Uncomfortable Histories: Learning with contested and confronting history in Australian museums

Amy McKernan

ORCID: 0000-0003-2776-9082

Abstract

Today's museums are charged with responsibilities far exceeding the straightforward display of interesting or unique objects; increasingly, they are expected to represent a wide range of stories, often focusing on bringing to light histories that – for various reasons – have previously been hidden or neglected. In Australia, the stories museums have told have been passionately debated for several decades, with considerable consternation meeting exhibitions deemed to over-emphasise the violence of colonisation or to present triumphalist narratives of Australian involvement in overseas wars. These are similar to debates that rage within academic history and school history education in this country.

Previously silenced or 'untold' histories are often a source of collective shame and pain, and this thesis examines the representation of histories likely to provoke such discomfort in museum visitors. These contentious and confronting histories are difficult material for inclusion in museum displays at a time when appealing to diverse audiences is essential to survival. This thesis examines the potential for museums to support the learning of school-aged visitors, analysing the representation of 'uncomfortable histories' across three Australian museum institutions: the Australian War Memorial; Museum Victoria; and Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. It considers the question of which histories are seen as 'difficult,' contentious or confronting in these museums, and argues that histories of war and violence, discrimination and collective trauma are often connected to perceived responsibilities for museums in civics and citizenship education and/or education for social justice.

The three museums are addressed in case studies that draw on archival research, interviews with museum staff, and analysis of museum exhibitions and education programs. This thesis conceptualises the museum as a heterotopia, a 'space of difference' where visitors can encounter an unfamiliar familiar – 'visiting' history in the present and viewing displays as a 'separate' reality, even while the museums themselves are located within the society they seek to represent as 'other Within the museum, affect and emotion have become central to communicating and teaching the past, and this thesis analyses what Margaret Wetherell describes as 'affective

practices'[1] alongside an investigation of the implications of cultural memory and collective trauma in museum representations.

This thesis argues that 'uncomfortable histories' carry significant potential to support history learning in museums, although this potential can be employed to vastly different ends. In some instances, discourses surrounding previously 'untold' stories are put to work to encourage a celebration of difference, endeavouring to lay the foundation for more socially just communities and to create space for multiple perspectives of the past and present. In other cases, histories of violence and trauma are employed to reinforce dominant narratives that silence and undermine conflicting perspectives and seek to present a more singular representation of Australian history. In all cases, contentious and confronting histories are used to provoke emotional responses and affective practices that promote particular understandings of the past. Each of the museums analysed faces considerable challenges in managing political and community pressures when representing these histories, but each demonstrated a commitment to representing the past with accuracy and authenticity. Ultimately, this thesis argues, in spite of the difficulties representing confronting history for diverse audiences, museums see considerable educative value in constructing encounters with the uncomfortable past.

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[1] Margaret Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion: A new social science understanding* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012).

Declaration page

a) This thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy;

b) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and

c) This thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

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Port Arthur Historic Site map, sourced from the Port Arthur Historic Site visitor
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority
AWM	Australian War Memorial
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs [Australian Federal]
HASS	Humanities and Social Sciences [Australian Curriculum]
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Intersex, Queer
MONA	Museum of Old and New Art
NCHE	National Centre for History Education [Australia]
NCHS	National Center for History in the Schools [United States]
NMA	National Museum of Australia
PAHSMA	Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VACL	Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education

Chapter One: Introduction

Public representations of the past are often contested and sometimes confronting, particularly where they focus upon histories of violence, trauma, and injustice. Collective memories are seen as foundational to national identity, and are often fraught with difficulties, constantly renegotiated between opposing political views, beliefs, and diverse perspectives on historical events.[1] In Australia, as in many other nations, the history that children and young people learn has been a focal point for political and social tensions and insecurities throughout the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[2] Politicians and historians alike are thoroughly invested in the ways the national story is communicated. Most often, arguments for or against particular ways of telling a national story focus on what is conveyed in classrooms, but school is not the only place children learn about history, nor is it the only sphere in which depictions of the past are contested.[3] Museums and other heritage institutions are increasingly seen as important sites for the construction of cultural memory, and they work in myriad ways to make historical understanding accessible to diverse audiences. In recent decades, as Brenda Trofanenko states, museums have begun to deal with 'issues of representation, identity and diversity by refiguring their explicitly public pedagogical purpose.'[4] The ways museums 'teach' visitors has emerged as a central concern, often relating to these questions of representation, identity and diversity.

In this study, I analysed the museum as a site for history learning for school-aged children, focusing in particular on students from upper primary level to the middle years of secondary school. I examined the ways in which museums work with contested and confronting, or what I have called 'uncomfortable' histories in order

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[1] Jan Assmann, "Communicative and cultural memory," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning and Sara B Young (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 109-118; Astrid Erll, "Cultural memory studies: An introduction," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning and Sara B Young (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1-15.

[2] For a summary of some of this debate see: Anna Clark, "What do they teach our children?" in *The History Wars*, Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 171-190.

[3] See for example: Laurajane Smith, "Affect and registers of engagement: Navigating emotional responses to dissonant heritages," in *Representing enslavement and abolition in museums: Ambiguous entanglements*, ed. Laurajane Smith, Geoff Cubitt, Ross Wilson and Kalliopi Fouseki (New York: Routledge, 2011), 260-303.

[4] Brenda Trofanenko, "Introduction," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 28, no. 3 (2013): 251.

to support history learning. These uncomfortable histories were often linked to different understandings of learning for civics and citizenship and for social justice, recognition and inclusion. My interest lies in the histories that create or uncover tensions, the histories that carry their capacity to cause difficult emotion into the present. The learning potential of these histories arose in part from what I have described as 'affective dissonance,' emerging through museum encounters that provoke unexpected or uncomfortable affects and underscore a need to make meaning of discomfort. The research addressed the following key questions.

Research questions

How have Australian museums responded to and represented difficult history from the 1970s to the present day and what are the consequences of this for educating for citizenship and social values?

Subsidiary questions

How might the growing emphasis on constructivist learning theories in the museum relate to the representation of difficult history?

Has, and if so to what extent, the museum's substantive focus changed during this period?

How have museums responded to cultural imperatives and educational debates to accommodate difficult histories, including through their methods of display?

What theoretical resources are most helpful for understanding the relationship between museum representation, historical debates and education?

The research questions are designed to bring together concerns relevant to museum education, history education and the issue of 'uncomfortable history'. The literatures associated with each of these fields, as I outline in Chapter Two, intersect only in a limited fashion, and it is a key focus of this thesis to explore what might be gained by drawing from practical and theoretical knowledge across each of these themes or fields. The case studies outlined in Chapters Four, Five and Six demonstrate the value of taking such an approach.

My research included close study of three major Australian museum institutions –
Museum Victoria, the Australian War Memorial [AWM], and Port Arthur Historic
Site Management Authority [PAHSMA]. These sites represent different types of
museums and different sets of concerns regarding the representation of an
uncomfortable past. Museum Victoria is a state museum, located in the city of
Melbourne in the state of Victoria, and has two campuses containing history
exhibitions – Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum – both of which
were examined for this research. The Australian War Memorial is a national museum
and the national war memorial, located in Canberra – the national capital – in the
Australian Capital Territory, containing extensive exhibitions representing Australia's
history of involvement in overseas conflicts. Finally, Port Arthur Historic Site
Management Authority [PAHSMA] has a number of historic sites significant to the
transportation of convicts throughout southern Tasmania, and was granted World
Heritage status by UNESCO as part of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage
Listing.[5] The most well-known of these sites, Port Arthur Historic Site on the
Tasman Peninsula, was the primary location addressed in this project, however some
data collection and analysis was also completed at the Cascades Female Factory site
in Hobart. At each site, I analysed exhibitions and programs, interviewed curators
and education staff, and undertook archival research exploring the ways
representations of contentious and confronting history have been managed over the
last forty years. The study was not designed to examine visitor experience or how
young people actually learned at each site; rather it focused on the work undertaken
by museums to support learning. I undertook an analysis of the ways each museum
worked as a teaching and learning 'resource' or public teaching space.

Looking back, I now understand that I began this project with very clear ideas about
what Australia's 'difficult history' was and is, and who might find it confronting. As a
result, I felt I knew exactly how such histories should be displayed and presented in
museums. I was also – and remain – convinced that 'difficult' confronting and
contested histories provide some of the most valuable material for museum display
and history learning. What I failed to recognise, however, and what my interview

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[5] This is a listing of eleven Australian convict sites, including the three sites under the management of
PAHSMA: Port Arthur; the Cascades Female Factory; and the Coal Mines. See: "Australian Convict
Heritage Sites," UNESCO, accessed November 12, 2015, http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1306.

participants very quickly helped me to see, was that my assumptions were based on a very limited understanding of the complexities faced by museums and were thoroughly embedded in my own world view. I wanted to see only what a left-wing, middle class, educated Melbourne woman might hope for. Unwittingly, I had only considered the ways in which history might be confronting to other middle-class, white Australians.

My own experiences were testament to the fact that museum visitors carry with them considerable baggage in the form of personal, sociocultural, and physical context, as Falk and Dierking's influential model of museum learning suggests.[6] Many factors came into play both inside and outside of the museum to inform the way that I understood what I was seeing, but exhibitions also worked to challenge and expand these contexts and in some instances this challenge was significant enough to shed light upon my own, pre-existing assumptions about histories or people. I argue, ultimately, that staying with and reflecting on such moments of challenge – of discomfort – represents a significant opportunity for learning. In line with recent research examining affective learning in museums,[7] I go beyond cognitivist conceptualisations of learning to consider the emotional and affective dimensions of learning with contentious and confronting histories in museums.

It was challenging for me to realise that museums could not, in fact, be there to deliver only what I wanted to see, because there are many hundreds of thousands of other visitors who also wanted to find a space for themselves in these public institutions. More importantly, there were voices – different perspectives of history – that would be excluded in the museum I imagined. It is in part from diversity that 'difficult history' emerges – history may be difficult to encounter in many different

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[6] John H Falk and Lynn D Dierking, *The Museum Experience* (Washington, DC: Whalesback Books, 1992); John H Falk and Lynn D Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012).

[7] See for example: Dianne Mulcahy, "'Sticky' learning: Assembling bodies, objects and affects at the museum and beyond," in *Learning Bodies*, ed. Julia Coffey, Shelley Budgeon and Helen Cahill (Singapore: Springer, 2016): 207-222; Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell, "The elephant in the room: Heritage, affect and emotion," in *A Companion to Heritage Studies,* ed. William Logan, Máiréad Nic Craith and Ullrich Kockel (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 443-460; Brenda Trofanenko, "Affective emotions: The pedagogical challenges of knowing war," *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 36, no. 1 (2014): 22-39; Andrea Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect in producing a critical pedagogy for history museums," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 28, no. 3 (2013): 255-271.

ways for different people, and the contested nature of the past emerges because there is not one 'truth' but many. Literature and pedagogy focusing on history learning, for instance, emphasises the need for novice historians to learn about the 'tentative' nature of historical interpretation and the multiple perspectives of any given event.[8] The history of the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families in Australia throughout the twentieth century, for example, may be differently challenging to confront for the descendants of the Aboriginal children who were taken and for the descendants of the white Australians who did the taking, who in fact sometimes wish to forget these histories.[9] Additionally, those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who found themselves with loving adoptive or foster parents have a different, though usually still difficult, relationship with that history compared to those Aboriginal children who were placed in situations of abuse or in cruel institutions.

I am a white, non-Indigenous Australian, and initially my thoughts about difficulties in representing the history of the Stolen Generations – as these Aboriginal children have come to be known – focused on how confronting it might be for white Australian visitors to encounter these stories and the feelings of shame and guilt that may arise. That I came to a deeper understanding of the ways perspective determines how uncomfortable particular historical representations can be is testament to the educative power of museums and the skills and knowledge of museum curators and educators I encountered. It is also indicative of a way of understanding museums that values purpose as much as methods, because as Peter Vergo argues, 'every juxtaposition or arrangement of an object or work of art…means placing a certain construction upon history.'[10] Influenced by these ideas from the New Museology,

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[8] Stéphane Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating students for the twenty-first century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Alan McCully, "History teaching, conflict and the legacy of the past," *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 7, no. 2 (2012): 145-159; Peter Seixas and Carla Peck, "Teaching historical thinking," in *Challenges and Prospects for Canadian Social Studies*, ed. Alan Sears and Ian Wright (Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press, 2004), 109-117; Tony Taylor and Carmel Young, *Making History: A guide for the teaching and learning of history in Australian Schools* (Carlton South: Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003); Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).
[9] See for example: Commonwealth of Australia, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997); Anna Haebich, "Forgetting Indigenous histories: Cases from the history of Australia's Stolen Generations," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 1033-1046.
[10] Peter Vergo, "Introduction," in *The New Museology,* ed. Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 2-3.

curators are increasingly wary of what it is that their arrangement of objects and exhibition design communicates to – or teaches – visitors about the past.

There are many other themes and events in Australia's history that have been and remain confronting and contentious in various ways. Each of the institutions I examined in this study presented different facets of Australia's potentially uncomfortable history, providing insight into the diverse contexts and perspectives for museum representation and learning in Australia and raising issues associated with the sometimes 'uncomfortable' elements of particular historical periods and themes. In Australia, as elsewhere in the world, there are a number of histories that are or have previously been considered shameful or too painful for public representation. These include histories of colonisation and the violence and injustice meted out by white Australians to Aboriginal people over many decades, and it is this history that is most often brought to mind when 'difficult' or contested history is spoken about in Australia.[11] This is perhaps because public discourse over the last few decades has often focused upon Australia's history of colonisation and mistreatment of Aboriginal people as a particularly problematic aspect of the national story.

The twentieth and early twenty-first century have been characterised in Australia by growing movements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal rights and cultural recognition, resulting in a rapidly changing landscape for Indigenous peoples in this country.[12] In 2000, significant numbers of Australians – including myself as a secondary school student – participated in Reconciliation Walks. Throughout the 2000s, the Stolen Generations became a focal point for guilt and shame amongst non-Indigenous Australians, and in 2008, following eleven years of campaigning by proponents of reconciliation, then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered an apology to Indigenous people whose lives had been impacted by the policies of removal.[13]

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[11] See for example Henry Reynolds, *Why weren't we told? A personal search for the truth about our history* (Ringwood: Viking, 1999); Lyndall Ryan, "'Hard evidence': The debate about massacre in the Black War in Tasmania," in *Passionate Histories: Myth, memory and Indigenous Australia,* ed. Frances Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys and John Docker (Canberra: ANU Press, 2010), 39-50.

[12] Anna Haebich and Steve Kinnane, "Indigenous Australia," in *The Cambridge History of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 332-357.

[13] Kevin Rudd, "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples," accessed March 14, 2016, http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples.

This was the backdrop to my formative years as a school history student and later as a university history student and trainee history teacher.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories were certainly in the front of my mind when I began this research. There were and are, however, other contested and confronting historical themes and events in Australia's past and present. The history of immigration to Australia can be a fraught topic, as can the history of the transportation of convicts.[14] Arrivals of asylum seekers to Australia by boat has been particularly controversial, culminating in significant public debate surrounding events such as the Tampa crisis – where the Norwegian Ship *Tampa* rescued hundreds of people from a sinking boat off Christmas Island (an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean).[15] Convict history occupies an ambivalent place in the Australian story, with public perceptions of the convict past swinging between seeing it as a source of shame – a 'convict stain' – to seeking convict ancestors as a point of pride.[16] Australia's war history is also contentious, and the Australian War Memorial has in fact come under fire from some historians at various points in its existence for its representation of what historians and the public call the 'Anzac myth,' a glowing depiction of the Australian soldier as epitomising courage, resilience, and friendship, which I expand upon in Chapter Four.[17]

There is a sense – reflected in the literature as well as throughout my analysis of exhibitions and interviews – of a need for museums to represent the 'hidden' stories of those whose histories have not been told; yet which previously hidden stories can be brought to light depends greatly upon institutional context. As Andermann and Arnold-de Simine note:

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[14] On immigration history, see for example: Klaus Neumann and Gwenda Tavan, "Introduction," in *Does History Matter? Making and debating citizenship, immigration and refugee policy in Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Klaus Neumann and Gwenda Tavan (Canberra: ANU Press, 2009), 1-7. On convict history, see for example: Henry Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[15] J. Olaf Kleist, "Refugees between pasts and politics: Sovereignty and memory in the Tampa crisis," in *Does History Matter? Making and debating citizenship, immigration and refugee policy in Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Klaus Neumann and Gwenda Tavan (Canberra: ANU Press, 2009), 81-104.

[16] Alison Alexander, *Tasmania's Convicts: How felons built a free society* (Crows' Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2010).

[17] See for example: Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds and Mark McKenna, eds., *What's Wrong with Anzac? The militarization of Australian history* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010); Henry Reynolds, *Forgotten War* (Sydney: Newsouth Publishing, 2013).

> Over the last two decades, in response to feminist, postmodern and postcolonial critiques of the modern museum, objects, collections and processes of musealization have been radically re-signified and re-posited in the cultural arena… Rather than as ruins of a lost past, certifying its demise, museum objects have turned into the material hinges of a potential recovery of shared meanings, by means of narrativization and performativity. By granting a voice to what has been left out of the dominant discourses of history, diversified and sometimes even incompatible narratives have supposedly been granted a locus in a museal space that seems no longer to aspire to any totalizing synthesis.[18]

This argument further reinforces the proposition that, over the past several decades, museums have ceased to focus solely on methods of conservation, and have come to concern themselves more with representation and, crucially, with the purpose for that representation.[19] Essentially, museums have shifted their focus to how it is that museums can teach and what their purpose for educating visitors might be.

Exploring uncomfortable history in Australian museums was a little like the time I drove a rental car to Port Arthur, the location of Port Arthur Historic Site, on a winter evening – the further I went, the deeper the mist and the darker the night, until my headlights vanished disconcertingly into the fog. In that darkness, everything becomes possible – there could be anything in the shadows just a few metres to the left – and the only way forward is to accept the million possibilities and simply drive, warily, and with close attention to what might be there. Uncomfortable histories exist in the dark, and what you highlight with a torch will look thoroughly different to what I saw in my headlights. This, in the end, might actually be the point. We see things differently, and we imagine things differently, but that empty road I see doesn't mean a sleeping koala isn't there in that tree. Museums bring to light small pieces of history and heritage; and increasingly, it seems, they seek to teach us to remain open to the possibility that there are myriad other things going on just beyond our reach.

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[18] Jens Andermann and Silke Arnold-de Simine, "Introduction: Memory, community and the New Museum," *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 1 (2012): 4.
[19] Vergo, "Introduction."

The politics of museum and history education in Australia

Both museums and schools have been the target for considerable attention from politicians and historians regarding the ways Australians – particularly children and young Australians – are taught about their country's past.[20] Australia's 'history wars' have become an established part of the national narrative, erupting over the 1980s and 1990s as a response to the emergence of 'Black Armband history' that was said to characterise some of the national historical scholarship in the preceding decades.[21] The term 'Black Armband history' was coined by the well-known Australian historian Geoffrey Blainey, when he questioned the growing tendency for Australian historians and left-wing politicians to emphasise the violence and racism associated with colonisation, arguing that this view of history might 'represent the swing of the pendulum from a position that had been too favourable, too self-congratulatory, to an opposite extreme that is even more unreal and decidedly jaundiced.'[22]

The history wars focused predominantly on 'rewriting' the history of colonisation; that is, on writing into the narrative the perspectives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose voices had long been suppressed in favour of a national story of settlement that Australians could celebrate. The most vocal commentators tended to line up at opposite ends of the spectrum as Blainey described, arguing either in favour of or against emphasising the histories of injustice and discrimination that mark Australia's post-colonial past and present. Conservative politicians and historians tended to favour the more triumphalist, Eurocentric narratives of progress and achievement – stories that are generally linear in nature and heavily nationalist – preferring to focus on telling a 'success story' rather than placing any undue

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[20] See for example: Fiona Cameron, "Contentiousness and shifting knowledge paradigms: The roles of history and science museums in contemporary societies," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 20, no. 3 (2005): 213-233; Anna Clark, *Teaching the Nation: Politics and pedagogy in Australian history* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2006); Amanda Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier in the museum," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 115-1128.
[21] Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003).
[22] Geoffrey Blainey, "Drawing up a balance sheet of our history," *Quadrant* 37, nos. 7-8 (1993): 11.

emphasis on acknowledging the suffering and injustice experienced by Aboriginal people.[23]

One of the leading public figures in these arguments for a celebratory history of Australia's past was former Conservative Prime Minister John Howard throughout the 1990s and 2000s; he noted in an interview in 1996 that he hoped Australians would come to feel 'comfortable and relaxed about their history[24] That same year, he stated his belief that

> Australia is a tolerant nation. I do not take the black armband view of Australian history, which is so popular in some circles. I believe that the truth about Australia's past should be taught in an unvarnished fashion. I believe that the balance sheet of Australian history is overwhelmingly a positive one. I believe that the balance sheet of Australian history will demonstrate a group of people who have had great achievements, a group of people who have had heroic achievements and have done much to bring about a remarkably enlightened, tolerant and diverse Australian community.[25]

Conservative politicians and their supporters have continued to be outspoken on questions of Australian history, and call for curriculum and teaching that does justice to the perceived importance of Australia's 'Western heritage.'[26] In 2006, in response to Howard's call for a 'root and branch renewal' of the teaching of Australian history in schools, then Minister for Education, Science and Training Julie Bishop hosted a national History Summit. History in schools was perceived to be in crisis, argued by

[23] See for example: John Howard's 2006 Australia Day address, "A sense of balance: The Australian achievement in 2006," Australian Politics, accessed March 14, 2016, http://australianpolitics.com/2006/01/25/john-howard-australia-day-address.html.

[24] John Howard, interviewed by Liz Jackson for Four Corners, February 19, 1996, Australian Broadcasting Commission.

[25] 38, Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, 29 October 1996, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=CHAMBER;id=chamber%2Fhansardr%2F1996-10-29%2F0001;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F1996-10-29%2F0000%22

[26] See for example: Howard, "A sense of balance"; Daniel Hurst, "Christopher Pyne: Curriculum Must Focus on Anzac Day and Western History", *The Guardian,* January 10, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/10/christopher-pyne-curriculum-must-focus-on-anzac-day-and-western-history; Jewel Topsfield and Matthew Knott, "Education Review: Overhaul of 'Bloated' National Curriculum Widely Supported," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 12, 2014, http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/education-review-overhaul-of-bloated-national-curriculum-widely-supported-20141012*114zkz.html.

some to have been the victim of Black Armband supporters, and history educators and experts were called on to consider how the national narrative should be taught to Years 9 and 10 students.[27] History was seen by Howard as so central to participation in the nation that his government introduced a citizenship test, which included questions about Australia's history. Gwenda Tavan has argued that this test 'was a consciously constructed form of collective memory making that sought to reinforce a homogenous and undifferentiated view of Australian society and history in the pursuit of specific ideological and political interests.'[28]

Alongside these debates about history in schools, new directions in museum studies proved similarly controversial, with the National Museum of Australia's [NMA] *Contested Frontiers* exhibition proving particularly contentious.[29] Australia's national museum was opened in the capital city of Canberra in 2001. The NMA sought, in part, to represent conflict on the Australian colonial frontier, and sought to provide the Waradjuri's (the local Aboriginal people's) perspective of the Bells Falls massacre by using oral testimony.[30] Keith Windschuttle, a well-known protagonist of the history wars in Australia, took exception to this representation of an Aboriginal oral narrative as historical evidence and called the narrative of the massacre a 'myth.'[31] The controversy highlighted some of the challenges specific to 'post' colonial contexts like Australia; Western ways of knowing history are far more likely to go unremarked upon in museums, presenting significant challenges for museums seeking to present 'other' voices.

Windschuttle was not the only detractor to the *Contested Frontiers* exhibition, and in fact the same conservative government calling for an overhaul of Australian history

27 Richard Allsop, "Do we need more history summits?" *Institute of Public Affairs Review* 58, no. 4 (2006): 28-29.
28 Gwenda Tavan, "Testing times: The problem of 'history' in the Howard Government's Australian citizenship test," in *Does History Matter? Making and debating citizenship, immigration and refugee policy in Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Klaus Neumann and Gwenda Tavan (Canberra: ANU Press, 2009), 126.
29 For discussion of the contentiousness of Australian museum representations of history, see: James Gore, "Representations of History and Nation in Museums: The National Museum of Australia and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa" (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2002); Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier"; Julie Marcus, "What's at stake? History wars, the NMA and good government," *Cultural Studies Review* 10, no. 1 (2004): 134-148;
30 Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier."
31 Amanda Nettelbeck, "Remembering Indigenous dispossession in the national museum: The National Museum of Australia and the Canadian Museum of Civilization," *Time & Society* 21, no. 1 (2012): 29-54.

education in schools sought a review of the NMA almost immediately. The review, published in 2003, criticised the NMA's approach to 'storytelling,' but noted that the museum was 'prepared to cover darker historical periods, and contentious ones, and has done so with balance.'[32] Criticisms about the NMA's 'storytelling' were, some argued, indicative of outdated ideas about the museum's role in telling a cohesive national story,[33] highlighting the challenges of change in public institutions. Museum curators, influenced by the ideas of the new museology, often see a need to present less structured, linear narratives, but visitors – and politicians – do not always expect such approaches.

Returning to the educational context, following the summit and the associated public debate, history became an important focus in the development of Australia's National Curriculum, the foundations for which were laid in 2009 with the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* document.[34] The curriculum for the first four subject areas – English, Mathematics, Science, and History – was endorsed for implementation in 2011. This Curriculum has been the subject of considerable political wrangling, with successive ministers, curriculum developers and reviewers arguing from opposing sides of the political spectrum. As a result, it has faced a number of revisions in quick succession – partly in response to changes of government – with a review announced almost immediately after its endorsement for implementation by a newly-elected conservative government under the leadership of then Prime Minister Tony Abbott.[35]

That history was one of four core subject areas included in the first stage of development of the Australian Curriculum speaks to its centrality in politicians' views on what matters most in education. The review process also made clear the tension that exists between the two major parties or the two sides of politics in Australia over representations of the past. Acknowledging the wrongs of the past was important to the then-Labor government when the curriculum was conceived and during its early

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[32] John Carroll, Richard Longes, Phillip Jones and Patricia Vickers-Rich, *Review of the National Museum of Australia: Its exhibitions and public programs* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2003), 68.
[33] Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier."
[34] National Curriculum Board, *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).
[35] Australian Government Department of Education, *Review of the Australian Curriculum: Final Report*, 2014.

development, while restoring a sense of achievement and a celebration of Western heritage was vital to the incoming conservative Liberal government from 2013. The development and implementation of the Australian Curriculum also brought to the surface tensions between state and federal politics in education; traditionally, the states had authority over their own jurisdictions, and federal intervention was seen by some as intrusive. Well-established curricula were operating in every state, and had in some instances received global recognition; there was a sense of the Australian Curriculum 'fixing' what was never actually broken.[36]

Pervading the literature and commentary is a sense that knowledge about history is central to becoming a citizen – a good citizen – although arguments oscillate between beliefs that national pride or national shame are the bedrock for civic participation.[37] While this is true of many countries, it is a point of considerable tension in Australia, where layers of inequity run through every aspect of social, cultural, and economic life.[38] The stakes are high for history curricula.

Australian history is not intrinsically all triumphant or all troubling; it contains events both honourable and shameful, and sometimes the one event can be viewed as either, depending upon standpoint. Australia's history wars – which were part of a larger, global movement towards rewriting the past from more diverse perspectives[39] – reflected a divide between those who wished to acknowledge and remember shameful events, and those who would prefer to focus on the history of which we can be proud. What occurs in the development of curriculum and the public representation of history in Australia is a tug of war of two opposing sides each hoping to tip the balance in their favour. In this analogy, both museums and schools form part of the rope, and the task for educators and curators is to render its weave

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36 See for instance: Adam Shoemaker, "Three things our nation's schools need (none is a national curriculum)," *The Conversation,* March 14, 2014, https://theconversation.com/three-things-our-nations-schools-need-none-is-a-national-curriculum-24328.
37 Alan Reid and Judith Gill, "Australian schooling and the changing contexts of citizenship," in *Globalization, the Nation-State and the Citizen: Dilemmas and directions for civics and citizenship education*, ed. Alan Reid, Judith Gill and Alan Sears (New York and Oxon: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 19-34; Samuel Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); Joseph Zajda and John Whitehouse, "Teaching history," in *International Handbook of Research on Teachers and Teaching,* vol. 21, ed. Lawrence J. Saha and A. Gary Dworkin (New York: Springer, 2009), 953-965.
38 See for example: Alastair Greig, Frank Lewins and Kevin White, *Inequality in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
39 Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier."

strong enough to withstand a likely unending battle. Thus the history wars continue to be enacted through two forums for the education of novices in history – the classroom, and the museum.

Learning with uncomfortable histories in Australian museums

The museums explored in this project have all dealt with histories that are contentious and confronting, and each has taken risks in representing themes, events, and perspectives that are likely to create discomfort in some visitors. Museum representation is by its nature educative, but the ways exhibitions aim to educate have changed. While it was once more common to encounter objects as 'curiosities' neatly categorised in nineteenth century museums – the Enlightenment Room at the British Museum in London is an example of what this looked like[40] – today's museums are providing a forum for debate and conversation, and 'have emerged as intensified theatres of struggle.'[41] The result is a much more 'difficult' and diverse past needing to be represented. While the focus has shifted to consider what museums are attempting to teach, determining the most effective way to go about achieving identified learning goals in exhibitions is often a case of trial and error. Education and public programs can more clearly draw on the extensive body of learning theory applied to formal educational settings, but how can *exhibitions* do the work of teachers?

Museums have enormous responsibility in their selection of material and methods for display – this is arguably more the case now than ever before, as the options for both material and methods for display have grown exponentially in recent decades with the burgeoning interest in stories outside of the 'official history' of countries and governments.[42] The digitization of sources and the growth of the internet has, additionally, changed the ways visitors can access historical material outside of the museum, presenting considerable challenges in attracting visitors, who can often find more comprehensive selections of material relating to their interests online. With an

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[40] "Enlightenment (Room 1)," British Museum, accessed August 19, 2016, http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/galleries/themes/room_1_enlightenment.aspx.
[41] Fiona Cameron, "Contentiousness and shifting knowledge paradigms," 215.
[42] See for example: Andermann and Arnold-de Simine, "Introduction"; Max Ross, "Interpreting the New Museology," *Museum and Society* 2, no. 2 (2004): 84-103; Vergo, "Introduction."

incomplete picture inevitable, many museums have begun to see their role as exposing visitors to difference and inspiring further learning, rather than depositing 'correct' knowledge into their minds, although this view persists in some institutions.[43] Within this context, they have begun to engage with histories that tell a less than triumphant national story, taking into account the often negative experiences or critical views of marginalised groups such as migrants and Indigenous people.[44]

This study examined the ways representations of 'difficult' or 'contested' history have entered into and changed the museum. These two terms tend to be used interchangeably in the literature, though the use of 'difficult' perhaps betrays a political standpoint acknowledging the violent or traumatic nature of certain historical issues or events.[45] This thesis uses a number of different terms to describe histories that may cause discomfort or incite debate in museums. For the most part, I have used 'uncomfortable,' 'confronting,' or 'contested' to describe what are often referred to as 'difficult.' The fact that difficult histories can be both contested and confronted reflects the complexity of the Australian context where – particularly in relation to frontier conflict – some have contested even the occurrence of difficult historical events, arguing there is little to compare to the difficult histories of places like Germany and the more widely acknowledged histories of colonial violence in the Americas.[46]

I began this research immediately after qualifying to become a history teacher in the state of Victoria, my initial forays into the research field framed by my recent

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43 See for example: Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, "Museum Education: Past, present and future," in *Towards the Museum of the Future: New European perspectives*, ed. Roger Miles and Lauro Zavala (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 133-159; Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience*; George Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).
44 See for example: Ruth T. Abram, "Kitchen conversations: Democracy in action at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum," *The Public Historian* 29, no. 1 (2007): 59-76; Viv Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers: Democracy, identity and difference," in *Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are changed,* ed. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod and Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge), 315-329; Vivienne Szekeres, "The past is a dangerous place: The museum as a safe haven," in *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent pasts in public places*, ed. Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E. Milton, and Monica Eileen Patterson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 41-54.
45 See for example: William Logan and Keir Reeves, eds., *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'difficult heritage'* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008).
46 See for example debate surrounding the National Museum of Australia's representation of the Bells Falls massacre in Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier."

experiences as a student teacher negotiating the difficulties of bringing new ideas into classrooms where the status quo was often incompatible with my developing teaching philosophy. It was immediately apparent that history in the schools in which I was placed could at times be only superficially informed by curriculum and education research. With limited resources, schools were unlikely to prioritise the subject of history to the same extent federal politicians might, and as a result many of the teachers teaching history had never trained as historians or history teachers. These teachers had limited knowledge of the historiography and methods of the discipline, and had even more limited time and resources to access the knowledge and understanding they would need to meet the requirements of a curriculum focused on historical thinking and 'skills.' I observed that although teachers brought considerable teaching skill to the classroom, they were in many cases ill-equipped to engage students in meaningful historical study and to support students to act as historians.[47] When faced with contested and confronting histories of injustice, trauma, and discrimination, they struggled to engage with, or scaffold the students' engagement with, the moral and ethical complexities of those historical narratives. What helped them to access the deeper significance of difficult histories with their students were sources that provided insight into the practices of historians and archaeologists, including films, websites, and, crucially, museums and other history institutions.

Museums play a central role in supporting young people to develop the tools for historical thinking that can be difficult to access in history lessons that are confined to the classroom. Classroom history, as I observed it, was decontextualised to the extent that it almost always felt unreal and was often uninteresting, even with the most skilled history teachers. Finding and reproducing appropriate, meaningful, and engaging materials for history classes is an enormous amount of work that teachers can find hard to fit into an often already overwhelming workload. The students I encountered worked with textbooks that gave useful summary, but had little in the way of depth. In the museum on the other hand, students could see objects, interact with exhibits, observe artworks and wander freely amongst varied displays. Museums

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[47] John Whitehouse, "Beyond time, continuity and change: Reasoning, imagination and the future of history," *Curriculum Perspectives* 31, no. 3 (2011): 84-88.

also provided materials that could be brought into classrooms in the form of online exhibitions, freely available teaching resources, and museum outreach programs.

Museums and the resources they provide allow students to see the work of teams of historians, with both artefacts and interpretation viewed side by side; the primary material and its analysis by experts. These public historical institutions have a unique capacity to scaffold the learning of students of history and invite them into what curators construct to be 'authentic' encounters with the past – or at least as authentic as possible in an artificial context – and I quickly became interested in the ways museums might be employed to address the histories we struggle to teach children and young people about; the confronting histories of trauma and injustice. An early experience of teaching a class about the early modern European witch trials made me feel that children and young people were particularly interested in confronting and difficult histories – they remained in the classroom with me until well into their lunch break, wanting to be entertained by the gruesome stories of witchcraft and punishment. Their enthusiastic engagement, while initially more about entertainment than learning, made it possible for us to delve deeply into sophisticated ideas about the contested nature of historical representation and the multiple experiences of different historical actors. This, I believed, might indicate something about the use of emotion in history teaching, and might suggest a particular value for displaying confronting histories in public spaces in order to foster historical thinking. These beliefs were reinforced and at times problematised by further reading on what Zembylas calls 'pedagogies of discomfort.'[48]

In this chapter, I have explored some of the context for this study, explaining from where my interest in museum and history learning emerged, and noting the complex, highly-charged field in which curators and educators work. In Chapter Two, I outline in more detail the relevant literature dealing with history education, museum learning, and the inclusion and exclusion of 'uncomfortable history' in museum representation. This literature suggests a rich context for the museum's educational role, highlighting changing approaches to educational theory and historical pedagogy and the ways these have influenced museum display and programs. Attention to the

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[48] Michalinos Zembylas, "'Pedagogy of discomfort' and its ethical implications: The tensions of ethical violence in social justice education," *Ethics and Education* 10, no. 2 (2015): 163-174.

management of histories of trauma, injustice, and other confronting themes and events is rapidly growing in museum research, as curators and museum directors grapple with politically and emotionally challenging material.

Chapter Three provides the theoretical and methodological frameworks for this project and details the study design and approach I took to investigating each site. My research is informed by several areas of theory that I see as relevant for understanding museum learning, particularly where it concerns the contentious and confronting topics that are my focus. I conceptualise the museum as a heterotopia, a term first applied to the museum by Foucault,[49] following the work of several others who have studied museums and other educational spaces as heterotopias.[50] Of particular importance in seeing the museum as a heterotopia in the context of this study is the light this concept sheds upon the museum's relationship to society – the idea of heterotopia allows the museum to be positioned as both outside of and an integral part of society. I suggest that museums examined as part of this study position themselves as heterotopian, working with, within, and outside of the communities they represent to reflect their varied conceptions of historical 'truth,' and often to present the possibilities for a more socially just future, with a view to effecting change. In order to gain insight into the ways museums work to achieve this, I consider what Margaret Wetherell has termed affective practices,[51] and apply both clinical and cultural lenses drawn from the vast field of trauma theory to understand the ways museums work with the histories of trauma as well as the survivors of traumatic events and their descendants. Finally, I draw on educational theory and pedagogy relating to historical thinking and civics and citizenship education, seeking insight into the role museums take on when educating young Australians about their country's past.

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[49] Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London and New York: Routledge, 1966/2002); Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," in *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, ed. M Dehaene and L De Cauter (Hoboken: Routledge, 1967/2008), 13-29.

[50] Beth Lord, "Foucault's Museums: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy," *Museum and Society* 4, no. 1 (2006): 1-14; Maria Tamboukou, "Of Other Spaces: Women's Colleges at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century in the UK," *Gender, Place and Culture* 7, no. 3 (2000): 247-63.

[51] Margaret Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion: A new social science understanding* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012).

Chapters Four, Five and Six examine each of the case studies that form the evidence for this research. Considering the Australian War Memorial, PAHSMA and Museum Victoria in turn, I explore the ways 'uncomfortable history' can be understood in the context of three very different institutions, applying the theoretical lenses outlined in Chapter Three to analyse the approaches each of these museums takes to dealing with their own confronting and contentious subjects. Each chapter includes attention to the substantive content of the museums, highlighting omissions and inclusions relevant to the question of difficult history, and then turns to an analysis of the educative dimensions, focusing on communicative methods and pedagogies apparent in exhibitions and highlighted in interviews and archival sources.

Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with an account of the overall findings of the research, situating understandings of what constitutes difficult history and how it is managed within the unique contexts of each of the institutions analysed here. In this final chapter, I bring together arguments made in the preceding chapters, which call for nuanced, multifaceted representations of contentious and confronting histories. In doing so, I reflect on the particular value of such histories in educating children and young people for historical understanding. Such histories are vitally important in the construction of the nation – the traumas and injustices in Australia's past continue to cause suffering in the present, and are unlikely to ever truly be resolved. Violent historical events leave a significant and lasting impact on individual and collective memory.[52] Cultural memory lives long after individual memory has passed, and growing understandings of transgenerational trauma indicate the continuity of historical events' impact on people in the present.[53] Museums are both keepers and creators of cultural memory and, perhaps more than any other medium, allow visitors to access historical experience and have the opportunity to identify with very different lives. No single museum, however, could ever lay claim to a comprehensive representation of the national story, not least because no comprehensive national story exists anywhere in the world. Museums are increasingly aware of the multiplicity of historical perspectives, and of the equally diverse

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[52] G J Ashworth, "The Memorialization of Violence and Tragedy: Human Trauma as Heritage," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity,* ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 2008), 231-44.
[53] See for example Judy Atkinson, *Trauma Trails, Recreating Song Lines* (North Melbourne, US: Spinifex Press, 2002).

possibilities for interpretation of those perspectives.[54] Our picture of the past is incomplete and always will be.

Overall, this thesis argues that 'uncomfortable histories' carry significant potential for history learning in museums, although this potential is employed to vastly different ends. In some instances, discourses surrounding previously 'untold' stories are put to work to encourage a celebration of difference, endeavouring to lay the foundation for more socially just communities and to create space for multiple perspectives of the past and present. Staff at Museum Victoria, in particular, were self-consciously focused on creating inclusive spaces and using exhibitions and education programs to effect social change. In other cases, histories of violence and trauma are employed to reinforce dominant narratives that silence and undermine conflicting perspectives and seek to present a more singular representation of Australian history. In all cases, contentious and confronting histories are used to provoke emotional responses and affective practices that promote particular ways of understanding of the past. I show how feeling, affect and experience in the museums were seen as central to learning, and how at the same time each institution had a different set of learning goals and different ideas about the broad educational purposes of museums.

The museums I analysed in this study faced considerable challenges in managing political and community pressures when representing these histories, but each demonstrated a commitment to representing the past with accuracy and authenticity, although they defined these concepts in slightly different ways. Ultimately, I argue that in spite of the difficulties representing confronting history for diverse audiences, museums saw constructing encounters with the uncomfortable past as central to the New Museum's educative role. It is clear that the issues of uncomfortable history are highly pertinent to contemporary museum research at present, and I have addressed some of the myriad questions emerging from the challenges of its representation and display. It is likely that no single 'best' approach to teaching children and young visitors about the uncomfortable past will ever be found; instead, I argue that museums can and do draw on a range of approaches informed by varied learning theories and epistemological understandings to deal with different histories and

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[54] Cameron, "Contentiousness and shifting paradigms."

achieve different learning goals. Uncomfortable histories, in many cases, were the foundation for learning beyond the 'facts' of history and encouraged affective connections to deeper issues and empathy for those in both the past and present.

Chapter Two: Literature review

The concerns of the New Museum emerged during the second half of the twentieth century, shifting the museum's focus to create 'inclusive and accessible spaces.'[1] The New Museum is often positioned in opposition to much earlier public museums, which, according to Tony Bennett, employed and reinforced structures of power/knowledge and were in part characterised by a 'fear of the crowd.'[2] As I outlined in the previous chapter the growing 'openness' of the New Museum and its attention to multiple perspectives of the past created a number of challenges for Australian museums, while increasing attention to 'history from below' reshaped history in schools.[3] In this chapter, I broaden this analysis of the context and examine in more detail the academic and educational literature dealing with the fields of relevance to this project. This study addresses growing concerns with representing 'difficult' or 'uncomfortable' history for educational purposes in the museum. In order to support my analysis, I review developments in school history teaching and learning, changing approaches to museum display and understandings of learning in museums, and the growing attention to histories of trauma, injustice, and other difficult themes in museums, with a focus on how these are linked to learning. In particular, I examine the intersections between this emerging interest in uncomfortable histories and the growing impetus for museums and heritage to participate in movements for social justice, recognition, and inclusion.[4]

A foundation for this work can therefore be drawn from a number of fields and themes, and I have included sources addressing history education, civics and citizenship education, the educational role of museums, and representations of trauma and other 'difficult' heritage and history in museums and education. The historical education literature, which also reflects more general pedagogical developments made over the last half-century or so, provides context for the

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[1] Suzanne MacLeod, "Introduction," in *Reshaping Museum Space*, ed. Suzanne MacLeod (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.
[2] Tony Bennett, "The exhibitionary complex," *New Formations* 4 (1988): 83.
[3] Robert J Parkes, "Reading history curriculum as postcolonial text: Towards a curricular response to the history wars in Australia and beyond," *Curriculum Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (2007): 383-400.
[4] See for example: Laurajane Smith, "Ethics or social justice? Heritage and the politics of recognition," *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 2 (2010): 60-68.

changing methods of display in the museum. The literature in museum education demonstrates the way the field of museum studies has taken up some of the ideas of history education in schools and indicates a commitment to moving from didactic forms of display and teaching to more interactive, often constructivist approaches to crafting museum experience and learning. This literature also allows insight into the changing educational role of the museum during the period since the 1970s, including the growing attention to a greater role for museums in social justice. Finally, research literature addressing the representation of difficult heritage in museums situates the display of histories of violence, trauma and injustice within an international context.

Australia is certainly not the only country coming to terms with a past marred by trauma and injustice, and there are many examples for dealing with such history in museums throughout the world. The post-war contexts of Germany and Japan, for instance, are particularly contentious and provide difficult fodder for history museums in those countries.[5] The Enola Gay controversy in the United States is especially well known amongst museum staff and historians; the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum met with considerable controversy for proposing an exhibition around the restored plane used in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.[6] Objectors argued that any attempt to critically engage with that history would be 'anti-American.'[7] Some of these concerns are also reflected in Australia, where the National Museum of Australia's 2001 representation of the Bells Falls Massacre of Indigenous people – estimated to have taken place in the 1850s – met with heated criticism from politicians and others.[8]

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[5] See for example: Chia-li Chen, "Representing and interpreting traumatic history: A study of visitor comment books at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 27, no. 4 (2012): 375-392; Roger Simon, "A shock to thought: Curatorial judgment and the public exhibition of 'difficult knowledge,'" *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4 (2011): 432-449.

[6] Martin Harwitt, *An Exhibit Denied: Lobbying the history of Enola Gay* (New York: Copernicus, 1996).

[7] E.T. Linenthal and T. Engelhardt, cited in Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier," 1116.

[8] Julie Marcus, "What's at stake?"; Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier." For a summary of the NMA's evidence on Bells Falls, see: "Bells Falls Gorge: An interactive investigation," National Museum of Australia, accessed September 2, 2016, http://www.nma.gov.au/engage-learn/schools/classroom-resources/multimedia/interactives/bells_falls_gorge_html/cabinet_items/evidence_a_place_of_great_sadness.

Although there is a significant and growing body of work addressing the representation of various types of confronting or contested history in museums, there remains a clear need for research to broaden understandings of the educative work of the New Museum in relation to these types of history. The focus on 'purpose' in the New Museum is relatively recent,[9] and the literature presents limited guidance about the ways museums can go about 'teaching' visitors about the past and present. The literatures of museum education, history education and 'difficult history' rarely intersect, and I argue that further research is needed to explicitly focus on the ways museums *teach* about the uncomfortable past. There is also value in broadening analysis to include the multiple uncomfortable histories that can emerge within one national context and to investigate the various ways histories can be considered 'difficult' for museum display, and this is what I sought to do in Australia. Literature tends to focus on more specific types of 'difficult' history or heritage, while generally referring to it under this broad name, considering, for example, histories of trauma, contested or contentious histories, or histories of violence.[10] Attention to contested and confronting histories has after all arisen only recently, and I join a growing number of researchers making contributions to a field that is likely to continue to preoccupy curators and museum educators for many years to come.

This project brings these three fields of research together through an analysis of the way changes in historical education and public histories have intersected in the work of Australian museums. Its multidisciplinary focus necessitated a search for literature across databases in a range of humanities disciplines, including history, museum studies, education, and cultural studies. Most of the relevant literature in these areas has been relatively recent, with the majority of sources referred to here published in the last thirty years or so, with some notable exceptions.

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[9] Vergo, "Introduction."

[10] For a few of many examples, see: Cameron, "Contentiousness and shifting knowledge paradigms"; Chen, "Representing and interpreting traumatic history"; Monica Eileen Patterson, "Teaching tolerance through objects of hatred: The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia as 'Counter-Museum'," in *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent pasts in public places*, ed. Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E Milton and Monica Eileen Patterson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 55-71; Patrizia Violi, "Trauma site museums and politics of memory: Tuol Sleng, Villa Grimaldi and the Bologna Ustica Museum," *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 1 (2012): 36-75.

History education: substantive and procedural

> Thus did Laura apply herself to reach the school ideal, thus force herself
> to drive hard nails of fact into her vagrant thoughts. And with success.
> For she had, it turned out, a retentive memory, and to her joy learning
> by heart came easily to her – as easy as to the most brilliant scholars in
> the form. From now on she gave this talent full play, memorising even
> pages of the history-book in her zeal...
>
> Henry Handel Richardson, *The Getting of Wisdom*, 1910[11]

The literature of pedagogy in history education emphasises significant change over recent decades, reflecting the broader shifts that have taken place in educational theory. The classroom that Henry Handel Richardson describes above, where 'hard nails of fact' formed the bulk of the curriculum, reflects what Freire described as the 'banking' model of education. In this model, 'knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing.'[12] Modern educational theory instead espouses approaches underpinned by a constructivist epistemology.[13] Laura Rambotham's 'retentive memory' would not necessarily win her the same success in today's classroom as it did a century ago. Instead, she would need to be able to critically engage with material presented to her in 'student-centred' and 'inquiry-based' learning activities, emphasising her skills in historical analysis and constructing representations of the past.[14] Pedagogy for history has come to emphasise an active role for students in the classroom – they are not expected simply to memorise 'facts,' but to interpret, analyse, and contextualise historical evidence; to act as historians.[15]

This is not to suggest that the 'facts' of the past evident in Laura's classroom are considered irrelevant or less important, rather that attention has shifted to focus on

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[11] *The Getting of Wisdom* is a well-known novel by Australian author Henry Handel Richardson, following the story of Laura Rambotham at a prestigious boarding school in the city of Melbourne. It was based partly upon the author's own experiences of schooling at Presbyterian Ladies' College in Melbourne in the late nineteenth century.

[12] Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972): 46.

[13] Educators are influenced by theorists such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, John Dewey, and Jerome Bruner, among others – these theorists feature heavily in teacher education in Australia.

[14] See for example: Taylor and Young, *Making History*.

[15] John Whitehouse, "Beyond time, continuity and change."

these two facets of historical understanding – what Lee and Ashby describes as substantive and procedural knowledge.[16] In Australia, as elsewhere, the perceived need to know the important people and events in the national story continues to inspire debate in public commentary, with school history often considered a vital foundation to nation-building and citizenship education.[17] This emphasis on the importance of historical knowledge to citizenship is far from new, but attention to the idea became particularly fraught in Australia during the period of John Howard's government, and against the backdrop of the history wars, as I noted in the previous chapter. As Prime Minister, Howard was demonstrably concerned with the teaching of Australian history in schools, famously calling for a 'root and branch renewal' in the Australia Day Press Club address that ultimately prompted the Australian History Summit, which took place in 2006.[18]

At the Summit, history educators, experts, and politicians considered the ways history should be taught to Australian schoolchildren, addressing the historical skills and ways of thinking students should learn as well as considering the historical themes, events, people and societies that should be studied.[19] History was and remains a matter for deep political and social concern, as politicians and commentators continue to question what children should learn about their country.[20] History is clearly about more than just the past; as conservative historian Gregory Melleuish argued, the 'knowledge that the study of history provides, and the skills that it inculcates, develop the sorts of capacities that enable people to live useful and dignified lives as citizens and members of Australian society in the twenty first century.'[21]

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[16] Peter Lee and Roslyn Ashby, "Progression in historical understanding among students ages 7-14," in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning history: National and international perspectives*, ed. Peter Stearns, Peter Seixas and Samuel Wineburg (New York and London: New York University Press, 2000), 199-222.
[17] See for example: Clark, "What do they teach?"; Howard, "A sense of balance"; Reid and Gill, "Australian schooling."
[18] Howard, "A sense of balance."
[19] Jenny Gregory, "At the Australian History Summit," *History Australia* 4, no. 1 (2007): 10.1-10.5; Gregory Melleuish, *The Teaching of Australian History in Australian Schools: A normative view* (Canberra: Australian Department of Education, Science and Training, 2006); Tony Taylor and Anna Clark, *An overview of the teaching and learning of Australian history in Australian schools* (Canberra: Australian Department of Education, Science and Training, 2006).
[20] Clark, "What do they teach?"; *Teaching the Nation*.
[21] Melleuish, *The Teaching of Australian History*, 1.

That history plays a part in educating for citizenship and civic participation is often implied and rarely questioned in public commentary, however, there remains a clear distinction between the two. History education researchers Carla Peck and Alan Sears note that 'Given the long and obvious connections between history and citizenship education, it strikes us as strange that initiatives in these fields largely grew in isolation from one another,'[22] and it is true that the two are often considered separate 'learning areas It is not the case, however, that such a clear line can be drawn between the two subjects in the Australian Curriculum; both history and civics and citizenship fall under the learning area of Humanities and Social Sciences [HASS], although they are addressed under distinct subheadings in the Foundation to Year 6 primary curriculum and are separated into disciplines in the Years 7 to 10 secondary curriculum.[23]

There are a number of different priorities highlighted by theorists, researchers, and public commentators for civics and citizenship education; the place of history in some of these priorities is less frequently discussed. As I explained in the introduction, attention to the role of history in civics and citizenship education comes as much from public discourse as it does from the literature. In current civics and citizenship curriculum, as I noted above, history is a separate, though related, concern. In Australia, civics and citizenship education has been given attention for nearly a century, with Alice Hoy's textbook, *Civics for Australian Schools,* influencing the ways educators understood the role of schools in democracy.[24] Civics continued to be a focus in Australia, as elsewhere in the world, throughout much of the twentieth century. *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* discusses the most recent iteration of civics curriculum in the country. This report, and the associated curriculum, highlights three facets of citizenship: 'civil (rights and responsibilities); political (participation and representation); and social (social values, identity and community involvement).'[25]

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[22] Alan Sears and Carla Peck, "Introduction," *Citizenship Teaching and Learning* 7, no. 2 (2012): 116.
[23] "Australian Curriculum – Humanities and Social Sciences," Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, accessed August 16, 2016, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/introduction
[24] Alice Hoy, *Civics for Australian Schools* (Melbourne: Lothian, 1931/1938).
[25] ACARA, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Civics and citizenship* (Sydney, 2012): 2.

While history can inform student learning in all of these areas, it is not explicitly addressed in this way in the curriculum, which is instead present-focused with – I would argue – a determined eye to the future.[26] Importantly, while history is not explicitly referred to in the civics and citizenship curriculum, it is highly likely that historical events will inform teaching in this area, simply because it would be difficult to address political representation and the mechanisms for social and political change in Australia without attention to history. In addition to the role of history in civics and citizenship learning, and closely related, is a perceived role for history in values education.[27] Additionally, civics and citizenship education also raises questions about the impacts of globalisation, and indeed there is a growing scholarship surrounding 'global citizenship' in education, a topic that is beyond the scope of this thesis.[28]

Alongside understandings of a citizenship education role for history in Australia has been considerable attention to the ways of thinking and the skills students of the discipline are expected to develop. While most public debate focuses on the content of history curricula, history teachers and researchers appear to be more concerned with the procedural knowledge students should develop in history classrooms.[29] This has more to do with what teachers should teach students to *do*, rather than know. Content, substantive knowledge, is of course still essential, as we cannot practice the skills and ways of thinking of the discipline without having something to think with and about. History teachers though are increasingly interested in teaching the ways of thinking and investigating the past that encourage students to learn to act as historians.[30] This *procedural knowledge* relates to understandings about the procedure of historical study, or the discipline's structures.[31]

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[26] "The Australian Curriculum: 7–10 Civics and Citizenship," accessed 25 April, 2016, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/civics-and-citizenship/curriculum/7-10?layout=1

[27] Wineburg, *Historical thinking.*

[28] See for example: Julie McLeod, "Youth studies, comparative inquiry and the local/global problematic," *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies* 31 no. 4, (2009): 1-23.

[29] Joseph S. Lucas, interview with Sam Wineburg, published as "Historical thinking is unnatural – and immensely important: An interview with Sam Wineburg," in *Recent themes in historical thinking: Historians in conversation*, ed. Donald A. Yerxa (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 35-43.

[30] See for example: Peter Seixas, "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: A framework of assessment in Canada," The Historical Thinking Project, accessed April 22, 2016, http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concepts; Wineburg, *Thinking Historically.*

[31] Lee and Ashby, "Progression in historical understanding."

The Australian Curriculum for History does represent a much greater acknowledgement of the role of procedural knowledge in learning history, and for history educator John Whitehouse this emphasis creates greater possibility for teachers of history, as the rationale for the curriculum 'affirms the power of history to excite the imagination,' although there remain limitations to the curriculum's approach.[32] For others, the curriculum is less positive and the focus on procedural knowledge may detract from more interdisciplinary or generalist learning in primary school and the middle years.[33] Ultimately, the success of the curriculum depends largely on the skills of teachers – who, writes Brian Hoepper, 'in their mediation of the curriculum document into practice, will be able to overcome some of these limitations.'[34] While the emphasis has shifted to procedural knowledge, the importance of substantive knowledge – the knowledge about people and events usually referred to in political and media debates such as those outlined above – is not disputed. In fact, Lee Shulman and Peter Seixas note that issues arise when one form of knowledge is privileged over the other.[35] This thesis thus sets out to examine both the content of museum exhibitions and analyse the strategies used in 'teaching' or communicating to visitors.

Academic literature on history teaching has, in the last few decades, largely focused on identifying and explaining elements of procedural knowledge in order to facilitate its teaching to children and young people. Museum education literature tends to neglect more discipline-specific pedagogies, and this thesis seeks to consider the value of, for instance, pedagogical models of historical thought in museum learning. Models such as those developed by Seixas, Jannet van Drie and Carla van Boxtel, and the National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA attempt to describe the

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[32] Whitehouse, "Beyond time, continuity and change," 88.
[33] Ruth Reynolds, "Teaching history in primary school: Interrogating the Australian Curriculum," *Curriculum Perspectives* 31, no. 3 (2011): 78-83; Mallihai Tambyah, "'More tick-the-box': The challenge of promoting interdisciplinary learning in the middle years through the Australian history curriculum," *Curriculum Perspectives* 31, no. 3 (2011): 72-77.
[34] Brian Hoepper, "'Promises to keep…' potential and pitfall in the Australian Curriculum: History," *Curriculum Perspectives* 31, no. 3 (2011): 70; see also Whitehouse, "Beyond time, continuity and change."
[35] Peter Seixas, "Beyond 'content' and 'pedagogy': in search of a way to talk about history education," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999): 317-337; Lee S Shulman, "Knowledge and teaching: foundations of the new reform," *Harvard Educational Review* 57, no. 1 (1987): 1-21.

elements of historical thinking, providing a focus for teachers wishing to teach and assess the skills of the discipline.[36]

Other theorists of history education emphasise specific activities that students of the discipline should learn to practice. Historical empathy has been much-discussed in recent decades, for example, while others have also drawn attention to historiographical analyses of secondary sources, and a number of approaches to including primary sources in history curriculum.[37] Empathy in all its forms plays a complex role in learning, and is in many cases employed in an under-theorised and perhaps ineffectual way, as Megan Boler argues in her description of 'passive empathy.'[38] Historical consciousness is also given significant attention in history education, and may have potential as a 'bridge between the study of collective memory and history education,' as Seixas argues.[39] Historical consciousness is in some instances used almost interchangeably with conceptualisations of collective memory, and as a concept encourages deeper understanding of the relationship between national identity, collective memory, and history.[40]

It is clear, however, that no definitive structure for the teaching of history exists, and understanding the processes of the discipline is further complicated by the differences between the work of practising historians and the work of school students. Although teachers can encourage students to act as historians, they must do so by rendering the complex disciplinary practices of historians accessible to novices.

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[36] Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six: Historical thinking concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2013); Jannet van Drie and Carla van Boxtel, "Historical reasoning: towards a framework for analzying students' reasoning about the past," *Educational Psychology Review* 20 (2008): 87-110; "History standards," National Center for History in the Schools, 1996, http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards.

[37] On historical empathy, see for example: "Deconstructing empathy in history," National Centre for History Education, 2002, http://www.hyperhistory.org/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=794&op=page. On secondary sources and historiography: John Whitehouse, "Teaching the historians," *Agora* 43, no. 2 (2008): 4-8. Most theorists and researchers in history education highlight the importance of primary sources to fostering historical thought – some specific examples include: Chris Husbands, *What is history teaching? Language, ideas and meaning in learning about the past* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996); Chris Husbands, Alison Kitson and Anna Pendry, *Understanding history teaching: teaching and learning about the past in secondary schools* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003); Taylor and Young, *Making*; Levésque, *Thinking historically*.

[38] Megan Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and education* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999).

[39] Peter Seixas, "Collective memory, history education, and historical consciousness," in *Recent themes in Historical Thinking: Historians in conversation*, ed. Donald Yerxas (Colombia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 30.

[40] McCully, "History teaching"; Seixas, "Collective memory."

The application of the models of historical thinking mentioned above is one such method by which teachers make the discipline teachable. The work of Seixas is perhaps the most well known in Australia, and it is evident that his six concepts of historical thinking have informed the development of the Australian Curriculum for history.[41]

Several models describe the elements of history for teachers of the discipline, and here I address three that are commonly used by teachers in Australia. These models – developed by the National Center for History in the Schools [NCHS] at UCLA; Seixas at the University of British Columbia; and van Drie and van Boxtel at two universities in the Netherlands – include the use and analysis of primary sources, understanding of the tentative nature of historical interpretation, and awareness of the multiple perspectives, causes and consequences of historical events as elements of historical thought.[42]

Although similar, each model emphasises different elements in the practice of history, and different roles for the study of history. The NCHS model gives explicit attention to the role of history in a democracy, highlighting students' responsibilities to develop the skills to reflect on and investigate social, political and ethical issues in the past and present.[43] Seixas' model presents a structure for history that stresses an active role for the student and a moral role for history – it includes both an element relating directly to the moral dimension of the past, and asks students to learn to 'take historical perspectives,' or engage in historical empathy.[44] Finally, van Drie and van Boxtel take a more analytical approach to the study of the past, placing focus on the reasoning activities involved rather than making a strong attempt to fit the study of history to a purpose for the present.[45] This perhaps reflects the fact that the model was developed more as a research tool for analysing and assessing student learning

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[41] "Australian Curriculum v8.1: 7 – 10 History," Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority [ACARA], accessed April 22, 2016, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/history/curriculum/f-10?layout=1. See also: Whitehouse, "Beyond time, continuity and change."
[42] "History Standards"; Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*; van Drie and van Boxtel, "Historical reasoning."
[43] "History Standards."
[44] Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*; "Benchmarks of Historical thinking: A framework for assessment in Canada," The Historical Thinking Project, accessed April 21, 2016, http://historicalthinking.ca/historical-thinking-concepts.
[45] Van Drie and van Boxtel, "Historical reasoning."

than as a tool for teachers – nonetheless it can be and is used in structuring historical learning activities.[46]

Models of historical thinking provide a useful guide to analysing history learning in the museum; in this thesis, they are used to identify opportunities for students to learn the ways of thinking of the discipline in museum exhibitions and programs. They are, in some ways, much easier to apply in facilitated educational settings, where teachers or educators can ensure that students have adequate support and resources to engage in these practices. The models reflect what it is that historians 'do,' but they – artificially – separate the components of this work in a way that, although problematic, can support teachers and museum staff to construct learning activities and opportunities for novice historians.

Additionally, other researchers and theorists in history education have explored both specific and general elements or ideas about the study of the past. Most relevant to this study is literature highlighting a moral or social role for history, as museums are often seen to have a role to play in educating young people to be good citizens. This is particularly true of the inclusion of difficult heritage in museums, as the reasons for representing negative experiences are often related to the perceived need for tolerance and empathy towards specific groups of people in the present.[47] Two of the models referred to above, those developed by the NCHS and Seixas, pay explicit attention to the role history can play in explaining and finding solutions for problems in the present.

The idea of historical empathy in particular is often focused upon in relation to history's role in values education.[48] What is perhaps particularly important to note about historical empathy is that it is not the same as empathy more broadly – most authors state that historical empathy is an academic activity involving sophisticated historical understanding, while what is more generally referred to as empathy can be

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[46] Amy McKernan, "Thinking Historically in the Immigration Museum" (Masters thesis, University of Melbourne, 2011); Amy McKernan, "Thinking historically in the Immigration Museum," *Agora* 50, no. 4 (2015): 4-11.

[47] See for example: Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers"; Patterson, "Teaching tolerance."

[48] "Deconstructing empathy in history,"; Keith Barton and Linda Levstik, *Teaching history for the common good* (Marwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004); Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*.

largely imaginative and, in many cases, less informed.[49] Few, however, argue that historical empathy can be achieved without emotion. Historical empathy is challenging in that it appears to presuppose the possibility of reconstructing the past so that we can experience it; this raises a host of issues about the relationship between the historian and the past, and the possibility or impossibility of understanding the perspectives of people from a different time and context.[50] Historical empathy is, however, widely acknowledged to have great potential in the teaching of history, although it is equally clear that its role in historical understanding is contestable and complex. It is also, clearly, an idea of great relevance to the museum, where visitors are often encouraged to 'experience' the past.

I have mentioned the role of history in developing young citizens and in nation-building, but the literature also suggests a broader social and moral role for history.[51] American history education researcher Samuel Wineburg claims that 'history holds the potential…of humanizing us in ways offered by few other areas in the school curriculum.'[52] Wineburg's work, which speaks to the 'unnatural' act of thinking historically, supports the idea that history can teach skills essential to becoming an active citizen in a democracy, but also emphasises the ways in which historical thinking can contribute to values learning. This sense of the importance of historical understanding to citizenship and values education is highly relevant to the representation of contentious and confronting history in the museum, where these uncomfortable histories can be linked to learning for social justice and inclusion in the same way they are in history classrooms.

Teaching 'difficult' histories is an emerging area of concern for teachers and history educators worldwide. This is particularly true of countries recovering from recent and continuing histories of divisive conflict, including for example Cyprus, Israel,

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[49] "Deconstructing empathy in history,"; Levésque, *Thinking historically*; Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*.
[50] "Deconstructing empathy in history."
[51] "History standards"; Zajda and Whitehouse, "Teaching history."
[52] Wineburg, *Historical thinking*.

and Northern Ireland, as well as countries with histories of colonisation.[53] Education research literature highlights challenges surrounding questions of whether to include difficult history in curricula, how to ensure teachers are adequately trained to sensitively address these histories, and how to ensure content is appropriately targeted to students' ages and levels of understanding. The exposure of children to stories of trauma and injustice is less frequently opposed in research literature than it might be, and as Kenneth Kidd notes in his discussion of children's literature, '[s]ubjects previously thought too upsetting for children are now deemed appropriate and even necessary.'[54]

Contested and confronting histories have clear potential in history teaching that encourages understanding of multiple perspectives of the past. In contexts where there is, or has been, conflict, history's 'emphasis on students developing their own understandings from their examination of evidence and a range of perspectives has greater potential in helping them scrutinize deeply held community positions, than does the teaching of a single narrative, even if the latter claims to be inclusive of all groups in society.'[55] McCully's work, and the work of others in teaching difficult histories, suggests an important role for history in supporting students to employ historical understanding in the present to better understand present day rifts and conflicting perspectives.[56] Such histories are far less likely to be avoided in classrooms, and in fact – especially in the case of the Holocaust – are often focused upon for their capacity to teach children.[57]

There is an extensive body of research and theory underlying the teaching of history in schools. What is clear is that a growing emphasis on procedural knowledge is linked to a perceived social role for history – a role, that is, in developing both

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[53] On Cyprus and Israel: Zvi Bekerman and Michaelinos Zembylas, *Teaching contested narratives: Identity, memory and reconciliation in peace education and beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On Israel: Tsafrir Goldberg and Yiftach Ron, "'Look, each side says something different': the impact of competing history teaching approaches on Jewish and Arab adolescents' discussions of the Jewish-Arab conflict," *Journal of Peace Education* 11, no. 1 (2014): 1-29. On Northern Ireland: McCully, "History teaching."

[54] Kidd, "'A' is for Auschwitz," 120.

[55] McCully, "History teaching," 156.

[56] McCully, "History teaching"; Michalinos Zembylas, *Five Pedagogies, A Thousand Possibilities: Struggling for hope and transformation in education* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2007).

[57] Kenneth Kidd, "'A' is for Auschwitz: Psychoanalysis, trauma theory, and the 'children's literature of atrocity,'" *Children's Literature* 33 (2005): 120-149.

students' moral values and their understanding of their role as citizens in a democracy. In the latter part of the twentieth century, discourses of history learning, as in many other curriculum areas shaped by constructivist influences, came to be less focused on what students should know, and more on what they should be able to do.[58] Conversely, public and political commentary about the role of school history tends to focus more on whose histories are being told and what children are learning about their country. Ultimately, both types of knowledge are essential to the discipline and very much interconnected,[59] and attention to both is interwoven throughout this thesis. All of these issues have clear implications for this study.

It is important, in a study of history education, to pay attention to both the substantive and the procedural knowledge promoted by museums – a need to examine which history is included, but also to explore what visitors are being asked to do to interpret and understand that history. The impassioned debate about what we should be teaching Australian citizens about the country's history also reveals the political contentiousness of public history. The multitude of potential perspectives on the past means that history can be used and misused in many different ways, and museums face conflicting pressures from a number of sources and stakeholders. There is perhaps potential in approaches that allow multiple interpretations and perspectives of the past to mitigate these pressures – or it may be that allowing multiple interpretations could be seen as a political choice in itself. History, evidently, can no longer provide the hard nails of fact that Laura Rambotham so unquestioningly absorbed a century ago.

Museums and their educational role

Museums have a long history as institutions of power and knowledge.[60] Briefly, as I have noted, the new museology or New Museum emerged as a set of ideas in the latter part of the twentieth century espousing a changing, more inclusive, and in

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[58] See for example: Taylor and Young, *Making History.*
[59] Seixas, "Benchmarks."
[60] Bennett, "The exhibitionary complex."

some ways more public role for museums.[61] As part of this growing attention to the public role of museums, learning has become a key concern for museological literature in recent decades. Learning and education in museums reflects some of the shifting concerns in education research and theory, with a clear embedding of theories and epistemologies of education within understandings of the museum's role in constructing and communicating collective memory. Segall argues that:

> As informal classrooms, public museums, like classroom teachers, act
> pedagogically: The stories developing teams and curators choose to tell,
> as well as those they gloss over and "forget," form a curriculum that
> conveys – explicitly, implicitly, and by omission – particular messages
> about history, power, knowledge and identity, helping position those
> who encounter those stories to think about the world in some ways
> rather than others.[62]

Most of the leading recent museum education literature supports constructivist learning theories – theories that acknowledge the socially constructed nature of knowledge – in the museum, without referring to specific disciplines.[63] According to these constructivist perspectives, today's museum emphasises an active role for the visitor in this process of meaning and knowledge construction, and aims to encourage visitors to reach their own understandings rather than absorb those of expert curators.[64] There has been little objection to these constructivist ideas within the museum education literature, but it is worth remembering that 'museum

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[61] See for example: Andermann and Arnold-de Simine, "Introduction"; Ann Chinnery, "Temple or forum? On New Museology and education for social change," *Philosophy of Education* (2012): 269-276; Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education: Purpose, pedagogy, performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Vergo, "Introduction."

[62] Avner Segall, "Making difficult history public: The pedagogy of remembering and forgetting in two Washington DC museums," *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 36, no. 1 (2014): 55.

[63] See for example: Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and* Education; Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience*.

[64] Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine, *Museum Basics* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006); Robert Bain and Kirsten M Ellenbogen, "Placing objects within disciplinary perspectives: examples from history and science," in *Perspectives on Object-Centred Learning in Museums*, Scott G Paris, ed. (Marwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002): 153-169; John H Falk, Lynn D Dierking & Marianna Adams, "Living in a learning society: Museums and free-choice learning," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, Sharon Macdonald, ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006): 323-339; Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education*.

education' as a field in its own right has really only existed since the period in which constructivist theories became influential in school education.[65]

Learning is also considered by Falk and Dierking to be mediated by personal, physical, and sociocultural contexts.[66] These ideas reflect a shift similar to that described by Freire in education, from a model in which museums were 'experts' whose knowledge visitors were expected to absorb without question. Visitors to today's museums are expected to actively construct meaning, to actively interpret what they see, with museums placing much greater emphasis on interactive displays and creative ways of encouraging visitors to participate in museum exhibitions.[67] Some of these museum theorists also draw on critical pedagogy, highlighting the ways exhibitions can, as Witcomb writes, 'open up a space for critique by using the subjectivities of their viewers to create a tension with the narratives they are using.'[68] Learning in museums can be both formal and informal; it can take place in formal education programs or in visitor interactions with and within gallery spaces.[69] Museums also increasingly see themselves as playing a key role in lifelong learning, and so their learning focus is not simply on school-aged visitors.[70]

Museum literature broadly repositions the museum within society, suggesting that while more traditional museums were seen to be immune to outside influences and capable of delivering 'factual' narratives, today's museums – through an awareness of their own role in the construction of knowledge – can occupy a more transgressive or perhaps transitional space in society. This more postmodern positioning of the museum is captured in Foucault's concept of the heterotopia, which I will address in

[65] Hein, *Learnin in the Museum.*
[66] Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience.*
[67] See for example: Rosemarie Beier-de Haan, "Re-staging histories and identities," in *A Companion to Museum* Studies, ed. Sharon MacDonald (Malden, MA: Blackwood Publishing, 2006): 186-197; Eilean Hooper Greenhill, "Education, communication and interpretation: Towards a critical pedagogy in museums," in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (London and New York: Routledge, 1996): 3-27; Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and education*; Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; Margaret A. Lindauer, "Critical museum pedagogy and exhibition development: A conceptual first step," in *Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are changed,* ed. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 303-329; Andrea Witcomb, "Interactivity: Thinking beyond," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon MacDonald (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 353-361.
[68] Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect."
[69] See for example: Hein, *Learning in the Museum.*
[70] See for example: Smith, "Theorizing museum."

more detail in the next chapter. In brief, the idea of the heterotopia allows the museum to be seen as both within and outside of society; it is an integral part of the communities it represents, but it can only represent them by maintaining a degree of separation. There is a general consensus in the literature that museums have 'progressed' to constructivist approaches, although Witcomb has argued that museums have perhaps not embraced the theories of learning in a fuller sense.[71] Ultimately, to fully embrace these approaches, museums would need to radically alter the way they communicate to visitors and rethink the role of the curator. In much the same way that constructivism in the classroom requires teachers to relinquish the position of 'sage on the stage' and take up the role of 'guide on the side' or 'meddler in the middle,'[72] museum exhibitions would need to cease to impart messages and find ways to create space for visitors to make meaning.

There is, however, one particularly significant challenge for the museum that does not exist in the classroom; museum visitors do not always have what influential constructivist pedagogue Lev Vygotsky called a 'more capable other' – often a teacher, but also potentially a peer – to facilitate their learning.[73] The suggestion inherent in this narrative of progress is that social constructivist learning theories are desirable in museums – or at least, certainly more desirable than didactic models of communication – but there remains an important question about whether constructivist learning is possible to achieve informally in exhibitions but outside of formal education programs. The museum curators I interviewed demonstrated concern with this issue, and often appeared to experience conflict between a desire to allow visitors to make their own meaning and a desire to communicate messages about the past and present.

Museum display methods, the objects and other elements they contain, and the subjects addressed by the museum appear to have altered almost beyond recognition from their origins as fifteenth-century, object-centred cabinets of curiosities to the

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[71] Witcomb, "Interactivity."
[72] See for example: Erica L. McWilliam, "Teaching for creativity: From sage to guide to meddler," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 29, no. 3 (2009): 281-293.
[73] Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

more 'audience-driven' of today.[74] Goodman has criticised this tendency to a linear narrative of progress in museums, arguing that today's museums tend to be defined by their difference to the nineteenth century's scientific 'classifying house,' while the nineteenth century museum was defined by its distance from the cabinet of curiosities and the circus.[75] While Goodman does not argue that museums of the twentieth century returned to the same emphasis on curiosity and entertainment of the eighteenth century, he does note some similarities in order to demonstrate the inappropriateness of the linear, progressive narrative found in the museum studies literature and discussed above. Given the vast differences in museums in Australia today, the narrative of the development of museum education and learning would perhaps be more appropriately viewed as many small, specific but interconnected narratives. A small, local, folk museum in a tight-knit rural community, for instance, has a very different set of concerns to a national institution attracting significant numbers of school students.

Nonetheless, broadly speaking, attention to the educational role of the museum has grown in recent decades. One of the most commonly cited authors in museum education, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, explains the ebb and flow of the museum's emphasis on education through the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century in her overview of the history of museum education in Britain, and identifies the late-twentieth century as a time of expansion and revitalisation of museum education. She goes on to call for a 'whole museum' approach to pursuing education goals, stating that approaches to date have been largely driven by individuals and not at an organisational level.[76] Hooper-Greenhill's suggestion is that although museums have begun to develop more sophisticated approaches to educating visitors, they have some way to go before they can be seen to fully embrace the principles of constructivist learning. In this thesis, I have argued that constructivist approaches are only one of several ways of thinking about learning that have something to offer museums dealing with uncomfortable histories; affective learning, for example, has

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[74] Hooper-Greenhill, "Museum education."
[75] David Goodman, "Fear of circuses: founding the National Museum of Victoria," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (1990): 18-34.
[76] Hooper-Greenhill, "Museum education."

considerable importance in understanding the role of feeling and experience in education.

The shift, in recent decades, towards employing more constructivist learning theories in the museum is aligned with the growing emphasis on 'history from below' and the democratisation of the past in both history education and public history.[77] In the museum, attention to such history is frequently linked to social, moral, and citizenship education aims, much as it can be in school history curricula and pedagogy.[78] Issues of race and racism are particularly pertinent; for example, Monica Eileen Patterson describes the ways the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia in the United States uses dialogue to 'leverage the museum's miscellany of hate in an attempt to achieve something positive' in challenging visitors' ideas about race and racism.[79] A number of museums have taken up a focus on human rights, 'providing opportunities for publics to engage in the various practices of human rights as human rights defenders,' as Jennifer Carter notes.[80] It is worth noting, however, that the idea of a moral and social education role for museums also existed prior to the New Museology that emerged in the 1980s.[81] George Hein further links the professionalisation of museum education to the emergence of progressive education in the early twentieth century, noting that social aims were as integral to each.[82]

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[77] See for example: Angela Philp, "'History wars' in the National Museum of Australia," *Teaching History* March (2004): 2-5; Cameron, "Contentiousness and shifting knowledge paradigms."

[78] Beier-de Haan, "Re-staging histories and identities"; Fiona Cameron, "Moral lessons and reforming agendas: History museums, science museums, contentious topics and contemporary societies," in *Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are changed,* ed. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 330-342; Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers"; Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb, "Beyond nostalgia: The role of affect in generating historical understanding at heritage sites," *Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are changed,* ed. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 263-275; Robert R. Janes, "Museums, social responsibility and the future we desire," in *Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are changed,* ed. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 134-146; Lynda Kelly, "Visitors and learning: Adult museum visitors' learning identities," *Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are changed,* ed. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 276-290; Lindauer, "Critical museum pedagogy."

[79] Patterson, "Teaching tolerance," 62.

[80] Jennifer Carter, "Human rights museums and pedagogies of practice: The Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 28, no. 3 (2013): 338.

[81] Cameron, "Moral lessons."

[82] George Hein, "Progressive education and museum education: Anna Billings Gallup and Louise Connolly," *The Journal of Museum Education* 31, no. 3 (2006): 161-173.

Most museum education literature views the museum as an active agent for positive social change. Miriam Kahn, however, notes that by collecting and displaying objects in particular ways, museums 'influence the definition of tradition and heritage, the status of analytical categories such as art, culture or culture area, and the importance of social values and political ideologies,' and this power can work to both socially just and unjust ends.[83] Historically, Kahn argues, 'museums have served to legitimize racial exploitation at home and the creation of an empire abroad.'[84] The museum retains some of the authority it has always had as an institution of knowledge, and its power remains open to exploitation; redistributing museum power is a key component of the New Museum and linked to constructivist approaches to learning.[85]

Both theoretical and practical literature about the museum supports the idea that museums both 'change and are changed' by societies.[86] George Hein's oft-cited book, *Learning in the Museum*, highlights the ways museums change as societies do – this is apparent in shifts in the type of history explored by museums during postmodern times, but also in methods of display and public and education programs.[87] Education programs in museums are often linked to social justice aims, with many recent examples of innovative and participatory programs in museums, particularly in the United Kingdom and United States and documented in the English-language literature. Viv Golding, for example, describes a program working with young people at London's Horniman Museum in which students' learn about Black culture and investigate negative depictions of the 'Other' in the media, in an issues-based approach emphasising critical thinking.[88] Golding's argument is that museums have an important role to play in building tolerance and counteracting negative depictions of the 'Other

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[83] Miriam Kahn, "Heterotopic dissonance in the museum representation of Pacific Island cultures," *American Anthropologist* 97, no. 2 (1995): 324.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Vergo, "Introduction"; Kahn, "Heterotopic dissonance"; Hein, *Learning in the Museum*.
[86] Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson, eds., *Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are changed* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).
[87] Hein, *Learning in the Museum*.
[88] Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers."

In the US, museums such as the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia fulfil a similar role, confronting visitors with offensive racist material in order to challenge their ideas about race and discrimination.[89] The literature provides valuable insight into the ways museums are working with confronting and contested histories to challenge visitors' prejudices and understandings of important issues, especially race. As I have argued, this role for museums in social justice and citizenship education is directly connected to the growing emphasis on constructivism as a theory underpinning both informal learning and formal education in the museum. Museum education and public programs increasingly emphasise active and social learning activities, in keeping with the acknowledgement of visitors' roles in interpreting museum exhibitions and objects and constructing their own meanings. Such activities teach more than content – they are designed to teach ways of thinking and often values that are considered important to citizenship – although they do not necessarily provide clear links to what could be helpful ideas drawn out of pedagogy in history education.

In the US, New York's Lower East Side Tenement Museum runs a program entitled 'Kitchen Conversations,' which embodies the constructivist epistemology supported in the museum literature and demonstrates the value of facilitated learning experiences in the museum.[90] In 'Kitchen Conversations,' visitors to the museum gather in the kitchen of one of the museum's apartments to discuss their experiences in and outside of the museum. These conversations, which centre on the issue of immigration to the United States, can and do become 'uncomfortable,' but facilitators do not see this as negative, with one member of staff claiming that these uncomfortable conversations, though they do not rate as highly in visitor surveys, are the most successful in terms of shifting visitors' racist beliefs and challenging ignorance.[91]

As I have highlighted through this review of the literature, museum education clearly shares many of history education's goals in social and moral education. Museums see themselves as playing a similar role to history education in developing 'good' citizens

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[89] Patterson, "Teaching tolerance."
[90] Abram, "Kitchen conversations."
[91] Ibid.

by teaching values desirable to society – perhaps most obvious from the examples given here is the teaching of tolerance and a focus on race and ethnicity. It is equally apparent that museums have changed significantly in their approaches to both display and education in recent decades, and that many scholars see this as a highly positive 'step' along the way to embracing constructivist learning theory in the museum. One of the goals of this study is to examine how enthusiastically such constructivist theories have been taken up in museums, and to explore what they have to offer the treatment of difficult heritage. Today's museum is becoming, according to the scholarly literature reviewed here, far more democratic and inclusive than museums have historically been considered. Aligned with the New Museum's focus on the social purpose of museums, the stories of those who have suffered at the hands of history play an essential role in creating spaces where visitors can be challenged and learn values that support social justice and inclusion.

Difficult histories: making visitors uncomfortable

Representations of histories previously deemed too confronting for museum display have increased in recent decades, but many aspects of the past remain contentious material for exhibitions. In Australia, the histories of issues that remain a focal point for debate in the present – for example immigration, Aboriginal disadvantage, and gender inequality – are challenging to represent in any public setting. The Bells Falls controversy at the National Museum of Australia, as I described in Chapter One, demonstrated the 'discomfort generated by an invitation to remember Australia's frontier wars.'[92] The representation of Aboriginal history in Australian museums – as distinct from Aboriginal anthropology[93] – has been of primary concern in the Australian context for the ideals of the New Museum, but as I have argued there are myriad other histories that prove challenging in this context. Ultimately, the inclusion of difficult history in the museum is linked to the growing acknowledgement of the perspectives not often recognised by historical scholarship in the past. The prevailing

[92] Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier," 1117.
[93] There is an extensive literature about the display of Aboriginal archaeological and ethnographic collections, including addressing issues of the display of human remains. See for example: Tiffany Jenkins, *Contesting Human Remains in Museum Collections: The crisis of cultural authority* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011); Nicolas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby, eds., *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2009).

view in the museum research literature is that, in relation to growing acknowledgement of the diverse experiences of historical events, the increased visibility of difficult or contested historical issues in the museum is a positive development and to be desired.[94] Further, the literature suggests that many museums are keen to engage with histories of conflict and violence, discrimination and genocide with the aim of fostering social change and inclusion.[95]

While exhibitions have long challenged visitors with unusual and sometimes provocative displays, including for example the display of people of colour like Saartjie Baartman,[96] it was not until the late twentieth century that they began to focus on representing conflicting perspectives and controversial histories, and courting controversy themselves.[97] As a result, approaches to dealing with such history in the museum are relatively new. Contested and confronting histories are further linked to the ideas about a social and moral role for museum education and learning that I have highlighted throughout this chapter; it is often the case that previously un- or under-represented histories are uncomfortable in various ways. Museums are seen as places in which to build tolerance and understanding, and in which the wounds of both distant and recent pasts can be healed.[98] As Carter notes, Chile's Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos [Museum of Memory and Human Rights] 'obtaining truthful accounts of human rights transgressions were deemed necessary in Chile's healing' following the turbulent history of the 1970s.[99] Cameron, writing about the Australian context, suggests that museums can become 'civic centers in the engagement of topics of contemporary relevance and importance.'[100] This is seen as the museum's responsibility to the present – the use of the past to encourage understanding of contemporary issues.

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[94] Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers"; Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier"; Patterson, "Teaching tolerance."
[95] See for example: Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers"; Patterson, "Teaching tolerance."
[96] Saartjie Baartman was a Khoikhoi woman who came to be known as the 'Hottentot Venus.' She was born in South Africa and brought to England for exhibition as a 'curiosity.' For more detail, see the essays in: Deborah Willis, ed., *Black Venus 2010: They called her "Hottentot"* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).
[97] Cameron, "Moral lessons."
[98] Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers"; Patterson, "Teaching tolerance."
[99] Carter, "Human rights museums," 330.
[100] Cameron, "Moral lessons," 214.

Several United States museums provide examples of this 'use' of the past in their treatment of histories of racism and slavery, and also raise the pertinent issue of visitor comfort. Amy Tyson (2008) uses her analysis of two living history museums – Historic Fort Snelling in Minnesota and Conner Prairie in Indiana – to argue that even where their exhibitions and programs appear to be aimed at making visitors *un*comfortable, the museum is still preoccupied with ensuring visitor comfort.[101] Although each of the museums Tyson describes take very different approaches in their attention or inattention to the history of slavery, she argues that both approaches aim to preserve visitor comfort in different ways, even in the case of Conner Prairie, where visitors can role play as a slave on the underground railroad. It is however equally clear that some museums also aim for a degree of discomfort – Conner Prairie's underground railroad role play is likely to be uncomfortable whatever measures it takes to protect visitors from discomfort.

Similarly, the museums described by Ruth Abram and Patterson – the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York, and the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University in Michigan respectively – have programs aimed at disturbing visitors' prejudices and preconceived notions of racism and immigration experiences.[102] In Australia, Vivienne Szekeres describes Adelaide Migration Museum's exhibition *A twist of fate* as 'not for the faint-hearted,' and 'definitely not for those who had been refugees and experienced torture and trauma,' as the exhibition dealt with those themes.[103] This research suggests that many museum professionals believe that it may be through discomfort that visitors learn the most, and find their attitudes most challenged.

The inclusion of histories of trauma and injustice speaks to a role for museums in bringing to light previously neglected or forgotten histories. The Holocaust has been a particular focus in this field, and in many instances Holocaust museums throughout the world are seen as prime examples of museum approaches to representing trauma

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[101] Amy Tyson, "Crafting emotional comfort: Interpreting the painful past at living history museums in the new economy," *Museum and Society* 6, no. 3 (2008): 246-262.
[102] Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Patterson, "Teaching tolerance."
[103] Szekeres, "The past is a dangerous place," 47.

through architecture and exhibition.[104] Holocaust museums function as both museums and memorials, commemorating the enormous collective trauma of the Second World War, and are located all over the world.[105] Questions about displaying material culture and photography to represent the horror of these events are important to museums, particularly when considering questions of whether children and young people are ready to encounter such histories.[106] As Kidd notes, however, cultural material for children (he writes specifically about literature) increasingly makes it appear as though 'we now expect reading about trauma to be traumatic itself – as if we think children can't otherwise comprehend atrocity.'[107] Holocaust museums have been part of an international focus in memory studies since the Second World War.[108] Testimony is also often central to the development of museums dealing with collective traumas such as the Holocaust, as indeed reclaiming testimony is seen as an essential component of trauma recovery.[109]

Closely linked are museum approaches to human rights; there are now a number of museums with 'human rights' in their names throughout the world.[110] The District Six Museum in Cape Town, for example, deals with the intensely challenging history of apartheid in South Africa, but also demonstrates the museum's role in constructing a better, more inclusive and just future; as Layne writes, the neighbourhood District Six 'can be modelled [in the museum] as an example of a community which can exist without economic, linguistic, or racial antagonisms.'[111] Sites of historical collective trauma are often employed to represent their own history

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[104] See for example: Roger I. Simon, "The terrible gift: Museums and the possibility of hope without consolation," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 21, no. 3 (2006): 187-204; Stephanie Shosh Rotem, *Constructing Memory: Architectural narratives of Holocaust Museums* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2013).
[105] Rotem, *Constructing Memory*.
[106] Segall, "Making difficult history public."
[107] Kidd, "'A' is for Auschwitz."
[108] Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, "Memory and history in twenty-first century Australia: A survey of the field," *Memory Studies* 6, no. 3 (2013): 370-383.
[109] See for example: Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, narrative, and history* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
[110] For example: the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, https://humanrights.ca/; Museum de la Memoria y Los Derechos Humanos, http://ww3.museodelamemoria.cl/. A number of other museums focus on human rights issues such as slavery, for example the International Slavery Museum in the United Kingdom. Other examples can be found at the Federation of International Human Rights Museums website, http://www.fihrm.org/.
[111] Valmont Layne, "The District Six Museum: An ordinary people's place," *The Public Historian* 30, no. 1 (2008): 62.

and can be both museums and memorials. Such sites are always interpreted through the present and often with a view to the future, as is the case with the District Six Museum and many of the other examples considered in this chapter. Patrizia Violi argues that at memorials constructed on the sites of trauma 'the past is always remembered and reconstructed from the point of view of the future, of the new post-conflict society to be built, where a need for political reconciliation may play a crucial role.'[112] Szekeres has also suggested that the museum has a role to play as a 'safe haven,' with a healing capacity for those whose difficult histories are told.[113] Clearly, history has affective and emotional power, and this power can perhaps, as suggested by much of the scholarly literature, have a significant impact on learning for social change and social justice.

The issue of dealing with difficult history is made more complex by the many approaches used by the myriad types of museums, which have different purposes and relationships to the past. The memorial museums, living history museums, national museums, museums on specific historical periods and themes, and historic site museums described in the literature each take distinct approaches to representing the past. It is also clear from the literature that museums can rarely be easily assigned to one specific type – many historic site museums take a living history approach, and some site museums are also memorial museums, for instance. Each type of museum can create vastly different experiences or interpretations of the past for visitors, depending on their engagement with difficult heritage. Living history museums, such as Conner Prairie or Fort Snelling, for example, provide visitors with quite contrasting views of the past – one traumatic and the other more pleasant and entertaining.[114] National museums, like the National Museum of Australia, are challenged by diverse audiences and the need to accommodate often conflicting views of what warrants representation as part of the national story.[115] Memorial

[112] Violi, "Trauma site museums."
[113] Szekeres, "The past is a dangerous place."
[114] Tyson, "Crafting emotional comfort."
[115] See for example: Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier."

museums face additional complexity in their dual responsibilities to commemoration and documentation, or memory and history, as Andrew Beattie notes.[116]

While the distinctions between public memory and history are by no means clearly defined, museums face challenges in balancing evidence-based historical research and interpretation with the more moral and sympathetic aims of commemoration. Beattie's analysis of the Documentation and Information Centre in Torgau, Germany, an historic site with links to Nazism and Stalinism, highlights these challenges, as well as the difficulty in representing a past that is considered shameful to the museum's local community. Addressing difficult history brings to light questions about to whom museums are responsible, which museums have the right to represent which histories, and in what way. These questions are commonly raised in the literature on public history. The Australian historian Inga Clendinnen addressed such questions in her Quarterly Essay *The history question,* revealing how firmly we cling to our historical myths and how challenging the role of representing the past can be.[117] Australian history is widely contentious and, as I have noted, the the history wars of the late twentieth and early twentieth centuries reached into all facets of public history.[118]

Research and commentary on difficult history in the Australian context has, since the early 2000s, often alluded to or directly addressed the National Museum of Australia's display of Indigenous Australian history and culture. The public outcry surrounding the representation of frontier conflict in the NMA, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, had more than a ripple effect.[119] This controversy left a mark upon the Australian museum industry; perhaps not so significant as the impassioned debate surrounding the Smithsonian's Enola Gay controversy, but oft-

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[116] Andrew H Beattie, "Between histories and memories: Torgau's Memorial Musuem for Germany's short twentieth century," *Museum and Society* 8, no. 1 (2010): 37-55.
[117] Inga Clendinnen, *The History Question: Who owns the past?* (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2006).
[118] Macintyre and Clark, *The History Wars*; Philp, "History wars"; Tony Taylor, "Constructing the Australian school history curriculum: Ideology, high politics and the History Wars in the Howard years," in *Globalisation, Ideology and Education Policy Reforms*, ed. Joseph Zajda (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2010), 19-37.
[119] Guy Hansen, "Telling the Australian story at the National Museum of Australia," *History Australia* 2, no. 3 (2005): 90.1-90.9; Julie Marcus, "What's at stake?"; Philp, "History wars"; Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier."

mentioned in the Australian context nonetheless.[120] While the NMA controversy looms large, there are many other state-based and regional museums in Australia that represent various types of difficult history, and it seems that our national public history institutions, including the NMA and the Australian War Memorial, are particularly vulnerable to controversy due to their status as national institutions.

It is worth noting that while this study focuses on larger, more established museums, smaller regional museums also have the potential to present contested views of Australia's past, and they can perhaps do so with less pressure to represent a celebratory national story.[121] Certainly there is an advantage in being less centrally located and less visible to the nation, but the inaccessibility of many of the historic sites so important to Australia's difficult history also has disadvantages. The sites of frontier conflict, for example, are generally quite remote, or at least less accessible for the majority of Australia's population. Massacre sites like Coniston in the Northern Territory and Myall Creek in rural New South Wales – where Australia's only two memorials to Aboriginal frontier deaths are located – are quite out of the reach of most school groups, although Myall Creek is an important site of remembrance.[122] Bronwyn Batten, writing on the experience of a memorial service at Myall Creek, notes that greater numbers of visitors may jeopardise the affective power of the site, again throwing into doubt the advantages of accessibility.[123]

Literature about the representation of difficult history in museums reveals greater attention to the emotional and experiential effects of museum visits than was perhaps the case in earlier museums – Conner Prairie's debriefing with psychologists is a good example of the new museum's awareness of its potential emotional impact, bringing with it attention to the issue of visitor comfort.[124] G. J. Ashworth has noted the link between violent histories and emotion – violence is both 'provoked by strong emotions and in turn evokes strong emotions,' and this has implications for

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[120] See for example: David Arnold, "Museums as contested history sites," *Agora* 41, no. 2 (2001): 5-15; Marcus, "What's at stake?"; Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier"; Nettelbeck, "Remembering Indigenous dispossession." Bells Falls was also mentioned by a number of my interview participants.
[121] Nettelbeck, "The Australian frontier."
[122] Ibid.
[123] Bronwyn Batten, "The Myall Creek Memorial: History, identity and reconciliation," in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'difficult heritage,'* ed. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008): 82-96.
[124] Tyson, "Crafting emotional comfort."

the display of violent histories in public museums.[125] This attention to the affective and emotional facets of museum display is characteristic of the New Museology, where a stronger emphasis on the stories of individuals and the representation of previously marginalised perspectives of the past means that more personal, and often emotive, stories have found their way into displays. The multitude of perspectives in the museum does however bring with it challenges to public memory and a much more complex approach to interpretation and representation. These challenges have important implications for this study, which I will discuss further in the next chapter of this thesis.

Conclusion

In this review, I have brought into critical dialogue three bodies of research literature – pedagogy in history education, new methods of museum communication, and the New Museology's growing emphasis on multiple perspectives and the inclusion of previously marginalised 'difficult' history. I have shown that these intersect in many complex ways, and in doing so have highlighted the challenges museums face in fulfilling the aims of the New Museum. It is clear that this is a rapidly growing area of research – both museum research and history education research are particularly concerned with the representation and teaching of histories of trauma and injustice and with the potential for the representation of these histories to build the foundations for social justice and inclusion. The directions for museums remain somewhat unclear though, and the literature highlights a need for further investigation into the theoretical and pedagogical resources that museums are using and could use to support their teaching about uncomfortable history. I have shown that there are parallels between history education and museum learning, with clear correlations between the emphasis on constructivist education in each, but it is not clear whether museums have found utility in history-specific pedagogies. I argue that 'difficult history' emerged as a concern alongside constructivist, New Museum approaches in museums, because these approaches are supportive of multiple possible experiences and interpretations of the past, and it is through the inclusion of

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[125] G. J. Ashworth, "The memorialization of violence and tragedy."

stories at the margins of the single grand narrative of history that more confronting stories are brought to light.

This study examines the intersections between museum representation, history teaching, and histories of trauma and injustice as they have played out in the museum over the last four decades, and how they occur in the present day. Arguments that history classrooms and museums seem to have 'progressed' during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries were in evidence in much of the literature in the 1990s and 2000s. History education was seen to have moved from an emphasis on substantive knowledge to a combined focus on substantive and procedural knowledge, while museums embraced greater visitor agency in constructing meaning and interpreting exhibitions and objects. In the most recent literature, the focus appears to be shifting into affect and emotion, perhaps encouraging an even greater space for confronting and contested histories, given their emotional and affective potential.

There are many similarities between the goals of the history classroom and the museum, and a growing sense of the moral and social role of historical knowledge and understanding pervades all of the literatures discussed here. This is highly pertinent to questions about the display of negative or contested histories in public spaces because, as we have seen, the display of such histories is often linked to social justice aims. Both constructivist approaches to museum display and attention to the affective, emotional facets of museum experience can be and have been shaped to these purposes. What is now needed, and what this thesis contributes to, is a stronger sense of how museums employ particular substantive and procedural facets of history to foster social inclusion, cultural recognition, and/or civics and citizenship learning. In addition, there is a need to further analyse what theoretical resources museum staff utilize in constructing museum experiences, considering, for instance, the ways constructivist ideas about meaning-making are informing exhibition design, or the ways affect and emotion are employed to engage visitors in learning opportunities.

Representing difficult history does not sit entirely comfortably with ideas about the museum as a leisure and entertainment space, but it does clearly link to the perception of the museum's educative role. The reasons for paying heed to difficult

history correspond to the most commonly stated aims for both history education and museum education – aims that reflect a need to foster tolerance and empathy in learners and visitors. There is a strong warrant for exploring these matters in the Australian context, building on the work of others addressing themes of affect, learning, and difficult history in the museum,[126] and deepening understanding of some of the ways museums work to 'teach' visitors about history. In particular, there is a strong need for continuing research to support the representation of collective trauma in museums and especially to consider the educational purposes to which museums put these histories. What is it that Australian museums seek to teach children and young visitors when they engage with contested and confronting history? And to what end do museums display histories that might make their visitors uncomfortable?

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[126] Including for example: Trofanenko, "Affective emotions"; Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect."

Chapter Three: Methodological and theoretical frameworks

Introduction

Museums are complex spaces for research. They are multifaceted assemblages of people, objects, and space, their representational and educational aims informed by a number of contextual pressures and characteristics. In the New Museum, as Hein distinguishes, learning can be both formal – through education programs – and informal – by visiting the exhibitions and interacting with displays.[1] The latter is related to the notion of 'interminable learning' that Trofanenko has highlighted; the 'unintended learning experiences' that museums provide.[2] In this study, I address both of these types of learning, viewing them as often interrelated and disputing the historically-privileged notion that learning is purely cognitive.[3] Instead, as others have done, I consider the experiential and affective dimensions of learning in museums, focusing on the ways exhibitions and education programs are constructed to facilitate particular understandings of the past. My interest, in this research, lies in what the museums 'do' rather than the ways visitors respond.[4] Although in a constructivist sense visitors play an important part in the process of interpretation, the 'raw materials' – in the form of constructed exhibitions and programs – are a critical source of information about the educational goals, approaches, and perspectives of each of the institutions studied here.

Museums are far from static. They are spaces and collections of objects constantly in flux, undergoing continual reinterpretation and reformulation by staff, visitors, events, and discourses. The museum exists at a nexus between past, present, and

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[1] Hein, *Learning in the Museum*.

[2] Brenda Trofanenko, "On difficult history displayed: the pedagogical challenges of interminable learning," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 26, no. 5 (2011): 484.

[3] Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education*.

[4] A small number of other Australian studies have, valuably, begun to focus on visitor responses to exhibitions with attention to the affective dimensions. See for example: Dianne Mulcahy, "'Sticky' learning: Assembling bodies, objects and affects at the museum and beyond," in *Learning Bodies*, ed. Julia Coffey, Shelley Budgeon and Helen Cahill (Singapore: Springer, 2016): 207-222; Laurajane Smith, "Visitor Interviews Australian War Memorial," unpublished report to Australian War Memorial (2013) [My thanks to the author for providing me with a copy of this work]. There are also a number of international researchers who have undertaken projects investigating children and young people's affective and emotional responses to museum learning, including, for example: Trofanenko, "Affective emotions."

future; containing the past and its relics, which are interpreted in the moment, often with a view to a better, more just, more informed future. In many ways, the museum's concerns mirror those of history education and civics and citizenship education, where research literature and pedagogical advice highlight an important 'use' for the past in the present and future. In the previous chapter, I explained that my research into contested, emotionally fraught and complex histories emerges from the intersection between teaching the past in formal educational settings and representing the past in public spaces. My primary concerns are with the ways museums 'change and are changed,'[5] and their place in shifting, contentious public histories. This thesis considers the question of what it is museums are attempting to change – and what they are changed by – when they address contested histories and histories of trauma, tragedy, and injustice.

This chapter is divided into three main sections, in which I elaborate the theoretical and methodological frameworks that underpinned this study, as well as outline the study design. In the first section, I explain the theoretical resources employed in understanding the place of the museum in society, and in particular its educative role. The theoretical foundations for this research are drawn from an understanding of the museum as 'heterotopia,' the concept of an 'other' space within society raised by Foucault.[6] Heterotopias are spaces of difference, in which encounters with an unfamiliar familiar are possible – in the museum, we can observe the real world in unreal form, in the form of authentic objects and images of authentic scenes removed from context or artificially contextualised. Applying the concept of the heterotopia, I examine the ways in which the museum acts as a space both part of and separate to society, reflecting, I suggest, an ideal, possible future even while providing a space for critical engagement with a flawed present and past. Understandings of the role of affect and emotion in museum learning further inform the theoretical basis for this study, and the concept of collective or cultural trauma supports a deeper engagement with the affective, emotional facets of confronting histories.

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[5] Knell, MacLeod and Watson, *Museum Revolutions*.
[6] Foucault, *The Order of Things*; "Of Other Spaces."

An examination of histories of trauma and tragedy brings with it a particular set of ethical, methodological and theoretical challenges. These are histories with fraught and often contentious places in society; they incite questions about how, and even whether, to represent stories and events that are likely to make visitors distressed and uncomfortable. I draw on a range of literature relating to these kinds of histories – variously described as 'dark,' 'difficult,' or 'tragic' – in order to explore their place in the public spaces of museums and to consider approaches to displaying and educating about complex stories of trauma and tragedy. The work of Judith Hermann underpins my understanding of trauma as a clinical construct, however her work also highlights the importance of the social context for trauma.[7] The social context for trauma, incorporating notions of cultural and collective trauma, is an important part of the focus for this study, and the work of Maria Tumarkin, Michalinos Zembylas, and Jeffrey Alexander informs a framework for understanding histories and spaces of trauma and tragedy.[8] In this examination of 'dark,' 'tragic' histories, I also consider the ways in which the museum puts affect and emotion to work in order to produce particular learning effects in visitors. Informed by the work of Margaret Wetherell[9] and others who have focused on affect in the museum, such as Brenda Trofanenko in Canada, and Laurajane Smith, Dianne Mulcahy, and Andrea Witcomb in Australia,[10] I investigate the potential for affective learning in the museum, and examine the intentions of museum displays and programs for producing affects.

The next section of this chapter explains the historiographical foundations informing my exploration of the ways that history and civics and citizenship education are understood and implemented in the museums. This approach draws on the models of historical thinking, very much entwined with notions of educating for citizenship,

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[7] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

[8] Particularly helpful works have included: Maria Tumarkin, *Traumascapes: The power and fate of places transformed by tragedy* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2005); Michalinos Zembylas, "'Pedagogy of discomfort' and its ethical implications: The tensions of ethical violence in social justice education," *Ethics and Education* 10, no. 2 (2015): 163-174; Jeffrey Alexander, *Trauma: A social theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

[9] Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion.*

[10] See for example: Trofanenko, "On difficult history displayed"; Smith, "Affect and registers of engagement"; Smith and Campbell, "The elephant in the room"; Mulcahy, "'Sticky' learning"; Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect."

which were outlined in the previous chapter, as well as introducing notions of collective memory and the place of public history. In examining questions about history education, I draw on the work of Peter Seixas, Carla van Drie and Jannet van Boxtel, and Samual Wineburg, among others.[11] Each of these researchers and theorists examine approaches to teaching historical thinking and reasoning, with their work tending to be underpinned by a belief in the value of history education to provide a foundation for democratic participation and the development of values, including empathy and compassion.

In the final section, I outline the research design, which is based upon interviews, museum analysis, and archival research. Lists of participants, museum exhibitions, and education programs, are included in appendices, and a summary of archival materials is included in the bibliography. I explain the collection of and interpretation of the 'data' gathered, and reflect upon the ethical dimensions of this study, its scope and limitations. Three museum institutions are analysed in this research:

- Museum Victoria (including two campuses – Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum, both in Melbourne);
- Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority [PAHSMA] (including the main historic site in Port Arthur, Tasmania and the Cascades Female Factory in the city of Hobart); and
- the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Reasons for the selection of these museums are also outlined in this final section of the chapter. The study addresses both the present-day of each of these museums as well as their recent history of representations of difficult history since the 1970s, exploring a period in which ideas about the New Museum are purported to have challenged the former status quo of the museum as an authority on knowledge.

The museum in society

This section outlines the theoretical foundations to this study, detailing the conceptualisation of the museum and its educative role, and exploring the ways the

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[11] Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*; van Drie and van Boxtel, "Historical reasoning"; Wineburg, *Historical Thinking*.

'use' of difficult history can be viewed through lenses of affect and trauma. I consider the museum as a heterotopia, after Foucault, positioning the institutions included in this study as both integral to and apart from the societies they represent. Museums are undoubtedly very much a part of their communities — perhaps increasingly so — and yet, I argue, they remain separate, able to situate themselves as separate enough to the past and present so as to be able to represent them, as the authority or the knowledgeable 'other.' In addition to this conceptualisation of the museum as heterotopia, I employ understandings of public pedagogy in order to focus on the outward-facing aspects of the museum, what it uses to communicate and teach — its exhibitions and programs. Delving more deeply into an understanding of the ways museums communicate and teach, I explore concepts of affect, emotion, and trauma, considering the links between these ideas and the 'difficult history' that is the focus for this study.

Heterotopia and the museum

Conceptualising museums, when they can be so completely different to one another, requires the use of flexible and broad understandings that can be shaped to different purposes and types of museum. Foucault's concept of the heterotopia provides a valuable approach to understanding the way the museum functions both as part of and apart from society. It is a concept of particular use in this study because it allows an investigation of the dialogue between society as it is and society as it could be that can be observed within museums, particularly, I would argue, where the museum is dealing with contentious histories of trauma, injustice, and tragedy. Adding to this analysis of the way the museum functions in society, which is central to this study, I bring the concept of public pedagogy, informed by Elizabeth Ellsworth's analysis of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.[12] Both the notion of heterotopia and public pedagogy are supple and flexible, and have been productively used in understanding the role and function of museums.[13] In summary, heterotopia provides a foundation

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[12] Elizabeth Ellsworth, "The US Holocaust Museum as a Scene of Pedagogical Address," *Symploke* 10, no. 1-2 (2002): 13-31.
[13] On heterotopia, see for example: Lord, "Foucault's museums." On public pedagogy, see: Ellsworth, "The U.S. Holocaust Museum."

for understanding the place of the museum in society, and public pedagogy allows an examination of the museum's educative process.

Foucault's first published mention of the heterotopia appeared in the preface to *The Order of Things*. He expanded on the concept in two broadcasts for French radio in 1966 and 1967 in a lecture to French architects entitled *Des Espaces Autres*, most commonly translated as 'Of other spaces' in English, although the text was not published until 1984.[14] Foucault abandoned the concept quickly, but it continues to be employed across a number of fields.[15] Foucault noted the museum's capacity to act as a heterotopia, and other researchers have applied the concept to examine the ways the museum works to function as a space of difference, or an 'other space.'[16] The oppositional nature of the heterotopia was, as suggested by Tony Bennett, what allowed the nineteenth century museum to be 'thought into being.'[17] The heterotopia is a space of difference and comes in different forms – Foucault cites the examples of heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of deviance, suggesting through his examples of the military service for boys (a heterotopia of crisis) and the prison (a heterotopia of deviance) that heterotopias remove their inhabitants or visitors from society, even while the heterotopia itself remains situated within society.

Museums open themselves to diverse conceptualisations of both 'place' and 'space,' and the concept of the heterotopia can productively be employed to explore the way the museum functions as a socially-produced space within society.[18] As Tony Bennett has written, the 'political-discursive space of the museum' has long been shaped by outside forces as much as it has been shaped from within.[19] The more concrete term

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[14] Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, "Heterotopia in a postcivil society," in *Heterotopia and the City: Public space in a postcivil society*, ed. Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008), 3-9; Arun Saldanha, "Heterotopia and structuralism," *Environment and Planning A* 40, no. 9 (2008): 2080-2096.

[15] Arun Saldanha, "Heterotopia and structuralism."

[16] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, theory, politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Kahn, "Heterotopic dissonance"; Lord, "Foucault's museum"; Brent Allen Saindon, "A doubled heterotopia: Shifting spatial and visual symbolism in the Jewish Museum Berlin's development," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98, no. 1 (2012): 24-48; Kevin Hetherington, "Foucault, the museum and the diagram," *Sociological Review* 59, no. 3 (2011): 457-475.

[17] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 1.

[18] Henri Lefebvre, "The production of space," in *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, ed. Jen Jack Gieseking, William Mangold, Cindi Katz, Setha Low, and Susan Saegert (New York: Routledge, 2014), 289-293.

[19] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 102.

'place' carries significance for many museums though, and in particular for historic site museums such as Port Arthur, where the location – in this case isolated, quiet, distant from the city – contributes to a tangible sense of the past. Place lends meaning to each of the museums addressed in this study, and I have endeavoured to consider the significance of place to each of the sites whilst exploring the ways they function as heterotopian spaces. Like space, place has many possible interpretations, and according to Hayden, 'is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled one can never shut the lid.'[20] It 'provides a profound centre of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties and is part of the complex processes through which individuals and groups define themselves.'[21] The New Museum is perhaps more commonly conceptualised as a space because the word encourages a sense of flexibility and openness; as Suzanne MacLeod notes, there has been a 'repositioning of the museum as a flexible space, open to change, responsive to visitor needs and in touch with contemporary issues and agendas.'[22]

The idea that the heterotopia is a 'space of difference' is important to this study, and the concept affords attention to some of the movement and flexibility of the museum space that MacLeod refers to above. Although the 'difference' could refer to the heterotopia's capacity to juxtapose a number of spaces and times in one location,[23] it is perhaps more useful here to refer to the understanding advanced by Beth Lord.[24] To Lord, the real 'difference' in the museum lies not in the different objects, times and places represented, but in the 'experience of the gap between things and the conceptual and cultural orders in which they are interpreted.'[25] An example of this could be taken from Melbourne Museum's 'Little Lon' display in the *Melbourne Story* exhibition, where archaeological findings from a city street are displayed in a reconstruction of two houses. Here, objects such as jewellery displayed

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[20] Dolores Hayden, "Urban landscape history: The sense of place and the politics of space," in *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, ed. Jen Jack Gieseking, William Mangold, Cindi Katz, Setha Low, and Susan Saegert (New York: Routledge, 2014), 82.
[21] Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane and Peter Davis, "Introduction: Making sense of place," in *Making Sense of Place*, ed. Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane and Peter Davis (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 1.
[22] MacLeod, "Introduction," 3.
[23] Foucault, "Of other spaces."
[24] Lord, "Foucault's museums."
[25] Ibid., 7.
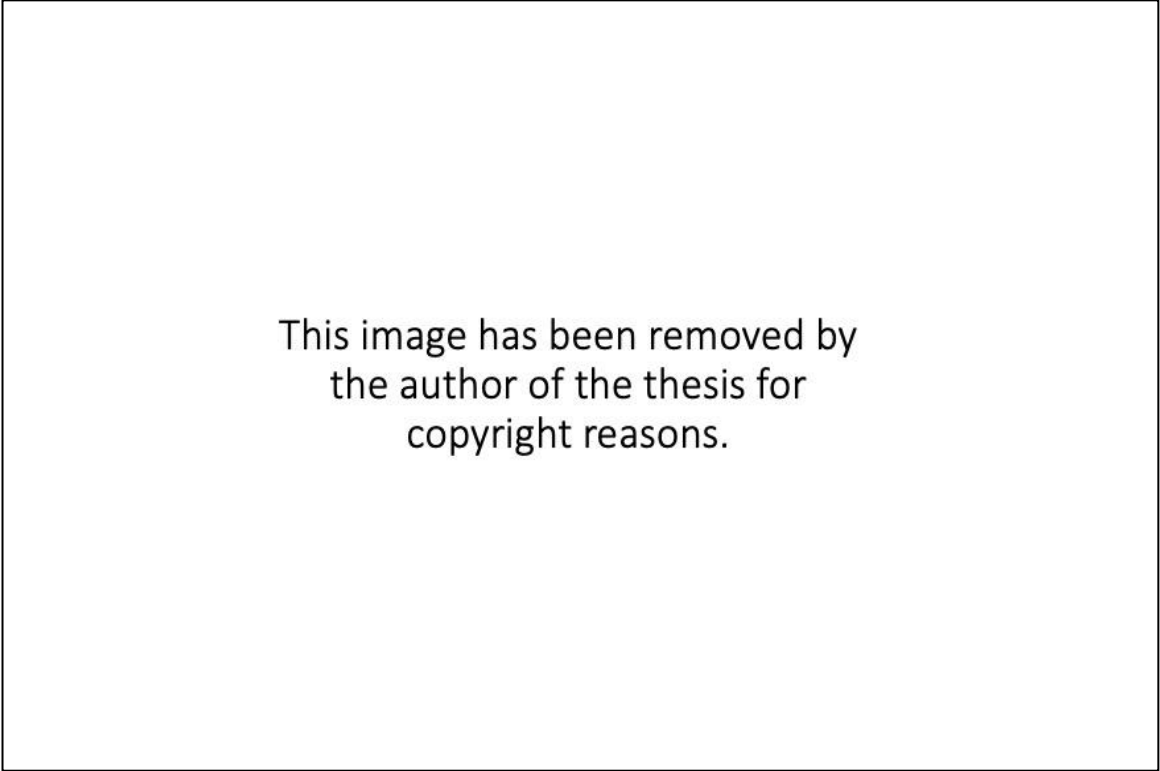
in what looks, to modern viewers, like a 'poor' house might surprise visitors, challenging their notions of the ways that those living in poverty in the nineteenth century experienced everyday life. Conversely, the interpretation of Phar Lap – a taxidermy race horse in the same exhibition – which promotes the horse as a kind of national icon and hero, might create dissonance for visitors to whom this object represents a dead animal and the exploitative nature of horse racing.

This image has been removed by the author of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 1: Phar Lap display, Melbourne Story, *Melbourne Museum*

The concept of heterotopia essentially resists clear definition, which can be advantageous in recognising the complexity of the museum's role as a 'space of difference.'[26] Although some consensus appears, it is important to note that the heterotopia is 'an ambivalent formulation meant to destabilise discourse and language.'[27] Its ambivalence, in the context of this study of museums, proved helpful in framing different institutions that may sometimes appear to be almost opposite in their aims and functions. If the museum-as-heterotopia's major role is to challenge

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[26] Heidi Sohn, "Heterotopia: Anamnesis of a medical term," in *Heterotopia and the City: Public space in a postcivil* society, ed. Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008), 41-50.
[27] Sohn, "Heterotopia," 48.

and undermine dominant narratives in society, the more traditional emphasis on presenting the 'facts' of the past and present is decentred. This is not to suggest that museums are not seeking to represent the past and present accurately, rather that they can simultaneously seek forms of representation that acknowledge and account for complexity, fluidity, and multiple perspectives.

Foucault describes six principles relating to his definition of the heterotopia.[28] He notes the existence of several types of heterotopia, including the heterotopias of crisis and of deviance noted above. Heterotopias also have a 'precise and determined function within a society.'[29] That the heterotopia functions in *society* is clearly important, but Foucault also notes that heterotopias function in *space*, either creating 'a space of illusion that exposes all real space…as even more illusory,' or 'another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is disorderly, ill construed and sketchy.'[30] Foucault's attention to the heterotopia's functions in society and space provides a foundation for understanding the place and activity of museums as heterotopias, as it suggests a way of locating where and understanding how the museum makes its impact.

Heterotopias also carry important elements related to time, and are linked to 'slices of time,' as Foucault notes.[31] Museums, according to Foucault, are 'heterotopias of time that accumulates indefinitely.'[32] Further, heterotopias carry the potential for representation of multiple spaces and times within a single real space. This is part of what produces the museum's capacity for the familiar unfamiliar, or a combination of authenticity and artificiality – the museum's representations are not limited to here and now. They are not required to reflect 'real' time or 'real' space, but can include past, present, and an imagined, sometimes hoped-for, future. Finally, heterotopias have a system of opening and closing that both restricts and allows access; they are public and private, open and closed.[33]

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[28] Foucault, "Of other spaces."
[29] Ibid., 18.
[30] Ibid., 21.
[31] Ibid., 20.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

As Lord argues, a key feature of the museum as heterotopia is that it can either reinforce existing social structures or challenge them; museums can act to destabilise social practice and discourse but can also reinforce dominant social and cultural paradigms through their exhibitions and programs.[34] Notions of power and knowledge are, as Bennett has argued, particularly central to the functions of museums, 'progressively more open' spaces where objects and bodies become 'the vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power.'[35] In practice, as I show in my case studies, it is rare to encounter exhibitions that completely subvert dominant discourses and ways of knowing, or conversely to encounter exhibitions that unquestioningly reinforce tropes and stereotypes. More commonly, exhibitions work with popular or widely understood symbols, discourse, and affect to trouble particular views about the world, and in doing so can also serve to undermine or introduce values and notions of citizenship. This familiar/unfamiliar binary can be productive for museums. By employing familiar symbols and discourse, museums work with the familiar, however they can also function to undermine this familiarity, whether deliberately or not, by representing the familiar within the strange 'otherness' of the heterotopia. This is one potential source of discomfort in the museum.

Maria Tamboukou writes of the heterotopia's function 'in relation to a specific cultural, social and historical context.'[36] She suggests that heterotopias at once challenge hegemonies and open spaces in which alternatives can be built and explored. As Tamboukou notes, however, it would be incorrect to suggest that the notion of heterotopia as a challenger of hegemony and creator of alternatives is unproblematic, or that it functions so simply. As Saldanha argues, 'heterotopia circumscribes subversive, visionary, or sacred space which *by virtue* of its special qualities, its "absolute otherness", either keeps a social formation stable (garden), or, more often, forces it to evolve [emphasis in original].'[37] Heterotopias are not immune to or ever completely separate from the structures and norms of the societies in which they exist and of which they are essentially a product, and juggling this

[34] Lord, "Foucault's museums."
[35] Tony Bennett, "The exhibitionary complex," 74.
[36] Maria Tamboukou, "Educational Heterotopias and the Self," *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 12, no. 3 (2004): 400.
[37] Saldanha, "Heterotopia and structuralism," 2083.

paradox is as much a part of the interpretive and analytic challenge for the museum as it is for this thesis.

In Tamboukou's example of women's colleges, 'heterogeneous and sometimes radical discourses coexisted with fears of breaking social taboos, as well as with traditional practices of educational discipline and control.'[38] It is also the case that Foucault's heterotopia implies what Saldanha describes as a '*totality* of one particular society [emphasis in original],' suggesting that 'the science of heterotopology exposes the immediate relationship certain special places have with a virtual whole called "society."'[39] In the context of this study, Saldanha's critique is particularly important because there is no singular 'Australian society' with a homogenous sense of a national history and identity with which to compare this 'other space' – the heterotopian museum. Certainly there are more and less dominant narratives of Australian history though, and these have been my focus for analysis. The museums in this study can and do act as different types of heterotopia in relation to different perspectives – they function in myriad ways to undermine some perspectives while reinforcing others.

The museum is a strange, 'other' space, it is both authentic and inauthentic, using the 'real' relics of the past in an artificial setting, allowing genuine encounters with the past in a sanitized space often touted as 'safe' – the safe spaces for dangerous ideas suggested by the work of Elaine Heumann Gurian.[40] The museum is perceived as a space apart from the world it represents even while located within it; it is also nonetheless very much a product of that world, and seeks to represent it. As James Clifford describes though, different realities can sometimes present a challenge for museums. In Clifford's description of the Portland Art Museum's consultation with Tlingit [Indigenous] elders, the latter's interpretation of objects presented museum staff with 'difficult dilemmas.'[41] The 'real world' enters into the museum and changes

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[38] Tamboukou, "Educational Heterotopias," 410.
[39] Saldanha, "Heterotopia and structuralism," 2084.
[40] Elaine Heumann Gurian, *Civilizing the Museum: The collected writings of Elaine Heumann Gurian* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
[41] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 191.

it (if it is allowed to) and the museum's representations can also leave something with the visitor, which they take with them back into the 'real world.'

I have suggested that the heterotopia's fluidity may be appropriate to describing the museum, but there are also clear challenges and limitations associated with its use. As Dehaene and De Cauter note, 'when putting on heterotopian spectacles, everything tends to take on heterotopian traits.'[42] When applied to an investigation of the museum though, heterotopia has the potential to highlight what Heidi Sohn describes as an 'essentially disturbing function,'[43] and this function is particularly relevant to my analysis of uncomfortable histories. Miriam Kahn, an anthropologist, describes what she calls 'heterotopic dissonance' as a problem for museums.[44] Kahn notes that such dissonance results in disorientation and confusion amongst visitors, and she is probably correct – none of the authors cited here would refute the capacity of heterotopias to confuse. However what Kahn sees as negative is what Lord has noted as the essential function of the heterotopia – heterotopic dissonance perhaps has the capacity to open up a space of learning.[45] The heterotopia exists to disturb, to 'overturn established orders, to subvert language and signification, to contrast sameness, and to reflect the inverse or reverse side of society.'[46] The heterotopia can thus be powerful. Its disturbing function is reflected in the goals of the New Museum – it is a space in which established prejudices can be challenged and redefined. As Hilde Heynen notes:

> Heterotopias seem to be the spaces where the interplay between
> normative disciplining and liberating transgression manifests itself most
> clearly…They can easily be presented as marginal spaces where social
> experimentations are going on, aiming at the empowerment and
> emancipation of oppressed and minority groups; they can as easily be
> presented as instruments that support the existing mechanisms of

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[42] Dehaene and De Cauter, "Heterotopia in a postcivil society," 6.
[43] Sohn, "Heterotopia," 44.
[44] Kahn, "Heterotopic dissonance."
[45] Lord, "Foucault's museums."
[46] Sohn, "Heterotopia," 44.

exclusion and domination, thus helping to foreclose any real possibility for change.[47]

Conceptualising the museum as heterotopia supports an acceptance of the principles of the New Museology, in which history museums can be 'disturbing' in their inclusion of multiple perspectives of the past, which challenge visitors' assumptions. The notion of museum as heterotopia reinforces the museum's teaching role – its aim is to educate visitors in such a way that social change becomes possible through complex movements within the museum and between the museum and society.

The Public Pedagogies of Museums

Further supporting my analysis of the educative role for museums is the notion of public pedagogy. Public pedagogy has obvious relevance to the museum – it refers to the educational activity of spaces outside formal education institutions – and is therefore foundational to the assumptions underpinning this study.[48] Much of the scholarly discussion on public pedagogy can be preoccupied with the question of which spaces are and are not sites of public pedagogy. Given that the museum's public pedagogic role is indisputable – it is after all a public teaching space, among other things – it is not necessary here to extensively debate whether the museum is a site of public pedagogy; it is explicitly a site of public learning and teaching. For these reasons, theoretical discussions of public pedagogy have not been a primary focus for this research, although much of the literature I have canvassed supports a range of assumptions about the museum as teaching space.

Public pedagogy speaks directly to the moral and social imperatives increasingly seen in education across all forums. It carries a 'flavour' akin to the educational aims highlighted in recent museological literature, suggesting as well the importance of not viewing this literature in isolation. Often public pedagogy's imperatives have been seen as oppositional in nature – in that they highlight the oppressive capacities of

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[47] Hilde Heynen, "Heterotopia unfolded?" in in *Heterotopia and the City: Public space in a postcivil society*, ed. Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008), 322.
[48] For a description of conceptualisations of public pedagogy, see: Jennifer A. Sandlin, Michael P. O'Malley and Jake Burdick, "Mapping the complexity of public pedagogy scholarship: 1894-2010," *Review of Educational Research* 81, no. 3 (2011): 338-375.

popular culture and the need for resistance.[49] Arguing against such a tendency, Savage sees a need for 'informal sites of learning…to be re-imagined as spaces of resistive *and* regulatory potential.'[50] Savage's arguments here align closely with the duality of the heterotopia, described above and supported by the work of researchers employing the concept. As Jennifer A. Sandlin, Michael P. O'Malley and Jake Burdick note, museums are 'consciously created with pedagogical ends in mind,' but these 'pedagogical ends,' and the tools used to reach them, are almost infinitely broad.[51] In this study, I employ an approach drawing on notions of affect, trauma, civics and citizenship education, and theories of history teaching to begin to understand both the 'pedagogical ends' and the 'tools' museums use to teach them, as they relate to 'uncomfortable' histories.

Of relevance here is the work of Elizabeth Ellsworth, whose analysis of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum is foundational to understandings of the museum as a public teaching space even though she does not use the term in her analysis.[52] Ellsworth, in her work, examines a museum's forms of 'pedagogic address.' She provides a detailed account of the pedagogic address used by the Holocaust Memorial Museum to impart a sense of the incompleteness of the historical account offered, and to reveal the impossibility of crafting a comprehensive narrative of the Holocaust.[53] Her analysis also refers to the museum as a 'space of difference,' though again without specifically citing Foucault's heterotopia. Ultimately, public pedagogy is engaged in my study as a useful background concept to the museum as heterotopia – it reinforces the museum's position as a teaching institution and encourages attention to informal learning in museum spaces. In this research, public pedagogy supports the assumption that learning takes place throughout the museum's galleries and spaces, but also that the museum itself, with its exhibitions and displays, *teaches* its visitors. Pedagogy is built in to every aspect of museum work.

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[49] Glenn Savage, "Problematizing 'public pedagogy' in educational research," in *Handbook of public pedagogy: education and learning beyond schooling*, ed. Jennifer A. Sandlin, Brian D. Schultz and Jake Burdick (New York: Routledge, 2009), 103-115.
[50] Ibid., 104.
[51] Sandlin, O'Malley and Burdick, "Mapping the complexity," 346.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ellsworth, "The U.S. Holocaust Museum."

Museum learning, affect, and histories of trauma

In the previous section, I described the museum as a heterotopia, outlining the ways Foucault's concept allows an analysis of the museum's position as a space 'different to' the society in which it exists, even whilst hegemonic discourses and structures regularly intrude. In order to further understand how the museum-as-heterotopia subverts, challenges, and/or reinforces social order, I consider the affective facets of museum displays and programs. In light of this study's focus on 'uncomfortable histories,' I also draw on trauma theory to explore the ethical and political dimensions of displaying histories of trauma and tragedy. This section expands upon the ways affect and trauma theories inform analysis of the museums in this study, considering in more detail what an understanding of the museum as a heterotopia employing affective strategies to manage histories of trauma can contribute to the field.

Affective practice

The fields of education, museum, and historical research have 'turned' to affect in recent years, demonstrating – some argue – a move away from research methodologies and theoretical approaches that have privileged language and cognition to the exclusion of embodied, experiential learning.[54] Attention to feeling and experience and their relationship to learning in the museum has proven a productive direction for both understanding and broadening the museum's educative role, however it is important to note the problematic nature of the language of the 'turn.' As Leys notes,

> The whole point of the turn to affect by Massumi and like-minded
> cultural critics is thus to shift attention away from considerations of
> meaning or "ideology" or indeed representation to the subject's

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[54] Ruth Leys, "The turn to affect: A critique," *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 3 (2011): 434-472; Julie McLeod, "Memory, Affective practice and teacher narratives: Researching emotion in oral histories of educational and personal change," in *Methodological Advances in Research on Emotion and Education,* ed. Michalinos Zembylas and Paul A. Schutz (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 273-284; Mulcahy, "Sticky learning"; Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion.*

subpersonal material-affective responses, where, it is claimed, political and other influences do their real work.[55]

The turn to affect can often indicate a shift away from processes of meaning-making and representation that are central to this research. Methodological approaches employing understandings of affect as 'force,' as a pre-cognitive physiological response, which are what Leys is referring to above, seek to understand what she calls 'subpersonal' responses. Such approaches, taken to their extreme, however, neglect the integral role of discourse and cognition in learning in the museum.

In her overview of the 'turn to affect,' Leys notes that 'what motivates [scholars of affect] is the desire to contest a certain account of how, in their view, political argument and rationality have been thought to operate.'[56] In exploring the affective, embodied aspects of history and education in the museum, I seek to present a multifaceted analysis of public representations of the past. I draw predominantly on the work of Margaret Wetherell to argue for an approach to museum research that constitutes less a 'turning away' and more a deepening and broadening of pre-existing ways of understanding the museum as a learning space, one that accounts for experience and emotion as well as addressing the complex social and discursive contexts that meaning-making takes place in. Wetherell's 'affective practice' is a counter offer to affect research that, in her words, 'seems to derail…all the research that attempts to think in an integrated way about the specificities of the chaining and assembling of body–brain–narrative–feeling–response–context–history etc.'[57] Through the concept of affective practice, I explore the opportunities for learning in the museum as they draw on 'a figuration where body possibilities and routines become recruited or entangled together with meaning-making and with other social and material figurations.'[58]

Wetherell identifies two major directions in affect research: the first emerging from psychological notions emphasising emotions, sometimes focusing exclusively on physical manifestations of these; and the second describing affect more broadly as

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[55] Leys, "The Turn to Affect," 450-51.
[56] Ibid., 436.
[57] Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion*, 75.
[58] Ibid., 19.

'force' and 'intensity,' drawing non-human actors into understandings of affecting and being affected.[59] As Wetherell suggests, adhering to one or the other of these ways of understanding affect is not necessarily the most productive way forward. Both of these approaches to working with affect view it as distinct and separate from discourse and cognition – essentially responding to the perceived exclusion of feeling and experience in language- or discourse-centred research by excluding those elements in turn. Analyses of affect as divorced from discourse and cognition rely upon the notion that embodied affect comes before meaning-making in an 'initial bodily hit,' however, as Wetherell suggests: 'Any initial bodily hit…is always already occurring within an ongoing stream of meaning-making or semiosis.'[60] Affect is also often considered involuntary, provoking 'a response that is neither fixed nor prescribed.'[61] The problem when considering learning in the museum is not this tendency to view affect as involuntary, but that separating affect and viewing it as automatic and involuntary means that social contexts and individual backgrounds can be flattened and neglected. It allows the researcher to dispose of much of what is valuable in cognitivist understandings of learning – an awareness of the impact of individuals' backgrounds, prior knowledge, and social context upon the way they make meaning in the museum.[62]

There is, of course, value in affective analyses of museums that focus on affect as pre-cognitive; they allow the reading of what Janice Baker describes as an 'alternative museum' that coexists and has always coexisted with the 'rational museum.'[63] Baker argues that 'critical theory and new museology continue to be imperative while tending to perpetuate an exclusionary discourse that limits appreciation of encounters that lie outside those prescribed by the rational museum,' and she highlights an important direction in museum research.[64] Work on affect in museums can be of value, whether it focuses on pre-cognitive affect or views affect as part of a complex web of socially-informed discourse and experience. While pre-cognitive

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Margaret Wetherell, "Affect and discourse – What's the problem? From affect as excess to affective/discursive practice," *Critical Psychology* 6, no. 4 (2013): 355.
[61] Trofanenko, "Affective Emotions," 24.
[62] See for example: Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience*.
[63] Janice Baker, "Beyond the rational museum: Towards a discourse of inclusion," *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum* 1, no. 2 (2008): 23-29.
[64] Ibid., 28.

affect does allow readings of museum spaces that account for the diversity of experiences, approaches such as Wetherell's allow research to consider affect as situated within social, cultural, and political contexts. In the context of my research, of significance is the more 'expected' responses to museum displays and programs; the intentions of curators and educators as they are informed by discourses and beliefs about history education.

What approaches to understanding affect as situated within a wider web of discourse, cognition, experience, and emotion do offer is the opportunity to explore affect as it is 'transmitted'; although Wetherell has noted the problems of this term, highlighting the need to avoid viewing any movement of affect between bodies, or between bodies and objects/spaces, as direct and linear. Some affect theory engages in a complex process of situating affect, experience, and emotion somewhere beyond and between individuals and their worlds. About affect, Ahmed argues that:

> …emotions play a crucial role in the "surfacing" of individual and
> collective bodies through the way in which emotions circulate between
> bodies and signs. Such an argument clearly challenges any assumption
> that emotions are a private matter, that they simply belong to
> individuals, or even that they come from within and *then* move outward
> toward others. It suggests that emotions are not simply "within" or
> "without" but that they create the very effect of the surfaces or
> boundaries of bodies and worlds.[65]

Ahmed's argument supports a more complex understanding of what she describes as the 'circulation' of affect. However, her tendency here is to shift affects too far beyond human agency to be of use in this research, which is centrally concerned with the actions of human beings in constructing representations of the past. I explore the ways historical objects, texts, and reconstructions are *used* to create learning opportunities, with deliberate strategies that work with emotion, affect, and discourse to craft engaging and sometimes challenging depictions of uncomfortable history. Affect theories emphasising 'force' are useful in that they support a 'breaking down of the subject-object and mind-body binaries,'[66] but I want to avoid being drawn into

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[65] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 117.
[66] Mulcahy, "'Sticky' learning," 220.

a trend that views affect as separable from cognition and discourse. Equally, I note that theorising affect as internalised, individual experience – a conceptualisation based largely on affect's origins as a psychological term – fails to account for affect's potential to move between, to become 'sticky' and to produce opportunities for learning and knowing differently.[67]

In the context of exploring affect in learning, some work has begun to explore the ways that affect provokes learning in exhibition encounters. Mulcahy's work with Melbourne Museum's Little Lon display is one example. In one experience of Little Lon, a teacher participating in Mulcahy's research stated that the display 'really took my breath away,' prompting Mulcahy to argue that 'the viscerality of poverty produces disjunction between expectation and experience that for this adult learner serves to shock and produce an 'oh, goodness' moment, the affective response of the body.'[68] The teacher describes 'a really big learning curve' that emerges from this moment of affect – and it is this affective response, argues Mulcahy, that induces 'learning that will stick.' Here affect produces a need to make sense of itself – the teacher is now inspired to consider what it is that affected her so, to reflect on her understanding of the history.

Trofanenko's work addresses similar themes in investigating representations of war, noting 'a shift in focus from the nationalist themes which frame war to how we experience and interpret war displays.'[69] She further suggests a need for educators to develop their understandings of how museum exhibitions are constructed and their emotional and affective impacts on visitors; to use Trofanenko's evocative phrasing, educators and museum practitioners may wish to consider the uses of museums as 'pedagogical wonders.'[70] While studies investigating visitor responses are vital in exploring affects in the museum, it is equally important to explore the ways museums work to construct experiences and what it is they seek to achieve by doing so, and it is this facet of museum learning that I focused on in my research.

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[67] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*; Mulcahy, "Sticky Learning."
[68] Mulcahy, "Sticky Learning."
[69] Trofanenko, "Affective emotions," 36.
[70] Ibid.

I employ Wetherell's concept of 'affective practice' in this study to understand affective learning as inseparable from the discourses and social contexts of Australia's uncomfortable history. Affective practice seeks 'shifting, flexible and often over-determined figurations rather than simple lines of causation, character types and neat emotion categories[71] It often feels like a 'pre-existing given' but is also 'actively created and needs work to sustain.'[72] Wetherell highlights the centrality of the 'emoting body' to affective practice, but situates it within a social and cultural context that informs and is informed by affect, rather than viewing affect as having linear direction (we experience an affective 'hit' and then attempt to make sense of it with language and thought and by drawing on our experiences and beliefs about the world). Museums are increasingly preoccupied with visitors' emotional, embodied experiences, but there is also an awareness that affective experiences take place in bodies that are very much connected to minds, located within social contexts that both inform and are informed by the affects, emotions, and cognition of individuals and groups of people. I explore the ways museums endeavour to work with and on visitors' bodies and minds, engaging them in emotive and evocative encounters with the 'difficult' past.

In part I wish to explore whether, as Trofanenko argues, the 'nod to emotions/affect has realigned the essence of museums once thought of solely as authoritative sites for gaining knowledge directly from displayed objects and organized narratives framing an exhibition.'[73] This relies upon an awareness of the museum as a space of public history as well as a teaching space, because the discourses and movements of both history and education impact directly upon the role and aims of museums. Affects in the museum cannot be viewed as divorced from this context, and here reveal their value in deepening understanding of the ways the museum functions as a heterotopia. Affect, essentially, can be considered one of the means by which the museum achieves its heterotopian functions of disrupting and changing the dominant discourses and structures of the society in which it exists. Witcomb, for example, notes that a range of examples of exhibitions employing affect all carry an 'ability to not close off narrative,' requiring 'that visitors engage imaginatively in the

[71] Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion*, 4.
[72] Ibid., 142.
[73] Trofanenko, "Affective Emotions," 25.

space between themselves and the objects or the spatial and aesthetic structure of the displays.'[74] Understanding that the heterotopia can be a double-edged sword – both challenging and reinforcing social structures and public discourse – I argue that museum researchers and practitioners need to be wary of viewing these practices as oppositional to the former 'authoritative' practices of museums. Instead, it is necessary to consider the ways affective practice in the museum can engage visitors in processes that both reinforce and subvert existing ways of thinking and knowing about the past.

Trauma in the museum

Affect can become particularly visible when museums decide to represent dramatic and horrific histories – the histories of trauma, violence, and tragedy that are a focus for this study. Histories of trauma carry a significant set of challenges for public display and interpretation, and the body of theory on both psychological and cultural or collective trauma is vast. For the purposes of this research, I draw on two major themes from within the fields of trauma theory. Firstly, I argue that museums can form part of what Judith Herman described as important 'social contexts' for wider understanding of psychological trauma, whether individual or collective.[75] This facet of trauma theory is drawn from psychology, but has been part of a drive to shift representations of traumatic history into the public sphere and speaks largely to the need for recognition of the experiences of victims and survivors of traumatic events, particularly where these events were perpetrated by the state or other institutions with authority.

It is important to distinguish here between psychological and psychoanalytic approaches to scholarship on trauma; much trauma theory draws on both approaches to understand the impacts of trauma on individuals and the ways traumatic events come to be understood. Importantly, psychoanalytic perspectives particularly acknowledge the complexity of trauma responses and the effects of

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[74] Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect," 267.
[75] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*

repression and distortion of traumatic memories;[76] in the context of this analysis of the representation of historical trauma, such understandings highlight the challenges museums face in representing what are always likely to be contradictory and tentative versions of the past.

Secondly, I draw on several approaches to researching 'cultural trauma' in order to consider complex questions about nationhood and responsibility, and victimhood and empathy, which have become important to the movement of trauma stories into public spaces. While I acknowledge that there are significant differences between cultural trauma and psychological trauma, I argue that both concepts can be of value when considering traumatic histories and the educative role of museums, as long as we are careful not to conflate the two.

Traditionally, museums and spaces of commemoration have demonstrated a tendency, Silke Arnold de-Simine argues, to 'conveniently ignore any collective responsibility for acts of violence,' instead ensuring that 'collective victimhood is framed in a narrative of heroic martyrdom.'[77] This tendency has become observable as histories of violence 'come to light' through movements for history from below and for understanding the past from the perspectives of victims and survivors of trauma. In Australia, public historical representations demonstrate a growing valuing of the perspectives of Aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees, women, children, and other often marginalised groups. Rarely do museums encourage empathy for the perpetrators of injustice or state-sanctioned discrimination, although there are some exceptions to this explored in this study.[78] Additionally, there is a greater awareness of instances of psychological trauma amongst war veterans, although they have been less likely to be politically maligned or marginalised, with the exception of Vietnam veterans during the 1960s and 1970s.[79] Trauma is highly political; some traumas are deemed more valid than others, and some victims viewed with greater compassion

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[76] Jeffrey C Alexander, Alexander "Toward a theory of cultural trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C Alexander, et.al (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004), 1-30.

[77] Silke Arnold de-Simine, *Mediating Memory in the Museum* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 36.

[78] Staff at Port Arthur, for example, argued for a more nuanced understanding of the intentions of those who managed convicts at the site, rather than roundly condemning their actions. Ultimately there were a number of instances where the museums in this study attempted to 'muddy' what were sometimes popularly seen as clear-cut examples of cruelty in this way.

[79] See for example Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.

than others in the public sphere. Many museums attempt to redress these imbalances, emphasising the voices of groups of people who have often been unheard or silenced in the past.

There is some disagreement within the wide body of literature about public encounters with stories of trauma. Some argue that human beings are often drawn to confronting histories, and 'dark tourism' has become an emerging area of research.[80] According to this view, stories of horror and violence can attract visitors rather than deter them. Writing about visitation to sites of terror in the United States, Tumarkin asks 'Why do we, as is so readily acknowledged these days, become fascinated by the dark side of our history and the tangible remnants it yields?'[81] In some instances, the 'hegemonic power' of trauma is also significant, as Zembylas highlights, undermining the capacities of learners and teachers to critically engage with histories of trauma.[82]

Conversely, there has been a clear and often deliberate policy of repressing the stories of survivors of state-perpetrated or wide scale collective trauma, and these events have not been considered appropriate material for museum display in the past. In Australia, the policy of forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities, known as the Stolen Generations, which was traumatic for both children and families, is an example of this.[83] Histories of trauma often remain hidden from public view for long periods in much the same way survivors of trauma may keep their own memories of traumatic events hidden from themselves. Here, Herman provides a useful way of explaining the contradictory but apparently equally natural responses to stories of trauma. Describing a central 'dialectic of trauma,' Herman notes that survivors experience a 'conflict between the will to deny horrible

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[80] Stephen Miles, "Battlefield sites as dark tourism attractions: An analysis of experience," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 9, no. 2 (2014): 134-147; Rudi Hartmann, "Dark tourism, thanatourism, and dissonance in heritage tourism management: new directions in contemporary tourism research," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 9, no. 2 (2014): 166-182; Mary Margaret Kerr and Rebecca H. Price, "Overlooked encounters: Young tourists' experiences at dark sites," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 11, no. 2 (2015): 177-185; Jaqueline Z. Wilson, *Prison: Cultural memory and dark tourism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).
[81] Tumarkin, *Traumascapes*.
[82] Michalinos Zembylas, "The politics of trauma: Empathy, reconciliation and peace education," *Journal of Peace Education* 4, no. 2 (2007): 207-224.
[83] Commonwealth of Australia, *Bringing them Home*.

events and the will to proclaim them aloud.[84] These two impulses can occur simultaneously, and Herman goes on to note that:

> Witnesses as well as victims are subject to the dialectic of trauma…The knowledge of terrible events periodically intrudes into public awareness but is rarely retained for long. Denial, repression, and dissociation operate on a social as well as an individual level.[85]

Awareness of trauma takes place in a constant negotiation between these two urges – the urge to deny and the urge to proclaim. The museum can and does take part in both responses to traumatic events, but recent work in museology demonstrates a preference for proclaiming histories of trauma, often with a strong sense of the ongoing damage caused to individuals and to social groups by both the traumatic events and the urge to deny the experiences of victims and survivors. Representing trauma is seen as an essential part of reconciliation and 'healing' this damage.[86]

As Antonio Traverso and Mick Broderick argue, trauma 'is an exceptional form of memory; not a memory formed through symbols and narratives but one closer to the nature of an injury…a painful mark of the past that haunts and overwhelms the present.'[87] Notions of collective and cultural trauma extend this view into cultural memory by arguing that, as noted above, the characteristic responses to trauma 'operate on a social as well as an individual level.'[88] As Alexander notes in his work on a social theory of trauma:

> Intellectuals, artists, politicians and social movement leaders create narratives about social suffering. Projected as ideologies that create new ideal interests, trauma narratives can trigger significant repairs to the civil fabric. They can also instigate new rounds of social suffering.[89]

Alexander's ideas here link to arguments for public recognition for survivors of trauma that emerge from psychological and psychoanalytic traditions. Exploring the

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[84] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1.

[85] Ibid., 2.

[86] Zembylas, "The politics of trauma."

[87] Antonio Traverso and Mick Broderick, "Interrogating Trauma: Towards a critical trauma studies," in *Interrogating Trauma: Collective suffering in global arts and media*, ed. Antonio Traverso and Mick Broderick (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 5.

[88] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 2.

[89] Alexander, *Trauma*, 2.

ways trauma becomes 'collective,' or a part of cultural memory, Alexander describes a 'trauma process' that allows 'collectivities to define new forms of moral responsibility and to redirect the course of political action.'[90]

This trauma process takes place in social spheres. I argue that there is, however, a risk with a social theory of trauma, in that it appears to neglect and at times overwrite the experiences of the individual or invite engagement in the 'collective victimhood' that Arnold de-Simine describes.[91] It is therefore critical to clearly delineate between cultural and psychological trauma in analysis, even though the two are interrelated. Cultural trauma is a social process often undertaken as much by bystanders as by survivors, and it can, even unwittingly, take ownership of trauma stories from those who experienced them. As Alexander describes it, 'shared trauma depends on collective processes of cultural interpretation' and it is the 'performative power' of a narrative that determines whether it will be heard.[92] Psychological and psychoanalytic work on trauma emphasises the importance of survivors having agency in the telling of their own stories; it is characteristic of traumatic events that victims and survivors experience a complete loss of control, and regaining some semblance of agency is central to recovery.[93] These ideas about voice and agency perhaps underpin some of the impetus museums feel for allowing multiple voices to be heard in their spaces, although this characteristic of the New Museum is also very much related to the burgeoning of history from below to which I have referred elsewhere.

Conversely, as Smelser argues, 'it is essential to avoid psychological reductionism (via which the cultural level evaporates).'[94] While cultural and social constructions of trauma carry the potential to undercut personal testimonies of trauma by putting them to use for various (often well-meaning) purposes, they are nonetheless an important part of the trauma landscape. In this study, I seek to acknowledge the complexity and diversity of individual responses to trauma within an analysis of how trauma is formulated and represented in the public spaces of museums. Psychological

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[90] Ibid., 2.
[91] Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory*.
[92] Alexander, *Trauma*, 30.
[93] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.
[94] Neil J. Smelser, "Psychological trauma and cultural trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity,* ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 32.

understandings of trauma are central, however conceptualisations of cultural trauma allow insight into the social processes built around traumatic events, which are an important and valid form of cultural expression. As Zembylas asserts, 'victims of oppression and torture are not merely seeking recognition, but they are also seeking witnesses to horrors beyond recognition.'[95] There is a place for both individual and cultural trauma in the museum, and it can provide a space both for recognition and for the social 'trauma process.' Within these practices though, museums also straddle a moral challenge in taking care to avoid disenfranchising survivors of trauma and their descendants.

Citizenship and cultural memory

Considerations of the purposes of teaching school-aged children about the past are central to this research project. I began this work with an assumption, based on literature about history teaching, that the role of developing historical consciousness and historical thinking in children and young people is related to their development as 'good citizens.' Research literature also highlighted the notion that displaying 'difficult histories' can be associated with striving for social change and inclusion in museums.[96] Further, I have outlined the ways public discourses about history education in schools are very often linked to ideas about cultural memory and its relationship to national identity. In Australia, there is a very real sense of the place of history education in constructing and communicating what it means to be Australian – a good Australian – apparent in political and media discourses and the development of curriculum, as I discussed in detail in Chapter Two. In this section, I critically examine the place of these intersections of history education, civics and citizenship education, and public history and cultural memory in my research. This section outlines a framework for building a deeper understanding of the democratic and social justice work of the New Museum, providing a foundation for critical engagement with the uncomfortable history practices of the museums researched.

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[95] Zembylas, *Five Pedagogies*, xix.
[96] See for example: Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Golding, "Learning at the museum frontiers"; Patterson, "Teaching tolerance."

There are two main parts to this section. The first reconsiders the models of historical thinking outlined in Chapter Two through a lens of civics and citizenship education, considering the ideas these models put forward about what it means to participate in a democracy and the purposes for learning about the past in such a context. I consider the values embedded in these ways of understanding what it is that teachers try to teach when they focus on the 'skills' or types of historical thinking of the discipline of history. Here I apply the work of Daniel Friedrich, who reconsiders the role of historical consciousness in the development of good citizens, noting that the assumption of 'intrinsically embedded moral values or lessons' in historical study means that students are constituted as good citizens only when they are able to participate in democracy and historical consciousness in the ways prescribed, becoming 'enemies of the people and its future' if they are not.[97] The second part of this section situates the museum within its context of cultural memory and public history, with a focus on the Australian context for this research. I explore the museum's role as a constructor of national identity, as a self-appointed arbiter of 'Australianness,' laying the conceptual groundwork for understanding the museum as an agent within discourses and debates about the meaning of Australia's difficult past and the place of traumatic historical events within the cultural memory.

Learning history for citizenship

Models of historical thinking, as well as many other representations of history teaching and learning, frequently highlight history's moral and ethical facets, its potential for teaching students about being 'good' — good people or good citizens. This is particularly evident where literature focuses on historical empathy as one of the key components for the discipline, and it is reflected in much of the literature surrounding the history museum and its role in facilitating social change.

Friedrich has noted the problems of these assumptions about history's 'intrinsically embedded moral values or lessons.'[98] The belief that history's moral lessons are simply '*there* to be taken' creates a situation in which limitations are placed upon the

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[97] Daniel S. Friedrich, *Democratic Education as a Curricular Problem: Historical consciousness and the moralizing limits of the present* (Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 113.
[98] Friedrich, *Democratic Education*, 113.

purported goals of much historical pedagogy – critical thinking, critical analysis of sources, and so on. Students can only critically engage with the past to the extent where they are able to interpret history's lessons to the moral and ethical ends prescribed by teachers, curators, and textbook writers. As Friedrich argues, 'It all becomes a matter of figuring out the steps needed to make sure that all pupils learn, from their past, things such as to value democracy, to be hopeful for the future, or to participate in the appropriate manner.'[99]

Australia's national curriculum has been under development throughout the period of this research, with a new civics and citizenship curriculum approved for implementation in 2015. The development of this curriculum has taken place against a politically tumultuous backdrop, as I have noted, with successive governments led by liberal Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard and conservative Prime Minister Tony Abbott contesting and altering the documents' perceived underpinning values. The most recent version of the curriculum, version 8, reflects something of the push for recognising Australia's 'Christian heritage' that was called for by representatives of the former Prime Minister Tony Abbott's conservative government between 2013 and 2015.[100] This recent Australian example perfectly illustrates the contentious and problematic nature of civics curricula – they can be firmly based upon a set of values that are not only not shared by all citizens, but that actively work to 'whitewash' diversity and impose ways of understanding civic participation that exclude those whose values are 'Other.' It is not my intention in this study to present a detailed analysis of racism in Australian curriculum, however it is clear that any emphasis on Australia's Christian heritage risks overwriting a rich and significant history that began long before the arrival of European invaders. Any study drawing on these structures for formal school education is obliged, as Zamudio, Russell and Rios suggest, to consider the 'hidden' or 'implicit' curricula in relation to race.[101] Throughout this research I seek to identify the ways in which museums work both with and against formal curriculum in relation to race and a range of other sociological issues.

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Hurst, "Christopher Pyne"; Topsfield and Knott, "Education Review."
[101] Margaret M. Zamudio, et al., *Critical Race Theory Matters: Education and ideology* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011).

Models of historical thinking inform curriculum and teaching and learning in many different ways. They are an integral part of teacher education and professional development, and museum educators are sometimes very familiar with these elements of pedagogy. The three historical thinking models outlined in the literature review demonstrate different levels of engagement with the ethical and moral facets of history teaching and learning in schools.[102] It is largely within these elements of historical study that the role for history in values education becomes visible, however the substantive content of history curricula also demonstrates a great deal about history's place in national politics and identity.

Identity is an important underpinning theme in this work, particularly as it relates to young Australians and the nation. History has, as I have discussed, long been seen by Australian politicians as central to constructions of citizenship, with young people's knowledge about the past central to their capacity to become 'good citizens.'[103] It is important to distinguish here between notions of 'identity' and 'subjectivity'; as McLeod and Yates note, the terms are often used interchangeably but can highlight different features of children and young people's understandings and experiences.[104] Throughout this thesis, I predominantly use the term identity, as it highlights 'more self-conscious identifications'[105] as well as acknowledging the centrality of national identity to the work of museums and other public historical institutions. Within my use of the term, I pay particular attention to what Wetherell has described as 'psycho-discursive practices' – 'recognizable, conventional, collective and social procedures through which character, self, identity, the psychological, the emotional, motives, intentions and beliefs are performed, formulated and constituted.'[106]

There remains a great deal of value in historical thinking models for teachers and museums, but they need to be considered critically in light of the fact that they could be implemented in ways that exclude certain viewpoints and privilege others.

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[102] NCHS, "Historical thinking standards"; Seixas, "Benchmarks"; van Drie and van Boxtel, "Historical reasoning."
[103] See for example: Howard, "A sense of balance"; Hurst, "Christopher Pyne."
[104] Julie McLeod and Lyn Yates, *Making Modern Lives: Subjectivity, schooling and social change* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006): 37.
[105] Ibid., 38.
[106] Margaret Wetherell, "Subjectivity or psycho-discursive practices? Investigating complex intersectional identities," *Subjectivity* 22 (2008): 80.

History's capacity for informing civics and citizenship and values education leaves it open to misuse, regardless of the intentions of teachers and museum curators. In the context of this study, I am interested in the ways 'the assemblage of heterogeneous phenomena woven together [aims] at producing a particular desired subject.'[107] How do the museums analysed in this study seek to produce 'desired subjects,' and to what extent do museum approaches to educating for citizenship as well as historical understanding support the development of critical, reflexive learners?

Cultural history, public history and collective memory

This study's historical methodology is also informed by cultural history's emphasis on what John Tosh has described as 'meaning and representation,'[108] exploring the intersections between the discipline of history as it is practiced in academia, and the way it is represented and educated about in public spaces. There is also an important relationship between public history and collective memory that has relevance to this study – debates about the display of the difficult past in museums frequently centre on the place of difficult events in the nation's memory. This project investigated the directions of Museum Victoria, Port Arthur, and the Australian War Memorial in dealing with the violent, troubling, traumatic past; in doing so, it inquired into the construction of and relationship between meaning and representation, and collective memory, knowledge, and power. While the focus for this study is upon the present, the research questions are embedded within an awareness of the significance of historical context for museum display, as well as an understanding that the museum in its current form is always an amalgamation of past and present. To address only the most recent elements of the museum's exhibitions, programs and collections would be of limited value.

Memory broadly refers to 'the ways in which people construct a sense of the past.'[109] These 'constructions' of the past are also put to use – memory does not simply exist in the past, it has impact on the present and future. As Darian-Smith and Hamilton have noted, while memory and history were once 'assumed to be oppositional, [they]

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[107] Friedrich, *Democratic Education*, 114.

[108] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 5th edition (Harlow: Longman, 2010), 246.

[109] Alon Confino, "Collective memory and cultural history: Problems of method," *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1386.

have now come to be understood as inextricably entangled in terms of scholarly definitions and in the circulation of historical knowledge.'[110] Public history discourse, both academic and political, highlights these impacts; the use of cultural memory in the present and its potential influence on the future is largely the reason debates about representing history in public spaces reach the fever pitch observed in the Bells Falls controversy. There is an educative component here, a consideration of what should be known, and what we can be as a result of knowing in this way. Examining the use of cultural heritage through the lens of collective memory can also thus provide valuable understandings about the normative dimension of history education – commentary on history education is often underpinned by assumptions and arguments about what students should know, and these assumptions and arguments are connected to the way Australians 'use' and 'understand' their past.[111]

The normative dimensions of public history and history education suggest links to Eric Hobsbawm's notion of "invented traditions":

> …taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.[112]

Hobsbawm's 'invented traditions' have particular salience in relation to Australia's Anzac 'myth' and the role the Australian War Memorial plays in the repetition of practices founded in that narrative. Debate surrounding the commemoration of the First World War in Australia also provides an emotive example of growing pressure from academic historians for public history to emphasise 'histories from below,' in keeping with the historians' growing understandings of the previously silenced or ignored voices and experiences of the past. In representations of the First World War, as I argue in Chapter Four, 'invented traditions' can work to silence and whitewash the past.

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[110] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, "Memory and history."
[111] Seixas, "Collective memory."
[112] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

Sara McDowell also links memory to heritage and identity, arguing that the choices museums make in displaying and conserving heritage are 'intimately related to our identity requirements in the present.'[113] In the museum, it is through heritage and its representation that collective memory and identity is constructed, reinforced, and challenged, and engaged in on a personal level.[114] The role of heritage and memory in identity formation is highly relevant to the debates about the display of Australia's past in museums, as we have seen demonstrated by the history wars.[115] Ultimately, attention to the construction of collective memory is one way of understanding the ways museums work to build national stories – national stories that can both strengthen and challenge celebratory narratives of progress and achievement. Collective memory and history often sit uncomfortably together in the museum though, as 'history is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it.'[116] In the New Museum, where the interpretations of inexpert visitors are supposed to be given weight alongside the interpretations of expert historians, unease has emerged surrounding the roles of curators, who have a challenging role in negotiating the difficult terrain between memory and history.

These ideas about the museum and its invented traditions raise important questions for this research, and in particular my use of the term 'difficult history Difficult history is in many ways a useful concept – it speaks to a relationship with the past that is challenging to understand and emotionally fraught – but it is also intensely problematic, and a potentially damaging term for those whose perspectives are deemed to be 'difficult.' The notion of 'difficult' history or heritage is found in recent historical and historiographical writing,[117] but the implications of its use are have not been fully explored. This project highlighted a range of concerns with labelling history as 'difficult,' and I have come to prefer more precise terms for what I see as

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[113] Sara McDowell, "Heritage, memory and identity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 49.
[114] Laurajane Smith, "Theorizing museum and heritage visiting," in *The International Handbook of Museum Studies: Museum Theory*, ed. Andrea Witcomb and Kylie Message (Chichester: Wiley, 2015), 459-484.
[115] Macintyre and Clark, *The History Wars*.
[116] Pierre Nora, "Between memory and history: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* Spring (1989): 9.
[117] See for example: Segall, "Making difficult history public"; Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E Milton and Monica Eileen Patterson, eds., *Curating difficult knowledge: Violent pasts in public places* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Trofanenko, "On difficult history"; William Logan and Keir Reeves, eds., *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'difficult heritage'* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008).

the subsets of difficult history that I explore. Difficult history can mean histories that are contentious because of multiple perspectives on the events, or histories that are particularly complex and therefore difficult to understand, or histories that are emotionally difficult to encounter – histories of trauma, tragedy, and injustice. For the most part, where I refer to all of these 'subsets' of history that can create discomfort or contention, I use the term 'uncomfortable history,' but I also use the terms confronting or contentious to refer to examples that are challenging in these more specific ways.

The use of the broad term 'difficult history' in an Australian context can be problematic in part because of a common assumption that when we refer to difficult history we are usually – or perhaps always – referring to Aboriginal history. This is problematic both because it limits our understanding of what historical events and themes can be 'difficult' for audiences, but also because it limits our understanding of Australian Indigenous history and culture. Assuming Australia's difficult history is its colonial past serves a colonizing role – it relegates Aboriginality to the past, it ignores the rich past of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander societies prior to invasion, and it ignores the histories of continuing culture and achievement since. In addition, it contributes to a sense that these histories are only ever a problem, undermining any capacity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to value and celebrate this cultural heritage. It can work to reduce any desire non-Indigenous Australians might have to engage with these histories in order to understand them – many museum visitors are unlikely to be drawn to histories that are assigned the label of 'difficult.'

This tendency does not necessarily indicate a conscious desire on the part of white Australians to undermine histories of Indigenous Australians' successes, achievements, culture and language, among other things, however the blanket assumption that 'difficult history' is synonymous with 'Indigenous issues' in many ways whitewashes over anything that does not support a narrative of complete destruction and devastation. The tendency to equate 'difficult history' with 'Indigenous issues' recurred throughout my research whenever I spoke about it outside of museum contexts; it highlighted an assumption on the part of many that as a white Australian researcher, when I referred to difficult history, I was thinking of the difficulty white Australians often experience when they learn about the injustices faced by Indigenous Australians. In coming to terms with this assumption made by

others, I was forced to confront my own subjectivity. In the words of Coloma, the 'critical self examination' I was led to brought 'into sharp relief the intertwined relationship of subject, power, and knowledge.'[118] My conceptualisation of what constituted difficult history centred upon what *white* visitors might find challenging to confront, and I argue that this is the same conceptualisation often found in literature addressing confronting history in museums.

This often unacknowledged tendency to assume that 'difficult history' and 'Aboriginal history' are neatly overlapping subsets of the past can undermine exploration of the many other aspects of Australian history that can be difficult, in a myriad of ways, for different audiences, including military history, immigration history, and penal history to name a few examples relevant to this study. Difficult Aboriginal histories of trauma, tragedy, and injustice were certainly an important part of this research, but my conceptualisation of difficult history also included contentious histories and histories of trauma, tragedy, and injustice experienced by other groups of Australians. There is an important point here to be made about museum audiences, who are not homogenous, and who will respond differently to different kinds of uncomfortable history.

The fact that 'difficult history' can be a problematic term was not, in the end, a disadvantage in this research. Rather, 'difficult history' proved a useful provocation in interviews as well as in my own analysis, sensitising all involved to the notion that histories can be difficult in many different ways to different groups of people. Alongside raising critical issues in making judgements about what history can broadly be considered 'difficult,' the term highlighted the need to consider different levels and types of difficult engagement with the past. This also reflects one of the values of difficult history in education for social justice and citizenship – it allows access to the extremes of the diversity of human experience that can perhaps form a foundation for empathy and sophisticated historical understanding. Models of historical thinking highlight the importance of considering multiple perspectives of the past, and difficult history can give us insight into clearly separate, often violently

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[118] Roland Sintos Coloma, "Who's afraid of Foucault? History, theory and becoming subjects," *History of Education Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2011): 185.

opposing views. I now turn to outline the design of the study and the decisions I made to investigate these questions in relation to specific museums and exhibitions.

Study design

This research is based upon analysis of both recent historical and current museum practices in representing and not representing uncomfortable history. There are a number of facets to the approach taken, as my intention was to gather evidence from various sources within each institution in order to piece together a nuanced understanding of institutional context, staff perspectives and beliefs about difficult history, and the public representations that emerged from these factors. To that end, I undertook archival research at each institution, exploring a range of material that included guides, maps, education materials, published materials, and organisational documents. Documents were sought from 1970 to the present day, and most were found in each museum institution's library or research centre. These sources gave insight into the ways each institution's historical approach had both changed and remained the same throughout the period.

I also conducted a number of semi-structured interviews with staff at each institution, including curatorial and education staff, and managers with significant responsibilities in exhibition development and education. Between four and seven staff participated at each institution. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into the intentions curators and educators held in regards to the museum exhibitions or programs they worked on; they provided information about how the museums were or were intended to be 'used' for educational purposes. Finally, analysis of current museum exhibitions and programs at each of the case study museums informed a detailed picture of present day approaches to representing confronting, contested, and complex histories.

The study's design was underpinned by the notion of the museum as heterotopia, a space of difference with the potential to function either to subvert or support existing social structures, and explored the different role the museum as heterotopia has played in different locations and times. As outlined above, analysis drew on different theoretical approaches to conceptualizing uncomfortable history and learning in the museum, exploring the museum's representation of trauma, its

potential for affective learning, and its position as an institution of cultural memory. Historical analysis addressed the museum's display of and education about difficult and contested Australian history from the 1970s to the present. This period, as discussed in the literature review, is significant in that it reflects supposed shifts in museum practice that are characteristic of the New Museum. The study's contemporary museum analysis involved examination of museums as they are today, although it is worth noting again that any museum display is not purely the product of its own time, but includes elements of the past through its objects, as well as vestiges of previous interpretation by museum staff – concepts or themes in museum exhibitions, for example, may be reused when an exhibition is redesigned, and objects are certainly often used in exhibitions repeatedly.

Case studies

Three museum institutions – including five museum sites – were investigated in this study. Each institution was the subject of a bounded case study, in which I investigated the museums within a wider social and cultural sphere. The institutions were: Museum Victoria (Melbourne Museum and Immigration Museum campuses in Melbourne); Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority [PAHSMA] (Port Arthur Historic Site and the Cascades Female Factory in Tasmania); and the Australian War Memorial [AWM] in Canberra. These museums reflect a purposeful sampling, as they were selected to cover important historical themes and events that might be considered difficult or contested, as well as including several different types of museum.[119] All of the museums selected contain historical exhibitions. Each of the museums is an established and successful institution, and also includes an established education program, and each proved rich in material for an analysis of uncomfortable history and education. To support analysis for each of the case studies, I collected several different types of evidence, in keeping with the common

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[119] Sharan B Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A guide to design and implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009); Lynne Miller and Jeffrey S. Beaudry, *Research Literacy: A primer for understanding and using research* (Guilford Publications, 2016), accessed August 31, 2016, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unimelb/detail.action?docID=4000022.

practice in case study research of seeking multiple sources of data to sufficiently address the research questions.[120]

The three museums were deliberately selected to encompass a wide range of historical themes that might be considered 'uncomfortable' in different ways. The focus on such diverse histories was an important move to counter the tendency for 'difficult history' to be understood as 'Aboriginal history,' as I have discussed. This project addresses a broader category than Indigenous Australian history in examining uncomfortable histories; some aspects of Aboriginal history are certainly emotionally difficult, complex, and contested, but not all Aboriginal history is so. Conversely, some of what might be considered 'difficult history' in Australia does not directly concern Aboriginal Australians. This is not to suggest that Aboriginal history has not been an essential focus, rather to underline the relevance of a number of potentially uncomfortable themes and events. In addition, there was a need to allow other stories and people to emerge as uncomfortable in each of the museums through analysis of exhibitions, programs and archival materials, and in particular through interviews with staff.

In the following paragraphs I will provide a very brief description of each museum, with more detailed context in their respective chapters. Current floor plans are included in Appendix IV. These sites were chosen in part for their established education programs and their corresponding focus on learning as a core component of museum 'business.' Significant percentages of visitors at each site were school students. More than 139,000 school visitors attended the AWM in the 2014-15 financial year.[121] There were a record 140,360 student visitors to Melbourne Museum in the 2013/2014 financial year,[122] and 281,095 students participating in education programs across Museum Victoria's three sites in 2014/2015.[123] Education visitor numbers were not available for PAHSMA's sites, and revenue from education

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[120] Bill Gillham, *Case Study Research Methods* (London and New York: Continuum, 2000).

[121] Australian War Memorial, *Australian War Memorial Annual Report 2014-2015*, Canberra, Australia, 2015.

[122] "Record education visitors at Melbourne Museum," Museum Victoria, accessed August 16, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/about/media-centre/media-releases/archive/record-education-visitors-at-melbourne-museum/.

[123] Museum Victoria, *Museums Board of Victoria Annual Report 2014-15*, Melbourne, Australia, 2015.

programs was less significant than at other sites.[124] PAHSMA has nonetheless strengthened its focus on formal education since the development of its interpretation plan in the early 2000s, when there were in fact no curriculum-based programs operating.[125]

Museum Victoria's Melbourne Museum and Immigration Museum, both in Melbourne, include several historical exhibitions focusing on Victoria, and cover the state's Indigenous culture and heritage, the history of Melbourne, and the history of immigration to the state.[126] Museum Victoria provides a state-focused interpretation of events important to national history, and the exhibitions on Indigenous history and immigration history are of particular relevance to this study, as they raise themes of racist discrimination in Australia's past and present, undoubtedly a difficult issue. The galleries dealing with Victoria's Aboriginal history, located in the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Melbourne Museum, were redeveloped during 2012 and 2013,[127] and provide important material for understanding changing approaches to dealing with histories of collective trauma. The redesign of Bunjilaka presents a valuable opportunity to explore very recent thinking on the display of Indigenous culture and heritage in Australia. Museum Victoria also examines many other aspects of Victoria's difficult history, including a site dedicated specifically to immigration, the Immigration Museum, which includes both difficult material and material that reveals the more positive aspects of this historical theme. The Immigration Museum has featured in a wide range of research and commentary since its establishment in 1998.[128]

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[124] Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, *Annual Report 2014-15*, Port Arthur, Australia, 2015.

[125] PAHSMA, *Interpretation Plan*, Port Arthur, Australia, 2001/2005.

[126] "Museum Victoria," accessed August 16, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/.

[127] Genevieve Grieves, "First Peoples: The Bunjilaka redevelopment," *Insite Magazine* (2013): 7.

[128] See for example: Kay Ferres, "An invitation to inclusion: Museums and migration," in *Migration and Insecurity: Citizenship and social inclusion in a transnational era*, ed. Niklaus Steiner, Robert Mason and Anna Hayes (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 48-63; McKernan, "Thinking historically," *Agora*; Mulcahy, "'Sticky' learning"; Phillip Schorch, "Experiencing differences and negotiating prejudices at the Immigration Museum Melbourne," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21, no. 1 (2015): 46-64; Phillip Schorch, et al., "Encountering the 'Other': Interpreting student experiences of a multi-sensory museum exhibition," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 36, no. 2 (2015): 221-240; Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect".

Port Arthur Historic Site, managed by PAHSMA, has a multilayered difficult history as both a convict site and a tourist site.[129] The public perception of convict history in Australia has undergone a dramatic change since Port Arthur ceased to be a functioning convict site in 1877. While initially a convict past was thought to be a source of significant shame, with Port Arthur considered part of a 'convict stain' many sought to remove from the country's historical fabric, more recently there has been a resurgence in interest in this period and in some cases a sense of pride in family connections to convicts.[130] Port Arthur was also the site of a more recent difficult history in 1996, when a lone gunman killed 35 people and injured many others at the site and nearby. The Port Arthur Massacre, as it has come to be known, has been a highly traumatic event in the historic site's recent past, and occupies a difficult position in the physical and cultural landscape. PAHSMA also manages the Coal Mines Historic Site, which is not addressed in this research, and the Cascades Female Factory, which is located in Tasmania's capital city of Hobart. The Cascades has been the focus for revamped education programs in recent years.[131]

Finally, the Australian War Memorial [AWM] in Canberra, although primarily designated a memorial, includes a large and established museum on Australia's involvement in conflicts overseas.[132] Australian military history is often revealed to be particularly contentious, as I have discussed in previous chapters and will explore in further detail in Chapter Four. As well as contested history, or contested representations of history, the conflict and violence of war speak of trauma in the past, and the AWM's daily fare includes a large dose of death and injury. The AWM's role as a memorial lends an additional complexity to its educational role and its potential for critically examining traumatic and contested history. Recent debate about the inclusion of peacekeepers on the roll of honour, for example, is indicative of the emotional engagement many Australians feel with the national war memorial.

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[129] "Port Arthur Historic Site," accessed August 16, 2016, http://portarthur.org.au/
[130] Merran Williams, "Stain or badge of honour? Convict heritage inspires mixed feelings," *The Conversation*, June 8, 2015, accessed May 6, 2016, https://theconversation.com/stain-or-badge-of-honour-convict-heritage-inspires-mixed-feelings-41097.
[131] "The Cascades Female Factory," accessed August 16, 2016, http://femalefactory.org.au/; this was also raised in interviews with PAHSMA staff, detailed in Chapter Five.
[132] "Australian War Memorial," accessed August 16, 2016, http://www.awm.gov.au.

While case study research was the overarching method for analysis, within each institutional case study I collected a range of evidence using differing methods.[133] These included interviews with curatorial and education staff, analysis of documentary material and museum education programs, and analysis of museum exhibitions. I detail my approaches to each of these 'sub-methods' below.[134]

Interviews with curatorial and education staff

Semi-structured interviews with curatorial and education staff provided important context for examining today's museums, extending the museum analysis to seek the views of those involved in the development and implementation of exhibitions and programs.[135] Curators and education staff are uniquely placed to identify and understand limiting factors or strategies in museum display that may not be clear from the displays themselves. They are also able to provide insight into the motivations behind the representation – or lack of representation – of difficult or contested history. Speaking to both curatorial and education staff also provided an opportunity to explore the different intentions and perspectives of each group, and the extent to which they work together towards the same or similar goals. The intersections between education and exhibition work are a central focus for this research, and interviews supported a deeper analysis of the ways historical thinking concepts and other history-specific pedagogies informed both program and exhibition design. Interviews were also essential in understanding the educational goals of each institution, because curatorial and education staff were able to provide information about the intentions of different facets of the museums' public role. They were semi-structured in order to allow some flexibility in the topics covered.[136]

Eighteen interviews were conducted in total across the three institutions. Museum Victoria interviews took place in late 2012, and included interviews with six curatorial staff (including a section manager) and two education staff. Interviews with AWM staff took place in June 2013, and included five curatorial staff and the manager of

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[133] Gillham, *Case Study Research Methods*.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Miller and Beaudry, *Research Literacy*.
[136] Rosalind Edwards and Janet Holland, *What is Qualitative Interviewing?* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

the education section. Finally, the four Port Arthur interviews were conducted in mid 2014, and included interviews with three curatorial and conservation staff and one education officer.

Participants

Interview participants are listed in the following table.[137]

Institution	Name	Position
Museum Victoria	Dr Richard Gillespie	Head, Humanities
	Genevieve Grieves	Curator, First Peoples
	Dr Moya McFadzean	Senior Curator, Migration
	Jan Molloy	Programs Co-ordinator, Humanities
	Amanda Reynolds	Curator, First Peoples
	Dr Charlotte Smith	Senior Curator, Politics and Society
	Dr Liz Suda	Programs Co-ordinator, Humanities
Australian War Memorial	Stuart Baines	Education Manager
	Rebecca Britt	Curator, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Nick Fletcher	Head, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Chris Goddard	Assistant Curator, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Dr Kerry Neale	Assistant Curator, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Participant [did not wish to be identified]	Curatorial/Management
Port Arthur Historic Site	Gemma Davie	Education Officer
	Dr Jane Harrington	Director, Conservation and Infrastructure
	Michael Smith	Conservation Project Officer
	Dr Jody Steele	Heritage Programs Manager

Interviews were semi-structured in order to allow participants to direct the discussion without veering too far from the subject of the study. Given the nature of the topic, my interview questions rarely sought 'facts,' rather they focused on the interview as a 'meaning-making event,' where the participants and I worked together to make

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[137] For ease of reference this table is also included in Appendix III.

meaning.[138] I sought to understand how my participants conceptualised 'difficult history' and how they positioned it in relation to their work as curators or educators. Fundamentally, my interviews sought 'to understand the meaning of central themes of the subjects' lived world,' as Kvale writes.[139] Interviews were transcribed, and participants' words because the focus for my analysis, but I also took notes during and after each interview with more general impressions, as well as identifying body language with significance to key points.[140] In some cases, for example, participants gestured to objects or areas of the museum to illustrate their views, and these moments were not captured in audio recordings or transcripts, but were important in understanding meaning. As such, I endeavoured to note these as much as possible.

All participants read a Plain Language Statement prior to agreeing to participate, and so they were primed to think about the issues I was raising. Questions addressed:

- understandings of 'difficult history' and what it means in Australia;
- awareness of history education pedagogies and theories;
- the process of developing exhibitions on contested histories (where participants have experience of this);
- ideas about the role of museums in dealing with contested public histories; and
- understandings of the museum's role in supporting formal education in schools.

Findings from the interviews were analysed for insights into approaches to representing difficult history; a 'thick' analysis was made possible by the small number of interviews.[141] The views of curators and education staff proved to be an important source of information about the ways museums aim to educate about difficult history, and they provided contextual understanding of the pressures and limitations museum staff face in constructing museum exhibitions and programs. In research of this nature, what emerges from interviews is not a simple description of what is, but rather some insight into intentions and aspirations. Interview data

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[138] Glynis Cousin, *Researching Learning in Higher Education: An introduction to contemporary methods and approaches* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).
[139] Steinar Kvale, *Doing Interviews* (London: SAGE Publications, 2007).
[140] Kvale, *Doing Interviews.*
[141] Anna Bryson and Seán McConville, *The Routledge Guide to Interviewing: Oral history, social enquiry and investigation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).

provided a source of comparison with other forms of 'data' in this study, including my analysis of museum exhibitions, programs and documentary sources.[142]

Given that I was interviewing experts who were already immersed in and experiencing first-hand the issues associated with museum education and display, participants were able to quickly understand what I hoped to hear about. It is, however, important to consider what Glynis Cousin calls the 'social position of the researcher,' as power imbalances can impact upon participants' experiences and their responses to questions.[143] My position as a student-researcher meant that more often than not the balance of power was on the side of the participant. This was generally beneficial, as participants were able to speak with authority about what they were expert in; a role museum curators and educators are usually comfortable with given their position. It also allowed me to enter interviews with what Kvale describes as a 'qualified naïveté,' or an 'openness to new and unexpected phenomena,' because as a student-researcher, participants often – quite correctly – did not expect me to be as knowledgeable as they were about their work.[144] For the most part, I benefited greatly from the characteristic love of learning that all participants shared – they were enthusiastic, welcoming, and interested in the research.

Archival sources

Archival material for this study was drawn from each of the museum's archives, and included material relating to the institutions' themes and layout, the development of exhibitions, strategic directions for the museums, and educational and public programs. Museum archival sources included:

- guidebooks and brochures, which usually included maps showing the location and 'highlight' objects, images, or interactive elements of exhibitions;
- photographs, plans, and designs of exhibitions and buildings;
- information on visiting/travelling exhibitions and programs, usually in the form of brochures, education materials, and catalogues;

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[142] Bryson and McConville, *Routledge Guide to Interviewing.*
[143] Cousin, *Researching Learning.*, 75; Liz Atkins and Susan Wallace, *Qualitative Research in Education* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012).
[144] Kvale, *Doing Interviews.*

- exhibition catalogues for major exhibitions;
- annual reports, organisational documents relating to strategic directions, and plans for major redevelopments; and
- education and public program materials, including worksheets and programmes.

Newspapers, journals, and museum magazines provided further historical material, including information and advertisements about major exhibitions, events and programs and exhibition reviews were drawn from these sources. A summary of archival material is included in the bibliography. Historical analysis focused on the ideas about difficult history and contestability represented in the available material, the representation of perspectives other than those of dominant groups, and the involvement of community groups in creating social histories or 'history from below.' I analysed sources for their insights into conceptualisations of historical thinking, considering these in light of recent pedagogical work in the discipline, as I discussed in the previous chapter.[145]

More challenging were concerns with the reading of emotion and affect in documentary sources, as Matt notes, the words we encounter in historical sources 'are not the same as emotions, but they bear a relation to them. This relation, however, is somewhat unclear.'[146] It was easy to fall into the trap of considering the 'interiority' of emotion in what I was reading; paying attention only to my own feelings, when it was far more essential to consider what Ahmed describes as the 'sociality of emotion,'[147] or at least to situate my own emotional responses within an awareness of the historical context for the various dates and places. Ultimately, the challenges of reading for affective practices in historical documents created an important role for interviews in attempting to provide some of the detail of the context – all of the participants, regardless of the length of time they had worked at the institutions, had a sense of the history of discomfort about particular themes and events in their museums.

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[145] Including, for example: Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*; van Drie and van Boxtel, "Historical reasoning"; Wineburg, *Historical Thinking*.
[146] Susan J. Matt, "Recovering the invisible: Methods for the historical study of the emotions," in *History of the Emotions: Doing emotions history,* ed. Susan J Matt and Peter N Stearns (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2013): 41-53.
[147] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*.

Museum education materials

Museum education materials from the present day also informed analysis of each museum's current approach to uncomfortable history. These were often accessible through the institutions' websites, or were provided or explained by museum education staff. Approaches to some education programs were such that printed material was not available – some of the Immigration Museum's education programs, for example, were based on the use of a suitcase full of objects, and could not be easily captured on paper.[148] In these cases, museum educators were able to explain the ways a museum lesson could be structured around particular objects or activities. This highlighted the importance of multiple approaches to gathering information about the museum – combining interviews with documentary research allowed a more complete picture of each museum's approach to education.

Each museum included in this study has an established suite of formal education programs for school groups, but there were also additional resources available outside of or in addition to these formal programs. Much of this material is available online, and provided valuable insight into the kinds of resources and supplementary material museums provide to educators. Also worth noting here are the museums' provisions for off-site museum education, where the staff are able to send resource kits to teachers for whom excursions to the museum are impossible. This indicates something important about the boundaries of the museum as a learning space, even in terms of formal education programs – they reach well beyond the walls of the building or site. It became apparent through interviews with education staff that teaching is a significant responsibility and about more than what happens within museum spaces.

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[148] Including, for example, *Passport Plus*, and *Leaving and arrival*. See: "School programs and resources," Immigration Museum, accessed August 31, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/learning/school-programs-and-resources/.

Museum exhibitions

Analysis of museum exhibitions forms a key component of this study. As Bennett has argued, museums have traditionally been expected to 'speak to the eyes,'[149] and more recently have come to speak to the rest of the body in embodied experiences. Museum exhibitions, I suggest, can be 'read' as multimodal documents, and my analysis of each of the museums addressed in this research is based upon such a reading. John Scott notes that a discursive 'message' of any kind can be considered a document containing a range of modes – written, visual, and audio, for instance.[150] Lindsay Prior's example of the graveyard demonstrates the way features of the landscape – in particular human-made features – can provide information about beliefs and ideas about death.[151] In the museum context and within this examination of learning, the components of design that contribute to making meaning are many, and this analysis thus draws on a range of resources for considering the affective dimensions of learning.

Major galleries in each of the four sites are explored, with the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier in this chapter informing the analysis. The exhibitions examined include mainly permanent exhibitions, as these are most likely to be designed to be of interest to teachers and students, given their longer-term aims. Some temporary exhibitions were included where their content was likely to be of significant interest to school groups, or where they dealt with histories that are particularly relevant to this analysis of difficult history. These are outlined in more detail in Appendix I. Floor plans for each of the museums are included in Appendix IV.

Some galleries, for instance the Mind and Body gallery at Melbourne Museum, were excluded because they are natural history or science focused, and would not be expected to deal with any 'difficult history An exception to this was Melbourne Museum's *Mind: Enter the Labyrinth*, which includes some representations of the

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[149] Tony Bennett, "Speaking to the eyes: Museums, legibility and the social order," in *The Politics of Display: Museums, science, culture*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 25-35.

[150] John Scott, "Editor's introduction: Documentary research," in *Documentary Research*, vol. 1, ed. John Scott (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2006), xix-xxxiv.

[151] Lindsay Prior, *Using Documents in Social Research* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2003).

history of psychiatry as part of an interdisciplinary exhibition about the health and the mind. A growing emphasis on interdisciplinarity at Museum Victoria meant that exhibitions in what have traditionally been the science galleries could not be automatically ruled out; indeed, one of the most significant of Melbourne Museum's exhibitions of difficult history – *WWI: Love and Sorrow* – is also located in the traditionally science-focused Mind and Body gallery.

The theoretical frameworks informing my analysis of exhibitions constituted an approach that embraced the 'messiness' of interpretive research.[152] As I noted above, in 'reading' the exhibitions as multimodal documents, I sought to investigate the discursive messages produced by the written, visual, and audio elements of the displays.[153] Stephanie Moser's framework, which I expand upon below, was helpful in identifying the multitude of 'modes' in which museum exhibitions communicate or 'teach.'[154] The analysis of museum exhibitions was informed by strategies associated with multimodal discourse analysis and a social semiotic approach to understanding meaning-making in the museums. Discourse analysis, according to James Paul Gee and Michael Handford, is sometimes described as 'the study of language above the level of a sentence.'[155] As I have emphasised, language-focused approaches to discourse analysis are often not entirely appropriate for use in the museum, with its many tools for communicating. Multimodal discourse analysis supports a more detailed analysis of the complex ways multimodal exhibitions can 'teach' visitors. As Kress has argued, 'semiotically speaking, an exhibition is a complex multimodal text/message.'[156]

In multimodal discourse analysis, written or spoken language is one of many modes used in processes of communication and meaning-making.[157] Along with language, these modes also include gesture, images, music, and video, for example.[158] This type

[152] John Law, *After Method: Mess in social science research* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).
[153] Prior, *Using Documents*; Scott, "Editor's introduction."
[154] Stephanie Moser, "The devil is in the detail: Museum displays and the creation of knowledge," *Museum Anthropology* 33, no 1 (2010): 22-32.
[155] James Paul Gee and Michael Handford, "Introduction," in *Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. James Paul Gee and Michael Handford (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.
[156] Gunther Kress, "Multimodal discourse analysis," in *Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. James Paul Gee and Michael Handford (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 42.
[157] Brian Paltridge, *Discourse Analysis: An introduction* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012).
[158] Ibid.

of analysis also acknowledges that meaning-making is socially situated – analysis must pay attention to the sociocultural context in which meaning is made.[159] Importantly, as Gee and Handford note, discourse analysis accepts that we 'do not just mean things with language: we also do things with language.'[160] Multimodal discourse analysis recognises that curators 'have specific aims and purposes – social aesthetic or pedagogic, ideological.'[161]

In addition, social semiotic analyses, according to Gunther Kress,

> …make it possible to ask questions around *meaning* and meaning-*making*; about the agency of meaning-*makers,* the constitution of *identity* in sign- and meaning-making; about the social constraints they face in *making* meaning; around *social semiosis* and *knowledge*; how 'knowledge' is produced, shaped and constituted distinctly in different modes; and by whom.[162]

Importantly for this study, social semiotic approaches make possible complex understandings of socially-situated meaning. Bob Hodge's examination of the Australian Museum's *Indigenous Australians: Australia's First Peoples* exhibition, for instance, highlights both the ways objects and display methods combine to create meaning, but also links to the social processes indicated by displays, as in the case of plaques highlighting the community involvement in developing the exhibition.[163] Analyses such as Hodge's reveal the importance of reading a museum as situated in and interconnected with its social context. As Kress notes, 'the modal resources available in a culture need to be seen as one coherent, integral field, of – nevertheless distinct – resources for making meaning.'[164] In the museum, this means that all of the elements of exhibitions, including objects, images, texts, films, and interactive

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[159] Gee and Handford, "Introduction"; Paltridge, *Discourse Analysis.*
[160] Gee and Handford, "Introduction," 1.
[161] Kress, "Multimodal discourse analysis," 42.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Bob Hodge, "A semiotic analysis of the Australian Museum's Indigenous Australians: Australia's First Peoples exhibition," Australian Museum, accessed March 28, 2011, http://australianmuseum.net.au/document/a-semiotic-analysis-of-the-indigenous-australians-exhibition.
[164] Kress, "Multimodal discourse analysis," 37.

displays are important to consider, but so too is the social and cultural context in which the museum operates.

Whilst a detailed investigation of all the elements of an exhibition was important and informed much of my analysis, it was also necessary to visit the museum more 'naturally,' moving through the exhibition according to its sequencing and following the cues most exhibitions have in place to guide visitors.[165] Visitors' pathways through the museum can be 'diversified and intensified,' with museums combining sequencing and more flexible designs of space 'to shape movement, through subtle relations between spaces and objects, that allows the contemporary museum to create the individual visiting culture that is so often its characteristic.'[166] Here my most important research 'instrument' was myself,[167] and so I visited and enjoyed each exhibition prior to undertaking a detailed analysis of its components. This allowed me to identify moments of intensity, where displays provoked particular emotions, as well as broad impressions and an overall sense of the messages and what I experienced as affective charges of exhibitions.

Having identified the impacts of the exhibition upon myself, I could then seek the origins of my emotional and intellectual responses in the displays. The framework for museum interpretation developed by Moser proved helpful here, identifying the myriad ways exhibitions work to create meaning through, for example, light, sound, colour, and arrangement of space.[168] Often, I was able to trace the ways the exhibition had made me feel, think, and understand. There were, however, also times where revisiting the exhibition in more detail made me feel my initial responses were 'wrong,' and in some instances I was able to ask curators responsible for the displays about their affective and emotional intent. Although the interpretation is mine, and it is very much informed by my own prior knowledge, background, and beliefs, as well as by the theoretical and methodological 'tools' I carried with me, I was able to, in a sense, check the validity of my interpretations.

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[165] Kali Tzortzi, "Movement in museums: Mediating between museum intent and visitor experience," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29, no. 4 (2014): 327-348.
[166] Ibid., 347.
[167] Merriam, *Qualitative Research*.
[168] Moser, "The devil is in the detail."

Gaining insight into the affective potential of the museum necessitated careful attention to displays that included sound, light, and movement.[169] All of the museums studied included a range of interactive displays as well as films and sound and light shows. The inclusion of historic site museums in Port Arthur and the Cascades Female Factory in Tasmania created an additional set of concerns with the experience of historic buildings and landscapes. The architecture and design of exhibitions were also a factor in producing particular affects and emotions related to the displays, and needed to be considered in relation to the text, objects, and photographs that made up each display and exhibition. As I have noted, the framework developed by Stephanie Moser proved useful in bringing to light the many ways museum exhibition create meaning and experience, and helped to guide my process for exploring each of the sites.[170] Moser's framework includes the following aspects of museum design and display:

- architecture, location and setting;
- space (including both the physical space and the way the visitor is guided to move in the space);
- design, colour and light;
- subject, message and text;
- layout;
- display types (for example objects in cases, images, reproductions, film, sound and maps);
- exhibition style (learning style); and
- audience and reception.

Only evidence for audience and reception was not examined as part of this research; rather my focus was upon intended audience and responses to particular displays, and this was based upon my reading of the other factors in this list as well as being informed by interviews and documentary data.

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[169] See for example: Nikos Bubaris, "Sound in museums – museums in sound," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29, no. 4 (2014): 391-402; Emma Waterton and Jason Dittmer, "The museum as assemblage: Bringing forth affect at the Australian War Memorial," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29, no. 2 (2014): 122-139.
[170] Moser, "The devil is in the detail."

Throughout this thesis, I use the term 'display' to refer to smaller components of exhibitions in the form of display cases or walls, interactive features, films, or themed areas. I refer to exhibitions when describing their themes, interpretive approaches or the learning intentions more broadly. Occasionally, I also employ the term gallery, which can be interchangeable with exhibition, where an exhibition takes up an entire gallery space – this is largely the case at the Immigration Museum for example. There are a number of examples where more than one exhibition exists in a gallery space – such as in the galleries of Melbourne Museum – or where an exhibition is installed across multiple galleries, as is the case with the First and Second World War exhibitions in the Australian War Memorial. Appendix I summarises the contemporary exhibitions that are the focus for analysis in this study – they provided the most insight into each institution's approaches to interpreting difficult history for visitors. The study predominantly addressed permanent exhibitions or exhibitions with significance to school curriculum.

Conclusion

This chapter described the theoretical and methodological foundations for this study, as well as detailing the study design and approach to museum analysis, interviews, and archival research. Understanding the museum as a heterotopian space, I draw on affect, emotion, and trauma in order to explore the role difficult history can play in visitor learning. Further, I apply conceptualisations of history education, civics and citizenship education, and cultural memory to consider the context for and processes of educating in the museum. The study design supports a detailed investigation of three case studies, drawing on the theoretical and methodological basis described to explore the research questions in depth.

Any study has limitations imposed by its timeframe and scope. In this research, it could be considered a limitation to exclude the perspectives of learners – or museum visitors – in an analysis of the museum's approaches to educating about Australia's uncomfortable history. The perspectives of learners are undeniably important, but this is not a study of the learning that takes place in the museum; rather, it is quite deliberately a study of the museum's role in representing Australia's past for educative purposes. I am most interested, for the purposes of this study, in the intentions of museum curators and educators and the institutional contexts of

representing the difficult past. Visitors are undoubtedly an important part of the museum and have growing agency in the interpretation of the past in its exhibitions, but their participation usually only takes place after parameters have been set by the institution and its staff. As I indicate in the conclusion of this thesis, I have also highlighted further avenues for audience research focusing on the learning of museum visitors, in line with other recent studies.[171]

There are other, more complex limitations posed by this study's proposed methodological framework. Criticism could be and often is levelled at interpretive research such as this, but interpretation is at the heart of both public history and educational approaches in the museum. The representation and educative role of difficult history would, I argue, not be meaningfully measured by a less interpretive method – or the 'mess,' as John Law (2004) describes it, could not be meaningfully interpreted through a simple approach.[172] This study aims to use some of the museum's and public history's own methods of interpretation to reflect on their intersection in the museum.

By working with an approach sympathetic to the New Museum's emphasis on the social construction of knowledge, I hope to reach understandings of the place of difficult history in the complex political terrain the museum must negotiate. With my focus on the potential of museums in supporting the type of history education encouraged by the research literature, I will investigate the ways museums are working to achieve the social and moral goals of both history education and museum education. Examining the representation of difficult history in the museum in both the past and present will allow analysis of the impacts of historical context and changing understandings of the role of public history on the construction of national narratives. Finally, I hope that this study will contribute to a growing sense of the important connections and intersections between the learning that takes place in the museum and in the history classroom.

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[171] See for example: Mulcahy, "'Sticky' learning"; Trofanenko, "On difficult history."
[172] Law, *After Method.*

Chapter Four: The Australian War Memorial

Introduction

The Australian War Memorial [AWM] is the first of three museum institutions explored in this research, and this chapter presents an account of the AWM based on findings and analysis of interviews, exhibitions, programs and archival material. The Memorial occupies a very significant position amongst Australia's national culture and heritage institutions, given the centrality of war history to Australian national identity and collective memory. It is the most well-resourced of the museums in this study and receives significant amounts of funding from the federal Department of Veterans' affairs; in the 2014-2015 financial year, for example, these grants totaled over 44 million Australian dollars.[1] The AWM is also influential in history education in Australia, and while I have focused on the on-site learning and education programs, it is also worth noting that education materials produced by the institution are found in many classrooms and school libraries throughout the country.[2]

In this chapter, I argue that the political context for representations of military history in Australia is challenging, but the narrative that ultimately wins out in the AWM is one of triumph and heroism that whitewashes over more confronting histories. This narrative is particularly problematic in its refusal to represent the histories of frontier conflict between Indigenous Australians and Europeans, as well as in a tendency to reinforce inaccurate but popularly clung-to notions of almost universal resilience and courage amongst Australian soldiers. These notions are central to the mythology of the Anzac 'character' in Australia, which relates most strongly to Australian involvement in the First World War.[3] Originally, ANZAC was an acronym referring to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, but Anzac is

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[1] Australian War Memorial, *Annual Report 2014-15* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 2015).
[2] Classroom resources include 'Memorial boxes' – with real and replica objects and associated learning resources – as well as published books and a wide variety of downloadable materials, the current versions of which can be found at "Classroom resources and activities," Australian War Memorial website, accessed August 18, 2016, https://www.awm.gov.au/education/resources-activities/.
[3] Ken Inglis, "The Anzac tradition," *Meanjin Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1965): 26; see also Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian soldiers in the Great War* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2010); Nick Dyrenfurth, *Mateship: A very Australian history* (Brunswick, Victoria: Scribe Publications, 2015).

generally used when describing the mythology or when speaking about Anzac Day, according to the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs [DVA].[4] Worth noting briefly is that New Zealand soldiers, both Maori and Pakeha, are frequently forgotten or ignored in Australian representations of Anzac, and the 'Anzac Spirit' that DVA refers to is commonly thought of as a uniquely Australian quality, one that emerged during the First World War.

Figure 2: The Australian War Memorial

The Memorial is a very useful resource for teachers of both history and civics and citizenship, however some of its exhibitions fail to engage with important historical debates in Australia that would be of particular value to Australian teachers and students. When seeking to teach students to think historically, it is important, as many scholars of history pedagogy have shown, to be able to work with content that encourages an exploration of multiple perspectives of the past.[5] The uncomfortable

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[4] It is perhaps necessary to note here that the DVA does not use the language of 'mythology' when referring to Anzac. See: "Protecting the word Anzac," accessed August 7, 2016, http://www.dva.gov.au/commemorations-memorials-and-war-graves/protecting-word-anzac

[5] Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*; Wineburg, *Historical Thinking.*

history available to the AWM is vast and carries the additional benefit of allowing insight into the ways history is used in the present, giving students and teachers the opportunity to explore notions of historical 'truth' and consider the ways particular narratives come to be seen as fixed and central to who we are as a nation. For the most part, though, the AWM represents perspectives that support a particular valuing of Australian experiences in overseas conflicts as central to national identity. This is, in some instances, a narrative that excludes important histories, usually centering the white, male experience of war. While the institution has worked hard to broaden its representations of non-white soldiers, and of women and other social groups previously relegated to the margins of this history, these stories still predominantly align with the narrative of victory and resilience that permeates most of the gallery spaces.

In the next section of this chapter I outline in more detail some of the contested histories relevant to the AWM and provide some brief background about the institution and its exhibitions and programs. I then move on to deeper analysis of the ways confronting and contested historical themes – histories that are 'uncomfortable' in the context of this institution – are represented, analysing exhibitions and programs as well as drawing on archival research and interviews with curatorial and education staff. These uncomfortable histories include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history – especially histories of frontier war – and the themes of injury and death and opposition to war. This is by no means an exhaustive summary of historical themes and events that could be considered challenging for the AWM, but it addresses aspects of history that, I argue, are both relevant to curriculum and have particular potential to engage children and young people in studies of the past that allow them to think like historians.[6]

These more contentious and confronting histories are especially helpful in supporting history students to understand the need for analysis of evidence, context, and other facets of the past that history educators identify as necessary to build historical understanding.[7] In the latter half of this chapter, I use this analysis of uncomfortable histories in the AWM as a foundation for a deeper exploration of the

[6] Lee and Ashby, "Progression in historical understanding."
[7] See for example: Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*; Lévesque, *Thinking Historically*.

ways the institution teaches young visitors about history. I consider the pedagogic approaches employed in exhibitions and programs, and broadly explore the AWM's educative role as suggested both by the institution's representations of history and by the responses of curators and educators. To conclude this chapter, I make arguments about the place of the AWM in school history in Australia and further explore the ways the institution's exhibitions and programs could support the teaching of historical thinking as well as civics and citizenship.

Background

The Australian War Memorial [AWM] officially opened on 11 November 1941, many years after military historian Charles Bean first imagined a national memorial to commemorate 'the endurance and achievements of Australian soldiers and nurses' in the First World War.[8] It was in fact Australia's first national museum,[9] with its roots firmly planted in the commemoration of the First World War. Bean formed his vision for the national memorial before the war had ended, inspired by his experiences on and around battlefields, and collecting for displays began during the later years of the war.[10] In the final years of the building's construction war broke out again, and 'it became apparent that the new war was comparable in scale with the Great War,' making it 'almost inevitable that the scope of the Memorial should be extended.'[11] Since then, the Memorial has taken on the responsibility for commemorating all of Australia's military action overseas, allocating the largest spaces to the First and Second World Wars, and representing other conflicts throughout smaller galleries. A summary of exhibitions analysed in this study is included in Appendix I, and a list of education programs can be found in Appendix II. It is Australia's foremost war memorial, addressing nearly every conflict Australians have fought in, with the very notable and often contested exception of the frontier conflict that occurred during Australia's colonisation.

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[8] Ken Inglis, "The Anzac Tradition"; see also Michael McKernan, *Here is their Spirit: A history of the Australian War Memorial 1917-1990* (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1991).
[9] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, "Memory and history."
[10] Australian War Memorial, *A Place to Remember: Australian War Memorial Souvenir Publication* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 2011).
[11] "Origins of the Australian War Memorial," Australian War Memorial, accessed April 5, 2016, https://www.awm.gov.au/about/origins/

These changes to the Memorial's role were supported by corresponding amendments to the Australian War Memorial Act, which, when passed in 1925, referred only to the First World War.[12] The Act governs the scope of the Memorial and its activities, and its changes reflect the expanding remit of the institution, with amendments in 1952 to shift the Memorial's focus to relate to 'any war or war-like operations in which Australians have been on active service.'[13] The emphasis on active service remains in the present day Act, referring to members of the Defence Force, including 'any naval or military force of the Crown raised in Australia before the establishment of the Commonwealth.'[14] The current language used in the Act effectively limits any interpretation and display of some of Australia's most contentious history of 'war-like' operations – the violence between Indigenous Australians and white colonisers – because the argument can be made that those involved in war-like acts, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, were not 'on active service' for the Crown. This is an important issue and often contentious, and I will expand upon this theme later in this chapter.

Representations of the history of Australia's involvement in the First World War are particularly contested amongst historians, politicians, and the public, although debate often relates to other conflicts as well. The publication of *What's Wrong with Anzac?* – edited by Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds, and Mark McKenna – resurfaced debate recently, highlighting the continuing contentiousness of the Anzac story.[15] Lake, Reynolds, and McKenna were condemned by historians Geoffrey Blainey and Inga Clendinnen for what they viewed as an inaccurate argument about 'top-down' approaches to Anzac; *What's Wrong with Anzac*, they argued, assumed that the proliferation of Anzac commemoration was driven entirely by government and

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[12] Australian War Memorial Act of 1925, Act no. 18, accessed August 27, 2016, https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1925A00018.
[13] Australian War Memorial Act of 1952 [Amendment to the 1925 Act], Act no. 12, accessed August 27, 2016, https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1952A00012.
[14] Australian War Memorial Act of 1980, Act no. 104, accessed August 27, 2016, https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2004A02305.
[15] Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds and Mark McKenna, eds. *What's wrong with Anzac? The militarisation of Australian history* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010).

memorial institutions like the AWM.[16] Lake, Reynolds and McKenna's book was criticised for failing to sufficiently acknowledge other scholars who had explored the reasons for Anzac's popularity in Australia, including, for example, Clendinnen and Ken Inglis.[17]

Placing too much emphasis on government and 'official' roles in promoting the Anzac myth is also problematic in the sense that it can undermine further attempts to understand the histories of war veterans, which are important to many Australians and to many historians.[18] McKenna suggested that trifling with the sanctity of Anzac is very unwise, largely due to the political investment of its continuing popularity.[19] It is also, however, very important to note the substantial public attachment to the Anzac myth, which can only partly be attributed to top-down promotion.[20] As Clendinnen notes, the 'elasticity' of what she prefers to call the 'legend' of Anzac is such that it can and will be 'constantly renewed' to support more 'personal readings and elaborations.'[21] The Australian War Memorial is therefore heavily impacted by pressures from both politicians and the general public to represent a triumphalist narrative that reflects the qualities of bravery, mateship, and resilience that Australians hold so dear. Any critique of the AWM's exhibitions requires awareness of the challenges that curatorial and museum management staff face; in some ways, education staff are likely to have more freedom to pursue contested narratives as they emerge in the often constructivist programs the AWM uses.

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[16] Geoffrey Blainey, "We weren't that dumb," *The Australian,* April 7, 2010, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/books/we-werent-that-dumb/story-e6frg8nf-1225848127735; Peter Cochrane, "The past is not sacred: The 'history wars' over Anzac," *The Conversation,* April 25, 2015, https://theconversation.com/the-past-is-not-sacred-the-history-wars-over-anzac-38596; Andrew Crook, "It's war: Anzac Day dissenters create bitter split between historians," *Crikey,* April 19, 2010, https://www.crikey.com.au/2010/04/19/its-war-anzac-day-dissenters-create-bitter-split-between-historians/.
[17] See for example: Clendinnen, *The History Question*; Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War memorials in the Australian landscape* (Carlton, Victoria: Miegunyah Press, 1998).
[18] See for example: Gammage, *The Broken Years*; Ross McMullin, *Farewell Dear People: Biographies of Australia's lost generation* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2012); Peter Stanley, *Lost Boys of Anzac* (Sydney: Newsouth Publishing, 2014); Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the legend* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2013).
[19] Mark McKenna, "Anzac Day: How did it become Australia's national day?" in *What's wrong with Anzac? The militarisation of Australian history*, Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds and Mark McKenna, eds. (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010), 110-134.
[20] Clendinnen, *The History Question.*
[21] Ibid., 9.

While there is substance to the claims that Lake, Reynolds, and McKenna overstate the role of government and other top-down approaches to promoting Anzac, it is also the case that politicians place considerable importance on the First World War as a forum for national identity in Australia. The centenary of the War, between 2015 and 2018, was celebrated in Australia with over 140 million Australian dollars in government funding.[22] The AWM's First World War galleries redevelopment attracted 27 million dollars in federal government funding. It is also the case, as Reynolds argues, that focusing the national spotlight upon Anzac throws other aspects of Australia's history into shadow, and this is particularly concerning in relation to the erasure of the history of colonisation as foundational to Australia's development as a nation.[23] It is not, however, my intention to argue that the AWM need represent a particular narrative; rather, I suggest that what would be most helpful to teachers and students of history is attention to the contested nature of all of histories of Anzac and the place of the past in the present.

Visitor numbers and political support reinforce the AWM's position as an important site for the education of the Australian public and especially schoolchildren. Its status as the primary resource for war history education in the country is undisputed, with vast amounts of published and downloadable material available in every state. Significant numbers of school visitors attend excursions to the AWM each year; for example, approximately 125,000 students visited in the 2013-2014 financial year, with almost 96,000 of those undertaking facilitated education programs.[24] Schools situated more than 150 kilometres from the Memorial can also include a visit as part of a government-subsidised trip to Canberra under the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate [PACER] scheme.[25] In fact, to qualify for the rebate, school trips to Canberra must include a visit to the Australian War Memorial alongside Parliament House and either the Museum of Australian Democracy or the National Electoral Education Centre, highlighting the way the institution, and the war history it addresses, is positioned by politicians as central to civics and citizenship education. Education is a

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[22] "Anzac Centenary Arts and Culture Fund," Anzac Centenary website, accessed August 25, 2016, http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au/get-involved/anzac-centenary-arts-and-culture-fund
[23] Reynolds, *Forgotten War.*
[24] Australian War Memorial, *Annual Report 2013-2014* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 2014), xiv.
[25] "Parliament and Civics Education Rebate", Commonwealth of Australia, accessed August 20, 2015, http://www.pacer.org.au/

core activity for the Memorial, and the institution's place in the landscape of history education in Australia is bolstered by this government support and by significant investment in funding construction, programs and exhibitions.[26]

As Inglis noted in 1965, 'Australia and New Zealand are, I think, the only countries in the world whose most popular national day commemorates the death of citizens in a war fought abroad.'[27] Australian involvement in overseas conflict, with particular emphasis on the First and Second World Wars, is a feature of state and national education curricula as well as a focus for Anzac Day, further reflecting the status of this history within popular national historical narratives.[28] How this curriculum is taught is a crucial issue; however, commentary on the implementation of curriculum rarely considers the myriad ways history is communicated and taught to school students outside of the classroom and beyond the textbook, even though historical and cultural institutions like the AWM are commonly used as a resource for teachers and students through excursions as well as the AWM's extensive online and published resources.[29]

Museums like the AWM are well-placed to respond to a need for opportunities for school students to meaningfully engage with histories of war, providing access to tangible remnants of the past in ways that can open the way for meaningful learning experiences.[30] They also provide a depth of expertise in specific historical themes and events that teachers – who are expected to be well-versed in broad swathes of historical content – cannot often provide. War is not easy material to teach though, and its themes encompass much of what we instinctively protect children and young people from. The confronting histories of war are difficult to communicate to diverse audiences with differing interests, and carry particular risks when communicating with the school-aged audiences that the Memorial attracts. When questioning the inclusion of certain confronting and contested histories in the

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[26] AWM, *Annual Report 2013-2014*.
[27] Inglis, "The Anzac Tradition," 44.
[28] Most states are currently using the Australian Curriculum for History, as it is one of the subject areas that has been endorsed for implementation. It can be viewed at: http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/history/curriculum/f-10?layout=1
[29] "Classroom resources and activities," Australian War Memorial website, accessed August 23, 2016, https://www.awm.gov.au/education/resources-activities/
[30] Bain and Ellenbogen, "Placing Objects."

AWM's exhibitions and programs, there is more to consider than just whether these stories should be told; curators and educators must also consider how to represent confronting and contested material, and grapple with the complex demands of multiple audiences who are likely to come with conflicting views and expectations.

Having grown and expanded over the last six decades, the AWM is now an extensive building set in carefully maintained grounds, with smaller memorials situated throughout the surrounding landscape. The building's byzantine-influenced façade faces down Parliament House, visible at the end of the wide, memorial-lined Anzac Parade and across Lake Burley Griffin.[31] It has a commanding presence, highly visible and distinctive, and its situation at the foot of Mount Ainslie, raised above the majority of low-lying Canberra, lends it authority. The tomb-like building and its peaceful location amongst the trees and grass of Mount Ainslie's lower slopes evoke solemnity and encourage quiet among approaching visitors, who are likely to find themselves predisposed to respectful commemoration by the time they are swallowed up by the large stone doorway.

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[31] AWM, *A Place to Remember.*

Figure 3: Exterior of the Australian War Memorial

The usual pathway through the Memorial's exhibitions begins with the First World War galleries, which were, as I have noted, redeveloped at a considerable cost during 2014 as part of the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War.[32] Visitors then move through the Hall of Valour, at the very heart of the building, which features medals and stories of bravery and sacrifice of soldiers in all of Australia's overseas conflicts. There are then several possible ways through the remaining galleries on the ground and lower ground floors. Some of the largest items in the Memorial's collection – in the form of air- and watercraft and vehicles – are displayed in Aircraft Hall and ANZAC Hall, newer additions towards the back of the building. The Second World War galleries occupy the space opposite the First World War galleries, while the permanent exhibitions on the lower ground floor currently include *Conflicts 1945 to today*, *Colonial Commitments* (covering overseas conflict fought when Australia was still under British rule), the *Discovery Zone* (designed for children and young people as an 'interactive' experience of several major conflicts),

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[32] As I noted above, the First World War galleries redevelopment attracted generous funding from the federal government. See Prime Minister Julia Gillard's announcement at the AWM here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IdIp2lBZBg&feature=youtu.be

Afghanistan: The Australian Story, and the Special Exhibitions gallery, which hosted *ANZAC Voices*, covering the First World War while the permanent galleries were under redevelopment during 2014, when the majority of exhibition analysis was undertaken for this research. There are also a number of areas of the Memorial that are dedicated more to commemoration than to exhibition, including the courtyard, the Hall of Memory containing the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the various smaller memorials scattered throughout the surrounding landscape.

The Memorial has an extensive education program, with school visitors given the choice between a self-guided, free visit and a guided visit costing less than ten dollars a student. School groups can also reserve time in the *Discovery Zone* at an extra cost. Formal education programs for primary and secondary school students focus on a range of themes and histories, with several dealing with the First World War, and others exploring science and war, 'unusual' objects, commemoration in Australia, Aboriginal servicemen, the Second World War, the Vietnam War, the home front, and stories of animals.[33] Programs are informed by a number of educational theories and pedagogical approaches, and include attention to historical empathy, Howard Gardner's 'multiple intelligences,'[34] and inquiry. Schools can also be involved in wreath laying ceremonies and a number of educational activities that take place outside the Memorial, including through education outreach programs and the Simpson Prize, which gives students the opportunity to travel to Turkey and take part in Anzac Day at Gallipoli.[35] In addition to the education programs for schools, the Memorial also offers a range of events and activities for 'lifelong learning,' which include lectures, guided tours, and professional development for educators.[36]

The AWM is a complex site in that it is both museum and memorial, and therefore has important responsibilities that have to do with commemorating as well as communicating the past. In the next section of this chapter I will explore some of the historical themes and events that might be 'difficult' or uncomfortable for the

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[33] A summary of current education programs can be found at:
https://www.awm.gov.au/education/schools/programs/
[34] Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The theory in practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
[35] "Simpson Prize," Australian War Memorial, accessed August 23, 2016,
https://www.awm.gov.au/education/simpson-prize/
[36] "What's on," Australian War Memorial, accessed August 23, 2016,
https://www.awm.gov.au/events/.

AWM and its visitors, considering the ways the institution's social and political context and its role as a memorial places limitations on its capacity to engage with particular histories. This section on uncomfortable history analyses the museum's exhibitions as teaching resources, exploring the public pedagogic dimensions of displaying particular historical themes and events. In the second main section of this chapter I detail the more explicitly, formally educative approaches taken to teaching visitors, and outline the ways the institution works towards educative goals relating in particular to civics and citizenship education.

Uncomfortable history at the Australian War Memorial

Much of what makes certain historical events and themes challenging for display at the Australian War Memorial is the institution's relationship to Australian politics and national identity. I have noted the popularity of the Memorial amongst school visitors from throughout Australia, and the federal government support for these camps and excursions is also testament to the place of war history in school curriculum and in the canon of what politicians – and many other Australians – believe the nation's children should know about their country's past.[37] The narrative of Australian military history represented by the AWM is one in which the courage and resilience of Australian soldiers is emphasised to the exclusion of other, more contentious and confronting stories of war and conflict. The AWM has come under fire for their role in 'mythologising' Anzac, with debate surrounding the interpretation of Australia's First World War history and its positioning as foundational to Australian national identity. Lake, for instance, argues that '[s]choolchildren are now conceptualised as the inheritors of the Anzac spirit and its custodians,'[38] and the AWM is an important context for initiating young Australians into commemorative practices and discourses.

The tendency to view Gallipoli as the birthplace of Australian national identity is problematic in a number of ways, privileging and celebrating an oversimplified image

[37] Anna Clark, *History's Children: History wars in the classroom* (Sydney: New South, 2008); Clark, *Teaching the Nation.*
[38] Marilyn Lake, "How do schoolchildren learn about the spirit of Anzac?" in *What's wrong with Anzac? The militarisation of Australian history*, ed. Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds and Mark McKenna (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010), 137.

of a usually white man who is portrayed as heroic. The history of this man is in fact far more problematic – as Lake and Reynolds note, he was in very violent circumstances, and he was likely to hold very racist attitudes, for example.[39] And yet, as McKenna notes, 'So sacrosanct has Anzac Day become, that no political leader dare risk qualifying, let alone doubting, the absolute centrality of its position to our national identity and national values.'[40]

The unsuccessful Gallipoli campaign has taken on the status of legend in Australia, a moment in history believed to exemplify the courage, mateship, good humour and persistence of Australian soldiers in incredibly difficult circumstances. Representing Gallipoli is clearly a central concern for the Australian War Memorial – its presence looms large in galleries and programs. 'Battlefield tours' appear to be synonymous with tours to Gallipoli.[41] Many historians have written about the problematic emphasis on military history in Australia – or specifically on the history of Australian participation in overseas wars and especially the First World War – with these concerns particularly apparent during the period of the First World War centenary from 2014. As Peter Stanley, formerly a historian at the Australian War Memorial, noted:

> Some of us [historians] entertain fears that military history is getting out of proportion; that the vast funding devoted to government agencies such as the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Australian War Memorial is skewing history (and indeed, military history) unduly. I essentially accept Marilyn Lake's argument (put in her *What's wrong with Anzac?*) that this is militarising Australian history, and the amount of attention devoted to military history, especially in schools, is unjustified.
>
> If you argue that this attention *is* justified, then I would counter that the weight of attention is unbalanced, with far more notice paid to operational history, often celebratory notice, than to where the balance should fall. We say that we loathe war and we want it to be an argument

[39] Henry Reynolds and Marilyn Lake, "Epilogue: Moving on?" in *What's wrong with Anzac? The militarisation of Australian history*, Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds and Mark McKenna, eds. (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010): 157-167.
[40] McKenna, "Anzac Day," 133-134.
[41] Stuart Baines, interview with the author, June 26, 2014, Australian War Memorial.

for peace but we still see more books devoted to celebrating Aussie heroes, presenting an unduly parochial interpretation of Australia's part in the Great War and beyond. We have seen the rise of an 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie' school of military historical writing since the appearance of Les Carlyon's *Gallipoli* (2001), which set the mould for the 'Oi, Oi, Oi' approach which is so lamentably common today.[42]

Stanley neatly summarises many of the problems of the Anzac myth and highlights important considerations for any analysis of the AWM, which presents a very public face for the Anzac myth.

In this chapter, I am exploring the way the Memorial contributes to the 'unduly parochial interpretation of Australia's part in the Great War and beyond' by considering stories of heroic sacrifice and resilience. I do not wish to dismiss the value of commemorating war, but to investigate where the emphasis lies at the AWM after some years of considerable critique from historians, and to consider the role of this version of the past in educating Australia's children and young people. What is it that the AWM's representation contributes to civics and citizenship learning that makes it worthy of inclusion as a required site for PACER visits? As the Australian historian Henry Reynolds argued in 2013,

> Few people have thought it appropriate to criticize activities that commemorate sacrifice and death in the service of country. But the size and longevity of the program raises a number of serious questions. The momentum fuelled by lavish funding creates its own problems. This is particularly true when education is considered. No other aspect of Australian history receives comparable promotion by a cashed-up government instrumentality. As a result the national story lists sharply to one side. War is presented as the most important element in national life.[43]

As I have noted previously, Reynolds is reflecting on the extensive federal funding that supports war commemoration, most obviously evidenced by spending on the

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[42] Peter Stanley, "Gallipoli - 98 years on: Professor Peter Stanley's speech to Gallipoli Memorial Club symposium," 7 August 2013, *Honest History.* Accessed March 30, 2016.
http://honesthistory.net.au/wp/gallipoli-club-peter-stanley/
[43] Reynolds, *Forgotten War*, 233.

First World War centenary. Formal education is one way the AWM 'teaches,' however I also argue that the public pedagogy of exhibitions means that they too have a significant role to play in educating Australia about its history.

The Australian War Memorial is a figurehead for understanding and remembering war and conflict in Australia. It plays a significant role in setting the tone for remembering, but it also serves as a symbol, or a reflection, of Australians' attitudes to war and to servicemen and women. Given that no single, homogenous view of war and remembrance is possible in a country of 20 million people, there will always be a degree of contention in what the Memorial does and does not do. Additionally, the simple inclusion of a conflict in the Memorial's exhibitions and commemorative practices, however it is represented, is an important acknowledgement; it legitimises and confirms the conflict and the value of the actions and experiences of Australians at war. It is therefore an unavoidably pointed statement when a conflict is not included in the Memorial's remit, as is the case with the wars of settlement, which I will address in more detail in the next section. Conversely, over time the AWM has become more inclusive in terms of representing the perspectives of women and children, and in addressing the home front in exhibitions. Ultimately, the exhibitions display a great deal of significant and relevant material about Australia's involvement in war, and choices have necessarily been made about what to include in a limited space.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history

In recent decades, the Australian War Memorial has begun to tell the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women through its exhibitions and programs. A travelling exhibition, *Too Dark for the Light Horse*, toured Australia throughout 2000 and 2001,[44] and accounts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service-people have been included in recent major exhibitions, including in the new

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[44] "Travelling exhibitions – completed: Too Dark for the Light Horse," Australian War Memorial, accessed August 23, 2016, https://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/toodark/.

Australia in the Great War exhibition. There has also been an effort to include commemoration of Aboriginal soldiers in the First World War centenary.[45]

The institution has, however, been criticised for its failure to represent Australia's frontier wars, fought between Indigenous Australians and white colonisers. As Henry Reynolds argues, 'There is now a broad consensus among Australia's military historians that frontier conflict was a form of warfare fought out along the ragged fringe of settlement for well over a hundred years.'[46] Current director of the AWM and former conservative politician, Brendan Nelson, disagrees with this argument, stating that the AWM is 'not of the view there was such a thing as a declared war against Indigenous Australians.'[47] Nelson's argument is that what Reynolds and others call a war was conducted by 'militia' and did not constitute military activity.

While on the one hand the AWM has sought to remedy the whitewashing of histories of Australian involvement in overseas campaigns, its failure to engage in any way with histories of frontier conflict represents a significant and deliberate exclusion. As Reynolds notes,

> The Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Australian War Memorial commemorate the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and –women…But they are both silent about frontier war. It is as though it doesn't exist. We have the extraordinary situation that Aborigines who died fighting on the other side of the world are recognised while those who were cut down defending their homelands are studiously ignored. It is no longer possible to feign ignorance of conditions on the frontier to explain the oversight.[48]

This in itself presents a valuable opportunity for teachers to engage students in explorations of the moral and ethical dimensions of history,[49] but unless teachers and

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[45] "Indigenous commemoration for the Centenary," Australian War Memorial, accessed August 23, 2016, https://www.awm.gov.au/1914-1918/indigenous-commemoration/.
[46] Reynolds, *Forgotten War,* 231.
[47] Primrose Riordan, "Indigenous gargoyles to stay at Australian War Memorial," *Canberra Times,* June 4, 2015, accessed August 16, 2016, http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/indigenous-gargoyles-to-stay-at-australian-war-memorial-20150604-ghgitz.html
[48] Reynolds, *Forgotten War,* 234.
[49] Seixas, "Benchmarks."

museum educators explicitly raise these issues, or students have prior knowledge of them, the opportunity will not be taken up.

Curatorial staff interviewed for this research presented two main arguments supporting the assertion that the institution cannot address these themes. The first and perhaps most difficult to overcome relates to the current version of the Australian War Memorial Act, which is – perhaps deliberately – worded to preclude the possibility of commemorating both Aboriginal and white people killed in frontier conflict within the Memorial. A detailed analysis of the Act is beyond the scope of this study, however it is worth noting that the Memorial's functions include acting 'as a national memorial of Australians who have died: (i) on or as a result of active service; or (ii) as a result of any war or warlike operations in which Australians have been on active service.'[50] Where it becomes impossible to commemorate those killed in the frontier wars is through the definition of the key terms in this statement, with 'active service' referring to active service by 'members of the Defence Force,' and 'Defence Force' including 'any naval or military force *of the Crown* raised in Australia before the establishment of the Commonwealth [emphasis added].'[51] This allows for the inclusion of pre-Federation conflicts such as the Boer War, but excludes those frontier forces that were not raised by the Crown and renders it difficult for staff at the Memorial to justify any commemoration or representation of people killed in those battles.

As curator Rebecca Britt notes,

> We have quite a specifically defined charter and that is to tell the
> experience of Australian servicemen who have enlisted for their country,
> and women, and served in defined operational conflicts overseas. So yes,
> I think, those contested histories of conflict with our Indigenous
> populations need to be told but I—actually looking at our Memorial Act
> which we are governed by legislatively, I don't see how we can do it.[52]

Britt perceives a tendency for Australians to view the AWM as a 'catch all' for histories of conflict in Australia but argues that this cannot be the case. The

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[50] Australian War Memorial Act of 1980.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Rebecca Britt, interview with the author, June 25, 2014, Australian War Memorial.

constraints of the Act preclude the possibility of commemorating deaths in frontier conflict, and it is likely that wording of the Act would need to be loosened before such commemoration could be considered possible in the Memorial. The problem in the Act, I would argue, has less to do with definitions of 'war,' given that there is a provision for 'warlike activity' that would circumvent the need to prove the status of the frontier wars, and more to do with the definitions of Australians on 'active service What all of this highlights is that the representation of the frontier wars cannot be considered a simple matter of choice on the part of curators and museum management; and as the Bells Falls controversy at the NMA demonstrated, museum staff can pay a significant price for representing contentious history against politicians' desires.[53] Representations in national institutions in particular are subject to intense political pressure. In thinking about the museum as heterotopia, there are clear limitations on the capacity for some museums to act as heterotopian agents of social change, and in this case the AWM is far more likely to encourage visitors to come into line with dominant narratives of Australian identity that go beyond war to reinforce the marginalisation of multiple social groups, but most notably Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Additionally, staff at the Memorial make the argument that the institution's collections would not support an exhibition of the history of frontier conflict in Australia. As curator Nick Fletcher stated:

> We don't have a collection to do it. It's the oldest and most hackneyed saying in the museum 'well an exhibition is not a book on the wall But you have to constantly remind yourself of that. It's no good just putting up reams and reams of text saying that, you know, for good or bad, you know, Australians—white Australians took the land from the Aboriginals. Anything written that is more than that is going to be more than the public wants to read. They are coming to a museum to learn through experiencing, through relating to objects or to media or whatever else but it's no good just simply putting up piles and piles of text and I think this is an area where we do hear some criticism of the institution from historians in particular 'why can't we deal with these

[53] Arnold, "Museums as contested history sites"; Marcus, "What's at stake?"; Nettelbeck, "Remembering Indigenous dispossession"; Nettelbeck, "The Australian Frontier in the museum".

more difficult matters?' The short answer is we haven't got a collection to do it with.[54]

These are perhaps not insurmountable problems – relevant collections do exist in other institutions,[55] although the display of these objects would likely necessitate collaboration or consultation with the Indigenous communities to whom they belong in order to ensure they were represented respectfully and meaningfully. It is also perhaps the case that these collections are not as extensive nor do they often have as easily-established provenance to specific conflicts as the Memorial's collections of artefacts from overseas conflicts. As Fletcher notes:

> You would have to do it through more general objects. You couldn't use specific objects, you couldn't say 'this rifle was used in a massacre' or that 'this spear was used to kill somebody You would have to say 'these are typical weapons carried by the people of this particular area' and 'that these weapons are representative of the types carried by the white settlers who arrived. So for me it would make it rather hollow. One of the things that the Memorial's very fortunate in having is, in a great many cases, the genuine item from the genuine event and that's certainly, I think as a child, is what influenced me so strongly is that the item was there. It's a genuine witness to the event.[56]

There is an important point here regarding the authenticity of an object – here defined in relation to its having been a 'genuine witness to the event' – and its affective power in learning and teaching. Fletcher describes being particularly affected by objects that are specific to the stories on display, and there is perhaps a greater imaginative leap to be made where objects do not have direct provenance.

Discourses of authenticity in encountering historical objects come together in the AWM with often particularly evocative artefacts – guns and gas masks, for example – which have their affective power reinforced when visitors are able to read text linking the object with the actual historical moment being represented, and 'engage

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[54] Nick Fletcher, interview with the author, June 24 2014, Australian War Memorial.
[55] Museum Victoria and the National Museum of Australia, for example, both have collections of artefacts relating to frontier conflict.
[56] Fletcher, interview.

imaginatively in the space between themselves and the objects.'[57] This is one type of museum experience where, as Wetherell notes, 'body possibilities and routines become recruited or entangled together with meaning-making.'[58]

When we consider the AWM through the conceptual lens of the heterotopia, the refusal to represent the history of the frontier wars becomes a clear demonstration of the ways heterotopias can act as 'instruments that support the existing mechanisms of exclusion and domination, thus helping to foreclose any real possibility for change.'[59] Modern Australia's foundational history of invasion and genocide is not widely recognised nor acknowledged, and this silencing feeds into a wider net of exclusion that is cast around present day Indigenous Australia, attempting to mask a clear example of complex cultural trauma. This silence is damaging in an institution that is, unavoidably, a figurehead for understanding the history of Australian involvement in war and conflict. While the AWM has begun to educate visitors about some of the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in its exhibitions, these stories rarely delve into the most confronting aspects of the history, and do not serve to 'disturb' the existing discourses surrounding the centrality of white experiences of war to Australian identity.

Violence, confronting physical injuries and death

Within the histories of war that the Memorial does focus on, there remain many potentially difficult or uncomfortable themes and events. In this section of the chapter, I analyse the representation of the themes of violence and death in exhibitions and programs, arguing that although these themes are given significant attention throughout the Memorial, they are addressed in ways that reinforce problematic notions about the heroism, resilience, and bravery of Australian servicemen and women in overseas wars. Ultimately, material related to violence and death is used to reinforce the dominant Australian narrative of Anzac. Rather than constructing a heterotopian space inviting critical engagement with established discourses, the AWM reinforces a narrative that is privileged by many politicians

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[57] Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect," 267.
[58] Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion,* 19.
[59] Sohn, "Heterotopia," 322.

from both sides of politics, in public discourse and affective practices of commemoration. While exhibition spaces can only hold so much material and a 'complete' picture of the past is always impossible, curators and other museum staff do make careful choices about what will and will not be included. These choices take place within complex political and historical contexts, and so are not often a simple matter of selecting the most interesting or appealing object. In this section of the chapter I consider some of these choices as they relate to the themes of violence and death, situating my analysis within a broader consideration of the context in which the AWM's staff works.

Violence is a central feature of histories of war and conflict, and it is their involvement in violence that lends soldiers the 'character' that commemoration celebrates – courage, determination, perseverance.[60] The themes of suffering, sacrifice and death ultimately give the AWM its most potent meaning, and curators, educators and exhibition designers are clearly adept at constructing powerful affective encounters with the histories of war. There is an awareness of the potential for confronting history to prove too horrific or to cause visitors – and staff[61] – to experience vicarious trauma, but AWM staff also noted that the risks of displaying histories of violence and death are likely not as significant in a war museum. As Curator Nick Fletcher noted in his interview, 'There's an expectation amongst those who visit that, even amongst the children…that we are dealing with conflict and human suffering and death.'[62] According to this view, there is no great need to censor the violence of the history because visitors expect to encounter difficult themes and to feel sadness and perhaps fear and horror.

It is however apparent that there is a line that cannot be crossed between engaging visitors in histories that are likely to inspire negative emotions and confronting visitors with the most gruesome aspects of war. Where this line lies is not always clear, but there are a number of areas that are or have until recently been considered taboo that Memorial staff identified in their interviews. It is not my intention here to

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[60] Inglis, "The Anzac Tradition."
[61] Education manager Stuart Baines noted the problems of vicarious trauma amongst staff, stating that they are sometimes 'directly involved with families who have lost people in current conflicts like Afghanistan' and have training and access to counselling in case of difficult issues.
[62] Fletcher, interview.

describe in detail the extensive displays and exhibitions dealing with violence and death at the Memorial, but to provide analysis of a few examples where what is and is not displayed allows significant insight into displays that contribute to a broader institutional narrative of war history. I draw in particular on several examples of history that is underrepresented or that presents particular value to teachers and students wishing to engage in the practices of historical thinking outlined by history pedagogues.[63] The historical representations I highlight here also provide insight into the affective practices the AWM is privileging; visitors are invited to participate in practices of commemoration that are intended to be inclusive in a sense, but ultimately place white, male, Australian soldiers at the centre and everyone else at the periphery.

Although injuries have long been a feature in Australian representations of the First World War, there are some types of injury that feature less predominantly or that have not been represented in public depictions of war until very recently. Facial injury is one example that has rarely been seen in museum exhibitions in Australia. It was recently the subject of a United Kingdom National Army Museum exhibition, *Faces of Battle*,[64] and attracted the interest of one of the AWM's curatorial staff, Dr Kerry Neale, who completed doctoral research on Australian men who sustained facial injuries in the First World War. Neale also worked with Museum Victoria in the development of *WWI: Love and Sorrow*, which is discussed in Chapter Six. Facial injury is addressed in *Australia in the Great War* in a limited sense; it is not allowed to interrupt the narrative of triumph, courage and resilience. On display in a cabinet is a watercolour painting from five months after the soldier, Corporal Harry Dester, was injured, along with a plaster cast of his face [Figure 3].

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[63] See for example: Seixas, "Benchmarks"; van Drie and van Boxtel, "Historical reasoning."
[64] "Faces of Battle at the National Army Museum, London," Culture 24, accessed June 16, 2016. http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/military-history/art51925

Figure 4: Display in Australia in the Great War, *including plaster cast and painting of Corporal Harry Dester's face, Australian War Memorial*

The painting and plaster cast, along with other elements of the display, produce a multimodal message drawing on the semiotic meanings of these objects associated with injury. They are not overly confronting though, and the more confronting photographs need to be sought out through the electronic label available on a touch screen next to the display. There is therefore a degree of removal, an obstacle to access here that means that unless a visitor is very thoroughly examining the exhibition or has a particular interest they are unlikely to understand anything of Dester's story beyond his injury and survival (given that his face has been reconstructed through surgery and looks, although malformed, healed). This approach is perhaps necessary, because the most confronting images of facial injury are in fact quite difficult to view and are likely to be more than some visitors – particularly children – can cope with.[65] While providing the option to avoid viewing

[65] This is interesting to consider in light of what Deborah Tout-Smith, one of the curators of Museum Victoria's *WWI: Love and Sorrow* exhibition, described in her interview regarding images of facially wounded soldiers in the First World War – she in fact needed to turn her computer screen to face away from her office door so that passers-by would not be confronted with the images she was viewing.

these confronting photographs is a useful strategy in managing visitor comfort, the display is still lacking in detail and does not encourage a great deal of reflection on the meaning and significance of Dester's story. The images are confronting enough, but text in the display tells us only that Dester 'underwent 12 operations' and 'returned to Australia in August 1919 bearing the signs of his disfigurement[66]

I do not suggest that the AWM should be risking traumatizing visitors with extensive, graphic descriptions of Dester's injury and and its aftermath, but this way of representing Dester's story effectively circumvents affective responses – of shock, for example – that might encourage young visitors to take up affective practices that differ to those of more traditional commemoration. The types of sense-making that visitors could engage in relating to shock and disgust could underpin learning for social justice, I argue, in that they would highlight the huge costs of war and throw into doubt the sense that war histories can ever be fully triumphant – which is what Anzac mythology relies upon. In addition, facial injury presents a useful opportunity for young learners to begin to understand the effects of disfigurement on soldiers, and this learning could be extended to deepen understandings of the experience of others who look 'different

The effect of skating over these confronting histories is the negation of the enormous potential of confronting images and objects; it undermines the potential for stories of injury and violence to prompt affects that will make learning 'stick,' as Mulcahy and Ahmed suggest.[67] Men with gaping holes where noses or eyes or jaws should be make for very challenging viewing, too challenging for some visitors, but their stories – displayed carefully and with attention to visitor comfort – could also provide a powerful opportunity to understand multiple facets of war history through the experiences of these men, the impacts of war on their minds and bodies, the medical history associated with the First World War, and the response to soldiers upon returning home with such horrific injuries. In essence, confronting images and objects can be used to throw visitors off balance, challenging them to engage with

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[66] Text panel, "Shocking Wounds," *Australia in the Great War*, Australian War Memorial.
[67] Mulcahy, "Sticky learning"; Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

uncomfortable issues in order to make sense of their own responses.[68] This further highlights the need for historical institutions to find ways to manage visitors' comfort while they encounter difficult themes and objects, rather than avoiding discomfort altogether.[69]

Neale in fact suggested quite a different approach in her interview prior to the opening of *Australia in the Great War*. She stated that the confronting stories of facial injury can and should be displayed, but that what is essential to 'overcoming' – or making meaning from – the likely response of disgust and aversion to images of facially wounded soldiers is an engagement with the human behind the injury – this could be one way of making the experience a more comfortable one, even while challenging and provoking, and is in many ways the approach taken by Melbourne Museum, which I will outline in more detail in Chapter Six. Neale notes that curators need to understand how to:

> approach the topic in a way that is visually graphic enough to actually
> explain what these men were going through and what the surgeons had
> to deal with. But in a way that still humanises … and makes sure that
> people aren't just confronted with this horrific image. That they're
> telling the story behind that image as much as just—not shocking people
> but really bringing that to light that these men—they existed, these
> wounds were happening and they were surviving.[70]

Neale makes an important argument here; the purpose for including confronting histories should not be solely to shock and horrify, it should be to build understanding of stories and of people's experiences. Considering the affective potential of such images, the immediate, visceral response can be useful if there is sufficient support for visitors to pause and make meaning of their own reactions. The speed with which most visitors need to move through *Australia in the Great War*,

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[68] One particularly powerful example of the use of difficult objects to challenge visitors is the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University in Michigan. See: Patterson, "Teaching Tolerance."

[69] For an analysis of the issue of visitor comfort in two US museums, see: Tyson, "Crafting Emotional Comfort."

[70] Kerry Neale, interview with the author, June 27, 2014, Australian War Memorial.

given its size and the extensive collections on display, is unlikely to support this kind of reflective pause.
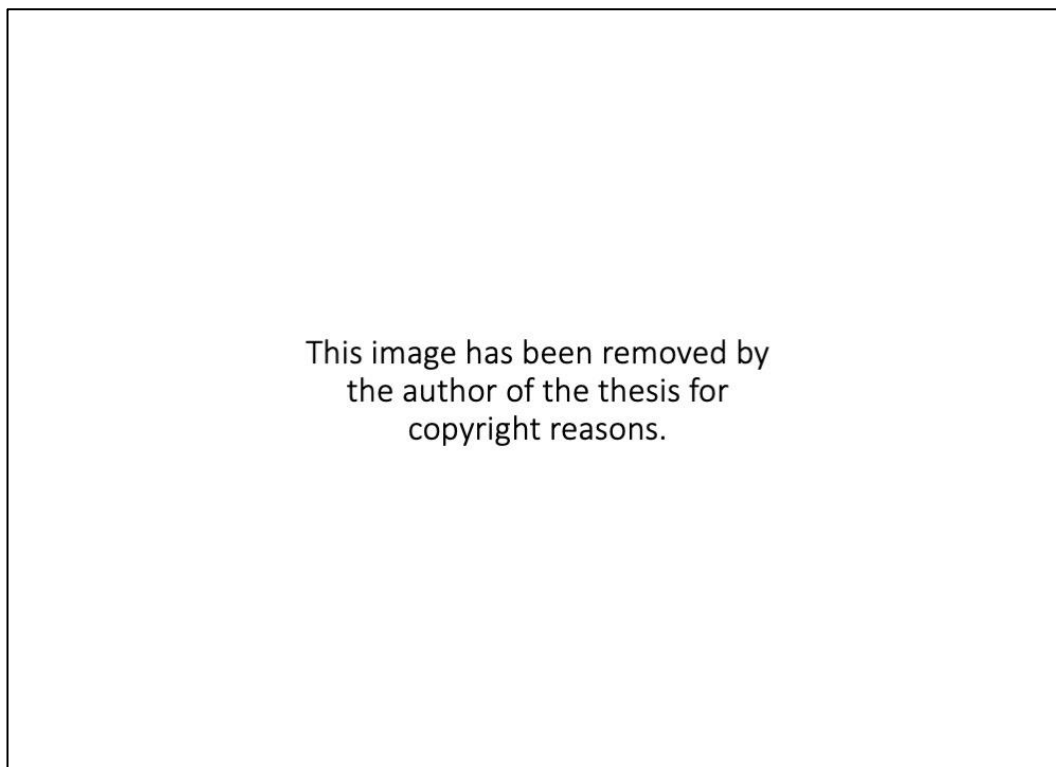
Figure 5: Display case containing weapons and armour, Australia in the Great War, *Australian War Memorial*

Images are not the only elements of multimodal museum representation that represent violence in war though, and the AWM's object collections present a vast array of weapons and damaged items that bear evidence of the destructive capacities of war. In some instances, such as in the display of weapons in *Australia in the Great War* pictured in Figure 4, weapons and other objects are used to impress the visitor – on one of my visits to the AWM, several young boys were particularly enamoured with this display cabinet, excitedly pointing out the biggest and most intimidating weapons. It is likely that visitors will be 'impressed' in different ways by such a display depending on the personal and social contexts, to draw on Falk and Dierking's contextual model for museum learning.[71] The bright red is, in this instance, arresting; in the context of an exhibition where colour is mainly muted and

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[71] Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience.*

the subject is war, red wall draws attention and evokes the blood that is otherwise largely absent from these depictions of violence.

This image has been removed by the author of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 6: Sten sub-machine gun and other objects, including medals (left), Second World War galleries, Australian War Memorial

The affective practices supported by this display have less to do with commemoration and more to do with violence and fear. Although a more direct representation of war's capacity for injury and death, the weapons are not supportive of compassionate commemoration, rather they are there to impress and excite. In other instances, such as in Figure 6 in the Second World War galleries, weapons are displayed alongside medals and other personal items belonging to soldiers. This has the potential to provide a moment of affective dissonance through an encounter with an object that provokes a visceral knowledge of dehumanised violence (in this case a sub-machine gun) alongside objects that emphasise the humanness of the soldier in battle (in this case a phrase book and first aid kit). The addition of an impressive set of medals in this display contributes to the semiotic meaning and affects at work here, relating to the narrative of heroism and sacrifice; yes, there was violence, but this was heroic violence.

Objects displaying signs of damage are also used in a number of different ways aligning with the overriding narrative of triumph and survival. Several items of damaged headwear in *Australia in the Great War* provide a particularly relevant example here. The hats and helmets tell stories of lucky escape and survival. Driver Osmond Howard's damaged slouch hat, for instance, is accompanied by an electronic caption explaining his head wound and subsequent recovery. Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant Tom Darley's sun helmet, displayed along with the nose cap of the shrapnel shell that knocked it off his head, states that Darley 'remained untouched while three other men and three mules around him were killed.'[72] Lance Corporal Neville Wilson also 'narrowly avoided death'[73] when a bullet struck the cap he was wearing, also on display in *Australia in the Great War*.

This image has been removed by the author of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 7: Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant Tom Darley's Sun Helmet and the shell nose cap that hit it, Australia in the Great War, *Australian War Memorial*

These displays are designed to provoke a moment of concern; the visitor is likely to be aware of the seriousness of head injuries, and is positioned to be unsure the

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[72] Australian War Memorial, Text label, Sun Helmet, *Australia in the Great War.*
[73] Australian War Memorial, Text label, *Australia in the Great War.*
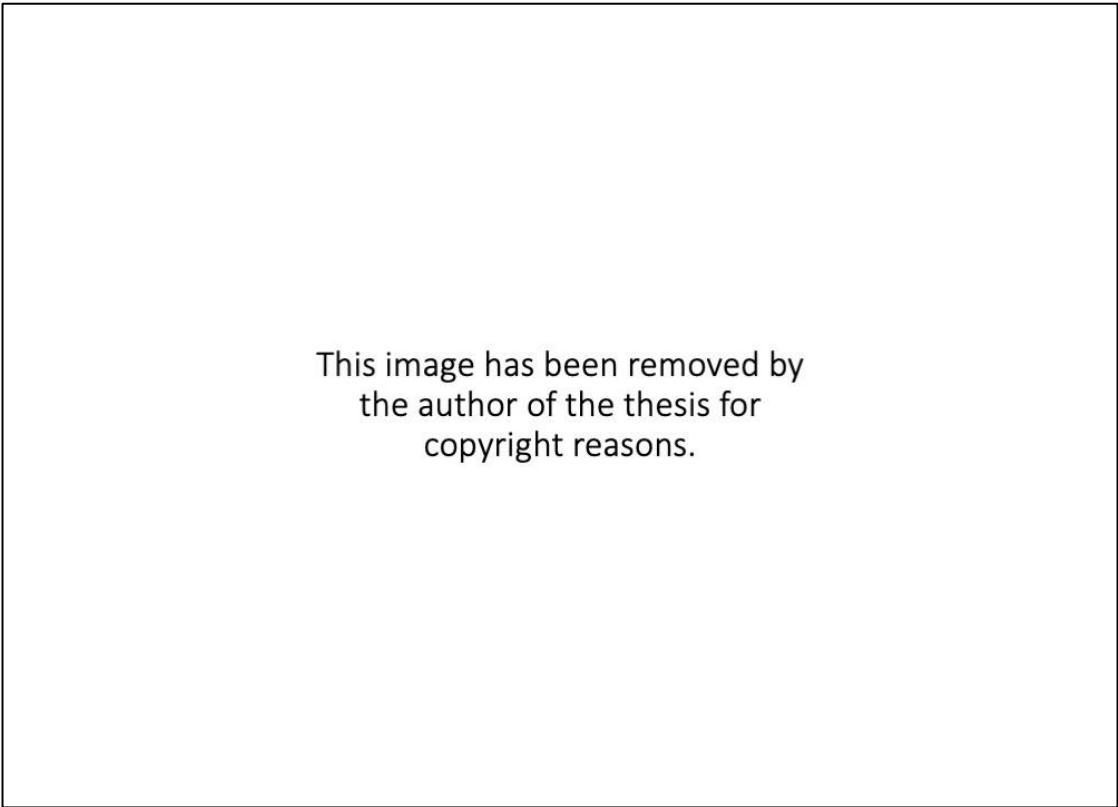
soldier could survive such damage. Affects are then, in all of these examples, folded into narratives of survival; because the visitor has had this moment of concern for the soldier, it is likely that the story of survival becomes more potent. It is also likely, however, in this case, that such stories reflect more about collecting practices during and after war than deliberate choices of curators to display only the headwear of survivors. Nonetheless, the various pieces of headgear reinforce a narrative of courage in which those who were killed form the backdrop – their loss is used to reinforce a sense of the soldier as survivor and hero, left standing when others have fallen. The soldier that the visitor is positioned to connect with, through the object, is the soldier the visitor is intended to feel for. The deaths of surrounding soldiers have a lesser impact than the death of this soldier would.

Uniforms present an important connection to bodies in war, and the use of uniforms in museum exhibitions on war and conflict is one way that institutions can work to viscerally remind us of the human beings in landscapes and amongst weapons and other objects. A damaged uniform belonging to Lance Corporal Tim Loch in *Afghanistan: The Australian Story* [Figure 8] raised questions about the appropriateness of displaying such potent reminders of the violence of that conflict for curator Rebecca Britt, who noted an 'inbuilt radar' amongst staff for what might prove too confronting for display. Britt stated in interview that the development team carefully considered

> what kind of effect [the display of the uniform] may have on our people
> who are coming in to view it. A lot of them we anticipated would be
> returned veterans, families with children … with that one we decided it
> could be construed as confronting but it was also the reality of the
> conflict. And so that outweighed the, I guess, the confronting nature or
> the … potential gruesomeness of it. If however we had the uniform of
> one of our soldiers who had been killed, I don't think we would have
> put that on display. Too raw, too soon, for what purpose … perhaps
> some of the damage … that would be done to families and to friends,
> would outweigh the benefits the Australian people would get from
> seeing that. We can tell those stories about sacrifice and death in other

> ways. I would be concerned about sensationalising that through
> something so visceral on display.[74]

Temporal distance can therefore have an impact on whether an object is considered 'safe' for display – several curators noted a need to be sensitive to the impacts of objects and displays on returned servicemen and women and their families, particularly where the conflict was recent. Again, this object is 'safer' for display because the soldier survived.

This image has been removed by the author of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 8: Lance Corporal Tim Loch's uniform displayed with a mobile phone of the type used to detonate IEDs, Afghanistan: The Australian Story

As I have been suggesting, the process of sense-making provoked by an object representing courageous survival is quite different to what would be prompted by an encounter with clothing worn by a soldier who died. Loch's survival perhaps mitigates the potential for this object to become a focus for vicarious trauma amongst visitors; we are able to quickly fold our moment of horror into a meaningful narrative of survival – a story with a happy ending. In some ways, the meaning-

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[74] Britt, interview.

making strategies used here are linked to what Alexander has summarized on the psychological and psychoanalytic traditions of trauma narratives and public recognition; these public displays of trauma are one way that such memories become 'collective.'[75]

Although it could appear counterintuitive that objects can more readily be displayed when they do not represent death in an institution ostensibly built to honour the dead, my findings suggest that curators make careful and conscious consideration of the types of emotion exhibitions should produce in visitors. At the AWM these emotions are very much entwined with particular messages about war heroism and sacrifice – they are not about emphasising the horror of war except for where confronting histories can be used to reinforce the affective power of stories of survival and triumph. The production of an emotional narrative of Australian identity that enables citizens' participation in commemoration is a core responsibility of the AWM.[76] Certainly the institution's role in the public ceremonies of Anzac Day and other instances of war commemoration demonstrate the immense public importance of this responsibility. With commemoration a central part of its role, these questions take on particular intensity and mean that curators are conscious of the need to take care to avoid provoking the 'wrong' kinds of difficult emotion.

War trauma and psychological injury

Psychological injury in war, although a common type of injury, is in many ways a more complex aspect of war history to represent in exhibition form than physical injury. Nonetheless, understandings of trauma and the psychological impact of war, as Christina Twomey has argued, have been central to the 'reinvigoration of Anzac' commemoration in Australia.[77] Physical injuries come with paraphernalia in the form of false limbs, first aid supplies, crutches, images of soldiers in wheelchairs or on stretchers. Psychological injury is both a more 'taboo' subject and comes with fewer easily-displayed objects and images; it is often a source of shame for returned

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[75] Alexander, *Trauma.*
[76] "About the Australian War Memorial," Australian War Memorial, accessed August 26, 2016, https://www.awm.gov.au/about/.
[77] Christina Twomey, "Trauma and the reinvigoration of Anzac," *History Australia* 10, no. 3 (2013): 85-108.

servicemen and women, and indeed shame is a central theme in post-traumatic stress disorder in particular.[78] At the AWM, war trauma and other mental illnesses are included in several displays, although these stories and objects are usually presented as marginal to the events addressed in exhibitions, most often simply by allowing them very little space. In a number of instances, traumatic events can be heard about through the recorded voices of veterans – for example in the Second World War galleries – but few detail experiences of mental ill health during or following their military experiences.

Horrific events, the type that can and often do lead to significant psychological injuries for human beings, ripple through the exhibitions but visitors are rarely – as I have previously argued in this chapter – given the opportunity to encounter the reality of long-lasting psychological damage due to violence in war. As Twomey notes, 'private knowledge about the harmful and, in many cases, ongoing effects of war service and grief over the loss of kin and friends have stood in a complex relationship with the public articulation of Anzac.'[79] Ultimately my analysis of exhibitions and archival materials and to a lesser extent interviews suggests that war trauma is a slowly increasing focus for the AWM; while representation is limited, there is a growing awareness of the need to represent this history and perhaps to begin to build the social context for trauma recovery that Herman describes.[80] Rebecca Britt noted that AWM director Brendan Nelson was 'very conscious of instances of PTSD' amongst returning soldiers in the present, although she 'would feel very uncomfortable claiming that my exhibition [*Afghanistan*] has a therapeutic effect.'[81]

Material culture relating to trauma and other psychological injuries in conflicts prior to the Vietnam War is not abundant, and understanding of these types of injury was limited.[82] Gaps and silences can in themselves provide highly significant evidence for historical interpretation though, and I argue that this is one area of history where

[78] See for example: Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*; James C. West, "Therapeutic alliance in the treatment of combat PTSD," in *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Related Diseases in Combat Veterans*, ed. Elspeth Cameron Ritchie (Cham: Springer, 2015): 27-34.
[79] Twomey, "Trauma and the reinvigoration of Anzac," 89.
[80] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.
[81] Britt, interview.
[82] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.

there is considerable scope for institutions like the AWM to undertake important work in building understanding of mental illness and trauma. In light of the Memorial's role within the community of returned servicemen and women in Australia – many of whom grapple with these issues personally – and their families, it may be that future exhibitions work to better raise awareness of the prevalence of PTSD and mental ill health amongst returned servicemen and women.[83]

Testimony, in the form of video and audio recordings played through the galleries, is the main mode of representation of veterans' experiences of mental illness and war trauma, highlighting the importance of considering the many modes that can be used to create meaning in a museum 'text.'[84] These are not heavy handed in their descriptions of traumatic events or the psychological effects, but present an important opportunity for visitors to connect in a more personal way to experiences of war. Audio in *Afghanistan*, for example, plays a film with soldiers and civilians describing their experiences of the conflict, many of which are quite traumatic and often desperately sad stories of loss and violence. This exhibition contains a small number of objects and images and creates quite a different space to other exhibitions in the museum. It is significantly less congested and thus allows the visitor to linger in a way that is conducive to deeper reflection and stronger affective experiences. In combination, viewing the objects – which include Loch's uniform described above, several arresting artworks, parts of a helicopter and an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle [UAV] and equipment relating to Improvised Explosive Devices [IEDs] – while hearing testimony from those who were there gives *Afganistan* considerable emotional depth. I suggest that this exhibition carves out a heterotopian space apart from the rest of the Memorial; here the narrative of bravery is at times disrupted through an affective practice of connection with human stories. In this instance, curator Rebecca Britt links emotion to engagement, noting that the exhibition has 'to get people's attention' and that 'sometimes that means relying on the emotions.'[85]

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[83] This is a current focus for the Department of Veterans' Affairs, as it is a continuing issue for many servicemen and women. See: "Mental Health," Department of Veterans' Affairs, accessed August, 26, 2016, http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health.
[84] Prior, *Using Documents*; Scott, "Editor's introduction."
[85] Britt, interview.

This and other representations of war trauma in the AWM make apparent the enormous affective potential of these human stories, but stories of PTSD – which often has permanent effects – also carry the potential to undermine beliefs about the resilience of Australian soldiers. Certain types of discomfort are acceptable for display, for instance the discomfort experienced by soldiers in the trenches, or the discomfort of hunger amongst prisoners of war. Other discomforts are less acceptable because, I suggest, they present too great a challenge to the narrative of Anzac; for instance, violent and sudden deaths or the types of physical and psychological injuries that meant soldiers were unable to live fulfilling lives following the wars. Essentially, I argue that in the case of the AWM beliefs about resilience are contextually necessary; that is, the fact of present and likely continuing participation of Australian soldiers in war and conflict means that presenting stories that emphasise the often permanent and horrifying impacts of war trauma on soldiers is impossible. For this reason, representations of war trauma are generally presented as marginal. In the First World War galleries, for example, attention to mental illness is limited to the display of an 'Electric machine' [Figure 9], used to deliver electric shocks to shell shock sufferers.

This image has been removed by the author of the thesis for copyright reasons.
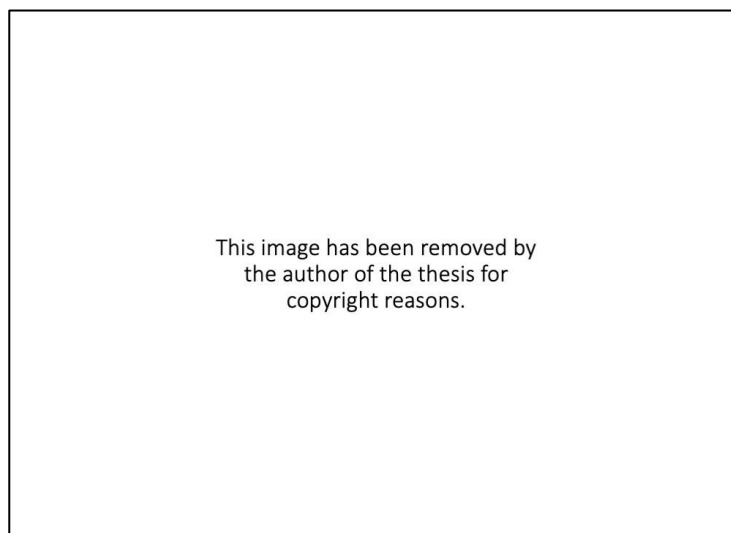
Figure 9: 'Electric machine' displayed in Australia in the Great War

There is a valuable opportunity here for student visitors to engage in analysis of change and continuity, a key component of historical thinking,[86] by looking at the

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[86] Seixas, "Benchmarks."

way mental illness has been treated and understood over time, perhaps through a comparison with the representation of psychological trauma in the Second World War galleries or in *Afghanistan*. Text panels accompanying the First World War electroshock machine refer to shell shock as a 'hitherto almost unknown' condition,[87] and demonstrate one of the important potentials of the Memorial's exhibitions. Provocative points of interest can be drawn from the interpretation for further research and historical analysis. This can be of immense value to skilled history teachers; however, such an activity would require significantly more material than is displayed in this cabinet or indeed in *Australia in the Great War* overall. While material on shell shock is not used to bolster the Anzac myth in *Australia in the Great War*, it also does not serve to challenge the narrative of courage and resilience embodied by the legend. Rather, I suggest that the object and its interpretation present a sort of 'outlier' to the myth – these are the exceptions to the majority of experiences of war. Although more confronting themes such as facial and psychological injury could provide highly valuable opportunities for deeper engagement with the difficult histories of war in ways that would be interesting and accessible for older school students, there are few opportunities for informal learning along these lines within the exhibition.

Questions about the necessity and value of Australian participation in war form a central tension in the AWM, one that is apparent in most exhibitions and is, I suggest, very much linked to representations of war trauma and the lasting damage inflicted on soldiers and civilians in war. Recent overseas military engagement, including in Afghanistan, by Australia is or has been politically contentious.[88] The Australian War Memorial's remit means that it is required to represent conflicts where Australian involvement has been widely protested, and the Memorial's role in commemorating servicemen and women means it cannot risk roundly condemning the involvement of Australians in any of the conflicts it represents. Nor is it feasible for the AWM to promote an anti-war agenda when Australian soldiers continue to be sent into conflict by the same government that funds the institution.

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[87] Australian War Memorial, Text label, "Shell Shock," *Australia in the Great War*.
[88] Karen Middleton, *An Unwinnable War: Australia in Afghanistan* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Publishing, 2011).

Australia's participation in conflict in Afghanistan, for example, was very recently a source of protest during the early stages of military intervention. Curators for the Memorial's *Afghanistan* exhibition faced the challenge of responding to a still ongoing conflict where Australia's involvement was vigorously opposed by many Australians, and with much of the most significant historical material that might support Australia's involvement not to be released – because of its military sensitivity – for display for quite some time.[89] For these reasons, *Afghanistan* does not focus on representing reasons for or against entering this conflict, nor does it provide a great deal of social and historical context for it. Instead, it focuses on individual servicemen and women and their families, revealing some of the characteristics of the conflict – the types of weapons used and the lack of 'front line,' for example – and the experiences of those involved. What is produced for the visitor in this space is therefore an affective practice of connecting with individuals, a more immediately biographical orientation, that is quite unlike the affective responses promoted by other galleries in the Memorial. The visitor listens to the voices of those servicemen and women whose stories are told in displays, and this act of hearing voices fosters a connection to the people we are learning about. It is worth noting that there has been some ambivalence towards the exhibition from amongst Memorial staff because, as Britt asks, 'how do you tell a story about a conflict that actually hasn't finished yet?'[90] Britt also suggests that this sentiment emerges from the sense that the Memorial is 'the official historians, we tell the official history once its finished,' but argues that the institution is more 'modern' now, and is 'trying to respond to different expectations of what a museum is in society.' That involves, she notes, becoming 'a space for current debate,'[91] reflecting the ideals of the New Museum.[92]

Celebrating war: heterotopian spaces

It is perhaps unsurprising that the national war memorial reinforces established discourses surrounding Australian involvement in war that are strongly promoted by dominant public commentary, particularly that relating to the Anzac myth. I want to

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[89] Britt, interview.
[90] Britt, interview.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Chinnery, "Temple or forum?"

emphasise here that although I do argue that the AWM neglects important facets of war history that should be central to what young people learn about the country's history of conflict, I do not suggest that it is a deliberate policy amongst curatorial and educational staff to silence marginalised histories. Rather, staff are constrained and influenced by the political contexts for war commemoration in Australia.

As I have argued in the above sections, while the overarching narrative remains the story of the courageous and resilient 'digger,' there are small moments of challenge emerging where traumatic experiences are presented with greater emotional depth. It is still the case, however, that the stories relating to the long lasting negative impacts of war are presented as marginal and relatively insignificant, while stories of heroic survival – particularly in the First World War galleries – tend to be foregrounded. The implications of this for informal learning in the galleries are significant;[93] they limit the opportunities available to school visitors outside of formal education programs.

On the one hand, the mobilisation of affective responses at the AWM to guide visitors into respectful commemoration and to foster investment in the mythology of Anzac is deliberate and powerful; on the other, this process takes place within extensive and powerful public discourses and practices. The AWM is not an isolated institution; for most Australian visitors it sits within a broader context for commemoration that citizens are inducted into from a very young age. The Memorial is both influenced by and helps to construct this context. Its heterotopian character is therefore slippery and difficult to grasp; it does not represent a significant 'difference' to other 'spaces' of commemoration in Australian society, although, as I have indicated, there are moments of challenge in several galleries. Rather, it predominantly reinforces the dominant discourses of Anzac, using affective practices of commemoration to ensure that visitors are oriented to absorb and become invested in a story of bravery and resilience.

The use of emotion and the affective practices of commemoration that the exhibitions contribute to in fact serves to silence and dismiss other narratives, because visitors can become so immersed in the affective practices of Anzac that

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[93] See for example: Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education.*

they simply do not see any other way of viewing this history. Space for experiences that differ from the dominant narrative within the AWM is therefore very limited, and the largely hegemonic constructions of history preclude any possibility for 'naturally' occurring critique. Even visitors who arrive at the doors with a great deal of skepticism about the Anzac myth – like myself – can find themselves moved by the stories within. For novice historians, such as school students, the informal learning opportunities provide little opportunity to critically engage with the public histories of Anzac and to practice sophisticated forms of historical thinking – critical interpretation of sources, understanding the ethical dimensions of history, and engaging with the notion that history is tentative and based on multiple possible interpretations.[94]

Learning and the Australian War Memorial

All of this substantive content is employed and communicated in a range of ways to support both informal learning and formal education in the Memorial. The previous section, addressing the types of historical narratives represented in the AWM, examined the gaps and silences in the historical narratives as well as the 'messages' the institution communicates about difficult or uncomfortable histories of war. In this section I turn to an investigation of the learning opportunities that are crafted within these exhibitions and experiences, considering the ways exhibitions 'teach' or the pedagogies and communicative techniques they employ. Within this analysis, I highlight the ways these strategies relate to a specific educative role for the AWM. I argue that learning at the Memorial has particular relevance to civics and citizenship education as well as history curriculum, especially because government support positions the institution as central to learning about what it means to be Australian.[95] While the substantive material of museum exhibitions carries a great deal of significance, meaning is also constructed through the methods and approaches museums use to represent these histories. Guided by literature, theories and pedagogies of historical thinking, affective learning, and civics and citizenship education, this section addresses both the educative aims of the AWM and they ways

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[94] See for example: Seixas, "Benchmarks."
[95] Here I refer to the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate [PACER] described in the introduction to this chapter.

exhibitions and programs set out to achieve these aims. In the case of the AWM, I argue, the predominant mode of 'teaching' in exhibitions is didactic, while opportunities for more constructivist and affective encounters with the past can be found in educational heterotopian spaces within some galleries.

Commemoration is the undercurrent that runs through everything the Australian War Memorial seeks to achieve; it is foundational to the educative role of the institution, given that the institution is primarily a memorial. Commemoration requires a certain respect for the past, it requires respect for the men and women who fought and suffered and died, and it is perhaps for this reason that some of the most confronting aspects of war cannot be – or at least, have not been – represented. This complex relationship between historical learning and commemoration carries enormous value in teaching about the politics of the past in the present though, and a more reflexive approach to representing Australia's military history might achieve a great deal in terms of educating young visitors about the tentative nature of historical interpretation.[96]

Purposes of learning at the Australian War Memorial

The Memorial's educational focus is strongly embedded in civics and citizenship learning because, as I have argued throughout this chapter, engagement in the affective practices of war commemoration – especially First World War commemoration – is seen by politicians and in public discourses as a necessary part of civic engagement.[97] Yet this is about more than saying and doing the right things; importantly, participants in war commemoration are also expected to feel the right feelings. While, as Trofanenko suggests, awareness of the importance of affect and emotion has shifted perceptions of museums to being no longer 'solely authoritative,'[98] the AWM demonstrates the ways affect can be used to strengthen particular messages about the past and its place in the present that the museum-as-authority transmits. Affective practices are engaged less to open up spaces for dissent

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[96] Taylor and Young, *Making History.*
[97] See for example: Lake, "How do schoolchildren learn about ANZAC?"
[98] Trofanenko, "Affective emotions," 25.

and difference, and more to bolster investment in a specific story about the significance of war to the nation.

The language of sacrifice and honour, for example, is likely to resonate with many Australian visitors who often encounter these words along with phrases like 'Lest we forget' in public ceremonies and traditions of commemoration and remembrance. In the Memorial, such language can work to reinforce an affective response. Language in the Hall of Valour, for instance, reflects a discourse of bravery and honourable sacrifice in war, with quotes in capital letters lining the stone walls. Phrases like 'extraordinary courage,' 'personal courage and leadership,' and at the entrance to the gallery, 'This gallant company of brave men,' highlight a heroic image of the soldier. These words, accompanied by the stories of young servicemen and women who lost their lives in war, work to reinforce a belief in the value of these deaths, a sense that death served a valuable purpose and demonstrated values that are prized by Australians. As Goddard noted, the Gallipoli story in particular is 'a very strong myth that people have grasped hold of and they're not going to let go of it now…it's too much in the psyche I think.' This is in some ways contradictory to what might be an instinctive affective response in visitors, where encountering stories of death in violent circumstances might highlight the futility of such loss, the senselessness of human deaths that no amount of political and economic rationalising could ever hope to account for. This interpretation highlights one of the key purposes of commemorating war, and is perhaps one of the main reasons an institution like the Australian War Memorial exists – when faced with history that is bloody, violent, and murderous, our natural response is to desire meaning or, where no meaning can be found, to lament the senselessness of loss.[99]

These affective practices could provide a powerful point of access for deeper historical thinking, were the opportunities for affective dissonance allowed to surface. In Chapter Six, I address some of the ways Museum Victoria's *WWI: Love and Sorrow* exhibition has sought to allow what is likely to be an uncomfortable dissonance for visitors between affective practices of commemoration and of encounters with stories of trauma and horrific loss. The AWM provides few

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[99] See for example: Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (London: Rider, 1946/2008); Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*

opportunities of this nature, and instead emphasises stories of heroism and resilience. There are opportunities for student visitors to think historically, for example by exploring notions of change and continuity throughout the different conflicts (a focus on change and continuity in weapons would be well-supported by exhibitions of every conflict represented). There are also of course many opportunities to investigate primary sources in the form of objects and photographs on display in the museum, and education programs also provide access to objects and documents from the collection.[100] Ultimately though, the uncomfortable, contentious and confronting histories of war are not used to foster the types of sophisticated engagement with moral and ethical issues that I have been arguing is their most important potential. The educative focus in the AWM is on the substantive rather than the procedural – this is not to suggest that students will not encounter many opportunities to see historical thinking through the work of the AWM's curators and historians, but I argue that the interpretation is presented as largely complete, the role of experts.

Confronting stories are used to impart specific messages about resilience and courage in war; making meaning of the history *for* visitors, rather than providing space for visitors to construct their own knowledge and understanding. In her interview, curator Neale spoke eloquently about the affective power of stories of violence and loss and the meaning-making visitors can engage in in response to such stories. She argued that this is one of the key reasons why institutions like the AWM should engage with histories of hardship and struggle, focusing in particular on the social and emotional learning they might take from encountering such histories. She noted that:

> It's that people can go 'you know what life can be really hard' and even
> if they just reflect on the tough time that they're having or that
> somebody else that they know if having. They can kind of step back and
> go 'but you know what? People can overcome a hell of a lot and okay
> they're not fighting on the front line but everybody's got their own

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[100] See for example: "Go back to the source," a program for upper primary and secondary students, https://www.awm.gov.au/education/schools/programs/back-to-the-source/. In his interview, Stuart Baines also noted the use of source-based historical inquiry in education programs as well as the use of objects and art in the galleries.

personal little battles going on. And I think when you start to appreciate what some people can do and how they can pull themselves up and go 'you know what this needs to be done and I'm going to be the one to do it You just get such a sense of admiration that it really does inspire you. You know I think people come away—and I don't mean that that means they'll go and try and save the world. But even if it just means that on a day that they're feeling a little overwhelmed they can maybe just reflect on that one little story that they saw in the galleries. Or they can tell somebody that story because it just meant so much to them. And that person can take the strength away from it. So it's this ripple on effect…[101]

There are numerous stories of courage and resilience in the AWM, such as those of the wearers of various headgear in the First World War that I discussed earlier in this chapter, or the well known Australian story of the stretcher-bearer Simpson and his donkeys, risking their lives at Gallipoli to return fallen soldiers to relative safety. These stories support the aim that Neale describes, but they present limited options for sophisticated – more critical – historical thinking about war and, I argue, reinforce the damaging notion that the only people worth commemorating are those who were brave and made enormous sacrifices, including risking their lives. This tendency to privilege stories of extraordinary courage and resilience has had and continues to have significant implications for understanding the impacts of war.[102] By silencing the stories of those who were not courageous or resilient, the AWM supports the notion that the outcomes of Australian involvement in war have been victory and worthwhile sacrifice. This, ultimately, is the central educative role of the institution and all of its activities.

Although the dominant narratives in the AWM do not facilitate critical historical thinking – and would require the intervention of educators to support critical engagement with the histories and sources displayed – there are moments throughout the galleries where interruptions to this narrative break through and form what I see as small heterotopian spaces. The treatment of 'enemies' provides a useful

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[101] Neale, interview.
[102] This is in contrast to some recent work in museums and by historians to represent more nuanced stories of war trauma, for example in Museum Victoria's *WWI: Love and Sorrow* exhibition, and in Thomson, *Anzac Memories.*

example in this instance, for while the overarching stories are – perhaps necessarily – told predominantly from the Australian perspective, there are moments of encounter with the experiences of others. These are limited to moments in each gallery and do not support detailed investigation into the experiences of, for example, German soldiers or Japanese soldiers in the Second World War. They do, however, disrupt the blanket assumption, as curator Chris Goddard described in his interview, which children tend to make that 'there are only good guys and bad guys.'[103]

In the Second World War gallery, for example, a German tunic is displayed with an Iron Cross, First Class, providing evidence that German people celebrated bravery in much the same way Australians did, with the official recognition of a medal. This is a subtle challenge to the simplified view of the 'enemy' as evil, corrupt, and inhuman that is promoted in propaganda, some of which is on display. It is a reminder too that the other side's soldiers are soldiers like Australia's own who found themselves in situations requiring immense bravery and frequently violence to survive. This display provokes a moment of what I describe as 'affective dissonance'; medals are a symbol that prompts visitors to adopt some of the affective practices of commemorating heroism and courage, but here those practices would link to 'enemies The affective charge attached to military medals is linked to honouring bravery and sacrifice, but those emotions rely completely on the unproblematic acceptance of an enemy and here – in the case of German medals – Australia must be the enemy. The transgressive potential of this moment is a kind of heterotopia within the Memorial; it carves out a space within that is separate, a different space.

Similarly, the sound and light show *Striking by Night* provides a moment of challenge to the narrative of triumph, problematising the sense of victory with a brief shift where footage of German civilians during the bombing of Berlin replaces the Allied perspectives from the air. This is an opportunity for visitors to engage with multiple perspectives of history in a very powerful way, with insight into some of the challenging ethics of war. We know that destruction and death are part of war, and it is exciting to view the bombing from above, akin to watching an action movie. When we see the view from below we are jolted out of our distance from the impacts of the

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[103] Chris Goddard, interview with the author, June 26, 2014, Australian War Memorial.

bombs, forced to see the experience of those who we are less likely to encounter in our Australian history textbooks and documentaries. It is a potent use of multiple affects; we begin with a sense of excitement but are jolted sideways into a sadness that is made more jarring by its juxtaposition with the initial drama.

Pedagogies and communicative techniques at the AWM

Museum education research and theory in recent decades has advocated pedagogical approaches informed by constructivist theories of learning as the way forward for museums.[104] It is perhaps the case that these arguments are more appropriate to education *programs* in museums than to exhibitions and other opportunities for informal learning, because constructivist approaches rely on facilitated opportunities for learners to construct meaning for themselves. Exhibitions can certainly leave gaps and questions for visitors to engage with, but the visitor is unlikely to take up these opportunities or be able to guess at what is not displayed without the support offered by a more knowledgeable other.[105]

While the literature on museum education promotes constructivist theories of learning, curatorial staff at the AWM did not express discomfort with more didactic approaches to communicating information in exhibitions, often emphasising the messages they hoped visitors would absorb about the significance of war and the nation. Education Manager Stuart Baines noted however that education programs are based on inquiry and are structured to be more student-led, stating that staff 'really want the learners to lead the journey rather than us.'[106] Interviewees also discussed affective and emotional engagement in learning, with Baines and others reflecting the belief that this can make learning 'stick,' as Mulcahy, following Ahmed have noted,[107] and is a particular strength of much of the AWM's historical material. There are some tensions here between education and curatorial roles; while education programs appear to espouse more constructivist ideas, both exhibition analysis and

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[104] Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education*.
[105] Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*.
[106] Baines, interview.
[107] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*; Mulcahy, "Sticky learning."

interviews with curatorial staff suggest a much more didactic approach to teaching visitors about the history of Australian involvement in wars overseas.

Opportunities for constructivist approaches to learning and teaching in exhibition spaces do emerge from questions relating to the ethical dimensions of war and violence, but this is more due to a *lack* of explicit engagement with the question of whether Australia should have been involved in the conflicts represented that to any communicative strategies used. While the Memorial does not explicitly promote a pro-war perspective, a number of strategies are employed to highlight the significance of war and the reasons for Australian participation. Some moral and ethical conflicts are displayed,[108] for instance in relation to the Vietnam War moratoria, and these moments provide spaces for critical engagement in a way, but they are brief interruptions in a wider story of the significance of Australia's military action overseas.

This section of *Conflicts 1945 to today* represents a more multifaceted view of the conflict, highlighting the perspectives of soldiers as well as those who opposed the war and Australia's involvement in it. A number of quotations adorn the walls, providing insight into the impacts of the war and the opposition to it. A quotation from Graham Edwards, for example, states

> 'Had I the opportunity to speak today I would have taken the time to
> publicly forgive the person from my mother's church … who wrote an
> anonymous letter to my mother saying she hoped I died as a result of
> my wounds, as I was a killer. I could not have found it in my heart to say
> those words a few years ago but it is time to move on.[109]

This powerful quotation – direct from a soldier – is far more likely to provoke sympathy for those who fought in the Vietnam War than to prompt any critique of the reasons for going to war. While this is one piece of a broader picture, it is indicative of some of the ways displays tap into and prompt affective responses. The quotation is laden with concepts and words carrying significant affective charge; the idea of forgiveness, the damage inflicted upon the mother of a soldier; the accusatory

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[108] Seixas, "Benchmarks."
[109] Text from *Conflicts 1945 to today*, Australian War Memorial.

'killer,' the anonymity of the accuser. The visitor is positioned to feel sympathy for Edwards, the soldier, and his mother, who is after all an innocent bystander. Throughout the Memorial, there are many opportunities to practice empathy for servicewomen and men; visitors can hear a great deal about their experiences and are in most cases positioned – as in the example above – to connect affectively with them. There is little impetus, even where exhibitions do provide opposing views like in the displays on protests against the Vietnam War, to identify with detractors or 'enemies.'

Although school visitors are unlikely to fully engage with debates about the necessity of war or its justifications, there is material in exhibitions to support deeper investigation of some contentious issues. The Vietnam War section in *Conflicts 1845 to today* is the most obvious example of this (and in fact elsewhere objection to war is not represented in detail). Several contentious issues in the Vietnam War are displayed, including opposition and conscientious objection, the moratorium marches, and the effects of Agent Orange. This is a particularly rich area of study for history, but there are important aspects of Vietnam War history that are not addressed in detail, including the movement of refugees from Vietnam to Australia and the significance of the Vietnam War in developing understanding and acknowledgement of PTSD.

Arguably these are issues that relate more to the aftermath of war than the war itself, but I argue that these themes are particularly rich for students of Australian history, because they relate to the long and short-term impacts of the Vietnam War on this country. Post Vietnam War migration to Australia is of particular relevance to school students, as they can be included in a depth study in the Australian Curriculum for History at Year 10.[110] The movement of refugees is briefly alluded to in the story of immigrant Danh Duc Tran, who is not named as a refugee, and although the informed visitor will be able to identify him as such school students may not see the

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[110] "History, 7 – 10," *Australian Curriculum History*, accessed August 23, 2015, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/history/curriculum/f-10?layout=1.

significance of his story without prior knowledge. Although the displays on the Vietnam War briefly deal with the aftermath of war, this is clearly not the main focus.

The aspects of war that are given the most space are weapons and tactics, key battles and people. In this way, the Memorial avoids engaging with topics that would undermine its positioning of war as essential, unavoidable, and ultimately central to Australian identity. To discuss large numbers of refugees as an inevitable outcome of war, for example, would be to highlight a still-contentious issue for Australia – many Australians oppose the intake of refugees from today's war-torn nations – and perhaps would prove uncomfortable for many visitors. I argue however that this is one instance where discomfort could be not only useful, but important, in that it would support students to build the knowledge and understanding required to thoughtfully engage with historical and present day debates. Instead, we are allowed to view the Vietnam War as interesting but ultimately resolved, with no opportunity to consider the lasting effects or to use historical understanding in developing a more informed response to current events.

As with each of the museums in this study, constructivist theories of learning can be considered in the context of both formal education programs and in the informal learning opportunities available in the Australian War Memorial's exhibitions.[111] It is difficult to make any kind of general statement about the extent to which the AWM has embraced a constructivist epistemology, in part because the approaches differ between the formal education programs and the exhibitions. Education programs at the AWM perhaps provide a greater chance to interrogate some of the above ideas about war's impacts and justifications.

Education programs are ostensibly designed around the inquiry method, with clear beginning and end points or outcomes.[112] The learners, through their questioning and discussion, determine the journey through the exhibition in collaboration with the educator, who also brings to the program particular interests and ways of thinking about military history. As Stuart Baines states, 'We really want the learners to lead the journey rather than us.' This is an instance of learners working through an inquiry

[111] Hein, *Learning in the Museum*.
[112] See for example: Taylor and Young, *Making History*; Whitehouse, "Historical thinking."

into the past, leading to specific outcomes.[113] To use the Vietnam War example, the program 'The Vietnam Era: War and Conscription,' may allow more opportunity for understanding opposition to war, but in exhibitions the evidence is heavily weighted in favour of military engagement and honouring those who fought. As a result, students are much more likely to emerge from the Memorial with a sense that although there are negative impacts of violence, it is sometimes necessary to counter the actions of others. Implicit in this narrative is the sense that Australia and its allies are not at fault, because they respond to violence rather than instigate it.

The provision of a great deal of information can also be considered one of the teaching strategies of the AWM – exhibitions include enormous amounts of information about weapons, battles, the experiences of different groups (soldiers, nurses, POWs, those on the home front, and so on), landscapes and the political events leading to and occurring during war. In a cyclical relationship, the AWM's authority lends weight to the material presented, but the plethora of historical evidence – most of it with direct provenance to the events represented – also reinforces the AWM's authority. Consequently, it can become difficult to question the interpretation of events and themes in the galleries as a result, and the Memorial exhibitions draw on this authority to strengthen what is a dominant narrative of Australian history – war as the birthplace of the nation. Curators in the Second World War exhibition, for example, are attempting to communicate the complexity of a conflict on an enormous, global scale, by addressing elements of the conflict in far-flung, disparate locations. Displays take in the European, Asian, American and Australian 'fronts In many places Australians appear to be the connecting factor, which could be problematic in that it may give visitors a sense of a much larger role for Australia in the war than might actually have been the case, and this is something curator Nick Fletcher was considering in the redevelopment of the First World War galleries.[114]

Although the focus for the AWM is on the narrative of Anzac and the significance of war to the development of Australian identity, this is not to suggest that what is represented is simplistic or unconvincing. What is displayed throughout the

[113] Taylor and Young, *Making History.*
[114] Fletcher, interview.

exhibitions is a work of considerable complexity and it is this that makes the omissions less obvious and more defensible – there is so much, it seems the only possible response to criticism of what is not there would be to state that there is no space for those histories (but of course, choices have been made about what is more or less important for display). The enormous amount of information displayed suggests a highly comprehensive exploration of the history, the provenance and significance of the material evidence renders the visitor disinclined to argue – visitors can be distracted by the emotional and affective practices of commemorating fallen soldiers and encountering stories of bravery and loss. I argue that in essence, a great deal of noise all but submerges the silences.

Some of this is literal noise; interactive and audio-visual displays are used in many different ways to support engagement with both the human experience of war and more substantive knowledge about battles, strategies, and context. In many cases, these interactive and audio-visual displays could be considered a kind of re-enactment of the past, transporting visitors to a different time and place in order to provide an immersive, imagined experience of war.[115] These experiences perhaps highlight the entertainment potential of museums as well as their educative role; as Hooper-Greenhill's research highlighted, enjoyment is a much-valued aspect of museum visits by school students, and for many students interactive and audiovisual representations are a lot of fun.[116] Sound and light shows like *Striking by Night* provide examples of the ways the museum recreates the past. In *Striking by Night* visitors are confronted with a level of noise and flashing lights that command their full attention – it is very difficult to explore the gallery at all while the show is playing.

Most visitors watch from above – the gallery has a mezzanine, which forms the entry level, with a large circular platform in the middle of the gallery – but it is possible to be 'caught' downstairs when the show begins, and the experience from below is more uncomfortable, more confronting than above. This is perhaps because Anzac Hall contains several aircraft and a submarine, and the experience of walking beneath these huge museum objects, while flashing lights and explosions sound from above,

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[115] Violi, "Trauma site museums."
[116] Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education*.

is particularly evocative. It presents an opportunity for students to 'take up' and reflect on the multiple perspectives of the past available in *Striking by Night*.[117] The overwhelming experience provokes a visceral sense of vulnerability – a kind of re-enactment of a traumatic moment[118] – allowing the visitor to understand something of the experience of fear in war that is less possible in forms of display that rely on familiar and perhaps tired discourses of war and commemoration, such as Anzac Day parades and services where the emphasis is not on provoking fear in participants.
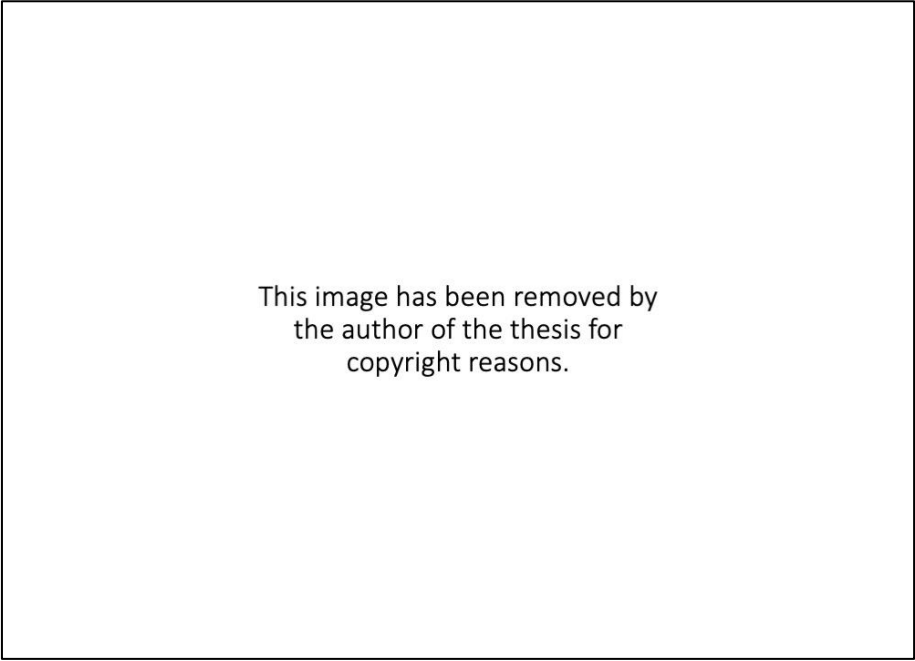
Other sound and light displays, such as the Iroquois helicopter shows in *Conflicts 1945 to today* [Figure 10], work to ensure that our engagement with the drama of war is constant – if visitor interest has begun to wane by the time they make it to this gallery, they are sharply pulled back in by the sounds of helicopter blades and gunshots. All visitors have limited attention spans, and school students in particular are likely to be losing focus unless *Conflicts 1945 to today* is the first gallery they have visited. In this instance, the sounds of gunfire are likely to prompt visitors to seek out more information about the display,[119] perhaps practicing historical research skills by seeking out relevant information to interpret their experiences throughout the gallery.[120]

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117 See: Seixas, "Benchmarks."
118 Violi, "Trauma site museums."
119 Bubaris, "Sound in museums."
120 NCHS, "Historical thinking standards."

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copyright reasons.

Figure 10: The Iroquois helicopter displayed for the 'helibourne assault' and 'dust-off' audiovisual display

The *Discovery Zone* is also an important educational space at the AWM, and contains a large number of interactive displays relating to the First and Second World War, the Vietnam War, peacekeeping, and the Cold War. Designed for school students and other children, the gallery allows visitors to 'touch, feel, and experience some of the conditions faced by Australians at war.'[121] In keeping with its name, the gallery is designed around the principles of discovery learning, with plenty of opportunities to touch and interact with exhibits.[122] Experiences allow young visitors to sit in a helicopter used during the Vietnam War, stick one foot into a hole in a trench wall to see it replaced by an image of trench foot, and open a drawer in a submarine to find out what it would have smelled like after a while at sea.

Education Manager Stuart Baines expresses some doubt about the efficacy of the *Discovery Zone* as a learning tool on its own, calling it 'only marginally useful' unless 'framed with…another [education] program.'[123] Nonetheless there is a clear novelty value for the space, and according to Baines 'year five and six kids love it because it's so far out of the realm of what they've probably experienced in other museums.'[124]

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[121] AWM, *A Place to Remember,* 18.
[122] Hein, *Learning in the Museum.*
[123] Baines, interview.
[124] Ibid.

Ultimately, the displays here are for play – they are fun and interesting – and are perhaps unlikely to encourage any sophisticated historical thinking unless facilitated by an educator. This does not mean that there is no educational value to experiences like those in the *Discovery Zone*,[125] as Baines notes.

An encounter with trench foot, for example, is affecting and memorable and likely to provoke interest in the experiences of soldiers in trench warfare – embedded within broader investigations into this theme in the museum or classroom, it becomes an experience through which learning can become memorable and perhaps 'sticky.'[126] The trench foot display carries the potential to shock and disgust, briefly shattering the museum's careful distance from the past, prompting visitors to imagine the mud and horror of the trenches as though they were there. This is an affective moment that could foster an investment in understanding the past, potentially inciting the visitor to seek deeper understanding, similar to the ways teachers and young visitors sought to understand their own affective responses in Mulcahy's research at Melbourne Museum.[127] Alternatively however, experiences of disgust could have the opposite effect, driving the visitor away from knowing, encouraging a desire to avoid encountering any more about the horrors of war – it is part of the work of curators and educators to know where to draw boundaries for these types of displays. This concern is particularly salient in the context of this thesis, because locating these boundaries can be very challenging and, on the basis of my interviews, seems to rely heavily on curatorial instincts, which are drawn from considerable insight into the diverse expectations and desires of museum audiences.

As I have noted, participants highlighted that visitor responses are likely to differ between instances where they view images of dead bodies and where they are invited to commemorate war dead through memorial plaques, graves, and personal objects. Although not heavy-handed in their use of shock, some exhibitions do use images and objects with clear shock value – images of bodies at Rwandan refugee camps in the *Conflicts 1945 to Today* peacekeeping gallery are a particularly pertinent example, where confronting photographs reveal the devastating aftermath of the Kibeho

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[125] Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education.*
[126] Mulcahy, "Sticky learning."
[127] Ibid.

refugee camp riot and massacre. Although several interviewees make the suggestion that the Memorial's content is less likely to be shocking to visitors given the institution's thematic focus on war and visitors' probable expectation that they will encounter images of violence and death, graphic images of death, disease, and the impacts of violence remain confronting to many visitors.

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Figure 11: Photographs on display in Conflicts 1945 to today*, including images of a mass grave*

Education Manager Stuart Baines showed a particular awareness of the need to take care not to overwhelm young children with confronting material,[128] and yet younger visitors may find these displays quite traumatic to view, and many adult visitors might similarly find shocking displays difficult to view and difficult to make sense of. There is also a possibility that certain displays in the Memorial – perhaps especially the photographs of bodies in Rwanda – might be triggering for survivors of trauma, including refugee children, who have often seen and experienced horrific things.[129] The Memorial does not make use of warnings signs or sectioning off confronting material the way other museums do and this is, I argue, necessary for material that is likely to trigger trauma responses for some students.

Learning with discomfort at the Australian War Memorial

I have argued that the focus for the AWM's exhibitions is on reinforcing the narrative of triumph and victory that is central to the way the Anzac myth is used in Australian nationalism. I argue, though, that this is not the whole story, and my

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[128] Baines, interview.
[129] For further information on 'triggers' for children who have experienced trauma, the following is a useful and practical resource: Child Safety Commissioner, *Calmer Classrooms: A guide to working with traumatised children* (Melbourne: Child Safety Commissioner, State Government of Victoria, 2007).

interviews with curatorial and education staff, as well as analysis of education materials, demonstrate the complexity of this museum context. The representation of stories of heroism and sacrifice does not always emerge from a simple desire to stick to the official story; in fact, curators were wary of this kind of over-simplification and very much cognizant of the potential for their work to be met with criticism by other expert historians. In some ways, curatorial staff sought opportunities to open up heterotopian spaces within the Memorial, seeking to challenge misconceptions and assumptions such as the clarity with which many visitors view the allies/enemies or us/them dichotomy. It is clear that considerable pressure, both from within and without, drives curatorial choices.

In the AWM's galleries, objects and language are used to connect into discourses of war commemoration and lay the groundwork for affective practices characterised by sadness, respect, and national pride. Education programs present opportunities to more critically engage with the public discourses of Anzac, but this is not the main focus. Visitors enter the Australian War Memorial with a range of expectations and degrees of enthusiasm. Whilst in the Memorial, they are guided through a process of transformation, underpinned by the affective workings of exhibitions, in order to, it is anticipated, be moved to support the museum's commemorative role. In this way the AWM functions as a heterotopia that reinforces dominant perspectives on national identity in Australia; its 'difference' from the social space outside lies in its centralising of the Anzac myth. There is a sense – suggested by interviews and exhibition analysis, in particular – that Australia's Anzac myth is absolutely central to national identity. It is a representation of a version of collective memory that excludes and silences significant social groups, including Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders, in spite of the fact that the institution has worked to include a wider range of perspectives. The suggestion is that this is who we are, told through our war history.

My argument is therefore not simply that war is 'sanitised' or that confronting history is 'left out' of exhibitions – although in some cases it is, as I have discussed in this chapter. Instead I have argued that where more confronting stories, objects, and themes are displayed a number of strategies are employed to mitigate their potential to shock. The use of 'safe access points,' interpretive choices that skate over the most confronting elements of objects, and the display of objects relating to stories of

survival all work to ensure that what visitors encounter in the galleries is not a direct reflection of the true horror of war and its permanent, devastating impacts.

Stories that do not reinforce the myth of Anzac are presented as marginal, and are not used to foster the critical engagement with understandings of the past that is central to history teaching in schools. The undercurrents of the informal learning opportunities for children and young people are about resilience, survival, and triumph; any critical engagement with these stories would require careful scaffolding through formal education. Where emotionally confronting histories are displayed in the Memorial they are sometimes used to attract the visitor's interest, and this is a useful strategy for young visitors, who are more likely to want to learn about the histories that engage them on an emotional level.[130] This would however require that visitors have an opportunity to further explore these difficult histories. In the case of school visitors, this results in a need for further learning to be facilitated through formal education. There are of course opportunities for such structured learning in education programs, but greater attention to informal learning could identify opportunities for the AWM to foster historical thought and critical engagement with debates about war and its commemoration within the galleries.

Other scholars have criticised the positioning of the Anzac myth as central to Australian national identity.[131] What my analysis has shown is the way affective practices of commemoration are mobilised to support this overall aim; I have examined the ways the discourses of Anzac are put to work to teach visitors to think and feel – triumphantly, proudly, sympathetically – about war. These practices also have silencing effects, because they do not allow the experiences of those who did not align with the characteristic courage and resilience of the myth to disrupt the notion that war is about strength and overcoming hardship. This undermines the AWM's capacity to act as a heterotopia for social change, but social change is not, I suggest, the educational focus for this institution. Civics and citizenship learning in the Memorial is premised on the notion that war sacrifice is valuable to the nation and that commemoration is an essential practice for citizens.

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[130] Barton and Levstik, *Teaching History*.

[131] See in particular Lake, Reynolds, and McKenna, *What's Wrong with Anzac?*

The AWM holds the complex responsibility of being both 'resting place' and museum, with duties to acknowledge and commemorate people who – regardless of visitors' perspectives of war and nation – fought, suffered and died for their country, as well as to interpret and represent complex, confronting, and contentious histories. The representation of histories of war trauma represents a lost opportunity in the AWM, but it is difficult to see how the institution could meaningfully engage with these most difficult of war stories without delivering an overtly anti-war message – an untenable position in a national institution when Australian soldiers remain on active service overseas. Public acknowledgement of the trauma and the lasting impacts of war on minds and bodies can be an important foundation to healing the wounds of the distant or recent past for both individuals and groups, and societies need to be willing to bear witness to the horror of these experiences. As Herman argues, healing from war trauma 'only becomes legitimate in a context that challenges the sacrifice of young men in war,'[132] but to challenge the Anzac myth would be to destabilise the foundations for Australia's involvement in any war. Confronting material, handled thoughtfully, can nonetheless provide young people with powerfully meaningful ways to understand both past and present, and to critically engage with narratives about violence and conflict, resilience and trauma.

Making meaning from emotionally difficult histories, in particular, relates strongly to an educative purpose. Although curators are not necessarily thinking primarily of schoolchildren when developing emotionally difficult material for display, they are considering the values and socio-emotional learning that visitors can be encouraged to take from encountering and experiencing the difficult emotions associated with histories of death, violence, pain, and injustice. The Memorial represents some of the worst of human experience embedded within a framework to demonstrate human beings' ability to endure – its displays are a depiction of human strength and perseverance as much as a representation of pain, suffering, and death. This is Australia's cherished Anzac myth, and it is perhaps the case that the public investment is far too great to be withdrawn entirely. In the next chapter, I extend this analysis to consider a different aspect of this country's national history in the convict

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[132] Herman, *Trauma and recovery*, 9.

past at Port Arthur and the Cascades Female Factory, continuing to deepen this exploration of the ways histories become uncomfortable in Australia.

Chapter Five: Port Arthur Historic Site and the Cascades Female Factory

Introduction

Port Arthur Historic Site and the Cascades Female Factory in the Australian state of Tasmania fall under the auspices of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority [PAHSMA], and together form the second case study addressed in this thesis. The main site, Port Arthur Historic Site [referred to throughout as 'Port Arthur'] is located about one hundred kilometres from Tasmania's capital city of Hobart, and is a complex and multifaceted representation of convict history. It was central to a large-scale penal system in Port Arthur, and a source of considerable convict labour.[1] The Cascades Female Factory [referred to as 'the Cascades'] is a smaller site located in the city of Hobart, and represents some of the difficult histories of female convicts in that city.

In this chapter, I analyse the ways Port Arthur and the Cascades bring together the complex histories of several distinct eras in their existence. Both sites have histories as convict prisons and settlements, but both also have histories of 'repurposing,' with their buildings and landscapes employed to different ends during the period between the end of convict transportation and their beginnings as tourist sites.[2] PAHSMA is a different type of museum institution to the other two addressed in this thesis, in that its 'museums' are historic sites and encompass a range of issues associated with conserving or restoring heritage sites and buildings.[3] In terms of uncomfortable history, both have the challenging task of interpreting histories of imprisonment and forced labour for diverse audiences, but Port Arthur also has a more recent history

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[1] Jane Lennon, "Port Arthur, Norfolk Island, New Caledonia: Convict prison islands in the Antipodes," in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'difficult heritage,'* ed. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Oxon and New York: Taylor and Francis, 2008), 166-181.

[2] See "Post convict era," Port Arthur Historic Site, accessed August 23, 2016, http://portarthur.org.au/history/post-convict-era/; "The later years," Cascades Female Factory, accessed August 23, 2016, http://femalefactory.org.au/history/the-later-years/.

[3] Brian Egloff and Peter Newby, "Towards cultural sustainable tourism at historic places: A critical study of Port Arthur, Tasmania," *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 7, no. 1 (2005): 19-33.

of trauma as the site for the worst single-person shooting in Australia, in which thirty-five people were killed in 1996.[4] Although the massacre is a significant and traumatic event in Port Arthur's recent history and I explore some of its impacts on the site, my focus is on the histories that are presented to school visitors. The massacre is not often addressed with school visitors, nor is it emphasised in broader terms, with the majority of historical interpretation in the landscape focusing on the site's convict history and history prior to its establishment as an official tourist site. Nevertheless, I discuss this theme further later in this chapter.

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Figure 12: Port Arthur Historic Site

In the following section, I detail some of the historical background of the sites, considering the ways the different eras and events in the histories of Port Arthur and the Cascades Female Factory have shaped the interpretation of the built heritage and landscapes. I also explore the place of the two convict sites in Australia's cultural memory today, noting Port Arthur's 'iconic' status and the sites' recent inclusion in

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[4] Wahlquist, Calla, "It took one massacre: how Australia embraced gun control after Port Arthur," *The Guardian* March 15, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/15/it-took-one-massacre-how-australia-made-gun-control-happen-after-port-arthur

UNESCO's World Heritage listing for Australian convict sites. In the next main section of this chapter I turn to an analysis of contentious and confronting histories at Port Arthur and the Cascades, examining the themes of crime and punishment, histories of 'others' – Aboriginal Australians, women, children, LGBTIQ+ people and those with mental illness – and the impacts of the 1996 massacre. This section addresses the museum as a teaching space or resource, focusing on what Lee and Ashby describe as substantive historical knowledge.[5] I consider the differing ways the two historic sites – or parts of the historic sites – function as heterotopian spaces, noting that attention to the ways heterotopias can work for social change is more limited than is suggested by notions of the New Museum. I address some of the instances of affective practice at both sites, examining in particular the affective practices of the 'prison visit,' which are closely intertwined with pedagogic practices linking to historical learning.

I then use this substantive analysis as a basis for a deeper exploration of the educative role of the sites and the ways they work to teach visitors about the histories of convictism. I argue that Port Arthur's educative concerns differ in many ways from those of the AWM, and that they demonstrate substantial attention to fostering historical thinking in young visitors. In my conclusion to this chapter, I argue that Port Arthur presents significant opportunities for teachers wishing to support students to act as historians, but that there are important elements of confronting and contested history that the site misinterprets or overlooks. Ultimately, in some instances, the desire for 'balanced' interpretation that respects the beliefs and knowledge of those in the past risks promoting dangerous ideas that I argue – in contravention of Heumann Gurian's views[6] – are not safe, even for the museum.

Background
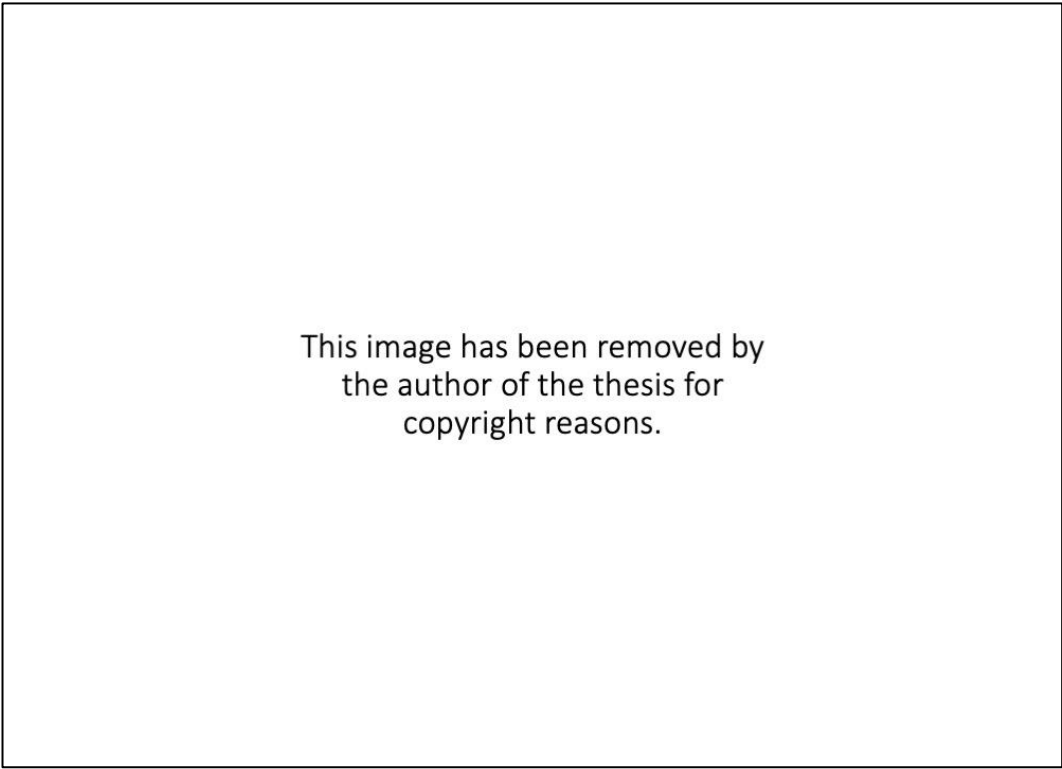
Both Port Arthur and the Cascades fall under the management of PAHSMA, which also manages the Coal Mines Historic Site.[7] The Port Arthur Historic Site, which

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[5] Lee and Ashby, 'Progression in historical understanding.'
[6] Heumann Gurian, *Civilizing the Museum*.
[7] A third convict site, the Coal Mines, is also managed by PAHSMA but was not included in this study due to its remoteness and the fact that it does not currently have a focus on education. At the time of writing there were no education programs available at the Coal Mines site.

provides the main focus for this chapter, is a former penal settlement on the Tasman Peninsula about an hour and a half's drive southeast of Hobart. Its history has been turbulent and chequered, both during its time as a penal colony and more recently as a historic site and tourist attraction. Transportation to Tasmania had ended by 1853 and the penal settlement closed in 1877.[8] Tourism to the site began almost immediately, but Tasmanians 'found it hard to live down the legacy of the convict system,' which was considered a source of shame until midway through the twentieth century.[9] Port Arthur is the more extensive of the two sites addressed in this chapter; the Cascades is much smaller and has significantly less built heritage remaining. A summary of exhibitions and smaller sites at Port Arthur and the Cascades is included in Appendix I, and a list of education programs is included in Appendix II.

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Figure 13: Yard 1 of The Cascades Female Factory in Hobart

Port Arthur was a site for 'secondary punishment'; convicts sent to Van Diemen's Land were assigned to work for settlers and were relatively free (or at least not contained by the walls of a prison), but were sent to the Peninsula if they abused this

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[8] Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania*; Lennon, "Port Arthur."
[9] Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania,* 137.

more open system.[10] According to staff at the site, the 'convict stain' meant that attention to preserving the site and collecting artefacts was limited.[11] Port Arthur has in fact been a tourist destination for longer than it was a penal settlement. The town was renamed Carnarvon after the convict era in an attempt to escape the stigma of the old convict settlement and re-brand the town as a holiday destination.[12] A small community of locals continued to live there, reusing and remaking the buildings of the convict site. Many of these locals were pushed to relinquish their property when it was acquired in the 1980s for the establishment of the historic site, later to come formally under the management of the newly created Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority [PAHSMA].[13]

Every museum and heritage site faces challenges attracting and engaging visitors, but Port Arthur perhaps faces more significant and practical barriers than many, at least in Australia. The site, about an hour and a half's drive from Hobart, is remote and requires a significant investment of time for visitors to get there. With the travel time, many visitors only allow a couple of hours to look around a large site that contains many buildings and ruins, a visitor centre museum, several house museums, walking tours, harbour cruises, and more.[14] There is infrastructure for school groups making overnight visits, with accommodation on site. Tourist infrastructure in the region is relatively limited, with few cafes and restaurants in the town of Port Arthur and surrounding areas. Mobile phone reception is limited, there are times when the water – supplied by the historic site – is undrinkable, and roads leading to the area are narrow, winding, and until recently were in a fairly poor state of repair.

Port Arthur is however somewhat 'iconic' in the Australian heritage landscape, a status reinforced by the World Heritage listing, although in recent years its popularity has been challenged by the newly-established Museum of Old and New Art [MONA] in Hobart.[15] Nonetheless, Port Arthur continues to be promoted as a popular tourist attraction in Tasmania, with Conservation Officer Michael Smith noting that various

[10] Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, "'The Lottery of Life': Convict tourism at Port Arthur Historic Site, Australia," *Prison Service Journal* 210 (2003): 24-28.
[11] Michael Smith, interview with the author, August 19, 2014, Port Arthur Historic Site.
[12] Lennon, "Port Arthur," 172.
[13] Michael Smith, interview.
[14] Jody Steele, interview with the author, August 19, 2014, Port Arthur Historic Site.
[15] "Museum of Old and New Art," accessed August 23, 2016, http://www.mona.net.au/.

tourist organisations have used the image to promote Tasmania to the rest of the country and to the world.[16] This reputation means that many of the Australian visitors who come to Port Arthur have already formed an idea of what the site reflects about convict history. This is partly positive – the site's 'iconic' status means that not only are visitors more likely to make the trip, they are also predisposed to view the site as historically significant. On the other hand, as participants noted, this also means that at times visitors carry uninformed or over-simplified views of Port Arthur's history. Nonetheless, its reputation is perhaps its saving grace, rendering its inaccessibility less of a burden, though still presenting challenges when competing with more centrally located attractions like MONA.

The Cascades Female Factory is less inaccessible but also less well known. Its relatively small size and its proximity to the centre of the city of Hobart make it a more practical destination for school excursions than Port Arthur, and an education program was developed in recent years in recognition of this potential. It is this recent work on education that made the Cascades an important inclusion in this thesis. The Cascades was a female prison, housing women convicts in a class system where three groups had significantly different experiences. Enough women had children with them – or gave birth whilst in the prison – for there to be a need for a nursery yard within the complex.[17] The histories of female convicts and their children are often particularly confronting and generally less well represented than those of male convicts; the challenges of representing this history in education programs was of particular concern for Education Officer Gemma Davie.[18] The original site consisted of six yards, three of which are now under the management of PAHSMA. The remaining yards are the property of private owners who purchased them at auction after the closure of the women's prison and the other state institutions that took over use of the site once transportation ended.[19]

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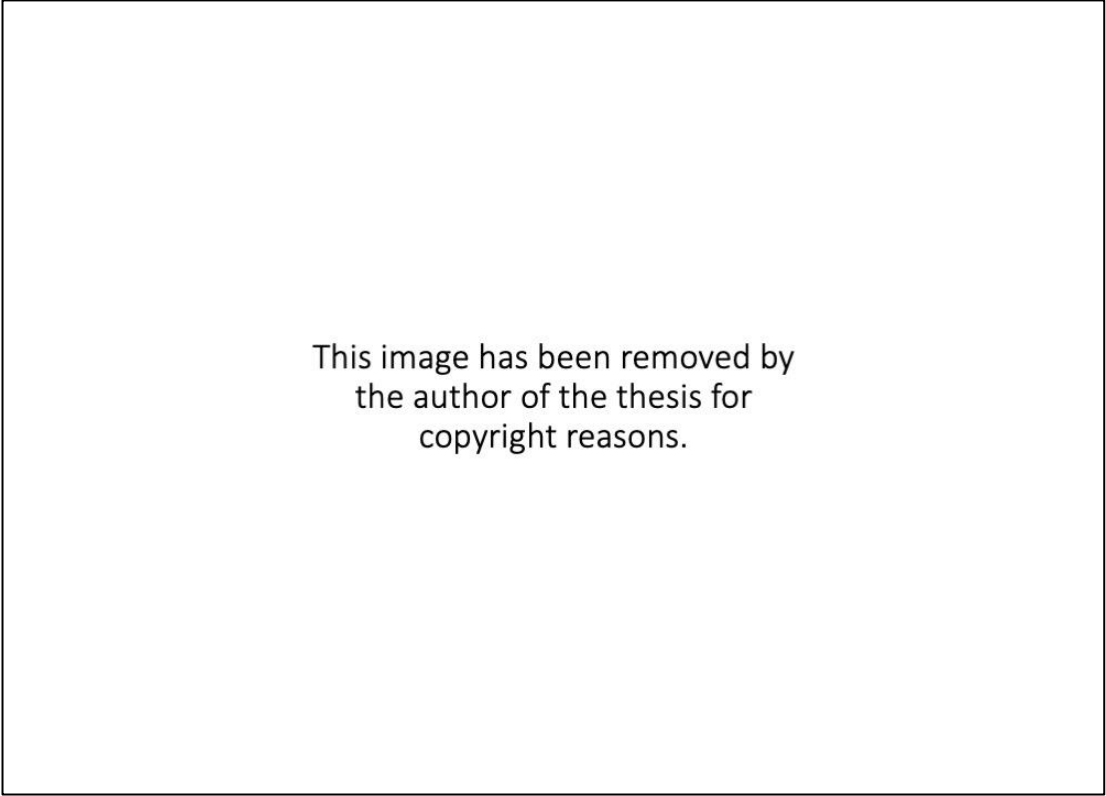
[16] Michael Smith, Interview.

[17] Rebecca Kippen, "'And the mortality frightful': Infant and child mortality in the convict nurseries of Van Diemen's Land," Presented to a meeting of the Female Convicts Research Group, 2006, paper available at http://www.femaleconvicts.org.au/docs/resources/RebeccaKippen8Aug06.pdf.

[18] Gemma Davie, interview with the author, August 19, 2014, Port Arthur Historic Site.

[19] "History," Cascades Female Factory website, accessed August 23, 2016, http://femalefactory.org.au/history/

In 2010, the properties managed under PAHSMA – Port Arthur, the Cascades and the Coal Mines – were included as three of eleven sites making up the Australian Convict World Heritage Property on the UNESCO World Heritage List.[20] According to Conservation Manager Jane Harrington, the listing requires the interpretation of all elements of the sites' histories, including their histories of neglect and tourism.[21] The listing is partly based on a recognition of the significance of convict history in quite literally building the nation – as Lennon notes, convict labour was essential to the early growth of settlements in a number of countries, including Australia.[22] World Heritage status seemed to be seen as both a boon and a burden; it was a recognition of significance and is a draw card for the sites, but it also brings responsibility.

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Figure 14: Port Arthur, with Mason Cove in the foreground and the Penitentiary Building

As well as being historically significant, Port Arthur's landscape is beautiful. Buildings in various states of preservation and ruin are set amongst hills and trees

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[20] "World heritage," Port Arthur Historic Site, accessed August 23, 2016, http://portarthur.org.au/heritage/heritage-values-significance/.
[21] Jane Harrington, interview with the author, August 20, 2014, Port Arthur, Historic Site.
[22] Lennon, "Port Arthur."

surrounding the harbour, which often glistens in sunshine most Australians rarely expect of Tasmania. The reconstructed Government Gardens are picturesque, and architectural choices in the newer and reconstructed buildings clearly reflect a desire to avoid detracting from the beauty of the setting. The stunning scenery can intersect somewhat uncomfortably with the preconceived notions many Australian visitors in particular have about Port Arthur's dark, difficult history. As Michael Smith, Conservation Manager, put it,

> the public come along with their own preconceived ideas about Port
> Arthur. I think they have trouble with the fact that they arrive here
> particularly in spring and autumn. This place is just gorgeous.[23]

The scenery is affecting in a way that can disrupt the types of experiences that visitors expect; on a sunny day it invokes a sense of peace and tranquility and openness that contradicts the usual affects of the prison visit, which emerge from enclosure and captivity.

Nonetheless, in spite of the appeal of its historical significance and the beauty of the setting, Port Arthur is often more commonly known as the site of the horrific massacre of 1996. The representation of the history of the massacre is not part of this study, largely because it has not been extensively interpreted on site due to the rawness of wounds inflicted by the tragedy, but also because it is highly unlikely to ever be a subject for study by school students. It was, however, a hugely significant event in recent Australian history and tends to colour the views of many adult visitors to the site, who were alive when the massacre occurred. The representation of the massacre and the commemoration of victims will be an ongoing concern for PAHSMA, and has centred on the former Broad Arrow Café, where many of the deaths occurred, and which has been converted into a memorial for victims. The massacre also presented an important ethical consideration in my research, particularly in interviews with staff who may have been affected by the event at the time or subsequently. I have no experience or expertise in working with survivors of trauma, and the task of understanding the impacts of the events of 1996 on staff and

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[23] Michael Smith, interview.

on the site is the subject for a different project, ideally one undertaken by researchers with the skills to support survivors and witnesses of trauma.

Port Arthur does not have a large staff, and management, curatorial, and education staff work closely together. Conservation Officer Michael Smith notes that the staff work as 'a whole department think tank.'[24] According to Gemma Davie, Education Officer, 'because we're such a small team, we do rely on each other a lot.'[25] Davie works particularly closely with Jody Steele, Manager of Heritage Programs, who oversees the interpretation of the site. As a result, participants were able in interviews to draw connections with one another's work and indicate where others may have a particular insight into the themes of this research. It is also perhaps due to the high level of cooperation and communication between staff that interviews provided insight into the ways the different roles and priorities of the historic site were managed and negotiated – where, for example, conservation needs were taken into account in developing education programs or deciding on objects for display.

The overriding theme of Port Arthur's interpretation is the 'machine to grind rogues honest' – based upon Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. All of the buildings that were part of the penal settlement are interpreted in ways that support their inclusion in this broader theme, with sub-themes focusing on education and trade training, religion and moral instruction, hard work, and surveillance, discipline and punishment.[26] The recent UNESCO World Heritage listing also brings pressure to tell the global story of Port Arthur, with the themes of forced migration, and the transnational influences of understandings of crime, punishment, and rehabilitation.[27] Interpretation uses a wide range of strategies to impart information about the site. There are museum exhibitions in the visitor centre and in various buildings throughout the site. There are a number of tours, including an introductory tour and a harbour cruise that are included in the price of entry, with optional tours to the Isle of the Dead and Point Puer Boys' Prison available at additional cost. Additionally, the site runs night-time ghost tours, which are very popular with school groups staying overnight in the area, and a 'paranormal experience,' which is essentially a

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[24] Michael Smith, interview.
[25] Davie, Interview.
[26] Julia Clark, *Port Arthur Historic Site Interpretation Plan* (Port Arthur: PAHSMA, 2001/2005), 19.
[27] "World Heritage," Port Arthur Historic Site.

ghost hunting expedition.[28] There is a wealth of programs for the public and for school groups, and an iPhone app that 'tries to fill the gap, all the gaps' and was 'a way to sort of remove those intrusive elements from the landscape but give them to people in a format that they could enjoy.'[29]

As I have outlined, this chapter focuses predominantly on Port Arthur, including reference to the Cascades where relevant. Both sites deal with confronting histories of crime, punishment, and the complex social contexts for each. In the following section, I explain in more detail what historical themes and events can be considered 'uncomfortable' at Port Arthur and the Cascades, analysing the representation of these themes and events within a broader understanding of the contextual factors that have an impact on interpretation at the site. I then turn to an analysis of the two sites' approaches to educating visitors about the past, including considering the purposes of education in light of understandings of civics and citizenship as well as history learning. This analysis is again embedded in wider consideration of the pedagogical and theoretical basis for learning in museums, which in the case of these historic sites is particularly embedded within notions of experiential learning that are relevant to affective practice.

Uncomfortable history at Port Arthur and the Cascades

The tendency for Australian visitors to view Port Arthur as a 'dark' site – largely because of its convict history but exacerbated by the events of 1996 – creates a preoccupation with representing a more 'balanced' interpretation of convictism for staff at the site. This is a central tension at Port Arthur: the tendency for visitors to assume they'll encounter dark and horrifying histories of punishment (and in some cases to actively seek such encounters)[30] sits uncomfortably with the desire of staff to represent a more complex story where the history of harsh punishment mingles with the more admirable desire to rehabilitate convicts and ensure they could productively contribute to the growing colony of Van Diemen's Land, as Tasmania was known

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[28] "Activities," Port Arthur Historic Site, accessed 23 August, 2016, http://portarthur.org.au/activities/.
[29] Steele, interview.
[30] Hartmann, "Dark tourism."

prior to the cessation of transportation.[31] Port Arthur and the Cascades are both historic site museums and therefore hold a set of expectations and concerns specific to their type.

Staff were particularly concerned with 'authenticity' and the complexities of conservation and restoration of a collection of historic buildings in various states of ruin and disrepair.[32] The sites must also work to a specific historical focus; that is, the physical sites' histories determine the focus of exhibitions and inform interpretive strategies throughout the buildings and landscapes. Buildings in fact form the most substantial part of the collections – objects, particularly those whose provenance can be traced to the sites, are in limited supply.[33] The substantive content of Port Arthur and the Cascades is therefore much more clearly delineated than other museums but is no less complex, given that a number of interconnected histories are layered over one another to create a challenging context for display. There is an Aboriginal history of the site, which is minimally acknowledged; I will discuss the reasons for this later in the chapter. There are the histories of various uses of the site by colonisers, including Port Arthur's use as a timber-getting camp and of course as a penal settlement. Alongside that history and interwoven with it is the story of Port Arthur or Carnarvon the town, with free settlers and penal settlement employees, as well as those who remained living in the area after the closure of the penal settlement in 1877. As I have mentioned, prior to the end of transportation, there is a history of dealing with the 'convict stain,' a burgeoning tourism industry, and the dispossession of the local people as a result of the establishment of the historic site authority, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority [PAHSMA].[34]

Much of Port Arthur's and the Cascades' histories as penal sites can be considered uncomfortable. Histories of crime and punishment can certainly be confronting, and as Reynolds writes, 'violence was central to the [convict] system and…its purpose was to instil a sense of communal terror.'[35] Although 'heavy' punishments such as

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[31] Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania.*
[32] Egloff and Newby, "Towards cultural sustainable tourism."
[33] Michael Smith, interview.
[34] Michael Smith, interview; see also the tension surrounding the representation of the 1996 massacre: Maria Tumarkin, "'Wishing you weren't here…': Thinking about trauma, place and the Port Arthur massacre," *Journal of Australian Studies* 25, no. 67 (2001): 196-205.
[35] Reynolds, *The History of Tasmania,* 151.
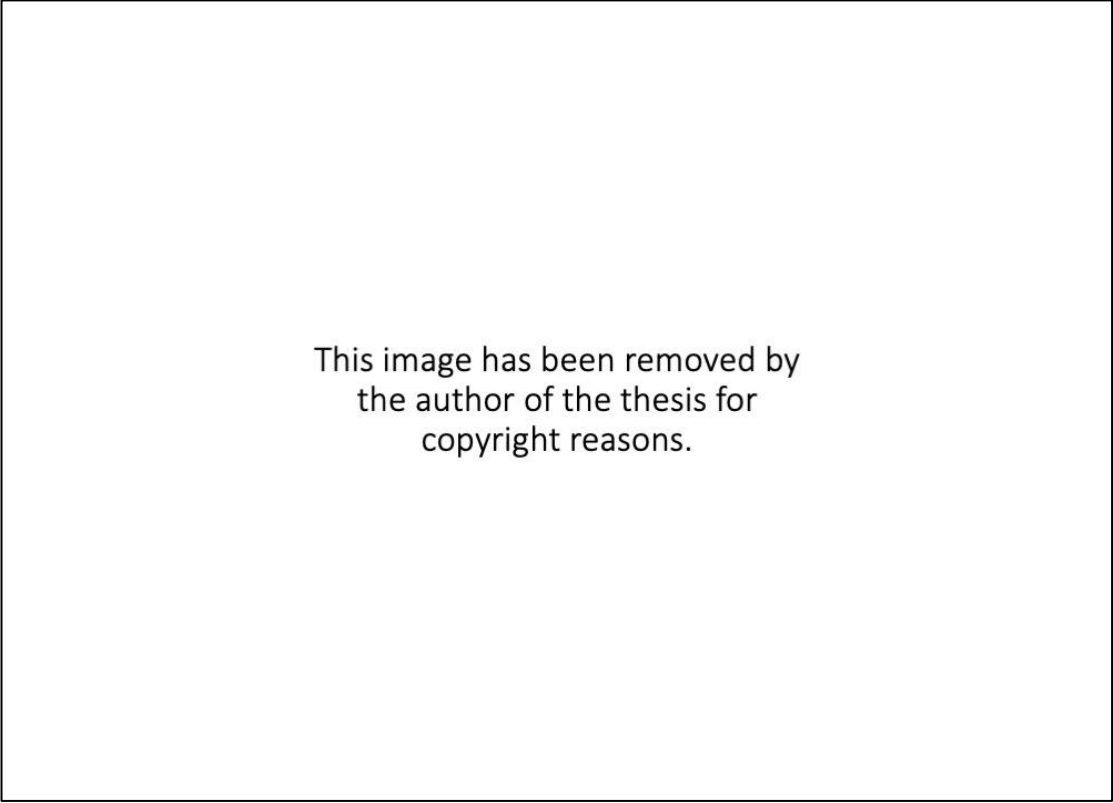
flogging, solitary confinement or hard labour were reserved for a minority of convicts, those punished in these ways 'were not just unfortunate victims who fell by the wayside; they were necessary for the whole system, which needed backs to bloody, bodies to weigh down with chains and necks to snap on the gallows.'[36] The Cascades has a similarly uncomfortable history, with the especially confronting histories of injustice and inequality experienced by convict women and their children. There is undoubtedly a great deal of 'dark' history at both sites, however for the most part staff work towards what they see as a more balanced version of events – one that explores both the cruelty and brutality of the system as well as its potential to be seen as progressive in its approach to convict rehabilitation and education.

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Figure 15: A solitary cell (top left corner) and solitary cell boundaries marked out on the ground at the Cascades Female Factory

Crime and punishment

Making a clear argument about the way crime and punishment are represented at Port Arthur and the Cascades is challenging, because the narrative that emerges is

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[36] Ibid., 151-152.

more complex than a simple assessment of whether or not the system was just. I do not argue that this is negative; in fact, it is in keeping with the need to undermine the established narratives visitors arrive with about the cruelty and brutality of the system. Encountering a historical narrative with this level of complexity is helpful for school students, because it better positions them to avoid being 'swept in' to the narrative,[37] an idea I will expand upon later in this chapter. In parts of Port Arthur, interpretation in the form of text panels and signs, along with other multimodal elements, guides the visitor into a process of meaning making that encourages understandings of the innovative qualities of the convict system, explaining the 'mill to grind rogues honest' theme [Figure 16].

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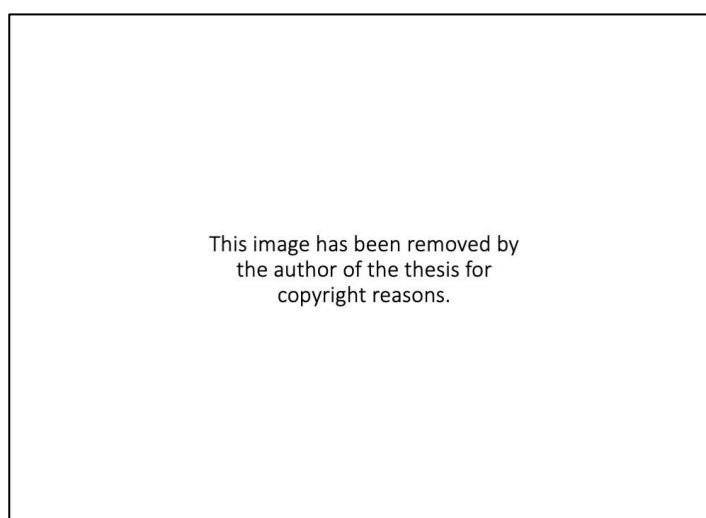
Figure 16: Display wall in the Asylum Museum, Port Arthur Historic Site

Elsewhere, the semiotics of interpretation and displays creates learning opportunities in which visitors can learn about – and at times 'experience' – harsh punishments like solitary confinement and convict labour. These differing ways of viewing the penal system as innovative and harsh create dissonance for the visitor, and I argue that this dissonance is helpful for students of historical thinking because it underscores the tenuous nature of historical interpretation and the multiple perspectives of the past.[38] Port Arthur's heterotopian character is difficult to pin down; it in fact appears to function as a number of heterotopias within a larger space. The Cascades, enclosed

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[37] Seixas and Peck, "Teaching Historical Thinking."
[38] See for example: Taylor and Young, *Making History*; Wineburg, *Historical Thinking.*

as it is in a number of yards, has greater cohesion than the historic site of Port Arthur, which was, after all, a town rather than solely a prison.

Representations of the crimes of convicts can be challenging, and create discomfort, in a number of ways. In some instances, the crimes themselves are particularly confronting; amongst Port Arthur's inmates there were those charged with crimes of murder, assault, rape and bestiality. As Education Officer Davie noted in interview, some of these crimes cannot easily be discussed with young children, and a degree of censorship is deemed necessary by the staff to ensure the site is accessible for people of all ages. Davie gave the example of a poster that was displayed in the café, containing the names, sentences, and crimes of convicts. This poster was edited for the education centre, and the crimes were removed. Davie cites crimes such as rape and bestiality as being too confronting for children, but notes that it can be difficult to draw the line and states 'a lot of the time we…leave it up to teachers and parents as to what they think is suitable for their children.'[39] When developing resources about individuals, staff 'tend not to go for those individuals who committed those more severe crimes…we tend to use the ones that aren't quite as controversial.'[40] There are of course problems associated with this approach, in that it could be argued to be misrepresenting the history, but it is arguably an area where Port Arthur, according to its staff, is obliged to compromise its commitment to historical 'truth,' as some of the darker stories of its history are judged to be too confronting - and therefore educationally counter-productive for young visitors.

Conversely, some visitors are attracted to Port Arthur because of its reputation for confronting history. School visitors are often most interested in the ghost stories and the more macabre tales of the site, and for this reason ghost tours are a feature of most overnight school visits. As Davie notes, school visitors':

> …questions are all about 'can you tell us about the floggings?' 'Can you
> tell us about the dark cells?' They always want to know the ghost stories,
> so you have to kind of, you know, use that a little bit, because it gets
> them interested in the history. But um, yeah there's a way that we go

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[39] Davie, interview.
[40] Ibid.

about it, where we try to encourage them to think about 'well what were some of the good elements of this site as well?'[41]

These darker histories can be put to use, as Davie notes, to stimulate interest in the history – the 'good elements,' she suggests, reflecting the preoccupation staff at the site have with ensuring that they do not reinforce a sensationalised, negative image of Port Arthur and its methods of meting out justice.

Port Arthur does offer visitors the opportunity to undertake a ghost tour on the site in after dark, and this is a popular experience for school groups staying overnight in the area.[42] The ghost tours highlight the interesting and at times conflicting affective practices visitors' are invited to participate in throughout the site. In this instance, experiences are constructed around storytelling and imagination, as groups traipse around the dark ruins with a guide who tells tales of hauntings and mysterious happenings at various locations. The theatricality of the experience is important and guides are skilled performers, but guides are not permitted to lie in order to preserve the possibility of historical 'truth[43] As a result, guides report their own experiences and stories from throughout Port Arthur's history, describing sometimes malevolent characters who lived at the site.[44] Although ghost tours are easy to dismiss as entertainment without educational value, I argue that this is not the case at Port Arthur, where informed teachers could use these 'ghost stories' as a springboard into a deeper analysis of the history. Where do these stories emerge from? What effect do they have on the way we view the site? What do they suggest about the place of convict history in the Australian imagination? The opportunity for engagement in the affective practices of the ghost tour – the enjoyment of an experience constructed to induce fear but where there is no real danger – is intended to entertain and be memorable. In this way, it presents an important opportunity for meaningful learning, creating learning that 'sticks[45]

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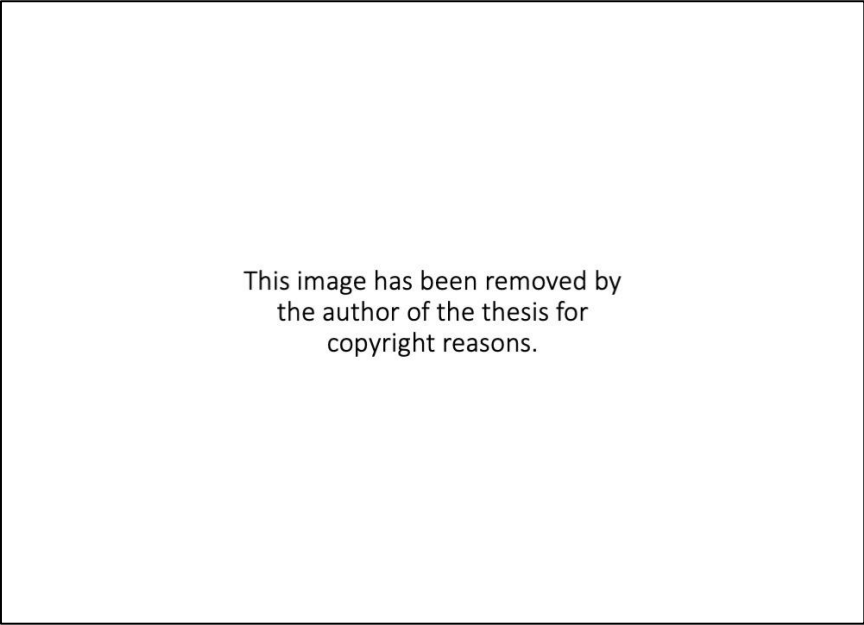
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] I experienced one of these tours as a visitor to the site, and gratefully acknowledge Jody Steele for arranging my access to the tour.
[45] Mulcahy, "Sticky learning."

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> copyright reasons.

Figure 17: Sign at entry to the Separate Prison, Port Arthur Historic Site

Elsewhere, the affective practices of the prison visit are used to engage visitors in experiences of the system. In the case of both Port Arthur and the Cascades, these experiences run along two major lines: those intended to teach visitors about the orderliness and rehabilitative potential of the system; and those intended to teach the brutality of punishment. The Separate Prison at Port Arthur provides a useful example of the emotional responses likely to be elicited by various themes. The Separate Prison is the only building on site that has been partially reconstructed, with some walls rebuilt because, as Steele notes, 'without those enclosing walls, you have absolutely no sense of the cruciform separate system…the way the place was designed to keep you inside.'[46] The reconstruction of the Separate Prison vastly altered the affective practices in which it was intended to engage visitors. Prior to the rebuilding of the walls, it was a dark and crumbling ruin; now it is a carefully constructed space that promotes affective practices of orderliness and a kind of calm. Sound and silence are an essential component of interpretation here, with visitors entreated to 'Be quiet!' and 'hear the building speak' on entry by a sign at the door [Figure 17], and the muffled sounds of convicts shuffling in metal chains intermingling with the music of services in the chapel [Figure 18].

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[46] Steele, interview.

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Figure 18: The Separate Prison Chapel, Port Arthur Historic Site

The space inside is clean and ordered, with natural light streaming through windows in the high ceilings. The walls are very white – something that Steele notes surprises visitors, who 'are fascinated by the fact that the walls are so white. Why is it so clean and tidy, surely in a prison it must have been…no, well actually it was very clean and very white. And so yes we've done some very basic things that tell a huge story.'[47] Cells are tidy and identical, lists of rules hang on the walls, and the chapel, with individual enclosed spaces for each inmate, is pristine if claustrophobic. All of these features are interpreted to give a sense of the order and predictability of convict life in this prison, but a strong sense of punishment remains and is reinforced by the existence of the punishment cell, accessible via one of the yards [Figure 20]. The punishment cell is a small, dark, stone-encased space, and offers visitors the opportunity to participate in an affective practice of 'experiencing' solitary confinement. This space is more in keeping with what interview participants described as being something they wished to destabilise – the tendency for visitors to

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[47] Steele, Interview.

see Port Arthur as a place of cruel punishment, of darkness and misery. The freezing cold and pitch black punishment cell is a quite literal manifestation of this narrative.
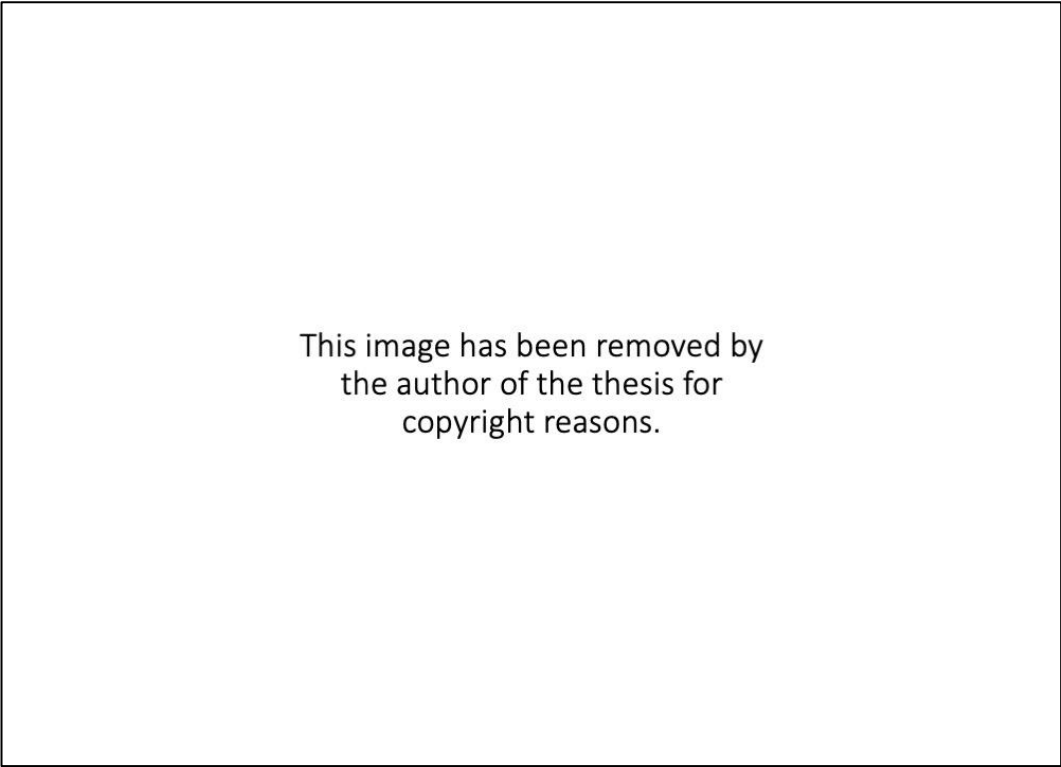
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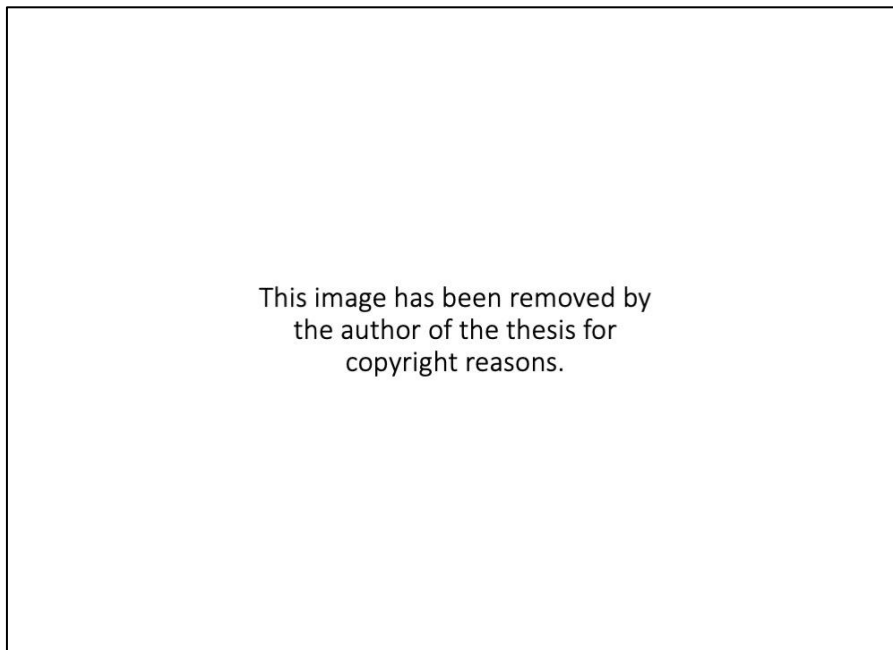
Figure 19: A cell in the Separate Prison, Port Arthur Historic Site

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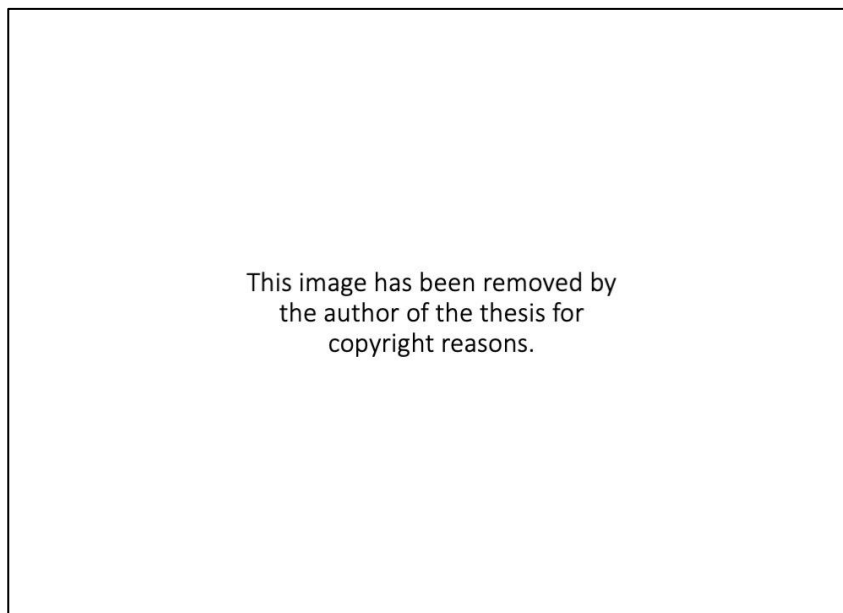
Figure 20: Pathway to the Punishment Cell, Separate Prison, Port Arthur Historic Site

While most interview participants at Port Arthur did stress the need to tell the story of rehabilitation and innovation, interpretation is not intended to overturn the 'dark' narrative, but to muddy it with the complexity of multiple perspectives and

conflicting experiences. There are, after all, visitors who are attracted to the site on the basis of its dark reputation, as the advent of dark tourism suggests.[48] In this way visitors are invited to engage with several affective practices, some expected and some less so, in order to destabilise any notion of there being a simple story of right and wrong. These intersecting narratives with their apparently contradictory effects are also evident at the Cascades, but there is a stronger tendency to emphasise the harshness of convict life for women. Interpretation at the Cascades is undertaken largely through the performance work of costumed guides, and stories tell of the punitive conditions of life in the yards. I expand upon these ideas at the Cascades in the next section.

The tendency of visitors to oversimplify the story contributes significantly to the difficulties of interpreting the past for visitors to Port Arthur and the Cascades. According to Michael Smith, this problem – a tendency for visitors to assume Port Arthur is a dark place where prisoners were misunderstood and guards were evil – emerged in part from the early interpretation of the site. He notes that:

> …the way that the site was interpreted in the early days, or accessed, the
> notion of sensationalising the place built up a kind of reputation that
> may have—that wasn't appropriate. I heard a story…of a guide that was
> here at the end of the convict period…offering for a few more shillings
> to show the scars on his back that—the cat had not been used a Port
> Arthur for the best part of fifty odd, sixty odd years.[49]

Smith here describes an anecdote about a guide who took tours at Port Arthur during the beginning of its period as a tourist destination, shortly after the site ceased to operate as a penal settlement.[50] The anecdote may or may not be factual, but it does indicate something about Smith's and other Port Arthur staff's concerns with the sensationalising of the convict past. This concern is embedded in a preoccupation with authenticity and historical 'truth,' which will be explored later in this chapter. Although staff do not suggest that there is no truth in the narratives that

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[48] Hartmann, "Dark tourism."
[49] Smith, Interview.
[50] Between the end of transportation and the establishment of the formally managed site, Port Arthur attracted visitors curious about the convict era; the site was an established open air museum by the 1980s. See: Maxwell-Stewart, "The Lottery of Life."

many visitors arrive with about the suffering and injustice experienced by convicts, they argue that this is far from the full story. As Heritage Programs Manager Jody Steele noted,

> People come here with a very preconceived idea of what they think Port Arthur is and what convicts were and how they lived their lives, you know, the poor convict that was shipped out here because he stole a loaf of bread, that kind of attitude. So trying to break and put it into context is a very difficult thing to do, trying to give people the understanding of what was going on in the greater global sphere of convictism and forced migration so that they understand what role Port Arthur played in that as opposed to just being, you know, this horrible place at the end of the world filled with torture.[51]

Challenging these preconceived ideas and communicating the 'truth' is not easy – as Smith states, visitors 'cling' to the stories they arrive with.[52] A number of strategies are employed and subjects addressed in order to challenge the tendency for visitors to only consider the darker histories of Port Arthur. The overall result is the construction of what can be described as an affective practice of 'authenticity' – of experiencing an 'authentic' encounter with the past – that is predicated on the value of understanding multiple perspectives through the physical remnants of history across the site. Such encounters with authenticity are closely linked to the aims of historical thinking pedagogy and demonstrate the relationship between affective and pedagogic practices at the site; the encounters encourage visitors to consider perspectives outside those they might be more familiar with, and they use historical sources to interpret these perspectives. As the PAHSMA Interpretation Plan argues, the narrative of commandant power and convict powerlessness is vastly oversimplified, and 'life at Port Arthur was a constant process of interpersonal negotiation and adaptation to what was, rather than what ought to have been.'[53]

The Government Gardens, for example, are used to promote the 'softer side' of Port Arthur's history.[54] The dockyards also incorporate some attention to the free women

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[51] Steele, interview.
[52] Michael Smith, interview.
[53] Clark, *Interpretation Plan*, 14.
[54] Steele, interview.

and the children at Port Arthur, as one way of countering the sense of harshness at the site, with a soundscape presenting an evocation of the everyday experiences of a family living in one of the houses there. The dockyards are, according to Harrington, 'one of the least convict components of the story,'[55] and their interpretation reflects a desire on the part of staff to address the multiple perspectives of those who lived and worked at Port Arthur, many of whom were not convicts. Such an approach is useful for teachers and students, allowing an opportunity to explore multiple, different perspectives of the past and linking to the curriculum requirements related to understanding the lives of people in the past.[56] The Dockyards and the Government Gardens also contribute to ways of interpreting the site that support a more 'balanced' perception of convict history. Director of Conservation and Infrastructure Jane Harrington stated that:

> …we have a deliberate policy here of trying not to emphasise the
> sensational side of convictism and the sensational side of punishment
> and the system and trying to recognise it as a system that was put in
> place at the time that actually did provide benefits to both the convicts
> and society. And we have to be very careful to balance that with not
> then looking like we're trying to whitewash the story as well.[57]

Steele argues that Port Arthur's history is not the 'terrible history' that many visitors assume it to be. She notes that it played a 'pivotal role in the building of what is our nation' and in the development of 'penal philosophy and … the way our prisons are run today.'[58]

Part of what makes it difficult for the interpretation of objects and buildings to communicate both the complexity and contentiousness of Port Arthur's history is time – a number of visitors expressed regret at not allowing enough time to see everything on their visit in audience research conducted at the site.[59] Steele expresses doubt that visitors will be able to 'get a comprehensive understanding of what Port

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[55] Harrington, interview.
[56] See for example: "Year 5 Content Descriptions for History: Australian Curriculum, F-6/7 HASS," accessed August 23, 2016, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/curriculum/f-10?layout=1#yl-5.
[57] Harrington, interview.
[58] Steele, interview.
[59] Clark, *Interpretation Plan.*

Arthur was as a penal settlement in two to three hours,'[60] an estimation of the time day visitors have to actually spend on site, assuming they have travelled from Hobart. A number of interpretive strategies are employed to attempt to develop more complex understandings of the history in visitors, but as with all museums, there is no way to ensure that all visitors experience each of the elements designed to engage them in learning about Port Arthur's convict past. Many people bypass the *Lottery of Life* gallery, for example, which would allow them a valuable insight into the diversity of convict experiences.[61] The *Lottery of Life* exhibition, located in the visitor centre building, attempts to connect with some of the diverse experiences of convict life, representing the many different types of involuntary work convicts did and revealing that a convict's experience could be better or worse on the basis of the skills that made them suitable for particular types of work, rather than the severity of their crimes.[62]

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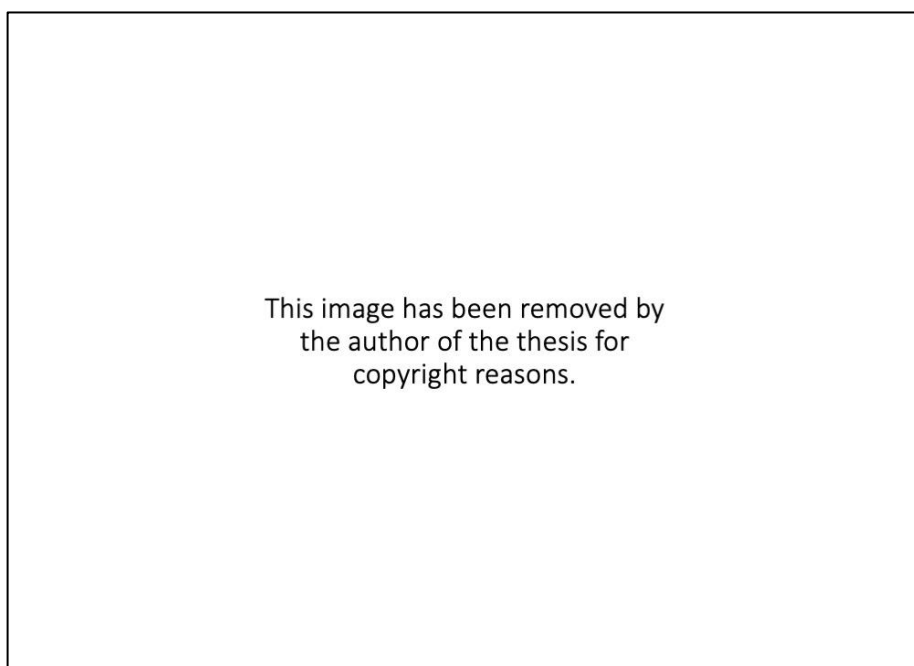
Figure 21: Lottery of Life *"Find your sentence" display with panels corresponding to playing cards visitors are given on purchasing entry tickets to Port Arthur Historic Site*

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[60] Steele, Interview.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Maxwell-Stewart, "The Lottery of Life"; Emma Christopher and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, "Convict transportation in global context, c. 1700–88," in *The Cambridge History of Australia, Volume 1: Indigenous and colonial Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 68-90.

The unpredictability of visitor pathways through a large and complex site does mean that repetition of messages is important,[63] and it cannot be assumed that visitors will cover every aspect of the site. The key themes of the site are indeed repeated throughout the tours, exhibitions, and information panels. As I have noted, the overarching theme of the 'mill to grind rogues honest' emphasises the system and its aims of rehabilitation as well as punishment. This system is represented as 'a gigantic social experiment,'[64] and 'sub-themes' relate to a number of 'cogs' in the machine: education and training; religion and moral instruction; hard work; and surveillance, discipline and punishment.[65] Smaller themes are also addressed in other tours and areas. For example, the Isle of the Dead tour addresses the idea that 'rigid principles of social and moral separation governed not only the lives but also the deaths of the people of Port Arthur.'[66] Crime and punishment is in fact only part of the history at Port Arthur, and the complex social system in place is perceived to be a very important part of what must be taught to visitors.

The representation of crime and punishment at Port Arthur demonstrates, I propose, a strong desire to do 'justice' to the multiple perspectives of convict life. An important tension is created between the opposing perspectives of convicts and overseers, centering on the question of whether or not the system was fair or cruel. I argue that this is essentially a useful approach in terms of teaching historical thinking, as it highlights what is always an important concern in understanding the past; multiple and conflicting perspectives can in fact be equally accurate.[67] In this case, the convict system was certainly harsh and undoubtedly often cruel, but there were ways in which some convicts had more positive experiences, often depending on their skills.[68] Education Officer Gemma Davie notes that:

> A lot of people come to the site with expectations that it was a place of
> torture and, you know, physical and psychological torture and we really
> try to interpret about it from both sides. Maybe from our perspective

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[63] Steele, Interview.
[64] Clark, *Interpretation Plan.*
[65] Ibid., 19.
[66] Ibid., 20.
[67] Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Goldberg and Ron, "Look, each side says something different"; McCully, "History teaching."
[68] Maxwell-Stewart, "Lottery of Life."

today, it does look like a fairly terrible place but, you know, what were they trying to achieve? Were they trying to reform convicts, it was a little bit of both.[69]

Here Davie argues the need to avoid condemning the past on the basis of modern understandings of crime and punishment, and this is key to much of Port Arthur's interpretation. Representations are intended to ensure that visitors understand the past on its own terms. This is viewed as a way to ensure that the histories represented are 'balanced' and therefore taken to be accurate; a way of doing justice to the past. There are heavily moral messages about crime and punishment and a strong desire to avoid the 'poor convict' narrative that has been evident in public perceptions.[70]

While there is significant literature on the problems of the convict system,[71] Port Arthur staff expressed concern more with a sensationalised version of this history that many visitors seemed to hold. Text panels in the Asylum museum, for example, describe the system as 'well-intentioned but brutal.' They do not shy away from describing punishments 'used to break the rebellious will,' and forcing convicts to attend the church, regardless of their beliefs, was 'part of the cruel machine Other displays in the museum are used to indicate the problems of sensationalising the history of Port Arthur. For example, a text panel accompanying tourist post cards notes that the images of men in cells and 'in the embrace of the Iron Maiden' are 'melodramatic and highly inaccurate' and would 'soften even the hardest heart to the poor convict's sufferings.'[72] These displays demonstrate a range of perspectives of convict history, its overall narrative highlighting both the brutality and the progressivism of the system. Throughout the site, the different buildings help to construct a complex narrative of the many different ways of experiencing 'convict life' from within and without; visitors can explore the commandant's house, the barracks and the church as well as the sites of convict imprisonment and labour.

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[69] Davie, interview.
[70] Harrington, interview; Steele, interview.
[71] See for example: Christopher and Maxwell-Stewart, "Convict transportation"; Robert Hughes, *A Fatal Shore* (New York: Random House, 1987); Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania*; Lynette Ross, "A final escape: An analysis of suicide at the penal settlement of Port Arthur," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 7 (2005): 181-202.
[72] Text panels, Asylum Museum, Port Arthur.

Importantly, affective practices are closely connected to pedagogical practices at Port Arthur and the Cascades, with the cognitive sense-making process entangled with affective responses that work to challenge some of the preconceived notions visitors hold, according to participants. The complexity of the Port Arthur site in particular, with its myriad smaller locations and buildings, means that visitors can leave with a tangible sense of being pulled towards different interpretations and perspectives of the convict past. For school visitors, this provides a useful and powerful sense of the past as tentative and debatable.

The 'others' at Port Arthur and the Cascades

In the previous section I focused mainly on representations of the experiences of male convicts and overseers at Port Arthur, who made up the bulk of the population at the site. There is a range of instances at both Port Arthur and the Cascades where the experiences of 'others' marginalised in mainstream historical memory – Aboriginal people, women, children, gay convicts at Port Arthur, and those with mental illness – are interpreted to varying degrees for visitors. In this section, I focus on these representations. The experiences of these diverse groups are in many cases presented only marginally in the museum. Although they serve to draw the visitor's attention to the differences amongst convicts and others living at the sites, I argue that in some cases these representations are so minimal or so careless as to have the potential to cause significant offense or to reinforce problematic beliefs visitors may hold, particularly about homosexuality and mental illness. Port Arthur in particular does not represent an attention to social inclusion that some museum heterotopias embody; its attention, as I have argued, is on justice to the past rather than justice in the present or future.

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Figure 22: The Asylum building, Port Arthur Historic Site

Mental illness is a potentially confronting theme at Port Arthur, but carries some of the same challenges the AWM faces in representing histories of psychiatry – historical research into mental illness amongst convicts has been limited, and there is little evidence to support details about the prevalence of psychiatric disorders at the site. Deaths by suicide made up a relatively small percentage of the mortality rate at Port Arthur, but Ross argues that 'to ignore them would be to disregard a significant piece of the jigsaw puzzle that makes up Port Arthur's past.'[73] The prevalence of mental illness was sufficient to require the existence of an asylum to house afflicted inmates, and this building has been put to multiple different purposes throughout the town's history. It was damaged in the 1895 bushfires following the closure of the

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[73] Ross, "The Final Escape," 181.

settlement and reconstructed,[74] losing much of its original architecture along the way. Inside, a short film plays in the central room, while three wings house an exhibition of objects from the site, an area for genealogical research and a café. The Asylum's history as a home for those with mental illness is not addressed in any great detail, although this is partly because there is an absence of appropriate material to support an exhibition on the history of the treatment of mental illness at the site.[75] The film in the foyer of the Asylum does however present a highly problematic and potentially very harmful representation of 'madness' at Port Arthur. Entering and walking through the space, visitors hear a man groaning against a background of haunting music. A voice-over, a deep male voice imbued with exaggerated drama, describes seeing an inmate as 'grizzled' and with a 'peculiar wild beast smell,' a 'gibbering animal Footage reveals a wide-eyed man in an almost comical representation of a 'lunatic

Harrington suggests that the film is not intended to inform people about mental illness at the penal settlement, rather 'it's a lovely overview of the asylum as a building. It provides very little, I think, information or education to people about the notion of mental illness and how it was dealt with. It's the history of the building.'[76] Certainly, it may not be the intention of the film to inform visitors about this particular area of history, but the film does address the theme, and contributes – especially through its sounds – to an affective experience of the space that suggests very clear messages about 'madness' and the need for people with mental illness to be feared and locked away for their strangeness. In this sense the representations are problematic and echo damaging popular-culture representations of the mentally ill as to be feared and imprisoned, rather than cared for. The film is an example of the staff's desire to represent the past on what they understand to be its own terms, during a time when those with mental illness were viewed with this kind of suspicion, fear, and misunderstanding. I suggest there is, however, an implicit assumption that we have left these attitudes in the past that I argue is quite mistaken. Although the history of psychiatry is a relatively under-researched area, a more detailed and –

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[74] "Welfare at Port Arthur," Port Arthur Historic Site, accessed August 23, 2015, http://portarthur.org.au/history/welfare-at-port-arthur/
[75] Michael Smith, interview.
[76] Harrington, interview.

essentially – more critical representation is possible. Representing mental ill health in this way risks contributing to stigma and fear in the present; Steele and Harrington concede that the site does not deal well with the theme of mental illness, with Harrington noting that 'the sad thing here is that it's all part of the beginning of the history of how the western world dealt with mental illness.'[77]

Homosexuality is also a part of Port Arthur's history that is contentious amongst some visitors; it also provoked considerable concern at the time about the sexual activities men might partake in when living in such concentrated male populations.[78] Steele notes that homosexuality is an important theme at the Coal Mines site in particular, and states that there are 'a lot of people who don't want to hear that.'[79] Tasmania is in fact known for its 'repressive social climate' as Tumarkin writes, with laws prohibiting homosexuality existing until 1997,[80] and some lingering resistance to acknowledging homosexuality is arguably not unexpected in such a context.

At Port Arthur, the histories of gay men are briefly addressed in the mobile app's section on the Penitentiary.[81] Audio is accompanied by an image of a grey convict mask, noting that homosexual acts were punishable by death in nineteenth century England, although this 'harsh fact…failed to deter some of the inmates at Port Arthur.'[82] The American convict Linus Miller is also quoted as saying Port Arthur 'was a sink of sin…I have no hesitation in saying that hundreds of abominable crimes against nature, such as the laws of England punish with death, are daily committed.' The application also states that authorities at the site were forced to acknowledge these 'unnatural acts,' referring to the 'homosexual blight' at Port Arthur. The commentary states that 'the obscure language used to describe charges of homosexuality reflects the squeamishness of the times.'[83] It is clear again here that an attempt is being made to avoid 'judgement' of the past through a contemporary

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[77] Harrington, interview.
[78] See for example: Lennon, "Port Arthur"; Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania.*
[79] Steele, Interview.
[80] Tumarkin, "Wishing you weren't here," 196.
[81] PAHSMA, iPhone application Port Arthur Historic Site, "The Penitentiary."
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

lens, that the past should be understood on its own terms. In this case the language used – describing homophobia as 'squeamishness' – is dismissive of a serious issue.

However, by carefully avoiding condemning people of the past for their hatred and fear, their actions could be seen to be excused. Opportunities for learning are also missed though, I suggest, in these limited representations of a complex issue. While addressing sexuality in public spaces can undoubtedly be challenging and raises concerns about the age-appropriateness of material, recent research highlights the need for representations of sexual diversity for children from a young age.[84] Where students and other visitors could be provided with material to consider the change and continuity of these ideas about sexuality, they are instead encouraged to assume that this is an example of the strange attitudes of those in the past, 'the squeamishness of the times,' times that are, the interpretation suggests, nothing like the present. In considering the heterotopian quality of Port Arthur, here interpretation suggests affective practices of moral superiority – people in the present are not so ignorant, so 'squeamish' – that do not invite critical engagement with notions of LGBTIQ+ inclusion outside of the site. Port Arthur is essentially constructed to be a heterotopia containing separate slices of time; rather than emphasising their centrality and relevance to Australian society, they are positioned as discrete, the literal past.

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[84] For instance, the report *Writing themselves in* reveals that by age thirteen sixty per cent of same-sex attracted young people knew their sexuality. Lynne Hillier et al, *Writing themselves in 3* (Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, 2010).

This image has been removed by the author of the thesis for copyright reasons.
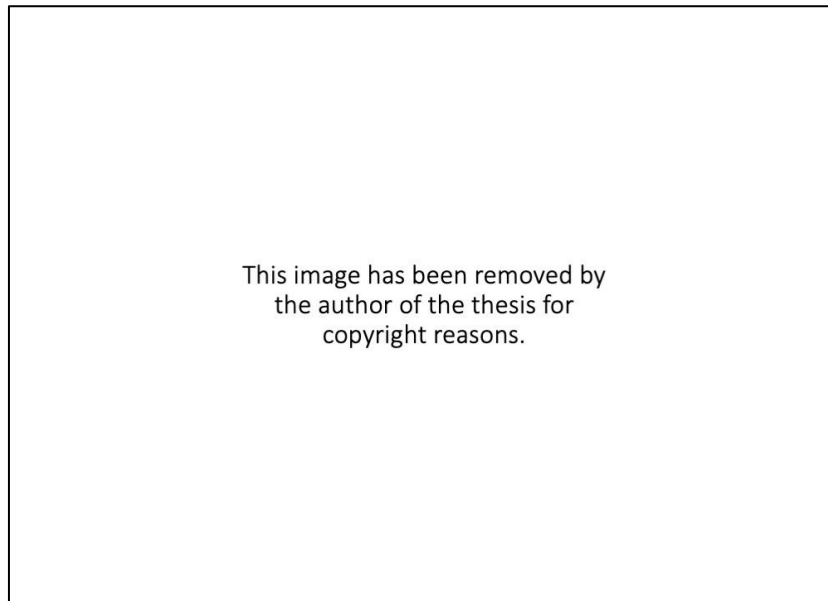
Figure 23: Actors performing the roles of convict and overseer at the Cascades Female Factory

The Cascades Female Factory can also be a confronting site, as it deals with the stories of female convicts and their children, who were usually sent to orphanages or were adopted, if they survived their infancy in the nursery yard.[85] The histories of female convicts were until recently under-researched, but new works have been published in recent years.[86] There has also been increasing attention to female convicts through the *Roses from the Heart* project, in which bonnets are made to commemorate each of the women transported to Australia from Britain and Ireland in a project led by Christina Henri and supported by the Cascades.[87] Interpretation for school visitors centres around the story of a convict woman, Alice, and is delivered through museum theatre – there is a specific school tour that is similar to the general tour, in which Alice and an overseer take turns leading the tour through one of the Factory's yards. This strategy is in a way necessary; the site is essentially a series of walled yards with little remaining of its convict era structures. Visitors learn about each of the sections of the yard, watching as Alice experiences life as a convict, participating at various points in the narrative; for instance, on my tour I spent a few

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[85] Kippen, "And the mortality frightful."

[86] See for example: Susanna De Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore* (Brisbane: Pirgos Press, 2009); Joan Kavanagh and Dianne Snowden, *Van Diemen's Women: A history of transportation to Tasmania* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland, 2015).

[87] "Roses from the Heart and Cascades Female Factory," Creative Partnerships Australia, accessed August 26, 2016, https://www.creativepartnershipsaustralia.org.au/resources/case-studies/roses-from-the-heart-and-cascades-female-factory-historic-site.

moments miming unravelling shipping ropes at the request of the overseer. The story of Alice is an amalgamation of a number of different female convicts' experiences, and exists somewhere between fiction and history.

The tour draws on historical sources relating to the different experiences of women at the Cascades. Alice's story has 'a bit of a positive spin at the end…she realized that if she works hard and behaves really well, she can go outside the factory and make a life for herself.'[88] Alice's story is 'the PG version' of the female convict experience.[89] The most confronting elements of the history are not addressed in detail; although I would not suggest that there is any attempt to completely silence the misery and suffering, it is largely skimmed over. For instance, Davie noted that stories of children's deaths, and experiences of rape amongst female convicts were excluded from Alice's story.[90] This renders the effect less powerful than it could be but also promotes affective practices that are more comfortable. Visitors are encouraged to imagine themselves in the position of convict – as I did while unravelling rope – but the affects of the stories told are largely about cold, damp conditions, hard work, and the sense of confinement.

These are, I suggest, safer practices than might be provoked by representations of children's deaths or violence against women.[91] Again, contrary to Heumann Gurian, some subjects are not particularly 'safe' in museums; or rather, in some instances it is difficult to put in place the structures that would make the museum space safe for all visitors. This is especially true where there are no affordances for groups of visitors to make choices about the types of history they encounter; for a school group especially, stories of children's deaths and sexual violence cannot be easily shared with all. In addition, representations of sexual violence may be triggering for visitors who experience psychiatric conditions related to such trauma.[92] While teachers often have a sense of which students might find such histories too confronting, museum guides do not know the children and young people they present to and must take care not to overwhelm them. Given that the yards at the Cascades have been left as

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[88] Davie, interview.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] See for example: Kippen, "And the mortality frightful."
[92] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*

largely open spaces and there are no walls or enclosures that would allow separate, optional sections for display, which is a strategy used elsewhere, visitors cannot easily 'opt out' of encountering difficult material.[93]

Perhaps the most glaring absence of potentially challenging history at Port Arthur is the Aboriginal history of the site. Port Arthur staff, however, note a number of reasons for this that are largely related to the need to work with local Aboriginal communities to ensure any representations are appropriate. At the time of interviewing there were plans to rectify this omission on the site, with input from elders and others in the community. This is however quite late in comparison to many other museums, where attention to Australian Aboriginal history has been a focus for several decades. As Davie noted though,

> …we are also conscious of not telling stories that don't—that aren't necessarily our stories. So we want to do it in the right way which is why it's probably been done quite minimally up to this point. But we have been working more recently with Aboriginal communities, local communities, so in the future we're looking to have a lot more involvement which is quite exciting.[94]

While there are brief mentions of the Aboriginal people from the local area, the Pydairrerme, both at the site and in the brochures and maps handed to visitors on entry, these really are only mentions. Even the brief acknowledgement of the first peoples of the area in tourist guides has only been a practice for approximately the last decade.[95] It is, however, clear that staff have the inclusion of Aboriginal history in mind, and are keen to ensure it is approached sensitively and with the involvement of local Aboriginal people. As Harrington stated, Port Arthur does not 'tell the Aboriginal story. It's not a matter of whether we tell it well or not, we don't tell it. It's as simple as that[96] Harrington argued that they do not tell this story because they are 'not authorised to tell it While there has been some effort to work with the

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[93] Museum Victoria's *Love and Sorrow* exhibition uses this separation technique with signs warning visitors about difficult content, as did the visiting exhibition *Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions,* developed by the National Museum of Australia, with warning notices on the entryway.
[94] Davie, interview.
[95] The first mention of the Pydairrerme people appears to have been in the Port Arthur Historic Site guide from c2006.
[96] Harrington, interview.

Tasmanian Aboriginal community, according to Harrington their interest has been limited until recently. This, she argues, is due to the fact that having their stories told at Port Arthur is 'not their priority,' and there are much bigger concerns for the community. Part of the problem perhaps, as Harrington notes, 'is that Port Arthur is seen as a sad place…on two fronts, the convict story itself they consider to be sad, which it is. And then of course the incident with the 1996 massacre.'[97]

'Ninety-six'

Although the massacre of 1996 – more often referred to as 'the Port Arthur Massacre,' or by staff at the site simply as 'ninety-six' – is not my focus for this thesis, it does form an important part of the site's recent history. The massacre is in some ways the site's most uncomfortable history. It is recent enough that many Australian visitors remember it, and many of the current locals lived in the area at the time and were directly or indirectly affected by it. The actions of the gunman resulted in the deaths of 35 people in and around the historic site, with 20 of those deaths occurring in the Broad Arrow Café, Port Arthur's previous main food and drink venue.[98] In addition to these tragic losses, the events of Sunday 28 April 1996 had broad implications for gun ownership in Australia, and the massacre is often seen as the catalyst for strict gun laws in the country.[99] It is thus a significant event in recent Australian history.
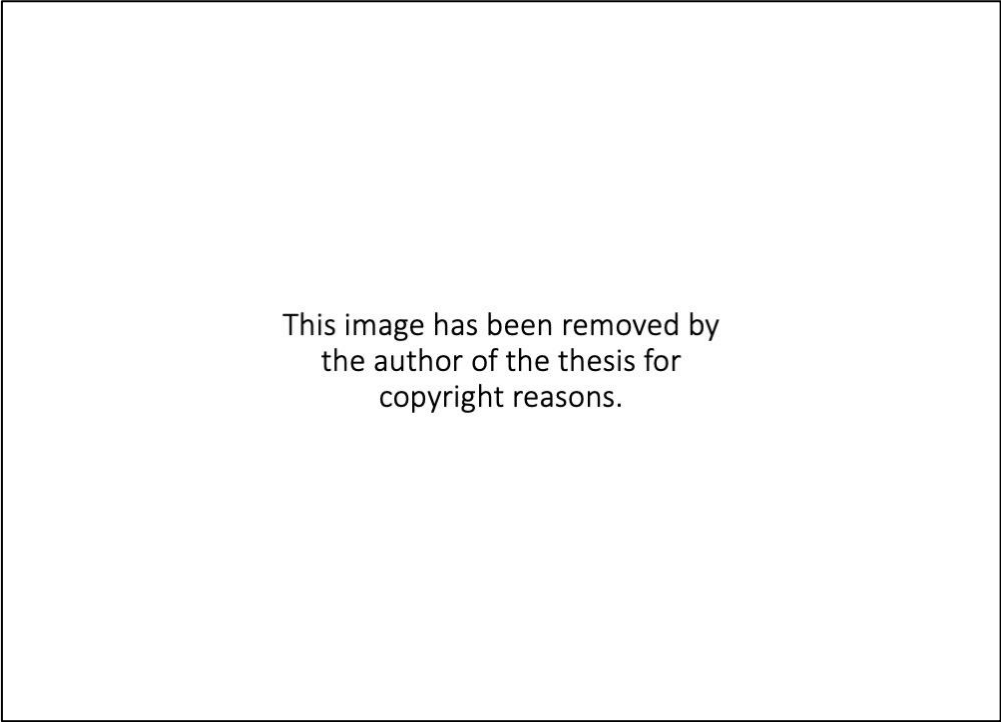
Ninety-six highlighted the difficulty of managing a site of trauma of this scale, made even more complex by the fact that Port Arthur was already a historic site of a different nature. In the wake of the tragedy, determining how to approach the memorialisation of the deaths became a primary concern, as did the question of what to do with the Broad Arrow Café, which had been a site of intense horror. Conservation Officer Michael Smith noted that the massacre seemed to strengthen the ambivalence with which the local community viewed the site.[100]

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[97] Harrington, interview.
[98] Jane Lennon, "The Broad Arrow Café, Port Arthur, Tasmania: Using social values methodology to resolve the commemoration issues," *Historic Environment* 16, no. 3 (2002): 38-46.
[99] See for example: Wahlquist, "It took one massacre."
[100] Michael Smith, interview.

Figure 24: Memorial to the victims of the Port Arthur massacre

In the aftermath of the massacre, according to Tumarkin, 'the question of the ownership of the site was central,' and it was the Port Arthur's status as a national icon that took precedence over local needs. As Tumarkin writes, 'It was the entire community of the [Tasman] Peninsula that was devastated by the massacre,' and this community that bore 'the brunt of the carnage.'[101] Tumarkin argues persuasively that trauma – in this case the trauma of the Port Arthur massacre – comes to be 'the key enabler of the project of national self-legitimation.'[102] Ownership of the narrative is shifted to the nation, undermining the agency of survivors in making meaning of the tragedy and ensuring that the event can be framed in terms of 'collective victimhood.'[103] This is similar to the ways the trauma of the First World War is used in the AWM, making it seem as though we cannot critique these histories without undertaking an unforgiveable attack on the victims and survivors of trauma. Key in the case of Port Arthur is the sense that this story of tragedy *belongs* to the nation, rather than to the local people, and this relates to my primary concern with understandings of trauma that operate at a collective level beyond the people who

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[101] Tumarkin, "Wishing you weren't here."
[102] Ibid., 204.
[103] Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory.*

have been affected by traumatic events. Reclaiming agency over the narrative of trauma is most often central to recovery for the individuals and groups who have experienced the trauma;[104] if the trauma story is 'claimed' by the nation, we risk re-traumatising survivors and their ancestors.

The victims of the massacre are commemorated at Port Arthur, and I do not mean to suggest that this memorial is in any way insensitive, rather to note that the treatment of this type of trauma is about much more than what is visibly presented on site. For most visitors though, the only reminder of the massacre is largely concealed. The Broad Arrow Café is now a ruin, destroyed to create a memorial within its former walls, with a reflective pool, a plaque and a cross to commemorate the victims. Prior to the establishment of the memorial, Lennon wrote that 'the desire to obliterate the structure relates to the very real psychological trauma which the place engenders, as well as the fear of immortalising the incident.'[105] Lennon also notes the reluctance to immortalise the crime and the murderer, fearing potential 'copy cat' crimes – in fact the murderer is not named anywhere at the site, as a way to privilege the stories of those who lost their lives or were affected by the tragedy and to undermine the 'fame' the killer purportedly sought by committing these crimes. The memorial is thus a quiet, peaceful space much like many other ruins around Port Arthur, and until the visitor becomes aware that this is a much more recent ruin, there is little sense that this space differs from the rest of the site.

The Broad Arrow Café has thus become a heterotopia within a heterotopia; a 'slice of time' is frozen there to allow the ruins to be, in the words of a text panel, 'touchstones for people's thoughts about what happened here.'[106] The café highlights the elements of deliberateness in the construction of affective practices of commemoration. The choices made in interpreting the tragedy and the café site have a number of implications for the affects produced. In choosing not to name the killer, staff have consciously tried to direct attention away from what he did, focusing instead on the impact of his actions on victims and survivors. Staff also note the potential for this history to upset young visitors and, in their 'Code of Conduct' for

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[104] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*
[105] Lennon, "The Broad Arrow Café," 39.
[106] Text panel, "What happened here?" Port Arthur Historic Site.

school visitors suggest that teachers discuss the massacre with students before visiting.[107]

There is a very deliberate attempt to disrupt any tendency to seek constructed encounters with the horror and terror of the events. The café invites visitors to take up affective practices of respectful commemoration, in many ways like those at the AWM, and to direct visitors away from the more macabre pedagogic practices of learning about and imagining the horrific details of violence – a practice more commonly indulged in the media. There is much more to be said about the memorial and the representation of the massacre at the site, and I do not have the space to do justice to this complex commemoration in this thesis. Ultimately, the events of 1996 have meant that Port Arthur has taken on a commemorative role that was never intended to be part of its historic or educational focus.

The affective practices of the prison visit

Both Port Arthur and the Cascades use some aspects of uncomfortable history relating to convict life to reinforce ideas about its harshness while embedding this within a sense of the system as 'just.' I do not suggest that this emerges through a single narrative, rather that a range of experiences that at times seem conflicting actually come together to present a complex and multifaceted view of the past. Port Arthur in particular has faced considerable challenges in representing what is more a collection of histories than a single story of the site; with limited resources, staff have developed the site as an extremely useful teaching resource. In some ways, conflicting narratives represent significant opportunity for teachers and museum educators, who can use the affective practices supported as a springboard for deeper investigation into historical issues. In other cases, the need to represent history as distinct from the present has the effect of 'othering' convicts, working within the context of Australia's contentious relationship with its convict past.[108]

Experiences are constructed to allow visitors to participate in encounters that relate to the lives of convicts and of overseers. There are spaces where visitors can be

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[107] PAHSMA, "School Visits to the Port Arthur Historic Site: Code of Conduct for School Visits," n.d.

[108] Wilson, *Prison.*

immersed in the relative luxury of everyday life for the Commandant and other families who lived at the site, but there are also spaces of encounter with the harshness of punishment, for instance in the solitary confinement cell, in trying on leg irons in the *Lottery of Life* exhibition or in acting out convict labour.[109] These are, I argue, the more palatable uncomfortable histories of crime and punishment at the sites; the most confronting crimes and the harshest punishments – or at least the most physically violent[110] – are not represented in detail and generally not part of the affective practices visitors are intended to participate in.

While the histories of marginalised groups are at times not emphasised, they are not completely silenced either. In some instances, as I have argued, the limited and problematic representation allowed is likely to foster stigma and the conditions for social exclusion. The types of attitudes towards same-sex attracted and mentally ill people that are supported by displays and learning materials in some cases provide spaces for bigotry and ignorance to flourish, in direct contradiction of what literature about museums suggests about their capacity to influence positive social change.[111] I do not argue that this is a deliberate strategy on the part of staff, and in fact interview participants expressed some need for further work on these themes.[112]

In these and other cases, the lack of critical engagement with the beliefs of those in the past appears predicated on the assumption that the visitor is *not like* the people who held those attitudes; the humour, for example, with which the film in the asylum is imbued suggests that visitors should see this history as ridiculous. This is central to much of the two sites' interpretation; the visitor is not the same as the people they are encountering and learning about, and the sites allow visitors to experience a past that is quite distinct from the present. Nonetheless, the effect is problematic and represents a lack of awareness of the museum's broader history as a site of power and authority; allowing damaging and incorrect views about disadvantaged social groups commits an injustice, reinforcing the types of inequality that the literature

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[109] Ibid.
[110] Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania.*
[111] As suggested by, for example Janes, "Museums, social responsibility."
[112] Harrington, interview; Steele, interview.

suggests museums can work to combat.[113] In addition, it emphasises an approach to history that fails to account for continuity within and with the past;[114] it assumes, by virtue of the fact that the visitor is invited to laugh at or view actors in the past as ridiculous, that they can separate that time from ours completely.

Learning at Port Arthur and the Cascades

Like most museums and historic sites, PAHSMA's educational approach includes both a formal schools program and a range of online and outreach resources. Formal education uses and builds on the substantive content I have highlighted above, but informal learning is equally important, and in this section I analyse both the learning potential of exhibitions and buildings and the use of programs to support learning at Port Arthur and the Cascades. The schools program includes a range of tours and activities, including convict brickmaking, the story of Alice at the Cascades, and ghost tours in the evenings. Many school groups stay overnight in onsite accommodation, participating in these ghost tours in the evening of their visit. One of the challenges of attracting school groups to Port Arthur is its remote location, and ghost tours and cheap and accessible overnight accommodation are likely to be powerful attractions for schools.

PAHSMA's approach to education is very much focused on history learning, and although there is some attention to possibilities for civics and citizenship and social learning most activities and exhibitions aim to teach visitors about the past without a great deal of emphasis on its place in the present. It is also very much influenced by the constructivist ideas promoted by Hein in relation to museum learning.[115] Davie is responsible for overseeing education programs at Port Arthur, and in her interview made it clear that she is strongly aware of the curriculum requirements for history and links these to her work at the sites. It is clear that education is highly valued, and Davie works hard to ensure that teachers and students get the most value possible from the site. Davie communicates with schools to ensure that even those groups

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[113] See for example: Abram, "Kitchen conversations"; Janes, "Museums, social responsibility"; Layne, "The District Six Museum."
[114] Seixas, "Benchmarks."
[115] Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; PAHSMA, "Interpretation Plan."

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not able to manage a visit to Tasmania are able to benefit from the Port Arthur's resources, whether through the use of a 'discovery box' – a collection of convict artefacts objects loaned to schools for education activities – or through consultation, or both. Davie works with teachers to develop programs that are specific to their learning goals and aims, and structured to suit different age groups.

Steele notes that although she and Davie 'would probably like to force the convict story' on all of the students who visit the site, 'some of them just like to come here for their school camp.'[116] This convict history is prioritised in a specific way that does not demonstrate the strong links to civics and citizenship education that the AWM, for example, showed. Rather, education and learning opportunities, as I argued in the previous section, view Port Arthur's and the Cascades' histories as discrete objects of study, with less attention to the ways these histories exist in the present. Education at the two sites treads the line between education and entertainment; and there are a range of 'hands on' activities aimed at capturing students' interest and teaching them about the way of life of convicts. Davie's education background also means that she has expertise in learning theories that can be used to inform teaching at historic sites, and her own and previous staff's approaches were centred on constructivist understandings of learning. Additionally, experience and affect are particularly important to the two historic sites, because both lend themselves well to activities where students can 'perform' various aspects of the history. Port Arthur's heterotopian qualities are slippery and difficult to grasp in part because of its layered histories – convict histories lend themselves to very different affective practices, for example, to those provoked by the 1996 memorial, or to those that might be suggested if the local Aboriginal history were interpreted more comprehensively for visitors.

Pedagogical and communicative approaches at Port Arthur and the Cascades

Educational approaches at the two PAHSMA sites addressed in this thesis are informed by the PAHSMA Interpretation Plan, which was authored primarily by previous Interpretation Officer Julia Clark (Jody Steele's predecessor). The

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[116] Steele, Interview.

Interpretation Plan reveals an explicit focus on constructivist learning theory as it relates to museums and heritage sites.[117] Drawing largely on the work of George Hein, the Interpretation Plan suggests that applying constructivist theory to interpretation at the site requires working with visitors' prior knowledge, beliefs, and opinions in order to challenge them. There is a clear sense that the site's interpretation should avoid any assumption 'that we just have to tell visitors the "truth" and they will change their views.'[118] This is in some ways contradictory to the sense imparted by interviewees that suggests a need to represent ideas of rehabilitation and justice in order to encourage visitors to have a more 'balanced' view of the site. There is some attention to the potential of experience to support learning, but for the most part the emphasis of education at both sites is cognitively-focused, with less explicit attention to embodied or affective learning. I argue however that in practice, the affective and embodied dimensions of learning are absolutely central to education at both Port Arthur and the Cascades.

Davie demonstrates a keen awareness of the requirements of a constructivist approach to learning at the site, for example noting that the questions provided to students for use in the museums are focused on 'getting [students] to use their own knowledge and reasoning.'[119] Edwards and Mead write that constructivist models of exhibitions 'acknowledge the co-construction of knowledge within museum spaces and that displays and exhibitions will invite a number of different readings.'[120] Learning activities at Port Arthur present a mixture of more traditional questions that ask visitors to locate the object, person, or story, such as listing the names of convicts in the *Lottery of Life* for the 'Race through Time' activity,[121] and more constructivist approaches such as in the 'What's my Story?' activities, where students research with primary sources.[122] Guides and teachers are encouraged to facilitate learning in ways that provoke questioning from students, allowing programs to be

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[117] Clark, *Interpretation plan*.
[118] Ibid., 11.
[119] Davie, interview.
[120] Elizabeth Edwards and Matt Mead, "Absent histories and absent images: Photographs, museums and the colonial past," *Museum and Society, 11,* no. 1 (2013): 32.
[121] PAHSMA, "Race through Time" activity, 2014.
[122] PAHSMA, "What's My Story?" lesson plans and activity, Year 9, n.d.

'student-led' to a degree and providing opportunities for students to construct their own knowledge of the convict past.

Steele reinforces this sense of the agency of visitors in forming their own views of Port Arthur, noting that:

> …it's also not up to us to make people's minds for them. We can only give all of the information that we can give them and hope that they can actually think about that a little more critically themselves. We try our hardest not to say 'this is exactly what you should think It's more like 'here's a bunch of ideas and you come up with your own solution as to what you should think on that So that's um, I think making a conscious choice just to give people facts and figures and not to give them our opinions means that it's up to them to make up their own mind which is a good thing.[123]

Encouraging questions from children and young visitors also at times prompts concern about the 'appropriateness' of historical themes for these visitors. This is an instance where careful 'management' of difficult history emerges. Guides 'gauge the interest and the age levels [of students] as to what's appropriate and what's not' in terms of particularly confronting histories of crime and punishment.[124]

Student led approaches are one way the site staff deal with emotionally confronting histories, relying on the work of guides who encourage questions and delve into the areas of history most of interest to the group. Dealing with the histories of children's experiences at the Cascades Female Factory carries the problem of confronting young visitors with the illnesses and deaths of many of those children. As Davie explains it, guides do not avoid highlighting the 'awful conditions' for children in the Cascades nursery yard, however they equally do not delve into those histories deliberately; rather they will respond to questions if they emerge during the tour.

> We explain that there were fairly awful conditions, so that it was very crowded, what happens when it's crowded, you know, it might not be very comfortable, they might spread germs, what happens when the

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[123] Steele, interview.
[124] Davie, interview.

germs are spread oh they might get sick. So we know from all of our historical sources that many of the children did get sick. And at that point—we sort of leave it at that point but sometimes the children will come to their own conclusions and say "well did some of the children die?" "Yes they actually did, so it was a pretty awful place for the children".[125]

Here Davie notes that the Cascades education tours seek to avoid exposing young visitors to stories about the deaths of children. A line is drawn – illness is acceptable, but death should be avoided if possible. Davie expresses a belief in the need to not 'dwell on those harder aspects of the history.'[126]

These constructivist approaches are closely tied to practices of historical thinking and other pedagogical approaches to the discipline. Education programs at Port Arthur are in many cases explicitly linked to concepts of historical thinking, seeking to engage young visitors in historical inquiry and the study of primary sources.[127] Central to understandings of what it means to think historically at Port Arthur is the concern I have discussed with presenting a 'balanced' perspective of what went on at the site – understanding the convict past is viewed as dependent on visitors relinquishing preconceived notions about convict experiences as always brutal and traumatic. It is also evident, as demonstrated by representations of homosexuality in the 'app' and mental illness in the Asylum film, that historical understanding as it is conceptualised at the site requires the visitor to engage with the past on its own terms. As Harrington puts it,

> I think the important thing for us is that we also don't judge something that happened within an academic and intellectual and philosophical context at that time and say "how could they have done that?"[128]

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[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] See for example: "What's My Story?" lesson plans; PAHSMA, "Port Arthur Historic Site Education Program Guide: Year Nine, The Making of the Modern World," n.d.
[128] Harrington, interview.

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In some ways the constructivist approaches and the emphasis on historical thinking undermine some of the affective possibilities of the site – the practices engaged in are intended to be more historical (in a disciplinary, intellectual sense) than affective. Port Arthur raises interesting questions about the relationship between models of historical thinking and affect in learning. While I argue that the two are not mutually exclusive, privileging more cognitively-focused approaches makes it appear as though affective practices of the prison visit sit in opposition to 'true' historical understanding. This tension is linked to a central concern at the sites regarding presentism, the tendency for visitors to simply place themselves in the position of those in the past rather than making an attempt to understand the beliefs of historical actors.[129] This concern is, I suggest, one of the underlying reasons for the emphasis on understanding the past on its own terms that was evident in interviews and displays.

This issue is worth considering in light of affective practices and their place in history learning; this study does not examine visitor's responses to exhibitions, and my analysis highlights a need for further empirical investigation into the ways affect impacts on and informs historical thinking. Ultimately, interviews at Port Arthur suggest that constructivism at the sites is about encouraging visitors to question. As Steele puts it,

> I don't think we failed if everyone who comes here doesn't come away
> suddenly an expert in the convict system. That doesn't concern me at all.
> I am quite happy with the fact that most people come and just want to
> have a good time. But if in that good time having, we can insert some
> little things that make people—even if it's through the ghost tours and
> people say 'oh I actually think the really—for me the really important
> thing about education and our role is that we encourage people to ask
> questions.[130]

There is some tension here, however, with the conflicting desire to see visitors reach understandings about the complexity of convict history. The constructivist aims are

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[129] Peter Seixas, Carla Peck and Stuart Poyntz, "'But we didn't live in those times': Canadian students negotiate past and present in a time of war," *Education as Change* 15, no. 1 (2011): 47-62; Taylor and Young, *Making history*.
[130] Steele, interview.

for visitor agency, but within careful parameters set by learning goals set by staff with responsibilities for interpretation.

The *Lottery of Life* gallery is also relevant here; opened in 1999, the exhibition was designed as an introduction to the site and is usually part of an education visit. This exhibition connects with the aim of the site to problematise visitors' pre-conceived ideas about convict life, presenting a more complex range of stories of individuals. Students and other visitors are given a convict-themed playing card on arrival at Port Arthur, corresponding to the identity of a convict in the gallery below. The *Lottery of Life* was designed to put the convicts themselves back into the Port Arthur landscape – as Richard Flanagan had commented, Port Arthur seemed to be somewhere 'a history of people is too dangerous to be contemplated.'[131] One of the chief curators of this exhibition, Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, has described the interpretive strategy employed in the exhibition as one 'in which we told visitors different, often contradictory stories, since we wanted them to argue about Port Arthur and the lives of the convicts that were sent there.'[132]

This approach is in keeping with much of the discourse of the New Museology and its emphasis on individual interpretations and opinions of the past, as well as supporting a social constructivist underpinning to learning in the museum.[133] It also corresponds to the tendency for interpretation to emphasise 'experiencing' history at the site – visitors are encouraged to experience the gallery through the identity of the convict represented by their playing cards. Maxwell-Stewart notes that the approach did attract criticism, with commentators arguing that convict history was turned into 'a game'; however he counters by noting that 'the game that visitors play takes them on a journey that reveals much about the inner workings of transportation.'[134] Turning convict experiences of transportation into a game is no doubt problematic, as it could be viewed as reducing the theme to entertainment. Entertainment is however essential to any museum's function and is in many ways closely aligned with affective, emotional experience in galleries and historic sites. Again, *Lottery of Life*

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[131] Richard Flanagan, "Crowbar history: Panel games and Port Arthur", *Australian Society,* 9, 8 (1990), 35-7, cited in Maxwell-Stewart, "The Lottery of Life.".
[132] Maxwell-Stewart, "The Lottery of Life", 28.
[133] Andermann and Arnold-de Simine, "Introduction"; Hein, *Learning in the Museum*.
[134] Maxwell-Stewart, "The Lottery of Life", 28.

makes convict history more complex, in this case by introducing a significant number of individual histories. The curators wanted visitors to 'argue about Port Arthur.'[135]

Emerging from the visitor centre, having – ideally – visited the *Lottery of* Life, the visitor then encounters the site itself. Here the natural landscape of Port Arthur reveals its contribution to affect and experience – the site's natural beauty is in stark contrast to any preconceived notions about the darkness of the history, and in stark contrast to the crowded, dark gallery just left behind. This is not necessarily a barrier to historical understanding, and can actually contribute to the affective potential of both buildings and interpretation. It does mean that the visitor is likely to feel they have travelled a very long way from the history displayed in the *Lottery of Life* – the distance here between past and present is great. This is largely a problem of the absence of the people from the site – it was, after all, those who lived at Port Arthur who made it the penal settlement that it was.

Although the educational focus at Port Arthur is on historical thinking and constructivist approaches to learning, there is an affective dimension to activities used with school children. Davie notes that the 'What's My Story?' activity encourages students to 'see the convict as a real person,'[136] and offers an encounter with primary sources in the form of copies of convict records. Copies of primary sources such as these can be affecting, but I argue that what could – perhaps at a stretch – be called the affective practices of documentary work of this nature differ vastly from the affective practices of moving through a historic site. Encounters with primary sources are essential in practices of historical research and history teaching,[137] where they are more likely to emphasise cognition than feeling or affect. Interestingly, PAHSMA's education materials recommend these types of activities for pre- and post-visit lessons as well as lessons in the Port Arthur or Cascades education spaces. This effectively separates these more cognitive-focused activities from the much more affective practices of the visit to the site; it speaks to the idea of a dialogue between the two, with affective practices intended to drive interest and a

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Davie, interview.
[137] Seixas, "Beyond 'content' and 'pedagogy'"; Wineburg, *Historical Thinking*.

desire to know more, and more formal educational activities intended to make sense of experience and encourage critical engagement.

Different experiences, with different affects and pedagogical practices, are provoked or promoted in various locations within Port Arthur and the Cascades. The Commandant's House at Port Arthur, for example, invites the visitor to experience the site from above – figuratively and literally, given that the house sits on a hill overlooking the site – experiencing a sense of a 'civilised life' that is positioned as diametrically opposed to (and above) the lives of convicts and soldiers on the site. This much grander house museum forms another heterotopia within Port Arthur; it is a space apart, a very different space to the rest of the site, and sits uncomfortably with the much harsher histories of convict life around it.

The Matron's Cottage in the Cascades Female Factory represents a different type of space again – less grand, closer to the inmates, but remaining 'other' to the rest of the yard. In both of these examples, smaller heterotopias highlight the problems of the mini-societies outside; they reveal the inequalities inherent in the lives of convicts and overseers, more by representing difference than by explicitly drawing attention to what might be perceived to be injustice. This leaves interpretation to the visitor and demonstrates some of the power of heterotopian spaces. Affective practices, in addition, are integral to the learning promoted by these spaces; in moving between the affective practices of the house visit to those of the prison site visit, visitors are given the opportunity to consider the stark differences between the two. A foundation is provided for deep understanding of the inequality of the system, raising questions about the justice or injustice of the treatment of convicts.

Purposes for learning at Port Arthur and the Cascades

The above represents a key concern relating to what PAHSMA staff see as the role for education at the two sites. This is essentially what the educational approaches at Port Arthur and the Cascades are working towards – a deeper, more complex understanding of the convict past as multifaceted and varying according to an individual's place in the convict 'machine.' Although staff express a desire to encourage visitors to form their own conclusions about what is on display, interviews also gave a strong sense of the need to 'correct' a pre-existing narrative that visitors have about the history of the site, as detailed above. Introductory tours, which are

included in every ticket to the site, are an important part of building a more complex narrative, and attempting to 'muddy the waters' for those who visit with fixed ideas about whether the site's history is a story of 'good' or 'evil.' As Davie describes,

> …the overarching theme of the tour is "was this a place of torture and sadness and punishment or was it a place of reform? Were they trying to educate these criminals? Were they trying to reform them, were they trying to give them better lives?" So there's not necessarily a right or wrong answer, we just try to encourage the students to see it from both points of view and to try to see that there was some balance and may be some of the intentions were good and the way they went about them may not have been so fantastic.[138]

Conserving the past is of primary importance for the historic site, and in many ways its public pedagogic role focuses on teaching visitors about the significance of the built heritage. The preoccupation with the 1996 massacre means that for some visitors the convict heritage of Port Arthur can be submerged,[139] but interpretive strategies generally serve to position convict history as central and the massacre as peripheral – not unimportant, just not part of what staff hope will be major focus for visitors. The massacre renders emotion and affect at the site – particularly emotions and affects relating to stories of violence – as somewhat dangerous and represents a very literal challenge to the notion that museums are 'safe spaces for dangerous ideas.'[140] Staff clearly do not wish to strengthen any tendency to see Port Arthur as a site of violence and death, although they are equally aware of the need to avoid 'whitewashing' the history.[141] At the Cascades, even though the histories of women and children present some very confronting material, interpretation does not have as much to contend with in terms of a recent history of violence (the site has no link to the massacre at Port Arthur, about two hours' drive away) or the iconic status and reputation. So while the 'Her Story' tour does not delve into the darker aspects of that history in detail, there is less danger of connecting with visitors' pre-existing ideas of the darkness and trauma of the site.

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138 Davie, interview.
139 Tumarkin, "Wishing you weren't here."
140 Heumann Gurian, *Civilizing the Museum.*
141 Harrington, interview.

Historical understanding is then the primary motivator underlying the public pedagogies of Port Arthur. The resource developed for Year Nine students, aligned with the Australian Curriculum, emphasises the development of historical understanding through inquiry, working with the concepts evidence, significance, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, and contestability, aligning with the work of Peter Seixas in particular.[142] As Davie notes, some flexibility is allowed to teachers as to how they approach teaching at Port Arthur:

> …we provide as much as we can in terms of the scaffolding, I guess, and then we do leave it up to the teachers as to how they're going to use the site. We also provide some other suggestions for things that that year group would do while they're on site. So give them some questions to use in some of our museums and suggestions for some of our hands on activities that they might be interested in as well.[143]

There is considerable guidance for teachers and Davie is a particularly active source of support for teachers planning visits, so while teachers could plan very different ways of visiting the site, it is difficult to see why they would do so. The extensive educational resources highlight the centrality of education to Port Arthur's existence.

Staff cite 'hands on' activities as an important part of education and in some instances also link these to a social role for learning at the site. Harrington provides the example of a community boat building project as a hands on, community-building activity. Harrington notes:

> …you've got an education system which recognises in terms—that education is not just about sitting in a classroom, that it is about—first of all it's about education about a skill set and history. […] the other thing that's really interesting about it from the perspective of using it as a mechanism that educates as well, there's a social side of it. […] how do you get the school age community to engage with adult groups in a way that allows for an exchange of information and an understanding about socialising? And I think that's something that's really important about it. […] I suppose to some extent, we very much aim for our interpretation

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142 Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*.
143 Davie, interview.

> to be an experience in education so that people come away with
> knowledge. [...] I think a capacity to be able to build a boat on site and
> to engage all levels of the community with it and our visitors would be
> an extraordinary interpretive device.[144]

This is partly about the power of experience in learning, but Harrington also describes the boat building activity as having an important role in building relationships, perhaps contributing to a social role for Port Arthur. It is a project aimed at fostering connections between people who might not otherwise connect, as well as preserving a skillset that might be lost to history. In some ways this represents a different way of considering Port Arthur's capacity to function as a heterotopia; it constructs a space and an activity in which a small community is fostered, and represents a more positive example of reinforcing existing social structures. In this case a more disparate community of boat builders and people interested in boat building is brought together in physical space, strengthening links that might otherwise have been much more nebulous.

Adding to the complexity of the landscape for affect, discourse, and experience at Port Arthur are questions of authenticity, and what that means in the context of objects and buildings. How to establish authenticity emerged through interviews as a major concern for staff, and is central to the focus on representing history 'on its own terms' as well as honouring the tangible heritage at the sites. Port Arthur and the Cascades' status as historical sites means that questions of authenticity are highly pertinent, with the limits of authenticity constrained by the boundaries of the site. While Museum Victoria and the Australian War Memorial have greater freedom to display material from all over the country, without any question as to its relevance to the history they interpret, Port Arthur has a responsibility to interpret and display predominantly the local past, in the form of objects from the site. This contributes to a sense that visitors can experience an authentic past at Port Arthur, obtaining a sense of themselves in historical time and place.[145]

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[144] Harrington, interview.
[145] Mads Daugbjerg, "Patchworking the past: Materiality, touch and the assembling of 'experience' in American Civil War re-enactment," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20, no. 7-8 (2014): 724-741.

Staff raised the importance of the provenance of objects, with Smith noting that finding material that could be confirmed as having been used or located at Port Arthur during the convict period is challenging.[146] Smith also notes that 'it's the stuff that you can actually really attribute to the site that I think is really quite exciting.'[147] The reconstruction or restoration of historic buildings and structures is also debated, with the majority of buildings at Port Arthur preserved in a state of disrepair or ruin rather than being rebuilt or restored to resemble their original versions. Authenticity is seen as a highly significant aspect of the site's interpretation and its capacity to educate. It is in part from the site's 'authenticity' that the powerful affective practices can emerge; the affective practices of the prison visit, for example, are provoked and strengthened by the ability to enter cells and feel cold, stone walls. Part of what makes Port Arthur and the Cascades Female Factory significant is their realness, their tangible sense of the past.

Defining 'authenticity' in the context of a historic site is not straightforward, and is very much intertwined with questions about what buildings and displays should communicate to visitors, and what kinds of affective experiences might be conducive to particular ways of understanding. There is a general sense that preservation is usually preferable to reconstruction, in line with the requirements of the Burra Charter.[148] This argument is made more legitimate by the granting of World Heritage status, which reinforces the need to interpret all of a site's history, including the period in which Port Arthur was a town and there was no concerted effort to preserve what was there.

The attraction to the 'romantic ruin' is noted by Steele, who argued that the Separate Prison, prior to its restoration, may have contributed to notions of Port Arthur as a dark and tragic place. She states:

> …when I started working here as a consultant, a long time ago, the
> Separate Prison was essentially an empty shell with a few signs running
> along the C wing walls and was, aside from having a roof on it and the

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[146] Michael Smith, Interview.
[147] Ibid
[148] Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS], *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* (Burwood, Victoria: Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

infrastructure in the chapel, it was just a shell. At that point in time a lot
of people used to enjoy, I guess, what you would call a romantic ruin. So
they would go in there, they would see it's all dark and dingy and that
was, I guess, that was kind of feeding that whole, you know, this is a
horrible dark, dingy place sort of mentality.[149]

Steele's concern here is with the impacts of affect in the unrestored Separate Prison.
Entering a dark, dingy ruin is likely to reinforce existing discourses that promote the
idea of convict history as equally dark and unpleasant. The building, as a ruin,
became an element of a multimodal message that was, according to Steele, not
desirable.[150] This does not align with the desire for visitors to reach more nuanced
understanding about positive and negative experiences of the convict sites; it
promotes an idea about the past that is oversimplified or one-sided and therefore
'inauthentic,' according to the ways Port Arthur staff understood authenticity.[151]

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the restoration of the Separate Prison was
intended to make the experience of the building more authentic, with the intention
of creating an affective experience that could challenge visitors' preconceived notions
of the 'dark' convict past. Compromising the authenticity of the *ruin* was seen as
necessary to ensuring that visitors had an 'authentic' experience of the past; as Lain
Hart has argued, 'in any exhibitionary context it is by approximating the original as
closely as possible that genuine authenticity is achieved.'[152] Part of what made this an
acceptable choice, to Steele, was the decision to 'very clearly define what's new and
what's old,' in this case with different colours of bricks delineating between the
original and reconstructed parts of the building. The Separate Prison is in this way a
particularly interesting heterotopian space; a strange mix of present and past, part
ruin and part reconstruction. It serves to highlight a very tangible sense of the past *in*
the present as well as creating a dialogue between the two – in places, the

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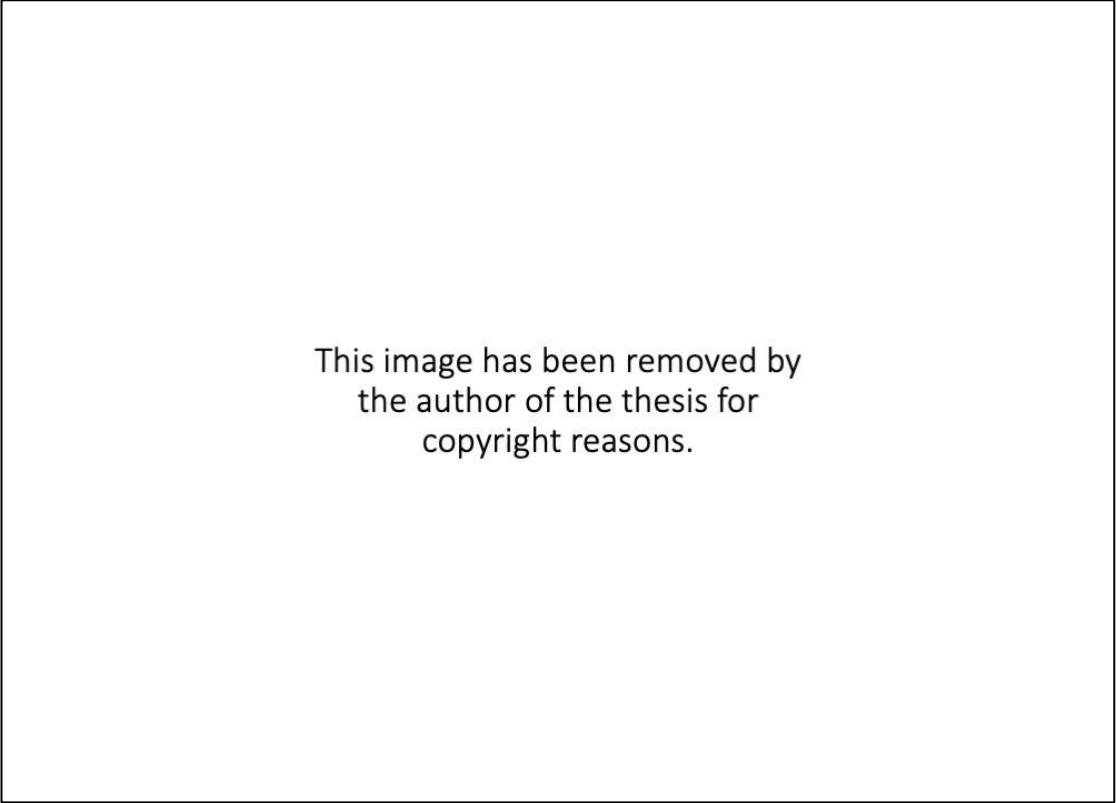
[149] Steele, interview.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Davie, interview; Michael Smith, interview; Steele, interview.
[152] Lain Hart, "Authentic recreation: Living history and leisure," *Museum and Society* 5, no. 2 (2007): 103-124.

reconstructed walls meet original walls with a very distinct difference between the two, the Foucault's 'slices of time' meeting without fully merging.[153]

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Figure 25: The Separate Prison, yard showing reconstructed walls

Learning with discomfort at Port Arthur and the Cascades

As a well-known, 'iconic' historic site, Port Arthur faces significant challenges in representing the convict past and it is these challenges that create the primary focus for public pedagogy at the site. Teaching about the past centres on destabilising what are perceived to be the misconceptions of visitors about the brutality of convictism – while staff do not seek to cover over histories of crime and punishment, they do seek to undermine the sense that convict history is entirely 'dark The public perception of convict history also has an impact on understandings of life at the Cascades, although there appears to be less sympathy in the interpretive approach there; while

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[153] Foucault, "Of other spaces."

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interpretation emphasises a less confronting story than it might, there is a sense that the treatment of female convicts is less 'forgivable' than the treatment of male convicts at Port Arthur. Questions of gender are highly relevant here, and it is also apparent that the presence of children at the Cascades makes viewing the actions of overseers and other staff there as brutal less complicated. What staff cite as the most difficult aspects of the Port Arthur Historic Sites' history emerge more from this sense of the oversimplified versions of a 'dark' convict past that visitors arrive with than from the sense that this history is particularly emotionally difficult and confronting, although there is of course an acknowledgement that such histories are present. The 1996 massacre remains a particularly uncomfortable aspect of Port Arthur's history and also suggests that some recent collective traumas cannot be extensively interpreted until more time has passed – this links in some ways to the need for care what was evident at the AWM when representing recent deaths and injuries in war.

A range of interpretive strategies are employed to challenge preconceived notions about the convict experience, with affect and experience contributing significantly to constructed encounters with the past but formal education focusing on constructivist approaches to teaching the elements of historical thought. The presence of historic buildings gives both sites a particular advantage in the use of affect and emotion; they provide an evocative, immersive experience for visitors, promoting affective practices that differ according to the perspectives presented. In some instances, the affective practices of the prison visit – the sense of enclosure and the yearning for freedom, for example – serve to reinforce notions of the harshness of convict life, while the affective practices promoted in the house museums – nostalgic representations of 'civilised' life – are held in stark contrast. The dissonance created by these conflicting experiences carries highly significant learning potential that links in to the desire to represent a more 'balanced' history containing multiple perspectives. In addition, sites where convicts experienced a degree of freedom, for example in the dockyards, destabilise the affective practices of the prison visit and strengthen understanding of the diversity of experiences even amongst convicts.[154]

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[154] Maxwell-Stewart, "Lottery of life"; Christopher and Maxwell-Stewart, "Convict transportation."

For the most part, the desire to ensure that visitors receive messages about central themes – and in particular the 'progressiveness' of the penal system in place at Port Arthur and the Cascades – means that most interpretive strategies employed are somewhat didactic. This is not, however, the more message-focused 'activist practice'[155] that I highlight at Museum Victoria in Chapter Six; rather the interpretive strategies focus more on a perceived need to promote historical 'truth.' While education programs work with understandings of the concepts of historical thinking to support a constructivist approach to learning, exhibitions and displays throughout the site generally do 'tell visitors what to think However, the complexity of the sites and the existence of different heterotopian spaces within the whole mean that sometimes different and conflicting messages are transmitted in different spaces, contributing to what I argue is a helpful dissonance for teachers and students engaging in historical thought. The sites do not therefore deliver one specific message to visitors; rather the multiple perspectives represented contribute to a much more complex whole. The *Lottery of Life*, for example, delivers a diverse exploration of convict experiences, while the Commandant's House represents a very different way of life on site. This capacity to represent differing perspectives, in line with the site's actual layout, is one of the educative strengths of Port Arthur.

Education for citizenship and social values is not an explicit aim of interpretation and programs at Port Arthur and the Cascades, although there is some attention to a social role relating to the Tasmanian community and the sense that convictism is an important part of the history of nation-building in Australia. It appears to be the case that the Port Arthur Historic Sites' primary responsibility is seen to be to the past; PAHSMA's priorities are to preserve the infrastructure of its convict sites and interpret and educate visitors about their history. Where education for citizenship and social values is promoted it is typically a present- and future-focused goal. At Port Arthur and – and perhaps to a lesser extent the Cascades – the need to represent historical actors 'fairly' and accurately by avoiding 'judgement' of their actions on modern values trumps any need to have an impact on the assumptions of present day visitors about, for example, homosexuality, mental illness, and perpetrators of crime more broadly. Encouraging visitors to more critically engage

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[155] Sandell and Dodd, "Activist practice."

with the ideas and beliefs of those in the past would not require interpretation to roundly condemn the system at Port Arthur and the Cascades. Interpretation could instead work to problematize both extremes in understandings about the convict system, engaging more with debates about its progressivism or barbarity in order to create a space in which visitors can construct their own, perhaps more tentative and flexible, understandings of the convict experience.

In the next chapter, I move on to the final institution examined in this research, Museum Victoria, highlighting its emphasis on the ideals of the New Museum and exploring in more depth the ways museums can work as heterotopias for social change.

Chapter Six: Museum Victoria

Introduction

The final case study site addressed in this thesis, Museum Victoria, is the museum of the Australian state of Victoria, consisting of three museum sites [Melbourne Museum, the Immigration Museum, and Scienceworks], as well as the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Royal Exhibition Building and several storage facilities for collections and conservation work. It is the largest public museum organisation in Australia, with all sites located in the city of Melbourne.[1] Museum Victoria represents a different focus to those of the other two museum organisations in this research – it much more closely reflects the characteristics of the New Museum or 'post-museum,' which, as Hooper-Greenhill writes, is characterised by

> …a more sophisticated understanding of the complex relationships between culture, communication, learning and identity that will support a new approach to museum audiences; a second basic element is the promotion of a more egalitarian and just society; and linked to these is an acceptance that culture works to represent, reproduce and constitute self-identities and that this entails a sense of social and ethical responsibility.[2]

These ideas, I argue, are central to Museum Victoria's exhibitions and programs and emerged as strong themes in interviews with staff. Museum Victoria is perhaps the most consciously heterotopian site in this study, or at least represents the most obvious awareness and use of the heterotopia's capacity to effect social change.[3] The institution's Statement of Purpose includes the goal of 'build[ing] connections with and between individuals and communities to enhance understanding and a sense of belonging.'[4]

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[1] Museum Victoria, *Melbourne Museum: A souvenir guide* (Melbourne: Museum Victoria Publishing, 2013).
[2] Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education*, 1.
[3] Tamboukou, "Educational heterotopias."
[4] Museum Victoria, "Corporate Information," accessed 31 August, 2016,
https://museumvictoria.com.au/about/corporate-information/.
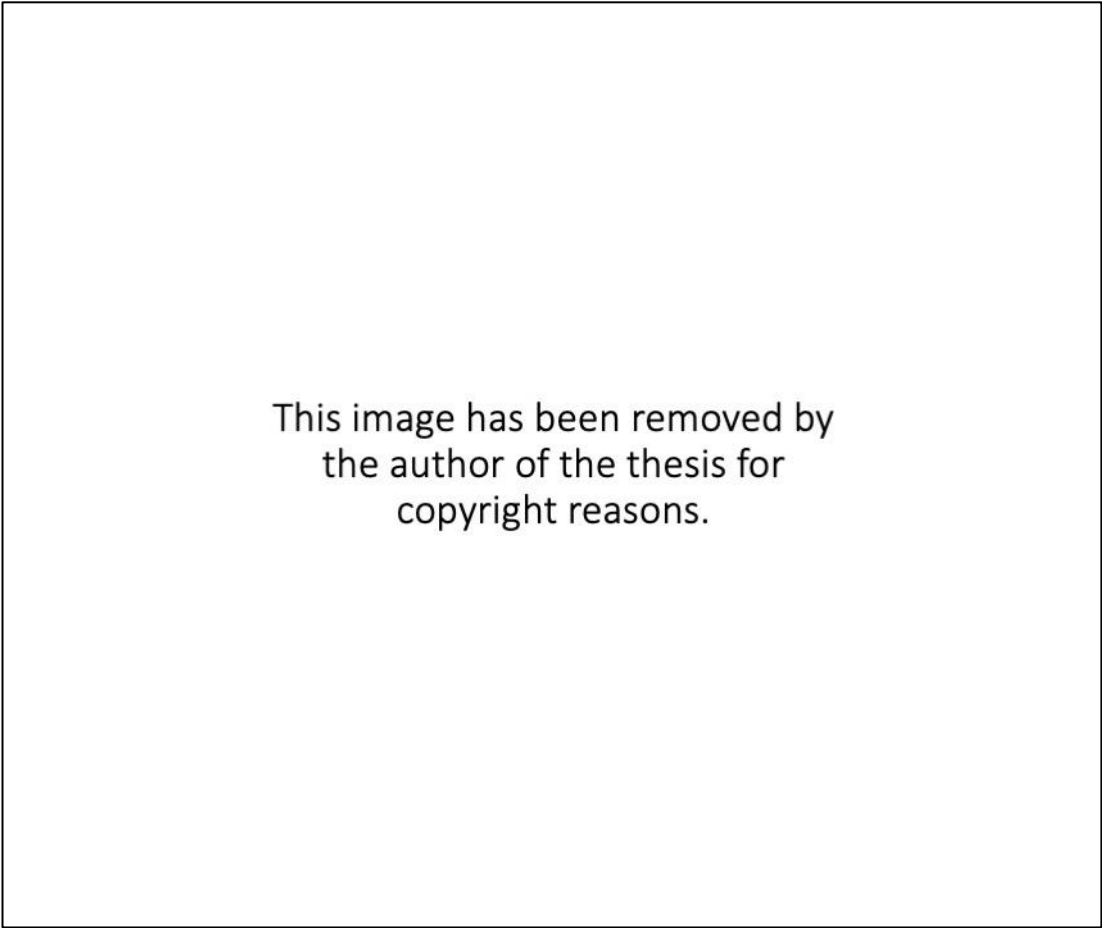
With this institutional support for a social role for Museum Victoria, staff very openly described their beliefs about the capacity of museums to play a role in historical justice and social inclusion, and saw histories of trauma and injustice as fundamental to this process. Museum Victoria's context is in some ways less limiting than those of the AWM and Port Arthur; it does not have comparable issues of access or the reputation of 'darkness' that Port Arthur must manage, and it does not face the pressure of being a national institution, although there remain pressures associated with its local, state-based context.

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Figure 26: Melbourne Museum (left) and the Royal Exhibition Building

In this chapter, I analyse a range of exhibitions and programs at Museum Victoria's two history museum sites, Melbourne Museum (which includes both historical and scientific exhibitions) and the Immigration Museum, a smaller themed site. In the next section, I explain some of the historical background for these two sites and their place in Victoria today. Following the same structure as the previous two chapters, I then turn to an analysis of the 'uncomfortable histories' that Museum Victoria represents in exhibitions and programs, exploring the ways these types of history are used to teach visitors about the past and present. This investigation of the uncomfortable histories that are displayed or not displayed at Museum Victoria's

sites forms an analysis of the museums as teaching spaces; as in other chapters I consider the public pedagogic practices of gallery spaces with attention to the multimodal discursive messages produced.[5]

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Figure 27: The Immigration Museum

The subsequent section focuses more closely on the learning theories and communicative strategies that underpin these representations of uncomfortable history, analysing in more detail the ways the museums' public pedagogies connect with the heterotopia's capacity to influence social change. Finally, I draw conclusions about Museum Victoria's approach to managing contentious and confronting histories, arguing that these histories are seen as an essential part of educating visitors for social inclusion. Firmly embedded within this belief is a sense that the museum's role is to bring to light previously untold stories and give voice to the neglected and

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[5] Kress, "Multimodal discourse analysis"; Sandlin, O'Malley and Burdick, "Mapping the complexity"; Scott, "Editor's introduction."

silenced. There is also evidence to suggest a shift within the institution to less constructivist approaches to crafting exhibitions; although constructivist learning theories still underpin much of the institution's educational work – both informal and formal – curatorial and education staff demonstrated a growing confidence in the museum's capacity to impart messages to support social change, rather than remaining preoccupied with 'not telling people what to think.'[6] Museum Victoria presents a mode of operating in which strategies for promoting social inclusion and a celebration of difference are centred on the provision of space for the marginalised groups in the state of Victoria; this is, I argue, a conscious effort to tap into the capacities for museums to change, but also to *be changed* by their communities.[7]

Background

What is today known as Museum Victoria originated as two separate museums very early in Melbourne's history as a colonial settlement. The National Museum of Victoria was established in 1854,[8] a product of a period of significant growth during and following the discovery of gold in the state early in the 1850s.[9] In 1983 this museum was amalgamated with the Science Museum of Victoria, and the combined institution was later renamed Museum Victoria.[10] Museum Victoria's recent history has been marked by growth and expansion, with Scienceworks – the major science-focused Museum Victoria campus – opening in 1992, the Immigration Museum in 1998, and Melbourne Museum opening at its current site in a new, purpose-built building opposite the Royal Exhibition Building in 2000. All three of these sites are located in Melbourne, either within or close to the central business district.

This study addressed the two of these museums – Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum – that deal with the social, cultural, and political history of Melbourne. Scienceworks was omitted from the study because its exhibitions deal largely with contemporary understandings of science, and the museum's scope could not be reasonably expected to include the kinds of uncomfortable history I address

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[6] Moya McFadzean, interview with the author, October 25, 2013, Melbourne Museum.
[7] Knell, Macleod and Watson, *Museum Revolutions*.
[8] Carolyn Rasmussen, *A Museum for the People* (North Carlton, Victoria: Scribe Publications, 2001).
[9] Goodman, "Fear of Circuses."
[10] "About Museum Victoria," https://museumvictoria.com.au/about/

here. Similarly, some galleries at Melbourne Museum were also not examined in detail, due to their focus on natural history and science. An exception to this was the exhibition *The Mind: Enter the labyrinth*, which touched on some confronting history of mental illness. A summary of the exhibitions analysed is provided in Appendix I. Education programs include a range of different activities for school students of different ages, and are detailed in Appendix II.

Melbourne Museum's purpose-designed building is an imposing piece of architecture in the midst of the beautiful Carlton Gardens on the northern edge of Melbourne's central business district. Its location is very close to the University of Melbourne, and Museum Victoria has built connections with the University for the purposes of research over a number of years.[11] From the outside, its large glass front reflects the ornate façade of the Royal Exhibition Building, lending something of the flavour of 1880s 'marvellous Melbourne' to the very modern museum building.

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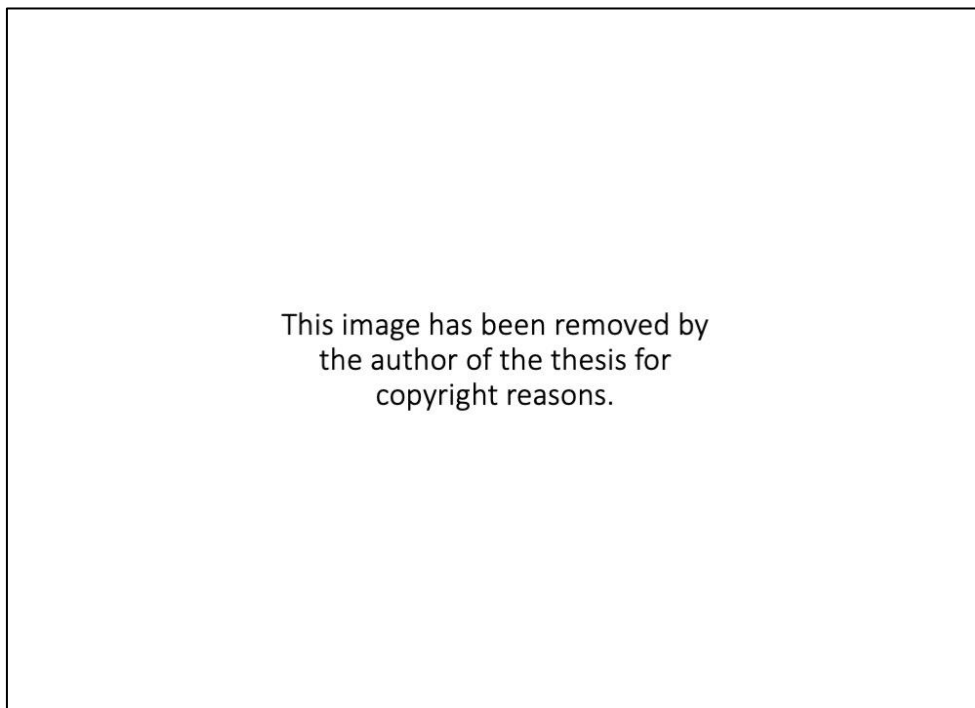*Figure 28: Entry to Melbourne Museum, with the Royal Exhibition Building reflected in the glass*

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[11] The McCoy Project is a formal example of this collaboration, with grants available to research teams made up of University of Melbourne and Museum Victoria investigators. See: "The McCoy Project," Museum Victoria, accessed August 31, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/about/mv-blog/oct-2013/the-mccoy-project/.

Previously, Melbourne's state museum was located adjacent to the State Library of Victoria in a block of nineteenth century buildings; the new facilities are much larger and more modern, reflecting something of the institution's strong emphasis on the qualities of the New Museum. Melbourne Museum's exhibitions are loosely structured around a separation between the science galleries and those dedicated to the humanities, although curatorial staff interviewed in this study did note a growing desire within the museum to better integrate the two paradigms through interdisciplinary exhibitions.[12] Melbourne Museum also contains Museum Victoria's Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Bunjilaka, which had its main exhibitions overhauled in 2013. Bunjilaka, as I will discuss throughout this chapter, represents significant attention to the relationships between Aboriginal communities and museums in Australia, and the recent exhibition redevelopment emerged from important questions about museums, power, and colonisation.

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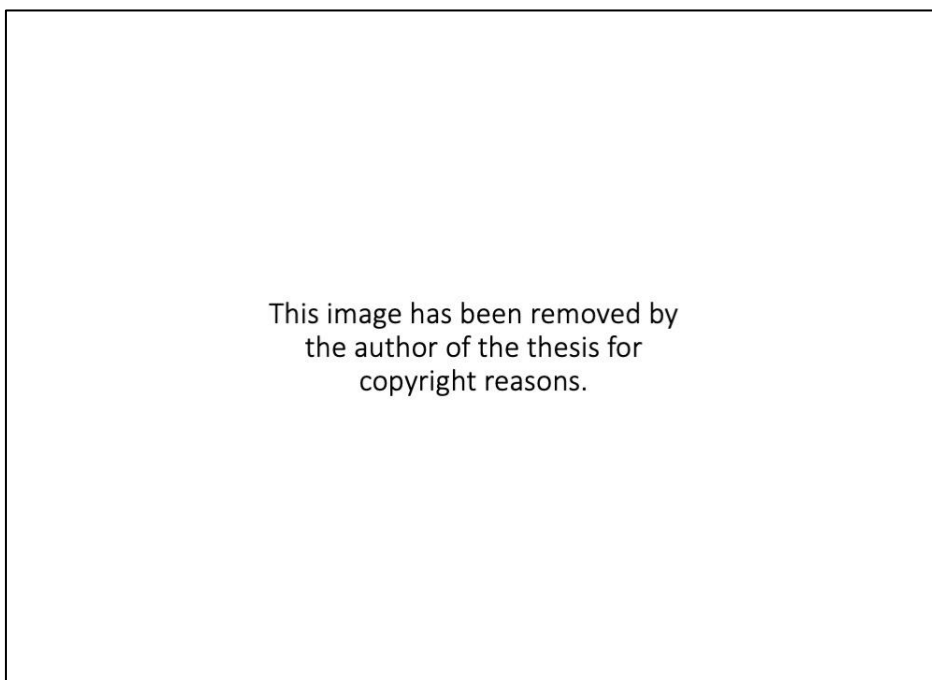
Figure 29: Inside the Immigration Museum, level 1 foyer

The second of Museum Victoria's sites addressed in this thesis, the Immigration Museum, is located in Melbourne's Old Customs House on Flinders Street. The Museum opened in 1998, the result of a feasibility study in the early nineties that was

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[12] Richard Gillespie, interview with the author, November 15, 2013, Melbourne Museum; Deborah Tout-Smith, interview with the author, November 27, 2013, Melbourne Museum.

linked to a growing movement for museums of migration across Australia.[13] The Immigration Museum's beautiful, nineteenth century building is quite a contrast to Melbourne Museum's current more modern home, and the features of Old Customs House are important historical displays in themselves [Figure 29].

The building is also very significant in Melbourne's history, and is in fact located in front of the landing place of some of the first European settlers to the area.[14] Its location is therefore strongly connected to the dispossession of the Aboriginal Australians of the local area, the Wurrundjeri people, and effort has been made to acknowledge this history throughout the building. The Immigration Museum includes a number of permanent exhibitions and two temporary exhibition spaces, including a small gallery that is reserved for community exhibitions. The Community Gallery houses exhibitions that are created by communities, often cultural groups, with a range of assistance from staff and resources from Museum Victoria.[15]

Permanent exhibitions at both museums have largely been the focus for this study, as these are more likely to be constructed to align with school curriculum in the state. During the period of this study two new exhibitions opened at Melbourne Museum, and another new exhibition opened at the Immigration Museum just prior to this study's beginning. The Immigration Museum's newest addition, *Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours*, signals a shift for the museum into a discussion about contemporary experiences of racism and identity in Melbourne and Victoria; it is demonstrative of a growing confidence in the museum's role in the community, according to curator Moya McFadzean.[16] Melbourne Museum's redeveloped exhibition *First Peoples* opened in the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre in September 2013, as I have mentioned, replacing the former exhibition representing Australian Indigenous history, and its most recent exhibition, *WWI: Love and Sorrow*, opened in August 2014, a part of commemoration associated with the centenary of the First World

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[13] Eureka Heinrich, "Museums, History and Migration in Australia," *History Compass* 11, no. 10 (2013): 783-800.

[14] A. G. L. Shaw, "Foundation and early history," *eMelbourne: the city part and present*, accessed August 31, 2016, http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00602b.htm.

[15] "Community exhibitions," Immigration Museum, accessed August 31, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/about-us/community-exhibitions/.

[16] McFadzean, interview.

War. This exhibition highlights some important differences between the ways war history can be represented away from the national spotlight that shines on the AWM.

Museum Victoria places emphasis on educating for more than facts about the past, and many participants expressed a personal dedication to working towards social justice in Victoria. There was institutional support for exhibitions that challenge and at times confront. As curator Deborah Tout-Smith described,

> We like to think at Museum Victoria that when we do a project, because it's supported and approved all the way up if it's done then there won't be any individual who has to wear it. There's a museum board that sits above the director if the director's wearing it and so on. There's always—there's a team behind you and I feel really confident about if we do something which turns out to be controversial that I feel there are articulate advocates in favour of what we've attempted to do.[17]

It is clear that staff feel the role of the institution is to do more than reflect the Victorian community, although this was part of their aim. Rather, interviews and museum analysis indicated a very real attempt to effect change in the community, with far reaching goals for developing empathy and understanding for others and a celebration of diversity. The institution's statement of purpose makes this approach explicit, stating that 'We develop and use our knowledge, collections and expertise to build connections with and between individuals and communities to enhance understanding and a sense of belonging.'[18]

This chapter includes analysis of several examples of Museum Victoria's display of history that challenges and confronts visitors, as well as considering some of the gaps and silences that are acknowledged by curators. I first analyse the more substantive content of exhibitions, exploring how uncomfortable histories are situated within the museum as a heterotopian teaching space. I include sections dealing with the major areas of potentially 'uncomfortable' history explored by Museum Victoria: histories of race; histories of war and conflict; and histories of marginalised groups of people. Later in the chapter I address the opportunities for learning more explicitly,

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[17] Tout-Smith, interview.
[18] "Corporate Information," Museum Victoria, accessed 31 August, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/about/corporate-information/

considering first the pedagogical and communicative approaches employed in exhibitions and programs, and then exploring what interviews, museum analysis and archival research suggested about the purposes and goals of learning, which in this case are again very strongly related to the institution's emphasis on social and values education. Finally, I make some concluding comments about the place of difficult history in Museum Victoria's two historical campuses, arguing that exhibitions and programs make deliberate and considered use of discomfort about the past and present to effect social change, and to impart messages about inclusion, cultural recognition, and compassion.

Uncomfortable history at Museum Victoria

Given that Museum Victoria is a state museum, it follows that the institution's scope for representing uncomfortable history should be focused on the state of Victoria, or the area that came to be known as Victoria in 1851.[19] After the arrival of Europeans and prior to its separation from the bigger colony of New South Wales, this part of Australia was known as the Port Phillip District, but earlier still it was the country of Aboriginal Australians from around forty language groups.[20] Several of the museums' exhibitions demonstrate a strong awareness of Victoria's Aboriginal past and present, and a central teaching relates to the continuing existence of a vibrant community. Within Victoria, histories of race and colonisation, war and conflict, and the stories of marginalised communities and groups are no less 'difficult' than elsewhere in Australia, however there are a number of reasons why Museum Victoria has a little more freedom to represent potentially confronting topics. Museum Victoria is an institution with a history of working towards reconciliation and inclusion;[21] as I have noted, curatorial staff feel supported in decisions to display confronting history towards social aims.

The barriers to representing uncomfortable history at Museum Victoria are perhaps more surmountable than those faced by the AWM and Port Arthur, but in some

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[19] Geoffrey Blainey, *A History of Victoria*, Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
[20] "Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages [VACL]," VACL home page, accessed 31 August, 2016, http://www.vaclang.org.au/
[21] See for example: Museum Victoria, *Museum Victoria Strategic Plan 2013-2018* (Melbourne: Museum Victoria, 2013).

instances this is a result of the choices made about the type of institution staff want to create. The choices that museum staff make are significant in this thesis; they demonstrate the impacts of context but also the ways curators and educators work within and *on* these contexts. In the case of Museum Victoria, staff are very much informed and influenced by a culture that supports working towards social aims, but they were also demonstrably committed to contributing to what they saw as a living and changing museum approach. A strong sense of the museum in flux emerged through interviews and exhibitions, and this related as much to the material displayed as it did to the processes the museum used to create exhibitions and seek community participation.

Museum Victoria is in fact particularly innovative in commitment and approaches to community consultation.[22] The processes for making decisions about what should be included in exhibitions were particularly significant in *First Peoples,* where an advisory group made up of Victorian Aboriginal community members and elders had the final say over what stories the exhibition would tell. In the following sections, I analyse the 'difficult' content included in Museum Victoria's history-focused exhibitions at the Immigration Museum and Melbourne Museum, considering these histories in light of the heterotopia. I explore the important role of affect in exhibitions, noting that this is a key concern for staff, who are committed to developing their understandings of museum work and theories of learning.

Histories of race

Both Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum include a focus on histories of race and racism in Victoria and Australia. As Witcomb notes, writing about the *First Peoples* exhibition at Melbourne Museum, histories of race have very different meanings for different audiences – what is a 'traumatic history' for Indigenous Australians in the *Our Grief* display is a 'forgotten history' for many white Australians.[23] Melbourne Museum has long held a focus on Australian Aboriginal history and culture, largely manifested in the work of Bunjilaka, the Aboriginal

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[22] See for example: Samantha Hamilton, "Community consultation and the First Peoples exhibition," *Insite Magazine* September – October, 2013, 4.
[23] Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect," 262.

Cultural Centre that is a part of the museum. The Immigration Museum has obvious scope for dealing with issues of race and racism, and has been representing the challenging histories surrounding migration to Victoria since its opening in 1998.

Recent exhibitions developed at each museum, such as *First Peoples* at Melbourne Museum and *Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours* at the Immigration Museum, demonstrate the institution's changing approaches to the issues of race and colonisation, and indicate a commitment to building local, non-Indigenous understandings of the experiences and challenges faced by diverse groups of Victorians. In addition, recent exhibitions at both museums have worked to connect with communities and to strengthen cultural diversity in the state by providing spaces for recognition and celebration of culture, language and identity.

The new permanent exhibition, *First Peoples*, opened in the Bunjilaka space at Melbourne Museum in 2013. Its galleries represent Victorian Aboriginal history and culture from the time prior to the arrival of white invaders to the present day, leaving visitors with a firm sense of an ongoing story with the parting words 'Our story continues…' painted on the wall as they leave the gallery. This emphasis on the continuing presence of Aboriginal people and the rich, surviving cultures of Victoria is a recent focus for the Museum. Earlier exhibitions represented Aboriginal culture and way of life as in the past and finished, for example, the 'Aborigines and the land' display in *Story of Victoria* exhibition in the 1990s displayed 'how the Aborigines in Victoria related to the land.'[24] *First Peoples* is largely told in the present tense and is, as I will expand upon, spoken by members of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

The focus of *First Peoples* is on the local communities from the state of Victoria, their cultures and histories, although the section 'Many Nations' also includes material from elsewhere in Australia.[25] The prior exhibitions in this space placed greater emphasis on history and culture from throughout Australia, including for example a display on the anthropologist Baldwin Spencer, who worked predominantly in the

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[24] Museum Victoria, "Stories of Victoria Exhibition Guide," published by the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd, c1994.
[25] See: "First Peoples," Bunjilaka, Melbourne Museum, accessed August 31, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/visiting/first-peoples/.

Northern Territory of Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[26] The Victorian focus was important and deliberate, with curator Genevieve Grieves noting that visitors expressed a desire for local stories, and suggesting that this is particularly useful to education visitors from Victoria, with curriculum often emphasising local history.[27] Museum Victoria's Head of Humanities Richard Gillespie noted that the exhibition team for *First Peoples* wanted to reverse this emphasis on Australian collections for two reasons: the first being simply Museum Victoria's status as a Victorian state institution, the second related to a 'sense of kind of invisibility of the Victorian Aboriginal community'[28]

In part the local focus was achieved through significant participation by members of Victorian Aboriginal communities in the exhibition's advisory group, the Yulendj group,[29] which I will expand upon below. *First Peoples* curator Genevieve Grieves notes that the local focus is very much linked to the second facet of the exhibition that I want to highlight here; its representation of a continuing, thriving local Aboriginal culture. As Grieves stated in her interview,

> …people are still here despite all that has happened, through
> colonisation people have been able to maintain and revive culture and
> our audiences really struggle with that, they really struggle with Victorian
> Aboriginal identity. They don't understand that they're surrounded by
> Aboriginal people, there's such a strength of culture down here. So that
> was a very important message that was easy to communicate. You know
> we're just never focused on the past, we're always bringing stories into
> the present. And diversity, you know, that there's not one Aboriginal
> group, there's not one Aboriginal way of being, there are many nations
> across the country, there are many different cultures in Victoria, people
> are diverse in terms of their appearance and their historical experience

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[26] D. J. Mulvaney, "Spencer, Sir Walter Baldwin (1860-1929)," Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 20 November 2015, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/spencer-sir-walter-baldwin-8606/text15031.
[27] See for instance: "Year 2 Content Description," Australian Curriculum: HASS F-6/7, accessed August 31, 2016, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/curriculum/f-10?layout=1.
[28] Gillespie, interview.
[29] Further information on the Yulendj group and its members can be found at: "Yulendj Group," Bunjilaka, Melbourne Museum, accessed November 12, 2015, https://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/visiting/first-peoples/yulendj/.

and their identity and it's not one voice from the community, there are many communities.[30]

The emphasis on 'bringing stories into the present' rather than focusing on the past is a particularly important aspect of Museum Victoria's historical approach, and I will discuss this further later in the chapter. What is important to note here is that the purpose for representing the past is only partly related to a responsibility to those *in* the past, and staff see the role of the past in the present – and their responsibilities to people in the present – as just as significant.[31]

First Peoples addresses some potentially very confronting, uncomfortable histories, for example in the devastating effects of smallpox upon Aboriginal people, histories of violent invasion and settlement that under colonisation in Victoria, and often traumatic and tragic events in Victorian and Australian Aboriginal history such as the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families throughout the twentieth century and up until the 1970s (known in Australia as the Stolen Generations).[32] Even some of the language used will be 'an area of sensitivity'[33] to some visitors; the word 'invasion,' for example, is used in the exhibition and is perceived by many Australians to be in opposition to the more common 'settlement' in the Australian story of colonisation. The exhibition seeks to do this confronting work with care to avoid telling a story characterised only by tragedy; stories of loss and devastation are embedded within a message of survival and resilience. This was achieved through a number of strategies, and in particular very much emerges from and is supported by the involvement of members of the Victorian Aboriginal community, according to interviewees involved in the development.[34]

The Yulendj group is made up of sixteen elders and community members and worked to 'co-curate' *First Peoples*. An emphasis on community consultation and

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[30] Genevieve Grieves, interview, December 6, 2013, Melbourne Museum.
[31] Richard Sandell, "Constructing and communicating equality: The social agency of museum space," in *Reshaping Museum Space*, ed. Suzanne Macleod (Oxon and New York: Taylor and Francis, 2005), 185-200.
[32] Commonwealth of Australia, *Brining them Home*.
[33] Geoffrey Cubitt, Laurajane Smith and Ross Wilson, "Introduction: Anxiety and ambiguity in the representation of dissonant history," in *Representing enslavement and abolition in museums*, Geoffrey Cubitt, Laurajane Smith, Ross Wilson and Kalliopi Fouseki, eds. (Taylor and Francis, 2011): 5.
[34] Grieves, interview; Amanda Reynolds, interview with the author, December 12, 2013, Melbourne Museum; Tout-Smith, interview.

engagement in exhibition development is characteristic of the New Museum,[35] and Melbourne Museum has pushed, through *First Peoples* and the Yulendj group, for even greater participation. Members of the Yulendj group really 'owned the process,' as Grieves described it.[36] Program Manager Liz Suda noted that from her perspective the approach was 'very collaborative,' and that the Yulendj group 'had absolute input into how they wanted the story told, which stories they wanted told, and…how it was going to be represented in the exhibition.'[37] Suda also stated that there 'is nothing in that exhibition that they disapproved of.' What is crucial about the Yulendj group's involvement in development is apparent in the exhibition's curatorial voice; that is, the voice that comes through most strongly is not what most visitors are used to hearing in museums – the voice of the curator – but instead the plural voices of Aboriginal people from Victoria. This is quite literally the case throughout the exhibition, as text displays use multiple Victorian Aboriginal languages to interpret objects, often describing meaning in first person singular or plural – a display on 'meen warann,' (smallpox) for example, includes the text:

> Yiri, yiri-ngan (sorry, I am sorry).
>
> Nyoorn, nyoorn (sorry and sad).

These words are in Djab Wurrung, a language of the south-western part of Victoria. This, in part, is what makes the exhibition's message of survival and the existence of continuing, rich cultures clear and powerful; we are hearing from those who are a living part of that culture. As Witcomb notes, 'Key themes are mediated through the voice of the elders involved in the Yulendj group and thus carry their authority.'[38] The Yulendj members were not however staff at the Museum, and for this reason were not interviewed for this study – their voices are lacking here, and would certainly make a valuable contribution to a more focused study of *First Peoples*.

As Witcomb has also noted, this work between the Yulendj Group and museum staff brings to the surface attention to the museum's place as a 'contact zone,' reflecting

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[35] See for example: Chinnery, "Temple or Forum?"
[36] Grieves, interview.
[37] Liz Suda, interview, 13 November 2013, Melbourne Museum.
[38] Andrea Witcomb, "'Look, listen and feel,': The First Peoples exhibition at the Bunjilaka Gallery, Melbourne Museum," *THEMA: La revue des Musées de la civilization* 1 (2014): 54.

some of the considerations Clifford made in his influential work.[39] In Clifford's account of working with American Indian Tlingit elders in the 1990s, he notes that museum objects

> provoked (called forth, brought to voice) ongoing stories of struggle…this was a disruptive history which could not be confined to providing past tribal *context* for the objects…The museum was asked to be accountable in a way that went beyond mere preservation.[40]

Objects on display at Melbourne Museum sometimes do similar work. A brass breastplate on display in *First Peoples* carries a text panel noting that

> Breast plates are really difficult to talk about and bring forth conflicting emotions. On one level they are a type of military gorget used by the foreign regime to try to oppress our leaders and warriors. But on another level, they are a memory of our Old People who fought to keep a place for family and community in the new world order.[41]

Language here highlights a present-day experience of the object that is embedded in multiple ways of understanding the story the object tells. Breastplates have a complex history and are increasingly prominent in museum displays as a representation of troubling relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians on the frontier.[42]

It is also very much indicative of the exhibition perspective, which is strongly, powerfully Aboriginal. *First Peoples* invites non-Indigenous visitors into an encounter with a voice that has previously been largely forgotten,[43] and the affective practice of encountering the Other that is scaffolded here is much closer to a meeting than past practices of exhibiting Aboriginal Australians have allowed. As Clifford notes,

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Clifford, "Museums as Contact Zones," 193.
[41] Text label, "Brass breast plate engraved with 'Malcolm, Chief, Kukuruk, Mum,' Melbourne, Victoria, 1830s-40s," *First Peoples*, Melbourne Museum.
[42] Kate Darian-Smith, "Breastplates: Re-enacting possession in North America and Australia," in *Conciliation on Colonial Frontiers: Conflict, performance and commemoration in Australia and the Pacific* Rim, ed. Kate Darian-Smith and Penelope Edmonds (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), 54-74.
[43] Haebich, "Forgetting Indigenous histories."
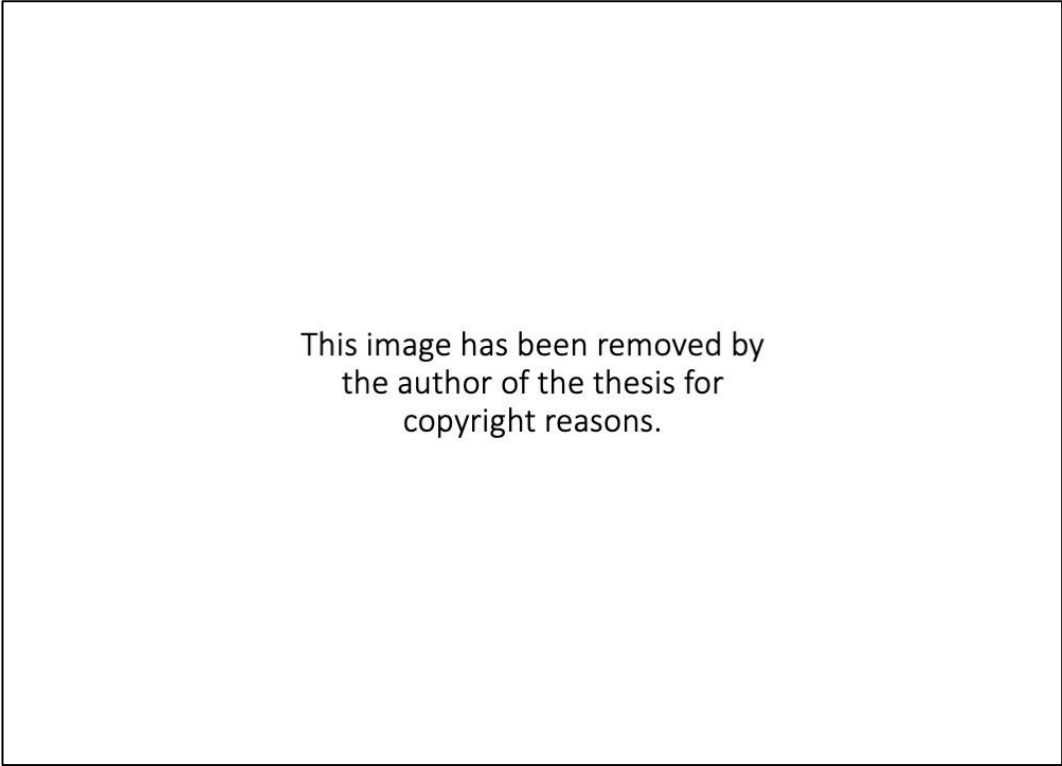
> When museums are seen as contact zones, their organizing structure as a *collection* becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral *relationship* – a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull.[44]

Clifford's ideas here connect to the question of 'whose voices have a right to be heard.'[45] The Aboriginal voices privileged in this exhibition create an opportunity for the non-Indigenous Victorian visitor to engage in what are likely to be unfamiliar affective practices; those of the migrant or visitor to Victorian country, listening as the people there explain their story. Non-Indigenous Victorians are in some ways positioned as the Other in this space, taking on what has traditionally been an unusual role for white Australians.

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Figure 30: Wominjeka display, First Peoples, *Melbourne Museum*

If this exhibition is 'power-charged,' as Clifford describes,[46] then the power is not the non-Indigenous visitor's. Although this positioning creates the opportunity for discomfort for white visitors in particular, we are welcomed rather than attacked, the

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44 Clifford, "Museums as Contact Zones," 193.
45 Cubitt, Smith and Wilson, "Introduction," 1.
46 Clifford, "Museums as contact zones."

word *Wominjeka* (welcome) greeting us as we enter, and invited throughout to learn and understand. Being welcomed is familiar, but being welcomed onto a land that white Australians have experienced as our own creates an important affective dissonance, destabilising without explicit challenge. The voice of the exhibition forces us into an encounter that we fully expect to be confronting, given white Australians' history of brutal and unjust treatment of Aboriginal peoples,[47] but we are less confronted and more welcomed into understanding.

What is constructed for the non-Aboriginal visitor is an opportunity to engage in an affective practice of respect, acknowledgement, and *listening*.[48] The Deep Listening space provides a good example, where visitors enter a semi-enclosed, dark space with screens occupying the curved walls. On these screens are films of Victorian Aboriginal people speaking about aspects of identity, country, family and culture. In many examples, we see the power of hearing directly from survivors of traumatic historical events, as well as the impacts of cultural and intergenerational trauma. The representation of histories of trauma in *First Peoples* from the perspective of those who experienced it and their descendants works to align with notions of agency in trauma narratives that I have argued is an important consideration for museums dealing with these histories.[49] Recent research suggests that trauma's impact carries through generations, and in the Australian context the historical traumas carried out against Aboriginal people continue to cause significant pain.[50]

In constructing this affective practice of visiting, the museum acts powerfully as heterotopian; it brings together elements of reality and crafts an artificial space reflecting an idealised present – concentrating the community in one space in a way that makes it much more visible than it is outside of the museum. Affective practices are engaged to reposition visitors; Indigenous visitors are privileged, are owners within the galleries, while non-Indigenous visitors are guests. This gallery is one instance where I was fully aware of my own, often unnoticed, whiteness and much

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[47] See for example: Haebich and Kinnane, "Indigenous Australia."
[48] See for example: Witcomb, "Look, listen and feel."
[49] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*;.
[50] Atkinson, *Trauma Trails*; David Samuel, "Do Jews carry trauma in our genes? A conversation with Rachel Yehuda," *Tablet,* December 11, 2014, http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/187555/trauma-genes-q-a-rachel-yehuda.

more aware of the limitations of my own interpretation of the museum representation. I could only experience the displays as a non-Indigenous visitor, and there was no opportunity for me to forget that my whiteness renders my experience specific rather than general. This is indicative of what is most powerful about this exhibition's Indigenous voice for non-Indigenous visitors. While Aboriginal voices are more heard than previously, it is still entirely possible for young Victorians to grow up hearing very little from the state's first peoples. This bringing of a neglected reality to the forefront in the exhibition is a powerful example of the museum's 'essentially disturbing function' as Sohn describes.[51] That visitors are encountering a reality in the form of real, surviving Aboriginal people who do not fit any of the negative stereotypes held by many Australians challenges and confronts, but we are quickly caught by opportunities for participating in new subjectivities, where we become part of a narrative of reconciliation and appreciation for a shared, rich culture.

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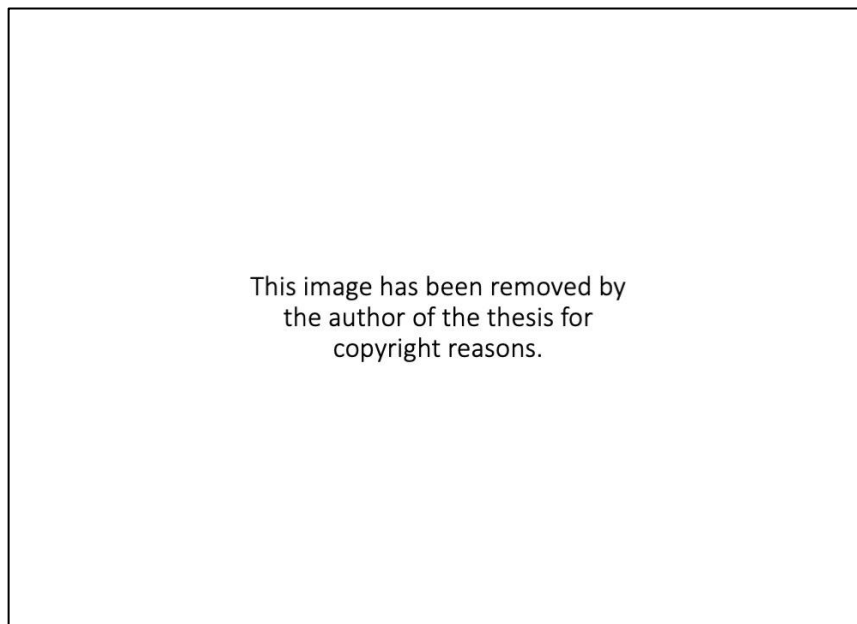
Figure 31: Wall at the exit of First Peoples*, Melbourne Museum*

The Immigration Museum displays some similar underlying aims to Melbourne Museum, and works to also construct a heterotopia of difference that both challenges and welcomes. Hilde Heynen's assertion, that heterotopias 'can easily be

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[51] Sohn, "Heterotopia," 44.

presented as marginal spaces where social experimentations are going on, aiming at the empowerment and emancipation of oppressed and minority groups,[52] speaks to some of the central goals of the Immigration Museum, which have become more focused on challenging stereotypes and injustice throughout the evolution of the Museum's exhibitions. The Museum's most recent permanent exhibition, *Identity: yours, mine, ours*, constructs a space that is often troubling and uncomfortable as it deals with broad questions about identity and relates these to race and racism and belonging. The entry to this exhibition provides an encounter with others that could form a similar experience to that of the Deep Listening space in Bunjilaka, but in this case the encounter can be deliberately uncomfortable and alienating.

Against the wall visitors face as they move towards *Identity* is a video installation created by Lynette Wallsworth, entitled 'Welcome,' depicting people – Victorians – of diverse backgrounds. They are silent, sometimes waving, staring at the visitor without speaking, and facing down along the corridor. This introductory experience can destabilise visitors as they walk through; they may be pushed into themselves at this point rather than encouraged to reach for understanding, but Senior Curator Moya McFadzean considers this moment of unsettling desirable and productive.[53] This display, as Witcomb argues, 'works the affective space not in terms of narrative but in terms of people to people encounters.'[54] There are a number of possible experiences here, depending on how long visitors linger, or the moments they pay attention to, as some of the people filmed make welcoming gestures – smiling, waving – while some are less welcoming and leave the visitor with the discomfiting sense that they shouldn't be here. Again the affective practices promoted position the visitor differently to what we might expect of the museum. Museum displays do not usually look back at us, and the dissonance provoked is a use of discomfort that is intended to push visitors into viewing themselves as one of the displays, challenging, as Witcomb describes, 'our subjectivity and position in relation to others.'[55]

Upon entering the gallery space, visitors find that *Identity* is quite dark with uneven ground in its first section – there are low platforms upon which some exhibits are

[52] Heynen, "Heterotopia unfolded?" 322.
[53] McFadzean, interview.
[54] Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect," 257.
[55] Ibid., 264.

displayed – and these factors combined with the asymmetrical arrangement of display cases can contribute to a sense of discomfort and strangeness. This exhibition demonstrates some of the capacity for museum displays with discomfiting elements to provoke dialogue;[56] these are physical discomforts, but elsewhere more intellectually uncomfortable material is provided to 'unsettle the identities of all visitors.'[57] Displays provide opportunities to become involved and invested in the subject of the exhibition – visitors can look for their own hair or eye colour, and think about what this means for their identity and sense of belonging. These more superficial aspects of identity and belonging scaffold a deeper engagement as visitors move through the exhibition, encountering objects that have personal meaning to those whose stories are displayed, drawing on the visitor's own sense of identity to understand those who are different from them. Here the exhibition may tap into affective responses informed by positive discourses of multiculturalism in Victoria; visitors may experience positive affects in connecting with others through objects belonging to them. The use of familiar, personal objects also humanises the Other, making it more difficult to dismiss the people displayed as simply different.[58] This is an affective practice of connecting with people, and for the most part, although issues of racism and injustice are raised, visitors are prompted to occupy a position of open-mindedness and acceptance.[59]

Further on in *Identity,* an interactive installation offers a less comfortable experience featuring a Melbourne tram journey. A familiar experience, even to many tourists, and for local visitors a jarringly realistic depiction of a racist incident – although some visitors do not view it as racist.[60] In the scenario, a young black man sits and speaks loudly in Arabic on a mobile phone, while a white man becomes visibly annoyed, eventually asking him to 'keep it down Actors in the scenario play out nuanced responses to the incident, and visitors have the opportunity to hear the

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[56] Sally Roesch Wagner, Tori Eckler, and Maxinne Rhea Leighton, "Productive discomfort: Dialogue, reproductive choice and social justice education at the Matilda Joslyn Gage Center," *Journal of Museum Education* 38, no. 2 (2013): 164-173.
[57] Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect," 265.
[58] Schorch et al., "Encountering the 'Other.'"
[59] Ibid., Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect."
[60] This is evident in comments on the online version of the scenario: "Who's next door?" Immigration Museum, accessed June 12, 2014, https://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/discoverycentre/identity/people-like-them/whos-next-door/; and also acknowledged by McFadzean in her interview.

internal monologues of several people in the tram, including Ibrahim, the victim, and Rob, the perpetrator. That Rob has acted out of racism is represented as a given, placing those who do not understand this in the somewhat uncomfortable position of finding themselves on the 'wrong side' of the exhibition's message. McFadzean notes that 'the idea behind the tram was to have a very everyday experience of discriminatory behaviour that really does happen.'[61] The exhibition development team did not want to give visitors the opportunity to distance themselves by using an extreme example of larger-scale racist violence, even though there are examples of such in very recent Australian history.[62] The tram scenario is interesting from many perspectives: it is an example of a heterotopia's capacity to craft an artificial reality (in this case a stark close up of the world outside); it uses film and interaction to demonstrate the affective power and emotional charge of museum displays; it speaks directly to a need for young people to develop nuanced understandings of how racism can play out in society; and it carries a clear message of right and wrong.

It is this last point, this willingness to send a message to visitors about the right way to respond to and think about diversity, that indicates the greatest shift in the Immigration Museum's recent history of representing confronting issues of race and racism. Speaking about the *Getting In* exhibition, which opened in 2003, McFadzean notes that curators 'didn't want to tell visitors what to think,' although she also states,

> I don't believe for a minute that there's any such thing as an objective exhibition. They're all subjective, they all come from an institutional perspective. But as far as that goes, we worked hard to try and make it as dispassionate and a presentation of the facts over time as we could.[63]

On *Identity,* McFadzean states that the exhibition emerges from a desire for the museum to 'start to be a little more courageous,' asking,

> can the Immigration Museum position itself as a place where we can not just be a forum for discussion of contemporary issues, but actually maybe lead the debate or instigate debate or, you know, encourage it? And we started to use terms like "agency for change", "social activism".

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[61] McFadzean, interview.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.

> This is, this sort of language is the first time we've really got into that in a more explicit way … to be more proactive about that and articulate that. That was new. And I think it's okay that it took that time, because the museum needed, it was a brand new museum, it needed to find its place in the community. I think it needed time to…in terms of developing our own legitimacy and reputation and trust, … all of that takes time, and I genuinely believe we couldn't have done the *Identity* exhibition in 1998 and I don't actually think we could have done it in 2003, when we did *Getting In*. I think these things are an evolution.[64]

This has partly meant that overt messages about racism and injustice have become more obvious and less avoidable to visitors, as museum staff have become more confident, as I have noted.

Museum Victoria has shifted, very deliberately, into occupying a more fortified place as a heterotopia for addressing social inequality; a careful construction of the outside placed within the relative safety of artificial museum displays in order to create the discomfort needed for change. It works on the assumption that movement and change are only likely if existing realities become uncomfortable; wanting to make people move, the museum seeks to make them uncomfortable with where they are. This is an important role for discomfort in educating for social change and cultural recognition in the museum, and museum staff clearly see a value in creating uncomfortable encounters for visitors.[65] More than in any other museum addressed in this study, the curatorial and education staff at Museum Victoria expressed a desire to make a difference in the realms of equality and inclusion.[66] Simultaneously, Museum Victoria staff demonstrated a firm belief in the need to display histories that may confront and challenge visitors – especially white Australian visitors, in the case of histories of race and racism – and worked to find ways of doing so that would produce the desired effects of inspiring change. This raises a number of questions surrounding the ethics of using discomfort to teach; because, as Zembylas has noted, 'a pedagogy of discomfort might always entail some sort of ethical violence,' and

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Wagner, Eckler and Leighton, "Productive discomfort"; Zembylas, "Pedagogy of discomfort."

[66] This was evident in interviews with all of the Museum Victoria participants.

museum educators and curators may need to employ strategies to minimise that violence.[67]

War and violence

War is often considered an important part of the social history of Victoria and Australia, and Museum Victoria has endeavoured to represent significant international conflicts with a focus on local experience. War also informs the story of migration to Victoria, and a wide range of conflicts are addressed across the stories of migrants displayed in the Immigration Museum. While these examples have addressed difficult material that is pertinent to questions about the use of such histories in teaching about the past, I will focus in this section on Melbourne Museum's recent exhibition on war, because this very new exhibition, I argue, represents a significant shift in constructing affective practices of war commemoration to other displays on the First World War. *WWI: Love and Sorrow* deals in detail with the devastating impacts of violence and conflict on bodies and minds. As curator Deborah Tout-Smith described, staff 'felt that an exhibition that focused on injury, distress, violence, and long-term recovery was something that an Australian museum hadn't done before Tout-Smith noted a particular interest in facial injury, considering it one of 'the final taboos of [war] injury,' and psychological injury.[68]

The resulting exhibition, *WWI: Love and Sorrow* [shortened to *Love and Sorrow* by participants]*,* deals with the long term effects of war and violence on soldiers and their families. There are eight possible individual stories to follow through the exhibition, working within Museum Victoria's general propensity for exploring individual stories within broader historical contexts. As Tout-Smith noted, 'of the stories that we follow through, every one of them is injured or killed…there's no one who sort of comes out of the war experience without being hurt by the war. So it's a fairly grim story I have to say.'[69] Curators hoped the exhibition would be considered 'ground-breaking' in its attention to 'really difficult and confronting and potentially

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[67] Zembylas, "Pedagogy of discomfort," 11.
[68] Tout-Smith, interview.
[69] Ibid.

very upsetting' history,[70] and indeed it is. As former deputy director of the AWM and noted historian of war Michael McKernan wrote in his review of *Love and Sorrow*, it 'is an exhibition that openly and deliberately works on the emotions of its visitors to proclaim its strong and powerful message: war is an unmitigated and abhorrent disaster and we need always to be conscious of its enduring impacts across subsequent generations.'[71]

In spite of this attention to the negative impacts of war, the exhibition does not seek to be overwhelmingly bleak or counterproductively confronting, with material carefully managed to avoid sensationalising violence and to allow visitors to make choices about the extent of their engagement with difficult material. The section on facial injury, for example, has been placed in a separate section to the side of the exhibition, with small signs indicating the material within may be too confronting for some visitors. This is a practical strategy for managing exhibition material that may not be suitable for some, an essential option given that many visitors will be schoolchildren. Content warnings or trigger warnings have been much debated in educational settings of all kinds; often viewed as pandering to 'oversensitive' learners, they are in fact vital for students with mental health conditions where symptoms might be triggered or exacerbated by violent images and stories.[72]

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Michael McKernan, "WWI: Love and Sorrow," *reCollections: Journal of the National Museum of Australia* 10, no. 1 (2015).

[72] See for example: Juris Dilevko, "The politics of trigger warnings," *Journal of Information Ethics* 24, no. 2 (2015): 9-12; Ingrid Sturgis, "Warning: This lesson may upset you," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 18, 2016.
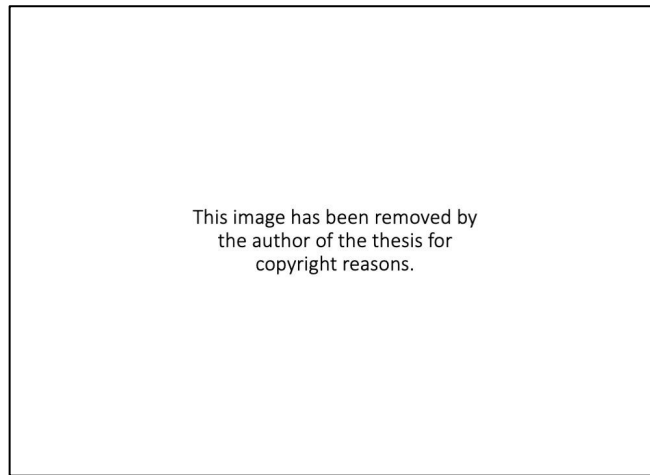
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Figure 32: Content warning at the entrance to facial injury display, WWI: Love and Sorrow*, Melbourne Museum*

While the images chosen are confronting and reveal very serious injuries, they are not the most confronting images of facial injury available; some photographs of facially wounded soldiers are incredibly difficult to look at.[73] What is perhaps most interesting about the use of histories of facial injury in this instance is the images' affective power; it is impossible to look at the images without being jolted by a visceral response. These images also run counter to dominant discourses of war commemoration, in which we see less confronting wounds and celebrate the bravery of the men who survived. As Kerry Neale, an AWM curator who also worked on *Love and Sorrow*, noted, amputees and those who suffered shell shock are amongst 'those war wounded groups that we've become a little more comfortable with, and have kind of become iconic of the cost of war.'[74] An image of a soldier missing a limb is significantly less confronting than an image of a soldier missing a nose, or an eye, or part of a jaw; such an image cannot easily indicate anything other than the horror of war; it takes work to move from initial shock and revulsion to understand what it means to survive such an injury. It may be that some of the belief curators

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[73] A number of images of men with facial injuries sustained during the First World War are available online and have been exhibited overseas. Please note, the images in the following links depict what may be confronting injuries for some viewers. See for example: Kerry Neale, "Poor devils without noses and jaws: Facial wounds of the Great War," Honest History, May 2014, http://honesthistory.net.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/Neale_Honest-History-MHC-paper.pdf; "In pictures: Faces of battle," BBC News website, accessed August 31, 2016, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/07/magazine_faces_of_battle/html/1.stm. The site includes some images from the exhibition *Faces of Battle*, which was held at the National Army Museum in the United Kingdom. For further information and images, see: "Faces of Battle at the National Army Museum, London," Culture 24, November 14, 2007, http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/military-history/art51925.
[74] Neale, interview.

hold about images of soldiers missing limbs as being less confronting also relate to familiarity and desensitisation – Neale alluded to this in her interview. There is in this instance a sense that the more confronting histories are displayed, the less confronting they become, raising an important issue with displaying histories for shock value. *Love and Sorrow* works towards a recognition of the damage inflicted by war, while other representations of war in Museum Victoria's campuses look more to stories about escaping war (in the Immigration Museum) or more established narratives of life on the home front (in *Melbourne Story*). There is no overriding sense of triumph in *Love and Sorrow*, this is instead a representation of the trauma and long lasting violence of war.

A quotation from the gravestone of First World War veteran James Connell, who died in 1926, introduces a text panel addressing these long lasting impacts of war with the phrase 'Days of war and years of suffering.'[75] The story depicted in *Love and Sorrow* is far from the usual tale told as part of Australia's national narrative, where the Great War ended and courageous, resilient soldiers returned home to lead lives of freedom. *Love and Sorrow* problematises the notion that the war ended with victory or that it even truly ended at all. There is an impression, given by the focus upon the lives of soldiers and their families in the decades after the Armistice, that none walked away unencumbered by war injury and illness. An exploration of war trauma and associated mental illness also runs through the exhibition, with a number of the individuals' stories including examples of PTSD, depression, and other mental illnesses long after the fighting ended. Nurse Lil McKenzie, for instance, is noted to have 'struggled with depression,' her 'disturbing wartime experiences…probably contributed to her condition.'[76] John Hargreaves' story is also used to highlight the problem of war trauma, and raises some of the intergenerational implications, with Hargreaves' daughter Joan 'deeply distressed at the prospect of her own son being drafted for Vietnam, having seen her father suffer the long-term impacts of war.'[77]

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[75] Text panel, *WWI: Love and Sorrow,* Melbourne Museum.
[76] "Lil Mackenzie," text panel, *WWI: Love and Sorrow*, Melbourne Museum.
[77] "John Hargreaves," text panel, *WWI: Love and Sorrow,* Melbourne Museum.

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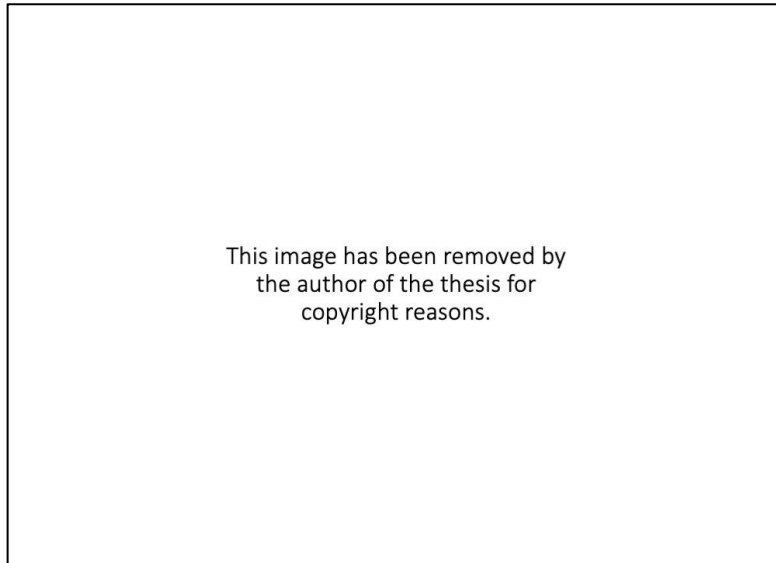
Figure 33: After 1919, Lil Mackenzie display, WWI: Love and Sorrow*, Melbourne Museum*

The exhibition ends with descendants of the people featured in the eight key stories reading aloud their letters and documents on film. There is a significant investment of time required to view all eight readings, and here the value of the exhibition's approach becomes apparent. The exhibition is designed around the notion that visitors will select one individual to follow, dipping in and out of contextual information and engaging most with the material relating to their particular historical person – in some ways similar to the strategy used in Port Arthur's *Lottery of Life*, and encouraging the same type of personal connection fostered by *Identity* and *First Peoples*.[78] This focused engagement is both practical and highly affecting and emotional; the affective practice we engage in with one person's story about their life is very different to the affective practice Australians are most adept at when examining broader histories of the experiences of soldiers in war, which I discussed in Chapter Four. In short, this exhibition structure, which privileges the stories of people over the politics and broad experiences of war encourages an affective practice on a very human level, one in which we practice empathy and consider the wider political aims of war secondary. An exhibition where explanations of politics, battles and strategy that generally only employs individual stories as evidence for larger arguments is much more conducive to an affective practice of nationalist

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[78] Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect."

commemoration, as is the case for most of the exhibitions at the Australian War Memorial addressed in Chapter Four.

The purpose for including the descendants of those featured in the exhibitions emerged from discussions about the need to acknowledge the intergenerational impacts of war. As Tout-Smith noted,

> …there are some families who have a history of family violence that can be traced back to an alcoholic family member coming back from World War I and then once you have a violent behaviour within the family context you have learned behaviour so the children then pass that legacy of violence on to their children and so on.[79]

Again linking to recent research on the intergenerational impacts of trauma,[80] *Love and Sorrow* engages with the complex issues of war trauma and the devastating impacts it has on servicemen and women and their families both during and long after the war. In doing so, it asks visitors to connect to war trauma in ways they may not previously have considered. Rather than engaging in familiar, comfortable affective practices of commemorating brave soldiers, we are asked to enter into a complex, confronting affective practice emerging from the devastating futility of war and its horrific, ongoing impacts. We cannot ignore the implications here; and what Museum Victoria is asking of us is that we engage in what Zembylas described as a 'sense of *feeling-together* that opened up a new potential for affective struggle in the community.'[81] It is likely that many visitors to *Love and Sorrow* will approach the question of Australian involvement in war with a much greater appreciation of the seriousness – and perhaps the senselessness – of sending soldiers into battle.[82] *Love and Sorrow* promotes the anti-war sentiment that is untenable in the Australian War Memorial.

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[79] Tout-Smith, interview.
[80] See: Atkinson, *Trauma Trails*; Samuel, "Do Jews carry trauma?"
[81] Zembylas, *Five Pedagogies,* xxiv.
[82] See: Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*

Marginalised stories

I have outlined some of the ways Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum work to bring to light the stories of those who have previously been rendered invisible by history in the sections above; the museums' attention to the experiences of Aboriginal Australians and migrants to Victoria highlight their commitment to telling the stories (and allowing the communities to tell their own stories) of marginalised groups. There are however any number of groups of people whose stories have not been deemed worthy of museum display in the past, and Museum Victoria addresses a number of themes that help to bring these stories to light. This project is certainly not complete, nor is it ever likely to be, and this section will focus on the stories and people that are represented in the museum and the themes raised by curatorial and education staff, who occasionally identified areas in which the museum could 'do more.'[83] As I have argued, this attention to the 'powerless' in society supports the conceptualisation of the museum as a heterotopia for social change; recognising the authority of museum institutions, staff use this to shift the balance of power in museum spaces and craft 'model' spaces where a more socially just community becomes possible.

Individual stories are a key component of both Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum's approaches to exhibiting history, and a strength of the museums' 'history from below' approach is that it encourages the representation of marginalised stories without suggesting that the museum can display the *whole* history of every social group in Victoria. Exhibition spaces do privilege certain groups; *Bunjilaka,* to provide an obvious example, privileges Victorian Aboriginal people, bringing a still-marginalised group to the foreground within a heterotopian space. Museum Victoria's exhibitions do not all work to 'overturn established orders' or to challenge structures of power and dominance however,[84] and there are spaces that are more likely to reinforce inequalities in the community.

Melbourne Story, for example, presents a predominantly non-Indigenous and European history of Melbourne, with limited critical engagement into – for example – issues of

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[83] Tout-Smith, for instance, suggested the histories of LGBTIQ+ people in Victoria might be a future focus for exhibition development.

[84] Sohn, "Heterotopia," 44.

racial or gender inequality. As Charlotte Smith, one of the curators of the *Melbourne Story* redevelopment in 2007 and 2008 notes, the exhibition is

> quite a white story of Melbourne, with occasional acknowledgments of
> Indigenous Australia, Indigenous Melbourne, Aboriginal Melbourne.
> And that's interesting because I think as an institution because we have
> the Immigration Museum, I do sometimes wonder if we think well
> we've got Immigration Museum, so we tell the story of the other down
> there, so we don't need to tell it up here.[85]

Interestingly, *Melbourne Story* does some work to include groups that have been left to the periphery of history for reasons other than race – it features a reconstructed working class area of Melbourne, for example, and also deals with the challenging history of Kew Asylum.[86] It does however assume a position of whiteness throughout, and for the most part stories of those of non-European backgrounds are not integrated into the broader narrative of Melbourne's social history.

The reconstructed working class houses, known as the 'Little Lon' display, after the location of the architectural dig from which they draw their inspiration and objects – Little Lonsdale Street in central Melbourne – are a feature of *Melbourne Story* and a particularly popular part of the exhibition. This display has been the focus of recent research by Mulcahy and others, who examined the affective experiences of school visitors to the exhibition.[87] When *Melbourne Story* was redeveloped, the architecture of Little Lon was kept whilst its internal exhibitions were updated. Previously, according to Charlotte Smith, Little Lon was well-loved by visitors,

> even though we did present it at the time as one man being an alcoholic
> simply because there were lots of alcohol bottles in the [dig] … so we
> presented them as slum dwellers and so forth and so it was not, from my
> perspective that was a problem.[88]

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[85] Charlotte Smith, interview with the author, October 25, 2013, Melbourne Museum.
[86] See for example: Keir Reeves and David Nichols, "'No less than a palace': Kew Asylum, its planned surrounds, and its present-day residents," in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'difficult heritage,'* ed. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Hoboken: Routledge, 2008), 247-262.
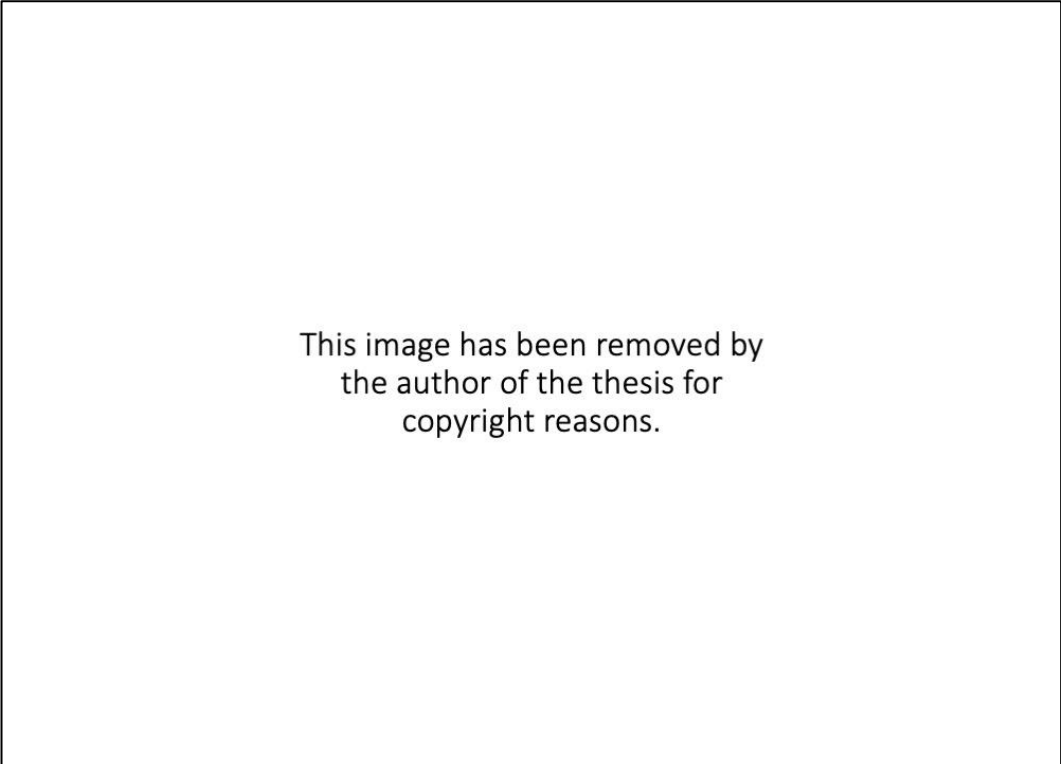[87] Mulcahy, "Sticky Learning."
[88] Charlotte Smith, interview.

Smith's aim in redeveloping the exhibitions was to

> challenge an established view, so this idea of the working class area of
> being a slum … that was a term of course that at the time was bandied
> about all the time because you get the sort of the white middle class,
> excuse the term, 'do-gooder' and I again, add in context, at the time they
> were doing what they believed was good, but you know, they're the
> outside looking in, they're writing about these people who themselves
> don't have a voice, and the terminology they use all the time is slum
> dwellers and these itinerant or whatever people. The funny thing about
> that though is that that sort of narrative continued right on to the 1990s,
> and yet from the material evidence and from the oral histories and from
> other sort of evidence, you know the archaeological and material
> evidence, we know that that wasn't the case. Yes some people lived in
> abject poverty, some people lived in pretty awful circumstances but
> there was also incredible wealth in that area, and also a real sense of
> pride in themselves and in their place, even if they were working class.[89]

What Smith highlights here is significant in terms of Museum Victoria's approach to dealing with attitudes and beliefs often considered problematic and damaging now, that were very much accepted in the historical time that is being represented. Here Smith and other curators are working to trouble these attitudes simply by representing a more positive depiction of this marginalised group; Little Lon includes two houses and challenges assumptions about poverty and 'slum dwellers' with multimodal displays representing clean, ordered homes that are basic but contain a few precious objects.

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[89] Ibid.

Figure 34: Little Lon display, Melbourne Story *, Melbourne Museum*

Melbourne Story also addresses some of the history of psychiatry and mental illness in Melbourne, through a depiction of the now infamous (at least in Melbourne) Kew Asylum. Kew Asylum is used to represent the brutality of misinformed psychiatric treatment, and the exhibition does not shy away from representing some troubling elements of this history. The collection of objects presents an overall picture of harsh institutionalisation, perhaps most notably a rubber truncheon used to 'control' patients, and a locked glove that looks like a calico oven mitt, designed to keep 'inmates' from 'scratching or otherwise damaging themselves' as well as to 'prevent masturbation, which was listed as a cause for insanity as late as 1939.'[90]

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[90] Text label, "Locked Glove," *Melbourne Story,* Melbourne Museum.

Figure 35: Kew Asylum display including 'cotton bonnet' and 'locked glove,' Melbourne Story, *Melbourne Museum*

The Kew Asylum display seeks to represent the troubling past 'by being as impartial' as possible according to Smith, and although she recognises the need to understand the attitudes of the past through the lens of context, she notes that 'you don't want to discount the fact that at the time it was horrific and that things were done in a way that we would judge as being unfair today or just not the right approach today.'[91] A text label associated with a cash box on display provides an example of the approach to representing troubling histories. It states:

> When Kew was opened in 1872, it was called a 'Lunatic Asylum'. In
> 1903 it became a 'hospital for the insane'. Patients were called 'inmates,'
> 'lunatics,' and 'idiots'. Each name reflected a different type of treatment
> regime.[92]

No 'judgment' is inherent here, however the label works to tap into language about mental illness that is considered inappropriate to modern discourse. This represents

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[91] Charlotte Smith, interview.
[92] Text label, "What's in a Name?" *Melbourne Story,* Melbourne Museum.

some contrast to the way mentally ill people are represented in the Asylum at Port Arthur.

The relationship between affect and discourse is here apparent;[93] even the phrase 'Lunatic Asylum' is so evocative as to conjure images of brutal treatment of patients, it also suggests ideas about the uncontrollable, frightening 'lunatic In this case though, there is no dramatized representation, and the text panel is carefully written to invite critical consideration of what the language suggests about the 'type of treatment regime.' With the selection of the objects – the truncheon, the institutional beige clothing, the lockable glove, and medical supplies, for example – the display on the Asylum forms a multimodal representation designed to provoke discomfort relating to what remains a taboo topic – mental illness. The affects in this display underpin a process of meaning-making that promotes a critical engagement with the history of psychiatry that is represented.[94]

The stories of Kew Asylum are a point of pride for Tout-Smith, who was a lead curator on the exhibition. She states

> I thought here are people who at the time were hidden, essentially or at
> least their conditions at the time of their lives that they were in Kew
> Asylum were hidden and I felt really proud that there they were as big as
> key leaders of Melbourne.[95]

This representation of people whose stories remain largely hidden and 'taboo' is an important focus for curators, and often these histories are very troubling. As Smith states, one of the stories about Kew Asylum features

> a man who was basically an alcoholic…and probably if given the
> support networks that we once had, we don't have them any more, I
> think he might actually have been able to live in society, but his family
> didn't want him out. So even though he was well enough to live outside

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[93] Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion.*
[94] Lindauer, "Critical museum pedagogy."
[95] Tout-Smith, interview.

of an institution, his family basically dictated that he stay in. So he died in an institution.[96]

People with disabilities have been publicly represented in ways that have reinforced exclusion and injustice for many decades and continue to be represented in such ways in other museums; for instance, I have discussed one example in the Asylum at Port Arthur. As Richard Sandell and Jocelyn Dodd argue,

> predominantly negative and damaging conceptions [of people with disabilities] have, in turn, shaped public policy, approaches to education, employment and welfare; they have framed interactions between disabled and non-disabled people and provided the justification for continuing forms of prejudice, discrimination and oppression.[97]

Museum Victoria's displays dealing with mental illness present difficult experiences and seek to build understanding of the diversity of conditions, treatments, and outcomes for people throughout history. While some of the objects on display are confronting, these objects are not used to promote or connect to stigmatising notions about mental health conditions – and people with these conditions – as something to be feared and avoided.

There are also quite extensive collections relating to the histories of sexuality and gender diversity available in Victoria,[98] however these histories are not addressed in detail in permanent exhibitions in the two museums. Tout-Smith states that she doesn't believe 'museums generally deal with sexuality very well,' particularly noting the neglect of histories about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and sex and gender diverse people. This is an area that Tout-Smith expresses a desire to explore further in future exhibitions. In general, both Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum represent a broad range of stories of women and children – both groups that have been excluded from more traditional representations of the past, which favour white, middle class men. Women's and children's personal stories are featured throughout the museums, along with their belongings. Interviews with all Museum Victoria staff

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[96] Smith, interview.
[97] Sandell and Dodd, "Activist practice."
[98] See for example: "The Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives," accessed August 26, 2016, http://alga.org.au/.

gave insight into the ways they work to promote the 'disturbing' capacities of heterotopian museums;[99] as such, their work is in line with what Sandell and Dodd – writing more specifically on the representation of disability in museums – call an 'activist museum practice,' seeking to 'construct and elicit support amongst audiences (and other constituencies) for alternative, progressive ways of thinking.'[100]

Heterotopias for 'progress': affective practices for social inclusion and cultural recognition in Museum Victoria

The two museums I have analysed in this chapter represent the capacity for heterotopian spaces to challenge existing and create alternative social spaces. This work is very deliberate; it is clear that Museum Victoria staff have taken considerable care to ensure that gallery spaces are inclusive and bring 'hidden' histories or people to light. In terms of the substantive focus for exhibitions, this has been achieved through an emphasis on 'history from below,' telling the stories of those who have previously been marginalised or invisible in historical representations. Often, this is a powerful approach, challenging the visitor to see the world from a different perspective or to occupy a different position in relation to familiar and unfamiliar others, as is the case for non-Indigenous Australian visitors to *First Peoples*. It is, in many instances, a deliberate push for affective learning, which I will describe in more detail below.

First Peoples is substantively different to most other representations of Aboriginality and Aboriginal history in Australia. Its approach to crafting a curatorial voice, drawing as it does on the language and words of the Victorian Aboriginal community members who co-curated the exhibition, is intended to evoke an affective practice of 'visiting' country as well as museum. Elsewhere, the (predominantly white, authoritative) curator's voice continues to dominate, but there are moments of disruption throughout the exhibitions that mean that other voices can be noticed and heard. Museum Victoria's approaches – informed by the notion of the New Museum – to representing the past, which emphasise community voices, individual stories, and the perspectives of those who have largely been absent from historical

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[99] Sohn, "Heterotopia."
[100] Sandell and Dodd, "Activist practice," 3.

representation in the past, all contribute to the construction of a heterotopian space where the status quo is challenged. It is clear that this desire to challenge links to a desire to effect social change; essentially, if the museum wants visitors to move towards a new perspective, it must make them uncomfortable with where they are, with where they have been.

Learning and Museum Victoria

My analysis of the substantive content of Museum Victoria's exhibitions about history highlighted where 'uncomfortable' history has been displayed or represented, and where there may be gaps or silences, and revealed the ways the museums work to destabilise social structures that staff see as unjust or as indicative of social exclusion. Having outlined some of *what* is being taught about in the Melbourne and Immigration Museums, I will now explore *how* this material is being communicated and taught, examining the pedagogies, communicative strategies and educational theories underpinning displays. In the second part of this section I will also consider how both the *what* and *how* of Museum Victoria's displays of difficult history relate to particular purposes for learning, with particular attention to the ways curatorial and education staff discuss the museum's educative purpose and the reasons for engaging with uncomfortable histories.

Museum Victoria has a number of staff whose work focuses on education and public programs, and two of my participants – Jan Molloy and Liz Suda – had roles coordinating educational activities and schools' programs. The institution has a wide range of education activities for school visitors across primary and secondary levels, and some focusing on very young children at kindergarten level. Programs are, according to Molloy, 'about children exploring,'[101] and are based on social constructivist models of learning where students take part in facilitated activities that allow them to create meaning, usually from encounters with objects. The focus is often on people's stories, particularly in the Immigration Museum, where students can learn about, for example, asylum seekers and refugees in *Seeking Refuge* or migrant stories relating to objects in a suitcase in *Passport Plus*. Programs also connect to

[101] Molloy, interview.

curriculum in Victoria from early primary through to the Victorian Certificate of Education [VCE – the most commonly-completed school leaving certificate in the state]. The object-based programs have elements of 'discovery' in them, with students undertaking historical 'detective work' through, for instance, the secondary school program *Cold Case Detectives*, where students investigate the lives of Melbourne citizens through 'the things they left behind.'[102]

The two Programs Coordinators, Molloy and Suda, both spoke passionately about the role of museums in social justice and inclusion. Molloy, who is based at the Immigration Museum, spoke particularly strongly about migrant and refugee rights in Victoria, stating that 'I just think that the small-mindedness and the attitudes of discrimination that are being pushed in our world today are frightful, and in Australia today, and we've got to counter that, and I think that that's part of the role of this museum.'[103] Suda was, at the time of interviewing, especially focused on Aboriginal history and culture. She is based at Melbourne Museum and at the time was working towards the opening of *First Peoples*, and spoke about the importance of Aboriginal voice in the exhibition. In addition, Suda noted that at Museum Victoria 'there is increasingly a commitment to making our role as an education institution more broad and diverse, and being more inclusive of more groups.'[104] Both Suda and Molloy were also working with my colleague Dianne Mulcahy on a program of research relating to affect and learning, and were clearly interested in ways of expressing what they had intuitively been observing and working with throughout their museum education careers.

Pedagogical and communicative approaches at Museum Victoria

Like all of the other museum staff I interviewed for this research, Museum Victoria participants revealed a broad range of theoretical and practical approaches to communicating and teaching visitors in the museum. During interviews with education staff it was clear they had considerable awareness of constructivist

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[102] "School programs and resources," Melbourne Museum, accessed August 31, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/learning/school-programs-and-resources/. A list of education programs at each of the museums is also included in Appendix II.
[103] Molloy, interview.
[104] Suda, interview.

approaches to learning, and that they generally supported a shift away from a 'banking model' of education,[105] or what would more commonly be referred to as a 'didactic' method of representing history in museums.[106] Education staff were not the only ones aware of social constructivist theories of learning, although curatorial staff were less inclined to use the language associated with those theories and more likely to speak in general terms about allowing visitors to form their own conclusions about historical events.

Exhibitions often had several opportunities for visitors to undertake their own interpretations of material, although they usually also carried an overall message or messages that it was clearly hoped visitors would absorb. Several Museum Victoria staff also raised the potential of employing affect in developing museum education programs, and others spoke of feeling and experience as central to particular exhibits, and many exhibitions reflected this attention to embodied learning. Exploring the elements of historical thinking outlined by history education researchers also proved fruitful, highlighting, for example, the ways curatorial voice – or the voices that were heard or read in exhibitions – was an important factor in crafting opportunities for visitors to encounter the multiple perspectives of history. Ultimately what Museum Victoria staff worked towards was a learning approach that was based upon 'how people interact with exhibitions with their head, with their hands and with their heart'[107]

Key to learning at the Immigration Museum in particular was a sense of personal connection to the material; education materials and exhibitions emphasise that 'there is an immigration story in the life or family history of every non-Indigenous Australian.'[108] Some activities were designed around discovering students' own family histories of immigration, and others sought to connect students to stories of recent and more distant immigrants to the country, such as through the program *Passport*

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105 Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*
106 Chinnery, "Temple or Forum?"; Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; Macleod, "Introduction."
107 Gillespie, interview.
108 Lucy Carroll, "Pack your bags: An education program at the Immigration Museum," Immigration Museum, Melbourne, 2000.

Plus.[109] In this program, students learn about individual migrants through personal objects in a suitcase. This perhaps emerges from constructivist ideas about designing learning experiences to allow students to move from the known to the unknown, or from the personal to the more abstract. It is also an approach reflected in curriculum, which tends to have younger students of history – early childhood and primary students – learning about the past through their own family and local histories, while secondary students move on to more temporally and geographically distant groups of people.[110]

Several participants – both curatorial and education staff – expressed a desire to avoid 'telling people what to think' with reference to the contentious issues represented in various museum spaces, although they often also expressed an uneasiness with this aim – what would it mean to allow potentially bigoted and exclusionary views to be aired in the museum? This emerged particularly strongly in interviews with two staff – McFadzean and Programs Officer Jan Molloy – who worked largely at the Immigration Museum, where issues of racism can inspire heated debate and where ignorant and often damaging beliefs can be uncovered. As I have noted previously, McFadzean cited issues with online comments on the Melbourne tram experience described above; some visitors did not believe they were witnessing a racist incident, and merely pointed out that the man talking loudly on his phone was annoying.[111]

This situation highlights something that can be challenging for museums aiming for constructivist approaches to display – there is little opportunity to facilitate discussions that take place within and outside of the museum. Here the role of educators is key for school groups, as educators can help to facilitate learning in the museum and ensure that students are able to reach deeper understandings of

[109] "Passport plus," Immigration Museum, accessed August 31, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/learning/school-programs-and-resources/passport-plus/.

[110] "Australian Curriculum: F-6/7 HASS and 7-10 History," accessed August 31, 2016, http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/introduction.

[111] The tram scenario film clips, from various character perspectives, can be viewed online, along with visitor comments, at http://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/discoverycentre/identity/people-like-them/whos-next-door/.

contentious issues.[112] In writing about representations of abolition and slavery in museums, Cubitt, Smith and Wilson note the difficulties associated with, for instance, displaying racist images, which runs 'the risk of simply reinforcing the racial stereotypes.'[113] In constructivist understandings of education though, learners are not always expected to have the same 'zone' of potential achievement;[114] that is, in this example, a constructivist approach would not assume that all visitors will start from the same point nor finish with the same knowledge. A visitor's capacity to reach the 'end point' desired by the curators of this exhibition is dependent on their prior knowledge, background, and other contextual factors, as Falk and Dierking note.[115]

There is a mismatch here between what curators see as the learning goal and the ways they construct exhibitions to teach visitors. Exhibitions often work to encourage debate and conversation, with interpretation sometimes limited to allow multiple possible conclusions to emerge. In some instances, though – and it appears *Identity* is at least partly an example of this – there is a relatively fixed end point that would perhaps be more suited to didactic approaches. It is perhaps for this reason that curators are beginning to be more didactic in their pedagogical approaches to teaching in exhibitions; melding multiple tactics that allow spaces for visitors to construct meaning while ensuring that key messages are promoted more strongly. *First Peoples*, for example, has a range of objects and artworks where limited explanation is provided, leaving the visitor to attempt to draw on other text and objects in the displays to build knowledge about the exhibition's themes. This exhibition does also however go further to make arguments and promote messages than earlier exhibitions do. *Getting In* at the Immigration Museum, for example, works hard to avoid being heavy-handed in delivering an anti-racist message, in spite of the obviously anti-racist stance of Museum Victoria. While several interviewees noted a belief that simply displaying the evidence will result in visitors reaching the

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112 Hein, *Learning in the Museum.*
113 Cubitt, Smith and Wilson, "Introduction," 7.
114 Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; Vygotsky, *Mind in Society.*
115 Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience.*

desired conclusion anyway,[116] others had begun to doubt and sought a shift to be 'more proactive.'[117]

Understandings of the role of affect and emotion in learning have also made their way into both museums. The two Programs Coordinators' involvement in research investigating the affective learning taking place in exhibitions was clearly influencing their thinking about learning in the museums.[118] Although this certainly informed some of the language they used to describe their activities, it was apparent that attention to feeling and embodiment in learning was far from new to them – rather, both education programs and exhibitions had long been constructed with these facets of learning in mind. Suda describes a 'three dimensional approach' in education programs,

> building on knowledge, affective skills, which is your values and beliefs
> and emotions and so on, and the skills, the generic skills that you use in
> you know, building knowledge. So we're really interested in teachers and
> pre-service teachers thinking about the other…the holistic, a more
> holistic way of learning, not just focusing on the facts and knowledge
> that are in the exhibitions but the total exhibition experience.[119]

Suda links affect to values, reflecting the ways affective practices are scaffolded in exhibitions to promote learning for values and social inclusion.

First Peoples, for example, uses art created by Maree Clarke, recordings of an Aboriginal grieving song in the language Djab Wurrung, and a darkened section of the exhibition to evokes the grief associated with the devastating impacts of smallpox. The semiotics of the arrangement of multimodal elements in this display invite visitors to participate in affective practices of grieving that are culturally specific, so what is bundled into these practices are visceral responses relating to grief

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[116] Tout-Smith, interview.
[117] McFadzean, interview.
[118] Molloy and Suda were involved in the pilot for a research study on affect and learning with researchers Dianne Mulcahy and Andrea Witcomb. I was also involved in a later small grant exploring the same subject: Dianne Mulcahy, Andrea Witcomb, Elizabeth Suda, Jan Molloy, Helen Aberton, Amy McKernan, and Lyn Yates (2015-2016), *Attuning to affect in museum and school education: embodied knowledge and its capacities and effects*, Melbourne Graduate School of Education Seed Funding, the University of Melbourne. I would like to extend my gratitude to the researchers involved in this project for allowing me the opportunity to work with and learn from them.
[119] Suda, interview.

and sadness as well as interpretations of culture. Details about the broader impacts of smallpox are background to the feelings and affects provoked by image, sound, and darkness in this space; they help visitors to make sense of an experience. As I have argued, visitors will experience these differently though, depending on their backgrounds and beliefs, and particularly in this case, their cultural background.

In addition, museum experiences involving reconstructions have long been a communicative strategy for the institution – in 1984 the then Museum of Victoria included a reconstructed farm smithy – 'a typical pioneer building of the 19th century.'[120] Little Lon today presents a similar type of exhibit, inviting visitors to 'experience' the historic spaces surrounding the archaeological dig on Melbourne's Little Lonsdale Street. 'Hands on' activities and displays were also a focus from the 1980s, with school programs were taught by teachers appointed to the museum by the State Education Department and the Catholic Education Office of Victoria.[121] Education programs continue to be underpinned by notions of experience and of learning beyond the textbook; clearly one of the key features of learning in museums is the possibility of learning through object-based encounters.[122]

As I have noted, what Witcomb describes as pedagogies of listening are used to powerful effect in *First Peoples*,[123] with the displays employing a range of different approaches to ensure that visitors have opportunities to hear voices and sounds produced by Victoria's Aboriginal community. The Deep Listening space is a particularly useful example where the museum pedagogy really only asks visitors to sit and listen – unusual in an institution where it has become much more common for visitors to be asked to read, to question, to push buttons, to move through spaces, to be *active* in interpreting the displays, rather than this relatively passive absorbing. These pedagogies are, as I have argued, indicative of a shift taking place in Museum Victoria, a movement away from the constructivist-influenced desire to

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[120] Museum of Victoria, "Museum of Victoria," guide, 1984.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Bain and Ellenbogen, "Placing objects."
[123] Witcomb, "Look, listen and feel."

avoid 'telling visitors what to think,' towards the communication of messages and the view that the museum can and should 'lead the debate' for social inclusion.[124]

Purposes of learning

Education for social change has been a growing focus for Museum Victoria throughout the historical period investigated in this research. Indeed, education generally has become a stronger focus, or at least more formalized, since the Director of what was at the time the National Museum of Victoria, Barry Wilson, argued for 'trained educationalists in our museums' in 1981.[125] The strategies for structuring both formal education and crafting informal learning opportunities outlined above suggest an increasingly active role for the visitor in undertaking interpretation; however it is also clear that the museums are beginning to reassert authority, albeit in very different ways and for very different purposes to the museums of earlier periods. While some interviewees' discussions of communicative and pedagogical techniques suggested a progression from an older style, 'cabinet of curiosities' methodology, they were less assured of a fixed end point to this progression, rather seeing their work as part of an ongoing process of negotiating and influencing change. This is a relationship with society that is suggestive of the heterotopia; curators and educators see their institution as both integrally, importantly entwined with communities and society whilst simultaneously positioning themselves as separate to and therefore able to reflect back to visitors a construction of the world they both leave at the door and carry with them.

In terms of the educational focus for Museum Victoria, goals for history learning are linked to those for civics and citizenship education, and the tendency to relate history learning to the development of particular values is very conscious. Molloy notes that she believes teachers need to consider the 'hidden curriculum,' in what is taught without ever being explicitly stated, referring in particular to notions of race and cultural recognition. Molloy asked of teachers, 'When the kids leave your classroom at the end of a year with you, where have they moved in terms of thinking about who

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[124] McFadzean, interview.
[125] Barry Wilson, "A Director's view of education in museums: Summary of address," Museums Education Association of Australia Biennial Conference, Melbourne 22-28 August, 1981, 96.

they are in the world?'[126] This question was central to the education work of the Immigration Museum, where Molloy is based, and reflected through several versions of education materials, which asked often students to consider their own place and history as migrants in order to build empathy for others.[127] Both programs and exhibitions engaged with a range of personal, individual stories, situating these narratives within broader contexts of movement and migration in order to provide an access point for students. In the program *Seeking Refuge*, for example, students encounter the stories of a number of individual asylum seekers and displaced persons, but 'are also offered the opportunity to investigate the history of legislation relating to the settlement of displaced persons in Australia.'[128]
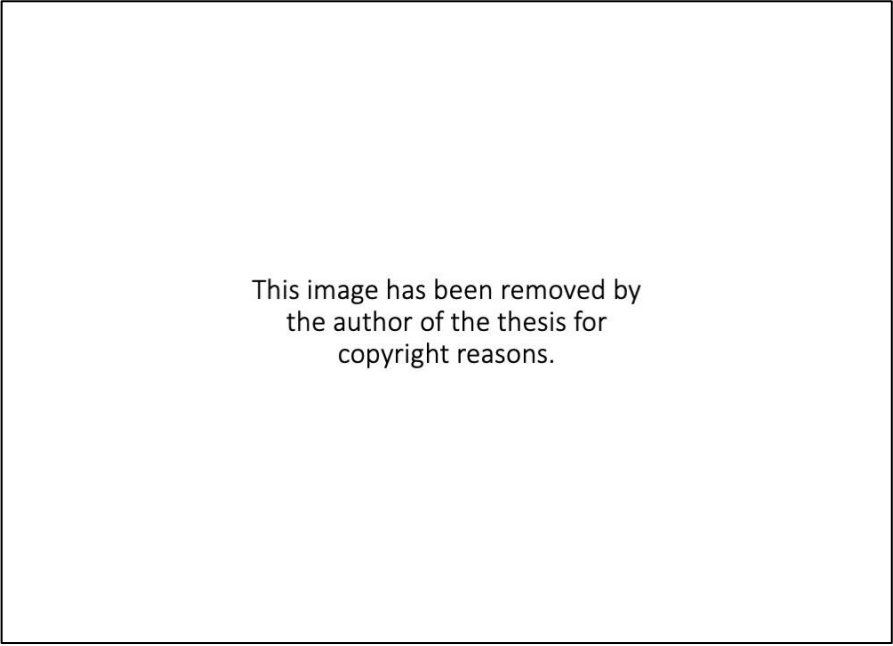
Affect, empathy and emotion are strongly linked to learning at Museum Victoria and are seen as particularly important in meeting the institution's goals for learning for social inclusion and cultural recognition. Most of the Immigration Museum's earlier exhibitions present opportunities for emotional engagement with stories of migration, and students are also encouraged to interact with the reconstructed ship displays in *Journeys of a Lifetime* – by climbing into bunk beds or playing with board games, for example – in order to better understand how migrants might have felt. These are the 'intrinsically embedded moral values or lessons' of Museum Victoria's citizenship learning; visitors who do not come to empathise with migrants are positioned as oppositional to the museum.[129]

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[126] Molloy, interview.
[127] Education materials refs.
[128] https://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/learning/school-programs-and-resources/seeking-refuge/
[129] Friedrich, *Democratic Education,* 113.

Figure 36: The ship in Journeys of a Lifetime*, Immigration Museum*

There is a strong possibility here that students will engage in 'presentism,' imagining what the experiences would be like for them, rather than using historical evidence and context to gain a more informed understanding of the motivations and perspectives of those in the past.[130] For example, Immigration Museum education materials from 2001 suggests that teachers 'Ask students to consider which period they would like to have made the journey, and why' whilst exploring the ship in *Journeys of a Lifetime*.[131] Some more recent exhibitions such as *First Peoples* move away from this presentist tendency, providing the material to explain experiences of historical others without encouraging visitors to assume they know what it was really like.[132] This is partly, again, an impact of the voice and of the clear messages of *First Peoples*, which is in many ways more authoritative than earlier exhibitions in the Immigration Museum. This is not to suggest however that one approach or result is more desirable than the other; both have strengths and disadvantages. Emotional connection to the past, such as that encouraged by Immigration Museum education materials, encourages interest and provides a valuable basis for learning more[133] –

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130 See for example: Seixas, Peck and Poyntz, "But we didn't live in those times"; Taylor and Young, *Making History*.

131 Particia Ferrara, Sarina Bellissimo, *Passport: An education program at the Immigration Museum* (Melbourne: Museum Victoria, 2001).

132 Seixas, "Beyond content and pedagogy."

133 Barton and Levstik, *Teaching History*.

how might things have been different for those in the past? Why might they have experienced the journey differently to us?

Reconstructions like the ship in *Journeys*, which was developed in 1998,[134] have potent affective potential that goes further than these explorations of individual emotional responses to the past, but both are constructed to contribute to learning for social values in the Melbourne and Immigration Museums. Asking visitors to engage in considering how historical actors may have felt encourages empathy for those who are different, and this is a core goal for both museum campuses. In *Journeys*, the Immigration Museum completes a foundation for identifying with the figure of the migrant that guides visitors to experience the 2003 exhibition *Getting In*,[135] which is the logical next exhibition, from a different perspective. *Journeys* promotes affective practice that is sympathetic to migrants, an affective practice of 'walking in the shoes of another' that is characteristic of much of the first floor of the Immigration Museum. Having spent the previous several exhibitions 'walking in the shoes' of migrants, visitors enter *Getting In*, which deals with the contentious political context for migration to Australia, predisposed to empathise with the targets of the policy that is on display.

The Immigration Museum's project is highly political, and although, as McFadzean notes, these earlier exhibitions, referring to all except for *Identity*, which did not open until 2011,[136] avoid taking an explicit stand in relation to debates about migration and asylum seekers, the affective practices provoked are conducive to a compassionate response to migrant and refugee stories. *Identity*, the Immigration Museum's newest permanent exhibition, takes this project further and brings an anti-racist argument to the fore, employing affective, interactive experiences to provoke discomfort and understanding of injustice. Ultimately though, some visitors will resist affective practices that are sympathetic to the Other because of their beliefs and backgrounds; these people are likely to experience considerable discomfort with being 'pushed' to

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[134] "Journeys of a Lifetime," Museum Victoria Collections, accessed August 31, 2016, http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/10647.
[135] "Getting In," Museum Victoria Collections, accessed August 31, 2016, http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/10649.
[136] "Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours," Museum Victoria Collections, accessed August 31, 2016, http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/4578.

align with the figure of the migrant. I argue that this discomfort is, for Museum Victoria, a very deliberate strategy to attempt to effect change.

Difficult history is used to support Museum Victoria's educational project in a number of ways, but exhibitions are rarely heavy-handed or didactic in their approach; for the most part they do not explicitly state a particular view. In some instances, exhibitions have actually become less confrontational than previously – the shift between the previous and current *Bunjilaka* exhibitions is demonstrative of this. While the prior displays included more attention to protests surrounding the Bicentennial of 1888 and took the provocative (although apparently frequently overlooked)[137] step of putting the anthropologist and collector of Aboriginal objects and remains, Baldwin Spencer, in a glass cabinet, the current exhibitions embed confronting material with less anger and more confidence in a future for Aboriginal Victorians.

Conversely, exhibitions about race and racism at the Immigration Museum appear to have become more confronting, and perhaps reflective a sense of less confidence in justice for migrants and asylum seekers who come to Australia in the face of recent political calls for greater 'border control' and scrutiny of claims for asylum.[138] These changes indicate important facets of museum staff's perception of the museums' roles in the community. In all cases, exhibitions are intended to challenge racism in Australia, whether it relates to Indigenous Australians or more recent arrivals. Both examples indicate something of the context for the issues. Racism in Victoria is a significant issue, with research showing that approximately 40% of Victorians believe there are some racial, ethnic, or cultural groups that do not 'fit in,' representing a 17% increase between 2006 and 2013.[139] As racism continues to be a problem in the state, the Immigration Museum continues to argue more strongly for inclusion and recognition of diversity.

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137 Gillespie, interview.
138 See for example: Kleist, "Refugees between pasts and politics"; Neumann and Tavan, "Introduction."
139 VicHealth, *Findings from the 2013 survey of Victorians' attitudes to race and cultural diversity* (Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2014).

In amongst all this concern with the purposes for displaying and teaching visitors about particular histories, there remains an awareness of the museum's role in supporting formal school curriculum. As Gillespie notes, one of the major purposes for including education staff in exhibition development teams, aside from their insight into different audience groups, is their knowledge of curriculum. This contributes to 'strategic thinking' about how exhibitions can connect to classrooms, and highlights the attention paid to schools and other formal education settings at Museum Victoria.[140]

Museum Victoria eagerly takes on considerable responsibility for changing the community it serves, for striving to make it more inclusive, compassionate, and for healing the wounds caused by discrimination and the silencing of marginalised social groups (a process in which museums have, in the past, played a willing part). This situates Museum Victoria as a heterotopian space apart, a separate space working to present alternatives to the injustice in the society it is simultaneously a part of. Tout-Smith noted that in relation to early evaluations with teenage and older visitors to *Love and Sorrow*,

> none of them were worried by the content…everyone said, "thank goodness you're telling the story, this is a war story, why would you only tell some of it?" No one ever says "don't tell us about that stuff". It's always "thank goodness someone's talking about this stuff because we live with it for the rest of our lives". And war service is—when you go to war and you see horrible things, it does stay with you for the rest of your life and we need to, I think, support men and women who do that stuff for the rest of their lives.[141]

The sense of the link between learning about the difficult past and healing the wounds it caused was particularly palpable when speaking with the curators for *First Peoples* and in visiting the exhibition. As Grieves described it:

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[140] Gillespie, interview.

[141] For example, on *Love and Sorrow* website user Paul writes: 'At a time when we are again involved in a war and flag-wrapped nationalism this exhibition should be compulsory viewing. The tragic, pitiful and deeply moving cost of war and the impact it has long after hostilities have ended. Congratulations to the museum and the curators involved – an exceptional exhibition.' (Comment made November 1, 2014 at 22:04, http://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/whatson/wwi-love-and-sorrow).

I think there's a process of validation that happens for people when they're given a space in which their story is shared and it's a respectful space and there's an acknowledgment and a validation in that process that is very…I think a part of healing, and I've experienced that in my work many, many times, because I've worked with testimony for a long time in a lot of different contexts. And you know, museums are places of knowledge and places of education, so to have your story placed in a space of this sort of standing is a huge…a hugely positive experience for people. We've had many tears and many emotional reactions to people's images and objects and stories appearing in this space. It was a validation of many people's personal experiences but also of Victoria and of the people and the cultures and the communities that exist today. So it can't be sort of over stated how important that is. In terms of people being able to hear those stories, it's been very difficult I think for the wider community to have access to all this material. There's so much more work to be done in terms of Aboriginal history and the presentation of narratives and stories.[142]

Grieves speaks here of the enormous power of testimony, and references understandings of trauma and the place of storytelling in the process of healing from trauma. This is not a straightforward process, or a simple matter of explaining what happened; rather, as Herman suggests, survivors of trauma – and I would argue, those directly connected to cultural trauma through histories of oppression and injustice – have a great deal invested in the telling of their stories, and must have agency in the way they are told. Additionally, the process becomes very emotional and simultaneously difficult and cathartic, a result of the conflicting urges to hide and proclaim these intensely felt stories of pain and injustice.[143]

Fundamentally, discourses of social inclusion and cultural recognition emerged strongly in interviews, exhibition analysis, and programs across the two Museum Victoria campuses addressed in this study. The museum's social role was seen as inexorably linked to its educative function, and Museum Victoria presents a strong example of a museum institution working actively and consciously to effect change

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[142] Grieves, interview.
[143] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*

in the community it represents and exists in. Employing pedagogical strategies that work to engage visitors' emotions, minds, and bodies, or, as Gillespie put it, 'thinking about how people interact with exhibitions with their head, with their hands, and with their heart,'[144] the two campuses demonstrate the myriad ways museums might work towards social learning.

Learning with discomfort at Museum Victoria

Museum Victoria aligns closely with many of the goals for the New Museum that are highlighted in the research and professional literature, and moreover, its exhibitions and curatorial decisions point to some of the ways the concept of the heterotopia functions as an agent of social change. I argue, however, that to view the institution as one simply representing an ideal, or a position of progress along a linear trail to an ideal, would be to miss an opportunity to understand a complex, multifaceted, and ever-changing museum organisation. Museum Victoria provides ample evidence for the existence of multiple possible pedagogical and communicative approaches to representing the difficult past. Participants saw their work as part of an ongoing project without necessarily identifying an end point, working to bring to light different stories in ways that most suit diverse audiences and communities. This reflects Tamboukou's description of the heterotopia as existing 'in relation to a specific cultural, social and historical context.'[145] There are a range of strategies and ways of working that form a foundation for Museum Victoria's work. Rather than a consistent, rigid set of structures for building exhibitions and programs, these form a set of underpinning philosophies that can be worked in any number of ways to achieve inclusive, thought-provoking, and learning-rich exhibitions and programs.

Museum Victoria's Statement of Purpose reads:

> As a cherished cultural organisation, we engage in contemporary issues
> of relevance, interest and public benefit.

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[144] Gillespie, interview.
[145] Tamboukou, "Educational heterotopias," 400.

> Both within and beyond our museums, we encourage participation in
> the diversity of experiences we offer.
>
> We develop and use our knowledge, collections and expertise to build
> connections with and between individuals and communities to enhance
> understanding and a sense of belonging.[146]

It demonstrates an outward-looking focus for the institution, and notably the focus here is upon how collections can be used, rather than how they can be protected. This is not to suggest that Museum Victoria doesn't care for its collections; just that collections are seen as central to the contributions the institution can make to the communities it works with and within, and the objects' intrinsic value is less emphasised.

The institutional support for crafting challenging exhibitions that seek to effect social change meant that all participants were able to speak at length about what 'difficult history' meant for them and their work. As Deborah Tout-Smith said in her interview,

> I think exhibitions that are too benign and feel good have a tougher time
> making a social difference. Sometimes exhibitions use a lot of humour
> and lighter weight can actually more cleverly and subtly make a social
> difference and lead people along to another perspective. But I think it's
> probably the best thing we could do is to say we are going to make a
> difference and make that an underpinning of what we do, as much as we
> can. And so many of the programs that Museum Victoria have that
> underpinning as well.[147]

Participants were also able to articulate the complex ways discomfort works within exhibitions to encourage deeper engagement with difficult history and contentious issues. Where displays and interactive installations were likely to create discomfort – in film in the entryway to *Identity*, for example, or in the facial injury section of *Love and Sorrow* – this was deliberate and carefully considered in order to avoid overwhelming visitors with too much confrontation. What is common to most of the

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[146] Museum Victoria, "Corporate Information," accessed 31 August, 2016,
https://museumvictoria.com.au/about/corporate-information/.
[147] Tout-Smith, interview.

exhibitions examined in this study is a careful construction of the visitor as learner; the use of affective jolts encourages a desire to understand, and surprising or previously unheard voices, messages and approaches – such as the voice and message emerging from *First Peoples* – limit the possibility of visitors assuming they already know the story.

Museum Victoria thus provides an example of the ways affective approaches work within a heterotopian space to create opportunities for learning and change within and beyond its walls. The institution's function as a heterotopian agent of change is central to all of its activities. Uncomfortable history is significant within this function, and there is particular attention to destabilising the assumptions of visitors from privileged backgrounds, especially white Australian visitors. In contrast to the heterotopias-within created at Port Arthur, Museum Victoria's more cohesive approach creates a more 'whole of institution' heterotopia, positioned as different to the outside world it represents. Perhaps most notably in the context of this study are a museum where marginalised peoples can see themselves represented with authority and valued for the very things that have made them excluded elsewhere, and conversely, a museum where those who have benefited from unequal social structures can – with a degree of safety – have their position destabilised and begin to see and question inequality and injustice.

Affective practices are used to support visitors to empathise with others; they are used to promote experiences imbued with feeling that colour the way histories are interpreted. In many instances these affective practices are linked to discomfort; they represent uncomfortable histories of trauma and injustice, or they may be uncomfortable for visitors whose views and values do not align with those of the institution. At Museum Victoria, curatorial and education staff work from the notion that if you want people to move, it helps to make them uncomfortable where they are. Uncomfortable history is central to the project of learning for social change and inclusion that the museum works towards by bringing untold histories and hidden peoples to light, by allowing survivors of trauma and injustice to own their collective memories, and by numerous strategies employed to challenge and destabilise attitudes of exclusion, discrimination, and stigma.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The Buddhist writer Pema Chödrön once wrote this of difficult experiences:

> Most of us do not take these situations as teachings. We automatically
> hate them. We run like crazy. We use all kinds of ways to escape – all
> additions stem from this moment when we meet our edge and we just
> can't stand it. We feel we have to soften it, pad it with something, and
> we become addicted to whatever it is that seems to ease the pain.[1]

Chödrön's writing reflects some of what research and theory on trauma suggests
about the tendency to 'run,' the desire to avoid any encounter with uncomfortable
emotion.[2] Her argument is that discomfort is an inescapable part of life but that it
always has something to teach, supporting the value of the pedagogies of discomfort
I have raised throughout this thesis. It is only by facing discomfort, she argues, by
sitting across from it in companionship, that human beings can access whatever it is
that discomfort has come to teach them. The central tension Herman identifies in
her work on trauma – 'between the will to deny horrible events and the will to
proclaim them aloud'[3] – speaks to this desire to avoid distress and has had an impact
on the work of the museums studied as part of this thesis. While each demonstrated
a commitment to historical accuracy – a concept, as I have shown, that was
understood differently in each institution – their capacity to represent uncomfortable
histories was constrained by various elements of context and responsibility. In
keeping with Chödrön's beliefs, but also with the findings of other museum and
history education researchers, I argue that uncomfortable history carries a
tremendous potential to teach.

This thesis investigated questions relating to the teaching potential of uncomfortable
histories – histories that can be confronting, contested and complex in different ways
for different audiences. I analysed three institutions' approaches to educating visitors
about these types of histories, finding that museum staff had varied understandings

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[1] Pema Chödrön, *When Things Fall Apart* (London: HarperThorsons, 2003): 20.
[2] See for example: Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.
[3] Ibid., 1.

of which narratives or events were 'difficult' depending on their institutional context. I considered both the opportunities for informal learning in gallery spaces and more formal educational programs where learning is facilitated by an educator.[4]

Although staff at each of the museums demonstrated an awareness of and a commitment to employing uncomfortable histories to educational ends, both the ways these histories were used and the purposes for which they were included or excluded in museum exhibitions and programs varied between institutions. This variety is, I argue, significant, in that it suggests a need for analyses of 'difficult' history to account for the multitude of ways histories can become contested, confronting, and complex; that is, there is no single 'difficult history' and equally no single museological or public pedagogic approach for addressing it. It also highlights the utility of a *range* of pedagogical tools and approaches that museum curators and educators can and do draw upon in constructing educative encounters. Contrary to the established notion that constructivist learning theory presents the most productive way of conceptualising learning in the museum,[5] curators and educators interviewed for this research raised important considerations of emotion and affect and in some instances indicated a reluctance to rely upon visitor-centred communicative and pedagogical approaches. At Museum Victoria in particular, there was a sense that museums are turning away from constructivism's emphasis on avoiding telling visitors what to think and working towards what Sandell and Dodd describe as 'activist practice.'[6]

Employing the concept of the heterotopia extended insight into the tensions museum curators and educators have experienced in navigating the relationship between constructivist approaches and a social role for museums. This was linked to a sense that encouraging visitors to make their own meaning does not allow the museum to promote a 'message,' and messages – about social inclusion and difference, about what it means to be a good citizen, and about historical 'truth,' for example – were seen by participants as central to the museum's public pedagogic role. Affect and emotion carried potential for supporting learning goals relating to

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[4] Hein, *Learning in the Museum.*
[5] See for example: Hein, *Learning in the Museum*; Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education.*
[6] Sandell and Dodd, "Activist practice."

citizenship and values education,[7] and each institution constructed different affective practices that invited visitors to engage with and understand the past in different ways. Affective prompts were, in most instances, closely related to overarching learning goals for the museum and, as I will expand upon below, these differed for each museum.

In this final chapter, I bring together findings from the three institutions, noting their differences and the tensions emerging from the varied but intersecting contexts for history in public spaces in Australia. In the following paragraphs I summarise each institution's approach to histories that may produce discomfort in visitors, linking these approaches to educational aims and ways of understanding the museum's role in society. I highlight the insights the theoretical and methodological resources employed in this thesis allowed into how museums teach and why discomfort can be seen as a productive – and also sometimes problematic – approach to supporting learning in the museum.[8]

Museum curators and educators work within specific and complex settings and manage a range of conflicting pressures, particularly where uncomfortable histories are concerned. I argue that there is, as a result, no one approach that museums can take to manage these difficult subjects; rather, I offer a number of case study examples demonstrating some of the ways in which museums have dealt with histories that are contentious, complex and confronting in a range of ways. I have investigated the types of histories the museums did display and the gaps and silences in the stories they told, and considered what these inclusions and exclusions mean for how and what visitors are encouraged to learn in each setting. In analysing the museum's exhibitions as teaching spaces as well as examining education programs, I have worked to capture opportunities for both formal and informal learning in each of the museums.[9]

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[7] See for example: Mulcahy, "Sticky learning"; Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect"; Michalinos Zembylas, "Making sense of the complex entanglement between emotion and pedagogy: Contributions of the affective turn" *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 11, no. 3 (2016): 539-550.
[8] Wagner, Eckler, and Leighton, "Productive discomfort"; Zembylas, "Pedagogy of discomfort."
[9] Hein, *Learning in the Museum.*

The Australian War Memorial's encounter with difficulties of historical representation are overtly political in the sense that the institution is central to debates about national identity and especially the role of Anzac in that identity construction.[10] Contentiousness is perhaps the most defining 'difficult' characteristic of what the Memorial does represent, and debate about conflicting perspectives of war often eclipses any attention to the histories of trauma and violence in war. As several interviewees argued, trauma and violence are standard fare for war memorials and, being expected by visitors, are not so 'difficult' to display; or at least there is not the same need – as evident in other museums – to consider questions about whether such topics should be included.[11]

It appeared, however, that some forms of trauma and violence and some historical subjects are more easily represented than others at the AWM. Comparing the Memorial's exhibitions with Museum Victoria's *Love and Sorrow* makes clear the tendency – and perhaps the imperative – to avoid allowing histories of trauma to produce an anti-war sentiment. Although curators argued that violence and death were not such difficult subjects for display in the Memorial, the ways these themes are addressed and the events and people represented work largely to reinforce the dominant narrative of Anzac, which is seen in public discourse as central to national identity in Australia.[12] Further, they tend to minimise the histories that might challenge this, such as stories of PTSD and suicide, which do not fit the ideals of resilience inherent in the Anzac myth.

The implications of these factors for learning in the Memorial are related to the institution's political role and its position as a national war memorial; while also a museum, the AWM's status as memorial shifts its focus to commemoration. A significant aspect of what the AWM seeks to teach visitors – especially, I suggest, young Australian school students – is the practice of commemoration. As a national institution, the AWM carries the weight of the nation upon its shoulders, and there are considerable and conflicting pressures placed upon curators and educators to

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[10] See for example: Lake, "How Do Schoolchildren Learn About the Spirit of Anzac?"; Stanley, "Gallipoli."
[11] Fletcher, interview.
[12] McKenna, "Anzac Day"; Christina Twomey, "Prisoners of war of the Japanese: War and memory in Australia," *Memory Studies* 6, no. 3 (2013): 321-330.

construct particular national stories. One question raised by my analysis of war trauma in the AWM relates to those experiencing war trauma and their families in the present – how does this community experience the AWM's exhibitions, and the triumphant stories of Anzac heroism more broadly? And what are the ethical implications for young people of teaching that resilience is the only response to traumatic circumstances that is worth celebrating, when they may not always be resilient in the face of their own traumas?[13]

The Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority's concerns in some ways differed significantly from those of the AWM, but both institutions needed to manage the external pressures that came with being 'iconic' tourist attractions. A major source of tension at Port Arthur and the Cascades lay in managing visitors' preconceptions of the history and in striving to ensure that they could walk away from the site with a more nuanced and 'authentic' understanding of the convict past. Port Arthur's more recent history of trauma, in the 1996 massacre, further exacerbates the tendency for visitors to see the site as 'dark' and informs the need that staff perceived to redress what is seen as an 'unbalanced' view of convict history. For staff at PAHSMA, historical authenticity was related to a capacity to understand multiple perspectives and to avoid any tendency to 'judge' the actions of convict overseers on the basis of modern understandings of brutality and injustice. This was central to the aims of informal and formal learning at the sites, and was embedded within understandings of historical thinking and the problematic nature of presentism.[14]

The – likely unintended – result of the need to avoid 'judgement' was at times quite problematic. There were some instances where attention to topics that might be discomforting for visitors, such as mental illness and homosexuality, provided little or no scaffolding to allow visitors to engage critically with outdated and damaging ideas. In a number of instances, histories were presented in an uncomplicated and often entertaining way, and it was this that makes them difficult – even painful – for visitors who may be personally affected by the issues represented. The need to teach

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[13] Here I would like to acknowledge Deborah Tyler, a colleague at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, for helping me to think critically about the desirability of 'resilience.'
[14] Taylor and Young, *Making History*; Wineburg, *Historical thinking*.

with sensitivity some of these contentious issues has been evidenced by recent controversy surrounding the Safe Schools Program – an anti-bullying education program that focuses on issues of sexuality and gender – in Australia.[15] While that controversy focused on schools, I argue that heritage institutions like PAHSMA also have an important role to play in considered representations of sexual and gender diversity, particularly as 'an obsessive concern about homosexuality' is part of the site's history.[16]

These instances showed the ways heterotopian spaces can work to reinforce problematic narratives, often invoking pedagogical practices that positioned those in the past as distant and different, and in some instances even as morally inferior. Presenting some historical issues and people as novel and entertaining at times failed to provide opportunities for visitors to critically consider their own positions in relation to issues that continue to have salience in the present. While understanding the past on its own terms is an admirable aim, and one with a long tradition, there is also potential for educators and museum curators to use history to engage students in ethical investigations in the present, and to reflect on their own prejudices and misunderstandings of those who may be different to them.[17]

Museum Victoria placed a much more explicit emphasis on 'using' the past in the present to work towards social inclusion. This political focus for the institution differed significantly to both the AWM and PAHMSA, in that it demonstrated institutional support for representing histories of trauma, violence and injustice. This was the central concern of much of Museum Victoria's public pedagogic approaches; it is a state-based and state-focused museum, and its educational aims focus on the diverse, local community. This is not to suggest that Museum Victoria does not have a view to welcoming inter-state or international visitors, rather that its first consideration is often to the local context.

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[15] See for example: Lucy Nicholas, "We must celebrate gender and sexual diversity in our schools," The Conversation, February 16, 2016, https://theconversation.com/we-must-celebrate-gender-and-sexual-diversity-in-our-schools-54740; Timothy W. Jones, "What is the Christian right afraid of?" *The Conversation*, February 26, 2016, https://theconversation.com/safe-schools-coalition-what-is-the-christian-right-afraid-of-55296.
[16] Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania*, 144.
[17] See for example: Seixas and Morton, *The Big Six*.

The most recent exhibitions at Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum –
First Peoples, *Love and Sorrow*, and *Identity* – demonstrate a growing confidence in
activist museum practice,[18] promoting particular messages, in part through
experiences that foster an affective connection to people in the past and present.
This represents a current shift in thinking around the public pedagogic role in the
institution's sites. Museum Victoria embraced constructivist approaches that avoided
'telling people what to think' throughout the latter part of the twentieth century and
up until the last few years, and curators spoke about the tensions arising from
dissatisfaction with the need to avoid promoting particular messages.[19]

Discomfort was seen as a productive and sometimes necessary tool for promoting
learning; pedagogies of discomfort, approaches that present opportunities for
learners to 'sit with' troubling histories as Chödrön describes, are a useful direction
for museum curators and educators seeking to engage with such material.
Discomfort played multiple, complex roles in communicating messages and in
inviting visitors to participate in pedagogical and affective practices emerging from,
for example, reframing the museum space as Aboriginal country in *First Peoples*.
Subverting what might be the visitor's expected experience of the museum was seen
as a valuable tool for destabilising established beliefs that museum staff sought to
challenge. This was an example of a growing consciousness of the capacity for
museums to function as agents of social change; and emotion and affect – especially
as they relate to uncomfortable histories – were seen as essential to this process.

The interview participants at each of the case study museums demonstrated a keen
awareness of the complexity of their context for educating young Australians about
their history. They were very cognizant of criticisms of their own institutions and the
risks of representing histories in particular ways, but they also spoke about how
capacities for and approaches to engaging with uncomfortable histories differed
between heritage institutions. More than this, there was a sense that certain histories
were only 'uncomfortable' in specific contexts, or were uncomfortable in different
ways. The history of war trauma and suicide, for example, appeared to be too
challenging in the AWM because, I have argued, it represents too great a challenge to

[18] Sandell and Dodd, "Activist practice."
[19] McFadzean, interview; Tout-Smith, interview.

the ideals of bravery and resilience embodied in the Anzac myth. This theme was accepted for display at Melbourne Museum though, where it was uncomfortable in the sense that it was confronting, but was not as contentious as it could have been at the AWM because Museum Victoria is much more at ease with – and less likely to be challenged on – a possible resulting sense of the hopelessness of war. If we accept what Herman argues – that healing from war trauma 'only becomes legitimate in a context that challenges the sacrifice of young men in war'[20] – the institution that actually provides a more supportive space for war trauma recovery is not the AWM, but the Melbourne Museum's *Love and Sorrow.* This raises the important question of what role the Memorial can play in supporting survivors of war trauma; the *Afghanistan* exhibition, I suggest, might indicate a shift in direction to exhibition approaches that place individuals closer to the centre, in a move that may allow a more complicated and accurate narrative of war trauma to emerge.

The affective practices of historical trauma

The topic of historical trauma and violence has been a growing concern for museums through the last half decade or so. This can be attributed to a range of factors, emerging in part from growing understanding and acknowledgement of psychological trauma, as Twomey notes, and the focus on individual stories,[21] but can also be linked to changing roles for New Museums and the rise of histories of non-dominant social groups.[22] Psychological trauma is said to generally occur in circumstances where the victim or survivor has no control;[23] clearly, trauma can be and often is highly political, emerging from situations of unequal power. As I argued in Chapter Three, the need to regain some level of agency in the telling of trauma narratives has formed an impetus for museums to work with survivors to represent these stories, and this is especially pertinent in instances where traumatic experiences were collective and the result of policies and actions of the state or other institutions.

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[20] Herman, Trauma and Recovery, 9.
[21] Twomey, "Trauma and the reinvigoration of Anzac."
[22] Andermann and Arnold-de Simine, "Introduction"; Ross, "Interpreting the New Museology."
[23] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*

These issues will, I suggest, continue to be pertinent for museums in decades to come as details of other instances of collective trauma emerge.[24]

Trauma therefore emerged during this study both as a set of theoretical ideas that can inform museum representation and as a type of uncomfortable history. I argue, not without awareness of problems of doing so, that the characteristics of individual trauma can provide guidance for understandings and approaches to dealing with collective or cultural trauma.[25] Not least, an awareness of the potential for representations of certain themes or events to trigger psychological symptoms for visitors with PTSD or other conditions is essential for ensuring that museums are safe for all.[26] In order to respond to these issues, museum exhibitions must consider a range of strategies to ensure that visitors (or parents or teachers) can make decisions about what they encounter – for instance through content or trigger warnings, and structuring exhibitions with separate sections that can be avoided when needed. It may also be the case that some museum encounters require a more formal debriefing process for visitor groups, such as that used in the Conner Prairie historic site, where visitors took part in a role play as fugitive slaves on the underground railroad.[27] Unsophisticated applications of psychological concepts relating to trauma and recovery could be damaging in museums, but I saw little evidence of such carelessness in the museums I researched. Such representations would encourage the visitor to occupy a safe and undemanding position of sympathy that allows identification with the victim/survivor and distancing from the

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[24] For instance, at the time of writing, accounts have been made public of cruelty and violence at Australian-managed offshore asylum seeker detention centres and in juvenile detention centres in Australia. See for example: Calla Wahlquist and Elle Hunt, "Northern Territory juvenile detention 'may amount to torture', says Unicef – as it happened," *The Guardian Australia*, July 26, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/live/2016/jul/26/northern-territory-juvenile-detention-reaction-royal-commission-footage-four-corners-tear-gas-restraint-live; Paul Farrell, Nick Evershed and Helen Davidson, "The Nauru files: cache of 2,000 leaked reports reveal scale of abuse of children in Australian offshore detention," *The Guardian Australia*, August 10, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/aug/10/the-nauru-files-2000-leaked-reports-reveal-scale-of-abuse-of-children-in-australian-offshore-detention.
[25] See for example: Zembylas, "The politics of trauma."
[26] Much media has focused on the use of trigger warnings in higher education – see for instance: Jill Filipovitch, "We've gone too far with 'trigger warnings'," *The Guardian*, March 5, 2014; Kate Manne, "Why I use trigger warnings," *The New York Times,* September 20, 2015.
[27] Tyson, "Crafting emotional comfort."

perpetrator.[28] Rather, staff at every institution demonstrated a keen – and perhaps at times anxiety-inducing – awareness of the responsibilities of their roles.

While my analysis has been critical of particular interpretive strategies, it is clear that the decisions of curatorial and education staff are complex and constrained by their institutional context as well as the practicalities of resourcing. They worked, for the most part, to carefully consider the most likely responses of audiences and consciously explored ways of challenging and teaching through exhibitions as well as specific education programs. It is also important to note here that my analysis also raises questions relating to the effect on professional staff as they research and seek to manage confronting histories of trauma and violence. Several participants reflected on the potential for vicarious trauma amongst curatorial staff dealing with these themes; curators are the front line, seeking strategies and selecting material to avoid pushing visitors into encounters that are too confronting, but there is no protection for staff who take on this role. There were often informal supports in place for staff dealing with difficult material, however this may be an area for further development for museums that choose to engage with confronting histories.

Teaching young people about the histories of trauma is an ethically complex undertaking.[29] The challenges in confronting children and adolescents with histories of violence and injustice are significant, and museum curators and educators could give no simple answer to the question of where to draw the line. In most instances they relied on their instincts and a professional knowledge of audience behaviour to determine which objects and histories were suitable for display, and in some cases – for example in *Love and Sorrow's* sectioned-off facial injury display – also used practical strategies within the exhibition design to ensure that visitors were given a choice about encountering confronting material. There was also a great deal of respect for visiting teachers' knowledge of their students' capacity to engage with confronting material; using techniques to allow different pathways through

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[28] This is similar to the ideas expressed by Arnold-de Simine in *Mediating Memory in the Museum*, 36, who notes that public commemoration is often built upon a sense of 'collective victimhood,' ignoring collective responsibility and framing citizens 'in a narrative of heroic martyrdom.'
[29] Zembylas, "Pedagogy of discomfort."

exhibitions – pathways that may skip past confronting displays – could be one way to allow teachers more agency in guiding students to engage at their levels of readiness.

While I do not suggest that museum visits should be censored, the inclusion of histories of trauma nevertheless underscores a need for ethically responsible choice, because some visitors will find these themes too challenging or too distressing to engage with. Public acknowledgement of collective trauma is, however, an important foundation to healing the wounds of the past for both individuals and groups, and there can be important learning potential as well as a role in healing provided by opportunities for visitors to bear witness to the horror of these experiences.[30] It is clear though that what is essential in trauma recovery is the survivors' agency over the story.[31] This is partly why the tendency to participate in what Arnold-de Simine refers to as 'collective victimhood'[32] can be negative and why I have argued against a tendency to shift the ownership of trauma narratives wholly from individual to nation. Where historical trauma is represented as an attack on the nation, museums risk silencing survivors and their descendants, and this can be particularly disturbing in those cases in which the nation state was in fact a perpetrator. Where histories of trauma are spoken to audiences through the voices of those survivors and their descendants, as they increasingly are at Museum Victoria, visitors are instead guided into an affective practice of listening, of bearing witness, of understanding. Visitors are not entreated to take on or imagine themselves to be experiencing another's pain; they instead observe, acknowledge, and honour. I have argued throughout that historical traumas undeniably have an important place in museums, but their representation is complex and requires, I have shown, a different and even new role for curators; one in which they facilitate community curatorship and work to inspire, translate and make real the visions of survivors and their ancestors.

The value of discomfort in learning is about more than negative emotions; it requires that students face their own feelings in the face of difficult material.[33] Discomfort could emerge in unpredictable ways in the exhibitions I analysed in this thesis. It was

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[30] See for example Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*; Tumarkin, *Traumascapes*; Zembylas, "The politics of trauma."
[31] See Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.
[32] Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory*.
[33] Wagner, Eckler, and Leighton, "Productive discomfort."

not always brought about by representations of injustice and trauma, and it most often emerged in a very subjective way from being brought into conflict with the self. Affective dissonance provokes a more urgent process of meaning-making, I argue, than cognitive dissonance, particularly where it is linked to uncomfortable histories. Affective dissonance arises in part from the urge to avoid the knowledge of trauma;[34] each of the museums in this research uses its authority to guide visitors to look at and listen to sometimes confronting material, and the urge to turn away is interrupted by the pedagogical practices of visiting. Visitors are left facing what gives rise to fear, shame, anger and other difficult emotions, and it is, as Frankl suggests,[35] their instinct to make meaning of their discomfort. Herein lies uncomfortable history's most potent learning potential.

Situating Uncomfortable Histories

I have documented some of the findings and significance of this research, and I turn now to consider some of the ambitions and the limitations of this research, the aim of which has been to contribute to a growing field addressing the representation of 'difficult' history and its pedagogical potential. In undertaking this research I hoped to understand more about the diverse ways in which what I have called uncomfortable history can be mobilised and engaged for educational purposes in museums. I asked how Australian museums have responded to and represented difficult history in the period since the arrival of the New Museum, and considered the consequences of these approaches for citizenship and history education. I hoped to uncover some of the work museums are doing to support learning for social inclusion and the recognition of 'forgotten' histories,[36] and to explore some of the reasons why their exhibitions might not be working towards or achieve such goals. Rooted within my research questions was a firm belief that the museum as an institution has an essential social role; that its core function should be to work towards social justice and inclusion. When it became obvious during the writing of this thesis that I was not going to be able to report all of what the museums were doing or everything my participants said, I chose to focus on instances that were

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[34] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery.*
[35] Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (London: Rider, 2004).
[36] Haebich, "Forgetting Indigenous histories"; Segall, "Making difficult history public."

indicative of broader trends or innovative practices taking place at each site. Inevitably, there are instances where the boundaries of my scope have highlighted potential areas of further research.

In summary, I focused on the perspectives of museum staff and on the programs and exhibitions they developed in order to gain insight into the institutional contexts for representing uncomfortable histories. Focusing my research in this way allowed a detailed analysis of the museum's role in society as each institution determined, fundamentally investigating the museum as a teaching and learning 'resource.' Given my research questions and focus, I have not addressed student or teacher perspectives on learning in these museums, and there is a clear need for future research on this topic and further empirical studies investigating the ways in which children and young people 'take up' the affective learning opportunities presented to them.[37] I also focused closely upon a small number of museums, seeking to delve deeply into the ways they represented difficult subjects while maintaining a flexible understanding of exactly what types of history might be confronting, contentious, or complex for visitors of different backgrounds and experiences. There are many different types of museums existing in different contexts in this country and others, and there would, I suggest, be value in reflexive considerations of the contextual factors relating to the representation of – and the determination of what constitutes – uncomfortable history in these institutions. In addition, the notion of the heterotopia can, I argue, shed light on the complex positions of public historical institutions in and apart from societies, and beyond the case studies I have elaborated here.

In some ways, this type of interpretive research, as Friedrich writes,

> needs to trigger a re-framing of the original questions, a move pushed by
> the implications of the research itself. That is, if the process of
> researching the topics does not produce a shift in the commonsensical

[37] As I have mentioned, a number of researchers have begun to do work in this field. See for example: Mulcahy, "Sticky learning"; Trofanenko, "Affective emotions."

> assumptions that the researcher had before starting, then how were the
> answers to the questions not implied in the questions to begin with?[38]

I asked how museums represented 'difficult history' and how they related it to learning in history and civics and citizenship. A significant challenge emerged very quickly in interviews; and concerned the central place in my approach of the word 'difficult.' It became apparent to me, as I began my interviews, that the notion of 'difficult' history or heritage is under-theorised and over-used. Particularly in Australia, citing 'difficult history' tends to give rise to assumptions about audience and subject that are problematic and serve to reinforce the very notions that representations of such history most commonly seek to undercut.

One obvious example of this lies in the tendency to conflate 'difficult history' in the Australian museum context with 'Indigenous issues' – the difficulty is assumed to be what white Australians experience in response to stories of their ancestors' violence and oppression of Aboriginal people. Coming to understand this tendency heightened my awareness of my own subjectivity and investments and assumptions as a researcher; it generated for me an uncomfortable sense that although I saw difficult history as being about more than colonisation, I still approached every museum exhibition I analysed as a white, non-Indigenous researcher, as myself, and my own position and beliefs coloured everything I saw. Yet, as I found, it is not sufficient to simply acknowledge this kind of researcher reflexivity. The challenge is to understand the impact it has on how interpretations are developed and new knowledge and insights generated.

Despite these dilemmas of identity, it was in fact my prejudice and assumptions as a white, middle class, politically progressive woman that also allowed one of the transformative moments of my research to occur. A powerful insight into my own pre-existing beliefs came from a museum exhibition – *First Peoples*. I had particular expectations for what I would feel in that space – guilt, shame, sympathy. Instead, I felt impressed. Fascinated. Excited. *Hopeful.* Feeling this way left me confused, needing to work through the disconnect between my expectations and my experience. This was for me a powerful learning experience emerging from what I

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[38] Friedrich, *Democratic Education,* 112.

have described as affective dissonance. *First Peoples* demonstrated the impact museums can have when they create space for communities to speak with all the authority an exhibition, with its glass cases and impressive audio-visual effects, can provide. It presented both a kind of 'activist practice,'[39] as Sandell and Dodd describe, in actively working to include marginalised people in museum practice, and a contribution to civics and citizenship learning that was based on a perceived need for social justice.

This experience was made possible by my own subjectivity in *First Peoples*, just as my anti-war stance was destabilised by affective practices of commemoration at the Australian War Memorial, and my vision of a cruel and desolate convict station challenged by brilliant sunshine and natural beauty at Port Arthur. Being thrown off balance like this is partly from where the learning power of museums emerges, for we all arrive with our sets of beliefs and knowledge, and we often find these challenged. Reflecting on my own responses underscored not only the complexity of museum experiences but also and importantly the challenges curatorial and education staff face in interpreting potentially uncomfortable histories.

Given the social role increasingly recognised and adopted by museums, there is important work to be done concerning the ways museum staff determine the moral and ethical positions that exhibitions take up. This thesis has highlighted a number of significant areas for future work in this field, especially identifying the need for museums to continue to carefully consider whose perspectives are privileged and marginalised in museum spaces. A key question that arose repeatedly throughout this work related to the definition of 'moral' that was enacted; morality is complex and often subjective, and as some museums – like Museum Victoria – begin to move into more determined occupations of moral and ethical positions, there is a strong need to consider who might be alienated or challenged by this positioning, and how discomfort, in these instances, might prove helpful or unhelpful in teaching and learning.

The theoretical and methodological resources I employed in this research helped to capture some of the depth and complexity of museum experiences relating to

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[39] Sandell and Dodd, "Activist practice."

uncomfortable history. The notion of the heterotopia highlighted differences within each museum but also underpinned the ways I understood the museum to be an 'other' space in relation to Australian society.[40] In some instances, it shed light on the ways museums worked to reinforce dominant discourses and social structures, but elsewhere it made clear the ways museums can work to challenge hegemonies and work to create what staff perceive to be more socially just and inclusive communities.

A number of pedagogical approaches informed the ways museums worked to achieve these ends. Constructivist approaches and especially history-specific pedagogies were often put to work to foster historical thinking in both programs and exhibitions,[41] but there was also a growing concern with less cognitivist-focused theories of learning.[42] Although constructivist learning and affective learning are not necessarily oppositional, I argue that constructivist understandings of learning tend to overlook what is most valuable about learning with and through discomfort. Affective learning emerges from encounters with objects and displays that have the potential to move visitors. Attention to the body and affect was thus seen by participants as often central to learning about histories of trauma, violence and injustice, but it also supported affective practices containing or entangled with more positive emotions, such as pride or humour. Affective practice is a particularly fruitful theoretical concept in this setting, because it helps to elucidate the ways museum experiences tap into embodied responses and practices that are situated within social and cultural contexts that in turn both inform and are informed by affects.[43]

Attention to history-specific pedagogies, and in particular the features of the models of historical thinking outlined earlier in the thesis, seemed to provide some direction for structuring learning around complex, confronting, and contested histories. Future research could continue to explore the theoretical and practical affordances of

[40] Lord, "Foucault's museums."
[41] Taylor and Young, *Making History.*
[42] Mulcahy, "Sticky learning"; Trofanenko, "Affective emotions"; Witcomb, "Understanding the role of affect"; Zembylas, "Making sense of the complex entanglement."
[43] Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion.*

historical thinking models and provide pedagogical guidance for teachers and museum staff seeking to educate young learners with uncomfortable history.

Although, as Chödrön suggests, we often 'hate' experiences of discomfort, my analysis suggests that there is considerable educative potential in learning about histories that may arouse 'difficult' emotions. Historical representations of traumatic events can certainly be troubling, but when managed carefully in museum spaces they can also be extremely productive, with the types of affective dissonance provoked by challenging displays working to underscore processes of meaning making that are especially likely to 'stick.'[44] The museums I have analysed in this thesis presented myriad, innovative ways to deal with histories that have previously been 'forgotten'[45] or deliberately avoided; there were still subjects deemed less appropriate or relevant for display, but all of the curatorial and education staff I interviewed demonstrated a commitment to educating beyond the 'facts' of the past, seeking to challenge visitors to think and, often, to feel differently. Ultimately, this research has been about finding a kind of comfort with – and in – discomfort. If discomfort is inescapable – and it is – there is simply no point in trying to avoid it, and if we face difficult emotions and experiences as Chödrön suggests, we may find that they are, in fact, our greatest teachers.

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[44] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*; Mulcahy, "'Sticky' learning."
[45] Haebich, "Forgetting Indigenous histories"; Segall, "Making difficult history public."

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Appendix I: List of current museum exhibitions and galleries

The following is not an exhaustive list of museum exhibitions at each of the case study sites, rather a list of exhibitions that were current and relevant to this thesis, with some description of the content and focus for each.

Australian War Memorial

Afghanistan: The Australian Story	Opened 2013, an exhibition addressing ongoing military operations in Afghanistan. This exhibition focuses on a range of stories told by those involved in the conflict through film; material for the exhibition is limited by the potential sensitivities around sharing information about a current conflict.
Aircraft Hall	Displays a range of aircraft involved in conflicts throughout Australia's military history.
Anzac Hall	Includes a variety of large objects, including aircraft and a submarine, along with smaller displays and the sound and light shows *Striking by Night*, *Over the Front: Great War in the Air*, *Sydney Under Attack*, and *Our First Naval Victory*.
Anzac Voices, 2013-2014.	Temporary exhibition replacing the First World War permanent exhibition, which was redeveloped during this period.
Australia in the Great War	Opened 2015, history of Australia's involvement in the First World War.
Colonial Conflicts	Galleries addressing Australia's early history of involvement in conflicts overseas, including the Crimean War and the Boer War.
Conflicts 1945 to today	Addressing conflicts after the Second World War, including the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and information on

	peacekeeping operations throughout the world where there has been Australian involvement.
Second World War	A detailed, chronological history of the Second World War, focusing on Australia's role and the experiences of Australians at home and overseas.
The Discovery Zone	An education space, often booked for school groups and with public access at specific times. Includes a range of 'hands on' and interactive displays aimed at children. Displays focus on a number of historical events and conflicts, including the First and Second World Wars, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and a peacekeeping mission.
The Hall of Valour	Honours Australian soldiers who have received the Victoria Cross medal and Australian Defence personnel who received the George Cross. See: https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/hall-of-valour/

Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

Port Arthur Historic Site

Church buildings	Including the Church ruin (a roofless structure that is popular for weddings and photography), and the smaller St David's Church.
Commandant's House	Home to Port Arthur's most senior official, includes rooms set up as they would have been during the period of the penal settlement and several displays relating to the Commandants and their families.
Government Gardens and Government Cottage	Housing for the senior officers and their families and the associated gardens (not accessible for convicts).

Historic house museums, Civil Officers' Row	Including Trentham, the visiting Magistrate's House, the Junior Medical Offer's House, the Accountant's House (now the Education Centre), the Parsonage and the Roman Catholic Chaplain's House. Containing a variety of exhibitions relating to the occupants of the houses.
Isle of the Dead	The cemetery island in Carnarvon Bay, accessible by harbour cruise and walking tour of the site.
Lottery of Life	Introductory gallery displaying relating to the different experiences of convicts at the penal settlement, including types of work assignments, punishments, and the administration of the system.
Point Puer Boys' Prison	Ruins of the Boys' Prison site, only accessible by boat and guided walking tour.
Smith O'Brien's Cottage	Housed Smith O'Brien during his time as a political prisoner at the site.
Soldiers' Memorial Avenue	Constructed as a memorial to soldiers of First World War, before Port Arthur's establishment as a managed historic site.
The Asylum	Contains an exhibition about the site's history (not specific to this building), the film about the Asylum's history, and space for accessing convict records (popular with those undertaking genealogical research).
The Broad Arrow Café/1996 Memorial Garden	The ruins of the Broad Arrow Café, site of the 1996 massacre and now a memorial to the victims.
The Dockyard	Includes a number of structures and displays relating to boat building at Port Arthur during its time as a penal settlement.
The Hospital and the Pauper's Depot	Largely ruins, with some displays relating to the histories of each building.

The Military District	Largely ruins, including displays relating to the lives of soldiers living and working at the site.
The Penitentiary	A former flour mill, later converted to contain cells for 'prisoners of bad character.'[1] The Penitentiary was closed to conservation work during the time of my visit, but is a particularly iconic building in the centre of the site.
The Separate Prison	Partially reconstructed, includes displays in cells, the convict chapel with separate compartments for inmates, the 'dark cell,' and exercise yards.

Cascades Female Factory

Yard 1	The tours of the site begin in yard 1, where visitors are guided to imagine the existence of the former hospital, kitchen, nursery, solitary cells and sleeping rooms.
Yard 3	Contains the visitor centre and entry to the site.
Yard 4	Includes the Matron's Quarters – one of the only remaining structures at the site, as well as being the location of a former nursery building, cookhouse, laundry and exercise yard.

Museum Victoria

Melbourne Museum

First Peoples, Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre	Opened 2013, contains a history of Aboriginal Victoria before, during, and after colonisation, co-curated with a group of elders and others from the Victorian Aboriginal community.
The Melbourne Story	A social and cultural history of Melbourne featuring a number of 'iconic' objects and events, including the race

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[1] "Port Arthur Historic Site Visitor Guide," 2011.

horse Phar Lap, the Little Lon archaeological display and reconstruction, and a rollercoaster carriage from the amusement park Luna Park.

The Mind: Into the Labyrinth	This exhibition is largely science-focused, but includes some history of Kew Asylum and psychiatry in Melbourne.
WWI: Love and Sorrow	Opened in 2014, focuses on the experiences of eight people in the First World War and its aftermath, with a particular emphasis on the impacts of war on body and mind.

Immigration Museum

Customs Gallery	Details the history of the building, Customs House.
Getting In	A history of policy relating to entering Australia as a migrant, including interactive displays such as the Interview Room and the Dictation Test, where visitors can play the role of immigration official or as an immigrant seeking entry to the country during the time of the Immigration Restriction Act [White Australia Policy].
Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours	Opened in 2011, addressing identity and exploring themes of cultural heritage, language, religion, and other facets of identity and belonging.
Immigrant Stories and Timeline	Includes a detailed timeline of immigration to Victoria containing additional social history as context for key events, as well as a rotating series of stories of individual immigrants told through relevant objects, images, audiovisual materials and documents.
Journeys of a Lifetime	Most displays in this gallery are located inside a model ship, where visitors can 'experience' the journeys migrants throughout history have taken to get to Victoria.

Leaving Home	Explores the reasons why people might leave their countries of origin.

Appendix II: List of education programs

The following is a list of relevant, on site, predominantly guided education programs that were available to school groups at the time of this research, including – if stated – whether they were available to specific year levels or to primary (approximately age 5 to 12) or secondary (approximately age 13 to 18) students, or both.

Australian War Memorial

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wartime service [formerly *'Blak' Diggers*]	Primary and secondary. Exploring the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women during wars overseas, since the Boer War.
Anzac legacy	Primary. Focusing on the experiences of Australian servicemen and women and the qualities associated with Anzac soldiers.
Australia in the Second World War	Secondary. The history of Australia in the Second World War.
Australians and the First World War	Secondary. The history of Australia in the First World War.
Cobber's tales	Preschool/foundation (early childhood).
Go back to the source	Primary and secondary. Investigating the experiences of individuals in war through primary source material from the Memorial's collection.
Science and war	Primary and secondary (adapted to different levels). Exploring innovation and invention relating to war.

Strange but true	Primary and secondary (recommended for grade 4/age 9 or 10 and over). Features 'unusual and obscure' objects in the Memorial's collections.
The past in the present	Primary. Exploring what life was like for Australians during wartime.
The Vietnam Era	Secondary. Exploring the experiences of Australian soldiers in the Vietnam war and the social and political context of the time.
We will remember them	Primary and secondary (recommended for grade 4/age 9 or 10 and over). Exploring reasons for and traditions of commemoration in Australia.

For a current list of AWM education programs, see:
https://www.awm.gov.au/education/schools/programs/

Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

Port Arthur Historic Site

Brick making	Popular with groups of younger students. Students learn about convict-made bricks and then make their own version.
Education walk	Guided walk adapted for primary and secondary students, including the Penitentiary, the military precinct and the Separate Prison.
Ghost Tour	Walking tour of the site after dark, guided by lamplight and including stories of 'strange occurrences.'[2]

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[2] "Optional school tours: Ghost tours," Port Arthur Historic Site, accessed September 3, 2016, http://portarthur.org.au/education/optional-tours/.

Hidden Secrets	A tour covering small details in the Port Arthur buildings and landscape.
Isle of the Dead tour	Guided tour of the Isle of the Dead cemetery, accessed by ferry.
Making a better world?	Guided walk for Year 9, aligned with the Australian Curriculum for History.
Point Puer Boys' Prison tour	Guided tour of the Point Puer Boys' Prison, accessed by ferry.
What's my story?	Upper primary and secondary. Activity conducted by Port Arthur staff, in which students research convict lives using handwritten primary source records.

Further information about education programs, including outreach materials, can be found at: http://portarthur.org.au/education/.

Cascades Female Factory

A day's work at the Female Factory[3]	Lower primary. Role plays and demonstrations of work undertaken by female convicts.
Education group heritage tour	Upper primary and secondary. An introductory tour to the site.
Her Story	Upper primary and secondary. Similar to the tour I attended, a tour performed by two actors, one playing a convict woman and the other an overseer/doctor.
Investigation to interpretation	Secondary. Students learn about the work of heritage professionals and the 'behind the scenes' of the Cascades Female Factory.

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[3] Several of these activities were in development at the time of interviews and my visit to the Cascades.

What's my story?	Upper primary and secondary. Students research convict lives through primary sources and artefacts.

More information about Cascades Female Factory education programs can be found at: http://femalefactory.org.au/education/.

Museum Victoria

Melbourne Museum[4]

A load of old rubbish	Years 7-9 (secondary). Exploring the work of historians and archaeologists through the Little Lon display in *Melbourne Story.*
Ancient worlds	Years 7-8 (early secondary). Focusing on Indigenous Victorians' culture and identity, linked to *First Peoples.*
Cold case detectives	Years 9-10 (secondary). Explores a number of histories from *Melbourne Story* though objects and displays.
Daily life	Years 1-2 (early primary). An introduction to *First Peoples* for young students.
Fun and games	Years 3-4 (primary). An exploration of what life was like for children in the past through toys and games, linked to *Melbourne Story.*
Living on the land	Years 9-10 (secondary). Based in the *Millari* outdoor area adjacent to *First Peoples*, exploring the ways Indigenous Victorians lived on the land.

[4] This list includes only history or humanities-focused programs for school students; there are several science- and technology-focused programs not included here.

Making a quid	Years 5-6 (upper primary). Explores the history of work through a selection of objects, linking with *Melbourne Story*.
My grandmother's toy box	Years K-2 (early childhood and primary). The story of a young girl and her grandmother, linking to *Melbourne Story*.
Our shared history	Years 5-6 (upper primary). Focusing on the impacts of colonisation on Indigenous Australians, based on *First Peoples*.
Place and culture	Years 3-4 (primary). Based on *First Peoples*, addressing culture and traditions of Victoria's Aboriginal peoples.
The modern world	Years 9-10 (secondary). Explores the culture and history of Victoria's Aboriginal people, based on *First Peoples*.
WWI: Love and Sorrow student trail	Years 9-11 (secondary). This is a self-directed tour of the exhibition *Love and Sorrow*.

A full list and details of Melbourne Museum's education programs and resources is available at: https://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/learning/school-programs-and-resources/.

Immigration Museum

City excursion: What does it mean to be an Australian?	Years 9-12 (secondary). Designed to support the common practice of school programs allowing secondary students to explore Melbourne ('city-based learning').
Global citizenship	Years 9-12 (secondary). Onsite activities linked to online resources *Talking Faiths* and *Talking Difference*, exploring ideas of diversity.

Identity and belonging: VCE English	Year 11 (secondary). Designed to support the VCE English curriculum, exploring issues of identity and belonging in *Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours.*
Leaving and arrival	Years 9-12 (secondary). Investigating migration to Australia, students unpack suitcases containing objects and documents related to immigrant stories.
Pack your bags	Years F-4 (primary). Telling the stories of Australian immigrants through objects and costumes.
Passport plus	Years 5-8 (upper primary and lower secondary). Students unpack suitcases containing objects belonging to a migrant in order to learn about that person's story.
Seeking refuge	Years 9-12 (secondary). Exploring the history of asylum seeking and refugee resettlement in Australia.
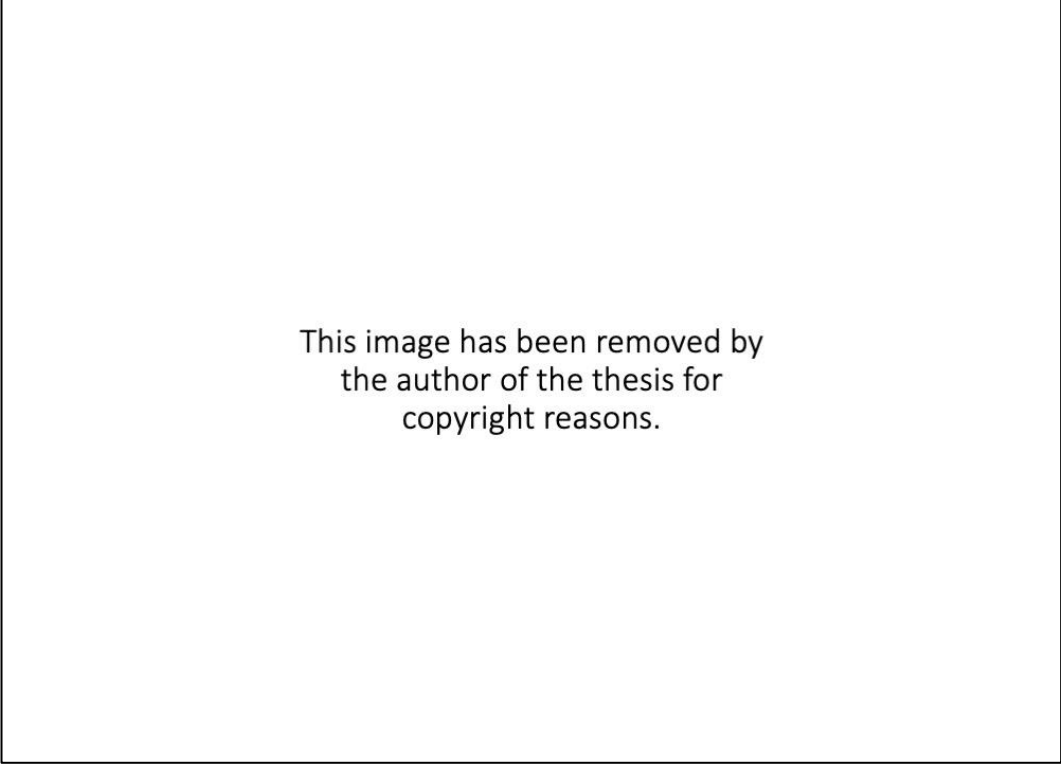
Appendix III: List of interview participants

Institution	Name	Position
Museum Victoria	Dr Richard Gillespie	Head, Humanities
	Genevieve Grieves	Curator, First Peoples
	Dr Moya McFadzean	Senior Curator, Migration
	Jan Molloy	Programs Co-ordinator, Humanities
	Amanda Reynolds	Curator, First Peoples
	Dr Charlotte Smith	Senior Curator, Politics and Society
	Dr Liz Suda	Programs Co-ordinator, Humanities
Australian War Memorial	Stuart Baines	Education Manager
	Rebecca Britt	Curator, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Nick Fletcher	Head, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Chris Goddard	Assistant Curator, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Dr Kerry Neale	Assistant Curator, Military Heraldry and Technology
	Participant [did not wish to be identified]	Curatorial/Management
Port Arthur Historic Site	Gemma Davie	Education Officer
	Dr Jane Harrington	Director, Conservation and Infrastructure
	Michael Smith	Conservation Project Officer
	Dr Jody Steele	Heritage Programs Manager

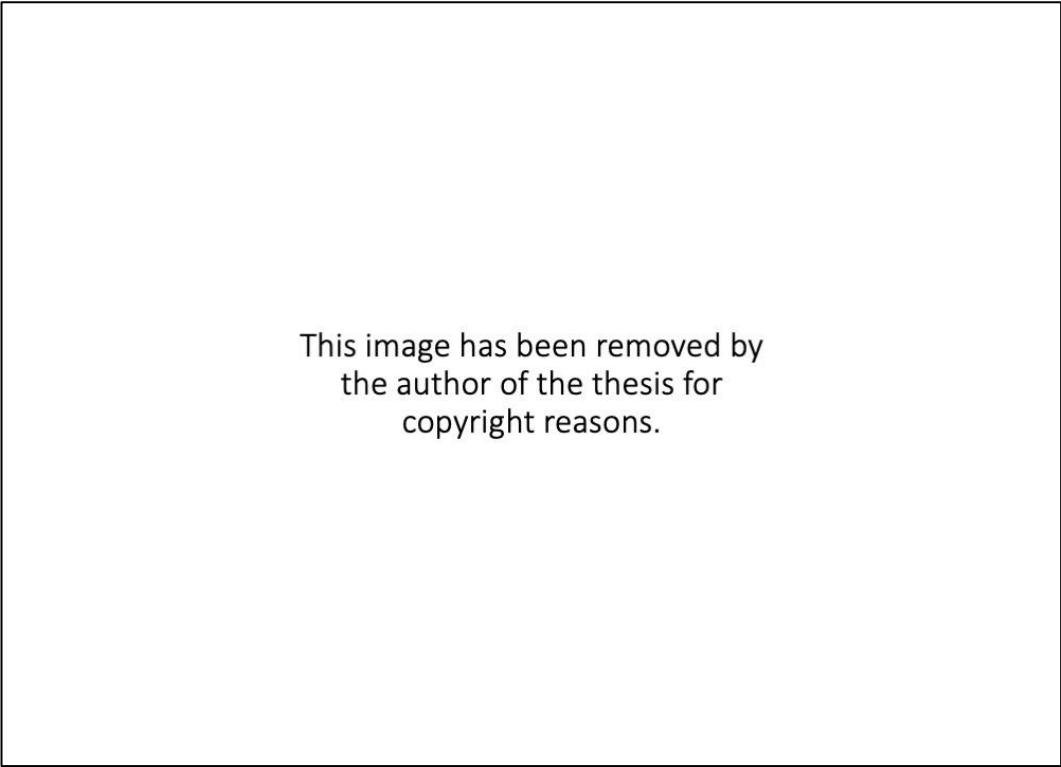# Appendix IV: Museum floor plans

Australian War Memorial

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Lower Level

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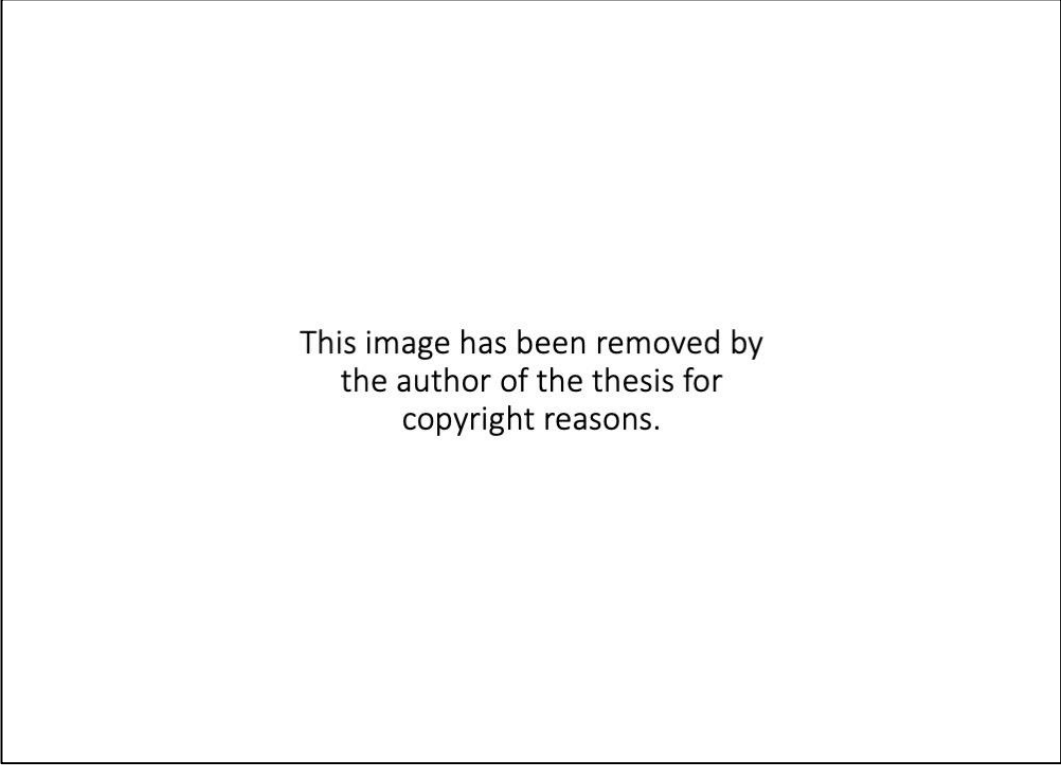
Ground level

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the author of the thesis for
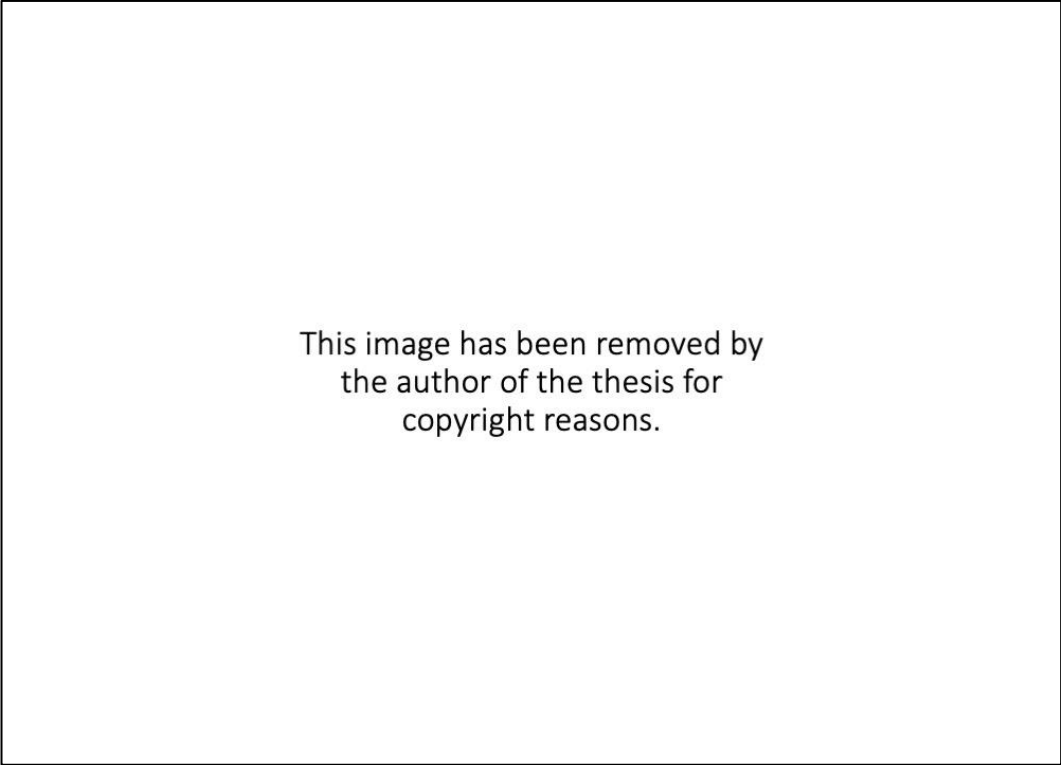copyright reasons.

Roll of Honour and Hall of Memory

Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

Port Arthur Historic Site

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Please note this is a cropped version of the full version, which includes text describing the histories of key locations on site. The current version can be accessed at: http://portarthur.org.au/research/factsheets-and-visitor-guides/.
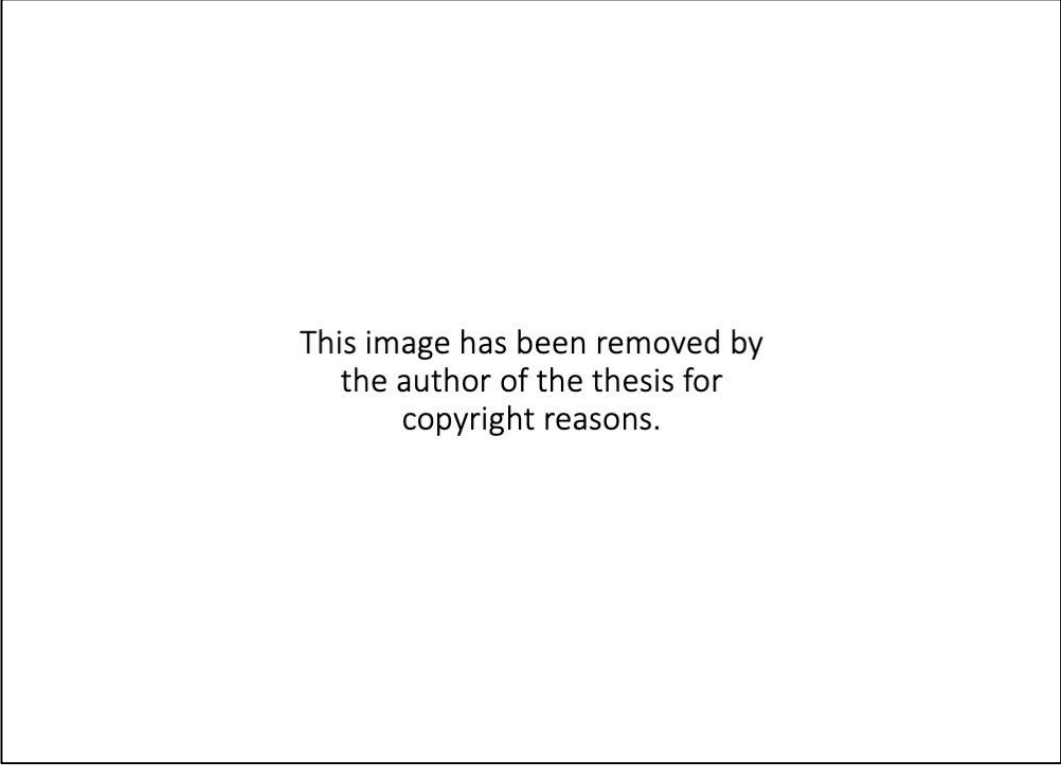
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the author of the thesis for
copyright reasons.

The above map shows the five yards of the former Female Factory (left to right: Yard 5, Yard 2, Yard 1, Yard 3, and Yard 4). Yards 5 and 2 are privately owned and not part of the present-day Cascades Female Factory Historic Site. The current version of this map can be accessed at: http://portarthur.org.au/research/factsheets-and-visitor-guides/.

Museum Victoria

Melbourne Museum

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Map sourced from: "Visiting," Melbourne Museum, accessed September 3, 2016, https://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/visiting/.

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Map sourced from: "Visiting," Immigration Museum, accessed September 3, 2016,

https://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/visiting/.