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The Sydney 2000 Olympics Bid and its impact on the process of redefining Australian national identity

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CERTIFICATE

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Contents

Abstract

When in 1993 Sydney was awarded the rights to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000, the Olympic Bid was hailed by the media and governments alike as a milestone in the development of Australia as a nation. Throughout the Olympic Bid the question of civic pride and identity (as a culturally diverse nation) seemed to transcend with ease the traditional boundaries/inhibitions of social and political divisions in Australian society. Although initially conceived by the New South Wales State Government as a local venture Sydney's Bid soon developed into a project of national importance boasting the active involvement of wide cross sections of Australian society, including both major political parties, unions, industry and commerce, ethnic and indigenous community groups. In a time of uncertainty and change, the successful Olympic Bid appeared to offer a reaffirmation of Australia's achievements as a nation and was highlighting the potential of the Sydney Olympics as an agent for 'national reconciliation and reconstruction'.

This thesis sets out to examine the phenomenon of the Sydney Olympic Bid within the current debate on national identity in Australia. How, if at all, did the Olympic Bid impact on the nation building process in Australia? There are no exact terms of measurement for the status of a nation's identity hence it is not aimed to quantify statistically a possible impact of the Bid. The main objectives of the research are twofold. First to identify and critically analyse the theoretical/philosophical and historical processes that delineate the phenomenon of the Olympic Bid. Second to establish a framework of relationships that connect those processes. How do they interact?

It is argued that the concept of national identity as a sense of collectivity is centred upon an act of imagination within the spheres of subjectivity. Although being an abstract concept that is often likened to quasi religious observance, the nation is set in and subjected to the power relations of the socio political framework within a bounded territory. The imagined community of nation does not occur naturally, it requires an active process of communication that relies on symbolic representations such as flags,

anthems, a history of heroic acts, and collective experiences. It is within the context of symbolic representations and imagination that the Olympic Bid operated and ultimately, however temporarily, impacted on Australian nationhood. Undoubtedly, the Olympic Bid has given a grand promise of a collective identity that is based on an all inclusive membership. However, it is argued that the bid operated predominantly through projections of an idealised future that imposed versions of Australianness, namely multiculturalism and reconciliation with the indigenous people, which by no means can be considered as fully developed or resolved within the current process of redefining Australian identity.

1. Introduction

Background

"..the winner is Sydney", - when International Olympic Committee President Samaranch announced with these words the host city for the Olympic Games in the year 2000 a wave of public enthusiasm erupted across Australia. Thousands of revellers gathered in the early morning hours of the 24th September at Sydney's Circular Quay to share this moment in a collective atmosphere, an act of jubilation that was soon to be followed by innumerable spontaneous celebrations throughout the country. In a public outburst of national pride and sentiment both the media and the federal and state governments advocated the importance and ramifications of Sydney's successful Bid. National media headlines on the day following the announcement boasted "Congratulations Australia" and were proclaiming that "Olympic Spirit inspires nation" (*The Australian* 25 Sep. 1993:1). The then Prime Minister Paul Keating announced that the successful Olympic Bid was a major step in Australia's search for a new international identity (*Sydney Morning Herald* 25 Sep 1993:1).

The announcement of Sydney's successful candidature brought to a culmination two and a half years of intensive campaigning which saw an unprecedented co-operative effort across political and social spheres of Australian society. What initially started out as a mundane occasion that revolved around (locally constrained) technical and financial planning procedures suddenly dominated broad aspects of public life (ranging from culture, politics, sports, economics). Sanctioned by the institutions of government, the Olympic Bid purveyed a message of 'national importance' - the Olympic Games were to deliver Australia into a new age of nationhood. Symbolically spearheaded by the then-Prime Minister Paul Keating the Olympic bid was represented as the embodiment of 'spiritual/national qualities' that were to provide Australians with the opportunity to imagine themselves as a nation (Sydney Olympic Bid Limited, 1993a:10).

Arguably, Australia had come to a cross-roads in its short history as a nation. Massive social and economic change combined with the advent of global communication technologies and trade had seemingly set the stage for a profound search of the 'Australian soul' in the final decades of the twentieth century (McKay 1993). Over the past decades the parameters delineating nationhood in Australia entered a process of transition (Alomes 1988, White 1981). Traditional alliances (particularly with the United Kingdom and later the United States) that in the past had politically, economically and socially set the bearings for Australian nationhood had become increasingly inadequate in providing the philosophical foundations for the "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983:15) of Australia. Simultaneously, the onslaught of cultural and economic globalisation have made obsolete Australia's protective geographic isolation. Australia is more and more drawn into the arena of international cultural competition. The urge for cultural differentiation, for setting the new bearings of nationhood had become paramount for the political leaders of a country in transition - a project particularly promoted by the then Labor Federal Government. In the process of readdressing the sense of common purpose within its boundaries, Australia was to present to the world with the Olympic Bid a new model of nationhood that featured multiculturalism and reconciliation with Australia's indigenous people as key notions of Australianness.

Given this context, the objectives of this thesis are twofold. First, to identify the processes and discourses that frame the debate of nationhood. Second, to examine the role of the Olympic Bid in the context of constructing Australian nationhood. How, if at all, did the Olympic Bid impact on the nation building process in Australia?

As it is not aimed to provide an answer of a quantitative nature to this question, no primary research data in the form of field surveys was collected. The concern of this study is not to determine statistically a possible impact of the Bid as perceived by a sample population. Moreso it is aimed to identify and put into relation the theoretical/philosophical and historical contexts that delineate the phenomenon of the Olympic Bid.

A number of reinforcing qualitative research methods were employed. These methods included the content and textual analysis of audio visual materials and texts emanating from the Sydney Bid Committee, newspaper articles, as well as the published personal accounts of the Chief Executive Officer of the SOBC. Also utilised throughout this study was the review of existing literature as well as the process of observation carried out at the time of working for the Sydney Olympic Bid Company. The initial research question is broken up into four points of discussion that represent a particular emphasis and angle of observation. These topics are: the concept of identity and the nation state; the Australian experience of nationhood; the nationalist construction of the Olympic Games; and an empirical study of the national element within the bidding process in Sydney's quest for the Olympic Games. Although these points of discussion are presented as autonomous essays they incorporate a common thread linking them: the concept of nationhood. The key observations and findings along this thread are the basis for the final analysis carried out in Chapter Five. Within this framework literature emanating from a range of disciplines is reviewed and critically analysed in order to establish a map of concepts and relationships that position the Sydney Olympic bid within the debate of nationhood. The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter Two contains an introduction to the concepts of nation, state, modernity and post-modernity. In a critical examination of literature particularly by Anderson (1989), Smith (1991), Gellner (1993), Giddens (1991), Hall (1984), Larrain (1994) I aim to establish the fundamental principles and tools of analysis for this thesis by exploring the relationship between subjectivity and nationhood. What is the concept of nation, what is its origin and who are the main protagonists of this concept? What is the role of subjectivity in the discourse of nationhood and what are the processes and conditions that lead to the construction of the 'nation'? Particular emphasis is given to the concept of nation's most prolific appropriated form - the nation state and the philosophical challenges the nation is facing in light of post-modernist thought and the mechanics of globalisation.

The third Chapter examines the historic processes and power relations that have shaped the quest for an Australian national identity. Central to this study of the Australian experience of nationhood is the review of literature most prominently works by White (1981), Alomes (1988), Najman & Western (1993), and Castle, Kalantzis, Cope & Morissey (1988). The objectives of this Chapter are to present a biographical outline of the events that have delineated the development of particular models of nationhood and to examine their repercussions on the present day debate on national identity: from the first emergence of an Australian colonial identity, - the Australian Type, from the 'Australian' type to the Australian lifestyle ideology and the current debate of civic pluralism and cultural diversity. Central to this Chapter is Australia's settlement history from the initial annexation of the "*terra nullius*" and the consequent establishment of a white Anglo Saxon franchise of British society to the 'populate or perish' mass immigration after World War II as key determining factors. Also, consideration is given to the role of sport in Australian society.

Drawing amongst others on the work of Hargreaves (1992), Loland (1994), Houlihan (1994) and MacAloon (1991) the fourth Chapter presents a study of the nationalist construction of the Olympic Games from both a structural/ideological as well as historical point of view. The Games were the ultimate prize to be gained in the bidding process and to understand the status that the Australian Bid for the 2000 Olympics enjoyed it is essential to examine the relationship of the Olympic movement and the concept of nation state. This Chapter examines the rise of the modern Olympic Games from humble beginnings as a low key event to one of the world's largest spectacles. I argue that today the Olympic Games are established as a phenomenon that, while not overtly pursuing political goals, has become an effective and powerful agent in national and international politics due to its structural and ideological compatibility with the concept of nation state.

The empirical study of the Sydney Olympic Bid is discussed in Chapter Five. A particular emphasis is given to the analysis of the representations of Australian nationhood that were crucial to the selling of Sydney as a candidate city both nationally and internationally. Also

examined are the mechanics put in place to address the imagined community nation - the mobilisation of the discourses of nation in the quest for the Olympic Games. Again a special focus is given to cultural diversity and indigenous culture that stand out as the key features in the visual and contextual presentation of Australian society throughout the Olympic Bid.

Bringing together the key findings of the previous Chapters in Chapter Six I endeavour to position the phenomenon of Sydney's Olympic Bid within the process of defining Australian nationhood. In doing so I return to the initial questions: Did the Olympic Bid impact on the nation building process, and, if so, on what level? Has it helped Australians to imagine themselves a strong and proud nation?

2. Nationhood and subjectivity

Throughout the twentieth century the nation state has become the world's dominant form of socio-political formation. Around the globe clearly demarcated bounded territories are boasting their autonomous status through nomenclature[1] (every nation state has its own distinct name), symbolic representations (such as flags and anthems) and distinct rules and regulations of membership. Central to the concept of the nation state and its relationship with the subject is the notion of identity. National identity[2] forms a powerful collective identity that subjects the individual to a certain set of cultural practices and value systems: it defines the individual as a national, a citizen of a territory and in turn provides him/her with the means of being positioned in the world. As Smith (1991:17) observes, the "process of self-definition and location is in many ways the key to national identity."

It now seems almost natural to have such an identity, to be an Austrian or an Australian. However, the concept of nation state is far from being a natural order. In fact it is a highly complex and abstract fabrication of human origin. The aim of this Chapter is to examine the origins and key features of the nation state and relate it to the issues of cultural and personal identity at the end of the twentieth century.

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[1]Smith (1993:14) describes a nation as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members."

[2]national identity is described by Hargreaves (1992:121) as "an expression of difference from others based on perceived membership of a community within a given territory, or of a community with historic claims to a given territory". Smith (1991:75) similarly accentuates the differentiation of members and non-members as a "pattern of similarity-cum-dissimilarity" as a meaning of national identity.

2.1. Origins of the nation state

The concept of the nation state is a relatively modern phenomenon with its roots dating back to 18th century Europe. Prior to this date, states usually were based on religious or dynastic ties and solidarity within the state was centred around the church or ruling family. The rise of nationalism[3] (Anderson 1983, Smith 1991, Renan 1990) coincided with the age of Enlightenment which brought a radical break to the philosophic, political and economic framework (Feudalism) of its time. Crucial to this new age was the belief in progress (encouraged by the discoveries in science and technology) and the abiding faith in the power of human reason. The human being was elevated to the centre of the universe ready to unveil the mysteries of nature and spelling the end of the all embracing domination and universality of religion.

> ..the human being became 'the subject', the basis of all knowledge, the master of all things, the necessary point of reference for all that goes on (Larrain 1994:143).

This centrality of the subject and the almost blind reliance on reason also formed the pinnacle of what has become known as modernity. With the foundations to modern secularisation laid, political and economic liberalism and humanitarian reform spread throughout the 19th-century Western world. The emergence of capitalism and the growth of trade and industry transformed the traditional locally constrained production processes into a wider (national) economic system. Vastly improved communication and education enabled the citizenry to overcome the tyranny of linguistic diversity and isolation, enabling the individual to learn about, comprehend and identify him/herself with this solidarity based on a common heritage. As Anderson (1983:49) notes:

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[3]I use the term nationalism in accordance with Smith's (1991:73) definition: "as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'".

> ..the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.

The sudden void left by the decline of religious belief combined with the advent of print-capitalism[4] was a fruitful nurturing ground for the rise of the nation as a "spiritual principle" (Renan, 1990:19) that could provide certainty and continuity. Nation is a construct in the mind of the subject or, as Anderson (1983:15) observes, it is an "imagined political community" that reaches beyond the individual's capacity to comprehend in its entirety.

> It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

Anderson (1983:16) goes further to suggest that nations are not only imagined but also sovereign and limited in their nature: limited in a sense that a nation has geographical and political boundaries beyond which lies another nation - it does not intend to identify itself with the whole of mankind; and sovereign because of its negation of the "divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm" (1983:16) - in line with its Enlightenment origins.

Despite its abstract nature, the ideas of nationhood and nationalism have left a tangible legacy on socio-political developments in the nineteenth and twentieth century. They have been closely aligned, and in many ways have become synonymous with political ideologies such as liberalism, fascism and communism and the associated struggles for ideological supremacy. In fact, the term nation state in itself is equally critical. As will be discussed in more detail later in this Chapter, nation and state have a close relationship and many

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[4]Benedict Anderson (1983:46) describes print-capitalism as the interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism) and a technology of communications (print).

overlaps. However, they are essentially two different concepts. As Anthony Smith (1991:16) observes, the nation "signifies a cultural and political bond, uniting in a single political community all who share a historic culture and homeland". The state in turn "refers exclusively to public institutions, differentiated from, and autonomous of, other social institutions and exercising a monopoly of coercion and extraction within a given territory"[5]- it predominantly operates in the realms of law and bureaucracy. Smith (1991:99) further points out that national identity comprises both a cultural and political identity and that "any attempt to forge a national identity is also a political action with political consequences..." The nation is a multi dimensional construct drawing on elements from a variety of other concepts of collectivity such as class, religion, ethnicity, geographic boundaries and common heritage - and it is the ease of compatibility with these concepts that makes nationalism vulnerable to incorporation into ideologies like liberalism, fascism and communism.

Arguably, to understand nation in its complexity we have to go beyond the notion of ideology and, as Benedict Anderson (1983:19) argues, we have to align it "with the large cultural systems that preceded it", namely the pre-Enlightenment domination of religion and kinship. Indeed the concept of 'nation' as a quasi religious entity lies close. Anderson, while not claiming that nationalism superseded religion, distinctively likens the concept of nationhood to religious observance. He points out that nationalism and religion both share the centrality of death and immortality, "the mystery of re-generation" (1983:18) as a fundamental characteristic and underlying principle. Smith (1991:161) similarly notes: "Identification with the 'nation' in a secular era is the surest way to surmount the finality of death and ensure a measure of personal immortality". Willis (1993:20) goes even one step further when she describes the nation as a substitute for religion:

> ...the rise of the nation-state coincided with the decline of religion and that, in significant ways, the belief in nation has been a modern substitute for belief in God.

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[5]This formulation also conforms with Max Weber's definition of the state as the agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence.

> Nation provides a pervasive way of making communal life meaningful beyond the immediate circle of family and beyond the different social formations a subject may move through in the course of a lifetime.....providing a sense of belonging.

Ernest Renan (1990:19) sees the nation as a soul, a spiritual principle that is nurtured by a "rich legacy of memories" and "a present day consent", a desire to live together.

Paradoxically, the concept of nation as a relatively modern phenomenon relies heavily on the presence of a past, it presupposes a historic development, a legacy of common experiences and sacrifices. A glorified past combined with a desire for a 'limitless' future produce the all embracing formula on which the philosophic framework of the nation hinges. It is this dualism that Anderson (1983:19) describes as the "magic" that turns chance into destiny: arguing that it is accidental that the individual is born in a particular geographic location, but it is through this very accident that he/she becomes part of a common fate of the seemingly eternal collectivity of the nation.

Renan (1990) boldly puts this dichotomy of shared past and future experience as the central argument in his discussion of nation. He goes even further and discounts the validity of factors such as geography, language, race and religion as adequate explanations of the phenomenon of nation. For him the spiritual principle is the dominating aspect in defining nation.

> More valuable by far than common customs posts and frontiers conforming to strategic ideas is the fact of sharing, in the past, a glorious heritage and regrets, and of having, in the future (a shared) program to put into effect, or the fact of having suffered, enjoyed, and hoped together.....I spoke just now of having suffered together and, indeed, suffering in common unifies more than joy does (Renan, 1990:19)

Similarly, Yuval-Davis (1986:8) sees "the boundaries of collectiveness [in national communities]" centred around the 'myth' of a common origin and a common fate and argues that the right/opportunity to participate in this collective is normally obtained by birth.

Undoubtedly, the traditional appearance of nations is that of an exclusive club where membership is restricted and in its most common form handed down through the generational line thus creating continuity and homogeneity which maintains the status quo. Arguably, many nations share a communion in one or more of the factors of race, language and religion and have used this community to distinguish themselves from other nations. Indeed, ethnicity has become a most powerful means of exclusion within political frameworks. Gellner (1983:1) argues that:

> ....nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state -....- should not separate the power holders from the rest

However, the fact that there are successful nations that manage to survive and prosper in the absence of a homogenous internal fabric (such as Switzerland with its numerous official languages and religions, the USA, Canada and Australia) leads us to conclude that the question of a nation's identity cannot solely be reduced to physical manifestations of homogeneity or the bounded space occupied, but rather, as Renan would have it, a shared spiritual principle.

As will be discussed later in this Chapter these limitations of the concept of nationhood as a cultural unit are major proponents in the formation of "otherness" and in turn the "self" (Larrain 1994). While it cannot be disputed that nations in a territorial sense are most flexible entities and to a varying degree have been subjected to geographic expansion, it is

undeniable that the relationship resulting from such an expansion is generally one of exclusion and distinction rather than homogeneity: the colonising power versus the colonised.

The notion of exclusion constitutes a central argument within the construction of cultural/national identity: what are the processes that lead to the formation of common characteristics and conditions that transform the anonymity of cohabitation in a bounded space into a large scale solidarity? As discussed, the nation is a phenomenon of human fabrication and not a natural occurrence with universal rules and regulations. Hence the politics of inclusion and exclusion within the framework of national identity are subject to particular interpretations within particular socio-cultural contexts. Race, language, religion, heritage all play a part in the discourse of nationalism and cultural identity. However, it is the structure and distribution of power relations within social groups that ultimately determine the prevalence of a particular identity, or as Connell (1977) argues, nationalism is centred around the hegemony[6] of a certain class and their aim to cement their values culturally, psychologically, politically and economically. In other words, the notions of rule and subjection are crucial in the analysis of nation. I will therefore at this point direct my attention to the state, the ultimate agency of social control and regulation, and its congruence with the issues of nationhood and national identity.

2.2. Nation and State

One of the most intriguing characteristics of the omnipresent concept of nation is that it is mostly tied to other discourses. Willis (1993:17) argues that "the figure of nation"

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[6]Following Gramsci, Connell (1977:206) defines hegemony as "a solidarity between oppressors and oppressed" that has developed "with cultural processes reinforcing the political and economic domination of the ruling group." - the domination by the ruling group is achieved through the consent of the subordinate.

constantly appears as a "proper name and image" in the realm of party political rhetoric, economics, arts and leisure. A fact which Turner (1994:13) succinctly observes:

> Nationalism can build great nations but it can also be used to sell petrol, tourism developments, margarine, immigration policies, mufflers, political parties, stuffed koalas, racial discrimination, perhaps even airport runways.

The nation is an abstract concept that surfaces in many different interpretations, but none more concrete and significant than within the realm of the state. Whereas Gellner (1983) observes that the existence of a nation is not necessarily bound to the existence of a state, (arguing that state and nations are two different contingencies, and do not manifest themselves at all times)[7], he sees them as destined for each other - one is incomplete without the other. It is undeniable that generally the state "presents itself through the symbolic form of the nation" (Willis,1993:19). I have previously described the state as the agency in society that "claims the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Weber, 1970:77). It lies within the very purpose of the state to control and govern its subjects. While this can ultimately be achieved by the application of force, it is done so for the most part by creating and nurturing the consent of citizens enabling them to 'imagine' themselves as part of the framework of the nation-state. Consequently, the infusion of national identity and purpose into the citizenry becomes the very justification of the state as a political entity. Smith (1991:16) argues that national identity plays an important political role by "legitimising common legal rights and duties of legal institutions, which define the peculiar values and character of the nation and reflect the age-old customs and mores of the people." Anderson (1983:16) reaffirms this uniting quality of national identity when he describes the ability of 'nation' to create a community that "is always conceived as a deep,

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[7]This separation of state and nation can be seen in the emergence of states out of pre-existing nations (bonded through religion, ethnicity or language) such as the Czech & Slovak states, the former Baltic republics of the USSR and the newly created ethnic based states of the former Yugoslav Republic.

horizontal comradeship, regardless of the inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each [community]".

I have so far treated the state as an abstract, autonomous fabrication, however, this does not accurately reflect the nature of the (liberal democratic) state. One of its main characteristics is its constant interaction with society, it "arises out of society and is powerfully shaped and constrained by the social relations which surround it" (Hall, 1984: 22). He continues:

> They [states] maintain particular forms of social order: a particular set of institutions, a particular configuration of power relationships, a particular social structure and economy. The 'empty' state - without social content - does not exist.

The state is inseparably linked with society through the formal mechanisms of representation, the legally defined rights to participate in government. The second crucial concept the modern state is based upon is consent. Consent and representation in turn are closely related: it is through the process of electoral procedures that citizens ultimately agree to the exercise of power by the state. However, as Hall argues (1984:25) consent is not necessarily spontaneous, it can be manufactured by the state. What better instrument does the state possess to achieve loyalty from its subjects than the mechanics of nationalism? Not surprisingly then, states in general strongly encourage and actively pursue the establishment of procedures and institutions that reinforce the formation of national identity. National celebrations and commemorations, national institutions such as memorials and museums as enshrinements of cultural, scientific and sporting achievements of individuals into the communal memory are all vital mechanisms in the symbolic representation of nation. As mentioned above, it is the ultimate purpose of the state to rule and regulate society, to provide stability and a sense of continuity. The congruence of state and nation provides a set of symbolic representations, values and standards that can effectively meet this goal. The nation state formally presupposes and sanctions an 'essence' of cultural identity that

ultimately determines a people as German, French or citizens of any other nation. It is in this context, namely the appropriation of the spiritual foundations of the concept of nation by the state, that the debate on nationalism enters the sphere of political ideology.[8] As Fiske, Turner, Hodge (1987:138/39) note:

> The ways in which history is mobilised to construct and sustain a mythology are complex; the least one can say is that they are motivated and determined by ideology rather than a disinterested search for an objective truth. The result is always the same, the national past becomes a chain of events, progressively and inevitably delivering us into the present and, in so doing, making sense of it.

Ideology and states share a complex relationship centred around the question of whose interests within society the state serves. Clearly, there is no objective or univocally valid answer to this question. Any attempt to answer it would have to originate from a particular viewpoint, may this be a liberal, pluralist, reformist, Marxist or feminist etc. Whatever approach taken, one has to be aware that the version of national past that is utilised in creating cultural identity is the result of a scrutinising process of inclusion and exclusion. This process is set in the dialogue of power relations within a political community and supported by the institutions of the society (education system, media, law etc.). As Larrain (1994) emphasises, there are many versions of identity within every cultural formation according to the diversity of world views, classes, religious and ethnic backgrounds of its members. Nevertheless, the end product or official public version of identity in general does not reflect this diversity because it is brought about, as Larrain (1994:164) suggests, by a "narrowing process in the discursive construction of a cultural identity" that is based on a "selection process whereby only some features, symbols and group experiences are taken into account and others are excluded". Hence cultural identities are not only constructed

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[8]The term ideology is used in accordance with Stuart Hall's (1983:26) definition as "a set of ideas..concepts, that form a framework in which we make sense of the social world in which we exist".

historically but are also moulded around the interests and views of certain groups within society. Castles, Kalantzis, Cope & Morissey (1988:6) similarly describe the balance of social forces within the process of establishing the nation as crucial for the determination of national characteristics.

Hence any attempt by political interests to finalise a single true cultural identity is in many ways an ambiguous endeavour: not only does it favour the interests of particular groups or classes within society it also discounts the possibility and certainty of social, political and technological change. Advancements in information technology, globalisation of trade, the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, increased people movement (both migration and travel) are only a few factors that have left a significant impact on social practices and world views at the end of the twentieth century. Capitalism has developed into an all embracing economic order with the world developing into an arena of competing market forces operating beyond political and geographical boundaries (Giddens 1990). The local is closely tied into the global. Events happening thousands of kilometres away impact almost simultaneously on the local: stock market fluctuations in New York and interest rate rises in Germany have the potential directly and indirectly to influence people's lives all around the globe. The rapid pace and expansion in the development of information technologies is more and more linking individuals and cultures even in the remotest areas of the world. Arguably, globalisation, as I will discuss in the next subsection of this Chapter, threatens the very foundations of the nation state itself.

In a climate of such rapid and massive change, the perpetuation of a certain set of (historic) national characteristics and symbolic representations does not necessarily guarantee that they will convey the same meaning (or any at all) from generation to generation. However, the threats to the established order brought about by internal and external factors (such as globalisation) can act as a powerful catalyst for the resurgence of the quest for national identity and indeed amplify the question of identity. Larrain (1994:143) suggests that the existence of a crisis situation and a period of instability is a requirement if the notion of

identity is to become an issue. He maintains that "the main ideas associated with it [cultural identity] seem to be those of permanence, cohesion, and recognition." In this context Larrain (1994:142) further emphasises the role of the 'other' as central to the formation of the self, in a sense that the process of identity-formation is guided by a process of differentiation from the values and characteristics of the other: even more so "wherever there is a conflictive and asymmetric encounter between different cultures, be it by means of invasion, colonisation or extensive forms of communication". This argument, in turn, implies that a situation of isolation, prosperity and stability renders the question of cultural identity of secondary importance.

I have discussed above the shared past-future dualism as providing the spiritual foundations of 'nation' and so far have highlighted the historic perspective. However, it lies within the 'future' aspect of this dualism that the challenges of historic transformation can be met. As Larrain (1994:165) argues:

> The very fact that identity is inherently selective allows the possibility that, although a nation cannot choose its traditions, it can at least politically select how to continue or not to continue with some of them. .....Identity is not so much what one is as what one wants to be, and in the construction of the future not all of one's own historical traditions are equally valid.

The notion of continuity is deeply embedded within the concept of nation. However, the nation is not a static entity, it is an organic body that is subject to change. Indeed Renan (1990:20) formulates it, the "nations are not something eternal. They had their beginnings and they will end". If Renan's assumption is correct and the concept of nation has a "life cycle" of birth, maturity and decline, the question lies close: at what stage of this "life cycle" have we arrived and what will come after the nation? Have we already left the era of the nation-state behind and are we entering into a condition of global existence?

2.3. Globalisation - the end of nation ?

As previously outlined, the concept of nation is a relatively recent phenomenon and in many ways the process of nation-building is necessarily incomplete. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries the nation developed from its local European origins into the prevailing global model of socio-political organisation. The end of the colonial era, the break up of the Eastern Bloc and most recently the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia have provided the world with a constant flow of new nations and consequently the physical and socio political manifestations of nations vary quite significantly. Simultaneously 'super-national' formations such as the European Union (EU) are gaining strong momentum in the establishment of structures that erode the sovereignty of the individual nation state. For example in the case of the EU measures such as a centralised governing body, single currency, absence of border control, unrestricted people movement significantly undermine the traditional jurisdiction of sovereign nation states. Can we therefore pronounce the beginning of the end of the nation as a political formation?

Modernity has not only produced the nation, it has also given rise to its antitheses - the concept of globalisation and the associated debate on postmodernity which will be discussed later. The following subsection examines the mechanics of globalisation that threatens to wither away the phenomenon of the nation state. How can the concept of globalisation be defined? Giddens (1990:63) describes globalisation as a phenomenon of modernity that accentuates the 'time - space distanciation'. [9]

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[9] For Giddens (1990:17,18) time and space are crucial in the analysis of social relations. He argues that in premodern societies (and the absence of synchronised timing mechanisms) time was generally related to "socio-spatial markers", the "when" was generally connected with "where" or "identified by regular natural occurrences". The advent of standardised time and date measurement followed by the uniformation of the social organisation of time resulted in an 'emptying' of time. Similarly space was emptied from the concrete locale by the creation of universal maps, that established space as independent of any particular place or region.

> Globalisation can thus be defined as the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.

In other words, globalisation refers to a process that progressively renders people mutually dependent and interlinked. Its main vehicles are transnational institutions of all kinds that penetrate the realm of the nation state to become dominant forces in peoples lives - resulting in a form of "cultural globalisation" (Giddens, 1990:77) which will be discussed later. The concept of globalisation can be attributed many characteristics, mainly though it has become synonymous with fragmentation (which is a central topic in post-modern theory) as well as homogenisation. Giddens (1990) describes fragmenting elements inherent in the globalising abstract models and institutions of modernity that have caused an emptying of experience and in turn produced highly unstable subjects and societies. Among those elements of fragmentation Giddens lists commodification, the penetration of individuality by mass media/culture and the growing complexity of bureaucracies. The second and arguably most prolific characteristic of Globalisation is homogenisation a phenomenon that can be described as the superimposition of a standardised mass culture that would eventually eradicate cultural diversity and ultimately the nation state. Unlike others, however, Giddens does not view these developments as uniform trends towards homogenisation, the destruction of the local characteristic and peculiarity. Quite the contrary, he observes "mutually opposing tendencies" (1990:64) such as the rise of local nationalism in Europe as the outcome of globalisation. Mary Kalantzis (1995:2) brings forward the same notion when she argues that:

> The universal processes of globalisation perform the opposite function to what it was once assumed they would - imposing homogeneity. Instead, they accentuate diversity, deploy diversity as a means of product differentiation and use local diversity as the basis for making global connections.

Globalisation is a phenomenon of a paradox nature, on the one hand it provides the mechanisms of homogenisation and on the other hand it provokes cultural differentiation a desire to reaffirm particular cultural identities. How does the nation state fare in this ambiguous situation?

Giddens (1990:65) suggests that this push for differentiation takes place on a level subordinate to the nation-state, expressing itself in "pressures for local autonomy and regional cultural identity". As such he describes globalisation as a force that redistributes nationalist feeling from the nation state to more localised entities. Summarising his ideas he quotes Daniel Bell's (1987:116) argument that the "nation-state has become too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life". It remains to be seen if this prevailing trend will indeed lead to the phasing out of the traditional nation, nevertheless, the mechanisms of globalisation have been firmly established and in fact their distribution is accelerating at a rapid pace.

Larrain (1994) and Giddens (1990) equally contribute this acceleration to the emergence of capitalism as a dominating force in modern society. Giddens (1990:69) notes that

> ...capitalism has been such a fundamental globalising influence precisely because it is an economic rather than a political order; it has been able to penetrate far-flung areas of the world which the states of its origin could not have brought wholly under their political sway.

The universal, super-national characteristics of capitalism do not imply however that the distribution of power within its processes is balanced and even. In fact, Giddens (1990:69) describes the globalising forces of capitalism as consisting of a "core", a "semi periphery" and a "periphery" - a state's position in this order is determined by its wealth and military strength. Larrain also (1994:155) observes the domination of "the prevailing cultural

patterns of a powerful international country" as central to globalising processes. He describes colonial Britain and more recently the United States as the industrial and commercial powers that historically have occupied and dominated the core position within the web of globalisation. Larrain further argues that this privileged position in the world order has been crucial in the formation of these countries' respective cultural identities as predominant and central. In turn, this central positioning simultaneously constructed other cultures as secondary and inferior. Of course, this position is subject to the forces of historic change. The end of the colonial era has not only brought a large number of newly formed sovereign nation states but has also severely undermined, as Larrain (1994:156) formulates it, the "preferred sense of identity of the British dominant classes". Similarly, the collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in a loss of a source of identity for the United States: making redundant the perception of the 'other', the archenemy and rival on a global scale on which much of the United States' self image of defenders of freedom and justice was centred.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of globalisation is what Giddens (1990:77) calls "cultural globalisation" which is (contrary to industrial and commercial globalisation processes) the ever increasing omnipotence of media and new forms of information technologies. It falls within this category that, as Larrain (1994:153) argues, cultural homogenisation reaches its most acute form: by creating a global mass culture based on synchronised entertainment and leisure practices - the consumption of electronic images via film and television. It cannot be denied that this particular field is dominated by the United States[10], its world views and interests. However, to accept the view of a uniform mass culture with uniform consumption patterns and behaviour, would mean to ignore the

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[10]It should also be noted at this point that the concepts of globalisation and Americanisation are not one and the same phenomenon. Globalisation refers to the general processes of interlinking social relations on a global level, whereas Americanisation refers to the superimpositition of American cultural practices on other cultures. Arguably though, as Rowe, Lawrence, Miller & McKay (1994) note the two concepts are often used in an indistinguishable form.

complexity inherent in the diversity of individual cultural frameworks they identify with. Indeed, as Mary Kalantzis (1995:4) notes:

> We live in an environment where subcultural differences - differences of identity and affiliation- are becoming more and more significant. Gender, ethnicity, religion, generation and sexual orientation are just a few of the words that are used to describe these differences....As people are simultaneously the members of multiple lifeworlds, so their identities have multiple layers, each layer in complex relation to the others.

Kalantzis (1995:4) further argues that the information technology revolution has given rise to multi channel media systems that "promote an increasing range of accessible subcultural options" which ultimately dispose of the myth of a single public - a "homogenous imagined community".

Even if one assumed that there was only one message to be transmitted the subcultural diversity inherent in society would ensure that this message was received in a myriad of different contexts and connotations. As VanWynsberge and Ritchie (1994:131) observe that "diverse groups of television viewers are able to decode messages just as heterogenously as the encoding seeks homogeneity" - the construction of meaning takes ultimately place in the realm of subjectivity. I have so far discussed the larger overreaching framework of cultural identity in the context of the nation state. I will now direct my attention to the issue of subjectivity and its interrelation with national identity. In fact the key to the debate on national identity has to be located in the realm of subjectivity. The construction of identity and subjectivity were the great achievements of modernity. The elevation of the subject to the centre of the universe and the belief in progress through reason have paved the way for the emergence of the nation state. However, two centuries of violent confrontations between the 'enlightened' constructs of nation states combined with the onslaught of globalisation

have cast serious doubt on the notions of reason, progress and most of all subjectivity: modernity has given rise to theories of postmodernity. Finally I will expose the issues of subjectivity and identity to the fundamental debate on modernity versus postmodernity asking, do we live in a post-modern world and if so, how relevant is the notion of national identity in contemporary society?

2.4. The Subject and the formation of identity

Is there a relationship between national identity and individual identity? Clearly this question has to be answered affirmative. In fact, the subject and the nation form a close alliance. The subject is the smallest denominator of the nation state and the variety of its subcultural forms can only be discussed in conjunction with personal identity. In turn, as Larrain (1994) notes, cultural identity, in particular national identity, constitutes a major proponent in the formation of the self. Whereas it does not lie within the scope of this thesis to discuss the topics of self and identity in great detail, I will nevertheless briefly attempt to outline the major ideas that frame these discourses in order to contextualise their relation to national identity in general.

The formation of the self as a subject of scientific analysis largely falls within the concerns of social theory and psychoanalysis. Both these fields incorporate complex and diverse systems of thought and by no means do I intend to reduce them to a uniform framework of ideas. However, social theory and psychoanalysis in their contemporary form by and large acknowledge the centrality of the social experience as crucial to the development of the self and in turn negate the existence of a naturally given 'essence' that one acquires at birth and maintains throughout life. Accordingly the sociologists Najman and Western (1993:5) summarise that "..The individual, from the sociological perspective, is ... a product of social processes which are embedded in the groups to which he or she belongs." Elliot (1992:3)

stresses the "question of the nature of the psyche" as "essential for the analysis and understanding of human subjectivity" and argues that in turn the acknowledgement of the social and historical specificity of self identity is fundamental to the analysis of psychological processes.

George Herbert Mead offers an attractive model to understand the social nature of the self by arguing that we have to locate the formation of the self within the interaction with the group. He presupposes the prior existence of the group:

> The essence of the self ... is cognitive: it lies in the internalised conversation of gestures which constitutes thinking, or in terms of which through or reflection proceeds. And hence the origin and foundations of the self, like those of thinking, are social (1933:173).

Mead also suggests that the self is not one homogeneous entity but, rather, it consists of a variety of aspects that are subdivided into a socialised element and a spontaneous element, the 'me' and the 'I' respectively: the aspect that has been shaped by society and the one that represents the spontaneous awareness of the self. Hence, the formation of the self is not only subject to socialisation but also to forces of active agency within the subject. The complex processes and mechanics of socialisation in turn result in a multitude of identity layers within the subject.

Peter and Brigitte Berger (1977:73) note that it is the socialised part of the self that is commonly referred to as identity. While they distinguish between assigned and achieved identities (such as 'boy', 'girl' or 'policeman' or 'archbishop') they emphasises that "in each case it is appropriated by the individual through a process of interaction with others". Any particular identity has to be confirmed by the other to become real to the holder. Group membership, the sharing of common experiences and a consequent process of identification

and self-identification are the factors that delineate personal identity. As such the fabric and make up of the nation as a social group is a significant point of reference for the formation of the subject living within its bounded space. In fact Larrain (1994: 154) argues that in modern times the notion of national identity was the cultural identity that has had the most important influence on the formation of subjects.

Modernity is largely characterised by the creation of the human subject as the centre of the universe, ''the basis of all knowledge ..the necessary point of reference for all that goes on" (Larrain 1994:143). Breaking with the fatalism of theo-centric pre-Enlightenment worldviews, modernity ascribed active agency to the subject - the ability to control his/her own destiny and self. Hoffmann-Axthelm (1992:200) observes:

> Identity was one of the grand promises of the modern. In the name of identity, laws of the species were to be abolished; traditions and corporate chains cast aside. It was hoped that dominion of collective suppression and prevailing linguistic patterns would end and that identity would be based in one's own person and one's own responsibility.

If modernity champions the cause of the subject it is the phenomenon of post-structuralist/post-modernist[11] thought that in turn advocates the deconstructing of the subject. At the centre of this onslaught on the subject is the theory that discourse is the pinnacle of social life (Larrain, 1994:105). By removing the term discourse from the realm of language, (and its grammatical and linguistic foundations) both post-structuralists and post-

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[11]Larrain (1994:91) formulates the distinction between poststructuralism and postmodernism as to the degree both models of thought advocate the fragmentation of social reality. He argues that poststructuralists allow for the possibility "for a variety of collective subjects to be politically constituted by progressive discourses which resist power or aim at socialism" whereas postmodernists tend to dissolve reality into simulacra accepting the "chaotic and hyperreal character of society where not even power exists as a reality any more."

modernists alike create a model of subjection that sees the individual as a product of forces and relationships of power beyond his/her agency. Consequently, Larrain (1994:91) argues in his analysis of Michel Foucault's work (one of the main protagonists of post-structuralist thought), that discourse has to be seen as a body of knowledge, a discipline, and can only be examined in relation to the oppressive institutions and their practices which subject the individual. Foucault sets out to question the sovereignty and autonomy of the subject and examines the historic conditions "which made various types of quite specific and differentiated subjects possible in the first place" (McHoul & Grace 1993:91). Foucault further rules out the existence of a meta or higher discourse that lies at the basis of all specific discourses and consequently highlights the particularity and unique nature of any discourse. In this process he discards both the notion of absolute truths (as there is no benchmark for universally valid discourses) and the idea of history as a natural cohesive sequence. McHoul and Grace (1993: 51) note:

> Foucault suggests that history is differentiated and fragmented into particular discourses, and that each fragment (each discourse) has a threshold, a process of birth and an equally complex process of disappearance which can be analysed and described.

Postmodern theories not only share with poststructuralist thought the centrality of discourse but also the notion of fragmentation. The post-modern subject as a consequence is also highly fragmented and unstable by nature. Kellner (1992:143) critically observes:

> ..as the pace, extension, and complexity of modern societies accelerate, identity becomes more and more unstable, more and more fragile. Within this situation, the recent discourses of postmodernity problematize the very notion of identity, claiming that it is a myth and an illusion.

Kellner (1992:143) describes the fragmentation of the subject as the key characteristic of post-modern theories. As a result of "the levelling of individuality in a rationalized, bureaucratized, mediatized, and consumerized mass society", identity in post-modern society "has disintegrated into a flux of euphoric intensities, fragmented and disconnected" - "subjects have imploded into masses".(1992:144)

Jean Baudrillard (Best & Kellner 1991) renounces reality all together and argues that we are living in a 'hyperreality' that is governed by signs and codes which in turn do not convey any meaning or reference beyond themselves - there are no meta discourses, no universal value systems or points of reference. The subject has entered a spiral of consumer culture whereby the commodity attaches meaning to the consumer. The postmodern condition negates both the existence of ideological forms and "any universal sense in historic development" (Larrain, 1994:105). National identity, then, in postmodern theory loses its entire substance: as fragmentation is the social condition of contemporary life, there is no justification for a type of identity (in fact identity itself is relinquished) that by its nature tries to establish a uniform system of characteristics, values and ethics. National identity requires a meta discourse, it presupposes a spiritual principle that implies continuity of meaning. In the absence of these conditions national identity does not make any sense, it becomes a hyperreality, a meaningless sign.

Undoubtedly, postmodern theories present radical views of social analysis that to a certain extent can be substantiated in manifestations of fragmentation within contemporary society. However, to elevate postmodernity to a position of absolute truth and validity would ironically also mean to invalidate postmodern theory itself - as by its nature it relinquishes the existence of ideological forms and universal truths.

So have we entered a postmodern age or are we still, as Giddens (1990:150) describes it, in a "radicalized" modernity? To answer this question affirmative in either way would not do justice to the contemporary debate on identity. As Kellner (1992: 174,5) observes

> I would argue that is equally arbitrary and open to debate as to whether one posits that we are in a situation of late modernity or a new postmodernity. Either could be argued. The features I have ascribed to post-modern identity could be read as an intensification of features already present in modernity, or as a new configuration with new emphasis that one could describe as 'post-modern'.

Arguably, contemporary society presents a variety of life opportunities that could be interpreted as characteristics of both the modern and post-modern conditions. What in a postmodern perspective is seen as conditions of late modernity that inevitably cause the dissolution and fragmentation of the subject such as the emptying of life through commodification, the disintegration of the local into the process of globalisation, the intrusion of mass media/entertainment into the realm of individuality, theories of modernity interpret as challenges to the subject that involve both "appropriation as well as loss" (Giddens 1990:150). The modern subject is not the helpless pawn at the mercy of the forces of fragmentation, it has the ability to reflect, interpret and create spaces of meaning and self identity. To announce the universal end of subjectivity is not only overly pessimistic, it discounts the possibility of diversity.

The debate on identity both on an individual and cultural level dominates modern social theory and whatever label is applied to contemporary society (modern or post-modern) the issue of identity will continue to play a prominent role. Equally, at this point it appears that the nation state, instead of succumbing to the onslaught of postmodernism/globalisation, enjoys a revival on a global scale. As we will see in the next Chapter, Australia is no exception in this resurging search for national identity.

3. The quest for a national identity - the Australian experience

As mentioned in Chapter Two, national identity is a concept that presupposes and strongly draws upon a past. While the current resurgence of nationalist sentiments is largely centred upon things to come, the process of reinventing Australia can only be understood in the context of the historic circumstances that have shaped the gradual invention of the country in the first place. The objective of this Chapter is to outline briefly the events that have delineated the development of Australian nationhood and to examine their repercussions on the present day debate on national identity.

How does a geographically isolated, young migrant country fare in the construction of national identity when it seemingly lacks all the vital catalysts of nationhood identified in Chapter Two: a legacy of common shared memories, generational continuity of the population and, for most of its existence, sovereign status?[12] Arguably, Australia's history as a remote colonial outpost has contributed to a relatively slow and weak growth of national sentiment compared with the feverish nationalisms of Europe. However, Australia has never been a (national) identity free zone. As I have discussed previously, national identity fulfils a distinct purpose within the political framework of the state. It is a means to generate loyalty and solidarity and to cement a certain set of values within society. Not surprisingly then, right from its humble beginnings as a penal colony Australia has boasted versions of Australianness that were to provide the social cohesion for an emerging nation. Dominant myths of Australianness ranged from the white, wholesome British colonial offspring braving a rugged country, to the Anzac digger, the happy suburban family of house and car owners, to the celebration of cultural diversity.

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[12]Whereas European settlement is the starting point of my discussions, by no means do I wish to imply that social history on the Australian continent commenced with white settlement but rather that the concept of national identity as a product of western culture was introduced to this country by its European conquerors.

After more than 200 years of white settlement, however, many of the themes that have emerged as quintessentially Australian are becoming increasingly obsolete as meaningful philosophical frameworks of the nation. As Kalantzis (1995:5) notes:

> Neither the imaginings of the British Empire in its most distant outpost nor the frontier legends have ever worked as convincingly as a narrative as many other world nationalisms have.

With the traditional symbolism of nationhood failing to convey meaning to an Australia in the closing decades of the twentieth century, there has been an unprecedented drive to reinvent the nation with the former Federal Labor Government taking the lead. Even the seemingly most unassailable icons such as the monarchy and the national flag have been under threat, and issues, such as reconciliation with the indigenous population, multiculturalism and Australia's new found role in the Asia Pacific region have become the dominant factors in the present day debate on national identity. But first to a consideration of the historical construction of Australian identity.

3.1. Emerging nationhood

Although the formal federation of the Australian colonies was not until 1901, the parameters for the construction of what was to become the Australian nation were set with the establishment of British colonial rule in 1788. The very processes of colonisation in many ways left a legacy of social relations that delineate the discourse of national identity. Australia was technically annexed by Britain as a *terra nullius*, a no-man's land that was considered to be uninhabited. This belief rendered the Aboriginal population an underclass of savage hunter-gatherers that were seen merely as a 'missing link' in the evolutionary development of Homo Sapiens.

> The link between the monkey and man was thought by many to be the Australian Aborigine, for no better reason than that he seemed to be furthest from European civilisation, which in their arrogance they assumed to be the highest imaginable form of human life (White, 1981:8).

Legally, Australia became a settled colony rather than a conquered one, and consequently no landrights were granted to the indigenous population - a fact that has only recently been contested successfully in the High Court Mabo Case (1992). White settlement not only meant the legal dispossession of Aborigines but also the dramatic decline of their population. As Keen (1993:217) observes, the predominantly hunter and gatherer economy of the Aborigines was incompatible with the large scale agricultural economy implemented by the European settlers. The indigenous culture was unable to bring forward any effective resistance to the quickly expanding white settlement.

> In Australia and similar colonies, hunter-gatherer peoples suffered a very different fate from agricultural communities: they were displaced and destroyed, whereas agricultural communities often entered into a cash crop production, converting part of their agricultural production to crops suitable for sale through the colonising power (Keen:1993:217).

Homicide, displacement from resources and introduced diseases saw the Aboriginal population decline from an estimated 500,000 at the end of the eighteenth century to 67,000 in the mid 1930s (Keen, 1993:226). With the fading early interest in Aborigines as biological curiosities, the indigenous culture was further driven towards oblivion by being branded as an inferior form of civilisation that gradually would perish. It is not surprising then, that when the Australian colonies marked their Federation in 1901, little consideration was given to the Aboriginal population, in fact, they were excluded from both the right to vote (until

1967) and the right of citizenship. In turn, Aboriginality was not a factor defining Australian national identity.

> For most of the settlers they were pests, sometimes comic, sometimes vicious, but always standing in the way of a civilised Australian community. Eventually they were to reach the indignity of being 'Our Aborigines', their image no longer representative of Australia except as garden ornaments in suburban backyards and ashtrays in souvenir shops (White,1981:15).

Against all odds, Aboriginal culture did not perish and its relationship with white Australia developed into an uneasy legacy that to the present day haunts the efforts to reassess Australian nationhood.

Another factor that has remained a focal point in the formation of its national identity is Australia's immigration policy that, until the mid twentieth century, defined an almost exclusive gateway for settlers from the 'mother country' Great Britain.

> Immigration policies have reflected Australia's cultural identifications and the fears, so clearly manifested in the pre-war White Australia Policy, of a dependent nation with a vast territory. ...State sponsored immigration produced the ethnic homogeneity of the white foundation population as well as the social and political cleavages that were to shape the nation and the later federation (Pusey, 1993:37).

Since its initial establishment as a British penal colony Australia maintained a close affiliation with Britain that, for most of its duration, represented an uneven relationship between a dominant and a secondary culture - with Great Britain through its economic, military and political power setting the terms for the relationship, and Australia as a colonial offspring of the then mighty Empire, subjecting itself to its cultural, economic and political dominance. As a result, observes Alomes (1988:215), the overpowering might of the British Empire and

its colonial interests in Australia became a major impediment to the development of an 'autonomous' Australian identity.

> The self-denigatory, self-demeaning character of the colonial cultural cringe, which assumed that everything colonial or Australian was inferior to the British equivalent, was the height of self-destruction (Alomes, 1988:215).

This perceived cultural dependence was equalled by Australia's economic dependence on Britain. Australia was both an important source of raw materials and a market for the British economy. Australia's loyalty to Britain was the key condition perpetuating a trading relationship that secured a constant and cheap supply of resources for British industry. This loyalty also maintained for Britain the status of leading importer and foreign investor in Australia.

The process of perpetuating a relationship of dependency, however, went further than ensuring loyalty, the very fabric of the Australian state was to be closely interwoven with that of imperial Britain. Hence, even after Federation, legally Australia was not a sovereign country. As White (1981:111) notes, Australia had no power to declare war or peace, no diplomatic representation abroad (not until 1937 in Washington), the British Parliament could invalidate Commonwealth law, and the highest court of appeal was the Privy Council in London. In fact, Australia did not even have its own national anthem until 1977. How could Australianness be defined in a period that was characterised by such overwhelming dominance of a colonial power? The following sub-section examines the influence of British racial ideology on the process of constituting early Australian national identity.

3.2 The Australian Type

In 1901, ninety-eight percent of the population was either born in Great Britain or of British origin, and the idea of British racial superiority and the necessity to maintain this racial purity formed the core value of emerging Australian nationhood. Alomes (1988:40) observes that being Australian was conceived as being a member of the British Empire and "the primary definition of Australian nationality was racial" (Alomes, 1988:40). Subsequently, the 'White Australia Policy' became firmly established by the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia and dominated the migration policy for the next fifty years. The White Australia Policy was a selective immigration policy that could ensure an Australian population base originating from the British Isles and the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 provided the legal means to perpetuate this policy.[13] The racism at the time, of course, was not confined to, nor did originate in Australia. Much more so the Australian experience was a reflection of the prevailing racist ideologies of Western Europe. The emerging theory of Social Darwinism, propagating the survival of the fittest, provided the scientific/biological justification for racial discrimination and was supported, as Alomes (1988:40) notes, by economic arguments:

> ...labor and liberal thinkers alike shared the fear that Asian races would lower Australian living standards, either through cheap labour or superior efficiency (Alomes, 1988:40).

or as Jayasuriya notes also:

> ..This cultural and structural hegemony, derived from the dominant groups of the time, served to fashion the fabric of Australian society which was built firmly on the

[13] It should also be mentioned that there was a minor influx of migrants from outside Britain, predominantly from Germany and Scandinavia, who, Makkai & McAllister (1993:181) observe, "as northern Europeans were regarded as acceptable entrants."

> need to preserve and maintain a racially and culturally homogenous, white and monocultural society (Jayasuriya, 1995:1).

Social Darwinism and the consequent racial discrimination not only characterised Australia's early immigration policy but had even more immediate ramifications for the social position of the indigenous culture. In fact, Social Darwinism, as White argues (1981:69), became the justification for the extinction of Aborigines. In accordance with the theory of Social Darwinism, the idea of "the national type" became a dominant feature of political ideology in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The national type constituted an expansion of the idea of racial superiority as a manifestation of biological characteristics by incorporating moral, social and psychological elements that characterised the 'essence' of a people. As White observes (1981:64), throughout the nineteenth century Australia did nurture some form of home-grown identity which was based on the belief in a distinct Australian type. Again, this identity is to be seen in the context of the Australian type being derivative of the British one. The so called Australian type emerged from the efforts of the 'British stock' to come to terms with the new environment, the harsh land but also the hot climate and outdoor life. White (1981:76) describes the characteristics of this Australian type as:

> ...independence, manliness, a fondness for sport, egalitarianism, a dislike of mental effort, self-confidence, a certain disrespect for authority.

These are qualities that have been ingrained ever since in the national consciousness as 'typically Australian'. The real landmark for the Australian type and nationhood, however, was, what could be described as the nation's "baptism" in the international arena, the performance of Australian soldiers in the defence of the British Empire in World War I. Ironically, what is widely considered the cornerstone of Australian nationhood was laid on foreign soil and arose out of a military disaster. Whereas before the First World War, Australian troops had participated in several imperial campaigns, in the Sudan, the Boer War

in South Africa, the Boxer Rebellion in China, it was the battlefields of World War I that were to nurture the strongest manifestation of Australian national mythology to date - the Anzac legend. Despite being defeated at Gallipoli the Anzacs returned home heroes. They were praised for having given a courageous performance and delivered once and for all confirmation for the worthiness of the Australian type within the international community and most importantly within Australia. By 1927 Anzac Day had become a statutory holiday throughout Australia and the nation had finally gained a shrine for self worship and righteousness of a 'truly Australian spirit'. Anzac Day:

> ...[in] time ... developed a common form of observance, complete with a semi-religious ritual, liturgy and hymnal, perhaps filling a spiritual need in a secularised society (White 1981:136).

Fundamental changes to Australian society slowly emerged when, along with the rest of the industrialised world, Australia was drawn into the great depression of the 1930s. It was then, as Alomes (1988:85) describes, that the first serious signs of conflict arose between British loyalism and Australian patriotism. The effects of the financial crisis were particularly devastating for an Australian economy that was dependent on raw material exports and British investment. When British 'economic missions' to Australia were deployed to collect debts, Australians were given a stern reminder of which nation's interests were being served as a priority in the relationship with Britain.

> Ingrained racism meant that the financial crisis itself could be seen as the work of Jewish financiers. Others blamed British bankers, seeing Britain itself as 'foreign' and therefore threatening. Indeed anti-British feeling was so strong that the use of bodyline bowling by the English test cricket side in 1932 had repercussions at government level (White, 1981:146).

Tensions in the financial relationship between the two countries eventually prompted a movement towards economic independence and a strengthening of the Australian manufacturing sector. However, it was once more in the area of defence that the future direction of the nation was being drawn up. Australia went into World War II along with Great Britain and participated in major wars in Europe and the Middle East. Nevertheless, defence took on a new meaning when the objectives of the Australian military campaigns shifted from the British Empire to Australian soil. With the Japanese advance through Asia, the war was carried to Australian shores and with it the focus of Australian troop deployments shifted accordingly. The fear of an imminent invasion saw the national interest outweigh loyalty to the Empire. In turn, the besieged Britain was in no position to come to Australia's aid and new military and economic ties were formed with the United States. General MacArthur set up his headquarters for the Allied Pacific Campaign in Australia and the influx of Marines was closely matched by that of American economic interests. As Alomes (1988:119) notes, from 1941-42 to 1944-45 over forty percent of Australian imports came from the United States.

Throughout the post-war period, Australian governments maintained a close relationship with the great powers that have dominated, not only its foreign policy, but also the internal fabric of the nation - Great Britain and the United States. However, the process of post World War II decolonisation saw Britain's power declining rapidly, while the status of the United States as the omnipotent 'superpower', the 'defender of freedom and democracy' was further cemented. Ironically, as Alomes (1988:139) observes, the late 1940s and 1950s saw a popular revival of Britishness, which found its expression in school curricula and symbolic occasions, such as Empire Day, the Queen's Birthday, and in then-Prime Minister Robert Menzies' leadership as a loyal supporter of the Crown. However, it was the American military and economic might that was to set the directions for Australia's further development as a nation. American economic influences grew steadily and by the mid 1960s American investment in Australia exceeded that of Britain (Alomes, 1988:179). Equally, the military alignment between Australia and the United States was intensified by the

establishment of American bases in Australia. Australian foreign policy was closely aligned also to its powerful ally and once more loyalty to its chosen protector led an Australian government to deploy troops to its most controversial military expedition to date, the Vietnam war. But unlike the defeat at Anzac Cove, the disaster of the Vietnam War did not result in the birth of new mythologies of national glory. The ramifications of the growing American influence in Australia were particularly crucial in the processes of defining nationhood by introducing the concept of the Australian way of life.

3.3 Shifting parameters of Australianness: from type to life style

While previously the notion of the Australian type dominated the debate of national identity, it was in the 1940s that the idea of the Australian "way of life" gained strong momentum.

> During the 1940s the basis of the Australian identity changed. The idea of a racial or national type, a fundamental part of what it meant to be Australian since the early nineteenth century, was replaced by a new concept, 'the Australian way of life' (White, 1981:158).

The factors for this shift in the definition of Australianness are manifold. First, the excesses of Nazi Germany had cast a serious shadow over earlier prevailing ideologies of racial superiority, and the perpetuation of a 'national type' was morally and politically untenable. Second, the Australian way of life was constructed as a reflection of the changing political and economic orientation and allegiance towards America:

> Whereas the Australian 'type' had been seen as an extension of the British 'type' , and Britain has set the standard against which the developing Australian character

> was measured, it was the United States which provided the standard against which Australia, and other Western nations, measured their way of life (White, 1981:162).

Third, the internal fabric of Australian society was changing rapidly. The threat of a Japanese invasion during World War II had magnified the vulnerability of the vast and underpopulated Australian continent. As a result the question of the survival of the nation was considered by the government of the time to be dependent on the establishment of an expanded immigration program. The resulting 'populate or perish' policy which was aimed at increasing the population by one percent annually (Makkai & McAllister, 1993:182), however, was exhausting the pool of British migrants and the target could only be met by directing attention to other European countries as migrant sources. In light of the arising ethnic diversity of post World War II Australian society, the idea of a racially based national type no longer could serve its purpose as the symbolic backbone of nationhood. Instead, the 'Australian way of life' offered, at least at first sight, an undiscriminatory, inclusive model of collective identity for a multi-racial society.

> The ideology of the Australian way of Life appeared as the pinnacle of modernism: pride in economic progress, technical advance and a high standard of living was to make differences in origin, race and ethnic background meaningless (Castle et al, 1988:12).

In reality, new migrant groups were far from equal to their British counterparts who until the mid 1970s, as Makkai & McAllister (1993:182) point out, enjoyed a range of special privileges, such as the exemption for British migrants on assisted passages from the obligatory two years labour for the government, eligibility for social security, and the right to vote in Australian elections (other migrant groups had to obtain Australian citizenship before they could vote) and visa exemptions for both visitor and permanent residency status. Ironically, the 'Australian way of life' remained a rather vague concept that appeared to lack

any specifically Australian characteristics. Whereas the 'Australian type' at least made reference to the unique rugged environment of Australia which moulded the imagery of the bushman, frontiersman and the digger, the new life style philosophy was to embrace the universal values of consumerism as its guiding principle. White (1981:164) observes that:

> ...the familiar picture of suburban family life, with its focus on home and garden, and on a catalogue of family possessions such as refrigerators, washing machines, radiograms, television sets and, of course, the family car, was the basis of post-war affluence and the vast new consumer economy which the manufacturers and governments encouraged.

Australia was experiencing an economic boom which translated into unprecedented material affluence for a large part of its population. In turn, this widespread affluence led to a further strengthening of Australia's image as an egalitarian, classless society:

> ..because Australia's general (and anticipated) level of economic prosperity had become so high, the sense of envy of the rich was not particularly strong. Living in a society which strove for almost universal home ownership and car ownership, and which seemed to have achieved a widespread sense of being 'comfortably off', Australians living in the second half of the 20th century generally lost interest in the question of social class (Mackay, 1993:133).

While the new life style identity enhanced the traditional egalitarian image of Australian society, it broke with two dominating symbolic representations of Australianness. First, it accentuated the urban nature of Australian society, rather than the outdated frontier mythology. Australia's 'coming of age' was defined in terms of its industrial development rather than its rural sector. The image of the self reliant, good mannered but crude bushman

as the personification of the Australian soul lost its appeal in a highly urbanised, sophisticated society.

> Again, although it lacked definition, the image of 'the Australian Way of Life' was closely related to the image of Australia as a sophisticated, urban, industrialised, consumer society. ...this suited the needs of an Australian manufacturing sector which was increasingly aligning itself with the US....(White, 1981:161)

If the act of consumption was central to the new life-style ideology, it was advertising that took on the task of disseminating the new imagery of consumption. The traditional forms of print media acquired a powerful ally with the advent of television in the mid 1950s. With the transition from 'national type' to 'life style' the focus of the visual representation of Australianness not only saw a shift from rural to urban but also but also a change in gender imagery. The Australian type, in all its variations was centred upon the virtues of men from the resourceful bushman to the brave digger - the pinnacle of Australianness was to be found in the domain of masculinity. Not so the images of the Australian life style:

> They [women], more than men, were conceived by the advertisers as the great consumers, dominating family, home and garden, and the consumer economy was structured around them (White, 1981:165).

The inclusion of women into the formation and representation of national identity did not, however, result in a resolution of unequal gender relations. As White (1981:165) argues, the images of women that were the focus of advertisers were still a very restrictive, depicting them as full-time housewives and mothers. In fact, issues of equal participation by women in social, economic and political life have remained a focus of public debate in Australia to the present day. As previously mentioned, post World War II mass immigration promoted a dramatic diversification of Australian society. However, the 'Australian way of life' was by

no means representative of this increasing diversity, in fact, as White argues (1981:160), it actively denied the possibility and validity of diversity (of both lifestyles within Australian society and of ethnicity) by superimposing a uniform mould for a national identity that was centred upon the act of consumption. Consequently, new European immigrants were expected to assimilate with this life-style rather than to perpetuate their cultural practices.

> Assimilation, required of both migrants and Aborigines throughout the 1950s, assumed a common, homogeneous Australian way of life which would be threatened unless outsiders conformed to it (White, 1981:160).

By the mid 1960s, it became obvious that the policy of assimilation was not working. As Makkai & McAllister (1993:183) note, a large number of migrants were returning to their countries of origin and, of the migrants remaining in Australia, many did not acquire English language skills "largely because the English requirements were minimal in most unskilled occupations" (the main employment category for migrants). These developments consequently prompted the emergence of a new version of Australian identity, multiculturalism.

3.4. Moving towards cultural diversity

The end of the 1960s saw a dramatic change in migrant policy away from assimilation and towards integration with programs set up to improve English language skills and the creation of opportunities to utilise overseas gained qualifications. With the election of the Whitlam government in 1972 the 'White Australia Policy' was formally abolished, paving the way for further diversification of immigrant groups as well as the fostering of a new Australian identity: that of a multicultural society.

> By the late 1970s,.., this fledgling Australian nationalism was beginning to come apart. Symptomatic of the change was the replacement of the official policy assimilation or integration with one of cultural pluralism. Deeper down, the nation-state was beginning to lose its political and cultural significance, as culture and identity increasingly took on stronger international and local or subcultural dimension (Castles *et al*, 1988:114).

The idea of the Australian way of life was eventually abandoned as the spiritual/philosophical foundation of the nation. As Castles *et al* (1988:12) note, "it only scratched the surface of a society still highly elitist and dominated by Anglocentric values". Worsening economic conditions were threatening the high living standards which were the pillars of the Australian way of life. Additionally, the increasing segmentation (both economical and social) linked to race and ethnicity made the life style ideology an even more questionable concept. Multiculturalism has since emerged as the dominant discourse defining the nation (Castles *et al*, 1988:13). The policy of multiculturalism endorsed the celebration of cultural diversity rather than the forced perpetuation of a fading racial homogeneity. It has won bipartisan political support and been implemented as policy by governments with considerable success since the 1970s. While it may seem a contradiction in terms to build a nation by promoting a principle of cultural pluralism, and to strive for unity while propagating diversity:

> ...ethnic diversity has few implications for the functioning of the nation-state and Australia remains a liberal democracy which is based on institutions and principles established a century ago (Makkai & McAllister, 1993:207).

Multiculturalism and its acceptance of diversity has not brought an end to nationhood in Australia. Rather, it has presented consecutive Australian governments with an opportunity to adjust social policies to social realities and, in turn, to re-position distinctly Australia in

the international arena. Arguably, this recent switching of identities from mono-cultural to multicultural cannot be seen as a completed project and it remains to be seen how far and deeply these changes in the official version of what it means to be Australian will be adopted by the public. Indeed, could Australia be experiencing a period of anxiety as a nation, as Hugh Mackay (1993:154) suggests? Does the concept of multiculturalism possess strong enough symbolic power to sustain the imagined community "Australia", and challenge "long-cherished stereotypes, myths and legends about the Australian character, the Australian style and the Australian ethos?" (Mackay, 1993:159). Whatever the answer will be, it seems certain that the quest for a national identity, far from vanishing into oblivion, will continue to play a prominent role in the political, economic and social spheres of Australia in the lead up to the year 2000. The symbolic value of this date as a new beginning, the centenary of Australian Federation and the Sydney Olympic Games have become catalysts for a renaissance of nationalist feelings.

3.5. Towards 2001 - Redefining Australia

Over the past decades Australia has undergone a period of massive social change which has created an aura of uncertainty and disorientation. The changing internal fabric, the loosening of ties with the old mother country, the repositioning of Australia within the Asia Pacific region, high unemployment, the redefinition of gender roles, the move toward reconciliation with the indigenous population have rocked the very foundation of the spiritual principle of the nation: a sense of continuity and purpose. Mackay (1993:19) observes:

> By contrast, the present era seems fraught with the peculiar stresses created by a confused and diffused sense of identity, the lack of a consistent or coherent sense of purpose, and a growing feeling of isolation and even alienation among Australians ... The Australian way of life is now being challenged and redefined to such an extent

> that growing numbers of Australians feel as if their personal identities are under threat as well.. 'Who are we?' soon leads to the question, 'Who am I?'.

Undoubtedly, Australian is currently experiencing an "Age of Redefinition" (Mackay 1993:19). While anxiety and disorientation may be some of the symptoms created by the changing face of Australian nationhood it cannot be overlooked that this period of uncertainty has also given rise to a proactive search for the philosophic foundations of the new Australia. In Chapter Two I described the promotion of nationalism as a powerful tool in the state's quest to fulfil its utmost purpose as an agency of control: nurturing nationalist sentiment is a key to ensure the functioning of the large scale solidarity of the nation state. It is not surprising then that in the current period of disorientation, the former Keating government took a strong lead in the process of redefining the nation. At a Commonwealth Government sponsored international conference on Global Cultural Diversity, the then Prime Minister Paul Keating (1995:11) reiterated the particular vision of nationhood Australia was to aim at:

> ...we will not be a nation state in the old sense of that term....we will be more integrated with the world and with the Asia Pacific region in particular than the Australians of 50 years ago...we might have in our modern nationhood at least some of the elements of a 21st century model - diversity, tolerance, openness and worldliness within the boundaries of national purpose and cohesion.

The new Australia has become a central argument in the political debate and, in a time of fading ideological opposition of the main political parties, it is an emerging factor of differentiation between conservative and progressive forces in Australian politics.

> There seems to be no limit to the Keating government's capacity to inject nationalist sentiment into every new policy development. We've had the Greening Australia

> environmental policy, Playing Australia, a touring arts program, Multicultural Australia for the Olympics Bid, the republic debate with all its rhetoric about the 'mature' nation and ...Creative Nation (Hawkins, 1995).

In the midst of this quest for nationhood the questions remain to be asked: how is the maturity of a nation expressed, and how can it be communicated to its subjects and the rest of the world? If the other is crucial for the formation of the self what are the available mechanisms for a nation's image to be consolidated in the international arena? As previously discussed, Australian identity was always closely connected to military deployments to international theatres of war. The perception of war as the ultimate test of a nation's capability has dominated the development of national mythology and the hardship and sacrifices endured in past wars have been enshrined in 'sacred' memorials, celebrations and the legends of the heroism of Australia's soldiers. However, participation in armed conflict can no longer be considered a desirable option for Australia. While in the recent past Australia has continued to deploy troops to various areas of conflict such as the Gulf War, Somalia and Cambodia (under the banner of the United Nations as part of multinational peace keeping forces), these military deployments were numerically relatively insignificant and largely non-combat by nature. Whereas the threat of large scale armed conflict is receding, Australia is more and more drawn into another international arena of fierce combat: the quest for economic and cultural survival/prosperity in a highly competitive world. Indeed, it appears that it will be in the areas of economics and culture that the 'new Australia' will have to measure its maturity and achievements on the world stage. As Gellner (1983) argues, nationalism involves a process of a nation worshipping itself. Hence to communicate nationalist sentiment, a nation has to create opportunities and institutions for worship. Over the past decades Australia has seen an onslaught of public spectacles and celebrations which in many ways (and with varying success) addressed the issue of collective/national identity: from the Brisbane Commonwealth Games, the Expo, the Bicentenary Celebrations in 1988 and the Sydney Olympic Bid in 1993. The advent of the new millennium will bring two more gigantic events of 'national importance', the Sydney

2000 Olympics and the Centenary of Australian Federation - two events that undoubtedly will overshadow the above mentioned celebrations in scale and impact on Australian society.

MacAloon (1991) suggests that a nation's ability to communicate its identity is dependent on communication forms supplied by the 'transnational community" (MacAloon, 1991:42) . Arguably, the institutions of globalisation, in particular global information technology play an important role in this process by providing the medium and opportunities to culturally differentiate nation states - culture and politics have become "entwined discursive formations" (MacAloon, 1991:39):

> ...appearing everywhere today is a fundamental fusing of the political category with the culture category, a new understanding of the relations between power and social meaning (MacAloon, 1991:37).

MacAloon goes further to stress the role of sport in this process of appropriation:

> ....sport is above all a cultural performance system for the generation of symbols and meanings, and the vast economic and political interests that accrue to it do so as a consequence.

The notion of the appropriation of sport in the process of nation building does have great significance in the Australian experience. I do not claim that the congruence of sport and nationalism is a particularly Australian phenomenon, however, sport has traditionally taken a prominent role in the development of nationhood in Australia. One of the most durable legacies of Australia's early pioneering phase for the national character is the image of a sports loving people. Also, while politically Australia has remained largely overshadowed by the dominance of its chosen mentors, it was on the sporting fields where Australia has left

its mark as an autonomous, successful nation on the international community throughout its brief history. The Olympic Bid was not a sporting competition *per se*, however it constituted a prolific international contest within the wider context of sport and Olympism, the ultimate prize for the victor in this contest were the rights to host the Olympic Games.

Arguably, sport and leisure play an important role in Australian society. From the early cricket battles against Great Britain to the Davis Cup successes against America, the America's Cup win in 1983 and the victorious Olympic team at Barcelona, sport has served as an effective tool to affirm sentiments of nationalism by providing Australia with an "international reputation for achievement" (Rowe, Lawrence, Miller, McKay, 1994).

Sport in many ways has functioned as a substitute for war: with nations competing against each other and enhancing their prestige and standing in the world through their successful performances. Sporting grounds produce the modern day heroes - the victorious athletes who are publicly worshipped in ticker tape parades and advertising billboards. Sport, far from being an isolated autonomous institution, is at the centre of Australian society and is closely interwoven with the country's political, economic and cultural spheres. The modern Olympic Games are the ultimate fusion of sport and spectacle and, not surprisingly, their history closely reflects the political and ideological movements and struggles of the past century. In the following Chapter I will focus on the development of the modern Olympic Games as a powerful political agent and forum for international relations/competitions and examine the ramifications/opportunities the Games present to the host country as an arena for the production of national identity.

4. The Nationalist Construction of the Olympic Games

1996 marks the centenary of the revival of the ancient tradition of Olympic Games - a period that is well characterised by the official Olympic motto itself: *citius, altius, fortius* (Faster, higher, stronger). The urge to strive for superlatives not only is the (official) motive for participants in the Olympic sporting competitions, but in many ways has become representative of the development of the Olympic movement. From its humble beginnings as a low key event to the present day global spectacle the Olympics have undergone a miraculous cycle of growth in both their physical manifestation as well as their socio economic and political impact internationally. Today, as Hargreaves (1992) argues:

> .. Olympism, in its more precise sociological sense, constitutes a certain force in itself as an active agent on the global stage, interacting with and affecting other agents, governments included (Hargreaves, 1992: 120).

The Olympic movement is engaged in a global web of relationships on economic, social and political levels. While it lies outside the scope of this thesis to engage in a detailed examination of the phenomenon of the modern Olympic Games in their full complexity, the following Chapter will analyse one of the key factors in the development of the Olympic movement, namely its inseparable affiliation with the concept of nation states and the ideas of national identity and nationalism. In the course of this Chapter I will discuss the philosophical framework upon which the Olympic Movement is based and the inherent ideological and structural ambiguities that ultimately have led to the nationalist construction of the games. I will conclude this Chapter with a brief historic overview of the past one hundred years in the turbulent relationship between the Olympic movement and its principal antagonists, the nation states participating in it.

4.1. Olympic Ideology - a celebration of internationalism?

Beneath the surface manifestation of the Olympic Games as a mega sporting competition lies an official ideology that for the past century has functioned as the philosophical framework for the gradual expansion of the Games. While arguably today this ideological base may be less prominent than its image as global media spectacle the attraction and growth of the Olympic movement cannot be explained in isolation from its ideological foundations, or to be more precise, the inherent ambiguity of striving for internationalism while promoting the cause of nationalism.

In Chapter Two I discussed the principle of nation as a modern concept whose origins coincided with the philosophical elevation of the subject to the centre of the universe (followed by an almost blind belief in reason and progress). While the revival of the ancient tradition of Olympic Games did not eventuate until the end of the nineteenth century, its ideological roots are strongly anchored in the spirit of the Enlightenment and the consolidation of the borders of the European nation states. Aware of the growing geographical and political distinction of European nations, Baron Pierre de Coubertin [the founder of the modern Olympic Games], saw the idea of modern Olympic Games as a vehicle that would be able to carry the universal message of harmonious co-operation between different peoples or as Loland observes "a possible cult of human progress, international understanding and peace." (1994:36). While the borders of Europe became more distinct[14] Coubertin's vision for an enlightened international community sharing universal humanistic values gained shape in the form of the revival of the ancient tradition that had a proven track record as a peaceful celebration of the human spirit - the classic Olympic Games which were able to "promote the cause of peace and reconciliation among Greeks.....furthering closer ties and co-operation between them." (Mouratidies,1992:51).

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[14]Loland notes (1994:33)..."to Coubertin the emergence of the European national states led to an increased awareness of the potential of international co-operation".

Coubertin revived the tradition of the games in the hope of transferring this concept of nurturing goodwill and co-operation through sporting competition to the end of the 19th century on an international scale. Indeed, one of the most fundamental features of the modern Olympic Games (and in contrast to the ancient Games which were restricted to Greeks) was to become the ambition of the International Olympic Committee to strive for global participation.

Central to the Olympic ideology is the idea of an omnipotent and universally understandable messenger of a humanistic world view - sporting competition. Sport in Olympic ideology takes on an educational role, a means of cultivating the individual. It is used as a tool to foster "the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles" and, in alignment with the Enlightenment spirit, "to worship human greatness and possibility" (Loland, 1994:26) . Consequently the educational aspect became a crucial force in the development of the modern Olympic Games. As Loland (1994:29) argues

> Coubertin was convinced that ".. most great national questions can be reduced to educational questions,... The idea of educating[15] the masses through classical ideals and thus bring about social harmony (and international peace) was.... to become a key thought in Olympism.

The modern Olympic movement thus is based on an ideology that draws on the belief in progress and reason, the faith in humans to create a harmonious and peaceful society. The role of sport and the athlete was clearly delineated as one of messenger carrying a univocally understandable message of universal moral virtues.

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[15]Coubertin took reference from the classical ideal of education characterised by the "systematic harmonious development of all the physical and intellectual talents of the individual."(Laemmer1992:109).

> ...top level athletes could serve as ideals for the masses and as a motivating force to more sport activity and thus moral development of individuals in all layers of society....the Olympic Games could become a new humanistic religion for the 20th century (Loland, 1994:38).

Nevertheless, the Olympic movement's aspirations as super-national promoter of goodwill and co-operation had to take serious setbacks over the past one hundred years. Not only has the ideological base of the Olympic movement (the enlightenment spirit of human progress and reason) been eroded by a century of armed conflict between 'civilised' nations, but the very fabric of the Olympic Games bears the imprint of national, political, economic and ideological power struggles. As will be discussed at a later point in more detail, Olympic Games since their foundation continuously served as an arena of confrontation and differentiation as much as unity. Olympic ideology strives for global participation, and indeed the Games have become an outright success in attracting nations wanting to participate and compete against each other. By the same token, the Olympics have become increasingly entangled in a web of political exploitation. The argument lies close that the flourishing membership in the Olympic Movement is due to a lesser amount to the global community's desire to share universal values of peace and harmony, than to the opportunity the Olympic Games offer to nations to utilise international sporting competitions as a convenient and powerful messenger for their own political ends that "is more easily understood by all social classes than are political, economic, or religious issues" (Leiper, 1988:333). The exploitation of sporting achievements consequently serves as a vehicle to both promote national sentiment within nations as well as to establish their reputation in the international community:

> The accumulation of Olympic medals by a nation's athletes supposedly tells the world that the nation is vigorous, energetic, physically strong, and supportive of sporting values (Leiper,1988:333).

Are the Olympics a celebration of nationalism rather than a festival of united nations? Can the success of the Olympics be explained by their appeal to 'national' audiences rather than their appeal as a celebration of global friendship and goodwill? Arguably, the concept of the Olympics as an arena for the construction of national identity/mythology has had its share in the successful development of the Games. Indeed, right from the beginning the Olympic Games had a close affiliation with the political (nationalist) spheres of their times (as will be discussed later in more detail). Lapchick (1986:330) even argues that one of Coubertin's driving forces for the resurrection of the Olympic Games was his desire to boost the morale within his mother country France:

> Years later it was discovered in de Coubertin's personal correspondence that the decline in the French spirit after the Franco-Prussian War was a prime motivating factor in his work to rebuild the Olympic Games . He even worked behind the scenes to keep Germany out of the first games (Lapchick,1986:330).

Houlihan (1994:111) observes that the structure of the Olympic Games and Movement is almost ideal for the expression of national interest - and the exploitation of the Games by external forces in many ways relies on the 'nationalist' organisation of the Olympic Movement and the Games. To participate in the Olympic Games, an athlete must be a citizen of a nation recognised by the IOC, athletes march according to membership of nations at various ceremonies (most prominently the opening ceremony), while the national flag is raised and the national anthem being for the victorious athletes. Most blatantly nationalistic though is the tabulation of a medals table in order to nominate an overall winner - signifying a direct competition between nations for supremacy on the sporting field. While this practice officially was denounced by the IOC in 1914 as "contrary to the IOC's own insistence that the Olympic Games were contests between individuals and not nations and was hardly conducive to the international peace and goodwill intent of Olympism" (Leiper, 1988:334), it has been kept alive by the media and National Olympic Committees alike until the present day. Similarly the flag raising and the national anthem have remained vital and visually

prominent ceremonies within the Olympic Games - although critical notions were raised by Avery Brundage (a former IOC President) several times during his presidency to abolish these ceremonies. All these attempts to "reduce the opportunities for reinforcing nationalism presented at the Games as a way of diminishing the incentive to maximise national advantage" (Houlihan, 1994: 127) failed and Brundage's idea to replace the nationalist ceremonies with generic ones were rejected by the IOC. The anonymous athlete deprived of his/her national colours and identity was not considered an attractive option for the future conduct and development of the Olympic Games. In fact, as Leiper (1988:334) argues, the growing number of newly emerging nations joining the IOC since the Second World War can partly be explained by the powerful symbolic representation of nationalism within Olympic ceremonies - featuring a national team in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games marching in front of a global audience with their national flag and having the national anthem played for a victorious athlete - all these occasions are important manifestations of recognition within the international community. The opportunities for self promotion are even more significant for the host nation in particular the opening ceremony offers a prolific showcase for the national culture.

> The Opening Ceremony has now become the occasion for the host nation to put on a gigantic performance incorporating elements of the national culture through which it projects an image of itself to the whole world (Hargreaves, 1992:126).

Transcending logistical restraints of participation in the localised events, the Olympic Games have become synonymous with the phenomenon of globalisation, the transformation of the locally based event into a global experience. I have previously discussed globalisation as the antithesis of the concept of nation state. I now want to consider the impact of the mechanics of globalisation on the nationalist construction of the Olympic Games.

4.2. The Globalisation of the Olympic Games

Central to the Olympics modern day attraction as a global promotional outlet for the international community was the advent of global information technology (particularly television) that could transfer the local Olympic experience into a global spectacle. While television has entered the Olympic arena at a relatively late stage, (the first televised games were the 1956 Melbourne Games), it has since added a new dimension to it - a global audience that can share the excitement and passion of the Olympic festivities. Since the 1950s television arguably has had an enormous influence on accelerating the expansion of the Games. By opening up a global market of spectators for the Olympics, television has revolutionised the income generating opportunities for the staging of Olympic Games (through the sale of television rights and the global advertising opportunities for the corporate community to promote their sponsorship endorsements of the games) and in return the feasible scale of the event. Despite the global information technologies however, the central focus and attraction of the Olympics remains on the national element. Indeed, as Hargreaves (1992) argues, modern mass media and audiences interact and collude in a nationalist construction of the Olympics.

> ...sport - and especially the Olympics - powerfully attracts people, affords multiple opportunities for identifying with admired performers and for losing oneself in what is going on - in other words, for finding meaning in the ritual, drama and spectacle. These meanings are constructed by audiences out of the cultural material at their disposal, which is provided by membership of a culture or cultures, their experience of these activities in question, and crucially, the meanings signified by the mass media. Audiences by virtue of their membership of national cultures are predisposed to view the Games through a nation-tinged lens (Hargreaves, 1992:127).

In Chapter Two I discussed the phenomenon of globalisation and its inherent paradox of the simultaneous processes of promoting global relationships while stimulating local cultural

differentiation. Through a closer examination of the modern day Olympics we can find a prime example for the concept of globalisation and its ambiguities: on one hand the Olympic Games act as a distributor of a universally understandable message that can be simultaneously experienced around the globe and on the other hand it works as an instrument of cultural distinction by promoting the national/local element. MacAloon (1991) identifies this inherent dichotomy of contradicting qualities as central to the Olympic Games attraction to the cause of national identity. He sees a close dependency of a cultural group's ability to communicate its identity "upon the availability of [communication] forms supplied by the transnational community" (MacAloon, 1991:42) - once again articulating the role of the 'other' in the construction of the 'self'. MacAloon goes further to argue that the Olympic Games have become a powerful agent in the process of differentiating cultural identities.

> ....the Olympic Games are one, indeed one of the most important sources of such transnational forms for constituting differentiated identities. To be a nation recognised by other and realistic to themselves, a people must march in the Olympic Games Opening Ceremonies procession....But common practices need not entail common meanings - that was the error of modernisation theory, liberal and Marxist- and how peoples decode their common activity in the Olympic Games remains probably more not less various, not to mention more politically lively, than ever. ...It is this global process, not some supposed homogenisation or hegemonisation, which joins the cosmopolitan and the local into a truly world system (MacAloon, 1991:42).

Nationalism has become an inseparable component of the phenomenon 'Olympic Games' and the question lies close: are the Olympic Games merely a pawn in the powerplay of national interests or is the Olympic movement in fact exploiting its attraction for the national cause to its own end - advancing its mission to create a truly global event? Arguably justifications for both points of view may be found in the development of the Olympic Games, however, as Houlihan (1994:127) suggests, the relationship between nationalism and

the Olympics can be best characterised by a form of symbiosis, a complex relationship intertwined on "ideological, structural and procedural levels".

> What is central to the Olympic movement is the capacity to promote an international political agenda while at the same time claiming that the movement and the games are above politics (Houlihan, 1994:111).

Clearly the Olympic movement contains a variety of contradictory notions on both an ideological and structural level. Not surprisingly, the ambivalence inherent in the Olympic movement is also visibly manifested within the structure of its governing body, the International Olympic Committee (IOC). While every participating nation in the Games is required to have a National Olympic Committee (NOC), membership of the IOC is highly restrictive and geographically highly unbalanced. Not every NOC is automatically entitled to a seat in the IOC and the current (and past) distribution of membership countries shows a strong European bias. Far from being an organisation guided by universal democratic principles, the IOC resembles a "self perpetuating oligarchy" (Houlihan, 1994:123). Eligibility for membership does not adhere to any particular rules, it is more so as Houlihan argues "dependent on the whim of the incumbent president, who may or may not seek advice" (1994: 124). This closed shop mentality is justified by the IOC with the argument that this selection process assures a membership that is committed to the principles of the Olympic movement and that has considerable freedom from political interference/dependence. Nevertheless, political independence as an explicit aim of the Olympic Movement to the present day has largely remained in the realms of wishful thinking.

Consequently, the history of the modern Olympic Games bears a close reflection of the historic developments that have shaped the twentieth century: from the international tensions in the lead up to the World Wars, the ideological struggles of the Cold War, the movements against racial discrimination, to the advent of modern information technology

and the spread of capitalism as the world's dominant economic system. The Olympic Games have left their mark on the twentieth century as a major global event, a gigantic assembly of representatives of nations symbolically united under the banner of five interconnected rings. One hundred years ago, the Olympic Games supposedly set out to become a forum of international peace and co-operation. While it is difficult to assess to what extent and with what success the message of goodwill and understanding has been disseminated by the Olympic movement, it is indisputable that the Olympics have achieved a unique status as a global messenger, a powerful communications tool for the international community to further particular national and ideological interests or as Hargraves suggests they are "instruments of foreign policy" (1992:120). In the following subsection I will take a closer look at the Olympic Games history as a political forum for the international community.

4.3. A history of political/national interference

The nature of external interferences with the Olympic Games are manifold, however, there are two forms that have gained particular prominence: "the use of boycotts and the exploitation of the Games for propaganda purposes for the host state" (Houlihan, 1994:114). Lapchick (1986:330) describes, the first "overt act of politics" in the history of the modern Olympics occurring at the London Games in 1908 when the United States team marched past the King and Queen with their flag at half-mast and did not lower the flag while passing the monarch - an act that was explained by the high number of Irish American athletes protesting against the continuing presence of British troops in Ireland. Four years later a similar 'flag statement' was made by the Finnish team when it marched behind the Finnish flag rather than the Russian one in protest against Russian domination of Finland.

Political statements at the Olympics remained relatively low key up to the 1920s - not accounting for the 1916 Berlin Olympics which were abandoned as a direct result of the political situation of the time. The cessation of the Games presented a stark reminder of the limitations of the Olympics as an international agent of peaceful co-operation - and unlike the ancient tradition of the Olympic Truce that guaranteed all athletes free passage and a cessation of hostilities during the games, the First World War brought a temporary standstill of the Olympic Games rather than the end of armed conflict - a situation that was repeated during the Second World War when the 1940 and 1944 Games were cancelled. The post World War One Games in Antwerp in 1920 saw the continuation of the polarisation within the international community: the Great War had produced a winning and a losing side and a 'peaceful' competition on the sporting field between representatives of those two sides were deemed to provoke tensions. Hence steps were undertaken by the IOC to exclude the Central Powers (the losing alliance in World War One, most notably Germany, Austria and Hungary) from the Games - a ban that remained intact until the 1928 Amsterdam Games[16].

Undoubtedly the most political and infamous Games to date were held in 1936 in Berlin. Although the Games were awarded to Berlin before the Nazi party's ascent to power in Germany, it was amidst great controversy and tension when in 1933 the IOC reaffirmed its decision to hold the Games in Berlin. Despite international protests against Germany's anti-Semitic policies, the Berlin Games went ahead and even America, the leading nation in the efforts to boycott the Games despatched a team. As Lapchick notes (1986:333) the American Olympic Team officially based its decision to attend on the very foundations of Olympic Ideology claiming that "sport was the wedge that would lead to the end of discrimination in Germany"(Lapchik,1986:333). The reality was different: of the 477 strong German Olympic team marching in the opening ceremony only one member was of Jewish

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[16]The IOC devised mechanisms to exclude the losing alliances in both wars for the immediate post World War I and World War II games. As Leiper (1988:336) observes the IOC on both occasions focused on the legitimacy of the National Olympic committees of the central powers and later the axis powers: no previous information about the members of the central powers was available - hence the affected countries were not eligible to participate. Similarly, after World War II, the axis powers were excluded with the explanation that as they were formally occupied countries, they did not have national sovereignity - hence their National Olympic Committees were deemed unacceptable as legal institutions for the IOC.

background. What was to follow remains to this day the most ruthless and blatant propaganda exercise in Olympic history. As Houlihan (1994:115) observes "...Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, soon realised the opportunity they [the Games] presented both internally, as a means of galvanising support for the new government, and internationally, as a way of promoting the success of National Socialism." Impeccably organised, the Berlin Games were consequently spiked with Nazi Party imagery and symbolisms interwoven with displays of a progressive, clean and healthy nation. Nevertheless, the early warning signals of things to come were also featuring strongly: as Lapchick (1986:333) notes, the map of Europe displayed on the official Olympic poster showed German speaking areas in Southeast and Central Europe within German borders and when the Austrian team arrived in Berlin the German and not the Austrian anthem was played. With all the major nations participating, the Berlin Games became an international showcase for Nazi Germany firmly reminding the world of its growing status and aspirations as a great power.

> Nazi Germany utilized their sports and sports festivals as tools of propaganda so effectively that they were able to lull sportsmen and diplomats alike into believing that Germany was a fine nation in the family of nations (Lapchick, 1986:334).

In turn, the success of the Berlin Games had major repercussions on Germany and the Nazi party - boosting their self confidence and national pride. The Berlin Games also, once and for all, cemented the dominance of the national character (the particularities of the host city/country) for the staging of the Games rather than the notion of a generic "Olympic Territory" as had been propagated previously by the then IOC president Baillet-Latour[17].

The 1952 Helsinki Games marked another milestone in the history of the Olympic movement when the USSR participated for the first time at the Games. Helsinki became a mirror of the

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[17] Leiper (1988:337) notes that in light of the growing political manipulation of the Berlin Games, the then IOC President Baillet-Latour confronted Hitler with the fact that the IOC and the German National Olympic Committee were the patrons of the Games rather than other external forces such as the Nazi Party.

political carve up of Europe, with the USSR and other Eastern Bloc countries establishing a separate Olympic Village. The polarisation of political blocs was further escalated at the 1956 Games in Melbourne. As a reaction to the violent intervention of Soviet troops in the Hungarian uprising against Soviet domination, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Spain boycotted the Games. Several other nations withdrew from the Melbourne Games: Egypt and Lebanon and Iraq in reaction to the IOC's failure to condemn Britain and France as the aggressors in the Suez Canal crisis.

The admission of the People's Republic of China to the Olympic movement in 1954 - resulted in the 'two Chinas question' (Lapchick, 1986:334): when at the 1956 Games in Melbourne both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (otherwise known as Taiwan or Formosa) fielded teams, the delegation from the PRC withdrew from competition in protest of the RC's participation in the games. A dramatic turning point in the two China question occurred in 1970 in the lead up to the Montreal Games when the Canadian government refused to grant entry to athletes of the Republic of China in defiance of Olympic protocol (even risking a withdrawal of the Games from Montreal[18]). Faced with the option of either competing under a different name or not compete at all Taiwan chose the latter. The question on which China should be competing in the Olympics remained unsolved until 1980 when Taiwan was forced to refrain from using the name Republic of China, and to adopt the title Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee for its National Olympic Committee. By the 1950s the growing influence of national interests within the Olympics prompted the IOC to lay down stringent rules and regulations for National Olympic Committees to ensure that they are 'completely independent and autonomous and entirely removed from political, religious or commercial influences' (IOC 1955:12 in Leiper 1988: 339). Arguably, this quest for an apolitical autonomous status has, by and large, been unfruitful and in many ways has prompted severe criticism of the Olympic movement. By declaring that the recognition of a national Olympic committee does not imply political

[18] Leiper (1988:338) argues that this drastic measure was largely prompted by Canada's recognition of mainland China as the sole representative of the Chinese republic - as well as an appeasement of the mainland Chinese to assure the sale of wheat to that country.

recognition (IOC:1966,12) of a nation the IOC attempted to rid itself of moral responsibilities and obligations arising during the Olympic family's expansion drive - hence trying to avoid possible restrictions of membership caused by adverse internal political and social circumstances of prospective member countries. Hoberman (1986:2) critically observes this quest for membership as an amoral universalism 'which strives for global participation at all costs, even sacrificing rudimentary moral standards'.

Undoubtedly, the most divisive issue arising from this universal approach to membership in the Olympic Movement was the question of South Africa's apartheid regime's participation in the Games. While South Africa was excluded from the 1964 Games due to its practice of racial discrimination, the ban was lifted for the 1968 Games under the South African pretence of concessions to allow a multiracial team to compete in Mexico. Despite the threat of an African boycott of the 1968 games, the IOC maintained this position until the Soviet Union joined the African boycott - resulting in a renewed ban of South Africa. It took another two years until South Africa was finally expelled from the Olympic Movement. As Houlihan observes (1994:118) this development was triggered "less by sympathy with the critics of apartheid and more by a fear that the African states and the communist bloc might be persuaded to leave the Olympic movement and support some rival competition ...".

The 1972 Games in Munich were once again marred by the intrusion of international political conflict this time in the form of a terrorist attack which ended in the massacre of Israeli athletes.

The expulsion of South Africa did not spell once and for all an end to boycott threats from African nations. In fact, the 1976 games in Montreal saw a massive African boycott in response to the IOC's refusal to ban New Zealand which prior to the Games hosted the South African Rugby team. The 1980 and 1984 Olympics again were dominated by massive boycotts of blocs within the Olympic movement: this time reflecting the tensions and power

relations of the late cold war era - the 1980 Moscow Olympics being boycotted by the United States and a number of its allies in response to Russia's involvement in the Afghanistan War, and four years later the Eastern Bloc boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics largely as a retaliatory action against the West's boycott of the Moscow games. Despite these boycotts both the Moscow and the Los Angeles Games were exploited by their hosts to showcase their respective political ideologies and cultures:

> ..the Soviet Union used the Moscow Games of 1980 to proclaim the achievements of the socialist path to development; just as the Los Angeles Games four years later were used to reiterate the virtues of free enterprise and capitalism, and the appeal of American consumer culture (Whitson & Macintosh, 1995:2).

In recent years the issue of boycotts has gradually receded as a threatening extraneous factor at Olympic Games. Nevertheless, the exploitation of the Games as a propaganda vehicle for the host city and country has remained a prolific feature at both the Seoul and the Barcelona Games. The notion of the host city as "Olympic territory" rather than a national territory largely remains a romantic ideal further stressing the question of independence of the Olympic Games. Formally the International and National Olympic Committees are autonomous bodies. It is arguable, however, to what extent these aspirations translate into Realpolitik. The hosting of Olympic Games as a logistic undertaking is a venture far exceeding the resources and capabilities of both the IOC and the National Olympic Committees. The realisation of the Games therefore relies heavily on the willingness of governments to act as sponsors and underwriters and consequently, as Houlihan (1994:125) notes, the Olympic movement is locked in a delicate relationship with the host city and its government(s). The high stakes involved in hosting the Olympics make it vulnerable to political interference and, in the worst case scenario, encourage "and legitimise internal

repressive measures" by the host governments[19] (Houlihan, 1994:125). Indeed, governments of host countries have continuously used the games for their own political national agendas. MacAloon (1991:36) suggests that "hosting the transnational sport community has frequently and abidingly - beginning with the first modern Olympic Games of 1896 - altered the political landscape of the host nation." From the first games in Athens that were used by the Greek Royal Family to promote Greece in the international arena as a "barrier against Turks and Slavs in modern times as it was against the Persians at Marathon." (Kanin 1981:29 in Houlihan 1994: 120) to the Berlin Games that served as a propaganda tool for Nazi Germany, to the 1988 Seoul Games that provided the South Korean Government with an "immensely important opportunity to achieve international recognition" (Houlihan, 1994:121) that "accelerated political reforms" (MacAloon, 1991:36) host nations have staged international Olympic spectacles with a particular local flavour. In a time that is characterised by the processes of globalisation, super national trading blocks, global information technology, and increasing global tourism, the Games offer a powerful vehicle of cultural distinction for the host country.

> ....hosting international sporting events has become one of the most effective ways for a country to place itself front and centre on the world stage, however temporarily, and show itself off as a successful society (Whitson & Macintosh, 1995:2).

While hosting the Olympic Games is a country's ultimate prize in the quest for national prestige, most recently a new phenomenon has surfaced within the Olympic Movement as a powerful agent of national distinction: the bidding process for the rights to host the Games has developed into a prolific international competition in itself. In 1991 the City of Sydney entered the race to gain the rights for the Olympic Games in the year 2000 and over the next

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[19]As happened at the 1968 games in Mexico when thirteen people where killed in anti Olympics riots against the government, the round up of dissidents before the Moscow Games and the arrests of Catalan activists in the lead up to the Barcelona Games.

two years Sydney's Olympic Bid was to become a dominant feature of the public life in this country. While the ultimate target of Sydney's bidding campaign (the affirmative votes of the International Olympic Committee Members) was located overseas, its main thrust was deeply anchored within the Australian community and deeply engendered the debate on national identity. The following Chapter will analyse a central feature in Australia's pre Olympic experience - the mobilisation of the imagined community 'nation' in the quest for the Olympics.

5. "Share the spirit" - the mobilisation of a nation in the quest for the Olympic Games

In 1991 the New South Wales State Government embarked on its quest to bring the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney, a venture that would deeply engage the social, political, economic spheres of Australian life over the next three years. What started out as a localised (and rather mundane) undertaking revolving around issues of technical and financial viability soon spiralled into a cause of national importance. Far beyond the boundaries of Sydney NSW, the Olympic Bid seemed to emerge as a prolific forum of the new Australia, a showcase of the achievements of contemporary Australian society in the international limelight. The Olympic Bid enjoyed bipartisan political support, financial backing from the corporate community and most remarkably, enthusiastic support from the Australian public. Arguably, this enthusiasm did not arise overnight, nor was it a "natural" occurrence, far more it was the product of an Australia wide promotions campaign that was targeted at the very heart and soul of the nation - its identity. Technically, the Olympic Bid represented a gigantic marketing campaign, however, the message conveyed throughout the campaign seemed to transcend this technical level, it was to become an embodiment of the 'new' Australian spirit: young, dynamic and colourful and it was to provide a measurement of this spirit in the international arena. The following Chapter will analyse the machinations that allowed the nation to identify with the cause/quest to bring the Olympic Games to Sydney.

5.1. Background

In October 1990 the then NSW Premier, Nick Greiner, commissioned a committee to prepare a study on the financial feasibility of staging the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. Chaired by Bruce Baird, then NSW Minister for Transport (and later Minister in charge

of the Olympic Bid) the all-male committee, consisting of Ministers and prominent members of the business community[20], three months later delivered a report that forecast a profit of $53 million for a prospective Sydney Olympics. This positive appraisal cleared the way for the NSW Government to undertake to bring the games to Sydney. Endorsed by the Australian Olympic Committee, the City of Sydney registered its interest with the International Olympic Committee and a limited company, the Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid Limited (SOBL), was established with the NSW Premier, initially Nick Greiner, as the President and Chair of the Executive Board.

Sydney's Bid for the Olympic Games was the third consecutive bid by an Australian city. Brisbane had failed to gain the rights for the 1992 Games (held in Barcelona) and Melbourne was unsuccessful in its quest for the 1996 Games (to be held in Atlanta). Both these unsuccessful attempts to bring the Olympics to Australia highlighted a key issue in the bidding process: to be awarded the rights to hold the Games, a bidding city would have to overcome fierce international competition - a relatively new phenomenon in the history of the Olympics. As Rod McGeoch, Chief Executive Officer of the SOBL, notes in his personal account[21] of the Bid that were published in the aftermath of Sydney's successful candidature:

> The whole business of trying to win the right to stage an Olympic Games had changed dramatically in the 1980s. By the late 1970s, the Games had come to the

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[20] Robert Webster, Minister for Family and Community Services; John Hannaford, Minister for State Develompment; John Lewis, chairman of Concrete Constructions; David Smithers, a partner at Coopers & Lybrand; Andrew Turnbull, managing director of Burns Philp; David Hoare, chairman of Bankers Trust Australia; and Nick Whitlam, a merchant banker.

[21] I would like to note at this point that although '*The Bid. How Australia won the 2000 Games.*' is a valuable resource for the examination of the Olympic Bid, it is not written as a critical reflection on the Bid but rather as an account of the Bid's achievement from a marketing point of view, hence the quotes taken from this publication do not necessarily represent the line of analysis taken in this thesis.

> point where no city wanted to host them. The 1972 Munich Games were overshadowed by the massacre of the Israeli athletes, then there was the crippling municipal cost of the bid spending on infrastructure for the 1976 Montreal Games and all sorts of politically-inspired boycotts, like the Moscow debacle (McGeoch and Korporaal, 1994:79).

However, this situation changed dramatically after the financially profitable Los Angeles Games which McGeogh credits with the turnaround of the "fortunes of the modern Olympic movement" (1994:79). Consequently the number of bidding cities increased from two for the 1988 Games to six for both the 1992 and 1996 games. By the time of the Barcelona Games in 1992 eight cities from various parts of the world had registered their interest to bid for the 2000 Games, these included: Beijing, Manchester, Berlin, Milan, Istanbul, Brasilia, Tashkent and Sydney.

In the course of the bidding process every city was to produce a formal response to the IOC's official questionnaire for prospective host cities, outlining technical details, such as venues, infrastructure, hospitality, communications and medical facilities and many more aspects of the bidding cities - this information was to be compiled in a document known as the bid book. The information contained in the bid books was to be scrutinised on site at the bidding city by the IOC Evaluation Commission, which in turn reported its findings to the IOC members who ultimately make the decision on the host city. The modus operandi of the decision making process was one of secret ballot cast by the IOC members (around ninety - their numbers shifted during the bidding process) until a majority of votes was given to a particular city. This process usually requires several rounds of voting [22]whereby the city with the least votes in any round is removed from the ballot for the next round of voting. Dictated by this voting procedure, the ultimate aim for bidding cities is to gain the support of the majority of the ninety or so individuals constituting the membership of the IOC. To

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[22] Barcelona won in the third round, Atlanta in the fifth round and Sydney in the fourth round)

achieve this goal a city has to engage in an intensive lobbying campaign targeted at the IOC members[23] - a fact that the Sydney Bid team was well aware of:

> Our primary target was clear - it was the IOC members. We identified our secondary market as the international sporting federations, the national Olympic committees, the Olympic media, athletes and other members of the Olympic family. The third was the Sydney business and political community, the Australian community, and NSW and national sporting federations (McGeoch and Korporaal, 1994:50).

Despite this clear segmentation of marketing targets by the Sydney Olympic Bid Company the actual campaign strategies to address those markets were often overlapping and closely intertwined. Sydney's campaign was highly visible and was underpinned by programs which mobilised grassroots support for the Bid. In fact, the bipartisan domestic support for Sydney's Bid became the foundation for its comprehensive international campaign: from the programs that brought NSW school children in contact with IOC members, the involvement of ethnic communities and indigenous people, environmental groups, current and former federal politicians, the union movement, the corporate sector, war veterans , and celebrities from the sports and entertainment areas. The following section will examine the processes that led to the mobilisation of such a wide spectrum of Australian society in the quest for forty five votes.

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[23]a process that in the past has been subject to significant controversy and criticism: faced with adverse media attention towards the lavish treatment of IOC members by prospective host countries had prompted the IOC to issue guidelines for bidding cities, imposing a $200 limit to the value of gifts presented to IOC members by the time of the 2000 Olympics bidding period.

5.2 Addressing the nation

In the previous Chapter I reviewed Olympic ideology and its spiritual foundations of peaceful co-operation and friendship as the philosophical driving forces of the Olympic Movement. From the very outset of the bidding campaign the Sydney Bid Company adopted the key notions of Olympic ideology and cleverly interwove them with the idea of the spirit of Australia as a nation that was to be projected during the bidding process.

> We were ... marketing the very spirit of Sydney and Australia as a young, colourful, friendly, modern and informal place. It was a city and a nation where people loved sport and loved competing - but they also believed in the Olympic spirit of 'friendship, solidarity and fair play' (McGeoch & Korporaal, 1994:66).

Accordingly, the leading motive of the Bid was to reflect this spirit as the committee had defined it. When the Bid company adopted its official theme, it had found a promotional vehicle that was broad enough to both address the Olympic movement and the Australian people: "Share the spirit"

> In some ways it was a play on words - we were asking the Olympic movement to share the Olympic spirit with us by giving us the right to host the Games. We were saying that Sydney had that spirit (McGeoch, Korporaal, 1994:74).

The official slogan was soon to be followed by a campaign song, spelling out in more detail about the kind of spirit that was to be shared. Following are two excerpts of "share the spirit" - the song:

We want to share the century's dawn
A golden age will reign
Where the spirit of competition

Burns so bright in the eternal flame
Share your hopes
Share your dreams
Share the spirit of the Games

and further

....The spirit of sport, the spirit of sharing
The spirit of striving, the spirit of daring
The spirit of hope, of woman of man
The spirit of clasping a rival's hand
The spirit of challenge, the spirit of a smile
The spirit of going that extra mile. (Excerpts from the SOBC, theme song, Share the Spirit' in McGeoch, Korporaal, 1994:76,7)

The central theme is focused on the notion of a better future, the turn of the millennium as the dawn of a new age. However, the campaign song also contains references to the traditional Australian national characteristics I discussed previously in Chapter Two competitiveness (love of sport), friendliness, giving everybody a fair go. To the Australian audience the song offered an opportunity to identify as an entity through common characteristics, but unlike traditional concepts of national identity that draw on the experience of a shared past, the bidding campaign was building on the prospect of a common future. At this point it should also be mentioned that during the bidding campaign Australia's historic development and Anglo Saxon/Celtic origins as a nation played a surprisingly little role in the promotional activities. In fact, it was spelt out by the CEO of the Bid Company, Rod McGeoch, very early in the preparation of the creative outlines for the Bid that Sydney was not to be presented as "European or British" (McGeoch, Korporaal, 1994:73). Consequently, the official Bid logo was to depict the silhouette of an icon of modern Australia, Sydney's Opera House. The choice of logo in many ways carried an important message. On one hand the Opera House was an internationally significant and recognisable architectural structure, and on the other hand, as Fiske, Turner and Hodge

(1987:160) argue, the Opera House signifies a vital point of reference in Australia's emancipation from its cultural cringe towards Europe and in the establishment of an Australian iconography of popular culture.

> The perceived marginalisation of Australia underlying the cultural cringe and the continual comparisons with the richer civilisations of Europe is halted by the very building which was conceived in envy of the cultural centres of Europe. Instead of institutionalising the glories of the European past, it asserts the manifest glory of the Australian present.

The Sydney Opera House as the main feature of the Bid logo perpetuates the theme set in the "Share the Spirit" song: a nation that is looking forward rather than backwards for its identity. Fiske et al (1987:161) further argue

> It is spectacular, and the main source of its egalitarianism is its placement and exteriority. In becoming an image of Sydney, of Australia, it becomes the property of all; possessed by its lookers and photographers it is instantly and easily appropriated into popular culture; photographs, postcards, T-shirts, tea towels, glittery wall hangings, ashtrays, all that paraphernalia of mass accessibility

The silhouette of the Sydney Opera House *per se* was not a new idea for a corporate identity, amongst others the Sydney Festival logo features a version of the Opera House. However, the colours and composition of the Sydney Bid logo represent a unique interpretation of both the spirit of Australia and the Olympic movement: featuring a succession of the colours of the Olympic Rings (blue, black, red, yellow and green) on the outline of the Opera House sails. In addition the borders of the individual colours were marked by a series of dots reminiscent of Aboriginal dot painting which were to signify the

ancient culture of the Australian continent. In the official explanation the significance of the various design components of the logo is summed up as following:

> The design is the spirit of an ancient and colourful land. One vigorous line progressing in a fusion of Olympic colours. It is a cultural message of the union of nations expressing the freedom of the Olympic movement and the informal vitality of the city of Sydney. (SOBL, 1992)

The depiction of the Opera House silhouette was further accompanied by the text "Sydney 2000" as well as the Olympic rings (the use of the Olympic rings with the Sydney 2000 logo was however restricted to non-commercial usage by the bidding authority). The logo successfully addressed the SOBL's fundamental marketing strategies: it was delivering a message to the Olympic "family" that Sydney was engulfed in the spirit of the Olympic ideals. Equally important, however, it was a sign/symbol that could easily be associated as a particular image of Australia: a young, dynamic and colourful society with an ancient cultural history. The establishment and far reaching dissemination of a meaningful and effective corporate identity was to lay the foundations for the transformation of a locally constrained venture into a cause of national proportions: during the bidding campaign the SOBL logo found its way on every prominent surface imaginable around the country featuring on corporate and government stationery, TV advertisements, flagpoles, car registration stickers, T shirts, Coca-Cola cans and jumbo jets. Sydney's Bid soon was to become Australia's Bid for the Olympic Games.

5.3. Australia's Bid

I have mentioned previously that Sydney's Olympic Bid was conceived and financially underwritten by the NSW State Government which at this time was formed by a Liberal - National Party Coalition. In a surprisingly bipartisan political gesture the State Government

soon gained a supportive ally in the Federal (Labor) Government, and in particular the then Prime Minister Paul Keating and his wife Annita. In fact, the Keating's personal support became a central feature of the bidding campaign. The Prime Minister as the head of the Federal Government became the official Patron of the Bid - lending it further symbolic impetus as a cause of national importance. The Prime Minister's involvement went far beyond this representative function and covered support in the financial, logistic and lobbying efforts in which the bid was engaged in. In mid 1992 the Prime Minister pledged federal funding of $5 Million for the Sydney Olympic Bid which represented a significant contribution to the total $25 Million budget. In his sponsorship announcement speech the Prime Minister revealed the spontaneous nature of this financial contribution:

> I'm going to do something I've never done in public life before and that is commit Commonwealth money without a Cabinet decision (SOBL, 1992c).

What was the rationale behind this astonishing gesture? McGeoch and Korporaal, (1994:122) in recalling this occasion suggest that the Prime Minister's motivation was driven by the Olympic Bid's potential as a catalyst for national pride.

> Keating may not be a great sportsman, but he was an internationalist and could see a Sydney Olympics would be important for Australia's national pride.

It was up to the Prime Minister himself to spell out in more detail his perspective on the importance of the Olympic Bid for Australia as a nation. In a speech at the NSW Australia Day Council lunch in Sydney's Darling Harbour, the Prime Minister underlined the function

of sport as a central pillar to the constitution of the Australian identity, or to be more precise, the 'Australian type'. [24]

> In the pioneering phase of our national life we were in perpetual competition with the elements and it is said that this translated culturally into an almost universal admiration for physical prowess. ....It was a physical culture and, of course, a healthy one, which made our athletes all the more formidable.

Outlining the importance of sport in Australia's cultural heritage, the Prime Minister went further to stress the role of sporting achievements in the international arena as a crucial source of national pride, a means for individuals to imagine the collective community 'nation'.

> And if the personal triumphs of the past year [the sporting victories at the Barcelona Olympics], and this Bid for the Olympics in the year 2000, help Australians imagine a modern, strong, competitive and fair society, they will have done their country a great service. I see the Sydney Bid playing a substantial role in the great challenges which face Australia in the 1990s. Whether the Bid succeeds or fails might in the end be judged less important than the inspiration and confidence it gives us. (SOBL, 1993a:10)

The Prime Minister left no doubt that the Olympic Bid was part of a national agenda rather than a localised event - a potential benchmark for contemporary Australia (and a test for the

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[24]As I have discussed in chapter II, the notion of national type was the dominant discourse in the formative phase of Australia as a nation state and was characterised by the physical nature of the pioneer's life - resulting in the image of a wholesome, healthy and white (the fact that the Australian type was largely racially delineated did, however, not find a mention in the Prime Minister's speech) imagery of Australia.

capabilities of the country that had just undergone severe economic recession). Also remarkably the Prime Minister raised the notion that in any scenario, win or lose, the Bid would have fulfilled its purpose - The Sydney Olympic Bid was right from its early days considered a highly competitive and competent contender amongst its rival cities and regardless of the outcome it would have provided international recognition for its achievements - a notion that is also reminiscent of another benchmark event in Australia's history: the ANZAC experience in Gallipoli that despite being a military disaster established Australia's self confidence in the international arena.

Undoubtedly, the Olympic Bid had become of paramount interest for the Federal Government as a tool to address and rekindle national pride in a time that was marred by economic recession and social uncertainty. In many ways the Federal Government's efforts were amplified by the personal involvement and enthusiasm of the Prime Minister and his wife as active Bid lobbyists on both the national and international circuit - efforts that culminated with the Keatings inclusion in the team for the final presentation of Sydney's Bid to the IOC members in Monte Carlo on the 23rd of September 1993. The Keatings performed a crucial role at this occasion as a personification of what contemporary Australia was all about: Paul Keating in his role as statesman gave a dynamic account of Australia's vision and position in the Asia Pacific Region, and his wife reiterated (first with a heavy Dutch accent and later utilising her multi lingual skills) the merits of multiculturalism Australian style. As McGeoch and Korporaal note:

> They [the Keatings] were an extremely impressive couple in themselves, and they sent out many appropriate signals about Australia - multiculturalism, youthfulness, style, the importance of children and the family (McGeoch, Korporaal, 1994:276).

The Keatings were not the only public personae of Australian life to contribute to Sydney's Bid. In fact the list of supporters represents a 'who's who' of Australian society: from

current and past sporting heroes such as Greg Norman, Kieren Perkins, Nick Farr Jones, Sir Donald Bradman, Dawn Fraser, and Yvonne Cawley (nee Goolagong) to internationally renowned performers such as Dame Joan Sutherland, Nicole Kidman, Mandawuy Yunupingu (lead singer of the Aboriginal Rock band Yothu Yindi and Australian of the Year 1993) past and present politicians such as former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and his wife Margaret, Graham Richardson, prominent business people, arts administrators and renowned professionals. National celebrities provided their expertise, toured the world, signed cricket bats and golf caps and publicly endorsed the Sydney Olympic Bid - "stars" became an integral part both to woo the votes of IOC members as well as to provide promotional imagery in Australia. The Sydney Olympic Bid successfully attracted figureheads of Australian society, however, how did it impact on "ordinary Australians"? I have previously mentioned that the local community was one of the prime targets in the SOBL campaigning and indeed the SOBL succeeded in enlisting the support/services of wide sections of Australian society: ethnic and Aboriginal communities that were to play an integral part in the cultural representations within the bidding process, war veteran associations, union officials that persuaded workers to postpone strikes[25] that were scheduled during IOC visits, environmental groups that relayed to the world images of a "green Olympics" and school children that both made an emotional plea to the IOC members as well as formed the backbone of the national 'grassroots' support. In the following subsection I will take a closer look at the nature of the 'grassroots' support for the Olympic Bid.

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[25]The NSW Labor Council planned a strike in October 1991 coinciding with the visit of 21 IOC members in response to the planned introduction of new State industrial legislation. The strike was postponed after intervention of Michael Easson, Head of the NSW Labor Council and member of the Bid committee was made aware by Bid officials that IOC members would be in town during the planned strike and that this industrial action could have devastating ramifications for Sydney's candidature.

5.4. Grassroots support

As I have mentioned previously, one of the key targets for the SOBL's marketing campaign was to win the support of the Australian public and accordingly community programs became a priority in the SOBL efforts, particularly in the initial phase of the bidding process. What was the rationale behind the push for local support when the majority of decision makers for the granting of the rights to host the games, the IOC members, were thousands of miles away in foreign countries? Arguably, public enthusiasm or at least consent for a city's candidature has to be considered a prerequisite in the campaign to win the rights to host the Games: it is ultimately the wider public that bears the financial and socio political risks that are associated with staging Olympic Games and an adverse public reaction could jeopardise and in the worst case scenario even terminate the bidding campaign[26]. Also, as the SOBL successfully implemented, an enthusiastic community represents a valuable resource in the lobbying of IOC members. To this end the SOBL organised IOC visits around major public events (as a visible demonstration of the spirit inherent in the Australian people) and utilised sectors of the community such as ethnic groups and schoolchildren to seek actively IOC member's votes for Sydney's candidature. The largest single contingent of IOC members (fifteen) to visit the city was engineered to arrive in time for the 1993 Australia Day Celebrations which were largely held under the banner of the Olympic Bid in Sydney's Darling Harbour. A traditionally colourful and spectacular day on Sydney's harbour, Australia Day provided the perfect imagery of an enthusiastic local public for the visiting dignitaries. Also at the same time a Sydney Mega Festival took place that saw (for the first time in their history) the Sydney Festival, the Sydney Carnevale and the Sydney Biennale synchronised with this all important IOC visit to Sydney - needless to say that all three events were incorporated in the Olympic Bid campaigning effort. The strategy to

[26]As happened in Innsbruck Austria in 1993 where a plebiscite was held in response to a public uproar against the city's efforts to gain the rights to stage the Winter Olympics for the third time. With the majority voting against the idea of a third Olympics,Innsbruck did not proceed with its candidature.

utilise established or prolific 'one off' public events (Grand Prix car races, tennis/golf tournaments, the Sydney Easter Show, the closure of the Harbour Bridge) to associate the Olympic Bid with enthusiastic crowds was adopted successfully throughout the Bid. With similar effectiveness the SOBL actively enlisted the services of other community groups and particularly school children in the hunt for IOC votes.

This 'grassroots' community support was to become a key angle in Sydney's promotional campaign. In the December 1992 issue of "Share the Spirit" the SOBL published the results of a research study it commissioned to assess the level of support by the Sydney community. The poll, showing a 90% approval rate, was interpreted by Bruce Baird, Minister in charge of the Bid, as follows:

> In Australia for some time now there has been open public debate on the merits of hosting the Games. ..To achieve a 90 per cent support rating in this free speaking climate is a sensational result as the public has had a chance to assess the Olympic Bid. (SOBL, 1992d:2)

Arguably, the Olympic Bid enjoyed enormous public support. However, it remains to be questioned if this support was indeed, as Bruce Baird proclaimed, the result of an affirmative and conscious assessment by the public, or engineered by a conducive and thorough marketing campaign as Booth and Tatz (1994:14) suggest. In fact, as Darcy and Veal (1994:7) note the entire bidding period was characterised by a lack of critical reflection, particularly in the media.

> Whether or not it was a result of a media/government conspiracy or a genuine desire on all sides not to jeopardise the bid by providing competing cities with critical ammunition, criticism of the idea of holding the Games in Sydney was muted. No

> pressure groups emerged to oppose the bid as happened, for example, in Berlin. (1994:8)

The sentiment of the media throughout the entire bidding period was overwhelmingly in favour of the Olympics and can only be interpreted as a position of active support (giving free airtime and editorial space to the Bid). Not surprisingly, most major media organisations were acknowledged by the SOBL as corporate supporters and representatives of major media outlets were members of Bid advisory committees. As a consequence, as Darcy and Veal (1994:8) note, questions arose about the independence of the media particularly following claims that critical articles were rejected by papers. There is no data available on the nature and extent of the public's awareness of the merits/risks of hosting the Olympic Games. However, it has to be noted that at the time of the above quoted poll neither the official economic impact study nor the preliminary social impact study for the Sydney Olympic Games[27] were available to the 'informed public'. Hence the conclusion lies close that the overwhelming community support at best should be interpreted as an emotional rather than rational projection of the possible merits of Olympic Games. Also, as Booth and Tatz (1994:14) suggest, the notion of grassroots support being 'engineered' has to be taken into account when explaining the high approval rating for the Olympic Bid: a notion that becomes particularly relevant when analysing SOBL school programs.

As mentioned previously, youthfulness was to be projected as a key attribute synonymous with the Australian spirit during the bidding campaign and consequently images of schoolchildren waving Sydney 2000 flags adorned virtually every SOBL publication. Far beyond the production of publicity shots, children performed an active part in the lobbying

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[27]The economic/social impact studies were released in July 1993 and February 1995 respectively. Their reference details are: KPMG Peat Marwick (1993) Sydney Olympics 2000: Economic Impact Study.Two volumes. Report to the Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid LTD, Sydney; Keys Young (1995), Preliminary social impact assessment of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games, 2 Volumes. Prepared for the Office of Olympic Co-ordination, Premier's Department, Sydney.

of IOC members as well as providing the backbone of 'grassroots' community support: the SOBL in conjunction with the NSW Department of Education developed and implemented school curricula during 1992 and 1993 focusing on the Olympic ideals and the merits of Sydney's Olympic Bid. The key objectives of this program were to

> ...provide direct support for Sydney's Bid from schools and students, encouraging IOC members to select Sydney for the 2000 Games; and to develop greater awareness of the Sydney Bid, the principles of the Olympics and the benefits of participating in and hosting the Games (SOBL, 1993a:6).

By incorporating the Olympic Bid into school curricula the SOBL gained access to an army of enthusiastic supporters in the form of schoolchildren and additionally, as a spin off effect, it would reach a large number of parents with a positive message about Sydney's campaign. Furthermore, as a sub-program of this Olympic Curriculum, selected schools were 'twinned' with IOC members - specific schools were assigned IOC members with which they were encouraged to communicate in writing and in case of visiting members to establish personal contact with "their" member. Up to the decision day in Monte Carlo these twinning schools were to provide an emotional plea to the IOC members to vote for Sydney.

> We got the twinning schools to write a letter to their individual member and tied a ribbon around it and put it on their pillows. So the last thing the members got before they went to sleep was a little message from their own school children saying, 'Please give Sydney the Games' (McGeoch and Korporaal, 1994:292).

On the Bid decision day the IOC members were treated to yet another surprise when the SOBL revealed its "secret weapon" in its final presentation: Tanya Blancowe, an 11 year old

schoolgirl who gave a well rehearsed recital of her (speech writer's[28]) vision of the 2000 Games in Sydney - once again reflecting the key motive running through the entire bidding campaign: the presentation of Australian society as youthful, sharing the spirit, and looking towards the challenges of the future with optimism.

5.5. A colourful Bid

The second key characteristic that was to be projected in Sydney's Bid was the image of a colourful society. Hence special attention was directed by the SOBL to promote the accomplishments of Australia in nurturing a multicultural society. Again the inclusion of ethnic groups in the bidding campaign went beyond mere symbolic representation as colourful images in print and video productions. Ethnic groups were to fulfil a practical purpose in the lobbying of IOC members.

> We also wanted the involvement of Sydney's ethnic groups, for practical reasons, and to demonstrate Australia's multicultural policies, as well as making visitors feel at home and fight perceptions of Australia as an Anglo-Saxon nation (McGeoch, Korporaal, 1994).

The SOBL rationale behind the promotion of multiculturalism was twofold: on the one hand Australia's policy of cultural diversity was to serve as a national feature that would distinguish Sydney's Bid amongst its rival cities, and on the other hand, Australia's demographic diversity would allow almost every visiting IOC member to be matched with members of his/her own ethnic background. Ethnic community groups were not the only section of Australia's "colourful society" that became involved in Sydney's Bid: Australia's

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[28] As McGeoch and Korporaal (1994:277) note, the speeches for the final presentation were written by Gough Whitlam's former speech writer Graham Freudenberg, and fine tuned by a communications company.

indigenous people were to play a significant role in further distinguishing Australian culture as unique featuring both ancient traditions and a young society - an issue that was potentially contentious. Whereas the notion and imagery of an ancient culture was to be an integral part of the promotional strategy, it was clear that the issue of Aboriginal relations posed something of a risk in Sydney's Bidding campaign. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, the relationship between the indigenous culture and white Australia has been largely characterised by discrimination and violent oppression of Aboriginal people and the relatively recent policies of reconciliation were still in an early stage. Hence there was a possible danger that (in particular black African) IOC members may voice criticism of Australia's record of racial discrimination against its indigenous people, as they have done previously in their fight against South Africa's participation in the Olympic movement.

> We knew we would also have to be prepared to answer questions about race relations in Australia, particularly from black African members (McGeoch, Korporaal, 1994:145).

Understandably, the SOBL was "particularly keen to have the involvement and support of the Aboriginal community" (McGeoch and Korporaal, 1994:144). Again the SOBL took a thorough approach in achieving this objective by approaching peak Aboriginal organisations and prominent Aborigines to endorse the Olympic Bid. Amongst those were the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Charlie Perkins a former senior federal public servant, the sprinter Cathy Freeman and Mandawuy Yunupingu (lead singer of the commercially successful Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi). However there was also a faction within the Aboriginal community, the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service, that actively campaigned against the Olympic Bid as a reaction against the treatment of Aboriginal people in Australia, writing letters to IOC members and staging demonstrations at public events. As a result of these letters, the leader of the black movement within the IOC, Jean Claude Ganga, requested to meet Aboriginal groups on his visit to Sydney. Consequently a meeting took place between representatives of the NSW Legal Service and Mr Ganga which clarified that there was no

discrimination against blacks within the Australian Olympic Movement - stating his position that socio economic disadvantages of Aborigines in Australian society were not part of the IOC agenda and as long as Aborigines were able to participate in the Games the IOC would be satisfied with the nature of race relations in Australia (McGeoch and Korporaal, 1994:147) - consequently diffusing the potentially adverse issue of the uneasy relationship between the indigenous culture and mainstream Australian society. The frailty of this relationship however was surfacing among Aboriginal 'official' supporters of the Bid most prominently in the controversy surrounding Charlie Perkins's premature departure from the opening of the IOC museum in Lausanne: Perkins had been included in the Bid lobbying effort at several occasions and was to give a special presentation on the cultural program of the Sydney Olympics (with a particular view on the Aboriginal involvement) at Lausanne. On his arrival Perkins gave a controversial press conference on human rights issues in Beijing and Sydney and the consequent tension between the SOBL management and Perkins led Perkins to depart Switzerland without having given his presentation. Nevertheless fears of an Aboriginal backlash on the Olympic Bid did not eventuate. Was the Olympic Bid or the prospect of the Olympic Games going to improve the status and living conditions of Aboriginal people?

What was the Aboriginal community to gain from the Olympic Bid? At an Aboriginal community function in support of the Sydney Olympic Bid, entitled "Share the Spirit of Reconciliation", the Minister responsible for the Bid outlined the possible benefits of the Olympic Games for Aboriginal people:

> Not only will there be greater opportunities for Aboriginal athletes, there will be a greater awareness of Aboriginal culture through extensive involvement in the cultural program (SOBL, 1993e:12).

Indeed it was the official cultural program in the lead up to the 2000 Olympic Games that contained the most tangible and promising gestures of acknowledgement of the indigenous people. In the following section I will briefly examine the main thematic and philosophical foundations for the Cultural Olympics.

5.6. Cultural Olympics

As part of its overall presentation of its technical and financial capabilities, the SOBL was obliged to present an outline for a cultural program accompanying the Olympic Games. The staging of a cultural program is a requirement imposed by the IOC on the host city and while the cultural element is largely overshadowed by the sporting program of the Olympic Games, it has to be considered a vital factor in the production of identity associated with the Olympic Games. The SOBL emphasised this important role and rather than limiting it to the actual games it developed a program that would encompass a series of festivals in the three years leading up to the Games. Arguably, the cultural program also contained the most tangible promises for the reassessment of Australian nationhood, the spaces and opportunities to both define and communicate an Australian identity of the twenty-first century. Consisting of four themed festivals the program will commence in 1997 with The Festival of the Dreaming as a "homage to our origins" (SOBL,1993f) the indigenous culture. At first sight it appears somewhat cynical that the cultural program claims ownership to the indigenous heritage considering that the committee responsible for the content of the cultural program featured only one representative[29] of the Aboriginal community. However, the text reveals the broader context of this statement - it is the origin of human communal settlement and "the search for all that is most enduring and universal in the human condition" that serves as the philosophical backdrop for the Festival of Dreaming as a commemoration of an archetypal form of civilisation both in Australia and other parts of the globe.

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[29]The Aboriginal actress Justine Saunders

> Our program of events in 1997 will commemorate not only the Australian Aboriginal heritage, with its traditional dance, song, story telling, painting and craft, but other indigenous cultures, especially those threatened - now or in the past - by conquest, imperialism, or the pressures of advancing industrial society. (SOBL, 1993f)

In a stark contrast to the Festival of Dreaming which celebrates the threatened indigenous cultures, the 1998 festival, A Sea Change commemorates "the story of exploration and immigration, humanity's search for new frontiers, its longing for freedom, its endless quest for new opportunities for material and spiritual fulfilment" (SOBL, 1993f) - a story that, as in Australia's case, in many ways represents the very threat to indigenous cultures; the processes of conquest, imperialism, and advancement of industrial society. Again, it is not the dominant Anglo Saxon settlement history on this continent that will be singled out for the celebration of this central aspect of Australian culture, but the diversity of the more recent phenomenon of multiculturalism.

> Australia, with a population drawn from no fewer than 140 nationalities, and with a rich seafaring tradition,..., will be a natural host for this celebration. (SOBL, 1993f)

The notion of mutliculturalism is also expressed in the visual imagery accompanying the text for 'A Sea Change': a group of Surf Life savers rowing in heavy sea featuring as backdrop with pictures of young ethnic Australians in (Southern European/South American) folkloric costumes superimposed. The 1999 festival 'Reaching the World' offers a continuation of the two leading motives dominating the national imagery conveyed in the cultural program for the Olympics: Australia's ethnic diversity and ancient indigenous culture - which are to be brought to the world in an extensive international touring program.

> They [the touring artists] will present the best and newest of Australia's creative and performing arts, interpreting the spirit of Australia and its evolving multicultural society, and giving emphasis to the work of Australia's Aboriginal artists and performers. (SOBL, 1993f)

The outline for the year 2000 festival "Harbour of Life" foresees a celebration of the 'variety of the world's cultures', commissioning artists from all over the globe to present performances and exhibitions in Sydney. Despite being a quintessentially international festival the text once more makes reference to the above mentioned 'official spirit of Australia':

> Taking its inspiration from the example of Sydney itself - where the principles of multicultural integration have been successfully adopted - the theme of Harbour of Life will be nothing less than the possibility of enduring human happiness and spiritual fulfilment in a world of contention, diversity and change

and further on

> Among the works presented will be ones by Australia's own artist and performers, including especially its indigenous people, whose timeless culture will provide a nexus with the past, a reminder of the distant origins of the human story and its endless process of renewal. (SOBL:1993f)

All in all, the cultural program is consistent with the main thrust of the bidding campaign stressing ethnic diversity and the indigenous culture as the two features most prominent and distinct of Australia's national identity - features that were utilised pragmatically by the

SOBL to differentiate and sell Australia's Bid in strong international competition. As Stevenson (1995:16) observes:

> Principally, the Sydney 2000 Cultural Olympiad is concerned with constructing and promoting images and representations of Australianness to assist the symbolic and material sale of the Games.

Undoubtedly, the cultural program contained a grand promise of identity, however, along with the rest of the rhetoric behind the Olympic Bid we have to bring forward the question to what extent Australians can benefit from the cultural program. Will "Harbour of Life" provide an opportunity for Australians to participate in and share this collective experience and ultimately will it help them to imagine themselves as a community? The Sydney Olympic Bid had aligned itself closely with the spirit of nationhood in its successful venture to bring the Games to Australia and there can be no doubt that the symbiosis between nation and the Sydney Olympics Bid worked advantageously for the latter. The following, concluding Chapter will reverse the angle of observation and focus on the position of the nation in the above allegiance. Having discussed the issues of identity, nation, the Olympics and the Australian experience as separate entities, I will now bring together the key findings of the previous Chapters in the central analysis of this thesis: what are the ramifications of the Olympic Bid/the Olympic Games on the current processes of reassessing nationhood?

6. The Legacy of the Olympic Bid

Almost three years have passed since Sydney was awarded the rights to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000. Much of the public hype that accompanied the bidding campaign and in particular the announcement of Sydney's successful candidature has waned and the international media attention surrounding the Olympic movement is focusing on the impending Games in Atlanta. The Sydney Olympic Bid Company has come and gone within two and a half years, a minute timespan compared with the longevity of its central protagonist, the imagined community of Australia. Today, the Olympic Bid has become part of the social history of this country and it has to be asked: what is its legacy and what are the conclusions that we can draw from the Olympic Bid experience in light of the forthcoming Sydney Olympic Games? I would like to stress again at this point that this thesis is not an inquiry into the Olympic Bid Company, it does not aim to pass a value judgement on the machinations that were put in place to gain the rights to host the Games in the year 2000. Rather, this thesis sets out to analyse the current debate of reassessing national identity in Australia with a particular view to the role of the Sydney Olympic Bid on this process. Has the Olympic Bid impacted on the way Australians see themselves as a nation, has it helped Australians, as the then Prime Minister Paul Keating suggested, imagine a "modern, strong, competitive and fair society" (SOBL,1993a:10)? If so, will the Olympic Games offer an even larger window of opportunity to set the bearings for Australia as a nation? Or do we have to discount the Olympic Bid and the forthcoming Games in Sydney as global media spectacles that in their superficiality can barely touch the fundamentals of Australian society as Booth and Tatz (1994:20) suggest.

> ..Whatever shadows or shudders of memories individuals retain from the Games, of the dramatic, beautiful, tearful, dastardly, mean or disdainful, or whatever the Olympics add to social history, they cannot change fundamental Australian economics, politics, sociology or anthropology; they are not a foundation on which a nation can build.

Arguably, behind the Olympic Bid's facade as a prolific marketing operation we can find a congruence of highly complex notions which I introduced in Chapters One to Three: the ideas of nation and identity, Australia's history as a nation and the nationalist construction of the Olympic Games. Any attempt to determine the relevance of the Olympic Bid in the nation building process will have to originate from the analysis of these three components, they set the parameters for my final argument.

6.1. The Olympic Bid - building the new Australia?

I have so far outlined the criteria delineating the process of nation building. We can now pose the question of how the Olympic Bid relates to this process in the Australian context. In light of my observations of the bidding campaign presented in the previous Chapter the argument lies close that, at least formally, the Olympic Bid met the requirements of a 'nation building' exercise: right from the beginning of Sydney's candidature the Bid was rendered synonymous with the 'spirit' of the Australian nation, in fact it adopted the very mechanics that I have described as the main components of nationhood. It developed its own visual iconography of Australianness, it had its own "hymn", it created opportunities for public spectacles and 'worship' and it ultimately created 'national heroes' that were honoured in public procession.[30] I have previously described the concept of nation as a phenomenon that is settled in the realms of imagination. The Olympic Bid largely operated on the level of imagination. The purpose of the bid was to gain the rights to stage the Olympic Games, an event that at the time of the announcement would take place seven years in the future. By no means could the project of the Sydney Games be considered a tangible entity. Even the technical aspects of hosting the Games, the infrastructure and sporting venues, were by and

[30] Following the announcement of Sydney's successful candidature, the SOBL team was publicly honoured in a tickertape parade through Sydney's central business district - an honour that, up to this point was exclusively reserved for victorious sporting delegations to international competitions.

large only existing as artists' impressions. Similarly, the visual imagery of Australian society conveyed during the Olympic Bid was an idealised version of nationhood characterised by inclusion and diversity, spiritual renewal and hope for a prosperous common future. Throughout the bidding campaign the prospect of a Sydney Olympic Games was to provide Australians with the opportunity to imagine themselves as a nation that was able to realise great achievements on both a technical and social level. Renan (1990) describes collective experience of having, enjoyed , hoped and in particular having suffered together as the unifying qualities a nation can build on. Undoubtedly, the bid engendered hope and ultimately offered occasions of joy, nevertheless, but were these occasions collective experiences? To what extent did Australians utilise this opportunity? Was the Olympic Bid indeed a nation wide phenomenonon or rather was it a localised, isolated event? Arguably it is difficult to quantify the national impact of the Olympic Bid without any research data from a country wide poll. Sydney was the undisputed centre of activities during the bidding period and as discussed in the previous Chapter, a Sydney based poll showed a high local approval rating of Sydney's candidature. If the national media response to Sydney's successful bid is taken as a guide for the national sentiment it appears that, as Darcy and Veal (1994) note, in the absence of criticism[31] there was, to say the least, nation-wide consent to and in many instances outright support for Sydney's quest for the Olympic Games. Media reports following the announcement of Sydney's successful candidature on the 24th of September 1993 can be described nothing less than euphoric:

> City united by Games fever; Its ours, Sydney wins - longest night explodes with joy (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1993:1) Fahey, Prime Minister vote unity for Games (*Australian*, 1993:1) We win, So Proud (*Telegraph Mirror*, 1993:1)

Under the headlines "Congratulations Australia" and " Olympic Spirit inspires nation" *The Australian* (25 Sep.1993:1) reported festivities across the country:

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[31]Arguably, Darcy and Veal concede that by the same token, the lack of criticism in the media led to a questioning of the independence of the media.

> The announcement from Monte Carlo triggered a series of celebrations which centered on Sydney but spanned the entire nation in the most joyous scenes since the Bicentennial and the America's Cup victory a decade ago....Political leaders yesterday revealed their hopes that Sydney's victory will transcend a sporting triumph to fuel a surge in Australian community confidence and provide a focus of national renewal after the debilitating recession of the early 1990s.

In the same edition of *The Australian* (1993:3), Gabrielle Chan gave her account of the Sydney based celebrations:

> John Williamson sang Waltzing Matilda as the collective feeling of pride welled in 50,000 people. The overwhelming sentiment was one of hope - after all the years of talk of the recession, unemployment, doom and gloom

Paddy McGuinness (1993:2) devoted his regular contribution to *The Australian* fully to the enthusiastic reception of Sydney's successful candidature.

> The best thing about the winning Sydney bid for the 2000 Olympics is the euphoria with which it has been greeted all over Australia...if this euphoria of the Olympics persists and is transformed, as I hope, into a general rise in national self confidence this will also spill over into the cultural and educational sphere.

In addition to the Olympics-inspired editorial in the above mentioned newspapers, full page advertisements offered reaffirmation of the Australian triumph. Among the most notable advertisements was a message by the federal government of New Zealand (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1993:24) With the words: "Go on Aussie Go on" New Zealand's Prime Minister

Jim Bolger offered his congratulations to the people of Sydney and Australia on behalf of the people of New Zealand. Similarly the Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett offered congratulations on behalf of Victoria in a full page advertisement in *the Australian* (1993:10) on the 25th of September: "Sydney, you're not the only ones with a hangover this morning: Congratulations from Victoria."

All in all the message conveyed by the media was one of national unity and pride signifying a departure into a new age of nationhood. Another indication of the Olympic Bid's aspirations as a 'national' venture can be found in the Federal Governments and in particular the then Prime Minister's close involvement throughout the bidding campaign. Arguably this involvement has to be interpreted as a government reaction to the Bid's potential as a catalyst for national, collective experience. As its patron, the then Prime Minister put the symbolic and financial weight of his status as the elected head of the Australian Federal Government behind the Bid, in fact, as I have mentioned previously, Prime Minister Keating explicitly reiterated on his vision of the bid's role as a nation building exercise when he pledged Commonwealth funding for the Bid. As I have discussed in Chapter One, the state expresses itself through the symbolic form of nation, it uses the nation as a powerful agent to exert loyalty and cohesion among its citizenry. The state and its three tiers of government were the main driving forces behind the Olympic Bid and particularly the Federal Government put great efforts into appropriating the bidding campaign for the discourse of nationhood highlighting the issues of identity and common purpose. As Huxley and North (1993:1) reported in the aftermath of the announcement of Sydney's successful candidature in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

> ...the Prime Minister acclaimed Sydney's successful Bid to stage the 2000 Olympics as a major step in Australia's search for a new international identity....."it is a defining decision that marks out the Australian nation as one that can carry the greatest international pageant of our times...we are there as a country in our own

> right, right on the brink of a new millennium, right on the edge of the centenary of our Federation.

Why was the Olympic Bid successful in mobilising the nation? Several factors can be identified, but, I would argue that the basis for the Bid's success has to be found in the combination of timing as the Bid was framed by an environment of change and heightened 'national' awareness, and the status of sport as a messenger that is ".. more easily understood by all social classes than are political, economic, or religious issues" (Leiper, 1988:333). The central theme of the Bid was the projection of sporting competition and Olympism as a life ideology that was a mirror image of the very "spirit of Australian nationhood" - dynamic, aspiring, competitive and fair. Despite being closely interwoven with a political context, Sydney's Bid was not marred by the polemics and infighting of opposing political parties (in fact it enjoyed bipartisan political support), it was not about bureaucracy, policies or academic critical inquiry. The bid delivered a streamlined, and no doubt idealised version of Australianness that did not carry the 'burden' of being restricted by the complex socio-political relationships inherent in Australian society. The meaning and sense of collectivity construed by the bid was not limited to membership of any particular class, religion, ethnic background, race, age or gender. Far more so it was based on the projection/possibility of a prosperous common future, a coming to fruition of a new model of nationhood: worldly, inclusive and diverse.

Another factor that has to be taken into account when explaining the enthusiasm surrounding the Olympic Bid was the quality and extent of the marketing campaign put in place to nurture community support. Sanctioned by federal, state and local governments and carried virtually without critical reflection by the media, the Olympic Bid dispatched a message of national urgency: the Olympic Games would deliver Australia into a new age of prosperity and international prestige. The role of the media in this process was crucial. As I have discussed in Chapter One, the convergence of print-capitalism (Anderson, 1983:49) was a vital prerequisite for the development of the concept of nation, providing the means

for the dissemination of standardised value systems. By enlisting the main representatives of the print and audio-visual media organisations in the bidding campaign (through representation on advisory committees as well as through the corporate support program) gained a powerful ally that could transform a local venture into a national project.

The extent of how deeply the message of 'national urgency' penetrated into the diverse strata of Australian society was reminiscent of a war like situation of general mobilisation. The Olympic Bid was able to draw on literally every 'national' resource required to advance its stance against the rival bidding cities and as a consequence during its course it brought together a wide spectrum of Australian society as unlikely allies. Both the Federal Labor Government as well as the State Liberal-National Coalition Government pledged bipartisan support for the Bid. A fact that was reiterated by the then Prime Minister and reported by *The Australian* newspaper (1993a:1) on the 28th of September under the headline "Fahey, PM vote unity for Games"

> The Bid was a great effort between all levels of government and sectors of the community and this Government will continue to work co-operatively with the NSW Government in the many things that will have to be done between now and the year 2000.

Environmental groups such as Greenpeace and the Australian Conservation Foundation endorsed the Olympic Bid and provided the SOBL with expertise on environmental matters, particularly for the construction of Olympic venues. Aboriginal community organisations pledged their support for Sydney's Bid . High profile representatives of Australia's Aboriginal communities such as Charlie Perkins, Cathy Freeman and Mandawuy Yunupingu lent their support to the Bid for both national and international promotions and lobbying efforts. Ethnic community organisations were involved in the lobbying process of IOC members particularly during their visits to Sydney. In this context Stepan Kerkyasharian,

Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales, proclaimed after the announcement of Sydney's successful candidature that immigrant communities represented Sydney's "secret weapon" (Ferrari: 1993:4). He further encouraged "members of our communities to do their best to see that the Sydney Games are the best". More than 300 companies across Australia pledged financial or in-kind support for the bidding campaign. The union movement, as discussed in the previous Chapter, postponed industrial action which was threatening to damage the chances of the Olympic Bid. In the aftermath of the host city announcement the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), Martin Ferguson (Ferrari, 1993:4) renewed a pledge for industrial harmony for Sydney's Olympic venture on behalf of the trade union movement.

Arguably, it is also in this context of 'national urgency' that the lack of criticism of the Olympic Bid can be explained. The absence of criticism was due less to an informed affirmative public assessment of the possible merits of the Olympic Games than to the bipartisan political and media support which was based on the status of the Bid as a project of national importance - to criticise the relevance of the bid in this context would have meant to put in question the very identity of the nation.

The Olympic Bid was conducted with the precision of a military style operation, every move was carefully planned and executed, nothing was left to chance. Far from the Olympic ideology of peaceful co-operation between nations, the Olympic Bid represented a fierce international contest, a measurement of Australia's capabilities and achievements on a global scale. The prize to be gained, the right to host the Olympic Games, was the most prestigious opportunity for a nation to promote - above anything else - itself. The main thrust of the Bid was to differentiate Sydney from its opponents which was largely done on a cultural level[32].

32This is not to say that matters on technical and financial infrastructure did not play an important factor within the bidding process. In fact the SOBL put great efforts into presenting a technically competent masterplan for the Olympic Games, however, it was to be expected that (at least) both Manchester and Berlin would possess the technical expertise

Sydney and Australia were to be portrayed as young dynamic and colourful with Multiculturalism and the indigenous culture presented and put to work as the two most prominent features unique to contemporary Australian society. This act was connected with a certain degree of risk as to how much ethnic and indigenous Australians were to embrace the promotional rhetoric on Australian society within the bidding campaign. Consequently the Sydney Olympic Bid in many ways became a test of this latest version of Australian identity. Was Multiculturalism and Reconciliation with the indigenous people to withstand scrutiny in the international arena (and in particular the scrutiny that was to be expected from the media of the rival bidding countries)? And how would ethnic and Aboriginal Australians fare within the bidding process: were they merely "extras" in someone else's grand project or would they be able to claim full membership in the collective experience of national pride that evolved out of the Bid? Arguably both points of view deserve consideration. On one hand ethnic and Aboriginal groups became active parts of the bidding campaign, they were involved in high level lobbying of IOC members as well as providing community support on a local level. On the other hand it has to be acknowledged that Australians of diverse cultural backgrounds and Aborigines (as well as women) were underrepresented at the top decision making level and that the relationship between representatives of the Aboriginal community and the SOBL was at times strained and characterised by an aura of practicality rather than equality and co-operation - as demonstrated by the previously discussed controversy surrounding Charlie Perkins premature departure from Lausanne where he was to brief IOC members about Sydney's cultural program.

Nevertheless, on the larger scale in the international arena Sydney's Bid was able to be presented as a cohesive and united image of Australian society. Equally there was no criticism brought forward addressing race relations in Australia by the international community. Understandably, as a comparison of the history and present status of race

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and financial means required to stage Olympic Games - hence differentiation had to occur mainly through cultural criteria.

relations within rival bidding cities was pointing favourably towards Australia. Berlin's bid had to battle the legacies of the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany as well as the recent racial violence against immigrants in Germany, Beijing's bid was marred by continuous human rights violations in China, Istanbul's bid had to cope with images of the violent history of modern Turkey where the genocide of Armenians at the turn of the century and most recently the prosecution of the Kurdish minority presented ongoing problems. When IOC president Samaranch announced "The winner is Sydney" in many ways it signified a positive appraisal for the Australian model of cultural diversity and it was relayed through the media to 'mainstream' Australia as a model of nationhood that not only withstood the comparison in the global arena but that in fact it was by far the most progressive and successful amongst the bidding countries. While multiculturalism and the process of reconciliation by no means can be considered 'completed projects', the Olympic Bid arguably has given indigenous and ethnic Australians grounds on which to claim membership in Australian society. In fact both multiculturalism and the indigenous culture have become a dominant feature of differentiation ("a young and diverse society" and the "home to an ancient culture") for Australianness within the international community. Returning to my initial question that I set out with in the introduction of this thesis "did the Olympic Bid impact on the way Australians see themselves as a nation?" I would argue that, in light of my research, the answer is affirmative. I do not claim however that the Olympic Bid resolved the disparities of living conditions and social and economic opportunities inherent in Australian society. Far more the role of the Bid in the nation building process has to be located on a level of symbolic representation. It gave a vital impetus for a new model of nationhood by validating it within the international community in turn allowing Australians to imagine themselves as part of a proud and aspiring nation. How deeply ownership of this 'nation building' experience penetrates into Australia's collective memory may however ultimately hinge on the extent to which these opportunities were perceived as controlled and fabricated. As Wamsley & Heine (1993:81) suggest in their analysis of the impact of the Calgary games:

> ...the boundaries of cultural experience - or opportunities for finding an identity - had been delineated by organisers, federal, provincial, and local politicians, and through the distributed ideologies of the Olympic movement in the years leading up to the games. Similar to what Bennett suggests for Expo 88 and the people of Brisbane, citizens of Calgary were 'rehearsing new consumption codes in a custom-built environment.'

The Sydney Bid has given a grand promise to provide opportunities for finding (national) identity most evidently stated in the outline of the cultural program in the lead up to the Games. The challenge for the Olympic Games Organising Committee will be to transform these opportunities, as Anderson (1983) suggests, into acts of imagination of community. Whatever the outcome, though, we have to be aware that the Olympics inspired nationalist sentiment appears to be a phenomenon of temporary nature. As effective as Olympism and sport are in nurturing national pride, these effects can be short lived. A fact that the two governments responsible for bringing the Olympic Games to Australia have already experienced. From a political perspective the Olympic Bid did not bring any long term advantages or benefits for the governments involved: both the Federal Labor Government as well as the State Liberal Government were voted out of office in elections following the announcement of Sydney's successful candidature (in March 1996 and March 1995 respectively). The personal association of both the Prime Minister and the NSW Premier with the Bid were evidently not sufficient to sustain their position of power. The example of past Olympic host cities further underpins that hosting the Games is not a guaranteed recipe for eternal social cohesion, common purpose and peaceful co-operation within a nation.

> Even events in recent host countries and cities have failed to debunk de Coubertin's idea [of Olympism inspired peace and harmony]: disintegration of the Soviet Union, an attempted coup in Russia, insurrection in Moscow, race riots in Los Angeles, war in Sarajevo, bloody student demonstrations in Seoul, and secessionist politics in Spain...(Booth&Tatz,1994:3)

Arguably, it may depend on the size of the gap between idealised projections of social conditions relayed through the Olympic experience and social realities prevalent as to how much a nation state can capitalise, however temporarily, on the "glory" of hosting Olympic Games. Like the ANZAC legend before, the Olympic Bid and the Olympic Games will not be able to fix or reinvent one particular version and sentiment of Australianness in an outburst of national pride simply because it is an impossible undertaking. The ANZAC campaign in Gallipoli did not invent the Australian type, rather, it provided confirmation for a set of 'national' characteristics, a sense of nationhood that in its geographic isolation did not have any point of reference beyond the relationship of inferiority and dominance with Great Britain. The process of reinventing Australia is again taking place in a climate of exposure towards the 'other'. The Olympic Bid did not invent cultural diversity, however it gave symbolic impetus to this most recent model of Australian nationhood. The nation is organic and it is bound to a historic context. It is the product of collective experience. Today's experiences are history tomorrow. In this process, a nation accumulates a wealth of experiences which result in particular characteristics and variations of identity. During this process, the state is confronted with the task to make choices as to which characteristics to perpetuate and which to abandon. There is no such thing as a neutral or even natural version of nationhood. Every form of national identity is a product of human fabrication and, as such, will always and inevitably reflect a particular social context. This context arises out of a particular set of morals, ethics and relationships of power. The Olympic Bid and even more so the upcoming Olympic Games have to be considered as effective tools in the process of addressing nationhood. However they are merely channels of communication. It is the fabric and depth of the content that is disseminated through these channels that determines their effectiveness in the nation building process.

7. Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to examine the popular conception surrounding Sydney's successful candidature that the winner in the contest to stage the Olympic Games in the year 2000 was in fact Australia. Undoubtedly, behind the Sydney Olympic Bid's facade as a gigantic marketing exercise lies a multitude of highly complex issues none more prominent though than the debate on national identity. This thesis aimed to identify the discourses that frame the concept of nationhood and consequently to assess the possible impact of Sydney's Olympic Bid on the process of defining Australian nationhood.

The initial question to guide my research was to analyse what exactly is the omnipresent concept of nation, what are its foundations and what or who can impact on them. The concept of nationhood was the common thread running as a central theme through the previous Chapters. I have set out to remove the debate on nationhood from any value judgement, and initially isolated it from its most prolific appropriated form - the state. Arguably, the most difficult aspect in the process of defining nation is that it does not adhere to any 'exact' terms of reference or measurements, it does not abide by "natural laws" and there are no clearly defined demarcations of where a nation starts and ends. Whereas geographic/political boundaries are factors in defining a nation they are only part of the various dimensions of the discourse on nationhood, others including class, religion, ethnicity and common heritage. In isolating the concept of nation from its appropriated forms, my research led me to the conclusion that the central thrust of nation lies beyond physical and tangible manifestation, it is settled in the realm of imagination. As Anderson (1983) observes the nation is an imagined community, a spiritual principle (Renan, 1990) that, although evidently of human fabrication, operates on a quasi religious level. It implies a meta discourse, a sense of continuity and eternity, it shares the centrality of death and regeneration with religious observation. The concept of nation is a form of worship (Gellner, 1983) centred upon subjectivity and identity. The concepts of nation and subjectivity are inseparably fused, they are both products of what has become known as Modernity. They

both share the centrality of identity as philosophical foundations. The elevation of the subject through Enlightenment Thought has brought with it the great promise of identity. In turn the nation evolved as a socio political formation that is moulded around this promise of identity. In a secularised world the nation provides a quasi religious form of belief or spiritual principle - a powerful collective identity for the subject. The nation is first and foremost an act of imagination within the realms of subjectivity. It emanates a sense of continuity and purpose through glorification of the past and projections of collective future. It is nurtured by the mechanics of worship.

It is difficult to discuss the concept of nation as an autonomous, value free phenomenon as it is always bound to other discourses such as race, religion and ethnicity and most prolifically, the state. The nation is the symbolic form the state expresses itself through and exerts loyalty from its subjects. The state sanctions and perpetuates versions of nationhood in a process of inclusion and exclusion - National identity is not the sum of the entire diversity of cultural identities inherent in a bounded territory but an exclusive version thereof. Also, the concept of national identity presupposes the existence of other nations beyond the boundaries of a nation - it requires the context of the 'other' to make sense of itself.

My next step of inquiry in this thesis was to apply the theoretical framework of nationhood to the Australian context. How has Australian identity been defined historically and what are the parameters that delineate the current debate on redefining Australianness? Arguably, Australia's development as a nation is equally brief as it is complex. As an offspring of a colonial power Australia's development as a nation was, for the most part of its history, overshadowed by the cultural dominance of Great Britain as the measurement of all "civilisation", consequently hampering the emergence of an autonomous Australian identity. The lack of generational continuity as well as the absence of a 'grand heroic past' further inhibited the rise of nationalism in Australia. As a migrant nation, Australia experienced an ever accelerating diversification of its population base through immigration rendering it increasingly difficult to inspire an imagined community through a concept that presupposes a

past that relates to only part of the population. Another factor in the slow development of Australian nationhood can be found in Australia's geographic isolation, the lack of immediate neighbours that combined with the cultural dominance of Great Britain resulted in a limited growth of national sentiment within Australia. For most part of its history Australia boasted little autonomous stance in the global community which in turn reduced the opportunities to communicate itself as a nation to other nations and ultimately to itself. Not only does Australia feature a slow growth of nationalist sentiment but it is equally difficult to clearly demarcate what exactly is Australian or what version of Australianness captures 'the true spirit' of the country better than others. In fact, if any one central feature of Australianness had to be isolated it would have to be the frequency of change and contradictory nature that characterises Australian nationhood. Australia's history vividly demonstrates how radically the process of inclusion and exclusion can be inverted in the process of assessing national identity. At the time of Australian Federation Aboriginality was denied any acknowledgement within the 'national character', in the 1990s Aboriginality has become an outstanding and unique feature of Australianness (at least in the process of differentiating Australia within the global community). Reconciliation with the indigenous people has become a project of national importance. Similarly, the turn of the century was marked by an Australian "type", a racially pure citizenry derived from British stock. Since the 1970s the opposite has been the case and cultural diversity has become the dominant discourse of nationhood. The myth of the land outlived its attraction for the formation of Australianness by the 1950s when it was replaced by a radical push towards an imagery of a sophisticated (sub)urbanised culture. The 'all inclusive' Australian life style ideology of assimilation which was dominant in the fifties and sixties was abandoned in favour of a multicultural society by the 1970s. Which of these versions is the 'truly Australian' version? Whatever version is adopted, it is certain to be one of contradictions and subject to interpretation from a particular ideological view. Even the much quoted national characteristics (rooted in Australia's pioneering days of the hardy bushmen) of 'easy going, fun loving, giving everybody a fair go' are, to say the least, ambiguous statements on the 'true national character' considering that they were established in a time that was not only characterised by romantic notions of the mild mannered digger, but also by violent racism

and genocide towards the indigenous people. Ironically, the act of defining Australia has largely taken place in the global arena: the concept of the 'Australian type' was only validated as 'worthy' as much as it was identified as such in exposure to the international community. The current efforts to reinvent Australia are again taking place in a climate of exposure towards the 'other'. Arguably, the process of self identification as a nation is dependent on the availability of transnational means of communication hence ultimately the new bearings of Australian nationhood will be set on the international stage. Multiculturalism and Reconciliation are being projected to the world by consecutive governments (and particularly the Keating Labor Federal Government) as features of differentiation of Australianness within an increasingly 'globalised' international community. It lies within this context of communicating national identity through transnational vehicles that I located the main focus of this thesis. Consequently in Chapter Three I set out to examine the status of the Olympic Games as a transnational forum of national interests. My aim was to provide answers to the questions: What are the structural and ideological characteristics within the Olympic Games that make them such an attractive proposition for nation states and what has been the role of nation states in the brief history of the modern Olympic Games?

The concept of nation and the development of the Olympic movement are closely interwoven, indeed they are both products of Enlightenment philosophy. The resurrection of the ancient tradition of Olympic Games was a direct consequence of the emergence of nation states. Olympic ideology demarcates the Games as a tool to foster international co-operation and good will and consequently the Games are structurally and ideologically geared towards the participation of nations rather than individuals. The Olympic Games are delineated by a series of ceremonies and rites that frame the sporting competitions which are the central messenger of Olympic ideology which foresees the promotion of sport as a means to disseminate universal moral virtues. However it lies within the symbolic representations of the ceremonies and rites that the national rather than an international element is accentuated: featuring the 'paraphernalia' of nationhood such as national flags and anthems, and

promoting the victorious athlete as national hero and mirror of national achievement. The Olympic movement and nation states are engaged in a symbiotic relationship: the Olympic Movement strives for global participation and consequently it needs to attract nation states by providing them with opportunities to communicate their national identities. Aided by the increasing world-wide interconnection through media technologies, the Olympic Games have become a global forum of communication and cultural differentiation. The opportunity for national self promotion is further heightened for the host nation. The staging of the Games requires a gigantic financial and logistic planning exercise and its successful realisation is widely considered a reflection of a country's capabilities and achievements. In addition, the Olympic Games present the host nation with a showcase of its national culture, most prominently in the form of the opening ceremony and the (obligatory) cultural program complementing the sporting competitions. Arguably, there are no neutral or supranational Olympic Games, quite the contrary, Olympic Games since their inception have not only featured a local, national flavour of its host country, but for most part have borne witness to expressions of national interests as vehicles of foreign policy.

The inseparable relationship of nation-state and Olympic Games also formed the central argument in the next Chapter by applying it to the context of Sydney's Olympic Bid. As an empirical study Chapter Five aimed to identify the key protagonists of Sydney's Bid and to expose the structural and ideological foundations put in place to mobilise the nation in the quest for the right to host the Olympic Games. The key findings of this empirical study in many ways mirror the key notions introduced in earlier Chapters: the concept of nation as a spiritual principle - the Bid was rendered synonymous with both the Olympic spirit and the spirit of Australia as a nation most prolifically signified by the 'share the spirit' theme that dominated the promotional campaign. The crucial role of the state in the process of defining nationhood - the Olympic Bid was conceived, underwritten and sanctioned by various governments with the federal government taking a leading role in promoting the initially localised event of Sydney's Bid into a national cause. The idea of collective experience as the basis of nationhood - the Olympic Bid attracted the support and facilitated the active

involvement of large sections of the public and provided spaces and opportunities such as the announcement celebrations for the creation of collective identity. The nature of nationhood as a phenomenon of human fabrication - the surge in national sentiment and public support throughout the bidding process was not a natural occurrence, it was carefully nurtured by a national promotional campaign that was carried enthusiastically by the media and in some instances such as the school program, outrightly manufactured. The Olympic Bid also utilised the mechanics of worship that characterise and perpetuate the concept of nationhood such as a distinct visual identity (logo/flag), heroic anthem, personification of achievement - cult of heroism; the role of cultural/national identity as a factor of differentiation in an increasingly 'globalised' world - the Olympic Bid accentuated Australian national characteristics and particularities as a key strategy in its promotional campaign. In fact the Olympic Bid conveyed the Australian version of multiculturalism as a role model of nationhood for the twenty-first century. In addition to cultural diversity Australia's Aboriginal heritage was portrayed as a unique feature of the Australian nation. Consequently multiculturalism and indigenous culture are the dominating themes in the cultural program 'Harbour of Life' that will complement the Sydney Olympic Games; the role of the other in the process defining the self. The impact of the Olympic Bid can only be explained by its focus on the international arena. The Bid signified a contest of the Australian nation with other 'great' nations and consequently its success reflected as an achievement of national proportions.

Did the Olympic Bid impact on the process of defining nationhood in Australia? The research carried out in this thesis has led me to the conclusion that this question has to be answered affirmatively. However, the Bid's impact has to be seen within the limitations and contradictions inherent in the concept of nationhood itself. The nation is settled in the realms of subjectivity, it is first and foremost an act of imagination, it does not represent or address the full complexity and diversity of social realities. The nation is an idealised form of collective identity that, although it presupposes continuity/eternity, is in a state of constant fluctuation and change. The Olympic Bid has given, at least temporarily, a vital impetus to

the notions of multiculturalism and reconciliation by validating them as national characteristics/achievements in the international arena. The Olympic Bid has not however fundamentally changed Australian society nor has it eradicated disparities in life opportunities delineated by membership of class or race. First and foremost the Olympic Bid has given a grand promise of a collective identity that is based on an all inclusive membership and it operated predominantly through projections of an idealised future. It remains to be seen if the Olympic Games can indeed deliver Australians into a new age of nationhood.

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