

**Conceptualisations of cultural identity in the Cronulla
riots debate: One concept, four theorists, one text**

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Signed:

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Abstract

The nature and future of multiculturalism in Australia has been a controversial topic of debate in the Australian media over the past two years. Agreement in this debate has been limited partly because of the range of theoretical conceptualisations of cultural identity assumed by the many participants.

This study investigates the different conceptualisations of cultural identity within this debate by viewing one discourse from the debate through four contrasting theoretical perspectives regarding the nature of cultural identity. Foucaultian and Critical Discourse Analysis is used to discover connections between the theoretical frameworks and the voices in the discourse. Conceptual differences are discovered concerning the boundaries, essentialism, relationship to social order and the historical determinism of the concept.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: Bringing theory into the debate

Multiculturalism has been a dominant policy shaping Australian society since the early 1970s. Recently the policy has been under intense scrutiny globally and nationally as changing interactions between a globalised market and political and cultural trends affect the global economy, national politics, and social issues at the regional, national and local levels. In following the debates surrounding the future of multiculturalism over the past three years, I became interested in the concept of cultural identity. I realised I had little theoretical understanding of this central concept, and I noticed how commentators within the debate sometimes appeared to be speaking from different assumptions about the concept. I wondered whether holding different assumptions about the meaning of cultural identity could be a factor hindering understanding between participants in the debate. If so, I reasoned, a study relating a range of theoretical conceptualisations of cultural identity to the ideas expressed by voices in the current debate about multiculturalism might contribute towards better understanding between participants in this broad social debate.

This study is part of my attempt to understand the ways that theoretical conceptualisations of cultural identity are assumed and applied by participants in the current debate about the future of multiculturalism in Australia. My question here is ‘what insights into the theoretical assumptions underlying these conceptualisations of cultural identity can be drawn by viewing a discourse in this debate through the perspective of four contrasting theoretical frameworks?’ My hope is that exploring some basic theoretical differences in the way that such a central concept is understood

might enhance understanding of some of the reasons for disagreement and misunderstanding in this debate. In deploying these theoretical frameworks, I also hope to draw attention to the potential of these four theoretical approaches as ways of understanding cultural identity.

The thesis seeks to find an appropriate method for approaching these questions by focussing on one moment in the debate, and on four contrasting theoretical perspectives, represented through the work of four contemporary theorists. I use discourse analysis to analyse the moment of the debate through these four theoretical lenses.

The moment in the debate, which forms the primary text for analysis in this study, is the commentary from a range of community, media and political voices on a television program; *Insight* 'Culture Clash' screened on SBS television in March 2006. The program provided a public forum for people with diverse viewpoints to discuss multiculturalism in the aftermath of the Cronulla riots in Sydney, and in light of the fear of violence following riots in several countries over publication of cartoons of Mohammed. 'Culture Clash' provides a small window into this public debate, and this thesis aims to view this moment of the debate through four of the many theoretical perspectives that seek understanding of cultural identity. In 'Reconfiguring the public sphere', Thomas (2004, p.231), quoting Luke (1997, as cited in Thomas, 2004, p. 231), comments: 'the reconfigured public sphere is conceptualised as being made up of local sites of discourse that carry the "public debate over whose and which versions of history, morality, and ethics should count, in whose interests, and to what ends."' This research project focuses particularly on the public sphere. SBS *Insight* programs are a specific domain in the Australian media where public debate is exposed and where

voices from a wide range of local sites are able to come together. This forum not only provides a sphere for investigating the internal processes of public discourse, but also allows public access to the local discourses.

The Special Broadcasting Service, ‘the voice and vision of multicultural Australia’ (SBS Corporation, 2002), is a unique media broadcaster. Begun in 1975 as a radio service to provide programs in a wide range of the languages spoken by Australians, it is now the world’s most linguistically diverse broadcaster. The service’s vision as stated in its charter (2002), includes ‘SBS celebrates difference and promotes understanding. It gives Australians access to other cultures and languages, and targets prejudice, racism and discrimination through creative and quality programming that is inclusive and diverse.’ SBS *Insight* ‘Culture Clash’ would appear to be ideal to contribute towards this vision. It is important to note that because of this stated intention, SBS *Insight* ‘Culture Clash’ cannot be seen as an unbiased text, but has its own, quite overt position on the virtues of multiculturalism. SBS is funded both through government grants and through commercial advertising.

Insight is a long-running, hour-long, weekly program on Australia’s SBS television station where issues of current community concern are discussed on air by a studio audience of about forty to fifty people. The topic for each week is advertised well in advance and interested members of the public are able to attend and participate in the discussion. In addition, each week, selected guests with significant interests in the issue are invited to participate; guests are frequently linked up by video link from overseas. The discussion is facilitated by a host, currently Jenny Brockie, a Walkley award winning journalist, and follows a regular structure, which always includes at least one

pre-recorded video segment and an introduction outlining the basic background to the issue. The host takes an active role in guiding the discussion by proposing specific questions. These are often directed at a particular audience member, but some are open for comment by any audience member. Recent *Insight* programs have covered issues such as immigration policy, the changing role of China, twins, methamphetamine use, Australia's relationship with Indonesia and drugs in sport. Whilst some episodes have won international awards for making significant contributions, (the United Nations Media Peace Award 2006 was won by an April episode), some are more entertaining than informative. Because of the partially directed, partially unpredictable nature of the program, *Insight* episodes are often interesting viewing, but are seldom extremely controversial.

From a lengthy review process searching for theories offering a conceptual framework for understanding cultural identity, I have chosen four theoretical perspectives, each based on significantly different approaches. I represent each theoretical approach through the ideas of one contemporary thinker, drawing their ideas primarily from one relevant work of each¹. I chose these four theorists for several important reasons. Firstly, they offered contrasting ways of conceiving of cultural identity, deriving from different theoretical traditions. Secondly, their ideas about cultural identity were strongly and directly articulated, so that I could more confidently avoid misrepresentation. Finally, two of them illustrated their ideas through application in a particular instance, and the other two outlined in detail the philosophical derivation of

¹ I acknowledge the limitations of this approach. I do not make any claims to accurately represent the ideas of these thinkers beyond the scope of the cited works. Nor do I claim to investigate or assess the four theoretical frameworks, except in so far as they are useful in revealing insights into the conceptualisations of cultural identity within the study text.

their ideas, so for each I had some guide towards a methodological approach through which to apply the perspective.

Angela Reyes comes from a linguistic anthropology background and is interested in the way the cultural identity of individuals and groups is constructed directly through interactions in language (Reyes, 2002). Anna Yeatman's cosmopolitan idealism draws on Durkheimian and Marxist social constructivist views of cultural identity. For her, cultural identity is part of the problem, an instrument of the hegemonic structure of late modernity, which served its purpose in establishing the nation states that were needed for the development of political and legal structures, but which is now inhibiting us from exploring a cosmopolitan future (Yeatman, 2002). Ien Ang writes from the area of culture studies and is concerned with the experience of cultural identity and the relationship between the individual's experience and the social discourses within which cultural understanding is being written. She finds hybridity a meaningful concept to help explain the complex nature of cultural identity (Ang, 2001). Genevieve Lloyd is interested in exploring cultural identity as a phenomenon of perspective. Having no fixity itself, she suggests we can understand this concept only through examining the orientations from which we perceive. She finds the key to this in exploring the metaphors we use to express ideas about cultural identity. Metaphors reveal the frameworks of our perspective, and show how we imagine a concept within that framework (Lloyd, 1997).²

² Because this study seeks to explore a range of conceptualisations of cultural identity, I will not provide a working definition of this concept here.

The context

Several European countries have been taking steps towards changing or even dismantling multicultural policies in the past two years. Button, in his series in *The Age* on multiculturalism in Europe reflects on 2005:

It was the year Britain set up a taskforce to assess whether its policies of multiculturalism — of funding and promoting communities based on ethnic and religious difference — had bred segregation and a lack of loyalty to the nation. It was the year the Netherlands confirmed that it had abandoned the creed of multiculturalism for good. Three events triggered the soul-searching. In July, four suicide bombers, three of them born in Britain to Pakistani families, killed 52 people in London. In November, thousands of young men, mainly unemployed and of Arab and African background, set fire to the desolate outer suburbs of French cities (Button, 2005, p. 13).

In Australia debate about the nature, problems and future implementation of multiculturalism has been omnipresent over the past year. Several events have contributed to the rise in interest in the issue: riots in Cronulla on 11th and 12th December 2005; in early February 2006, the fear of violence spreading following the publishing in Denmark of cartoons portraying the prophet Mohammed; and highly publicised arrests of men in Sydney and Melbourne on suspicion of plotting acts of terrorism. In late 2005 discussion centred on the requirement that entrants to Australia commit to Australian values, and passion flared up in October 2006 over sexist comments by a Muslim cleric. John Howard commented on 12th December 2006 that he has decided to change the language he uses when referring to Australian public policy on the nature of our national cultural identity. He claims that the term ‘multiculturalism’ is losing its relevance in contemporary Australian society, and that he has decided to use it less frequently, and to replace it with ‘integration’.

Asked if multiculturalism was to be dropped, Mr Howard said on ABC radio: 'I haven't used the word a lot. We are not sort of formally abandoning words ... you use the language which best expresses the feeling you have, and I prefer to use the expression integration.' (Metherell, 2006)

This comment reveals the complex interrelationship between feelings, words and power. 'The feelings you have' do not occur in a vacuum, but reflect one's involvement in social discourses. Howard's changing choice of words signals a significant change in direction for Australian cultural policy. The change was reenforced in late January 2007 when the Federal Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs was renamed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

In December 2005 the Cronulla riots impacted upon the conceptualisations of cultural identity amongst Australians. Cronulla, on the southern outskirts of Sydney, had long been regarded as a quiet semi-rural backwater, with a beach that was favoured by surfers. But in recent years the Cronulla locals have increasingly had to share the beach with many visitors from the growing suburbs inland of Cronulla, the sprawling suburbs of south western Sydney, home to many recent migrants from the Middle East. Cronulla beach is the only beach with direct public transport access from the south western suburbs. Complaints about aggressive and sexist behaviour by Lebanese men at Cronulla beach had been appearing in the Sydney newspapers and on Sydney talkback radio over the past few years, and some Cronulla locals were commenting that they had stopped using the beach. In the weeks leading up to the riots, these complaints had been widespread in some Sydney media outlets. One incident, about which the details remain confused, involved fighting between two lifeguards and some young men of Lebanese background. This incident received intense attention on talkback radio through the week before the riots. On 11th December 2005 an angry mob of around 500 people gathered on Cronulla beach. Fuelled by alcohol and invited by mobile phone text messages that

incited racial violence, they intended to rid the area of Lebanese. Several people were bashed by the mob, some of who shouted racist slogans and draped themselves in Australian flags. The following night convoys of cars filled with Lebanese Australians and their supporters caused considerable property damage and several people were violently attacked. Although many people predicted ongoing or escalating violence, this did not occur. The Cronulla riots received enormous media attention throughout Australia and significant international media attention. In the weeks following, media commentators, politicians, young people and community representatives, expressed many versions of the significance of this event for race relations and the future of multiculturalism in Australia, for the influence of the media on social attitudes, and for issues of youth and migrant disengagement.

In October 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten* published 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed. In early February 2006, violence broke out across Europe and Asia as radical Muslims protested against the cartoons. By 13th February, 12 people had been killed in the riots, and questions about the relationship between religious sensitivities and freedom of the press had become urgent. In Australia, two Queensland papers published one of the cartoons, and several other papers referred to websites where they could be viewed, but otherwise media decided not to publish.

Fundamental to the debate about multiculturalism, but unquestioned within it, are conceptualisations of the nature of, and processes of development and change in, cultural identity. The various voices engaged in the debate about cultural clashes, the nature and future of multiculturalism, and the disenfranchisement of youth from recently immigrated families, speak from their particular understandings of cultural

identity. The conceptualisations of cultural identity assumed by the different voices in the debate have been largely unexamined. It is my task in this thesis to contribute to this examination.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY: How theory and text speak to each other

This thesis begins from the assumption that there is an active, interdependent relationship between the language use in discourse and the concepts and structures of knowing that are at work in myriad layers of our selves, relationships and societies. I will be using a discourse analysis methodology to explore the links between the theoretical conceptualisations of cultural identity and the debate of the *Insight* text. Rogers *et al*, (2005 p. 369), offer the succinct insight that ‘discourse moves back and forth between reflecting and constructing the social world.’ Furthermore, discourse analysis recognises that language is a social practice, and all social practices are bound up in the power relationships that are at play in societies. Gee (2003, as cited in Wodak, 2006, p. 599) writes ‘If I had to single out a primary function of human language, it would not be one but the following two: to scaffold the performance of social activities, and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions.’ For my research, both features are of interest, but the second function of language is particularly relevant, for this thesis analyses language to explore how it is scaffolding affiliation to groups and to the idea of cultural identity.

Kendal and Wickham provide a ‘crude’ definition for text deconstruction as ‘a close and critical reading of texts in an attempt to lay bare their hidden allegiances and affiliations’ (1999, p. 181). There are several different approaches to text analysis, and the task of finding the one best suited for this exercise was not simple. The methodological tool affects the reading of the texts, and the nature of observations about the theoretical frameworks of the participants and the text. I needed an appropriate

methodology to be able to construct relationships between the language, the textual and discourse features of the text, and theoretical frameworks of cultural identity. The two methodologies I will briefly review here are Foucauldian discourse analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis developed as a methodology that was overtly interested in investigating and indeed transforming, conditions of inequality, through language analysis. CDA ‘starts from the perception of discourse ...as an element of social practices, which constitutes other elements as well as being shaped by them’ (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. vii). CDA positions itself between discourse and the productive forces of society – in order to expose, and analyse the workings of the dialectical processes between them. CDA ‘focuses on how language as a cultural tool mediates relationships of power and privilege in social interactions, institutions, and bodies of knowledge’ (Rogers *et al*, 2005, p. 367).

Wodak, Fairclough and van Dijk offer three variations of Critical Discourse Analysis each of which initially appeared to provide an effective tool for my discourse analysis. My comments here are based on Fairclough’s approach outlined in 1999, which starts with a problem, then reflects upon the relationship of the problem to other related situations, looks at the ordering of statements in the discourse, looks at interdiscursive analysis (how the participants influence each other), embarks on linguistic and semiotic analysis, examines solutions to the problem, and reflects on the analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). This is a methodology where the researchers have to have and recognise their prior theory of dominance or power, because they approach the text from the start with a question that overtly recognises their own position.

CDA methods attempt to gain access to the power relationships of a discourse, enabling them to draw conclusions with potential to challenge structures of interaction. It is a strength also that CDA seriously addresses the issue that ‘there is no innocent space for discourse outside questions of power’ (Harvey, 2003, as cited in Lewis, 2006, p. 357). Criticisms of CDA however are many. Schegloff, (1997, as cited in Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 7) has accused CDA of a ‘kind of theoretical imperialism’, as the researchers impose their theoretical views about the ideological and power contexts of the discourse upon it. Essentially, he claims it is too likely that ‘the theory drives the data so that the reading of ideologies is imposed rather than systematic’. Proponents of the theory reply that all theorists cannot help but impose their theoretical values upon their studies, and that to avoid any system of generalisation in an attempt for complete objectivity is to risk the vagaries of extreme relativism (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 8, for these responses). This answer, whilst relevant, does not alter this methodological concern and CDA approaches need to remain vigilant in stating and maintaining awareness of their own theoretical stances.

Chiltem (2005) has made the further criticism that an absence of attention to the mind and cognitive sciences weakens CDA, as without it CDA is dealing with the superficialities of the process, and lacks the ability to show how the processes are working cognitively. Van Dijk, (2006, p. 162) shares Chilton’s concern about the need for CDA to be informed by cognitive theory; ‘There is no conditional or causal connection between groups, institutions, social positions or power relations, on the one hand, and discourse structures, on the other hand.’ He suggests CDA needs to incorporate understanding of individual mental models, and specifically context models,

which are individuals' mental models within particular discourse contexts. While this cognitive addition to CDA does overcome Chilton's shortcoming, putting it into practice is a gargantuan task, fraught with the dangerous need to overgeneralise social theory, cognitive processes and discourse processes in the attempt to make any clear analyses. Nonetheless, it is something like van Dijk's approach that I find most useful when searching for meanings and assumptions and relating them to theoretical presuppositions in this thesis.

Kendall and Wickham (1999) outline Foucault's methodology succinctly. They argue that by concentrating on appearances, rather than seeking to implicate deeper meanings or judgments, Foucault's approach specifically rejects CDA's presuppositions of specific power contexts. Archaeology, they explain, is the term Foucault uses to emphasise this materiality of the exercise of discourse analysis. In an archaeological investigation one would examine the visible and sayable aspects of the study area, and seek to understand the relationships between them; one would explore the rules within the discourse that enable statements to be repeatable, to become part of the true; one would discover the way subject positions are established; one would find the systems established or referred to for the understanding of the phenomena, to relate it to other phenomena, and make it accessible to us. Foucault's next process, genealogy, links archaeology to a particular current interest, through reflecting the insights gained through the archaeological exploration against the origins and assumptions lying behind the historical event. Foucault's approach, as outlined by Kendall and Wickham, seems to provide a process to move from linguistic discoveries to meaningful conceptualisations about knowledge, power and identity. Archaeology provides a theory to help to construct contexts and connections, and genealogy provides a framework permitting the

opportunity to reflect. Foucault's positioning of power, knowledge and subject provides a model for making connections between these.

In reflection upon these approaches, I realised different methodological approaches are appropriate to different aspects of my research task. In the first instance Foucauldian archaeology, with its emphasis on excavating into the text in its materiality, can enable me to discover the linguistic features, and the structures and rules of the discourse.

Genealogy then is the process of relating these findings to relationships of meaning creation, and to the relevant historic and political discourses, to be able to draw meaningful theoretical observations about the significance of the discursive discoveries within the contemporary Australian debate about multiculturalism. Then applying a Critical Discourse Analysis will enable reflections upon and discoveries of the relationships between the discursive positions of the participants and the broad frameworks and ideas of the cultural identity theorists, as I approach the text with particular theoretical perspectives in mind. Something like this combination of approaches is suggested by Schegloff (1997, cited in Blommaert, 2001, p. 17):

even where critical analysis is wanted, is justifiable, and can have its basic conditions met, what it should be brought to bear on is an internally analysed rendering of the text, the episode, the exchange, the 'text' ... You need to have technical analysis *first*, in order to constitute the very object to which critical and sociopolitical analysis might sensibly and fruitfully be applied.

In practice, this methodology worked well for my analytic tasks. It seemed reasonable and practical to begin with the material focus of archaeology, excavating into the text to uncover particular linguistic signposts indicating perspectives and meaning. I searched for language features such as; the choice of pronouns, the use of metaphors, the choice of adjectives, the words chosen to denote categories and the boundaries implied by these category words, the repeated concepts and how well repeated concepts became

accepted. I also searched for interactional elements such as the way meanings were built between the participants and how rules for the discourse were established through repeated words and phrases or missing words or phrases that may have been expected. Genealogy was the next process, and was a practice of reflecting upon specific discourse discoveries in the light of my research into the historical context. This included research into; the individual participants in the debate, the background to the violence at Cronulla and the issues surrounding the cartoons of the prophet Mohammad, the history of Australian multiculturalism, recent issues involving immigration and multiculturalism, the media coverage and editorial positions regarding the Cronulla riots and the cartoons. I then reanalysed the text four times over, through the theoretical lens of each of the four theoretical perspectives. This exercise put into practice CDA methodologies as I approached the discourse with a clearly defined set of theoretical propositions in mind, and the specific question as to what the discourse might reveal examined through these theoretical lenses. Each theoretical perspective demanded analysis of different linguistic and interactional elements of the discourse. For each CDA analysis I needed to approach the discourse presupposing the basic theoretical assumptions of the approach, so that it could reveal insights relevant to that theoretical approach. This indicates the fundamentally interdependent nature of the relationships between theory, methodology and discourse. The results of these analyses are outlined in the next sections through the perspective of each of the four theories.

Finding the most appropriate methodology for the task of this study has led to a theoretically complex methodological investigation. One outcome of this methodological investigation has been finding a comfortable working relationship between Foucauldian discourse analysis and CDA. In fact, in this study the two

complemented each other very well. Archaeology provided the deconstructed material which genealogy reconstructed to see it as meaningful within the relevant historical, political, and social contexts. But without a clear theoretical perspective from which to view, at this stage the material could provide nothing with any conclusions. CDA was then needed to explain what the linguistically analysed and contextually relevant data meant, within the terms and boundaries of particular theoretical perspectives. CDA used alone would have needed to begin with these boundaries, and I may have missed seeing simple features of the discourse that do not initially appear to have any ideological significance. I have found the methodological investigation as valuable and revealing as the theoretical investigation.

CHAPTER 3

Cultural identity is constructed through discursive processes

Angela Reyes describes her theoretical perspective towards the conceptualisation of cultural identity as based in linguistic anthropology. She is interested in how individual and group conceptualisations of cultural identity are constructed through interactive relationships between the discursive processes within particular discourses. At one level the discourses are the ordinary conversations and interactions of people through their lives, but these are always interacting with other discourses at a macro level. Individual and group concepts of cultural identity develop and change as the micro level discourses impact upon the macro level discourses, and the macro level discourses in turn affect the terms, assumptions and language of the micro level discourses. She explains how a linguistic anthropological approach to a concept like cultural identity in discourse is circulatory; it ‘allows for a semiotic relationship to develop among micro level and macro level discursive orders because once an amount of interaction becomes fixed, it contributes to the stability of a larger circulating pattern. Culture then, becomes more dynamic and fragile as its endurance relies on its circulation.’ This approach avoids seeing identities as fixed, but ‘construe[s] the emergence of culture and identity in interaction’ (Reyes, 2002, p. 187). Of the four theoretical approaches that I explore in this study, Reyes’ is the most linguistically centred, and the least concerned with political or cultural frameworks. It is concerned with cultural identity as a product of discursive processes. This theoretical model privileges language over culture, being more interested in the ways culture is formed through language than the other way around. It provides a tool for showing how discourse creates and maintains power relationships, but does not critique these relationships.

Her 2002 study into the discursive processes through which cultural identity categories are established in a panel discussion between six young Asian Americans is the research project I have located which is most similar to my own. She identified two constructions of culture which emerged through the discussion; culture as 'historical transmission' and culture as 'emblem of ethnic differentiation'. The participants interacted with these two constructions as the discussion proceeded, to participate in what Reyes calls 'participation frameworks' (2002, p188). The study illustrates 'how 'culture' is interactionally emergent and how 'identity' is performatively achieved through struggles to position the self and the other in socially meaningful ways' (p. 184).

Analysing 'Culture Clash' from Reyes' theoretical perspective on the nature of cultural identity, I explored the discourse to discover the linguistic and discursive interactional processes through which conceptual frameworks of cultural identity are constructed both by individuals, within the patterns of development of their own discursively constructed conceptualisations, and through the interactions between participants as the discourse itself constructs frameworks of accepted meaning. I was also searching for any clues about how categories and frameworks from macro level discourses are brought into this discourse and interact with it. Initially I looked for the recurrent patterns of usage of categories, narrative metaphors, connectors, applications of verb tenses and adjectives that might indicate concepts that are accepted or becoming accepted. Equally, I looked for patterns of usage that showed usages that did not become accepted, and sought to discover any factors, including the relationship with macro level discourses that might explain the differences. I looked at micro level interactions to see the ways the text recruits participants and others into categories, the

acceptance of concepts, roles, and power relationships through things like the choices of pronouns, repetition or non repetition of words, metaphor choices, and the terms used by participants in referring to each other's ideas. I could then draw conclusions about how conceptualisations of cultural identity are produced and constrained within this discourse.

Viewing 'Culture Clash' from a linguistic anthropology perspective

Senator George Brandis, a Queensland Liberal Party Senator in the Federal Parliament, was the government spokesperson on the program. Reyes' approach reveals how he uses the discourse to construct meanings relevant to multiculturalism and cultural identity.

Well I think we're entitled to have a discussion in this country about what multiculturalism means. I think what both the Prime Minister³ and Peter Costello⁴ were saying was this - that multiculturalism means a diversity of cultures based on mutual respect and tolerance. It doesn't mean that Australians don't have common values, because everybody who takes the citizenship oath, for instance, takes an oath to uphold certain common values.

Here, in his opening comments, he repeatedly uses 'I think', positioning his comments as personal and reflective, and protecting himself from accusations of having formulated or described Liberal party policy. He uses 'we' almost immediately, pleading unity, emphasising to the audience that we are one. 'We' is followed by 'entitled'. This is the language of rights. It positions him as a morally strong voice in this debate, standing for our rights to free speech. He then posits Prime Minister John

³ The Prime Minister John Howard in an interview with George Megalogenis on 9th December 2005, two days before the Cronulla riots. In the interview when asked about the integration of Muslim migrants into Australian society Howard commented that 'I do think there is this particular complication because there is a fragment which is utterly antagonistic to our kind of society, and that is a difficulty' (Megalogenis, 2006).

⁴ The Treasurer Peter Costello delivered a speech to the Sydney Institute on 23 February 2006 in which he stated 'Before becoming an Australian you will be asked to subscribe to certain values. If you have strong objection to those values don't come to Australia.' In this speech he also described multiculturalism as 'mushy misguided multiculturalism' (Garnaut, 2006).

Howard and Treasurer Peter Costello's contentious comments in the morally positive terms of 'mutual respect and tolerance'. In opening he establishes the working definitions of the central term and of the debate itself in the light which suits him. We can see his careful use of language to provide a morally righteous reading of Howard and Costello's comments.

He continues:

I think that if you track back these discussions since the beginning of December, the Prime Minister was asked, naturally, a number of questions about this topic after the Cronulla riots on the 11th of December. That debate progressed in this country for the fortnight or so between then and Christmas...

The phrase 'was asked, naturally' places these comments within an historical and indeed, natural, context, implying that the comments were not, really, the Prime Minister's fault; he was just responding to questions which were themselves the result of history. Brandis implies that things are as they should be; not an issue of concern. His tone and manner here is relaxed, enhancing the apparent reasonableness of Howard's responses. He even mentions Christmas, as if to reinforce the sense of cheery well being. He positions himself as natural and comfortable, which suggests everything is under control.

Jenny Brockie, the host of *Insight*, then asks: 'So do you share the view that there's a fragment in Australia which is utterly antagonistic - these are the Prime Minister's words - 'Utterly antagonistic to our kind of society.' There's a fragment here that is that?' Howard's words and tone here are a contrast to the version of them just presented by Brandis. Howard's statement is made as fact, rather than personal opinion, 'utterly' is used, leaving no vagueness about the quality of the judgment, 'antagonistic' poses a polarised relationship between two sides, one good, because it is 'our kind of society'.

‘Our’ positions ‘us’ with him in one particular ‘kind of’ society which it is assumed we can identify, against them. Howard uses an interesting mix of the strongly explicit; ‘utterly antagonistic’ and the vague and general, ‘our kind of society’. He chooses the explicit when making value judgments, and the general when referring to actual social reality.

Brandis’ replies to Howard’s general claim by referring to one specific instance:

When you hear people like the Sheikh who said last August, ‘My religion doesn’t tolerate other religions.’ I think that’s not only antagonistic to the common Australian values we share but strikes at the very basis of multiculturalism. This is the point I was trying to make at the start, that multiculturalism to me and I think to most people means respecting and tolerating other people’s views and cultures. It doesn’t mean an absolute cultural relativism or cultural nihilism. What it does mean is a society based on pluralism and tolerance and anything that attacks that is inconsistent with multiculturalism.

He positions the Sheikh’s comment as opposed to ‘respecting and tolerating other people’s views and cultures’ which he refers to as ‘common Australian values that we share’ a phrase which contains four terms that reinforce unity. The word ‘inconsistent’ is clearly much milder than ‘utterly antagonistic’, showing Brandis as moderating Howard’s position in this debate. The broad message, couched in the positive terms of support for tolerance and respect, is nonetheless one that supports the silencing of some voices. This point is completely avoided, as Brandis chooses his words to present the government’s position as being all about creating tolerance. Furthermore he does not answer the question. He mentions that a few words by one man were not supportive of multicultural policy. He does not discuss how widespread these views are.

When asked more pointedly, he replies:

I think we’re talking about, for the purposes of this debate in recent weeks, that tiny proportion of the Muslim community who express the attitude that the Sheikh exemplified, that their culture, as they define it, their religious values as

they define it, is so extreme that it doesn't tolerate other cultures, values or religious opinions either within Islam or in other religions.

Again he carefully specifies 'I think', and uses the pronouns 'I' and 'we', as opposed to, 'the Prime Minister' or 'the Liberal Party', implying that these are the terms of the general debate as it in fact is, rather than two powerful men's interpretations of the situation. He defines the boundaries of this debate very narrowly and carefully 'what we're talking about', 'in recent weeks' 'as they define it', are all boundary defining statements to clarify the limitations of his comments. He clearly does not want to be taken out of context. 'Their culture' contrasts to the previous generous use of the inclusive 'our' and 'us'. The assumption here is that this is a group which is not yet included as part of 'our' multicultural, tolerant Australia, whose culture is not yet 'our' culture. He has now clarified that he does regard the people concerned as part of a group, rather than individuals.

So, from Reyes approach, looking at the way the discourse shapes opinions and identity through interaction, this discourse reveals the relationship between Brandis, his Prime Minister, and the public, showing the way the conversation can be made and remade to create or mask different meanings, inferences or moods.

At this point the interactions of the discourse play themselves out in a manner that demonstrates how positions in a discourse can be constructed through the pattern of discursive interactions. George Megalogenis, a journalist with *The Australian*, engineers the discussion along a particular line. Firstly he contextualises the debate by presenting the circumstances of his interview with Howard. His recount is cased in the language of fact, 'this happened... then that happened', so as an audience, we are positioned to accept his telling as a truthful representation of facts. He then shows his own

professional credibility by providing some statistical details and then shares his personal response ‘I was a bit surprised by it to be honest because you know, until you can point out an individual –’. The comment encourages a sense of trust in Megalogenis, as he appears to be revealing his honest feelings. Megalogenis then introduces Costello’s controversial comments concerning ‘misguided, mushy multiculturalism’, and reflects upon the timing, implying that Costello was commenting to gain political visibility at a time when he needed a higher profile. Megalogenis was brought in by Brockie, and raises the issue of problematic political motivations behind the comments.

His lead is taken up by Diaa Mohamed, a young Muslim man, ‘The only reason Peter Costello said those things was to score political points. What he said was so immoral, irrational, flat-out stupid.’ The viewer can readily follow the process by which the discourse produced this comment. Mohamed also differentiates ‘you’ as non-Muslim Australians, and ‘us’ as Muslims. ‘You don’t make us drink alcohol, you don’t make us eat pork, and you let us practise our religion freely.’

In the ensuing argument between Brandis and Mohamed, the two speak at cross purposes, Brandis is deflecting criticism by casting aspersions against Mohamed, Mohamed, misinterpreted, becomes accusatory.

Brandis: ‘Have you read his speech?’ Brandis attacks Mohamed’s credibility, seeking to show that his opinion has no substance.

Mohamed: ‘I heard his speech.’

Brandis: 'Have you read it right through because for you to say...' Brandis appears to assert that hearing the speech is not adequate basis for evaluation and that Mohamed has inadequate knowledge.

Mohamed shouts: 'It's irrational. It's irrelevant.' Mohamed does not reply to the question, instead dismissing the speech, and hence the question also as out of touch with reality and not based on evidence. He is trying to move the debate back to his point, away from Brandis' insinuations of his ignorance.

Brandis: 'Have you read the speech right through because for you to say it's irrational...' Brandis continues his accusations. His manner appears disciplinary - he assumes a dominant role.

Mohamed: 'What you're doing now is you're inciting, you're inciting.' Mohamed accuses with raised voice, now thrusting his finger repeatedly towards Brandis. His body language shows the senator's repeated questioning of his credibility is angering him.

Brandis: 'No I'm expressing my point of view as you expressed yours.' Brandis claims higher moral ground, again referring to freedom of speech and a personal rather than representative role.

He continues:

My point of view is we can't have a situation in which whenever a political leader or community leader raises the subject of multiculturalism and what it means, what its dimensions are, they're immediately stigmatised as saying

something that is out of bounds which is what, with respect, Sir, I think you're doing.

Brandis is constructing this as a discussion about freedom of speech. He establishes himself as upholding it, and Mohamed as threatening it. In addressing Mohammed as 'Sir', Brandis positions himself as honourable, and Mohamed as less honourable. At the conclusion of this encounter, Brandis seems to have claimed a morally superior position through maintaining composure.

But Mohamed will not accept this interpretation, asserting:

That's not what I'm doing at all. What I'm saying is for a small faction of people – there are Muslims out there that do the wrong thing and there are Christians out there who do the wrong thing. At the Cronulla riots, there were white supremacists, saying that you are not a real Australian unless you except any other colour, we don't say that's the view of all Australians. Why didn't Peter Costello mention them? For what reason?

Mohamed adamantly denies Brandis' interpretation of his position, and tries to make his point in different, simplistic terms, using a repetitive form of phrasing. He makes his point through two rhetorical questions, which imply that Costello had an agenda of inciting racism.

Brandis and Mohamed's discussion is an example of miscommunication and competition; one defensive speaker who questions the other's credibility, the other struggling to explain his point, but refusing to accept the suggested reading. In terms of cultural identity, the two show the tendency to define their positions in opposition to each other. Brandis claims the position of tolerance and freedom, Mohamed claims the position of the valiant attacker of injustice, and the victim of racial abuse. These two positions are commonly found in the debate about immigration policy in recent years. Both try to claim the position of the victim. They could continue to counter each other

with these positions, making little progress. They are making different readings of the same situation, such that the two do not reply to each other. One explanation that linguistic anthropology suggests is that they are coming into this micro level discourse with different discursive assumptions, categories and narratives developed within different discourses, or for different purposes. Brandis is interpreting through a values framework prioritising freedom of speech. Mohamed prioritises equality and fairness. Within this discourse their interaction is structured as competitive, so each wishes to demonstrate the power of their interpretation of events, and there is no opportunity for the two versions to influence each other.

Another example of the way different macro level and micro level discursive assumptions interact can be found in the discussion between Scott Goold, a surfer and Cronulla local who was present at the riots and Nick Hanna, a young Lebanese born resident from the south western suburbs who was present at the Lakemba Mosque the following night, both present a reading of the events leading up to the riots in Cronulla. Goold begins:

About 15 years ago, when I was coming home from school on the train, a group of about 20, 30 guys got on the train and just decided to - they got on every second day and they'd just pick on someone and they decided to hit me a few times that day.

Later Hanna provides this interpretation of Goold's representation:

I think a lot of things are very misleading. Firstly, if he hasn't actually talked to them, how does he know if they're Muslim, for starters. Secondly, he makes it seem like as if, you know, there's hordes of Arab guys who go down and invade them and harass the women. This is the common thing you hear all the time. That was pumped out before the riots themselves and that's why in a way I don't blame the Aussies that went there because the media was repeating the stuff, we're under siege, they won't leave the women alone.

Goold, in his personal anecdote notably leaves out any mention of the cultural background of his attackers. In describing one event through a personal perspective without much detail, he gives the impression of trying to ‘stick to the facts’, to avoid any judgments or assumptions. As a result, his description is particularly vague. He seeks to assume the role of witness rather than accuser, and carefully avoids any implication of being judge.

Hanna misrepresents Goold’s statement. It is clearly what Hanna feels elements of the media and broad community believe. Brockie does not mention the misrepresentation, but accepts its precept, and draws attention to the violent reading of the events mentioned as false by Hanna, and wishes to see if she can find any corroboration of it. We can see here the three different motives interplaying in the dialogue. Goold trying to position himself as an impartial witness, to avoid being accused of racism, Hanna looking for an opportunity to express his sense of injustice as strongly as he can in a limited time, and Brockie, seeking to use these two young men to shape the debate in a more exciting direction for her show. This micro level discourse provides a direct example of the interdependent relationship between the structure and context of discourse and the interplay and development of the views and identities within it, as well as its relationship to the categories of macro level discourses.

Around this part of the debate, several younger audience members all begin reinforcing each other’s experiences of being racially profiled. Once one speaker raised the experience, three others were eager to express their own similar experiences. Terms like demonising, racial profiling, and the notion of ‘they report it’ are readily adopted. This

shows what Reyes refers to as a ‘larger circulating pattern’ or a ‘participation framework’ in the micro level of the discourse.

The role of Dennis McCormack, a co-founder of the political party Australia First (Australia First campaigns against immigration) on the program is revealing from the linguistic anthropologist’s point of view. He is asked a specific question, ‘Are you proud of what those Anglo-Australians, for want of a better term, did that day at Cronulla?’ The answer he gives; ‘Cronulla was referred pain from an immigration program that’s been off the rails since it was combined with multiculturalism in 1975. Our prime minister-’, shows him using this program as a forum to make his desired point. He is breaking the hidden rules that Brockie and *Insight* intend to follow, and in doing so, he helps to reveal them. *Insight* is presented as a place for genuine public debate, but through this interaction we can see how regulated it is, and how preconceived directions to the debate are constructed by Brockie and chosen audience members. We are reminded of SBS’s objective to foster tolerance and cultural diversity. The show is a constructed context, and attitudes are moderated, encouraged, interpreted constantly to provide a lively television experience. Furthermore, all opinions are not given equal weight. Brockie directs the discussion towards valuing some opinions rather than others.

Brockie indicates through her response to McCormack that he is expected to provide a particular answer. ‘I’m not asking for your view of the immigration program. I’m asking if you’re proud of what you saw on that screen, those people doing on that day at Cronulla. Are you proud of that? Is that a good thing?’ Brockie asserts control to dismiss his comments as irrelevant. The oversimplified language, ‘is that a good thing?’

is a contrast to the usual style of her questioning, and indicates to the audience that McCormack is to be ridiculed.

Once she has positioned McCormack as pariah, other audience participants quickly follow her direction, and provide denunciation of the riots and of McCormack's stance with vehement terms; 'the darkest day in Australian history', a clichéd overstatement that contrasts with McCormack's dismissive comment is made by hip-hop artist and rapper NomiseE as an example of the 'correct' answer; that is to say, what morally virtuous people are supposed to think. Brockie's next comment; 'So you're not prepared to say it was a problem. You're not prepared to condemn it' contains the implication that his position is an indication of his worthiness, and an implication that a condemnation is the correct response. Hage-Ali provides the condemnation:

I'm prepared to say that disgusts me and I'm not happy. I find it quite offensive, I can't understand how someone in your position cannot denounce what those people did, saying that they're the 'ethnic cleansing' unit, that's immoral, what happened was immoral.

She takes the public shaming of McCormack one step further, using terms of moral judgment, yet she is asserting a moral indignation which has been established by the discourse itself. The discussion continues with McCormack claiming: 'It was a clumsy and inappropriately-' his terms contrast highly with the terms used by others in this debate and appear to understate the violence. He is cut off though before finishing. Hage-Ali mocks McCormack, with the patronising and demeaning comment 'That's not clumsy, darling.' This comment positions her as superior to him, as if to say she is more in tune with the correct reading of events, as if she shares with the audience in mocking him. One reading is accepted, the other not. There is something of the attitude of bullying in this remark. The studio audience audibly laughed at McCormack with Hage-Ali's comment, and viewers may readily participate vicariously in this attitude.

Later further insight can be gained into the relationship between McCormack, the

Insight program and the audience:

Megalogenis: ...The Asian Triads - remember the moral panic of the eighties, all these machete wielding Vietnamese amphetamine dealers who were carving us up-

McCormack: Is that not happening, George?

Megalogenis: Your problem at the moment is you won't answer a straight question and you want to say 20 things after that.

McCormack: They are in denial, folks. I'm sorry, we tried.

Brockie: You are about to be put in denial. I need you to stop, Denis. Altogether. You've had a say. I'd like you to stop. George.

McCormack looks directly into the camera during his last comment, (he does the same thing later with another interjection during the discussion of cartoons), indicating his controversial relationship with the program. His appearance on this show is its own show, with its own audience, and its own agenda, which is radical, since it challenges the agenda of the program itself. McCormack challenges the constructed format and the unstated, hidden but powerful, structural assumptions of the *Insight* program. He is dangerous within this format, let into the debate because to exclude him would be an omission that would raise questions of active censorship; but only permitted greatly restricted opportunities for comment.

Brockie's comment in response indicates that this is 'against the rules' of her *Insight* format. She will not permit him to use *Insight* as a platform to present his own message to his own audience. She asserts her role as facilitator defining the limits of the task, in this case control over the acceptable and sayable with respect to the Cronulla riots.

Megalogenis like Hage-Ali and NomiseE before him, colludes with Brockie in the

condemnation and censoring of McCormack. The rules of the context are held in place successfully because they are willingly enforced by the participants. Hage-Ali, Megalogenis and later the cartoonist Bill Leak, all openly denigrated McCormack. They felt they were permitted to do this because the program and Brockie gave them that permission. The momentum of the discourse recruited them into the roles of rule keepers of the discourse.

The discursive relationship between Megalogenis and Brockie as media representatives and Brandis as the government representative has considerable impact on the denouement of the position of the program on the issue of public views on the nature of cultural identity in Australia. We can see it as an example of the influence of discursive power relationships between media and government more generally on public perceptions, and on the public conceptualisation of cultural identity and the health of multiculturalism in Australian society. Neither Brockie nor Megalogenis are impartial or value free in their language about cultural identity, both choose metaphors and terms which are laden with connotations, and use these ideas as if they are matters of commonly accepted truth. In response, Brandis chooses moderate and positive terms, defensively placing the government as reasonable. In the end the journalists and the government end up appearing to be on the same side, the side of rational, open discussion, and freedom of speech. The other reading of the debate, asserted by the young Muslim participants, as being about equality and fairness, is marginalised through the course of the discourse. This attests to the power of the style of language use that Brandis shares with the two journalists, and which is in contrast to the less media-savvy style of language used by many of the other participants.

What does Reyes' linguistic anthropological view reveal?

Reyes' perspective allowed insights into the processes and rules through which the discourses in this text constructed conceptualisations of cultural identity and through which they were accepted or marginalised by participants within the discourse. It also enabled me to explore relationships between the concepts of cultural identity voiced in this text and external macro level discourses. There are five main points.

Firstly, notions of cultural identity were affected by participation frameworks in the discourse. For example, several participants in the discourse tried to position themselves to claim the high moral ground, to the point of accusing other speakers of victimising them. Because of this, part of the discourse involved participants speaking at cross purposes which led to an impasse in terms of finding positions from which to work together towards a consensus. The structure of the program, where participants were directed by questions, and the host already had an intended direction for the program, meant that through directing questions to particular participants, participants tended to be pigeonholed into certain stances. This contributed to positions, including assumptions about cultural identity, being more solidified and polarised and made conversations where new ideas and consensus could be developed unlikely.

Secondly, group language and a framework of accepted meaning developed between some participants through comments which validated their experience. This occurred for the young participants from immigrant backgrounds. Their common experiences were of having assumptions made about them on the basis of their background. This group of speakers expressed the same opinion throughout; that individuals should be

accountable for their actions under the law, and that labelling people who are causing trouble using racial, cultural or religious terms causes widespread pain amongst the community and should stop. These speakers sought to disassociate cultural identity from responsible behaviour. The values that were central to their perception of the issue were fairness and equality. Despite their united message, these young people did not appear to form a united group, and their point was never acknowledged by the host. Brockie continued to use terms like ‘elements of the Muslim or Lebanese community’, where these terms were contested as misleading by this group.

Thirdly, the structure of the program affected which conceptualisations of cultural identity were accepted, and which were not. This drew attention to the relationship between the micro level discourses of this discussion, and the micro and macro level discourses occurring beyond the television studio, in which participants and host were developing their attitudes. The power of the rules imposed by the program, and the directions in which the host did and would not direct the debate, made certain terms permissible within the discourse, developed certain metaphors as appropriate, permitted certain inaccuracies to be accepted, and made certain versions of the history of the Cronulla incident acceptable. The opinions which were acceptable were those which were broadly supportive of multicultural ideals. SBS’s role in promoting multicultural values possibly influenced this stance. This was particularly clear in the program’s forceful sidelining of McCormack, whose participation in the discussion appeared to be at two levels. He was participating in the SBS *Insight* debate, but he was also aiming his performance at an alternative audience operating within an alternative set of boundaries and rules. The audience of ‘Culture Clash’ was only permitted to glimpse McCormack’s

ideas about cultural identity. They appeared to involve moral judgments about groups based on ethnic or national heritage.

Fourthly, the rules of the discourse, established by the format and context of the program, influenced the roles of some participants within the discourse. The boundary challenger, the boundary keeper, the bully and the bully's followers, the rational and the irrational were all constructed within the rules of the discourse. In effect, this impacted on the conceptualisations of cultural identity which were permitted, accepted, marginalised or excluded from the discourse.

Finally, the language style and discourse style of the participants were not equally valued within the format of the SBS television segment. More academic styles of language, less emotional and personal styles of speaking were better positioned through the format of the show, despite no overt selectiveness being apparent. This may have been because many of the terms and metaphors were initially provided to the program by the host, the government representative, or another journalist.

In summary, participants in the discourse did take distinctively different roles within this discourse, and had different perceptions of cultural identity. There were several different approaches to the issue raised in the program, which drew upon different macro level discourses and constructed the issue as based upon different essential values. For some it was freedom of speech, for others it was fairness and equality, and for McCormack it appeared to be race. The benefit of the linguistic anthropological approach is its focus on discursive processes which show how concepts are constructed and developed through interactions, both within and across discourses.

CHAPTER 4

Cultural Identity is an ideological tool of oppression

In 'Globality, State and Society' (2002) Anna Yeatman outlines a concept of cultural identity that can be described as cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitanism is the idea that all humans should be global citizens, freed from the artificial boundaries of nationalism, patriotism and political and religious ideologies. All humans should be equal under the same moral standards and (until such a notion is no longer needed) human rights⁵. She draws on Durkheimian⁶ perspectives on the nature of the individual and individual freedoms in late modernity. Durkheim developed a theory of the development of human societies from what he calls traditional societies where social order is maintained with mechanical solidarity based on feeling similar to each other through sharing the same social roles, to modern societies where social order is maintained with organic solidarity based in feeling interdependent through specialised individualised roles.

'[G]lobal social scale requires us to think of ourselves and our institutions in a cosmopolitan way. A cosmopolitan identity transcends the containment of ethical identity by the national form of the state' (2002, p. 5). Yeatman passionately argues for a reconceptualisation of society as a cosmopolitan order, where nation states are no longer needed as universalising tools for human values, (which she suggests were their role in the first stage of modernity), where cosmopolitan citizens are constituted under human rights, not national rights, where the individual is free to 'orient as self-

⁵ Cosmopolitanism is a highly contested theoretical position. Critics argue that the loss of cultural and national identity would be a loss of important meaning.

⁶ Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), a French sociologist and anthropologist was interested in the processes by which societies maintained themselves, but also progressed historically. In his work *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) he proposed an evolutionary model where societies develop from traditional to modern, developing different processes of solidarity, which maintain their order.

determining persons *and* to be able to respect others as both separate and thus different from themselves’ (p. 14). The notion of radical individual freedom is central to her position, this ‘would be an ideal of the social as the distinctive kind of solidarity that enables individuals to be self-determining, and to accept and respect each other as such’ (p. 16). She takes a stance against the notion of individual identity and group identities which are defined through some reference to what she describes as metaphysical terms; ‘by which I mean the nature of the human being is taken to be given in some sense, and does not require us to work at both explicating and actualising it’ (p. 15). Cultural identity is one of these metaphysical constrictions on human freedom; ‘a conception of a shared cultural identity, arises out of the national form of the state, and out of the way in which the development of citizenship was necessarily bound up with a project of nation building’ (p. 11). In rejecting any such ideological, cultural, spiritual, historical or political factors which would contribute to a self defined metaphysically, and maintaining a rigorous optimism in the capacity of humans for radical rational self-definition and freedom, she maintains a materialist social perspective.

In this view cultural identity is conceptualised as a freedom-inhibiting tool of the nationalistic political history of the twentieth century. She feels it had a role to play in the development of states within which people could come together to negotiate rights and constitutions, but that now we should put aside these intermediary, flawed, devices of political power, and become culturally cosmopolitan – each of us an equal global citizen, all of us from the same place.

As I analyse the text from Yeatman’s perspective I will look for comments by the speakers reflecting their assumptions about the nature of cultural identity as part of the

social order; do they see cultural identity as something that keeps us feeling the same (Durkheim's traditional solidarity), or do they express the possibility of cultural identity as something that can be different for each individual? I will look for statements which identify cultural identity with national identity, or which challenge that notion. I will look for comments that suggest cultural identity is viewed from a utopian global perspective. And I will look for any assumptions about history and national or historical frameworks of political order and their relationship to cultural identity.

Viewing 'Culture Clash' from a cosmopolitan perspective

Brockie:

In recent weeks our political leaders have had a lot to say about the idea of 'fitting in' to the Australian way of life. The Prime Minister has hit out at some aspects of Muslim culture, declaring there is a fragment which is utterly antagonistic to our kind of society

The initial precept of the program, these comments by Howard, implying an identifiable 'Australian way of life', and one Australian 'kind of society', are fundamentally at odds with Yeatman's cosmopolitan, post-nationalistic conceptualisation of the cultural identity of the self. In the terms of her theoretical perspective, these comments reveal a view of cultures and lives which she conceives as belonging to a particular stage in the process of the development of human civilisation. This stage has required the construction of cultural identities based around feelings of national allegiance. This was necessary to enable political entities to negotiate the political and administrative structures human societies needed as they grew and became more complex. Now, though, Yeatman believes, humans should seek a greater freedom and flexibility in the way we conceive of our identities. Howard's comments do appear to envisage the

cultural identity of Australians as associated with the idea of Australia as a nation with one fixed identifiable national 'kind of society'.

Let us return to Brandis. He uses the term multiculturalism frequently throughout this program. He is careful to define his view of the policy, and it clearly involves pluralism; the coexistence of different cultures. This concept requires the acceptance of the existence of distinct cultures which can be identified as different from each other.

Yeatman's view, by contrast, espouses a form of cultural relativism, to the extent that each individual is free to identify with the unique set of influences that combine to form their personal cultural heritage.

Australian history, for Howard and Brandis, (as represented on the program), does not have the same narrative of progress that it has for Yeatman. The 'progress' models, which have a philosophical link to Hegel, and beyond him, to Christian utopianisms, frequently espouse more radical social change, as they contain the germ of utopianism, whereas a concept of history without a progress narrative, may be more conservative. Yeatman might categorise Howard and Brandis' version of history as traditional in the Durkheimian sense.

Brandis uses culture and religion as the basis for identifying some particular people; 'we're talking about...that tiny proportion of the Muslim community'. However the criteria by which he assesses that these individuals cause concern, 'that their culture, as they define it, their religious values as they define it, is so extreme that it doesn't tolerate other cultures, values or religious opinions', is not particular to any specific religious or cultural group, but might apply to individuals from a wide range of backgrounds.

Therefore the use of the cultural identification would appear to serve some purpose other than simply describing individuals who have expressed these general sorts of ideas. It appears that when Brandis speaks about these people, he cannot disassociate them as individuals from them as members of the Muslim community. This inability to conceptualise individual identity apart from cultural identity once again relates to a 'traditional' social structure in the Durkheimian sense. Yeatman would characterise Brandis' statements as belonging to a pre-cosmopolitan world, which is now holding us back from greater tolerance and freedom.

Hage-Ali's response: 'Peter Costello ... should have made that comment across the board. He shouldn't have singled out the Muslim community', reflects a view more characteristic of Yeatman's cosmopolitan social order. Later she even denies the view of recent history preferred by the majority of the media, that recent terrorist acts and threats are related to Islam: 'No, nothing had happened for him to say those remarks. There was nothing that was happening in the world arena or in Australia-wide for him to say those remarks. He wasn't replying on anything.' This comment appears wrong if we listen to it from a view which identifies the terrorists of Bali, London, Madrid and New York with Islam, but if we disassociate the individuals and their personal values and beliefs from 'the Muslim culture', it can be read in another way.

From a Yeatman point of view, the account of history that Megalogenis' presented to Howard in his interview before the Cronulla riots, indicates a traditional social order where the solidarity that maintains social relations is our identifying as being similar:

I then asked him well, the Asian waves have been absorbed pretty quickly, do you think there is a problem with the Muslim waves? And he thought that the majority yes but this is when he made the distinction on the minority. I was a bit

surprised by it to be honest because you know, until you can point out an individual – it is a very difficult thing to ah -

‘Pointing out an individual’ as evidence of group behaviour would seem to imply a conceptualisation of cultural identity that does assume similarity, rather than interdependence as the essential factor. In this reading, each one is as a representative of the whole, find one who fits the profile, and cultural identity is such that it can be assumed that this represents something distinctive and common to others in the group. Megalogenis’ questions to the Prime Minister were to an extent leading questions, with hidden assumptions about the nature of cultural groups, Australian history and the social order.

Brandis’ choses the terms acceptance and integration, when he speaks of immigration history, implying that Australian society itself can change as different people join it, rather than assimilation and absorption, which imply a more complete dissolving of the new immigrant’s traditions into the new society.

I come from a predominantly Irish background if you look back 40 or 50 years before that, it was the Protestants and Irish Catholics and your point, which is a good point, George, is that the degree of acceptance and integration is accelerating in each successive generation, which I think speaks tolerance, not ignorance.

His conceptualisation of Australian society takes into account change over time, change which includes changing values (the acceleration of acceptance in this instance). Subtle differences in word choice can have significant effects on the assumed meanings of concepts as they are used in the arena of public policy and community debate. Whilst Brandis and Megalogenis are making comments which initially appear to have the same meaning, the subtle differences in the words chosen for important abstract policy concepts affect the implications for discourses in public policy. In this case, the government spokesperson is being more supportive of a multicultural, multi-valued

Australia than the media spokesperson's interpretation of the situation. Brandis' view of Australian society is a step closer to Yeatman's cosmopolitanism than Megalogenis'.

Elleni Samuel, who supports recently arrived immigrants to settle into education at Victoria University, speaks for a society with less divisive categorisation of cultural groups:

it's really, really difficult to keep on talking about labelling people. Instead of doing that, why not we work on our unity and bring our differences aside and bring our strengths together and work as an Australian?

This would seem to support, in simple and general terms, a cosmopolitan style of society. 'Bringing our strengths together' is a description of Durkheimian solidarity in a modern society. But she still maintains a notion of a group of 'real Australians', and a notion of us 'as Australians' indicating she still holds a concept of an identity defined by national allegiance to be of value. Yeatman's cosmopolitanism definitively denies nationhood as a morally valid basis for defining identity.

Mohamed also uses the phrase 'real Australian', but for him the term is more problematic: 'At the Cronulla riots, there were white supremacists, saying that you are not a real Australian unless you except any other colour, we don't say that's the view of all Australians.' He confronts the notion that there is a simple concept of a 'real Australian', defined by something like skin colour. The fact that that he uses this idea as the basis for an analogy to demonstrate the illogicality of assuming all Muslims hold the same views as one extremist Sheik, demonstrates the absurdity of the concept for him. By denying that 'real Australian' exists in a simple to identify sense, Mohamed calls into question nationality-based notions of identity. His understanding is much more in line with a hybrid conceptualisation, which I will explore in the next chapter, and goes

some way towards cosmopolitanism. This attitude is voiced by several of the younger audience participants.

Dr Tanveer Ahmed, a Muslim psychiatric registrar based in south west Sydney raises the broader power issues influencing the comments, actions and viewpoints of the key political and media players. His interest seems to be to help to contextualise the whole debate, to reveal the political power aspirations involved, and the cultural and social factors, in order to allow a more considered appraisal of the issue. He points out that the Australian Muslim community is itself a construct defined through complex discourse between the community's own internal regulation of its opinions, the media which decides whose opinions it will represent to the public, and the politicians who seek to use whatever they can to further their careers.

I think the Costello thing could definitely be put into the leadership frame where I think he was pandering to conservative groups in the party to some degree. And also when the senator referred to the Sheikh, I think that's probably a bigger problem in, how Muslim groups regulate their opinions. Where it's quite easy to stick a mike in front of anyone –

In speaking of attitudes towards women, he disassociates attitude from culture, and describes it in behaviourist terms, as learnt behaviour ‘- if you grow up in a household where you are taught that a woman is meant to behave a certain way...’ He does not deny cultural identity, but explains it, as Yeatman might, as the result of political and economic structures of power.

Unlike Ahmed, Darwiche associates attitudes and behaviour with cultural identity, not with social structures: ‘I've grown up in a Lebanese household and my parents have always instilled in me an Australian Muslim identity and with that comes mutual

respect.’ For her, it is because of their Muslim Australian culture that her parents have given her certain values.

What does Yeatman’s cosmopolitan view reveal?

Viewing the text through Yeatman’s perspective allowed insights into the assumptions of the participants about how structures of social order, history, and nationhood are related to cultural identity. There are four key points.

Firstly, what did the text reveal about the participants’ assumptions about the role of cultural identity as part of social solidarity, the maintenance of social order? The government voices on this program appeared to see national cultural identity within the terms of what Durkheim described as a traditional society, as something that keeps social order by maintaining a sense of being similar. This was voiced as a concept of fixed national identity in the short extract from Howard, but was modified by Brandis as he allowed for the idea that our national cultural identity changes as different cultures integrate into it. One speaker, Samuel, did suggest we should try to envisage national cultural identity within a (Durkheimian) modern context, where national solidarity gains strength from the combining of each individual’s differences.

Secondly, what relationships between power structures and cultural identity are represented? Within this text, two contrasting attitudes towards the relationship between political and social power structures and cultural identities were expressed. From one perspective cultural identity is secondary, constructed by power structures and social conditions. This position was most effectively articulated by Ahmed, but a couple of the

young Muslim speakers suggested this position. For them being Muslim was about religious belief, not cultural identity. From the other perspective cultural identity is primary, with language and power structures determined as a result of cultural values, meanings and traditions. Those who emphasised values such as freedom of speech or respecting the prophet Mohammad as more culturally fundamental affirmed culture as the more primary determiner.

Thirdly, was there any suggestion of utopian global concepts of cultural identity? There was little utopian thinking within this discourse. Only one person, Samuel, voiced any form of cosmopolitan utopian vision that envisaged a cosmopolitan view of cultural identity and this was not explored any further by the host or other audience members. Generally the debate in the text maintained a more pragmatic focus on political power games and perceptions of inequality and unequal treatment. This approach has its strengths, in that it avoids some of the ideological conflicts that can arise from debates about the best ideals and social visions for the future, but it has its weaknesses, in that the debate becomes dominated by accusations and defences about instances of unfair treatment, and actions are only able to be evaluated within the context of political power rather than in terms of ideals for the future.

Finally, were any assumptions about history and national or historical frameworks of political order and their relationship to cultural identity revealed? Distinct cultural boundaries between national cultural traditions were presupposed by all but three participants, to greater or lesser degrees. An explanatory version of the history of immigration and multiculturalism in Australia was proposed and accepted within the discourse as fact. However it was a version that assumed a particular notion of cultural

identity that is not uncontroversial. Megalogenis' simplified account assumed that cultural identities are linked to nationhood; that immigrants from the same area have the same basic settlement experiences and that after a time the whole group loses its sense of separate cultural identity. In this discourse the assumed version of history was used to justify one particular version of cultural identity and one particular model for cultural policy for Australia; that being a 'melting pot' model based on integration.

In summary, participants in this text demonstrated several different understandings of the relationship between cultural identity and history, the concept of the nation, and social order. For some cultural identity is fundamental, for others it is historically and politically derived. The benefit of this cosmopolitan approach is its ability to view the particular discourse within a clearly defined broad historical context.

CHAPTER 5

Cultural identity is a negotiated space

Ien Ang conceptualises cultural identity in the terms of hybridity theory (Ang, 2001). Hybridity perspectives foreground the changing, shifting, blurred boundaries of cultural identity. Homi Bhabha explains; 'it is the 'inter' and the 'in-between', the liminal 'third space' of translation, which carries the burden of the meaning of culture' (Bhabha 1994, as cited in May, 1999, p. 22). The historical urge to define the boundaries of cultural identities, and to shore up this notion with nationalism, mythology and ritual, can be seen in itself as an indication that identities, cultural or individual, are not in fact stable and easily defined, but are always slipping away from the control of the myth- and nation-makers.

Hybridity allows for the acceptance of multiple cultural identities. The concept is most commonly used to refer to the cultural identities of diasporic individuals; those who have experienced a life involving adapting to live with one language, history and set of cultural values, whilst still maintaining a sense of identity with one or more others. But the concept is very broadly applicable. Indeed some (May cites Friedman and Levi-Strauss) have commented that all culture arises out of mixes of influences, and that hybridity as a concept actually aides in the artificial 'museumisation' of cultures, conceiving as distinctive and able to be hybridised, that which was never clearly defined in the first place. This criticism of hybridity theory is somewhat self-defeating, as the intent of the concept of hybridity would seem to support this very observation.⁷

⁷ A further criticism of hybridity is the political passivity of the stance. In smiling accommodatingly upon the simple co-existence of differences, hybridity disables critical analysis of power inequalities (Kalra, Kaur, & Hutnyk, 2005, p. 96).

Ien Ang's stance on hybridity arises from her own experience as a diasporic individual, moving and adapting to several different social environments through her life. She sees a hybrid identity as a highly positive part of herself, allowing a greater creativity and emancipation for herself and she believes it has provided strength for the people of the Chinese diaspora in general (Ang, 2001, p. 35). Although she identifies such a thing as a 'Chinese identity', she posits this thing as contextual rather than essential, denying that there is an 'authentic' demarcation of Chineseness: 'I am only sometimes Chinese by consent' (p. 36). So, (and this is one of the perplexing aspects of hybridity theories), Ang is trying to enunciate a stance where distinct cultural identity is defined, experienced and real, but is also ever changing, unclear, chosen and the construct of discourse. 'Conceiving Chineseness as a discursive construct entails a disruption of the ontological stability and certainty of Chinese identity; it does not, however, negate its operative power as a cultural principle in the social constitution of identities [*as Chinese*]' (p. 40). This seeming paradox is central to the notion of hybridity, and whilst it makes the position vulnerable to criticisms of essentialism on the one hand and irrelevance due to a lack of referents (relativism) on the other, it is also what ultimately enables it to articulate a version of cultural identity that reflects these contradictory forces at play in the globalised world today. She agrees with Chow that 'hybridity is the politics of those 'who do not have claims to territorial propriety or cultural centrality' ' (Chow 1998, as cited in Ang, 2001, p. 72).

In viewing the text from Ang's hybridity perspective I will explore the ways the participants contextualise and express the complexities of cultural identities, looking for indications that they are multiple, ambiguous, paradoxical or fluid. I am seeking to find what the text has to say about the boundedness of cultural identity. Can individuals

belong in several groups? Can the boundaries be vague, personal or changing, or are they perceived as fixed? I will be looking for comments, categories, constructions, absences, pronouns, metaphors, interactions, which shed light on the assumptions of the participants about the stability or permeability of the borders in their conceptualisations of culture and cultural identity.

Viewing ‘Culture Clash’ from a hybridity perspective

There are several comments through the program in which discourse analysis can reveal conceptualisations of cultural identity which may be elucidated by a hybridity model.

Abdul El Assad, a member of the Australian New Muslim Association comments:

Personally, I don't like to focus on it from a Lebanese community or Asian community. It's really an Australian issue, It's an Australian youth issue and I can give you a little bit of information as an Australian with Lebanese background, I can somewhat understand and relate to the youth obviously being one myself. We really do have a sort of identity crisis. The identity crisis is, for example, if we were to go back to Lebanon, we would be considered Australians. We come home to Australia and we're considered as Lebanese.

El Assad contradicts himself, claiming the issue is about all Australian youth, but then affirming that it is specific to Lebanese Australian youth. This contradictory sort of construction echoes an experience that is similar to the experiences Ang expresses in her reflections of her relationship to her Chineseness.

Hage-Ali's representation of her identity as a young Muslim born in Australia captures some of the ‘border-crossing’ features of a hybrid identity. She explains that for her, individual identity is separable from cultural identity.

Now I think it's very unfair as a Muslim Australian, someone who was born in this country, to be stigmatised by the comments of one man who lives in Melbourne who said outrageous comments, that as a Muslim leader, we have all distanced ourselves from and who we have put down as well.

Here we can see that she views Muslims in Australia as able to make their own choices about their ways of interpreting their religion, and establishing their identities as Muslim Australians. She also distinguishes between citizenship of the nation and cultural identity as a Muslim. The one requires obedience to the law, the other is a matter of personally identifying with a religion, and with a group: 'if Peter Costello is really so keen about having immigrants, you know, take up and respect the laws of this country, he should have made that comment across the board.' Although she views citizenship and cultural identity as separate, by referring to herself as 'a Muslim Australian, someone who was born in this country', she shows that her own personal identity encompasses both aspects, and that they are melded together and inseparable in her.

By contrast, there are several voices in this debate which clearly express a view of cultural identity as firmly bounded within borders which are not in any sense hybrid, but fixed, identifiable and representing significant difference. Scott Goold, for example, claims:

A lot of Muslim, Lebanese guys have never interacted with, you know, local surfers or anything like that and what a lot of the surfers are afraid to do it, I mean, a few of us are just going to have to stand up and, you know, interact with them.

Goold's statement that interacting with the Lebanese guys is something that will take bravery and will represent a major change indicates his perception of a solid boundary between the culturally identifiable groups. Megalogenis' generalisation about cultural groups implies he believes people readily fit into cultural groups based on their heritage. 'It took 20 or 30 years for the Italians to lose the ethnic slur of mafia and Greeks to lose

the ethnic slur of welfare bludger.’ His construction would also appear to deny hybrid versions of cultural identity.

Brandis sets the official tone with his description of multiculturalism: ‘a diversity of cultures based on mutual respect and tolerance.’ ‘A diversity of cultures’ envisions a wide range of distinctly identifiable cultures. ‘Based on mutual respect and tolerance’ entails that these different cultures presumably do have different beliefs, customs, habits, languages, traditions and values. So to this extent, we are assuming boundaries that are definable and meaningful. Hybridity as an approach to understanding cultures however, is able to encompass distinctly identifiable bounded cultures. Hybrids are mixes between two things which are able to be identified separately, so this view does not disallow hybrid identities. But Brandis does not appear to recognise hybrid identities: ‘I think we're talking about, for the purposes of this debate in recent weeks, that tiny proportion of the Muslim community...’ The fact that he clearly views these very few individuals as members of the Muslim community is highly significant to this whole debate. His identification of these individuals as being Muslim reveals that he does view their religion as an essential aspect of their identity. He also sees Muslims in Australia as belonging to one community, making it harder to disassociate any particular Muslim person from other Muslims or indeed from any other particular Muslim. This picture of cultural identity has little in common with a hybrid view.

The framework that Brockie establishes for the program suggests she is allowing the possibility of a hybrid conceptualisation of cultural identity. While the program begins from the assumption of culturally distinct and conflicting identities between groups, Brockie adds the suggestion that this model may be inadequate and in need of

questioning and revision. Initially Brockie sets up the discussion to assume bounded, distinct and readily identifiable cultural groups. The show is called 'Culture Clash', and in her introduction Brockie describes the situation as

the shocking violence over summer at Sydney's Cronulla beach was seen by many as a disturbing clash of cultures, but while there is plenty of fear about, there is confusion about exactly what people are frightened of and that is what *Insight* is talking about tonight.

'Clash of cultures' implies a difference based perception, and this is reinforced by the suggestion that fear is the relevant and present emotional response. Brockie seems to be asking participants and audience to explore our emotional responses to recent events.

'Confusion' is an emotion closely linked to boundary challenging hybrid constructions of cultural identity. If confusion is a common emotional response to this recent violence and the multicultural debate, it is possible that revisions of the way that cultural identity is constructed by media and government as distinct categories of cultural allegiance are needed. A hybrid model would be an appropriate alternative to explore, as it would provide a better 'fit' with the possibly confusing emotional reality that many people are experiencing.

Early in the discussion Brockie asks:

But this is important, isn't it, this question of who we're talking about. Because for Muslims it's a very sensitive issue to be throwing around general terms, now do you think this is about fundamentalist Muslims, is it about people who behave criminally? Who exactly are we talking about?

This suggests the possibility a hybridity point of view, because 'who someone is' in terms of cultural identity may, from this theoretical perspective, be very difficult to define or understand. If cultural identity were a simple direct correlation between body and history, identifying 'who we're talking about' would be straightforward, but this is not the case. Brockie also recognises that 'throwing around general terms' is dangerous,

a point with which hybridity theorists would agree. General terms do not define individuals well, nor can individuals represent whole cultural groups. 'Sensitive' is a word well suited to a hybrid conception of cultural identity, because where borders are unstable, or crossed, identity is more sensitive, more vulnerable to more influences. This applies to individual cultural identity, and also to group cultural identity. On the other hand, such a conception of cultural identity, by allowing for greater adaptability, is less vulnerable to ideological threats from external sources such as the global electronic media than one which relies on unchanging unchallenged boundaries.

Despite these indirect suggestions that an alternative way of conceptualising cultural identity may be appropriate, Brockie directs the discussion throughout the rest of the program assuming a conceptualisation of cultural identity based within distinctly defined non-hybrid boundaries. For example, with this interaction; she appears that she does not appreciate the potential of seeing cultural identity in other than a 'difference' model.

Brockie: 'It happened on both sides in Cronulla. It's not one side. That's the point we're trying to make.'

Charida: 'This is not a thing about two sides with each side having their story. We're speaking as though the starting point of this problem is young guys or gangs as you like to call them, go down to Cronulla and cause trouble. That's the starting point of the discussion, the starting point of the tension. The starting point goes way back, much further back than that. You are denying the reality of this situation. You're denying the roots of this situation.'

Brockie: 'And what do you see the roots as?'

Charida: 'You have not grown up as a migrant in this country. You have not experienced the - get on a train in Bankstown and see the way police racially profile young Arab boys. They stop them simply because they look Arab. I see it on a daily basis. You're not recognising the racism that people grow up with in this country.'

Brockie: 'Okay you have made your point.'

Although Brockie appears to be providing a ‘balanced’ view that seeks to avoid apportioning blame to one group, she is endorsing a view that identifies two distinct sides. Charida’s attempt to raise concern about this construction of the issue is interpreted as a complaint about racist treatment and as several others have made this point before, the issue goes no further. But Charida’s comment can be read as having more profound implications. She calls into question the wisdom of a society which does perceive and promote the perception of the distinctiveness of groups of different cultural backgrounds. She also raises the question of inequalities of power and representation. These implications can also be seen in her earlier comment:

I basically wanted to - I'm quite shocked that starting point of this discussion is whether or not Muslims are fitting into this country. It's classic Australian practice to always put the minority group that's being victimised and the target of Australian racism, it's classic Australian practice to put them on the back foot and question their legitimacy of even being here. I can't believe that's the starting point.

Charida’s language when speaking of her own Muslim identity is a contrast to her language when speaking of general attitudes. Charida: ‘They're drawing cartoons. Why touch something that's not yours. This is typical of Australian racism I'm talking about. I'm a Palestinian woman. I look at that cartoon with the bombs and think, ‘You obviously have no understanding of the situation. Israel is the aggressor.’ ‘ In her mind, the hijab belongs only to Muslim culture, and non-Muslims have no right to comment upon it. A possessive relationship with her culture is implied here, and with that possessiveness, a sense of the fear of threat from outside, a fear of a threat to meaning and to cultural identity from the racist disrespect of outsiders. She asserts her Palestinian identity such as to imply that it has a causal relationship with her attitude towards Leak’s cartoon. This is an appeal to a construction of cultural identity that is determined by boundaries of cultural meaning. Charida is appealing to the boundaries for affirmation of her cultural identity. This is not a view that embraces hybrid

constructions of cultural identity, but one which finds meaning by holding onto clearly defined differences.

Many participants showed their view of Australia is one where people are thought of as from different cultures, (rather than having a cosmopolitan identity, or being ‘Aussies’ or being hybrid), ‘it's crowded and people have to interact with different cultures and so forth.’, ‘we're really ostracised. When something happens, a few people mentioned today when something happens within the Arab community, straight away the entire community is labelled.’, ‘Women all over, all race, Arab women are getting harassed, Greek, Australian, are getting harassed. Everybody is.’

What does Ang’s hybrid view reveal?

Viewing the text through Ang’s hybrid perspective revealed insights into how the participants constructed and negotiated the boundaries of their cultural identities. There are four key points.

Firstly, for some, hybrid appears to be an appropriate descriptor, as their statements indicate that they view cultural identity as multiple, and boundaries as negotiable. For the majority, however, boundaries appear to be regarded as fairly rigid, significant and defining for cultural identity.

Secondly, the debate seemed to need definitions, categories which could become objects of discussion and revision, for example, Brockie frequently asked for clarification as to the identity of the group who was being mentioned, and several people sought to

establish cultural values that they could use to define appropriate behaviour.

Establishing these boundaries however, created generalisations and sometimes clichéd metaphors, which in turn caused friction.

Thirdly, where they were implied, hybrid conceptualisations of cultural identities appeared to be a more accurate way of describing the actual experience of cultural identity, and were a genuine attempt to avoid contentious generalisations. For this very reason, however, they were difficult to use in this context. Media contexts may have particular reluctance to move away from generalisations of clearly bordered simplistic cultural identities and adopt hybrid concepts of cultural identity as typical. The generalised categories provide more opportunity for simple race based constructions of debates enabling a simpler and more sensational narrative representation of the issues. The hybrid conceptualisation is by its nature boundary blurring. It may, in addition be threatening to those who feel it is a step towards the loss of cultural identity, and hence the loss of something they value.

Finally, there were resistances to seeing cultural issues as not based on conflict between two opposing sides. Challenges to this construction appeared to be easily misunderstood, partly because of problems with established patterns of discourse and partly because of perceived threats to the value of individual cultural identity.

In summary, there was a range of different ways of conceptualising the boundaries of cultural identity expressed within this text. While the majority used concepts of stable boundaries, some expressions of cultural identity allowed for boundaries that could be blurred or stepped over. The benefit of a hybridity approach is the ability to concentrate

on the interface between personal experience and the places where the social and historical boundaries of culture are negotiated. This enables self-reflective, variable descriptions of cultural identity.

CHAPTER 6

Cultural identity is a point of view

Genevieve Lloyd's concept of cultural identity is close to the hybrid version, but different in important ways (Lloyd, 1997). Lloyd is primarily interested in tracing the changing metaphors⁸ through which we, in everyday usage, literary usage and in academic enquiry, conceptualise cultural identity. Whereas in earlier centuries, cultural identity could be defined by metaphors of nation, race and religious belief, metaphors which seemed to provide stability to the concept, and a sense of clear borders, more appropriate metaphors now need to be found for the concept. She considers these old ones do not fit the contemporary experience.

She looks towards theories which she calls 'perspectival' for the source of new metaphors. Noting the interdependence between individual autonomy, and group-based identity, and the difficulty with any theoretical construction which tries to prioritise one over the other, she turns her attention towards theories which begin with an understanding of perspective or orientation. She focuses on Immanuel Kant⁹ who she feels sought to understand the complex, creative, emotional and imaginative relationships between the individual's perspective, and the group perspective of shared understanding. 'Cultural identity changes as it is approached from different paths and a variety of aspects come into view. By giving centrality to this aspect of identity - grasped through metaphors of perspective - we are able to articulate ways of thinking of identity attuned to its contemporary complexities' (Lloyd, 1997, p. 465).

⁸ By metaphor, I mean here a concept or idea which is represented through the use of a different concept, such that certain significant features of the latter are transferred to the idea or concept being represented.

⁹ Lloyd refers to Immanuel Kant's concept of the critical nature of reason. For Kant (1724-1804), reason is critical because it is generated only from itself, and therefore cannot be based on a stable, already existing foundation, but must constantly orient itself within its own creative development.

‘[T]here are no pre-existing foundations for identity under modern conditions of cultural diversity’ (p. 470). The new metaphors for cultural identity are about orientation, perspective, tensions, creativity and imagination. ‘Coming to have an identity is an exercise in autonomy – constructed, not as an act of pure will, but as a continuing response of self-orientation in the lack of the pre-existing ‘foundations’ which might, in earlier times, have determined its formation’ (p. 471).

In analysing ‘Culture Clash’ from Genevieve Lloyd’s perspectival theoretical approach, I will be taking great interest in the metaphors through which speakers attempt to describe their ideas about cultural identity. Metaphors, Lloyd asserts, can reveal in language the way we experience cultural identity. We use metaphors to develop our own understanding of our experiences, and to try to find the most accurate ways to express them. The metaphors reveal the imagined experience, which according to Lloyd, is actually all that we have. I will be looking for any other ways the speakers try to express their perspectives about their identity, for example, pronoun choice, emotional expressions and discussions of borders. I will be relating their metaphors and perspectives to the broader issues of the debate.

Viewing ‘Culture Clash’ from a perspectival perspective

John Howard is quoted in the program as referring to a group of people as ‘a fragment’. Conceptualising a small group as a fragment, rather than as just a small number of individuals, clearly envisages a larger unified whole, from which a small piece has come apart. A fragment is usually the result of a break, a fracture, something going

wrong, with the larger thing. This would seem to support a conceptualisation of cultural identity incorporating clear borders, and that a breaking of the borders threatens the stability of the whole. A fragment splitting off can then be dangerous. Lloyd is suggesting that borders in cultural identity are constantly shifting and changing, and that we need new metaphors which allow for this, rather than fearing 'breakages'.

Howard's remark is directly challenged by Mohamed's version, when he says: 'What I'm saying is for a small faction of people – there are Muslims out there that do the wrong thing and there are Christians out there who do the wrong thing.' His model is of a society made up of individuals who have responsibility for their own actions, as well as, and not dependent upon, cultural identity or religion.

The metaphors used by Brandis are about a different kind of bordered definition for cultural identity, one where the borders are defined by the values of Australian society, particularly the value of freedom of speech. Brandis advocates freedom of speech as a fundamental Australian value, but he seems to be carefully defining a line between Australian values which are available for open free discussion, and those which are not. Having established multiculturalism as a morally virtuous ideal society, Brandis chooses the metaphor of 'striking at the very basis' to describe the comment 'My religion doesn't tolerate other religions.' 'Striking' carries an image of direct physical violence, and 'very basis' calls to mind the heart, the core, the most fundamental feature of a thing. Brandis positions the Sheikh's comment so it appears to be a violent threat to our society. This is a dramatic contrast to his later views about Costello's comments about multiculturalism: 'we can't have a situation in which whenever a political leader or community leader raises the subject of multiculturalism and what it means, what its

dimensions are, they're immediately stigmatised as saying something that is out of bounds.' Although he has established multiculturalism as an important pillar of Australian society, he now stands up for those who wish to debate its limitations. In this case, he is supporting Costello's right to question these dimensions, rather than that of, say, the Sheikh, whom he has effectively placed as 'out of bounds'.

In discussing the Danish cartoons of Mohammad, a commonly used metaphor, also with a focus on the borders, was 'drawing a line' to describe what is and is not seen as respectful of cultural sensitivities. Tahir Bilgic, a Muslim stand-up comic explains: 'I'm making like there's a line and sometimes it's crossed. You have to be aware of it.' Some audience members expressed concern that this line was crossed on the 'Culture Clash' program by a cartoon by Bill Leak which was displayed, showing two Muslim women. One was holding her hijab open, revealing bombs hidden underneath, saying 'does my bomb look big in this?' 'The line' is about as clear a boundary metaphor as we can have. Along with 'the line' participants used 'loaded gun' to describe the seriousness of the responsibility to not go over the line, and 'core' values, to demonstrate the essentialism that this line is considered to have. These metaphors represent very clearly the high degree of importance of the positioning of the borders between cultures for these speakers. For them, the important border is around highly esteemed cultural values. Questioning or joking about something that they regard as of high cultural value, is not acceptable for them, and makes them feel threatened.

There is in this discussion a central argument between whether it is the law that is the regulator of behaviour or whether it is values. Brandis' comment about values towards women is the obvious case in point. A great many people in Australia hold sexist

values. Currently, where these values cause discrimination or physical or emotional violence they are against the law, but the values themselves are permissible under the law. Australian law has avoided involvement in matters of individual or cultural value for several reasons; these issues are too open to interpretation, they are impossible to enforce without the sorts of restrictions to personal freedom that we would find intolerable, and our society has been reluctant to accept any absolute moral standpoint as a basis for acceptable values because this is seen as elitist, inequitable and fraught with moral problems. But the current government has brought this issue to public attention and wants to enforce the holding of certain values as mandatory for entry to Australia. The passion with which Brandis, Costello and Howard speak of freedom of speech and tolerance, explains how they see these 'core' values as the rightful basis of legislation. The metaphor of the line around sacrosanct values is apparent here.

Nick Hanna uses several metaphors in describing the media and community response to the riots.

[T]here's hordes of Arab guys who go down and invade them and harass the women. This is the common thing you hear all the time. That was pumped out before the riots themselves and that's why in a way I don't blame the Aussies that went there because the media was repeating the stuff, we're under siege, they won't leave the women alone.

His military metaphors are sensationalist, in that they are chosen to convey the strength of feeling he perceives in the media coverage. In challenging these metaphors, Hanna is questioning usages like these which portray Muslims as invading savages. Military metaphors were popular with the media in representing and discussing the Cronulla riots, and are freely used by the media in this program. Clearly military metaphors expressing the debate as a battle between two sides reinforce what Lloyd would

characterise as the inaccurate and unrealistic construction of cultural identity which needs revision. They are well represented in this program.

Dennis McCormack uses metaphors liberally: 'Cronulla was referred pain from an immigration program that's been off the rails since it was combined with multiculturalism in 1975'. He mixes metaphors here; 'referred pain' takes society as a body, one organism of interrelated parts. The immigration program would therefore be something from the outside, inflicting injury. Presumably in his Australia, people coming into the country as immigrants are not yet part of the body, but more of a threat to it. 'Off the rails' is clearly a train metaphor, whereby society has a preferred direction, from which it therefore can depart. The metaphor shows that McCormack believes Australian society has a desired direction. He does not tell us what it is, but we know it does not involve multicultural ideals. Later he uses graphic metaphors to comment upon Howard's method of communicating his views about multiculturalism. 'From a community which is overseen by a prime minister who has to dog whistle his message, our prime minister who was left in the gutter with broken political teeth years ago on this issue. He cannot go out the front with it.' Here 'dog-whistle' implies that the Prime Minister has a secret method of communicating his support to those Australians who want to restrict immigration. It suggests that Howard supported the Cronulla riots (that he 'dog-whistled' them to arms). This presents a deeply cynical position regarding multiculturalism. 'In the gutter with broken teeth' imagines Howard beaten by the various media, community and political pressures that support multiculturalism. Noting McCormack's own liberal use of insinuating metaphors, and his opportunistic attitude towards his appearance on *Insight*, it is tempting to interpret his own approach to this program as dog-whistling. The response from the various voices aligned against him,

appears to leave him in a similar state to the one he imagines Howard to be in on this matter. McCormack's metaphors enable him to dog-whistle efficiently.

Aside from McCormack, the predominant use of metaphors with implications for the understanding of cultural identity in this program is by journalists. Megalogenis, responding to questions about his interview with John Howard about cultural clashes, used the metaphor of 'waves' of immigration, a visual term. It is a metaphor which carries several assumptions about the nature of culture and history. Firstly, with regards to cultural identity, 'waves' implies the arrivals from a particular region all share one cultural identity, and are able to be identified as part of this one thing, this wave. Secondly, the metaphor affirms a cyclic, repetitive concept of history, the construction of which requires generalisations about the similarities in the experiences of many different people from many different backgrounds over long periods of time. As such, it affirms a clearly generalised perception of an outcome (absorption), whilst ignoring the diverse and often problematic experiences, which often may never have been finally resolved. The term 'absorption' is itself a metaphor, based on the behaviour of liquids taken up into an object like a sponge. The assumptions about cultural identity implied in this metaphor are; firstly that there is a 'general Australian cultural identity', into which others can be absorbed, and secondly, that individuals and culturally identifiable groups do lose their sense of distinction from the general, (but not necessarily their identification with their culture of origin as would be implied by assimilation), and blend into it comfortably.

Amanda Collinge, presenting her pre-recorded segment, employs several metaphors: 'Scott says the Cronulla riot was hijacked by white supremacists who turned a community rally into utter chaos.' 'When did it, sort of, change from a party atmosphere

into something ugly?’ Collinge chooses highly emotive metaphors, ‘hijacked’, ‘something ugly’ and ‘utter chaos’. The highly judgmental and general nature of the terms might typically be avoided by journalists, but here, because they are clichéd terms in current Australian media, Collinge passes them off as accurate descriptions. Her metaphors all emphasise the violence and disturbance. The groups she mentions, and says that Scott speaks about are ‘white supremacists’, and ‘Lebanese troublemakers’. These terms are used to delineate two opposed sides to the violence, and assert a clearly racial basis for the riots. Furthermore she uses metaphors to outline an explanatory narrative for the riots – a ‘community rally’, a term with positive associations implying building better community relationships, is ‘hijacked’, a metaphor currently loaded with associations with terrorism, by ‘white supremacists’ – which has associations with Nazism. Collinge has presumably chosen the terms to cause alarm, and to apportion responsibility. ‘Utter chaos’ is a visually succinct clichéd metaphor used here to emphasise, and arguably, exaggerate, the violence of the riots.

Jenny Brockie herself, uses certain metaphors which clearly position the program on this issue: ‘In recent weeks our political leaders have had a lot to say about the idea of ‘fitting in’ to the Australian way of life.’ The metaphor ‘fitting in’ is only used twice in this program, once, as above, by Brockie, and secondly, when it is challenged by Rihab Charida:

I'm quite shocked that starting point of this discussion is whether or not Muslims are fitting into this country. It's classic Australian practice to always put the minority group that's being victimised and the target of Australian racism, it's classic Australian practice to put them on the back foot and question their legitimacy of even being here. I can't believe that's the starting point.

‘Fitting in’ implies a social model based on conformity and normalising processes, after Functionalist theories of social equilibrium. Brockie uses the term to generalise the

approach to the debate taken by 'our political leaders'. 'Fitting in' implies a conceptualisation of contemporary Australian society as a pre-existing structure stable enough to at least allow for it to be conceptualised and to persist. This stable structure then enables the identification of things which are outside, or culturally different, or abnormal for this structure (the unfit, or not the right shape, to extend the metaphor). These things which are identified as cultural differences can be incorporated, 'fitted in' to the structure, such that they no longer are cultural differences, but are normalised to support the existing structure.

Charida challenges the debate to question this assumed model of Australian society. She uses the metaphor 'to put them on the back foot', in an attempt to show how she envisions Muslims being denoted as the abnormal, or unfit. She is suggesting that the debate abandon, at least as a starting point, the assumption that one particular construction of Australian society is normal. However this debate would not be permitted to question that assumption.

Brockie's reply to Charida shows that she either misinterpreted Charida's idea, or did not want to address it:

Brockie: 'The starting point is actually been set by the comments made by our political leaders. That's the starting point. We've had the Prime Minister and Treasurer saying these statements and that's what we're discussing.'

Charida: 'That's problematic in itself.'

Brockie: 'We'll get back to that but I'd like someone to respond to what Tanveer said about the section of the Lebanese community.'

Here Brockie repositions the discussion to particularities of one identified group.

Charida's comment was on topic, according to Brockie's statement about 'what we're discussing'. Charida was discussing the statements of the political leaders, and reflecting upon how public debate about the issue needs to be able to begin with

different questions if it is to really question the assumptions made by political leaders, not merely argue about how accurately society reflects their analysis. It was a moment in the debate where the dominant perspectives were being challenged, but it was missed because of the preconceived frameworks of the program and the host.

The terms ‘Muslim community’, ‘Islamic community’, ‘Arab community’ and ‘Lebanese community’ are used frequently throughout the program. The reliance on these terms seems to confuse the issue. These terms are important in the discourse, yet their meaning is vague and misleading. The term ‘Muslim community’ is generally used to simply mean ‘Muslim people living in Australia’, but because the word ‘community’ in effect works as a metaphor, implying a group wherein the members know each other and engage in ongoing interdependent relationships with each other, this meaning tends to be carried over into the concept ‘Muslim community’. The term Muslim community is used as if there is only one interconnected, united Muslim group, but this is not the case in a country the size of Australia and with Muslim people speaking many languages and following many different traditions. So long as Muslims in Australia are referred to as ‘the Muslim community’ there is the misapprehension that someone can be a spokesperson for the community, that they are united under one organisation, and that culturally they are in agreement about values. The same concerns are present with the terms Islamic community, Arab community, Lebanese community or indeed, Australian community.

What does Lloyd's perspectival view reveal?

Viewing the text through Lloyds's perspectival approach revealed insights into how the participants conceptualised cultural identity through imaginatively associating their experiences of it metaphorically. There are five key points.

Firstly, the metaphors most commonly used to conceptualise cultural identities in the discourse were ones which were based around set boundaries like the nation, or which characterised two sides in conflict. This was the precept from the start with the title and it was maintained throughout as the dominant way of conceiving of cultural identity in this situation. Lloyd's suggestion, that metaphors such as nationhood and metaphors that imagine cultural identity defined through polarising difference are no longer appropriate did not seem to be borne out within this discourse.

Secondly, the journalists' ready use of metaphor to convey complex ideas quickly and with affect, frequently constructed and perpetuated frameworks of understanding which overgeneralised complex situations. Examples are Megalogenis' 'waves' of immigration being a metaphor which is unable to contain the variety of experiences of the settlement process, and Collinge's 'community rally' that was 'hijacked' and turned into 'utter chaos', which provides a simple narrative at the expense of factual detail. Within the program the frameworks of understanding constructed by these metaphors were unquestioned, so they appeared to be accepted. Whilst not directly related to cultural identity, these frameworks sustain and endorse particular conceptualisations of cultural identity.

Thirdly, the most passionately defended boundaries, described using a range of forceful and boundary oriented metaphors, were those around what were perceived to be culturally important values. The values that were highly defended were varied, depending on the speaker's background and perspective, but within this discourse were; not making images of Mohammed, respecting women, tolerance of different religions and cultures, and freedom of speech. These appear to be the sorts of things that many of the participants sought to hold on to as necessary for cultural identity, either their own, or that of their country. The importance of these culturally significant values is apparent in the government's recent legislation requiring obeisance to Australian values from people entering the country. It is equally apparent in the demonstrations against the cartoons of Mohammad and, in the context of this program, in the discomfort of some audience members to Leak's cartoon of women hiding bombs in their hijab.

Fourthly, there were some attempts to challenge the boundary based metaphors, and approach the issue from an awareness of perspective. But these were either misunderstood within the terms of the discourse, or not adopted by the host as for elaboration, showing that they were not expected or desired for the discourse.

Finally, the concept of community was liable to misinterpretation as a metaphor through the discourse such that implications of close relationships, normatively accepted values and normatively accepted concepts of cultural identity were exaggerated. This contributed to difficulties for participants who were trying to redress this imbalance by explaining their cultural identities in more hybrid terms. They tended to use two conflicting perspectives, the ones from community which implies unity, and ones based

on legal and individual responsibility. These can be reconciled, but this was not done within the framework of this debate.

Although metaphors relating to borders were most common for cultural identity, different metaphors, reflecting different ways of imagining the concept were used by some participants within this discourse. Viewing through this theoretical perspective indicated more about the commonalities than the differences in the conceptualisations of the different participants, and indicated where some of the limitations of the imagination of cultural identity might lie for all of the participants within this discourse. The benefit of a perspectival approach is its ability to reveal the creative nature of the concept, to remind us that we are investigating imagination and ingenuity as much as historic, political and linguistic frameworks.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this work, I hoped to shed light on some of the theoretical assumptions which might be underlying the varied conceptualisations of cultural identity expressed within the recent debate about multiculturalism in Australia, and thereby reveal some of the basic differences that might be contributing to misunderstanding or disagreement. To be able to engage with this task, I needed a structure that could relate theoretical frameworks exploring the meaning of cultural identity with the current discourse, that could be flexible enough to expose differences and powerful enough to allow insight into the theoretical assumptions underlying the conceptualisations. My research design came together from three essential elements: a suitable text, a suitable selection of theoretical perspectives into the nature of cultural identity and a methodology which could manage the analysis. I managed to find a text, *Insight 'Culture Clash'* which provided a range of voices in the debate interacting together in a discussion which potentially revealed their assumptions about cultural identity. I was able to find four writers with contrasting theoretical perspectives on the meaning and nature of cultural identity. Each perspective allowed a reading of the discourse, and for each one I was able to define linguistic and discursive features which could enable me to discern the participants' approaches to cultural identity within the terms of the theory. Discourse analysis methodologies were ideal to provide the means for searching for meaning in relating the text and the theories.

It was clear that at least in this small moment of the debate, people were expressing a variety ways of understanding this concept. Each theoretical perspective revealed

significant differences in the ways participants in the discourse were conceptualising cultural identity. These differences did contribute to misunderstandings between the participants, and to contrasting perceptions of the nature of the issues under discussion. Participants engaged within this discourse with a range of interpretations of what the issue was; different ways of representing and explaining their own experiences; a range of different assumptions about the defining boundaries of the concept; several narratives about the past and a range of different assumptions about what was possible and desirable for the future. These were all related to the theoretical assumptions the participants held about the nature of cultural identity.

When I read the text from the theoretical perspective of Reyes' linguistic anthropology, I viewed the participants as actively involved in the process of constructing frameworks of meaning. I searched for patterns within their interactions through which concepts were constructed, negotiated, accepted or rejected. The structures, rules and power relationships of the discourse did influence the conceptualisations that were accepted. Two broad interpretations of the issue were developed in conflict with each other through the program. One represented the issue as about racism in Australia, implicated the media and the government in the racism and saw the social objective as overcoming racism and increasing equality. The other represented the issue as about freedom of speech, and was maintained by the media and government representatives. From the former viewpoint, cultural identity tended to be expressed as a central and fundamental experience of identity. From the latter viewpoint, it tended to be a way of describing broad groups of people for political or historical purposes, based on country of background. Equally significantly, participants were engaged in different social discourses beyond this one, and brought with them into this debate meanings of cultural

identity constructed for particular purposes within particular discourses. For example, Senator Brandis' participation in the debate about multiculturalism within federal law and the federal Liberal party fostered his conceptualisation of cultural identity and Megalogenis' engagement in discourses about the political history of multiculturalism influenced his concept of cultural identity. Other participants brought experience from discourses within Muslim communities, academic contexts, marginal political organisations and friendship groups.

Analysing the discourse from Yeatman's cosmopolitan theoretical framework, I saw it from within a broad historical and political narrative. This narrative itself was only apparent through a theorised perspective. I found substantial theoretical differences. In terms of the approach to power, the participants could loosely be grouped into those, like Darwich, who saw cultural identity as primary, and the cause of attitudes and behaviours, and those, like Ahmed, who saw it as secondary, and determined along with attitudes and behaviour, by social and political realities. The participants in this discourse who did have these different conceptualisations did not find ways of understanding each other. Some participants, notably Brandis, Megalogenis and McCormack conceptualised cultural identity within the assumption of a traditional (in the Durkheimian sense) society where we maintain order because we all identify as being in some sense the same. This implies a sense of cultural identity that seeks sameness, where differences are potential barriers to order. Others, including Ahmed, Samuel and Mohamed described a society that is orderly because we value the numerous benefits created by our diversity. This implies a sense of cultural identity that accommodates multiple borders. The narrative version of the history of immigration to Australia that was uncontested within this discourse was dependent on a particular

conceptualisation of cultural identity, one based on the assumption of unity of culture within a national identity. A utopian expression of a cosmopolitan order was suggested only briefly by Samuel, indicating that this theoretical perspective was marginal within the discourse.

When I approached the text from Ang's hybridity perspective, I explored the ways the participants experienced and expressed ideas about the boundaries of cultural identity. I found clear differences in the ways participants expressed these boundaries. Hybrid conceptualisations were expressed by some of the young people from immigrant backgrounds, Hage-Ali and El Assad for example, sometimes in confused and contradictory ways. Their hybrid perspectives were attempts to accurately describe their personal experiences of cultural identity in Australian society. This contrasted with the conceptualisations of other participants, particularly the media and government representatives, who viewed cultural identity as defined in clearly bordered national and religious terms. These commentators were describing cultural identity as part of broad social, political or historical narratives, and did not account for individual experience. The hybrid view did not appear to be understood, or perhaps was not heard by the media or government representatives. I considered the possibility that media and government spokespeople might at times retain strongly defined boundaries of cultural identity where they are concerned to create narratives that are easy to understand within a limited timeframe. In addition, hybrid accounts were not countenanced where they were felt to be too threatening to cultural identity. These two different conceptualisations of the boundaries of the concept did not find a way to understand each other within this discourse.

Exploring the text from Lloyd's perspectival theoretical position, I was viewing the participants as the imaginative creators of their own conceptual framework. I searched the metaphors they used as keys to the assumptions underlying their understandings of their experiences and ways of understanding cultural identity. I did find differences in the metaphors being used to express this concept, but most of the metaphors pointed towards one dominant conceptualisation of cultural identity. The predominant metaphors used in conceptualising cultural identity were those that emphasised boundaries, particularly boundaries around values which are regarded as culturally significant. These metaphors took a variety of particular forms, as did the values that they protected and that were considered central to notions of cultural identity. When cultural identity boundaries were regarded as impermeable, the explanation of cultural mixing in society emphasised assimilation within one unified national cultural identity. The social issues identified with this conceptualisation then concerned the success or failure of people's ability to assimilate. This account of cultural identity was occasionally, but unsuccessfully within this discourse, contested by voices, such as Chariba's, that questioned these metaphors of solid impermeable boundaries. Metaphors were closely associated with explanatory narratives, and contributed to strengthening the dominant narratives of social values and history within this program.

This analysis enabled me to identify several significantly different theoretical assumptions underlying the conceptualisations of cultural identity of participants and contributing to misunderstanding in this discourse. Firstly, there were contrasting assumptions concerning the nature of the defining boundaries of the concept of cultural identity. Some embraced notions of hybridity, or considered the boundaries of identification as a matter of broad personal choice and personal experience, separated

from national or legal frameworks. For others the borders of cultural identity, particularly those concerning values which are regarded as culturally important, were sacrosanct, to the point where identity was felt to be threatened if these boundaries were not considered within national legal frameworks. Secondly, there were different assumptions concerning the essential nature of cultural identity. For some, it was essential, and the source of values and perspectives which would then frame a social system. For others it was a construct of economic, historical and political forces. Thirdly, there were contrasting assumptions relating to historical narrative. Some made sense of the current situation from a narrative drawn from metaphors of waves of immigration settling into a harmonious united Australia. Others saw a narrative of continual racist treatment and inequality. Fourthly, there were different assumptions about the nature of social order. For some, cultural identity was tied to a concept of social stability based on unity through identification of our sameness, meaning cultural identity needs strong articulation and clear definition. For others a strong social stability comes from the interdependence of diverse people, and cultural identity could be interpreted loosely. For each area of difference, one conceptualisation was dominant within in this discourse. The structures, roles and discursive interactions privileged a construction of cultural identity that was bounded by national and regional origin and would end or change into something else with successful assimilation or integration.

I found each theoretical perspective to be valuable in different ways. The theoretical perspectives provided criteria enabling subtle differences in language, metaphor and discursive interaction to yield insights into underlying assumptions which otherwise were not accessible. Each theory provided me with the basis to find different implications about the ways cultural identity was conceived by different people within

the discourse. To use any one alone would only have provided access to a limited view of the meanings, issues and perspectives within and surrounding the discourse. The theories did affect the meanings and insights that were possible.

In addition to the exploration of conceptualisations of cultural identity, this study has explored the relationship between theory and methodology. Each theoretical perspective used here had a different relationship to methodology, as each one asked different questions of the text. The theory influenced the way the discourse was read and the insights that could be gained, and raised awareness of particular issues not noticed through the other perspectives. Changing theoretical frameworks was changing paradigms. It meant that not only was the text like a somewhat different text, but also the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology was to some extent reinvented each time, coming from different perspectives and asking different questions. To critically analyse the text from a different theoretical perspective, I needed to read it differently and search for different linguistic and discursive features.

Emerging from this methodological exploration is a flexible, concise and effective methodology that has produced a wide range of theoretical and practical insights in this study. The methodology can be summed up as deploying appropriate discourse analysis techniques multiple times through contrasting theoretical frameworks to draw out the theoretical assumptions underlying the conceptualisations of a controversial concept within a discourse. The success of this methodology and its likely applicability to other research is a significant outcome of this study.

This study has many limitations, and also provides several directions for further research opportunities. I looked at one discourse within a much broader social context, and used the work of only four theorists to provide insight into conceptualisations of cultural identity. Clearly these limitations mean that this study cannot claim to represent anything other than an investigation of the way that cultural identity has been conceptualised in one particular text, within one debate. Further, I make no claims that the attitudes expressed by the participants in the 'Culture Clash' text are their attitudes in any other contexts. I also make no claims to have comprehensively represented the views of the four theorists. I have based my interpretation of each approach on one work only. Some of these limitations provide possibilities for further work. There are a number of directions that further research might take, drawing on the directions initiated in this study. Some future research directions are suggested from the theoretical potential of this study. For example, further work based on more extensive explorations and critiques of these theoretical frameworks may provide more philosophical depth to future studies in the same area. Different theoretical frameworks, from more widely varied areas of knowledge, could be deployed in a similar manner to this or other discourses in this debate, perhaps revealing further insights into cultural identity as it is applied in Australian social debate. Other directions are suggested from the methodology established in this study. A similar methodology could be deployed in a number of recent controversial events, and may help to build clearer understanding within controversial debates. For example, an investigation on a global scale could provide insight into the theoretical assumptions regarding cultural identity expressed within the media following the publishing of the Danish cartoons.

I hope that emerging from this discussion between text and theory will be a more profound understanding of the different theoretical conceptualisations underpinning the varied voices of the debate about cultural conflict and multiculturalism in Australia today and that this can contribute to better understanding between the parties in this debate. In addition, I hope this discussion contributes to a more acute critique of the theories, in the light of their application to a contentious area of public debate, and provides new directions for research which seeks to reflect upon issues of cultural policy from a theoretical perspective.

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Appendix: The Participants in the SBS Insight ‘Culture Clash’ program

In order of first appearance

Jenny Brockie: The host. Brockie is a journalist with twenty years experience in radio, television and print. She has worked with *Insight* since 2001. She has received many journalistic awards including a Gold Walkley Award.

Senator George Brandis: A Federal Liberal Party Senator representing Queensland. George Brandis began serving in the Federal senate in 2005. Prior to this he was a senator in the Queensland senate from 2000 to 2005. He has sat on numerous senate committees. Prior to his political career, he was a barrister (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006)

Iktimal Hage-Ali: A member of the Muslim Community Reference Group. Also a member of the New South Wales Youth Advisory Council, and the Young Australian of the Year for 2006, a title she resigned from late in 2006.

George Megalogenis: A journalist with The Australian. He was the journalist who interviewed Prime Minister John Howard about his views on the integration of Muslims into Australian society in late 2005.

Diaa Mohamed: A member of the Australian New Muslim Association.

Reverend George Capsis: A Baptist Minister, living in Cronulla. He migrated as a child with his parents from Egypt, and experienced racism in Australian schools in the 1940s.

Dr Tanveer Ahmed: A Psychiatric Registrar, working in the south western suburbs of Sydney. Ahmed is Muslim and was born in Bangladesh.

Rihab Charida: A member of the Sydney-based group Sawiyan - Palestine Solidarity.

NOMISEe,: A rapper and actor.

Amanda Collinge: One of the journalists on the *Insight* team.

Nick Hanna: A young Lebanese Australian, who lives in south western Sydney and attended the Lakemba mosque on the night of the 12th December, the night of the reprisal attacks.

Naomi Gittoes: A girl who experienced sexual harassment at Cronulla beach. She is accompanied by a friend with similar experiences.

Freelance Journalist: (her name is not provided), a Muslim woman.

Mona Darwiche: A Muslim woman, no further information available.

Scott Goold: A resident of Cronulla who used to surf there but has not used the beach in recent years. He was present at the riots on the 11th December 2005.

Denis McCormack: A co-founder of the political party Australia First. Australia First campaigns against immigration and against government support for Indigenous Australians. The party's most prominent spokesperson was Pauline Hanson.

Abdul El Assad: A member of the Australian New Muslim Association

Elleni Bereded Samuel: Works at Victoria University assisting recently arrived immigrants to establish themselves in education in Melbourne. She is of Ethiopian background.

Warren Brown: A cartoonist with The Daily Telegraph.

Bill Leak, Cartoonist: A very experienced cartoonist with The Australian. Bill Leak's cartoons have a reputation for political satire.

Tahir Bilgic: A stand-up comic. Bilgic is Muslim, and his humour often satirises Australian Muslim traditions.