Horses for Discourses:

A critical examination of the horse in Australian culture

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Abstract

The cultural significance of the horse functions as one of the cornerstone narratives in the production and performance of Australian national identity. From Phar Lap's preserved remains to the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games; from 'Banjo' Paterson's poem "The Man from Snowy River" to the 2018 *Wild Horse Heritage Bill* (NSW), the notion that the horse is meaningful to Australians continues to be perpetuated. Nonetheless, the exact nature of this significance remains nebulous and imprecise, and the topic has drawn little critical attention from Australian Studies or Cultural Studies scholars. In view of this academic silence, this thesis interrogates the key narratives associated with the Australian 'horse discourse', and asks, broadly, what is the *nature* of the horse's significance in Australia, and what does this reveal about Australian identity?

Drawing on a mixed-methods approach – including a nation-wide survey of collecting institutions, stakeholder interviews, and the analysis of literature from a diversity of fields – this research seeks to explore the foundational assumptions upon which the equine significance narrative is constructed. The thesis addresses representations of the horse from several key perspectives—as an imported cultural trope; as historically important; within the museum context; and when framed as heritage, particularly with respect to the recent brumby debates. Through these multiple entry-points, the thesis offers a considered analysis of constructions of this animal as an identity narrative.

Building on anthropologist James Wertsch's notion of schematic narrative templates, I identify an Australian iteration, which I name the Underdog narrative template. The thesis argues that tales from the equine significance discourse, when underpinned by the Underdog schematic narrative template, are reinforced, becoming potent sites for the expression of nationalism. Combining this understanding with an Animal Studies framing, I argue that the significance of the horse in Australia is largely instrumental, predicated upon an inherently anthropocentric and utilitarian approach. This in turn allows it to be deployed as a symbolic construct, revealing the cultural work the horse is tasked with—in particular in mediating anxieties of belonging among white, Anglo-European Australians.

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Introduction

Though I grew up in the urban heart of Sydney, I was fortunate to have some exposure to horses from a young age. My father, who always claimed he was "a farm boy at heart", grew up on the land with two 'horsey' parents, ensuring his childhood and teenage years were filled with numerous ponies and equestrian events. Though he moved off the farm as a young man, he retained an interest in, and love of, horses, and as a child our family trips to the farm usually involved the opportunity for me to interact with the three or four equines who inhabited the home paddock. Thus was my interest piqued. When, on the occasion of my seventh birthday, my grandmother gifted me the sum of a hundred dollars, I thought long and hard about how I was going to spend it. This was an inconceivable fortune to me at the time, and after due consideration, I announced to my parents that I was going to use the money to buy a horse. My mother laughed, then gently explained that it would require much more than a hundred dollars to buy and care for a horse, but perhaps we could put the money towards some riding lessons? This heralded a decade filled first with trail rides and holiday camps, before landing a weekend job at a riding school, where I taught children and took tourists on scenic rides around Centennial Park. Finally, at age 15, I was able to buy and care for my own pony, a happy state that lasted until the demands of higher education drew me onto another path. But not before I had developed a deep regard for this animal.

The germ of this thesis occurred many years later, when, as a curator at the National Museum of Australia, I worked on an exhibition that featured Flemington Racecourse and the Melbourne Cup. Here, the Cup was pitched as a significant event for Australians, though there was no critical exploration of why a horse race was so important, and no attention given to the emerging social interest in animal welfare issues associated with horse racing. Somewhat tangentially, the exhibit incorporated the heart of the famous racehorse Phar Lap (he won the race in 1930), and I was fascinated by the way people—museum staff and visitors alike—approached this object. Again, there was no critical exploration, merely an understanding that it was 'important', and this rhetoric was duly dispensed by both the museum (as an institution), and on the floor between visitors, in particular from parent to child.[1] These two separate but coincident events, where the uncritical acceptance of the equine significance narrative—what I have termed the 'horse discourse'—

[1] In June 2011 I conducted visitor research to explore how people were responding to the heart. Further details in Isa Menzies, "Phar Lap: From Racecourse To Reliquary," *reCollections: A journal of museums and collections* 8 (2013) http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/volume_8_number_1/papers/phar_lap

appeared so pervasive that it went unquestioned at a national cultural institution, triggered the research journey that has now become this thesis.

The research derives from the ways that the horse is positioned as a significant animal for Australians. This thesis does not attempt to prove or disprove the veracity of the horse discourse; it is not about 'mythbusting'. As Richard White writes, "[w]hen we look at ideas about national identity, we need to ask, not whether they are true or false, but what their function is, whose creation they are, and whose interests they serve."[2] In probing these questions, I have chosen to explore the discourses that underpin the notion of equine significance. My research question asks, what is the *nature* of the horse's significance in Australia, and what does this reveal about Australian identity? In constructing my answer, I have approached the question through a diversity of frameworks, which range from an examination of nationalism and narrative, to heritage studies, animal studies, and museology.

In her pivotal text exploring masculinity in Australian identity, *Women and the Bush*, Kay Schaffer frames her critique by posing some key questions: "who decides what the dominant images of Australia are, whose interests are served by the various representations and how do these meanings function in everyday life?"[3] This thesis functions, in part, as a response to Schaffer's questions, with the focus being on the role of the horse. Here, I critically engage with the nature of the horse's significance in Australia, and what this reveals about Australian identity. I do this through analysing a number of popular and representative narratives, where the horse is central to the story. From 'Banjo' Paterson's 1890 poem "The Man from Snowy River" to the "national narrative" paintings of Tom Roberts;[4] from Elyne Mitchell's sympathetic portrayal of feral horses in the Snowy Mountains in *The Silver Brumby* books to the ongoing iconic status of Depression-era race horse Phar Lap in the national imagination, the horse is present in many of Australia's most emblematic cultural representations. A prominent example of how centrally the horse has been absorbed into the Australian identity narrative was the role it played (alongside the stockman) in the opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics, when a display of choreographed riding by 120 Drizabone-clad, Akubra-topped figures emerged to the theme tune of the 1982 film version of *The Man from Snowy River*. Significantly, this was the first representation Australia chose to make of her national identity before a global audience, preceding Aboriginal content. More recently, the horse in Australia has been the subject of a social history exhibition at the National Museum of Australia

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[2] Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), viii.
[3] Kay Schaffer, *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2.
[4] "Tom Roberts," National Gallery of Australia, December 4, 2015 – March 28, 2016.

(September 11, 2014 until March 9, 2015), and the topic of two books, which ostensibly cover the history of the horse in Australia, that were published in late 2014—the coffee-table volume *Horses in Australia: an Illustrated History*, by Nicolas Brasch, and Cameron Forbes' more penetrating *Australia on Horseback: The story of the Horse and the Making of a Nation*. Elsewhere, the past several years have seen debate raging over the presence of feral horses (brumbies) in the Kosciuszko National Park, with the New South Wales state government backflipping from the planned reduction of populations by 90% over 20 years, to their formal listing as a heritage attribute of the Park.[5]

The link between horses and nationalism is not new, and nor is it uniquely Australian. The horse as a symbol of nation is ripe for analysis, as Karen Raber and Treva Tucker observe in their Introduction to *The Culture of the Horse*: "Styles of riding, the rider's position on horseback, the type of horse being ridden: any or all of these can be transformed into a discourse about national character and values."[6] The authors offer the image of the American cowboy,[7] whose relaxed seat and single-handed grip on the reins symbolises his freedom from the constraints of what other countries view as the correct posture for equitation.[8] What might we in Australia then make of our own equivalent, the stockman, captured so enduringly by Paterson in "The Man from Snowy River", as he audaciously sets both self and horse galloping down "that terrible descent"?

Raber and Tucker's comment thus reveals the necessity for a concurrent analysis of the figure of the stockman. The presence of the horse is critical to the idea of the stockman in the popular imagination, where he is typically depicted mounted on horseback, or, as is the case with the sculpture positioned outside the Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach, Queensland (see Figure 1),

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[5] Jen Hunt and Josh Becker, "Brumby 'Backflip' Denied By Nsw Deputy Premier John Barilaro," ABC South East NSW March 5, 2019, accessed July 17, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-05/brumby-backflip-claims-rejected-by-barilaro/10872306

[6] Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker, "Introduction," in *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the early Modern World*, eds Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 25.

[7] While superficially the cowboy and the stockman appear as comparable icons, this is not in fact the case. The stockman's antecedents are primarily British (as argued in Chapter 4), while the cowboy evolved from the Mexican *vaquero* (see Nanette Mantle, *Horse & Rider in Australian Legend* (Carlton: The Miegunyah Press, 2004), 3). Further, the cowboy, according to the U.S. Senate's resolution establishing a National Day of the American Cowboy, embodies "Honesty, Integrity, Courage, Compassion, Respect, A Strong Work Ethic, And Patriotism." (see Ann Brower, John Page, Amanda Kennedy and Paul Martin, "The Cowboy, The Southern Man, And The Man From Snowy River: The Symbolic Politics Of Property In Australia, The United States, And New Zealand," *The Georgetown International Environmental Law Review* 21 (2008-2009): 476). While some of these positive qualities may also be attributed to the stockman, the final three in particular are problematic in the context of the Australian stockman. Drawing on Ward's description of the Australian Legend, we find a more complex character, defined by undertones of class, and positioned firmly within the egalitarian/underdog tradition. For these reasons, the cowboy is not a relevant comparison figure, and as such will not be addressed within the thesis.

[8] Raber and Tucker, "Introduction," 25.

holding a saddle and bridle, which signal the association with the horse. This is because the stockman requires a horse for the discharge of his primary duties.[9]

Figure 1: Stockman sculpture outside the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, Longreach, 2015.

Scholar of Australian Studies Catriona Elder argues that the creation of nationalistic narratives is a central way in which ideas about being Australian is reinforced.[10] It is worth examining such identity narratives closely; while ascertaining their veracity[11] serves a limited purpose,[12] critiquing the *foundational assumptions* upon which they are built gives a useful insight into the work such narratives are deployed in. Further, articulating the underlying rationale of these identity myths exposes the way different people are either included or excluded from these narratives.[13] Here I

[9] Reverence for the stockman presents an interesting contrast to the swagman, another folkloric Australian figure. The swagman is an itinerant worker who travels on foot. This figure (outside Paterson's poem "Waltzing Matilda") has failed to capture the public imagination the same way that the stockman has. This may be due to what Sue Rowley argues were his more sinister overtones (Sue Rowley, "Incidents Of The Bush," in *Lying about Landscape*, edited by Geoff Levitus (North Ryde: Craftsman House, 1997), 19-20), though the fact that he lacks the appeal of a horse may also contribute.

[10] Catriona Elder, *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 5.

[11] For an example of how popular myths continue to be privileged, even when conclusively disproven, see Jed Smith, "Discredited Class-War Fable Or Priceless Promotional Asset? The Duality Of Rugby Union's William Webb Ellis Foundation Myth," in Jeff Hill, Kevin Moore, Jason Wood (eds), *Sport, History, and Heritage: studies in public representation* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), where Smith outlines how the myth that William Webb-Ellis invented the sport of Rugby Union has proved singularly impervious to disruption.

[12] White, *Inventing Australia*, viii; Schaffer, *Women and the Bush*, 2; Elder, *Being Australian*, 3.

[13] Elder, *Being Australian*, 3.

draw on the work of James Wertsch, whose unpacking of the role of schematic narrative templates in constructing national identities informs this research.

Implicit within assertions of the horse's significance lie assumptions about Australian identity; that is, if the horse is significant to Australians, then by definition 'Australians' must be those for whom the horse holds importance. Such assertions do not encompass an inclusive definition of Australianness. Instead, they are predicated upon an understanding that positions white, Anglo-Europeans at its centre, and mythologises a masculine, rural identity. Deconstructing representations of the horse in the context of such identities therefore also serves to destabilise the dominant, exclusionary version of what fundamentally constitutes 'Australianness'.

In the context of popular constructions of the horse as significant to Australia, notions of cultural significance and historical significance are interwoven. For example, museums, themselves key disseminators of identity narratives,[14] are associated in the mind of the public with history and heritage, and as such confer authenticity upon the subjects of their exhibitions, in parallel to the authority implicit within the institution itself. Similarly, historical work produced by major publishing houses carries an assumption of veracity. While both museums and publishing houses undoubtedly represent populist interests in an audience-centred and market-driven economy, they are also social establishments traditionally imbued with authority. Representations of the horse disseminated by these institutions (and elsewhere) frequently conflate cultural, and/or historic, and/or symbolic significance, to produce an amorphous, and ostensibly universal, notion of 'significance'. Therefore, unpacking the significance attributed to the horse in the national imagination presents some challenges.

This thesis argues that many of Australia's most significant equine narratives are underpinned by a schematic narrative template privileging the figure of the underdog, which reinforces both the significance of the horse, and of the underdog narrative trope in the Australian cultural imagination. Further, while the horse has played an integral role in Australia's past, this role is solely instrumental. That is, while the horse is intrinsic to many of Australia's most popular identity narratives—from the Man from Snowy River, to Phar Lap—in the context of Australia's history, the horse's utilitarian function, rather than its intrinsic worth, sets it apart. This has been facilitated by the influence of imported European tropes relating to the horse, but also hinges on the very practical advantages that this animal afforded white colonists. In this context, the horse proved invaluable in dispossessing the traditional inhabitants of their land. It is my contention that

[14] Elder, *Being Australian*, 7.

assertions of the horse's significance as a cultural symbol are underpinned by the barely-acknowledged recognition of the violent process of colonisation. Thus, the horse, while it is most frequently deployed in celebratory nationalist narratives, functions to mediate anxieties of white belonging. This significance, intrinsic as it is to an aspect of Australia's history that is regarded by many as shameful, is difficult to acknowledge in the context of a modern, twenty-first century Australia, and therefore constructions of the horse as culturally important are couched amid allusions to history, tradition, and heritage. Such assertions are nebulous and rarely explored in any depth, and it is this gap in the Australian studies discourse that my thesis addresses.

Little critical work has been produced on the horse in Australia. A rare exception that does engage specifically with this animal's role in nationalistic narratives is Nanette Mantle's cultural historiography *Horse & Rider in Australian Legend*. This text examines the influence of the horse in Australia's settlement, and addresses its increasing use in the construction of a national identity, in particular by the image-makers of the nineteenth century.[15] Mantle focuses on the mythologised history of the stockman, engaging particularly with Ward's construction of the Australian Legend. While Mantle does acknowledge the overwhelming 'whitewashing' of Australia's frontier history, she falls short of critically engaging with the horse's specific role within this. Further, the text fails to deconstruct the animal's symbolic significance to any extent. Nonetheless, in the absence of any significant scholarship on the topic, Mantle's work has been an invaluable resource.

The absence of a critical analysis of the horse, both from Australian Studies scholarship, and academic study more broadly, might, according to Peter Edwards and Elspeth Graham, be that the animal's very embeddedness within human history has rendered it invisible.[16] Further, "[a]n unconscious transfer of value from present to past has meant that horse-related history may seem unserious, the product of no more than a hobby-based or idiosyncratic interest."[17] Edwards and Graham concede that the issue is rendered more complex, owing to the fact that "[to produce] anything intelligent on the subject of the horse [requires a rare combination of] training in the academic professions with training in, or at least substantial exposure to, the arts and nuances of horsemanship".[18] My own history with horses means I feel somewhat qualified in regard to these

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[15] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*.

[16] Peter Edwards and Elspeth Graham, "Introduction," in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, eds Peter Edwards, Karl A.E. Enenkel and Elspeth Graham, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1.

[17] Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 2.

[18] Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 2.

prerequisites, and as such I attempt to tackle, and do justice to, a critical exploration of the horse in Australia.

Thesis structure: themes and content

This thesis takes a thematic approach, each chapter focusing on the horse within a specific context. The exceptions to this are Chapters 1 and 2, which contain, respectively, a review of the overarching themes drawn from within the existing literature, and an outline of my research methodology. Chapter 1 covers a diversity of terrain, including writings on narrative and national identity, the influence of Russell Ward's *The Australian Legend*, the confluence of history and memory, understandings of emotion and affect at museum and heritage sites, and the ways that the horse is constructed in Australia. This chapter also introduces James Wertsch's schematic narrative templates, and the concept of the 'underdog' functioning as just such a narrative template in Australia.

Chapter 3, titled "The Instrumental Horse", lays the conceptual groundwork for understanding the horse for its instrumental, rather than intrinsic, worth. Here, I draw from the animal studies paradigm to deconstruct the events from Australia's past that are commonly associated with the equine significance narrative—exploration, battle, and horseracing. Drawing on notions around animal agency, this chapter argues that there is little room for the horse as an historical subject in its own right. Instead, it is the horse's instrumentality that has led to its wider understanding of being historically significant. Importantly, this instrumental value is obscured by the emotive, and often nebulous, assertions that are made about this animal, and the nature of Australia's attachment to it. These assertions are problematic, as they mask the real cultural 'work' that representations of the horse are frequently deployed to undertake. Through deconstructing some of Australia's most popular narratives of equine historical significance, I reveal the symbolic and constructed nature of the horse discourse. This chapter also introduces the role that the horse played in the colonisation of Australia, and the dispossession of the continent's first peoples. While the horse's agency in the work of colonisation was no different to its function in any of the other narratives addressed by that chapter, the omission of this facet of the horse's contribution to Australian history is a serious elision, and forms the basis for one of my key arguments—that this animal functions as an avatar of belonging for white, settler Australia.

Chapter 4, "'The Man from Snowy River': European tropes, Australian pastoral, and the 'underdog' narrative template", focuses on the ways the horse was culturally constructed, in particular during the nineteenth century, and how this has shaped its contemporary perception in

Australia. In contextualising the Australian horse discourse, I draw on some of the equine tropes from the early Modern period of European history, as well as the British cultural constructs that settlers brought with them to Australia, both of which proved critical in shaping ideas relating to the horse. I draw here on the work of art historian Jeanette Hoorn, who argues that the European pastoral tradition was particularly influential in framing the settlers' cultural understanding of the land. Focusing on the way this tradition influenced the artwork, and writings, of the Heidelberg and *Bulletin* Schools respectively, and drawing upon the British tropes upon which the figure of the stockman is based, I argue that the conflation of the pastoral with pastoralism significantly contributes to Australia's culture of stockman-worship. This chapter introduces A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson's 1890 poem, "The Man from Snowy River", as a thematic case-study of Australian tropes pertaining to masculinity and belonging, which have been frequently harnessed to the equine significance narrative. This chapter particularly picks up on ideas relating to nationalism and narrative that were introduced in Chapter 1, and frames Paterson's poem in the context of the underdog schematic narrative template. The chapter also extends the discussion of the historical role of the horse as a tool of colonisation that was first touched on at the close of Chapter 3, to encompass the iconic figure of the stockman, who, functioning alongside the horse, was integral to the process of colonisation.

Chapter 5, "Phar Lap: horses, objects, and the museum 'afterlife'" moves into the museum realm, where the famous Australian Depression-era racehorse Phar Lap provides an apposite case study. Here, I explore the ways that museum processes contribute to the objectification of the horse, and the corresponding promotion of its instrumental worth. In some cases, such as the 2014-15 National Museum of Australia exhibition *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story*, curatorial efforts are actively made to counteract this objectification, however, as the chapter argues, the institutional processes of the museum are deeply entrenched, and not easily overcome. This chapter also discusses the Equine Remains in Collections survey (ERIC), a national collection survey of horse-derived material that was undertaken as part of this research, revealing the ways material culture is used to reassert the horse discourse. As social institutions that work to preserve and interpret the past, museums are integral to the dissemination of particular narratives—and the elision of others. This proves true in the museum context, where, this chapter argues, the horse functions as the nexus for positive nationalist stories (including those framed within the underdog schematic narrative template), while its significant role in the darker aspects of Australia's colonisation remains unacknowledged. This significant elision in the public record is indicative of the extent to which the horse-as-tool-of-colonisation narrative remains invisible.

In Chapter 6, I draw on the brumby, and its recent re-configuration as a heritage icon, to return to the themes of belonging and identity that were begun in Chapter 4. "Brumbies: heritage, identity, and anxieties of belonging" brings together many of the ideas relating to the cultural 'work' of the equine significance narrative, arguing that the brumby can be seen as an avatar of belonging for a certain sector of Australian society, where it functions to reinforce a particular view of Australian identity—one that is white, rural, and masculine. While only a relatively small number of individuals personally identify brumbies as part of their heritage, repeated invocations of heritage has garnered the feral horse wide-spread support. This chapter draws on the work of Karen Welberry, who highlights Australia's uncritical attachment to the brumby narrative, to argue that the impassioned 'brumby debate' is symptomatic of the role of the brumby—and the horse more broadly—in mediating what Australian Studies scholars have identified as an anxiety of belonging among Australians.[19] Here, the brumby becomes the epitome of equine instrumentality, serving as a pawn in the machinations of Australian identity politics.

Historian Michael Roe, speaking of the (parallel and unequivocally related) archetypal figure of the bushman points out, "[h]ere we approach the point at which the legend exists in spite of the facts!"[20] What is the nature of this "legend", as it pertains to the horse? Roe cautions that though "[t]his quarry will never fall captive, […] its pursuit should stimulate the hunter."[21] While the horse may never fall entirely from its position as an Australian icon, a thorough exploration of the nature of its significance, and its association with the narratives of nation, is stimulation enough.

[19] Karen Welberry, "Wild Horses And Wild Mountains In The Australian Cultural Imaginary," *PAN: Philosophy, Activism, Nature,* no. 3 (2005): 23-32.
[20] Roe, in Michael Roe and Russell Ward, "The Australian Legend," *Meanjin Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1962): 366.
[21] Roe, in Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 366.

Chapter 1: A thematic overview

In exploring the nature of the significance of the horse in Australian culture, this thesis spans a wide-ranging intellectual terrain. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to present an outline of the central themes—and corresponding literature—that underwrite my research, and to make explicit how these relate to the research question. While I make use of existing literature and secondary sources throughout the thesis, here I focus particularly on the conceptual frameworks, which will be further elucidated in the following chapters.

The lack of critical research on the horse's significance to the Australian cultural discourse has lead me to draw from a range of disciplines and sources. For example, constructions of the horse as significant are themselves constituted within understandings of nation and nationalism. These concepts are in turn interwoven with issues of identity, memory, and heritage, and made concrete through the use of narrative. These narratives are disseminated through a diversity of cultural productions, encompassing everything from films to philately, and publications to performance. And the horse, being an animal, occupies a singular position within this cultural landscape. In exploring the nature of the significance of the horse, the thesis considers the animal as both a subject, and a symbolic construct. This chapter therefore draws on a selection of the available scholarship on each of these areas to frame the research question.

Nationalism and narrative in Australia

Underpinning the notion that the horse is a figure of significance in Australia are particular ideas about Australia as a nation, and, more broadly, the concept of nationalism itself. Benedict Anderson has argued that nationalism is problematic to both define and to analyse,[22] and a brief foray into the Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography, which provides distinct and complex definitions for the terms 'nation', 'nation-state', and 'nationalism',[23] supports this contention. Cultural Studies scholar Vincent Pecora provides a suitably pragmatic definition of the nation as "consist[ing] of geographically bound populations united by widely varying degrees and modes of social solidarity, held together by the machinery of markets, media, and political will backed by forces. But it is also

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[22] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983, 2016), 3.

[23] Noel Castree, Rob Kitchin, and Alisdair Rogers, *A Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford University Press, 2013), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868

haunted by echoes of the past, both ethnic and civic, that are not easy to ignore."[24] While Pecora has acknowledged the socially constructed nature of the modern-day nation, his definition fails to take into account the imagined nature of many of these pasts, or at least their mythologised aspects, which transcend historical truth to retain a grip on the national imagination. Benedict Anderson, on the other hand, has made the imaginary aspects central to his (somewhat loose) definition. He describes the nation as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently and politically sovereign."[25] He further elaborates that this imaginary status allows the illusion that, though we will never meet or engage with the majority of our nation-state co-members, "in the minds of each lives the *image* of [our] communion",[26] and reiterates that the *communal* nature of the imagined nation lies in the nation being understood "as a deep, horizontal comradeship."[27] Anderson's emphasis here is very much on the imagined nature of the nation. The creation of nationalistic narratives is a central way that (imagined) ideas of nationalism and belonging is constructed and reinforced,[28] and, working from this, my focus will be on exploring those narratives of Australian identity where the horse is a central figure.

Narrative functions as a significant tool for the dissemination of nationalism. Anthropologist James Wertsch argues that the narrative form itself functions as a cultural tool.[29] Wertsch draws on the imagined community articulated by Anderson,[30] and further highlights the ways that narrative is fundamental to the formation of a group identity, existing as a form of deep collective memory.[31] Narrative accounts that exist within this terrain lie largely outside conscious reflection, and can generate a strong commitment, "commitments that are often masked by the tendency to think that our account simply reflects what happened."[32] This is problematic, as these narratives are not neutral cognitive instruments that express universal truths, and nor do they exist in isolation.[33]

The power of the narrative context lies not in its content, but in the framework that underpins it. Wertsch has identified the tendency of nationalistic stories to adhere to what he terms 'schematic narrative templates'.[34] Contrary to specific narratives, which pertain to particular events,

[24] Vincent Pecora, "Introduction," in *Nations and Identities: Classic readings,* ed. Vincent Pecora (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 3.
[25] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.
[26] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6, my italics.
[27] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.
[28] Elder, *Being Australian*, 5.
[29] James Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[30] Wertsch, *Voices*, 64-67.
[31] Wertsch, *Voices*; James V. Wertsch, "Collective Memory And Narrative Templates," *Social Research* 75, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 142.
[32] Wertsch, *Voices*, 9.
[33] Wertsch, *Voices*, 58-9.
[34] Wertsch, *Voices*; Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 140.

dates, and locations, schematic narrative templates are more abstract and contain minimal concrete or factual details.[35] This then allows them to underlie multiple narrative contexts.[36] The idea of a template is central, emphasising the repeatability of these "abstract structures [that] underlie several different specific narratives, each of which has a specific setting, cast of characters, dates, and so forth."[37] It is my contention that a parallel schematic template, which I describe as the 'Underdog' narrative, underlies many of Australia's most significant cultural narratives. Further to Wertsch's notion of schematic narrative templates is his recognition that a ubiquitous structure underpinning diverse narratives within a cultural tradition allows a shift in focus, "from analysing a list of specific narratives to analysing an underlying pattern that is instantiated in many of them."[38] This thesis represents an attempt to analyse the commonalities that underlie Australian nationalistic narratives that invoke the horse.

Repetition is a critical tool in fostering national identity, and the repeatability of the schematic narrative template can be seen underpinning other elements supporting the nation-state. Michael Billig argues that the ideological means by which nation-states are reproduced are performed in small, unnoticed everyday gestures—the flag hung outside the public building, for example.[39] The invisibility of such actions reinforces the general perception that rabid nationalism exists elsewhere—something enacted by fundamentalists, not members of Western democracies.[40] Instead, argues Billig, the nation is "flagged" in the lives of its citizens through daily interactions,[41] which serve to reproduce its underlying ideology. Billig has coined the term "banal nationalism" to describe these methods of social reproduction.[42] Anderson too highlights the importance of the act of reproduction. He uses the example of a logo, which due to its constant repetition becomes immediately recognisable as a national symbol.[43] In the Australian context, we can see how imagery of brumbies and stockmen immediately conjures echoes of the Man from Snowy River, and therefore becomes a shorthand symbolising nation.

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[35] Wertsch, *Voices*, 60-62.
[36] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 142.
[37] Wertsch, *Voices*, 62.
[38] Wertsch, *Voices*, 61.
[39] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), 6.
[40] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 6. See also the definition of "Nationalism" provided in the *Dictionary of Human Geography*, which further supports Billig's contention. Castree et al, *Dictionary of Human Geography*, http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-1243
[41] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 6.
[42] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 6.
[43] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 184.

One example of the expression of this shorthand is the Australian $10 note, which depicts a mounted figure and the words to 'Banjo' Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River" in microprint (see Figure 1.1).[44] Here we have an apt illustration of the inter-relationship between narrative and nationalism, and ways the horse frequently lies at the nexus of both. It is generally recognised that the widespread attachment that is felt towards the brumby originates with this poem, first published in 1890 and recounting the fictional exploits of a nameless Man and his "mountain-bred" horse.[45] The action of the poem, which even a cursory reading reveals does not take place anywhere near the Snowy River, continues to be associated with this region, as are the brumbies. This would be trivial, if it were not for the fact that the enduring association with Paterson's poem has far-reaching contemporary ramifications, continuing to influence the way the brumby is regarded. Thus, the $10 note represents as an everyday gesture that serves to reinforce the significance of the poem in the national imagination. Billig argues that though this form of cultural reproduction may be banal, its power is anything but benign.[46] In the Australian context, the brumby debate has seen environmentalists intimidated,[47] and NPWS staff and their families threatened,[48] all in support of feral horses. In 2018, these (imagined) associations between brumbies, the Man from Snowy River, and Kosciuszko National Park, were powerful enough to enable the passing of legislation—the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Bill—to protect these feral horses under New South Wales (NSW) law.

Figure 1.1: The Australian $10 note showing 'Banjo' Paterson, an illustration of the Man from Snowy River, and the words to the poem in microprint.

[44]Paterson's face, as well as the words to the poem, and an illustration of a man on horseback brandishing a stockwhip and chasing brumbies, appeared on Australia's first $10 polymer note. The redesigned note, appearing in late 2017, retained most of these elements.

[45] A.B. Paterson, *The Collected Verse of A.B. Paterson: containing The Man from Snowy River, Rio Grande, Saltbush Bill, J.P* by A.B. Paterson, 16th ed. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1967), 5.

[46] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 6-7.

[47] Dianne Thompson interview, November 5, 2015.

[48] Rob Gibbs interview, November 27, 2015.

That the "wild bush horses" of Paterson's poem continue to be conflated with the brumbies of Kosciuszko National Park, in spite of the 'facts', highlights the role of myth-making in national identity. Anderson refers to Ernest Gellner's thinking around the invented nature of nations; where Gellner equates invention with falsehood, Anderson sees this invention as aligned with imagination and creation. He points out that communities are defined by the ways in which they are imagined.[49] Here, the Snowy Mountains region has been redefined in the imagination of locals, and more widely across Australia, through its association with both Paterson's Man, and the mob of brumbies. While, given these 'facts' and their tenuous relationship to the 'truth', an argument could be mounted for the "invented" (and subsequently, in parallel with Gellner's thinking, false) significance of the brumby/horse to Australia, it is more productive to explore the *nature* of the imaginative power of the horse, as it pertains to Australia's idea of itself as a nation.

Australia's underdog narrative tradition

Within this broader discussion of nationalism and narrative, I now turn to briefly outline one specific Australian narrative tradition, that of the underdog. This storyline underpins many nationalist narratives that feature the horse, and, as I elucidate here, fits within Wertsch's description of the schematic narrative template.

The figure of the underdog, or 'Aussie battler', is specifically linked to Australia's grand identity narrative of egalitarianism.[50] Examples of stories from this narrative tradition include two of Paterson's most highly-regarded poems, "Waltzing Matilda", and "The Man from Snowy River", as well as the ways that national heroes such as Phar Lap, Ned Kelly, and the Anzacs who fought at Gallipoli have been framed. The underdog has been defined as:

> one who competes with a top dog (individual or group) under the following conditions: (1) the competition has a well-defined outcome (market dominance, an athletic victory, political office, etc.); (2) both parties are constrained by the same set of competitive rules; and (3) the underdog has obviously fewer competitive resources (strength, speed, status, financing, intelligence, agility, connections, etc.) and/or greater liabilities (disabilities, obligations, etc.) than the top dog. Even though underdogs struggle because of fewer competitive resources, they do not give up and they have a winning mentality. From this

[49] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.
[50] Bruce Elder, *Blood on the Wattle* third edition (Frenchs Forest: New Holland Publishing, 2003), 248.

> definition, people who are merely unfortunate, like drowning or homeless people, are not underdogs because they are not in a competitive setting.[51]

While the underdog story is considered universal,[52] perhaps even archetypal,[53] commentators suggest that the Australian iteration of this theme is unique, in that it is the effort and will to succeed which is significant, rather than any resulting victory.[54]

The deep resonance with which the underdog narrative convention is met with in the national consciousness is, it could be argued, due to Australia's origins as a penal colony. Convict transportees are frequently portrayed as underdogs—the morally innocent victims of circumstance, who were convicted by a heartless State (Britain) and banished to a foreign shore for the most minor of offences[55]—stealing a loaf of bread because they were starving, for example—then to suffer heroically the privations and brutality that convict life represented.[56] Further, Russel Ward, and scholars of his work, have argued a direct link between the convict, and the iconic figure described in *The Australian Legend*.[57] In this context, the bush ethos outlined by Ward originated among the convicts and emancipists who dominated the rural workforce prior to 1851.[58] Certainly it was the work of assigned convicts to look after stock in the earliest days of the colony,[59] and by the 1830s freed convicts began to see themselves as having legitimate authority over the Australian

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[51] Abby Boytos, Kerry Smith and JongHan Kim, "The Underdog Advantage In Creativity," *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 26 (December 2017): 96.
[52] Boytos et al, "Underdog Advantage," 96; JongHan Kim, Scott T. Allison, Dafna Eylon, George R. Goethals, Michael J. Markus, Sheila M. Hindle, Heather A. McGuire, "Rooting For (And Then Abandoning) The Underdog," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 38, no. 10 (October 2008): 2550-55.
[53] Kim et al, "Rooting For The Underdog," 2558, 2570.
[54] "The Underdog," Convict Creations website, accessed November 1, 2018 http://www.convictcreations.com/culture/underdog.htm; Sandra Muller, "Why Us Aussies Love The Underdog So Much," accessed November 1, 2018 https://sandralmuller.com/why-we-aussies-love-the-underdog/;
[55] For one example, see the story of Henry Alphan, in Babette Smith, "Legend And Reality: The Genius Of Russel Ward—The 2009 Russel Ward Annual Lecture," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 12 (2010):171-190. See also Convict Creations, "Convict Crimes," accessed November 7, 2018 http://www.convictcreations.com/history/crimes.htm; the notion of the morally innocent convict echoes a statement I repeatedly overheard among visitors to Fremantle Prison (where I worked from 2011-2013) in Western Australia, which was built in 1855 by (and to house) convicts.
[56] Grace Karskens, "Defiance, Deference And Diligence: Three Views Of Convicts In New South Wales Road Gangs," *Australian Journal of Historical Achaeology* 4 (1986): 18. See also David Andrew Roberts, "Russel Ward And The Convict Legend," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 10, no. 2 (2008): 44. Elsewhere, Richard White has argued that the sensationalist constructions of Botany Bay as a "Hell On Earth" were motivated by commercial concerns, while also performing a key role in controlling working class criminals in England. See White, *Inventing* Australia, 18-20.
[57] Ward, *Australian Legend*; Smith, "Legend And Reality"; Roberts, "Russel Ward And The Convict Legend," 37-58; Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 12.
[58] Roberts, "Convict Legend," 38; Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 12.
[59] John Connor, *Australian Frontier Wars, 1788-1838* (University of New South Wales: UNSW Press, 2002), 55; Mantle, *Horse*, 14.

landscape.[60] However, the dominant discourse in the latter half of the nineteenth century was that the convict population had been swamped by the influx of migrants drawn to Australia by the discovery of gold during the 1850s,[61] effectively obliterating the convict stain. Thus, it is highly doubtful that the bushman mythologised by the Heidelberg artists and *Bulletin* poets was based on a convict prototype, given the prevailing anti-convict sentiment in the era of their creation. However, irrespective of its connection to the bushman, the convict story is one that is frequently framed as an underdog narrative, and this may account for the deep-seated resonance that this narrative has in the Australian popular imagination.

Given the ubiquity of the underdog narrative,[62] it is surprising that little academic work has been done on its significance within Australian identity narratives.[63] In the thesis, I apply Wertsch's notion of the schematic narrative template to the Australian underdog narrative tradition, with a particular focus on stories that feature the horse. Wertsch's emphasis on the role of the schematic narrative template in constructing national identities is particularly useful in this context; deconstructing these narratives reveals the discourses of masculinity and racism that underpin them.

The 'Australian Legend': masculinity and the idealisation of the rural

Masculinity and gender play a significant role in Australian identity narratives,[64] and the horse, and narratives pertaining to the horse, are also co-opted to serve this agenda, which penetrates almost all facets of Australian nationhood. It can be seen in the construction of national figures of heroism (Ned Kelly, the Anzacs, Don Bradman), and extends to the perception of certain species[65] and landscapes[66] are as 'more' authentically Australian. Nicholas Smith mounts a convincing argument demonstrating the ways masculinity has permeated not only the social aspects of Australian identity, but its eco-nationalist discourse. Smith contends that the wide-spread hatred of feral cats in

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[60] Mantle, *Horse*, 30; Smith, "Legend And Reality."
[61] See Roberts, "Convict Legend," 39.
[62] Outside nationalistic narratives, and the plot arc of movies, the underdog narrative is also frequently applied to Australian sporting events, particularly where Australia and England are competing against each other.
[63] Most of the scholarly literature drawn on for this thesis came from the field of marketing. This serves as another example of how 'everyday' discourses (like the horse itself) are so ubiquitous as to be academically invisible.
[64] Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*; Elder, *Being Australian*, 65-75; Rowley, "Incidents Of The Bush;" Linzi Murrie, "The Australian Legend: Writing Australian Masculinity/Writing 'Australian' Masculine," *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, no.56 (1998), 68-77.
[65] See for example Adrian Franklin, *Animal Nation: The true story of animals and Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006); Nicholas Smith, "The Howl And The Pussy: Feral Cats And Wild Dogs In The Australian Imagination," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 10 (1999):288-305.
[66] Laurajane Smith, "A Pilgrimage Of Masculinity: The Stockman's Hall Of Fame And Outback Heritage Centre," *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no. 3 (2012):472-82.

Australia is influenced by an historical understanding of the cat that is bound up in notions of femininity and womanhood, rather than any environmental impact the cat might have.[67] According to Smith, cats are nationally reviled, while the dog—an animal that is commonly associated with constructions of masculinity, especially those prioritising traits such as loyalty and courage—is preferred.[68]

Of particular interest in the current context is the hyper-masculinity of the bushman figure.[69] The figure of the 'noble bushman' depicted in the iconic paintings of the late nineteenth century and by the poets of the *Bulletin* school has been most enduringly defined in Russel Ward's influential mid-twentieth century text *The Australian Legend*.[70] Here, Ward describes this figure, which has come to stand for the archetypal Australian:

> the 'typical Australian' is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing to 'have a go' at anything, but unwilling too to be content with a task done in a way that is 'near enough'. Though capable of great exertion in an emergency, he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion. Though he is 'the world's best confidence man', he is usually taciturn rather than talkative, one who endures stoically rather than one who acts busily. He is a 'hard case', sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally. He believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better, and so he is a great 'knocker' of eminent people unless, as in the case of his sporting heroes, they are distinguished by physical prowess. He is a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority, especially when these qualities are embodied in military officers and policemen. Yet he is very hospitable and, above all, will stick to his mates through thick and thin, even if he thinks they may be in the wrong. … He tends to be a rolling stone, highly suspect if he should chance to gather much moss.[71]

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[67] Smith, "Howl And The Pussy,"292.

[68] Smith, "Howl And The Pussy," 299.

[69] Jeanette Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral: The Making of a White Landscape* (Fremantle: Fremantle Press, 2007), 164; Mantle, *Horse and Rider*, 3; Smith, "A Pilgrimage Of Masculinity," 475.

[70] Graeme Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no.3 (2012): 429.

[71] Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958), 1-2.

The significance of this depiction of Australian-ness cannot be overstated. It has deeply permeated the national psyche and forms the blueprint for all contemporary representations of the bushman, including the figure of the stockman. Research by John Merritt found that “the self-image [of the Snowy Mountains stockmen] does conform in important respects to the Wardian stereotype.”[72] This highlights two significant issues. First, the impact that Ward’s articulation of the Australian Legend has had, to the extent that it has been incorporated into the performance of self-identity among those who it purportedly depicts. Second, Merritt’s finding here supports the understanding that, while not all those who are described as ‘bushmen’ are necessarily stockmen, all stockmen (who are in turn associated with the horse) are certainly bushmen. Given this, references to bushmen in general will, in this thesis, be considered applicable to stockmen specifically.

The reliability of Ward’s depiction of the Australian legend as a typical Australian, and the veracity of his existence, has been debated at length.[73] Ward maintains that “[t]he real man was, like other men, noble in some ways and ignoble in others. He did, however, exist … in the labour force of the Australian pastoral industry in the 19th century.”[74] At this juncture it is worth turning to historian Richard White and his influential text *Inventing Australia*, in which White argues that:

> [t]here is no ‘real’ Australia waiting to be uncovered. A national identity is an invention. There is no point asking whether one version of this essential Australia is truer than another because they are all intellectual constructs, neat, tidy, comprehensible—and necessarily false.[75]

In accordance with White, the legitimacy of Ward’s assertion is immaterial in the current context; it is the *power* of the myth, rather than its truth, which is of interest. Ward himself articulates the crux of the matter, when he clarifies that:

> the important thing was not so much that most bushmen possessed these qualities, as that they liked to think that they did ... [Subsequently,] other Australians [believed that] the bushman, possessing such qualities in a higher measure than they did, was ‘the true Australian’.[76]

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[72] John Merritt, “Shearers, Mountain Stockmen And The Australian Legend,” *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 10, no. 2 (2008): 69.
[73] See for example Leigh Astbury, *City Bushmen: the Heidelberg School and the Rural Mythology* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985); Roe and Ward, “The Australian Legend;” Davison, “Rethinking The Australian Legend,” 440; Murrie, “Writing Australian Masculinity.”
[74] Roe and Ward, “The Australian Legend,” 369.
[75] White, *Inventing Australia*, viii.
[76] Roe and Ward, “The Australian Legend,” 367.

Ward here touches on the underlying power of the Australian legend. Rather than being a figure that Australians identify with themselves, he is a figure identified within the *idea* of Australia. In this way, the nebulousness of the myth ensures its continuity, as its existence does not need to be proven to retain its popular appeal.

The extract describing the Australian Legend reproduced earlier also hints at—while not making explicit—the underdog characteristics of the Australian Legend.[77] These can be seen in the fact that the Legend is Jack, and not his Master. Nor is he himself an eminent person, instead preferring the role of critic to such people. Ward's Legend here demonstrates 'tall poppy syndrome', a phenomenon defined by the Oxford Australian Dictionary as an Australianism describing "the habit of denigrating or 'cutting down' those who are successful, high achievers, etc."[78] Tall poppy syndrome is the inverse of the national reverence for the underdog[79] tradition. It is further important to note that an underdog status does not preclude the type of rugged masculinity that is central to constructions of Australian identity.

The central role that masculinity occupies in Ward's Legend is most obvious in the fact that the "typical Australian" described by Ward is male. It is worth reiterating that Ward was describing what he saw as a typical Australian, not a 'typical Aussie bloke' but a typical member of Australian society, whom he inevitably envisioned, and therefore constructed, as male. While this in part may be attributed to the then-common practice of referring to humanity as male, it cannot entirely be explained away by this. The masculine norm continues to characterise representations of Australian identity today. For example, during the Sydney Olympics Opening Ceremony, commentator Garry Wilkinson described both male and female horse riders as "stockmen."[80] This is just one example, but, taken alongside Ward's description—written almost half a century earlier—it effectively demonstrates the totality of maleness, and masculinity, as a key tenet of being Australian.

The origins of this hyper-masculine construction of Australian identity, which historian Marilyn Lake identifies as "the separatist model of masculinity which lay at the heart of the eulogies

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[77] Roe picks up on this, identifying "Sympathy With The Under-Dog" as one of the defining features of Ward's legend. See Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 363.

[78] *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* third edition (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1393. See also Stuart Macintyre, "Tall Poppies," *Australian Society* 8, no. 8 (September 1989):8-9; Bert Peeters, "Tall Poppies And Egalitarianism In Australian Discourse: From Key Word To Cultural Value," *English Worldwide* 25, no. 1 (2004): 1-25.

[79] Boris Kabanoff, Nerina L. Jimmieson, and Malcolm J. Lewis, "Psychological Contracts In Australia: A 'Fair Go' Or A 'Not-So-Happy Transition'?," in *Psychological Contracts in Employment: Cross-National Perspectives*, eds. Denise M. Rousseau and René Schalk (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000), 36.

[80] Sydney 2000 Olympic Opening Ceremony, original television broadcast, Seven Network Australia, September 15, 2000.

to the Bushman"[81] has been explored at some length by feminist scholars. Kay Schaffer points out that Ward's "typical Australian" is not only defined according to what he is, but what he is *not*. She argues that this 'other' is generally framed as a British parental authority figure, symbolising old-world values.[82] Schaffer also highlights the ways in which those qualities derided by the Australian Legend are feminised. In this way, "the city, urban life, morals, intellectual and cultural pursuits come to be represented as derivative [of the parental culture], inauthentic, unnatural and thus 'feminine'."[83] Elsewhere, Linzi Murrie argues that the valorisation of the bushman by his bohemian creators[84] reflected their own middle-class anxieties, as they themselves did not embody this type of masculinity.[85] Further, this masculine ideal:

> functioned as a response to the fears of late nineteenth century manhood, that society was inherently 'feminising', and that the opportunities for expressing masculinity were becoming increasingly limited. The bushman … symbolised a masculine freedom and 'naturalness', which the *Bulletin* constructed as nationalist and Australian[.][86]

Ironically, as Murrie points out, this concern was not uniquely Australian at all. It was being played out amidst a widespread, international movement of female emancipation, and the evolution of first-wave feminism.[87] Nonetheless, the notion of a rugged masculinity continues to pervade constructions of Australian identity, and discursive appeals to masculinity remain nationally approved.[88]

The norm of masculinity is applicable to the underdog schematic narrative template; implicit within the figure of the underdog is the understanding that the archetypal 'Aussie battler' is male. The vast majority of Australia's identity narratives featuring the underdog have an all-male cast: the miners at the Eureka Stockade; Ned Kelly and his gang; the war heroes of Anzac; Phar Lap and his connections. This is further reflected in representations of the underdog in the Australian popular media, from Raymond Longford's 1919 film *A Sentimental Bloke*, to Daryl Kerrigan in *The Castle*

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[81] Marilyn Lake, "Historical Reconsiderations IV: The Politics Of Respectability: Identifying The Masculinist Context," *Historical Studies* 22, no. 86 (April 1986): 118.
[82] Schaffer, *Women and the Bush*, 19.
[83] Schaffer, *Women and the Bush*, 21.
[84] See White, *Inventing Australia*, 85-109; Lake, "The Politics Of Respectability," 118.
[85] Murrie, "Writing Australian Masculinity," 70.
[86] Murrie, "Writing Australian Masculinity," 71.
[87] Murrie, "Writing Australian Masculinity," 71.
[88] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 183.

(1997), and Kenny Smyth in the 2006 mockumentary *Kenny*.[89] While women might be inserted into an underdog story, even (though rarely) forming the central character of such a narrative,[90] they are merely temporarily occupying a terrain that is understood as inherently male. This reflects the ways that women are simultaneously excluded by, but also defined in relation to, Australian masculinity.[91] Schaffer perfectly articulates this in her invocation of the work of Lacan and phallocentric culture, when she states that one's subjective identity is either male, or not-male.[92] In matters of Australian identity, masculinity is the norm against which all other states are defined,[93] and this continues to hold true within the framework of the underdog schematic narrative template.

Alongside, and often interwoven with, these constructs of Australianness, and masculinity, is an idealisation of rural life, and a belief in the authenticity of the bush, or 'outback'.[94] These notions are also interwoven with understandings of the horse's significance. According to Ward himself, the Legend was drawn from the pastoral workers of the nineteenth century,[95] and these same pastoral workers formed the inspiration for some of Australia's most iconic nineteenth-century cultural productions. These works were in turn shaped by European sensibilities, and are deeply indebted to the pastoral mode, which idealised the rural, and scorned the urban.[96] The bush ballads of Paterson, and the works of his contemporaries—particularly those writers published in the *Bulletin*, and the artists belonging to the Heidelberg school—drew on this tradition, romanticising the bush and positioning it (and its inhabitant, the 'bushman') as authentically Australian. Importantly, Murrie argues that there were other, family-oriented masculinities being played out in nineteenth century Australia, but these were not celebrated.[97] Instead, "they were either feminised as gentry (and therefore 'English') in the case of the squatters, or ridiculed as emasculated in the case of the selectors".[98] Historian Marilyn Lake has argued that the *Bulletin* under the editorship of J. F.

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[89] Lisa Milner, "*Kenny*: The Evolution Of The Battler Figure In Howard's Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 33, no. 2 (2009): 153.
[90] The much-anticipated 2019 biopic of Melbourne Cup-winning jockey Michelle Payne, *Ride like a Girl*, is a likely example of this, though apparently even here the focus will be shared by two of the men in Michelle's life—her father, Paddy, and brother, Stevie. See Dominic Cansdale, "'Ride Like A Girl': Michelle Payne's Historic 2015 Melbourne Cup Win To Become A Movie," March 16, 2018, abc.net.au, accessed December 12, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-16/michelle-payne-movie-ride-like-a-girl/9555590
[91] Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*, 4.
[92] Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*, 10.
[93] Lake, "The Politics Of Respectability," 116.
[94] Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*, 52; Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity;" Elder, *Being Australian*, 212-217; McLean, *White Aborigines*, 5.
[95] Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 369.
[96] Hoorn, *Australian* Pastoral, 9.
[97] Murrie, "Writing Australian Masculinity," 68-77; Lake, "The Politics Of Respectability," 117-18.
[98] Murrie, "Writing Australian Masculinity," 69.

Archibald—who Lake describes as "an unhappily married, childless misogynist"[99]—played a critical role in promoting the approved masculinity epitomised by the figure of the bushman.[100] She writes:

> When the 'nationalist' school of writers represented the pastoral workers as cultural heroes, they did so because in their apparent freedom from the ties of family and in their 'independence', these bushmen most closely approximated to their masculinist ideal. The pastoral industry provided the perfect subjects on which they could project their attitudes and values.[101]

Here, the link between Ward's Legend, and the rugged masculinity epitomised by the *Bulletin* (including Paterson's Man from Snowy River), is made explicit.

Ward's text has been instrumental in the ongoing mythologising of the bush, the figure of the stockman, and correspondingly, the horse. Seeking to historically document what he saw as a uniquely Australian culture, Ward published *The Australian Legend* in 1958, which revived the figure of the bushman and disseminated the mythology to a new generation. Historian Graeme Davison argues that, rather than perpetuating an outdated nineteenth-century ideology, Ward's work was very much of its time, born of a post-war sense of nationalism. Davison positions the revival of the figure represented by the Australian Legend within a broader Australian leftist intellectual movement of the 1940s, which embraced the nationalism epitomised by the works of Henry Lawson, 'Banjo' Paterson and others.[102] Further, the focus on romanticised constructions of the past that occupied Ward reflected an international trend; in Britain, historian Raphael Samuel has documented a similar post-war surge in interest in English heritage, which was then adopted by the leftist movement during the post-war years.[103]

Most scholars agree that the poetic and artistic depictions of Australian life such as those published by the *Bulletin* and produced by the Heidelberg school were anachronistic even at the time of their creation.[104] Statistically, over two-thirds of the Australian population lived in cities and towns in 1891, while less than a quarter of the population (23.3%) was employed in agricultural or pastoral industries.[105] The historian Michael Roe pithily describes this disjunction: "whereas the appeal of the bush has been the great myth of Australian history, the appeal of the city has been the

[99] Lake, "The Politics Of Respectability," 118.
[100] Lake, "The Politics Of Respectability."
[101] Lake, "The Politics Of Respectability," 120.
[102] Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 440.
[103] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), 207-8.
[104] Astbury, *City Bushmen*; Roe, in Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 364; Elder, *Being Australian*, 190.
[105] Cited in Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 181.

great fact."[106] Nonetheless, the popularity of these works was, and continues to be, undeniable. According to critic Leigh Astbury, this was because, "[i]mmune from the actual experience of rural life, an urban public was able to respond freely and imaginatively to distinctive elements of the rural myth" contained within these works.

The conjuring power of the bushman mythology is such that it has followed Australia into the twentieth century, through two world wars, and emerged, virtually unreconstructed, into the twenty-first century. As Ward himself acknowledged, these nationalistic mythologies have a powerful influence on the present, "colouring men's ideas of how they ought 'typically' to behave",[107] irrespective of whether the legends upon which they are based are true, or not. It is not the purpose of this thesis to deconstruct this particular idealisation of Australianness. That myth has been convincingly and thoroughly deconstructed already, and the scholarship is there for those who wish to explore it.[108] Of greater interest here is the ongoing popularity of these nationalistic imaginings, and the role of the horse within them. Drawing on Elder's exhortation that it is less important to define what the characteristics of an Australian identity are, and more useful to think about what function such narratives serve, [109] I investigate the 'work' performed by the horse as a shibboleth of Australian culture and identity. For this reason, defining an Australian identity is not central to my argument, though exploring existing constructions of it is.

Memory, heritage, history

The discourses of nationalism discussed thus far are themselves bound up in understandings of memory, identity, and place.[110] These elements in turn underpin notions of the horse's significance, which is frequently framed as either historical or associated with heritage—the brumby debates in particular are underpinned by issues of personal identity and belonging. In this section, I focus predominantly on the relationship between collective memory, constructs of heritage, and their inter-relationship with history. I draw especially on the work of Wertsch and Laurajane Smith, as theorists whose scholarship takes particular account of the interweaving of these themes.

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[106] Roe, in Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 364.
[107] Ward, *Australian Legend*, 1.
[108] See for example: Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 429-451; Elder, *Being Australian*; Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 363-369; Astbury, *City Bushmen*.
[109] Elder, *Being Australian,* 3.
[110] Dylan Trigg, *The Memory of Place: a phenomenology of the uncanny* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012); Divya P. Tolia-Kelly, Emma Waterton, and Steve Watson (eds), *Heritage, Affect and Emotion: Politics, Practices and Infrasctructures* (Oxon: Routledge, 2017); Sue Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past: the ethics and politics of memory*, eds Christine M. Koggel and Rockney Jacobsen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

The boundaries between individual and collective memory, and the cultures within which they are situated, are complex. Wertsch argues that memory (both individual and collective), is socially and culturally produced.[111] He cites scholarship arguing that the impact of mass literacy, and the habits of thought that accompanied it, was nothing less than a revolution in human memory.[112] One outcome of this shift, contends Wertsch, was the emergence of the discipline of history as a new way of representing the past.[113] This construction of (Western) human memory is revealing when paralleled with the "shallow historical memory"[114] that has been attributed to Australian Aboriginal peoples. Alongside this shallow historical memory is an intellectual flexibility (particularly in incorporating different species into a 'native' landscape),[115] which is correspondingly absent from a more rigorous scientific mindset.[116] This cross-cultural comparison illustrates the culturally-specific nature of memory, and associated acts of remembering.[117]

In the form of nationalistic narratives, these acts of remembering are themselves part of a social process. That is, memory—and the cultural narratives within which it is collectively vested—are indivisible from our broader socio-cultural environment. As such, the nationalistic narratives under investigation in this thesis can be seen to perform an important social function, integral to which is the process of memory. Laurajane Smith defines heritage as "not so much a 'thing', but as a cultural and social process, which engages with acts of remembering".[118] On an individual level, these acts of remembering are highly subjective, entailing, as Sue Campbell writes:

> unstable traces of information about the past, whose encodings have already been shaped by previous history, [which then] interact with the needs and interests of the present and meld with previous knowledge and with what we

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[111] Wertsch, *Voices*.
[112] Wertsch, *Voices*, 18.
[113] Wertsch, *Voices*, 19-20.
[114] David S. Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs' In The Australian Bush: Aboriginal Responses To 'Introduced' Animals And Plants In A Settler-Descendant Society," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* vol. 14, no. 3 (2008): 640.
[115] Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality," 640.
[116] Franklin, *Animal* Nation, 3. See also Michael Adams, "The Cultural Meanings Of Wild Horses," *The Conversation*, October 13, 2017, accessed July 14, 2019 https://theconversation.com/friday-essay-the-cultural-meanings-of-wild-horses-84198
[117] It also highlights two different ways of understanding place, where in one, it is a reductionist, empirical understanding "in which the totality of place is reduced to its parts". In the second, place becomes "a constructive product of human experience". See Trigg, *The Memory of Place*, 3. This in turn illustrates the ways that memory and place are interwoven, both at the personal and the collective levels.
[118] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2.

> have been told to form memory reconstructions for which no originals exist, and which vary on each occasion of recall.[119]

What then may be said of the collective memory that purportedly resides within nationalistic narratives? Wertsch contends that the separation between individual and collective memory is not as distinct as popularly believed,[120] demonstrating that specific aspects of social processes influence, and are reflected in, individual processes of memory.[121] He draws on the controversy over the exhibiting of the *Enola Gay* at the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) in Washington, USA during the early-mid 1990s as a case-study to illustrate this point. Wertsch argues that it was not solely for political reasons that the original proposed exhibition was pulled, but that the veteran stakeholders were able to appeal to "autobiographical memory" in a way that surpassed the authority of professional historians. This meant that the veterans "spoke in a voice that reverberated much more strongly with the public than some of the parties involved in this debate had anticipated."[122] Wertsch notes that the end result of the NASM controversy was an exhibition containing "just the 'facts'."[123]

This approach is problematic, as there are no such objective facts, and all representation necessitates a philosophical position, whether it is made explicit or not. As Laurajane Smith reminds us, heritage is never simply about the past; it is about meaning-making in the present *as well*.[124] There is a tension that arises here between understandings of heritage as it relates to an untouchable or distant past, the present-day narratives that support such notions of (our common cultural) heritage, and the unconscious emotional investment which they engender, which are themselves intrinsically tied to constructs of national identity and belonging.

The notion that memory and history are discretely located is in fact difficult to uphold. Wertsch makes the observation that memory and history are frequently positioned in opposition to each other,[125] where history is perceived as objective and academic, while memory is generally viewed as fallible and emotive. The distinction between memory and history has been argued by academics for decades.[126] While, in Wertsch's view, "[t]he distinction is both necessary and difficult

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[119] Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past*, 11.
[120] Wertsch, *Voices*, 38. See also Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past*, 5-7.
[121] Wertsch, *Voices*, 37; Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past*, 5-7.
[122] Wertsch, *Voices*, 39-40.
[123] Wertsch, *Voices*, 40.
[124] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, my italics.
[125] Wertsch, *Voices*, 19-20, 40-43.
[126] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 145.

to maintain,"[127] he also contends that there is in fact a complex and undeniable relationship between the two.[128] As he writes:

> memory typically involves a complex mix of meeting the needs of accurate representation and providing a usable past. … On the one hand, we judge memory by its accuracy, and we raise objections when inaccurate representations of the past are put forth as truthful. On the other hand, memory functions to provide a usable past for the creation of coherent individual and group identities.[129]

The practicalities of the "usable past" that Wertsch identifies here bring history and memory into very close alignment, for both are integral in representing the past. As he argues, one intention behind providing students with an education in history is to inculcate a sense of knowledge in, and loyalty to, the nation-state. This sense of loyalty remains critical to fostering national identity: "It is because the political stakes are so high that disputes can break out over the appropriateness and accuracy of various accounts of the past."[130] For Wertsch, this is an indication that such issues are more to do with collective memory than history.[131] Wertsch further contends that collective memory (like the academic discipline of history) undergoes change over time, due to its role meeting the needs of a "usable past".[132] That is, the act of remembering is ongoing. Memories necessitate an act of remembering, which allows them to be continually re-created.[133] This accounts for the rapid shift that occurred between brumbies being considered as pests, and their recent reframing as heritage.[134] Wertsch continues, "one of the few genuinely constant attributes of collective memory is that it is likely to undergo change",[135] a point with which Raphael Samuel concurs. As Samuel writes:

> [S]o far from being handed down in the timeless form of 'tradition' [memory] is progressively altered from generation to generation. It bears the impress of experience, in however mediated a way. It is stamped with the ruling passions of

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[127] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 145.
[128] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 146.
[129] Wertsch, *Voices*, 31.
[130] Wertsch, *Voices*, 70.
[131] Wertsch, *Voices*, 70.
[132] Wertsch, *Voices*, 43, 45.
[133] Wertsch, *Voices*, 17-18.
[134] Isa Menzies, "Heritage Icon Or Environmental Pest? Brumbies In The Australian Cultural Imaginary," in *Equestrian Cultures: Horses, Human Society, and the Discourse of Modernity*, eds Kristen Guest and Monica Mattfeld (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 201-216.
[135] Wertsch, *Voices*, 46.

> its time. Like history, memory is inherently revisionist and never more chameleon than when it appears to stay the same.[136]

The conjunction of history and memory lies in their mutual role of creating a useable past. The means through which this usable past is constructed and disseminated includes museums and heritage sites. One of the key functions of many such institutions is the interpretation of narratives that purport to be representative of national characteristics and nationhood. The vehicle through which such messages are frequently internalised, is emotional connection, or affect.

Emotion and affect

Nationalistic narratives are, by their very nature, emotional.[137] As Wertsch argues, they elicit a deep commitment, and are integral to the construction of group identity. [138] The horse discourse is no exception, and it is therefore constructive to (briefly) examine the nature of this emotional commitment. The recent emergence of the "affective turn" within the humanities[139] proves an insightful framework from which to approach the issue. Due to the ways that the horse is widely understood as part of Australia's heritage, my focus here is on scholarship exploring the influence of affect and emotion within constructs of heritage.[140]

Within the literature on affective practices within heritage sites there are, broadly speaking, two differing theoretical approaches.[141] In one model, heritage is seen as attracting layers of affect, which are intrinsic to the site. For example, Divya Tolia-Kelly, Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, in their Introduction to *Heritage, Affect and Emotion*, write of the tumultuous whirlpools of affect "that

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[136] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, xxiii.
[137] Elder, *Being Australian*, 352; Wertsch, "Collective Memory,"142.
[138] Wertsch, *Voices*, 9; "Collective Memory," 142.
[139] Ann Cvetkovich, "Affect," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, second edition, eds Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 13; Owain Jones, "'Who Milks The Cows At Maesgwyn?' The Animality Of UK Rural Landscapes In Affective Registers," *Landscape Research* 38, no. 4 (2013): 426; Jopi Nyman, "Horse As Significant Other: Discourses Of Affect And Therapy In Susan Richards's Chosen By A Horse: How A Broken Horse Fixed A Broken Heart," *HUMaNIMALIA* 5, no. 2 (2014): 70.
[140] See for example: Laurajane Smith, Margaret Wetherell and Gary Campbell (eds), *Emotion, Affective Practices, and The Past in the Present* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, and Watson (eds), *Heritage, Affect and Emotion*; Laurajane Smith, "Visitor Emotion, Affect And Registers Of Engagement At Museums And Heritage Sites," *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage* 14, no. 2 (2014): 125-131; Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell, "The Elephant In The Room: Heritage, Affect And Emotion," in *A Companion to Heritage Studies*, edited by William Logan, Máiréad Nic Craith, and Ullrich Kockel (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2016), 443-460.
[141] Margaret Wetherell, Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell, "Introduction," in *Emotion, Affective Practices, and The Past in the Present*, eds Laurajane Smith, Margaret Wetherell and Gary Campbell, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 1.

shape and are located in, articulated by and palpably accumulated at heritage sites,"[142] while Margaret Wetherell, Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell, in the Introduction to their volume *Emotion, Affective Practices, and the Past in the Present* take issue with the notion of affect as "mysteriously imbuing places and spaces [such that it] automatically […] charge[s] those who pass through this space."[143] In their conceptualisation, the emphasis is on the nature of "affective practices",[144] which (like heritage itself) is a form of social and cultural practice.[145] Irrespective of whether affect is seen as inherent to particular sites, or socially constructed in relation to them, the consensus among scholars is that affective, or emotional, experiences influence our perceptions and understandings.[146] The role of affect is particularly worth considering here in relation to the brumby debates, and the emotive nature of the figure of the horse overall.

There are many contextually-dependant definitions of affect, however, in the framework of this thesis, the term is loosely understood in accordance with the following statement:

> Because affect, emotions, and feelings stand at the intersection of mind and body, cognition and sensation, and conscious and unconscious or automatic processes, it is not easy to identify the material basis for their social and historical construction, which includes parts of the body (nerves, brains, or guts) as well as environments and transpersonal relations.[147]

Differentiation between understandings of affect, feeling, and emotion remain somewhat amorphous.[148] Ann Cvetkovich, in her consideration of affect within the Cultural Studies context, speculates that its use "stems from the desire to find a more neutral word, given the strong vernacular associations of 'feeling' and 'emotion' with irrationality."[149] In the context of this thesis, the terms 'emotion' and 'affect' will be used interchangeably, both coming under the same "umbrella term".[150]

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[142] Divya P. Tolia-Kelly, Emma Waterton, and Steve Watson, "Introduction," in *Heritage, Affect and Emotion: Politics, Practices and Infrasctructures,* eds Divya P. Tolia-Kelly, Emma Waterton, and Steve Watson (Oxon: Routledge, 2017), 1.
[143] Wetherell et al, "Introduction," 4.
[144] Smith et al, *Emotion, Affective Practices, and The Past in the Present*.
[145] Wetherell Smith and Campbell, "Introduction," 8.
[146] Adam Morton, *Emotion and Imagination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 40-42.
[147] Cvetkovich, "Affect," 13.
[148] Wetherell Smith and Campbell, "Introduction," 1; Cvetkovich, "Affect," 13-14.
[149] Cvetkovich, "Affect," 13.
[150] Cvetkovich, "Affect," 13.

While heritage experiences may be deeply emotive (or affective), they may simultaneously do little to trigger critical reflection.[151] An awareness of the role of affect in the ways that heritage experiences are constructed is therefore paramount. What role might affect play in reinforcing the constructs of national identity inherent within the horse discourse? Laurajane Smith's research reveals that many visitors to museums and heritage sites actively seek affective experiences, with a desire to "feel" expressed as part of their motivation for visiting particular sites.[152] This work exposes the tendency among visitors to use heritage sites and experiences as a means to uncritically reinforce—rather than challenge—their identity narratives. This inclination in personal meaning-making was demonstrated regardless of the curatorial intent behind an exhibition,[153] which raises interesting questions about how affect, and exhibition content, might inadvertently interact.

The affective nature of the horse discourse is evident in, among other things, the public investments in the ways this animal is treated, which are most clearly evinced when the standards of what is regarded as acceptable treatment are transgressed. One such example is the passionate outcry over the past, and potential future, culling of brumbies. Popular concern for equine welfare has been expressed at various times throughout modern history; Anna Sewell's enduring nineteenth-century horse story, *Black Beauty*, was written explicitly to raise public awareness of cruelty to carriage horses,[154] and contributed to significant changes in their treatment. That public standards of acceptable treatment towards horses continues to change, even as horses become less ubiquitous, is demonstrated by the increasing discomfort of using the Melbourne Cup as an expression of Australian national identity, as awareness of the problematic nature of the racing industry grows.

The horse discourse retains a high affective register. Owain Jones argues that all inter-species encounters are largely characterised by affect, to the extent that "affects and emotions will always be co-present forces, and are processes through which [cultural and economic] dynamics are channelled or practised."[155] These cultural and economic dynamics recognise the hierarchies of affect. Animals with a higher affective register, such as the horse, represent species in which a higher emotional investment is made. In the current context, this emotion plays a significant role in maintaining the conjuring power of the horse.

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[151] Smith and Campbell, "The Elephant In The Room," 445.
[152] Smith, "Registers Of Engagement," 125.
[153] Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity."
[154] Sewell herself wrote of the book's "Special Aim Being To Induce Kindness, Sympathy And An Understanding Of The Treatment Of Horses." Quoted by Gina M. Dorre, *Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 95.
[155] Jones, "'Who Milks The Cows?'," 426.

I can recall an example from personal experience, when I took a field trip to Kosciuszko National Park in 2015. On that day in late spring, I sat alongside Ranger Rob Gibbs as we drove over the unfolding landscape under a clear blue sky that met the edge of the land with sharp clarity, looking for brumbies. Though I witnessed the banks of watercourses muddied by hoofprints, and smelled the sweet, grassy scent of countless piles of horse dung, we did not spot a single brumby, until, late in the afternoon when we crested a rise on the fire trail and startled a solitary bay stallion. He galloped off, while my hands fought clumsily with the lens cap of my camera, and I caught a glimpse of glossy sleekness, the vitality of taught muscles, and a flowing black tail, before he disappeared down the track. I was absolutely transfixed. While I had an intellectual appreciation for all the ecologically-based arguments put forth regarding the environmental devastation being caused by brumbies, in that moment such ideas were irrelevant. My response was visceral—my heart began pounding; I felt it high up in my chest, and I held my breath, absolutely stunned by the magnificence of this wild animal. This affective response completely bypassed my logical brain, instead prompting an emotional and physical response that drew with immediacy on my own personal memories of horses, both real—early mornings with my pony's soft muzzle blowing misty breaths into the air as we rode through the dawn quiet of Centennial Park—and imagined—reading the *Silver Brumby* as a horse-obsessed tween; the chase sequence at the end of the film version of "The Man from Snowy River"; the trawling of brumby rescue sites and the fantasy of one day rehoming one of these animals myself. Both Wetherell et al and Jones emphasise the role that remembrances of the past play in constructing affective experiences in the present. [156] In the case of my seeing a brumby within KNP first-hand, the affective power of the experience was such that it drew on as many associated memories as could be internally conjured in that one moment. Little wonder then, that the brumby, and the horse, are so loyally defended.

The nature of affect is such that it is difficult both to construct and deconstruct. On one hand, academia—particularly the social sciences and humanities, which rely on language and thought in the interpretation of the representational—struggles to reconcile the affective,[157] while its very intangibility renders it problematic to destabilise. Yet its centrality to the human experience, particularly (in the current context at least) experiences of heritage, makes the accounting, and articulation, of the nature of affect critical. Though Tolia-Kelly et al contend that understanding the intangible aspects of heritage—beliefs, feelings, practices—offers the opportunity to deliver more inclusive heritage,[158] yet as the deeply divisive brumby debates demonstrate, the reverse can also be

[156] Wetherell, Sith and Campbell, "Introduction," 4; Jones, "'Who Milks The Cows?'," 426.
[157] Jones, "'Who Milks The Cows?'," 426.
[158] Tolia-Kelly et al, "Introduction," 3.

true; affect can be harnessed to narratives that are fundamentally exclusionary, and therefore its deployment has equal potential to be divisive. Further, the influence that affect has, and the emotional investments inherent within identity-construction, means that challenging dominant cultural narratives can be felt as personally painful. As Elder writes, "[f]or Australians who benefitted from the dominant stories—mostly Anglo-Australians—it is often experienced in terms of loss and accusation."[159] These feelings of loss and accusation can be seen in the ways that brumby advocates within the Snowy Mountains community have (at least in recent years) tied their cultural identity to the brumby,[160] and their corresponding anger and grief at the suggestion that these animals do not belong within a National Park. Yet these conflations of affect, memory and identity have barely been acknowledged in the current brumby debates, and they remain an ongoing (and unaddressed) point of tension. This highlights the very real ramifications of failing to acknowledge or factor in the role of affect in constructions of heritage and identity, both at the personal level, and more broadly, at the community and/or national level. However, as Elder points out, it is only through highlighting these difficult aspects of our past that new futures can be imagined for Australia,[161] and perhaps it is *here* that affect can be re-constructed and reintegrated, to facilitate a more inclusive heritage.

Finally, affect may be understood to more broadly embrace considerations of the beyond human world.[162] Jopi Nyman sees the affective turn as a point of entry for human-animal studies scholarship, arguing that affect is "the mode through which human and non-human, culture and nature, are shown to be interrelated rather than isolated."[163] In the context of this thesis, then, affect functions as something of a unifying concept, bringing together the elements of post-humanist discourses that have proven influential to my research—animal studies,[164] explorations of agency, and the investigation of 'things'. In this way, drawing on scholarship around affect highlights the recognition "of humans as integrated with animals, things, and nature and to understandings of affective experience as bodily sensation and vital force."[165] This integrative approach is one that underpins the thesis as a whole. However, before moving to a discussion of the relevant Animal Studies scholarship, I now turn to examine the museum institution.

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[159] Elder, *Being Australian*, 352-53.
[160] Pete Minard, "Why Do Brumbies Evoke Such Passion? It's All Down To The High Country's Cultural Myth-Makers," *The Conversation*, June 13, 2018, accessed February 6, 2019 https://theconversation.com/why-do-brumbies-evoke-such-passion-its-all-down-to-the-high-countrys-cultural-myth-makers-97933
[161] Elder, *Being Australian*, 339.
[162] Cvetkovich, "Affect," 16.
[163] Nyman, "Horse As Significant Other," 70.
[164] The field of Animal Studies also has scholarship on the issue of affect—see for example Jopi Nyman and Nora Schuurman, eds, *Affect, Space and Animals* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).
[165] Cvetkovich, "Affect," 16; see also Tolia-Kelly et al, "Introduction," 4.

Museums, nationalism, and the horse

From the phenomena of cognition represented by the prior discussion of collective memory, affect, and emotion, I now move to the more 'public' realm of the museum. In the posthumously published *Our Faithfulness to the Past: the ethics and politics of memory*, Sue Campbell cites memory theorist John Sutton, who writes "no neat division of labour between the cognitive and social sciences can be maintained, because the domain is not neatly sliced into distinct psychological and public aspects which may or may not interact."[166] As if in illustration of Sutton's point, the museum institution can be made relevant to every field drawn on thus far in this literature review, incorporating as it does aspects of nationalism, identity,[167] narrative, history, memory, affect and emotion within its mandate. Further, as a social institution, it actively perpetuates the horse discourse. Given this imbrication, I have chosen it as a site to locate a chapter of the thesis. My rationale is both personal and academic. As touched on earlier, my professional background lies in museums. This gives me both interest in, and insight into, museological practice. Yet beyond its everyday practicalities, the museum functions as a social apparatus,[168] and much scholarship addressing this has been produced in the past two decades. For this reason, it is an ideal site in which to locate one part of this exploration of the horse in the nationalist discourse.

The museum has a long history, having developed from 'cabinets of curiosity' to the institutions we recognise today.[169] Anderson cites the museum (along with the map and the census) as one of the key institutions of power that "profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion".[170] Anderson further contends that museums, and "the museumizing imagination" that they represent, are fundamentally political.[171] Anderson here links the museum apparatus with the role of imagination in constructing nations and nationalism. In doing so, he renders visible the connections between the museum institution, the nation-state, and the fundamentally political work that the museum performs.

In his politically-focused genealogy of the museum, Tony Bennet extends many of the ideas touched on by Anderson, including the role of the museum in the establishment and ongoing power of the modern-day nation-state.[172] For Bennett, museums and galleries function as "a set of educative and civilising agencies [that] have proved remarkably influential cultural technologies in

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[166] Cited in Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past*, 4.
[167] Elder, *Being Australian*, 7.
[168] See for example Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: history, theory, politics* (Oxon: Routledge, 1995).
[169] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 24.
[170] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 163-4.
[171] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 178.
[172] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*.

the degree to which they have recruited the interest and participation of their citizenries."[173] This active and voluntary participation of the modern-day citizenry has, in many ways, contributed to the obscuring of the museum's political aspects. Further, the museum's control by interests invested in maintaining the power of the nation-state—namely the government—while indirect, remains. Through the accepted practice of managing museums and galleries by a Board of Trustees, the hand of Government is less visible—it can control content and policy through its power of appointment, while seemingly removed from the everyday conduct of institutional affairs.[174]

The National Museum of Australia, opened in 2001, provides an apt example of this type of political control over content. The incumbent conservative Coalition government that oversaw the Museum's development and opening appointed renowned conservatives—including then-Prime Minister John Howard's speech-writer Christopher Pearson, former Liberal Party president Tony Staley, and Howard's official biographer David Barnett—to the Museum's Council. Prior to opening, Barnett expressed his concerns regarding the Museum becoming "a contributor to the reworking of Australian history into political correctness", as well as a lack of "founding fathers" within exhibition content.[175] These criticisms, most frequently voiced by members of the conservative right,[176] continued to dog the Museum after opening, and it soon faced the ignominy of a formal review of its content (subsequently known as the 2003 Carroll Review). The fallout from this political intervention lasted years. For instance, in 2006 the Collections Committee (a working group within the broader Museum Council), which numbered supporters of the conservative Liberal Party among the majority of its members, rejected the advice of the Museum's internal Acquisitions and Collections Group to acquire a 1997 painting depicting a massacre of Aboriginal people by Aboriginal artist Queenie McKenzie.[177] According to the Museum's then-Director Craddock Morton, the Committee view was that "the painting depicted an event which did not occur—that is, a massacre involving white people—[and] the painting did not fulfil the criteria for acceptance into the [National Historical] Collection."[178] John Howard was clear that he wished to avoid any sort of "black arm band" interpretation of history at the National Museum, and, by stacking the Museum Council with those

[173] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 66.
[174] Nicholas Pearson, cited in Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 66.
[175] Guy Hansen, "White Hot History: The Review Of The National Museum Of Australia," *Public History Review* 11 (2004): 40-41.
[176] A succinct account of these can be found in Hansen, "White Hot History," 40.
[177] Paul Daley, "What Became Of The Mistake Creek Massacre?" *Global Mail* July 4, 2013, accessed October 15, 2013 https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/jul/04/mistake-creek-massacre-indigenous-painting
[178] Craddock Morton, Department of Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Legislation Committee hearing, May 24, 2006, transcript accessed June 24, 2018 http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id:committees%2Festimate%2F9344%2F0013

of the same political persuasion, set out “to ensure that our history as a nation is not written definitively by those who take the view that Australians should apologise for most of it.”[179]

The National Museum of Australia became an unwitting battleground for what has come to be known in Australia as the History Wars,[180] with the Mistake Creek massacre painting representing just one casualty of this period.[181] This example illustrates Wertsch’s contention that maintaining the distinction between history and collective memory is problematic and may in fact be a false dichotomy. He points out that “official histories produced by the state and unofficial histories produced outside its purview both include elements of collective remembering as well as history.”[182] Given this tension between history and memory, it could even be argued that (particularly in the case of social history museums), the processes of museology represent an attempt to relocate material culture from one context (memory), into another (history), through inscribing upon collection objects an institutional biography, which serves to legitimise them as ‘historical’.

The processes through which significance is constructed by museums are invisible, a fact that has been noted as problematic by a number of curators and scholars of museology.[183] James B. Gardner, former Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs, National Museum of American History (Smithsonian Institution), fears that the public have overlooked the core function of museums as sites of *interpretation*. That is, the museum actively mediates between the object and the meaning that is ascribed to it. Further, there are perspectives, choices, and arguments inherent in exhibitions that are rendered invisible.[184] Gardner writes:

> The public needs to understand how museums have shifted from preoccupation with the authenticity of artefacts to issues of significance and meaning; that the selection of artefacts for exhibition is itself a subjective act, a way of shaping

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[179] John Howard, “The Liberal Tradition: The Beliefs And Values Which Guide The Federal Government,” Sir Robert Menzies Lecture, 1996. Transcript accessed September 6, 2018 http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-10171

[180] Margaret Anderson, “Museums, History, And The Creation Of Memory: 1970-2008,” in *Understanding Museums: Australian Museums and Museology*, ed. Des Griffin and Leon Paroissien. Accessed November 17, 2017 http://nma.gov.au/research/understanding-museums/MAnderson_2011.html

[181] Happily, with a change of Museum Council came a change of focus, and the painting was formally acquired into the National Heritage Collection in 2012. See Daley, “Mistake Creek Massacre”.

[182] Wertsch, *Voices*, 20.

[183] See for example James B. Gardner, “Contested Terrain: History, Museums, And The Public,” *The Public Historian* 26 (2004): 13-15; Guy Hansen, “There Is No ‘I’ In Team: Reflections On Team-Based Content Development At The National Museum Of Australia,” *Public History Review* 17 (2010): 18; Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, “Objects And The Museum,” *Isis* 96, no. 4 (2005):559-571.

[184] Gardner, “Contested Terrain,” 13.

> perspective, establishing point of view; and that artefacts never simply stand as objective evidence.[185]

Museums are both political, and social, institutions.[186] Significantly, they deal with constructs pertaining to the past, and function as sites where, through the use of material culture, a particular notion of the past is conserved, curated, and consumed by the public. This renders the public obliviousness to the issue of institutional subjectivity raised by Gardner problematic.

Within Australia, museums figure significantly in the dissemination of the national horse discourse, though scant literature on this subject exists. It is my contention that the equine significance narrative is indivisible from the popular mythology of the horse, and that both find ready expression in the museum context. For example, much of the cultural 'work' that Phar Lap does as a national identity figure is either directly through, or supported by, his existence within the various museums that house his assorted remains. I have argued elsewhere that Phar Lap's continued significance is a direct corollary of his perpetual presence in the museum.[187] Phar Lap represents the opposite of the adage 'out of sight, out of mind', and the museum institution is integral to his ongoing role in Australian cultural identity. Beyond Phar Lap, the museum institution plays a notable role in perpetuating the horse discourse. This is a circular, self-referential process; it hinges on horse-derived material being donated to the museum, on the understanding that the material is culturally 'important'; the material is then displayed, reinforcing this narrative of significance. Therefore, rather than impregnable bastions of culture whose influence is disseminated outwards, museums and their visitors interact in a much more fluid way. This may be seen as part of a wider trend, a result of the 'relational turn' that characterises post-New Museology practice, where museums are positioned as places of connection rather than classification[188] (or, as some would have it, entertainment rather than education).[189] Regardless, the fact remains that the public perception of horses as significant has inevitably shaped their appearance within the museum context.

The animal 'Other'

The theoretical positions outlined thus far relate broadly to ideas of nation, constructions of identity particular to Australia, and the expression of nationalism through collective memory, emotion, and

[185] Gardner, "Contested Terrain," 15.
[186] Gardner, "Contested Terrain," 15.
[187] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[188] Duncan Grewcock, *Doing Museology Differently* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 5.
[189] Max Ross, "Interpreting The New Museology," *Museum and Society* 2, no. 2 (July 2004): 89.

heritage. Equally relevant however, is the field of Animal Studies. Within this framework, the subjectivity of the horse exists in complete opposition to its objectification within the museum context and must be accounted for. While this is not an Animal Studies (or human-animal studies) thesis, this field underpins much of the work, and provides a useful perspective for considering the ways the horse is culturally constructed, and the humanistic agendas it is deployed in.

Contemporary Animal Studies scholarship posits that animals are valued either instrumentally, or intrinsically, two differing, and socially constructed, frames of reference.[190] The instrumental position values animals for the work they do or tasks they perform, such as chickens laying eggs for human consumption, or sheep for their wool and/or meat. This approach towards animals is not limited to industrial or farm animals. Even most pets are instrumentally regarded, given the expectation of companionship or entertainment they provide. Instrumentality, or utilitarianism, renders animals as essentially tools for human use. An animal's intrinsic worth, on the other hand, lies in nothing more than its essential self. The admiration of the grace shown by a wedge-tailed eagle, soaring high above on invisible thermal currents, is one example.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that constructions of the horse as significant in Australia, particularly in the context of Australia's past, tend to emphasize their instrumentality. Their importance is measured in direct proportion to the service they provide, and they are typically accompanied by a human co-agent. Examples of such constructions include the purported significance of horses in the exploration of the continent, and their role alongside Australian soldiers in times of war, in particular the Light Horse units during World War I. In exploring the notion of the horse as an historical agent, I draw particularly on the work of Gary David Shaw. Shaw constructs the concept of the "unity", in which the horse-and-rider are envisioned as a single force and posits that an animal cannot have historical agency unless accompanied by a human co-agent.[191] Testing Shaw's hypothesis in the context of Australian history poses some challenging questions; it subsequently reveals both the instrumentality of the horse in Australia, and the anthropocentrism of academic history.[192]

There are, however, some few instances where it may be argued that horses are regarded for their intrinsic actions. The detrimental effects caused by the brumbies that roam the Australian alpine wilderness of Kosciuszko National Park are frequently ascribed by their detractors to their

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[190] Caroline Winter, "Loving Thoroughbreds To Death: Conflicting Values In Leisure Experience," *Annals of Leisure Research* 20, no. 5 (2017): 580.
[191] David Gary Shaw, "The Torturer's Horse: Agency And Animals In History," *History and Theory, Theme Issue 52* (2013): 161-2.
[192] See Chapter 3.

agency. In this case, the horses cannot be seen in any way as being wilfully or deliberately engaged in environmental vandalism; yet in enacting the biological processes of their existence—eating, defecating, breeding—they cause significant damage to highly fragile eco-systems. On the other side of the brumby debate, it may initially be argued that the brumbies of the Snowy River region are valued by their supporters for their intrinsic qualities. These wild or feral horses ostensibly have no human companions or relationships, and the beguiling notion of freedom and wildness that they evoke is often cited in their favour. However, the association these horses have with issues of settler identity and belonging renders the intrinsic animal subordinate to what is essentially an anthropomorphised construction. Rather than upholding their intrinsic value, this humancentric projection reveals the brumbies to function as instrumental, their worth so thoroughly intertwined with the identity narratives they have been constructed alongside.

Anthropomorphism

Bearing in mind the symbolic deployment of the brumby just discussed, it is worth turning briefly to a discussion of anthropomorphism. Unpacking this concept and the ways in which it is constructed is integral to the philosophical stance taken in this thesis. One of the most visible contexts in which anthropomorphism occurs is in the human assuming an animal voice, particularly through fiction. Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty*, touched on earlier, is a well-known example. While the alterity of animals—meaning that we cannot ever really know or communicate what an animal might be thinking[193]—is a given, the more interesting question is whether we should try.

The anthropomorphising of animals is often criticised, though the Australian eco-feminist writer Val Plumwood argued that to dismiss anthropomorphism out of hand is to deny that there are any overlapping characteristics between human and non-human animals. [194] The problem, writes Plumwood, lies with an *anthropocentric* anthropomorphism.[195] While these two constructs exist on a continuum,[196] for ease of discussion they will be regarded here as distinct. In distinguishing between anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism, the former can be loosely defined as attributing human characteristics to an animal,[197] while the latter stems from an ideology in which the human is separate from, and superior to, the animal world. These two concepts interplay constantly, often problematically, in representations of animals. In addressing this difficulty, Plumwood writes:

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[193] Margo DeMello, "Introduction," in *Speaking for Animals: animal autobiographical writing*, edited by Margo DeMello (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1; John Simons, *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), 117.
[194] Val Plumwood, *The Eye of the Crocodile*, edited by Lorraine Shannon (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2012), 66-7.
[195] Plumwood, *Eye of the Crocodile* (my italics).
[196] Plumwood, *Eye of the Crocodile*, 66-68.
[197]A discussion of whether these characteristics are perceived as *uniquely* human is beyond the scope of this thesis, however Val Plumwood's *The Eye of the Crocodile* offers a nuanced discussion of the subject.

> The problems in representing another species' speech or subjectivity in human terms are real, but they do not rule out such representation in any general way, and they pale before the difficulties of failing to represent them at all, or before the enormity of representing communicative and intentional beings as beings lacking all communicative and mental capacity. That is a much greater inaccuracy and injustice than any anthropomorphism.

Nonetheless, the challenge of how to redress the issue remains. Both Plumwood and fellow Animal Studies scholar Margo DeMello suggest that the limits of representation and language can, to some extent, be ameliorated through poetry and fiction.[198] Adopting the animal voice through fiction in order to highlight the suffering of animals is a technique that has been drawn on in Western literature for centuries.[199] In this context, the representation of animals can function to minimise, or altogether erase, the human/non-human animal divide.

Examples of equine representation range from the nineteenth century novel *Black Beauty*, to a contemporary piece intended to raise awareness of the welfare of race horses by writer Rosanna Beatrice Stevens.[200] In "Interviews with The Other Three Quarters," Stevens 'interviews' three fictional horses from different equestrian backgrounds. The horses are an Arabian hacking pony named Mirabelle Have You Met Miss Jones?, a barrel racer known as Hank, and an Olympic dressage champion who failed at racing under the name My Good Luck but made her dressage success with the moniker Sweetbones. These names are important; as Sweetbones points out, "humans need names so they can call us things— distinguish between us in radio commentary or on a television screen."[201] The understanding of the horse as a human construct is both highlighted and subverted throughout the article, the title of which refers to the amount of effort required of equine athletes, in comparison to their human counterparts. While Stevens, playing the role of interviewer, recounts in journalistic fashion the statistics associated with racehorse wastage—that of every 1000 thoroughbred pregnancies, only 300 of the resulting foals will actually race; that between 22,000-32,000 horses are slaughtered each year in Australia, around 40% of which are racehorses—it is through the fictional voice of Sweetbones that these facts are rendered more powerful:

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[198] Val Plumwood, "Nature In The Active Voice," *Australian Humanities Review* 46 (2009), 126; DeMello, "Introduction," 7-9.

[199] DeMello, "Introduction," 8.

[200] Rosanna Beatrice Stevens, personal communication, July 20, 2019.

[201] Rosanna Beatrice Stevens, "Interviews With The Other Three Quarters," *Seizure* 5 (2013), accessed March 19, 2014 http://www.seizureonline.com/content/interviews-with-the-other-three-quarters?rq=the%20other%20three%20quarters

> The truck reeked – you could smell it before it had arrived. I don't know if your type can smell things like fear, um, but fear – it has many different scents. A stale shit smell is a big giveaway that something is wrong, but so's the stink of thousands of exhausted athletes all coming from the gaping jaw of a rusty truck.[202]

While Stevens has created distinctive voices for her characters, she has also incorporated vivid descriptions of particularly equine behaviour—Miss Jones "shifting the weight of her rump from one back leg to the other and snorting at the end of an exhale", Hank scratching himself against a tree, "[h]is lip curl[ed] up in delight, exposing pink flesh and gums, and green-stained teeth." Here, Stevens' knowledge of equine behaviour allows her to render her equine creations three dimensionally, and gives them depth and authenticity.[203] Further, the emphasis on these non-verbal cues returns attention to the horse's physical subjugation, which is reiterated by each of the horses themselves. From Sweetbones' recollections of being physically restrained while being mated with a stallion to Miss Jones discussing being smacked with a riding crop, these illustrations of human control underscore Stevens' concerns regarding the racing industry. The article represents an effective example of giving voice to the non-human. It offers an insight into equine subjectivity, even while communicating the concerns of its human author.[204]

In most respects, the realm of fiction and the animal voice lies outside the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, the issue of representation remains relevant. Both "The Man from Snowy River" and Elyne Mitchell's series of *Silver Brumby* books are works of fiction, and both continue to characterise certain representations of Australia and Australianness through their depictions of horses. I will not delve further into the concepts of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism here, though these terms will be used throughout the thesis.

Performing animality

Contiguous to the issue of anthropomorphism is the ways animals are defined in opposition to humans. Historian Dominick LaCapra, in his text *History and its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence,* reflects on this desire to separate humanity from the animal, which, he argues, has been evident throughout human history. LaCapra questions this insistence on a distinction between human and

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[202] Stevens, "The Other Three Quarters."
[203] DeMello, *Speaking for Animals*, 7.
[204] Isa Menzies, "From The Horse's Mouth," Horses for Discourses blog, March 19, 2014 https://horsesfordiscourses.wordpress.com/2014/03/19/from-the-horses-mouth/

animal, and the motivations that underlie it. Further, he questions whether humanism has always required an 'other' against which to project negatively. As post-modernism has increasingly given voice to women and non-European/colonised peoples, animals remain the last bastion of otherness.[205] The ascription of animalistic characteristics often equates with denigration, though, as LaCapra points out, the behaviours that are negatively perceived as animalistic or bestial—victimisation, torture, and genocide—are in fact distinctly human in their delivery.[206] Conversely, many positive descriptions of animals have humanity as their reference point, for example the lion being constructed as 'the King of the beasts'.

Though LaCapra contends that it is fundamental to notions of humanity, and what it means to be human, to be constructed *against* the animal,[207] it is worth querying whether the gap between human and non-human animals is as insurmountable as we are enculturated to believe, or whether it is simply another anthropocentric human construct. Psychologist Thomas Suddendorf has documented evidence that indicates homo sapiens occupied the planet simultaneously to other hominids, including H. erectus, H. neanderthalensis, and the Florensis and Denisova hominids.[208] Suddendorf argues that it is *because* these other hominids are extinct that the chasm between human and animal appears so great. Further, Suddendorf believes that these extinctions were, at least in part, due to the deliberate actions of Homo sapiens.[209] Suddendorf's findings not only provide an insight into why the human/non-human animal divide seems a legitimate distinction, they also reinforce LaCapra's contention that Homo sapiens has always needed an 'other' against which to define itself.

Another distinction between the human and non-human animal is articulated by scholar of literature John Simons. In his book focusing on the literary representations of animals, *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation*, Simons distinguishes human from non-human animals, not through definitions based on physiology or consciousness, but through the notion of performance. That is, while we perform being human, animals do not perform themselves. [210] Simons contends that "we can say that a non-human is an animal which cannot perform. This

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[205] Dominic LaCapra, *History and its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 152.
[206] LaCapra, *History and its Limits,* 156.
[207] LaCapra, *History and its Limits,* 155.
[208] Thomas Suddendorf, "What Sets Us Apart From The Animals?" Ockham's Razor, Radio National, March 7, 2014, accessed September 23, 2015 http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/5303368
[209] Suddendorf, "What Sets Us Apart."
[210] Simons, *Animal Rights*, 8-9. See also Shelly R. Scott, "The Racehorse As Protagonist: Agency, Independence, And Improvisation," in *Animals and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, edited by Sarah E. McFarland and Ryan Hediger (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 49.

argument is important for the understanding of the ways in which animals appear in necessarily human cultural products", which include representations from film to literature to museum exhibitions.[211] Though animals can perform tricks, this is not the same in nature as the performance that defines (and enables) the human being. Further, an argument can be made that an animal that has been trained to perform *reinforces* the notion that only humans perform—this animal is performing, both literally and figuratively, the human idea of its animal-ness. This concept becomes particularly interesting when combined with notions of anthropomorphism. If we accept that we can never really understand the consciousness of a non-human animal (discussed in greater detail in the next section), then it might be argued that all animal performance is anthropomorphic. That is, we are projecting our own ideas of *what the animal is* onto the tasks we ask it to perform.

In the case of the horse, it is worth considering what ideas of 'the horse' are most widely performed. These would constitute the equestrian sports and disciplines, the principals of which are dressage, show-jumping, eventing, and horse racing. For example, within the discipline of dressage, which has its origins in mounted war manoeuvres, the natural gaits and movements of the horse have been refined (or perhaps exaggerated) into a particular set of standard moves. These are best embodied by the Lipizzaner horses (and particularly the stallions), who perform these movements for audiences around the world.[212] As all equestrian disciplines could arguably serve as evidence of the horse being 'performed', they could all similarly be accused of having anthropomorphism at their core—that is, the horse is being asked to perform a *human* construct of itself, for the benefit (being primarily entertainment) of humans.

One of the defences offered by racing enthusiasts when the sport is criticised is that horses love to run,[213] and they are just doing what comes naturally. Such reasoning fits within the category of animal-performance-as-anthropomorphism. Humans, as naturally performative beings, are conceptualising animal behaviours within a humanistic framework. While the galloping gait is indeed natural (as are many of the prancing and leaping movements of dressage), racing's uneasy relationship with natural equine behaviour is evident in the removal of the jockey. Without this

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[211] Simons, *Animal Rights*, 10.
[212] YouTube has many examples. One such is "The World Famous Lipizzaner Stallions," by David Belenzon, published November 7, 2007, accessed April 16, 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vY3wmWT-sb8
[213] Andrew Lemon, "Racing Scandal Is Shocking. But We've Seen Worse," smh.com February 3, 2019, accessed April 18, 2019 https://www.smh.com.au/sport/racing/racing-scandal-is-shocking-but-we-ve-seen-worse-20190201-p50v44.html; Anita Lyons, "Melbourne Cup 2018: Australians Boycott The Race That Stops The Nation: Nup To The Cup!" *Now to Love,* November 6, 2018, accessed April 16, 2019 https://www.nowtolove.com.au/news/local-news/melbourne-cup-2018-nup-to-the-cup-52266; News Corp Australia, "Are Opponents Of Melbourne Cup Fun-Hating Whingers Or Worried Animal Activists With A Point?" News.com.au November 7, 2017, accessed April 19, 2019 https://www.news.com.au/sport/superracing/melbourne-cup/are-opponents-of-melbourne-cup-funhating-whingers-or-worried-animal-activists-with-a-point/news-story/b3d121acfc49b8028b9598f09492985f

human impetus, it seems unlikely that the horse would continue to run at a full gallop along a set course. Were the equestrian to be removed from the back of any racehorse/dressage horse/eventer/showjumper, the horse would most likely cease galloping/prancing/jumping. This is not to say that a horse will not independently demonstrate any of these behaviours, but, being unprompted by humans, those acts would remain the horse's own. Thus, the performance of 'the horse' is revealed *only* in its interactions with humans. Scholar of performance studies Shelly R. Scott has argued that racehorses are anthropomorphised in order to position them as protagonists in high-drama narratives.[214] Many of Scott's American case studies are relevant to the Australian context. For example, she cites the winner of the 2004 Kentucky Derby, Smarty Jones, who, similarly to Phar Lap, was constructed in the media "as the protagonist in an underdog, against-all-odds fairytale".[215] In another example reminiscent of Phar Lap, when twentieth-century racehorse Man O' War died in 1947 he was embalmed and lay in state while 2,000 people filed by his coffin over three days as a mark of respect.[216] It is Scott's contention that framing these animals thus actively disempowers them: "By constructing the horses in terms usually reserved for humans, we reduce the animals to mere personalities instead of recognising them as individuals we cannot fully comprehend."[217] There appears to be widespread consensus among those writing on the politics of animal representation that the ways in which we construct animals is further evidence of our anthropocentrism.[218]

Constructing the horse in Australia

The various ways the horse is constructed in Australia reveals much about the underlying cultural 'work' performed by this animal. Scholar Adrian Franklin has argued that Australia, among all nations of the world, is unique for its ability to concurrently position animals as pests, as part of Aboriginal cosmology, and as comestibles.[219] He cites the buffalo as an example of an animal which, in the Northern Territory, has been embraced by Aboriginal communities,[220] while simultaneously vexing National Parks authorities, and also frequently featuring on the tourist menu. The eastern grey

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[214] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 45.
[215] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 46.
[216] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 46.
[217] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 46.
[218] See for example Steve Baker, *Picturing the Beast: Animals, identity, and representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Donna Landry, "English Brutes, Eastern Enlightenment," *Eighteenth Century* 52, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 11-30; Simons, *Animal Rights.*
[219] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 3.
[220] David Trigger also noted the way the buffalo has generally been incorporated into Aboriginal cosmologies across most of the Northern Territory, though he notes the findings of Deborah Bird Rose, whose research among the Wagait people noted the negative impact of this animal. See Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs'," 628-646.

kangaroo is another animal that comes to mind as a more local example, particularly in urban Canberra, where culling is intermittently carried out.[221] Public attitudes to the culling of different species are revealing, with vast differences in the ways different species are defended against lethal control. This is not limited to non-native species such as brumbies, but, as with the kangaroo (an animal that appears on Australia's coat of arms), includes the culling of native species also.[222] It is Franklin's contention that the dissonance implicit in this divergence of meanings is symptomatic of a lack of clarity regarding what it means to be Australian.[223]

Franklin highlights that animals are bound up with nationalist discourses in particular ways, as nations are imagined in part through an ideology of kinship with 'Mother Nature', which includes animals.[224] He writes:

> Science might choose a classificatory framework to distinguish animals but it cannot control how those same animals enter into our language as metaphors, or metonyms, the ways in which the animals come to represent something other than themselves.[225]

How we act towards an animal that carries social or symbolic meaning serves to reinforce that meaning. In a nationalistic context, an animal that is associated with a nation encourages positive interaction, and every such positive act serves to endorse the nation or group it stands for.[226] Within this context, the overwhelmingly positive attitude toward the horse by (settler) Australians can be read as a positive view of (settler) Australia as a whole. Conversely, criticism of the horse (or the brumby) can also be inferred as criticism against Australia. How the horse is construed and understood within that is worth examining.

The word 'horse' can be understood in several different ways according to the context in which it is used. To continue drawing on the example used previously, a brumby is a horse—it is not genetically distinct from any of the domesticated horses living in paddocks or stables throughout Australia. Yet in the national imagination, the brumby is distinguished from the tame or companion horse. It is important to recognise that these diverse understandings of the same term are not

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[221] "2018 Conservation Cull," ACT Government Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate—Environment webpage, accessed November 28, 2018, https://www.environment.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/plants-and-animals/urban_wildlife/local_wildlife/kangaroos/2018-conservation-cull

[222] Isa Menzies, "Culling Koalas," Horses for Discourses, March 11, 2015 https://horsesfordiscourses.wordpress.com/2015/03/11/culling-koalas/

[223] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 4.

[224] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 4.

[225] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 5.

[226] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 6-7.

completely distinct from each other, and that the affective power of one type of horse inevitably influences regard for the other. As discussed previously, the fictional nineteenth-century herd of "wild bush horses" captured by the Man who hailed from Snowy River is inevitably conjured in contemporary discussions of brumby management and control in the High Country. This echoes the previously-cited works of both Campbell and Wertsch, who separately highlight the ways that cultural 'memories' interact with the needs of the present, melding with received knowledge to produce highly variable recollections,[227] or what Wertsch describes as a "usable past".[228] This further illustrates the evocative power inherent within constructions of the horse, which invoke narratives that have become central to our manufactured Australian identity.

Yet it is my contention that in all contexts, the horse in Australia functions instrumentally. This is the case both literally—such as the advantage it gave settlers in colonising Australia—or figuratively, for example as an entirely fictional human construct—a symbol of Australian-ness that is drawn from the human imagination and contains no actual 'horse DNA'. There is an understanding within the anthropological discourse that our attitudes to animals reveal not only our attitude to 'others', but also to ourselves.[229] Steve Baker, in his pivotal text on the cultural imagery associated with animals, *Picturing the Beast: Animals, identity, and representation*, argues that all representations of animals are essentially representations of humans.[230] John Simons concurs, arguing that "the non-human experience cannot be reproduced but only represented. … In other words, no human is capable of sufficient understanding of the non-human to act as its reproducer."[231] Ultimately, then, Simons must conclude alongside Baker that all animal representations are based on the subjectivity of the human condition: "Every time we represent an animal we are, however hard we try and however much we wish it was different, engaging in an act which, to a greater or lesser degree, appropriates the non-human experience as an index of humanness."[232] Given this, what do representations of the horse then reveal about Australian identity?

Colonisation, frontier wars, belonging, and the horse

Historian Henry Reynolds argues that frontier violence characterised Australian life for more than half the duration of white settlement, from within a few weeks of the British arrival at Sydney Cove,

[227] Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past*, 11.
[228] Wertsch, *Voices*, 31.
[229] Smith, "The Howl And The Pussy," 290.
[230] Baker, *Picturing the Beast*.
[231] Simons, *Animal Rights,* 86.
[232] Simons, *Animal Rights,* 87.

until the 1930s.[233] While the realities of frontier conflict are widely accepted among historians today,[234] few refer to the horse. Reynolds, along with military historian John Connor, appear to be the only ones who refer explicitly to the significance of the horse in the colonisation process and associated frontier wars. In *Fate of a Free People*, Reynolds writes that "[t]he difficulties of the Tasmanian settlers underlined the importance of horses in the conflict between European colonists and the Aborigines."[235] Elsewhere, he acknowledges that "given their superior weapons and, above all, the mobility provided by their horses, many more blacks died than did whites."[236] Connor's 2002 military history *The Australian Frontier Wars* is peppered throughout with references to the horse.[237] In the below extract, Connor details four key tactical advantages that use of the horse granted colonists:

> First, Aborigines who had never seen these large animals before were naturally intimidated at the sight of a man on horseback. Second, horses finally gave the British the extra mobility, both in speed and range, necessary to pursue raiding parties effectively. No matter how quickly Aborigines could move through the bush, mounted policemen or settlers could move faster, and this enabled the British advantage in firearms to be brought to its full effect. Third, a mounted man's height advantage over a man on foot gave the mounted policeman a greater field of vision, and it was difficult for Aboriginal warriors to defeat a man on a horse. Finally, the bulk of the horse itself could be used as a weapon, especially effective when attacking camps.[238]

As a military historian, Connor is well-placed to assess the strategic advantage of the horse in the context of war, and in this summation, we see the role this animal played was considerable. Yet this aspect of Australia's horse history is continually overlooked, even amid the growing recognition of the realities of frontier violence.[239]

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[233] Henry Reynolds, "The Written Record," in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, eds Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 79.
[234] See for example Lyndall Ryan, "Untangling Aboriginal Resistance And The Settler Punitive Expedition: The Hawkesbury River Frontier In New South Wales, 1794-1810," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15, no. 2 (2013): 219-232; Connor, *Australian Frontier Wars*; Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster, *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003); Henry Reynolds, *This Whispering in our Hearts* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998).
[235] Henry Reynolds, *Fate of a Free People* (Melbourne: Penguin, 2004), 71.
[236] Reynolds, "The Written Record," 85.
[237] Connor, *Australian Frontier Wars*.
[238] Connor, *Australian Frontier Wars*, 67.
[239] For example, see the continually updated Colonial and Frontier Massacres 1788-1930 map compiled by The University of Newcastle's Centre for 21st Century Humanities https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php

The exact number of Aboriginal people killed in frontier conflicts during the process of Australia's colonisation remains a matter of contention and debate.[240] An estimated ratio agreed upon by several historians is an average figure of ten Aboriginals for every white settler.[241] This amounts to somewhere between 18-20,000 Aboriginal people killed as a result of Australia's colonisation.[242] And here, the horse's role was integral. This largely unacknowledged aspect of Australia's past represents a critical insight into the nature of the horse's significance. Now, however, I turn to the invisibility of the horse within the narrative of colonisation.

The term 'horse' is absent from the Index of any historical text I consulted, with the exception of Connor's text, and a 2003 publication titled *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, edited by Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster, where the reference links to the now-familiar citation of Reynolds in relation to the absence of horses in Tasmania.[243] Notably however, the book's cover features a reproduction of a work titled "A fight at the Murray", by WA Cawthorne (1844), which shows ten mounted troopers that are surrounding and shooting at a cluster of Aboriginals, who are all on foot and wielding spears (see Figure 1.2). In spite of Reynolds and Connor having touched on the importance of the horse, it appears that the horse's role in frontier conflicts remains largely invisible.

There is, however, a small but noteworthy body of literature that explores the metaphorical underbelly of the horse as a figure in the Australian cultural imagination. Cameron Forbes's *Australia on Horseback: The Story of the Horse and the Making of a Nation,* while not an academic text, draws on primary and secondary source material to present a well-researched account of the horse in Australia. The book as a whole suffers from a lack of coherence,[244] and one reviewer felt that the equine aspect was less of an overarching principle, and more of a "recurring but thin coincidence that its cast of characters quite often arrive in a saddle."[245] However, as a text intended for popular consumption, it does contribute to the understanding that Australia's colonial frontiers were not peacefully settled. Even more significantly, the book explores in some detail on the role of the horse in these frontier wars. Forbes unflinchingly charts the "pestilence, war, famine and death [that]

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[240] Richard Broome, "The Statistics Of Frontier Conflict," in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, eds Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 88-98; Lyndall Ryan, "Waterloo Creek Northern New South Wales, 1838," in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, eds Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 33-43.
[241] Broome, "Statistics Of Frontier Conflict," 89-90, 95.
[242] Broome, "Statistics Of Frontier Conflict," 89-90, 96-97.
[243] Broome, "Statistics Of Frontier Conflict," 89.
[244] Isa Menzies, "Review: 'Australia On Horseback' By Cameron Forbes," *Horses for Discourses* blog post May 20, 2015, https://horsesfordiscourses.wordpress.com/2015/05/20/review-australia-on-horseback-by-cameron-forbes/
[245] Jonathan Green, "How Australia Rode Through History On The Horse's Back," *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 29, 2014, accessed April 7, 2015 https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/how-australia-rode-through-history-on-the-horses-back-20141121-11qqzr.html

would ride on horseback through the land of many Aboriginal clans in the settling of Australia."[246] Though the horse's role in frontier violence is not the sole focus of the book, Forbes' work in this area undeniably addresses a significant gap in the Australian studies discourse.

Figure 1.2: W. A. Cawthorne, 1844, *A Fight at the Murray*. Image courtesy Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

The uncomfortable truths of Australia's bloody colonisation are deeply interwoven with the issue of belonging.[247] Karen Welberry's short but significant article "Wild Horses and Wild Mountains in the Australian Cultural Imaginary" has focused in particular on the role of the brumby in mediating these anxieties of belonging among settler Australians.[248] Welberry is one of the few scholars to observe the unproblematic acceptance of the brumby narrative, and the lack of critical engagement with the horse in Australia.[249] Drawing upon Elynne Mitchell's *Silver Brumby* series of children's books, she contends that the brumby acts to justify a white presence in the landscape.[250] This thesis builds on Welberry's understanding of the brumby as a legitimising presence, and argues that this animal functions as a potent symbol of naturalisation for settler Australians.

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[246] Cameron Forbes, *Australia on Horseback: The Story of the Horse and the Making of a Nation* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2014), 70.

[247] See for example Elder, *Being Australian*; Peter Pierce, *The Country of Lost Children: An Australian Anxiety* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Lisa Slater, "Anxious Settler Belonging: Actualising The Potential For Making Resilient Postcolonial Subjects," *M/C Journal* 16 (2013), accessed July 1, 2014 http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/viewArticle/705.

[248] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 23-32.

[249] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 23-4.

[250] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 24-5.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the diverse scholarship that frames this thesis. At its broadest, the thesis is underpinned by ideas relating to the ways in which nations are formed and performed. Here, the imagined community articulated by Anderson highlights the imaginary nature of the nation-state, while narrative forms one cultural tool through which it is constituted. Wertsch's identification of the schematic narrative templates offers a useful approach through which the horse as a narrative construct can be explored, particularly where the trope of the underdog is emphasised. In the context of Australian national identity specifically, the thesis is informed by feminist scholarship, which identifies constructs of masculinity as central to understandings of Australianness.

Within this intellectual scaffolding, I introduced literature from two seemingly opposite fields—the museum, which deals in things and objects; and Animal Studies, which attempts to reposition animals as agents. The museum context represents one avenue through which the horse discourse is disseminated and maintained, in particular through the museum's emphasis on narrative. As this chapter has already noted, narrative plays a significant role in establishing and reinforcing national identities. Unique to the museum context, however, is the use of material culture in the support of nationalist discourses. Conversely, the field of Animal Studies offers an approach that reveals the ways different animals are perceived and valued, either instrumentally, or intrinsically. Applying an Animal Studies perspective to the horse discourse exposes the inherently anthropocentric and utilitarian attitudes to this animal, which then facilitates the horse's deployment within humanist agendas, particularly in a symbolic capacity. This in turn discloses the cultural 'work' the horse is tasked with in the context of Australian national identity.

Catriona Elder has effectively argued that settler belonging in Australia is predicated upon the "barely acknowledged understanding that any land non-Indigenous people have directly correlates to land that Indigenous people have lost."[251] Correspondingly, the stories we tell—in the media, through film and television, within our cultural institutions—about the ways in which we belong to this land as Australians reflect a particular kind of belonging; a peculiarly *white* belonging, where Aboriginality is often rendered tokenistic at best, invisible at worst. This, writes Elder, "is the ambivalence so often underlining non-Indigenous stories of being Australian, of being at home."[252] In

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[251] Elder, *Being Australian*, 309.
[252] Elder, *Being Australian*, 332.

exploring these stories of identity and belonging, we find, again and again, the figure of the horse. This thesis sets out to critically engage with why this might be.

Chapter 2: Methodology and methods

Methodological overview

The broad intellectual terrain described within this thesis is considered as 'Australian culture', where culture is defined, according to anthropological terms, as "pertain[ing] to that proportion of human knowledge and ways of doing things that is acquired, learned and constructed, that is, not innate to the newborn child."[253] My specific focus lies within constructions of nationalism, and its realisation through identity narratives that feature the horse. This research is positioned within the field of Cultural Studies, and takes an interdisciplinary approach, including adopting a mixed-methods research strategy. In addition to generating primary data through a collection survey and stakeholder interviews, I have also drawn significantly from existing literature, the practice of object biography, and a blog that I published during my candidature. These methods, and the overarching research framing and rationale, are detailed in this chapter.

Cultural Studies is an academic framework that supports a diversity of approaches being brought together to analyse a particular cultural phenomenon.[254] It can broadly be defined as a post-structuralist mode of inquiry, rather than a strictly-defined discipline.[255] In the current context, the phenomenon being researched is the nature of the significance of the horse to Australian understandings of national identity. This topic is particularly suited to the field of Cultural Studies due to the diversity and breadth of the horse discourse across Australian cultural representations, and within Australian culture more broadly. Further, Cultural Studies has been recognised as a discipline that asks about the methodological implications of being inside one's object of study.[256] This is particularly pertinent here, where I, the researcher, am not only a member of the society and culture under investigation (white, settler Australia), but I am also embedded in this thesis in other ways, having worked at a site that promulgates the equine significance discourse (the National Museum of Australia), and in that role been actively engaged in its dissemination (interpreting the horse Phar Lap through exhibition, written publications, and conference papers). While I do not spend much time interrogating this fact in the body of this thesis, it is nonetheless worth noting.

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[253] Nigel Rapport, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: the key concepts*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 120.
[254] Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis, eds, *Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 7.
[255] Ziauddin Sardar and Borin van Loon, *Introducing Cultural Studies: a graphic guide* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2010).
[256] Richard Johnson, Deborah Chambers, Parvati Raghuran, and Estella Tincknell, *The Practice of Cultural Studies*, (London: Sage, 2004), 1.

One of the principal characteristics of Cultural Studies is its interdisciplinarity. Cultural Studies does not have its own definitive principles, theories or methods (instead drawing on the research methods of existing fields) and encompasses a diverse range of theoretical and political positions,[257] embracing interdisciplinarity. Academic Stuart Hall, associated with the foundation of Cultural Studies in the 1960s, describes the field as "an adaptation to its terrain" and a "conjunctural practice[, having] developed from a different matrix of interdisciplinary studies and disciplines."[258] Scholar of museology Kylie Message highlights that the Cultural Studies rationale for crossing disciplinary boundaries is to create new points of connection, rather than an arbitrary dissolution of boundaries.[259] That is the goal of this thesis, which brings multiple approaches to bear on a single subject—the horse in Australia—in order to re-frame the way this animal is understood.

To realise this, I have taken an interdisciplinary approach to the research, and the thesis transects the scholarly terrain of history, heritage studies, animal studies, museum studies and Australian studies. I do not limit the chronological scope of the research, as the horse discourse transcends any set period in time. As such, the thesis spans the period from Australia's colonisation in the late eighteenth century, to now, addressing contemporary issues such as the public discourse around the 'brumby debate', and the cultural realm of museum exhibitions and other public performances of identity. Just as the horse's purported significance is not confined to any one area, so it is not sufficient to focus solely on the horse from within a single discipline. As Richard Johnson et al point out, "culture exceeds the terms of any one discipline", and any serious interrogation of culture must, therefore, be interdisciplinary.[260]

As appropriate as the Cultural Studies approach is for this topic, it also fits my own professional and academic background. Both my undergraduate Bachelor of Arts (majoring in Social Ecology) and my Master of Arts (in Museum Studies) functioned outside typical disciplinary boundaries. This has meant that interdisciplinary practice has been inculcated as the norm from my earliest academic experience. Further, I began my doctoral research with almost a decade's professional experience in museums and cultural heritage, the practice of which I have continued while studying. Museological practice is itself interdisciplinary,[261] and this has profoundly influenced

[257] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies And The Centre: Some Problematics And Problems," in *Culture, Media, Language,* edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 15-47; Sardar and van Loon, *Introducing Cultural Studies*.
[258] Stuart Hall, "The Emergence Of Cultural Studies And The Crisis Of The Humanities," *October* 53 (Summer 1990): 11.
[259] Kylie Message, "The Conjunctural Possibilities Of Museum Studies," draft chapter in an unpublished manuscript (2014): 7.
[260] Johnson et al, *The Practice of Cultural Studies*, 23.
[261] Kylie Message and Sandra Dudley, "Editorial," *Museum Worlds* 2, no. 1 (2014): 1.

my approach to research. Drawing on this experience, the field of Cultural Studies represents the most appropriate academic fit for my research. Through the application of diverse theoretical perspectives to the topic of the significance of the horse in Australia, this thesis creates a new approach from which this animal can be interpreted and understood.

Museum Studies: a shadow discipline?

James Chandler refers to the post-1960s proliferation of new fields that have arisen under the rubric of 'studies' (and for Chandler, this includes Cultural Studies) as "shadow disciplines". [262] Though there is debate in some quarters as to the legitimacy of Cultural Studies as discipline—and Hall has stated that, in Britain at least, it was never intended to serve as a distinct discipline, due largely to the hostility that it was met with from within the academic humanities[263]—I wish to bypass that issue and focus here specifically on the field of Museum Studies, which also falls within Chandler's "shadow" classification. Though it began as such, this PhD is no longer confined solely to the area of museology. However, Museum Studies, and museological practice, retain a significant influence on the thesis, and thus invite some further elucidation of the field within this chapter. The peculiarities of the museum institution in perpetuating the horse discourse will be addressed in Chapter 5.

There has long been a sense among scholars of museology that museum studies lacks a rigorous methodology.[264] Message cites a study of 353 museum studies journal articles, published between 2003 and 2008, which found that there was little to no methodological discussion.[265] This was reflected in my own experience, which ultimately proved fruitless, searching museum studies literature to find some methodological precedent for the collection survey that formed part of my early data collection. Because this type of survey is most often enacted in an administrative, business-as-usual capacity, little if any thought is devoted to methodological implications, and it is rarely addressed even in instances where results are published.[266] This lack of attention to methodology might support the claim of Robert Post, a critic of Cultural Studies, who argues for maintaining a rigid distinction between disciplines and professions, stating "disciplines refer

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[262] James Chandler, "Introduction: Doctrines, Disciplines, Discourses, Departments," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 35, no. 4 (2009): 737.
[263] Hall, "Emergence Of Cultural Studies," 12.
[264] Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: a cultural study* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992); Nicholas Thomas, "The Museum As Method", *Museum Anthropology* vol. 33, no. 1 (2010): 6-10; Grewcock, *Doing Museology Differently*; Message, "Conjunctural Possibilities."
[265] Message, "Conjunctural Possibilities," 12.
[266] For example, see B. Keneghan, "A Survey Of Synthetic Plastic And Rubber Objects In The Collections Of The Victoria And Albert Museum," *Museum Management and Curatorship* vol. 19, no. 3 (2001).

primarily to forms of knowing that are situated within universities."[267] According to Post, this positions museology wholly outside academia, squarely in the realm of the professions.

Elsewhere, Message has argued in favour of situating Museum Studies under the disciplinary rubric of Cultural Studies, contending that the centrality of the collection, and the community-led emphasis on materiality that typifies the 'new museology', aligns with many of the sociological interests in which Cultural Studies had its foundation.[268] Further, Message believes that Museum Studies, and the 'new museology', have the potential to grant intellectual legitimacy to Cultural Studies.[269] This 'new museology' can loosely be described as concerned with the broader social dynamics within which museums sit; questioning positions of privilege and authority in the representation of other cultures and peoples; and the increasing emphasis on the contextual, rather than inherent, aspects of material culture.[270] This new mode of museology emerged out of the broader questioning of cultural and social processes that occurred in the 1980s.[271]

Museum practitioner and theorist Susan Pearce highlights how, in many cases, the theory and practice of museum work are indistinguishable, a fact that is demonstrated every time an object is selected for display, or the subject matter of a floor talk is finalised.[272] This observation is an exhortation to practitioners to give greater consideration to the implications of curatorial decision-making, as Pearce argues that an implicit methodology is not adequate when challenging representational norms, which the 'new museology' purports to do.

While omitting methodological considerations is not good scholarship, it is conversely true that the pragmatic determinants under which museums operate are barely, if ever, considered in scholarly literature. Issues of staffing and resources shape museums, their exhibitions and their collections, as do matters of personal taste and individual preference. In my experience, what goes on inside the museum doors often bears little relation to scholarly debates. This is reflected within museum studies literature, which, as Nicholas Thomas points out, either focuses on the 'how-to' of museum practice, or critically engages with 'the museum' as an institution.[273] Both these foci are

[267] Robert Post, "Debating Disciplinarity," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 751-52.
[268] Message, "Conjunctural Possibilities," 6. See also Hall, "Cultural Studies And The Centre," 15-47.
[269] Message, "Conjunctural Possibilities," 1
[270] For example, see Mark O'Neill and Gary Osmond, "A Racehorse In The Museum: Phar Lap And The New Museology," in *Representing the Sporting Past in Museums and Halls of Fame*, ed. Murray G. Phillips (New York: Routledge, 2012): 30-38; Ross, "Interpreting The New Museology," 84 – 103; Grewcock, *Doing Museology Differently*.
[271] Sharon Macdonald, "Expanding Museum Studies: An Introduction," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonld (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 3.
[272] Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections*, x.
[273] Thomas, "Museum As Method," 7.

problematic in their own way; the former, typified by a lack of attention to methodology—attributable to a business-as-usual approach that takes the details of museum praxis somewhat for granted—prioritises method over methodology. The latter, while taking a broader view of museums as a particular type of institution, fails to acknowledge the practical constraints and limitations faced by museums of all sizes, which are actually fundamental to determining and shaping outputs.

The growing awareness of, and commitment to addressing, such concerns (with museums being just one such example where academic scholarship historically has failed to address practical considerations, and vice versa), challenges Post's distinction between discipline and profession.[274] Further, when we take into account trans-disciplinary research, and the para-academic fields, the lines between academia and professionalism continue to be blurred. Though not wholly based in the museum, my research draws consistently upon museology. It is the field within which I am most comfortable, and most practiced. Cultural Studies supports a position of subjectivity within one's research, and is open to the methodological implications of approaching a subject from within.[275] By positioning the thesis as a whole within Cultural Studies, I aim in part to transcend the barriers between discipline and profession, with equal consideration granted to both critical theory, and the constraints of praxis.

Cultural Studies is, fundamentally, about the study of culture, with an emphasis on the inherent and often invisible dynamics of power. Museums, at their core, are about cultural representations. As Message highlights, these are overlapping concerns.[276] While Thomas postulates that the increase in community collaboration in exhibition development (and the assumption that this is now the procedural norm) is indicative that representation is no longer a key issue of debate within the museum sector,[277] cultural representations continue to be created. They may no longer be of the 'other', however representations of nation—or other non-heterogenous communities—remain problematic, and the museum institution remains a valid site of research.

Methods

In keeping with the Cultural Studies framework, this thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach to research. In addition to generating primary data through a collection survey, object biographies, and stakeholder interviews, I have also drawn significantly from existing literature, across a range of disciplines. My research was also informed by the "Horses for Discourses" blog, which I published for

[274] Post, "Debating Disciplinarity," 751-52.
[275] Johnson et al, *The Practice of Cultural Studies*, 1.
[276] Message, "Conjunctural Possibilities", 1.
[277] Thomas, "Museum," 7.

over two years (2014-2016) during the research-focused (rather than writing up) phase of the thesis. All these methods will be addressed in greater detail, below.

Dawn Snape and Liz Spencer, writing on mixed-methods research, acknowledge that “there is some debate about whether mixing methods across paradigms may lead to a lack of analytical clarity because each method relies on different assumptions in data collection and produces different types of data”.[278] They also caution that “it is important to be aware of the philosophical debates, and methodological developments arising from them, in order to secure the quality of the research produced”,[279] while emphasizing that there is no single right way of doing qualitative research.[280] The epistemological tensions highlighted by Snape and Spencer are evident in my own work, where the research question is underpinned by a constructionist epistemology, while the museum institution (and many of its standard practices) derive from the positivist tradition.[281] Constructionism is usefully defined by scholar and pedagogue Michael Crotty as “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.”[282] The significance of the horse to Australian national identity is a social phenomenon, and certainly meets Crotty’s definition of the constructionist paradigm. However, this epistemological framing is further applicable to the museum context, given the role these institutions play in constructing and disseminating culture—both actively, and less consciously (this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5). Nonetheless, the museum as an institution derives from the positivist and objectivist epistemologies of the eighteenth century, characterised by evidence-based observations, and a belief in a knowable, objective reality.[283] This viewpoint reached its zenith at a time when repositories of material ‘evidence’, particularly natural history specimens,[284] were being rigorously classified, on the understanding that

[278] Dawn Snape and Liz Spencer, “The Foundations Of Qualitative Research,” in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds), Qualitative Research Practice (London: Sage, 2004), 17.
[279] Snape and Spencer, “Qualitative Research,” 1.
[280] Snape and Spencer, “Qualitative Research,” 2.
[281] Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections*, 2-4; Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*;
[282] Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: meaning and perspective in the research process*, (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 42.
[283] Sharon MacDonald, “Perspectives, Disciplines, Concepts: Introduction,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon MacDonald (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 14; Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections*, 2-4; Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*; Alberti, “Objects And The Museum,” 559-571.
[284] Alberti, “Objects And The Museum,” 559-71; Samuel J.M.M. Alberti, “Introduction: The Dead Ark,” in *The Afterlives of Animals: a Museum Menagerie*, edited by Samuel J.M.M. Alberti (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 1-16.

the world could be known and catalogued.[285] Many of the research tools utilised in this thesis are also the tools of museum practice, and to uncritically incorporate them is potentially problematic, given Audre Lorde's maxim that "the Master's tools will never dismantle the Master's house."[286]

Museum research itself derives from a range of disciplines. The collection survey, which originated within anthropology,[287] has, in the museum context, been developed into a management tool. Object biography, which has origins in the discipline of history[288] but is now practiced in contemporary museology, can serve to reveal, rather than hide, many of the assumptions that underpin museum work.[289] As practiced by museologist Samuel Alberti, the object biography represents a meta-analysis of material culture, emphasising the active role played by the museum in shaping cultural discourse.[290] Jennifer Mason urges researchers not to downplay paradigmatic differences, but instead to "factor into rather than out of our mixed-methods approaches the capacity to see and think about things differently and creatively. … Explanations do not have to be internally consensual and neatly consistent to have meaning and the capacity to explain."[291] I acknowledge the complexity of the issue, and the potential for paradigmatic incompatibility, while also recognising the many benefits that a mixed methods approach delivers.

Further, while employing a mixed methods approach to the topic as a whole, I have retained methods appropriate to specific sites of investigation. For example, when focusing on the museum context, I drew from techniques that are standard museum practice: the collection survey, object biography, and secondary reading. I also spoke informally with museum professionals. Elsewhere, when investigating ideas relating to the brumby and notions of heritage, I interviewed individual stakeholders, but also drew on publicly-available online content presented by the largest organisational stakeholder (the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service). This was critical to understanding a debate where the popular discourse differed so significantly from the academic. And, in analysing the horse's historical impact, I have drawn on the work of Australian historians including Henry Reynolds, Ann McGrath, and Kay Schaffer, as well as archival documents such as the

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[285] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: the English and other creatures in the Victorian age* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), 12; MacDonald, "Perspectives, Disciplines, Concepts," 14. See also Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*.

[286] Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Crossing Press, Berkeley, California, 2007).

[287] Thomas, "The Museum As Method," 6-10.

[288] Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections*, 17.

[289] Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography Of Things: Commoditization As Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Alberti, "Objects And The Museum."

[290] See Alberti, "Objects And The Museum," 559-571; Alberti, "Introduction," 1-16.

[291] Jennifer Mason, "Mixing Methods In A Qualitatively Driven Way," *Qualitative Research* 6, no. 1 (2006): 20.

diaries of explorers. The work of the blog was, in many ways, to test the accountability of my thinking in the public domain. Such "integrative research strategies"[292] have allowed me multiple entry-points from which to engage with the research question and provide a richer framework from which to derive an overall analysis. Each of these methods will now be detailed separately.

Critical analysis of existing literature

As little critical work exists on the horse's significance to Australia, my thesis draws upon existing literature, across a range of disciplines, to inform the framing and interpretation of my response to the research question. That is, in exploring the nature of the significance of the horse in Australia, I have critically engaged with a number of secondary sources. This use of secondary sources is a fundamental practice of social history curatorship and reflects my professional and academic background in this field.

This literature-based research methodology extends from a constructivist approach to learning. Academic Huguette Comerasamy argues that literature can function as a source of data, and that it can be a valid research methodology in itself, beyond the traditional literature review.[293] However, as Comerasamy notes, issues of academic rigour can arise when drawing on an interpretivist (rather than a positivist) approach. These include methodological shortfalls due to there being no specific method employed, and a lack of research design.[294] However, here Comerasamy is referring explicitly to literature reviews in the form of either a systemic review, or meta-analysis, while the textual analysis that occurs in this thesis does not fall within the purview of either. Rather, the existing literature I have drawn on, covering a broad intellectual terrain, serves to effectively outline the 'negative space' into which this thesis fits. So as not to rely entirely on existing literature, and to better validate my findings in relation to the research question, I have deployed additional methods of data sourcing, which are detailed below.

ERIC: Equine Remains in Collections survey

This thesis was initially conceived as an investigation of the ways the body of the horse, as both natural specimen and cultural artefact, functioned in the museum context. For this reason, I began the data-gathering with a survey of museum collections across Australia. This survey, to which I gave the appellation ERIC (Equine Remains in Collections—see Appendix 1), was designed to elicit from

[292] Mason, "Mixing Methods," 10.
[293] Huguette Comerasamy, "Literature Based Research Methodology," slideshare.net, accessed September 14, 2018 https://www.slideshare.net/huguette_comerasamy/literature-based-research-methodology
[294] Comerasamy, "Literature Based."

the institutions surveyed what (if any) horse-derived material culture they held, how much existing research had been done on it, and if, and in what contexts, it had been exhibited. The criteria for inclusion were that the equine content was both visible, and intrinsic to the object, which had to retain some element of equine representation. The survey sought out material such as whole or parts of taxidermied horses, decorative arts objects, and osteological or biological specimens. It did not include functional items such as horse-hair furniture, or hairbrushes. The rationale underscoring this survey was to seek case studies for the thesis, while testing an early theory that the horse was unique as an animal where its representation was also made of *itself*.

The survey was emailed out to 116 cultural institutions across Australia, spanning the breadth of museums from local, state, private, and national institutions. I initially approached Museums Australia for a list of current collecting institutions; however, the list I received was out of date, with the organisation having little time available for updating and maintaining it.[295] Instead, I worked from an online list on Wikipedia,[296] covering one state at a time, and disseminating the survey from the period June 2014 through to June 2015 alongside my ongoing research. The electronic nature of the survey had some implications for inclusion, and the emphasis on research and exhibition (ie the functional aspects of narrative dissemination) necessitated institutions having an active approach to museological practice in order to effectively respond. This inevitably meant that very small local institutions were not canvassed, though an effort was made to include small properties that had an overarching management structure, for example, museums that formed part of Central NSW Museums, or properties held by the National Trust.[297]

The results of the survey were first entered into a spreadsheet. This gave an overview of the number of surveys disseminated, number completed, and whether there was or was not any relevant material. From there, I constructed a table that correlated affirmative responses according to the level of the institution (private, local, state and national), and the types of material (scientific or natural history, social history, decorative arts—see Table 5.1). It is important here to note that the survey was specifically designed to identify potential objects of interest, rather than a quantitative survey intended to generate statistics. Each response was read by me and sorted according to its relevance to my research. The vast majority of material revealed by the survey was biological in origin, and scientific in interpretation. Given my focus on narrative, such material was of minimal interest to the thesis research. However, some interesting objects, and methodological issues, did

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[295] Email from Lee Scott, May 5, 2014.
[296] "List Of Museums In Australia," accessed May 5, 2014
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_museums_in_Australia
[297] The National Trust is administered differently according to each state.

arise. These included a pair of Huon pine and cannon bone candlesticks in Tasmania, and the since-destroyed taxidermied remains of a former police horse. These examples will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Object biography

At the time when the thesis was entirely situated within museology, I initially intended that the case studies identified from the ERIC survey would then be developed into several object biographies. The terrain of the thesis has shifted a great deal since its inception, and the role of the object biography has subsequently diminished. However, in Chapter 5, which focuses on the museum's role in disseminating the equine significance discourse, this tool has been utilised to explore the background histories of Phar Lap's remains; Sir Hercules, a horse appearing as 'The Bone Ranger' at the Australian Museum; and a pair of candlesticks collected by the Tasmanian Museum and Gallery.

The use of object biography has great possibilities for rendering visible the opaque practices of the museum. The work of Samuel Alberti highlights the significant role that museum processes play in the life (or, to use Alberti's term, the "afterlife"[298]) of a collection object. Such processes are, after all, fundamental in ensuring the continued and prolonged existence of the object, physically, intellectually, and culturally. Alberti recognises the accretion of meaning and identity that occur as a result of this phase of an object's life.[299] These augmentations accumulate as the object makes its trajectory through institutional processes—acquisition, conservation, research, interpretation, and exhibition. Changes in object care, research priorities, or new exhibition programs means that many of these are repeated. Depending on the resourcing of the institution, and the profile of the object, the cycle may continue *ad infinutum*, and each occurrence is documented in the archives of the museum. Through incorporating this invisible phase of an object's life into its biography, each stage of the meaning-making process may be revealed. It is worth noting, however, that there are times and places in the histories of many objects that will, due to their nature, inevitably remain unchartable.[300] Nonetheless, it is through internal museum archival research that "the wider cultural and intellectual movements at play in the museum"[301] may be revealed.

Sandra H. Dudley has highlighted a lack of critical engagement with the physicality of objects in the museum context, and argues that the majority of scholarship falling under the rubric of

[298] Alberti, "Introduction," 3.
[299] Alberti, "Objects And The Museum," 561.
[300] Alberti, "Introduction," 3.
[301] Alberti, "Objects And The Museum," 568.

material culture studies emphasises the *culture* at the expense of the *material*.[302] Museologists and National Museum of Australia curators Kirsten Wehner and Martha Sear respond to Dudley's criticism, arguing for the object biography to be incorporated into museum practice. For Wehner and Sear (more so than for Alberti), the object biography includes an interrogation of the physical form and characteristics of the object—the materials from which it is made, and the techniques used in its creation—in addition to an investigation of the object's life history, the social context of its existence, and the values and meanings attached to the object by the people involved with it. [303] Wehner and Sear see the meaning of the object within the enactment, or performance, of its original function.[304] In this way, object knowledge can also be perceived as embodied knowledge.[305] In the context of horse-derived material, however, this is somewhat problematic, as the original function of the core components of such objects was inevitably to keep the animal alive. This remains true whether the object is a skeleton, a heart, or a hoof. Thus, the death of the horse is fundamental to the object's creation. This serves as an additional means of distinguishing the horse-derived material culture that is of interest here from other materials that contain horse remnants, such as horse-hair furnishings. Though this is most often by-product of slaughter, the horse does not actually need to die in order to relinquish its hair. For the hoof, the heart, or the hide, however, it does.

This brief overview of the practice of object biography highlights the differing approaches that can be taken to this method. The object biography as articulated by Wehner and Sear, and the gap in museum literature highlighted by Dudley, call for an increased emphasis on *materiality*, whereas the object biography as understood by Alberti focuses on the cultural *meanings* that underpin objects. While an emphasis on the object's physicality may inspire new forms of interpretation in the exhibition context,[306] it is the post-acquisition procedures that every collection object is subjected to, via the enactment of museum practice, that best reveal the underlying process of meaning-making in which museums engage, and thus is the approach taken here.

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[302] Sandra H. Dudley, "Encountering A Chinese Horse: Engaging With The Thingness Of Things," in *Museum Objects: Experiencing the Properties of Things*, ed. Sandra H. Dudley (London: Routledge, 2012), 4 (my italics).
[303] Kirsten Wehner and Martha Sear, "Engaging The Material World: Object Knowledge And *Australian Journeys*," in *Museum Materialities: Objects, engagements, interpretations*, ed. Sandra H. Dudley (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 143-161.
[304] Jacques Maquet, "Objects As Instruments, Objects As Signs," in *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 30-40; Wehner and Sear, "Object Knowledge," 146; Grewcock, *Doing Museology*, 2-13.
[305] Wehner and Sear, "Object Knowledge," 151-52, 157.
[306] The *Spirited* exhibition curated by Wehner and Sear, for example, incorporated this object knowledge into the display of several saddles, which were mounted as though on a horse (in terms of height and positioning), thereby emphasising the materiality of the objects within their original context.

Interviews

As part of the research relating to brumbies, I undertook four semi-structured, participant-led, face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders. These were done for my own benefit, to gain a more nuanced understanding of the topic as I explored it, rather than as case studies in and of themselves. This style of interview, argues researcher Anna Potter, is fundamental to the process of contextualisation.[307] While not forming discrete case studies, these interviews have particularly informed Chapter 6 of this thesis.

Participants (who agreed to being identified) included Rob Gibbs, the NSW Parks and Wildlife Ranger tasked with coordinating the most recent Wild Horse Management Plan Review Project, who in turn contacted three key stakeholders whose perspective he believed I may find useful, and suggested they contact me. Two of these three responded. They were Leisa Caldwell, brumby advocate and founder of the Snowy Mountains Riders Association, and conservationist Dianne Thompson. On the advice of my then-supervisor, I also interviewed Dr Graeme Worboys, an academic at the ANU Fenner School of Environment. All interviews were undertaken in November 2015, at a location nominated by the interviewee.

Potter highlights the benefits of the face-to-face interview, including managing the flow of conversation without the intrusion of technological disruptions, and the ability to observe the subject in their professional environment.[308] This latter is particularly relevant to the interview with Rob Gibbs, which occurred over a five-hour period, which encompassed the drive to and from Jindabyne, and a site visit to Kosciuszko National Park. There, Gibbs showed me evidence of brumby activity, including stallion mounds (piles of dung marking territory) and signs of trampling around watercourses, in addition to the NPWS's efforts to manage horse numbers, in the form of passive trapping set-ups at two locations. In the context of this thesis, my time with Gibbs was more than an interview—it was also field research. Here I witnessed the effects of brumby populations on the ecosystems of Kosciuszko, and had a first-hand encounter with a brumby. Both experiences were eye-opening and enhanced my understanding of the issues under debate.

While my approach to undertaking interviewing was somewhat outside the usual scope, the research (and therefore the interviews) had to pass the ANU's Human Ethics requirements. This means that participants signed and received a copy of the consent form, which stipulates that nothing said in the interview would be published without explicit permission. However, in the case

[307] Anna Potter, "Managing Productive Academia/Industry Relations: The Interview As Research Method," *Media Practice and Education* 19, no. 2 (2018): 163.
[308] Potter, "Productive Academia/Industry Relations," 163.

of Leisa Caldwell and Di Thompson, the role that each of these women has adopted as advocates for their respective causes means there is much additional relevant material available on the public record. One of the potential problems of the interview is the desire for a subject to promote a particular agenda;[309] this was certainly true of the brumby issue, which was being hotly debated at the time I engaged with these stakeholders. Yet it was precisely because of the agendas that each of these individuals held that they were relevant to my research. By using interviews to contextualise the issue, rather than as primary data in and of itself, I was able to embrace the stakeholder agenda, rather than try to find ways to mitigate it.

Blog

At the start of this century, museum websites generally contained little content beyond their opening hours, address, and the current program of exhibitions, but technological changes, and the soaring popularity of social media, have seen a marked rise in efforts towards online engagement.[310] One facet of this is blogging, which has many potential applications, including the opportunity to view and understand behind-the-scenes facets of museum work.[311] The opportunity to reveal aspects of museum practice with visitors was something I found genuinely appealing while working at the National Museum of Australia, and I was a frequent contributor to the *Landmarks* gallery development blog, from 2009 until the gallery opened in 2011.[312]

Drawing from that experience, in 2014, following a workshop on making research more accessible[313] delivered by Dr Inger Mewburn (whose blog the Thesis Whisperer is oriented towards PhD researchers), I started my own para-academic blog, https://horsesfordiscourses.wordpress.com. The "Horses for Discourses" blog began as a place to explore ideas relating to the horse that fell outside the scope of the thesis. Early entries looked at issues such as stockmen, brumbies, and the concerns of animal studies scholarship. However, as the thesis evolved to embrace a wider terrain, the blog soon became an important testing ground for ideas, many of which have found themselves incorporated into the final product of this thesis.

The blog also fed into my research as a place for interested stakeholders to either contact me, or to get an idea of the broad field of my research. For example, when in 2015 I first emailed

[309] Potter, "Productive Academia/Industry Relations," 164.
[310] Carol Vogel, "The Spirit Of Sharing," *New York Times*, March 16, 2011, accessed January 2, 2018 https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/2011/03/17/arts/design/museums-pursue-engagement-with-social-media.html
[311] Vogel, "The Spirit Of Sharing."
[312] This content, being now almost a decade old, is no longer available online.
[313] Inger Mewburn, "Be Visible Or Vanish? Working The Media For Career Advantage," March 4, 2014, Finkel Theatre, John Curtin School of Medical Research, Australian National University.

Rob Gibbs in his capacity as the NPWS Ranger leading the Wild Horse Management Plan Review Project to request an interview, his reply included an acknowledgement that "I have been aware of your research and following your blog over the last 18 months with some interest and found your thoughts and investigations of the horse issues interesting and for myself very thought provoking."[314] Through the blog I was also contacted by a Ngarigo woman who offered to pass my details onto the community Elders[315] (which unfortunately has not resulted in any further contact), as well as fellow PhD students whose work or interest overlapped with mine.

The benefits for PhD students of blogging include developing good writing habits,[316] increasing visibility, and engaging with audiences outside academia.[317] Influential Australian academic and blogger Pat Thompson has argued that blogging is part of, rather than separate from, academic writing.[318] For Thompson, blogging is "now part and parcel of the academic writing landscape. As such, it is of no less value than any other form of writing. Even though audit regimes do not count blogs—yet—this does not lessen its value."[319] In July 2016, expecting a baby, I put the blog on hiatus. While my subsequent commitments have seen me unable to resume the fortnightly posting schedule I once committed to, the blog remains a significant influence on this thesis.

Conclusion

Cultural Studies exemplifies an academic framework within which a diversity of approaches can be brought together to analyse a particular cultural phenomenon. The nature of equine significance in Australia is an apt application for this disciplinary framework, which embraces inter-disciplinarity, and a mixed methods approach. Though Cultural Studies has its detractors,[320] it has demonstrated remarkable longevity, effectively functioning as a discipline within the traditional structure of academia for half a century. The potentially problematic aspects of identifying with this field in the

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[314] Rob Gibbs, email dated October 13, 2015.
[315] Comment posted by Sal Lavalee on "The True History Of The Stockman: Cattlemen, Horses, And Aboriginal Dispossession In Australia," Horses for Discourses blog, on November 27, 2018 https://horsesfordiscourses.wordpress.com/2014/07/16/the-true-history-of-the-stockman-cattlemen-horses-and-aboriginal-disposession-in-australia/
[316] Sara Shinton, "The Benefits Of Blogging For Phd Students," May 25, 2017, Teaching Matters blog, The University of Edinburgh, accessed January 2, 2019, http://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/the-benefits-of-blogging-for-phd-students/
[317] Mark Carrigan, "Blogging During Your PhD," February 9, 2018, Culture, Politics and Global Justice blog, accessed January 2, 2018 https://cpgjcam.net/2018/02/09/blogging-during-your-phd/
[318] Pat Thompson, "Blogging Helps Academic Writing," December 7, 2015, patter blog, accessed January 2, 2019 https://patthomson.net/2015/12/07/blogging-helps-academic-writing/
[319] Thompson, "Blogging Helps Academic Writing."
[320] See for example John Carlos Rowe, "The Resistance To Cultural Studies," in *Aesthetics in a Multicultural Age*, eds. Emory Elliott et al (Oxon: Oxford University Press, 2002), 105-119; Post, "Debating Disciplinarity," 749-770; Chandler, "Doctrines, Disciplines, Discourses, Departments," 729-746.

context of a PhD is the issue of examination,[321] where disciplinarity plays a critical role. Here, scholarship is read and assessed within a particular academic discipline, whereby it is judged according to generally recognised criteria.[322] Quality within academia is measured according to standards unique to each discipline,[323] and there are issues inherent to evaluating the validity and quality of interdisciplinary research,[324] where evaluation is critical to the legitimisation of research.[325] Outlining my methods, and the Cultural Studies framework within which I position my research, represents my response to these potential issues.

The mixed methods I have drawn on to generate my primary data include existing literature, a collection survey, object biography, stakeholder interviews, and a blog that I published during the research-intensive phase of my PhD candidature. These methods, though originating within differing epistemological frameworks, work to both inform and complement each other in the current research context. Following Mason's advice to "factor into instead of out of"[326] the mixed methods approach, I have retained site-specific research practices for the differing terrain of the thesis, for example utilising museum practice in investigating the museum context; following stakeholders in the brumby debate; drawing on historical research in investigating the role of the horse in Australia's past; and testing my ideas in the public realm via the "Horse for Discourses" blog. These diverse strategies provide a variety of entry-points from which to approach, and engage with, the research question, and a stronger framework for deriving an overarching analysis.

Alongside Cultural Studies' advocacy of an interrogation of the methodological implications of being inside one's object of study, the use of mixed methods within an interdisciplinary framework suits not only the phenomenon under investigation, but my own experience. Both my academic and my professional backgrounds are characterised by interdisciplinarity. Both my Bachelor and my Masters degrees functioned outside typical disciplinary boundaries, which for me has meant the normalisation of interdisciplinary practice. In addition to this, I began my doctoral research with almost a decade's professional experience in museums and cultural heritage, and at times my previous work becomes an object of study within the thesis.

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[321] Johnson et al, *The Practice of Cultural Studies*, 22.
[322] Post, "Debating Disciplinarity," 768.
[323] Katri Huutoniemi, "Evaluating Interdisciplinary Research," in *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, eds Robert Frodeman, Julie Thompson Klein and Carl Mitcham (Oxon: Oxford University Press, 2010), 310.
[324] Huutoniemi, "Evaluating," 309.
[325] Huutoniemi, "Evaluating," 310.
[326] Mason, "Mixing Methods," 20.

Chapter 3: The Instrumental Horse: animal agency and Australia's past

The notion that "[h]orses have an integral connection with the Australian character [and] are part of our national psyche"[327] continues to hold power, despite the reality that the horse's presence in everyday life is dwindling.[328] What this demonstrates is that there is a disjuncture between the frequency with which Australians might engage with real horses,[329] and the ways they are asked to *feel* about the horse—and in turn, it raises the question of why the horse is constructed as socially, culturally, and historically significant in the first instance. What agendas in the present are being served by constructing the horse as significant within our understandings of the Australian past? During the early modern period of European history, an attachment to a local breed of horse could potentially be useful in establishing both an emotive, and pragmatic, affinity with a region, state, or royal house,[330] attachments that can be transferred into the present.[331] Though such concerns initially seem irrelevant in the Australian context, an awareness of this parochial use of the horse undoubtedly emigrated to New South Wales along with the colonists,[332] and thus influenced the discourse of equine significance. The prevailing understanding that the horse was an important animal in the settlement, exploration, and development of Australia has led to this animal being ascribed historical significance for the nation. This chapter seeks to explore the ways that this significance is constructed, and to analyse the horse's position within the historiography.

There are many points that need to be teased apart within an animal-focused discussion of history. First, there is the understanding of the term 'history'—how do understandings of 'the past', and what is considered 'history', differ? What does an animal-focused history look like? And what is

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[327] Maree Bentley, Susan Hall and Tina Mattei, eds, *Little Book of Horses* (Parkes: National Library of Australia, 2010), reverse. See also Amanda Burdon, "Where The Wild Horses Are," *Australian Geographic* January/February 2016, 76.

[328] According to Ian Parsonson, Australia's highest equine population occurred in 1918, when there were 2,527,149 horses. Increasing mechanisation has seen the horse population declining since then. See Ian Parsonson, *The Australian Ark: a history of domesticated animals in Australia* (Collingwood: CSIRO Publishing, 1998), 120; Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 1.

[329] A satirical review of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Opening Ceremony quipped that "This Is The Closest Most Australians Will Ever Get To A Stock Horse." Russell Jackson, "Retro Live Blog: Re-Living Sydney's 2000 Olympic Opening Ceremony," *The Guardian*, August 4, 2016 https://www.theguardian.com/sport/live/2016/aug/04/retro-live-blog-re-living-sydneys-2000-olympic-opening-ceremony

[330] Raber and Tucker, "Introduction," 28.

[331] See for example Nora Schuurman and Jopi Nyman, "Eco-National Discourse And The Case Of The Finnhorse," *Sociologica Ruralis* 54, no.3 (July 2014): 285-302.

[332] See Chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion of the imported cultural tropes that have influenced constructions of Australia.

the role of agency within that discussion? Scholar of public history Hilda Kean makes a useful distinction between 'the past' and 'history', with the former being "events happening before the present",[333] while history is "an analysis or argument about such events."[334] As there has been little scholarly argument (as opposed to a recounting of events) specific to the role of the horse in Australia's past, the following chapter offers both a selective background of this animal, and an analysis of its role in Australian historical events. In taking this dual approach, I reveal the ways in which the horse's value is shaped, first and foremost, by its instrumental worth. This instrumentality is frequently cloaked in emotive, and often nebulous, assertions about the horse, and the nature of Australia's relationship to this animal. Such assertions are problematic, because they mask the real cultural 'work' in which representations of the horse are frequently deployed. Through deconstructing some of Australia's most popular narratives of equine historical significance, we can see the symbolic and constructed nature of equine significance narratives more clearly.

The horse's status as an historical animal is evinced through its representation in state and national museums,[335] forms the content of books,[336] and is a statement frequently repeated by the media[337] and within the artefacts of mass culture—films such as *The Man from Snowy River* (1982), *Phar Lap* (1983) and *The Cup* (2011). The horse's association with Australia's past is irrefutable; what is less clear is the exact *nature* of the horse's historical contributions. Applying an Animal Studies framing to the research question, this chapter asks whether the horse can be understood as a significant historical figure in its own right, or if this historical significance is limited to its *instrumental* function. Is the horse historically significant to Australia in a way that is different from a Cobb & Co. coach, a Victa mower, or any other Australian innovation designed to reduce human toil?

The exploration of whether the horse can be constructed as an historical actor in its own right, or merely a tool in human service, can be read as parallel to the issue of whether the horse has intrinsic, or merely instrumental, value to Australians. I begin the chapter with a broad exploration

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[333] Hilda Kean, "Challenges For Historians Writing Animal-Human History: What Is Really Enough?" *Anthrozoös* 25, Supplement 1 (2012): s59.
[334] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s60.
[335] See for example the respective displays of Phar Lap material at the National Museum of Australia and Museum Victoria. The National Museum of Australia's exhibition *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story* (2014-15) is another case in point. Both of these will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.
[336] For example, Nicholas Brasch, *Horses in Australia: An Illustrated History* (Sydney: Newsouth, 2014); Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*; Bentley, Hall and Mattei (eds), *The Little Book of Horses*.
[337] See for example Rachel McGhee, "Brumby Cull On Central Queensland Island Sparks Community Outrage, Prompts Review," ABC Capricornia, December 7, 2018, accessed April 19, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-07/qld-government-investigates-curtis-island-brumby-cull/10589014; Ricky French, "A Debate Gone Feral," *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, February 15, 2019, accessed online April 19, 2019 https://www.theaustralian.com.au/weekend-australian-magazine/battle-over-brumbies-in-kosciuszko-national-park-turns-feral/news-story/52b8296ac42047be1cf00a6cb6652a6e

of animal agency in general, drawing primarily upon animal studies scholarship, in addition to the work of several historians. I then move on to consider how the term 'agency' might best be defined in the current context, examining both the way the word is understood from an animal studies perspective, and more traditional constructions of 'agency' within history scholarship. It is in the problematic issue of articulating the subjectivity of slavery and captivity that these different understandings of the word 'agency' find overlapping terrain. This raises a number of questions, though the focus here remains on exploring the discourses pertaining to the nature of the historical significance of the horse in Australia.

The chapter then turns to the horse as an historical agent. This is an area that has attracted less scholarly attention, and I draw here particularly on the work of historian David Gary Shaw. With recourse to Shaw, and world historian Richard Foltz, I examine the horse within the context of three themes from Australian history—exploration, battle, and horseracing. The first two of these will focus on specific events: the Victorian Exploring Expedition of 1860, and the Battle of Beersheba in 1917. In attempting to frame the horse as an historical agent, its underlying instrumentality is revealed, challenging the recent broadening of historiography to encompass animal-focused work, and the growing legitimacy of animals as subjects of historical enquiry.[338] Nonetheless, at present it appears almost impossible to re-define historical understandings of the horse as a subject, rather than an object. This discussion reveals that, historiographically speaking, the horse without a human co-agent is solely of instrumental significance—it is still the human counterpart on the horse's back who retains true historical significance. Yet, though the horse may not be considered historically significant outside its instrumental function, the narrative of historical significance nonetheless continues to influence the way the horse is viewed by Australians. This is problematic, as it clouds other issues, such as the brumby debate, examined in Chapter 6.

At the close of this chapter, I posit that there is one aspect of the horse's historical contribution that remains widely unacknowledged, and that is in the essential advantage it afforded to white settlers in colonising Australia and dispossessing the first inhabitants of their land. While not offering any substantial challenge to the horse's instrumentality, it is in the realm of colonisation that Shaw's definition of a historical agent—someone without whom history would have turned out differently—is most applicable to the horse. The advantage that the horse gave to settlers means that we cannot contemplate the circumstance of colonisation and dispossession—essentially, the events of Australian history—without acknowledging this animal. Further, I contend that the role of the horse as a colonial tool of dispossession has been sublimated and celebratory narratives of

[338] Harriet Ritvo, "History And Animal Studies," *Society & Animal Studies* 10, no. 4 (2002):405-6.

equine significance have been substituted for these darker truths. However, as will be demonstrated throughout the thesis, such affirmatory narratives fail to withstand scrutiny.

Animal agency

The concept of animals as agents is not new,[339] though the terminology may be. While not the primary focus of this thesis, it is necessary to briefly explore the concept of animal agency, as a precursor to the ensuing discussion of animals as *historical* agents. While the two concepts are inter-related, they are not the same; animals as historical actors[340] represent one aspect of the broader subject of animal agency. Historian David Gary Shaw highlights that the importance of attributing agency lies in the fact that "to be an agent is to become a proper, customary focus for historical concern." [341] As claims of historical significance are frequently made on behalf of the horse, establishing its agency is therefore a worthwhile endeavour.

Shaw points out that our understanding of animals shifts according to the dominant cultural hegemony of the time. [342] For example, pre-Enlightenment Britain saw non-human animals ascribed a level of autonomy and power that meant they could be perceived to have broken the law, and be liable for prosecution in the same manner as humans. [343] Such an occurrence today—at least in Western societies—is unthinkable, but demonstrates how historical context is integral to our understanding. Animals that were expected to function within prescribed socio-legal codes of behaviour, and who could be understood as having the autonomy to break the law, must necessarily possess some faculty that we would today refer to as 'agency'. It was only with the rise of what historian Harriet Ritvo terms "self-consciously enlightened humanitarianism"[344] that the intentionality that had been ascribed to animals lost its potency. Beginning at the time of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, by the end of the nineteenth century animals had been transformed: from independent agents, into just another form of property. Ritvo emphasises that during this process, the power previously attributed to animals—their agency—was appropriated by

[339] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 1-2.
[340] In this chapter the word 'agent' and 'actor' will be used interchangeably.
[341]David Gary Shaw, "A Way With Animals: Preparing History For Animals," *History and Theory, Theme Issue 52* (2013): 8.
[342] Shaw, "The Torturer's Horse," 146.
[343] Ritvo, *Animal Estate,* 1.
[344] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 2.

humans.[345] This development was significant, and it continues to characterise the dominant discourse around non-human animals today.[346]

Alongside historians such as Shaw, Foltz, Kean and Ritvo, who are pushing the boundaries of historical enquiry to make room for the animal, contemporary animal studies scholars are also attempting to return this power to non-human animals. Citing examples of animal behaviours that are perceived as transgressive and subversive, Traci Warkentin argues that animals are reasserting their own desires and agency.[347] Warkentin documents the behaviour of captive cetaceous mammals, which she positions as "acts of resistance". One example recounted by Warkentin was the bottle-nosed dolphins at Sea World Orlando stealing trays of fish that were purchased by visitors to feed them, allowing the dolphins to bypass the human contact that the fish trays are specifically designed to facilitate.[348] Warkentin also reframes what scientists refer to as "cultural learning" among orcas at Marineland, Canada, as an act of agency, if not outright resistance. [349] Here, the whales were documented using the fish fed to them by handlers to catch their own food, deploying the fish as bait for gulls, which they then seize.[350] Warkentin argues that these actions can be understood as "demonstrating a kind of resistance... to the hegemony of captivity."[351]

Captivity today represents one of the demarcations in our understandings of the difference between the human and the non-human animal. Historian Dominick LaCapra posits that the act of retaining animals in captivity is predicated upon an understanding of the non-human animal as already being the captive of its own instinct.[352] LaCapra refers to this as an animal's "self-enclosure".[353] Humanity, on the other hand, is defined by the concept of "spirit",[354] that is, it is the human spirit that characterises us as human, rather than bestial. However, this was not always so. This discourse of captivity recalls an earlier usage of the term 'agency', when it was applied in history scholarship to discussions of enslaved peoples.[355]

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[345] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 2.
[346] Some hopeful exceptions to the dominance of this paradigm include the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill, which was passed by the parliament of New Zealand in May 2015, and legally recognised animals as sentient beings.
[347] Traci Warkentin, "Whale Agency: Affordances And Acts Of Resistance In Captive Environments," in *Animals and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, eds Sarah E. McFarland and Ryan Hediger (Leiden: Brill, 2009),32-36.
[348] Warkentin, "Whale Agency," 32-36.
[349] Warkentin, "Whale Agency," 41-42.
[350] Warkentin, "Whale Agency," 41-42.
[351] Warkentin, "Whale Agency," 43.
[352] LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, 156.
[353] LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, 156.
[354] LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, 156.
[355] Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37 (2003): 113-124.

In this context, social historian Walter Johnson demonstrates the existence of a synonymy between the terms “humanity”, “agency” and “resistance”.[356] Johnson argues that the emphasis on “‘the individual’ as the subject of history … ultimately reproduces the idea of a liberal agent as the universal subject of history.”[357] This is problematic precisely because it obscures how slaves understood their own actions; further, “[i]t represents the alienation of enslaved people from the historical circumstances and ideological idioms of their own resistance”.[358] The comparison between animals and enslaved people has been made elsewhere.[359] The issue that Johnson raises—distancing those who have been enslaved from their own narrative—is also applicable to discussions addressing agency in non-human animals. Indeed, LaCapra argues that it is language itself that represents “the decisive criterion that separates and acts as the unbreachable limit or divide between the human and the animal.”[360]Animal studies scholars themselves, who must create justifiable and academically defensible frameworks of agency as it might be construed and interpreted between species (as opposed to the historians working to challenge their existing discipline, whose task of critiquing the status quo might appear as the comparatively less onerous one), acknowledge the complexity of this issue,[361] which has no easy resolution.

‘Agency’ is indeed a slippery term and defies attempts to be pinned down; it provokes more questions than it provides ready answers. As an example, if we apply Johnson’s argument to the animal studies context, are animal studies scholars genuinely re-empowering animals, or simply re-framing their behaviours within a humanist paradigm to be understood as such? Is the dominant discourse of animal powerlessness legitimately being subverted through the attribution of agency and resistance to actions such as stealing food trays, and sacrificing hand-fed fish for hunted gulls? Or is it merely serving academic agendas among post-humanist scholars? LaCapra warns against ascribing non-human animals with a radical alterity, arguing it is another form of anthropocentrism.[362] While undoubtedly thought-provoking, these questions occur outside the parameters of my own research, and must necessarily remain unanswered here. However, asking

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[356] Johnson, *Agency*, 116.
[357] Johnson, *Agency*, 117.
[358] Johnson, *Agency*, 118.
[359] Scott, “Racehorse As Protagonist,” 47.
[360] LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, 185.
[361] Richard C. Foltz, “Does Nature Have Historical Agency? World History, Environmental History, And How Historians Can Help Save The Planet,” *The History Teacher* 37 (2003):9-28; Sarah E. McFarland and Ryan Hediger, “Approaching The Agency Of Other Animals: An Introduction,” in *Animals and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, eds. Sarah E. McFarland and Ryan Hediger (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 16; Shaw, “The Torturer’s Horse,” 146-167.
[362] LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, 154.

them serves to highlight the complexity that inevitably attends such attempts to measure the non-human consciousness.

Animals as historical agents

As has already been demonstrated, attempts to define agency, particularly in relation to animals, are constructed on ambiguous intellectual terrain. The issue becomes even more complex when making a case for animals as historical actors. Within the discipline of history, agency may generally be understood as synonymous with humanity,[363] but Shaw, Foltz, LaCapra and others are challenging this assumption, problematising definitions of agency that prioritise rationality and intentionality. In arguing for a recognition of animal agency within history, Shaw contends that it is possible to give an account of an animal's agency—in his case study it is the Duke of Wellington's horse—without having to account for "the nature of horsey consciousness."[364] For Shaw, *rational agency* is not the key to historical agency, though it should remain in consideration "as a core component of at least one spine of the starfish that is agency."[365] Furthermore, privileging rationality, a trait largely perceived as being solely within the human realm, reveals the humanist agenda underlying dominant constructions of agency. Shaw queries whether, if animals cannot be seen as possessing agency, this is a reflection of a lack within animals, or instead, represents a deficiency in nuance in understandings of the term agency.[366] Shaw himself defines agency as "an *interdependent structure or dynamic* in which neither self nor intention is required."[367] The historian Richard Foltz concurs, arguing that the assumption that agency is tied to will is misguided.[368] Foltz points out that "[h]istory's vast litany of unintended consequences is no series of mishaps—if anything, they verge more on constituting the rule."[369] If seemingly minor occurrences throughout history have heralded significant historical outcomes, then the issue of will (or intentionality, or rationality) becomes less consequential.[370]

Rather than asserting that agency cannot exist without a gamut of associated human characteristics, we can look at agency as a force, enacted without recourse either to rationality, or intentionality. For example, the destructive agency of brumbies in the Australian landscape is constantly highlighted by those advocating their removal from national parks, yet there would be

[363] Johnson, *Agency*, 114.
[364] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 155.
[365] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 150.
[366] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 152.
[367] Shaw, "A Way With Animals," 8 (author's italics).
[368] Foltz, "Does Nature Have Historical Agency?" 22.
[369] Foltz, "Does Nature Have Historical Agency?" 16.
[370] Foltz, "Does Nature Have Historical Agency?" 23.

little sense in arguing that these animals are *intentionally* acting as environmental vandals. Nonetheless, their day-to-day actions of grazing and defecating have negative consequences on sensitive landscapes. Anthropocentric constructions of agency that necessitate the prerequisites of rationality or intentionality are irrelevant here, where brumbies can be understood as enacting their agency in a manner that exists outside such definitions.[371]

Recognising the difficulty in defining agency is necessary to an investigation of animals as historical actors because to be understood as an actor or agent presupposes some degree of agency. Shaw's simple definition of what constitutes an historical actor is "someone without whom things, especially a particular doing, might have been significantly different."[372] Using this definition, Shaw then asks whether animals should be considered as actors, or objects?[373] He refrains from a third possibility—that of animals as historical *subjects*. On the one hand, this omission in Shaw's framing of the question immediately curtails its possibilities. Yet, on the other, in spite of the legitimacy of animal studies and the growing recognition of a post-humanist discourse, the notion of animals as historical subjects is still somewhat challenging to mainstream notions of scholarly history. As Kean points out:

> There is a distinction to be made between *events* happening in the past in which even the most conservative of historians would agree animals played a role, most obviously in the economy, transport, or warfare and the turning of this subject matter into particular histories that privilege animals.[374]

The idea that animals are machines, as they were once conceived by Descartes,[375] is acceptably ludicrous; yet within the mainstream of academic history, as Shaw's question demonstrates, the consideration of animals as objects appears unremarkable. LaCapra questions whether humanism has always required an 'other' against which to project negatively. Where post-modernism has increasingly given a voice to women, non-European, and colonised peoples, animals remain the last

[371] While the brumbies' detractors are able to recognise that this aspect emains intrinsic to these horses, their supporters continue to value them for their instrumental worth. If, as I argue in Chapter 6, brumbies function as avatars for humans in the landscape, then their value—that is, the reason their existence is advocated for—is in fact instrumental; were they to be prized simply as sentient beings, without ascribing a value (both literally and metaphorically), then their worth would be intrinsic. It is my contention that, within the confines of the brumby debate, these horses are still regarded instrumentally, because it is only for their symbolic value to a particular community that they are lauded. Their environmental impacts, however, are undoubtedly an intrinsic expression of their agency.

[372] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 148.

[373] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 147.

[374] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s60.

[375] Peter Harrison, "Descartes On Animals," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 42, no. 167 (April 1992): 219-220. See also Jopi Nyman, "Horse As Significant Other."

bastion of otherness. LaCapra describes this as "the residual repository of projective alienation or radical otherness."[376] It is within such academic confines, where there is little room for the concept of animal subjectivity, that Shaw must argue his point. As such, his discussion advocating the consideration of (some) animals being accepted as actors rather than objects may be an inevitable compromise of the discipline.

Shaw uses the Duke of Wellington's horse, Copenhagen, ridden at the Battle of Waterloo, as a case study to argue in favour of individual animals functioning as historical actors. On Sunday June 18, 1815, the Battle of Waterloo was fought in what was then the Netherlands (present day Belgium), and proved decisive in finally deposing French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Opposing the French army at Waterloo were an alliance composed of British, Dutch, and Belgian troops led by the Duke of Wellington, and the Prussian army, which was under independent command. Shaw recounts how, from around 6am until at least 10pm, the Duke of Wellington and Copenhagen were inseparable, and concludes that it was not only the Duke's presence that proved integral to the favourable outcome of the battle, but that of his horse as well. In his examination of this partnership, Shaw constructs what he calls a "unity" to describe the combination of horse-and-rider, summed up by the phrase, "A man and horse can interact in many ways, but the horse-and-rider act as one." [377] Shaw reasons that Copenhagen held the equivalent level of agency as an ordinary soldier, and therefore had an equivalent level of significance as an historical actor.[378]

Shaw's unity demonstrates his caveat that animals cannot achieve historical agency without human involvement. [379] I would argue that this contention supports the instrumental approach to assessing animal worth, and that here Shaw is succumbing to the same narrow and anthropocentric definitions of agency that he purportedly contests. Foltz, on the other hand, incorporates a much broader range of organisms in his consideration of agency, for example arguing that the cotton plant is itself an agent within the story of cotton's predominance as a fibre, "since it either flourished or didn't and in doing so affected the fortunes of humans who had invested their money and energy in cultivating it."[380] While historians of world history already focus on connections and interactions, Foltz argues that this approach remains limited, as it focuses on human connections only.[381] Using the example of wool, Foltz proposes that:

[376] LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, 152.
[377] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 161-2.
[378] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 165.
[379] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 146.
[380] Foltz, "Does Nature Have Historical Agency?" 9.
[381] Foltz, "Does Nature Have Historical Agency?" 10.

> Any history of the economy of wool production is not telling the full story if it does not tell the story of sheep as well. But it must also tell the story of the water and the plants that the sheep consume, the land they degrade, the diseases they acquire and pass on from other species, and so on.[382]

As with my earlier positioning of brumbies as agents, this less anthropocentric approach to history significantly broadens the scope for assessing animal agency, both within and beyond the context of history. When considered in this way, the concept of non-human animals—living, breathing, moving, unpredictable—as agents becomes a more legitimate avenue of inquiry. Pursuing it in the context of this thesis provides a useful framework for measuring the horse's historical significance as either instrumental, or intrinsic.

Horses as historical agents

Shaw has argued that the historical interest in horses stems from an increasing desire for national heroes,[383] and his focus on the horse as a subject of historical enquiry is particularly apt in the Australian context, where the media habitually refer to horses as "heroes".[384] His recognition that "[t]here are histories of horses and there will be more of them … so if agency can be made meaningful in horse history it is certain to matter"[385] seems peculiarly fitted for the Australian culture of horse veneration. Of course, Shaw's contention that animals require a human collaborator in order to be gauged as historical actors also necessarily limits the number and types of species that he might view as historically significant. Apropos this, as Shaw himself highlights, the horse's prevalence in many of the events traditionally studied by scholars of history—particularly the role of cavalry in battles—renders the pursuit of this idea reasonable.

While the horse and its genetic forebears date back millennia, it is not until *Equus ferus caballus* was domesticated that it becomes of interest to human history.[386] Domestication of the

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[382] Foltz, "Does Nature Have Historical Agency?" 11.
[383] Shaw, "A Way With Animals," 3.
[384] For example: Racing Post, "Melbourne Cup Hero Wins In Dubai," Racing.com, March 31, 2019, accessed April 20, 2019 https://www.racing.com/news/2019-03-31/news-melbourne-cup-hero-wins-in-dubai; Paul Kent, "Winx A Traditional Hero For A New Generation," *Daily Telegraph*, April 12, 2019, accessed April 20, 2019 https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/subscribe/news/1/?sourceCode=DTWEB_WRE170_a_GGL&dest=https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/sport/superracing/paul-kent-winx-a-traditional-hero-for-a-new-generation; Jem Wilson, "Paddy The Hero Horse," ABC Goulburn Murray, February 25, 2009, accessed April 20, 2019 http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2009/02/25/2501338.htm; Wayne MacDonnell, "'Bill The Bastard': Ipswich Tribute For Australian War Hero," *The Queensland Times*, October 1, 2017, accessed April 20, 2019 https://www.qt.com.au/news/bill-the-bastard-ipswich-tribute-for-great-austral/3229555/
[385] Shaw, "The Torturer's Horse," 149.
[386] Human beings have been fascinated by the horse for far longer than this, however, as the pre-historic cave paintings in France attest. Here, across the many species depicted, horses account for around a third of

horse occurred between five and six thousand years ago,[387] well after the dog, but long before the cat.[388] Archaeological evidence from the site of Krasnyi Yar, in northern Kazakhstan, reveals evidence of equine domestication among the Botai people dating back to 3500 BC. Horsemeat was a staple of the Botai diet, mares provided milk, and ancient equine teeth reveal the mark of the bit, perhaps first placed in the horse's mouth here.[389] It is during this period, through the process of domestication, that the horse first becomes visible to history.

Summarising the immense advantage that the domesticated horse afforded humans, Cameron Forbes writes, rather poetically:

> The world changed, in peace and war. Far horizons came closer and the hunter had speed as well as guile. Communication and organisation went at a gallop. So did warriors, death, destruction, rape, pillage, invasion, dispossession and subjugation. Chariots carried Greek heroes, cavalry charges won battles and empires were built on horseback.[390]

The horse has long had a place in the field of battle, and evidence suggests that this role was not limited to western societies, but was common to Asia,[391] the Middle East[392], and North Africa.[393] In more recent history, the horse proved indispensable in the process of colonising new lands and was used for this purpose by the Spanish in South and Central America,[394] and the British in North America, and Australia.[395]

Shaw has written that the historical framework of battle is particularly suitable for assessing animal agency.[396] Notably, it is also within this context that the agency of animals is formally acknowledged, through the awarding of commendations for bravery. Though such awards are

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illustrations across the documented caves, making them the most frequently-appearing animal. See Melanie Pruvost, Rebecca Bellone, Norbert Benecke, Edson Sandoval-Castellanos, Michael Cieslak, Tatyana Kuznetsova, Arturo Morales-Muñiz, Terry O'Connor, Monika Reissmann, Michael Hofreiter and Arne Ludwig, "Genotypes Of Predomestic Horses Match Phenotypes Painted In Paleolithic Works Of Cave Art," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108, no. 46 (November 2011): 18626.

[387] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, xvi-xvii.

[388] Cat domestication dates back at least 3,600 years. See Smith, "The Howl And The Pussy," 292.

[389] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, xvii.

[390] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, xvii.

[391] Victor Hehn, *Cultivated Plants and Domesticated Animals in their Migration from Asia to Europe: Historico-Linguistic Studies* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V., 1976), 52.

[392] Hehn, *Cultivated Plants*, 43-44.

[393] Hehn, *Cultivated Plants*, 40.

[394] Greg Bankoff, "Big Men, Small Horses: Ridership, Social Standing And Environmental Adaptation In The Early Modern Philippines," in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, edited by Peter Edwards, Karl A.E. Enenkel and Elspeth Graham (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 101.

[395] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback.*

[396] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 149.

generally granted by external agencies rather than the military—there is no formal system of commendation for animals within the hierarchy of the military in Australia, the United Kingdom, or the United States—this does not lessen their significance as a recognition of animal agency. In the United Kingdom, the animal charity People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) has been awarding the Dickin medal since 1943. This award "acknowledges outstanding acts of bravery or devotion to duty displayed by animals serving with the Armed Forces or Civil Defence units in any theatre of war throughout the world",[397] and is likened to the Victoria Cross. Its recipients number 34 dogs, 32 pigeons (including two Australian carrier pigeons who were awarded the Dickin medal in 1947), four horses and one cat.[398]

While concepts such as bravery and devotion to duty are human constructs, inherent within the conferral of commendations such as the Dickin medal is an assumption that animals possess a degree of agency. Even if the animal has no concept of the consequences of its action, these awards are predicated upon the understanding that the animal has choice, and must choose between the 'brave' or the 'not-brave' course of action.[399] In recognising that an animal can 'choose' to be brave (or at least, do their duty), and be duly commended for that choice, we arrive at Shaw's definition of an historical actor as "someone without whom things, especially a particular doing, might have been significantly different."[400] Of course, these "doings" are concerned with human undertakings, and, while there is the recognition of agency, it is limited by its humanist framework.

Horses and Australian history

As already discussed, the horse has significantly influenced human history, humanity having evolved alongside the horse across many cultures. In the case of the horse-human conjunction, Shaw's construction of the "unity" is useful in articulating a sense of this inter-species interdependence. If we accept Shaw's assertion that animals need a human co-agent to function as historical actors,[401] then the "unity" concept also provides a useful framework for gauging historical significance, though its parameters may be somewhat limited, in that it takes into account only the most obvious

[397] "PDSA Dickin Medal", web page on the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals website, accessed September 21, 2015 https://www.pdsa.org.uk/what-we-do/animal-honours/the-dickin-medal
[398] "PDSA Dickin Medal"
[399] There is certainly an interesting interweaving here of anthropocentrism and moral values, which underpin the rewarding of an animal for making what is deemed the "right" choice (the one that will save *human* lives), though it is outside the scope of the present discussion.
[400] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 148.
[401] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 146.

protagonists and ignores the myriad tiny connections within which all life is enmeshed. Here I will be testing the formulations of Shaw and Foltz and applying their work to the context of Australia's past.

The influence of the horse in Australia's development is significant. The horse not only facilitated agricultural expansion and exploration, but was also integral to the dispossession of the first people of this land.[402] In this respect, the horse's contribution is as ubiquitous as that of the settlers who moved in their wake—those farmers, stock workers, and pioneers whose cumulative impact had a profound effect. This parallels Shaw's ascription of Copenhagen's agency as equivalent to that of a regular soldier, where, in the context of Australian history, the horse's overall agency could be considered as equivalent to that of the average, unremarkable settler. However, it is problematic to extrapolate from the individuated case study presented by Shaw and attempt to apply its conclusions to such a broad population (whether of Australian horses, or settlers). Shaw's construction of a partnership of historical significance is based on two protagonists of notable distinction and widespread regard—an individual man, the Duke of Wellington, and his individuated horse, Copenhagen—whose victory in a single battle helped shape the course of English history for some two centuries.

Such examples are difficult, if not impossible, to come by in the Australian context. The nineteenth century was undoubtedly the era in which horses became ubiquitous in Australia,[403] however, the horses of this period remain largely unidentified. This is not to say that only known historical figures may possess historical agency, but rather that, in following the established trajectory common to the study of history, it is among such figures that historical agency is most easily assessed. For the same reason that Shaw located his study within a battlefield, the attribution of historical agency is most easily observed in those figures traditionally forming the subject of historical enquiry. In the search for comparable examples, let us now turn to some selected events involving the horse in Australian history.

The Victorian Exploring Expedition

Horses are associated with the great narrative of Australian exploration, and, while they proved useful on many expeditions, they were ill-fitted for much of Australia's terrain.[404] Horses are

[402] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*.
[403] See Mantle, *Horse & Rider*.
[404] Ludwig Leichardt, for example, acknowledged the worth of the horse in sparing human exertion, but his diaries reveal that horses were also liable to drowning, breaking their legs, and accidental poisoning. In one entry, he discusses having purchased a spring cart to be pulled by the horses, which first caused problems when it was repeatedly bogged, then finally had to be abandoned after the horses ran away with it and the springs snapped. He writes: "I was fortunate in exchanging my broken cart for three good travelling bullocks, and afterwards purchased five draft-bullocks, which we commenced to break in for the pack-saddle; for I had

recorded in the diaries of explorers, having either starved to death, or been eaten by the explorers to stave off their own starvation.[405] The issue of equine agency, as opposed to mechanical utility, will be explored here using the case study of Billy, the last horse to survive the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition. This campaign, officially known as the Victorian Exploring Expedition, departed Melbourne in August 1860 to attempt the north-south crossing of Australia, from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria. It ended with the deaths of seven members of the party, including expedition leader Robert O'Hara Burke. [406] The attempt also cost numerous animals their lives, among them the horse Billy.

Most Australians are familiar with the misfortunes of the Victorian Exploring Expedition, known colloquially as the Burke and Wills expedition. The over-equipped exploring party was farewelled from Melbourne by some 15,000 well-wishers. They carried an estimated 20 tonnes of provisions on six wagons, and were so slow-moving they failed to leave the outskirts of Melbourne by the close of the first day.[407] Travelling with them were 23 horses[408] and 26 camels.[409] Burke was an Irish-born policeman living in Victoria, with no experience of exploration or navigation.[410] Within weeks of setting off he quarrelled with George Landells, the man appointed as second-in-command. Landells resigned, and third-in-command William John Wills was promoted into his position.[411] Frustrated by their slow progress, Burke chose seven men to accompany him north to Cooper Creek,[412] where he originally planned to wait for the remainder of the party and equipment to catch up. They arrived at Cooper Creek in November, before Burke decided to split the party again, and make a dash for the Gulf.[413] Setting off in mid-December, during the peak of the Australian summer,

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by this time satisfied myself that we could not depend upon the horses for carrying our load." See Ludwig Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition in Australia* (Project Gutenberg edition, 2004). http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5005/5005-h/5005-h.htm

[405] William Wills writes to his sister Bessy that "One of our chief articles of consumption is horseflesh: it is very nice; you would scarcely know it from beef." See "Wills Second Letter To His Sister, Coopers Creek, December 15, 1860," Burke & Wills Web, accessed December 21, 2018 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Despatches/Wills/Wills_Letter_11.htm; see also Leichhardt, "Chapter VIII," *Journal*.

[406] Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Burke, Robert O'Hara (1821-1861)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed online December 21, 2018 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/burke-robert-ohara-3116

[407] "Melbourne," *Geelong Advertiser*, August 21, 1860, 2.

[408] "List Of Stores Part VI: Horses," Burke & Wills Web, accessed December 21, 2018 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Stores/horses.htm

[409] Fitzpatrick, "Burke, Robert O'Hara."

[410] Fitzpatrick, "Burke, Robert O'Hara."

[411] Fitzpatrick, "Burke, Robert O'Hara."

[412] Fitzpatrick, "Burke, Robert O'Hara."

[413] "Robert O'Hara Burke's dispatch, Coopers Creek, December 13, 1860," Burke & Wills Web, accessed December 21, 2018 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Despatches/Burke/Burkes_Despatch_16.htm

Burke travelled with Wills, John King, Charles Gray, six camels and the horse Billy.[414] The remaining four men, under the charge of William Brahe, were instructed to wait up to four months for their return.[415]

Burke and his party reached the Gulf on February 11, 1861.[416] However, they had only taken enough provisions to last them three months,[417] and they no longer had adequate supplies for the return journey. At least one of the camels was killed and eaten along the way.[418] By April, Billy was deemed by Wills to be "so reduced and knocked up for want of food that there appeared little chance of his reaching the other side of the desert". [419] Faced with this situation, the explorers "thought it best to secure his flesh at once. We found it healthy and tender, but without the slightest trace of fat in any portion of the body." [420] Seven days later, Gray succumbed to the effects of dysentery.[421] Burke, Wills and King returned to the Cooper Creek depot on 21 April, only to find it had been vacated by Brahe that very morning.

The butchering of Billy to feed the human members of the party demonstrates the ultimate lack of agency on Billy's part, his life and death determined by human whims. However, from a

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[414] "Burke's Dispatch, Coopers Creek, December 13, 1860."
[415] According to Brahe, Burke verbally instructed him to remain at the Depot for three months, and Wills later asked him to remain for four months, but as the leader of the expedition, Brahe only needed to take orders from Burke. He vacated Camp 65 on April 21, 1861, four months and five days after Burke's departure. See "The Exploring Expedition," *The Argus*, November 14, 1861, 5.
[416] Alan Moorehead, "King, John (1841-1872)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed December 21, 2018 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/king-john-3956
[417] William John Wills, transcribed by Ferdinand von Mueller, "Journey From Cooper's Creek To Carpentaria And Return To Cooper's Creek: Field Book No. 1," Burke & Wills Web, accessed December 21, 2018 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Journals/Wills_Journals/Wills_Field_Book_01.htm
[418] It is well established that Burke took six camels north to the Gulf and returned to the Depot at Camp 65 with only two. The fates of only three of the four who did not return is recorded by Wills, two of them seemingly being abandoned, and at least one killed. In the "Field Notes Of William John Wills, Saturday March 30 1861," transcribed by James Smith, Wills notes "Poor Bucha was killed; employed all day in cutting up and jerking him". Burke & Wills Web, accessed December 22, 2018 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Journals/Wills_Journals/Wills_Field_Notes_March.htm. At least two other camels were shot and eaten after leaving Cooper's Creek for the second time. In Wills' "Journal Of A Trip From Cooper's Creek Towards Adelaide", he notes that the camel Landa had become bogged, and in the entry dated Monday April 29, 1861, writes "Finding Landa still in the hole, we made a few attempts at extricating him, and then shot him; and after breakfast commenced cutting off what flesh we could get at, for jerking." Burke & Wills Web, accessed December 22, 2018 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Journals/Wills_Journals/Wills_Journal_April_1861.htm; on Tuesday May 7, 1861 Wills notes that their only remaining camel, Rajah, "would not rise, even without any load on his back." By Friday May 10, "Mr Burke and King employed in jerking the camel's flesh". Burke & Wills Web, accessed December 22, 2018 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Journals/Wills_Journals/Wills_Journal_May_1861.htm
[419] "Field Notes Of William John Wills, Wednesday April 10, 1861," transcribed by James Smith, Burke & Wills Web, accessed August 11, 2015 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Journals/Wills_Journals/Wills_Field_Notes_April.htm
[420] "Field Notes Of William John Wills, Wednesday April 10, 1861."
[421] "Field Notes Of William John Wills, Wednesday April 17, 1861."

historical point of view, it might be argued that Billy's sacrifice (however undesirable it might have been to Billy himself) did make a discernible difference in the outcome of events, in that it gave the explorers the nutrition required to prolong their existence. Therefore we can see that Billy fits within Shaw's definition of an historical actor, as "someone without whom things … might have been significantly different."[422] Nonetheless, while Billy's sacrifice of life may be viewed as coming within the purview of historical agency according to Shaw's framework, I contend that this sacrifice, being outside of Billy's—albeit limited—capacity to choose, places it alongside the many other instances where the horse has functioned as a utilitarian being. The issue of choice is critical, and I will return to it shortly. Whatever Billy's intrinsic value, whether he was ever seen as a companion or helpmate to the explorers in their ill-fated expedition,[423] it was ultimately over-ridden by his instrumental worth as a source of food. Therefore, in this context, we must conclude that Billy, as a single case-study of a horse used in the endeavour of Australia's exploration, could not be seen to have true historical agency.

This is not to conclude that horses were not important to the exploration of Australia, though the evidence suggests that camels were far more successful in expeditions to Australia's arid inland (see Chapter 6).[424] That the horse has continued to be associated with the endeavour of exploration, in spite of its unsuitability, speaks more to the imported cultural assumptions of the early European explorers. On a practical level too, the horse represented familiarity, while camels and bullocks were—both literally and metaphorically—more foreign creatures. Leichhardt's first expedition in 1844 initially consisted only of horses, but it was not long before he recognised the unsuitability of these animals for carrying loads and purchased eight bullocks.[425] Leichhardt admitted that neither he nor his companions had any experience with bullocks, however "at last, by dint of habit, [we]

[422] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 148.
[423] An exploration of the expedition animal's unique position as both friend and food would make an interesting future study. On the attachment to expedition animals, Leichhardt wrote: "If we become naturally fond of animals which share with us the comforts of life, and become the cheerful companions of our leisure hours, our attachment becomes still greater when they not only share in our sufferings, but aid greatly to alleviate them. The little world of animated beings, with which we moved on, was constantly before our eyes; and each individual the constant object of our attention. We became so familiar with every one of them, that the slightest change in their walk, or in their looks was readily observed; and the state of their health anxiously interpreted. Every bullock, every horse, had its peculiar character, its well defined individuality, which formed the frequent topic of our conversation, in which we all most willingly joined, because every one was equally interested. My readers will, therefore, easily understand my deep distress when I saw myself, on recent occasions, compelled to kill two of our favourite bullocks long before their time; and when our poor dog died, which we all had fondly hoped to bring to the end of our journey." (Leichhardt, "Chapter XIII," *Journal*.) Elsewhere, he recounts the killing of a buffalo, for "our meat bags were almost empty, and, as we did not wish to kill [the bullock] Redmond, our good companion, we had the prospect of some days of starvation before us." (Leichhardt, "Chapter XV," *Journal*.)
[424] Parsonson, *The Australian Ark*, 140.
[425] Leichhardt, "Introduction," *Journal*.

soon became familiar with, and even got attached to, our blunt and often refractory *compagnons de voyage*."[426] The advantage of the bullock was clearly impressed upon him; in 1848, when attempting to cross the Australian continent from east to west, Leichhardt took only seven horses, but 50 bullocks.[427] In 1860 the Victorian Exploring Expedition became the first major expedition to import camels to Australia for the express purpose of exploration.[428]

Within the frameworks of a British/European sensibility, the horse was seen as an essential asset. The members of the Gulf of Carpentaria party from the Victorian Exploring Expedition demonstrated this when they chose to shoot at least one of their camels—the more useful animal—for food, before Billy the horse was sacrificed. So though, in the narrative of white settler colonialism, the horse is repeatedly positioned as significant, in the context of inland exploration, it had limited usefulness, and its association with colonial exploration is one of the imagination, rather than of practice. That the horse continues to be identified with exploration in spite of its limited use in this capacity conveys the pervasive nature of the equine significance narrative.

Battle: the charge of the Light Horse, 1917

Another example drawn from Australian history, and one that, initially at least, better fits the framework of the "unity" established by Shaw, occurred during World War I. The Great War was regarded then, as now, as Australia's 'baptism of fire', in which a strong sense of national pride and identity are invested. As an identity narrative, there are strong links between the archetypal Australian 'Digger' of World War I, and the colonial imagery discussed in the next chapter.[429] While reverence for the Anzacs (Australian New Zealand Army Corps) who fought at Gallipoli in 1915 is the most enduring of the identity narratives that emerged from this period, the charge of the Light Horse at Beersheba in 1917 has also retained strong significance in the national imagination (see Figure 3.1). Here, the quintessential bush horsemen of the nineteenth century, best characterised by the Man from Snowy River, were reconfigured into heroic Light Horsemen.[430]

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[426] Leichhardt, "Introduction," *Journal*.
[427] Bernard Lagan, "What Really Happened To Ludwig Leichhardt?" *The Guardian*, May 31, 2013, accessed April 21, 2019 https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/may/31/what-really-happened-ludwig-leichhardt
[428] "The Introduction Of Camels Into Australia," Burke & Wills Web, accessed April 21, 2019 http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Camels/Introducing_Camels_Into_Australia.htm
[429] See C.E.W Bean, "Volume I: The Story Of ANZAC From The Outbreak Of War To The End Of The First Phase Of The Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915," *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18* (11th edition, 1941), 6; Ken Inglis, "The Anzac Tradition," *Meanjin Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (March 1965): 27-8; Paul Daley, *Beersheba: A journey through Australia's forgotten war* (Carlton: Victory Books, 2011), 30-1, 35-36.
[430] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 2.

Figure 3.1: George Lambert, 1920, *The Battle of the Australian Light Horse at Beersheba, 31 October 1917*.

The town of Beersheba was the southernmost of the Turkish-held lines defending Gaza. In October 1917, after two failed attempts to capture the territory, allied troops planned to take the Beersheba in a surprise attack, as part of the Third Battle of Gaza. The only approach was through the desert, and it was imperative to secure the town's wells before they could be destroyed. The town was surrounded by rough terrain, reinforced by Turkish trenches, and defended by 1,000 riflemen, nine machine guns, and two aircraft. On 31 October, British infantry attacked the town on the west and south-western lines, while the Australian mounted troops remained about five miles to the south-east.[431] Throughout the day, Beersheba's defences were attacked on a number of fronts. In the afternoon, the 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments (forming the 4th Light Horse Brigade) were instructed to ride in a cavalry-style charge at the enemy trenches,[432] using their bayonets as swords,[433] and secure the town. The Light Horse were not a cavalry unit but were mounted infantry who fought in groups of four, with one of those men designated to remain with the horses while the other three engaged. The Light Horsemen approached the Turkish trenches at a gallop and, while some troops did indeed stop and dismount at the enemy lines in the traditional fashion, others leapt the trenches and continued to the town.[434] The significant deviation from the usual practice of the Light Horsemen at Beersheba is what made the success of the charge so extraordinary, and accounts

[431] Daley, *Beersheba*, 131-33.
[432] Daley, *Beersheba*, 140.
[433] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 384.
[434] Daley, *Beersheba*, 146-152.

for its popularity as an Australian identity narrative. It has become known colloquially as the last great cavalry charge.[435]

The battle of Beersheba perhaps comes closest to imitating the situation of Shaw's protagonists, as it involves mounted horsemen. However, there remain significant differences. Between Waterloo and Beersheba, the technology and the tactics of war had both changed dramatically. Technology meant that at Beersheba, the victory that has been popularly credited to the Light Horsemen was part of a united and combined effort.[436] The mounted troops who stormed the town late in the day were supported by artillery and infantry, and even the relatively unknown Imperial Camel Corps assisted in the conflict.[437] Yet, perhaps mistakenly, it is the cavalry charge that remains "the lingering memory …[that has] become embedded in the national story."[438] Even the Australian Light Horse Studies Centre is quick to share credit for the victory, pointing out that "[t]he Battle of Beersheba was not only the famous charge but many other actions, all of which culminated in victory."[439] Though the same must be said of Waterloo—Wellington did not win the battle single-handedly—the difference is the general level of military technology in the period of World War I, which was such that a cavalry charge was anachronistic.

Further, it is problematic to compare hundreds of mounted soldiers at Beersheba with Copenhagen, a single horse, being ridden by a General. As Shaw points out, while there were over 190,000 men and 40,000 horses at Waterloo, "the odds of a man who was a general mattering among such a mass is very high".[440] Wellington's counterpart in the military hierarchy of Beersheba was Lieutenant General Harry Chauvel, who was in command of the Desert Mounted Corps, of which the 4th Light Horse was one part. While Chauvel was present at the headquarters set up near Beersheba, he himself did not go into battle. The 4th Light Horse Brigade was under the charge of Brigadier General William Grant. This name, outside military history circles, is not one that commands the same recognition as that of the Duke of Wellington. Nor can the credit of leadership at Beersheba be as easily assigned as in the case of Waterloo, as the question of which man instigated the charge is contested. Grant claims that "I was solely responsible for the mounted

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435 Daley, *Beersheba*.
436 "The Battle Of Beersheba, Palestine, October 31, 1917," Australian Light Horse Studies Centre, accessed May 1, 2017, http://alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog?topic_id=1105601; Daley, *Beersheba*, 128-138.
437 "Imperial Camel Corp," Australian War Memorial, accessed April 21, 2019 https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51065
438 "Battle Of Beersheba."
439 "Battle Of Beersheba."
440 Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 150.

charge, and it was due to my own initiative."[441] Chauvel, on the other hand, asserts that "[m]ounted action was certainly contemplated … As a matter of fact there was little time for anything else."[442] Regardless, it is not the name of the general who is recalled by most Australians who honour the charge of the Light Horsemen, but the charge, and the horsemen, themselves. In this way, though a man who was a general mattered at Waterloo, the same cannot be said of Beersheba. We cannot create a similar circumstance from Beersheba that Shaw was able to construct from Waterloo. Where the significance of historical agency can be located with a single General and his horse at Waterloo, this significance must be shared among all the men of the 4th Light Horse Brigade who participated in the charge at Beersheba.

The Australian horses themselves, who are integral to the narrative as a whole, were certainly significant—in fact this appears to be one instance where the status of significant historical actor might be conferred *equally* between the men and their horses, as military historians are agreed that the securing of the wells, and the breaking of the Turkish line, at Beersheba proved decisive in the Middle Eastern campaign.[443] However, unlike the example of Wellington and Copenhagen at Waterloo, the individual story of almost any one of the Beersheba horses can function as a representative of the whole. The story of no *single horse* stands out as part of a nationally recognised narrative, though the narrative itself is well known.

Here we return to the issue of whether individuation is a prerequisite for achieving historicity. Although there were a number of generals and men in command involved in the battle of Beersheba—General Allenby, for whom Beersheba was a strategic point to be won; Chauvel, who orchestrated movements on the day; Grant, who commanded the 4th Light Horse as a Brigade; and finally Lieutenant Colonels Murray Bourchier, commander of the 4th Light Horse Regiment, and Donald Cameron, commander of the 12th Light Horse regiment—their relationship to the narrative is not a significant one. If a collective can be ascribed historical significance, how is that significance then apportioned within the collective? With hundreds of men and horses charging, to lose a certain number makes no discernible difference to the outcome; whereas to lose the Duke of Wellington may have had a more decisive effect. Apropos this, a second question emerges. Given Shaw's contention that there must be a human component in any unity involving an animal if we want to

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[441] Letter from General Grant to C.E.W. Bean, reproduced on the Australian Light Horse Studies Centre, accessed May 1, 2017, http://alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog/1847762/put-grant-straight-at-it/

[442] Letter from General Chauvel to C.E.W Bean, reproduced on the Australian Light Horse Studies Centre, accessed May 1, 2017, http://alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog/1847762/put-grant-straight-at-it/

[443] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 383; Daley, *Beersheba*.

ascribe it with historical significance,[444] how equal are the partnerships between horse and human in the "unities" under discussion here? According to Shaw's thesis, at Waterloo the horse of the General was equal to a soldier in terms of historical agency. This would suggest that the partnership between horse and rider is not an equal one, either historically or in any other facet of life. The point is reinforced in the case of the Light Horsemen, whose surviving soldiers were eventually permitted to return home, while their horses were not.[445] In fact, the only horse to return to Australian soil was Sandy, the horse of a General (Major General Sir William Bridges).[446]

The two examples discussed above raise important questions about the relationship between instrumentality, and animal agency. In the cases cited, instrumental value seems to correlate to an exponential lessening in the horse's historical agency. The critical factor lies in the level of human involvement; whereas Copenhagen had instrumental value as a 'tool' ridden in battle by the Duke of Wellington, the environmental impact of the brumbies (to return to an earlier example), whose direction is determined by instinct rather than human will, bears the hallmark of agency. This configuration directly opposes the work of Shaw, who sees human involvement as a *prerequisite* for historical agency.[447] Here we see the difficulty in incorporating opposing schools of thought to frame this discussion—the animal studies paradigm of instrumental versus intrinsic, and the understanding of agency used among historians.

Further to this are the issue of choice and the problematic relationship between agency, obedience, and instrumentality. In the example of cetaceous mammals described earlier by Warkentin, acting disruptively was interpreted as an expression of agency. Yet in the examples of Copenhagen and the Light Horse, where the horses presumably obeyed commands (if this was not the case it has not been noted in the narrative of popular history), their obedience might be framed as proof of their instrumental status. However, if animals can be agents without having intention, as argued by Shaw and Foltz, and as used to frame my own argument, then can agency also be seen in the following of a command? In light of the discussion around the perception of choice raised in the context of animal commendations, the answer to this must be in the affirmative. But the problematic issue of whether instrumentality overrides animal agency remains.

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[444] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 146.
[445] Four horses were returned to New Zealand. All of the Anzac horses who were returned were the horses of officers, "saved by privilege." Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 387-8.
[446] It is worth noting that Bridges, who died from injuries sustained at Gallipoli, was the only identified soldier whose body was returned to, and buried in, Australia.
[447] While it might be argued that the random movements of feral horses has no historical relevance, it should also be noted that the impacts of these horses affect landscapes, habitats, and waterways, and thus they can be perceived as affecting Australia's environmental history.

Beyond these questions regarding agency and instrumentality, the exploits of the Light Horse Brigade at the Battle of Beersheba have strong claims to an identity narrative. The story not only feeds into the already-established heroic tradition of the bushman,[448] but it also fits the description of the underdog schematic narrative template, as outlined in Chapter 1, and discussed in detail in Chapter 4. As the story goes, the Australians seemed unlikely to succeed;[449] further, they were pitched not only against the conventional enemy—the Turks—but antagonisms with Britain, and the failings of British authority (a defining feature of the Gallipoli narrative) also enter the story.[450] As the narrative goes, the undaunted Australians and their brave mounts pushed through to achieve a heroic victory. Significantly, this success was not a result of good planning or military strength—it was, at least in the popular imagination, a true example of "Australian doggedness, perseverance and courage in the face of adversity."[451] This invocation of a distinctive Australian-ness, which ties into the bush legend of Paterson et al., in addition to the accompanying underdog narrative template, render the Beersheba story ripe for deployment in reinforcing imagined understandings of what being Australian entails.

The Australian Light Horse has been collectively annexed to the horse discourse through another popular, yet completely fictive, narrative. At the close of World War I there were 9751 surviving horses in the Middle East, and it was deemed inefficient to send them back to Australia, given both quarantine concerns and expense.[452] There is a romantic idea that servicemen shot their own horses, rather than sell them to locals, who they feared would treat them cruelly. This notion possibly derives from a poem written by frontline correspondent 'Trooper Bluegum', Major Oliver Hogue:

> I don't think I could stand the thought of my old fancy hack
> Just crawling round old Cairo with a 'Gyppo on his back.
> Perhaps some English tourist out in Palestine may find
> My broken hearted waler with a wooden plough behind.
> No, I think I'd better shoot him and tell a little lie:–
> "He floundered in a wombat hole and then lay down to die."

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[448] Sarah Midford, "Bean's Anzac Book Shaped How Australians Think About Gallipoli," *The Conversation*, April 9, 2015, accessed December 23, 2018 https://theconversation.com/beans-anzac-book-shaped-how-australians-think-about-gallipoli-38203; Inglis, "The Anzac Tradition," 28-9, 32.
[449] Daley, *Beersheba*, 3.
[450] Daley, *Beersheba*.
[451] Daley, *Beersheba*, 4.
[452] Jean Bou, "They Shot The Horses – Didn't They?" *Wartime* 44 (2008): 54–57, accessed September 3, 2014 http://www.awm.gov.au/wartime/44/page54_bou/

> Maybe I'll get court martialled; but I'm damned if I'm inclined
> To go back to Australia and leave my horse behind.[453]

In truth, this is nothing more than a myth, albeit a widely disseminated one.[454] Instead, horses were redistributed by the military to other armed forces or sold on wherever possible. The surviving animals were classified according to their age and soundness, with any that did not meet requirements to be destroyed. The cut-off age before they were automatically consigned to destruction was 12 years for a riding horse and 15 for a draught horse,[455] though a horse's average natural lifespan is around double that. Military historian Jean Bou describes the process by which the lives of the 3,059 Australian horses[456] who did not meet the criteria ended:

> After their manes and tails were shorn (horse hair was valuable) and their shoes removed, these horses were taken to selected spots near their camps where working parties under the command of a veterinary officer shot them with pistols. They were gutted and the skins salted (these were valuable too).[457]

Here, the instrumentality of the horse is overt. The horse is simply a commodity, and the ultimate fate of these animals overshadows any potential nuanced discussion of agency. This blatant commodification of the horse contrasts starkly with the popular sentiment that "Walers were more mates than workhorses to Australian Light Horsemen".[458] Of course, one does not necessarily preclude the other; it is entirely possible that individual men did care for their horses, while the overarching military structure viewed them only as assets. Nonetheless, the instrumental worth of the horse is revealed, in both accounts, through control of the horse's fate, which, in either case, is death. In the sentimental narrative, the soldier states that "I'm damned if I'm inclined / To go back to Australia and leave my horse behind", where leaving the horse behind equates to leaving the horse *alive*. The entire charm of the poem shifts, and the instrumentality of the horse is exposed, if the final word is replaced by 'alive'.

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[453] Bou, "They Shot The Horses."
[454] Bou, "They Shot The Horses." For examples, see Russell Vines, "The Waler: Australia's Great War Horse," Mago Films, 2015; Emma Reynolds, "The Legend Of Bill The Bastard And Australia's Great War Horses," News.com.au April 19, 2015, accessed April 20, 2019 https://www.news.com.au/entertainment/tv/the-legend-of-bill-the-bastard-and-australias-great-war-horses/news-story/e1db9f692db5216676ac734dcb6041bc; MacDonnell, "'Bill The Bastard'."
[455] Bou, "They Shot The Horses."
[456] Figures on this differ. I use the figure given by Bou.
[457] Bou, "They Shot The Horses."
[458] Damien Murphy, "The Last Huzzah For The Walers Of The Light Horse Brigade," *Sydney Morning Herald* October 20, 2017, accessed April 21, 2019 https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-last-huzzah-for-the-walers-of-the-light-horse-brigade-20171019-gz42p0.html

Finally, the popular belief that horses were 'lovingly' shot by their assigned servicemen, rather than face an ignominious fate with the "Gyppos", illustrates the ways in which the equine significance narrative perpetuates the notion of a unique Australian relationship with the horse. Both the Trooper Bluegum poem, and the popularity of the narrative, support an implicit belief that Australians were better suited to caring for horses than other nations and races. Re-examining this assertion against the situation of the Australian horses who were in the Middle East at the close of the war, reveals, in fact, that there was little market for the horse, as camels and donkeys provided more useful service.[459] The narrative of the Light Horsemen shooting their faithful companions, rather than seeing them sold locally, is not only factually inaccurate, but reinforces the jingoistic nationalism frequently associated with the horse discourse.

Elsewhere, the Beersheba narrative (and that of the Australian Light Horse more broadly) reasserts the masculinist traditions of Australian identity, bringing together the elements of horsemanship and war. The Australian soldiers were famed for their skill in the saddle, a reputation first gained in the Boer War, which reached its apotheosis in the Light Horsemen who charged Beersheba.[460] Masculinity is frequently tied to horsemanship in Australian identity narratives, and the Beersheba story neatly fits this tradition, with the men's victory simultaneously reinforcing their riding ability, and their masculinity. Elder highlights how the masculine ideal is often portrayed in constructions of war. Such portrayals pertain not only to the (active) men, who are fighting to protect the (passive) women of the home front but extend to the masculine military protecting the feminine nation.[461]

In the Light Horse, we see the transformation of that nineteenth-century paragon of approved masculinity, the bushman (a figure discussed in detail in the following chapter), into the heroic military figure of the Light Horse. This metamorphosis owes no small debt to the literary stylings of 'Banjo' Paterson.[462] Renowned for his bush poetry published by the *Bulletin*, Paterson was commissioned as a war correspondent by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the Melbourne *Age* at the outbreak of the Boer War.[463] Fifteen years later, he travelled to Europe hoping to obtain a similar

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[459] Bou, "They Shot The Horses."
[460] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 230-36; Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 327-89; Paul Daley, *Beersheba*; The Australian Light Horse Association, "The Mounted Soldiers Of Australia," accessed April 22, 2019 http://www.lighthorse.org.au/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia-2/
[461] Elder, *Being Australian*, 66-7.
[462] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 237-9; Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 372-3.
[463] As well as his war reportage, Paterson also wrote ballads in the veldt. While they were similarly parochial to his previous work and presented warfare in a simplistic light, he admits to later having had "something of a nervous breakdown", which occurred in the years following the Boer hostilities. ('Banjo' Paterson, "'Banjo' Paterson Tells His Own Story Part III," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 18, 1939, 21.)

posting but was unsuccessful. Instead, he first became an ambulance driver for the Australian Volunteer Hospital, then he attended Waler horses exported from Australia as an honorary vet, before being commissioned into the 2nd Remount Unit of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1915.[464] Here Paterson was deemed "ideally suited to his duties",[465] and as one of the founding fathers of the bushman iconography, was well-placed to reinterpret that mythology in the image of the Light Horsemen.[466]

The narrative of the Battle of Beersheba, comprising as it does elements of horsemanship, masculinity, the underdog narrative template, and the Australian Legend, serves as an apt illustration of the role of the horse within the context of a nationalist identity narrative. While reinforcing approved Australian discourses of identity, it also demonstrates the utilitarian approach taken towards the horse by its human counterparts, even those whom it served in the theatres of war.

Race horses

Racehorses, and the sport of horseracing, are commonly constructed as significant in Australia, particularly from a social history standpoint.[467] Prior to the rise of social history as a legitimate concern for historians during the 1970s,[468] there was little recognition of racing's significance beyond an interest in racing statistics among 'historians of the turf'.[469] One exception to this was the Melbourne Cup, a race that has been remarkable for its popularity almost from the time of its inception in 1861.[470] Today, the Melbourne Cup functions as something of a conduit for presenting Australia's relationship with horse racing as part of the nation's cultural fabric. [471] The Cup is

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[464] Clement Semmler, "Paterson, Andrew Barton (Banjo) (1864-1941)," Australian Dictionary of Biography, accessed April 22, 2019 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/paterson-andrew-barton-banjo-7972

[465] Semmler, "Paterson." A similar sentiment is echoed by Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 372-3.

[466] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 237-8, 240.

[467] Matthew Bevan, "Melbourne Cup: Australia's Obsession With Horseracing Has Rich And Colourful History," ABC Radio Sydney, November 3, 2015, accessed April 23, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-03/melbourne-cup-history-of-australian-horseracing/6908252; National Museum of Australia, "Defining Moments: Melbourne Cup," accessed April 23, 2019 https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/melbourne-cup

[468] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 208.

[469] Phillip Herringer, "Thoroughbred Horse Racing In Australia: A Study Of The Geographical And Social Development Of Racing Communities," Thoroughbred Heritage website, accessed April 23, 2019 http://www.tbheritage.com/TurfHallmarks/Aus/AusHistHerringer.html

[470] Ken Inglis, *The Australian Colonists: an exploration of social history 1788-1870* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1974), 239-252 electronic edition.

[471] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 398-405; National Museum of Australia, "Melbourne Cup."

frequently represented as an event characteristic of Australianness,[472] which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

However, in discussing the historical significance of racing in Australia, it is important to recall Kean's observation regarding the distinction between events happening in the past in which animals played a part—areas such as the economy, transport, and warfare—and history that privileges animals.[473] Horseracing in Australia falls rather more into the former than the latter category. Economically, the racing and breeding industry has grown to become a significant contributor to Australia's economy. In the 2009/10 financial year the racing industry disbursed prize money totalling over $AUD427 million, while in that same period the total wagered on races was almost $AUD14.4 billion dollars.[474] The emphasis on the economic contribution of racing is a hallmark of its transformation from a sport to an industry,[475] one which bears little resemblance to its colonial origins. The earliest colonial horse races in Australia were match races, contested between two horses who were usually ridden by their owners.[476] The winner got the losing owner's stake and the prestige of victory. It is easier to extract some cultural meaning from these early races, when racing offered proof of a horse's quality in a land where these animals were both scarce, and useful.[477] McManus et al speculate that the Australian demand for staying (long distance) races was due to the long distances required of police horses in pursuit of bushrangers.[478] In Britain, the origins of horseracing lay in efforts to improve the bloodlines of the thoroughbred, though it remained the preserve of the rich, as only they could afford the costs of maintaining a stable of horses bred purely for speed.[479]

Early colonists brought with them a British sensibility towards horse racing, adopting the rules first established by the Jockey Club at Newmarket in England during the 1750s as a matter of course. [480] Yet whereas at Newmarket the 'common people' were actively discouraged from

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[472] See for example, Stephen Howell, ed., *The Story of the Melbourne Cup, Australia's Greatest race* (Docklands: The Slattery Media Group, 2010).
[473] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s60.
[474] Phil McManus, Glenn Albrecht and Raewyn Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry: Social, economic, environmental and ethical perspectives* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 1.
[475] Rod Johnson, "The View From The Inside," in *The Story of the Melbourne Cup, Australia's Greatest race,* ed. Stephen Howell (Docklands: The Slattery Media Group, 2010), 53; McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry*, 53.
[476] John O'Hara, *A Mug's Game: a history of gaming and betting in Australia* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1988), 13; Andrew Lemon, *The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing: Volume One* (Melbourne: Classic Reproductions, 1987), 47-52.
[477] See Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 6; Lemon, *The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing*, 48.
[478] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry*, 53.
[479] O'Hara, *A Mug's Game*, 5.
[480] Herringer, "Thoroughbred Horse Racing In Australia."

attending race meetings,[481] the new colony lacked the population to support racing under such strictures, and from necessity, took a more inclusive approach. The first official race meeting in New South Wales was held from 15-19 October 1810, run over three non-consecutive days as was the custom in Britain. The 73rd Regiment, funded by public subscription, cleared and levelled the area now known as Hyde Park, and laid out the course.[482] The races had been sanctioned, and carefully orchestrated, by the governor, Lachlan Macquarie. This facilitated Macquarie in both maintaining social control (through providing an approved outlet for high-spirited fun) and investing him with the authority of the rural landlord, a position familiar to British subjects.[483]

This earliest racing carnival was attended by the breadth of colonial society, from convicts to the militia, emancipists and gentry, and this social egalitarianism continued to characterise Australian racing during the nineteenth century. In fact, the real growth of the colonial racing clubs was contingent upon the financial support of the average punter, through entry fees and gambling revenue. The appeal of the turf crossed class and social boundaries, and this appeal was prudently cultivated by the clubs, though the ruling authorities were careful to maintain segregation between the classes.[484] In 1853 the Presbyterian clergyman and republican, John Dunmore Lang, railed against the fact that a town may have no church, but even the smallest town was equipped with "that never-failing accompaniment of Australian civilisation": a race track. Lang was also derisive of the races, drawing a parallel between them and the local population. He dismissed the Geelong Cup as a race "for horses of whatever pedigree, character or previous occupation—like the squatters themselves."[485] While Lang's comment here may well say something of the Australian people, through the framework of horseracing, the horses themselves remain invisible. The horse's function is, once again, instrumental. This is not animal-centred history; it is the recounting of events from the past, which happens to involve animals, in this case the horse.

Available statistics to demonstrate, through attendance figures, racing's contemporary social import are now somewhat dated. According to an Australian Bureau of Statistics report dating from 2009/10, horse racing was the second most well-attended sport in Australia (after Australian Rules football), with 11% of the population, or 1.9 million people, having attended at least one race in the prior twelve month period.[486] At that point, racing attracted the most diverse audiences from the

[481] O'Hara, *A Mug's Game*, 6.
[482] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 397.
[483] O'Hara, *A Mug's Game*, 13-15.
[484] Peter Charlton, *Two flies up a wall: the Australian passion for Gambling* (North Ryde: Methuen Haynes, 1987), 59-62.
[485]John Dunmore Lang, *Port Phillip: Or the Colony of Victoria* third edition (Glasgow, 1853), 116.
[486] Australian Bureau of Statistics, "4174.0 – Spectator Attendance At Sporting Events, 2009-10," accessed May 2, 2017, http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4174.0

widest breadth of Australian society of any sport, with spectators spread across socio-economic groups and an almost equal split between genders, with women representing 46% of spectators.[487] This may be shifting, as attendance figures from the Victoria Racing Club (VRC) show a steady decline in numbers for the Melbourne Cup Carnival,[488] with attendance in 2018 marking its lowest since 1999.[489]

Racing is well-represented in the collections and exhibitions of many Australian social history museums. Accepted practices of commemoration and memorialisation within the racing community[490] have ensured that racehorses are far more likely than other horses to be preserved, in whole or in part, for sentimental and historical purposes. The form this commemoration takes is primarily in creating either functional or decorative arts objects from the body parts of horses. Examples include the hooves of Melbourne Cup winner Peter Pan, transformed into an inkwell and a pincushion,[491] or the candlesticks made from the canon bones of the racehorse Quiz (discussed in detail in Chapter 5). Many such objects have found their way into the cultural institutions of Australia, and, with the exception of biological material, make up a significant proportion of equine objects in collections.[492] This literal objectification of the horse, which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5, highlights the fundamentally instrumental worth of the racehorse.

Considering racing as socially (and/or culturally) significant immediately positions it within an anthropocentric framework, and renders the horse incidental. That is, we do not examine racing under the historical lens in order to learn more about horses themselves, but to learn more about the societies in which racing occurred. There are some horses that seem to transcend this distinction, horses such as Phar Lap, for whom a nation cheered, and then mourned; or, in America, the champion Man O' War, who, when he died in 1947, was embalmed and lay in state while 2,000 people filed by his coffin over three days as a mark of respect.[493] Nonetheless, through use of anthropocentric anthropomorphism, these animals remain "as supplements to human subjects", rather than actors who contribute to the shaping of human lives.[494] Scott argues that:

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[487] Tony Ward, *Sport in Australian National Identity: Kicking Goals* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 55.
[488] Notably, the drop in numbers begins in 2014, following the very public death of Melbourne Cup competitor Verema in 2013.
[489] Victoria Racing Club, "Track Records And Attendances," Flemington Racecourse website, accessed April 24, 2019 https://www.flemington.com.au/racing/track-records-and-attendances
[490] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary;" McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry*, 25.
[491] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[492] Equine Remains in Collections Survey (see Appendix 1).
[493] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 46.
[494] Susan McHugh, *Animal Stories: narrating across species lines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 3.

> The great horses – the champions – become more than sports figures. They become characters at the centre of elaborate narratives: not just performers in arenas but players in dramas. High-profile thoroughbred protagonists are constructed as characters through anthropomorphism.[495]

Scott surmises that this anthropomorphism is calculated and commercially motivated, designed to make humans identify with the horses, and therefore more likely to place a bet.[496]

There are some animal studies scholars who seek to grant the racehorse agency; Scott argues that racehorses do exert some agency in the races that they are obligated to participate in, through acts of improvisation.[497] There are many examples in racing literature of individual racehorses being ascribed limited agency, largely inferred by how they responded to the jockey, and, through this, whether they won or lost a race.[498] Scott acknowledges that even in these small acts, the human typically regains control, noting that "Thoroughbreds are not encouraged to act independently; when they do so, it is usually noted by people as problematic and exceptional."[499] Elsewhere, Kean, citing Sandra Swart, contends that the instruments of control, such as whips and bridles, that horses are subjected to, are evidence of the horse's resistance.[500] Nonetheless, even in these individual acts, it is not equine history that is being made. It remains human history, with the racehorse operating as a vehicle through which stories of human achievement—whether sporting, or social, or economic—are told.

Here, these equine players function as props, through which human narratives are interpreted. The ways that race horses, and horseracing, are harnessed to identity narratives in the context of the Melbourne Cup, will be discussed in Chapter 5. For now, let us examine the discussion pertaining to horses (or animals in general) as historical agents in their own right, and how this may or may not reinforce the instrumental value of the horse.

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[495] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 45.
[496] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 54.
[497] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 47, 55-8.
[498] For example, see Les Carlyon, *True Grit: Tales from 25 Years on the Turf* (Milsons Point: Random House, 2002),55-57; Max Presnell, "Phar Lap's Melbourne Cup Failure In 1929 Had The Conspiracy Theorists Out In Force," *Sydney Morning Herald* October 29, 2014, accessed May 19, 2019 https://www.smh.com.au/sport/racing/phar-laps-melbourne-cup-failure-in-1929-had-the-conspiracy-theorists-out-in-force-20141029-11dorj.html.
[499] Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 59-60.
[500] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s67. Scott offers a similar assessment of the whip in racing. See "Racehorse As Protagonist," 55.

Historical agency and instrumentality

This chapter has examined the notion that animals can be constructed as having agency, with a particular focus on the context of Australia's past. Positioning the horse as an historical subject has raised some discursive challenges, particularly to the frameworks of academic history. Within this field are a range of perspectives; there are those historians such as LaCapra, who embrace the conjunctural possibilities of scholarship that encompasses animal-focused history, envisioning a time "when the issue of the other-than-human animal, understood in nonanthropocentric, broadly relational and ecological terms, will be conjoined with such crucial questions as race, class, and gender in critical-theoretical inquiry".[501] Elsewhere, Shaw's contention that animals are limited to functioning as historical agents *only* when paired with a human counterpart[502] demonstrates the disciplinary limits of considering animal agency within the confines of academic history. As Kean recognises, for many of the historians whose work considers animals, the focus remains "not around agency or representation as such, but an attempt to show in the present the importance of animals in the past".[503]

In the Australian context, to re-conceptualise the horse into an historical context in which it has agency is counter to the way its usefulness has, historically, been understood. That is, the horse is constructed as historically significant based primarily on the instrumental value ascribed to it. Shaw's contention that the horse can be considered as an historical actor exclusively when partnered with a human (where it forms part of a "unity") seems peculiarly fitted to the Australian idea of the horse as historically significant. Arguments constructed on a paradigmatic basis that ascribe agency to animals, and recognises their intrinsic value, find little to support them in the context of Australia's past, as they are diametrically opposed to the traditional understandings of equine significance in Australia. As such, the horse in Australia is considered historically significant in the same way that a Cobb & Co. coach might be, or a Sunshine harvester—as a tool for human use.

That horses (and other non-human inhabitants of the planet we share) have agency is undeniable. The agency of brumbies, as they enact their daily existence (that nonetheless has ramifications for fragile ecosystems) is fundamental to arguments advocating their removal from Australia's national parks. Here, the brumbies may well be changing the course of Australia's environmental history. Further, this agency is being enacted without a human co-agent (though it was through human intervention that the horses first entered the landscape).

[501] LaCapra, *Limitations of History*, 187-88.
[502] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 146.
[503] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s64.

However, the purpose of this chapter is not to construct an alternative historical discourse built around the horse (though that may prove a worthwhile endeavour for future scholars), nor to reimagine Australian history with the horse as a central actor. The purported significance of the horse in the context of Australia's past is but one way this animal is positioned as important. Examining the issue within the framework of history scholarship serves to demonstrate the repeated instances where this animal's instrumentality, rather than its intrinsic nature, are what is valued within the Australian experience. Why does this matter? Because in conflicts such as in the brumby debate, where an emotive argument that seemingly elevates the horse's intrinsic worth is mounted, this instrumental worth is obscured. This is problematic, because, as argued in Chapter 6, the brumby debate is also predicated on an instrumental understanding of the horse, albeit as an animal valued as an avatar of white belonging.

The horse as a tool of colonisation

The narrative of the horse as historically significant to Australia is widespread. Yet, as Laurajane Smith reminds us, there are different understandings of Australian history:

> [In one,] the colonial realities of forced land seizure, warfare, child removal and cultural assimilation that attended British occupation of Australia are identified as foundational aspects of Australian history, and white racism is exposed. The other view emphasizes the social, economic, cultural and technological achievements of the settler society.[504]

The first section of this chapter, discussing some of the popular narratives associated with the horse in relation to Australia's past, conforms to the latter. I will now reframe the horse's significance in the context of the former view of history articulated by Smith. This version of Australia's past is much less visible, and has inspired few, if any, celebratory narratives. It is an uncomfortable but irrefutable fact that the horse delivered a significant advantage to white settlers in the process of colonising Australia. It is here, as we will see, that this animal truly *can* be credited with changing the course of history.

Addressing the specific role of the horse in Australia's colonial history is rendered somewhat difficult, however, as this animal was so ubiquitous within the colonial experience as to remain largely invisible. This is evinced by any mention of the horse being primarily in the negative—for example, the lack of horses in Tasmania highlighted by Reynolds,[505] or an unpromising police

[504] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 171.
[505] Reynolds, *Free People*, 71.

constable described as “no horseman, [with] no knowledge of horses”.[506] Implicit here is the obverse understanding that, for example, the horse *was* an asset in frontier warfare on the mainland, to treat the observation made by Reynolds; or, in the case of the police constable, that good horsemanship was intrinsic to the duties and requirements of policework.[507] Through its invisibility, the horse can be seen as little more than a colonial commodity. It featured in police Occurrence Books as another resource,[508] and while an animal remained serviceable, it occasioned little or no comment. It was only when the function of the horses (or their riders) was impaired,[509] or horses were stolen or speared, that there is reason for their presence being made explicit. This instrumental understanding of the horse is maintained even in cases where the animal was consciously used to settler advantage. For instance, in 1845, Leichhardt reported that:

> The natives considered our [horses] to be large dogs, and had frequently asked whether they would bite (which I affirmed, of course); so that they themselves furnished us with a protection, which otherwise I should not have thought of inventing.[510]

Leichhardt notwithstanding, the horse’s instrumentality meant this animal remained largely invisible, and there are comparatively few examples of the horse being referred to explicitly in accounts of skirmishes and reprisal killings.

Parallel to this are accounts of Aboriginal people successfully avoiding capture by men mounted on horseback. In Van Diemen’s Land (now Tasmania) during 1830, while with a group of Swan Island Aboriginal people, George Augustus Robinson recorded a new dance, telling the story of an Aboriginal man who had been chased on horseback, but had successfully outrun the horse.[511] Elsewhere, in 1916 police in the Northern Territory attempting to capture a group of Aboriginal peoples who had been killing cattle were evaded, the perpetrators travelling through gorges that were impassable on horseback.[512] While the horse is again only here visible in the negative—in these instances, the failure to successfully capture its quarry—these accounts raise the issue of Aboriginal

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[506] Cited in Chris Owen, “’The Police Appear To Be A Useless Lot Up There’: Law And Order In The East Kimberly 1884-1905,” *Aboriginal History* 27 (2003): 114.
[507] Elder, *Blood on the Wattle*, 204. Further, the nomenclature of the ‘Native Mounted Police’ provides a compelling illustration of this norm. In differentiation of settler police, mounting *Aboriginal* policemen was so noteworthy as to be acknowledged within their title.
[508] For example, the Occurrence Book at Wyndham, in Western Australia, shows that from 2-November 6, 1895, PC Rhatigan is recorded shoeing a number of horses; on November 6, a party setting forth on a bush patrol is documented as including 13 horses. See Owen, “’A Useless Lot’,” 120.
[509] Owen, “’A Useless Lot’,” 113, 114.
[510] Leichhardt, “Chapter X,” *Journal*.
[511] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 38.
[512] Ann McGrath, *Born in the Cattle* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 14.

agency in relation to the horse. It is not my intention here to disempower the generations of Aboriginal people who fought, and continue to fight, for their country, by suggesting they were hapless victims of better horsemanship and superior weaponry. Accounts of Aboriginal people during the colonial period spearing or killing horses[513] represent one example of both horse, and Aboriginal resistance, made visible. Elsewhere, the flexible ways that Aboriginal people moved into and out of the pastoral frontier[514] will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 6. However, it is also worth noting here that, unlike the Native Americans, Aboriginal people in Australia did not introduce the horse into their bush economy; nor did they use it in warfare.[515] Thereby a consideration of the horse as a tool that further enabled the colonial project, and, within the broader context of the thesis, as a white, settler identity narrative, does not preclude simultaneous narratives emphasizing Aboriginal sovereignty and resistance.

Within that framework, it is important to address the "difficult heritage" represented by the Native Mounted Police.[516] Scholarship reveals that these mounted and armed para-military units, most commonly led by a white officer, themselves massacred many thousands of Aboriginal people.[517] Contrary to the estimate of 18-20,000 deaths of Aboriginal people during colonisation offered by some historians,[518] Lyndall Ryan suggests as many as 24,000 Aborigine people in Queensland alone (where the Native Mounted Police were active for the longest period) may have been killed between the years 1859 and 1897.[519] Tim Rowse and Emma Waterton point out that this aspect of Australia's frontier wars is difficult to reconcile for those wishing to preserve either an idea of unified Aboriginal resistance, or a national identity based on recognition of settler-colonial injustice along clearly-demarcated lines.[520] While the need for any such resolution lies outside the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that these Aboriginal men were taken deliberately from their own country to serve far beyond their traditional lands,[521] and that long-established pathways to success were no longer open to them, as a result of colonisation.[522] Irrespective of binary moralising, the fact remains that the Native Mounted Police were established by, and to serve, colonial powers.

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[513] See instances cited by Owen, "'A Useless Lot'," 110, 119, 123.
[514] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle,* 21.
[515] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle,* 152.
[516] Tim Rowse and Emma Waterton, "The 'Difficult Heritage' Of The Native Mounted Police," *Memory Studies* (May 2018): 1-2.
[517] Rowse and Waterton, "'Difficult Heritage'," 3; see also Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, Part II.
[518] Broome, "Statistics Of Frontier Conflict," 89-90, 96-97.
[519] Lyndall Ryan cited in Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 45-46.
[520] Rowse and Waterton, "'Difficult Heritage'," 3.
[521] Nathan Morris, "Native Mounted Police Camps, Evidence Of Frontier Battles Unearthed In Queensland," September 25, 2018, ABC, accessed April 7, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-25/archaeologists-discover-hundreds-of-native-mounted-police-camps/10183402
[522] Professor Bryce Barker, quoted in Morris, "Native Mounted Police Camps."

The addition of the horse to the arsenal of these troops, and the deadly results it delivered, serve to illustrate the observation made by Forbes, that "horses and riders signalled the end of the world as [Aboriginal people] knew it. Men on horseback were the outriders of the invasion and dispossession."[523]

Frontier warfare was an integral part of the process of Australia's colonisation, yet it is continually minimised. Reynolds argues that the dispossession and death of Australia's Aboriginal peoples as a corresponding effect of settlement is "the longest, most consistent theme in Australian political history." [524] One reason for the continued denial of frontier warfare arguably stems from the status of Aboriginal peoples as Crown subjects, against whom war could not legally be waged.[525] As historian Robert Foster writes:

> Necessity required that violence be employed to dispossess them of their land, but the ideal of the rule of law required that a pretence be maintained that Aboriginal people were being 'protected' and 'policed'. It was a pretence that bedevilled settlers, police and governments as the frontier wars were waged.[526]

Yet as Reynolds baldly states, "either it was war, or it was murder."[527] Some deny that it happened at all.[528] This self-deception of national proportions is made easier, argues Foster, by the language used to frame contemporary accounts of conflict, characterised "as much by a desire to reveal as they were by an imperative to conceal."[529] Forbes also notes the obfuscating language typically used to describe the massacre of Aboriginal people. He highlights the frequently-used phrase relating to "dispersing the Aborigines in the usual manner", the "usual manner" being one of bloodshed and violence.[530] Take, for example, this 1895 telegraph to the Commissioner of Police G. B. Phillips:

> Returned today met police party about eighty miles from here they have had most successful trip tribe recently killing at Durack Bros Ivanhoe Stud Station

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[523] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 6.
[524] Henry Reynolds with Paul Daley, "The Whispering In Our Hearts Revisited," public talk Canberra Writer's Festival, August 25, 2018, National Museum of Australia.
[525] Robert Foster, "'Don't Mention The War': Frontier Violence And The Language Of Concealment," *History Australia* 6, no. 3 (2009): 68:1; Connor, *Australian Frontier Wars*, 58. See also Owen, "'A Useless Lot'."
[526] Foster, "'Don't Mention The War'," 68:2.
[527] Reynolds with Daley, "The Whispering In Our Hearts Revisited."
[528] See for example Keith Windschuttle, "The Myths Of Frontier Massacres In Australian History," *Quadrant* 44, no. 10 (October 2000): 8-21; Keith Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History, Volume One: Van Diemen's Land 1803-1847* (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2002).
[529] Foster, "'Don't Mention The War'," 68:2.
[530] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 197. See also the illustration "Dispersing Usual Way" (c.1890s) by 'Oscar', an Aboriginal youth from the Palmer River, whose sketchbook is now in the collection of the National Museum of Australia. 1984.0011.0001; Reynolds, "The Written Record," 84.

> thoroughly dispersed *not one escaping*. Durack Bros reports no killing on Argyle Downs station Sergt Wheatley met Halls Creek police party at Lissadell station where both parties dispersed several tribes.[531]

While there is no reference to death or killing of the people of the tribes, the phrase "not one escaping" reveals the underlying truth of the practice of 'dispersal' of Aboriginal people.

While the fact of frontier conflict, and the deaths of many thousands of Aboriginal people—either directly through massacres and skirmishes,[532] or indirectly, through the transmission of disease brought by white colonists—is now a matter upon which professional historians largely agree,[533] in some quarters these deaths continue to be debated.[534] There are still those who wish to cling to the lie of Australia's peaceful foundation and the maintenance of what, to paraphrase anthropologist WEH Stanner, could be termed "the great Australian silence."[535] This perspective continues to play out within the mainstream media, particularly that which is aligned with right-wing political affiliations.[536] Such debates are, points out John Connor, "as much about contemporary politics and the relative merits of empirical and postmodern history as [they] are about what happened on the Australian frontier."[537]

Another way in which the denial of bloodshed can superficially be maintained is due to the lack of written accounts by Aboriginal people.[538] Yet across the continent, we see an oral tradition,[539] frequently expressed through painting, which confirms that bloody clashes between settlers and traditional owners were a function of frontier life. Failure to recognise these oral traditions

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[531] Cited in Owen, "'A Useless Lot'," 121 (my italics).
[532] Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars*.
[533] Ryan, "Untangling Aboriginal Resistance," 219-232.
[534] The most notable proponent of this view is Keith Windschuttle. For examples, see "The Myths Of Frontier Massacres In Australian History," 8-21; *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*. For a comparative assessment of Windschuttle's approach, see Ryan, "Waterloo Creek," 3.
[535] WEH Stanner, "After The Dreaming: Black And White Australians—An Anthropologist's View," The Boyer Lectures 1968 (Sydney: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, no date), 18.
[536] See for example: Michael Duffy, "PC Lessons And A Rewritten History," *The Daily Telegraph* December 14, 2002, 26; Miranda Devine, "Truce, And Truth, In History Wars," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 20, 2006, accessed online December 23, 2018 https://www.smh.com.au/national/truce-and-truth-in-history-wars-20060420-gdne64.html; Andrew Bolt, "Dodson's Reckless Warning," *Herald Sun* August 3, 2018, accessed online December 23, 2018 https://www.heraldsun.com.au/blogs/andrew-bolt/dodsons-reckless-warning/news-story/c0f665628247660d7e490245003f677d; Ross Eastgate, "Our Army Did Not Fight 'Frontier Wars'," *Spectator Australia* September 7, 2018, accessed online December 23, 2018 https://www.spectator.com.au/2018/09/our-army-did-not-fight-frontier-wars/.
[537] Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars*, x.
[538] D. J. Mulvaney, "Barrow Creek Northern Australia, 1874," in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, eds Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 44-51.
[539] For a summation of the way this oral tradition functions to contain and reveal knowledge, see Deborah Bird Rose, "Oral Histories And Knowledge," in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, eds Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 120-131.

represents a wilful rejection of evidence, which continues to influence the public record (as illustrated in the example of the Mistake Creek Massacre painting at the National Museum of Australia, discussed in the Introduction). Contemporary Aboriginal artworks that illustrate these oral traditions, including events of past violence, are not uncommon. One such is Angelina Pwerl Ngal's *Whitefella killing blackfella*, 1998 (see Figure 3.2). This painting depicts three white men, two of whom are on horseback, and a third, who has dismounted and is firing upon an Aboriginal man. In the top left quadrant of the painting, a group of Aboriginal men wielding spears run towards the violence. In the top right, and lower left, corners of the painting, Aboriginal people sit around a campfire. A mounted (white) horseman stands near each of these groups. Significantly, this painting appeared in the 2015 exhibition *The Horse* at the National Gallery of Victoria, and its illustration of settler violence and the role of the horse was a deliberate choice by curators.[540] Whether war or murder, the horse proved fundamental.[541]

Figure 3.2: Angelina Pwerl Ngal, 1998, *Whitefella killing Blackfella*.

[540] Artwork labels for this exhibition are available online. See https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/TheHorse-Labels-for-download.pdf

[541] Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars*, 67; Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*.

Forbes' "outriders of … invasion and dispossession",[542] comprising both man and horse, fulfil Shaw's criteria of including a human co-agent to create a "unity", and thereby achieve equine historicity in accordance with Shaw's framework. Drawing on the work of both Forbes and Shaw, it can be argued that the horse in Australia can here be ascribed with historical agency, as defined by Shaw, in the context of Aboriginal dispossession. Without horses, this aspect of Australia's history may well have turned out very differently. Further, Shaw's "unity" finds a strong expression in the mounted figure of the stockman. Because this figure is ubiquitous and legendary, rather than individuated and historical, it will be explored in Chapter 6, which considers the horse—and in particular the brumby—within the framework of heritage.

Conclusion

Drawing on the work of historians such as Shaw, Foltz, and Kean, this chapter has mounted an argument for animal agency—and horse agency in particular—to matter. As the response to archaeological finds at Krasnyi Yar demonstrate, the horse is only rendered visible to history when it becomes domesticated. This epitomises Shaw's understanding that, for an animal to "matter" it requires a human co-agent. However, another way of framing this contention may be that the horse is only interesting to humans in its instrumental capacity, the type of history characterised by Kean as events in which animals played a role.[543] The intrinsic horse may be of little interest to historians, but the horse's instrumental value, beginning with the process of domestication, is the very stuff of history.

While there is an argument to be made for social history—or history from below—as an important precursor to the embracing of animals as genuine historical actors,[544] it is difficult to find this in the current approach to horses in the context of Australia's past. In the fields where horses are present—exploration, transport, battle—the focus remains largely anthropocentric. As an example, there is an oft-repeated story concerning the horse Copenhagen, where, upon being returned to his stable after the full day on the battlefield of Waterloo, he kicked out, narrowly missing Wellington with his hoof. Shaw recounts how, in its re-telling, this act comes loaded with the motives of the teller—whether to illustrate Copenhagen's endurance, his high spirits, or conversely, his anger.[545] Shaw highlights that none of these accounts properly consider what Copenhagen himself might have meant by this kick.[546] This failure to look beyond the human realm is indicative of

[542] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 6.
[543] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s60.
[544] Shaw, "A Way With Animals," 4; Ritvo, "History And Animal Studies," 404.
[545] Shaw, "The Torturer's Horse," 155.
[546] Shaw, "The Torturer's Horse," 155.

the anthropocentrism that characterises much historical scholarship. If we look beyond an anthropocentric narrative, we might conjecture that the horse's kick at that moment was a result of being bitten by a flea or midge. In this case, the kick has nothing whatever to do with human concerns. While this would immediately remove it from the concerns of traditional historical enquiry, adopting a Foltzian approach renders this tiny creature no less worthy of consideration than the great horse Copenhagen himself, nor the grain he consumed, or the manure he left behind, on that fateful day.

Ultimately, an instrumental bias is understandable—and indeed, largely acceptable—in the context of mainstream history scholarship. However, it is problematic in the broader context of the Australian equine significance narrative. The horse discourse has been selective about which aspects of Australia's past are associated with the horse, focused only on the celebratory aspects of Australian history—even when such narratives are rather grim, such as the case with the Victorian Exploring Expedition. Yet the true advantage that the horse afforded settlers in colonising the Australian landscape, and subjugating the Aboriginal peoples, has drawn scant attention.

In constructing ideas relating to agency, broader definitions that conceptualise it as a force—rather than a sub-set of will and intentionality—hold more promise for inserting horses into historiography. In seeking to reveal the implicitly instrumental view of the horse within Australian history and culture, this thesis draws on more generous understandings of agency, as constructed within the animal studies literature; in writings on affect; and in museum studies scholarship. A consideration of the agency of museum objects has recently occupied museology scholars, and these ideas will be elucidated in Chapter 5.

In exploring the narratives traditionally offered in support of the horse's historical significance, it becomes apparent that in such contexts the horse has little to no agency. Instead, the animal's role is akin to a tool or labour-saving device. Working within the confines set out by Shaw, we see that the historical agency of the horse becomes most apparent within the Australian context in the contribution this animal made to the dispossession of Australia's first peoples. It may be that the underlying shame attendant upon this historical significance has seen it being ignored, with more positive narratives being substituted in its place. However, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, such affirmatory narratives fail to withstand close examination. While the horse's agency in the work of colonisation is no different from its function in any of the other narratives addressed in this chapter—that is, a primarily instrumental value—the omission of this role in Australian history is a serious elision. As a weapon in the war of colonisation, the horse provided a notable advantage, and, as demonstrated here, significantly influenced the course of Australian history.

Taken together, these issues prompt a questioning of the present-day motivations for framing the horse as historically significant to Australians. As a discipline, history mirrors general social trends. [547] While the rise of animal-focused work is one example of the ways contemporary concerns influence the field, so too are the contentions represented by the 'history wars'. That is, the challenging of established understandings of history, particularly as it pertained to the grand narratives of Australia's discovery and settlement, prompted a backlash among conservatives, which also met with some (albeit limited) support from within the discipline itself.[548] I am not suggesting here that the horse's historical invisibility in the context of Australia's frontier warfare and violent colonisation has been deliberately orchestrated by those who wish to cling to the great Australian silence.[549] However, it does serve as evidence of the ways that cultural assumptions around the horse remain unexamined, and uncritically accepted. Here, using the horse as a case study reveals the ways in which history is intertwined with issues of national identity and nationalism.[550]

[547] Ritvo, "History And Animal Studies," 404.
[548] Damien W. Riggs, "Constructions Of Truth And Objectivity In Debates Over Windschuttle's *Fabrication*," *Journal of Australian Studies* 28, issue 82 (2004): 37-48.
[549] Stanner, "After The Dreaming," 18.
[550] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, see in particular Chapter I.

Chapter 4: “The Man from Snowy River”: European tropes, Australian pastoral, and the ‘underdog’ narrative template

National admiration for the horse did not emerge, Adam-like, from the Australian soil, though nor has it been imported wholesale from Britain. Instead, it is the culmination of a long process of active cultural construction, in conjunction with global trends. This process began with the unconscious tropes imported by settler colonials, which, as I argue here, were then hybridised by the first generation of Australian-born artists and poets. These artists and writers left a legacy of self-conscious nationalism that, over the course of the twentieth century, developed to suit the prevailing national mood, until today we find ourselves left ‘holding the reins’ (so to speak) of a cultural myth that, even at the time of its construction, owed more to European ideals and the political climate than any accurate representation of the Australian nation.

In this chapter, I outline the ways the horse was culturally constructed, in particular during the nineteenth century, and how this has shaped its contemporary perception in Australia. In so doing, I begin with the earliest equine tropes dating from the early Modern period of Europe. I then examine the British cultural constructs that settlers brought with them to Australia, and how these have shaped contemporary approaches to the horse. draw here on the work of Jeanette Hoorn, who argues that the European pastoral tradition was especially significant in framing the settlers’ cultural understanding of the land, and particularly influenced the artwork of the Heidelberg school. Applying Hoorn’s argument to the bush balladry published in the *Bulletin*, I then focus on the British tropes upon which the figure of the stockman is based, to argue that this conflation of the pastoral with pastoralism significantly contributes to Australia’s culture of stockman-worship. Here, I use ‘Banjo’ Paterson’s 1890 poem, “The Man from Snowy River” as a case study, examining its themes of masculinity, belonging, and the use of the underdog schematic narrative template. The “Man from Snowy River” is significant for its continued influence, not only on cultural representations of Australian identity, but the realisation of this identity through contemporary understandings about heritage. The horse is fundamental to this cultural imagery, and it cannot be understood in isolation from such constructions.

Influences from the early modern period

Recent years have seen a growing interest among historians and scholars of the European early modern period in exploring the horse culture of this era. While such work may not appear immediately relevant to the Australian context, it in fact provides an important historical

background to the culture within which the significance of the horse developed in Australia. Furthermore, closer scrutiny of this history reveals a correlation between the cultural associations of the early modern period, and some of Australia's most familiar equine tropes. Much of Australia's equestrian symbolism can thus be seen as having antecedents in English traditions.

Peter Edwards and Elspeth Graham argue that the cultural significance of the horse originates from within a social elite, who "possessed the means, as well as the inclination, to judge horses according to their symbolic value as well as their functional capabilities, [and] viewed them not as luxuries but as essential signifiers of status."[551] Certainly most scholars investigating the field of horse culture during the early modern period of European history concur the horse was emblematic of status.[552] In Elizabethan England, for example, the horse was understood as a meter of worth for his (or her) human counterpart.[553] According to scholar Elizabeth Socolow:

> The symbolic reading of the meaning of a horse and a noble rider, a perfect combination of the steed's flowing action and lithe muscle and the rider's learning, control and agency, was obvious and meaningful to all at the time.[554]

Conversely, when horses were imported to the Philippines by Spanish colonists, their adjustment to the climate and environmental conditions led to a rapid decrease in size. This physical diminution was reflected in a reduction of the horse's symbolic power, which "became more closely associated with the humdrum affairs of the colonised. … Far from enhancing the dignity of the coloniser, the [horse] now served only to mock him".[555]

The origins of many tropes now attached to representations of the horse in contemporary Australia can be seen to lie within this period of England's history. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, horses came to be associated with a distinct English national identity,[556] at a

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[551] Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 7.

[552] Peter Edwards, Karl A.E. Enenkel and Elspeth Graham (eds), *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (eds), *The Culture of The Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: palgrave macmillan), 2005.

[553] Elizabeth Anne Socolow, "Letting Loose The Horses: Sir Philip Sidney's Exordium To The Defence Of Poesie," in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, eds Peter Edwards et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 137.

[554] Socolow, "Letting Loose", 137-38.

[555] Bankoff, "Big Men, Small Horses," 117.

[556] Ian F. MacInnes, "Altering A Race Of Jades: Horse Breeding And Geohumoralism In Shakespeare," in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, eds Peter Edwards Karl A.E. Enenkel and Elspeth Graham, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 175; Richard Nash, "'Honest English Breed': The Thoroughbred As Cultural Metaphor," in *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the early Modern World*, ed. Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 246.

time when the notion of national identity itself was relatively new.[557] As Professor of English Ian MacInnes argues, "horses contributed economically to the construction of the idea of 'nation'… [and] attention to the horse was by extension attention to the land and its products."[558] Two hundred years later in Australia the horse similarly contributed to the construction of the nation. This was both literal, in the case of physical labour and the advantages of being mounted to colonising the continent, and metaphorical, in the role the animal began to play in the cultural imagination. Though the horse did contribute economically to the construction of the Australian nation, in an inversion of the model of early-modern England, attention to the land and its products today arguably equates with attention to the horse, as narratives of farming and the rural mythology are intrinsically tied to this animal. This is due, in part, to the pervasive notion of historical significance attached to the horse (as discussed in the previous chapter), however the centrality of the figure of the stockman (and thereby the horse) to these narratives also contributes to this conjunction.

One example of a trope transplanted almost verbatim from England is a purportedly national regard for the thoroughbred.[559] Though in Britain and Europe the thoroughbred remains strongly associated with English cultural identity, in Australia this breed has been embraced as significant largely because of its association with horse racing.[560] Caroline Winter and Elspeth Frew argue that racehorses have become embedded into Australian society through the elevation of individual horses to celebrity status, leading to the thoroughbred being widely loved. This, in turn, has manufactured the "social licence" that has made racing events part of national culture.[561] One notable event is the annual Melbourne Cup race, which has been popularly billed as "the race that stops the nation", and for many years has been promoted as intrinsic to Australian national identity.[562] The notion that in Australia horse racing is a more egalitarian sport than elsewhere has

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[557] MacInnes, "A Race Of Jades," 178.
[558] MacInnes, "A Race Of Jades," 178.
[559] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry*, 13. See also Winter, "Loving Thoroughbreds To Death," 578-93; Bevan, "Melbourne Cup."
[560] Caroline Winter and Elspeth Frew, "Thoroughbred Racing: Backstage At The Sport Of Kings," *Leisure Studies* 37, no. 4 (2018): 456.
[561] Winter and Frew, "Thoroughbred Racing," 454, 456.
[562] Until late 2018 the race featured on an Australian Government website detailing significant national days. It is also currently the subject of a permanent exhibit ("Flemington", within the Connecting the Nation module within the Landmarks Gallery) at the National Museum of Australia, as well as online—see http://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/melbourne-cup (accessed November 14, 2018). See also Carole M. Cusack and Justine Digance, "The Melbourne Cup: Australian Identity And Secular Pilgrimage," *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 12 (2009):876-889.

been disseminated and capitalised on, particularly by the aforementioned Melbourne Cup[563] (this will be addressed in greater detail within Chapter 5), and the thoroughbred has been co-opted into this narrative. The Australian thoroughbred breeding industry is now the second-largest in the world,[564] far outstripping the number of horses produced by England. Writing of the breed's English heritage, Richard Nash argues that, as a specifically and intentionally bred horse, the thoroughbred functions simultaneously as natural and artificial, "operat[ing] as 'natural' living metaphors for a particular set of cultural values that they thereby reify as innate."[565] This status as a living cultural metaphor for English-ness has been bastardised in the Australian context, where thoroughbreds occupy dual status as both commodities, and individual horses.[566] These diverging parallels, while interesting, lie largely outside the scope of this thesis. It is sufficient to note that the nationalistic associations of the thoroughbred were transplanted to Australia with British settlers, and have subsequently come to uncritically symbolise another aspect of Australian identity. I will look at the use that one key Australian race horse, Phar Lap, has been put to in serving the nationalist agenda, in Chapter 5.

A conjunction between the horse, and a nation's performance in battle, is another confluence with origins in the early modern period. This era saw a period of technological innovation that heralded the modernisation of weapons. This changed the nature of warfare, part of which was a reduction in the role of the horse in military life.[567] In parallel to this was the declining influence of the aristocracy within the military, which led to the democratisation of the cavalry. The outcome of these changes was the formation of the Light Horse brigades, and the obsolescence of traditional heavy cavalry.[568] The form of the British Light Horse brigades were therefore well-established by the time World War I occurred. The structure was subsequently adopted by Australians serving in the Light Horse and represented a significant aspect of Australia's contribution to the British war effort, which ultimately saw 16 mounted regiments in action.[569] As discussed in the previous chapter, the exploits of the Light Horse are one way in which the horse is framed as historically significant to the Australian people. This narrative draws on the bushman mythology in its construction, while also

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[563] Rod Fitzroy, "Introduction," in *The Story of the Melbourne Cup, Australia's Greatest race,* ed. Stephen Howell (Docklands: The Slattery Media Group, 2010), 23; The Slattery Media website, accessed July 8, 2016 http://books.slatterymedia.com/store/viewItem/the-story-of-the-melbourne-cup
[564] "Our Industry," Thoroughbred Breeders Australia website, accessed October 30, 2018 https://www.tbaus.com/australian-breeding/our-industry/
[565] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'," 246.
[566] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry,* 116.
[567] Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 7-8.
[568] Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 7-8.
[569] "The Mounted Soldiers Of Australia," The Australian Light Horse Association, accessed November 14, 2018 http://www.lighthorse.org.au/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia-2/

forming part of a broader narrative that emphasises the egalitarianism and mateship purportedly unique to the Australian troops.[570] Within this context it is important to highlight the pre-existing understanding that the Light Horse was already a more egalitarian fighting unit, as a result of the changes that occurred in the early Modern period of Europe.[571] Further, as Catriona Elder argues, by the time Australia was shaping up for battle alongside the allied forces in Europe, the notion of an egalitarian nation had already been internalised, and reconfigured into something of an identity narrative.[572] In this context, the Australian Light Horse can be seen as the convenient vehicle for a narrative of egalitarianism, rather than its inspiration.

These examples of imported understandings of the horse that have subsequently been fashioned into antipodean identity narratives, illustrate the extent to which global paradigms have shaped Australian identity. In focusing on the horse, we see how European attitudes shaped the ways this animal was perceived and interpreted, and that the significance of the horse is in fact part of a broader legacy, with historical antecedents in the early modern period. In the next section, I focus on the ways these attitudes were expressed through the art and literature of the period. While the examples I draw from do not represent the entirety of the creative output of colonial Australia, they have subsequently come to stand for this era in the popular imagination. This, I argue, was a result of the ontological frameworks that were already in place in the colonial imagination,[573] and which were handily filled by a localised version of the pastoral, wherein shepherds were replaced by stockmen.

From pastoral to pastoralism

The horse arrived in Australia in 1788, along with the first white colonists. The fact that horses were imported to these faraway shores alongside the first boat-loads of convicts indicates that they were considered animals necessary to the business of human survival. In addition to the living animals, the colonists brought with them a conceptual understanding of the horse, shaped by a particularly English cultural perspective. The greatest proportion of migrants to Australia from the early nineteenth century until the post-war period (1945 and beyond) were people from England, Ireland,

[570] See in particular C.E.W Bean's description of the Australian national character in Chapter 1 of his *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, 4-7, accessed via online pdf https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1416969
[571] Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 7-8.
[572] Elder, *Being Australian*, 41-42; 46; 49-52.
[573] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*.

Scotland and Wales.[574] It is therefore unsurprising that an Anglo-centric sensibility has influenced the cultural discourse of Australia since colonisation.

The Anglo-Celtic bias is particularly evident in the cultural works produced in the period of identity construction that occurred in Australia during the 1880s and 1890s. The arts are one recognisable way in which societies disseminate their national narratives,[575] and during this era, the artworks of the Heidelberg School and the writings of the *Bulletin* School formed the basis of a new Australian cultural identity, which continues to influence modern-day representations of the nation. The figure of the horse was intrinsic to these cultural productions. Here, it represented an authentic Australian identity, itself bound up in constructions of whiteness, masculinity, and the rural. The Heidelberg School is the name is given to a group of painters working in Australia during the late nineteenth century, with the movement they belonged to also known as Australian Impressionism, while the Bulletin School refers to the nationalist Sydney-based periodical the *Bulletin*, which is credited with popularising bush balladry that romanticised the rural lifestyle. Sue Rowley advocates for a reading of these artistic and literary works in conjunction with each other, to expose the gendering of nationalist mythologies, and as an opportunity to reconsider the traditions of Australian national culture.[576] This chapter consids these nineteenth century iconic literary and artistic works within their historical contexts, revealing their underlying European frameworks, and their ongoing influence.

The Australian Studies literature is well represented with scholarship that explores the origins and influence of the figure of bushman.[577] For example, Nanette Mantle, in her historiography of the horse in Australia, contends that the origins of this "mytho-history" lie in the accomplishments of the nineteenth-century stockriders, and the subsequent iconography created by the poets, writers and artists who heroised them.[578] She further argues that the bushman iconography has cultural origins based in an imported British code of chivalry, with those settlers of the 'gentlemanly class' bringing with them not only the skills of equestrianism, but the "values and aspirations based on a cult of masculinity—group loyalty, mental and physical strength, courage and physical skill."[579] Leigh Astbury argues that the mythology of the Australian bushman, which found

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[574] Elder, *Being Australian*, 118.
[575] Geoff Levitus, "Introduction," in *Lying about Landscape*, edited by Geoff Levitus (North Ryde: Craftsman House, 1997), 7-14; Elder, *Being Australian*, 181. Geoff Levitus, "Introduction," in *Lying about Landscape*, edited by Geoff Levitus (North Ryde: Craftsman House, 1997), 7-14.
[576] Rowley, "Incidents Of The Bush," 17.
[577] Ward, *The Australian Legend*; Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 363-369; Astbury, *City Bushmen*; Mantle, *Horse & Rider*.
[578] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 2.
[579] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 90.

its apotheosis in the works of the Heidelberg School,[580] was just one aspect of a wide-ranging "nostalgia felt by an urban-based society for the values of rural life",[581] and that similar expressions of such a nostalgia could be found in the works of French and English painters of the time.[582] Astbury argues that the works of the Heidelberg School (and, by extension, the poetry of *Bulletin*) represented a mythologised view, due to the discrepancies between the pastoral ideals depicted, and the realities of urban and rural life, noting that, "[i]mmune from the actual experience of rural life, an urban public was able to respond freely and imaginatively to distinctive elements of the rural myth in the Heidelberg artists' paintings."[583] Elsewhere, and against the majority consensus, art historian Jeanette Hoorn contends that the works of Heidelberg artists Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts did depict contemporary and everyday rural life, rather than a mythologised past.[584] Yet what is of greater import—and the issue underpinning these arguments—is that these depictions continue to unduly colour both domestic and international perceptions of Australian life. This is not to say that shearing, pastoralism, and agriculture are not still important functions of the national labour and economic markets, however, their continual dissemination and over-representation presents a very narrow, gendered, and mono-cultural view of twenty-first century life in Australia.

While the idealisation of the bushman in the Australian cultural imaginary has been written about at length, the influence of the pastoral tradition on such cultural iconography has garnered less scholarly attention, with the notable exception of Jeanette Hoorn. However, this is a significant gap, as it was arguably the conflation of pastoral and pastoralism that occurred in Australia during the nineteenth century that produced a cultural climate where the figure of the stockman could be deified. Hoorn has convincingly argued that, in Australia, the European pastoral mode fused with the economic and political imperatives of pastoralism,[585] to foster the artistic works of the Heidelberg School and the bush balladry popularised by the *Bulletin*, both of which romanticised the rural lifestyle. While in a literary sense the pastoral remains difficult to define, several of its key tropes can be seen within the works under discussion. Here I argue that, in the Australian context, the figure of the stockman has replaced the shepherds whose lives formed the "representative anecdote" of traditional European pastoral poetry.[586] This creates a significant link between the pastoral conventions of Europe, and what Australian studies scholars have termed "the cult of the

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[580] Astbury, *City Bushmen,* 1.
[581] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 2.
[582] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 2. See also Ian McLean, *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 22.
[583] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 2-3.
[584] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral,* 165-173.
[585] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*.
[586] Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 22-28.

bushman".[587] While seemingly tangential, this figure is himself intrinsically linked to the horse through the construction of Shaw's "unity",[588] whereby a horse and rider may be considered as a single agent. The concept of the "unity" was introduced in Chapter 3, and the stockman within this context will be more fully unpacked in Chapter 6.

Along with the white settlers of the eighteenth century came cultural frameworks, shaped by an Anglo-European sensibility, which were transposed onto the antipodean landscape. One such cultural ideology, argues Jeanette Hoorn, was the use of the pastoral as a framing device. Hoorn contends that the pastoral ideal, as "one of the great traditions of western art and literature",[589] was present from the outset in shaping understandings of Australia and influencing representations of the landscape. Such was its widespread familiarity that it was used as a device to attract free settlers to the colony from the 1820s,[590] with descriptive passages emphasising the fertile promise of the land used by William Charles Wentworth in his *A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales,*[591] as well as the imagery produced by Joseph Lycett for *Views in Australia*.[592] Writers referencing colonial New South Wales demonstrated their familiarity with pastoral tropes, often presenting them in witty juxtaposition to the actual conditions of the colony. For instance, in the 1842 poem "Song of the Squatters I", immigrant and poet Robert Lowe quipped that "The stockmen will swear / and the shepherds won't sing".[593] Elsewhere, Anthony Trollope wrote:

> The general idyllic idea of Arcadian shepherd-life which teaches us to believe that Tityrus lies under a beech-tree most of his hours playing on his reed and 'spooning' Phyliss, is very unlike the truth in Australian pastures. … It is a life … of unremitting labour amidst the dust and the grease, amidst fleece and carcasses.[594]

It is worth noting that here, in addition to presaging this unique Australian coalescence of poetry and pastoralism, in its reference to "a life … of unremitting labour", this quote also heralds a particular construction of Australian identity, which simultaneously championed the toughness required to survive life in Australia, while denigrating its 'uncivilised' conditions.

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[587] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 12; Rowley, "Incidents Of The Bush," 17.
[588] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 161.
[589] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 9.
[590] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 11; Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 123-24.
[591] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 55-56.
[592] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 55-64.
[593] Cited in Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 14.
[594] Cited in Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 177.

Leigh Astbury demonstrates that a pictorial tradition relating to the bushman emerged as early as the 1850s with the work of colonial artists such as S.T. Gill;[595] however, it was not until the 1890s that it reached its apotheosis in the work of the Heidelberg School.[596] The artists drew the titles for many of their landscape paintings from pastoral verses, for example Arthur Streeton's "Still glides the stream, and shall forever glide" (1890), which originates in Wordsworth's "Valedictory Sonnet to the River Duddon"; or "The purple noon's transparent might" (1896), taken from Shelley's "Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples".[597] Hoorn writes that "[these] paintings cannot be understood without due weight being accorded to the European cultural ideals that shaped them and the political agenda that was implicit in those ideals".[598] One of these implicit ideals was the equation of pastoralism with 'civilisation', and civilisation with settlement. In his treatise on the merits of New South Wales (and its superiority to the United States, for those contemplating emigration), explorer and noted colonist William Charles Wentworth declared that "[a]n endless variety of hill and dale, clothed in the most luxuriant herbage, and covered with bleating flocks and lowing herds, at length indicate that you are in regions fit to be inhabited by civilized man."[599] Wentworth's many demarcations of what was and was not fit for "the purposes of civilized man", interposed with frequent references to Indigenous peoples as "savages",[600] reveals the discourses of colonialism that shaped constructions of the land, and landscape, in the colony. Such assumptions were also implicit within the convention of the pastoral mode.

The 1870s were a turning-point in the colony's history. Pastoralism became the primary source of Australia's wealth,[601] and it was at around this time that wool, and the figure of the "squatter", were incorporated into constructions of national identity.[602] These influences were reflected in the colony's artistic and cultural pursuits; 1870 marked the publication of Adam Lindsay Gordon's popular poem "The Sick Stockrider", regarded by some as the original bush ballad,[603] while the proliferation of illustrated newspapers and periodicals saw imagery associated with the figure of the bushman become entrenched in contemporary culture.[604] It was also during the 1870s that

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[595] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 2.
[596] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 1.
[597] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 184-88.
[598] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 183-84.
[599] W.C. Wentworth, *A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales and its Dependant Settlements in Van Diemen's Land with a Particular Enumeration of the Advantages which the Colonies offer for Emigration and their Superiority in Many Respects over those possessed by the United States of America* (Project Gutenberg EBook, 2005), http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15602/15602-h/15602-h.htm
[600] Wentworth, *Description of the Colony of New South Wales.*
[601] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 134.
[602] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 133. See also Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 31.
[603] Douglas Stewart & Nancy Keesing, *Australian Bush Ballads* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1955), ix.
[604] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 2.

Trollope made the observation on the difference between pastoral depictions, and the realities of pastoralism in Australia, cited earlier. This set of circumstances signals the likely origins of the conflation of the pastoral with pastoralism in Australia, where the traditional European pastoral sensibility amalgamated with the colonial ideology of rural pursuits, forming something of pastoral palimpsest.

Hoorn cites *The Australian National Dictionary*, which gives sixty five different local usages of the word pastoral, all of which relate to land usage or occupation; whereas the equivalent volume from Britain, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, describes a pastoralist as "a writer of pastorals". The *Oxford English Dictionary* does, however, note that in Australia the word has the distinctive meaning of a sheep farmer.[605] Hoorn concludes that, "when Australians refer to the pastoral they do not have in mind the literary forms of Virgil but those which they associate with the bush".[606]

The Australian pastoral

Academic Paul Alpers argued that there is no single definition of what is meant by 'pastoral',[607] though he outlined several key aspects that he saw as defining features of the mode. These included:

> that pastoral 'is a double longing after innocence and happiness'; that it is based in the philosophical antithesis of Art and Nature; that its universal idea is the Golden Age; that its fundamental motive is hostility to urban life.[608]

These features, as I argue here, can also be seen as characteristic of much of the bush poetry of the late nineteenth century.

The tenet espousing anti-urban sentiment is particularly relevant. This antipathy formed the crux of an ongoing and public dispute between several notable proponents of the bush ballad, in what has come to be known as the *Bulletin* debate.[609] In July of 1892, the *Bulletin* published a poem by Henry Lawson titled "Borderland", in which he obliquely criticised the romantic bush poetry of

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[605] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 145-46.
[606] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 147.
[607] Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?* 8.
[608] Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 10.
[609] William H. Wilde, Joy Hooton, and Barry Andrews, "Bulletin Debate," in William H. Wilde, Joy Hooton, and Barry Andrews, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* online edition (Oxon, Oxford University Press, 2005).

men such as Paterson, by comparing the images depicted in poems with the reality of life in the bush.[610] The poem begins:

> I am back from up the country, very sorry that I went,
> Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;
> I have lost a lot of idols, which were broken on the track,
> Burnt a lot of fancy verses, and I'm glad that I am back.
>
> Further out may be the pleasant scenes of which our poets boast,
> But I think the country's rather more inviting round the coast.[611]

A fortnight later the periodical published Paterson's response. Titled "In Defence of the Bush: On Reading Henry Lawson's 'Borderland'", the poem claimed that, if life in the bush was tough, it was still an improvement on life in the "squalid street and square"[612] of the (ubiquitous) city. Paterson concluded with the sentiment that Lawson "had better stick to Sydney and make merry with the 'push', / For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush".[613]

Paterson's rejoinder to Lawson attracted retorts of its own, with a number of poets offering up rhymes supporting Lawson's original critique. For example, Edward Dyson challenged Paterson, at that time working as a Sydney-based solicitor, with a poem titled "The Fact of the Matter", which begins:

> I'm wonderin' why those fellers who go buildin' chipper ditties,
> 'Bout the rosy times out drovin', an' the dust an' death of cities,
> Don't sling the bloomin' office, strike some drover for a billet
> And soak up all the glory that comes handy while they fill it.[614]

Lawson too offered a poetic riposte, in the form of "In Answer to 'Banjo', and Otherwise" (later re-titled "The City Bushman", a none-too-subtle jibe at Paterson), where he cautions "True, the bush 'hath moods and changes'—and the bushman hath 'em, too,/ For he's not a poet's dummy—he's a man, the same as you".[615] While Paterson's *bona fides* lie in a childhood growing up on a farm

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[610] In fact, a case may be made for Lawson's work to be described as 'anti-pastoral'.
[611] Henry Lawson, "Borderland," Bulletin July 9, 1892, 21.
[612] Andrew Barton Paterson, "In Defence Of The Bush: On Reading Henry Lawson's 'Borderland'," *Bulletin* July 23, 1892, 15.
[613] Paterson, "Defence Of The Bush," 15.
[614] Edward Dyson, "The Fact Of The Matter," *Bulletin* July 30, 1892, 19.
[615] Henry Lawson, "In Answer To 'Banjo', And Otherwise," *Bulletin* August 6, 1892, 5.

surrounded by horses and bullocks in the small country town of Binalong, and while he would later return to life on the land,[616] his late nineteenth-century poetry, created in a highly urban environment, is coloured by the rosy glow of nostalgia.[617]

The debate continued for several years; however it is best encapsulated by Francis Kenna's 1892 offering, titled "Banjo of the Overflow". This title refers both to Paterson himself, and his 1889 poem, "Clancy of the Overflow". The final four stanzas of Kenna's poem, reproduced below, neatly illustrate both the thrust of the debate, and the satirical view taken by some towards the romanticism of depictions of the bush:

> I am tired of reading prattle of the sweetly-lowing cattle
> Stringing out across the open with the bushmen riding free;
> I am sick at heart of roving up and down the country droving,
> And of alternating damper with the salt-junk and the tea.
>
> And from sleeping in the water on the droving trips I've caught a
> Lively dose of rheumatism in my back and in my knee,
> And in spite of verse it's certain that the sky's a leaky curtain –
> It may suit the 'Banjo' nicely, but it never suited me.
>
> And the bush is very pretty when you view it from the city,
> But it loses all its beauty when you face it 'on the pad;'
> And the wildernesses haunt you, and the plains extended daunt you,
> Till at times you come to fancy life will drive you mad.
>
> But I somehow often fancy that I'd rather not be Clancy,
> That I'd like to be the 'Banjo' where the people come and go
> When instead of framing curses I'd be writing charming verses –
> Tho' I scarcely think he'd swap me, 'Banjo, of the Overflow.'[618]

According to the *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, the *Bulletin* debate was a literary version of the age-old contest between representing romance and realism.[619] In this

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[616] Terry Birtles, "Andrew Barton ('Banjo') Paterson, Bush Poet, Lawyer And Journalist," *MARGIN: Monash Australiana Research Group Informal Notes* 68 (2006): 23-37.
[617] Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, vii.
[618] Francis Kenna, "Banjo, Of The Overflow," *Bulletin*, August 27, 1892, 17.
[619] Wilde, Hooton, and Andrews, *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*.

assessment we see a further correlation with the pastoral tradition, where, as one eighteenth-century commentator cautioned, for the writer of pastorals:

> …it is sometimes convenient not to discover the whole truth, but that part which is only delightful. … [In] writing Pastorals, let the tranquillity of that life appear full and plain, but hide the meanness of it; represent its simplicity as clear as you please, but cover its misery.[620]

The essence of the *Bulletin* debate could equally be viewed as a dispute between the virtues of the (romanticised) Rural, and the evils of the (pragmatic) City. This emphasis on the virtues of the country over the corrupting influence of the city is a lynchpin of the pastoral trope.[621] Poet Andrew Taylor has argued that a defining feature of Australian pastorals is that they are written by urban poets for urban audiences.[622] The tendency of bush ballads, as exemplified by Paterson, to be authored by city-based poets, and consumed by urban readers,[623] supports Taylor's assertion. Further, as evinced by the *Bulletin* debate's crossing of poetic swords, the bush ballad depicts an idealised vision of nature, again echoing Alpers' thesis.[624]

Central to the bush ballad's idealisation of nature lies the conviction that rural life is more authentic than urban existence. The notion that the 'real' Australia can only be found in the outback retains its currency today,[625] yet as most scholars concur, it was outdated even at the time these works were being composed.[626] During the heyday of the bush ballad, the 1890s, the majority of the nation's population was then, as now, based in the city.[627] Nonetheless, these poems evoke an idea of a golden age in Australia's history, a (fictional) time when we were a nation populated by stockman and drovers, illustrating Alpers' assertion of the Golden Age as one of the key attributes of the pastoral mode.[628] The figure of the horse is implicit within this poetry, and functions to reinforce the rural ideal.

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[620] Cited in Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 89-90.
[621] Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 365; Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 53.
[622] Andrew Taylor, "The Pastoral In Australia: Is There A Genuine New Pastoral?" Keynote address presented at the Afterlife of Pastoral conference, University of Queensland, July 5, 2014.
[623] Nonetheless, the *Bulletin* promoted itself as 'the bushman's bible'. See Warren Fahey, "The Bushman's Bible," Warren Fahey's Australian Folklore Unit webpage, accessed July 22, 2019 http://www.warrenfahey.com.au/the-bushmans-bible/
[624] Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 22-28.
[625] See for example Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity;" Elder, *Being Australian*, 212-217; McLean, *White Aborigines*, 5; Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*, 52.
[626] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 2-3; Elder, *Being Australian*, 184, 190.
[627] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 181; McKenry, "Beyond The Bowyangs," 26.
[628] Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 10.

The shepherd re-imagined

According to Alpers, it is the herdsmen and their lives, as opposed to the landscape, that functions as the representative anecdote defining the pastoral tradition.[629] In this construction, the traditional pastoral was not concerned with real landscapes but imaginary ones, created purely to articulate the human drama portrayed within. If, as Alpers argues, "whatever the specific features and emphases, it is the representative anecdote of shepherds' lives that makes certain landscapes pastoral",[630] then it can be argued that in the Australian tradition, the ubiquitous shepherd had been replaced by the stockman, and the herdsmen by drovers (the 'bush hierarchy' that underpins the substituting of mounted stock workers for shepherds is addressed below). Alpers himself intimates that such substitutions are acceptable, arguing that "pastoral landscapes are those of which the human centres are herdsmen *or their equivalents*".[631] This Australian recasting reveals the role the stockman plays in reconfiguring the foreign antipodean landscape into a more culturally familiar one. Here, the figure of the stockman becomes a defining feature of the Australian reimagination of the pastoral, and thus functions to reframe the European trope into an Australian context. The landscapes depicted by the Australian bush ballads were constructed to facilitate the human drama of conquest and domination. This arguably allowed settlers to translate the Australian landscape into a more palatable, and less threatening, form. The human-centred nature of bush balladry, while taking place in a very particular landscape of the imagination, at its core asks the reader to identify with its human protagonist (in this case the stockman). This figure serves as a link, not only between the European pastoral tradition and nineteenth-century bush balladry, but to the modern-day cultural iconography of Australia.

The stereotype of the Australian stockman has retained a tenacious hold on the national cultural imagination. According to Keith McKenry, this stranglehold is enabled, at least in part, through the continued influence of "historically warped … folklore and balladry",[632] in which the figure of the stockman plays a significant role. As Billig has argued, the repetition of imagery is a key component of fostering nationalism;[633] it can also function to actively disseminate cultural knowledge.[634] The persistent repetition of the iconic bushman-figure in cultural representations of Australia, for example in museums, heritage centres (such as the Stockman's Hall of Fame), public

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[629] Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 22.
[630] Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 28.
[631] Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 28, emphasis mine.
[632] Keith McKenry, "Looking Beyond The Bowyangs: A Critique Of Australian Ballad Anthologies," *Overland* 147 (1997), 26.
[633] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*.
[634] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 64.

events like the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympics, and the $10 dollar note, ensures he retains his position in the national imagination.

Figure 4.1: Frank Mahony, 1889, *Rounding up a Straggler*.

Like the pastoral tradition, which provided a ready framework into which a uniquely Australian figure might be easily substituted for the herdsmen of Europe, the figure of the stockman also has antecedents in Europe, in this case evolving out of the British chivalric tradition. [635] Nanette Mantle demonstrates that the late eighteenth century witnessed a revival of "the cults and culture of chivalry" in Britain,[636] with the mainstays of the tradition being courage, honour, and a nobility of spirit.[637] The horse too was integral to the concept of chivalry, and was itself embedded within the romantic traditions of knights and knighthood. The root of the word 'chivalry' contains the word *caballarius*, which has the Latin root word *caballus*, meaning horse. The romance of the mounted figure, which the stockman by necessity must be, would have been intrinsic to the construct of chivalry that eighteenth and early nineteenth-century settlers ascribed to. Mantle argues that the figure of the stockman is a reimagining of several Anglo-European traditions—the fox-hunting gentleman of England, the chivalrous cavalryman of the army, and the knight errant.[638] In particular,

[635] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 2.
[636] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 91-3.
[637] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 91.
[638] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 59.

the strong parallel between stockman and knight can be found in depictions of the stockman, mounted, with whip raised, evoking imagery of St George slaying the dragon (see Figure 4.1).[639] These culturally iconic personages have been reconfigured into the landscape of Australia to create the figure of the stockman, who continues to occupy mytho-historical status in the public imagination. In discussing the representative in pastoral, Alpers urges scholars to ask, "what do these representations represent?"[640], and it is worth considering this question in the context of the stockman. What does the figure of the stockman really represent in Australia, given his continued presence in nationalistic iconography?

Bush Ballads and "The Man from Snowy River"

While the Heidelberg artists visually depicted this Australian conflation of the pastoral with pastoralism, the bush ballad epitomises its written form. Emerging in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it falls within the wider Australian balladic tradition.[641] It has been defined by Douglas Stewart, who, alongside Nancy Keesing was the first to anthologise the form in Australia, as "essentially a simple story of action, swift and direct in movement, having even in its humorous moments a certain weight of the soil".[642] Stewart felt that "the Australian bush ballad [is] the ebullition of the [eighteen] nineties, robust, humorous, earthy and heroic".[643] There has been speculation regarding the historical antecedents of Australia's bush ballads, and Stewart recounts two schools of thought, whereby either the bush ballad grew out of British traditions of folk-poetry, or Adam Lindsay Gordon may be credited as the originator of the form, pioneered by his poem "The Sick Stockrider". Stewart sees truth in both theories,[644] while McKenry deems the notion that the ballad originated with Gordon to be "ludicrous".[645] More recent scholarship argues the Australian bush ballad developed from Anglo-European broadside and folk verse traditions.[646] Scholar of Australian literature Peter Kirkpatrick reminds us that the national taste for bush poetry must be considered as part of a wider fashion for such literary forms. Within this context, he argues, "many bush ballads appear less a folkloric expression of Australian national consciousness than local variations of a hegemonic literature of colonial adventure."[647]

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[639] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*,60.
[640] Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* 22.
[641] McKenry, "Beyond The Bowyangs," 25.
[642] Stewart and Keesing, *Australian Bush Ballads*, viii.
[643] Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, ix.
[644] Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, ix.
[645] McKenry, "Beyond The Bowyangs," 29.
[646] McKenry, "Beyond The Bowyangs," 29.
[647] Peter Kirkpatrick, "Hunting The Wild Reciter: Elocution And The Art Of Recitation," *Journal of Australian Studies* 30 (2006):31.

Key poets of this tradition include Adam Lyndsay Gordon,[648] Henry Lawson,[649] Barcroft Boake, and Will Ogilvie,[650] though the most noted among these, and retaining his popular cachet today, is 'Banjo' Paterson. Described by one contemporary in 1898 as "the stockman's and rough rider's bard",[651] and even well into the twentieth century retaining his title as "the king of them all",[652] Paterson valorised the stockman throughout his oeuvre, and nowhere more thoroughly than in the poem "The Man from Snowy River". The poem recounts the feats of a nameless man, who, on trusty steed, rounds up a herd of wild bush horses, as well as the valuable escaped colt that prompts the muster. The poem found a ready audience among *Bulletin* readers, where it was first published in 1890. [653] Five years later when it appeared in anthology form under Paterson's own name (rather than his pseudonym, 'The Banjo') it broke all previous Australian publishing records, selling out its first edition within a week, and generating sales of 10,000 copies in its first year.[654] From this time, Paterson's literary reach was huge, regarded as second only to Kipling among English-language readers.[655] As the influence of this poem forms a critical part of my thesis argument, I reproduce it in full here:

The Man from Snowy River

There was movement at the station, for the word had passed around
That the colt from old Regret had got away,
And had joined the wild bush horses—he was worth a thousand pound,
So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.
All the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far
Had mustered at the station overnight.
For the bushmen love hard riding where the wild bush horses are,
and the stockhorse snuffs the battle with delight.

There was Harrison, who made his pile when Pardon won the Cup,
The old man with his hair as white as snow;
But few could ride beside him when his blood was fairly up—
He would go wherever horse and man could go.
And Clancy of the Overflow came down to lend a hand,
No better horseman ever held the reins;

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[648] Elizabeth Webby, "Not Reading The Nation: Australian Readers Of The 1890s," *Australian Literary Studies* 22, no. 3 (2006): 317; Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, x.
[649] Webby, "Not Reading The Nation," 317.
[650] Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, x.
[651] "Three Bards Of The Bush: Edward Dyson," *The Academy* 53, no. 1352 (1898), 450.
[652] Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, xxi.
[653] Birtles, "Andrew Barton ('Banjo') Paterson," 30.
[654] Frederick T. Macartney, introduction to *The Collected Verse of A.B. Paterson: containing The Man from Snowy River, Rio Grande, Saltbush Bill, J.P* by A.B. Paterson, 16th ed. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1967), v; Birtles, "Andrew Barton ('Banjo') Paterson," 30.
[655] Macartney, "Introduction," v.

For never horse could throw him while the saddle girths would stand,
He learnt to ride while droving on the plains.

And one was there, a stripling on a small and weedy beast,
He was something like a racehorse undersized,
With a touch of Timor pony—three parts thoroughbred at least—
And such as are by mountain horsemen prized.
He was hard and tough and wiry—just the sort that won't say die—
There was courage in his quick impatient tread;
And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye,
And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

But still so slight and weedy, one would doubt his power to stay,
And the old man said, "That horse will never do
For a long and tiring gallop—lad, you'd better stop away,
Those hills are far too rough for such as you."
So he waited sad and wistful—only Clancy stood his friend—
"I think we ought to let him come," he said;
"I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,
For both his horse and he are mountain bred.

"He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,
Where a horse's hoof strikes firelight from the flint stones every stride,
The man that holds his own is good enough.
And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their home,
Where the river runs those giant hills between;
I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced to roam,
But nowhere yet such horsemen have I seen."

So he went—they found the horses by the big mimosa clump—
They raced away toward the mountain's brow,
And the old man gave his orders, "Boys, go at them from the jump,
No use to try for fancy riding now.
And Clancy, you must wheel them, try and wheel them to the right.
Ride boldly lad, and never fear the spills,
For never yet was rider that could keep the mob in sight,
If once they gain the shelter of those hills."

So Clancy rode to wheel them—he was racing on the wing
Where the best and boldest riders take their place,
And he raced his stockhorse past them, and he made the ranges ring
With the stockwhip, as he met them face to face.
Then they halted for a moment, while he swung the dreaded lash,
But they saw their well-loved mountain full in view,
And they charged beneath the stockwhip with a sharp and sudden dash,
And off into the mountain scrub they flew.

Then fast the horsemen followed, where the gorges deep and black
Resounded to the thunder of their tread,
And the stockwhip woke the echoes, and they fiercely answered back

From cliffs and crags that beetled overhead.
And upward, ever upward, the wild horses held their way,
Where mountain ash and kurrajong grew wide;
And the old man muttered fiercely, “We may bid the mob good day,
No man can hold them down the other side.”

When they reached the mountain’s summit, even Clancy took a pull,
It might well make the boldest hold their breath,
The wild hop scrub grew thickly, and the hidden ground was full
Of wombat holes, and any slip was death.
But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head,
And he swung his stockwhip round and gave a cheer,
And he raced him down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,
While the others stood and watched in very fear.

He sent the flint stones flying, but the pony kept his feet,
He cleared the fallen timber in his stride,
And the man from Snowy River never shifted in his seat—
It was grand to see that mountain horseman ride.
Through the stringybarks and saplings, on the rough and broken ground,
Down the hillside at a racing pace he went;
And he never drew the bridle till he landed safe and sound,
At the bottom of that terrible descent.

He was right among the horses as they climbed the further hill,
And the watchers on the mountain standing mute,
Saw him ply the stockwhip fiercely, he was right among them still,
As he raced across the clearing in pursuit.
Then they lost him for a moment, where two mountain gullies met
In the ranges, but a final glimpse reveals
On a dim and distant hillside the wild horses racing yet,
With the man from Snowy River at their heels.

And he ran them single-handed till their sides were white with foam.
He followed like a bloodhound on their track,
Till they halted cowed and beaten, then he turned their heads for home,
And alone and unassisted brought them back.
But his hardy mountain pony he could scarcely raise a trot,
He was blood from hip to shoulder from the spur;
But his pluck was still undaunted, and his courage fiery hot,
For never yet was mountain horse a cur.

And down by Kosciusko, where the pine-clad ridges raise
Their torn and ragged battlements on high,
Where the air is clear as crystal, and the white stars fairly blaze
At midnight in the cold and frosty sky,
And where around The Overflow the reed beds sweep and sway
To the breezes, and the rolling plains are wide,
The man from Snowy River is a household word today,
And the stockmen tell the story of his ride.[656]

[656] ‘Banjo’ Paterson, “The Man From Snowy River,” in *Complete Poems* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2014), 4-6.

The significance of this poem, and the figure of the Man himself, cannot be overstated. Paterson is regarded by many as Australia's greatest bush balladist,[657] with "The Man from Snowy River" described by the State Library of NSW as "the most famous Australian poem of all time."[658] Today, the poem is understood to reflect unique Australian characteristics that have become synonymous with Australian identity. Of particular interest is the way this poem promotes the trope of the underdog, and the requisite traits of strength and tenacity that are necessary in order for the underdog figure to succeed. Notably, these characteristics are represented in the poem by both the Man, *and* his horse. The notion of the underdog deployed as a schematic narrative template, in the manner of Wertsch, will be discussed in the next section, but for now I turn to the ways the poem reinforces concepts of belonging among white, Anglo-Australians.

Implicit within the poem is an ideology promoting the colonial domination of the Australian landscape. The mountainous terrain does not stop either the non-Indigenous man, or his non-native horse, from achieving their goal. As Cultural Studies scholars Aimee Carillo Rowe and Eve Tuck remind us:

> These narratives of conquest are present, pervasive, and mostly invisible within the settler consciousness, yet they are doing profound cultural work in reminding settlers that they belong, that their place in the social order has been hard-won through the taming of savages, and confirming their status as the rightful inheritors of pastoral landscapes such scenes evoke.[659]

Within the settler-colonial context of Australia, the poem's appeal can be interpreted as reinforcing this notion of the settler's right to belong.

Further, the poem reveals the nineteenth-century cultural framing of the Australian bush; while the settlers who dwelt in the bush were frequently romanticised in ballads such as these, the bush itself was often depicted as hostile, a malevolent presence that stole away children,[660] and needed to be tamed.[661] Today, the notion that the 'real' Australia only exists in the heartland of the

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[657] Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, xxi; "Publisher's Preface," in Banjo Paterson, *Complete Poems* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2014), xi.
[658] "The Man From Snowy River, 1895", 100 Objects State Library of NSW accessed September 25, 2017 https://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/events/exhibitions/2010/onehundred/100-objects/Exhibit-053.htm
[659] Aimee Carillo Rowe and Eve Tuck, "Settler Colonialism And Cultural Studies: Ongoing Settlement, Cultural Production, And Resistance," *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* 17, no. 1 (2017): 6.
[660] Pierce 1999, xii.
[661] Schaffer, *Women and the Bush*, 62.

bush, or the 'Outback', still holds currency,[662] despite the fact that Australia is one of the most urbanised nations in the world.[663]

The poem depicts its (entirely male) cast of characters—those "cracks" who "had gathered to the fray"—as the true inhabitants, and rightful inheritors, of the bush. These are men such as Harrison, an "old man with hair as white as snow", though "few could ride beside him when his blood was fairly up". Also present is Clancy of Overflow fame, "no better horseman ever held the reins / for … / he learnt to ride while droving on the plains." In depicting both these characters, Paterson uses skill in the saddle to represent proof of a man's worth. This construct of masculinity is intrinsic to the conjunction of man and horse presented in the poem, where we are told that "the bushmen love hard riding where the wild bush horses are, / And the stockhorse snuffs the battle with delight." The poem presents a particular view of masculinity, associated with toughness and hardiness, and applies it to both man and horse in equal measure. This, however, does not preclude either the Man or his horse from embodying the classic underdog figure that has become embedded in the canon of Australian icons.

The underdog as schematic narrative template

Anthropologist James Wertsch has identified underlying schematic narrative templates within particular nationalistic stories, which he argues are distinct from specific narratives (that is, events which pertain to specific people, dates, and locations).[664] Schematic narrative templates are unconscious, more abstract, and contain minimal concrete or factual details, allowing them to be deployed in multiple narrative contexts. Rather than being universal, these templates are culturally specific, in that their distinct framework can be seen to underpin many of the most significant historical narratives of that culture. In the Australian context, the underdog story represents a recurring theme within the nationalist narrative tradition, which, when deconstructed, reveals a common underlying structure.

In deconstructing a schematic narrative template particular to Russia, which Wertsch names the "triumph-over-alien-forces" narrative, he isolates four components to the story. These are:

1. An initial situation in which the Russian people are living peacefully is disrupted by:
2. Aggression by an alien force, which leads to:

[662] Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity," 472-482.
[663] "Australian Social Trends 2008: Australian Population Distribution," Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed June 27, 2014, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Chapter3002008
[664] Wertsch, *Voices.*

3. A time of crisis and great suffering, which is:
4. Overcome by the Russian people, acting heroically and alone.[665]

Wertsch does not claim this narrative template as being unique to Russia, though he maintains that "this template plays a particularly important role and takes on a particular form in the Russian narrative tradition, and hence in collective remembering."[666] Hallmarks of a schematic narrative template include its ubiquity; the flexibility of its application (for example, in the Russian context, 'alien' doesn't necessitate foreign, and thus the template can also be applied to scenarios outside the typical invasion narrative);[667] and the narrative's starting point—in Wertsch's example, the Russian people living peacefully. One final factor is the identification of Russia as a victim, which Wertsch argues is common to many of that nation's nationalistic narratives.[668] Taken together, these identifiers are indicative that a schematic narrative template is at play.

Wertsch's conception of the schematic narrative template can be applied to the underdog story, a narrative convention that underpins many of Australia's most significant cultural stories. As with Wertsch's Russian example, it is not being argued that the underdog story is unique to Australia; it is, however, the case that this thematic structure is applicable to many of Australia's most popular identity narratives, both fictional and historical. Following Wertsch's structure and formatting, this is how I describe the Australian underdog schematic narrative template:

1. An individual (or small collective), that has valid reasons for being a non-favoured starter, is pushed to:
2. battle against the adversity of opposing forces (which are often, but not always, framed as classist), and:
3. through one's own efforts of hard work, perseverance, and the moral rightness of their position, succeed—if not in the overall war, then the battle at least. This leads to:
4. A realigned position as a not-underdog.

The realignment of position at the narrative's conclusion is significant, as it serves to 'prove' the moral legitimacy of the cause. Importantly, this reconfiguring is not dependent upon an overall victory in order to be realised. For example, in the Ned Kelly story, Kelly is captured and eventually

[665] Wertsch, *Voices*, 98.
[666] Wertsch, *Voices*, 94.
[667] Wertsch, *Voices*, 94.
[668] Wertsch, *Voices*, 95-6.

hanged, but due to his frequent framing as courageous *in spite of* being a victim of anti-Irish prejudice, he retains the moral integrity of the legitimate hero.[669]

This realignment of position serves another important function. Taken as a whole, the underdog narrative in the Australian context emphasizes the moral rightness of one's success, if/when it is achieved alongside struggle. If we return to the earliest foundational narrative of Australian history, that of the convicts and early white settlers struggling—and ultimately succeeding—against the hostile environment of the Australian landscape, we can view the underdog narrative as one that functions to reassert the moral right of white Australians to occupy this land. It is worth noting that in the nationalistic narratives in which this figure features, the underdog is never the aggressor. Further, in starting from behind, the underdog represents a sympathetic figure with whom many can identify. This identification with the underdog creates an uncomfortable disjunct between ideas about ourselves as a nation of 'battlers', and an acknowledgement that Australia's colonisation had—and continues to have—a devastating impact on Aboriginal people. Because the underdog is not constructed as an aggressor, they are not seen as the type of figure who would be a dispossessor of lands. This highlights the underlying 'work' that such narrative templates can perform and illustrates their potentially problematic nature. In the Australian context, we can see how heroising the underdog might simultaneously reaffirm the national disavowal of the dispossession of Aboriginal Australians.

To return to the context of Paterson's poem, the Man, who remains nameless throughout—a literary device that, perhaps more than any other single element of the poem, allows him to be positioned as the Australian 'everyman'—is cast early as the underdog figure. Described as "a stripling", and his horse as "a small and weedy beast", he is initially advised that he'd "better stop away / Those hills are far too rough for such as you", while his horse "will never do / For a long and tiring gallop". However, in accordance with the underdog narrative trope, by poem's end both Man and horse are heroes, the Man single-handedly (though certainly four-hoofedly) capturing the fleeing mob of bush horses after a ride that "might make the boldest hold their breath … full / Of wombat holes, [where] any slip was death." His horse, meanwhile "was blood from hip to shoulder from the spur; / But his pluck was still undaunted, and his courage fiery hot, / For never yet was mountain horse a cur." Here we see the action of both Man and horse depicted as courageous, their combined efforts heroically overcoming the obstacles in their path, and eventually succeeding where "the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far" failed. While it is the Man who becomes

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[669] For an example of such framing, see the National Museum of Australia's Defining Moments webpage on Ned Kelly, accessed November 25, 2018 http://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/ned-kelly

"a household word today", the praise within the poem belongs equally to the horse, "For both his horse and he are mountain bred." Both embody the spirit of tenacity that is required by the underdog, who must start from behind and then succeed against the odds.

The power of the schematic narrative template lies in its uncritical acceptance. In the specific context of the Underdog, this narrative convention is embraced for its purported demonstration of Australian egalitarianism. An equine narrative underpinned by the Underdog schematic template, such as "The Man from Snowy River", has its significance reinforced; this in turn unconsciously bolsters the commitment to the horse discourse. Deconstructing these cultural tools reveals the potency of both the equine significance narrative, and the Underdog schematic template, in constructions of national identity, and the conjuring power that such narratives hold in the national imagination. Further, it exposes the cultural work that such narratives are tasked with.

Nationalism and Australian narrative traditions

Historians have demonstrated that the centrality of the bushman to nineteenth-century Australian art and literature is just one illustration of a global trend.[670] The stockman figure has parallels in Europe, where growing anxieties around industrialisation resulted in the peasant becoming an increasingly important symbol,[671] which was also associated with notions of authenticity. The "purest expression [of this authenticity] was found in the legends, songs, dances and folkways of the peasantry, those who lived closest to the native soil and whose way of life was least corrupted by the cosmopolitan outlook of the urban elite."[672] In the Australian context the equivalent could be found, not within Aboriginal culture, but among the bushmen, those "outback employees, the semi-nomadic drovers, shepherds, shearers, bullock-drivers, stockmen, boundary riders, station-hands and others of the pastoral industry." [673] It was these white men who were regarded as authentically Australian, and depicted as living their lives close to the soil, shunning the corruption of city life.[674] In the twenty-first century, when Ward's wide-ranging list of pastoral occupations has largely become obsolete, the ideology of authenticity associated with this collective of 'bushmen' has coalesced and been projected onto a single figure—the stockman. Today, the stockman has become shorthand for an authentic Australian identity. And, while mustering in the present day is an activity primarily

[670] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 8; Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 435; Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 365.
[671] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 8; Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 435; Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 365.
[672] Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 435.
[673] Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 2.
[674] Ward, *The Australian Legend*; Leigh Astbury, *City Bushmen*.

undertaken by vehicle—whether a quad bike, ute, or helicopter—the stockman continues to be represented on horseback (see Figure 4.2).

At the heart of this idealisation of the peasant-figure was another transplanted trope—a belief in the rural capacity to shape character. As Roe writes:

> The premise that living in a particular corner of the world shapes character has the corollary that the closer a man is to the soil, the more he must feel that effect. So [while] Old World nationalisms stress the rural theme, … the emphasis becomes overwhelming in New World nationalisms.[675]

Graeme Davison elucidates on two schools of thought regarding the development of the nation-state. The Modernist perspective views it as a new institution, born of Enlightenment ideals, while those of a "primordialist" standpoint see the nation influenced by primitive ties to the soil from which a people have sprung. [676] The latter view found particular support among early nineteenth-century German thinkers, who, as Davison points out, at that time were a people with a national language, but no unified state.[677] According to this construction, a nation's origins "lay deep in the past, in a time before history."[678]

The ideas about Australia's national character evinced in the bush balladry published by the *Bulletin*, the artworks of the Heidelberg School, and promulgated by Ward's *The Australian Legend*, all draw on a primordialist construction of nationhood. Yet if there was a genuine conviction in the notion that national character is shaped by the soil of one's birth, then the Aboriginal people would have been far more visible in these nineteenth-century cultural constructions. Art historian Ian McLean argues that Ward and other primordialists were in fact manufacturing a white Aboriginal.[679] This "new Australian was a white Aborigine sprung from the land itself … [and founded] on the presumed extinction of the Aborigines whose land it was".[680] Such a concoction, however, is deeply problematic in the context of a settler-colonial nation such as Australia, where the original inhabitants have been dispossessed, and their culture displaced.

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[675] Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 365.
[676] Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 434-36.
[677] Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 435.
[678] Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 435.
[679] McLean, *White Aborigines*, 88-89.
[680] McLean, *White Aborigines*, 89.

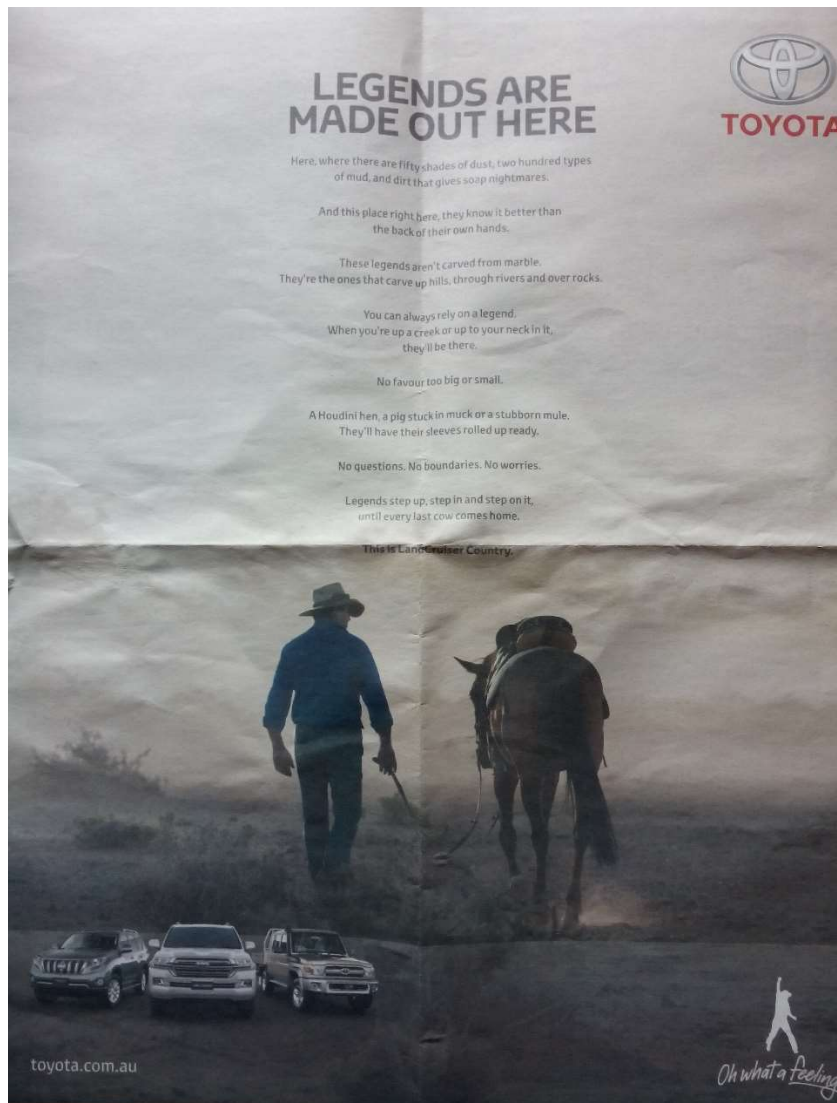

Figure 4.2: Toyota's 2016 'Legends' advertising campaign, featuring the figure of the stockman.

Post-colonial theorists argue that settler-nationalism takes a distinctive form, underscored by the circumstances of settler-colonialism.[681] Where Indigenous peoples have been displaced, it is argued, claims for the land and belonging are integral to the way nationalist discourses are shaped.[682] Anthony Moran argues that "settler nationalism is driven to give some account of, and to come to terms with, the dispossession of the indigenous."[683] Dan Tout contends that this was expressed during the mid-twentieth century in a number of settler-colonial societies, through art and literature that sought inspiration from the traditions and culture of the First Nations peoples.

[681] Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism And Cultural Studies," 6.
[682] Dan Tout, "Neither Nationalists Nor Universalists: Rex Ingamells And The Jindyworobaks," *Australian Humanities Review* 61 (May 2017): 1-26; Anthony Moran, "As Australia Decolonizes: Indigenizing Settler Nationalism And The Challenges Of Settler/Indigenous Relations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 6 (2002): 1013-1042; Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism And Cultural Studies," 3-13.
[683] Moran, "As Australia Decolonizes," 1013.

Examples of these movements include the Jindyworobaks in Australia, the Maorilanders in New Zealand, and the Andean *indigenismo* in Latin America.[684] Putting aside the problematics of cultural appropriation, and the recently-highlighted issue of primordialism, both of which are implicit here, these movements represented a turning *toward* the landscapes, and pre-existing cultures, in which they were conceived. The late-nineteenth century cultural productions of the Heidelberg and *Bulletin* Schools, on the other hand, conform to a particularly raced and gendered view of what it is to be Australian, and who can rightfully claim this identity.[685] This supports recent theorisations of settler colonialism, arguing that cultural productions remain complicit in supporting the *status quo* of settler culture.[686]

This prejudice can be glimpsed in the negative spaces of these popular depictions of national identity, which (unlike the work of the Jindyworobaks), continue to influence our nationalist discourse. Those who are excluded include Aboriginal peoples, white women, and non-British immigrants, all of whom remain largely invisible in the depictions of the creation of the Australian nation produced by the most well-known of the Heidelberg artists.[687] Likewise, *The Bulletin*, which ran under the masthead "Australia for the White Man" from 1886 until 1961, when the editorship was taken over by Donald Horne, makes explicit who the intended audience of this nationalistic publication was. Elder has argued that this "distaste for difference" dates back to the 1850s goldfields, when anti-Chinese legislation was passed in many of the colonies.[688] This legislative racism meant that understandings around who could legitimately claim belonging to Australia was exclusionary, and took the form of both active discrimination (for example, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901), and more subtle marginalisation, through the elision of women, Aboriginal peoples, and non-Anglo migrants from Australia's literary and artistic records.

These creative depictions of Australian national identity are intrinsically linked to constructions of the horse, and any deconstruction of the horse as a nationalist narrative must take them into consideration. Among the Heidelberg painters, for example, the "national narratives"[689] created by Tom Roberts frequently feature depictions of the horse. Examples include *A Breakaway* (1891), *A Mountain Muster* (1897-1920s), *Bailed Up* (1895, 1927), and *In a Corner of the Macintyre [The Bushranger]* (1895). These iconic paintings, which have seared themselves into the national imagination as genuine depictions of Australian life, were, as has been argued by Australian

[684] Tout, "Neither Nationalists," 2.
[685] Elder, *Being Australian*, 187.
[686] Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism And Cultural Studies," 6.
[687] Elder, *Being Australian*, 187; Hannah Gadsby, "Hannah Gadsby's Oz: Episode 1," Closer productions, 2014.
[688] Elder, *Being Australian*, 119.
[689] National Gallery of Australia, "Tom Roberts."

Studies scholars, already nostalgic constructions of the past at the time of their creation.[690] These colonial art-makers created what the National Gallery of Australia has described as "works that are now embedded in the Australian psyche, *as intended*"[691], pointing to their very conscious construction, while the colonial writers of the era were on a similar mission. Here, the horse is most visible depicted alongside the figure of the stockman. Nicholas Brasch asserts that it was "[Henry Lawson], along with Banjo Paterson and Adam Lindsay Gordon, [who were responsible] for elevating the horse to folklore status",[692] highlighting the significance of bush balladry in simultaneously heroizing both stockman and horse. Further, it is in this context that the white male has become naturalised as an inhabitant of the Australian bush.

Masculinity and the stockman

"The Man from Snowy River" serves as an example of the type of rugged masculinity that is approved in Australian identity narratives, and its longevity and influence illustrate the ongoing power of discursive appeals to masculinity.[693] This idealised masculine principle has become intrinsic to the equine narratives of Australia. In the poem, the individual worth of the men is evinced by Paterson as he describes their skill in the saddle, and their mastery of horses more generally. The eponymous Man proves himself to be the ultimate Man, through his domination of the wild horses at poem's end.

Close examination reveals the figure of the horse to be firmly, though almost invisibly, embedded within both the masculinist and underdog traditions. As one example of the embeddedness of the horse within Australia's cultural iconography, let us consider the figure of the stockman. While any depiction of the stockman might include those characteristics cited by Ward, what we do not see articulated, but which is implicit, is the horse. In fact, the horse remains so invisible that it does not warrant any mention by Ward. Instead, in establishing the hierarchy among pastoral workers in which he positions the stockman at the pinnacle (and, within that, "the overlanders" as the most elite),[694] he distinguishes between those who tended cattle, and covered long distances (the stockmen), and "the [despised] 'crawling' shepherd," who tended sheep.[695] That the elite roles required horses is not addressed, yet I content it was fundamental to their elevated status. Further, this bush hierarchy serves to clarify why the shepherd was not eulogised within the

[690] Elder, *Being Australian*, 184; Astbury, *City Bushmen*.
[691] National Gallery of Australia, "Tom Roberts," (my italics).
[692] Brasch, *Horses in Australia,* 89.
[693] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 183.
[694] Ward, *Australian Legend*, 171.
[695] Ward, *Australian Legend*, 171.

Australian pastoral/bush ballad. The fundamental role of this "representative anecdote" was to represent the authenticity associated with rural life, and in Australia, this authenticity is epitomised by the stockman. The horse was fundamental to the act of droving[696] in the nineteenth century, and yet it is completely overlooked in Ward's treatment. This reveals the ways the horse remains invisible, while simultaneously being interwoven with cultural understandings of masculinity and identity. The stockman signifies the pinnacle of Australian masculinity, and to attain that position necessitates a horse.

While the figure of the stockman has been represented in many and varied forms, it is perhaps best typified by "The Man from Snowy River", whose fictional form has in turn shaped countless representations. This includes Tom Burlinson's depiction of the character in the 1982 film, *The Man from Snowy River*,[697] where the horse is critical to identifying the stockman. For example, early in the film, the character of the Man-to-be (named Jim in the film version), has his horse Bess stolen by the mob of wild bush horses, and then loses his workhorse in a tragic accident that also kills his father. In a subsequent scene, Jim stands by his father's grave, when he is approached by six mounted and Drizabone-clad figures. The leader tells Jim gruffly that he must leave his father's land, and go "down to the low country, and earn the right to live up here". [698] These gate keepers of the high country represent 'real' mountain stockmen, which is signalled by the fact that they are mounted on horseback, while the horseless Jim looks up at them from ground level. By the film's close, Jim has successfully "earned" his right to live in the mountain country, and his status as a 'real' stockman is confirmed. Again, this is signalled to viewers by the fact that Jim is mounted, and he has demonstrated his prowess by successfully capturing both the horse-napped Bess, Harrison's colt, and the valuable herd of bush horses.

The masculinity epitomised by the stockman is represented in opposition to nature. In this context, nature is feminised, and its successful domination is heroised.[699] The horse is also symbolic of feminised nature,[700] with Man's (in the Wardian sense) mastery and exploitation of this noble and magnificent animal being proof of his superiority.[701] This understanding is almost universal across

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[696] Ward himself acknowledges that, as the nineteenth century wore on, stockmen were increasingly employed droving sheep, rather than cattle. This reasserts the significance of the horse in defining the role of the 'stockman'. See Ward, *Australian Legend*, 171-2.
[697] The film is described in the trailer as "a story of a boy who becomes a man." See film trailer on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=138&v=08rdCBgP-GY accessed December 16, 2018.
[698] George Miller (director), *The Man from Snowy River*, Cambridge Productions, Edgly International, Snowy River Investments Pty Ltd, and the Hoyts Group, 1982.
[699] Schaffer, *Women and the Bush*, 62.
[700] Dorre, *Victorian Fiction*, 9.
[701] Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 101; Raber and Tucker, "Introduction," 14;

Western cultures,[702] and underpins many cultural constructions pertaining to the horse, from early modern sculpture and art that showed the ruling monarch mounted on a horse (symbolising his rightful control over his subjects),[703] to Victorian carriage horses, whose "bound and blinkered postures enact the symbolic work of submission and duty that was so important to nineteenth-century ideologies of gender, class, and colonial rule."[704] At the time of Australia's colonisation, the horse was strongly associated with masculinity in England. Though this association began to wane during the Victorian era, the ideal that came to Australia with the earliest colonists was that equestrianism was a manly pursuit.[705]

Outside the field of Australian literature, the emphasis on masculinity is evinced in contemporary narratives of horse breeding, particularly in the world of horse racing. Here, the thoroughbred stud book can be read "a site for reasserting … patrilineal doctrines of influence and heritability."[706] The three horses that are regarded as founders of the thoroughbred breed—the Byerly Turk, the Godolphin Barb, and the Darley Arabian[707]—are all stallions. Where are the mares in this narrative? Maternal genetics have come to be regarded as secondary in the arena of thoroughbred breeding. However, as Richard Nash argues, the purpose of establishing a national stud book in England was to document the evolution of the breed, not to record the influence of particular stallions: "The resulting stud book is in fact an impressive document of maternity, more than paternity, with page after page of dams listed".[708] Nash contends that the significance placed on pedigree was a notion imported to England alongside the Arab, Barb, and Turk stallions.[709] Having come to be accepted practice, this emphasis on paternal heredity continues to influence discourses of breeding today.

While the association between the horse and constructs of masculinity forms another example of a trope adopted from England, love of the horse has come to typify representations of Australia to a strong degree. Brasch, in his 2014 populist history of the horse in Australia, writes of "[the horse's elevation] to folklore status in the hearts and minds of Australians."[710] Here Brasch

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[702] See for example: Edwards, Enenkel and Graham (eds), *The Horse as Cultural Icon*; Raber and Tucker (eds), *The Culture of The Horse*; Kristen Guest and Monica Mattfeld (eds), *Equestrian Cultures: Horses, Human Society, and the Discourse of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).
[703] Raber and Tucker, "Introduction," 20.
[704] Dorre, *Victorian Fiction*, 11.
[705] Dorre, *Victorian Fiction*, 10, 21-22.
[706] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'," 252.
[707] Richard Nash, "'Beware A Bastard Breed': Notes Towards A Revisionist History Of The Thoroughbred Racehorse," in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, eds Peter Edwards, Karl A.E. Enenkel and Elspeth Graham (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 194.
[708] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'," 251.
[709] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'," 266.
[710] Brasch, *Horses in Australia*, 89.

pronounces a love for the horse as a definitive part of being Australian,[711] which subsequently positions those who do *not* profess such a love as *un*-Australian.[712] The Australian equine significance narrative is here associated with the power to delineate 'Australian-ness', and thus to critique this narrative must, by its very nature, be un-Australian. As Elder states, "[i]f being Australian is something attributed to a variety of characteristics, then so is being 'un-Australian'."[713] Further, in constructing various behaviours as 'un-Australian', the phrase functions as "both an insult and a disciplining expression".[714]

The notion that the horse is an animal that is significant to Australians is pervasive. Brasch's argument that it is embedded in our folklore, and through this, into our "hearts and minds", is circular. Inclusion in the folklore once rendered the horse significant; now it is considered Australian because it represents this folklore. Further, Brasch's demarcation of Australian identity as horse-loving is highly exclusionary, appealing to an Australian identity characterised by non-Indigeneity, whiteness, masculinity and heterosexuality,[715] rather than the diverse ethnic, social and heterogeneous reality that is contemporary Australia. Does Brasch number recent migrants from China, India, or Sudan, or include Aboriginal people, among the Australians who feel a sentimental attachment to the horse? The wide-spread myth regarding the Australian attachment to the horse must, therefore, be treated with caution.

An uncomfortable cultural legacy

The unequivocal popularity of both the poem, and its titular figure, has positioned The Man as the archetypal stockman in the national imagination. Far from being rendered obsolete, the romance of this figure extends beyond the nineteenth century and into the present day. Writing of the way the "Man" has become iconic to contemporary Australians, Stewart states "he was a stockman chasing brumbies; yet, as an embodiment of courage and dashing horsemanship and as a repository of deep

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[711] This association is also reiterated through the media. For examples, see sources cited in: Leonie Mellor, "Learning How To Tame Australia's 'Wild, Crazy, Untrusting' Desert Brumbies," ABC news September 17, 2018, accessed April 16, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-17/the-magnificent-brumbies-of-central-australia/10210108; Cassie Crofts, "Australia's Mighty War Horses," National Geographic online, November 10, 2017, accessed April 21, 2019 https://www.nationalgeographic.com.au/history/australias-mighty-war-horses.aspx

[712] However, the way that this purportedly Australian love of horses is realised is contentious. Support for the Melbourne Cup is painted, on the one hand, as un-Australian by its detractors (see, for example, ABC News, "Melbourne Cup: The Cliffsofmoher Euthanased On Track After Sustaining Injury During Race," November 7, 2019, accessed April 19, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-06/the-cliffsofmoher-euthanased-on-track-after-melbourne-cup/10470260), while elsewhere, race advocates accuse critics of the Cup of being un-Australian (see News Corp Australia, "Fun-Hating Whingers").

[713] Elder, *Being Australian*, 2.

[714] Elder, *Being Australian*, 3.

[715] Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*, 12; Elder, *Being Australian*, 6.

Australian awareness of the land he has become a kind of national hero, a figure of heroic mythology".[716] Nonetheless, the figure of the stockman, and his role in pastoralism, also has a sinister aspect, as the displacement of Aboriginal people parallels pastoral and agricultural expansion. Further, as discussed in the previous chapter, the benefit that mounted settlers had over the traditional Aboriginal owners, who were without horses, was evident in the inevitable outcomes of the violent clashes which occurred. Horses also facilitated the rapid movement and spread of the colonists.[717]

A further parallel can be drawn between the literary pastoral and bush ballads, as argued by literary academic Ivor Indyk. Indyk compares the figure of Meliboeus, portrayed in Virgil's *Eclogue* lamenting his exile from his homeland, with the dispossession of the Aboriginal peoples in Australia. He writes, "Australian pastoral is haunted by a similar sense of violation, caused by an upheaval of no lesser magnitude—that of the displacement of an indigenous population by the settlers of a colonizing power".[718] In a less literal, yet still potent illustration of dispossession, Hoorn notes the function that pastoral paintings served in denying the bloodshed of frontier conflict. Similar to the invocation, cited previously, that writers of pastorals cover the misery of real life, [719] the dictates of artistic decorum determined the rendering of the colonial landscape. This of course ensured only depictions of the picturesque, a circumstance wholly to the advantage of the settlers.[720] These incomplete visual representations now comprise the public record.[721]

Statistically, a high proportion of the stockmen working in nineteenth-century Australia were Aboriginal—Mantle cites a figure of fifty-one percent of rural workers in Queensland by 1886 being Aboriginal.[722] In the context of the Northern Territory during the early twentieth century this percentage was far higher; McGrath contends the ratio was "a couple of hundred Europeans [to] at least 4000 Aborigines", with increasing numbers employed in the cattle industry each year.[723] According to McGrath, "the majority of [Aboriginal] men were employed as stockmen [and] their

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[716] Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, xx.
[717] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 32.
[718] Ivor Indyk, "Pastoral And Priority: The Aboriginal In Australian Pastoral," *New Literary History* 24 no, 4 (1993), 838.
[719] Cited in Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 89-90.
[720] Horn, *Australian Pastoral*, 10-11.
[721] While there are of course depictions of frontier violence (see for example Figure 1.2), these, unlike the works of the Heidelberg school, are not generally the subject of blockbuster exhibitions, nor are they reproduced on placemats, tea-towels and other mercantile artefacts.
[722] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 46.
[723] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 27, 30.

work was mainly concerned with cattle-handling, especially on horseback".[724] Yet the stockman depicted in poetry and art is consistently white and Anglo-European.[725]

It is generally acknowledged that national identity functions (at least in part) as a tool of differentiation.[726] The desire for Australia to differentiate herself from England has been cited as the motivator for many aspects of the national character.[727] Ward, writing of his own work in 1961, reiterates the importance of divergence from the Englishman in imagining the national Australian archetype. He stresses that it is by his "extreme and un-English direction" that the bushman is typified.[728] However, as has been argued here, the figure of the bush- or stockman, as realised in countless Australian narratives, has his origins in British tropes, and his apotheosis in the bush ballads of Paterson and others can be traced back to the Anglo-European tradition of the pastoral. Baron Alder, in assessing Ward's work fifty years on, concurs, highlighting that "the Australian national character is really a product of our relationship with England [and] the survival of the Australian national character that Ward wrote about is an aspect of a lingering provincialism".[729]

The pastoral as a framing device was brought to colonial Australia deeply embedded in the sensibilities of European settlers. Alongside this were British notions of chivalry, which were strongly associated with the horse, and the mounted figure of the knight. These were subsequently reimagined, and the pastoral was conflated with pastoralism, to produce the bush ballads of the nineteenth century. In this sense, through the ongoing influence of this poetry, the pastoral continues to shape discourses of nationalism and identity in Australia. This influence exposes the continued dominance of England's cultural legacy. Rather than the image of a mature and independent nation, one that might lay claim to the bush ballad as a uniquely Australian tradition,[730] the continued influence of the British cultural hegemony reveals instead a "lingering provincialism".[731] Capitalising on this facet of the myth of the stockman may serve as a useful device for destabilising its power, however, as many scholars have found, cultural myths frequently prove resistant to disruption.[732]

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[724] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 32.
[725] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 11.
[726] Elder, *Being Australian*, 10-11.
[727] See for example, Baron Alder, "The Australian Legend Fifty Years On," *Quadrant* online, September 2008, accessed January 8, 2015 http://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2008/09/the-australian-legend-fifty-years-on/; Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 365, 368; Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 12.
[728] Ward, "Australian Legend," 368.
[729] Alder, "Australian Legend Fifty Years On."
[730] As per Stewart, *Bush Ballads*, ix.
[731] Alder, "Australian Legend Fifty Years On."
[732] Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity"; Elder, *Being Australian*; Smith, "Discredited Class-War Fable," 19-32.

Conclusion

In the first instance, this chapter works to contextualise the cultural artefacts of the nineteenth-century—the bush balladry published by the *Bulletin* (with particular focus given to Banjo Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River"), and the artworks of the Heidelberg School—that continue to underpin constructions of Australian national identity. Here, I position them within a European tradition influenced by the pastoral mode. After examining the imported tropes that accompany understandings of the horse, I moved to a close examination of Banjo Paterson's poem, "The Man from Snowy River", arguing that this poem can be read as an example of the schematic narrative templates discussed by Wertsch. The Australian tradition abounds with 'underdog' stories, and in this chapter I elaborated further on the underdog schematic narrative template, positioning "The Man from Snowy River" as one example where the horse is integral to the story. The figure of the stockman holds great significance in the Australian cultural imagination and is interwoven throughout the equine significance discourse.[733] The horse cannot be thoroughly understood in isolation from considerations of the stockman.

The importance of the horse as a mythologised figure has antecedents in the horse culture of the early modern period of Europe, which formed part of the unconscious cultural baggage that accompanied colonists to Australia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Among these imported ideologies was a late-eighteenth century re-imagination of the masculine culture of chivalry,[734] and a high regard for the thoroughbred.[735] The egalitarian story of the Australian Light Horse has been over-simplified, in that the historical antecedents of the British Light Horse units lie in the modernisation, and subsequent democratisation of, the traditional heavy cavalry.[736] While these notions relate directly to the horse, imported tropes with broader implications—pertaining to but extending beyond the horse—have further influenced the construction of Australian national identity. One of the most significant of these is the pastoral mode.

Both the bush balladry of the *Bulletin* and the art of the Heidelberg School can be traced to the pastoral tradition, though, as Jeanette Hoorn has argued, the influence of the pastoral went beyond art and literature. More broadly, it functioned as a lens through which the Australian

[733] See for example the analysis of the interplay between the stockman, brumbies, and national identity that occupies much of the discussion paper on the heritage significance of the Kosciuszko brumbies. Georgia Melville, Chris Johnston, Helen Doyle and Catherine McLay, *National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment & Conflicting Values Report: The wild horse population Kosciuszko National Park,* (Brunswick: Context pty ltd, 2015).

[734] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 90-3.

[735] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'."

[736] Edwards and Graham, "Introduction," 7-8.

landscape could be interpreted and understood.[737] Implicit within the pastoral mode was a political ideology that equated pastoralism with civilisation,[738] and thus in the Australian context, the pastoral trope can be seen as aligned with the discourses of colonialism, and dispossession. Further to this, the *Bulletin* and Heidelberg Schools represent the visual and literary elision of those who lay outside the centre of power; namely, Aboriginal peoples, women, and others who did not fit the culturally proscribed Australian norm, which mandated whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality.[739] Hoorn further contends that Australia witnessed the conflation of the European pastoral tradition with the occupation of pastoralism, thus creating a cultural *milieu* in which the stockman—and his horse—was deified. While this conflation is unique to Australia, broader trends were at play that further supported a culture of stockman worship. Europe in the late nineteenth century was engaged in reifying the figure of the peasant, a result of growing anxieties around industrialisation,[740] and the stockman was positioned as a suitable antipodean equivalent. The twentieth century iteration of this figure, which came to prominence through Ward's *The Australian Legend*, was, as Davison demonstrates, part of a resurgent post-war nationalism, which emerged from a leftist intellectual tradition.[741] These factors aptly illustrate how the horse cannot be adequately understood within the Australian context, without some recourse to international trends, or broader cultural frameworks. In dismantling Ward's Legend, Roe ultimately decrees that "the [bushman] becomes one more proof of the truism that the Enlightenment shaped Australian life and ideas in high, perhaps unique, degree."[742]

[737] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral.*
[738] For one example of this, see Wentworth, *A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales*. See also Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 183-84.
[739] Elder, *Being Australian*; Gadsby, "Oz: Episode 1."
[740] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 8; Davison, "Rethinking," 365.
[741] Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 440.
[742] Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 365.

Chapter 5: Phar Lap: horses, objects, and the museum 'afterlife'

In this chapter, I turn to the museum context, where the equine significance narrative finds another expression. Museologist Susan Pearce defines the museum as those "institutions which hold the material evidence, objects and specimens, of the *human and natural history* of our planet".[743] While museums are but one among many platforms—films, books, art, public events and ceremonies—that engage in cultural representation, the museum is the only one of these whose *raison d'être* lies in maintaining and re-constructing the material culture of the past. This is true irrespective of the *type* of material culture held, whether biological, archaeological, or of social history provenance. As social institutions that work to preserve and interpret the past, museums are integral to the construction of identity, and the dissemination of cultural narratives.[744] Further, museums are trusted institutions that confer authenticity and legitimacy,[745] a fact that is illustrated every time controversy is generated by an acquisition or exhibition.[746] If museums are contested sites because of the imputation of veracity that they entail, it therefore follows that revealing the underlying mechanisms through which such significant narratives are constructed is of some worth.

The ways the horse discourse manifests within the museum context is two-fold; first, there is the perpetuation and dissemination of the equine significance narrative, in the form of displays, exhibitions and research, all of which are underpinned by the uncritical assumption that the horse is an animal that is uniquely significant to Australians. In addition to this, the museum has a second, much less understood role, which is realised through its operative functions. This chapter will argue that, through the meaning-making processes of the museum—not just research and exhibition, but all those procedures governing aspects of museum management—the horse is further objectified. That is, the museum method itself functions to negate the horse's subjectivity, and instead serves to promote the instrumental version of 'horse history'.

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[743] Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections*, 1 (my italics).
[744] Elder, *Being* Australian, 320; Shawn M. Rowe, James V. Wertsch and Tatyana Y. Kosyaeva, "Linking Little Narratives To Big Ones: Narrative And Public Memory In History Museums," *Culture & Psychology* 8 (2002): 96-98.
[745] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: popular uses of history in American life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 21-22, 32; Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton, *History at the Crossroads: Australians and the past* (Ultimo: Halstead Press, 2010); Margaret Conrad, Jocelyn Létourneau, and David Northrup, "Canadians And Their Pasts: An Exploration In Historical Consciousness," *The Public Historian* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 15-34.
[746] See the discussion on the National Museum of Australia and the history wars in Chapter 1.

The chapter begins with a discussion of 'thing theory' and the material turn. Combining this with the Animal Studies approach that underpins this thesis, I construct a theoretical framework within which the case studies addressed in this chapter are positioned. This visual representation highlights the terrain in which horse-derived material culture sits, and draws attention to the museum's limited capacity for considering animal subjectivity. The chapter then moves on to consider the results of the Equine Remains in Collections Survey, which I undertook to understand the exact role that horse-derived material plays in contemporary museum collections. The chapter subsequently explores several key museum objects that came to light as a result of the survey. The remains of Depression-era racehorse Phar Lap forms a central case-study in this chapter, and the narrative that is popularly associated with this horse is further contextualised within the Underdog schematic narrative template. From there, I move to a close examination of the objects selected from the survey. These were a set of cannon bone candlesticks, and the osteological remains of one of Australia's most noteworthy racing sires. Drawing on these, in addition to an exhibition and a case study where there is no object, I argue that the horse-derived material culture held within Australian collections has been influential in maintaining the notion of Australia's purportedly unique relationship to this animal.

Scholar of literature Gina Dorre, in her study of the horse in Victorian literature, points out that "[w]hile studying animals in cultural representation does not bring us closer to knowing 'real' animals, it does make accessible significant aspects of ourselves".[747] Her observation is fundamental to the central argument of this chapter, which is that in the museum context, the *animal* horse is meaningless. Instead, the horse appears as either a symbolic construct, or in its instrumental capacity. While on one level it is unremarkable that the horse acquires meaning through its symbolic use by the community to whom it is significant, deconstructing the specific ways the horse is deployed subsequently reveals a great deal about that community. This chapter seeks to deconstruct the narratives of significance relating to some key horse-derived material culture. It draws on the practice of object biography, with the goal of making explicit those behind-the-scenes processes—the same processes that lead to objectification and artefactualisation—that underscore the construction of these narratives, and thereby to potentially disrupt them.

Materiality in the museum context

Recent years have seen the emergence of the "material turn" in academia.[748] The material turn is best described as the scholarly interest in the role that material objects play in our cultural reality.

[747] Dorre, *Victorian Fiction*, 6.
[748] Jennifer L. Roberts, "Things: Material Turn, Transnational Turn," *American Art* 31, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 64.

The investigative terrain ranges from everyday things, to museum objects. Cultural theorist Bill Brown, working in this area, frequently utilises the museum institution as a platform of comparison, being acutely conscious of the ways in which museums regard Things and Objects differently. He states that "[t]hings lie beyond the grid of intelligibility the way mere things lie outside the grid of museal exhibition".[749]

Brown conceptualises Objects and Things as occupying similar, but not identical, terrain—the two are not situated diametrically, nor are they considered as one and the same. This distinction is pivotal when discussing museum material culture. For Brown, an Object only becomes a Thing when that object stops functioning. [750] This signals a shift in the subject-object relationship, a transformation that hinges upon the existence of a human subject. Though this runs counter to the museum process, where a Thing does not become an Object *until* it has stopped being used (and thus becomes part of a museum collection), the core of Brown's argument remains useful. As Brown himself articulates, the transformation is characterised by "a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation."[751]Hence it is the shift in subject-object relation that is of import here, rather than whether the term Thing or Object is used. Such a shift is implicit when an object enters the realm of the museum, and becomes collection material. In the museum context, Objects and Things are regarded differently. As Brown writes:

> [W]e look *through* objects (to see what they disclose about history, society, nature, or culture – above all, what they disclose about *us*). … We look through objects because there are codes by which our interpretive attention makes them meaningful, because there is a discourse of objectivity that allows us to use them as facts.[752]

This "discourse of objectivity" is integral to the mode of the museum. In constructing a theoretical framework to position case studies located within the museum context, I position the Object in opposition to the Subject. This brings into relief the tension implicit within a discussion of horse-derived material, those objects that *were* once subjects. It also retains museum parlance, while still drawing on Brown's ideas. Though Brown places the Thing in opposition to the Subject,[753] as I argued above it is the shift in the human-subject relationship that is at the core of Brown's

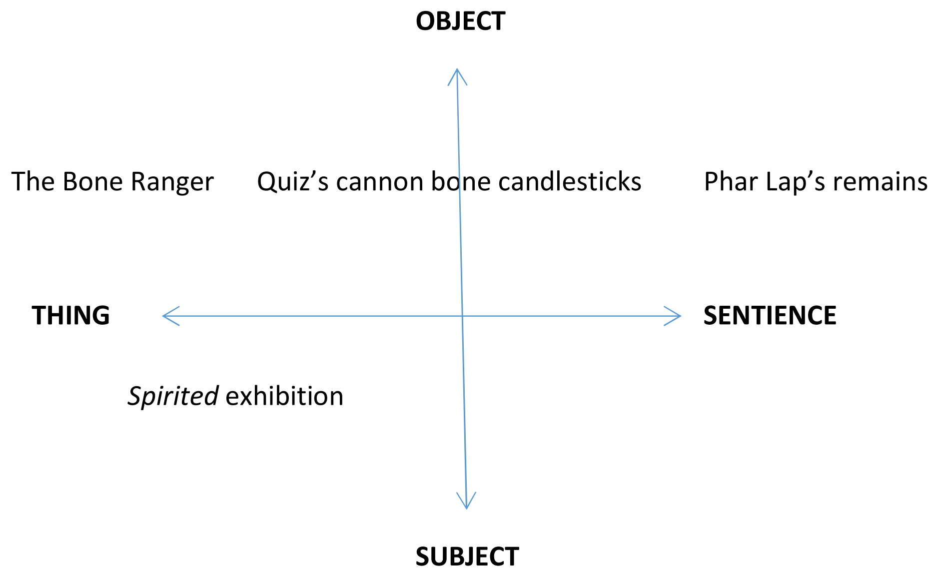
[749] Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28 (2001):5.
[750] Brown, "Thing Theory," 4.
[751] Brown, "Thing Theory," 4.
[752] Brown, "Thing Theory," 4.
[753] Brown, "Thing Theory," 1.

thesis, and, as museum objects are themselves typified by such a shift, I thus use the term Object. Further, this thesis is underpinned by an Animal Studies perspective, integral to which is a recognition that subjectivity extends beyond the realm of human consciousness. Here I open the privilege of subjective positioning to include the non-human. Therefore, we now have an axis that looks like this:

In constructing the next axis, I turn to Igor Kopytoff's influential paper on artefact biography, "The Cultural Biography of Things". Here, Kopytoff outlines a scale with things-as-commodities positioned at one end, and people-as-individuals at the other (noting that this is both a recent, and a culturally exceptional, paradigm).[754] Building on this distinction, and again extending it beyond the human to encompass all sentient beings, produces a second axis, where the Thing is placed opposite Sentience.[755] This represents a useful scale ranging from the purely material object—Kopytoff's thing-as-commodity—which is now no longer recognised as sentient, through to fully conscious beings:

Bringing these two opposing axes together, Subject/Object and Thing/Sentience, creates a framework with four quadrants. This framework provides a useful scaffold to position for consideration objects and exhibitions relating to the horse, while simultaneously revealing the limitations of the museum institution. I have chosen to discuss the four case studies shown here in this chapter. These are The Bone Ranger at the Australian Museum, Quiz's cannon bone candlesticks at the Tasmanian Museum and Gallery, Phar Lap's remains (held in a number of collections in Australia and New Zealand), and the *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story* exhibition held at the National Museum of Australia in 2014-2015. These examples lie thus within the framework:

[754] Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography Of Things," 64.
[755] Given the primary focus of my thesis is the horse, it is outside the scope of the material to contest what sentience constitutes and where the boundaries of it lie. Suffice to say, in the current context, the term sentience will be applied to all animals, both human and non-human.



The Bone Ranger's positioning within this quadrant is indicative of his long-term status as a Thing/Object.[756] His lack of subjectivity is evinced by the ways his individual narrative (former racehorse Sir Hercules) has been subsumed by his representative status as an osteological specimen. In many ways, Phar Lap epitomises the opposite of this. His positioning in the Object/Sentience quadrant reflects the way all his remains are identified with his individuated narrative. However, while his sentience is acknowledged, his subjectivity has been effaced, and he has been transformed into an icon symbolic of Australian-ness.[757] Positioned in between Phar Lap and the Bone Ranger are a pair of candlesticks made from the canon bones of a nineteenth-century racehorse named Quiz. These are an interesting example of objects that are in the process of moving from the sphere of Thing, into the realm of Sentience. This is due to the equal emphasis currently placed on their decorative arts aspects, and their equine origins, in interpretation by the Tasmanian Museum and Gallery. The lower half of the framework, privileging subjectivity, is somewhat vacant, only including the exhibition *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story*. This represents a notable case-study, as the curatorial intentions for this exhibition were focused on making the horse central to its own narrative. Unfortunately, the positioning of the horse as a subject within the museum environment inevitably imposed some constraints. Among these was that the animal itself could only be represented by non-living things, hence being situated in the Thing/Subject quadrant.

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[756] This was true at the time of the survey, and when I selected the specimen for inclusion in the thesis. However, it is no longer true of the horse's new display in the new Westpac Long Gallery, which opened in October 2017. In the current exhibition the horse's identity is discussed. This will be addressed in a later section of this chapter.

[757] John Harms, "Phar Lap: Ours Then And Now And Always," in *The Story of the Melbourne Cup: Australia's Greatest Race*, ed. Stephen Howell (Melbourne: The Slattery Media, 2010), 189.

The fourth quadrant, Sentience/Subject, poses some difficulty in the current context. For the purposes of this research, an acknowledgement of sentience is considered to have been made when the horse's individual history has been incorporated into display or interpretation. To also incorporate recognition of equine Subjectivity, however, creates an almost impossible task within the museum purview. In actuality, this quadrant encompasses terrain that lies outside the traditional domain of material culture. As such, it must necessarily remain empty. An argument could be made to include Takhi (Przewalski's) horses within this quadrant, being the terrain where the zoo[758] meets the living horse. These animals are exhibited within open range-style enclosures at three zoos in Australia (Taronga Western Plains Zoo in New South Wales, Weribee Open Range Zoo in Victoria, and Monarto Zoo, South Australia). However, given the zoo's tangential role in the dissemination of identity-forming narratives, as well as their contentious nature as places of captivity, zoos fall outside the scope of this chapter, and indeed the thesis.

What becomes evident from examining the above framework is that there are certain interpretive and intellectual constraints to working with material culture in the museum context. Whether these limitations are a result of the nature of the material culture itself, or of the museum institution, is impossible to distinguish, as they are mutually reinforcing entities. That is, the objectification of, and institutional meaning ascribed to, these items of material culture is primarily created through the enactment of museum meaning-making processes—cataloguing, research, conservation, and exhibition. These objects, having come into the sphere of the museum, now represent the museum process as much as whatever underlying meaning prompted their initial acquisition. Beyond this, individual objects can become emblematic of particular museums,[759] creating reciprocity of meaning that is difficult to tease apart. The role of the museum in bolstering the significance of particular equids will be examined in a later section, which considers the absence of the object using the case of the horse Gendarme.

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[758] Zoos are considered within the purview of the museum. See for example Edward P. Alexander, Mary Alexander, Juilee Decker, *Museums in Motion: an introduction to the history and functions of Museums* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

[759] One Museum Victoria internal memo recommends that "In view of Phar Lap being synonymous with the N.M.V, it is as well to recognize the fact and play it for all we can get". (Memo to the Acting Director and Council of the National Museum of Victoria from Sue Boyd and Bill Birch, dated July 20, 1979, 3. Phar Lap files, Museums Victoria). Elsewhere, the Bone Ranger featured in much of the promotional material relating to the 1983 opening of the Skeleton Gallery, including on the invitation to the Opening. ("Animals – Bone Ranger – Sir Hercules" Australian Museum file)

ERIC: The Equine Remains in Collections Survey

Many Australian museums—in particular natural history and social history museums—hold horse-derived material within their collections. By 'horse-derived material' I mean those unique objects that simultaneously represent the (frequently individualised) horse, while also being comprised of equine anatomy. Such objects include whole or parts of taxidermied horses, biological specimens, and decorative arts objects fashioned from horse remains (such as a horse hoof pin-cushion). It does not include items where the equine inclusions are incidental to the function of the object. This excludes objects such as horse-hair brushes, wigs or furniture, from my study. In horse-derived museum material the *real*—that is, a physical part of the horse—has been incorporated into its representation of *itself*.

To further assess how notions of significance relating to the horse are harnessed to horse-derived material, I undertook a survey of Australian museums. The Equine Remains in Collections survey (ERIC—see Appendix 1) was devised to identify potential case studies for this thesis. It was designed to elicit from the museums surveyed what (if any) horse-derived material culture they held, how much existing research had been done on it, and if, and in what contexts, it had been exhibited. Throughout 2014 and 2015, I distributed the survey via email to museums at all levels across Australia. The criteria for objects that fit within the parameters of the survey were that the equine content was both visible, and intrinsic to the object, which had to retain some element of equine representation. It encompassed material such as whole or parts of taxidermied horses, decorative arts objects, and osteological or biological specimens. It did not include functional items such as horse-hair furniture, or hairbrushes.

In total, 116 institutions were contacted, with 79 (68%) responding. Of those 79 museums, the vast majority (78.5%) did not hold any relevant material. Seventeen institutions, however, did. The breakdown of the types of horse-derived materials, and the level of institutions in which they are held, is detailed below in Table 5.1:

Type of museum, & number who held relevant material: **Type of material:**	Corporate collections: 3 (17%)	local: 2 (12%)	State: 10 (59%)	National: 2 (12%)	**TOTAL: 17 museums**
Scientific /natural history (bio/osteo)	10 objects	1	94	17	**122 objects (79%)**
Social history	1	1	3	3	**8 (5%)**
Decorative Arts (commemorative)	12	-	3	9	**24 (16%)**
TOTAL	**23 objects (15%) held in corporate collections**	**2 (1%)**	**100 (65%)**	**29 (19%)**	(154 objects)

Table 5.1: Types of horse-derived material, and their distribution across Australian museums.

The survey revealed that the majority (79%) of horse-derived material held within Australian collections is scientific in origin, composed of osteological and wet specimens. These are distributed primarily among State-based collections. The reason for this is that the earliest collecting institutions, dating from the colonial era of Australia's history, were, at Federation, absorbed into the new State-based framework, and have largely remained so. At the time these institutions were established, the pursuit of scientific knowledge through the ordering and cataloguing of the material world was the primary function of the museum mission.[760]

Subsequently, and due in particular to the rise in prominence of social history during the latter decades of the twentieth-century, the cataloguing systems used to classify this horse-derived material failed to evolve to reflect the ways certain objects have shifted between scientific and historical. The Phar Lap mount is a case in point. It is catalogued by Museum Victoria as a natural history (rather than social history) object, reflecting the overarching natural history focus of the institution at the time of the object's acquisition. Nonetheless, despite intermittent internal dissent, the Phar Lap mount has been regarded (to a greater or lesser extent) by the institution as a social

[760] MacDonald, "Perspectives, Disciplines, Concepts," 14.

history specimen.[761] Similar examples exist in the collection of the Australian Museum, in New South Wales, where several of the nineteenth century osteological specimens were once prominent racehorses. Their catalogue records include their names, and even in some cases their pedigrees. Their donation to the Australian Museum was likely motivated by a desire for historical posterity,[762] yet in an era before the advent of social history these racehorses have been dealt with in the only way the institutional frameworks of the time permitted: as natural history specimens.

Where at one end of this spectrum we find horses of (arguably) historical importance being framed as scientific specimens, at the other end are the wet specimens that form the founding collection of the National Museum of Australia, which are now interpreted as social history objects. There, the majority of horse-derived material was originally part of the collections of the Australian Institute of Anatomy (AIA), and was collected for scientific study. The collection was transferred to the newly-formed National Museum at that institution's establishment during the 1980s.[763] As these objects are now within the purview of a social history museum, they are interpreted to reflect this focus. Once again, we can draw on Phar Lap-related material to provide a pertinent illustration. Among the material transferred from the AIA was Phar Lap's preserved heart, and the recently re-discovered biopsy remnants that were taken from it in 1934. While at the AIA the heart was primarily used as a representative object to interpret biological principles such as circulation,[764] since being transferred to the National Museum it has become much more closely associated with the individuated narrative of Phar Lap. This illustrates the ways individual objects can, according to time or a shift in focus, transition between typologies—or defy simplistic classifications altogether. These examples highlight the blurred, even arbitrary, nature of the boundaries that exist between object types.

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[761] In a Memo to the Acting Director dated September 21, 1978, National Museum of Victoria staff member Thomas Rich protested the removal of Phar Lap from a planned exhibit on evolution, arguing that "to display Phar Lap merely as a trophy as he is at present is to totally ignore the fact that this animal was the product of an historical process extending for thousands of millions of year into the past." Over a decade later, issue was taken by the Curator of Mammals Joan Dixon when a draft label for Phar Lap's latest exhibitory iteration was put forth by Elizabeth Willis, the Curator of Social History, addressing the issue of how the horse died. Dixon wrote "If a new label is appropriate, I am happy to prepare one in my capacity as Curator of Mammals." Memo to Carol Henry, Deputy Director Public Programs, from Joan M. Dixon, Curator of Mammals dated September 29, 1989. Phar Lap files, Museums Victoria.

[762] In the case of Sir Hercules, the horse was buried when he died in 1865, but was later exhumed with the express purpose donation in 1870. Letter from J.T. Lee, October 15, 1913, in "Sir Hercules Reference File 'Animals – Bone Ranger – Sir Hercules'," Australian Museum.

[763] Guy Hansen, "Captivating And Curious: An Exhibition Case Study," *ReCollections* 7, no. 1 (April 2012), accessed May 5, 2019 https://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/volume_7_number_1/commentary/captivating_and_curious

[764] Letter from Australian Institute of Anatomy Curator R. Stone to National Museum of Victoria Director J. McNally, dated March 10, 1977, files of Museum Victoria.

Representationally, the type of horse-derived material culture held within collections, particularly within social history museums, presents a further issue. The over-representation of certain types of horses in the collection record may create a false sense of their significance. For example, through the idiosyncratic processes of commemoration specific to the racing industry, [765] racehorses have been re-fashioned into decorative arts objects with greater frequency than other horses. Police horses, on the other hand, are less visible in a collection context, because the commemorative practices common in the racing industry would be considered disrespectful within the mounted police community.[766] It is worth noting that all of the physical objects that feature as case studies within this chapter are associated with racehorses. This illustrates how, in the first instance, the practices of different equestrian communities determine the variety of material culture that is available for eventual collection. This in turn influences the diversity (or lack thereof) of objects represented within museum collections. While racehorses are more numerous than police horses in Australia, their numerical superiority does not automatically equate to greater significance.

Museologist Eileen Hooper Greenhill asks whether the "exclusions, inclusions, and priorities that determine whether objects become part of collections, also [create] systems of knowledge".[767] In the context of the type of horse-derived material frequently found in museum collections, these "systems of knowledge" might include the assumption that the racehorse (and therefore horseracing itself) is *more* significant to Australians than other horses. Elsewhere, Nicholas Thomas, interrogating the museum method as a discipline, poses a similar question: "What kinds of knowledge underpin the interpretation of collections? What methods does that interpretation involve, and what knowledge does it generate?"[768] These questions invite an exploration of the dual functions of the museum—the visible outputs of exhibitions, research, and conservation, alongside the less transparent epistemologies upon which these outputs are based.

Objectification, the museum process, and object biography

One of the inevitable, yet perhaps unintended, outcomes of the museum processes is objectification. The processes of registration, conservation, research and exhibition—all intrinsic to the *raison d'être* of the museum—effectively serve to transform the *animal* into a *thing*. Of course,

[765] The ERIC survey revealed several similar objects within the collection of the Australian War Memorial. Aside from the mounted hoof of Sandy (touched on in Chapter 3) however, the horse hooves used were unprovenanced, and the objects were fashioned not as commemorative of the horses, but rather the men's service.
[766] Sergeant Terry Claven, Victoria Police Museum Curator, personal communication, March 5, 2015.
[767] Eileen Hooper Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge 1992), 5.
[768] Thomas, "Museum As Method," 6.

the significant presence of whole taxidermic animal specimens in Australian museum collections (particularly within natural history museums) demonstrates that it is not only horses that are subject to objectification. However, peculiar to the horse is the frequency with which the *part* is left to stand for the *whole*, a synecdochal construction not often applied to other species. [769] Another ancillary output of the museum process, particularly where social history is concerned, is what Susan Pearce defines as becoming "artefactual". Pearce's observation relates to natural history material, all of which, she argues, becomes artefactual once it has been labelled and classified.[770]

There is a tendency to assume that when an object enters a museum, its life ceases. But objects do not reach stasis once accessioned. Museum processes mark objects, determining their research and exhibition contexts, and effectively shaping their meaning. Museums are performed in the enacting of their core business—the everyday transactions of installation, de-installation, conservation, research and curation.[771] Museologist Duncan Grewcock describes this as "the situated nature" of museum work,[772] a realm that remains highly practical, rather than heavily theoretical, in nature. Elsewhere, Thomas notes that museum studies literature generally falls into two categories, either technical or critical,[773] neither of which address the theoretical frameworks that underpin the museum institution. Though a body of museological literature exists, the field remains characterised by a gulf between museological theory, and museum practice.[774] This failure of scholarly theory to align with everyday practice ensures that the underlying processes of museum work remain invisible. That is, the processes that determine the cultural framing of objects, and the discourse of their significance, remain out of sight—and therefore, beyond critique. This, it must be recognised, is problematic.

The ways that the meanings of objects change as a result of museum processes has been highlighted by Samuel Alberti.[775] Alberti acknowledges that museum objects have always been polysemic, "open to multiple interpretations, from icon to datum."[776] Yet the role that museums play in shaping those meanings remains opaque. In answer to this, Alberti offers the object biography, the practice of which charts the trajectory of an object subsequent to its entry into the museum

[769] This act of part-as-whole substitution is of course much more evident in the realm of extinct and ancient species, particularly dinosaurs.
[770] Susan Pearce, "Collecting As Medium And Message," in *Museum, Media, Message*, ed. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (London: Routledge, 1995), 18.
[771] Grewcock, *Doing Museology Differently*, 12.
[772] Grewcock, *Doing Museology Differently*, 7.
[773] Thomas, "Museum As Method," 7.
[774] Thomas, "Museum As Method," 6-10.
[775] Alberti, "Objects," 559-71.
[776] Alberti, "Objects," 567.

institution. This, Alberti writes, offers "a valuable way of tracing the changes in classificatory schema, theoretical frameworks, and debates surrounding the objects."[777] Exposing these processes makes visible the multiple ways an object is framed, and the role of the museum within that. Further, exploring internal dissent around iconic objects (such as the Phar Lap mount) highlights the wide-ranging opinions and diverse agendas that underlie what is most often perceived as a singular institutional voice.[778] In the context of this thesis, drawing on Alberti's framework to examine the post-acquisition life of certain horse-derived objects enables us to better understand the role that museums play in cultural meaning-making and social reproduction with regards to the horse.

Figure 5.1: Sir Hercules displayed at the Australian Museum, 2018.

[777] Alberti, "Objects," 567.
[778] Rowe at al, "Linking Little Narratives To Big Ones," 99.

The “Bone Ranger” (see Figure 5.1), the articulated skeleton of a rearing horse, has been exhibited in various iterations of the Australian Museum’s skeleton gallery since the 1870s.[779] While in earlier display contexts his history and background were referred to,[780] from 1983 he was labelled as “The Bone Ranger”, and formed part of what was intended as:

> an uncomplicated display of vertebrate structure [that] function[s] to show how these are the result of evolutionary processes working on a single structure or theme. … The vertebrate skeleton offers the best possible example of the reality of evolution.[781]

The specimen is in fact the skeleton of Sir Hercules,[782] bred in Australia in 1843, and claimed by racing aficionados to be one of the greatest sires of Australia’s colonial racing era.[783] To prioritise the skeleton’s representative function as an example of the process of evolution over the horse’s identity (and therefore his worth from a social history perspective), illustrates the process of objectification. Here, the individuality of Sir Hercules was subsumed by his representational worth as an osteological specimen. Interestingly, this approach was somewhat reversed when the gallery was recently redeveloped. The skeleton was installed into the new Westpac Long Gallery, which opened in October 2017, with the object label now revealing his identity. However, in addition to being Sir Hercules, in this iteration of display he is:

> also a representation of the importance of horses and horsemanship to Australian history. Horses were indispensable to farming, industry and travel in colonial Australia, and are important in many stories about our national identity – from horse-breakers and bushrangers to breeders and racers.[784]

Interestingly, while the old skeleton has been reunited with his individual identity, he has simultaneously been deployed in reinforcing the equine significance narrative. This shift in meaning echoes that of the skeleton of Phar Lap, on display in Te Papa Tongarewa (discussed in greater detail in a following section).

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[779] Australian Museum, “Sir Hercules Reference File ‘Animals – Bone Ranger – Sir Hercules’.”
[780] This is inferred from an undated object label included within the Australian Museum file “Sir Hercules Reference File ‘Animals – Bone Ranger – Sir Hercules’.”
[781] Memorandum from Des Griffin to Rob Joyner, dated October 10, 1982, contained in Australian Museum, “Sir Hercules Reference File ‘Animals – Bone Ranger – Sir Hercules’.”
[782] S.1325, information provided by the Australian Museum via the Equine Remains in Collection survey.
[783] Keith Robert Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier (1788-1900) and the Serpent’s Legacy* (Volcanic Productions, 2005), 191; Parsonson, *Australian Ark*, 127.
[784] Object label, Australian Museum

While the shifting cultural and intellectual parameters outlined above are not in themselves problematic, their invisibility, and the subsequent naturalisation of the object's meaning as an iconic object, is.[785] The naturalisation of certain narratives within the museum context, combined with the discourse of objectivity[786] with which the museum institution is associated, has significant ramifications. Once more we look to Phar Lap for an illustration. Phar Lap's heart, while originally acquired by the Australian Institute of Anatomy as a specimen of comparative anatomy, is now exhibited and interpreted within a context where it is symbolic of Phar Lap as an Australian icon. The history of this object, dating from its acquisition in 1932, its subsequent transfer, and the associated documentation relating to research and display, has been detailed in the relevant object file in the Museum's archives. This file provides an invaluable insight into the changing understanding of the heart as an object, yet the processes that it records remain untraceable on the object itself. That these shifts in meaning are not made explicit is problematic, as is their uncritical acceptance.

Phar Lap: a case study in significance

Foaled in 1926 in New Zealand, the then-unnamed thoroughbred colt was purchased at the 1928 Trentham Yearling Sales by a Sydney-based American businessman, David J. Davis, at the behest of struggling trainer Harry Telford. Davis was initially disappointed with the horse's looks, and Phar Lap's early racing performances were unremarkable—he came last in his first race and failed to place in his following three starts. However, Phar Lap soon found his form; over a four-year career he won 37 races from a total of 51 starts and was only unplaced a total of nine times. He set numerous track records, won most of the prestigious races in Australia, and even claimed the 1932 Agua Caliente handicap in Mexico, then the richest race in North America. A fortnight later, on April 5, while still overseas, he appeared unwell to his strapper-cum-trainer Tommy Woodcock. A vet was called, but several hours later the horse haemorrhaged and died. His death, mysterious and sudden, was front-page news in Australia. Speculation around the cause of his death continues today, and even in the last decade two new theories have come into prominence. In 2008, it was announced that research undertaken from 2006 using a synchrotron in Chicago demonstrated conclusively that Phar Lap had ingested a massive dose of arsenic in the 40-30 hours preceding his death.[787] More recently, however, the explanation being offered for Phar Lap's death is a bacterial illness—Duodenitis-

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[785] Elder, *Being Australian*, 25-27.
[786] Brown, "Thing Theory," 4.
[787] *Catalyst*, ABC television episode aired June 19, 2008, transcript available at https://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/phar-lap/11010508 accessed June 2, 2019; Michael Reason, "Phar Lap Arsenic Mystery Solved," Museums Victoria website, accessed June 2, 2019 https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/16421.

Proximal jejunitis—unknown to vets of the 1930s.[788] Neither explanation has put an end to conjecture regarding the cause of Phar Lap's death.[789] The enigmatic circumstances surrounding the horse's death is undoubtedly one aspect of his appeal.

Though Phar Lap was a racehorse, his importance has transcended the racecourse and entered the national consciousness. As an Australian identity narrative, he is strongly associated with the Great Depression. His rise to fame and reign over the racetracks of Australia during the years 1929-1932 coincided almost exactly with the financial crash of 1929 that lead to a global economic Depression, and Phar Lap is credited with having brought hope to Australians struggling during the Depression.[790] Over and above this, he is understood to embody something of the national spirit.[791]

There is a tantalising tension between Phar Lap's instrumentality as a living racehorse, and the agency of his remains-as-objects. While the Phar Lap narrative is frequently co-opted as a construct purportedly symbolic of Australianness, Phar Lap's 'afterlife' as a museum specimen offers an opportunity to consider the agency of objects in the context of their role in constructing narratives of historical significance. Instead of fading with living memory as other racing greats have (the names of Carbine, or the mare Wakeful, were once equally well-regarded, though they are now known only to those interested in turf history),[792] Phar Lap's ongoing display in the museum context, and his oft-mentioned association with the Melbourne Cup (an issue that will be addressed in more detail shortly), keep him very much alive in public memory. Beyond this, Phar Lap's fame has been co-opted by humanist agendas. To return to Shaw, though history may not have turned out differently without Phar Lap, the stories we tell ourselves now, about the character of the Australian people, and the nature of Australian culture, *would* be different. Phar Lap is less an actor in a specific event (or sequence of events) and more an icon, a symbol, whose narrative now ostensibly stands for something uniquely Australian. Phar Lap as he is understood in contemporary Australia does not represent a horse, so much as a human construct, embodying "something about the Australian

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[788] Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson, *They Shot Phar Lap, didn't they?* (Millers Point: Murdoch Books, 2010), 212-218; Phar Lap skeleton exhibit text, Te Papa Tongarewa, photographed in 2016.
[789] See for example Damien Murphy, "Strapper's Words Paint Arsenic As A Big Red Herring," Sydney Morning Herald, October 31, 2011, accessed April 16, 2019 https://www.smh.com.au/national/strappers-words-paint-arsenic-as-a-big-red-herring-20111030-1mqff.html; Tim Egan, "Who Killed Phar Lap?" Country Racing NSW, February 6, 2015, accessed June 2, 2019 http://countryracingnsw.com.au/who-killed-phar-lap/
[790] "Collection Highlight: Phar Lap," National Museum of Australia website, accessed September 24, 2015 http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/phar-lap ; "The Times," Museum Victoria website, accessed September 24, 2015 http://museumvictoria.com.au/pharlap/legend/times.asp
[791] Harms, "Phar Lap," 189.
[792] Carlyon, "Carbine, The Shot That Echoed Around The World," in *True Grit*, 109-113; Carlyon, "Let's Elope Does A Flit," in *True Grit*, 144.

sensibility, and about what is meaningful to us."[793] This symbolic value will be considered more fully in the following sections.

Museum object, and cultural icon

Phar Lap is arguably the most famous horse in any Australian museum. A necropsy, performed at the time of Phar Lap's death, meant that an assortment of his remains were available for preservation, and those of interest were duly shipped back to Australia over the course of several months. The remains included his mounted hide, his skeleton, and his heart. These objects, having now attained the status of secular relics,[794] are displayed in three separate cultural institutions spanning the Tasman. In one sense, this journey has taken Phar Lap from the racecourse to the (cultural) reliquary.[795] Phar Lap's impressively life-like taxidermied hide is a popular exhibit at the Melbourne Museum, in Victoria.[796] His heart is said to be the most frequently requested object by visitors to the National Museum of Australia in Canberra,[797] and his articulated skeleton is displayed at Te Papa Tongarewa, the National Museum of New Zealand.

All three of these objects have been on more-or-less constant display in the decades since Phar Lap's death. The popularity of Phar Lap is such that the dictates of conservation are secondary to ensuring he is available to his adoring public.[798] He has an official Facebook fan page operated by Museum Victoria, with over 85,000 fans.[799] Though the remains have been on almost constant display, over the years their interpretive focus has shifted. The museum process can be traced within this shift, evinced in the changing context of display and interpretation.[800] Each of these separate pieces of Phar Lap originates as a specimen from a different discipline, and the motivation for their collection differed in each case.

Phar Lap's heart had been removed from his carcass immediately following his death by the stable vet, Bill Nielsen. It was stored in preserving fluid and sent to Australia, where Dr Stuart McKay had expressed a desire to examine it. McKay was a Sydney specialist with an interest in racehorse physiology. Its larger-than-usual physiognomy prompted McKay to suggest its donation to the

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[793] Harms, "Phar Lap," 182.
[794] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[795] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[796] "At The Museum: *Phar Lap: Australia's Wonder Horse*," Museum Victoria, accessed March 31, 2016 http://museumvictoria.com.au/pharlap/museum/index.asp
[797] "Collection Highlights: Phar Lap", National Museum of Australia, accessed March 31, 2016 http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/phar-lap
[798] As a museum professional working with the heart from 2009-2011, I was advised by a conservator at the NMA that the heart would never be taken off display, despite its fragility.
[799] Phar Lap Facebook page, accessed June 14, 2017 https://www.facebook.com/pharlapfanpage/
[800] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."

Australian Institute of Anatomy (AIA).[801] It was acquired and displayed as a biological specimen, exhibited alongside the normal-sized heart of an army remount horse. Phar Lap's heart stood as an exemplar of comparative anatomy. At the time, it was considered significant—and appropriate for collection by the AIA—primarily because of its size, not its provenance to Phar Lap himself. As I have postulated elsewhere, had the heart been of an average size it is unlikely that it would have been retained.[802] This is important, because the social significance subsequently ascribed to the heart has nothing to do with how it originated as a collection object, and everything to do with the cultural discourse in which it has been framed. Unpicking the history of such an object—in fact, of any of the Phar Lap material, which has been imbued with national significance—functions "to reveal the socially structured ways in which meaning is made, communicated and reproduced in museums."[803]

Unlike the heart, Phar Lap's hide was not seen as a scientific object and initially remained in the United States. It was then mounted by renowned New York firm of taxidermists the Jonas Brothers. Paid for by David J. Davis, the mount was primarily a theatrical object, and featured in several promotional opportunities staged by Davis in the United States. Upon its arrival in Australia in December 1932, the mount was exhibited in the upstairs foyer of Melbourne's Capitol Theatre,[804] reinforcing its status as a theatrical prop. In contrast, the heart had been briefly exhibited at the Australian Museum,[805] as befitted an object of scientific value. Regardless of this distinction, the mount very quickly became the focal point for Phar Lap's fans. It drew large crowds and proved a greater attraction at Melbourne's National Gallery and Museum than the artworks, much to the chagrin of the then-Director, Daryl Lyndsay (see Figure 5.2).[806]

[801] National Museum of Australia, "Harry Telford Collection," file 90/163.
[802] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[803] Ross, "Interpreting The New Museology," 84.
[804] "Phar Lap Returns Home," *Advocate*, December 17, 1932, 3.
[805] "Phar Lap's Heart," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 4, 1932, 8.
[806] Eric Thake, '"Gallery Director', or, 'This Way To Phar Lap'," Museum Victoria Item HT 23941 (Christmas Card), accessed May 8, 2014 https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/1486450

Figure 5.2: Eric Thake, 1954, *'Gallery Director' or 'This Way to Phar Lap.'*
© the estate of Eric Thake.

The skeleton was the most unremarkable of Phar Lap's remains to be transformed into a museum object. As we have seen with the Sir Hercules example, it was not unusual for horse skeletons to be donated to museums. At that time, the skeleton of famed nineteenth-century racehorse and sire Carbine was on display at the Melbourne Museum, where Phar Lap's skeleton was initially donated by Davis, alongside the mounted hide.[807] The bones were then given to the New Zealand Government, who passed them onto the Dominion Museum in Wellington. Here they remained, unmounted, until New Zealand turf correspondent S.V. McEwen coordinated a public subscription to fund the work five years later. Decades on, Phar Lap's (poorly-articulated) skeleton became part of the collection of Te Papa Tongarewa, the national museum of New Zealand. Until

[807] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."

very recently, Te Papa curatorial staff viewed the skeleton's primary significance as being historical. It was seen as an example of 1930s taxidermy, not a cultural icon.[808] It was not until 2012, following significant public pressure, that the skeleton was rearticulated by Te Papa. It seems that in spite of (or perhaps because of) its more traditional nature as a museum object, Phar Lap's skeleton proved the most resistant of all the artefacts to being subsumed by the Phar Lap narrative. Nonetheless, the influence of this narrative has proven deeply influential—literally. The skeleton was repositioned to mimic the pose of the hide (see Figure 5.3).[809] As Samuel Alberti points out, "[t]he study of museum practices reveals that to articulate is to articulate; rebuilding such beasts imbues them with new purposes, meanings, and explanations."[810] In the case of Phar Lap's skeleton, the re-articulation represents the shift from historic taxidermic specimen, to cultural icon. It has joined the heart and the hide to form "a 'Holy Trinity' of objects in which the veneration of Phar Lap is situated."[811]

Each of the objects relating to Phar Lap originally signalled something different from what it has now come to represent. Today, each object, having been subjected to decades of the museum processes of research, display, and interpretation, has become interchangeable with the broader Phar Lap narrative.[812] In this way, what was originally signified by each of these distinct individual objects has now been assimilated into the icon that is Phar Lap—including the horse's own subjectivity. Phar Lap has been reduced to his knowability. As I have written elsewhere, "What we know *about* Phar Lap—how tall he was, how many races he won, who his favourite strapper was—becomes who he *was*."[813] This is problematic, because in quantifying him thus, the essential horse-ness of Phar Lap has been overridden. It has been replaced with an anthropocentric construct—a figure symbolic of Australian-ness that has a limited relationship with horse-ness, while the imagined significance of horse-ness remains an integral part of our national narrative. The horse's symbolic reconstruction represents another form of instrumentality, whereby Phar Lap's intrinsic self—his equine mystique—is subsumed by projections of national identity. The museum agenda services this narrative by effectively reducing the horse to the sum total of his parts: what his hide reveals about how he died, or how his heart compares in size to that of other horses, for example.[814] These are

[808] Stu Piddington, "Phar Lap's Bones Rattle Horse Fancier," smh.com.au, August 8, 2009, accessed November 10, 2011 http://www.smh.com.au/national/phar-laps-bones-rattle-horse-fancier-20090807-eczd.html
[809] Neil Clarkson, "Mighty Phar Lap's Skeletal Makeover Is Complete," *Horsetalk*, March 14, 2012, accessed February 7, 2013 http://horsetalk.co.nz/2012/03/14/phar-laps-skeletal-makeover-is-complete/
[810] Samuel J.M.M. Alberti, "Maharajah The Elephant's Journey: From Nature To Culture," in *The Afterlives of Animals: a Museum Menagerie*, ed. Samuel J.M.M. Alberti (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 52-53.
[811] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[812] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[813] Isa Menzies, "Phar Lap Was A Horse," People and the Environment blog February 4, 2015, National Museum of Australia, https://pateblog.nma.gov.au/2015/02/04/3599/#more-3599
[814] Menzies, "Phar Lap Was A Horse."

then redeployed to create the iconic figure of Phar Lap, who is no longer a horse, but a symbol of Australian greatness.

Figure 5.3: The rearticulated Phar Lap skeleton on display at Te Papa Tongarewa, 2016. Image courtesy Priya Vaughan.

While Phar Lap certainly contributed to the field of Australian racing, his iconic status is not due solely to his achievements on the turf. Phar Lap's impressive string of racing victories coincided with a revolution in mass media technology, which brought the horse into the lives of everyday people in a way not previously experienced. For example, the second ever 'talkie' presented to the Australian cinema-going public was Phar Lap as a three-year-old running the 1929 Melbourne Cup.[815] Elsewhere, newspapers were moving away from printing advertisements on the front pages in favour of headline stories, and improvements in photographic reproduction meant images increasingly appeared in the print media. Thus, Phar Lap found himself squarely in front of a

[815] Harms, "Phar Lap," 186.

limelight that was primed to receive him.[816] Consequently, he has become inextricably linked with the media through which he was represented. This is the visual equivalent of being reduced to his representation; classic photographs that have been reproduced again and again—jockey Jim Pike wearing the distinctive black hoops of Telford's racing colours on his sleeves, bent over Phar Lap's outstretched neck as the horse is in full gallop; the horse sharing a moment with strapper Tommy Woodcock, Phar Lap in profile with ears pricked while the young man gazes at him lovingly. There is also grainy black and white footage of the horse's races readily available on YouTube, as well as the horse's ongoing presence in Australian museums. Phar Lap has shown great longevity as a public figure, transformed from a popular personage of his era into a twenty-first century icon.

The ongoing power and longevity of the Phar Lap narrative is worthy of closer examination. There were other, human, heroes during this period, who also benefitted from the media revolution—Walter Lindrum, Donald Bradman, and Charles Kingsford Smith were all achieving significant, and well-publicised, milestones during this period. Yet the fact remains that Phar Lap is more of a household name today than many of his high-achieving human contemporaries. This longevity, I argue, is more attributable to his remains being preserved and kept on permanent display, than a result of his racing performance.[817] While those who saw him race, or remember him firsthand, have almost all passed away, Phar Lap's physical remains, held in showcases and artfully lit, are constantly reinterpreted, and shared with new generations. The sense of hope this horse is said to have engendered within the working-class people of Australia is a thing of the past, which can now only be imagined. Any sense of this affective power is diminished, delivered at a distance, and the horse becomes a re-presentation of his Depression-era self. Though films and other cultural representations also play a part in maintaining Phar Lap's legendary status, the remains provide a physical focus within which to situate Phar Lap's cultural veneration,[818] and form the material foundation for his use as an identity narrative. Further, the authority implicit within the museum institution elevates the remains—and their associated narratives of tragedy and underdog triumph—to a status where their interpretation goes unquestioned.

The Phar Lap exhibits at the Melbourne Museum and the National Museum of Australia both touch on Phar Lap's significance to working-class Australians during his racing years. However, the horse's meaning is also reconstructed to speak strongly to the cultural mores and purportedly national characteristics valued today. Put simply, Phar Lap's heart is not the National Museum's

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[816] Eddie Butler-Bowdon, "The Media Star," in *Phar Lap*, ed. Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 169-77.
[817] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[818] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."

most requested object for the role he played in the Depression; rather, he is valued as a symbol of Australian identity, which, while associated with the national past, holds broader meanings for contemporary visitors. The most problematic aspect of this lies in the fact that this fundamental shift in meaning remains implicit, rather than explicit. There is no active interrogation of the way the horse is deployed in reinforcing constructs of national identity, either for visitors or internally. Thus, through their interpretive approach, the Phar Lap exhibits become complicit in the horse's re-presentation as a symbolic construct.

In New Zealand, Te Papa's capitulation to public pressure and subsequent re-articulation of the Phar Lap skeleton precisely illustrates the way that the meanings of object can shift. It also illustrates the power of the Phar Lap narrative, and its influence, even across the Tasman Sea. In the skeleton's re-articulation, we see the transition from the skeleton as an object of representative interest, to an(other) embodiment of the broader Phar Lap narrative. It has now joined both the heart and the hide as an object whose individuality has been subsumed, and that now serve as shorthand for the overarching Phar Lap narrative. Thus, even while the object has had its association with Phar Lap reinforced (in place of being a representative object), far from heralding a return to his own subjectivity, this shift further cements the horse's status as an icon—an anthropocentric construct—and removes him from his intrinsic horse-ness.

Museum processes applied to animal material have a tendency to render the subjective *animal* invisible, either in favour of the objective *object*, or, as in the Phar Lap example, as a cipher to a broader narrative. In the case of Phar Lap's heart, the heart-as-object is generally overlooked, instead operating as an entry point to the over-arching Phar Lap-as-national-hero story. Even when aspects unique to the heart, such as its unusual size, are addressed, they are framed in such a way as to reflect the heroic and nationalistic aspects of the narrative. For example, the phrase "a heart as big as Phar Lap's", said to be part of our national lexicon, features in the National Museum's interpretation of this object.[819] In this way, the heart reflects Phar Lap's (and through him, ostensibly Australia's) 'big-hearted' nature. The recently discovered genetic anomaly known as the X-factor gene, which has been shown to lead to large hearts among the progeny of the eighteenth-century racehorse Eclipse, rates little mention in interpretations of this object.[820] This gift of genetic inheritance (rather than Phar Lap's individual 'big-heartedness'), is deliberately overlooked in

[819] NMA, "Collection Highlight: Phar Lap's Heart."
[820] It is included in the online Collection Highlight for Phar Lap's heart on the NMA website: http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/phar-lap However, the boundaries between this thesis and my professional interest are particularly blurred here, as it was through my research when employed as a curator interpreting the heart that this fact was revealed, and I wrote the original online content relating to it.

representations of the horse, perhaps due to the vague fear that it might lessen the power of the Phar Lap narrative—and subsequently that of the Australian people. Here we explicitly see the subjectivity of Phar Lap as an individual equid overridden in the interests of promoting a favourable nationalistic narrative.

While Phar Lap is frequently constructed as historically important, his true worth lies in the ways his narrative is utilised in a symbolic capacity. That is, his story (and his body) now stands for something outside himself. Phar Lap, as he is popularly understood today, no longer represents a horse, but a human construct. In the words of sports writer John harms, he has come to embody "something about the Australian sensibility, and about what is meaningful to us."[821] In this way, he functions very much as an object in accordance with the framework established by Brown.[822] Rather than examining the body parts of Phar Lap for what they truly are, we look through them, to see ourselves as Australians, reflected back.

Phar Lap as underdog

Catriona Elder has argued that Australian egalitarianism narratives require greater investigation, to expose the role they play in masking difference.[823] This section of the thesis represents just such an examination of the Phar Lap narrative, which I argue here, is more complex than a benign 'feel-good' story. While the underdog figure is not directly associated with the horse as a species, this animal is frequently cast within many of these narratives, and Phar Lap's story is one example that has been moulded to fit the requisite narrative arc. Both the underdog narrative and its related trope, egalitarianism, are integral to the story of Phar Lap, whose presence looms large in the Australian cultural imagination. Here, I unpack the overarching Phar Lap narrative as a whole, with a particular focus on the framing of the horse (and those associated with him) within the underdog schematic narrative template.

While Phar Lap's story is certainly a specific narrative, in that it pertains to real people and actual historical events,[824] in its most visible and popular retellings (for example, the 1983 film of the same name, and the museum exhibits at the National Museum of Australia and Museum Victoria), it is framed within, and structured according to, the schematic narrative template that I have outlined above. The ways in which the Phar Lap story has been shoe-horned to fit the underdog narrative include the elision of David J. Davis' significance as a positive influence, the down-playing of Phar

[821] Harms, "Phar Lap", 182.
[822] Brown, "Thing Theory," 4.
[823] Elder, *Being Australian*, 64.
[824] Wertsch, *Voices*, 62.

Lap's thoroughbred pedigree, and the omission of the unhappy endings that befell these protagonists. Wertsch highlights how an ending shapes its preceding narrative, not just in fictional or collective stories, but in analytical historical narratives also.[825] In the case of the retelling of the Phar Lap story, the narrative arc tends to close with the death of the horse, who, in emerging victorious from the Agua Caliente Handicap, has proven his worth internationally, and is now confirmed in his position as a hero, or not-underdog. The three (white, male, Christian) co-agents most frequently associated with him (which excludes Davis) are framed as deserving of their association with this hero-horse, and there the story usually ends. This of course does not reflect the historical reality, which proves far more complex.

Phar Lap's underdog status has been bestowed due to several factors. According to the story, his purchaser, David J. Davis, initially dismissed him because of his looks.[826] Second, once he started winning consistently, the racing establishment, which is here framed as classist, and has been popularly positioned as one of the main antagonists of the horse and his connections, tried to curb his winning streak. This was, ostensibly, first by banning geldings from competing in the two-and three-year old classic races,[827] and then by changing the weight-for-age scale of penalty weights.[828] Rather than an attempt to exclude Phar Lap, the banning of geldings had been under discussion for some time, and brought Australian racing into line with the United Kingdom.[829] As for the change in weight-for-age weights—which only applied to Victoria Racing Club (VRC) events, not to racing across the board—whether this was a deliberate strategy to target and exclude a single horse, or was instead an attempt to open the field to more competitors, is a matter of perspective. Nonetheless, the 'anti-Establishment' angle remains the most favoured in the popular imagination, adding as it does to the horse's cachet as an underdog figure.[830] The 1983 film version of the Phar Lap story emphasises the idea that, due to his interest in the horse Carradale, the Chairman of the VRC, Lachlan K. S. Mackinnon, particularly targeted Phar Lap.[831]

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[825] Wertsch, *Voices*, 58.
[826] Tommy Woodcock, "Phar Lap Memories: How Ugly Duckling Was Bought As Yearling," *The Mercury*, Wednesday September 30, 1936, 11; Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 6-7; Eddie Butler-Bowden, Michael Reason, and Matthew Churchward, "Harry Telford, Race Horse Owner & Trainer (1877-1960)," Museum Victoria webpage, accessed January 21, 2018 https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/1625
[827] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 67.
[828] Biff Lowry, *Killing Phar Lap: an Untold Part of the Story* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2014), 35; Museum Victoria, Phar Lap webpage, accessed June 14, 2016 https://museumvictoria.com.au/pharlap/horse/winner.asp; Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 107-8.
[829] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 67.
[830] For example, see Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 125.
[831] Simon Wincer (Director), *Phar Lap*, Hoyts Edgley, 1983.

Yet as a registered thoroughbred, Phar Lap was no less a pedigreed racehorse than any other competing on the field at that time. Further to this, another popular aspect of the Phar Lap narrative, frequently cited to support the horse's positioning as an underdog, was his 'cheap' price at auction. However, it should be remembered that the 160 guineas paid for him was still too great a sum for Harry Telford, the struggling trainer whose interest in the colt was piqued by the horse's bloodlines, to afford. Instead, Telford attempted to persuade a number of others—who were also disinclined to spend the necessary money—before eventually interesting Davis in the horse.[832]

Following his initial dismissal of the animal, Davis agreed to lease him to Telford for a period of three years.[833] Though the horse did not perform well in his early starts as a two-year-old sprinter, and lost eight of his first nine races, starting him over longer distances as a three-year-old soon brought victory.[834] By the time Telford's lease of Phar Lap elapsed, he was a rich man. At this point in the narrative something is usually made of Telford successfully tricking Davis into selling him a share in the horse for a good price.[835] As Telford is the figure we are encouraged to identify with, this is framed as a victory over Davis, who is positioned as the antagonist. Davis is unflatteringly described in Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson's definitive text *Phar Lap* as "a dumpy American-born self-promoter" and a "loud-mouthed Yank".[836] Little critical reflection is given to the anti-Semitic feeling that underlies this depiction. Further, while Harry Telford is frequently portrayed as the archetypal Aussie 'battler' made good,[837] this is not only an over-simplification, but, in omitting significant events that were occurring in Telford's life at the same time as Phar Lap's successes, the story preferences the rugged masculinity that is typical of Australian identity narratives. In September 1931, in the midst of much public speculation about whether Phar Lap would run in the Melbourne Cup, and whether or not there was truth in the rumour that the horse was bound for America,[838] Telford and his wife Elvira welcomed a baby girl into their family.[839] Three months later, on 16

[832] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 17; Eddie Butler-Bowden, Michael Reason, and Matthew Churchward, "Harry Telford, Race Horse Owner & Trainer (1877-1960)," Museum Victoria webpage, accessed January 21, 2018 https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/1625
[833] Jan Wositzky, *Me & Phar Lap: The remarkable life of Tommy Woodcock* third edition (Docklands: The Slattery Media Group, 2011), 40.
[834] Wositzky, *Me & Phar Lap*, 44.
[835] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 78; Wositzky, *Me & Phar Lap*, 71; Wincer, *Phar Lap*.
[836] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 17.
[837] For examples, see Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*; Butler-Bowden, Reason, and Churchward, "Harry Telford," Museum Victoria webpage;
[838] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 120-28.
[839] "Another For Uncle Phar Lap To Provide For," *Arrow*, Friday September 18, 1931, 8.

December, baby Louise passed away,[840] a tragic event that is most often completely overlooked.[841] This illustrates Murrie's contention that, in Australia, a family-oriented masculinity—one emphasising a man's role as husband and father—has been ignored, in favour of privileging the rugged masculinity promoted by the *Bulletin* writers.[842] Further, in the desire to frame the Phar Lap story as the traditional underdog tale of hard-won success, many details—such as this family tragedy—are left out.

In fact, this holds true for all of the key human figures in the Phar Lap narrative, particularly in the years following the horse's death. The Australian triumvirate of trainer (Telford), jockey (Jim Pike) and handler (Tommy Woodcock) can be more-or-less neatly positioned into the pre-existing archetypes common to such stories, providing the narrative does not stray beyond Phar Lap's lifetime. Moving beyond the well-known endpoint of the Phar Lap chronicle (Phar Lap's death in California in April 1932) reveals a less-than-happy ending for all the protagonists. Telford, who had also recently lost a child, failed to train any more significant winners, and soon had to surrender "Braeside", the training facility he was able to establish with Phar Lap's success. Despite this, he spent another two and a half decades trying his luck in the industry, before he finally retired from racing in 1957. He died almost penniless just a few years later, in 1960.[843] Jimmy Pike had never been physiologically suited to being a jockey, being naturally of a larger frame. In order to meet the requisite weights, he frequently endured the regime of wasting that was common for jockeys in those days, which left him with ongoing stomach problems. He retired as a jockey several years after Phar Lap's death, in 1936. He met no luck as a trainer, and, due in part to his propensity for gambling,[844] eventually died in poverty in 1969.[845] Of the three men most often associated with Phar Lap, Tommy Woodcock did not meet such bad luck. The connection between Phar Lap and Woodcock is popularly depicted as so profound as to have an almost spiritual dimension (see Figure 5.4).[846] After Phar Lap's death, Woodcock did achieve some success as a trainer. However, in 1977,

[840] "Deaths," *The Age*, Thursday December 17, 1931, 1.
[841] There was no mention of this unhappy circumstance in any of the secondary texts on Phar Lap I consulted. Neither was Telford's newborn baby, or young family, ever offered as a possible reason for him refusing to travel with the horse to America in November 1931.
[842] Murrie, "Writing Australian Masculinity," 69.
[843] Armstrong and Thompson, *They Shot Phar Lap*, 221.
[844] John N. Molony, "Pike, James Edward (Jim) (1892-1969)," Australian Dictionary of Biography (online), accessed January 22, 2019 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/pike-james-edward-jim-8050
[845] Molony, "Pike, James Edward;" Bill Whitaker, "Devoted To The Cause," in *Phar Lap*, ed. Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 191.
[846] Bob Hawke, "Foreword," in *Phar Lap*, ed. Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2000), ix; Jan Wositzky, *Me & Phar Lap: The remarkable life of Tommy Woodcock* third edition (Docklands: The Slattery Media Group, 2011), 42-44; Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*; Bill Whitaker, "Devoted To The Cause," in *Phar Lap*, ed. Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 183-188.

when Woodcock's horse Reckless was the sentimental favourite to win the Melbourne Cup, he was beaten by the big money, the Bart Cummings-trained gelding Gold and Black,[847] and thus eluded a narratively-satisfying happy ending. Finally, let us not forget the horse himself. Phar Lap, in spite of his success and popularity, died in excruciating agony. The ongoing display of his preserved remains presents a comforting fantasy against the fact that he only lived for five years. The stories of those associated with Phar Lap, including the horse himself, are massaged to fit the narrative arc common to the underdog tale.

Figure 5.4: Tommy Woodcock and Phar Lap at Agua Caliente, 1932.

Interpreting the figure of David Davis—both within and beyond the Phar Lap story—is more problematic. Perhaps as an American, Davis resists being stereotyped into an Australian narrative—or perhaps his foreign status renders him invisible. His story does not end in obscurity, unlike the others. He continued to enjoy success as a racehorse owner, including owning another Melbourne Cup winner, Russia, who won the race in 1946. Though frequently portrayed as an antagonist to Telford and ascribed the blame for taking the horse to America where he died, Davis also paid a

[847] Bill Whitaker, "Devoted To The Cause," in *Phar Lap*, ed. Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 183.

significant sum of money to have the skin mounted, and then donated the mount back to the people of Australia. As such, his role in the Phar Lap story resists easy simplification.

The Phar Lap narrative also functions to promote the Australian constructs of masculinity discussed earlier in the thesis, where proficiency with, and command over, the horse is tantamount to a man's broader worth. In the Phar Lap narrative, this is demonstrated by the various ways in which the male protagonists are shown as capable of influencing the horse's success, whether as trainer, jockey, or strapper. This vein of masculine competence is notably absent from depictions of the hapless owner Davis, who is often portrayed as being duped into having sold Telford a half-share of the horse for a fraction of his worth.[848] Davis' inability to 'read' the horse's value here renders him a figure of ridicule in this context. It is worth reiterating that Davis was not an Australian, and his role in the narrative often serves as the 'outsider' against whom the 'heroes' of the story are positioned. It is also worth noting that Phar Lap himself was gelded (a neutered male). Therefore, while he can be used as a representation of Australian character, the masculinised presence within the story is served by human protagonists, with the 'heroes' identified by their horsemanship.

Further, as already discussed, the elision of the painful, more human elements of Telford's story, where his role as husband and father are ignored in favour of portraying him as a tough horseman,[849] privilege the type of rugged masculinity that has come to be associated with Australianness. The Tommy Woodcock-Phar Lap dynamic is a possible exception to the promotion of these harder constructs of masculinity. Woodcock is often portrayed as gentler, softer, and more understanding with the horse.[850] He himself said that "he did soften me, that horse."[851] Jim Pike was also regarded as a gentle jockey who preferred not to whip his mounts,[852] described as an equestrian "genius who coaxed the best from horses without belting them."[853] Nonetheless, all three men are depicted as confident horsemen, and their ability to bend the horse to their will reasserts the traditional Australian masculinity.

Phar Lap is widely seen as embodying uniquely Australian characteristics. These, of course, can only be projections. The horse himself remains elusive. All that we have left of him are physical remains encased in glass within museum walls, along with some grainy footage. Photographs and racing memorabilia, such as race programs in which he is featured, often appear in the catalogues of

[848] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 78; Wositzky, *Me & Phar Lap*, 71; Wincer, *Phar Lap*.
[849] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*; Wincer, *Phar Lap*.
[850] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 37; Jan Wositzky, *Me & Phar Lap,* 43.
[851] Jan Wositzky, *Me & Phar Lap*, 47.
[852] Molony, "Pike, James Edward."
[853] Whitaker, "Devoted To The Cause," 189.

auction houses. To own a part of Phar Lap is coveted, akin to owning a part of history.[854] His positioning (both literally and metaphorically) as a key symbol of Australian identity is reinforced by the ways his narrative is disseminated and deployed. Scholars of religion Carole Cusack and Justine Digance point out that Phar Lap sits alongside two other venerated Australian icons—the Anzacs at Gallipoli, and Ned Kelly—and argue that "all these heroes were ultimately 'losers': heroic achievers who died before their time".[855] Cusack and Digance wryly observe that "Australian icons persist in being somewhat iconoclastic."[856] Nonetheless, Phar Lap's 'loser' status is not what is emphasised in the narratives that relate to him. Though initially renowned as a horse who brought hope to a generation during the Great Depression, the social and economic circumstances of that era have now receded into the distant past, and the horse is memorialised today for different reasons. Similarly to the Man from Snowy River and his horse, Phar Lap is seen as embodying the key traits of Australianness associated with the underdog figure. These are courage, tenacity, and achieving success despite the odds. While the Man from Snowy River is a fictional creation and is thus easily constructed to fit the underdog mould, as an historical figure, Phar Lap's story needs to be shoe-horned somewhat in order to match the prescribed narrative arc.

Despite his enduring appeal, Phar Lap was not a battler. His pedigree and breeding were equal to any other thoroughbred racehorse, and, as his string of victories proved, he was an exceptionally gifted athlete. However, his story continues to resonate, framed as it is within the underdog schematic narrative template. In the next section I examine how the horse's narrative has been exploited to promote the annual Melbourne Cup race. Phar Lap, the Melbourne Cup, and Australian national identity have been interwoven for so many years that they are now inter-related, and the Cup needs to be addressed in this context.

Egalitarianism and the Melbourne Cup

The Melbourne Cup represents a key context for the interpretation of Phar Lap's remains, particularly the heart, which is currently displayed within an exhibit on this race at the National Museum. While the race itself is somewhat tangential to this thesis, it has become indelibly associated with Phar Lap, and Australian identity more broadly, and is thus worth a brief detour. Of particular interest are the ways that nationalistic narratives have been harnessed to market the race,

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[854] Chris Johnston, "The Phar Lap 'Stuff' Worth $150,000, And Climbing," *The Age*, May 7, 2016, accessed May 10, 2016 https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/the-phar-lap-stuff-worth-150000-and-climbing-20160506-goo6xs.html; "Collectors Spend Big On Phar Lap Memorabilia," 10 News First, aired Sunday May 19, 2019, accessed May 31, 2019 https://tenplay.com.au/news/national/2019/5/19/collectors-spend-big-on-phar-lap-memorabilia
[855] Cusack and Digance, "The Melbourne Cup," 886.
[856] Cusack and Digance, "The Melbourne Cup," 886.

particularly the 'battler' or underdog narrative, where the horses are positioned as protagonists of an egalitarian ideal, and the repeated use of the Phar Lap story. Here, I focus on the race's egalitarian framing, as an adjunct to the Underdog narrative template.

The language pertaining to the Melbourne Cup has, until very recently,[857] emphasised notions of egalitarianism and a 'fair go', foundations of the Australian identity narrative,[858] which race organisers the Victoria Racing Club (VRC) claim are intrinsic to the race. Rod Fitzroy, the then-Chairman of the VRC, declaimed in 2010, "I love the way the Melbourne Cup reflects the Australian sense of fair go and a chance for all".[859] As a handicap race, competing horses carry a weight penalty based on how well they have performed during the year's race season. In theory, this is meant to encourage a level playing field—the egalitarian ideals of Australia realised. This conjunction between the race's purported egalitarianism, and Australian national identity, is repeated so frequently that it has successfully transformed the race into something of a symbol, purportedly representing a national ideal: "The concept of a handicap race as a nation's greatest event is unique to Australia and the Melbourne Cup. It represents so much about its host nation—a chance for all no matter the circumstances of birth or opportunity"[860] claims a 2010 publication commemorating the Cup's 150th anniversary. However, as we will see, this emphasis on equality and egalitarianism is simply a myth.

As a handicap, the nature of the race is one avenue where the myth of egalitarianism is perpetuated. It is also disseminated through the fabrication that 'anyone' can own a Cup winner. In the words of Rod Fitzroy, "[i]t is still the case that all of us can dream that with the right trainer, jockey and horse at the right time we can have the chance to compete in the Melbourne Cup against the finest thoroughbreds and greatest racing stables from around the world".[861] This, of course, is a complete fiction, manufactured and disseminated in order to ensure new injections of capital into the industry from those 'buying in'—both in a literal sense, and a metaphorical one.[862] The years leading to the running of the sesquicentennial Cup in 2010 in particular heralded an increase in the

[857] The very public deaths of four horses as a result of the running of the 2013, 2014, and 2015 Melbourne Cups has led to a widespread shift in the public perception of this race, which has for many years been largely immune from mainstream criticism due to its role as an iconic Australian event. How the Victoria Racing Club responds, and how the situation unfolds in the coming years, remains to be seen. Interestingly, after the death of yet another horse in the 2018 race, the Australian Government removed their pro-Melbourne Cup webpage, which had formerly appeared as part of a list of days of significant national celebration.
[858] Elder, *Being Australian*, 46-52.
[859] Fitzroy, "Introduction," 23.
[860] The Slattery Media, accessed July 8, 2016 http://books.slatterymedia.com/store/viewItem/the-story-of-the-melbourne-cup
[861] Fitzroy, "Introduction," 23.
[862] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry*, 4.

promotion of egalitarian claims. One particular quote, attributed to a nameless source of the 1860s, was frequently invoked:

> To make a handicap the principal event of the turf year is to make a farce of everything that racing stands for. Its effect would be to make any brumby brought out of a mob for 30 shillings the equal of the finest horse in the land. It is a mad idea, doomed to failure.[863]

Though most likely apocryphal, this statement repeatedly appears alongside discussions of the Melbourne Cup, and is offered as evidence of its significance to Australia's national narrative.[864] For example, journalist Tom Reilly claims that "[i]ts essence has changed little from its first running in 1861 … it's a race for the masses, a lung-busting slog in which the blue bloods and their owners can be knocked off by the battlers. The handicapper gives everyone a chance. It is emphatically Australian."[865]

In reality, however, this rhetoric does not stand up to scrutiny. 'Battlers' do not generally own Melbourne Cup-standard racehorses, as demonstrated in the earlier deconstruction of the Phar Lap narrative, where it was shown that not even the famously 'cheap' Phar Lap could be afforded by the 'battler' Harry Telford. Competing in an event such as the Melbourne Cup remains the province of those rich enough to afford it, and this is particularly true for a staying race (a race run over a longer distance, rather than a sprint), which is generally contested by older horses with the stamina to cover longer distances.[866] Owning a more mature racehorse is indicative of an individual (or, less frequently, a syndicate) with enough money to maintain their investment for a longer period. Further, the entry fee—which amounted to $63,910 in 2016—to compete in Australia's richest

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[863] Cited in Maurice Cavanough, Rhett Kirkwood and Brian Meldrum, *The Melbourne Cup 1861* – 2000 (Melbourne: Equus Marketing & Crown Content, 2000), 7.

[864] John O'Hara, "Globalisation, Historical Consciousness And The Melbourne Cup," *Sporting Traditions* 23 (2007): 35; Eric O'Keefe, *The Cup* (Docklands: The Slattery Media Group 2011), 54; Brasch, *Horses in Australia*, 139; Dr Turf, "A Field Of Talent But Mad Rush The One To Beat," *The Age* November 4, 2008, accessed July 8, 2016 http://www.theage.com.au/news/sport/horse-racing/a-field-of-talent-but-mad-rush-the-one-to-beat/2008/11/03/1225560738689.html; Tom Reilly, "Luck Of The Irish," *The Age* November 3, 2008, accessed June 7, 2011 http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2008/11/03/1225560744513.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1; Greg Muller, "Is The Melbourne Cup Still The People's Race?" *Bush Telegraph* November 4, 2008, accessed July 7, 2016 (archive only) http://www.abc.net.au/site-archive/rural/telegraph/content/2006/s2409759.htm; Les Carlyon, "A Cupful Of Memories And Snapshots, Pageantry And Fun," *The Age* November 2, 1987, 38.

[865] Reilly, "Luck Of The Irish."

[866] Only 23 three-year-olds have won the Melbourne Cup, with the last being Skipton in 1941, whereas horses aged four or five account for 89 winners, and those aged 6 or above account for 46 winners (to 2015).

horserace (distributing $7.3 million dollars in prizemoney in 2018)[867] precludes all but the wealthiest owners from entering.

Additionally, the economic barriers of racehorse ownership are echoed socially at Flemington Racecourse (the home of the Melbourne Cup) on race days. The rules of race clubs, including strict dress codes, maintain the traditions of the turf, which are far from egalitarian, and ensure that the Member's Enclosure retains its exclusivity.[868] For example, the 2017/18 VRC Member's Handbook states that gentlemen and boys over the age of 12 must wear "a suit of tailored slacks,… sports coat or blazer, plus tie or bow tie and dress shoes." Jackets may only be left off between 1 December and 31 March. Women and girls over the age of 12 are expected to "maintain a suitable standard in keeping with the dignity of the Members' Enclosure." Women are prohibited from wearing (among other things) shorts, untailored pants, garments that show midriff, and duffle coats. The VRC adopts a "strictly no denim" approach towards both genders, and also prohibits "torn or ripped clothing, even if considered 'designer' tears" for both men and women.[869] The rules also extend to comportment, with members being advised that they are not to use "offensive or discriminatory language, or indulg[e] in any kind of unseemly behaviour", though what comprises such behaviour remains unstated.[870]

Parallel to the way the VRC Member's Enclosure ensures the distinction between members and 'others' is maintained by rules pertaining to dress and behaviour, so the requirements of thoroughbred pedigree guarantee that no "brumby brought out of a mob for 30 shillings" will ever contest a Melbourne Cup, let alone win one. The mission of the Australian Stud Book[871] is "to ensure the integrity of thoroughbred breeding in Australia."[872] The breeding industry is strictly regulated, to the point where every broodmare, and every foal born in Australia, must undergo a DNA test to verify their parenting. DNA kits are sent to registered breeders, and only an authorised Australian Stud Book veterinarian may perform the hair extraction for the testing. [873] In addition to maintaining

[867] "Lexus Melbourne Cup Prizemoney Reaches A Record $7.3 Million," Flemington racecourse website June 1, 2018, accessed December 2, 2018 https://www.flemington.com.au/news/2018-06-01/lexus-melbourne-cup-prizemoney-reaches-a-record
[868] Peter Charlton, *Two Flies up a Wall*, 59.
[869] "Victoria Racing Club Membership & Racing Rewards Handbook 2017/18," accessed September 12, 2017, https://cdn.racing.com/-/media/vrc/pdf/2017-2018/membership/211748-vrc-members-handbook-web.pdf?la=en ,18-19.
[870] "Victoria Racing Club Membership & Racing Rewards Handbook 2017/18," 16.
[871] Since 2015 the Stud Book has been a division of the peak regulatory body for horse racing in Australia, Racing Australia Pty Ltd.
[872] Racing Australia Limited, "About The Australian Stud Book," Australian Stud Book website, accessed December 2, 2018 https://www.studbook.org.au/AboutTheASB.aspx
[873] Racing Australia Limited, "Rules And Services," Australian Stud Book website, accessed December 2, 2018 https://www.studbook.org.au/RulesAndServices.aspx

the genetic exclusivity of the thoroughbred, these industrialised processes are also a means of securing the racing and breeding industry, though they bear little resemblance to the romantic vision of racing that is conjured by its promotors.[874]

However, the point of this section is not to deconstruct the mythology of the Melbourne Cup, but to illustrate how the narrative of egalitarianism has been leveraged, particularly in a context where the horse is reconfigured as a protagonist, and how these discourses have contributed to the level of social buy-in that the Melbourne Cup enjoys. While it is true that attitudes towards the Cup have started to shift over the past four or five years,[875] the event still enjoys widespread support, and has done since its inception almost 160 years ago. What is most interesting about the Melbourne Cup is not that it has been so successfully marketed, but that, in attaching itself to an ideology associated with Australianness (in this case egalitarianism), it transcends the racing world, and has been accepted as part of the fabric of Australian society. This is evinced by the race's depiction in contexts outside the sporting arena, and it is here that Phar Lap—and the particular appeal of the underdog narrative—plays a critical role. Phar Lap won 37 races, including the Cox's Plate (twice), the AJC Derby, and the VRC Derby. Some racing aficionados (among them jockey Jim Pike) believed the 1931 Caulfield Futurity Stakes victory to be the horse's greatest win.[876] Yet these triumphs are today virtually unrecognised, and Phar Lap has now become almost synonymous with the Melbourne Cup. The VRC is able to capitalise on the significance of the underdog schematic narrative template by repeatedly citing Phar Lap, from the horse's mount being displayed at the grounds in 1980 to the naming of its junior member program, the Phar Lap Club—or indeed, in any context where the history of the Melbourne Cup is mentioned.[877] Conversely, any reference to Phar Lap inevitably also touches on the Melbourne Cup. For example, the Phar Lap display at the National Museum of Australia appears within an exhibit on Flemington Racecourse, the site where the

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[874] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *Global Horseracing Industry*, 60.
[875] At the time of researching the Flemington exhibit for the National Museum of Australia during the development of the *Landmarks* gallery (2009-2011), there was very little within the mainstream media that was critical of horse racing in general, and the Melbourne Cup in particular. The little I did find was disturbing enough that I suggested incorporating some of the negative aspects of horseracing into the exhibit to the senior curators, but to no avail. However, by the time the NMA's *Spirited* exhibition opened (2014-2015), the landscape had shifted sufficiently enough that the exhibition included an object from the Australian anti-horseracing lobby group the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses—see http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/spirited/stories_and_objects/objects/horsielicious
[876] Armstrong and Thompson, *Phar Lap*, 111.
[877] For examples, see Howell, *The Story of the Melbourne Cup*; "Historical Features," Flemington Racecourse website; and the VRC's involvement in "The Greatest Melbourne Cup Never Run," a digitally animated stunt to commemorate the 150th running of the Cup in 2010, sponsored by Boags, which Phar Lap inevitably won—https://www.theroar.com.au/2010/11/03/fix-was-in-for-other-melbourne-cup/

Melbourne Cup has been run annually since 1861. In this way, the significance of both Phar Lap and the Melbourne Cup are mutually reinforced.

The way that egalitarianism is deployed here illustrates Elder's argument that:

> One of the reasons why the egalitarian story works so effectively as a nationalistic story of a united nation is that what constitutes egalitarianism is ill-defined. Nebulous phrases, such as 'a fair go' are used to explain how Australia is organised. If these notions of egalitarianism are put up against a clearly expressed description of what equality entails … then the idea of Australia as an egalitarian nation is harder to sustain.[878]

Functioning in this way, Elder contends that narratives of egalitarianism work to mask difference.[879] Similarly, Jeanette Hoorn argues that the real scope of Australian egalitarianism is much narrower than the mythology allows, its beneficiaries being confined primarily to men of Anglo-Celtic descent.[880] In the context of the Melbourne Cup, the narratives of egalitarianism and a 'fair go', with their analogous figure the underdog, have been leveraged in support of the race. Nonetheless, an increasing number of social commentators are moving toward the view that the Melbourne Cup is a festival of animal cruelty,[881] rather than something Australians should be promoting, let alone celebrating, as a nation. Yet, in spite of these concerns (prompted by the death of four horses in three consecutive runnings of the Cup in the years 2013, 2014, and 2015, and a fifth horse in 2018), the self-described "race that stops the nation" continues to be promoted as an important national event, symbolic of Australianness.[882]

While remaining tangential to the primary thrust of this thesis, the Melbourne Cup serves as one example of the ways horses have been harnessed to dominant national identity narratives.

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[878] Elder, *Being Australian*, 60-61.
[879] Elder, *Being Australian*, 64.
[880] Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 256-7. See also Elder, *Blood on the Wattle*, 248.
[881] Melissa Welham, "The Race That Stops The Nation Also Killed This Horse Today," Mamamia November 6, 2013, accessed July 8, 2016 http://www.mamamia.com.au/melbourne-cup-count-animal-cruelty/; Sam de Brito, "The Cup – That'll Do Me," The Sydney Morning Herald (online) November 5, 2014, accessed November 5, 2014 http://www.smh.com.au/comment/the-cup--thatll-do-me-20141104-11h06i.html; Animals Australia, "Horse Racing," webpage accessed July 8, 2016 http://www.animalsaustralia.org/issues/horse_racing.php
[882] "Melbourne Cup," Australia.gov.au website, accessed July 8, 2016 http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/melbourne-cup The site was no longer available following the 2018 Melbourne Cup race, however the race continues to be promoted through exhibition content presented by both State and Federal government agencies, such as the National Museum of Australia and Museum Victoria.

Further, Phar Lap and the Melbourne Cup cannot be considered in isolation from each other, as each serves to reinforce the significance of the other.[883]

In the absence of the object

During the latter part of the twentieth century, Australia produced another equine star. Within Victoria, this horse was almost equivalent in fame to Phar Lap, and his story and subsequent afterlife serves as an instructive counter-point to Phar Lap. During the 1970s, one of the most popular members of Victoria's mounted police force was a big grey gelding called Gendarme. Gendarme and his human partner Sergeant Alex Tassell were a regular sight at occasions of both civil unrest, and social celebration. They worked the anti-apartheid and anti-Vietnam protests of the 1970s, as well as participating in a number of Moomba parades, and appearing in the Myer toy department.[884] For almost two decades, Tassell and Gendarme, who Tassell had trained as a drum horse for the police band, were Melbourne identities. The horse's popularity was huge, and he was said to have been "nearly as big as Mickey Mouse".[885] His fame was bolstered among the younger generation by a children's book series, with titles *Gendarme the Police Horse* and *Gendarme at Work* selling over 25,000 copies each.[886] The horse also received the Victoria Police Chief Commissioner's Award, was given the Key to the City of Melbourne, and, upon his retirement in 1980, was given a huge public farewell at Government House.

When Gendarme was euthanised due to a heart condition shortly after he retired, death was not seen as a barrier to his posterity. Instead, Gendarme would "[receive] the same honour as the great Australian race horse Phar Lap, and [be] stuffed."[887] Gendarme may be the only other horse besides Phar Lap to have his hide preserved and mounted entire, a true testament to his popularity and the esteem in which he was held at the time. The cost of mounting was partially funded by public subscription, which raised $5000 for the work. The remaining $3500 was paid for by the State

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[883] For examples, see the Phar Lap display at the National Museum of Australia, which appears within an exhibit on Flemington Racecourse; the Phar Lap mount in the Melbourne Museum also references his Cup victory. On the side of the VRC using Phar Lap to promote the Cup, see Howell, *The Story of the Melbourne Cup*; "Historical Features," Flemington Racecourse website; and the VRC's involvement in "The Greatest Melbourne Cup Never Run," a digitally animated stunt to commemorate the 150th running of the Cup in 2010, sponsored by Boags, which Phar Lap inevitably won— https://www.theroar.com.au/2010/11/03/fix-was-in-for-other-melbourne-cup/

[884] Michael Hast, "Sergeant Alex Tassell Is Melburnian Of The Year," *Melburnian* (no date), 11.

[885] Geoff Wilkinson, "Cop Who Rode Into History," *Herald Sun* December 24, 2008, accessed March 18, 2015 http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/cop-who-rode-into-history/story-e6frf7kx-1111118398490

[886] Wilkinson, "Cop Who Rode."

[887] Ian Brown, "Gendarme Stands Proud For Posterity," *Herald* June 11, 1981 (no page reference).

Government.[888] In June 1981, the great horse was once again able to greet the public, unveiled in a ceremony at Dandenong Town Hall. Sergeant Tassell himself was impressed at the way Gendarme had been captured through taxidermy: "The head is to a tee and they've done a really good job on the rest, even down to the bumps and scars he received over his long career".[889] Unfortunately, time was not kind to the mount, and at some point its deterioration meant that it had to be destroyed.[890] As those associated with Gendarme passed away, the horse's story, and his significance, were also lost. At the time of the newly-mounted horse's unveiling, the prevailing opinion was that Gendarme was so popular that he was bound "to be remembered for many years to come",[891] yet this has not been the case. I had not heard of Gendarme until I was contacted by Sergeant Terry Claven of the Victoria Police Museum, in response to the ERIC survey. The Gendarme example begs an inevitable question of the Phar Lap remains—if all Phar Lap's remains were to suddenly disappear from public view, how long would he remain in the public consciousness? While the museum institution is not the only promulgator of the Phar Lap mythology, the adage 'out of sight, out of mind' is particularly apt when comparing the afterlives of these two horses.

While the fame of Phar Lap was national, whereas Gendarme was a more local Victorian celebrity, considering the two horses in parallel nonetheless reveals something of the role that material culture and the museum plays in the dissemination of cultural mythologies. As Alberti points out, the "[afterlife] is limited, after all, to those animals whose remains survive."[892] While there are other factors relating to the Phar Lap narrative that have contributed to the horse's elevation into a symbol of Australian nationalism, the Phar Lap-Gendarme comparison does highlight the role of the physical object in ensuring the longevity of particular narratives.

The public nature of Phar Lap's remains, and their associated narrative, is critical to their having endured in the national imagination. To illustrate this, let us take a second comparative example, that of the racehorse Peter Pan. Peter Pan also raced in the 1930s, contesting and winning many of the same races that Phar Lap had won (including two Melbourne Cups), and has been described by racehorse biographer Jessica Owers as "Phar Lap's successor".[893] Peter Pan emerged into the racing spotlight just months after Phar Lap's death, and was regarded by many at the time as being an equally talented, if not better, horse than Phar Lap. Yet, in spite of the similarities

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[888] The work was done by Mr Brent Hall, who had established a home-based taxidermy business. Hall had also worked at the Museum of Victoria, in the Display and Preparators section.
[889] Brown, "Posterity."
[890] Claven, personal communication, March 5, 2015.
[891] "Beat The Drum Slowly," [no publication name] June 1981, p.18.
[892] Alberti, "Introduction," 11.
[893] Jessica Owers, *Peter Pan: the forgotten story of Phar Lap's successor* (North Sydney: Random House, 2011).

between the two champions, there were also significant differences. Peter Pan was bred by Rodney Rouse Dangar, scion of a well-established and wealthy colonial family. He was trained by one of the best trainers of the era, Frank McGrath. There can be no parallel here with the 'battler' status that is frequently attributed to Phar Lap. Owers, on the other hand, attributes Peter Pan's ellision from popular history to be because, "unlike Phar Lap, Peter Pan had raced until he expired, allowing defeat to soil his image."[894] She also argues that each era only has the capacity for one representative 'legend'.[895] There is another reason, however, for Peter Pan's relative obscurity, and that is the fate of his physical remains. Where Phar Lap's remains became public property, drawing thousands of people to them, Peter Pan was mourned in a more private fashion. He was buried facing the rising sun, in his favourite paddock at Baroona, the stud where he was bred.[896] However, his hooves, mane and tail were removed prior to burial and fashioned into mementoes, including a horse hoof inkwell and a horse hoof pincushion.[897] These commemorative remnants remain in the family, far from the public eye; where Peter Pan's death and 'afterlife' were private affairs, Phar Lap's passing and commemoration were highly public. The role that the museum institution has played in this is pivotal.[898]

The horse as object

In the museum context, the horse is a species that simultaneously functions as natural history, and material culture. Frequently, horse-derived material that is interpreted as culturally significant has been acquired—and remains accessioned—as natural history. For example, both Phar Lap's hide at Museum Victoria and his skeleton at Te Papa are part of the natural history collections of their respective institutions. This is reflective of the long history of many cultural institutions, which have had to adapt archaic classification systems to modern collecting practices. The sheer number of objects within such collections means that historical collection management models, established before social history was seen to have inherent value, cannot simply be updated to newer systems. The significance of the process of classification to the museum project has a legacy, whereby an object must fit within a single broad classification. In the case of much horse-derived material culture, this is inevitably 'natural history'. While the Phar Lap examples are reasonably straight-forward, there is another type of horse-derived object that defies easy classification. These are the

[894] Jessica Owers, "Peter Pan," accessed July 9, 2017 http://www.jessicaowers.com/page8/index.html
[895] Owers, "Peter Pan."
[896] Jessica Owers, personal communication, October 27, 2011.
[897] Ibid.
[898] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."

portmanteau commemorative objects. Here, this category of material is examined through the case study of a pair of candlesticks fashioned from the canon bones of the racehorse Quiz.

As touched on in the thesis already, the remains of racehorses are, more commonly than in any other equestrian discipline, re-created as cultural artefacts. This practice evolved during the Victorian era, when the art of *memento mori* reached its height, and continued into the inter-war years of the twentieth century.[899] Outside these artefacts, Richard Nash argues that the thoroughbred is itself a cultural creation.[900] Nash contends that, as a specifically and intentionally bred horse, the thoroughbred simultaneously functions as natural *and* artificial, a positioning that potentially deciphers this trend for the refashioning of racehorse remains; if, due to its breeding, the thoroughbred is already understood subconsciously as a cultural artefact, then the physical transformation of its body into a concrete artefact assumes something of an internal logic. In this way, the racehorse is refashioned into an object that both represents *and* commemorates itself. An example of objects that exist at this boundary between *representing* the horse and *being* the horse are P2006.69, a pair of candle-sticks that form part of the Museum of Old and New Art State Collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Gallery (TMAG) (See Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Candlesticks made from the cannon bones of Quiz. Image courtesy Tasmanian Museum and Gallery.

[899] Menzies, "Racecourse To Reliquary."
[900] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'," 246.

These candlesticks were acquired in 2006 by TMAG as part of a larger collection of Huon pine furniture.[901] In addition to the components made from turned Huon pine, the candlestick stems are formed using the cannon (or metacarpal) bones of a nineteenth-century racehorse. The underside of one of the candlesticks is inscribed in black ink with the text "Canon bones of the horse Quiz the Property of Mr W.H. Mence who was killed on the Brighton racecourse whilst running in the Town plate". The grammatical ambiguity of this somewhat confusing statement necessitates a brief account of the events that lead to Quiz's death.

The 1854 Hobart Town Plate was what is known in racing parlance as a weight-for-age race. This means that horses carry a set weight according to their age, the idea being that the older the horse, the stronger it is. The weight is accounted for by the jockey and riding gear, and, where this is insufficient, it is made up by additional weights. In the 1854 Hobart Town Plate, the assigned weights were seven stone 12 pounds (50kg) for three-year-olds, eight stone 12 pounds (56 kg) for four-year-olds, and so forth, up to horses aged six and over, who had to carry nine stone 10 pounds (61.6 kilos). The race was contested over a gruelling distance of four miles, almost six and a half kilometres.[902] Quiz, who was described as "aged",[903] carried the maximum weight penalty. There were only three contenders for the Town Plate in 1854, and the accident that led to Quiz's death was purportedly caused when the horse of one of the spectators, a Mr Waters, took off (with Waters still on board) and joined the field. The two impromptu competitors came into contact with Quiz, and, it was reported by both *The Courier* and the *Colonial Times*, Quiz was killed instantly.[904] This was disputed by William Mence, the stallion's owner and jockey. Mence wrote to *The Courier*, stating that, following the contact between Quiz and Waters' horse:

> I was thrown into the air with great violence from the buck of that noble animal [Quiz], who was caught by a gentleman on the ground. I led him from the fatal spot, injured and exhausted as I was, with the blood gushing through his nostrils; with difficulty he reached his stable, and fell down dead. The cause was the

[901] ABC Stateline Tasmania, "Huon Collection," broadcast August 25, 2006, transcript accessed April 5, 2016 http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/tas/content/2006/s1724539.htm

[902] To put this in context, the Melbourne Cup, today considered a distance race, is run over 3.2 kilometres, and while in theory there is no maximum penalty weight, no horse has been asked to carry more than 59 kilograms in at least 45 years. (Ray Thomas, "Dunaden Given Heaviest Weight In More Than 40 Years," *Daily Telegraph* October 22, 2012, accessed July 21, 2019 https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/dunaden-tasked-with-heaviest-weight-in-more-than-40-years/news-story/3c211f130a249ecd6a390f08785940d9?sv=5b8437317d63861a854fd862b1b182dc)

[903] "Brighton Races," *The Courier*, November 3, 1854, 2.

[904] "Brighton Races," *The Courier*; "Local Intelligence: Accident At The Races," *Colonial Times,* November 4, 1854, 3.

> bursting of a main artery, which may be more fully explained before a higher tribunal.[905]

Mence closes his account by stating that the horse's death represents a loss to him of over one thousand pounds. [906] Mence reiterates the monetary value of Quiz several times in his letter, and the candle sticks would seem to represent Quiz's ultimate commodification. They speak to the very literal objectification of the horse, the reduction of a sentient being from a state of aliveness to a household object.

Unlike the Phar Lap mount, whose construction was thoroughly documented and reported upon, there is no information pertaining to the specific processes by which Quiz went from racehorse to candlesticks. It is also unknown whether it was Mence himself who commissioned the work, however, background research indicates it was in keeping with his character,[907] and I believe that it was most likely carried out at his instruction. He was described in his obituary as "an enthusiast on racing matters",[908] and had at one time been Secretary of the Latrobe Turf Club. Almost three decades later he was still remembered as a notable owner, trainer, and rider of racehorses in Tasmania.[909] In recalling him, one of his contemporaries muses on whether Mence "protested against death at the finish. If not, it was one of the very few times he did not protest when beaten."[910]

While the hoof of a racehorse is most commonly found refashioned as an *object d' art*, TMAG curators have speculated that there was a particular motivation in the selection of Quiz's canon bones to become candlesticks. They argue that:

> Because the cannon bones bear a considerable part of the horse's weight while it is in motion, their proportions are important indicators of breeding quality. Both this fact and the size and straightness of the bones may have influenced the decision to commemorate the horse in this unusual way.[911]

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[905] "The Death Of 'Quiz'," *The Courier,* November 7, 1854, 2.
[906] "The Death Of 'Quiz'."
[907] William Henry Mence was transported to Van Diemen's Land under a life sentence in 1842, aged in his twenties. His ticket of leave was granted in 1851, and he married that same year. He remained in the colony until his death in 1892. His occupation on several official documents is listed as veterinary surgeon. He also held licenses for a number of public houses and had a passion for the turf.
[908] "Obituary. Mr W. H. Mence, senr.," *North Coast Standard*, April 30, 1892, 2.
[909] Coronach, "Some Reminiscences. Old Time Jockeys.," *Australasian*, July 19, 1924, 23.
[910] Coronach, "Some Reminiscences."
[911] "Pair Of Candlesticks," Tasmanian Museum and Gallery website, accessed February 25, 2015 http://static.tmag.tas.gov.au/decorativeart/objects/misc/P2006.69/index.html

There may be a similar rationale behind the creation of the horse hoof inkwells, pincushions or ashtrays prevalent among the horse racing community. When galloping, there is a split second where a horse places all its weight on one hoof, perfectly balancing half a tonne of horseflesh travelling at speeds of up to 70 kilometres an hour. The hoof is certainly of critical significance in racing.

While the cannon bone candlesticks are fascinating in and of themselves, the fact that they were acquired by TMAG not as social history, but as decorative arts objects that feature the Huon pine, is worth further examination. According to the object's Statement of Significance:

> The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery seeks to build a comprehensive representation of decorative arts made in Tasmania in the colonial period. This includes items made in Tasmania from 1803 to 1901. Many of these objects are similar to contemporaneous objects made in Britain, but are distinguished by an idiosyncratic inflection derived from the colonial context of their production. These cannon bone candlesticks are a highly idiosyncratic example of the turner's art.[912]

Samuel Alberti's object-centric approach, where artefacts can be understood as primary sources,[913] offers a useful model for interrogating such items. Alberti highlights some of the key questions to ask when constructing the biography of collection material:

> What are the key moments in the career of this thing? How has its status changed over the course of its life – what have been its significant 'ages'? What makes it different from other, similar objects? How has the political and social climate impacted on its trajectory?[914]

Alberti recognises that the acquisition of meaning (or significance) is not a process that culminates in the object's acquisition by a museum, after which it ceases; instead, this progression continues, and the museum context is integral to the ongoing life of the object on multiple levels— physically, intellectually and culturally.[915]

In the context of the candlesticks, which were collected by TMAG as part of the larger George Burrows collection of Huon pine furniture, the equine origins of the objects were of secondary

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[912] TMAG, "Pair Of Candlesticks."
[913] Alberti, "Objects," 560.
[914] Alberti, "Objects," 560.
[915] Alberti, "Objects," 561.

importance to their Huon pine content. However, in subsequent online interpretation of these objects, the symbolic value of the parts of the horse used (if not the role of the horse more broadly) is emphasized, and the commemorative function of the objects is highlighted. The Statement of Significance for the objects begins with an acknowledgement of their significance as decorative arts objects that were made in Tasmania during the colonial period, and they are described as "a highly idiosyncratic example of the turner's art".[916] However, the Statement of Significance then closes with the recognition of the integral role that the horse Quiz (though he is not named) played in their production, with the statement: "They were made to commemorate the loss of a prized race horse." The meaning of these objects is blurred between the living animal it once was, and the functional object (parts of) that animal became. This transformation renders visible the ways in which objects acquire new meanings during their museum lives. Acquired relatively recently, these candlesticks are beginning their museum trajectory. It remains to be seen what the future holds regarding their interpretation.

Museums and animal subjectivity: the *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story* exhibition

This chapter has thus far argued that the processes of the museum, geared as they are towards the creation of collection objects, inevitably leads to the stripping of animal subjectivity. This creates circumstances where, such as with Phar Lap, the horse can be exploited as a symbolic construct, rather than an animal with intrinsic value. However, this does not always have to be the case. The curators of the exhibition *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story*, held at the National Museum of Australia from September 11, 2014 until March 9, 2015, consciously attempted to reassert the subjectivity of the horse within the exhibition space. The challenges this approach met included constraints inherent to the museum process—the inability to incorporate living animals (or their by-products) into the necessarily sterile gallery environment, for example. The curatorial vision for the exhibition was also challenged by less visible mechanisms of the museum institution, such as debates about language.

The exhibition attempted to represent the essential horse-ness of the horse, as well as its historical and social importance to Australians.[917] Human embodiment was used as a cognitive entry-point, and it proved remarkably effective as an interpretive strategy.[918] Techniques included engaging the sensory capacities of visitors, such as at stations where the audience was invited to

[916] TMAG, "Pair Of Candlesticks."
[917] Martha Sear, personal communication, September 25, 2015.
[918] Isa Menzies, "Review: Spirited: Australia's Horse Story, National Museum Of Australia, Canberra," *Animal Studies Journal* 3 (2014): 41-47.

smell or touch items such as horse feed, saddlery, and manure. Elsewhere, visitors were asked to consider their own physiological processes—heart rate, digestion, sense of smell—in comparison to those of the horse. Several displays actively evoked the human scale in exhibiting particular objects, for example saddles and bridles mounted on horse-shaped and -sized sculptures. This subtle yet profound technique presented the objects in the manner they would appear to a human at ground level while in use (that is, on/with horses). This rendered the function (and therefore, arguably, the meaning) of the objects immediately visible. Beginning from the position of the 'known' is a commonly-employed strategy in constructivist learning environments such as the museum,[919] and in the context of *Spirited*, the emphasis on embodiment fostered an environment where visitors were cognitively prepared to consider the fundamental differences between horse and human. Rather than representing the horse as a projection of the human, an attempt was made to position it as a unique being. Asking the audience to consider their own subjectivity allowed the exhibition curators to re-connect the horse to *its* subjectivity.

A similar strategy was employed in curating the 2012-2013 "War Horse: Fact & Fiction" exhibition, held at the National Army Museum in London. This exhibition was inspired by the highly popular play *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo, and the Steven Spielberg movie of the same name that followed.[920] Alternative interpretive strategies utilised there included a sculpture of a horse stumbling in barbed wire, and a pair of binoculars that demonstrate the ways a horse sees. These were described by animal studies-focused historian Hilda Kean as "significant", and "sophisticated", and a recognition that (similarly to *Spirited*), "[t]he exhibition attempts throughout to privilege horses rather than to speak of the work of soldiers".[921] The fact that such interpretive strategies are gaining ground in the context of museum exhibitions is notable. That the horse has provoked two recent examples of such approaches is also remarkable.

As the overarching curatorial vision for the *Spirited* exhibition was to make the horse central to its own narrative, the exhibition was strongest when horses (as opposed to the humans associated with them) were centrally positioned. For example, both 'On the Farm' and 'Through the City' asked the audience to consider how accommodating the needs of horses physically shaped these spaces, such as 1880s Melbourne, when the city was home to some 20,000 horses. The idea of the horse-human bond was also addressed, most strikingly in the centrally-positioned 'Silent

[919] Kodi Jeffrey-Clay, "Constructivism In Museums: How Museums Create Meaningful Learning Environments," *The Journal of Museum Education* 23, no. 1 (1998): 3-7; George Hein, "Is Meaning Making Constructivism? Is Constructivism Meaning-Making?" *Exhibitionist* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 15-18.
[920] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s66.
[921] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s67.

Conversation', a life-sized sculpture by artist Harrie Fasher that depicted a horse and human in mutual contemplation. Nonetheless, anthropocentric narratives occasionally eclipsed the horse completely, particularly in the 'On the Station' and 'In the ring and on the field' exhibits, where the emphasis fell heavily on the human stories rather than the equines.[922] Regardless of this (and other criticisms I raise in the next section), the very fact that an animal-centric approach was attempted at all is commendable. The *Spirited* exhibition offers valuable insight into the difficulties of attempting to bring a non-human subjectivity into the museum space.

One of the significant issues that emerged for curators during the process of drafting the exhibition text was a lack of recognition that an animal could grammatically occupy a position as a subject.[923] This stance is not unique to the National Museum of Australia. Individual horses in the public arena, most frequently by the news media, are often referred to using the pronoun 'it',[924] rather than the appropriate gendered pronoun. As was touched on in the discussion defining agency in Chapter 3, this linguistic paucity is a reflection of the anthropocentricity of the English language, and its inability to embrace the non-human. For the curators of the *Spirited* exhibition, which aimed to return the animal to a central position (in the context of an exhibition where it was the primary subject), an adherence to such linguistic beliefs meant challenging this deeply-embedded cultural norm within the institution itself.

The problem with representation

These internal processes remain invisible to the visitor, yet they are integral to shaping the final product. Exhibitions are not a simple linear process of research, design, display. Instead they require numerous interactions between diverse project teams, and the navigation of personal and professional boundaries.[925] This means that ultimately, all large-scale exhibitions are a compromise of the exhibition's original vision.[926] Yet these behind-the-scenes machinations remain in the

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[922] Menzies, "Review: Spirited," 43.
[923] Sear, personal communication, September 25, 2015.
[924] For examples, see: ABC News, "Melbourne Cup: The Cliffsofmoher Euthanised;" Dan Colasimone, "Liam Neeson And Russell Crowe Claim Horses Recognise Them From Movie To Movie," ABC News October 10, 2018, accessed April 16, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-10/liam-neeson-claims-a-horse-recognised-him-on-set/10358804; Daniel Franklin, Simon Elvery, and Ben Spraggon, "Melbourne Cup Winner Prince Of Penzance: How It Compares To Past Champions," ABC News November 2, 2015, accessed April 16, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-02/melbourne-cup-2015-how-the-runners-compare-to-past-champions/6891238; Murphy, "Strapper's Words." See also Steve Wilstein, cited in Scott, "Racehorse As Protagonist," 53.
[925] Hansen, "There Is No 'I' In Team," 17-22.
[926] Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' And Boundary Objects: Amateurs And Professionals In Berkeley's Museum Of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39," *Social Studies of Science* 19, no. 3 (August 1989): 390.

background, and museum audiences are unaware of the sundry agendas that influence an exhibition. James B. Gardner, former Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs, National Museum of American History (Smithsonian Institution), advocates for making the curatorial process visible so that the public can more readily grasp that museums operate within political and social contexts, and that they are not objective historical authorities.[927] The assumption commonly held by the public that museums are repositories of truth,[928] rather than reflections of the societies in which they are embedded, is problematic.

The subjective nature of the exhibition project is illustrated by a more focused examination of *Spirited*. Close examination reveals several underlying assumptions—the norm of masculinity, the instrumental worth of the horse, and the implicit privileging of white settler culture—which, when taken together, illustrate the ongoing, uncritical acceptance of the equine significance narrative. Underpinning each exhibition module was the notion that the horse had played a significant role in the shaping of Australia, yet the displays were limited to those that were celebratory. The role of the horse in Australia's frontier conflict was not addressed at all, and the animal's status in parts of the country as a pest was glossed over.

The Australia for which the horse was deemed significant was implicitly one of white, Anglo-European origins, as it is this group who directly benefitted from the animal's introduction. While there was recognition of the role played by Aboriginal stock workers, it was primarily white, settler Anglo-Europeans who featured in the exhibition. However, the horse's impact has been far more widespread, and has had profound and ongoing ramifications for many communities positioned outside the white Anglo-European centre. The horse's role in displacing both the first peoples, and the flora and fauna of the continent, is far-reaching. The omission of the horse's negative impacts on this continent inevitably privileges a white Australian sensibility, and reinforces the horse discourse without challenging it.

While women were featured in *Spirited*, their inclusion did little to disrupt the Australian discourse of rugged masculinity that dominates equestrian identity narratives. Here, the stories of female stockriders Vere Moon and Leona Lavell, and the record-setting show-ring jumper of the 1920s, Emilie Roach, highlights the ways that women are defined in relation to traditional Australian masculinity.[929] That is, in their capacities as stockriders or high jumpers, these women were considered exceptional from their gender, while simultaneously acting in ways that were the norm

[927] Gardner, "Contested Terrain," 15.
[928] Per B. Rekdal, "Introduction: Why A Book On Museums And Truth?" in *Museums and Truth*, eds Annette B. Fromm, Viv Golding and Per B. Rekdahl (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), xix-xxv.
[929] Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*, 4.

for men. Though these women demonstrated certain traits that were traditionally viewed as masculine—such as bravery and a command over horses—their overall adherence to the hetero-normative roles of wife and mother rendered them unthreatening. Elsewhere, the pivotal role of Aboriginal horsemen and women in the pastoral industry was interpreted through objects such as nineteenth-century breastplates (a type of military gorget given by white settlers to particular Aboriginals singled out for distinction), and an Akubra hat belonging to Luritja stockman Bruce Breaden. Again, however, there was no moving beyond these celebratory inclusions, for example the issue of the 'drovers boy' (an Aboriginal woman masquerading as a young male assistant to the head stockman, while also covertly being his sexual partner—either willing or unwilling)[930] remained unaddressed.

The problematic nature of the celebratory exhibition extends far beyond *Spirited*, however. It is an issue faced by the majority of cultural institutions, and most of all national institutions, whose mandate of representation is a Herculean task. For national institutions, what is presented is viewed, as Gardner writes, as "an official statement, a national validation, and is always under scrutiny."[931] Museologist Tony Bennett cautions against focusing solely on the representational aspects of the museum. This, in Bennett's view, "is the central weakness of post-structuralist criticisms of the museum in their focus on the museum's claims to representational adequacy, and then, inevitably, finding those claims wanting."[932] What Bennett is arguing here is that representation is a single facet of the work of museums, and to focus solely on this is to ignore the overarching role of the museum as an apparatus, one of whose originating functions was social control.[933] Yet taken more broadly, the *Spirited* exhibition illustrates the ways the mechanisms of the museum function to reinforce the (anthropocentric, masculine, instrumental) status quo. As Tolia-Kelly et al remind us, "museums are constituted by, and themselves constitute, frameworks that use alterity as an organizing intellectual logic."[934] How can museums attempt to move beyond the problematic realm of representation, when the institutional apparatus remains geared towards reinforcing those very cultural norms? There are no easy answers to such questions, but asking them remains important.

[930] There is little historical evidence remaining of this practice, however the phenomena was popularised by a song by Australian country music singer Ted Egan, who later published a children's book on the subject. See Ted Egan and Robert Ingpen, *The Drover's Boy* (Port Melbourne: Lothian Books, 1988).
[931] Gardner, "Contested Terrain," 15.
[932] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 45.
[933] Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum.*
[934] Tolia-Kelly et al, "Introduction," 2.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the role of museums in promulgating the Australian horse discourse, through the institutional programs of exhibitions, research, and collecting. Here I constructed an intellectual framework within which to position the case studies and reveal the specificity of the museum's representational function. As an institution, the museum in fact has limited scope for the stories it can tell, being primarily geared towards the collection, preservation and exhibition of objects. These processes are all governed by strict protocols. Irrespective of the remit of individual museums, objects are by their very definition no longer either sentient, or subjects. This places considerations of agency and subjectivity, when dealing with animal-derived material, outside the scope of the museum's core business, and contributes to the overall objectification of the horse as an animal.

Given the difficulty that the curators of *Spirited* met in their attempts to reintegrate the animal with its subjectivity, it seems that the processes of the museum, including the practice of exhibition and interpretation, are unable to fully encompass the terrain covered by the Sentient/Subject quadrant of the framework outlined earlier. In addition to this, the emphasis on narrative within social history museums means that the horse-as-animal must inevitably give way to the human-centred stories being told about that animal. As such, museums play an integral role in objectifying the horse, both in a literal and a metaphorical fashion. The museum's struggle to conceptualise the horse (or, more broadly, any animal) within a framework that encompasses their subjective status, taken in conjunction with the number of horse-derived objects—a commemorative form that sees the horse turned into an artefactual representation of itself—found in collections across Australia, suggests that the museum institution does play a role in the dissemination of a broadly instrumental view of the horse. This supports an understanding of the horse, not as an agent or subject in its own right, but a knowable object, upon which human aspirations can be projected. Here, we are reminded of LaCapra's observation regarding the in-roads made by post-modernism, which have increasingly given representative voice to women and non-European/colonised peoples, while leaving animals as the last bastion of otherness.[935] As Tolia-Kelly *et al* write on the problematics of alterity within museum representation, "[t]here is no seeing-with or *being-with* the 'Other' as a possibility; indeed, the Other is not felt, known or understood beyond consideration as a material artefact".[936] Though speaking here about the representation of human cultures, their words are just as relevant to the context of animal subjectivity.

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[935] LaCapra, *History and its Limits*, 152.
[936] Tolia-Kelly *et al*, "Introduction," 3 (authors' italics).

That museums are sites where meaning is made, communicated, and reproduced, in socially structured ways, is irrefutable.[937] The equine significance narrative is disseminated through the museum apparatus in the same ways it is reproduced across a diversity of media, whether the "banal nationalism" sanctioned by the state, such as philately and currency,[938] or the films, books, poetry and artworks that comprise popular culture. Phar Lap serves as an apt illustration of this. In the more than 80 years since his death, he has featured in songs,[939] artworks,[940] a film,[941] and countless books. In 2019, PlayStation released a video game in his honour.[942] In terms of his official presence (that is, in government-sanctioned representations) Phar Lap has featured on a 50-cent stamp (1978), a 60-cent stamp (2010), and a commemorative $5 coin (2000). Further to this, he is also actively collected and interpreted by the National Museum of Australia, Museum Victoria, and the National Film and Sound Archive. Here we see that Phar Lap, and the underdog narrative that he is most frequently associated with, and for which he has become something of a shorthand for, has permeated all aspects of Australian culture, and now, with the re-articulation of the Phar Lap skeleton at Te Papa, extends its influence to New Zealand.

That Phar Lap continues to hold the nation's imagination as a beloved symbol of Australian national identity speaks to the potency and affective power of the narratives with which he is associated. Yet the uncritical acceptance of these narratives is problematic, as they are underpinned by—and therefore perpetuate—discourses of racism, masculinity, and false notions of egalitarianism. As has been argued here, Phar Lap was not a battler. His pedigree was such that he was entitled to race alongside other purebred thoroughbreds, and his price, while not record-breaking, was still too prohibitive for many to consider. He was a popular figure of the day, though, as argued by Eddie Butler-Bowdon, this is attributable in no small part to the emerging advances in media technology, which ensured his widespread visibility.[943] Regardless, the continued

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[937] Ross, "Interpreting The New Museology," 84.
[938] Billing, *Banal Nationalism*.
[939] Jack Lumsdaine, "Phar Lap—Farewell To You!" (1932), National Film and Sound Archive website, accessed January 20, 2019 https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/phar-lap-farewell-you-jack-lumsdaine; Kevin Shegog, "Phar Lap (The Red Terror)" (1965), Discogs website, accessed January 23, 2019 https://www.discogs.com/Kevin-Shegog-With-The-Hawking-Brothers-Phar-Lap-The-Red-Terror-Johnny-Was-A-Friend-Of-Mine/release/4101811
[940] Joseph Fleury, "Phar Lap Before The Chariot Of The Sun" (1932), print donated to Museum Victoria, accessed January 23, 2019 https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/827225; Daryl Lindsay, "Phar Lap" (1932), Museum Victoria, accessed January 23, 2019 https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/271682; Jimmy Pike, "My Horse Phar Lap" (1990s), Museum Victoria, accessed January 23, 2019 https://museumsvictoria.com.au/pharlap/museum/jimmypike.asp; Thake, "Gallery Director."
[941] Wincer, *Phar Lap*.
[942] PlayStation, "Phar Lap—Horse Racing Challenge," PlayStation Store, accessed May 31, 2019 https://store.playstation.com/en-au/product/EP4116-CUSA09265_00-MCC2000000000000
[943] Butler-Bowdon, "The Media Star," 169-77.

dissemination of these stories is less problematic than their uncritical acceptance, particularly in the museum context. As Elder reminds us, narratives of egalitarianism often serve to mask difference, and the Phar Lap narrative is no exception. Looking beyond its feel-good aspects as a classic underdog story, we find unaddressed elements of racism and anti-Semitism in the treatment of Davis, in addition to the perpetuation of the masculine norm, and associated discourses of toughness and dominance. Also revealed are the ways the narrative has been harnessed to the Melbourne Cup in particular, as a tool to legitimise what is, in fact, an ethically dubious industry.[944]

The museum institution is not separate to the world; instead, the preoccupations and concerns of broader society can be seen reflected in the museum context. This is illustrated by the example of horse-derived material being donated to the museum, creating a circular cycle of significance. That is, *because* museums are seen as storehouses of significant cultural material, the public *expectation* is that horses, as animals deemed socially significant, will be part of those collections; and will thereby donate such material to those institutions. While the museum is not the only means through which the horse discourse is perpetuated, it is unique in the ways it deploys material culture to demonstrate significance. Here we see the literal objectification of the horse, reinforcing the cultural understandings of the horse as a utilitarian animal that have been raised within this thesis. While emphasising the horse's instrumentality, the museum also continues to perpetuate the horse discourse, utilising it for the expression of positive nationalist stories, including the underdog schematic narrative template. Meanwhile, its significant role in the problematic aspects of Australia's colonisation, discussed in the previous chapters, remains unacknowledged. This significant elision in the public record is indicative of the extent to which the horse-as-tool-of-colonisation narrative remains invisible.

[944] See for example McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry*; Winter and Frew, "Thoroughbred Racing," 452-465; Winter, "Loving Thoroughbreds To Death," 578-593.

Chapter 6: Brumbies: heritage, identity, and anxieties of belonging

In this chapter, I explore the ways that the horse is constructed as an animal integral to Australia's heritage, using the brumby as a case study. Brumbies carry great power in the Australian cultural imagination, and their proponents repeatedly invoke the heritage of these horses as justification for their ongoing presence in the Australian landscape—including some of this continent's most sensitive eco-systems. Historian Raphael Samuel has noted that implicit within the term 'heritage' is the notion of something under threat,[945] and this reflects the way constructions of heritage are frequently (though not always) deployed, instigated as something of a rallying cry. Samuel further notes the overtones of religious fervour in approaches to heritage, "[i]f not in contemporary uses of the term, then in some of the rhetorics associated with it."[946] The brumby debate perfectly encapsulates the ways that these underlying elements of the heritage discourse have been utilised to reposition the brumby: as heritage under threat, and an icon (here consciously drawing on the religious connotations of this word) worth saving. While brumby advocates also ally their arguments with claims of historical significance, these claims are more contentious than popular appeals to heritage and identity, as will be discussed. This reframing of a feral animal as cultural heritage offers an opportunity to consider the brumby—one of the most popular figures in the cultural imagination[947]—within the context of heritage, and to engage with how such narratives have been constructed.

As cultural heritage scholar Laurajane Smith has argued, heritage is not simply about the past. It refers to a process of meaning-making and engagement that is manufactured and performed in the present.[948] Smith argues that all heritage is in fact intangible, for heritage is not the site or the building, but the meanings we ascribe to them, and the way these meanings are put to use.[949] This distinction—between the 'thing' and the meanings that are culturally ascribed to it—serves to highlight the cultural assumptions inherent within the discourse of heritage. That is, based on a Western paradigmatic framework, a particular type of materiality, which we have been culturally programmed to recognise as heritage, is privileged.[950] Further, Smith argues that "heritage may also

[945] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory,* 229. See also Chris Johnston, *What is Social Significance? A Discussion Paper* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992), 4.
[946] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 230.
[947] Melville et al, *National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment*.
[948] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*; Smith, "Registers Of Engagement," 125-131.
[949] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 3.
[950] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 3.

be understood as a discourse concerned with the negotiation and regulation of social meanings and practices associated with the creation and recreation of 'identity'."[951] As this chapter elucidates, it is in this context that the brumby has been framed as heritage, where the heritage that is ascribed to the brumby functions to reinforce a particular view of Australian identity—one that is white, rural, and masculine.

While heritage is part of a cultural discourse, it also has more formal instruments of management. In June 2018, the NSW Parliament passed The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Bill, ostensibly granting the feral brumbies of the Snowy Mountains heritage status. Though the Aboriginal Heritage Act of Victoria was amended in 2016 to incorporate particular elements of Aboriginal history such as stories, songs, and dance,[952] there is currently no other legislation regarding intangible heritage (that is, heritage not associated with buildings or objects, but rather comes under the classification of 'tradition') in Australia.[953] The NSW Heritage Act (1977) refers only to "a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct",[954] and it remains to be seen how the heritage values of the brumbies will be realised within the strictures of existing legislation. According to correspondence from the NSW Department of Environment and Heritage, the horses will be considered an attribute of the Kosciuszko landscape, rather than having stand-alone significance.[955] Yet, when those horses are damaging the environment they are considered an attribute of, and the proposed Heritage Plan of Management is to take precedence over the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974),[956] the inherent difficulties of managing the competing priorities of natural and cultural heritage becomes apparent. The passing of the Brumby Bill (as it has become known)[957] has been

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[951] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 5.
[952] Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, "Aboriginal Heritage Act Amended To Protect Intangible Heritage," Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission website, July 20, 2016, accessed December 23, 2018 https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/home/news-and-events/commission-news/item/1431-aboriginal-heritage-act-amended-to-protect-intangible-heritage
[953] In spite of its ostensible popularity, there is no dedicated site to recognise the role of Australia's folklore, to which the brumby and its attendant aspects arguably belongs. A 1986 Committee of Inquiry into Folklife in Australia recommended (among other things) the establishment of an Australian Folklife Centre, which never eventuated (see Emily Gallagher, "What The Folk? Whatever Happened To Australia's National Folklife Centre?" The Conversation, December 20, 2018, accessed January 27, 2019 http://theconversation.com/what-the-folk-whatever-happened-to-australias-national-folklife-centre-108678)
[954] New South Wales Government, "Heritage Act 1977 No 136," NSW legislation webpage, accessed January 20, 2019 https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1977/136/full
[955] Donna Sampey, NSW Department of Environment and Heritage, email dated May 21, 2019.
[956] New South Wales Government, "Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Bill 2018: Explanatory Note," accessed June 12, 2019 https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bill/files/3518/XN%20Kosciuszko%20Wild%20Horse%20Heritage%20Bill.pdf.
[957] See for example Don Driscoll, Euan Ritchie, Tim Doherty, "Passing The Brumby Bill Is A Backward Step For Environmental Protection In Australia," *The Conversation*, June 7, 2018, accessed January 27, 2019 https://theconversation.com/passing-the-brumby-bill-is-a-backward-step-for-environmental-protection-in-australia-97920; Australian Associated Press, "Brumby Bill: Labor Wants Investigation Into Deputy Premier's

met with considerable opposition, and has yet to reach a definitive conclusion.[958] While these issues will develop over the coming months, they lie outside the scope of this thesis, which is focused on the ways that heritage has been invoked, and by who it has been deployed, in the context of the brumby debates.

Here, in the final chapter of this thesis, I argue that the horse, notably the brumby, functions as an avatar of belonging for a particular group of Australians, who are typically white and of Anglo-European descent. While only a relatively small number of individuals personally identify brumbies as part of their heritage, through the repeated invocations of heritage,[959] this emotive issue has garnered wide-spread support across much of the Australian community. Drawing on the work of Karen Welberry, who highlights Australia's uncritical attachment to the brumby narrative, it is my contention that the impassioned 'brumby debate' is symptomatic of the role of the brumby—and the horse more broadly—in mediating what Welberry describes as an anxiety of belonging among Australians.[960]

The brumby debates

In 2000, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) carried out an aerial cull (shooting of horses by trained marksmen from a helicopter) of around 600 feral horses from the Guy Fawkes River National Park, which is located in the New England region of NSW. The cull ignited community outrage that eventually spread across the globe,[961] and it has continued to influence public debate about brumby management.[962] The Australian arm of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) launched a legal campaign against the NPWS amid allegations of animal cruelty.[963] Though all charges were eventually dropped, the highly politicised nature of the debate

Alleged Link To Donor," *The Guardian*, June 5, 2018, accessed January 27, 2019 https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jun/05/brumby-bill-labor-wants-investigation-into-deputy-premiers-alleged-link-to-donor.

[958] In July 2019, there was a Federal Court injunction and case brought against Parks Victoria (the authority tasked with managing Victoria's National Parks) by the Australian Brumby Alliance, in relation to implementation of the former's Feral Horse Strategic Management Plan. A decision can be expected in the weeks after this thesis is submitted.

[959] For example, see: Susan Chenery, "The Brumbies Fight For Survival," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, January 16, 2015, accessed December 23, 2018 https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/the-brumbies-fight-for-survival-20141030-11eix8.html; Beverly Hadgraft, "The Fight To Save Snowy's Brumbies," *Australian Women's Weekly* July 2016, 31.

[960] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 23-32.

[961] Rosalie Chapple, "The Politics Of Feral Horse Management In Guy Fawkes River National Park, NSW," *Australian Zoologist* 33, no. 2 (2005): 234.

[962] Dale Graeme Nimmo and Kelly K. Miller, "Ecological And Human Dimensions Of Management Of Feral Horses In Australia: A Review," *Wildlife Research* 34 (2007): 413.

[963] Chapple, "Politics Of Feral Horse Management," 237.

became apparent when the then-Minister for the Environment of NSW, Bob Debus, issued an immediate ban on the aerial culling of horses in NSW, followed by the instigation of an independent inquiry, and the commissioning a heritage assessment of the Guy Fawkes River horses.[964]

The 'brumby debate' loosely refers to the ongoing dispute between conservationists and brumby advocates regarding the presence of feral horses (colloquially known as 'brumbies') in Australia's national parks. Within this broader discussion, a number of specific issues are further disputed. These include whether there is a need for population control at all; which management strategies are acceptable (including the advocacy of or opposition to methods such as the passive trapping of horses, ground shooting, aerial culling, fencing, and fertility control); and the veracity of scientific evidence demonstrating the environmental consequences feral horses represent. The debate encompasses a range of positions. Opponents of culling range from those who position the brumby as an iconic Australian animal,[965] to animal rights advocates who feel that the culling of brumbies is just as reprehensible as the culling of other non-native species such as foxes and rabbits.[966] On the other side of the debate are those who are opposed to the presence of these feral horses in National Parks for reasons of environmental conservation. The effects on Australia's ecosystems, which evolved without the presence of hooved mammals, are well-documented, and include compacting soil, muddying waterways, introducing weeds, and affecting native animal populations.[967] Australia has the largest feral horse population in the world, which has been estimated at 400,000 in 1993,[968] and up to 1 million in 2016.[969] Within this, the numbers of discrete populations is contested,[970] particularly those of the Kosciusko region, which in 2014 were estimated by the NPWS to be around 6,000 horses.[971]

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[964] NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, *Guy Fawkes River National Park: Horse Management Plan* (Sydney South: Department of Environment and Conservation NSW), 2006: i.

[965] NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, "Point Of View: Alexandra Brown On Rehoming The Wild Horses," accessed October 29, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnDgzZzza6I

[966] Madison Young, "Protect The Snowies: Videos" web page, accessed October 15, 2015 https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectsnowies/videos/1339

[967] Don A. Driscoll et al, "Impacts Of Feral Horses In The Australian Alps And Evidence-Based Solutions," *Ecological Management & Restoration* 20, no. 1 (January 2019):63-72; Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 409; Rob Gibbs, Interview.

[968] Alison Swain, Invasive Species Council, email August 26, 2019.

[969] Burdon, "Where The Wild Horses Are," 76.

[970] See for example John Ellicott, "Brumby Numbers 'Wildly Exaggerated', Says Heritage Group," The Land, July 25, 2017, accessed July 13, 2019 https://www.theland.com.au/story/4811066/brumby-hoax-protection-group-says-park-numbers-grossly-inflated/

[971] NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, "Explore The History Of Kosciusko National Park," accessed October 29, 2015 http://protectsnowies.environment.nsw.gov.au/

Also contested are the impacts themselves. Many brumby advocates either deny that the horses cause environmental damage,[972] or claim that any documented degradation is the work of feral pigs or other introduced animals.[973] Scientific evidence is disputed, and many advocates remain unconvinced of the need to manage feral horse populations at all.[974] The issue of brumbies as pests transcends ecological terrain, and enters the realm of culture[975] and identity,[976] which the management of other feral species does not.[977] Anthropologist Nicholas Smith has observed that brumbies are immune to the sort of loathing directed, for example, towards feral cats in Australia, and are a rare exception from eco-nationalist discourses.[978]

While the brumby as an icon of Australia, running wild across the figurative plains of the national imagination, is frequently conjured in these debates, the animal physicality of the brumby is largely omitted. Though the destructive agency of feral horses is constantly emphasised by those opposed to its presence in national parks, more practical considerations of the fleshy implications of lethal management strategies (such as what to do with all those bodies) are usually absent from discussions. Conversely, for those who actively frame the brumby as heritage, the intrinsic animal is subordinate to an entirely cultural and anthropomorphised construction, characterised by the universal depiction of these animals as healthy, beautiful, and free. This imagery denies the presence of sick, starving, and ageing horses. The only exceptions to this are images of bloated and rotting horse corpses, used to incite public opinion against culling. While outside the scope of my thesis, a wholly animal studies-focused consideration of the brumby debate would doubtless reveal some valuable insights.

The 2000 Guy Fawkes River National Park cull is frequently referred to in the ongoing discussion around feral horse management, both publicly in the media[979] and within stakeholder

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[972] See for example Peter Cochran, quoted in Blake Foden, "Debate Over Kosciuszko National Park Brumby Cull As Bitter As Ever," May 31, 2018, accessed July 13, 2019 https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/debate-over-kosciuszko-national-park-brumby-cull-as-bitter-as-ever-20180524-p4zh8o.html
[973] Isa Menzies, "A Great Hue And Cry," Horses for Discourses blog post, July 23, 2014 https://horsesfordiscourses.wordpress.com/2014/07/23/a-great-hue-and-cry/
[974] Chenery, "The Brumbies Fight For Survival."
[975] Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 413.
[976] Leisa Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos," NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, accessed October 15, 2015 https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectsnowies/videos/1338; "Point Of View: Alexandra Brown."
[977] As an operational plan under the overarching Kosciuszko Plan of Management, the Wild Horse Management Plan legally does not require the NPWS to make it available for public comment, however due to the highly topical and emotive nature of this Plan, it is. This is not the case for any of the other pest species management plans currently in place at Kosciuszko.
[978] Smith, "The Howl And The Pussy," 294.
[979] For a small sample: Debbie Schipp, "Brumby Lovers Unite Against Plan To Shoot Snowy Mountains' Wild Horses," News.com.au May 12, 2016, accessed October 7, 2017 http://www.news.com.au/national/brumby-

discussions.[980] It was critical to the coalescing of the brumby issue in eastern Australia, though the outcry and subsequent mobilisation of popular sentiment that followed "was a predictable sequence of events, so congruent with past experiences that it could have been foreseen from past literature alone",[981] according to Dale Nimmo and Kelly Miller. They argue that it is the interweaving of ethical, political and cultural constraints that makes this issue so contentious, and immune to "appeal[s] to institutionalised ecological knowledge".[982] While such 'soft' approaches may be difficult for the scientific community to engage with, the affective power of the horse, in this context specifically the brumby, cannot be overlooked. The notion of brumbies having some heritage significance was first raised in relation to the Guy Fawkes River horses, and the subsequent "confirmation of local heritage significance despite there being no genetic basis for it […] has possibly opened up a new 'can of worms'",[983] according to a 2005 review of this case by Rosalie Chapple. Here we see the ways in which affect is frequently bound up in constructs of heritage,[984] with the emotional response towards the brumby driving claims of heritage significance, which are themselves tied to discourses of identity. In deconstructing these discourses, the brumby debate can be effectively contextualised within the frameworks of what Laurajane Smith has termed the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD),[985] discussed below.

Heritage debates and the AHD

The debate around brumbies in Australia's national parks can be articulated using any one of several different intellectual frameworks. For Rob Gibbs, NPWS Ranger and former Senior Project Officer of the Kosciusko National Park Wild Horse Management Plan Review, the issue is akin to Horst Rittel's "wicked problem" paradigm. [986] Here, a problem is effectively unresolvable due to shifting parameters, lack of consensus, and circumstances where one issue may be resolved only for another to be uncovered in its wake. Historian Simon Cubit has likened the debate to "tournaments of value, in which one vision competes against another for acceptance by decision makers, [who] invariably

lovers-unite-against-plan-to-shoot-snowy-mountains-wild-horses/news-story/e395bf35b832e84af1ac12b65baa95f1; Chenery, "The Brumbies' Fight For Survival; Hadgraft, "The Fight To Save Snowy's Brumbies," 32; Burdon, "Wild Horses," 83;

[980] Gibbs, interview.

[981] Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 413.

[982] Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 413.

[983] Chapple, "Politics Of Feral Horse Management," 240.

[984] Smith, Wetherell and Campbell, *Emotion, Affective Practices, and The Past in the Present*; Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, and Watson, *Heritage, Affect and Emotion*; Smith, "Visitor Emotion, Affect And Registers Of Engagement," 125-131; Smith and Campbell, "The Elephant In The Room,", 443-460.

[985] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.

[986] Gibbs, interview.

seek political expression."[987] These constructions are indeed applicable to the brumby debate. However, the framing of the brumby as heritage reveals the underlying discourses of identity and belonging, and thus the framework of the AHD is a suitable one for analysis.

Framing the brumby within the discourse of heritage grants it a legitimacy that is difficult to challenge. As Laurajane Smith argues, "[t]he discourses through which we frame certain concepts, issues or debates have an affect in so far as they constitute, construct, mediate and regulate understanding and debate."[988] Smith continues:

> At one level heritage is about the promotion of a consensus version of history by state-sanctioned cultural institutions and elites to regulate cultural and social tensions in the present. On the other hand, heritage may also be a resource that is used to challenge and redefine received values and identities by a range of subaltern groups.[989]

Where does the brumby fit within this schema? The brumby's status as a heritage icon exists outside the legislative frameworks that technically define heritage in Australia, yet the narratives and identities it reinforces remain those of the dominant cultural hegemony. While it remains to be seen how the brumby, as an animal, will be integrated into the NSW Heritage Act (1977), it nonetheless fits within Smith's articulation of an authorised heritage discourse. Smith positions the AHD within the dominant Western view of heritage, which "works to naturalise a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage."[990] It is this 'work' that the brumby heritage discourse serves. Here, incorporating the brumby into the heritage discourse of Australia functions to bolster existing narratives of belonging and identity, particularly among settler Australians. Examples of these narratives, and the role of the brumby (or horse) within them, will be drawn on later in this chapter. However, I will first briefly address the broad issue of the contentions between natural and cultural heritage, as these constructions are critical to the way the brumby discourse is both framed and understood.

Natural versus cultural heritage

In the context of the brumby debate, the environmental concerns of those opposed to brumbies in National Parks are set against the claim that horses, particularly brumbies, embody significant

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[987] Simon Cubit, "Tournaments Of Value: Horses, Wilderness, And The Tasmanian Central Plateau," *Environmental History* 6, no. 1 (July 2001): 398.
[988] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 4.
[989] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 4.
[990] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 4.

cultural heritage values for Australia. While at its core the debate has been manufactured to be one of natural versus cultural heritage, the inherent complexities of this issue mean it should not be so easily distilled into an essentialist argument between nature and culture. For this reason, it is worth making a brief examination of the discourses that underpin constructions of both 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage.

Ideas about the natural and the cultural cannot be considered in isolation from each other. In the first instance, as Cubit and others argue, nature is a cultural construct.[991] This renders the environmental values ascribed to National Parks as, if not negated, then at least problematic in any 'nature vs culture' framing. While the validation of purportedly natural landscapes is enshrined through processes such as UNESCO World Heritage listing, such landscapes are themselves constituted within cultural frameworks. [992] Laurajane Smith draws our attention to the questionable use of the word "natural", in particular when describing the Australian landscape. She points out that landscapes here perceived and interpreted as being "natural" are in fact the result of between 40,000-60,000 years of active management by Aboriginal people.[993]

On the other hand, if nature is a cultural construct, then heritage is certainly so. If we look at the dichotomy of natural and cultural heritage, we find that in many ways it is an artificially constructed one. As scholar of human geography David Lowenthal argues, the two share many similarities in their treatment, and are frequently managed by the same instruments and institutions, for example the World Heritage Convention.[994] In light of this, we might consider that, when placed in opposition, the culturally constructed nature of each of these concepts effectively negates them both. Nonetheless, they continue to be regarded as antithetical points on a scale, particularly within the issues under discussion in this thesis. For example, Ward's construction of the 'typical Australian' positions the natural in opposition to the cultural,[995] while the brumby debates are also predicated upon an assumption of a difference between these two constructs. It therefore becomes necessary to here adopt this position, in order to effectively examine the central arguments at work.

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[991] David Lowenthal, "Nature And Cultural Heritage," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11, no. 1 (2005): 81-92; Cubit, "Tournaments Of Value", 395; Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 166-67; Melville et al, *National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment*, 103-4.
[992] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 166-67.
[993] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 168. See also Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2012); Marcia Langton and Zane Ma Rhea, "Traditional Indigenous Biodiversity-Related Knowledge," *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 36, no. 2 (2005): 45-69; Deborah Bird-Rose, "Exploring An Aboriginal Land Ethic," *Meanjin* 47, no. 3 (Spring 1988): 378-387.
[994] Lowenthal, "Nature And Cultural Heritage," 82.
[995] Schaffer, *Women and the Bush*, 21.

To begin, the use of the term 'heritage' here is problematic, as it is loosely defined and functions in different ways. Among academics and heritage professionals, it is generally understood to refer to either built or other material culture (tangible,) or intangible heritage. These fields are clearly defined, and are managed in accordance with relevant international documents, for example those set down by both UNESCO and ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites), or otherwise governed by legislation. Outside the professional context, the term 'heritage' is defined somewhat more loosely. Visitor research by Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell has revealed differing interpretations of the word according to nationality.[996] For example, in the United States the word was most strongly associated with family and identity, while in the United Kingdom it was principally identified with preservation. Tellingly, for Australians, the term 'heritage' is most commonly associated with identity.[997] This offers an important insight into the affective power of the brumby when it is constructed as 'heritage' in Australia.

In the context of this chapter, the term 'heritage' is used and understood in accordance with the definition offered by William Logan and Laurajane Smith:

> a social and political construct encompassing all those places, artefacts and cultural expressions inherited from the past which, because they are seen to reflect and validate our identity as nations, communities, families and even individuals, are worthy of some form of respect and protection.[998]

This definition moves beyond formal or legislative understandings, to encompass a broad spectrum of what is popularly conceived of as 'heritage'. Further, it acknowledges the problematic issue inherent within such understandings—the notion that all such heritage is worthy of protection. It is not sufficient in the current context to simply state that the brumby cannot be considered heritage in accordance with current legislative or professional descriptions. In drafting the 2016 Wild Horse Management Plan (subsequently overridden by the Wild Horse Heritage Act of 2018), the NPWS commissioned a heritage study of the Kosciuszko brumbies,[999] effectively demonstrating that, where something is considered heritage by enough of the community, it must be treated as such,

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[996] Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell, "The Tautology Of 'Intangible Values' And The Misrecognition Of Intangible Cultural Heritage," Heritage & Society 10, no. 1 (2017): 37.
[997] Smith and Campbell, "Tautology Of 'Intangible Values'," 37-38.
[998] William S. Logan and Laurajane Smith, "Foreword," in *Intangible Heritage*, eds Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), xii.
[999] NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, "Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Management Plan Review Update For Stakeholders," September 3, 2015.

regardless of professional interpretations.[1000] Formal definitions become meaningless in the face of the identity-validating work that heritage is often invoked to serve.

Considered within the context of the above definition, the brumby can in fact be understood as heritage. However, what is worth further exploration is how a feral animal has come to occupy such significance in a nation that more often devalues the non-native.[1001] This can be seen in Australia's strict quarantine and bio-security measures. It is here we must consider the political dimensions, which are simultaneously implicit and invisible, within the framing of the brumby as heritage. These centre upon the legitimisation of particular constructions of the past, which are themselves either reinforced (or marginalised), by approved narratives of identity. Competing discourses wrangle for authority, though the politics of identity are largely invisible, naturalised within the AHD.[1002] Narratives that "speak to white Australian mythologies that are so intrinsic to Australian identities that they 'just are' and thus are not subject to reflection"[1003]—as, for example, the discourse around the brumby—must be closely scrutinised in order to reveal their underlying political agendas. In the next section, I examine several of the key heritage narratives associated with the *horse*, which in turn influences the national regard for the *brumby*.

Brumby/horse heritage

The brumby is frequently conflated with the tame or companion horse, particularly in arguments put forth by brumby advocates. For example, speaking of why she views brumbies as different to other feral animals, Jindabyne resident and founding member of the Snowy Mountain Horse Riders Association Leisa Caldwell states:

> [O]ur grandfathers did not ride foxes into battle at Beersheba. It was not pigs, deer or cats that transported humans throughout the world for over 8,000 years, and partnered humans in the field for survival. It's not the other introduced animals that still partner humans today in the Olympics. There's no other animal on the planet that has such a relationship or has that interaction with humans. So, horses should be viewed very differently.[1004]

[1000] The horses of the Guy Fawkes River National Park functioned as a test-case of this approach, and the results have indeed opened up the "can of worms" predicted by Chapple ("Politics Of Feral Horse Management," 240).
[1001] Franklin, *Animal Nation*.
[1002] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.
[1003] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 175.
[1004] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."

Caldwell's argument here hinges on the role the *horse* has played in Australian history, and in human history more broadly, rather than the specific significance of the *brumby*. This bears further scrutiny, as many of the arguments put forth by brumby advocates draw upon this conflation, while simultaneously attempting to emphasise the (genetic) uniqueness of the brumby. I will return to the issue of brumby genetics shortly, however, I now turn to a critique of some of the narratives of significance in which the horse and the brumby are often conflated.

The horse as pioneer

One of the recurring narratives relating to the horse in Australia, and frequently offered as a rationale for preserving the brumbies, is that it is a historically significant animal. The notion of the horse as a significant contributor to Australia's economic, technological, and social development underpins many contemporary assertions that this animal is important to Australians.[1005] As discussed in the previous chapters, the horse as a species unquestionably provided an advantage in the process of the colonisation and settlement of Australia,[1006] however it was not feral horse populations that rendered these services. Domestic horses are documented as having been released into the bush by 1804, [1007] when it is said that Private James Brumby left his horse stock to run wild after leaving the colony of New South Wales to settle in Van Diemen's Land.[1008] A decade later wild horses were to be found west of the Great Dividing Range,[1009] and by the 1830s feral horses were reasonably common in parts of southern Australia.[1010] Within a few decades, these animals were considered by many to be pests.[1011] A newspaper article from 1887 recounts that in 1875 "it was found necessary to shoot as many as 7000 wild horses in the colony of New South Wales alone."[1012] What this clearly demonstrates is that feral horses were considered as separate from domestic horses by the colonists, with the former regarded a nuisance.

It is widely accepted that seven horses arrived with the First Fleet, in 1788, aboard the *Lady Penrhyn*, though some sources suggest there were nine horses. [1013] These Cape horses, purchased *en*

[1005] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*; Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*; Brasch, *Horses in Australia*; Bentley, Hall and Mattei (eds), *The Little Book of Horses,* verso.
[1006] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback.*
[1007] Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 408; Parsonson, *The Australian Ark*, 129.
[1008] Anecdotally, this led to the free-ranging horses of the region being referred to as "Brumby's", a name that is said to have then become 'brumbies' and been applied to all such horses. See Parsonson, *The Australian Ark*, 129; A.W. Campbell, "Brumby, James (1771-1838)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed July 16, 2019 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/brumby-james-1840
[1009] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *Global Horseracing Industry*, 52.
[1010] Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 408.
[1011] Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 408.
[1012] "Wild Horses," *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, December 6, 1887, 4.
[1013] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *Global Horseracing Industry*, 52.

route at Cape Town,[1014] were of indeterminate breeding, a mixture of Persian, Andalusian, South American and thoroughbred. A further 33 of these horses arrived in 1795 aboard the *Britannia*. The importation of the stallion Rockingham in 1797 signalled an improvement to the colony's equestrian bloodlines,[1015] which were further bolstered by the arrival of the 17-hand high stallion Northumberland. Imported in 1802, Northumberland's £10 service fee was considered so exorbitant an amount that even the colony's Governor, George King, felt unable to afford it.[1016] This example illustrates the significance placed on bloodlines and breeding from the earliest days of the colony, and could be viewed as the precursor to Australia's modern-day multi-billion-dollar thoroughbred breeding industry.[1017]

The number of horses in the fledgling colony grew steadily and was accompanied by a rapid shift in the demography of horse ownership. In 1800, there were 173 horses, of which most (105) were owned by officers. Here, horse ownership was facilitated by free land grants and unpaid convict labour.[1018] Just eight years later however, officers owned 227 horses, while free settlers were responsible for 666 of them.[1019] Horse ownership in Australia (then, as now) was made easier by the availability of space. Despite their scarcity, these animals were seemingly regarded as somewhat dispensable, as the anecdote of James Brumby demonstrates.

Horses were certainly essential to aspects of Australia's development. Their needs often dictated the way agriculture was performed on small farm holdings, for example, the requirement to devote a certain proportion of arable land to growing feed crops.[1020] They also prompted technological advances such as improved cropping techniques, including the evolution of hay and straw harvesters.[1021] Early Australian cities were built with the necessities of thousands of horses in mind, including the provision of minor infrastructure such as hitching posts and water troughs, as well as providing trade and income for the hundreds of businesses that catered to equine service provision.[1022] However, again, these horses, integral to the functioning of a fledgling nation, were

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[1014] Forbes, 8-9, 12; Mantle, 3.
[1015] Forbes, 18-19.
[1016] Forbes, 19.
[1017] McManus, Albrecht and Graham, *Global Horseracing Industry*.
[1018] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 6.
[1019] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 6.
[1020] Kirsten Wehner, Martha Sear, Laura Breen, Carol Cooper, Cheryl Crilly, Nicole McLennan and Jennifer Wilson (curators), *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story*, National Museum of Australia, September 11, 2014 – March 9, 2015.
[1021] National Museum of Australia, "Turning Hay Into Chaff," *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story* exhibition website, accessed November 17, 2015 http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/spirited/stories_and_objects/farm/chaffcutter
[1022] National Museum of Australia, "Through The City," *Spirited: Australia's Horse Story* exhibition website, accessed November 17, 2015 http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/spirited/stories_and_objects/city

not brumbies. It is worth reiterating that by this time, feral horses were already considered a pest. Clearly, the ways the brumby is now being read has changed.

Battle and breeding

The arena of battle is another facet of Australian history that is frequently mentioned in association with brumbies, horses, and heritage, though this association is often vague and remains unclarified.[1023] During the nineteenth century, Waler horses (thus named because they came from the colony of New South Wales, as Australia was broadly known for much of its colonial history), were popular and profitable exports. Walers were exported to the British Army in India for use as remount horses.[1024] Though they were also ridden by the Australians who participated in the earlier Boer War campaign (1899-1902), the Waler has become synonymous with the horses and troops sent overseas during World War I. At that time, however, the term 'Waler' remained shorthand for a horse from NSW, and was not considered a particular breed.[1025] In fact, many of the approximately 120,000 service horses were actually home-bred animals, foaled on the family farm, who accompanied their owners when enlisting for the battlefields of Europe.[1026] Following the First World War, there was a push to establish the Waler as a recognised breed. Richard Nash describes the notion of pedigree as "the inscription technology for writing horses into culture",[1027] a definition that aptly fits the evolution of Waler horses from an ad-hoc collection of horses, to a breed unto itself.

Today, the Waler Horse Society of Australia is keen to dissociate Walers from the brumby label, stating "[i]t is important to note that wild bred Walers can be considered brumbies but not all brumbies can be considered Walers! … [T]he majority of Walers were selectively bred on large properties".[1028] Further evidence that brumbies are not the descendants of those horses who served alongside the men of the Light Horse lies in the fact that none but one of the horses that went overseas ever returned to Australian soil.[1029] Instead, as discussed in Chapter 3, the remaining

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[1023] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos"; Guy Fawkes Heritage Horse Association, "History," accessed October 30, 2015 http://guyfawkesheritagehorse.com/history/
[1024] Pioneer, "Waler Remount Arrangements," *Traralgon Record*, August 17, 1888, 3.
[1025] Malcolm J. Kennedy, "The Role And Significance Of Bullocks And Horses In The Development Of Eastern Australia 1788 To 1900" (PhD dissertation, University of Melbourne, 1986), 280-82. See also: Milroy, "The Waler," *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, March 17, 1900, 647; "The Australian Horse," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 9, 1908, 4; "The Waler Declines*," Casino and Kyogle Courier and North Coast Advertiser*, July 22, 1911, 5.
[1026] If a horse met the standards required by the Army, it was bought on behalf of the Commonwealth, and could, in theory, be issued to anyone.
[1027] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'," 266.
[1028] Waler Horse Society of Australia Inc., website accessed March 8, 2016 http://www.walerhorse.com/?page_id=62
[1029] Bou, "They Shot The Horses."

equines were procured by the British Army and continued in military service. Given this, the connection between brumbies and the horses that acquitted themselves in battle under Australian soldiers can be seen as tenuous at best.

The appeal to heritage in relation to brumbies has also been used as a marketing device by brumby advocates. Following the Guy Fawkes National Park brumby cull of 2000, interested parties formed the Guy Fawkes Heritage Horse Association (GFHHA). The feral horses of the Guy Fawkes River region have been re-branded as Heritage Horses by their advocates, who claim "direct descen[t from] Australia's wartime cavalry horses".[1030] The GFHHA not only positions the feral horses from this region as genetically distinct from other populations of brumbies, but tries to actively distance their horses from the brumby label, stating that these so-called Heritage Horses are "often misnamed brumbies"[1031]. Instead, the horses are marketed as direct descendants of the Waler, and the GFHHA emphasise that these "are the only group of Australian Wild Horse to have this proven heritage value". [1032] As already stated, it is highly unlikely that these horses are descended from the Walers of World War I. Further, claims of genetic uniqueness have been applied by brumby advocates to other feral horse populations. While Caldwell argues that brumbies have "earned the right to run free, and to carry on their *now unique genetics*, which are found nowhere else in the world",[1033] Rob Gibbs counters that:

> We're talking about a species, other the Przelowski's horses, that is nowhere near becoming extinct. To me there's really no difference between a horse that I find here [in Kosciuszko National Park] and driving to Canberra and looking at the horses off in the side paddocks.[1034]

To single out one particular population of brumbies as genetically distinct may well be factually true, but only inasmuch as all brumby populations are genetically distinct, due to the localised nature of the founding populations and any new animals that are subsequently introduced into the gene pool. The practice of releasing horses into the wild in Australia continued for generations. It occurred as farm holdings were abandoned throughout the nineteenth century, and continued into the twentieth century, following the economic collapse of the remount trade after

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[1030] Guy Fawkes Heritage Horse Association, "About Us", website accessed April 22, 2016 http://guyfawkesheritagehorse.com
[1031] Guy Fawkes Heritage Horse Association, "The Breed," website accessed April 22, 2016 http://guyfawkesheritagehorse.com/
[1032] Guy Fawkes Heritage Horse Association, website accessed October 30, 2015 http://guyfawkesheritagehorse.com/gfhaa/
[1033] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Video," my italics.
[1034] Gibbs, interview.

World War I.[1035] Anecdotal evidence indicates that the practice continues in certain areas today, with pastoralists releasing individuals into herds to improve the breeding and appearance of the animals.[1036] In this way it could be said that brumby populations are no more distinct than any other Australian horse populations outside the purebred establishments, and this was in fact the finding from the genetic testing that was carried out on the Guy Fawkes River horses following the 2000 cull.[1037]

The promotion of brumby genetics is noteworthy, considering the competing desire to emphasise the brumby's genetic distinctness from the domestic horse, while also enlisting arguments relating to the broader significance of the horse to justify the brumby's right to a free and unfettered existence. This emphasis on genetic uniqueness, employed in support of the Guy Fawkes Heritage Horses, and by brumby advocates more broadly, is the manifestation of a deeper pre-occupation with equine breeding. This trope was imported from England, and dates to the development of the thoroughbred.[1038] Nash argues that thoroughbreds, being "[c]ulturally created, … operate as 'natural' living metaphors for a particular set of cultural values that they thereby reify as innate."[1039] Similarly, the brumby could be read as a cultural artefact embodying uniquely Australian values. Its status as a cultural creation operates at both the symbolic level, where it is framed as heritage, and more literally, in the active manipulation of herd genetics that is undertaken by some communities. Alongside the claims that the brumby is genetically distinct from the domestic horse is concealed the tacit practice of introducing new stock for the improvement of herd genetics.[1040] In this way, the brumby is similar to the thoroughbred, functioning as a living metaphor for the values of the white settler culture who created it.

Comparison species

The horse was not the first, or indeed the only, species of livestock imported to Australia to ease the life and work of colonists and settlers. Malcolm Kennedy's 1986 doctoral thesis, a comparative analysis of the horse and the bullock as draught animals in eastern Australia, found that, while horses were suitable for use around the coastal plains and grasslands, bullocks (oxen) were better

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[1035] Nimmo and Miller, "Management Of Feral Horses," 408.
[1036] Anne Crawford, *Great Australian Horse Stories* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 6; Ernie Maskey interview transcript, "Report Of The Heritage Working Party On The Horses Of The Guy Fawkes River National Park To The Minister For The Environment: Volume 2," (Sydney: NSW Department of Environment 2002), 5; Thompson, interview.
[1037] "Report Of The Heritage Working Party On The Horses Of The Guy Fawkes River National Park To The Minister For The Environment: Volume 1," (Sydney: NSW Department of Environment 2002), 29-31.
[1038] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'."
[1039] Nash, "'Honest English Breed'," 246.
[1040] Crawford, *Great Australian Horse Stories*, 6; Maskey interview, "Report Of The Heritage Working Party: Volume 2," 5; Thompson, interview.

suited to a diversity of terrain, ranging from the grasslands, through the arid interior, and as far as the desert.[1041] Both bullocks and camels proved themselves adept at the rigours of heavy haulage and exploration that were essential to Australia's economic growth. Bullocks were able to transport much heavier loads than horses, including timber and wool. They did not require the same care as horses[1042] and were easier to handle.[1043] In fact, Nanette Mantle, in her history of the horse in Australia, credits the arrival of oxen with the earliest agricultural successes of the colony.[1044] Camels were also used for heavy haulage, being the preferred animal for use in arid regions and during conditions of drought.[1045] They proved pivotal to the exploration of Australia's arid interior,[1046] as well as to trans-continental expansion, serving on the Overland Telegraph Line, the Trans-Australian Railway, and the northern line to Alice Springs.[1047] During the First World War, the Imperial Camel Corp was founded with Gallipoli veterans, and fought alongside the Australian Light Horse in the Middle East, including at Beersheba.[1048] Yet in spite of these major contributions, both bullocks and camels remain conspicuously absent from Australia's national discourses of historical significance. Camels in particular present a remarkable parallel to brumbies, with Australia now estimated to have the largest wild camel population in the world.[1049] Further, camels are recognised as a pest species, having been released into the interior of the Australian continent and subsequently bred into healthy populations. Similar to brumbies, camels are recognised as causing damage to plant and animal communities, and aerial culling and ground shooting are the most commonly implemented management practices for these animals.[1050] Unlike the brumby, the control of feral camel populations is carried out without protest—at least, within Australia.[1051]

[1041] Kennedy, "Role And Significance Of Bullocks And Horses," 3-4.
[1042] Parsonson, *The Australian Ark*, 128.; Kennedy, "Role And Significance Of Bullocks And Horses," 3-4.
[1043] Parsonson, *The Australian Ark*, 128.
[1044]Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 5. See also Kennedy, "Role And Significance Of Bullocks And Horses," 2-3.
[1045] Parsonson, *Australian Ark*, 140.
[1046] The first major expedition to import camels to Australia for the purposes of exploration was the Victorian Exploring Expedition. See Burke & Wills Web, http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Camels/Introducing_Camels_Into_Australia.htm
[1047] Margaret Simpson, "Making A Nation: 'Afghans' And Their Camels For Australian Inland Transport," Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, May 6, 2015, accessed December 23, 2018 https://maas.museum/inside-the-collection/2015/05/06/afghans-and-camels-for-australian-inland-transport/
[1048] AWM, "Imperial Camel Corps."
[1049] Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, "Feral Camel," PestSmart Connect webpage accessed November 17, 2015 http://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/camel/
[1050] Northern Territory Government, "Feral Camel," Department of Land and Resource Management webpage accessed November 17, 2015 http://www.lrm.nt.gov.au/feral/camel
[1051] "Camels In The Outback," *Al Jazeera* December 26, 2014, accessed June 13, 2019 https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraworld/2012/12/20121226115848287535.html; Larine Stratham, "Brits Outraged By Australian Camel Cull," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 2, 2009, accessed June 13, 2019 https://www.smh.com.au/national/brits-outraged-by-australian-camel-cull-20091202-k5mk.html.

It is interesting to consider why the camel is largely disregarded as an animal of significance to Australia, where the horse has been embraced. There are many aspects of Caldwell's earlier statement around the significance of horses over other non-native species that are similarly applicable to the camel—they were ridden at Beersheba; they have transported humans throughout the world for thousands of years and were particularly valuable within the arid interior of Australia.[1052] This elision hinges on the different cultural connotations evoked by each animal. The camel is associated with Asia and the Middle East,[1053] an exotic status that inevitably renders it a perpetual outsider in any Australian identity narrative. The exclusion of the bullock, on the other hand, speaks to issues of class.[1054] The horse's Anglo-European associations fit comfortably within the parameters of Australia's white identity. Highlighting this bio-nationalist discourse forms a cornerstone of this thesis. Its recognition and acknowledgment matters, because it is part of the same thinly-veiled racism that forms the bedrock of Australian culture.

The camel and the bullock provide an interesting contrast to the brumby in illustrating the ways different species are framed in Australia's discourses of heritage and significance. Despite all having some claim to historical significance for the role they have played in Australia's expansion and development, it is in defence of the brumby that the claim to historical significance is made most frequently. This neatly illustrates the dialogue that exists between *history* and *heritage.*[1055] Positioning the brumby as 'heritage' legitimises its embeddedness within a narrative of Australian identity that operates at personal, local, and national levels.

"…where the wild bush horses are" in the national imagination

The brumby carries significant conjuring power as an animal of romance and myth, and at the epicentre of this phenomenon are the feral horses that inhabit the Snowy Mountains region of NSW and Victoria. The particular significance of this population originates with the 'Banjo' Paterson poem "The Man from Snowy River", discussion of which forms the crux of Chapter 4. While in that chapter the poem functioned as a means to contextualise the horse discourse, here my interest is centred on the ways those fictional "wild bush horses" have influenced the national discourse on brumbies.

While the popularity of the poem may have stemmed from the heroic figure of the Man, rather than the latent power of the wild horse imagery, it has come to be strongly associated with

[1052] See Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."
[1053] "Camels In The Outback," *Al Jazeera*.
[1054] 'Banjo' Paterson himself refers to such attitudes (Birtles, "Andrew Barton ('Banjo') Paterson," 22.) See also Kennedy, "Role And Significance Of Bullocks And Horses," 12.
[1055] Logan and Smith, xii.

the concept of brumbies, and the feral horses of the Snowy Mountains region in particular. Immediately popular upon publication,[1056] in the ensuing years, "The Man from Snowy River" has never been out of print.[1057] The ongoing engagement with the poem, and its continued dissemination through various media, renders us familiar with its tropes.[1058] The entire construct of the poem has come to be recognised as heritage through the processes that shape such discourses—frequent repetition and continued visibility.[1059] The Man from Snowy River has become part of Australia's cultural iconography, and the brumbies with which he is forever associated (though they were never referred to as such in the poem) are now also described as part of our heritage.

Notably, while brumbies may have become particularly synonymous with the Snowy Mountains, the wild horses described in the poem are not from the Snowy River or the Kosciusko region at all. That the events of the poem do not occur anywhere near the Snowy River is clear from a brief examination of the poem. In the first stanza it is stated that "All the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far / Had mustered at the homestead overnight". While the Man could ostensibly be one of the riders from "near" rather than "far", the fact that he and his horse appear unknown to the locals, described only as "a stripling on a small and weedy beast / … /…so slight and weedy, one would doubt his power to stay" indicates he is one of the riders from further afield. The fact that the character Clancy must justify to the others why his presence might prove useful: "I think we ought to let him come … / I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end, / For both his horse and he are mountain bred" demonstrates the Man's unknown status. Finally, as Clancy continues, describing where the Man is from, it is very clear that this description is of somewhere else, rather than where the present action is happening:

> "He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,
> Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,
> Where a horse's hoof strikes firelight from the flint stones every stride,
> The man that holds his own is good enough.
> And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their home,
> Where the river runs those giant hills between;
> I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced to roam,

[1056] Macartney, "Introduction," v; Birtles, "Andrew Barton ('Banjo') Paterson," 30.
[1057] Webby, "Not Reading The Nation," 308.
[1058] See the following video montage by Leisa Caldwell for the Snowy Mountain Riders Association: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKq2luOD4O0
[1059] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*; see also Schuurman and Nyman, "Case Of The Finnhorse," 289.

But nowhere yet such horsemen have I seen."[1060]

Nonetheless, the brumbies and the Snowy Mountains are continually conflated in the popular imagination. Madison Young, of the Hunter Valley Brumby Association, states:

> …everyone who thinks about the Snowies thinks about these wide-open spaces, and snow and, to me, when I think about them, I think about the brumbies. … [W]hen I think of brumbies, I picture the ones from 'The Man from Snowy River', the ones running across the mountains.[1061]

Despite fictitious origins and geographical inaccuracy, the conjunction is so powerful in the national imagination that it will likely prove impossible to dispel.[1062] Yet this mis-reading of the poem has ramifications beyond accuracy. In 2018, as a result of the ongoing association between brumbies and the Snowy Mountains in the public imagination, the feral horses of Kosciuszko National Park were granted heritage status by the NSW state government. In his second reading of the Bill, Member for Monaro John Barilaro stated:

> …nothing is more synonymous with the Australian outdoor lifestyle than the brumby, from 'The Man from Snowy River' to the integral role that the Snowy Mountains bush horses played in the Australian Light Horse campaign during World War I. They even featured at the opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics.[1063]

As this chapter has demonstrated, close examination of the points raised by Barilaro reveal them to be factually inaccurate. Yet the "emotional truth" of the brumby as an animal of significance remains.[1064] This emotional truth draws on the affective regard for the brumby, which is itself underpinned by the underdog narrative template represented by "The Man from Snowy River".[1065]

[1060] Paterson, "The Man From Snowy River," 5.
[1061] Young, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."
[1062] See Smith, "Discredited Class-War Fable,"19-32 for an example of how the myth that William Webb-Ellis invented the sport of Rugby Union has proved singularly impervious to disruption.
[1063] John Barilaro, Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Bill 2018, Second reading speech, May 23, 2018, Legislative Assembly Hansard, accessed December 24, 2018 https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/'HANSARD-1323879322-102131
[1064] Adam Morton, "II: Emotional Accuracy", in Ronald de Sousa and Adam Morton, "Emotional Truth," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary volumes* 76, no. 1 (2002): 265-275.
[1065] Notably, the brumby debate has not been constructed within the underdog schematic template. This may be due to the brumby's indelible (and oft repeated) association with that most well-known Underdog narrative, that of The Man from Snowy River. The environmental group Reclaim Kosci have (whether knowingly or unknowingly) latched onto this oversight and have begun to actively position the critically endangered Corroboree frog within this framework, creating a mascot and producing a documentary titled

As Barilaro's statement demonstrates, the conflation of the Man from Snowy River and Kosciuszko National Park continues to be interwoven with notions of the brumby.

Affect and attachment

The intangible dimensions of emotion and affect (and community and individual attachments to them) as they pertain to the brumby are not easily quantified. Jones reminds us that "affective registers lie largely outside the realms of language, thought, rationality and reflexive consciousness",[1066] which leads to some difficulty in addressing this aspect of the brumby issue, where the personal can be intimately bound up with broader identity narratives.[1067] There are also significant cultural and economic dynamics at play in human-animal relations that further complicate these relationships.[1068]

However, the affective elements of the brumby debate have been largely ignored, particularly by environmentalists. What is revealed by this studied attempt among scientists and conservationists to ignore the undeniable influence that these narratives hold? And what of the narratives which they themselves privilege? There appears to be an almost childishly stubborn adherence to science against all other ways of knowing, which human geographer Michael Adams identifies within the brumby debate as an anthropocentrism that fails to take into account alternative perspectives—including those of Aboriginal people.[1069] He continues:

> The agency and intelligence of animals, the increasing discoveries of distinct cultures amongst animal populations, the agency of planetary systems in continually reorganising around changing inputs, all stand against the modern human insistence on control, stability and stasis. […] Perhaps our task is to harmonise ourselves with these old and new environments, not continually attempt to 'manage' them into some other state that we in our hubris think is more desirable, whether ecologically, economically or culturally.[1070]

There is a certain allure to the notion that our concern with environmental management (and, some might say, sustainability) is purely anthropocentric. Yet surely an attempt to ensure the continued

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"Underfrog". See "'Underfrog' Film Screening," Reclaim Kosci website, accessed July 14, 2019 https://reclaimkosci.org.au/2019/04/29/underfrog-film-screening-anu-premier-screening/

[1066] Jones, "'The Cows At Maesgwyn'," 426.

[1067] As an example, brumby advocate Leisa Caldwell described how, when she met her husband while camping in the Snowy Mountains at age 14, "He Was The Man From Snowy River To Me." Caldwell, interview.

[1068] Jones, "'The Cows At Maesgwyn'," 426.

[1069] Adams, "The Cultural Meanings Of Wild Horses." See also Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 166-92.

[1070] Adams, "The Cultural Meanings Of Wild Horses."

existence of endangered and vulnerable species, regardless of the underlying motivation, shows genuine concern for life outside our own—and thus is the opposite of anthropocentrism? While outside the scope of the thesis, this perspective raises some interesting questions.

It is worth noting that not all communities co-located with feral horse populations feel a strong attachment to brumbies. In the Kimberly Region of WA, for example, the "level of social concern" regarding brumby culling is relatively low,[1071] and culling is routinely carried out. One significant reason for this is that, in this region, the horses present competition for the grazing stock of pastoralists. The president of the Pilbara Cattlemen's Association, David Stoate, has voiced his concerns regarding the "grazing pressure [and] their affect [sic] on water points" that the brumbies represent.[1072] Elsewhere, brumby supporter Leisa Caldwell clarified during an interview that it is only the Snowy Mountains brumbies that she is advocating for, not brumbies throughout Australia:

> Ultimately most of the brumbies out west and up in the Territory, they're on private property, they're not in a national park. And they're competing with the cattle, and that's another reason why the cattlemen in Victoria aren't all that concerned about them, hanging onto the brumbies, because it's competition for their cattle.[1073]

Caldwell later discloses that, back when the feral horses were "competition", their family used to shoot brumbies.[1074] The fact that the same horses that were once shot because of the competition they presented for pastoralists are now having heritage status thrust upon them, demonstrates that the iconic place these horses hold today is a recent invention. Wertsch and Samuel have both discussed the ways collective memory changes and is, in fact, "inherently revisionist."[1075] Further, it reveals the underlying role of the brumby as a foil of identity and belonging. That the heritage significance of these horses was only valued once they ceased to be an economic threat speaks to the arbitrary, and anthropocentric, nature of this heritage.

[1071] Rebecca Nadge, "Calls For Better Data On Kimberly Wild Horses Amid Secrecy Over Aerial Culls," ABC Kimberly, April 7, 2019, accessed July 8, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-07/wild-horses-of-the-kimberley/10974722

[1072] Michelle Stanley, "'Judas' Method Aims To Cull Wild Horses In Northern Australia For The First Time," ABC Rural, August 7, 2017, accessed July 9, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-08-07/judas-pest-management-expanded-to-wild-horses-brumbies-wa/8685068

[1073] Leisa Caldwell, interview, November 26, 2015.

[1074] Caldwell, interview.

[1075] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, xxiii. See also Wertsch, *Voices*, 17-18, 46.

Identity and belonging

Many brumby advocates have familial farming ties with the contested landscapes that the brumbies frequent. There is some crossover between the brumby debate, and the ongoing resentment felt by many who were directly affected by the gradual banning of grazing and recreational horse-riding in wilderness areas that occurred in Australia from the 1960s through to the 1990s.[1076] This legislation has been enacted independently by states across Australia, including in the Blue Mountains and Snowy Mountains areas in NSW, and in the central plateau region of Tasmania. In all these cases, the resultant outcry illustrates Cubit's example of a tournament of values,[1077] where wilderness values and constructions of nature are positioned in opposition to horses, grazing rights, and a sense of (settler) ancestral tradition. For Caldwell and others, the brumby is strongly associated with a heritage and identity that is also bound up in the narratives of pastoralism. For those affected, the forced concessions to opposing values is tantamount to the hijacking of the community's heritage:[1078]

> In the past 50 years the people of the Snowy had their cattle and livelihood taken from the mountains, their towns flooded and much of their history lost. And then the Snowy River riders were prohibited from even riding their beloved horses in the mountains as their fathers and grandfathers did. Once the brumbies are gone, there will be nothing left to demonstrate that our Snowy Mountain history since white settlement even existed.[1079]

A similar story is told by the Carlon family in the documentary *The Man from Cox's River*. Generations of the family had lived and worked in the Burragorang valley in the Blue Mountains, before it was flooded by the rising waters of the Warragamba Dam. Following this first displacement, the Carlon family started Packsaddlers in 1960, a trail riding business that took tourists into the area, until the valley's value as a wilderness site and significant catchment area brought an end to public access and forced the closure of the business. The Carlons were left bitter, feeling that their inter-generational connection to the wilderness area had been disregarded by the government when the land was resumed in the 1990s. This area of Crown Land had been used by graziers, including the Carlons, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The forced closing of the business

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[1076] Cubit, "Tournaments Of Value;" Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos;" Caldwell, interview. See also the Carlyon family as depicted in the documentary film *The Man from Cox's River* (Kilbey, Empress Arts Film, 2014).
[1077] Cubit, "Tournaments Of Value," 398.
[1078] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos;" see also Caldwell's video montage for the Snowy Mountain Riders Association.
[1079] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos.".

signalled a period of high animosity between the Carlon family and the NPWS, though by the time of the documentary, "feelings had cooled down a fair bit."[1080]

In the context of Kosciusko, these past resentments continue to underscore community discussions around a Wild Horse Management Plan, a circumstance not lost on Rob Gibbs: "It's not just about wild horses. There's a whole history, in terms of feeling dispossessed and disenfranchised from the park, and all the rest of those issues, which brings a lot of baggage to the table."[1081] While recognising the weight of personal history is one thing, these issues lie outside the scope of the Wild Horse Management Plan. Unresolved, they continue to influence the feelings of many in the community.[1082] As Leisa Caldwell states, "here in the Snowy Mountains, the brumbies are not just … an integral part of the High Country natural environment, they reflect our history, our ancestors[1083] and our culture. That's a heritage that gives us our own identity and sense of belonging".[1084] For Caldwell, the brumbies are an inseparable part of the Snowy Mountains identity. "It's a package deal with us; it's horse-riding in the mountains, it's the mountains themselves, and it's the brumbies, and if it weren't for the brumbies there would be nothing left here to demonstrate that our history even existed",[1085] she has said. While Gibbs counters this by pointing out the many examples of pastoral heritage that are part of the Park,[1086] what Caldwell is really articulating here is a fear of loss that relates to her personal sense of history and identity. While not discounting Caldwell's sense of personal loss, implicit within such statements is the erasure of centuries of Aboriginal history. As scholars of settler-colonialism argue, the accumulation of land that distinguishes this from other types of colonialism also inherently problematises the Indigenous peoples whose land it was.[1087] As Rowe and Tuck argue, "[t]he precarious quality of settler colonialism requires the continuously renewed erasure of Indigenous peoples", positioning settler colonialism as an overarching structure that continues to be felt, rather than an event or sequence of events located in the past.[1088] In the

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[1080] Russel Kilbey (dir.), *The Man from Cox's River*, Empress Arts Film, 2014.
[1081] Gibbs, interview. This was also reinforced by comments made by Leisa Caldwell in interview.
[1082] There are people who have a different view within the Jindabyne community, but this view has been silenced. "They're reluctant to speak up about that publicly within the local community," Gibbs tells me (interview).
[1083] Caldwell here is referring to non-Indigenous ancestors.
[1084] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."
[1085] Caldwell interviewed in Alex Blucher and Bill Brown, "Shooting Brumbies In Kosciuszko," ABC Rural, April 1, 2014, accessed July 1, 2014, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-27/shooting-brumbies-in-national-parks/5267898
[1086] This includes both built heritage such as the hut network and the remnant fencing, and recognition more intangibly, in the nomenclature used throughout the site, and interpretive signage. Gibbs, interview.
[1087] Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism And Cultural Studies," 6.
[1088] Rowe and Tuck, "Settler Colonialism And Cultural Studies," 6.

context of the brumby debates, this settler colonialism can be read in the desire to claim the land on behalf of the brumby.

A further issue underlying the brumby dispute is the changing nature of rural life in Australia. A sense of nostalgia for the mythologised past, triggered specifically by widespread social changes, has been discussed elsewhere in the thesis. From the way nineteenth-century anxieties around industrialisation lead to the new-found reverence for the figure of the peasant[1089] examined in Chapter 4, to the post-war leftist idealisation that prompted Ward to write *The Australian Legend*,[1090] which were touched on in Chapter 1, it seems that social change provokes fears about the future, which frequently manifests as nostalgia for the past. Such concerns also influence the ways that landscapes are framed and understood.[1091] In the current context, the brumby has become a "key symbolic, material, emotional, and ecological '[component]' of the rural."[1092] The trigger for this shift in focus, particularly among those for who the brumby was once competition but who now defend its existence within those same landscapes, can be in part attributed to the rapid and sweeping shifts in rural life, encompassing changes to "agricultural, economic, social (class) and ecological formations."[1093] For example, Leisa Caldwell frequently touched on her fears around the loss of a particular lifestyle when I interviewed her, and strongly identified the brumby with this way of life.[1094] That these horses have come to represent a vanishing way of life recalls Samuel's argument that the sense of something under threat is implicit in understandings of the term 'heritage',[1095]and may go some way to explaining why their ascension to heritage status has been so successful.

The issue of culling

The name 'brumby' is thought to derive either from the aforementioned horses of James Brumby, or from an Aboriginal word, *baroombie* or *baroomby*, which purportedly refers to feral horses.[1096] Significantly, while brumbies are frequently referred to by their proponents, and even by the NPWS,

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[1089] Astbury, *City Bushmen*, 8; Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 435; Roe and Ward, "The Australian Legend," 365.
[1090] Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend," 440.
[1091] Jones, "'Who Milks The Cows?'," 425.
[1092] Jones, "'Who Milks The Cows?'," 425.
[1093] Jones, "'Who Milks The Cows?'," 425.
[1094] Caldwell, interview.
[1095] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 229.
[1096] Robyn MacDougall, "The History Of The Guy Fawkes River Australian Brumbies And The Brumbies Of The Northern Tablelands" in *Report of the Heritage Working Party on the Horses of the Guy Fawkes River* (Appendix 1) (NSW Department of Environment, 2001), 9.

as 'wild horses', this is a misnomer.[1097] The only true species of wild horse extant is the endangered Takhi (Przewalski's) horse, *Equus ferus przewalskii*, native to the steppe region of central Asia. While those opposed to the culling of brumbies from an animal rights' standpoint prefer not to use the term 'feral',[1098] the fact that the brumby is genetically no different to the domestic horse demarcates it as 'feral' in accordance with most accepted definitions.[1099]

With an estimated population numbering up to one million horses across Australia, the brumby is unique among feral species on this continent for garnering such impassioned defence. Support for the brumby comes not only from the pastoralists among who they live (at least in the case of the Snowy Mountains), or animal rights advocates, but is drawn from all quarters. Following the release for comment of the 2016 Draft Wild Horse Management Plan,[1100] which recommended a 90% reduction in horse numbers,[1101] several petitions protesting any culling were launched online. The most popular of these attracted over 73,000 signatures,[1102] though other petitions also garnered tens of thousands of signatures.[1103] At this juncture, a brief consideration of public attitudes towards culling is worthwhile. Though this topic is complex and lies largely outside the scope of this thesis, touching on it here is essential, as the range of responses to lethal population control measures illustrates the diversity of popularly-held perspectives regarding different species. The camel has already been addressed as a comparison feral animal, but what of the culling of native species?

In 2015, several media outlets revealed the details of a "secret cull" of koalas in Cape Otway, Victoria.[1104] According to the articles, almost 700 koalas were culled during 2013 and 2014, in a bid

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[1097] Globally, there are some genetically distinct wild horse populations that, while regarded as part of the *Equus ferus caballus* species, are still recognised for their unique heritage. These include the Camargue horse in the south of France, and the Sorraia horse of the Iberian Peninsula, in Portugal.

[1098] Young, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."

[1099] Jen Bond argues that the competing terms "wild", "feral" and "brumby" create an unnecessary dichotomy. See "'Feral', 'Wild' Or Brumby: The Politics Of Horse Management In Australia," online conference presentation, accessed June 12, 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nD4MyQkYkCs&fbclid=IwAR1wlrWTGQZ32344fPGyu4k073cS5sWhrauaXAZIefjHNqajVyHaVuawxmQ

[1100] The *Wild Horse Heritage Act* (2018) has subsequently overridden this draft Plan of Management.

[1101] State of New South Wales and Office of the Environment and Heritage, "Draft Wild Horse Management Plan, Kosciuszko National Park," (Sydney: NSW Office of the Environment and Heritage, 2016), 3.

[1102] "Save Australia's Brumbies! Stop The Cull!" Petition started by Josh Matthews on The Petition Site http://www.thepetitionsite.com/923/870/065/stop-australias-brumby-cull/ accessed May 16, 2017. At the time the petition was accessed, only around a quarter of those signatures were from Australians.

[1103] "Stop The Brumby Cull In Australia" by Shan Mary to the Prime Minister of Australia on Change.org, accessed May 16, 2017 https://www.change.org/p/australian-government-stop-the-brumby-cull-in-australia; "NSW Government – Stop The Slaughter Of The Snowy Mountains Brumbies!"by Richard Roberts on Change.org, accessed May 16, 2017 https://www.change.org/p/nsw-government-stop-the-slaughter-of-the-snowy-mountains-brumbies;

[1104] "Starving Koalas Secretly Culled At Cape Otway, 'Overpopulation Issues' Blamed For Ill Health," ABC website, March 4, 2015, accessed March 11, 2015 http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-04/starving-koalas-

to deal with over-population in the region. That the cull was an unfortunate necessity was made clear in the articles, though there was no mention of any cultural attachment to koalas, or reference to their iconic status as symbols of Australia.[1105] Reading the comments left on two articles[1106] in the week following their publication revealed this omission to also be characteristic of public perceptions, with only one of the total of 45 comments mentioning the 'iconic' status of koalas.[1107] The koala is native to the east coast of Australia, and is listed as vulnerable in NSW, the ACT and Queensland.[1108]

It is notable that the over-population, and subsequent culling, of koalas in a small region raised little public ire, especially when compared with the similar circumstances faced by the brumbies in the Snowy Mountains region. Here, though the horses are reportedly starving,[1109] any consideration of lethal control is met with protest, and the afore-mentioned petitions. A further parallel between the Cape Otway koalas and the Snowy Mountains brumbies are disputes about population numbers.[1110] Koala advocacy group The Australian Koala Foundation claimed that population numbers were grossly exaggerated in order to justify proceeding with the cull.[1111] Yet the lack of public outcry about this cull exposes the ways that brumbies, alone among species, are

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secretly-culled-at-cape-otway/6278768; "Hundreds Of Starving Cape Otway Koalas Killed In 'Secret Culls'," *The Age*, March 4, 2015, accessed March 11, 2015 http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/hundreds-of-starving-cape-otway-koalas-killed-in-secret-culls-20150304-13un49.html; "Almost 700 Victorian Koalas Killed In Secret Cull," ABC News website, March 4, 2015, accessed March 11, 2015 http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-04/almost-700-victorian-koalas-killed-in-secret-cull/6280158.

[1105] Only in an online statement made by the International Fund for Animal Welfare was there any reference to the koala as "Our National Icon". See "Koala Cull Highlights A Bigger Problem," International Fund for Animal Welfare website, March 5, 2015, accessed March 11, 2015, https://www.ifaw.org/australia/news/koala-cull-highlights-bigger-problem

[1106] Of the articles I accessed, only two, in the *Geelong Advertiser*, and *The Australian*, had comments enabled.

[1107] "Hundreds Of Koalas Killed In Secret Cape Otway Cull," *Geelong Advertiser*, March 4, 2015, accessed March 11, 2015 https://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/news/geelong/hundreds-of-koalas-killed-in-secret-cape-otway-cull/comments-fnjuhovy-1227247247287; "Hundreds Of Victorian Koalas Killed Off In Secret Cull," *The Australian,* March 4, 2015, accessed March 11, 2015 https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/hundreds-of-victorian-koalas-killed-off-in-secret-cull/news-story/3bf5b32b6e55e84445da40bb3f4c0a1b&memtype=anonymous.

[1108] "Koala Cull Highlights A Bigger Problem," International Fund for Animal Welfare website, March 5, 2015, accessed March 11, 2015, https://www.ifaw.org/australia/news/koala-cull-highlights-bigger-problem.

[1109] Don Driscoll and Sam Banks, "The Grim Story Of The Snowy Mountains' Cannibal Horses," *The Conversation*, September 23, 2014, accessed March 11, 2015 http://theconversation.com/the-grim-story-of-the-snowy-mountains-cannibal-horses-31691; Gabrielle Chan, "A Time To Cull? The Battle Over Australia's Brumbies," *The Guardian*, August 20, 2014, accessed March 11, 2015 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/20/-sp-a-time-to-cull-the-battle-over-australias-brumbies.

[1110] Caldwell, interview; "Brumby Numbers Don't Add Up," *Tumut and Adelong Times*, June 14, 2013, accessed March 17, 2019 https://www.tatimes.com.au/brumby-numbers-dont-add-up/.

[1111] Rachael Brown, "Almost 700 Victorian Koalas Killed In Secret Cull," The World Today, ABC Radio March 4, 2015, transcript accessed March 11, 2015 https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/worldtoday/almost-700-victorian-koalas-killed-in-secret-cull/6280158.

defended. Why is this? If native species, including our most iconic animals, the kangaroo[1112] and the koala, can be culled with relatively little protest, why does such debate surround the brumby?

Adrian Franklin argues that this divergence of meanings, and the dissonance that is implicit within them, can be read as a lack of clarity regarding what it means to be Australian.[1113] Taking Franklin's argument further, I suggest that the impassioned defence of the brumby, when considered alongside the attendant claims of heritage significance, are symptomatic of a deep desire to belong, and to become naturalised in the Australian landscape. This is particularly true among Anglo-Australians. For example, the statement accompanying the petition titled "NSW Government – Stop the Slaughter of the Snowy Mountains Brumbies!" declared that protecting the brumbies is "protect[ing] the culture of European Australia".[1114] Elsewhere, a comment from a brumby supporter on the Facebook page of anti-brumby environmental group Save Kosci argues that "if you are Australian [horses] are your culture, like it or not."[1115] I contend that this strong identification with the brumby reflects an underlying settler anxiety, and that the brumby, when constructed as 'heritage', becomes legitimised as an avatar of belonging in a colonised land.

Horses, brumbies, and Australian anxieties of belonging

Anxieties of belonging are a consistent theme throughout the Australian studies discourse. This national disquiet is identified by scholars as symptomatic of the collective uncertainty regarding the moral right of Europeans to occupy the land,[1116] and is expressed through certain narratives. According to Peter Pierce, anxieties of belonging are evinced in the image of the lost child, a recurring motif in Australian art and literature.[1117] Pierce argues that where the death of adults is considered a natural, if unfortunate, consequence of settlement and development, the lives of children being cut short is "terrible, and … more than a personal and family matter. Their loss plays more heavily on the fears of Australians … emblematic either of the forfeiting of part of the national future, or of an anxiety that Australia will never truly welcome European settlement."[1118] Pierce

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[1112] ACT Government, "2018 Conservation Cull."
[1113] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 4.
[1114] Roberts, "NSW Government – Stop The Slaughter Of The Snowy Mountains Brumbies!"
[1115] Comment by Carmen Bajpe, in response to Alison Swain, Reclaim Kosci Facebook page, March 10, 2019, accessed March 11, 2019 https://www.facebook.com/ReclaimKosci/posts/363279964517804?comment_id=363280541184413&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R0%22%7D
[1116] Elder, *Being Australian*; Pierce, *The Country of Lost Children*; Peter Read, *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Welberry, "Wild Horses"; Slater, "Anxious Settler Belonging."
[1117] Pierce, *Lost Children*.
[1118] Pierce, *Lost Children*, 6.

reinforces the role that Aboriginal dispossession plays in this anxiety (rather than it being simply an ambiguous unease of living on foreign shores) by highlighting the irony of white children who have wandered away being found by black trackers, who have themselves been dispossessed of that same land.[1119] He concludes by expressing the belief that reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians holds the potential for a healing that might end the pervasive narrative of the lost child.[1120]

Elsewhere, Nicholas Smith explores Australian eco-nationalist discourses as they apply to the feral cat and the naturalised dog, the dingo. Smith outlines an inverse relationship between these two colonising animals. Where once the cat was a signifier of acclimatisation in Australia and the dingo was regarded as a pest, the cat is now seen as a feral invader, while the dingo is embraced within the post-colonial eco-nationalist discourse.[1121] Smith argues that this cultural dissociation from the cat is, in part, symptomatic of the simultaneous recognition and denial of European colonisers as another invading species.[1122] Conversely, the dingo's symbolic potency lies in its relatively recent naturalisation into the Australian environment, which renders it "open to identification by all colonisers."[1123]

Similarly, and of particular relevance, Karen Welberry analyses the role of the brumby in facilitating the process of indigenisation within settler Australian culture.[1124] Welberry frames her discussion around a critique of the book *In Search of a Wild Brumby*, by Michael Keenan, which she argues is "an increasingly frantic and fictionalised attempt to establish the virility and legitimate indigeneity of high country cattlemen and their brumby running culture."[1125] Welberry highlights the gendered narrative of the book, where masculinity is aligned with the dominant cultural norms of stockman culture, while environmentalism is feminised.[1126] She also draws attention to the ways Keenan has capitalised on the narrative of what Ken Gelder and Jane Jacobs term the "marginalised majority", by manufacturing an association between the mountain stockmen and indigenous traditions.[1127] According to Welberry, Keenan does this through the narrative of Ernie Maskey,[1128] a

[1119] Pierce, *Lost Children*, 11, and elsewhere.
[1120] Pierce, *Lost Children*, 201.
[1121] Smith, "The Howl And The Pussy."
[1122] Smith, "The Howl And The Pussy," 302.
[1123] Smith, "The Howl And The Pussy," 302.
[1124] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 23.
[1125] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 26.
[1126] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 27-8.
[1127] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 28.
[1128] Maskey was also one of the primary informants of the "Report Of The Heritage Working Party On The Horses Of The Guy Fawkes River National Park To The Minister For The Environment", a report that highlighted

man whose Aboriginality Keenan cites "as if to give objectivity and credence to views about mountain culture which he shares."[1129] As Welberry points out, of all the stories that could be told about horses in Australia, it is these narratives—of masculinity, heritage, and personal identity—that are the ones that are repeatedly told—and uncritically accepted.[1130] As Welberry concludes:

> There are, indeed, many other stories which *could* be constructed from the facts of horse treatment in Australia. In this context, it is salutary that the stories that do emerge, such as Keenan's *In Search of a Wild Brumby*, often romantically use the figure of the horse to focus broader issues of belonging and identity.[1131]

What the critiques of Pierce, Smith and Welberry all demonstrate is that there is an undercurrent of tension in the Australian psyche, which stems directly from the eighteenth-century colonial project that led to the death and dispossession of thousands of Aboriginal people. Widespread acknowledgement of this fact today remains contentious. There has been no widespread national acknowledgement of this history. While it is recognised by many, particularly within the academic context,[1132] there is a certain quadrant of Australian society among whom the notion of colonial invasion, and the resulting inter-generational inequality and systemic racism suffered by Aboriginal Australians, is met with denial.[1133] This debate that forms the crux of Australia's 'history wars'. By being thus titled—a matter of 'history'—it is implied that the issue under contention is factual accuracy relating to the events of the past, yet in truth this is a debate that touches at the very heart of what being Australian means.

(or manufactured) the heritage significance of the Guy Fawkes River brumbies. See "Report Of The Heritage Working Party: Volume 1," 22; complete transcript included in Volume 2.

[1129] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 29.

[1130] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 23-4.

[1131] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 31.

[1132] Academia is a field that generally facilitates and supports the expression of cultural criticism (Gardner, "Contested Terrain," 14).

[1133] For example, see: Clarissa Bye, "UNSW Rewrites The History Books To State Cook 'Invaded' Australia," *Daily Telegraph* March 30, 2016, 1, 7, and the resultant reportage and commentary around this story: "Uni Students Told To Refer To Rewriting Of Australian History," *The Australian* March 30, 2016, accessed October 15, 2017 http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/uni-students-told-to-refer-to-rewriting-of-australian-history/news-story/eef43896f73dd88485937e8ab2d1b895; Tony Taylor, "Australia's 'History Wars' Reignite," *The Conversation* March 31, 2016, accessed October 15, 2017 http://theconversation.com/australias-history-wars-reignite-57065; Paul Daley, "It's Not 'Politically Correct' To Say Australia Was Invaded, It's History," *The Guardian* March 29, 2016, accessed October 15, 2017 https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2016/mar/30/its-not-politically-correct-to-say-australia-was-invaded-its-history; Lindy Kerin, "UNSW Defends Indigenous Guidelines Amidst Claims Of 'Whitewashing' And 'Rewriting' History," ABC.net.au March 31, 2016, accessed October 15, 2017 http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-30/unsw-defends-indigenous-guidelines/7285020.

As scholars of affect and emotion point out, affective practices also have categories of desire—some of these practices are valued, some are admired, and some are reviled.[1134] Within this hierarchy of feeling, the denial of discourses pertaining to Aboriginal dispossession may constitute an affective practice in itself. Further to this, in highlighting the ways the horse narrative has been used as a locus for issues of identity and belonging in Australia, Welberry infers there may be an overlap between those who maintain the denial of Australia's bloody past, and those who support the presence of the brumby.[1135] That is, there may be some correspondence in the affective hierarchy adopted by those whose affective practice privileges the brumby, with a subsequent revulsion for the emotions of shame and guilt attendant upon recognising Australia's bloody colonial origins.

To further contextualise the brumby within this discourse of cultural anxiety, we must return to the earlier discussion of natural versus cultural heritage. Accepting the widely-supported convention that the natural world is distinct from the cultural realm (where the former is typically characterised as largely untouched by humanity, while the latter is generally understood to be a product of intentioned human design) necessitates positioning both nature and culture within the same value system. This in turn recognises that, when the two are in opposition, one must inevitably be prioritised in favour of the other. While the underlying issues may be more complex, Lowenthal highlights that when nature and culture are in conflict, it is often the cultural that will be defended, for "[h]owever deeply we may love nature, most of us identify more easily with human relics and rise more readily to their defence."[1136] This can be seen when considering the brumby. Those who recognise the value of the wilderness spaces that are under threat by brumbies generally have direct experience or academic knowledge of such places, while the emotional appeal of the brumby—its affective reach—is considerably broader, and functions without recourse to direct experience. A personal sense of 'heritage' is sufficient for the affective appeal of the brumby to be internalised. Despite the fact that those with direct heritage links to the brumby lie in the minority, the iconic status of this animal means it has been subsumed into the national imagination. Pro-brumby narratives appear in the mainstream national media, including *The Sydney Morning Herald,*[1137]

[1134] Wetherell et al, "Introduction," 6.
[1135] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 31.
[1136] Here Lowenthal's reference to culture infers the culture in question is of course one's own culture, not of the 'other'. Lowenthal, "Nature And Cultural Heritage," 86.
[1137] One particular article published there includes the statement that "[t]he infinitely less glamorous endangered broad-toothed rat is having its habitat beneath grass and herbs trampled by the horses in Kosciuszko - though, to be fair, it is more likely the rats will be picked off by predatory feral foxes and cats. And unlike other introduced carnivorous animals, horses are not predators, but gentle herbivores. They just want some nice grass to eat." Chenery, "The Brumbies Fight For Survival."

Australian Geographic,[1138] and *The Australian Women's Weekly*.[1139] These contribute to the brumby's presence within these contested landscapes attracting support from among the general population, regardless of whether they have ever seen a brumby.[1140]

The culturally-constructed nature of the concept of heritage is clear. If we position the brumby debate within the 'nature versus culture' dichotomy, then the brumby, as a culturally-constructed embodiment of the concept of heritage, must be positioned *in opposition* to nature. In this context, the wide support among the general population for the brumby perfectly illustrates Lowenthal's argument. As a cultural construct—a "human relic", in Lowenthal's terms—the brumby is, unsurprisingly, defended. Yet on an essentialist level, this argument does not make sense. The brumby is a horse, and is therefore distinctly non-human. On this basis then it should be aligned with the 'natural', yet it does not belong within the nature described by the National Parks Act of 1977. How then can it be understood? This paradoxical arrangement can only make sense if it is reframed. By replacing the brumby with the figure of the human—that is, rather than horses despoiling the wild spaces of nature we have human beings doing so—then the issue is immediately recontextualised as one where the presence of the (white, Anglo-European) *human* is perceived as contested, rather than the *horse*. In this way, the brumby can be seen as functioning as an avatar of belonging, and the brumby debates can be read as another expression of Australia's anxieties of belonging. The debate suddenly takes on a new meaning, and the discourse of heritage which underpins it is revealed, in this context, to be a tool of settler-colonial legitimacy.

Here I once again draw on the work of Welberry. She cites *The Silver Brumby,* a series of books written by Elyne Mitchell[1141] for children, but ultimately consumed by a broader audience, to demonstrate the symbolic power of the horse as an agent of belonging in Australia (see Figure 6.1). Welberry argues that in these texts, the eponymous equine characters, which are written so as to be the characters readers most identify with, "signally became more 'native'/suited to life in the high country than legitimately native animals and/or indigenous trackers employed to hunt them down".[1142] This is affirmed by the frequent use of Aboriginal (or Aboriginal-sounding) names for the equine characters. 'Thowra' in the book is named for the wind, for "[i]n wind were you born, and

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[1138] Burdon, "Where The Wild Horses Are," 71-83.
[1139] Hadgraft, "The Fight To Save Snowy's Brumbies," 31-34.
[1140] Anecdotal evidence from Rob Gibbs indicates that for most people he speaks with, the brumby as part of the landscape is normalised. When they are made aware of the environmental issues, they may reconsider, however the default position is one of acceptance (interview).
[1141] It is interesting to note that Elyne Mitchell's father was Harry Chauvel, commander of the Desert Mounted Corp, who we met in Chapter 3. See *National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment & Conflicting Values Report*.
[1142] Welberry, "Wild Horses," 25.

fleet as the wind must you be if you will live."[1143] While this appropriation of Aboriginal language is not made explicit in the book, according to Wikipedia, Thowra is "the Aboriginal word for 'wind'."[1144] Other appropriated-sounding names include Bel Bel, Boob Boon, Kunama, and Baringa. In this context, the brumbies are thereby reframed, not as feral or pest animals, but as animals that rightfully belong in the Australian landscape. In Welberry's analysis, these horses epitomise the idea that "the 'best' intruder could 'earn the right' to live in a privileged virgin space through demonstrating the ability to 'read' and survive the landscape more effectively than pretenders to that title".[1145] This is also evident in Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River", where "the gorges deep and black" are conquered by the Man and his horse.

Figure 6.1: The Silver Brumby being used to promote 'Australian stories' available in e-book format at a public library.

1143 Elyne Mitchell, *The Silver Brumby* (HarperCollins) electronic edition.
1144 "Silver Brumby," Wikipedia, accessed July 15, 2019 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silver_Brumby#Thowra
1145 Welberry, 24-25.

The *Brumby* stories revolve around the silver stallion Thowra, his descendants, and their respective herds. Published over a forty-year period from 1958, the stories present Thowra as the hero in his quest to elude capture by humans—though it is Thowra's colouring, rather than his environmental impact, that provides the impetus for him to be hunted in the books. Thowra, unlike most real brumbies, is depicted as distinctively *pale* in colour, giving further credence to the notion that the brumbies can be read as projections of white settlers. Further, this story functions within the frameworks of the underdog schematic template. Thowra's fate, through no fault of his own, is "[to be] hunted by man, since [he] was so strange-looking in the wild herds. And this colt would have another enemy too, every stallion would be doubly against him because of his colour."[1146] Nonetheless, using his wits and knowledge of bushcraft, Thowra triumphs over his adversaries. The story's framing within the narrative arc of the underdog schematic template taps into the underlying power of this cultural construct, while simultaneously reinforcing the power of the horse discourse more broadly—and of the brumby within that.

While the books have proved hugely popular, the story's dissemination through other media has extended its generational reach. In 1993 a live-action film was released based on the book, and the following year saw an animated series screened on Australian television. This spanned 3 series and 39 episodes, airing from 1994 until 1998. These productions doubtless contribute to the sentimental view that many Australians have of brumbies in the High Country, particularly when considering that most readers (or viewers) first encounter the character during the impressionable years of childhood.[1147]

The world of *The Silvery Brumby* exists within the same cultural space as "The Man from Snowy River",[1148] a world that heroises horses and horsemanship, and positions an authentic Australian identity as one that retains mastery over the land. Both are continually evoked in articles relating to the brumby, and the brumby debates.[1149] Not only does this reinforce the conjunction

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[1146] Mitchell, *The Silver Brumby*.

[1147] Comments on book review website Goodreads, where the book scores a rating of 4.31 out of 5, include "Honest to God this series is my entire childhood" (Jamieson, March 13, 2017); "this whole series was such a vivid childhood favourite for me." (Arielle Walker, August 21, 2013); "The Silver Brumby books were my absolute favourite when I was a horse-crazy girl in primary school." (Justine, July 11, 2013); "…the five stars are for how much I loved this book twenty years ago and how much I still love it now." (Abigail, June 25, 2018); "When I was a teenager, The Silver Brumby was one of my favourite movies. I watched it over and over again." (Dominique, April 21, 2019). Goodreads website, accessed July 13, 2019 https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1180574.The_Silver_Brumby

[1148] In 1982 a book version of *The Man from Snowy River* film was released. It was authored by Elyne Mitchell.

[1149] See for example: John Ellicott, "Classic Wild Horse Of The Snowies Looks Certain To Lose His Freedom," *The Land*, May 4, 2018, accessed July 13, 2019 https://www.theland.com.au/story/5378505/paleface-adios-brumby-trapping-may-snare-parks-famous-stallion/; French, "A Debate Gone Feral;" Matthew Higgins, "Elyne Mitchell And Brumbies Reign Supreme," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 9, 2014, accessed July 15, 2019

between these cultural productions, and public attitudes towards the brumbies, but it assumes a shared experience of familiarity with these texts. Once again, we see constructions of Australianness (which here includes the brumby) aligned with a white, rural, masculine identity.

When positioned as an animal that embodies an iconic national heritage, it becomes more difficult to consider the brumby as an interloper. Instead of being perceived as a feral animal compromising native landscapes, the brumby becomes a symbol of identity that belongs in the spaces where it is found.[1150] These spaces, such as the Snowy Mountains region of Australia, have been allocated to it by the cultural representations of a white, settler society. Beginning with 'Banjo' Paterson and percolating throughout representations across a number of media—movies, books, television, exhibitions, and sporting celebrations—the narrative of the brumby as a symbol of Australian identity has been internalised to the point where the brumby functions as an avatar of belonging for many white Anglo-Australians.

In addition to the brumby debates, the horse has featured elsewhere in the tug-of-war of community heritage. It has been a recurring trope in tournaments of value where ownership and land use is contested among settler, non-Aboriginal communities. For example, in Tasmania during the 1990s, conflict arose when vast tracts of land in the Central Plateau were reclassified as 'wilderness.'[1151] These disputes centred on access, with the reclassification generating hostility from the local community when it was revealed that the wilderness designation would put an end to horse-riding within the area. Writing of the conflict between environmental managers and the local community, Simon Cubit argues that the Anglo-Europeans residents in Tasmania "saw the plateau as a robust environment with resources that should be used as a living cultural landscape bearing the imprints and stories of their ancestors and as a place where community values and traditions were passed on to younger generations."[1152] What Cubit here describes is essentially an argument about community heritage. Similar disputes have been repeated in the Blue Mountains,[1153] and the Snowy River region.[1154] What they have in common with the brumby debate is that they are also

https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/elyne-mitchell-and-the-brumbies-reign-supreme-20140609-zs1jx.html; Minard, "Why Do Brumbies Evoke Such Passion?"; Foden, "Debate Over Kosciuszko National Park;" Adams, "The Cultural Meanings Of Wild Horses."

[1150] The horse is viewed as so intrinsic to Australia that some citizens remain unaware that the horse is not, in fact, native to this continent. When explaining the gist of my thesis topic to my hairdresser, he asked, "But horses are native to Australia, aren't they?" (Personal communication, November 11, 2015). See also Melville et al, *National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment*, 104, 110.

[1151] Cubit, "Tournaments Of Value."

[1152] Cubit, "Tournaments Of Value," 400.

[1153] Kilbey, *The Man from Cox's River*, (2014).

[1154] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."

"tournaments of value",[1155] where the local community's definition of heritage, and what is valued as significant, is in direct opposition to the values prioritised by environmental advocates.

Thought-provoking (though limited) scholarship exists focusing on the legal aspects of such tournaments of value. This work found that private interests, motivated by self-interest, are more effective at gaining privileges than publicly-motivated groups, or even the State itself.[1156] In parallel examples drawn from the United States, New Zealand and Australia, it was demonstrated that graziers successfully achieved greater access to land than they were legally entitled to. This was true across all three case studies. It was found that those advocating for their individual rights to access land utilised several common tactics, including the representation of their interests as aligned with the dominant national iconography.[1157] This supports the argument made by Richard White, who, in discussing the influences that comprise the construction of national identities, wrote "[e]very powerful economic interest likes to justify itself by claiming to represent the 'national interest' and identifying itself within 'national identity'."[1158]

The Australian case study illustrating these arguments examined the 2005-2006 expiration of grazing licenses in Victoria's Alpine National Park (the continuation of the Snowy Mountain range past the NSW state border). For graziers local to the area, the Alpine region provided excellent grazing opportunities, and cattle would be driven up into the High Country as the snow receded to fatten, returning at the end of the season. In 2005, the Victorian State Government announced that these licenses would not be renewed, due to concerns over the environmental impact of cattle on the fragile Alpine ecosystem. The outcry among graziers subsequently prompted the then-Federal Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, to attempt an emergency heritage listing under the Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act (1999). Campbell stated that he was "adamant about the importance of alpine grazing to the heritage of Australia", [1159] and proposed that it be heritage listed. The Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria had repeatedly linked

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[1155] Cubit, "Tournaments Of Value."
[1156] Brower et al, "The Cowboy, The Southern Man, And The Man From Snowy River," 455.
[1157] Brower et al, "The Cowboy, The Southern Man, And The Man From Snowy River," 458.
[1158] Richard White, *Inventing Australia*, ix.
[1159] Hansard, "Environment, Communications, Information Technology And The Arts Legislation Committee, Estimates Committee," Senate, May 26, 2006, accessed November 19, 2015 http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Dataset%3AcomSen,estimate%20Decade%3A%222000s%22%20Year%3A%222005%22%20Month%3A%2205%22%20CommitteeName_Phrase%3A%22environment,%20communications,%20information%20technology%20and%20the%20arts%20legislation%20committee%22%20Questioner_Phrase%3A%22senator%20ian%20campbell%22;rec=1;resCount=Default

their grazing practices to the figure of The Man from Snowy River,[1160] and this was taken up by Campbell, who argued in Parliament that:

> *The Man from Snowy River* and the involvement of mountain cattlemen droving cattle up into the alpine region, which has been going on for 170 years, is without any doubt, in my mind, an absolutely intrinsic part of the Australian story and a part of our heritage.[1161]

This repeated reference to Paterson's invention is curious for two reasons. First that a purely fictional persona should hold so much import, and second, because there is no mention of cattle or alpine grazing in the poem at all. The connection appears to have been inferred, without any concrete basis upon which to found this comparison between the grazing practices of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association and a rough-riding stockman who chased feral horses in a work of fiction. In an ironic twist, when questioned in Parliament about the potential damage to eco-systems caused by grazing Campbell was quick to point to the destruction caused by brumbies.[1162]

While it was ultimately found that Federal parliament lacked the authority to intervene on this matter of State management, the example demonstrates that a claim of self-interest masquerading as heritage might fail on a legal basis, but retain its political efficacy.[1163] In the context of Kosciuszko National Park and the Snowy Mountains of NSW, Rob Gibbs is of the opinion that there are stakeholder groups whose objective is to re-introduce high country cattle grazing, and who are using the brumby issue as leverage.[1164] This links to a broader history in Australia of the legitimising power of the rural narrative. Though sectors of the urban population may well identify with this rural mythology, the fact remains that it is not representative of the majority of Australian historical and contemporary experience.

Further, it is worth highlighting that this discussion on heritage values—whether of brumbies, or of Alpine grazing—is located entirely within settler culture. Those who frame the brumby as heritage—that is, as intrinsic to personal and community identity—are referring specifically to a rural, white, Anglo-European identity. None of these constructions of significance take into account

[1160] Brower et al, "The Cowboy, The Southern Man, And The Man From Snowy River," 488.
[1161] Hansard, "Environment, Communications, Information Technology And The Arts Legislation Committee, Estimates Committee," Senate, May 26, 2006.
[1162] Hansard, "Environment, Communications, Information Technology And The Arts Legislation Committee, Estimates Committee," Senate, May 26, 2006.
[1163] Brower et al, "The Cowboy, The Southern Man, And The Man From Snowy River," 491. With the change of Victoria's government in 2010 limited grazing was reintroduced, before finally being banned, again with a change in government, in 2014.
[1164] Gibbs, interview.

an Aboriginal perspective of heritage, though many attempt to capitalise on widely-recognised understandings of Aboriginal connections to 'country'.[1165] Laurajane Smith argues that the perception among some rural communities that Aboriginal cultural claims carry political legitimacy has led to their appropriation. They are then re-deployed to serve the political agendas of settler culture.[1166] This is evident in statements such as this one, made by Leisa Caldwell: "Similar to our Indigenous friends, we too have a profound and unique culture and history in the mountains, and it also deserves preservation, as well as celebration."[1167] Likewise, in the example of expired grazing licences in Victoria's High Country, Doug Treasure, the president of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association, argued that "the mountain cattlemen have exactly the same emotional attachment to land they have cared for" as the Aboriginal people.[1168] The use of the term 'Country' has also been employed in such contexts. This, argues Smith, is an attempt to capitalise on the commonly understood Aboriginal meaning of the word.[1169] Here, the discourse of 'country', which signifies belonging, and a spiritual connection to place,[1170] is appropriated by non-Aboriginals to legitimise narratives of belonging—and exclusion. [1171]

Before I move to the next section, I wish to briefly explore another way in which these anxieties of belongings might be read in the brumby debates. Implicit within the desire to control or manage the landscape in a state that is subjectively defined as 'pristine' or 'wild' might also be symptomatic of the desire to belong. Franklin argues that care of the land was one way that Australians could assert their "right" to be here.[1172] As he writes, "[h]ow we feel about ourselves works its way through and becomes worked out through our dealing with nature, that entity we need more than anything else to become embedded in, to own, to be naturalised into."[1173] This is equally applicable to both those who defend the brumby's existence within national parks, and those who seek to exclude it. While outside the scope of the current research, this idea has potential for further investigation.

[1165] For examples, see Brower et al, 485; Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 162-192; Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."
[1166] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 191.
[1167] Caldwell, "Protect The Snowies: Videos."
[1168] Brower et al, "The Cowboy, The Southern Man, And The Man From Snowy River," 485.
[1169] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 175-76.
[1170]Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 174-78.
[1171] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 184.
[1172] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 17.
[1173] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 4.

The horse in Aboriginal cosmology

This thesis is situated firmly within settler culture and thus does not attempt a comparative analysis of the horse within Aboriginal culture. Nonetheless, a brief treatment of this topic is necessary. Broadly speaking, the horse is not generally a figure of significance within the Aboriginal cosmological frameworks,[1174] though cattle have become so.[1175] In many ways, the Aboriginal use of the horse during the pastoral advance echoed the instrumental values placed on this animal by colonisers. Historian Ann McGrath notes that the horse provided an effective means of travel, and enabled speedy access to hunting grounds.[1176] However, walking was preferred when time was not an issue,[1177] a fact that reinforces a more functional view of the horse. This is not to deny the many Aboriginal people who became consummate horsemen and women through the nineteenth century pastoral advance.[1178] McGrath, writing of Australia's northern-most frontier in the period from 1910-1940, points out that the Aboriginal people employed in station work were doing so on their traditional lands.[1179] She writes:

> [t]he 'untamed' nature of the Territory landscape, and the absence of fences meant the Aborigines themselves were the boundary-riders of the frontier, in both a material and cultural sense. They could travel relatively freely between the cultural worlds of station and bush. … On horseback they were pioneers who opened the land for pastoral enterprises; on foot they were the traditional landowners and users: the resistance.[1180]

McGrath argues that in this employment, and the mobility and status it facilitated, was a sense of pride.[1181] Further to this, the horse was the means of retaining a connection to country that such work offered.[1182]

Elsewhere, feral horses can be understood, alongside other non-native species, as one of many participants in a complex and inter-woven construction of 'country'.[1183] As Franklin writes:

[1174] Dr Natasha Fijn, personal communication, February 13, 2014. See also McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 152.
[1175] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 149.
[1176] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 46.
[1177] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 46, 152.
[1178] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*.
[1179] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 24.
[1180] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 23.
[1181] McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 148.
[1182] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, 146.
[1183] Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs'," 166-92; McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, 149.

> Aboriginal people work with a concept of the landscape as it is, as they 'find it' and as they work with it. They are not concerned with what a proper Australia should be with its identity, natural or social, relative to other nations. This can only be the concern of those in the grip of nationalism.[1184]

While I do not dispute that this is the case for many Aboriginal people, I am interested in Franklin's construction of Aboriginality in this context, which strikes me as reminiscent of the similarly essentialist constructions of Australian identity that this thesis challenges. Franklin is here drawing on a particular understanding of Aboriginality that may not reflect the heterogeneity of this group of people. For example, Aboriginal identities and Aboriginality are being drawn on in the campaign against the feral horses in the Kosciuszko landscape.[1185] Richard Swain, campaign director for conservation group Reclaim Kosci and volunteer spokesperson for the Invasive Species Council, actively draws on his Wiradjuri heritage in positioning himself in opposition to the brumbies.[1186] Swain, alongside Yuin elder Uncle Max Harrison, arranged a traditional Narjong (water healing) ceremony for the Murrumbidgee River. Held in March 2019 at the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee in Kosciuszko National Park, the ceremony brought together Aboriginal groups from across south-eastern Australia, representing all areas of the Murrundi (Murray) River system.[1187] This was the first time since 1860 that such a gathering had occurred, and represent ted a potent message to settler culture that, in the words of Swain, "the land you are standing on, that is your heritage. And the responsibility of caring for that country, and protecting that country, needs to be our culture."[1188]

Australian Aboriginal peoples have demonstrated significant intellectual flexibility in their incorporation of outside influences, including Christianity and the culture of pastoralism, into traditional world-views.[1189] However, as with any large collective of people, there is a diversity of opinions among Aboriginal individuals, families, and communities. These reflect a spectrum of understandings relating to feral species in the landscape.[1190]While some Aboriginal people and communities see the presence of any animal in the landscape as indicative of healthy country, others

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[1184] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 174.
[1185] Justin McManus and Finbar O'Mallon, "Ancient Rite, Modern Fight: How Brumbies Are Breaking The Landscape," *The Sydney Morning Herald* March 10, 2019, accessed July 17, 2019 https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/ancient-rite-modern-fight-how-brumbies-are-breaking-the-landscape-20190308-p512nw.html
[1186] See for example: "AWAYE! Healing Our Rivers," Radio National, March 16, 2019 https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/awaye/healing-our-rivers/10901592 audio available at https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2019/03/aye_20190316_1807.mp3
French, "A Debate Gone Feral;" Hunt and Becker, "Brumby 'Backflip'."
[1187] McManus and O'Mallon, "Ancient Rite, Modern Fight."
[1188] "Awaye! Healing Our Rivers."
[1189] See Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 175; Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs'," 631, 633.
[1190] Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs'."

wish to see the damaging effects of some species minimised.[1191] Any essentialist notions of Aboriginality, and what Aboriginal people might 'want' in relation to feral species—particularly when being offered to support a particular settler viewpoint—should be treated with caution.

David Trigger points out that on landscape health maps, the highly disturbed landscapes of south-eastern Australia almost exactly overlap with the disturbance colonisation has wrought upon local Aboriginal communities.[1192] Trigger argues that "these two geo-spatial records of colonisation are unmistakeably connected in the national consciousness of Australian society."[1193] Significantly, the emotional heartland of the brumby, the Australian Alps, lies within this region, while the more common range of the brumby falls outside it. That is, the most prevalent area where white settlement and brumby habitation coincide is the Australian Alps. Taking the most conservative estimate of 400,000 horses, which does not account for subsequent population growth,[1194] the 6,000 brumbies residing in the Australian Alps represents 1.5% of the overall brumby population, yet they are the horses universally conjured in people's minds by the brumby debate. While large numbers of brumbies range through traditional Aboriginal lands in north and central Australia, the small percentage that inhabit the Snowy Mountains, and other areas of settlement such as the Guy Fawkes River, generate the majority of the support for the fate of feral horses. This divide between brumbies and settler communities illustrates how the horse holds greater cultural significance to settler Australians than it does to Aboriginal Australians. Further, it demonstrates a point made by Rob Gibbs, who observed that:

> [It's interesting that] White Australia has a much stronger affinity and attachment to an introduced species than they do with the native species that are here. ... There's not too many Australians who jump up and down about wholesale culls of eastern grey kangaroos, but you start talking about culling horses…[1195]

This is in direct contrast to the previously discussed work of Nicholas Smith on the dominance of eco-nationalist discourses. This, I contend, is due to the brumby's significance as a symbol of settler belonging. Another iconic symbol associated with the brumby—due to the ongoing and indelible

[1191] See for example McManus and O'Mallon, "Ancient Rite, Modern Fight;" Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs'," 632.
[1192] Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs'," 629.
[1193] Trigger, "Indigeneity, Ferality, And What 'Belongs'," 629.
[1194] This figure is based on aerial surveys, however it dates from 1993. The more recent estimate of 1 million individuals (see Burdon, "Where The Wild Horses Are," 76) is based on unmanaged breeding rates of up to 20% per annum. Swain, personal communication, August 26, 2019.
[1195] Gibbs interview.

influence of Paterson's Man from Snowy River on our cultural imagination—is the figure of the stockman, to which I now turn.

The Stockman: an Australian "unity"

The Man from Snowy River was, first and foremost, a stockman. He is almost always represented mounted on a horse and brandishing a stockwhip, and this characterisation has come to represent all stockmen, as the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria demonstrated through their repeated evocation of the Man from Snowy River, a poem that has nothing to do with cattle grazing.[1196] Through his universal depiction as mounted, the horse has become integral to the figure of the stockman. This illustrates an additional example of the horse's instrumental function—its deployment conveys the power to turn the man, into a *stockman*. It is here that we find an Australian example of Shaw's "unity", discussed in Chapter 3, where the horse-and-rider function as a single agent.[1197] However, unlike the real historical figures of the Duke of Wellington and Copenhagen, the Australian unity exists outside the field of historical enquiry, in the realm of folklore. Nonetheless, the "mytho-historical"[1198] stockman has had a notable impact on Australia's frontier history.

This character is described by researcher Nanette Mantle as a bricolage of the fox-hunting gentleman of England, the chivalrous cavalryman of the army, and the knight errant.[1199] Despite the widespread mechanisation of farm labour, the image of the mounted stockman continues to dominate cultural representations of Australia.[1200] One notable example of this lies in the opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Olympic opening ceremonies are recognised by scholars as productive sites of national narratives,[1201] and the Sydney event offers a useful demonstration of the way the idealised figure of the stockman, epitomised by Paterson's fictional Man hailing from the Snowy River, continues to infiltrate contemporary representations of Australia. In this performance, a single galloping stockman entered the darkened stadium; pausing only long enough for his mount to rear up theatrically beneath the spotlights, he galloped off, cracking his stockwhip as he went. The

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[1196] Brower et al, "The Cowboy, The Southern Man, And The Man From Snowy River," 488.
[1197] Shaw, "Torturer's Horse," 161.
[1198] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 2.
[1199] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 59-60.
[1200] This idea has such cultural cache that it has now acquired cliché status. In the episode "Summit Attempt" of the satirical comedy *Utopia*, the marketing team take the Head of Department's idea for a conference and transform it into the blatantly ridiculous "Summit On The Summit", envisioning delegates mounted on horseback, wearing Akubra hats and Drizabones, and holding stockwhips, all gathered atop Mt Kosciusko for a promotional photo shoot (Series 2, episode 8, Australian Broadcasting Commission 2015).
[1201] Teresa Heinz Housel, "Australian Nationalism And Globalization: Narratives Of The Nation In The 2000 Sydney Olympics' Opening Ceremony," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (2007):450.

music swelled, and 120 similarly-mounted figures entered the arena. Clad in Drizabones and wearing Akubras, these equestrians performed a choreographed routine to the theme song of the 1982 film version of *The Man from Snowy River*. The unity of man-and-horse that comprises the figure of the stockman (irrespective of whether the rider happens to be a woman) is deeply embedded in Australia's cultural imagination.

Much cultural capital has been invested in mythologising the figure of the stockman, including the establishment of The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre (ASHOF) in Longreach, Queensland. This institution was first conceived of in the 1970s, and, after much community fundraising, finally opened in 1988 after receiving both State and Federal government funding as a Bicentennial project. Welcoming around 1.5 million visitors[1202] in the 30 years since opening,[1203] the organisation boasts that it receives no ongoing government support.[1204] The site celebrates the "custodians of the bush",[1205] those "pioneering [and] brave settlers [who] had to clear scrub, build huts and *tame difficult land* in order to forge a living and *bring wealth to the inland*."[1206] Again, we see the rhetoric of taming the land, making it productive in a way that the Aboriginal inhabitants, it is implied, had not. Anthropologist Veronica Strang argues that the ASHOF was a reactionary response by conservatives to the ideological threat represented by the shifting social landscape heralded by the counter-cultural revolution of the 1960s and 70s.[1207]

It is worth noting that the pioneering rhetoric that characterises the ASHOF's website is now largely absent from its physical galleries.[1208] Following criticism at the time of opening, the galleries were redeveloped in 2003, to incorporate a greater emphasis on the roles played in opening up the outback by women and Aboriginal people. However, in conducting visitor research at the site, Laurajane Smith found that, despite these interpretive interventions, the presence of more inclusive, less Anglo-masculine histories was overlooked by most visitors.[1209] The overarching narrative of a

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[1202] The majority of whom are Australian. See Veronica Strang, "Moon Shadows: Aboriginal And European Heroes In An Australian Landscape," in *Landscape, Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 130.
[1203] Kirili Lamb, "Celebrating Milestone Of Australian Stockman's Hall Of Fame," Rural Weekly, May 10, 2018, accessed July 13, 2019 https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/rural-weekly/celebrating-milestone-of-australian-stockmans-hall-of-fame/news-story/43327e36e0a70014361d7162f9c9803d
[1204] "Our Story," Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame website, accessed July 13, 2019 https://outbackheritage.com.au/our-story/
[1205] Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame website, accessed July 13, 2019 https://outbackheritage.com.au/
[1206] "Galleries And Exhibits," Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame website, accessed July 13, 2019 https://outbackheritage.com.au/galleries-exhibits/, my italics.
[1207] Strang, "Moon Shadows," 120.
[1208] I visited the ASHOF in 2015, and found the exhibits to be well-balanced, lacking the parochialism I had anticipated. The exception to this was the introductory film.
[1209] Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity."

white, masculine ideal as promulgated by the bush ballads retained its power—the authorised heritage discourse at work.

Smith's research found that visitors arrived at the Stockman's Hall of Fame cherishing inherent notions of outback heritage, which were reinforced rather than challenged by their visit. Even visitors purportedly seeking alternative narratives did not seem to find them, as articulated by this visitor:

> I mean you're walking around here but you're not taking away the message that Aboriginal stockmen were involved, but I'm sort of thinking where were they, or not even thinking about them at all 'cos there's nothing really to cause me to think about them.[1210]

This was the case even after attempts had been made by the Hall of Fame to disrupt such preconceived notions, leading Smith to conclude that:

> messages and meanings taken from heritage and museums cannot always be controlled by the intentions of curatorial or interpretive staff, … suggest[ing] such places may play more complex and uncertain roles as agents of cultural production.[1211]

What Smith's research establishes is that the AHD is larger than individual attempts to define or interpret it. The research further demonstrates that the influence of overarching cultural mythologies cannot easily be destabilised, regardless of the accuracy or truth of these interventions. Elder, while not writing specifically about heritage, could easily be referencing the notion of the AHD when she states that "the longevity or centrality of particular national stories does not reflect the truth of these stories or their accuracy; rather, it reflects the power of the story. … Over time, the dominant story or representational codes become naturalised".[1212] The myth of the stockman as the great hero of the Australian outback has certainly been naturalised, and continues to be disseminated, as is his rural, masculine idealised identity. While these aspects are indeed problematic, the larger issue lies in the unacknowledged role that this figure played in Australia's colonisation.

[1210] Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity," 479.
[1211] Smith, "Pilgrimage Of Masculinity," 482.
[1212] Elder, *Being Australian*, 25-27.

Mantle has argued that the elevation of the stockman to mytho-heroic status, and the hyper-masculinity of the bushman's code, serve to mask the darker truth of Aboriginal dispossession.[1213] Tim Flannery concurs. In a 2003 *Quarterly Essay*, he writes:

> 'The Man from Snowy River' is an archetypal Australian hero–one of the brave Aussies who tamed the rugged land […] Yet our worship of the self-reliant stockman neatly side-steps the fact that the men of the cattle frontier were the shock troops in our Aboriginal wars.[1214]

The stockman played a key role in the colonisation of Australia, and the dispossession of the continent's first inhabitants. Returning to the example of the Sydney Olympic opening ceremony described previously in this chapter, it is significant that this display of equestrianism preceded any representation of Aboriginal history and culture, in a performance that was staged for a global audience. In this context, the figure of the stockman can be read as symbolically effacing the pre-colonial history of Australia and her first inhabitants, while the ceremony as a whole naturalised notions of colonisation and industrialisation as progressive and inevitable.[1215]

The Aboriginal people, occupants of the Australian continent for over 50,000 years, were systematically dispossessed of their land when settlers arrived in the late eighteenth century, and the identity myth of the stockman evolved, at least in part, to suppress the brutal realities of frontier conflict.[1216] As already discussed, the physical displacement of Aboriginal people can be charted alongside the pastoral and agricultural expansion of the colonists, a process in which the stockman, and his horse, were integral.[1217]

Conclusion

This chapter has used the framework of heritage to explore the significance continually ascribed to the horse for Australians. Here we see the term 'heritage' deployed as a catch-all, often associated with issues of personal identity, rather than the legislative frameworks that it technically represents. In examples drawn on in this chapter, government ministers at both State and Federal level invoke limited understandings of the term, while the governments of these same ministers are charged with implementing and managing the legislative frameworks of Australia's heritage. Smith and

[1213] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 2.
[1214] Tim Flannery, "Beautiful Lies: Population And Environment In Australia," *Quarterly Essay,* Adobe eReader edition, Melbourne, Black Inc., 2003.
[1215] Housel, "Australian Nationalism And Globalization," 451.
[1216] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 3.
[1217] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*.

Campbell's research relating to distinct understandings and interpretations of the word 'heritage' between people of different (but still Western) countries reveals the close association between heritage and identity in the Australian imagination.[1218] Using the brumby debate as a case-study, the chapter has examined the reframing of a pest species as a heritage icon. The dissemination of the brumby mythology through poetry, books, film, and popular culture has deeply permeated the Australian imagination, creating a strong association between feral horses and national identity. Community recognition of the brumby as part of Australia's heritage has led to it being accepted as such, culminating in the NSW Wild Horse Heritage Bill of 2018 being enshrined in an Act of Parliament, offering the feral horses of Kosciuszko National Park legislative protection. The reframing of the brumby as a heritage animal ensures its management as an environmental pest will continue to be problematic.

The Authorised Heritage Discourse provides a useful lens through which the brumby can be re-examined, revealing the discourses of identity and power that underpin these constructions of heritage. Further, these heritage claims have been invoked in the service of white, Anglo-European settler Australians. Closer analysis of arguments offered in favour of protecting the brumby reveal a frequent conflation of brumbies with the broader history of the horse in Australia more generally. While the brumby debate can, on one level, be considered as the positioning of wilderness heritage values against cultural heritage values, upon closer examination we see how these debates are being argued at cross-purposes. For one group of stakeholders the issue is environmental and ecological diversity, while for many brumby advocates the matter is, at its core, about *belonging*. This ideological disparity is problematic, as any debate under such conditions is essentially unwinnable, a "wicked problem" lying at the heart of our national identity. Reframing the brumby as heritage simultaneously hides and hints at the underlying issue, which is that, for settler Australians, the brumby has come to function as an avatar of belonging.

Recognising this transference and its affective implications would represent a significant step forward, not only in dealing with the concrete realities of land management where brumbies are concerned, but also on a deeper level, in Australia's race relations and the ongoing, systemic marginalisation of Aboriginal people. Widespread admiration for Australia's iconic "unity", the stockman, educed in every evocation of the Man from Snowy River, masks a deep cultural anxiety. The stockmen of history, and their horses, were integral to the violence wrought upon, and the dispossession of, Australia's Aboriginal people. Given the role of the horse here, it is somewhat ironic that today it is the proposed expulsion of the brumby from the Edenic wilderness of the

[1218] Smith and Campbell, "The Tautology Of 'Intangible Values'," 37.

Snowy Mountains (and elsewhere) that triggers the pangs of dispossession among non-Aboriginal Australians.

Conclusion

The foundational aim of this thesis was to explore the nature of the significance of the horse, in the specific context of Australian culture. There has heretofore been little critical engagement with the horse, an animal that appears with regularity in constructions of Australian identity, and this research set out to address this significant gap. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach – including a nation-wide survey of collecting institutions, stakeholder interviews, and the analysis of literature from a diversity of fields – this research seeks to explore the foundational assumptions upon which the equine significance narrative is constructed. The thesis addresses representations of the horse from several key perspectives—as an imported cultural trope; as historically important; within the museum context; and when framed as heritage, particularly with respect to the recent brumby debates. Through these multiple entry-points, the thesis offers a considered analysis of constructions of this animal as an identity narrative.

The first horses arrived in Australia with the first white settlers, and their narratives have been portrayed as intertwined ever since. This co-existent framing has established what Nanette Mantle has described as an "identification with equestrianism"[1219] that has been pervasive in constructions of national identity. Here, the paralleling of horse and colonist is integral, manufacturing a conjunction that has permeated the national imagination. Though superficially constructed as an historically important animal, Kean argues that there is a difference between understandings of 'the past', and historical scholarship. The former is simply events that happened, while the latter necessitates an argument about such events.[1220] While the horse has been celebrated for the role it has played in the events of Australia's past, these uncritical narratives of success in no way represent a cogent argument about the horse's historicity. Further, the almost complete disregard of the horse's influential part in the (overwhelmingly violent) dispossession of Australia's Aboriginal peoples demonstrates this animal's ongoing invisibility as an historical subject.

This thesis has drawn from the limited scholarship that critiques the horse's role in Australian culture. The work of Cameron Forbes and John Connor in particular highlights the horse's role in the dispossession and death of Australia's first peoples, while Nanette Mantle's work contextualises the figure of the stockman as a celebratory counter-narrative that evolved in response. Finally, the scholarship of Karen Welberry, whose recognition of the role the horse plays in mediating Australian anxieties of belonging, was critical to the coalescing of my thinking on the

[1219] Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 2.
[1220] Kean, "Challenges For Historians," s59-60.

topic. To these understandings of the horse in Australia, I applied Wertsch's notion of the schematic narrative template. Here I constructed an Australian iteration, the Underdog schematic template, which, as I demonstrate, underpins many of the most popular equine significance narratives. The power of the schematic template lies in its ability to generate strong but unconscious commitments. In combination with the horse discourse, the two are mutually reinforcing, and create potent sites for the expression of nationalism.

Thinking through the Horse Discourse: findings

As scholars of the early modern period of European history have demonstrated, horses have been harnessed to nationalist discourses for centuries.[1221] While this discloses that the issue is not unique to Australia, the Australian horse discourse has some distinctive attributes that render it overdue for analysis. These are: the coupling of the equine significance narrative with the Underdog schematic narrative template; the instrumental understandings within which the horse is overwhelmingly framed, thus allowing it to be deployed in a largely symbolic capacity within identity narratives; and, stemming from this, the horse's role in mediating anxieties of belonging in a settler-colonial nation.

Drawing on the work of Wertsch,[1222] the thesis has argued that the horse discourse is underpinned, and strengthened, by what I have termed the Underdog schematic narrative template. Narrative templates represent potent sites for the expression of nationalism, with the narrative accounts through which these templates are expressed generating strong social and emotional commitments.[1223] Further, these schematic templates exist outside conscious reflection, rendering them difficult to challenge or displace.[1224] In Wertsch's view, they "shape the speaking and thinking of individuals to such a degree that they can be viewed as serving as 'coauthors' when reflecting on the past."[1225] Thus, when a schematic template underpins a nationalistic equine narrative, commitment to both is reinforced.

The underdog narrative template underlies many of Australia's most significant identity narratives, as I have argued in this thesis. While I do not suggest that the Underdog narrative is unique to Australia, the prevalence of this narrative structure within Australia's identity myths—from the convicts to Ned Kelly, and from Phar Lap to the Kerrigans—reveals it to be one that is particularly powerful in the national imagination. There is a connection between the figure of the

[1221] See Raber and Tucker (eds), *The Culture of the Horse*; Edwards, Enenkel and Graham (eds), *The Horse as Cultural Icon.*
[1222] Wertsch, *Voices*; Wertsch, "Collective Memory."
[1223] Wertsch, *Voices*, 9.
[1224] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 140, 151.
[1225] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 139.

underdog (or 'Aussie battler'), and the purportedly Australian trait of valuing egalitarianism, and, most academic work in this area has been focused on the issue of egalitarianism.[1226] Constructing the figure of the underdog within the framework of schematic narrative templates allows it to be identified within the particular narratives it operates in, and reveals the cultural 'work' in which this figure is engaged.

The Australian Underdog schematic narrative template serves to reinforce existing understandings of Australian identity, in which masculinity, whiteness, and the rural[1227] are positioned as central. This is evident in the context of narratives such as 'Banjo' Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River", the silver horse Thowra in *The Silver Brumby*, and Depression-era racehorse Phar Lap, all of which are framed in such a way as to emphasise these characteristics, irrespective of their status as either fiction (in the case of the former) or historical (in the case of the latter). All conform to the underdog narrative arc. In the context of the horse discourse, I contend that the alignment of equine significance narratives with the underdog figure has contributed to the uncritical acceptance of the horse as a figure of national significance. This uncritical acceptance points to the potency of the equine significance narrative in constructions of national identity, and the conjuring power that such narratives hold in the national imagination.

These identity narratives are all predicated, to a greater or lesser extent, on an instrumental understanding of the horse. That is, rather than valuing the intrinsic capacities of the horse as a sentient being, with subjectivity and agency, we instead emphasize its worth as a tool for human deployment. This remains true irrespective of the specifics of that usage, whether literal or figurative. In some cases, this instrumentality is obvious—for example, figuring as a workhorse or beast of burden within historical accounts of agriculture and exploration—while in others it was more metaphorical, such as when acting as a symbolic construct. The latter is evident in the power of the horse to distinguish a man from a *stock*man; or in Phar Lap's symbolic reconfiguration as an Australian icon, whereby the animality of the horse has been cast aside, his literal objectification rendering him a convenient canvas upon which ideas about who we are as Australians can be projected. What became evident through examining the narratives of the Australian horse discourse was the fundamental anthropocentrism upon which regard for this animal is constructed.

[1226] For example: Elder, *Being Australian*; Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 256-7; Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 17-18. See also Elaine Thompson, *Fair Enough: egalitarianism in Australia* (Kensington: UNSW Press, 1994); Peeters, "Tall Poppies," 1-25.
[1227] See for example: Schaffer, *Women in the Bush*; Lake, "The Politics Of Respectability;" Murrie, "Writing Australian Masculinity;" Davison, "Rethinking The Australian Legend;" Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*; Elder, *Being Australian.*

The museum context here plays a significant role, both in perpetuating the equine significance narrative, and in reinforcing instrumental understandings of this animal. The horse discourse is disseminated by the museum institution through the traditional outputs of acquisition, exhibition, and research. These elements are all underpinned by the uncritical assumption that the horse is an animal that is uniquely significant to Australians. This significance operates only in as much as it pertains to the human story, whether that be framed within the discourse of scientific knowledge (for example, the skeleton of Sir Hercules exhibited in the context of evolution, or Phar Lap's heart serving to illustrate the circulatory system), or as an example of the turner's art (as per the candlesticks made from the canon bones of racehorse Quiz). The example of the *Spirited* exhibition further speaks to the ways the horse is deployed in anthropocentric constructs of significance, despite curatorial efforts to undermine this narrative and return an element of subjectivity to the horse. Beyond this, the museum has a second, much less understood role, realised through its operative functions. The thesis argues that, through the meaning-making processes of the museum—not just research and exhibition, but all those procedures that govern museum management, including accessioning, conservation, and collecting practices—the horse is further objectified. That is, the museum method itself functions to negate the horse's subjectivity, and instead serves to promote an instrumental version of 'horse history'.

In light of this, if we return to the notion of the schematic narrative template, which is located at the intersection of folklore and psychology,[1228] we can see that all constructions of the horse in Australian identity narratives (as with any nationalistic narrative) serve a much broader goal—that of social cohesion and a sense of national unity.[1229] While such a device might have been suited to the eighteenth-century, during which the nation-state emerged,[1230] it has limited relevance in the context of a modern, socially pluralistic society such as Australia. Unfortunately, as part of our deep collective memory—stemming back to Australia's European origins and the imported tropes that settlers brought with them—these social commitments are "conservative and resistant to change."[1231] Today, they function as demarcations of exclusion, proclaiming who can and cannot rightfully identify as Australian.

The underlying work of the horse discourse is therefore to assert the cultural hegemony of one particular group—white, settler Australians. White colonists brought with them to Australia a

[1228] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 142.
[1229] Wertsch, *Voices*, 64. See also Mantle, *Horse & Rider*, 3.
[1230] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3.
[1231] Wertsch, "Collective Memory," 140.

European sensibility towards land and landscapes, and this included an understanding of the horse as a symbol of power and prestige. Alongside these imported tropes, the horse also provided a very real advantage to white settlers, particularly in the frontier violence that characterised the first century or more of Australia's colonisation.

It is the central argument of this thesis that the horse, while it is deployed in celebratory nationalist narratives, functions as an avatar of white belonging, and that assertions of the horse's significance as a cultural symbol are underpinned by the barely-acknowledged recognition of the bloody colonisation of the continent. This significance, a part of Australia's history that is rightfully regarded by many as shameful, is difficult to acknowledge in the context of a modern, twenty-first century nation. Thus, constructions of the horse as culturally important are couched in allusions to history, tradition, and heritage. This is not to disregard the contribution of the horse to the Australian 'success story.' Nonetheless, the horse also played a pivotal role in our nation's more troubling history. These two aspects of the horse's significance represent two sides of the same coin. As Henry Reynolds writes of the stories Australians like to tell of themselves:

> …those sagas of progress and burgeoning settlement, tales of triumph over adversity, of battlers making good in the new world and uniting in praise of equality and a fair go for all. The fate of the Aborigines casts long, deep shadows over those sunny narratives. Indeed the two stories are as closely interrelated as light and shade.[1232]

Reynolds' here highlights the unacknowledged relationship between these seemingly disparate narratives. Or, as journalist Bruce Elder states, somewhat more bluntly but no less truthfully, "Our wealth and lifestyle is a direct consequence of Aboriginal dispossession."[1233] And, critical, *instrumental*, to that dispossession, was the horse. While "settler prosperity was purchased with indigenous land and indigenous lives",[1234] the currency (to pursue the metaphor) that facilitated that violent transaction was the horse.[1235]

Limitations of the research

While I do not discount the significant contribution that the horse has made, both to human history more broadly and Australian history specifically, this research is predicated on certain personal

[1232] Reynolds, *This Whispering*, 245.
[1233] Elder, *Blood on the Wattle*, 296.
[1234] Reynolds, *This Whispering*, 246.
[1235] Forbes, *Australia on Horseback*, xvii-xviii.

assumptions regarding the horse. Central to these is that it is an exotic species, and thus does not belong in any significant numbers in a national park. While this is a well-established position in Australian land management practice,[1236] this research has revealed the extent of the affective discourse around brumbies, and its powerful influence on public policy. Nonetheless, from a research perspective, my privileging of one side of the brumby debate has fundamentally informed the approach I have taken in the thesis. Beyond this, my animal welfare (rather than perhaps animal rights) standpoint emerges in my support for the aerial culling of brumbies (as the most humane and effective method of culling), and my distaste for horseracing. This latter is a result of the years spent researching the Flemington exhibit for the *Landmarks* gallery at the National Museum of Australia. Finally, it must also be acknowledged that in this work I too have used the horse instrumentally as a means of constituting Australian identity. I have tried throughout to maintain an Animal Studies sensibility, though perhaps its most significant influence is in allowing me to recognise this fact.

In addressing the personal frameworks that have influenced this research, attention must be given to my ethnic background, which is white settler on the paternal side, and first-generation migrant on the maternal. In truth, I feel this blend of cultures represents more of an asset than a limitation, as I believe it has allowed me to see the horse discourse in a way that those wholly embedded within white settler culture may not. While I have first-hand experience of farming life, I also have some understanding of the migrant diasporic experience and recognise the deep desire to belong that comes with this displacement. That it is characteristic of the migrant experience, which includes the first whites to settle in Australia, does not surprise me.[1237] Nonetheless, my settler colonial ancestry means that I too am culturally complicit in the ongoing legacies of the horrors that were wrought upon Aboriginal people through the colonial project. For me, this research has revealed the extent to which frontier atrocities were perpetuated. In some small way, I hope that this thesis contributes to rectifying past wrongs.

From a methodological perspective, the survey was a less rewarding investment that I had anticipated. Not only was the process of combing through every museum in Australia on a state-by-state basis time consuming and unwieldy, but the survey did not yield the results for which I was hoping. While both the Quiz candle-sticks, and the Gendarme case-studies emerged as a direct result of the survey, and both offer ample scope for analysis, I had hoped for richer pickings. Nonetheless, while the survey disabused me of the notion that Australian museums were rife with horse-derived

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[1236] "Alpine National Park – Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan," Parks Victoria website, accessed July 24, 2019 https://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/alpine-national-park/plans-and-projects/feral-horse-operational-plan; "Draft Wild Horse Management Plan," NPWS. See also Driscoll et al, "Impacts Of Feral Horses," 53-72.
[1237] The universality of this experience is expressed in Ian McLean, *White Aboriginals*.

material, it also revealed the very narrow—but still influential—social history context in which such material exists. It is possible that I could have undertaken a greater degree of numerical analysis of the survey results; however, as the survey was conceived as a means to identify objects of interest and their interpretive contexts, I did not pursue this.

The influence of the museum context, and my professional experience therein, must also be noted here. While this thesis was initially conceived as Museum Studies, the research terrain expanded during the course of my candidature. However, as can be seen—and as discussed in the analysis of my methods in Chapter 2—this influence has continued to underpin the research. This is perhaps most evident in my wide reading, and use of secondary sources, which is a core function of curatorial practice. Further to this, the breadth of this work has inevitably meant some sacrifice of depth. Yet, each component addressed here has been essential to building the central argument of the thesis. The scope of this work has been integral to constructing my argument, and the thesis could not have been as comprehensive had it been otherwise.

Lastly, it is important to make explicit that this was not a comparative study, and thus conclusions drawn here are only applicable to the Australian context. Further, there was minimal focus in the thesis on framing the horse within a broader global or human historical context. There is the possibility that having done so may have increased my tolerance for, and understanding of, the uncritical acceptance of the horse discourse within Australia.

Future scholarship

The fundamental aim of this thesis was to explore the nature of equine significance, and what it reveals about Australian identity. Thus, the scope of the research has been necessarily wide. Nonetheless, several areas have been identified that hold potential for further or deeper investigation. These are outlined here.

First and foremost, a closely-focused, archivally-based search for the horse, particularly in encounters of frontier violence, has the potential to reveal the extent of the role that this animal played in the process of colonisation. As demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 3, the ubiquity of this animal has rendered it somewhat invisible in historical accounts of Australia. An investigation of both written documents, and visual representations, dating from the first century of Australia's colonisation is likely to yield striking results, which would provide further examination of, and possibly deeper nuance to, one of the central arguments of this thesis.

A subject that has been touched on, but not fully investigated here, is the role of affect in the brumby debates, and its implications as a means for moving this conflict forward. A closer examination of the affective elements within the debate potentially contains the seeds for its solution. The *status quo,* with science in opposition to narratives of identity, has reached an impasse. The *Wild Horse Heritage Act* (2018), while seemingly bringing the issue to a decisive close, has not actually solved the debate in any meaningful or sustainable manner. Nor does denying the investment of those who identify their heritage with the brumby bring any healing or closure to the issue. An acknowledgement of these affective elements, and most importantly, a legitimate avenue for their expression, holds some possibilities for future directions.[1238]

Apropos this, a further investigation of anxieties of belonging in the context of environmental activism, flagged in Chapter 6, may offer something interesting to the brumby debate, and scholarship more broadly. I offer this suggestion tentatively, however. Given the current social and political context, typified by the failure of governments to act on the climate crisis, any research that can in any way be tied (even through misinterpretation) to supporting a more *laissez faire* approach to the looming environmental collapse should be approached with caution.

The contents of this research, while indebted to the field of Animal Studies, is not itself an animal-focused piece of work. Examining the horse solely within an Animal Studies framework would doubtless bring new insights to the topic. Both the history of Australia, and the brumby debates, would be excellent candidates on which to focus such an exploration in future. An understanding of the horse as an animal-in-itself is lacking from the Australian horse discourse, and this suggested scholarship has the potential to rectify that, while simultaneously revealing the extent of our anthropocentric engagement with this animal. Adding a horse-focused treatment to the Australian Studies scholarship would represent a valuable broadening of the ways in which this nation is understood.

Finally, Chapter 3 unearthed a tantalising thread from the diary of explorer Ludwig Leichhardt, who wrote so intriguingly about the bond he and his party had formed with their pack animals. An archivally-based investigation of the relationship that explorers form with their animals, who serve as both companion and food, would be intriguing. If there were others who saw this

[1238] As of mid-2019, the Snowy Mountains community is in the early planning stages of developing a Heritage Centre. If done sensitively, this avenue of cultural expression will offer some solution to the sense of disenfranchisement that is repeatedly raised by those in the Snowy Mountains community. If this is the case, there exists a genuine possibility of some yielding on the brumby issue.

relationship in the same terms as Leichhardt, it would doubtless add some nuance to the robustly masculine narratives of Australian exploration.

Concluding thoughts

This research began with a reactionary desire to dispel the myth of the horse's significance. Instead, what has been revealed is a growing respect for the role played by the horse, even while it remained only instrumentally valued—whether that instrumentality was expressed by being killed and eaten by starving explorers, or as a representation of local identity. Nonetheless, the horse has indeed been fundamental to the Australian success story. Yet part of recognising the (still instrumental) worth of this animal must lie in acknowledging all the aspects in which it helped white settlers to succeed, not just the selected highlights. So, while celebrating the horse, and a colony that facilitated the (albeit limited) flattening of class stratifications in its earliest years, we must simultaneously recognise the service the horse provided in the dispossession of Aboriginal people, and in that, the act of dispossession itself. It cannot be glossed over if we wish to truly recognise the contributions the horse has made to the nation of Australia.

Catriona Elder reminds us that it is only through challenging the dominant discourses that cultural change can take place.[1239] Elder highlights the invented nature of narratives of national identity, and contends that "these inventions have been and continue to be organised around a desire for the land, a fear of others who may claim the land and, as a result of this, a deep ambivalence about belonging to this space."[1240] This articulation is but one among the many similar conclusions that Australian Studies scholars have come to regarding Australian anxieties of belonging. It is clear that there is a deep disquiet in the national psyche, originating with Australia's settler colonial roots, and the corresponding program of violent dispossession that was wrought upon the continent's first inhabitants.

Scholar of English literature Gina Dorre has argued that the horse is a vehicle through which the anxieties and dominant discourses of the day are projected,[1241] and this can certainly be seen to be true within the Australian context. As the symbol of the horse has become intrinsically linked to a particular white, Anglo-European discourse of Australian identity, it has come to function as a legitimising agent of colonisation.[1242] Put another way, there are no high-profile treatments of the horse in identity narratives that highlight its intrinsic qualities. Instead, it is the affective element of

[1239] Elder, *Being Australian*, 38.
[1240] In Elder, Being Australian, 6.
[1241] Dorre, *Victorian Fiction*, 6.
[1242] Franklin, *Animal Nation*, 155.

the horse discourse, and the ways that (some) Australians have constructed the horse (particularly the brumby) as an animal that represents us as a nation, that has led to its casting as an animal of significance. These constructions are, at their heart, anthropocentric. Here, the horse is associated with the deep collective memory that harks back to European origins and harnessed to the Australian underdog narrative template. Neither of these cultural tools embrace the plurality of contemporary Australia. Rather, they function as exclusive and limiting, though this has not weakened their power.

The uncritical acceptance of this narrative means it continues to be perpetuated and disseminated. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, the horse is no more nor less significant than other animals that have featured in Australia's development. Camels and bullocks contributed to the opening up of the land, aiding in exploration, transport, and establishing important infrastructure, while sheep produced the unprecedented wealth enjoyed by the nineteenth century pastoralists. On the other hand, in eco-nationalist discourses, it is feral pigs, deer, cats and foxes (to name but a few) that are noted as damaging Australia's ecosystems, while the feral horse has been re-named the brumby, and legitimised as state-sanctioned heritage.

The underlying ambivalence regarding the right of non-Aboriginal Australians to claim belonging to this land renders the public acknowledgement of the horse's significance as an agent of colonisation fraught. Instead, it has been absorbed into broader narratives of belonging and identity that serve to mask its role as a tool of dispossession. As has been repeatedly demonstrated within this thesis, the significance ascribed to the horse as a species cannot bear close examination without collapsing. Instead, the horse is either transformed into a symbolic representation of Australia—for example, the purportedly uniquely Australian (but human) characteristics ascribed to Phar Lap—or fixated upon as an unacknowledged symbol of belonging, in the case of the brumby. Regardless of the context, we repeatedly find that it is the attachment and idealisation of the horse *in a symbolic capacity*, rather than as an animal or a species, which truly holds power in the national imagination.

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