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Uncovering Transgression in the Textiles Collection of the National Army Museum Te Mata Toa

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Abstract

This research centres on the textiles collection of the National Army Museum Te Mata Toa (NAM) which encompasses military clothing and associated items, holding examples from the New Zealand Wars of the 19th century to the present. The collection overall is visually conventional and male-centric with a noticeably lower proportion of women-related textiles, these mainly comprising World War II nursing and other service uniforms, such as those of the Women's Land Service. The Museum's displays reflect this understated female narrative.

The intention of my research was to question whether a patriarchal view has caused women-related garments in NAM's textiles holding to be overlooked, resulting in less focus on collecting and researching these textiles. Despite their layered social history contributions being directly related to New Zealand's military life, had a lack of professional training and best practice knowledge adversely affected the textiles collection?

To consider the question I have applied Laura Mulvey's "male gaze" theory of filmic spectatorship (ways of viewing) to the museum textiles context. The theory argues that whereas men are positioned as protagonists and spectators, actively controlling narratives and events, women are peripheral, dependent, the spectated upon. However, women are also transgressive, capable of disturbing a male world view (Mulvey, 1975, p.18). Applying this theme to textiles appeared logical as I noticed non-conventional or aberrant female-related objects emerging during curatorial work.

Three dissonant objects, purposefully selected, are the focus of a qualitative research framework using case studies within a specifically NAM context. Examples from the uniforms, souvenirs and comforts categories follow the prescribed steps of Jules David Prown's material culture method (1982) for framing the case studies, and semi-structured interviews were also conducted.

The findings reveal that collecting habits have caused a lesser female narrative in the textiles collection, despite the case study objects' ability to evoke strong feelings and memories. Through the practices undertaken in relationship to objects themselves, the research also makes a case for systematic application of material culture studies frameworks to collection management and collection research.

Acknowledgements

Without donors' generous responses to the call for military-related items to build a national collection, amid a sense of urgency while collective memory was fresh, the National Army Museum Te Mata Toa may not exist. So I thank all donors who have seen this institution as the best place for their and their relatives' experiences, memories and objects to be kept.

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Abbreviations

AFM – Air Force Museum (Royal New Zealand Air Force Museum)

ANZUS – The Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty

GLAM (sector) – Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums (sector)

J-Force/ Jay Force (and other variations) – name of the NZ military presence in Japan post-WWII

LGBT+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans+ gender identifiers

NAM – National Army Museum Te Mata Toa (QEII Army Memorial Museum)

NLF – National Liberation Front, formed 1960 by North Vietnam

NZ – New Zealand

NZANS – New Zealand Army Nursing Service

NZDF – New Zealand Defence Force

NZEF – New Zealand Expeditionary Force

PoW – Prisoner/s of War

SEATO – South East Asia Treaty Organisation

6NZGH – 6 New Zealand General Hospital

RNZNC – Royal New Zealand Nursing Corps

6NZGH – 6 New Zealand General Hospital

U.K. – United Kingdom

WRNZNS – Women's Royal New Zealand Naval Service

WWI – World War One/First World War

WWII – World War Two/Second World War

VC – Viet Cong (the military arm of the National Liberation Front) (Russell, 1983, p. 3)

Part 1

Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Beginnings

The words *Dominion Museum* sum up Sunday afternoons of utter fascination for me who always asked to be taken to this other world entered through mysterious round, compartmented doors. If quick enough I would be let out to the mosaic floored imaginarium, or if not, swept back outside, exhilarated and ready to take my chance again.

Once inside, I felt peacefully enveloped within the whare to gaze at scrolling decorations and mysterious, massive pou, I walked seemingly for ages along the length of the waka taua, reacted fearfully to ko iwi, was fascinated by animal and bird scenes. Then the colonial clothing displays utterly captivated and transported me, engaging all my senses.

1.2 Development

Decades later my museum career led me to work in a different iteration of the same building, before the National Army Museum (NAM) textiles department became my professional dwelling place, and locus of this dissertation.

Having worked at social history based museums and historic homes, here was a new world of militarism with a collection of over 10,000 textiles objects and an overwhelming sense of masculinity. This was conveyed through exhibition and collection – story after story of male deeds and rank upon rank of male-related clothing.

1.3 Questioning the Status Quo

My collection management experience said that of course, as in all history museums, there would be a strong female component, if not of the ubiquitous christening gowns or Queen Victoria's bloomers, then of something else distinctively feminine. I certainly saw Army and Volunteer Aid Detachment (VAD) nursing uniforms, Land Girls' brown uniforms, some officers' mess (evening) dresses, jackets, skirts, cardigans and so on, although occupying only a few storage bays rather than the numerous racks of male garb. Clearly a male narrative was present, a female one muted. A male narrative was present, a female one absent in the collection and muted in the museum's displays. There appeared to have been a patriarchal curatorial exercise maintained for the valorisation of male deeds to find their expression in "permanent" displays throughout the museum. Even given that this is a national military collection the imbalance was clear – the textiles holding explicates male service and valour .

Therefore, I began to question the collection's status quo in terms of its prevailing maleness and professional practice. If the national story states that women had served in a nursing capacity, as part of the Land Army and in many other roles in wartime, why then were such narrative-bearing textiles relating to service overseas and in New Zealand not sufficiently strongly represented in NAM's collection?

1.4 The Research Question

The situation indicated that a patriarchal overview had prevailed in the gathering of the Museum's textiles, and my research direction was to establish whether that view had resulted in a lesser focus on collecting and researching woman-related textiles.

Unexpectedly, this became a feminist issue, leading to my decision to apply to my question the filmic theory of American feminist and academic Laura Mulvey, writing of male gazing or spectatorship. This complex theory asserts that men are active controllers of the look (Mulvey, 1975, p.810), holding the power to spectate, especially upon women. Male roles are as protagonists controlling narrative and action, while women are dependent, passive, the spectated upon. Mulvey (1975, p.18) states, however, that women are also capable of subverting that male world view, and this aligned to my belief that illuminating aberrant female-related textiles would point up the otherwise conventional and male-controlled textiles holding.

1.5 Research Design

To write a research project examining the situation by quantifying the holdings would be insufficient although telling, as would merely selecting objects from the three main sections of the textiles holding – uniforms, souvenirs and comforts. However, highlighting three female-related objects from within these otherwise conventional groups to defy the norm would emphasise the fact that "even" woman-related items had extraordinary stories worth exploration. The research would justify the objects' presence in the collection since the objects would assert themselves against the male worldview.

Although Mulvey's spectatorship theory was originally based on Freudian psychoanalysis and the male gaze as applied to Hollywood cinematic "patterns of fascination" (Mulvey, 1975, p.6) the format of this research does not allow analysis of these two very extensive factors.

1.5.1 Qualitative Research

To demonstrate that subversion illuminates norms, I chose to base my research on a qualitative method of enquiry. According to Sumner (2006) qualitative research features subjective investigation into how humans view the world, while placing particular importance on the contextual aspects of the study. The method is based on various philosophies and theories including cultural studies and feminism, and it makes allowances for meaning and interpretation of social history (p.2). Focussing on multiple cases to confirm or question the findings, and on the analysis of diverse cases, this type of case study design will determine whether the findings are confirmed or "called into question" (Sumner, 2006, p.3).

The subjectivity of the meanings of clothing, and memory and absence suited the research in the context of NAM's textiles collection. Most importantly, exploring the theory of the male gaze as a feminist construct and its application in this context, would lead me to answering the research question.

My work involved researching the collection, its background and later processes; describing NAM's own view of the national Army story; conducting and recording a semi-structured interview recording a long-standing NAM staff member about the Museum's textiles collection.

My original intention was to compare the Army, Navy and Air Force Museums' textiles collections, and accordingly I conducted two other semi-structured interviews with those curators. However, this research evolved in a different direction, with the information gathered through interview no longer required.

The project's research also encompassed New Zealand's involvement in theatres of war and war aftermath; I observed how visitors move in the Roimata Pounamu, Tears on Greenstone memorial, I consulted studies on the meanings of colour, and I ventured along other unexpected pathways. I have also referred to literature on topics such as memory-making in museums, clothing signifiers, museum collections, military museums, social history and the New Zealand Defence Force, among others.

For this research, I applied for and received Low Risk Approval from Massey University Human Ethics Committee, application approval no. 4000021857.

1.5.2 Research Report Focus

The report takes as its focus three objects, one from each of the conventional categories of souvenirs, comforts and uniforms. I chose these because they are the largest groups of the female-related holdings, and therefore where subversion would be most obvious. Although the category of "uniform" appears conventional and self-explanatory, one section named "Foreign Uniforms" seemed to me to be provocatively "other", providing a garment full of narrative and embodying an aspect of NZ's late 20th century history.

If the category of "uniforms" is clear, "souvenirs" is not, because they are usually associated with objects being sent home from foreign parts by servicemen to loved ones. The example I found among several hundred, was a complete reversal of this tradition, and upset the conventional outlook.

Similarly, in terms of comforts, these are most often associated with fabric packages containing small necessities to help in various situations, such as darning a worn-out sock. The comfort I chose from well over 100 examples, again, reversed the convention of creation by a woman for a man.

The three objects chosen, I then decided to examine within a case study format which, according to Chris Hart's definition (2005, p.327) provides for detailed explanation and illumination of a single case within a context.

I decided to choose the case study format to highlight three items from a specific collection which, in conjunction with the chosen framework, would establish boundaries yet enable flexibility. In this way, what was not known about the objects would still agree with Bloomberg's definition of case studies and the characteristics of them. Crucially, this format would offer "insights into social life" (Bloomberg, 2018, pp.1-5) and could incorporate an empathetic dimension to the material culture enquiry.

1.5.3 The Material Culture Studies Framework

For the case study results I wanted to uncover, I considered two material culture investigative frameworks. The first, written by E. McClung Fleming (1974) appeared over-complicated and clinical.

I selected Jules David Prown's framework (1982) as it offered a comparative simplicity and an imaginative freedom available in the speculation step. I found that the deduction and

speculation steps allowed for considering that absences, such as provenance, also have a role when deciphering an object to reveal its inherent details about the three chosen objects. This flexibility assists in data collection for case study structures (Bloomberg, 2018, p.2).

In addition, Prown offers empathy with objects through detailed looking to complete the description step, and gazing is at the root of Mulvey's theory. Prown's framework was therefore apposite for my research.

1.6 The Male Gaze Theory

In the 1970s, the decade in which the Army's collection became The Queen Elizabeth II Army Museum, Laura Mulvey was theorising the existence of a "male gaze" (Mulvey, 1975, in Mulvey, 1989, p.14).

Mulvey's theory is insightful. It is anchored in the filmic, therefore the visual, and models spectatorship (male, active), and spectatorship's links to the oppression of women (passive, the spectated upon). This gaze selectively orders and understands the world (Mulvey, 2001, p.5) subjecting female sexuality to outside control (the inability to prevent such gazing). Mulvey named this control "the politics of the body" (Mulvey, 2017, p.385).

The theory can make the leap from film to textiles collection because gendered, objectifying curatorial gazing overlays this collection, which is literally visible through the disparity in the male/female holdings. It is as though, when viewing NAM'S textiles collection, there is a private world of maleness (Mulvey, 1975, p.60), one where "woman stands in patriarchal culture *as signifier for the male other*" (my emphasis). Yet, crucially, in both the textiles holding and in a film narrative, the unpredictable (non-normative) woman bursts through illusion (the normative) and is thereby a signifier of transgression (Mulvey, 1975, p.18). The non-normative within a conformist collection was what I was seeking, and so to find these, I considered the three categories where there was strong female representation – uniforms, souvenirs and comforts – to ascertain the non-normal.

1.6.1 The Male Gaze and Museums

As a 1970s feminist, Mulvey politicised the psychoanalytically-based Freudian theory of scopophilia in her work *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey, 1975). Mulvey's understanding of Freud's definition of scopophilia, as explained in her paper, can be thought of as pleasure in looking at a person as though they were an object, thereby "subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" (Mulvey, 1975, p.806). In the performative space, for

example a darkened cinema, such objective gazing occurs as the film unravels, where the female has no ability to control possessive spectatorship either from the audience or a protagonist male (Mulvey, 2017, p.386).

Mulvey's theory actually proposed three categories of gaze: that of a film's male characters, that of the camera and that of the spectating audience. The universality of the theory does affirm the fact that the female body was and still is the site of political struggle and oppression (Mulvey, 2017, p.385).

In a museum setting, feminist museologist Hilde Hein criticises prevailing "masculinist" philosophies while discussing several sites of feminist vindication in museums. She writes that "masculinist theory denies humanity and thus philosophical relevance to more than half the human race" (Hein, 2010, p.54). The lack of such relevance is evident in NAM's textiles collection through the quantity of male uniforms to female, and lack of a female perspective in displays.

Hein also makes the point that feminist theory in museums allows for more empathetic and contextual interaction, permitting "disruptions of ordinary circumstances that undermine the determination to simplify and celebrate" (Hein, 2010, p.55). This resonates with Mulvey's "bursting through" of female activity in counterpoint to male control (1975, p.18) and is the point which I wish to make through the selection of three female-related textiles objects in an otherwise conventional collection highlighting and privileging male patriotism and valour.

1.6.2 Limitations and Applications

In a later interview, Mulvey contemplated the limitations of her male gaze theory, such as its emphasis on binary genders (Mulvey, 2017, p.386); even so, the theory accommodates many other applications. Among these are its inversion by Maurice Patterson and Richard Elliott, researchers of consumerism and brand advertising, and who consider that the interest in men's lifestyle magazines force men to regard their own gender's bodies, rather than women's (Patterson and Elliott, 2002, abstract).

The male gaze theory is also applied to research by Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan whose 2000 study looks at gender relations relative to tourism. In applying the theory to tourism images and tourism experiences, they concluded that the language of tourism promotion is patriarchal, producing a privileged male heterosexual gaze (Pritchard and Morgan, 2000, p.1). Given that museums are among other things tourist attractions, according to Andrew Cardow

and Alastair Emerson (2007, p.2), it is arguable that NAM's displays do the same by producing idealised highlighting of masculinity for a male heterosexual spectatorship, by utilising the textiles collection.

Laura Ramos offers another perspective in her doctoral thesis (2016, p.2) which is "focused on the feminist curatorial project as an intervention in museums" (Ramos, 2016, p. 191). Believing that for a curatorial feminist voice to be heard, Ramos writes that museum hierarchies must be challenged from within, rather than merely to publish criticisms of museums that simply display women's work, or to collect the output of women's art. Carol Malt asserts that feminist principles and curatorship must be incorporated into exhibitions, interpretation and education, among other museum functions (Malt, 2010, p.47).

As these examples show, Mulvey's male gaze theory is politically based and nothing if not flexible. It appeals because the theory's gendered and universal truths feel accurate, reliable and suitable as a basis for my own work in a museum environment.

1.7 Definition of Politics

If, as Mulvey believed, the female body was the site of political struggle (2016, p.385), how to appropriately define "politics"? Research Professor in Political Science, Andy Smith, defines it as "activity to modify or maintain institutions that either mobilizes values explicitly, or seeks to silence them" (Smith, 2016, p.9) confirming the visually obvious in NAM's textiles collection. Politics and the male gaze have coalesced to silence or outvoice women, resulting, in NAM's case, in less targeted collecting, less research into female-related textiles and therefore less use in displays interpreting women's military or social contribution and experience.

1.8 Women in Museums

The topic of visibility of women in exhibitions either as subject or curator is well covered, for example by the essays in *Politics in a Glass Case* edited by Angela Dimitikaki and Lara Perry (2013), Senior and Principal Lecturers respectively in the humanities fields. Sue Malvern's contribution, *Rethinking the Invisible* (2013) discusses feminist theory in art exhibitions in several countries. While NAM does offer art exhibitions from time to time, women are little represented in the "permanent" displays which are the subjects considered in those works. The late Jane Glaser was a Special Assistant in the Arts and Humanities office of the Smithsonian Institution, writing with colleague Programme Co-Ordinator and Editor Artemis Zenetou.

Their 1994 book acknowledges women in museums who try to bring about change, and they also address a broad range of topics including the impact of societal change on museums.

The culture of collecting and collectors is thoroughly explored by noted museologist Susan M. Pearce, especially on the issue of contemporary collecting (1998). In 2006, academic and writer on museums and history, Sharon Macdonald, set out a history of how museums' and art galleries' collections speak more to the (perhaps political) decision-making around what was worthy of keeping and what not, and how to organise material and information.

There are works on the individual aspects of this report's case studies, such as those above on collecting; Professor Jennifer Craik on cultural studies and uniforms (1994 and 2005 respectively); souveniring by Professor Margaret Higgonet (2007); and war and memory (see for example anthropologist Nicholas Saunders, 2004; historian Professor Susan Crane, 2000). There are also works on topics such as semiosis in museums, engagingly discussed by Stephanie Szitanyi (2015) and Amy Levin (2010).

1.9 Chapter Outlines, Part 1

Continuing Part 1 of the research report is a Context chapter which places the National Army Museum in the context of its background and its place in New Zealand's museum landscape. The galleries, including the memorial area and the temporary galleries, their presentation and interpretation are outlined. An overview of the collections, the range and disparities of the textiles collection are described, including its strengths and the processes it has been subject to. The movement to authenticity for the objects is also considered.

1.9.1 Chapter Outlines, Part 2

Part 2 comprises a preface to the three case studies around which the research is built. The male gaze theory is applied to the cases. Each object of enquiry follows a prescribed set of steps or elements of discovery and understanding, unfolding within Jules David Prown's material culture framework for examining objects.

Following the case studies is a discussion and analysis of the foregoing sections including the findings of the case studies. It also suggests that an unexpected dimension is added to the "female bursting through" aspect of Mulvey's male gaze theory (Mulvey, 1975, p.18): that of New Zealand Defence Force diversity policy and its application in the context of the National Army Museum's displays and textile collection.

Part 2 concludes with a consideration of how a more balanced textiles collection could be achieved through policy changes and updated perspectives.

Chapter 2 - Context

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the context within which this research is written, and sets out the background to the National Army Museum Te Mata Toa in terms of its creation, its collections and galleries, and curatorial processes and oversight. This will support the reason for exploring whether a patriarchal view has affected NAM's textiles collection, show how Prown's enquiry framework suits the case studies in Part 2, describe trajectories of value in museums according to Arjan Appadurai (1986) and describe how this Museum sustains national memory.

Figure 1: The National Army Museum Stage 1, 1978. Catalogue no. 1992.2630. Image used with permission.

Figure 2: NAM today. Source: Tripadvisor.

2.1 The Building

The National Army Museum Te Mata Toa, approached from the south through open farmland with vistas of far ranges and the towering maunga that is Ruapehu, has a solid muscularity. It gives the impression of a citadel, an appearance reinforced by the moat which ripples across part of the building's front façade, facing the highway.

On the roof of this heavy-set building fly New Zealand flags, with more standing tall across a side road, where a roughcast concrete wall inset with plaques names the corps of the New Zealand Army Ngāti Tūmatauenga. Fronting the Museum's main entrance is a variety of heavy weapons and military vehicles set onto a lawned area capable of hosting ceremonies such as the blessing in 2018 of the New Zealand War Animal Memorial. This bronze representation of a horse stands as a commemoration of all animals working with New Zealand troops and as a tribute to animal valour and comradeship.

According to architect Miles Warren (later Sir) of Warren and Mahoney, Christchurch, his firm's "… instructions were to design a building to house and display to as large a public as possible the army's collection of memorabilia and military artifacts" (1979, p.37). Specifically, it had to be a recognisable building to attract people seeing it "at the pace of a car". It also had

to accommodate the skills of army engineers "with no finesse of fiddly detail" (Warren, 1979, p. 37). The building shows the opposite of "fiddly detail", portraying a powerful, crouching appearance. It cannot fail to be seen and appears as the concrete epitome of masculine solidity.

On the other hand, architect Geordie Shaw's 2012 thesis argues that the architecture of NAM is based on European ideas of moat and castle, asserting that the building ignores New Zealand's history, and in particular the internal conflicts of the 19th century. It was at that time, he believes, that we were born as a nation, rather than during WWI (Shaw, 2012, p.11) yet externally, the museum built to house military relics and memory shows to the world a purely European image of brutalist concrete slabs reminiscent of WWI and WWII bunkers (Shaw, 2012, p.81). This, he believes, obliterates our founding history (Shaw, 2012, p.2).

However, in its earliest iteration the Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum emerged after 276 days of building by the army's Engineering Corps, opening on 15th July 1978. Stage 2 opened in July 1983; and in 1994 the Kippenberger Pavilion was opened. The Pavilion's ground floor presents a bright retail area, a reinvented café named the Mess Tent, and a sizable display cabinet. Upstairs are the Kippenberger Research Library and the museum's military archives, considered important destinations for researchers, with both handling large numbers of public and other research enquiries. 2017 saw the opening of a new entranceway and gallery linking the Kippenberger Pavilion and existing exhibitions and galleries (QEII Army Museum – History, n.d.). This new entrance with admissions desk and imposing vertical dimension is usually the first area of contact between visitors and front of house staff. This is also where paid tours begin and school groups assemble prior to undertaking education programmes.

2.2 The Galleries

The galleries offer a mix of permanent displays generally laid out in chronological order in large spaces, and there are also discrete rooms for temporary exhibitions. The main displays have been in place for more than a decade.

The Museum makes extensive use of life-sized male models in active poses to illustrate a literal history of New Zealand's army and its contributions to the military life of this and other nations. The displays do not completely exclude women, however they are represented statically by items of clothing rather than in movement or authority. Examples include one case for a New Zealand Forces Club uniform dress worn in WWII, members of which according to historian Bronwyn Dalley were popularly known as Tuis (Dalley, 2018). Its overarching organisation, the Women's War Service Auxiliary (WWSA) was formed in 1940 principally as a women's

recruiting agency, also serving overseas, and could be a focal point for explicating the female workforce's wartime experience.

Nearby, and despite the Women's Land Service (WLS) providing critically important agricultural labour in WWII, the brown skirt and jacket, white shirt and green necktie of its Land Girl's uniform is not featured discretely, sharing its case with an American uniform illustrating "the American invasion", referring to the number of young American soldiers training in New Zealand during WWII. Between the two and among some photographs a board very briefly interprets the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACs), the WLS and the WWSA. By 1944 the WLS comprised around 2,000 members, women who worked on farms, tackling machinery and heavy toil to replace the male farming community.

Formed in 1942, the WAACs numbered 4,600 members at its height, with women serving overseas and in New Zealand. Among the variety of duties was working within artillery regiments, learning radio operations and other active assignments (Dalley, 2018). Post War, the WAACs were renamed the WRACs (Women's Royal Army Corps). These two cases alone could illustrate thoughtful counterpoints in the male dominated displays.

Figure 3: Nursing/ Hospitals display. Photograph: Author.

While a nursing uniform is also on display and has a pictorial and text background supported by medical instruments and models, male and female clothing generally is uninterpreted,

although battles and weapons are. The passivity of the women-related displays confirms the way of looking expounded by Laura Mulvey, in this context, protagonistic viewers are male, viewees are the non-active females without interpretive narrative around their military experience.

Figure 4: Women's Land Service display. Photograph: Author.

2.2.1 Roimata Pounamu and War Memorial – the Heart of the Museum

Museums are constructed as places of memory, for "audiences, publics, collectives and nations" by means of their collections, (Crane, 2000, p.2). Museums contribute to a national identity, especially through the objects they assemble, categorise and, in particular, display. Thus, the importance of the objects within museum collections is that they "embody the discourse of memorial representation" (Bal, cited in Crane, 2000, p.2). Viewing such material representations of thoughts, concepts, ideas can therefore engender or endorse a sense of nationhood. Importantly, NAM must present a narrative in line with the Army's self-image (Cardow and Emerson,2007, pp. 2, 5).

The place of memory in the National Army Museum is at its middle floor. Its special feature is a curved wall of pounamu, named Roimata Pounamu, Tears on Greenstone. Water constantly trickles down the face of the wall, symbolising everlasting grief for the loss of life through war. Visitors are invited to place a miniature cross for remembrance near the base of the wall. The names of the fallen are continually intoned, and from a nearby computer

database visitors can highlight a name which will reset the system to recite that name. This verbal tolling could be termed the heartbeat of the museum, and it is in this space, beneath a panoply of knitted poppies, that successful army cadets take their Oath of Allegiance as they begin their careers.

Nearby two cased memorial books show pages hand-inscribed with the names of deceased New Zealand soldiers. Pages are turned daily. A further case of drawers holds battle-related taonga, such as a New Zealand blue ensign flown by the Canterbury Battalion at Quinn's Post, Gallipoli. The heroism and emotional reaction that the Gallipoli actions provoke is deeply felt and honoured by New Zealanders annually on Anzac Day, with this space also serving to hold these annual services. Memorialising the loss of life far away, scarlet battalion banners and woven embroideries in this space hang in tribute.

Behind the Roimata Pounamu wall, panels relay the ferocious dedication of the Māori Battalion in battle, accompanied by a small number of taonga Māori. There is little written interpretation for what is presumably a unique wall, or the area generally, although verbal explanations are given during visitors' guided tours.

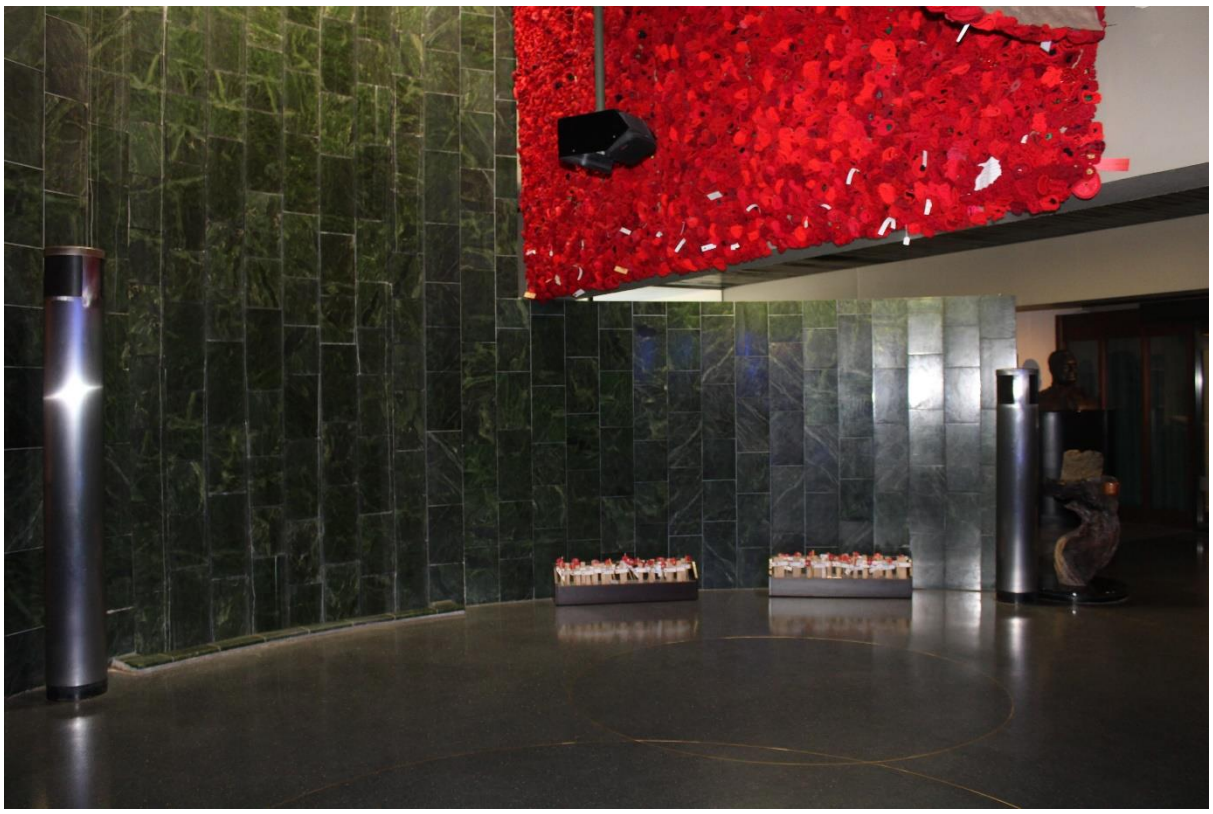

Figure 5: Roimata Pounamu. Photograph: Author.

Observation shows that instead of seeing this area as a memorial, everyday visitors often use it more as a place to gather themselves before deciding where to go next, upstairs or down. It is

common to see fingers dabbling in the "tears" or roimata running down the face of the pounamu wall. Despite the emotional meaning of the area, it can be difficult to sense the wairua of this memorial (M. Brannigan, personal communication, 5 October, 2020).

From this central space visitors can reach the permanent displays arranged over two floors. These displays comprise a mix of free standing objects, such as trucks, field artillery and display cases, with small side-galleries which are used for temporary installations.

2.2.2 The Medal Repository and Valour Alcove

A small gallery frequently visited is the Medal Repository with its dedicated search database and banks of drawers of heraldry (medals) and insignia. Within is the Valour Alcove containing a display of particularly important medals with accompanying photographs and text panels explaining the deeds (and in some cases the character) of the men who earned these New Zealand Cross, Victoria Cross, Albert Medals and George Cross awards.

2.2.3 Temporary Galleries

The Museum also has smaller side galleries which it uses for temporary displays; these are named after New Zealand Army male notables, such as Generals Thornton, Hassett and Freyberg. These more intimate spaces are often used for works of art and photography exhibitions, sometimes coupled with objects from the collections.

2.3 Presentation of Displays

The displays above the memorial floor, from where visitors are encouraged to begin their exploration through time, set out New Zealand's military involvement in warfare from 19th century Land Wars and European settlement to the present.

NAM's permanent exhibitions overwhelmingly feature male military deeds and theatres of war. Patriarchal in nature, the displays are object-rich, and make extensive use of multiple life-sized, clothed mannequins displaying uniforms set in many different environments, such as a desert scene complete with jeep, a Korean winter, a park rotunda and several more. The park scene centres on a women's Amazon movement at around the time of the South African Wars, and depicts a female model (the Amazon) collecting money to support the military effort overseas. Bringing the Army's activities more up to date are cases displaying the organisation's peacekeeping role in Afghanistan. The Museum uses photography and collection objects to illustrate this change in military focus away from battle and toward support, with these cases ending the permanent displays.

The patriarchal intent of the displays is noticeable, focussing on the roles of male soldiers in battle. Representations of women's roles are much less active, their activities in theatres of war and at home often being uncredited. One example is the case relating to J-Force (male) personnel and activities: a single uninterpreted photograph of New Zealand nurses is the only representation of the role of New Zealand women in Japan, immediately post-WWII. Case study 3 refers.

Figure 6: J-Force Display 1. Photograph: Author.

2.4 Interpretation of Displays

The majority of interpretation accompanying the permanent displays at NAM is through factual text panels. Aspects generally absent are details such as the types and parts of uniforms and textile composition, and possible layered meanings or wider contexts are not proposed. Visitors walk through a timeline, avoiding engagement with alternative viewpoints embodied by "things".

For Kavanagh (1990, pp.142-143) "things" have meanings not always immediately obvious, and the ability to impart these or at least to begin a train of thought is fundamentally important in museums. One such meaning is that "things" are commodities, and if they are, they are the

crux of material culture, being highly engaging to "social and economic historians, [and] to art historians […]" (Appadurai, 1986, p.5).

For Clifford Geertz, however, meaning is found in descriptions of "things", because description affirms significance (Geertz, 1973, p.5), and significance is born of meaning and is at the heart of every museum object if we only read the signs. For multi-layered meaning, or "thick description" as Geertz terms it (1973, p.6) knowing more than that an object was used in a particular campaign is critical to understanding the *why* of anything. Thus, the semiotics of NAM's galleries for "permanent" displays project patriarchy through its negation of women's lived experience.

In 2018, NZ's three service museums collaboratively mounted an online exhibition entitled "Wahine Toa: Women in Defence". Celebrating 125 years since women had the vote in New Zealand, Suffrage 125 outlined the roles of women in NZDF, including garments used for different occasions. The exhibition ran from 2018 for around a year, and was an opportunity to showcase Army women's mess (evening) dress, albeit virtually. In terms of visiting exhibitions of women's garments, a number of these have been held at NAM, such as a recent display from an Australian-mounted private collection. "Women of Empire – The Homecoming" consisted of numerous female models dressed in clothing from WWI to reflect their working and home lives. It is from the "permanent" displays, however, that this balance is absent.

2.4.1 Technology and Interactives

NAM uses technology in audio-visual screens and interactives such as touch buttons on topographical maps (Cassino, Gallipoli), listening stations with headphones, and telephones playing sound loops. There are also background narratives (such as a Quartermaster barking orders), bombardment (WWI trench) and music (Victorian background to the South African Wars display). Sombre tones narrate a film of the history of the Gallipoli campaign.

Throughout the galleries it is not possible to miss the overwhelming predominance of male presence, from narrators to male figures in active poses. The models are especially noticeable in the NZ Wars, towering over visitors, and there seems to be an implication that women's roles were principally as nurses, passive and forbearing. This shows in a nursing/Red Cross side annexe featuring a variety of instruments which it is likely that only male doctors were permitted to use.

For children, the Museum offers a dedicated space, Kidz HQ, where uniforms for dressing up are provided. There are also interactives such as hunting for objects on a map, and for this, pencils and clipboards are supplied.

2.5 The Collections

NAM cares for military-related objects across seven departments: Textiles (uniforms especially); Heraldry (medals, competition cups, currency); Vehicles and Technology (such as navigational aids); Weapons (heavy artillery, small arms); Social History & Accoutrements (unissued but necessary items such as compasses, also a military medical collection); the Kippenberger Research Library; and Archives.

It was not until the 1990s that Army personnel posted to the major museum positions began to be replaced by trained museum professionals (see Appendix 3). From NAM's inception, the collection was used for lending uniforms and other items in an ad hoc manner, inevitably leading to the loss of some important objects. By the 1990s, documenting donations and obtaining provenance was still not part of professional level practice, resulting in difficulties to this day in obtaining accurate collection numbers, loss of receipt sequences and the frequent disconnect between donors, objects and events (W. Jones, 15 November 2019, personal communication).

As I tried to account for this lack of processional practice, I discovered that all three service museums (Air Force, Navy and Army) had similar ongoing difficulties as a result of early enthusiastic collecting and unenthusiastic record-keeping. Although the three service museums operate independently of each other, differences in nomenclature and other inherited issues indicate conflicted early inventories with repetitive entries and, sometimes, incomprehensible indexing systems (E. Johnson, personal communication, 5 November 2019).

2.6 The Textiles Collection

Despite searching, I was not able to find a great deal of documentation relating to the history of NAM's textiles collection and its staff. However, after the involvement of a series of Army "volunteers", the first Assistant Curator Textiles was appointed in the late 1990s/early 2000s, according to a series of framed black and white photographs. Major tasks involved preparing the current textiles area for receiving the collection moved from previous storage locations and setting up the Vernon Collection Management System. Dealing with a never-ending flow of donations left little opportunity to shape the collection's wide range of textile objects donated

over the previous decades. Prior to this, unqualified male Army personnel administered receipting processes.

Storage in the designated textiles store is now at a critical point. Issues other than capacity include a lack of local volunteers, and fundamental tasks such as replacing plastic packaging and acidic boxes with archival materials, and regulating storage labelling information are lagging behind.

2.6.1 Textiles Collection Strengths

NAM's latest Curatorial Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) (the collecting policy) of 2006 Part 6 requires the collecting of -

> g. "A complete collection of uniforms, clothing and accoutrements worn by New Zealand military personnel, and a representative collection worn by enemy and allied forces in the field".

The strength of the collection is its range. It encompasses all manner of textile objects dating from the early to mid-19th century, comprising everything from attire to flags. Headgear, mess kit, capes converting to half-shelters, kilts, brassards, silk maps, Pierrot costumes, prisoner-of-war cardigans, sportswear, pantaloons (the official name for breeches or jodhpurs), vestments, a mascot dog coat, a child's (boy's) replica uniform are just a few examples. Such a span requires hard decision-making in terms of the ability to store everything according to its needs, such as rubber-coated cotton (despatch rider coats) and silk cigarette "cards".

Numbering 10,000-plus items, the collection is unsurprisingly strongest in male uniforms and associated components, mainly dating from the World Wars. Service dress uniform design has evolved from heavy khaki wool to man-made fibres for unisex, easy-wearing trousers and jackets and choices for adding or subtracting layers. These feature Velcro fastenings and numerous pockets in field-ready designs based on camouflage patterning, and are donated relatively often.

Despite losing some items to unreturned loans, the collection still contains exemplars from the early days of New Zealand's Volunteer militia period and British military contingents in New Zealand, such as the Royal Engineers. Textiles also attest to battle from the South African Wars, through two World Wars in Europe and the Pacific, campaigns in Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam, and New Zealand's peacekeeping presence in Afghanistan. This solid male materiality is reinforced by a strong holding of battle souvenirs, flags and ceremonial

regimental banners, often lent for commemorations. A 2019 example was the loan of the 28th (Māori) Battalion banner which travelled to Italy to commemorate the battles at Monte Cassino in 1944 (NZDF, 2019).

2.7 Women in NAM's Textiles Collection

"We are an Army that values diversity…" (Chief of Army's Brief, 2019, p. 16).

It is clear in the textiles store that women's textiles are outnumbered by men's. Reasons for this are a smaller collecting pool because fewer women undertook active, front line roles in conflicts, and perhaps a belief that men's uniforms were more important to donate/collect since men were the "real" fighters.

The female-related part of the collection is strongest in its holding of nursing uniforms, capes and veils, which aligns to Mulvey's belief concerning the fetishism of scopophilia "fragments parts of the body" (Mulvey, in Chaudhuri, 2006, p.37). It also holds Land Girl items and mess gowns of lurex-threaded brocade (with matching evening bag), however these are heavily outnumbered by the male collection of mess kit. The collection of women's undergarments and maternity wear is slowly building.

Over the years, data inputting has led to naming conflicts, such as Women's/ Female's, making database searching convoluted because of the wide variety of search terms used, showing the effects of varying degrees of restrictions placed on descriptors. Therefore a search on location (the storage bays) was undertaken instead, revealing that the holding of female-related garments is numerically approximately 11% of the men's holding.

UNIFORMS, WOMEN'S	NOVEMBER 2020
Shirts, capes, skirts, jackets, cardigans, Mess wear, uniform sets (not headgear, neckties, stockings, other accessories, eg hankies, gloves)	Approx 375
UNIFORMS, MEN'S	
Shirts, uniform sets, trousers, jackets, tunics, camo, coats (not headgear, neckties, socks, ponchos, other accessories, eg hankies, gloves)	Approx 3350

Table 1: Table showing gender disparity in the Uniforms section, excluding foreign uniforms

2.7.1 Summary

To summarise, NAM's textiles holding numbers over 10,000 pieces of clothing in a variety of types and materials. Male-related textiles greatly outnumber females'. Because of dubious historic practices such as lending items from the collection, lack of accurate receipting and cataloguing processes, and inadequate storage capacity, issues continue to affect collection management.

2.8 Selecting for the Case Studies

The impetus for this report was to consider a male spectating view upon a conventional textiles collection, and the conflict arising from aberrant objects within the strongest textiles groups – uniforms, souvenirs and comforts. I had noticed a delicate black bodice in the uniforms section, catalogued but with scant database information. A box of unaccessioned small textile souvenirs was interesting, one especially being strikingly transgressive. Thinking around the issue of what constituted a "comfort", I found an example which again allowed for alternative exploration. These three form the subjects of the following case studies, conforming to the purposive selection criteria of qualitative enquiry (Bloomberg, 2018, p.3).

2.8.1 Method of Investigation

Because I wanted to interrogate aberrant objects, I chose the case study framework because, according to Gary Thomas, the case study "is about the particular rather than the general. You cannot generalise from a case study" (Thomas, 2016, p. 3). He notes that a case study studies a case rather than a method – its value being that it is "a focus … on one thing, looked at in depth and from many angles" (Thomas, 2016, p.9). Not only did I want to see how the male gaze theory would work in terms of women's voices bursting through, but Thomas' description meshes with Jules David Prown's method of deep consideration when examining material culture: unpacking a case, as it were.

Dick defines a case study as "an in-depth examination of a single social unit […] group […] or phenomenon" (cited in Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014, p.2). I apply this definition to the objects selected because, despite their disparity, they belong to one over-arching group, NAM's textiles collection.

Yin (cited in Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014, p.4) explains that a research area not previously researched is termed an "exploratory case study", indicating that a case study can be defined by its purpose. Stake, meanwhile, focusses strongly on interpretive aspects of case

studies, encouraging "systemic thinking and the iterative and emergent nature of questions and interpretations". He also notes that such case studies can address side issues (Stake, cited in Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014, p.4).

Jules Prown places Description, Deduction, Speculation, Research and Interpretive analysis as loci for following his material culture studies methodology. He discusses the "patterns of mind" underlying the fabrication of a thing, or artifact, and with which it is necessary to engage in order to understand – interpret, analyse – the particular example of material culture (Prown, 2000, p. x).

Using Prown's categories to empathise with the three objects, I could examine them through case study definitions to understand how they would relate to Mulvey's male gaze theory, clarifying the ramifications of this 'presence' against the 'absence' of women's voices. Absences needed to be accounted for as being equally important as the objects' materiality, and Prown's analysis encouraged deep engagement with objects to consider all of their facets, present or not.

Engagement also means understanding that most museum objects have had previous lives – "trajectories … that enliven things" as Appadurai terms it (Appadurai, 1986, p.6). He describes objects commonly associated with material culture as "commodities", distilling them into "things in a certain situation […] at different points in their social lives [… intersecting] temporal, cultural and social factors" (Appadurai, 1986, pp. 5-15).

He notes that today's gift is tomorrow's commodity (Appadurai, 2006, p.1) yet they can be both at the same time (Appadurai, 2006, p.19). In a museum context this occurs both because (generally) an object was donated, and it has a function: thus is commodified, has a value, whether for viewing in a display or as an example of something. 'Viewing' or 'being viewed' provides yet another layer in a trajectory.

In these terms, therefore, the three case study objects have multiple layers of meaning (values) through their trajectories from creation to entry into museum patriarchies. While objects may have lost value through removal from their original contexts (Farriss, 2006, p.ix) their "social life" or circulation (Appadurai, 1986, p.5) still offers much for us. The objects' silence until now mirrors that of women's presence in both collection and display, therefore women in the museum have been committed to passivity through insufficient collecting and interpretation. Thus, relationships between museum policy, collection objects and displays are incomplete,

yet Mulvey's 'women bursting through" can materialise, moving from spectated upon to vocal (Mulvey, 1975, p.18).

2.9 Museums and Cultural Capital

As José Causadius suggests, culture means "the systems of people, places and practices for [the] purpose" of understanding culture (Causadius, (2020, p.1). In other words, a network of systems. Tony Bennett drills into the relationships between "social institutions, cultural fields and relations of power" as being central to cultural and social explorations of "capital" as theorised by Pierre Bourdieu (Bennett, 2013, p.143). These connections are the cultural capital supplied by institutions such as museums. As NZ's National Army Museum possesses all of those characteristics, it is an important source of national cultural capital, positioned as the guardian of the nation's self-awareness.

Another perspective on military museums is offered by Richard Handler (as cited in Clifford, 1988, p.218) who is quoted as believing that "the collection and preservation of an authentic domain of identity […] is tied up with nationalist politics […] and with contested encodings of past and future". For a military museum containing authentic material objects relating to every kind of situation within a war and peripherally to it, such objects being worshipped or fetishized, nationalist politics are the force behind the message which the Museum wishes to promote. For visitors (investors in cultural capital) following a chronological path through displays presenting only one part of a dual or multi-narrative, the investment is easy because it places no demands and poses no questions. Museums, however, are obligated to understand themselves in order to understand what it is that they are conveying to the public, how this is received and how all that they do is as a result of political decisions (Pearce, 1994, p.1).

If a museum presents itself while denying a voice to over half the population as Hein (2010, p.54) contends, the unheard cohort must do more than be gazed upon. Museological feminism must be more active than, as Appadurai said (1986, p.6) to merely enliven its things, to justify their and its existence.

Reiterating Andy Smith – ["politics is] activity to modify or maintain institutions that either mobilize values explicitly, or seeks to silence them" (Smith, 2016, p.9). At NAM, the memorial area of Roimata Pounamu mobilizes values explicitly in what follows, and what follows is a male voice born of a patriarchal system, with a muted female narrative throughout. In this way, NAM is not aligned to the diversity ethic committed to by NZDF.

In Part 2, I preface then present the three case studies. This is followed by a Discussion chapter. Finally, Chapter 7 establishes the outcomes of the research; suggests ways in which professional practices at NAM may be consolidated and, lastly, how further research concerning 'the male gaze' and its application to heritage collections may reveal the gendered inscriptions in these collections in ways not previously considered.

Part 2

Preface

The objects in the following three case studies were chosen as being representative of female transgression. They demonstrate an ability to disrupt accepted norms: research shows their capability of being active, more than objects in the background, and more than things in a static setting. Suggesting qualities of heat, humidity and coolness respectively, they hold particular characteristics to effectively "break through the alienating spectacle or façade to women's 'reality' hidden behind it" to regain control of their own bodies (Mulvey, 2006, p.33) – or experiences. That the objects have been hidden indicates a curatorially patriarchal perspective toward female-related objects in NAM's textiles collection.

The following three chapters comprise a material culture investigation according to a theoretical framework. For the latter, two "structures" were considered, with my reasons for selection.

A Material Culture Investigation

In order to successfully apply Mulvey's theory to three objects, it was through material culture study that the essence of these female-related objects was found. Particularly relevant to the bodice of Chapter 3 (case study 1), sociologist the late Professor Fred Davis described how clothing is at the heart of material culture studies, allowing deep study of garments, their purpose and nature. This is achieved through engagement with the physical relics of the past and present, thus we gain insights about people connected to the use, function and form of objects. The essence of the discovery is that we perceive the deeper messages which clothing (especially) has the ability to signal (Davis, 1992, p.5).

Considering McClung Fleming's Framework

Shaping the study required a framework comprising defined investigative steps. As E. McClung Fleming wrote, "[the] study of artifacts is …[primarily] a humanistic study" (Fleming, 1974, p.153). Despite this outlook, Fleming's model was found to be complicated and unempathetic.

Fleming's model encompasses five categories for object study: "History, Material, Construction, Design, Function" (Fleming, 1974, p.154). These then relate to a further four investigations of those five, comprising identification, evaluation, cultural analysis and

interpretation. Next, further operations – such as object comparisons – inform components of the original group of five (Fleming, 1974, p.153).

While Fleming was devising his factual, objectifying model, Laura Mulvey was writing her feminist academic work recognising the objectification of women, signalling a clear disparity between modes of thinking. To me, Fleming's categorisation lacks imaginative and thoughtful discourse between object and curator, especially avoiding the empathy element as described by Hilde Hein (Hein, 2010, p.55). Given this and the fact that the case study objects possessed the cues I needed for researching them, standing out from a collection of over 10,000 objects, McClung Fleming's framework was deemed unsuitable for this research.

Considering Prown's Framework

Jules David Prown, on the other hand, frames Description, Deduction, Speculation, Research and Interpretive analysis as loci in his research. Through this framework the results I wanted to uncover would be offered via its comparative simplicity and the imaginative freedom available in the speculation step, with deduction and speculation allowing for the consideration that absences, such as provenance, also have a role in considering an object. Prown offers empathy with objects through detailed looking to complete the description step, and gazing is at the root of Mulvey's theory. Prown's framework was therefore apposite for my research.

The next three chapters comprise the case studies for objects from the uniforms, souvenir and comforts categories respectively.

Chapter 3 – Case Study 1 – Uniform

3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines a female-related garment without recorded provenance or donor details. The garment is stored within a mixed "Foreign Uniforms" section rather than in a gender specific area, as are the men's and women's NZ uniforms. Its appearance, particularly its colour, and provenance appear to have justified this separation over time. Its demure style and different colour signal the opposite of Mulvey's imagery of a powerless, spectated upon female, who volubly disrupts the male worldview (Mulvey, 1975, p.18). The bodice suggests female agency through military activity: a small black bodice represents the bloody turmoil of the 1960s invasion of Vietnam. An exercise of mighty American power – and the participation of our own forces – became a lost war fought at every turn by a race of people of extraordinary capabilities and geo-cultural understanding, which enabled their endurance of great privation. I consider that the bodice belonged to one such woman.

The bodice, or blouse, also represents local rebellion. A period of social upheaval in New Zealand occurred in the 1960s, the same period as the Vietnam War: we questioned who we were and where our loyalties lay. Representing such disruption, the subversive uniform piece is highly capable of being visually compelling and causing viewer reaction, as I have witnessed, and for this reason I characterize it as "hot". In this and other aspects it conforms to Mulvey's visuality narrative, and to me this is a fiery and captivating garment, despite its being without a known donor or provable provenance.

As Mary-Ellen Roach-Higgins, Joanne Eicher and Kim Johnson have written (1995, p. xi) the management of personal identity is bound up with clothing. Clothing being a projection of the self, it has an exclusive intimacy with bodies, and using or making it is an embodied (visible) act. "Beyond production, the circulation and consumption of textiles and needlework are among the most significant of embodied acts in material culture" as Maureen Daly Goggin states (2009, p. 1).

The creativity or individuality which we take for granted when considering our own clothing, does not apply to all, because in a cohort such as a military organisation, clothing must signify authority, not individuality (Craik, 2005, p.119). The semiotics of clothing, however, can also indicate a political ideology, as will be shown. The commodification of this collection object – of value to its maker, wearer as individual and cohort member - is completed through its

journey from Asia to partial contextualisation according to a Western museum taxonomy. While it should be at the collecting stage where that object's value is authenticated (Clifford, 1988, p.215) the case study object is under-documented and under-utilised. These lacks point to the patriarchal system of collecting which has resulted in an inequality of female presence in NAM's textiles holding.

To uncover the aberrance and provide context for this object, the following case study moves through the Prownian steps of material culture investigation: Description, Deduction, Speculation and Analysis.

3.1 The Garment

The garment was found in one half of a bay described to me during a familiarisation visit as the "Foreign Uniforms" section (S. Stevens, personal communication, December 2017). It is both "uniform" and "women's" yet is not placed with other female-related items. This bodice or blouse is aberrant both because of its past and the way it has been categorised in the textiles collection.

In the following pages, the terms "blouse" and "bodice" are used interchangeably as both apply to this garment. Definitions are from the University of Fashion (n.d.) -

> *Blouse*: a bodice garment that extends to above the hips.
>
> *Bodice*: a bodice silhouette [...] fitted to the body, has shoulder and waist darts
>
> [ending] at the waistline.

3.2 Database information

<u>Original Database Title From (possibly) 1978</u>:

VC or NLF fighter's uniform. [Description field is empty].

<u>Updated Catalogue Title 2019</u>:

Blouse, Viet Cong women's, black. Said to be VC/NLF fighter's uniform. [Accompanied by a 2019 physical description only, as follows]:

Catalogue description:

"Viet Cong black cotton blouse, collarless, fastens with seven metal press studs at centre front. Also has a half-round pocket near hem either side of centre front. Each side seam is split at the base for fit and the shoulder seams are dropped to upper arm level. Would have been worn with matching cotton trousers and long scarf/wrap".

Figure 7: Bodice front. Catalogue no. 1978.1014. Photograph: Author.

Figure 8: Bodice back. Catalogue no. 1978.1014. Photograph: Author.

3.3 Description

An unassuming blackish, light cotton blouse-like garment, small-sized, long-sleeved, machine-stitched and with seven nickel or chrome press studs as vertical centre front closure ending in a plain round neck. Near the hem, either side of the centre front, is a horseshoe-shaped pocket finished in a turned-over edging at the opening and a row of stitching top and bottom of the turn-over. This simple finishing stitching is also present around the plain neck and down each side of the centre front opening, also around the uncuffed sleeve ends and the hem of the garment. Two bust darts run vertically from beneath the bust and finishing inside each pocket.

There are two seams to each sleeve; one is a full length back (elbow) seam and the other joins the sleeves to the garment body at approximately two-thirds of the way up from the wrists. An edged slit at each side seam, running from hem almost to waist, provides flare and looseness for movement at the lower back, for example when the wearer is bending, and allows air movement through resting outside a trouser waistband. The garment has no shoulder seams or yoke.

Lightly faded overall, the blackish fabric is paler in colour on the shoulders and at centre back. Areas of wear are primarily around the waist front and back, and forearms/elbows, visible as wrinkles as the material takes on body contours from continual use. Pale areas show also on the proper right of the centre front opening, from the action of fastening and unfastening the metal studs. In areas around the neckline back, the stitching is uneven, commonly found when the sewing machine tensioning is incorrect.

Reinforced machine stitching at the top of the flare slits has been strained on both sides and has given way at both armscyes (armpit areas). Overall, this is a simple, plain, worn garment.

3.4 Deduction

Because of the slender fit of the blouse and its bust darts, I deduce that it is intended for wear by a female aged between the teens and elderly, and that the garment has undergone wear over years, given the armpit tears and habitual wrinkling of specific areas. It is likely to have been a working garment but not a stand-alone piece: if the catalogue descriptor is accurate in relation to South-East Asian use, the blouse would have been worn with matching black cotton trousers, headgear, and long multi-purpose scarf.

Although the catalogue has a confused Name/Title, it implies that this type of garb could be associated to the Viet Cong (National Liberation Front or NLF) or the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). It could also relate to the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia or to peasant wear in any of these geographic locations. In the West this item with the usual trousers is commonly termed "pyjamas" (Katcher, 1980, pp. 31-32). The blouse's colour would be suited to jungle surrounds; the style would limit the amount of visible flesh-tone and ultimately the garment would anonymise the wearer in urban, village or jungle environments.

3.5 Speculation

I suggest that despite the disordered database entry for this object, the original Name/Title information provided may have some factual basis which would justify the blouse's inclusion as a uniform in the collection. To me, the garment's own voice (Davis, 1992, pp. 5-6) is voluble in stating what it is, not what it could be. It is possible to speculate as to origin, ownership, place and date of manufacture, and what it is saying about a woman's roles as agricultural worker and potentially as a member of a guerrilla cadre.

Traditional wear of the Viet Cong jungle fighter primarily consists of such "pyjamas" as these, the collarless top with varying sleeve length and the bottoms of matching material, also sandals

and occasionally headgear (Katcher, 1980, p.31). If it is part of guerrilla uniform, it could have been worn only by a female of very small stature and slender proportions, and I speculate that the wearer would have been a woman or girl able to move anonymously between a fighting and a village or urban environment. The fabric's black colouring, its non-embellishment, the close fit to the body, the breathable cotton and time-worn wrinkling of the material would allow the wearer virtual invisibility for performing necessary tasks. The garment's simplicity may indicate that such items could be run up by the dozen on sewing machines in homes or by the thousands in factories.

Is the bodice in the Army Museum collection as a souvenir? The catalogue is silent as to donor. Was it simply found by a New Zealand soldier serving in Vietnam between 1962 and 1972 (Lyles, 2004, p.3); alternatively was it a bartered object? Why would the owner have relinquished it? Was it removed from a prisoner or a cadaver?

I hypothesise that this garment, possibly a part of subtle fighting dress, was "souvenired" and brought to New Zealand as a kind of trophy, subsequently gifted to the Museum. If so, becoming a museum collection object has bestowed a changed identity to the bodice, from uniform to a new value as a souvenir, yet its categorisation does not reflect this. Alternatively, the blouse may have been part of work dress, such as could be worn by a factory worker (Ribaud and Devillers, 1970, p. 51), or simply the wear of agricultural labourers, in which case both iterations of the database Name/Title are misleading.

3.5.1 Research - Historic

Claire Loftus Nelson explains that the political positioning behind New Zealand's decision to deploy troops to Vietnam concerned pressure from Australia and the United States, with whom New Zealand needed closer ties for agricultural exports and security. There was also a need to fulfil international obligations to treaty partners in organisations such as SEATO and ANZUS (Loftus Nelson, 1990, p. 7).

New Zealand's military involvement in the Vietnam War occurred between 1963 and 1975. Almost 4,000 New Zealanders served during the war, fighting with Australian troops in the main. V (Victor) Company, Royal New Zealand infantry Regiment, the NZSAS and other companies took part in many operations before final withdrawal in 1972. In this war, 37 New Zealanders were killed on active service (Lyles, 2004, p. 19).

I have used photographs to try to ascertain the geographical origin of the case study bodice. Edward Emering presents many monotone images of the Vietnam war years and describes "the classic black pyjama garb of the peasant class" (Emering, 1999, p.7). The correct name for the blouse or bodice is - áo bà ba – and it is also shown in Emering's images in an indeterminately pale colour. The lighter shade provides more visual detail but the same characteristics as I have described apply, apart from variations on the press stud centre front fastening using, for example, hooks and eyes.

3.5.2 Research – Colour

In this context, studies of 'colour' have been widely written from multiple perspectives.

In their technical study of the cross-cultural effect of colour, Frances Adams and Charles Osgood (1973) found that black is described as "potent" (p. 145), meaning "very bad, very strong, very passive" (p.147). The pair concludes that "evil and death" are connected to this colour (as cited in Duje Kodzoman, 2019, p.92). Robert Leach states that 'uniform' has evolved to reflect its battle surroundings, depending on whether either concealment or recognition is the aim (Leach, 2012, p. 71). Further, Kodzoman (2019, p.2) also notes that colour expresses "cultural affinities".

David Hunt discusses in detail the intense cultural identity and social order attached to wearing white or black clothing, for example "white" did not only indicate the colour itself but also stood for non-black clothing – meaning clothing which broke away from tradition by making different cultural statements about class identity and ways of living (Hunt, 2014, p.40).

Hunt notes that defectors were often found to wear conventional black around their family or work groups, changing into white on the pretext of "going to town" (Hunt, 2014, p. 43). As mentioned, the colour black in clothing was associated with rural living and agricultural toil. Hunt's interpretation is that the wearing of "white" meant any colour other than black, signalling, especially in young people, a discomfort with a traditional agricultural background (Hunt, 2014, p.40. Thus wearing white indicated the ability to purchase the so-called luxury American goods which poured into Vietnam with the military, such as cigarettes and nylon clothing (p. 38, 41). Hunt explains further that "[Vietnamese] cadres and villagers who wore black pyjamas as symbols of the revolutionary ethos" were characterised in this way by media, through which a stigma of impoverishment or austerity was applied. This resulted in probably a global generalisation of an entire culture. Hunt states that while a humbleness of attitude and clothing in this culture were deemed trustworthy, in fact the portrayal of traditionally-clad

citizens or revolutionaries as impoverished, rather than better-dressed and not engaging in peasant-like activities (non-agricultural), was considered culturally disrespectful by those involved (pp. 49-50).

A further important fact emphasised in Hunt's research is that by the categorisation of people in black as "wearing VC uniform" such people became the enemy, thus highly vulnerable to (especially air) attack. His research explains that for this reason, local Vietnam village governors issued edicts for farmers to carry "white" clothing and conical hat which could be changed into on the double, thus potentially diverting the threat (Hunt, 2014, pp. 42-43). It is possible that the Viet Cong employed the same tactic.

3.5.3 Research – Dissidence

Researching instead the subject of guerrilla clothing, Nathan Joseph discusses such garments through a particular movement's evolution or development toward success. He notes that when the group's goals become close to realisation, it is then that uniform becomes less a matter of concealment and instead is both fully adopted and shown in the public arena. The opposite can also occur, Joseph maintains, when other irregular military groups, rather than adopting military garb as a symbol of particular political belief, may choose to conceal all such indications by continuing to wear civilian attire (Joseph, 1986, pp. 138-139).

Adding to these positions is Dicky Yangzom's perspective which he explores for Nepalese dissidence, but which I see as being valid relative to the Vietnamese, during Chinese-backed rule from the North, or invasion by America to the south. Yangzom (2016) proposes that one way to materialise political resistance is through dress, in which the clad body itself becomes the site of protest, which aligns with Mulvey's feminist deduction that the female body was a site of politics and protest (Mulvey, 2017, p.385). Wearing traditional clothing can present an ostensibly innocuous obedience, yet in the absence of safe places for political expression, clothing may concomitantly express an opposing political or cultural belief. He also notes that, decoded by those in the know, clothing can be semiotic in addition to being an agency for change through challenging the "gaze" of holders of power (Yangzom, 2016). Yangzom is referring to clothing, but the gaze/power theory echoes that of Ann Kaplan's assertion that "[men's] gaze carries with it the power of action and possession that is lacking in the female gaze" (Kaplan, 1986, p.231, in Devereaux, 1990, p.341).

The case study garment thus becomes a metaphor for an attitude - and an attitude, or ideology, arguably finds its penultimate expression in clothing. Disrupting the "appearance messages"

through disallowing communication (Kaiser, 1998, p. 239) also blurs the value of the object to the museum.

3.5.4 Research – Women in the Vietnam War

Karen Turner's detailed study on the place of Vietnamese women in the Vietnam War – or as the Vietnamese term it, the American War – defined two goals. First, that women were highly active, resourceful and successful in repelling American activities. Second, that their place in the fight did not undermine the capability of men but was hugely important and highly regarded. It was also a conflicted place, in that negotiation was necessary in order for women to achieve leadership status, yet on the other hand their role was considered of equal importance in the fight against invading forces (Turner, 2002, pp. 93-94).

In the same paper, Turner notes that the place of women in this war has attracted little attention, which may be why the statistical evidence she presents is so unexpected, and in some quarters is considered an under-estimation. It is estimated that almost one million women served in local self-defence and militia units, of whom most were farmers – but 70,000^{+} professional women, such as doctors, engineers and reporters volunteered or were recruited to support the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) (Turner, 2002, pp. 94-95).

The American/Vietnam War which had relied equally on the participation of women as well as men, ended in 1975, however it was not until 1977, two years later, that New Zealand's Army began the integration of women, noted Minister for Defence Mr Ron Mark in 2019.

3.5.5 Research – Meanings

Craik's study of uniforms as ambiguous (bi-lingual, perhaps) is discussed not only as relating to control, order and conforming but also as indicating non-conformity, punishment, even erotica, among other characteristics (Craik, 2005, pp. 4-7). The lack of confirmatory database information about the case study blouse means that research has to be fluid to cover its categorisation as uniform and, speculatively, as souvenir. Its utility allows for transitions between the agricultural setting of a peasant garment and the guerrilla-type resistance of a fighting garment. "Freedom of movement", like clothing itself, has a double meaning in this context – both in terms of comfortable fit and ability to fit into different environments.

In connection with Wendy Kozol's work on the ability of objects to invoke recoil (Kozol, 2014, p.129), I would like to note my recent involvement with the case study object.

This small black bodice was laid out at a VIP evening event held at NAM, and shown to serving officers, retired military, governance board members and Defence personnel including the Minister for Defence. I noticed that without exception, the guests were immediately taken aback and also intensely focussed. When I explained that the garment was "said to be part of a Viet Cong uniform" this only intensified the visitors' impulse to both recoil from yet desire to touch it. Some spoke of their Vietnam memories, others said little, but all appeared aware of the almost talismanic power of the blouse.

Mulvey's expression "seeing with the mind" or spectating with thought and image, as Sarah Cooper discusses, exactly explains the "experiential mode of viewing" (Cooper, 2017, p.423-424) or instinctive reaction to the bodice.

Kozol's area of scholarship (2014, pp. 127-164) is about ethical viewership, especially when confronted by archives or collections of battlefield memorabilia. She notes, however, that writers dealing with related subject matter have "… not yet addressed the interconnections between archival desires and historical witnessing". For the case study object, therefore, there is a possibility that the bodice was looted or otherwise obtained as a curio or trophy of war to fit into a personal archive. Either way, its appearance was witnessed by someone who wished to "collect" it as an object for archiving, contextualised as curio and thus submissive to a male gaze, moving through Clifford's proposed art-culture system to now become material culture (Clifford, 1988, p.225). Its delicate size and composition belie the bodice's power to both distance and beckon the viewer.

3.5.6 Research – The Male Gaze

The final piece of research into this object concerns Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze.

Kelly Oliver explains the kernel of Mulvey's theory as involving a male gaze (spectatorship) situated within a filmic context. In this perspective women are depicted in passive roles, while those of men are active and self-permit the performance of a not necessarily authorised gaze toward women (Oliver, 2017, p. 451).

I wish to apply this theory to the black bodice case study. Here the object's shape confirms that it is part of women's wear: in the collection store it is mixed with men's "Foreign Uniforms", thus it is displaced because of its gender, "foreign" and "uniforms" seemingly possessing more status. The very passivity of the blouse encourages an unauthorised gaze because it (the blouse) embodies a value as a curio or war trophy. However to activate a

counter-gaze and acquire – possibly – respect or at least acknowledgement of its past life, the blouse must be visible to provoke emotion or the unsayable in an audience.

As Mulvey aptly notes of Hollywood's 'women's genre" films: "in […] films of displaced meanings[…] the 'unsaid' and 'unsayable' find […] expression in the mise-en-scène" (Mulvey, 2017, p. 473). It is the *context*, interpretation and visibility of things which give them validation, hence value and authenticity.

3.6 Interpretive Analysis

Given the universality of colour, meaning and uniform, the case study garment demonstrates its ability to move between two worlds, the domestic and the political/activist. The bodice has no need to be improved upon because it is functional, simple, and more than adequate within its original social and practical frames of reference.

As can be seen in illustrations such as Riboud and Devillers' 1970 photographic essay (p.25) and the line drawings in Lee Russell's publication (1983, p.29) Vietnamese women and men wear similar garments, although the men's black shirts appear to be less closely fitted than the women's black blouses. This conforms to Craik's theory that some uniforms are "quasi-uniforms" – i.e. those "that are consensually imposed as appropriate" (Craik, 2005, p.17), which in this case relates to garments concealing yet revealing female contours. This assertion requires a re-think of how such a plain, utilitarian garment can possibly be considered erotic - yet the bodice images mentioned do enhance breast, waist and hip, all areas of general sexual interest.

The contradiction of colour is yet another question posed by the study garment, in that black is the colour that can be unseen, however Daniela Niesta Kayser found that like red, black can also connote seduction (Niesta Keyser, 2015, p. 1). Nevertheless, I suggest that the practical design, the power and mobility of this uniform component outweigh, without undermining, prevailing theories of some of the more extreme possibilities of garment interpretation.

3.7 Summary

3.7.1 Male gaze

The key point about this female's garment is that it has been subjected to a male gaze since is collection, likely by a male NZ soldier with service in Vietnam. The motive for applying an authorised gaze to collecting it could range from collecting a curio to possessing a trophy, or

to purchasing a new object for a personal archive. Which scenario is correct is unknown, although either would be imbued with a male gaze through its objectification as a war trophy of some kind. However through its colour and shape encapsulating a female ability to disrupt, the blouse embodies Mulvey's assertion that a female hidden power exists: it is not merely passive in the textiles collection.

Conversely, it has the ability to focus a resounding discourse to lend weight to "shaping our identity […] and our place in the world" as NAM's mission statement states (National Army Museum). The gaze has moved the object geographically along a path into a Western museum where it has become stifled, because the conversation between the gender of the former wearer and the museum and its public is absent.

3.7.2 Absence

For such a small garment, the blouse has an innate power to both distance and beckon. Up to 35,000 people in 1971 were protesting against NZ's involvement in the Vietnam War (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2020) and, even on its own, this garment could represent that war, and New Zealand's social upheaval in the same period. It therefore illustrates one aspect of military history which is still within living history but instead points to an absence of a female presence, silencing stimulating discussion and reflection upon New Zealand's history and its Army.

3.7.3 Interpretation

The bodice speaks to women's skills, competence and contribution to retaining a national identity in the country of its manufacture. It also contributes to New Zealand's identity through our service in a foreign war. The research applied to the garment shows that it could be a perfect counterpoint to NAM's displays of Vietnam-era weaponry and masculinised military service. The Museum does fulfil ICOM's existing definition of museums as places for communicating, researching and exhibiting "[…]the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity […] (ICOM, 2007) however, currently, the Museum does not incorporate ways of engaging with viewpoints differing from those on already show. ICOM is currently proposing an updated museum definition (ICOM, 2019) and seeing the bodice in a discursive or forum context would multiply its commodity value beyond its mere manufacture or country of origin.

The exploration of this "hot" garment is now followed by Chapter 4, Case Study 2, a "humid" representative of the souvenir group in the NAM textiles collection.

Chapter 4 - Case Study 2 – Souvenir

4.0 Introduction

This object representing the souvenir collection could be termed deviant. It is not known when it entered the collection, or how, or why it was accepted, however it dates and places itself in Egypt, 1915. I term this object as humid, opening up the WWI Cairo scene with its venalities and lurid provocations. An embroidery, this object depicts a nude woman bathing and the question was, how it had come into being, and how did its trajectory take it from Egypt to Waiouru. Was the depiction stitched by a woman, was it sweatshop piecework, did it have a purpose beyond commerce and why would it have been purchased in the first place?

This piece was chosen as to illustrate the ability of objects to communicate. It was found unrecorded in the textiles collection and has now been accessioned, entered onto the database and imaged. The case study considers at what level this object can communicate, and what can be deduced from its lack of communication, or in other words, that which we do not know. It also has an *uncanniness* as Margaret Higgonet describes (2007, p.65) because through its mere existence it has the ability to trigger memory – to fly though time – perhaps evoking longing, perhaps marking a coming of age for, ironically, it stands as both a symbol and a stereotype of manliness through its imagery of a woman.

The pink embroidery embodies spectatorship aspects formulated by Mulvey and described by Coorwalala (1996, p.19) as power and commerce – which arguably represent the impartial gaze (such as that of a camera) in the pursuit of money through the disempowerment of women.

This object is also fetishistic, as defined by Sarah Cooper in discussing Laura Mulvey's perception that scopophilia is the source of its own pleasure (Mulvey, 1975, p.59). According to Cooper, fetishism is "seeing and refusing to see simultaneously" (Cooper, 2017, p.422). Cooper discusses how this (Mulvey's) explanation of fetishism and viewing "place[s] women in an idealized yet problematic space"(Cooper, 2017, p.422) – and here, the case study subject fetishizes a female caught in the private act of bathing (voyeuristic spectatorship) which, through its commodification, is forever more available to be spectated upon.

Presenting an unconventional perspective on how women are represented in the NAM textiles collection, this object offers a further layer for examination in that it may also have been made by female hands in addition to its depicting a female. In this aspect it is in line with Prown's assertion that speculation is a necessary action when examining material cultural objects.

4.1 Database Information

From the catalogue description dated 28 December 2019:

Name/Title – Embroidery, souvenir, pink silk damask reading “Souvenir of Egypt, 1915”.

Brief Description – Pink silk damask square fringed with lilac thread. The embroidered image depicts a nude woman standing in a primitive shower or sunbeams (possibly rain?) while behind her are various colourful flowers strung vertically. The upper text reads “Souvenir of Egypt/ 1915” and the lower text reads either “Glorious Allies/ Humane English” or “Glorious Humane/ Allies English”.

Figure 9: Embroidery. Catalogue no. 2019.531.1. Photograph: Author.

4.2 Description

The object comprises a piece of peach/pink damask, almost square in shape, in a single layer with fringing around all sides, the fringe forming tangled lilac silk threads, faded mostly to silver grey. This is attached to the machine-edged peach fabric by fancy chain embroidery

stitch. Competing for attention, apart from the peach colour and the texture of the fringing, there are machine-embroidered aspects such as a mid-blue oblong set at an oblique angle, running across both lower quadrants, and this rectangle has been taken as the reference point when describing the design elements of this object.

To one side of the blue rectangle (to the viewer's right) is a clerestory-type window outlined in light green thread, adjacent to a flower stem. This consists of a single stem bearing three styles of flowers, the lowest two being red, the central flower turquoise and white, and the uppermost being purple and lilac. There are also bi-coloured (dark green and yellow) leaves, and this stem has the appearance of emanating from grass, depicted as a connected squiggle pattern snaking along and back on itself in the lower quadrant.

At the centre top of the cloth, positioned between the topmost flower of purple and lilac and a bright green outline of a window cut into a thick wall is the text "Souvenir of/ Egypt" then the date just below, "1915". The window is the upper (viewer's left) quadrant and from it are five long golden embroidered uninterrupted lines of sunbeams (?) stretching as far down as the blue-outlined rectangle.

While all of these colourful and textural elements are eye-catching, the most noticeable image must be the embroidered, cream-coloured female figure standing nude in the centre of the blue oblong, providing a startling vertical shape at the centre of the fabric. This figure is standing in profile to the viewer; she has long dark hair reaching to her thighs; one hand is to the side of her head and the arm closest to the viewer is outstretched. Shown in profile are a breast and a flurry of dark-coloured stitches suggesting pubic hair. The blue rectangle outline on which she stands has a further smaller, inner line which is surrounded by maroon-coloured text comprising from left to right the words "Glorious" "Humane" on the upper row and beneath, "Allies" "English".

As mentioned, the lilac silk fringing is tangled in places, some strands having unravelled over time. The fringing row has become detached near the embroidered grass pattern (at the viewer's right) and overall the fabric is creased and has one heavy fold-line across the whole. Overall there is general soiling. Some pencil marks are visible, suggesting that the embroiderer should follow these when stitching the placement of the various depictions.

4.3 Deduction

From the nude female subject of this embroidery, it could be deduced that it is aimed at a male target market. By 1915 approximately 8,500 New Zealand Expeditionary Force Main Body and 1st Reinforcements New Zealand soldiers were based mainly at Zeitoun Camp near Cairo. Here they would train prior to shipping out not, as first planned, to England and Europe but instead to Gallipoli, as Matthew Tonks states (Tonks, 2015). There were also thousands more encamped Australian and English military personnel. The bazaars and other Cairo offerings in the seedy Wasa'a district and Alexandria's Rue des Soeurs were major recreational destinations for the soldiers who purchased among other items "[…] postcards, embroidered silk handkerchiefs and other tourist tat" from the stalls in the bazaars, as Damien Fenton describes. He also notes the difficulties encountered through differing customs, attitudes, living conditions – and general licentiousness (Fenton, 2013, pp.16-17).

NAM's Curatorial manager, Windsor Jones, noted that out of the 200 embroidery items catalogued on the database, he "realized a lot of them were souvenir items that had come out of Egypt in World War I […] so my feeling is not all of these would have been completed by women. In reality, in Egypt and Cairo a lot of them would have been completed by men" (W. Jones, personal communication 15 November 2019). This comment is considered in more detail later.

However, the more obvious deductions are that this embroidered object is a souvenir, that it is from Cairo, that it may have been intended for sale to British soldiers but a New Zealand or Australian purchaser would do equally well from a vendor's point of view, and that it is likely to have been made in 1915, which it tells us itself.

One would also deduce that this is not a skilled piece of work, shown for example in the downward sloping stitching of the blue rectangle; and that as a machine embroidery it would have been relatively quick to sew, since so much of the ground is empty. It appears to be fully machine-stitched, including the rows securing the fringing line and where this is attached to the damask, from which I deduce that it could have been sewn either at the maker's home, at a street stall or within a mechanised factory. The current overall grubby cast to the fabric could have been acquired by frequent passing around between soldiers interested in the naked female shape conveyed in any form, or by the passage of time.

4.4 Speculation

As it is not known who would have stitched this item, it is reasonable to consider the comment above which states that "many" of the souvenirs would have been produced by men. Yet it is possible that it would have been crafted by a woman, possibly on the instructions and oversight of a male relative, for sale at a bazaar stall or footpath trader; and that the piece was designed or made by a person unskilled in English, as I will show in the Research section.

In speculating about this example of tourist art and souvenir object, as Clifford might classify it (Clifford, 1988, p. 224) it is true that one possibility is that the damask could have been sold as a completed piece, however it could also have been part of a piece-work industry in which fabric was cut and fringing attached at one place or by one person, then embroidery added by another (or any other permutations of process) with the item then being put out for sale. At any point in this operation the piece may have been on-sold for completion by someone else, with a middle-man at each step. Business must surely have been good with the huge influx of foreign military "[whose] interactions with locals consisted mainly of fending off the […] street-vendors who hounded them ferociously" (Fenton, 2013, p.16).

Speculating as to the purpose of the example, it may have been envisaged as an embellishment to an existing cushion cover, since it has only one layer rather than two, so could not form the usual envelope for containing stuffing, although it could form one of the two necessary sides. However the naked woman is hardly the sort of image which would be sent home to a female relative, although as part of usual household furnishings no doubt it would have been talking point. The same would likely apply if intended for use as an embroidered wall-hanging.

It may be that instead of being purchased as a commodity the embroidery was won, perhaps in a game of cards played while filling in time between training in desert conditions, or could it have been merely a risqué souvenir with a longer life span than a paper image, being easily packed into a kitbag or uniform jacket, unfolded and repacked many times over.

Although the text is in English it does not make sense to a Westerner's eye, and I deduce that any purchaser would have been a good purchaser from the seller's point of view. The embroidered word "English" was probably merely a generic term for any of the English-speaking groups spending recreational time in Cairo in 1915 (and quicker to embroider than "Australian" or "New Zealand").

The embroidery may represent an object of derision by New Zealand servicemen toward Egyptian women – "the bitch cats" noted by Bronwyn Dalley in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (Dalley, 2006, p. 373). Did the embroidery's new owner consider Egyptian women to be beneath contempt? A study on objectifying gaze by Dixson, Grimshaw et al (as cited in Gervais, Holland and Dodd, 2013, p.558) found in a sample of New Zealand men that they concentrated their observation on breasts and waists – would the men of 1915 have been very different?

The embroidered woman depicted, being available for viewing at any time, is powerless to prevent an objectifying and salacious gaze, and as Diane Ponterotto puts it –

> The body, in other words, is territory conquered by masculine spectatorship, the site of a struggle over ownership of resources […] (Ponterotto, 2016, p.147).

Other feminist thinkers, such as Mulvey, are discussed by Shohini Chaudhuri. Chaudhuri writes that for Mulvey, fetishism isolates parts of the body for lingering viewing, thus valuing the body for its appearance only (Chaudhuri, 2006, p.37). Thus the seeing/not seeing claim of fetishism is further justified.

In the end, it is impossible to avoid the fact that this embroidery objectifies women by actively encouraging the male gaze, and thus by encouraging commerce (resources) in order to liberate the gaze, the female anatomy is effectively prostituted. Arguably, this prostitution was effected by Egyptian men through this kind of depiction of Egyptian women.

4.5 Research - Customs

As far as the maker of the embroidery is concerned, it would be true to say, as scholar Sandra Mokalled (2016, p. 10) points out, that lower-class women had higher visibility than upper-class since the former worked to provide for their families. Mokalled's thesis charting the rise of feminism in early 20th century Egypt does not discuss the type of work undertaken by these poorer women, but it is highly likely that sewing would be one way of earning money. Mokalled does record that by 1919, unwilling to continue living under a British Protectorate system, Egyptian demands for independence resulted in revolution which provided political platforms for ideological debate. While upper-class women possessed certain rights under Sharia or Islamic law, their lives were traditionally secluded, however in the unsettled political

climate these women now came forward with feminist opinions (Mokalled, 2016, pp.7-10). Earning a living would not be the sole prerogative of men and lower-class women in future.

4.5.1 Research - Damask

The Fabric Dictionary defines "damask" as follows:

> A glossy, heavy, firm-textured Jacquard weave fabric […] with flat and reversible patterns […] made of silk, linen, cotton, rayon or a combination of fibers […] and that among other things it is used for "tablecloths, napkins, home furnishings […] (Damask, Fabric Dictionary, 2005-2020).

The technique of weaving a pattern into the fabric to create damask was used in the Middle East and Byzantium and particularly in Damascus, from where it was sent around the world and certainly to neighbouring Egypt (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). The Jacquard process, refined by the invention of a particular loom attachment by Joseph-Marie Jacquard, allowed more detailed patterns to be created through the use of punch-cards fed into the attachment (Science and Industry Museum, n.d.). The case study object however has no particular pattern woven into the facing side, whereas the reverse resembles a cotton fabric and is perhaps unrefined silk. Two edges have selvedges.

This availability of damask cloth points to the ability to run a home industry probably with scores of fabric pieces for making up by an available home workforce, combined with a ready market through which, despite considerable competition, it would be possible to make a living.

4.5.2 Research – Cairo

Precise numbers of soldiery with access to Cairo in 1915 are fluid, but over 8500 men (and 4000 horses) embarked with the Main Body of the NZEF in October 1914, joined by more than 500 in the Native Contingent who arrived in 1915 (Stats NZ, 2014). This many men in a city with over 3000 licensed prostitutes (Fenton, 2013, p.16) was perhaps the Middle Eastern larger equivalent of Kororareka's 'hellhole of the Pacific" of the 1830s, considering the numbers of Cairo's hotels, bazaars and bars in 1914-15 where

> …swarms [of Australians and New Zealanders] had descended upon the area [the Wasa'a]. So began night after night of absences without leave, riotous binge-drinking sessions, and visits to brothels […] (Dunbar, 2014, p. 16).

Such an atmosphere of licentiousness would have been new to many of the soldiers and it is not surprising that saucy images such as the case study piece were acquired, purchasing such an object being rather at the lower level of sin, although definitely not to be sent home to mother.

More circumspectly, Private Thomson of the 4th Battalion Otago Regiment noted in his diary for Sunday December 6th, 1914 –

> Although it was Sunday the bustle in the streets was just the same [as any week-day]. Every shop was open for business – cafes and hotels were just as busy as every [sic] selling their wares (Thomson, 1914, p.17)

Three days later Sergeant Swan's diary records that he "Went to Cairo and bought handkerchiefs and table centre" (Swan, 1914, p.11) thus underlining that the military in training had money to spend and that it is likely that his "table centre" was purchased as both a future houseware and a souvenir.

4.5.3 Research – Stitched Text

Examining the text embroidered on the case study piece presents a riddle, in that Arabic writing is read from right to left and top to bottom (Andiamo, 2021), but even following the Western practice of reading from top to bottom and left to right, the text within the blue rectangle does not fit with Western sensibilities.

The four words from the viewer's left to right, top then bottom, are –

Glorious Humane

Allies English

Then reading from right to left and top to bottom we see: Humane Glorious / English Allies. Praise indeed from the Egyptians who, according to Fenton (2014, p.16) despised the British and made no distinction between those and the Anzacs. The laudatory embroidered words probably point to a keen interest in providing goods for sale which would appeal to the large ready market with an appetite for shopping for exotic souvenirs.

Unfortunately there is no indication in the National Army Museum's database as to a previous owner of the souvenir, whether British or a New Zealander, nor how the piece came to be in NAM's textiles collection.

4.6 Interpretive Analysis

A key point about the damask souvenir and its place in the NAM textiles collection is the almost complete lack of information pertaining to it. I found it in the collection and then accessioned and catalogued it in 2019, and it is likely that, along with several other pieces, the damask would have been in the collection unaccessioned for some years.

Speculation can take material culture study only so far at any one time, and later curators may have knowledge or perceptions to add to diverse objects. However, the absence of facts and particulars and even donor details not only gives this piece no evidence of its importance to the collection, but also shows that museum processes have received little respect. It also points to scant regard for how the collection might be shaped, and indeed the intent of the souvenir collection in the first place. This embroidery has little to recommend its presence in a box on a shelf, and without provenance it is virtually defenceless should a collection assessment be conducted. Most regrettable of all is the fact that the owner will never be known and may not even have returned to New Zealand.

As far as I can ascertain, this object was simply a piece of merchandise, a commodity, not inauthentic but not high art (Clifford, 1988, p.224). In all likelihood it was created for a transient population of males; it features a nude woman possibly bathing; it has Middle Eastern features such as an arched aperture cut high into a thick wall, and it has flattering words encompassing not just the English military but the Allies too. In terms of modern erotica it is tame, hardly even worthy of a place in the erotica category. The "web of significance" (Geertz, 1973, p.5) or the means by which we explain, interpret and interact with the practice of "culture" is fractured at best for this object. Barry Mitnick and Robert Ryan, investigating the making of meaning in institutions, state that rather than just exhibiting an object (as, for example "A souvenir of Egypt 1915"), curators must arrange it, provide a context for it, and attempt to mend its web Mitnick and Ryan, 2015, p.145). They add that such items must also be explained to viewers by people such as curators, who make meaning through interpretation. The embroidery would gain some status as a useful addition to the collection in this way.

4.6.1 Interpretive Analysis – Uncanniness and Trajectories

Whatever this embroidery lacks in terms of communicable material information, it would once have had the ability to mentally transport its owner to a particular place, time and no doubt momentous event in life. This uncanniness (Higgonet, 2007, p.65) of the connection between

object and human memory is mysterious and in the absence of first-hand memory, we must attempt to construe meanings ourselves, and especially as curators, as Nicholas Saunders believes (2004, p.5).

Higgonet (2007, p.65) suggests that war narratives are founded on objects and losses, and that with the breakages (loss, shattering, disconnection) of these narratives the problems of reconnection and reconstruction of meaning arise. Saunders reiterates this (2004, p.6) in terms of the "interpretive contextualization" of museum display objects and their individuals, in that the layers of meaning of each is an "accretion". He continues, pointing out that pre- and post-1918 souvenirs of war had very different significance, with the latter filling a market of civilian women profoundly wishing to connect with the experiences of their loved ones, painful though that may have been (Saunders, 2004, p.14). Again the uncanny power of the inanimate provides a means of relating to something or someone through intuition, imagination, speculation, or grief.

C.A. Bayly explains in an Indian context how the value of commodities lessens and they "become impersonal things" once they are subjected to market forces, clarifying how "the meaning and function of transactions in cloth [change] in response to general political and economic trends". He continues, perfectly encapsulating the point of this case study, noting that through the making and exchanging of cloth, the makers' own qualities are ingrained (Bayly, 1986, pp.285-286).

I suggest that the real value of this case study object is in the fact that it embodies a time, a place and experience and - whether through maker or purchaser - a male cultural perspective, that is, that the damask features a nude woman: men in general are not averse to images of nude women. In this regard I am applying Mulvey's empowered repetitive male gaze and Michael Cunningham's term "talismanic powers" which draw the observer to re-view repeatedly (Cunningham, 2020). This embroidery makes itself available for demonstrating this perspective through its own display. Even without interpretation, it is already telling the audience when, where and why it was made, its commodification and its forward trajectory.

The embroidery's presence and potential in the collection are in the hands of curatorial "instinct and inclination" according to museologist Gaynor Kavanagh (1990, p. xii) as well as the re-cognition of the object's ability to spirit us to a past century. The trade-off, however, as Esther Leslie (1999, p. 116) admits, is that the physical experience itself, as represented by the object, is closed to us.

4.7 Summary

4.7.1 Uncanniness and Absence

The vividness of this object, through both colour and date significance, relates to the ability to reach through time to events which we have not experienced. Even so, there are still facts missing, such as why it was purchased, by whom, and how it arrived into NAM's textiles collection. In this way, at the same time as the object is visible in our present, it also represents absence. It will have been collected by the museum because of its date, but as an object for display it offers an insight into the culture encountered by inexperienced servicemen in Cairo, preparing for war.

4.7.2 The Male Gaze

A female form is commodified on this piece of fabric as a lure to a commercial transaction, while flattering the (male) purchaser with words such as "glorious" and "humane". The stitched depiction projects that a woman is to be looked at and used, and that she is disempowered: there for the gazing – or taking – at any time. If the embroidery were made by a woman there may also be a concealed discourse of male control and belittlement (Heather Pristash, Inez Schaechterle et al., 2009, p.15); sarcasm even – was the behaviour of the Allies when in Cairo really "glorious" and humane"? The embroidery embodies a male narrative through objectifying the female form.

4.7.3 Embodiment

In NAM's textiles collection, women's service is embodied mainly through nursing uniforms, as well as Land Girls' and other clothing from supporting organisations. The demureness of these oppose the stitched form of the souvenir. Women's uniforms were initially based on masculine versions in terms of severity (Craik, 2005, p.89), however as more women entered previously masculine spaces, the former status quo threatened. With a masculine perception that women were confusing hitherto conventional roles, their uniforms combined an eroticism with power (Craik, 2005, pp.90-91). Thus seeing and not seeing (Cooper, 2017, p.422) fetishizes ambiguity (Craik, 2005, p.4). The embodiment of this confusion is clear to see on the case study souvenir embroidery.

In the third and final case study which follows, I look at the topic of comforts, altogether cooler than humid, drawing out aspects of a sewing kit.

Chapter 5 - Case Study 3 - Comfort

5.0 Introduction

In Chapter 2 I refer to the activities of J-Force in the 1940s, in particular to a case containing an uninterpreted photograph of nurses who served in post-WWII Japan. This chapter focusses on a simple object from that time, probably made by the woman who used it, whose story remains untold in the display cabinet.

The subject of case study 3 is a cooler, more approachable domestic sewing kit, probably made as a comfort, or container of necessaries, by a woman for herself. This quiet object was used in Japan at the end of WWII, then a traumatised and defeated country where defeat was unimaginable, but where, peripherally, the user of the sewing kit would have realised her own skills and independence. The kit's contents tell their own stories and the object stands as a metaphor for female independence and freedom, such characteristics being the antithesis of those permitted by a controlling cinematic male protagonist, as Mulvey describes.

The sewing kit, often known as a housewife (also spelt and pronounced *hussif)* at NAM is part of a wider group of objects known as "comforts," following a tradition of gifting to (usually) men posted overseas in wartime. The gendered name may be a double entendre turning on the fact that the object is both a go-to source for domestic haberdashery and other small, homely provisions, and a female – a housewife – being the person most likely to be the supplier of these items. Therefore this object typifies another approach to women's representation in the NAM textiles collection. And as Sarah Cooper comments when discussing Mulvey's male gaze theory, the object is "born of the ceaseless troubling of the patriarchal status quo" (Cooper, 2017, p.422).

The steps of Prown's analysis have been increased to accommodate wider exploration of this object.

5.1 Catalogue Description

From the catalogue description dated 2015:

Name/Title: WWII-Jayforce Housewife attributed to Sister Wray Corsbie.

Brief Description: Khaki drill sewing kit, with needles and cottons for mending stockings.

Figure 10: Sewing Kit contents. Catalogue No. 2015.19.7. Photograph: Author.

Figure 11: Sewing Kit closed. Catalogue No. 2015.19.7. Photograph: Author.

5.2 Description

This sewing kit is constructed of a double layer of drab cotton drill, rectangular in shape, with two undyed cotton tapes at one short end. The object's design allows it to be rolled up from the other short end and tied securely with the tapes in order to contain the contents. The corners at the tape end have been cut at an oblique angle, to make a tidier roll devoid of dog-eared corners.

In a horizontal view, most of the features of the kit's interior are placed at the cornered end (i.e. opposite the tape end). There is a full-height pocket, extending from which are two horizontal cotton tapes acting as holders for items sliding beneath; these fixed tapes run parallel to each other, ending in a vertical cotton tape to which are stitched spare buttons of differing colours, sizes and purposes. Further along from this vertical tape within the kit are two leaves of black woollen material holding needles of various sizes and pins. The leaves can be flipped over so anything pinned beneath can be retrieved.

This description points to the function of the object – as a "housewife" it is a compendium of items all serving to fulfil a function by providing small necessaries to increase the user's comfort. This it does by suggesting a sense of caring and helpfulness to someone in the field

at some theatre of war or other activity, especially military-related. It is also a sewing kit enabling the user to make repairs to uniforms or other clothing.

5.3 Contents

Contents will differ according to need; in this example the end pocket has taken on the shape of cotton reels, although none is present, and the fixed parallel cotton tapes could stash some of the eight darning and mending cards of thread which tumbled out as the housewife was first unrolled for the purposes of this case study. The tapes could also house the five paper packets of needles which feature various monotone images such as illustrations of a Victorian-style woman, or the heraldic device of an armoured arm wielding a sword, or the smaller bright red paper packet of Minx Razor Blades.

The needle packets themselves are presented as gentle and feminine, such as Milward's Duchess Needles and Sharps, the pale green Abel Morrall Ltd packet and the cherry red Sew & Sew needle cases. The thin cards which hold varying deniers of thread are both a means of advertising for brands such as "Darneezi", "Flosso", "Peri-Lusta" and "Anchor", as well providing type information and application instructions. The packets state that the thread is for darning, for example, or for mending stockings. The cards are a simple, conveniently flat and lightweight method for keeping the skeins secure and tidy.

With five buttons – some brown or tan, some pearly white – pins and a sizable darning needle, this sewing kit is full of necessities, items for running repairs. Other examples in NAM's collection are known to contain widely varying items, such as a miniature pencil, bootlaces, or whatever requisites were dictated by individual personal needs. Comparing this drab drill case study kit to the many others in the museum's collection shows it to be little changed in design from First World War examples. Although it dates to around 1947, housewives have fulfilled the same purpose: both a neat container for small objects and a reminder of and from home and family – a comfort.

5.4 Deduction

Clothing, as the narrowest definition of the concept of *dress* set out by Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne Eicher in 1995 (pp. 7-9), can be seen as embodying a person's identity or character. In the same way, other objects can also be construed as agents of selfhood, whether one's own or when interpreting another's. These authors assert that "…dress functions as an

effective means of communication during social interaction…" and that "identities communicated by dress are subject to other influences and standards" (1992, p.1).

With this physical characterisation in mind, I consider that the emotions associated with identity (for example the portrayal of "mother" being associated with the image of nurturing) make it possible to transfer this emotion, through material objects, to another person. Therefore, one could apply an instinct to oneself to nurture, in the absence of a deep connection with another person. In terms of the case study object, it may indeed be true that nurturing or caring – as a comfort - was supplied by the user herself for herself, rather than being manifested by a mother toward a daughter.

Yet the physicality of the housewife visually also leads to a pedestrian deduction, that it is intended as a carrier of useful objects. These it will keep neatly together, provide easy access, allow quick packing away and cause little weightiness in a pack or case. The contents can be reduced, increased up to a point or varied, depending on needs as the user travels from place to place.

Being made of drab khaki (a yellowish shade of beige) drill cotton, the sewing kit appears durable and utilitarian, echoed by its lack of embellishment. Scholar of Indian history Stanley Wolpert wrote for the Encyclopedia Britannica in 2019 that the colour khaki's association with the military began with the British 19th century campaign for power through trade in India. It was decided around 1848 that tightly fitted brightly coloured uniforms of the British were to be discarded, to be replaced by "khaki", "dust-coloured" or "mud-coloured" clothing for the Guides Corps, being eminently more suited to the terrain and climate of India, (Hodson-Pressinger, 2004, p. 343).

5.5 Branding

The branded contents of this homely compendium show typefaces and language ("Darneezi", "Flosso") redolent of the 1940s, according to The Advertising Archives in the U.K. The instructions printed on the packets, setting out how the threads and various needles should be applied, are helpful for the mending and darning activities which servicewomen (and men) could enact when time permitted.

5.6 Depilation

As for the "Minx" razor blades, the obsession with removal of undesired body hair is assiduously investigated by Rebecca Herzig, who explains that 18th century opinion regarded

hairlessness as the preserve of indigenous peoples (Herzig 2014, p.12). However in the following century, advertising for depilatories such as wax or creams began to gain ground with Americans generally (Herzig, pp. 40-41). This practice continues. Razors were found to be convenient tools for women (Herzig, pp. 126-127) therefore razor blades would be a necessity for hair-free legs. Hairless legs became very desirable as hems were fashionably shortened. As for the case study comfort, depilation was not the only use for a sharp blade; its other purpose was its general purpose cutting ability for threads, or perhaps an emergency hair trim.

I deduce therefore that this compendium of varied items is designed as a comfort with a practical purpose, and that it is embodying the belief that both these aspects are – or were – served, with special reference to a military context.

5.7 Discussion on Prown's Framework

In 2017 dress historians Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim suggested an alteration to Prown's investigative material culture study sequence (Mida and Kim, 2017, p.31). They proposed that the Speculation aspect can alternatively be considered as "Interpretation", since it requires a deep consideration of the object at hand. They add that "speculation" can result in confusion for students and researchers, with no clearly signposted way through and beyond this particular step.

Having the academic freedom to guess or speculate is in my opinion a gift, and has I hope been shown to be useful in my research. For Mida's and Kim's students, however, one possible solution for a seeming impasse would be to consider Clifford Geertz' theory of webs of significance (Geertz, 1973, p.5). This theory relates to "doing" ethnography, questioning behaviours influenced by a culture, and examining symbols of that culture within a particular context (Geertz, 1973, pp. 10-14). Therefore, in my view, the webs of significance could also be applied to "seeing" (i.e. Prown's deep engagement with and Mulvey's ways of seeing) material culture objects. Thus, speculations are mooted and students then move along the Prownian ladder, with Interpretation a further step along the way.

Kenneth Haltman (2000, p.6) also differs from Mida and Kim, setting out an elaboration on the speculation step of Prown's construction, asserting that speculation is where hypotheses can appear. Hypothetical scenarios may differ from interpretative ones as the former may be more wide-ranging or even fantastical than perhaps more interpretative or strictured lines of thought. Essentially this is a moot point, however the ability to offer malleable categories

accommodating more than one train of thought is, in my opinion, the major benefit of the speculative aspect of Prown's structure of material culture investigation.

5.8 Presence and Absence

I would not like to speculate on the question of the missing or the absent. As far as the case study 3 object is concerned, it is likely to have been home-made, rather than purchased, because of the simplicity of its design, and it lacks a Red Cross ink stamp or other institutional marking. Deciding what to place inside the fabric container would be a matter of personal preference, with decisions about damage to those contents within the rolled up kit and travel also needing thought. It is impossible to guess at what initially may have been placed inside and is now missing, what may have been replenished, what discarded, what rejected as not having multiple uses. Including multi-use items such as the packet of Minx razor blades for depilation or any other razoring eventuality would have been a key consideration.

Despite this amount of missing information about the original contents, the housewife is in fact the most complete of all the case study objects because of what is present – known – about the owner and her war service, accounting perhaps for the lack of eeriness referred to in case study 2. To me, this case study's suite of items has an intuitive familiarity and a friendliness not manifested by the objects in case studies 1 and 2.

5.9 Research - J-Force

The object on which case study 3 is centred has a rich provenance securely documented by many institutions such as NZDF Personnel Archives; databases including Nominal Rolls; publications, for example Kendall and Corbett's extensive 1990 history of New Zealand military nursing, and personal diaries.

The extensive background of the former owner of the sewing kit includes her military service with J-Force, the focus of this section.

According to Laurie Brocklebank (1997, p.1, p.28) J-Force was officially brought into existence in October 1945 for the purpose of joining Allied occupation of Japan under the terms of that country's acceptance of the Allies' Joint Declaration. This demanded Japanese capitulation in order to bring about the end of WWII. Brocklebank goes on to state that New Zealand's role was to form an army brigade and an RNZAF fighter squadron to contribute to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force known as BCOF, which included groups from India, Australia and Britain. Thus, around 4000 troops awaiting a return to New Zealand from

Europe were instead sent to Yamaguchi Province on the island of Honshu, Japan, as counterparts to the sizable American occupation contingent (Brocklebank, 1997, p.4, p.6). They remained in Japan until 1948 (Parr, 2012, p.22).

5.9.1 Research - Sister Wray Corsbie

Accompanying the sewing kit at the time of its donation was a letter in which a relative of the donor describes the owner, Miss (later Sister) Wray Cecile Corsbie. She was said to be "dedicated […] with a strong Christian faith" and a woman who "dearly wanted to enlist during the Second World War" (personal communication, n.d.).

However, fearing for her daughter's safety, Mrs Corsbie forbade her daughter to serve in WWII, and I see this decision as central to the purpose of the future sewing kit with its self-nurturing undertones.

It was not until 1947 that Miss Corsbie took matters into her own hands, volunteering for service in the New Zealand Army Nursing Service in June of that year. Given the officer rank of Sister, she was then posted as part of J-Force to 6 New Zealand General Hospital (6NZGH) in Kiwa, Japan. Here Miss Corsbie served as a civilian bacteriologist or laboratory technician from 15th July 1947 until her discharge on 7th November 1948 (NZ Defence Force, 2020).

Sherayl McNabb records that 6NZGH was set up in 1946 and comprised a 300-bed hospital staffed by personnel from a former casualty clearing station in Italy (McNabb, 2015, p.305). Brocklebank expands on the difficulties of hospital life with inadequate facilities and high workloads associated with inoculations, as well as caring for patients with diseases attributed to poor hygiene, venereal disease, accidents and injuries. As a bacteriologist, Sister Corsbie would have carried a great deal of responsibility, particularly during a mumps epidemic, with typhus and cholera also present (Brocklebank, 1997, pp.150-151). He also notes that servicewomen were required to be escorted outside camp environments (Brocklebank, 1997, p.110).

Sister Corsbie's own archive of papers deposited with the National Army Museum indicates a loving relationship with her mother ("Dearest Mumsie") despite having been forbidden to serve in WWII. She enjoyed work social events "We sang and danced all night and had a wonderful supper" (letter Wray Corsbie to Marion Corsbie, 21 September 1947), in the same letter describing a novel method of shopping via the gift train. This little train chugged along near

all the local military camps and was provisioned with clothing, fabrics and many other items, among which, Wray wrote, "I bought …stockings".

Later that year Sister Corsbie was writing to her mother –

> …It was a great party and I was well looked after and was sorry to see the bint waggon arriving at 11.15 p.m. to take us home. (Letter, Wray Corsbie to Marion Corsbie, 25 November 1947).[1]

In her professional life, Miss Corsbie was involved in the introduction of laboratories in several New Zealand hospitals while working as a nurse from the 1930s intermittently to the 1950s (Corsbie, personal communication, n.d.). Post military service, one such was the Norfolk Hospital in Tauranga, of which Dr Paul Mountfort wrote in 2015:

> The Board readvertised the post [around 1950-1953] and Miss Wray Corsbie a Technologist from Auckland Hospital was appointed. She was a perfectionist and set about setting up a high class laboratory to serve not only the hospital but also the general practitioners (Mountfort, 2015).

This extract seems to describe an intelligent, educated, practical and competent woman, probably one of few women bacteriologists at the time. Clearly, Sister Corsbie was well regarded for her professionalism, no doubt honed during her service with the New Zealand Army Nursing Service (NZANS).

It was during this period in Tauranga that Wray met and married Anglican minister Ken McGechie. Mrs Corsbie had previously forbidden an earlier marriage between her daughter and a serving J-Force member (personal communication, n.d.). Mrs Corsbie is once again dictating her daughter's life course, first by not permitting Miss Corsbie to serve in WWII, then disallowing a marriage. Neither of these events seems to have disrupted the relationship between mother and daughter, but the representation of independence through the sewing kit is potent.

In *The Occupiers*, Alison Parr's examination of New Zealand veterans' memories in post-war Japan, one interviewee mentions the acquisition of parachute silk via an unguarded cave:

[1] "Bint", an "informal, derogatory British term for girl or woman", from the mid-19th century Arabic for "daughter, girl" (2020, Lexico.com).

> We would […] rescue the parachutes, and they were silk. And of course these nurses went home with arms full of silk. […] Luckily nobody came to check up what was going on. (Parr, 2012, p. 158.)

As part of the donation of Sister Wray Corsbie's effects, a "book of silk thread" is another entry on the NAM receipt form, appearing not to be part of the "khaki drill sewing kit" and "cottons for mending" also itemised on the same form. This book of silk thread has been catalogued separately and stored with the sewing kit, and has an earlier appearance of perhaps the 1920s or 1930s. The silks' colours, wound around three leaves, are primarily pink and lilac shades, such as an older woman might wear, for example Mrs Marion Corsbie, Miss Corsbie's mother. As a stiff-covered object of bulky approximately A5 size, it is unlikely that it would have been taken to Japan but in any case, perhaps Sister Corsbie did own clothing items made of parachute silk, hence the need for this special thread rather than the everyday wools for darning and hosiery mending as found with this example of a comfort.

5.9.2 Research – Needle Manufacturers

Two major English needle manufacturers are represented within the sewing kit; Milward's and Abel Morrall Ltd, both of Redditch, Worcestershire. Needle-making is said to have arrived in England in the 17th century, with these two manufacturers being founded in 1730 and 1785 respectively, according to Anthony Green's 2015 history of the area. Initially a cottage industry in Redditch, by implementing water-powered industrial methods the town was able to produce 50 million sewing needles per week by the mid-19th century for international export as Kate McLaren recounts (McLaren, 2015).

Subtle messages of strength and dominion seem to be expressed through the packaging of needles, for example the heraldic symbol on the H. Milward & Sons 3/7 Drilled Ey'd Sharps. This features a raised armoured arm holding horizontally a weapon said to signify the quality of leadership (Heraldry & Crests, 2020). Milward's "Duchess" needles show the head and bust of an elegant woman dressed, presumably, in garments hand sewn with that company's needles, while the Abel Morrall Ltd ("Over a Century's Reputation") pale green paper packet is named simply "The Flora MacDonald".

This reference to Flora is somewhat mysterious, but historian Evelyn Laidlaw records Flora's moment in history as being connected to the aftermath of the 1746 Battle of Culloden between Catholic Jacobite loyalists, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, and the Hanoverian George II. The Prince's forces were defeated and, managing to escape, the Prince at one point owed his life to

Flora MacDonald who assisted in the Prince's evading capture, enabling his return to France and safety (Laidlaw, 2006, p.219).

Further, Flora witnessed the American Revolution after her emigration to America, although she subsequently returned to Scotland (Laidlaw, 2006, p. 219). Perhaps this romanticised character was simply widely acclaimed as a loyal, adventurous woman, her likeness becoming an adjunct to a brand and thus an inducement to purchase Abel Morrall's robust "sharps".

It can be seen, therefore, that the case study 3 sewing kit or housewife fits the profile of a comfort. It does this through its contents (none of Japanese origin), necessities such as darning wool and specialised needles. Such items may well have been unavailable in a Japan exhausted by war and traumatised by the horror of atom bomb desolation, not to mention the cultural and political dishonour of capitulation. The provenance set out substantiates the probability that the owner made the housewife herself as an act of determination to undertake military service despite parental wishes.

5.10 Interpretive Analysis

It is the physical contents which reveal how "comfort" is manifested by this sewing kit. It was made to be a practical aid to life in post-war Japan, and is likely to have been provisioned in New Zealand. The contents would have been immediately to hand, and were common enough to have been shared and replaced. If the donor did make the housewife herself, by doing so she was enabling herself to be independent and to meet military, professional and civilian dress standards.

While Miss Corsbie was clearly a practical woman, sitting and stitching in off-duty moments may well have provided the comfort of reflection while working on a small task with the aid of yarns and necessaries from home. Deborah Tout-Smith describes the role of the Australian Comforts Fund and the range of "luxury" goods it provided to soldiers during WWI (Tout-Smith, 2013). The Fund understood that the vision of home and nurturing were all part of the "comfort" and this has not changed; this case study object fulfils the same requirements, and is one in that long and honourable line of items with the same function.

The object is clearly an example of the way in which women are represented in the NAM textiles collection; women have not been the primary user-collecting source, and such female-related objects as the collection holds are the result of the original gendered collecting decisions forming the basis of this collection. Yet despite this object's owner and user being a proficient

and qualified member of the NZ military in an overseas theatre, it has been subject to a male gaze through what Mulvey describes as "filtering ways of understanding […]" (Mulvey, 2001, p.5), in this case a lack of research or display interpretation. The active nature of the object, however, easily disrupts its assigned position in the collection (Devereaux, 1990, p.344).

NAM holds around 800 objects named as comforts. If these comforts were originally practical gifts for male soldiers (NAM's dating from the 19th century South African Wars) this one has been used later, immediately post-victory in Europe 1945, donated later (21st century). It exemplifies a complete example with established provenance relating to a servicewoman. Its female embodiment is illustrated through provenance and content because this kit contains items unique to a woman rather than a man (thread for the repair of nylon stockings, for example).

It is possible too that there is a general conviction that women are more likely to have crafted and stocked such sewing kits than men, which may be one of the gender biases of which "we are largely unaware", as Prown puts it (1993, p.25). Certainly, there are images and enough history to confirm that Women's Institutes and Red Cross groups comprised women who sewed housewives and handkerchiefs, and knitted socks, caps, scarves and mittens, as Nancy Taylor records (Taylor, 1986, p.1054).

Therefore the case study object is one of the few in the collection potentially made, stocked used and donated by women, thus through this report the kit's purpose and the owner's gender have made "the unnoticed noticed" (Devereaux, 1990, p.345).

5.11 Summary

5.11.1 Feminism

Feminism provides a perspective which differs from the norm, the norm being a patriarchal view (Devereaux, 1990, p.347) prevalent in NAM's textiles collection. Challenging the existing situation through research shows that the sewing kit represents female enterprise and technical ability.

5.11.2 A Curatorial Challenge

Creating feminine agency to uncover women's military service narratives would benefit the Museum. Highlighting outwardly simple objects for a dialogue between the Museum and its visitors and its service stakeholders would display a much more balanced and updated

appearance. Gaining “power off-screen” as Devereaux puts it in reference to Mulvey’s cinematic founding of the male gaze (Devereaux, 1990, p.347) would support powerful stories in the future.

This section are now concluded, and the following chapter discusses the findings from the case studies.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.0 Introduction

Wanting deep engagement with all aspects of the case study objects, I chose the Prownian framework for examining them. All aspects were thus discernible in terms of what they signified. Equally, the Prownian steps enable a speculative view, which I have applied to aspects which are absent from the object, but which could throw further light on it, for example, lack of provenance. The case study 1 garment is only "thought to be" a Viet Cong woman's bodice, but logical reasons for thinking this are uncovered through the framework. While stimulating useful deductions and rationalising my thoughts through research, the framework also fostered creative thoughts, speculation and deduction, allowing me to make some wide interpretive conclusions.

I found that there were many aspects to undertaking this research. Professional practice appeared to have not been implemented during the earlier years since the Museum's founding, as indicated by the collections database, which many anomalies. For many reasons, such as lack of resources, it is only comparatively recently that museum-trained staff have been employed. For this research's question, to some extent it was inevitable that a male perspective over the textiles collection would have been applied, because initially only men were involved with the collection, predictably causing a lesser focus on the women-related part of the holding. Also, it seems that there would have been less provenance-gathering and research of that group prior to the collecting policy dated 2006.

I now discuss the findings.

6.1 The Male Perspective

It is true that women's military contribution has been less than that of men: women were not accepted into the NZ Army until 1977. The disparity in numbers is seen at first hand at NAM's textiles collection. Here there are approximately 3350 parts of men's garments, versus the approximately 370 of women's basic uniform components, out of a collection totalling over 10,000 items. In terms of the research question, should the late arrival into the Army's Regular Force be sufficient reason for under-researching female related objects? Shouldn't researching women-related objects offer new insights from which the Museum's displays would benefit? I suggest that new perspectives on the activities undertaken by women as war service or social contribution should sit alongside the displayed textiles as insightful narrative.

On the other hand, it is probably unreasonable to expect a knowledgeable or particularly interested approach from Army servicemen untrained in museum or cultural studies. These early employees were thrust into a position requiring them to assemble, receipt, catalogue, research, display and interpret a textiles collection, which is unlikely to have excited engineers, mechanics or administrators, for example.

And probably not just servicemen. Lou Taylor notes the "scorn" of many historians for academic interest in dress. She states that the "patiently acquired, specialised skills" required to work on object-based research (such as identification, display, interpretation) have been underrated by many historians (Taylor, 1998, pp.347-348). Although in Mida and Kim's opinion, studying material culture has been mainly practiced through art history and anthropology to incorporate a female voice (2015, p.12). Even so, a modicum of understanding, if only from an unskilled perspective, could have been evinced toward NAM's women-related textiles.

The Army Museum, dominated by male leaders and employees until recently, now has an opportunity to shape the collection and update displays, not least through structured positive collecting. With the roles led by women in NZDF, more opportunities exist for this curatorial process. As an example, the NZDF Staff Sergeant named Person of the Year (2020), noted for her competence and capabilities, serves in the Royal NZ Army Logistics Regiment (Army News, 2020, p.2).

As far as philosopher Mary Devereaux's feminist position is concerned, a male view is associated with a patriarchal society, meaning that within that hegemony women must define their own identities. The gaze, therefore, suppresses women (Devereaux, 1990, p.337).

6.1.2 Meanings

The deductions from each case study illustrate themes of value or commodification (embroidery), embodiment of belief and resistance (bodice) or an expression of practicality and nurturing "comfort" (sewing kit), all of which speak to layered meanings beyond simple acquisition of the objects. These are discussed as follows.

6.1.3 Value

In terms of desirability, all the case study objects vindicate the worth (or value) ascribed to them - two originally as curios/other, one as a utility, and now as museum objects. They provide direct connections with the past, illustrating lives and experiences and this is their

value. They also embody past political decisions "modifying or maintaining institutions to mobilise or silence values" to paraphrase Smith (Smith, 2016, p.9). The values have been silenced through a way of thinking which has not recognised (decoded) the messages which the objects are capable of imparting, therefore disallowing their female voice.

The value of those items is in what they can offer the Museum, although being "museumised" imbues the objects with a different importance to that given by their maker or vendor. If objects are not displayed or researched, they do not signal their value. Value, or importance, has been systemised into certain categories, such as "symbolic exchange value", relating to gift circulation (donation) and the relationship between objects and a subject. "Sign value" is about conveying the social status of the owner – hence the drive to collect, according to Daniela Rogobete (Rogobete et al., 2015, p.1). Yet the case study items reflect virtually no such relationship, showing such low social status that the Museum seems to have ascribed little importance to them.

Once in the museum, in other words having travelled through the authentication system as discussed by Clifford (1988, pp. 223-224), the object reaches the high point of its trajectory. There is nowhere else to go unless it is researched, placed on display within a context, or as Museum Studies Lecturer Susan Dudley puts it, is allowed to continue "living" (Dudley, 2012, pp.1-2). In terms of my research question, "living" has not been permitted for these objects, however in terms of Mulvey's theory of ways of viewing, the case study objects have "burst through" the patriarchal perspective prevalent in NAM's collection, by coming to my attention. (Mulvey, 1975, p.18).

The textiles collection's value is in its breadth. It could be even more important, nationally, if future collecting is underwritten by good curatorial practice and care is taken to right the balance, as far as possible, between genders, research, and provenance gathering as early as possible in the donation acceptance process.

6.1.4 Embodiment of Belief

As I have shown in chapter 3, the question of traditional clothing as uniform has been studied by academics Nathan Joseph (1986), Dicky Yangzom (2016) and others such as the authority on uniforms, Jennifer Craik (2005), who have all expressed various perspectives. Joseph notes that uniformity of clothing is often concealed until successful realisation of a movement's goals is within reach (Joseph, 1986, p.138), while Yangzom believes that traditional garb can give an impression of obedience, while masking oppositional beliefs (Yangzom, 2016, pp.622-623).

Craik (2005, p.5) states that uniforms are used to send signals about power and relationships. All of these theories point to clothing's being an expression of belief of one kind or another, and this is strongly applicable to the case study 1 uniform.

This small garment has the power to generate a physical effect – recoil – and is worthy of display and discussion, symbolising as it does toil, anonymisation, and either submission or opposition to a political system.

6.1.5 Memory

The power of this effect is not just physical and numerical – more men's uniforms than women's, for example. If there is only a male gaze in collection or display, it could be possible to forget individual memories in favour of second-hand (curated) memories, as academic Silke Arnold-de Simine suggests (2013, p.29). This would mean that the opposite of what is actually portrayed would also be true: that the Gallipoli campaign was a harrowing error; that women's memories are as meaningful as men's; that women are as much a component of fighting forces as men; that a small black bodice might provoke, 50 or so years later, useful discussion about state-led violence, or New Zealand's presence in international crises.

The museal fact of curated remembering (Hirsch, as cited in Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 30) shows just how important family albums are for unadulterated personal memory retention, and also that women are most often the storehouses for such narratives as well as intimate family matters. If these memory-keepers are silenced, the channel of memory communication dries up – and this alone must be impetus for NAM's incorporating much more about women's participation in the New Zealand Army's activities, whether through provenance-gathering or exhibition.

To discuss curated remembering/memory-forgetting, the painful stories of New Zealand men taken prisoner of war are well documented elsewhere and by NAM's mock-up of a prison camp bunk amid various PoW artifacts from WWII. However a story untold in the Museum is that of Lilian Gladys Tompkins, detailed by Rae Tiach (2000). Born in the Manawatū, this nurse was imprisoned in Changi Prison for four years. Tompkins' diaries and paintings (held in the Alexander Turnbull Library) are equally important in NZ's military history, yet her narrative of privation and endurance is absent from NZ's military museum.

6.2 NAM's Macro-Environment

The National Army Museum is a member of Museums Aotearoa (MA). This is New Zealand's independent professional association for the country's public museums and galleries, and their staff and volunteers (Museums Aotearoa, 2020).

In turn, MA belongs to the International Council for Museums (ICOM) which, currently, commits to

> …the research, conservation, continuation and communication to society of the world's natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible (ICOM, Museum Definition, 2007).

NAM is an institution with a single narrative while also offering education, research and channels, such as videos, for experiencing a curated, controlled past. Yet museums are also "polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures" (ICOM, 2019).

This discourse is absent from NAM which, while offering the services above, shows only what is deemed necessary for the public to see, bypassing the "forum" aspect of what museums are for. One small black blouse, or one pink embroidery could open dialogues beyond nostalgia and pride, to "pluralism and tolerance" as Arnold-de Simine proposes (2013, pp. 119-120), not to mention incorporating the voices of military women. Using NAM's textiles collection as pathways to discussion about "us" would show diversity not only of people but of thought.

6.3 Diversity

To further consider my research question, I would like to amplify the discussion around the textiles collection, the Museum and the New Zealand Army, since the Museum operates within the macro-environment of the Army and NZDF. The following is one of numerous examples.

In an *Army News* article, (2020, p. 24) Captain Nerissa Chapman outlines the current approach to integrating a gender perspective in her organisation. She explains that "Gender Advisors", part of a high level advisory group currently including herself and Wing Commander Allison Wells, occupy roles in which they are *expected* to provide gendered perspectives in the military. In particular, they -

> ensure the key objectives of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) and related resolutions are achieved.

War has a disproportionately heavy impact on females (Chapman, 2020, p.24). Gender Advisors therefore are important in post-conflict reconstruction, conflict resolution and peace-keeping. Chapman writes that the advisors' roles are not exclusive to women, explaining that their professional "situational awareness" also impacts operational environments in such places as Afghanistan (Chapman, 2020, p.24). Carrying out humanitarian duties, facilitating university study, enabling professional development for Afghani women – these green shoots toward post-war restoration of normality are not recognised at NAM, yet are highly likely to encourage conversation among prospective career servicewomen, and the public. This empathy between women of different cultures tells a social history story, and through related textiles would, I believe, contribute to strengthening NAM's textiles collection.

Hearing in the Museum the narratives of these outward-looking Army roles would encourage contemporary textiles donations, and the sense that NAM is a vibrant organisational resource, rather than one which seems left behind as the Army moves forward. Well interpreted, the textiles collection, through its displays, should offer taxpayers – arguably the most important stakeholder group – the democratic right to discuss and debate operations or organisations which it funds.

Returning to Andy Smith's definition of politics:

> *activity to modify or maintain institutions that either mobilizes values explicitly, or seeks to silence them* (Smith, 2016, p.9).

This definition could inform a strategy to substantially improve the shape of and research into the textiles collection. Smith's explanation would also support a reconsideration of how best the Museum can present its interpretation of the New Zealand Army's role in our often contested military history. An ongoing effect would be that more representative displays would enhance the visitor experience.

A diverse organisation with a diverse role: reflecting this should give the Museum impetus to collect to illustrate the true range of the Army's activities and personnel.

The final chapter will attempt to distil ways for this research to be applied to other heritage collections, but especially those of NZ's military museums.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

7.0 Introduction

This research report seeks to question whether a patriarchal view has prevailed in the National Army Museum's textiles collection, and, if so, whether this has resulted in a secondary effort to collect and research women-related textiles over the years.

It is true that there is a far smaller holding of female-related textiles to males'. For example, in terms of uniforms alone, the women's grouping is approximately 11% of the size of the men's holding. This disparity is reflected in the Museum's displays.

The case studies in this research show that many of the objects in the textiles collections are under-researched. I have set out how the selected three objects could have an important place in how the Museum tells its military story: through women's familial independence in service, women's resistance to invasion, and women's objectification for commerce.

In conclusion, I suggest that there are two outcomes which could be applied to this research. These could inform how NAM confronts its current and future presentation of our national story.

7.1 Ways for Change

Crucially, a female gaze "marks out neglected territory" because it does not form part of Mulvey's male gaze theory in which masculinity is active, femininity passive. A female gaze does not, however, merely take a mirror view of its opposite, because it can entail another way of viewing (female gaze, Oxford Reference, 2021) such as experiences, attitudes and viewpoints. So that NAM can achieve a better balance in terms of collecting, a female gender bias framed as a project with a stated time period could be enabled. This could comprise either an outward-looking plan for considered provenance-gathering and research, or regular amounts of time set aside for research on the existing collection.

A collection policy review could also be undertaken. In the current document dated 2006, the textiles collection is referred to as "Uniforms and Accoutrements", however those two groups now operate as separately curated departments. With the document's emphasis on "soldiers" (National Army Museum, SOP Part 6, 2006, pp.1-5) the values of the Museum would be clearer if aspects of women's service could be incorporated in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). In particular, allowing for projects as suggested above.

7.2 Mobilising Values

In museum collections, authentication reflects value, and value to the museum is two-fold. First, the museum acts as a guardian of memory, often transforming this into nostalgia (Arnold-de Simine, 2013, p. 129), and second, the value is silent until it is seen. If objects are not seen and given their context, value withers and object lives are in limbo, their trajectories cut short.

Scholar James Clifford claims that Western collecting is usually reflective of "a possessive self, culture, and authenticity" or a "need to have" (Clifford, 1988, p.218) could be examined in the context of the military museum landscape. "Having" means curating entire collections, rather than selecting or managing them along gendered lines. Clifford's assertion is just one part of a wider question, which is the value to NAM of its silent collection.

I have shown how lack of research combined with a male world view has affected not only the textiles collection but the Museum's displays in general. There may be ways in which other military heritage collections can build on this research for their own institutions.

7.3 Finally – the Universe

As museologist Susan Pearce pointed out, "collections are essentially a narrative of experience; as objects are a kind of material language" (as cited in Dudley et al., 2012, p. 221).

A narrative is not merely a collection of chronological facts but a dialogue; a dialogue engages and builds on knowledge; knowledge expands personal universes. Personal universes depend on dialogue for sustenance, and the sustenance of museums is personal narrative. For NAM, an exciting and diverse perspective on the textiles treasures it holds, and displays, could be just around the corner.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Mission Statement of The National Army Museum Te Mata Toa

To engage New Zealanders with our soldiers [sic] *stories, history and the development of our Army. To show how these have shaped our identity as a country and our place in the world, thereby helping create a nation which understands and values its military.* https://www.armymuseum.co.nz/about-us/

Appendix 2

Directors of the National Army Museum Te Mata Toa

1978-81	Major Bob Withers
1981-85	Major Gordon Stevenson
1985-88	Major Peter Nelson
1989-90	Major Dave Mowatt
1990-92	Major Garry Clayton
1992-93	Major Peter Pitts
1993-95	Major Richard Taylor
1998	Major Colin Hodkinson
1999-2002	Captain V. Pomana
2002-2007	Major Chas Charlton
2007-2012	Colonel Ray Seymour
2013-2015	Mrs Jeanette Richardson (directorship civilianised)
2015-2018	Ms Tracy Puklowski
2018-2019	Windsor Jones (interim)
2019-present	Ms Maree Brannigan

Appendix 3

Curators of the National Army Museum Te Mata Toa

This role has traditionally been held by one Curator with responsibility for all collection departments, supported by a number of Assistant Curators. In 2019, position titles were changed so that the Curator became the Museum Collections and Exhibitions Manager, and the assistants became Curators in their own right.

1999-present Windsor Jones, Manager, Museum Collections and Exhibitions

2007-2016 Sue Stevens, Assistant Curator Textiles

2017-present Philippa Harrison, Curator Textiles

Appendix 4

Interview Schedule

5.11.2019 – Curator, Air Force Museum

12.11.2019 – Curator, Navy Museum

15.11.2019 – Curatorial Manager, National Army Museum Te Mata Toa