The story of the story of Anzac

PART II

Re-reading Bean’s *Official History*

“Before you study the history, study the historian.”

*What is History?*, E.H. Carr
CHAPTER FOUR

temper Imperial, bias Australian

In 1915, as Manning Clark has it, Henry Lawson was again in great torment. He was either “in a hole,” or “on a bust.” The war is raging in Europe, the Anzacs have stagnated at Gallipoli. Lawson writes to his publisher George Robertson about the young French soldier-poet who penned the Marseillaise with words that “shook the world” — a jiggling fool, says Lawson, borrowing from Shakespeare. For Clark, the sad thing is that no longer did any words about the liberation of humanity well up in Lawson’s heart. Clark looks at the aging Alfred Deakin and sees that he, too, is also dismayed; the war news leaves him “confused.” By war’s end, Mr Deakin had “walked deeper into the night,” and Lawson had “become a wreck” (V: 427).¹

In 1915, Ginger Mick looked on war through different eyes, with “Joy in ’is ’eart, an’ wild dreams in ’is brain.”² The war was adventure, it was “the call of stoush.” Ginger didn’t make it to the end. Unlike Lawson and Deakin, C.J. Dennis’ larrikin Anzac joined the ranks of those who did not grow old. But throughout it all, Bean watched and recorded, and believed that “in those days Australian became fully conscious of itself as a nation” (Official History, 1: xlviit).


² C.J. Dennis, The Moods of Ginger Mick.
The fifth volume of Clark’s history spans the years 1888–1915; from the centenary of British colonization, through the roaring nineties and Federation, to the invasion and withdrawal from Gallipoli. In keeping with the messianic trope that informs his writing, Clark prefigures his own entry to the world in the tragic year of 1915, as news of war visits his pregnant mother like some terrible annunciation from a latter-day angel Gabriel (v: 376). But if 1915 is a beginning of great things for Charles Bean, it is the end of a dream for Manning Clark. The last words of his volume look not to a birth of national consciousness — but declare rather that, “The ideals of Australia had been ‘cast to the winds’” (v: 426).

Clark’s epilogue lowers the curtain on the two men who have helped narrate the story of Australia’s lost utopian vision, Henry Lawson and Alfred Deakin. Together they compass the story of the nation: “The tragedies of Lawson and Deakin are the tragedies of Australia writ large,” says Clark (v: vii). These two become parallel narrators amongst a polyphony of voices, in imitation of the novels of Dostoevskij which so affected Clark. The dialogic relationship of the narrators fleshes out the character of the nation imagined by the author.

At the end of his autobiographical The Quest for Grace Clark confesses his “two shy hopes” to be the triumph of the proletariat and the resurrection of the dead. It is thus possible to see the Lawson and Deakin of this volume as Clark’s alter egos: on one side the radical politics of ‘Australia’s great native son’, on the other the narcissistic spiritualism of the ‘Australian-Briton’. This is the essence of Clark’s Dostoevskij, whom he describes as a “divided man” (Speaking out of Turn, 164). So, too, Manning — in his own words a “polyphon”, a man of many voices and parts, often seemingly irreconcilable. Of course, Clark is selective in what he takes from his exemplars. There is more to Lawson and Deakin than finds expression in Clark.

From a different viewpoint, it is possible to see Charles Bean also as combining the characters of Lawson and Deakin. But Bean approaches
the twain from an opposite direction, taking his politics from Deakin and his spirit from Lawson. Not for Bean the troubling thoughts of the pale Galilean, nor a tragic view of wasted poetic vision. He maintained faith in imperial allegiances, but also in the democratic morals forced in the seedbed of the bush. Bean listened to the accent of Lawson, but heard not the message. He did not want to uproot the 'Old Dead Tree', merely to graft branches of the 'Young Tree Green' onto the originary trunk, to reinvigorate the old stock. As Inglis says, Bean was a democrat but not a man of the left.3

For each of these historians, their six volumes became their life's work. Both wrote the nation's history, both wrote in Canberra. But Lawson and Deakin speak to the historiographers in different tongues. Bean and Clark thus complement each other and their respective pasts, adding two more actors to the polyphonic novel of Australian history — though as Clark would later admit, their own voices sounded too often to the exclusion of others yet to be properly heard.4

It is hardly possible to read Clark without some understanding of the issues that played on his conscience and inflected his work. The same goes for Bean. E.H. Carr makes the point that when we take up a work of history, our first concern should be not with the facts but with the historian who wrote it. “History is interpretation,” he says, and hence motivated in ideology. In a homely metaphor, Carr exhorts us to find out what bees the historian has in his bonnet: “Always listen out for the buzzing. If you can detect none, either you are tone deaf or your historian is a dull dog” (What is History?, 23). Roland Barthes’ study of the French national historian Jules Michelet proceeds in similar fashion to Carr's

3 Inglis, 'The Anzac tradition', 31. Inglis is quoting Stephen Murray-Smith’s epithet on Geoffrey Blainey from the early 1960s.

4 In The Quest for Grace (219) Clark recants his opening sentence of the History, which fails to see the European invasion through the eyes of the existing inhabitants. In other places he says he did not give enough attention to women.
thesis. Barthes says at the beginning of *Miechlet par lui-même* that his endeavours have been “to recover the structure of an existence (if not a life), a thematics...a network of obsessions.” There are many obsessions, and plenty of buzzing in Bean’s *History*, as we shall see.

* Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean was born in Bathurst, New South Wales, in November 1879. His antecedents were English folk, “mostly sincere Anglican Christians, educated, humane.” Charles’ mother Lucy Butler was third generation colonial-born from Hobart; his father Edwin Bean was Anglo-Indian from Bombay. The traditions of both families instilled in Bean a belief in the values of the intellectual bourgeoisie, and the rectitude of the Empire-colony relationship.

Bean spent his first nine years in the inland town of Bathurst, attending All Saints College where his father was Headmaster. In early 1889 the family removed to England. The young Charles enjoyed much journeying around England and the continent. As a ten year-old he was tramping the battlefield of Waterloo searching for relics, and immersing himself in Edward Cotton’s battle museum. A few years later he was excitedly walking the decks of Nelson’s flagship *Victory* at Portsmouth and watching famous regiments parading on review. These historical signposts of British military and naval pride did much to convince Bean (and so many others) that the Empire was a natural, benign and enduring phenomenon in the world. The gay doodlings of marching guardsmen in Bean’s copy of Herodotos’ *Histories* offer evidence of how seamlessly the ancient Hellenic glories were appropriated into the Empire’s pedagogical ideology (fig. 1).

His father became Headmaster of Brentwood, an old but ailing Grammar school on the north-east edge of London. Charles completed his schooling here, and at his father’s *alma mater* Clifton College, Bristol,

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5 Unless otherwise noted, details of Bean’s life are taken from Dudley McCarthy’s biography *Gallipoli to the Somme.*
fig. 1. Detail from a page of Bean's Greek copy of Herodotos' *Histories* (85% actual size). Australian War Memorial, Bean Study Collection.

The marginal notes refer to the Greek text lying open on the verso folio.
a relatively new school but with a strong tradition as a pathway to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. Among Clifton’s old boys were William Birdwood (later commander of the A.I.F. at Gallipoli), Douglas Haig (British Commander-in-Chief 1916–18), and Henry Newbolt, the poet and historian. Newbolt would always be a great example to Bean, with his patriotic historical fiction, books on naval tactics, and stirring verses on the public school ethos: “Play up, play up, and play the game.” Ken Inglis sees Newbolt’s poem as a key text in the development of Bean’s complex ideology: “playing the game, the lesson learned on the cricket field, saves the day on the imperial field of battle.”6 Another strong influence was Rudyard Kipling, the ‘poet of Empire’. Bean had an affinity with Kipling in their common Anglo-Indian heritage, and he was fond of paraphrasing Kipling’s adage on the decentralized pluralism of the Empire: “they little know of England who only England know” (Bean, ‘Australian IV’).7

From Brentwood and Clifton it was a natural progression to Oxford and ‘Greats’. In 1902, Charles graduated with second class honours, and in August that year he sat the ‘Open competitive examination’ for a career in the Empire Civil Service. Bean hoped to go to India, or maybe South Africa; but he failed to gain a place.8 He was fluent in French, reasonably proficient in German, and thoroughly at home in classical literature and history; yet he had no vocation. Somewhat listless he returned to Oxford

6 Inglis, C.E.W. Bean, 6. The line is from Newbolt’s poem ‘Vitai Lambada’, in The Island Race. Bean affirms his faith in the public school system in the last chapter of the Official History, where he declares (with typical circumlocution): “It did not really favour progress in humane ideals to teach that a ruling class deliberately schooled in the principles of Clausewitz and Bernhadi would tend to mould human affairs as generously as one brought up in the creed of the English public schools” (1074).

7 Kipling’s line is, “What should they know of England who only England know?” (The English Flag).

8 Among his results were the following: 278/750 Greek language and literature; 243/750 Latin language and literature; 126/400 Greek history; 169/400 Roman history. Bean’s results were good, but not good enough (AWM 38, 3RDL 6673/894).
to read law, and in June 1904 he was called to the Bar. Six months later he sailed for Australia.9

Back in Sydney, Bean searched for direction. He did some teaching at Sydney Grammar, worked as a judge's associate, and he wrote some articles for the press. The first of these, an insightful analysis of the forthcoming naval conflict between Russia and Japan, was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (13th Apr. 1905). He was also published in the *Evening News*, and became friends with the editor Banjo Paterson and his family. In January 1908 the growing success of his writing led Bean to abandon the legal profession and take up a journalism cadetship at the *Sydney Morning Herald*. His daily bread was police and court rounds, the odd fire, or the chance to indulge his cricket interest reporting on the Sydney Ashes test. Soon he was 'on assignment' covering railway expansion into western New South Wales beyond the River Darling; then on board HMS *Powerful* travelling to New Zealand. Later he wrote a feature series on the wool industry.

In 1910 Bean was rewarded with the position of London correspondent for the *Herald*, where he remained until early 1913. During this time he published his articles in a series of books, and made notes for further writing projects, for example: "Suggested Works 1913–14: Bathurst History; Roman Novel; Brentwood Novel: Essay(?); The Colonial; Mother and Father." Returning to Australia in 1913, he made another inland journey, to the mouth of the Murray. He was in Sydney contemplating his future, when war broke out.

With the announcement of Australia's offer to send troops overseas Bean wrote to the Minister for Defence, Senator Millen, asking permission to accompany the A.I.F. as an 'eyewitness'. Millen replied positively but took no action, no doubt distracted by the general election campaign.

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9 McCarthy (47) notes that once again the young Charles duplicated the actions of his father, who achieved similar marks at both Oxford and in the Civil Service exam, and who had then migrated to Australia through lack of immediate prospects.
of the moment. But in September 1914, responding to a British invitation to send a correspondent, the new Government approached the Australian Journalists Association asking it to recommend one of its number to be the nation's official press correspondent accompanying the A.I.F. Bean won the ballot, narrowly defeating Keith Murdoch of the Melbourne Herald and Sun (Official History, XI: 215). Murdoch had better political contacts and greater understanding of affairs of state, but Bean had more support from within the profession. As it was, the two would meet often throughout the war, though as McCarthy notes (78), had Murdoch been given the position, in all likelihood he could never later have been confined to write an official history as Bean was happy to do; it was not Murdoch's life vocation.

As early as 1910 Bean had expressed hopes of becoming a war correspondent, and now he was elated with the opportunity. He immediately resigned from the Sydney Morning Herald and went south. On 20th September Bean reported to Victoria Barracks in Melbourne where he met with the senior A.I.F. staff for briefings. He was also introduced to Senator George Pearce, the new Minister for Defence. Pearce intimated to Bean his hope that, in addition to filing regular reports the Official Correspondent would ultimately "write a history of the force." Bean replied he was "eager to do so."

With Pearce's commission in his breast Bean was able to plan, from the very beginning of the war, the overall structure and various volumes that would constitute the project of the Official History. For example, while resting in Egypt after the evacuation from Gallipoli, Bean was already sketching the two volumes of the history to cover 'the story of Anzac'. The scale of the Australian participation was such that, unlike British or German writers for example, Bean had an almost exhaustive personal experience of his subject matter. As he states in the Preface to the first

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10 Letter from Bean to his parents, 5th Apr. 1910; McCarthy, 68.
edition of the *Official History*, he was able to "make a rule of being present, while the events narrated in these volumes were actually happening, on some part of every battlefield on which Australian infantry fought" (I: xxx). And in the sense that the volumes enable a reader to follow the feelings of one who witnessed every important Australian battle except Fromelles, Bean's histories are consequently "autobiographical." This brings a remarkable consistency of focus and perspective to the six volumes on the A.I.F. in Turkey and France — the consequent merits and deficiencies of which will be addressed further below.

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This brief sketch gives some idea of the events which had shaped Bean's experience prior to the war. Another insight can be gained by looking at his many publications. While still a journalist, Bean had turned the products of his assignments into a sequence of books: *With the Flagship in the South* (1909), *On the Wool Track* (1910) and *The Dreadnought of the Darling* (1911). In England he also wrote *Flagships Three* (1913). Together, these articles and books show clearly that the social and political ideas which later would inform the *Official History* were moulded early in Bean's philosophy.

The first of Bean's books, *With the Flagship in the South*, indulged his imperial sympathies. McCarthy (62) observes that "almost every page is vividly alive with the pride of British heritage." Both Henry Lawson and Montague Grover (Bean's sub-editor at the *Sydney Morning Herald*) compared the book with Kipling. Grover, however, thought the epilogue to *With the Flagship* unnecessary: "a few hundred words of flamboyant flap-doodle about the flag." In this passage Bean took to task those who

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11 Gammage, 'Introduction' to vol. IV, UQP reprint of the *Official History*, xxv.

12 Grover in a review (McCarthy, 63); Lawson in a letter to Bean, 28th Jan. 1915: "Dear Sir, I am reading 'With the Flagship of [sic] the South' over and over again. This style reminds me of Kipling and Abbott (Letters from Queer Street) at their very best. Yours to be forgiven, Henry Lawson, etc." (AWM 38, 3 DRL 6673/904).
scorned 'flagwagging' as the activity of “howling sentimental jingo”; and proceeds to wag the flag with all the passion of a recruiting sergeant. This book was later incorporated into Flagships Three, which concerned HMS Powerful, the building of HMAS Australia, and the excavation of a Viking ship in Norway, which Bean called “the first flagship of our race.” Inglis notes wryly that Bean sounded a lot more like Newbolt when he was looking at warships than when he was out on the wool track (Bean, 14).

Bean’s other two books are more remarkable, in their unique treatment of life in the Darling basin of western New South Wales. Bean was unenthusiastic at being assigned to the sheep industry, to tell of “wool, meat, tallow, glue and lanolin.” His novel solution was to write not about sheep and wool, but about people. He described this revelation in a later preface to the book (identifying himself as usual in the third person):

And then it flashed upon him that the most important product of the wool industry for Australia was men: it was responsible for creating some of the outstanding national types. (On the Wool Track, vii)

The squatter took his place in this story of course, along with the shearer. But there was room also for the rouseabout and cook, the bullock driver and boundary rider, even the swagman and the sundowner (women are almost entirely absent). The book demonstrates Bean’s interest in character and the individual, especially his fascination with the influence of the outback in evolving a distinct Australian ‘type’. It is driven by Bean’s enthusiasm for what he observed in the outback, particularly differences between city and bush.

Henry Green has suggested that the region Bean describes in On the Wool Track, “may be taken to represent the outback that has created some of the most vital of the types that went to make up the Anzacs” (History of Australian Literature, i: 794). The Anzacs that Green is thinking of are of course those that walk the pages of Bean’s history, rather than the real men themselves. This distinction between immanence and representation
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is of fundamental importance. Green is entirely sensitive to the motivating impulse in Bean’s mimetic realization of “the real Australian as the author saw him.” When he says that the characteristics of the Australians in the *Official History* “accord perfectly with their representation in ballad and prose fiction,” Green identifies the leaven of prior literary representations in Bean’s subsequent depictions, but he also implicitly acknowledges the process whereby written representation becomes ‘historical truth’ (*Australian Literature 1900–1950*, 17, 16).

Bean’s valorization of the bush type can be found in his earliest published writings. It is very apparent in this piece titled ‘The Australian ideal’, from a series of articles Bean published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1907:

There is no doubt that the Australian finds his ideal in that strong-hearted and sturdy philosopher who is being at this day turned out by the thousand for him in the bush. He does not ask perfection of him by any means. He condones his reckless and roving temper. A man may live and drink pretty hard at times without forfeiting his respect. But he must be strong and generous. He is to be an adventurer with all the adventurer’s frank and generous virility. (Bean, ‘Australia VII’)

This is a blueprint for Bean’s later Anzac hero: “Here, in 1907, were all the features which Bean both as war correspondent with the troops and later as their historian, was to note and to propagate as characteristic of the Anzacs” (White, *Inventing Australia*, 126).

Identifying the proto-Anzac type in Bean’s pre-war writings is important in establishing a chronology. It also provides a key to understanding how the iconography of Anzac so quickly and potently became established during and after the war — it was a pre-existing model. Michael Roe maintains this chronology is crucial:

It suggests that Bean’s central concept — the heroic power of the bush — derived less from experience and observation of reality that from pre-established faith and/or ideology. The truer this is, the more important
becomes the task of identifying the sources and nature of that faith-ideology. (Roe, 'Bean: progressive and nationalist', 2)

Roe’s argument is that the image of the Anzac cultivated by Bean is based not on observing them at first hand during 1914-18, but rather, is a regurgitation of his pre-war experiences in the Australian outback. Read against these earlier texts then, the *Official History* tells another story of how the author appropriates the new figure of the Anzac to embody his already established ideal Australian.

Bean is not alone in this appropriation of course; just as he is not solely responsible for creating the image of the Anzac. Poets, writers, artists, politicians — all helped fashion the legend, together with the popular press and later films. Each borrows from earlier sources, adapting to suit their needs and purposes. Gerster identifies a number of prior exemplars in the literature of the 1890s, and that generated by the Boer War (*Big-Noting*, 14–19). Robert Dixon sees relevant archetypes in the adventure romances of the same period (*Writing the Colonial Adventure*). But as White acknowledges, it was Bean who “did more than anyone to turn the digger into a national legend” (*Inventing Australia*, 126). Moreover, with Bean the process is particularly transparent, with a thread of examples running from the pre-war writings, to the correspondent’s depatches and *Official History*, to the post-war books and pamphlets. We can thus trace the evolutions, mutations and appropriations through the œuvre of a single author, such that what at first sight appears to be spontaneous, suddenly has a revealing archeology.

The strength and currency of Bean’s ‘ideal Australian’ has not stopped its validity being called into question. Alistair Thomson asserts that Bean constantly modifies the behaviour of his subjects to accord to a particular model. Thomson believes that because Bean commanded greater cultural influence than the individual soldier, his definition became predominant in the Anzac tradition, often redefining a digger’s understanding of himself. Here again is the chiasmus of myth and reality,
rubbing at each other's mutability. The plurality of backgrounds, beliefs and characteristics in the men thus become subsumed within a dominant homogeneous paradigm that admits little diversion or subversion.  

Like Roe, Thomson argues that the image of the Anzac in the *Official History* is fabricated from Bean's pre-war imagination:

In both his public and private writing Bean struggled to show how the behaviour of the Australian soldier fitted his ideal, and the creation of an account which fitted his own preconception was more important than any conscious attempt to produce a publicly acceptable account. ('Steadfast until death?', 463)

To see how Bean developed his ideas, we must go back to the series of eight articles which he published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in June and July 1907, under the general heading 'Australia'. In these essays Bean set forth his views on themes such as the country versus the city; sport and games; immigration and racial policy; nation and Empire. The essays thus adumbrate the social and political philosophy which continued throughout all Bean's work, including the *Official History*. Once again Bean locates his ideal Australian as the bushman, and continues by saying the Australian intends "to respect his womenfolk, his Judge, and his parson...to live by his horse, his gun and morning tub; to amuse himself in clean sports, and work with a clean conscience" and so on. The same themes are repeated in *With the Flagship in the South*, where Bean extols the "pure old cross of St George," which stands "for generosity in sport and out of it, for a pure regard of women...for cleanliness in body and mind," as well as liberty and equality for all. These values are rehearsed once more

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13 Thomson, "Steadfast until death?", 477. See also Lohrey, 'Australian mythologies'; Thomson, 'A crisis of masculinity?'; and Gough, 'The First AIF'.

14 While still working as a judge's associate Bean had conceived the idea of a book entitled 'Impressions of a new chum'. Eight selected essays were published in the *Herald* on consecutive Saturdays between 1st June and 20th July, 1907, under the pseudonym 'C.W.' (see McCarthy, 52-55).
in the introductory chapter of the *Official History* (I: 3), which says the British and Australian “loved the same sports, held the same ideas of honesty, of cleanliness, of individual liberty.” The emphasis on bodily vigour is closely allied with moral health and also racial purity.

Bean’s love of sports sees him indulging in sporting similes throughout the *Official History*, for example:

1: 618 running forward like a schoolboy in a foot-race
2: 429 like racehorses approaching the starting-gate
3: 602 a team which pulled together like a crew in an eight-oared race
3: 419 the Australians, up on the parapet, flung their missiles like cricketers throwing down a wicket

Masculine virility has always been at the forefront of the Australian ethos of the self, and yet the male body is always balanced between strength and fragility. The popularly espoused ‘archetypal Australian male’ is not a sturdy peasant type, but thin and wiry. Frequently the image is of a broken male body, as in the endless corpses in the landscape; or perhaps the image in *My Brother Jack*, of a wastrel Jack returning to Australia after the Depression, hollow and broken. Physicality is central to the image of Ned Kelly too, but his strength is external, reliant on extra-corporeal armour; and as Sidney Nolan so suggestively depicted, Kelly’s very identity is hollow. Even the ‘greatest Australian hero of all’, Donald Bradman, presents a fragile masculinity. His strength is in an external weapon,

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15 In the volume on Palestine, Harry Gullett takes trouble to tell us about McAllister, “a well-known Australian athlete”; and Cotter, “the famous Sydney fast bowler” (VI: 325, 401). In *Gallipoli Mission* (109), Bean describes The Nek battlefield as a “strip the size of three tennis courts” (an image repeated by Gammage, *Broken Years*, 75). Many other writers equated war with sport, as in C.J. Dennis’s epitaph for Ginger Mick: “E found a game ’e knoo, and played it well.”

16 Iconic representatives come and go with each generation, but some of the more lasting and influential are Chips Rafferty and Paul Hogan.

his body all too often struck down by disease.\(^{18}\) Bean’s themes are common, especially in that they suppress the anxieties of early Australian history, namely the homosexual practice that inevitably comes with isolation and incarceration.

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Apart from the tropes of character and type, the most prominent theme in Bean’s writing is a recurring obsession with race. It appears in his earliest works, and he remains interested in the topic throughout his life. Bean’s library shows him reading Myra Willard’s *History of the White Australia Policy*, and making notes in Toynbee’s *A Study of History* such as: “Does he allow enough importance to inborn racial traits?”\(^{19}\)

In his 1907 article on “The Australian ideal” Bean states that Australians asks the absolute right to live “according to the ideas of a clean white British people.” He twice warns of the danger of Australia being “flooded with Orientals.” In *The Dreadnought of the Darling* (22) Bean imagines a time when Australia will be a “nation of 100,000,000 white British people.” He wrote a long letter to the London *Spectator* in 1907 in which he defends the White Australia Policy and cautions against expedient diplomatic relations with the Japanese. These statements were reiterated when Bean republished them six years later in *Flagships Three* (207).\(^{20}\) For

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18 Bradman missed the first Test in the Bodyline series of 1932 because of physical exhaustion. He came close to death on tour in England in 1934 with a kidney infection — almost going the same way as Les Darcy and Phar Lap as another great sporting icon to die overseas. On his return to test cricket after the War, he was described as a “ghost of a cricketer” in the press.


20 Bean drew up the following list of six Propositions to explain his case:

(1) That, for the good of either Australia or England, a Western & an Oriental race cannot live together in Australia.

(2) That the probability of an Oriental invasion, peaceful or warlike, is enormous, and justifies urgent measures.
Bean the racial issue is of the utmost importance, and he advocates very strongly the principle of keeping white people and other races apart:

You know that English children brought up amongst Hindoos loose all their fibre. You see with a sickly horror the filth and sordid infamy of any Chinese quarter. (‘Australia VII’)

He specifically rejects the accusation that his warnings about contamination from orientals can be dismissed as mere “colour prejudice.” It is a struggle that has existed throughout history, argues Bean: “The Australian is fighting the coloured nations of the East today in the same cause in which Thermistocles fought with Xerxes, Pompey with Mithridates, Richard of the Lion Heart with the Saracens.” In this sentence Bean exemplifies exactly the sort of prejudice Said analyzes in Orientalism.

McCarthy suggests that, easy as it might be (in the 1980s) to criticize such views as racist, at the time “there was scarcely one Australian who did not share them in full measure” (53–4). Bean himself states that “there is not a party nor a paper nor a politician of any note in Australia that would be tolerated if they wavered on this subject” (‘Australia VII’).

Ken Inglis is less indulgent than McCarthy and reprints the propositions on race from the Spectator in his biographical monograph on Bean (see footnote 20). Inglis allows his subject some historicizing licence, however, suggesting that in 1907 a decent man could still use the phrase “the battle

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(3) That, right or wrong, the resolve of Australians to keep their country white is of an intensity undreamed of in England.

(4) That Australians, knowing this, believing a fierce racial war, due to a policy of which England disapproves, to be ahead of them, and determined to fight it at any cost, ‘harbour no illusions’ as to England’s supporting them in it. That this doubt does immense harm to the cause of the Empire in Australia, and is deliberately made use of by separatists.

(5) That England will not refuse her support, but will probably exhibit sympathy for the other side until the eleventh hour, and then pull Australia through; and so get all the kicks and no halfpence.

(6) That all this harm could be saved, and England get the credit she deserves, if for once a clear statement were made that England was not out of sympathy with the Australian and would not leave him to fight the battle of her race by himself.
of her race” without apology or embarrassment (*Bean*, 31). Inglis concedes that Bean appears to become more pluralist over time: the 1943 pamphlet *War Aims of a Plain Australian* confesses that, “our past attitude towards foreigners and strangers is a sign of old-world ignorance,” and in 1949 Bean is even advocating limited Asian immigration, rather than perpetuating a “quite senseless colour-line.”

Thomson argues that Bean saw a homology between race on the one hand and moral and cultural traits on the other, and that he was convinced that “the English were superior because of their superior characteristics” (*Anzac Memories*, 49).

Whatever their allowances and extenuations, McCarthy, Inglis, Thomson and others only discuss Bean’s racial statements in his pre-war writing, and avoid the issue of racial sentiment in the text of the *Official History*. In fact, race remains a powerful signifier throughout the *History*, which continues Bean’s advocacy of White Australia. The first chapter is a pean to the Australian climate and way of life, which together have ‘improved’ the basic ‘stock’ of the British race, as the following examples from volume 1, pages 3–7 illustrate:

- What manner of people had been evolved from these offshoots of the race?
- younger branches of the British stock
- no branch had developed a more distinct character than the Australian
- the blood of the Australian was different, being a blend of four British strains
- from a stock more adventurous
- Bred of such stock
- Such, at this date, was the people of this offshoot of the British stock, the embryo, it may be, of one of the earth’s great nations. (I: 3–7)

There is a strong hint of eugenics in Bean’s discourse here. Robert Dixon argues that in this period, “the ‘science’ of eugenics located the body, especially the male body, as the site where subsequent anxieties about racial and cultural degeneracy were inscribed” (*Writing the Colonial Advent-

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Bean saw the country-bred Australian as "the Briton re-born," as the decay of city influence was weeded out and the true stock reinvigorated ("Australia VI"). Roe suggests that Bean was influenced by American progressives who saw eugenics as a doctrine "to strengthen the race" ("Bean: progressive and nationalist", 3). The vegetal and animal signifiers ‘root’ and ‘branch’, ‘blood’ and ‘stock’, evoke a vulgar-Darwinist theory of racial evolution, which inevitably places ‘British’ at the apex.

The idea of the bush as the incubator of a new race had in fact been around for many years. On the back of Darwin’s theories and the possibilities of evolution, many looked forward to the advent of the ‘Coming Man’. Similarly, eugenicist theories encouraging stratified division between races found tacit acquiescence throughout society. By the early twentieth century Darwin’s once radical theories of evolution had been harnessed to this most-conservative doctrine of social organization. As noted elsewhere, Charles Bean was but one among many who actively adopted and sponsored eugenicist policies (Roe, ‘Bean’). Moreover, as he frequently argues in the Official History and other writings, Bean fervently believed that Australian physical and social conditions were improving the British ‘stock’. Nevertheless, this process is seen not in parallel or opposition to British superiority, merely as an extension of it. Bean’s whole epistemology was built on the principles of European, and especially British, ascendancy. His education was founded on the Hellenist ideals advanced by Matthew Arnold, which celebrated reason and rational thought, in juxtaposition to the excessive energies and religious intensity which Arnold characterized as ‘Hebraism’. We can see the germ of Frazer’s ethnic stratification (and Auerbach’s poetics) in this passage from Arnold:

Science has now made visible to everybody the great and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how signal a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people. Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism is of Semitic growth; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism. (Culture and Anarchy, 141)
Arnold is employing here the same genetic metaphors — growth, stock, pregnant — that we noted Bean using in his passages on Australian identity. As Said observes, what gave writers like Arnold and Ernest Renan the right to speak with such sweeping generality about race was the "official character of their formed cultural literacy." Such oppressive generalities were "supported by the tradition of belles-lettres, informed scholarship [and] rational inquiry" (Orientalism, 227). And it was these structures of thought that informed the education of those alumni of Clifton College and their ilk in August 1914.

In Australia, Francis Adams proclaimed in 1893 that the bushman was, "the one powerful and unique national type yet produced in Australia" (The Australians, 165). In 1877 Marcus Clarke had suggested that the new Australian would be, "a tall coarse, strong-jawed, greedy pushing, talented man, excelling in swimming and horsemanship" (The Future Australian Race, 20). There were detractors as well, who predicted a 'degeneration' of the Anglo-Saxon race. Mostly, however, the Australian bush and lifestyle were seen as producing a superior human to the worn-out European model — if not in intellect, then at least in physique and moral rectitude.

In the Official History these racial ideas occasionally spill over into irrelevant anecdotes harbouring thinly disguised strains of petty racism:

- in a ship-wreck or bush-fire one man of British stock could compass the work of several Germans (I: 5)
- The Turk was too dull to take readily to the work (I: 516)

Then there are the derogatory descriptions of Greek and Egyptian café owners in Cairo, whom Bean blamed for leading young Australian soldiers astray with "sordid amusements" and poisonous drinks of "unheard-of vileness" (I: 128). But there are also more serious expressions of racial division, and it is clear Bean was quite happy to exploit the Official History to promote his views and strategies for Australia's racial future:
Only in one point was the Australian people palpably united — in a determination to keep its continent a white man’s land. (I: /)

If failing basic measures, economic and cultural, the nation itself may be in danger of ‘racial’ suicide. If what was admirable in its character is to be maintained in a changing world, this can be done only by special planning and vigorous determination to maintain those qualities. (VI: 1093)

The added emphasis on special planning makes it clear Bean believes immigration and other policies must be used to protect the white population from contamination, or “racial suicide.” To be fair, this passage was published in the shadow of the fall of Singapore, but it demonstrates a consistent motivation in the author’s ideas and beliefs. Whatever reorientation may be apparent in Bean’s writing after the second war, the Official History continues his earlier separatist theme.

While such racist and chauvinist ideas seem embarrassing at the end of the twentieth century, it must be acknowledged that they are mild and liberal in historical context. Douglas Cole observes that the ideas of ‘race and stock, of blood and breed’ played upon Australian thought strongly in the decades either side of 1900 (‘Crimson thread of kinship’, 511). Writing on the eve of the Great War, Mary Gilmore declared, “The instinct for purity is the root of all distinction of tribe, breed, or genus in the whole mothering world.”

Hansard makes for terrifying reading throughout the period as politicians, Labor and Nationalist, play to their respective jingoist audiences. The pages of the Bulletin, Tocsin, Lone Hand and Worker screamed racial abuse at Chinese, blacks and Kanakas; the broadsheets warned of the German dreadnought menace, and expansionist policies of Russia and Japan. Dudley McCarthy is no doubt right to aver that Bean is only moderately reactionary in the spectrum of this debate. Nevertheless, the Official History promotes supremicist ideals.

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22 Gilmore was writing in the ‘Women’s page’ of the Worker on 30th July, 1914, and is thus pursuing a protectionist line. See Susan Sheil, Along the Faultlines, 103–118.
Moreover, since this ideology was present in the incipient Anzac model, it can be hard to separate it from other aspects of Anzac mythology.

the bees in his bonnet

I began this chapter with Carr's quaint dictum that we should “find out what bees the historian has in his bonnet.” In this section I want to look in more specific detail at how Bean’s fascination with the Bush and his conceptions of race are played out in the Official History.

The great narrative of the Official History is the revelation of ‘Australian identity’. As Bean wrote in November 1918, “the big thing in the war was the discovery of the character of Australian men.”23 This theme is essentially a politics of difference: the Anzac soldier has a different physique to other soldiers; the A.I.F. has a different code of discipline to other armies; Australian egalitarian democracy is different to Prussian oligarchy; and so on. Difference is a universal code of identity. And the greatest difference of all for Bean is the uniqueness of the bush experience and its influence in the development of the Australian ‘type’. In his earliest published writing he already states that country life in Australia had “hammered out of the old stock a new man” (‘Australia IV’). He continues this theme in the first volume of the Official History, adding that “The bush still sets the standard of personal efficiency even in the Australian cities,” and that therefore the Australian was already “half a soldier before the war” (I: 46, 47).

Bean is of course not alone in his belief in the importance of the bush. When Russel Ward studied this phenomenon he concluded that the bush workers in the Australian pastoral industry had influenced the whole

Australian community in a way that was "completely disproportionate" to their numerical and economic strength (*The Australian Legend, v*). Ward sees Bean as a willing and able prophet of this influence (230–1). Inglis notes that in some respects Bean anticipated Ward’s study of the bush legend, but that he also “stood alongside the *Bulletin* writers as a maker of the legend” (‘Anzac tradition’, 28). As Graeme Davison says, the Australian Legend was built not so much by the transmission of bush values to the urban masses, but by “the projection onto the outback of values revered by an alienated urban intelligentsia” (‘Sydney and the Bush’, 129).

Bean spent the 1890s absent from Australia, and thus did not witness or participate in the debates over ‘the city or the bush’ in the *Bulletin* in 1892, nor the literary politics played out in the decade that followed. Leon Cantrell describes the main protagonists of the *Bulletin* debate, Paterson and Lawson, in stark political terms as conservative and radical: the one celebrating the liberating freedom of the bush, the other with a keener eye for the vast gap between squatter and selector (*Writing the 1890s*, 138). When Bean did settle in Sydney he became friends with Paterson, and spent much time with his family (McCarthy, 56). Bean’s travels in outback New South Wales subsequently confirmed in him the same romanticized, apolitical image of the bush as promulgated in Paterson’s verse, and it was these values and opinions that Bean took with him as he sailed with the first contingent.

There has been vigorous debate about the degree of credit Bean ascribes to the bush in the character and ability of the Anzacs. Lloyd Robson demonstrates statistically the falsity of many of Bean’s assumptions about his subjects (‘Origin and character of the First A.I.F.’, 742–5). But John Barrett defends Bean, arguing that on the question of the specific qualities of the A.I.F., “Bean himself finally rejected the bush in

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24 Almost every commentator after Henry Green makes some mention of Bean’s fascination with the bush.
favour other 'prime causes' — such as egalitarianism and independent initiative ('No straw man’, 111). Barrett complains that Robson forever 'drags the bush in' even when Bean doesn't mention it, and that he quotes too selectively, often leaving out qualifying statements by Bean which attenuate the influence ascribed to the bush. In fact Bean's text displays opposing claims and contradictions. In the final chapter, 'The Old Force passes', Bean shuffles his opinions about the importance of the city and bush, evening up the score as it were:

the percentage of Australian soldiers who had acquired their powers of determination, endurance, and improvisation from country occupations was probably not much more than a quarter. (VI: 1079)

It is true that the war furnished ample proof that, in general, country life produces a much better soldier than city life. (VI: 1079)

an outstanding feat by a platoon would be explained by such a comment as, “They were country boys from around Shepparton.” (VI: 1079)

But the city element in the A.I.F. was so large, and the perceptible distinction between it and the country element so small, that it seems certain that, in the case of this force, country training was not the main reason for its effectiveness. (VI: 1080)

In this section, at the very end of the Official History, Bean is attempting to objectify the more fulsome assertions in his previous volumes about the bush influence on the A.I.F. Yet despite Bean's claims and counter claims, and pace Barrett, the underlying message is that the country is superior. Never does Bean say, for instance, that 'X Battalion's effectiveness was due to the high number of clerks'; it is always the pastoral that leads the questions of value. The country is the standard against which the city is measured.

All the time Bean is praising the values of the bush over the city, he is conscious of the fact that Australia was overwhelmingly an urban nation: “this country must always, for good or for bad, for richer for poorer, be very much a country of large cities, and this nation a nation of
city men” (‘Australia II’). In order then to explain the ‘virility’ that he finds in the A.I.F., Bean argues that even city-bred Australians acquire bushman’s skills because “many city Australians spent holidays in the bush” (VI: 1079). It is a lame argument, but is further reinforces the impression that the city is inferior to the country. Barrett’s protestations are also undermined by what Bean wrote immediately after completing the final volume of the *Official History*, for in *War Aims of a Plain Australian* (1943) he confirms his opinion about the superiority of the country soldier:

Most wars show that, on the whole, the country man makes the best soldier...country bred men tend to be stronger in resources, endurance, determination, and perhaps also in faithfulness. (*War Aims*, 120)

Such comments go hand-in-hand with the idea that the strength of the nation itself, and not merely its soldiery, relies on a powerful rural sector: “for a nation to be strong, the best life is the country life” (*In Your Hands*, 22).

The other side to the valorization of the bush ethic is the condemnation of the city, a theme which is apparent in Bean’s earliest writing: “As soon as a nation begins to shut itself up in cities it begins to decay. First its bodily strength, and along with that its moral strength, declines” (‘Australia II’). Thirty-five years later he makes similar observations in the *Official History*:

In most European armies the troops from crowded industrial areas were visibly poorer in physique, mentally more helpless, and morally less virile and capable of endurance, than those from country parts. (VI: 1079)

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25 Bean had said more or less the same thing in the first volume, though in language that betrayed a strong sense of personal nostalgia: “The bushman is the hero of the Australian boy; the arts of the bush life are his ambition; his most cherished holidays are those spent with country relatives or in camping out” (I: 46).
This juxtaposition is as old as the myth model of Cain and Abel, and as Raymond Williams argues throughout *The Country and the City*, is indicative of both sentimental nostalgia and reactionary politics.26

All these examples demonstrate how the myth of rural virtue recurs in Bean’s writings over forty years. The same set of values from Bean’s pre-war articles and books inform his wartime despatches and the *Official History*, and later reappear in the pamphlets and condensed volume *Anzac to Amiens*. Taken as a whole, it confirms the impression that the War did not materially affect Bean’s ideas, but that he saw it through his already established beliefs and prejudices.

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I want to look now at Bean’s complex engagement with General Monash. This relationship has always attracted attention, for neither man had much time for the other, and said so often enough. Given his role as Official Correspondent, Bean had a responsibility to write with honesty and objectivity about Monash — a responsibility he did not fulfil. The relationship reached its lowest ebb in Bean’s scheming to block the appointment of Monash to the command of the A.I.F. in 1918. This antipathy is well known, and has been much commented upon. For example, in his biography of Monash, Geoffrey Serle writes that, “Bean displayed extraordinary prejudice against Monash” (398). Monash’s reputation and achievements are being constantly reviewed, but that is not at issue here — what I want to consider are the particular themes of Bean’s prejudice.

It is apparent that Bean’s assessment of Monash proceeds in the same manner as his general themes of the A.I.F.; namely, a concern with masculine physicality, and race. Bean’s favourite epithet for Monash is

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26 Williams examines the myths that go to construct the image of pastoral innocence and virtue, in contrast to the worldliness of the town: “The means of agricultural production are attractive to the observer,” argues Williams, because “they can then be effectively contrasted with the exchanges and counting-houses of mercantilism, or with the mines, quarries, mills, and manufactories of industrial production” (*The Country and the City*, 46). Bean is very much an inheritor of the tradition Williams is critiquing.
“lucid,” which crops up some half dozen times across the volumes of the *Official History*, typically noting Monash’s “extreme lucidity” (I: 137) or his “lucid exposition” (VI: 205). All this would be very well were it not attenuated by frequent criticisms of Monash’s lack of physicality, and his intellectual aloofness. The repetition of “lucid” thus becomes code for an anti-intellectual critique, designed to undermine the General’s superiority in the minds of the common soldier/reader.

Bean’s most frequent complaint of Monash (and Bean was not alone in this), is that he did not spend enough time at the front line. Such criticism asserted that Monash did not comprehend fully the reality of trench fighting, and could not assess properly reports of battle. Bean would not call Monash a coward, yet he complained that the General was too prudent in consideration of his own safety; he preferred Birdwood who, “with his eye on the effect among his men, was resolved to share some of their dangers” (VI: 208). There is an obvious throwback here to the romanticized image of the heroic commander leading a cavalry charge. Bean was not prepared to see that the changes wrought by modern warfare demanded a more detached sense of command. He also forgets the fate of such heroic leaders who show off their bravery in front of the men; like Nelson at Trafalgar, or indeed Throsby Bridges, the Commander-in-Chief of the A.I.F. shot at Gallipoli.

Bean also complained that Monash was not a sportsman, and didn’t play games: “Monash was not good at them and had no conception of their tradition” (VI: 200).27 Most significantly, he calls into question Monash’s masculine attributes and aptitude for active command:

he had not the physical audacity that Australian troops were thought to require in their leaders (VI: 195)

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27 The same sort of bias even comes out in Bean’s portrait of Throsby Bridges, a man he admired: “General Bridges was not a popular leader. He was not an athlete” (I: 69).
This criticism is part of a series of comparisons Bean draws between Monash and Napoleon. In the space of a few paragraphs he makes six references to Napoleon, even quoting the Emperor’s words to Josephine to illustrate how Monash imitated the French general. But ultimately he criticizes Monash for not having “the calculated audacity of the Corsican.” Monash loses either way, either guilty by association in terms of arrogance and bombast, or by failing to match up to the standard.

Lastly, we must look at the issue of Monash’s Jewishness. Like most in his class, Bean shared the conventional anti-Semitism of the era. There is no sense of aggression or paranoia, just a general discomfort with Monash’s Jewish ‘difference’ which Bean feels impelled to comment upon:

He was born in Melbourne, and was Jewish by race and religion (I: 137)
His Jewish blood gave him an outstanding capacity for tirelessly careful organization (IV: 562)
the middle-aged, Jewish–Australian citizen soldier (VI: 185)
he was loyal to his clan; at Australian Corps Headquarters his personal staff was Jewish, and men honoured him for his loyalty (VI: 208)

The key elements here are Bean’s focus on “blood” and “clan,” repeating the themes which fascinate him about the Australian breed.

It is clear from all these niggling complaints and innuendoes that Bean’s main problem with Monash is simply that he did not manifest the Australian ‘type’ that Bean wanted to celebrate in his history. Despite the fact that Monash spent three years of his boyhood in the country, his vast intelligence and bookish pursuits placed him at odds with the image of the energetic bushman, and his Jewishness meant that his obvious abilities could not be attributed to the ‘improving Australian stock’. At the same time, where Bean despairs of Monash’s “efflorescent adjectives” in praising his troops and by implication his own command, and decries the
falsity in raising up the Australian soldier as some sort of titan or demi-god, Bean is unable to see these very qualities in his own *Official History*.

Barthes stresses that the importance of themes is that they are iterative; they repeat throughout a writer’s texts. Moreover, as he shows with Michelet, a writer’s beliefs are often unaffected by the historical events they witness: “The Theme resists History” (*Michelet*, 201). We can see this process repeated in Bean’s work, where the ideological values that appear in his earliest work continue to inform the pages of the *Official History*. Bean’s preconceptions focus his view of events, and they mould his historical narrative. The persistence of his beliefs on race and the bush ethic must then call into question the aetiological value ascribed to these themes in the *Official History*. “History could inflect Michelet’s ideology,” says Barthes “but it could not change his myths” (*Michelet*, 202). The same can be said for Bean.

In the next chapter I shall look in greater detail at exactly how Bean constructed his history — in terms of form, content, and exemplars. And I shall examine how Bean’s predilections and prejudices, including those against Monash, irrupt in the historiography as well as in the prose style.

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28 Letter to Gavin Long, 1931; quoted in McCarthy, 282.
CHAPTER FIVE

Content and Form

**style is the man is the text itself**

TO READ ANY of Bean's works — his journalism, his pamphlets, his history — is to appreciate a discernible and distinctive style to his writing. As a feature journalist, Bean knew a bit about style. That is not to say he was a great stylist — but he understood the importance of style as a means of communicating with a given readership. Style is thus an essential focus in understanding the intended audience for Bean's writing. I want to begin by discussing stylistics, particularly in relation to the hermeneutics of historiography, and then look more closely at the specifics of the Bean style.

"Style is a centaur," says Peter Gay, "joining what nature has deemed should be kept apart. It is form and content" (Style in History, 3). With this epigraph Gay captures the paradox of style: at once elusive and undefinable, but also the very essence of aesthetic expression. This latter quality is at the heart of Buffon's seductive bon mot, "Le style est l'homme même," which Gay takes as his point of departure for analyzing historians' style. Michel Riffaterre goes further, declaring emphatically "le style est le texte même" (Text Production, 2).

But even if a writer's style can be described and identified, what value is this when it comes to textual hermeneutics? Collingwood sees a correlation between style and personality:

The style of Herodotus is easy, spontaneous, convincing. That of Thucydides is harsh, artificial, repellent. In reading Thucydides I ask myself, what is the matter with the man that he writes like that? I answer: he has a bad conscience. He is trying to justify himself. (Idea of History, 29)
Peter Gay suggests that style can tell us as much as content or form about a work. Gay maintains that style is best considered in its narrowest sense, literary style — the management of sentences, the use of rhetorical devices, the rhythm of narration:

Gibbon's way of paring phrases, Ranke's resort to dramatic techniques, Macaulay's reiteration of antitheses, Burckhardt's informal diction, taken by themselves, as single instances, mean what they say on the page. They describe a battle, analyze a political artifice, chronicle a painter's career. But once characteristic and habitual — that is, recognizable elements in the historian's mode of expression, of his style — they become signposts to larger, deeper matters. (Style in history, 7)

So for example, Gay sees a reflection of the prosperous and expansive social system of the mid-Victorian era in the "bourgeois amplitude of Macaulay's rhetoric" (Style in History, 200). At a more personal scale, it can be seen that Manning Clark's prose frequently recalls the equanimity of his youthful favourite Ecclesiastes. The ironic, gently mocking tone is soothed by the measured and constant flow of the paragraphs. There is a poise and balance between the abstract thoughts and concrete language. Alexander Kinglake on the other hand (whose Invasion of the Crimea is an important exemplar for Bean) is the epitome of Victorian hierarchy and order. Kinglake's prose proceeds with the stately and rigid purpose of Lord Cardigan leading the Light Cavalry into the Russian guns. Regardless of what noun phrases or subordinate clauses interpose themselves, the sentence advances unswervingly toward its goal. The syntactic and rhetorical flourishes are as opulent yet contained as the jacket of the charging Cardigan:

He wore the uniform of his old regiment, the 11th Hussars; but instead of dangling loose from the shoulders, his pelisse — richly burthened in front with gold lace — was worn closely put on like a coat, and did not break or mitigate the rigid outline of his figure. (IV: 253)
In this vein it is tempting to observe that Bean writes from the very trenches. The mud sucks his boots, it flecks the lens of his telescope, it oozes into his prose. The occasional attempts at sybaritic expression strain the fabric of the syntax.

The opening sentences of the first volume of the *Official History* give an immediate appreciation of the Bean style:

On the 30th July, 1914, a cablegram in secret cipher from the British Government to the Government of Australia informed it that there was imminent danger of war. It was not necessary to indicate the enemy. (1: 1)

This is quintessential Bean, direct and dramatic, with just a hint of grammatical instability. Bean's prose style is quite distinctive, a curious mixture of pithy narrative and periphrastic repetitions. Sentences can be memorable either for their vivid description or their syntactic fallacy. Most important is the text's reflexive ability to dictate form through content.

Bean's 1907 series on 'Australia' in the *Sydney Morning Herald* gives an early insight into his unique rhetoric, stylistics and poetics, foreshadowing that of his later work as official historian. The first thing to notice about Bean's poetics is how the writing is mimetic of the very ideas it expresses, offering a meta-discursive emphasis of content. This is most clearly seen in the shifting ground and direction of the narrative voice. Throughout his career Bean tended to refer to himself in the third person: 'the writer', 'the author', 'the official correspondent', occasionally as 'Bean', and often simply as 'he'. Matters become more complicated when Bean as writer is also a subject in the narrative. Here the use of the third person functions to imply that the prejudices of the individual are somehow disassociated from the role of the writer. Gérard Genette has considered in depth the permutations of writer, narrator and actor in his treatise *Narrative Discourse: an essay in method*. Genette suggests that choice of writing oneself in the first or third person is not simply a grammatical or rhetorical decision, but a choice of 'narrative posture' (244). More than merely an exchange of verbal voicing, it radically alters the focalization of action.
Three instances will serve to illustrate this effect in Bean's writing. The first of Bean's SMH series begins thus: "On December 7, 1904, the writer of these articles was on board one of the great mail steamers that ply from the old country to the new...". The passage continues with a reverie by the writer of the "land in which his early youth had been spent." The long opening paragraph finally culminates in the revelation of the narrative 'I': "this and little more remained to the writer of that vast mysterious land from which tomorrow's break would at last lift the veil. And so, on this night of all nights, I slept on deck." In the next paragraph Bean moves into the second person, with the observation, "You can hear only the silver laughter of the wavelets as they slap the sides."

This piece shows Bean in full flight, encouraging the reader to re-enact the journey he himself has made; from the unknown to the known, from exterior to interior, from obscurity to familiarity. With the subject matter and ship board scenario, we can detect a strong influence of Conrad. The same topos of dual voice and identity, which is characteristic of Conrad and the moment of post-coloniality, is also apparent in Bean. The plurality of narratorial voices is a rhetorical representation of his ideological position as both an imperialist and an Australian patriot. Bean also exploits this duality in writing his impressions of Australia from different perspectives at the same time: as both a 'new chum' and a returned native.

In the Official History Bean is more constrained. Notwithstanding the variety of his own views, and his peculiar position as a civilian caught between the troops and staff, he recognizes that he has a commissioned role to play. In the Prefaces to the first and third editions, and in the Introduction to the first volume, he speaks of himself entirely in the abstracted third person: "To the writer has been given the privilege"; "he is indebted"; "he dedicates"; and so on. This device is largely to iterate the perception of critical distance and promote an objectivist air, and is a common convention in prefaces and introductions of the era. The
practice is similarly followed by the five other writers of volumes in the *Official History.*

Bean also appears as a *dramatis persona* in his six volumes. For example, when General Bridges requests Bean to publish a letter on his behalf explaining why certain men had been discharged: “he asked the official war correspondent to write to the Australian newspapers…” (1: 129). Another occasion involves Bean’s interference in the promotion of Monash in early 1918, where he refers to himself as “the senior Australian correspondent, Bean” or simply “Bean” (vi: 188, 196–7). Bean’s intrigue in this affair did not reflect altogether positively on him, and as we shall see below, he writes about it with difficulty. Nevertheless, the remove of the third person voice here enables Bean to continue his narrative in a seamless fashion, without too much reflexive strain. The overall impression created by the third person posture is of a parallel voice. Given that this phenomenon occurs mostly in the prefaces, it takes on a framing aspect, encouraging an illusion of impartiality, which to a modern ear seems overly artificial.

*During his career, it was not so much Bean’s narrative poetics that came under scrutiny, as his style and rhetoric. Bean was universally admired for his methodical approach, his attention to detail, and his commitment to witnessing the action at the front line: “Oh Bean,” Ashmead Bartlett is often reported as saying, “I think Bean counts the bullets.” Yet despite the recognition of his factual accuracy, the most common assessment of Bean’s wartime correspondence was that he was boring. This was certainly the opinion of many newspaper editors during the war, who periodically ignored Bean’s despatches because they didn’t correspond to received conventions for heroic eulogy of ‘our boys in action’.28 The

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28 Bean notes in his diary (30th Sep. 1915) that the *Age* and *Argus* had written to say that they no longer wished to publish his despatches because “they are of insufficient interest to them.” The papers did later resume accepting correspondent’s reports from Bean, though only intermittently, often preferring the independent Reuters articles and
Bulletin's 'Red Page' (7th Oct. 1915) criticized Bean's prose as "detached and impersonal," suggesting Bean had "a padlock on his soul...Such a man could do algebra while Rome was burning." At one stage the Bulletin complained that Bean's leaden reports were costing Australia new enlistments because, "The communications from the official correspondent have been colourless and no warver's pulse has been quickened by them" (15th Mar. 1917). The Argus (22nd Apr. 1915) compared his writing to a bank-clerk's ledger. General Monash described Bean's account of the battle of Messines in 1918 as "the apotheosis of banality" (Serle, Monash: 292).

Bean took such criticisms of his work very hard, though he largely kept his disappointments to himself. In particular, Bean's accounts suffered in comparison with those of the independent British correspondent Ellis Ashmead Bartlett. It had been Ashmead Bartlett's initial despatch from Gallipoli, reprinted in Australian papers on 8th May 1915, that so galvanized public opinion in Britain and the dominions to the 'glorious deeds' of the Anzacs.29 In Australia men were reported arriving at recruiting stations in May 1915 clutching the famous despatch which had so inspired them (Gammage, Broken Years, 13). Bean maintained an equivocal attitude to his colleague cum rival; a mixture of envy and disdain. The Australian prided himself on the 'truthfulness' of his representation of events, and believed the Englishman was not as scrupulous: "Ashmead Bartlett makes it a little difficult for one by his exaggerations" ('Diary', 26th Sep. 1915). Bean is widely praised for his standard of veracity in war reportage. Looking back, his sober and reticent cables make the hyperbole and effusive rhetoric of his colleagues appear like mere propaganda in comparison. Not that Bean was entirely objective. He certainly saw the

such like, which though less authoritative, made better copy.

29 The Argus ran the report under the headline "Australians at Dardanelles: Thrilling Deeds of Heroism." See especially Fewster, 'Ellis Ashmead Bartlett and the making of the Anzac legend'.
Australians in a different light to other troops, and this attitude persisted in the *Official History*, as evidenced by the following shrill assessment of the Gallipoli campaign: "never in history was a campaign richer in pure heroism and conscious self-sacrifice" (II: 906).

On leaving Gallipoli, Ashmead Bartlett undertook a world-wide lecture tour and subsequently published a number of books, including *Despatches from the Dardanelles* (1915) and *The Uncensored Dardanelles* (1928). Bean, on the other hand, reluctantly acknowledged that his own approach was unlikely to land many publishing contracts: "I have a suspicion that I've spoilt my chances of ever being some day tolerably well off." Yet in an eulogy on the occasion of Ashmead Bartlett's death, Bean conceded that, "the tradition of the Anzac landing is probably more influenced by [Bartlett's] first story than by all the other accounts that have since been written." Apart from the hint of envy in this, Bean is indulging in a bit of false modesty here. Whatever Ashmead Bartlett's role in the 'tradition of the landing', Bean's writings have been the most influential in generating the myth and tradition of Anzac as a whole.

As well as dealing with unflattering comparisons of his writing, Bean had to suffer the censor culling his efforts. On learning that his account of the withdrawal from Anzac had lost much to the censor's blue pencil, Bean was dismayed:

> This was like an unexpected shrapnel shell in the pit of the stomach. The despatch on which I had poured out more care than anything else of which I have written here — the only chance one has had of even attempting to rival Bartlett's work. ('Diary', 26th Dec. 1915)

Like all war correspondents Bean was forced to self-censor his work for security, but the obverse was anathema to him. Bean would never slip in a bayonet charge to spice up his story, never take gross licence with the facts for the sake of good copy. His defence, committed to his diary, is

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30 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9th May 1931, 17.
often mobilized as sufficient rebuttal to critics of his wartime correspondence:

I can’t write that [something] occurred if I know that it did not, even if by painting it that way I could rouse the blood and make the pulse beat faster... War Correspondents have so habitually exaggerated the heroism of battles that people don’t realize that the real actions are heroic. (‘Diary’, 26th Sep. 1915)31

Readers remained divided throughout the war, yet Bean did not change his style. This attitude remained when he came to write the _Official History_. Here of course the expectations were different. The desire for ‘thrilling accounts’ yields to requirements for ‘sober judgements,’ and in many ways Bean found himself on the other side of the fence. Where his correspondent’s reports were ignored during the war in comparison with others because they disappointed the tabloid readership, Bean’s vernacular _Official History_ became a modest publishing success.

Among the reviews of the first volume, the _New Statesman_ (29th Apr. 1922) notes that Bean’s access to battlefield conversations and his researches into private diaries “gives a quality to his book which is lacking in all other official histories; it makes it, indeed, the most _readable_ Official History that the war has yet produced.” General Sir Ian Hamilton in the _Manchester Guardian_ (20th Feb. 1922) was of the same opinion: “The style is simple and straightforward. Every sentence means something.” The most complimentary notice appeared in the _Sydney Morning Herald_ (28th Oct. 1921): “The detail does not obscure or confuse the picture, the conclusions are supported by overwhelming evidence; the interest is sustained from the beginning to the end.”

Others, however, were less impressed. The _Times Literary Supplement_ suggested that as Volume I progresses to descriptions of the fighting at the Landing, “the story falls far below the very high standard of the

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31 See Winter ("Anzac Book: a reappraisal", 60–61), for evidence that this passage is a later interpolation in the diary; and Thomson’s refutation (Anzac Memories, 246, n.31).
opening and general chapters.” The *Argus* (5th Nov. 1921) asked why
history cannot be both accurate *and* interesting, noting that, “Mr. Bean is
at his best when a description grips him and leads him to omit unneces-
sary detail.”\(^{32}\) The *Argus* reviewer also complained that, “the opening
volume causes some disappointment, because of certain deficiencies in
the writing.”

The *Argus* was not the first to have made such criticisms. When the
publisher George Robertson saw the drafts of the first volume in April
1920 he didn’t like what he saw. He wrote to Arthur Jose to express his
concerns:

> When Bean handed me the MS. I only looked at the first par, which of its
kind is good enough. On the following Sunday night I read the first chapter
—and did not get to sleep until 4 a.m! He told me his secretary had come
up to Sydney and got on the bust (*sic*). Is it any wonder? Only that the
wherewithal was lacking and the pubs closed, I’d have done the same! Bean
is what our dear friend Henry Lawson calls ‘a Wanterwriteandcant.’\(^ {33}\)

After stewing on the business for some two months Robertson then
wrote to Bean saying, “I regret to have to tell you that Chapter I. of your
Official History simply dismayed me’ (Letter 3). According to Robertson,
Bean’s writing was “slipshod journalistic talk, misconceived and misbegot-
ten.” Bean responded to Robertson’s letter admitting his “mortification”
at the criticism, but counting himself fortunate nevertheless to have “a
publisher so conscientious and a friend so courageous” to write such

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\(^{32}\) Reviews of the various volumes of *Official History* are accessioned at the Australian
war Memorial as: AWM 38, 3 DRL 8043.

\(^{33}\) Letter 1, ‘Robertson Correspondence’; Private collection. The correspondence
consists of a sequence of twenty-five letters concerned with the drafting and editing of
the Official History, covering the period 19th April 1920 to 23rd May 1921. As
Robertson writes to George Swinburne, MP (Letter 25): “I have made a copy of all the
papers in connection with the affair.” I thank Tony Barker for making the Robertson
Correspondence available to me. Barker’s account of the tensions between Bean and
Robertson was published as, ‘Fighting words / Words at war’, *The Australian* magazine,
20/21 April, 1996: 44–47.
things in the first place. He promised to rework the draft so that Robertson should “not be ashamed” for his readers (Letter 4).

This correspondence took place in July 1920. When in March the following year Robertson finally saw the proofs of the first volume, he was convinced Bean had “undertaken a task beyond his powers” (Letter 5). Robertson feared that publication of the material as it stood “would expose the Commonwealth to derision,” and considered declining to publish the work at all. He demanded the text be subject to stylistic revision by a literary expert. When Bean dug in his heels, Robertson used his influence with George Swinburne M.P. to have the matter raised in Cabinet (Letters 9, 10).

At this stage the Prime Minister Billy Hughes intervened. Having perused the drafts, Hughes summoned Bean to Melbourne to give him his views. A chastened Bean then wrote to the publishers saying that “after conference with Mr. Hughes” he would recast the first chapter (Letter 13). Bean had spent much time with Hughes during the Prime Minister’s wartime sojourn in Europe and his visits to the front — the ‘Little Digger’ obviously commanded more respect and influence with Bean than did a mere publisher. Hughes agreed with Robertson that the text should be forwarded to a literary editor, and by consensus of opinion Thomas George Tucker, a retired professor of classical philology was selected.

Bean still rejected the thought of anyone ‘editing’ his work, however, and informed Robertson that if he were not to have the final say over the text, “I would regretfully tender my resignation to the Minister” (Letter 18). This was a game of bluff and double bluff. Bean saw Robertson’s demands as a kind of censorship, something he was determined never to suffer again. The same attitude was taken by Harry Gullett, the writer of Volume VII, who was likewise leaned upon by the publisher to submit his drafts to the literary editor. “I will have nothing to do with Tucker,” he wrote to Bean indignantly. “He is full of literary quality, but
warm as a frozen fish.” Gullett finished his letter unequivocally stating, “The simple fact is that I cannot, and will not, have Tucker meddling with the Light Horse story.”

As it was, after many letters and much negotiation, both Bean and Gullett eventually resigned themselves to indulging Tucker’s scrutiny. In May 1921 Tucker assessed Bean’s work as follows:

It is ‘high-falutin’ in tone and temper, inflated in style, and rather puerile in general. Its expression is often unfit, and sometimes sheerly ungrammatical.

Bean’s writerly pride was sorely pricked, but he nevertheless acknowledged “the advantages to be gained from a critical revision, by some capable literary friend.” His eventual response was typical of his warm-hearted generosity: “Really Professor Tucker’s work is excellent...His corrections are one long lesson to me in the nicety of English.” Bean publicly recognized Tucker’s involvement in the Preface to the first edition (albeit obliquely), and privately wrote to him to acknowledge the professor’s role in the positive critical reception of the History. Everyone was satisfied, and the reading public none the wiser.

Prior to Barker’s 1996 article, there was no discussion of the struggle between publisher and writer. The only published comment on Tucker’s job of massaging Bean’s writing into digestible prose has been benign.

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34 Gullett–Bean correspondence, 1st June 1920; AWM 38, 3DRL 7953/item 8. Gullett communicated to Bean his eventual acquiescence in a letter dated 17th May 1922.

35 Professor Tucker’s report on Bean’s prose style is Letter 16, 9th May 1921: henceforth ‘Report’.

36 “For the purpose of a final revision of the proofs the assistance was obtained of Professor T.G. Tucker, C.M.G., Lit.D. His work, of value to the nation, and the public spirit which induced him to undertake it, the writer desires here warmly to acknowledge.” Preface to first edition, Volume 1.

Bean wrote to Tucker on 30 March 1922 saying, “I never read a review without realizing that the appreciation is, in a large manner, due to your work.” AWM 38, 3DRL 6673/204–1.
Arthur Baxley, in his memoir on the writing of the *Official History* (246), blithely observes that when Robertson suggested Tucker read the drafts "Bean agreed to this proposal." He recounts Freddy Cutlack's (author of vol. VIII) anger at Tucker's comments, but only Bean's warm acceptance of the editor's involvement. McCarthy's biography likewise smooths over the tense negotiations. In the introduction to UQP's reprint series, P. A. Pedersen briskly remarks that "literary experts ensured lucidity of text" (III: xxxiv).

One of the most interesting aspects of the whole affair and the attendant correspondence is the battle of wills between Robertson and Bean. The jolly, brusque publisher versus the dogged, polite historian. As much as he complained of Bean to his various correspondents throughout the negotiations, Robertson obviously enjoyed his role of publishing mandarin. He revelled in the gamesmanship of battling the egos of his writers, and rather gleefully referred to the editorial process as 'tuckering'. Robertson had years of experience dealing with the likes of Henry Lawson — in comparison to whose wiles Bean was a relative novice. Having secured the services of Tucker together with Bean's acquiescence, Robertson then wrote to Bean saying how delighted he was with the arrangement — and couldn't help adding the following:

Had it fallen out otherwise, I intended to inform Mr. Pearce [Minister for Defence] that on publication of your first volume I should endeavour to secure its withdrawal from sale by causing the matter to be fully discussed in the House of Representatives. See what you nearly brought me to! (Letter 24)

Bean's modesty swallowed this last attack along with the others, and he got on with the job. But the rewriting of the introduction and first chapter in fact had major implications for the structure and overall impression of the *Official History*. The textual and political implications of the 'affair' — as well as just who had the last laugh — are dealt with more substantially
in the following chapter, where I compare the original drafts against the eventual published volumes and trace the history of some 'tuckering'.

Observers such as Robertson, Tucker and the *Argus* reviewer have obvious justification for their assessments of the literary quality of Bean's syntax and expression. But this aspect of Bean's writing has been largely outside the concerns of historians and other writers who have worked from Bean's accounts. They have addressed themselves largely to the 'factual accuracy' (Winter, Robson), or the cultural politics (Inglis, Williams), or the latent ideology (Gerster, Andrews) in the *Official History*. Only Green has directly addressed the prose style of the text:

Bean's style is simple, direct and lucid, but stripped rather bare; it is informed, however, by the greatness of his subject and by his deep but disciplined enthusiasm. (*Australian Literature 1900–1950*, 16)

Apart from these perceptive comments by Green, other writers have mostly confined themselves to admiring Bean's narrative skill. Ely says that "Bean knew very well how to frame a narrative," and Gerster sees him simulating drama "with the skill of a novelist."37 Even Tucker acknowledged that, "Mr Bean is at his best when he is simply setting forth a course of events. He has a real gift for clear and orderly narrative" ('Report').

The problem with the *History* is that very often Bean is not 'simply setting forth a course of events'; and in this regard Tucker is not so generous. In his assessment delivered to Robertson, Tucker suggested that Bean's syntactic argument suffered from a "loose stringing together" (Report). "He appears to find much virtue in a dash," and his punctuation "calls for a revision throughout." Tucker hastened to add that the weaknesses could be quickly amended by a professional, but he advised Robertson that "I doubt whether the writer could discover and correct them for himself."

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37 Ely, 'The first Anzac Day,' 55; Gerster, *Dig-nition*, 65.
Time proved the fears well-founded. Professor Tucker worked on all the published volumes of the History until 1930, when he left for Europe. Subsequently, without the smoothing hand of a literary editor, Bean's grammar and syntax relapsed into its old faults. Too often in the later volumes the writing gets away from him. Sentences are convoluted, paragraphs disjointed. Frequently the subjects of main and relative clauses are opposed, and rhetorical interjections haphazardly interpolated. Geoffrey Serle writes that in the late 1930s Bean worked under pressure and without much support. His first draft for the sixth volume was scribbled on the back of the page proofs of volume V, and ominously, "remained largely intact" (UQP, VI: xix). Upon seeing the drafts for volume IV in 1932, the British official historian General Sir James Edmonds wrote to Bean saying they "do not seem to be up to the standard of your previous published volumes." The following paragraphs illustrate how those faults which Tucker had aimed to correct crept back into the text:

But dangerously weak though Haig's army was when attacked in immense force on an extended line with only 18 divisions in reserve, yet the total preponderance of German strength in the West was not so great that the combined Anglo-French reserve (57 divisions) should not, if wisely placed and controlled, have been sufficient to stop Ludendorff's thrust, possibly on the Somme line, but at all events without the extremes of haste, confusion, and anxiety that actually attended its use. (V: 665)

And from volume VI:

This was a small group, mainly of staff or others closely associated with headquarters — but including several of the most prominent and honoured names in the force — who since its earliest days had been associated with General White, and who recognised, as others had no opportunity of doing, not merely the brilliance of his intellect but the nobility of his character and the outstanding part — far beyond that of any other leader — that (as chief-of-staff first to Bridges and then to Birdwood) he had played in building up the Australian Imperial Force. (VI: 195)

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38 Edmonds to Bean, 2nd Sept. 1932 (AWM 38, 3 DRL 7953, item 34).
Such passages would pass for bad parodies of Henry James or Proust. And it is not merely a case of the occasional sleepy nod, as Horace observed of Homer — any casual reading of these last volumes will expose passages which would have benefitted from discrete 'tuckering'.

The second example from volume VI is particularly representative in that it illustrates the tendency of Bean's prose to founder when the writer is dealing with a delicate subject. This particular quotation is from the section detailing the rise of Monash to the command of the A.I.F. in May 1918. Bean distrusted Monash, who he thought had schemed for the position, and he believed Brudnell White had been unjustly overlooked. Bean himself is prominent among 'the small group'. This chapter in the History was obviously difficult for him to write, especially owning up to his own vain intrigues in dissuading the Government from appointing Monash. The convoluted syntax continues on the following page: "It may be safely premised that, if those who were endeavouring to unseat him had known the life story of John Monash, no voice would have been raised against his appointment even if some continued to doubt — as indeed they may do to this day — whether in all possibilities it was the best" (VI: 198).

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The basic problem of Bean's grammar is revealed by a simple typological analysis: there are too many adjectives, and not enough nouns and verbs. The table below gives comparative percentages from samples of prose taken from throughout Bean's six volumes, from Clark's last two volumes (covering the same period as Bean), together with passages from Kinglake's Invasion of the Crimea.39

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39 The sample consists of seven passages from Bean, five from Clark, and three from Kinglake — over 3000 words in all. To create a balance, the passages range from battle description to political analysis, and across volumes. In any event, no marked differences are observed across sample types of one author.
percentages of total words by select grammatical class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Class</th>
<th>Bean</th>
<th>Clark</th>
<th>Kinglake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>finite verbs</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participles</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns &amp; pronouns</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjectives</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>adverbs</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunctions</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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As this data shows, Clark has the most concrete language, with the highest proportion of nouns and finite verbs, and least number of descriptors. Kinglake is distinguished by the most participles (and gerunds also). Bean can be seen to use the least nouns and verbs, and the most adjectives, resulting in an excess of description and a deficit of action. That is, as the sentences get longer they acquire a surfeit of descriptors in proportion to finite verbs. The syntactic weight on the main clause is too great, and the writing becomes turbid and disjointed.

Upon reading Tucker’s corrections, Bean acknowledged a ‘jerkiness of style’ in his own work, whereby he had “ignored the necessary connection” between statements.\(^4\) This tendency can be identified in his frequent use of parataxis, whereby subordinate and co-ordinate clauses are joined without conjunctions. Parataxis is common enough in Latin and Greek, but less so in English. Traditionally, the effect is terseness and compression. With Bean it sustains the notion that much is happening simultaneously, as in these examples from volume IV:

With the thaw, this comparative tranquillity became much more pronounced, artillery observers being unable to see their targets. (IV: 43)

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\(^4\) Diary entry quoted in McCarthy, Gallipoli to the Somme, 382.
The movement was to begin at 8 o'clock, the companies advancing to right and left of the village respectively, the centre company engaging it while they were drawing round. (IV: 248)

But parties were organised spontaneously, men eagerly following the most vigorous officers and N.C.O's. (IV: 854)

Bean compounds the effect by having different subjects in apposing clauses, but denying the second subject a finite verb.

Bean's verbal usage is further complicated by a tendency to place the main verb late in the syntactic argument. He builds up a scenario in order to prove his point in the final cadence of his main clause. The head of the sentence is thus cluttered with prepositional phrases, noun phrases, adverbial phrases, subordinate clauses and the like. The main verb (underlined) lingers towards the end:

The tension at this point, the tremendous fire which had been maintained there night and day since the landing, the heavy fight of Tuesday, the constant local attacks and the extreme watchfulness of the enemy, had prevented the digging of a trench system. (I: 579)

An hour later, while the field artillery was still playing on the Hindenburg parapets and the "heavies" on Bullecourt and Riencourt; after a remnant of the brigades had straggled in, the machine-gunners of the 4th by a brave effort bringing with them two of their sixteen guns; while the line of wounded, followed by shells from some German battery, was trailing like a string of ants across the open to the rear — there suddenly appeared, slowly retuming from the sector of the Hindenburg Line captured that morning by the 12th Brigade, about 150 men. (IV: 338-9)

Pared of its subordinate clauses and peripheral details, the bones of this sentence can be rendered thus: 'An hour later, about 150 men appeared.' This passage too becomes more interesting when properly contextualized. It is part of the description of the battle of First Bullecourt, 11th April 1917. The Allies have occupied the Germans' front trenches, but are facing strong resistance. The subsequent German counter-attack is
successful and results in the capture of stranded Australian troops. Here is Bean’s response to the unfolding scenario:

many onlookers with a cold shock realised they were watching for the first time the surrender of a number of Australian soldiers. (lV: 338)

As in the discussion of Monash’s ascendancy (quoted above), Bean’s discomfort in his subject matter expresses itself in the syntax. Indeed, it can be argued that stylistic faltering is a reliable signifier of unease with a particular event or subject. In this circumstance the embarrassment of surrender seems to bring on Bean’s unwieldy syntax: he doesn’t know quite what to say, nor how to say it. But after clumsily bringing the ‘150 men’ into the frame, the contrast is marked. In one short, sharp statement we meet the heroes: “They were the 48th Battalion.” This sort of dramatic narrative punctuates the text at regular intervals, and saves Bean from being unreadable.41

Another significant aspect of Bean’s style is his indecisiveness. Bean will rarely say anything of importance that he does not immediately qualify. He uses numerous tags, *e.g*; ‘for the most part’, ‘as far as possible’, ‘except’, ‘hardly’, ‘in general’, and so on:

a people reared in conditions closer to pure democracy than any other nation, with the possible exception of the Swiss (VI: 1094)

units recruited chiefly from the great cities were, at one time or another, probably unequalled in the force (VI: 1080)

Bean is such a slave to Rankean objectivity that, rather than appear biased, he usually avoids stating any concrete position at all.

Bean’s dedication to accurate and exhaustive detail is often at the expense of narrative rhythm and style. Where others might condense

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41 The passage bears a close resemblance to an earlier sequence in Egypt: “Then out of the mirage came a line of men, all unnaturally tall, all running. They were the 9th Battalion” (I: 131).
detail to preserve the clarity of the story, for Bean the detail is the story. Consider the apology with which Winston Churchill prefaces his account of the Gallipoli landing:

It would not be fitting here to recount the feats of arms which signalized the day. To do them justice a whole volume would be required: each Beach deserves a chapter; each battalion a page.42

In the end, Churchill gives one chapter to the seven beaches of the Allied landing: a few pages to the British and French at Cape Helles, and a page to the Australians at Anzac Cove. Bean’s motives are entirely different; his whole purpose is to recount those “feats of arms,” and that one ‘day’ consumes the bulk of his first volume, concluding only as the Allies establish their beachhead. Something like 250 pages are devoted to one beach alone, Anzac Cove; and brigades, even battalions, are accorded whole chapters. Every yard of ground is covered in text. Occasionally in the History Bean lets himself go, with a chapter about diplomacy, or trench systems, or “the Diggers”. But for the most part, once the fighting begins, there are endless descriptions of hand-to-hand combat, trench raids, and bomb throwing.

From a totally different perspective, it is possible to imagine Bean’s prose as a brilliant metaphor of battle itself. Imagine the position of a participant in the fighting. From moment to moment he connects only to what is immediate and apparent to himself. Bean’s narrative lens on the battlefield is synchronic rather than diachronic. He takes the position of an in situ observer, not the distant perspective of the staff ‘at the back’. Thus, within a single syntactic structure the proliferation of data encourages the perception of everything happening at once. This, surely, is how most participants conceived of the action. Bean said as much himself: “the principle adopted has been to tell at first only so much of the whole situation as was known to those whose action is described” (Writing the

Australian Official History', 104). In recreating actual battle circumstances then, the prose is remarkable.

The same realization can be made of another of Bean's idiosyncrasies, his tendency to place the verb before the subject, thereby inverting the standard Subject–Verb–Object order of English. This gives a sense of revelation and epiphany. In long sentences the subject is shunted to the end like a German participle, as in the Bullecourt passage quoted above. The noun emerging from the ruin of syntax becomes homologous to the 150 men of the 48th Brigade appearing through the smoke of No-Man's Land. Nevertheless, such an interpretation is somewhat undercut by observing exactly the same tendencies in Bean's pre-war writing.43 It is more often appropriate, though less appealing, to see the prose as turgid, and the narrative obscure.

A final look at an important passage from the Official History will suffice to conclude this analysis:

The horror of knowing that a mate — his living body the prey of flies and ants — is being slowly done to death within two minutes succour to which, without military disadvantage, he could be brought, is less present to distant staffs than to officers and men in the line, as was estimated (though doubtless only after severe internal conflict) as a trifle when balanced against the mighty issues at stake; yet the memory of such horrors lingering in millions of minds unquestionably leads sometimes, in the long run, to results beside which even the great war-time issues may seem unimportant. (III: 440)

Bean is almost saying something important here; that the individual is more significant than the cause, and that victory can never assuage the pain and horror of an unnecessary death. But the power of the statement is lost in the quagmire of words and grammar.

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43 Cf. this passage from The Dreadnaught of the Darling, (19): "Far away by itself across the West, through the huge 1,000,000-acre runs or little 20,000-acre homestead leases, down the middle of the sort of country and amongst the sort of people of which these chapters tell, runs — or at any rate straggles, for the greater part of every year — for 2,000 miles or so — the Darling River."
It is perhaps too easy to pick holes in Bean’s prose, given the scale of the project. It is conversely just as easy to admire the dedication and stamina involved in completing the mammoth undertaking. The vast bulk of the writing is relatively lucid and free of grammatical inconsistencies, in which ‘style’ is hardly an issue. But the cultural significance of the *Official History* demands that we assess every aspect of it. And so, arguments about Bean’s style are important in terms of understanding readers’ responses to the text.

Bean knew very well the role he had to play. He was entrusted with the nation’s heritage, and must produce a document worthy of its honour. His work would be subject to the scrutiny of review: in the press, in the academy, in the barracks. But most of all, the intended audience was his very subject matter, the men of the A.I.F. He was therefore absolutely correct to eschew a dry, bureaucratic style (characterized by other official histories), just as he was wise not to attempt a literary style (which as Tucker observed, would have been beyond him). He tried to write in a manner that would not offend any of his projected readerships, and in this he was largely successful.

That he too often stumbled is therefore a great pity, for it makes the *History* difficult to read other than in short doses. This is not necessarily a problem for those who want to read a few pages of a particular engagement, to relive the exploits of a relative or friend. Nor perhaps to a military expert looking for detail of troop movements or chronology. But for the general reader, the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–18* is too often a chore.

Ironically, Bean’s convoluted expression is utterly contradictory to his avowed determination “never, if possible, to write a sentence which could not be understood by, say, a housemaid of average intelligence.” Leaving aside the sexism and class snobbery here, this statement confirms the principle which both saved and ruined Bean’s prose: it is simultaneously anti-intellectual, and yet patronizing of those with only ‘average intelli-
gence.’ You can’t have it both ways, and Bean frequently loses on each punt. The consequence is that many readers, including reviewers and academics, have not read the History ‘through’, as Dr Johnson would say. Thus Bean the man, and his text, are victims of his style.

the historian’s apprenticeship

De Certeau has said that historiography has an ambivalent status of both ‘producing history’ and ‘telling stories’ (*Writing of History*, 87). Historians have always wrestled with each others’ facts and the construction of history. More recently literary and cultural critics have turned their gaze on narrative poetics as an equally valid area of enquiry for historiography. As Hayden White argues, “narrative discourse, far from being a neutral medium for the representation of historical events and processes, is the very stuff of a mythical view of reality” (*The Content and the Form*, ix).

From the moment of its publication, the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–18* was considered unique in the annals of military history. Specifically, this distinctness relates to the History’s extraordinary detail, but mostly to a perceived radical strategy of leaving the staff room to place its gaze on the front-line troops: “It has been remarked to the point of cliche that this is a history of the man at the front” (*Big Nothing*, 64). The reviews were quick to make these points: “As a war record the book is in a class by itself”; “No other history of that terrible day will ever be written so exhaustive and minutely accurate as this”; “it was time that some Official History should present the ‘front-line’ point of view and counter-act the efforts of the ‘back-area’ apologists.” Hamilton’s view sums up these comparisons:
the whole of the action is cast on intensely individualist lines as contrasted with those mechanical movements of anonymous masses which stupefy us in the war histories of the West.44

But in spite of the remarkability of Bean’s historiography, there has been no significant study of how he came upon his unique approach. Here I shall consider how Bean constructed his methodology, and analyze its characteristics.

When chosen as the official Australian press correspondent, there was no doubting Bean’s credentials for the role. He was a leading feature journalist with years of experience and a number of books to his name. But what qualifications did he have as a historian? Writing in the 1930s, contemporaneously with Bean, R.G. Collingwood observed that because education involves a certain amount of history, “in a sense we are all historians nowadays.”45 Yet Collingwood stresses that simply having an education did not qualify a person to ‘answer questions’ about the object or method of ‘historical thinking’:

No one, for example, is likely to answer them worse than an Oxford philosopher who, having read Greats in his youth, was once a student of history and thinks that this youthful experience of historical thinking entitles him to say what history is, what it is about, how it proceeds, and what it is for. (Idea of History, 8)

While there is a certain amount of ‘marking out territory’ in Collingwood’s complaint, the argument has relevance in regard to Bean’s training and preparation for his role as Official Historian.46 The publisher George Robertson was convinced neither of Bean’s aptitude nor competence in

44 Comments by Hamilton, Nevinson, and Liddell Hart respectively. Apart from Australian and British newspapers, notices appear in publications from places as varied as Shanghai, Cape Town, Montreal, Fiji, Boston, Calcutta.


46 The same could probably be said for most ‘official’ military historians of the Great War. Typically the job went to a staff officer.
the task of writing an Official History: "Of the philosophy of history Mr. Bean could write all he knows on the back of a postage stamp," he objected.\textsuperscript{47} Certainly Bean had not the training or experience of his contemporaries Arthur Jose and Ernest Scott.

Yet Robertson was hasty to derogate Bean's schooling in the philosophy of history. Maybe he was not fluent in Tocqueville, Hegel, Ranke, or the latest writings of Croce, but he knew their work vicariously, and his education ensured familiarity with the works of the great Victorians, Macaulay and Carlyle, and the military historians Napier and Kinglake. Moreover, Bean's university studies provided a solid background in the ancient historians Herodotos and Thucydides — which despite Collingwood's reservations about the epistemology of historiography, offer at least the basis for a methodology of inquiry. All these writers and their works provide the foundation of Bean's understanding of history and historiography; melded, inexorably, with the master narrative of the British Empire. In this, Bean fitted the archetypical mould of a certain caste of his generation: public school education, Greats at Oxbridge, faith in Empire; together with societal practices such as \textit{laissez faire} Anglicanism, a passion for cricket, and so on. Such are the tropes of Bean's epistemology. History was bound within the triple narratives of Judaeo-Christian faith, Greek humanist philosophy and Empire politics. It was a text that ran from the walls of Jericho to the valley of Thermopylae, from the seas at Trafalgar to the field of Waterloo. These things filtered and distilled his understanding of history, much as his lexicon framed his expression of it.

But 'history' as a discourse was changing, and Robertson's use of the 'philosophy of history' is relevant here. The phrase is first employed by Voltaire (\textit{La Philosophie de l'Histoire}), and is taken up by Hegel in his attempt to instil scientific method into historiography (\textit{Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte}). In the nineteenth century the phrase was approp-

\textsuperscript{47} Letter 12, 'Robertson correspondence'.
riated by positivists espousing general and universal laws about history. The ensuing theoretical arguments saw philosophers of history and practitioners of historiography dispute each other's territory. The theoreticians poured scorn over the historians' haphazard methodology, while the writers viewed with contempt the abstractions of academic philosophers of history (White, *Metahistory*, 267–280). It was the age-old dispute between artists and critics, but for once the battleground wasn't literature or painting, but history — as Le Goff says, the nineteenth century was "the century of history" (*History and Memory*, 15).

Bean finished his formal education at the turn of the century when these debates were prominent in the Academy. His 'philosophy of history' was constructed by the curriculum and through his wider reading. The chief influences, explicit and covert, that operate in Bean's method and science of historiography are thus the Greek and Roman historians, the theorists of the age, and British military historians. Bean borrows selectively from his exemplars — often directly, but never slavishly nor without discretion. He took what he wanted and needed of their methodologies, and rejected what did not suit his purpose. In this way Bean constructs his own method; not so radical in its various parts, but new in its combination. The complex relationship between the *Official History* and Homer's *Iliad* is discussed in the following chapter. But here I consider Bean's debt to the first western historian, Herodotos.

**Herodotos**

Herodotos has always endured a double reputation, by turns the 'father of history' and the 'father of lies'. In one breath Cicero names him "pater historia", then denounces him as the writer of "innumerabile fabula" (*De legibus*, I, 1: 5). Herodotos has long been revered for his version of the

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48 Bean's borrowing and adaption from his sources bears some similarity to 'revisionary ratios' identified by Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence*. The 'swerves' (dianamen) and antithetical restatements (te...id) of his exemplars accord perfectly with Bloom's Freudian map of poetic self-development.
Greek triumphs over the Persians, but criticized for his strange accounts of barbarians and other fringe cultures, and for being too credulous of sources. In the twentieth century his 'method' has been progressively rehabilitated. Hartog argues that a return to Herodotos has been possible because of a shift in the field of historical inquiry towards an interest in the "imaginary representation" of societies (Mirror of Herodotos, 380). The combining of ethnography, geography, mythography and sociology is now regarded by many as the very model for modern historiography. At the end of the nineteenth century however, the positivist philosophers of history were inclined like the ancients before them, to consider Herodotos as much a fabulist and a mythographer, as a historian.49

In the Bean Study Collection at the Australian War Memorial is a curious edition of Herodotos' Histories. Presumably fabricated for students, the Greek pages are pasted onto larger blank leaves to provide room for a translation gloss and marginalia. There are two volumes of 362 and 334 pages respectively. Every page of both volumes is festooned with Bean’s scribblings. There are translations, parsing notes, diagrams of battles, as well as unrelated sketches and jottings. The extraordinary amount of notation means we can be quite confident that Bean read every word. In addition to the Greek text, Bean also possessed a copy of Rawlinson’s translation (which I use throughout).

Momigliano identifies two principles in Herodotos’ method: the priority of recording over criticizing, and the priority of seeing over hearing.50 The first principle can be seen in the following statement, which recurs throughout the text:

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49 For an account of Herodotos’ reputation throughout the ages, see Momigliano, 'The place of Herodotos in the history of historiography'.

For myself, my duty is to report all that is said (λέγειν τὰ λέγομενα); but I am not obliged to believe it all alike — a remark which may be understood to apply to my whole History. (VII, §152).

The second principle is crystallized in Herodotos' careful distinction between what he himself has seen, and what he has been told by others; for example:

Thus far I have spoken of Egypt from my own observation, relating to what I myself saw, the ideas I formed, and the results of my own researches. What follows rests on the accounts given me by the Egyptians, which I shall now repeat. (II, §99)

These two hierarchies beg to be deconstructed, and in one sense the Histories does this itself. By constantly apposing the two methods of each dyad, the text encourages a subversive reading which lays bare Herodotos' implicit critiques and uncovers the mise en abyme of narration. Reading becomes one more level of story telling, and the author merely another informant. Herodotos' interventions in the narrative invite the reader to question not just the verisimilitude of the stories told, but the prejudices of the narrator. Foregrounding the narrator's role in this way in fact anticipates the post-Rankean narrative praxis of the 'new history'. Hence Momigliano comments, "It is a strange truth that Herodotos has really become the father of history only in modern times" ('Herodotus', 141).

But at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was research methodology rather than the subtleties of narratology for which Herodotos was known, and this centred on his preference for eyewitness reports. Bean takes this method very much to heart, such that Gerster identifies in the Official History "an almost excessive faith in the factual worth of the eyewitness testimony" (Bigoting, 66). As Bean explained on many occasions, a remarkable proportion of this testimony was his own personal observation, from either his diaries or notebooks. The word 'history', it should be remembered, comes directly from Herodotos' opening sentence: Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησσέως ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἰδε — "These are the
histories of Herodotos of Halicarnassus" — but the word ἱστορίας originally meant ‘enquiries’ or ‘researches’.

Methodology becomes especially significant in the managing of reported testimony. Herodotos’ principle of simply repeating ‘what is said’ by his various informants had a twofold effect on his writing. It licensed the imaginative freedom which has always made the Histories popular as entertaining reading, but it compromised his reputation as an objective recorder. Objectivity was paramount to Bean, and hence in his Preface he specifically rejects Herodotos’ practice:

In the pursuit of strict accuracy [the writer] found himself driven by experience to adopt the old legal rules of evidence, discarding all hearsay. (Preface to the First Edition)

Whereas Herodotos happily recounts all sorts of stories and fabula, carefully crediting their provenance, Bean announces he will confine himself to “strict accuracy.” But he does frequently quote from diaries and letters of participants, the more so as the History progresses, and Gerster for one has questioned the wisdom of “such prodigal use of highly coloured personal accounts.” The difference is that Bean satisfied himself in the veracity of all material he published, whereas Herodotos simply appends the tag “I do not believe the tale, but it is told” (ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες, λέγουσι δ’ ὑπ’).

It is Momigliano’s first principle of recording over criticizing that holds greater influence in Bean’s method. Although the Australian History was seen to be more forthright than the bland, censored volumes of the British Official History, it yet remains conservative in its criticism, especially of individuals. Bean hoped that the ‘facts’ would speak for themselves, and so he avoided as much as possible the distasteful task of assessing failure. Gammage says of Bean that it pained him to speak ill of any man, and that he was reluctant to condemn, especially senior officers, and
especially if they were still alive. "In short," advises Gammage, "a reader must constantly be alert to what Bean hints at."

Perhaps the main legacy Bean takes from Herodotos is an intimate memory of how the Hellenes wrote of their own heroics, and of the folly of their enemies. He knows by heart the glorious sacrifice at Thermopylae, the victories at Marathon and Salamis, and the hubris of Darius and Xerxes. We can see Bean agreeing with John Stuart Mill's statement that, "The battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings." Bean does refer to and indeed paraphrase the *Histories* on occasion (see 'Homeric similes' in the following chapter), but his positivist methodology will not allow the speculations that Herodotos grants himself. So although much of the method of the 'father of history' informs Bean's work, the more poetic aspects are eschewed (Bloom's *chimney*). This was only to be expected according to the dominant historiographical tenets of the day — but perhaps to be lamented by later readers wishing for a more novelistic narrative.

*Thucydides*

In contrast to Herodotos's fluctuating reputation, Thucydides has mostly been regarded as a model historian. This is true especially in the nineteenth century, when the *History of the Peloponnesian War* was championed by positivist philosophers of history as a worthy exemplar. That Thucydides remains still so conventional is testament to just how advanced his style and method were at the time. Bean's Greek copy of Thucydides, like his volumes of Herodotos, is heavily annotated on every page. Interlinear glosses and marginalia give a picture of the eager student preparing his text for tutorial.

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51 Gammage, *The Broken Years*, vii; 'Introduction' to vol. IV, UQP reprint of the *Official History*, xxvii, xxix.

52 See Croce, 'Greco-Roman historiography', in *History: its theory and practice*, 183; Crane, *The Blinded Eye*. 
The trace of Thucydidcs can be seen in the very last words of the Official History — "a possession for ever." This is the very phrase used by Thucydidcs in claiming that his work is not just for readers of the 'present moment', but "is composed as a possession for ever" — κτιμέ ε'ς αιεı.53 This says much of Bean's conception of his work, and the tradition within which he hoped to be received. He was very aware of the genre within which he was writing, and the texts against which his own work would be compared. Just as Thucydidcs helped record and preserve the glorious history of Greece and its heroes, so Bean wished to do for Australia and its soldiers. And if the writer himself achieved immortal fame, that would be fine too.

Above all, however, the passage which is material to Bean's ideas is the Funeral Oration of Perikles (History of the Peloponnesian War, Book II: §35-46). This great speech, as much political address as eulogy, is delivered to the assembled Athenians at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War, as they bury and commemorate the soldiers who have died in service of the city. Bean incorporated a section of Perikles' oration into the letterhead for the AWM, and he ensured these words were used at the Memorial's inauguration ceremony in 1929:

They gave their lives. For that public gift they received a praise which never ages and a tomb most glorious — not so much the tomb in which they lie, but that in which their fame survives, to be remembered for ever when occasion comes for word and deed.54

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53 Peloponnesian War, 1: §22. "It is composed as a possession for ever, rather than as a prize-task to listen to at the present moment." Dale's translation (1852). The two other well-known editions in Bean's time, Hobbes (1628) and Crawley (1876), translate the phrase as "an everlasting possession". The marginalia in Bean's copy of the Peloponnesian War suggest that he was using Dale's translation as a crib.

54 Inglis, 'A sacred place', 109; Sacred Places, 336. Bean selected the text and Tucker prepared the translation (AWM 38, 3 DRL 6673/809). The passage is from Book II: §43. In Bean's copy it is highlighted by three parallel lines, something he does nowhere else.
The sentiment of the speech is infused through the whole writing of the *Official History* as well, and its seed blooms whenever Bean pauses to consider the meaning of death and sacrifice by the A.I.F. Two instances are the epilogues to volumes one and six. At the conclusion to the first volume Bean considers the merits of the invasion at Gallipoli, and meditates on the character and sacrifice of the Australian soldier. "What motive sustained them?" Bean asks — "It lay in the mettle of the men themselves," he answers:

To be the sort of man who would give way when his mates were trusting to his firmness...to live the rest of his life haunted by the knowledge that he had set his hand to a soldier's task and had lacked the grit to carry it through — that was the prospect these men could not face. Life was very dear, but life was not worth living unless they could be true to their idea of Australian manhood.

The language, style and structure of this passage bear more than a passing resemblance to the funeral oration as reported in Thucydides. Perikles likewise assays the reasons for the Athenians' courage and 'manliness':

when the reality of battle was before their faces, they put their trust in their own selves. In the fighting, they thought it more honourable to stand their ground and suffer death that to give in and save their lives. (II: §42, Warner translation)

Such patriotic claims are of course quite natural and widespread. Any writer can suggest their nation's soldiers won 'everlasting glory', or that they would 'rather die than surrender'. But the similarities continue. Bean defends the Australian ethos of "a people unaccustomed to restraint, naturally haters of the system of cast-iron subordination on which most armies are trained"; Perikles contrasts the Athenians who live "at their ease," with the Spartans who undergo "laborious training from their very youth" (II: §39). Perikles also suggests of the Athenian soldiers that, "Such did these men prove themselves, as became the character of their country" (II: §43, Dale). This type of metonymic homology between
soldier and nation is central to Bean’s project. And just as the bush influence was a pre-determined ideology for Bean, so too we can see that his ideal of heroism and sacrifice is borrowed from an earlier source. He nevertheless plots the History as if to unveil a revelation of the Australian soldier’s character engendered by the experience of war.

Bean’s debt to Thucydides is also apparent in his declaration of methodology, which reads like a direct transcription from the Greek historian:

**Bean, Volume 1, Preface**

> the writer has derived his information, as far as possible, only from those who actually saw and took part in the particular events narrated…The writer himself, either on the day of battle or soon afterwards, visited as far as it lay in him to do so, every important trench or position.

**Thucydides, Book 1: §22**

> with regard to my factual reporting of the events of the war…either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible.

One point of difference between the two emerges in the value placed on informants. Thucydides admits the difficulties in reconciling his diverse testimonies: “different eyewitnesses give differing accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other.” But in contrast Bean specifically defends his informants:

> In dealing with the accounts of separate witnesses it has been a perpetual marvel to me how exactly their narratives dovetail…Where information has been obtained from eyewitnesses among our former opponents, it has been found to fit with extraordinary accuracy. (Writing the Official History’, 109)

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55 Both authors complain that men coming out of battle cannot be trusted for reliable testimony, for example: “he [Bean] found it useless, for the most part, to seek trustworthy accounts from wounded or oversstrained men” (Preface); and Thucydides: “In daylight those who take part in an action have a clearer idea of it, though even then they cannot see everything, and in fact no one knows much more than what is going on around himself” (VII: 44).
As well as being a defence of Bean's editorial methodology, the closeness of the two texts suggests this statement also acts as an apostrophe from the modern author to his ancient authority.\(^{56}\)

Bean departs further from Thucydides in the area of speeches. Thucydides tells us that because it was impossible to remember the precise words of various speeches, he makes the speakers say “what, in my opinion, was called for by each situation” (I: §22). As Auerbach observes of Tacitus, these speeches invariably proceed in the discursive style of the writer, not the speaker. Bean is not at liberty to admit such speculative imaginings into an 'Official' history. The success of the speeches is that they introduce variety into the pace and discourse of Thucydides' narrative. But when Bean reports of Monash that his lectures on strategy were spellbinding (VI: 205), one can only wish that some of them had been included in the text. Such material would have broken the monotony of the prose and narrative. Bean gained a sound method of interrogation from Thucydides, but not the confidence to make best use of it.

**Kinglake**

Where Herodotos and Thucydides constitute the standard texts of Hellenic military history and Livy and Tacitus those of the Romans, Napier and Kinglake do the same for the British Empire. William Napier’s *History of the War in the Peninsular* (1828–40) and Alexander Kinglake’s *The Invasion of the Crimea* (1863–87) were essential reading for any alumnus of Clifton College, and Bean was an avid student of British naval and military history. The Bean Study Collection contains a condensed edition of Napier and one volume of Kinglake, but we can be certain of Bean’s familiarity with the full texts of both authors.\(^{57}\) In his discussions

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\(^{56}\) The act is similar to what Bloom calls *kenosis*, or repetition and discontinuity.

\(^{57}\) The copy of Napier is Bean's father's, presented in 1866 as a prize for Latin composition at Clifton College. Like his son after him, Edwin Bean made copious notes and drawings in his books, and there are numerous maps in coloured pencil stuck in the copy.
on the composition of the future ‘Official History’, Bean wrote to Senator
Pearce in November 1916 suggesting that, “the books should be
distributed as widely as possible in Britain, America and Australia — (as
widely, say, as Napier’s Peninsular War, or Kinglake’s Crimea).”58 George
Robertson could certainly gauge the influence of these two authors on
Bean’s pride and writerly vanity. In a calculated appeal to his stubborn
client to accept the imposition of a literary editor, Robertson invokes
both weighty authorities:

Those fine books of Murray’s and Blackwood’s and Macmillan’s have all
had their Professor Tuckers. Do you think that Napier and Kinglake, and
others of that ilk, received no help? (Letter 17, 10th May 1921)

Bean replied the same day to Robertson’s letter, adding a postscript to the
effect that he had “opened Kinglake and Napier at random” and imme-
diately found passages which he suspected would not ‘pass a reader’ in
Robertson’s publishing house. These he appended for Robertson’s edifi-
cation.59 The fact that both writers were obviously to hand as Bean was
writing raises the important question: how much were they also in his
mind?

Kinglake is particularly relevant to Bean because his subject is so
similar. The Crimean War, so proximate to the Dardanelles, was drawn

It is curious to find only one volume of Kinglake (III), from the total of eight
published. As discussed below, Bean demonstrably had the other volumes to hand
when writing the Official History, but they are not held in the collection. AWM staff
report that they believe a number of books from Bean’s study were not included in
the accession; other notable absences are Bean’s copies of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

58 Bean to Pearce, 24th Nov. 1916. AWM 38, 3 DRL 6673/12. In the reviews of the
Official History Bean was indeed frequently compared with Napier and Kinglake;
Hamilton goes so far to call Bean “the Kinglake of the Antipodes.”

59 Bean to Robertson, 11th May 1921. Bean’s letter is numbered 18 in the Robertson
correspondence. The postscript and appendix are absent in Robertson’s copy, who
presumably did not wish to record this rebuff to his professional judgment. However,
Bean’s own copy of this letter is held in AWM 38, 3 DRL 6673/204. See Appendix C
for the passages from Napier and Kinglake.
out and indecisive. Like the Gallipoli campaign, it foundered on a lack of planning, supply and commitment. Kinglake was present at the Battle of Alma, and like Bean he came under fire — though unlike the Australian journalist he was not injured in battle.

Where Bean draws most from Kinglake is his detailed descriptions of the minutiae of battle. Kinglake's work in fact gives the lie to the claim that Bean's method and focus were unique. The fourth volume of *The Invasion of the Crimea* covers the Battle of Balaklava; 427 pages for one day's action. There are some 200 pages devoted to the twenty minutes of the Light Brigade's charge alone. That Bean's detail and intense focus is not unique can be seen in a comparison of the following passages; firstly Kinglake:

> a shell came into [their] midst whilst the volunteers were still gathered close to the heap. A voice cried, "The fuse is burning!" Then instantly, and, as the narrator says, "with one spring," Captain Peel darted upon the live shell, and threw it over the parapet. The shell burst about four yards from his hands without hurting any one. (*Invasion of the Crimea*, IV: 3)

To any reader familiar with Bean the parallels here are striking. The passage could in fact pass unamended into the *Official History* without comment. The style, language, syntactic structure, dramatic use of reported speech, and indeed focus on the front line and naming of junior officers, are all typical of Bean. Even the technical data is apposite. A surprisingly similar scenario in Bean shows just how much the two texts have in common:

> Fire was coming from everywhere, and the enemy threw a few bombs. So new were the Australians still to these missiles that Durrant picked up one which fell at his feet smoking and fizzing. "Look, Colonel," he said to Burnage, "a Chinese stink-pot!" The Colonel cried to him to throw it away, which he did before it exploded. (*Official History*, I: 588)

The great distinction between the two, however, is the perspective on the action. Kinglake spent the Battle of Alma with the Commander-in-Chief.
Lord Raglan and his command, and on the evening of the battle he dined alone with Raglan in his tent. He was later motivated to write his history because he was given the personal papers of Lord Raglan, by his widow (I: v). Kinglake's eye and ear are thus ever in the staff tent and with the commander's despatch.

The most dramatic example of this is his account of the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. This notorious event was the subject of extensive debate and inquiry in Parliament, and lingering post-mortems in the British press. The bare facts of the event are well known: as the result of a confusing order, a brigade of light cavalry under the command of Lord Lucan, and led by Lord Cardigan, made a fatal charge at the Russian batteries, with overwhelming casualties. Kinglake dwells particularly on the "third" and "fourth" orders of Raglan and their misinterpretation (Bloom might say 'wilful misprision') by Lord Lucan (iv: 224 ff.). This is possibly what Bean has in mind when he distinguishes his own method from "the tendency among military historians to regard the despatches of the high commanders as the most authoritative sources of information." Kinglake appears to excuse the incompetence of Lucan, because the commander's judgement was disturbed by the perceived rudeness of a junior officer, Captain Nolan, who should have known better than to question his superior in public (iv: 258). And so, into the valley of death rode the six hundred.

Compare this to Bean's assessment of the Australian charge at The Nek, that, "it seems certain that Antill at headquarters did not make himself aware of the true position," even though his subordinate Brazier was begging the attack to be called off (ii: 631). Gerster is right to suggest that Bean shrinks from giving The Nek a proper analysis (Big-noting, 81). By keeping his narrative focus on the heroic sacrifice and "devoted

60 De Gaury's rather painful, forelock-tugging biography of Kinglake sees this occasion as similar to Wellington unburdening himself to the diarist Creevey following Waterloo (Travelling Gent, 115).
loyalty” of the soldiers going over the parapet, he avoids a sustained critique of the responsibilities of the commanders. Kinglake on the other hand is damning. His ‘defence’ of the Lords Lucan and Cardigan (who led the charge) is parodic to the point of ridicule. The historiographical style of The Invasion of the Crimea is throughout closer to the poetics of Pope and Swift than the well-mannered realism of the mid-Victorian era. Kinglake’s independence allows him to criticize at will, and satire is his most frequent weapon. Kinglake’s Lucan thus addresses Nolan in the cadences of Boswell’s Johnson: “Attack, sir! attack what? What guns, sir?” (IV: 240). His confidence in his style and in his position give Kinglake’s writing a robust momentum which Bean rarely achieves.

Aside from the issue of stylistics, the Charge of the Light Brigade and the assault at The Nek invite further comparison. In the first place, the numbers of troops involved and proportion of casualties are almost identical: 600 British Light Cavalry and 600 Australian Light Horseman, each suffering casualties of about 240 dead plus a further 100 wounded. Secondly there is the reckless bravery of participants, incompetence of command, and confusion over orders. Moreover, David Williamson’s screen play for Gallipoli (which concludes with The Nek attack) proffers a nobility of sacrifice, and generates much the same sort of nationalist emotion as did Tennyson’s poem.62

In one of his 1907 articles Bean specifically rejects the notion that an Australian would subscribe to the principles of loyalty and subordination espoused in Tennyson’s verses on Balaklava: “The force of the military axiom ‘Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do or die’ does not in the least appeal to him” (‘Australia IV’). Bean believed the ‘Australian’ was

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61 Nolan’s deft reply — which so infuriated Lucan — is abrupt as it is simple: “There, my lord, is your enemy; there are your guns.”

62 Both Nevinson and Masefield were sensitive to the parallels between the Nek and Balaklava. (Nevinson, The Dardanelles Campaign, London: Nisbet, 1918; Masefield, Gallipoli, London: Heinemann, 1916, 153).
too independently minded to sacrifice himself for no good reason other than obedience to orders:

If he did not see the reason why he should go and be killed, the fact that he was ordered to do so would make little difference to the Australian. (Australia IV)

Forty years later, however, Bean himself draws attention to the similarities between The Nek and Balaklava to applaud the self-sacrificial devotion of the Australian soldiers. He praises "Tennyson's magnificent verse," and laments that many Australian children "have never heard of the heroic charge of the Light Horse" (Anzac to Amiens, vi). It is clear that the need to support national honour and find value in wasted lives motivates both Tennyson as Poet Laureate and Bean as Official Historian. Kinglake on the other hand was not constrained by institutional allegiance, and thus presents a vigourous critique, rather than a sentimental rationalization.

**Ranke**

In February 1938 Bean gave an address to the Royal Australian Historical Society in which he outlined the sources and methods employed in the writing of the Official History. Among other things, he expresses the view that a historian must "attempt to exhibit events, causes and results as they actually happened on the world's stage."63 The choice of words is not random, but a quotation from Leopold von Ranke's dictum that the study of history should show an event 'as it actually happened' — 'wie es eigentlich gewesen'.64 Ranke's phrase achieved instant fame, and became a veritable

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63 'The writing of the Australian Official History', 111. Given his role in the Australian War Memorial, Bean's use of "exhibit" seems to reflect a pursuit of positivist praxis in both historiography and museology.

64 In *The Clothing of Clay* Stephen Bann discusses the mis/translation of Ranke's phrase, specifically the meanings of *eigentlich*. For my purposes however, it is important only to deal with the currency of Ranke's dictum in its English translation at the turn of the century.
The mantra for historians in the nineteenth century, such that, "Three generations of German, British, and even French historians marched into battle intoning the magic words 'Wie es eigentlich gewesen'" (Carr, *What is History*, 9). So Bean identifies himself amongst the Rankean generations when he too intones the sacred words. The manifesto is also apparent in Bean's declaration, in the Preface to the first edition, to "record the plain and absolute truth." Of course, this Bean palpably does not do, and neither of course did Ranke; but the belief in and attempt at objectivity was the spirit of the era.

Ranke's philosophy of history was championed by the British historian Lord Acton who declared, "Ranke is the representative of the age which instituted the modern study of History." Acton's determined belief that history can be 'neutral' is the ultimate expression of the positivist ideal. Among other things Acton was concerned with the growth of nationalism, which he saw as resurrecting unethical excesses from the ancient world. For him the catholicity of the British Empire represented a far more sophisticated model, in which a mixture of races could live happily, in the manner that Christianity accommodated all mankind. Acton exhorted historians to state things "in longitude 30 degrees west" — that is, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Yet even this objective ideal is betrayed by its point of reference, with Greenwich as the cartographic centre of the world. This very British position would humour later continental theorists of the New Historiography, and causes Momigliano to smile upon "that Lord Acton who was such an admirer of German professors and so utterly unlike any of them." Nevertheless,

65 From Acton's inaugural lecture as Professor of History at Cambridge, June 1895. *Lectures on Modern History*, 18.

66 Acton is equally unconcerned with the hegemonic nature of both institutions.

67 On Acton's faith in the prospects of 'ultimate history' and its ability to 'solve every problem', see Carr, *What is History*, 7. Philippe Carrard's amusement in Acton's folly is found in his survey of twentieth-century French historiography, *Poetics of the New*
when Bean was an undergraduate in the English academy at the turn of
century, it was Acton as the prophet of Ranke who influenced the direc-
tion of historiography.

Bean toes the line of this positivist methodology, even after its
philosophical basis had all but collapsed in the wake of the social and
political upheaval of the war, and the aesthetic assault of modernism.
When he writes in the Preface to the First Edition of recording ‘the bare
and uncoloured story’ he mimics the prose style associated with Ranke’s
theories. According to Acton, Ranke taught the age “to be critical, to be
colourless, to be new” (*Lectures*, 32). Ranke’s translator Armstrong
agrees that his subject was not a ‘colourist’, but adds that, “If Ranke’s style was
as transparent as water, it was said, it was also as tasteless.” Bean can be
seen to follow the three principles Acton takes from Ranke, to be ‘critical,
colourless and new’, although his success in each is open to question. In
his paper on the writing of the *Official History* Bean said that he began the
project believing that “history can only be written in a partisan spirit”
(11). Nevertheless, he goes on to say that the historian must be objective,
and further, he implies that his own work in some achieves this ideal (12).
It is surely a truism that the more objective a writer insists their method-
ology is, the more susceptible it is to ideological refraction. From this
perspective Bean’s insistence on his objectivity is simply hubristic
dreaming. Bean appears to depart from the criterion of critical objectivity
when his loyalty is skewed from reporting ‘what actually happened’, to
preserving the reputation of the men of the A.I.F. We have seen that
Bean’s style is not so much transparent as translucent. His method is not
so much new as a unique combination of established models.

*History*, 19; Momigliano’s epigram is in *Studies in Historiography*, 53.

68 E. Armstrong, in the Preface to Ranke’s *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations*,
London 1909, x, xi.

69 Cf. the dispute between Bean and Aspinall-Oglander about the stragglers on the first
day of the Landing, discussed in the Introductory.
But there are further ways in which Bean does compare similarly to Ranke, such as genre and mode of argument. White analyzes the great European historians of the nineteenth century, comparing their styles, genres, use of tropes, and so on. He proposes a loose taxonomy based on modes of employment — Romance, Tragedy, Satire, Comedy — together with related modes of argument and ideological implication (Metahistory, 29). For example, he suggests Alexis de Tocqueville wrote his history in the Tragic mode and with a Radical politics. Michelet wrote with a Romantic employment; hence his nationalist history, symbolized by transcendence and liberation. White describes Ranke as writing in a Comic mode, according to a Conservative politics. He also describes Ranke’s argument as Organicist — that is, characterized by the ‘crystallization of some integrated entity whose importance is greater than any individual entities described in the narrative’ (15).

Applying Hayden White’s categories to the Official History, we see that like Ranke, Bean uses an organicist argument and professes a Conservative politics. As we shall see in my concluding chapter, this makes Bean very attractive to a Conservative politician like John Howard wanting to promote the concept social and cultural unity. Satire is anathema to Bean, likewise Tragedy. When he attempts to portray the individual Anzac soldier as a symbol for the nation he strays into Romantic mode, though as White stresses, this is generally characterized by a far more ‘colourful’ style, which Bean assiduously avoids. His is the Comic mode where, by the reconciliation of conflict, society is represented as being “purer, saner, and healthier” (Metahistory, 9).

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70 The following discussion is drawn largely from White’s Introduction to Metahistory, 1–42.

71 Tocqueville was the historian who most influenced Manning Clark, a writer who can also be described as using the tragic mode with radical politics. See Clark, The Ideal of Alexis de Tocqueville.
CHAPTER SIX

Epic Poetics

The Old Force passed down the road to history. The dust of its march settled. The sound of its arms died. Upon a hundred battlefields the broken trees stretched their lean arms over sixty thousand of its graves. The time has arrived to sum its achievement. (Official History, VI: 1093)

Bean's 'last' paragraph

WHAT ARE THE great passages in the Official History? The battles in Turkey, the victories in France? Given the subject matter it might be expected these events would furnish the most significant and memorable prose. Yet Bean's approach to combat narrative doesn't produce this sort of writing. Not for him the broad scope of the commander's vision drawing lines across the battlefield of history. Bean's angle is a close focus on the individual, the actual fighter who lives or dies, who kills by hand rather than order. As the contemporary reviewers acknowledged, this style was a revelation in military history. But while this process does homage to the work of the individual soldier, the sheer scale discounts individual renown or the significance of any particular action. Over six volumes, the sob and clubbing of the gunfire is dulled by the turning pages. The endless battle descriptions eventually bleed into one.

So it is that the great set pieces of the Official History are not the fighting scenes, but the conclusions to each volume. Where most of the story is spent at the front line and the minutiae of battle, in the epilogues the narrative pace is relieved, the focus drawn back. It is here that Bean pauses to summarize relevant strategies and the ongoing status of the war; he editorializes on themes and issues, offers judgments on situat-
ions and events. The final words go to the Australian soldier and the
nation. These are the passages that have inspired the passing generat-
ions with their rousing rhetoric and passionate advocacy of Australian
sacrifice and endeavour. This is where we read that the consciousness
of Australian nationhood was born on the 25th April, 1915 (II: 910); or
find the claim that the Anzac corps was recognized as "among the
finest fighting machines at the disposal of the British command" (III:
958). At the same time, the conclusions give a picture on Bean's re-
sponses to his own text: "A comparison of his final 1917 paragraphs
with those of any of his other volumes reflects the flatness and dismay
he felt when he reviewed the year."71

The epilogue to the first volume celebrates the soldiers' fortitude as
the epitome of Australian masculine values:

Life was very dear, but life was not worth living unless they could be true
to their idea of Australian manhood. Standing upon that alone, when
help failed and hope faded, when the end loomed clear in front of them,
when the whole world seemed to crumble and heaven to fall in, they
faced its ruin undismayed. (I: 607)

The tone and style is unmistakably heroic and romantic; the sort of
prose one could expect in a 'Boy's Own', or Fitchet's Deeds that Won the
Empire. But it captured the Zeitgeist of immediate post-war Australia, and
it is classic Bean. The second volume ends with a detailed assessment of
the merits and legacy of the Gallipoli campaign, especially the way it
brought a focus to the Australian people:

For eight months their most intense feelings had been centred upon
Anzac. Every man, woman, and child was tied to those few acres of
Turkish hillside, either by personal affection and interest or by a new-
born pride in their nation. (II: 909)

71 Gammage, 'Introduction' to volume IV, UQP reprint of the Official History, xxv.
Gammage adds that: "To an extent this was because 1917 contributed relatively little
to his essential purpose, to show how Australian citizens passed the test of war and
founded a national tradition."
Similar sorts of themes run through the conclusions to each volume, as Bean looks back on campaigns on the Somme, Passchendaele, and the German offensive of Spring 1918. The first chapter to the sixth volume works in similar fashion, as Bean allows himself the indulgence of an affectionate, extended portrait of “The Diggers.”

One of the best known sections of the whole History is the epilogue to the final volume, beginning with the words “The Old Force passed down the road to history” (vi: 1093). In this passage of 1500 or so words Bean looks back on the efforts and legacy of the A.I.F., saying “The time has arrived to sum its achievement.” He sees a threefold legacy for the force: firstly that they helped ‘win the war’; secondly that they brought the new Australian nation to the attention of the world community; and thirdly, most importantly, that the A.I.F. showed to the Australian people what sort of nation they were, and epitomized this character. Appropriately, the epilogue concludes with an intense and passionate homage to the diggers. Since I will address this passage in detail, it will be useful here to quote it in full:

Twenty-three years ago the arms were handed in. The rifles locked in the rack. The horses were sold. The guns were sheeted and parked in storage for other gunners. The familiar faded-green uniform disappeared from the streets.

But the Australian Imperial Force is not dead. That famous army of generous men marches still down the long lane of its country’s history, with bands playing and rifles slung, with packs on shoulders, white dust on boots, and bayonet scabbards and entrenching tools flapping on countless thighs — as the French countryfolk and the fellaheen of Egypt knew it.

What these men did nothing can alter now. The good and the bad, the greatness and smallness of their story will stand. Whatever of glory it contains nothing now can lessen. It rises, as it will always rise, above the mists of ages, a monument to great-hearted men; and, for their nation, a possession for ever.
The importance of these, the final words of the Official History, can be seen in the attention they have generated. Peter Stanley takes the passage as a touchstone for the 'Anzac legend' generally ('Reflections on Bean's last paragraph'), and he employs its individual phrases as headings throughout his essay. Robert O'Neill cites the epilogue approvingly in the General Preface to the UQP reprint of the Official History, quoting the entire passage, and Bill Gammage concludes his preface to Volume IV with the final sentence. Carl Harrison-Ford extracts the complete 1500-word epilogue in his anthology of Australian war writing Fighting Words (140–2).

The passage contains some of Bean's strongest writing. It boasts an embarrassment of tropes and stylistic flourishes, with rich language and self-conscious rhetoric. The sentences remain direct and cogent however, and the message is immediate. It constitutes an exemplary expression of the anxiety of national identity which informs the whole Official History: the nation earns "a place at the League of Nations"; its citizens prove they are energetic and not "degenerating physically"; and at home, "Australians watched the name of their country rise high in the esteem of the oldest and greatest nations."72

Bean concludes by emphasizing the immortality of the A.I.F.'s story: "It rises...a possession for ever." One factor that explains the special attraction of the final sentence is that Bean's wording is already a series of quotations from familiar texts. As we have seen, the four last words are taken directly from Thucydides, one of Bean's significant influences. This quotation works two ways. Firstly, it seeks to equate the glory of the A.I.F. with that of ancient Greece. But also, it shows a latent desire in the author that his work might compare in some way to the

72 Here we see again the pathology of identity discussed previously in Chapter II; the need for acknowledgement and recognition, which is at the heart of the Anzac myth. Gerster writes that "the men of the First A.I.F. craved favourable notices" (Big Nosing, 3), something which Monash had understood implicitly with his analogy of 'putting up scores on the board'. 
longevity of the Greek text. Bean was only too well aware of the rest of the sentence, as Thucydides argues that his work is not simply "a prize-task to listen to at the present moment," but of everlasting value. Bean is certainly more modest and self-effacing than his precursor, but the reference is there all the same.

"Mists of ages" conlates the proverbial phrase "mists of time" with the Christian imagery of Toplady's well-known hymn "Rock of Ages." This lends historical depth to the 'always rising' glory, suggesting mythical origins and an eternal future, 'for ever and ever, amen'. This phrasing is a further example of how Bean's style reappears from text to text. In the words "It rises, as it will always rise," we can hear echoes of the rhetorical syntax of his early panegyric on the 'pure old cross of St George: "It flies, and will always fly, at the stern of every Australian warship" (Flagships Three, 338). The emphasis on the verb "rise" is directly bound to its antithesis "fall", which in its past participle “fallen” became the euphemism for all the dead in the war.73 Like the erect diggers and obelisks of the war monuments, "rise" also suggests a virile masculinity which seeks to invert the impotence of death.

"Great-hearted" seems a perfect description for soldiers who gave their lives for King and Country. Bill Gammage borrows it to inscribe his debt to the official historian, as if the appellation were Bean's own inspired creation: "To him, and to Arthur Bazley, and to the thousands of great heated men who were their comrades during the war, I dedicate these pages" (Broken Years, vii). The words are Homer's, of course, and come straight from the Iliad, where the compound formulaic adjective 'great-hearted' appears often in descriptions of both Trojans and

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73 See Inglis, Sacred Places (93). The word is best known as the title of Binyon's ode, "For the Fallen".
Achaeans. John Howard's speechwriter Mark Baker gathers the image of the "great-hearted generation" as well as the "monument" for the Prime Minister's Anzac Day 2000 address at Anzac Cove. Again, the evocation of heroic/epic symbolism is a potent motivation in Bean's choice of words. It encapsulates his vision of the Australian soldier as a noble character stepping out of the pages of Homer. All this in one sentence.

The intertextual connexions in the epilogue have passed largely unnoticed by commentators, not knowing or perhaps not caring to consider Bean's sources. Neither has the textual archeology of the passage been explored, despite the importance it has been accorded. Stanley imagines the paragraph as the "considered view" of an author who had spent twenty-two years at work on his "monumental" project ('Reflections', 4). Harrison-Ford prefaces his publication of the epilogue with the following observation:

This tribute to the soldiers of the First A.I.F. and their place in history is made all the more poignant by the fact that Bean's coda was written in May 1942, with the Second World War well under way. (Fighting Words, 140)

But the epilogue to the last volume was not composed with these connotations at all. Moreover, it was not written in 1942; but in 1919. Bean's drafts of the Official History held at the Australian War Memorial reveal that, rather than being the conclusion to the final volume of the History, this 1500-word passage was intended by the author as the opening passage of the first chapter of volume I, 'The story of Anzac'. This

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74 For example: "great-hearted Trojans" (VIII: 523); "great-hearted Nestor" (XXIII: 541); "great-hearted Priam" (XXIV: 117); Lang, Leaf & Myers translation. Harry Gullett also employs the term in his pean to the bush contingent of the Light Horse: "that throng of the great-hearted countrymen riding in to enlist" (VII: 30).

75 How much more skilful Lawson seems in 'Faces in the street', where he combines two Homeric compounds (hollow ships + great-hearted) to create a new one, in his grim vision of a society full of "hollow-hearted men."
revelation has implications beyond simple genetic criticism of the text of the epilogue passage. Because it shows the sorts of themes and ideas with which Bean wanted to frame his work, it gives new insight into the whole motivation inherent in the production of the *Official History*.

The history of the passage can be traced through material held in File No. AWM 44: 1/2 of the Australian War Memorial's archives of Official Written Records. In a single cardboard briefcase file are one hundred or so leaves of paper, variously bound and collated. This file contains folders, manuscripts, typescripts and printer's galleys, constituting a number of radically different drafts for the first chapter of the *Official History*. The material reveals that the passage underwent a series of emendations, additions and revisions before its ultimate publication in 1942, as the epilogue to the sixth and final volume of the *History*. The textual genealogy is relatively uncomplicated but evidences three distinct phases. In the discussion that follows it is necessary to distinguish each version. Thus, for ease of description, I use the term \( E \) (*Epsilon*) to refer to the epilogue in its various forms, and particularly as published in the final volume, from “The Old Force passed down the road to history” to the concluding words, “a possession for ever” (*VI: 1093–6*). Following the critical practice of textual bibliography, I describe the various drafts in terms of a stemma. The three distinct stages of *Epsilon’s* development are referred to successively as *Alpha*, *Beta* and *Gamma*, with nominalizing suffixes to distinguish consecutive drafts within a single branch of the stemma (see Appendix C).

Firstly there exists a typescript, *alpha.0*, which begins with the original opening phrase of \( E \): “They have gone down the long road of history.” This is a rather rough document which may or may not pre-

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76 The following discussion draws on research carried out at the Australian War Memorial in October 1997 and December 1998. Although I was specifically searching for drafts of the *Official History* they proved difficult to trace, since the relevant material is accessioned in a different area to the bulk of Bean’s papers (AWM 44 as opposed to AWM 38, 3DRL). This may explain why the drafts have not been examined by others.
suppose an earlier manuscript. The many self-corrections in the course of the typing suggest changes of mind at the time of composition (e.g., the first sentence; see fig. 2). As well as the typed alterations the text contains hand-written emendations, in particular a long, marginal interpolation on the second folio beginning, “The arms are handed in; the rifles are locked in the rack…” (fig. 3). The ε material constitutes the opening couple of pages of the typescript, and is separated from the rest of chapter by a row of asterisks.

Next there is a second typescript, alpha.1, held in a folder marked “First Typing / Chapter 1.” This is a much fairer copy of alpha.0, incorporating corrections from the original draft and introducing further additions and revisions. There are two sets of page numbers, one of which corresponds to alpha.2, thus facilitating cross-referencing for emendations made on another copy. In a folder marked “2nd typing,” signed by Bean and dated “26/3/20,” there are extant some fragments of alpha.2, which appears to be what Bean showed to Robertson in March 1920 — in Letters 1 & 3 in April and July 1920 Robertson quotes sections of the alpha.2 text as examples of Bean’s “misconceived and misbegotten” prose. Also in this folder are two pages of unsigned editorial comments in carbon copy. This is undoubtedly Robertson’s suggested “outline” for the revision of the material, which he initially refrained from sending to Bean so as to spare him a “fresh infliction” (Letter 3), and which he later disclosed to Shenstone had never been sent (Letter 5).

Following the attack on his initial composition Bean set to work to recast his first chapter (Letter 4, 3rd July, 1920). The new opening was duly set up in proof and forwarded to Robertson in March 1921. As we saw in the previous chapter however, Robertson was still not impressed. He called it “a shocking bit of work,” and proceeded to bring pressure to bear on Bean from all sides to submit his work to external revision. After his interview with Billy Hughes in April 1921, Bean wired

Chapter I.

They came from the end of history: the last which closes behind them is already settling; the sound of their ship is chased. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Upon a hundred in Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx the battlefields of thousands broken Xxxxxxxxxxxxx trees stretch XxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxXXXXXXXXXXX to thousands of their graves, and as his Xxxxxxxxxxx to whom it falls to Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx write the chronicle of their dress, there rests a responsibility that is heavy indeed.

Four years later.

In those Xxxxxxxxxxx years that are finished they Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx created the history of their country if ever it existed. They found their country almost unknown even to their own race. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx years Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx shaped, Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx like a wave through the main all the shore of their country, by their dress alone, Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx showed him in the region of the world. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx They entered the war not knowing oldest and bravest people. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

They themselves first knew of the Xxxxxxxxxxx Australians were. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

that in the capacity of their nation for any big enterprises there were Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Australians who I have ever written that their people could Xxxxxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

support the discipline neither of a navy nor any other Xxxxxxxxxxx any great industry; it was a solemn idea that the Australian worker was Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx less energetic, than a European general and critics had ever written of him a physical capacity attributed to the natives. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

that Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx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fig. 3. Draft for Chapter One of the *Official History* (75% actual size). AWM 44, 1/2.

alpha.0, Folio 2. The first draft, showing hand-written interpolation “The arms are handed in...” which ultimately becomes the final epilogue to volume vi of the *Official History*.
On the 27th July, 1914, a cablegram in secret cipher from the British Government to the Government of Australia informed it that there was imminent danger of war. It was not necessary to indicate the enemy. Every Australian knew that a sudden quarrel between Austria and Serbia had occasioned the intervention of Germany. Few realised then that Germany was deliberately employing in that intervention the characteristic methods which brought her into danger of war with Britain; that Britain might be immediately involved was not contemplated even as a remote possibility. But all knew that Germany was the only power whose action could at that time drag the British people into any international struggle. If Britain were involved what was the position of those younger British peoples inhabiting lands remote from the old world, which were loosely bound together in the family of nations known as the British Empire?

Of those peoples of the world which had sprung from the British race, only one, the American nation, had reached its adult years. The other offshoots of the British stock, in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland, were still far from their national maturity. The world regarded them and their motherland as one community. Foreign nations had begun to know something of the British Empire as a whole and to regard it as a producer of raw materials and of new ideas; but they had not regarded it as a producer of men. Their population, still in its infancy, was not yet reckoned as a factor in the world's intercourse.

Britain having brought these peoples into existence or rather having allowed an enterprising section of her population to found themselves into nations under her protection in the outer fringes of the world, had—according to her principle—permitted them to organise themselves as they desired, certainly free of restriction, under the free shelter of the British Navy. She imposed on them no organisation. They paid her no levies, whether imposed from without or within; they were free to tax their goods, their trade, their ships and her people within their own spheres. She demanded no contribution to any common army or navy. The younger British nations were free to tax their goods, her trade, her ships and her people to the mother land or to restrict them to their own country. The responsibility of the mother country for the defence of the whole was absolute—freely undertaken by Britain whether the younger nations assisted or not.

The humane thinkers, who were amongst the early leaders in most of the colonies, often nursed the vague hope that their youth communities would be able to seclude themselves from the world and live without concern in its intercourse, freed by their isolation from the possibility of war and the need for an army or a navy. But in the last generation swift transport, international trade, and the obvious temptation of their empty continent to nations whose land was crowded, had convinced the people of Australia and New Zealand that they were intimately affected, not only by the wealth of the world, in
War History—SEVEN

But when history comes to count the sum of their achievements it may be that in their own country she will find the greatest. It is easy to forget the atmosphere in Australia in the last-forgotten days before the Great War. When the Australian Imperial Forces first sailed it left behind it a nation which did not yet know itself. Even the men of the First Australian Division entered their first battle not knowing what manner of men Australians were. The people of the six States which formed the Commonwealth were much divided. In many respects they were still six colonies rather than a single federal nation. Many an Australian had no confidence in the capacity of his nation for any big enterprise. Many believed and had said and written that their people could support the discipline neither of an army and navy, nor of a successful industry. Some held the idea that the Australian worker was less energetic than those of Europe and America. One well-known critic had claimed that Australians were degenerating physically from the British stock. Many of the older-fashioned Australians looked upon it almost as a sacri
cifice to pretend that goods of Australian make or men of Aus
tralian training, from bootmakers to bishops, could be the
equals of those from the older countries. The section of Aus
tralians which did proclaim a belief in its native stock often
obtained that belief from a knowledge of its own country,
but from an ignorance of others. For the opportunity of
Australians to know their own people had never arrived.

And then, during four years in which the world was put
to a terrible trial, the people of Australia looked on from afar
at three hundred thousand of their nation struggling amongst
millions from the strongest and most progressive peoples of
Europe and America. They saw their own men—those who
had dwelt in the same street or been daily travellers in the
same railway trains, men for whom they had no especial
regard—flash into the sky like a meteor; they watched the
name of their country by these men's deeds along the high
in the esteem of the world's oldest and greatest nations. Every
Australian bears that name proudly to-day. And by the
daily doings, great and small, which these pages are to narrate,
the Australian nation came to know itself.

Nothing can alter that page of history now. The meaner
intrigues that follow on the close of every war, the selfish
struggle of politics, cannot erase one title from the story of
that terrible and more generous struggle in the holly of
Gallipoli or under the rain-clouds of France.

The arms are handed in. The rifles are locked in the rack.
The horses are sold. The guns are sheeted and parked in
storage for other gunners, if ever the ev'ry day come which
will call them forth. The familiar faded-green uniform has
disappeared from the streets.

But the Australian Imperial Forces is not dead. That
famous army of generous men marches still down the long
lane of its country's history with its bands playing and its
rifles slung, with its packs upon its shoulders, the white dust
on its boots and the bayonet scabbards and entrenching tools
flapping on its thigh—even as the French country-folk and the
fellahin of Egypt knew it. What these men did nothing can
alter now. The good and the bad, the greatness and small-
ness of their story will stand. Whate'er of glory it contains
nothing now can lessen. It rises, as it will always rise, above
the mists of ages, a monument to great-hearted men, and for
their nation, a possession for ever.

fig. 5. Galley for Chapter One of the Official History (85% actual size). AWM 44; 1/2.

fig.6. Folio 7. Galley showing original Epsilon material at conclusion of Chapter One, subsequently cut.
Shenstone (at A&R) saying he had written a new introduction and reworked the first chapter (Letter 13). At the same time Swinburne wrote to Robertson admitting he was confused as to the various versions of ‘chapter one’ and the ‘introduction’ (Letter 10). There is thus some uncertainty as to which version the various commentators are referring in the correspondence of March/April 1921.

What is certain is the existence of a new ‘Chapter I’ in an entirely different document, beta.1, which becomes the base material of the first edition. This consists of 52 pages of manuscript and typescript. Importantly, where the Epsilon material had formed the opening of the Alpha genealogy, it now appears as the conclusion to Beta. The typescript pages appended to the manuscript correspond to alpha.2.77 The two parts are reproduced almost verbatim as a printer’s galley, beta.2. The copy of the galley in AWM 44 (fig. 4) is almost certainly what was presented to Tucker for his stylistic and structural revisions. It shows numerous corrections and revisions, including a large number of cuts. The most significant of these is the excision of the entire Epsilon section from the Beta version of the first chapter (fig. 5). Finally then, we arrive at the Gamma text of the first edition, published in October 1921 (gamma.1), from which all of Bean’s original text of ε has disappeared.

Nevertheless, Bean did not forget this piece of writing. These first words of his great project remained in his mind, and twenty years later he revised them and reinserted them into the Official History, as the epilogue to volume vii, pages 1093–6 (gamma.2). It is another example of Bean’s ‘obsessions’ remaining with him; in this case an epic/heroic framing of his subject. Ultimately Bean made few changes to his original draft of ε — Tucker had long since departed to England, and Robertson had died in 1933. Some revisions are made for relevance. Verbs are

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77 These pages are typed on the same paper (American foolscap, watermarked Rockdale), and evidence the same typewriter signature (there is an identical fault in the letter “v”).
modulated so that present and perfect tense become preterite. One sentence from the original first paragraph which survives in the galley is specifically excised in the printed edition: “On him to whom it falls to tell of their deeds — increasing nothing, minimising nothing — there rests a heavy responsibility indeed.” This trope of narration might have gone into the past tense too, as a final coda for Bean’s life task; but he deleted it. Maybe Bean felt it no longer appropriate to insert his role into the story of the A.I.F. Maybe, too, he became mindful of the Shakespearean cadences the line invoked: “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing” (Macbeth, V: 26–28). In any event, by 1942 Bean’s poetic declamation that ‘The A.I.F. is not dead’ had taken on a dreadfully ironic ring, far greater than Harrison-Ford or contemporary readers were aware.

It is clear that file AWM 44: 1/2 is by no means a complete archive of manuscripts, typescripts, galleys and proofs of the different streams of the first chapter. Some of these may have been lost, some discarded; others may be in different archives. But Bean is renowned for his meticulous record-keeping and taxonomies of data. It is therefore probable that this file contains all the material that Bean wanted to retain ‘for posterity’. In other words, we may be sure that Bean left behind all the evidence needed to show what he had originally intended for the first chapter, but had been forced to revise. He meant it to be found.

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The original first chapter for the Official History sets out the architecture for an epic story of the AIF. The intertextual references reach out to ancient glory and tradition. The first paragraph of ɛ sends the A.I.F.

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78 E.g.: 1920

They have passed
The sound of their arms has died
The arms are handed in
these pages are to narrate

1942

The Old Force passed
The sound of its arms died
Twenty-three years ago the arms were handed in
these pages have narrated
“down the road of history”; the second declares “they created the history of their country if ever men did” \((alpha, 1, 2)\). The people of Australia “saw their own men flash into the sky like a meteor; they watched the name of their country by these men’s deeds alone rise high.” \(^7^9\) The Australian soldier is cast in the role not just of defending hero, but as symbol of the nation. Once again we see the homology drawn between Anzac and the nation.

The structuring role of these sentiments is not accidental. We have seen how Bean borrows much of his historiographical methodology from Thucydides. We have also seen how the first book of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* charts the formation of Hellas from a collection of ‘separate communities’ to a unified nation, and accords this nation-building to the bonding process of the Trojan war. In almost the same manner and place in the narrative Bean presents an identical scenario. Reaching back into ‘olden times’ as Thucydides does, Bean examines the dis/unity of the nation “in the half-forgotten days before the Great War”:

The people of the six States which formed the Commonwealth were much divided. In many respects they were still six colonies rather than a single federated nation. \((E)\)

His familiar conclusion is that by the “daily doings” of the A.I.F., “the Australian nation came to know itself.” The war becomes the only significant event in Australia’s history, and its soldiers unique amongst the world’s armies. These sentiments, eventually published at the conclu-

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\(^7^9\) This section of \(E\) undergoes numerous changes. The A.I.F. alternately flash “like a comet through the zenith” \((Alpha)\); “into the sky like a meteor” \((Beta)\); or “across the world’s consciousness like a shooting star” \((Gamma, VI: 1095)\). Bean’s unease with the precise metaphor might be explained by recognizing that each, like Macbeth’s candle, is but a brief apparition. It is hardly in accord with the ‘everlasting glory’ boasted elsewhere. One of many cases of Bean mixing metaphors.
ion to the last volume of the *Official History*, had been intended as it opening statement.

Others had different ideas. Robertson considered it “tosh to say that the A.I.F. ‘created the history of their country’,” and Tucker feared that “The book will appear to have been written for a parochially-minded public.” Bean had spent the whole war totally absent from Australia, in Egypt, Turkey and Europe, and his perspective had no doubt been moulded by this. After his meeting with the Prime Minister, Bean admitted that he had gone too far in conflating the A.I.F. with the Australian public generally, and put “perhaps too much stress on the achievement of the A.I.F. alone” (Letter 13). The editorial intervention of Robertson, supported by Hughes, thus caused an entirely different beginning to be constructed for the History. The grand heroic opening was discarded, and Bean’s intended framework was, if not destroyed, certainly attenuated. Even when Bean tried to hide it at the back end of the first chapter it was forced out. The published Gamma text is less of the A.I.F., and more of the general populace.

Another of the aspects of the Alpha text which suffered pressure was the use of quotations and speeches. Bean had made free use of politicians’ discourse to create the public atmosphere at the outbreak of war. There were statements from Cook and Fisher, and a host of others in Australia and Britain. Robertson asks why it is necessary to quote “Grey, Joe Cook, Forest, Asquith, Holliweg and others?” (Letter 1). The comment sheet in the “2nd Typing” folder likewise suggests the deletion of “most of the political utterances.” As it was, some were cut, but others remained. In any case, the quotations that are left are mostly short utterances culled from newspaper reports. There are none of the

80 This blindness to the actions of non-Australian Allied troops was to be the frequent criticism of the British official historian General Sir James Edmonds, who wrote to Bean complaining that in his descriptions of the fighting at Pozieres, he “left the impression that there was nothing going on elsewhere and only the Australians were doing anything.” Edmonds to Bean, 24th Jan. 1928 (AWM 38, 3 DRL 7953, item 34).
great orations which characterize Thucydides, or indeed Kinglake, whose first volume on the causes of the war abounds with speeches by the Emperors of France, Russia and Austria, the Grand Vizer of Turkey, and a whole parliament of British politicians.

Mapping the genealogy of ε reveals much about Bean’s character as a writer, as well as his intentions for the *Official History*. In terms of hermeneutics though, the drafts are peripheral. They show what might have been, rather than what is; whatever interest they generate in literary history, they do not participate in the sociology of the text. Bean’s intentions, original or final, are not to be considered; the published text must remain the site for interpretation.81

However, the original role for the ε material and its resurrection by Bean bring into sharper relief many of the other textual strategies in the *Official History*, giving more credence to the argument that the whole text is a mythopoetic endeavour. It seems surprising that nothing in the intervening twenty years — including the Great Depression and the advent of a second world war — altered his view on the A.I.F. and its role in the construction of the Australian nation. The fact that Bean resurrects his opening material unchanged, without emending its substance, demonstrates the depth of his ideological position.

**Homeric similes**

It has often been noted that there are inescapable comparisons to be made between the Gallipoli campaign and Homer’s epic of the Trojan War, the *Iliad*. Countless writers at the time rushed to paint the British invaders, and the Anzacs in particular, as latter-day Achaéans. The

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81 For a summation of the primacy of the first edition over earlier versions as the basis of hermeneutic, see Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography*, and Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism*. 
predictable comparisons flowed like the wine of a hasty libation. By contrast, one of Bean's great achievements as a historian is his apparent suppression of the urge to quote the *Iliad* directly. His victory is that by refusing to ventriloquize Homer, the *Official History* becomes a palimpsest on the *Iliad*, rather than the other way round.  

The literary-historical associations of the Gallipoli locality were immediately appreciable to participants and observers. In particular, the proximity of Cape Helles to the ruins of Troy — very much in the news since Schliemann's and Dörpfeld's excavations — made reference to Homer almost unavoidable. Acknowledging these influences on the imagination, John North admits that "no battleground so easily lends itself to retrospective sentimentality" (*Gallipoli*, 20). Arthur Adams' poem 'The Trojan war, 1915', published in the *Bulletin* on 20th May less than a month after the landing, is fetid with such sentimentality:

We care not what old Homer tells  
Of Trojan War and Helen's fame:  
Upon the ancient Dardanelles  
Australia writes — in blood — her name.  

But as Richard Ely observes, Adams does know, and does care, about what 'Old Homer' said ('First Anzac Day': 59). The opening gambit of "We care not" is so transparently contrary that it hardly deserves the name irony. The chauvinist and bellicose *Bulletin*’s 'Red Page' was dedic-

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82 In this Bean endures what Bloom calls *apophrades*, the return of the dead, where the strong poet causes the dead precursor to speak in the new text, but in the voice of the ephebe.

83 The poem has an interesting history. Following its publication in the *Bulletin*, it reappeared in *The Anzac Book* credited to J. Wareham, 1st Field Ambulance ('Australia' in the fourth line is amended to 'New peoples' — presumably in deference to New Zealand sensibilities). Subsequent impressions silently corrected the authorship (see Kent, *The Anzac Book*, 380, n.5).  

More recently, Garrie Hutchinson quotes the poem as Wareham's (*An Australian Odyssey*, 266), unaware of the *Bulletin*’s Red Page origin. Presumably Hutchinson worked from an early edition of *The Anzac Book*, and was not familiar with Kent's researches.
ated to such jingoism. Newspaper reports (propaganda) did not stoop to irony, but trumpeted the epic qualifications of the campaign. Late in 1915, the Manchester Guardian suggested that the new Federal capital Canberra should be renamed Anzac, because of its ‘Homerian ring’.

The ‘coincidences’ were readily apparent to those participating in the battle as well, especially those from English public schools. Keegan remarks that “Troy and Gallipoli make two separate but connected epics, as so many of the classically educated volunteer officers recognised and recorded.”84 General Sir Ian Hamilton (the British commander at Gallipoli) himself had on many occasions observed allusions to ancient history, and invoked classical authors. Hamilton was in many ways a ‘soldier poet’ — not of the literary flair of Sassoon and Graves, nor of the romantic bent of Rupert Brooke — but an example of those commanders throughout history who studied classical military campaigns and avidly wrote memoirs.85

Scholarly reflection is continually apparent in Hamilton’s diaries and addresses. Planning the amphibious invasion of Cape Helles caused him to remember Herodotos: “The landing of an army upon the theatre of operations I have described...involved difficulties for which no precedent was forthcoming in military history except possibly in the sinister legends of Xerxes” (Despatches, 20th May, 1915). When accompanying the fleet on their abortive attempt to force the straits on 18th March, Hamilton was ruminating how:

84 Keegan names Patrick Shaw-Stewart, Arthur Asquith (son of the Prime Minister) and Rupert Brooke among such a class (First World War, 269). See also Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory.

85 This is a tradition which stretches from Napoleon’s maxims to Caesar’s histories. The motivation for such compositions stems from the famous man in question attempting to control his subsequent reputation by writing the history himself. In addition to Hamilton’s own Gallipoli Diary, two other relevant examples are The World Crisis 1915 by Winston Churchill (the architect of the Gallipoli campaign), and Monash’s The Australian Victories in France 1918.
There, Hero trimmed her little lamp; yonder the amorous breath of Leander changed to soft sea form. Far away to the Eastwards, painted in dim and lovely hues, lies Mt Ida. Just so...when Hector fell and smoke from burning Troy blackened the midday sun. (Gallipoli Diary, I: 28)

- except this time it was the burning French and British fleets that sent up clouds of smoke, and the sinking cruisers that disturbed the soft sea form. Later in the campaign, when the Turkish artillery is firing on Cape Helles from the straits on the Asiatic side “on the plains of Troy,” Hamilton muses, “So, once upon a time, did Paris shoot forth his arrows over that selfsame ground and plug Achilles in the heel.”

Hardly surprisingly, Bean was moved to criticize Hamilton for a “certain artistic sensitiveness” which robbed him of the power of driving subordinates (II: 783). Observing how the general noted in his diary the “extravagant blueness of the Ægean,” Manning Clark suggests that Hamilton “wanted to be remembered as a man who noticed such things” (A History of Australia, V: 408).

Hamilton’s French colleague at Cape Helles was also mindful of his surroundings. In a eulogistic epistle praising the British general’s ardour, General D’Amade reminds his frère d’armes that their theatre of war was once “the Troad,” with its reverberations through history, and that they, too, are now part of history. Such self-reflexions are heavy with irony however, as both commanders were replaced for failure during the campaign. The desire to dwell in the reflected glory of the landscape’s literary history is a sad but inevitable compensation for these men. The full consequences of the spatial poetics were vividly realized by Hamilton in his dedication addressed to his troops:

86 Hamilton, Gallipoli Diary, I: 28 (18th March), I: 181 (30th April). There are numerous other references to classical literature in the Diary.

87 Hamilton, Gallipoli Diary, I: xi. “Dans le passé ce théâtre qui était la Troade, venait se souder aux éternels récurrences de l’Histoire.”
Already you form part of that great tradition of the Dardanelles which began with Hector and Achilles. In another few thousand years the two stories will have blended into one.

In all likelihood the details of the reference would have been wasted on many of the soldiers he was addressing. But in this passage Hamilton grasps the function of narrative in engendering myth. By repetition and reinforcement of a bundle of mythemes, over time, the factual narrative and mythic narrative 'blend into one'.

John Masefield’s 1916 apologia Gallipoli is likewise littered with the discourse of past epics. Masefield continually employs the ancient name ‘Hellespont’ instead of Dardanelles; he delights how “the sun comes up from Troy” (33) and how the islands “had waited for the fall of Troy and the bale-fires of Agamemnon” (82); he slips in a few passages about Roland and his horn (95, 146). His chapter epigrams are all from The Song of Roland, emphasizing how glory can be won in a famous defeat. The ideological manipulation is apparent in the first quotation, as Roland declaims: “France shall never lose her name through me.” Such bravado mobilizes that old lie of Horace’s which so upset Wilfred Owen, but which was so important to the war effort; ‘A sweet and beautiful thing it is, to die for one’s country’. In this script, death is a mere by-product of glory.

Masefield was writing propaganda, and knew exactly the pitch he was working. His recourse to overblown panegyric to heroism trod a thin line between high diction and trashy journalese, but the book proved hugely popular. The poet’s name and swift publication so soon after the campaign lent the book immediate appeal, and Masefield’s sentimental veneer and ideological spin on the positive outcomes of Gallipoli guaranteed an eager audience. North notes of Masefield’s text that, “the strength and felicity of its diction lulls the spirit; and it has largely been responsible for the poetical growth of the Gallipoli legend” (Gallipoli, 20).
Ernest Raymond’s *Tell England* encourages a heroic reading along the same lines, and Henry Nevinson pursued similar themes in his essay *Troy was*. One who followed directly in Masefield’s train was the novelist Compton Mackenzie, who served as a staff officer throughout the campaign. Mackenzie’s *Gallipoli Memories* was published in 1929, laced with souvenirs of his classical education. The sight of Samothrace and Ida prompts an extended reverie of scenes from the *Iliad* (65–6). The dead at V Beach are conveniently celebrated with a “wonderful elegiac couplet” Mackenzie finds in Simonides, on “those who died before Byzantium” (76). Like Masefield — and many others — Mackenzie is enraptured by the beauty of the Australians:

Their beauty, for it really was heroic, should have been celebrated in hexameters not headlines...There was not one of those glorious young men I saw that day who might not himself have been Ajax or Diomed, Hector or Achilles. (80–1)

By the time the British official historian Brigadier-General Cecil Aspinall-Oglander came to publish his account (two volumes, 1929 & 1932), there were many exemplars to draw from. Not the least of these were Bean’s two volumes, which had come out in 1921 and 1924. Aspinall-Oglander’s *Military Operations: Gallipoli* is a vastly different text than that of Bean: scholarly where Bean is vernacular, austere where Bean is engaging, and disinterested where Bean is chauvinist. This is not to value the one more than the other, nor to comment on the relative truths of the two official histories; merely to highlight differences, in object and in content. Aspinall-Oglander was writing an account of a minor military failure — Bean was writing the history of a nation.

The tone is set in the opening sentence, where Aspinall-Oglander quotes Napoleon: “Who will have Constantinople?” asks the French
Emperor — but it might as well be Churchill. Like Hamilton’s ‘great tradition’ recurring throughout history, Aspinall-Oglander sees the British taking their place in a repetition of epic narratives. When it is suggested that a collier, *The River Clyde*, be hollowed out to carry troops onto the beach at Cape Helles, the British history calls it a stratagem “borrowed from local history...after the manner of the wooden horse of Troy” (I: 132). The plan was “accepted with enthusiasm” — the British commanders only too keen to see themselves in the likeness of a latter-day Odysseus. In his novel *The Secret Battle*, A.P. Herbert sees history repeating itself exactly in the ancient and modern campaigns either side of the Dardanelles strait: “the difference between a steel ship and a wooden horse being about the extent of the matter.” When describing the Suvla landing of Kitchener’s New Army recruits in August, Aspinall-Oglander notes that, “Since the Argive host set sail for the Trojan shore no stranger collection of ships can ever have crossed the Aegean...” (II: 235).

The reasons for these writers’ rehearsing of classical references are manifold. At the simple level of authorial pride and ego, many would be keen to parade their intimate knowledge of classical literature; to drop an allusion to Homer here, insert a quote from Herodotos there. On another level, there is an appropriation of epic and heroic discourse operating. Just as Homer’s subject has been celebrated for three thousand years, so too will the story of Gallipoli — or so Hamilton’s theory goes. By yoking the contemporary narrative of the Allies to past glory, the scale of the deeds is supposedly elevated to the poetic. The appropriation also acts to effect a commonality of experience for the

88 “*La fond de la grande question est toujours là: Qui aura Constantinople?*” Letter from Napoleon to the French ambassador in St Petersburg, 1808. *Lettres*, t: No.286. Both Alan Moorehead (*Gallipoli*) and Robert Rhodes James (*Gallipoli*) also use Napoleon’s question as an epigraph to their books.
readership; always assuming the reader knows their Homer and their \textit{Æschylus}, and the whereabouts of Mt Ida or the Troad.

But the inverse of this appropriation of epic glory is to betray a deep anxiety in the subject matter. When Masefield, Hamilton, Herbert, Churchill and others mobilize an epic past to frame their stories, it insinuates a degree of doubt as to whether the story is heroic in its own right; it suggests an insecurity in the strength and matter of the narrative. What need to dress up in another’s glory, except that one’s own is mean and transparent? In this sense, the comparison with ancient authorities is not so much apposite as desperate. The problem is, as Bean pointed out, that wartime heroic deeds are habitually so inflated that mere survival becomes discounted:

There is plenty of heroism in war — it teems with it. But it has been so overwritten that if you write that a man did his job people say: ‘Oh, but there’s nothing heroic in that!’ Isn’t there? (Diary 17, 26th Sep. 1915)

The failure to force the Straits in March was the first defeat suffered by the Royal Navy since before Nelson. The Allies had to wear the ignominy of their boasts being tossed aside by the ‘sick man of Europe’; the campaign was a miserable and costly defeat. Aspinall-Oglander nevertheless attempts to salvage some pride and meaning from the enterprise. He begins his second volume with a quote from \textit{Æschylus'} \textit{Agamemnon}, as the King of Men considers the fate of the “remnant of the Argive host” as they prepare to leave the plains of Troy: “Aye, all’s well, well ended.” Aspinall-Oglander returns to his epigram as he closes his account. The last page peters out with this hollow platitude:

Truly it may be said that those who fell in Gallipoli did not fall in vain. In the words of \textit{Æschylus}, “What need to repine at fortune’s frowns? The gain hath the advantage, and the loss does not bear down the scale.” (II: 486)
These lines are of little comfort to the dead and survivors, who knew only too well that the expedition was a litany of miscalculations and lost opportunities. The classical reference is a trope of distance, what Liddle-Hart terms the "romantic halo" which serves to obscure a lamentable story. It does not recover the loss, but merely inflates the pathetic ambivalence of the claim.

Perhaps the most significant anxiety pertaining to the Gallipoli campaign is that, despite its much publicized potential to change the war, for the British and French it remains an inconsequential footnote to the action on the western front. No wonder, then, the classical embellishments and epic tropes that clamour for attention in so many of the accounts of participants and historians — "Oh, forget not the Dardanelles!" Aspinall-Oglander exemplifies this strategy:

The drama of the Dardanelles campaign, by reason of its setting, the grandeur of its theme and the unhappiness of its ending, will always rank amongst the world's classic tragedies.

He does protest too much. Notwithstanding the strength and validity of feelings of those who were at the Dardanelles, through sheer scale Gallipoli is displaced by the names of Mons and Verdun, Somme and Passchendaele, where classical allusions seemed too irrelevant a companion to the awful realities.

This is not to deny that poets and writers of the western front also refer or allude to literary tradition. Yet more often they turn to Shakespeare, or to the English pastoralists and romantics. In contradistinction to Gallipoli texts, where classical borrowings do appear they are likely to be ironic rather than emphatic, sarcastic rather than supportive. Compare Mackenzie's amusement at the happy literary coincidences he observes with Homer and Simonides, against the bitter appropriations by Owen from the Bible, Horace, Vergil and others; or contrast Hamilton's recollection of Leander's amorous breath quieting the soft sea form, with Robert Graves' reply from the Somme 'To Robert Nichols,'
in which he chastises his friend for writing about fauns, when for Graves, "even to dream is pain."

But not all the writers on Gallipoli quite so breathlessly resurrected ancient exemplars, nor so happily compared modern death with epic heroism. John North is convinced the story need not be "dependent on an entirely false glamour" to claim its deserved (though much abused) epithet "epic." He is also concerned that the story suffers from its cloying literary associations, and declares: "All classical opiates will, therefore, be absent from this volume."

And so it is with the Official History. Like North, Bean does not pursue some vainglorious panegyric. He eschews overblown, hollow boasts, turgid with classical embellishments, for he knows that the average digger would find them "high falutin" — what Fussell in The Great War and Modern Memory called "high diction." But as described in the previous chapter, Bean does not abstain totally from the temptations of ancient muses. He wrestled with the influence of his predecessors, especially the Greek classics, and the struggle with Homer is central to this. He could not ignore the Iliad, it was too powerful an avatar. As McCarthy describes Bean's voyage across the Ægean in 1915, he "knew the seas, though he had not sailed them before, for the Iliad and the Odyssey were open books to him as Homer had written them" (Gallipoli to the Somme, 106). Robin Gerster (quoting Rawlinson on Herodotos) suggests that Bean had "drunk at the Homeric cistern till his whole being [was] impregnated with the influence thence derived" (Big-noting, 57). Rawlinson's is the translation Bean owned, held in the Bean Study Collection at the AWM, and we have seen that he was totally familiar with this text. (Bean had drunk at other wells besides — his valorization of the bush ethic demonstrates that the outback artesian bore was equally to his taste.) Nevertheless, to 'sing the snows of Ida' (in North's phrase) would for him betray the new heroes he set out to honour. He was only too aware, as he wrote in the Official History, of the dangers of
being “misled by the false literature of other wars” (II: 427). His compromise, then, is subtle and complex; and not always understood or discerned by commentators.

We can identify two distinct ways that Bean has been read: literal and thematic. The first reviewers were, like Bean, men who had grown up with Homer. They knew the epic background to the battle scene, and in one sense would have been expecting to see it in Bean’s text. So, in his review of volume one of the *Official History*, General Ian Hamilton observed that the events took place “there on the land which cradled the romance of war...The story is one of minor tactics; of Homeric struggles of twenty men as they dwindle down to half a dozen.” The London *Observer* was more direct: “The book is Australia’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.”

At this thematic level Gerster sees Bean imitating Homer in structure and device (see below). But at the literal level, he also acknowledges that the Homeric card is underplayed: “Surprisingly, the obvious military and geographical connections linking the stories of Troy and Anzac are unexploited by Bean in his two volumes on Gallipoli” (Big-noting, 67). This is also the view of John North, who notes approvingly that “in the unromantic Australian Official History the only mention of Troy is that of a private soldier of the name, born in the severely unclassical locality of Geraldton, Western Australia” (*Gallipoli: the fading vision*, 19). Robert Rhodes James repeats North’s observation: “the only reference to Troy concerned an Australian sergeant [sic] of that name” (*Gallipoli*, 351), as does Gerster: “The only clearly Homeric allusion is inadvertent, a reference to a soldier who happens to be named Troy” (67). Private Troy’s notoriety is indeed but a brief appearance in the pages of history: “Another man, named Troy...was knocked senseless by a bomb” (I: 595–6). What these writers all suggest is that, in comparison with other

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accounts, the perceived absence of ‘classical opiates’ from the *Official History* helps lend Bean the sober air of truth. Gallipoli is firmly fixed in the realities of the twentieth century, not in some ahistorical, poetic Elysium.

These readings resemble Leavis’ policy of ‘close reading’, with its intense focus on the actual words of the text as opposed to any framing context. But it is hard to balance Leavis’s influence, which is alternately too much or too little.90 In this case, unfortunately, the readers have not read closely enough — for Bean does mention Troy, just as he mentions Homer. Moreover, the influence of the *Iliad* and other ancient texts is far more pervasive and powerful than previously acknowledged, as I shall detail below.

Bean’s use of classical literature in the *Official History* functions on many levels, and is apparent in the text’s theme, structure, and lexis. At the lexical level, it is perhaps useful to list a number of examples. The geographical description of the Dardanelles affords numerous references typical of Bean:

The strait at the inner end of the Narrows is the one across which Xerxes threw his bridge of boats when he led the Persian army from Asia to Europe. The ancient city of Abijos was on the southern or Asiatic side at the knobbly point now known as Point Nagara. The ruins of the old city of Sestos can still be seen on the European side. (I: 179)

Bean is very matter-of-fact in his references; Xerxes is a historical rather a literary figure. Likewise, the towns of Abydos and Sestos are placed in the text bereft of their literary fame; they were respectively the homes of Hero and Leander. As recounted earlier, Xerxes, Hero and Leander are each mentioned in vastly different fashion by Hamilton in his *Diary* — which Bean acknowledges having read (I: xxix). But rather than

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Hamilton’s lyric apostrophe, here the poetry of the geography is undercut by the prosaic adjective ‘knobbly’. Closer comparison reveals that the whole passage appears to be a free paraphrase of Herodotos, from his account of the famous pontoon bridge:

Xerxes, after this, made preparations to advance to Abydos, where the bridge across the Hellespont was lately finished. Midway between Sestos and Madytus in the Hellespontine Chersonese, and right over against Abydos, there is a rocky tongue of land. (Histories, VII; §33)

There is no need for Bean to mention either settlement at all but for their literary fame, which in Bean’s account is merely a latent possibility. The mention demonstrates that Bean is demonstrably thinking of the spatial poetics of his field of play, but that he is anxious to suppress overt classical references. He satisfies himself and other cognoscenti in his knowledge of the classics, but he does not parade the reference in a way that would alienate anyone without the same exhaustive knowledge. His target audience is not the general staff with their Oxbridge educations, but the men of the A.I.F. They are his intended audience, his ‘housemaids of average intelligence’. The question remains as to whether the theme of epic heroism then seeps out and inflects the rest of his writing.

Bean’s description of the local geography continues with a rehearsal of famous events and personages: citadels planted by “Mohammed II in the 15th century,” and “two old keeps built by Mohammed IV against the Venetian fleet in 1659.” In this way Bean builds a historical fortress around the battlefield, asserting its credentials as a proper site for the great deeds of nations. Finally we encounter the expected nominalization:

Forts 4 to 6 were on the southern side of the mouth at Kum Kale, less than four miles from the ruins of Ancient Troy, of which the excavations could be seen from Cape Helles on any clear day. (I: 180)
Here again, Bean denies the romance: Troy takes its place with Abydos and Sestos as a mere trope of archaeological discourse, and there is no mention of Homer or the Iliad. That does come, however. In volume III Bean describes the mechanics of hand-to-hand trench mêlée on the western front, in words very similar to Hamilton's review of volume I:

The instrument — above all others — of heroic combat, when the two sides stood face to face under equal conditions and fought it out as men, was the bomb — seconded by the rifle or the light machine-gun. With these the battle in Munster Alley was fought, the men on each side being as dependent as the Homeric Greeks and Trojans on their sheer strength and endurance. (III: 609)

These few examples — and there are others — refute the argument that Bean completely avoided the epic fortuities which so impressed other writers, contemporary and modern. The scholarly line which maintains that "the only mention of Troy is that of a private soldier," presumably stems from an initial mistake by North in 1936, compounded by subsequent derivative research. Possibly it reveals a reading practice that sidesteps the bulk of the text and goes first to the Index: there is Pte. Troy (p. 565), but no city of that name. Six thousand pages of text is after all a lot for anyone to read — be they reviewer, critic or fascinated veteran. As we have seen, Bean's legacy is focussed on a number of discrete, select passages, particularly his epilogues; but the text's meaning is a function of the whole. That such basic misreadings have been perpetuated by professional historians with no correction is unfortunate, and makes it all the more imperative to continue to re-read Bean, and not simply repeat received interpretations.

The fact that so many readers have perceived a Homeric essence in the Official History without the larding of 'classical opiates' that we see in Mackenzie, Masefield and even Aspinall-Oglander, is testament to Bean's skill and restraint. He understood that a self-consciously literary text would sit uneasily with his real subject, the Australian character. But
he could not bring himself to excise completely the spatial and literary poetics of the Ægean, and they end up influencing Bean the writer probably far more than he himself realized.

* 

Apart from the demonstrable lexical bonds, the Homeric strain manifests itself in more subtle fashion as well. We saw in the ‘Introductory’ how Bean indulges in some modest imitation of Homer, appropriating the famous epithet “rosy-fingered dawn” to gently place in the reader’s mind the themes of the Iliad (Official History, 1: 103). In many ways, Bean’s whole employment of adjectives recalls that of Homer. Since the work of Milman Parry it has been acknowledged that Homeric verse carries traces of oral-formulaic traditions. The most common figure of such verse is the repetition of stock phrases, tags that may be applied to any number of situations or characters, but which most importantly make up the feet in a line. The effect of repetition is also to create a certain circularity of themes, emphasizing familiarity. It has been calculated that about one in eight of all the verses in the Iliad recur at least once elsewhere in the poem (Silk, The Iliad, 17).

Bean is under no metrical constraints, yet he too appears to enjoy repetition of stock images to reinforce perceptions. The first volume gives us the “motionless sea” (98), “high seas” (95, 98), the “perfect sea” and “evening sea” (245), and the “silken sea” (247). Ships’ hulls are almost invariably “dark” (101, 103, 247, 248). As the transport fleet lies up in Albany on 1st Nov. 1914, the harbour is “glassily smooth” (98). Near the Cocos Islands on the night of 8th November, the sea is again “glassily smooth”, and later, as the convoy awaits news of the fight with

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91 The wording for the passage which includes the “rosy-fingered dawn” in the Official History is an almost verbatim transcription from Bean’s diary for Monday 9th Nov. 1914 (AWM 38, DRL 606, Item 1 [2]).

92 Banjo Paterson, also at Albany, noted that “The sea is dull, still grey, without a ripple” (“Ready to sail”, Song of the Pen, 11: 367)
the *Emden*, the men gaze “far over the glassy plain of the sea” (103, 105) — a very Homeric image.

Understandably, in a work the length of the *Official History*, repetition is to some degree unavoidable. On the night of the withdrawal from Gaba Tepe and Suvla, 19th December, Aspinall-Oglander says that, “The sea was as smooth as unruffled silk” (*Military Operations*, II; 454). On the same night Bean wrote from the deck of his departing transport: “Three miles away, across a grey, silky sea lies the dark shape of land. Eight months ago, just as the lemon-grey of dawn was breaking…” (*Age*, 1st Jan. 1916). Maybe the *Aegean* was ‘silken’ on this and other occasions. My point is not the relevance of the individual description, but the larger effect of recurrent epithets and noun phrases, and the stylistic exemplar this imagines.93

While much of the repetition in Homer is motivated by the oral-formulaic exigencies, there is also structural repetition that draws attention to itself, in order to link passages. For example, the deaths of Patroklos and Hektor are narrated with four identical lines:

He spoke, and as he spoke the end of death closed in on him, and the soul fluttering free of his limbs went down into Death’s house mourning her destiny, leaving youth and manhood behind her.
Now though he was a dead man glorious Hektor spoke to him:

*Iliad*, XVI: 855–859; and also XXII: 361–364.94

In this way the deaths of Patroklos and Hektor are linked. But more importantly, in the verses that follow the fates of Hektor and Achilles...
are contrasted; the one questions his fate, the other gladly embraces it, and with it ‘immortal glory’.

Bean employs exactly the same method to structure his narrative. The sinking of the German raider *Emden* by the Sydney on 9th November, 1914 was the first trial of Australian forces. Bean uses the description of the calm night as a foundation to his dramatic narrative of the sea fight. The method is repeated on a grand scale in the prelude to the landing on 25th April, 1915. The *Official History* devotes nine pages to the short voyage across the “silken sea” (t: 247) from Mudros harbour to Gaba Tepe on the night of 24th. A comparison of the two sections reveals a remarkable set of textual parallels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8th November, 1914 (t: 103)</th>
<th>24th April, 1915 (t: 248–50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The sea was glassily smooth, the air mild — a beautiful tropical night.</td>
<td>The water was as smooth as satin — a gloriously cool, peaceful night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was no sound except the splash of the warm ripples, the ‘fist-fist’ of some valve in the engine-room.</td>
<td>There was no sound, save the swift plunge and wash of the boats and the throbbing of the small engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dark hulls of the convoy could be dimly seen.</td>
<td>The hulls of the battleships lying near one another on the water, motionless, were difficult to pick out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As well, there are corresponding observations of ship positions and movements in the two passages, and details of moon rise and set. Why the repetition? There is no need for Bean to describe the night of 8th November — nothing happened: “Through the whole night the convoy moved without the least interruption.” The important event occurs on the following day, when the sinking of the *Emden* by an Australian ship generates “intense pride.” The descriptive passage of the calm night has been interpolated for reasons of narrative structure. It establishes a frame that, when repeated, generates the expectation of similar outcomes. The events of 25th April thus are accorded a place in an already
established tradition of glory. It is no surprise that this is where Bean invokes the "rosy-fingered dawn" to greet the day of first battle, further emphasizing the Homeric topos.

At a larger level, too, the *Official History* imitates the structural employment of the *Iliad*. Unlike many commentators before and since (and unlike Thucydides), Bean avoids a long introduction on the background of his subject. As he says, "It is not here necessary to discuss the causes of the war..." (I: 11). Instead, the first chapter is titled 'Australia's position at the outbreak.' Bean believed firstly that it was not yet time to analyze the causes of the conflict, and that in any case such speculation on European history was unnecessary in the Australian account. What is important is not the reasons for the conflict, but the "high motive" for Australia's participation in it. As he explained to Tucker: "There are many reasons for plunging straight into the narrative." From this it might be argued that Bean follows the familiar epic convention of an opening *in medias res*, 'in the middle of things', assuming that the prehistory of the story is 'already familiar to his reader.' This is maybe stretching the definition; a more dramatic use of *in medias res* would begin on the beach at Anzac Cove, and mediate between causes and effects. Nevertheless, as with Homer, the origins of the war are not within the frame of Bean's story. He 'plunges straight in' with the secret cablegram and declaration of war. There is no discussion or analysis of the European arms race, the Prussian military élite, and so on. Just as Horace suggests in such cases, "what he cannot hope to embellish by his treatment he leaves out."

The third chapter of volume I is given to a catalogue of the men who constituted the AIF. The fourth chapter provides portraits of the

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95 The first chapter was originally titled 'Australia's entry into the war' (AWM 44, 1/2).

96 Letter 18 & 19, 'Robertson Correspondence'.

97 See Horace, *Ars poetica*, for the classic description of *in medias res*. 
staff. It is easy to draw a parallel with the second book of the *Iliad*, which asks the Muses to tell “who were the captains and lords of the Danaans” (I: 487). Homer lists the various Achæan captains, their cities and towns of origin, the size of their forces and number of ships. There is Menestheus, skilled in “the arrangement in order of horses”; Podarkes son of “Phylakos rich in flocks”; the Enienes and the Perrhaibians who “held tilled acres [and] made their homes by Wintry Dodoma;” Asios with the “huge and shining horses” — and so on, for four hundred lines.\(^9\) In remarkably similar fashion, the *Official History* details the battalions of the A.I.F. according to place of origin, and the character of those places (Chapter 3): “In Queensland...the people were largely engaged in cattle-raising”; the Western Australians “consisted of gold-miners...farmers...timber-getters”; the Tasmanians “comprised mainly sheep-farmers, fruitgrowers, and miners...in that colder climate.”\(^9\) The listing of place-names and vocations is a common enough trope in epic narrative, as is the placement immediately after the opening ‘argument’. But the many precise equivalences between these two texts show that similarities run deeper than generic coincidence.

This chapter also features a long digression on bush fires, perhaps the nearest Bean comes to an extended or ‘epic simile’, one of Homer’s most distinguishing tropes. Into his description of the A.I.F. recruitment, Bean interpolates a 300 word passage about two brothers fighting a fire for four days near Campania, Tasmania, in 1913. The purpose is to illustrate the similarities of fire-fighting and combat; the physical

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\(^9\) Frank Dalby Davidson makes conscious and overt use of the *Iliad* for his ‘catalogue of horses’ in *The Wells of Berseba*. Davidson signposts his debt to Homer by saying of the horses, “These are the great-hearted ones” (Green, *History of Australian Literature*, I: 1037; Gerster, *Big-noting*, 105–14).

\(^9\) Lloyd Robson quotes the 1911 Census to show that Bean grossly inflates the prominence of rural workers. In Queensland and Tasmania the proportion of the male population engaged in rural work was in fact less than one third (Robson, ‘Origin and character of the First A.I.F.’, 745).
exhaustion, the lack of sleep, battling an enemy without respite —
“fighting bush-fires, more than any other human experience, resembles
the fighting of a pitched battle” (I: 46). Bean ties up the simile neatly by
telling his readers that, “Three years later the younger brother was
recommended for a Victoria Cross after sixty hours’ fighting at
Mouquet Farm.”

At the sentence level, we occasionally find Bean
producing a poetic simile: “to the weary Australians this support came
like a draught of strong wine” (III: 854). For the most part though, Bean
avoids any obvious poetic devices, and such examples are the exception
rather than the rule.

After describing the geographical structure of the A.I.F. brigades,
Bean continues with the selection of officers. He gives biographical
portraits of the officers and staff, but the ranks are known merely from
their provenance and occupation. Homer likewise describes the capt-
ains of the Danaans; but “As for the rank and file that came to Ilium, I
could not name or even count them,” he says (II: 488). Bean concludes
his catalogue of the A.I.F. saying: “Such were the officers and men of
the ‘first contingent.’” Again there is direct correlation to Homer’s line:
“These then were the captains and commanders of the Danaans” (II:
760).

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One of the ways Bean introduces his various individual subjects is by
punctuating his narrative with the direct reported speech of the partici-
pants, for example:

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100 In his 1907 articles Bean similarly described the activity of fighting bush fires, and
extolled the benefits of such experience: “It is all part of a day’s work in the bush, part
of that day’s work that is turning out the Australian” (Australia VI).

101 For the first division of the A.I.F., the 1st Infantry Brigade was raised from New
South Wales, the 2nd from Victoria, the 3rd from the other states (roughly a battalion
from each). This structure was largely repeated throughout the war as fresh divisions
were drafted.
...Lalor stood up to see, and resolved to charge forward.

"Now then, 12th Battalion," he cried; and, as he said the words, a Turkish bullet killed him. (I: 309)

Gerster calls this method of Bean's a "Homerica technique of concentrating on brief anecdotal descriptions, including dialogue." He also discusses the process of concentrating on individual 'heroes'. According to Gerster, Homer focusses on "relatively few glorious figures" who are "aristocrats, the heroic chieftains." By contrast, he suggests, Bean is more egalitarian: "There are heroes by the hundred in Bean's epic, and the spotlight is directed as often on the Myrmidons as on the Achillean favourites" (Big-noting, 68).

But Gerster is too narrow in his assessments of both Homer and Bean. Like any storyteller, Homer concentrates on a select cast of actors who drive the narrative. Figures such as Agamemnon, Achilles, Hektor and Patroklos dominate the major scenes. As Rutherford observes, "this is aristocratic combat: the common man is almost invisible" (Homer, 35). Yet apart from the aristoi, there is an extraordinary range of other figures on both sides, whose names lend depth to the swathes of battles. These are not the nameless rank and file whom Odysseus derides as "things of no account whatever in battle or council" (II; 202), nor yet the captains of men. They are the lesser commanders, or men whose deeds draw attention to themselves. Many of these characters appear but once, usually as victims of the great warriors — as in this list of Achæans slain by Hektor in one fight (Iliad, XI: 299–305):

Who then was the first he slaughtered, who the last, Hektor the son of Priam, now Zeus gave him glory? Asaios first, Autonoös next, and then Opites, Dolops, Klytius' son, and Opheltios, Agelaös, Aisymnos, and Oros, and Hipponoös staunch in combat. He killed these, who were lords of the Danaans, and thereafter the multitude...

— or in this similar passage from the aristeia of Patroklos (XVI: 692–7):
Who then was the first you slaughtered, who the last when the great gods called you down to earth? First Adrestos, then Autonoös, then Echeklos, then Perimos, Megas’ son, Epistor and Melanippos, then in a flurry Elasos, Moullos and Pylartes — he killed them all but the rest were bent on flight.

The number of slain opponents attests to the ‘god-like’ abilities of the heroes. But the names of the vanquished also offer a sense of verisimilitude to the battles, a little like Barthes’ ‘reality effect’. The warriors named in these two passages are never heard of again in the poem. They exist only to be killed — but they are named.

A similar pattern emerges in Bean’s text. Thomson estimates there are approximately eight thousand soldiers individually named in the Official History (Anzac Memories, 162). Many appear but once in twelve volumes. There is a fair smattering of sergeants, corporals and privates among the named. But for the most part, the actors in Bean’s narrative remain the commissioned officers and decision makers. Assuredly Bean tells the story of the front line more than other historians, and there is a far larger proportion of subalterns in Bean’s pages than in other ‘official histories’. But even when the spotlight is ‘directed on the Myrmidons’, its beam shines brightest on the officers, not the ranks:

Standing at the narrow dugout entrance, Major Biddle, liaison officer for the artillery, was wounded — at exactly the same spot Captain Herbertson, liaison officer for the engineers, had been killed on the night of July 22nd. Runner after runner was killed in the dangerous trench and on the road outside it. (III: 554–5)

The Major and the Captain receive due nominalization and respective footnotes to commemorate the deaths. The legions of “runner after runner” are not so individualized; they are Homer’s nameless ‘multitudes’. In the same way, the list of dead in the footnote to The Nek assault names only those of the rank of lieutenant and above (II: 623, n.57). Death, too, has its classes.
The naming of the soldiers, whatever their rank, also illustrates one of the more extraordinary topoi of the *Official History*. Whenever a general, major, captain or even private is mentioned in the text, they are indexed at the back of the volume. At the first mention they are marked by a footnote, which details their background and subsequent fate. This practice is instigated from the very beginning, with the first mention of William Throsby Bridges. The footnote reads:


In 1922 the TLS reviewer was quick to identify that a mention in these pages “honours not only those named but will bring honour to their descendants for many a generation.” This is precisely what Bean intended (“Our war history”), and many descendants since have scanned the indices to read with pride of their father/uncle/grandfather. Another result of this practice however, is that whenever a heavy battle is described not only does the text narrate the death and slaughter, but the footnotes iterate the tragedy of lives deleted by battle. The phrase “Killed in action” followed by a date, becomes an inescapable mantra of death:

A tall Irish ex-regular of the 25th, “Pat” O’Gorman, tired of lying idle before [the trench], called to his mates: “Come on, chaps! let’s have a charge!”, and, dashing up to the entanglement, was shot dead. (III: 635)

And so with this single sentence, Private O’Gorman appears and passes from the story accompanied by his requisite footnote; “Killed in action, 29 July, 1916.” Another example is that of Sgt. Fowles, killed at the Landing by friendly fire:

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102 Thomson writes that he and his brothers would look up their grandfather’s name in the index “and then read about his exploits, discovering, just as Bean intended, a proud, personal connection with the A.I.F.” (*Anzac Memories*, 155).
On the very edge of the plateau Sergeant Fowles was grievously wounded by one of the bullets. "I told them," he said as he lay there dying in the Turkish trench — "I told them again and again not to open their magazines." (I: 261)

And the hapless Fowles passes, his brief fame immortalized in the date of his footnote, "Killed in action, 25 Apr., 1915."

This naming of the dead is important in narratological terms. In Greimas's actantial matrix, any given actant can be manifested in discourse by several characters (or 'actors'), just as a single actor may constitute a syncretism of several actants. So for instance Hektor's victims, although different characters, all occupy the same actantial position and fulfil the same narrative function. They are firstly the Object of Hektor's action, and also the Helper, in that their deaths earn him further glory. But they are not Subjects in themselves. These names, then, are not actors in the narrative, merely passing events. Their deaths are fuel for the twin projects of the glorification of the hero, and the nobility of sacrifice.

Bean's practice throughout the History creates narrative dynamics similar to Homer. Unlike the fodder of the aristeia however, his minor characters oscillate between the actantial positions of subject and object. Within the frame of a single page the named individual is the hero, the Subject of the narrative. But when the perspective is drawn back, those footnotes like O'Gorman and Fowles become subsumed with the larger grammatical subject of the narrative: the A.I.F. and the nation. This changing syntax is brought on by the expanded syntagmatic structure. The other difference between Bean’s ‘footnotes’ and Homer’s ‘names’ is that Bean is writing about real people, whom he could accord kēios ἀφθιόν (immortal glory), the legacy of a mention in the Official History.

103 See especially Greimas' essay 'Actants, actors, and figures' in On Meaning, 106–120. This grammatological model is quite different from, say, E.M. Forster's division between 'round' and 'flat' characters in Aspects of the Novel (46–54).
At the level of genre, it is probably too easy to suggest that the *Official History* is an ‘epic’, and hence to see parallels with the epitome of epics, the *Iliad*. The scale, the *matière*, the characters — if we consider the nations themselves as the characters in the script — everything conjures the idea of epic. All this has often been acknowledged. But the most interesting comparison are not generic, as much as thematic. The two great interlinked themes of the *Iliad* are heroism and death. As it is a *pean* to the deeds of heroes, so it is a necrology of heroism’s victims. The poem is driven by an ideology of heroism which links “death, glory, art and immortality” (Silk, *Iliad*: 70). These words keep ready company in time of war. The attempt to compensate for death by imagining immortality is universal; to lesser or greater degrees it is the kernel of all religions. This ideology persists in responses to the Great War; it found expression in the rubric from *Ecclesiasticus*, “Their name liveth for evermore.”

The notion of glory is more problematic, but reflects a similar desire to find meaning and hope in despair. And the more meaningless and wretched the death, the greater the need to reverse its legacy. This was encapsulated in the success of Lloyd George’s phrase “The glorious dead,” which the British people took to heart. The terrible irony in the phrase was too awful to question, and its paradox helped hide what survivors did not want to face — the actual circumstance and waste of individual death.

Bean goes further than most in combining all these concepts in the verbal ‘monument’ that is the *Official History*. Inglis describes how Bean’s ambivalence to Christianity made him congenial to the Greek attitude to heroic death. He imagined the building of the Australian War Memorial as a structure of “white marble, in the purest possible Greek style...as the memorial to those who fell in our ‘Thermopylae’.”

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104 Inglis, ‘A sacred place’, 102–3; quoting a letter from Bean to Mr Justice Ferguson, 11th July 1922.
often remarked though, that the *History* itself was a truer monument to
the A.I.F. than anything an artist could fashion in bronze or stone.
Bean’s epilogue, which we now know was written at the very start of
the project, makes exactly this claim for the *Official History*:

But the *Australian* Imperial Force is not dead. That famous army of gen-
erous men marches still...Whatever of glory it contains nothing can now
lessen. It rises, as it will always rise, above the mists of ages, a monument
to great-hearted men; and, for their nation, a possession for ever. (VI:
1096)

Death, glory, art, immortality. It is in these terms that the *Official History*
comes closest to Homeric ideals, and hence to myth.