarks of culture were largely expressed in European terms.\(^\text{199}\)

Grainger’s belief in the existence of an emergent Australian cultural history worth collecting, documenting, preserving, and exhibiting, although early in terms of Australian cultural commentary and museums, did develop at approximately the same time as the profession of Australian academic history, with the appointments of the first professional historians (often British-trained) to Australian universities at the turn of the century.\(^\text{200}\) But although these historians did deal with local subjects, Australian history was still perceived largely in relation to Britain and the Empire and focussed on economics and politics,\(^\text{201}\) whereas Grainger was interested in Australia’s cultural history, a subject on which the pioneering studies were not published until after the Second World War.\(^\text{202}\) Australian art history as a research discipline essentially began well into the twentieth century, the first substantial publication appearing in 1934,\(^\text{203}\) and the first chair of fine art endowed in 1937.

\(^{196}\) Hancock, p.271.
\(^{198}\) Gibson, *Uses of art*, pp.11–35.
\(^{199}\) White, pp.59–62.
\(^{203}\) This was William Moore, *The story of Australian art: from the earliest known art of the continent to the art of today* (Angus & Robertson, 1934).
and filled in 1946.204 Little Australian literature was taught in Australian universities before the Second World War.205 The early Australian music qualifications such as that established at the University of Melbourne by Marshall-Hall in 1891 included music history, but the focus was on European music. Scholarly Australian ethnomusicology and music-historical research did not commence in earnest until the 1960s–1980s.206

Although the Grainger Museum was preceded by Australian art museums in displaying the end products of Australian artistic endeavour, I do not believe comparisons with art museums are the most useful when discussing the Grainger Museum. Grainger emphasised that his Museum was about the process and social context of composition—including the productive interactions between artists, family members and friends—whereas art museums were at the time, and in many cases still are, largely unconcerned with the process of making. Even social context is a relatively new area of attention for many art museum exhibits, which although often chronologically arranged, focus on the finished product, its aesthetic qualities, and more recently, its ‘meaning’. Grainger, by contrast, illustrated the context in which his art was created and he interpreted objects accordingly. Unlike, for example, the typical musical instrument collection curator who focuses on technological improvements, Grainger was not concerned with the make or type of the piano upon which he was first taught, but with the fact that it was his mother who taught him, and that eventually the piano passed into the hands of the Husband family, who had been kind to his own family.207 By using this approach Grainger also avoided the unfortunate situation in many history museums which are ‘full of objects stripped of these [personal] associations and it is anyone’s guess what they really meant in people’s lives’.208

205 Ward, Nation for a continent, p.211.
208 Kavanagh, Dream spaces, p.103.
Ultimately it was Grainger’s finished product, his compositions as heard, upon which he had to rely in order to cement his place in Australian and international cultural history. He emphasised process in order to privilege composition over ‘mere’ performance, but his Museum was not the equivalent of an art museum. The musical equivalent of the art museum, particularly of Grainger’s day, might be a recital of Grainger’s most important works, carefully selected by another person (conductor, concert programmer, music critic) according to agreed aesthetic criteria, performed perhaps in chronological order of their composition, probably well after Grainger’s death. Alternatively, the art museum equivalent of the Grainger Museum might be the ‘blockbuster’ temporary exhibition of the works of one artist’s entire career, assembled from museums and private collections around the world, and including preliminary sketches and other documentation as well as completed works. These exhibits are ephemeral however, whereas the Grainger Museum fulfilled its founder’s aim of permanence.

It is relevant however that the nineteenth-century art museum embodied a romantic worship of the artist, acting as ‘a temple to human genius.’ Many art museums even today, and certainly in Grainger’s day, placed the individual artist in this central ‘priestly’ position. Similarly, many historic house museums focus on a single person or family, elevating the individual subject over economic, social and cultural context. So it is unsurprising that Grainger, long familiar with art and house museums, would place himself, whom he considered a genius, at the centre of a museum. But, unusually for his time, Grainger understood the importance of social and cultural context in producing works of art and attempted to make this clear in his collection and displays.

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209 Gregory makes a similar observation. Gregory, p. 54.
210 Such projects have their origins in temporary loan displays of the seventeenth century but were very popular in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, changing the ways people understood art. Francis Haskell, The ephemeral museum (Yale University Press, 2000).
212 Ibid., pp. 81–123.
Designing the Grainger Museum

I contend that Grainger was fortunate in the timing of his Museum building and in the appointment to the project of the University’s staff architect, John S. Gawler (1885–1978). Gawler had travelled in America and had American connections, and the 1930s were a time when the United States was moving to the forefront of innovation in museum architecture. The outcome for Grainger was a building which, although it had both aesthetic and practical shortcomings, was informed by contemporary trends in museum philosophy, layout, aesthetics and lighting. Although Grainger’s understanding of museums was steeped in the traditions of the nineteenth century, by working with a professional architect he had access to more contemporary ideas for the building. Even at the very literal level, the Grainger Museum’s unusual radial floor-plan was influenced, I shall argue, by the work of American architects and town planners who were seeking to replace nineteenth-century historicism with something forward-looking, democratic and socially progressive. Design and construction of the Grainger Museum have been well documented elsewhere.214 My emphasis is on how the building reflected international, principally American, developments in museum design during the 1930s.

Grainger and the University agreed on the Royal Parade site in 1932–33, but little work was done until Grainger arrived in Melbourne on his 1934–35 concert tour. By then he had developed one of the concepts which would guide the design: uninterrupted, long narrow display galleries, lit naturally from high windows rather than by electricity.215 He also wanted a central courtyard, but envisioned a rectangular building around it.216 Gawler turned these ideas into an initial design which evolved into the first stage, constructed in 1935—what is now the front section of the building—the entrance vestibule and north and south galleries.217

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216 Grainger, rough sketch for Grainger Museum, 2 January 1933.

With his Museum, as with so many of his creative projects, Grainger tried to fulfil his anti-specialisation ideal of the ‘all-round-man’; a reaction against the narrow focus of modern life through a return to what he saw as the broad-ranging skills needed by Scandinavian or colonial pioneers. As a hands-on person Grainger probably had a greater input than many architect’s clients, and his early familiarity with architecture through his father’s work as an architect probably gave him self-confidence on the subject. The single most defining characteristic of the Museum however—its plan of corridor-like galleries radiating from a central point, surrounded by an outer semi-circular gallery—was probably, as Tibbits points out, Gawler’s way of ‘giving form and practicality to Grainger’s hitherto somewhat vague requirements.’ To do this, I contend that Gawler drew upon current developments in museum and library design, particularly in the United States. Gawler had travelled and worked in the United States, particularly Chicago and the midwest, before the First World War, met his American wife-to-be during his travels, and is thought to have brought American architectural ideas back to Australia. In 1912 he was appointed Walter Burley Griffin’s Australian representative. He advocated housing reform and pursued his ideals as a municipal councillor and through membership of statutory and planning authorities. Gawler’s democratic belief that architecture should serve the community would have appealed to Grainger.

Grainger felt fortunate in having Gawler as the architect for his cherished Museum, in 1955 describing the building appreciatively to Gawler as ‘a delight […] truly lovely in design & in color,’ showing originality and ‘wonderful taste.’ Gawler chose a style which combined, as Tibbits points out, Arts and Crafts elements which harmonised with Grainger’s ethnographic and folk culture interests, with a more modernist, functional

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218 RBA, p.19.
220 Tibbits, ‘Building’ p.49.
222 Grainger to John Gawler, 22 October 1955.
interior aesthetic which aimed to meet the practical needs of the collection and was consistent with Grainger’s view of himself as a musical modernist.\textsuperscript{223}

**Museum design in the 1930s\textsuperscript{224}**

The 1920s and 1930s were a boom period for museums, particularly in North America, and the sheer quantity of new museums encouraged widespread reconsideration of design and function.\textsuperscript{225} In the later nineteenth century many museums had moved into opulent new buildings, ornamented in Gothic, Romanesque, Baroque or Classical styles.\textsuperscript{226} By the 1920s–1930s, although many museums were still being built along these historicist lines, this traditionalism and monumentalism had many critics.\textsuperscript{227} Some smaller museums (and libraries) were more experimental, favouring functionality, rather than making a rhetorical statement on the lofty classical origins of the museum institution.\textsuperscript{228} It is this type of museum which is of interest when placing Grainger’s building in a contemporary context.

In the 1930s, some American commentators saw the museum as having a noble yet socially useful purpose of wide dispersal of knowledge, thus strengthening democratic values; history museums for example were ‘preparing to give American history back to the American people’.\textsuperscript{229} Museum and library architecture was a subject of debate and was considered important enough to warrant two entire editions of a major architectural

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{223} Tibbits, ‘Building’, p. 50.
  \item \textsuperscript{224} Part of this section was published in Belinda Nemec, ‘Some influences on the design of the Grainger Museum’, In a nutshell (vol. 10, no. 2, June 2002) pp. 6–9.
  \item \textsuperscript{226} Sheets-Pyenson, pp. 45–46.
  \item \textsuperscript{228} Arthur E. Bostwick, ‘The librarian’s ideas of library design’, *Architectural forum* (vol. 47, no. 6, December 1927) p. 512; Stein, ‘Form and function’; Kent, ‘Why and wherefore’, p. 530; Kent, ‘Museums of Art’, *Architectural forum* (vol. 47, no. 6, December 1927) p. 584.
  \item \textsuperscript{229} Adam, *Museum and popular culture*, pp. 1, 12–16.
\end{itemize}
By 1933 there was an observable trend in the British Empire away from English and Scottish influences in museum architecture towards American. In 1939 the American museum administrator and historian Laurence Vail Coleman noted that modern architecture had taken hold in museums as in other fields. With both library and museum architecture, the south-western states were the most enthusiastic in adopting a vernacular style, drawing on Spanish colonial influences. As RBA observes, the Grainger Museum is consistent with broad trends in inter-war Melbourne architecture, which saw the rise of a more international approach over the earlier, nationalistic Federation style, and the influence of west-coast American architecture.

Australian museums by the 1930s shared many of the problems of their older North American and European counterparts. Few Australian museum buildings had been purpose-built or were adequate to house their growing collections. Grainger and Gawler attempted to allow for expansion of the Grainger Museum by allowing for an (unrealised) second storey. In the 1930s museum lighting—both natural and artificial—was also a subject of discussion and experimentation. Not all museums had been fully electrified by this time although the process was well under way, so to conceive a new museum such as Grainger’s without electricity was an anachronism. Experiments with solely artificial lighting in museums took place from around 1930. Artificial lighting also had social implications. With opening hours extending beyond daylight hours, museums could welcome a greater number of working-class visitors. Libraries had led the way here; by 1927 many American public libraries were open for eighty hours or more per week, year-

230 Architectural forum (Library and museum reference number, vol.47, no.6, December 1927); Architectural forum (Museum and library reference number, vol.56, no.6, June 1932).
231 Markham & Richards, Museums and art galleries in Australia and New Zealand, chapter 6.
233 See examples illustrated in Architectural forum (vol.47, no.6, December 1927).
234 RBA, pp.34–35.
235 Rickard, Cultural history, p.131.
236 Markham & Richards, Museums and art galleries in Australia and New Zealand, p.28.
237 See for example Grainger to Miss Hanshaw, 2 October 1959.
239 Githens, p.131.
240 Coleman, Museum in America, vol.1, p.5.
round. Although this democratic approach would have appealed in principle to Grainger, he was more concerned about fire risk to the collection (not to the visitor, a person in whom he expressed surprisingly little interest), so he specified plenty of natural light but no electricity.

Museums had long grappled with the problem of light reflection off showcase and picture glazing, caused by fenestration determined by the traditional exterior architecture, rather than by the resulting interior illumination. The German response of replacing the ‘palace museum’ with small, individually-lit rooms was accepted in Europe and the United States by the 1930s. Compromises included blank (bricked-in) windows in traditional placements.

In comparing different methods of lighting, architects and curators debated the respective benefits of skylights, clerestory windows, niches, and side lighting from a single source. Generally, the aim was for diffuse, even light throughout a room, and in 1930 Stein specifically recommended the use of glass brick or tile. The Grainger Museum ended up with windows high along the walls of each narrow gallery; these were made of textured, semi-opaque glass in the 1935 section, and ‘Insulux’ glass bricks (newly-available in Australia at this time) in the 1938 circular and radial galleries. In January 1933 Grainger

242 Grainger to Sir James Barrett, 2 January 1933.
243 Grainger to A.W. Grieg, 6 September 1938.
244 Gilman, Museum ideals, pp.162–237.
specified ‘narrow, light-filled rooms with windows above man’s height, these windows being above the show-cases in most cases’. Gawler probably had access to the 1932 Architectural forum, and possibly also to some of the other writings on the subject quoted above, so Grainger’s ideas might have seemed nothing new to him.

In the early 1930s artificial lighting of individual showcases (rather than of entire galleries) was still a relatively new technique, and curators were advised to learn from shop displays. The department store vitrine has much in common with the museum display case. In 1929 a street-level vitrine was dedicated to Grainger in the premises of his New York publisher, Schirmer. Grainger’s manager described it as ‘simply exquisite’:

Both Fred and I stood spellbound in front of it, a marvellous display, the big Sargent photo (from the dining room) in the center with 28 of your compositions on display, and the printed score, plate and manuscript pages of “English Dance” also a copy of January “Music & Youth” (in which is reprinted C. Scott’s article “The music and the man” […] and last but not least an adorable little snapshot of you and Ella, which you sent to Schirmer from Sweden. It was all that could be desired for Grainger the composer and how your dear mother would have loved that window.

Thought was also given to modernising museum interiors, to make them more enticing, often through the use of colour, and to make the décor more appropriate to the displays, acknowledging galleries’ impact on the visual effect of the objects. It was argued that ‘variously coloured backgrounds give to the objects a much sharper definition, and considerably enhance their attractiveness.’ Recommendations for museum interiors generally included flexibility of space; a simple, neutral background; movable or hinged screens or lightweight partitions; and ceilings which could be changed in location and character. This ‘de-cluttering’ both served a practical purpose and followed the more streamlined, modernist aesthetic prevalent between the wars. It was felt that even in an architecturally traditional building, the gallery space should provide freedom for the curator to extract beauty from the object itself. This updating did not occur

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251 Grainger to Barrett, 2 January 1933.
253 Tonie Morse to Grainger, 9 April 1929.
254 H. Stansfield, ‘Coloured backgrounds for display cases’, Museums journal (vol.32, no.3, June 1932) p.96.
256 Bagenal, pp.789–795.
instantaneously however. Many old décor schemes and exhibits were retained for years, often because of funding constraints. In 1933 a lack of interest in modern display methods was noted in Australian museums, other than the Geological Museum at the University of Melbourne.257 But the Grainger Museum interior was consistent with the newer aesthetic. The cream painted brick walls, topped by grids of opaque glass or glass brick, form a neutral backdrop. The floors are mostly grey concrete inscribed with geometrical indicators at turning points, other than the front section’s simple wooden floorboards. Against this background Grainger drew attention to the exhibits with the brightly painted wooden frames and coloured paper backings in his Legends (which he variously described as ‘Anglo-Saxon’, ‘South sea’ or ‘Scandinavian’ colours).

But despite this modern setting, and although only a fraction of Grainger’s vast collection made it into the galleries, his arrangement of the displays had more in common with the cluttered Victorian museums of his youth. Extant photographs show crowded galleries, with little blank space between the Legends and artworks on the walls; showcases filled with beadwork cheek-by-jowl with cases of first edition scores.258 Grainger liked this effect: ‘There is a splendid richness & crowdedness about the exhibits, so many lovely pictures & photographs & the amount of musical information provided is first class.’259

The plan of the Grainger Museum
The Grainger Museum has an unusual floor plan, and there has been a misconception in some quarters that Grainger largely designed the building himself.260 Grainger’s correspondence and the studies by Tibbits and RBA clearly show, however, that Gawler designed the building, to Grainger’s sometimes vague directions. Tibbits suggests that the radiating form and ‘outer corridor’ or semi-circular gallery were Gawler’s initiatives, but

257 Markham & Richards, Museums and art galleries in Australia and New Zealand, p.21.
259 Grainger to Elsie Bristow, 3 April 1956.
without suggesting Gawler’s possible source. RBA also credits the plan to Gawler and points out that many twentieth-century museums had rectangular galleries with courtyards, or light-wells between galleries. RBA notes Gawler and Drummond’s 1926 St Paul’s Church of England Home for Boys, featuring two radial wings, lit from both sides, and a half-octagonal foyer, thus demonstrating that well before commencing the Grainger Museum, Gawler had experimented with radial wings and some of its other features.

But Gawler was not alone in experimenting with this type of design; plans and photographs of several American museum and library buildings with angled wings were published in the *Architectural forum* of December 1927. Clarence Stein in 1932 published suggested museum floor plans bearing a remarkable similarity to the completed Grainger Museum and earlier designs for it. The first (Figure 1a) resembles Gawler’s final version (Figure 4). Figure 1c resembles Grainger’s rough sketch for the completed Museum drawn up soon after a meeting with Gawler in 1935 (Figure 2) and Gawler’s unrealised plan drawn up before September 1938 (Figure 3). Although it is possible that Grainger was aware of Stein, or saw Stein’s plans in the *Architectural forum*, I suggest that it is more likely that Gawler did, and suggested the layout to Grainger. Gawler may have been influenced initially by Figure 1c which shows radiating galleries from a central hub with no outer rim. This is suggested in the Grainger Museum by the lack of provision for doorway openings at the far end of each of the front galleries, with lack of funds in 1935 meaning that only the front section could be built. By 1938 however, when Grainger had sufficient funds for a second stage, the addition of the semicircular gallery (Figure 4) represents to Tibbits ‘an unexpected and surprising change of conception’ for which there are no surviving sketch

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265 By July 1932 this journal was in the architecture library at the University of Melbourne, where Gawler had taught since 1920.
designs, but which ‘seems to have come from Gawler’. This change is less surprising if Gawler had simply returned to Stein for further ideas.

Figure 1 (a–c): from Clarence S. Stein ‘Making museums function’, Architectural forum (June 1932) p.610.

Ibid., pp. 53–54.
Figure 2: Percy Grainger, sketch of proposed Grainger Museum, in letter to Clara Aldridge, 4 March 1935.

Figure 3: Gawler & Drummond, ‘Proposed additions to the Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne’ [n.d., before September 1938] [Property and Buildings Department, University of Melbourne, Architectural Collection], reproduced in Tibbits, ‘Building’, p.55.
The principal advantage Stein claimed for his radial plan was the separation of the areas for the general public from those required by the specialised student (Figure 1a). Unlike in the traditional palace layout (Figure 1b), the visitor was not obliged to pass through all galleries sequentially, but could easily visit a sub-section of the collection.\(^{268}\) This need had been widely discussed since the nineteenth century, mostly in large museums,\(^{269}\) where ‘museum fatigue’ was blamed partly on the tradition of exhibiting huge numbers of objects to the point where, according to Lee Simonson, the museum, rather than fulfilling its potential to be ‘as exciting as a great drama’, was reduced to ‘nothing more than a huge dictionary of art.’\(^{270}\)

The nineteenth-century museum project had been an encyclopedic one. Simonson’s criticism highlights an attitudinal shift, originating after the First World War, toward more

\(^{268}\) Stein, ‘Making museums function’, p.609.


\(^{270}\) Lee Simonson, ‘Museum showmanship’, *Architectural forum* (vol.56, no.6, June 1932) p.531.
selective display. His recommendation that exhibitions should tempt visitors to look just as department store customers are tempted to buy reflected this trend. Simonson, a theatre designer and critic, envisaged the museum not as a custodian but as a showman. Other solutions to museum fatigue included variety in size, shape, surface treatments and lighting of rooms, smaller showcases, and seating for visitors. Some rooms should open upon gardens and vistas. The Grainger Museum’s triangular courtyard serves this purpose, although to a limited extent, being visible only from the vestibule. Obviously physical fatigue is not a problem in this small museum, and both Grainger and Gawler originally envisaged all galleries open to the public. But Grainger acquired duplicates for his collection where possible—one score on display, the other for study in a reading room; thus he too was differentiating between the needs of general and specialist visitors.

Stein’s museum plans of 1932 grew out of earlier work. His friend Simonson had in 1927 proposed a museum skyscraper: a ‘tower-encyclopedia of all the ages of art’. In 1930 Stein published drawings and a further commentary for Simonson’s idea, which although very different in elevation from the Grainger Museum, also had a radial plan (Figure 5). On the lower levels were eight radiating wings between which were triangular courtyard gardens planted in historic styles complementary to adjacent period rooms; the octagonal perimeter housed ‘the student’s museum for investigation’. The central tower

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271 Bazin, p.265.
275 The glass door to the courtyard was not installed until 1976 when the bricked-up doorway was opened up. Kay Dreyfus & Frank Strahan, ‘Seventh progress report of work on the Percy Grainger Museum Collection, for the period January to March 1976’, 13 April 1976, appended to Grainger Museum Board minutes of meeting held on 13 April 1976 (University of Melbourne Archives).
276 The two small concealed triangular rooms were originally thought sufficient storage space, but gradually most of the semi-circular space has been converted to storage to the detriment of public access.
accommodated more open storage and study areas. Stein’s ideas of separating the main exhibits from the study collections were not new, but his spatial ideas were.

Although these American journal articles of the late 1920s and early 1930s may well have inspired Gawler’s design for the Grainger Museum in the immediate sense, there are also

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281 Gawler may also have been familiar with Stein’s work in town planning, the field in which Stein was most influential, as they shared common aims for improvements to city layout, low-cost housing and social benefit.
other less direct American precedents of which either Grainger or Gawler might have been aware, such as the Walker Art Gallery at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine (1891–1893) designed by McKim, Mead & White; its central domed sculpture hall behind the rectangular loggia is flanked by rectangular galleries, an oval gallery at the rear. The semi-circular Hall of Fame for Great Americans might have been familiar to Grainger. Built in 1900 on the University Heights campus of New York University which housed part of the Music Department when Grainger was its Chairman in 1932–1933, this spectacular outdoor classical colonnade on a lofty site surrounding a library, accommodates about a hundred bronze busts of American luminaries. The Patterson Library in Westfield, New York (completed 1908) has a symmetrical radial plan resulting in a straight front elevation and semi-circular rear wall; the central dome houses the librarians’ desk, and octagonal reading rooms radiate from it. Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium (opened 1929) also has a modified radial floor plan. The Fung Ping Shan Library (now Museum) at the University of Hong Kong (Leigh & Orange, 1932) has two angled front wings flanking the central entrance and a semi-oval shaped rear section creating a curved rear wall. Grainger’s father’s 1899 design for the elliptical ballroom at Government House in Perth created a protruding semi-circular side wall.

Although only one of Stein’s four museum designs was ever (partially) realised—‘New Wichita Art Museum opened’, Museum news (vol.13, no.9, 1 November 1935) p.1—Stein theorised and published on museum design and wrote an unpublished book on the subject. Parsons (ed.) pp.290 (note 3), 310, 352, 353, 656. If Gawler modelled his floorplan on Stein’s ideas then the Grainger Museum takes on a further level of architectural significance as one of only two realisations (albeit only partial and on a modest scale) of this important American’s museum theories, and possibly the only one implementing Simonson and Stein’s radial museum concept.

282 Searing, pp.32–35; illustrated in Architectural forum (vol.47, no.6, December 1927) pp.597–598.
283 Now occupied by Bronx Community College, part of the City University of New York.
287 Website, University Museum and Art Gallery, University of Hong Kong http://www.hku.hk/hkumag/virtualtour.html accessed 18 August 2005; Tina Yee-wan Pang, email to Belinda Nemec, 19 August 2005. Gawler had worked in southern China in the early twentieth century.
Earlier precedents for radial plans were (mostly unrealised) schemes for circular or polygonal cities in Renaissance Europe, later used for Baroque fortress towns. The radial boulevards of Washington D.C., Haussmann’s re-design of Paris and Burnham & Bennett’s plan for Chicago followed in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively. Jeremy Bentham’s 1791 circular ‘Panopticon House’ designed for constant, unimpeded one-directional surveillance of the perimeter from a central observation point preceded the more widely realised ‘Pentonville’ radial or star-shaped prison layout, also based on a surveillance principle. Radial prisons resulted in both 360-degree and 180-degree arrangements, often (like the Grainger Museum) with a rectangular front building, bell-tower (approximated by the greater height of the Grainger’s Museum’s polygonal vestibule) and wedge-shaped spaces between radial wings left empty as exercise yards (Grainger’s two triangular store-rooms and single courtyard being the equivalent). Radial designs were used for other institutions reliant on surveillance such as hospitals, asylums, barracks, workhouses and schools, and continued to be used for prisons well into the twentieth century. The Grainger Museum combines the circular perimeter of Bentham’s Panopticon with the Pentonville radial arms and the central hub common to both. In the early- to mid-twentieth century, circular and radial plans were often


293 Australian radial prisons included Berrima, Darlinghurst, Kingston Pentagonal Gaol on Norfolk Island, Adelaide, the Separate or Model Prison at Port Arthur, Pentridge in Melbourne, Sandhurst (Bendigo), Castlemaine, Bathurst, Rockhampton, and even Jika Jika in Melbourne, designed as late as 1978. James Semple Kerr, Out of sight, out of mind: Australia’s places of confinement, 1788–1988 (S.H. Ervin Gallery in Association with the Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988).


proposed (although less frequently realized) as part of the utopian garden city movement in Britain and America, proposed (although less frequently realized) as part of the utopian garden city movement in Britain and America, in which Clarence Stein was an important figure. The idealistic circular designs of influential Garden City figures such as Ebenezer Howard subsequently influenced the radial design of Canberra. Many proposed Canberra designs, not only the successful one by Walter Burley Griffin, featured radial street plans, a concept with wide currency at the time. As mentioned earlier, Gawler had been Griffin’s Australian representative and would presumably have followed the Canberra competition closely, as well as being familiar with the Garden City movement and its American applications. The popularity of the circular, radial plan in the designs suggested for a modern capital city of a young nation illustrates its association with modernity. This was borne out in 1939 when the New York World’s Fair was itself laid out according to a modified, semi-circular radial plan and its centrepiece, Democracity, was a model ‘city of tomorrow’ designed along similar lines.

It is also worth noting that in the nineteenth century the visualisation of evolutionary logic was sometimes reflected in a very literal way in museum planning. Pitt Rivers, for example, in 1888 proposed a national educational museum of arts built in the form of a rotunda, concentric circles being ideal for ‘the exhibition of expanding varieties of an evolutionary arrangement’ with the earliest items at the centre moving outwards in stages to modern items at the periphery. Holmes in 1902 considered, although did not strongly endorse, a radial layout in which the most ‘primitive’ cultures were represented in the

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297 Johnston, Cities in the round, pp.102–128.
299 Ebenezer Howard, Garden cities of to-morrow (Faber & Faber, 1974). First published 1898 as Tomorrow: a peaceful path to real reform, re-issued 1902 as Garden cities of to-morrow.
300 Reps, Canberra 1912, pp.12–32.
centre, the most ‘civilised’ at the periphery.\textsuperscript{304} The layout of the educational botanic or ‘system’ garden at the University of Melbourne in the 1850s–1860s, based on that at Cambridge University, comprised three concentric circles with radial paths intersecting on an octagonal domed conservatory.\textsuperscript{305} Its creator, Professor Frederick McCoy, also the Director of the National Museum of Victoria which he had relocated to the University, was an anti-Darwinist,\textsuperscript{306} but his garden reflected the current obsession with taxonomic classification, as it was intended to illustrate all the plants by class, order, family and genera ‘arranged with the systematic precision of the leaves of a book and fully labelled’.\textsuperscript{307} The Grainger Museum was eventually built adjacent to the perimeter of what remained of the garden, its position determined by alignment with the garden’s axis.\textsuperscript{308}

Libraries, such as the British Museum reading room (completed 1857), often applied panopticon principles: at ground level under a high dome is a central desk for the librarians and catalogues, out from which radiate the readers’ desks, the circular perimeter lined with bookshelves.\textsuperscript{309} The domed reading room of the State Library of Victoria (opened 1913) follows a similar plan.\textsuperscript{310} Grainger was familiar with these institutions and possibly with other similar examples, since the British Museum reading room became a universal library prototype.\textsuperscript{311}

In Chapter Three, I shall discuss the Grainger Museum as the notional and geographic centre of Grainger’s empire of ideas. Seen in this light, its floor plan can be read as a highly schematised map of his empire: it has a centre (the hub through which the visitor enters), a periphery (the semicircular gallery) and channels of communication and exchange between the two (the four radiating galleries). The wheel-like design might also remind us of the

\textsuperscript{304} Holmes, pp.359–360.
\textsuperscript{305} Selleck, pp.81–82.
\textsuperscript{307} McCoy, quoted in Selleck, pp.81–82.
\textsuperscript{308} Tibbits, ‘Building’, pp.47, 51.
\textsuperscript{309} W.H. Boulton, \textit{The romance of the British Museum} (Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1931) pp.38–41 & plate facing p.34.
\textsuperscript{311} Tilton, ‘Library planning’, p.499; Tilton, ‘Library planning and design’, \textit{Architectural forum} (vol.56, no.6, June 1932) p.568.
Ferris wheel, the first of which was created for that great imperial event, the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago. Ferris wheels and other ‘technologies of vision’ such as the Eiffel Tower and elevated viewing platforms served, proposes Bennett, not just as a joy-ride but as a means of surveying the entire exhibition site, itself a microcosm of the world, structured according to imperial powers and their dominions. These technologies rendered ‘the whole world metonymically present, subordinated to the dominating gaze of the white, bourgeois, and […] male eye of the metropolitan powers.’ Grainger went to the 1888 Melbourne and 1900 Paris exhibitions and possibly to other world fairs; a museum design reflecting this concept of surveillance may have appealed to him. From ancient times, circular city plans were based on a symbolism of universality and completeness, whether centred on cathedral, palace, town-hall or marketplace. Through the heterogeneity, detail and breadth of his collection, Grainger’s whole world was represented in his Museum. But it centred around him; his life’s achievement as ‘Australia’s first great composer’ was the lynchpin of his Museum.

**Conclusion**

I have argued here that the Grainger Museum, although built and fitted out in the 1930s and 1950s, bears greater resemblance to later nineteenth-century museums in its conception and intellectual framework. Grainger had adopted a medium which had been largely superceded by the university, scientific laboratory, and anthropological fieldworker in the creation of new knowledge, and was now focussed on communication to a broad public. But it was a medium whose heydey coincided with Grainger’s most creatively productive and original years, and in which his wide-ranging views on many non-musical subjects, which are also illustrated in his collection, took shape.

In its architecture and in some elements of its interior however, the Grainger Museum reflected museum design concerns of the 1930s, particularly the problem of visitor fatigue, the need for improved illumination, and the desire to highlight individual objects, removing visual distractions and overcrowding. The more contemporary approach on these questions

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312 Conn, p.104.
313 Bennett, *Birth of museum*, p.84.
314 Johnston, *Cities in the round*. 
was due largely to Grainger’s collaboration with the architect John Gawler, who although by no means radical in his ideas, was familiar with current international (especially American) developments. Gawler’s involvement protected the Grainger Museum building, although not its exhibits, from Grainger’s frequently idiosyncratic, amateurish and make-do approach to practical matters, which is evident for example in the poor workmanship, inconsistent design, and lack of finish of his Legends.

I have also argued that Grainger, from early in the twentieth century, believed that Australia had a significant cultural history, of which he was a leader. By building his Museum in the 1930s he created one of the earliest efforts to preserve Australian non-indigenous history generally, and Australian cultural production more specifically, in a museum.

In the next chapter I examine the psychological motivations behind Grainger’s urge to collect, document, preserve and display. I consider the milieu in which he was raised, where objects had acknowledged meanings beyond their practical purpose. Although objects were widely used as signifiers of class, wealth, education, taste and attitudes, for Grainger and many other collectors objects also symbolised other times, places and people; serving as mementoes of the past and expressing the collector’s own nature. I begin the discussion in 1922, when Grainger lost his beloved mother Rose and as a result began to codify his ideas about establishing a museum.
Chapter One: A museum of which time?
CHAPTER TWO: Death and memory in the Grainger Museum

‘I am hungry for fame-after-death’

One of the principal concerns of museums of Grainger’s time was the past, and by implication death. When Grainger’s mother died unexpectedly in 1922 one of his first reactions was to propose a museum. This focus on death and memory is the central concern of this chapter. I also compare Grainger to two other artists—painter Gustave Moreau and writer Pierre Loti—whose autobiographical museums were similarly initiated by the loss of loved ones, and by a more generalised nostalgia. Even from a young age, Grainger pondered the prospect of death and felt a need to ensure his immortality. This memorialising urge informed his musical creativity and his collection; both would form his legacy to future generations. Grainger thus shared with many collectors the use of collecting in order to control the passage of time, to cope with the inexorable progression of life from birth to death.

I discuss Grainger’s collecting in the context of the literature on personal (as opposed to institutional) collectors, their psychological motivations, and issues of gender and age. I argue that Grainger grew up in a collecting and memorialising culture. There were acceptable modes of collecting for men, women and children but Grainger’s collecting included elements of all three. Much of the collecting culture centred on the domestic sphere; the collection was part of the backdrop to everyday life. To demonstrate this I examine his creation, with Rose, of an ethnographic ‘museum’ in their house prior to the First World War. This domestic character also had implications in public museums with the popularity, particularly in the United States between the wars, of the period room and house museum. Grainger’s Museum has characteristics of these two types and at one stage he was planning a house museum in his maternal family home in Adelaide, following an earlier notion of turning his White Plains house into a museum.

1 Grainger to Ella Ström, 9 June 1927.
The past, death and the museum

The past, and by implication death, were prominent as subject and sub-text in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth century museums that Grainger knew. House and birthplace museums in Europe and America were dedicated to luminaries of the past, rarely if ever to a living person. Years, decades or even centuries had to pass after a person’s death before society created such a memorial to them, or before the community perceived an architectural style as worth conserving or a historic period worth interpreting. The encyclopedic museums of art, ethnology, natural history and technology preserved and displayed mostly things which represented the past because they had outlived their original purpose, been removed from everyday circulation, or were created by societies thought to be dying out or extinct. ‘Primitive’ cultures were thought to represent modern museum makers’ and visitors’ own forebears. Folk museums preserved evidence of a way of life thought to be rapidly disappearing. Technology displays were regularly made obsolete by their lack of resources to keep up with technological advances; many other exhibits remained static due to high replacement costs. Classical statuary and ‘Old Master’ paintings rather than the works of living artists were usually an art museum’s greatest treasures. Although natural history displays were ostensibly about life itself, even those representing extant species seemed old by virtue of being collected, preserved and placed behind glass.

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3 Bazin, p.6; Lowenthal, *Foreign country*, p.256.


8 Stewart’s observation that souvenirs such as Victorian glass domes covering sea shells, leaves or butterflies ‘deny the moment of death by imposing the stasis of an eternal death’, could apply also to museum displays.
The permanence of the museum institution, the apparently immutable status of the object within the collection, and the predominance of permanent over temporary exhibitions all contributed to this effect. Even objects which were new when acquired soon became ‘old’ in a museum. Grainger’s ‘blue-eyed English’ term for museums was ‘past-hoard-house’,9 a telling choice, talking only of the past even though he was also collecting current or recent material for future generations. ‘Hoard’ reflects the hoarding (rather than acquisitive) character of his collecting in the generic sense but also the specific historical sense of an ancient treasure gathered to increase the owner’s status and prestige,10 the process being an ‘ancestor of modern collecting’.11 ‘House’ reflects the domestic origins of much of Grainger’s collecting.

Once items are placed in museums their context and thus their meaning are altered; they are removed from the material economy, taken out of circulation, and no longer used for the purpose, or by the same people, for which they were made.12 Objects change or even lose their significance, metaphorically their life, if removed from circulation or if indigenous knowledge about them is lost.13 Even artworks created to be looked at are believed by some to have lost their vitality through their decontextualisation (or recontextualisation) in a museum display.14 Because an object comes to represent the culture or time which produced it, its very presence in a museum can make its source seem old-fashioned, obsolete, or gone. By collecting Aboriginal artefacts for example, museums did not serve the interests of the makers or their descendants, partly because the museum

Stewart, p.144. See also Griffiths, pp.24–25; and Robert Cushman Murphy, ‘Natural history exhibits and modern education’, Scientific monthly (vol.45, no.1, July 1937) p.79.
10 Pomian, pp.18–20.
11 Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, pp.49–50.
12 Pomian, pp.7–9; Lowenthal, Foreign country, p.356.
context, representing the past, in itself perpetuated misconceptions of the originating cultures as having died out. This disempowered and delegitimised the actual survivors. 15 Conversely, as Clifford points out, artefacts demonstrating, through change and syncretism, fruitful contact between indigenous and European societies—artefacts which ‘may signal the life, not the death, of societies’—were (and often still are) excluded from museum displays. 16

Many commentators have compared the museum with the graveyard or mausoleum. Ripley asserts that, in the nineteenth century, the word museum came to mean ‘something ponderous, dull, musty, dead, a graveyard of old bones of the past.’ 17 In 1861, art critic Théophile Thoré (1807–1869) described museums as ‘cemeteries of art, catacombs in which the remains of what were once living things are arranged in sepulchral promiscuity.’ 18 In the twentieth century, Benjamin Ives Gilman described museums as ‘resurrection places of things which were made for other surroundings’ 19 and Adorno quoted Paul Valéry’s description of museums as ‘like the family sepulchres of works of art’. 20 Lewis Mumford wrote in 1938: ‘Layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves in the city until life itself is finally threatened with suffocation; then, in sheer defense, modern man invents the museum.’ 21 More recently, Lowenthal writes, ‘The image most frequently associated with the museum [in Britain] is the cemetery’, 22 and Elsner speaks of the museum as ‘a kind of entombment, a display of once lived activity’. 23 The public have responded similarly: a child in 1927 described the local museum as ‘the dead circus’. 24 Radley cites modern visitors’ responses: ‘sense of oldness, history and even decay’ and ‘the feeling of

16 Clifford, Predicament, p.201.
17 Ripley, p.38.
18 W. [Thoré]-Bürger [pseudonym], Salon de 1861 (Paris, 1901) p.84, quoted in Haskell, p.6.
19 Gilman, Museum ideals, p.236.
20 Adorno, p.175.
21 Lewis Mumford, The culture of cities (Secker & Warburg, 1938) p.4.
23 Elsner, p.155.
24 Bennett, Pasts beyond memory, p.12.
looking at dead history’, while many non-visitors described a museum as ‘a monument to the dead’.  

Andrea Witcomb criticises this mausoleum view as an over-used academic argument which does not acknowledge the many changes museums have undergone.  

Black argues that despite its associations with death, ‘For many Victorian writers […] the museum was the space not of the dead body […] but of the productive and reproductive social body.’ While I agree that the trope of the museum as mausoleum cannot encompass a museum’s many meanings, the point relevant to Grainger is that museums of his time were often perceived as representing the past and the dead, and that this was not always a negative perception. Museums were popular so presumably westerners need(ed) their mausoleum aspects, perhaps because the complements of death are resurrection and immortality. The past and death are not always in opposition to modernity; they are in many ways complementary or sequential. Grainger as composer is an example of an artist who strove for innovation and modernity, but whose modernity was steeped in tradition, and for whom the past, death and mourning were a source of creative inspiration, a point I discuss further below.

Given this perceived association between museums and death, it is not surprising that individuals often use collecting and preserving material culture to cope with the prospect of death. We often preserve keepsakes of the recently deceased; the beloved is being left behind, in our past, but by holding onto some remnant or symbol of them—a souvenir—they remain, in one sense, with us now and in the future. Similarly in the natural history museum, animal skins appear to be resurrected, given an illusory life by the skills of taxidermists and diorama-painters. Perennially popular exhibition types such as dinosaurs

28 For a discussion of souvenir collecting and the role of souvenirs in making sense of past and present, see Stewart; Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, pp.69–73; Pearce, ‘Collecting reconsidered’, in Kavanagh (ed.), Museum languages, pp.139–141.
and Egyptian mummies\textsuperscript{10} similarly speak of both death and immortality. Even the religiously-informed architecture characteristic of the nineteenth-century museum, whether inspired by the Greek temple or the Gothic cathedral, makes the link between death and immortality. Duncan characterises art museum visiting as a ritual which affords ‘communion with immortal spirits of the past’.\textsuperscript{11}

Given this context, Grainger was neither unusual nor unpredictable in responding to actual bereavement (the loss of his mother) by acts of collecting, preservation and display. But he took this to a greater extreme than most individuals, by creating a large and catholic collection which focussed on himself, and by building an autobiographical museum to preserve and display it.

The death of Rose Grainger

The catalyst to the establishment of the Grainger Museum was the most tragic loss to occur in Grainger’s life: the death of his mother. On Sunday 30 April 1922, Rose Grainger committed suicide by jumping from a high window in the New York city office building of Grainger’s concert manager.\textsuperscript{12} Percy was away on tour in California and Rose had been anxious and physically debilitated for some months. For decades she had suffered from syphilis, contracted from her husband soon after Percy’s birth.\textsuperscript{13} The disease and possibly some of its treatments such as mercury\textsuperscript{14} had damaged her physical and mental health. During the last year of her life Rose’s condition had deteriorated and she was worried about becoming a burden. During Percy’s absence in 1922 her distress was brought to a crisis by some jealous women admirers of his, who spread rumours that their relationship was incestuous.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{10} Murray in 1904 noted the prominence given since ‘olden times’ to Egyptian mummies in collection displays. Murray, vol.1, pp.50–55.

\textsuperscript{11} Duncan, p.17.


\textsuperscript{13} ‘Anecdotes’, p.79; ‘Aldridge-Grainger-Ström saga’, p.49.

\textsuperscript{14} Rose Grainger to Grainger, 25 August 1906.

\textsuperscript{15} Grainger, ‘Anecdotes’, p.76.
These rumours were false but Percy and Rose’s relationship was unusually close. Grainger described it as ‘the intense mutual love and devotion of her and my life together.’ Rose had directed every aspect of her son’s education, career, social life and sexual relationships from his birth until her death. She concentrated her considerable energies on her ‘genius’ son, and he gave her the loyalty she expected. Despite this dominance however, there was a strong filial and maternal love present, and the son’s grief at his mother’s suicide was overwhelming. He learnt the bare fact of her demise from a telegram handed to him as he left the concert stage in Los Angeles, but only found out the gruesome details accidentally by reading them in a newspaper during his train journey home.

This devastating loss led Grainger to feel that he too, might die soon, reflecting his unusually close identification with Rose. His immediate emotional response was extreme but rather than dwelling only on his loss he had his eye firmly on the future. While still in a state of shock, and before having put in train any of the usual practical arrangements following a bereavement, he took steps towards confirming his place as Australia’s first great composer through the publication of all his works, and the establishment of two museums. Journeying home to New York he wrote a detailed letter to his old friend Henry Balfour Gardiner, setting out precise instructions in case he, Percy, died before he could get home:

My heart & head alarm me & I wonder if I can live thru it all. I want to come thru so badly, for I am all in life that remains of my beloved mother, & I wish to live so as to make her as sweetly remembered as possible

1 because of her unusual intensity of mother-love (I shall write her life)

2 how, thru her love of art & innate critical sense, she made me the first great composer of Australia

3 to show how terribly she struggled & suffered all her life (as none but I know), the intensity of the fight for my goodness she put up.

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36 Grainger, Photos of Rose Grainger and of three short accounts of her life by herself, in her own handwriting; reproduced for her kin and friends by her adoring son Percy Grainger; also table of dates and summary of cultural tastes (the author, [1923]) p.5.
39 Grainger to Gardiner, 3 May 1922; Grainger to Roger Quilter, 14 May 1922.
But to be able to do all that I must live many years longer and prove myself (as well as hint towards) the great artist & generous man she planned me, from the 1st, to be. But should my body break under this strain, then I must rely on you doing all you can to have my unpublished works published in the right way.40

Grainger then wrote Gardiner a blank cheque to use for publishing his music. He instructed:

You understand the general need of bringing out everything […] that, together, could place me as Australia’s 1st great composer & make Australia & my mother’s name shine bright. [Long list of compositions and tasks follows and includes:]

29 All very intimate letters or notes should be deposited in an Australian Grainger Museum, preferably in birth-town Melbourne.

30 Mother’s ashes & mine (both cremated) to be placed beside her mother’s in cemetery (which?) in Adelaide South Australia.

31 Could plot of ground (owned by me) next to White Plains home be used for building small fireproof Grainger Museum? If so, place there Grieg’s watch, Grieg mementos, mother’s collection of Scand. & Tartar Embroideries, scarfs, some of her most characteristic clothes, my collection of beadwork & native art, my toweldresses & army uniforms.

[…] I must think of Australia’s fame & the brightness of my adored mother’s memory before all else. […] / Mother & I were just expecting to begin the happiest part of our lives. I delayed too long, worked too long, did not bring leisure to her early enough. I have used shocking judgement in all things.41

Once back in New York, Grainger went straight to the funeral parlour and had his mother photographed, as though sleeping among flowers in the casket,42 a relatively common practice at the time, such images often displayed on parlour walls.43 He cut a lock of her hair44 and made a detailed inventory of the contents of the handbag she had had with her on the fateful day.45 Shortly thereafter, Grainger wrote a new will leaving the bulk of his estate

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40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 These photographs by Frederick Morse are now in the Grainger Museum. Some were later reproduced in the memorial book Grainger produced at no small expense a year after Rose’s death: Grainger, Photos of Rose Grainger.
43 Elizabeth Hallam & Jenny Hockey, Death, memory and material culture (Berg, 2001) pp.4–5, 141–146.
44 For a discussion of the significance of hair for memory and as linking life and death, see Marcia Pointon, ‘Materializing mourning: hair, jewellery and the body’, in Marius Kwint & others (eds), Material memories (Berg, 1999) pp.39–57; Hallam & Hockey, pp.136–141.
45 Grainger, ‘List of contents/ Beloved mother’s shiney black bag / left in Mrs Sawyer’s office at time of death / Ap. 30, 1922’.
to Gardiner. He acknowledged that ‘the museum side & the biography side will have to be shelved until later years’ but henceforth Grainger had a museum project.

Thus from Rose’s death virtually until his own, Grainger built on his existing collection and simultaneously made arrangements for the ultimate disposal of that collection; such an act (although normally undertaken at the end of one’s life) being, as Pearce observes, ‘a helpful part of our preparation for death.’ So although Grainger eventually recovered his equanimity and went on to live for many productive years, the bereavement can be seen as marking the starting point of his own preparation for death. Grainger’s compositional output suffered a creative fall-off after Rose’s suicide, as he spent most of the second half of his life re-working earlier creations rather than initiating new pieces (the exception being his Free Music), and on educational activities. Grogan asserts that Grainger’s expansion of areas of activity in the 1920s and 1930s, including the Museum project, was part of an attempt to conceal from himself and others his decline as a composer and front-line performer. Mark Grant suggests that Rose’s death caused Percy to redouble his ‘already powerful emotional need to memorialize and preserve the sound world he conceived in his youth as a kind of living incarnation of his mother and their symbiotic relationship’. Although collecting has been well recognised as a way of continuing to relate to the deceased, and the death of a loved one has been a catalyst to many prominent collectors, Grainger took this response to extremes. Further, Grainger was concerned not only with preserving memory, but with preserving the truth: ‘When remarkable people die (such as my mother […]) no-one seems able or willing to describe them justly, faithfully. […]

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46 ‘Last will and testament of George Percy Grainger’, 21 June 1922 (copy), with codicil to H. Balfour Gardiner’s will, 22 July 1922.
47 Grainger to Henry Balfour Gardiner, 27 June 1922.
48 Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, p.56.
49 Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, p.2; Gillies & Pear (eds), Portrait, p.xxxiv, Gillies & Pear, ‘Grainger, Percy’.
53 For example, le Duc Jean de Berry; Sigmund Freud; J. Pierpont Morgan. Belk, Consumer society, pp.28, 49; Muensterberger, p.169.
There is some conspiracy going on anent the remarkable dead.\textsuperscript{54} This dedication to ‘truth’ might have been compounded by the mode of Rose’s death; suicide being ‘often particularly difficult to reconcile with memories of the deceased with the result that relatives are left with the ongoing task of rethinking both the life of the person lost and their own relationship with that person.’\textsuperscript{55}

As evident from the letter to Gardiner, Grainger felt a heavy guilt at Rose’s death. This also related to Grainger’s guilt and feelings of cowardice at having left England in 1914, at the outbreak of war: ‘I know that my music will bring more honor to Australia than any soldier-work I may have done in British armies […]. But I bitterly clear-see that my beloved mother had to die because of the shame of my cowardly enslavement brought upon us. The war claimed one of us, after all.’\textsuperscript{56} But this guilt did not arrive unannounced at Rose’s death; his sense of obligation toward his mother had long been tinged with guilt, probably initiated by sympathy for her physical suffering.\textsuperscript{57} Early familial anxieties have been documented as an impetus towards collecting. Muensterberger for example describes the rabid bibliophile, Sir Thomas Phillips (d.1872) whose collection began with historical and genealogical records, triggered by insecure identity caused by his illegitimate birth, and Martin G.’s collection of Oriental art, stemming from the death of his father while in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{58}

Rose’s death also triggered in Grainger the urge towards autobiography,\textsuperscript{59} a memorialising habit which from this time until his own death ran parallel to his collecting. From the time of his mother’s death he produced a series of rambling memoirs, essays and anecdotes, mostly incomplete, all unpublished in his lifetime.\textsuperscript{60} As Gillies and Clunies Ross point out, the underlying motives of these works changed little over the years, being concerned with:

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\item \textsuperscript{54} Grainger, ‘Anecdotes’, p.66.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Hallam & Hockey, p.112.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Grainger, ‘P.G.’s remarks on Rose Grainger’ s letters of May 12, 1917 & June 26, 1917 to Cecil J. Sharp’, 14 March 1932, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.529.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Grainger to Kellermann, 8 May 1926.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Muensterberger, pp.73–100, 150.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Perry, pp.126–127.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
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recording and analysing the relationship with his mother and her family in a search for personal understanding, with revising the history of twentieth-century music so as to acknowledge the primacy of his own experiments and to promote the achievements of such composers of his artistic circle as Cyril Scott and Herman Sandby, and with candidly describing his own sexuality and particularly his flagellantic predilections.61

In other words, concerns similar to those of the Grainger Museum, which he founded during this period of increasing retrospection.62 This alignment between his autobiographical and museum activities demonstrates how Grainger moved seamlessly between collecting, recording, preserving, analysing and promoting; all were integrated in his project of creative memorialising.

Grainger continued to think and speak of the Museum as, at least in part, a memorial to Rose and he nurtured plans to establish a series of Rose Grainger libraries.63 In 1927, on the eve of his marriage and five years after Rose’s death, he wrote to his fiancée: ‘What are the feeble threads that still hold me to life? […] The forming of Aldridge-Grainger museums in White Plains & perhaps Australia, & the publication of noncommercial works by me & other artists. […] It would be too much to expect any widow to carry out my museum plans when two-thirds of my estate fell into her hands.64 Rose’s death served to divide Grainger’s life into two parts. This is reflected in his labelling of certain items of clothing and accessories ‘Mors Tid’, meaning ‘Mother’s time’ in Danish.65 Grainger mourned his mother for the rest of his life, and always remembered her birthday and her ‘death-day’.66 But he tried to paper over this seam by continuing childhood traditions such as that of creating a birthday gift for her; on the first birthday after her death, Grainger created two watercolours of Barstow in California (where they had holidayed in 1920), inscribed ‘In memory of my beloved mother/Birthday gift, July 3, 1922. Barstow, where we were

61 Gillies & Clunies Ross (eds) p.xvii.
62 Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, p.2.
64 Grainger to Ella Ström, 9 April 1927.
66 Grainger to Karen Kellermann, 8 May 1926.
happy. But he always felt the loss keenly. For example, 35 years after her death he wrote in his diary, ‘Beloved mother would have been 95 today. I have felt the tragic influence of her death more in this year, 1957, than in any other year.’ Rose’s death also caused Grainger to reassess his ambivalent relationship with his father (who had died, also as a result of syphilis, in 1917): ‘I love my father so much more since I have lost mother. Only since then do I realize that he, too, is dead, has had his waxing & waning like all living beings, that his poor blood runs within me as well as my darling mother’s, & that if he is to achieve a few years more of memory […] it must be thru my effort & achievement.’ Loss created in Grainger not only a need to memorialise but an obligation to do justice to the lives of the deceased. His Museum was the key element in this project, which occupied much of his remaining life.

**Musée Gustave Moreau**

The Grainger Museum is unusual, although not unique, as an autobiographical museum. Most of the other examples I or others have identified were also created by professional artists such as architects, painters and writers. One such example which like Grainger’s was inspired by a sense of loss is the museum created late in life by the symbolist painter Gustave Moreau (1826–1898) from his Paris studio and family home. It shares many characteristics with the Grainger Museum, as did the two men’s lives.

Like Grainger, Moreau pondered immortality from a surprisingly young age, and also like Grainger, this raised the question of his artistic legacy. At the age of 36, when his father, his teacher and a dear friend all died in the one year, Moreau wrote on a sketch: ‘This evening 24 December 1862. I think of my death and of the fate of my poor little works and all these

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67 Grainger, quoted in *Objects, documents and pictures to reflect upon, selected from the Grainger Museum and the Archives Collections of the University of Melbourne* (exhibition catalogue, University Gallery, University of Melbourne, 1978) p. 31.


69 Grainger, Day-book 1957, entry for 3 July.

70 Grainger, ‘My mother & her son’, p. 29.
compositions which I have taken pains to keep together. Separated, they perish; taken together, they give some idea of what I was as an artist and of the milieu in which I pleased to dream.'  

Although achieving public acclaim as a painter, Moreau, unlike Grainger, had withdrawn from the public eye from his early thirties, thereafter painting largely for himself, withholding many works from sale. Like Grainger, Moreau was contemptuous of fashion and fad: ‘Be ready to continue to follow your own path to become original and new and to wait sometimes not 10 not 20 not 30, but 50, 100 years until the deadly ridicule of special interest groups has died and passed away—then you will be the future’.

By 1890, Moreau’s mother, his companion Alexandrine, and most of his close friends had also died. He envisaged a museum in which his life’s work could be kept together and displayed after his death. In 1895 he decided to enlarge his house to achieve this end, and moved out to enable the significant construction works to take place. He made detailed plans for the museum, although it did not open until 1902. Like Grainger—who rarely if ever referred to the monetary value of items in his collection—Moreau valued things for their associations, numen, aura, or souvenir value (a concept I discuss further below), rather than for their more widely-acknowledged aesthetic qualities which often translate into market value. When a friend commented on Moreau’s mediocre furnishings, Moreau replied: ‘Do you think I don’t know as well as you that the chandelier, the candlesticks and most of the furniture here are valueless? But they suited my parents, and that’s enough for me. When I want to see beautiful things, I go to the Louvre.’ In the private rooms of his autobiographical house-museum Moreau displayed possessions of personal value: artworks of friends or admired artists in the corridor; in the dining room, photographs of his own works long since sold; and in the bedroom, mementoes of Alexandrine. As did Grainger with the London Room, which was closely associated with his mother Rose and to which he

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72 Listri, pp.76ff.
73 Mathieu, p.31.
76 Kaplan, *Art of Moreau*, p.22.
78 Lacambre, p.94.
added artworks by his father, Moreau preserved his parents’ rooms unaltered.\textsuperscript{79} The public rooms, by contrast, showcased his artworks.

Moreau bequeathed all to the State on the condition that it ‘retain its character of ensemble in order to bear witness forever to the sum of the artist’s labour and effort during his lifetime.’\textsuperscript{80} The collection ranges from preliminary sketches to finished paintings, and includes a vast documentary archive. This completeness enables the viewer to follow each work from conception to completion,\textsuperscript{81} a characteristic it shares with Grainger’s collection, with its many drafts, published editions, and even piano roll or audio recordings of compositions, and the emphasis on his compositional raw material and other, more abstract sources of inspiration.

Although born more than fifty years apart, there are some striking similarities between Moreau’s and Grainger’s early lives, which perhaps influenced their later urge to create an autobiographical museum. Each was in effect the only child of a successful government architect father and accomplished pianist mother who instilled a love of music in her son; each boy was affectionate, physically rather fragile, and educated mostly at home in a cultivated middle-class milieu, free-thinking on religious matters; each led a sheltered childhood in a loving family circle and showed an early talent for drawing.\textsuperscript{82} Like Grainger, Moreau constantly revised many of his creations,\textsuperscript{83} became a dedicated teacher and mentor, was loved by his students, but left no offspring to carry on his legacy. He also adored his mother, who was his faithful companion and confidante. He seemed to need his mother’s approval before commencing a painting, and would submit the completed work to her judgement first. Her satisfaction gave him more pleasure than any other compliments,\textsuperscript{84} just as for Grainger, Rose’s ‘instinctive critical sense […] has ever constituted the highest tribunal of my artistic life.’\textsuperscript{85} As with Grainger, Moreau’s response to his mother’s death

\textsuperscript{79} Paladilhe, p.26.
\textsuperscript{80} Moreau, ‘Last will and testament’ (1897), quoted in Mathieu, p.31.
\textsuperscript{81} Lacambre, p.98; Mathieu, p.35.
\textsuperscript{82} Moreau’s biographical details are taken from Paladilhe and Lacambre.
\textsuperscript{83} Listri, pp.76–78.
\textsuperscript{84} Paladilhe, pp.48–49.
\textsuperscript{85} Grainger, \textit{Photos of Rose Grainger}, p.5.
(when he was fifty-eight) was immense and inconsolable grief. His reaction to the death of his companion Alexandrine two years later was to travel and then to throw himself back into his work. By thus rejecting all pleasure he was making ‘a moral offering to my dear departed, a proof, and still vital testimony, to them of my unshakable constancy to their memory. Without this, what a humiliation it would be to forget, after having loved so much.’ Despite his strong memorialising urge, Moreau—like Grainger—wanted no traditional funeral formalities for himself. In his will Moreau requested ‘no flowers or wreaths, no speeches by anybody of any kind, no image on the tomb, in short, nothing, nothing.’

**Grainger on the past, memory and forgetting**

It was not only when faced with actual bereavement that Grainger thought about death, and of ways in which his memory and reputation could be posthumously preserved and even enhanced. For years prior to Rose’s suicide, death and immortality in an abstract sense had occupied Grainger’s thoughts, not as a finality or conclusion, but as a catalyst for action:

> My manifold amateurish interests lead me to myriads of graves that other fellow talents never tread. The whole being of folk art is closely akin to all or many racial & artistic burials. Dead ideas, words, myths, plots, occupations flit about thro the dying rhymes. And folksingers too; in them I’m hoarding up a wealth of dead friends soon to go. All the languages I potter about with are hornets nests of new births and old deaths, passing away & coming forward, full of wistful suggestions to the loving & sympathetic mind. […] / Sorrow is fine & productive for me. Fear of death & loss, destruction & forgottenness spur me to compose, collect, preserve & embalm. May I live long & not accomplish all too little! Not for my own silly sake, but because there is so much awaiting doing, & my heart really feels loving & feelingly & there ought to be some record of it. Also there must be someone to sit mourningly & hold the cold hands of dead races, men, & languages, lost battles & failed enterprizes.

Many of Grainger’s compositions and arrangements were on morbid subjects: ‘hangings, drownings, murders, jailings, death-for-love’s-sake, knights mouldering in ditches, the sad fates of young men killed before their time’. Grainger saw ‘culture’ as the ‘storing up &

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86 Paladilhe, pp.48–49.
87 Ibid., p.50.
88 Moreau, quoted in Ibid.
89 Listri, pp.76ff.
study of records of life & thought & skill [...] the surest form of deathlessness’. While in the army Grainger wrote to his mother: ‘I like to see all the leavings of the band boys [...] hanging on the walls [...] especially when they are all away I prefer the evidences of life to life itself perhaps.’ In writing of death and suicide some years after his mother’s demise, Grainger stated:

This all-too-good understanding of the self-killing mood94 is all part of my all-round in-tune-ness with “dead” things—the sea (which is dead from man’s slant, altho teeming with sea-life), the sand-waste ((desert)), art (which is just a dead form of life), past-hoard-mindedness ((museum-mindedness)), lewdness instead of love, mind-stirs ((interests)) rather than feelings. All these choices of mine are away from life towards death, away from more-ness towards less-ness.95

Grainger felt strongly about preservation, writing in 1934 to Ella of the need to preserve museums and places unchanged, ‘otherwise the past will die upon us.’ Although Grainger liked the ‘steady lastingness’ of cemeteries, he considered displaying his and Ella’s skeletons in the Museum, as this would be ‘so much jollier & braver & more heathen & more scientific [...] so free from mawkishness’ compared to the graveyard, ‘much as one yearns to lie there’.97 While this seems a bizarre wish (and Ella promptly backed away from what had been only a joking suggestion),98 Grainger would have seen many entire skeletons and human remains in museums, particularly those of indigenous people.99 In 1954, after discussing cremation, Grainger wrote to Ella:

All this business of having one’s ashes strewn to the wind, or into the sea, or over the fields—what does it mean, but that the death-confronted sentimentalist [is exposed to any whim]. He has no plans for facing the long future. And the future of bones is

92 Grainger, ‘My mother & her son’, p.35.
93 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 1 July 1917.
94 Grainger’s maternal great-grandfather, a surgeon in London, also took his own life, as did ‘Uncle Fred’. Grainger, ‘Notes from Clara Aldridge’s diary 1874–1878’, pp.9, 17.
96 Grainger to Ella Grainger, 13 September 1934.
97 Grainger to Ella Grainger, 24 January 1935.
98 Ella Grainger to Grainger, [16 February] 1935.
100 Phrase originally in Danish.
Grainger’s last will—signed on 29 September 1959, when he was suffering painfully from cancer—included the following clause: ‘I request that there be no public or religious funeral, funeral service or ceremony of any kind or nature. I direct that my flesh be removed from my bones and the flesh destroyed. I give and bequeath my skeleton to the University of Melbourne […] for preservation and possible display in the Grainger Museum.’102 The explicit reference to removal of flesh from bones brings to mind Jeremy Bentham’s similar instructions for the creation of his posthumous ‘Auto-icon’, now at University College, London. Inside a wooden cabinet is Bentham’s preserved skeleton, dressed in his own clothes stuffed out with straw, sitting in his usual chair, holding his trusty walking stick, all surmounted by a wax head. Bentham had envisaged public displays of ‘Auto-Icons’, which would have educational, moral, genealogical and other benefits for future generations.103 Perhaps Grainger knew of Bentham’s Auto-Icon, which has been displayed in the College since 1850.104

In the actual event of Grainger’s death, Ella arranged for Percy’s remains to be buried with Rose’s in Adelaide.105 If Grainger’s wish had been realized, however, his Museum would not have been the first to serve as its creator’s mausoleum. For example, a significant element of the Dulwich Picture Gallery designed by Sir John Soane in 1811–1814 was a mausoleum for its founders.106 Duncan has described this as ‘a mausoleum expanded into an

101 Grainger to Ella Grainger, 14 August 1954.
art gallery (rather than an art gallery with a mausoleum in it). Examples of the latter would be those house-museums created by individual art collectors, which also house the physical remains of their creator-donor. On a more autobiographical note, New Haven’s Trumbull Gallery was designed by its founder, former aide-de-camp to George Washington and nationalistic American history painter John Trumbull (1756–1843), to house his art collection, which included his own works. Trumbull and his wife were eventually buried in the basement crypt, surrounded by relics such as his palette and brush. Similarly, the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844) agreed for his ashes to be prominently interred in the courtyard of the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen—which he helped create—partly because his Italian rival Antonio Canova (1757–1822) had designed a sepulchral monument for his own remains in his home-town, adjoining a museum of his sculptures. Grainger admired Thorvaldsen and probably visited this prominent landmark during trips to Denmark. Waterford argues that such projects were not only about self-memorialisation but shared (like the Grainger Museum) a patriotic, nationalist agenda. Similarly, several American presidents are interred in their presidential libraries and some ‘Great Men’ house museums, such as George Washington’s Mt Vernon, include the tomb of the men they commemorate.

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107 Duncan, p.85.
108 Mostly created by Americans, these include J. Paul Getty Museum; Francine & Sterling Clark Art Institute in Massachusetts; William Hayes Ackland Memorial Art Centre at the University of North Carolina; and Huntington Art Gallery, California. Mr & Mrs Roberts Woods Bliss are buried on the grounds of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., Peggy Guggenheim in the garden of her Venetian palazzo, and Bernard Berenson in a chapel at his villa near Florence. Duncan, pp.79–88, 154 (note 31).
109 Built 1831–1832, demolished and relocated several times and renamed the Yale University Art Gallery. Bazin, p.245.
110 Searing, pp.20, 23–24; Waterford, pp.56–60.
112 Grainger to Herman Sandby, 27 September 1901, in Dreyfus (ed.)  p.5.
113 Rose twice urged him to see it in 1904. Rose Grainger to Grainger, 27 September & 14 October 1904.
114 Waterford, pp.55–59.
D’Annunzio, in creating one of the autobiographical museums which I consider in Chapter Three, included an elaborate hilltop mausoleum for himself and some soldier-companions.

Grainger’s childlessness perhaps added to his imperative to preserve the past; as an only child who never had children he saw himself as the sole bearer of his mother’s heritage, which he perceived as fragile: ‘there is some life-dodging instinct at work in all of us (grandmother, mother, me). We are not part of the great army of breeders, family-builders & society-bulwarks. We are, rather, the “sports” by which Darwinian nature effects its changes.’ This comment is consistent with the eugenicists’ belief that ‘the inferior are more fecund than the superior.’ In his Museum, Grainger wanted to create a permanent and unchanging autobiography and record of his career, his musical and extra-musical beliefs, and the careers of his compositional fellow-spirits; a memorial to Rose; and a family history, particularly of the maternal line.

Grainger’s urge to collect, record, preserve and memorialise strengthened as the years passed. It represented a sense of duty. Upon hearing in 1950 of the death of Balfour Gardiner, Grainger wrote: ‘I feel so close to death myself that all these losses and blows melt together in one great anxiety that cultural duties (of my own & my dear genius-friends) will be neglected until it is too late.’ In 1927 he informed his bride-to-be that he had bequeathed nothing to her or to his family; everything would go to a Grainger Museum, publishing his musical and literary works and holding Grainger concerts: ‘All that deals with the time after my death enthralls me. I am hungry for fame-after-death.’ In 1953 Grainger claimed that he had been ‘collecting things characteristic of creative musical genius […] for the last 55 years’ and that he was anxious to complete the Museum while

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117 Rose was actually one of nine children. ‘Rose Grainger’, Museum Legend.
121 Grainger to Ström, 9 June 1927.
122 Grainger to Richard Fowler, 12 June 1953.
he was still alive, intending to give up all concerts to this end. Grainger wanted to leave his mark for posterity; in 1954, by which time his health was clearly deteriorating, he wrote: ‘It makes one realize that old age is a gradual rotting to bits. Nevertheless I still feel I will live for ever & my fury to leave my mark on the future was never keener.’

The habit of collecting

Collecting and preserving were significant in giving meaning to Grainger’s life and to his sense of personal and artistic identity. To Grainger, ‘art & things are unsunderly twined together.’ In this respect he was not unique, although he sat towards the extreme of the collecting scale. His propensity to form a collection needs to be placed in the context of the substantial literature examining collectors, their practices and motives.

While much of the earlier literature focusses on children or on collecting art or natural history, a more recent focus has been on individual collectors in a context of material culture and museum studies, a movement arguably led by Susan Pearce, presently the most active author and editor in this area. This approach is applied both historically and to present-day collecting, including a series of anthologies of first-hand accounts by collectors, which demonstrate the long European history of collecting. Studies of the phase described by Pearce as ‘early modern’ focus on the Renaissance and Baroque cabinets of curiosities, while Pearce’s ‘classic modern’ period—which encompasses Grainger’s own time—includes the ‘museum age’ and that period of prodigious material production

123 Grainger to Richard Fowler, 25 September 1953.
128 Pearce & others (eds), Collector’s voice 1–4.
129 Belk suggests that the earliest known collection might be an 80,000-year-old collection of pebbles found in a French cave. Belk, Consumer society, p.2. See also Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, pp.90–91; Alexandra Bounia, The nature of classical collecting: collectors and collections, 100 BCE–100 CE (Ashgate, 2004); Allison K. Thomason, Luxury and legitimation: royal collecting in ancient Mesopotamia (Ashgate, 2004).
and consumption, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\(^{131}\) Although Pearce’s ‘post-modern’ collecting phase—from the mid-twentieth century to the present\(^ {132}\)—largely post-dates Grainger’s Museum project, her insights into the motivations behind much contemporary collecting do, I assert, apply to earlier collectors such as Grainger.\(^ {113}\)

Earlier literature on collecting emphasised questions of an individual’s visual aesthetic ‘taste’,\(^ {114}\) but from the 1980s the broader social setting of personal collecting was more systematically examined.\(^ {115}\) Martin’s, Belk’s and Pearce’s work reflects this broadening by discussing collectors of all types of material, particularly contemporary collecting of popular ephemera and mass-produced instant collectibles, rather than the traditionally acknowledged fine arts, books and other high-status objects. As Belk points out, it is natural for collectors in a consumer culture to collect mass-produced goods and other consumer items,\(^ {116}\) and although the history (at least in Britain) of such popular collecting extends back to the late nineteenth century,\(^ {117}\) museums have been slow to acquire such material. Grainger, who made no distinction in his collecting between objects traditionally considered ‘high’ art (such as an easel painting or an orchestral score) and the ‘low’ or popular (such as underclothes, paperback ‘lust-branch’ novels or girlie magazines), was therefore perhaps ahead of his time, not in acquiring items from the second category but in combining them with acknowledged ‘art’ and preserving this synthesis in a ‘serious’

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\(^{131}\) Texts include Briggs; Rémy G. Saisselin, *Bricabracomania: the bourgeois and the bibelot* (Thames & Hudson, 1985).

\(^{132}\) Pearce, *Museums, objects and collections*, p. 90.

\(^{113}\) Although much contemporary collecting documented by Pearce is of mass-produced consumer items, which Grainger did not acquire in series (although he was happy to incorporate examples into his collection if there was a thematic relationship), the psychological motivations of today’s collectors are, I believe, relevant to Grainger.

\(^{114}\) See Russell Lynes, *The tastemakers* (1955, reprinted Dover 1980); Aline Saarinen, *The proud possessors* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1958); Maurice Rheims, *Art on the market* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1959); Niels von Holst, *Creators, collectors and connoisseurs* (Thames & Hudson, 1967); Frank Herrmann (ed.), *The English as collectors* (Chatto & Windus, 1972); Francis Henry Taylor, *The taste of angels* (Little, Brown & Co., 1948). This last work also discusses the economic and political conditions which have encouraged art collecting throughout history, while Gerald Reitlinger, *The economics of taste* (Barrie & Rockliff, 1961) examines prices of artworks as ‘a yardstick of taste’ (p. xi). Many of these volumes, all concerned predominantly with collecting, sculpture and the decorative arts (and occasionally, rare books and manuscripts) emphasise monetary value.

\(^{115}\) Bounia, pp. 4–5.

\(^{116}\) Belk, *Consumer society*, pp. 139, 156.

museum, particularly in a university setting. Grainger in his musical life also engaged with both popular and more esoteric forms, and as Pear points out, the wide range of object types in Grainger’s collection reflected his ideal of the non-specialist ‘all-round-man’. Grainger was not party to the trend of specialisation observable among collectors since the eighteenth century. He felt that all artefact types were equally important in defining him as a man and as a composer. Belk’s observation that European collecting and consumer culture arose at the same time as terms such as ‘self-regard’ and ‘self-consciousness’, along with the increase in autobiographies, family- and self-portraits, increased popularity of mirrors and other manifestation of the ‘historic emergence of the self’ is relevant to Grainger’s collection, which served primarily as an autobiography and memorial for posterity.

Belk’s consumer-focussed research is also relevant to Grainger. While Belk’s definition of collecting as a highly involving, passionate type of consuming is, I think, too narrow for Grainger because it only touches on his more accumulative and creative approach, matters such as the growth of collecting alongside the emergence of consumer culture, the wide popularity of collecting through history, and in particular the use of the collection in personal identity-formation, all relate to Grainger the collector and museum-maker. The competitiveness frequently observed among collectors, and the seriality of much collecting, do not apply to Grainger.

Grainger’s perception of continuity between past, present and future, his disinclination to rank old objects over new or new over old, and his enthusiasm for the creative manifestations of many different places and historical periods, are all reflected in his Museum collection and the way he documented it. Grainger treasured many things which happened to be old, but not simply because they were old. He treasured them for their associations and their signification of the past for the present and the future. The emotions

139 Belk, ‘Collectors’, p.323.
140 Ibid., p.91.
142 Belk, Consumer society, pp.65, 66.
they excited in him were immediate and strong. Many of his object labels or descriptions recount past incidents with which the object was associated, but at the same time are usually connected with something recent or even yet to eventuate: a model boat from childhood influenced his futuristic Free Music which occupied him in his final years; relics or mementoes of his mother—although tinged with sadness and nostalgia—acted upon Grainger until his own death. These motivations are similar to those documented by another collector who lived close to Grainger’s own time. In his much-cited personal account, Walter Benjamin characterised his book collecting as a ‘passion’, associated with generating a sense of renewal and rebirth. Grainger lacks Benjamin’s covetousness, probably because the core of Grainger’s collection was not acquired but self-generated. But in this latter sense Grainger bears witness to Benjamin’s observation that ‘Of all the ways of acquiring books, writing them oneself is regarded as the most praiseworthy method.’ Grainger ‘wrote’, both in a literal and metaphorical sense, much of his own collection.

Benjamin’s sub-collection of children’s books began with his mother’s childhood scrap books. He elaborated on inter-generational collecting: ‘Inheritance is the soundest way of acquiring a collection. For a collector’s attitude toward his possessions stems from an owner’s feeling of responsibility toward his property. Thus it is, in the highest sense, the attitude of an heir, and the most distinguished trait of a collection will always be its transmissibility.’ Grainger was both the heir of his parents’ collecting, which I discuss further below, but more significantly, in building his Museum he was making possible the transmission of his collection to future generations.

An early twentieth-century literature on childhood collecting observes the frequency of this usually solitary past-time, occurring at particular ages, and differences between boys’ and girls’ collections. More recently, Danet & Katriel characterise both childhood and adult

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145 Ibid., p. 61.
146 Ibid., p. 66.
147 Ibid.
149 For a bibliography of this earlier literature on children’s collecting, see Danet & Katriel.
collecting as a striving for closure, completion or perfection.\footnote{Ibid., p.222.} Muensterberger asserts that the collecting passion usually originates in the formative years.\footnote{Muensterberger, p.13.} Baekeland observes that both boys and girls collect and that most adult collectors collected as children.\footnote{Frederick Baekeland, ‘Psychological aspects of art collecting’, Psychiatry (vol.44, 1988) pp.45–59, reprinted in Pearce (ed.), Interpreting objects and collections, pp.207–208.} Baudrillard also claims that most children collect, and asserts that for the child, collecting represents the most rudimentary way to exercise control over the outer world: by laying things out, grouping them, and handling them.\footnote{Baudrillard, p.9.} Benjamin touches on collecting as one of the child’s many ways of achieving ‘renewal of existence’.\footnote{Benjamin, ‘Unpacking my library’, p.61.} Creating a domestic ‘museum’ was considered a worthwhile task for the late-Victorian child.\footnote{Briggs, p.47.} Encouraging collecting among English children in the 1880s, reminisces about her family’s childhood collections, making clear distinctions between boys’ and girls’ collections. She concludes her book as follows:

> Every house ought to possess a “Museum”, even if it is only one shelf in a small cupboard. Here, carefully dated and named, should be placed the pretty shells you gather on the sea-shore, the old fossils you find in the rocks, the skeleton leaves you pick up from under the hedges, the strange orchids you can find on the downs. / […] many a happy memory will the museum bring back to you years hence, when you and your brothers and sisters, now a happy, even if at times a quarrelsome little party at home, will be scattered far over the wide world in homes of your own. For, after all, the greatest delight which a collection of any kind can afford is the memory of the days in which it was formed.\footnote{C.A. Montresor, Some hobby horses and how to ride them (W.H. Allen & Co., 1888) pp.192–193.}

Collecting continued to be encouraged among children in the twentieth century, including by organisations such as the boy scouts and girl guides.\footnote{Belk, Consumer society, p.55; Jay Mechling, ‘The collecting self and American youth movements’, in Bronner (ed.) pp.255–285.} The childhood collecting urge is thought to carry into adult collecting. Stewart for example describes adults’ collecting of ‘the miniature’ such as dolls houses and models as ‘linked to nostalgic versions of childhood and history, present[ing] a diminutive, and thereby manipulatable, version of experience
McIntosh & Schmeichel comment that the popularity of comic books, gum cards and the like demonstrates that much adult collecting serves as a link to the collector’s childhood. Martin sees this type of collection as ‘emblematic of a happier or more certain time, [acting] as psychological protection from the uncertainties of the future.”

Aged 71, Grainger wrote that from age fifteen or sixteen he had collected manuscripts, letters, photographs, clothes and other objects shedding light upon the personalities and working methods of the most gifted men of his racial group. This recollection suggests that he was not a childhood collector; he only considers himself to have started collecting cultural material in adolescence. Much of Grainger’s childhood material was preserved, but by his mother Rose. Arguably Grainger did not need to collect as a child; this was being done for him, in a form determined by the dominant force in his life. One of his own early preservation efforts which he did recall, the Yachtsman magazines which I discuss further below, was in fact a rare cause of friction between Grainger and his mother. And for a short period in Australia he collected feathers, Rose angering him by throwing the collection out when infested by moths.

For collectors who, like Grainger, pursue an artistic career there may be a direct link between their collecting and their creative work. Cardinal discusses the graphic designer and collage-maker Kurt Schwitters who incorporated rubbish and ephemera collected on the streets into his artworks as a way of dealing with the pointless tragedy of the First World War, while Sir John Soane’s collection of classical architectural, archaeological and sculptural material related closely to his own illustrious architectural practice. Overlapping with Grainger’s late years, Andy Warhol collected art and artefacts

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159 Stewart, p.69.
162 Grainger to Percy Spender, 5 February 1953. See also ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
165 Elsner, pp.155–176.
intentionally through purchase, as well as accumulating (and boxing up as hundreds of ‘time capsules’ which he then placed into cold storage) the vast quantity of material generated by his daily life.\[166\] Both of Warhol’s collecting modes were relevant to his art practice, being concerned with contemporary consumerism and mass production.\[167\]

Benjamin extended his book collecting—his ‘central passion’—to collecting quotations, which became source material for some of his writings.\[168\] Similarly, Grainger’s collected folk-songs became source material for much of his musical output.

Authors who have examined collecting from a predominantly psychological perspective include Baudrillard, Baekeland, Muensterberger, Formanek\[169\] and McIntosh & Schmeichel.\[170\] I consider here principally those motivations relevant to Grainger. Formanek summarises earlier psychoanalytical approaches, finding little empirical evidence for the Freudian notion that collecting relates to the anal stage of development.\[171\] Rather, she considers collecting as arising from the transfer in adulthood of the need for personal relationships onto relationships with abstractions: one’s country, language, religion, profession, or collection.\[172\] The national and racial agenda of his Museum suggests that this motivation applies to Grainger. As explained by Formanek, this ‘relational-model’ approach also posits collected items as representing close relationships to other people.\[173\]

Clearly this is relevant to Grainger’s Museum as embodying his relationship with his mother, and also with his composer-friends.

Muensterberger concludes that collecting is essentially a ‘defensive move’ aiming to turn ‘disillusionment and helplessness into an animated, purposeful venture’; that the trigger to collect is often an ‘underlying [childhood] experience of hurt or unsafety’ in which an

\[166\] [Amy Barclay], *Andy Warhol’s time capsules* (National Gallery of Victoria, 2005).
\[170\] McIntosh & Schmeichel, pp.85–97.
\[171\] Formanek, pp.327–328, 334.
object ‘came to the rescue’. There is a long history of characterising collectors as unhealthily obsessed or otherwise unbalanced, but Pearce points out that most modern approaches reject this tradition, although Stewart suggests that the secrecy of some modern collectors indicates fetishization of the collection. Guilt and secretiveness are sometimes associated with collecting, although Pearce suggests this is rare. Edgar examines four collector stereotypes in popular culture: philanderer; social inadequate; collector who is orderly to the point of predictability; and obsessive. I argue that none of these fits Grainger. McIntosh & Schmeichel observe that although superficially inexplicable, collecting is a common human social behaviour. While the lives of some of the collectors documented by Muensterberger were dominated to a damaging degree by their collecting, in reality these types are the exceptions; the very frequency, long history, and wide social acceptance of collecting in western society, coupled with humans’ fundamental, apparently almost universal, reliance on objects for identity formation and psychological stability, suggest that collecting is, by definition, normal, despite some commonly-held negative perceptions of the whole enterprise.

Grainger, although an unusually energetic and persistent collector (mostly in the sense of creator, accumulator and retriever of items), led an active and productive life, pursued many interests, generously supported various relatives and musicians, and enjoyed a large circle of social and professional contacts and a mostly happy marriage. Though substantial,
the time and money he spent on his Museum were within his means, and although the practicalities of the project, the extensive sorting and filing required, and his lack of expertise caused him many frustrations and disappointments, collecting in itself was not a cause of profound anxiety or distress. Similarly, collectors such as Benjamin usually write about their own collecting in a positive, enthusiastic tone, belying any suggestion that collecting is somehow pathological. While rare individual collectors might become anti-social, most contemporary collectors create formal or informal social networks around their collecting. Grainger did not join collectors’ societies—there would be no society fitting his broad-ranging yet highly personal mode of collecting—but his solicitations to friends, colleagues and relatives of material for the Museum were done largely through his social correspondence, and he gave progress reports on his Museum to those closest to him, including through his regular ‘round letters to kith and kin’.

I cannot identify any specific traumatic childhood incident as posited by Muensterberger that may have triggered Grainger’s collecting, although later Rose’s death gave it a memorial purpose. I assert that the motivations for collecting identified by authors such as Pearce, Belk, Martin, and McIntosh & Schmeichel—being linked to broader social phenomena—apply to Grainger more than the neurotic response to a specific early trauma posited by psychoanalysts such as Muensterberger. Pearce suggests that reasons for contemporary collecting include social change; increase of personal insecurity; ownership of property replaced by debt; stress on family values; institutions facing a crisis of confidence; the rise of alternative systems such as new age therapies and sects; and the changing role of the media. Martin posits similar motivations, particularly during the huge social disruptions of the Thatcher/Reagan years of the 1980s. Although almost a century earlier, Grainger would have felt similar insecurities, particularly the constant financial pressure from a young age to support himself, his invalid parents and various members of his extended family. He had a stressful family situation caused initially by his father’s alcoholism, violence and unfaithfulness, his mother’s subsequent anger, and their

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184 See for example numerous mentions of museum work in Grainger’s letters to Elsie Bristow, 1955–1956.
marital separation. The family moved house frequently during Percy’s childhood due to John Grainger’s fluctuating fortunes, then Rose and Percy lived in rented accommodation in Frankfurt and London, in several New York hotels after a hasty relocation in 1914 from England and the uncertainties of impending war, until Grainger enlisted in 1917. They had no domestic security or stability until they purchased the White Plains house in 1921. Pearce contrasts differences between collections and real life, of which several apply to Grainger’s situation: collections offer escapism as opposed to the entrapment of real life; fantasy opposed to fact; certainties instead of doubts; a stable platform rather than shifting sands; a controllable environment rather than being controlled by environment; permanence over transience.\footnote{ Pearce, \textit{Collecting in contemporary practice}, p.16.}

McIntosh & Schmeichel argue that ‘collectors are drawn to collecting as a means of bolstering the self by setting up goals that are tangible and attainable and provide the collector with concrete feedback of progress.’\footnote{ McIntosh & Schmeichel, p.87.} Grainger’s goals were not the typical collectors’ ones such as completing a set (a prospect both desired and feared by collectors) or competitively acquiring a coveted object. An autobiographical collection such as Grainger’s can never be completed; as the subject’s life continues new collectables are created. Grainger’s goal could be described as bolstering the self in the long term, that is, after his death by creating an autobiographical legacy which he hoped would position him in the eyes of future generations as Australia’s first great composer. This also of course fits the common collecting motivation of achieving immortality, observed by Pearce and others. ‘Monuments, children or an impressive collection can all ward off the awareness of mortality.’\footnote{ McIntosh & Schmeichel, p.87.} Similarly, Baudrillard argues that collecting helps us cope with time’s passing:

\begin{quote}
The setting up of a collection itself displaces real time. Doubtless this is the fundamental project of all collecting—to translate real time into the dimensions of a system. [...] collecting simply abolishes time. [...] It is this irreversibility (of time signalled in the
\end{quote}

\footnote{ Pearce, \textit{Museums, objects and collections}, pp.63–66; Douglas Rigby & Elizabeth Rigby, \textit{Lock, stock and barrel: the story of collecting} (Lippincott, 1944) pp.45–58; Baekeland, p.208.}

\footnote{ McIntosh & Schmeichel, p.87.}
moment of our birth), this relentless passage from birth to death, that objects help us to resolve.\textsuperscript{193}

This motivation, also observed by Baekeland,\textsuperscript{194} applies to Grainger, who stated in 1933 why he thought museums were important: ‘The whole value of the museum idea is its promise of something lasting, un-changing, reliable—something that has the permanence of art—something that lacks the drifting uncertainty of modishness.’\textsuperscript{195} Grainger’s musical creativity combined with collecting in fulfilling his yearning for immortality. At the age of only twenty-seven he wrote: ‘My own compositions I undertake largely as a kind of life insurance against my coming death. Let there be no records wanting, I say, of any folk, language, song, history, not even of myself.’\textsuperscript{196} Collectors are usually unwilling to accept that their collection might end when their own life ends.\textsuperscript{197} Most older collectors want to bequeath their collection to another person,\textsuperscript{198} and this wish for immortality through the collection has resulted in many great bequests to public museums.\textsuperscript{199}

The quest for immortality was one of the strongest factors in Grainger’s Museum and preserving urge. This is supported by his efforts to ensure that his collection would survive crises such as war. For example in 1918, upon learning that his American Army division might be sent to France, he made Duo-Art reproducing piano roll recordings of various compositions, to ensure that evidence of his musical greatness would survive him.\textsuperscript{200} Similarly, before the United States entered the Second World War, Grainger made and distributed multiple copies of much of his correspondence and important musical items, and had his folksong recordings duplicated by the Library of Congress.\textsuperscript{201} He and Ella moved their residence, and key elements of the collection (such as towel clothes, his letters

\textsuperscript{193} Baudrillard, p.16.
\textsuperscript{194} Baekeland, p.217.
\textsuperscript{196} Grainger to Karen Holten, 2 May 1909, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.290.
\textsuperscript{197} McIntosh & Schmeichel, p.94.
\textsuperscript{198} Pearce, Collecting in contemporary practice, p.157; Belk, ‘Possessions’, p.148.
\textsuperscript{199} Rheims, pp.43–45; Baekeland, p.217; Malraux characterised the private collection as ‘the antechamber of the museum’. André Malraux, Museum without walls (Secker & Warburg, 1967) p.232.
\textsuperscript{200} Grainger, Two musical relics of my mother (Schirmer, 1924) program note.
\textsuperscript{201} Percy Grainger ‘Round letter’, 1 September 1940; Grainger to Richard Fowler, 6 October 1940.
to Karen Holten, manuscripts, and locks of Rose’s hair) away from the vulnerable east coast to Missouri for the duration. He placed particularly prized objects in a bank safe, numerous others (correspondence, scores, paintings, photographs, gramophone records, articles) in the Grainger Museum with duplicates in a Seattle bank. Grainger instructed Fowler to move the most important objects in the Museum to an inland location considered safe from air raids. Grainger seemed concerned more about the collection than about his or Ella’s personal safety; although they moved house, he toured America energetically throughout the war.

Grainger had a long-standing anxiety about his collection being destroyed by fire—the reason for his decision to have no electricity installed in the Museum. He built two fireproof strong-rooms in the basement of his White Plains house. He sought a chemical drench to fire-proof his Museum showcases. His concern has been made much of because it seems overly nervous today, but was perhaps not so odd for the time. In 1924 for example a university museum in Indiana was destroyed by fire, and in 1925 the American Institute of Architects and the journal Architectural forum held a competition for design of fireproof homes. Hotel and restaurant letterheads would sometimes boast of ‘fireproof’ facilities.

Of Pearce’s three collecting modes: souvenirs, fetish objects and systematics, I believe Grainger’s was primarily the first (although he did not use that word), which Pearce

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204 Grainger, ‘List of items lodged in security safe deposit box (no. 2) in Springfield, Missouri’; Grainger, lists of sendings 1940–1944; Grainger to Robert Atkinson, 5 August 1940.
206 Grainger to Richard Fowler, 22 December 1944.
209 American Institute of Architects, Seventy-two designs for fireproof homes: from a national competition among architects, draftsmen and architectural students (United States Gypsum Co., 1925).
210 For example letterhead of Hotel Ojibway, Michigan, used by Grainger to Clara Aldridge, 27 March 1939.
211 Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, pp.68–69.
describes as: ‘objects which take their collection unity only from their association with either a single person and his or her life history, or a group of people […] souvenirs are moving and significant to each of us as individuals.’ Souvenirs are called by different authors ‘numinous objects’, ‘association objects’, ‘memorabilia’, ‘icons’ or ‘auratic objects’. The common factor is a real or imagined association with a person, event or place. Such an object has psychological rather than material significance, embodying an association sufficient to merit preservation. These are not collected as documents or for their aesthetic qualities, but as a bridge between past or present, as evidence of the past, or as a talisman of continuity. The souvenir ‘does not illustrate history, it embodies it, allowing access to some essential quality of a historical person or bygone event, and through its own perdurance transcending the passage of time itself.’ This embodyment or physicality is crucial to the relic’s meaning; its effects are enhanced by touch, so absolute originality of material is crucial. As in a religious relic, a replica or substitute will not do. A religious relic is ‘said to have been in contact with a character from sacred history, and whenever possible was an actual part of his body. […] this object retained all the grace with which the saint had been invested during his lifetime’. Grainger understood the need for authenticity, and the significance of apparently trivial matter, recalling in 1951: ‘When I was in Frankfort I heard that someone had preserved in a bottle the water in which Bismarck had washed his hands after signing the Treaty of Frankfort & I saw nothing strange in such an act of preservation.’

Relics, unless associated with a particularly distinguished personality, are usually experienced by others as ‘boring and embarrassing’. ‘No one is interested in other people’s

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216 Grainger to Cyril Scott, 10 & 11 December 1951, in Gillies & Pear (eds) p.255.
Chapter Two: Death and memory in the Grainger Museum

souvenirs. Grainger however was convinced that future generations would be keenly interested in his souvenirs, believing that even such intimate items shed light on his creative development. Museum professionals are challenged by numinous objects from our own culture, because they do not conform with our traditional model of historical objectivity, but embarrassingly reveal museums' lack of objective measure of historical significance. Numinous objects often have no intrinsic aesthetic significance and are therefore not considered 'museum quality.' Grainger however had no problem with acquiring and displaying such material; indeed he felt an obligation to do so. His earlier dabbling in anthropology through folk-song collecting perhaps made this seem a natural progression.

Collecting for some serves a sacred role (converting mundane objects into something extraordinary or capable of generating reverence), thus epitomizing the shift of sacredness in modern times from religion to science to consumption. Grainger was probably familiar with Christian relics from visiting churches and cathedrals as sites of historical interest, and possibly from the 1900 Paris Exposition, in which many reliquaries in the forms of human body parts were displayed. While many numinous objects are religious or spiritual in nature, others are personal or intimate. Grainger did not shy away from including in his collection (although not in his displays) such intimate items as blood-stained underclothing following flagellation, or the remains of a humble bar of soap, stored in an envelope which he labelled 'Mors Sœhe' (Mother’s soap). Many museum relics embody memories of pain and loss and can provide a focus for the grief and guilt of survivors of war or disasters.

217 Pearce, ‘Collecting reconsidered’, pp.139–141.
218 Maines & Glynn, pp.16–17 & 21.
219 Ibid., p.18. For examples of some recent artists who have turned this hierarchy on its head, see Barton Lidice Beneš, Curiosa: celebrity relics, historical fossils, & other metamorphic rubbish (Harry N. Abrams Inc., 2002); Jean-Hubert Martin, “The “Musée sentimental” of Daniel Spoerri”, in Lynne Cooke & Peter Wollen (eds), Visual display: culture beyond appearances (Bay Press, 1995) pp.55–68; Mauriès, Cabinets of curiosities, pp.220–252.
222 Grainger, uncatalogued envelope with soap.
223 Maines & Glynn, p.10.
Numinous objects are simultaneously both past and present, but they are also mute, unable to stand alone without interpretation; their numen will only survive as long as there is someone who knows their associations. Grainger understood this and meticulously recorded the significance of artefacts. While his archival collection and musical scores do contain material usable without additional interpretive documentation, with his artefacts and ephemera, Grainger had to provide further information. Many items in Grainger’s collection which might be dismissed as trivial ephemera have been transformed, through the process of Grainger’s identification, collection, preservation and interpretation, into relics. Grainger particularly treasured Edvard Grieg’s pocket watch, given to him by Grieg’s widow Nina accompanied by her note: ‘Take it, keep it, and never forget him’. Grieg’s fame as a composer meant that the numinous significance of this item was more widely appreciated than many of Grainger’s possessions, and people would ask to see it. Many collectors like to bask in the reflected glory of an object’s association with its famous maker or former owner, and this ‘magical connection’ imparts the object with a sense of sacredness. Grainger often used the term relic to refer to Grieg’s watch and similar numinous objects, such as his childhood piano and the paintings of A.E. Aldis. As Pearce points out, the common meaning of ‘relic’ is something left behind, with implications of lifeless debris, but in an earlier age it signified ‘the living dead at work amongst us, a voice from a past not left behind but entering into present life.’ This is clearly the sense in which Grainger used this emotive word. For example, four printed copies of Grainger’s Marching tune were transformed into ‘relics’ by the presence of Rose’s inscriptions: ‘with R.G.’s writing on each copy, “sing whatever part suits your voice” (relic of chorus meetings at 31a Kings Road)’. Two years after Rose’s death, Grainger published two folksong arrangements as Two musical relics of my mother arranged for two pianos, suggesting Percy

225 Maines & Glynn, p. 10.
226 Reg. no. 01.0209.
228 McIntosh & Schmeichel, p. 92; Belk, Consumer society, p. 96.
229 Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, p. 197.
230 Grainger, ‘Sendings to Grainger Museum, Melbourne University, 1936’, p. 5.
and Rose performing together, which was indeed the case with the Duo-art piano roll release.231

Grainger was perhaps justifying his nostalgic souvenir collecting by overlaying it with a veneer of 'scientific' meaning. In 1936 Grainger described a model yacht bought c.1894–95 at Albert Park Lagoon which 'I suppose has seemed perfection to me all my life'; he mentioned Rose throwing away his Yachtsman magazines: ‘for why should ANYONE be so poor as not to be able to harbour space for the few things they like best of all?’ 232 Fifteen years later, in another rare instance of criticising his mother, Grainger wrote:

In my mid-London period mother suddenly got rid of several volumes of “The Yachtsman” that I had treasured from my around-10-year-old days & had taken with us everywhere. The reason given was “lack of space”. But the “Yachtsman” volumes only took up one quarter of a suitcase & only weighed a pound or so, whereas my father’s bound volumes of Italian operas, which were much less interesting to me & also much bulkier & heavier, were never thrown away & are now in the museum.233

Although the magazines were documents, Grainger was not interested in their textual or pictorial content; he was treating them as relics. Grainger’s fond nostalgia for childhood days spent messing about with boats were in fact a rare occurrence, but the ‘memory’ of them had a musical significance, the sounds of lapping water influencing his ‘Free music’:

From 3 to 12 the rapturousness of my life centred round the Albert Park Lagoon in Melbourne & it was there that the lapping of water along the side of boats started the observations that eventually led to “Free Music”. But I was able to get to the Albert Park but seldom […] So “The Yachtsman” volumes was a “surragat” for one of the main impulses of my emotional & artistic life […] my childhood volumes of “The Yachtsman” can be considered as particularly valuable & desirable for my museum without such an opinion being the result of hoarding or a special fondness for things old. Such an opinion seems to me to be the normal reaction of a cosmopolitanly-trained & historically-minded esthete in opposition to the wild & wicked destructiveness of Anglosaxon life.234

This passage is significant in showing how Grainger transformed a physical object (in this example the Yachtsman magazines) into a representation, symbol or surrogate for an abstract concept, ideal or desire (Grainger’s idealized childhood, the sounds of nature, and

231 Grainger, Two musical relics of my mother, for two pianos (Schirmer, 1924), program note, n.p.; Duo-art roll nos. 6760-4 (Aeolian, recorded 1918, released 1924).

232 Ibid., p.7. See also ‘Aldridge-Grainger-Ström saga’, p.167.

233 Grainger to Scott, 10 & 11 December 1951, pp.254–255.

234 Ibid., p.255.
the ideal of creating a musical tool which would communicate directly the intention of the composer without the instrumentalist’s intervention). Similarly an object could represent a person. In unpacking some clothes together, Rose had said to Percy, “Which do you care most for, this red jersey [given to him by his former Australian fiancée Margot Harrison] or Karen’s national costume [worn by his subsequent Danish sweetheart Karen Holten]?” and she was so happy when I answered “How can you ask?” and told her how I was bound up with the national costume more deeply.”

Grainger felt strongly attached to many such objects, which he made great efforts to preserve physically. Because their significance to him was largely an abstract or spiritual one, the preservation of the original fabric was paramount. By contrast, with documents such as scores and letters, Grainger was more concerned with preserving content than fabric, therefore distributing copies of documents between multiple locations. In 1955 he told Cyril Scott he was copying Scott’s work for the Museum: ‘This copy is good enough for my museum (where PRESERVATION and not appearance is the main thing).’ Above all, Grainger wanted to ensure that his legacy would survive *permanently*. He was an enthusiast for photocopying, and had an early copying machine installed in his basement at White Plains for this purpose. He had used a hektograph method as far back as 1908, to copy and distribute folk-songs he had collected. In regard to his own compositions, although his habit of preserving many drafts and versions of the one work, and distributing copies to different repositories, has caused confusion for scholars (and Ella continued to distribute material after Grainger’s death), it did in some cases ensure the preservation of copies of scores of which the originals appear to have been lost, the very contingency for which Grainger planned. In a diatribe against the evils of specialisation, he commented:

> I have taken upon myself the gathering and compiling, the preservation and handing down to other generations, the folk-songs of various countries and races. But I can

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235 Grainger to Kellermann, 8 May 1926.
236 Grainger to Cyril Scott, 24 February 1955.
find nothing on which to notate them permanently. I try to buy ink that will stand the erasure of Time. No one knows how long this or that ink will remain distinct. I visit one manufacturer of paper after another—not one can assure me that his paper will not of itself become dust one hundred years from now.  

**Collecting families**

Collecting often runs in families. Grainger’s parents were both collectors. Grainger acknowledged in a biographical Legend his father’s collecting habit—which served both a practical purpose in relation to his architectural work but also sprang from his wider aesthetic inclinations: John H. Grainger ‘was on fire for beauty everywhere & all his life he collected photos of lovely buildings, pictures, statues, bridges & pasted them into albums himself adding information about the origin & history of the works of art depicted. This was known as “Graingerising”. (Many of these “Graingerised” albums are in this museum.)’ This was probably a pun on ‘Grangerising’ or ‘extra-illustration’ of books, named after James Granger, whose 1769 *Biographical history of England* was famously transformed into thirty-six volumes through this practice allied to scrapbook-making, popular between the 1790s and 1860s, of gluing related documents, prints, watercolours, portraits and other material into the pages of a published book. Percy described one of his father’s albums or ‘hoard-books’ as ‘father’s most wonderful book, & the one that sure enough had the most to say (of all his things) in shaping my life & tastes’.  

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240 Grainger, quoted in Deborah Beirne, ‘Percy Grainger’s ideas on love and life’, *Success: the human magazine* (January 1926), reprinted as ‘Percy Grainger meets Deborah Beirne in Paris’, *Grainger journal* (vol.6, no.2, August 1984) p.24. See also Grainger to Daniel Gregory Mason, 24 January 1947, in Gillies & Pear (eds), *All-round man*, pp.207–208, regarding the permanence or otherwise of different types of copies and the need to ‘feel secure against the future’.

241 Muensterberger, p.46; Rheims, pp.22–23.


244 ‘Aldridge-Grainger-Ström saga’, p.139.
John Grainger even compiled detailed scrapbooks as gifts. The albums themselves are difficult to date; as he may have accumulated material over many years before compiling, or possibly pasted in material gradually. But they include material ranging over many years and their assembly represents hundreds of hours of work. This scrapbook habit, which Percy learned as a child and maintained throughout his life (for example, compiling salacious press cuttings about mothers whipping their disobedient teenage daughters), was also an acknowledged family trait on the Aldridge side. Percy’s intellectually disabled uncle, Frank Aldridge (Rose’s youngest brother, of whom Percy was very fond and with whom he maintained a regular correspondence), kept a diary and scrapbook which Percy regarded as ‘family relics’. As far back as 1904 Grainger encouraged Frank in his scrapbook keeping, sending him concert programs and other material and jokingly calling him ‘the family historian & keeper of the Royal Rolls’. He commented, ‘Uncle Frank is very like me in many ways, a historian, a hoarder-up’.

In creating scrapbooks Grainger’s relations were engaging in a social practice common, and encouraged, among adults and children in the late nineteenth century. It was one of a range of amateur practices involving collection, classification and domestic display. For example, Mrs Montresor promoted scrapbook keeping, recommending selectivity to the point of autobiography, collecting only ‘the places you have yourself visited, the celebrities in whom you really feel interested, the public ceremonies you have seen or wished to see, all these will furnish pictures which will have an interest for you during your whole life.’ Creating an orderly, categorised and indexed architectural scrapbook was encouraged as a

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245 John H. Grainger, scrapbooks: ‘Beauty Spots […] to AMQ from JHG’, Christmas 1898 (reg. no. 02.0570); ‘Auntie Jack 18.3.99’ (reg. no. 02.0569); ‘Architectural tit-bits’, 1898 (reg. no. 02.0567); ‘Sculpture, collected by JHG, Perth 1898, for Auntie Jack’ (reg. no. 02.0571). The recipient, ‘Auntie Jack’ (Anna Maria Quesnel) donated these to the Grainger Museum, probably in the 1930s.

246 For example, one of John Grainger’s architectural scrapbooks includes material spanning the period 1874–1900 (reg. no. 02.0532).


248 Frank Aldridge, Diary 1918–1919; Frank Aldridge, untitled scrapbook (reg. no. 02.0538).

249 Grainger, ‘Family relics such as; a copy of Uncle Frank’s Diary/ A family photo album’, swing tag.

250 See for example Grainger to Frank Aldridge, 9 January 1904, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.33.

251 Grainger to Frank Aldridge, 8 July 1927.

252 Grainger to Roger Quilter, 30 September 1924.

253 Montresor, pp.1–5.
way of learning about various building styles, but only English ones. Thus the habit of classifying and creating hierarchies was instilled alongside that of collecting, and all combined into an educational and nationalistic project on a small scale. Museums, by extension, were ‘institutional scrapbooks of nature and culture’.254

Rose too was a collector. She not only acquired decorative arts and other material which appealed to her aesthetically, but she retained Percy’s belongings from his babyhood onwards, many of which are preserved in the Museum. She treasured every early manifestation of her son’s ‘genius’ such as his childhood drawings and letters. Many mothers save the clippings from their baby’s first haircut, or their first pair of shoes. But these are usually kept privately, and thought to be of only family significance or interest. Rose saved and valued such ephemera generated or accumulated in the course of Percy’s daily life, and these could serve as a substitute for their owner. When she was away once Rose wrote to Percy of her home-sickness: ‘I shall never leave home again, without you, I think. I miss you so much more when I am away from all your books, compositions, clothes etc.’255 When Rose died Percy preserved such items not only for their relevance to his own life but also as part of Rose’s legacy.

As well as preserving and accumulating such material, Rose also sought out fine and applied artworks, such as Arts-and-Crafts metalwork, Meissen porcelain monkey orchestra figurines, Ottoman ceramics, Japonaiserie, textiles, and native American beadwork,256 suitable for domestic display. Percy encouraged and shared these enthusiasms, happily entering into the spirit of discovery of new styles encountered in their travels. As discussed in Chapter One, the characteristically cluttered late Victorian and Edwardian domestic interior was made possible by collecting and displaying such items of little if any practical use. Grainger’s wife Ella also appears to have been of a collecting turn of mind, although to a lesser degree than Rose or Percy. An artist herself, Ella acquired prints, paintings and ethnographic items, and accumulated ephemera, some now in the Museum. One anecdote

254 Griffiths, p.18.
255 Rose Grainger to Grainger, 30 September 1905.
256 Brian Allison, The accidental Wunderkammer: decorative arts and curiosities from the Grainger Collection (exhibition catalogue, Grainger Museum, 2002).
recalls Ella Grainger searching dustbins at Grand Central Station for scraps for her collages.257

**Men’s collecting, women’s collecting**

In late Victorian Britain, America and Australia, collecting was considered a respectable pursuit for middle-class men and women.258 While documents were the subject of history as an emerging professional academic discipline, indigenous and other artefacts and natural history specimens were gathered by curious amateurs. The colonial antiquarian typically displayed his or her collection in the house; some called these domestic collections ‘museums’. For men, collecting and its associated busy-work represented ‘a sort of muscular interior decoration, a manly domesticity’.259 Grainger, initially with his mother, was in this respect typical of his place, class and time; this contention is supported by the many ethnographic items now in the Museum which were originally given to Grainger by friends, students or relations, indicating that such collecting was an unexceptionable element of Grainger’s social milieu.

Although both men and women have long been collectors,260 the literature of collecting emphasises men’s collecting.261 This may reflect economic and political advantages that enabled men to indulge the collecting urge to a greater degree than women. It could be a symptom of men’s higher visibility in society generally, and the fact that most institutional collectors (art curators, natural scientists, anthropologists) have until recent decades been men. It may however reflect a bias in the perception of collecting. Griffiths observes that, although both male and female Australian settlers collected Aboriginal material, ‘men dominated the public conversations about collection.’262 Baekeland points out that women’s sometimes vast accumulations of clothes, shoes, china and the like are rarely considered

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258 Alison K. Brown, ‘Collecting material folklore: motivations and methods in the Owen and Hasluck collections’, Folklore (no.109, 1998) p.34; Griffiths, p.17.


260 Pearce, Museums, objects and collections, pp.60–63.


262 Griffiths, p.20.
collections even though they exceed any practical need. While Belk observes a preponderance of males among adult collectors, both historically and today, Pearce concludes that today, at least as many women as men collect. This apparent discrepancy might be explained by the observation that society continues to define ‘collection’ according to the male version. For example, women often do not call their accumulations a collection, even though they too:

support notions of personal identity and are as much extensions of the self as are the collections made by men. What they are not is closely defined, separated off from normal living, and embodying a vision or a philosophy which is itself distinct. [...] Men on the other hand, are serious and creative, acquiring in relation to an anticipated rationale.

After Rose’s death Percy absorbed her collection into his own. This is not surprising given their close relationship, and Grainger’s belief that his mother was his greatest artistic and cultural influence. Grainger’s collecting combined both male and female attributes according to Pearce’s schema. His domestic accumulation could be seen as ‘feminine’, whereas his Museum demonstrated a distinct vision and philosophy. Most family photograph collections, displayed on mantelpieces or pianos, are created by women. Grainger’s accumulation of family mementoes shares many characteristics of such collections. Grainger’s collecting only partly fits Pearce’s further description of adult male collecting:

a distinct, and important, even self-important, activity. It frequently happens in a specific place, usually one set aside. It involves set times, and settled practices. The paraphernalia which surrounds the collection—cabinets, records, books and catalogues—may well be as striking as the collection itself. The whole assemblage is obtrusive in every sense, and clearly, for the collector, this is a significant meaning.

Grainger’s collecting was not distinct, for it embraced every aspect of his life, although it was self-important. It did not happen in a specific place (although the Museum became a

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263 Baekeland, p. 207.
specific repository), or involve set times; it was inextricably entwined with daily activity. When he furnished his Museum Grainger gave thought to the Legends, showcases, mannequins and other display furniture, but the designs were inconsistent and workmanship and materials mediocre. His collection became obtrusive in the sense that creating the Museum dominated his later decades, influenced his relationships with friends and family, and soaked up much of his money.

Belk contrasts common characteristics of female/male collecting: tiny/gigantic; home/world; nature/machine; nurturing/extinguishing; art/science; playfulness/seriousness; decorative/functional; inconspicuous/conspicuous; animate/inanimate; consumption/production.270 Grainger expresses some of each. He collected items of all sizes; his collection concerned both domestic and worldly activity; in his free music he combined ideas of nature and machine but he seldom collected natural history specimens (the childhood feather collection mentioned earlier is an exception); he did however acquire representations of landscapes and seascapes in postcards and paintings; he tended more towards the nurturing (the nurturing effects of friends and family on him as composer) than towards the extinguishing (although his claimed love of death and violence might be interpreted as the latter); art was more important than science (although he believed that his collection was a form of scientific evidence); he took his collection very seriously; he was concerned with both the decorative and the functional (combined for example in the towel clothes); his collecting was highly conspicuous, indeed he advertised it widely; the animate/inanimate does not appear relevant, but his collection, concerned fundamentally with musical composition, relates more to production and work than to consumption. Grainger also meets Belk’s identified middle-class collecting demographic, which might result simply from the need for a certain level of income and leisure to support the collecting habit.271

Belk & Wallendorf analyse the gendered personality traits which appear to support collecting: masculine aggressiveness, competitiveness, mastery and seriousness; feminine

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270 Belk, Consumer society, pp.98–99.
271 Ibid., p.100.
care, creativity, nurturance and preservation. While Grainger’s aim to present himself as Australia’s first great composer could be described as competitive, he was neither competitive nor aggressive in his collecting. His ‘all-round man’ ideal led to a certain dilettantism which mitigated against his mastering many of the activities he took up at various times. About collecting and his Museum he was serious but also showed the ‘feminine’ traits of care, creativity, nurturance and preservation.

Collecting itself is sometimes described as a variety of sexual experience, or a hunt or conquest. In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Australian collecting circles, hunting was a ‘manly’ pursuit while gathering was ‘feminine’ because these were the gender roles thought (often incorrectly) to apply in ‘primitive’ hunter-gatherer societies. Male colonial collectors prized spears, shields, throwing sticks and other weapons of warfare and hunting, while artefacts associated with subsistence and camp maintenance, and therefore with women, were less highly prized. Grainger’s collecting did not generally follow this male pattern; because so much of his collection was generated by his everyday work—composing, concertising, reading, letter-writing, travelling—it has a more organic quality, accumulated rather than hunted. But he was no ‘mere accumulator’ who according to Baekeland ‘lacks self-definition, and [...] tends to defer decisions’ and for whom ‘The things he accumulates have no clear-cut symbolic significance.’ The organic growth of Grainger’s accumulation gives even his artefact collection an archival quality. A possible exception is the ethnographic material which he collected mostly during his London years. Some of Grainger’s earliest serious collecting was not of material culture, but collecting (i.e. documenting through notation and/or gramophone recording) British, and later Scandinavian, folk-music (examined in Chapter Four). These two ethnographic components of his collecting could be characterised as ‘hunting’ rather than ‘gathering.’

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275 Baekeland, p.206.
But the Grainger Museum contains no weapons;\textsuperscript{276} in this Grainger was not the typical colonial artefact collector,\textsuperscript{277} although he otherwise acquired typical ethnographic object types.

Regarding other object-types, Grainger collected some usually acquired by men, others by women. He collected postcards for example, which were particularly popular among women since about the 1880s;\textsuperscript{278} but he was not interested in postage-stamps, which since about 1860 had been a past-time principally for men and boys (although it had enjoyed an earlier fad among women).\textsuperscript{279} Most of the classes of material typically collected by boys or men, such as animal specimens, weapons, tobacco souvenirs and paraphernalia, hunting and fishing equipment, tools and repair equipment, clocks, coins, cars, books, sporting items, chess-men, antique furniture and musical instruments,\textsuperscript{280} were of little interest to Grainger (I discuss the incorporation of Rose’s antique furniture into Grainger’s Museum below), other than books and musical instruments and his model yachts from childhood. I would argue however that Grainger’s book ‘collection’—although eventually making its way to his Museum—was largely a working library. Grainger was more likely to read and use his books than a collector such as, for example, Walter Benjamin (although the provenance of books which had been given to him by close friends or family, or which he had bought at an important place, was significant to him, as evidenced by some of his retrospective inscriptions in particular volumes). Similarly, many of his musical instruments were originally his tools of trade, only later becoming collection items.

Some of the object types typically collected by girls and women—decorative objects, jewellery, souvenirs, autographs, valentines, dolls, household items, school objects, games, and animal replicas\textsuperscript{281}—were of interest to Grainger: South African and Native American beadwork for example, as I shall discuss further in Chapter Four, he sought and created in collaboration with his mother. The Meissen miniature monkey orchestra figurines were

\begin{flushleft}
276 Reeves, ‘Past-hoard-house’, p.86.
277 Belk & Wallendorf (p.242) observe that among latter-day collectors, guns are the domain of men.
281 \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushleft}
also originally Rose’s, as was most of the domestic decorative ware, textiles, metalwork, jewellery, ceramics and ornaments.\textsuperscript{282}

Thus, in applying both Pearce’s and Belk & Wallendorf’s analyses of the gendering of collecting, I conclude that Grainger incorporated both ‘male’ and ‘female’ characteristics, both in object-types and approach. I attribute this to his close identification with his mother, the unusually wide and eclectic range of his interests, and perhaps the nature of the education he received largely from Rose rather than at school, and which was, as Pear points out, the standard nineteenth-century female education.\textsuperscript{283} If collecting is indeed ‘identity work’\textsuperscript{284} then Grainger’s incorporation of Rose’s collection into his own after her death demonstrates their close relationship, the feminine nature of his upbringing and his strong identification with her, the very identification which, potentially ruptured by her suicide, initiated the Museum project in the first place. It is also noteworthy that many of the items that Grainger took out of circulation by placing in his Museum were originally acquired for practical purposes; in this sense they were not originally ‘collected’. The London Room furniture is a good example here. After Rose’s death, its meaning to Grainger changed, its relationship to and usefulness within everyday life was severed in his mind, and it could eventually, to use Pavoni’s term, be ‘museumized’.\textsuperscript{285}

**A museum in the house**

On the other hand, some material was acquired, by both Percy and Rose, as ‘collectibles’ from the start, rather than for practical use. There is evidence from Grainger’s London years that he was consciously assembling a collection of artefacts, featuring ‘exotic’ items bought during the leisure hours of his international concert touring or in some cases given to him by friends, presumably once they had been alerted to his interest in such things. In 1909 he gave the Sandbys a mat he had bought in New Zealand and wrote ‘I hope you will like it, as we are so fond of all this native work, of which I have the beginnings of a jolly


\textsuperscript{283} Pear, ‘Percy Grainger: educator-at-large’, p.263.

\textsuperscript{284} Belk & Wallendorf, p.240.

collection. His mother wrote to him in 1909: ‘Mr Leslie Whyte has given me—for you—an Australian Black’s Shield, & water baler […] You will have a fine collection of things’. By 1910 Percy was using the word ‘museum’ when referring to his collection. He wrote to his mother ‘I have been to Friedberg and asked about the klavier for my museum.’ In 1914 Rose wrote to Percy, ‘Your little museum won’t be quite ready on your return. You must be photographed in all your Greenland furs for your museum.’

Grainger’s idea of a ‘museum’ at this time was yet to develop into the concept that took shape after 1922. It was on the other hand consistent with the domestic location and ethnographic focus of much collecting in the late nineteenth century, and the childhood museum as described by Mrs Montresor. This close articulation between home and display also demonstrated ‘the museum effect’:

Like the picturesque, in which paintings set the standard for experience, museum exhibitions transform how people look at their own immediate environs. The museum effect works both ways. Not only do ordinary things become special when placed in museum settings, but also the museum experience itself becomes a model for experiencing life outside its walls.

Grainger in the 1930s discussed a painting by family friend and boarder A.E. Aldis, depicting the mantelpiece of one of Grainger’s childhood homes: ‘his Killalah fireside mantelpiece is full of the closeclasped ((intimate)) past-alive-keepth that gives life to my Past-Hoard ((museum)) eye-dreams ((visions)).’ The museum effect was manifested in the originally domestic basis of Grainger’s collection; in his travels abroad resulting in the collecting of items to bring home, later to be placed in the Museum; in his deliberate arrangement of such material for display; and in his self-exhibition and (re)creation as a museum artefact. In the 1950s Grainger planned Museum displays about composers’ homes. In 1951 he wrote to Cyril Scott’s wife thanking her for photographs of Cyril’s

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286 Grainger to Herman Sandby, 11 August 1909.
287 Rose Grainger to Grainger, 21 April 1909.
288 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 7 February 1910, quoted in Thacker, ‘Conclusions’ p.49.
290 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, p.410.
various residences, and planning an architectural model of one of the houses.\textsuperscript{292} He made a Legend ‘Homes of composers’.\textsuperscript{295}

In the Victorian era, objects were signifiers of status, but also held personal meanings, acting as keepsakes, heirlooms and mementos; they represented social transaction through buying and selling; and had abstract, symbolic meanings.\textsuperscript{296} Domestic accumulations of such objects also served a memorial function, being ‘a reliquary of upholstery and commodity clutter, where velvet-lined casings, baldachins and embroidered cushion-covers ensnare[d] traces of memory, ideology and social desire.’\textsuperscript{295} Relics of the deceased which had previously accumulated in churches, by the nineteenth century were relocated to the home.\textsuperscript{296} Domestic collections could also reflect imperialism; it was fashionable in the 1880s for example to combine in a home an eclectic mix of items from India, China, Africa, Europe and Russia. Collecting was encouraged among the lower and middle classes as morally, socially and aesthetically uplifting, while even Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were keen collectors.\textsuperscript{297} Grainger was accustomed to these object-rich interiors; for example the house of folklorist Evald Tang Kristensen was ‘a veritable museum’, containing an enormous collection of ‘pewter, china, broadsheets, old pictures and thousands of copies of his own folk-song books which he had been unable to sell.’\textsuperscript{298} Architect John Gawler reminisced about the domestic ‘museum’ typical of Australian lower-middle-class urban terraces before the First World War:

Enter the front door and you are in a narrow ill lit passage dignified by the name of hall from a remote ancestry of the baronial halls of England. Should you be a visitor, the parson or the doctor, you would be shown into the front room, the drawing room, the holy of holies where many families kept a small museum. The best room in the house, it was used the least, but contained the costliest furniture, various jinjcrack tables, a piano, and the mantelpiece were covered with a collection of family photos and other curios; sometimes the parents’ wedding photo enlargement hung over the mantelpiece and dad was wearing white gloves! An old fashioned

\textsuperscript{292} Grainger to Marjorie Hartston [wife of Cyril Scott], 2 March 1951.
\textsuperscript{293} Appendix p.259.
\textsuperscript{294} Conn, pp.13–14.
\textsuperscript{296} Hallam & Hockey, p.136.
\textsuperscript{297} Black, pp.72–75; Briggs, pp.47, 83.
\textsuperscript{298} Bird, p.208.
venetian blind and some heavy curtains kept the light dim, saving the antimacassars from fading and the aspidistra from growing. Mother entertained her lady friends in this room if they were important enough, but the children rarely entered for fear they might damage something, in fact I remember one house I visited where the door was locked to keep them out.299

The core of Grainger’s domestic ‘museum’ of ethnographic exotica—developed in collaboration with Rose—was artistically arranged for display in a mahogany glass-fronted secretaire standing prominently in the front hall; it moved with them to New York and in 1936 was sent to the Museum. Grainger described the ensemble at that time:

Mahogany bookcase-secretaire in 2 pieces (doubtless bought by R.G. in Chelsea, period—1907–1914) containing S. African, South Sea and other bead work and other native curios (also elaborate necklace with hanging patterned fringe made by P.G. in S. African style) very dear to R.G. and P.G., much of it bot at Tost & Rohu’s, Sydney (opp. G.P.O.), early 1909, after they fell in love with native beadwork in the Christchurch (N.Z.) museum, early 1909. This piece of furniture (with the curios) stood in the hallway (street-level, near heavy small settee) in 31a Kings Road, Chelsea, London (1909–1914) and again in hallway (facing front door) in White Plains. These curios played a large part in the lives of R.G. and P.G. (They themselves worked a lot at beadwork, around 1910, London). / Amerindian (North American Indian) bead work (on leather, etc. that hung above and at sides of the above mentioned bookcase-secretaire (containing native curios) at White Plains (see photos showing set-up): / Belt nailed on long piece of wood, forming top of Amerindian display (above mentioned) at White Plains. (The rest in 2nd case.)300

299 Gawler, Roof over my head, pp.48–49.
When in 1921 Rose and Percy finally had the opportunity to establish a permanent home, accommodating their collections was a consideration in their choice. Grainger wrote that they had bought a house, rather than an apartment, which would be too expensive if large enough to house their phonograph records, musical instruments, beadwork etc. 301 The pair devoted considerable energy to collecting. As Csikszentmihalyi observes, where objects are used as projections of ourselves rather than as tools, they ‘like the servants created by the sorcerer’s apprentice, threaten to drown their masters with relentless zeal.’ 302 As poor Rose wrote to her son days before her death, when her nerves were particularly frayed by

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301 Grainger to Herman Sandby, 30 March 1921.
302 Csikszentmihalyi, ‘Why we need things’, p.28.
the thought of letters that could be misinterpreted: ‘collecting is a bore—too much work, dear’\textsuperscript{303} and ‘I am so bothered with so many letters everywhere […] You have written so much dear—& collected—& kept—so have I—Alas—too much.’\textsuperscript{304}

**Maison Pierre Loti**

Another striking example of a domestically-focussed autobiographical collection and display was the home of the French writer Louis-Marie-Julien Viaud (1850–1923), known as Pierre Loti. Loti’s collection reflected on a personal level the European imperial project, combined with a compulsion to preserve souvenirs of his past to counter a fear of death. Although constituted only posthumously as a public museum, the house was such a deliberate and strongly personal expression and memorial, and its creator an artist and life-long collector with so many parallels to Grainger (and also to Gustave Moreau), that I contend that it is relevant here.

Loti was famous for his partly autobiographical novels evoking sea voyages and exotic, faraway places. In a period of accelerating colonisation, he penned, for a generation of armchair travellers, tales of distant lands explored or conquered by the West.\textsuperscript{305} Loti was also a naval officer, traveller, artist and photographer. The modest middle-class house in which he had been born and raised served as a display case for treasures gathered during his naval adventures (particularly in ‘the Orient’), for his historical fantasies, and for his childhood memories.\textsuperscript{306} From 1877 he began transforming the house by creating a series of display rooms: a Turkish room, Arab room, Japanese pagoda, Renaissance hall, mosque, Chinese room and monk’s room. Contrasting with these was the more intimate universe of his own personal and family life as shown in the Red Sitting Room, his bedroom, his father’s study and the conventionally bourgeois dining room.\textsuperscript{307} For Loti ‘exotic’ could mean different and far-away in space or time.\textsuperscript{308} By appropriating the trappings of colonised

\textsuperscript{303} Rose Grainger to Grainger, 18 & 19 April 1922.
\textsuperscript{304} Rose Grainger to Grainger, 24 April 1922.
lands visited during his naval career, Loti, like Grainger, linked his personal and national stories. According to the curator:

All the rooms are bona fide installations, and are, indeed, artistically designed projects that were shaped by his peregrinations, the events which influenced his life, and the fashions of his time. The purpose of the house, which was his own design, was to halt the passage of time. It is as if the constant recollection of memories, dreams and travel adventures could prevent them from disappearing. Loti, who was obsessed by the flow of life’s current, greatly feared the idea of death. He wished to freeze the passing moment, imprisoning it in an object or space from which it could be recovered when he wanted it.309

Loti went to great lengths to ensure that all his treasured objects would be preserved after his death. He left meticulous instructions on preservation, destruction, or sale, even for the care of his pets and garden. He arranged for future publication of unpublished works, particularly his journals. He specified that he be buried alone in the garden of his mother’s ancestral home, which he had bought in 1899 but never lived in.310 His desire to freeze the passing moment through the creation of elaborate interiors based on the peregrinations of his own life, even if originally intended for his own benefit and that of his friends, shared much with the self-museumizing spirit of the Grainger Museum, and the common if unacknowledged motivation of many collectors, including Grainger, to cope with the passing of time, and thus by implication the approach of death.

Loti’s house opened as a museum in 1973,311 so Grainger could not have visited it, but he felt an affinity with the spirit behind it. Loti’s books were enjoyed by both Percy and Rose, being among Rose’s ‘chief esthetic impressions and interests of the London years 1901–1914’.312 In 1915 Grainger referred to Loti’s writing on the music of the South Sea Islands.313 In 1924 in discussing his own visit to Tahiti, he commented that Loti’s The marriage of Loti was ‘a true and reliable picture of the national soul of the Tahitians’.314 In his

309 Scason, p.49.
310 Blanch, pp.313–316.
311 Scason, pp.49–50.
312 Grainger, Photos of Rose Grainger, p.4.
homage to Frederick Delius which forms the basis of a Museum Legend he contended that Loti (along with Robert Louis Stevenson, Paul Gauguin and Giovanni Segantini\(^{315}\)) shared Delius’ inspirational spirit.\(^{316}\) Loti like Grainger (and Gustave Moreau) as a child was talented in music and drawing, and his close relationship with his mother and ‘hothouse upbringing’ in a strongly feminine family almost excluded any relationship with his father. Young Julien created a museum in the attic, which he preserved until his death, and he remained a conscientious journal-writer.\(^{317}\) From a young age he preserved *memento mori* ‘as holy relics’:

> [F]rom his earliest days he seemed to sense the transitory or permanent nature of all life […] but things remained. Things, inanimate objects, could reassure by their unchanging presence. […] /Throughout his life, things were a barrier standing between him and the nothingness which lay ahead […] and gradually, this obsessive attachment to objects reached fetish proportions. All these jealously preserved objects, generally of little value except by association, came to be invested with a life—a soul, even.\(^{318}\)

This transformation of everyday material into relics, combined with yearning nostalgia and the acquisition of the ‘exotic’, have close parallels with Grainger’s collecting practice.

**The ‘period room’**

This discussion of domestic collecting and display leads us to the ‘period room’, of which an example of sorts exists in the Grainger Museum’s ‘London Room’.

Period rooms—the comprehensive decoration and furnishing of a gallery room in the style of a particular historic period, or the installation in a museum of an entire room interior removed from a historic building—emerged first in Europe. The earliest examples usually cited were in the Musée de Monuments Français (established 1795, dissolved 1816)\(^{319}\) and

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\(^{315}\) Italian-Swiss symbolist painter of Alpine landscapes (1858–1899). Grainger may have been aware that a Segantini Museum opened in 1908.

\(^{316}\) Grainger, ‘The personality of Frederick Delius’, *Australian musical news* (vol. 24, no. 12, July 1934) p. 10, included in ‘The personality of Frederick Delius’, Museum Legend.

\(^{317}\) Blanch, pp. 20, 31–36, 292.


\(^{319}\) Bazin, pp. 172–174; 221.
Musée Cluny (established 1830s–1840s), but period rooms did not really become common in Europe until the end of that century. Scandinavian folk museums advanced the form from the 1890s and some historical and commercial displays in international exhibitions had the characteristics of period rooms, for example furniture-makers’ displays at the 1900 Paris Exposition, which Grainger attended. The period room proliferated in America, particularly following the Metropolitan Museum’s installation of its American wing in 1924, to the point where by the 1930s the period room (as with the natural history diorama and ethnographic group) was seen as a ‘natural’ setting. The period room’s gradual decline in America after its inter-war heyday has been attributed to affordable international travel, enabling people to see the real thing in its original European location. The relative paucity of period rooms in Britain is probably due to similar reasons; the British always had access to the real thing in stately homes, long open to visitors. Period rooms were never as popular in Australia as in America, possibly for reasons of cost, the large amount of space required, lack of easy access to the necessary sources of furnishings, British attitudinal influences, and an Australian reluctance to relocate historic buildings. In 1933 Australia’s nearest approximation to a period room was in the National Gallery of Victoria: ‘a bay devoted to furniture of the early nineteenth century arranged as it would have been at the time.’ In 1935 the Public Library of Victoria arranged a recent donation of furniture and fittings previously owned by John

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323 Bazin, pp.7, 252; Kaufman, p.27.
324 Kimball, p.564.
325 Githens, p.129.
326 Thomson, Treasures on earth, p.98.
328 Lowenthal, Foreign country, pp.282–288 discusses the pros and cons of relocating buildings and other historic items.
329 Markham & Richards, Museums and art galleries in Australia and New Zealand, p.44.
Pascoe Fawkner (1792–1869), one of Melbourne’s founders, ‘as a room of Fawkner’s time and with contemporary pictures on the wall’. But these were rare Australian examples.

The London Room display shows the affinity in Grainger’s mind between his Museum and the typical period room and house museum. This affinity lies in what Pavoni analyses as the ‘museumization’ of the everyday in the house museum and period room, which already existed in the ‘nineteenth-century passion […] for collecting relics of the past and using them for a personal reconstruction of history displayed within the walls of the home.’ She continues:

The nineteenth century has thus left us with this ambivalent picture of the house; on the one hand, an inspirational model for the fitting out of museums, and on the other a result of the ‘museumization’ of history and of the past […] the following complex relationship: a house rich in history and steeped in the past; and a museum imitating the environment of the house the better to display its own treasures.

As is obvious from their name, period rooms are concerned with recreating a particular past epoch, usually from the quite distant past. Like so many museum display types, period rooms have a frozen-in-time quality. Despite representing spaces used for human activity, they conjur impressions of that which has disappeared or died.

Grainger described the London Room arrangement—of mostly carved wooden furniture of various historical styles—as a recreation of the music-room at 31a Kings Road Chelsea, his and Rose’s relatively modest dwelling 1909–1914. Rose’s London Room furniture, Meissen animal musicians and other decorative arts were placed in the Museum not only as a memorial to her but also to show the environment in which young Grainger had lived and worked, often in the company of his Frankfurt group, and which he therefore believed influenced his music and character. When shipping some of the furniture to Melbourne, Grainger wrote that it was ‘very characteristic of my mother’s taste & of the way she & I lived in London, 1902–1914.’ In interpreting the display, Grainger refuted inferences of

131 Pavoni, ‘Towards a definition’, p.16.
bourgeois social climbing or snobbery, or an antiquarian fondness for old things. On the contrary, he suggested that Rose thought old furniture was better value for money and that she would manipulate others’ snobbery to her and Percy’s advantage:

In buying the old furniture my mother had no yearnings for “The House beautiful”—no wish to “surround herself with beautiful things”. She had no social interests or ambitions. [...] She simply wanted to help me as a composer. She thought that the “Society people” who took lessons from me & engaged me to play at their “at homes” would be more impressed (& therefore more likely to employ me) if we had some nice old furniture in our house.334

The question of artistic taste and visual sensibility was an important one to Grainger however, as a ‘culturizing influence’. Important musical work happened in the London Music Room: ‘[C]horal rehearsals & musical experiments were conducted by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter, Frederick Austin, Herman Sandby, myself and other composers.’335 For Grainger, the furniture had taken on some of the numinous power of the music made in its midst. To his way of thinking it was both an influence on, and was influenced by, the music of that particularly creative period. A Museum visitor could supposedly, by looking at these chairs, tables and sideboards, better understand Grainger the composer.

Modernist interior design trends which emerged after the First World War were based on a sparer aesthetic from which Edwardian clutter had been cleared. They were less compatible with Pavoni’s domestic ‘museumization’ of history and the past. This did not however affect period rooms or house museums during their heyday, because they were embodiments of historic, not contemporary, settings. It was not until well after the Second World War that modernist houses came to be seen as appropriate for this type of preservation.336 Thus Grainger continued in his Museum the aesthetic and the domestic collecting habitus typical of his youth—consistent with the early development of his musical and cultural ideas and his subsequent consistency in propagating them, as discussed in Chapter One. He placed it however in a form reminiscent of the house museum and

335 Ibid.
period room which in America (where Grainger was living) reached their zenith of popularity between the wars,\(^{137}\) when Grainger was planning and building his Museum. Further, the American historic house museum had, since its origins in the 1850s, been closely connected to efforts to engender nationalist sentiment.\(^{138}\) In this sense therefore the Grainger Museum, nationalistically promoting Australia through its musical son Grainger, was a museum of its time.

## Three Grainger Museums?

Grainger envisioned at various times not just one, but three Grainger museums: a house museum in or adjacent to his home at White Plains; the Grainger Museum in Melbourne; and a house museum at ‘Claremont’, the Adelaide home of the Aldridge family and particularly of Rose’s sister, Percy’s beloved ‘Aunty Clara’. He even toyed with the idea of **every** Australian house he had inhabited being preserved as a museum.\(^{139}\)

Grainger first mentioned the idea of a Melbourne Grainger Museum and a White Plains Grainger Museum in his grief-stricken letter to Balfour Gardiner discussed earlier.\(^{140}\) In 1927, the year before his marriage to Ella Ström, Grainger discussed with her his plans to turn the White Plains house into a museum:

> While there [at White Plains] you could see how you like the place & whether you would like me to build a new small house beside the old, where we & the Morses could have our separate places, you a studio & Morse his studio, I my music room in yr studio or next to it—gradually turning the old house into a museum, as the Morses & I have long discussed doing.\(^{141}\)

Why should a perfectly adequate and relatively new\(^{142}\) house which Grainger had purchased a mere six years previously, henceforth become a museum, albeit ‘gradually’, and its occupants be obliged to decamp to a smaller dwelling? I believe this would not have been suggested if Rose were still alive, and it demonstrates further the division of Grainger’s life

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\(^{137}\) Most early American historic house museums were established by local community groups but in 1935 the Federal Government became involved. Alexander, *Museums in motion*, p.90.


\(^{140}\) Grainger to Gardiner, 3 May 1922.

\(^{141}\) Grainger to Ella Ström, 15 October 1927.

into two parts, marked by Rose’s death. In his 1928 will Grainger provided for the establishment of a public Grainger Museum at 7 Cromwell Place, to be displayed ‘as nearly unaltered as possible from which it was at the time of the death of my mother’. In his 1928 will Grainger provided for the establishment of a public Grainger Museum at 7 Cromwell Place, to be displayed ‘as nearly unaltered as possible from which it was at the time of the death of my mother’.443 Embarking on marriage, Grainger associated the house with his past with Rose (although she had lived there less than a year), not his future with Ella. But by 1933, during negotiations with the University of Melbourne, Grainger wrote that he would prefer a museum at the University.444 In later years Grainger said he wanted to sell 7 Cromwell Place and divide his and Ella’s remaining years between Sweden and Australia. But this never eventuated and in fact the house became a library-archive-museum following Ella’s death. This was not consistent with Grainger’s last will, which provided for copies of his drawings, paintings, musical and literary manuscripts and letters to be placed in the Library of Congress or a similar institution, the originals to be sent to the Grainger Museum.445

The third museum which Grainger envisaged was to be a more typical house museum. The Aldridges moved to ‘Claremont’ in 1879.446 Clara remained in the house until her death in 1944, there caring for ‘Uncle Frank’. Grainger often visited Claremont, firstly with Rose and later alone or with Ella, and he held the place, and its inhabitants, in great affection. Clara collected family documents and genealogical records, which found their way to the Grainger Museum. In April 1939 Grainger wrote to Clara:

> About 2 weeks ago I was passing through Hannibal, Missouri […] & while there looked into the newly set up “Mark Twain Museum” […]. No, it was not his birthplace […] but he & his parents, etc, came to live in Hannibal when he was about 9 & lived there some years. […] The whole thing is charming, very valuable & very touching. But in the Mark Twain house there is none of the original furniture, pictures, or anything […] I couldn’t help thinking how much luckier we are going to be at “Claremont”, in having an undisturbed family museum, with (in the main) the same things in the house that grandmother & you had there over 50 years ago. I wonder if there is any family museum, anywhere in the world, where the contents of the

443 Grainger, Will, 10 November 1928.

444 Grainger to Barrett, 2 January 1933.


446 Clara Aldridge & Percy Grainger, ‘Aunty Clara’s “Aldridge History”’.
house are so undisturbed, so unchanged, as at “Claremont”? [...] They will be a wonderful foil to each other: The Grainger Museum in Melbourne, dealing with manuscripts, & instruments, books, documents & various arts, & the Aldridge Museum in Adelaide, keeping family records & showing the lovely “Claremont” life as it was & is. I am so thankful about it all!347

This house, in which Twain (Samuel Clemens, 1835–1910) lived from 1844 to 1853, became a permanent museum in 1937.348 Grainger had long been fond of Twain’s writing, which to him represented ‘the wildly happy & heroically self-centred boy-life of the New World.’349 Grainger’s nostalgia for the freedom of childhood later expressed itself through the Claremont museum idea, which was not intended to duplicate the Grainger Museum, but rather to be a true house museum, preserved in the state in which it had been left by the final inhabitants, because ‘It is the only house, in which I spent part of my childhood, that has remained practically unaltered. In addition my mother (to whom I owe most of my musical attitude & training) spent some of her most impressionable years there.’350 It is not surprising that Grainger saw house museum potential in a place associated in his mind with women (his aunt and mother). Unlike most nineteenth- and early-twentieth century museums, house museums, particularly in America, were seen as a legitimate domain both for women to work and for the preservation of women’s culture,351 even though most such museums were primarily shrines to the public achievements of men.352 Both in considering an Aldridge museum in Adelaide and in founding the Grainger Museum in Melbourne, Grainger was no doubt influenced by ‘Great Man’ house museums which, as discussed by Charlotte Smith, not only celebrated the lives of the eminent individuals which they commemorated, but also served as exemplars of patriotism and self-improvement, to the point where they became, in effect, places of pilgrimage in a nationalistic, non-theological

347 Grainger to Clara Aldridge, 25 April 1939.
349 Grainger to Karen Holten, 15 March 1907, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.100. Grainger also knew Clemens’ daughter Clara, wife of pianist Ossip Gabrilowitsch with whom Grainger collaborated on occasion; see correspondence Grainger/Gabrilowitsch, and Clara Clemens, My husband Gabrilowitsch (Harper & Bros, 1938) p.165.
350 Grainger to O. Tipping, Elders Trustee and Executor Co. Ltd, 5 January 1944.
351 This was also reflected in women’s significant role in the early American historic house museum movement. Bennett, ‘Museum and citizen’, p.7; Alexander, Museums in motion, pp.88–91; Smith, ‘House enshrined’, p.48.
‘civil religion.’ The most prominent examples—Mt Vernon and Monticello—were well-patronised by the 1930s. Claremont had the dual advantage over the University of Melbourne of being an actual place in which Grainger had spent time during his formative years, and of being a dwelling, both important elements in the ‘Great Man’ museum type, which relied heavily on the numen of the historic site and the sanctity of the home in promoting patriotic and democratic values. In a similar vein, Grainger in 1941 visited Old Matt’s Cabin Museum near Branson, Missouri, a humble log dwelling enshrined as the place where Harold Bell Wright wrote the popular book on Ozark pioneers, *The shepherd of the hills* (published 1907).

Aunt Clara died in 1944 and bequeathed Claremont to Percy. He explained his intentions to her executor:

> The artistic and esthetic history of Australia is young. And that is one reason why it is important to begin that history RIGHT—that is to say, truthfully and scientifically. Future generations of Australians should have the benefit of knowing OUT OF WHAT BEGINNINGS & SURROUNDINGS & EARLY INFLUENCES their musicians, poets, artists have emerged.

Grainger felt that it was of the utmost importance to preserve the actual physical fabric of the house, because this was evidence of the truth. He was keen for example to retain the drawing room ceiling rose because it had been chosen by his father over sixty years earlier. Similarly he opposed the installation of electric light: ‘From a museum standpoint it is most important that my aunt never had electric light (which I presume is one of the reasons why she preserved her sight, without glasses, to the age of 86) or gas in her house.’ In 1954 Grainger was prepared to spend £1,000 on repairs, but the museum plan did not

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536 Grainger, Day-book 1941, entry for 25 May.
538 Grainger to Tipping, 5 January 1944.
539 Ibid.
540 Grainger to Mr Stace [Elders Trustee and Executor Co. Ltd], 22 August 1954.
eventuate, mainly because some Aldridge relatives had moved in. Ella inherited the house from Percy and gave it to the Aldridges.361

Grainger’s exposure to European and American house museums must have influenced his plans for Claremont, as house museums were virtually unknown in Australia (except for Vaucluse House, opened in 1912, and the importation of Cook’s Cottage in 1934) until National Trusts were established after 1945.362 But house museums flourished earlier than this in the United States, to the point that in 1933, they were the topic of a book by Laurence Vail Coleman, who commented on their growing popularity and reported that this museum type was being taken seriously in professional museum circles.363 He attributed this growth to a colonial revival and interest in public history evident in the United States since the 1920s, other signs of which included the popularity of cameras, historical photographs in magazines, historical fiction with American settings, and antique collecting.364 Coleman rebutted critics who saw in the house museum only sentimentality and worship of the past which would hinder progress. He saw such museums as a means of conquering mortality:

The historic house movement seeks not to use but to know—to understand American houses of the past. This is not a revival but an awakening; its result is education. It is an advance on the modern frontier of ideas which has more and more engaged our energies since the old frontier of land was closed in 1890. [...] A visit to an historic house museum is full of [...] Hazlitt’s ‘feeling of immortality in Youth’ [...] and so we may all become immortal in our heritage of historic house museums.365

Grainger’s visits to house museums and personal monuments influenced his decision to establish his own Museum. In 1896 for example he visited Goethe’s birthplace, sending a postcard of it to his mother.366 Rose encouraged Percy during his concert tours to visit historically significant places: ‘Be sure you see some notable things, & places, Hans

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363 Laurence Vail Coleman, Historic house museums (American Association of Museums, 1933).
364 Ibid., p.19.
365 Ibid., pp.20–21.
366 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 3 July 1896.
Andersen’s grave, too’.\textsuperscript{367} While Percy was in Denmark in 1905 Rose urged him to visit museums and monuments.\textsuperscript{368} She wrote, ‘I am reading Jacobsen still [...] So glad you saw his grave & birthplace.’

By the time Grainger was visiting such establishments, public visits to historic houses and monuments had a long history in Europe. In England, the popularity of visiting abbeys, castles, gardens and country houses was one response to the anxieties caused by urbanisation consequent upon industrialisation, as a result of which rural life seemed to represent past values, the antithesis of the dehumanisation of modern town life.\textsuperscript{370} Similar sentiments contributed to the revival of folk-song and pre-Bach music, to which Grainger contributed. The 1920s and 1930s, when Grainger was planning and building his Museum, saw many house museums established in Europe and the United States, celebrating historical figures, including artists such as Titian,\textsuperscript{371} Haydn\textsuperscript{372} and Keats.\textsuperscript{373} In 1939 Grainger visited the birthplace museum of the Norwegian poet and linguist Aasmund Olavsson Vinje (1818–1870).\textsuperscript{374} Edward Elgar’s daughter turned her father’s birthplace into a museum shortly after his death in 1934.\textsuperscript{375} Museums were also established on the sites of significant historical events; there were a number in and around White Plains with which Grainger might have been familiar.\textsuperscript{376}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{367} Rose Grainger to Grainger, 29 September 1904.
\item \textsuperscript{368} For example Rose Grainger to Grainger, postcard, 10 October 1905.
\item \textsuperscript{369} Rose Grainger to Grainger, 27 September 1905. Referring to the Danish writer Jens Peter Jacobsen (1847–1885).
\item \textsuperscript{370} Adrian Tinniswood, \textit{The polite tourist: a history of country house visiting} (National Trust, 1998).
\item \textsuperscript{371} ‘News from the museums: Pieve di Cadore, a Titian Museum’, \textit{Museums journal} (vol.32, no.2, May 1932) p.85.
\item \textsuperscript{372} ‘News from the museums: Rohuau, Austria, proposed Haydn Museum’, \textit{Museums journal} (vol.32, no.1, April 1932) p.36.
\item \textsuperscript{373} ‘News from the museums: Hampstead, Keats House & Museum’, \textit{Museums journal} (vol.32, no.6, September 1932) p.248.
\item \textsuperscript{374} Sparre Olsen, \textit{Percy Grainger} (Det Norske Samlaget, 1963) typescript English translation by Bent Vanberg, p.21.
\item \textsuperscript{375} Website, Elgar Foundation \url{http://www.elgarfoundation.org/elgar_fr.htm} accessed 15 September 2003.
\item \textsuperscript{376} Elijah Miller House (Washington’s headquarters after the battle of White Plains) opened in 1917; the White Plains County Court House operated as a museum from 1874; and Hammond House, located between White Plains and Tarrytown and occupied during the American revolution by Colonel James Hammond, opened in 1927. L.C. Everard (ed.), \textit{Handbook of American museums} (American Association of Museums, 1932) pp.443, 522–523.
\end{itemize}
Grainger knew of house museums commemorating two significant musical figures in his life: Edvard Grieg and Frederick Delius. Grieg and his wife Nina’s summer house at Troldhaugen, where Grainger visited in 1906, opened to the public as a museum in 1928.\footnote{Ros McMillan, ‘Troldhaugen and Grainger’, In a nutshell (vol. 9, no. 3, September 2001) p. 6.} In 1919 Nina Grieg shocked her friends by selling the beloved home and most of its contents. When she died Grainger contributed to efforts to return Grieg’s remains to the place and open it as a museum.\footnote{Bird, p. 210; Grainger, ‘Ere-I-forget’, p. 63.} In 1943 Grainger became aware of a woman in Jacksonville, Florida, who was turning the old cottage on Delius’ father’s orange plantation into a museum, gathering there Delius-related ‘relics’.\footnote{Grainger, ‘Round letter’, 3 September 1943.} This had been Delius’ dwelling in 1884–1885 when inspired by the ‘Negro’ workers’ singing (discussed further in Chapter Four). Grainger was referring to Mrs Martha Bullard Richmond (d. 1968), who identified the derelict cottage in 1939, purchased it and surrounding land in 1943, eventually donating both to Jacksonville University. The house was relocated onto the campus in 1961, where it remains today, furnished in 1880s style. A monument has been erected on the original site. Ella Grainger visited the cottage during the 1972 Delius festival.\footnote{Websites of Delius Collection, Jacksonville Public Library [http://ipl.coj.net/MusicRef/delius.html] and of Jacksonville University [http://www.ju.edu/tour/map.asp?page=delius] both accessed 3 January 2006; Jeff Drigger (Curator, Delius Collection, Jacksonville Public Library), emails to Belinda Nemec, 5 January 2006; Mark A. Stoneman, ‘Delius in Florida: the Delius Festival of Jacksonville’, in Lionel Carley (ed.), Frederick Delius: music, art and literature (Ashgate, 1998) pp. 36–56.}

An Australian cultural figure and ‘all-round man’ whom Grainger admired was the artist Norman Lindsay (1879–1969).\footnote{Grainger, ‘The specialist and the all-round man’, pp. 315–316; John Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: the embattled Olympian (O.U.P., 1973) p. 168; Gillies, ‘Percy Grainger and Australian identity’, p. 41.} Grainger felt an affinity with Lindsay as an Australian creative genius: ‘[H]e and I are doubtless the 2 most important artistic personalities of Australia’.\footnote{Grainger to Karen Holten, 12 May 1909, in Dreyfus (ed.) p. 298.} Lindsay bequeathed his home ‘Springwood’ to the National Trust, in his last years modifying it for its posthumous opening as a house-museum-memorial containing much of his art, his paints and painting table and, like Grainger, books comprising ‘works of the writers who have meant most to me in prose and poetry.’\footnote{Lindsay, quoted in Hetherington, Norman Lindsay, p. 256.} He created another
legacy of artworks at the University of Melbourne, which, like Grainger, he never attended. The Lindsays were probably the best known Australian example of such self-memorialising, which was clearly a family trait. Norman’s brother, (Sir) Daryl Lindsay (1889–1976) and his wife, author Joan Lindsay, bequeathed their home ‘Mulberry Hill’ as a house museum to the Victorian National Trust, of which they had been among the founders. This might have resulted partly from rivalry with Norman (the brothers had fallen out in the 1930s) but it also followed Daryl’s disappointment in an earlier plan to create a National Trust museum of ‘Lisnacrieve’, the Lindsay family’s original country home, intended ‘to house early Creswick historical records, Lindsay relics and works of art’. Daryl and Norman’s sister Mary did however bequeath some of Lisnacrieve’s contents to the Ballarat Gallery, to be displayed in a replica of the drawing room. Like Grainger, the Lindsay family saw themselves as important players in Australia’s cultural history, and with a material legacy worth preserving in both documentary and physical form.

At least one salient feature of the the Grainger Museum collection, its comprehensiveness, owes much to the ethos of the house museum. As Pinna explains, the significance of the house museum is due at least in part to the fact that ‘emphasis is placed not on the value of individual objects but on the whole set of objects and its interaction with the spirit of the people who lived in the house.’ Grainger did not live in the Grainger Museum but nearly all the objects in it lived with him and Rose or Ella; this lends it a distinctly domestic character. In interpreting his exhibits Grainger took into account each item’s original household location and use. The London Room is the most obvious example but others include items in his 1936 shipping list: his father’s music which ‘lay near Grieg manuscript and small Grieg photo, in music room at White Plains’; a porcelain inkstand ‘which P.G. used much at 31a Kings Road Chelsea (on Rathbone’s writing table?) and later in U.S.A.’;

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384 Clark, In trust, pp.11–12, 51, 62. Ella Grainger met Daryl and Joan Lindsay at Mulberry Hill in 1935. Ella Grainger to Grainger, 1 July 1935.
385 Hetherington, Norman Lindsay, p.214.
386 Daryl Lindsay, The leafy tree: my family (Cheshire, 1965) pp.197–198; Hetherington, Norman Lindsay, p.247.

Springwood. Richard Fowler to R. Hynder, 23 August 1966. These and some of Lindsay’s books are in the Grainger Museum.
the picture Toledo by Ernst Thesiger previously ‘at White Plains on East wall of sitting room next bookcase’; six photographs of Rose by Frederick Morse ‘hung beside piano in White Plains music room’. Thus an object, although removed from the location in which it had been part of everyday life, could conjure up the spirit of that now long-gone time in which it was an element of Grainger’s domestic surrounding, influencing his personality, relationships and art.

Conclusion

Grainger’s urge to accumulate, preserve, document and interpret the material remnants of the past was integral to his way of dealing with the uncertainties of life, the inexorable passage of time, and the prospect of death. I have demonstrated that Gustave Moreau and Pierre Loti were two other creative men who, although of the generation before Grainger, were raised in a similar milieu and responded similarly to bereavement, and to time’s passing, by building an autobiographical museum. This should modify to some degree interpretations characterising the Grainger Museum, and the motivations behind its establishment, as unique.

There is a long historical association between museums and ideas of death, mortality and immortality. Although sometimes overstated, this association is important in understanding some of the many meanings of museums at different times and places and to different people. In this chapter I have demonstrated that this association was deep-seated in Grainger, illustrated by his immediate response upon learning of the death of his beloved mother: to create a museum.

By examining the extensive literature on private collectors it is clear that Grainger experienced types of anxiety, nostalgia and desire which were common among collectors in his own day and today. Like at least one-third of today’s population, Grainger dealt with these emotions by collecting, arranging and displaying material things. Collecting and displaying things were part of everyday life for men, women and children in the consumer society in which Grainger was raised. Such work was carried out by individuals in the home, and usually by government or community organisations in the public museum,  

including the house museum and period room. Although unusual in the degree to which he indulged this preoccupation, I have argued here that Grainger merely took to an extreme degree a practice of collecting which was common and acceptable in the world of his youth and in his immediate and extended family.

Grainger differed in some ways from his contemporary collectors in refusing to discriminate between what were generally considered ‘high’ and ‘low’ object types. This is one of the reasons for Grainger’s significance as a collector: his open-mindedness about preserving a wide range of types of material evidence was advanced for his day, and demonstrated an understanding of the social context in which art, artefacts and people are made. But at the same time, Grainger combined this idiosyncratic approach with the more typical, traditional collecting modes he learned from his family, social circle, and museums.

In the next chapter I examine more closely the substance of one of Grainger’s major preoccupations in life, which informed his collecting and the interpretation of his life through his Museum: racial and national identity. Again, Grainger’s views were extreme but reflected many common beliefs of his time. I contend that it is no coincidence that a white, middle-class man born in late nineteenth-century Australia and preoccupied with racial hierarchy should establish a museum.
Both his ‘Nordic’ race and Australian nationality were key elements in Grainger’s personal identity. Ultimately however it was race that framed the way in which he perceived and understood the world. In this chapter I examine the communication of Grainger’s racial and national convictions through his Museum. These cannot be considered in isolation from the nationalist, racial and imperial agendas of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which were in turn the subject-matter of much museum activity. Museums both contributed to and reflected the nineteenth-century formation of nation-states,1 and were used at home and abroad to reinforce racial hierarchies, furthering the interests of European colonialism.2 Museum contents were often arranged as maps or representations of the resulting empires.

While such museums were normally centred on a political state, Grainger’s was centred on an individual. I argue that, based on his personal racial hierarchy, Grainger created an imaginary ‘Nordic’ empire of which his Museum is metaphorically both a map and the hub. His Museum also had a more typical nationalist agenda, as through it Grainger argued for Australia’s cultural validity.

I contend that Grainger’s preoccupation with matters national and, more importantly, racial, is highly pertinent to his choice of the medium of the museum—over other possible media such as literature—for his most enduring statement and extravagant legacy. Although the museum was a medium with which he was familiar from childhood, it was one in which he had no expertise other than as an enthusiastic visitor, and at various times

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2 Kaplan (ed.), Museums and the making of “ourselves”; Coombes, Reinventing Africa; Barringer & Flynn (eds); Torgovnick; Pearce & others (eds), Collector’s voice 3: imperial voices; Teslow; Black, pp.11–12; Griffiths, p.18.
he felt his lack of experience keenly.³ There is no evidence in Grainger’s extant library that he engaged with the museological literature of his day.⁴ The museum was, however, a medium which would have been associated in his mind with an issue he held most dear: the supreme importance of race. Further, all museums are exercises in, or acts of, classification,¹ and Grainger constantly classified people, usually according to race. I argue that the classificatory logic of the museum would have seemed natural and inevitable to Grainger.

In this chapter I also discuss another autobiographical museum: the highly nationalistic *Vittoriale degli Italiani*, the final home of the Italian writer, wartime hero and proto-fascist, Gabriele d’Annunzio (1863–1938). Like the Grainger Museum, the *Vittoriale* manifests contemporary nationalist and imperialist agendas.

**Museums, race and empire**
Museums have long dealt with issues of race, particularly in the age of high colonialism in which Grainger did much of his museum visiting. As discussed in Chapter One, race was discussed both overtly and tacitly in museums and even today can form the subtext to displays ostensibly on other subjects.⁶ Grainger was born into a culture with a tradition of racist views dressed up as science. By the mid-nineteenth century, racism’s influence on scientific enquiry strengthened. Moving away from the long-standing belief in monogenesis, ‘scientific racism’ embraced polygenesis, understanding humanity as comprising several biologically-determined species, hierarchically ranked, each with its own history and its own moral, intellectual and biological characteristics.⁷ It therefore made perfect sense that Grainger should choose a museum to deliver his message on the musical superiority of his Nordic race. It also reinforces my argument that it was the

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² Grainger acknowledged his own ‘complete museum-ignorance’ to Richard Fowler, 7 July 1956.
⁴ Barringer & Flynn (eds); Torgovnick; Stocking (ed.), *Race, culture and evolution*; Edwards, *Raw histories*; Bennett, *Birth of museum*; Bennett, *Past beyond memory*.
‘knowledge’ characteristic of Grainger’s earlier years that was most strongly represented in his Museum. Although when Grainger was planning his Museum in the 1920s and 1930s, the Nordicists were ascendant in the popular imagination,9 in leading American and British scientific circles ‘race typology as an element of causal cultural explanation [had become] largely discredited, racial differentiation began to be limited to physical characteristics, and prejudicial action based on racial discrimination came to be viewed as racism.’10 But many museums perpetuated the scientifically discredited racial-cultural link until well after the Second World War, and so did Grainger.

Museums’ emphasis on race was most apparent when depicting the ‘other’—usually the indigenous people of Europe’s colonies. But belief in European racial superiority also underlay the national ideals which were the subject of public monuments and museums depicting white people’s actions and history. In the Australian civic sphere, for example, the pioneer myth was a white racial narrative.10 The racial agendas of museums in Grainger’s day could not be separated from their imperialist ones, and it was no accident that the imperial age was also a time of museum expansion.11 The public museum was a well-established tool of nationalism and imperialism by the second half of the nineteenth century, a function which continued into the early twentieth century, and in some cases, beyond,12 for example with the establishment of over two thousand German Heimatmuseums and numerous soviet museums between the world wars.13 Errington argues that the disciplines of folklore and archaeology were in fact created largely as part of the project of creating nation-states at this time, helping to ‘project the national story into the past’.14

Western political regimes throughout history have used museums, monuments and exhibitions for explicit or implicit imperialist or propaganda purposes; even the temples in

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9 Barkan, p.3.
11 Sheets-Pyenson, p.20.
12 Prösler, pp.21–44.
13 Bazin, p.269.
14 Errington, pp.18–19, 40.
which ancient Romans displayed appropriated Greek statues served an imperial agenda.\textsuperscript{15} The Renaissance cabinet of curiosities emerged in the age of global discovery and exploration.\textsuperscript{16} At the peak of European empire-building, museums justified colonisation by depicting conquered races as lower on the evolutionary scale; colonisation would help them along the path to civilisation long ago trodden by Europeans. Evolutionary anthropology ‘served as a master narrative that justified direct colonial intervention and provided classificatory criteria for the incorporation of subject peoples into European empires’.\textsuperscript{17}

The logic according to which a museum’s collection is organised into representations has changed from time to time and place to place, reflecting changing ways of understanding the world and humans’ place in it. A museum can therefore be seen as a microcosm, a representation of the world, or part of it, in miniature or schematic form, seen from the point of view of the museumising culture.\textsuperscript{18} The size and wealth of a nation’s imperial possessions and spheres of influence were reflected in the size, diversity and quality of its collections, brought in from the colonial periphery. When displayed in museums, these collections formed an ‘imperial archive’,\textsuperscript{19} making a statement about the power and influence of the colonising state,\textsuperscript{20} over not only colonised peoples, but also over rival imperial powers.\textsuperscript{21} Such collections, as well as those in international exhibitions, were often displayed according to a geographic or political schema that was, in effect, a three-dimensional map.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{15} Mary Beard & John Henderson, ‘Please don’t touch the ceiling: the culture of appropriation’, in Susan M. Pearce (ed.), \textit{Museums and the appropriation of culture} (Athlone Press, 1994) p.11; Pomin, pp.15–16; Ripley, p.25.
\textsuperscript{16} Stocking, \textit{Objects and others}, p.6; Belk, \textit{Consumer society}, p.10; Murray, vol.1, pp.20–23; Pomian; Sheets-Pyenson, p.3.
\textsuperscript{17} Shelton, ‘Unsettling’, p.143.
\textsuperscript{18} Tim Barringer, ‘The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project’, in Barringer & Flynn (eds) p.11; Griffiths, p.18; Prösler, p.35.
\textsuperscript{19} Richards, p.15.
\textsuperscript{20} Black, pp.11–12.
\textsuperscript{21} Clunas, p.43.
\textsuperscript{22} Holmes, p.357.
In the United States, internal imperialism shaped much of the work of museums and academia in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Ethnographic fieldwork for example followed westward exploration and commercial exploitation. Franz Boas at the American Museum of Natural History sought funding from railroad owners for ethnographic expeditions, in the territories through which their new tracks would run.23 Such tycoons were often patrons or trustees of major American museums.

Churches used museums to expand their spiritual empires. Missionary societies for example acquired ‘pagan fetishes’ or ‘charms’ surrendered by ‘natives’ upon conversion to Christianity—evidence or trophy of the colonisation or collection of a native soul.24 Imperialism influenced private collectors, even children. Stamp collecting acted as ‘a metaphor for the free market’, consistent with colonialism’s commercial imperatives.25 Mrs Montresor’s 1888 instructions on stamp collecting were, in effect, a guide to creating from collected artefacts a world map privileging the British Empire.26 Collecting and museum-visiting were encouraged as educational activities among western middle-class children in the later nineteenth century.27 The association between collecting, museums and imperial thought was also reflected in juvenile literature. As Black argues, many adventure stories—like the adult novels such as Gulliver’s travels and Robinson Crusoe on which they were based—involved journeys that concluded with exhibition of items acquired along the way. In Kipling’s Kim (which Grainger read) a museum plays a central role in turning Kim from a racially ambiguous boy into ‘a white man, a good man’.28

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23 Jacknis, p.84.
25 Gelber, pp.742–769.
26 Montresor, pp.129, 137.
27 Black, pp.150–151; Bennett, ‘Museum and citizen’, p.6; Bennett, Pasts beyond memory, p.80; Thomas Greenwood, ‘The place of museums in education’, Science (vol.22, no.561, 3 November 1893) p.247; Prössler, p.34.
28 Black, pp.152–155.
Museums in the colonies

The degree to which any nation, city or province has attained is best shown by the character of its public museums and the liberality with which they are maintained.29 Because Grainger located his Museum not in the metropolis but in a former colonial outpost, I shall briefly discuss the role of museums in such locations. As colonies grew, museums were established, modelled usually on famous examples ‘back home’. Founding a museum in a colonial city celebrated the city’s progress and growth, thus reflecting back on the strength of the empire. Museums also served actively in the colonising process.30 City museums and other collecting institutions such as herbaria became the repositories of material gathered by colonial protagonists. Just as cities were the starting- and ending-points for voyages of exploration, city museums were the starting- and ending-points for collecting expeditions by curators (also a type of explorer), as well as passively receiving items gathered by other individuals or organisations.31 Similarly, Grainger saw his Museum as the ultimate repository for the record of his life’s journey. Melbourne represented both the start of his life and the launch of his musical career and, in theory, the end of it; he spoke of returning to live in Australia, and envisaged his and Ella’s skeletons hanging in the Museum.

The colonial museum both celebrated ‘progress’ and preserved remnants—whether of the flora and fauna, or of indigenous people and their culture—of a world believed doomed to disappear. Although Australian museums had been founded in the relatively early days of a new group of colonies, in this way they were already looking back to, and preserving, the past. If colonisers felt any sadness or nostalgia at these disappearances however, it rarely if ever translated into action to forestall them. Such losses were seen as inevitable, even desirable. Grainger, while also seeing indigenous or folk cultures as dying out (one reason for his folk-song collecting), believed that a cultural future was opening up for Australia. By using folk-tunes as the basis of his own compositions it could be said that he was taking action to preserve them for the future, but he took no steps to help preserve the societies

29 George Brown Goode [Secretary of Smithsonian Institution, 1880s], quoted in Rasmussen, Museum for the people, p.129.
30 Healy, p.85.
31 Griffiths, p.18.
which produced the music—its natural habitat. In this sense of fatalism he was not unusual. Steps being taken by others to establish folk museums for example, particularly in Scandinavia, aimed to preserve evidence of a ‘passing’ way of life, but not the way of life itself or the economic conditions that made it viable.

Anderson describes the ‘profoundly political’ museumizing imagination and activity which in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial outposts involved not only collecting portable objects but also the disinterring, documenting, restoring and displaying of ancient sites and monuments. This helped raise the prestige of the colony and thus of the metropolis, as well as contributing to conservative educational programs for the colonised. It was part of the ‘creation’ of local tradition to benefit the European colonisers, particularly those of the second generation, born in the colony, but the site’s original sacred significance was ignored.32

Just as raw materials and manufactured goods moved between metropolis and periphery, metropolitan and colonial museums maintained exchange relationships, with artefacts, personnel and information moving in both directions.33 Copies of prize displays were distributed between museums for educational and promotional purposes.34 Grainger distributed copies of his musical scores and other documents to museums and libraries in several ‘Nordic’ countries.35 Partly this was a hedge against the risk of loss of unique originals, but it also served to spread the word of Graingerism, creating a permanent place for his music across the ‘Nordic’ world. Much of the scientific knowledge required to interpret colonial objects resided in the imperial centre,36 although this situation gradually changed as colonies firstly imported scholars and later trained their own.37 Geographic distance between objects and the knowledge about them was also true of Grainger’s

33 Healy, pp.84–85; Bennett, *Pasts beyond memory*, p.80; Griffiths, p.18.
34 Sydney’s Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences for example received reproductions from London’s Victoria and Albert Museum.
35 Grainger to various public libraries, October–November 1954.
Museum, because both he and the other composers represented in the Legends resided outside Australia.

Complementing museums in their imperial representations, international exhibitions provided a forum for many metropolitan centres and colonial outposts to stage elaborate displays in one host city simultaneously. There was overlap as well as competition between exhibitions and museums; some permanent museums grew out of these temporary exhibitions, and museum staff were employed to create exhibition displays. Some museums, like exhibitions, aimed to increase the competitiveness of local designers and manufacturers (and encourage corresponding ‘improved taste’ among consumers) by displaying a wide range of raw materials and ‘the best’ objects. Thus a complementary and circular relationship existed between museums and the international exposition circuit. There were also overlaps—in philosophy, design approach, patrons and personnel—with department stores.

As McCubbin explains, nineteenth-century Australian colonial and international exhibitions celebrated the achievements the young colonies had made as part of the British Empire; they looked forward to a bright and prosperous future, rather than back to convict origins (which were assiduously avoided, as was bushranger history). As with museums, such exhibitions combined concepts of progress, race, nation and empire. The 1888 Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition for example was predominantly about progress through time from primitive to modern; all made possible by Anglo-Saxon courage and endurance. Australian history was represented by portraits of pioneers, colonial founders and statesmen, and their contemporary equivalents, the exhibition Commissioners. In the cultural program, however, age was equated with quality, while newness was ‘morally tainted.’ One of the most prestigious displays comprised eighteenth- and nineteenth-

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40 Bronner.
century British paintings. This is one of the principal points of divergence between Grainger and many of his Australian contemporaries, as discussed in Chapter One; although steeped in the museum and exposition culture of his day, Grainger was not reactionary in cultural terms and wished to promote Australia’s bright cultural future.

Bennett explains how through their physical layout, international exhibitions were a virtual representation of real-world places, mapped not geographically but racially or imperially. National courts later expanded into separate national pavilions, and subsequently were racially grouped. The ‘rhetoric of progress’ created a hierarchy at the pinnacle of which was the host nation (and therefore its public), which had the biggest, most elaborate, and best-positioned pavilions. Exhibitions were timed to celebrate imperial or national anniversaries and many had explicitly imperial agendas. As an impressionable six-year-old, Grainger visited the 1888 Melbourne International Exhibition and decades later recalled a ‘Japanese Village’. Percy also attended the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, mainly because his architect father had contributed to the Western Australian court. Grainger’s London years (1901–1914) saw a frenzy of exhibition activity in that city as well as in other centres such as Glasgow, Bradford, Wolverhampton, Dublin, and Edinburgh. Grainger at least intended to visit Glasgow’s 1901 exhibition because he asked Melba to write him letters of introduction. There is a set of postcards in the Grainger Museum of the Dahomey Village from London’s 1909 Imperial International Exhibition (discussed in Chapter Four), and Grainger was living in White Plains (half an hour from New York) during that city’s 1939 World’s Fair.

43 Ibid., p.61.
44 Bennett, Birth of museum, pp.81–82.
45 For example, Philadelphia’s Centennial Exhibition 1876; Melbourne’s Centennial Exhibition 1888; Chicago’s 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition.
46 For example the Empire Exhibition at Wembley 1924–25 and the Glasgow Empire Exhibition 1938.
47 ‘Aldridge-Grainger-Ström saga’, p.151. Grainger recalls it vaguely as being in a city arcade, but this was probably the Exhibition hall.
50 Nellie Melba to Grainger, 23 September 1901.
There are many references in Grainger’s correspondence to visiting museums and art exhibitions, although only occasionally did he discuss their influence upon him, usually when something made a great aesthetic impact. The most important example would be his (and Rose’s) visits to museums in New Zealand in 1909 (discussed further in Chapter Four). He also enjoyed the Victoria and Albert, writing to Karen Holten of a visit with Rose: ‘we spent such a happy afternoon there […] We must go there together when you’re here next trip. / It’s pretty good fun to me, going thro’ such a museum & having a look at the leavings of the races; the unmistakable stamp of their live feelings & deeds on all the dead things that have outlived them. The Greeks are very English, to be sure.’ Typically, Grainger was interpreting the displays in racial terms.

Grainger kept up the habit of museum-visiting throughout his life, particularly when travelling. In 1929 he visited the ethnological rooms of Finland’s new National Museum. He understood how museum displays could make explicit, ethnic links across geographic space and through time:

Roaming through the ethnological rooms of the recently erected and excellently conceived National Museum in Helsingfors we see the folk-dresses, embroideries, home-utensils and farming-gear not merely of the Finnish country-sides throughout several centuries, but, furthermore, similar exhibits from the various branches of the Finnish-Ugrish-speaking communities that are dotted around Europe, Russia and Siberia from the arctic tundra to the sun-drenched plains of Hungary. The racial self-awareness that is so characteristically Finnish has welded together these heterogeneous relics of isolated tribes into a total showing that is as impressive to the mind as it is ravishing to the eye.53

**Grainger’s Australian national identity**

As I have demonstrated, museum- and exhibition-visiting were an integral part of the milieu in which Grainger passed his childhood, youth and early adulthood. A common

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51 Grainger to Karen Holten, 31 March 1907, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.102.
52 For instance, in 1936 Grainger visited the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford with Balfour Gardiner. On this and other trips he also visited historic sites, including the ruined abbey of Shaftsbury where he made a note of having seen the bones of St Edward Martyr. Twice during that 1936 holiday he visited the British Museum, and Scandinavian museums including the Ostasiatiské Comhancits Old Museum in Göteborg and the National Museum of Finland. Grainger, Day-book 1936, entries for 11 & 12 June, 14 August, 23 September, 9 & 20 November. When visiting Arnold Dolmetsch in the 1930s, Grainger probably visited the highly-regarded Haslemere Educational Museum where the Dolmetsch Musical Foundation held its annual meetings.
activity for travellers, Grainger as a busy touring concert pianist had many opportunities to visit the numerous national museums in European cities. Visiting a museum was a convenient way for a visitor to get to ‘know’ a national culture. In this section I discuss Grainger’s Australian national identity which reflected attitudes prevalent in his childhood years and particularly in the highly nationalistic early years of Australian Federation, when Grainger made two extended antipodean concert tours. I later assert that Grainger synthesised his racial and national ideas with the imperialist agendas of museums and international exhibitions, to create the Grainger Museum, the centre of his own empire.

Grainger was born in Melbourne in 1882, technically a British subject. His father was an English immigrant whom Percy once described as an English failure, while his mother was Australian-born of Anglo-Irish descent. Grainger left Australia for Europe when nearly thirteen and although returning for a number of visits, some quite extensive, he never again lived in Australia. After some six years’ study in Germany (1895–1901) he spent fourteen years based in London but travelling widely, before moving to the United States at the outbreak of the Great War. After joining the American army in 1917, Grainger became an American citizen in 1918.

While Australian writers generally claim Grainger as Australian, some earlier American and British references describe him as American (of Australian origin) or occasionally as English. His first full-length biographer (an American) wrote: ‘Percy Aldridge Grainger was an Australian, not only by familial heritage, but by choice’, although also stating that Grainger was very proud of becoming an American citizen. I would dispute this last point;

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54 Griffiths, p.18; Bazin, p.8.
56 Grainger to Scott, 19 November 1947.
57 ‘Rose Grainger’, Museum Legend.
58 Grainger, Day-book 1939, reference to date and method of naturalization.
61 Armstrong, ‘Frankfort Group’.
62 Slattery, pp.1, 88–89.
Grainger stated that he was ‘bitterly ashamed’ of changing his nationality and ‘[H]ow could I expect Australians to feel proud of me as an Australian, when I had become an U.S.A. citizen?’ He never internalised his American citizenship into his personal or musical identity.

As in many things, Grainger had some ambivalence about Australians: ‘There is no Nordic folk amongst whom I feel less at home than amongst the Australians […] But one thing must never be forgotten: That I was a true & passionate Australian, or at least a would-be Australian, in my young manhood, in the days when I was a spirit-filled (inspired) tonewright.’ His love for ‘Australia’ but antipathy towards ‘Australians’ differentiate Grainger’s national and racial identities. Pear concludes that Grainger—although ‘caught between the various strands of his own national and racial background’—identified as ‘an “off-shore” Australian, fighting a world-wide battle for a Nordic, yet Australian-inspired art. Seen in this soldierly light, the contents of the Grainger Museum are his most important trophies of War.’ Grainger saw himself, particularly in later life, as an embattled crusader for his cause: ‘I have had only one goal, as an art-man, since I was about 10 years old; to make my art the slave of race-boostment, realm-keenth (patriotism)). I saw myself, in my mind’s eye, time-beating [conducting] my Australian marches, at the head of marching troops, when Australia went to war.’ Grainger identified proudly as Australian, and only occasionally in his earlier years as English or British. Australianism was a promotional tool, particularly when touring Australia. As a seasoned self-publicist he knew that Australians would warm to him most as local boy made good. The questionable loyalties of expatriates could be a divisive issue in Australia’s artistic community.

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64 Grainger to Heinze, 13 November 1949.
66 Grainger, ‘My mother & her son’, p. 70.
67 Dreyfus & Whiteside, pp. 157–159.
life Grainger often expressed the hope of spending his last years in Australia in order to be remembered as an Australian composer. This wish never materialized but he acted towards this goal by placing his Museum in Melbourne.

I will argue that Grainger’s strong sense of Australian identity, although used for promotional and strategic purposes and therefore on one level partly contrived, or at least highly self-conscious, was on another level sincerely held, particularly as it emerged partly from his early expatriatism. Although he later claimed that leaving Australia had had no influence on his national/racial outlook,71 Grainger felt the difficulties of being an expatriate, ‘sundered from my birth land so early as I was’.72 As with British emigrants to Australia, ‘distance thickened ethnic ties’.73 Grainger’s loud Australianism was also a reaction to Germany’s musical domination. Under the British fashion prevailing in Grainger’s youth, a person’s exposure to music was restricted largely to the Austro-German eighteenth- and nineteenth-century canon. Many younger British composers, including the Frankfurt Group, railed against their country’s sense of musical inferiority. Grainger, typically, took this attitude to extremes, claiming for example to hate the music of Beethoven and Mozart. Studying in Frankfurt he became disillusioned and disappointed with Germany’s supposed musical superiority, with his music teachers, and with his German fellow-students, concluding that only the English ones had any talent. His compositional efforts sometimes met with derision, and he rejected his appointed composition teacher.74 Grainger’s attitude to German culture became ambivalent and he maintained thereafter a generalised anti-German sentiment which helped define his identity, drawing parallels between personal and national struggles: ‘For me the war (my war against Germany in music) began 14 years before 1914’.75

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71 Pear, ‘Grainger on race and nation’, p.25.
72 Grainger to Henry Balfour Gardiner, 28 May 1929.
73 Macintyre, Concise history of Australia, p.112.
75 Grainger to Herman Sandby, 9 December 1937.
Grainger was thus also reacting to the international political situation. During the Boer War the Graingers, perceived by the Germans as English, suffered anti-British feeling. Many years later Grainger recalled, ‘The insults heaped upon me in Germany at the time of the Boer war [...] drove me into a lifelong need to revenge my race and show to the world that an Australian (even when a little boy) cannot be teased and insulted with impunity.’ The need for Percy to differentiate himself from Germany and demonstrate British loyalty was also an issue with his parents: in 1897 for example John Grainger sent his son a patriotic book, W.H. Fitchett’s highly popular *Deeds that won the empire*, and several works by Kipling, in response to suggestions from Rose that Percy was becoming ‘Germanized’. This literature immediately caught Percy’s imagination and inspired the first of his many Kipling settings.

Racially, Grainger conflated being Australian with being part of the (superior) British race:

> I don’t know what you mean by ‘developing personality’. I was born of British stock. Isn’t that enough? I know that all my feelings (even the hatred for my own race I sometimes feel) are British & that I will always know how to behave in the British way. I don’t need the recognition of other people to give me confidence in this matter. [...] I was born right—I don’t have to ‘develop’. I am happy thru & thru: happy in my race, happy in my art, happy in my marriage. [...] I don’t have to behave morally—I am good. In other words, I am an Australian!

Australians in the early twentieth century generally saw no contradiction in identifying as both Australian and British, nor as both nationalist and imperialist, illustrated for example by Australia’s enthusiasm in following Britain into both the Boer and First World Wars. This also had racial implications, and motivations for Australian Federation included a wish to preserve white racial ‘purity’. Henry Parkes proclaimed, ‘The crimson thread of kinship runs through us all. Even the native-born Australians are Britons [...] We know

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77 Grainger to Scott, 19 November 1947.
79 Grainger to Alfilda Sandby, 30 March 1940.
82 McLachlan, p.172.
that we represent a race […] for the purpose of settling new colonies, which never had its equal on the face of the earth." By locating his Museum in Melbourne, Grainger could put his birth-town on the world’s musical map. He could also express his gratitude to Melbourne for enabling him to study overseas. But most importantly, by choosing Melbourne over New York or London for his Museum Grainger was making a clear statement about his Australian identity. As Macdonald points out, in the nineteenth-century nationalist culture in which Grainger was imbued, ‘just “having a museum” was itself a performative utterance of having an identity’.

Gillies describes Grainger’s ideal Australian as:

a creative, Nordic spirit, self-reliant in the face of the tyranny of distance and the harshness of climate. […] a robust, hungry, lustful man—and no ‘sissy’. […] blond hair, blue eyes and rosy skin, […] an English speaker, but ideally shunned words of un-Nordic origins […] Grainger’s Australian was British, and saw no shame or contradiction in that fact, but […] while the Australian was British, the Britisher was quite different from the Australian, particularly because of his class-consciousness and lack of gumption; […] he shared with the settler on the South African Veld, the Canadian prairie and the Scandinavian Far North the sense of pioneering and conquering of vast spaces […] a dweller of the Pacific region.

I agree with Gillies’ conclusion that Grainger’s hypothesized Australian identity was in step with the vision of his times and indeed, of ours, in which the resourceful, colonial, outback image is still heavily promoted, despite Australia’s urban concentration. Grainger’s ideal man shared many characteristics of the late-nineteenth century Australian bushman image: practical, disliking affectation, an improviser, independent, loyal to his mates, sceptical about religion, egalitarian, hospitable, unimpressed with eminent people unless distinguished by physical prowess, rejecting authority, and tending to a peripatetic or

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83 Henry Parkes, Speech at Federation Conference, Melbourne, 6 February 1890, reprinted in Sally Warhaft (ed.), *Well may we say...: speeches that made Australia* (Black Inc., 2004) pp.6–7. For discussion of an Australian (white) ‘race’ superior to its forebears see for example Palmer, pp.31–33; White, pp.76–84.
84 Grainger to Senator Neil O’Sullivan, 8 December 1952.
85 Macdonald, ‘Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities’, p.3.
'rolling stone’ lifestyle. Grainger however rejected other characteristics of the Australian Legend: taciturnity; rough and ready manners; swearing, gambling and drinking; and scepticism of intellectual and cultural pursuits. Grainger also idealised the pioneer legend, which in Australia had strongly nationalist implications and involved courage, enterprise, hard work and perseverance, to tame a harsh new environment. The pioneer legend was democratic in that it transformed humble selectors into nation-builders and suggested that all could achieve success if they showed the right qualities. As with Grainger, the legend largely ignored party politics but in the early twentieth century took on racial connotations. No doubt the legend resonated with Grainger’s belief in himself as a musical pioneer. His ideal man also had elements of the ‘digger’ archetype which gained currency after Gallipoli: ‘a soldier rather than an officer; an amateur rather than a professional; representing, if not a classless society, then at least not an hereditary ruling class.’ Like the bushman and pioneer legends upon which it depended, the nation-building Anzac tradition also looked back to a pre-industrial, rural life, and grew from racial and imperial assumptions and national insecurity; the valiant defence of Australia was part of the valiant defence of the British Empire, which in turn had been established by the great British race.

‘A chance for all to shine in a starry whole’: Grainger and Australian democratic values

Grainger believed Australia was a ‘democratic’ nation, and attributed some of his musical and personal characteristics to the late nineteenth-century ideal of Australia as a working man’s paradise, leader in social and electoral reform, a democratic New World, free from

90 Hirst, pp.28–29. Grainger collected commercial images along these lines; a series of postcards from Kerry’s Series 9, ‘Pioneer life’ include ‘An outpost of civilization’; ‘Double banking over a Billabong’ showing a team of labouring oxen; and ‘River Murray’. Kerry’s Series 23 includes ‘By forest and plain’ showing a herd of cattle; ‘On the Wollondilly’; ‘Mounted police and native black trackers, far North, South Aust.’; ‘A mail coach change’.
94 Grainger to Basil Cameron, 9 June 1952.
the Old World class struggles and inequalities. This apparently radical Australian vision actually reflected a romantic yearning for antipodean freedom and innocence. Although it led to significant measures in suffrage, education, trade-unionism and social support, many of Australia’s supposed virtues were exaggerated. During this period of intense Australian nationalism, which encompassed a post-Federation sense of democracy, Grainger wrote of Australian ‘democraticness’, illustrating his views of the relationship between a composer’s nationality and his music:

[T]his here is Australia in its special speciality, in its particular noblest mood. No Sunday frock garb to impress or holiday prettiness to entice, but a great grand general average:—what Bach’s many-voicedness is to music. No Napoleon like individualistic theme of Beethoven, or wantonness of Wagner, or fieryness of Tshaikowsky, or husbandry of Haydn, or ecstasy of Chopin, and so on, a.s.o, but the week day-like, enduring, unerring graft & grind of a Bach Fugue; grim glamorless greatness which lifts largest in the end. And men’s life spilt like water on this Way towards the Gold. Numberless dead, found by the railroad layers as they went. […] / What a trip for me. My most beloved land for many many 100s of miles.

In 1906 Grainger wrote, ‘Remember that I come from a new country where the freedom & independence idea is the biggest virtue, & that further as a socialist & democrat the idea of anyone belonging to anyone is a perfect nightmare […] to me.’ True to Australian egalitarianism, Grainger lauded the working man over the aristocrat, and the amateur, versatile ‘all-round-man’ over the professional specialist. Grainger in proclaiming democratic ideals made comparisons between Australia and America. This reaction against ‘the feudal military brass pomp of the Old World’, was part of a widely accepted view in the nineteenth century, that the new ‘Anglo-Saxon’ societies—North and South America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—were ‘in advance’ of Europe, being brash, young, egalitarian and materialistic, although culturally inferior. Of these, the United States

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97 A term coined by Grainger meaning an appreciation of equality between people; a sense of democratic values. See for example ‘Percy Aldridge Grainger’s published compositions, 1st editions’, Museum Legend, 2 November 1938 (Appendix p.15).
98 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 16 January 1904.
stood out as the archetypal new society. Well into the twentieth century, comparisons between Australia and America were frequent. In the program note to his *Marching song of democracy* (composed 1901–1917), dedicated to the memory of Walt Whitman and inspired by seeing the George Washington statue at the 1900 Paris exhibition, Grainger wrote ‘I felt a keen longing to play my part in the creation of music that should reflect the easy-going, happy-go-lucky, yet robust hopefulness and the undisciplined individualistic energy of the athletic out-of-door Anglo-Saxon newer nations […] the buoyant on-march of optimistic humanitarian democracy’. The program note to his *Colonial song* also drew parallels between Australia and America.

Thus Grainger shared many Australian ideals prevalent around the turn of the twentieth century. He was unusual however in interpreting Australian democratic values as inseparable from Australian music: ‘As an Australian I felt it my duty to restore to modern music the musical democracy (defined as “a chance for all to shine in a starry whole”) it had enjoyed in religious music from the 13th century up to & including Bach.’ To achieve musical democracy Grainger eschewed the concerto which raised the soloist above the orchestral players. He tried to enable musicians of all standards to play his music by publishing easy versions; substituting instruments to suit the available level of musicianship; and developing ‘elastic scoring’ for varying instrumental combinations. Significantly, this contrasted markedly with the more common late-nineteenth century Australian view of democracy and newness as incompatible with high culture. I argue that Grainger’s creation of an autobiographical museum in itself reflects his democratic Australian viewpoint. Museums are usually the creations of people or organisations of power, influence or authority: originally royal or aristocratic families; in Grainger’s time usually governments (particularly in Britain and Australia); sometimes wealthy and powerful...

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101 White, pp.47–52.
104 Grainger to Cameron, 9 June 1952.
107 White, pp.56–58.
individuals with a philanthropic or memorialising urge (particularly in the United States). Grainger felt equal to adopting this model as a means of promoting and memorialising himself. Further, he felt no compunction in placing his Museum in a university, another bastion of (intellectual) authority and privilege, which he never attended and for which, as an institution, he had scant regard.

Grainger therefore combined typical Australian nationalist and egalitarian ideals with aspirations to high cultural achievement, all parcelled up in a museum—a typically nationalist medium—but, most unusually, focussing on a living Australian individual. Grainger’s stated primary subject of his Museum was musical composition ‘during the period in which Australia has been prominent in music—say from about 1880 on.’ He did not claim that the subject matter of the Museum itself was primarily Australian, but its ostensible scope was delimited by an Australian factor. By conflating the supposed beginning of Australia’s musical prominence approximately with his own birth date, Grainger was conflating his own life with his nation’s cultural history, a narrative he then expressed through his Museum displays.

A ‘theatre of memory’ and mausoleum
Grainger was unusual but not unique in creating a personal museum to express in concrete form his relationship with his nation of origin. Another museum combining nationalist narrative with autobiography is Il Vittoriale degli Italiani, the final home of Gabriele d’Annunzio (1863–1938), a celebrated Italian writer, flamboyant military hero, and right-wing, nationalist political identity. The Vittoriale, although a house museum, is like the Grainger Museum autobiographical and nationalistic. It was created by its subject during his own lifetime, with a view to establishing a public memorial to himself and his contribution to his nation’s history. Its ambitious scale reflects D’Annunzio’s greater financial resources and government support, and arguably his even greater sense of self-importance and national significance than Grainger’s.

108 ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
By the end of the First World War, D’Annunzio was a well-known writer, military hero, and potentially powerful political figure, aged in his fifties. Feeling dissatisfied with Italy’s territorial losses under the Treaty of Versailles however, in September 1919 he seized the Croatian port city of Fiume (Rijeka) which had been excised from Italy, and ruled it despotically until he was ousted by the Italian government in January 1921. Again feeling disappointed, uncertain, and disoriented, D’Annunzio purchased a substantial eighteenth-century farmhouse set in extensive grounds, which he gradually transformed into the Vittoriale. According to Woodhouse:

For most of his life D’Annunzio’s sole concern was self-gratification and glory [...] to create a work of art from his life and to immortalize it in words. [...] And when inspiration for creative writing ran out, after his expulsion from Fiume in 1921, he spent the next sixteen years in the creation of a vast physical artefact which might reflect his life and achievements: the Vittoriale [...] the reward of victory as well as the symbol of victory itself, and the estate constituted a theatre of memory guaranteeing D’Annunzio immortality.

Thus, like Grainger, D’Annunzio began creating his memorial when he had achieved celebrity but his most artistically fruitful years had ended. Unlike Grainger however, D’Annunzio received significant government support for his project, albeit arising from cynical motives; Mussolini supported the Vittoriale’s creation in order to negate D’Annunzio as a political rival. D’Annunzio transformed the estate into an ostentatious monument to his life and political beliefs, and eventually into his mausoleum. He covered the facade with emblems, coats of arms, statues and bas-reliefs, all recalling incidents from his life, while filling the interior with objects ranging from casts of famous sculptures to bric-à-brac and personal mementoes. He named the rooms after his personal philosophical and literary preoccupations and decorated spaces with mottoes and proverbs, many referring to his literary works or military exploits.

112 Woodhouse, pp.4–5.
113 Bonadeo, p.146; Woodhouse, p.369.
114 Woodhouse, pp.372–375.
In 1923 D’Annunzio declared: ‘Everything here has, in fact, been created or transfigured by me. Everything here bears the stamp of my style. My love for Italy, my cult of memory, my striving after heroism, the presentiment of my country as it will come to be, all these things are embodied here, in every search for a line, in the matchings and clashings of colours.’ He added a war museum displaying the car from his triumphant march into Fiume. Under a grand cupola hung the aeroplane from his celebrated wartime propaganda flight over Vienna. His torpedo boat was exhibited behind the house, while projecting impressively from a hill was the prow of the battleship Puglia from his Fiume campaign.

In 1930 D’Annunzio commissioned a mausoleum on the site’s highest point, modelled after ancient Roman triumphal arches. He is interred there among the sarcophagi of nine of his comrades-in-arms from Fiume, an eternal flame burning in honour of the memory of his mother and of motherhood. D’Annunzio, like Grainger, Loti and Moreau, shared a close psychological bond with his mother. His deep sense of loss was related to the war rather than to a personal bereavement such as Grainger’s, but he felt this national diminishment equally keenly.

Unlike the Grainger Museum, the Vittoriale became a place of pilgrimage even in its creator’s own lifetime. While vastly larger and more extravagant than the Grainger Museum, the Vittoriale also positioned its creator’s life in that of his nation. Grainger never visited the Vittoriale although he may have heard of it in the 1930s through Arnold Dolmetsch, who had been friends with D’Annunzio from 1897. Grainger liked D’Annunzio as a writer; in 1912 he commented favourably on his play Gioconda (now in the Grainger Museum), given to him by its Dutch translator, Jeanne Salomonson Asser.

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117 Singley, p.12.

118 Woodhouse, p.367.

119 Ibid., p.380; Website, Vittoriale; Singley, p.9.


121 Grainger to Karen Holten, 23 November 1912, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.483.

122 Gabriele d’Annunzio, Gioconda, treurspel, uit het Italiaansch door Jeanne Salomonson-Asser (W. Hilarius, 1900).
In any case, Grainger and D’Annunzio each adopted a medium commonly used for national aggrandizement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the museum—to memorialize in a strongly visual way his own perceived contribution to his nation’s history.

**Grainger’s views on race**

‘I care nothing for myself as an individual (& nothing for my personal opinions), but only for myself as part of a wolf-pack—part of a tribe, or race, or nation.’

Although Grainger’s Australian nationality was important to him, his perceived racial heritage, which he eventually dubbed ‘Nordic’, was even more important. ‘According to my inborn feeling the nationalist who feels so strongly local as to forget the race tie between his branch of his race-tree is a race traitor.’

This was in a historical context where ‘biology had come to represent destiny.’ Gillies and Pear have convincingly demonstrated that race was Grainger’s primary framework for interpreting the world and art, taking precedence over any other point of view. They are rare however among Grainger scholars in seeking to understand but not excuse or explain away Grainger’s racism and anti-Semitism. In the introduction to their anthology of Grainger’s letters they ask, ‘was this man, on balance, more a cosmopolitan or more a bigot?’, contrasting Grainger’s ‘wonderful and progressive statements of musical universalism’ with his views on the superiority of Nordic music and peoples. They conclude that he was a bigot.

When Grainger liked somebody he would describe desirable aspects of their appearance or personality in racial or national terms. If someone couldn’t be squeezed into the desired stereotype, they became an exception to the rule; the rule itself was never questioned.

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123 Grainger to Scott, 2 December 1947.
124 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 8 June 1919.
This reflected the concept of national ‘types’ which emerged in the nineteenth century alongside the emergence of the nation-state. 129 From an early age Grainger commented on physical and psychological characteristics supposedly typical of a person’s race, and the superiority of some races over others. He came to believe that the Nordic races were superior to all others, that this racial superiority was accompanied by a musical superiority, and that he was part of that élite. By using a broad definition of that term, encompassing not only the traditionally understood Scandinavian peoples but also the British, Dutch, Irish, and white Australians and North Americans, Grainger attempted to reconcile his Australian and Nordic identities, and imagined inherent relationships and similarities between individuals hailing from opposite ends of the earth.

Grainger’s racial views are unacceptable today and some authors have excused Grainger’s prejudices by emphasising his cosmopolitan and universalist approach to music and his admiration for the cultural productions of various non-white peoples. 130 And during his own lifetime, Grainger was considered a cosmopolitan. 131 For example, he supported the Brooklyn Music School Settlement, which aimed to develop ‘Native music’ among African-Americans, 132 and other ‘Negro’ institutions. 133 But Grainger’s feelings about African-Americans are betrayed by statements such as his description in 1944 of ‘Negroes’ (as well as Jews) as ‘backward’ and ‘feeble.’ 134 Ella harboured similar prejudices, 135 as did her daughter. 136 Although some writers have attempted to explain away Grainger’s racism and

129 White, pp.64–65.


131 See for example Hughes.

132 Slattery, p.49.

133 Grainger to Roger Quilter, 2 February 1921.


135 Ella Grainger to Grainger, 18 June 1930.

136 Elsie Bristow to Grainger, 26 August 1960.
anti-Semitism or suggest that he at least changed after the Second World War,\textsuperscript{137} Grainger’s letters reveal that he remained anti-Semitic his entire life.\textsuperscript{138} From the 1940s Grainger toned down his public statements,\textsuperscript{139} but probably because he knew that overt anti-Semitism was less acceptable, rather than from any fundamental change of heart. Grainger’s ability to sustain professional relationships with individual Jews appears to be more a result of their tolerance of Grainger’s bigotry than of his acceptance of their background.\textsuperscript{140}

In any case, the frequency and sheer quantity of racial references in Grainger’s writings throughout his life demonstrate that the whole issue of race was one of great concern to him, producing anxiety and contradictory feelings which he sought to reconcile through his strange theorising.

Grainger believed that his racial views were innate: ‘As a quite young child I showed my inborn emotional appreciation of race.’\textsuperscript{141} He probably acquired at least the germ of his racial bias from his mother and her family. Rose’s father was a hotelier who would not admit Jewish patrons.\textsuperscript{142} When fair-haired, blue-eyed Rose was considering marriage to the dark-haired, dark-eyed John Grainger, her mother warned her against having any dealings with dark-eyed people as they had been the source of all her troubles in life. Rose later attributed her marital unhappiness to this perceived miscegenation, passing on this view to Percy.\textsuperscript{143} When later trying to position himself as a Nordic, Grainger harboured underlying unease about his ‘mixed’ inheritance: ‘[Rose] seemed the very sum & essence of all Nordicness boiled down to a point of concentration […] Beside her I (tho I have points of

\textsuperscript{137} See for example Taylor, \textit{Running pianist}, p. 30; Thérèse Radic, \textit{Australian music biography and the skew of cultural context: changing viewpoints to assess significance} (University of Western Australia, 1994) p.14; Dorum, p.197; Bird, pp.60, 87.

\textsuperscript{138} Grainger, ‘Round letter’, 5 March 1944; Grainger to Sidney Harth, 14 April 1952; Pear, ‘Educator-at-large’ (thesis), pp.236–238.

\textsuperscript{139} Harris, ‘Nature of Nordicism’, p.25.

\textsuperscript{140} See for example the correspondence between Grainger and Heinrich Simon.

\textsuperscript{141} Grainger to Rose Grainger, 8 June 1919.

\textsuperscript{142} Bird, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.5–6.
beauty rare in men) am a mulatto. Similar negative attitudes towards mixed-race people, common in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, fed into government policies such as the removal from their families of Australian Aboriginal children of mixed descent.

The Nordicists believed that the Nordic race had been the creative force of western civilisation since ancient times. Grainger too connected race with cultural achievement. From childhood he was inspired by the Icelandic sagas, an enthusiasm shared with his mother. Grainger admired Magnusson’s and William Morris’ translation of Grettir’s saga, describing Morris as a ‘genius’ which he defined in racial terms: ‘a man who feels greater responsibility for his race, or for mankind, than ordinary men’, because Morris ‘saw where England was going (towards socialism, towards amalgamation with Scandinavia & Iceland) better than any other of our artists.’ After reading historians such as E.A. Freeman he lamented the Norman domination of the Anglo-Saxons from 1066. He returned to this theme time and again and claimed that these beliefs strongly influenced his music:

By the time I was 10 or 11 years old I had read Freeman’s “History of the Norman Conquest”, excerpts from the “Anglo-Saxon Chronicle” and George Webbe Dasent’s English translation of the Icelandic “Saga of Grettir the Strong”. This last mentioned story immediately became, and has always remained, the strongest single artistic influence in my life, providing me […] with an ideal example of what Nordic art should be […]. Out of the Freeman book the Battle of Hastings had become (as it still is) an acute personal tragedy. My duty as a composer seemed clear: to turn back, in my music, the tide of the Hastings battle, by celebrating all seemingly Old English (Anglo-saxon) and Norse characteristics, by ignoring, as far as possible, all seemingly Norman traits and influences and those derived from the civilization of the Roman Empire.

144 Grainger, ‘My mother and her son’, p.15.
146 Engs, pp.103–104, 162–163.
147 Grainger to Dorothy Nicholson, 10 January 1939.
148 Grainger, 1936 inscription on The story of Grettir the strong, translated by E. Magnusson & W. Morris (Longmans, Green, 1900).
150 ‘Grainger’s published compositions’, Museum Legend.
As discussed earlier, Grainger proclaimed Australian democratic ideals. But at the same time he harboured racist views about the ideal Australian community of the future. In 1903 for example he commented from Brisbane on Australia’s racial policies:

Brisbane has lovely little spots […] but God keep me out of the place […] / Quite nice for a short stay, but it’s a blot on Australia. / Full of Chinese, Kanakas, & worse still ½ breeds, & chaps likening Colombo Eurasians. And the whites too, all bung-faced, sallow, puffy, sloppy-built, undersized; no look of pride, uprightness, or toughness. A right-thro’ immoral hole too, by all accounts. Sure as I’ve been thus far of a doubtless noble to-come for the rest of the places seen, like sure I am that here trouble will one day arise. / To let lower races in in itself shows weakness in the stock; folk must be clean mad after the example of the USA & all past history, to beckon in colored & lower-race work into a land that as yet has no race-hatreds or -wars within itself, & need have none. / To think of spoiling an almost alone-standing chance like Australia has! It riles me so that I’m all the time in a state of annoyance & rage—so uncalled-for, so shortsighted, narrow-eyed.\(^\text{151}\)

Here Grainger was reflecting widespread Australian thought of the day on racial purity, the common belief that mixing the races, particularly with Asians, would lead to mental, moral and physical decay. Racial prejudice, fear of racial decline, military invasion, and economic competition from non-British immigrants were major elements of Australian nationalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the White Australia Policy\(^\text{152}\) remaining in place until the 1960s.\(^\text{153}\) Thus the apparent contradiction between Federating Australia’s striving for a society free of the injustices and class inequalities of the old country on the one hand, and discrimination against certain groups on the other, was resolved by a belief that racial and cultural homogeneity would help give the new Australian society coherence.\(^\text{154}\) Alfred Deakin stated that ‘The unity of Australia is nothing, if that does not

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\(^{151}\) Grainger to Rose Grainger, 1 November 1903, in Dreyfus (ed) pp.25–26.

\(^{152}\) The nationalistic ideal that Australia should be populated only by ‘white’ people: those of northern European descent. Steps in this direction dated back to restrictions in the various Australian colonies against non-European, particularly Chinese, immigration from the 1840s; a more comprehensive legislative approach came with Federation in 1901.


\(^{154}\) Tavan, pp.11, 17; Rickard, *Cultural history*, pp.114–115; White, pp.111–112; McMinn, p.124.
Chapter Three: Race, nation, empire, museum

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imply a united race.\textsuperscript{155} Australia’s first Federal legislation restricted non-European immigration and facilitated the deportation of ‘non-whites’.\textsuperscript{156} Grainger always supported the White Australia Policy.\textsuperscript{157} And there would have been no reason for his expatriatism to have negated his Australian racist views. Although he had left Australia as an adolescent, the two countries in which he lived most of his life—the United Kingdom and the United States—also had racially discriminatory immigration controls and in America, internal systems of administrative discrimination against African-Americans and native Americans.\textsuperscript{158}

Physical appearance and vitality, sexuality and racial pride converged in Grainger’s mind. In 1908 he wrote to his mother from Australia:

There were some heartcheering specimens of Australian boyhood there today, young fairlings diving & threshing about like fishes. I have never seen at English baths such lovable figures (with a very slightly womanish touch to them) […] One chap in particular, fairhaired, blue-eyed, sun tinged on a very fair skin, with the straightest thinkable legs, & a delicious richness & flowingness of form about his arms, shoulders, thighs, legs, but no trace at all of stomach, & a dear honest, broad, rather smoothly-round typically Australian face (nearer the German than the real English type is). I could hardly keep my eyes off, the healthy showing of him gladdened me so, & made me so racially proud. The sexual parts, too, were so astoundingly Grecian; graceful & round & full without being clumsy & floppy.\textsuperscript{159}

The contrast between these ‘fairlings’ of 1908 and the ‘bung-faced specimens’ of 1903 illustrates Grainger’s happy knack for absorbing a variety of ideas which could be applied as convenient, often by drawing sweeping generalisations from particular examples. While the unfortunate Brisbane whites of 1903 were supposedly the result of associating with ‘lower’ races, by 1908, in distinguishing between English and Australian boys, Grainger was reflecting a view held popularly and by some doctors in later nineteenth-century Australia— influenced first by Lamarckism and later by Darwinism—that a distinctive and superior white Australian race would emerge as a result of adaptation to the local

\begin{footnotes}
\item[156] Tavan, p.7; Alomes & Jones, p.136.
\item[157] Grainger to Elsie Bristow, 20 October & 19 November 1955.
\item[158] Engs, pp.10, 14, 115–116; Fredrickson, pp.110–111.
\item[159] Grainger to Rose Grainger, 11 November 1908.
\end{footnotes}
environment. This view lingered into the twentieth century, reinforced by the nationalism surrounding Federation.¹⁶⁰ A tall, slender physique, fair hair, blue eyes and a reddish complexion were seen from the nineteenth century as characteristics of an emerging Australian race.¹⁶¹ As Pear points out, a ‘rosy’ complexion was considered not only aesthetically but ethically desirable, indicating perfect physical and mental vigour.¹⁶² To Grainger, physical characteristics reflected inner qualities which were also evident in a race’s music. For example, he found Nordic music ‘generally more spiritual & deeply emotional than the more frivolous music of the more Southern European races’.¹⁶³

Through the course of his life Grainger developed a definition of the supreme racial identity, which drew upon prevailing influences. As Pear explains, ‘Although many of Grainger’s racial ideas developed early in his life, it was only through his exposure to the American Nordicist writers [1919–1928] that he gained a simple, multipurpose framework with which to view his world and a consistent vocabulary capable of articulating his race-oriented views.’¹⁶⁴ Grainger had earlier described his own race, and his racial ideal, as ‘Anglo-Saxon’. Then it became ‘Nordic’.¹⁶⁵ During this period Grainger met his Swedish wife-to-be: ‘the very vestal virgin of that [Nordic] race’.¹⁶⁶

Even within the Nordic ‘race’, Grainger saw a hierarchy: at the top were Scandinavians, then British, Dutch and northern Germans. Among Grainger’s non-Nordics were Southern Germans and Austrians, while the Northern French were superior to Southern French and Italians.¹⁶⁷ A hierarchy privileging the ‘Nordics’ over other whites, who in turn were superior to the middle-ranking Asian and lowest-ranking ‘black’ races, originated in the nineteenth-century writings of J.A. de Gobineau (1816–1882)¹⁶⁸ and came to Grainger via

¹⁶¹ Palmer, pp.32–33.
¹⁶³ Grainger to Parker, 26 April 1933, p.118.
the American Nordicist writers who were widely read between the wars.169 This ranking of
Nordics—Alpines—Mediterraneans prevailed when the Australian government in 1925
restricted migration from Southern and Eastern Europe.170 Similar restrictions were in place
in the United States from 1924 to 1965.171 The supreme racial identity was described as
‘Nordic’ in many museums. For example the permanent sculptural display Races of mankind
at Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History included a sculpture based on a body-builder
from Brooklyn, naked in classical pose. Originally labelled in 1933 as ‘American, from
Brooklyn New York’, by 1942 it was re-labelled ‘Nordic’ and represented both Europe and
the United States.172

Unsurprisingly, on questions of race Grainger gravitated towards like-minded individuals.
He found for example that the father of his Museum curator—Western Australian
parliamentarian J.M. Fowler (1862–1940)—had written a book claiming that the English
were not originally Celtic or Anglo-Saxon, but Nordic.173 Grainger promoted and published
the book;174 the manuscript remains in his Museum and he even created a large Legend on
the subject, to which Richard Fowler contributed.175 Grainger explained in racial terms the
affinity between himself and the elderly Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, making
explicit his vision of Australians as a Nordic people.176

170 Tavan, p.28; Anderson, Cultivation, pp.159–162.
171 Engs, pp.49–50, 117, 126.
172 Teslow, p.67.
173 James Mackinmon Fowler, False foundations of British history: a new study of British origins (edited by R.H.
    Fowler, published for the author by Whitcombe & Tombs, 1943).
174 See for example Grainger to Richard Fowler, 16 June 1955. The book was well received by J.S.
    MacDonald, then Director of the National Gallery of Victoria. J.S. MacDonald to Richard Fowler, 28
    December 1943.
    227).
176 See Clunies Ross, ‘Nordic revolt’.
Grieg’s behaviour to me was flawlessly fatherly, tender and sweet from the first to the last. It just shows what close ties bind one Nordic composer to another, and it also shows the strange affinity that links Australia to Scandinavia. Their people like ours are a Colonial people. They are still colonizing their own great waste lands—in parts as sparsely populated as Australia—and the percentage of Scandinavians that colonize abroad, in the U.S.A. for instance, is a higher percentage of the home population than that ever sent out by Britain. It seems as if the Australian type in so far as it differs from its British forefathers is largely reverting to Scandinavianism.  

The racial agenda was always important for Grainger in his Museum project. As war was about to break out in 1939 he wrote to his curators about what a disaster that would be:

I fear that the world will become gradually Germanised—which seems to me a worse calamity than war itself. My museum has been, from the first, planned partly to meet such an event. I mean that one of the objects of the museum is to preserve an artistic record of the spirit of freedom & individualism in the art of Scandinavia & other countries before these countries become squashed and Germanised. In my teens this fear seemed very real. After the world war it faded away, for a time. But now it is with us again.  

Grainger’s Museum is not only an autobiography and monument to his own artistic achievements, but a statement on the supposed superiority, both cultural and physical, of his idealised ‘Nordic’ race. ‘The museum shall emphasize all the romantic and personal factors (family characteristics, love-experiences, books that have exerted influences) that make art personal, characteristic, race-typical and emotional.’ In 1949 for example Grainger sent a switch of Ella’s hair to the Museum because ‘All things showing to what racial type a composer belonged are very important to the museum’. The most explicit way in which the Museum promotes Grainger’s racial agenda is his promotion of himself as the ‘first great Australian composer’ and his exclusion from his Legends of non-Nordic composers, discussed in Chapter Five.

Another cultural manifestation of Grainger’s Nordicism was his ‘blue-eyed English’, in which he replaced words of Latin or Greek origin with new words supposedly based on

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179 Grainger to Karen Kellerman, 26 January 1935, quoted in Wrobel, Grainger’s gift, p.22.
180 Grainger to Dorothy Nicholson, 22 February 1949.
living Anglo-Saxon roots. Grainger thought he was thus (re)creating, through a type of linguistic cleansing, a modern version of English as it was spoken before the Norman Conquest. His agenda was ‘democratic’: ‘I have every quarrel with those longer, stuck-up, would-be-learned put-together ((compound)) words […] which […] stand like a fence between the plain man & his road to wider Knowledge’, but racially exclusive: ‘I would do everything to make English uncouth, ungetatable, clumsy, queer, & hard for outlanders to master. I would try & keep its howth as a very queer, cut-off, islandy speech.’ His earliest attempt to use blue-eyed English consistently was in his autobiographical writings from the 1920s and he often used it in his round-letters to friends and relatives. He lodged his writings about blue-eyed English in the Museum. Blue-eyed English is relevant to the Grainger Museum, not only because of the personal significance suggested by his use of it in his autobiographical writings, but because it shows how again, one of Grainger’s seemingly eccentric preoccupations reflected wider concerns of or before his day. Blue-eyed English should be placed in the context of nineteenth-century linguistic activity of European lexicographers, philologists, grammarians, folklorists, publicists, poets and composers in developing vernacular print-languages (including some of the Scandinavian languages which Grainger embraced), language reform and standardisation, and an awakening interest in dialects and folklore collecting, all connected with the formation of nation-states. Grainger was familiar, for example, with the Landsmaal movement, especially the work of the nationalist Norwegian linguist Ivar Aasen. The trend even manifested in Australia with the publication in the 1890s of several dictionaries of


183 Grainger to Robert Atkinson, 1 April 1939, quoted in Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, p.4.

184 See for example Grainger, ‘Round-letter to friends’, 31 March 1946.

185 For example, ‘Nordic English word-list’ and ‘Sketches: Nordic English, Thots on tone-art, a.s.o. 1935—’.

186 Perry, p.126.


188 Clunies Ross, ‘Nordic revolt’, p.56; Grainger to Robert & Elsie Bristow, 22 December 1960, in Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, p.286.
Australian usage. A key figure in nineteenth-century museums, Artur Hazelius, advocated ‘improving’ the Swedish language particularly through spelling regularisation and ‘purification’ from ‘foreign loan words’.

Anti-Latinate attitudes were common in nineteenth-century England. A key figure here was William Barnes (1801–1886), the self-educated son of a farmer whose remarkably varied accomplishments included writing verse in Dorsetshire dialect and textbooks on many subjects including grammar, archaeology and folklore. Wilfrid Mellers’ assessment of Grainger discusses Barnes, who claimed to be upholding ‘our own strong old Anglo-Saxon speech and the ready teaching of it to purely English minds by their own tongue.’

Like Grainger, Barnes saw similarities between English folk-music and Pacific Island music, likening the songfulness of his native Dorset peasantry to Tongan ‘paddle songs.’ Barnes’ book *Early England and the Saxon English* in the Grainger Museum probably belonged to Grainger. Grainger certainly purchased for his Museum Barnes’ *A philological grammar, grounded upon English, and formed from a comparison of more than sixty languages.* Grainger and other nineteenth-century language ‘purifiers’ like Barnes shared views on ‘purity’ of language and the potential for renewal based on indigenous sources.

In his folk-song collecting Grainger recorded not only the song but the singers’ dialects and pronunciation. He was not alone in realising the significance and interest of these regional

190 Hazelius quoted in Hudson, *Museums of influence*, p.120.
194 Mellers, p.160.
197 Clunies Ross, ‘Nordic revolt’, p.54.
forms. In 1873 for example, when the English Dialect Society was founded by the scholar and philologist W.W. Skeat (1835–1912), it already had a vast body of mostly amateur dialect studies on which to draw. The English language was also seen as under threat from the very size and power of the British Empire. The founding of the Society of Pure English in 1913 aimed to prevent contamination and corruption of the language through imperial contact with other races. The Folk Lore Society, founded in 1878, called in 1910 for ‘more looking-inward, more on the English “peasant” than the colonial “savage”’.

Grainger’s style of English writing, aptly described as ‘turgid’ by Perry, and ‘crunchy’ by Gillies and Pear, is reminiscent of his greatest literary idol, Walt Whitman. As Pear points out, Whitman loved collecting robust English words of the Common Man, including slang (for which Grainger also had a penchant). Unlike Grainger and Barnes however, Whitman did not try to ‘purify’ the language; rather he celebrated the diversity of influences on English, envisioning a future American usage which reflected a vibrant young society.

During a visit to Hobart in 1926 Grainger befriended an English-born journalist and local critic Robert Atkinson (1872–1950). The two had much in common, including an interest in folk-music, racial views, Nordicist writings and a desire to purify the English language. Grainger took up Atkinson as yet another fad, offering to publish his translation

202 Perry, p.128.
207 This account of their relationship is taken largely from Michael Roe, ‘Robert Atkinson, Percy Grainger’s “dear over-soul friend”’, Papers and proceedings of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association (vol.28, no.1, March 1981) pp.8–16.
of the work of Hans Sachs, and from 1937 paying him to write a book (never completed), *Our mother-tongue*. In 1953 Grainger wrote to his curator that Atkinson had been ‘the only man I ever saw eye to eye with on language reform, so I would like mementos of him in the museum *very very much*’. He devoted a small Legend to Atkinson, no doubt intended to accompany a display of his manuscripts, and possibly his guitar and concertina, acquired from Atkinson’s widow in 1955, and a plaster relief portrait which Atkinson donated to the Museum in 1935. Again, Grainger was attracted to someone who shared his enthusiasms, and he incorporated this collaboration into his Museum displays.

Grainger defined the focus of his Museum with terms he used interchangeably on different occasions and for different audiences: ‘British’, ‘English-speaking’, ‘Blue-eyed’, ‘Nordic’ and ‘Scandinavian’. While Grainger’s letters and autobiographical writings are full of racial references, his Museum Legends emphasise ‘English-speaking’ and to a lesser extent ‘Scandinavian’ composers rather than ‘Nordics’. Perhaps Grainger realised (or someone convinced him) that few Melburnians in the 1950s would describe themselves (and hence their musical son) as ‘Nordics’, whereas many Australians still identified with Britain.

Scholars differ in their views on the degree to which matters of race dominate the Grainger Museum, just as there are differing views on Grainger’s racism, as discussed above. Pear describes the Museum as Grainger’s main educational project, ‘a self conscious exercise in racial justification’ and concludes that ‘Percy Grainger saw the purpose of the institution as, culminatingly, racial’. Reeves takes the opposite view, more typical of earlier writers: ‘The Museum and its contents may be seen to exemplify Grainger’s universalist attitude.’

I contend that, typical of the museums in Europe and its colonies with which Grainger was

208 Grainger to Richard Fowler, 22 October 1953.
211 reg. no. 01.0771.
212 See for example Grainger to Imogen Holst, 20 February 1956.
213 White, p.162.
well familiar from the 1890s, a major agenda of his Museum was to demonstrate the superiority of the race of its creator(s) by demonstrating the superiority of that race’s cultural output. The Grainger Museum is unusual however in placing Australia (rather than a European nation-state) at this cultural forefront; in highlighting one person as the representative of this superiority; and in focussing on musical cultural output rather than on visual and decorative arts and artefacts.

**A map of Grainger’s empire of ideas**

In this chapter I have argued that Grainger was a product and manifestation of imperial time, place and attitude. He was born on a colonial periphery, during the most active period of European imperialism. He spent five youthful years feeling an outsider in Germany, centre of a rival empire, and particularly during the Boer War—a war of colonial possession between two European imperial powers—he felt the brunt of anti-British feeling. His support came from the local English contingent, establishing a personal loyalty he nurtured for the rest of his life. Grainger and his circle resented the German musical hegemony dominating musical life in Britain, and by extension Australia, and he proceeded to set up a rival, Nordic, hegemony. By defining his ideals broadly, Grainger’s Nordic cultural empire could be greater than the restricted Austro-German musical empire into which he had been born.

In 1901 Percy and Rose Grainger relocated from Germany to the greatest imperial centre of the day, London, which was still considered ‘home’ by many Australians. Over the next decade Grainger travelled widely, not only in Europe but back to the colonial periphery: Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific and South Africa. Throughout this period he visited museums, large and small. During this golden age of imperialism, museums and object-based museum anthropology, Grainger’s principal ideas on a wide range of subjects—particularly race, nationality and musical innovation—took shape; he spent the rest of his life propounding them. His Museum represents significant effort over many years to seek popular acceptance of, and establish a permanent place in the future for, a strongly held set of convictions. These efforts occupied a substantial portion of his long and varied career and I contend they can be described metaphorically as an *empire* in the realm of ideas, art and identity. Nordic racial dentity was the unifying device of that empire, ‘blue-eyed English’ its *lingua franca*. Grainger’s was a cultural and ersatz-racial empire, rather than a
political or geographic one. Aided by his regular travels, quick absorption of Scandinavian languages, blue-eyed English, collaborations with Scandinavians Edvard Grieg and Evald Tang Kristensen, two long-term sexual relationships with Scandinavian women, and his propaganda activities including his Museum, lectures and writings, Grainger was imagining and promoting a community of Nordics, located not only in the traditional Nordic lands of Scandinavia, but in Britain, the Netherlands and 'pioneering' lands such as Australia and North America. Modernism in musical composition was the trading commodity or economic currency of Grainger’s imaginary empire. The establishment of real colonies created new markets for goods produced by the imperial power, and provided new sources of raw materials, at controlled prices, from which to manufacture such goods for sale at home, back to the colony, and elsewhere. Similarly, the creation of a Nordic empire, artistically speaking, could in the future create new ‘markets’ for the music of Grainger and his cohort; it enabled him potentially to argue the significance of his ideas to a wider audience.

Grainger never attempted, of course, to implement his imperial project literally. For example, he was not so naïve as to believe that he could convince the wider community to use blue-eyed English. But the metaphor of colonialism and empire building can illuminate Grainger’s life and in particular his reasons for establishing a museum. Grainger’s imperial efforts consisted of disseminating his ideas, hopefully in ever-widening circles around the globe. His empire would be an imagined Nordic community.

Ironically, Grainger did not generally approve of real-world imperialism: ‘all nations should try to throw off foreign yokes & foreign dominations.’ His view of the Norman Conquest of England as an ‘acute personal tragedy’ also illustrates this. Although, typically contradictory, he sometimes expressed approval of ‘Nordic’ imperialism. But in the realm of ideas Grainger can be described as an imperialist. He had an unwavering

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216 As Anderson observes however, it was precisely those ‘dead’ languages such as Latin or Qur’anic Arabic which, because they were not used in everyday speech, served to unite or even create another type of empire: vast, global religious communities. Anderson, Imagined communities, pp.13–15.

217 Grainger to Hans Kindler, 26 June 1946. See also Grainger to Sandby, 9 December 1937.


219 Grainger to Elsie Bristow, 6 January 1956.
conviction in the rightness and superiority of his own theories on music, modernity, race, nationalism, sexuality and a range of related topics and, wishing to convince others, was an energetic propagandist from a young age. His lifelong campaigning began at the pragmatic level of establishing, with Rose’s help, his reputation as a pianist in order to earn money and be accepted by an influential social class. His next phase was to promote himself, and his circle of composer colleagues, as modernist musical pioneers. Finally he wanted to convince people of the rightness of his wider beliefs, some with mythical overtones: Nordic racial and musical superiority; music as a universal language; ‘all-roundedness’ over specialisation; and the desirability of western musicians and audiences to become familiar with musics outside their narrow canon. When Grainger expressed disappointment or frustration, it was usually caused by his sense of failure at convincing others of his own genius or of his views. Grainger’s belief in the power of a museum to shape, not simply reflect, artistic taste reflected the influential role of museums in his society.220

Throughout the high colonial period, Grainger visited museums in European cities and in the colonies, and this experience influenced him in his wish to establish a museum of his own. During his London years Grainger lived for some time near the South Kensington cultural complex: the Victoria and Albert, Natural History Museum, Geological Museum, Science Museum, Imperial Institute, Albert Hall and Royal College of Music, and he visited the British Museum in Bloomsbury. Even by the 1930s, when Grainger was building his Museum, the arrangement of many exhibits in these large museums remained much as they had in the mid-nineteenth century.221 It is unsurprising that Grainger used the museum device as one of the principal expressions of and monuments to his ‘empire’ and that the anthropological approach underlying late nineteenth-century museum displays on other races is evident in his Museum (a point I discuss in Chapters Four and Five).

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The Frankfurt Group\textsuperscript{222} was central to Grainger’s empire. Following its dispersal Grainger worked hard to maintain contact with its members (other than O’Neill) and to promote them both as a musical school and as individual composers. Armstrong suggests that the group’s continental training not only united its members artistically but when they returned to England it isolated them from mainstream British composition, which they regarded as ‘stuffy and provincial’.\textsuperscript{223} Over the years Grainger chivvied and chastised his Frankfurt colleagues for what he perceived as their shortcomings whether musical or personal, while praising them for their achievements. Members of the Frankfurt Group featured prominently in Grainger’s Museum Legends. From the Frankfurt Group, Grainger’s empire expanded, to include other favoured contemporary composers including Grieg and Delius; folklorists such as Evald Tang Kristensen and Natalie Curtis-Burlin; pre-Bach European—especially English—art music and particularly its proponent Arnold Dolmetsch; and certain non-western musics. He liked to point out similarities between widely disparate cultures, thus linking them in time and place. He cast his empire broadly by, for example, perceiving similarities between Scandinavian and Pacific peoples and their music. As Duclos points out, museums are an ideal place for symbolically linking, through their artefacts, diverse worlds.\textsuperscript{224}

By giving his imagined community its own language, based on a supposedly ‘purified’ yet rejuvenated form of an old language, Grainger was giving this community, or empire, both a unity and an historical past. Anderson argues that languages can generate imagined communities, build solidarities and create a heritage or history.\textsuperscript{225} By discrediting the English language since 1066 as corrupted by a foreign power, Grainger could reposition English by transforming it to blue-eyed and use it to give a unity and history to his actually disparate and ahistorical empire. Just as linguistic endeavour was one manifestation of nineteenth-century nationalism, and by extension in some countries, of imperialism,
Grainger, an excellent linguist, used language to define his own imaginary ideal against the ‘other’.

But it takes more than a common language to create or unite an empire. Smith writes that it requires ‘the fund of ethnic myths, symbols and values, and […] the corpus of ethno-historical traditions, to inspire a sense of cohesion.’ The myths which Grainger used to this end included Nordic racial and musical superiority; Australia as an emerging race and nation based on bushman, pioneer and digger myths; ‘all-roundedness’; and notions of manliness and masculinity. In particular, Grainger’s love of the Nordic sagas and his reliance on folk-musical sources gave his empire a ‘past’, while the desirable Nordic qualities—physical, moral and intellectual—were personified in his idealised ‘all-round-man’. Grainger’s perception of cultural similarities between certain Nordic and Pacific peoples had mythological overtones: ‘The South Seas with their lovable graceful fiery-souled Viking Island races may become a second Scandinavia to me. I intend to learn Maori some day.’ Scandinavia to Grainger was the home of mythical figures such as Grettir the Strong. He also applied Greek mythology to the ‘primitive’: ‘After Icelandic Maori is the most lovely sounding speech I know, heroic, rhythmic, & reckless like the former. But it is an added joy to not only read it, but hear it said sung & chanted out of bare brown dancing bodies built like Greeks.’ This was a common primitivist trope; the titles of ethnographic texts such as Malinowski’s *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* or Frobenius’ *Atlantis* reveal the tendency to perceive ‘primitive’ peoples through the lens of western myths.

I propose that Grainger’s Museum can be read as a map of this imaginary empire. He called his didactic display panels ‘Legends’, reminiscent of the legend of a map. Grainger placed himself at the centre of the scheme: ‘The composers represented in the Museum appear for the most part in the chronological order of my contact with them, or in the order of their

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226 Smith, ‘History and modernity’, p.57.
227 See for example Grainger to Eric Fenby, 10 September 1948.
228 Grainger to Balfour Gardiner, 10 February 1909.
229 Percy Grainger to Herman Sandby, 11 August 1909.
artistic importance in my eyes, and not in accordance with their year of birth’ and ‘I have tried to limit all statements about composers and their works to things and happenings, personally witnessed by me, or communicated by the composers in letters and conversations.’ Thus his museum-map is also a map of Grainger’s life journey through his empire.

Museums, collections and exhibitions have long served a mapping function. The princely Wunderkammer for example, aimed to ‘recreate the world in miniature around the central figure of the prince who thus claimed his position as sovereign’, and ‘played a part in the mapping of new lands using artefactual rather than cartographic symbols to make accessible what would otherwise remain inaccessible to the domestic viewer’. Quatremère de Quincy characterised Rome, which he considered the archetypal museum, as ‘a sort of three-dimensional mappamundi, which offers a condensed view of Egypt, Asia, Greece and the Roman Empire, the ancient and modern world.’ In nineteenth-century anthropological exhibits, ‘Chronological diversity was mapped onto spatial diversity; and the “primitive” was relegated to other time and space.’ The nineteenth-century museum ‘offered a vision of the world to scale, a one-to-one correspondence between unknown reality and culturally generated representation.’ Anderson has analysed the close articulation between maps, museums and censuses (a type of statistical mapping) of indigenous populations according to race, religion, or other typological categories. European-style mapping and museums created a ‘totalizing classificatory grid’ for the delineation and control of colonies. Corbey describes the international exhibition as ‘an inventory and census of the whole world and the whole history of humankind […] constructed in a way reminiscent of medieval maps of the world—mappae mundi, offering an encyclopedic survey of the world as creation—or of cabinets of curiosity during the

231 ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
234 Quoted in Décotte, p.57.
235 Dias, p.48.
236 Black, p.31.
Chapter Three: Race, nation, empire, museum

Renaissance.\textsuperscript{238} Grainger’s Museum shared these encyclopedic and cartographic qualities by virtue of the wide range of material types in the collection and his attempt to demonstrate that every aspect of a person’s environment played a part in shaping the person.

Just as museums and international exhibitions included representations or actual examples of the racial other to enable the European visitors to glory in having advanced so far above their ‘remote ancestors’,\textsuperscript{239} and major nineteenth-century projects aimed to map the peoples of entire empires through photography and anthropometry,\textsuperscript{240} Grainger’s collection and his artefact displays (although less so his Legends) included representations of those Pacific Island and other ‘primitive’ peoples whose music he sincerely admired but whom he nonetheless considered less advanced than, and ultimately inferior to, the Nordic. The Nordicism mapped by Grainger’s Legends was largely English from the point of view of composers: all the other composers honoured in the Legends were English or of English descent, other than the Norwegian Edvard Grieg;\textsuperscript{241} the only other Scandinavian represented was the folklorist Evald Tang Kristensen.\textsuperscript{242}

All empires have a centre, and therefore a periphery. I contend that Grainger created a centre for his empire at the Museum in his birth-city, Melbourne. He chose this place, despite having left Australia at age thirteen, being educated in Europe, settling in America, and having strong ties with Scandinavia. Just as other representations of empire had their ‘centre’ chosen for strategic or political purposes (medieval European maps placed Jerusalem at the centre of the world; the World Missionary Exhibition held at the Vatican in 1924 put Rome in this position; international exhibitions centred on the metropolitan capital of the nation-state),\textsuperscript{243} Grainger chose Melbourne because he saw himself as the first

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{238} Raymond Corbey, ‘Ethnographic showcases, 1870–1930’, \textit{Cultural anthropology} (vol.8, no.3, August 1993) p.340; see also Pomian, pp.49–60.
\item\textsuperscript{239} William H. Schneider, ‘Race and empire: the rise of popular ethnography in the late nineteenth century’, \textit{Journal of popular culture} (vol.11, no.1, Summer 1977) p.98; Corbey, ‘Ethnographic showcases’, p.341.
\item\textsuperscript{240} Edwards, \textit{Raw histories}, pp.134–148.
\item\textsuperscript{241} Delius, although of Dutch and German descent, was born in England and is generally considered an English composer.
\item\textsuperscript{242} Grainger included the German Karl Klimesch in the Legends not as a composer in his own right but as Grainger’s composition teacher. ‘Karl Klimesch’, \textit{Museum Legend}.
\item\textsuperscript{243} Corbey, ‘Ethnographic showcases’, p.358.
\end{itemize}
great Australian composer, not the first great American, British or Scandinavian composer.

White Australia was a younger society than White America. And the most important influence on Grainger’s life, his mother Rose, was Australian. Grainger could not position himself at the cultural centre in Britain, the United States or Scandinavia, but he believed he could in Australia.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that because Grainger’s views on race, national identity and Australian democracy were consistent with the predominant popular views of his early years, his expression of these views through his Museum made it very much a museum of that time. Grainger was embedded in the imperial and racial attitudes of the turn of the twentieth century, both by inheritance of familial opinions and prejudices and through exposure to wider influences. He was therefore naturally drawn towards a tool and manifestation of racial hierarchy, nationalism, and imperialism—the museum—to tell his story and to be the centre—in his birth-town of Melbourne—of his own empire of ideas.
CHAPTER FOUR:
The typical collector?

In this chapter I argue that in the ways he acquired and used objects made by or representing the racial ‘other’, Grainger was typical of collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As discussed in Chapter Two, to collect and domestically display artefacts was a typical activity of Grainger’s day. In Chapter Three I explored Grainger’s collecting in the light of his racial beliefs. Here I challenge the perception, which Grainger himself often promoted, that he was eccentric, independent-minded, uncompromising and embattled. Grainger’s collecting of, and writing about, non-western objects and music has been cited as evidence of a special sensitivity towards and understanding of the originating peoples, their lives and cultures. I argue however that his interpretation of ethnographic objects is typical of collectors and museums of his time, rather than demonstrating any special sympathy or insight. His use of ethnographic collectibles as part of his process of racial and cultural self-definition contradicts rather than supports Grainger’s supposed uniqueness. It counters the unfortunate popular, and sometimes scholarly, perception of Grainger (and his Museum) as a curious one-off which implies that he is historically irrelevant.

Grainger the eccentric?

Many who met Grainger commented on his charm, vitality and personal magnetism.¹ Beginning public life as a concert pianist, his youthful precocity and unusual stage demeanour probably started the Grainger ‘legend’. His blonde, blue-eyed looks were favoured at the time and added to his singularity.² Controversial statements, and unconventional acts in his personal life such as marrying Ella Ström at the Hollywood Bowl, perpetuated this reputation. Such headline-grabbing stunts, the popularity of his

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lightweight compositions over his more serious ones, and posthumous gossip over his relationship with his mother and his flagellantism, have not only characterised Grainger as different but have dominated and trivialised public perception of Grainger and therefore of his Museum.3

Grainger’s musical originality and innovation have been justifiably acknowledged. One critic in 1912 called Grainger ‘a choral composer in a line by himself.’4 *Etude* magazine in 1924 described him as ‘easily one of the most original and individual minds of the present-day music world […] He thinks for himself.’5 Donald Mitchell commented on Grainger’s ‘inspired oddity’.6 Peter Pears wrote of his ‘characteristic originality—simple, direct and honest.’7 But claims to Grainger’s originality or uniqueness more broadly have often been taken too far. For example, C.W. Hughes wrote in 1937 that Grainger ‘differs greatly from most present-day music makers. He has sought out and been stirred by influences that have had little effect on most of his contemporaries.’8 Such eulogising has continued since Grainger’s death. Foreman, for example, introduced Grainger as ‘a giant in so many fields […] In days when a blinkered musical establishment had a tight grip on the current scene, Grainger was somehow suspect—he did not slot into any convenient pigeon-hole […] He was not musically respectable.’9 Bird wrote that ‘Grainger was a visionary. He was also a maverick, an outsider, an anarchist with a thousand bees in his bonnet and in thrall to no “cause” or leadership but his own’—both ‘mad’ and ‘a genius’.10 Marjorie Tipping wrote ‘he will always be a person to confound both critics and devotees. The paradox that was Percy Grainger defies any rational analysis.’11

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3 Cooke, ‘Editor’s note’, p.593.
5 Pears, ‘A personal introduction to Percy Grainger’, in Foreman (ed.) p.27.
6 Hughes, p.21.
7 Foreman (ed.) p.11.
8 Bird, pp.xx, 205–206.
I argue that Grainger does not defy rational analysis, and he knew this himself, describing himself as ‘a small bundle of inherited traits worked over and changed into unrecognisability by influences’. Close consideration of any aspect of his creative output or educational or propaganda activity reveals influences from his contemporaries and his predecessors. Grainger borrowed heavily from a vast range of musical, philosophical, historical, racial, visual and other sources. Certainly he gave them his own distinctive twist but he did not develop, either as a man or as a musician, in isolation, and his Museum is testament to this fact. Musically, Grainger assiduously acknowledged influences and sources, and his definitive public statement on the purpose of his Museum emphasises this:

> Believing that achievements in musical composition are seldom the result of a purely individualistic effort on the part of a composer, but are oftener the outcome of a coming-together of several propitious circumstances or fructifying personalities, I have tried in this Museum to trace as best I can the aesthetic indebtedness of composers to each other (the borrowing of musical themes or novel compositional techniques) and to the culturizing influence of parents, relatives, wives, husbands and friends.

In Chapter Two, I discussed Grainger’s motivations for collecting and preserving the material evidence of his life and of his circle of intimates. I described how Rose’s suicide prompted his autobiographical Museum, in which he could acknowledge her memory and her role in moulding him into Australia’s first great composer. I also argued that Grainger’s responses to death and loss, or the fear of them—which included an urge to collect and preserve—were not unique, the similar responses of Pierre Loti and Gustave Moreau being further evidence on this point. I demonstrated that Grainger grew up in a world in which collecting was a common and respectable activity. I continued this argument in Chapter Three by examining Grainger’s racial and national identity and how these were expressed in his Museum. I discussed the role of museums and expositions in promoting imperial values and I interpreted Grainger’s Museum as a map of his own empire of ideas, led by his imagined Nordic race.

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12 Grainger to D.C. Parker, 26 May 1933.
13 ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
In this chapter I reinforce the point that much of Grainger’s collecting was typical of his time and served aims common to many collectors and museums of his day. In examining his collection of non-European material, I contend that Grainger’s contact with indigenous cultures was limited and superficial in nature. It occurred largely through the constrained circumstances of tourism, museum-visiting, souvenir-shopping and gift-giving, rather than through any sustained or meaningful interaction with the people themselves. This was despite Grainger’s popular reputation as a knowledgeable scholar of indigenous cultures. I will argue that it was this very superficiality that enabled Grainger to maintain his Nordic-supremacist views while still appreciating the aesthetic aspects of non-Nordic cultures through music, languages and the visual arts.

Grainger’s collecting of English and Scandinavian folk-music was different however; he spent more time with ‘his’ folk-singers, particularly the English ones, recorded not only their tunes and texts but appearance, dialect and occupation, and sympathised with their often difficult predicaments. He believed these people were of the same ‘race’ as his mother so he felt some affinity with them on that score. Grainger saw such ‘yeomen’, a term he also applied to his mother’s family,14 as the dying representatives of a lost, pre-industrial utopian Britain. This attitude, common among European collectors and museums, was one of the reasons for the rise of a new museum genre from the 1870s: the folk museum. It aimed to preserve the material evidence of dying folk cultures, considering all classes of society worthy of such consideration,15 and influenced Grainger in establishing his Museum.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Grainger’s collecting of ethnographic artefacts and his appreciation of non-western music have been used to portray him as a man of universalist values, while he in fact subscribed to a racial hierarchy of which those tribal peoples who had created the very artefacts he acquired, occupied the lowest rung. Notwithstanding this contradiction, Grainger publicised his universalist views in journals and lectures.16

16 For example, Grainger, ‘Universalist attitude’, pp.4–12.
Grainger’s collection includes material made by, or depicting, indigenous peoples of New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Fiji, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Indonesia, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Borneo, Tahiti, Hawaii and North America. But to acquire or display the cultural material of a particular people does not necessarily represent universalist ideals. The abundance of ethnographic displays in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century museums that aimed at demonstrating the creators’ inferiority, as discussed in Chapter One, is ample testament to this. Grainger’s methods of arranging ethnographic items in the Museum reflect his attitudes to the cultures that created them. For example, the 1938 Museum arrangement included a showcase of mostly ‘South Sea’ and South African beadwork and related items; and another of mostly American Indian beadwork. The ‘South Sea’ case was backed with a South African jackal-skin rug or ‘Karos’, against which were placed numerous objects artistically arranged. By combining many ethnographic objects together in the one display Grainger was probably recalling traditional ethnographic exhibitions, where a number of visually similar objects, spears for example, were arrayed into geometric patterns or trophy groups; the aesthetics of each object were not important but the entire group was transformed by the curator into aesthetic work. These aesthetic techniques, typical of late nineteenth and early twentieth century museum displays, were also imitated by private collectors. Grainger combined in the one showcase artefacts from many different cultures, the main aim being a visually pleasing effect. Grainger only vaguely documented each artefact’s origins, many items having no individual display labels, or labels documenting only Grainger’s method of acquisition. Dates of production are not noted, whereas Grainger was assiduous in dating the numerous drafts and arrangements of his own compositions and his encounters with their original

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17 Percy Grainger and the arts of the Pacific (exhibition catalogue, Grainger Museum, 1979).
18 Unknown photographer, slide dated Dec 1938 and annotated in unknown hand; also Richard Fowler, envelope to Grainger, postmarked Melbourne 18 January 1939, enclosing photographs of displays taken in December 193; Photographer unknown, inscribed verso in Grainger’s hand: ‘Left case: South Sea Island beadwork, etc. Right case: American-Indian beadwork, etc (all collected largely by Rose Grainger) Dec 1938’, small sepia-toned photograph.
19 For example, in 1926 Grainger and Ella in Chicago visited the ‘South Sea Island glories of the Field Museum’. Grainger, ‘Helen & Paris’, p.22.
20 Edwards, Raw histories, pp.63–64.
22 Boxes: ‘Grainger’s original museum labels & descriptive notes/ tags’ and ‘Grainger’s museum labels & tags’.
sources such as folk-singers. His display of his own first edition scores demonstrates his emphasis on chronology when interpreting his own work. 23 Similarly, in creating the ‘effigies’ of himself, relatives and the Frankfurt Group, Grainger attempted to depict specific, named people attending a particular event (Harrogate Music Festival) at a particular moment (1929), as represented in a particular photograph in Grainger’s collection. I discuss this further in Chapter Five.

Photographed later but probably reflecting Grainger’s own setup is an assortment of western and Asian decorative art items such as ceramic vases, a carved wooden or lacquer-ware stool, an enamelled clock, and inlaid wooden boxes. 24 Although few have their own labels, they have not been arranged into a pattern like the ‘primitive’ ones, suggesting that each is to be contemplated on its own merits. The separation of European and courtly Asian from South Pacific/South African/American is also telling, reflecting as discussed in Chapter One the earlier ‘elevation’ of Indian, Chinese and Japanese objects from functional object to artwork in the western museum, compared to the later western acknowledgement of tribal work as ‘art’.

How can one reconcile Grainger’s belief in Nordic superiority with his admiration for the music and art of peoples of Polynesia, Africa, and parts of Asia, people far lower in his racial hierarchy? How in the one essay could he describe Aboriginal people as ‘the most primitive savages’, but their tunes as ‘lithe and graceful as snakes, and highly complex in their rhythmic irregularities.’? 25 Black describes collectors’ difference in attitude towards the merits of objects (or music) on the one hand, and the people who created them on the other, as ‘the paradoxical purpose of collectibles […] at once satisfying the possessor’s curiosity for the strange and confirming his superiority.’ 26 Western collectors might sing the praises of the skill and workmanship of ‘native’ craftsmen, enumerating the beauty, practicality and materials of artefacts they create(d), at the same time denigrating the

24 Simon, p.90.
25 Grainger, ‘Universalist attitude’, p.6. It was commonly held in the late nineteenth century that the Aboriginal Australians occupied the very lowest rung on the ‘evolutionary’ scale; see for example A.L. Fox [Pitt Rivers], ‘Principles of classification’, pp.301–302.
26 Black, p.50.
craftsmen’s race. Coombes gives the example of the ‘Benin bronzes’, which when displayed in England in the late nineteenth century were admired for their beauty, skill and refinement, while the people of Benin were despised as cruel and degraded savages. Explanations given at the time included suggestions that the European colonial presence itself led to degeneration among native societies, a view reminiscent of the romantic concept of the noble savage. Perhaps the bronzes were created by a different, possibly Egyptian or European race, now gone from Benin. Either way, such fine artworks did not trigger a reassessment of their makers’ allotted position on the evolutionary scale. The Benin bronzes were treated as ‘freak’ creations.27

Similarly, the supposed presence of an earlier race was used to explain the existence of large stone circles in Victoria’s western plains, and great earthworks in America.28 Ancient monuments studied by colonial experts in the Dutch East Indies up until the 1930s were thought to have been built by a different, usually immigrant, race, rather than by the forebears of the current colonised people. Or a supposed process of racial degeneration meant that the contemporary natives were no longer capable of matching their ancestors’ achievements. This view, reinforced by the surrounding rural poverty compared to the colonisers’ wealth, again ‘justified’ foreign rule.29

Thus the inherent contradiction between Grainger’s racialist views and his admiration for many non-western cultures was not unusual for his time and milieu. Such inconsistency would not have caused Grainger, or his family, to pause and reconsider. I contend that in Grainger’s case it was also the superficial nature of his interaction with non-western people, coupled with his lifelong habit of categorising people according to race and attributing to them characteristics which he believed were typical of that category, that enabled him to love, for example, African-American music but consider ‘negroes’ racially inferior. His focus on material culture probably compounded the situation. Just as most nineteenth-century Britons would have gained any scant knowledge of China almost solely

28 Griffiths, p.40.
through commodified artefacts, Grainger gained much of his ‘knowledge’ of non-western societies through collecting their material culture or seeing it displayed in museums. Although he read books relating to these cultures, he rarely discussed (in his letters) his findings, being far more strongly affected by the material culture, and of course by the music. While on tour in 1908–1909, for example, Percy and Rose developed a great interest in Polynesian culture, mostly through visiting museums. Grainger had little personal contact with Maori people on this trip but made judgements based largely on their material culture, much of which he saw at museums or tourist sites: ‘The Maoris are a mighty interesting race in lots of ways. Their carvings, houses, canoes, weavings, & tattoo patterns enthral me greatly, & mother & I spend many happy hours at the museums.’ Decades later, Grainger reminisced that the museum-visiting had led him to suffer ‘the birth of a new taste, a new artistic life.’ His Legend on the subject recalls his and Rose’s joy:

In spite of (or because of?) South English forefathers, on both sides, my mother showed an unusual cosmopolitanism of taste, from girlhood on. When she and I were in New Zealand, on tour with Ada Crossley, in 1909, she went, by herself, into the museum in Christchurch and was fascinated by its display of S. African and other beadwork. Curiously enough, I happened to go to the same museum the same day and came home raving about the beauty of the beadwork—not knowing my mother had been kindled by it too. […] So we entered a phase of intense mutual interest in South African and South Sea beadwork and kindred arts, buying at that time in Auckland (Eric Craig) and Sydney (Tost and Rohu).
Grainger, upon reading a book on Polynesian mythology and history,37 expressed disappointment in the Maori legends (although acknowledging that ‘one mustn’t ever trust translated stuff too far, the more so when an ordinary Englishman has had a hand in it’)38 in contrast to his enthusiasm over Maori decoration and artefacts: ‘Their woodcarving is simply gorgeous. Something so sharp & keen about it. […] Reminds me of Norway & the Stave churches.’39 Grainger was not alone in his dependence upon artefacts; Griffiths describes how in the late nineteenth century, British folklorists and Australian collectors of Aboriginal artefacts ‘both worked within a tradition that disdained the native informant and preferred to work with mute “relics” and “surivals”’.40 Western artists influenced by tribal imagery generally used as their source objects observed in museums or bought at flea markets, not items they had collected themselves; even Gauguin’s idyllic Pacific visions were often fabricated from sources such as photograph albums and guidebooks.41 Collecting the artefacts of ‘primitive’ peoples involved travel, whether by collectors, dealers or agents. Brown observes that the period 1880–1925 (which parallels the ‘golden age’ of museums, the zenith of imperialism, and the museum age of anthropology) saw an increase in cross-cultural interactions through Europeans’ overseas travel: ‘some people collected on their travels; others travelled primarily to collect.’42 Many museums’ anthropological and folkloric collections were formed at this time. Sydney’s Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences for example acquired numerous Pacific items from missionaries, planters and dealers in the late nineteenth century. The fad for such items coincided with the shaping of what from 1901 became the White Australia Policy, which led to deportation of Pacific Islanders from Australia.43 Artefacts representing these peoples’ cultures were prized while the people themselves were considered undesirable neighbours. But many nineteenth-century anthropologists did not travel; they were dependent on networks of missionaries, colonial administrators and others to send them artefacts, photographs or first-hand

37 George Grey, Polynesian mythology, and ancient traditional history of the New Zealand race as furnished by their priests and chiefs (Routledge, 1906).
38 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 1 January 1909, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.257.
40 Griffiths, p.42.
42 Brown, ‘Collecting material folklore’, p.33.
accounts. As described in Chapter One, forms of anthropological study that emerged further into the twentieth century—examining kinship, social structures, languages, and other intangible aspects of culture—required extended fieldwork and revealed the relative inability of objects alone, unsupported by contextual knowledge or other data, to provide meaningful information to outsiders about the originating culture.

During the New Zealand visit mentioned above, Percy and Rose purchased postcards such as examples from the Auckland Museum, depicting artefacts: the prow of a war canoe, a carved doorway, the ‘Maori Court’. On seeing a Maori ‘Pa’ (meeting house) Grainger commented, ‘It looked modernly made, the roof of galvanized iron, & European paint used everywhere instead of stains, but [my emphasis] the carving of the front & the crisscross wall-screen decorations [sketch] inside appealed to my ignorant enthusiasm like anything. Lovely color effects & seemingly never repeated variety of pattern.’ Grainger had no interest in the builders’ incorporation into a traditional art form of imported materials and techniques; typical of collectors and museums of his day, he defined authenticity narrowly, as those elements free of outside influence. This ‘ethnographic puritanism’ continued in many museums until (at least) the 1990s.

Statements such as the following by David Tall have credited Grainger with a deeper understanding of other cultures than I think is actually the case:

His interest in the ethnic folk-art of the Pacific extended far beyond the music; he collected artefacts, mixed freely with the natives, wore grass skirts and learned to make up their intricate decorative beadwork. He was one of the first true ethnologists to look beyond the surface sheen to the very soul of the people by taking

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44 Edwards, Raw histories, p. 32.
45 Some would argue that little has changed; Hudson’s selection of 37 ‘museums of influence’ in the 1980s, for example, includes not one ethnographical museum, because he felt that these communicate only the surface rather than the essential features of societies. Hudson, Museums of influence, pp. vii–viii.
46 Contents of parcel of postcards, inscribed on one of the envelopes by Grainger, ‘Grainger Museum / Postcards from Auckland Museum / N.Z.’.
47 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 14 January 1909.
48 O’Neill, p. 197; Clifford, Predicament, pp. 231–232.
part in their lives. One of the stated aims of his museum in Melbourne is as a centre for ethnic study in the Pacific. 50

Grainger did not ‘mix freely with the natives’; any interactions were ad hoc, brief and superficial. His experience of their cultures occurred largely in the manipulated and controlled contexts of tourism, souvenir-shopping, and visits to museums or international exhibitions. For example, his oft-quoted early interest in Chinese and Japanese music is probably based on music heard during childhood visits to Melbourne’s Chinatown and ‘Japanese village’. 51 Grainger’s hearing of a Javanese Gamelan orchestra at the 1900 Paris Exposition and probably his seeing Asian instruments at the Ethnographical Museum in Leyden a decade later inspired his use of ‘tuneful percussion’ instruments. 52 In 1900 in Paris Grainger also heard some Egyptian double reeds, and he heard Indian reed players at King George V’s coronation, all of which inspired some of the unusual instrumentation in Hill song no. 1. 53 A visit to Belgium’s Ethnological Museum in 1913 inspired Grainger to use musical glasses. 54 He was also familiar with the Crosby Brown collection of ethnographic musical instruments at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. 55 Most of the Pacific, South-East Asian, Chinese, Australian Aboriginal, African, African-American and Native American musics he admired and promoted were revealed to him through commercial recordings, or occasionally the recordings of other collectors such as Walter Baldwin Spencer in Australia, 56 Alfred J. Knocks of New Zealand, 57 or Natalie Curtis-Burlin in America. 58 Grainger did not continue his earlier musical fieldwork in America although he was in contact with, and greatly admired, Curtis-Burlin, and collector-composer Howard

52 Bird, p.171; Grainger, ‘Ere-I-forget’, p.49; Hughes, p.104.
54 Slattery, p.139.
55 Grainger, ‘What effect is jazz?’, p.593.
Percy and Rose’s interest in Native American culture was expressed through the purchase from dealers of clothing and decorative items, beadwork being a particular favourite. A pair of moccasins inspired Grainger’s cover design for his composition A tribute to Foster. These items were incorporated into the domestic display of beadwork which later made its way to the Museum (see Figure 6 in Chapter Two). Similarly Grainger made no real efforts to record European-American or African-American folk-music, with the exception of the notation of six ‘Negro’ songs shortly after his arrival in 1914. Influenced by Delius’ tales of the musical inspiration from his early years managing his father’s orange plantation in Florida, Grainger had often expressed a dream to collect ‘Negro’ music, but when he finally had the opportunity by moving to the United States he did not take steps to fulfil this wish. Nor did he collect the folk-song of Australia or Germany, those other places in which he spent extended periods of time.

Although Grainger, through his frequent travels, had more opportunities for direct engagement with indigenous peoples, particularly of Australia and the Pacific, than did the average westerner of his day, he was probably typical for his time in gaining impressions of other cultures primarily through artefacts made for sale or collected by museums, supplemented by postcards and books. Poole observes that most postcard and photograph collectors ‘had no personal knowledge of the places and peoples whose images they so avidly collected. Far from recreating the intimacy of the traveller’s souvenir, these collections instead seemed to echo the rather different aesthetic drive for order that animated both the colonial bureaucrats in their archives and the racial “scientists” in their
laboratories. 66 Many postcards were out-of-date by the time they were purchased; Kerry’s South Pacific postcards, of which Grainger owned several sets, were produced in the 1880s–1890s but still sold in Sydney in the 1930s. 67 Although Grainger made rare efforts to meet local musicians, 68 most of the recordings he acquired were sold commercially. Grainger’s 1909 encounter with Polynesian music was mostly through the medium of phonograph recordings of Maori and Rarotongan (Cook Island) music made by Alfred Knocks at the 1906–1907 Christchurch International Exhibition. 69 At Knocks’ home Grainger made copies of the cylinders with the intention of transcribing them, a project never completed. Grainger also made some original recordings of Maori singers he met through the Lincolnshire-born President of the Polynesian Society. 70 But he did not pursue this to any great extent. After returning to Europe he undertook to learn some of the Maori language, but not with the aim of communicating directly with Maori people or reading their literature. His motivations were partly aesthetic (he loved the sound, especially the rhythm, of the language regardless of meaning) and partly for an idiosyncratic mode of appropriation—he adapted words for correspondence with his mother and girlfriend, and later with his wife, giving them new meanings, usually of an intimate or sexual nature, often combined with Scandinavian or English words. 71

Despite the relatively brief and superficial character of Grainger’s interactions with indigenous cultures, his responses were strong and sincere, and influenced his own creative output. His introduction to Maori music, for example, through an English painter, A.E. Aldis, in Melbourne, had a memorable effect on seven-year-old Percy:

[Aldis] would keep the marrow-curdling Maori rhythms hammering away by the hour—or so it seemed to me—so that when I heard the Maori speech at Rotorua in 1909 it was a like a home-coming for me. […] And when I came to set the Faeroe

66 Poole, ‘Our Indian’, pp.42–43.
68 For example, Arts of the Pacific, p.11 (note 14).
69 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 21 January 1909.
70 Dreyfus (ed.) p.265 (note 8); Maria Wong, ‘Grainger’s ethnomusicological interest: his early years’, In a nutshell (vol.7, no.3, September 1999), pp.8–10.
71 Arts of the Pacific, p.10; Gillies, ‘Grainger’s word games’, p.147; Dreyfus (ed.) p.xxiv.
Island “Father & Daughter” […] in 1908–1909 it was the heroic sonorities of Mr. A.E. Aldis’s Maori recitations that I was trying to re-enact.72

For many years Grainger continued to express a wish to revisit the Pacific to collect and study its indigenous music, but this never eventuated.71 While briefly passing through Tahiti, the Cook Islands and New Zealand in 1924 he attended a Rarotongan musical performance but to his disappointment, only non-indigenous music was performed as it was a ‘steamer day’, the program chosen for the benefit of tourists.74 To Grainger this was not ‘authentic’ and therefore of little interest. During this same trip Grainger’s friend Dr Hamilton Russell took him to visit the renowned photographer J.W. Lindt (1845–1926) near Melbourne. Grainger was fascinated by Lindt’s depictions of the ‘South Seas’ natives, their houses and so forth,75 well known among anthropologists and general public alike.76 Grainger and Ella also visited the Pacific during the 1930s but Grainger’s only resulting work on music encountered was the transcription from commercial recordings of Javanese, Balinese and some other musics,77 and in a more diffuse sense his use of tuned percussion. I am not belittling the usefulness, quality or authenticity of commercial recordings but Grainger’s dependence on them belies claims of his being an ethnographer or anthropologist of originality and depth.

Although Grainger made several lengthy Australian visits, he made no arrangements to hear Aboriginal musicians. His only documented encounter with Australian indigenous music was (again in 1909) when he visited Baldwin Spencer78 and transcribed three of Spencer’s 1901 phonograph recordings of Aranda songs:

I heard Prof Spencer’s phonograph records Friday evening, & we spent an unforgettable time there […] What lies stand in the Musical Histories re Australian

73 Arts of the Pacific, pp.8–9.
74 Grainger, Round letter, May–June 1924.
75 Grainger, ‘Anecdotles’, p.32.
76 Edwards, Raw histories, p.40.
77 Tall, ‘Grainger and folksong’, p.65.
78 Professor Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860–1929), renowned biologist and pioneer anthropologist, Foundation Professor of Biology at the University of Melbourne 1887–1928 and Director of the National Museum of Victoria 1899–1928.
native music, that it moves over a few notes only & is mere repetitions of primitive phrases; not at all! Generally over an octave in compass, a tune is often made up of 4 or 5 distinct phrases, & is no less complex than many European tunes. / I took down 3 interesting tunes which you will hear. / Spencer’s records are excellently taken. He says the Inland blacks are wholly harmless to nice sensible whites. / He & they chummed grandly. No wonder. Such a man would find few races hostile.79

Spencer owned significant personal collections of art and artefacts,80 which Grainger presumably saw during his visit. But despite many visits to Australia over the years, Grainger collected surprisingly little Aboriginal material for his Museum. A pair of clapping sticks and a didjeridu were not originally acquired by Grainger but donated by a Mr P.C. Cole in 1940.81 There are a few books in Grainger’s library on the subject of Aboriginal Australia, including one by A.G. Bolam,82 to whom Grainger wrote appreciatively in 1926, pledging support for future work.83 In 1943 Ella Grainger gave a series of lectures on Australian subjects. To illustrate one lecture Percy made a copy of an ‘Australian Blackman bark painting, a Like-eth of red, black, white and yellow snakes & stringy-bark blossoms—a gem of art!’ Grainger painted the copy onto wallpaper, and also made enlarged ‘photostat’ copies of ‘other Blackman art—shields, throwing-sticks, magic-bearing planks, and the like’.84 Grainger’s postcard collection includes images such as ‘Australian wild flowers’ showing an Aboriginal woman’s head emerging from a waratah; ‘Aboriginal medicine men’; ‘Aboriginal fighting men’, ‘Aboriginal mia mia’, ‘Aboriginal camp’ depicting a family wearing European-style clothes, the man holding a carved weapon; ‘Aboriginal gin’; and ‘Kerry’s Australian post cards series 49: Aboriginal mystic Bora ceremony’. Tasmanian postcards include ‘The last of the Tasmanians: Wm. Lanne and Trucanini’.85

Most of the indigenous-made artefacts in the Grainger Museum were purchased during Grainger’s travels or given to him by friends, family or students. The prosperity of shops

79 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 16 May 1909.
80 Rasmussen, _Museum for the people_, p.122.
81 _Arts of the Pacific_, cat. nos 51 & 52.
82 A.G. Bolam, _The trans-Australia wonderland_ (Modern Print Co., 1925).
83 Grainger to A.G. Bolam, 5 August 1926.
84 Grainger ‘Round letter’, 18 January 1943.
85 (bay 1, box 49).
such as Tost and Rohu in Sydney indicated a solid trade in hand-made artefacts from the Pacific, a market which grew substantially in the 1890s and which served not only amateur collectors but museums with scientific pretensions. Victorian and Edwardian-era European and colonial homes were often decorated with these artefacts on walls, mantelpieces, side-tables or piano-tops. Many such items acquired by Grainger are listed among his 1936 Museum consignments: a Papuan or other Island palm-leaf plaited fan, given by an explorer to Rose when a girl: ‘such native work has a free shapeliness I would like to see in my own music’; the South African jackal-skin rug, given to Grainger by a young Australian man he met in Johannesburg in 1904 and of which Percy and Rose were ‘both very proud […] I viewed it as new-world wildness and freshness as against European stuffiness’; a Chinese stringed musical instrument (Grainger was unsure whether to call it a ‘fiddle’ or ‘mandolin’), given by his friend Everard Feilding in around 1905; a ‘Javanese (or other Dutch-Indian) gong, gong-holder and beater, bought by R.G. (together with my Dutch-Javanese pupil Willy ?) in (The Hague?) around 1912’; two Chinese vases given to the Museum by Antonia Sawyer (Grainger’s first American concert manager) in memory of Rose; a South African statue of a woman and child (Grainger calls it an ‘idol’) given to him by an African girl pupil in London whose name he could not recall. There are artefacts from places Grainger never visited, such as the Solomon Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea and Borneo, many purchased in Auckland or Sydney, others originally belonging to Ella. From Tost & Rohu Percy and Rose also acquired South African artefacts brought back to Australia by returning Boer War soldiers.

In 1909 Grainger purchased some ‘Kanaka’ beaded armbands from a Dane in Bundaberg, Queensland. While Grainger made detailed observations on, and appreciated, the materials, design and craftsmanship of these and other beadwork objects, he manifested little or no interest in their meaning, purpose, use, history, or the identity of their

86 Edwards, Raw histories, p.74; Stephen, Pirating the Pacific, p.12.
87 A boomerang casually sits as an ornament on a ledge in Grainger’s house in White Plains.
88 The arrival at their London home of this South African ‘Karos’ was a significant event which Rose reported to Grainger while he was touring Scandinavia. Rose Grainger to Grainger, 9 October 1904.
90 ‘Native art & stage fright’, Museum Legend.
91 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 11 May 1909.
maker(s). Although his and Rose’s aesthetic response was strong, the objects’ visual qualities inspired Grainger not to learn more about their makers but rather to create his own copies or adaptations, through a method of his own devising. In other words, Grainger’s most enthusiastic response to the art of other cultures was to appropriate it. Such appropriation is yet another manifestation of European imperialism, not artistic exchange.92 In 1909 Grainger purchased from a Scotsman in Sydney some South African beadwork, including a belt which he subsequently copied as a necklace for his mother (Figure 7). Grainger spent much time and energy on this project, carefully documenting the process. He mailed the finished necklace to Rose, with a long letter:

Before I show you the nigger original you must promise to take one last look at my copy first, as you will never care to behold mine afterwards. To begin with, the original is so wondrously much better done, flatter & smooth, & the colors a treat, chalky & unseethroable & glowing, not glassy, flashy, & thin in tone like the only ones I could get. / I bought my beads from a wholesale bead merchant in Sydney after much racing round93

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93 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 11 May 1909.
Upon returning to London, Grainger dressed up in a combination of a Melanesian skirt bought from Tost & Rohu, the South African-inspired beadwork necklace, and two Pacific armbands purchased in Bundaberg, to be photographed in front of what appears to be a Pacific Island woven mat (Figure 8). This combining of items from different cultures to create one ‘outfit’, a ploy commonly used by commercial studio photographers who mixed native artefacts from different cultures as props, reinforces the impression that aesthetics were Grainger’s main interest. Fidelity to place, meaning, intent, culture or style was of little relevance, just as he used Maori rhythms in a setting of a Faeroe Island folk-song. This reflects the exoticist trope as described by Nicholas Thomas: ‘The object of fascination is appreciated, but only so far as it matches or seems to respond to the desire of the traveller, artist, writer, scientist or collector. The exoticist attitude is not generally marked by an interest in understanding how other people see themselves.’

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Figure 7: Percy Grainger, Beadwork ‘collar and tassels’, c.1909; collar 6.0cm wide, tassels 34.0cm long, reg. no. 01.3046.

94 Stephen, ‘Familiarising the South Pacific’, p.70.
taking Grainger at face value, characterising this exercise as ‘dressing up as a South Sea
islander to learn more of their culture.’ 96 Similarly, Reeves describes Grainger’s
engagement with Pacific cultures: ‘He rarely prejudged, and his approach to a new culture
was one of openness and inquiry […] Grainger was fascinated by the people themselves.
This was never superficial, but a genuine and deep concern.’ 97 Another example is the 1941
portrait of Percy by Ella Grainger titled Laird of art which combines a Scottish title with
towelling clothes based on Scandinavian folk-costume, a Maori carving (which still hangs as
a wall ornament in the sitting room at White Plains) against a striped background based on
a woven bedspread also still in use at White Plains (Figure 9). 98

Figure 8: Percy Grainger [Self-portraits wearing Melanesian grass or coconut fibre skirt,
purchased beadwork belt and armbands, home-made beadwork necklace, standing before a
woven grass mat], 12 August 1909, two black and white photographs, Grainger’s catalogue
no. W4-43 and W4-42, reg. no. 99.0500.

97 Arts of the Pacific, p.10.
98 I am grateful to Stewart Manville for bringing this textile to my attention.
Just as Grainger happily combined elements from disparate sources to form one outfit, museum collections from as far apart as New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt and Scandinavia later served as catalysts for the towel-clothes he designed and made originally with Rose and later with Ella. While the clothes had practical benefits of comfort and hygiene, as had nineteenth-century American and European dress reform,99 the aesthetic was also important to Grainger. The ‘old Egyptian cloths and stuffs, (gorgeously rich in colouring)’ which he saw at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1907100 may have been one influence,101 as well as visits to Scandinavian museums: ‘[Beyer]102 showed me a bewitching book […] about Greenlanders, the small tubby Mongolian folk whose dumbfoundingly lovely clothes

100 Grainger to Karen Holten, 31 March 1907, in Dreyfus (ed.) p.102.
102 Frantz Beyer (1851–1918), folksong collector and friend of Edvard Grieg.
Chapter Four: The typical collector?

in the Norwegian Museums have birthed my latest madness [...]’. 103 Rose had given Percy a towel for Christmas 1909, from which to make some trousers, and she had their maid help her make them up. On hearing this he wrote: ‘I am so longing to see the towel trousers. I am going to be gloriously dressed some day. I’m full of dress-plans. Such glorious hints in Xia [Christiania], Bergen & Copenhagen Museums.’104

And around 1910 (after we had both been fired by the beauty of Maori and South Sea Island clothes and fabrics seen in the museum in New Zealand and Australia) my mother mooted the idea of clothes made from Turkish towels—cool in summer, warm in the winter and washable at all times. I leaped at the idea, seeing therein a chance to return to something comparable with the garish brilliance of the ‘skyblue and scarlet’ garments of our Saxon and Scandinavian forefathers [...] Between 1910 and 1914 I wore these clothes while giving many of my lessons in London and continually during my composing holidays in Denmark. In 1932 or 1933 my wife and I took up again this idea of clothing made of toweling and when in Australia in 1934 and 1935 we were amazed by the beauty of the bath towels on sale in Australia—some imported from England, Chekoslovakia and America, but most of them (and among them the most beautiful ones) manufactured in Australia. Here was a chance to show what could be done with the beauty born of machinery—a beauty as rich and subtle, in its own way, as anything made by hand or loom.105

Another inspiration for the geometric patterns on the towel clothes was the clothing of Durban’s rickshaw-runners, whom Grainger encountered in 1904:

Yesterday Durban, which’s landscapes quite pretty, blacks (‘spec Zulus) godlike, whites largely outland & thro’out weedy. No good homegrown colonial-type to be spotted at Durb. But the Zulu ricksha-runners are wholly overmanish; fulsomely headgear with ribbons & cattle-horns & tuniced & breeches [drawing of clothing with caption “the lined shading standing for brilliantest red braiding on snow-white ground” [...] / These bounding black brutes knobby-foreheaded and squash-faced, shining from sweat & polished oil, thus devilishly rigged-up are fine untamed savagery indeed—and the perfect taste of savagery—gentlemen, fighters, brutalists—none of the sage greens & pale-pinks of decency-worshippers. / Give me henceforth blacks.—Northern Aryans or blacks—Indians, Japs, Shems but smallfry alongside these brainless brawlers. Almost as good as us Vikings-at-heart.106

103 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 9 February 1910.
Again, Grainger ‘discovered’ an exotic culture through the typical tourism activities of his day.107 This encounter was recorded in a photograph (Figure 10) very similar to the typical commercial postcards of the time (Figure 11):

![Figure 10: The Bower Studio, Durban, large black and white photographic print, inscribed in Percy Grainger’s hand ‘Percy Grainger & Ada / Durban / South Africa / 1904’ (February 1904), reg. no.99.4700.]

107 Rickshaws were introduced to Durban by European colonists in the 1890s. As a commercial venture targeting the beachfront tourist trade they remain popular today, and buying a souvenir photo or postcard has long been an integral part of this activity, with tourists’ descriptions often commenting on the drivers’ spectacular costumes. Grainger’s other postcards from South Africa include images of a native village; a ‘Zulu Warrior’; the ship Omrah; view of Cape Town; and landscapes.
A later influence on Grainger’s second phase of towel-clothing design may have been textiles displayed in the Herning Museum in Jutland, the traditional centre of the Danish textile industry,\(^{108}\) as well as the costume designs of the Ballets Russes\(^ {109}\) and Isadora Duncan.\(^ {110}\)

In the 1920s Grainger and his secretary and neighbour, Frederick Morse, were photographed wrestling in bathing suits on Grainger’s veranda (Figure 12). Intended as publicity shots,\(^ {111}\) this series may have been inspired by a postcard from the Dahomey Village at London’s 1909 Imperial International Exhibition (Figure 13).

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\(^{108}\) Grainger first visited Herning in 1922 during his folk music collecting trip with E.T. Kristensen and became lifelong friends with the folklorist Hans Peter Hansen (1879–1961) who later became director of the Herning Kulturhistoriske Museum, an outdoor and folk museum established in 1892.


\(^{111}\) Gillies & Pear (eds), *All-round man*, plate 9.
Figure 12: Photographer unknown, possibly Frederick Morse, ‘Percy Grainger wrestling with his secretary, Frederick Morse, they are both devoted to wrestling and enjoy this experience almost everyday that Grainger is in his White Plains home—which is not often’, one of three sepia-toned photographs of Morse and Grainger wrestling, all bearing this caption, probably typed by Percy Grainger, n.d. [early 1922], reg. no. 99.5000.

Figure 13: ‘The wrestlers, Dahomey Village, Imperial International Exhibition, London, 1909’, printed by Valentine & Sons Ltd, one of a set of four postcards from the Exhibition, reg. no.996[3] or 01.3119.

This exhibition was one of a series of colonial and trade exhibitions held in London during Grainger’s years there. As major events receiving considerable press coverage, Grainger
would have at least been aware of them, as they informed popular culture at the time.\textsuperscript{112} The presence of the postcards in his collection suggest he attended the exhibition. Displays of colonial ‘villages’ were a common element of such exhibitions; since the 1870s they had included spectacular performances emphasizing the supposed bellicosity and savagery of Dahomeans and other African men.\textsuperscript{113} The 1900 Paris Exposition, which Grainger attended, included a Dahomey Village.\textsuperscript{114} These wrestling images represented the association in the early twentieth-century western mind between ‘primitive’ races and the strong, virile male body. Many of the postcards of Pacific or other ‘exotic’ women in the Grainger Museum were intended to be sexually titillating.\textsuperscript{115} Grainger was also influenced by the physical culture movement, particularly Bernarr Macfadden, which encouraged nakedness and wrestling.\textsuperscript{116}

**Avant-garde and primitive: ‘twin halves of a cultural whole’**\textsuperscript{117}

Grainger’s interest in indigenous cultures, reflected in his Museum, should be examined in the light of contemporary western attitudes to these ‘primitive’ peoples during the time of high colonialism in which so many of Grainger’s views were formed.

In the early twentieth century, European avant-garde artists such as Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck and Picasso were being influenced by, or were appropriating, African, Oceanian, Asian, indigenous American and other non-western imagery.\textsuperscript{118} They often acquired actual masks, sculptures and other artefacts. Rapid social changes and disenchantment following the First World War further fuelled artists and connoisseurs’ enthusiasm for ‘the primitive’, often triggered by displays at ethnological museums.


\textsuperscript{113} Schneider, ‘Race and empire’, p.106.

\textsuperscript{114} Thomson, *Paris Exhibition 1900*.

\textsuperscript{115} For example ‘Maori girls bathing’; topless women from Durban; topless seductive ‘Fijian girls’; French ‘Bedouin’ girls; *Some Maoriland beauties from original photographs of feminine types of the natives of New-Zealand* (A.D. Willis, 193—).


\textsuperscript{117} ‘Copy of Paul Gauguin’s “Nevermore” picture by Jelka Delius’, Museum Legend, November 1938 (Appendix pp.25–29).

This appropriation undermined established art-historical categories and ethnographers’ privileged role in displaying and interpreting such works.\(^{119}\) It did not however break down the western conceptual dichotomy: nature/culture, myth/history, primitive/civilized.\(^{120}\) Such appropriation was yet another aspect of colonialism: ‘the artistic resources of [African and Pacific] lands and peoples were just as available for exploitation as their mineral and agricultural resources.’\(^{121}\) As Clifford explains, even as late as the 1980s, this appropriation has been interpreted as western creative geniuses ‘discovering’ African sculpture as ‘art’ and perceiving ‘common artistic informing principles’ between tribal and modern works.\(^{122}\) Clifford’s explanation sheds light on the universalist interpretation of Grainger’s attitudes to exotic cultures which I explored in Chapter Three. Grainger’s interactions with non-western music have been interpreted as demonstrating that he, a distinguished composer, could appreciate the qualities of non-western musics which others around him, due perhaps to their prejudices, ignorance or inferior standing as artists, could not.\(^{123}\) Grainger attributed western artists’ appreciation of the ‘primitive’ to the western artists’ genius:

> [T]he present widespread interest in unwritten music (be it European or Afro-American folk-songs and dances or native music from any quarter of the globe) apparently does not emanate from any reaction against the latest iconoclastic developments of our written art music, but that, on the contrary, it is mainly in the ranks of the most highly cultured musicians (men whose depth of heart and brain makes them equally capable of appreciating the glorious creations of the great classics and the no less thrilling achievements of the most extreme modernists of to-day) that we meet with the keenest interest in this ‘back to the land’ movement.\(^{124}\)

Primitivism is essential and integral to defining what western art is.\(^{125}\) Grainger understood this at one level: ‘civilised life and art on the one hand, and primitive life and art on the other hand, were twin halves of a cultural whole that must have flourished long before the

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\(^{120}\) Errington, pp.30–33.

\(^{121}\) Hiller (ed.) p.11.


\(^{124}\) Grainger, ‘Impress’, p.43.

earliest dawn of known history. Creative artists are atavistic as well as progressive. This connection between ‘primitive’ and progressive was reflected in the trend of early twentieth-century art dealers’ selling both modernist western art and ‘primitive’ African objects to collectors who displayed them side-by-side in their homes. It was fashionably avant-garde to collect the primitive.

As Clifford demonstrates, the European moderns’ ‘discovery’ of tribal art occurred at a particular historical moment which saw a growing ‘négrophilie’ mediated through American popular culture: jazz music, African-American boxers such as Al Brown, and the stage performer Josephine Baker. Thus, the new attitude towards African art had strong—but rarely acknowledged—racial implications, tied up with colonialism and ambivalent attitudes to the black body and its supposed erotic, vital and rhythmic powers. Grainger too felt the effects of this trend, both in its earlier years while he was living in London, and later after moving to New York. His In Dahomey (“Cakewalk smasher”) for example (1903–1909) is a ragtime piece based on themes from a comic opera of the same name which Grainger probably saw in 1903, completed in the year a ‘Dahomey Village’ was displayed in an imperial exposition in London. Thus Grainger unquestioningly accepted the popular equation of American ragtime with the people of Benin. Mellers grasps this connection when he characterises Grainger’s method of musical appropriation as ‘a synthesis of natural primitivism with the urbanly demotic […] communal “savagery” fuses with the jaunty virility of the Edwardian music-hall’. In America, the middle classes associated jazz and blues with lewd conduct and undesirable inter-racial mixing. In 1927 Grainger and Ella saw Josephine Baker perform at the Folies Bergères. Her dances included ‘Plantation’, while other performers presented ‘Le marché d’esclaves’ [the slave market]. Many of

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126 ‘Copy of Gauguin’s “Nevermore”’, Museum Legend.
127 Errington, p.64.
129 Reeves, ’Universalist outlook’, p.41; Ronald Stevenson, ’Grainger and the piano’, in Foreman (ed.) p.118; Bird, p.82.
131 Alwyn Williams, ’Jazz and the new negro: Harlem’s intellectuals wrestle with the art of the age’, Australasian journal of American studies (vol.21, no.1, July 2002) pp.1–18.
Grainger’s ‘lust-branch’ books depict women of non-European races as sexual objects. These range from pulp fiction to works with a historical or scientific veneer such as Captive: l’esclavage au Maroc de nos jours [Captive: slavery in Morocco today] (1911); Cinquante ans de flagellations [Fifty years of flagellation] and La flagellation des esclaves aux Etats-Unis [Flagellation of slaves in the United States], Corrections féminines: souvenirs d’un médecin français [Feminine correction: memoirs of a French doctor] and Terre d’esclavage (la vie des femmes indiennes au Perou) [Land of slavery (lives of the native women of Peru)] (1913). Promotional material for other titles such as Felix Bryk, The sex life of African negroes, illustrated with 100 actual intimate photographs taken in Africa by the author, illustrate the popular link between sexual and anthropological material. Bryk is touted as ‘The world’s greatest anthropological authority on the subject’ and the book is promoted as scientific and sociological, dealing with ‘The most vital—and hitherto least understood—question in colonial world-politics.’ A brochure for a book by Professor Paolo Mantegazza which Grainger purchased includes a bonus giveaway:

An anthropological cabinet, being a rare Collection of 500 authentic Racial photographs and illustrations intended as a scientific supplement illustrating hundreds of the racial curiosities in the sexual relations of mankind by Prof. Mantegazza […] Collected, annotated and arranged from Scientific explorations, Museum archives, Field Studies by the Anthropologist Robert Meadows […] Never before in America have cultured collectors had such a cabinet presented for their instruction.

Such titles conflate many of Grainger’s preoccupations, which in themselves reflect wider preoccupations of his day: sexual fascination with non-European women (in images

133 (1882–1957), Viennese-born entomologist, anthropologist and writer.

134 Undated promotional brochure.

135 (1831–1910), Italian medical doctor, Darwinian anthropologist and pioneering sexologist, founder of Italy’s first museum of anthropology and ethnology.


137 Undated promotional brochure.

cultivated for purposes including tourism promotion); the use of academic disciplines of anthropology and ethnology—still seeking legitimacy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—to make respectable far from scholarly modes of thought and illustration; the creation of racial hierarchies; desire and anxiety about the bodies of ‘primitive’ people and miscegenation; and collecting and possessing. Museums, academic anthropologists and popular culture all dealt with issues such as racial ‘purity’ at this time. ‘Scientific’ knowledge and popular imagination overlapped and interacted.

In 1924 Grainger wrote ambivalently of jazz, concluding that there was a ‘vast chasm’ between jazz and composers such as Bach and Delius, reflecting his rather derogatory racial slant on predominantly rhythmic music. Eight years later however he had apparently changed his tune; there is an often-cited anecdote of Grainger introducing a lecture/demonstration at New York University: ‘The three greatest composers who ever lived are Bach, Delius and Duke Ellington. Unfortunately Bach is dead, Delius is very ill but we are happy to have with us today The Duke.’ As so often with Grainger it is difficult to navigate this mass of contradiction. His attribution of jazz’s best characteristics to the influence of Anglo-Saxon folk-music and ‘Nordic melodiousness’ suggests that he was sympathetic to a current (although not universal) American opinion that any cultural achievement by African-Americans was due to genetic inheritance from whites.

Grainger’s interpretation of Delius’s influence on him emphasises Delius’ hearing African-American workers on his father’s Florida orange plantation:

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140 The sexualisation of the ‘noble savage’ in the guise of detached scientific study is discussed in Torgovnick, pp.3–8, 17–18.
141 Coombes, Reinventing Africa, pp.2–3.
142 Grainger, ‘What effect is jazz?’, pp.593–594.
144 Bird, pp.239–240.
146 Barkan, pp.147–148.
Delius [...] did not finally decide to become a composer until he [...] became enthralled with the untutored singing of the Negro workers on his orange grove [...] It was mainly the “call of the wild” that stirred Delius to become one of the greatest composers of all time. So it was quite fitting that the “Nevermore” picture—also born of “the call of the wild”—presided over the Delius music room. /We should remember how many of Delius’s greatest creations were inspired by thoughts of primitive nature [...] / It was this urge to express in art the mood of virgin nature, the spirit of wild races, that drew Delius and me so closely together. This urge is behind my “Free Music”, “Jungle Book Settings” (Kipling), “Hill-Songs 1 & 2”, “Father and Daughter”, etc., and also informs my reverence for the African, South Sea and North American Indian beadwork, for the Greenland patterned furclothes, and for other examples of primitive decorative art displayed in this museum.147

Delius is the subject of four Legends, including one devoted to his wife Jelka’s copy of Gauguin’s painting Nevermore,148 which Grainger went to great efforts to acquire149—together with her portrait of Delius which shows Nevermore in the background150—seeing these as symbols of his and Delius’ shared love for the ‘primitive’ which inspired some of their greatest works. Through this painting Grainger linked himself to Delius, to primitivist thinking, and to his modernist efforts in ‘Free Music’.

Grainger subscribed to the romantic trope of the noble savage: ‘[T]he very strongest and most pronounced root emotion of my life: the love of savagery, the belief that savages are sweeter and more peaceable and artistic than civilized people, the belief that primitiveness is purity and civilization filthy corruption.’151 Grainger wrote this after discovering the Nordicist writers, and as Pear explains, many racist and anti-Semitic tracts of the period manifested ‘a nostalgic primitivism, a romanticisation of the noble savage’.152 To Grainger, artists such as Gauguin, Delius, Robert Louis Stevenson and Pierre Loti all illustrated the rich source of artistic inspiration to white, western artists provided by the ‘uncivilised’ and ‘savage’ qualities of Pacific Islanders and African-Americans.153 Gauguin’s work particularly struck Grainger after a visit to Roger Fry’s influential and controversial exhibition Manet

147 ‘Copy of Gauguin’s “Nevermore”’, Museum Legend.
148 Jelka Delius, [Copy of Gauguin’s] Nevermore, n.d., oil on canvas, 61.3 x 117.5 cm, reg. no. 1972.0040, gift of H. Balfour Gardiner, 1938.
150 Jelka Delius, Frederick Delius, 1912 or c.1925, oil on canvas, 91.8 x 79.0 cm, reg. no.0000.5006.
151 Grainger, ‘My mother and her son’, p.32.
153 ‘Copy of Gauguin’s “Nevermore”’, Museum Legend.
and the post-impressionists in 1910: 154 ‘The very name Gauguin is to me like a gentle angel’s hand laid over modern art, truly a holy-man he, a man near to Gods & women, a man raised & ennobled above antlike male longings & busy [pettinesses]. A sage, & loving father type.’ 155 Grainger was not alone here; Gauguin was the only artist in this exhibition whose works the public really liked. 156

The primitive represented a pre-capitalist utopia of the past, while civilization represented the overly materialistic present. 157 Grainger compared those millions of modern day people whose ‘overworked and arduous’ lives were ‘completely immersed in the ambitions and labyrinths of our material civilization’ with ‘the bulk of uneducated and “uncivilized” humanity of every race and color, with whom natural musical expression may be said to be a universal, highly prized habit that seldom, if ever, degenerates into the drudgery of a mere means of livelihood.’ 158

Grainger suggested that ‘primitive’ music, although technically complex, was psychologically simpler than modern music: it was ‘uncriticised and untaught’. 159 The primitive was undifferentiated, as Grainger lumped together contemporary English farmers, African tribesmen, Pacific Islanders, Russian peasants and old Norsemen: ‘[T]he singing of […] an unsophisticated Lincolnshire agriculturalist of the old school will in essentials approximate more closely to that of Hottentots or other savages than it will to the art music of an educated member of his own race living in a neighboring town.’ 160 He placed primitive people outside linear history, grouping together the cultures of South Pacific and ‘negro’ people of his day with European events of centuries before: ‘Personally, I do not feel like a modern person at all. I feel quite at home in South Sea Island music, in Maori legends, in the Icelandic sagas, in the Anglosaxon “Battle of Brunnanburh”, feel very

154 Dreyfus (ed.) p. 335 (note 4).
155 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 10 January 1911.
156 Torgovnick, p. 85.
157 Ibid., pp. 3–4, 8–9.
159 Ibid., p. 45.
160 Ibid., p. 51.
close to Negros in various countries, but hardly understand modern folk at all.' This ahistorical western perception of ‘primitive’ peoples was common and as discussed in Chapter One was perpetuated by many ethnographic displays. Contemporary ‘savages’ represented ‘prehistoric man’ or the childhood of modern man. Grainger’s perspective reflects the ethnocentric differentiation between two disciplines: anthropology—then the study of timeless ‘primitive’ peoples who were seen as being without history—and history, which Europeans were continually making. Tribal societies represented the distant past of modern civilisation: ‘In […] Polynesian part-songs we can trace the early promptings of polyphony and the habits of concerted improvisation to their very source.’

Grainger asserted that when a ‘primitive’ society adopted European musical influences such as the Rarotongan use of part-singing—an influence from missionary hymns—the Islanders’ use of this ‘foreign accomplishment was completely native in its application.’ Even when the Rarotongan polyphony resulted in discords which in modern art music would be called sophisticated, according to Grainger these musicians were unaware of their own innovation, as they were incapable of grasping the vertical harmonies:

To us moderns the results of this free polyphony makes a seductive complex harmonic appeal, but I doubt very much if the Rarotongans themselves hear their own music in this way, and I am more inclined to believe that they attain their unique results precisely because their exceptionally developed individualistic polyphonic instincts are still free from the kind of harmonic consciousness which art musicians have gradually built up through the centuries.

Thus Grainger asserted that, unlike western musicians, ‘primitive’ musicians had no historical development, no changes in their traditions or artforms, even though a page earlier he acknowledged that ‘No doubt the habit of harmony here [Rarotonga] displayed had been caught long ago from missionary hymns.’ Western musicians gradually build up

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161 Grainger to D.C. Parker, 28 August 1916, in Gillies & Pear (eds), All-around-man, pp.26–27.
165 ibid., pp.51–52.
166 ibid., p.53.
167 ibid., p.52.
a consciousness through the centuries; Rarotongans ‘catch’ a habit but remain fundamentally unchanged.

When enthusiastically praising the music created and performed by the African-American members of New York’s Clef Club, Grainger assumed that these admittedly sophisticated urban musicians still had the ancient native ways in their blood. He attributed a Clef Club musician’s ability to sing a tenor part while playing bass to ‘inherited instincts’; in a white person such executive skill would suggest individual talent and advanced musical training:

   The compositions they interpret are art music, and reveal the strict harmonic habits of the written art, but the case with which those members of the Club who cannot read musical notation learn and remember intricate band and choral parts by heart (often singing tenor and playing bass) and many individualistic and rhapsodical traits in their performances suggest the presence of instincts inherited from the days of communal improvisation. [...] / Musicians who have been thrilled by the passionate but always artistically refined percussion playing of the ‘Clef Club’ can the more easily picture to themselves the overwhelming effect of the Dahoman drumming.\footnote{168}

Grainger’s attitudes to ‘primitive’ peoples and their cultures were contradictory and paradoxical, but reflected views prevailing at the time. For example, a universalist statement such as ‘music is always perfect amongst all races, at all times and in all places, I cannot admit any conception of musical progress that sees music passing gradually from worse to better, and which therefore belittles primitive music or the earliest traceable beginnings of art-music’\footnote{169} is contradicted by his perpetuating as late as the 1930s a discredited nineteenth-century theory\footnote{170} that scales developed over time from few notes to more notes.\footnote{171} Although emphasising that some of the most beautiful melodies used the fewer-note scales, Grainger’s language reveals the underlying conception of evolutionary progress: ‘slightly less primitive scales add one more interval to those already mentioned’ and when modern composers such as Grieg or Herman Sandby used fewer-note scales such

\footnote{168} Ibid., p.55.
\footnote{169} Grainger, ‘Universalist attitude’, p.11.
\footnote{170} Blacking, p.8.
as a pentatonic, they used them ‘unconsciously, of course.’\textsuperscript{172} Similarly, Britain’s leading folk-song collector, Cecil Sharp, perceived musical change as subject to a Darwinian process of continuity, variation and selection.\textsuperscript{173} Thacker observes Grainger’s inability to break away from nineteenth-century evolutionary doctrine.\textsuperscript{174}

Although Grainger had a lifelong interest in and genuine admiration for art and music from many parts of the world and from every era, his vision as explicitly communicated in the Legends was narrow. Only two Legends specifically address non-western cultures: ‘Native art and stage fright’, and ‘Beadwork and other native curios’, and they do so only in so far as such cultures affected or influenced Grainger or his cohort, barely touching on the qualities, characteristics, contexts, makers or meanings of the ‘native’ art itself. They also emphasise the visual arts; surprisingly, the music of these cultures is hardly canvassed. These two Legends were intended to interpret two display cases: ‘Case 3 (South African and Polynesian artefacts)’ and ‘Case 5 (American Indian work)’. This suggests that from at least sixteen display cases set up by Grainger in 1938,\textsuperscript{175} only two were dedicated to non-western art or music. Other Legend references to non-western cultures are largely in passing, such as Maori music in ‘A.E. Aldis: painter and linguist’. ‘Towel clothes’ mentions the influence of Japanese ‘cleanliness’ and Maori and South Sea Island clothes, and in the lengthy ‘Arnold Dolmetsch: musical Confucius’ Grainger briefly advocates study of Madagascan, ‘South Sea’ and ‘Oriental’ music. ‘Sir William Walton, cosmopolitan composer’\textsuperscript{176} begins with a brief mention of Polynesian peoples’ relationship with natural phenomena, as reflected in their languages.

To sum up, Grainger’s understanding of non-western cultures reflected the prevailing beliefs of the turn of the twentieth century: a perceived opposition between primitive ‘other’ and civilized westerner, and the primitive as timeless distant ancestor of modern

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Thacker, Book II, pp.44–47.
\textsuperscript{175} Grainger to Nicholson, 25 December 1938. There were more cases after 1956 but photographs suggest there were no additional cases devoted to non-western cultures.
\textsuperscript{176} Museum Legend, 13 May 1956 (Appendix pp.239–240).
European man, living close to nature. Museums both reflected and perpetuated this
dichotomy into the twentieth century and it is therefore unremarkable that it also informed
Grainger’s Museum presentation of indigenous cultures.

**Folk-song collecting**

Compared to his mediated encounters with non-European indigenous music and art,
Grainger’s involvement with British folk-music was more direct, sustained and scholarly. Grainger’s London years of 1901–1914 coincided approximately with the most active years of the English folk-song revival. Although previously exposed to published collections of folk-songs, Grainger’s earliest direct contact with folk-singers was made possible in 1905 by English friends: collector Lucy Broadwood and tenor Gervase Elwes. His appreciation led to several bouts of enthusiastic collecting until 1909, gathering more than 400 songs. His Scandinavian collecting of the 1920s came from meeting Evald Tang Kristensen, who had been collecting and publishing folk-songs, tales, and legends since the 1860s.

The English folk-song movement evolved against the background of a view widely held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, both in England and on the continent, that England was dominated by foreign music. This perception aroused bitterness and frustration and complex, ambivalent feeling towards foreign music, German music especially, compounded by growing imperialist and industrial rivalry between England and Germany. Such a scenario tallies with Grainger’s own ambivalence towards, and

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178 For example, Grainger published a substantial article based on his 1906 lecture to the Folk Song Society, ‘Collecting with the phonograph’, *Journal of the Folk Song Society* (no.12, 1908) pp.147–242, reprinted in Balough (ed.) pp.19–64.


181 See for example Sharp, pp.163–164.

182 Gammon, pp.74–77.
subsequent rejection of, the German classical and romantic musical canon. As discussed in Chapter Three, Grainger’s anti-German feelings began during his Frankfurt years, but were no doubt reinforced from 1901 by prevailing English attitudes.

England’s anxiety about external domination was accompanied by internal doubts. Industrial capitalism’s apparent failure to provide a decent livelihood for most Britons combined with anxiety about hereditary urban degeneration, rural depopulation, and eugenicist fear of racial decay. As Howkins explains, the English elite had supposedly abandoned national allegiance to international capitalism; London was the corrupt centre of an Empire, and like ancient Rome, would cause its downfall. When Grainger was collecting English folk-song, English urban life was denigrated as inferior to the rural life it had replaced, with long-term damaging effects upon the ‘race’. This concern about the negative effects of city life resonated even in outposts such as Australia: ‘the romantic dream of “The man from Snowy River” and “Clancy of the overflow” appealed to those who sat in their “dingy little offices”’. Folk-song was seen as a pure, natural product of the rural people which would help to ‘refine and strengthen the national character’ and regenerate a debilitated, degraded, urbanised population. The collectors were grasping at something they believed represented the true and distinctive spirit of the English ‘race’ but had been overlaid or lost in English life. In his Legend on the subject Grainger wrote that the English men and women from whom he collected songs possessed ‘the heritage of the old high moods of our race (tangible proofs that “Merry England”—that is, agricultural England—once existed) that our yeoman singers have preserved for the scrutiny of mournful, mechanised modern man.’ According to Grainger the upper classes had, following the Norman Conquest, lost the essence of Anglo-Saxon culture. It survived only in the Yeoman-artists who ‘have been able to hand down to us a large body of proud

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183 Ibid., pp.80–83.
185 Alomes, p.8; Alomes & Jones, pp.90–91.
186 Gammon, pp.79–83; Dodd, p.9.
187 Gammon, pp.78–79.
188 ‘English folk-singers’, Museum Legend, 18 April 1956 (Appendix pp.205–211). Although among the later Legends, its texts dates back to 1906–1908, as it is based on Grainger’s preface to the 1937 composition which he conceived as a series of portraits of folk-singers, *Lincolnshire posy* (Schott, 1940); and which in turn drew on his 1908 article ‘Collecting with the phonograph’. 
English moods, qualities and feelings: grandeur, sturdiness, stoicalness, unmatched sweetness, [...] wistfulness, island-minded mildness.189

Collectors including Grainger perceived the folk-singers ahistorically, somewhat as noble savages. Their supposed illiteracy190 and geographical isolation were prized for contributing to musical 'purity'.191 Grainger’s Legend describes his informants as ‘the musically illiterate countryside singers through whom—and through whom alone—the melodies of our past have been preserved into our time’, while admitting that his favourite singer Joseph Taylor was far from illiterate; he was the capable bailiff of a large farming estate and sang for 45 years in the local church choir.192 Grainger felt that by collecting English folk-songs he could record or ‘save’ but the remnants of a dying culture: ‘I’ve not lived in vain. That was a good deed getting Taylor gramophoned. I feel real virtue in me when I hear those records, Darling I must do some more good deeds. Damn expense. / I must get some more of the old men done this summer before they die.’193

When recording and transcribing a folk-song, Grainger aimed at preserving the integrity of all elements, such as variations between renditions, dialect, and nonsense syllables, in order to communicate underlying cultural values.194 Grainger noted non-musical aspects such as spoken dialect, personality, appearance and environment.195 This has been much commented on for its originality but Grainger was not the pioneer here: Evald Tang Kristensen had long been doing this and by the late 1890s museums and anthropologists began to acknowledge oral history as valid historical evidence.196 Grainger had in effect selectively adopted some of these emerging anthropological methods.197 Although his contact with his British (and Scandinavian) folk-song sources was less superficial than his

190 Most were not in fact illiterate and could at least write the words of their songs. Gammon, p.83.
191 Ibid., pp.78–84.
193 Grainger to Rose Grainger, 14 February 1910.
194 See for example, Grainger, preface to Bold William Taylor (1952), reprinted in Lewis, Source guide, p.133.
195 Reeves, ‘Past-hoard-house’, p.16; Wong, ‘Was Grainger an ethnomusicologist?’.
196 Coombes, Reinventing Africa, p.57.
197 See for example Grainger, ‘Impress’, pp.43–44.
contact with the proponents of the non-European musics he promoted, as Bearman makes clear, Grainger, like other amateur middle- and upper-class collectors, depended on friends and other intermediaries to make contact with the singers; he rarely spent enough time to fully explore their repertoire; and seldom followed up leads to other singers—in marked contrast to the more methodical, professional approach of Cecil Sharp. Grainger was arbitrarily selective in what he recorded; although he noted down extra-musical aspects mentioned above, he had his own idea of what was musically ‘authentic’. Like most collectors of his day (Sharp being a notable exception), Grainger was not interested in his informants’ renditions of music-hall ballads, popular songs or other composed material, even though these were an integral part of the singers’ musical lives. Grainger collected only that material which reinforced his pre-existing nostalgic ideals about the passing rural lifestyle. While Sharp saw folk-music as a ‘great engine of social and cultural renewal,’ promoting its performance in schools and elsewhere in the community, Grainger’s motivations were more introverted, antiquarian, nostalgic and idiosyncratic, and emphasised preservation. This was reflected in his striving for accurate recording and his assiduous acknowledgement of sources in scores and concert programs. Grainger wrote: ‘Cecil Sharp’s goal was to make folk-dancing & folk-singing part of men’s lives. My goal, with the folk-arts, is to freeze them where they stand: to keep each one in its life-foreign queerness (queer to us now-timers), just as a spider is de-rotted in a spirit-bottle.’ Unlike Sharp who saw social possibilities in giving back to the entire community what they saw as an indigenous folk culture, Grainger transformed the material, often quite radically, to create something new, personally expressive, and clearly his own.

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199 Ibid., p.439.
200 Grainger keenly felt his debt to his folk sources. He twice offered half his substantial royalties from Country gardens to Sharp, who had collected the original tune, eventually making payments to Sharp’s estate. Bearman, p.454; Grainger to Sharp, 14 April 1924, in Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, pp.66–68.
202 This transformation is best discussed in Mellers.
Museums and the preservation of traditional social values

The late-nineteenth century saw the emergence of a new museum type: the folk museum, which included the outdoor museum.\(^{203}\) It originated in Scandinavia, with the work of Artur Hazelius (1833–1901). Hazelius loved the Swedish landscape and traditional rural life and culture, regretting the latter’s gradual disappearance. He turned from archaeology to collecting old costumes, furniture, furnishings, tools, paintings, music, dances and folk sayings, to helping Swedes preserve, study and understand the traditional culture of people of all occupations and classes (focussing however on rural life).\(^{204}\) Hazelius wanted Scandinavians to develop both a national and pan-Scandinavian consciousness by understanding their traditions and heritage.

Hazelius’ *Nordisk Museet* (established in the 1870s) emphasised ‘naturalistic’ or functional arrangement of artefacts, representing a change from the traditional rows of glass cases holding numerous similar artefacts sorted by geography or type and explained by labels. Hazelius combined scholarly striving for authenticity with museum and world’s fair display techniques such as the natural history habitat group (shifting the focus to human subjects), the waxwork tableau, period room and travelling panorama.\(^{205}\) He later relocated the *Nordisk Museet* and a collection of entire buildings to what became the world’s first open-air museum, opening in 1891 at Skansen. Buildings of different functions, places, styles and periods were grouped and landscaped picturesquely, authentically furnished but in no meaningful order. Skansen became a model for folk museums throughout Scandinavia,\(^{206}\) and then in other central and eastern European countries. Although slower to catch on in Britain,\(^{207}\) the genre flourished in the rapidly modernising and industrialising United States of the 1920s–1930s,\(^{208}\) where it took two main forms: actual historic buildings or districts


\(^{205}\) Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, p.410.

\(^{206}\) By 1928 there were approximately 150 outdoor museums in Sweden alone. Kaufman, p.279.

\(^{207}\) The first example, the Welsh Folk Museum, was established in 1946. Bennett, *Birth of museum*, p.115; Rhiannon Mason, ‘Nation building at the Museum of Welsh life’, *Museum and society* (vol.2, no.1, March 2004) p.20.

\(^{208}\) Ibid.
preserved as site museums, such as Colonial Williamsburg; and less frequently, collections of relocated buildings such as the ‘village’ component of the Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum in Michigan.²⁰⁹ It was not until the early 1960s that Australia’s first open-air museums opened.²¹⁰

The influence of folk museums on the Grainger Museum is evident particularly in the London Room display, discussed in Chapter Five, and in his preservation of seemingly trivial everyday items which had belonged to himself, his friends, wife, parents and other relatives, and his composer colleagues. Grainger however avoided some of the genre’s pitfalls identified by Bennett and others—the reduction of people to a picturesque element in the landscape, romanticizing and sentimentalizing their lives, omitting the uglier aspects and a distancing of history²¹¹—by collecting all aspects of his own life, even the seamier side, as it was being made. He did however exclude such material from his displays.

Grainger’s collection includes postcards from Scandinavian folk and outdoor museums such as the Sjöhistoriska Muséet, Stockholm; historic vernacular farm buildings; and entire buildings and period rooms from the Norske Folke Museum at Bydgo.²¹² As mentioned earlier Grainger maintained a long correspondence with H.P. Hansen, director of the Herning Museum.²¹³ Well after moving to America Grainger continued to visit Scandinavian folk museums.²¹⁴ And there were plenty to visit; by 1955 there were some


²¹² Grainger to Rose Grainger, postcard, 5 February 1910; postcards in envelope from Breifonn Hotel, Hardanger, Norway, inscribed by Grainger, ‘Museum Norwegian postcards, June, 1939’.

²¹³ In Grainger’s library are eleven (mostly unread) books by Hansen, including two volumes on Hansen’s museum: Herning Museum 1892–1942 (Aarhus Stiftsbogtrykkerie, 1942). That museum was of further interest to Grainger as it holds collections relating to E.T. Kristensen. See also Danish Museums Online, http://www.dmol.dk/engelsk/start.asp accessed 28 November 2004.

300 examples in Sweden and 120 in Norway. Ella Grainger recalled in 1971 that folk museums and house-museums had influenced Grainger in his decision to found his Museum:

Percy was always talking about having his house in White Plains as the museum, and […] both Percy and I were very museum-minded people. I was an art student in Sweden as a child and I went to museums every day, and Percy had been in Denmark and Norway, where there were museums scattered all over the country, with old houses containing the remains of older people of importance, or not so important, so we were very up to the idea that there should be a museum after Percy, with all his things.

In 1979, when the Grainger Museum was at risk of demolition, Stewart Manville, Ella Grainger’s second husband, wrote to the Historic Buildings Preservation Council:

The notion of its having been conceived as a means of self-glorification (what would be called an ‘ego trip’ in today’s jargon) is quite incorrect. One need but visit one of the “folks museums” in Europe—especially in the Scandinavian lands—to see what it was that suggested this presentation format to Percy Grainger. It was while visiting such a museum in Ghent, in fact, that Ella Grainger explained this to me.

I argue however that the existence of the prior model of the folk museum does not negate the egotism of Grainger’s Museum. A folk museum, even if sometimes the result of one curator’s work, does not collect and display the manifestation of that creator’s life. It interprets the lives of people from a cross-section of a given community or nation. And generally the collections are not presented as the prior possessions of named individuals, but rather as typical examples of the material culture of a given class, sex or occupation. The Grainger Museum, although showing the influences of a wide range of contemporary private and institutional, amateur and professional collecting and display practices, including the folk museum, is focussed on one man. In the next chapter I discuss the basic autobiographic content of the Museum. This includes Grainger’s presentation of himself through the Legends as Australia’s first great composer, in which he attempted to draw together, in himself, the trajectories of European and Australian music history.

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Conclusion
The first half of Percy Grainger’s life coincided with the ‘new imperialism’; with a radical modernism in the arts complemented by a fascination with its supposed opposite, the primitive; with increased international travel and tourism leading to brief encounters between Europeans and indigenous peoples of the Pacific, Asia and Africa; and an urge to preserve the vanishing primitive at home. This complex mix of innovation and nostalgia was reflected in the influence of non-western indigenous art forms on the western avant-garde, on the popularity of collecting both ‘exotic’ artefacts and the disappearing folk-ways, languages and artforms of European rural life, and in the popularity of folk museums in northern Europe and subsequently the United States. Grainger’s own musical output combined all these elements of this tumultuous period—evident particularly in his use of English and Scandinavian folk-song as the basis of many works. The same confluence is evident in his Museum collection, with its mix of, for example, souvenirs from the Pacific, Grainger’s own copies of South African beadwork, commercial recordings of Indonesian gamelan music, folk-song recordings and transcriptions, and sexually titillating ‘anthropological’ literature and photographs emphasising racial difference. I have thus demonstrated in this chapter that Grainger was very typical of his time as a collector and in many of his attitudes, and that in his interpretation and way of understanding ‘the other’ he did not show any real originality as suggested in some of the existing Grainger literature. In this way the Grainger Museum sheds light not only on Grainger but of his time and milieu; it is not a quirky one-off and therefore irrelevant to its broader historical context, but highly illuminating.
CHAPTER FIVE:
The Grainger Museum as autobiography

‘Let the genius be presented whole, as life made & moulded him.’

Grainger wrote about himself prolifically but never published a traditional autobiography. In this chapter I discuss whether his Museum serves this purpose, arguing that the depth and breadth of the collection are the raw data of autobiography, while the Legends are narrower in scope and more deliberate in purpose. I also compare the Grainger Museum to some other autobiographical museums. Grainger’s belief in the importance of both heredity and environment in shaping a person helped determine the form of the autobiographical narrative encapsulated in his displays. Many Legends are dedicated to his forebears, while three-dimensional exhibits such as the London Room and ‘effigies’ illustrated the physical and artistic environment in which he developed creatively. I contend that Grainger’s emphasis on inherited physical appearance was not unusual for his time. This connection between physiognomy, intellect and morality, all racially determined, was well established in museums by the turn of the twentieth century. Further, a train of thought similar to Grainger’s was evident in museum exhibitions accompanying international eugenics conferences in 1912, 1921 and 1932, in which the genealogies of successful artists, scientists or other public figures were set out as family trees, and a person’s physical appearance was thought to indicate his or her inner qualities. Such exhibits demonstrated the ‘biologisation of history’ prevalent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Grainger’s collection as autobiography

Grainger’s collection serves as a type of autobiography—although by its nature one requiring more investigation, inquiry and interpretation than the standard written format. The thousands of objects and documents contain Grainger’s story from before his birth until his last days. His Museum has characteristics of the archive, library and museum. The archive is the material, mostly paper-based, generated in the course of Grainger’s life; the

1 Grainger to Cyril Scott, 6 June 1944.
2 Coombes, Reinventing Africa, p.121.
3 Green, p.6.
core of it is his vast correspondence, but it also includes his manuscripts, concert programs, posters, publicity photographs and ephemera. The library comprises Grainger’s books, which he accumulated either through purchase or gifts. The museum-type material includes three sub-groups: firstly, deliberately acquired objects such as Pacific artefacts; secondly, objects originally used or created in the course of Grainger’s daily round and only later considered for Museum preservation, such as musical instruments, gramophone recordings, clothing, and London furniture; and thirdly, items created by Grainger deliberately for Museum display: the Legends and effigies. There are overlaps between these categories however, and Grainger did not distinguish between creating, collecting, preserving and record-keeping. For example, later in life Grainger kept duplicates of his own letters for his Museum and similarly asked his friends to write to him in multiple copies. Thus, spontaneously-created archival material overlapped with the category of material deliberately created for the Museum. Similarly, items acquired as souvenirs were carefully arranged into displays to complement the Legends, and some Legends themselves incorporate texts originally written for other purposes.

Grainger completed only a three-page introduction to an intended autobiography, its proposed title *My wretched tone-life* reflecting the cynicism of his later years. The brief biography with which Grainger began his memorial book to Rose provides some autobiographical information to 1922. From 1922 until his death Grainger wrote a number of extensive but unpublished memoirs, characterised by Perry as a manifestation (as is his Museum) of Grainger’s life-long documentary obsession.

Grainger’s small diaries or ‘day-books’ vary in the detail recorded. Those from the London years for example note concert dates, repertoire and teaching appointments, while some

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4 Pear discusses the supreme importance of the correspondence collection in ‘Educator-at-large’ (thesis), p.358.
5 Mieke Bal describes how collections can begin unconsciously, only retrospectively becoming acknowledged as such. Mieke Bal, ‘Telling objects: a narrative perspective on collecting’, in Preziosi & Farago (eds) pp.86–89. See also Rigby & Rigby, pp.83–85.
6 See for example Grainger to Cyril Scott, 17 June 1941, in Gillies & Pear (eds), *All-round man* p.171.
8 Grainger, *Photos of Rose Grainger*, p.3.
9 See Bibliography, section 1.2. These total over 250,000 words. Gillies & Pear, *Portrait*, p.xxxiii.
10 Perry.
later American day-books describe work such as his free music experiments. During some periods Grainger recorded his weight, food consumed, state of health, hygiene habits and sexual activity (the last usually indicated in a combination of Danish or Maori words and symbolic code). The day-books are however short on detail, reflection or discussion, for which Grainger’s letters are a better source.

Although Grainger never published an autobiography, others published biographical accounts. But none equals the collection’s level of insight. To understand Grainger’s youthful optimism and enthusiasm, turning later to bitter cynicism, one needs to read Grainger’s letters. To enjoy his visual sensibility and creativity one must look at his youthful drawings, the calligraphy of his music covers and the intricacies of the towel clothes. To sense his improvisatory approach to Free Music one needs to see the bits of string and tape holding together the kangaroo-pouch machine. Only by reading the letters to and from friends and colleagues can one understand why most held Percy in high regard despite his sometimes objectionable beliefs and tedious self-obsession. The London Room furniture speaks eloquently about the middle-class, but tending slightly towards bohemian, milieu in which Percy and Rose attempted to establish themselves in Edwardian London. Only by seeing the whips, girlie postcards, scrap-books, photographs and blood-stained clothing of the ‘lust branch’ and observing the cryptic Danish and Maori diary annotations and graphic symbols can one understand the importance to Grainger of his sexuality, and the devotedness of his partners.

In 1941 Grainger wrote ‘Most museums, most cultural endeavors, suffer from being subjected to TOO MUCH TASTE, TOO MUCH ELIMINATION, TOO MUCH SELECTION, TOO MUCH SPECIALISATION! What we want (in museums & cultural records) is ALL-SIDEDNESS, side-lights, cross-references.’ He wrote to his curator: ‘I have a bottomless hunger for truth […] life is innocent, yet full of meaning. Destroy

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12 Grainger to Gardiner, 7 June 1941.
nothing, forget nothing, remember all, say all. Trust life, trust mankind. As long as the picture of truth is placed in the right frame (art, science, history) it will offend none!"13 And it is fortunate for later scholars that Grainger had this attitude because in recording facts he could be unreliable.14 He was not completely above editing the evidence however. In 1940 for example, while preparing material for the Museum, he ‘censored’ his letters to Karen Holten.15

Grainger’s collection includes the most intimate items relating to his sexual flagellantism.16 He believed that this unusual preference developed from his childhood association between whipping and his mother. Rose sometimes chased her drunk and disorderly husband with a horse-whip, and also whipped Percy for misdemeanours including bedwetting, well into his teenage years.17 When as a young man he told Rose of his flagellantic preference she was shocked, disapproving and saddened. Despite this, Grainger held a surprisingly positive, rather than guilty, attitude towards his sexuality. It gave him great joy until late in life and he felt that as an integral and significant part of his creative personality, the evidence of it should be preserved in his Museum. Here Grainger diverged from the typical museum and exhibition-makers of his day who felt that a clear distinction needed to be made between the ‘higher’ pleasures associated with the arts and related endeavours and ‘lower’ pleasures such as sexual ones.18 Although catalogues of the erotica collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale and British Museum were published in 1913 and 1936 respectively,19 awareness of the existence of the latter was still discouraged in the 1960s.20 Such institutional accumulations are not however as revealing of the sexual inclinations of an individual

15 Grainger, Day-book 1940, entries for 22 & 23 August.
18 Greenhalgh, p.86.
collector, rendering him or her vulnerable to social ostracism, as might be Grainger’s personal collection. One famous collector whose accumulation included erotica, the banker J. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), immortalised his name by bequeathing much of his art and library collections to public institutions, but sent the erotica to France ‘thus entirely purifying the shelves of the Morgan Library now open to researchers in New York.’

Grainger had more courage, or more faith in the understanding of future generations.

Although Grainger was a skilled and energetic self-promoter, in much of his correspondence and autobiographical essays he is remarkably honest and open, sometimes embarrassingly so. Many letters in the general Museum correspondence collection include sexual references. But, understanding the importance to his career of maintaining the social proprieties in the eyes of the general public, in May 1956 Grainger put the designated ‘lust-branch’ material into a bank vault, placing an embargo on opening it until ten years after his death. At the time he wrote of his fear of dying ‘without the full evilness of my sex-feelings being known to the world or recorded. If I knew of a country where I could publish an unabridged account of my sex-life & sex-feelings I would be a happy man indeed. Perhaps I could in Scandinavia.’ Grainger was no coward when it came to supporting others facing public shaming; he stood by Henry Cowell during his gaoling in 1938 on a morals charge, and by Eugene Goossens when caught with pornographic pictures in 1956, but he concealed the lust branch from the public. He hoped that the material would not be destroyed, but lodged ‘with some medical or historic or scientific society or library that may wish to investigate the nature and habits of creative Australians’

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21 Ibid., p.27.
22 Pear, ‘Passions of Percy’, p.60.
23 The University followed Grainger’s instructions punctually. The package marked ‘DO NOT OPEN UNTIL 10 YEARS AFTER MY DEATH’ was opened at the first meeting of the Grainger Museum Board following the anniversary, and the contents placed in the safe in the Grainger Museum. Grainger Museum Board, minutes of meeting held on 24 March 1971 (University of Melbourne Archives).
24 Grainger to Cyril Scott, 23 July 1956.
26 Correspondence between Percy Grainger and Eugene Goossens.
in a supposedly more enlightened future.\textsuperscript{28} In his negotiations with the University in the 1930s he had given the University the right to censor the exhibits, but not the collection.\textsuperscript{29}

Despite the all-inclusiveness of his collection, Grainger in his Legends attempted to shape and control his narrative legacy. He restricted and interpreted the Museum’s public face, creating what I argue was another autobiography but in unusual format. In his Legends Grainger focussed on his maternal family inheritance, childhood cultural influences (avoiding however the sadder aspects such as his parents’ marital breakdown), the Frankfurt Group, Grieg and Delius, blue-eyed composers, Arnold Dolmetsch, and folk-song collecting. Free Music has only one Legend, created before most of his experiments had been undertaken. This is probably because his Free Music was still a work-in-progress in 1955–1956, and indeed when Grainger died. Many significant elements and people from his life are omitted or mentioned only in passing: work as a pianist, conductor and teacher; army service and other wartime activities; move to America and taking out American citizenship; politics; religion; sexuality, physical culture and vegetarianism; his sweetheart Karen Holten or any romantic relationships other than Ella (and this is only touched upon); and the real cause of his parents’ illness and death. Other important fields are dealt with surprisingly briefly: language reform and blue-eyed English, for example, are discussed largely in reference to Robert Atkinson;\textsuperscript{30} Grainger’s own efforts \textit{per se} are not discussed. Only Dolmetsch is discussed in regard to early music, while Grainger’s more sustained collaboration with Dom Anselm Hughes\textsuperscript{31} is ignored.

Although Grainger restricted the Legends, the collection is nevertheless an unparalleled source of data on which others can base their research. Like all data sources however, this raw material can be interpreted in many ways. Because Grainger hoped that the collection would be used by future scholars, he claimed to be loath to leave anything out; he

\textsuperscript{28} It appears that Grainger placed ‘lust branch’ books in the Public Library of Victoria in 1956. They were returned to the Grainger Museum in about 1978 or 1982. Ray Marginson [Vice-Principal, University of Melbourne] to Ken Horn [Librarian, State Library of Victoria], 24 January 1978; Margery C. Ramsay [Principal Librarian, State Library of Victoria] to Ray Marginson, 6 August 1982.

\textsuperscript{29} Grainger to Barrett, 2 January 1933.

\textsuperscript{30} ‘Robert Atkinson: language-reformer, poet, musician, humanitarian’.

\textsuperscript{31} 1889–1974; English scholar of early music with whom Grainger worked in the 1930s–1950s.
understood others would ask new questions.\textsuperscript{32} Grainger’s attitude to the public visiting his Museum during his own lifetime, however, indicated contradictory feelings. The official launch occurred more as a result of pressure from the University than from Grainger’s own ambition. According to Fowler, Grainger ‘did not care if it was not opened to the public for 100 years […] the museum was created for preservation of precious things for the scholars of the more distant future.’\textsuperscript{33} Grainger advised the Chancellor that ‘the museum should not be opened for indiscriminate public inspection during its first few years (though available to special students and special visitors, at the discrimination of the Conservatorium)’.\textsuperscript{34} Seventeen years after the official launch, visitors were still a low priority: ‘[W]e hope that the preparations for ‘public access’ will not be too tiring & bothersome. At this stage we must (I feel) not make too many demands upon ourselves re the Museum. After all, it is only a personal record which is in process of being worked out. In the meantime we are letting the public see how we are getting along.’\textsuperscript{35} When the Museum opened to the public on a regular basis in 1957, it was for only a few hours at weekends.\textsuperscript{36} Despite his apparent reticence however, Grainger did have a propaganda role in mind:

My impression is that the public, left to its own devices, will always choose what is light, short and un-instructive (“Entertainment music”) & will always ignore all that is bulky, demanding, uplifting & instructive. Therefore, my view is that the public should NEVER be “left to its own resources,” but should be consistently treated to propaganda & admonishment likely to lead or frighten it into an acceptance of “higher values.” […] We have seen what the Russian Government has been able to do for Schostakovich in our time.\textsuperscript{37}

Grainger wanted to leave a didactic legacy, but his eye was on the distant future.

Grainger was collector, curator, registrar, exhibit designer, publicist, technician and funding source for his Museum. While his collection is diverse in its variety of object types, it is unashamedly egocentric in subject matter. Grainger claimed initially in his

\textsuperscript{31} Scott, \textit{Bone of contention}, p.72.
\textsuperscript{32} Fowler, ‘Grainger Museum: first phase’.
\textsuperscript{33} Grainger to Sir James Barrett, 24 August 1938, in Gillies & Pear (ed.), \textit{All-round man}, p.147.
\textsuperscript{34} Grainger to Richard Hindle Fowler, 12 September 1956, in Gillies & Pear (eds), \textit{All-round man}, p.268.
\textsuperscript{35} Tibbits, \textit{Grainger Museum}, p.41.
\textsuperscript{36} Grainger to Richard Fowler, 21 September 1946.
introductory Legend that his main intention was a broad, relatively impersonal one: ‘The contents of the Grainger Museum have been assembled with the main intention of throwing light upon the processes of musical composition (as distinct from performances) during the period in which Australia has been prominent in music—say from about 1880 on’. Thus despite Grainger’s many universalist statements he narrowed the explicit chronological focus of his Museum displays to a mere 70 years or so, with only passing reference to other subjects. In this same introductory Legend Grainger revealed his principal point of reference (himself):

> The contents of this Museum are thus the product of one man’s taste and criticism—my own—and are limited accordingly [...] The Composers represented in the Museum appear for the most part in the chronological order of my contact with them, or in the order of their artistic importance in my eyes, and not in accordance with their year of birth [...] extremely well-known works [...] are omitted altogether, my preference being to concentrate on unknown or less-known works of genius. I have tried to limit all statements about composers and their works to things and happenings, personally witnessed by me, or communicated by the composers in letters and conversations.\(^{39}\)

Even Grainger’s idiosyncratic method of cataloguing his correspondence was autobiographical. It embodied a hierarchy based on the degree of closeness of the personal relationship between Grainger and the correspondent, or their significance in his eyes. For example letters from ‘Servants to RG, PG, EG’, were grouped together under one number, as were ‘American (not closest) friends to PG, EG’ and letters from ‘RG to British (not special) friends’; but each correspondent whom Grainger considered important—such as his Frankfurt friends, Rudyard Kipling and Richard Fowler—had his own number. There was a special indexing system for other material relating to Rose.\(^{40}\) His curator suggested a more conventional system of classification,\(^{41}\) but Grainger pursued his own method. Grainger used a related system for cataloguing artefacts, scores and other material, classified initially by the person with whom the item was associated, then by material type, then sequentially numbered.\(^{42}\) Belk observes that ‘as we age, the possessions

\(^{38}\) ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.

\(^{39}\) Ibid.

\(^{40}\) Grainger, ‘Index museum numbers’ exercise book; and ‘Grainger museum index numbers’ scrapbook containing typed list ‘Rough alphabetical guide to Grainger Museum index numbers’.

\(^{41}\) Richard Fowler to Grainger, 6 December 1943.

that people cite as “special” tend to be those that symbolize other people (e.g. gifts from people, photographs of people). […] This suggests an age-related widening of the boundaries of self”.43 Grainger’s collection from the very start included objects representing other individuals. Although his collection is self-centred in that he perceived all these people in terms of their artistic influence upon him, this characteristic of his collection reveals perhaps the unusually broad ‘boundary of self’ which Grainger possessed even from a young age, and also the lack of boundary between himself and Rose.

Other autobiographical museums

The Grainger Museum is difficult to categorise because it is so individual and yet so comprehensive, combining as it does elements of the private domestic collection, personal archive, library, cabinet of curiosities, ethnographic museum, house museum, folk museum, autobiographical museum and period room. To position the Grainger Museum among other museums and collections, it is necessary to compare it to a range of types and specific examples. To some extent I have done this in previous chapters: Chapter One considers earlier attempts at preserving and displaying Australian history and then discusses the design of Grainger’s building in the context of 1930s museum architecture. Chapter Two discusses the late-Victorian tradition of domestic collecting and display which imbued Grainger’s family life and broader milieu and manifested in house museums and the period room. Chapter Three puts the Grainger Museum in the imperial context. Chapter Four discusses institutional and personal ethnographic collecting and appropriation. Here I compare the Grainger Museum to other autobiographical museums and collections.

While most Grainger scholars have consulted its collection, few have attempted to position the Grainger Museum among other museums or autobiographical collections. Tibbits cites Grainger’s familiarity with house museums dedicated to preserving the ‘leavings’ of other geniuses such as Goethe, Wagner, Beethoven, Dickens, Carlisle, Hans Christian Anderson and Grieg.44 Reeves also mentions these but suggests that Grainger’s is possibly the only autobiographical museum in existence.45 RBA describes it as ‘unique as a purpose-built

autobiographical museum’.\(^{46}\) Pear’s dissertation, which examines Grainger’s life and art from a primarily literary and educationalist point of view, discusses the Museum’s role in expressing Grainger’s racial and related views, but it is outside the scope of Pear’s work to place the Museum in a broader museological context.\(^{47}\) Naomi Cass comes closest to making comparisons with other autobiographical museums:

As far as I am aware this is the only museum conceived of, built, collected for and curated—albeit ineffectively from afar—by one living artist. While there are many biographical museums, particularly collectors’ homes or artists’ studios (including those of Freud, Giacometti, Gustave Moreau and Picasso), these have been created in retrospect, like crafting the biography after the life has been lived and greatness or notoriety achieved. The Grainger is quite different in conception. From an early age Grainger’s mother \textit{curated} a space for her son’s genius, and under her complex support Grainger lived a life worthy of a museum. Closest in spirit, perhaps, is the Sir John Soane Museum in London.\(^{48}\)

Grainger was familiar since Frankfurt days with house museums and memorials to geniuses or what he called ‘lifemasters’ or ‘oversouls’ and believed that if he too was a genius he was equally deserving of a museum:

The Museum idea I see as follows: We are all own-up-ly ((admittedly)) wontbound ((conventional)) beings to some lengths—generally to far lengths. The museum matter is wontbound: It is the wont of our mindtilth ((culture)) to teach mankind by means of museums & to anchor museums to the houses & leavings of lifemasters. Thus we have museums & “houses” based on Goethe, Wagner, Beethoven, Dickens, Carlisle, H.C. Anderson, Grieg, Leighton, Watts & many others. \textit{If} I am a lifemaster I have the same “right” to a museum as these other men & have a full right to foreready for it while I am alive. Far more right than most—\textit{for} I have wholly new & lifelit schemes for making a museum heartreaching.\(^{49}\)

Grainger wanted to shape his own legacy; he would not leave this task to another person through the creation of a typical posthumous house museum. His 1922 instructions to Balfour Gardiner to establish museums in Melbourne and White Plains came at a time of extreme stress when Grainger feared he might be about to die and would therefore have no choice in the matter. His true inclination was better reflected during his final visit to

\(^{46}\) RBA, p.33.
\(^{47}\) Pear, ‘Educator-at-large’ (thesis).
\(^{49}\) Grainger to Ella Grainger, 15 July 1930.
Melbourne in 1956, when he wrote that museums ‘should be done while the composers themselves are still alive & able to provide information that outsiders don’t know.’

In this sense Grainger was working along similar lines to Sir John Soane (1753–1837) over a century earlier. The leading London architect of his day, working during the classical revival, Soane used his collection, which he began during the customary Grand Tour of Europe and developed over thirty years, to position himself as the heir and culmination of the grand classical tradition. As Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy, Soane initially arranged in his London house his collection for students’ use. Disappointed in his hopes to establish an architectural dynasty through his two sons, he progressively acquired and rebuilt two adjoining houses as the collection grew, creating a museum-house inspired by classical art and the nobleman’s cabinet, eventually bequeathing all to the nation. Elsner suggests that the Soane Museum is autobiographical by positing that the heart of its collection is the series of architectural models of Soane’s own, and antique, buildings. By placing his own creations alongside those of antiquity Soane was positioning himself in an architectural continuum extending from ancient times to modern. Grainger shared this need to position his own career in a historical lineage, giving himself a distinguished professional ancestry. Soane was also seeking to elevate the status of the architectural profession in England, just as Grainger was positioning Australia as a leader in musical modernity.

Soane’s museum differs from the typical art collectors’ house museum in the degree to which it is autobiographical; most collector’s houses, such as Henry Clay Frick’s in New York, or the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the latter of which Grainger visited (probably in 1915), are autobiographical only insofar as all collections reveal

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50 Grainger to Elsie Bristow, 3 April 1956.
51 Pearce & Arnold (eds), Collector’s voice 2: early voices, p.318; Black, p.67.
53 Listri, p.48.
54 Elsner, pp.159–160.
55 Ibid., p.166.
57 Grainger, ‘Ere-I-forget’, p.58; correspondence Grainger to Isabella Stewart Gardner.
something of the collector. Like a public art museum, Gardner purchased the ‘best’ of the
traditional high-art canon, often based on professional advice. Although indicative of
Gardner’s tastes in art and architecture, and her social ambitions, such a museum is less
personally revealing than those of Grainger and Soane, which centre on their own creative
output, and illustrate the intersection between their own careers and their nation’s cultural
history. Works of ‘high’ art such as those acquired by Frick or Gardner have a ready
reception and market, and bring social prestige upon their owners, even if only recently
acquired. Much of the material in the more personal collections would have been
considered beneath the notice of museum curators at the time. Although Soane also
collected artworks prized by collectors and museums, his unique configuration of this
material, his complex and extended project of creating a house and museum around it in
which he realised some of his own design and technical innovations, and his positioning of
his own work as the culmination of the classical tradition, gave the material from past eras
an immediate and strong personal relevance and meaning which transformed it from
antiquarian treasure to an expression of his personal identity.

In establishing her museum, Gardner was influenced by contemporary European collectors’
house museums, particularly Milan’s Museo Poldi-Pezzoli. Bogaard argues that these
intentionally educational collector’s house museums—created either during the owner’s
lifetime, or posthumously in accordance with the owner’s wishes—emerged as a type in
western Europe and North America between about 1870 and 1930, simultaneously with a
growing trend of wealthy citizens donating their fortunes or collections to art museums.
Grainger’s museum initiative occurred in the context of this development, despite the
results being quite different.

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58 She consulted principally the celebrated art historian and broker Bernard Berenson, and several painters.
Keith S. Thomson, Treasures on earth: museums, collections and paradoxes (Faber & Faber, 2002) p.42; Saarinen,
The proud possessors, pp.39–45; Hilliard T. Goldfarb, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: a companion guide and
59 Saisselin, pp.120–121.
60 Witcomb, p.115.
61 John Coolidge, Patrons and architects: designing art museums in the twentieth century (Amon Carter Museum,
62 Conny Bogaard, ‘Sypesteyn Castle: a special kind of collector’s house in the Netherlands’, Open museum
journal (no.5, July 2002) pp.2, 17. Others include Museo Bagatti Valsecchi in Milan, Museo Stibbert and
When a painter or sculptor (rather than a connoisseur collector) displays his or her art collection however, an autobiographical statement can result. For example, the sculptures and acquired collections of the neoclassical Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844) are displayed in Thorvaldsen’s Museum in Copenhagen, inaugurated in 1848. Although the idea to establish the museum was not originally his, Thorvaldsen collaborated in its creation.\(^{63}\) As mentioned previously Grainger probably visited this museum, which makes striking use in its décor of the bright, contrasting colours which Grainger called ‘Scandinavian’ or ‘South Sea’ colours and adopted for his later Museum Legends.

The Dutch marine painter H.W. Mesdag (1831–1915) built a museum beside his house, to accommodate a collection assembled to illustrate his artistic ideals, as well as works by himself and his wife. Visitors toured both the museum and the house.\(^{64}\) Edgar Degas (1834–1917) was in the 1890s planning, like his former mentor Gustave Moreau, to establish a museum, to display his work not in ‘splendid isolation’ like Moreau’s, but among that of selected (mostly French) predecessors and contemporaries in a context ‘both autobiographical and polemical’.\(^{65}\) The project did not eventuate, due perhaps to Degas’ negative response to Moreau’s museum which reminded him of a mausoleum and Thesaurus or Gradus ad Parnassum.\(^{66}\) In 1921 the Basque painter Ignacio Zuloaga y Zabaleta (1870–1945) opened a museum in his home (formerly a medieval monastery) based around his own works and those collected or painted by his father.\(^{67}\) Ignacio aimed to preserve his national history and identity: ‘Onto his canvases, Zuloaga transferred the symbolic images of a great culture that was little by little dissolving into modernity.’\(^{68}\) Grainger’s friend John Singer Sargent was a strong supporter of Zuloaga.\(^{69}\) A much later example is the Dalí Theatre-Museum created from the 1960s by the Catalan artist Salvador Dalí (1906–1989)

\(^{63}\) Lange, pp.7, 21, 31–37.
\(^{64}\) Bogaard, pp.1–7.
\(^{68}\) Listri, p.86.
at the suggestion of the local mayor, within the bombed-out shell of the nineteenth-century theatre in which Dalí had held his first exhibition.\textsuperscript{70}

Two non-artists who added an autobiographical element to a standard museum type—the natural history museum and the stately home respectively—were Major Percy Powell-Cotton in England and C.H.C.A. Van Sypesteyn in the Netherlands. Powell-Cotton (1866–1940) was a Victorian-era ethnographer, big game hunter and advocate for wildlife preservation. In the grounds of his country home in Kent he built a museum which he filled with ethnographic artefacts and taxidermied beasts, most of which he had shot on safari.\textsuperscript{71} The autobiographical element comprised Powell-Cotton’s arrangement of specimens into elaborate dioramas representing events he had witnessed, while human dioramas represented scenes from African life.\textsuperscript{72} Upon arrival the visitor is greeted by a portrait of Powell-Cotton in hunting jacket and rifle, the actual jacket, which he wore when almost mauled to death by a lion in 1906, displayed adjacent, and the mounted skin of that lion is in a diorama in the next room, killing a large wildebeeste.\textsuperscript{73}

Van Sypesteyn (1857–1937) was heir to a patrician family which had lost much of its traditional property. In 1902 he established a foundation: ‘to gather, keep and maintain and extend the family archives and portraits, coat of arms, valuables and rarities and all other objects related to or proceeded from the Van Sypesteyn Family […]. The Founder, as the last male descendant of the Van Sypesteyn Family, wishes with this foundation to honour the family’s name.’\textsuperscript{74} Between 1911 and 1922 he built a museum in the style of a gothic castle, on a site which had once belonged to his family. As Bogaard points out, the result was ahistorical with a highly illusory sense of habitation, the collections (some of which had been gathered by his forebears) simulating ‘an atmosphere of generations of domestic life’. Van Sypesteyn was living in the castle when it opened to the public in 1926, but more as a


\textsuperscript{71} The museum opened to the public in 1896 but Powell-Cotton continued making new displays into the 1930s.

\textsuperscript{72} Website, anthropology project based on Powell-Cotton Museum, \url{http://era.anthropology.ac.uk/Era_Resources/Pages/Projects/powell_cotton.html}; website, Powell Cotton Museum, \url{http://www.powell-cottonmuseum.co.uk/}, both accessed 5 April 2005.

\textsuperscript{73} Tait, pp.49–52 & coloured plates.

\textsuperscript{74} Van Sypesteyn Foundation Archive, 16 May 1902, quoted in Bogaard, p.8.
money-saving measure than as an integral part of his intention. He was creating an autobiographical/family history museum in a historically-based faux-domestic building that recalled the wealth of his ancestors and in which he sought to contextualise his family history within the Dutch national golden age.\textsuperscript{75}

Both Powell-Cotton’s and Van Sypesteyn’s museums tacked an autobiographical component onto a more objective museum format; neither was as exclusively autobiographical as the Grainger Museum. In attempting to define or identify the autobiographical museum as a type, however, these marginal forms need to be taken into consideration, both for what they are and what they are not. It can be argued that all collecting by an individual is autobiographical to a greater or lesser degree, and thus the countless public collections which were originally private collections have an autobiographical element. Henry Ford, for example, began his collecting by re-purchasing his own bicycle, acquiring children’s readers of the type he had used at school, relocating his family farm house and then excavating the site for remnants of his childhood. Later he built a scale replica of his first assembly plant and relocated the mill where he and his father had taken the wool from their farm. Although Ford’s Greenfield Village and its associated folk museum eventually grew into something broader in scope and larger in scale, its autobiographical origins were significant in shaping this ‘complex artifact in which history, country, and religion were inextricably mingled with personal mementos.’\textsuperscript{76}

None of the examples discussed here however shares the singularly personal detail, focus or intimacy of Grainger’s Museum, nor its attempt to describe its creator’s artistic-social milieu. While another composer who, like Grainger, collected autobiographically in great detail was Manuel de Falla (1876–1946),\textsuperscript{77} the organisation now dedicated to preserving his archive was established posthumously and there is no evidence of his having considered establishing a museum or similar institution.\textsuperscript{78} Only in Grainger have I been able to find the

\textsuperscript{75} Bogaard, pp.9–16.
\textsuperscript{76} Kaufman, pp.286–287.
\textsuperscript{78} Elena Garcia de Paredes de Falla [Managing Director, Archivo Manuel de Falla], email to Belinda Nemec, 24 June 2005.
combination of a lifelong and consistent collector and retainer of explicitly autobiographical material with an urge to create a permanent physical display space.

Family Legends

During his London years Grainger mixed in circles which included wealthy owners of country houses. Here he would have seen collections—paintings, heirlooms, and other possessions—as well as the house itself, used to establish and document family lineage. As initially impoverished expatriates, Percy and Rose had relatively few heirlooms and were thus obliged to start their family documentation afresh. Grainger’s explicit autobiography in the Museum begins with his family background, presented through seven Legends: four on his mother and her family, and three on his father’s life and career. Unfortunately, it seems that no list or documentation exists to enable us to know exactly in which order Grainger hung the Legends, although the introductory Legend gives us a clue. The first Legend created concerned his mother. This is a particularly large and well-constructed, higher-quality panel than most of the others, featuring a selection of photographic portraits of Rose, some of which Grainger had included in his 1923 memorial volume. It is the only Legend commissioned from a professional cabinet-maker (a relation of Rose’s) rather than cobbled together by Grainger. This large Legend was in 1956 complemented by a smaller one which includes three short autobiographical writings by Rose, also reproduced in the memorial volume. Throughout his life Grainger showed great fondness for and attachment to family members on his mother’s side. He supported many relations financially, and was a faithful correspondent, particularly with Rose’s sister Clara. In 1956 Grainger set up an ‘Aldridge family division’ in the Museum, ‘before the London Room’. The Legends include two panels of photographs of Rose’s relations, in which the images are left largely

79 Belk, Consumer society, p.42.
80 ‘The composers [...] appear for the most part in the chronological order of my contact with them, or in the order of their artistic importance in my eyes’. ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
82 ‘Rose Grainger’, Museum Legend.
83 Grainger to Fowler, 12 September 1956, p.268.
to speak for themselves, with only the briefest of captions provided. Grainger believed that the Aldridges contributed directly to the man he became; this was reflected in his taking Aldridge as his middle name, his reason explained in a later Legend: "I hoped that my music was closer to the groping emotionality of my mother’s yeomanlike family than to my father’s more brainy, critical and conventional approach to the arts."85

His father’s ancestry was less central to Percy’s personal identity. The Legends about John H. Grainger are thus less personal and emotional in tone, and many of the objects now in the collection which had belonged to John Grainger were donated by others rather than having been preserved by Grainger himself.86 There are no images of John Grainger’s forebears, although this might simply be due to a lack of available information as John emigrated from England alone as a young adult. Furthermore, although John Grainger ‘was fond of tracing his ancestry back to a misty, pure Celtic origin’,87 he might have been deliberately vague about his own past, said to have included an illegitimate child whose mother he abandoned by emigrating to Australia.88 The first Legend relating to John Grainger gives a brief biography and refers to other biographical sources; it touches on John Grainger’s ‘arthritis’ (euphemism for syphilis) and, most tellingly, on his long-standing scrapbook habit (‘Graingerising’) discussed in Chapter Two.89 The second Legend displays six studio portrait photographs of John H. Grainger, all rather similar, with brief captions but no explanatory text.90 The third contains a series of photographs and postcards of buildings: ‘Buildings & bridges, designed by John H. Grainger & associates’.91 Grainger was clearly proud of his father’s professional achievements.

Grainger’s early childhood in the broader sense is represented by two Legends, highlighting the influence of two men; firstly, A.E. Aldis, who boarded with the Graingers and

87 Bird, p.4.
89 ‘John H. Grainger’, Museum Legend.
introduced young Percy to Maori music,”92 and who “was the first man I heard speak Maori, thus laying the foundations for my “Father and Daughter” and whole anti-white race viewpoint since 1909. His pictures are amongst the very most precious relics of childhood days.”93 This use of anecdote to link an incident from his early life with a later achievement or development is typical of Grainger’s Legends and autobiographical writings. The same anecdotes often appear in several sources: autobiographical essays, Legends, journal articles and letters to friends.94 Grainger was creating his own folk-lore. The other panel concerning his Melbourne childhood discusses an early example in Grainger’s life of an ‘all-round man’, Thomas A. Sisley, with whom young Percy had studied elocution and painting.95 Sisley’s significance lay, however, in introducing to him Icelandic and Anglosaxon literature.96 Again, Grainger dwelt on apparently insignificant early events which he believed had a major impact on his adult outlook and creativity.

Grainger’s early musical training is covered by only two Legends: the first dealing with his first and second piano teachers (after initial lessons from Rose), Louis Pabst and Adelaide Burkitt, the text of which was written on 3 December 1938,97 perhaps because Burkitt would be at the Museum opening a week later.98 The second discusses Karl Klimsch, with whom Grainger studied after rejecting his official composition teacher Iwan Knorr. Grainger claimed Klimsch was his ‘only’ composition teacher.99

Surprisingly perhaps, Grainger’s long and generally happy marriage to Ella100 is not explicitly discussed in the Legends, although the collection includes thousands of letters, including those of the most intimate nature, between the couple. Ella is acknowledged in a Legend dedicated to her ‘rime-tiles’ (hand-painted ceramic tiles with lines from her

94 See for example Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, p.273 (note 3).
95 Bird, Percy Grainger, pp.20–21.
One of the most visually striking Legends, it best illustrates Grainger’s use of ‘bright Scandinavian colours’ or ‘South Sea Island colours’ for his displays. Ella collaborated on some of the towel clothes displayed in the Museum and one of the effigies represented Ella dressed in a towel outfit. Two other Legends relate obliquely to Grainger’s relationship with Ella: those illustrating the barque L’Avenir on which the couple travelled from Copenhagen to Perth in 1933–1934. The couple thoroughly enjoyed this voyage, Grainger climbing the rigging and otherwise entering into the spirit of shipboard life, and the pair caused quite a sensation upon landing in Australia. On this voyage Grainger wrote his second (unfinished) autobiographical essay ‘The Aldridge-Grainger-Ström-Saga’. On an earlier sea-voyage in 1926 Grainger had met Ella, and while at sea Percy wrote to Ella proposing marriage, so sea travel played an important part in their early relationship.

Through Richard Fowler Grainger commissioned in 1938 a model of L’Avenir from a Melbourne maker, no doubt to complement the Legends. Ships and boats had nostalgic value to Grainger on another level; as discussed in Chapter Two, playing on Albert Park Lake as a child was an inspiration for ‘Free music.’ Percy seemed to have inherited an affection for ships and the sea from his father, whose maritime paintings are in the Museum. Percy’s earliest surviving dated drawing (1886) depicts a boat, while the earliest surviving thing he made (1895 or 1896) is ‘the beginning of an attempt to make a

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102 ‘In making legends & titles I think we should use prettily colored paper or cardboard or bind with nice edging [. . .] Our particular sort of museum need not woo dignity thru drabness, it seems to me. We are dealing with South Sea objects, or viewing life & art in a South Sea mood. This may well show in our bright & lightcolored arrangements, it would seem to me. Grainger to Nicholson, 25 December 1938.
106 These include French fishing boats entering Boulogne Harbour, December 1892, which J.H. Grainger gave to Mr and Mrs Husband in gratitude for their kindness to Rose and Percy; the Husbands later donated the painting to the Grainger Museum, along with Grainger’s childhood piano. Grainger, ‘Paintings by John H. Grainger showing his love of the sea’, label in green watercolour calligraphy.
model yacht. Dreyfus observes that sailing represented for Grainger a form of utopian escape, free of the cares of his career as a pianist.

Australia’s first great composer

The majority of the autobiographical Legends relate to Grainger’s development as a composer. He defined himself as Australia’s first great composer, not performer:

When people talk of painting they mean paintings, not reproductions of paintings; when people talk of literature and the drama they mean books and plays—not “elocution” and actors. But when people talk of music they seldom mean the music itself, but merely performers and performances of music. I feel that a musical museum, stressing the creative side of music, might (in so truly musical a country as Australia) do something to right this lopsided attitude toward music.

Grainger little valued his outstanding career as a pianist, and did not wish it to constitute his legacy. Thus his Museum emphasises the creative, not executive, side of music. Other Australians such as Nellie Melba (1861–1931) and Ada Crossley (1871–1929) had by the turn of the century achieved success overseas as performers, but no Australian composer had won such international recognition; here Grainger felt that he could claim to be the first. From early in his expatriate career Grainger formulated largely unrealised schemes to foster musical development back home, which would have positioned him as a leader of Australian composition. In later years he considered moving back to Australia in order ‘to lawfully dub my tone-works Australian’. But finally it was through his Museum that he staked his claim to being Australia’s first composer. His privileging of composition over performance also had a racial implication as Grainger resentfully felt that non-Nordic executants had been ‘in the saddle’ musically for over 200 years.

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107 Grainger, ‘Beginning of an attempt to make a model yacht by Percy Grainger (age 12 or 13)’, typed display label, 4 November 1938.
108 Objects, documents and pictures, p.25. See also Grainger to Rose Grainger, 30 October 1907; Grainger to Parker, 28 August 1916, p.30.
109 Grainger to Richard Fowler, 4 October 1938.
110 A monthly musical magazine was proposed, and an Australian Music Bond School to fund frequent, cheap musical performances. Kay Dreyfus & Janice Whiteside, ‘Percy Grainger and Australia: was there a kookaburra in those English “Country Gardens”?’, Meanjin (vol.41, no.2, June 1982) pp.167–168. See also Grainger to Sandby, 27 September 1901, regarding his plans for ‘Australian national musical-education’.
Fame was not straightforward for Grainger. He felt that his popular success as a pianist and as composer of several short, popular works led to what one colleague described as the ‘obscurity created by the wrong kind of fame’. Grainger believed that he never received adequate recognition for his most important achievements: his original compositions. Grainger went to great lengths to obtain recognition as a composer, often to his own financial disadvantage. His bitterness at the lack of recognition as an innovator is reflected in the Legend accompanying his first editions:

This long display of the first editions of my published compositions may seem, to the thoughtless, a proof of my ‘success’ as a composer; in reality it marks the measure of my artistic defeat. The bulk of these works are not ‘alive’—for music that is not heard is not alive, and the bulk of my music is never heard [...] where musical progress and compositional experiments are discussed my name is never mentioned. Can a more complete aesthetic failure be imagined? Not by me.

As explained earlier, the ideals, enthusiasms and opinions of Grainger’s early years dominated the rest of his life. Similarly in composition, Grainger claimed that his main achievements occurred between about 1898 and 1904. Indeed, it was in his earlier (although not juvenile) creations that Grainger first explored many musical innovations and he continued to pride himself on his youthful achievement thereafter:

And then there is myself—way ahead (tho I have to say it myself) of all my time-mates, in any land, in experimentalism & go-ahead-ness. Other composers (Scott, Fickenschier, Schoenberg) have undertaken some of the experiments that lead to Free Music. But no one (that I know) except myself has taken the leap & done all the experiments that lead to complete musical freedom. My tone-vision of 1894 or 1895 (before I left Australia) is still a half a century ahead of all the other composers.

It suited Grainger’s agenda to proclaim the originality of his early years, even if it meant admitting a subsequent lack of development. This is because Grainger wanted to be remembered not only as Australia’s first composer, but as an originator in world terms; a modernist experimenter responsible for various important innovations which were

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subsequently adopted by other composers, either those of his own circle (such as Scott or Delius) or beyond it (such as Stravinsky). This ambition operated in Grainger at both a personal and nationalistic level, indeed the two were inextricably linked; if Grainger could prove that he had used some musical device before anybody else, this demonstrated not only his own modernity, but Australia’s:

In my teens I thought it quite natural that Australian commonsensicalness […] should act as a leaven upon the (then) rather stodgy dough of European composing. I saw my “large form” […] adopted by Cyril Scott and others. I saw my “wordless vocalism” […] taken over by Frederick Delius, Vaughan Williams and others. I saw my “irregular rhythms” and “Large chamber music” […] become part of the normal European compositional procedure. But never have I seen credit given to Australia for these universally adopted innovations. Yet every one of them springs from an obviously Australian root. “Large form” was just the face of the endless yet unrepeating Australian desert translated into tone; “wordless vocalism” was Australian natural songfulness […] as opposed to European cerebral musicality […]; “irregular rhythms” were the direct tonal result of wave-shapes and wave-movements, seen at Brighton (Melbourne) and Albert Park (Melbourne); “large chamber music” […] was merely Australian democraticness applied to music-making.118

Grainger attempted to locate Australia’s cultural history within international cultural history by tracing and dating musical influences between composers from different parts of the world and attributing primacy in innovation. In 1933 Grainger noted that decades earlier, Cyril Scott (1879–1970) had obtained his permission to adopt certain ‘Australian innovations’ (that is, Grainger’s innovations) in his ‘English Art’. Thus the colony was now leading the mother country and Europe generally: ‘These innovations proved history-making, for the irregular rhythms of the Scott Sonata, played by the composer widely in European countries around 1904, preceded by several years the use of such rhythms by Continental composers such as Stravinsky & others.’119 He suggested examining whether he or Debussy was the first to conclude a work on a discord: ‘The matter is worth looking into—by some patriotic Australian; for it would be a bright feather in Australia’s cap to have produced the first composer to use a discordant ending.’120 Of his early Kipling settings, Grainger later wrote, ‘In these […] I developed my mature harmonic style—that is to say, harmony in unresolved discords. To the best of my knowledge, such a procedure

118 ‘Grainger’s published compositions’, Museum Legend.
119 Grainger to Parker, 26 April 1933, p.121.
was unknown at that time & must be considered as an Australian contribution to musical progress.'121 Grainger believed that modernism was an integral element of his identity: while he thought other early twentieth-century composers only used such innovations when it suited them, ‘I didn’t do them “for a time”, but for my whole life, showing that they were really part of me.’122

Despite this modernity, Grainger perceived a close and meaningful relationship between past (whether recent or distant) and future. In 1916 he wrote, ‘[T]he appeal of all new music is very greatly further enhanced by my consciousness of its close blood-relationship with all the achievements of the past, and of the portent it holds for as yet unimagined styles to come.’123 Grainger believed that ‘music at its best is always a cumulative, rather than an individualistic, affair […] An art like music cannot prosper fully when its roots are cut away from under it.’124 Such belief in the continuity between the historical past and an apparently radical future was not unique to Grainger. Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) for example, emphasised that his seemingly groundbreaking atonal and twelve-tone music had evolved smoothly and logically from its historic predecessors such as the music of Bach, Mozart, Wagner and Brahms.125 He even suggested Bach might be called ‘the first twelve-tone composer.’126 Grainger took innovation furthest in his Free Music.127 He claimed to

121 ‘John H. Grainger’, Museum Legend.
122 Grainger to Armstrong, 21 October 1958.
126 Schoenberg, ‘New music, outmoded music, style and idea’ [1946] in Style and idea, p. 117. Grainger admired Schoenberg’s work and attended the first London performance of his Fire orchestral pieces (op. 16 of 1909) at the Queen’s Hall on 3 September 1912. See Gillies & Clunies Ross (eds) p. 59 (note 23). In 1956 Grainger felt that it was very important to get a new recording of this work for his Museum, and to point out that he had been present at that early performance. Grainger to Fowler, 12 September 1956, p. 270.
have been thinking about this since childhood, although his work specifically in this area was not begun until the 1930s and was pursued most energetically from the mid-1940s until the end of his life, in collaboration with a local physicist, Burnett Cross. His inspiration lay in ‘wave-movements in the sea that I first observed as a young child at Brighton’, his abiding love of the desolate Australian landscape, and his memory of the sound of wind whistling through lonely telegraph wires.

The great importance of Free Music to Grainger is suggested by his inclusion of a Legend on the subject in the displays for the Museum’s opening in 1938. In this roughly-executed panel Grainger describes music as an art ‘not yet grown up’—like the unrealistic representations of the human figure in ancient Egyptian art—whereas Free Music represented ‘the phase of technical maturity such as that enjoyed by the Greek sculptures when all aspects and attitudes of the human body could be shown in arrested movement.’ He then moves from this classical analogy to a futurist one: ‘It seems to me absurd to live in an age of flying and yet not be able to execute tonal glides and curves’. Elsewhere Grainger elaborated on this comparison, describing Free Music as ‘the only really progressive modern music, (the musical counterpart of jet planes, radar, TV, etc).’ In arguing that Free Music was the inevitable result of centuries, even millenia, of musical ‘progress’ he was reinforcing his ‘natural’ place in the international modernist musical narrative and repeating the nineteenth-century trope that all societies develop in the one linear direction, from primitive to sophisticated. He cast himself as part of an inevitable historical progression: ‘Yet the matter of Free Music is hardly a personal one. If I do not write it someone else certainly will, for it is the goal that all music is clearly heading for now and has been heading for through the centuries. It seems to me the only music logically suitable to a scientific age.’

As with his other innovations, Grainger was keen to prove that he was the first to think of the elements of Free Music. In 1952 he sent Herman Sandby a detailed questionnaire


129 Ibid.
130 Grainger to Max Steffens, 27 May 1953.
seeking confirmation of Grainger’s earliest discussion and experiments in the area: ‘I am very anxious to have the starting date of my “gliding tones” (in Free Music) fixed as accurately as possible. [...]—I want the credit to go to Australia, unless somebody else really thought of it first.’133 Grainger deliberately organised for his ‘Free Music’ to be heard first in Australia.134 By the time Grainger was working intensively on the Free Music Machines with Burnett Cross, he knew of other composers attempting to escape the restrictions of traditional notation, rhythm, scales and harmony, some of them working in electronic music.135 But although he shared their search for a way to create new sounds and break away from historical constraints, Grainger did not mention these parallel efforts in the Museum Legends and except in the case of Henry Cowell, with whom he had a long-standing friendship, did not seek their work for his collection. Again, Grainger positioned himself at the vanguard.

In 1953 Grainger wrote that his life’s goal had been ‘starting Australia on the creative path musically. I have always wanted to do for Australia what Grieg did for Norway, what Dvorak did for his land.’136 In later years Grainger became bitter for not receiving credit from critics, conductors and other composers for what he saw as his own, and therefore Australia’s, innovations: ‘I do not mind so much being overlooked as a serious composer as I mind being ignored as an Australian musical innovator. I am quite ready to believe that my music lacks true melody, that my scoring is colorless and my form monotonous. But I will not, without a struggle, have my typically Australian contributions to musical progress “killed by silence”.’137

Grainger described the main intent of his Museum as ‘throwing light upon the processes of musical composition (as distinct from performances) during the period in which Australia has been prominent in music—say from about 1880 on’.138 He did not explain his choice of 1880 as the time in which Australia supposedly became musically prominent. I argue that

\[\text{\footnotesize 133} \text{ Grainger to Herman Sandby, 31 July 1952.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 134} \text{ Anderson, ‘Grainger’s “Free” music’, p.123.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 136} \text{ Grainger to Thomas Wilson, 14 April 1953.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 137} \text{ ‘Grainger’s published compositions’, Museum Legend.} \]
he simply chose the decade of his own birth as the beginning of this important era, because he saw his own place in the history of composition as inextricably bound up with Australia’s place in world cultural history. The lack of discussion in the Legends of any colonial composers implicitly rules out the possibility of early local figures influencing later Australian composition. But Grainger excluded from the Legends all other Australian composers.\(^{139}\) Further, Grainger defined nationality strictly; for instance, entrants to a prize he established for New Zealand composition in 1936 had to be ‘a born (not naturalised) New Zealander’.\(^{140}\) This belief in the creative connection between artist and birthplace might have been the reason for his lack of acknowledgment of overseas-born Australian composers such as Mona McBurney (1862–1932), Frank Hutchens (1892–1965) and William Arundel Orchard (1867–1961), although being born British they theoretically fell within Grainger’s favoured ‘Nordic’ group. Ultimately however, Grainger saw himself as not only the first Australian composer, but the only Australian composer,\(^ {141}\) and his displays reflect this. In his Legends Grainger was keen to acknowledge the influence of Europeans such as Grieg and Delius, whom I discuss further below, but he did not discuss any Australian predecessor or contemporary, such as Louis Lavater (1867–1953), who founded the Guild of Australian Composers,\(^ {142}\) Alfred Hill (1870–1960) or Ernest Hutcheson (1871–1951).\(^ {143}\) Admittedly these men did not achieve the same level of fame as Grainger, and probably did not influence him musically. But they did compose in Australia after 1880.

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\(^{139}\) G.W.L. Marshall-Hall was no exception in this regard because he is discussed in a Museum Legend not as a composer but as a conductor in ‘Outline history of orchestral music in Melbourne by Sir James Barrett’, Museum Legend, n.d. [probably 1955–1956] (Appendix pp.245–250) and briefly for supporting Grainger’s early career in ‘Photographs of Louis Pabst, Madame Pabst, Miss Adelaide Burkitt & Fritz Müller’, Museum Legend.


\(^{141}\) For example: ‘I came to America in order to rescue Australia’s only composer from “liquidation” (fancy, how well it would have suited the Germans to have the only Australian composer killed off!).’ Grainger to Jane de Glehn, 4 January 1941.


\(^{143}\) Grainger dispatched a photograph of Hutcheson to the Museum in 1938 but there was no discussion of creating a Museum Legend to him. Grainger to Dorothy Nicholson, 25 December 1938. Grainger also admired Hutcheson as a pianist. Grainger, ‘English pianism and Harold Bauer’, pp.338, 340.
The Legends are similarly silent on indigenous Australian music, Australian bush balladry, Grainger's Australian-born contemporaries, even his own piano student Katharine Parker (1889–1971) whom he described elsewhere as 'one of Australia’s most gifted and inspired composers', and Alec Burnard whom he had called 'the 1st real Australian tonebirther after me—many tangled as I', and whom he had considered appointing as curator for his Museum. Despite Grainger’s familiarity with the work of these and other Australians and in some cases knowing them personally, none was discussed in a Legend, although he sought their scores for his collection. Grainger’s Legends are silent even on a figure whose concerns were in some important ways similar to those of his own Free Music: Henry Tate (1873–1926), who in the 1910s and 1920s proposed a new Australian musical idiom, based on local birdsong and bush sounds. Although Tate’s compositions have been described as naïve and technically inferior to Grainger’s, the two men’s search for a uniquely Australian music gave them much in common. But Grainger did not see this as relevant to the history of Australian composition since 1880.

In 1960, in writing to the University Architect about enlarging the Museum building, he acknowledged that ‘There are already several Australian composers whose music is known and prized all over the musical world—men such as [John] Antill [1904–1986] & Arthur Benjamin [1893–1960]. In my opinion their works should be accessible to Australian music

144 Grainger, program note to Katharine Parker, *Down Longford way, arranged for ‘elastic scoring’ by Percy Grainger* (Boosey & Hawkes, 1936) p.2; see also Grainger, ‘English pianism and Harold Bauer’, p.338.

145 Grainger, postcard to Ella Grainger, 5 May 1938.


147 Grainger told Arthur Benjamin that he had heard Benjamin’s ‘sparkling & fascinating music on many occasions and [had] thrilled at the thought of such distinguished compositions coming from an Australian pen’. Grainger to Arthur Benjamin, 27 May 1953.

148 Clifford, *Grainger’s collection of music by other composers*.


151 Covell, *Australia’s music*, pp.88–107. Although the material on Tate now held by the Grainger museum was acquired well after Grainger’s death, Grainger was probably at least aware of Tate’s efforts; many of Tate’s poems were published in the *Bulletin* and sections of *Australian musical possibilities* appeared in major newspapers. *Australian musical resources: some suggestions* (J. Endacott, 1917), was reviewed in the United States. Tate, *Australian musical possibilities*, ‘Appendix 2’.
students & music-lovers’. While it is possible that if the second storey had eventuated and Grainger had lived beyond 79 years he would have included Legends on these composers, I conclude however that it is significant of his intentions that he ignored them in his Legends both in 1938 and 1955–1956. Grainger omitted other Australian composers from his Legends because he saw himself not just as the first Australian composer of any significance, but as having achieved his greatness as the inheritor of a European tradition, to which was exposed at its source, not through a second-hand or transplanted Australian version. He wanted his Museum to facilitate:

a study of the nature (personality, racial characteristics, working habits, etc.) of composers and of the family traits and environmental influences that appear to make for greatness in composers; to examine the indebtedness of composers to early influences coming from music-loving parents, guardians, teachers, friends; to examine the indebtedness of composers one to another and the extent to which composers give practical help to one another—how Schumann helped Brahms; how Brahms helped Dvorak; how Liszt helped Grieg; how Grieg helped Delius; how Delius helped me.

Thus Grainger positioned himself at the end of a long and illustrious European inheritance. This was no misrepresentation; Grainger did not study composition in Australia; he was influenced by Delius. Grainger’s Legends impose the linear, evolutionary approach so prevalent in the large museums of his youth onto the eclectic, organic, non-evolutionary collection. This evolutionary logic corresponded with the cause-and-effect, positivist understanding of ‘progress’. Despite his claims to universalism, Grainger was interested in ‘firsts’ and ‘leadership’:

The Nordic nations (Scandinavia, Northern France, the Netherlands, England, etc) led music at least for 600 years (1000 to 1700). Then they passed out of the picture (tossing the ball of leadership to Germany, Austria, Italy & Russia) until about 50 years ago. In those 50 years I have not only been, myself, one of the most experimental of composers, but I have known intimately, Norway’s first great composer (Grieg), Denmark’s ditto (Sandby), England’s first modernist composer (Cyril Scott), the Englishman who first put English modern music on the map (Gardiner), several of America’s greatest & jolliest composers (J.A. Carpenter, Guion, Fickenscher) & America’s leading Negro composer (Dett). Also, I was in

152 Grainger to Rae Featherstone, 23 March 1960.
153 Grainger to Barrett, 24 August 1938.
some ways the closest of all fellow-composers to the greatest composer of our own era (Delius).\textsuperscript{154}

Thus Grainger was not only positioning himself at the vanguard of Australian composition, but was also placing himself in an international historical context, and a racially exclusive one at that. Grainger claimed that his Museum was concerned with ‘Nordic’ composers whom he defined at the time as ‘British, Irish, American, Canadian, Australasian, Dutch and Scandinavian’.\textsuperscript{155} But even within these narrow racial parameters, the content of the Legends was overwhelmingly British; there was not one Legend dedicated to any American, Canadian, or Dutch composer.\textsuperscript{156} The only Scandinavian composer covered in any detail was Edvard Grieg. Grainger was not fond of the work of other famed Scandinavian composers such as Sibelius and Nielsen,\textsuperscript{157} and so they were not mentioned in the Legends. The only possible Irishman was Ernest John Moeran.\textsuperscript{158} The only Australian was Grainger.

Those composers to whom Grainger dedicated Legends fell into two groups: his two older mentors, Edvard Grieg and Frederick Delius, and his Frankfurt Group contemporaries (Cyril Scott, Balfour Gardiner and Roger Quilter). There is substantial correspondence with these composers in the collection (except for Grieg who died the year after meeting Grainger). They are discussed repeatedly in Grainger’s writings and were clearly considered by Grainger to be intimately entwined with his own personal story. It would be surprising if there were not Legends on these figures. It is apparent that Grainger put more effort into writing, designing and fabricating this group of Legends than into those dealing with the secondary group discussed below. Also he gave these composers priority as some

\textsuperscript{154} Grainger to Tonie Morse, 20 July 1943.
\textsuperscript{155} ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
\textsuperscript{157} ‘Anecdotes’, p.20.
\textsuperscript{158} Ernest John Moeran’, Museum Legend, 12 May 1956 (Appendix pp.233–238). Moeran was of Irish descent but he was born and lived mostly in England. E.J. Moeran to Grainger, 3 March 1949.
of their Legends were made in 1938, in time for the Museum’s official opening,\textsuperscript{159} whereas the majority of the Legends were not undertaken until 1955–1956.

Grainger attempted to cement his own place in the history of modern composition by cementing that of the Frankfurt Group, and Cyril Scott in particular. When Grainger praised Scott, he was boosting himself by association.\textsuperscript{160} Until his death Grainger valued the works of the Frankfurt Group far more highly than most commentators then or now, and continued to promote them: ‘I would regard the spoiling of any of Cyril’s youthful masterworks as a national calamity—on a par with the destruction of Canterbury Cathedral or Stone Henge.’\textsuperscript{161} Grainger represented the significance of the Frankfurt Group in the arrangement of his Museum, proposing to give a bronze bust of Cyril Scott, not of himself, pride of place in the foyer: ‘my whole museum starts with this bust.’\textsuperscript{162} Although bizarre in an autobiographical museum,\textsuperscript{163} it is fully consistent with Grainger’s acknowledgement of sources: he credited Scott as the leader of the Frankfurt Group, calling it sometimes ‘the Cyril Scott Group.’\textsuperscript{164} In ‘Cyril Scott: musical originator’,\textsuperscript{165} Grainger places Scott squarely at the forefront of musical modernism, emphasising his originality and essential Englishness.

Grainger devoted no less than five Legends to Henry Balfour Gardiner. Three comprising the programs from Gardiner’s 1912–1913 Queen’s Hall concert series reflect principally the significance of those concerts in bringing Grainger recognition as a composer.\textsuperscript{166} The fourth describes Gardiner as the ‘Fairy Godfather’ of British Music and acknowledges his


\textsuperscript{160} Grainger to Cyril Scott, 26–28 February 1930.

\textsuperscript{161} Grainger, ‘Round letter’, 16 August 1947.

\textsuperscript{162} Grainger, ‘Round letter’, 18 October 1955.

\textsuperscript{163} Grainger also specified ‘Place [Rupert] Bunny’s portrait of me where it looks well, but nothing of mine in entrance hall.’ Grainger to Nicholson, 25 December 1938.

\textsuperscript{164} Grainger to Thomas Armstrong, 17 October 1958, in Gillies & Pear (eds), \textit{All-round man}, p.276.

\textsuperscript{165} Also located in the foyer in 1956. Grainger, Day-book 1956, entry for 8 January.

\textsuperscript{166} ‘Programmes of the Balfour Gardiner Concerts’, three Museum Legends.
financial support for the construction of the Museum.\textsuperscript{167} The single Legend on Roger Quilter positions him as ‘easily the world’s finest song writer of his generation’, \textsuperscript{168} not a widely held view. The final Frankfurt Group member, Norman O’Neill, whom Grainger did not know well, \textsuperscript{169} has no Legend (although he is mentioned in ‘H. Balfour Gardiner, champion of British music’).

Surprising however is the absence of a Legend on the Danish composer and ‘cellist Herman Sandby. A lifelong friend since Frankfurt days, Grainger promoted Sandby as a composer and even supported him financially.\textsuperscript{170} Also, it was Sandby who first brought Grainger’s compositions to the notice of Edvard Grieg,\textsuperscript{171} thus facilitating one of the most important musical relationships in Grainger’s life, for which Sandby is acknowledged only in passing in the Legend ‘Edvard Grieg and Percy Grainger’. Although it is possible that Grainger simply ran out of time to write a Legend on Sandby, it is likely that if Grainger had intended to do so, he would have at least drafted the text at the same time as those for his other Frankfurt contemporaries. Grainger did however plan to display Sandby’s scores with his wife Allhild’s painting of the New Zealand seascape,\textsuperscript{172} and sought items of ‘Sandbyana’ relating to Herman and his forebears,\textsuperscript{173} as well as a suit of clothes, presumably for an unrealised ‘effigy’ to join those of other Frankfurt Group members.\textsuperscript{174} In 1956 Grainger asked Sandby and Allhild to return his letters so he could lodge them in the Museum,\textsuperscript{175} but perhaps their subsequent refusal influenced him here.\textsuperscript{176}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167} ‘H. Balfour Gardiner, Champion of British music’, Museum Legend. The fifth Gardiner Legend is an assemblage of photographs of the composer and his relatives. Untitled [Relatives of Henry Balfour Gardiner], n.d. [probably 1938] (Appendix pp.81–82).
\item \textsuperscript{168} ‘Roger Quilter: melodist’, Museum Legend, 10 February 1956 (Appendix pp.149–152). See also ‘Roger Quilter: the greatest songwriter of our age’ (manuscript, 27 July 1936), reprinted in Gillies & Clunies Ross (eds) pp.290–292.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Grainger to Armstrong, 17 October 1958.
\item \textsuperscript{170} Bird, p.226.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Grainger, ‘Anecdotes’, p.5.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Grainger, ‘Round letter’, 18 October 1955.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Grainger to Herman Sandby, 29 December 1952.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Grainger to Sandby, 31 July 1952.
\item \textsuperscript{175} Grainger to Herman & Alfhild Sandby, 11 May 1955.
\item \textsuperscript{176} The letters were donated posthumously by Sandby’s nephew. Kay Dreyfus & Frank Strahan, ‘Tenth progress report of work on the Percy Grainger Music Collection, for the period October 1976 to May 1977’,
\end{itemize}
The second group of composers about whom Grainger created Legends is larger in number (twelve names) but each had a less significant influence on Grainger the composer than the five mentioned above. They are all British: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958), Arthur Bliss (1891–1975), Richard Addinsell (1904–1977), Frederick Austin (1872–1952), Josef Holbrooke (1878–1958), John Ireland (1879–1962), Gustav Holst (1874–1934), Ernest John Moeran (1894–1950), William Walton (1902–1983), Arnold Bax (1883–1953), Ethel Smyth (1858–1944) and Maude White (1855–1937). Grainger created these Legends during his second period of intensive museum-work in Melbourne (October 1955 to May 1956). Their apparently lower place in Grainger’s hierarchy is suggested by his treating most in pairs;¹⁷⁷ and by the fact that some of their Legends were never completed.¹⁷⁸ With the exception of Ralph Vaughan Williams it would be fair to say that they are not generally held to be composers of the calibre of Delius or Grieg. And although Grainger’s relationships with some dated back to his London years,¹⁷⁹ they were not among his inner circle of composer-friends with whom he exchanged ideas over decades. Grainger and Moeran for example had had little contact, either personal or musical. When in 1948 Grainger asked Moeran to have his eyes photographed, he was obliged to track him down through the BBC. Bliss too was more an acquaintance than a friend¹⁸⁰ and Grainger was obliged to use an intermediary when seeking him out.¹⁸¹ The inclusion of the British film and theatre composer Richard Addinsell is surprising; it appears that Grainger never met him, although he frequently performed Addinsell’s popular Warsaw concerto and arranged it for two pianos.¹⁸² I suggest that Grainger included at least some of the less influential of these figures (Walton, Holbrooke, Bliss, Ireland, Moeran) in his Legends because they were among the ‘blue-eyed’ composers whom he had photographed for the Legend on that subject (discussed below). They were probably also included in the Legend ‘What colour

¹⁷⁷ Bliss & Addinsell; Austin & Holbrooke; Ireland & Holst; Smyth & White (Appendix pp.255, 189–190, 257, 253).
¹⁷⁸ Bliss & Addinsell; Austin & Holbrooke; Ireland & Holst; Bax (Appendix p.241–242); Smyth & White.
¹⁷⁹ Vaughan Williams, Austin, Holst, Holbrooke, Bax, Smyth.
¹⁸⁰ Bird, p.215
¹⁸¹ Grainger to Max Steffens, 27 May 1953.
are composers' eyes?' made in March 1956 but sadly no longer extant. There was little point in Grainger expounding the musical wonders of blue eyes if the composers who possessed them were not allocated a place in his musical canon.

The dearth of Scandinavian composers represented in the Legends (other than Grieg, for whom Grainger created three Legends\(^1\)) is curious, particularly Herman Sandby as discussed earlier. Other Scandinavian composers whom Grainger admired such as his Norwegian friend (and posthumous biographer) Sparre Olsen (1903–1984) are also omitted. Similarly the Legends lack specific discussion of the many American composers whom Grainger had admired and championed;\(^{184}\) Edward MacDowell (1861–1908), Howard Brockway (1870–1951), Arthur Fickenscher (1871–1954), Rubin Goldmark (1872–1936), Daniel Gregory Mason (1873–1953), John Alden Carpenter (1876–1951), Nathaniel Dett (1882–1943), David W. Guion (1892–1981), George Gershwin (1898–1937) and Roy Harris (1898–1979). There is not even a group Legend dedicated to American composers, only passing references elsewhere to Carpenter, MacDowell, Goldmark, Harris and Fickenscher,\(^{185}\) and a lengthier discussion of Gershwin’s musical debt to Grieg.\(^{186}\) Fickenscher, for example, composer and inventor of an instrument with 60 notes per octave, whom Grainger considered to be searching in similar realms to his own Free Music,\(^{187}\) is only mentioned in the introductory panel ‘The aims of the Grainger Museum’ and in passing references in the Grieg Legend, as well as in ‘Arnold Dolmetsch: musical Confucius’ and ‘Free music’. This is despite Grainger’s claiming him in 1934 as ‘one of the greatest creative giants of our era’.\(^{188}\) Thus Grainger’s American contemporaries, and highly successful students such as composers Morton Gould (1913–1996)\(^{189}\) and Bernard Herrmann (1911–1975), were not brought into Grainger’s narrative,
although, as with their Australian equivalents, he did acquire some scores for the collection.\footnote{190}

In noting the narrow scope of Grainger’s Legends on composers I do not intend to detract from them. They achieved what Grainger set out to achieve. He himself explained that the contents of his Museum reflected his own personal taste and criticism, and that the composers represented appeared in the chronological order of his contact with them, or in the order of their artistic importance in his eyes. He conceded that his Museum collection could not pretend to present all important progressive English-speaking and Scandinavian composers of the last seventy years, nor all their significant works.\footnote{191} Further, while this discussion focuses on the Legends, it should be remembered that the displays also included ‘desks’ displaying other composers’ scores,\footnote{192} which possibly represented his American, British, Scandinavian and Australian contemporaries, and he generally requested a second copy for the ‘reading room’.\footnote{193} Eventually however, Grainger acquired far too many such scores to be able to display simultaneously.

The Museum had originally comprised two distinct halves: the Grainger Museum on the one hand and the Music Museum—possibly to be complemented by a future Music Library—on the other.\footnote{194} The Music Museum was intended to be filled by the University and ‘to preserve and exhibit things of general musical interest and things connected with the general musical life of Australia.’\footnote{195} In 1938 the front North wing was set up as as the Music Museum, the portrait of G.W.L. Marshall-Hall to hang in the foyer.\footnote{196} While working on the displays in 1956, Grainger and Ella made and hung two signs: ‘Entrance to Grainger Museum’ and ‘Entrance to Music Museum’,\footnote{197} indicating that this plan was still in place. Had it been fully executed and subsequently maintained, perhaps some of the scores of his

\footnote{190} See for example Grainger to Mr Summy, 24 December 1946, seeking Dett’s \textit{juba dance} for the museum.
\footnote{191} ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’, Museum Legend.
\footnote{192} Grainger to Holst, 20 February 1956.
\footnote{193} See for example Grainger to Herman Sandby, 19 December 1955.
\footnote{194} Grainger to A.W. Grieg, 6 September 1938.
\footnote{195} Grainger to Barrett, 24 August 1938. The University’s invitation on 10 December 1938 was for the official opening of the ‘Music Museum and the Grainger Museum’.
\footnote{196} Grainger to Nicholson, 25 December 1938.
\footnote{197} Grainger, Day-book 1956, entries for 6 & 7 January.
contemporaries would have ended up in the Music Museum, and a more comprehensive and broader (albeit more orthodox) approach to Australian music history may have complemented Grainger’s idiosyncratic selection. Grainger contributed only marginally to the contents of the Music Museum, however. He acquired in 1935 the Marshall-Hall manuscripts for the Music Museum, rather than for the Grainger Museum, ‘not only because of their value as music but also because of the immense part played by Professor Marshall-Hall in Australian musical progress.’

Any ideas for displays in the Music Museum are scantily documented, suggesting that they were not Grainger’s priority; a list prepared in 1936 contains only three items: a large photograph of Marshall-Hall, a picture of Beethoven, and an ‘old table piano.’ I maintain therefore that Grainger considered only those composers discussed in the Legends as central to his career as a composer, and thus central to his story.

Propitious circumstances and fructifying personalities

Grainger stated that his Museum was about the process of musical composition. He believed that matters both obviously musical and apparently extra-musical influenced this process, and his comprehensive collection reflected his view of the importance of both types of influences. In 1949 for instance he sent from Sweden some furniture that had belonged to Ella’s mother, even though it dated from a time well before he had met Ella. He believed that her mother’s taste would have influenced Ella’s, which in turn influenced his after they met in 1926. His exhibits also reflect this holistic approach in terms of the wide range of material types put on display. Grainger put more effort into displays of composers’ clothing, for example, than into displays of their scores. In seeing clear links between a creative artist’s social, cultural and physical environment and his artworks, Grainger was advanced in museum display terms.

198 Grainger to Barrett, 24 August 1938. The bronze statue of Marshall-Hall, now installed outside the Conservatorium building, was donated anonymously to the Grainger Museum in 1949. Richard Fowler to Grainger, 12 September 1949.


201 ‘Aims of the Grainger Museum’.
When Grainger described his compositional development in his Legends, he discussed only briefly the formal musical influences on his earliest years such as his teachers Louis Pabst and Karl Klimsch, much of that being extra-musical anecdote. Judging from the Legends, Grainger perceived the most musically influential aspects of his earliest years to be family ones; he believed that the broader cultural legacy of his family and childhood friends had greater impact on him as a composer than did formal musical lessons, methods or examples. It was only with the Frankfurt Group Legends that he discussed in any depth specifically musical matters.

An exhibit into which Grainger put much time and effort in the 1950s was a series of life-size mannequins depicting himself, Rose, Ella, Roger Quilter, Cyril Scott and Balfour Gardiner.203 Grainger usually referred to these figures, which he commissioned from a Mrs Rodgers of Ossining, New York, using a ‘wire and rag’ process, as ‘effigies’.204 Grainger originally envisaged wax models,205 which Cyril Scott described as: ‘à la Madame Tussauds, but when I wrote and warned him that waxworks were highly inflammable (he has a phobia about fire) he modified his original idea.’206 Grainger may have got the mannequin idea originally from Richard Fowler who in 1940 offered to make a wax figure of Grieg for the Museum, an offer Grainger welcomed but apparently did not take up.207 Working in the Industrial and Technological Museum, Fowler would have been well familiar with the use of life-size human models in exhibits, and had made wax magnified botanical models himself.208 In discussing the proposal eleven years later with Mrs Rodgers, Grainger had

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203 The effigy of Rose and its clothing was despatched to the Museum in 1955 along with the other effigies. Grainger, ‘List of contents of lift van 30 June 1955’, but according to Reeves no longer exists and Grainger may have destroyed it. Reeves, ‘Past-hoard-house’, p.83. Grainger also sought a suit of clothes from Herman Sandby, suggesting an intention to create an effigy of him. Grainger to Herman Sandby, 31 July 1952.
204 Grainger to Mrs (Kathleen) William H. Rodgers, 2 June 1952; also correspondence and invoices between Grainger and Mrs Rodgers (Arch Hill Studio) 1951–1953; Grainger to Richard Fowler, 23 April 1952.
205 Grainger to Barrett, 24 August 1938.
206 Scott, Bone of contention, p.71. This is supported by a magazine article collected by Grainger: ‘Realistic models from life, made in wax, are not as unusual art as they seem. The Greeks made colored statues, but time has washed them white.’ ‘Who’s who in wax’, magazine pages, n.d. [c.1940s].
207 Grainger to Richard Fowler, 24 March 1940.
moved away from the waxwork portrait idea, towards a generalisation of ‘type’ with racial and anthropological overtones:

I mentioned my indecision as to whether the figures should be close likenesses or just type-likenesses. Why I somewhat favor the vague type-likeness idea is because I do not want visitors to the museum to view the figures as if they were wax-works (“how life-like they are”). I want everything in the museum to be very documented and fact-tight. I do not want visitors to get their impressions from PORTRAITS (unless the portrait is part of the LIVES of the composers) if photographs are available. It would seem to me a good procedure if the visitor could get an impression of the taste & habits of the composer from looking at his clothes DISPLAYED ON SOME VAGUELY LIKE FIGURE & look at the photo alongside for likeness details.209

Although claiming to be aiming at only a ‘type’ likeness, Grainger in his display of Scott, Quilter and Grainger together intended to reflect their appearance in a photograph at the Harrogate Festival in 1929. Grainger was very specific about racial details such as hair colour: ‘the hair of all 3 was similar in colour to Ella’s fringe at present—a pale dusty yellow—dark mouse—yellow rather than light brown. There was no suggestion of brown in the hair. PG’s was slightly lighter than the others’.210 Similarly for the clothes; Grainger asked Quilter for ‘anything that seems suitable to you & is characteristic. / I will want suit, underclothes, socks, necktie, handkerchief, walking stick, hat, shoes.’211 Unsurprisingly, Cyril Scott in the 1950s had not kept any clothes from the 1920s, so Grainger asked him to have a suit made up in the appropriate style, and wear it for a few weeks to give it ‘a lived-in look.’212 Eventually the heads of the effigies of Gardiner, Scott and Quilter were removed, at Fowler’s suggestion but with Grainger’s approval.213 Grainger later claimed it was because he did not like the faces, but if he could get some replacements as good as Madame Tussaud’s, he would.214 At one stage Grainger envisaged two mannequins of Rose; one depicting her during the London years to be consistent with one of the Museum’s main objects: ‘the presentation of information about the development of (& interinfluencing of

209 Grainger to Mrs Rodgers, 5 October 1951.
210 Grainger, undated typescript, presumably instructions for Mrs Rodgers, ‘Figures based on “HARROGATE FESTIVAL 1927 [sic]” photo of Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter & Percy Grainger’.
211 Grainger to Roger Quilter, 14 April 1952.
212 Grainger to Scott, 10 & 11 December 1951.
213 Grainger to Richard Fowler, 24 January 1956. Installation photograph from the 1980s suggest that at least those of Ella and Percy were later re-attached. Unknown photographer, [envelope of colour photographs of effigy displays], photographic paper stamped verso ‘SEPT 83’.
214 Grainger to Cyril Scott, 19 June 1956.
each by) the members of the so-called “Frankfort group” of composers at the time of their
greatest activity & greatest cooperation with each other [...] say 1897 to 1914’, and one
later in life, although he was ambivalent about representing his mother in poor health.

Grainger was influenced by popular waxwork displays; in 1951 he wrote, ‘People go & see
waxworks of kings, criminals, politicians, movie stars, etc. How can we creative artists
hope to hold our own if we do not use the methods & materials & appeals of our day?’
Mannequins would also have been familiar to Grainger from dioramas in museums, a form
of display which, in its modern museum sense, originated in Britain and Scandinavia, then
flourished in the United States. Dioramas aimed to educate the general public, rather
than the academic or researcher; the wildlife diorama was adopted in anthropological
exhibits, with life-sized models of indigenous people with traditional clothing and tools,
sometimes with recreations of their shelters, food and crafts, all set among the local flora
and fauna.

Judging from the surviving photographs and remnants of Grainger’s mannequins, they were
cruelly made and the exhibits had no painted scenery. The dressed figures simply stood in
glass showcases, with stencilled labels. Originally Grainger envisaged artefacts to
complement the display: ‘As regards backgrounds as part of the figures: We have quite a lot
of things (furniture, etc) suitable for display with the figures of the composer, so a
background built-in with the figures might not be needful. We can see.’ This type of
‘habitat’ arrangement would have been similar to displays which first appeared at the end of
the nineteenth century but which remained popular well into the twentieth, such as those
of Native Americans in New York’s American Museum of Natural History. It was also

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215 Grainger to Mrs Rodgers, 27 November 1951.
216 Ibid.
217 Grainger to Cyril Scott, 2 October 1951.
219 Wonders, pp.9–10.
220 For example, a diorama depicting a camp of people of the Yarra Yarra tribe created at the National
Museum of Victoria in the late 1930s re-used three figures from an 1886 display, and remained on display in
212. Also Rasmussen, Museum for the people, p.336. Ethnographic dioramas continued in Britain as late as
common in Scandinavian folk museums. Grainger was unusual however in applying these techniques to represent himself and other named individuals of his own circle; museums typically used them to represent anonymous ‘type’ examples of the racial ‘other’ or the local ‘folk’. The shipment of the five effigies to Melbourne included some of the London furniture,\textsuperscript{222} so Grainger presumably intended to place the figures in the London Room setting, but this would not have worked chronologically for the figure of Ella, whom he met twelve years after leaving London.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{221} Grainger to Rodgers, 5 October 1951.

\textsuperscript{222} Grainger, memorandum for J.H. Evans & Sons Inc., n.d. [1953].
The emphasis in Grainger’s Museum displays on people’s outward appearance extended beyond family photographs in the Legends and clothing on mannequins to the physical characteristics of the body itself, primarily because Grainger saw the body as the site of racial characteristics which he believed were fundamental in determining a person’s inner nature. This connection between physiognomy, and intellect and morality, all racially determined, was well established in museums by the turn of the twentieth century.223 As discussed in Chapter Three, Grainger believed that his racial inheritance was an important element in shaping him as a composer. In attempting to ‘prove’ his superior genealogy through his Museum, Grainger made use of various means, including photography. The best way to demonstrate Nordic descent was in Grainger’s view to illustrate blue-eyedness by displaying colour photographs of blue-eyed composers. From the late nineteenth century, photography had been adopted by a range of scientific, academic and technical disciplines, largely because of its ‘apparent consistency with the empiricist assumptions and methodological procedures of naturalism.’224 Photography was perceived as disinterested,

224 Green, p.3.
Grainger’s major memorial to his mother had been a book of photographs. When describing the difference between ‘portraits’ and ‘photographs’ as quoted above in regard to the effigies, Grainger saw only photographs as scientifically truthful and revealing.

So to prove his blue-eyed composer theory, between 1949 and 1955 Grainger made and commissioned photographs of the blue eyes of various composers and other individuals. These survive in the collection and some were incorporated into Legends. Those Legends discussing Roger Quilter, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ernest John Moeran include both a front-on and profile photograph, reminiscent of anthropological racial documentation. Subjects photographed in 1950 by Grainger, apparently in collaboration with Burnett Cross, but not included in Legends, were friends Bambi and Niels Grøn, Quilter, Ella, her daughter Elsie and Aunt Ström. In these examples, a label with the subject’s name and the date of photography has been stuck to the subject’s forehead prior to the photograph being taken; thus the individual has become objectified; a specimen. Another series taken in 1953–1954 is more professional in quality; subjects include Cyril Scott, Arnold Bax, William Walton, Arthur Bliss, Richard Addinsell and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams’ eye colour was presumably not quite what Grainger preferred, for he created a display caption reading: ‘R. Vaughan Williams has peculiar eyes. The main colouring is purple-ish blue. This is shot through with specks and shafts of yellow and hazel.’ Delius was long dead by this time so Grainger planned to display a black and white reprint photograph of him in his younger years, captioned: ‘Frederick Delius. (See also the colour of his eyes in his wife’s portrait of him).’ Black and white images of Gustav Holst and Joseph Holbrook are also among this material. Grainger also lodged copies of the eye-photographs with the Library of Congress.

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227 Bay 33, box 15.
228 Dorum, p.197.
For many shots Grainger commissioned a London studio, Tunbridge Photographers. The colour process which Grainger chose appears from the correspondence to have been relatively new, experimental and costly. Grainger was not however averse to distorting the evidence to prove his theory. His instructions to the photographer include the following coy suggestion:

There is one aspect of these colour photographs I want to stress: without wanting to seek exaggeration, I will never mind if the results are a little bit on the startling and drastic side. One of the most usual signs of genius in music (this is not my idea, but has been noted by many, is a [glaring?-illeg.] wide open eye & brilliant colouring.

The choice of individual composers to which Legends are dedicated, as enumerated earlier, is a ‘Nordic’ selection according to Grainger’s definition, and appears to have been determined only partly on the grounds of Grainger’s actual involvement with the individual concerned or their musical significance. Grainger saw the Frankfurt Group, Grieg and Delius as key figures in his life, and therefore obvious subject-matter for displays, but the remainder were relatively marginal, although Grainger admired, and in some cases performed, their music. Gillies and Pear point out, for example, that Grainger’s main interest in John Ireland seems to have been the colour of his eyes. In his request to Ireland Grainger explains that he wants photos of the eyes of the greatest British composers. The letter is an illogical rant; Grainger initially denies a preference for the music of blue-eyed to brown-eyed composers, then brings in the Jewish element ‘Isn’t it strange that there are so many darkeyed Jews, yet that most great Jewish composers […] are blue or light eyed?’, claims indifference to what the facts of the matter might eventually prove to be, ‘so long as they are proved’, but tirades against ‘deliberate falsifications & false propaganda by the pro-darkeyed’, referring to ‘that series of coloured pictures put out in Vienna, or somewhere, where all the blue or light eyed wellknown classical composers […] are shown as having brown eyes.’ He concludes: ‘It is partly to counteract such nonsense that I am planning this

229 See for example Grainger to Ralph Vaughan Williams, 31 October 1948, in Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, p.224.
231 Grainger to J. Tunbridge, 2 November 1948.
233 Gillies & Pear (eds), All-round man, p.xxiii.
section in my museum, entitling What coloured eyes do British Composers have? [...] So you can imagine how frustrated & defrauded I would feel if the blue-eyes that have written your extraordinarily blue-eyed music should be missing from the collection in my museum!234

In requesting photographs from those composers (other than Ireland) who were not members of his inner circle, Grainger generally avoided mentioning his blue-eyed theory, talking more broadly of ‘colour photos [...] of the eyes of the greatest living composers’.235 But the coincidence between the blue-eyed photo subjects and Legends suggest that the racial agenda governed the choice of composers to be discussed in that sub-group of the Legends which deal with the primary goal of his Museum: the processes of musical composition from about 1880 on.

As Green explains, the ‘biologisation of history’, of which Grainger’s blue-eyed theory was an example, arose in the later nineteenth century; in it ‘the perception of a natural order of social structure and stratification was thought to be readily available in the evidence of the human body.’236 Consistent with this, the emerging Australian nation was seen as ‘the apparently predestined place of the working white man.’237 Attempts to define this made use of photography ‘in which the image is intended to function as a kind of evidence, an irrefutable testimony to the existence of facts. It is a genre of photography which is dependent upon the simple equation between appearance and truth, and between description and knowledge.’238

Grainger was not alone in conflating a particular family’s genealogy with broader racial characteristics in the production of artistic ‘genius’. Eugenicists also made conclusions on individual families. Francis Galton wrote: ‘[T]he life of each individual is in some real sense a prolongation of those of his ancestry. [...] The life histories of our relatives [...] are especially able to forewarn and to encourage us, for they are prophetic of our own

234 Grainger to John Ireland, 8 December 1948. The Legend itself on Blue-eyed composers appears to have been dismantled or misplaced since Grainger’s death. Astrid Krautschneider [Acting Assistant Curator, Grainger Museum], personal communication to Belinda Nemec, 8 December 2005. See Appendix p.187.
235 See for example, Grainger to Arthur Benjamin, Grainger to Arthur Bliss, 27 May 1953, Grainger to Vaughan Williams, 31 October 1948.
236 Green, p.6.
238 Ibid., p.8.
futures.239 Museums were a venue in the early twentieth century for displays and discussion on eugenics and their implications for entire races and classes, particular families and even individuals. In August 1932, the Third International Congress of Eugenics was held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.240 The Second Congress had been held at the same venue in September 1921,241 and the First at the University of London in June 1912, during Grainger’s London years.242 Eugenics comprised many disciplines—genetics, history, genealogy, anthropology, medicine, psychiatry, criminology and social policy—and was considered a scientifically and socially respectable field.243 President of the Eugenics Education Society in 1912 was Leonard Darwin,244 and the many Vice-Presidents included such luminaries as the Bishops of Birmingham and Oxford, Alexander Graham Bell,245 Winston Churchill, the Lord Mayor of London, and the Director of Paris’ Natural History Museum.246 Laurence Vail Coleman, head of the American Association of Museums, was one of the three members of the Exhibits Committee for the 1921 Congress, which has since been described as representing ‘a


241 Eugenics, genetics and the family, volume I: scientific papers of the Second International Congress of Eugenics held at American Museum of Natural History, New York September 22–28, 1921 (Williams & Wilkins Company, 1923); Eugenics in race and state, volume II: scientific papers of the Second International Congress of Eugenics held at American Museum of Natural History, New York September 22–28, 1921 (Williams & Wilkins Company, 1923); Laughlin.

242 Problems in eugenics: paper communicated to the First International Eugenics Congress, held at the University of London, July 24 to 30th, 1912 (Eugenics Education Society, 1912); Problems in eugenics vol.II: report of proceedings of the First International Eugenics Congress, held at the University of London, July 24 to 30th, 1912, together with an appendix containing those papers communicated to the Congress not included in volume I (Eugenics Education Society, 1913); Engs, pp.17–73, 202–203, 213–214.


244 Leonard Darwin (1850–1943) was a son of Charles Darwin and the leader of the British eugenics movement. Engs, p.38.

245 Bell (1847–1922) was an early pioneer of the eugenics movement and studied family pedigrees. Ibid., p.17.

246 Problems in eugenics, p.xi.
comprehensive consensus of biological racism in America and England never matched before or since.'247

The 1921 exhibits were in two sections: ‘an exhibit relating to the paleontology of man, especially prepared for the occasion by the American Museum of Natural History, in the Hall of the Age of Man on the fourth floor’ and ‘the Special Eugenics Exhibition, in eighteen alcoves in the Forestry and Darwin Halls on the first floor.’248 Conference exhibitors included two from Australia and one from New Zealand as well as two Nordicist writers admired by Grainger: Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant.249 Exhibits included ‘pedigrees’ of the talented such as the Kemble family of actors and the Bach family of musicians, and a pedigree of the Caesars. Conversely, the heredity of criminality and other undesirable social tendencies, mental attributes such as ‘feeblemindedness’ and unwanted physical characteristics were graphically illustrated with family trees of several extended clans.250

Although by 1932 eugenics was losing scientific credibility,251 the 1932 Congress included an even more extensive exhibition.252 The committee included Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard. Papers delivered covered topics such as the testing of the innateness of musical talent and the shapes of western European skulls.253 One author described ‘purity’ as ‘blue eyes, yellow hair, pink cheeks, tall stature, long head, long narrow face, high narrow nose; thus a yearning for simple, clear-cut human origins, a sense of the aesthetic and a sense of superiority have clustered around the Nordic, parent of the people one asks to dinner’254. In other words, Grainger’s Nordic ideal.

In 1932 there was even greater emphasis than in 1921 on applying the eugenics philosophy to the individual family. Family history and pedigree studies, of both ‘outstanding’ and

247 Barkan, p. 221.
248 Laughlin, p. 13.
249 Grant was also a trustee of the American Museum. Engs, pp. 102–103.
250 Laughlin, pp. 147–151.
251 Wyndham, p. 141.
252 A decade of progress, part II: ‘The exhibit’.
‘unfit’ clans, had been part of the eugenics movement since the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{255} Both heredity and environment were thought to contribute to achievement: ‘Heredity supplies ability; environment furnishes opportunity. The two must meet, if results are to be attained.’\textsuperscript{256} One author based his research on anthropometric measurements of his own relatives; he referred to a recent published study of the inheritance of blue and brown eyes,\textsuperscript{257} and the use of ‘Martin’s Augenfarbentafel’.\textsuperscript{258} Other displays included a wall chart featuring pictures of Charles Darwin and family members, exhibited by his son Leonard; a pedigree of the ‘Galton-Darwin-Wedgwood family’;\textsuperscript{259} a bust of Francis Galton; a bust of Thomas Edison with pedigree chart of his family; and illustrations of the ‘inheritance of natural physical, mental and spiritual qualities in the families of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Theodore Roosevelt’.\textsuperscript{260} Grainger’s Legends featuring photographs of his own maternal forebears, the Aldridges, the relatives of his friend Balfour Gardiner, or Frederick Delius and his wife, seem less unusual, and no less self-serving than these others. Family history or pedigree studies had lost scientific credibility by mid-century,\textsuperscript{261} but Grainger expanded upon those in his Museum during his 1955–1956 visit.

Although the 1932 Congress itself was smaller than the 1921 event,\textsuperscript{262} the associated exhibit was no minor undertaking; it comprised 267 displays and attracted over 15,000 visitors. There were elaborate tables showing the hereditary patterns of eye colour, bronchial trouble, unusual mechanical ability and fingerprint type, a ‘case of skulls and bones, also skiagraph, showing specialized skeletal adaptations to such arts as dancing and piano playing’; ‘Charts showing inheritance of musical capacity’ from the Eastman School of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{256}Engs, pp.67–69; Lynn, \textit{Eugenics: a reassessment}, pp.5–6.
  \item \textsuperscript{257}Rudolph M. Binder, ‘The Soong family: an example of great ability in the common man’, in \textit{A decade of progress}, pp.145–158.
  \item \textsuperscript{258}\textit{Eugenical news} (vol.15, 1930) p.175.
  \item \textsuperscript{260}Galton was a cousin of Charles Darwin. Darwin married his cousin Emma Wedgwood in 1839. Engs, pp.38, 82.
  \item \textsuperscript{261}A \textit{decade of progress}, passim.
  \item \textsuperscript{262}Engs, p.69.
  \item \textsuperscript{263}\textit{Ibid.}, p.213.
\end{itemize}
Music; ‘Genetic studies of artistic capacity’; and charts showing ‘differential fecundity according to social class’.\footnote{A decade of progress, p.214.} In acknowledging the collaboration of the American Museum of Natural History, the 1932 Congress organisers stated that:

All anthropological exhibits of the Museum were thrown open to the visitors to the Eugenics Exhibit. Thus the Museum’s permanent exhibits on man’s evolution were closely articulated with the current Eugenics Exhibit on man’s present trends in race and capacities, and on the technique of his own purposeful control of his own future racial and family-stock evolution. In a folder prepared by the Museum for the use of the delegates to [the Congress] there appears the following statement, “Nothing that pertains to the biological history of man or to the conditions of his racial progress or retrogression is foreign to the Third International Congress of Eugenics.”\footnote{Ibid., p.509.}

Thus it can be seen that a large, well-respected, supposedly scientific museum such as the American Museum of Natural History considered it perfectly acceptable and appropriate in the 1920s and 1930s to be actively involved in the eugenics movement. Eugenics was considered a fit topic to which to devote substantial display resources, its messages consistent with those of the museum’s own permanent displays. Indeed, the President of that museum, Henry Osborn, was a pioneer of the American eugenics movement, an associate of Madison Grant, and an Anglo-Saxon supremacist in his beliefs.\footnote{Engs, pp.170–171. This does not mean that the entire museum staff held similar views; there were significant differences of ideology among the anthropologists at this museum in the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1933 Osborn was forced to resign as president of the museum as his views became less acceptable to the wider scientific community. Barkan, p.96; Engs, p.171.} He declared the 1921 exhibit ‘[p]erhaps the most important scientific meeting ever held in the museum.’\footnote{Quoted in Haraway, p.56.} Other museums also propounded eugenic ideas; the permanent Races of mankind exhibition at Chicago’s Field Museum for example (discussed in Chapter Three) included not only the bronze busts of racial types, but displays on American racial problems, immigration and miscegenation.\footnote{Teslow, p.61.}

Many Australians in the 1920s and 1930s still harboured anxiety about their convict ancestry and its contemporary implications, and discussed it in eugenicist terms.\footnote{See for example, ‘The Australian people has sprung from transplanted British stock. During the first forty or fifty years of the transplanting, this stock was of predominantly poor quality; but throughout the last 100 years it has been generally clean and vigorous.’ Hancock, p.37.} At the
University of Melbourne several key figures are considered eugenicists including Sir James Barrett, the main supporter of the Grainger Museum in its early stages.\textsuperscript{269} As Wyndham explains, the term ‘eugenics’ has been sometimes vaguely applied but a definition relevant to Australia in the early twentieth century would be those people who agreed on the ‘need for a larger, healthier, racially pure population, and for the preventive and scientific treatment of social problems.’ Many eminent Australians subscribed to eugenics in the broadest sense; they advocated improvement in diverse fields including town planning and public housing, general hygiene, access to medical care, and better conditions of labour, although they were not necessarily supporters of eugenics’ more extreme measures.\textsuperscript{270} Barrett advocated both environmental and social improvements to strengthen the Australian race, but also urged voluntary sterilization of ‘profoundly defective’ individuals.\textsuperscript{271} His colleague Agar advocated ‘Nordic’ immigration and suggested that Australia had slipped behind Germany’s measures to improve the eugenic quality of the nation since 1933.\textsuperscript{272} The presence of such figures in influential positions at the University of Melbourne in the 1930s does help explain the institution’s sympathetic acceptance of what we now consider to be the more offensive aspects of the Grainger Museum. As Anderson points out, this was at a time when such formalist taxonomies of race were being challenged by scientists in Britain and North America; race was increasingly being seen as separate from culture.\textsuperscript{273} Grainger was astute, or lucky, to have chosen Melbourne for his Museum, a place which clung to outdated racial ideas that coincided with his own. Even by the 1950s when Grainger was creating his racially-informed displays, Australians generally still judged ‘Aryans’ and Anglo-Saxons to be superior to other races, as reflected in the racial restrictions and preferences of the post-war immigration program.\textsuperscript{274}

\textsuperscript{269} Also Professors Richard Berry (anatomy), Wilfred E. Agar (zoology and genetics), Frank Tate (education), John Elkington (history) and others. Wyndham; Anderson, \textit{Cultivation}, pp.165–173.

\textsuperscript{270} Wyndham, pp.10–11, 17.

\textsuperscript{271} Anderson, \textit{Cultivation}, p.172.

\textsuperscript{272} \textit{Ibid.}, p.173.

\textsuperscript{273} \textit{Ibid.}, p.174.

\textsuperscript{274} Tavan, p.50.
Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that Grainger’s urge towards self-disclosure—coupled with his lifelong compulsion to collect, preserve and document—resulted in a mostly uncensored collection that serves as an autobiography of the most intimate kind. Although a prolific writer throughout his life, he never published a traditional autobiography, and so it is his comprehensive collection which must serve this purpose. Grainger’s belief in the importance of the social context in which art is made is evidenced in the breadth of the collection and in his interpretive emphasis on the relationships between the people represented by objects. The Museum Legends and other exhibits, however, drew selectively and deliberately on this all-encompassing source to create a genealogical narrative reflecting his racialised perception of the world and his place in it. This narrative and Grainger’s display methods share characteristics with displays created in the aid of promoting eugenical ideas in the 1920s and 1930s, in themselves a symptom of the ‘biologisation of history’ prevalent in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century western thought. In expressing ideas of hereditary cultural and physical superiority, which were often the topic of exhibition displays in Europe, North America and Australia, Grainger created his own versions of some of the most common museum techniques such as the diorama, genealogical display, and period room.

I have also compared the Grainger Museum to other autobiographical collections and museums, pointing out some significant commonalities and differences. Grainger’s Museum is far more personally revealing than the typical posthumous house- or birthplace-museum or the art collector’s house museum. It has more in common with the autobiographical museum creations of a small but significant number of men, mostly professional artists, writers, or architects, each of whom, like Grainger as ‘Australia’s first great composer’, was attempting to position himself in the minds of future generations as a significant figure in his national cultural history.
CONCLUSION

This thesis is the first in-depth examination of the Grainger Museum in the context of the history and development of museums in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth. It explores the influences upon Grainger of museum philosophies, subject matter and display techniques in Europe, the United States and Australia. It argues that although built in the 1930s and fitted out mostly in the 1950s, the Grainger Museum reflects predominantly the museum philosophies and methods originating during Grainger’s earlier years in Australia, Frankfurt and London, prior to his relocation to the United States in 1914. These were the years when museums generally were at their most influential in terms of the creation and dissemination of new knowledge. Classificatory hierarchies, detailed and encyclopedic taxonomies, uncompromising narratives of evolution and progress, and epistemologies based on material objects rather than on abstract theorising, scientific experiment or field observation, prevailed. The years 1890s–1914 were also the time of Grainger’s greatest musical creativity, and the period in which most of his ideas and beliefs on a wide range of subjects originated, generally as a result of his eclecticism and ready assimilation of prevailing thought. They were also the years he privileged in his subsequent autobiographical writings. By the time Grainger actually built and then equipped his Museum in the 1930s and 1950s respectively, museums generally had ceded to the university, scientific laboratory, and anthropological field researcher their primacy in the creation of new knowledge. Grainger chose a medium which although obsolete in this sense, coincided chronologically with the period of origin of many of the ideas he wished to present.

The Grainger Museum was not a complete anachronism to the 1930s–1950s however, as Grainger’s original exhibits expressed some aspects of eugenical displays which took place in larger museums between the wars, and the building’s design shows an awareness of museum design approaches to solving problems such as museum fatigue and inadequate lighting in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in the United States. That inter-war period also saw the increasing popularity of the period room, outdoor or folk museum and historic house museum, all of which influenced Grainger’s presentation, particularly in the ‘London Room’ display and in the comprehensive nature of his collection which reflected in its wide range of object types every part of his life, from concertising to flagellation. Grainger also
understood the social context in which art was created, and the importance of the influence of colleagues, friends and family upon an artist; this point comes across strongly in his Museum. From very early in the twentieth century, Grainger demonstrated a strong awareness of the existence of a non-indigenous Australian cultural history, asserting that this history, of which he saw himself as a leader, was significant enough to preserve in a museum.

This thesis compares the Grainger Museum to other autobiographical collections and museums, arguing that there are similarities in career, social and family background, and memorialising urge, among the men who created such legacies. It examines Grainger’s mode of collecting and reveals that although he collected unusually broadly, his motivations were similar to many other individual collectors, both of his time and today. He saw collecting as a way of dealing with mortality and the unrelenting passage of time, as a way of defining one’s personal identity, memorialising the past, and leaving a legacy to the future. He was raised in a milieu in which collecting, ordering, preserving and displaying material culture were common among children and adults. This was reflected in his own family’s fondness for collecting, and in his plans at various stages to create three Grainger Museums, of which two would have been of the ‘house museum’ type, which became particularly popular in the United States (where Grainger was living), between the World Wars.

Grainger wished future generations to remember him as Australia’s first great composer, and also as a leading figure in international musical modernism. As a child of a materialistic society which was largely made possible by European colonialism, he chose for his medium a museum, an institution which was an intrinsic part of that colonial project. In communicating his vision to the future public through his Legends Grainger continued with the racially hierarchical, social evolutionary approaches to which he had been exposed, particularly in his younger years. This thesis thus contradicts some of the claims which have been made about Grainger’s uniqueness, originality and eccentricity, arguing instead that as a highly observant, catholic, enthusiastic and eclectic individual, he absorbed numerous characteristics of his cultural milieu, synthesising and presenting them to a future Australian public through his most enduring legacy, the Grainger Museum. His Nordic racial view was manifested in his choice of composers discussed in his Legends, in his creation of life-size
mannequins and displays illustrating the colour of composers’ eyes, and in the very different museum interpretations and emphases applied to supposedly Nordic and non-European cultures. Rather than having a special affinity for indigenous Pacific, Asian and African peoples and their art, as suggested by some previous writers, Grainger assimilated and repeated in his collection many of the primitivist tropes prevalent in the west around the turn of the twentieth century.

These many aspects of Grainger’s long, productive and eclectic life and career were combined in his Museum, which I argue thus metaphorically serves as both map, and hub, of Grainger’s imagined Nordic community and empire of ideas.

At the time of writing, the Grainger Museum is at a potential turning point in its history. The building is completely closed to the public for the first extended period since the 1960s and the collection is being removed. The Museum’s custodian, the University of Melbourne, while formulating plans and seeking funding for remedying the building’s structural and maintenance problems, is considering the Museum’s future role and method of operating. Although the legal protection provided by its heritage registration should ensure that the building continues to serve as Grainger’s Museum, the details of how this obligation can be fulfilled while preserving the collection and meeting the changing needs of scholars, musicians and the wider community are yet to be resolved.

Grainger formed and then realised his ideas for an autobiographical museum when many museums were still operating along lines set in the nineteenth century, particularly in their concern with racial hierarchy, national identity and technological progress. Traditionally, most of those who administered museums believed that their principal relationship was with the collection rather than with the visitor; they felt relatively little obligation to attract a broad demographic or involve the community in decision-making. As a museum-maker Grainger was typical of his time in these respects.

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1 Weil, Rethinking the museum, p. 56.
2 There were rare exceptions, such as the American John Cotton Dana (1856–1929), who advocated community engagement for museums, but he was not widely influential in his own day. Weil, Making museums matter, pp. 191–192.
Even when open to the public prior to the current closure, public visitation levels were low and the Grainger Museum did not appear to be held in the highest esteem by the University of Melbourne, judging by its relatively low levels of staffing, funding and building maintenance. Anecdotal evidence suggests that international visitors often had a greater appreciation of Grainger and his Museum than locals. The permanent display of many Legends, the London Room, keyboard gallery and other exhibits created a static impression, providing little incentive for return visits, despite a regular turnover of temporary exhibitions in one or two galleries. Music scholars have long appreciated the value of the collection, particularly its documentary material, and the reappraisals of Grainger since his death would have been impossible without this resource. Lack of access to a comprehensive catalogue is still however an impediment to research.

Although the building was designed to serve the Museum’s functions in the 1930s, it did not comfortably accommodate the collection as it grew both during Grainger’s lifetime and after his death. The collection’s increased size also prevented Grainger’s display vision from being realised, as exhibition spaces were gradually overtaken for storage and staff use. In addition to problems of size, understanding of conservation has progressed significantly since the 1930s and the building in its current state does not adequately protect the collection from deterioration.

Despite these problems, the Grainger Museum has much to say to a wide range of visitors and researchers. Its smallness could be an advantage; those museums concerned with a single subject or person are particularly popular today with visitors. If its exhibits can be re-interpreted by taking advantage of the insights triggered by the new museology and more recent understandings of Australian cultural history, the visitor while still having the opportunity to understand Percy Grainger and his place in music history could also consider broader topics, such as the many motivations behind and meanings of personal and institutional collecting, the effectiveness or otherwise of museum formats such as the

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1 Grainger never envisaged, when working with Gawler, the quantity of material which would require accommodation in the Museum. And even if he had, the construction project was curtailed by a relatively confined site and small budget. Plans to add a second storey never eventuated.

period room and anthropological display, and the historical and current role of museums in both reflecting and creating popular and scientific attitudes. By employing a more reflexive, critical approach, exhibitions could critique Grainger and the nationalist and racial attitudes and evolutionary grand narratives his Museum represented; they could present but also move beyond Grainger’s own assessment of himself, his contemporaries and his environment. If Grainger’s ideas continue to be presented unquestioned, his Museum will probably continue its sad pattern of low attendance. As museum theorist Eilean Hooper-Greenhill points out, museums have always had to change and adapt to their changing environment and circumstances. Most progressive museums today are informed by the postmodernist proposition that a text (of which an exhibition is an example) is only completed by the reader, and therefore each text has many versions. This reflects the new museology’s philosophical shift away from the museum as cultural ‘legislator’ to cultural ‘interpreter’, which at the practical level included opening up museums to more diverse, and therefore potentially larger, audiences. Curatorial interpretation of the Grainger Museum, if it included not only Grainger’s own statements and interpretations of the objects but also other contemporary and more recent points of view on the subject in question, could enable each visitor to create his or her own reading, while providing accurate, and more contextual, historical information on which to base it.

Exhibitions should acknowledge and thus make accountable the source of the interpretation (for example the curator, or Percy Grainger), rather than leave this unsaid, implying institutional or authorial infallibility. In this regard, the Grainger Museum has unrealized potential to interpret the historical context in which it was created, because, being the creation of one person, it is more a transparent manifestation of a particular point of view, than a large museum where the identities of the curatorial decision-makers are largely obscured from the public gaze. The Museum could still serve the purposes Grainger intended, and could honour him by communicating his message, but in a context of challenge and inquiry rather than propaganda.

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This thesis has attempted to show the Grainger Museum’s place in the history of museums during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a small, autobiographical museum which nevertheless reflected many of the concerns of both larger museums and historic house museums of the golden age of museums, the Grainger Museum has much to say about the museum format itself. Museums and their visitors continue to grow in number in many countries; numerous older institutions have undergone expensive refurbishments and expansions; museums are an integral part of the tourism and recreation ‘industries’. Many museums are now reflexive in nature, making more transparent (when compared to their predecessors) the assumptions on which they are based. The Grainger Museum was created and curated by its own subject, who also wrote a great deal about himself and about much of the material in the Museum collection. The Grainger Museum is therefore already self-reflexive in one sense. Yet Grainger’s often unquestioning assimilation of attitudes, beliefs and trends surrounding him enable his Museum to illustrate those very attitudes, beliefs and trends, and also to leave scope for their analysis and deconstruction by subsequent curators and visitors. Thus, the Grainger Museum could make a unique contribution to public understanding of museums, what they have tried to say in the past and what they are saying now, how they go about this, why societies preserve some things but not others, and how visitors can interpret what they see. The Grainger Museum could thus be a museum about museums. This would be particularly appropriate in a university setting.

The Grainger Museum is the sole example I have been able to identify of a purely autobiographical museum which was purpose-built by its subject-creator as a publicly-accessible museum, with no residential component. Although possibly unique in this sense, it has much in common with several other personal collections or autobiographical museums established mostly by creative professionals or by individuals with a strong interest in their nation’s identity and history. Grainger’s collection is the most comprehensive, covering in detail as it does its creator’s intimate personal, family and sexual life as well as the more predictable professional achievements and elements of

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11 Weil, Rethinking the museum, p.3; Witcomb, pp.27–28.
national history. I conclude therefore that it is, of all the museums and collections considered here, the most revealing statement on the relationship between the private, intimate aspects of an artist’s life, his publicly acknowledged creativity and his place in his nation’s cultural history.

Grainger wanted his Museum to be ‘scientific’, to tell the ‘truth’. He went as far as he could to make this possible by bequeathing a comprehensive collection in a permanent setting. But to see the truth, insofar as that is ever possible, the viewer must understand the nature and intrinsic characteristics of the lens through which he or she is looking, and in this case the lens is a museum. Many of the ‘myths of the primitive’ of Grainger’s time persist today in our supposedly post-colonial world. Despite recent theoretical deconstructions, ‘the illusion that knowledge springs directly from displayed objects’ still has currency in many museums and for many visitors. The Grainger Museum could challenge this. Weil proposes that museum staff should present their interpretations as individual opinions, rather than as impersonal and institutional truths; Clifford similarly argues that ‘Ideally the history of its own collection and display should be a visible aspect of any exhibition’. Grainger as museum curator, although unwittingly, and acting from wildly different motives, already did this. As a not very subtle one-man-show, Grainger’s Museum makes clearly visible his political-cultural agenda. For this reason the Grainger Museum could stimulate discussion about and understanding of the mostly unspoken agendas of museums generally, both today and in the past.

12 Weil makes the similar point that museums are traditionally, but incorrectly, portrayed as ‘a clear, clean, and undistorting lens.’ Weil, Rethinking the museum, pp.47–48.
14 Jordanova, p.40.
16 Clifford, Predicament, p.229.
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‘Photographs of Louis Pabst, Madame Pabst, Miss Adelaide Burkitt & Fritz Müller’ (3 December 1938) (reg. no. 04.0332).
‘Photographs on glass of Rose Grainger’, n.d. [October 1938].


‘R. Vaughan Williams (greatness in simplicity)’ (February 1956) (reg. no. 04.0345).


‘Roger Quilter: melodist’ (10 February 1956) (reg. no. 04.0339).

‘Rose Grainger’ (11 February 1956) (reg. no. 04.0340).

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Untitled [Photographs of Aldridge family], n.d. [probably early December 1938] (reg. no. 04.0346).

Untitled [Relatives of Henry Balfour Gardiner], n.d. [probably 1938] (reg. no. 04.0326).

**Grainger, Percy: other archival material:**

‘Beginning of an attempt to make a model yacht by Percy Grainger (age 12 or 13)’, typed display label, 4 November 1938 (box: Grainger’s original museum labels & descriptive notes/tags).

‘Contents of lift van […] 30 June 1955’, (folder 01.1097, bay 2, box 74).

‘Corroborree’ (word-processed transcript of an incomplete text, not dated, probably 1959) (bay 4, box 15).


‘Democracy in music’ (manuscript, 9–10 July 1931) (bay 1, box 65: Grainger’s outgoing correspondence PG 15–160, 15/75/84/155/160, including round letters).

Display caption regarding Ralph Vaughan Williams’s eye-colour (bay 33, box 15: Photographic collection: Composers’ eyes – close up colour photos of Percy, Ella and composers, reg 99.1500).


Envelope with soap, uncatalogued (box: Grainger’s museum labels and tags).

‘Family relics such as; a copy of Uncle Frank’s Diary/ A family photo album’, swing tag (box: Grainger’s museum labels and tags).

‘Figures based on “HARROGATE FESTIVAL 1927 [sic]” photo of Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter & Percy Grainger’, undated typescript (bay 1, box 35).

‘Grainger Museum index numbers’, scrapbook containing typed list ‘Rough alphabetical guide to Grainger Museum index numbers’ (box: Grainger’s original museum index & list of contents).

‘Index museum numbers’ exercise book (box: Grainger’s original museum index & list of contents).

‘Last will and testament of George Percy Grainger’, 21 June 1922 (copy), with codicil to H. Balfour Gardiner’s will, 22 July 1922 (bay 4, box 78: Grainger’s wills and passports).


‘List of contents/ Beloved mother’s shiney black bag / left in Mrs Sawyer’s office at time of death / Ap. 30, 1922’ (box: Grainger’s original museum labels & descriptive notes/tags).

‘List of contents of lift van 30 June 1955’ (bay 2, box 74).

‘List of items lodged in security safe deposit box (no. 2) in Springfield, Missouri’ (folder 460, bay 1, box 35).

Lists of sendings 1940–1944 (copies in bay 1, box 61: Percy Grainger collection PG 434–473 and box: Grainger’s original museum index & list of contents).

'Model of 4-masted barque “L’AVENIR”, made (1938) by J. Merriman (Ex-sailor, born in the Shetlands)” [1938], stencilled display label (box: Grainger’s original museum labels & descriptive notes/tags).

'Model yacht “Cape Verd”’, draft typed label, 4 November 1938 (box: Grainger’s original museum labels and descriptive notes/tags).

'Percy Grainger’s childhood piano’, embossed metallic-finish display label, (box ’Grainger’s original museum labels & descriptive notes/tags’).

'National characteristics in modern flagellantic literature’ (manuscript, 11 May 1955) (bay 1, box 65: Grainger’s outgoing correspondence PG 15–160, including round letters).

'Nordic English word-list’ (manuscript, October [1933]) (bay 4, box 9: Grainger’s writings and related materials collection: critical writings 2: 1929–1951 CW/1–CW/56, box 9/60).

'Notes from Clara Aldridge’s diary 1874–1878’, pp.9, 17 (bay 4, box 1: Autobiographical & personal writing: Aldridge family history).

'Paintings by John H. Grainger showing his love of the sea’, label in green watercolour calligraphy (box: Grainger’s original museum labels & descriptive notes/tags).

‘Sendings to Grainger Museum, Melbourne University, 1936’ (Folder 227, bay 1, box 55).

'Sendings 1936’, blue exercise book (box: Grainger’s original museum index & list of contents).


'To whomever opens the package marked “DO NOT OPEN UNTIL 10 YEARS AFTER MY DEATH” by Percy Grainger’, 10 May 1956 (bay 4, box 55: Lust Branch, Grainger’s writings, articles etc, including ‘Private matters’).

Untitled [rough sketch for Grainger Museum], 2 January 1933 (bay 1, box 35).

Untitled [shopping list] in glassine sleeve inscribed by Grainger: ‘Relics of Museum work / 1938/ sort’ (box, ‘PG’s box labels, museum labels & envelopes’).

Other authors: other archival material


Aldridge, Frank, Diary 1918–1919, reg. no. 02.0567 (CARM box 382: Aldridge family collection, box 19).
untitled scrapbook, reg. no. 02.0538 (CARM box 371: Aldridge family collection, box 7).


Florimell, Rosemary, memorandum to Susan Bray, 12 May 1992 (bay 4, box 15).

Fowler, Richard, ‘Model of ‘L’Avenir’, undated manuscript (folder 01.1099, bay 2, box 74).

untitled, Photographs taken in the Grainger Museum 13 December 1938, inside envelope postmarked Melbourne 18 January 1939 (folder 282, bay 1, box 57: Percy Grainger collection incoming correspondence, PG 270–328). Another print of this photograph is inscribed verso in Grainger’s hand: ‘Left case: South Sea Island beadwork, etc. Right case: American-Indian beadwork, etc (all collected largely by Rose Grainger) Dec 1938’ (bay 33, box 75).


Grainger, John H., Scrapbook: [Untitled], donated to the Grainger Museum by Marion Aldridge in April 1935, reg. no. 02.0532 (box 367, Aldridge family collection, box 3).

Grainger, Rose, [Percy Grainger wearing grass skirt and beadwork necklace, belt and armbands, standing before a woven grass mat], 12 August 1909, two black and white photographs, Grainger’s catalogue no. W4-43 and W4-42 (bay 33, box 5: photographic collection, VO 1/2-Percy Grainger 1906–1912, Percy solo nos 78–87, reg.no. 99.0500).


Postcards, ‘Australian wild flowers’ (bay 1, box 49: Percy Grainger Collection, postcards, box 1 of 2).

Postcard, French ‘Bedouin’ girls (bay 4, box 56: Lust Branch: publications/images).

Postcards from South Africa including images of a native village; a ‘Zulu Warrior’; the ship Omrah; view of Cape Town; and landscapes (bay 1, box 49).

Postcards, in envelope from Breifonn Hotel, Hardanger, Norway, inscribed by Grainger, ‘Museum Norwegian postcards, June, 1939’ (bay 1, box 49).
Postcards, in envelope inscribed by Grainger, ‘Mexico’ (bay 1, box 50: Percy Grainger Collection, postcards, box 2 of 2).

Postcards, in envelope, Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd (bay 1, box 49).

Postcards, ‘Maori girls bathing’; topless women from Durban; topless seductive ‘Fijian girls’ (bay 1, box 50).


Postcards, Kerry’s Series 9, ‘Pioneer life’ include ‘An outpost of civilization’; ‘Double banking over a Billabong’ showing a team of labouring oxen; and ‘River Murray’. Kerry’s Series 23 includes ‘By forest and plain’ showing a herd of cattle; ‘On the Wollondilly’; ‘Mounted police and native black trackers, far North, South Aust.’; ‘A mail coach change’ (bay 1, box 49).

Postcards, parcel of, inscribed on one of the envelopes by Grainger, ‘Grainger Museum / Postcards from Auckland Museum / N.Z.’ (bay 1, box 49).

Tate, Henry, Henry Tate collection, Gift of the Mercer Family, 1978 (bay 24, boxes 1–5: Henry Tate Collection boxes 1–5). 

Undated promotional brochure (bay 4, box 56: Lust Branch: publications/images).

University of Melbourne, invitation to official opening of the ‘Music Museum and the Grainger Museum’ on 10 December 1938 (bay 1, box 35).

University of Melbourne, receipt to Mr H.E. Morris, 7 November 1938 (folder 460, bay 1, box 35).

Unknown author, [List of Museum Legends], 1993 (bay 4, box 15).


Unknown photographer, [envelope of colour photographs of effigy displays], photographic paper stamped verso ‘SEPT 83’ (bay 33, box 75).

Unknown photographer, two photographs inscribed recto in red ink in Grainger’s hand: ‘Clothes of Balfour Gardiner, English composer’, verso: ‘13/12/38 W76 / Grainger Museum’ (bay 33, box 75).


Unknown photographer, slide dated Dec 1938 and annotated in unknown hand (bay 33, box 75: Grainger Museum W76, photographs and slides including recent, reg. no. 99.7500.)
Unknown photographer, possibly Frederick Morse, ‘Percy Grainger wrestling with his secretary, Frederick Morse, they are both devoted to wrestling and enjoy this experience almost everyday that Grainger is in his White Plains home—which is not often’, one of three uncatalogued sepia-toned photographs of Morse and Grainger wrestling, all bearing this caption, probably typed by Percy Grainger, n.d. [early 1922] (bay 33, box 50: American friends W28, reg. 99.5000).


1.3 University of Melbourne Archives Collection

[Bonighton, Ian], Untitled and undated list of displays, appended as ‘attachment 1’ to Grainger Museum Board, minutes of meeting held on 19 July 1973.

Dreyfus, Kay, & Frank Strahan, ‘Seventh progress report of work on the Percy Grainger Museum Collection, for the period January to March 1976’, 13 April 1976, appended to Grainger Museum Board, minutes of meeting held on 13 April 1976.


Manville, Stewart, to Frank Strahan, 15 May 1972, appended to Grainger Museum Board, minutes of meeting held on 14 July 1972.

____, to Frank Strahan, 20 September 1972, appended to Grainger Museum Board, minutes of meeting held on 8 November 1972.

1.4 Percy Grainger Library Society Collection, White Plains

Box 1, item 19: Photographs ‘Grainger Museum: work in progress’.

Box 1, item 20: Map of University of Melbourne campus showing completed Grainger Museum.

Box 1, item 26: Correspondence regarding Free Music with Dr Earle L. Kent, Director of Research at C.G. Conn Ltd in Elkhart, Indiana, November 1951. Photographs of Percy Grainger and Dr Earle L. Kent.

Box 1, items 29 & 30: Photographs of Percy Grainger and Knocks in Otaki, New Zealand, 1924.

Box 1, item 71: Photographs of Percy and Ella Grainger playing Hammond organ.

Box 2, item 211: Photographs by Burnett Cross of Free Music Machines.

Box 2, item 214: Picture of Poulteney Bigelow.

Box 2, item 223: Press cuttings and pamphlet regarding exhibition of Ella Grainger’s tiles, held at Ferargil, 63 East 57th Street, New York, in 1930.

Box 2, item 228: Photograph of Percy Grainger outside the door of the Grainger Museum [1936].

Box 2, item 230: Three photographs of Percy Grainger wrestling with Frederick Morse, 1922–1923.

Box 2, item 236: Scrap book made by Percy Grainger: ‘Grainger Museum/The University of Melbourne/ Photos of Building. Description of aims of Museum, Professor Laver’s Opening Address, Press Reports, interviews etc.’

Box 2, item 241: Two photographs of the Grainger Museum with railing fence still in place, 1934–1935: one glass negative and one black and white print.

Box 2, item 252: Colour negative of Jelka Delius’ portrait of Frederick Delius in Grainger Museum.


Box 2, item 269: Photograph of Percy and Ella Grainger outside Grainger Museum, September 1956.

Box 2, item 297: Photographer unknown; Percy and Ella Grainger and two others on the veranda at 7 Cromwell Place, White Plains, with dressed mannequins of Cyril Scott and Percy Grainger, intended for the Grainger Museum, undated [c.1953].
Box 2, item 298: Portrait of Mark Twain, taken from a magazine. Images of two Grainger Museum effigies, one of Percy Grainger, other possibly of Cyril Scott.

Box 3, item 301: Picture of Rudyard Kipling.

Box 3, item 311: Photograph of Stewart Pitt (African-American servant) growing sunflowers in the garden of 7 Cromwell Place.

Box 3, item 337: Dolmetsch family programme 1949.

Box 3, item 348: Photographs and postcards of Rose Grainger, and memorabilia.

Box 3, item 368: Photograph of Percy and Ella Grainger at Minneapolis in 1960.

Box 3, item 373: Photograph of Percy Grainger and Ralph Vaughan Williams at Cecil Sharp House, with Ella Grainger visible in the background.

Box 3, item 401: Label for typewriter shipped to Melbourne.

Box 3, item 403: Three colour photographs of Ralph Vaughan Williams’ eyes, 1954.


Box 3, item 405: Pictures of unidentified private house in Australia, architect John Grainger.

Box 3, item 418: Photograph of Rose Grainger’s Room.

Box 3, item 423: Sir James Barrett, two letters to Percy Grainger.

Box 3, item 432: Photograph of Percy Grainger [aged 13] with group.

Box 3, item 433: Programme from Folies Bergères, Paris, 1927 which Percy and Ella Grainger attended.

Box 3, item 442: Photographer not recorded [probably Percy Grainger], inscribed verso: ‘Indian collection of beadwork in a case that stood in the Hall of 7 Cromwell Place … 1928 etc + the[n]ce sent to G.M. in 1930s.’

Box 3, item 443: Sir James Barrett, letter to Percy Grainger 30 January 1940 and Percy Grainger’s reply of 24 March 1940.

Box 3, item 405: S.G. Spink, Rundle Street [Adelaide], photographer, Unidentified house, possibly Mr Aryn’s House in Mt Lofty.

Box 3, item 348: Box inscribed in Percy Grainger’s hand ‘Re mother’s photos / FOR MUSEUM’ containing photographs of Rose Grainger and a list.

Un-numbered box: Photographs selected for book planned by Ella Grainger, with list.

Music cabinet in upstairs study:

Folder of unidentified press cuttings on the issue of Ella Grainger not following Percy Grainger’s will regarding the display of his skeleton in the Grainger Museum.


Press cutting Age 25 November 1959 with picture of London Room.

Music cabinet in corner of music room:

Book in Ella Grainger’s hand: ‘Mailing book / Parcels and letters and sendings’.


List of sendings to University of Adelaide 1962.

Typed list of books in Grainger Museum, ordered alphabetically by author’s surname, n.d.

1.5 National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Collection

National Trust of Australia (Victoria), classification file no. 4062, ‘Grainger Museum’.

2. Primary sources: published

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___, Colonial song (for piano solo, Schott & Co., 1921), ‘Long program note’, p.3.


___, ‘Grieg: nationalist and cosmopolitan: personal recollections of Edvard Grieg in celebration of the centennial of the great Norwegian master’, Etude (vol. 61, no.6, June 1943) pp.386, 416–418; (vol.61, no.7, July 1943) pp.428, 472; (vol.61, no.8, August 1943) pp.492, 535, 543; (vol.61, no.9, September 1943) pp.569, 616; reprinted in Malcolm Gillies & Bruce Clunies Ross (eds), Grainger on music (Oxford University Press, 1999) pp.318–337.


___, *Photos of Rose Grainger and of three short accounts of her life by herself, in her own handwriting; reproduced for her kin and friends by her adoring son Percy Grainger; also table of dates and summary of cultural tastes* (the author, [1923]).


___, *Two musical relics of my mother* (for two pianos, Schirmer, 1924) program note.

___, ‘What effect is jazz likely to have upon the music of the future?’, Etude (vol.42, no.9, September 1924) pp.593–594.


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____, *A philological grammar, grounded upon English, and formed from a comparison of more than sixty languages* (John Russell Smith, 1854).


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Cooke, James Francis, ‘Editor’s note’, to Percy Grainger, ‘What effect is jazz likely to have upon the music of the future?’, *Etude* (vol.42, no.9, September 1924) p.593.


*Eugenics in race and state, volume II: Scientific papers of the second international congress of eugenics held at American Museum of Natural History, New York September 22–28, 1921* (Williams & Wilkins, 1923).


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___, ‘The unconventional composer’, *Music and musicians* (vol.9, no.8, April 1961) pp.9, 41.


Hancock, W.K., *Australia* (Ernest Benn, 1930).


Kipling, Rudyard, *Kim* (Macmillan, n.d.)

Lane Fox, Augustus (see Pitt Rivers, Augustus Lane Fox).
Laughlin, Harry H., *The second international exhibition of eugenics held September 22 to October 22, 1921, in connection with the second international congress of eugenics in the American Museum of Natural History, New York: an account of the organization of the exhibition, the classification of the exhibits, the list of exhibitors, and a catalog and description of the exhibits* (Williams & Wilkins, 1923).

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