Making the Australian Male:
The Construction of Manly Middle-Class Youth in Australia, 1870-1920

Martin Alexander Crotty

Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 1999

Department of History
The University of Melbourne

PRINTED ON ACID-FREE PAPER
ABSTRACT

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Australia’s middle classes were plagued by a variety of concerns for their society’s security and well-being. Among the many answers proposed to these threats, control of the nation’s young men was among the foremost. Through schooling, juvenile literature, youth groups and various government initiatives, increased efforts were made to ensure that Australia’s young men would safeguard and advance their society. Ideals of manliness were promoted with increased vigour, and evolved in accordance with changes in perceived threats.

Until the 1870s and 1880s, the primary fears influencing middle-class constructions of manliness were of descent into barbarism, irreligion and vulgarity in a land far removed from European civilisation. This decline was associated with excessive of masculine qualities at the expense of feminine religious and moral virtue. Efforts to control and define manliness thus focused on suppressing masculine hardihood in favour of an effeminate manliness marked by intellectualism, godliness and moral maturity. However, the increasing secularism of the late nineteenth century, growing pride in Australia, the impact of social Darwinism, and the perception of military threats to Australia and the British Empire made feminine ideals of manliness less desirable. Effeminate boys could not conquer the interior spaces of Australia, nor guard against racial decline, nor defend Australia from potential invaders.

The ideal of manliness was thus gradually reworked to focus more on physical strength, courage, chivalry, patriotism, and military capability. Masculine qualities were lauded rather than suppressed. Feminine qualities were increasingly despised, and the model of manliness promoted in elite secondary schooling, juvenile literature, and youth groups in the early twentieth century was a vastly more masculine, anti-domestic and muscular construct than that which had predominated fifty years earlier.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work,

(ii) due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies, appendices and footnotes.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous individuals and organisations have assisted in the completion of this thesis. First and foremost, my sincere thanks must go to my supervisor, Dr Joy Damousi, and my associate supervisor, Professor Stuart Macintyre. Their enormous knowledge, gentle encouragement, constant availability and friendship have been tremendous.

A number of libraries and organisations provided access to important collections of archival material and juvenile literature. My thanks to the staff at the Special Collections of the Ballieu Library at the University of Melbourne, at the Rare Books Collection at Monash University, at the State Library of Victoria, the Mitchell library in New South Wales, and the Mortlock Library of South Australiana. Thanks also to Kenneth Park and Wesley College, Michael Collins Persse and Geelong Grammar School, Bruce Wakeling and the Boy Scouts Association of New South Wales, Dan Ryan and the Boy Scouts Association of South Australia, and the Gordon Homes Institute for access to their records and the provision of work space. Thanks also to Ian Brice, Dinny Cullican and Brenda Niall for helping with queries.

Various friends and colleagues in the Department of History offered useful comments on drafts, provided references, or supplied assistance in other forms. Others simply provided moral support, encouragement and friendship, sharing in my enthusiasm and discoveries during the good times, and providing solace and support during periods of difficulty. I am extremely grateful to Ellen Warne, Frazer Andrewes, Kat Ellinghaus, Antonia Finnane, Camilla Russell, Nikki Henningham, Ben Schrader, David Phillips, Sara Wills, Jo Leahy, Jane Carey, Rachel Jenzen, Julie Evans, Georgine Clarsen, Jo Townsend, Peter McPhee, Steven Welch, Megan
Cassidy, Erica Mehrtens and Leigh Summers especially, though certainly not exclusively.

For portions of the period in which this thesis was completed I was also employed at Trinity College and in the Department of History at the University of Newcastle. I am grateful to Trinity College for financial support, and to the University of Newcastle for giving me a generously light teaching load while the thesis was finished. Within these organisations, I would especially like to thank Don Markwell, Chris Dixon, Hilary Carey and Wayne Reynolds for support and encouragement.

Finally, Sarah's patience and support have been invaluable.
CONTENTS

Introduction

Gender History and Masculinity 1

Chapter One

Manliness and the ‘Boy Problem’ in Australia, 1870-1920 17

Chapter Two

From Godliness and Good Learning to Athleticism:
The Rise of Muscularity in the Australian Public Schools
of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries 51

Chapter Three

The Early-Twentieth-Century Australian Public School:
From Athleticism to Militarism 111

Chapter Four

‘Fine Specimens of Young Australia’:
National and Religious Mythologies and the Public Schoolboy
in Australian Juvenile Literature 139

Chapter Five

At The Edge of Civilisation:
Boys’ Adventure Stories in Australia 190

Chapter Six

‘Saved from the Reeking Filth and Sin’:
Australian Boy Rescue Movements 234

Chapter Seven

‘Something Other than a “Ninny”’: The Australian Branches of the Boy Scout Movement 270

Conclusion

The Limits of Manliness 303

Bibliography 315
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1.1. ‘Before and After Universal Service’ 47
3.1. ‘The Football Tyranny’ 127
3.2. ‘New Year Resolutions’ 127
4.1. ‘Jim Linton sat on a small box outside his dugout...’ 155
4.2. ‘All his being centred in the effort to get rid of the weight on his back’ 155
4.3. Max as senior prefect 156
4.4. ‘“Don’t talk,” Max said shortly 160
5.1. 'The natives and the stranded whale’ 198
5.2. ‘Some rascally bushrangers ‘stuck me up’ 201
5.3. Stamping white masculinity upon the Australian landscape 211
5.4. 'The last of the bloodthirsty Warlattas’ 217
5.5. 'The fight now resolved itself into an effort...’ 221
5.6. ‘Stand back, you vile spy, or I’ll fire’ 222
6.1. 'Which Life Will He Live?’ 243
6.2. Successful rescue 250
6.3. ‘Night School’ 258
6.4. ‘A Few Senior Members Who Have Enlisted’ 266
6.5. ‘I am the Boy’ 267
INTRODUCTION

Gender History and Masculinity

This thesis is an attempt to explore the construction of middle-class masculinity in Australia. I seek to reveal its ideals, how and why they were defined in the way they were, and how they were presented to the next generation of Australian males. In selecting the notion of ‘middle-class’ ideals of masculinity, I do not seek to ignore other possible social groupings, to privilege class over race or sexuality. Rather, mine is an attempt to fill a gap in the historical literature of Australian masculinity by examining how the dominant classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries developed and exploited elite secondary schooling, juvenile literature and youth groups in their attempts to preserve and further their own ideals. I explore their efforts to construct a dominant type of masculinity and their attempts to suppress a range of ‘others’, marginalised through race, sexuality or class.

The saying that ‘boys will be boys’ is often used to justify what seems to be the ‘natural’ masculine behaviour of young men. Their social behaviour is linked, as if inevitably, to their male biology. Masculine behaviour, in such a conceptualisation, is the natural outcome of being genetically male. R. W. Connell has noted that this biologically determinist view of masculinity forms, for many people, a common sense understanding beyond which ‘thought cannot go’, a frame of mind which has even resulted in serious attempts by sociobiologists to use biological differences to explain gender and gender relations.¹ But most sociologists and historians of gender now reject biological determinism and argue that gender is a cultural construct which is, in

the words of Joan Scott, 'imposed upon a sexed body'.² Culturally defined differences between the sexes, like those between people of different races, do not flow from biology, but rather exploit physical differences 'to legitimate pre-existing social relations and, in particular, power relations'.³ The biological differences between males and females are, through gender discourses comprising 'systems of meaning embedded in language and social practices', rendered into social differences.⁴ As analysts of masculinity, such as Scott Coltrane, David Gilmore and many others, have argued, culturally constructed gender differences appeal to 'nature' and biology to explain and provide quasi-scientific endorsements of gendered power relations, but are not determined by them. Biology and nature are employed as legitimations for gendered behaviour, but do not actually create it.⁵ Biological reductionism is, in Connell's words, 'two or three million years out of date'.⁶ Thus one starting point for this thesis is that gender is culturally and historically contingent, that masculinity and femininity are always open to reinterpretation and reformulation.⁷

The feminist history project of the 1970s was to write women back into history in a compensatory mission.⁸ However, rather than simply attempting to rewrite the historical record to include women, feminist historians and sociologists became

⁶Connell, Gender and Power, pp. 72, 81. Connell also points out that any biologically influenced differences between men and women in matters of, for example, temperament or ability, are insufficient to explain major social institutions that have arisen around gender, and also that 'they pale into insignificance beside the common capacities of women and men'. For an objection to Connell's rejection of the influence of biology, see Judith Stacey, 'Toward Kinder, Gentler Uses for Testosterone', Theory and Society, vol. 22, no. 5, pp. 711-22. I consider that Connell's arguments are more convincing than Stacey's.
increasingly interested in the workings of systems of gender relations in history. It was this desire that first gave rise to an interest in exploring masculinity. Natalie Zemon Davis suggested as long ago as 1975 that ‘we should be interested in the history of both women and men...we should not be working only on the subjected sex any more than an historian of class can focus entirely on peasants’.

We need to understand masculinity in order to understand ‘those times and places in which men see their interests and defend themselves qua men’. Comprehending patriarchy, defined by Chris Weedon as a system of ‘power relations in which women’s interests are subordinated to the interests of men’, therefore requires examination of the structures and discourses promoted by the dominant gender as well as the experiences of the subjugated.

There has also been an increasing realisation that masculinity can be explored for its significance in itself, for the gendering of male experience, and not simply as a part of an analysis of power relations between men and women. Feminist historians such as Marilyn Lake and Barbara Caine have pointed out that masculinity needs to be exposed to historical inquiry just as much as femininity, and that such inquiry is necessary to overcome the hitherto dominant presentation of masculinity a somehow universal, gender-neutral, and simply ‘human’. Harry Brod elaborated on this idea in 1987 when he argued that histories written from a male perspective were histories of male activities, but most certainly not histories of masculinity:

---


Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley and Susan Sheridan, ‘Introduction’ in Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley and Susan Sheridan (eds), Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1993, pp. xvii-xviii.
While seemingly about men, traditional scholarship's treatment of generic man as the human norm in fact systematically excludes from consideration what is unique to men qua men. The overgeneralisation from male to generic experience not only distorts our understanding of what, if anything, is truly generic to humanity but also precludes the study of masculinity as a specific male experience rather than a paradigm for human experience.13

Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans argued similarly in 1992 that our familiarity with men as universal social actors has ironically led to a situation where we know men least well as specific sexual and gendered identities, while in 1994 John Tosh commented that ‘in the historical record it is as though masculinity is everywhere but nowhere’.14

The problem has been further exacerbated in Australia by the fact that historians have tended to ignore middle-class Australia, and have concentrated instead on the dissident and insurgent, or on the mythology of the bushman and the digger. However, in the words of Janet McCalman, 'Camberwell and Kew are just as much part of the “real” Australia as Collingwood and Cootamundra'.15 The study of masculinity in Australia has tended to concentrate on convicts, diggers, bushmen,

---

larrikins and the working classes at the expense of consideration of the masculinity of ruling-class men.\textsuperscript{16} There has been some work done in the histories of schools and schooling, and some scholars have looked at the construction of gender ideals in boys’ stories, or at the values underpinning youth movements.\textsuperscript{17} But these studies have not attempted to synthesise the construction of ideals across a range of socialising influences, as this study attempts to do.

Further, even where studies have considered the battles between different cultures and their ideals of what boys should be, they have dwelt upon the attempts to impose a seemingly stagnant middle-class or respectable culture upon a non-respectable working-class culture. There has been little recognition that middle-class ideals themselves were subject to vigorous challenge and contestation. Contests over the definition of manliness cannot be so brutally reduced to class cleavages. As Janet McCalman and Robert van Krieken have argued, the relations between classes need to be understood in terms of negotiation and exchange rather than social control. Many working-class people, for example, promoted ‘respectable’ ideals in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Australia.\textsuperscript{18} Debates and contests over the morality, behaviour, outlooks and priorities of males need to be understood as a process of dialogue and

\textsuperscript{16}See, for example, the contents of Moore and Saunders (eds), \textit{Australian Masculinities}. A number of the articles in this collection (such as those by Ross Laurie, Kay Saunders, David Pear, and the joint effort between Daryl Adair, John Naughton and Murray Phillips), consider ‘respectable’ ideals of masculinity, though none explicitly focus on the middle classes. In contrast, there are articles on convict masculinities, larrikins and masculinity and rock ‘n’ roll.


conflict between different codes of masculinity, operative within, as well as across, class boundaries.

This thesis attempts to help fill this void by exploring the historical development in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Australia, of respectable middle-class ideals of masculinity. Attempts were made, as I show, to circulate these ideals to working-class boys through youth groups, compulsory schooling, and ‘improving’ literature. My aim is, however, not to describe the process of the emergence of a more respectable working-class masculine culture, but to examine the attempts of the middle classes to define their ideals and disseminate them. It is a thesis about the production of codes of manliness, rather than their consumption.

In particular, I consider the changing role of religion and the nation in the construction of manliness. I do this through examining three principal socialising agencies: elite secondary schools, juvenile literature and youth groups. Primarily through an examination of the teachings and methods these agencies employed, as revealed in sources such as school magazines, adventure stories and annual reports, I seek to reveal evolutions in the ‘hegemonic masculinity’ which they constructed and promoted. By understanding these ideals I hope both to illustrate the influences working upon adolescent males as they grew into men, and to reveal the mindsets, fears and hopes of the adult society which promulgated such codes.

The term ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is taken from R. W. Connell’s work. I use it to denote the ideal of manliness which was most prevalent amongst those with the power to formulate the ideal and disseminate it. Connell himself defines hegemonic masculinity as:

the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the
legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken
to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the
subordination of women.19

Historians have, however, increasingly questioned the used of the term ‘patriarchy’ in
gender studies, partly because of the recognition that to categorise all women as
victims ignores, for example, the realities of the white women oppressing black
women. The term ‘patriarchy’ as a descriptor of power structures in gender relations
also ignores, in Joanna Bourke’s words, ‘the way in which power structures also
oppress men’.20 While I use Connell’s term, therefore, I shift the emphasis from the
construction of male hegemony over women to focus instead on the formation of a
dominant or hegemonic ideal of what it means to be ‘manly’. ‘Manliness’ is the ideal
which, through any number of social, cultural and legal practices, oppresses all those
which it excludes. Heterosexual, white, middle-class hegemonic ideals oppress and
marginalise all that is homosexual, black or working-class.21

Because hegemonic masculinities are culturally constructed, they are in flux,
contingent on prevailing ruling-class interests, perceptions and concerns. Further, their
power, or the degree to which they tolerate difference and pluralism, can alter. Thus
Clyde Griffen has argued that in Victorian America there emerged a narrowly-defined
hegemonic masculinity based around ideas of toughness, courage and loyalty,
qualities which were at a premium during the American Civil War, and that the
previous pluralism in ideals of manliness was eroded in the late nineteenth century.22

---

19Connell, Masculinities, p. 77.
20Joanna Bourke, Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain, and the Great War, Reaktion Books,
Masculinity’ in Michael Roper and John Tosh (eds), Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since
21Connell, Gender and Power, p. 183. Connell notes this point, observing that “Hegemonic
masculinity” is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in
relation to women’. Our differences in the use of the term are in terms of emphasis. See also Tim
of Masculinities, p. 92. The authors point out that a hegemonic masculinity may operate at a symbolic
level, and is thus not to be confused with a norm of masculine behaviour.
22Clyde Griffen, ‘Reconstructing Masculinity from the Evangelical Revival to the Waning of
There appear to have been similar developments in the rest of the Western world; the Victorian era, according to Gertrude Himmelfarb, witnessed a convergence of ideological outlook as the aristocracy and the working classes increasingly shared, as never before, the tenets of middle-class morality. The growth in the power of the state and more determined middle-class attempts to control and shape working-class culture assisted in the development of an early-twentieth-century conception of manliness which was much more widely shared and much less tolerant of difference than had been the case some fifty years previously.

A hegemonic masculinity is constructed by reference to range of ‘others’, including femininity. Arthur Brittan thus suggests that masculinity ‘will always be an expression of the current image that men have of themselves in relation to women’. Yet it is important to note that ‘in relation to’ does not necessary imply – though it certainly allows the possibility of – a binary opposition between the ideal of manliness and femininity. Hegemonic masculinities (which I call ‘manliness’, in common with most contemporary commentators) can be composed of feminine qualities as well as masculine ones. I thus reject any formulation which implies that ‘manliness’ is necessarily in a relationship of binary opposition to femininity. I also reject the formulation that seems to have found favour among some recent writers on American masculinity that manliness can be posed against masculinity. Manliness is a discursive construct which is composed by reference to both feminine and masculine qualities, as I show throughout this thesis, but most pointedly in my analysis of Australian public school stories in Chapter Four. Both the effeminate boy of 1870 and the masculine boy of 1920 were described as ‘manly’.

23Brittan, Masculinity and Power, p. 3.
Kay Schaffer has argued that men and women can be composed of a mixture of masculine and feminine qualities, that they ‘are defined and define themselves within and across...masculine and feminine categories’.27 The categories of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are, of course, themselves cultural constructs. Once biological determinism of gender ideology is rejected, there is ‘no essential referent, nor even a finite range of referents’, in which the meanings of such terms can be anchored.28 There is no reason for the qualities of delicacy, virtue, morality and religious piety to be identified as feminine, and for the qualities of hardihood, courage, physicality and violence to be associated with masculinity. That they are is principally a function of discourse. But Anne Summers, Peggy Pascoe and others have shown that these associations of certain qualities with femininity and others with masculinity were indeed made in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and with a considerable degree of constancy.29 Women were not ‘naturally’ or necessarily associated with religion, nor were they free from discrimination by the churches and their teachings. But they were culturally designated as keepers of the faith and the guardians of moral virtue.

Defining manliness was thus often a matter of adjusting the mix of masculine and feminine traits, both of which were generally considered necessary in the making of the manly boy. Some from each realm were embraced, others were rejected. Similarly, womanhood could be idealised as a partly masculine construct (for example, the woman who battles the native environment, acting out the masculine project of colonisation). There were generally limits to the degree to which ideals of

---
27Schaffer, Women and the Bush, p. 14. In the same way that the drover’s wife must cry to maintain her essential femininity, so must Norah Linton, another partially masculinised female hero figure, in Mary Grant Bruce’s Billabong stories. See Chapter Five.
masculinity and ideals of femininity could embrace the qualities of their allegedly bipolar opposites, but that they could do so at all, as individual men and women could, illustrates the fiction of a necessary manly-feminine binarism in the constitution of gender ideals.  

Thus the opposite of that which is manly is not necessarily that which is feminine, but that which is unmanly. As Mrinalini Sinha has suggested in her study of colonial masculinity in India, examination of the construction of the ideal of colonial masculinity 'disrupts any stable equation between gender identity and sex difference: it demonstrates that masculinity had as much to do with racial, class, religious, and national differences as with sex difference'. In colonial and early Federation Australia white middle-class manliness was constructed against racial, gender, class and national 'others'. The labelling and marking of Aborigines, bushrangers, larakins and, especially later, women, the English and potential invaders from Asia, as 'unmanly' all served to create a 'them' removed from 'us'.

Attempting to discover hegemonic masculinities leaves one open to the criticism of reducing masculinity to a single construct. As sociologists and historians have pointed out, there is no unitary masculinity, for different masculinities can be produced in different social settings, and even in the same social setting. Similarly, there is no single dominant masculine ideal. The dominant ideal operative in a white-middle-class school will be different from that dominating in a working-class factory, or a black community, or a gentleman's club, and so forth. There are a multitude of fractures and cleavages across lines of class, race, sexual orientation, religious affiliation and nationality; and also within these delineations. Even at the individual

---

30See Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, 'Dislocating Masculinity: Gender, Power and Anthropology' in Cornwall and Lindisfarne (eds), Dislocating Masculinities, p. 11.
31Michael S. Kimmel, 'Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity' in Brod and Kaufman (eds), Theorizing Masculinities, p. 120.
33Connell, Gender and Power, pp. 175-6; Don Conway-Long, 'Ethnographies and Masculinities' in Brod and Kaufman (eds), Theorizing Masculinities, pp. 61-2.
level, men can choose different masculine personae for different sets of circumstances. We need to think of ‘hegemonic masculinities’ in the same way that we need to think of ‘masculinities’.\(^{34}\)

However, even if one allows for exceptions, sub-groupings and ‘counter-hegemonic’ forces, there are certain aspects to a male character and being which most people within a social grouping define as desirable or essential, others which they consider of little import, and still others which they flatly reject. It is these components which constitute the hegemonic masculinity, or the ideal of ‘manliness’. These discourses operate on gendered subjects by suggesting to them ‘natural’ or ‘obvious’ models to which they should conform.\(^{35}\) Boys are exposed to socialising influences which suggest to them the appropriate identities, behaviours and outlooks they should adopt as they grow into men.

There are necessary limits to the scope of this study. There is a multitude of possible sites for examining the ideologies of manliness, and in this thesis I concentrate on just three. I do not consider the lived experience of manliness, despite acknowledging, as Raymond Evans has pointed out, that ideologies of manliness and masculine behaviour do not always square. Dominant ideologies may be accepted, but they can also be rejected or ignored.\(^{36}\) Nor do I examine those ideals which might be considered counter-hegemonic. And although I do consider the gendering of the landscape, I have paid little attention to sexuality, preferring to focus more on questions of civic and religious obligations than individual orientation. I have also chosen not to consider, except in the broadest sense, the operation of the patriarchal system, in the sense of power relations which subordinate women’s interests to those


\(^{36}\)Raymond Evans, ‘A Gun in the Oven: Masculinities and Gendered Violence’ in Saunders and Evans (eds), *Gender Relations in Australia*, pp. 198-204.
of men, and the influence upon it of changing ideologies of manliness. Although these factors are external to this study I hope the work that follows is a significant step towards a better understanding masculinity in Australia and Australian history.

This study begins with an examination of the nature of the 'boy problem' in Chapter One, outlining the fears which the middle classes held for the young, and the social and cultural background against which their responses were formulated. The 'boy problem' only emerged for the middle classes with their creation of the category of youth as the result of trends which saw privileged boys educated for longer and marrying and entering the work force later. The gap between childhood and the rites of adulthood thus widened, creating a new category that needed new forms of control for which there seemingly existed little historical precedent. This new category was frequently the focal point for fear of moral and physical decay, especially in the settler society of Australia. Removal from the centres of civilisation, the influence of a warm climate, and the breaking down of old world structures of authority would, it was feared, lead to either a barbarous and crude Australian male 'type', or, alternatively, to colonial weaklings. In subsequent chapters I explore the discursive and practical responses to these problems in three main arenas of discursive construction and active socialisation.

Chapters Two and Three examine the elite secondary school system which emerged in Australia in the middle of the nineteenth century and which expanded rapidly until the beginning of the twentieth. The schools which comprised this system were where the wealthier sections of colonial and early Federation society sent their sons to be educated. They were, in the public eye, the places where the 'best' men were made, and enjoyed considerable prestige in the wider community, hence the extensive public interest in their sporting encounters, and the detailed newspaper reports of school speech days. Within these schools, character training of boys was

---

more important than intellectual training, a priority which became clearer and more pronounced in the years under consideration. The ideals these schools sought to inculcate as part of their self-proclaimed role as educators of the future elite evolved from godliness and good learning in the middle of the nineteenth century, through to athleticism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and increasingly to militarism in the decade or so before the outbreak of the First World War. Masculinity, once to be restrained and controlled through devotion to study and religion, and through strict rules regarding polite and decorous behaviour outside the classroom, was increasingly embraced through the priority given to sports and to cadet training. The feminine boy, much more acceptable in mid-nineteenth-century educational ideology, was increasingly posted as the enemy and threat.

Chapter Four shifts the focus to fiction. It considers the emerging and developing figure of the public schoolboy in Australian juvenile fiction and suggests that the ideals of the 1870s were overturned by the 1910s. The shifts that occurred in the public schools were reflected in the fictional realm, though with an even greater clarity and to an even greater extent. Free from the need to instil academic learning into their subjects, and free to incorporate a range of masculine and feminine signifiers not as readily available to headmasters, authors such as Robert Richardson, Mary Grant Bruce, Lillian Pyke, Ethel Turner and Eustace Boylan constructed hero figures which clearly revealed both what manliness was to be, and what it was not to be. In these stories, manliness was defined in increasingly rugged, athletic and militarist terms. The villains of the stories of the 1870s had more in common with the heroes of the 1910s stories than with the latter’s ‘unmanly’ figures, and vice versa. The effeminate hero gave way to the masculine one.

But if public school story authors had greater freedom than teachers and headmasters to make use of masculine and feminine signifiers, and to use unlikely situations and events in the construction of the ideal boy, they were still hampered by
the demands of their genre. Some connection with schooling remained necessary, and the principal heroes were always adolescents. Less limited were the writers of boys' adventure fiction, for their heroes could be boys or grown men, and could encounter a wider range of challenges. Chapter Five thus examines boys' adventure stories set in Australia, arguing that the values of domesticity and femininity, evident in the adventure fiction of the 1870s, were gradually removed, and that the focus for the operation of increasingly rugged masculine ideals was shifted overseas and onto the battlefield. Whereas earlier adventure heroes had travelled to Australia and sought to reproduce feminine morality and domesticity in the hostile spaces of Australia, by the war years they were employing fighting ability and physical hardihood in defending the nation and the British Empire.

Chapter Six explores attempts by middle-class reformers to impress their ideals of manliness upon working-class boys in the boy rescue movements. This was also a task of state secondary schooling and juvenile literature, but the rescue movements are novel in that they directed their efforts, almost without exception, at working-class boys alone. 'Respectable boys' had no need of 'rescue' and appear not to have joined youth movements until the arrival of the Boys' Brigade and, more especially, the Boy Scouts. Rescue movements such as the Melbourne City Newsboys' Society and the Adelaide Boys' Brigade were an important site of the construction and dissemination of middle-class conceptions of manliness, for they directed themselves at overcoming working-class masculinity, epitomised by the despised figure of the larrikin. Again, the process of making manly and moral boys emerges as an attempt to control their masculinity in favour of middle-class feminine virtues such as religious observance and temperance.

These movements, like the elite secondary schools and juvenile literature, came to endorse the virtues of physical hardihood and military preparedness. But they never shed their emphasis upon feminine morality. More significant in terms of the
development of codes of manliness in Australian youth movements is the rise of the Boy Scouts from 1908, a rise which was often at the expense of the rescue movements. Chapter Seven considers the emergence and ethos of the Boy Scouts and demonstrates that their ideals were more masculine and militarist than those of their forebears. Girls were not allowed in the movement, and part of the movement’s appeal lay in the way it offered an escape from feminine domesticity.

The Scouts, in turn, were usurped by the Commonwealth’s universal military training scheme which came into operation in 1911. The development of the scheme for the universal military training of young males was, in many ways, symptomatic of the changes which took place in the construction and inculcation of middle-class ideals of manliness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was a masculinity that revolved around the nation rather than the kingdom of God, it idealised masculine attributes such as physical hardihood and patriotism, and marginalised femininity and its associated qualities of moral and religious purity. It was administered by the nation rather than the churches. It was more ‘national’ and racial in its composition and defined less by class, for the enemy was the foreign invader rather than the working classes. It blurred class boundaries, for it was an ideal and a role which all Australian male youths were required to participate in, regardless of class standing. Working-class youth were co-opted into the project rather than functioning as the project’s object. Whereas hegemonic masculine ideals of the 1870s had focused on class, women, intellectualism and godliness, the ideals of the 1910s revolved around race, nationality, militarism and the empire.

Finally, a word on terminology. In the literature on masculinity much confusion has been caused by the different terminology of sociologists and historians. Some have seen manliness as a spiritual concept, others as a physical concept. Words such as manhood, maleness, masculinism, masculinity and manliness have all been given different definitions. For the sake of clarity, I restrict my use of these terms, as I
have indicated above, to the following senses. 'Manhood' is the state of achieving male maturity. Simply, it is what comes after boyhood. 'Maleness' and 'masculinity' are identical. They are used in this thesis to describe the characteristics which contemporaries believed naturally attached to being of the male sex. These include the characteristics of aggression, physicality and dominance. 'Femininity' is used in the same sense and includes the qualities of gentility, moral virtue and godliness. 'Masculinism' is the partisan promotion of the interests of those who identified themselves as masculine. 'Manliness', the 'ideal of masculinity' and 'hegemonic masculinity' are used interchangeably. As indicated above, the ideal of masculinity/manliness/hegemonic masculinity may be composed predominantly in masculine terms, or predominantly by reference to feminine characteristics. However constructed, it was the identity towards which boys were directed.

'Militarism' is also a contested term, and one which I have used extensively in this work. One need to only to refer to different dictionaries to locate widely varying definitions, ranging from 'the political condition characterized by the predominance of the military class in government or administration' to 'the desire to strengthen and use the armed forces of your country in order to make it more powerful'. For the purposes of this thesis, 'militarism' and 'militarist' are used to denote an emphasis on, and an admiration for, the ability to fight for one's country and the qualities of the idealised soldier, such as bravery and fortitude. They imply that fighting for one's country is the peak of personal achievement and the epitome of manliness, but they do not necessarily imply a war-mongering spirit.

CHAPTER ONE

Manliness and the ‘Boy Problem’ in Australia, 1870-1920

Women, it has been frequently noted, have been widely employed in national iconography. But if late-nineteenth-century iconography was predominantly female, the fears and hopes of nations were projected more onto males, and especially young males. ‘Young Australia’ was a term in widespread use by 1870 and was used to describe both the emerging Australian nation and its rising generations.¹ Fears and hopes about the nation’s future and the coming generation of native-born men were conflated. Crises in masculinity were crises for the nation, and vice versa. The same is much less true of femininity. Although exalted in national iconography, the state of the nation’s girls seemed much less to threaten, or to offer the potential to improve, national destiny, except through the improving (or deleterious) effects of feminine morality and domesticity on Australia’s young men. This chapter draws primarily on secondary literature to examine the identification and perception of the ‘boy problem’ in Australia between 1870 and 1920. I consider these fears and anxieties and what defined them, examining the changing social and intellectual background to the construction of the ‘boy problem’.

Throughout the European world perceptions of the child were changing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The circulation of Darwin’s theories, the introduction of universal education and the growth of democracy increasingly prompted people to look at the rising generation and to ponder, in Ken Inglis’ words,

‘how will things turn out when this lot grow up and take over?’. The middle classes, in particular, looked at the growing cohorts of children in the mid-to-late nineteenth century with anxious eyes. This was partly because it was the middle classes who ‘invented’ adolescence, the lengthening period between childhood and marriage when the boy had increasing opportunities to escape the strict control of parents and the demands of the home. Moral corruption and physical decline threatened the European boy, and the Australian boy even more because of the allegedly inferior social and physical environment. Larrkinism and the supposed physical shortness of many Australian boys appeared to confirm that the long-term future of Australia was anything but bright. Such fears prompted determined efforts to maintain and improve the quality of the nation’s youth. Education, sport, youth groups and juvenile literature, along with medical investigation and growing amounts of state legislation, were all enlisted in the fight against moral and physical degeneracy, in the battle to develop the ‘manly’ boy.

Of equal importance to the identification of the ‘boy problem’ are the assumptions that were made about its nature, assumptions informed by the intellectual and cultural environment. The two principal changes, though certainly not the only ones, were the decline in the authority of religion and the rise of the nation-state, both as an organising imperative and as a socialising influence. The rise of militarism, feminism and social Darwinism all had an impact on understandings of masculinity, as did changing conceptions of childhood. Whereas youth was once frequently seen as a time of potential depravity, it was later increasingly romanticised and identified as something to be harnessed to ruling-class and state interests. If in 1870 the boy was judged by the standard of his ascetic religious morality and his worthiness for the

---

2 ibid., p. 19.
5 ibid., pp. 156-7.
kingdom of God, by 1920 he was judged by physical strength, patriotism, military usefulness, and ultimately, his worthiness as a member of the nation and empire. Over the period from 1870 to 1920 discussion of the problem of boyhood shifted from a fear of moral degeneration to the fear that the rising generation would be unable protect the new Australian nation. It was this broader social commentary on the ‘boy problem’ that helped to bury the 1870s view that boyishness and raw masculinity should be suppressed in favour of feminine morality, and created a new perception that masculinity needed to be developed and nurtured in an increasingly effeminate world if the nation was to survive and prosper.

These broad developments were closely tied up with changes in Britain, where the definitions of manliness were also becoming more secular, physical, and militarist. Through juvenile literature, schoolmasters, migrants to Australia, and through institutions originally developed in Britain before being used as models in Australia, such as the Boy Scouts, British developments tended to be mirrored in colonial Australia as the creed of middle-class manliness was disseminated throughout the empire upon which much of it was based. 6 The influence of the metropolitan centre, however, falls far short of explaining developments in Australian masculinity. Australia often had its own distinct priorities, hopes and fears, such as the fear of racial and moral degeneration in the hot and harsh Australian wilderness, the perceived threat of Asian invasion, and the desire to forge a distinctive Australian identity. British influences, imperatives which were shared between Australia and Britain (such as growing class tension and secularisation), and exclusively Australian concerns wove a complex background for changing constructions of the ideal male.

---
Whether a virile and moral race could be produced and maintained in Australia, removed from the European centres considered to be the font of modern ‘civilisation’, and in a strange and seemingly deleterious physical environment, was a hotly-debated question. A number of writers were pessimistic. James F. Hogan, for example, a school teacher and headmaster of St. Mary’s Catholic School in Geelong, later to become a journalist and politician, published an acerbic piece in the *Victorian Review* in 1880. He argued that if the current crop of youngsters was anything to go by, the future for the Australian race was bleak indeed. He suggested that the three main characteristics of the native Australian were an inordinate love of outdoor games, a disinclination to respect the authority of parents and superiors, and a dislike of mental effort. ‘If excellence in cricket or football is to be the summit of the Australian native’s ambition’, Hogan suggested, ‘the Coming Man will suffer considerably by comparison with his ancestors’. Objects of admiration, according to Hogan, tended to be successful sportsmen rather than more deserving achievers in the fields of art and literature. Oarsmen and cricketers, after all, achieved ‘nothing more than what an ignorant South-sea islander could do if he wished’. Children who were disrespectful and disobedient in the home, Hogan alleged, would transfer these same shortcomings to their behaviour towards the state. The future Australian would represent a sharp decline from a cultured British origin, its men a descent into a bestial and irreligious masculinity:

the coming Australian will spend most of his time out-of-doors.... He will be an ardent admirer and supporter of all manly sports. He will be...wanting in a feeling of reverence for the venerable institutions bequeathed by

---

1Hogan was an Irish-born Catholic educated at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Geelong and St. Patrick’s in Melbourne. His education helps explained his aversion to athleticism, which until the 1900s was much stronger in the Protestant educational system than its Catholic counterpart. See Douglas Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography: Volume 4. 1851-1890*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 409-10.


his ancestors. Ambition is a vice with which he will never be charged. He will daily move in a circle bounded by his own little horizon, taking little interest in the proceedings of the great world outside.... [He] will be peaceably disposed and sportively inclined; rather selfish in conduct and secular in practice, contented and easy-going, but non-intellectual and tasteless.\(^{11}\)

Hogan laid the blame at the feet of educationalists who were treating children with too much laxity when more discipline was called for.\(^{12}\)

Hogan's focus on educationalists rather than parents was widely mirrored in contemporary commentaries on the 'boy problem'. The system of compulsory, secular education provided by the state was still in its early years and was frequently criticised as an unjustified intrusion upon the moral authority of the home and church-run schools. Many feared that schools were paying too little attention to educating boys' moral senses and ensuring they left school with what another contributor to the *Victorian Review* called 'habits of manliness, order and obedience'.\(^{13}\) The contributor, W. M. Tomlinson, invited his readers to

Listen to the foul, filthy, disgusting language of some of our colonial lads...and it is sufficiently evident that they are copying the habits and manners of larrikins, and have set up for themselves a false and bastard standard of manliness.... Reverence seems to be completely at a

\(^{11}\) *ibid.*, pp. 108-9.

\(^{12}\) *ibid.*, p. 106.

discount... [I]s it right to designate the teachings of the
‘three R’s’ by the high-sounding name of education?14

Manliness, Tomlinson was suggesting, lay in moral elevation. The rough and ready
codes of the larrikin, the desire to be ‘tough’, offered other standards of manliness, but
false and immoral ones.

The fears of men such as Hogan and Tomlinson that Australians might decline
into a bestial and irreligious masculinity crystallised in the heated debates, which took
place over much of the second half of the nineteenth century, concerning the place of
religion in education. State aid to denominational schools was ‘one of the two or three
most important political questions of the later nineteenth century’ in Hilary Carey’s estimation.15 Although there were complications, such as the distinctions between
Catholic and Protestant education, and the desire of many to find a solution which
involved non-denominational religious teaching in state schools, the debate eventually
resolved into a contest between the proponents of denominational education and those
of secularism. It was one those in favour of denominational education lost, for
between 1852 and 1895 state aid to denominational schools was abandoned
throughout Australia, state aid being withdrawn in the most populous colonies of
Victoria and New South Wales from 1872 and 1882 respectively.16

The question of state aid to denominational schools was, however, concluded
only after protracted and vitriolic debate.17 The move towards increasingly secular
education attracted stern opposition from church groups which feared widespread
moral decline and the erosion of their influence. One churchman, the Reverend James

14Ibid., p. 636.
15Hilary M. Carey, Believing in Australia: A Cultural History of Religions, Allen and Unwin, Sydney,
16Alan Barcan, A History of Australian Education, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 132-
44.
87.
Hegarty, for example, argued that an entirely secular education showed a naive faith in human nature and ignored the higher ends of mankind in favour of more materialist and worldly goals. But the decline of morality was Hegarty's main concern as he suggested that secular education would lead to 'a tendency to unbelief and to laxity of morals', and that the church could not be replaced as a moral guide:

The rod in the school and the prison afterwards are the only sanctions the child must know. In a country such as ours, with the all but tropically early development of sexual passion, and an ultra-democratic disregard for parental authority, what is to be the consequence to the morals of our boys and girls who are taught the one rule – "keep clear of prison if you can"?\(^{18}\)

Catholic Bishops in New South Wales described state schools established on secular principles as 'seed-plots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness' while another churchman warned in 1904: 'Sow the seeds of Secularism, and you secure a crop of the poisonous weed of juvenile delinquency'.\(^{19}\) Archbishop Vaughan went so far as to speak of the movement towards secular education as part of a sinister, worldwide conspiracy against all religion.\(^{20}\)

More liberal ministers argued that the Bible should remain an important influence in the schools because even if it was no longer appropriate or acceptable to


teach religious doctrine and rituals at school, it still contained many moral lessons which had a secular use in teaching public morality.\textsuperscript{21} There was a common feeling that if religion was removed from education there would be no suitable way of teaching boys to behave properly, for it was the religious element which provided ‘the living impetus to morality’.\textsuperscript{22} John Crozier, for example, another contributor to the debate which raged in the pages of the \textit{Victorian Review}, argued that any type of religious instruction was better than none:

I had occasion not long since to cross the play-ground of a large school in Melbourne, and was utterly shocked at the ribaldry and oaths which I heard from the lips of the lads at play.... [T]hough I am a Protestant, I should much prefer to send my children to a school under Roman Catholic direction, but where decent discipline was maintained, than to let them run the risk of the moral contamination of the public schools.\textsuperscript{23}

Such arguments were typical of the widespread belief in the need to replace sectarian religious instruction, but a simultaneous confusion as to what basis education should be organised on if it was still to teach morality. Some argued for complete secularity, while many others, such as Crozier, opposed denominationalism and sectarianism, but argued that an entirely non-religious education could not adequately teach morality.

George Higinbotham, who chaired the Victorian Royal Commission charged with settling the education question in Victoria in 1866 and 1867, is an excellent example of a man who, despite disdain for the religious denominations, wished to preserve the place of religion in the emerging state education system. A social order

without religion, he feared, would become social disorder 'unregulated by a single ascertained or unquestioned law'. He believed that the state should support all churches equally in their provision of education, and only reluctantly accepted, when faced with the churches' inability to agree on what would constitute fair levels of assistance from the state, that state aid to religious schools would be impracticable. Like many, Higinbotham came to endorse and advocate secular state education only when it was clear that a non-denominational, state-assisted education system run by both church and state would be impossible.

Similarly, the Lord Bishop of Melbourne, Bishop Moorhouse, considered that there could not be morality without religion, that society's fabric was underpinned by religious faith and the removal of religion would leave a void. 'If Christianity be abandoned', he asked, 'where is the religion that we can adopt in its stead?'. He argued that Christianity was 'the only religion in the field' and that concepts of morality had to flow from the Bible. Religious instruction would provide a moral basis for the young, and allow boys to deal with the moral temptations they would inevitably be exposed to as they grew older:

What, however, can be done, and what, therefore, it is of the most importance to attempt, is this, that before the great plunge is taken, before the soul finds itself at death-grips with an all but irresistible force, it shall be furnished with the sword and shield of religious principle.

---

27Ibid., p. 284.
Liberally for an Anglican Bishop, he was opposed to denominational education, except to satisfy some of the demands of Catholics. But in common with other commentators of a church background, he could not envisage moral education without a religious basis.²⁸

Others, however, objected to the assumption that a secular education would be an atheistic and amoral one, arguing that the schools would still have an important role in providing a moral education for children, whether they used the Bible to do so or not.²⁹ Many felt that the church needed to be excluded from state education on the basis of separation of church and state, and argued that ‘in a free constitutional democracy there can be no State religion, no endowed church, no subsidised sectarianism’.³⁰ All creeds had to be respected equally, and if the Catholics, secularists and Protestants could not agree, it would be wrong to impose the views of any one group, even if they were a majority, on the others ‘in a free country and under a free constitution’.³¹ Eventually, state education was established on secular lines, and state aid to denominational schools was abandoned.³²

The great threat to morality which appeared to be posed by the decline of religion in the teaching of the next generation was exacerbated by growing class tension in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Declining moral standards and the results of an irreligious education seemed, for many, to have reached their logical conclusion in the rise of the working-class larrikin, the symbol of the immoral and

²⁸Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography: Volume 5, 1851-1890*, pp. 281-3. Bishop James Moorhouse (1826-1915) was born in Sheffield, England, and studied at St. John’s, Cambridge, before becoming Bishop of Melbourne in 1877. He remained heavily involved in education policy and provision in Victoria, and was one of the few non-Catholic churchmen to support Catholic claims for state aid.
irreligious mob, devoid of any higher or ennobling influences. Larrikins, standing on street corners and abusing the more 'respectable' members of society, offended middle-class sensibilities and at the same time represented a threatening inversion of the correct social order. The 'boy problem' increasingly became one of class as well as morality.

Class, as E. P. Thompson has argued, is an event rather than a structure, created when one group of people 'feel and articulate' a common identity and interests against those with a different identity and competing interests. Thompson's work has centred on the creation of the English working class, but the same process applies equally well for the creation of an Australian middle-class agenda and identity in the second half of the nineteenth century. Heightened perceptions of a working-class threat to middle-class hegemony produced a greater identity and commonality of purpose amongst those not of a working-class identity. In Australia, as in England, it was feared that the poor were an increasingly powerful class with interests and values directly opposed to those of bourgeois society. Unless they could be controlled, brought to heel, or educated to the same ideals as their social superiors, they would present a threat to the social order. John Stanley James ('The Vagabond') expressed such fears in 1888 when he wrote that

We, too, have a dangerous class in our midst, lurking in holes and corners away from the public gaze, where they mature undisturbed their plans against society; and where vice in every form flourishes unchecked by aught that might have a restraining influence over it.

37John Rickard, 'Lovable Larrikins and Awful Ockers' in Moore and Saunders (eds), Australian Masculinities, p. 79.
40John Freeman, Lights and Shadows of Melbourne, London, 1888, p. 14. Quoted in Graeme Davison and David Dunstan, "This Moral Pandemonium": Images of Low Life in Graeme Davison, David
The moral panic associated with larrikinism peaked in the 1880s, before subsiding as the larrikin gangs moved from the inner-city to the suburbs, and as they began fighting each other more often and attacking respectable people less.37

But larrikinism remained a long-running scare, and as late as 1901 the Age could speak of 'the growing tendency towards vicious ways among our young people'.38 Anxieties about the future of Australia were projected onto the larrikin in the same way that the middle classes projected their hopes onto the public schoolboy.39 Different ideological groupings offered their own interpretations of the problem. Religious people, for example, claimed that the larrikin was evidence of the declining religious standards of the community. The Reverend Father Mulhall, S.J., the senior priest at St. Ignatius Church in Richmond, claimed in the early 1900s that the Education Act was to blame for larrikinism:

I must put it down to the want of religion amongst the younger classes of the community. They are growing up without either the fear of God or the love of man in their hearts, and the inevitable result is they are sinking lower and lower into bad and vicious habits.... It is from the fact that we have instructed the children intellectually but not morally that now they grow up in defiance of

---

Dunstan and Chris McConville (eds), *The Outcasts of Melbourne: Essays in Social History*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, p. 42. John Stanley James (1843-1896), 'The Vagabond', was English-born, travelled to America after a dispute with his father, and arrived in Melbourne in 1877. He made a name for himself in Australia by writing newspaper articles about the underside of urban life, providing 'a point of view unobtainable to the majority'. See Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography: Volume 4, 1851-1890*, pp. 469-70.

37Chris McConville, 'From “Criminal Class” to “Underworld”' in Davison, Dunstan and McConville (eds), *The Outcasts of Melbourne*, pp. 75-6.

38*Age*, 2 November 1901. Newspaper cutting in Try Boys' Society Scrapbook 1, SLV MS9910/41.

law and order, and, of course, the state has itself to blame.\textsuperscript{40}

Mulhall's accent upon the decline of religion, his endorsement of flogging, and his belief that parents were too soft on children, reveal an anti-modern stance towards the problem of boyhood which was typical of many churchmen, but which was increasingly out of tune with a modern age.\textsuperscript{41}

Various religious groups retained a role in defining and attempting to construct the idea of the Australian boy. The elite schools were generally church-based organisations (though they tended to move more and more away from their religious roots), clergymen railed against immorality, and religious groups attempted to reform the larrikins. But the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period of gradual decline in the authority of religion as Australian society became more secular.\textsuperscript{42} The force of religion as a paradigm within which ideals of manliness could be constructed was in sharp decline. Science and liberal economic and social theory produced a dominant ideology which ‘seemed to push the churches into a corner reserved for the gullible and the unthinking’.\textsuperscript{43} By 1900 Australian popular culture included a widespread indifference to religion, which lost much of its authority as a moral basis for society.\textsuperscript{44} Many, ranging from intellectuals to larrikins, even adopted attitudes of open hostility towards religion.\textsuperscript{45} The ‘boy problem’ was thus an increasingly secular one.

It has also been suggested that religion became feminised in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. Women and religious

\textsuperscript{40}Undated newspaper cutting (probably 1903-1905 judging by where it appears) in Try Boys’ Society Scrapbook 1, SLV MS9910/41.
\textsuperscript{41}ibid.
\textsuperscript{42}Carey, Believing in Australia, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{43}Hogan, The Sectarian Strand, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{44}ibid., pp. 154-5.
\textsuperscript{45}Carey, Believing in Australia, p. 105.
morality, despite the exclusion of women from positions of power within the church, were metaphorically aligned from at least the middle of the nineteenth century. Respectable women were idolised as moralising influences, with some justification. Hugh Jackson has argued that one of the major causes of irreligion on the Australian frontier was the absence of women. Where women were present, Jackson argues, they acted ‘as moderating and softening influences on male behaviour’. Where they were few in number, however, ‘drinking, gambling and swearing were likely to abound and readiness for religion to be slight’. Women were promoted as the keepers of civilised and moral values, a connection which was later intensified by groups such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. With the emergence of increasingly masculinist ideals of imperialism, militarism and athleticism, a divide was opened between secular manliness and feminine religion which proved difficult to close. Feminine religion sat uneasily with the heroic masculine, and feminine religious moral authority uneasily with the legendary independence of the bushman, the nationalist symbol of Australia.

Clearly, some ethical system was necessary to replace the teaching that had formerly been done by the church. Although many felt that this teaching still had to be centred around the Bible, there was increasing interest in secular ethics grounded in an individual’s rights and duties to the wider community. If religion, education and punishment were all failing to solve the problem of crime and moral degeneracy, better training in discipline and ethics might produce the required solutions and control the threat of uncivilised and barbarous masculine behaviour.

---

46Ibid., p. 107-112.
One potential solution was an increased role for the state in the dissemination of ideals of male citizenship. Late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century initiatives such as compulsory schooling, children’s courts, child protection legislation and cadet training can all be seen as part of what Graeme Davison has termed ‘a grand design to mould the private and family lives of the people according to the needs of the state’. The state assumed a greater role in defining the ideals of manliness that were to be operative, and in controlling, through legislation, schooling and military training, the socialisation of boys towards these ideals.

Other solutions included an increased emphasis on new agents of socialisation to develop noble and chivalric ideals of citizenship for boys. Juvenile literature, the growth in the character training ethos of the elite secondary schools which allegedly provided a ‘superior’ education, and the rise of youth movements were all attempts to fill the ideological void left by the decline of religion. If boys could not be instructed from the pulpit as to how God expected them to behave, they could be instructed, in the games they played, the books they read and the youth groups they belonged to, in the qualities of manliness which honour, their social position and their nation all demanded of them.

The ‘boy problem’ was also one of physical, as well as moral, decline. Fears of racial degeneration were based on a number of theories, some of which now seem quite ludicrous. One commentator argued, for example, that ‘we must be prepared for the inevitable deterioration of the Anglo-Saxon stock’ because the geological structure of Australia meant that the land was not of good quality. Such arguments were based on a crude environmental determinism which suggested that ‘The laws of nature are as irresistible as they are inexorable and immutable’. In the late 1860s Sir Charles

---

52Anon., ‘Will the Anglo-Australian Race Degenerate?’, *Victorian Review*, no. 1, November 1879, pp. 122.
53Ibid., p. 123.
Dilke attributed the ‘superior energy’ of Victorians over New South Welshmen to their being of more recent British stock, and to Melbourne’s climate being less tropical, and thus less debilitating and productive of lassitude, than Sydney’s. Fears about the environment were joined with fears about the influence of the convict strain. One Victorian doctor, for example, was quoted in 1910 to the effect that a regular influx of new, non-convict Europeans would be needed to prevent the deterioration of the Australian race.

Not all people believed that the Australian race was degenerating and there were some words of scorn in response to the more pessimistic view. The growth of an Australian-born population as an influential factor in Australian life seems to have discouraged constant reference to an English standard, as those born in Australia refused to accept the inferior status that talk of degeneration pressed upon them. The Australian Natives’ Association, the Bulletin and radical nationalists all praised the possibilities of the new land, and as reverence for the motherland declined, so pride in Australia and faith in its young men increased. Australian-born boys were increasingly seen as having great potential for the advancement and betterment of Australia, rather than as a threat to the displaced English civilisation.

The increasing idealisation of Australian youth was partly a result of the new discourses, in both England and Australia, which glorified the frontier and dismissed England as an old and ineffectual country which had fallen victim to class snobbery, feminisation and over-civilisation. Imperial crises, hooliganism, the rise of feminism and concern about the condition of the working class gave rise to fears of

---

degeneration in Britain from the late nineteenth century onwards. Britain no longer seemed as powerful as she once had. As Robert MacDonald has observed, ‘civilisation itself seemed to be rotten. Europe was sick in mind and body’. The working classes were considered degenerate, the middle classes selfish and materialistic. Modern life was decadent and ‘soft’, and the civilised nations were heading towards ‘race suicide’.

Disparagement of European civilisation began to find voice in Australia. By the early 1880s some commentators in periodicals such as the *Victorian Review* were already making assertions of colonial superiority over the old country and its people, or at least denying Australian inferiority. W. G. Carroll, for example, objected to an English periodical that had suggested that young English gentlemen who could not find a suitable station at home should head to the colonies. He complained that Australians were being lumbered with a ‘miraculous draught of useless young Britons...poured in upon us by each succeeding vessel from home’ who considered themselves superior to colonials. Especially objectionable to Carroll was the arrogance of the presumption that such young men could realistically be of benefit to Australia and its people:

if there is one thing more than another which we do *not* require in the new world, and which we emphatically protest against...it is an inundation of youngsters from the old world brimful of the home-implanted notion that they are the salt of the earth sent to teach us the whole duty of man. Such a chimera could only emanate from a country so obstinately conservative in small matters,

---

58*ibid.*, p. 4.
and so far behind the march of civilisation beyond her own shores, as is the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{60}

Into the twentieth century it was widely assumed that Australia was a land of opportunity for those of good character, who might be held back by the static and class-ridden nature of English society.\textsuperscript{61}

Physically, too, Australia seemed to offer possibilities not available in the old land. This was important because science made the body the site where fears about racial decline, degeneration and depravity were located, so a sense of Australia as a place where men had more opportunities for physical development tended also to imply that there could be moral improvement.\textsuperscript{62} Australia, it was felt, with its sunny climate and wide open spaces, offered chances for 'becoming a man' which were not available in an over-civilised and effeminate England. Australian manhood was increasingly seen as at least a match for, and frequently superior to, English manhood. The performances of Australian cricketers, rowers and soldiers, for example, were followed with great interest in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and their triumphs taken as evidence that fears of racial decline had been unfounded.\textsuperscript{63} The sunny climate and outdoor lifestyle of Australia were considered influential enough to overcome the hereditary effects of the convict strain.\textsuperscript{64} By the end of the century the dichotomy between the manly Australian and the effeminate Englishman was a

\textsuperscript{60}ibid., p. 173.
\textsuperscript{61}White, Inventing Australia, pp. 35-6. White dates this presumption as ending in the 1890s, but I think that the stories of Alexander Macdonald, for instance, illustrate its survival into the twentieth century. These stories are discussed in Chapter Five.
\textsuperscript{62}Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, p. 3.
common theme in Australian culture, suggesting that the ‘boy problem’, physically at least, was less daunting.\textsuperscript{65}

Part of the reason for the success with which the Australian middle classes were able to convince themselves that they were not degenerating through over-civilisation lies in the existence of the Australian bush, a ready-made frontier which could be exploited for national mythologies by all classes. The glorification of the bush was essentially the product of a new generation of artists and writers, almost wholly Australian-born, who rebelled against what they saw as an outdated and stale cultural world which they identified with Europe. They sought to promote a new and vital culture as the ‘real’ Australia.\textsuperscript{66} Sunlight, wattle, the bush, egalitarianism, mateship and freedom were the symbolic values which they associated with Australia, and which they located as belonging in the outback.\textsuperscript{67}

The symbols and ideals which the 1890s writers attached to the bush were not, in fact, exclusively Australian. English writers such as Rudyard Kipling idealised the outposts of the empire as a place for ‘real men’, contrasting it with the effeminacy of the metropolis.\textsuperscript{68} For much of the nineteenth century the city was identified as a dangerous space which indicated ‘womanhood out of control, lost nature, loss of identity’.\textsuperscript{69} As a counter, and in searching for models for a rejuvenated masculinity, Europeans looked towards the new world and the empire, where men were risking their lives in pushing civilisation onwards.\textsuperscript{70} The bushman and the pioneer in Australia, the farmer in New Zealand, the mounted policeman in Canada, and the cowboy in the United States all provided an imaginative escape from the effects of an effeminate civilisation and were employed as cultural symbols in the construction of

\textsuperscript{65}White, \textit{Inventing Australia}, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{66}ibid., pp. 85-7.
\textsuperscript{67}ibid., pp. 97-8.
\textsuperscript{68}ibid., p. 102.
\textsuperscript{70}MacDonald, \textit{Sons of the Empire}, p. 5.
rugged masculinity in children’s literature and in movements such as the Boy Scouts.\textsuperscript{71} The clean and manly bush was posted against the ‘foetid air and gritty’ of Banjo Paterson’s ‘dusty, dirty city’, populated by ‘little city urchins who would greet you with a curse’, and who were destined to grow into men with ‘pallid faces’, ‘eager eyes and greedy’ and ‘stunted forms and weedy’.\textsuperscript{72} It is significant that the Australian bush legend, as Graeme Davison has shown so convincingly, was formulated not in the bush, but as an imaginative retreat by people living in the city, such as Paterson and Henry Lawson. They disliked the city, seeing as a negation of the qualities of the Australian ethos of secularism, nationalism and egalitarianism.\textsuperscript{73} The development of the Australian legend was ‘not the transmission to the city of values nurtured on the bush frontier, so much as the projection onto the outback of values revered by an alienated urban intelligentsia’.\textsuperscript{74} There was little about the bush-worker that was uniquely Australian, but the point is that he was made to seem uniquely Australian, functioning as a widely accepted national symbol onto which nationalist ideals could be projected.\textsuperscript{75}

The Australian bush and the Australian masculine type were inextricably linked, for the bush would, it was thought, provide more manly boys than the city. As W. H. East argued in an article in \textit{Lone Hand} in 1913:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{71}ibid., p. 47; J. B. Hirst, ‘The Pioneer Legend’ in J. B. Hirst (ed.), \textit{The Australian Legend Re-Visited. Special issue of Historical Studies}, vol. 18, no. 71, October 1978, pp. 316-37;
\item \textsuperscript{72}A. B Paterson, \textit{The Man From Snowy River and Other Verses: Commemorative Centennial Edition}, (intro. Jonathan King), Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1995 (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1895), pp. 22, 158.
\item \textsuperscript{73}Graeme Davison, ‘Sydney and the Bush: An Urban Context for the Australian Legend’ in Hirst (ed.), \textit{The Australian Legend Re-Visited}, pp. 192-4, 200-2.
\item \textsuperscript{74}Davison, ‘Sydney and the Bush’, p. 208.
\item \textsuperscript{75}White, \textit{Inventing Australia}, pp. 82-3, 99, 102-3. See also Hirst, ‘The Pioneer Legend’, p. 332. On the extent of the influence of the bush legend, see Russel Ward, ‘The Australian Legend Re-Visited’ in Hirst (ed.), \textit{The Australian Legend Re-Visited}, pp. 171-190. See also Desley Deacon, ‘Reorganising the Masculinist Context: Conflicting Masculinisms in the New South Wales Public Service Bill Debates of 1895’ in Magarey, Rowley and Sheridan (eds), \textit{Debutante Nation}, p. 58. Deacon argues that the urban reinterpretation of the bush legend was more misogynist than the bushmen themselves, and that this was partly responsible for some particularly misogynist urban policies, such as the increasing exclusion of women from the public service of New South Wales after 1895.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The settler’s children...develop into healthy manhood without the vicious surroundings which breed deplorable vices in the city. Contrast the gaunt, wiry, flexible, virile bushman with the cigarette-sucking factory hand of the big Australian city!... His surroundings made him what he is – a genius at handling horses and cattle, building stockyards, full of bushcraft, Nature-lore and resourcefulness. He is seldom in so tight a corner that he cannot evade disaster – and this wonderful trait in his nature began to germinate from the risks he faced in his childhood.76

That the *Lone Hand* should idealise the bush and the men it produced is no surprise. It was a magazine of the nationalist school, an off-shoot of the *Bulletin* by which it was owned until 1914 and from which it drew many of its editorial staff. The magazine was unashamedly nationalist, as revealed in its prospectus which stated that it would ‘teach Australians how to live in accordance with their own sunny clime, and not according to the dour and depressing customs illogically imported from chilly distant regions to our warm and radiant fatherland’.77 It glorified mateship, was misogynist, anti-religious and concerned with problems of defence.78

The bushman ideal was constructed against a range of ‘others’, including Asians, people from the city, recent immigrants, non-Caucasian males, and the English.79 This national type also excluded women, and can be seen as a response to the assault by feminism, the suffragette movement and bodies such as the Women’s

78C. A. Jeffries, ‘The Australian Navy’, *Lone Hand*, vol. 1, no. 2, June 1907, pp. 206-10. It advocated, for example, the building of an Australian navy in Australia.
79Clive Moore, ‘Colonial Manhood and Masculinities’ in Moore and Saunders (eds), *Australian Masculinities*, p. 43.
Christian Temperance Union on male privilege. Women could acquire a surrogate masculinity by being good at riding horses, or by being tomboys, but more often found their role as the negation of the ideal, used as the feminine 'other' against which Australian manliness could be constructed. Women were, as Vron Ware has observed of women in the British Empire generally, 'expected to provide domestic continuity as well as to breed new citizens', but were reduced to a minor role in the making of the national culture. They were, in Australia, generally portrayed as limiting and frustrating, while it was the male pioneers who forged the nation. Women represented limiting morality, law, Christianity and respectability, or could be the sexual possessions of men. But they were not active participants in the national legend. The 'real' Australian was male, and anything which did not fit the stereotype of the bushman and his qualities (such as the city, urban life and intellectualism) was categorised as feminine.

The nationalist imagery of the bush and rhetoric of egalitarianism and mateship were increasingly appropriated and modified by the middle classes, especially from Federation when they attempted to stamp their control on the national culture. The middle-class or 'respectable' reinterpretation of the bush legend illustrates a point made by David Walker that there is no single unitary bush legend or bush tradition, but that the bush was used to serve different ideological functions and appeal to different audiences. There was, indeed, a considerable difference between the idealised bushman, as promoted by Lawson and Paterson, and the bush masculinity which authors of respectable juvenile literature, many middle-class

80 Linzi Murrie, 'The Australian Legend: Writing Australian Masculinity/Writing "Australian" Masculine' in Moore and Saunders (eds), Australian Masculinities, p. 69.
81 White, Inventing Australia, p. 83. See also Schaffer, Women and the Bush, p. 10.
82 Vron Ware, Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History, Verso, London, 1992, p. 120.
85 White, Inventing Australia, p. 114.
commentators, and Scoutmasters idolised. Russel Ward has described the Australian male of the bush legend as

a practical man, rough and ready in his manners.... He is a great improviser...willing to 'have a go' at anything.... [He] normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He is a 'hard case', sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally. He believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better.... He is a fiercely independent person...yet he is very hospitable and above all will stick to his mates through thick and thin.... He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion.\(^{67}\)

Respectable boys, if they drank at all, drank little. Nor did they swear or gamble. But they were egalitarian in spirit, unaffected and natural, ideally from the bush where they developed physical strength and resourcefulness, and were enterprising and willing to 'have a go.' The bush legend was masculinist, and the appropriation of the legend by the middle classes is consistent with their growing desire to overcome the degeneracy and effeminacy of modern life.

Another principal driving force behind the de-feminisation of the boy and his redefinition in more aggressive and masculine terms was the rising importance of nationalism at the turn of the century. At the 1904 conference of those involved in boys' clubs and rescue work, R. E. Ulrich, the headmaster of Middleton State School, presented a paper titled 'Duty of State Citizens'. Both the title and the sentiments of

the paper illustrate the manner in which the state was becoming an increasingly
important paradigm within which to view the nation’s boyhood. Ullrich argued that
boys formed

the roots of the national tree. Prevent the development
of the roots of any tree or plant and that tree will be
crippled for ever, and most likely die off early. Neglect
the...physical and moral development of a child and it is
sure to be a weakling all its life, a member of the State
that will contribute but little, if anything at all, towards
the welfare of the nation. If we wish to see the national
tree develop into a strong, stately oak or gum, we must
carefully tend and watch its roots, the younger
generations.88

Ullrich asked young men to consider what would become of the Australian nation if
they stood by ‘disinterestedly and indolently.... There are dangers looming ahead and
you must be ready to meet them’.89 Parents had a national responsibility, and the
government also had to play its part in raising the next generation. ‘A nation’s
greatness rests on the morals of its citizens’, warned Ullrich, ‘and if these latter fail in
this respect then the history of that nation will never be worth recording’.90

The nation, rather than God, became the dominant paradigm. Even godly
morality was important more for its effects on the nation than for religious reasons.
Although religious reformers might not have accepted this priority, they employed it
as a justification for living a moral life. Commissioner Hay of the Salvation Army, for
example, stated in 1912 that ‘Four quid a week, eight hours a day, three or four

89ibid., p. 34.
90ibid., p. 39.
sweethearts and don’t worry’ appeared to be the philosophy of life of many young Australians. He stated that sin, self-license, gambling, alcohol and a lack of religious feeling were great evils which worked against the development of Australia as a great nation.\(^91\) From more secular sources, there was an increased emphasis on schools’ need to train boys for citizenship, part of the ‘New Education’ movement which was powerful in both Britain and Australia.\(^92\) This renewal of educational purpose exalted loyalty to the nation and empire, as decreed by Article 571 of the Victorian Education Department’s *Regulations and Instructions* of 1905:

> It is the duty of all teachers employed in State schools to foster in the minds of their pupils the sentiment of love of country, respect for its laws, and loyalty to its sovereign.... It should be impressed upon pupils that the greatness and stability of the Empire depend upon the production of a fine type of citizen, fit of body, fit of mind, and fit of soul. They should be so directed and encouraged as to fit them for the part they have to play.\(^93\)

The New Imperialism placed a premium upon imperial loyalty, and the British Empire became an ever more insistent object of loyalty for the Australian middle classes. Empire Day was thus developed as an occasion to inculcate children with ideals of patriotism and imperial loyalty, with ceremonies such as the saluting of the flag, lessons in geography and the recitation of patriotic poems.\(^94\) The nation also grew in importance, especially after Federation and as threats to Australian national security

---

\(^91\) *Argus*, 10 June 1912, p. 15.


\(^93\) Quoted in Bob Bessant, ‘Introduction’ in Bessant (ed.), *Mother State and Her Little Ones*, p. 23.

\(^94\) See, for example, *Argus*, 21 May 1912, p. 7. See also C. N. Connolly, ‘Class, Birthplace, Loyalty: Australian Attitudes to the Boer War’ in Hirst (ed.), *The Australian Legend Revisited*, pp. 210-32. Connolly argues that middle and upper-class Australian were much more concerned with the fortunes of the British Empire, and hence much more in support of Australian participation in the Boer War.
appeared to loom large. By 1899 the commissioners who inquired into Victorian education argued that 'to develop national resources the most potent instrument is national education'.\textsuperscript{95} It was this 'race of nations' and fears that Germany was outstripping Britain and her empire that provided much of the motivation for the development of state secondary education in the early part of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{96} Frank Tate, for example, the Director of Education in Victoria from 1902 to 1928, argued passionately that Australia's economic and industrial welfare required the establishment of national education to ensure a 'sturdy, self-reliant race' which could 'bear its part in the world struggle'.\textsuperscript{97}

The most obvious way in which manliness could be defined in national terms was in the glorification of fighting for the nation against external enemies. Militarism became an increasingly important aspect of the definition of the ideal Australian boy. Militarism was partly an imperial ideal in that Australian soldiers would be able to participate in the defence of the British Empire. When some 800 men sailed from Sydney to assist British forces in the Sudan in 1885, 200,000 people crammed the quay to farewell them, while over 16,000 Australian volunteers served in the Boer War.\textsuperscript{98} However, the need for men who were capable of fighting was increasingly a question of national, rather than imperial, needs. Concern about Australia's defence capabilities had been one of the catalysts for Federation, and it dominated the early Commonwealth. The German naval threat to the British Navy was thought to tie Britain's navy to the North Sea, especially in times of war, and to leave Australia vulnerable to invasion, particularly from the Asian countries.\textsuperscript{99} Magazines such as the \textit{Lone Hand} pointed out the danger that Australia faced with its vast unpopulated and

\textsuperscript{96}P. W. Musgrave, \textit{Society and the Curriculum in Australia}, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1979, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{97}\textit{ibid.}, pp. 22, 60; Frank Tate, \textit{'School Power': An Imperial Necessity}, Imperial Federation League of Australia, Melbourne, 1908, pp. 4-5. Quoted in B. K. Hyams and B. Bessant, \textit{Schools for the People?: An Introduction to the History of State Education in Australia}, Longman, Melbourne, 1972, p. 86.
under-developed areas in the north. These were undefended while ‘distant a few days steam, cluster the myriads of Asia, threatening ever to swarm across the rich fields of a land, attractive in all respects to a frugal, industrious people, condemned at present to exist in a much poorer country.’ Japan was seen as a dangerously aggressive nation, and its large military forces and the problems of a growing population made it self-evident to such commentators that Japan had expansionist intentions.

Fears of invasion were expressed in a crop of invasion stories in the late nineteenth century. The Chinese and the Russians were defined as enemies in the late-nineteenth-century invasion stories, but after the turn of the century fears increasingly focused on Japan, especially after that nation’s triumph in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. This military triumph had a strong effect upon Australia’s leaders and policymakers, including Alfred Deakin, the principal architect of Australian defence policy in the new nation’s first decade. He believed that unless Australians were awake to the threats of Asiatic invasion, they would be ‘only tenants’ on the continent. Military prowess added impetus to the middle-class adoption of the bush legend, and to worry about the effects of over-civilisation and ‘unmanliness’. Writing in 1907, C. E. W. Bean equated the bush myth with fighting prowess:

The Australian is always fighting something. In the bush it is drought, fires, unbroken horses, and cattle; and not unfrequently strong men.... We look upon all this as very shocking and unruly in England nowadays; but there is no doubt that having to fight for himself gives a man pluck.... All this fighting with men and with

---

100 J. C. Watson, ‘Our Empty North’, _Lone Hand_, vol. 1, no. 4, August 1907. p. 420.
101 See, for example, frequent articles in the _Lone Hand_.
nature, fierce as any warfare, has made of the Australian
as fine a fighting man as exists.\textsuperscript{103}

The bushmen, forerunners of the Anzacs, were, however, not numerically strong
enough, nor well-enough trained, to defend the country. Other steps were necessary to
increase the prestige of militarism and to train Australia’s young men to be capable of
fighting for their country.

As well as celebrating soldierly virtues in rhetorical forms such as school
songs, public school stories and the teachings of the Boy Scouts, practical steps were
taken to provide boys with military training. Military drill had been used in schools
since at least the 1850s, and had gradually expanded over the course of the nineteenth
century. Cadet corps also flourished, so that by 1891 there were 2,703 boys in
seventy-seven cadet detachments in Victoria alone. More basic training in military
drill was given to over 17,000 boys.\textsuperscript{104} There was more resistance to the development
of cadets in New South Wales, but in 1890 a Public School Cadet Force was
established and by the end of that year it included nearly 6,000 cadets.\textsuperscript{105} Queensland
also established a school cadet force in 1890, and in 1891 introduced military drill to
state schools.\textsuperscript{106} Cadets and military drill, one Queensland inspector suggested in
1897, would have to do for Queensland ‘what conscription does in the European
countries’.\textsuperscript{107} By 1910, when the cadet scheme had been under Commonwealth control

\textsuperscript{103}Sydney Morning Herald, 22 June 1907, p. 6. Quoted in White, Inventing Australia, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{104}David Jones, ‘Cadets and Military Drill: 1872-1914’ in Bessant (ed.), Mother State and Her Little
Ones, pp. 68-9
\textsuperscript{105}ibid., pp. 72-4. Numbers dropped to a little over 3,000 in 1896 due to the effects of the depression,
but increased again thereafter.
\textsuperscript{106}ibid., pp. 73-4.
\textsuperscript{107}Queensland Parliament, Votes and Proceedings, 1895, vol. 2, Military Report, 1894-95, p. 34.
Quoted in ibid., p. 74. See also pp. 74-6. An increase in enthusiasm for cadet training is evidenced in
the other states as well, with the partial exception of South Australia where formal cadet activity ceased
in 1886 and was not recommenced until the institution of a scheme funded by the Commonwealth in
1906. Drill was placed on the school curriculum in Western Australia in 1892, and cadet corps were
established in Perth and Fremantle in 1897. Tasmania did not establish a school-based cadet force until
1905 when a federally funded scheme was launched.
for several years, there were 24,216 Junior Cadets and 10,225 Senior Cadets in Australia.¹⁰⁸

David Jones has suggested that the cadets appealed as a training system for boys simply because they provided a cheap form of defence. While this certainly appears to be so for those most concerned about Australia’s ability to defend itself, military training was also seen as providing the qualities of good character. This can be clearly seen in J. Elkington’s report on the Victorian cadets in 1889 in which he stated that ‘the general discipline of a school gains much by a smart and well-ordered habit of military routine’, and that military discipline was useful in controlling boys, especially those from the unruly working classes.¹⁰⁹ Cadet training satisfied the interests of school and parents in instilling discipline and physical health, while for the defence authorities military training of boys was an important step in the protection of the nation.

As time went on, however, more militarist notions of manliness came to prevail throughout the Western world, and the cadets were increasingly seen as a method for ensuring the defence of the nation, and less as an exercise in developing manly traits for use outside of a military context, such as discipline and physical health. Paradoxically, the cadets were ‘militarised’ as a cultural and social practice. Rather than being idealised for their general applicability in the development of good character, qualities the cadets were held to develop were increasingly directed towards nationalist and militarist purposes. Similar developments, as I shall show in Chapter Three, occurred in the values discursively attributed to sport within the public schools.

For all the development of the cadets and the re-working of the ideals of manliness to include a militarist element, it was still feared in the first decade of the

¹⁰⁸Jones, ‘Cadets and Military Drill’, p. 78.
twentieth century that Australia was grossly under-prepared militarily. Major T. B. Dibbs, an active member of the Australian Defence League, argued in 1907 that 'Not three per cent of Australians can handle a rifle with safety either to themselves or to those in their immediate vicinity'. Furthermore, he suggested, it was a fallacy 'assiduously fostered by the ignorant here and abroad' that Australian boys were proficient horsemen, especially 'the youth dwelling in the over-bloated cities that characterise the Commonwealth'. The bush contained many manly boys, but Australia was threatened by the effeminate city, effeminate modern commercial life, and effeminate Asians, the antitheses to the manly Australian bush and its bushmen.

Fears for the safety of the new nation continued to increase in the first decade of the twentieth century and resulted in the universal military training scheme which came into effect in June 1911. This, the culmination of attempts by the state to inculcate military values in boys in service of the nation, followed a long campaign by bodies such as the Australian National Defence League, which had been set up in 1905 to promote the cause of universal training. Some, such as the bellicose Labor politician, 'Billy' Hughes, linked rights of citizenship to the duty to be prepared to defend the nation, while others advocated compulsory military training as a cure for larrikinism and a means of improving the moral and physical well-being of the next generation. But unlike earlier cadet movements, especially in schools, compulsory military training was developed overwhelmingly in pursuit of a military goal, not a character one. As the national crisis and its solution appeared as problems of military readiness, so too did the 'boy problem'.

The Defence Act 1903-1910 came into force on 1 January 1911 and established compulsory junior cadet training for all boys from twelve to fourteen years of age, compulsory senior cadet training for all aged from fourteen to eighteen,

---

110 Barrett, Failing In, p. 33.
111 Ibid., p. 12.
112 Tanner, Compulsory Citizen Soldiers, pp. 37, 58-60.
compulsory citizen force training for those aged eighteen to twenty, and a compulsory reserve force for those aged from twenty to twenty-six.113 Junior cadets were required to perform ninety hours of military work at school, senior cadets to undertake sixty-four hours of training annually, and those turning eighteen to contribute sixteen days of annual training as infantrymen, or twenty-five days if in the Navy or in artillery or engineering units.114 The most notable aspect of the scheme is the broad approval it appears to have received. Groups opposing the scheme tended to be from the labour side of politics, interpreting the compulsory participation in a militarist, nationalist and imperialist scheme as reactionary.115 However, it is significant that the scheme was introduced by a Labor government, indicating a far broader base of support for compulsory military training than in Britain, where such a scheme was opposed by the British Labour Party.116 Some women’s groups, such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, also opposed the scheme, which they considered ‘a menace to home influence, and a cruel, needless, and unwarrantable burden upon the manhood and boyhood of our land’.117 However, they were similarly ineffective in their opposition to the scheme, at least until after World War One.118 By 1913 the soldier had been firmly established in Australian ideology as the embodiment of all that was manly. (See Figure 1.1).

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that when war did break out in 1914 Australian soldiers were placed on a pedestal. In their churches, schools and homes, through rhetoric, honour-boards and compulsory compositions, boys were taught to look up to the figure of the Australian soldier as an appropriate hero, a model to be emulated. Many apparently absorbed the lessons in the way their teachers, priests and

113 Barrett, Falling In, p. 69.
114 Ibid., pp. 72-3.
115 Ibid., pp. 102, 86-90.
116 Tanner, Compulsory Citizen Soldiers, pp. xxii-xxiii.
117 Ibid., p. 212.
118 Barrett, Falling In, pp. 206, p. 3. Tanner disagrees with Barrett, but Barrett’s interpretation is to be preferred. Tanner does show that there was a lot of opposition to the scheme, but unlike Barrett does not balance this against the widespread and general acceptance of, and even support, for compulsory military training.
Figure 1.1. 'Before and After Universal Service'. Compulsory military training as a tonic for the nation's manhood. (Source: Bulletin, 11 October 1906. Reprinted in Thomas W. Tanner, Compulsory Citizen Soldiers, p. 89).
parents hoped, and even sacrificed their own pocket-money and collected material for scrap in their endeavours to aid the war effort.\textsuperscript{119}

The Digger emerged as a national hero because he was the fulfilment of all the hopes invested in what Richard White calls ‘The Coming Man’. He represented Australian manhood and showed that the nation’s sons, and by extension, the nation itself, were worthy and unaffected by the convict strain and the allegedly degenerative effects of the Australian climate and modern civilisation.\textsuperscript{120} In contrast, questions were raised about the manhood of those who did not volunteer for the war. The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} of 22 June 1917 commented that it was a wonder that it should be necessary to appeal to any of our young men who are fit and free to don the uniform. If they would wear the badge of courage and true manhood, let them follow in the steps of these others.... We remember these heroes with pride, and their country will continue to remember them. But of the others, those who stay behind in these great days, what are we to say?.... “They lifeless live for whom the deathless died.”\textsuperscript{121}

The ideal of militarism was thus pervasive in the early twentieth century, and was vigorously promulgated to children.

Glorification of the Anzac soldier served to reinforce the definition of Australia as ‘male’. Ken Inglis has pointed out that ‘Australia’ was overwhelmingly represented as a male in war memorials erected after the First World War. Several


\textsuperscript{120}Stephen Garton, ‘War and Masculinity in Twentieth Century Australia’ in Moore and Saunders (eds), \textit{Australian Masculinities}, pp. 88-9.

\textsuperscript{121}Sydneyian, no. 233, September 1917, pp. 10-11.
female 'Australias' were proposed for different war memorial statues, but a monument at Mornington in Victoria is the only example Inglis has been able to find of a female figure used as an allegory for the nation.\textsuperscript{122} Marilyn Lake has further developed the argument. Anxiety about Australians' ability to hold their continent gave rise to the institution of measures to encourage child-bearing, such as the institution by the Labor government of a £5 maternity allowance in 1912, payable to European mothers on the birth of a baby, and thus gave mothers an exalted role as bearers of the race. However, it was Anzac soldiers, treated preferentially after World War One and praised as exemplary citizens, who were held to have 'given birth' to the Australian nation.\textsuperscript{123} Through such mythology, Lake argues, 'men appropriated and denied women's procreative capacities'.\textsuperscript{124} The Australian nation was thus a masculine construct both in terms of its values and in terms of who 'created' it. Idolisation of pioneers and bushmen had originated this process, but it was cemented further by the Anzac legend.\textsuperscript{125}

The intellectual and cultural background to the construction of middle-class notions of manliness was thus much different in the early twentieth century from what it had been in the 1870s. Masculinity is always 'in process', and the hegemonic ideal is constantly reinforced, challenged, and contested by new interest groups and emerging ideologies. It is only in light of these changes in the intellectual and cultural backgrounds, only in light of changing ideas about nation, religion, childhood, and boyhood, that the developments within arenas where ideals of manliness were constructed and disseminated, such as public schools, juvenile literature and youth


\textsuperscript{124}Lake, 'Mission Impossible', p. 319.

\textsuperscript{125}Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quatry, Creating a Nation: 1788-1990, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1994, p. 2.
groups, can be understood. The influence of the recognition and changing definitions of the 'boy problem' was profound. The following chapters of this thesis illustrate how these ideas were understood, interpreted, and used in the construction of the middle-class ideal of manliness.
CHAPTER TWO

From Godliness and Good Learning to Athleticism:
The Rise of Muscularity in the Australian Public
Schools of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth
Centuries

This chapter explores the changing educational ideals and methods of the elite public secondary schools of Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century. It seeks to explain the masculine ideal the schools aimed at, how and why it developed over time, how it was contested, and how it related to wider Australian society. Although reference will be made to other schools and to the wider landscape of secondary education in Australia, this chapter is based primarily upon the close examination of four of the dominant schools in Australia in this period. These are Geelong Grammar School, established in 1855; Wesley College, established in 1866; Sydney Grammar School, which opened in 1857; and St. Peter’s College in Adelaide, which opened in 1847. These schools have been selected as a reasonably representative sample of Australia’s elite schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They include one school from each of the principal capital cities along with one non-metropolitan school. They include two Anglican schools, reflecting Anglicanism’s dominant position in Australia, one non-denominational school established by the state rather than by churches, and one non-conformist school. The Methodist Wesley College is chosen over a representative of the Presbyterian denomination, such as Melbourne’s Scotch College, for two main reasons. The first is that Wesley’s history embodies, perhaps more clearly than that of any other school, the developments in educational ideology in the period under examination. Second, although Methodists were outnumbered by Presbyterians for much of the period under consideration, the denomination was a rapidly expanding one. Just 5.63 percent of the population were
Methodist in 1851, but by 1901 this had increased to 13.36 percent, making the denomination more popular than Presbyterianism.¹

Education provided an important means through which religious organisations, governments and the middle classes could further their interests by impressing their values and world views upon the rising generation. This frequently resulted in coalitions to further or protect Christianity, such as when governments assisted the efforts of colonial churches to found schools, thus making for a moral and controlled populace. It also led to conflict, such as when the churches fought the state over the question of secular education.² Education and its ends were also sometimes hotly contested by competing religious denominations.³ The Anglican church, for example, sought to dominate the educational system emerging in New South Wales in the first half of the nineteenth century, before reluctantly accepting a compromise in 1848 whereby the state offered aid for all churches providing education, while at the same time developing its own secular institutions.⁴

The history of education for boys in Australia has often been written as a history of institutions, and many school historians have paid scant attention to the intellectual and cultural environment of their schools, and to evolving educational values.⁵ Most boys’ school historians have paid even less attention to the ideals of manliness which their subjects sought to inculcate. Indeed, women historians

examining girls’ schools have done much more to open up the possibilities for gender analysis in educational history.\textsuperscript{9} What work has been done on the value systems which elite boys’ schools sought to inculcate has usually been informed by theories of class more so than by gender perspectives.\textsuperscript{7} Ignorance of gender in histories of boys’ schools has been particularly impoverishing when one considers that instructing boys in appropriate gendered behaviour was one of the principal tasks of these institutions.

In the first half of the nineteenth century there was relatively little interest in secondary education. Some moves had been made to establish corporate secondary schooling in Sydney from the 1820s, but most boys who received a post-elementary education did so in small private schools, through individual tutors or in English schools.\textsuperscript{5} The religious denominations all operated primary schools, but the secondary education system was poorly developed. However, the establishment of colonial universities and the expansion of the middle classes from the 1860s fuelled a much greater demand for secondary education, which in turn was increasingly seen as a means to ensure elevation to, or survival in, the ranks of the upper-middle classes. Consequently, many secondary schools were established from the 1850s to the 1870s, often with considerable assistance from the state.\textsuperscript{9} For example, the squatters and merchants who dominated Victoria’s legislature in the mid-nineteenth century voted £20,000 in 1854, followed by another £15,000 in 1856, to the churches for the


\textsuperscript{5}C. E. W. Bean, \textit{Here, My Son: An Account of the Independent and Other Corporate Boys’ Schools of Australia}, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1950, p. 16; Barcan, \textit{A History of Australian Education}, pp. 403-4.

establishment of public schools, partly to supply students to the newly established University of Melbourne.¹⁰ Scotch College was thus established in 1851, St. Patrick’s College in 1854, the Geelong and Melbourne Church of England Grammar Schools in 1855 and 1858 respectively, Geelong College in 1861, and Wesley College in 1866.¹¹ In Sydney the Sydney Grammar School was incorporated at the end of 1854, aided by the New South Wales legislature which provided £20,000 for buildings and a yearly endowment of £1,500, allowing the school to be opened 1857.¹² It was followed by the emergence of a number of other schools in the next few decades, established with varying levels of assistance from the government.¹³ State aid was similarly prominent in Queensland and Western Australia, and although the first corporate boys’ school in South Australia, St. Peter’s College, had to rely on a grant of £2,000 from the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and a donation of £7,000 from a local philanthropist rather than government assistance, the state clearly had a major hand in the emergence of a significant secondary education system throughout Australia.¹⁴ The network continued to expand in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but was present as an identifiable system and network by 1870.¹⁵

Principally denominational, these schools were devoted not only to the intellectual training of future leaders, but also to the training and disciplining of their bodies and their characters. However, over the second half of the nineteenth century there was a significant change in the emphasis of the educational purpose of these schools. In a development very similar to that which took place in the English public

¹⁰Bean, _Here, My Son_, p. 42.
¹¹Bessant, _Schooling in the Colony and State of Victoria_, p. 6; Bate, _Light Blue Down Under_, p. 1. There is some dispute as to the date of Geelong Grammar’s establishment. Although Bessant cites the year of 1858, 1855 is preferred by Bate, the school’s historian.
¹²Bean, _Here, My Son_, p. 36.
¹⁴Barcan, _A History of Australian Education_, p. 121; Bean, _Here, My Son_, pp. 49, 60-64. In Queensland the Grammar School Act of 1860 whereby the State added money to that raised by local communities fuelled the development of a network of grammar schools, with Ipswich Grammar School founded in 1863, Brisbane Grammar in 1868, Toowoomba Grammar in 1870, and Rockhampton and Maryborough Grammar Schools in 1881. In Perth the Perth High School was established in 1878 with substantial government assistance to get it going. In South Australia Prince Alfred College was established in 1867, St. Peter’s College in 1847.
¹⁵Bean, _Here, My Son_, pp. 60-2.
schools, the construction of manliness which these schools promoted shifted away from what David Newsome has characterised as ‘godliness and good learning’ towards a much more muscular and physical ideal, of which the athlete was the embodiment.\textsuperscript{16} Largely through personnel imported to Australia from the English public school system, changes in English educational ideology were broadly reflected, though not without some modification, in the Australian colonies. Throughout the nineteenth century the goals of education included the inculcation of character qualities as much as the training of the intellect, whether the education was provided by the state or by the churches.\textsuperscript{17} This can be clearly seen in the elite secondary schools of Australia, and the development in such character ideals from godliness and good learning to athleticism emerges clearly on a closer examination of individual schools.

When Geelong Grammar was first established, Bishop Charles Perry was pleased that it would follow ‘the plan of their good old English public schools’ and that ‘it would attract here all those who valued sound learning and a religious education, and who desired to have their children brought up in a manner worthy of the descendants of British parents’.\textsuperscript{18} The first headmaster was George Oakley Vance, born in London in 1828 and a graduate of Lincoln College, Oxford. Arriving in Australia in 1852 and ordained in 1853, Vance’s educational priorities were intellectual knowledge and religious devotion, and he appears to have been


\textsuperscript{18}Bessant, \textit{Schooling in the Colony and State of Victoria}, p. 6. Charles Perry (1807-1891) became Bishop of Melbourne in 1848 and served in that role until he left Australia in 1874. Perry’s statement reflects a great deal of pride in the English public school system of which he had been part. He was educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge. A great admirer of Thomas Arnold, his major contributions to education in Victoria were overseeing the early years of Melbourne Grammar School and Geelong Grammar School, and seeing work commenced on Trinity College, The University of Melbourne. See Pike (ed.), \textit{Australian Dictionary of Biography: Volume 5, 1851-1890}, pp. 432-6.
uninterested in sport. Under him, the school opened and closed with prayers and a considerable amount of attention was devoted to religious instruction. There was a strict emphasis on academic progress which included both monthly and end-of-year examinations, the latter held over several days. Little attention was devoted to sport in the school’s early years, and what physical recreation there was tended to be unorganised.

The school was forced to close for several years because of severe financial problems, but reopen in 1863 under John Bracebridge Wilson. Wilson had been privately educated in England. Although he appears to have acquired some of Thomas Arnold’s ethos of the importance of character training in a public school education during his time at St. John’s College at Oxford, and although he was an enthusiastic sportsmen, he was no ideologue of athleticism as the best means for educating boys. Intellectual development, moral exhortation and religion appear to have appealed to Wilson, initially at least, as offering more promising avenues for the development of manly character. Although he believed that physical recreation and cadet training, which he introduced in 1863, could be of some benefit, he gave little emphasis to organised games and devoted more to recreational swimming, boating and excursions in the bush, including Saturday excursions where boys would spend whole days exploring the local countryside. Wilson’s priority was a novel teaching and assessment system which would take account of the needs of all the boys and which

---

20 ibid., p. 18.
would not devote special attention to the intellectual elites.\textsuperscript{23} Until James Lister Cuthbertson’s arrival at the school in 1875, boys who took sport seriously played for local clubs.\textsuperscript{24}

Similar priorities dominated Wesley. At the inauguration ceremony on 11 January 1866, the President of the school, the Reverend Dr. James Swanston Waugh, announced his pleasure at witnessing the gathering of those who represented ‘the intelligence and piety of Methodism in Victoria’ who had assembled ‘to inaugurate an institution belonging to their own body’.\textsuperscript{25} Wesley’s educationalists in its first thirty years, and particularly in its first twenty before the arrival of L. A. Adamson, were predominantly men of ascetic backgrounds deeply devoted to religion and hard work. Waugh held the post of President from 1866 to 1884 and was in charge of the school, including its boarding house, when the headmaster was not on the premises. He had a strict religious upbringing in Ireland which left him outside the main thrust of the Arnoldian public school ethos, and his emphasis was on a disciplined and ascetic life reflected in the tightly controlled, rigorous daily routine of the boarders, overwhelmingly devoted towards religion and scholastics.\textsuperscript{26} The first headmaster, James Corrigan, was of similar disposition. Educated at Trinity College in Dublin and an eminent schoolmaster in Ireland at the time of his recruitment, Corrigan, who served at the school from 1866 until his death in early 1871, teamed up with Waugh to impose strict rules aimed at getting boys to work hard and behave in an orderly fashion.\textsuperscript{27} Wesley’s educational ideals thus revolved around religion and reflected the Methodist emphasis on self-improvement through hard work and the cultivation of personal holiness.

\textsuperscript{23}Bate, Light Blue Down Under, pp. 29-30; E. T. Williams (ed.), Church of England Grammar School, Geelong: History and Register, Jubilee 1907, Geelong Grammar School, Geelong, 1907, chapter 6. 
\textsuperscript{24}Marles, ‘An Evaluation of the First Thirteen Years...’, pp. 97-8. 
\textsuperscript{25}Blainey, Morrisey and Hulme, Wesley College, pp. 14-15. 
\textsuperscript{26}ibid., pp. 35-8, 62-3. 
\textsuperscript{27}ibid., pp. 29-30.
The first set of rules at the school were aimed overwhelmingly at ensuring orderly, polite and respectful conduct, with no tolerance of 'boy culture'. Boys were required to be 'respectful and obedient to authorities', and were requested to 'conduct themselves upon all occasions in a quiet and peaceable manner, particularly to avoid making any unnecessary noise or disturbance during the hours of business, at the changing of the classes, or at the time of dismissal'.\(^\text{28}\) Pupils were expected to be polite and orderly, were not allowed to strike each other for any reason whatsoever, and were expected to return home directly at the end of the school day. Fighting was a severe offence, even under provocation, tale-telling was encouraged rather than retaliation, and boys were expected not to be rowdy, disrespectful or vandalistic, all of which could lead to expulsion. Refinement, which did not always go with wealth in gold-rush Victoria, was one of the principal aims of the school.\(^\text{29}\) Religion's central place was reflected in the theological examinations, which required a thorough knowledge of many chapters of the Bible, that were held at the end of every year.\(^\text{30}\) Boys devoted up to eight hours a week to religion, and from 1871 to 1888 the Methodist Theological Institute was a part of the school.\(^\text{31}\)

This pattern was continued by succeeding headmasters. Martin Howy Irving, headmaster from 1871 to 1875, was educated at Balliol and recruited from the University of Melbourne after Corrigan's death. He had a high reputation as an educationalist and produced a number of fine scholars in his time at Wesley.\(^\text{32}\) Unlike Corrigan, Irving was an enthusiastic sportsman, established rowing at the school, and founded the Melbourne University Boat Club in 1859, but his efforts were directed mainly at scholastic training.\(^\text{32}\) Irving's successors in the later nineteenth century, Henry Martyn Andrew (1876-1881), Arthur S. Way (1881-1892), Frank Goldstraw

\(^{29}\)Ibid., pp. 14-15; Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, pp. 14, 29.  
\(^{30}\)Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, pp. 30-40.  
\(^{31}\)Ibid., pp. 30-1, 65.  
\(^{32}\)Ibid., pp. 41-51.  
\(^{33}\)Ibid., p. 43.
(1893-1895), A. R. Stephenson (1895-1897) and Thomas Palmer (1898-1901) all continued the pattern of concentrating upon work and religion, devoting only a limited amount of attention to pursuits such as sport. The focus at Wesley College was thus firmly upon work and religion in the pre-Adamson era, and in 1889 Way spoke of the latter with some pride in his report at the end of the year:

The past year has followed what we have a right to call the tradition established at Wesley College. We look back upon a year of honest hard work, of steady effort, unresting, unhasting; of hearty co-operation between teachers and taught. It is natural to look for a part of the result...in university successes.... [E]ach old boy who wins an exhibition, scholarship or higher distinction thereby wins for his old schoolmates a half-holiday, and so keeps his memory green, and becomes a star of promise for this who are still with us.34

Way was clearly most concerned to develop in his boys a love for knowledge, and his training of the character appears to have been conceived in terms of training their morality and religiosity, with little attention to physical development or the ethics of the games field.35 The importance attached to scholastic success was reinforced by the effusive praise given to successful scholars of the pre-Adamson era. Successive headmasters attempted to make the high-achieving scholar, rather than the successful sportsman, the hero of the school by, for example, granting a half-holiday whenever an old boy was placed first in a university examination.36 Manliness was thus of the mind and spirit, not of the body.

34Wesley College, Prospectus, 1889, pp. 10-11.
35See Way's retirement speech at the end of 1892 in Wesley College, Prospectus, 1893, p. 17.
36Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, pp. 70-1.
However, there was an emerging, if embryonic, sympathy for secular character formation and for games, traceable partly to the backgrounds of men such as Irving and Stephenson. Stephenson, who was a prominent athlete and captain of both cricket and football while studying at New College at the University of London, argued that the boys should strive to excel in their games as well as in their studies. Palmer, who took over from Stephenson in 1898, emphasised the importance of developing boys’ characters as well as cultivating their intellects, and suggested that all masters should be determined to ‘plant deeply in the minds of their scholars, and to nurture and strengthen within them, the principles that form a just, upright, truthful, candid, generous character’.  

However, a concern with character formation and sympathy with sport did not go hand in hand in the eyes of the headmasters of this period, and character was to be developed in the chapel and through hard work in the class room. Wesley did not embrace athleticism through any action of the headmasters (Adamson was restricted rather than encouraged in his efforts in this direction) and Palmer even protested against the amount of time devoted to games and attempted to limit their intrusion upon the work of the school by lessening the amount of play on weekdays and moving it to Saturdays. As he stated in 1899,

The many interruptions in class work owing to the intercollegiate games has been to me a source of annoyance. This will in future be obviated. Our football matches are to be played on our own grounds on Saturday afternoons...and much valuable time will be saved for class work. Cricket matches are also to be played on Fridays and Saturdays.  

---

37 Wesley College Chronicle, no. 68, December 1895, p. 219; Wesley College, Prospectus, 1897, p. 10; 1898, p. 11.
38 Wesley College, Prospectus, 1900, p. 15.
Palmer placed a lot of pressure upon his boys to work hard and seemed most interested in training their intellects and improving their manners to give them the stamp of English gentlemen; thus he introduced lessons in elocution to maintain 'above all, purity of vowel sounds'. Palmer's protests against the amount of time devoted to games resulted from the successful encouragement given to sport by L. A. Adamson after his arrival at the school in 1887, but it was not until Adamson returned to the school to take up the headmaster's post in 1902 that Wesley really became a bastion of games-playing in the interests of character formation.

Refinement, religious devotion and intellectualism were established as priorities at Sydney Grammar School from its founding. The Act inaugurating the school stated that it was 'for the better advancement of religion and morality and for the promotion of useful knowledge'. In the period between the legislation being introduced to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly and the opening of the school, there was considerable discussion about the educational goals of the school. This debate generally revolved around academic and intellectual matters, but W. T. Cape, an old boy of Merchant Taylor's in London and headmaster of a preceding Sydney Grammar School venture which had collapsed, advocated games as part of school life to prevent the boys from indulging 'in the colonial habit of slouch and lounge so injurious to their physical development'. Gymnastics did form part of the curriculum from the opening of the school, but organised games occupied only a minor place. The first headmaster, W. J. Stephens, was, like most of the school's early masters, a graduate of Oxbridge. He had received his secondary education at Heversham Grammar School and Marlborough College, where he was captain and dux of the school, and had been an MA, Fellow and Senior Tutor at Queen's College, Oxford. He undoubtedly had some experience of games, and encouraged the manly

---

3Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, p. 100.; Wesley College, Prospectus, 1898, p. 12.
4Bean, Here, My Son, p. 107.
recreations of the boys, but little was supplied in terms of facilities, organisation, or supervision, and what recreational activities the boys took part in were principally of their own making.\textsuperscript{42}

St. Peter's had a similarly strong religious and academic impulse. In 1846 the Reverend James Pollitt, who had been in Adelaide as a missionary for six months, wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts that he had never seen 'such a democratic, radical, and anti-church spirit' as he found in Adelaide.\textsuperscript{43} As in other colonies, schooling was seen as one means for correcting this, partly through the development of a godly elite. It was also a means through which Anglicans could cement their control of colonial society, for although there was initially some talk of making the school non-denominational, and although the relatively small pool of potential pupils demanded considerable tolerance so that the school would have at least some appeal to wealthy dissenters, the school was established as Anglican and came under the control of the Bishop of Adelaide in 1849.\textsuperscript{44}

The importance of religion at St. Peter's was underlined by the refusal to appoint a layman as headmaster until after World War One. But although they were all clergymen, it is clear that the first headmasters of St. Peter's placed a much greater stress on religion in the making of good character, and had less faith in secular training methods, than did later ones. The Reverend Theodore Percival Wilson, who served as temporary headmaster from 1848 to 1850, appears to have based his educational vision around religion and classical learning, as does his successor the Reverend Samuel Allom. He served as de facto head until being forced to resign in 1852 when his educational credentials were called into question. Allom's educational


\textsuperscript{43}Tregenza, \textit{Collegiate School of St. Peter, Adelaide}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{44}ibid., pp. 12, 30.
philosophy, which placed a great deal of stress on religious worship in the creation of ‘Christian gentleman’ was based on that of Thomas Arnold.45 His successor, George Henry Farr, served from 1854 until 1878. Educated at Christ’s Hospital and Cambridge, Farr similarly aimed at turning out ‘Christian gentlemen’ who would be honest and truthful.46 Under his regime the boarding community, which in his early years amounted to over half of the school’s students, was strictly controlled, and their Sundays were almost totally devoted to religion. Farr attempted to preach accessible and relevant sermons to his charges, and sought, like Arnold, to use the pulpit to mould their characters.47 Throughout most of Farr’s headmastership St. Peter’s also included a theological college.48 School sport did begin to emerge under Farr’s headmastership, largely through the efforts of Frederick Henry Digby, an old boy of Christ’s Hospital who served at St. Peter’s from 1858 to 1864. He organised the first school athletics in June 1862, appears to have been the driving force behind the school’s first rowing club which was established in 1860, and probably played a hand in the emergence of school cricket and football in the late 1850s and early 1860s.49 Digby’s efforts were facilitated by Farr’s liking for sport. Although no subscriber to the ideology of athleticism, Farr was a keen oarsman who had stroked a college boat while at Cambridge, and he appears to have encouraged a certain level of sporting activity at the school. He was, for example, often present as a spectator at sports events, and Digby would have required Farr’s approval for extending school sports.50 However, despite the gradual emergence of organised school games under Farr, his educational vision remained firmly rooted in intellectualism and religious piety as the main tenets of manliness. He was a great admirer of Thomas Arnold, and of the era of Christian manliness rather than muscular Christianity or athleticism.51

45ibid., pp. 66-7.
46ibid., pp. 83-5, 210-12.
47ibid., p. 102.
48ibid., p. 113.
49ibid., pp. 117-20. The first rowing club appears to have catered for teachers and old boys as well as current students. It was not until the 1880s that enrolment and interest made it practical to have rowing crews composed completely of current pupils.
51Tregenza, Collegiate School of St. Peter, Adelaide, pp. 210-11.
The educational regimen of the Australian public schools into the 1870s and 1880s was thus a rather sedate one. But the ideal of masculinity which emphasised religion, intellectual attainment and gentlemanly manners does not appear to have knitted well with the ideals and cultures of either colonial parents or their sons. The schools all experienced a great number of difficulties in their early years. These centred on disappointing enrolments and behaviour problems. Geelong Grammar struggled for survival in the early years of its existence and actually closed down for several years from June 1860, due to poor enrolments, incompetent management and a recession in the colony. Fighting and bullying were common in its early years, as was vandalism. Vance, the first headmaster, was even reprimanded in 1859 by the trustees for his ‘inability in securing the proper behaviour of the boys out of school, as evinced in the wanton destruction of all parts of the premises,’ and Wilson similarly had a number of discipline problems with his senior boys well into the 1870s.

Wesley’s enrolments were initially encouraging, before falling off. Numbers reached 271 in 1874, but plummeted in the depression of the 1890s and dropped to 128 pupils in September 1893, ninety-three in September 1895, and just seventy-four in July 1897. Similarly, after encouraging early enrolments at Sydney Grammar School, numbers gradually fell away so that by 1866 only 127 boys were attending the school. Discipline appears also to have been lax, perhaps because of Stephens’ dislike of corporal punishment, and he resigned amidst increasing dissatisfaction with his headmastership in 1866. When Albert Bythesea Weigall took over the headmastership at the start of 1867, there were only thirty-nine boys in attendance and the school was

---

55 Meyer, *The History of Wesley College*, pp. 16, 20, 32. The school had opened with eighty boys in 1866.
in some danger of closing.\textsuperscript{56} Vandalism of school property was also a major concern, and one that persisted into the 1880s, while fighting and bullying would appear to have been common in the school’s early years.\textsuperscript{57}

With such problems, the trustees of the schools were no doubt receptive to new initiatives in education from headmasters and other senior staff. They appear to have been tolerant of a new generation of headmasters who emphasised the formation of character as a central aim of schooling, and who, in conjunction with influential assistants recently educated in and recruited from the English public schools and the Oxbridge universities, founded the cult of athleticism in the colonial context by encouraging sport for its secular character benefits and elevating the sportsman as the ideal masculine type. English schools had suffered from similar problems of falling enrolments and lax discipline earlier in the nineteenth century, and the strenuous ethos of muscular Christianity, followed by athleticism, had been successfully promoted in the English schools as an antidote to such problems.

The problems faced by the English schools had, in fact, been significantly greater than those faced by their Australian counterparts. In the middle of the nineteenth century sexual morality was very loose, with the boys gaining sexual experience from each other and women and whores in the nearby towns. Bullying was horrific in its extent and brutality, and recreations were unsupervised, violent and unruly.\textsuperscript{58} Boys terrorised the local wildlife through duck-hunting, beagling, and even boar hunts, while stone-fighting and matching cats and dogs in fights were popular recreations at Harrow.\textsuperscript{59} Masters took a disinterested attitude towards the recreations of the boys, who were consequently allowed to run riot.\textsuperscript{60} So poor were staff-student

\textsuperscript{56}Turney, Grammar, pp. 49-69, passim.
\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., p. 60; Sydneyan, no. 90, August 1890, pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{60}T. W. Bamford, Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys’ Public Boarding Schools in England
relations in English public schools that there were student riots. At Harrow in 1805, for example, the boys dragged the headmaster's desk into the centre of the school and burnt it, and even planned to blow the school up, getting as far as laying a trail of gunpowder down a corridor before desisting.61

Dr Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby from 1827 to 1842, began the task of moral reform by establishing closer control over the daily lives of the boys, but he did not endorse playing sport as an important element in this process as he believed that the class of boys who attended public schools would be called upon to work with their minds rather than their bodies.62 Men such as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes attempted to bridge the gap between the religious and moral conceptions of manliness favoured by Arnold, and what Norman Vance has termed "boy culture", through the ideal of muscular Christianity.63 Kingsley railed against effeminacy and asceticism, and glorified physical health both as an index of moral and spiritual well-being and as useful to the performance of his clerical duties.64 Hughes similarly suggested that "round shoulders, narrow chests, stiff limbs...were as defective as bad grammar", and that they were to be corrected "if we are to educate the whole man".65

Headmasters such as G. E. L. Cotton, who took over Marlborough College in 1852, and Charles Vaughan, who took over Harrow in 1845, used school games as part of their attempts to improve school discipline by bringing boys in from the countryside and involving them in activities under the eyes of masters and within the bounds of the school.66 Other headmasters, such as Nathaniel Woodward, who

---

63 Vance, "The Ideal of Manliness", p. 119.
65 Quoted in Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, p. 213.
established Lancing in 1857, and Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham from 1853 to 1881, used games to give their schools the image of great public schools which had already adopted games systems. Most of these headmasters saw sport as a means to an end, but the increasing secularisation of English society, and the popularity of sport with boys, saw athleticism soon succeed muscular Christianity as the dominant ideology of the schools. Between 1860 and 1900 most public schools became obsessed with games, and by 1880 they were compulsory at all the major schools. Sport became the principal means for instilling the newly prioritised masculine traits of bravery, courage, physical strength, teamwork and devotion to a cause. In the words of J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, manliness ‘became increasingly divorced from the chapel and increasingly anchored in the games field’.

Many of the early headmasters of Australian public schools were educated at times or in places that left them outside the full thrust of the emerging athletic and strenuous manly ethos. Albert Weigall, headmaster of Sydney Grammar from 1867 to 1912, was educated at Macclesfield Grammar School, not one of the elite institutions. Although he played sport at Brasenose College at Oxford, which he entered in 1858, he was noted for his intellectual attainments more than his sporting prowess. Wilson, also educated at Brasenose, was of a similar type. But although these headmasters did not instil athleticism upon their appointments, they were young men receptive to new ideas and willing to move beyond religion and the classroom in their search for methods both of controlling pupils and of making them into muscular Christians and

---

6Mangan, Athleticsism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School, pp. 35-8, 43-6.
6Newsome, Godliness and Good Learning, p. 222.
7J. A. Mangan and James Walvin ‘Introduction’ in Mangan and Walvin (eds), Manliness and Morality, p. 4.
chivalrous gentlemen. The scene was thus set for men such as James Lister Cuthbertson and Edwin Bean to make an impact on Australian public school life.

Cuthbertson transformed Geelong Grammar. Born in 1851 in Glasgow, he was a pupil at Trinity College, Glenalmond, before winning a scholarship to Merton College, Oxford. He was not a success there, probably because of his excessive drinking, so came out to Australia in 1874 and took up teaching at Geelong Grammar in 1875.\textsuperscript{72} An enthusiastic sportsman and advocate of the athletic ideology who was able to gain Wilson’s support, he re-instituted prefects, founded a school magazine, and developed school sports, all with the aim of establishing an inspiring school environment which would make the boys manly by giving them strong bodies and ethically developed minds.\textsuperscript{73}

Weigall, after taking over Sydney Grammar in 1867, aimed to inculcate character into his boys as much as scholastic knowledge. This in itself was no great departure from his predecessor, but Weigall succeeded where Stephens had failed because he took on the methods and trappings of the successful English public schools. It was under Weigall that organised games emerged, along with a school magazine, school colours, a prefect system, and a uniform. Weigall was not always the initiator of such innovations, and he owed much to other masters recruited from England who brought with them the ideals and practices of the English public school system. Henry Anderson, for example, formed the cadet corps in 1870, while Edwin Bean, also a former English public schoolboy who had taught at Geelong College, launched the school’s magazine in 1875. Bean and Charles Francis, an assistant master who had been educated at Marlborough College and Oxford, were also

\textsuperscript{72}Bate, \textit{Light Blue Down Under}, pp. 42-3. Cuthbertson was only twenty-three when he was appointed by Wilson, and had never taught before. It appears that he misrepresented himself to Wilson with regard to his studies at Oxford, as Wilson told the board that Cuthbertson was a graduate, which he was not.

\textsuperscript{73}Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 1, April 1910, p. 2; Collins Persse, \textit{Well-Ordered Liberty}, p. 6.
prominent in establishing organised sport at the school.\textsuperscript{74} Weigall acknowledged the debt he owed to such men, and to the English public school system in general, in improving ‘the moral and physical tone of the boys’ when he reported to the board in September 1883:

the Trustees have at various times imported Masters from England, all of whom have been educated at schools of repute, and have graduated in honours at the English Universities. These gentlemen have brought with them the traditions, the discipline, and the spirit of the English Public Schools, in these respects confessedly the best schools in the world. To this they have added the intellectual training and associations of the Universities, and have thus assisted, as no other class of men could, in raising the mental and moral tone of the boys, who will soon be men.\textsuperscript{75}

Similarly, the emergence of an athletic ideology at Wesley in the late nineteenth century, although not to fully bloom until after his appointment to the headmaster’s position in 1902, owed much to the initiatives of Adamson.\textsuperscript{76} He sought, with a ‘missionary zeal’, to transfer the atmosphere of Rugby School to Wesley, and did so primarily through sport.\textsuperscript{77}


\textsuperscript{75}Quoted in Turney, \textit{Grammar}, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{76}Felix Meyer (ed.), \textit{Adamson of Wesley: The Story of a Great Headmaster}, Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1932, \textit{passim}.

The new headmasters and their influential assistants were thoroughly grounded in the educational goals, ideals and methods of Oxbridge and the English public schools. Collectively, they redefined and restituted the colonial public schools by grafting onto them the Arnoldian purpose of character formation for the colonial elites.\textsuperscript{76} They promoted boyhood as an important, if not the most important, stage in the development of a man’s character, and argued that how boys learnt to behave at school would have a major impact on their future lives. ‘Youth is the season of acquiring the habits necessary to fit us for the great battle of life’, trumpeted the \textit{St. Peter’s School Magazine} in 1894, warning that ‘The careless, untidy boy will blossom into the slovenly man; the dishonest boy into the hated hypocrite’.\textsuperscript{79} This element of character formation was held to produce the superior type of individual to which the successes of the British race could be attributed, and was favourably compared by Anglophiles such as Edwin Bean to the mere ‘instruction’ of continental schools.\textsuperscript{80}

The concentration upon character – a term loosely employed to denote qualities such moral steadfastness, determination, personality, selflessness and loyalty – soon reduced schooling of the intellect to secondary importance. At St. Peter’s, for example, it was argued in 1899 that a determined and honourable character was to take precedence over scholastic brilliance:

brilliancy without character is a snare and delusion.

Genius has been described as the art of taking pains.

This is so because character is at the bottom of all true success in life. The brilliant school companion has so often proved in after life that his brilliancy without a true love of duty has brought him disappointment and failure, while the boy of less brilliancy and steady

\textsuperscript{76}See Turney, ‘The Advent and Adaptation of the Arnold Public School Tradition in New South Wales’, \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{79}\textit{St. Peter’s School Magazine}, vol. 4, no. 19, October 1894.

\textsuperscript{80}See, for example, \textit{Sydneyian}, no. 2, December 1875, p. 46.
application has won the highest place in each walk of life. Character is formed alike in the class-room and the playing-field: the boy who is keen at his lessons and keen at his games is a credit to his school and will become a credit to his country.  

It was with the same ideas in mind that the Bishop of Adelaide told the boys in 1908 that 'examinations were not everything in school life, but rather the formation of character', and that it was 'more desirable to turn out men of honour and honesty than men of genius.' A over-emphasis on scholastic training, it was feared, was prone to turn out 'a premature, priggish young man' when the real need of the country was 'a body of gentlemen sturdily bred' who were 'strong of their hand' rather than 'shallow dyspeptics'.

Training the character was all the more important because of the belief that the public schools were training future leaders of their states and, later, of the Commonwealth, whether they be leaders in commerce, politics or the army. Wilson, for example, placed the development of character above scholastic achievement because the privileged backgrounds of his students required that they develop character attributes to fit themselves for their assumed destiny as the colony's leaders, rather than knowledge for commercial gain.

The supposition that public school old boys would fill prominent positions in society certainly had some basis in fact. The fees demanded by the elite public schools placed them beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest sections of society. Because

82Ibid., no. 70, May 1909, p. 3. See also Bate. Light Blue Down Under. p. 56.
84Bessant, Schooling in the Colony and State of Victoria. p. 7.
85Geelong Grammar School, Prospectus, 1912; Wesley College, Prospectus, 1884. p. 6; Collegiate School of St. Peter, Prospectus, 1884. p. 9; Turney, Grammar, pp. 44, 144; Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, p. 26. At Geelong Grammar, for example, fees had by 1912 reached the level of ninety guineas per annum for boarders in the senior school, although only twelve guineas per annum
they came from the wealthier middle classes, boys who attended the public schools tended to end up as members of these classes themselves. They did not form a tight ruling clique as old boys of English public schools did, but tended to enter 'respectable' occupations, with disproportionate numbers becoming prominent citizens. A survey in 1901 of Wesley College old boys who had left the school since the previous speech day found most of them occupied in warehouses, insurance houses, the public service, banks, university, farming, essaying and metallurgy. By 1920 Wesley College counted amongst its old boys eighteen university professors or lecturers, two judges, eleven Members of Parliament, two knights, three fellows of the Royal Society in London, five Rhodes Scholars and three international cricketers. Although Methodism generally appealed further down the social scale in England that Anglicanism, and although the denomination was very strong among miners and other skilled trades in Australia, it also appealed to a considerable middle-class element in the colonies. Moreover, Renate Howe has shown that the St. Kilda congregation of the Methodist Church in Melbourne, where Wesley was located, was very upper-middle class in its composition. Although the church produced few professional men and did not dominate the city's aristocracy, it included a lot of men in respectable educational and commercial occupations. Wesleyan Methodists appear to have enjoyed a considerable degree of upward social mobility, both facilitated by and allowing attendance at the elitist Wesley College. In New South Wales, the bigger public schools also had an immense effect on public life, and were especially

---


6Wesley College Prospectus, 1902, p. 15.


prominent in the professions where a large percentage of the leaders were educated at Sydney Grammar School.91 Weigall once told of how, when he was at a criminal trial, ‘the judge was an Old Boy; the counsel on the one side and the counsel on the other were Old Boys; and I am sorry to say the chap behind the spikes was an Old Boy too’.92 Associations established by the public schools in most colonies and states, such as the Secondary Public Schools’ Association established in Western Australia in 1905, and the Athletic Association of the Great Public Schools (AAGPS) formed in Sydney in 1892, served to maintain their elite identity even after the state began providing secondary schooling. Who one played sport against became an important indicator of social status.93

The aim of the public schools was thus, in Meyer’s words, the ‘fashioning of young minds, the making of men for whom citizenship shall mean a life of high endeavour, and to whom their country shall look to take their part in the guidance of its destinies.’94 They were to love their country, subordinate their own interests to it, and obey its laws, were to be thorough and honourable members of the learned professions, and were to be fair businessmen.95 An editorial in the Geelong Grammar School Quarterly in 1886 succinctly expressed the school’s perceived role in inculcating appropriate values into the ruling classes of Victoria and Australia:

They must be men of whom all can feel that they are trustworthy, honorable gentlemen, courteous to all, and holding their money, if they have any, not as a selfish instrument of their own pleasure, but as a gift bestowed on them for good purposes.... [I]f the lads of this school can leave it with engrained habits of self respect, of

91Bean, Here, My Son, pp. 67-8.
92MacCallum, In Memory of Albert Bythesa Weigall, p. 67.
94Meyer, The History of Wesley College, p. 4.
95Sydneyian, no. 184, September 1905, pp. 7-8.
moderation, of courtesy to all men and women, they will be more truly educated than many a learned pedant.\footnote{Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 10, no. 4, December 1886, p. 4.}

It has been argued by Janet McCalman and Stuart Macintyre that education became more important, in Melbourne at least, after the crash of the 1890s damaged the speculative optimism of the Melbourne middle and upper classes. Chastened, these groups increasingly looked to the public schools to provide character training, status and networking.\footnote{Stuart Macintyre, History for the Homeless: Kathleen Fitzpatrick's Vocation and Ours, Department of History, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1995, pp. 2-3, McCalman, Solid Bluestone Foundations and Rising Damp, p. 3.} There thus evolved, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a relationship whereby the public schools assumed for themselves a role of educating the sons of the elites of the community, and these elites looked to the public schools for such training. This convergence of aims which does much to explain the rapidly increasing popularity of the public schools over this period.

The public schools of England were seen as the standard to be followed in the training of characters, and their methods were adopted by Australian disciples who established school magazines, prefect systems and organised sport. The Geelong Grammar School Annual (the Geelong Grammar School Quarterly from 1877) was founded by Cuthbertson in 1875 and used as a medium through which he could encourage a sense of pride in the school and its traditions, and exhort boys to behave and think in certain ways. They were 'to emulate the gallant deeds of the past' and 'scorn what is mean, and sneaking, and unmanly in word or deed, that they may wear the light blue ribbon to the last without stain or blemish'.\footnote{Bate, Light Blue Down Under, p. 43; Geelong Grammar School Annual, 1875, p. 1.} The Wesley College Chronicle was put to similar uses by Adamson, while St. Peter's School Magazine, established in 1884, and the Sydneian, founded by Edwin Bean in 1875, performed a similar function for those schools' ideologues.\footnote{Torney, Grammar, p. 77.}
Prefects were used as a way of training boys in self-government, and, at a more practical level, of providing supervision often beyond the capabilities and resources of the staff. At Geelong Grammar, Wilson abandoned his first attempt at a prefect system, but its revival in 1875 appears to have been inspired by Cuthbertson as part of his intention to recreate Geelong Grammar in the image of the muscular English public school.\textsuperscript{100} The principle of self-government was endorsed at Geelong Grammar as a way of teaching the boys to take responsibility for their own actions, and of teaching them to be good leaders. It was also part of the Arnoldian belief that masters should treat the boys with respect, and as if they were gentlemen, a belief specifically endorsed both by Cuthbertson and Wilson.\textsuperscript{101} Wilson, for example, told his boarders in 1887 that it was in keeping with a public school that a large amount of trust should be placed in them, that they ‘should be treated with an honourable freedom’, and that a ‘hateful system of espionage’ was to be avoided.\textsuperscript{102}

Sydney Grammar School introduced a prefect system under Weigall in 1878, and Wesley College’s first prefect system was established by H. M. Andrew in 1876.\textsuperscript{103} Prefects were charged with assisting the masters in maintaining order, checking vandalism, suppressing bullying, helping new and young boys, seeing that there was no ‘fighting for fighting’s sake’, stopping fights at their discretion, and enforcing discipline by punitive measures such as detentions.\textsuperscript{104} Adamson further developed the prefect system in 1902 after returning to the College as headmaster, cementing the office of Senior Prefect, increasing prefects’ powers, and appointing boys on the basis of character and leadership ability, often measured by the extent of

\textsuperscript{100}Marles, ‘An Evaluation of the First Thirteen Years...’, pp. 175-7, 221.
\textsuperscript{102}ibid., vol. 11, no. 1, April 1887, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{103}MacCallum, In Memory of Albert Byhessea Weigall, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{104}Meyer, The History of Wesley College, p. 23. It is notable that fighting except for its own sake was apparently tolerated, a departure from the first set of rules for the college and an apparent recognition of fighting as a legitimate means of solving some forms of disputes.
their successful participation in sport, rather than the previous practice of appointment solely on the basis of academic performance.\textsuperscript{105}

Cadets were also developed, but until the 1890s and into the 1900s their existence was often somewhat tenuous, possibly because they could not compete with sport for popularity, and because militarism had not yet taken hold as a central element in the ideal of manliness. Cadets were first established at Wesley in 1867, at Sydney Grammar School in 1870, at Geelong Grammar in 1884, and at St. Peters in 1900.\textsuperscript{106} In all cases the initial establishment of the cadets was greeted with an enthusiastic response from boys, evident in numbers enrolled, but the enthusiasm was short-lived and none of the initial attempts at founding cadet corps survived. Cadets were sometimes ridiculed by their school fellows, so that the \textit{Wesley College Chronicle} railed in 1896 against those who ridiculed boys ‘manly enough to join and brave all their stupid and senseless remarks’, while parents of boys at Sydney Grammar School responded negatively to Weigall’s suggestion that cadets be made compulsory.\textsuperscript{107}

By far the most important educational tool promoted by headmasters and their assistants was organised sport. Between 1875 and the end of the century, men such as Cuthbertson, Adamson and Bean, with the consent and endorsement of headmasters such as Weigall and Wilson, established school games where they did not exist, expanded and improved them where they did, invested them with moral purposes, promoted the sportsmen as the ideal type embodying all the characteristics of manliness, and glorified sport and its most successful practitioners. To varying degrees, their schools became havens of athleticism where characters and bodies were

\textsuperscript{105}\textit{ibid.}, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{106}\textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 99, October 1903, p. 16; Turney, \textit{Grammar}, p. 73; Williams (ed.), \textit{Church of England Grammar School}, chapter 6; \textit{St. Peter’s School Magazine}, vol. 8, no. 40, April 1900, p. 175.
trained on the games field, even more so than places of intellectual training where minds were trained in the class room.

Cuthbertson considered that although boys did not need encouragement to play, it was well to ensure that 'the exercises they do take and the games they play are such as will improve their health and strength and bring out their good and many qualities'. To this end he recommended that boys play 'our noble game of cricket' and 'show their strength and pluck on the river'. Under his influence, Geelong Grammar in 1875 played its first cricket match in Melbourne since 1858 and opened its own cricket ground in 1876. Rowing was Cuthbertson's other great love, and he did much to expand the sport at Geelong Grammar. In 1875 he coached the first school crew to compete in the public schools' race. The school's first boathed was obtained in 1877 largely through Cuthbertson's efforts, and the same year saw the first intra-school rowing events, as well as the first athletic sports. Football was a little slower to expand, and it was not until 1889 that second and third teams appear to have regularly been put into the field, but by 1914 Geelong Grammar had seven football teams from the first eighteen down to the under-thirsteens. Not all sports were encouraged, however. It was many games that were considered important, and Cuthbertson scorned tennis as 'effeminate,' wanted it banned, and gave it minimal coverage in the Geelong Grammar School Quarterly. Alongside competitive sport ran the traditional Saturday expeditions, founded well before Cuthbertson's arrival, but continued with his approval. Boarders ventured into the nearby countryside to

---

108 Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 3, no. 9, April 1879, p. 4.
109 Marles, 'An Evaluation of the First Thirteen Years...', p. 227; Geelong Grammar School Annual, 1876, p. 7.
110 Marles, 'An Evaluation of the First Thirteen Years...', p. 229. See also Williams (ed.), Church of England Grammar School, chapter 13. The school had first boated a crew in 1870 and the rowing club was formed in 1874.
111 Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 4, December 1877, pp. 21-6; vol. 1, no. 1, April 1877, p. 15
113 Bate, Light Blue Down Under, p. 123.
picnic, explore, and hunt small animals, enjoying masculine comradeship and a level of freedom from the daily routine of school.\textsuperscript{114}

The adoption of sport as an integral part of the educational process took longer at Wesley College. Despite some indications of enthusiasm from early headmasters such as Martin Howy Irving and H. M. Andrew, it is indicative of the lowly place of sport at Wesley College that the school did not even boat a crew for three of the Head of the River contests in the 1880s.\textsuperscript{115} The low level of interest in sport was probably attributable to Way's lack of enthusiasm for organised games. Although not entirely hostile to sport, he felt that the development of qualities of character such as 'manful perseverance' belonged more to persistence in the class room than on the games field.\textsuperscript{116} He did give some encouragement to manly sports because, in his words, 'we do not forget that a healthy mind must be housed in a healthy body', and he was glad to note that his most successful scholars were also among the most prominent sportsmen of the school.\textsuperscript{117} It was also under Way's headmastership in 1882 that Wesley's first gymnasium was opened for 'various healthful and muscle-making exercises'.\textsuperscript{118} Way, however, in common with other headmasters until Adamson's appointment, never strayed from a conviction that the school's scholastic work was its main business. Until about the 1890s, therefore, it appears that most boys at Wesley did not play sport, and the school fielded only one team in each branch of sport, except for rowing where it boated two fours.\textsuperscript{119}

The growth of a more fervent athletic ideology had to await the arrival in 1887 of L. A. Adamson, a man who was to dominate Wesley until 1932. Adamson came to the school as the senior resident master at the age of just twenty-six. Adamson was an

\textsuperscript{115}Blainey, Morrissy and Hulme, \textit{Wesley College}, pp. 74-5.
\textsuperscript{116}Wesley College, \textit{Prospectus}, 1886, pp. 11-13.
\textsuperscript{117}\textit{Ibid}., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{118}\textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 16, April 1882, p. 289.
\textsuperscript{119}Blainey, Morrissy and Hulme, \textit{Wesley College}, p. 72. See also \textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 22, October 1883, p. 411. In the 1883-84 season a cricket second eleven did emerge, but it appears to have been short-lived.
old boy of Rugby School in England, and although he had not been an outstanding sportsman at the school, he had enjoyed cricket and rugby football and had imbibed a belief in their usefulness in training character. He was given the role of sports master at Wesley, and was asked to improve the quality of the school’s sporting life. Adamson immediately tried to raise the profile of school games, partly by using the *Wesley College Chronicle* as his platform and increasing the amount of coverage it gave to sport. The tone of its editorials underwent a sudden change after Adamson’s arrival. They became much more vigorous and sports-oriented as Adamson implored more boys to take an active part in school games:

> We have tigers enough at work, we want more tigers at play. Many boys...argue that if they play in the afternoon they find themselves unable to work as they would like to at night. This is precisely the very reason why they should play the more; it argues that want of stamina which more regular training would probably give them.... What we wish is to see the time when every fellow in the school will look forward to representing her in some way as the highest honor his life here can bestow or his school ambition suggest.\(^{121}\)

From the time of his arrival there was a distinct increase in the enthusiasm for sport. A boat-house was erected in the late 1880s, followed by a sports pavilion and tennis court in 1890.\(^{122}\) Facilities and organisation were improved, and by early in the twentieth century it was compulsory for every boy at Wesley to play at least some school games. From 1891 the prospectus recommended that boys be provided with cricket flannels and football jumpers to prevent damage to their normal school

\(^{120}\)Crawford, ‘Athleticism, Gentlemen and Empire in Australian Public Schools’, p. 45.

\(^{121}\) *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 41, May 1889, pp. 709-10.

\(^{122}\) *Wesley College, Prospectus*, 1890, p. 12.
clothing, and in the same year Way noted an increased interest in sport and devoted more of his annual report than was his custom to sport at the school. The interest in and time devoted to sport continued to grow, and by early in the twentieth century the number of teams, and the number of games they were playing, were greatly in excess of what they had been before Adamson’s arrival. The increased devotion to sport both led to, and was fuelled by, much improved performances by school teams.

Sport remained in a precarious state at Sydney Grammar School in the early years of Weigall’s headmastership. This was partly because of poor games facilities as a result of its central location and consequent small grounds, and because it was established as a day school and thus lacked a core of sports-playing boarders. It was not until the arrival of several influential assistants that sports were given much endorsement or encouragement at the school. Weigall, however, with the assistance of Edwin Bean and Charles Francis, launched a campaign in 1875 to improve the school’s sporting offerings. Weigall and his senior assistants founded a rowing club, introduced organised cricket and football matches for the whole school, commenced an annual athletic meeting, and organised a program of cricket matches against other Sydney schools. They obtained a section of Moore Park to play games upon, established permanent first elevens and fifteens, and assumed control of practices and matches. A gymnasium was built in 1892 to cater for fencing and physical drill which were both part of the regular curriculum, and in 1907 the school acquired its own sports ground at Rushcutters Bay.

However, the enthusiasm for sport first generated by Bean, Francis and Weigall in the mid 1870s appears to have waned in the early 1880s and into the 1890s, and a number of contributors to the *Sydneian* bemoaned the lack of spirit shown by the school in its sporting pursuits. In 1885, for example, the *Sydneian*

---

124 *Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College*, p. 109.
reviewed a rather unsuccessful cricket season and complained of ‘a woeful deficiency of unity and energy’ within the team, and ‘an utter want of sympathy and enthusiasm in the school at large for those who were selected to represent us in the all-important sport of cricket’. In 1890 renewed efforts were made to increase the enthusiasm and sporting performances of the school. Separate committees were established for the conduct of cricket, football and athletics, and stricter rules were imposed against ‘scratching’ on the basis that ‘No boy who has been selected to represent the school has a right to refuse to play’. The system of form matches was resumed in 1893, increased numbers of practice matches were played, and the swimming sports were revived in 1894.

Such measures appear to have had, initially at least, only limited success. There were bitter complaints about the lack of enthusiasm, unity and spirit in the 1895 football side, which was described as ‘slovenly’. The lack of support for the hapless footballers also caused some caustic comment in the Sydneian. However, increased involvement from masters in the organisation and supervision of the games field appears to have brought about greater enthusiasm from the mid-1890s onwards. The number of matches and teams rapidly increased. In the 1879/80 cricket season, for example, the first eleven played just seven matches but in 1908/09 it played thirty-six matches involving forty-one days of play. There were also more teams. The Sydneian commented in 1907 that ‘prior to 1890, we never had more than three elevens in the field at the same time. Last season here were sometimes 21 teams playing form and other matches on Wednesday afternoons’. Furthermore, whereas only two or three teams were representing Sydney Grammar in the rugby field into the

---

126 Sydneian, no. 56, April 1885, p. 9; no. 59, September 1885, pp. 7-8. The difficulties in whipping up a school-wide enthusiasm for sport were partly attributed to Sydney Grammar being a day school with no boarding facility, which made it harder for most boys to go to practice, and boys often had sporting commitments to outside clubs.
127 Ibid., no. 97, September 1891, pp. 1-3.
129 Ibid., no. 124, June 1895, p. 14.
130 Ibid., no. 135, December 1896, p. 1; no. 137, April 1897, passim.
131 Ibid., no. 27, August 1880, passim.; no. 200, June 1909, pp. 19-20.
132 Ibid., no. 193, August 1907, p. 20.
mid-1890s, by 1907 the school was fielding some twelve or thirteen rugby teams in inter-school encounters, the best of which were playing up to twenty-two inter-school games per year. Masters also organised a system of ‘Colour Clubs’ for play within the school, which resulted in ‘some two hundred’ getting at least one game a week. A house system was eventually installed in 1915.133

The development of sport at St. Peter’s College was also rather slow and uneven, and was similarly driven by headmasters and senior masters who believed in the beneficial effects of athleticism. St. Peter’s College rowed its first race in 1862, held its first annual swimming sports in 1884, and formed a lawn tennis club in 1890.134 But the emergence of sport as a serious aspect of school life was restrained by a series of headmasters who emphasised intellectualism and religiosity. School sports received a boost with the appointment of the Reverend Henry Girdlestone to the headmastership from 1894. A former stroke of the Oxford and Magdalen eights, Girdlestone was a muscular Christian in the truest sense who combined a love of sport with religious devotion.135 He encouraged a more professional approach to the school sport, and sought to revive the school’s fives tournament and develop tennis.136 A sports pavilion was constructed in 1900, the boarders held their own annual sports from 1901, a rowing club was formed in 1895, and a boatshed followed in 1896.137 The boat club held regattas from 1895, and internal competitions were first held in cricket and football in 1896. By 1913 four ‘district’ sides were competing regularly in cricket, swimming, athletics, shooting, gymnastics, football, rowing and tennis for the

133ibid., no. 192, May 1907, pp. 6-9; no. 224, June 1915, p. 26; Sherington, ‘Athleticism in the Antipodes’, p. 23.
134Bean, Here, My Son, p. 165; St. Peter’s School Magazine vol. 1, no. 1, May 1884, p. 7; vol. 3, no. 2, June 1890, p. 15.
135Price, The Collegiate School of St. Peter, pp. 29-36.
136St. Peter’s School Magazine, vol. 8, no. 33, June 1898, pp. 1-2. For example, the headmaster arranged the formation of a new Executive Games Committee in 1898 following dissatisfaction at poor practice attendance and at the practice of boys playing at outside clubs. Tennis, however, was still considered a slightly effeminate game, and it was noted that ‘due care will be taken that it does not unduly trespass on the more important branches of rowing, cricket, and football’.
137ibid., vol. 9, no. 41, June 1900, p. 197; no. 57, December 1904, p. 7; vol. 5, no. 21, April 1895, pp. 323-6; vol. 6, no. 26, September 1896, p. 416.
Tolley Cup. This was eventually reorganised into a house system in 1920, in which each house of about eighty boys fielded three cricket teams, two football teams, and two teams for all other athletic contests. Girdlestone's policies appear to have had a considerable amount of appeal, and after some turbulent years in the 1880s and early 1890s, numbers increased from 170 in 1894 to 250 in 1896. Girdlestone resigned in 1915, but with the school maintaining the direction he had set, numbers had reached 537 by 1920.

The rise of sport as a significant part of the education offered by the public schools was also signified and aided by developments in the way sports were funded. This generally evolved from a system where boys paid for each sport individually, to one where all sports players contributed to a central fund, and finally to one where all boys paid for the bulk of the school's sports regardless of whether or not they wished to participate. The evolution of such a system removed what must have been a considerable financial disincentive to sports participation, as fees were often considerable. In the 1870s at Geelong Grammar, for example, the boat club had an entrance fee of ten shillings and a quarterly subscription of five, football cost 2s 6d per quarter for seniors and one shilling for juniors, while cricket levied a quarterly charge of five shillings on seniors and 2s 6d on juniors. Even the athletic sports required a small entrance fee from competitors in each event. This type of fee structure was evidently abolished shortly after Cuthbertson's arrival so that all boarders paid for cost of sports regardless of whether or not they took part in them, although for many years the boat club remained exclusive as the only club not covered by this arrangement and its membership cost extra. A similar evolution took place at

138 ibid., no. 84, December 1913, p. 23.
139 ibid., no. 103, May 1920, pp. 7, 14.
140 Price, The Collegiate School of St. Peter, p. 32.
141 ibid., p. 44.
142 Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 1, April 1877, p. 18.
143 ibid., vol. 1, no. 4, December 1877, p. 21; Marles, 'An Evaluation of the First Thirteen Years...'; p. 231; Geelong Grammar School, Prospectus, 1912. By 1912 the separate subscription for the boat club had also lapsed, with all boarders paying 7/6 per quarter to the boat club, and 10/- for other athletic sports.
144 Marles, 'An Evaluation of the First Thirteen Years... ', p. 231.
Wesley, completed in Adamson’s tenure as headmaster when all boys contributed a compulsory levy.\(^{145}\) Weigall instituted a compulsory sports fee at Sydney Grammar in 1892, while St. Peter’s appears to have had a common games fund by at least 1889, although those who wished to be members of the tennis and rowing clubs had to pay an extra levy.\(^{146}\)

Along with the rise of sport within the schools came a great rise in the number of sporting contests between them. The first public school cricket and football matches in Victoria were played in 1858, but encounters were often irregular, and it was not until 1890 that a premiership system was established to govern contests between Geelong Grammar, Wesley College, Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar.\(^{147}\) Boat races were held regularly from 1868, athletic contests from 1870, and rifle-shooting contests from 1873.\(^{148}\)

In Sydney the challenge system of matches was replaced when the AAGPS was established in 1892 to regulate inter-school sport and the premiership contests between Sydney Grammar, the King’s School, Sydney Church of England Grammar School, St. Ignatius College, All Saints’ College, St. Stanislaw’s College, St. Joseph’s College, Newington College, St. Patrick’s College, and the Cooerwull Academy.\(^{149}\) Between 1892 and 1911 similar bodies were established in other states to govern sport

---

\(^{145}\)See Meyer, *The History of Wesley College*, p. 101; *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 5, October 1878, p. 81; no. 9, November 1879, pp. 1-2; *Wesley College Year Book*, 1907, p. 6.

\(^{146}\)Turney, *Grammar*, p. 80; *St. Peter’s School Magazine*, vol. 3, no. 2, June 1890, p. 15; vol. 5, no. 21, April 1895, pp. 323-4.

\(^{147}\)Meyer, *The History of Wesley College*, p. 98-121; Williams (ed.), *Church of England Grammar School*, chapter 12. As an indication of the lack of regularity in encounters, Geelong Grammar and Scotch did not meet in cricket or football between 1860 and 1885, while Geelong Grammar and Melbourne Grammar did not meet from 1858 to 1875. After the establishment of the premiership system there were to be two encounters each year. This was reduced to one in 1904 when Xavier College was admitted, though the cricket matches were now played over two days rather than one. Geelong College was admitted to the premiership contests in 1908.

\(^{148}\)Meyer, *The History of Wesley College*, p. 17, 135-56; *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 133, April 1912, p. 4. The first combined athletics meetings, known as the United Athletic Sports of the Melbourne Public Schools, took place in 1870 and continued until 1881 when Wesley withdrew, after which the meetings soon lapsed altogether. It was not until 1905 that combined athletic sports were resumed.

\(^{149}\)Turney, *Grammar*, p. 81.
between the elite schools. In South Australia the two principal public schools of St. Peter's and Prince Alfred College played each other in an increasing number of events. They played their first cricket and football matches in 1871, met in intercollegiate athletic contests from 1898, tennis matches from 1900, gymnastics from 1901, and rifle-shooting from 1908. However, the lack of sufficient colleges for premiership contests meant that St. Peter's frequently looked beyond other public schools in the vicinity to match itself against. The school began playing grade cricket in 1906 and rowed against Geelong Grammar from 1895 until 1908.

The rise of sport went had in hand with glorification of the most successful athletes through practices such as colours systems, special privileges, special functions, and the elevation of the sportsman as the model of manliness. Between 1878 and 1890 the schools all introduced variations on the colours system first employed by English schools. Songs, prose and special events were also used to elevate the athlete as an ideal type, particularly at Wesley. Adamson wrote a lot of school songs which glorified sport and athletes, establishing the athlete as a hero of the school and investing sport and games with moral purposes. The role of such songs should not be underestimated, for at Wesley under Adamson, boys sang selections from the *Wesley College Song Book* every Friday morning at assembly. These songs served to remind singers and listeners of the virtues of the sports field, while the singing of the songs was in itself a powerful symbol of conformity and unity. Adamson also instituted an annual Boat Race Dinner in 1902 and gave banquets in

---

150Bean, *Here, My Son*, p. 168.
151Tregenza, *Collegiate School of St. Peter, Adelaide*, vol. 8, no. 39, December 1899, p. 154; vol. 9, no. 42, September 1900, p. 229; vol. 9, no. 46, September 1901, p. 325; no. 68, August 1908, p. 63.
153*Geelong Grammar School Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2, October 1887, p. 38; Meyer (ed.), *Adamson of Wesley*, vol. 3, no. 1, March 1890, pp. 1-2; Turney, *Grammar*, p. 81; *Sydenian*, no. 83, July 1889, p. 14. Perhaps to emphasise the lofty origins of the colours system in the English public schools, the letter accompanying the awarding of colours at Wesley was a duplicate of that used at Rugby School, based on the letter Adamson received when he was awarded his colours.
154Blaney, Morrisey and Hulme, *Wesley College*, p. 119.
honour of champion football teams. Sportsmen became the heroes of the school, were given special privileges, and ‘strode about the school like Gods.’

School sportsmen were also glorified in prose for their embodiment of manly qualities such as dedication, loyalty, and fighting for the honour of their school. The *Sydneian* praised the efforts of its rowing crew rifle shooting team of 1885, stating that

The recent success of our crew upon the river, and the still more recent success of the Rifle Team...are subjects for congratulation, because in both cases our representatives were fighting for the honour of the school, and not for their personal gain. Under such conditions athletic contests have a real value. They ennable the competitors themselves, and help to generate a healthy public spirit through the school.

At St. Peter’s, glorification took yet another form in 1886 when the whole school was given a half holiday to celebrate the efforts of the school crew in winning the public schools’ race at the Adelaide Regatta. Through a complex combination of symbols, rituals and rhetoric, many of which had their precedents in the English public school system, athletes and their attributes were thus identified as embodiments and expressions of the ‘approved’ masculinity of their schools.

It is important, however, to recognise that the qualities sportsmen in the public schools were praised and glorified for were not found, or considered to be found, on

---

156 Meyer (ed.), *Adamson of Wesley*, p. 44; *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 99, October 1903, p. 5.
158 *Sydneian*, no. 60, November 1885, p. 1.
159 *St. Peter’s School Magazine*, vol. 2, no. 13, May 1886, p. 5.
the sports field alone. The adulation of the athlete rested not upon athletic success per se, but upon the manly qualities which the sportsman, and particularly the successful one, was held to epitomise. Qualities of character such as determination and courage were the end, and sport was not the sole means for its achievement. Thus when the Bishop of Melbourne visited Geelong Grammar in 1877 he urged the boys to develop their intellects and their characters, but made no reference to sport.\footnote{Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 1, April 1877, p. 19.} Similarly, in his visit in 1878, he urged upon boys the need for steadfastness of character, to ‘Die Biting’, again without mentioning any possible role for sport in instilling this trait. Cuthbertson, in an adjunct to the Bishop’s statements, told boys that they needed to be resolute:

Be brave, then – brave to protect the weak, brave to do what is right, seek for confidence in yourselves, for “they can conquer who believe they can.” But, first of all, be bold in thought and heart – bold to bear the worst that man can say; seek, when you can, to return good for evil, and cultivate the power to say ‘no’ to all that would lead to wrong-doing.\footnote{ibid., vol. 2, no. 6, July 1878, p. 5.}

Being a good scholar or a good athlete was desirable, but it was considered most important that a boy should learn to be of good character. Every boy, the Quarterly advised, should look to ‘be a man worthy of trust, to be upright and straightforward.\footnote{ibid., vol. 9, no. 4, December 1885, p. 2.}

Headmasters and their assistants were frequently at pains to emphasise that the school should be esteeming not necessarily the athlete, but the boy who had acquired the values and character attributes of the sportsmen. It is perhaps best expressed in an anonymous poem, probably written by Cuthbertson, which appeared in the Geelong
Grammar School Quarterly in 1879. The poem rhetorically asked who it was that the school should honour the most, and suggested that it was not the sportsman, but the boy who displayed moral and virtuous qualities:

Whose modest life from every taint of sin or shame is pure,
Who knows that virtue conquers if only it endure.
If such there be, then worthiest he of all that we can give,
For he has taught us, young and old, the lesson how to live.

And if to lips that cannot lie he add what all desire,
The hand that does not waver, and the foot that does not tire,
And if fair knowledge too is his, of him we well may boast,
That he, of all the Grammar School has loved our colours most.\(^{164}\)

Nonetheless, sport was widely felt in the Australian public schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to be the best means through which boys could develop their characters along the lines of chivalrous, upright, manly gentlemen, loyal to themselves and the wider associations they were part of, strong of mind and body, and prepared to accept defeat in good grace. Sport, in short, would ensure that the elites of Australia were worthy of their position, and would be men who would guarantee against decline, both physical and moral, in the colonies. To this end, sport was invested with a number of beneficial purposes and effects by its proponents.

\(^{164}\)ibid., vol. 3, no. 4, December 1879, pp. 4-5; vol. 23, no. 3, October 1899, p. 2. The Geelong Grammar School Quarterly put it like this in 1899:

The game, it is true, matters little, but much depends on the spirit in which it is played. The scrupulous regard for fair play, the chivalrous courtesy to opponents, the ready acknowledgement of superiority in a rival, the love of the School colours which no defeat can quench – these are things worth striving after, for they are the qualities which go to make a man.
Sport, it was alleged, would guard against decline in the colonies by serving a eugenic imperative. Amidst fears that the colonial climate had a tendency to produce unmanly boys, sport was advocated as a safeguard against effeminacy. As the Geelong Grammar School Quarterly reported in July 1894,

without some hardy exercise like football boys [are] in danger of becoming effeminate. This is...particularly true of boys in a climate like ours, where the tendency is to produce a tall, narrow-chested, thin-legged race without the “last” and stamina of the British pioneers who planted these Australian colonies.\textsuperscript{165}

Cuthbertson maintained that Australia had a positive future if the character of its inhabitants could be maintained and developed, and he remained hopeful that Australians would not ‘lose that moral and physical force which has tended to make the Anglo-Saxon the foremost race of the world.’\textsuperscript{166}

At a dinner in 1909 at Wesley College to celebrate the winning of the football premiership, the Ven. Archdeacon Crossley equated healthy sports with healthy leadership of the nation, suggesting that if anyone dreamt of ‘the decay of Australian character’, the ‘manly boys of schools like this’ would provide reassurance. ‘So long as they play brave and straight and true’, Crossley maintained, ‘the nation will follow and awake’.\textsuperscript{167} Similar sentiments can clearly be seen in a St. Peter’s College song titled ‘College Gymnastics’, written in 1894 apparently in response to criticism of the powers of colonial born boys:

As British born youths, though colonial bred,
No danger can daunt us, no trouble we dread;
Not here nor in England is pluck on the wane;
Here still exists plenty of muscle and brain.

Let spouters our boyhood’s shortcomings deplore,
And scoffers indite what they please on that score;
Be it ours British rigour and might to maintain,
Ever proving we’ve plenty of muscle and brain.\textsuperscript{168}

Sport would thus combat the degenerative tendencies both of the colonies and modern life in general.

Sport was perhaps even more important in its alleged development of moral qualities, through which it taught boys to ‘play the game’. The ideology of athleticism was based on an formulation which exploited the games field as a site on which boys could learn the ethical qualities of gentleman. Whether under the guise of chivalry, gentlemanly conduct, ‘playing the game’, acting in a manner that was ‘manly’, or in avoiding behaviour that was considered ‘not cricket’, schoolboys were bombarded with an array of behavioural and attitudinal directives and imprecations to shape their characters and ethical outlooks. Sport was thus invested with moral values, and used as a means of teaching these ethical codes to boys in the process of character formation.

One such moral value was the acceptance of defeat. Colonial schoolboys were passionate about the results of their inter-school contests and fought hard for victory. Glorious was the schoolboy who battled until the end of the contest, trying his hardest and refusing to accept defeat until the contest was over. But when the contest was over it was considered important that sportsmen accept victory or defeat with grace.

\textsuperscript{168}St. Peter’s School Magazine, vol. 4, no. 19, October 1894, p. 301.
and dignity. The efforts of their opponents, victorious or not, were to be applauded and it was considered bad form to 'crow' if one was successful. Thus Geoffrey Wall, a pupil of Melbourne's Wesley College, wrote in 'After the Boat Race, 1914':

And so defeat may have its use,
And by its aid in other years
A younger crew may row anew
To win success 'mid other cheers;
And should their utmost efforts yield
Once more the fate of second place,
We'll cheer the blue – the better crew
And own defeat – but not disgrace.\(^{169}\)

The contest, ideally, was more important than the result. Simply in the act of contesting, in giving one's all, participants were showing a manly character worthy of praise. Thus Adamson urged his boys, regarding defeat and victory, to 'treat those two imposters just the same.'\(^{170}\) Similarly, Cuthbertson reminded the rival crews before the annual Head of the River races in 1894:

It matters not who shall prove the best,
    If the schools have with honour blended:
They are oar to oar on Barwon's breast,
    They are one when the race is ended.\(^{171}\)

Defeat, then, could be tolerated in two principal ways. First, it was no disgrace to lose if the contestants had fought hard until the finish, if they had shown 'pluck' and determination, and if defeat had been taken in the right spirit and with the resolution

\(^{169}\)Meyer (ed.), Adamson of Wesley, p. 93.
\(^{170}\)Ibid., p. 17.
\(^{171}\)James Lister Cuthbertson, Barwon Ballads and School Verses, Melville and Mullen, Melbourne, 1912, p. 182.
that victory would be sought all the harder the next time. Defeat could, moreover, ‘have its use’ as Geoffrey Wall put it, teaching the vanquished the valuable lesson that success could sometimes prove elusive. Sport taught schoolboys how to handle failure, to accept reverses without questioning the legitimacy of the system which produced such setbacks. One was to play by the rules and accept the results. Defeated Wesley College boat crews, for example, were praised for being prepared ‘to take a beating like sportsmen’.

Sport at school was alleged to teach boys to stand up for themselves, in both a moral and physical sense. On the football field, the cricket pitch and the river, boys had to assert themselves and their rights, thought to be a valuable lesson and a fundamental teaching of the public school. In 1911, for example, a former editor of the *Sydneian* suggested that Sydney Grammar School adopt a school song, and sent in a proposed piece:

So whene’er in after life we meet
Foes worse than those at school who fought us,
Proud alike in victory or defeat,
We’ll play the game the school has taught us.
Let us stop the rot if things be going wrong,
And tackle every danger low.

Determined and ethical conduct in the face of adversity was an important element both in the chivalric code of manliness and in the Victorian code of athleticism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Physical fortitude was similarly important and it was thus important that boys play manly games rather than indulging in less muscular forms of amusement. In this

---

172 *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 100, December 1903, p. 4.
173 *ibid.*, no. 207, March 1911, p. 25.
lies Cuthbertson’s deep-rooted antipathy to tennis, generally seen as a gentle, even effeminate, game until the twentieth century. Similarly, the St. Peter’s School Magazine railed in 1905 against the habit of some boys in the upper school of playing games such as ‘fly the garter’ and ‘glory’. The editor sarcastically asked, ‘If these games are going to be continued, would it not be well for the Sports Committee to try and arrange an intercollegiate marbles match, or some such effeminate pastime?’ As physicality became an increasingly important element in the code of manliness, so too did non-physical games indicate effeminacy.

The definition of physicality, assertiveness and self-respect as ‘manly’ in schoolboy sports goes some way towards explaining the relatively high levels of violence which were tolerated, and even endorsed, in public school athleticism. As well as the inevitable legal violence of contact sports such as football and rugby, fighting and unnecessarily rough play occasionally broke out in inter-school contests. It was not often referred to directly in public school publications, but there are enough hints to make this conclusion inescapable. In 1886, for example, the sports committee of Sydney Grammar School briefly suspended football and cricket matches against Newington College as recent encounters had been ‘productive of bad feeling,’ while Melbourne Grammar School in 1904 accused Wesley College of ‘unfair and unmanly’ rough play in a recent football encounter. Off the field, fights between spectators were common enough for the Age to refer in 1905 to ‘the usual scrimmages between the boys of the two schools’ after fighting had broken out between supporters of Wesley College and Melbourne Grammar football teams, while an informal behavioural code amongst the boys of Wesley College enforced the nominally voluntary attendance at inter-school contests by forcible ducking in a barrel in the school yard.

---

175St. Peter’s School Magazine, no. 57, December 1904, p. 2.
176Sydney, no. 62, April 1886, pp. 5-6; Wesley College Chronicle, no. 103, October 1904, pp. 1-3.
177Age, 18 August 1905, p. 9; Brian Lewis, Our War: Australia During World War I, Melbourne
The violence boys committed and endured was held to have its benefits for its perpetrators and victims. The *Sydneyan* suggested that the element of physical danger inherent in sports such as football was a positive thing as ‘a spice of danger is the very element, that calls forth courage and presence of mind’, while the *Wesley College Chronicle* ridiculed the aforementioned objections of Melbourne Grammar against the allegedly overly rough play of the Wesley footballers, suggesting that the Melbourne Grammar boys had received ‘much feminine sympathy’ and were being unmanly in complaining of the manner of their defeat.\textsuperscript{178} The same journal also endorsed by implication the use of fists when opposition barrackers insulted one’s school, calling this ‘a manly display of self-defence’.\textsuperscript{179} In the annals of public school sport, violence was endorsed more often than decried.

However, the ideology of sport as important in teaching boys to be stoic can perhaps best be seen in the furor surrounding the fight between supporters of Wesley College and Melbourne Grammar at their 1905 football match at the St. Kilda Cricket Ground in front of several thousand spectators. Supporters grouped at either end of the ground and prospects of a clash at quarter time were averted by having the supporters move around the ground in the same direction to change ends, thus never meeting. However, at half-time the Melbourne Grammar boys grouped in the middle of the ground for a photo. Wesley boys, apparently objecting to the Melbourne Grammar boys taking such symbolic possession of the arena, joined them, and a general melee ensued. The *Argus* reported that ‘Some boys, shouting with delight, rushed round from group to group, hitting every hostile face they saw’, and that the field was ‘dotted all over in a series of hand-to-hand encounters’.\textsuperscript{180} Fighting continued at the end of the game, despite the efforts of police and troopers to break it up, and took some time to subside.

\textsuperscript{178}*Sydneyan*, no. 123, May 1895, p. 1; *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 103, October 1904, pp. 1-3.
\textsuperscript{179}*Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 79, October 1898, p. 427.
\textsuperscript{180}*Argus*, 18 August 1905, p. 5.
Indignation at the antics of the boys was expressed in the letters columns of the following day’s papers. ‘Spectator’ took exception to the ‘exhibition of rowdyism’ which he or she ‘found painful in the extreme’. ‘Paterfamilias’ was similarly outraged and queried: ‘Must “somebody’s darling” receive serious, if not fatal, injury before the responsible authorities take steps to prevent this upper-class larrkinism?’ More revealing about the prevailing attitudes to masculinity, however, was the light-hearted and even affirmative response of headmasters, editors and other correspondents. G. E. Blanch, the headmaster of Melbourne Grammar, and Adamson, both pointed out to the press that the same thing happened every year at the Eton-Harrow match. Adamson even joked that ‘we have a lot of caps — so many that I don’t know what to do with them. I’m thinking of making them up into parcels, and sending them up to the Grammar School’. 

Furthermore, two days following the incident and one day following the indignant letters to the editor, letters of a much different nature were published, arguing that the fighting was a healthy indication of boyish vitality, and rather harmless fun. A ‘Staid Citizen of Fifty’ wrote:

Thoughtful parents and those who fear fatal injuries to their darlings in school “scrapes” ought to put frills on their limb casings and send them to ladies’ seminaries. So long as episodes such as yesterday’s are not allowed to get absolutely out of hand, and too much is not made of them, little harm has ever been done or ever will be. 

\textsuperscript{181}ibid., p. 5.  
\textsuperscript{182}ibid., p. 5; 19 August 1905, p. 14. Stealing the opposition’s caps was a way of symbolically scalping one’s adversary. In asserting that Wesley had a lot of caps, Adamson was implying that Wesley had ‘won’ the fight. Adamson later moderated his comments and offered assurances that he deplored the fighting, but this seems to have been more of a diplomatic response than an honestly held sentiment.  
\textsuperscript{183}ibid., 19 August 1905, p. 14.
Expressing similar sentiments, 'Ex-School' endorsed the fight as 'evidence of a healthy boyish spirit and enthusiasm, and a good sign of a virile race':

It will be a poor look-out for the British Empire when its younger school boys do not behave roughly and even rudely at times. Nations are not made or sustained by milk-sops, and so long as nothing mean or vindictive occurs in such "cap fights" it is difficult to pass scathing criticism upon them.\(^{104}\)

Editorial opinion also seemed to favour the antics of the boys. The *Australasian* stated that 'Hands were given to the youth to defend himself', and that today's feuds would only further cement tomorrow's friendships.\(^{105}\) *Melbourne Punch* also devoted some attention to the incident, and saw the hardiness that boys were showing in their willingness to fight as indicative of a proper public school training aimed at 'making men of them, not men of the skim-milk drinking, bath-bun-eating Private Secretary in the farce, but breezy, square-headed men of the world'. *Punch* went on to contrast the 'lad who can give and take blow in an hour of excitement and trial' with those 'nurtured on the lines beloved by old maiden aunts' and revelled in the manliness revealed by he boys:

The lads have only shown a feature of the quality that has gone to the making of good Britishers for hundreds of years...[I]t is a time to reflect composedly that it is very fortunate boys will be boys and not little priggish Admirable Chrichtons in knicker-bockers.... Anyway,

\(^{104}\textit{ibid.}, \text{p. 14.}\)
\(^{105}\textit{Australasian,} 19 \text{August 1905, p. 444.}\)
young Australia didn’t seem to suffer much from that mythical tired feeling.\footnote{Melbourne Punch, 24 August 1905, pp. 251, 263.}

Fighting for a cause, or at least being prepared to fight, was seen as manly. What some would have promoted as a more ordered and decent boyhood was seen by those supporters of the muscular and athletic public school ethos as effeminate.

The athletic ideal also sought to teach boys devotion and loyalty to the wider corporate body of the team and school, and it was hoped that this would later translate into devotion and loyalty to country, Crown and empire. As the Sydney\textit{ian} argued in 1884:

\begin{quote}
The same disposition of mind, that has made us loyal to our school, will make us loyal to our country; the service of the schoolboy will find its consummation in the service of the Statesman. In this way shall we best be fitting ourselves while boys for a manhood of patriotism and philanthropy.\footnote{Sydney\textit{ian}, no. 52, May 1884, p. 2.}
\end{quote}

Similarly, the St. Peter’s School Magazine printed an article in 1895 titled ‘Pro Patria’ which impressed upon boys the need for school patriotism and its links to national patriotism, while Girdlestone urged each boy to do his best by ‘sinking his own identity in the glorious community of the whole body’.\footnote{St. Peter’s School Magazine, vol. 5, no. 21, April 1895, p. 338; Sherington, Petersen and Brice, \textit{Learning to Lead}, p. 57.} In the sports arena such beliefs found their expression in the emphasis on playing for one’s side rather than for oneself, epitomised by Adamson’s exhortation to ‘Play the game together, then, self is but a fool!’\footnote{L. A. Adamson (ed.), \textit{Wesley College Songs}, (4th ed.), Wesley College, Melbourne, 1918, p. 3.} Team games were thus considered to be of superior moral value to
individual pursuits such as athletics because the latter involved struggling for one's own glory, whereas the former involved team and community effort. Rowing, a sport in which the expression of individual flair was virtually impossible and which was often portrayed as the epitome of team work in sport, was often advocated as the most morally beneficial of all school sports for its 'complete subordination of self'.

For the captain, games were supposed to provide lessons in leadership. For the remainder, games could teach one how to follow. Obedience of an unquestioning nature and the submergence of individual interests were considered virtues rather than slavishness. Thus the cricket writer of the *Sydneian* wrote in November 1885 that even though the captain 'may be mistaken', 'he is in authority and must be obeyed'.

Similarly, rowing was advocated at St. Peters as a particularly moral sport for the way in which it embodied complete subordination of selfish interests for the good of the crew. Rowing was said to offer

> The discipline, mental, moral, ethical...the voluntary submission to one master, the self-surrender to one aim, the conversion of self into part of a machine, devoid of free agency, the working and training for weeks and weeks, to uphold the honour of the school, college, or university, in the severest test of strength, wind and pluck which the whole range of athletics offers.

Sport could thus be used to support the opinion espoused at St. Peter's that 'the truest freedom consists in willing and intelligent obedience to wise laws.'

---

190 *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 152, May 1918, p. 37.
191 *Sydneian*, no. 60, November 1885, p. 6.
192 *St. Peter's School Magazine*, vol. 2, no. 11, December 1885, p. 9.
With such virtues attached to sport, it is not surprising that there was some pressure for it to be made compulsory. However, compulsory sport never became as much a feature of the Australian public school scene as it did in the English. What compulsory sport there was operated for only a brief portion of the period from 1870 to 1920, and was not taken to the extremes of English public schools where, for example, boys at Lancing and Harrow schools had to play football every day of the week in winter, and cricket three times per week in summer. Geelong Grammar School would appear to have had compulsory sport at some stage after 1910 as it was recorded in the Quarterly in May 1913 that at the beginning of the year it had been decided that cricket would now be optional on Thursdays as those who wished to go rowing could do that instead. There were also other compulsory physical activities for boys at Geelong Grammar, though not games. By 1912, all boys visited the sea baths daily during summer under the charge of a master, and in the junior school, from 1914 at the latest, each day opened ‘with either swimming, running exercises, deep breathing, or bat drill’. In 1914 the school also instituted weekly runs of about three miles in which the whole school participated.

The Sydneian pushed for compulsory sport at Sydney Grammar School. It argued in 1878 that boys did not always know what was good for them and should thus be forced to play, and that this was especially important in the Australian climate which tended to produce languor. However, Weigall resisted such pushes for compulsory sport, and games at Sydney Grammar remained optional. At St. Peter’s it was argued in 1884 that compulsory sport was impracticable because the long distance from school that many boys lived denied them the time to devote to the serious pursuit of sports. It was not until compulsory military training came into

194 Mangan, Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School, pp. 79-84.
198 Sydneian, no. 13, October 1878, p. 1.
199 Turney, Grammar, p. 80.
200 St. Peter’s School Magazine, vol. 4, no. 17, April 1894, p. 268.
effect in 1911 that arrangements changed. The Defence Act made a certain amount of physical training compulsory, and St. Peter's fulfilled the requirement by making it compulsory for every boy to play football at least once a week.\textsuperscript{201} Compulsion was abandoned in 1916, revived before being dropped again in 1918, and picked up again in 1920 as part of the house system of internal games.\textsuperscript{202} At Wesley, compulsory sport only appears to have come about with the development of the internal school matches after 1900, matches which were not the major part of the sporting calendar as they had been in England.

The lack of enthusiasm for compulsory games probably reflects the concern, even on the part of those who established the athleticism of the public schools, to ensure that sport did not completely take the place of scholastic training. The desire was, as Edwin Bean put it, "to hit the golden mean between athletic idiocy and intellectual priggishness".\textsuperscript{203} Sport had to be reconciled with scholastics rather than allowed to dominate them, and it was thus often argued that sport was actually of benefit to intellectual pursuits. As early as 1876 Cuthbertson referred any objectors to the amount of sport played at Geelong Grammar to the results of the previous year's Matriculation Examination, in which Geelong Grammar had done better than any other Victorian school, and maintained that mental and physical education had to go hand in hand.\textsuperscript{204} Thus he argued in 1879:

\begin{quote}
It cannot be for a moment doubted, that when engaged in work which taxes the brain, we must keep up our physical health and strength in order to maintain our mental activity; for when the body is ill or feeble the intellect suffers in proportion. Our aim, therefore, should be to keep our bodies in such a state of health
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{201}ibid., no. 77, August 1911, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{202}ibid., no. 91, May 1916, p. 1; no. 97, May 1918, p. 4; no. 103, May 1920, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{203}Sydneian, no. 1, September 1875, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{204}Geelong Grammar School Annual, 1876, p. 21.
and strength that our mental powers shall have full vigour and freshness; and we should accomplish this in such a way that neither the physical nor mental powers shall be injured or neglected, and so that too much attention shall not be given to the detriment of the other.205

Similar arguments were advanced at St. Peter’s and at Sydney Grammar School.206 Even Adamson took a much more serious attitude towards work than would have been the case at Rugby, the school he attempted to model Wesley on. He recognised that Wesley boys would have to earn a living, and even in the years when athleticism was at its high point, success in public examinations remained important to a school’s standing and to its enrolments.207 Sport was important, but school work was not to be sacrificed, and the anti-intellectualism of the English public school never permeated the ‘official’ school rhetoric on education in Australia. Successful years in examinations were the source of considerable satisfaction and often celebration.208

In practice, however, glorification of the non-intellectual, secular, and stoic merits of athleticism frequently led to a devaluation of the intellectual, the ‘idle’ and the religious. Idleness in particular was increasingly despised as it was portrayed as everybody’s duty to work for the success of the school in one way or another. The Geelong Grammar School Quarterly attributed the success of the school’s cricket side in 1886 to ‘patriotism’, which it juxtaposed against idleness, gladly reporting that ‘that mysterious monster, the loafer – the over-dressed, under-couraged loafer – has disappeared of late, and long may it be before his cowardly “not good enough” whine

204 Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 3, no. 9, April 1879, p. 4.
206 Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, p. 105.
207 Sydneyian, no. 113, December 1893, p. 2; St. Peter’s School Magazine, vol. 3, no. 12, December 1892, p. 1. For example, the Board of Trustees of Sydney Grammar allowed to school to keep up five days early in 1893 as a reward for the ‘exceptionally large number of University prizes won by the School in the past year’, while in 1892 the headmaster of St. Peter’s School gave the school a half-holiday in honour of an exceptional university examination performance by an old boy. T. S. Poole.
is heard in the playground’. Attacks on ‘idlers’ were frequent, and Adamson’s scathing attack in 1896 is typical rather than exceptional:

Undoubtedly there may be in any school miserable spirits uninfluenced by this pulse of healthy life – loungers and duffers, so devoid of the spirit of our race as to find their chief pleasure in “hanging about,” hands in pockets, and engaging in nothing but foolish gabble, as the fatted sow lies in the sun and grunts.210

Just as boys who were loyal to the school were supposed to develop into men loyal to their, country, monarch and empire, so too did the process work in reverse. At the 1906 Boat Race Dinner at Wesley, Dr Watkin, former President of the college, lambasted those not firmly behind the school’s sporting representatives as the boy ‘who was not loyal to his school and did not wish his school success...was not likely to grow up a loyal man, loyal to his country, his King and his God.’211 Similarly, the Sydneian called the manliness of those boys who did not support sports into question by asking: ‘what sort of selfish old women will they be when they are men!’212

Although sport was not to take the place of scholastics, there is little doubt that the heroes of the schools were generally the successful sportsmen rather than scholars. The Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, when Cuthbertson was absent and the magazine was being edited by another master, lamented in 1883 that ‘Too often work is regarded as “stewing,” and workers as “stewpots,” whereas the feats displayed on field or river are over-idolised’.213 Similarly, there was little protest when Cecil Rhodes’ bequest for the Rhodes Scholarship was to be directed to scholars who were

210 Wesley College Chronicle, no. 71, October 1896, p. 274.
211 ibid., no. 112, December 1906, p. 36.
not ‘merely bookworms’, but ‘the best men for the world’s fight’.\textsuperscript{214} Seventy per cent of the marks in the assessment of a candidate would be awarded for success in ‘manly sports’ and ‘qualities of manhood’.\textsuperscript{215} This, the Quarterly noted, was likely to prove difficult to measure, but the Quarterly was loud in its protest when a ‘bookish’ individual was chosen to be the first Rhodes Scholar.\textsuperscript{216} It asked:

Would the conditions of Mr. Rhodes’ will be satisfied by the election of an athlete who should protest that he was really fond of books, and often gazed wistfully through a library window, but that having to earn his living as a ground bowler, he had found it impossible to graduate? Are these conditions, then, in any degree satisfied when a student – a college don – who naively professes an affection for sport, but admits at the same time that he knows nothing of it (or has at the most a bowing acquaintance)?\textsuperscript{217}

The Quarterly was firmly of the opinion that an ‘all-round’ man who was somewhat less ‘donsish’ should have been chosen instead, reflecting its denigration of scholasticism as a measure of manliness.\textsuperscript{218}

Denigration of the intellectual can also be seen in an Adamson song about ‘Tommy’. Tommy, as Adamson noted in the Wesley song book containing the piece, was a fictional character, but represented ‘what the average boy may fairly wish to be’:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{215}Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 26, no. 4, December 1902, p. 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{216}\textit{ibid.}, p. 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{217}\textit{ibid.}, vol. 28, no. 4, December 1904, pp. 1-3.
  \item \textsuperscript{218}\textit{ibid.}, pp. 1-3.
\end{itemize}
Oh!

Tommy was a bright boy, always on the go;
Losing didn’t whimper, winning didn’t crow;
Not too smart at books, yet you couldn’t call him slow;
Honest little gentleman, and feared no foe.\textsuperscript{219}

In subsequent verses Tommy achieves considerable success at cricket, football and especially at rowing, winning a number of honours which he accepts with modesty, a gentlemanly trait that he maintains after leaving school. In a description of his ideal schoolboy that runs to six verses, Adamson tells us of Tommy’s character that he is modest and that he is a gentleman, of his sporting prowess that he is courageous, determined and successful, and of his standing in the school that he is revered. But of his scholastic ability Adamson dismisses him as ‘Not too smart’, though of course ‘you couldn’t call him slow.’ For Adamson the ideal boy was most decidedly not defined by intellectual and scholastic ability, perhaps partly because the high academic achievements of some girls in the latter half of the nineteenth century removed scholastic success from the exclusively masculine sphere, encouraging the pursuit of other ‘manly’ activities to distinguish the ideal boy from the high-achieving girl.\textsuperscript{220}

Sports also dominated other amusements. Various societies such as Christian unions and camera clubs often existed, but had a low profile. Their eclipse by sport can perhaps be best seen in the fate of the debating clubs, which most schools possessed, but which enjoyed only a tenuous existence. Such clubs were forever being formed, dying out and being revived again. They were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm for sport, and it is a sad commentary on the pervasiveness of athleticism in the late nineteenth century that when the debating society at Geelong Grammar School, which Cuthbertson had been influential in forming, held its first debate in

\textsuperscript{220} See Fitzpatrick, \textit{PLC, Melbourne}, pp. 84-6.
1878, the topic was ‘Which is the better game – cricket or football?’ \(^{221}\) Similarly, at St. Peter’s, the debating society’s first topic after its formation in 1899 was ‘Which is the best form of sport - Cricket, Football, or Rowing?’ \(^{222}\)

Religion was also threatened by the public school code of manliness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and was reduced to secondary importance. It did not disappear altogether, and even the most fervent ideologues of athleticism saw an important place for it. When Cuthbertson considered the aims of the education afforded by Geelong Grammar in an 1893 editorial he listed character attributes such as steadfastness, and ‘lastly...a firm basis of belief on which all their character and conduct shall be founded’. \(^{223}\) Adamson, meanwhile, maintained a relatively strong interest in the religious education of his boys and introduced the custom of services at the Wesley on Sunday evenings. The last Sunday of the school year was made the occasion of a special Christmas service, to which day boys, parents, old boys, and friends of the college were all invited, and Adamson considered it fitting that the last school function a boy should attend in his time at Wesley should be one of worship. \(^{224}\)

But the increasing dominance of athleticism in the schools, and the general secularisation of Australian society, marked a declining role for religion, and a status far lower than the founders of the schools would have envisaged. Cuthbertson argued that while the school had a religious function in teaching boys about the Bible and the life of Christ, encouraging religious piety and devotion was the responsibility of the clergy and parents, not the school. \(^{225}\) At Wesley College in the 1890s, religious instruction was non-sectarian in nature, and although the Chaplain gave biblical instruction to each form once a week, attendance was optional. \(^{226}\) The *Wesley College Chronicle* noted in May of 1913 that the Christian Union was attracting smaller

\(^{221}\) *Geelong Grammar School Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 5, April 1878, p. 24.

\(^{222}\) *St. Peter's School Magazine*, vol. 3, no. 36, March 1899, p. 74.

\(^{223}\) *Geelong Grammar School Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 2, July 1893, p. 2.


\(^{225}\) *Geelong Grammar School Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3, October 1879, p. 2.

\(^{226}\) *Wesley College, Prospectus*, 1898, p. 11.
attendances to its meetings than had previously been the case, when it had managed to
draw over fifty boys on a regular basis.\textsuperscript{227} Similarly, J. F. Stretch noted in a 1907
sermon to the Old Geelong Grammarians that ‘In most schools the atmosphere is
frankly pagan. Pagan virtues, pagan principles take the place of what is distinctively
Christian’.\textsuperscript{228} Furthermore, it should be noted that ‘Tommy’, from what we know
about him, did not attend church services. Despite the rhetoric of ‘muscular
Christianity’, God played only a small part in the ideal promulgated by late-
nineteenth-century educators.\textsuperscript{229}

Religion’s marginalisation may have had much to do with its perceived
femininity.\textsuperscript{230} In a masculine environment which promoted ever more rugged creeds of
manliness, feminine religious morality had little place. It is notable that clergy in
schools were frequently attempting to overcome this by seeking to ally religion with
secular traits of manliness. For example, the \textit{Wesley College Chronicle} reported that
the Rev. A. E. Albiston, at the mass to celebrate the end of the year in 1906,

\begin{quote}
emphasised the need for all-round development,
combating the idea that somehow grips the schoolboy
mind that a religious life means the sacrifice of all that
gives enjoyment – all sport, all literature, all pleasure.
Mr. Albiston held up Jesus Christ as the ideal of all-
roundness, and defined godliness as getting the fullest
enjoyment out of the here, whilst in no way neglecting
the interests of the hereafter. \textsuperscript{231}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{227} \textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 137, May 1913, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{228} \textsuperscript{228}Williams (ed.), \textit{Church of England Grammar School}, appendix 1.
\textsuperscript{229}David W. Brown, ‘The Legacy of British Victorian Social Thought: Some Prominent Views on
Sport, Physical Exercise and Society in Colonial Australia’ in \textit{Sport and Colonialism in 19th Century
Australasia}, p. 23. See also Leonie Sandercoc and Ian Turner, \textit{Up Where Cazaly?: The Great
\textsuperscript{230}See Carey, \textit{Believing in Australia}, p. 107. See also Chapter Four.
\textsuperscript{231} \textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 109, April 1906, p. 7.
Religion had to adapt to the prevailing construction of manliness to remain relevant, and did not play a great part in defining the masculine ideal. The authority to define manliness in the late-nineteenth-century public school rested with the headmaster and the sports master, not the chaplain. From being one of the central tenets of manliness in the public schools, religion had by the end of the century moved to the periphery.

In terms of scholastic learning, the type of education afforded boys in the colonies was perhaps the one area where major concessions had to be made to local circumstances. The usual pattern of teaching was for the schools to have both classical and commercial, or modern, sides to prepare boys for entry into the professions or the university on one hand, and the commercial world on the other. Headmasters advocated a classical education as superior and tended, into the twentieth century, to place a great weight upon the classics and other literary or historical subjects. But headmasters were forced to bow to pressure from parents, the short period many boys spent at the secondary schools, and the lack of preparatory education in the classics in the adoption of more 'practical' courses of instruction. Geelong Grammar, for example, had classical and commercial sides from the outset, despite Vance's preference for a classical education. Similarly, although the study of Latin and Greek dominated the syllabus at Wesley College for most of the nineteenth century, as early as 1879, and possibly earlier, boys who did not wish to study Latin or French could do German and commercial work instead. This option must have been removed after Andrew's tenure as headmaster because it was some departure when Way announced in 1886 that Latin would no longer be compulsory for boys, and that they could now take Physical Science instead. Way admitted that this change would probably not satisfy those parents 'who desire for their sons what may be called a counting-house education' but pointed out that seven or eight hours a week were already devoted to arithmetic and book-keeping. It seems that parents indeed were

---

232 Bessant, Schooling in the Colony and State of Victoria, p. 53.
233 Bate, Light Blue Down Under, p. 17.
234 Wesley College Chronicle, no. 9, November 1879, p. 150.
235 Wesley College, Prospectus, 1885, p. 13.
not satisfied by his concessions as Way bowed to further pressure in reviving the commercial class from 1887. Further concessions came when Wesley developed a new business course in 1905 and 1906 which centred on science, practical physics, drawing, algebra, history, arithmetic and English. It included no classics or modern languages and was thus geared towards people not proceeding to university studies.

Sydney Grammar had both classical and modern sides from its opening, although the emphasis was on the former and the curriculum was dominated by classics and mathematics. The ‘modern school’ attracted little interest in its early years as most parents still aspired to a classical education for their sons. Weigall, however, devoted much attention to strengthening the modern side and expanding the curriculum, especially from 1890 onwards, and impressed upon parents the need to prepare their boys for a commercial world. He endeavoured, successfully it would seem, to rid the school of the prejudice it had long had against commercial studies and those who took them. In 1914, however, the distinction between commercial and classical educations was abolished in favour of a common course of instruction.

Alan Barcan has argued that the curriculum of most Australian schools was actually more Scottish than English, placing less concentration upon the classical subjects and more upon commercial ones. But the extent of the change should not be exaggerated because classical subjects remained a central part of the curriculum and were advocated as a superior type of education to the more modern subjects.

---

236Wesley College, Prospectus, 1886, pp. 11-13. See also Wesley College Chronicle, no. 32, April 1886, p. 555; no. 35, April 1887, p. 603.
237Wesley College Chronicle, no. 109, April 1906, p. 9. See also Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, pp. 81-2.
238Turney, Grammar, pp. 40, 47.
239Ibid., pp. 84-91, 126, 148; Sydney, no. 219, March 1914, p. 1. Weigall also did much to improve the scientific instruction of boys. By 1874 all boys in the fifth and sixth forms, and many below, were taught science, and in 1890 and 1891 laboratories and scientific apparatus costing over £1,000 were added to the facilities. A new physics laboratory, funded by a grant of £1,500 from the trustees, was built and opened shortly before the war. When it was completed, Henry Sloman, Weigall’s successor, voiced his satisfaction that the school was now able ‘to give the teaching of Science the place it ought to have in any scheme of liberal education’.
240Sydney, no. 219, March 1914, pp. 1-2.
Editorials in the *Wesley College Chronicle* argued that a commercial education made merely for a rich man, whereas a classical education made for an educated one. Weigall, despite introducing a commercial side and modern subjects such as physical science, always believed that the classics provided the best basis for a liberal education, and the modern side continued to be seen as intellectually and morally inferior, consisting of boys who had 'no appreciation of the real meaning of education'. It was thought that a classical education taught boys how to develop their skills of observation, reason and memory, whereas modern subjects, including sciences, merely plied them with information.

By the start of the twentieth century, therefore, the ideal of godliness and good learning which had characterised an Australian public school education in the third quarter of the twentieth century had largely been replaced with an ideal centred around the incultation of the masculine qualities of the athlete. Learning was still important, but was pursued for reasons of a more pragmatic and less idealistic nature than previously, while godliness had declined in centrality. Physically, health and strength had become exalted qualities. In terms of character, the lessons of fair play, stoicism, leadership, determination and discipline had come to dominate over the Christian virtues of selflessness, humility and religious devotion. The differing ideals were both described by their promoters as 'manly', but challenges to the hegemony in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced a manliness much more overtly masculine by century's end than that which had dominated previously. Boyish boisterousness and violence, rather than being suppressed, were tolerated, embraced and even endorsed to produce a boy more fit to cope with the challenges of leading the nation, surviving the threat of racial decline, and making his way honourably and ethically in a secular world. There was nothing inevitable about these shifts. They

---

242 *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 21, June 1883, pp. 381-2.
depended upon, and were underpinned by, changing social and cultural factors. Social Darwinism, the desire for physical health and the threat of mob rule had become more important imperatives than the word of God, and led to a more masculine construct. The qualities of femininity, once endorsed in the moral and godly boy, were now the qualities of the 'slacker' and the 'idler'. Manliness, once constructed by reference to qualities located in the feminine sphere, had by the early twentieth century come to be constructed against them.
CHAPTER THREE

The Early-Twentieth-Century Australian Public
School: From Athleticism to Militarism

The adoption of athleticism in the public schools of Australia and the elevation of the athlete as the embodiment of the hegemonic ideal of masculinity were processes that occurred with little opposition. But from late in the nineteenth century the cult of athleticism in the public schools was increasingly attacked by critics. They were prompted by fears of imperial deterioration which the poor performance of British troops in the Boer war seemed to evidence, by fears of invasion from Asian countries, and by fears that the athletic ideology had been taken to excessive lengths at the expense of other forms of education. From within the schools and from external commentators came calls to improve the standard of academic work, while fears of invasion and the widespread militarism of the early twentieth century brought calls to improve the military training of the boys. The cult of athleticism never completely dissipated, but its advocates were only able to meet the challenge to its status by asserting that it did not impinge upon school work and, more importantly, that it was of military value.

The strongest internal challenge to athleticism came from the unlikely source of the headmaster of Geelong Grammar, Leonard Hartford Lindon, who replaced Wilson after his death on 22 October 1895. Lindon had been educated at Rossall School and was a classical scholar at Jesus College, Cambridge. While at school he had been school captain, the leading scholar of his year, and captain of cricket for two years. He worked for eleven years under Weigall at Sydney Grammar School and appeared to be an ideal candidate to continue the school along the course set by the
Wilson-Cuthbertson dynasty. Lindon, however, believed that athleticism had got out of hand at Geelong Grammar and he launched an unpopular campaign to alter the school’s priorities. First, he sacked Cuthbertson at the end of 1896, after Cuthbertson’s drinking had got totally out of control. He then set about improving the academic performance of the school by, for example, placing a much greater emphasis upon scholastic achievement and instituting monthly examinations. He also improved the status of day boys to rival that of boarders, entitling them to wear the school badge, wear colours, and be appointed prefects, reforms that were unpopular with many who preferred the tradition of ‘boarders first’ established under Cuthbertson.

Lindon was not nearly so enthusiastic about sport as Wilson or Cuthbertson, even though it is recorded that he had a cricket pitch prepared in the playground to facilitate easier practice, which he often joined in himself. His priorities were more religious and academic. He made the study of scripture compulsory for the whole school, whereas previously the upper and middle school had been exempt. In 1904 he also established a fortnightly Sunday service for all boys, boarders and day boys, to impress upon them religious teaching, particularly with regard to matters suited to their age and relevant to school life. It was under his headmastership that comment began to appear in the Quarterly critical of the amount of attention devoted to sport, both in the school and in the community at large. In April 1902 the editorial gave some support to Kipling’s comments about ‘flannelled fools’ and ‘muddied oafs’. It considered that Kipling’s criticisms of athleticism, if a little strong, were ‘in the main just’ since sport, although essential to education of a boy, was liable to be accorded a wrongfully high place which left ‘too little time and inclination for intellectual pursuits’. In 1902 the Quarterly reported an address given by Lindon at a recent

---

1 Bate, Light Blue Down Under, p. 68.
2 ibid., p. 52.
3 ibid., pp. 70-1.
4 Williams (ed.), Church of England Grammar School, chapter 8.
Church Congress in which he stated that he was humiliated that the spirit of athleticism ‘permeated and saturated’ the public schools. He described the mania for sport as an ‘evil’, and alleged that society’s fascination with sport was distracting men from the commercial race which the British Empire appeared to be losing, and also from religion and refinement. Sport, Lindon seemed to suggest, was a brutalising influence and he thus implored the church to ‘use all her efforts to put recreation back in its proper position’, and to ‘demonstrate to the people that...recreation must ever be auxiliary to the true work of life, and not one of its leading motives’. Lindon’s use of the term ‘recreation’ rather than ‘athletics’, ‘sport’ or ‘games’, and his emphasis on the ‘true work of life’ are interesting. They suggest that Lindon shared Cuthbertson’s strenuous ideals of self-improvement, but that he saw little personal development possible in playing sport. For Lindon, sporting pursuits were the antithesis of moral, intellectual and personal development, not an aid to them. At the distribution of prizes for 1904, Lindon, while congratulating the boys on their success on the sports field, again stated that he considered the spirit of athleticism needed restraint rather than encouragement. In December 1909 he explained the poor performance of one of his forms in Greek by pointing out that it was a small form ‘of big boys, of athletic proclivities’ who were studying Greek solely to enable them to enter Cambridge. He stated that the boys were ‘at present making rather heavy weather of it’, but that they were doing their best and would hopefully ‘eventually satisfy the not very exigent requirements of my old University’. The implication was clear – athletes were not good scholars.

There were also increasing attacks on athleticism in the Melbourne press, notably by the *Argus*, and some concern was also expressed in the *Sydneyian* and the *Teachers’ Guild* about the enthusiasm for sport in the elite schools of New South Wales, which allegedly detracted from the intellectual life of the schools because of

---

7 *ibid.*, vol. 26, no. 4, December 1902, pp. 25-6.
8 *ibid.*, vol. 27, no. 1, April 1903, p. 8.
9 *ibid.*, vol. 33, no. 4, December 1909, p. 5.
the ‘excessive expenditure both in time and nerve energy’ which athleticism demanded.\textsuperscript{10} Similarly, when the Right Reverend George Merrick Long, the Lord Bishop of Bathurst and formerly the headmaster of Trinity Grammar School in Melbourne, was asked to give his opinion on the Australian schoolboy in 1913, he praised the influence of sport in turning out boys imbued with the ethics of the games field, but also saw serious defects in the public school type whom he believed was ‘apt to have all the individuality pounded out of him’, leaving him with a ‘lack of imagination and narrowness of outlook’ which in turn led to ‘both a weakness in mental power and also an absence of reserves of spiritual force with which to resist the rude assaults upon the fine ideals of life which will soon come upon him in the world without’\textsuperscript{11} The Lord Bishop blamed a lack of reading for many of these faults, but also the cult of athleticism:

\begin{quote}
The encroachment of the cult of sports has its dangers and needs watching.... [i]n spite of the great advance in educational technique and equipment, the mental horizon of the average boy to-day is much more limited than that of the boy of twenty years ago. Speaking generally, we are turning out a very likeable kind of pagan, but I would he were somewhat more alive to beauty and nobility in literature and art.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Nor, it should be noted, was the cult of sport completely pervasive throughout the elite public school system. At Scotch College there was, until the 1900s, considerably more reserve about the place of sport, even though Alexander Morrison, the headmaster of Scotch College from 1857 to 1903 who had been educated in Scotland, espoused the same character ideals as his more English colleagues, declaring that the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[11]\textit{St. Peter’s School Magazine}, no. 83, August 1913, p. 33.
\item[12]\textit{Ibid.}, p. 33.
\end{footnotes}
school was to ‘form and discipline character by training boys in habits of order, submission to authority, self-control and self-reliance...and cultivation of vigour and manliness of character’. Catholic secondary schools were also less enthused about athleticism and the strenuous ideal of manliness, especially before the 1900s.

Attacks on the devotion to sport in the public schools were generally met with assertion that they did not interfere with, and were actually beneficial to, the scholastic training of boys, and with a reiteration of their moral benefits. Thus 1883 accusations in the press that the Victorian public schools were devoting too much time to sport were met in the Quarterly with the response that the recent sporting successes attained by Geelong Grammar were not achieved at the expense of scholastic work, but through the efficient use of time outside the classroom. The Quarterly further commented in 1895 that it was ‘a total misapprehension...on the relation between athletic sports and brainwork...that leads the uneducated to abuse indiscriminately all manly sports and exercises’, and quoted the argument of the headmaster at the 1894 speech day that a boarding school, more so than a day school, had to utilise the playground as well as the classroom in educating boys. Wilson, meanwhile, in opposing Dr. Alexander Morrison’s proposal of 1894 to limit the matches between the public schools to one encounter in each sport per year, argued that less concentration on sport and more on school work would be dangerous for boys:

without the stimulus of rivalry between our schools, the pursuits of the playground languish, and...one match a year in each game does not afford a sufficient stimulus to effect our object.... There is no ground whatever for the supposition that too much of our time is given to

---

13Quoted in Bessant, Schooling in the Colony and State of Victoria, p. 47. 
14See, for example, the Xavier College magazine, the Xaverian, which devoted much less attention to athletics than magazines at Anglican or Protestant schools. 
16Ibid., vol. 19, no. 19, April 1895, p. 17.
Sports. So far from that, it would be impossible to give less without direct harm to our boys. It should be clearly understood that all boys resident here, who are old enough to take an active share in school contests, are employed at their books for eight hours a day, for five days in the week. No young growing lad can do more than this without danger to health.\textsuperscript{17}

Exercising the body was supposed to benefit the exercise of the mind, and too much of the latter could be harmful to physical health.

Lindon’s attack on the cult of athleticism at Geelong Grammar was eventually repelled. He was not popular at the school and was deposed in 1911 after tension with a council that was dominated by old boys of the Wilson-Cuthbertson era.\textsuperscript{18} His successor was Francis Brown, an old boy of Bristol Grammar School and a graduate of Hertford College, Oxford who was headmaster from 1912 to 1929. He had no personal experience of the elite English public schools, and no contact with boarding schools, making him in some ways an unlikely appointment.\textsuperscript{19}

But Brown was a strong believer in the character-training role of a public school, and stated in 1915 that if the school had failed to teach high ideals of character to its boys than it had failed in its educational mission, regardless of what else it might have achieved.\textsuperscript{20} He showed considerably more enthusiasm for sport than did Lindon, and continued to advocate it as a central element in the moral training of the young. He stated at the end of 1913 that ‘A slack playground means a slack school’, and argued that sports could ‘afford a field for the exercise of many patriotic virtues, and help perhaps quite as much as books to make a boy into a useful member of the

\textsuperscript{17}ibid., p. 17.
\textsuperscript{18}Bate, \textit{Light Blue Down Under}, pp. 78-80; Collins Persse, \textit{Well-Ordered Liberty}, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{19}Bate, \textit{Light Blue Down Under}, pp. 140-2.
\textsuperscript{20}Corian, vol. 38, no. 1, May 1914, p. 17; vol. 40, no. 1, May 1916, p. 5.
community'.\textsuperscript{21} It was under Brown that the house system was adopted at Geelong Grammar in 1912, principally for encouraging rivalry in sport and for giving people the opportunity to shine within a smaller system than the whole school. It was, for example, envisaged that there would be house prefects and house colours for excelling in inter-house sporting competitions.\textsuperscript{22} Under Brown, boys did not have to be able to justify their being at school in academic terms. Brown asked one boy to come back to school in 1914 just for the rowing, while another master on another occasion had to advise an eighteen-year-old boy not to sign himself ‘Captain of the Botes’.\textsuperscript{23}

Wesley also came under attack for its strong emphasis on sport in the Adamson years.\textsuperscript{24} Adamson vigorously defended the school against such accusations by arguing that sport was not contradictory to intellectualism, and that the two could go hand in hand. His ideal was that boys should play hard and work hard. As he once told an Old Collegians’ dinner,

if a boy has brains...he pays attention to his sports as well as his study, and he is twice the boy for doing so. If a student does not feed his brain with healthy blood, he will run the risk of petering out. I have seen this happen too often. Sport in a properly organized school does not interfere with lessons, and, moreover, is the best possible training for one’s life work later on.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{21}ibid., vol. 38, no. 1, May 1914, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{22}Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 4, December 1910, pp. 3-4; vol. 36, no. 1, April 1912, p. 5; vol. 36, no. 4, December 1912, pp. 54-5; vol. 38, no. 3, December 1914, p. 73; vol. 39, no. 1, May 1915, p. 36. House sports initially included competition in football, athletics, ‘military’, rowing, cricket and swimming. Over the next few years shooting, gymnastics and tennis were added to the inter-house sports and ‘A’ and ‘B’ teams were fielded for all events.
\textsuperscript{23}Bate, \textit{Light Blue Down Under}, p. 144.
\textsuperscript{24}Crawford, ‘Athleticism, Gentlemen and Empire in Australian Public Schools’, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{25}Quoted in Meyer (ed.), \textit{Adamson of Wesley}, pp. 16-17.
Athleticism was also defended in a special supplement to the *Wesley College Chronicle* of June 1908, titled 'Work and Play'. Wesley and Melbourne Grammar appear to have come in for particular criticism in 1908 for their emphasis on athleticism, and the supplement used examination and sporting results to show that these two schools, the most successful in sport, also attained the best academic results. The aim was to demonstrate that sporting and scholastic achievement were complementary rather than antithetical, because the 'boy who plays games and who takes proper exercise, feeds his brain with a proper supply of healthy blood'.

It was partly the criticisms of public school sport in the press that seem to have prompted a meeting of three delegates from each of the public schools of Victoria on 13 September 1910. While they resolved that it was not desirable to increase the number of competitions between the schools or to play inter-state matches, thus limiting the further growth of public school athleticism, the delegates also resolved 'That the conference, after inquiry, is satisfied that undue time is not devoted to public school sport'. The Boer War had been and gone, but social Darwinism, lingering fears of decline in the colonies, the perceived threat from Asian countries, the ideology of athleticism as an important element of character training, and the pleasure that boys, old boys and masters derived from sports, all ensured their survival.

At Sydney Grammar the occasional expression of concern about sporting culture does not seem to have had a great effect. Any sign of a waning interest in sport was greeted with horrified comment about the evils of a solely intellectual education:

Is it that we have a school of physical degenerates?....
Cannot those amongst us who are capable of thought realise that there is more than mere rough and tumble to be got from strenuous sport? If those who are able

---

27 *Geelong Grammar School Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 3, October 1910, p. 45.
bodied leave School without taking part in these games—though their learning and virtue be great—they depart only half educated, for they have missed the character and man-producing side of education, which is just as important as the intellectual.\textsuperscript{28}

Weigall continued to refer to good teaching as ‘desirable’, whereas the formation of character was ‘imperative’.\textsuperscript{29}

Despite some voluble criticisms, athletic ideology and the type of education it afforded seem to have won broad support from parents. Enrolments at Wesley recovered and grew rapidly under Adamson, increasing from 280 boys in 1905 to 560 by 1919.\textsuperscript{30} Similarly, enrolments at Sydney Grammar expanded rapidly under Weigall, from thirty-nine boys in 1867 to virtual capacity of 400 in 1876.\textsuperscript{31} Devotion to sport and success in inter-school contests increased the prestige of the school, vouched for the ‘manliness’ of its students and ensured healthy enrolments. In 1912 Bursar O’Donnell of Wesley College went so far as to claim that the sporting fortunes of the school were the greatest single determinant of the number of enrolments for the following year.\textsuperscript{32}

The cult of athleticism in the public schools thus survived, but the challenge to the hegemonic masculinity promoted by men such as Cuthbertson and Adamson in the late nineteenth century had a broader aim than reigning in the attention devoted to sport. It was increasingly argued that education had to be directed towards national defence and to the maintenance of a healthy racial stock. Imperial and national loyalty, physical fitness and military preparedness had always been elements of the

\textsuperscript{28}Sydhaian, no. 212, June 1912, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{29}ibid, no. 203, March 1910, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{30}Meyer, \textit{The History of Wesley College}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{31}Turney, \textit{Grammar}, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{32}Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, \textit{Wesley College}, p. 149.
ideology supporting athleticism, but in the early years of the twentieth century they became much more central as masculinity and the needs of the nation were increasingly conflated. The ideal boy was defined by performance in cadets, loyalty to King, country and empire, and by physical fitness. Sports and physical training were increasingly directed towards military and national purposes, and the athlete was challenged, if not displaced, by the loyal cadet as the model public schoolboy.

Patriotism and the use of a privileged training for national purposes came in for frequent attention. Donald Mackinnon, President of the Old Geelong Grammarians and later to become director-general of recruiting for the Commonwealth during the First World War, stated at the Old Boys’ Dinner in 1908 that in his opinion not enough men who had received a character training in the Victorian public schools were making the benefits of their training felt by entering State or Federal politics.\textsuperscript{33} He urged more old boys to ‘take a greater share in moulding the destinies of their country’.\textsuperscript{34} Mackinnon repeated his exhortations in 1919, and Senator George Fairbairn, another old boy, pleaded at the distribution of prizes for 1917 for more boys to take an interest in politics.\textsuperscript{35} Lindon argued, when speaking to the Old Geelong Grammarians in 1911 that old boys, had a responsibility to serve the community they entered, and from the early 1900s there was increasing mention of the need for patriotism.\textsuperscript{36} The increased emphasis on national and imperial loyalty from about the turn of the century permeated all spheres of education. The ‘New Education’, an international re-evaluation of educational priorities which was embraced and adopted in Australia, placed a lot of stress on the empire. School syllabuses ‘were filled with imperial geography and history, with British Empire patriots and heroes, [and] stories of white explorers in darkest Africa and arid Australia bringing civilisation and Christianity to the ignorant and often savage natives’\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{33}On Mackinnon’s role during the war, see Bate, \textit{Light Blue Down Under}, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Geelong Grammar School Quarterly}, vol. 32, no. 1, April 1908, pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Corian}, vol. 44, no. 3, December 1919, pp. 10-1, vol. 43, no. 1, May 1918, pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Geelong Grammar School Quarterly}, vol. 35, no. 2, July 1911, p. 15
\textsuperscript{37}Bessant and Spaul, \textit{Politics of Schooling}, p. 2.
The need for loyalty often focused on Britain and her empire rather than Australia. British heroes tended to be put before boys more readily than Australian ones, partly because the icons of Australian nationalism, with their populism and radicalism, often sat uneasily with the elitist culture of the public schools.\textsuperscript{38} Ritual expression of the need to be loyal to the British Empire took the form of Empire Day, celebrated in lavish fashion by the public schools as well as government schools. The inaugural celebrations at Wesley in 1905, for example, included the recital of poems, the singing of songs, lectures, and the cadets saluting the Union Jack.\textsuperscript{39}

However, loyalty to the motherland was considered best when combined with loyalty to Australia, and the Chaplain of Wesley College, the Rev. J. R. Harcourt, described the ‘best type of Australian’ in 1906 as ‘one proud of his country but loyal to the old land, and ever remembering the debt Australia owes to the Mother Country’.\textsuperscript{40} Given the emphasis on imperial loyalty, the death of King Edward VII was a suitably solemn event in the public schools, and at Wesley usual classes were suspended in favour of a talk by Adamson about Edward’s life, and a special memorial service was held on 20 May 1910.\textsuperscript{41}

Imperial and national loyalty implied a readiness to fight for Australia or the British Empire, and character was increasingly portrayed as requiring military capability and willingness. The \textit{Sydneyian}, for example, commented in 1906 that it was just as well that the spirit of their forefathers was alive in Australian boys as ‘We need men of thaw and of courage and of daring for the defence of the Commonwealth in the future, by land and by sea’.\textsuperscript{42} To train boys for this endeavour, cadets, which had

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 106, June 1905, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}, no. 110, June 1906, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Ibid.}, no. 126, July 1910, p. 3.
waned in most schools in the 1880s, were from the 1890s and 1900s once again recommended both for their beneficial effects upon the individual and for the good they would do in preparing against the invasion of Australia. Wilson, for example, argued in 1891 that cadets were important for the nation’s defence, and sought to ease the fears of parents who considered the cadets to be too militarist by asserting that ‘No one can desire more earnestly than I do that peace may ever reign in this land, but the only way to secure it is to be prepared for defence’. When it was suggested in 1894 that the government should retrench the cadet corps as an economy measure, Wilson protested that he regarded them ‘educationally as of the greatest value’ and of potential benefit to Australia if attacked.44

At Wesley College, cadets were also advocated for the twin benefits of character formation and the defence needs of the country. In 1905, Frank Shann, the Officer in Charge of the Wesley College Cadet Corps, wrote to the Wesley College Chronicle urging boys to join. The cadets, Shann argued, would offer them the chance to ‘gain an interest in one of the school institutions’, would help in ‘straightening and smartening up any boy who is inclined to be slovenly’, would offer ‘training in self-reliance and in responsibility’ and could provide the ‘opportunity of developing initiative and talents for organisation’.45 Similarly, the President of the Old Wesley Collegians Association, G. B. Vasey, in a lengthy exposition on the ideals of public school life, argued that the army needed men of public school character to be its leaders, for if public school old boys joined the army, Australians could ‘be quite sure that our armies will be led by brave men’.46

At St. Peter’s, militarism was increasingly glorified early in the century through practices such as a special occasion in 1909 when those old boys who had

---

44Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 16, no. 1, April 1892, pp. 36-7.
45ibid., vol. 19, no. 1, April 1895, p. 15. Displaying a desire to protect the prestige and place of elite secondary schools, Wilson suggested that if the Education Department had to save money, it would be better to reverse moves to involve the State in secondary education.
47ibid., no. 140, May 1914, p. 25-7.
served in the Crimean, Sudan, Indian Mutiny and Boer wars were invited to the school by the headmaster and paraded before the boys as models of manliness. The St. Peter's School Magazine reported the headmaster as stating that

They were a splendid example to the younger generation of self denial and devotion to country, and he hoped that the younger generation would take the example and be as ready, if need ever arose, to give themselves to the service of their country. 47

Like other schools, St. Peter's assumed that its cadets would supply the future officers of the army. 48

Public school cadet movements increased in number and prestige. The Geelong Grammar School Quarterly claimed in 1903 that seventy-five per cent of those eligible to join the school's cadet corps had done so, and the 1907 school history claimed with some pride that over ninety percent of eligible boys were cadets, 'so that with us military training is almost universal'. 49 Lindon evinced none of the hostility towards cadets that he had shown towards sport, and it was early in his headmastership that the Bracebridge Wilson Hall was erected in 1897, primarily as a drill hall for cadets, at the cost of some £1100. 50 He also thoroughly approved in 1910 of the compulsory military training scheme that was to come into effect the following year, suggesting that it contained 'nothing to which secondary schools can object'. 51

47St. Peter's School Magazine, no. 72, December 1909, p. 22.
50Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 21, no. 1, April 1897, p. 6.
51Ibid., vol. 35, no. 1, April 1911, pp. 3-4.
The resurgence of cadets was just as pronounced at Wesley College after the college's cadet corps was revived in 1896, starting with twenty-seven members.\textsuperscript{52} There were eighty-six cadets in April 1901, a that number fell to under twenty in 1904, but grew steadily thereafter and reached 245 by the end of 1909.\textsuperscript{53} The President of the Old Wesley Collegians Association, Major H. V. Champion, even looked forward to the day when cadets would constitute the dominant 'sport' of the public schools:

I hope the time will soon come when military training will be considered the most important sport of any in the Public Schools. I was glad to see Wesley College win the boat race the other day, but what I want you to believe is that the most important game is the military game.\textsuperscript{54}

At Sydney Grammar, Weigall raised the question of the revival of the school cadet corps on several occasions, but it was not until 1907, with the likelihood of compulsory military training and the announcement that military authorities would heavily subsidise school cadet corps, that serious steps were taken. The cadets were revived in 1908, soon flourished, and by the end of 1908 had 185 members.\textsuperscript{55}

Urged on by exhortations of the importance and benefits of cadet training, 130 boys attended the first drill of the revived cadet corps at St. Peter's in 1905.\textsuperscript{56} They

\textsuperscript{52}Wesley College Chronicle, no. 72, December 1896, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{53}ibid., no. 89, April 1901, p. 670; no. 105, April 1905, p. 13, Wesley College, Annual Report, 1908, p. 7; 1909, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{54}Wesley College Chronicle, no. 122, July 1909, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{55}Turney, Grammar, pp. 132-3, Sydneyian, no. 196, June 1908, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{56}St. Peter's School Magazine, vol. 9, no. 5, December 1902, p. 441, no. 60, August 1905, pp. 2, 7-8; no. 60, December 1905, p. 10. In 1905 the Debating Society was addressed by Col. Reade who impressed upon those present the duty of everyone to take part in the defence of the empire. It is perhaps indicative of the militarist and almost authoritarian attitude of the public schools on this question by early in the twentieth century that the motion 'That this House would favour the adoption of some scheme of compulsory military service throughout the Commonwealth' was carried by twenty votes to four.
joined the Federal cadet scheme in 1906, a miniature firing range was constructed at the school in 1908, and by 1909 215 of the school's 340 boys were cadets. It was estimated that a further 100 were not eligible as they were not of the minimum age of twelve years or the minimum height of four and six inches, so cadet training was almost universal, and those who did not take part were the object of some scorn. The cadets quickly became an important institution and were accorded a high place in the school, forming, for example, a guard of honour when the Governor visited in 1909.

At Wesley, even boys who were not members of the cadet corps were put through a quasi-cadet type of physical and military drill, designed to give them the discipline and physique necessary for soldiers. There appears to have been some parental resistance to this, but it was regarded by Adamson as an essential part of a boy's education, and he told parents in 1909 that 'a boy should no more absent himself from drill than from an ordinary lesson'. Whether at Wesley's prompting or not is unclear, but the practice of compulsory drill became universal in the Victorian public schools. A meeting of headmasters in 1906 resolved that military drill should be compulsory for all boys over thirteen years of age, aided by instructors which the Defence Department had agreed to supply. Even boys who did not join the cadet corps could not escape military training.

Cadets and militarism were driven by a national imperative to preserve Australia's security. This, along with continued fears of racial decline, brought an increasing interest in the physical capabilities of boys, and the subsequent development of physical drill and increased use of gymnastics. From 1897 Geelong Grammar held an annual assault-at-arms which included displays of drill, horizontal bars and boxing. By 1901 the programme included running drill, parallel bars,
bayonet exercises, horizontal bars, dumb bells, free gymnastics, physical drill with arms, boxing, single-sticks, sword display, and vaulting horse. At Wesley every boy had to pass through a course of gymnastics, an innovation introduced by Adamson in his early years as a headmaster. Gymnastics classes were held twice weekly in the upper school, all boys were required to complete two classes per week, and there was compulsory physical drill daily in the junior school, which also had gymnastics classes twice weekly, although these appear to have been voluntary. Adamson also introduced medical inspections for each boy in 1907 so that the gymnastics instructor might give boys specific exercises to remedy identified weaknesses. Similarly, Sydney Grammar acquired a gymnasium in 1892 and instituted a comprehensive system of gymnastic instruction, which was compulsory for boys in the lower school, and available to others after school on four days of the week for a small fee. Weigall also introduced a system of compulsory Swedish drill, first in the lower school, then in the whole school, from 1896. The fifteen minutes per day that it occupied were used by Weigall to reach those boys who did not play sport, and were a substitute for compulsory sport which was not considered feasible in a day school with relatively poor games facilities.

St. Peter’s hired a drill instructor in 1897 who was soon drilling the whole school once a week. Drill was added to the annual gymnastic display for the first time in 1899, and the St. Peter’s School Magazine, noted that the boys ‘seemed to have caught the martial instinct which is prevalent just now’. Gymnastics were made compulsory from the start of 1902 as ‘a part of the regular routine of the school’, and compulsory military drill was adopted in 1906, every boy drilling for about half an

---

62 Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 27, no. 3, October 1903, p. 34; vol. 25, no. 3, October 1901, p. 4.  
63 Wesley College, Annual Report, 1907, p. 6.  
64 Meyer (ed.), Adamson of Wesley, p. 15; Wesley College Year Book, 1907, pp. 34, 39.  
65 Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, p. 116.  
66 Turney, Grammar, p. 94.  
67 ibid., p. 119, 132. See also Sydneyian, no. 130, April 1896, p. 1.  
68 St. Peter’s School Magazine, vol. 6, no. 30, October 1897, p. 477; Collegiate School of St. Peter, Prospectus, 1899, p. 5.  
69 St. Peter’s School Magazine; vol. 8, no. 39, December 1899, pp. 163-4.
hour every day.\textsuperscript{70} By 1914 the school was also supervising rifle practice and had its own naval and military cadet corps.\textsuperscript{71} In all schools, therefore, ‘rational recreation’ was adopted and closely allied to militarist purposes. If sports could teach patriotism and the need to act out of loyalty to the wider body, gymnastics and drill could force boys to be physically fit for the prosecution of war, as well as acquainting them with regimentation and discipline.

Despite the increasing attacks upon the sports mania of the Australian public schools, athleticism survived. However, the purposes to which public school sport were directed changed, partly in response to allegations that public school sport was antithetical to the defence interests of Australia. (See Figures 3.1 and 3.2). In particular, the meanings of sport were militarised to suit the emergence of military manliness over chivalric manliness. Athleticism and the new priorities of loyalty to country and empire were reconciled through discursively modifying the purposes of sport, investing it with the qualities of preparing boys for war, likening the battle field to the games field, and playing up the connections between loyalty to team and loyalty to King, country and empire.

As early as 1879, Cuthbertson, in a poem simply titled ‘The Grammar’, had linked the strenuousness of the river with patriotic purpose, even to the point of sacrificing one’s life for Australia in the same way that one sacrificed individualism for the good of the crew:

\begin{quote}
Might, muscle, bone and courage – all
Are given to win the race.
Thus grows the manly vigour,
And thus the courage high -
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{70}ibid., vol. 9, no. 47, December 1901, p. 337; vol. 9, no. 51, December 1902, p. 451; no. 62, August 1906, pp. 25-6.
\textsuperscript{71}Collegiate School of St. Peter, Prospectus, 1914.
Figure 3.1. ‘The Football Tyranny’. Public school sport as antithetical to military training and national defence. (Source: Bulletin, 20 June 1912. Reprinted in John Barrett, Falling In, p. 150).
NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS
AUSTRALIA: "I'll ease up on cricket and footy, and curb my gee-gee mania, until such time as I have taught myself how to shoot straight."

Bulletin 5 January 1911

Figure 3.2. 'New Year Resolutions'. Sacrificing games in the interests of defence. (Source: Bulletin, 5 January 1911. Reprinted in John Barrett, Falling In, p. 71).
To live for thee, Australia,  
And if need be to die!\textsuperscript{2} 

In a poem titled ‘Vincet amor patrioe’ (love of native-land will conquer) which appeared in the \textit{Geelong Grammar School Quarterly} in April 1891, sport was similarly linked to military training and the sentiment of glorious sacrifice to the point of death:

March, March, sons of the river breast-  
Head of the river and head of the field,  
March, March, boys of the bonnie west -  
Steady and resolute, never to yield.

March, March, bolder and bolder, boys,  
Once that the face of the enemy’s seen,  
March, March, shoulder to shoulder, boys -  
On for your country, and on for your Queen.\textsuperscript{3}

Geelong Grammar, however, seems to have had a more constant militarist element in its character ideal, and other public schools were slower to make the equation of sport with militarism to quite the same extent.

The equation was eventually made at Wesley in the early years of the twentieth century. Dr Watkin stated at the 1908 speech day that ‘As they strove on the football field or the river, so it might be that in the near future they would have to fight for the motherland, their King, and the Commonwealth’, and that those who had taken part in school sports would be especially well-equipped to handle the challenges

\textsuperscript{2}ibid., no. 9, April 1879, p. 32
\textsuperscript{3}ibid., vol. 15, no. 1, April 1891, p. 16.
of war. In a metaphoric sense, the language of athleticism appears also to have become significantly more militarist. Encounters in the sporting arena were increasingly talked of in terms of ‘battles’ where sides tried to ‘conquer’ their opponents. A good example of this is a Wesley song by F. S. Williamson, a master at the school, titled ‘Before the Boat Race, 1907’:

There’s a tumult in the distance, and a war-song in the air,  
Where the foemen in their galleys for another fight prepare,  
For they whisper in the country, and they noise it in the town,  
That the Wesley colours from the mast will soon be taken down.

Chorus
Then it’s forward boys, to battle – hear the bugle’s thrilling tone –  
With the Royal Standard borne ahead, march on to hold your own,  
With the Lion proudly ramping as the ensign flutters free,  
Let the Lion keep the river, as the Lion keeps the sea.

Before 1900 sport had primarily meant fair play, loyalty, acceptance of victory and defeat, fortitude, discipline and obedience. It did not lose these meanings after 1900, but the meanings themselves were more allied to militarism, and sport thus increasingly came to mean preparing for war.

The enthusiasm for war that was developing around the turn of the century meant that the outbreak of the Boer War and the involvement of old boys were greeted with considerable enthusiasm and pride at all public schools. School

---

74Wesley College Chronicle, no. 119, October 1908, p. 5.
75Ibid., no. 115, October 1907, p. 3.
76Geelong Grammar School Quarterly, vol. 24, no. 1, April 1900, p. 1. The Quarterly remarked in 1900 that

It is not without a thrill of pride that we think of our old boys now for the first time in the fighting line, and we feel sure that the lessons of patriotism, of courage and endurance, learned in their
magazines published lists of those serving, letters from old boys at the front, and lengthy memorial notices for those who lost their lives.\textsuperscript{77} Their contribution was carefully memorialised after the war. A memorial tablet was unveiled at Sydney Grammar in December 1903 to the eleven old boys, described as ‘White Knights’, who had died in the war, and in September 1902 a tablet was unveiled a tablet to those St. Peter’s old boys who had fought in the war.\textsuperscript{78} At the unveiling the Lord Bishop, the Right Reverend Dr John Harmer, spoke of how the service of the old boys had proven Australia’s manhood:

Self-sacrifice, endurance, and courage in dangers, the future is bound to demand of us; but these were the first to join with our motherland in armed resistance to her enemy. The decadence of our race was in question. Our State and Commonwealth proved its manhood in righteous battle as now it welcomes the humane peace. These names stand on the old school walls, a record of duty done and a help to keep the names unstained in the larger battle of life.\textsuperscript{79}

In a taste of what was to be a major element in the public schools’ willingness to send old boys to the trenches in World War One, the sacrifice on the battlefield was held up as a vindication of public school training.

If there was some enthusiasm in the public schools about the contribution of old boys to the Boer War, it was insubstantial compared to the wave of patriotism that swept through the schools on the outbreak of World War One, including an almost

---

\textsuperscript{77}See \textit{ibid}, vol. 24, no. 4, December 1900, \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{78}Turney, \textit{Grammar}, p. 135; \textit{St. Peter’s School Magazine}, vol. 9, no. 50, September 1902, p. 427.

\textsuperscript{79}\textit{St. Peter’s School Magazine}, vol. 9, no. 50, September 1902, p. 428. See also \textit{Register}, 8 September 1902, p. 5; \textit{Advertiser}, 8 September 1902, p. 6.
pathetic eagerness to see their old boys showing the school flag on the slopes of Gallipoli or in the mud of the Western Front. The outbreak of World War One was greeted with something approaching joy at most of the public schools, where it was seen as providing an opportunity for the vindication of the national character, public school training, and the work of the school in emphasising loyalty to country and empire. Such sentiments shine through in Brown’s remarks about the response of old boys at the 1914 Geelong Grammar speech day:

The readiness with which men answer to the call made upon them in the time of the Empire’s need is the best test of the stuff they are made of and of the training they have received. The sense of duty and responsibility, the subordination of personal interest – that is the very essence of the Public School spirit, which now takes a wider range and manifests itself in devotion to the service of the country.80

Wesley College similarly glorified its old boys who enlisted. The *Wesley College Chronicle* in December 1914 published a poem titled ‘Young Chivalry’ by Alan Gross, an Old Wesley Collegian. Gross promised that Wesley boys would leap to the aid of the motherland by bringing ‘All that our lives can bear, our lips can sing’. Because of the training ‘through many a bloodless field and fray’, Gross maintained, Wesley boys knew ‘the code which governs war and play’.81 Just as they had fought for Wesley on the games field, so would they fight for Britain on the battlefield.

The boys who went to war were portrayed as torch-bearers for their school and for Australia. Thus in December 1914 Adamson gave a special farewell dinner to the boys going to the war, and stated that ‘The training of the Public School instils

---

80 *Corian*, vol. 38, no. 3, December 1914, pp. 10-12.
81 *Wesley College Chronicle*, no. 142, December 1914, p. 3.
devotion to a cause'. He also used the occasion to justify sports once more, which, he said, were merely a symbol of devotion to a greater cause: 'We begin with patriotism at home for things near and dear to us, and this grows into devotion to things which seem further off when we are young, but grow nearer as we grow older'. The Old Wesley Collegians Association got right behind the war effort and raised money for war-related causes, made all old boys on service honorary members for the duration of the war and one year following, and forwarded them copies of each issue of the Wesley College Chronicle, autographed menu cards from Founders' Day dinners, Christmas cards, and annual reports. Each day from 1915 to 1918 boys and masters drank a water toast to the sentiment 'Safe Return', and each year the last chapel service in Adamson Hall was made a memorial service for those who had fallen.

The reaction of Sydney Grammar was similar. Enthusiasm for cadets and rifle shooting immediately increased, though this later receded after 1915 as the war dragged on. The school raised £1,853 for various patriotic funds during the war and the Sydney published lists of all old boys serving, followed their fortunes closely, and claimed that the war service of old Sydneysians was 'a glorious vindication of all the School's work'. The St. Peter's School Magazine used similar methods to glorify its old boys, and seemed all too keen to have its first casualties to eulogise:

To read the English School Magazines gives us a pang of envy. Their lists of those who have died for their country are a source of sorrow, of course, but what pride! And we are waiting for our share of the sorrow that is inevitable. But what pride shall we feel, as Australians, and as men of a truly loyal school, when the news at last comes of their first action. Doubt we

---

82 Ibid., no. 142, December 1914, p. 5.
84 Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme, Wesley College, p. 132.
85 Turrey, Grammar, pp. 153-7; Sydney, no. 237, September 1918, p. 58.
have none! They will fight as they played – with their heart in the game, and the cry on their lips, ‘buck in Saints’.

Sacrifice and death were glorified in the Geelong Grammar School Quarterly when it reprinted a poem from London Punch, ‘Dulce et Decorum’, which concluded that it was ‘Magnificent to die!’ Serving one’s nation was glorious, but the most manly thing an old boy could do was give up his life for the cause.

Military service was promoted as an indicator of a fine, devoted and manly character which boys still at school should strive to emulate. At every morning assembly at Wesley College, boys said a prayer for their predecessors now at the front, using them as an example of how current boys should live:

We look to them for the strength that comes of purity; grant us the power to keep ourselves controlled and cleanly as we would have them be. We ask from them obedience to orders and self-discipline; grant us a sense of shame if we do not pay back to them in our daily lives what we demand from these our brothers who are risking all for us.

The Sydneian also used old boys who had joined up as manly models and as examples of the selfless devotion it argued was necessary for people to possess if the British Empire was to survive. ‘Let that [unselfishness] be our ideal here at the school, freely to make sacrifices for the good of the school’, the Sydneian implored, for ‘If we have learned that lesson at school, then our ideal in life will be to be useful, to serve our

---

*Sth. Peter’s School Magazine*, no. 87, December 1914, pp. 29-32; no. 88, May 1915, pp. 22-3.

Corian, vol. 40, no. 1, May 1916, p. 36.

Wesley College Chronicle, no. 143, May 1915, p. 31.
country.... If we do not learn that lesson, our Empire is doomed'. Military service was the highest of all manly callings, and the _Sydneman_ assumed that those boys who were too young to serve would feel 'chagrin and disappointment' at being denied the opportunity to reveal their 'manhood'.

The militarist ideology of the schools in the early twentieth century and the glorification of war service appear to have successfully encouraged patriotism linked with a strong willingness to serve, at least in the early years of the war. It was perhaps best expressed by J. D. Burns in his emotive poem 'For England':

O England! I heard the cry of those that died for thee,
   Sounding like an organ voice across the winter sea;
They lived and died for England, and gladly went their way,
   England! O England! How could _I_ stay?

Such patriotism and militarism meant that the public schools provided a disproportionately high number of soldiers and suffered a great number of casualties. A total of 420 old Geelong Grammarians served in the war, of whom eighty-seven died and 106 were wounded. Geelong Grammar boys enlisted in larger relative numbers than the population as a whole, and Brown concluded, after a study of the rolls, that fewer than forty of the boys who had passed through the school from 1908 to 1918 had not enlisted. In all, nearly five thousand old boys from the public schools of Victoria served in the war, of whom 756 were killed, along with many more from other states. 1,800 old Sydneians enlisted, many as soon as they left

---

89_Sydneman_, no. 125, September 1915, p. 1.
90_ ibid.,_ no. 232, June 1917, p. 34.
91_Scotch College, *Florculum Australe*: *An Anthology of Poems and Songs from* "_The Scotch Collegian_", Scotch College, Melbourne, 1919, pp. 6-10. Burns was at Scotch College from 1911 to 1914 where he distinguished himself both as a scholar and a sportsman. His poem, written in May 1915, preceded his death in the Dardanelles while serving with the AIF by just four months.
92_Brice, ‘Which Patriotism?’_, p. 11.
93_Corian_, vol. 45, no. 2, August 1920, pp. 9-21.
95_Wesley College Chronicle_, no. 158, May 1920, p. 13; D. T. Merrett, "The School at War": Scotch
school, and about 260 lost their lives. St. Peter's supplied 1,139 old boys for the war effort, 173 of whom perished.

Sport was carried on in the public schools during wartime, a continuation justified by the militarised meaning of athleticism. Outside of the public schools considerable tension existed between the competing demands of sport and war, and considerable pressure was brought to bear upon sportsmen to employ their physical talents for military purposes. Adamson railed against professional sport during the war years, which, unlike amateur sport, he considered was carried on for selfish motives. He suggested that professional football authorities were doing what patriotic Germans living in Victoria would do – paying men to play football rather than fight Germany. Far from being considered inappropriate, however, events such as the Head of the River contest were held up as an example of the role of public school sport in training boys for the defence of the country and empire and the *Argus* thus waxed lyrical about the Boat Race in 1916:

The war has claimed its thousands of young Australians, but from no source has the recruiting been so thorough as from the athletes of the public schools.... Statistics show that there is hardly a boy who has rowed in these races in the last ten years who is not now in khaki.... Public-school sport has proved its worth to the Empire in its crisis...every one of these boys is fitting himself for the greater game....

---


*Turney, Grammar*, pp. 156; *Sydneian*, no. 239, July 1919, p. 1.


War cries and cheers resounded everywhere, and when the racing and cheering are resumed tomorrow there will be the knowledge that we have assisted at a sport which...is making men for the nation fit to take their places in the army, prepared to give all, even their lives, for the sake of the land they love.\textsuperscript{100}

Although celebrated by the \textit{Argus} in the above passage, the use of ‘war cries’ was not approved of by the headmasters of the Victorian public schools and inter-school premiership contests were cancelled for the latter part of 1917 because of recent ‘regrettable incidents’.\textsuperscript{101} Hostile ‘war cries’ and incidences of brawling after the Scotch-Xavier football match for the 1917 premiership were considered unsporting and ‘playing at hate’ in a time of war when the brotherhood between the public schools should be at its most pronounced.\textsuperscript{102} Sport in the right spirit, however, continued to be advocated, and the contribution of public school old boys to the war effort was hailed as proof of its efficacy.\textsuperscript{103}

War weariness took its toll in Australia, and the rhetoric of devotion to one’s country, sacrifice, and battlefield glory appears to have fallen on increasingly critical ears.\textsuperscript{104} But because of the great losses they had suffered, public school

\textsuperscript{100}Quoted in \textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 146, May 1916, p. 32.


\textsuperscript{102}Meyer (ed.), \textit{Adamson of Wesley}, p. 181; \textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 151, December 1917, pp. 8-9. See also no. 149, May 1917, p. 19. At a meeting on 24 February the headmasters had decided to prohibit the use of ‘war cries’ at public sporting events. They agreed that if there were any ‘regrettable’ incidents such as the use of war cries or fighting between spectators, the remaining premiership contests would be cancelled. At a football match between Xavier and Scotch on 22 August and at a football match between Wesley and Melbourne Grammar on 24 August, war cries were used, so on 30 August the headmasters acted on their threat. See also Merrett, ""The School at War"", p. 216.

\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Wesley College Chronicle}, no. 150, August 1917, p. 27. The \textit{Chronicle}, for example, published the following verse in 1917:

\begin{center}
Now where are those people who once were predicting
Our downfall because of our fondness for sport?
They’ve surely concluded at last, from what’s happened,
That games as we play them are just the right sort.
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{104}See Lewis, \textit{Our War}, pp. 216, 321.
memorialisation was necessary both as a ritual mourning for the dead, and to provide a continued ideological justification for the enormous sacrifices the schools had asked for and received. The dead were thus glorified in costly and elaborate memorials and their heroism was held up as a shining example for future generations of boys to follow. The Old Geelong Grammarians opened a memorial fund for the fallen in 1917 and by August 1921 £9,404 had been raised for memorial cloisters and a monument. At a memorial service in 1919 Brown appealed to the legacy of the fallen, saying that they had set an example in selfless devotion to a greater cause which boys would do well to follow, and that it was the duty of those who lived to make up for the fine work the fallen would have done for Australia had they lived. At Wesley College it was decided early in the war that the names of the fallen should be inscribed on the stairway up which the senior boys walked each morning ‘so that they might be reminded daily of how these had realised the promise of boyhood’, while St. Peter’s College announced after the war that it was to build a memorial hall, at a cost of approximately £20,000.

At all the major public schools, there was little effort to renounce the militarist ideals that had dominated these schools in the pre-war years. The public schools, public school sport, Australian manliness and Australia itself were held to have proven themselves worthy by their sacrifice in the First World War, and the militarist ideology of manliness promoted by the schools could not easily be renounced. For many years after, therefore, the Australian public schools continued to hold up the sacrifices of the war as glorious rather than tragic, and evinced little of the post-war revulsion towards militarism that was so evident in English public schools.

The shift from godliness and good learning in the elite secondary schools of Australia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a radical change in educational ideals. Less noticeable because of the continued emphasis upon sports, but just as significant, was the shift in the early twentieth century from athleticism to militarism. In response to the perceived defence needs of Australia and the British Empire, the boy who was militarily capable and willing increasingly emerged as a model of manliness more powerful even than the athlete. Athleticism remained important, but its earlier goal of developing the qualities of peacetime citizenship were increasingly overshadowed by its alleged ability to develop the qualities of the soldier. Similar trends are evident in juvenile literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Public school stories, with a greater freedom from the pragmatic requirements of educational institutions, made a greater use of feminine and masculine signifiers, and went even further in conflating manliness and citizenship with the strength of the nation.
CHAPTER FOUR

‘Fine Specimens of Young Australia’: National and Religious Mythologies and the Public Schoolboy in Australian Juvenile Literature

Ideals of masculinity were constructed in the fictional world of Australian juvenile literature as well as in the world of the Australian public school. This chapter examines the figure of the public schoolboy in Australian juvenile literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, considering how the figure of the public schoolboy hero, a metaphor for the middle-class manly youth, changed and evolved in the stories of Robert Richardson, Mary Grant Bruce, Lillian Pyke, Ethel Turner and Eustace Boylan. Fictional images of the schoolboy hero were more flexible than the models constructed by headmasters and the ideologues of godliness and good learning, athleticism and militarism. Whereas headmasters and their subordinates were restricted to some degree by the need to provide at least a measure of scholastic training, and whereas they were limited by the demands of the commercial world and the limited authority of the school, writers of the fictional public schoolboy had more freedom in the representations they employed. Action could take place in or out of the school, learning could be paid as little or as much attention as the author thought desirable, and authors could manipulate factors such as boys’ home life and their lives after leaving school. If headmasters and ideologues were restrained by a necessary attention to realities, writers could roam freer and wider in formulating, challenging, contesting and reformulating the idealised figure of the public schoolboy.

Australia does not have an extensive tradition of public school literature to compare with the English public school genre which, from the publication of Tom Brown’s Schooldays in 1857 until well into the twentieth century, was both plentiful
and extremely popular. Given the smaller market in Australia, the smaller number of public schools, and lower prestige these schools generally enjoyed compared to their English counterparts, it is no surprise that the Australian literature of the same type is much less plentiful. But from Robert Richardson’s *The Boys of Springdale; Or, The Strength of Patience*, published in 1875, through to the stories of Mary Grant Bruce, Lillian Pyke, Ethel Turner and Eustace Boylan in the years surrounding the First World War, some twenty stories were published which used the public schoolboy as a figure on which writers could project middle-class ideals of manliness. The insights which can be drawn from these stories is greater if the focus is broadened a little, as it is in this chapter, to include stories which, although not public school stories in the strictest sense of the term, presented public schoolboys as major characters.

These texts are important for two main reasons. The first is that they are cultural products which can be read for the ideologies and beliefs which underlie them. They are, to paraphrase Clifford Geertz, stories the Australian middle classes told themselves about themselves, texts which can be read for the gender discourses and ideals which they constitute, embody and endeavour to impart. A. S. W. Rosenbach has suggested of children’s books that ‘more than any class of literature they reflect the minds of the generation that produced them. Hence no better guide to the history and development of any country can be found than in its juvenile literature’.¹ Juvenile literature serves as a window onto gender ideals, particularly if one accepts Brenda Niall’s argument that ‘because of the vigilance with which children’s books are monitored, they may reflect their society’s values with special clarity’.² Further, Claudia Nelson has argued that the primary purpose of Victorian children’s fiction in Britain was to instruct, especially in gendered behaviour.³ The


same appears to be true of Australian juvenile literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The literary constructions of manliness that this chapter examines are thus particularly transparent cultural forms which say with an especial clarity 'look, this is how things should be, this is the proper, ideal pattern of social life'.4

Children's stories can also be a socialising influence on those who read them. However, caution is called for here on three counts. First, British books probably dominated the reading of most Australian youngsters into at least the early twentieth century, partly because of the relative paucity of Australian material available, and also because of a strong Australian identification with the culture of the 'motherland'. H. M. Saxby has estimated that there were only about fifty children's books published in Australia prior to 1900, though there were others written by Australian authors and published overseas.5 The library holdings of St. Peter's College in Adelaide tend to suggest that adventure stories by authors such as Ellis, Henty, Scott and Stevenson were as popular in the Antipodes as in Britain, as were English public school stories, while literary nationalists frequently complained in the late nineteenth century that there was little demand for Australian literature.6 Secondly, readers do not absorb ideas uncritically. Martin Lyons and Lucy Taska have pointed out that texts are 'never absorbed without resistance', but are 'reworked and reimagined by the reader' according to his or her 'cultural capital'.7 Third, children often do not even get to

more important ideological force in the second half of the nineteenth century as religion progressively ceased to function as a 'social cement' naturalising social realities.


7Martin Lyons and Lucy Taska, Australian Readers Remember: An Oral History of Reading 1890-
choose what they read and, presumably, do not often make the purchase. The stories are thus a better guide to the ideals that teachers and parents thought that their pupils and children should be absorbing than to the ideals these children decided to adopt. They reflect the official ideology of manliness in a similar way to that in which educational strategies reflect the policies and beliefs of headmasters rather than the views of students.

And yet we should acknowledge that the literature must have had at least some hold over the children who read it. As Sally Mitchell has observed, ‘successful mass fiction must speak to the readers who consume it’. It is impossible to conceive how tens of thousands of Australian children could have read the stories of Bruce, Pyke and others without being at all influenced by the ideas presented to them in what were essentially prescriptive and pedagogical texts. These stories provided models which could be followed or rejected, hero figures and villains who may have been admired or scorned, and provided scripts or roles which readers could opt to enact, not enact, or modify. They mapped the imaginative space of gender in the same way that cartographers mapped the real geographical space of land and sea, providing routes which readers could follow, or which they might bypass, preferring to find their own path.

The first Australian public school stories were written by Robert Richardson (1850-1904). Born in Armidale, New South Wales, he is regarded as the first Australian-born children's novelist. Educated in the pre-Weigall era at Sydney.


Ibid., p. 86.


For a fuller discussion of the idea that writers of fiction map imaginative space, see Richard Phillips, Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure, Routledge, London, 1997, pp. 1-29. Phillips' focus is boys' adventure stories, but the same ideas apply equally well to literary constructions of the ideal public schoolboy.

Stella Lees and Pam Macintyre, The Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature, Oxford
Grammar School, from where he went on to graduate in Arts from the University of Sydney, Richardson appears to have been a devout man who devoted considerable effort to intellectual improvement. In the 1870s, for example, he used to meet with others, including future Prime Minister Edmund Barton and future New South Wales Premier George Reid, in a ‘Mutual Improvement Society’ in Sydney. In addition to writing poetry and articles for a number of papers and magazines, such as the Herald, the Sydney Mail, the Echo and the Catholic Press, he wrote some twenty books for children in the period between 1875 and 1893, often set in Australia despite the fact that he was living in London and Edinburgh for much of that period. His best-known stories are set in the Australian bush but his first five, published in rapid succession between 1875 and 1877, were all public school stories.

Richardson writes in an early-to-mid Victorian tradition which portrayed the godly world and the adult world as providing the models to which children should aspire, in tune with the initial priorities of the Australian public schools, but in direct contrast to the newer ideals of masculinity and athleticism which were rapidly emerging at the time. Gender ideals were not strictly differentiated between girls and boys, for both needed to learn to be godly, ‘obedient, courteous, self-disciplined, honest, sensible, and neither foolishly timid nor recklessly brave’, qualities which were typically associated with femininity. Masculinity was something identified

---

16ibid., p. 9.
with a certain beastliness, something which boys needed to grow out of if they were to achieve manliness, a state defined primarily by reference to feminine moral and religious virtues. The situation was exacerbated by the colonial context where it was feared that boys’ moral sense was declining, and that Australian boys would become, in Henry Kingsley’s words, ‘lanky, lean, pasty-faced, blaspheming blackguards, drinking rum before breakfast, and living by cheating one another out of horses’. Feminine religious piety and moral sense needed to be promoted over secular masculinity.

Richardson’s most likely public school story model was Thomas Hughes’ Tom Brown’s Schooldays (1857). The two authors appear to promote similar ideals, though Hughes’ story is much more complex and subtle than Richardson’s short and transparent works. Richardson’s boy hero figures certainly bear some resemblance to Hughes’ tender and effeminate George Arthur who, Claudia Nelson argues, leads Tom away from his false muscular manliness towards a more gentle and feminine ideal by the end of the story, when Tom has become a true manly figure, ‘a real man, gentle, pious, humble, obedient, disciplined and ready to cry on affecting occasions’.

Richardson’s attempts to show the folly of muscularity and boy culture, and to instead praise moral and feminine virtue, godliness and adulthood, translate into five very similar narratives. In all of his school stories one character is excluded from the favour of the dominant group of boys within the school, this group generally comprising the boys who are best at sport, the wealthy, the wags, and often the school captain. However, in acts which involve a blend of forgiveness, courage, self-sacrifice and humility, the ostracised turn out to be the real heroes. The villainous boys, in the manner of Tom Brown, reach moral enlightenment through the example set before

---

17 On the identification of such qualities as belonging to the feminine sphere, see, for example, Schaffer, Women and the Bush, p. 31. See also Pascoe, Relations of Rescue, p. xv.
18 Quoted in White, Inventing Australia, p. 68.
them. All ends in happy reconciliation and the morally superior character, through various devices, usually receives some reward for his goodness.

In *The Boys of Springdale* Steven Kent is ostracised by the other boys for refusing to contribute his share to the purchase of a much-needed new cricket ball. He is labelled ‘Stingy Steve’ and the boys resolve to ‘break off all friendship with Steven for the rest of the half-year’.20 Steven feels unable to reveal to his school fellows that he needs the money to buy a gift for Philip Hay, a poor boy whom Steven has befriended and who lives with his widowed mother. Philip has been bed-ridden for months with a broken leg. When Tommy Trent, Steven’s main persecutor, is himself injured and sofa-ridden after a tree-climbing fall, Steven is kind and forgiving, forcing Tommy to re-assess his character. Steven’s good deeds with regard to Philip Hay are revealed to his classmates by the headmaster of Springdale, his former tormentors repent, and they contribute money towards sending Philip Hay to the seaside for a holiday so that he can recover more quickly, which he duly does.

Like Steven Kent, Philip Freeling is marginalised by the other boys in *The Cold Shoulder*, on this occasion because of his shabby appearance, his poverty, his refusal to fight, and his accidental undermining of a class ruse designed to allow the boys to escape doing their homework. His academic prowess is also the cause of some resentment, partly because it sees him threaten to displace the head of the school from his position, determined as it is by proficiency in classics. Reconciliation comes after Philip acts quickly and bravely to save George, one of the boys who has been making fun of him, after the latter has been bitten by a snake. According to the doctor who treats George, ‘Freeling’s whole conduct in the matter showed a self-possession and a quiet sort of courage of a first-rate kind, quite remarkable for a lad of his years’.21 The other boys realise their error in thinking Philip ‘a cur and a milksop’, now

20Richardson, *The Boys of Springdale*, p. 9.
appreciating that he has ‘got pluck enough, and of the right sort’. The boys are all reconciled and Philip leaves the school in triumph.

The storyline is essentially repeated in A Perilous Errand; Or, How Walter Harvey Proved His Courage. Walter Harvey is the ostracised character, scorned for his effeminacy, his morality, and his lack of any ability at sporting pursuits, being ‘little better than a muff’ at shooting and at cricket, a game, we are told, ‘that every urchin in Australia learns from the time he can first hold a bat a foot long’. Revelation of Walter’s true character comes when he displays great courage in riding through a storm in a valiant attempt to obtain much-needed medicine, again for his main persecutor, Will Bayliss, an heroic deed for which Walter earns the admiration of his schoolfellows.

The main variation in Our Junior Mathematical Master and The Boys of Willoughby School is that the ostracised figures are masters rather than boys. In the former, Thomas Christian Pottle upsets the boys by not joining in their games, by refusing to volunteer a subscription to the boys’ cricket club in the manner of most masters, and by allegedly telling the headmaster of a misdemeanour committed by the boys. In the latter, Monsieur Flavelle, the new French master, earns the ire of the boys by reporting what they consider a harmless joke (substituting coffee and black pepper for the snuff in Flavelle’s snuff box) to the headmaster, for which the boys receive a considerable punishment. Pottle’s selflessness is revealed when the boys discover that his financial thrift is the result of his providing financial support for his lamed younger brother, Ernest (with whom the boys become good friends), and it also becomes apparent that Pottle was not the one to inform the headmaster of the earlier wrongdoing of the boys. In Flavelle’s case, the boys’ opinion of him is transformed after Flavelle rescues the drowning Tom, who has gone swimming in Sydney Harbour against the headmaster’s express instructions.

\(^{22}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 111-12.\)
\(^{23}\textit{Richardson, A Perilous Errand}, pp. 58-9.\)
Richardson’s storylines all convey essentially the same message. His main concerns are to endorse adult authority over boyish independence, feminine gentleness over masculine ruggedness, and godliness over secularity. He endeavours to show the folly of judging people by what he fears are the usual criteria employed by boys; those of physical appearance, physique, dress, wealth, and proficiency in sport, for example. Moral worth, he wants his readers to learn, runs deeper than such superficial attributes, and is to be found particularly in religious piety, in the chivalric ideal of living for others, in being selfless and giving, and in sticking to one’s principles in the face of adversity.

These beliefs and ideals are clearly projected onto the hero figures of Richardson’s stories. Godliness, for example, is a defining feature of the heroic boys. In *The Boys of Springdale* one of Steven’s refuges from the hostility of his fellows is reading the Old Testament with Philip Hay and his mother, while in *The Cold Shoulder* Philip Freeling is advised by his mother to look for solace in the Almighty: ‘Try to feel that God is near you always in your everyday life, that He is really your Father, and fear nothing but what would pain Him’. In *A Perilous Errand* it is stated that Mr Cecil, the headmaster, ‘had a very strong desire that nothing should be left undone on his side to prepare us to be honest, truthful, God-reverencing and God-loving men’, while it is surely no coincidence that in both *The Boys of Springdale* and *Our Junior Mathematical Master* the middle name of the main character is ‘Christian’. The characters are also Christ-like in their acceptance of their persecution, and in the saviour role they play to those who would persecute them.

Richardson’s stories are also a vindication of adulthood. The teachers who are ostracised by the boys turn out to be heroes, while adults invariably play a major part in putting matters to rights after the damage done by the boys. The patronage of

---

24 Richardson, *The Cold Shoulder*, p. 60.
wealthy fathers, for example, is frequently used as a reward for the heroes, while the headmasters, usually English, are kind, generous, wise and understanding. Youth, in contrast, usually means folly, and one notable characteristic of the hero figures is how adult-like they are.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the heroes is their effeminacy. Decrying a rugged manliness which elevated muscles over morality, Richardson consciously constructs his boy heroes in feminine terms. Philip Freeling and Steven Kent are both gentle and sensitive boys, but perhaps the most telling depiction is that of Walter Harvey, hero of A Perilous Errand. Walter is described as

a boy with bright blue eyes, a smooth red and white complexion, that many a young lady would have envied, and that was almost too fine for a boy, and brown curly hair. He was stoutish, but this did not make him look any stronger, for it was a rather soft and flabby kind of stoutness. In fact, he did not look a strong boy, – neither sturdy nor wiry, but soft and loosely knit...his face...had a kind of sweetness in it that one sees more in girls’ faces than boys’. Yet it hadn’t an unmanly look either, though it might have struck a hasty observer that he leaned that way.26

Walter also possesses the feminine qualities of being ‘frank, sweet tempered, and above all affectionate’, while he, like Steven Kent and Philip Freeling, is also isolated from the typical boyish pursuits of fighting and playing games.27 Walter and Philip are further feminised by being the sons of widows, thus lacking masculine socialisation. We are not told whether or not Steven Kent has a living father, but boy he has been

26ibid., pp. 55-6.
27ibid., p. 57.
endeavouring to help, Philip Hay, is the son of a widow, and it is in the feminine environment of this house that Steven finds solace in reading the Old Testament with a woman and her son. Philip Hay, Ernest Pottle and Philip Freeling are all also emasculated by physical injuries or lameness which prevent them from taking part in masculine physical activities.

The moral sense of the heroes is identified as feminine, both in its nature and its source. Mothers provide moral direction, particularly in matters of religion, though this can also be supplied by adult male figures, such as headmasters, who have presumably already shed the false manliness of boyhood and reached a higher level of moral and spiritual maturity. Claudia Nelson has suggested that while femaleness and womanliness were usually seen by Victorian commentators as essentially the same thing, manliness had to struggle to overcome maleness.26 This is clearly evident in Richardson’s stories where the women are highly developed morally, but where the boys have to struggle to overcome their natural predisposition towards a bestial brand of masculinity to instead appreciate and take on essentially feminine qualities of godliness, tolerance, humility and forgiveness.

If masculinity and femininity can be thought of as a polarity, Richardson locates his ideal of manliness much closer to the feminine end of the spectrum than the masculine. His manly characters are of the Thomas Arnold variety and reflect the mid-Victorian priorities of his own education. Civilisation in Australia was to be preserved and furthered through the triumph of feminine and religious qualities over secular and masculine values. Although Richardson sets his novels in Sydney, it is clearly the responsibility of boys educated in institutions of English inspiration under English headmasters to ‘make’ Australia. English culture tends to dominate over Australian, for manliness is an essentially English attribute which is to be delivered to and cultivated in a potentially barbaric Australia. However, Richardson’s formulations

of manliness are in no way nationalist. In contrast with later authors, Richardson uses the Christian world and the community of God as the paradigms within which manliness must be formulated. And, despite the active discrimination against women within the church, Richardson’s godly world is one of feminine qualities.

Accordingly, Richardson feminises his heroes and masculinises his villains. In the religious discourse of asceticism, within which Richardson wrote, masculinity was identified with secular barbarism, so in Richardson’s gendered dichotomies it is the muscular games-playing boys who provide the villains. Will Bayliss, for example, Walter Harvey’s chief persecutor, is described as ‘a strong, sturdy fellow, with a frame like well-seasoned oak-wood, and muscles like whip-cord’.29 The sports that these boys play are shown to be of little benefit to them morally. Sport, in fact, is frequently the site of conflict between masculine and feminine. It is over the purchase of a cricket ball that Steven Kent clashes with his fellows, Philip Freeling is teased partly for his lack of classical form when batting, and Walter Harvey arouses the ire of Will Bayliss by reprimanding him for swearing after Will has been dismissed and lost a close game of cricket. On the occasions where sporting ability is shown to be of any substantial benefit (such as in Walter’s courageous but unsuccessful ride for medicine for the desperately sick Will, and Flavelle’s life-saving swim) the athletic ability is good only because it is a means for the performance of moral deeds of self-sacrifice, bravery and forgiveness. Muscles can be useful in the execution of moral deeds, but muscles without morality are of little or no worth. This represents an important distinction between athleticism on one hand and ideals of Christian manliness on the other.

There was a break of nearly thirty-five years before more books appeared which included depictions of the Australian public schoolboy, but the 1910s saw a flurry of juvenile literature in which public schoolboys were central characters. Mary

29Richardson, A Perilous Errand, pp. 63-4.
Grant Bruce wrote six of her Billabong stories before the end of the decade, and two stories about Dick Lester, who goes to school in Melbourne after growing up on a station at Kurrajong. 30 Pyke wrote three of her four public school stories in the 1910s, these being Max the Sport (1916), Jack of St. Virgil’s (1917) and A Prince at School (1919). 31 In The Cub (1915), Captain Cub (1917) and Brigid and the Cub (1919) Turner wrote of an anti-hero, John Calthrop, transformed into a hero by the war, while Boylan, a Jesuit priest and teacher at Xavier College, Melbourne, attempted to fuse religion with the more muscular and secular ideals coming to predominate in most schools in his The Heart of the School (1919).

It is difficult to assess exactly why there should be such a gap after Richardson’s stories, and then such a flurry of public school stories in the 1910s, but there were probably three main reasons. The first is the rising profile of the public schools, evident in their growing number, burgeoning enrolments, and increasing public interest in events such as the Head of the River races, other public school sporting contests, and non-sporting ceremonies such as speech days. The second is the general rise in the demand for and production of Australian nationalist literature. Until the 1890s English public school stories were probably of as much, if not more, interest to Australian readers as Australian ones. This was less likely to be the case after about 1900 when there was a much greater nationalist component to Australian literature. Thirdly, the war, and in particular the Anzac experience, created legends about Australian masculinity which public school story authors could both further and exploit.

30 The Billabong books published in the 1910s were A Little Bush Maid (1910), Mates at Billabong (1911), Norah of Billabong (1913), From Billabong to London (1915), Jim and Wally (1916) and Captain Jim (1919). Bruce also wrote a number of other non-Billabong stories in this decade, the two which concern me most here being Dick (1918) and Dick Lester of Kurrajong (1920).

31 These titles were all also published by Ward, Lock and Co. Pyke’s fourth public school story for boys, The Best School of All (1921) explores similar themes to her earlier three, but is disregarded here as it just falls outside the time period of this study.
Bruce and Pyke produced the dominant literary themes and images of public school manliness in the 1910s. Bruce enjoyed vast popularity which saw her Billabong books generally sell in excess of twenty thousand copies each, while her non-Billabong books usually sold about half that number.32 Pyke, meanwhile, attempted faithfully to reflect the ideologies of the public schools, particularly Wesley College where her son, Lawrence, was later a pupil. Pyke had come to know and form a life-long friendship with Adamson when she was a student at University High School during Adamson’s brief tenure as University High’s headmaster.33 She appears to have absorbed Adamson’s thinking about the educational role of the public school and to have developed a great admiration for him. Her second public school story, *Jack of St. Virgil’s*, was even dedicated to Adamson, with the inscription:

To Mr L. A. Adamson, M. A., Head Master, Wesley College, Melbourne, to whose teaching I am indebted for whatever understanding of “the public school spirit” I may have acquired, and whose kindly assistance and influence have enabled me to keep in touch with school life.34

The headmaster of St. Virgil’s is known as ‘The Chief’, a term also used to describe Adamson, while St. Virgil’s is a thinly disguised Wesley College, with the colours of royal blue and gold as opposed to the Wesley’s actual colours of purple and gold. The story includes Wesley’s ‘leaving song’ and St. Virgil’s contests sporting premierships against the other five Victorian public schools; St. Andrew’s (based upon Scotch College), St. Joseph’s (Xavier College), Victorian Grammar (Melbourne Grammar), Western District Grammar (Geelong Grammar) and Mervale College (Geelong

32Niall, *Australia Through the Looking-Glass*, p. 126. To 1927 *Mates at Billabong* (1911) had sold 22,127 copies, and *North of Billabong* (1913) 21,539 copies.
33Age 1 September 1927, p. 9; *Argus*, 1 September 1927, p. 14. Adamson left Wesley at the end of 1898 for four years, becoming headmaster of University High School before returning to Wesley as headmaster in 1902.
Pyke's stories are also the closest thing we have in the early twentieth century to a secular public school story. The action is more school-bound than in the stories of Bruce and Turner, and her stories reflect the ideals of the dominant and relatively secular public school establishment more so than Boylan's religious *The Heart of the School*.

In their constructions of the Australian public schoolboy, Bruce and Pyke effectively overturn the gender hierarchies promoted by Richardson to produce boys who are meant to be seen as distinctively Australian and who serve national needs, rather than producing Christian boys oriented towards the Kingdom of God. Masculinity dominates over femininity, muscles and masculinity over brains and spirituality, and childhood over adulthood. Richardson's heroes are effeminate, studious, religious and gentle; Pyke's and Bruce's are muscular, active, nationalist, not especially studious, unconcerned with religion, often somewhat rough, and reflect developments in schools such as Wesley and Geelong Grammar. Such heroes were more appropriate to the cultural environment of the 1910s and reflect the changing concerns, hopes and fears of middle-class pedagogy, as well as mirroring the altered educational ideals of public schools such as Wesley College and Geelong Grammar. The boys are certainly not devoid of moral sense, and are often contrasted with muscular bullies. But the ideal of manliness is a masculine attribute taught by fathers, not a feminine one taught by mothers. Effeminate boys would suggest, to Pyke and Bruce, over-civilisation, degeneration and helplessness. Their emphasis is thus heavily upon the type of boys who will fight for their country and the empire against external enemies, and who will also fight to overcome the various threats posed by the Australian wilderness, ranging from snakes to bush fires. To create such boys Bruce and Pyke appeal to Australian mythologies such as mateship and the redemptive influence of the bush. In both what they write and how they write, Australian-ness is central.

---

The appeal of such mythologies for Bruce can be traced to her background. She was born in Sale in 1878 and, like Norah, her main character in the Billabong stories, was something of a tomboy as a youngster.\textsuperscript{36} She loathed domestic chores and girls' games, and preferred instead to join in boys' games and read \textit{The Boys' Own Paper}.\textsuperscript{37} She moved to Melbourne in 1898 to develop her skills as a writer and was soon writing children's stories for the \textit{Leader} newspaper. Her first book, \textit{A Little Bush Maid}, was published in 1910. She travelled to England and Ireland in 1913 where she met her cousin, Major George Bruce, whom she married in 1914. They spent most of the war in England before returning to Australia, where she continued to live and write for many years afterwards, finally dying in 1958.\textsuperscript{38} In all she produced thirty-eight novels.\textsuperscript{39} Her most popular stories were the Billabong novels, set on a remote sheep and cattle station which was modelled upon her grandfather's cattle station in the La Trobe Valley, where she frequently spent her childhood holidays.\textsuperscript{40} Read by both boys and girls, these stories appealed to adults as well, whose moral approval of the stories is evident in their widespread use as Sunday school prizes, their holdings in school libraries, and their being given 'by the thousand' as Christmas and birthday presents.\textsuperscript{41}

In the Billabong stories Bruce recounts the adventures of Norah Linton, her brother Jim, Jim's friend Wally Meadows who is adopted by the Lintons, and the widowed David Linton, father of Norah and Jim. Various other characters are introduced in the different stories to add variety and interest, and there is a collection of hands about Billabong, but these four supply the main and constant personalities.

\textsuperscript{36}Alison Alexander, \textit{Billabong’s Author: The Life of Mary Grant Bruce}. Angus and Robertson, Sydney. 1979, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., pp. 9-11; Brenda Niall, \textit{Seven Little Billabongs: The World of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce}. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979, p. 38. See also Bruce, ‘How I Became a Writer’. \textit{Woman’s World}, 1 July 1924, p. 402.
\textsuperscript{38}Alexander, \textit{Billabong’s Author}, passim.
\textsuperscript{39}Niall, \textit{Australia Through the Looking-Glass}, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., p. 117.
\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., pp. 129-30.
Jim and Wally complete their schooling at Melbourne Grammar where they are good sportsmen and popular with both masters and boys, and the whole family head off to England so that Jim and Wally can join the British Army, where they predictably perform with distinction before returning to Billabong. (See Figure 4.1). Although in their early twenties when the war ends, Jim and Wally never really grow up, and always remain boyish in their good humour and love of adventure.

Bruce wrote another two stories about the school and bush adventures of a young boy, *Dick* (1918) and *Dick Lester of Kurrajong* (1920). Dick reluctantly heads off to school in accordance with written instructions from his absent father, where he learns to play sport and protects a weaker boy from school bullies. Dick sails with his mother to Fremantle (during the voyage he saves a young boy who has fallen overboard) to meet the returning father. After misadventures on a Western Australian station which leave him paralysed, Dick is invalided home to Melbourne where he is miraculously cured by a new surgical technique.

Bruce's public schoolboy constructions are notable for the fashion in which she combines the myths of the Australian bush with the ethos of an urban middle-class schooling to produce quintessentially Australian versions of boys educated in institutions which were English in their inspiration. (See Figure 4.2). Lillian Pyke uses a similar technique, but much more of her public school literature is concerned with faithfully reproducing in fiction the public school ideals she so admired. Pyke was born in a country town in Victoria in 1881, and after her marriage to Richard D. Pyke, spent time on railway construction camps in Queensland where she gathered material for her story, *Camp Kiddies* (1919). She wrote to support herself after the early death of her husband, and although she wrote a number of stories for adults under the name of Erica Maxwell, her specialty was children's literature, and in particular, school stories. In addition to her four school stories for boys, she also wrote five school stories for girls. Her output was quite staggering, and she might well have
Figure 4.1. ‘Jim Linton sat on a small box outside his dugout...’ The public schoolboy becomes soldier – Jim and Wally in the trenches of the Western Front. (Source: Mary Grant Bruce, Jim and Wally, p. 16).
Figure 4.2. ‘All his being centred in the effort to get rid of the weight on his back’. Middle-class schooling combined with the Australian bush legend – Jim Linton on Billabong station. (Source: Mary Grant Bruce: *Mates at Billabong*, p. 98).
out-produced both Bruce and Turner but for a comparatively early death in 1927 at the age of forty-six.\footnote{Lees and Macintyre, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Children’s Literature*, pp. 353-4.}

Although her heroes are certainly not school-bound, school does loom much larger in Pyke’s stories than Bruce’s. Max Charlton, the hero of *Max the Sport*, wins a scholarship to St. Virgil’s where he, along with the reader, is informed of the public school ideology by the headmaster, Mr. Thompson:

“The great lesson that you have to learn here and elsewhere is that of unselfishness, of sinking your private ends in the public good. To that ideal all our school patriotism is devoted... The greatest chance that is given to you boys is to ‘play the game’, not only in the sporting world, but in the ordinary routine of school-life.”\footnote{Lillian Pyke, *Max the Sport*, Ward, Lock and Co., Melbourne, 1916, pp. 67-8.}

Max becomes the school’s champion athlete, survives several moral crises with little difficulty, becomes senior prefect, and wins an exhibition to the University of Melbourne. (See Figure 4.3). When war breaks out he joins the Australian Imperial Force as a doctor, serving bravely and being recommended for a Victoria Cross.

*Jack of St. Virgil’s* centres around the adventures of Jack Brown, a boy who grows up in the country with his foster parents before winning a scholarship to board at St. Virgil’s. Jack participates enthusiastically in the life of the school, passes successfully through an adolescent sexuality crisis and performs the almost mandatory saving of a girl’s life. Jack chances to discover his real parents, his father turning out to be Captain Romaine, an old boy of the school wounded in the Great War whom Jack had already decided to adopt as a hero figure before he knew of their true
Figure 4.3. Max as senior prefect. (Source: Lillian Pyke, *Max the Sport*, cover illustration).
relationship. Unusually for stories of the war period, Jack does not participate in the war effort as he is too young. The ethic of war service, however, comes indirectly through his father and through the efforts of some of the older boys at the school. Fergus McLeod, for example, is the school’s captain, a member of the rowing eight and a model public schoolboy. He is placed in a dilemma shortly before the Head of the River race because he is required at home if his brother is to be able to depart for the war, and his departure would severely diminish the chances of the St. Virgil’s rowing crew. But the games committee of St. Virgil’s endorses Fergus’ inclination to head home, letting the crew down for the greater good. Important as sport is, it is to be subsumed to the war effort, and the games committee recognise that ‘St. Virgil’s would not be true to its traditions if by any act of theirs’ they deprived their country of one man who was fit to go to the front’. There are also tributes in the main hall to those who have volunteered for the war effort, described in such a way as to indicate that the school’s devotion to sport and the war are linked, but that the war is to be considered more important.

Similar themes are explored in A Prince at School. The headmaster of Whitefield College, Francis Lester, is appointed guardian of two children; Lola and Arnold West, aged twenty and sixteen respectively, who have been based on Vilatonga Island in the South Pacific. Andi, a Vilatongan prince whose throne has

\[\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 126. Captain Romaine proclaims that the war has proven the utility of a public school education in a speech which could have been lifted directly out of the Wesley College Chronicle. so closely does it resemble the official line of Adamson:}

\begin{quote}
  The true test as to whether a public school education is better than any other is to look at the citizens it turns out...whether they are of use to the world and capable of sacrificing themselves for others....
  [T]he rallying of the Public School boys to the banner of freedom and their conduct on the battlefield has been sufficient answer to any carping critics.
\end{quote}

\[\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 166. The problem is exacerbated because Fergus’ brother does not really want to go to war and will leap at any chance to get out of it. Fergus tries to keep this aspect of the matter quiet as ‘one doesn’t want all the chaps to know one’s brother is a bit of a rotter’.

\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 121. It was a feature of the sports described by Pyke and Bruce that they were given increasingly militaristic meanings, as they were in the non-fictional public schools.

\text{We are told that Whitefield College is not a public school, but it might as well be. There is nothing in the story to distinguish it from Pyke’s St. Virgil’s, and the school rejoices in the public school ethos. As the author states: ‘Whitefield College had its traditions and history, and was regarded as unequalled

\text{}}
\]
been usurped by rivals supported by German interests, joins them on the journey to
Australia and is permitted to study as a boarder at Whitefield College. He overcomes
racism and performs heroically in school sports, but is kidnapped, along with Lola, by
German agents and taken to Vilatonga where the Germans hope to install him as a
puppet ruler. After a battle between the Germans and the British, the captives escape,
Lola marries Francis Lester, and Andi persuades the Vilatongans to declare for
Britain. By story’s end ‘Vilatonga was fairly in the way of becoming a loyal British
possession’. 48

Perhaps the most obvious difference between Richardson’s hero figures and
those of Bruce and Pyke lies in their physiques. Whereas Richardson’s boys are
invariably weak and delicate, Jim Linton is ‘lean and broad-shouldered, with...well-
cut features and keen eyes’. 49 He is also described as ‘a huge boy, well over six feet,
broad-shouldered and powerful’, in which he clearly takes after his father, David
Linton, who is ‘a mighty figure of a man’. 50 Wally, while not quite so strong, is
‘tall...lean and quick and active’. 51 Such physical descriptions are repeated ad
nauseam throughout the Billabong books. Dick Lester is somewhat younger and thus
less impressive physically than the Billabong boys, but clearly is of the same ilk and
far removed from Richardson’s figures:

tall for his age, and straight and supple; his skin tanned
a deep clear brown to the very edge of his sailor collar,
and on the muscular hands and knees that had never
been covered from the sun. His hat had been flung

---

48 Ibid., p. 252. Bernstein, the German agent, nearly forces Lola to marry him. He represents a sexual
threat to her, a prospect of defilement of the pure white Australian girl by the German, in the same way
Germany threatens to defile Vilatonga. Francis Lester’s marriage to Lola allows him to possess her in
the same way Great Britain is eventually able to possess Vilatonga.


50 Bruce, Jim and Wally, Angus and Robertson, Pymble NSW, 1992 (Ward, Lock and Co., Melbourne,
1916), p. 64; Bruce, From Billabong to London, Angus and Robertson, Pymble NSW, 1992 (Ward,

51 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
aside, and his closely-cropped head was bare, the crisp wave of his hair showing only a hint of the curls he had hated. No beauty was Dick: only an ordinary, healthy, tanned young Australian. But there was something about him to bring a leap of pride to the heart of any mother.\textsuperscript{52}

Pyke’s heroes are also very muscular and healthy, Max being ‘broad of shoulder and deep of chest’, having a face ‘well browned from exposure to the sun and wind’ and a square chin which shows ‘a determined, not to say obstinate, nature’.\textsuperscript{53} The frequency and detail of such descriptions make it clear that a powerful physique, a deep tan and lively eyes were an important part of the manly ideal and reflect the concern of Bruce and Pyke to counter any lingering fears about the physical decline of the Australian race.

The bodies these boys possess partly result from, and also enable, heroic and courageous performances on the sports field. Max performs heroic deeds for St. Virgil’s as captain of the first eighteen football team, stroke of the victorious rowing eight, and member of the premiership cricket team. He is also champion athlete of the school. Jim Linton is similarly an outstanding sportsman, being ‘captain of the football team, stroke of the eight, and best all-round athlete’, for which he is ‘worshipped by the boys’.\textsuperscript{54} Wally Meadows, Dick Lester, Jack Brown and Andi, and other admirable characters, also display proficiency and courage at sport. Sport thus serves as a site for and developer of manly behaviour, a place where the heroes reveal their courage and character, be it actually on the sports field or in more loosely associated ways, such as Max’s summary treatment of a bookmaker who attempts to bribe him into rowing ‘stiff’ or withdrawing from the Head of the River race.\textsuperscript{55} The


\textsuperscript{53}Pyke, \textit{Max the Sport}, p. 219.

\textsuperscript{54}Bruce, \textit{Mates at Billabong}, Ward, Lock and Co., Melbourne. 1911. p. 16.

\textsuperscript{55}See Pyke, \textit{Max the Sport}, pp. 157-8. Pyke uses the instance to expound strongly-held opinions against
physical power and courage which the boys learn on the games field also helps them perform heroic rescues away from their schools and in arenas other than sport, such as Jack’s rescue of Russell Howard (who is trapped up a tree) or the numerous rescues of children (usually girls) from the perils of fire, water, Aborigines and wild animals which appear in most of the narratives. (See Figure 4.4). Powerful physiques and sporting prowess are thus identified with heroism in the stories of Pyke and Bruce, whereas they are identified with villainy in Richardson’s.

Muscles and courage are also used for fighting, a frequent activity and a departure from Richardson, which indicates a much greater tolerance of violence in the manly ideal. Contests of muscle and power, as long as the fight is fair, are considered a legitimate means of solving disputes. Steven Kent, Walter Harvey and Philip Freeling are not the sort of boys who would wish to fight even if they had the ability, but later heroes are not averse to using their fists and generally do so in a very capable manner. Max, as well as dealing out summary justice to a bookmaker, fights and beats Johnnie, a ‘rat-faced though wiry boy’ who insults Max’s mother, the fight being supervised by a master to ensure fairness. Jack also fights his enemies, while Arnold fights racially abusive boys on Andi’s behalf in A Prince at School. But perhaps the most enthusiastic endorsement of fighting as part of the schoolboy code comes from Bruce in her stories about Dick Lester. Dick hopes that he won’t get knocked down too often as a new boy at school, and discusses the matter with his mother:

money in sport:

There is in Australian sport a very undesirable intruder who is not content with appearing at horse races and the like, but must needs poke his nose into branches where his presence is all against the interests of amateur sport, and that is the professional punter.

Max’s summary treatment of the punter, in plunging his head into a nearby horse trough, is given the author’s tacit approval.

*ibid.*, p. 39. Any unfair fighting would no doubt have come from Johnnie rather than Max.
Figure 4.4. "Don’t talk," Max said shortly. "Keep your breath for breathing." Max as saviour of a young woman. (Source: Lilian Pyke, *Max the Sport*, p. 105).
“Oh, if I am, I expect I’ll get up again.... It’s a good thing Father’s taught me a little about my fists.”

“Father had school in mind all the time he was teaching you,” said his mother. “It’s a great help for a boy to know how to use his hands when he goes to school.... I don’t want you to fight more than you need: but when you do, I want you – oh tremendously – to win!”

Problems and difficulties which Richardson’s boys would have managed through a mixture of patience, humility and prayer can be more effectively sorted out in later stories through the judicious use of one’s fists, illustrating that physicality, muscularity and courage are more suitable means to conflict resolution than moral force.

Physicality and readiness to fight are given their greatest opportunities for expression in militarism, again suggesting that masculine qualities need development for the good of the nation. There is no mention whatsoever of militarist sentiment in Richardson’s novels, and little in the pre-war novels of Bruce, though we do know that Jim excelled as a member of his school’s cadet corps. But in the novels written in the 1914-1918 period war is central as Bruce and Pyke obviously felt the need to urge upon readers ideals of manliness and good citizenship which revolved around national and imperial loyalty supported by military capability and enthusiasm.

There is never much question that the heroes will bravely play their part in the war. There is, however, little glorying in the arrival of the conflict – Max considers it a ‘terrible thing’ that the ‘dogs of war’ have been unleashed, while Jim and Wally can hardly be described as ‘spoiling for a fight’. The war comes as a disruption to the

---

normal and healthy patterns of school and station life, but our heroes have little doubt where their moral obligations lie in defending the women and children of ‘brave little Belgium’ from the menace of the Kaiser and his men. As Pyke puts it,

It was as if the big bully, in his desire to get at a declared enemy, should say to an onlooker, “Now you stand on one side while I knock this little chap down who stands between me and Bill....”

What college boy with sporting blood in his veins would listen for a moment to such reasoning? What “sport” that had played for the honour of the school could hear such sophistry without doubling up his fist and striking the bully? What use all the talk about “playing the game” if it only applied to small things of life and not the nation’s body politic?59

Jim Linton, despite his father’s wish that he remain on the station, similarly feels duty-bound to play his part: “It seems to me that any fellow who can be...useful...and who isn’t really tied, has no right to stay behind.... I’ve got to do the square thing”.60 His sense of moral obligation results partly from the dastardly deeds of the German invaders, a reflection of the propaganda hysteria at the start of the war about alleged German atrocities in Belgium. “Fighting men is all very well”, considers Jim, but German atrocities towards ‘women and kids...makes one feel one simply has to go’.61 Naturally, Jim Wally and Max all do the ‘square thing’ in volunteering, and perform with distinction.

59ibid., p. 235.
60Bruce, From Billabong to London, p. 19.
61ibid., p. 20.
Richardson would have agreed that the athleticism, powerful physiques, and willingness to fight of the hero figures drawn by Pyke and Bruce were masculine qualities. Bruce and Pyke do not alter the gender identification of games, fist-fights, war and masculinity. Instead, they locate the ideal of manliness more towards the masculine than the feminine, thus identifying these qualities as positive, predominantly because they serve the perceived national interest. Moral qualities are also positive – masculinity must be applied in a positive way, and there are plenty of examples of misapplied masculine qualities in the form of school bullies and German soldiers. Boys must always ‘go straight’ and there is a high premium placed upon qualities of honesty, honour, mateship and preparedness to sacrifice oneself for noble purposes. But there is nothing essentially feminine about these qualities – they sit easily with masculinity. Masculinity, suppressed and vilified in Richardson’s stories, becomes something to be embraced and celebrated.

Femininity, on the other hand, is suppressed as foreign to the true Australian male. Boy heroes in later stories rarely do anything that could be considered remotely girlish. Religion, although not explicitly defined as feminine, becomes less relevant to constructions of manliness, and the boys do little to indicate any significant piety. The same applies to study. Jim is ‘careless over work’ despite being ‘absolutely reliable in every other way’. Very little attention is paid to the academic progress of Wally, Jack, Dick or Andi, and although Max works hard to win an exhibition to the University of Melbourne, this in no way interferes with his prefectorial or sporting duties, and he is thus saved ‘from being placed in the same category as the habitual Stewer, that contemptible person with a dull, preoccupied look’. The heroes are certainly not dunces or pagans, but the essence of their manliness is non-intellectual

---

62See, for some of the many examples of the need for morality to be combined with masculinity, Bruce, Dick, pp. 130-1; Pyke, Jack of St. Virgil’s, pp. 93-4; and Pyke, Max the Sport, pp. 67-8.
63Bruce, Mates at Billabong, p. 16.
64Pyke, Max the Sport, p. 95. This is notably similar to the denunciations of ‘stewers’ and ‘idlers’ by Adamson at Wesley College and Cuthbertson at Geelong Grammar. It is quite possible that Pyke often paraphrased material she found in the Wesley College Chronicle, the Geelong Grammar School Quarterly and other similar public school publications.
and secular. Muscularity, militarism and athleticism predominate over the more feminine qualities of studiousness and piety.

Where feminine boys do appear, it is in the guise of villainy. Cecil Linton, who appears in *Mates at Billabong* as the effeminate townie inflicted upon the Billabong characters, is a thoroughly detestable figure. He is described as

a slim youth, in most correct attire. His exquisitely tailored suit of palest grey flannel was set off by a lavender-striped shirt, with a tie that matched the stripe. Patent leather shoes with wide ribbon bows shod him; above them, and below the turned-up trousers, lavender silk socks with circles made a very glory of his ankles. On his sleek head he balanced a straw hat with an infinitesimal brim, a crown tall enough to resemble a monument, and a very wide hat band. His pale, well-featured face betrayed unuttered depths of boredom.65

Cecil’s affectedness is further revealed in his unflattering opinion of the bush and its people, and in his class consciousness which does not sit well in the egalitarian environment of Billabong. He thinks, for example, that it is shameful that Norah should help out in the kitchen when the regular cook, Brownie, is ill, arguing that ‘A lady has her own place, and to get on terms of familiarity with the lower classes is bad for both her and them’.66 Cecil refuses to play sport and is a poor horseman, a shortcoming which leads to the ultimate act of villainy when he rides Norah’s horse, Bobs, despite Norah forbidding it, and kills the horse in an accident of his own making. Cecil is an effeminate townie, an English-like dandy far removed from the ‘real’ Australian boy who stands in stark contrast to the manly, masculine, sporty and

---

65 Bruce, *Mates at Billabong*, p. 33.
66 ibid., p. 57.
muscular figures of Jim and Wally. Like Horace Densham, the effeminate town boy of Bruce’s *Gray’s Hollow* (1914), he provides a feminine ‘other’ in the gendered dichotomies of masculine and feminine, manly and unmanly, which construct the ideal type.\footnote{See Bruce, *Gray’s Hollow*, Ward, Lock and Co., Melbourne. 1914, esp. p. 41. Horace is ‘almost exactly like’ his mother, with ‘slender limbs almost too slender for a boy of fifteen’, and a girlish face with ‘delicate features and a pink complexion’. The major difference between Horace Densham and Cecil Linton is that the former is redeemed and rejuvenated by the time he spends in the bush, developing into an admirable character. Cecil is not. When he leaves Billabong, whisked away after killing Bobs, he is at his most villainous.} The feminine boy, hero in Richardson’s stories, is the villain in the early twentieth century.

Femininity is further suppressed by the removal of motherly influence over boys. Whereas Richardson usually removes the father so that the boy heroes are the sons of widows and thus feminised by greater maternal influence, Bruce removes the mother from the Billabong stories. Mrs Linton died when the Linton children were still very young, so they grow up in a masculine household as well as the masculine environments of the bush and the boarding house of Melbourne Grammar School. The only adult female at Billabong is Brownie, the rotund cook. She is a comic figure, and certainly no source of moral wisdom.

Parentage is similarly abnormal in Pyke’s stories, partly a reflection of the plight Pyke’s own children were in after she was widowed. Jack does not know who his parents are, and finds his father as a hero figure at St. Virgil’s. The pattern is somewhat confused in *A Prince at School, Max the Sport* and Bruce’s two stories about Dick Lester, in all of which the father is absent, either dead or overseas. But in all of these stories the boy is sent off to school as a way of removing the son from dangerous feminine influence and placing him in a masculine environment. If mothers are not removed from their boys, boys must be removed from their mothers to allow them to escape femininity and acquire manliness.
Such removals are necessary as mothers are portrayed as unable to teach their sons to be manly. At best they are ineffective; at worst they are a corrupting and degenerative influence. Andi needs to attend Whitefield College to acquire the qualities required to be a ruler, while Max’s mother is relieved when Max wins a scholarship to St. Virgil’s as she fears that he has had enough ‘petticoat government’. Although Max’s mother has tried to ‘take a man’s view’ of Max’s upbringing, she ‘must be to some extent hampered by the difference in outlook peculiar to her sex’. Similarly, Dick Lester’s father writes to Dick’s mother from where he is occupied on business in England that it is time Dick moved away from his mother’s apron-strings: ‘he must learn things that you cannot teach him, and it’s time he began’. Dick’s mother is a little reluctant to send her beloved son away, but realises that ‘he knows best, Dick’. Dick replies: ‘Oh, of course.... He’s a man: of course he’d understand about a boy’. The response is telling because it encapsulates the idea that a mother cannot train a boy’s character into that of a manly individual; only a man, usually in the form of father, schoolmaster or senior student, is qualified to do so. The mother’s role is restricted to looking after the health of the young child and seeing him into a healthy adolescence. As Max’s mother says to his father when Max is just a baby:

“Now, Jack, you will have to do your part, and I’ll have to do mine. I will keep his body healthy and see he gets the right environment – I don’t want him to grow up a curled darling in sashes and petticoats. I want him to be a man-child; in fact a Sport, and that’s where you come in.”

---

69*ibid.*, p. 74.
70Bruce, *Dick*, pp. 18-19.
Mothers were to raise healthy boys who, at the beginning of adolescence, were to be handed over to the school, the father, the cadet corps, sports teams or the Boy Scouts and other groups for training in their role as protectors and makers of the nation.

Mothers remained an important influence upon the character of a boy in his younger years, but in adolescent years their role was much more limited. Their main role was to produce physically healthy offspring for the nation. The limitation of the mother’s role in this respect reflects widespread concerns of the time, in both Britain and Australia, about the future of the imperial race. Children were increasingly looked upon as vital to securing the future of nation and empire, and while fathers were supposed to inculcate them with vigour and patriotism, mothers were to meet the need for future soldiers and workers by bearing numbers of children and ensuring that they were physically healthy.73 But that was where there role largely ended. When Dick’s mother first takes him to school she leaves him with the advice to ‘be a man, and go straight’.74 With these parting words she hands her son over to the school where his moral fibre will be tested and his character formed:

He turned then, when she had passed through the gate, and marched back up the path and into the house, with his shoulders square and his head well up. Mrs. Lester watched him, but he did not look round. Perhaps he could not. The big grey door closed behind him.75

In entering the school Dick moves from a feminine space into a masculine one. Mrs Lester surrenders her son to the school, a masculine arena from which she is barred by the gate and the ‘big grey door’.

74Bruce, Dick, p. 138.
75Ibid., p. 139.
If mothers attempt to retain influence over their sons for too long they are likely to turn them into effeminate characters, a danger which must be avoided. Cecil Linton’s troubles, for example, stem from the fact that he has been spoiled by his mother and has not had a father to provide a role model or a stern hand. As David Linton exclaims to Norah:

“Of all the spilt young cubs! – and that’s all it is I should say: clearly a case of spoiling. The boy isn’t bad at heart, but he’s never been checked in his life. Well, I’m told it’s risky for a father to bring up his daughter unaided, but I’m positive the result is worse when an adoring mother rears a fatherless boy! Possibly I’ve made rather a boy of you – but Cecil’s neither one thing nor the other.”

The idea is repeated in Pyke’s *Bruce at Boonderong Camp* (1920) in which Bruce Henshaw, a day student at Whitefield College, has to be sent off to a Queensland railway construction camp to learn some manliness. In the city, because his father is too busy to devote sufficient time to his training, and because his mother is too soft on him, Bruce has gone astray. He has become ‘pasty-faced and flabby with too much “tuck” and insufficient exercise’, is becoming ‘that most objectionable creature, a slacker’, does not do his school work and finds it too much of an effort to play sport or join the Boy Scouts. Despite the failure of the school or Bruce’s father to inspire him to a more manly style of behaviour, the author makes it clear that the principal fault lies with Mrs Henshaw, his mother, and her failure to be a good parent. She is somewhat hurt when told that Bruce must be sent away for a time, but has ‘that attribute of mothers – the ability to sacrifice herself for her child’s good’, and

---

6Bruce, *Mates at Billabong*, p. 38.
concedes that Bruce ‘would be far better away’.78 Several adventures in the outback later (including saving the life of a girl who has been bitten by a snake), Bruce returns home a reformed character.

The ideal of femininity is also masculinised in that heroic women are frequently defined as admirable by their participation in masculine activities such as station life or aiding the war effort, especially in the Bruce books. This is most obvious in the character of Norah, the main hero of the Billabong stories. Norah is a rejection of Victorian norms of genteel femininity in that she rides astride, helps to round up the stock, detests female finery, and goes so far as to declare herself ‘three parts a boy’.79 When the war comes she plays her part, helping to catch a German spy, running a refuge for exhausted soldiers on leave, and knitting woollens for the fighting men. There are, however, limits to her gender transgression, and Bruce is careful to point out that Norah is a fine pianist and an even better cook. Her father, indeed, states that Norah’s scones are as soft as her touch upon a horse’s mouth. To some extent she is a feminist creation in breaking out of restrictive feminine ideals, but in other aspects of her character she is restricted to traditional feminine occupations, an illustration of the contemporary tension in Australia between woman as home-maker and woman as ‘not only the helpmates, but the co-equals of men’.80 However, what defines Norah as a hero are her masculine qualities and her enthusiastic participation in masculine activities such as fighting bush fires, general station life, and war, not her feminine religiosity or moral wisdom.

78ibid., p. 75.
In other stories, too, women are praised for their participation in Australian bush life. One traveller on the same boat as Dick Lester suggests to Miss Simpson, a passenger expounding the virtues of feminine decorum, that

“My old grandmother talked half a dozen languages, and played three or four instruments, and sang in Italian and painted on satin...and before she came out from England she’d never so much as made a bed. Then she came to Sydney...and married and went up into the Never-Never country. After that there wasn’t anything she didn’t do, from fightin’ blacks and bush fires and floods to helpin’ clear the land and build the house. Did it all well too. Didn’t hurt her either, she said; she liked it. Great old sort. Lots like her, of course. Reckon they made Australia.”

The qualification is made that these women ‘had decorum’ which they never lost, ‘even when they did a man’s work’.

Holding on to their feminine decorum is admirable, but their heroism again lies in their participation in the masculine pursuit of taming and settling the Australian wilderness.

In promoting their aggressively masculinist vision of manliness, both Bruce and Pyke marginalise femininity, reducing it to the category of ‘other’. Mothers are restricted to a role of producing physically healthy offspring who are handed over to male trainers, boy heroes are purged of their femininity, effeminate boys are villains, and female heroes are defined as such for their adoption of masculine behaviours. The puzzle would appear to be why such aggressively masculinist texts are produced by

---

81 Bruce, Dick Lester of Kurrajong, p. 52.
82 ibid., p. 52.
women who, as authors, might be seen as agents in their own oppression through the trivialisation and marginalisation of their own sex.

Schaffer argues that writers can be limited by the discursive frameworks and economies within which they operate, and that women writers are frequently limited by masculinist orientation of the wider social and cultural setting.83 Both Bruce and Pyke locate themselves within an Australian discursive tradition, established in the late nineteenth century, which has been frequently described as masculinist, misogynist and excluding.84 The Australian setting for Richardson served only the purpose of illustrating that English values of religiosity and moral maturity could be reproduced in a new land. But for both Pyke and Bruce a sense of Australian-ness and Australian national pride are central characteristics of their hero figures, reflecting the contemporary preoccupation with forging and promoting a separate national identity. In Pyke’s stories, Max, for example, decides that he would rather remain in Australia to attend university, turning down the opportunity to study in England, and when war breaks out he joins the Australian Imperial Force rather than the British Army. Her boy heroes come from or spend time in the bush, and the mythical Australian value of egalitarianism is strongly promoted.

Pyke’s heroes thus reflect the masculinist national identity which had emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which adopted the bush and the bushman as the two most powerful symbols of Australia, with associated values which were anti-feminine, anti-English and anti-urban.85 The desire to embrace this distinctive Australian identity, evident in Pyke’s stories, is even more central in Bruce’s, where the masculine Australian bush is frequently posited against the effeminate English city. All of Bruce’s main characters come from the bush and adore their native land, and it is with heavy hearts that the Lintons leave it behind and sail to

83See Schaffer, Women and the Bush, passim.
84See, for example, Magarey, Rowley and Sheridan, ‘Introduction’, pp. xvii-xix.
85See White, Inventing Australia, pp. 82-103.
England so that Jim and Wally, somewhat paradoxically, can join the British Army. England seems strange and foreign to them, and they yearn for home. Although awed by English history and culture, they find London gloomy, and the English themselves are not up to much. They are often depicted as effeminate, and are certainly not as manly as the Australians. There are constant references to Australians towering over their English counterparts, and all Australians are taller, bigger and more tanned. This contrasts sharply with Richardson’s boys, who are “somewhat sparer and less squarely built than English lads generally are, and with little of the colour in their cheeks that is bred of northern winters”.86 Dave Linton, meanwhile, observes that the war “is going to do big work in strengthening English shoulders – morally and physically”.87 The implication is that English shoulders, always a metaphor for moral and physical well-being and uprightness, are weak and in need of such strengthening. There is a constant gentle mocking of the English class system, English effeminacy and English affectedness. England is portrayed as old, tired and worn out; still a place of culture, still centre of the empire and still worth fighting for, but essentially yesterday’s country. Australia, on the other hand, is youthful, vigorous and masculine, a place of and for young people, a land of opportunity.88 Such assertions of the superiority of Australia over England, and in particular the superiority of Australian men over their English counterparts, were a feature of Australian identity in the late nineteenth century when it was increasingly felt that Australians’ fondness for sport, their sunny climate and their outdoor life were producing a race superior to the over-civilised English.89

Australia emerges triumphant over England in the same way that masculinity prevails over femininity. Australia represents the bush, youth and manliness, and Jim and Wally, as young males from the bush, emerge as national symbols, or something

86 Richardson, *The Cold Shoulder*, p. 5.
87 Bruce, *Jim and Wally*, p. 35.
89 White, *Inventing Australia*, p. 75.
of an Australian type. This can be seen in their description in nationalist terms as ‘fine specimens of loose-limbed Australia’ rather than simply ‘loose-limbed’, and as ‘tall young Australians’ rather than merely ‘tall and young’. England, by contrast, represents urbanity, affectedness and effeminacy. It is significant that Cecil Linton, an effeminate Australian, is represented as not being a ‘real’ Australian. He prefers English poetry to Australian, does not conform to Australian myths and stereotypes, and is from the city, which itself is seen as English, or at least not the real Australia because it is not the bush. When the Lintons return from England at the end of the war Cecil is somewhat disparaging and wonders that five years abroad has not made them a little ‘less Australian’.\(^9\) Australia is posited against England in the same way that manliness is posited against effeminacy, and the bush against the city.

Bruce’s stories and, to a lesser extent Pyke’s, are indicative of the penetration of the bush ethos and the bush legend, by the 1910s, into middle-class Australian culture, and from there into Australian children’s literature. Jim, Wally, Max and other public schoolboy heroes of the period are middle-class versions of the bush man of the Australian bush legend. Russel Ward has characterised the mythical Australian bush male of the period as practical, rough and ready in manners, a despiser of affectedness, not especially hard-working, irreligious and unintellectual, egalitarian, independent, loyal to his mates, and prone to gambling, drinking and swearing.\(^9\) Jim, Wally, Max and other public schoolboy heroes do not drink gamble or swear and are somewhat more inclined towards hard work than Ward’s caricature, reflecting middle-class values of temperance, thrift, form and industriousness. But in their egalitarian outlook, mateship, lack of affectedness, practicality and secularity, they are essentially middle-class variants of the bush type. Bruce and Pyke thus combine their perception of the needs of the nation with national mythologies in the formation of a national

\(^9\)Bruce, _Back to Billabong_, p. 296.
type of manly figure, an indication of the degree to which the middle classes, in Richard White's words, 'laid claim to the imagery of Australia'.

Because Pyke and Bruce locate themselves within this Australian nationalist tradition they comply in perpetuating the gendered dimensions of that tradition. Femininity has to be marginalised or suppressed in the discursive framework of the Australian legend, and it is significant that Bruce, who writes in a more overtly nationalist vein than Pyke, also devalues femininity to a greater degree. She has to, for she adopts the discursive framework of the Australian legend more thoroughly and must adhere to its conventions more rigidly.

The Australian legend aside, the characters of Pyke and Bruce are also a reflection of national priorities of physical strength, health, militarism and imperial loyalty. The Australian legend and the ideals of Australian citizenship (including its racial aspects) combine to create a framework within which the ideal Australian type can be formulated; a boy who is tough, athletic, chivalrous, nationalist, imperially loyal, masculine and militarist. Gentle, intellectual and religious boys would have stood only a slight chance as the heroes of juvenile literature in the early twentieth century. Gentle, intellectual and religious Australian boys would have stood no chance at all. Such heroes were all but an impossibility. In the discursive economies of Australian nationalism such creatures simply did not exist, nor did they suit the perceived requirements of the Australian nation. Even if they were thinkable, they certainly would not have been marketable.

And yet the Australian boy hero as drawn by Pyke and Bruce did not go completely unchallenged. I have suggested that the dominant literary ideal of the Australian public schoolboy is most clearly constructed and reflected in the novels of

---

92 White, Inventing Australia, p. 124.
93 For an interesting discussion of the way in which the bush legend was manipulated in some Australian children's literature in the war years to serve different ideological functions, see Walker, 'War, Women and the Bush', pp. 297-315.
Bruce and Pyke, partly on account of their popularity, but also because Pyke’s stories
in particular are intended as a transparent reflection of the public school ethos. In their
stories, however, Ethel Turner and Eustace Boylan construct public school heroes
somewhat at variance with those of Pyke and Bruce, embracing some of their ideals
but adding or rejecting others in their attempts to reconstruct and reinterpret the bush
legend and ideals of manliness to suit their different ideological positions and
concerns. There is no uniform construct of manliness in the figure of the public
schoolboy, and the stories of Boylan and Turner are indicative of an element of
tension in defining the middle-class ideal of masculinity.

Ethel Turner is probably Australia’s most famous children’s novelist, and was
a great rival of Bruce’s. Together they dominated the children’s book market for over
forty years with their immense appeal and prodigious output, Turner just out-
producing Bruce by writing forty-four novels to the latter’s thirty-eight.\textsuperscript{94} There is
much about Turner and her writing that leads to a different vision of manliness in her
stories about a public schoolboy, John Calithrop, the main male character in her
wartime ‘Cub’ trilogy. Born in Yorkshire in 1870, Turner came to Australia in 1880 at
the age of ten.\textsuperscript{95} She grew up in a feminine household with her mother and two sisters,
and adopted more ‘lady-like’ hobbies and interests than Bruce, such as dancing,
piano-playing and fashion. Her views on the female place were more traditional than
those of her great rival, and traditional femininity has a redemptive, rather than
corrupting, influence in many of her early novels, such as \textit{Seven Little Australians}
(1894) and \textit{The Family at Misrule} (1895).\textsuperscript{96} In contrast, fathers are often portrayed as
effeminate or unduly cruel to their children.\textsuperscript{97} Turner also had more sympathy for the
\textit{Bulletin} and its ideals than the politically conservative Bruce and Pyke, and turned her
back on the bush as a setting for her novels, locating them mainly in suburban

\textsuperscript{94}Niall, \textit{Australia Through the Looking-Glass}, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{95}ibid., p. 80; Niall, \textit{Seven Little Billabongs}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{96}Niall, \textit{Seven Little Billabongs}, pp. 8, 15, 22-3.
\textsuperscript{97}Lees and Macintyre, \textit{The Oxford Companion to Australian Children’s Literature}, p. 422.
Sydney. Her stories are thus more feminine, more urban and more socially concerned than those of the other women writing the Australian public schoolboy, so her depictions of manly middle-class youth are somewhat removed from the centre established by Pyke and Bruce, and are located more towards the periphery. Her children, moreover, are frequently intended to be more realistic and less model than those of her contemporaries, and are often cast in anti-heroic roles. The clear picture of the ideal public schoolboy drawn by Pyke and Bruce is thus challenged by Turner.

John Calthrop, the ‘Cub’, is Turner’s main schoolboy hero and one of the central characters in _The Cub_ (1915), _Captain Cub_ (1917) and _Brigid and the Cub_ (1919). His main positive attributes are his quiet sincerity and his socialist principles, qualities rather different from those which define Jim, Wally, Max and others as heroic. He is not especially good at academic or sporting pursuits, and when the war breaks out he has no real enthusiasm to enlist, explaining to his friend Brigid that his mission lies in helping the poor rather than soldiering:

"I’m sick to the soul of seeing the poor grinding their bones and the rich not caring a dump. I’m going to stop it. I’m going to build things up in this world, not destroy them. That’s why I don’t want to waste time enlisting."  

John resists any pressure to enlist until after his brother, Alec, a more conventional hero figure who responds enthusiastically to the call to arms, has enlisted and died.

But a potentially radical message, that of rejecting war as destructive and concentrating instead on aiding the poor, is transformed into a conservative one when John decides that he will, after all, volunteer. War goes against his principles, but he

---

98 Niall, _Australia Through the Looking-Glass_, pp. 106-7.
comes to believe that ‘you can’t have any principles – not individual ones – in times of war’. Individual beliefs have to be subsumed to national and imperial interest, as John explains to Brigid:

“You can’t read things in the papers...about the women and the children. You can’t lie in bed at night and think of England and the chance of her going under, even if it is only one chance in ten thousand, and not feel you’ve just got to go, whatever your principles.”

John is thus devastated when he is turned down after volunteering because of the poor physical shape he is in. He laments that he is ‘so slack and muscleless, such a flabby lout, such a miserable pretense of a man, they don’t think I’m even good enough to stick up to be shot at’. John’s determination to play his part leads to a vigorous campaign of physical exercise and he is thus accepted on his second application.

In his service John performs heroically, and is promoted to Captain for gallantry at Gallipoli, the youngest man from his state to achieve such a rank. When Brigid meets John in France, by which time the two have fallen thoroughly in love and have determined to marry, John has developed into a much more conventionally manly figure. He is ‘six-foot-two at least’, has lost his stoop, sports ‘a long scar seaming his left cheek, the reminder of a wound that he had never mentioned in his

---

100 ibid., p. 215.
101 ibid., p. 215.
102 ibid., pp. 218-19.
103 ibid., p. 253. There is, however, a social Darwinist tragedy in John’s enlistment which Brigid identifies, reflecting a common fear at the time and in post-war years that the best elements of the population were the ones who were being, or who had been, sacrificed. Brigid states:

If I were God and had to clean up my world with a war...I’d empty all the prisons and get all the deadbeats and slum people, and I’d make an army of them and march them out into the trenches to be shot at. He could make them brave enough for a few days. I wouldn’t empty my world of all the clean, strong boys who were going to try to make it better.
letters’ and has ‘turned from a dreaming stripling into a man, and more than that, a strong man’. John thus moves to a more conservative and conventionally heroic position and becomes a more orthodox manly type by serving his country and empire. Indeed, it is through the war that John moves from being unmanly to manly; his service to his country is both a marker of his new-found manliness and the means through which that state is achieved. But he remains unconventional in the tenacity of his quasi-socialist beliefs and behaviours, which go beyond the egalitarian outlook of Jim, Wally and Max. Turner’s overall construction of manliness might be conservative, but John’s failure to excel at school sports, initial reluctance to enlist, initial slight build and lack of time in the bush add a new twist to the characterisation of public school manliness, upsetting some of the binary oppositions established by Bruce and Pyke.

Turner, however, is not trying to glorify military reluctance or slight physiques – these are obstacles which she suggests can be overcome in the journey of an adolescent towards self-realisation. She thus writes from the centre in her endorsement of the war effort and John’s final character, but against the centre in his socialist principles and his urbanity. She is able to do so because she locates herself partly outside the Australian nationalist tradition. Her stories are set in suburbia and do not use the bush even as a redemptive influence. There is also very little talk of Australian national pride. England and the continent are referred to as ‘the Mecca of all Australians’ and the main female figure, Brigid, is English.103

Not only is the Australian bush and its masculine ethos of little interest to Turner, but so largely is masculinity as a whole. The novels are more concerned with proselytising about an admirable wartime femininity, with how genteel women in particular need to shed their affectedness and pull together in the midst of an imperial crisis, supporting the menfolk who have gone to the war through activities such as

105 Turner, The Cub, p. 11.
raising money and organising volunteer labour. Indeed, John Calthrop, despite the
titles of the stories, sinks almost into insignificance at points as the stories develop
into tales of domestic life in wartime centred on Brigid, rather than stories about war
centred on John. The redemption of Mrs Calthrop and Mrs Lindsay into good
supportive women working for the war effort, in losing their affectedness and
realising ‘how little joy there was after all in the subtlest schemes of purple and
silvery grey’, and in realising that ‘quite unfashionable, quite unpretending people
could be quite nice’ is at least as important as John’s self-realisation through his
devotion to the war effort.\footnote{Masculinity would appear to be of secondary concern to
Turner, who primarily wishes to contrast proper, patriotic motherhood and femininity
in the form of the willing sacrifice of sons and volunteer work with the smothering
mother who prevents her son from enlisting and achieving the full flowering of his
manliness, and the overly-refined and affected woman who will not play her part in
the empire’s hour of need.\footnote{Turner’s stories thus seek to ally manliness with a more socially-concerned
outlook while at the same time showing that masculinity, femininity and socialist
principles can all be allied to the war effort. She endeavours to illustrate that a desire
to help the poor, concern with the social and political structures which produce
poverty and a lack of athletic ability need not make a boy unmanly so long as he
undertakes the really important masculine tasks, such as fighting for his country. The
message is that everyone, rich or poor, strong or weak, male or female, should assist
in the national and imperial crisis, and that they will all be better for it.\footnote{Using similar techniques, Eustace Boylan seeks to ally manliness with a
religious outlook and religious principles. Boylan was an Irish-born Jesuit priest and
schoolteacher who taught at St. Aloysius’ and St. Ignatius’ colleges in Sydney, and at
\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, pp. 244-5.}}}}
Xavier College in Melbourne, where his 1919 story, *The Heart of the School*, is set. Like much of the Irish community in Australia, Xavier was the object of suspicions of disloyalty during the First World War, particularly after the Easter rising of 1916 in Dublin. Boylan’s novel can be read as an attempt to reaffirm the values of Jesuit Catholicism while at the same time dispelling doubts about Xavier’s loyalty. In doing so, his novel attempts to redefine elements of the code of manliness constructed by Bruce and Pyke in gentler and more spiritual terms, while at the same time affirming some of its central characteristics.

The story opens with ten-year-old Peter Jackson, whose education has been provided by governesses. Again reflecting the potentially corruptive influence of smothering females, Peter’s father feels that it is time Peter entered the more masculine environment of a public school, away from his mother and the mystically named Miss Moonlight, a governess who has been teaching Peter to write poetry:

“I am uneasy about the boy.... He is far from robust. He spends altogether too much time in reading; it is unnatural in a boy of his age. He dreams away too much of his existence, and Miss Moonlight's influence has, I fear, been injurious to him...it is about time he was taught to plant his two feet in hard realities. The boy wants more life. He needs the activities and practicalities of a good school with its companionship and its varied interest.”

Despite some initial protests from his mother, it is decided that Peter will be sent to Xavier College in Melbourne.

---

Peter seeks advice from an uncle as to what he can expect to find in the world of the public school, and is understandably somewhat concerned at the picture his uncle paints of a godless world governed only by the law of the jungle. Peter is told that he must be careful to conform in everything he does and that he should not take an independent or godly stand by, for example, kneeling at his bed to say prayers before retiring. ‘Say your prayers in bed’, Peter’s uncle tells him. Somewhat disturbed, Peter discusses his future, in true egalitarian style, with a stockman on the station who gives him the extraordinary advice that ‘any young Australian...who is not strong enough to tackle the bounders with his fists should ‘remember that heads are softer than iron, and pokers are handy’.

But Peter has no need to resort to pokers or other such weapons, for Xavier College is a much more welcoming, friendly and gentle place than he has been led to believe. It is also rather godly, with a lot of boys going to the chapel for a few minutes on their own initiative in the evenings to say prayers, including a number of the school’s prefects and leading sportsmen, indicating that a religious disposition does not necessarily run counter to the more secular aspects of manliness. Similarly, boys in Peter’s dormitory all kneel beside their beds to say prayers before retiring.

Many of the usual conventions of the early-twentieth-century public school story are followed. Peter is enthusiastic about school life, makes many new friends, and follows the school’s sports teams with great interest, learning along the way to accept losses with dignity and feel pride in the determination the school’s athletes have shown. Considerable portions of the story are devoted to sport and great joy is shown when Xavier wins major cricket or football matches. There are also the usual stories of moral crises and of broken and re-made friendships, and in the epilogue

---

111ibid., p. 47.
112ibid., p. 58.
113ibid., p. 142.
Boylan tells us that Peter went straight into camp once finishing school, fought in France, and was invalided back to Australia where he died.

But there are also several aspects of the story which set it apart from the usual public school story as Boylan attempts to invest the public schoolboy ideal with a greater amount of spirituality and religious devotion. For example, the teachers in the story, in this case Jesuit priests, assume a much greater role in the narrative as the providers of moral wisdom, and they are deliberately distinguished by Boylan from what he sees as the usual, rather brutish model for a master in boys' fiction. Father Keeling, for example, the principal, is a friend of the boys and thoroughly devoted to their welfare, but is 'none of the square-jawed type popularised by recent romantic writers probably from the literature of pugilism and the ridiculous analogy of the bulldog'.¹¹⁴ When the boys have difficulties or confront moral crises, masters play a much greater role in their resolution than they do in Pyke's stories.

Although sport is played at Xavier and is given a high profile in the story, Boylan is careful that it is not over-emphasised at the expense of intellectual or spiritual attainment. Work in the class-room is described as 'less dramatic and less noisy, but more important' than the activities of the sports field, and the principal purpose of sport in the story is to lend excitement to the narrative and act as a lure to the reader, in a similar manner to sport in _Tom Brown's Schooldays_. It is significant that while Peter has a number of moral triumphs during the story and also carries off several academic prizes, he is no great sportsman and does not represent the school in any of its top teams. Scholarship, spirituality and moral maturity are the determinants of Boylan's manliness, rather than ruggedness or sporting successes. These priorities are somewhat different from those of Pyke and Bruce, and are in contrast to the priorities of schools such as Wesley College and Geelong Grammar. They are,

¹¹⁴bid., p. 278.
however, consistent with and reflective of the less athletic educational ethos of Xavier College.\textsuperscript{115}

Peter's death scene is also significant and loaded with religious meaning. Peter lies dying at his parents' home after being invalided back to Australia, and is visited by Father Brownless, who had been Prefect of Studies at Xavier College during Peter's time there, and who arrives to deliver the final sacraments to Peter and console his parents. As Father Brownless gazes around Peter's room he notices the religious imagery that Peter has used, perhaps consciously, to create a fitting place in which to die. It includes the Sacred Heart above all, family portraits, the certificate Peter received on his reception into the Sodality of Our Lady, verses Peter has written in glorification of Mary, photos of his school friends who lived in the war, and Xavier memorabilia. Peter thus orders his place of dying to show the causes for which he has lived and died – his family, his friends, his school and his faith.

There is no Union Jack to threaten the dominance of the other images. Boylan is concerned to emphasise that while Peter has laid down his life for Australia and the British Empire, a much richer meaning is to be found in a religious perspective on his death. His sacrifice is a Christian sacrifice and his death is God's will. When Peter's father asks his son, clearly at death's door, whether Peter is at peace, his son replies that he has 'only one passing anxiety' – that his father might find it too difficult 'to bless the kind hand of our dear God in all this'.\textsuperscript{116} His father, although clearly grief-stricken, allays Peter's fears:

"Peter, a father never had a better son than you have been to me – and I thank God for it. You have been the light of our eyes and the joy of our hearts. You have helped to make our little home a paradise on earth, but

\textsuperscript{115}Dening, Xavier, pp. 170-3, 181.
\textsuperscript{116}Boylan, The Heart of the School, p. 396.
if you were a thousand times dearer to us than you are, and God calls you away from us, I bow to His holy will in humble thankfulness. Who am I that I should question His decrees? We have been blessed by Him in the fragrance of your bright and unselfish life, and now, with all the intensity of my Christian faith, I believe that in this hour of parting and of sorrow, when we are deemed to keep Mary and her Son company on Calvary, we are more blessed than ever. Welcome be God’s holy will!"  

Such a religious aspect to the giving of one’s life in the war is a major departure from Bruce and Pyke.

It is also worth noting that at the moment of his death, when he is at the peak of his moral and spiritual attainment, Peter, never particularly robust, is also at his weakest physically. His manliness is spiritual and moral rather physical. His goodness, worth and identity transcend his physical body, an interesting contrast to Dick Lester. When Dick injures his back and it appears that he will be crippled for the rest of his life, both the narrator and Dick’s father speak of Dick as if he no longer exists. Dick’s father laments: ‘I only had one…and I was too proud of him, I suppose. I was proud of every inch of him, mind and body – his pluck, his strength, his manliness, and his clean straight mind’. Dick’s identity is bound up with his body, but Peter’s with his spirit.

In the same way that Turner seeks to bring a greater element of social concern and socialist principle to the construction of manliness, Boylan seeks to invest the ideal with greater spirituality and religiosity. But both Turner and Boylan are limited

17 Ibid., p. 396.
18 Bruce, Dick Lester of Kurrajong, p. 203.
in the changes they seek to effect. There are many conventional aspects to John Calthrop and Peter Jackson, and to the stories in which they figure. Both boys fight in the war and both are loyal to their country and empire. In Boylan’s story sporting boys are glorified alongside the pious boys, rather than scorned, while John Calthrop develops an impressive physique. Even Father Keeling, the Principal of Xavier College in Boylan’s story, is described in terms which, although setting him off from the ‘square-jawed’ type, preclude any suspicion of his religious devotion being identified with effeminacy or asceticism:

He was of striking appearance, tall and well built, and of a most engaging disposition. He was a “boys’ man,” identifying himself with all the interests of his young charges, and he dearly loved the young life that flowed around him. Boys delighted to meet him in the Big Hall or in the playing fields, and readily gathered round him.119

The construction of manliness provided by Pyke and Bruce is thus qualified and broadened by both Turner and Boylan, but is certainly not overturned. John Calthrop and Peter Jackson have more in common with Jim Linton, Wally Meadows and Max Charlton than with Steven Kent, Philip Freeling or Walter Harvey.

The attempts of both Turner and Boylan to reconstruct the manly ideal are thus indirect, the result of their more immediate goal of writing their perspectives and ideologies, their socially concerned principles and religious piety, into the manly ideal, resolving conflicts which might appear to exclude non-athletic, socially concerned or religious boys from being considered manly. This is perhaps most obvious in the case of Boylan, an Irish Jesuit Priest and Prefect of Studies at Xavier

College at the time when his novel is set. Xavier was caught in the bind of not quite being a public school because it was Catholic, but at the same time not quite being Catholic because it was a public school. Boylan's novel can thus be read, and has been read by Brenda Niall, as an attempt to resolve conflicting loyalties, 'to assert Xavier's claim to be at once Catholic, Australian, and public school in feeling'. Turner's purposes are similar in attempting to illustrate that a boy can be non-athletic and socialist in his outlook, but at the same time can be militarily willing, heroic, chivalrous and loyal.

The goals and strategies of Turner and Boylan have much to tell us about the nature of hegemonic masculinity, both in the fictional world of Australian children's literature and outside it. Boylan and Turner remind us that there was no one ideal to which all others were subsumed, no single, universally accepted and promoted construction of the ideal middle-class Australian boy. The manly ideal was manipulated, expanded, circumscribed, redefined and rearticulated to serve different ideological functions and priorities and to appeal to different audiences in the same way that David Walker has argued that the bush legend is manipulated for the same purpose in the war novels of Bruce and Turner.\(^{121}\)

Walker suggests that 'the plurality of these traditions and the interests they serve is of greater consequence than their supposedly common characteristics'.\(^{122}\) However, in terms of the manly ideal which the different uses (or omissions) of the bush legend were used to promote, the continuities and commonalities are more significant and powerful than Walker's analysis would suggest. Pyke and Bruce define their heroes with an extensive set of dichotomies used to contrast characters such as Jim, Wally and Max with other less desirable characters such as Cecil Linton. The dichotomy of manly/unmanly rests upon a set of contributing dichotomies which

\(^{120}\)Niall, *Australia Through the Looking-Glass*, p. 162. See also J. A. Mangan, 'Noble Specimens of Manhood', p. 182.

\(^{121}\)Walker, 'War, Women and the Bush', p. 315.

\(^{122}\)ibid., p. 315.
variously pose the masculine against the feminine, the bush against the city, the athletic against the overly-studious, the physically powerful against the weak, soldiers against shirkers, workers against slackers, the sexually pure against the corrupted, the honest against the deceitful, white against non-white, the educated middle-classes against the lower-classes, law-abiders against law-breakers, Australians against Englishmen and nature against civilisation and affectedness. The result is a definition of manliness which finds its model in a middle-class, reasonably well-educated boy from the bush who uses his physical power to represent his school at sport, who is a member of the cadet corps, is deeply loyal to his nation and the empire, works hard, is naturally open and honest, is sexually pure, and who fights for his country when the time comes. He is not particularly religious or intellectual and is not usually greatly troubled by social problems such as poverty. Jim, Wally and Max are quintessential middle-class Australian heroes because they fit almost completely into these categories.

John Calthrop and Peter Jackson are departures from the model, but not as radically as they might at first appear. While their departures illustrate possibilities for reworking the manly ideal, the continuities are more significant and serve to illustrate the degree to which perceived national interest and the nationalist tradition of the bush legend held sway over the possibilities for gender construction for the Australian middle classes. Boylan shows us that religious heroes were thinkable and acceptable, but to be so Peter has to come from the bush, has to play and support school sport, and has to fight for his country. Turner shows us that a city-bred boy who is more socially-concerned and less athletic than the normal idealised schoolboy figure is a thinkable hero, but for John Calthrop to be so he has to build himself up physically, act in a chivalrous manner to the women around him, and become a war hero in the great Australian experience of Gallipoli.
Hegemonic masculinities are always fluid and contested. While authors such as Boylan and Turner were able to work away at the edges of the hegemonic ideal in its stance towards religion and socialism (never the essence of the predominant ideal), other elements remained beyond challenge, particularly national and imperial loyalty and a preparedness to serve in arms. The dominant nationalist ideology of manliness was thus able to accommodate the values of Boylan and Turner without changing its essence. Boys still had to be patriotic, still had to develop reasonably physically powerful frames, still had to shed their feminine characteristics and influences, and still had to be prepared to fight for their nation and empire.

Richard White has suggested that 'national identities are invented within a framework of modern Western ideas about science, nature, race, society, nationality'. The same might also be said for the construction of gender ideals, which are a fundamental part of notions of the 'nation'. The rise of nationalist thought and nationalist discourses provided a different framework for the construction of the Australian public schoolboy as they replaced the old framework of socially-concerned Christianity and religious asceticism. What was thinkable for one generation of authors was not so for another. Different concerns and different discursive frameworks produced radically different idealisations of the figure of the Australian public schoolboy. The Australian public schoolboy had been idealised as an effeminate figure who lived for God, but was transformed into a much more aggressively masculine creature who found his highest sense of devotion in living for the nation. The dominant literary representation of the Australian public schoolboy in the early twentieth century was thus an imagined national type constructed through the use of national imagery in the service of perceived national goals, a total overturning of the nineteenth-century religious model constructed through religious imagery in the service of godly objectives. The shift in ideals from godliness to good learning to athleticism and militarism in the non-fictional Australian public school,

discussed in Chapters Two and Chapter Three, was reinforced in the fictional realm. What it meant to be manly was revolutionised.
CHAPTER FIVE

At The Edge of Civilisation: Boys’ Adventure Stories
in Australia

Public school stories were not the only genre which sought to define and disseminate certain forms of manliness. Boys’ adventure stories threw their heroes against the dangers of the Australian desert, unscrupulous bushrangers, hostile natives and foreign enemies. In doing so they offered different rites of passage through which boys could become men, and employed a broader canvas for painting the masculine ideal. Although boy heroes could be schoolboys, they often had no connection with a school, nor did they even have to be of the public school ‘type’. Further, the heroes of boys’ adventure stories did not even need to be boys – they could be grown men participating in adventures designed to appeal to and shape the boyish imagination. And the range of adventures open to them extended even further beyond the games field and the class room than they did in school stories. This chapter examines boys’ adventure stories set in Australia in the years from 1870 to 1920. It considers the definition and construction of the manly hero, the threats which manliness overcame, and the means by which the manly triumphed over the unmanly.

Imperialist adventure stories for boys first emerged in England in the first half of the nineteenth century as a result of the desire of evangelical organisations such as the Religious Tract Society (RTS) and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge to exploit boys’ interests in factual travel works for their own didactic ends.1 Into the 1850s and 1860s these stories generally promoted ideals of charity and Christian brotherhood, reflecting both the manly ideology of the time and the philosophical basis of mid-nineteenth-century imperialism, which revolved around the

1Jeffrey Richards, ‘Introduction’ in Richards (ed.), Imperialism and Juvenile Literature, p. 3.
need to bring Christianity and civilisation to the heathen masses at the edge of the empire.\textsuperscript{1} By the end of the century the boys' adventure story industry had become huge. Cheaper printing techniques, new technology which made books more attractive (particularly with illustrations), falling prices and increasing rates of literacy made it easier to produce and consume these stories.\textsuperscript{2} Adventure story writers produced and sold their stories in vast quantities. W. H. G. Kingston (1814-1880), for example, wrote 150 stories for children, including over 100 for boys, between 1850 and 1880.\textsuperscript{3} R. M. Ballantyne and G. A. Henty published over a hundred stories each in the second half of the nineteenth century, and Henty's sales figures world-wide have been estimated at 25 million.\textsuperscript{4} By the early 1890s his books were selling at the rate of 150,000 a year in Britain alone.\textsuperscript{5} Libraries ensured that boys who could not afford to purchase the stories nevertheless had access to them. By 1892-3 juvenile literature accounted for nearly twenty percent of the total number of library borrowings in England, and many of the books borrowed were undoubtedly adventure stories.\textsuperscript{6} According to Martin Green, adventure stories were 'collectively, the story England told itself as it went to sleep at night' and 'charged England's will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer and rule'.\textsuperscript{7} Any cultural product which absorbs so much creative effort on the part of those who produce it, and which is imbibed by so many millions of young males, is clearly worth examination for the ideologies which it reflects, constructs, and seeks to impart.

There were also changes in the cultural significance of reading for gender construction. Terry Eagleton has suggested that literature became a more prominent ideological force in the second half of the nineteenth century as the increasing

\textsuperscript{1}Nelson, \textit{Boys Will Be Girls}, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{5}Dunae, 'New Grub Street for Boys', p. 21.
\textsuperscript{6}Bristow, \textit{Empire Boys}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{7}Green, \textit{Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire}, p. 3.
secularisation of English society weakened religion as a source of social authority. Religion, Eagleton suggests, was replaced by English literature as a ‘social cement’, fiction being used ‘to carry the ideological burden from the Victorian period onwards’. Literature became an increasingly important vehicle for the production, reiteration and dissemination of dominant ideologies and the naturalisation of social reality, functioning ‘to make it seem as innocent and unchangeable as Nature itself’.

Because of the pedagogical role of juvenile literature, authors and publishers were concerned to ensure that the books available for boys should be ‘morally improving’. This was of particular concern in the latter half of the nineteenth century with the extensive production of ‘penny dreadfuls’, cheap books which were lambasted as constituting a ‘nauseous mass’, a ‘poisonous stream...of pernicious trash’. These violent and unruly stories, devoid of anything calculated ‘to elevate, to ennoble, to inspire with a desire for truth and right-living’, needed to be suppressed. Organisations such as the Religious Tract Society thus sought to embrace and control the adventure story. The RTS founded the Boys Own Paper in 1879 and published a large number of books by authors such as Henty and Kingston, stories which contained ideologies deemed appropriate for the young. These generally appealed to a love of adventure while structuring that adventure in such a way that it served to further the extension of the empire through the moral qualities of Christianity and domesticity.

A range of ideological functions were performed by boys’ adventure stories, but, as has already been discussed, one of the primary functions of Victorian

---

9Eagleton, Literary Theory, pp. 23, 33-4.
10Ibid., p. 135.
11Bristow, Empire Boys, p. 6.
14Bristow, Empire Boys, p. 21; Richards, ‘Introduction’, p. 5.
children’s literature was to instruct children in appropriate gendered behaviour. This included promulgating the more aggressively masculine codes for boys which came into vogue from the 1870s onwards.\textsuperscript{16} Rider Haggard thus dedicated King Solomon’s Mines ‘to all the big and little boys who read’, while Conan Doyle praised Robert Louis Stevenson for being ‘the father of the modern masculine novel’.\textsuperscript{17} In a period when commentators were increasingly concerned at the apparent feminising of the Anglo-Saxon race, adventure stories offered some solace, an escape, and a ‘fantasy of masculine and Anglo-Saxon supremacy’.\textsuperscript{18}

Boys’ adventure stories were consumed as avidly in Australia as they were in England. The work of English authors such as Haggard, Henty and Kingston was widely available, was accessible to all classes as it was printed in cheap editions, and appears to have been widely read.\textsuperscript{19} For those boys who could not afford even the cheap editions, libraries increasingly catered for adolescents and children, and borrowing and holding records suggest that boys’ adventure stories were especially in demand.\textsuperscript{20}

English stories about English adventurers in Australia initially dominated the supply of adventure stories available to Australian readers. But authors who had visited and spent considerable time in Australia, British immigrants and Australian-born writers came to prominence from the 1890s, replacing those whom Brenda Niall has referred to as ‘the hastily-scribbling travellers and the stay-at-home romancers’.\textsuperscript{21}

Both English and Australian authors are important when considering the construction of masculinity in Australian boys’ adventure stories, and this chapter includes all stories set in Australia, regardless of the nationality of the hero figures or the authors. Both, in the words of Richard Phillips, ‘constructed imaginative space in which

\textsuperscript{16} Nelson, Boys Will Be Girls, pp. 1, 7-8.
\textsuperscript{17} Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, p. 4. See also Nelson, Boys Will Be Girls, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{19} Hollingworth, ‘The Call of Empire’, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{20} Askew and Huber, ‘The Colonial Reader Observed’, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{21} Niall, Australia Through the Looking-Glass, p. 1.
colonisation could take place, and sometimes mapped the course of that colonisation.' Both ‘mapped’ the masculinity which would carry out colonisation, and Australian readers could take on board maps provided for them by British authors as well as those provided for them by Australians.23

Adventure stories for boys are frequently analysed as a form of escapism, a journey out of the feminised domestic realm and the oppressive limitations of modern civilisation to an arena where men could be ‘real men’. Graeme Turner, for example, has suggested that adventure fiction ‘offered a refusal of dominant ideology in favour of a more romantic version of destiny’.24 Similarly, H. M. Saxby has argued that adventure stories ‘gave the maturing child...the opportunity of vicarious experience in a new world, of extending his environment, and of reaching out to a new and challenging life’.25 This is certainly true, for most boys could only dream of being actual participants in the range of adventures at the edge of civilisation which adventure stories offered them. But the fantastic nature of these stories should not obscure their ideological function. They constituted ‘an historically important site of contestation between contemporary discourses on gender, race nation and empire’.26 Such stories might not have told boys how they should act in their day to day lives, but they did present boys with ideals to live for and dreams to pursue. They told boys the types of men they should seek to become, the enemies they should seek to conquer, and the causes to which they should devote themselves.27

The mere existence and rise of the adventure story is indicative and constitutive of changing ideas about masculinity, for, almost by definition, adventure stories promoted a more rugged manliness than did the moral and religious tales they

22Phillips, Mapping Men and Empire, p. 68.
23ibid., pp. 72-3.
26Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, p. 8.
superseded. Adventure was positive because it was indicative of manly derring-do and masculine vitality, and concerned itself less with feminine and religious morality. By logical extension, the scope for changes in the construction of manliness within the adventure story genre is somewhat limited. Heroes must have a degree of masculine hardihood, courage and resourcefulness. Moral and effeminate heroes, the Walter Harvey type, simply would not be equipped to survive in the Australian desert or battle hostile natives and threatening wildlife. And yet, Graham Dawson reminds us, there is nothing that intrinsically demands the rigid separation of masculinity and femininity in adventure narratives. Early-nineteenth-century adventure stories, for example, were evangelical and concerned with promoting the values of the home. Thus in Sir Walter Scott’s Waverley (1814) the hero eventually returns to the domestic sphere. The divorce from femininity, typically identified as an integral aspect of the adventure hero, is actually ‘constitutive of a particular historical type of adventure hero’. Separation from the feminine, far from being inevitable, emerged only gradually in the Australian adventure narrative as the manliness which these stories promoted was redefined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The labels of ‘masculinist’ and ‘imperialist’, which are sometimes used to describe the themes promoted within adventure stories, do not, as Richard Phillips has pointed out, adequately capture the changes and developments in the ideals promoted within the genre because they ignore the different types of masculinity and imperialism these stories embraced. The 1870s hero was likely to be an English settler who overcame threats posed by the environment and Aborigines. His physique was relatively unimportant, and the main qualifications for success were a determined nature and a good work ethic. He pursued a domestic ideal, and was likely to be imbued with a considerable degree of feminine religious sensibility and moral sense.

29Dawson, Soldier Heroes, pp. 63-6.
30ibid, pp. 75-6.
31Phillips, Mapping Men and Empire, p. 89.
The 1910s hero, by contrast, was indubitably Australian, built like an Antipodean Hercules, militarist, nationalist, and purged of anything identifiably feminine.

Such changes accompanied a generalised shift in the themes of nineteenth-century culture away from a concern with domestic class concerns towards racial and international conflict, and mirror changes in the masculine ideal promoted in other cultural practices such as education and public school stories. But they are also intricately bound up with changes in the way in which the geographical, racial and political space of Australia was imagined. This chapter will suggest that such changes were perhaps the principal driving force in the formulation and reformulation of Australian masculinity over the late colonial and early Federation period. As discussed in Chapter One, it was within the fears and hopes held for the development of the Australian nation that ideas of social Darwinism and eugenics, and fears of emasculation and racial annihilation, assumed importance.

Adventure stories are a trip into the unknown, the ‘uncivilised’ and the untamed, wherein the hero becomes heroic, and both displays and achieves the qualities of manliness, by knowing, civilising and taming. English authors imagined Australia as the foreign land to be tamed, known and settled; Australian authors then looked to interior of the nation, and eventually to beyond the nation’s borders for the enemies to be defeated. Although the essence of the adventure mission thus remained relatively constant, the point of departure, the focus of the heroic efforts, and the enemies of the hero all changed, and to enable the hero to triumph he shed certain qualities along the way and acquired others.

Changing narrative constructions of the adventure hero are also reflective of changing fears about masculinity. Fiction is a field on which anxieties can be mapped, the narrative providing the possibilities for fears and dangers to be met and overcome.

---

Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, p. 5.
What the Australian adventure hero overcomes reflects what white society feared it would be defeated by. When masculinity threatened to run rampant and unchecked, adventure stories tamed and controlled it. When fears were held for the over-civilisation and feminisation of society, adventure stories allowed the masculine to run untrammeled, to escape civilisation and the feminine home. These fears are closely related to the changing constructions and imaginings of Australia, and to changing fears about the fate of the nation. When Australia was considered a wild place, the civilisation of frontier society demanded that masculinity be controlled to overcome the threat of a bestial society populated by unruly, irreligious men. When it was feared that Australia was vulnerable to invasion, the need for defence of the nation demanded that the masculine qualities of the soldier be encouraged and nourished, as they were in schools and public school literature, thus averting the prospect of annihilation by Asia and the descent into feminine helplessness.

The first Australian juvenile adventure stories were written by W. H. G. Kingston in the 1870s and 1880s. He typifies an English perspective that constructed Australia as a barbarous and foreign land, the periphery, to be overcome by heroes travelling from the ‘civilised’ European centre. Kingston never visited Australia himself, and only one of his novels, The Young Berringtons (1880), takes Australians as its main characters.33

In his first Australian adventure, Twice Lost: A Story of Shipwreck and Adventure in the Wilds of Australia (1876), Godfrey Raynor, his mother, father, sister and some associates are shipwrecked on an unidentified part of the Australian coast. Despite considerable hardships they manage to walk back to civilisation, heading southwards to the northern limits of civilisation extending from New South Wales. The story is essentially a narrative about the contrast between British society and the unmapped wilds of Australia, between civilised and uncivilised, the centre and the

33Niall, Australia Through the Looking-Glass, pp. 14-19.
periphery. The civilised masculinity of Godfrey and the rest of the males in the party, and the civilised femininity of his mother and sister, are threatened by the uncivilised geography and the bestial Aborigines, who horrify the Raynors by eating a rotting whale which they have found on the beach. (See Figure 5.1). The Raynors are guided by an Aborigine, but even he deserts them as the call of savagery becomes to strong for him to resist.

The representation of the ‘savage’, ‘barbarous’ and ‘uncivilised’ nature of the Aborigines performs three functions for Kingston. It provides a contrast against which white society can be constructed, it serves as a moral basis for imperialism by convincing Godfrey that white people have ‘a perfect right to be here’, and it reminds the Raynors (and the reader) of what we should be like were it not for the blessings of the Divine:

“It is not their fault that they are ignorant savages; and we must think of what we should have been ourselves if we had not been instructed... I should have known nothing of God or of his love for man, or of his desire that man should be reconciled to him through his own appointed way, and come to live with him in the glorious heaven that he has prepared, for ever and ever.”

After making their escape to the civilised part of Australia, the Raynors become successful settlers. The fear that civilised society will degenerate into barbarism and ‘un-civilisation’ when removed from its English setting is thus overcome.

Figure 5.1. ‘The natives and the stranded whale’. Representation of ‘savage’ Aborigines eating a rotting whale upon the beach. (Source: W. H. G. Kingston, Twice Lost, p. 327).
The masculinity promoted by Kingston in *Twice Lost* is a relatively moral, gentle, and kindly one. Far from achieving manliness by breaking free from the bonds of civilisation, the Raynors triumph by managing to maintain the values of civilisation, to which they are always seeking to return, in the wilderness. The heroes are identified as manly because of their civilised morality and religious sense, indicated by the party praying together morning and evening. Godfrey’s mother and his sister provide a feminine presence throughout the story, and the establishment of a civilised home is the final achievement of the adventure. Domesticity and religion are markers of civilisation, of ‘us’ and ‘we’, which the Raynors preserve, preventing annihilation of the values of the centre in the geographical location of the periphery.35

Of all of Kingston’s stories, the imperial mission to colonise and civilise the dangerous and savage land is perhaps clearest in *Australian Adventures* (1884). Two former English public schoolboys, Maurice and Guy Thornton, travel to Australia to seek their fortune and to establish a new home for their mother and their siblings. To succeed, they must triumph over the adversity of uncivilised Aborigines and ruthless bushrangers, which respectively represent uncivilised humanity and the imposition of an incorrect colonialism upon the land. Bushrangers are captured and handed over to the police, bush fires are survived, and large numbers of Aborigines are shot. The boys also successfully hunt native wildlife, a common activity in boys’ adventure stories which reflected a strong interest in hunting in the nineteenth century, and which also served to develop and express qualities of courage and derring-do and illustrate dominance of the land.36 The land and its occupants are thus dominated and

---

35See also W. H. G. Kingston, *The Young Berringtons: Or, The Boy Explorers*, Cassell, London, 1880. Kingston also promoted the family settler ideal in this, his only story which featured Australians as some of the main characters. In this story young Australians are joined by their cousins from England, who take a long time to develop the hardness that is required for success in the colonies. Hector is particularly unenthusiastic about Australia, though he is told by one of his cousins as he spends his first night on a Queensland sheep station that ‘It’s the finest country in the world old fellow... You’ll learn to like it. So cheer up, we’ll soon make a man of you’. Despite a number of mishaps Hector does eventually develop the brown cheeks synonymous with outdoor life in Australia, and by story’s end is ‘infinitely more manly and fit for work’. As in his other stories, physicality and masculinity are employed in promoting domesticity and religion.

tamed, and eventually the boys buy a station and successfully establish a new home for their family.

Kingston’s constructions of manliness idealise the good settler and the civilised man who will extend civilisation into savage or uncivilised space. Australia is a land of opportunity, but to take advantage of it settlers must be determined and resourceful, and ready to accept the bad with the good. As Norman Bracewell, a friend of the Thorntons at school and a successful settler, tells the boys:

“I have not done badly. I began with eight head of cattle, and now I have three hundred; and with forty sheep, which have become upwards of two thousand.... You must make up your mind to take the rough and smooth together, and not to despair though you happen to get what they call a run of ill-luck.... I also remember that I should have been much worse off in many respects had I remained at home.”

Bracewell and the Thorntons represent the model settlers, while Cyril Vinson, also a former schoolmate, represents the unmanly and undesirable settler, for he has become a bushranger. The correct order is threatened when the boys are made captives of the bushrangers, but restored when they escape and when Cyril is eventually killed.

Notably, both Bracewell and the Thorntons promote domesticity at the frontier. Bracewell has his own family, while the Thorntons are seeking to establish a new home for theirs. Entry into the masculine world of adventure is in service of a feminine domestic ideal, and is thus redeemed. The presence of women on the frontier as an allegory of the savage world, and that hunting was a symbolic way of taming it and bringing it under control.

at the new settlements, where they were expected to preserve domesticity, is actively sought. 38 Cyril Vinson, however, is in the masculine company of the bushrangers, and meets his end through his association with undomesticated and uncivilised masculinity. (See Figure 5.2). Kingston’s stories are thus narratives in which the anxieties of descent into masculine barbarism and a decline from the tenets of civilisation are defeated through the triumph of domesticity, religion and femininity, the three principal boundary markers, identified by Anne McClintock, of civilised Victorian society. 39

Similar ideas are also promoted in Kingston’s Peter Biddulph: The Story of An Australian Settler (1881). Peter, who has become a respectable family man after an unpromising start to life has been overcome through his honesty and thrift, is settling with his family in Australia. The novel is perhaps most interesting for the contrast it provides with the violent and irreligious themes of ‘penny dreadfuls’, themes which were later to enter more ‘respectable’ boys’ adventure stories. 40 The possibility of war between England and France is considered disastrous, there is little sympathy with or interest in convict society, and the brutal behaviour of many (lower-class) white men towards Aborigines is deplored. Religion is important in the advancement of colonial society, religious invocations are numerous, and the story finishes with a brief homily on the qualities of the ideal settler. He must be ‘industrious, persevering and energetic [and] trust in God’, for ‘idlers, rogues, and vagabonds will starve there, as everywhere else’. 41 Adventure in Australia, it is clear, was only slowly divorced from the qualities of the pulpit, the hearth and the home.

38 Ware, Beyond the Pale, p. 120.
39 Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context, Routledge, London, 1995, pp. 24-6. For an example in adult adventure stories of similar ideas about the need to preserve the association with femininity and domesticity to prevent the descent into a masculine barbarism, see Rolf Boldrewood, Robbery under Arms, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1990 (Remington, London, 1888), passim. It is through leaving the domestic world of their sister, Aileen, and their mother, and following their father, that Jim and Dick Marston come to grief.
40 Bristow, Empire Boys, p. 37.
Figure 5.2. 'Some rascally bushrangers 'stuck me up'. Capture by bushrangers, representing the dangers of masculinity unrestrained by feminine domesticity and morality. (Source: W. H. G. Kingston, *Australian Adventures*, p. 11).
G. A. Henty, one of Kingston's rivals for the honour of the most successful and productive of nineteenth-century English adventure writers, wrote stories in a similar vein. In *A Final Reckoning: A Tale of Bush Life in Australia* (1886) Henty's hero, Reuben Whitney, is the son of a widow who sails to Australia to escape a shady reputation which has unjustly attached itself to him. He joins the constabulary and becomes a hero by defending settler families from the attentions of degenerate Aborigines and all-male gangs of murderous bushrangers. As he triumphs, he falls in love with Kate Ellison, whom he marries and returns with to England, having in the interim made enough money in Sydney to purchase an English estate. Once again, masculinity is tamed and contained by the defeat of the bushrangers and Peter's marriage to Kate. Despite Henty's reputation as a writer of rollicking tales for boys, domesticity triumphs. Although scorn is poured upon the Aborigines, it is the highly masculine bushrangers, who have rejected femininity and the home in favour of all-male society and bushranging criminality, for whom the most 'deadly hatred' is reserved.  

A *Final Reckoning* promotes many of the themes Henty pursued in almost all of his juvenile fiction. His heroes may have been muscular adventurers, but they always retained their gentility, never lied, and were scrupulously moral. In Henty's adventure, like Kingston's, the young and wild Australian nation was to be tamed through the values of domesticity conquering unrestrained masculinity.

English adventure story writers who appeared after Kingston and Henty continued to write prolifically about Australia into the early twentieth century, increasingly using the Australian interior as a site for adventure, and throwing their heroes against the perils of savage natives, murderous bushrangers, scorching deserts

---

42G. A. Henty, *A Final Reckoning: A Tale of Bush Life in Australia*, Blackie and Son, London, 1887, pp. 199, 227, 315. Aborigines are represented by Henty as dangerous and extremely savage. They 'kill [cattle] from pure mischief and love of slaughter, even when they don't want the meat', and when they attack a station, one of the characters asserts, they kill every man, woman and child, showing no Christian mercy. But it is also stated that it was 'felt to be natural that the natives should resent the occupation of their hunting grounds' and that 'although they were shot down without mercy in fair fight, or if overthrown while carrying off cattle' greater hatred was reserved for bushrangers. These were the men who had turned their back on respectable civil society, a worse crime than Aborigines' ignorance of it.

and vicious storms. English adventure authors would have agreed with the comments of the Australian writer, Donald Macdonald, when he stated in 1901 that 'There is a Darkest Australia as well as a Darkest Africa, and the possibilities of one are as great as the possibilities of the other'. Although such stories tended to feature English characters as the principal heroes, they included heroic Australians, and reflect a change in authorship, away from stay-at-home English writers to Englishmen who spent a considerable amount of time in Australia, prospecting and pioneering, and who seem to have been impressed by the opportunities which the new land afforded. English-born though they were, they frequently came to identify with Australia, and the boundaries between centre and periphery were thus blurred, both in their own minds and in the adventure fiction they wrote.

Alexander Macdonald is probably the best-known author of such stories. Born in Scotland in 1878, he wrote a number of adventures based on his own prospecting and travel experiences in Australia and Papua New Guinea. Those which most directly concern Australia are The Lost Explorers (1907), The Quest of the Black Opals (1908), The Hidden Nugget (1910) and The Invisible Island (1910). These stories were all written according to a formula in which English and Australian-born adventurers team up in expeditions to the uncharted interior spaces of Australia, overcoming a range of foes before eventually emerging with various treasures.

Macdonald's heroes are invariably oppressed by an over-civilised England which they find tame, domesticated and over-crowded, reflecting a widespread late-nineteenth-century myth that the colonial frontier was an ennobling and invigorating place for youth to be. It was thought that men needed to escape the rise of feminism and the increasing regimentation and regulation of society, which combined to create what David Gilmore has described as a time of high 'male-role stress', if they were to

---

45Lees and Macintyre, The Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature, p. 271.
46Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, pp. 3-4.
reclaim their lost masculinity, an idea also common in other nations facing similar challenges, such as the United States. Under threat at home, masculine dominance could be recreated in the imaginative spaces of the fictional frontier, a process McClintock has described as 'the reinvention of the patriarchy'. Rob Wentworth, in The Lost Explorers, exemplifies this when he complains to his pal, Jack Armstrong, that England 'is too crowded for us, and too old. Everything is standardised so accurately that we are little more than machines'. Wentworth fears that they will go through life 'seeing nothing but grime and smoke and rain and fogs, until we become old and brain-sodden'. Modern society does not allow for the exercise of many qualities, so the young men must escape to the frontier. Similarly, Jack Meredith of The Quest of the Black Opals has to leave England to seek his fortune, while Frank Brandon, an Australian boy who has travelled to London in The Hidden Nugget, decides to return to Australia because 'a life of adventure was much preferable to one of drudgery, which seemed to be about the best that the old country could offer'. England is constructed as an old and worn-out land, whereas Australia provides opportunities for adventure and the development and employment of heroic masculine characteristics.

The Lost Explorers is typical of the Macdonald formula. Rob Wentworth and Jack Armstrong decide to sail for Australia to pursue adventure, eventually accompanying 'Big Mackay', a burly Scot and experienced prospector who has spent a lot of time in Australia. They join with some of Mackay's friends, good simple Australian gold-mining folk called 'Nugget Dick', 'The Shadow', 'Dead Broke Dan', 'Emu Bill' and 'Never Never Dan', in Western Australia. They strike it rich, partly

---

8McClintock, Imperial Leather, pp. 16-17.
11Loves and Macintyre, The Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature, p. 271. Macdonald based the character of Mackay upon himself.
due to Bob’s intelligence and chemistry skills which see him formulate a method for extracting gold from an unpromising soapy substance they have all struck in their mineshafts.\(^{52}\) Bob’s secret is eventually stolen by Macguire and his gang of ruffians, but Bob and the others care little, for they have already resolved to join Mackay on an expedition into the Never Never land in search of even greater riches, and the remains of Mackay’s friends who he believes died there on an earlier expedition.

The group overcome thirst, fears that they are lost, and hostile Aborigines, eventually arriving at a mysterious mountain veiled in mist. After entering a secret tunnel they emerge in a luxurious forest where they find Mackay’s old friends being held captive by Aborigines. Gold is so plentiful in this inaccessible El Dorado that even the plates the white men eat off are made of gold. Although treated well by the Aborigines, one of Mackay’s friends explains that neither they, nor their would-be rescuers, are likely to be released by the natives, descendants from a once advanced civilisation who wish to remain undisturbed and who thus pursue a ‘policy of isolation, which is now almost part of their creed’.\(^{53}\) The whites finally triumph by managing an escape, making their way back to civilisation with rich treasure.

Hidden treasures, hostile Aborigines, the Australian natural environment, and unscrupulous miners and gem-buyers feature as obstacles to the triumph of manliness in all of Macdonald’s stories. Australia, at least beyond the frontier, is a place of opportunity, but also of danger. The white rational masculine can be physically and sexually annihilated by the hostile feminine terrain, or racially overcome by

\(^{52}\) Macdonald, The Lost Explorers, p. 134. Typifying the glorification of youth over experience in many adventure stories, Bob explains that his youth has been an important factor in enabling him to discover the extraction process:

> As for my youth...I won’t allow that that should entitle me to any credit, for the same brain is with us always, and surely, when it is young, and fully developed, it should be able to grasp and evolve theories which, when older, it would hesitate to accept. The beaten track is so hard to forsake when one grows old in text-book experience.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 300.
Aboriginality. Racial identity and physical existence are under threat. So too are reason and rationality, qualities which were generally associated with masculinity, whereas femininity was the domain of the mysterious, spiritual and irrational.\textsuperscript{34} In the preface to The Quest of the Black Opals Macdonald warns his readers that ‘the country in which Nature has so sarcastically lavished her opal treasures is...one in which no man should sojourn long, unless he can successfully fight the subtle spell which steals over all’.\textsuperscript{55} For Jack Meredith and Dick Gorman, the boundary of civilisation is on the Darling River; when the steamer they are on sailing up the Darling overturns, they are told that they should not be surprised, for the are now in the ‘land of upside-down’. Jack and Dick are fortunately prepared for this, a friendly voice having already warned them:

\begin{quote}
“You are young, and the dread grip of the desert has not yet got hold of you. Fight against its insidious influence, listen not to the whispers of its fascinating solitude, for once you do, you are for life a victim of the most subtle spell on earth. There is an intense, yea, an irresistible glamour in the unknown, that none who have ever crossed the Darling can resist. The spirit of the west lures them on until only their bleaching bones are left.”\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

In the desert all is strange. Blacks are kings rather than whites, there is no water and civilisation has not yet arrived. Superstition and savagery predominate over reason and enlightenment.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{34}McCIntock, Imperial Leather, pp. 21-31.
\textsuperscript{56}ibid., p. 74.
\end{flushright}
Triumphing over the land, its unknowability and its threat to rationality and reason are as much the mission of the adventurer as the gathering of riches. Adventure stories constituted a site for the articulation of beliefs concerning race, nation and gender, and the Australian outback formed the geographical location where the contests between 'good' and 'bad' were played out. In Macdonald’s stories the thuggery of villainous gem-hunters and unscrupulous miners, the savagery of hostile natives, and the hardships and threats of the landscape are defeated by the white masculine rationality, brains, and scientific pugilism of the heroes. Although heroes such as Jack Meredith and Dick Gordon feel the influence of the desert (for example, they find that it makes them melancholy and superstitious), they do not succumb, as has Corrugated Sam, a man they meet on their travels who has become like the Aborigines, and thus degenerated into the ‘other’. The qualities of the masculine triumph over the feminine. Adventures which initially appear to be an escape from civilisation are thus not an escape at all. They are an extension of civilisation, impressing the qualities of white masculinity upon the empty and feminine interior spaces of Australia. Disorder is ordered, and the upside-down righted. The white man defeats the black man, and the moral and lawful heroes defeat the viciousness and lawlessness of the bushranger. The foreign, unknown and untamed are claimed, demystified and conquered.

The adventure type promoted by Macdonald differs in two principal aspects from that of Kingston. First, he is possessed of much more identifiably masculine qualities. Macdonald’s heroes are invariably hardy, physical and tough, and have shed, in most cases, their connections with feminine domesticity. Women make only fleeting appearances in his stories, feminine religiosity is rarely evident, and heroes operate outside the day-to-day life of a domestic household. Conquering the land

57ibid., pp. 340-1. They do, however, come close. Many of their gang are superstitious wrecks towards the end of the story, believing that they have seen the bunyip and will thus die. It is not until the New Chum swims around the billabong where the bunyip supposedly resides that their fears are allayed. The New Chum tells them: 'the people who believe in bunyips are those who have lived so long away from civilisation that they have fallen under the spell of this grim land, and their excited fancy plays them tricks'.
through adventure, rather than settlement, is their goal. Secondly, there is a much greater ambiguity about the point of departure for the hero. For Kingston, Australia is a foreign land, so his heroes are, or recently were, Englishmen. However, Macdonald’s imagination of Australia is somewhat different, probably due to his having spent a considerable amount of time in Australia exploring and prospecting. ‘Civilised’ Australia is not so much of a foreign space to him, so his heroes are both British and Australian. It is the wisdom of the British, such as Bob Wentworth, coupled with the local knowledge of many Australians, which makes for successful adventures. Manliness is no longer so closely linked to Britishness, because the identification of centre and the periphery have shifted and become less certain.

Macdonald’s concern to separate masculinity from femininity and the desire to possess and conquer the Australian landscape are both reflected in, and reflect, the gendering of the Australian landscape. Literary gendering of the colonial landscape has been explored by a number of authors, such as Kay Schaffer, Rebecca Stott and Anne McClinton. The latter two have looked at the most famous example in boys’ adventure stories, the African landscape in Henry Rider Haggard’s King Solomon’s Mines (1885). In this story, white explorers traverse the African landscape guided by a map drawn by a failed treasure-hunter, de Silvestre, several centuries earlier. The map is explicitly sexualised, drawn to represent an inverted naked female body, laid bare for the masculine gaze and masculine exploration. Drawn, according to McClinton, in male body fluids (blood) with a phallic instrument (a ‘cleft bone’), the map features mountains known as ‘Sheba’s Breasts’. The description given by Haggard leaves little doubt that he deliberately drew these mountains as part of a feminine body representing the landscape:

\[\text{\cite{Schaffer, Women and the Bush, p. 62.}}\]

\[\text{\cite{McClinton, Imperial Leather, p. 3.}}\]
These mountains...are shaped after the fashion of a woman’s breasts and at times the mists and shadows beneath them take the form of a recumbent woman, veiled mysteriously in sleep. Their bases swell gently from the plain...and upon the tip of each is a vast hillock covered with snow, exactly corresponding to the nipple on the female breast.  

After ascending Sheba’s Breasts the adventurers journey across the ‘belly’ via Solomon’s Road to the ‘pubic mound’. As McClintock explains,

this mound is named the “Three Witches” and is figured by a triangle of three hills covered in “dark heather”. This dark triangle both points to and conceals the entrances to two forbidden passages: the “mouth of the treasure cave” – the vaginal entrance into which the men are led by the black mother, Gagool – and, behind it, the anal pit from which the men will eventually crawl with the diamonds, in a male birthing ritual which leaves the black mother, Gagool, lying dead within.  

The men’s adventures in the cave are metaphors for the relationship of colonisers and the land and for the relations between masculine and feminine. Haggard’s Africa is ‘the testing ground for white male adventure, the landscape of adolescent fantasy’ in which masculine imperialism encounters the feminine landscape and eventually emerges in triumph.  

---


62McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 3.

pit, the men are trapped, and although they escape with only part of the enormous
treasure they have discovered, they nonetheless survive against overwhelming odds
and acquire great wealth.

The landscape of the empire is desirable, something men want to possess. But
in Haggard’s fiction it is clear that it is also dangerous. Lifting the veil of the
feminine, possessing the feminine, crossing the landscape and pursuing treasure, are
all potentially rewarding, but dangerous activities. The men, their adventure and
masculinity are all threatened and are lucky to survive their journey. On the landscape
of Africa, therefore, the masculine fear of emasculation is announced and overcome,
and the adventurers prove their manliness by eventually emerging triumphant through
a ritualistic possessing.

Macdonald is one of a number of Australian writers who used similar imagery
to express their fears for masculinity and the masculine project of controlling and
exploiting the Australian continent. In The Lost Explorers, the mountain to which
Jack, Bob, Mackay and their companions journey, deep in the Australian desert, has
bubbling and steaming mineral pools and is wrapped in a feminine veil of mist,
obscured by a ‘swelling, white haze’ and ‘dense white vapours’.64 The party, happy to
be ‘penetrating untrodden tracts’ in their journey, discover access to ‘a narrow, tunnel-
like entrance penetrating into the mountain’ which can be reached only by crossing ‘a
treacherous ravine’, or a ‘deep recess’.65 Eventually the party blast a way into the
tunnel when they find that the secret entrance can not be accessed, and find the tunnel
to be lined with ‘beaded moisture’ and ‘adrip with ooze’.66 After emerging into an El
Dorado on the other side (which has a luxuriant forest which may be compared to
Haggard’s ‘dark heather’), the party are trapped, and have to escape. By the time they
do so, they are covered in mud, while for the journey they have cloaked themselves in

64Macdonald. The Lost Explorers, pp. 267, 271.
65ibid., pp. 293-5.
66ibid., p. 319.
a disguise, blackening their faces and dressing themselves in animal skins. They have
descended into primitiveness in entering the feminine, and their escape, similar to that
of the heroes of *King Solomon’s Mines*, might also be considered a ‘male birthing
ritual’. 67 (See Figure 5.3).

A McClintock-style reading is a little more difficult for *The Lost Explorers*
than for Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*. The map which the party follows is not
explicitly sexualised, there is no equivalent for Sheba’s Breasts, and the symbolism of
the mountain is not as explicit or well-ordered. In a lively debate in the mid-1980s
Robert Darnton suggested that we can learn much from the symbolic reading of texts,
establishing the symbolic value of signs by moving from text to context and back
again. Roger Chartier has pointed out the dangers in such an approach, suggesting that
symbols are not ‘shared like the air we breathe’, but are instead ‘unstable, mobile,
equivocal’. We thus face the problem, he argues, that all symbols are signs, but not all
signs are symbols – they may be ‘empty signifiers’. 68 However, the use of terms such
as ‘penetration’ to describe the possession of the ‘virgin’ land, the description of the
tunnel and its entrances and the copying of imagery from Haggard make such a
reading appear at least feasible. 69 Masculine possession of the feminine landscape was
expressed in miniature by entering the tunnel and finding its riches. Fears of
masculine civilisation being defeated by the feminine landscape were assembled in
miniature in the idea of being trapped within the tunnel, and the risk of being
annihilated within by its guardians, the hostile Aborigines.

The persuasiveness of such a reading is added to by the frequency of narratives
which describe entry into secret caves where treasure can be found. In *The Invisible

---
67McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 3.
68Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. Penguin,
notes that terms such as ‘virgin soil’ to describe the land carry with them ‘the implication of a male
possessor who would reproduce himself on and in it’.
Figure 5.3. Stamping white masculinity upon the Australian landscape. (Source: Alexander Macdonald, *The Lost Explorers*, cover illustration).
Island (1911) Macdonald has his heroes discovering treasure which has been hidden away in a secret cave in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The island, like the mountain in The Lost Explorers, is veiled in mist, and access is difficult. Secret caves also appear in Joseph Bowes’ Pals (1910), Oliphant Smeaton’s The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains (1898), Robert Macdonald’s The Opal Hunters (1912), and Ernest Favenc’s The Secret of the Australian Desert (1896). The symbolism of the treasure hidden in the secret cave or tunnel appears to have been widely exploited in those stories which most forcefully seek to narrate a masculine possession of the feminine landscape. They are not present, for example, in the work of Kingston and Henty where the categories of masculine civilisation and feminine nature are not as clearly drawn.

Although Alexander Macdonald’s stories display a greater interest in the development of the Australian nation and confuse the relation between centre and periphery, the development of a literary nationalism in the Australian boys’ adventure story was a slow process. This was partly a result of the lack of demand in Australia for locally produced literature until late in the nineteenth century, but was also a function of the inability, which Robert Dixon has explored, to imagine ‘Australian’ as distinct from English, but also as a separate category from England’s barbaric or degenerate ‘others’.70

This is clearly demonstrated in Donald Macdonald and John Edgar’s The Warrigal’s Well (1901). The story of Jasper Meredith and Allan Ogilvie, two English investment agents searching for mineral deposits in the heart of Australia, The Warrigal’s Well is a stinging attack upon the Australian colonial project and all that is identifiably Australian. The Englishmen are the brave, loyal and chivalrous heroes, and the novel employs the usual adventures with native wildlife, hostile Aborigines and struggles through the desert. Where Macdonald and Edgar differ from most other

70See Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, p. 11.
authors is in their deliberate attacks upon the supposedly admirable characters in the development of the Australian colonies. The native police, usually admired as an example and symbol of the successful assimilation of the Aborigines, are incriminated through their brutal treatment of unassimilated tribes. After finding two prospectors speared by Aborigines, for example, the native police extract revenge upon a nearby tribe. Battle turns to massacre when the native police slaughter the wounded.\(^1\)

Further criticism of white Australia’s attitude towards the Aborigines is made when White, a stockman on a Queensland station where the heroes have temporarily stopped off, sees a cow that has been speared as he and Ogilvie are mustering. White expresses a desire to return to the homestead to gather reinforcements so that they can give the Aborigines ‘pepper’. Ogilvie tells him: ‘you’re not going to shoot all the blacks in Australia because you happen to find a cow speared’. He implicitly questions the right of white Australians to dispossess Aborigines at all: ‘It’s the price you pay for trespassing in their country, and if the price be not made too heavy the cattle owners have little to grumble of’.\(^2\)

White is an Australian stockman, a symbol of the Australian nation for Australian authors such as ‘Banjo’ Paterson, but Macdonald and Edgar portray the type in largely negative terms. They state that stockmen might be turned into good cavalry, but are ‘Slow of speech, many of them...slow of comprehension’, while the culture of the bush, such as bush ballads, is also mocked.\(^3\) White turns out to be a villainous character, and his villainy is linked to the legendary values of the

\(^1\)Macdonald and Edgar, *The Warrigal’s Well*, p. 92. The heroes, not surprisingly, want no part of it and determine that ‘never again should we even as onlookers witness a raid by the black police’.

\(^2\)ibid., p. 145.

\(^3\)ibid., p. 142. The narrator relates:

Most of the bushman’s songs appear to be written after the fashion of Irish ‘Come-all-ye’s,’ in exaltation of outlaws or to the discomfiture of ‘traps’ – as the police are called. Sometimes they deal with ridicule of new chums and hawkers, or prove that a shearer is necessarily the noblest work of God.
Australian outback. When White and Ogilvie are lost in the desert, White drinks the last of their water, depriving Ogilvie of his fair share and prompting an irate outburst from his companion:

"Damn you!" he shouted, "damn you for a pitiful cur. You've killed me to get a few more hours of life for yourself. Is there any manliness in you at all? Is this the mateship of which Australians boast? Oh, you cowardly hound, why shouldn't I kill you now, like the dog you are?" 74

The definition of the admirable masculine adventurer as English, and his antithesis as Australian, is the all the more noteworthy for the fact that Macdonald at least was Australian-born. Clearly, for some Australians, Australia could still be imagined and constructed as a foreign land, located at the periphery while England remained at the centre.

But slow as it may have been to come, literary nationalism did influence the construction of masculinity in the Australian adventure story. Australian writers began creating Australian heroes who ventured, initially beyond the civilised portions of Australia, and later beyond Australia, into the unknown or unmastered where they defeated the enemies of the new nation. As an imaginative construct, Australia was gradually shifted to the centre while the interior and, later, the enemies of the British Empire and potential invaders of Australia, became the periphery.

The idea of the good Australian triumphing over bushrangers and hostile Aborigines is common in children's literature from the 1890s, a basic theme employed in stories such as E. Davenport Cleland's The White Kangaroo: A Tale of

74Ibid., p. 180.
Colonial Life (1890) and E. T. Hooley’s Tarragai: Or, Bush Life in Australia, (1897). These are similar to stories by Kingston and Henty in their religious impulse. Manliness is moral, religious, respectable and domestic, and embraces the qualities of femininity as much as those of masculinity. Christian charity and morality are emphasised over savagery, and the qualities of manliness are of the community of God rather than the nation.

Questions of national identity and the construction of a peculiarly Australian masculinity are, however, much more thoroughly explored in Ernest Favenc’s and Oliphant Smeaton’s adventures, in which civilised Australian males travel beyond civilised Australian society to battle the nation’s enemies. Robert Dixon has convincingly argued that Australian identity was produced in popular literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through a need to distinguish Australia from England, without lapsing into the ‘otherness’ of Asia or Aboriginality.75 Although Favenc does not much concern himself with differentiating Australia and Australian masculinity from Englishness, he does express the tensions of Australian identity in the need to remain free from the category of ‘other’ by dominating the feminine landscape and its Aboriginal inhabitants.

Favenc was born in England, and came to Australia in 1863 as an eighteen-year-old. He spent sixteen years in North and Central Queensland, led pioneering expeditions in South Australia, and wrote prolifically, contributing more than fifty stories to the Bulletin in the early 1890s.76 In the words of Cheryl Taylor, ‘Writing seems to have presented itself to him as an extension into the imaginative and intellectual spheres of his nation-building tasks as an explorer, station worker, miner and drover’.77 The violence of his activities (he participated in Aboriginal ‘dispersals’

75Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, p. 11.
77Ibid., p. xxvi.
himself) is frequently reflected in his writing, and his attitudes strike the modern reader as far from enlightened.\(^78\)

Favenc's *The Secret of the Australian Desert*, originally published as a serial in the *Queenslander* in 1890, is the story of two expeditions into the heart of Australia. Morton, Brown and Charlie, along with Billy the 'nigger', are adventurers in search of the mythical 'burning mountain' in the Australian interior. Along the way they discover the remnants of an expedition led by Dr Ludwig Leichhardt, which had set out to travel from Brisbane to Perth in 1848. Thanks to the discovery of the diary of Stuart, one of Leichhardt's party, the story of Leichhardt's expedition is also revealed, so the story comprises the narratives of two adventures. The two narratives are essentially one of failure and one of success. Leichhardt's expedition is a failure because the leader dies in the desert, it does not reach its desired goal, and one of the party, Murphy, becomes one of the Aborigines, joining a cannibalistic tribe. When Morton's party discuss Murphy's participation in cannibalism they agree that he must have gone mad, for 'any white man, no matter how slow his intellect, would prefer death'.\(^79\) Aboriginality and madness thus represent the same fall into an irrational, barbaric 'otherness' from white, moral, and sane masculinity.\(^80\)

In contrast, Stuart, another of Leichhardt's ill-fated party, manages to avoid such a descent, as revealed in his diaries. The fears that Favenc holds for the fate of Australia are voiced through Stuart, for although Stuart is rescued from certain death in the desert by a friendly tribe of Aborigines, he records in his diary that 'I will become a savage like those around me, and forget what I was'.\(^81\) To remain free from

\(^{78}\textit{ibid.}, pp. 194, xv. See also Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, pp. 70-1.\)


\(^{80}\text{Favenc explored the idea of a descent into madness in several of his other stories. See, for example, 'A Haunt of the Jinkarras' and 'Spirit-Led', both of which are collected in *Tales of the Austral Topics*. See also his other boys' story, *Marooned on Australia: Being the Narration by Diedrich Bux of His Discoveries and Exploits in Terra Australia Incognita about the Year 1630*, Blackie and Son, London, 1896.}\)

\(^{81}\text{Favenc, *The Secret of the Australian Desert*, p. 98.}\)
the category of the ‘other’, Stuart must avoid the fate that has befallen Murphy. He writes:

“Murphy is dull and intractable; he has sunk to the level of his savage companions. O God, have pity on me, for I shall never see my countrymen again! Surrounded by deserts, impassable to me on foot, I must drag out my life here, hoping for the succour that will come too late to save me.”

However, rather than becoming like the Aborigines, Stuart comes to know them, helps friendly tribes defend themselves against the cannibalistic Warlatts, and teaches them to cultivate vegetables, clothe themselves and use basic writing. Stuart is the model of the good frontiersman who holds onto his white manliness. He reflects in his journal when he fears that he is about to die: ‘I thank God that though I have lived amongst these savages, I have not sunk down to be one of them in their habits, but rather have taught them better things’.

Although Stuart resists the descent into barbarism, others perish and Leichhardt’s expedition is ultimately a failure. Morton’s is more successful. After encountering the cannibalistic Warlatts, they explore the mysterious burning mountain (and its tunnels), discover Stuart’s journals, and find relics of a lost civilisation. They also discover gold and defeat the surviving Warlatts, most of whom have already been killed when they cave they live in collapses, in battle. The last of the Warlatts are ruthlessly shot down with revolvers from horseback. (See Figure 5.4). The land is thus known, exploited and tamed, and white civilisation is

---

82 Ibid., pp. 101-2.
83 Ibid., p. 150.
Figure 5.4. ‘The last of the bloodthirsty Warlattas’. Extermination of the native population in the making of a ‘civilised’ Australian national identity. (Source: Ernest Favenc, *The Secret of the Australian Desert*, frontispiece).
inscribed upon the Australian interior. Savage people and places, the ‘others’ of white masculinity, are either destroyed or colonised.\textsuperscript{44}

This is the essence of the colonial project. The land must be mastered, brought to order, and exploited for the advance of the Anglo-Saxon race, as revealed by Morton’s comments to a companion:

“\textquote{Yes, it's about as hopeless a looking picture as one could find anywhere at present. And yet, if the artesian water is found to extend throughout the interior, it will change the whole face of the Australian earth in time.... No, burn this scrub off, or clear it somehow, and with a good supply of artesian water, there are a hundred and one payable products that could grow here.... I believe the end of the coming century will see it [Australia] settled from east to west throughout.}”\textsuperscript{45}

The Australian interior, already penetrated and exploited by Morton’s party through their entry into it and the discovery of gold, can be laid bare, mastered, and made to bear fruit. White masculine civilisation can triumph over the savage, black and feminine interior.

The ‘other’ in Favenc’s \textit{The Secret of the Australian Desert} is principally the ‘uncivilised’, ‘savage’ and ‘barbarous’ Aborigine. Oliphant Smeaton’s \textit{The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains} also seeks to define white masculinity, but more by reference to opposites which are English and criminal, rather than an antithetical racial construct. Smeaton’s story is of three friends, all former miners, named John Cameron (Jack), William Arbuthnot (Billy) and Arthur Roberts (Bobbin). Having made some

\textsuperscript{44}Phillips, \textit{Mapping Men and Empire}, pp. 81-3.
\textsuperscript{45}Favenc, \textit{The Secret of the Australian Desert}, p. 213.
money from mining, they have settled down in Sydney, but Jack finds this existence ‘stale, flat and unprofitable’ and yearns for more adventure.\textsuperscript{86} An appropriate opportunity presents itself when a friend of Jack’s, John Cardiff, alerts them to the presence of a treasure buried in a secret cave in the Blue Mountains, stored there by convicts who had recovered it from a Spanish shipwreck.

The men are accompanied in their quest for the treasure by Leila Cardiff, John Cardiff’s beautiful eighteen-year-old daughter, who is the only one who knows where the treasure is located. Together they enter the lawless Blue Mountains, ‘the resort of all the scum of society, all those desperate characters whom justice or their own crimes have driven beyond the pale of law and order’.\textsuperscript{87} After a number of fights against Black Bob and his gang of ruffians, the treasure is found inside a cave with a secret entrance and is removed. The adventurers profit to the tune of a quarter of a million pounds each, and the story ends with Leila’s father agreeing to her being married to Jack Cameron, the two having fallen in love during the course of the expedition.

Australian national identity and Australian masculinity are distinguished carefully from Englishness. Notably, the convicts who removed the gold from the shipwreck are portrayed as victims rather than criminals, and their leader is described as a ‘noble fellow’.\textsuperscript{88} He had been transported for ‘shooting a great personage for trifling with his daughter’, while D’Arcy Thornton, the only one to escape the authorities and pass on the secret of the treasure’s whereabouts, ‘was also one on whom the absurd criminal laws of England in those days had affixed the stigma of convict, although he was utterly undeserving of it’.\textsuperscript{89} There are a number of anti-English remarks made in the narrative. It is observed, for example, that numbers of

\textsuperscript{86}Oliphant Smeaton, \textit{The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains}, Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1898, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{87}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 40-1.
\textsuperscript{88}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{89}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.
the sons of ‘good old English families’ have sunk into the lower strata of colonial society and ‘are either loafing about colonial cities, trading on their gentility for a pot of ale, or go to swell the flotsam and jetsam of the “back blocks”’. 90 It is also notable that Jack Cameron is of Celtic rather than Anglo-Saxon origin. Whatever Australia and Australian masculinity are to be, they are not English. This contrasts sharply with earlier narratives, such as those of Kingston and Henty, in which the heroes are invariably English, and in which convict society is represented as depraved. Reuben Whitney, for example, was made ‘almost sick’ by the thought that he only narrowly escaped having to ‘spend the rest of his life herding with men such as these’. 91

Like the desert in other adventure stories, the Blue Mountains are used by Smeaton as a site where the admirable qualities of masculinity can triumph over undesirable elements. The bush is a place of lawlessness and disorder, where Black Bob and his gang have thrived. They, and particularly Black Bob himself, represent the descent of masculinity into barbarism and bestiality, evident in the description of Black Bob:

He was a tall, strongly-built man, with a countenance stamped with the capacity for every description of evil and crime. No one could look on his lowering brows and full sensuous lips without perceiving that before them stood a man in whom every bestial and animal instinct had gained the mastery over his better nature.... He was a merciless, cruel, vindictive villain, to whom wickedness was a delight, and who respected a man the more he steeped his hands in every kind of crime. 92

90ivid., pp. 30-1.
91Henty, A Final Racketing, pp. 110-11.
92Smeaton, The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains, p. 114.
Black Bob and his gang are murderers, thieves and drunkards, and when they capture Leila they make thinly-veiled threats of rape and resolve to flog her into revealing the secret of the whereabouts of the treasure. Along with the English, they are the 'other' against which the noble and chivalrous manliness of Jack Cameron is constructed. In this way Smeaton negotiates the problem of hybridity, illustrating both what Australian masculinity has departed from and what it must not become.

Jack, of course, represents the Australian masculine ideal. He is physically tough, described as 'a veritable son of Anak...cast in the mould of a Hercules'.

He is noble, manly and 'true-hearted', and is entirely chivalrous in his actions towards Leila. In gaining the treasure and defeating, and eventually killing, Black Bob and much of his gang, the masculinity of Jack Cameron is inscribed upon the Australian bush and Australian identity. One possible form of Australian masculinity triumphs over another. (See Figure 5.5).

What makes Jack so different from Black Bob is his continued association with and maintenance of the tenets of civilised behaviour. Both men are physically strong and powerful, but Black Bob has descended through removal from civilisation and his activities against law and order. His masculinity is uncontrolled and allowed to run riot. Jack's, on the other hand, although allowed to thrive, is cultivated and civilised. Manliness results not from masculinity being suppressed, but from it being allowed to flourish in combination with feminine morality, symbolised by Leila. Jack, the masculine, is improved through his contact with and love for Leila, the feminine:

His had been a lonely, desolate existence.... [H]e had never known either a mother's love or a sister's refining influence. His lines in society had been cast wholly amongst men, and seldom had the idealising

---

\(^{93}\)ibid., p. 8.

\(^{94}\)ibid., p. 32.
Figure 5.5. ‘The fight now resolved itself into an effort on the part of either to get his sheath-knife drawn’. Jack fighting Black Bob – the contest to impose the ‘correct’ masculinity upon Australia. (Source Oliphant Smeaton, *The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains*, p. 162).
charm exercised by pure, sympathetic womanhood, 
brightened the harsh realism of his life.

But a new star had now risen over his life, and 
by its light he saw how debased had formerly been even 
his highest aspirations....

All this had been borne home to Cameron since 
his intercourse with her had...re-created Cameron’s 
entire moral nature, stimulating it to higher and nobler 
issues.95

Leila frequently has a leadership role in the expedition, and is rather like the goddess 
Athene watching over her warriors. (See Figure 5.6). She also saves Jack’s life when 
he is about to be stabbed by Lanky Larry, one of Black Bob’s gang. Masculinity is 
thus in the service of, redeemed by, and unfeasible without femininity, while Jack’s 
successful proposal of marriage at the end of the story symbolically links the 
masculine and feminine. Australian masculinity is thus defined by reference to 
English, criminal and bestial ‘others’, and the descent into barbarism in the new 
nation is prevented by the preservation of feminine morality. Manliness is masculine, 
for Jack Cameron is anything but effeminate. But it is not beastliness, and anything 
which represents beastliness or disorder and lawlessness are conquered through the 
preservation and cultivation of qualities located in the feminine sphere, symbolised by 
Leila.

An even greater national self-confidence is evidenced in the writings of Joseph 
Bowes, in which the shift of the centre to the Australian bush and the periphery to 
beyond Australia is taken further than in previous boys’ adventure stories. Bowes’ 
first story, Pals: Young Australians in Sport and Adventure (1910) is a celebration of 
Australian boyhood. Set in the New South Wales bush, the story features floods,

95Ibid., pp. 67-8.
Figure 5.6. ‘Stand back, you vile spy, or I’ll fire’. Leila challenging gender norms in fighting Black Bob and his gang. (Source: Oliphant Smeaton, *The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains*, p. 251).
bushrangers, the discovery of gold, cricket matches, and general boyish fun and amusement. ‘Oh, the merry, merry days of youth! Those are the days of the superlative mood’, writes Bowes. His boys are constructed as ‘real’ boys who get into scrapes, dislike learning at school, and make mistakes. But at the bottom of it they are full of admirable qualities, including loving the bush and being unaffected, brave, hard-working, loyal and courageous. They are contrasted with Neville, a ‘new chum’ Englishmen out on a business tour and wanting to learn something of station life in Australia. He is affected, pompous and delicate, and tells the boys, after they have neglected to ask him out riding one morning, that he would not have wanted to come in any case:

“Oh, I shouldn’t have dreamed of going out at such an early hour my lad.... I nevvah exert myself before breakfast. Besides, I am not sure that I should find a safe escort in a parcel of – er – schoolboys. With the young ladies, now.... I – I – should be delighted to go for a bush ride, as I think these equestrian expeditions are called in Awestralia, in the cool of the afternoon.”

Despite a number of misadventures, Neville eventually comes good and feels ‘the stirrings of a larger and nobler nature than that which had hitherto exercised him’.

---

97 *Ibid.*, p. 21. Their unaffectedness is revealed in Jack’s speech to thank the headmaster of a host school at a rather rough and ready bush version of an inter-school cricket match:

“Mr Chairman’ (addressing the headmaster), ‘I – we – that is – us fellows from Tarecla asked me to tell you – I mean to say, that – that – a – it gives us much pleasure – er – er – oh, hang it all! – I – I – mean – er – this is the jolliest blow in the way of tuck that we’ve ever had.” Jack subsided to the rattle of knives on the bare board.

He becomes manly by shedding the trappings of the Englishman and the businessman, and becoming initiated into the culture of the bush. As in Smeaton’s story, manliness is thus constructed as an Australian characteristic, rather than a purely English attribute.

The location of manliness in the Australian bush is further developed, along with the idea that Australian masculinity was to be directed at off-shore enemies as well as internal ones, in Bowes’ other pre-war adventure story, *Comrades: A Story of the Australian Bush* (1912). This is the story of three boys, Tony Lanarch, Sam Potts and Jack Joyce, who go to spend some time at Tony’s uncle’s station in the remote Northern Territory. In an arena far removed from any feminine influence, the boys are able to give free rein to their masculine attributes and inclinations, using their physical hardiness, stoicism and resourcefulness for shooting, hunting, surviving jungle storms and being lost in the bush, and quelling unregenerate and hostile Aborigines. Much of the story is sickeningly racist. Rod Murchison, for example, the uncle, tells the boys of how he and his men had recently pursued some ‘niggers’ who had been spearing his cattle. After capturing the ‘rascally blacks’, two of them were beaten with a rod to teach them a lesson, and although they were suitably penitent, it is made clear that the Aborigines’ assurances of better behaviour in the future are not to be trusted.100

It thus comes as no surprise when the boys discover that Aborigines have stolen a portion of Murchison’s stock, and set out in pursuit. But the boys are captured and taken to the headquarters of the Aboriginal tribe. The tone towards the Aborigines is extraordinarily derisive. They are described as ‘lazy’, ‘fiendish’ and ‘cruel’, and are allegedly ‘cannibals’, but an alliance is forged between the Aborigines and the white boys to fight a savage band of Malay fishermen who have recently raided the Aboriginal camp and carried away a number of the young women.101

101*ibid*, pp. 251, 219, 228, 225.
The alliance is significant because it marks two related developments in the ideal of manliness presented in Australian boys’ adventure stories. First, if Aborigines and white Australians can combine in the masculine project of defending the nation from Asian enemies, then the previous racial element to the manly ideal is weakened and even undermined. The dichotomies of white righteousness and black villainy are rendered inoperable. The dichotomy is also challenged in Alexander Macdonald’s *The Invisible Island* (1911), in which Asians are again constructed as the principal enemy of Australia. Mackay explains to one of his friends the threat that the Chinese pose to Australia and its honest white men, for they are allegedly brutal and have ‘a vera bad habit of experimenting on a fellow’s anatomy with their knives, an’ sometimes try to find out how long a white man can live with a silk scarf twisted round his windpipe’. Mackay also tells of how the Chinese also threaten to overrun Australia and states that ‘I shouldn’t be surprised if some day they swarm south from here all over Australia an’ make it their own country’. Rather than Aborigines threatening white society, racial fears are now expressed as Asian people threatening the Australian nation. When two of the prospectors are captured, they are glad it is by Aborigines and not the Chinese, for ‘natives would only kill them, but the latter would torture them first, as they had done many white prospectors before’. Notably, the Aborigines have more of a quarrel with the Chinese than with the prospectors, as one of the prospectors’ captors tells them:

“Black fellows friends of white men who look for yellow stuff, but they no’ friends with yellow man with tail coming out of his head. Bymbye warriors catch ‘em all, an’ my word! God save the King! Won’t we have budgerie corroboree!”

---

103 *ibid.*, p. 190.
104 *ibid.*, p. 192.
Macdonald stops short of developing a strategic alliance between white Australia and Aborigines in the face of greater threats from Asian invaders, but the possibilities are at least hinted at and the good white/bad Aborigine dichotomies which characterised his earlier stories are disturbed. There is thus a hint of manliness being redefined, from white masculinity directed at overcoming the internal enemies of Australian society, to Australian masculinity directed at defeating racial and national enemies from overseas.105

Such a shift is indicative of changing attitudes towards Aborigines in much Australian children’s literature in the first decades of the twentieth century, and some debate about the place Aborigines occupied in the national project. The interest in and uncertainty about the indigenous people of Australia is reflected in stories such as Joseph Bowes’ The New Chums: A Jungle Story (1915) in which two boys, Alan and Lionel, are shipwrecked on the north coast of Australia. The boys are eventually and predictably rescued and returned to white society, but what is notable is that there is a much greater respect for, and serious attempt to convey, elements of Aboriginal culture than in previous stories by authors such as Kingston, Henty, the Macdonalds, Favenc, and Bowes himself. Simplistic though the Aborigines might be, and although it is stated that extremely savage tribes do exist, it is noted that ‘as a whole the Australian aborigine is not a bloodthirsty creature’ and that ‘they are pacifically inclined, and unless evilly treated, need not be dreaded’.106 Interest in and romanticisation of Aboriginal society also prompted Mary Grant Bruce to write The Stone Axe of Burkamukk (1922). Thinking it ‘would be a pity if the native races of our country were to vanish altogether’ before their legends had been recorded, she sought to preserve some of them for posterity.107 With Australia securely established as a

---

105 Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure, pp. 136-7. Dixon notes the rise of the invasion story, and that fears after 1905 tended to focus upon Japan as the potential invader.
107 Mary Grant Bruce, The Stone Axe of Burkamukk, Ward, Lock and Co., Melbourne, 1922, pp. 5-6. She states in the foreword:
white nation, and with Aborigines no longer a threat to white society, the emphasis moved from extermination or distancing to assimilation. The descent into Aboriginality feared by authors such as Favenc was no longer a possibility. Threats to the Australian nation came from outside, shifting the frontier dividing ‘us’ from ‘them’ to overseas.

In boys’ adventure stories to 1920, this shift reached its culmination in Joseph Bowes’ three war stories for boys, *The Young Anzacs* (1915), *The Anzac War Trail* (1919) and *The Aussie Crusaders* (1920). These stories revolve around the war adventures of a band of quintessentially Australian war heroes, the main one being Jack Smith. Descended from ‘one of the bold pioneers who, greatly daring, accepted the hazards...which made life often a grim affair’, Jack also has Aboriginal blood in his veins, for his grandmother was a ‘half-caste’.

After doing very well at the grammar school to which he is sent – at seventeen he was captain of both the football and cricket teams – Jack resolves to go up-country because, in the fashion of Australian heroes of the period, he does not want to live in the city and hates the thought of a mercantile or bank occupation. He thus becomes a kangaroo hunter before hearing of the outbreak of the war in Europe and rushing, like so many Australians, to enlist ‘in obedience to the divine instinct of patriotism’.

Jack’s Aboriginal heritage marks the symbolic unity of all Australia in the fight for the British Empire. Whoever doesn’t want to fight is clearly unpatriotic and selfish in refusing to accept the demands imposed upon them by citizenship. When Jack meets such a man, ‘one of the wasters and shirkers who are no credit to any

---

We are apt to look on the blacks as utter barbarians, but, as we read their own old stories, we see that they were boys and girls, men and women, not so unlike us in many ways, and that they could admire what we admire in each other, and condemn what we would condemn.

---


country', who claims that the war is engineered by the capitalists and has nothing to do with Australia, Jack beats him in a fist-fight.\textsuperscript{110} Fortunately, shirkers such as the man Jack fights are in the minority. Most are, like Jack, ‘born anew in the glad surrender of his free spirit to the holy cause of his country’.\textsuperscript{111}

The trilogy develops into a vehicle for the propagation of a series of Australian war myths designed to present the war to children as holy, justified, and glorious for Australia. Australia and its soldiers are contrasted with other countries and their fighting men to construct the idealised Australian male as the man from the bush who displays qualities of valour, bravery, resourcefulness, physical power and patriotism in fighting for Australia and the British Empire against the heathen masses of the Middle East. The fact that Jack comes from bush identifies him as a ‘real’ Australian and also reflects the widespread feeling in the early twentieth century that the cities were breeding effeminate men and that the defenders of the nation would have to come from the bush.\textsuperscript{112}

At its most basic level, the war against the Turks is presented by Bowes as a conflict between the forces of Christianity, civilisation and light against those of heathenism and darkness, fought by ‘soldiers of the cross’ against ‘Mohammedan usurpers’.\textsuperscript{113} Bowes’ concern to add a stronger religious element to the war than most writers is no doubt partly a reflection of his being a Methodist minister.\textsuperscript{114} But national stereotypings remain central. Germans have been a negative influence in the Middle East, mistreat prisoners, and sacrifice all that is sacred to military necessity. Indeed there is something of the anti-Christ about the manner in which the Germans turn Calvary into a rifle range, and the Garden of Gethsemane into a ‘parade ground for

\textsuperscript{110}ibid., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{111}ibid., p. 54.
\textsuperscript{112}See also Charles H. Kirmess (Frank Fox), The Australian Crisis, Walter Scott Publishing Co., London, 1908, pp. 148-9. Japanese spies underestimate Australia’s resistance to invasion by assuming that the indolence of city culture is typical of Australian men.
\textsuperscript{113}Bowes, The Young Anzacs, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{114}Lees and Macintyre, The Oxford Companion to Australian Children’s Literature, p. 62.
Mohammedan recruits'. The Turks, on the other hand, are presented as brave and
noble soldiers, fair fighters who treat prisoners of war with due decency. Yet away
from the battlefield, removed from its codes of honour, there is also a brutal side to
the Turks. They torture Arab prisoners, and, encouraged by the Germans, who are 'the
dizzy limit for dishonour and cruelty', are poor and cruel imperial masters. Their
brutality and incompetence provide the philosophical justification for pushing them
out of Palestine and Jerusalem, thus allowing the British to take over and remove 'the
dead hand of Ottoman rule...from the oppressed peoples of that ancient land'.

In such war adventures, the frontier is effectively shifted from outback
Australia to the Gallipoli Peninsula and the Arabian deserts. It is a mystic and
disordered space, occupied by people whose minds work in ways fundamentally
different from those of rational Western men. As on the Australian frontier and in
the desert, Australian soldiers have to battle thirst and sun-stroke, and struggle against
an untamed and hostile landscape as well as a human enemy. Just as white Christian
masculinity had to be stamped on the Australian landscape, so too does it have to be
pressed upon Arabian spaces, mastering the feminine landscape and its people.

The similarity between the Australian frontier and the Middle Eastern
battlefields is further revealed in the way Bowes likens rounding up Turks to 'ringing

---

116 For example, the Turks do not bomb hospital tents, and even request that the Red Cross markings be
increased in size to avoid accidental air strikes.
p. 263.
118 *ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
119 Bowes, *The Anzac War-Trail*, p. 69. Bowes observes:

One’s conduct is usually determined by one’s viewpoint. The
viewpoint of the eastern is unimaginable to the western, and vice
versa. However...the eastern may be modified by western ideas he
will retain certain of his racial characteristics, super-imposed for
the time being by the modern stratum of culture. Let a crisis
happen, however, and the older traits burst through their covering.

The mysticism of the eastern mind is like that of the Aborigine, and serves as an index of racial
inferiority.
the big mobs of half-wild cattle to the musketry of whip-crackings’, driving the Turks ‘out of their hiding places like slinking dingoes’. It is, moreover, one of the reasons why the Australians are allegedly so well equipped for desert warfare. Time in the outback has made them much more accustomed to the hardships and trials of the desert, and has made them physically tough, resourceful, and particularly adept at riding horses.

But whereas frontier settlement and adventure were the domain of adventurous individuals and pioneers operating independently of state control, war in the desert was a carefully organised project on behalf of, and conducted by, the nation and the empire through the armed forces. Masculinity is thus redefined in a more militarist fashion, and is invested with the considerable brutality necessary for killing. Unlike Jack Cameron of *The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains*, whose masculinity is redeemed in his marriage to Leila, or Macdonald’s heroes, who realise their masculinity in individual adventure, Jack Smith finds his ultimate self-realisation in soldiering. He thus writes back home to his father that

“life’s the real thing out here. This is what comes home to every fellow who isn’t an absolute waster.... Not until now have I known what it is to be at the heart of things.... I always had a feeling that...something arresting would have to occur in my life to really awaken me. That has really come to pass in my experience. I have entered into life. I have come to know myself as never before. There has been begotten in me a new sense of duty. It is ever before me as clear as the noonday sun.”

---

121 Bowes, *The Young Anzacs*, p. 257.
The soldier thus represents the new pinnacle of manliness for boys to aspire to, while, predictably, the 'slackers' who refuse to enlist are derided as 'lovers of soft billets' who ought to be 'covered with shame'.

The masculinity of the idealised soldier is identified as an Australian masculinity by being linked to a number of national mythologies of the Australian war experience and Australian manliness in general. For example, the Australians are superior quality soldiers, partly because of their outback origins, but also because of their huge physical stature. They are 'bronzed giants with the strength of Hercules and the winged feet of Perseus' who, once 'shaped and hammered into form', become an 'army of gladiators'. Australian physical sturdiness and bravery make the Australians even better soldiers than the British and more than a match for the Turks. When a truce is called to bury the dead, it is noted that there are ten dead Turks for every dead Australian.

The Australian forces are also egalitarian, and Jack’s promotion to Captain does not prevent him from treating his old pals as equals. This would, we are told, not have been possible for a German officer, for whom 'the very heavens would fall...were he thus to step down from the sacred pedestal', nor for an English officer of the old type: 'Subversive of discipline, and therefore efficiency, don’t you know!' Moreover, the Australians are presented as 'average' or 'typical' Australians. They are from the bush, and are described as 'laughing, rioting hobbledehoys...wire-fence Jimmies and green hide Dicks'.

The posting of the Anzac soldier as the Australian masculine ideal also marks the final stage in pre-1920s boys' adventure stories of the divorce of masculine qualities from feminine ones. There are no women at the battleground, and no white

---

125 Bowes, *The Young Anzacs*, p. 104.
women appear in any of Bowes' war stories. Jack achieves the realisation of his manhood in his total removal from domesticity, rather than finding his realisation or redemption within it. Femininity represents gentility and refinement, and there is nothing refined or genteel about the way Australian soldiers toss Turks 'on bayonet point like a haymaker dealing with sheaves' \(^{126}\). The masculine ideal has thus become a hardened Australian soldier, effective and brutal as a result of his training in the bush, egalitarian in spirit, loyal to his mates, towering over all others physically, and devoted to fighting for his country and empire against the enemies of Western civilisation. Such a construction marginalised, rather than embraced, feminine qualities, and accorded women no place in the making of the nation.

With literature occupying such a central role in the formulation and promulgation of hegemonic masculinities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and with the growth of the adventure story genre, boys were presented with a vast range of stories to help them internalise the qualities of 'me' and 'not me'. Escapist though they might have been, adventure stories occupied a central place in the discourses which defined what were to be considered heroic qualities, what were to be considered villainous traits, what a boy should aim to be, and who he should set himself to overcome. Identification with adventure heroes, according to Dawson, met 'the wish to fix one's place within the social world, to feel oneself to be coherent and powerful rather than fragmented and contradictory', and offered 'the security of belonging to a gendered national collectivity that imagines itself to be superior in virtue and strength to others'. \(^{127}\)

Adventure narratives reflected changing constructions of the Australian nation, and in particular changing fears and hopes for the fate of white Australian society, which were in turn projected onto the adventure hero. Kingston and Henty, writing from a perspective which placed Australia at the periphery and England at the centre,

\(^{126}\)ibid., p. 104.
\(^{127}\)Dawson, Soldier Heroes, p. 282.
feared a descent into masculine barbarism and extermination by Aborigines. Their adventure heroes were thus constructed as English boys triumphing over Aborigines and bushrangers, and serving a moral and domestic end through their association with the home and their religiosity. By the 1910s, perspectives, hopes and fears had all changed so much that the adventure hero drawn by Bowes was of a completely different sort. Quintessentially Australian, divorced completely from the domestic sphere and possessing an element of Aboriginal heritage, he travelled beyond the Australian nation to fight for and defend the empire against Australia’s racial enemies. Like the public schoolboy, like the public schoolboy hero of popular fiction, and like the Boy Scout, he would have considered his 1870s counterpart a curious, effeminate, and largely worthless oddity. Masculinity, once again, had triumphed over femininity in the construction of an admirable and noble manliness dedicated to the service of the nation.
CHAPTER SIX

‘Saved from the Reeking Filth and Sin’: Australian Boy Rescue Movements

In elite schooling the Australian middle classes constructed ideals which they attempted to instil into their own rising generation. The appeal of juvenile literature focused on public schools and public schoolboys was perhaps a little wider, for boys who did not attend these institutions could, through such stories, participate vicariously in the world of the public school, while adventure stories appealed to boys of all classes. This chapter shifts the coverage of this thesis to rescue movements, in which the class distinction between the educators and their audience was very pronounced. Unlike juvenile literature and the elite schools, boy rescue movements sought to instil a respectable manliness into boys from across a class divide. Whereas the public schools and juvenile literature provide us with insights into middle-class constructions of an idealised middle-class masculinity, rescue movements illustrate middle-class constructions of an idealised working-class boy. Motivated by fears of mob rule and larrikinism, these organisations sought to incorporate boys into the prevailing social system and to teach them to benefit from it.

This chapter, in conjunction with Chapter Seven, explores the major trends in the history of these youth organisations, and examines their changing ideals. I argue that the rescue movements, which were organisations motivated principally by class interest, Christian morality and a desire to curb what was constructed as an excessive masculinity, were superseded by the militarist and nationalist Boy Scouts, which were concerned to suppress femininity and to emphasise masculine qualities. All youth organisations, including the scouts, were rendered increasingly irrelevant by the introduction of compulsory military training in 1911 and the Great War of 1914-1918
as the state assumed a more direct role in the inculcation of manly traits in service of
the nation. Trends in the educational and literary constructions of manliness, from
femininity to masculinity, from Christianity to nationalism, and from spirituality to
physicality and militarism, were thus replicated in a third major arena of male
socialisation in the form of youth groups.

The latter part of the nineteenth century saw a rapid expansion in the growth of
voluntary organisations designed to cater for the education and profitable leisure of
young Australian males. John Springhall has defined a youth movement as an
organisation that has an explicit ideological framework, youth involvement in its
leadership and organisation, accepts all children who meet its criteria, seeks to
promote a definite code of living, features competitions for badges, and possesses a
specific identity in the form of a uniform.1 Here I use a broader definition of youth
movements to include boy rescue movements such as the City Newsboys’ Society and
the Sydney Boys’ Brigade, along with the Australian branches of the Glasgow-
founded Boys’ Brigade, which alone would qualify as a youth movement under
Springhall’s definition. The rescue movements did not have their own uniform or
competitions for badges, but are important because they propagated a certain code of
living, and in particular a certain code of manliness formulated by the respectable
classes for adoption by those of a less privileged social status.

The first club which could be considered an Australian youth club or rescue
movement (excluding the main division of the Young Men’s Christian Association as
this catered for young men rather than boys) was the Youth’s Mission, a division of
the YMCA which began in 1872 and which was later transformed into the Gospel
Hall Ragged School, which offered evening classes to those boys not in the state
school system.2 Others followed rapidly. The Try Society, the Newsboys’ Society, the

---
Gordon Institute, the Young Australia League, Boys' Brigades and the Boy Scouts were all established between 1880 and 1910. They became an important agent of ruling-class culture, held frequent conferences concerning the raising of boys, especially in the early twentieth century, published a range of papers on 'the boy problem', purchased buildings, solicited donations, indulged in an ever-expanding range of activities, and promoted themselves as protectors of society who would transform wayward boys into respectable citizens.

In some aspects their work can be seen as philanthropic, directed towards ensuring that boys were well fed, decently clothed, happily occupied and generally cared for in a way the reformers thought appropriate. Such an interpretation might be posed by those historians who have tended to see the growth and emergence of youth groups, compulsory education, juvenile literature and state interest in children as the result of more enlightened views about childhood. But these developments in the history of childhood, including the youth movements, and in particular the rescue movements, can also be seen as attempts at social control, directed at instilling the 'correct' notions of citizenship and manliness, and thus ensuring the advancement and survival of the nation and the race. Youth movement founders, charity workers, educationalists and governments all set out to 'rescue' those youths who did not accord with middle-class ideals of what the adolescent should be, and promoted instead their own ideologies under the guise of philanthropic service for the young.

By their very nature, all youth groups had an element of socialisation or social control about them. Ideologies which the groups sought to impart to its members were embedded in their practices, policies and activities. And even though they frequently spoke of giving boys 'opportunities', it was the early youth groups in Australia that

should not form part of the instruction. This was unusual for YMCA activities at the time, and was probably a result of the desire of teachers to make the training more appealing and accessible to boys.

\footnote{Maunders, \textit{Keeping Them Off the Streets}, pp. 16-17.}

\footnote{\textit{Bessant, Schooling in the Colony and State of Victoria}, p. 41.}

\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, pp. 22-3.}
were most nakedly addressed at social control, both because of the types of youth they directed themselves towards, and because of the reformers’ perceptions of these wayward youngsters. Boy rescue movements represent the attempt of one class to impress its beliefs, ideologies and notions of correct gendered behaviour upon another, dealing with the rise of the working class by co-opting its children into the capitalist and hierarchical system and thus having them conform to middle-class ideals of thrift, industry, order, discipline and imperial and national duty.

Bob Bessant has gone so far as to suggest that the actions of the rescue movements need to be interpreted as part of a generalised ruling-class assault upon working-class culture in the late nineteenth century, for they sought to ‘siphon off from the working class many young people who showed themselves to have achieved a certain proficiency in the ruling class interpretation of every day life’. David Maunder has made a similar argument in suggesting that the principal role of these groups was to incorporate boys ‘into a set of values which supported the dominance of the emerging elite and which was justified as building up the nation’. Rather than fighting against the system, boys were expected to support it. Such purposes need

---

Kirkham Evans, ‘The Working Boy’ in Evans (ed.), The Boy Problem, pp. 23-4. Evans, for example, argued that the ideal of boys’ clubs such as the Our Boys’ Institute in Adelaide was to bring within the reach of poorer boys the sort of educational and amusement opportunities which older boys attending colleges enjoyed. One must, of course, consider the possibility that the rescue movement workers genuinely believed that this was what they were doing, for the path to salvation for working-class boys probably appeared to such workers in much the same way that the present day path to salvation is limited to the middle classes.


Maunder, ‘Providing Profitable and Instructive Amusement’, p. 32. I do, however, disagree with Maunder’s assumption that the nation was always an important justification for the activities of youth clubs. While certainly so for the Scouts, and increasingly for the other clubs after 1900, religion and self-improvement were more common justifications in the late nineteenth century.


Members were to be socialised into the way of society and to perceive existing social and class relationships as natural, even inevitable, to accept authority unquestioningly, to fit smoothly into their places in the labour market, to respect the great institution of society and in time, teach their children to conduct themselves in the same manner. [It] is clear that boys of these clubs were offered a glimpse of middle class culture and [were] to internalise its values rather than challenge its supremacy.
not, of course, reduce the efforts of youth club workers to cynical efforts at social control. Their own values and their strong sense of the right order of things meant that in performing work which may have been motivated by the highest of philanthropic considerations, they 'unconsciously contributed to the defence of their own class and the oppression of those they were committed to help'.

Understanding the relations between middle-class and working-class culture in the late nineteenth century through a social control model is an approach which needs to be used with caution. There is a danger in such an analytical framework of reducing the working classes to being the passive recipients of middle-class ideologies. Robert van Krieken has pointed out that 'the general principle that discipline and morality might be improved among a lot of working-class children was not in itself antithetical to working-class interests', and states that it has been demonstrated that clients often actively participated in the intervention of state agencies in working-class family life. Working-class mothers, for example, often brought their own children before welfare authorities. Moreover, the battle for respectability, as Janet McCalman has demonstrated, was often one between respectable and non-respectable working-class values as much as between middle-class and working-class cultures. Van Krieken is thus very critical of authors such as Bob Bessant for using a social control model to suggest that the working classes of Australia adopted an 'artificial' working-class culture through ruling class imposition.

But despite the criticisms of van Krieken and others, the social control model remains useful for the examination of child welfare bodies in the nineteenth century, for two main reasons. First, by van Krieken's own admission, there was in Australia and other Western countries a greater concern in the late nineteenth century to

---

10Maunders, ‘Providing Profitable and Instructive Amusement’, p. 36.
11van Krieken, *Children and the State*, pp. 25, 37.
13van Krieken, *Children and the State*, p. 38.
'rescue' the rising generation, resulting partly from political and economic changes which meant that the working classes would not necessarily stay firmly 'in their place', and from the emerging industrial system which demanded a disciplined and thrifty work force.¹⁴ There was consequently a tendency towards expanded state involvement in the regulation of childhood, reflected in the establishment of compulsory schooling, industrial schools and boarding-out schemes.¹⁵ Boys had to be taught the value of loyalty to the nation, subservience to the social order, and hard work and thrift, particularly in a democracy where they would have to take on the onus of citizenship with all its rights and responsibilities. This perceived need and the subsequent efforts made at controlling the rising generation, particularly working-class children, constitute greater efforts at social control by the more powerful in society who saw themselves as having the right, and even the duty, to dominate and control others.¹⁶ The fact that the middle classes could not control and direct working-class culture as much as they would have liked in no way means that this was not what they were attempting to do. Secondly, the forms which attempts at social control assumed have much to tell us about middle-class attitudes towards gender and appropriate gender constructions for working-class or lower-middle-class boys. This is my concern here – to explore what the middle-class reformers were trying to do in relation to working-class boys through the rescue movements; not how their efforts were received.

The main boy rescue movements in Melbourne were the Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, the Melbourne City Newsboys’ Society, and the Gordon Institute, these organisations all having much in common in their origins and objects. The Try Society was principally founded by William Mark Forster, the son of a saddlery merchant who came to Australia as a six-year-old in 1852. After inviting some street boys to his house in Toorak to play games with his own children, Forster established

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 62-4.
¹⁵Ibid., p. 61.
¹⁶van Krieken, Children and the State, pp. 26-7.
the Try Society in 1884, so named because of his philosophy that if these boys of the street wanted to become good citizens, all they had to do was ‘try’. Although plush suburbs, Toorak and South Yarra certainly had slum areas occupied by the urban poor either behind the wealthy facade they projected, or in their immediate vicinity, and it was the young men of these households which Forster wanted to reform, while at the same time preventing more respectable lads from being corrupted by them. In 1885 the Try Society merged with the William Groom’s Excelsior classes, thus creating the Try Excelsior movement. Open to boys of up to eighteen years of age who were in constant employment, and to schoolchildren about to leave school, the Try Society acquired its own hall in 1886, the walls of which were soon adorned with mottoes reflecting the Try ideology, such as ‘In God is our strength’, ‘If God be for us, who can be against us?’ and ‘A good name is acquired by good actions, but lost by one bad one’. Branches of the society were set up in various Melbourne suburbs, but the headquarters and main branch remained in Toorak and South Yarra. Membership of the main branch increased quickly to 461 in 1890 and climbed gradually to a peak of 749 in 1904 before dropping to 618 in 1907.

The Melbourne City Newsboys’ Society had its origins in the decision of William Forster to set up the Herald Try Boys’ Excelsior Class in Little Collins Street in 1886 to cater for newsboys. Newsboys were seen as particularly troublesome

17 Landells, Try, pp. 1-7.
18 For a discussion of the poor people in these wealthy suburbs, and analysis of one effort to reform them, see Roslyn Otzen, ‘The Doorstop Evangelist: William Hall in Darkest Prahran’ in Davison, Dunstan and McConville (eds), The Outcasts of Melbourne, pp. 112-23.
19 Landells, Try, p. 51; Mauders, Keeping Them Off the Streets, p. 39; Undated newspaper cuttings in Try Boys’ Society Scrapbook 1, SLV MS9910/41. William Groom had founded the Excelsior classes in 1882. A ‘journeyman hatter’, he aimed his movement at the sons of the well-to-do and so sought to keep them from playing in the streets where they might ‘thoughtlessly mix up with the offspring of the vicious, thereby contracting habits unnatural to them’.
20 Landells, Try, pp. 15-17.
21 Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1897, p. 8; Annual Report, 1888, p. 11; Try Excelsior News, vol. 1, no. 1, September 1893, pp. 5-6; vol. 1, no. 2, October 1893, p. 5; vol. 1, no. 6, February 1894, p. 9. Branches were also established in Fitzroy, Geelong and Bendigo, Brighton, Upper Hawthorn and Camberwell, Richmond, Collingwood Carlton and Yarraville.
22 Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1890, p. 8; Annual Report, 1904, p. 1; Annual Report, 1907, p. 1. On the Girls’ Try Society, see Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1895, p. 2; Landells, Try, p. 80. A Girls’ Try Society was established in 1894 and offered a programme which included physical drill, reading, writing, elocution, dress-making, cookery and Bible classes. The girls’ club was closed down in 1913, hampered partly by being unable to obtain suitable premises.
because their occupations made only ‘short and intermittent calls on their time’, leaving them with plenty of leisure time ‘to spend in our streets and lanes, where, it would appear, they inevitably drift into gambling and other demoralising practices’. 23 The City Newsboys’ Society also opened its doors to other street sellers and those who were otherwise deprived of what was thought to be a healthy upbringing, either through being on the street or by virtue of an unfortunate home life. Such boys were said to constitute ‘a large class of waifs and strays who would otherwise drift into a life of crime’. 24 The Herald Try Boys’ Excelsior Class became part of the Gordon Institute in 1889 but was re-established by Forster under its new name of the City Newsboys’ Try Society (later without the ‘Try’) in 1895 and handed over to a separate committee of management in 1901. 25 Membership rose to 420 in 1905 and 700 in 1907. Figures are thereafter unclear, but in 1916 the society claimed that it was still in touch with four to five hundred boys annually. 26

Forster was also prominent in setting up the Gordon Institute, which he established with George Coppin in 1888 with a government grant and with money left over from the erection of a statue to General Gordon. 27 The Gordon Institute looked after boys aged from ten to seventeen years of age, and by 1897 had 166 boys under its control. 28 Although the Institute offered a similar range of activities and amusements as the City Newsboys’ Society and the Try Society, it appears to have been directed at the most unfortunate of children, as opposed to the Try Society which claimed to cater for respectable boys, and the City Newsboys’ Society which looked after street sellers. The existence of a dormitory suggests that it was focused towards the homeless, and in the early 1900s the Institute became involved in the question of

---

24Ibid., 1898, p. 9.
25Landells, *Try*, pp. 30-3; Maunders, *Keeping Them Off the Streets*, p. 44.
27Landells, *Try*, pp. 23-4. Forster was appointed manager, but resigned from that position in 1890 in protest at the institute band accepting an invitation to play at a race meeting.
looking after criminal children. It encouraged the government to set up special
children’s courts, and provided the space where these courts operated after first sitting
in 1908. The Gordon Institute also took care of children before their court appearance,
frequently took guardianship of boys, and attempted to find them suitable homes and
employment if they were with ‘unfit’ parents, were orphaned, or were unemployed.29

The main boys’ rescue movement in nineteenth-century Sydney was the
Sydney Boys’ Brigade. Founded in 1882, the Sydney Boys’ Brigade, like its Adelaide
namesake, had no formal links to the Boys’ Brigade organisation founded in Glasgow,
was not directly linked to churches, and was more like the Melbourne City Newsboys’
Society in the manner in which it attempted to rescue newsboys and other street
sellers from the alleged vices and degradations of life on the street.30 It grew out of the
philanthropic attempts by newspaper proprietors and churchmen to rescue ‘newsboys,
factory lads, rag and bone pickers, boot-blacks, laces and knick-knick sellers, and that
other juvenile element which is for ever drifting on the city streets without settled
occupation’ from potential squalor and vice.31 Boys between the ages of ten and
eighteen were admitted as members, though boys of any age were assisted if in need.32
Membership was 350 in 1891, but this figure gradually dropped over the next two
decades so that only 220 members were enrolled in 1910. Numbers then rose again so
that 439 members were enrolled in 1912 and membership experienced a boom in 1913
with the acquisition of a new building. It leapt to 1,698 in that year and remained at
about the 1,700 level until 1920.33 However, the nightly attendance of boys, perhaps a
better indication of interest in the movement, remained relatively constant at about
300.

29 Gordon Institute, Annual Report, 1899, p. 6.
31 Ibid., p. 6; M. E. Hoare, Boys, Urchins, Men: A History of the Boys’ Brigade in Australia and Papua
32 Boys’ Brigade, Annual Report 1895-6, p. 7.
33 Ibid., 1890-91, p. 5; 1911, p. 10; 1912, p. 5; 1913, p. 5, 1914, p. 5; 1917, p. 4; 1918, p. 4; 1919, p. 4.
Adelaide also had its Boys' Brigade, though comparatively little is known of this organisation, and it appears to have led a tenuous existence. The main boys' society in Adelaide was the Our Boys' Institute, which grew out of the YMCA movement. The Adelaide YMCA did not admit youths under the age of eighteen, so a number of men associated with the movement decided to establish a club which would cater for younger males. The institute was formed in April 1888 and seems to have been an immediate success, as its membership reached 262 boys after a little over one year of existence. The organisation continued to thrive and by the early 1890s boasted a membership of over 400. Later membership figures are unclear, but in 1909 the institute claimed that over 10,000 boys had been members at one time or another. It seems to have aimed a slightly higher class of boys than many other boy rescue societies as it admitted 'respectable' boys to membership, charged the not inconsiderable sum of six shillings for a year's subscription, and deemed that the memberships of boys who were more than six months in arrears would automatically lapse.

These movements are defined as rescue movements because they sought to rescue teenaged boys from lives of squalor and vice and protect them, in what were considered important formative years for their characters, from the corrupting influences of the working-class society, particularly the society of the street and the working-class home. (See Figure 6.1). Victorian writers such as Henry James,
Figure 6.1. "Which Life Will He Live?" The two paths open to the boy and the justification for rescue. (Source: Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, *Annual Report*, 1897, p. 20).
Frederick Engels and Charles Dickens, frequently constructed the city as ‘a dark, powerful and seductive labyrinth’, a place of disorder and immorality removed from the virtue and order of the bourgeois home and hearth.\footnote{Judith R. Walkowitz, \textit{City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London}, Virago, London, 1992, p. 17.} The most common figure associated with the representation of degenerate London city streets was the prostitute, a symbol of the disorder and unrestrained sexuality who upset middle-class ideas of order and respectability.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 21; Wilson, \textit{The Sphinx in the City}, pp. 3-7.} Australian cities were also defined as dangerous and undesirable places. They were often noisy, infested with rats and stray dogs, and smelly. Andrew Brown-May has observed that ‘the stench of urine from the back lanes was one of the ubiquitous nineteenth-century city smells’.\footnote{Andrew Brown-May, \textit{Melbourne Street Life: The Itinerary of Our Days}, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 1998, pp. 66-88, 99.} Like London streets, Melbourne thoroughfares also had their street-prowlers, and as well as prostitutes there were the dreaded larrikins, the masculine equivalent to the prostitute in that both represented a street-based decline from respectable standards of appropriate gendered behaviour. Just as the prostitute flaunted her sexuality in the public spaces of the street, so too did the larrikin flaunt his offensiveness and incivility. Larrikins occupied footpaths, spat tobacco, used foul language, harassed respectable passers-by, and often fought with the police.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 21.} If streets could be a place of unrestrained femininity in terms of the prostitute, they also offered the possibility for unrestrained masculinity to run rampant, free from the civilising influences of social superiors and, in particular, the respectable feminine home. The problem was exacerbated by disappointingly low rates of school attendance, despite the introduction of compulsory schooling. In 1881, for example, the schools of Melbourne’s inner suburbs recorded an attendance rate of just below fifty percent, while in the city of Melbourne itself the figure was little over a third at 35.9 percent.\footnote{Rickard, \textquote{Lovable Larrikins and Awful Ockers}, p. 79.} Many children supposed to be under adult supervision clearly were not.\footnote{Davison, \textquote{Introduction}, p. 18.}
Streets thus became one of the central sites for the battle between respectable and non-respectable cultures in the nineteenth century. The Salvation Army, for example, used street processions in their attempts to claim the streets for respectability and promote a religious code which condemned gambling, smoking, card-playing and alcohol. Larrikins reacted by pelting Salvation Army processions with rocks, garbage and other missiles, breaking up Salvation Army meetings, and even organising their own skeleton army in opposition. A rough, irreligious masculine culture resisted assault by a feminised religious and moral order.

Rescue movements similarly endeavoured to control the unrestrained, violent and disorderly masculinity of the street. Unlike the Salvation Army, which concentrated upon religious and moral conversion, rescue movements operated by physically or culturally removing children from the street, thus ‘saving’ them from the degradations and vices of street life. As the Try Society’s newspaper trumpeted in 1894:

Saved from the streets! Saved from the streets!
So many Arabs saved from the streets!
Saved from the reeking filth and sin
Of the city’s haunts where death worms spin
Coils for the body and coils for the soul,
Dragging it down to destruction’s goal!
Saved from the rack of heart and brain!
Saved perchance from the crime of Cain!\(^4\)

\(^{44}\)Blair Ussher, ‘The Salvation War’ in Davison, Dunstan and McConville (eds), *The Outcasts of Melbourne*, pp. 128, 133-4.

The street was everything which the ideal home was not, and if boys from poor backgrounds were to grow into respectable, virtuous, hard-working men, they needed to be removed from street influences.

But from the reformers’ perspective, the working-class home was not always much better than the street, and could also be an environment from which boys needed to be ‘saved’, usually by being removed and placed in more ‘moral’ surroundings. This was particularly so if the home in question was in some way deviant from the middle-class vision of what a home should be. Rescuers felt justified in invading such homes and removing the children, as evinced in the following extracts from the 1898 case book of the Melbourne City Newsboys’ Society:

Case No. 1. – Father dead. Mother of low character and home a brothel. Lad sleeping out. His uncle a notorious criminal. Sent to Burwood Boys’ Home.

Case No. 2. – Father dead. Mother in New Zealand. Lad was left with uncle; leaves him, however, and goes to live with someone else. They sent him out to beg and steal. Boy sent to country by us. Employer writes to say “He is getting on well, is a very good boy, and I am well satisfied with him.”

Case No. 3. – Mother dead. Father aged and unable to work. Lad allowed to run wild; was sleeping out when found. Sent to country and is doing splendidly.46

The classic objects of the rescue movements were boys who, as in these cases, appeared to be morally or physically endangered by drunken, immoral or absent parents.

46The City Newsboys’ Try Society, Annual Report, 1898 (incorporated into the report of the Toorak and South Yarra Try Society for the same year), p. 9.
But such extreme conditions were not necessary for the rescuers to feel justified in removal of children. Middle-class perspectives on the working-class home tended to associate the poverty and dirt of working-class suburbs with vice and immorality.47 After all, it was the morality, thrift and hard work of the ruling classes which allegedly placed them in the dominant position they occupied, so it was virtually by definition that the working-class boy was being raised in immoral surroundings. The Try Society spoke of the ‘disastrous consequences’ to boys of being raised amidst ‘discomforts and depravity generally prevailing in the houses of the least favoured section of the community’. These made them ‘victims, from infancy, of demoralising associations; almost wholly given over to the most vicious habits of life’ and therefore in need of rescue from organisations attempting to raise them ‘from a condition of mental and moral depravity to become useful members of the community, and to keenly appreciate the new life which has been opened up to them’.48 Similarly, the society’s annual report for 1906 spoke of the dangers of poor households:

Large families are tumbled together in a few rooms. Beds are made up in the only eating and sittingroom. Having nowhere else to go until bedtime, the boys and girls naturally drift into the streets, where they just as naturally fall into bad ways, worse language and worse thoughts.... Girls brought up by a woman of the unfortunate class – what can they know of virtue or proper womanhood? Boys reared amongst thieves or loafers, picking up their education in gutters, and completing it in bars – how can they become good citizens? Inherited tendencies may be suppressed by the

48Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1890, p. 4.
cultivation of counterpoises, so that the impulse to go wrong may be checked by the wish to do right. ⁴⁹

The absence or immorality of mothers in the descriptions of those needing rescue is particularly noticeable. The middle-class mother was considered an ‘angel in the house’ guarding over the purity and innocence of her children, but immoral, absent or working-class mothers were expected to have a negative influence. ⁵⁰ If the working-class boy was going to have an opportunity to ‘better himself’, it was assumed that he would have to be placed in a more conducive environment.

It was also thought that viciousness bred viciousness, and that immorality bred immorality; that a dangerous and immoral working-class culture was perpetuated and reproduced in working-class homes. Boys were not necessarily considered inherently bad, and in its 1895-96 annual report the Sydney Boys’ Brigade spoke of ‘the kind hearts that beat beneath some of these ragged coats’, and stated that beneath the boys’ ‘uncouth external personalities beat their warm little hearts’. Boys’ ‘warped intellects’ could, the Brigade maintained, be ‘improved and the little fellows led on the right path’. ⁵¹ Others were apparently not so sure, and A. H. Roberts stated in 1904 that the Adelaide Boys’ Brigade ‘had very rough material to work with’, and that in many cases ‘the criminal nature of the boy predominates to such an extent that it is almost impossible to realise that there are any of the finer feelings, or that he can be fitted for any walk in life except that of the very lowest’. ⁵² But whether it was hereditary factors which made working-class boys anti-social or not, rescuers assumed that a change of environment could reform them, supporting Carol Bacchi’s claim that in Australia the nurture side of the nature versus nurture debate tended to be favoured. ⁵³ Boys supposedly entered crime partly because of a hereditary disposition to do so, but more

⁴⁹Ibid., 1906, pp. 2-3.
⁵⁰Kuczynski, Australian Childhood, p. 92.
often because their environments led them to it. Thus the best way to save the child was by removal to respectable homes where due care would be taken for 'the advancement of their moral and industrial training'. In a similar sort of way to the attempts made to stamp out Aboriginal culture, the invasion of some homes by members of the rescue movements was an attempt to steal the rising generation as a means of stamping out a resistant culture.

The extent to which the rescue movements oversaw the removal of boys to more respectable surrounds was certainly significant. The custody of large numbers of boys was given to the rescue movements by the children's courts, and they also claimed many boys who were 'neglected by parents, some orphans, others commencing a criminal career, some who were found in gaols, police courts, or who had run away from guardians'. By force of persuasion, or because boys were estranged from their parents, the societies were able to send large numbers of boys to more 'respectable' homes in the country. By 1896 the Gordon Institute, for example, had sent 1,215 boys into the country for a better home life and employment.

It was hoped that finding boys jobs and homes in the country would break the associations of the street and would allow them to be attended to by 'thoroughly...'

---

44Edith C. Onians, *The Men of Tomorrow*, Thomas C. Lothian, Melbourne, 1912, pp. 246-7. Reformers who preached that a change of environment would assist the moral reformation of boys could, at the same time, believe in hereditary disposition to crime and vice. Edith Onians, for example, a long time servant of the Melbourne City Newsboys' Society and one of the most prominent contemporary figures in boy rescue, was impressed by what she heard at the first International Eugenics Congress in London in 1912. She believed that some of the eugenicists' theories should be applied in Australia as it would save all the effort and expense of rescue.


46The similarity is no coincidence. Robert van Krieken has suggested that as the concern over the morality and lifestyles of white working-class children appeared to fade in the early twentieth century, and as the state increasingly took over a range of functions previously performed by charity organisations, middle-class reformers turned their attention to Aboriginal children. If it was the same sorts of people pursuing the same sorts of goals and operating according the same sorts of theories, it is perhaps not too surprising that they should use the same sorts of methods. The removal of white working-class children from their cultural environment may well have been an extremely important precedent for the 'stolen generations' of Aboriginal children.

47See, for example, *ibid*, 1910, pp. 9; 1917, pp. 5-6. In 1917 the Try Society claimed that ninety-five percent of the boys whom came into its custody never appeared in court again. *Try Excelsior News*, vol. 4, no. 11, December 1896, p. 12.

48*Try Excelsior News*, vol. 4, no. 11, December 1896, p. 12.
moral and religious’ guardians.⁵⁹ To this end the Gordon Institute and the Try Society frequently sent their members to a farm near Lilydale where the boys could allegedly benefit ‘morally and physically’ by removal from city perils, while at the same time learning skills which would later help them to find country employment.⁶⁰ (See Figure 6.2). To ‘prevent the possibility of the “call of the gutter” becoming too insistent’, boys signed agreements that they would be away for a stipulated period of time, though the City Newsboys’ Society claimed that most boys came to prefer country life in any case.⁶¹ Considerable numbers of boys were placed in country positions in such a fashion. The Try Society reported in 1899 that in the previous year 109 boys had been provided with such situations, and in 1900 the society claimed that in the previous nine years it had found country positions for 733 boys and fifteen girls.⁶² Employers received labour in return for the usual wages (managed by the Try Society – the boys only received pocket money) and the promise that they would keep the boys away from drink and tobacco and take them to church.⁶³ The masculinity which threatened to run rampant in the city could thus be curtailed by respectable, feminine and religious home life in the country.

But the reform of potentially dangerous boys who threatened the dominance of middle-class ideals of manly behaviour did not necessarily require, and did not usually entail, the physical uprooting of the boy. In the majority of cases, boys continued to live with their working-class parents and attended rescue movement activities in the evenings and weekends. Classes, talks, leisure activities and moral exhortation were the most common means through which the rescue movements sought to inculcate a religious and ascetic manliness which included middle-class

⁵⁹Our Boys’ Institute Magazine, vol. 16, no. 4, July and August 1904, p. 4; Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1892, p. 2; Landells, Try, pp. 39-40. Employers had to, for example, agree to take or send boys to church services on Sundays and to do all they could to prevent them from using tobacco and alcohol.
⁶²Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1899, p. 4; 1900, p. 4.
⁶³Ibid., 1901, p. 9.
Figure 6.2. Successful rescue – two boys to benefit from life on a farm under the auspices of the Try Society. (Source: Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, *Annual Report*, 1889, p. 9).
values of thrift, discipline, orderliness, cleanliness, morality and freedom from the vices of sexual impurity, gambling, and tobacco and alcohol use. The stated objects of the Melbourne City Newsboys' Society were typical:

To Provide a Club for ALL BOYS who want help.
To safeguard boys living in criminal surroundings, and to discourage them from vicious habits and associates.
To encourage the good in boys, and to guide them to higher ideals.
To teach boys trades, and to obtain them skilled employment.
To establish a fund through which boys may buy clothing and repay in weekly instalments.
To give boys good hot nourishing meals.
To provide clean, healthy games, and an attractive resting-place where boys may spend their spare time and always find a friend.

And in every way to HELP A BOY TO HELP HIMSELF.64

Rescue movements were thus to offer boys a morally uplifting environment to counter their other vicious and depraving associations.

There does seem to have been a genuine feeling that each boy was entitled to an enjoyable and happy life, and could justifiably expect, 'as one of the race', opportunities for 'making the most of his God-given faculties...with every chance to give full play to his mental and physical capabilities in the onward march of

64Edith C. Onians, letter to Mr H. Wright, Librarian of Mitchell Library, 2 July 1919 (contained in Mitchell Library collection of City Newsboys' Society annual reports).
civilization'. But the goals of the rescue movements reflect more than simply a selfless desire on the part of such organisations to cater for boys' needs for profitable employment and enjoyable leisure activities. Employment was found for boys partly because it would absorb them into the economic system and give them less opportunity and desire to act against the interests of the ruling-class social structures, as well as for the fact that the ability to earn a wage was itself an indication of manliness. And leisure activities were often offered simply as a sweetener for the more bitter pill of middle-class proselytising. The St. Kilda Branch of the Try Excelsior movement explained this openly in its 1888 annual report:

Many boys are doomed from birth to a life of crime from their very surroundings, unless some external force can be found to draw them unconsciously away and change their whole career. This we try to do by giving them gymnastics and games for an hour every evening we meet, with songs, recitations, short speeches and such discipline as they can bear.... Instruction should be given so intermixed with attractive amusements as to gain attendance; and many songs, dances &c., &c., are allowed that have no merit, but amusement, for the boys. They often take advice, admonitions, and words of counsel, as uncomfortable and unavoidable accompaniments of the evening's entertainment.  

Games and amusements were a vehicle for keeping boys' attention while the rescue movement leaders pursued the more important business of making them 'discontented with themselves' in their efforts to 'show them that there is something better than

---

65Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1905, p. 2.
larrikinism, ignorance, and excessive use of tobacco' and thus 'set these lads on the right path in life'. Even though boy rescuers were no doubt predominantly philanthropic in their motivations, such strategies for the reform of boys make it clear that the rescue movements, as well as endeavouring to satisfy boys’ demands, were seeking to impress a foreign ideal upon them.

Games and leisure activities were also designed to provide harmless leisure during boys’ 'perhaps...dangerous spare hours' in an appropriate middle-class environment. Unfortunate boys would, it was feared, otherwise be 'cast upon the streets at night by force of their home surroundings' where they would help to swell the ranks of an objectionable class'. Idleness was despised as the devil made work for idle hands, and the Gordon Institute, for example, claimed that if adults were more concerned about providing youngsters with healthy recreation 'we should hear less of the vice and impurity than we do'. Busy boys would not be tempted by alcohol, cigarettes or sexual impurity, the markers of uncivilised masculinity.

The leisure activities of the boys, like those of public schoolboys, were strictly controlled and used as a conduit through which middle-class teachings about the nature of the ideal boy could be poured. Most societies offered, for example, gymnastics and other forms of physical recreation, but rather than being provided simply for amusement, gymnastics were designed to aid physical development, 'produce a sound mind in a sound body', and prevent 'indulgence in some of those habits of dissipation which are so destructive to mental and physical power'. Physical development was alleged to assist spiritual and intellectual development, while also helping to safeguard boys from the 'solitary and sexual sin' of masturbation. The sports teams which were also frequently formed were intended to

---

56 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
59 Supplement to *Try Excelsior News*, vol. 5, no. 1, September 1897.
instil in boys some of the qualities associated with public school sport, with the notable absence of the qualities of leadership. Football, the Sydney Boys' Brigade reported in 1896, offered the chance for 'concerted exercise' in a 'manly game', a feeling of 'esprit de corps', the development of courage, and, notably, opportunities for 'the exercise of manly forbearance'. Reading matter in the reading rooms most societies possessed was no doubt strictly controlled, and whatever boys were allowed to do for their leisure, they certainly were not permitted to play two-up, walk the streets or smoke tobacco. Drill was another favourite activity for the rescue movements, and aimed not so much at the development of martial capability as soldier-like discipline and obedience.

Principally, however, the middle-class reformers sought to reform their working-class charges through moral exhortation. This proselytising, which was extended through newspapers to boys who did not come into direct contact with the societies after being removed to country positions, revolved principally around the need to be religious, the value of thrift and the work ethic, the need for sexual purity, and the stipulation that gambling and alcohol and tobacco use had to be strictly avoided. If boys absorbed these lessons, it was hoped, the alleged violence, sexual degradation, alcoholic indulgence, profligacy and irreligion of larrikin street culture might be avoided. The aim was to replace the masculinist and godless codes of behaviour of the street with a more religiously ascetic and feminine ideal which would remove the threat of a barbarously masculine working-class culture.

Of all the ideals which the rescue movements sought to inculcate, religiosity was the most important, and often the central principle around which all the activities of the rescue movement were organised. The Try Society, for example, stated that

25-8.
7Boys' Brigade, Annual Report, 1895-6, p. 11.
7ibid., 1899, p. 8. Sydney Boys' Brigade boys were drilled two to three times a week with such objects in mind, and although this was not particularly relished by many of the boys, the Committee considered that it was an important aspect of Brigade work and insisted on it being carried out.
7In its 1907 annual report the Our Boys' Institute stated unequivocally that religion was central to all it
On every fitting occasion it is our earnest endeavour to inculcate a reverence for, and faith in our Heavenly Father, feeling assured that without such a foundation we cannot look for any permanent blessing on our work. To this end the society established a children's church for irreligious youngsters, offered Bible classes, and adopted the motto 'If God be for us, who can be against us? Other rescue movements also emphasised the importance of religion, though it was the Our Boys' Institute which appears to have offered the most comprehensive programme of religious training. By 1909 this included Friday evening Bible classes, Saturday morning Bible classes, a Christian Workers' training class, a branch of the Young People's Scripture Union, a Sunday evening service, a Boys' Gospel Mission, and Tuesday evening prayer meetings.

Religion was an important part of the rescuers' manly ideal in itself, for the rescue movements were based on nineteenth-century religious values which preceded the nationalist, militarist and Darwinist ideologies coming to the fore in the public schools and juvenile literature, and which later dominated the Boy Scout movement. This is largely because the rescue movements were evangelically inspired, and their administration thus attracted and was dominated by men and women of deeply religious convictions. But religion was also endorsed for the role it would play in helping boys avoid a range of other vices, such as drinking and masturbation. The latter appears to have frequently obsessed the rescue movements, which considered it one of the gravest threats to the future well-being of boys. Physical exercise, drill, and training in hygiene were all employed against the fight against the 'solitary vice', so feared because of contemporary medical theories which pointed to the harm it could cause, because it transgressed contemporary middle-class sexual morals, and also

---

did. Our Boys' Institute, Annual Report, 1907. Contained in Our Boys' Institute Magazine, vol. 19, no. 4, July and August 1907, p. 4; Our Boys' Institute, Minutes of Board of Management, MLSA SRF 184/1; Board of Management meeting at the Our Boys’ Institute always opened with hymns.

32'Our Boys' Institute, Annual Report, 1891, p. 8.

33Our Boys' Institute, Annual Report, 1894, p. 1.


because it signified what was thought to be one of the great failings of working-class males – the inability to control animal passions. Boys were told that they must avoid being ‘drawn into the fierce fires and fully consumed’, and that if they did not exercise the necessary self-restraint their vision and hearing would become dull, their countenance coarse, their expression wretched, and their faces marred by pimples and blotches. Idiocy and insanity could also allegedly result.  

Kirkham Evans maintained that ‘Cleanliness of body, plenty of outlet for surplus energy, wise instruction in physiology, and well-pointed warnings’ could all help boys avoid masturbation.  

Evans was a tireless fighter against the evils of sexual impurity, so much so that at the first inter-state conference of those interested in boys’ groups, J. C. Butler of the Barrier Boys’ Brigade praised Evans, in an unfortunate turn of phrase, for waging the fight against impurity ‘with the gloves off’. However, there appears to have been a gap between Evans’ rhetoric and his personal practice, and in 1917 he was dismissed, in very shadowy circumstances, from his position as General Secretary of the Our Boys’ Institute and the position he also held as Metropolitan Commissioner of the South Australian Boy Scouts. The Scout Association, after thoroughly interviewing two boys, claimed that Evans was to be considered an ‘undesirable member’ and that they were ‘particularly desirous’ of keeping Evans away from future work ‘in connection with boys’.  

Some societies also maintained a ‘Band of Hope’ to encourage temperance and counter the alcoholic evil said to be responsible for the misbehaviour and descent into viciousness of many youngsters. Gambling was also reviled, probably because it went against the rational middle-class ideals of capital accumulation and the work ethic. The Our Boys’ Institute Magazine called gambling a ‘selfish vice’ because it

---

83 Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1894, p. 2; City Newsboys’ Society, Board of Management Minutes, 11 October 1909, p. 88. SLV MS 10034/1593.
broke up friendships, caused distrust, treachery and dishonesty, and bred a greed for money for money's sake, while the City Newsboys' Society adopted the high moral ground in refusing to accept donations which came from money publicly announced as the product of gambling. The contrary message that boys could get ahead through capital accumulation was encouraged through the establishment of penny savings banks at some organisations, and in short stories in society newspapers such as the Try Excelsior News, which in 1894 printed a story titled 'How a Shoeblack became a Barrister'. Closely related to the need for thrift was the need for boys to have a strong work ethic, completing the requirements of the capitalist worker in his attitude towards work and its rewards. Forster, for example, told his boys: 'make yourself so necessary to your employer that he cannot do without you.' Youth organisations also sought to give boys trade skills to lift themselves off the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder, partly for their own benefit, and also because this would provide a more skilled work force and thus help the nation in what Frank Tate called 'the great race for supremacy' amongst nations.

The process of moral improvement of the boys, especially in fighting indecency and encouraging religious feeling and refinement, was often constructed as a battle between desirable feminine qualities and undesirable masculine ones. The masculine was demonised and the feminine idealised. The street, because it was the opposite of the moral and feminine domestic realm, was considered by rescuers to be a place of unrestrained masculinity and attendant vice and moral licence. In bringing such boys into the rescue organisations, the reformers sought to create a substitute for the model home. Ladies who worked in the rescue movements would, it was hoped, have an especially beneficial moralising influence upon the boys, particularly in those

---

5See, for example, Boys' Brigade, Annual Report, 1899, p. 9; Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1894, p. 2; Try Excelsior News, vol. 1, no. 6, February 1894, p. 10.
cases where the home life of the boy was defective because of a 'weak mother' who could not control her son, and who thus failed to instil in him the sort of feminine morality possessed by the heroes of Robert Richardson's school stories.⁸⁸ (See Figure 6.3). Mr J. Kent noted at the annual meeting of the Sydney Boys' Brigade in 1899 that 'the gentle sympathies of ladies, aided by their presence among the lads, was an important factor in the uplifting of those who had naturally few gracious influences exerted over them'.⁹⁹ Similarly, J. P. McArthur noted that 'boys were strongly imitative', and that he 'could most heartily emphasise the necessity for the refining influence of ladies in contact with them'.⁹⁰ Masculine muscular qualities, although potentially useful, needed a basis of feminine morality, a combination which can be seen in Roberts' assessment of the work and aims of the Adelaide Boys' Brigade in 1904. He stated that boys were brought under the influence of 'lady and other helpers' and developed through work which included

physical development by carbine and field gun exercises, Indian clubs and dumb bells; mental training by classes in elementary education; manual exercise in the carpentry class; spiritual training by Bible classes and Sunday evening services; amusements, such as concerts, gymnastics, bagatelle, games etc.; thrift by the establishment of a Penny Savings Bank.⁹¹

Some masculine qualities were approved as long as they had the redeeming morality of femininity, but exclusively male society was considered dangerous for boys. In 1898 the Our Boys' Institute Magazine claimed that boys came out of their homes with good religious and moral training, but were then corrupted by the 'impurity', 'oaths' and 'foulness' of the men they encountered in offices and warehouses where

⁹¹Ibid., p. 15.
⁹⁰Roberts, 'A Study of the Street Boy', p. 5.
Figure 6.3. ‘Night School’. Three of the main elements of rescue movement training are captured in this image. The moral slogan on the wall exhorts ‘Men are made by many good actions, but lost by one bad one’, the boys are subject to feminine moral authority in the form of the woman teacher, who is also equipping them to advance in the commercial world with a simple accounting lesson. (Source: City Newsboys’ Society, Annual Report, 1907, p. 9.)
they worked. It was similarly asserted in 1914 that boys were likely to have their purity threatened wherever large groups of males were present, such as at sporting fixtures or in the military, through the disgusting language many men used.

Although the rescue movements had a large degree of continuity in their ideals and activities in the period between their foundation and 1920, there is some evidence that they were, in the early twentieth century, becoming more concerned with physicality, the nation, and the ability to defend it. Reflecting the changing priorities and concerns of the times, particularly the shift from class concerns to nation-related concerns, reformed boys were no longer thought of simply a threat to the system which had been averted, but as national assets. Although change was slow, probably because of a reluctance to see working-class children as potential makers of the nation, and because of the strong religious element to their operations which hindered a move away from religious emphases, the rescue movements did eventually follow the same trends in the construction of an ideal of masculinity which were evident in the public schools and juvenile literature.

From approximately the turn of the century, the publications of rescue movements tended to devote more space to sports and amusements than previously. More sports were played, and in some instances boxing was introduced, indicating a desire to control and direct the violence of the boys, rather than suppress it. A number of the societies also introduced naval brigades and cadet corps. As well as being motivated by a desire to instil ‘discipline and habits of obedience’, these activities do appear, amidst the growing fears about national security in the early twentieth century, to have assumed a more directly militarist meaning. It is

---

92 *Our Boys’ Magazine*, vol. 10, no. 4, January and February 1898, p. 8.
93 *Our Boys’ Institute Magazine*, vol. 26, no. 5, September and October 1914, p. 5.
94 Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, *Annual Report*, 1909, p. 1. This report plainly stated that ‘Every Lad moulded into a Good Citizen is a National Asset’.
95 Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, General Secretary’s Monthly Report, 7 March to 4 April 1910. SLV MS99910/5
significant that the Try Society even endorsed the introduction of compulsory military training, stating that the Australian boy would ‘regard it as an honour that he is permitted to qualify himself as a soldier capable of bearing arms in defence of his country’. When the Boy Scouts were formed, with a much clearer national mission and their arguable militarism, the rescue movements frequently formed Scout troops from amongst their own boys. The magazines and newspapers produced by the societies also reveal a gradually more aggressive and masculine ideology of manliness. They became less concerned with religious moralising, and included articles which praised the virtues of patriotism, the ability to defend one’s country, and aggressive sports. Such changes illustrate a growing desire on the part of the rescue movements to harness, rather than suppress, the masculine qualities of their charges, and better serve emerging national priorities.

Despite such trends, the rescue movements adjusted only slowly and reluctantly. They were slow to move away from a class orientation towards the boy problem, slow to recognise that religion was no longer such an important influence in an increasingly secular society, and slow to adjust to the increased militarism of the early twentieth century. In an age of militarist, physical and aggressive constructs of manliness, and as the state increasingly took over responsibility for child welfare, the rescue movements tended to fade from centre stage to a position of marginal relevance. Their own traditions and the strong religious convictions and mentalities of their organisers, as well as the considerable input of women motivated by evangelical Christianity, appear to have slowed the adoption of more masculine constructions of manliness.

Minutes, 13 September 1909, p. 87, SLV MS10034/1593; The City Newsboys’ Society, Annual Report, 1909, p. 5; Landells, Try, p. 59. See also William Forster’s letter to the Argus of 21 March 1900. Quoted in Mauders, ‘Providing Profitable and Instructive Amusement’, p. 47. The City Newsboys’ Society appears to have taken considerable pride in its Naval Brigade, used it to provide a guard of honour at its Annual Ball, and was hoping to soon have fifty boys enrolled in it.

Try Boys’ Gazette, no. 15, 14 September 1910, p. 9.

Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1909, p. 6. The society had, by the end of 1909, formed two troops of Boy Scouts.

Try Boys’ Gazette, no. 2, 9 June 1909, pp. 7, 9; no. 4, 7 August 1909, p. 5.

The appeal of the rescue movements to youth was also restricted by the very nature of the movements. Because they were directed at those in need of ‘rescue’, they automatically excluded all boys of the respectable middle classes. Further, to boys of the working classes, the rescue attempts must have seemed somewhat arrogant, patronising, and nakedly aimed at control. The Reverend Rabbi Davis, for example, gave a remarkable speech at the annual meeting of the Sydney Boys’ Brigade in 1891 in which he praised the efforts of those ‘who had contributed to lighten and brighten the lives and the hearts of the sons and daughters of toil’. Davis asserted that the boys’ poor circumstances at home had forced them onto the street where ‘they were led to associate with companions from whom they could learn none but degrading habits’, but had fortunately found in the Boys’ Brigade ‘a source of civilising influence...by being brought into contact with persons of a higher intelligence’ who ‘desired nothing so much as to lead them through the smiling valley of self-help into the broad high-road of prospective prosperity’. He finished by praising the value of labour as ‘the pioneer of virtue and civilisation’, though he also pointed out that mental labour had ‘greater claim to a more elevated rank in the social status’.\(^{101}\) Rather than appealing to the value systems of street boys, rescue movements attempted to force a middle-class version of an idealised working-class masculinity down the social scale, without in any way purporting to challenge the social structures which produced the poverty on the streets. Concurrently, they maintained and endorsed the belief that the working classes were the working classes because they were inferior to those of higher status. Despite their often considerable memberships, rescue movements were thus unable to claim or maintain a central position in the in the socialisation of young Australian males.

Also unable to capture the imagination was the Boys’ Brigade movement, representing something of half-way point between the rescue movements and the Boy

Scouts. Founded by Sir William Alexander Smith (1854-1914) in Glasgow in 1883, the movement sought “The Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom among Boys, and the promotion of habits of Reverence, Discipline, Self-Respect, and all that tends towards Christian manliness”\textsuperscript{102} The movement spread to Australia, and although Presbyterian in its original form, came to include the Church Lad’s Brigade (Anglican), formed in 1891, the Boys’ Life Brigade, formed in 1899, the Catholic Boys’ Brigade and the Jewish Lads’ Brigade, both formed in 1900.\textsuperscript{103} These Boys’ Brigades were quite different from the Sydney Boys’ Brigade and the Adelaide Boys’ Brigade mentioned above. Whereas the former were non-denominational rescue organisations, the main Boys’ Brigade movement was church-based and sought to provide boys already connected with the church with extra training and profitable amusement.

The first company of the church-based Boys’ Brigade was the 1st Melbourne, connected with the North Esk Church of Scotland and established in 1890-91. It was not until 1895 that the next company was formed, in Perth, but from that point to 1908 some seventy brigades were established. Michael Hoare estimates that in 1910-11 there were some fifty brigades active in Australia, but the number of boys in the movement remained unimpressive.\textsuperscript{104} Membership in 1900 was approximately 430, increasing to 671 in 1902 and 750 in 1904, with 500 of that number being in Melbourne where the national headquarters had been moved that year, and where the movement was undoubtedly strongest.\textsuperscript{105}

The development of a religious manliness remained its main purpose and its primary organising principle, while the governance of the movement rested firmly in church hands. The whole Victorian branch of the movement, for example, came under the control of the Victorian Sunday School Union, and everywhere the movement

\textsuperscript{102}Hoare, Boys. Urchins. Men, p. 23. Obedience was added to the stated object in 1893.
\textsuperscript{103}ibid., p. 24.
\textsuperscript{104}ibid., pp. 265-7.
\textsuperscript{105}ibid., pp. 45-9.
remained closely connected with Sunday School work. Combined with its religious emphasis were a number of elements which sought to appeal to secular boy culture, such as drill, physical activities, the wearing of a uniform, and camping. The movement concentrated less upon social control of a lower class than the rescue movements, and although it maintained a strong religious basis was more positively disposed towards the development of secular masculine qualities.

The Boys' Brigade in Australia became something of an anomaly in that it sought to combine the development of religious manliness with a secular training that was increasingly militarist. Military training was initially exploited principally for its potential to teach boys the value of discipline and obedience. The 1898 programme of the 1st Sydney Brigade, which included band work, drill and sword exercises, and which maintained at the same time a strong emphasis on Bible classes, appears to have been typical. But the militarist element of the training soon became excessive. From 1901 brigades began to be organised along specifically military lines, with Naval Boys' Brigades being rapidly established in various Melbourne suburbs. Between 1904 and 1908 these groups sailed on naval vessels to camp at the Naval Depot at Swan Island, near Queenscliff, where they used tents lent by the Army. The Boys' Brigade embraced a militarist ideology in its efforts to train its boys, and the military authorities reciprocated. This appears to have worked well for the Boys' Brigade in the short term, and by 1907 Australian membership was up to 1,350 boys and 120 officers.

Ultimately, however, it marked the beginning of the end for the movement. The Boys' Brigade in Australia was faced with the same dilemma encountered by its parent organisation in the United Kingdom. The question was whether or not to

---

106 ibid., pp. 43, 49.
107 ibid., pp. 23, 44. The more successful brigades were those that offered more in terms of camping, games and physical activities.
108 ibid., p. 37.
109 ibid., pp. 49-50.
110 ibid., p. 50.
continue embracing a militarist ideology and perhaps be officially recognised as a military training organisation, in which case the Brigade would receive certain benefits, such as the use of drill halls and assistance in holding camps. The Boys' Brigade in Britain remained firmly in opposition to such a step, with its executive stating that the movement was 'primarily a religious organisation' that had 'its own definite purpose – the moral and physical training of the Boys of the nation', and that it regarded military training 'as a means to an end, and not an end in itself'.\textsuperscript{111} The Boys' Brigade in Britain won a lot of support for its stance and thus successfully maintained its independence.\textsuperscript{112}

In Australia, however, the leaders of the Boys' Brigade appear to have thought that the way to remain relevant was to adopt militarism rather than fight it, so the organisation departed from its original mission and became ever more militarist in its organisation, ideology and practices. Support from the authorities was no longer provided once the compulsory military training scheme came into force, and although the Boys' Brigade attempted to maintain its importance by providing the training demanded by the Commonwealth Defence Act, it failed. The scheme effectively made the Boys' Brigade redundant. Those attracted by militarist ideologies of manliness no longer needed the Boys' Brigade, while those looking to its Christian aspects would have found its emphasis upon military training unappealing. Michael Hoare has deduced from this that the merger of the Boys' Brigade with military units 'on whatever basis was inimical to the basic principles of a Christian movement' and that this explains the general collapse of the Boys' Brigade movement in 1911-12.\textsuperscript{113} Many of those units which did not simply cease to exist in the face of compulsory military training closed in favour of the Boy Scouts, offering as it did a more appealing and relevant mix of religion, military-style training and contact with nature.

\textsuperscript{111}\textit{ibid.}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{112}\textit{ibid.}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{113}\textit{ibid.}, p. 57.
The difficulties which increasingly powerful codes of militarism presented for the boy rescue movements are evident in their membership figures in the 1910s, which reveal how hampered they were by the introduction of compulsory military training in 1911, and by the First World War. Compulsory military training both filled a considerable amount of the time boys had available for extra-school activities, making it harder for them to keep up rescue group activities, and fulfilled a number of the functions which the rescue groups had previously claimed for themselves, such as the use of drill to instil moral qualities and occupy boys' leisure hours. Rescue movements thus became less feasible. Membership of the Toorak and South Yarra Try Society dropped from 445 in 1910 to 395 the following year, and the society's Boy Scout troops were forced to disband as their usual Scouting time was taken up with drill. Membership of the society fell to 300 in 1916 and 1917, before recovering towards the end of the war and in its immediate aftermath. Similarly, the Our Boy's Institute claimed that compulsory military training had halved its membership within a year of its introduction, and had 'thoroughly dislocated almost every department of the work', while the City Newsboys' Society also reported a drop in attendance immediately after the training scheme came into effect.

The outbreak of war in 1914 also hampered the efforts of the rescue movements, ironically at a time when the rescue movements regarded their work as more important than ever. The youth groups typically evinced little enthusiasm for the war, for militarism had never been more than a peripheral part of their constructions of manliness. But patriotism had assumed a great deal of importance from the start of the twentieth century, so they showed great pride of the war service of their boys which they trumpeted as proof that these boys had learned sufficient devotion to their

114Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, Annual Report, 1910, p. 1; 1911, pp. 6, 11; 1913, p. 4; 1914, p. 7. Efforts to preserve the Try Society's identity by having a special Try company of cadets were initially successful, but in 1914 the authorities disbanded such companies.
115See annual reports for these years. Membership increased to 402 in 1918 and 510 in 1919, and 600 in 1920.
116Our Boys' Institute, Annual Report, 1912 (contained in Our Boys' Institute Magazine, vol. 24, no. 4, July and August 1912), p. 1; City Newsboys' Society, Manager's Report for June 1911, Board of Management Minutes, SLV MS10034/1593
country and empire to risk their lives. (See Figure 6.4). The 1918 annual report of the Sydney Boys’ Brigade, for example, praised ‘the patriotism and loyalty of the eligible members...shown by the fact that nearly every one of them were members of the A.I.F.’, which reflected ‘the greatest credit on the Institution’ and showed that the organisation had largely succeeded in turning boys from working against society to working for it in the greatest test of all for the nation.”

However, although they felt that they were doing their share for the war effort and deserved support, economic stringency and the call on donations from a number of patriotic funds rapidly reduced the incomes of the rescue movements. The Try Society, for example, claimed that its donations had dropped from £800 annually to £400 within a short space of time after the outbreak of the war.118 The Our Boys’ Institute also claimed that the war had placed it in considerable financial difficulty, forcing the organisation into a debt of over £400.119 Memberships and attendances also suffered. By 1918 attendance at the Bible classes run by the Our Boys’ Institute had dropped to sixteen on Wednesdays and twenty-five on Saturdays, whereas a few years previously attendances had been over a hundred. Other religious activities had to be abandoned for a lack of interest from the boys, and membership fell to just 170 in 1918, despite a recent membership drive. Membership recovered only slowly after the end of the war, and by 1920 only numbered 200.120 The feminine religiosity and moral virtue which dominated the perception and training of the rescue movements sat uneasily with the more masculine attributes required and exalted in a time of war.

This was particularly difficult for the rescue movements to come to terms with as they felt that because of the ‘dreadful wastage of Australian manhood at the War’,

117 Boys’ Brigade, Annual Report 1918, pp. 3-4.
Figure 6.4. ‘A Few Senior Members Who Have Enlisted’. Rescue movement pride in war service. (Source: Boys’ Brigade, *Annual Report*, 1917, p. 5).
the boys of the present generation would have an even greater role to play in re-making Australian society, providing extra urgency to the need to keep boys from ‘the evil consequences of street-roaming at night’.121 (See Figure 6.5). Thus the Try Society drew the fictional character of Fred Smith in a 1917 fundraising letter:

Fred Smith works in a boot factory.... At night, Fred goes to the Pictures or loafs around the streets. On Saturday afternoon he ‘barracks’ at the football match. On Sundays he plays ‘two-up’ down at the river.

He smokes cigarettes, and has that pasty look which denotes other vices, AND -- he is typical of thousands of other boys today throughout the Commonwealth; BOYS ON WHOM THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA DEPENDS....

He MUST be saved. He MUST be made a man of.122

Similarly, the front cover of the Try Society’s annual report for 1918 bore the lines:

I AM THE BOY
In me lie all possibilities.
I am the citizen of the future.
I represent the new generation, the intact, unshattered generation.
I am at once the hope of the future and the judge of the past.

121Boys’ Brigade, Annual Report, 1917, p. 2. This claim for the importance of the rescue movements was frequently made during the war years. See also Our Boys’ Institute Magazine, vol. 28, no. 1, January and February 1916, p. 1.
122Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, fundraising form letter 1917, Try Society letter book, letter 70a, SLV MS9910/1.
I AM THE BOY

In me lie all possibilities.
I am the citizen of the future.
I represent the new generation, the intact unshattered generation.
I am at once the hope of the future and the judge of the past.
I will be the maker of laws; the preacher of the gospel;
the teacher of youth.
Train me, educate me; give me every opportunity to fit myself
for my responsibilities—

I AM THE BOY.

The 36th Annual Report
OF THE WILLIAM FORSTER TRY BOYS' SOCIETY.

Figure 6.5. ‘I am the Boy’. Rescued boys as the makers of the post-war world. (Source: William Forster Try Boys' Society, Annual Report, 1919, p. 1).
I will be the maker of laws; the preacher of the gospel;
the teacher of youth.
Train me, educate me, give me every opportunity to fit
myself for my responsibilities.
I AM THE BOY.\textsuperscript{123}

Despite such protestations, the 1910s reduced the rescue movements to positions of marginal viability and only limited relevance. Training manly boys demanded the inculcation of patriotism and military capability, more the province of the Boy Scouts or the compulsory military training scheme than the rescue movements. Religious and ascetic morality were identified as feminine, belonged to the world of the church, and were overwhelmed in increasingly secular times by the all-encompassing demands of the nation. The feminine manliness which the rescue movements sought to develop was thus increasingly out of tune with social and national needs, and the rescue movements struggled with only limited success to adjust.

The claims of the rescue movements to prevent working-class degeneracy were also less credible in the 1910s than they had been in the 1870s and 1880s when most of these movements were formed. From the 1890s the moralistic assumption that individuals were responsible for their own condition and the environment they lived in was being increasingly challenged by reformers ‘equipped with eugenics theory and social statistics’.\textsuperscript{124} If the working classes were degenerate then it was increasingly thought that this was a government responsibility, curable by attention to matters such as income distribution and education. Poor morality was less convincing as an explanation for working-class poverty and delinquency, so rescue movements based upon evangelical authority appeared less able to offer effective solutions. Further, the masculinity of the working-class boys was not considered as problematic by the 1910s as it had been in the 1890s. As national and social concerns shifted, fewer saw

\textsuperscript{123}Toorak and South Yarra Try Society, \textit{Annual Report}, 1918, cover.
\textsuperscript{124}Davison and Dunstan, ""This Moral Pandemonium", p. 57.
working-class masculinity as a danger to be suppressed, but, like middle-class masculinity, as an asset to be harnessed and directed to national and imperial ends in a national endeavour which cut across class divisions. In such thinking lay the philosophical origins of the Boy Scouts, the reasons for their immediate popularity in Australia, and their almost immediate eclipse of the rescue movements.
CHAPTER SEVEN

'Something Other than a "Ninny'": The Australian Branches of the Boy Scout Movement

Developments in the ideal of manliness promoted by youth movements cannot adequately be captured solely by attention to the evolving and contested ideals within individual youth movements, or even within a category of youth movement, such as boy rescue organisations. Because of their own traditions, established practices, and often long-serving personnel, these movements did not always adjust as rapidly as they might have done to changing social perceptions and requirements. This chapter considers a new youth organisation which emerged in the early twentieth century, the Boy Scouts.

The Boy Scouts were one of a number of youth groups to emerge in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many of which, like the rescue movements in Australia, were directed at forcing a middle-class conception of manliness down the social scale. The British church-based Boys' Brigade, for example, founded in 1883 in Glasgow by William Smith, tried to convert working-class boys to a religious life by countering the notion that religion was effeminate, a belief that had served to limit the appeal of religion to lower and lower-middle class boys.¹ This, William Smith believed, could be achieved by associating Christianity with what the boys themselves considered noble and manly, such as athletic sports.²

Several off-shoots of the Boys' Brigade were formed in succeeding years of the 1890s, but by far the most significant and well-known youth group was the Boy

¹Springhall, 'Building Character in the British Boy' in Mangan and Walvin (eds), Manliness and Morality, pp. 54-5.
²Springhall, Youth, Empire and Society, p. 22.
Scouts, founded in 1908 by Robert Baden-Powell.\textsuperscript{3} Baden-Powell was a career soldier who became a national hero after commanding an outnumbered British force through the siege of Mafeking from 13 October 1899 to 17 May 1900, although some have argued that his military performance was not nearly so impressive as it was made out to be.\textsuperscript{4} Britain’s military performance in the Boer War raised serious questions about Britain’s military and imperial power, and indeed its whole national character. Baden-Powell set out to improve the condition of his beloved Britain by injecting manly virtue and practical skills into working-class and lower middle-class boys, on whom he believed the future of the empire rested. As he implored his Scouts in 1909,

it will largely depend on you, the younger generation of Britons that are now growing up to be the men of the Empire, don’t be like the young Romans who lost the Empire of their forefathers by being wishy-washy slackers without any go or patriotism in them. Play up!

Each man in his place and play the game.\textsuperscript{5}

To make them fit for their task, Baden-Powell conceived a boys’ movement which would fulfil the role the public schools played for the middle classes in developing ‘some of the spirit of self-regulation, self-discipline, sense of honour, responsibility, helpfulness to others, loyalty and patriotism which go to make “character”’.\textsuperscript{6} He wrote \textit{Scouting for Boys} in 1908, founded the first branch of the movement later in the same year, and was a heroic figure under whom the movement grew and spread rapidly.

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{4}Quoted in Rosenthal, \textit{The Character Factory}, p. 90.
Reflecting his own background of a public school education, Baden-Powell endorsed sports as ‘a school for teaching men those things which are best for every true Briton to practise’ and promoted a vision of manliness which emphasised outdoor training, anti-intellectualism, personal health, patriotism and service. He constantly appealed to the chivalric traditions of the knights and pointed out, for example, that just as the knight who broke his oath was disgraced, so too was the Scout who broke his honour, becoming ‘no longer an honourable, manly fellow, but merely a weak boy who makes a promise one minute and then has not the grit to stick to it. We don’t want such fellows in the Scouts; we don’t want them in our country’. On becoming a Scout, a boy had to take a Scout’s oath to do his ‘duty to God and the King’, to help others, and to know and obey the Scout code of honour, loyalty, helpfulness, friendliness, courtesy, kindness to animals, obedience, cheerfulness, thrift and purity. Adherence to the Scout laws and participation in Scout training activities was directed at producing tough, courageous and chivalric boys who would be ready to devote their lives to the nation and empire. Baden-Powell thus reworked the public school ideal of manliness to provide a code of living for youngsters not of public school breeding.

Despite all their similarities, there was, however, one notable difference between the ideal of manliness promoted in the public schools and that advocated in the Boy Scouts. Public school boys were expected to assume positions of power and influence in the army and in the imperial or civil service, and were thus cultured towards both leadership and obedience. As in the Boys’ Brigades and rescue movements, Boy Scouts were expected to develop into loyal and obedient followers, not leaders. This was to apply not only in the Scouts or in the military, but in all spheres of a Scout’s life. Baden-Powell thus urged that each boy should ‘be a brick’:

If you are discontented with your place or with your neighbours or if you are a rotten brick, you are no good to the wall. You are rather a danger. If the bricks get quarrelling among themselves the wall is liable to split and the whole house to fall.

Some bricks may be high up and others low down in the wall; but all must make the best of it and play in their place for the good of the whole.... We are all Britons, and it is our duty each to play in his place and help his neighbours. ¹⁰

If the public schools were to provide stout, morally upright and courageous leaders, the Boy Scouts were to provide followers of the same type.

Scouting in Australia grew directly from the British movement, and soon proved extremely popular. Scouting had more appeal for boys, for parents and for those concerned about the welfare of the nation, than either the rescue movements or the Boys' Brigade. More in tune with increasingly secular and militarist ideals of manliness, more attuned to the perceived need to counter the effects of over-civilisation, better adapted to tapping into myths of the frontier, and inspired by a hero of the entire white British Empire, Scouting captured the imagination of many educators, parents and boys alike. It was also less class-specific than the rescue movements, and was designed instead to offer training for all boys. Parents who let their sons join thus had no fear of being labelled 'unrespectable', while the movement avoided some of the offensiveness present in the preachings of boy rescuers.

Scouting organisations mushroomed in all states and enrolled large numbers of boys. In Victoria, the first Scouting troops were formed in June of 1908. An executive council was formed in September of that year, and in its first annual report of September 1910 it claimed that in Victoria alone there were 3,000 Boy Scouts and 250 Scoutmasters. In August 1911 it was estimated that there were 5,000 Scouts in Melbourne alone, although by May 1912 it was estimated that this had fallen to 2,000, evenly divided between the rival Victorian and Victoria sections after an acrimonious split in late 1911.

In New South Wales the growth of the movement was equally impressive, greatly assisted by the enthusiastic support and endorsement of T. R. Roydhouse, the editor of the Sunday Times, and the Sydney establishment. Roydhouse had keenly followed Baden-Powell's exploits at Mafeking, to the point where he raised nearly £2,000 through public appeals to present Baden-Powell with two chargers and saddles, a gold sword, and a scabbard engraved with the motto of Mafeking, 'No Surrender'. Roydhouse encouraged boys to form themselves into some of the first Scout patrols and had his paper publish the 'Boy Scouts Gazette' every week, which supplied news from various patrols, instructions taken from Scouting for Boys before that work was widely available in Australia, and advice on how to get patrols together. The Sunday Times claimed in November 1908 that there were already 900 Scouts in the state. By the end of the year this had increased to 1,200, a Committee of Control had been established, and the Sunday Times optimistically looked forward to having 5,000 Scouts in New South Wales by the next Christmas.

---

12Sunday Times, 2 October 1910.
14See H. J. Stoddart, 'Scouting: A Short History of the Movement in New South Wales 1907-1969', Scouting in NSW, July 1969, p. 11. The Governor, Sir Harry Rawson, was patron, the Hon. G. C. Wade, later Sir Charles Wade K.C., became President, and the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Sir Thomas Hughes, was Vice-President.
15Stoddart, 'Scouting', p. 12; Milne and Heward, Those Boy Scouts, p. 5.
16Sunday Times, 8 November 1908.
17Ibid., 27 December 1908; Stoddart, 'Scouting', p. 12.
The founding of the movement in South Australia, although also successful, was rather more controversial. In September 1909 various members of the Adelaide Our Boys’ Institute, including the President and General Secretary, noted that the Boy Scouts movement had made quite an impact in Victoria and New South Wales, resolved to extend it to South Australia, and called a meeting for the following week to establish a governing body. But by this stage there were already some troops, governed by a controlling council and comprising approximately 400 Scouts, operating in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide. Despite being aware of this, the meeting set up its own Council of Control.

The two rival bodies were soon engaged in an often acrimonious battle for control of the movement in South Australia. The initial movement was the creation of J. A. Ivett, who had formed the first troop of Boy Scouts in St. Peter’s early in 1909. Ivett appears to have been strongly disliked by the founders of the new Council of Control. In August 1909 Kirkham Evans of the Our Boys’ Institute wrote a vitriolic letter to headquarters in London in which he accused Ivett of being a ‘childish dreamer’ who should not be allowed to dominate ‘respectable’ people. He stated that Ivett had started many boys’ organisations, had failed each time, and was regarded as a ‘fishy character’. A hand-written draft of a letter from the President of the new council and the Mayor of Adelaide, Mr Frank Johnson, to Boy Scout Headquarters in London contained a revealing phrase which was later scored through. It said that ‘the men concerned are not such as to have charge of young boys’. The new council succeeded in having itself recognised by the London Headquarters, probably because

---

19Minutes of 1st meeting of SA Branch of the Boy Scouts. Published in a newspaper and then confirmed as acting as the official record. Meeting held 19 September 1909, report contained in file ‘Formation of Scouting South Australia’, SA Scout Association archives.
20Advertiser, 16 August 1909. Press cutting in correspondence files, SA Scout Association archives.
21Letter from Mayor of Adelaide and President of State Scouts Council, Mr Frank Johnson, to R. S. S. Baden-Powell, 8 October 1909. Correspondence files, SA Scout Association archives.
22Draft of letter from Mayor of Adelaide and President of State Scouts Council, Mr Frank Johnson, to R. S. S. Baden-Powell, 8 October 1909. Correspondence files, SA Scout Association archives.
of the influential citizens involved and the doubts that had been raised about Ivett’s character and that of his deputy, J. R. Coory. Some of the old council joined the new one, though a rump of the old organisation remained in operation, and affiliated itself with the British breakaway movement, the British Boy Scouts. Despite attempts to have the two councils merge, the rival controlling bodies remained bitterly opposed for some time.

Numbers rose quickly at first, so that in December 1909 there were 1,050 Scouts registered in South Australia. It appears that as many as 3,000 were enrolled in the early waves of enthusiasm, before numbers settled back and later fell to as low as 300, due to the effects of poor organisation, compulsory military training, and perhaps a natural loss of interest after an initial burst of enthusiasm. Estimates of the number of boys in the movement are often inconsistent, but it does appear that numbers fluctuated wildly. The 1916 annual report of the South Australian Scouts stated that numbers climbed from 497 in 1911 to 520 in 1913, 754 in 1914, 1,572 in 1915, and 1,435 in 1916. Numbers dropped to 1,143 in 1917, but soared, according to the 1917-18 annual report, to 2,620 in 1918, though such a rapid increase in numbers is difficult to explain, and the veracity of the figures must be in doubt.

---

21 Letter from J. Archibald Kyle, Secretary of Boy Scouts Headquarters, London, to Mr A. E. Shepherd, Commissioner for South Australian Boy Scouts, 19 January 1910. Correspondence files, SA Scout Association archives. See also a newspaper clipping in the same files, dated 21 September 1912, which describes Coory’s death in a scaffolding accident.
22 Letter from Mr Kirkham Evans, Our Boys’ Institute, to the Managing Director, Boy Scouts, London, 19 August 1909. Correspondence files, SA Scout Association archives.
23 Minutes, December 1 1909, Published in a newspaper and then confirmed as acting as the official record. Report contained in file ‘Formation of Scouting South Australia’, SA Scout Association archives.
25 Official Gazette’ (published in Adelaide Register and collected in file ‘Official Gazette 1911-1912’, p. 95), SA Scout Association archives; Boy Scouts Association (South Australian Branch, Boy Scouts Association (Incorporated), Boy Scouts Association, Adelaide, 1912, p. 5.
27 Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, State Council Minutes 27 June 1917, p. 103, SA Scout Association archives; Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, Annual Report, 1918, unpaged.
The story was similar in the rest of Australia. Western Australia had 413 Scouts in November 1909, increasing to 743 in 1913. In Queensland the first patrols were formed in 1908, predominantly by lay religious men already involved in the education of boys. By the end of November 1908 there were 500 Scouts in Queensland and a central executive had been established. This increased to 2,081 in early 1913, remained at a similar level until 1917, and then dropped to 1,500 in 1919. Whatever the reasons for the often significant fluctuations in the number of Scouts in Australia, it is clear that Scouting had an immense appeal and quickly established itself as a major force in the training of Australian boys.

There are three main reasons for the success of Scouting in Australia. The first is that Scouting appealed to the aspirations of boys by offering them a chance for adventure. Scouting offered an escape from home, opportunities to travel, adventures in the bush, chances for leadership, and participation in the colonial myth of the frontiersman. As Robert MacDonald has argued,

Scouting offered freedom, and a chance to break out from the restricted and often stifling atmosphere of the Edwardian home where the feminine atmosphere would be all too likely to make a boy soft. It allowed any boy...to take part in a simulation of the frontier world. A boy could wear the uniform of the frontiersman, he

---


31 Leslie E. Slaughter, *Baden-Powell: Boy Scouts Centenary-Jubilee, 1857-1907-1957*, Boy Scouts Association, Queensland Branch, Brisbane, 1957, pp. 10-11. Charles Snow had charge of a boys’ club at St. Mary’s Anglican Church. Leslie Williams was a Sunday School teacher, Leonard Lovejoy had a Gordon club at a Methodist church in Ashgrove where he persuaded the boys to become Scouts, while Septimus Davis conducted a boys’ club at St. Thomas’ Anglican Church in Toowong.


33 ‘Official Gazette’ (published in Adelaide Register and collected in file ‘Scout News March 1913 – May 1914’, p. 7), SA Scout Association archives; Slaughter, *Baden-Powell*, p. 34. Note that New Zealand in 1913 reportedly had 17,000 Scouts, a disproportionately high number when compared with Australia, and which may reflect the deleterious impact of compulsory training on Australian Scouting.
could make camp and sit around the campfire, he could
take to the countryside to follow spoor.\textsuperscript{34}

The second is that it suited the requirements of adult society. For parents it allowed
their boys to enjoy the man-making benefits of adventure without the dangers of real
adventure, while to the establishment it appeared to offer training in citizenship and a
solution to some of the problems plaguing the country and the empire.\textsuperscript{35} Despite the
work of earlier youth groups there persisted a common feeling in most Western
countries that modern civilisation was decadent and on the decline, fears seemingly
confirmed by Britain’s poor showing in the Boer War.\textsuperscript{36} The Australian perspective on
the Boer War was a little different to the British, for Australia was a young country
proud of its contribution to safeguarding the empire. But Australian boys still had to be
protected from the deleterious and feminising effects of civilisation, domesticity
and the city just as much as British boys. Scouting for Boys’ presentation of frontier
life as an adventure and a discipline at the same time, and as an escape from the
feminine atmosphere of the home to the bush where masculine attributes could be
developed and given a much freer rein, held as much appeal in Australia as in
England.\textsuperscript{37} Scouting could protect and rescue Australian youth as well as British. The
third reason is the influence and signature of Baden-Powell, as much a hero in
Australia as he was in Britain, admired for his gallantry, his pluck and his sense of
humour, and appearing as an incarnation of what the empire wanted from its sons.\textsuperscript{38}

At a surface level the Scouts aimed to teach boys a range of skills, such as
tyling knots, reading compasses and following tracks; the skills of Baden-Powell’s
military scouts. But these activities were a means to an end, the method through
which boys could hopefully be developed into loyal, obedient, courageous, physically

\textsuperscript{34}MacDonald, Sons of the Empire, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{35}ibid., p. 145.
\textsuperscript{36}ibid., p. 4, Rosenthal, The Character Factory, pp. 3-5.
\textsuperscript{37}MacDonald, Sons of the Empire, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{38}On the attribution of a variety of heroic qualities to Baden-Powell, see ibid., pp. 100-106.
fit, moral and militarily capable men. The Scouts were a means of socialising the rising generation, though they differed significantly from the rescue movements in that they oriented themselves towards youth of all classes, seeking to stamp out possible undesirable aspects of boyhood in general, rather than the constructed culture of a particular class. This change in purpose would appear to reflect and reinforce a general shift in welfare and educational work from the start of the century. Robert van Krieken has suggested that ‘the proportion of white families perceived as “immoral and vicious” decreased as the twentieth century progressed’ and that ‘instead of being denounced as drunkards, thieves and prostitutes, working-class families were now given lectures on ensuring school and church attendance... and so on’. 39 There was a shift from attempting to contain or reform working-class boys to involving and enlisting them in a nationalist enterprise with the middle classes. Rather than contemptuously being viewed as a threat to respectable culture, the working-class boy was increasingly seen as a potential asset to the nation, and one that must be tapped into if the nation was the survive external and internal dangers.

The Scouts maintained that they were guarding the welfare of the rising generation by taking boys at a impressionable age and instilling in them the correct ideals of manliness, thus protecting the ‘moral, intellectual, and physical future of the coming generation’. 40 Thus the South Australian Scouts spoke of the natural lawlessness of boys which the Scouts would overcome:

Every... guardian of youth knows that in the average human boy there is primarily an intractable element which has to be controlled and conquered.... A certain obstinacy, a mutinous desire to assert himself, whosoever may have to go to the wall, and an instinct of revolt against all established authority.... Now, the Boy

39van Krieken, Children and the State, p. 97.
40Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, Annual Report, 1917-1918, unpaged
Scout movement is essentially a training, a discipline, a suppression of unregenerate instincts, a first and lasting education in the difficult school of unselfish citizenship. The boys move together, work together, subdue their individual wishes for the benefit of the whole body, imbibe, at a tender age, the idea of a society which has to be kept together by mutual self-sacrifice.  

Adolescence was a dangerous time which offered a range of ‘bewildering experiences’ to which ‘wholesome, worthwhile activities’ of the Scouts would be a counter, thus helping to ‘diminish the problem of juvenile delinquency’. But whereas the rescue movements had sought to control these undesirable aspects of boyhood by imposing upon them a feminised manliness, the ideals of the Boy Scout movement were much more masculine and much more closely aligned with the natural interests of boys.

The stated objects of the Scouts reveal a range of goals which typically embraced developing loyalty to King, country and empire, ensuring that boys maintained a strong religious sense, developing obedience, encouraging physical strength and courage, and inculcating a chivalric impulse to do good to others. In promoting such a vision of manliness, the Scouts aimed to develop more masculine qualities than the rescue movements, but to ensure that were founded upon a basis of religious morality and unimpeachable moral judgement. Desirable qualities were labelled as manly, while those to be marginalised were identified as belonging either to larrkinism or femininity, both of which were identified as enemies of the manly boy. Feminine domesticity, for example, was an obstacle which boys had to overcome.

---

41Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, Boy Scouts Association (Incorporated), Boy Scouts Association, Adelaide, 1912, p. 20.
42Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, Annual Report, 1917-1918, unpagd.
43See, for example, Boy Scouts, New South Wales Section, Annual Report, 1915, pp. 5-6; Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, Annual Report, 1912, p. 28.
if they were to develop into true men, an overturning of the goals of the rescue
movements which promoted the home and the hearth as something of an ideal for
manliness. It was noted in the ‘Boy Scouts Gazette’ in July 1914, for example, that

    Self-reliance runs in knightly blood.... To a
generation of youths accustomed to go to the tap for
water, to the scuttle for coals, accustomed to ready laid
table and the ready-made bed, camp life [is] a moral
 tonic. The raising of brushwood tents, the building of
temporary bridges, the fetching and carrying, the
chopping of firewood, the drying of clothes...offers a
chance which at one time appeared rather remote of
being something other than a "ninny."44

Robert MacDonald has shown that the Boy Scouts were able to tap into the masculine
frontier myth in the different countries in which they were established, from the
mounted policemen in Canada to the bushmen and explorers of Australia.45 In
Australia, for example, the Scouts vicariously participated in and celebrated frontier
adventure and exploration when they enthusiastically celebrated the anniversary of the
commencement of the Burke and Wills expedition. The Argus reported in August
1910 that on the fiftieth anniversary of the departure of the expedition, 1,800 Boy
Scouts gathered at the spot in Royal Park from where the expedition departed, and
were told of ‘how those pioneer scouts sacrificed themselves to duty’.46 The Scouts, in
Australia and elsewhere, thus appealed to an energising masculine myth of colonial
adventure which was posited against the feminine and debilitating domestic realm.

44Newspaper clipping dated 4 July 1914 (published in Adelaide Register and collected in file ‘Scout
45MacDonald, Sons of the Empire, pp. 32-61.
But to avoid descent into the unrestrained masculine moral licence of hooliganism and larrikinism, such masculine qualities needed to be controlled through religion, obedience and an ethos of self-sacrifice. The Scouts were frequently at pains to point out that they aimed to produce good Christian citizens. They argued, for example, that ‘recognition of God, and the grateful acknowledgment of his favours and blessings, is necessary to the best type of citizenship, and is a wholesome thing in the education of the growing boy’. Although the religious component of Scout ideology was simple in that it emphasised only a belief in God and doing good to others, it remained an important element in the Scouting creed. It is noticeable that in the years up until 1920 many Scoutmasters in Victoria were clergymen, while in Queensland the founders of the Scouts were also religious men, and the rules of the organisation stated that ‘Frequent Sunday Scouting is deprecated, and if Scout camps occur on Sundays, arrangements shall be made for Divine Service in the morning. Troops should be returned in time for Scouts to attend evening service’.

This suggests that the church and its ministers were forced to bow to the secular nature of organisations such as the Scouts and operate within their rubric if they were to retain an influence in the development of manly boys, but also that the promoters of the more rugged ideal were concerned to maintain a strong moral basis for manliness. The alliance of chivalric virtue with muscular development can be clearly seen in the 1912 annual report of the South Australian section of the Boy Scouts:

---

47 MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, pp. 156-7.
50 Official Gazette*, newspaper clipping dated 1 May 1915 (published in Adelaide *Register* and collected in file ‘Scout News’, vol. 3, January 1915 – October 1915*, p. 16), SA Scout Association archives. It was even suggested in 1915 that one of the best ways for a church to hold onto boys from the ages of thirteen to fifteen when many tended to drift away was through the Scout movement. The ‘Official Gazette’ advocated church parades and said that the boys should be taught that ‘those qualities which are brought out through the scout teaching are based on religion’. 
In the training of a Scout there is instilled into the lad a love of virtue and what is right, and a repugnance to vice and that which is wrong.... He receives the training which purposes muscular development when he is on parade, his nerves are strengthened by the training which urges his utter disregard for danger, and his blood is purified by the natural resource, i.e., the fresh air which he avails himself of at the periodical Scout Camps, and which is so essential to that material portion of the body, blood.\textsuperscript{51}

Here, then, was a way to put some of the savage back into boys, to make them strong, resistant, tough and familiar with their land, while at the same time keeping such savagery under control. Scouting developed the admirable qualities of unrestrained and primitive masculinity – such as physical strength and resourcefulness – but harnessed them and trained them to serve a civilised moral and social order. All the benefits of the frontier could be brought to the boy without putting him beyond the control of those in charge of him. The qualities of the frontiersman were to be applied for the purposes of the empire and the nation, while boys were still expected to be religious and to obey their parents.\textsuperscript{52} This combination of elements of domesticity and order on one hand, and adventure on the other, was perhaps one of the keys to the success of the Scout movement. Boys found the chance to enjoy adventure and join a gang, while parents found an opportunity for their sons to learn discipline and obedience.\textsuperscript{53}

In instilling morality, the Scouts sought to identify moral qualities with masculinity rather than the feminine sphere, and thus used, for example, the

\textsuperscript{51}Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, \textit{Annual Report}, 1912, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{52}MacDonald, \textit{Sons of the Empire}, pp. 130, 145-6.
\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 150.
chivalrous knight as the model of morality. Feminine self-sacrifice and religious devotion became knighthly chivalry. Rather than being endorsed, anything which the controllers of the movement associated with femininity was firmly rejected by the Boy Scouts. The Council of Control in South Australia resolved at one of its very first meetings ‘That this council refuses to countenance in any way the establishment of Girl Scouts’, while in both Victoria and New South Wales it was decided that any Scoutmaster found to have been aiding the formation of Girl Scout troops would be asked to resign from all positions in the Boy Scout movement. The Our Boys’ Institute Magazine claimed that it found the ‘mere suggestion of girls camping out and engaging in night attacks, flag raids, tree felling, stalking, boxing, wrestling, rowing, cock-fighting’ and other activities ridiculous, and argued that ‘the girl has her mission to perform in life, but it is certainly not scouting’. Similarly, the Sunday Times in Sydney reported in 1909 that the idea of a Girl Scouts organisation was ridiculous as it was obvious that girls were ‘unable to do the work boys do’ and that there were more appropriate organisations for girls ‘desirous of doing something for their country’.

---

54 Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, Council of Control Minutes, December 1 1909 (published in a newspaper and then confirmed as acting as the official record. Report contained in file ‘Formation of Scouting South Australia’, SA Scout Association archives). Others outside the Scout movement also considered Scouting in appropriate for girls. Archbishop Carr told 200 candidates for confirmation at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne in December 1912 that he had grave moral objections to girls joining the Scouts because it removed them from the supervision of parents. Anything useful the Scouts taught the girls could, he claimed, be just as well taught in the home. See Argus, 16 December 1912, p. 12. On Victorian reactions to the prospect of Girl Scouts, see Milne and Heward, Those Boy Scouts, p. 34.

55 Our Boys’ Institute Magazine, vol. 21, no. 6, November and December, 1909, p. 3. The fact that South Australian Boy Scouts did not indulge in many of the activities listed by Evans (the likely author of the comment) is immaterial — what he was trying to do was draw the picture of two distinct worlds; one masculine and the other feminine.

56 Sunday Times, 20 June 1909. See also 28 April 1912; J. X. Coutts, F. W. Eddes and Others. ‘The Early History of the Boy Scout Movement in N.S.W.’, Scouting in N.S.W., December 1956, p. 7; Slaughter, Baden-Powell, pp. 18, 43-4; Denied participation in the Boy Scouts, New South Wales girls formed the Australian League of Girl Aids, with its motto of ‘Be Ready’, in 1912. They were to be ‘useful and to help others’ and were told that they ‘must Be Ready at any time to save life, or to help injured persons’. The movement appears to have thrived and 950 Girl Aids in New South Wales attended a gathering to meet Baden-Powell in 1912. Girl Aids were formed in Queensland in 1910, followed by the Girl Scouts in 1919. The Girl Scouts were based on ideas outlined in Agnes Baden-Powell’s How Girls Can Help the Empire, and shortly after being formed became the Girl Guides, conducted on the British model.
The good character of the Boy Scouts was assumed to be of great benefit for the nation and the empire. This was one of the most common justifications for the movement and an indication that patriotism had become a more important element in the ideal of manliness than it had been in the earlier days of the boy rescue movements. Scouts promised allegiance to the empire, and the death of King Edward VII was the occasion for large displays of mourning. But the nation appears to have been just as important as the empire as a focus for loyalty and a justification for the movement and its goals. The chairman of the Victorian section of the Imperial Boy Scouts stated at its first annual meeting in September 1910 that, to be a good Boy Scout, a boy had to guard against ‘evils which are the main factors in dragging down not only manhood but nationhood’. At the same meeting the Lord Mayor of Melbourne praised the Scouting movement as a cure for indifference, said that Scouting would teach boys both military knowledge and discipline, and that this would make them ‘an asset to the State’. Similarly, the *Sunday Times* claimed in 1909 that ‘it counts for something to be a scout today’ and claimed all Scouts could ‘feel satisfaction in knowing that they are doing a great work for their country’. The benefits of Scouting for the nation were asserted repeatedly by Scoutmasters and outsiders in their assessment of Scouting, and mirror the rhetoric of story writers and headmasters in using the nation, rather than Christian morality, as a justification for the inculcation of manly attributes.

As seen in earlier chapters, one of the main ways in which a boy of the early twentieth century could be of benefit to his nation was through being prepared and willing to defend it against foreign attack. But the nature of Scouting’s association with militarism is a complex one, full of internal conflicts over the question of militarism, constant battles against public perceptions, and ambiguous and

58*Argus*, 29 September 1910, p. 4.
59ibid., p. 4.
60*Sunday Times*, (newspaper clipping dated 1909 collected in scrapbooks) NSW Scout Association archives.
contradictory statements from the Scouts themselves as they struggled with their own self-perception and the conflicting demands upon the movement from different stakeholders. Confusion over the issue in Australia was exacerbated by conflict and confusion emanating from London. Baden-Powell always denied that the Scouts were militarist, but at the same time he stated in *Scouting for Boys* that ‘we ought really not to think too much of any boy, even though a cricketer and footballer, unless he can also shoot, and *can drill* and *scout*’. Scouting had only been operating for a year in Britain when the movement suffered a secession from a group which was offended by the perceived militarism of the main Scouting body. Their concerns were perhaps well warranted, for by 1912 most of the Presidents and Commissioners of the Scouting movement in Britain were serving or retired military officers, and the Scouts appear to have adopted an increasingly militarist line as World War One approached.  

In assessing the degree of militarism in the Australian Scouts’ constructions of manliness, the first point that needs to be noted is that Boy Scout organisation and activities were frequently of a inherently militarist nature. The need for unquestioning obedience of leaders, the organisation into troops and patrols, and activities such as tracking, games of single-stick, shooting, bridge-building, drill, ambulance work, first aid, signalling and the posting of sentries around camps were all ideas and principles which Baden-Powell had borrowed from his time in the army. They were codified in his *Scouting for Boys* and from there became standard practices in Australian Scouting organisations. War games were common, and some sections even had rifle clubs. Flag raiding was a popular activity, though it seems to have been taken to excess as the ‘Official Gazette’ had to note in 1911 that ‘On no account whatsoever may a sentry of the defending force be gagged or bound. Such action is inexcusable, and savours of common bullying’.

---

61Quoted in MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, p. 179.
62Ibid., pp. 180-4. The same appears to have been true throughout the world wherever Scouting was adopted. See J. Wilson, *Scouting Round the World*, Blandford Press, London, 1959, p. 24.
63See, for example, *Sunday Times*, 31 January 1909; Gough and Beal, *A Story of Scouting in Western Australia*, unpaged.
64‘Official Gazette’ (published in Adelaide *Register* and collected in file ‘Official Gazette 1911-1912’,
appear to have been backed up by militarist rhetoric from leaders, especially in the early years of the movement, before the Scouts, however haphazardly, sought to reposition themselves as a predominantly peacetime organisation from the early 1910s onwards.

In the early years of the movement many people directly involved in Scouting clearly saw it as associated with national defence, and encouraged boys to see Scout training as preparation for later and sterner duties in defending nation and empire. In October 1908, for example, readers of the ‘Boy Scouts Gazette’ were advised that

by increasing their strength and keeping united, the Australian section of the Boy Scouts’ League will constitute a body that will be seriously considered in future schemes for the defence of the country.

The scout’s position when the bullets of the enemy begin to sing through the air will be one of honor. He will constitute the eyes of the army, and will be the first to experience danger and give warning of it.65

In a series of exhortations at the head of the ‘Boy Scouts Gazette’ over the next few months, Boy Scouts were told that ‘war is an evil, yet it is an evil that will be provoked rather than remedied if we neglect the duty of preparing to defend ourselves’. Simply because they did not carry arms, ‘it must not be thought that they are useless as defenders’. Scouts were ‘the eyes of the army, and without eyes an army would be as helpless as a blind man in the streets of Sydney’.66 Boy Scouts were thus clearly seen as trainee army scouts. The Victorian Scouts seem also to have had a

---

65Sunday Times, 11 October 1908.
66Ibid., 8 November 1908.
distinctly militarist purpose, especially in their early days, while the cause of national
defence was held up as one of the reasons for establishing the movement in South
Australia.67

There does appear to have been some tension between Scouts and cadets, which Scout leaders frequently responded to, not by asserting their own superiority or their difference, but by attempting to impress upon Scouts and the public the commonalities between the two, and by suggesting that boys who learned Scouting would make better cadets than those who had not. In this vein, in February 1912, after
the military training scheme had already been in operation for over six months, the
‘Boy Scouts Gazette’ claimed that although the Scout movement was ‘essentially non-
military’, it was ‘yet intended to foster and cultivate all the faculties necessary to the
soldier’. Training in first aid, watermanship, pioneering and other Scout activities was
alleged to give the cadet who had previously been a Scout ‘a great advantage over the
one who has not’.68 Scouts and cadets were, moreover, seen as serving the same ends.
After some reported tension between the two, Boy Scouts were told by the Sunday
Times that

Scouts and Cadets are brothers in the Great
Cause. They should work together in perfect amity,
rendering each other brother help where necessary.

Both are for Australia, and Australia needs the
best service that ALL her sons can give her.

Sink petty differences where there are any. Stand
shoulder to shoulder for your glorious country. By

67Milne and Heward, Those Boy Scouts, pp. 13-14. In August 1909, for example, 1,240 Scouts paraded
along Collins Street led by their own buglers and drummers. With the boys all wearing puttees and
carrying staffs, the effect must have been, by design, strikingly similar to that of a military parade. See
also Minutes of 1st meeting of SA Branch of the Boy Scouts (published in a newspaper and then
confirmed as acting as the official record. Meeting held 19 September 1909, report contained in file
‘Formation of Scouting South Australia’), SA Scout Association archives.
68Sunday Times, 11 February 1912.
united effort you can render her secure and great.

Therefore, be united.69

Although it is not explicitly stated, the implication that both groups could do their nation great service by defending it from potential invaders is apparent. Scouts, the cadets and the voluntary militia were all seen as working for the same ultimate cause.70

Moreover, many outside the Scouting movement greeted Scouting as a militarist enterprise, and continued to do so regardless of later statements by Scoutmasters that the movement was not primarily directed at military training. Meanings could be projected onto the Boy Scouts by churchmen, parents, military leaders and any number of other parties, and there is indeed evidence that many saw the Boy Scouts as a potential aid to Australia’s defence requirements, a possible creator of the ideal military man who was both militarily capable and willing, and even ‘a kind of preliminary training prior to entering the cadets’.71 As early as July 1908, the paradoxically named Major Dove, in charge of the New South Wales cadet scheme, was interviewed by the Sunday Times to ascertain his opinion of the possibilities of the movement. He suggested that the skills learnt by Scouts, such as observation, were militarily useful and that the movement could find a niche as a sort of pre-school for the cadets.72 A correspondent to the same paper responded to the interview with great enthusiasm, seeing Scouting as a counter to the ‘utterly and miserably inadequate’ state of military preparedness in Australia, and suggested that the movement would ‘ensure that our children will not be obsessed with the lethargic inaction in matters of defence which almost approaches a degree of criminal neglect among the men of to-day’.73 Similarly, R. C. Packer, writing in the militarist Lone

69Ibid., 30 May 1909.
70Ibid., 23 January 1910. See also Argus, 1 October 1910, p. 6.
71Gough and Beal (eds), A Story of Scouting in Western Australia, unpaged.
72Sunday Times, 5 July 1908, p. 7.
73Ibid., 19 July 1908.
Hand in August 1909, greeted the Boy Scout as a ‘soldier in the making’, doing the work which was essential ‘if we intend to retain this continent – our own in right, title and interest’. Packer suggested that one of the main reasons to endorse Scouting was that it would make a boy familiar with methods ‘that will be in all probability called into use for a greater game in the near future’, that a Scout who had to fight would be a better soldier, and that even if he did not have to fight he would be a better man for his training. The militarist tone of his statements was reinforced with a picture of a group of Boy Scouts bearing the legend ‘Future Defenders of Australia’. Upon the outbreak of World War One it was even suggested in some quarters that the Defence Department take over the whole movement and exploit the knowledge and abilities the boys had gained.

When Baden-Powell visited Australia in 1912 he was critical of the degree of militarism in the Victorian branch of the Scouting movement, but at the same time appeared to reinforce the militarist interpretations of Scouting in Australia. For example, he appealed to Australian fears of invasion by her Asian neighbours when he suggested that ‘it was well to be prepared’ in case of threat from the ‘half-civilised’ people of Asia. He also suggested that Australia was ‘so situated as to be in the way of invasion by savages and people of less advanced civilization’, and stated that in Japan and China he ‘had seen peoples who were little better than savages living within a week or two weeks’ voyage from the Commonwealth...who were looking around for a country upon which they could prey’. He referred to the compulsory training scheme as ‘a grand example to the rest of the Empire’ and insisted that the cadets and the Scouts were not in any way oppositional. When asked about the applicability of the Scouts in a country that had a universal training scheme, he responded:

---

75Ibid., p. 381.
76Argus, 12 February 1915, p. 7.
77Marshall, 'The Victorian Boy Scout Movement', p. 54; Argus, 20 June 1912, p. 10.
78'Official Gazette'. Published in Adelaide Register and collected in file 'Official Gazette 1911-1912', SA Scout Association archives, p. 59.
I thought when I came out to Australia that there was no longer any necessity for the scout movement with the introduction of the universal military training system, but since I have been in touch with the different authorities, I am convinced that the movement will continue to be of great use in supplying the proper ground work to the boys before they enter on their carer [sic] as cadets. In fact, it will do half or three-quarters of the wok [sic] required by the military authorities before they take the boys over.... [T]hey are more efficient members of the defence forces when the time comes for them to do military training.²⁰

This was one position which the Scouts increasingly adopted in the face of the compulsory military training scheme which threatened their relevance. But insisting that they supported the cadets would reduce them to a position of secondary importance, so the Scouts appear to have increasingly sought to trade on their alleged benefits for the peacetime citizen.

In doing so, they increasingly adopted a tenuous position which maintained that Scouting sought to inculcate the qualities of the soldier, such as obedience and loyalty, but that the military application of these qualities was not necessarily the goal of the movement. The South Australian Boy Scouts, for example, claimed that the 'uniform, the patrol, the troop, and the drill, are not for military tactics, they are for the unity, the harmony, and the rhythm of spirit that boys learn in Scouting'.²¹

²¹Boy Scouts, South Australian Section, Annual Report, 1918, unpaged.
editorial in the *Register* in 1913 argued along similar lines – that the organisation was non-military, though it could prove to be militarily useful:

> Our scouting has nothing to do with soldiering; it is merely the practice of back-woodsmanship. We do not preach war to the lads, nor do we favour military drill for them.... Incidentally, the practice obtained in camp, scoutcraft, signalling and despatch riding, afford the soundest foundation on which to model a soldier of the best quality, trained to readily submit himself to authority and to withstand temptation.\(^82\)

In the same report, however, epitomising the difficulties the Scouts had in resolving their own position, were complaints about the inadequate performance of Scouts on the rifle range, and the statement that ‘A scout who cannot shoot straight is useless’.\(^83\)

Some also wanted a military status for the Boy Scouts, presumably so that those who were members of the Boy Scouts would be exempted from at least some of the compulsory military training requirements.\(^84\) To different people the Boy Scouts meant different things. The reports in the ‘Official Gazette’ which appeared in the *Register* were much more concerned to separate the Scouts from militarist purpose than the reports which appeared under the same name in the *Advertiser*, written by a different person. ‘The Heliograph’, for example, appears to have always interpreted Scouting largely, though certainly not solely, as a form of military training.

But the confusion and contests within the Scout movement over how militarist their ideal of manliness should be is most clearly illustrated by the number of

---

\(^{82}\)‘Official Gazette’ (published in Adelaide *Register* and collected in file ‘Scout News March 1913-May 1914, p. 6), SA Scout Association archives.  
\(^{83}\) *ibid.*, p. 7.  
\(^{84}\) *ibid.*, p. 39.
breakaway movements in the period before World War One. In Victoria, a split developed from September 1910 when the central executive council divided over the matter of the powers of the Chief Scoutmaster, E. G. Lister. Lister was attempting to run the Victorian branch of the movement in military style, using a strong-handed approach which appears to have alienated many of his colleagues. What was, on the surface, a battle between different styles of administration soon resolved itself into an ideological battle. A faction led by Lister favoured centralised and military-style control, in line with an apparent military conception of the Boy Scouts, while a competing faction led by W. E. L. Wears, the chairman of the Central Executive Council, favoured decentralised control and saw the movement as less akin to the military. As one Scoutmaster who clearly supported Wears put it, the split was 'the inevitable breach between a policy of autocratic, personal, and central government and that of local government and district autonomy'. A committee was appointed to reconsider the constitution, and the *Argus* reported that the majority of Scoutmasters were in favour of a new constitution which would place the centralised control of the movement in the hands of the Chief Scoutmaster. The *Argus* suggested that the only possible fault with such a move was that it might make the Scouts a quasi-military organisation, of dubious merit at a time when compulsory military training was shortly to be introduced. Still, argued Donald Macdonald, the author of the article, military training was the intended purpose of the Boy Scouts:

When Baden-Powell started the scout movement, it was largely with the idea of fitting boys for the patriotic duty of defending their country, the Boer war having made it clear that the yeomanry and volunteers were an essential part of the British Army,

---

87 *Argus*, 13 October 1910, p. 5; 18 October 1910, p. 8; 4 November 1910, p. 5.
88 *ibid.*, 25 November 1912, p. 10.
and that they were not getting the kind of training which
fitted them to be good campaigners.89

Macdonald, the co-author of The Warrigal’s Well and the war correspondent for the
Argus during the Boer War, was clearly interested in military matters and the
possibilities of training Australian manhood for military performance, hence his
militarist vision of Scout training.90 His attempts to define the Scouts as militarist are
typical of the efforts of those interested in defence to lay claim to the meaning and
ideals of the movement. It also illustrates that the ‘meaning’ of the Scouts was often
beyond the control of the central controlling bodies of the Scouts themselves, and was
subject to continuing debate. Two days after Macdonald’s comments, for example,
‘Queensland Scout’, in a letter to the Argus, took Macdonald to task, argued that
military and Scout training organisations were ‘absolutely distinct’, and suggested that
in the interests of both organisations ‘this must at once be recognised in Victoria, as
elsewhere’.91

In the Victorian case, a committee was appointed to consider a new
constitution, and in January 1911 it came down in favour of a new constitution that
placed most of the power in the hands of the Chief Scoutmaster. However, most
Scoutmasters and the Board of Control objected to the new constitution, and a split
developed.92 Yet another constitution which appeared to restore harmony was agreed on, but was essentially a victory for those who favoured centralised control.93 This
appeared to be a triumph for Lister and his supporters, but victory soon turned to
defeat when Wears, the leader of the opposing faction, was victorious over Lister by

89 ibid., 3 January 1911, p. 7.
90 See Macdonald and Edgar, The Warrigal’s Well, p. 142; Geoffrey Serle (ed.), Australian Dictionary
91 Argus, 5 January 1911, p. 5.
92 ibid., 6 January 1911, p. 8, 7 February 1911, p. 6, 8 February 1911, p. 5. Mr S. B. Vial, a member of
the committee appointed to reconsider the constitution, dissented from the majority opinion and wrote
a minority report which most eventually supported. He claimed in January 1911 that 1,724 Scouts were
behind the old constitution, 1,701 were neutral, and 345 supported the new constitution.
93 ibid., 12 May 1911, p. 6.
one vote for the position of Chief Scout Commissioner. Lister resigned in 1911 and formed his own breakaway group, the Victorian Section of the Imperial Boy Scouts. In May 1912 it was estimated that there were about equal numbers, a thousand, in each body. The newspapers considered such a split to be ridiculous and the product of jealousy rather than any deep-seated ideological difference, but there does appear to have been a significant discrepancy in the models of manliness which the two groups promoted, Lister’s undoubtedly being more militarist.

The breach remained for some years and was frequently acrimonious. Many were offended that only one group, Wears’, was officially recognised during Baden-Powell’s visit in June 1912. A number of people wrote to the Argus stating how unfair they thought it was that hundreds of Boy Scouts belonging to Lister’s group were not permitted to participate in the rally in the grounds of Government House where they were informed that they would only be admitted as spectators. The boys were being punished for their leaders’ petty disputes, it was alleged, and there appears to have been some feeling of animosity towards Baden-Powell for his lack of attention to Lister’s Scouts. One particularly passionate commentator referred to him as the ‘great Pooh-Bah’ and accused the official ruling body of Victorian Scouting of being a ‘pack of sycophants’. Various attempts to reconcile the Scouting organisations failed, and the two bodies remained separate until merging in 1932.

---

95Ibid., p. 40.
96Argus, 21 May 1912, p. 8.
97Ibid., 8 June 1912, p. 19.
98Ibid., 18 June, 1912, p. 9; 19 June 1912, p. 14; 20 June 1912, p. 10. Nearly all those who wrote letters to the Argus criticised the actions of Baden-Powell, stating that he had gone back on his promise to unofficially meet with the boys of the dissident section. See also Milne and Heward, *Those Boy Scouts*, p. 45.
100Norman J. James, *Boss and His Boys of 1st Hampton 1914-1984*, 1st Hampton Scout Group, Hampton, 1984, p. 3.
Similarly, a splinter movement in Queensland also emerged over an administrative matter of seemingly minor importance. After meetings of councillors and Scoutmasters in May 1910, eight Scoutmasters resigned or were dismissed, whereupon they formed the breakaway British Boy Scouts, modelled on the British breakaway movement of the same name, although the Queensland branch seems to have been more militarist than its British counterpart. By this point the dispute appears to have assumed an ideological element, and it is significant that the disaffected Scoutmasters ‘enlisted the assistance of several military men’ in establishing their splinter movement. Although attempts were made to unify the movement in 1911, the Queensland branch of the British Boy Scouts remained a separate organisation before eventually dying out in 1921.

The more militarist splinter movements of the Boy Scouts tended to be defeated by those officially recognised by Scout Headquarters in London. In Victoria, Lister’s movement gradually fell behind its competitor, and amalgamation was achieved over a number of years between 1925 and 1932, while the breakaway organisation in Queensland lasted only eleven years. Reasons for this include market positioning, for once the compulsory military training scheme had come into force there was less call for militarist recreational activity. War-weariness also played its part, for while the more militarist elements of than manly ethos promoted by the Boy Scouts and the breakaway movements appear to have had considerable appeal in the pre-war years, they definitely had less after the horrors of the Western Front had become widely known. Brian Lewis recalls that even though he and his friend Alan Gibbs thought the Scouts were somewhat ‘priggish’, they were still to be greatly admired in 1915 because they possessed uniforms, ‘looked like infantile soldiers’, and were closely associated with the war effort, attending patriotic meetings ‘in a vaguely

---

101 Argus, 3 February 1913, p. 11.
102 Slaughter, Baden-Powell, pp. 19-21.
103 Ibid., p. 21; Jeal, Baden-Powell, pp. 407-8. In Britain the breakaway British Boy Scouts movement was inspired partly by the feeling that the original movement was too militarist in its outlook, whereas the opposite appears to have been the case in Queensland.
104 Milne and Heward, Those Boy Scouts, p. 73.
official capacity in a row at the very front'.\textsuperscript{105} But as war-weariness set in, both with Lewis and the rest of Australia, enchantment with anything of a military or quasi-military nature faded. Militarism in the Scouts became an anachronism, and the more militarist movements consequently suffered more severely than their less militarist counterparts.

Thus although many of their activities were definitely of a militarist nature, and despite many in the movement and many outside it apparently conceiving of the Scouts as a militarist and patriotic enterprise, it would clearly be a mistake to see the Scouts solely, or even principally, as a militarist institution. Although much of what they did could be constructed as militarist, much of it was not, while the Scouts themselves appear to have increasingly interpreted their own work as being non-military in its purposes. And for all the people who interpreted it as a quasi-military endeavour there were many who saw it quite differently. Scouting could be many things to many people, which again goes some way to explaining its appeal. What is clear, however, is that the ideal of manliness which it promoted was more ruggedly masculine and much further removed from domesticity and feminine moral authority than that of the rescue movements. Militarist or not, Scouting was to save the nation by producing ‘real men’.

It is ironic that as the Scouts and the rescue movements struggled to position themselves as the makers of good citizens and protectors of the nation’s well-being they were severely hindered in their operations by government attempts to create an ideal man through the establishment of compulsory military training in 1911. Although John Barrett’s research has shown that most working-class boys did not regard it as too serious an imposition, there can be little doubt that universal training represented, in part at least, an attempt by the middle classes to impose their ideals of patriotism, imperial loyalty and civic duty on the working classes.\textsuperscript{106} As such, it took

\textsuperscript{105} Lewis, Our War, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{106} Maunders, Keeping Them Off the Streets, pp. 30-1; Barrett, Falling In, pp. 86-90.
over at least some of the function which the Scouts sought to perform, as well as occupying a significant amount of boys' available leisure time. The introduction of compulsory military training thus caused considerable angst amongst Scout leaders throughout Australia, for although they hoped that the movements could survive side by side, they were clearly worried about being rendered redundant.

The responses of Scouting organisations to the compulsory military training scheme were twofold, and contradictory. In many instances the Scouts sought to ally themselves to the training scheme, ensuring their survival and growth through their association with a scheme boys had no choice but to participate in. In September 1911, for example, the Victorian Scouts approached the Minister for Defence and suggested that it might be possible to give the Department some control over the Scout movement in return for having Scouts exempted from compulsory military training. They were, however, refused.107 Similar attempts were made, with the same result, in Queensland.108 Alliance with the military training scheme was also attempted through the assertion that Scout training aided cadet training.

The second response, as previously discussed, was for the Scouting organisations to distance and distinguish themselves from the training scheme, positioning themselves as the developers of a peacetime manliness while the military authorities tended to military training. Neither approach appears to have had much success. The compulsory military training appears to have rapidly reduced numbers, as many older boys left the Scouts because of the demands of the universal training scheme, and because universal training removed one of the reasons for joining the Scouts.109

Whether militarist or merely patriotic in their ideals, all Scout organisations participated enthusiastically in the war effort, especially in its early years. Although there was little excitement when the war came, the Scouts helped out in various capacities, as buglers, messengers and orderlies for the Red Cross, and also lent their support to various patriotic funds. The services of the Boy Scouts were offered to the military authorities and the Red Cross shortly after the outbreak of the war, and occasionally utilised. Queensland Scouts, for example, provided a clerk, two cyclist messengers and one bugler to the Australian Imperial Force camp at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds from 1916, while the 1st Wilston Troop produced 180,000 bandages for the Red Cross. Scoutmasters and older Scouts who enlisted were naturally given an enthusiastic send-off and were the cause of some pride.

Despite being determined to play their part, the reaction of most Scouting organisations to the war showed how much the militarist element of their ideology had receded. The war was not greeted with any great outpouring of martial or patriotic fervour, and the reaction to the first list of casualties from the Scout movement, as revealed in the ‘Official Gazette’, is interesting for its lack of nationalist and militarist sentiment. It described ‘the close of a young and promising life’ as ‘a sad thing’, commiserated with those who had lost loved ones, and looked forward to the end of the war:

For those who have lost their sons or brothers, we can
only grasp their hands in silent sympathy, and we

---

110 Newspaper clipping dated 15 August 1914 (collected in file ‘Scout News, vol. 2, June 1914 – December 1914’), SA Scout Association archives. Scouts in South Australia were simply told that they must be prepared to help out in whatever way was asked of them. Stoddart, ‘Scouting’, p. 12.
112 Slaughter, Baden-Powell: Boy Scouts Centenary-Jubilee, pp. 31-2.
hope...they may believe in the meaning of that line, with
which we have headed our roll of honour – “Called to a
higher service.”.... Surely if we grasp this idea firmly, it
will make all the difference in a time like the present
and through the years to come – “till the night is gone,
and with the morn those angel faces smile, which we
have loved long since and lost awhile.”\textsuperscript{114}

In disclaiming militarism the Scouts were distancing themselves from the slaughter at
Gallipoli and on the Western Front, but in continuing to do their bit for the war effort
they were illustrating their loyalty to the nation and empire, and were showing the
usefulness of Scout training. The fine line negotiated in these years was perhaps a
reflection of majority public opinion which supported the war but grieved at its cost,
but is also an indication of the Scout authorities’ attempts to shrewdly position their
movement in a way that located it as useful without being destructive.

Despite the ambiguities and often tenuous logic of their proclamations, there
was clearly a gradual and general shift towards more peaceful constructions of
manliness. Although ideologies varied, the consensus until at least 1911 was that the
ideal Scout was patriotic and ready to fight for his country, even if war was not
explicitly endorsed. After 1911, and especially after 1914, the ideal Scout was
redefined as one who was patriotic and who would work for the peacetime prosperity
of his country once the war was over. The qualities of the idealised Scout were also
the qualities of the idealised soldier, but his qualities of loyalty, courage, discipline
and self-sacrifice were increasingly praised for their peacetime application in the
envisaged postwar period of renewal. This is exemplified by the 1915 New South
Wales Association annual report which stated:

\textsuperscript{114}Official Gazette” (published in the Adelaide Register and collected in file ‘Scout News, vol. 3,
This War in which our Empire is engaged is likely to kill off the very best of our Nation, and if we are to keep our place amongst other Nations, the rising generation will need character and patriotism, and, therefore, a responsible duty has to be faced.  

In such a redefinition the Scouts were perhaps following, or at least mirroring, a similar trend in Britain, where Baden-Powell told Scouts gathered in London for the first world jamboree in 1920 that ‘mutual forbearance and give and take’ would lead to ‘sympathy and harmony’ between the peoples of the world, and that the Boy Scouts should ‘help to develop peace and happiness in the World and good-will among men’. Such rhetoric was far removed from his militarist claims prior to the war. The Scouts’ vision of manliness thus shed many of its militarist elements.

The history of youth movements in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from the boy rescue movements to the Boy Scouts, thus reveals a number of trends in the ideologies of manliness promoted through voluntary youth organisations. They are, in general, very similar to the trends also evident in juvenile literature and elite secondary schooling. The ideal of manliness was based much less on religion, and much more on the requirements of the nation and the empire. The Boy Scouts were a less religious organisation than most of the rescue movements, and concentrated principally on bringing boys to the service of the nation through good citizenship, chivalry, and, for a time at least, the ability to fight. Rescue movements, although gradually coming to endorse such an ideal, were, and remained, religious in their inspiration and their ideals, and continued to promote godliness and religious morality as the main tenets of manliness. Whereas the earlier movements praised femininity and sought to subdue masculine character traits, the Scouts sought to cultivate ‘real men’ and in doing so repressed femininity.

---

The ideology of Australian youth movements also became more nationalist. The tension between middle-class and working-class culture, so evident in the rescue movements, had abated by the time the Scouts were founded, and all but disappeared in the compulsory military training scheme. Once the object of fear, moral concern and scorn, working-class boys were drawn into the nationalist enterprise in the early twentieth century as Australia’s ruling classes and educators sought to instil in boys the qualities they considered necessary if the young country was to survive in the battle of nations. The battle of nations replaced the battle of classes.

The change in the ideals of manliness promoted by youth movements is also illustrated by those who created and shaped them. Rescue movements were generally founded by evangelical Christians and maintained strong connections with the church. Although the churches maintained their involvement in the Boy Scouts, military authorities and others concerned about the fortune of the nation were a more dominant force. The rescue movements, the Boys’ Brigade and the Boy Scouts all eventually suffered from the implementation of compulsory military training, an endeavour legislated by the nation’s governors, run by the military, and completely divorced from religious involvement. Whereas manliness in the 1870s and 1880s was to be developed by church-inspired organisations making boys into religious souls, by the 1910s the state was instilling manliness by making boys into good soldiers. The evolution in ideals was consistent with that of the public schools and juvenile literature, and the change in means was consistent with the education sector, where the state accepted a much greater responsibility for secondary education from the early twentieth century. Derivative from a British example as they may have been, youth movements, including the Scouts, were still formed, moulded, interpreted and re-invented in line with changing perceptions of the requirements of the emerging Australian nation.
CONCLUSION

The Limits of Manliness

By the time of the First World War, the ideal of manliness operative in the broad range of activities designed for socialising young Australian males was considerably different from that which had dominated half a century beforehand. In the 1870s the threats of masculine barbarism on the frontier, the 'savage' native race, the feared decline from the tenets of old world civilisation, and the Arnoldian ethos of godliness and good learning which had so heavily influenced many of Australia's early educators, combined to give rise to a formulation of manliness which emphasised morality, religiosity and intellectual development. Boys were encouraged to take on attributes which were commonly identified with an idealised femininity, and in so doing escape the brutishness, immoral masculinity, irreligion and barbarism associated with masculinity in its unregenerate state.

A number of social and cultural trends saw this formulation of manliness give way to an increasingly anti-feminine, secular, muscular and athletic alternative. One major trend was the decline in the cultural authority of religion and a parallel rise in the authority of secular notions of appropriate behaviour, often based around the perceived needs of the empire and the nation. The godly boy was replaced by the chivalrous boy who would live his life according to the demands of the society of which he was part, reflecting what Stuart Macintyre has called 'the transition from a society unified by faith to one joined in citizenship'.

Social Darwinism also emerged with strength in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Biological thought became increasingly powerful, and the idea

---

that the first requirement to be a good human being was to be a good animal found an increasingly receptive audience. The Australian fear of racial decline in the colonies, the general fear throughout the Western world about the deleterious effects of modern civilisation, and the importation of the enthusiasm for athleticism, which by the 1870s and 1880s was rampant in the English public schools, all joined to emphasise muscles and brawn over brains and piety. By the 1880s and 1890s the religious and intellectual boy was looking increasingly out of place. His vigorous and athletic colleague, on the other hand, offered reassuring evidence that a number of contemporary fears could be overcome.

The fit and athletic boy also appeared more suitable for fighting in defence of his nation, an increasingly important consideration in the early years of the twentieth century when Australia looked nervously towards her northern neighbours, particularly Japan, who appeared to threaten white Australia’s unsure grip upon a large and tempting continent. Nor did the British Empire seem entirely safe, as evidenced by the difficulty it had in overcoming the Boers. Growing continental unrest resulting partly from the armed build-up of Germany and threats to British industrial and commercial dominance also appeared to threaten Britain’s security. If Australia and the British Empire were to survive they would have to be fought for, and the rising generation would be the ones to do it. Glorification of the soldier and increased efforts at training the young to be militarily capable were the result. If he was out of place on the sports ground, the intellectual and religious boy would be even more out of place on the battle field, while his athletic successor would only be of value if his physical fitness and bravery were properly used, trained and directed towards a willingness to fight and die for the cause of country and empire. In middle-class schooling, in juvenile literature, and in youth groups, military man supplanted athletic man.
The ideal of a physically fit young man prepared to lay down his life for a good cause appealed as particularly noble to contemporaries, and is a construct which has been immortalised in Australia by the Anzac legend. But the militarist and nationalist ideals of manliness, as constructed in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Australia, had much to condemn, as well as commend them. They were, for example, extremely tightly-constructed ideals which became less and less tolerant and pluralist. Hegemonic masculinities do not deny or suppress all debate. It is, in fact, from debate and difference that they emerge. Rather than remaining unchallenged, they are constantly contested and disputed. But the degree of suppression which hegemonic masculinities exert over those masculinities they subordinate varies, and in the early years of the twentieth century the voices of dissent were all but completely silenced. Almost all elite secondary schools, for example, adhered to essentially the same educational vision. Even Scotch College, which had, under Alexander Morrison, been reluctant to embrace athleticism, prefects and other trappings of the English public school system, did so rapidly after his death in 1904 and the subsequent appointment of W. S. Littlejohn. Such a conversion appears to have been well-received, and may well have been one of the major reasons for a rapid increase in enrolments, from 272 in 1904 to 489 in 1908. By the time World War One broke out the school was at the forefront of schoolboy militarism. The prefects successfully proposed that the school motto of *Deo et Litteris* be expanded to include *Patriae*, and 600 Scotch boys sang at a rally in support of Hughes’ attempts to introduce conscription.

The uniformity of educational ideals resulted partly from the decreasing distinctions between religious denominations. R. B. Walker has suggested that in South Australia Methodists were often ‘an undistinctive part of a Nonconformist

---

2Merrett, ‘‘The School at War’’, p. 220.
3Sherington, Petersen and Brice, *Learning to Lead*, pp. 27-8. See also the *Scotch Collegian* from 1904 to 1908 which documents the adoption of athleticism and the rise in enrolments.
Protestant influence. The same would appear to be true throughout Australia, and true equally of other denominations, whether Nonconformist or not. The mingling of religious denominations appears to have weakened many of the definite distinctions of the old world. Rates of marriage between persons of different denominations suggest a gradual breakdown in the importance of denominational affiliation, while most churches also became less doctrinally strict in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This blurring of creeds affected the denominational schools, so that by the early twentieth century there was little to distinguish the Anglican school from the Methodist or Presbyterian one.

Even Xavier College, where sport had been boy-led until about 1900, lost much of its distinctive Irish Catholic identity after 1906 as it ‘embraced the English, Protestant and secular Public School spirit with enthusiasm’. Prefects, captains, duxes, honour boards and an increasing interest in sport made Xavier little different in many respects from Wesley College and Geelong Grammar. Less distinguished corporate schools, such as Trinity Grammar School in Melbourne, also enthusiastically adopted the ethos of their older counterparts. Established in 1903, Trinity adopted *Viriliter Agite*, or ‘Act Manfully’ as its school motto, and proceeded to establish athletic sports, prefect systems, school songs and cadets in an effort to mimic its more distinguished forebears. By the early twentieth century subscription to the athletic and militarist ideology of manliness was ‘tediously uniform’ throughout Australia.

---

Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 33-5.
3 *ibid.*, pp. 84-5, 125-6.
4Dening, *Xavier*, p. 4.
5 *ibid.*, p. 97. See, for example, the sentiments in Xavier’s school songs written early in the twentieth century. Xavier College, *School Songs of Xavier*, Xavier College, Melbourne, c. 1919.
When state secondary schooling was finally established in Australia in the early twentieth century, it was the public schools which provided the models for the curriculum, school organisation and methods, and for practices such as prefects, school badges, school songs, and sports.\textsuperscript{12} The first headmaster of Ballarat Grammar after it opened in 1911, for example, was P. A. Robin. He had taught at Melbourne Grammar since 1895, and in his first annual report as headmaster of Ballarat Grammar he stated that ‘from the outset an endeavour has been made to establish the school on the lines of the great Public Schools of Australia’.\textsuperscript{13} Schools such as Melbourne High, University High, and Geelong High developed traditions, rituals and old boy networks that gave them the appearance of the public schools.\textsuperscript{14} The pattern was set by Melbourne High School, opened in 1905 and known as the Melbourne Continuation School until 1912. Its headmaster was Joseph Hocking, determined to match the public schools in examination performance and character formation. He used rituals and school songs of a public school nature, a prefect system and sport in the inculcation of character. Sport in particular, he believed, was one of the most effective means of building ‘school spirit’ and of training character, and he stated that ‘in no part of our school course does a pupil receive such a sound preparation for the battle of life as on the sports ground’.\textsuperscript{15} Similarly, the University High School, which was opened in 1910, was heavily influenced by Wesley College. Adamson was a member of its council and its first two headmasters were Wesley College old boys. In true Wesley style, the pupils of the University High School would gather every morning to sing songs heavily influenced by the *Wesley College Song Book* and to listen to addresses. Prefects, form captains, a school badge and motto, cadet camps, and inter-house sports were all instituted within the first decade or so of its existence.\textsuperscript{16} Many


\textsuperscript{14}Quoted in Sherington, Petersen and Brice, *Learning to Lead*, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{15}Bessant, *Schooling in the Colony and State of Victoria*, pp. 73-4.

\textsuperscript{16}ibid., pp. 74-6.

\textsuperscript{16}ibid., pp. 77-8.
other state schools similarly employed gymnastics and calisthenics to develop physical fitness and martial discipline.\textsuperscript{17}

There were some exceptions. Quaker schools such as The Friends' School in Hobart, because of the pacifist nature of Quaker ideals, did not share in the growing enthusiasm for militarism.\textsuperscript{18} But schools perceived as not adhering to the dominant militarist and athletic ideology of the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries were the object of suspicion, or were gradually brought into line. Even Xavier, because of its Irish-Catholic background, was suspected of disloyalty, despite the Rector and the Old Xaverians' Association immediately declaring their support for the war effort.\textsuperscript{19}

Moreover, within such schools there was little opportunity for dissent. To be an intellectual meant to be a 'swot', to avoid manly games made one effeminate, and even refusing to attend a Saturday cricket match at Wesley was considered 'notoriously evil'.\textsuperscript{20} Adamson's lauding of the successful sportsman and those who served in World War One was matched only by the viciousness and surliness of his assaults upon 'slackers', those who he felt were not pulling their weight on the games field or on the battle field in the time of imperial crisis as Germany threatened to defeat the Western allies. Nor were the boys, following the example of their teachers, much more tolerant. A herd mentality often dominated the dormitories at Geelong Grammar, making life difficult for weak, sensitive or intellectual boys.\textsuperscript{21} At Wesley College initiation rituals such as running the gauntlet, tossing in blankets, blindfold boxing, body painting and performing a war dance introduced boys to the boarding culture and instructed them in group values.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19}Dening, Xavier, pp. 105-6.
\textsuperscript{20}Lewis, \textit{Our War}, p. 188.
\textsuperscript{21}Bate, \textit{Light Blue Down Under}, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{22}Wesley College Chronicle, no. 149, May 1917, p. 37.
John Gillis has argued that British boys of the first decades of the twentieth century were the objects of a smothering adult culture exerted over them as a response to the anxieties of their elders.\textsuperscript{23} The same is true in Australia. Educational pressures to conform were reinforced by prescriptive juvenile literature and youth groups. The state became increasingly involved in regulating childhood through, for example, law courts which functioned to extend the control of the state over children by defining as ‘deviant’ behaviour which had previously been tolerated.\textsuperscript{24} Medical practitioners and social reformers also had their say in constructing ever more narrow and didactic definitions of manliness.\textsuperscript{25}

Humphrey McQueen and others have argued that Australian nationalism was extremely racist and militarist, and suffered from a siege mentality because of the perceived threat to white Australia’s hold on the continent, particularly from Japan.\textsuperscript{26} The demands of Australian nationalism, along with the culture of the bush legend, played a major role in shaping Australian masculinity, and infected it with the same xenophobic and destructive qualities. Aborigines, homosexuals, Chinese immigrants, intellectuals and women were excluded by the increasingly rigid racist, misogynist and anti-intellectual hegemonic constructions. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have highlighted the importance of the creation of ‘others’ in the maintenance of social collectivity:

The...exclusion necessary to the formation of social identity at one level is simultaneously a production at the level of the Imaginary, and a production, what is

\textsuperscript{23}Gillis, Youth and History, pp. 141-2.
\textsuperscript{24}ibid., pp. 173-8.
\textsuperscript{25}See Kociumbas, Australian Childhood, passim.
more, of a complex hybrid fantasy emerging out of the 
very attempt to demarcate boundaries, to unite and 
purify the social collectivity.²⁷

Although they talk at the level of the imaginary, it is important to note that the 
formulation of a tightly-prescribed imaginary ideal acted as a very real exclusion upon 
those who did not meet its specifications.

Militarist and nationalist constructions of manliness reached their logical 
culmination in the idolisation of the Anzac soldier and in the glorification of the war 
experience. Although the sight of young men inculcated to believe in the qualities of 
heroism and self-sacrifice appealed to contemporaries, and although this vision still 
dominate the popular memory of the Anzac experience, it needs to be remembered that it 
resulted in often futile slaughter on the shores of Gallipoli and in the mud of the 
Western Front. Approximately 330,000 Australian men enlisted for service overseas. 
Sixty thousand of them never returned, and another 150,000 were wounded.²⁸ Back in 
Australia, paranoia reached new heights, and Australians of German extraction were 
‘beaten up, spat on, dismissed from jobs, expelled from clubs and associations, abused 
for attendance at church, and refused service at stores and theatres’.²⁹ They and their 
children were discriminated against in education, law and in the workplace in a 
shameful exhibition of wartime hatred.³⁰ Persecution extended to the school-yard. One 
man interviewed by Jacqueline Kent recalled his school fellows beating up a boy of 
German descent, and humiliating the thirteen-year-old victim by forcing him to walk 
around the school singing ‘Rule Britannia’.³¹

²⁷Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Cornell University 
²⁸Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Australian National 
²⁹*ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
The widespread enthusiasm which greeted the outbreak of World War One, particularly strong among middle-class males, marked the high point of a masculinised and militarised of Australian manliness. But it also marked its destruction as the grim and lengthy casualty lists took their toll, and as enthusiastic weeks stretched into weary years. Perhaps the best illustration of the failure of the militarist ideals of manliness promoted to middle-class children in the early twentieth century is provided by Brian Lewis, a student at Wesley College whose elder brother was killed in France. Lewis recalls the breakdown of the glorification of soldiering by the later years of World War One:

We had been told that our troops were stainless knights, that they were happy boy scouts holidaying in France, that they were nonchalant clowns tumbling in the mud of no-man’s land; we were beginning to think of them as hopeless men moving to their deaths because they could see no escape. The “sweet red wine of youth” had become blackened blood. We had been given a picture of the “fallen” as lying clean and serene before being committed to the gentle earth so that flowers could bloom above them. We were beginning to know that they would be lucky to be pushed into a hole and not left as rotting hunks in the mud.33

By the end of the war ‘1914 was along time ago’ and we had quite forgotten’.34 The cynicism towards militarist causes and the rejection of nationalist fervour carried over

---

32Joan Beaumont, ‘Australia’s War’ in Joan Beaumont (ed.) Australia’s War 1914-1918, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1995, pp. 2-7. Beaumont suggests that the working classes were less enthusiastic because of less devotion to the empire, while there was also opposition from some women’s groups, elements of the Irish population in Australia, and some minority religious groups. See also E. M. Andrews, The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations During World War I, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 40-5.

33Lewis, Our War, p. 280.

34Ibid., p. 281.
into an attitude of increased cynicism towards those who had purveyed such ideals. Lewis states that by war’s end Adamson’s teachings were no longer accepted. ‘The pathos of his war now looked ridiculous and artificial’, Lewis recalls, while Adamson himself ‘now seemed to be an isolated figure posturing and gesticulating remote from us’. For Lewis’ generation dying for one’s country had been set ‘as our highest goal’, but after the horrors of Gallipoli and the Western Front it increasingly appeared as ‘something which might be avoided, if luck ran your way’. Nor did problems end with the conclusion of the war, for as Stephen Garton has noted, many men appear to have found it difficult to settle back into peace time society as they found domestic life tame and unmanly after the dangers and excitement of the trenches.

Marilyn Lake has argued that one of the greatest political struggles in Australian history occurred at the end of the nineteenth century when men and women fought for control of the national culture. Women attempted to restrain the anti-domestic masculinity of the Bulletin school, absences from home, drunkenness, violence and smoking. If women had some success in restraining such non-respectable masculinist culture, they had less in restraining masculinist middle-class ideals, and often served to further them. Lake also suggests that by the 1920s Australian culture had become much more feminised, that anti-domestic masculinism had been largely defeated. This assertion appears to have more applicability to postwar middle-class codes of manliness, for despite the Anzac legend, and despite considerable evidence indicating a continued enthusiasm for athleticism, the extremely narrow masculinist codes of manliness appear to have been eased. Headmasters such as James Darling of Geelong Grammar School sought to wind back some of the excesses associated with schoolboy athleticism, school periodicals reveal

---

36 Ibid., p. 321.
38 Lake, ‘The Politics of Respectability’, pp. 2, 4-6, 10-12. See also Peggy Pascoe who similarly argues, in relation to the American West, that relations of social control were not only class-based, and can often be best understood as a conflict between men and women. Pascoe, Relations of Rescue, p. xvi.
an increased interest in academic and cultural pursuits, military codes of manliness never again had the same appeal of the pre-war years, and youth groups such as the Boy Scouts appear to have been increasingly determined to dissociate themselves from jingoistic nationalism.\footnote{On Scouting organisations attitudes to the war, see Chapter Seven. On James Darling's attempts to control schoolboy athleticism, see Peter Gronn, “‘Will Anything Ever Be Done?’: Geelong Grammar School and the Associated Public Schools Head of the River in the 1930s”, Australian Historical Studies, vol. 26, no. 103, 1991, pp. 242-61.}

Many of the component elements of the militarist, nationalist and athletic creed of manliness which dominated in the early twentieth century had enormous appeal for contemporaries. Obedience, discipline, loyalty, devotion, physical strength, readiness to fight for a cause and adventurousness appeared suitable qualities for overcoming the threats of physical degeneracy, military invasion, and anti-social behaviour. They appeared to be the key to making and keeping Australia in a secular and threatening age. And they still have considerable appeal to many today. But such apparently positive qualities can easily become negative ones. Unquestioning obedience of orders encourages despotism. A desire for health can easily become an obsession with the physical at the expense of the intellectual and spiritual. There is a fine line between courage and foolhardiness. Ultra-nationalism has been one of the greatest plagues of the twentieth century, and adventurousness can easily develop into recklessness.\footnote{See Wray Vamplew, Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p. 8.} As Wray Vamplew has pointed out, young British officers ‘led their men over the top as though it was a charge of rugby forwards, but instead of hard-tackling full-backs they ran into machine-gun fire’.\footnote{ibid., p. 8.} The tragedy of the early twentieth century is that qualities such as obedience, discipline and loyalty were harnessed to jingoistic, racist and misogynist ideologies, and that the hegemony was so forceful it was all but impervious to those voices which dared to question it. Fit, strong, loyal and obedient men may have appeared as the solution to the ‘boy problem’ and perceived threats to the Australian nation. But the adulation of these
qualities was so fierce and so strong that the possible contributions to Australian life of women, non-Caucasian males, homosexuals, intellectuals and the religiously devoted were ignored or undervalued, while the heroes themselves all too frequently met their ends as victims of their own lionisation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Boy Scouts Association, New South Wales Section, scrapbooks, annual reports, correspondence etc., 1909-1920, New South Wales Boy Scouts archives, Sydney.

Boy Scouts Association, South Australian Section, scrapbooks, annual reports, correspondence etc., 1909-1920, South Australian Boy Scouts archives, Adelaide.

Boys’ Brigade (Sydney), prospectuses and annual reports, 1890-1920, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

City Newsboys’ Society (Melbourne), annual reports, 1907-1920, correspondence, scrapbooks and other records, State Library of Victoria.

Geelong Grammar School, annual reports and prospectuses, 1870-1920, Geelong Grammar School archives.

Gordon Institute, scrapbooks, annual reports, correspondence etc., 1888-1920, State Library of Victoria.

Our Boys’ Institute (Adelaide), scrapbooks, annual reports, correspondence etc., 1888-1920, Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

St. Peter’s College, prospectuses and annual reports, 1884-1920, St. Peter’s College.

Toorak and South Yarra Try Society (later William Forster Try Boys Society), scrapbooks, annual reports, correspondence etc., State Library of Victoria.

Wesley College, prospectuses and annual reports, 1866-1920, Wesley College archives.

Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals

Age (Melbourne)
Advertiser (Adelaide)
Argus (Melbourne)
Australasian (Melbourne)
Church News (South Australia)
Corian (Geelong Grammar School)
Geelong Grammar School Annual
Geelong Grammar School Quarterly
Lone Hand (Sydney)
Melbourne Punch
Our Boys’ Magazine (Adelaide)
Register (Adelaide)
Scotch Collegian
St. Peter’s School Magazine
Sunday Times (Adelaide)
Sydneyian
Observer (Adelaide)
Scouting in NSW
Try Boys’ Gazette (Melbourne)
Try Excelsior News (Melbourne)
Victorian Review
Wesley College Chronicle
Wesley College Year Book
Woman’s World

Contemporary Collections, Books and Journal Articles


Cuthbertson, James Lister, Barwon Ballads and School Verses, Melville and Mullen, Melbourne, 1912.

Evans, Kirkham (ed.), The Boy Problem, Our Boys’ Institute, Adelaide, 1904.

Favenc, Ernest, Marooned on Australia: Being the Narration by Diedrich Bys of His Discoveries and Exploits in Terra Australis Incognita about the Year 1630, Blackie and Son, London and Glasgow, 1896.


Geelong Grammar School, Church of England Grammar School, Geelong: History and Register, Jubilee 1907, Geelong, Geelong Grammar School, 1907.


——————— The Best School of All, Ward, Lock and Co., Melbourne, 1921.

Richardson, Robert, The Boys of Springdale; or, The Strength of Patience, William Oliphant and Co., Edinburgh, 1875.


——————— The Cold Shoulder, or A Half-Year at Craiglea, William Oliphant and Co., Edinburgh, 1876.

——————— A Perilous Errand; or, How Walter Harvey Proved His Courage, William Oliphant and Co., Edinburgh, 1876.

——————— The Boys of Willoughby School, Sampson Low, Marston, London, 1877.


Smeaton, Oliphant, The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains, Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, London, 1898.


*Secondary Sources*

*Articles*


Bock, Gisela, ‘Women’s History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate’, *Gender and History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1988, pp. 7-30.


Books

Alexander, Alison, *Billabong’s Author: The Life of Mary Grant Bruce*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1979.


McClintock, Anne, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest, Routledge, New York, 1995.


Scotch College, *Flosculi Australes: An Anthology of Poems and Songs from "The Scotch Collegian"*, Scotch College, Melbourne, 1919


**Theses and Other Unpublished Material**


Author/s: Crotty, Martin Alexander

Title: Making the Australian male: the construction of manly middle-class youth in Australia, 1870-1920

Date: 1999


Publication Status: Unpublished

Persistent Link: http://hdl.handle.net/11343/35466

File Description: Making the Australian male: the construction of manly middle-class youth in Australia, 1870-1920

Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.