

- (2) the land in question was not owned by one tribe but by five;
- (3) Batman had not, as he claimed, marked the boundaries of the land as requested to make any transaction legal;
- (4) the Aborigines could not have understood the language of the New South Wales blacks who accompanied Batman as interpreters;
- (5) their correct names were not obtained;
- (6) the marks which were entered as the Aborigines' signatures had no meaning and were entered on the deed by someone else.

Campbell assumes, incorrectly, that the government's rejection of the treaty indicated that there was no recognition at all of native title in Australia. This is the conventional view which has been argued many times over in Australian historical work and, for that matter, in Australian courts. The argument went the other way in New Zealand. The refusal to recognize Wentworth's purchase of land in the South Island was not taken as a rejection of native title but rather an affirmation of the deeply-entrenched legal principle that subjects could not purchase land from the indigenous people of the Empire. This principle was fully established in North America in the eighteenth century and was embodied in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The principle was affirmed in the famous 'land rights' cases in the American Supreme Court in the 1820s and 1830s and in the New Zealand Supreme Court in *Symonds v the Crown* in 1847. In this one question of vital contemporary importance it is a pity that Campbell followed, rather than circumvented, the conventional wisdom.

HENRY REYNOLDS

James Cook University

Big-noting. The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing. By Robin Gerster. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1987 x, 294pp. Australian price: \$34.95, hardback.

SOLDIERS' letters and other war literature have in recent years been used for a variety of purposes: in Christopher Pugsley's *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story* (1984) for a military history; in Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years. Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (1974), and in my *A Destiny Apart. New Zealand's Search for National Identity* (1986) to explore the origins of national identity; in Jock Phillips' *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male*, to debunk our male culture. Paul Fussell, in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) broke new ground, using literary and journalistic sources, as well as soldiers' memoirs etc. to explore how the war has been remembered in Great Britain. Robin Gerster's *Big-noting*, as he acknowledges, follows in Fussell's footsteps. It uses a variety of sources, notably novels, to examine the theme of heroism in Australian war writing. The genre is closer to literary history or criticism than to military history.

Most Australian literature of the First World War glorified war. It was frankly propagandist, promoting national sentiment. 'Big-noting' is an Australian vernacular term signifying self-praise, exaggerating one's own importance, blatant boasting. There is plenty of evidence of this presented in this book.

Gallipoli was close to Troy. The Australian soldiers, tall, tough, sunburnt, walk like gods and Homeric heroes, resolute, keen-eyed. This is so catching that the author, on one occasion, and without any sign of satirical laughter (p.68), compares the works of Homer and the Australian military historian, C. E. W. Bean.

The Australians are also portrayed as resembling the public school heroes of the *Boys' Own Paper* variety, lean and clean-shaven, 'playing the game' in dangerous situations.

Above all, the Australian troops, like the bushmen before them, were loyal to their mates. Gerster notes that mateship was a 'commonplace reality' in all the armies of the Great War, and not, as is suggested in many books, an Australian monopoly.

Gerster believes that the 'heroic myth', born at Gallipoli, was conceived on the veldt during the South African war — a view I advanced myself about the New Zealand military identity. 'Banjo' Paterson was an Australian war correspondent in South Africa, so perhaps he was one of the inventors.

The aggressive response of Australians to the Great War was in marked contrast to the anti-war attitudes of the best imaginative British and European literature, for instance in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* or in the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, or Wilfred Owen. The author emphasizes this point but fails to notice that the literature seems to have had little if any effect on the European psyche: Germans and British were as warlike as the Australians in 1939.

Gerster quotes Dan Davin in the preface to his war novel, *For the Rest of Our Lives*, saying that 'it is easier to introduce fiction into fact than fact into fiction'. Almost all the war memoirs and, indeed, novels are ambiguous in the respect that fact and fiction are intertwined. For instance, though the author speaks of the 'myth' of heroism, surely many of these soldiers were, in fact, heroes. The praise was not all self-praise. British writers, like John Masefield, were quick to praise the Australian (and indeed, New Zealand) troops in extravagant and romantic terms. He wrote that the Anzacs 'walked and looked like kings in old poems'.

One sad and tragic aspect of the war is that it was often true, as General Sir Ian Hamilton wrote, that men lived through more in five minutes on the crest at Gallipoli than in five years of Bendigo or Ballarat. D. H. Lawrence said in his novel, *Kangaroo*, that 'the war was the only time they ever felt properly alive'. That was certainly true of many ex-servicemen I knew from the Great War, and of many veterans with whom I came home in 1945.

In this book New Zealanders almost never appear, though they do help the Aussies to burn the brothel district in Cairo. The word 'Anzacs' invariably means Australians, as it does in the film, *Gallipoli*. No reader would learn that the letters 'NZ' meant New Zealand.

KEITH SINCLAIR

University of Auckland

A Man's Country. The Image of the Pakeha Male. A History. By Jock Phillips. Penguin Books, Auckland, 1987. 321pp. NZ price: \$30.

ACCORDING TO Jock Phillips the stereotype of the New Zealand male was forged on the colonial frontier, tempered on the rugby field, and with some minor additions from the public houses and racecourses, cast into a definitive mould by the experience of war. All was not well though: fresh from the battlefield, the pub, and the sports field, Kiwi blokes were thrown into the coils of domesticity, and in the conflict between the bracing and sympathetic male world and the debilitating and unsympathetic feminine realm of home and family was born much of the deep-seated misogyny of New Zealand culture.

In response to a rapidly growing feminist literature Dr Phillips has cast his eye over the historical development of New Zealand society with a view to examining the creation of a distinctive national stereotype of the ideal man. By rendering masculinity problematic — as the sociologists would say — he hopes to illuminate hitherto neglected areas