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**NIETZSCHEAN PERSPECTIVES ON REPRESENTATIONS OF  
NATIONAL HISTORY IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS:  
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH GALLIPOLI?  
PERSPECTIVAS NIETZSCHEANAS SOBRE LAS REPRESENTACIONES DE LA  
HISTORIA NACIONAL EN LOS LIBROS DE TEXTOS DE AUSTRALIA: ¿QUÉ  
DEBEMOS HACER CON GALLIPOLI?**

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**Resumen:**

Durante casi dos décadas, la enseñanza de la historia en Australia ha experimentado una pugna en torno a la memoria colectiva del pasado colonial, y la preocupación de su impacto en la identidad nacional de los estudiantes. Desde la llegada de las luchas entre historia / cultura y su desbordamiento en la materia de Historia y de Estudios Sociales (Sociedad y Medio) los currículos, los historiadores conservadores, políticos y comentaristas de los medios han estado luchando para ver el fin del "brazalete negro" de la historia -o lo que perciben como una visión excesivamente triste de nuestra historia colectiva- y su sustitución por lo que argumentan es una más "equilibrada" visión positiva del pasado nacional. El nuevo plan de estudios de historia de Australia, que ha tratado de ir más allá del llamado "brazalete negro" y las historias "con los ojos vendados de blanco", ha sido criticado por su supuesta falta de atención a una de las mitologías fundadoras de la nación, la batalla de Gallipoli. Para colaborar con este debate, vamos a recurrir a un marco presentado por primera vez por Friedrich Nietzsche para pensar acerca de los usos y abusos del discurso histórico.

**Palabras clave:** Enseñanza de la historia, Libros de texto, Identidad nacional, Nietzsche

**Abstract:**

For almost two decades, History education in Australia has been a site of struggle over collective memory of the colonial past, and an object of concern for how this impacts students' sense of national identity. Since the advent of the history/culture wars and their spill over into History and Social Studies (Society and Environment) curricula, conservative historians, politicians, and media commentators have been fighting to see an end to 'black armband' history – or what they see as an excessively mournful view of our collective history – and its replacement with what they argue is a more 'balanced', but usually celebratory, vision of the national past. The new Australian History curriculum, which has sought to get beyond so-called 'black armband' and 'white blindfold' histories, has recently come under fire for its perceived lack of

attention to one of the nation's founding mythologies, the battle of Gallipoli. To engage with this debate, we will draw on a framework first presented by Friedrich Nietzsche for thinking about the uses and abuses of historical discourse.

**Keywords:** History Education, Textbooks, National Identity, Nietzsche

## Introduction

This paper explores the perceived role of school history textbooks in the construction and reproduction of national identity, through the exploration of an Australian case study. Anchoring the discussion in a specific national case takes seriously Goodson's (1992) assertion that "social histories of school subject[s] need to be undertaken in national and local milieux" (p. 25). While the paper is concerned with historical culture, political discourse, national identity, and history textbooks, it takes up this concern through exploration of recent conflicts over the content of the new Australian Curriculum: History (to be finally fully-implemented across the nation over the next two years).

For almost two decades, history education in Australia has been a site of struggle over collective memory of the colonial past, and an object of concern for how this impacts students' patriotic spirit, and sense of national identity. Since the advent of the history/culture wars and their spill over into History and Social Studies (Society and Environment) curricula, conservative historians, politicians, and media commentators have been fighting to see an end to 'black armband' history (Blainey, 1993) – or what they perceive as an excessively mournful view of Australia's past – and its replacement with what they argue is a more 'balanced', but usually celebratory, vision of national history. The new Australian Curriculum: History, which has sought to get beyond so-called 'black armband' and 'white blindfold' histories (Doherty, 2014), has recently come under fire for its perceived lack of attention to the battle known in Australian historical culture as 'Gallipoli'. The failed Gallipoli campaign of WWI is represented in Australian historical culture as a pivotal event in the formation (or more precisely, 'revelation') of national identity. Gallipoli is one of the 'hot' topics in the history and culture wars. Its continued commemoration is perceived as significant for the reproduction of national identity and national culture.

In this paper we consider the place of Gallipoli in Australian historical culture, explore the political concern over the place and representation of Gallipoli in school history education, examine the space given to Gallipoli in school history textbooks, and investigate a specific example of how one aspect of the Gallipoli narrative has been represented in those same textbooks. Specifically, we will investigate the extent to which political concern over the place of Gallipoli in the curriculum is justified by conducting a content analysis on a series of new history textbooks for the Australian curriculum. Then, we turn to a framework first presented by Friedrich Nietzsche (1874/1983) for thinking about the uses and abuses of historical discourse. Drawing provocatively upon our Nietzschean-styled lens, we will consider how Gallipoli is

represented in school history textbooks, examining the forms of history it serves, and by implication the uses to which it is put. We will focus explicitly on an example of core Gallipoli mythology, the case of Simpson and his donkey. The paper will conclude by reflecting upon the implications of the findings for thinking about history textbooks, historical culture, political discourse, and national identity construction.

### **Gallipoli in Australian historical culture**

According to Lüsebrink (2002), “[t]he concept of ‘nation,’ along with the concept of national identity, rests upon various forms of historical memory” (p. 217). Nations would seem to differ according to the specific means by which such historical memory is made available for appropriation (ie. the various oral, written, practical or banal forms in which national history is represented), as well as the degree of narrative borrowing that occurs across geographic, cultural, or state boundaries. The specific constellation of such factors forms the ‘historical culture’ of the nation; or as Fernando Sánchez Marcos states on a website dedicated to the exploration of historical culture, “the specific and particular way in which a society relates to its past”,<sup>1</sup> including the forms of historical experience that are made available, and the meditational texts, practices, and tools by which it does that. School history textbooks, as one of a number of important forms of what Wertsch and Penuel (1998) call ‘meditational means’, form an important part of the historical culture of many nations (see for some diverse examples, Dietsch, 2006; Elmersjö & Lindmark, 2010; Otto, 2013; Shinichi, 2010; Siebörger, 1994).

With the Centenary of World War I fast approaching, nations for whom this war was a significant event will undoubtedly be revisiting their curricular and textbook representations of ‘the Great War’. This is certainly the case in Australia, where the attention given to the Gallipoli campaign in the new national curriculum has come under conservative scrutiny. Both the conservative Prime Minister Tony Abbott, and his Minister for Education Christopher Pyne have decried what they see as insufficient attention to the important topic of Gallipoli, and have threatened to rewrite the curriculum, which is yet to be fully implemented across the nation. They have gone as far as to establish a review committee who are to examine the new curriculum, and have placed in charge of the committee two conservative public intellectuals, one of whom has published well-known books that are highly critical of contemporary education (see for example, Donnelly, 2004).

The attack on a perceived lack of attention to Gallipoli in Australian curriculum would seem to be largely motivated by an attempt to keep national mythology alive. We explore such accusations in the context of school history textbooks written especially for the new Australian curriculum, and thus operate as a concrete expression of that curriculum. Brindle (1997) asserts that textbooks published in the United Kingdom during the inter-war period were “particularly...concerned with strong

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<sup>1</sup> Fernando Sánchez Marcos is Professor of Modern History at the University of Barcelona. The above quote is from his website, [http://culturahistorica.es/historical\\_culture.html](http://culturahistorica.es/historical_culture.html) and was retrieved 1 June 2014.

narrative and their...affinity towards a mainstream, national heritage based upon a canon of recurring stories about figures and events from the past” (p. 1). The same can be said of the contemporary and historical Australian context with regard to the topic of WWI, as patriotic beliefs about the significance of certain events to Australia’s emerging nationhood, such as the Gallipoli campaign, are reflected in both official curriculum documents and in the accompanying textbooks. This struggle over national historical discourse can be seen in the recent critical examinations of the role patriotic representations of WWI have played in public constructions of national identity (Brown, 2014; Stanley, 2013); and in the refutations of these concerns by conservative commentators such as Bendle (2014), who seek to maintain the place of Gallipoli as an overarching, and defining, narrative in the origins and maintenance of a distinctly Australian identity.

The ANZAC (Australia New Zealand Army Corp) spirit is recognized in the patriotic histories of the nation that adopt the failed Gallipoli campaign as ground zero for the revelation of the nation’s identity. Historically, the Gallipoli campaign was a failure, with great losses of life that commenced with the landing of ANZAC troops at a place now known to prosperity as Anzac Cove. More than 8,000 ANZACs lost their life in the course of the eight-month Gallipoli campaign, and over 26,000 were injured. These were dramatic numbers for a country whose population was 4.9 million at the time, and whose entire enlistment for service in WWI numbered 416,809 (representing more than a third of the total male population aged between 18 to 44). Thus, the tragedy of Gallipoli impacted just over 12% of the entire enlistment, effectively ‘decimating’ the ANZAC corp. The legend of Gallipoli considers the great courage of the men who attempted to gain purchase on the beach amidst gunfire from their Turkish opponents nested high in the hills. Although the ANZAC troops were mobilized under the auspices of British command (responsible for overall coordination of the Empire’s armies), they were technically participating as the military unit/s of an independent nation. This was the nation’s first post-Federation conflict. That is, it was the first major military crisis the antipodean colonies of Australia and New Zealand had engaged in after each colony had formed itself into a separate, bounded, and ‘unified’ nation.

Australia was effectively formed as a discrete nation when the various states of the mainland and the colony of Tasmania formed a single Federation in 1901. Prior to this time, Australasia had existed as a separate series of British colonies. The original British settlement in what we would later call ‘Australia’, established under Governor Arthur Phillip in 1788, had claimed New Zealand as part of an entity called ‘New South Wales’, a condition it existed in until New Zealand became an independent colony in the middle of 1841. New Zealand participated in the conferences and conventions of the 1880s and 1890s that lead to the formation of the Federation of Australia in 1901, but declined the invitation to become a state of the Commonwealth of Australia, remaining a self-governing colony up until it was proclaimed a separate dominion within the British Empire in 1907. Importantly, Australian and New Zealand troops had fought alongside each other as a single colonial force in the Boer Wars (1880-1881, and 1899-1902), and continued to do so throughout WWI and WWII. However, it seems important to note that when ANZAC troops participated in the events of WWI

(and later in WWII), they were doing so as members of independent nations within the British Empire. That, coupled with the utter humiliation and defeat they experienced at Gallipoli, required the development of a redeeming historical narrative. The Gallipoli narrative was constructed within this context as a story of the recognition of Australian (and New Zealander) courage and mateship in the face of great adversity. It was not so much seen as 'making' an antipodean identity, but 'revealing' one.

Throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Australians remained quietly happy with the place of Gallipoli in their national mythology. However, in the lead up to the centenary of the ANZAC landing (which will occur early in 2015), a number of scholars have challenged the Gallipoli mythology. Reed (2004), a military historian, has argued that Australian military history is much bigger than just Gallipoli – as *The Encyclopaedia of Australia's Battles* (Coulthard-Clark, 2001), also aptly demonstrates, cataloging almost continuous military engagements since first settlement – and we do the ANZACs a disservice when we centre our focus exclusively on the Gallipoli campaign. On the other hand the social historians Lake and Reynolds (2010) have argued that Australian history is constructed around an over-emphasis on war and military history, and that Australian historiography is almost entirely pro-ANZAC. Despite the debate that historians have engaged in over the relative merits of a focus on Gallipoli, the Great War and the Gallipoli campaign both have clearly outlined places in the new national curriculum (which we will document later). However, this has not dissuaded politicians from continuing to engage in attacks on the history curriculum.

### **Gallipoli in recent Australian political discourse**

The contemporary 'raised profile' of the Gallipoli campaign and, by association, the ANZAC legend (often contextualised specifically in the role of the infantry of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp in Gallipoli, Turkey during WWI) can largely be attributed to former Australian Prime Minister John Howard; an outgrowth of his support for a 'three cheers' view of Australian history. His success at raising the profile of Gallipoli is evidenced through a number of key activities undertaken by a growing number of Australians each year. For example, travelling to Gallipoli is increasingly portrayed as being a rite of passage for young Australians; and its success in this regard can be measured by increased attendance at annual Anzac day events, services and commemorations. Participating in Anzac Day activities is increasingly aligned with a normalised 'Australian' way to demonstrate a broad sense of patriotism, rather than solely as a remembrance of Australian war service. With the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign approaching (April 2015), the government's attention has become increasingly focused on how this historic event will be commemorated. Signifying the national importance placed on this campaign, and the resultant mythologising of the birth of the Australian nation, and positioning this within the nation's identity discourse, the Federal government established the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board in 2012, which considers ways to commemorate this event. One of its current actions has been to develop a ballot-system for the distribution of tickets for the many members of the Australian public desiring to attend the somber Dawn Service at Anzac Cove for

the Anzac Centenary commemorations. To do otherwise they believed, was to court risk of having the service over-run, so great does the interest in attending seem to be.

Beyond the raised profile of Gallipoli, Howard also had his sites on the school curriculum. The public debates held between historians, academics, journalists, commentators, politicians and other high-profile public figures were concerned with the ideologies that underpinned particular versions of Australian national history, and their meaning for national identity (see Taylor & Guyver, 2011, for a discussion of this, and similar conflicts around the globe). While the debates had begun as a concern over different representations of frontier conflict among historians, they increasingly became focused upon what was being taught about Australia's past in school (Clark, 2004; Parkes, 2007). A significant moment in this battle over school curriculum was Howard's 2006 Australian Day Address to the National Press Club (delivered on the eve of Australia Day and reported in the papers over the next few days) where he called for a reinvigoration of the teaching of Australian history, stating:

I believe the time has also come for root and branch renewal of the teaching of Australian history in our schools, both in terms of the numbers learning and the way it is taught . . . Too often history has fallen victim in an ever more crowded curriculum to subjects deemed more 'relevant' to today. Too often, it is taught without any sense of structured narrative, replaced by a fragmented stew of 'themes' and 'issues'. And too often, history, along with other subjects in the humanities, has succumbed to a postmodern culture of relativism where any objective record of achievement is questioned or repudiated. (Howard, 2006)

Howard's ambitions for an Australia curriculum – to be implemented as a mandatory area of study for all students in the compulsory years of schooling across the entire nation – tapped into a broader public concern that many students leave school without an adequate grasp of their nation's history, fuelled by studies that showed Australians frequently fail to demonstrate a knowledge of who their first ever Prime Minister was, and other important 'facts' about the national past (Ashton & Hamilton, 2007). This could be redressed, in Howard's eyes, by moving away from skills-based and issues-focused curricula approaches, towards the teaching (read 'memorisation') of a 'coherent' (read 'singular') national narrative, obviously replete with the significant 'names and dates' (though this doesn't get explicitly stated). Although Howard was not as successful at politically influencing the shape or content of the curriculum as he may have hoped (see Taylor, 2009), six years on since Howard's electoral defeat, and with the return of a politically conservative Federal government, the issue of how Gallipoli is taught remains at the forefront of discussion about which version of history (it is usually singular when part of public discussions) should be taught to school students. This issue continues to catch the attention of media outlets and politicians who are interested in coopting this conflict to suit specific ideological, and oftentimes populist, purposes.

With three Prime Ministers in a single year, 2013 was an interesting year for Australian politics (and subsequently the fate of history education). The nine-month quasi election campaign that led to the 7 September election provided opportunities

for politicians to use History curriculum as a political weapon. The Sydney Morning Herald reported that the Liberal Party had “reignite[d] culture wars over Anzac Day teaching” (Kenny & Tovey, 2013, headline), and Shadow Education Spokesman, Christopher Pyne was reported as “attacking the school curriculum for putting Aboriginal and multicultural commemoration days on the same level as Anzac Day” (Kenny & Tovey, 2013, para. 3). Pyne had timed his comments so that they were made two days before the annual commemoration of Anzac Day, when discussions surrounding Australia’s past are often at the forefront of media attention. Pyne rejected what he saw as a cultural relativism which positioned Anzac Day as simply another day in the school commemoration calendar, “locked in with NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Day and Harmony Day” (Kenny & Tovey, 2013, para. 8), and went as far as to say that “You can't grow up in this country and not know about the Anzacs” (Kenny & Tovey, 2013, para. 11).

Continuing with the Liberal party’s criticism of the Australian curriculum, then opposition leader, now Prime Minister, Tony Abbott received a significant amount of attention when he asserted in a National Press Club address that the History curriculum had a “focus on issues which are the predominant concern of one side of politics” (Robertson, 2013, para. 2), meaning the Left or progressive parties, and more specifically the Australian Labor Party. This statement by Abbott garnered a lot of attention, with social media, mainstream press, political parties’ official websites, and Politifact (an organisation established to research and report on the accuracy of political messages and promises) all reporting on these statements, demonstrating that political comments made about school curriculum are considered an important topic to the Australian public. These two examples of attempts by serving members of Parliament to reignite the history wars have resulted in scholars, with long associations in one form or another with the development of the Australian curriculum (see Macintyre, 2013; and Taylor, 2013), making public statements repudiating the claims by politicians that the curriculum is ideologically biased, and asserting the strong presence of Australian history in the new national curriculum. It is the significance of Gallipoli in Australian historical culture, in national political discourse, and in the curriculum, that makes it an important topic to explore in any consideration of Australian history textbooks and their relationship to the production of national identity.

### **Representations of Gallipoli in History textbooks**

History textbooks are well-recognized as educational artefacts that reveal how a curriculum is translated from policy to practice (Valverde, Bianchi, Wolfe, Schmidt, & Houang, 2002), and despite a recent shift of focus towards how textbooks are actually used in the classroom (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2010), our study remains focused only on the textbooks themselves. This is primarily because the new Australian Curriculum: History is yet to be fully implemented across the nation, and is only being deployed in our own state jurisdiction of New South Wales for the first time this year (full implementation will not be completed until 2016). While we cannot be certain about how teachers actually use textbooks and other educational media in the

classroom without studying this directly, history textbooks remain implicated in the introduction of young people to national ideology (Foster & Crawford, 2006), and in the construction of national attitudes and identities (Crawford & Foster, 2007; Crawford, 2009), though we must remain mindful that discrepancies can exist between public discourse and textbook representations (Sharp, 2014). Textbooks are also useful as ways of gauging the areas of the curriculum that teachers are most likely to enact (Valverde et. al., 2002). With this in mind, we consider two lines of inquiry related to representations of Gallipoli in textbooks designed for the Australian Curriculum: History. First, we adopt a simple content analysis method to explore the volume of 'curriculum space' given to Gallipoli specifically, and the Great War more generally, in each of five recently published Australian history textbooks. We follow this line of inquiry in order to determine the veracity of the political Right's claim that Gallipoli is not being adequately addressed in the Australian Curriculum. Second, we examine as a specific case, how the Gallipoli narrative of 'Simpson and his donkey' is treated in a selection of the textbooks. For this line of inquiry we turn to the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche to provide us with a heuristic framework for examining nationalistic historical discourse.

### ***Content analysis of proportional attention to Gallipoli in history textbooks***

The Australian Curriculum: History sets out the teaching of Gallipoli to take place in Year 9 as Depth Study 3: World War I. So significant is Gallipoli considered to the national psyche and the teaching of the Great War, that it is the only military campaign of WWI that is indicated as a mandatory topic of study for this depth study area (Note: "The Western Front 1916" is suggested in the New South Wales syllabus for the Australian Curriculum, but following the national lead, it does not dictate it as an area of study). Importantly, the Australian Curriculum: History also requires students to learn about the ANZAC legend (including debates about its nature and significance). Thus, at least at the level of the curriculum, there should be little doubt of the explicit attention a teacher must give to the topic of Gallipoli.

Now that textbooks that align closely with the Australian Curriculum: History have been published, and are being distributed to schools on a commercial basis, it is both practical and timely to use these materials to determine exactly how much attention is likely to be given to Gallipoli when teachers enact the requirements of the Australian Curriculum. At the time of writing, a number of publishing companies have produced textbooks that cover the secondary years of the Australian curriculum, releasing one textbook (and in some cases an accompanying workbook) per school year, with each text covering a year's worth of content. Each textbook we examined is set out in the table below (see Table 1), listed in alphabetical order by publisher.



Table 1: Textbooks for the Australian Curriculum: History  
[All revised or first published in 2012]

<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Editor</b>	<b>Authors</b>
Cambridge	<i>History 9 for the Australian Curriculum</i>	Woollacott, A	Adcock, M Allen, M Butler, H Cunneen, C Evans, R Gregory, J Mackinnon, A McPherson, J Malone, R St Julian, J Siddall, L Skinner, R Thomas, A Vlahogiannis, N
Jacaranda	<i>Retroactive 9: Australian Curriculum for History</i>	Anderson, M	Keese, I Low, A Harvey, K
Macmillan	<i>History 9: The Making of the Modern World</i>	N/A	Ashton, P Anderson, M
Nelson (Cengage)	<i>Nelson connect with History for the Australian Curriculum Year 9</i>	Greer, V	Bowman, R Cameron, K Fielden, P Gates, C Phillips, L Southee, M
Oxford	<i>Oxford Big Ideas: Australian Curriculum History 9</i>	Carrodus, G	Delaney, T Howitt, B Smith, R Taylor, T Young, C

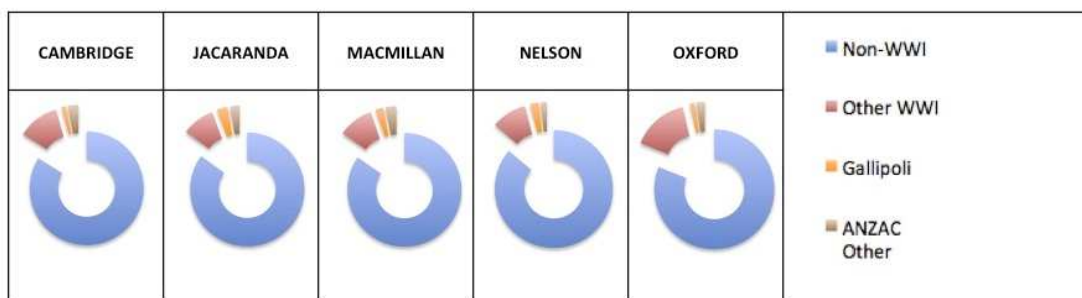
Our first line of inquiry into these history textbooks and their representation of Gallipoli may be described as a simple proportional content analysis to determine exactly how much attention is placed on Gallipoli and WWI. We carried out this first line of inquiry by literally determining the number of pages of the textbook devoted to Gallipoli, the ANZAC legend, and other aspects of WWI (see Table 2 below). Page numbers were rounded up where content filled half a page or greater, and page numbers were rounded down where content filled less than half a page. In the textbooks examined the minimum amount of attention given to Gallipoli was 4 pages, while the maximum amount of attention was 10 pages. Overall, the textbooks devoted a comparable amount of space to WWI, ranging from 48 to 56 pages.

Table 2: Number of pages devoted to Gallipoli and WWI in textbooks for Australian Curriculum: History

Textbook Title	Number of Textbook Pages				Content Emphasis in Section on Gallipoli
	Total WWI / Entire Textbook	WWI Focus	Gallipoli Focus	ANZAC Legend Focus	
Cambridge	48 / 296	35	4	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Political motivation for Australia's involvement.</li> <li>✓ Failure of the campaign.</li> <li>✓ Recognition Gallipoli was not the first major battle Australia fought in.</li> <li>✓ Evacuation of Gallipoli.</li> </ul>
Jacaranda	49 / 324	30	10	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Political motivation for Australia's involvement.</li> <li>✓ Military planning.</li> <li>✓ Soldiers' experiences.</li> <li>✓ Battles of Suvla Bay, Lone Pine and The Nek.</li> <li>✓ Evacuation of Gallipoli.</li> </ul>
Macmillan	49 / 317	32	7	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Political motivation for Australia's involvement.</li> <li>✓ Military planning.</li> <li>✓ Contestation of the 'facts' about Gallipoli.</li> <li>✓ Soldiers' experiences.</li> <li>✓ Battles of Lone Pine and the Nek</li> </ul>
Nelson	51 / 383	36	9	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Political motivation for Australia's involvement.</li> <li>✓ Military planning.</li> <li>✓ Soldiers' experiences.</li> <li>✓ Failure of the campaign.</li> </ul>
Oxford	56 / 294	45	4	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Failure of the campaign.</li> <li>✓ Political motivation for Australia's involvement.</li> <li>✓ Soldiers' experiences.</li> <li>✓ Comparison between John Simpson Kirkpatrick and Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges.</li> </ul>

To provide a clear indication of exactly how much attention is given to Gallipoli in the textbooks examined, we then graphed the number of pages focused upon Gallipoli, the ANZAC legend, other aspects of WWI, and the remaining non-WWI content. The graphics in Table 3 (below), present the proportions of the textbook dedicated to these various aspects of the curriculum. They reveal a picture of remarkable uniformity across the various textbooks. The Oxford text deviates most strongly from the typical pattern observed by providing a relatively smaller amount of attention to Gallipoli specifically, but a greater amount of attention to WWI as a whole. Paradoxically, the Jacaranda text, which provides the most attention to Gallipoli (both literally and proportionately), gives less proportional attention to WWI overall. However, the differences between the various textbooks in terms of page counts, and in proportions, are actually not particularly striking. We suggest that this uniformity most likely arises because the textbooks have a tendency to directly reflect the amount of space given to the Great War in the Australian Curriculum itself. What they reveal quite clearly, is that attention is being paid to Gallipoli, and suggestions that it is being neglected in the curriculum are unfounded.

Table 3: Visual representation of relative proportion of textbooks for Australian Curriculum: History focusing on Gallipoli and WWI



### ***Nietzsche's three histories: What stories are being told about Gallipoli?***

If curricular attention is indeed being given to Gallipoli (and the ANZAC legend and other aspects of WWI), then perhaps it is not attention that is the real problem for politicians, but the nature of the stories that are being told. This is where it is useful to draw on a framework for investigating various forms of historical discourse, particularly those forms that contribute to a sense of national identity. To do this we turn to the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche has not been an uncontroversial figure in studies of nationalist history, having had selective aspects of his work posthumously co-opted by the National Socialist movement in Germany during, and in the lead up to, WWII via the mediation of his sister and editor, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche. However, as his disappointment with his one time friend, the nationalistic composer (and favourite of the Führer) Richard Wagner reveals, Nietzsche demonstrated caution and concern with history as national mythology. Although Nietzsche explored history at various points in his voluminous writings, we are especially interested in how he conceptualized the various forms of historical discourse in his second "Untimely Meditation", *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life). Nietzsche's

(1874/1983) argument, written in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, and around the time of his breach with Wagner, was that there were three types of history: (1) the monumental; (2) the antiquarian; and (3) the critical. Like Jörn Rüsen's (2005) more recent typology of historical narration, Nietzsche's approach to historical discourse is concerned more-or-less with the human capacity for historical sense-making. We've adopted Nietzsche's framework for this article because he was writing against the co-opting of history for particular 'uses', particularly in the service of nationalistic discourses; whereas Rüsen is more concerned with understanding historical reasoning in its entirety. That said, in the exploration of Nietzsche's framework that follows, we make some effort to identify where the two typologies might conceivably be considered to overlap.

For Nietzsche, the three forms of historical discourse may be conceptualized as follows. *The Monumental* is a form of historical discourse in which 'great' events and deeds serve as models for the present, and are valorized and venerated. This arguably reflects something like the mode of historical narration that Rüsen (2005) calls the 'exemplary,' in which the past is viewed as a series of cases that can be mined for general rules to govern conduct. It engages the past as a kind of triumphant moral resource from which examples are drawn to guide decisions in the present. On the other hand, *the Antiquarian* operates as a mode of historical discourse in which attempts are made to preserve the past as cultural heritage and a source of identity; that provides an assurance that one's present life is connected in tangible ways with those of our ancestors. This would seem to overlap with the form of historical narration that Rüsen (2005) identifies as 'traditional'. Here traditions serve as inter-generational resources for connecting the present with the past. Finally, *the Critical* embodies an approach to historical discourse in which aspects of the past are interrogated and challenged from the standpoint of present wisdom. It equates with Rüsen's (2005) notion that 'critical' histories reveal "people's ability to say no to traditions, rules and principles which have been handed down" (p. 14), opening up the possibility of change, transformation, and new patterns of life. It is worth noting that Rüsen's model deviates from Nietzsche's in explicitly identifying a fourth form of historical consciousness, that he calls 'genetic', or a truly 'historical' perspective on the present and the past. To some extent Rüsen's genetic form of historical discourse combines what Parkes (2009) describes as the 'disciplinary' and 'historiographic' gazes, where both the past, and one's own perspective on it, are historicized. However, for our purposes, it is sufficient to consider Nietzsche's tripartite scheme.

According to Nietzsche's scheme, each of these uses of history – the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical – was subject to abuse (by being used exclusively, or to excess), in which case he believed that historical discourse would lead to human subjugation, or paralysis, rather than freedom. This can be demonstrated by considering what happens when specific forms of historical discourse are ignored. For example, if a people ignores the monumental, then they lose a moral compass, a resource with which to determine virtuous courses of action. If a people ignore the antiquarian as we have described it above, then they lose a connection with tradition, and therefore "the ground under their feet" (Rüsen, 2005, p. 13), or important resources from which to build identity. Finally, if the critical is ignored, then it is

possible for historical discourse to trap the individual in the rules and traditions of times past, denying freedom and the right to seek change and transformation. Thus, Nietzsche is careful to declare that all three forms of historical discourse are needed in order to avoid the problems that arise through exclusivity or over-emphasis. He was critical of “the power of the past to enforce its claims on the future” which subsequently presented “a threat to the project of modernism” (Gooding-Williams, 1987, p.102), where modernity was conceptualized as something like the advent of, or rupture into, the new. For Nietzsche, without an awareness of the strengths of the past there was no capacity for building a new future, but he also cautioned that without an ability to “forget” the past, we may become unable to move beyond it. Thus, Nietzsche’s answer was to pit the various forms of history against each other in a complex balancing act. Motivated by the question of “What would Nietzsche do with Gallipoli?” we use an understanding of these three forms of historical discourse as a heuristic for looking at the type of narratives constructed within the sample of textbooks we examined. We do this by examining ‘Simpson and his Donkey’, one of the most rehearsed stories in the Gallipoli narrative, and a critical figure in promulgations of the Anzac legend.

### ***Case Study: Simpson and his donkey***

The significance to the Anzac Legend of WWI soldier, Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick<sup>2</sup> and his donkey, cannot be underestimated. When the Australian Federal Government’s Department of Education, Science and Training poster, *Values for Australian schooling*, was distributed in 2006, it used the image of Simpson and his donkey as a backdrop. The Australian Government required this poster to be displayed in a prominent place in every school across Australia. The decision made by then Education Minister, Dr Brendan Nelson to have Simpson as the face of values in Australian schools was one which caused significant controversy (see Naylor, 2007 for a detailed response to the selection of Simpson and his donkey and the ensuing debates), and engendered almost as much debate as the actual nine values themselves.

Unlike most other major turning points in the history/culture wars, the concern over the use of the image of Simpson and his donkey originated from the school sector and then entered the public domain. So fierce was the debate surrounding whether Simpson and his donkey represented core Australian values, that the pro-lobby made a renewed call for Simpson to be posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, while the anti-lobby voiced a continued concern that it was inappropriate for a soldier to be the image of Australian values in schools. The poster survived the public debates; a

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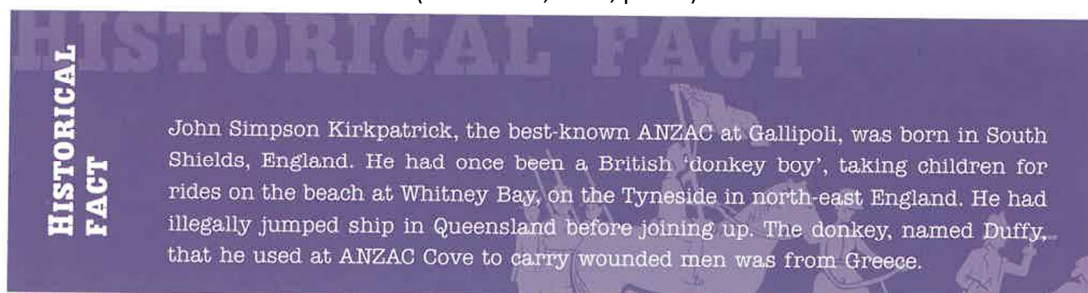
<sup>2</sup> John Simpson Kirkpatrick has become the ‘face’ of Anzac Day, representative of Australian soldiers and a more broad understanding of ‘mateship’. Nominated for, but did not receive, a Victoria Cross for Bravery, Kirkpatrick, known most commonly as ‘Simpson and his donkey’, taxied wounded soldiers on the back of a donkey from the battlefield of Gallipoli to receive medical attention on the beach of Anzac Cove. He was killed by gunfire within four weeks of landing at Gallipoli. He has since become synonymous with courage as part of the Anzac legend mythmaking.

triumph for the conservative Howard government. This did not go unnoticed by conservative-minded commentators, such as Gerard Henderson, who in an article titled 'A legend wins the culture wars', and printed on Anzac Day, wrote:

It is unlikely that self-proclaimed expert opinion will change the accepted view of Simpson and his donkey. In other words, it seems that the Nelson interpretation will prevail. The fact is that, whatever his background and whatever his views, the values which Simpson demonstrated at Gallipoli are much admired - from the bottom up. (Henderson, 2006, para. 13)

Representing a possible backlash against the so-called 'Nelson interpretation' only three out of the five textbooks published for the Australian Curriculum in 2012, contained reference to Simpson. Neither the Macmillan, nor the Nelson texts, include any information about Simpson, and the Cambridge textbook includes only a 5 line paragraph in a textbox titled 'Historical Fact' which does not form part of the main content on the topic of WWI or Gallipoli. The full text of the content is so limited (Figure 1, below), that it is insufficient to enable an analysis of it to be carried out using Nietzsche's three types of history.

Figure 1: 'Historical Fact' extract from *History 9 for the Australian Curriculum* (Woollacott, 2012, p. 256)




The Jacaranda textbook's inclusion of Simpson and his donkey is similar to that of the Cambridge volume in that it is included in a textbox separate from the main text and not part of the substantive content of the chapter it forms a part of (see figure below).



Figure 2: The 'man with the donkey': Extract from *Retroactive 9: Australian Curriculum for History* (Anderson, 2012, p. 312)

**RETROFILE**



**The 'man with the donkey'**  
Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick (1892–1915) was an Englishman who had lived in Australia since 1910 after deserting his position in the merchant navy. Motivated by the hope of getting back to England, he enlisted in the AIF in August 1914 under the name 'John Simpson'. He ended up at Anzac Cove.

Simpson's actions there were mentioned in official reports and became part of a 1916 book entitled *Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War*. This was propaganda, which greatly exaggerated what Simpson had done and singled him out as a hero at a time when Australia needed new recruits.

Simpson served 24 days at Anzac Cove. He was meant to serve as a stretcher-bearer transporting seriously wounded men from the front lines back down to Anzac Cove. Instead, he chose to work alone, with a donkey, delivering water as he made his way up the heights above the beach, through the dangerous Shrapnel and Monash gullies to bring the wounded back down on his donkey. He and the two wounded he was transporting were shot dead in Monash Gully on 19 May 1915.

For many people, Simpson typifies the man of the Anzac legend. Others argue that he was English, a reluctant recruit and someone whose assistance to relatively few and not seriously wounded men, while noteworthy, did not make him a hero.

**Source 4**  
Photograph showing Simpson and his donkey at Anzac Cove in 1915

AWM ART40993

After detailing some biographical information about Simpson, the authors then write of his inclusion in official reports which then became part of a book published during the war as “propaganda, which greatly exaggerated what Simpson had done and singled him out as a hero at a time when Australia needed new recruits” (Anderson, 2012, p. 312). They also go on to write:

For many people, Simpson typifies the man of the Anzac legend. Others argue that he was English, a reluctant recruit and someone whose assistance to relatively few and not seriously wounded men, while noteworthy, did not make him a hero. (Anderson, 2012, p. 312)

Here, it is clear that the authors are engaging in what Nietzsche would describe as ‘critical history’. That is, they are challenging past and present conceptions of Simpson that position him as a hero. They are clear in where this hero status originated (a book to assist with recruitment) and assign the majority of the text, beyond the biographical information and description of the text, to write about why Simpson’s contribution to the conflict is something to be critically evaluated. This is most notable in the concluding sentence, where the authors write that what Simpson did “while noteworthy, did not make him a hero” (Anderson, 2012, p. 312).

The third inclusion of Simpson in textbooks published for the Australian curriculum occurs in *Oxford Big Ideas: Australian Curriculum History 9*. It contains the most substantive information about Simpson, and is the only textbook that includes him in the main content of the topic. The authors use Simpson as a case study for students, exploring his actions in contrast with those of Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges. This case, titled 'Contestability: two heroes' takes up an entire page in the textbook, and on the following page there is a question for students to answer: "Given their brief periods of service at Gallipoli, do you think either Simpson or Bridges deserve to be remembered as a 'hero'?" (Carrodus, 2012, p. 253). The content provided on Simpson is largely celebratory. That is, the authors highlight the praiseworthy aspects of Simpson's actions, writing "Simpson worked tirelessly and cheerfully, often making up to 15 trips a day through sniper fire" (p. 252); and provide a quote from John Monash, a commander of Australian forces at the time, who is claimed to have said:

Private Simpson and his little beast earned the admiration of everyone at the upper end of the valley . . . he frequently earned the applause of the personnel for his many fearless rescues of wounded men from areas subject to rifle and shrapnel fire. (Carrodus, 2012, p. 252)

The positioning of Simpson next to Australia's commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division, the first group to land at Anzac Cove in 1915, is an interesting choice. Both men had very different roles to play, and it would be difficult for students to make a judgment based on the limited information they are presented with from the textbook, as to whether one, both, or neither of them "deserve to be remembered as a 'hero'" (Carrodus, 2012, p. 253). Therefore, the role of the teacher in mediating (and perhaps supplementing) this information would be pivotal to the success of this activity. Simpson's inclusion in the Oxford textbook presents students with 'monumental history', in which Simpson's activities, and what others thought of him, are clearly venerated. However, in requiring students to address the issue of whether or not they consider Simpson to be worthy of the title of 'hero', an attempt is made to engage students in 'critical history', however the question remains as to whether or not the information provided is sufficient to make an informed critical assessment.



'Contestability: two heroes' extract from *Oxford Big Ideas: Australian Curriculum History 9* (Carrodus et. al., 2012, p. 252)

focus on ...

### contestability: two heroes

Most Australians, if asked to name a hero of Gallipoli, will name Simpson—Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick and his donkey.

In contrast, few people know the story of Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges, who led the Australian forces that landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. In this section, we will look in more detail at these two individuals and the ways in which they made contributions to the war.

#### Private John 'Simpson' Kirkpatrick and his donkeys

English-born Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick jumped ship from a British merchant vessel in 1910 and spent the next four years wandering around Australia doing a variety of jobs. Hoping to get a free passage back to England, he enlisted in the AIF, and was placed with the



Source 5.35 Simpson and one of his donkeys with an injured soldier (AWM J06392)

3rd Field Ambulance. On 25 April 1915, he found himself landed on the beaches of Gallipoli.

Simpson, and many others, had the job of transporting wounded soldiers back to the field hospitals for treatment. The day after the landing, however, Simpson spotted some donkeys that had been used as pack animals. Simpson soon formed a bond with one of the donkeys. Although we do not know the exact name Simpson gave the donkey, records from the time suggest the name was Duffy. The sure-footed and steady donkey was the perfect mobile stretcher.

Simpson worked tirelessly and cheerfully, often making up to 15 trips a day through sniper fire—a round trip of almost 2.5 kilometres. The donkey was kept under cover while Simpson darted out to retrieve the injured soldiers.

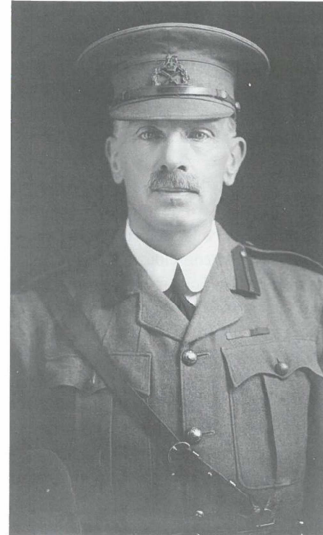
On 19 May, Private Simpson was killed by machine-gun fire. His faithful donkey Duffy returned alone to the field hospital, carrying his last soldier to safety. Simpson was buried at Anzac Cove under his true name, John Simpson Kirkpatrick.

The then-Colonel John Monash said of him, 'Private Simpson and his little beast earned the admiration of everyone at the upper end of the valley ... he frequently earned the applause of the personnel for his many fearless rescues of wounded men from areas subject to rifle and shrapnel fire.'

#### Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges

Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges was a hero of the Gallipoli landing and, for several years, one of the best-known names in Australia. He was responsible for the raising and naming of the 1st Australian Imperial Force. Bridges led the Australian Division that was the first to land at Anzac Cove on the morning on 25 April 1915.

Late in the day on 25 April, Bridges realised that the landing had been a failure and



Source 5.36 William Throsby Bridges (AWM A02867)

concluded that they should leave Gallipoli before there were further losses of life. Together with the New Zealand Commander, General Godley, he tried to convince the British General Sir Ian Hamilton that they should evacuate, to no avail.

Bridges gained a reputation for visiting his troops on the front lines, even if he was putting himself in danger. Only 20 days into the campaign, Bridges was shot. He died three days later.

Bridges was one of only two soldiers from World War I whose body was returned to Australia for burial (apart from the unknown soldier brought back in 1990). He was knighted just before his death and, in September 1915, was buried in the grounds of Duntroon, the military college he had established in Canberra. Moreover, his horse 'Sandy' was the only horse brought back to Australia from World War I.

Arguably Simpson, Australia's most famous WWI soldier, who enjoyed significant attention over the past ten to fifteen years in school curriculum and public arenas has, for the moment at least, been relegated to what Apple (2000) would describe as a 'mentioning' status within the school curriculum. This type of information is often included as a tokenistic gesture, and does not usually cover topics with any real substance or encourage depth of understanding. The content is usually included as a way to pacify others, especially for those who belong to minority groups, but have made (explicit and noticed) moves to have their perspectives and experiences included as part of the official knowledge in the school curriculum. In the case of Simpson and his donkey, the minor inclusion he is now given in the curriculum could be read as a push back against the former conservative government's elevating of him to a place in

the history curriculum that is not equivalent with the actual role he played in the Gallipoli campaign and as a pushback against the legend status he was receiving due to this increased attention. Simpson in this iteration of the Australian Curriculum: History is on the periphery of historical content, included in the Gallipoli narrative as and add-on to the 'real' history taking place, that includes for example, details of battles and a critical engagement with the Anzac legend (something the story of Simpson has been used as an 'exemplar' for since the time of the Great War itself). Interestingly, Simpson is not mentioned at all in the Australian curriculum documents or in the samples of student work provided to guide teachers. In the case of two of the textbooks analysed here, the topic of Simpson is not part of the main content included for classroom learning. The words of Hall (1998), drawing on the work of Gramsci, are worthy of recall here:

Hegemony...cannot be constructed once and for all, since the balance of social forces on which it rests is subject to continuing evolution and development, depending on how a variety of struggles are conducted. Hegemony, once achieved, must be constantly and ceaselessly renewed, re-enacted. (pp. 53-54)

What is clear in the demotion of Simpson in the curriculum and its associated textbooks is that there is evidence of a shift away from monumental and antiquarian perspectives towards a critical reappraisal in the historical discourse provided to students. Perhaps this goes some way to explaining the conservative concern about the place of Gallipoli in the Australian Curriculum, given the important place of Simpson and his donkey in the Right's visions of the Great War. Simpson stood as a symbol of Australian values in these histories, and without Simpson, conservatives may be justifiably anxious about what this means for their vision of Australian identity. However, apart from the direction to critically evaluate who deserves to be considered a hero in this conflict, the textbook presents the well-worn monumental narrative (albeit as a source to be appraised).

If the case of Simpson appears to indicate a shift from the monumental to the critical in the curriculum, then it is worth considering how Gallipoli fairs around at least one other issue, the evacuation and its aftermath among the ANZACs themselves. Here the Cambridge textbook, which had only a few lines on Simpson, explains:

On 7 December 1915, the British Cabinet ordered a retreat of all Allied troops from Gallipoli. A British war correspondent, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, and a young Australian journalist, Keith Murdoch, had at last exposed the terrible conditions and flawed military campaigning to the British leaders. (Woollacott, 2012, p. 257)

And in true monumental style declares:

One of the greatest disasters in British military history ended for the ANZACs on 19 December 1915. The Australians departed, shattered to leave more than 8000 of their dead behind, but comforted to have stuck it out so resolutely and to have gamely played their part in such a hopeless cause. (Woollacott, p. 257)

Thus, the enduring meaning of the ANZAC conflict for Australian identity is left intact in this textbook. While the Simpson narrative was given a little dose of ‘historical fact’, the same textbook secures a more monumental vision of the past with its repetition of the central ANZAC trope: brave men fighting a hopeless cause. Thus, without stating it directly, this type of typical ANZAC narrative permits the students to gain comfort through their participation in antiquarian-style ANZAC commemorations – as it helped those at the time overcome the feelings of devastation that must have come with such great loss of life in the fledgling nation – by providing them with the certain knowledge they are the descendants of courageous stock.

## Conclusions

The formation of an Australian Curriculum was at least partially a response to the history wars, and concerns over what young people in Australia were being taught about the nation’s past. While the political Left has claimed that the new national curriculum aims to get beyond ‘black armband’ and ‘white blindfold’ histories, the Right – now in government – continues to claim that the curriculum is ideologically biased. Central to the latest sorties in this ongoing history and culture war has been the place and representation of Gallipoli, which forms an important foundation narrative mobilized in the construction of Australian identity.

In this paper we have explored ‘Gallipoli’ as it manifests in Australian historical culture, contemporary political discourse, and in the syllabus and textbooks for the new Australian Curriculum: History. In our examination of five recently published history textbooks we found, contrary to current political rhetoric, that Gallipoli does have an explicit and somewhat elevated place in the Australian Curriculum (being the only battle of WWI that students are required to study). However, it did become clear upon closer analysis of the representations in the textbooks, that certain national mythologies, such as the story of Simpson and his donkey, no longer had the purchase they once had in the Gallipoli narrative, with only three of the five textbooks addressing the Simpson story, and only one in any detail. Here we can speculate that the textbook authors, like their curriculum counterparts (who elide the Simpson story from any specific mention in the curriculum document itself), have attempted to move away from what Nietzsche would call monumental history, towards a more critical interrogation of Anzac legend. It is here that the curriculum, as the textbooks testify, challenge a simplistic ‘three cheers’ version of national history.

We wondered at the beginning of our analysis what Nietzsche – at least as we interpret his framework – would make of Gallipoli; or more specifically, its representation in Australian history textbooks. We found clear examples in our analysis of both monumental and critical approaches to history. Antiquarian approaches may have been present, but were not an obvious part of the case we chose to examine. If monumental history equates to some extent with a triumphant white blindfold version of the past, and the critical reflects a more cautious black armband examination of national mythology, then we can confidently say that both can be found in at least some of the textbooks examined. The Simpson story, once central to the ANZAC myth and Australian identity construction, has become subject to

critical interrogation (at least in some of the textbooks); while the evacuation of the ANZACs, as the Cambridge text shows, is still mobilized as a redemptive narrative which was from its inception the core of the Gallipoli story's contribution to national identity construction. Perhaps the advice the political commentators need to hear is that monumental, antiquarian and critical perspectives are each necessary, and without an ability to forget some stories – even those once seen as essential to national identity such as 'Simpson and his donkey' – there is little chance for a nation to move forward.

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