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The History teacher as public historian

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ABSTRACT

Educators have long been aware of the role that schools, and specific school subjects, play in nation-building, including the ways in which national consciousness is perceived to be shaped within the classroom. This makes the historical narratives that future history teachers mobilise of particular interest to researchers. This paper draws on research from the Remembering Australia's Past (RAP) project conducted with pre-service History teachers from the University of Newcastle, who studied history at school during the period of the 'history wars' (Clark, 2008). Drawing on a methodology developed by Létourneau (2006), 97 pre-service History teachers (consisting of 27 males and 70 females, the overwhelming majority of whom identified as either or both European and Anglo-Celtic) were asked to "Tell us the history of Australia in your own words." The participants were given 45 minutes to write their personal account of the nation's past. The analysis of the stories of the nation collected from the pre-service teachers, reveal that they have largely adopted popular discourses circulating in contemporary Australian society, demonstrating that our pre-service History teachers are successful consumers of public history in general, and the dominant discourses of Australia's past in particular; and that given the opportunity, it is these dominant discourses that they readily mobilise. This underscores the importance of engaging public history directly in the classroom, in order to assist pre-service history teachers to deconstruct the narratives 'truths' they have inherited and taken for granted.

KEYWORDS

History Teachers, Public History, Collective Memory, Historical Narratives

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Introduction

Educators have long been aware of the role that schools, and specific school subjects, play in nation-building, including the ways in which national consciousness is perceived to be shaped within the classroom. Inherently political, histories are frequently studied and taught in national categories; and history as a school subject is regularly an area of public debate, government disquiet, and a site of struggle over collective memory and cultural literacy (Ahonen, 2012; Clark, 2008; Macintyre, 2004; Nash et al., 1998; Taylor & Guyver, 2011). Because a nation's history is always open to interpretation, many nations have in recent times been forced to rethink their past amidst competing interpretations, rival narratives, and revisionist histories. The emergence and recognition of counter-narratives from Indigenous, ethnic and national minorities, and sometimes regional neighbours (Elmersjö et al., 2017), have interrupted the incontestability of the nation-building project, and debates over the national narrative have frequently led to very public conflicts over what history is being taught in schools. In some nation-states these debates have become so intense that they have been described as history and culture wars (Taylor & Guyver, 2011). Like many post-colonial nations, Australia is no exception in this regard.

On 26th January 1988, Australia celebrated its bicentennial as a nation. National celebrations included an impressive flotilla of historic ‘tall ships’, pleasure yachts, and spectator craft crowding Sydney Cove and Botany Bay, in an exaggerated re-enactment of the arrival of the eleven ships of the ‘First Fleet’. Marking two hundred years since the beginning of British colonisation of the island continent, this striking fleet helped electrify the mood, and televised live around the country, remains a significant event in the collective memory of the nation. Importantly, this wasn’t the only aspect of this event etched in public memory at the bicentennial. Television news media also documented the significant protest marches lead by Aboriginal elders that called for an acknowledgment of January 26th as a ‘day of mourning’ to recognise the significant injustices, suffering and dispossession of Indigenous people that had come from the colonisation of the country. Rather rapidly school curricula moved from the story of peaceful settlement to a narrative that acknowledged the Aboriginal experience of colonisation as invasion (Parkes, 2007, 2011). When educators immediately responded to this sentiment, and incorporated the Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, significant conflict erupted over the history and social studies syllabi (Land, 1994), and resulted in what we have come to know as the ‘history wars’ (Clark, 2008; Macintyre & Clark, 2003). Since the bicentennial of the nation, and the history wars that followed, played out in the broadcast media, the Australian public has become acutely aware of rival narratives of the nation. Conflicts like the one that has recently emerged around the book *Dark Emu* (Pascoe, 2014) as a result of the publication of a critical tome: *Farmers or Hunter-gatherers? The Dark Emu Debate* (Sutton & Walsh, 2021) continue to find purchase in the national media, and represent the latest stage in this unfolding search for reconciliation and a shared national narrative (Norman, July 8, 2021; Wilkie, June 16, 2021).

In Australia, arguably a vision of school history as an important site in the production of the collective memory of the nation led to a growing political interest in History curricula during the Howard era of the mid-1990s and beyond (Howard, 2006), and was arguably what motivated the establishment of a national curriculum with History as one of its cornerstone subjects, as a sort of ‘guarantee’ that Australian youth would develop a shared historical consciousness of the nation. This same sense of the curriculum as a vehicle for ‘collective memory’ (Seixas, 2000), may also be responsible for on-going attempts at political (Crowe, 2014; Taylor, 2009) and ideological (Parkes, 2015) interference in History education. In the early 2000s, at the height of the ‘history wars’ (Macintyre & Clark, 2003), concerns over whose history was being taught in schools (Blainey, 1993a; Donnelly, 1997), paralleled anxieties over what the public knows about the nation’s past (Ashton et al., 2000; Ashton & Hamilton, 2007), often driven by survey research that expects an encyclopaedic knowledge of the past. The concern was compounded by the problem that both teachers and school students seemed to find Australian history of little interest (Clark, 2008), and evidence that many teachers found themselves teaching History without the necessary historical knowledge or disciplinary training (Taylor, 2000). Not long into its implementation, it was the

content of the national curriculum that caused concern, and whether it is doing due diligence to 'western civilization' or giving sufficient attention to national-identity making events such as Gallipoli (Parkes, 2015; Parkes & Sharp, 2014; Sharp, 2014).

Many studies internationally have concluded that subject-matter knowledge, including knowledge of the discipline and disciplinary modes of inquiry, is essential to good History teaching (Counsell, 2012; Levstik & Barton, 2008; Seixas, 2000; Seixas & Morton, 2012; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Wilson & Wineburg, 1998; Wineburg, 1991), but despite this, the evidence in the United States from around the time of these major conflicts over the curriculum in Australia and elsewhere, indicated that many History teachers often resort to teacher-centred didactic approaches when faced with managing student behaviour and what they perceive to be an overwhelming volume of curriculum content (Barton & Levstik, 2003). Regardless, what is clear in the Australian context is that History classrooms as an important site of public history, and the historical narratives shared within them, have largely remained a black box in the decade since the national curriculum was first implemented. We speculated, following Barton & Levstik (2003), that if a History teacher found themselves under pressure, they might resort to retelling narratives of the nation's past; and thus we wondered what narratives of the nation our pre-service History teachers might mobilise if given the chance to tell the history of Australia in their own words, and what this might tell us about what they would teach in their own classrooms. Intriguingly, as our study unfolded, we realised that the majority of our pre-service History teachers completed their schooling at the height of the conflicts over the national narrative, and we increasingly found that their historical consciousness, and the stories that they told, were marked or accented by the legacy of the history wars. In exploring the narratives our sample of pre-service History teachers mobilise about Australia's past, it became clear that there is a need for direct engagement with public history as a classroom imperative.

Remembering the Nation's Past

Our study was funded through the Faculty of Education and Arts' competitive internal Strategic Networks and Pilot Projects Grant Scheme. Our project 'borrowed' a methodology developed by Jocelyn Létourneau (2006), in which participants were asked to "Please account for the history of Québec, as best you know or can remember it". The outcomes of Létourneau's study refuted survey research and media reports that suggested Canadians had limited knowledge of their national history. Instead, it was found that Québécois held detailed narratives about their collective past; and that some narratives appeared to be widely shared. Létourneau compared these commonly accepted narratives with official histories that participants would have encountered in school history textbooks and determined that relationships did exist between these two sets of stories. Since publication of this work, Létourneau's methodology has been taken up in parallel projects conducted in places such as South Africa (Angier, 2017), Sweden (Donnelly et al., 2017; Olofsson et al., 2017), Belgium (Van Havere et al., 2017), and by our research team in Australia (Donnelly et al., 2019; Sharp et al., 2017).

In the Australian context our research team asked a group of 97 pre-service History teachers (consisting of 27 males and 70 females, the overwhelming majority of whom identified as either or both European and Anglo-Celtic) to "Tell us the history of Australia in your own words." This followed the latest refinements in Létourneau's methodology. The participants were given 45 minutes to write their personal account of the nation's past. They were instructed not to access the internet, and that we were interested exclusively in their accounts (not a perceived correct or incorrect answer to the question). The most common question in the various data collection sessions was "When should we start our narrative?" We refused to provide an answer to this question, inviting the participants to select the time period they thought relevant. Most started with reference to the ancient Aboriginal past, though a few were clearly 'Big historians' (Brown, 2012; Christian, 1991, 2008), and went far back into geological time when Gondwanaland was still part of the mega-continent Pangea. An even smaller number started with Federation (the official formation of the various states into the single Australian nation). Once the narrative scripts were

collected, they were analysed by the research team, seeking to identify the specific topics that were mentioned, and any shared narratives and 'narrative templates' (Wertsch, 2008) that emerge from the data.

Our analysis was predicated on a distinction between collective memory and "formal history" (Halbwachs, 1980). Formal history "views narratives as hypotheses against which evidence from archives, interviews, and other sources can be tested" whereas "collective memory often takes narratives as objects of dogmatic loyalty" (Wertsch & Karumidze, 2009, p. 379). Thus, the study was concerned with identifying shared narratives that underpin the collective memory or historical consciousness of pre-service History teachers. We also predicated the study on the assumption that our narratives of the past can be influenced by a variety of media forms (Davies, 2006; de Groot, 2009). Shared narratives were compared with the national narratives evident in both the curriculum and popular media, helping to identify if there was any common historical discourse at play in both.

Our sample consisted exclusively of our second and third year pre-service History teachers. Pre-service History teachers represent those individuals who, upon graduation, will be tasked with teaching the nation's past to future generations. A recent study of pre-service teachers at the University of Sydney found that alongside seeking to make a difference in the lives of young people, and work in a personally meaningful career, participants had made the decision to teach because they wanted to maintain a meaningful engagement with the subject area they were drawn to (Manuel & Hughes, 2006). A meaningful engagement with History suggests a strong interest in the past and the stories we hold about it. By developing an understanding of the narratives pre-service History teachers have appropriated, how they navigate competing accounts, and the influences on the formation of these narratives, we hoped to provide insights that might benefit the design of method courses in History teacher education programs. Further, our research sought to better understand how a group that are interested in the past (pre-service History teachers), engage with both collective memory and official history in their own narratives of the nation.

The stories we do and don't tell

Our study of the pre-service History teachers' narratives began with a simple content analysis that is reported in the following graphs. The first graph above reveals the 'contours' of the narratives the pre-service teachers told. Of the 97 participants from whom narratives were obtained, 88 discussed Aboriginal History, and 72 addressed British Colonisation. The World Wars were the next most often mentioned topics, with 71 mentioning WWI, and 61 WWII, both of which remain important curriculum foci in high school. However, only 29 discussed the European exploration of the continent, a topic that was once central to the curriculum. In New South Wales, where this study was carried out, most participants would have experienced topics on European Explorers as a core focus during their Primary schooling. However, with changing attitudes towards European imperialism and the British colonisation of Australia, and an increasing appreciation of the 'invasion' narrative, the 'discovery' narrative template had undoubtedly diminished in significance. Other topics of significance, also addressed in the primary school curriculum, included the Gold Rushes and (as already mentioned) Federation. Overall, it would be fair to say that Australia's engagement in various international military wars and conflicts loomed large, somewhat reflecting an emphasis in the overall school History curriculum itself.

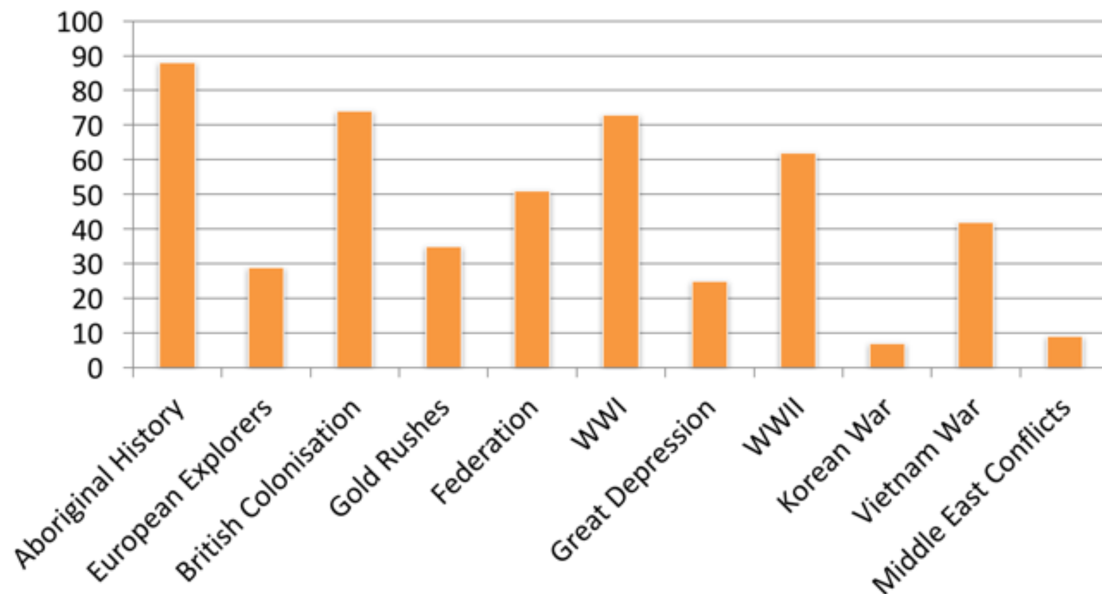

Figure 1: Contours of the Narratives: Historical Significance [n=97]

One of the events overlooked by our participants, that is conspicuous by its absence, and tells us a lot about how our pre-service History teachers see national history, is the Boston Tea Party (1773). Of course, the Boston Tea Party is a pivotal event in the history of the United States of America, and it may have been excluded by students for exactly that reason. It is also an event that is typically unstudied in Australian schools. However, the political protests that historians have come to know as the Boston Tea Party have a significance for Australia that is not usually acknowledged in curriculum documents or in public memory. From the early 1700s, the British Government had been transporting convicts to the American colonies. When the American colonials rebelled against the Tea tax of the British motherland, a chain of events was triggered that would lead to war. The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) that erupted would see the colonists seeking sovereignty and independence from Britain. When the American colonies were victorious in their struggle for independence, one of the consequences for Britain was that the government was forced to look elsewhere to send their convicts, who were currently overcrowding their prisons and held up in prison hulks (ships that had been modified as floating goals). Only a decade early, Captain James Cook had claimed possession of Australia, having charted a course around New Zealand, and landed on the east coast of the 'Great Southern Land' at a place he first called Stingray Harbour, but later dubbed Botany Bay, given the significant variety of new plants found there by the expedition's naturalist, Joseph Banks. In a race to beat the French, the British decided to establish a penal colony at Botany Bay, and the First Fleet arrived under the leadership of Arthur Phillip, who would become the colony's first governor. Thus, the Boston Tea Party was actually a catalyst in the eventual British colonisation of Australia. Its absence from the narratives might be a result of our participants having limited time in which to write up their narratives, and thus defining the boundaries of their narratives firmly within the nation itself. As already noted, this might also be because the Boston Tea Party is simply an area of history not directly addressed in the curriculum. However, it could just as easily be the result of paying insufficient attention to historical interconnections and the larger historical narrative in which Australia's story sits, a problem that the Australian national curriculum sought to address, but whose current format structures this period as one concerned with European global navigation, exploration and discovery.

Embracing the Black Armband View of Australia's Colonial Past

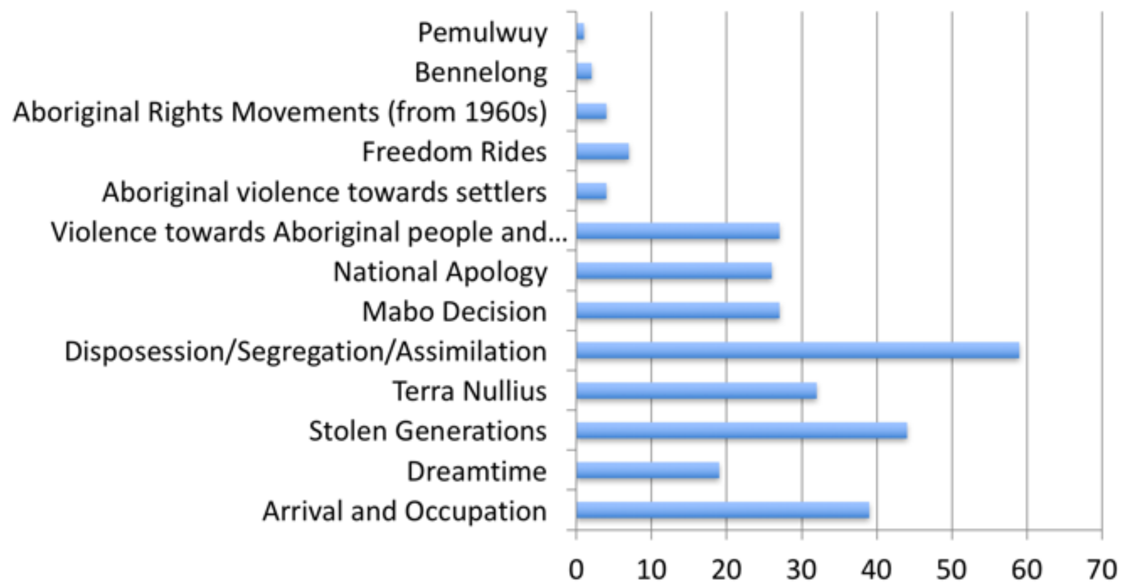

Figure 2. Aboriginal History in the Narratives
[n=88 of the n=97 narratives references Aboriginal History]

When Aboriginal History was discussed (as outlined in the second graph above), the overwhelming majority of the narratives concentrated on occupation, dispossession, segregation and assimilation during the colonial period (n=58); and a significant number focused on the stolen generations (n=44). In the early 1990s, the Board of Studies curriculum authority in New South Wales, mandated the teaching of Australian history for the first time. However, on the back of the bicentennial of the nation and the call for a 'day of mourning' by Aboriginal elders mentioned earlier, the history of Australia was to be taught with attention to Indigenous perspectives, along with Women's perspectives, and a recognition of Australia as part of Asia. Thus, it would certainly seem to be a victory for the curriculum authors of the early 1990s that so many students engaged with Australia's Indigenous history in this way; an indication that Aboriginal history, so often forgotten (Healy, 2008), had finally found its place in the national consciousness. However, what we found in the narratives tells a more complicated story than this might suggest, as can be demonstrated by examining some of the statements that appeared in our participants' narratives:

> Aboriginal people had a spiritual connection with the land; their purpose for life was to care for the land. If they did not do this they had no purpose. Different to the white settlers' viewpoint on land and land use. They viewed land for expansion and industrial reasons. This caused many tensions between English settlers and Aboriginal people, the ignorance of the white settler cause Aboriginal people and their culture to be discriminated and devalued. Upon the settlement of the English, Australia was proclaimed as 'terra nullius' Meaning that there is no man's land, therefore the settlers were allowed to do whatever they wished to do with the land. [#21]

> From an indigenous perspective, Australian history has been fraught with the annihilation of the Aboriginal race through to the assimilation in order for white settlers to gain dominance over the land and therefore resources. [#40]

> The Aboriginal people, however, lived on Australia for many thousands of years, before being invaded by Europeans . . . The lives of the Indigenous community were still being valued as inferior; Aboriginals could be killed without major concern. [#37]

> For the aboriginal people this meant they were displaced from their land and many thousands were killed as europeans expanded. At the same time, guerrilla warfare began to take place between the aboriginals and the new settlers as both sides fought for the right to their land. [#74]

> Australian history begins with the colonisation by the English and the inhabiting of the country prior to the colonisation by the Indigenous Australians, the Aboriginals. From then the history of our country is concerned around the treatment of the aboriginals by the white settlers. The policies of the time that were implemented controlled the treatment of these people. The Assimilation, Self-Determination, ___ and ___ were the policies brought in by the government of the time before the “White Australia” policy was introduced as an attempt to breed out the original owners of the land that was wrongly labelled “terra nullius”. [#50]

A close reading of these excerpts from our participants’ narratives reveals that while British colonisation, and Aboriginal oppression and dispossession were addressed, that Aboriginal agency and resistance is almost entirely absent from the stories being told (#74 being the exception). There is a definable sympathy towards the Aboriginal people of Australia, and even a certain sense of outrage at how they were treated in the colonial past. However, strikingly absent from the narratives (n=97) was any mention of an Aboriginal resistance leader by name, except a singular mention (n=1) of Pemulwuy (1750-1802), a member of the Bidjigal clan of the Eora people who were the original inhabitants of the areas we know as Toongabbie and Parramatta (places that retain their Indigenous name right up until the present). From 1790 until his assassination in 1802, Pemulwuy, then living in the area of Botany Bay, mounted a guerrilla campaign against the colonists. Other resistance leaders, such as Windradyne of the Wiradjuri (who occupied the Central West region of New South Wales, beyond the Blue Mountains), and Tarenorerer of the Tommeginne people (in Tasmania), are nowhere to be found in our participants’ narratives.

The overall tone of the narratives when talking about the colonial period, is marked by a negativity towards the Europeans who had ‘invaded’ the country. Of concern however, in the absence of any identified resistance leaders, Aboriginal people are constructed almost universally as victims of European imperialism and oppression, with little room for, or indication of, agency. The result are stories that rehearse a view that has dominated the Australian national consciousness, in which Aboriginal people have consistently been depicted as a ‘dying race’ (fuelled here by the lack of resistance), which likewise continues to feed into the ‘great Australian silence’ that had erased the violent conflicts of the colonial period from public memory (Attwood, 2005; Russell, 2001; Veracini, 2003), and “has been sustained by an Anglo-Australian myth that the destruction of Aboriginal society in the face of colonizing forces was inevitable and complete; a belief in an uneventful frontier free of the founding violence of other nations; ignorance of (and disbelief when confronted with the revelation of) state sanctioned Indigenous child-removal policies designed to foster ‘assimilation’ throughout most of the post-federation/pre-bicentennial period; and the wilful ‘drawing a veil’ over events by nineteenth-century historians already concerned about what it could mean for the national spirit and reputation if frontier atrocities were more widely circulated in Australia and abroad” (Parkes, 2011, pp. 81-82).

We would undoubtedly expect to see some differences if the data was collected again today, as *historical consciousness is always historically located*. Members of our sample had their historical consciousness forged in the crucible of the history wars. The perspective that dominates is what Geoffrey Blainey (1993b) dubbed in his John Latham Memorial Lecture in 1993, the ‘black armband’ perspective, a mournful view of the past that projects a one-sided picture of the colonial past, in which Europeans were oppressors and Aboriginal people were victims without agency. Undoubtedly this ‘black armband’ narrative is the one that many of our participants would carry into the classroom, and while we might applaud the attention to past wrongs, a strong sense of the strength and pride of Aboriginal people would still be missing. For Blainey, the black armband view could be contrasted with what he described as the “three cheers” view that celebrated the

nation's successes. Concerned that the Hawke-Keating labour governments had been rewriting the historical consciousness of the nation from the black armband perspective, Blainey (1993a) sought to have the 'balance sheet' of history restored; a view that, for a time, cost him status in his field. Blainey's view influenced the conservative Howard government that followed, and was taken up by educationalists such as Kevin Donnelly (1997, 2004), who continues to be one of the most outspoken conservative critics of the school curriculum to this day.

Three Cheers for Gallipoli

While narratives of the colonial past reflected a tendency towards a black armband perspective on the past, this changed when our participants engaged with the story of 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 perhaps one of the most sensitive topics in the history and culture wars. Its continued commemoration is believed to be significant for the reproduction of national identity and the protection of national culture. The central protagonists of the Gallipoli narrative are the members of the ANZAC (Australia New Zealand Army Corp). To understand why Gallipoli is so significant in the national psyche, it is necessary to understand something about the formation of the Australian nation itself.

Australia was effectively formed as its own independent nation when the various states of the mainland and the colony of Tasmania formed a single Federation in 1901. Prior to this time, there has existed a series of separate British colonies. The original British colony 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. Despite its independent status, 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. Importantly, although the ANZAC troops were under the command of the British (responsible for overall coordination of the Empire's armies), they were technically participating as the military unit/s of an independent nation. Thus, this was the nation's first post-Federation conflict, the first major military crisis, that the antipodean colonies of Australia and New Zealand had engaged in after each colony had formed itself into a separate, bounded, and 'unified' nation. Gallipoli was thus the first 'test of the metal' of the Australian (and New Zealand) troops. However, landing on the beach at Gallipoli amidst gunfire from their Turkish opponents nested high in the hills, made this a near impossible task. 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. Being the first real engagement of the newly formed Australian nation's fighting forces, the utter humiliation and defeat experienced at Gallipoli, "required the development of a redeeming historical narrative" (Parkes & Sharp, 2014, p. 163). The Gallipoli narrative that emerged within this context was 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" (Parkes & Sharp, 2014, p. 163).

Turning back to our pre-service history teachers' narratives, what is most apparent when looking at how they address the topic of Gallipoli, is the presence of what Blainey (1993b) called the "three cheers view" of Australian history (p. 268), as evident in the following excerpts (particularly the sections highlighted in italics):

> 1914-1918- WW1 Australia's first real chance to show its strength as its own country and show it is strong enough to be its own country. Gallipoli the great battle ground where we showed our true strength and Aussie spirit. [#8]

> When World War One came around, Australia was still very much so a baby country, not valued very highly by others as it was still only so new. Australian's saw WWI as an opportunity to prove themselves, as a chance to be on the 'stage of the world' and show their abilities. [#37]

> 1914 was the outbreak of the first world war, Australia participated in a bloody conflict on the Peninsular of Gallipoli in Turkey in April 1915 as part of the conjoined ANZAC forces (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps), this is retrospectively considered to be a baptism by fire of the newly formed nation. Solidifying what Australian meant as opposed to British. [#97]

> Throughout the war the ANZACs engaged in British battles and garnered some level international influence due to its role. [#39]

> Men were known to be strong and brave if they joined the war and thousands were shipped off overseas to fight battle in Europe. The first time Australia really made a mark on the world was in Gallipoli which could also be seen as Australia's biggest military fail. From here the idea of the ANZAC a brave solider who partakes in mate-ship and courageous acts was born. This idea has and still is imbedded in much of Australian society. [#74]

As can be seen from the above excerpts, there is solid adoption of the romantic or mythological perspective that dominates public discourse about Gallipoli. There is a strong emphasis in the narratives, despite the obvious defeat that this campaign was, that Gallipoli put our fledgling nation on the world stage. It is hard to imagine a more 'three cheers' version of this event that could be taken.

Conclusion: The Education of History Teachers as Public Historians

The Remembering Australia's Past (RAP) study reported above suggests, we would argue, that the pre-service History teachers whose stories of the nation we collected, have largely adopted popular discourses circulating in contemporary Australian society. While on first glance the narratives of the colonial past may appear critical, the lack of agency attributed to Aboriginal people, and the virtual absence of Aboriginal resistance to the European colonisation, suggests a less well thought out engagement with the past. That for many of the participants the representation of Gallipoli rehearses the public rhetoric of this event as setting Australian on the world stage, further suggests the influence of popular discourse on the histories our pre-service teachers have readily accessible. In facing the task to tell us the history of Australia in their own words, many of our pre-service History teachers mobilised narratives that show a sensitivity to political correctness. They provided a black armband view of colonisation, and a white blindfold view of Gallipoli, in both cases failing to move beyond these popular discourses to a more nuanced version of the past. In fairness to our participants, providing them with more time to complete their narratives, or more tightly exploring particular topics or events, might lead to more nuanced narratives that get beyond dominant discourses. However, follow up work is needed to determine if that is indeed the case.

This study offered us an important lesson. It demonstrated that our pre-service History teachers are successful consumers of public history in general, and the dominant discourses of Australia's past in particular; and that given the opportunity, it is these dominant discourses that they readily mobilise. This underscores the importance of engaging public history directly in the classroom, and in the seminar, if we seek to engage with the past beyond the popular sentiments of our time. The limitations in our pre-service History teachers' narratives suggest that much more work needs to be done with pre-service History teachers to help them explore the narratives they

mobilise, how they have developed, and the perspectives from which they emerge. Nietzsche (1874/1983) once suggested that the different forms of history needed to be pitches against each other, if we are to be free of the constraints of historical discourse. He was particularly thinking of the need to balance the monumental and antiquarian with the critical, and vice versa. Less a person be trapped by a conservative vision of the need to preserve cultural as it is, or a radical version that leaves them without footing, or depressed and guilt ridden about the past. Following Nietzsche, I would argue that there is a need for our future history teachers as public historians to offer their students narratives which provide some form of temporal mooring or historical orientation in which to know themselves as historical beings. There is also need for critical perspectives that assist them to deconstruct the narratives 'truths' they have inherited and taken for granted. The tension between these conservative and critical approaches can be a productive one, and could help our pre-service History teachers get beyond simply rehearsing what they believe is politically correct, and such an approach where these tensions are kept in play, is arguably central to the project of public history in the classroom.

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