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“Whichever and whatever it was”: rendering war and peace in Australian WWI narratives*

Australian narratives of World War I (WWI) reflect a different but characteristic commemoration of that event. While the best (to modern eyes) novels of WWI present a comprehensive picture of disillusionment, futility and waste, Australian stories proffer the view that the war was worthwhile, and that the sacrifices of the Anzacs were honourable and justified. In placing WWI as a salient marker denoting the origin of the nation, Australian texts diverge from the revered WWI canon’s convincing portrayal of the war as a symbol of civilisation’s demise. Even accepting this divergence, however, there is much in Australian narratives that amplifies the memorialisation of the war in Australian society.

Different styles of writing about WWI express different aspects of what was a long and complex event, with multiple perspectives not organised along demographic lines: for example, there is no such thing as “the woman’s view”, as the works of women writers range from rabid jingoism to despairing pacifism. World War I remains the most literary war ever conducted, inspiring a vast mass of textual material including letters, diaries, memoirs, histories, plays, poetry, novels, short stories, journalism, propaganda, official records and even verse novels.

Two major approaches to writing literature about WWI are the *traditional* and the *disillusionment* styles. Australian literature of WWI is understood to favour the traditional style (see Robin Gerster for a comprehensive analysis of Australian war writing across the decades).

The *traditional* style of war writing has been employed for centuries and includes patriotic, consolatory, heroic, elegiac, cautionary, action-adventure and inspirational works. Australian WWI style is a subset of traditional war writing and has been shown to rely extensively on traditional heroic tropes spurned by more modern renderings of the war.¹

Traditional war writing can be read as an attempt to honour the sacrifice of society’s forebears, because it relates the scale of that sacrifice as both an indicator of the greatness of those forebears and a warning about the lethal nature of war. *The Iliad* is generally considered the first western war story, and is sometimes thought simply to “glorify” war with no moderation or qualification. This is not so. On the contrary, all the *Iliad*’s heroes are stricken with fear, and there are few scenes of war more desolating than that of Hector’s body being dragged around the walls of Troy in the dust (Weil 184).² Indeed, very few traditional texts promote war as the

apogee of existence; most convey the confronting message of mortality, which even the most heroic protagonist (such as the semi-divine Achilles) is unable to overcome. The traditional style is often read as being enthusiastic about war, but this reading misses one of the major functions of traditional style – its foundational work.

The *disillusionment* style of war writing made a sensational impact in the 1930s, sparking what became known as the “war books controversy”,³ as ex-soldiers and literary critics argued over the truth value and the memorial functions of war narratives in both traditional and disillusionment styles.⁴ Many veterans strongly objected to the disillusionment portrayal, while others praised its evocation of the war’s horrors. Disillusionment has been particularly prominent since the 1960s, when the conjunction of pacifist and humanist values began to penetrate educational curricula, distrustfully probing the former emphases of patriotism and duty to society. Disillusionment is an extremely effective trope in which to express war’s horror and futility, and has the additional benefits of focusing in a more modern manner on the inner, thoughtful life of protagonists, and less on relaying a sequence of protagonists’ actions in traditional style.

The disillusionment narratives “touched a chord in public taste and popular memory” (Winter 1988, 226) at a time when there was a great deal of discontent with the post-Armistice, unfulfilling world of the Depression (Watson 2). The “ironic mode [was] adopted as the most appropriate mode of telling, and words like *disenchantment* and *disillusionment* [came] to be used as though they were objective and neutral terms for the soldiers’ attitude toward the war’s events” (Hynes 207, original emphases), thereby valorising these attitudes above others, and suppressing notions of victory and the value of sacrifice in achieving peace. The major works of the disillusionment canon are Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), Richard Aldington’s *Death of a Hero* (1929), Robert Graves’ *Good-bye to All That* (1930), Siegfried Sassoon’s *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930), and of course the poetry of Wilfred Owen.

While disillusionment texts are a minority of works about the war (which in the main reprise traditional tropes), they have succeeded in altering our reception of war narratives. Perhaps this is because, for the most part, the better disillusionment texts were written by highly educated, perceptive, sensitive authors, men already skilled in writing. Despite this success, disillusionment narratives must be treated as literature, not history; the accuracy of their representation of war can be no more certain than that of many traditional works.⁵

Several notions of disillusionment can be qualified. First, it is a minority response, and we move into dangerous territory if we are to reject other renderings of the war because they do not subscribe to the disillusionment attitude; we as latter day readers cannot deny the writings of veterans in particular. Second, the 1930s reflections of the disillusionment writers differ from their recorded thoughts and actions at the time: diaries written during the war, even those of iconic writers like Graves and Vera Brittain, are often far less bleak and more patriotic than the books which were later based on them (Watson 2004).⁶ Many personal diaries of the time were quite as xenophobic and nationalistic as the most fervent propaganda (Palmer and Wallis 2003). Much of the poetry produced during and immediately after the war was framed in epic terms, and the best of it sold quite as well as the disenchantment poetry that became popular following the war. Owen, so widely read since the 1960s, was almost unknown in the 1930s (Bond 2002,

28). Sassoon and Graves explicitly denied that their books were anti-war as an institution, their objections to this war notwithstanding (Graves 1930, 16, 43; Hynes 218; Bond 1996, 818; Bond 2002, 31-33). Yet from the late 1920s, disillusionment began to exclude other perspectives.

Disillusionment matched the dystopian mood of the times, becoming the memory of choice, both literary and historical: “once radical views of the generals’ and staff’s incompetence [became] the received wisdom” (Bond 2002, 65) – leading to modern day representations such as *Blackadder Goes Forth* being treated as history rather than farce (see Badsey 2001). Nevertheless the disillusionment canon dominates the war’s literary legacy.

Australian style

Because it follows many of the tenets of traditional western war literature, Australian style has been under-regarded and at times dismissed as inferior to the popular disillusionment canon.

Contrasts exist between disillusionment and Australian style.⁷ The dominant features of disillusionment are that the protagonist is a victim who is a reluctant, ineffective soldier and never kills anyone; the action is focused on the Western Front trench, which is always muddy, rather than on other theatres of the war or even other seasons of the year; the leadership persists in making farcical decisions, having no regard for the consequences, thus becoming a more dangerous enemy than the declared opposition forces; the home society crassly profits from the war; and that the unalleviated horror of the trench is the daily fare of the soldier.

Australian WWI style on the other hand offers a more purposeful interpretation of the war, anchored in a determination to posit the sacrifice as worthwhile, and to make the war serve as a foundation story for the nation. The fundamental distinction is that Australian texts prefer a heroic style, with laconic but willing and active protagonists who successfully, and with little introspection, enact their soldierly role. They are content to strut across the stage of war and to undertake war’s ugly tasks with stoicism.⁸

Further elements differentiating Australian WWI narratives from the literature of other nations have also been identified and explored.⁹ These features, which comprise a distinct Australian style, are extraordinarily tenacious across time, providing support for the idea that they may be sourced from widely approved underlying cultural values.

The first four relate to the preference for heroic constructions, restating the value of individual agency, and complying with the creation myth norm that mortal man can successfully navigate the dangerous, contingent world. In Australian narratives, heroic protagonists undertake meaningful actions, eschewing the passivity of the victim-protagonist; correspondingly, the narrative relates activity beyond the trench, often eliding the terrifying experiences of being under attack. These active Australian protagonists would more likely kill enemy soldiers than pity them, and the attitude of Australian protagonists is generally that they are undertaking lethally dangerous and difficult volunteer work, far from home.

Further distinguishing features focus on differentiating the new nation from the debased social values of the central Empire, conforming to the proposition of heroic actors who

maintain more agency than their imperial counterparts. For example, the Australians can blame “the British” in general, rather than their own older generation or authorities for the prosecution of the war. Homosexual and homoerotic elements are elided as hetero-normative relationships dominate. Because the war is emphatically located elsewhere, Australian protagonists can enact adventurer and tourist roles. In contrast to the malevolence on display in disillusionment narratives, the few women characters in Australian texts show ideal feminine attributes. Finally, the Australian home front is rather taken for granted as a distant place remaining exactly as it was when the protagonists left it.

Australian WWI authors

Some well-known Australian authors wrote about the war. For example, Mary Grant Bruce of *Billabong* fame moved to Ireland with her husband after the outbreak of war, which cut short their honeymoon. Major Bruce was a veteran of India and South Africa, and was recalled to train recruits in Dublin. While there, Mary wrote the four Billabong books which deal most directly with WWI: *From Billabong to London* (1914); *Jim and Wally* (1915); *Captain Jim* (1916); and *Back to Billabong* (1919). Written for young readers, the Billabong books take their “decent”, upstanding, traditional protagonists to the site of conflict, so that like most Australian WWI narratives, they do not address the wartime homefront. Less characteristically, Jim and Wally join the British army, and serve all their time on the Western Front, though of course they are sorry to miss the “show” at Gallipoli.

Ethel Turner, author of *Seven Little Australians*, lived in Sydney during the war where she organized first aid courses. She also campaigned for conscription and wrote a trilogy for juvenile readers about the war which is notable for being patriotic but not indulging in any anti-German propaganda: *The Cub* (1915); *Captain Cub* (1917) and *Brigid and the Cub* (1919). Her protagonist John Calthrop is a reluctantly effective and successful soldier, devoted to England and Empire, but rejoicing in the class-free nature of the Australian army. Few Australian protagonists display as much introspection about peace and universal brotherhood as the Cub; nevertheless he is absolutely convinced about the justice of the Empire’s cause.

Frederic Manning, an expatriate Sydney-sider, had a somewhat checkered career as an officer in the British army. He enlisted in 1915 aged 33, but he had serious problems with alcohol, and resigned his commission in 1917 with the express agreement of his superiors. However his excellent novel, *The Middle Parts of Fortune* (1929), was considered by Hemingway to be the best of the war. Manning’s mysterious protagonist Bourne serves as a front line soldier in the British army. The uncertainty of Bourne’s background complicates the action and reflection of the novel: he is not one of the men of the county or the country of his troop, and his evident education and higher-class background make both officers and men wonder why he is serving in the ranks.

Ion Idriess, another prolific author who had a significant impact on Australian writing and publishing in the 20th century, was a veteran of Gallipoli and Palestine. On Gallipoli, Idriess was a spotter for Australia’s most famous sniper, Private Billy Sing, who was nicknamed “The Murderer”. Idriess’ book *The Desert Column* was published in 1932 and republished a week later

when it sold out. Dealing with Gallipoli and Palestine, this is an unusual WWI novel that demonstrates the diversity of experience; the muddy Western Front trench is unknown in a war of movement which includes battles between mounted troops, excruciating desert marches, and all the mystique of leave in Egypt.

Leonard Mann, later a lawyer and celebrated author, enlisted in 1916 aged twenty, and fought on the Western Front. His book *Flesh in Armour* (1932) has been reprinted many times and is one of the finest and most complex novels to come out of the war. Mann's protagonist Frank Jeffreys is considered by some to approach the status of the disillusionment victim-infantryman, and indeed his eventual suicide in the trenches is consonant with that idea. However, Mann's book deals with much more than trench life, and Jeffreys' suicide is as bound up in his failed love affair as it is in his ineffective soldiering. Unable to (always) meet the standards of bravery set by his fellows, he despairs.

Jack McKinney is perhaps best known to us as the husband of the poet Judith Wright. He enlisted in 1915 aged 24 and served four years on the Western Front. His award-winning novel *Crucible* (1935) is the most balanced portrait of Australians in WWI. McKinney's protagonist John Fairbairn serves extensively on the Western Front, in the front line as well as behind the lines in communications. His affair with Nanette, daughter of the French family with whom he is billeted, gives him more concern as he journeys home from the war than all his battle experiences. While believing himself changed by the war, Fairbairn does not regret taking part. *Crucible* contains many thought-provoking passages as Fairbairn and his friends discuss and think about the place of war in society, the relative safety and security of Australia, and the astonishing efficiencies and equally astounding idiocies of army life.

Other narratives of the war were written by veterans whose literary efforts appear confined to their war experiences; one suspects that without WWI, they would not be authors. A particularly fine example of Australian style is provided by George Mitchell, who represents much of what is promoted as "the Anzac legend" in mainstream Australia. Mitchell was an Adelaide clerk with a reputation for larrikinism and a dislike of officialdom who enlisted in September 1914 aged 20, and landed at Anzac Cove on 25th April 1915. His memoir *Backs to the Wall* (1937) is a most evocative narrative of the war experience, relating in considerable detail Mitchell's breadth of experience throughout the war. Of over 316,000 Australians who soldiered overseas, about 7000 served from the first engagement at Gallipoli to the Armistice: Mitchell was one of these. Despite experiencing his whole war on the front line and being notably brave, Mitchell was never wounded. He was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1917 and a Military Cross in 1918. During the war he was promoted, and then demoted, six times for various offences, before finishing the war as a Captain. He then went on to serve in the Second World War. His reflections on the Australian attitudes to authority and to the British support popular (Australian) views of how the war was conducted.

The Australian narratives

The books written by these Australians record more heroic actions than farcical ones. They focus more on the survivors of the war than on the lost, while asserting that the self-sacrifice of both

the dead and the survivors was worthwhile. These narratives record that soldiers in war will kill, but they also provide a larger picture of the lives of men at war. Many veterans recall that the bulk of their time at war was spent in waiting; combat is comparatively rare. Unlike Blackadder, George and Baldrick in *Blackadder Goes Forth* (1989), Australian protagonists spend most of their time *out* of the trench – they are attacking, in reserve, at training, on leave, in hospital, or – as Australian war artist Will Dyson put it – “marching from one place where [they] don’t want to be to another place [they] don’t want to be” (1918, np). Australian narratives show the home front as supportive, not burdensome or selfish or warmongering; there are no Australian commanders demanding that soldiers move forward so that their “drinks cabinet” can gain closer proximity to Berlin.¹⁰ Importantly, these narratives look to the future while not forgetting the cost. WWI, for these Australian writers, is a comprehensive tragedy, but nevertheless it is a tragedy which helps build the nation. Leonard Mann sums up this attitude in *Flesh in Armour*:

[T]hey would be going home soon to mingle again with their own people in their own land. Some effect that return must have. They were a people. The war had shown that. ... It seemed, now he was leaving ... the old familiar landscape of death, that his life and the life of this generation was finished. They were the dung for the new flowering and fruit of the future. (Mann 347)

George Mitchell also expresses the connections between grief and achievement. The sacrifices of the dead are noted, and the grief of the survivors is evident. However, Mitchell strongly asserts that the sacrifice was worthwhile, that the price paid won victory rather than failure:

at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month came the silence. London and Paris went mad, but to us, it all seemed unreal. There was a little cheering ... Wonderful times we had, but underlying all was an indefinable sadness ... Against the grey mists of distance showed well-remembered faces in an endless gallery. Those who marched beside us for a while and died that our people might live. They died but did not fail. (Mitchell 314-8)

Compared to the bitterness of the disillusionment narratives, these Australian texts appear to accept the cost of their victory. In *Death of a Hero*, the victim-protagonist Winterbourne dies before the Armistice, and the losses are so severe that, in effect, Europe is bleeding to death while pretending not to notice the horrendous error of the war:

The casualty lists went on appearing for a long time after the Armistice—last spasms of Europe’s severed arteries. Of course, nobody much bothered to read the lists. Why should they? The living must protect themselves from the dead, especially the intrusive dead. But the twentieth century had lost its Spring with a vengeance. So a good deal of forgetting had to be done. (Aldington 11)

The business of the Australian writers was the building of a nation, not questioning it or grieving over its destruction. The worth of Australia was assumed and celebrated. In many ways, these Australian narratives form a legacy of purpose. They propose an outcome of the war which was, on the whole, more positive than negative. From the ruins of civilization so movingly recounted by European authors, the Australians stated their belief in the foundation of a matured Australian society, built on the valuable sacrifices of the Anzacs.

Australian WWI narratives have similarities to the creation or foundation stories which exist in most societies. Creation stories in general speak to a deep-seated human desire to locate ourselves in the universe. In the face of a very contingent existence, we have striven for centuries to discover how to stay safe, how to control our destiny, how to conduct ourselves in a correct, right, ethical, laudable, memorable, or natural manner. Our answers to all these questions differ with our zeitgeist and our culture, our personality, our personal preferences, our religious convictions, our experiences, our expectations. The lessons of creation stories also help us make judgements about the right or wrong way to do things from everyday activities to special ceremonial events. If we can learn the lessons, we can value people, behaviours, places, living creatures, inanimate objects, ideals and notions according to a world order that we each set up culturally, communally and individually through our preferred or privileged creation story.

Another aspect of creation stories is their attempts to record – and perhaps to manipulate – the society’s remembrance or memorialization of historical events. Rejecting the notion of a foundation story built either on Indigenous tales of creation or on the convict- and genocide-stained beginnings of European settlement, it is not surprising that Australians posited their birth as a nation on what was perceived to be a victorious martial event. The battle-hardened diggers met a need for heroic societal founders, ones much more acceptable than the ragged convicts, the murderous squatters or the dull founding fathers of Federation. For a variety of political and cultural reasons, WWI was promoted and accepted as a creation event, one which claimed nationhood for Australia much more effectively than any previous happening.

Australian WWI style may have grown out of a desire to demarcate the nation as a separate entity, but this style persists a century after the war’s conclusion. Australian cultural values support a mainstream view of our experience as having been at least equally constructive as it was destructive, despite the challenges of alternative viewpoints. Despite our greater appreciation of the futility of war, canonical WWI disillusionment tropes continue to be qualified in Australian renderings.

As Martin Thomas recently remarked, historical “falsehoods are built on fragments of reality, and for this reason they reveal greater cultural truths” (21). The valuable work done by scholars such as Carolyn Holbrook in uncovering the “fragments of reality” behind the Anzac legend can be complemented by further consideration of the “greater cultural truths” on which our legend is based. A desire to be recognised as an independent nation with its own laudable creation myths, for a celebration of culturally desirable traits, and for a compensatory value to balance the cost are all aspects involved in the creation and continuation of Anzac. Whether these cultural priorities will continue to operate with the same strength into the future remains to be seen; we can perhaps discern an evolution of the heroic Anzac into a more quotidian hero, someone to be relied upon for assistance in time of domestic crises, such as floods and fire. The recognition of Australian peacekeeping forces as “Anzacs” is consonant with this notion. It will be fascinating to observe how this evolution of ideals will affect the ongoing reception of Australian WWI literature, especially in conjunction with the raised awareness accompanying the centenary.

Visions of peace

In the Australian WWI narratives under discussion, the advent of peace is not always welcomed. Unlike the disillusionment narratives, however, this is not always because the protagonists now pause to regret the losses incurred in reaching Armistice, but because the essential task – the defeat of the enemy – cannot be completed. McKinney's John Fairbairn is confused about what exactly has been achieved, and about the cessation of hostilities against the enemy. The Hun is "fairly on the run this time", and the Australians want "to chase him and carry the ruin into his own territory" only to be disappointed that peace arrives to "shatter this hope" (McKinney 238). In fact Fairbairn, who is a competent rather than bloodthirsty soldier,

could not even decide that he welcomed [victory]. After so long it surely was their privilege to beat [Fritz] to his knees. And yet ... what matter! It was over ... Over! ... the thing they had fought for—victory, peace, civilization, decency, a safer world, a world purged of Prussianism, and so on and so on—well, they had it, whichever and whatever it was. And what did it amount to? All phrases. (McKinney 238)

Another reason, perhaps, for Fairbairn's reluctance to end the fighting has to do with his personal circumstances. His war experience, most unusually for an Australian WWI narrative, is complicated by an affair with the daughter of his French hosts, and the subsequent birth of a son. In his imaginings of homecoming, it is the confession of this affair to his fiancée which most worries him, particularly because he has no notion that anything at home would be different: "engulfed, outwardly and inwardly" (76) by war, he wonders whether the letters addressed to him from home are reaching the man to whom they were written (43). John Fairbairn considers himself changed, and home static.

In these Australian narratives, home is rarely mentioned, but it is always considered as a separate place, far from the war and isolated from war's contamination. London is an "overgrown, crowded antheap" (McKinney 85) where "it was hopeless trying to escape the war. It had London in thrall just as much as it had a section of front-line trench" (81). Australia is by comparison untouched, a place of peace, not war. No reflections on the bitter, divisive conscription debates enter these stories.

Not many of these narratives address scenes of homecoming, or the position of veterans in post-war society. The assumption at the close of many novels is that life at home is continuing in the same pre-war fashion, and few reservations are expressed. Idriess finishes his memoir with the simple entry: "January 2nd, 1918 – I am to be returned to Australia as unfit for further service. Thank heaven!" (614). Mitchell describes his turn away from war and toward home with the closing line, "Strongly our ship lunged towards the Southern Seas", while "night and distance closed over the English shores" (318). In *Billabong's Daughter* (1924), Mary Grant Bruce describes her characters back at their beloved Gippsland homestead. They are not especially the worse for their many adventures of the war years,¹¹ covered in the novels published between 1914 and 1919. It is interesting that wartime hardships are alluded to at all in this later novel, perhaps indicating that even in tales written for the young, the place and legacy of WWI was an important aspect of the narrative context of Australian life. Nevertheless, in this story, the emphasis is on continuity with tradition and the promises of the future:

Even the years of the Great War, which had whisked them all to Europe and played strange tricks with them, had not altered the old footing ... The old routine of work and

play claimed them all naturally ... The War, that had definitely aged [their father], with its long strain and its sharp anxieties, seemed to have left them as children ... With the ending of the long strain, when home stretched glad arms to receive them again, Time seemed to put back the marching hands of his clock so that they might find their vanished playtime. The years slipped from them: it seemed a kind of dream that there had been fighting, suffering, stern, hard work. (Bruce 10-11)

Despite “the fighting, suffering, [and] stern, hard work” (a less confronting portrait than the random bloodshed, maiming, cruelty, and death of disillusionment narratives), the Australia of the *Billabong* series is a thoroughly decent and peaceful place; its villains are small-time and easily vanquished. This resonates with the view that Australia itself, far from and untouched by the war, yet recognised the war experience as an important aspect of its past, one which enabled it to face the challenges of twentieth century life with confidence and a continuation of the playful, larrikin-esque attitude so recognised as a national characteristic.

Conclusion

The Australian narratives we have considered offer us a more complex rendering of the war than has often been appreciated. While including disillusioned sentiments, they tend to look to the future as one filled with possibility, and also to see purpose in their martial efforts. This conjunction of grief and potential is perhaps best encapsulated by Mann’s statement: “They were the dung for the new flowering and fruit of the future” (347). The disillusionment texts, while readily consigning their protagonists to little more than “dung”, give little promise of “new flowering and fruit”. Thus for Australian style, war remains a generative, foundational event.

Australia is typically represented as a locus of peace and prosperity, a source of support and pleasant reflection; certainly it is a place apart from war. Further, there is no sense that even peace in the place where war exists/existed could ever be the equal of Australia. Just as war is never associated with Australia, peace is represented in these narratives as incomprehensible in the locus of the war. As phrased by McKinney’s Fairbairn, “the thing they had fought for ... peace ... well, they had it, whichever and whatever it was. And what did it amount to? All phrases.” The translation of those phrases into a meaningful conclusion was left to the future.

Notes

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- * An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 'Writing the Great War' seminar at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, 20/06/2015
- 1 See Fussell for the turn to modernism and Gerster for the Australian devotion to classic tropes.
 - 2 Simone Weil describes the death and desecration of Hector in disillusionment terms: "The hero becomes a *thing* dragged behind a chariot in the dust ... The bitterness of such a spectacle is offered absolutely undiluted. No comforting fiction intervenes" (1986, 184, original emphasis). Further, "there is not a single one of the combatants who is spared the shameful experience of fear. The heroes quake like everybody else" (192), as do disillusionment protagonists.
 - 3 See for example Ariela Halkin, Chapter 4 "The Flood" (1995), for a summary of issues debated during "the war books controversy".
 - 4 JB Priestley summed up both the traditional and the disillusionment styles in a rather scathing précis: "The first war stories were a mixture of crude adventure and patriotic rant ... then came disillusion. We were promptly shown sensitive young men dragged from their charming studios, their editions de-luxe and sets of Japanese prints, and plunged into mud and blood; and the army in actual combat was shown to be nothing but obscenity and slaughter, and out of it nothing but a stupid farce. As rewards for heroes, Victoria Crosses went out of fashion and courts-martial came in" (1924, 539).
 - 5 Paul Fussell's powerful critique is a major influence in the favourable reception of disillusionment texts, and in the devaluation of traditional style of writing war. Fussell convincingly traced the demise of heroic protagonists in literary renderings of war, praising the valorisation of the victim-infantryman, protagonist of disillusionment novels and poetry. See Prior and Wilson, "Paul Fussell at War" (1994), for a strong rebuttal of Fussell's claims about the historical events, and also the reflections of Bond (1996; 2002).
 - 6 Graves averred, paradoxically, that memoirs "are not truthful if they do not contain a high proportion of falsities" because the veteran's "old trench-mind is at work in all over-estimation of casualties, 'unnecessary' dwelling on horrors, mixing of dates and confusion between trench rumours and scenes actually witnessed" (1930, 42); he himself had "more or less deliberately mixed in all the ingredients that [he knew to be] mixed into other popular books" and continued to write to the papers "to increase sales by a few more thousands" (13).
 - 7 See Gerster (1987) and Rhoden (2015) for a detailed analysis of the features of Australian WWI style.
 - 8 See Gerster (1987) for a comprehensive review of Australian war writing's "big-noting", ie hyperbole over Australia's role and achievements, across multiple conflicts, for over a century.
 - 9 These features are summarised from Rhoden (2015).
 - 10 The *Blackadder Goes Forth* line about attacks being ordered because Haig wanted to move his drinks cabinet six inches closer to Berlin has become "almost proverbial" (Badsey 114) as the epitome of men's lives spent for no worthwhile gain.
 - 11 These adventures including gassing, multiple wounds, skirmishes with German spies and, for Jim, a stint as a German prisoner of war.

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