

Homogenous Heroes, Selective Memory & Exclusive Myth:

Representations of War and Military
History in Modern Australian and
New Zealand Children's Literature

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Children's literature is a key means by which societies, cultures and nations indoctrinate the next generation with their values, beliefs and collective memory. In Australia and New Zealand, war has become an increasingly popular theme within modern children's literature. In both countries, these texts have been used to depict, disseminate and maintain certain perspectives about military history. The ANZAC legend, gender roles, representations of 'the enemy' and the glorification of war and militarism have all been central themes within children's books. However, the perpetuation and subversion of these themes over the past two decades have signalled a gradual evolution within the area of children's literature and historiography. Reflecting on how war and military history is represented to younger generations is particularly pertinent in light of the upcoming centenary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli and the start of the campaign which gave birth to the Anzac Legend.¹ This article will focus on how the experience of war is represented in modern Australian and New Zealand children's literature and the relationship between these representations and both countries' national historiography.

Within Australia and New Zealand, the term ANZAC has become intrinsically intertwined with the politics of national identity.² In both countries, World War One and, in particular, the landings at Gallipoli are commemorated as a form of national self-actualisation, the moment when both nations discovered their own distinct national character and culture.³ The stories of bravery,

1 Leon Davidson, *Scarecrow Army: The Anzacs at Gallipoli* (Melbourne: Black Dog Books, 2005), 169.

2 Marilyn Lake, 'How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?', in Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds and Mark McKenna (eds.), *What's Wrong With Anzac?: The Militarisation of Australian History* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010), 154.

3 Deborah Montgomerie, 'Reconnaissance: Twentieth-Century New Zealand War History at Century's Turn,' *New Zealand*

mateship and larrikinism which arose from the Gallipoli campaign were seen as emblematic of the Australian and New Zealand spirit.⁴ These characteristics came to be associated with the ANZAC digger and were largely disseminated through the work of war correspondents, particularly that of C.E.W. Bean.⁵ However, since its inception, the ANZAC Legend has been the subject of ongoing elaboration and manipulation which has led many historians to question not only what the ANZAC Legend is, but what role it serves.⁶ Indeed, the power of the ANZAC legend itself is such that, for some Australians and New Zealanders, questioning its purpose may seem like sacrilege. However, to suggest that the ANZAC Legend came about naturally would be to ignore its deep-seated political roots. Historian Marilyn Lake argued that 'each generation moulds the Anzac Legend for its own purpose'.⁷ The effects of changing socio-political climates are reflected in the changing depiction of the ANZAC story from being 'furious killers' in 1915 to 'cool and confident killers' in 1940, the rejection of 'Britishness' in the 1980s through to the popularisation of the legend contemporarily.⁸ However, in Australia, the ANZAC Legend was taken a step further by John Howard's government which saw the resurgence of ANZAC commemoration to the point that it had begun synonymous with patriotism.⁹ Successive governments have also continued this tradition of jingoism though, as historian Carolyn Holbrook points out, none as much as John Howard.¹⁰ It is this continued politicisation of military history which calls into question what message is being relayed to young people not only about what war and ANZAC means, but also about the values of the societies in which they live.

From the early to mid-twentieth century, Australia and New Zealand shared a common deficiency of children's books about war. Following World War One, the scarce number of war stories for children which did exist were extracted from adult texts such as *The ANZAC Book*¹¹ (1916) (a collection of satirical stories, illustrations and poetry created by ANZAC soldiers at Gallipoli) and appropriated for a child audience. Given that it was normally only possible to publish overseas¹² both countries were largely reliant upon children's books imported from Britain. During World War Two this market was extended to include the United States. American books such as *Scuttlebutt Goes to War* (1943)¹³ and the British texts *War on Land*, *War at Sea* and *War in the Air* (1940),¹⁴ provided a balance of fiction and information texts about the war. In Australia, the demand for these books was so strong that some libraries published appeals in local newspapers requesting

Journal of History 37:1 (2003), 62.

4 Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2004), 15.

5 Christopher Pugsley, 'Stories of Anzac,' in Jenny Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: Making History* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 47.

6 Marilyn Lake, 'Introduction: What Have you Done for your Country?,' in *What's Wrong With Anzac?*, 22.

7 Mark McKenna, 'How Did It Become Australia's National Day?,' in *What's Wrong With Anzac?*, 120.

8 McKenna, 'How Did It Become Australia's National Day?,' 121; Sonja Bates, 'The Anzac Day Legend: Its Origins, Meaning, Power and Impact on Shaping Australia's Identity,' (Master's Thesis, University of Sydney, 2013), 28.

9 Seal, *Inventing Anzac*, 4.

10 Carolyn Holbrook, *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 204.

11 C. E. W. Bean (ed.), *The Anzac Book*, 3rd ed. (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

12 Clare Bradford, 'Australian Children's Literature' in Peter Pierce (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 284; Martyn Lyons and John Arnold, 'Introduction,' in Martyn Lyons and John Arnold (eds.), *A History of the Book in Australia, 1891-1945: A National Culture in a Colonised Market* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2001), xviii.

13 Margaret Friskey and Lucia Patton, *Scuttlebutt Goes to War* (Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Corporation, 1943).

14 Owen Dudley Edwards, *British Children's Fiction in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 277.

donations of 'war books for small boys'.¹⁵ Despite this, by the end of World War Two, only fifteen per cent of books sold in Australia were of Australian origin, even fewer were for children and almost none were about the war.¹⁶ Unlike the United States and Britain, Australia and New Zealand's collection of war stories for children remained scarce until the mid-1990s.

The proliferation of war literature for children in the 1990s brought about a number of challenges with regards to fact versus fiction in Australian and New Zealand historiography. The rise of the 'factional' in children's war books sparked debate over whether historical accuracy should be sacrificed for entertainment or didactic purposes.¹⁷ Scholars such as Sara Buttsworth argued that texts such as Jennifer Beck's *The Bantam and the Soldier* (1997) and John Lockyer's *Lottie: Gallipoli Nurse* (1998) are two examples of children's literature which offer such fragmented views of history that they are 'more confusing than illuminating'.¹⁸ This confusion is also manifest in many Australian texts such as Gary Crew's *Memorial* (1999) which traces the story of three generations' experiences of war around the life of a local fig tree. While the text demonstrates the generational effect of war, by referring to multiple wars and distinguishing them solely by the characters Old Pa (World War One), Pa (World War Two) and Dad (Vietnam), the text is dependent on the young reader's prior knowledge of military conflicts. More recently, Phil Cummings and Owen Swan's *ANZAC Biscuits* (2013) focuses on the experiences of a young girl who decides to make ANZAC biscuits for her father who is fighting in an undisclosed war overseas. However, apart from depictions of gloomy-looking soldiers and muddy, snow-filled fields, the text omits any reference to the historical context in which the story is set. The reader is not informed what year it is, where the girl's father is stationed or the nationality of the characters themselves. In some cases the text even overlooks key historical realities which may have lent validity to the story, such as the effects of rationing on the homefront or even the reasons *why* soldiers were sent ANZAC biscuits. In this respect, children's war literature has become increasingly reliant on the reader's prior knowledge, thus increasing the need for adults to act as intermediaries between the literature and the child audience. A key reason for this reliance may be due to the extent that the ANZAC legend permeates Australia's social and national fabric, leading to the assumption that it simply does not need to be explained.

Along with the increasing dependence on adult guidance, adult control over children's war literature has also been manifest in the portrayal of war and nationalism as being inextricably intertwined. As discussed earlier, this glorification of war and militarism has its roots in the ANZAC legend. The front cover image of *The Anzac Book* [Figure 1.0] has become a touchstone for representing the 'typically Australian'¹⁹ soldier. Figure 1.0, Figure 2.0 and Figure 3.0 illustrate how the representation of the ANZAC legend has become synonymous with symbols of masculinity

15 'Patrons of Children's Library Seek War Books,' *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), January 24, 1940, 10.

16 Lyons, *A History of the Book in Australia*, xviii.

17 Catherine Butler and Hallie O'Donovan, *Reading History in Children's Books* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5; Christina Olin-Scheller and Michael Tengberg, "'If It Ain't True, Then It's Just a Book!': The Reading and Teaching of Faction Literature,' *Journal of Research in Reading* 35(2012), 154.

18 Sara Buttsworth, 'From Bedpans to Bulldogs: "Lottie: Gallipoli Nurse" and the Pitfalls of Presenting War to the Young,' in Maartje Abbenhuis and Sara Buttsworth (eds.), *Restaging War in the Western World: Non-Combatant Experiences, 1890 – Today* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 146.

19 Ann Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology,' *Journal of Australian Studies* 23(61) (1999), 7.

and the 'valorisation of the visual',²⁰ with each image portraying the ANZAC soldier as white, tall, strong and able-bodied. The strategic positioning of rifles and the use of low-angle shots further solidify the 'hero type'²¹ by making the soldiers appear larger-than-life. The perpetuation of this image in children's literature effectively omits individuals who do not fit this criterion, such as Indigenous soldiers, wounded and limbless veterans, members of other age categories and different cultural groups. In this respect, children's books have played a crucial role in both defining and perpetuating the ANZAC legend by linking it with notions of war, masculinity and heroism.



Figure 1.0: 'The Anzac Book,' 1916.



Figure 2.0: 'The Sky Soldiers,' by Glyn Harper with illustrations by Warren Mahy, first published by Reed Books in 2005.



Figure 3.0: 'Photographs in the Mud,' by Dianne Wolfer with illustrations by Brian Harrison-Lever, first published by Fremantle Press in 2005 <http://www.fremantlepress.com.au/books/picturebooks/937?keywords=wolfer&x=0&y=0>

The representation of gender roles in wartime has led to the development of a gendered dichotomy between active men and inactive women within children's literature.²² With much emphasis being placed on the adventures, sacrifice and violence of men's war experiences, little attention has been paid to women. While texts such as Tonkin's *What was the War like, Grandma?* (1995)²³ attempt to recognise women's war service, this acknowledgement is mostly limited to aspects such as rationing and child-rearing which situate women firmly within the domain of the home. While nurses are occasionally mentioned, the essential work of munitions workers, radar operators and the Women's Land Army and other services are seldom recognised. This narrow account of women's roles in wartime presents child readers with a view of war as a male dominated zone²⁴ with women portrayed as isolated from the war experience [Figure 4.0], confined to domestic duties

20 Kerry Mallan, 'Challenging the Phallic Fantasy in Young Adult Fiction' in John Stephens (ed.), *Ways of Being Male: Representing Masculinities in Children's Literature and Film*, ed. John Stephens (New York: Routledge, 2002), 153.

21 Mallan, 'Challenging the Phallic Fantasy in Young Adult Fiction,' 152.

22 Suellen Murray, 'Mixed Messages: Gender, Peace, and the Mainstream Media in Australia, 1983–1984,' in Maartje Abbenhuis and Sara Buttsworth (eds.) *Restaging War in the Western World: Non-Combatant Experiences, 1890 – Today* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 178.

23 Rachel Tonkin, *What Was the War Like, Grandma?: Emmy Remembers World War II* (Sydney: Walker Books Australia, 1995), 20.

24 Adhis Chetty, 'Media Images of Women during War: Vehicles of Patriarchy's Agenda?' *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equality* 59 (2004), 34.

[Figure 5.0] and serving chiefly as dormant reminders of who the men were fighting for [Figure 6.0]. Such representations not only curtail accurate historiography but perpetuate perceived gendered binaries between ‘military and home fronts, between soldiers and civilians, [and] between men and women’.²⁵



Figure 4.0: ‘Lone Pine,’ Text copyright © Susie Brown and Margaret Warner 2012. Illustrations copyright © Sebastian Ciaffaglione 2012. Published by Little Hare, an imprint of Hardie Grant Egmont



Figure 5.0: ‘What Was the War Like, Grandma?’ Original text © 1995 Rachel Tonkin. This edition © 2013 Rachel Tonkin. Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Australia



Figure 6.0: ‘Photographs in the Mud,’ by Dianne Wolfer with illustrations by Brian Harrison-Lever, first published by Fremantle Press in 2005 <http://www.fremantlepress.com.au/books/picturebooks/937?keywords=wolfer&x=0&y=0>

Recently, representations of ‘the enemy’ within children’s war literature have undergone a shift from the ‘evil, faceless bad guy’ to the ‘worthy foe’. In the past, calculated representations of the enemy have been effective in allocating ANZAC troops the ‘moral high ground’ within military history.²⁶ Images of the ‘monstrous, subhuman and evil’²⁷ enemy have pervaded much of children’s literature with dark colours and sharp lines frequently used to assist child readers to distinguish between the ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’; ‘us’ and ‘them’.²⁸ This binary is evident in texts such as Glyn Harper’s *The Sky Soldiers* (2005) about the German invasion on Crete. Throughout the text, the ‘Sky Soldiers’ (Germans) are portrayed as sadistic villains who pick on elderly women and children,²⁹ this is placed in direct contrast with ANZAC soldiers who are described in the book’s blurb as ‘honourable defenders’.³⁰ However, in recent years a rift has emerged between books which portray the ‘cruel enemy’ and those which portray the ‘worthy enemy’.³¹ Whereas compassion for enemy losses is normally omitted or glossed over, books such as *Photographs in the Mud* (2007)³² and

25 Kate Darian-Smith, ‘Remembering Romance: Memory, Gender and World War II,’ in Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake (eds.), *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 120.

26 Kate Agnew and Geoff Fox (eds.), *Children at War: From the First World War to the Gulf* (London: Continuum Publishing, 2001), 127.

27 Sam Keen, *Study Guide to: Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1991), 1.

28 Andrew Whitmarsh, ‘“We Will Remember Them”: Memory and Commemoration in War Museums,’ *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* 7 (2001), 7.

29 Glyn Harper and Warren Mahy, *The Sky Soldiers* (Auckland: Reed Children’s Books, 2005), 20-22.

30 Harper, *The Sky Soldiers*.

31 Margaret Meek Spencer (ed.), *Children’s Literature and National Identity* (London: Trentham Books, 2001), 39.

32 Dianne Wolfer and Brian Harrison-Lever, *Photographs in the Mud* (Perth: Fremantle Press, 2005), 1-4.

The Red Poppy (2012)³³ aim to emphasise the shared humanity of wartime foes. These books aim to deliver a didactic message about the terrors of war, the loss of life and the individual ‘enemy who wasn’t an enemy’.³⁴ Yet in relaying this didactic message, both books fail to delineate the historical context and the reasons for going to war. Nevertheless, no matter whether the cruel or worthy enemy is being portrayed, ANZAC soldiers still maintain the moral high ground.

Arguably, one of the greatest difficulties in authoring children’s war literature involves conveying the continued significance of commemoration to a generation for whom notions of twentieth-century and total war have entered into the realm of history.³⁵ Given its status as the ‘most important day in the national calendar’,³⁶ books celebrating the ritual of ANZAC day have proliferated owing in part to government initiatives such as the ‘Their Service – Our Heritage’³⁷ and ‘Saluting Their Service’ grants.³⁸ These grants promoted the education of young children about Australia’s ‘wartime legacy’³⁹ in an effort to encourage their participation in ‘commemorative events in their communities’.⁴⁰ This agenda is manifest in books such as *My Grandad Marches on ANZAC Day* (2005) in which loss and bereavement are peripheral to ceremony and ritual. Throughout the text, the girl’s account of ANZAC day is evocative of Christmas traditions as she and her father ‘get up very early’,⁴¹ listen to ‘sad poems and singing’,⁴² have ‘cake and hot chocolate’⁴³ and watch the parade. With its focus on custom and ritual, little is mentioned about *what* is being remembered or *why*. Conversely, *ANZAC Day Parade* (2010) offers a distinctive contrast between ritual and reality as it compares a ‘bright-eyed’ boy’s grand visions of war (‘Did it feel real cool to kill?’⁴⁴) with a veteran’s torment (‘Age won’t weary him...but boy, it’s wearied me’⁴⁵). Although *My Grandad Marches on ANZAC Day* and *ANZAC Day Parade* both purport to increase children’s appreciation of ANZAC day as a day for commemoration and remembrance rather than simply as a national holiday, the differences between the two books illustrate the difficulty of conveying the terror and anguish of war to the next generation in a way which is in keeping with national war mythology.⁴⁶

Although Australia and New Zealand’s shared military history has led to remarkable similarities between both nations’ canon of children’s war literature, analysis of these collections reveals a significant difference in regards to scope. In Australia, the majority of children’s war books

33 David Hill and Fifi Colston, *The Red Poppy* (Gosford: Scholastic Australia, 2012), 34.

34 Hill, *The Red Poppy*, 40.

35 Anna Clark, *History’s Children: History Wars in the Classroom* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2008).

36 Jenny McLeod, ‘The British Heroic-Romantic Myth of Gallipoli,’ in Jenny McLeod (ed.), *Gallipoli: Making History* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 85.

37 Lake, ‘How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?’, 142.

38 Lake, ‘How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?’, 151.

39 Lake, ‘How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?’, 145.

40 Lake, ‘How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?’, 148.

41 Catriona Hoy and Benjamin Johnson, *My Grandad Marches on ANZAC Day* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2005), 2.

42 Hoy, *My Grandad Marches on ANZAC Day*, 2.

43 Hoy, *My Grandad Marches on ANZAC Day*, 6.

44 Glenda Kane and Lisa Allen, *ANZAC Day Parade* (Rosedale: Puffin Books, 2010), 7.

45 Kane, *ANZAC Day Parade*, 15.

46 Cherie Allen, ‘Memory: (Re)Imagining the Past Through Children’s Literature,’ in Yan Wu, Kerry Mallan and Roderick McGillis (eds.), *(Re)imagining the World: Children’s literature’s response to changing times* (New York: Springer Publishing, 2013), 132.

are nation-centric in focus, leaving little room for deviation from 'white Australia's creation myth'⁴⁷ and 'ANZAC liturgy'.⁴⁸ By contrast, in recent years, New Zealand children's literature has experienced a gestalt-shift away from a solely nationalist standpoint to the inclusion of transnational perspectives. This is evidenced by books such as *The Sky Soldiers* and *Le Quesnoy* (2012),⁴⁹ which allocate the task of narration to foreign civilians living outside of the dominant ANZAC culture (Greece and France respectively). Although both texts still rely upon ANZAC mythology, they enhance awareness of the macro effect of war.⁵⁰ In Australia, the nationalist scope of children's war literature has been refined to such a degree that texts like *Lone Pine* (2012),⁵¹ *My Mother's Eyes* (2009)⁵² and *In Flanders Fields* (2002)⁵³ pivot upon a notion of ANZAC which excludes New Zealand. For example, *My Mother's Eyes* focuses on the experiences of an Australian boy soldier who lies about his age to enlist during the First World War. The story details his experiences prior to his departure, throughout his training in Egypt and then to Europe and the Western Front. Throughout the text, countless references are made to 'the Australians' who 'rode camels and played cricket' but any mention of New Zealand soldiers is noticeably absent.⁵⁴ Similarly, *Lone Pine* aims to explain the story behind the Lone Pine tree planted in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial to commemorate Jane Perry's son, Mark Smith, and other ANZAC soldiers who died at the battle of Lone Pine. However, while the final pages of the book contain information about the Battle of Lone Pine, no mention is made to the hundreds of New Zealand soldiers who fought and died there.⁵⁵ In this respect, Australian children's authors have become so absorbed in nationalist historiography that they seem to have forgotten 'what the 'nz' in ANZAC stands for'.⁵⁶ This omission illustrates the dominance of 'popular memory' over factual accounts within Australian historiography and the role of myopia in the perpetuation of national myths and militarism.⁵⁷

In Australia, the proliferation of children's war literature was due in part to John Howard's efforts to detract attention from the History Wars of the 1990s and, instead, emphasise a 'celebratory national narrative'.⁵⁸ The History Wars themselves had revolved around the question of 'what (and whose) history should be taught in schools' with debates mostly centring on the inclusion of Indigenous voices and perspectives on Australia's past.⁵⁹ To counter what he termed a history based on 'national guilt and shame', Howard drew upon the ANZAC legend to emphasise a

47 Sarah Maddison, *Beyond White Guilt: The Real Challenge for Black-White Relations in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011), 157.

48 Maddison, *Beyond White Guilt*, 157.

49 Glyn Harper, *Le Quesnoy: The Story of the Town New Zealand Saved* (Rosedale: Puffin Books, 2012).

50 Maria José Botelho and Masha Kabakow Rudman, *Critical Multicultural Analysis of Children's Literature: Mirrors, Windows, and Doors* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 5.

51 Susie Brown and Margaret Warner, *Lone Pine* (Melbourne: Little Hare Books, 2012).

52 Mark Wilson, *My Mother's Eyes: The Story of an Australian Boy Soldier* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2009).

53 Norman Jorgensen and Brian Harrison-Lever, *In Flanders Fields* (Fremantle: Fremantle Press, 2002).

54 Wilson, *My Mother's Eyes*, 16.

55 Brown and Warner, *Lone Pine*, 29.

56 Davidson, *Scarecrow Army*, 169.

57 Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics,' in Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (eds.), *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 14.

58 Lake, 'How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?', 139.

59 Clark, *History's Children*, 4, 71.

national narrative which young Australians could be proud of.⁶⁰ The history classroom quickly became a site for reinforcing this narrative with schools being provided with commemoration kits, information packs and resources.⁶¹ These curriculum materials were created by 'professional educators' who ensured that each resource reinforced the ongoing importance of ANZAC to modern Australia.⁶² In 2006, Anna Clark highlighted the effectiveness of Howard's approach when she surveyed school student's attitudes about Australian history. Clark found that many students not only felt a connection to the ANZAC story but felt that it was central to Australia's national history.⁶³ Nine years on, the effects of Howard's re-popularisation of ANZAC are still evident; the number of young people at dawn services have steadily increased, and books about war have not only proliferated but have continued to extend to even younger audiences.⁶⁴ Despite many historians' claims that Howard 'revitalised' ANZAC, the truth remains that the popularity of ANZAC has waxed and waned since World War One, and thus it may be more appropriate to refer to Howard's efforts as an attempt to repopularise a version of Australian history which was at once conservative and politically manipulable.⁶⁵ While the Rudd, Gillard and Abbott governments have each maintained the nexus between ANZAC and national identity, their political and institutional support for its instruction in schools has not paralleled that of the Howard government.⁶⁶

In Australia and New Zealand, emphasis on the 'Exodus story'⁶⁷ of ANZAC has led to the prioritisation of history with the ANZAC legend, the World Wars and the voice of the 'White Anglo-Saxon male'⁶⁸ taking precedence within children's literature. Historian Anne Curthoys argued that Australia's history is centred upon a narrative in which Australians are portrayed as victims struggling against adversity.⁶⁹ This 'rhetoric of victimisation' is manifest in both countries' national stories which also sheds light on the reason why the ANZAC legend has become such a transnational icon.⁷⁰ Curthoys suggests that memorialising such a narrative within national memory helps to justify conquests and warrant future actions to the exclusion of others. As a result, many absent and silenced voices occupy the edges of children's war literature and historiography. In light of John Howard's efforts to detract attention from the History Wars of the 1990s,⁷¹ it is not surprising that representations of military history are so fractional. In conforming to criteria for a 'celebratory national narrative',⁷² authors have effectively absented both official and private histories from children's books. The experiences of Indigenous Australians, prisoners of war, the contribution of subaltern groups (for example; German,⁷³ Russian⁷⁴ and Chinese⁷⁵ ANZACs)

60 Clark, *History's Children*, 71; McKenna, 'How Did It Become Australia's National Day,' 128.

61 Lake, 'How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?', 150.

62 Lake, 'How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?', 148, 153.

63 Clark, *History's Children*, 58.

64 Allen, 'Memory,' 132.

65 Allen, 'Memory,' 132; Holbrook, *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography*, 192-194.

66 Holbrook, *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography*, 204.

67 Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile,' 3.

68 Craig Stockings, ed., *ANZAC's Dirty Dozen: 12 Myths of Australian Military History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2012), 289.

69 Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile,' 4.

70 Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile,' 4.

71 Lake, *What's Wrong With Anzac?*, 155.

72 Lake, 'How do Schoolchildren Learn about the Spirit of Anzac?', 139.

73 John Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2003), 3.

74 Elena Govor, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), 144.

75 Alastair Kennedy, *Chinese Anzacs: Australians of Chinese Descent in the Australian Defence Forces 1885-1919* (Canberra:

and the history of home-front divisions are overlooked. Similarly, the Vietnam War features rarely, the Boer War, Korean War and Falklands War are seldom mentioned and current conflicts are yet to be amply acknowledged. Arguably, the recently published *A Day to Remember* (2012)⁷⁶ is the closest Australian children's literature has come to an inclusive military history. *A Day to Remember* may be more accurately described as an information text which chronicles milestones in Australian military history from the twenty-fifth of April 1915 through to the twenty-fifth of April 2012, 2014 and 2015 (an ellipsis is also included to signify future commemoration). Although the text provides a basic top-down approach to history, it nevertheless outlines each war, discusses current conflicts, mentions Indigenous soldiers and recognises the complexity of private and public repatriation.⁷⁷ Although many voices are still silent, *A Day to Remember* is indicative of the gradual movement away from the ANZAC 'Exodus Story'⁷⁸ and towards inclusive historiography within children's war literature.

If future Australian and New Zealand children's books are to avoid perpetuating exclusive and mythologised versions of ANZAC and military history, both nations must first reconcile themselves with the truth of their nation's history and find a way to commemorate those who served and died in war without celebrating war itself.⁷⁹ While the notion of providing young children with a truthful view of war may seem confronting, some examples of how this can be done effectively can already be found. One such example is Glyn Harper's *My Grandfather's War* (2007)⁸⁰ which tells the story of a young girl who wants to find out more about her grandfather's experiences in the Vietnam war and his subsequent explanation. Although the text relies on the hegemonic image of the white, middle class male who reflects on the trauma of war in stoic silence,⁸¹ its focus on how to explain the experience of war to the next generation remains pertinent. Unlike French's *A Day to Remember*, *My Grandfather's War* draws upon personal voice and private memory to explain war. While this approach risks conflating memory with overt personal bias, the text manages to avoid this by situating the plot in the present and using retrospective voice to tell events as they happened but informing them with current knowledge. The benefits of this approach are manifold; it allows the text to approach more difficult topics from an informed viewpoint (such as public and private repatriation, bereavement and the effects of Agent Orange)⁸², it avoids locking the grandfather into the 'soldier stereotype' and instead depicts him as a complex individual,⁸³ and it conveys the significance of war contemporarily. In this way, Harper's text can be seen as an example of how children's literature can be used to commemorate the people who served in war and their experiences, without celebrating or glorifying war itself.

In the lead up to the 2015 centenary of the landings at Gallipoli and the birth of ANZAC, it is important to reflect upon the stories Australians and New Zealanders tell of their military history. From the 1990s to present, children's literature has been a key means by which modern Australian and New Zealand societies have communicated war history to the next and future generations.

Alastair Kennedy, 2012), 4.

76 Jackie French and Mark Wilson, *A Day to Remember: The Story of ANZAC Day* (Sydney: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012).

77 French, *A Day to Remember*, 8-9, 28-29.

78 Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile,' 3.

79 Holbrook, *ANZAC: The Unauthorised Biography*, 216.

80 Glyn Harper, *My Grandfather's War* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2007).

81 Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 216 & 223.

82 Harper, *My Grandfather's War*, 18 - 19.

83 Christina Desai, 'Picture Book Soldiers: Men and Messages,' *Reading Horizons* 42 (2001), 88.

However, this communication has been mostly fractional, exclusive and reliant upon 'white narrative and mythology'.⁸⁴ Traditional conceptions of masculinity, 'the enemy' and patriotism have been crucial to maintaining the ANZAC legend and its 'narrative and symbolic power'.⁸⁵ The Howard government played a significant role in not only repopularising the ANZAC legend but also in politicising and shaping it to suit a favoured view of Australia's national story. While some recent texts have signified a shift towards transnational and inclusive histories, much of children's literature remains in the grip of the 'cult of ANZAC'.⁸⁶ In all, children's literature forms a basis for the next generation's education of war history and it is, therefore, a tool for perpetuating prejudices, misrepresentations and silences, thus further intensifying convenient amnesia within national memory.

84 Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile,' 4.

85 Ann Curthoys, 'National Narratives, War Commemoration and Racial Exclusion in a Settler Society: The Australian Case,' in Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (eds.), *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 133.

86 Lake, 'Introduction,' 23.
