

Chapter 6

Transforming representations of the nation in Australian children's fiction

'What is policy?' demanded Marcus. 'No one will tell me!'

'Policy, Marcus, is something that lets you be horrible to someone else and pretend that there's nothing you can do about it,' said Hazel with an air of authority.

Odo Hirsch, Have Courage, Hazel Green (2001:297)

Representation is a discursive mediation which occurs between the event and the culture and which contributes to the construction of national ideologies. The articulation of these ideologies is the work of constellations and alliances of groups or interests which appropriate, transform and mythologise. The specific terms of the legend are part of the labour of producing and determining meaning.

Graeme Turner, National Fictions (1993:123)

Conceptualisations of Childhood and the National Symbolic

In Australia, as in the Western world generally, the conceptualisation of childhood and of nation became increasingly enmeshed throughout the twentieth century. The interconnections between childhood and the nation were already moving beyond merely symbolic at the turn of the twentieth century and increasingly became actual as the century progressed. The concept of a 'proper childhood' — free from economic responsibility and a time of compulsory education — became politicised as the universal right of all children.

Hugh Cunningham (1991) argues that this Social Darwinian ideology of childhood

represents children as the 'the key to social advance' (191), as the bearers of the 'future of the nation and the race' (219) and as the nation's 'most valuable asset' (1995:172). By the beginning of the twentieth century Cunningham (1991:233) finds that the ideology of childhood endows this stage of life with a 'universal value' and the central tenet of this conceptualisation is that 'childhood should be properly happy and free while protected and dependent'. Thus the experiences that were once the preserve of socio-economically advantaged children are advocated as the right of all the nation's children (Cunningham 1991:6-7). State intervention was needed in order to ensure the realisation of this ideal of a 'proper childhood' for all children. A primary task of the law and social policies of the state became the enactment and enforcement of this ideal childhood as the 'universal experience' (Cunningham 1991:224; Kociumbas 1997:194). In Australia, as in Britain, this process of social transformation of the space of childhood came closest to fruition in the immediate post-war period (Cunningham 1991:231). Cunningham (1995:190) emphasises that, by the end of the millennium, the state's responsibility for the management of childhood is a naturalised position. He argues that 'to a much greater extent than in previous centuries, child-rearing has become a matter of negotiation between parent and child, with the state and other agencies monitoring the process' (ibid). Significantly the word 'negotiation' implies a degree of agency for the parties involved although 'monitoring' suggests the extent to which intervention by the state's instrumentalities is possible in many aspects of child-rearing in contemporary Western society, including Australia. In Chapter 2 I argued that the discursive practices of children's realist fictions offer children access to debates about the power structures in operation in Australian society. The fictions discussed in this chapter increasingly offer child readers opportunity to participate in debates about the conceptualisation of the national symbolic of 'Australia' and, in particular, access to debates about Australia's historiography and about Australia as a society, the context for their lived experiences.

The nation, then, is like the signifiers 'child' and 'childhood' in that it exists as both conceptualisation and as a site of material lived experiences: the nation exists as a symbolic entity with a history and traditions and as a structure of social relations organised by state bureaucracies and institutions. These are legitimated to shape the lived experiences of the citizens across the social space. Bourdieu (2001) advances a broad sociological argument about the masculinist structures of Western nations which has clear implications for childhood:

while the domestic unit is one of the sites where masculine domination manifests itself most indisputably ... the principle of perpetuation of the material and symbolic power relations exerted there is largely situated outside that unit, in agencies such as the church, the educational system or the state and in their strictly political actions, whether overt or hidden, official or unofficial (116)

Cunningham's (1991, 1995) and Kociumbas' (1997) findings align with Bourdieu's general argument here about state power influencing all relations across the nation's social space. Indeed, in Bourdieu's (1998:104) theorising of the nation-state, the children of a nation become a part of its symbolic capital. Bourdieu (1998:3) also argues that the imagined 'collective histories' of the nation, or national metanarratives, are significant mechanisms for effecting symbolic domination. Stratton and Ang (1994) defines the state and the nation thus:

the modern individual cannot identify with the state. Instead s/he identifies with the nation. Where the term "state" refers to the legal, financial, in short, bureaucratic aspects of an administrative unit, the term "nation" refers to the experience of the people within the state as unified by a common language, culture and tradition. (129)

In the second half of the twentieth century dominant scholarly paradigms of the nation are initially concerned with constructions of 'national identity'. This replaces the earlier

paradigm that examined the 'national type' or 'national character' (White 1981; Bourdieu 1998:46). In the late decades of the twentieth century the concept of 'nation', as a material concern, is elided from some intellectual paradigms, such as some schools of Cultural Studies, and so from the terms of that field's scholarly debate. For Bourdieu (1998), however, the power of the nation-state is uncontestable and he posits that the state is

the culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital: capital of physical force or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural capital or (better) informational capital, and symbolic capital' and thus the state becomes the 'holder of a sort of metacapital granting power over the other species of capital and over their holders. (41)

From this he argues that any intellectual paradigm that discounts its material effects must fail to be politically efficacious. Bourdieu (1998) argues that the state is able to exert symbolic violence

... because it incarnates itself simultaneously in objectivity, in the form of specific organizational structures and mechanisms, and in subjectivity in the form of mental structures and categories of perception and thought. By realizing itself in social structures and in the mental structures adapted to them, the instituted institution makes us forget that it issues out of a long series of acts of *institution* (in the active sense) and hence has all the appearances of the *natural*. (40)

Bourdieu's (1998) argument is that the nations' institutions ensure the production of their own symbolic capital. These institutions then activate forms of symbolic capital that enable the elision of the power relation underpinning compliance and submission of citizens, including children and families, in its social policy decisions. In practical terms the state is able 'to create the conditions for a kind of immediate orchestration of habitus which is itself the foundation of a consensus over this shared set of experiences constitutive of a

(national) commonsense' (1998:54).¹ Bourdieu (1998) argues further that the external reality of the state is balanced against the citizen's subjectivity and *habitus* which is also acculturated to perceive the nation-state's interventions as appropriate and often benevolent. This same subjectivity is, of course, capable of resisting such processes if and when they are brought to light and found to be oppressive or unsatisfactory in some other way. Thus Bourdieu is not pessimistic about the pervasiveness of national power as he asserts that it is contestable, that rupture of the dominant discursive practices is possible and evident in the construction of counter narratives. In Bourdieu's (1998) philosophy of sociology the first principle is the 'primacy of relations' (1998:vii) and hence he argues that

if the social world, with its divisions, is something that social agents have to do, to construct, individually and especially collectively, in cooperation and conflict, these constructions do not take place in a social void, The position occupied in social space, that is, the structure of the distribution of different kinds of capital, which are also weapons, commands the representations of this social space and the position-takings in the struggles to conserve or transform it. (12)

The realist fictions discussed in this chapter, L. H. Evers' *The Racketty Street Gang* (1961), Ivan Southall's *Bread and Honey* (1970), Allan Baillie's *Secrets of Walden Rising* (1996) and Odo Hirsch's *Have Courage, Hazel Green* (2001), also advocate the 'primacy of relations' (Bourdieu 1998:vii) and narratively represent the process of dialogical 'struggle' over the possibilities for the transformation of the social space. Discursive representations are integral to this process, as the Australian cultural commentator, Graeme Turner (1993), argues in the second epigraph to this chapter. Postcolonial theory acknowledges this too and also argues for the examination of the 'collective histories' of the nation.

¹ Similar arguments are made in feminist theorising of the state in S. Franzway's 'With problems of their own: femocrats and the welfare state' in *Australian Feminist Studies*, 3 (1986), 45-57. R. W. Connell expands Franzway's argument in 'The State, Gender and Sexual Politics: Theory and Appraisal' in *Gender/Power:*

The nation exists as a cultural, a symbolic and a political entity and these vectors of power may be mobilised together ‘as a means for gaining broad approval for the establishment of a centralised state’ (Hutchinson 1994:43-4). However, these forces are just as often in conflict in Australia as elsewhere (Dale 2001:372-3). Writing literature for children is, in Bourdieusienne terms, an example of a citizen’s position-taking in the social space by the articulation of views about the nation’s collective histories. Children’s writers actively participate in the Australian public sphere as they critique conceptualisations of ‘Australia’. The fictions I discuss in this chapter are those that advocate transformative possibilities for the reconceptualisation of the national symbolic. This effect is achieved in the literary discourse by the schematised articulations of some of the social determinisms that undermine the possibility of a ‘fair go’ for all Australian citizens and the possibility of equality and social justice. These fictions construct a social space where action is possible because ‘dispositional potentialities inscribed in the bodies of agents’ make transformation possible (1998:vii). That is, the individual’s habitus permits the possibility of change; because any habitus is learned, it can also be unlearned. Bourdieu’s (1998) extension of this argument about the power of the nation-state, and the argument fundamental to my literary argument here, is that

there is no more potent tool for rupture than the reconstruction of genesis: by bringing back into view the conflicts and confrontations of the early beginnings and therefore all the discarded possibles, it retrieves the possibility that things could have been and still could be different. (40).

The fictions discussed in this chapter offer a ‘reconstruction of genesis’ (Bourdieu 1998:40), a reconceptualisation of different aspects of Australia’s national metanarratives or collective histories.

In the Australian context, White (1997:15) argues the need for an examination of

the nation as political entity. Australian historians both invent and deconstruct the tropes employed in the paradigmatic shifts in conceptualisations of the nation. Such tropes have a unifying function in identifying attributes and traditions deemed unique to the political entity of the Australian state. As discussed in Chapter 4, White (1981) employs the scientific/technological trope of 'inventions' to his analysis of metanarratives of 'Australia' in the period up to the 1980s. By the late 1990s the new trope of 'creation' is adopted from the feminist social history, *Creating a Nation* (1994) by Grimshaw, Lake, McGrath and Quartly. This trope now circulates widely in journalism and popular culture as well as in academia. It connotes the inclusion of all citizens as contributors to the nation's metanarratives. The intention is to pluralise the national symbolic by diversifying the view-points that are regarded as legitimate and by an extension of the kinds of subjects and issues worthy of scholarly investigation and circulation. The trope of creation also problematises the pursuit of the 'real' identity of a people as a mythology and repudiates the ideas of unity expressed in a slogan like that for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901: 'One flag, one nation, one destiny'. Indeed cultural pluralism, Australia's Multiculturalism, is a cornerstone of the discursive formation of the nation from the mid-1970s into the new millennium. Despite paradigmatic shifts, older conceptualisations re-circulate powerfully, especially in contemporary conservative political discourse, as will be seen below.

Turner (1997), like White (1997), argues that in postcolonial settler societies like Australia, nation formation is an overtly public process. Postcolonial theory foregrounds issues of the nation-state and the scholarly work from this paradigm contributes significantly to the 'reconstruction of genesis' (Bourdieu 1998:40), in all white settler societies. Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths (1997) argue of the nation that 'for all its contentiousness, and the difficulty of theorising it adequately, it remains the most implacably powerful force in twentieth century politics. Its displacement has proved very

difficult even within internationally oriented movements' (151). From within the literary field, Brian Edwards (1998:2) writes of an appreciation of difference with 'negotiation as the preferred model for progressive action and understanding' and argues that postcolonialism and postcolonial studies

do not signify a neatly prescribed field or a set of agreed strategies but, rather, a cross-disciplinary interest in cultural and political identity observed in relationships between races and nations, imperialism, colonisation, and post-independence movements together with the signifying systems, pageantry, symbolism, practices and modes of language characterising these relationships. (1)

Edwards (1998) stresses the breadth of the legitimate concerns of postcolonial studies, the fluidity of its interdisciplinarity and its multiple perspectives. Edwards (1998) specifies that a nation's metanarratives are promulgated by national celebrations and pageantry as well as by school curriculum, social policies and the cultural products of the marketplace. His gloss resists the containment of post-colonial theory that a critics like Walder (1998) identifies. Their critiques of early post-colonial scholars ironise and question the limitations of 'happy hybridisation' (Perera 1994). Walder (1998), for instance, draws attention to the 'teacherly' discourse of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) that he argues is monolithic and has a homogenising 'rigidity' (Walder 1998:69). This condemnation argues that the postcolonialist and postmodernist trope of 'hybridity' allows the dominant culture to avoid encountering difference (Perera 1994:19; Stratton and Ang 1994:152-3; McCredden 1998:194). If this is indeed the case, then the need persists to find ways that enable difference to be the means to validation of subjectivity rather than the mechanism of oppression enabling the subjugation of minority interests (see also Touraine 2000:213). In postcolonial history Ann Curthoys (1997:31) also argues that the historically self-conscious process of the settler society's nation-building project is supplanted, in the last decades of the twentieth century, by an overt historical self-reflexivity and an

internationalist vision rather than just a nationalist perspective (1997:36). The nation, in this paradigm, is conceptualised as a fluid entity. All of these discursive practices contribute to the child's acculturation as effectively as the narratives of the family's historiography transmitted in the private sphere.

In Australia, then, the concept of 'nation' and 'national identity' are socio-cultural constructions, ideological and political conceptualisations inherited with British colonisation (White 1981:ix). Alluding to White's trope of 'invention', but writing a decade later, Turner (1994) echoes Bhabha (1990:59) in arguing that

[a]ll nationalities, of course, are invented and all relatively recently—despite the often lengthy mythic histories upon which they draw for their legitimacy—but the process of nation formation is especially explicit in settler societies' (69; see also White 1997:14; Anderson 1983).

Both White (1997:19) and Turner (1994:68) also assert the apparent everyday inconsequentiality of the nation in the lived experience of most Australian citizens.

However the approach of the new millennium in Australia was coincident with a number of symbolic national events so that conceptualisations and critiques of 'nation', 'national identity' and 'nationalism' were issues of keen public and intellectual debate. These national events included the referendum on an Australian republic and the celebration of the centenary of the federation of the Australian colonies in 2002. In 1988, the bicentennial year, the symbolic marking of Australia Day, 26 January, designed to celebrate the beginnings of British settlement of eastern Australia, was successfully reclaimed by indigenous Australians as Invasion Day.

Turner (1994:68) writes of the Bicentennial as 'a year of highly contested celebrations in which the seamless construction of nation could barely be contained for the four hours of *Australia Live*—let alone a whole year'. If a nation is assumed to be unitary, its people speaking with one voice, then the Bicentennial certainly failed to produce that

kind of nationhood' but he argues that this is its unintended success: 'The Bicentennial revealed the limits to the official production of nationalism when it made Australia's project of nation-building explicit. Becoming explicit, it became more vulnerable to contestation as new definitions of the nation came into play' (91-2). The possibilities for rupture are clear as Turner argues of the Bicentennial that its 'failure to deliver to us a newly unified nation—may turn out to be its achievement' (72). In fact 'The Celebration of the Nation' reveals multiple national identities, Turner argues (1997:17). The mounting of the Invasion Day protests achieved Bourdieu's 'reconstruction of genesis' (1998:40). The early 1990s was such a time with intense public debate about questions of native title surrounding the Mabo and Wik judgements, Asian immigration, the reform of the constitution, the Republic debate and the calls for formal processes of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. A similar achievement is fictively achieved for other aspects of the historical white settler metanarrative by Allan Baillie in *Secrets of Walden Rising* (1996) as the discourse of 'secrets ... rising' foreshadows.

Turner (1993:19) finds that in early post-war literary texts and in 1970s film productions, 'The cultural specificity, the Australian-ness, of Australian texts lives in the recurring principles of organisation and selection as applied to the universal narrative structures'. I argued this, in Chapters 4 and 5, with regard to literary spatiality in the 1950s fictions of Joan Phipson, Nan Chauncy and Patricia Wrightson. Prior to the mid-1980s, national identity is central to Australian Studies scholars. Brenda Niall (1984) exemplifies this framing, as her comment, noted in Chapter 1, indicates: 'I am as much concerned with Australia in children's books as I am with Australian children's books; the one preceded and influenced the other' (1). From this position she argues that her study intends to discover how children's fictions help 'to shape an Australian sense of self' (1984:2). By the end of the decade Niall's (1988) position shifts significantly when she argues that 'The question of Australianism as a moral imperative seems almost as remote as Ethel Turner's

colonial oath of 1894' (558). Nevertheless there are contexts in which fictions foreground issues of national power and identity and this is the case with the children's fictions under examination in this chapter. Here the conceptualisations and idealisations of both 'Australia' and 'Australian-ness' are dialogically constructed so that they offer counter narratives to those of the dominant culture: that is, to colonial stories of pioneering and frontier settlement, the Anzac legend and military historiography and also Australia's multiculturalist metanarratives.

New paradigms that emerge from the 1970s onwards, including Cultural Studies, Postmodernism, Feminism and Postcolonialism, challenge the position of Australian Studies researchers. Turner (1997:14) writes that '[t]he abandonment of a unitary view of the nation may be one of the key markers of the break between the old and the new tradition of Australian studies but this has not been as clean a break as one might imagine'. Cultural Studies academics eschew Australian Studies as inherently conservative because of its nationalist origins. Turner (1997:14) summarises the new millennial challenge for Cultural Studies as the examination of the ways that 'the problem of nation is bound up with the task of constructing collective imaginaries which are grounded in cultural difference rather than in cultural homogeneity' so that 'the nation is not just tolerant of difference but is actually constituted through it' (ibid). However, Stratton and Ang (1994:1523-3) argue that this new national identity is, in fact, just another policy for the containment of difference. The question to be addressed, and not just by Cultural Studies scholars, is whether 'to live with difference' can move beyond implicit hierarchical power relationships embedded in policies of toleration (Gunew 1990:104; Stratton and Ang 1994:153; Hage 1998:19; Castles 1999:39). For various reasons then, many academic fields engage with the 'nation' as a political and symbolic entity, seeing it as a necessary focus for scholarship.

The pervasive power of the state in the construction of the national symbolic means

that there are real difficulties in shifting paradigms in the public imaginary. Any clear change in public policy or social policy requires justification and re-education, that is Bourdieu's (1998:40) 'reconstruction of genesis'. This is recently in evidence as Australian cultural policy has taken on the task of 'incorporating the networks of cultural difference and similarities that mark post-war Australian society as distinctive' (Turner 1994:69). The extent of the divergence between the national metanarratives offered to contemporary Australian children can be gauged by the most recent examples of the political 'reconstruction of genesis' in the rhetorical shift that occurred when John Howard's Liberal government replaced Paul Keating's Labor Government in 1996. Keating's national metanarrative was multiculturalist and internationalist in focus, telling of 'a people who had triumphed over their tribulations and prejudices to embrace diversity and tolerance with an egalitarian generosity, enabling them to adapt to an open, globalised economy and engage with their Asian neighbours' and who had put behind them 'old-world errors and wrongs and lies'. The latter refers to the abjection of the indigenous population by the white settlers. The incoming Prime Minister, John Howard, labelled the Keating view as the 'black armband' view of history, employing historiographer Geoffrey Blainey's (1994) trope. Howard re-circulated a post-war nationalist metanarrative: 'a story of heroic achievement, of prosperity wrought from wilderness, of democratic innovation, of the fair go' (cited in Macintyre 1997:ix-x). The children's fictions under examination in this chapter engage dialogically with many aspects of key Australian traditional metanarratives explicit and implicit in the Keating and Howard conceptualisations of the nation.

Literary counter narratives, that is, literary representations of ideological rupture in the nation's collective histories, are the focus of this chapter's examination of post-war Australian children's realist fictions. Some of the nation's metanarratives, with their socio-cultural and literary conventions, have already been discussed in earlier chapters. In this

chapter these counter narratives are thematised and determine the shaping of the storylines. The dialogism of these fictions contests various aspects of the white settler society, Australian military histories, and the post-war 'Australian way of life' in an urban and technological Australia. They critique Australia's multiculturalism and its ideology of 'productive diversity'. The legitimacy of claims that Australia is a 'nation of plural social orientations' undergoes examination. I argue from this that the literary fictions discussed here disrupt the national symbolic with regard to the conceptualisations of 'nation' and 'child' and 'childhood'. These fictions suggest the complexity of being a child citizen of the nation. The difficulties of negotiating democratic outcomes for all are represented. There is little that is relativistic about the values that are advocated by the fictions as appropriate for 'Australia' as an ideological site at the turn of the new millennium. They are values that concern democracy, human rights and social justice.

The Racketty Street Gang is a groundbreaking Australian children's fiction in many ways. Niall (1984) argues that L.H. Evers's *The Racketty Street Gang* (1961) and Reginald Ottley's historical novel of the Great Depression, *The War on William Street* (1971) are significant texts with regard to genre, themes, spatiality and social class representation:

The Racketty Street Gang and *The War on William Street* enlarged the territory of the family novel in several ways. Their attempt to capture the life of the inner-city, working-class boys, and their refusal to move them either into the country or into the middle class was unusual; so was the acceptance of weak or harsh parents as a fact to be endured rather than an aberration to be corrected. The emphasis on the relationship between fathers and sons, and on boys' friendships, with scarcely a female figure in sight, makes these two novels distinctive among family novels, which are usually dominated by daughters and written for girls. In spite of the violence and crime which make up part of the narrative, the emotional centre in both novels is the family; they are not simply adventure stories. (264)

The Racketty Street Gang is also significant in its inclusion of a non-British migrant story in Australian children's fictions. This challenges the nation's metanarratives of egalitarianism and social class homogeneity. The exploration of Anzac Day in *Bread and Honey* extends the discussions of this fiction I began in Chapters 2 and 5. Again the reasons for its designation as a 'landmark' text in Australian children's fiction are clear in its anti-warfare ideology (Saxby 1998:158). Metanarratives of masculinist white settler historiography of nineteenth-century white settler society are ruptured in *Secrets of Walden Rising* (1996). This is achieved by the use of literary discourse to subvert the genre conventions of a boy's own adventure narrative. This latter genre is fully implicated in the dissemination of imperialist discourses from the nineteenth century onwards. The examination here is of a dialogically constructed and complex literary fiction. The final section of this chapter examines the mythology of Australia's multiculturalism, focusing on *Have Courage, Hazel Green*. This fiction represents the many problems of a hierarchically organised and masculinist nation-state and its propensity for the perpetuation of subaltern positions for certain citizens especially with regard to race and ethnicity. The literary texts discussed in this chapter demonstrate how ideological shifts are achieved in literary fictions by genre-mixing, narrative reconfigurations, by expanding the number of focalisers, by the inclusion of points of view other than those of the dominant culture, by a selection of non-traditional story existents, by employing new tropes and by altering conventional narrative patterning.

Resignification of the Nation's Collective Histories of War

Bourdieu (1998) denaturalises nationalist ideologies when he reminds readers that

state injunctions owe their obviousness, and thus their potency, to the fact that the state has imposed the very cognitive structures through which it is perceived (one should think along those lines the conditions that make possible the supreme sacrifice:

Bread and Honey ruptures such potent dominant nationalist ideologies so that the right of the nation to demand ‘the supreme sacrifice’ is problematised. White (1997) employs a trope of feminine creativity in his statement that

[n]ations, by definition, embroider the past into their fabric. Their imagined community consists not just of its present-day citizens but past lives as well (and above all others, those who died in the name of the nation). (14)

White’s (1997) analysis of Great War data, carried out in 1986, found that the claim of dying for the nation is not strictly true of the individual subjects:

... while notions of national duty and honour made sense to some, the majority did not frame their motives in national terms. Most soldiers if they do die, (which is usually not their intention on joining up), die not for nation but for more pressing notions: of family perhaps, or local community. It is others that name their death national, that raise them up as martyrs to the nation, and through the nation offer them the possibility of immortality. (21)

Nevertheless as Bourdieu (1998) argues above, nationalist rhetoric posits a claim to the ultimate loyalty of personal sacrifice. White then acknowledges the major role that historiographers play in the creation of the ‘collective histories’ of Australia and particularly its war narratives.² C. E. W. Bean, as an Australian war correspondent, helped to create the legend in his sixteen volumes of official collective histories (1921–42). White (1981:125–39) critiques the significance of the Anzac ‘Digger’s’ contribution to the perpetuation of the Australian ‘obsession with masculinity’. The national mythology of the Australian soldier and nation—the Anzac legend—emerges from World War I and the British military campaign to capture the Gallipoli Peninsula from the Turkish army, April

² See Gunew’s ‘Denaturalising cultural nationalisms: multicultural readings of “Australia”’ for details of the

25, 1915, 'the holy day of Anzac heroism' (Gerster and Bassett 1991:82; also Lake 1992:305-22).³ This metanarrative represents Australian soldiers as natural aristocrats (Caesar 1998:164) and the rhetoric of the attainment of 'manhood' at Gallipoli meshes with the theme of the concomitant achievement of Australian 'nationhood' (Shute 1975/1995:339; Howe 1983/1995:302; Lake 1992:305). Macintyre (1999) describes the Anzac mythology thus:

[t]he legend dealt with sacred themes: baptism under fire in the pursuit of an unattainable objective, sacrifice, death and redemption through the living legacy of a nation come of age. It told of courage and stoicism in the ultimate test of mateship and thus converted a military defeat into a moral victory. Within a year Australian servicemen commemorated the anniversary of the landing and Anzac Day was quickly established as a public holiday, marked ever since by a dawn service when the immortality of the fallen is proclaimed. (159)

Jenny Pausacker (1994:604), distinguished writer and critic of children's fictions, recognises some of the ways that this fiction is concerned with Australian hegemonic masculinity in its focus on Anzac Day as 'Australia's most masculine institution' and accurately describes *Bread and Honey* as an interrogation of the 'the romantic and scientific perspectives of war, ... civilisation and violence' (ibid).

Children's literary fictions of the immediate post-war period generally elide war experiences although popular culture texts embrace it eagerly, as Ivan Southall's *Simon Black* fictions demonstrate (Saxby 2002:232-3; Townsend 1979:179). Patricia Wrightson's *The Crooked Snake* (1955), discussed in Chapter 2, represents Australian citizenship

development of this argument (1990:100).

³ See also Carmel Shute's 'Heroines and Heroes: Sexual Mythology in Australia 1914-18' (1975/1995:23-4); Adrian Howe's 'Anzac mythology and the feminist challenge' (1983/1995:302-10); Robert Dixon's *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Culture 1860-1914* (1995); and Adrian Caesar's chapter, 'National Myths of Manhood' in Bennett and Strauss's *Oxford Literary History of Australia* (1998:147-65). Claudia Nelson's 'Ethel Turner and the "Voices of Dissent": Masculinities and Fatherhood in *The Cub* and *Captain Cub*' offers a useful critique of Ethel Turner's war fictions without unfortunately giving due consideration to the texts as war propaganda (*Papers: Explorations into Children's*

adopting what John Murphy (2000:16) describes as ‘an intensely privatised shape’ in the immediate post-war period. He argues that the citizenry withdrew from ‘a world understandably seen as uncertain, complex and often frightening’ (2000:221). War tropes frame the fiction and military terminology permeates the representation of the children’s relationships with adults, with other older children and their approach to environmental activism. The threat to the nation from the Cold War context is represented in *The Crooked Snake* by ‘Miller’s mob’, the gang of older boys’ who physically threaten the Society’s members. The boys are ideologically the enemy in terms of their failure to be environmentally ‘right thinking’ and in their unlawful activities. They use firearms while still under-age and without an adult present as well as shooting protected animals in a nature sanctuary. Their lack of self-governance makes them a threat to the best interests of the community.

The war framework of *The Crooked Snake* recurs in lexical sets of military terms: captain, forts, weapons, scouts, spies, secret agents, headquarters, reports and documents. These are all about the defence of territory. In order to demonstrate their commitment to the protection of the sanctuary, the children ‘annex’ it as ‘Secret Snake territory’ and are prepared to defend it (70). The high point and the ironising moment for a new millennial reader is Pete’s comment that there is ‘a lovely place for a war in the sanctuary’ and the speech tag ‘wistfully’ presumably indicates that the humour is a narratorial commentary on the remark (108). While there is ironising of the need to move to physical violence to defend the sanctuary’s wild life there is no disapproval. In fact the storyline confirms that ‘war’ is the correct action to take. In this regard then the routing out and punishing of those who think differently and have different values reflects the closed attitudes of Australian post-war political strategies in the Cold War era (Murphy 2000:68). The children’s idea of the society maintaining an official list of Dangerous Persons also suggests this defensive

stance against anyone who appears to threaten the 'Australian way of life'. *The Crooked Snake* does not critique the national social space either as a discursive formation or as political entity.

Australia's commitment to the war in Vietnam in the 1960s marks the most significant turn in cultural attitudes to war. Gerster and Bassett (1991) argue that Anzac Day commemoration declined in national significance throughout the 1960s.⁴ They conclude that 'The reassessment of the hitherto sacrosanct legends is an important cultural result of Australia's participation in Vietnam' (83). Ivan Southall's *Bread and Honey* exemplifies this complex socio-cultural shift which necessarily problematises conceptualisations of masculinity, heroism and the nation. Gerster and Bassett (1991) also argue that a 'process of cultural reassessment was underway before Australians started fighting and dying in Vietnam' (83-4). In children's fiction, L. H. Evers' *The Racketty Street Gang* exemplifies this early phase of reassessment with its emergent anti-war views. Scutter (1997:58) recognises that the thematics of *The Racketty Street Gang* offer an ideological rupture in Australian children's fiction and Saxby (2002:51) notes that this is 'one of the first books to have an inner city setting and characters who were post-war immigrants from Europe'. Thus in the primary storyline the 'New Australian' boy, Anton, comes to live in a run-down house in Racquetier Street in the industrial harbourside suburb of Sydney. His family has fallen on hard times because its uninsured truck, the means of livelihood, was stolen. Anton finds good friends in his neighbourhood and is appropriately initiated into the 'Racketty Street gang'. The story of family and friends becomes an adventure when the boys become the victims of the local criminals whose nefarious activities have already caught the boys' attention. Mr. Smertzer's war experiences become relevant to the boys' adventure because of the military nature of some of the criminals' strategies.

⁴ Alan Seymour's play *The One Day of the Year* (1963) is the significant adult literary text of this movement

The Racketty Street Gang offers a forthright challenge to Australia's Cold War insularity as constructed in *The Crooked Snake*. The fiction ruptures the bank of ideologies, narrative frames, discourses and tropes typical of conceptualisations of Australia during the post-war period. *The Racketty Street Gang* shifts several aspects of the Australian paradigms of children's realist fictions. These include the spatio-temporal frameworks, from rural to urban settings, the representations of the subjectivities of post-war migrants and new dimensions to the representation of masculine intersubjectivity. The fiction mixes genres combining boy's mystery adventure with a war story and aspects of the family story. There is a diversity in the representations of masculine subjectivities that foreshadows a later focus on intrapsychic worlds, or subjectivities, more complex discursive negotiations of the self in the world. Saxby (2002:202) also comments on accommodation of difference or 'social disparities'. This is mainly achieved in this fiction by extensive use of dialogues that are often revelations of internal emotional states and not only about plot development or formulaic character stereotypes. As the new configuration of the 'Australian way of life' is represented here, romanticism's child in Australian children's fiction, namely Badge Lorennny, is replaced by the childhood preparation for adulthood. Innocence and dependence are rapidly being overrun by the familial contexts in which the masculine participants find themselves.

The Racketty Street Gang also subverts the central historiographic tenets of the 1950s period as being prosperous and stable. Prosperity is not the experience of the children born on Racquetier Street or of the German immigrant child, Anton and his family. Australia is neither the New Eden nor the working-man's paradise for the Smertzer family.⁵ The residual effects of World War II are not effaced here; not only does the subject of World War II enter the discourse as a contentious ethical concern, but the German voice enunciates an anti-war position. The Smertzer family have lost their icon of 'the Australian

Its first production was also in 1963 (Gerster and Bassett 1991:84-5).

way of life', 'their new house out in the suburbs with its wide lawn and big, sunny rooms' (117) and have moved to a 'shabby' freestanding 'wooden cottage' (9) in an area where industrial enterprises invade the harbour-side suburbs, 'factories which have sprung up around since the war, obliterating whole streets of houses like Racquetier Street, lifting tall threatening chimney stacks, rearing massive blind brick walls, pierced by steel-shuttered doors through which heavy loaded trucks labour in and out' (8-9). This spatiality is a long way from Badge Lorennny's 'cold jungle' or 'Tickera', the Trevor family's property. However this inner-city spatiality is represented throughout the fiction as a fertile place for the body, mind and imagination, and the boatyard immediately fires Anton's imagination (11). Compensations for the factories are found in the little park with the sea wall that allows fishing, snorkeling and the possibilities of sailing (8). While the newspaper continues to serve a metonymic function (6, 170-1, 132, 146), this is now joined by the telephone (27), television (172) and films (13, 28, 122) as significant parts of the socio-cultural context that inform the boys' life experiences.

A traditional literary convention has 'the trio of males plus one', as the main participants of the fiction. Anton becomes the fourth member of the group who together 'constitute the ideal homosocial community', a unit that 'has an implicit hierarchy' (McGillis 2002:197). Here the leader is the intellectual boy, the Prof. The trio also functions paternalistically to nurture the masculine 'other'. In this case it is Anton who is the 'other', the 'New Australian'.⁶ Differences between the boys are acknowledged and represented as valued. Violence is routed among the boys by honest articulations of fear, by the denunciation of bravado as dishonest and by the repudiation of aggression as unsophisticated (30, 52, 87, 99-100). Even the brash Stanley and Anton eventually admit their fears to one another (125). Lexical sets to do with war are a feature of the boys' dialogues and their focalised thoughts even more than occurs in *The Crooked Snake* but

⁵ See Gunew (1990) for further discussion of post-war immigration (103-4).

these are deconstructed, unlike the earlier fiction. The boys are involved in a 'council of war' (113) and 'clandestine operations' (138). Words such as 'assassin', 'muzzle of a gun' (149), 'conquer', 'force' and 'yield tribute' (62) are all appropriate at various points in the storyline. Some of these terms are resignified in later episodes. Anton's apparently harmless enthusiastic description of the home-made spear-guns as 'these remarkable weapons' and the gang's being 'anxious to begin the slaughter' (85) are re-written as naive by the boys' focalised thoughts and in dialogues. Their enthusiasm for violence and weapons evaporates when they are the victims of criminal cruelties (141-4).

The subject of war is an embarrassment to the clever Prof and the sensitive Ben but the gormless Stanley understands only that 'Our army licked the German army hollow' (36). War stories, framed by Anton's 'Long, long ago' and Ben's description of 'good stories' (45), are interrogated and then repudiated as the text represents war experiences as an ongoing aspect of the memories, 'things that are not good to remember' (74). In the first embedded war narrative Mr. Smertzer tells the boys of his admiration for all men who fought—they all did their best for causes they believed in (39-40). The use of tunnels as the means of escape from prisoner of war camps is discussed and Mr. Smertzer acknowledges the ingenuity of men under stress as 'a grim sort of game, which sometimes we won and sometimes the prisoners won' (40, 43, 46). The word 'game' is repeated only to be undermined in the climax of the primary level storyline. The Prof has read of the importance of tunnels in the prisoner-of-war escape plans and this knowledge is significant in solving the 'mystery' conventionally required in the closure of the crime/adventure storyline.

The fiction's anti-war ideology is delivered didactically in participant dialogues as soon as the boys first express positive reaction to what they are hearing. When the Prof suggests that it might have been advantageous to be involved in some aspects of the war,

⁶ Scutter (1997:58) is unnecessarily dismissive of the function of this masculinist literary convention of

the text quickly asserts this as an error of judgement:

‘In no way was it good,’ Mr. Smertzer said in a definite tone. ‘Neither for the prisoners or for the guards ... Wars, bloodshed, hatred, men closed in with barbed wire—these things are bad and should be forgotten. Nor should I tell these tales. Where to put dirt from tunnels—what is that? Nothing, less than nothing. There are other things, beautiful things, great ...’ (43)

The children’s approval of the anti-war philosophy is represented by the Prof’s nods of agreement with Mr. Smertzer’s views. This is strengthened by the didactic narrator’s reinforcement of the Prof’s sincerity and intellectual competency (44). The embedded war narratives enable the Prof to deduce the method for the bank robbery. Metonymically, then, war activities are potentially criminal activities. In the dialogue with the criminal, Evans, Mr. Smertzer says: ‘... I say it was all a great waste and I have grown ashamed of my part in it. And if I can save one life here today then it will help to make up for the blood I have spilt in bad causes ...’ (184). The war’s residual traumas are acknowledged for both German and Australian military personnel.

The publication of Ivan Southall’s *Bread and Honey* was at the height of the 1960s counter culture in Australia and it is consequently more subversive than *The Racketty Street Gang*. The anti-war ideology in *Bread and Honey* is narrativised particularly in a climactic episode that offers the reader a literary re-creation of subjects operating under the physical and psychological duress of combat. Direct assault on the symbolic power of national military metanarratives is avoided because *The Racketty Street Gang* transposes the experience of duress into the participants’ encounter with criminals. For *Bread and Honey* the significant aspect of the nation’s socio-cultural context is the Vietnam War. The representation of an unequivocal anti-war view to children is a major rupture in the national symbolic in problematising ‘*pro patria mori*’. This is especially the case with the

formerly ‘sacrosanct legends’ of Anzac. When *Bread and Honey* won the CBC Book of the Year Award in 1971 the Judges’ Report declared it ‘ahead of its time’ not only in its psychological realism but also in its ‘presentation to children of contemporary issues and attitudes in an unresolved form leaving readers to make their own judgements’ (Saxby 1998:313-5).

The Vietnam War, described as ‘the quintessential sixties event’, saw Australian men conscripted for the first time: ‘Vietnam meant much more than the Western military intrusion into Indo-Chinese affairs: it became a moral issue of supreme importance to each individual’ (Gerster and Bassett 191:43; also Bennett 1998:239-40). Transgression of powerful iconography occurs with the undermining of ‘nationalism, mateship and the myth of individualism’ (Turner 1993:103; also White 1981:36). *Bread and Honey* is also a text of the era of the women’s liberation movement, and the fiction is groundbreaking in its representation of the engendered meanings of Anzac iconography. *Bread and Honey* intertwines four points of views on the Anzac Legend. First, there is Michael’s grandmother’s views about this commemoration day; and second, the conflicting views of the two fathers, Dr Cameron and Mr. Farlow. The grandmother’s views are represented as fully as those of the men. Lastly, there is Michael’s view.

Literary discussions of *Bread and Honey* usually assert that the primary storyline is about Michael’s ‘baptism of fire’ and his ‘manhood ... consummated in public’ (Saxby 2002:313). Such descriptions map a traditional war/adventure metanarrative onto the text. The fiction is however a subversion of this traditional understanding of ‘manhood’ and a repudiation of violence as an essential masculine rite of passage. Even more than with its reconfiguration of gender relations, *Bread and Honey* dismantles reader expectations about the linear development of the storylines that encourage conventional expectations about the climax and closure of the collective war histories of the nation. The annual commemoration of Anzac Day in the social microcosm of the beach-side community of

Deakin offers a motif for the examination of Australian war ideologies and collective histories. The demotic discourse in the extract below contrasts with the hieratic modes of official rituals and historiographic texts. This represents the bricolage of war narratives, especially films, employing the adventure story genre:

What about those fellows waving their guns and hissing through their teeth, lips drawn back really hissing, maybe because they were scared, climbing dirty great cliffs or splicing the mainbrace or looping the loop? Making battle cries, *Waaaahhh*, or something like that. Ten million fellows marching to war to have their heads blown off. Fellows on their bellies creeping round corners with knives in their teeth and machine-guns at the ready. Fellows getting shot at dawn or sunk in ships or screaming crunch into the earth in power dives and smoke. (15)

The invocation of the three military services—army, navy and air force—occurs metonymically. The action images of films are discursively constructed by the use of the present participle in phrases that are explicitly onomatopoeic: ‘waving their guns’, ‘hissing through their teeth’, ‘Making battle cries, *Waaaahhh*’, ‘marching to war’, ‘screaming crunch’. The tendency in adventure narratives to turn tragic deaths into dramatic action is suggested by the repetition of his father’s bitter comment about ‘Ten million fellows marching to war’ followed by the colloquial hyberbole of ‘to have their heads blown off’ (8). Dr Cameron makes it a story when he prefaces the remark with ‘Once upon a time’ and contrasts the inadequacy of the day of commemoration in the parallel structure, ‘Once a year, Dad said, everybody thought about it for an hour, at least for a minute ... almost everyone slept in’ (8). The colloquialisms also attempt to capture the enormity of the losses of human life and the physical and emotional demands placed upon men in combat without sentimentality. The general incomprehensibility is signalled in the vague phrasing of ‘something like that’. The lack of an ‘actuality’ for these persons is clear.

The war narratives constructed for the two fathers in *Bread and Honey* construct different attitudes to commemoration of Anzac Day. Their contrasting military experiences partly explain the differences in their the attitudes to war experiences. Dr Cameron rages that 'The whole idea gives me a pain. It's worn out. Drums and medals and bugles. What do they want to drag it up out of the past for?' (24). Dr Cameron's rupture of the traditional views is foreshadowed in the dialogue with Michael's grandmother: 'Dad wouldn't go to the march with grandma even though he had medals from the war in a drawer of his desk' (8). Later Dr Cameron comments on his own hypocrisy and irrationality as he and his older sons continue to work in areas implicitly connected to warfare:

Dad might have cut in, as he had done last year. 'If half the human race gets a kick out of butchering the other half, he's got to know about it. Don't you agree? Do you hide it from him? You're in missiles Richard. Do you deceive yourself that they're for peaceful purposes? And what of Gregory's bauxite? Is it for saucepans?' Dad had huddled there, looking wretched. Michael had never seen him like that before ... he can judge for himself who is the more stupid or dishonest. (25-6)

Here then Dr Cameron ruptures the coherence of the masculinist social structure. This offers a powerful subversion of the masculinist *illusio*, 'the investment in the game itself, the conviction that the game is worth playing all the same, right to the end, and according to the rules ...' (Bourdieu 2001:74). This discourse both undercuts the heroic postures of the symbolism of honour and of making the 'supreme sacrifice' for one's nation, in the use of the word 'butchering', and then also subverts the value of the son's claims to a progressive counter-culture, anti-war ideology as hypocritical. The dialogue implies that even where such a rupture occurs on the part of the individual subject, this remains structurally ineffective. Men remain implicated in and dominated by the larger social structure of the nation-state; their skills and expertise are ultimately still a part of the nation's 'metacapital'. They remain complicit in a masculinist global social order that will

not change if men do not choose to alter the power structures that legitimate global relationships. The extract highlights the double standard of men's occupations. To protest the order means marginalisation. To withdraw from lucrative and prestigious professions means serious economic and symbolic diminution and this is too high a price for most men to pay.

Mr. Farlow's military experience contrasts with Dr Cameron's. Mr. Farlow was a soldier engaged in direct action with the enemy. For him Anzac Day is a solemn commemoration but also a celebration of survival against the odds (19, 53). The homosocial institution of the army is part of Mr. Farlow's masculinist culture which encourages the idea of 'collective collusion'. This enables men's culture to protect the subject from both individual guilt and personal responsibility. Ray Farlow, Michael's peer and former pseudo-brother, is as yet not imbued with this ideology and focalises internally: 'Don't you ever wake up at nights, worrying, having to kill thirteen blokes so we could be born?' (53). Masculinist collusion is essential for the maintenance of psychological regulation and bodily practices that support the activities necessary for the perpetuation of the nation-state's militaristic objectives.

The climactic battle between Michael and his peers, mentioned above, is played out on Deakin Beach by Michael and undermines the traditional outcomes for the hero of the war narrative. The episode interacts dialogically with the accounts of war offered by the two fathers. This is achieved by the detailed representation of Michael's subjectivity as internally focalised and as representing extreme emotional states. For instance, as he is fighting Flackie it seems he is engaged in 'a mad spasm that went on and on' (111). Saxby's (2002) formalist description of this climactic episode reveals a traditional masculinist ideology:

Gently but relentlessly Southall pushes Michael further into clarity, every minute of resentment bearing him inexorably to the showdown that must come with Bully Boy

The episode is read here as the emergence of a natural machismo—connoted by the use of ‘inexorably’ and the high modality of ‘must come’—as the boy is inducted into manhood by a ritual warrior’s bleeding. However, as Lake and Damousi (1995) explain, there is a double bind for the warrior because

[i]n wars men could attain heroism, but they might also be plunged into a crisis of masculinity as they in some way or another failed to measure up to impossible standards. And paradoxically war could destroy the very manhood they were meant to prove ... ’ (5).

Potentially within the traditional paradigm of masculinity to which Saxby alludes, Michael can become the fictional war hero but there is more than physical risk involved. In this case it is Flackie who suffers the diminution of his ‘manhood’ but Michael, the ‘winner’, who suffers intensely over the outcomes of the experience, much as his father still does.

I argue that a reading of *Bread and Honey* as a traditional war/adventure narrative misses the symbolic incorporation and problematisation of the Anzac spatio-temporality and the representation of Michael’s emotional insights throughout the episode. The climactic battle occurs on the cold cloudy autumn morning with the enemy, Bully Boy McBaren, Flackie and Ray Farlow appearing invincible in their elevated position on the cliffs above the beach. This spatiality instantiates the Anzac metanarrative of the morning of the Gallipoli landing. Michael’s fear of the ‘enemy’ boys represents the metanarrative’s participants as inexperienced ‘boy soldiers’ sent to their deaths in Anzac Cove. When engagement with Flackie finally occurs, Michael finds the consummation of fighting is at first delicious and he has an overwhelming sense of personal empowerment: ‘Yeh, Dad, *resisting aggression*’ (112). The fatuousness of this transcendent conceptualisation of the event is understood as a lie by the reader because the ultimate provocation came from

Michael's insult thrown at Flackie. Michael cannot honestly claim the justification of self-defence. Michael's thoughts are constructed in line with the approved 'form of mental structures and categories of perception and thought' legitimated by state ideology in terms of national sovereignty. Michael's sense of empowerment is soon overtaken by emotional emptiness and a sense of futility. This parallels Dr Cameron's feelings about the catastrophic bombing of Dresden.⁷ In fact, Michael's more noble original concern was to protect Margaret (104). This is in line with White's (1986) argument, mentioned above, that men fight for their family and community rather than for the larger national project. Michael's initial sense of triumph dissipates into meaningless isolation: 'Was this the way it was with wars? The people you fought for not caring. Did you fight for nothing? After it was over did they all go home, not looking back, shrugging it off, forgetting that you weren't the same any more?' (113). As calm and rationality return, Michael sees his first idea about the 'badge' of the warrior marking his heroism forever, as naive (112). The issue, thus stated, returns readers to considerations of the larger socio-cultural context, the meaning of the war experiences of the veterans of the numerous international conflicts, including the Vietnam War. It problematises the attitude of the Australian society to the Vietnam veterans who were largely effaced from popular and official history for decades due to the prevalence of strong anti-war sentiments (Lake and Damousi 1995:3).

The 'primacy of relations' (Bourdieu 1998:vii), as mentioned above, is the emergent principle of the fiction as the high modernist angst Michael has just experienced is evaluated by Michael's post-combat focalisation. This possibility of intersubjectivity is foregrounded, for instance, in Michael's attitude to Flackie after their fight. First, Michael's initial celebration of victory is problematised by his focalisation of his victim:

⁷ R. W. Connell argues that '[m]odern states kill on a horrific scale, and gender is central to this fact. Probably the most destructive single action in modern history was not the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, but the relatively forgotten fire bombing of Dresden, a town of no military significance, by the British and American air forces in February 1945. About 135,000 civilians were burned to death in a day during an attack which followed mechanically from a bureaucratic planning process. Masculine toughness had become institutionalised as in an "area bombing" approach that delivered genocide; and no process in a military

'Flackie was huddled in the water, heaped up like something thrown away, heaped there sobbing' (112). Second, concern is expressed for the enemy whose sacrifice is no different from his own: 'Did you thrash people who lay down and cried? What were they crying about? Would you ever know?' (113). Finally, this high point of alienation is moderated by the value of victory and its separation and humiliation of the 'other' is repudiated as Michael says to Flackie, 'Look I don't care. It could have been the other way' (113). In terms of reconceptualisations of history, the subversive potential of Bourdieu's (1998:40) 'reconstruction of genesis' is demonstrated here as Michael 'retrieves the possibility that things could have been and still could be different' (40). Michael's statement is the corollary to his grandmother's earlier compassion for all mothers who lose their sons in battle (24). The compassion is clear and his failure to value intersubjective possibilities is regretted: 'Flackie shuffled farther and farther away, looking horrible, looking like he'd been broken and didn't want to live another hour. It was sad somehow' (114). This is one aspect of war that subjects like Dr Cameron desire to forget and it underpins his claims that an annual hour of ritual commemoration is a reductive hypocrisy, an entirely inadequate acknowledgement of the complexity of the heinous loss of life and mass destruction of international conflicts (8). Unlike his father, Michael does not walk away from the significant implications of this. The ramifications of warring must be remembered, mourned and commemorated as these processes are essential if the lie of historical erasure is to be avoided. Michael is no longer deceived by the culture's reductive metanarratives of war and representations that construct it as 'exciting' (24).

The violent patterns of masculine subjectivity that Michael regards as fixed in Bully Boy and Flackie, his ignorance of anything about them, make his fear much worse than it needs to be and it means that he overreacts to their appearance above the beach. This is made clear for the reader by shifting the focalisation briefly to the other boys'

points of view. But the fight is a public act and at first Michael is concerned that his attack on Flackie—a performance of hegemonic masculinity—is witnessed by other masculine subjects like Bully Boy and Ray Farlow. The implication is that it would be a waste if it were not (112). Bourdieu (2001:53) argues that ‘Manliness ... is an eminently *relational* notion, constructed in front of and for other men and against femininity, in a kind of fear of the female, firstly in oneself’ and Saxby (1998:313) comments that ‘Michael’s expression of his independence, his manhood, must be consummated in public’. The irony is that Flackie as a focaliser perceives himself as being emotionally socially marginalised in much the same way that Michael views his lack of intersubjectivity with family members (8, 25). Equally ironic is that Bully Boy does not witness the fight because he responsibly leaves the beach to return Margaret to her father (113). I argue that in *Bread and Honey*, Southall undermines the conceptualisation of the masculine subject as unitary and having a natural propensity to violence represented in his earlier fictions like *The Fox Hole* (1967) and *Let the Balloon Go* (1968).

Although Australian women have always been active in both pro-war and anti-war movements in Australia their collective histories have only had access to the nation’s metanarrative with the publication of second wave feminist research (particularly Lake 1995:74-5; Macintyre 1999:162-3; Evans 1995:239-41). The ‘primacy of relations’ (Bourdieu 1998:vii) or positive intersubjectivity in *Bread and Honey*, as mentioned above, acknowledges the impact on women’s life experiences devolving from national warfare. This does not happen in *The Racketty Street Gang*. Macintyre (1999:166) argues that after World War I ‘[t]he gendered division of protector and protected also persisted, hardening the aggressive qualities of masculinity, emphasising the vulnerability of femininity’. Carmel Shute’s feminist research argues that women ‘waited’ in ‘abject powerlessness’ (1975/1995:31). The discourse here is marked by the vituperative feminism that frames the history of feminine/masculine as a history of women solely as victims of masculine

domination.⁸ This oppositional discourse is not redressed until Damousi and Lake's historiographic and gender studies volume *Gender and War: Australians at war in the twentieth century* (1995) which introduces a tentatively relational analytical frame for gender relations into Australian war historiography. The complicity of women is acknowledged here as, for instance, evidenced in the field of children's literature by a number of fictions Mary Grant Bruce and Ethel Turner contributed to promote the war effort (Scutter 1997:54-7; Caesar 1999:1499). Pausacker's (1994) view of Anzac Day as 'Australia's most masculine institution' aligns with other feminist research (Summers 1975:380-7; Shute 1975:24-5) but overlooks the implicit complementarity for women in the commemoration because they bear emotional and economic losses in the course of any war and its aftermath.

Bread and Honey is, then, significantly pro-feminist in its inclusion of the points of view of Australian women in its representation of Michael's grandmother and Mrs. Farlow. Grandma's view is that 'Anzac Day is a time for tenderness, for remembering people you have loved. I feel no hate. How can you hate a German mother weeping for her son?' (24). Significantly Michael focalises his grandmother's loss in three wars and is shocked: 'She had lost her husband in the First World War, two sons in the Second World War, and a grandson was still in hospital from something that had happened in Vietnam years ago. Anzac Day must have been a *horrible* day for her, when he came to think of it' (16). Grandma's hand-made wreath for presentation at the war memorial during the Anzac Day service (2) is 'a wreath of leaves and chrysanthemums, green for heroes, white for sorrows, and red for love' (118). This problematises '*pro patria mori*' by suggesting the complexity of its social impact: war 'heroes' imply 'sorrows' for others. It certainly foregrounds the suffering of women as well as of the men. Representation of this relational aspect of '*pro*

⁸ Shute (1975) argued that World War I 'crystallised and consummated the Victorian doctrine of 'separate spheres' which had been slowly undermining the ideological foundation of the women's movement from the 1890s. Warfare, it was proclaimed, was inarguably the preserve of man, and hence woman could no longer be conceived the equal, potential or otherwise, of man, the "noble warrior"' (1975/1995:30).

patria mori' is significant, although the general failure to acknowledge the validity of the women's perspective on the national symbolic is represented in the discourse by the comment 'when [Michael] came to think of it'. This shows the usual marginalisation of women's views but at the same time advocates the inclusion of women's stories. *Bread and Honey* asserts that women like Michael's Grandmother whose loved ones die—siblings, husbands and children—have a large stake in the symbolic meanings attached to the nation's military metanarratives.

The internal retroversion to 'a big question' Michael tries to remember as this Anzac Day progresses is finally articulated in the fiction's closure. Michael's question was, as posed to his grandmother on an Anzac Day years before (2-3), 'Is this because people remember Grandma or to pretend that they don't forget?' (118). The discourse implies the careful selection of the story existents and the ideological shaping of the national metanarratives so that remembering and forgetting are quite selective. The construction and reconstruction of national collective histories and the extent of the citizen's agency are problematised here because Michael understands that the story of his fight on the beach will be retold from different points of view by each of the participants. Every narrator will desire to be the hero of his own version of the story and will want to represent himself as a 'winner' (112, 114). The discourse suggests the fragility, indeed the opacity, of nationalist military metanarratives. Michael's comment on his own question is that 'It's a day for forgetting, anyway, same as for remembering, I guess ... We'll go together' (118). Ambiguity and ambivalence remain in the low modality and the hesitancy signalled by the ellipsis; however the relational predominates and the mutuality of the desire to commemorate loss directs genuine intersubjectivity.

Many feminists argue that the Anzac tradition is a nationalist and masculinist mythologising which is unacceptable in any form. For instance, Howe (1995) reiterates her views, first expressed in the mid-1970s, that

[h]owever much the meaning of Anzac Day is stretched to include hitherto excluded groups, it cannot divest itself of its nationalistic, militaristic tradition nor of its class-based, race-based, ethnocentric and male-centred origins. (309)

Others argue that the anti-war protest movement of which *Bread and Honey* is a part, in concert with other counter-cultural movements of the 1960s, launched Australian society on a path of 'diversification and liberalisation' that meant change was 'profound and irreversible' (Gerster and Bassett 1991:187; also Lake and Damousi 1999:3). Certainly within the field of children's literature the central ambivalence of *Bread and Honey* contains a significant rupture in the representation of the national social space to Australian children. The fiction pluralises the possible readings of Australian official war narratives and creates a space for diverse viewpoints. The inclusion of women's stories and the stories of masculine subjectivity that resist metanarratives of machismo as empowering is a transformative move in the field. As a 'reconstruction of genesis' (Bourdieu 1998:40), *Bread and Honey* problematises the ideology and inclusiveness of the metanarratives of the Anzac Legend and authorises an interrogative stance for children.⁹

In the next section of this chapter, I consider the ways that an Australian fiction authorises an interrogative stance for children with regard to Australian metanarratives of a white settler society. In particular I examine the discursive literary strategies employed in *Secrets of Walden Rising* as it narrativises contentious historiographic issues and subverts dominant readings of the colonialist metanarratives.

Resignifying the Metanarratives of Australia as White Settler Society

Richard White (1997:14) argues that national historiographies give 'a diverse contemporary society a common past' and confer on 'the geographical space a cultural unity'. Here White's (1997) assessment of the Australian context aligns with Bourdieu's

⁹ Metcalf (1997:52) argues that such a stance is in fact typical of the narratorial position adopted by

generalised argument about the significance of 'collective histories' to the symbolic capital, and hence metacapital, of the nation-state. Earlier in this chapter, I argued like Turner (1994) and White (1997), that for most citizens of Australia everyday life occurs without reference to matters of the nation. However there are contexts in which national issues dominate public affairs and at these times the meaning of the 'nation' may be sharply contested. The conjunction of a number of such debates in the early 1990s could not be ignored, and this marks a period of rupture in understandings of the metanarratives of 'Australia'. White (1997:18) argues specifically that in Australia, the 1988 Bicentennial's theme of 'Celebration of the Nation' with its explicit postmodern 'gloss of multiple identities' reveals a 'tendency to leave out of the equation the contest for dominance. All multiple identities are seen as equal, when in fact some are more equal than others'. Again, this is the local application of Bourdieu's findings that relational issues dominate all aspects of the social space. Curthoys' (1997) feminist history also delineates the conflicting national metanarratives, reflecting the same extremes in her comments as do the political stories of the political leaders mentioned in the introduction to this chapter:

To historians these debates revealed the continuing strength of non-Aboriginal Australia's belief in stories of pioneering, settlement and rightful occupation of the land, with many still holding the view that invasion and dispossession had been justified because Aboriginal people did not use the land productively. At the same time, the Mabo debate also revealed the growing strength of an alternative historical understanding emphasising the impossibility of justifying invasion in these or any terms, and valuing rather than condemning Aboriginal societies. (31-2)

The first set of stories represents the conservative white settler society perspective that the Howard government currently promulgates. The second set of stories with its discourse of invasion represents the post-1980s revisionist histories that provided Labor Prime Minister

Paul Keating with his collective histories of Australia. It is not surprising, perhaps, that the role of the school subject, 'History', in Australian curricula has been contentious over the last decade (Macintyre 1997:xii). In the new millennium, Australian secondary school History syllabuses emphasise the significance of different points of view in all historiography. For instance in Kate Cameron, Jennifer Lawless and Carmel Young's *Investigating Australian History in the Twentieth Century* (2000/2001), a history text book for Year 10 students, the writers explain that 'The arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney Harbour, for instance, can be seen from the ship or the shore; ...' (x). The view from the ship, of the British arrivals, has been the dominant paradigm for most of Australia's historiography while the postmodern and postcolonial view 'from the land' is contentious.

Secrets of Walden Rising narrativises these controversial historiographic issues and offers a re-reading of the colonialist metanarratives. As a postmodernist fiction processes of textuality, narrative constructions and the politics of representations are foregrounded in *Secrets of Walden Rising*. The main focalising child participant, Brendan, is a contemporary British migrant whose defamiliarised gaze assesses the outback town and citizens of Jacks Marsh. The fiction's postcolonial perspective pays 'rigorous attention to those signifying systems, cultural arrangements and distributions of power that have created inequalities, repression, injustices and violence' (Edwards 1998:4). Brendan's experiences allow him to hear stories of squatters, gold miners and of the pastoralists' appropriation of vast tracts of supposedly uninhabited land, as told by the heirs of the first settlers. These stories indicate the inequitable power distributions between different categories of white settlers as well as between white settlers and indigenous races and non-British immigrants. The repression of violence in traditional national stories is also addressed in embedded narratives, one of which reveals the ruthless settler 'game' that resulted in a 'vanished' indigenous tribe (77). *Secrets of Walden Rising*, in Bourdieu's (1998:40), terms, attempts a literary 'reconstruction of genesis'. The narrative patterning,

spatio-temporal subversions and tropes all imply an interrogative stance to the official narratives of the nation and the familial stories of its citizens: the fiction clearly confronts dominant cultural paradigms (Stephens 1992:50) and is unquestionably a fiction about 'the politics of history' (Fernandez 2001:42).

Secrets of Walden Rising subverts fictive representations of Australian national stories as adventure genre, or television costume drama. The fiction is recursive in its use of 'television' as a metonym for fantasy. Brendan, the latter day 'POM', suffers being mimicked and wears a badge of 'otherness' in his sunburn (8). Brendan and his Dad are lured to the Australian outback by the colonialist narratives of wilderness, adventure, frontier conquest and new opportunities. Brendan's father believes that 'We're going to make tractors roar, make Land Rovers purr! We're going bush. Drovers, mobs of cattle, sheep, rivers thick with fish ...' (9). This is the 'working man's paradise' mythology of the nation (White 1981:41) and is metonymically invoked by Dad's belief that he will be 'his own boss, sniffing the country air' (12). 'Australia' is constructed here as the New Eden and this national metanarrative has a 'teleological dynamic' for the immigrants who embrace it (White 1997:21). Disappointment often follows, as with Brendan and his father. For them 'Australia' still primarily signifies as a 'new' land, lacking the ancient stories that European nation-states typically embroider into their metanarratives. However Brendan discovers that there are 'trolls' and 'ghosts' in the Australian landscape just as there are back in his home in Uxbridge, England.

In its ironic engagement with Australian literary history *Secrets of Walden Rising* overturns romantic colonial constructions of literary spatiality. We recall from Chapter 5 that the contrasting representations of spatiality in Australian children's fictions of the 1950s like *Tiger in the Bush* and *Good Luck to the Rider* show how 'The image of nature depicted in art is essentially ideological, and the most important relation it bears is not to the "real" qualities in nature, for example, but to an ideological formation of nature in the

culture' (Turner 1993:33). The traditional spatialities of the land as either sacred or productive space that Wrightson, Chauncy and Phipson represent in their 1950s fictions are gone. The fiction's ironic inversion of traditional representations of Romantic literary spatiality is signalled by the title's allusion to *Walden, or, Life in the Woods* (1854) by David Henry Thoreau. This is an iconic North American non-fiction romantic text that represents an account of two years (1845-7) spent living in rustic simplicity at Walden Pond. Here the narrator experiences only a subsistence existence as he seeks 'to put into action a program of self-reliance, whereby the individual spirit might thrive in detachment from the fractured world of mass society' (Ousby 1988:1039). Walden symbolises the time of the narrator's spiritual enlightenment, as the outcome of his experiences in the wilderness. It is used ironically, then, in *Secrets of Walden Rising* since in the fiction's storyline, the Australian wilderness, or outback, is represented as a drought-stricken, despoiled landscape: a dust bowl, ripped by the huge agricultural machines that Brendan's father intends to repair. To his chagrin, he finds little farm machinery currently in use. Brendan's experiences are hellish rather than spiritually affirming; unlike Thoreau's narrator, Brendan is entering a 'fractured world' rather than escaping from one.

The use of 'Walden' as nomenclature is significant also in the implications of the intertextual dialogue that results from the subversion of the Romantic conceptualisation of the child and childhood that is explicit in Thoreau's text. The intertextuality comments ironically on the focalisation of the child, in this case, Brendan. Thoreau believed that 'every child begins the world again' (1854/1937:262) and views the world with a wisdom born of innocence: 'Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily' (1854/1937:308). The irony lies in Brendan's being a disaffected child narrator. His 'innocence' is in fact a lack of local experience that distances Brendan from the dominant ideologies of the community. His marginalised gaze ironises the landscape's failure to appear anything like a paradise.

The employment of metaphoric metonymy is the most significant discursive strategy for distancing readers from the dominant traditional point of view in national stories. While the local children hold the view from 'the ship', contained in the oral histories of their parents and grandparents, Brendan 'sees from the shore', literally, as he observes Walden, 'The gold town' (38), buried for decades beneath the man-made Lake Fedder, re-surface. As the dam dries up in a season of severe drought the old town gradually reappears, little by little above the waterline.¹⁰ Metonymically then, for readers, the Australian nineteenth-century socio-cultural context is revived as Walden reappears. Brendan pursues historical knowledge in order to understand the tensions and conflicts of twentieth century rural Australia schematised in the spatio-temporal frame of Jacks Marsh. He 'discovers', for instance, the secrets of late nineteenth-century pastoral Australia that still necessitate family secrets and ignite local feuds. Brendan eventually understands that the 'shadow of Walden reached across the flat into Jacks Marsh' (72), rather 'as if everything here was dying as Walden came back to life' (77). The secrets of the past are literally rising before Brendan's eyes. This climaxes in the primary storyline with Brendan's phantasmic involvement in murders motivated by greed for stolen bushrangers' loot. The 'reality' of historical events, even as memory, is affirmed here, and the argument made that however distant the issues they raise may appear to be, matters of injustice must be redressed and reparations made for their consequences.

Narrative patterning is also of interest here, particularly the fact that the fiction has two orientations. The first one is in a symbolic mode and intimates the rupture that is to come from the re-emergence of the nineteenth-century landscape. The second orientation is in the realist mode and introduces the twentieth-century concerns of the main participants. This foregrounds the genre-mixing of the fiction and immediately offers a demonstration of how different genres and discursive practices construct different kinds of 'experience'

¹⁰ The drowning of towns, like Adaminaby, beneath new dam waters became a part of the post-war dam

and 'truth'. In the first brief orientation, an effaced narrator describes an eerie secret cove, lying undisturbed in night silence, where parts of a mysterious green bird gradually break the surface of the otherwise still waters. This bird is later revealed as a weathercock on the roof of the former Walden Hotel, but it is some way into the narrative before Brendan works out what it is and so demystifies it for readers. The bird is both 'ghost' (21) and a reality, capable of 'silently destroying' much more than just 'the soft calm of the cove' (20). Readers learn later that past attempts to destroy the green bird have been made, but have always failed (39). It remains symbolic as an omen of chaos and is important throughout the fiction and in its closure. The opening paragraph of the fiction is a single sentence paragraph: 'In the deep night the cove was waiting' (1). Discursively, here, the personification of the cove ascribes it with agency. Socio-culturally, the word 'cove' is portentous in Australia's historiographic metanarratives: the first colonial settlement was at Sydney Cove, early agriculture begins at Farm Cove and then later, of course, there is Anzac Cove at Gallipoli. The fantastic secret cove remains Brendan's secret for quite some way into the story. Determining what the place is and its historical significance brings Brendan into contact with various members of the Jacks Marsh community. In closure, Walden again takes on fantasy dimensions, as will be discussed further below.

The second orientation in realist mode introduces the main child participants in the story in the setting of the school playground. The boys' conflicted and hierarchical relationships are immediately represented. The episode develops around the boys' examination of a picture that Brendan is sketching (2). This enables the episode to also function as a discussion of the construction of cultural texts and also of how such texts may be read and interpreted differently. The reader sees that the point of view of the producer of a cultural text effects the meanings constructed in the text and that different perspectives result in a different story. Thus we have a literary dialogue about textual

genesis. The discussion among the child participants—and therefore with the reader—concerns competencies and aesthetic preferences in the production, reading and interpretation of different representational modes: fantasy, realism, humour and symbolism.

Brendan and the other children are in the playground of the iconic Australian one-roomed outback primary school, similar to that represented in *The Min-Min* (1966), discussed in Chapter 4. Brendan is sitting alone and drawing. The reading of his visual text becomes a centre of diverse interpretations and growing controversy among the boys who gather around Brendan. The episode is a *mise en abyme*, a ‘mirror-text’, which parallels the larger issues of the national collective histories. Again the reader’s attention is drawn to the national metanarratives as carefully shaped stories that selectively remember and forget. These are debated first in the dialogue between Tony and Brendan. Tony challenges Brendan’s realist drawings of the galahs as lacking in imagination, ‘a bit dull’ (2). Ironically the ‘ugly bird’—‘hostile’ and ‘ready to explode into shrieking anger’—symbolises Jacks Marsh for Brendan but he does not dare tell Tony this (3). When Bago and Elliott join the discussion the reader sees Bago’s inability to give significance to anything that is not directly representational (5). He ridicules the ‘fantastic’ drawing of the galah with fangs that Brendan had made by altering his original sketch to please Tony. The form and manner of representations and the differing reader receptions are thus significant issues in the text. Realist representations are assumed to be unmediated reflections of reality, as they often were in the late nineteenth century in Australian colonies where the colonial literature could compete with that of the imperial centre by its ‘commitment to the ordinary life as the true subject of art and literature’ (White 1981:58). It is most important that the fiction ensures that the reader understands Brendan to be fully alert to the different readings of his visual texts that are being offered. Awareness of the different viewpoints clearly empowers him as he understands something of the values and attitudes of his

classmates. The fiction is already suggesting through this *mise en abyme* the impossibility of a unitary history.

The fiction also achieves the subversion of those traditional masculinist metanarratives discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The latter chapter shows that the construction of these versions of Australian histories is often in terms of heroes and men of great vision and awe-inspiring determination. The Cardiff family sees their history from this point of view. The imperialist nature of their enterprise is signified and ironised because the family's Walden hotel is named *The Empire*. A third generation local, Elliott Cardiff, says to Brendan, 'Walden is *my* town, Pom' and to his school peers in general: 'We were here first ... This is our place' (41). Brendan experiences the temptations to the power of possession when he first walks the streets of the resurrected Walden (92-7) and he speaks to the portentous green weathercock: 'This is my town, bird. You can fly off' (92). Effaced from such white settler histories are the stories of indigenous populations. Claims of *terra nullius* are essential to the Cardiff family's legitimacy as landowners. The Cardiff forebears are also implicated in the genocide of the local Aboriginal population. White (1981) argues of nineteenth-century colonial society that it shared the racism based on Social Darwinist ideas. These provided the intellectual underpinning for British imperialist ideology: 'As long as racial purity was maintained, as long as only the noblest racial strain was permitted to flourish in Australian soil, then the future of the Australian branch of the British race was secure' (White 1981:71). Thus Elliott must deny any claims of earlier occupation by Aboriginal populations so he dismisses a stone spearhead found near Walden as just 'a rock' (67). The effacement of the collective histories of non-British migrants is also revealed in Tony Lee's storyline which I discuss below. Brendan's perspective of the local community is shaped by such diverse and contradictory views and in making his own judgement: 'The stories of Harry and Tony had changed Walden into a town of murder. That made the difference' (72). The compelling economic imperative of

profit—from agricultural and pastoral land and the discovery of ore and mineral deposits—is elided yet underpins the continuing feud between the Cardiffs and Bago's family about land (66-7).

The demise of traditional colonial rural Australia is depicted in Jacks Marsh which is 'half a ghost town' in a despoiled and unproductive landscape (10-11). The hotel is symbolically named *The Terminus* since it is, in its present owner's terms, at 'The goddam end of everything' (33). Ironically again, century-old sepia photographs of Walden's main street and its community leaders hang on the walls in *The Terminus*. The rail head that this hotel was intended to service never arrived in Jacks Marsh because Walden's gold ran out (12). Knowing the different versions of Walden's history, Brendan studies the re-surfacing township:

He found a small rectangle low in the water near the ruined church, that must be the cheapjack, the ancestral property that Tony was so proud of. So Elliott's ancestor built the Empire at one end of the street and Tony's built at the other end and Bago's ancestor dug gold for them both. Harry's bushranger probably robbed them both. Still seems all right. (55)

Brendan's wry focalisation is partly the result of his resentment of his marginalisation by his peers, but there is also recognition of the perpetuation of old values that still influence attitudes and behaviours. The whole colonial enterprise is constructed as economically motivated, with codes of greed and self interest determining behaviour and overriding other values. *Secrets of Walden Rising* then undermines that legendary Australian masculine attribute of mateship. This iconic virtue is deconstructed as mythic in the light of the families' three generations of rivalries and hatreds which re-surface among the boys. Uttered as a non sequitur, but functioning as prolepsis, Old Harry Sims says ominously of Walden that 'Sometimes it comes back' (67). In Harry's fight with Lean Wilson over 'Thunderbolt's treasure', Harry cries, 'No! This is not yours, this is ours! Ours!', but

Wilson's retort subverts the meaning of the treasure when he states that they are now only competing over the size of their gravestones (152-3). It is Brendan and Bago who are left to discover that the supposed treasure is worthless dust (165).

Traditional settler narratives recirculate in *Secrets of Walden Rising*, metonymically figured in the drowned buildings of Walden that are now empty façades. The perpetuation of its values depends upon the economically dominant maintaining narratorial control of national historiography and suppressing the secrets that contradict their metanarrative. The fiction argues that this dominant view is an exhausted narrative of empire, its power aligned with violence and its legitimacy threatened by unresolved moral dilemmas. The residual effects of these conflicts require resolutions rather than effacement from the nation's collective histories. The fiction represents the community refusal of correction and transition; embracing reconciliation and compensation is unthinkable; a new negotiation with landscape, meaning and value seems beyond imagining. Patriarchal modes of operation and social interaction and economic motivations predominate, along with competitive rather than cooperative social practices. The discursive strategies employed in the closure signify the dangerous temptation to alter nothing and to perpetuate patriarchal/imperialist social structures and practices. The personified 'ghost' copper weathercock on the roof of Walden's hotel 'creaked over the water' and is 'shining' its warning message loud and clear for Brendan who heeds it. Bago does not even register its existence (167-8). His final line of dialogue suggests the unwillingness of subjects to read the signs. Stephens' (1999) argument that Bago and Brendan, 'two mutually hostile boys who learn to cooperate and finally become mates' (64), fails to note that the alliance is only forged in the fantasy of Walden and against the mutual threat of Lean Wilson's murderous intentions. In the closure the alliance seems untenable as the possibility of intersubjectivity is problematised in a brief but disturbing dialogue. Bago reflects on the violence that he witnessed and also perpetrated: 'It was easy. Like killing sheep', is his

comment (168). Readers will find this a chilling pronouncement in the mouth of a child subject. It functions as a warning, asserting the need to confront past violence and renounce it; implicit is the idea that ignoring it will in fact perpetuate it. Readers are positioned to decide between the implications of Brendan's understanding of the symbolic message of warning and Bago's sense of empowerment through violence as a means of control and domination. Earlier in the storyline Brendan explicitly asserts that Jacks Marsh's 'troll' or 'bird, or ghost or spirit', is real and permanent and cannot be disproved like 'the troll of Uxbridge' or 'turned off like a TV for a commercial break' (77). In closure Brendan's gaze again becomes defamiliarised as it was in the orientation, and it seems that his attempt at 'the dehaunting of Walden' (88) is unsuccessful (167). The reader sees Brendan 'catching language in the act of formation' and 'recognising and assessing the effects of that formation' (Davies 1997:129). That is, readers are active or agential, aware of discursive power and reader positioning. This is the optimal reading state that postmodernist and post-structuralist fictions promote.

The significances of *Secrets of Walden Rising* are the result of an examination of the text as a literary fiction. Stephens (1999) and Fernandez (2001) discuss *Secrets of Walden Rising* as an example of the 'boy's own adventure' (Fernandez 2001:42) in which the primary level story predominates as 'a kind of treasure hunt' (Stephens 1999:64). This is perhaps how many readers will understand the fiction but it is possible to see it as more complex. Stephens and Fernandez's discussions ignore the literary and historical tropes which circumscribe the text's full range of significations. Assumptions that the fiction is about late twentieth century multiculturalism and comparisons with young adult *bildungsroman* also distort their readings, in my view. Here I assert that significances lie in the literary discursive practices as much as in storyline and participant interaction and genre conventions. In this fiction the deployment of extended tropes and motifs occurs throughout the fiction. The centrality of the metaphoric metonymy of the submerged

township of Walden has been discussed above. Others have to do with water as well as some that have particular resonances for Australian collective histories.

Here in *Secrets of Walden Rising* the literary discourse is marked by important tropes to do with water. For instance, the symbolic pouring rain in the closure is not a cliché because it is not, in fact, enough water to wash away ‘the sins of the fathers’ (165). The rivers around Jacks Marsh have stopped moving and not just because of the drought, but because of the algal blooms that infest them when fertilisers and insecticides continually pollute the rivers (26). The boys argue about who owns the water that covers the former gold-rush town of Walden (49). In the name, Lake Fedder, the qualifier ‘lake’ implies something natural rather than what it actually is, namely a disruption to the natural landscape (16). The presence of the dam is another way that white occupation has interfered with the environment and redirected the uses of the vital water resources.

Niall’s (1984:268) commentary on Ruth Park’s historical children’s fiction *Playing Beattie Bow* (1980) was that finally an Australian children’s writer was able to find ‘ghosts of our own’. *Secrets of Walden Rising* pursues the histories ‘ghosts’ in a more confronting way. Representations of white settler society as a pastoral are dismantled. Brendan’s troll of Uxbridge is an imagined ghost—it is a child’s horror story that impacts on the real world only once when a frightened boy runs onto the road (51, 54–5). The English troll establishes a contrast between the imagined ghost and the ‘real ghosts’ that refuse submergence in the texts of Australian social life. The motif implies that the ghosts of the Australian frontier society represent real issues that impact on lived experience and constructions and reconstructions of national metanarratives.

The processes integral to Australian colonisation typical of white settler societies, and recorded in their historiographies—that is, in conservative masculinist collective histories—are under attack in *Secrets of Walden Rising*. Naming, appropriating, possessing and taming the wilderness are some of the colonial processes that the fiction problematises

for readers. The fiction validates the significance of historiographic narratives because, whether they are oral or written, they represent much more than just 'bluff and myth' as Brendan at first tries to regard them (55). However, at the same time, the fiction asserts the need for readers to understand that 'history' should now be pluralised as the significance of any storyline depends upon its view point, its intended purpose and audience. It then offers resignifications of numerous Australian metanarratives. It writes into the children's history the massacres of the aboriginal populations and in this storyline 'Australia' cannot connote a place of 'salvation' or of 'rural innocence' (White 1981:34-6). The fiction also interrogates the disenfranchisement of non-British ethnic minorities and the late twentieth century's metanarrative of multiculturalism which I discuss below in the final section of this chapter. *Secrets of Walden Rising* is, then, a literary response in Australian children's fiction that challenges the re-circulation of colonial white settler metanarratives. It narrativises the difficulty of re-imagining the future when the narratives of the past still represent it as a 'paradise' and attempt to suppress its ghost stories.

In the final section of this chapter I examine literary representations for children of Australia's metanarratives of multiculturalism. Into the new millennium, controversy still surrounds what are often seen as tokenistic migrant social policies that promulgate 'cultural diversity' without providing the infrastructure to enable it to become a structural reality. I foreshadowed earlier that the focus fiction here is *Have Courage Hazel Green* which offers a critique of the various phases of Australia's multicultural policies. However I also trace the emergence of the literary representation of the cultural diversity in *The Racketty Street Gang* and I revisit *Secrets of Walden Rising* to demonstrate how it offers a critique of the reductive, but supposedly pro-diversity, argument that Australia was always a cultural and ethnic 'mosaic' rather than monocultural.

Australia's Multiculturalism

Australia's multiculturalism is the most recent metanarrative of the nation articulated in several policy documents since the late 1970s. *Multiculturalism for All Australians: Our developing nationhood* (1982) is the first document. The third articulation of Australia's multiculturalism came in 1999 with the continuation of the Commonwealth government's National Multicultural Advisory Council. However the Council is only part-time, has no rights to funding and its secretariat is located within the Department of Immigration. In Bourdieusienne terms Australia's multiculturalism is an 'official rhetoric' of the state, that is, the top-down imposition of a conceptualisation of national identity defined as cultural pluralism (Jupp 2001:260). This is expressed in the Keating metanarrative mentioned above of a people who had overcome former prejudices—implicitly racial and ethnic—'to embrace diversity and tolerance with an egalitarian generosity'. This supplants the 1970s integrationist model and the post-war assimilationist model of migration which desired the maintenance of a homogeneous national culture already referred to as 'the Australian way of life'. The advantage of multiculturalism as a conceptualisation of the nation lies in the implication of the possibility of the continuous present tense as signified by the use of the present participle, 'developing' in the document's title. This links to the historians' trope of the 'creation' of the nation. However not all scholars and commentators see top-down policies of cultural diversity as liberatory. Stratton and Ang regard official multiculturalism as a strategy of containment because in this 'new understanding of national identity as a process of continual reinvention through the interaction of a plurality of ethnically defined imagined communities, the state takes on a new role as the guarantor of historical continuity' (1994:148). Stratton and Ang argue that it at least 'provides a framework for a politics of negotiation over the very content of the national culture, which is no longer imagined as something fixed and historically given but as something in the process of becoming' (1994:152). While Stratton and Ang (1994:151) argue that some beneficial

material effects could flow from the policy's implementation, they assert that there is still no guarantee that it will impact greatly on the nation's social structure, and thence on the lived experience of the nation's citizens. So in the new millennium, controversy still surrounds what is seen as another tokenistic migrant social policy in the promulgation of 'cultural diversity'. Dominant culture views clash with those of scholars who express minority culture perspectives. Even more criticism is levelled at the economic pragmatism underpinning the 'productive diversity' paradigm with its 'management for diversity' strategies (Hage 1994:30-3). This too perpetuates the mythology of tolerance that remains a vector of power: the tolerated are the recipients of the beneficence of the tolerant (Hage 1994:31-2).

In Chapters 2 and 3 I reiterated Bourdieu's (2001:117) argument that the universal citizen of liberal humanist epistemologies, typical of Western masculinist socio-political orders, inherently oppresses certain individuals and groups in these nation-states. The structural disempowerment of many social groups occurs because the universal situation 'recognises only abstract individuals, devoid of social qualities' (2001:106). Among such groups, I argue, children and feminine subjects are proper inclusions. Here I argue also for the inclusion of non-British migrants to Australia as they are also structurally disempowered. Homi K. Bhabha (1994) concurs with Bourdieu, arguing that '[t]he postcolonial perspective forces us to rethink the profound limitations of a consensual and collusive "liberal" sense of cultural community. It insists that cultural and political identity are constructed through a process of alterity' (175). He problematises the 'in-between-ness' that is central to 'making meaning' in a culture where '(dis)placement' is the usual immigrant experience (1994:38). Australia's multiculturalism addresses the problem of alterities by assertions of 'the productivity of cultural difference' (Stratton and Ang 1994:148). Homogenisation succeeds again if the privileged 'other' is given token access to power as a 'representative'. Sneja Gunew (1990:112) and Gayatri Spivak (1994:196)

argue that policies of tolerance and benevolence lead once again to homogenisation.

Alain Touraine (2000) argues that 'both monoculturalism and multi-culturalism are either ideological assertions or political campaigns, rather than social or cultural realities' (164). He writes that '... a society that can recognise the diversity of individuals, social groups and culture will be a strong society, provided that it can also allow them to communicate with one another by stimulating their desire to see that both they and the Other are involved in the same constructive task' (181). Similarly Spivak (1994:197) argues that all members of a community are entitled to be speaking subjects on any and all issues as long as they are self-reflexive about their positioning and are informed about the field of discussion. With such lived realities in mind, Touraine (2000:158) asserts the need to envision a future in which 'democracy must be defined as the politics of the Subject' because he argues that '[w]e cannot live together with our differences unless we recognise one another as Subjects' (ibid). Touraine's (2000) argument is that there is a need to move beyond the political fiction of the universal rights of the universal citizen and therefore beyond the philosophical and psychological fiction of the autonomous, coherent subject. He argues that '[u]nity cannot be imposed by either tradition or a globalized economy, the only possible unity is that of a democracy that strives to combine the greatest possible solidarity with the respect for the civil, social and cultural rights of every individual' (2000:30).

The structure of relations in the Australian national social space represented in the fictions discussed here, especially the third fiction in the *Hazel Green* series, *Have Courage*, *Hazel Green* (2001), indicate that there is much still to be accomplished to achieve a structurally democratic multiculturalism such as Touraine (2000) and Spivak (1994) envision. The failure of this conceptual potential to become the reality for Australian citizens and to ameliorate the effects of alterity and 'in-between-ness' is the thematic and narrative focus of the text. *The Racketty Street Gang* is the first children's

text to seriously offer an extended examination of immigrant stories in Australian children's fictions and to challenge the nation's metanarratives of egalitarianism and social class homogeneity. The fiction explicitly schematises the lack of change in social structures or operations of power with regard to race and ethnicity. This then sets the context for the analysis of the complex debate about Australia's multiculturalism narrativised in *Have Courage, Hazel Green*.

In *Secrets of Walden Rising* Tony's forebears have come from China to the gold fields of colonial New South Wales in the nineteenth century and stayed to become merchants, first in Walden and later in Jacks Marsh. The representation of the Lee family's continuing presence and oppression in Australia offers a postcolonial re-reading of the nation's myth of ethnic homogeneity, implying the reality of a longstanding ethnic diversity. More importantly, the fiction also indicates the failure of multiculturalism's rhetoric to alter the structural domination and symbolic violence experienced by non-British immigrants; Tony's family is represented as effectively subaltern in contemporary Australia just as it was a century ago. Tony is marginalised in the hierarchy of his school peers and therefore sometimes aligns with Brendan's experiences of domination and alienation in the school playground (4-5). The recency of Australia as officially ethnically diverse is repudiated as a part of this storyline. In part this echoes arguments by some commentators like Hudson and Bolton who assert that Australia was always 'a mosaic rather than a monolith' (1997:4). Stratton and Ang (1994) dismiss such thinking as facile: the material fact of de facto ethnic presence in the nation does not make it culturally diverse if the official dominant discourses of the nation efface the ethnic presence and the state's power structures repress migrant populations. In attempting to create the historiography of Chinese immigrants' narratives of Australia, Jan Ryan (1997) writes that:

[c]learly there is a profound ignorance about the variety of roles that peoples of Chinese extraction have played in Australia, and also of the ways these people have

been suppressed and prevented from moving outside those roles, both in their life experiences and in the historical discourse that has marginalised and 'coloured' these experiences. Both the agency and the multiple identities of Chinese have been repressed. (72)

The processes of disempowerment and marginalisation schematised in the narrative of the Lee family are those Ryan identifies in her research. Bourdieu's (2001:93) argument about the 'negative symbolic coefficient' attached to a stigmatised group comes to mind here because in the Anglo/other dualism, the non-Anglo migrant bears such a stigma. These racialised, hierarchical social relations are not rational but part of an androcentric mythology that requires continual reiteration and enforcement in order to perpetuate symbolic domination, in this case of people of Chinese background. When Tony tries to assert his rights to parts of the buried township of Walden he is silenced by Bago and Elliott (41-2). However Brendan is told of Tony's great grandfather's 'cheapjack' shop, 'the smallest shop in Walden, maybe in the world!' that was drowned by the dam (52). In fact, his family is still present in the town because the remains of the Chinese cemetery were left to be flooded, whereas the artifacts from the European cemetery were respected and so removed (53, 137). The Lees own the Family Store in Jacks Marsh and Brendan learns a little of Tony's family narrative. This latter represents proudly agential participants who were frontiersmen and women in hostile territory with tales of physical and spiritual toughness rivalling those of any squatter or drover (52-3). Tony's narrative rejects representation of the individual's subjugation despite oppression. The Lee family's history thus enters literary discourse. A double articulation is achieved by the enunciation of Tony's contemporary denial of marginalisation. Understanding the legitimacy of Tony's links with Walden, Brendan decides that Tony should know about the old township's reappearance: 'It wasn't fair to keep Walden a secret from a kid who was so much involved in it'. Tony, however, has no interest in knowing about it and says: 'No. It's finished,

drowned. It can't come back, ever' (53), and he walks off. There is abjection in Tony's refusal to acknowledge race-based structural disempowerment and his acceptance of past injustices not redressed or used as a platform for contemporary transformations.

Secrets of Walden Rising advances the view that little material or cultural change has occurred in official Australian social policy with regard to race and ethnicity from White Australia through to multiculturalism. Against this view stand the two explicit immigration policies before the inception of the official rhetoric of multiculturalism in the 1980s. The paradigmatic shifts in the discourse of Australia's first three decades of post-war immigration policies are traced in the late Jean Martin's authoritative sociological critique, *The Migrant Presence* (1978). She analyses the assumptions that the earliest post-war migrants were easily 'assimilable' without the need for any structural changes to the Australian public sphere (Martin 1978:78). Later, under integrationist policies, expectations of participation in the public sphere signify the importance of cultural diversity to the nation-state. However, Martin (1978) argues that this remains a discursive strategy, official rhetoric, rather than a social policy with material effects. Her conclusions align with those of Bourdieu (1998) and Touraine (2000), when she argues that state institutions can sponsor ethnic diversity in ways that 'disjoin culture and structure' and 'promote purely symbolic forms of confirming identity: that is, forms of reward, recognition and group organisation that have no follow through, no implications, for ethnic interests or for substantive participation in social structures' (1978:216).

Australian children's fiction publishing in the 1960s demonstrates an awareness of the changing ethnic composition of the population. Maurice Saxby (2002:102) argues that 'a vogue for stories based on the adventure and misadventures of migrant families' is evident but argues that 'most were undistinguished narratives'. In this regard, and in many other ways, Len H. Evers' *The Racketty Street Gang* (1960) is a progressive text that ruptures dominant discourses. Saxby (1993) comments that

In having a German migrant family now living in Sydney's inner city, becoming integrated into the life there, Len Evers was breaking new ground in Australian children's books. Previously, foreigners had been pretty much stereotypes or oddities ... before nineteen-seventy, there had been little attempt, apart from the *Racketty Street Gang*, to reflect the changes in society as Australia became a multicultural nation. (418)

The word 'foreigners' now connotes xenophobia. The use of 'integrated' records the official contemporary description of the desired outcomes of the Australian immigration policy, so that 'foreign-ness' can disappear. The slippage from 'integrated' to 'multicultural nation' elides significant changes in social policies that are ideologically distinct if, in fact, indistinguishable in material effects. The three migrant participants in the family are focalisers so that the reader is given access to a monolithic 'migrant' point of view. This is empowering for the represented participant and privileges their experiences and attitudes.¹¹ Antagonism directed towards the 'New Australians' or 'Reffos' is enunciated, and immediately revoked, very early in *The Racketty Street Gang* (12, 17). One of the boys mocks Anton's name but is deemed ignorant by his peers, as is the abusive truck driver. This view is counteracted as the man's partner tries to buy Anton's silence and cooperation and comments that 'He's an ignorant sort of bloke who don't know no better' (12). It is assumed that the life in the country of birth will be left behind. The impossibility of this for individual subjects is not canvassed in the public discourse of immigration. Anton's challenge to Stanley's first aggressive engagement of 'Anyway, what're you standing around here for, mate?' is met with embarrassment at the challenge but an ideologically powerful cliché: 'It's a free country' (16). Scutter (1997:62) is unnecessarily

¹¹ The fiction is a more convincing representation than Phipson's *Helping Horse* (1974). The title refers to the Australian child participants' inability to correctly pronounce the German given name, 'Horst'. It establishes the migrant as an oddity and instantiates a hierarchy with the adult Horst subordinated as the one who needs assistance. The fiction reflects official policy that understands the incorporation of migrants into the society as requiring nothing more than 'a change of heart: understanding, sympathy and tolerance on the part of the host community, adaptability and optimism on the part of ethnics can effect what no social

dismissive of the function of this inclusive literary convention. Anton climbs the fence to retrieve the football not because he is bullied into an initiation rite, although that is how the position is initially represented. In fact the need for someone other than the three members of the gang to act is argued out in the dialogue. Stanley, the supposed bully, finally argues that '... you can't expect him to get the football unless he sees why he's the only one who can get the flaming thing, can you?' (21). Domination is not the tenor of the discourse. Dialogues and extensive participant focalisation embed discourses of mutuality between all the boys: for instance, Anton 'had already learned that Prof's ideas were generally worth listening to' (30). The Prof, for his part, announces that he will be learning German in the next academic year: '[a] scientific man is lost without German, because there's such a lot of technical stuff written in German these days. Our science teacher told us' (34).

The migrant family fears potential deportation threats, a situation that of course remains a contemporary experience for many recent arrivals in Australia. The third level story has Mr. Smertzer dogged by events that occurred in Europe: 'the spectre of misdirected retribution that haunted the life of the Smertzer family' (128). For Anton there is a progression of understanding about the seriousness of his father's post-war predicament and the illegal nature of their presence in Australia. Mr. Smertzer's behaviour creates tense 'undercurrents' in the household (5, 41). This ruptures the ideal of separation of the old life from the new. Assimilationist immigration policies are represented as unfeasible as links inevitably remain with former homes and citizenship affiliations. The colonial mythology of a prosperous life in the new country that still beckons decades later in *Secrets of Walden Rising* is dashed for the Smertzers, just like Brendan's father, by the family's misfortune in having the uninsured semi-trailer, their means of livelihood, stolen, overturning the mythology of the New Eden. Mr. Smertzer's spirit is not broken and he and Anton walk to the bank each week to add to the capital that will one day enable ownership

rearrangements could do, and so render structural change redundant' (Martin 1978:215-6).

of the 'Smertzter and Son' fleet of trucks (68).

A significant subversion of the boys' adventure genre is the inclusion of Mrs. Smertzter as the immigrant mother and feminine subject. In a way that is typically patriarchal, the different values and practices of women—manners, etiquette—are a point of union for masculine subjects despite other differences between themselves (35). Mrs. Smertzter functions as the ideal homemaker and partner in a companionate model of marriage so that she exhibits values that are desired by the community. The homemaker stereotype meets the idealisation of mothers and so assimilates the foreign mother as a 'good' mother. Indeed the thematic of mothering pursues the line that Anton receives better 'mothering' than any of the other boys in the gang. The reversal of the child-adult power relation is demonstrated as the eleven-year-old Anton can insist on his mother's attempting to speak English (7-8). Anton empathises with his mother's situation as he realises that he has opportunities to be 'integrated' with the local boys and at school but she remains excluded. He focalises her as needing assistance, or rescue, rather like the gang's football, he thinks bemusedly, that needed rescuing from the boatyard (30). The integration strategy that he decides on for his mother is her cooking. The boys visit the Schmertzter home and enjoy her cakes (31). However sociological research rejects the simplistic narrative strategy, because it indicates that post-war migrant women usually worked outside the home. Thus Mrs. Smertzter fulfils the dominant cultural idealisation of the 'good mother' schema. In other respects, the discourse constructs her as a migrant subject with a problem of her own making and, as such, something she must deal with herself. It is up to her to attend to her lack of English language skills.

This again represents the ideology of the post-war period as Martin (1978:78) finds that 'from the late sixties, early seventies migrants are people with problems (mostly seen as arising from inadequacy or unsuitability in themselves)'. The disempowerment that

results from the lack of the lingua franca means that the citizen is disconnected from the public sphere and denied the chance to participate fully in the structures and processes of the nation-state. Mrs. Smertzer has her language ‘problem’ and it is up to her to find the means to address it. Until she does, as her young son focalises, her participation in the social structures beyond their home will be very difficult, if not highly unlikely: she can ‘hide behind the four walls of the house forever if she so wished’ (5). The orientation of the fiction offers a serious discussion between mother and son about the necessity of English language skills. Language is represented as a central problem, with deficient skills being mocked. When Mr. Smertzer vents his rage about their stolen semi-trailer in German, he also suffers derision from bystanders (7). The possibility that the community might accept bilingualism is not considered. This possibility comes in the 1980s in Nadia Wheatley’s *Five Times Dizzy* (1982). Ursula Dubosarsky’s *The First Book of Samuel* and Simon French’s *Where in the World* (2002) also take up this issue in ways that are more integral to the subjectivity of the main child participants. Nevertheless in closure *The Racketty Street Gang* depicts the successful integration into the Australian community as a desirable, and a feasible, outcome at least for masculine subjects, if toleration is practised by all citizens.

By the turn of the new millennium the third book in the *Hazel Green* series, *Have Courage, Hazel Green* (2001) critiques the successive post-war immigration policies and subverts the reader’s perceptions of Australia’s contemporary multiculturalism as no more democratic or structurally inclusive than the assimilationist and then integrationist models. While the spatio-temporal frameworks of *Have Courage, Hazel Green* and *Secrets of Walden Rising* differ, the subversion of multiculturalism is a shared signification. *Have Courage, Hazel Green* constructs a complex matrix of relationships among ethnically and culturally diverse participants who live in Hazel Green’s apartment block, the portentously named Moodey Building. This matrix schematises the effects on subjects of the nation’s

three shifts in post-war immigration policies. In Chapter 2 I argued that *Hazel Green* is a literary construction that achieves a ‘subversive revolt leading to inversion of the categories of perception and appreciation’ in the case of the categories of children and adults (Bourdieu 2001:119). *Have Courage, Hazel Green* leads readers to a similar subversion of the structure of social relations established by the discourse of national social policies that celebrate cultural difference but in fact delimit migrant experiences of Australia’s social space: rather than inclusion there is exclusion of migrant citizens, and rather than living with difference there is suppression of serious ethnically-based division. These socio-cultural issues are schematised to represent relations of ethnic oppression across the social space. In the first epigraph to this chapter, Marcus asks Hazel about social policy and Hazel’s answer indicates that she views it as gravely negative. As she and Yakov and Mr. Egozian suffer the domination of the policies of the Building Committee, Hazel discovers that it is not only children who are denied participation and power in the public sphere. Adult migrants over three successive immigration policies are marginalised subjects in their positioning in the social structure. While the name and origin of the national day, Frogg Day, as discussed in Chapter 2, suggests the narrator’s attitude to national celebrations is playful, the issue of racial prejudice is constructed in detail and with little humour. The limitations inherent in the ideology of toleration that underpins each of these policy shifts, as a basis for the promotion of social justice and democracy, is an explicit significance of the discourse and storylines.

The Moodey Building, the spatial framework for the fiction with its numerous families in many storeys of apartments, is a trope for the nation’s culturally diverse communities. Scutter (1997:51-63) traces a continuing national mythologising with the house as metaphor and metonym. She argues that ‘[h]ouses are often used as constructs in literature to perform a range of functions, not the least of which is to include a cluster of values within the frame of the house and to exclude, explicitly or by implication, a cluster

of “other” values’ (Scutter 1997:51). The shift to the apartment block as a valued literary spatiality is a significant rupture in Australian children’s fiction. Mr. Davis makes the importance of the Moodey Building ‘family’ explicit on special occasions and habitually employs ‘the rhetoric of the official’ for purposes of self-aggrandisement, or as an instrument of symbolic violence and as an adjunct to power in controlling the Moodey Building’s families and the policy formation of its three-member governing Committee. Mr. Davis’ strategy of reifying the Moodey Building illustrates a significant feature regularly employed in the discursive practices of nationalist programs.¹² Hazel critiques Mr. Davis’ condemnation of her as ‘All he was really worried about was the Moodey reputation. But the Moodey was just a building. It didn’t have feelings, it couldn’t be hurt by what people said about it’ (86). Bourdieu (1998:58) describes state bureaucracies achieving the ‘*effect of universality*’ by ‘producing the performative discourse on the state, which under the guise of saying what the state is, [causes] the state to come into being’). The diverse ethnic mix of the shopkeepers is indicated by etymological diversity of the family names: Gluck, Volio, Petrusca, Frengel, Egozian, Nimsky, Plonsk offered beside the Anglo-Celtic jokes like the redundancy of Hazel Green and Bunn. Where Anglo-Celtic traces exist, as in the case of the Davis family, they in fact mask Anglicisation of nomenclature and the fact that Mr. Davis is a second-generation, non-British immigrant. Ethnic diversity predominates but cultural diversity is suppressed.

The effect of the assimilationist policies applied to the first wave of post-war immigrants is represented by the story of the sixty-eight-year old participant, Mr. Egozian. He has been relegated to a lowly place in the social structure where his employment is constantly threatened: ‘He was always around, in the background, and never did anything to push himself forward. You were always seeing him here or there, ... ’ (15). Mr. Egozian is represented as self-abnegating. He accepts that his place in the social order is marginal

¹² Mr. Davis’ strategy may, for instance, remind the reader of the discursive reification of nation that occurs

and that his 'rights' may be revoked at any time. This happens, for instance, when he is barred from attending the Moodey Building's social gatherings like the annual picnic and the Frengels' party (133, 143), despite Mr. Egozian being a resident of the building (235-7). Mr. Egozian is especially abject in the presence of the powerful Mr. Davis, lawyer and Head of the Moodey Building Committee, who continually intimidates the caretaker with threats of dismissal. Mr. Egozian is represented as accepting his disempowerment and marginalisation because he lacks structural connections to the public sphere—such as trade unions—that might provide access to processes of intervention and advocacy. Yakov, Hazel's friend who has only lived in the building a couple of years, doesn't know who he is (50). Hazel wonders why Mr. Egozian will not speak up for himself (42). Mr. Egozian argues that people will believe Mr. Davis because 'he's a respectable man. He's a lawyer. He makes speeches. People believe him' (120). Mr. Egozian reveals that he has never challenged power structures because he believes that those who fight 'ended up getting get hurt. Most of us didn't. Sometimes I wanted to fight back, I wished I was brave enough. Now I don't even wish that any more. I was sensible. I can see I wouldn't have changed anything' (123). Mr. Egozian judges the cost of speaking truth to power—to Mr. Davis, in this case—to be too high because he knows he will lose his job (123). Mr. Egozian, Yakov and the Frengels of the local delicatessen submit to symbolic domination by Mr. Davis' status and wealth. They do not expect justice, do not want to sue for it, and in fact construct the pursuit of justice in terms of 'making trouble' (243).

As with issues of gender oppression, ethnic difference legitimates domination both symbolically and materially in the social structure. Bourdieu (1998) writes of symbolic domination that ‘

[t]here was a need to spell out this analysis of the logic—that of symbolic violence—according to which dominated lifestyles are almost always perceived, even

by those who live them, from the destructive and reductive point of view of the dominant aesthetic. (9)

The shopkeepers understand themselves to be allowed to participate in the public sphere but generally avoid doing so and thus submit to symbolic domination. Mr. Egozian is a 'victim' in Hazel's focalising but then she wonders at his acceptance of disempowerment. Yakov is appalled at the 'principle' of racist thinking but he usually prefers to withdraw rather than confront and protest against it. He protests to Hazel:

'First of all, I didn't say *we*. Second, I said I wanted to show people what it's like, I didn't say I *had* to show them. And third, I didn't say him. I certainly didn't tell you to go and show someone like Mr. Davis.' (55)

Australia's multiculturalism is represented by Yakov's story of his experiences as the child in the newest family to settle in the Moodey Building. His story parallels that of Mr. Egozian but in a new generation of the nation's children. Yakov is racially ostracised by his school peers (51-3). His strategy for coping with the oppression of migrant experience is to embrace alienation. He withdraws totally from the social space and pursues his intellectual passions of mathematics and music. His alienation from the other children means that he refuses to be a part of the children's contingent in the Frogg Day parade, as was discussed in Chapter 2, so Hazel now correctly assumes that he will not attend the Frengels' party in the Moodey Building's courtyard (47). Yakov constructs his choice to live as a recluse as agential, but from the reader's perspective, it results in his abjection.

Australian integrationist immigration policies implemented in the mid-1970s are represented by the Frengels and all the other self-employed shopkeepers who own the businesses on the ground floor of the Moodey building and are therefore, symbolically, the foundation of the building and its means of provision. The second level storyline tells of another symbolic celebration for the Moodey Building family. Rather than being a public

cause as happened with the national day parade in *Hazel Green*, this time it is a party being given by their own delicatessers, the Frengels, who 'were the quietest, meekest shopkeepers you could imagine'; and when they worked 'they did it seriously, and never hastily, as if it was the most important thing in the world' (32). The Frengels want to celebrate their twenty-five years of business in the Building and agonise about the best means of celebration. Eventually they decide that only a party will do because

if you wanted to celebrate with your family, you didn't send them presents, did you? you brought them together That was the point. After twenty-five years, the Frengels felt as if virtually the entire Moodey Building was part of their family. (34)

They then see themselves as integrated, but accept that they are subordinate subjects and citizens. This is represented in the storyline by their submission to Mrs. Driscoll's domination of the organisation of their party. The enormous banner hung across the building's courtyard for the party 'Thank you, Moodey Building', another example of reification of the national, ironises the fact that the Frengels should feel gratitude for their marginalised and disempowered social status in the community that they claim to be their 'family'. They will not speak against injustice and in fact refuse a voice on any issue, even about who should attend the party they are hosting.

The fiction exposes the racism of the head of the Moodey Building Committee, Mr. Davis, towards Mr. Egozian (11). Mr. Davis is himself a second-generation non-British migrant whose choices for integration involve changing the family name and using education as the means to symbolic capital in the community. Martin (1978:78) finds that 'from the mid-seventies, migrants are a minority pressure group with rights to power and participation ... '. Such assimilation masks continuing racial prejudices that are a part of Mr. Davis' narrative of migration. The complexity of the links with former homelands is schematised in more detail than in *The Racketty Street Gang*. Mr. Davis remains haunted and embittered by the stories of his family's struggle and poverty once in the new land.

The family's migration is financed by an agent in the homeland and regular payments must be paid to a proxy in the new land. Here employment is difficult to find and what is available is poorly paid. The thematic of the primary storyline is made visible in the operations of power and in the refusal of intersubjectivity between Mr. Davis and Mr. Egozian based on Mr. Davis' racial bigotry which originates in his experiences prior to migration (171-3). Hazel and Marcus hear Mr. Davis' story from his son Leon who in his turn seems committed to it. The significance is explicitly that racial prejudice is taught to children in family narratives. Hazel overhears Mr. Davis shouting at Mr. Egozian,

'I've never liked you, Egozian. Look at you! I don't like you and I don't like your kind. Don't trust a single one of you. You're all the same. Liars, cheats ... ' The man paused. 'Just after what you can get, aren't you? Well watch out, Egozian. Wake me up one more time and that's it!' (11)

The speaker's identity is withheld from the reader at this point as part of the narrative's tension around his statements which are constructed as heinous: 'If she hadn't seen for herself, heard the things he said with her own ears, Hazel would never have believed it' and it plagues her (12 and 18, 40, 41). Hazel focalises in free indirect thought about her options for addressing the situation she has witnessed and recalls her experiences of disempowerment as a younger child—ignored, ridiculed, bullied (41). She has no hope that her 'evolving capacities' as a person will be recognised so she decides that it is pointless to speak directly to Mr. Davis (42). Hazel focalises Mr. Davis: 'Mr. Davis was a big man with a booming voice. Everyone knew him. He was a powerful, important lawyer, and Hazel had even seen his picture in the paper' (41).

The hypocrisy and lies of powerful 'respectable' adults with regard to ethnic prejudice are exposed (189). His 'performative discourse' activates the 'effect of universality' on his audience with regard to official dominant community values: '[t]he point here is what your daughter said. The point here is that we can't have children saying

that they don't like other kinds of people in the Moodey Building, the birthplace of Victor Frogg, Mr. and Mrs. Green, the Father of our Nation' (82). His hypocrisy and pomposity, and the demand that her parents punish her, lead Hazel to make her accusations about him public to her parents and the committee members (83). As in *Hazel Green*, so here too, the operations of power in the adult world are manifest. Children are required to adopt adult discursive practices and the social relations they instantiate. Again Hazel displays the tendency for children to be a disruptive force if they are not instantiated into the social order with the *habitus* of the 'good' child. Mr. Davis' intimidation of the community at large is evidenced in Hazel's family when her mother says, among other things, '... you just have to learn, Hazel. You'll have to apologise. It's not the way to talk to a man like Mr. Davis' (86). The deference due to holders of symbolic power is clearly understood by all the adults. Even Mrs. Gluck seems to adhere to the hierarchical expectations in this matter. She attempts to maintain the moral high ground at first by insisting that Hazel must not make such accusations against Mr. Davis:

'Mr. Volio's right,' said Mrs. Gluck. 'And your parents are right as well, Hazel. You can't go around saying things like that about a man like Davis.'

'Mr. Davis! Mr. Davis!' muttered Hazel. 'No one believes me because it's Mr. Davis. I bet if it was anyone else no one would care. What's so special about Mr. Davis?'

'Nothing,' said Mrs. Gluck. 'You're right. You can't just go accusing people without proof, Hazel, no matter who they are. You ought to know that already.'

'I bet if I said it was Mr. Egozian, no one would get upset,' muttered Hazel. 'I don't think anyone would care at all.' (105)

Here Hazel shows her understanding that children are not the nation's only disempowered subjects and that there are vectors of power impinging upon adults in the social structure too. Hazel's final line in the dialogue identifies ethnicity as a factor in subordination.

Concepts like courage, bravery, integrity are problematised as complex and often creating ethical dilemmas and outcomes that impact on people and social structures in unpredictable and often not entirely satisfactory ways, despite best intentions. Again Bourdieu (1998) is pertinent when he argues that any

monopoly of the universal can only be obtained at the cost of the submission (if only in appearance) to the universal and of a universal recognition of the universalist representation of domination presented as legitimate and disinterested. (59)

Mr. Davis has the whole of the Moodey building submitting to the universal bureaucratic mechanisms he institutes and controls and abides by the 'rhetoric of the official' (Bourdieu 1998:59). With regard to ethnicity and race this is a rhetoric that he covertly violates. The revelation that laws, rules, orders, truth and justice are not transcendent and universal, that matters of principle and practice diverge constantly, disillusion Hazel and is at first inconceivable for mathematician, Yakov (1999:164-5).

Have Courage, Hazel Green represents complex situations that are 'matters of principle' (55). 'Courage' connotes a degendered attribute essential to the pursuit of social justice in a matter such as racist behaviour by an adult. The primary storyline elaborates Hazel's difficulties and the high price she pays for having the courage of her convictions and her suffering inevitable disapproval and marginalisation. Hazel's extraordinary experience as a child in the building is constructed to mirror the ordinary experiences of the migrant subjects in the society. The storyline represents acting on matters of principle as 'troublemaking' and therefore undesirable. Significantly the storyline shows some masculine subjects as subaltern and also demonstrates that the perpetration of symbolic violence against dominant masculine subjects ensures that disruptions to the dominant order can be punished in ways that appear legitimate. Symbolic power is accepted as residing in men and women who have status in terms of socioeconomic advantage, cultural capital such as education, or professional status such as from the law. Such a person is

more likely to be a man than a woman and administrative structures authorise men like Mr. Davis to 'manage' others. Women who have similar capacities to Mr. Davis' are more likely to use their skills in ways that closely align with traditional feminine culture. This is the case with the meddlesome Mrs. Driscoll and her organisation of the Frengels' party (125-7).

Have Courage Hazel Green narrativises some of the outcomes of the elision of difference. The colloquialism 'your kind' is discussed as 'just an expression' with Mrs. Gluck (25-7). She uses the phrase of people who can afford the best, in this case orchids from around the world as the floral decorations at their anniversary party, and she uses it in a manner that categorises the subjects but implies admiration. When Hazel deliberately enunciates the words 'your kind of people' to her friend Yakov, he is devastated because he assumes Hazel is directing the statement at him. He is a recent arrival in the Moodey Building, from an unspecified origin: 'from Russia or Finland or Mozambique, no one knew for certain' (43). This elision of difference means that communication is fraught with propensities for misunderstandings. This is demonstrated in the closure of the primary level narrative when Mr. Davis' racism is displayed in public. The experience of shame suffered by Hazel and Mr. Egozian at the hands of Mr. Davis, and by Yakov at the hands of his peers, is now experienced by Mr. Davis. On the day of the Frengels' anniversary party, with the courtyard full of the Moodey Building residents, Mr. Davis reveals the depth of the racist hatred that he bears Mr. Egozian and his 'kind'. Most important is the fact that this is not just an unprovoked, melodramatic outburst but rather a response to the culturally specific gesture. Mr. Egozian's gesture of beseeching, the hands in a position of prayer and supplication, is misinterpreted by Mr. Davis as a gesture of mendacity. The failure of intercultural understanding is overt and its results are devastating for both participants (253).

Like *Secrets of Walden Rising*, *Have Courage, Hazel Green* schematises the

Australian social space as a contradictory sphere and uses discursive practices to demonstrate that 'the world is not actually a unitary linear place' (Davies 1989:29). It is most significant that it is a feminine subject who offers the political challenge to the operations of power in the public sphere. Here the Bourdieusienne ideal is pursued as the oppressed, namely women, join forces with other oppressed and stigmatised groups in the social space to question the legitimacy of actions occurring in the macro social space and the structure of state/citizen relations. We also see Connell's (1994:166) imagined achievement of the feminist state, mentioned in Chapter 5, as 'an arena for a radical democratisation of social interaction'. The discursive formations of 'multiculturalism' and 'cultural diversity' are problematised for readers as they are represented as emptied of agency for large numbers of political subjects across the social space. At the end of the 1970s Martin (1978) summarises assimilationist and integrationist/early multicultural policies this way:

In Australia public endorsement of a safe social pluralism includes both elements: symbolic as a substitute for substantive response and an emphasis on the priority of individual attitudes over social forms. (216)

Martin (1978) identifies the fact that underlying all the rhetorical shifts of the post-war immigration policies lurks the concept of toleration which implicitly involves a hierarchical power relation between the dominant culture citizen and the migrant, as discussed above. The continuing assumptions of assimilation across the social space masks aspects of difference that need to become shared community knowledges. Radical alienation like Yakov's and the isolation and submission adopted by Mr. Egozian mitigate against these subjects participating in the community. Readers who 'know how to read a novel' will realise that Mr. Egozian's claim, 'Truth? fairness? I'm sixty-eight-years old. I stopped hoping for that a long time ago' (244) is a shameful denunciation of the national metanarrative's espousal of egalitarianism, iconic mateship and a 'fair go' for all

Australian citizens.

The representation of the structure of social relations of the Australian national space in the fictions discussed here indicates that there is much still to be accomplished before the needs of all citizens are regarded equally. Sadly there are currently signs of 're-essentialising the nation'. However the fictions in the corpus that are examined here imply that children should have access to debates about the conceptualisation national symbolic and of the experience of being a member of this nation-state. All the children's fictions examined here demonstrate the ways that writing literature for children is, in Bourdieusienne terms, an example of a citizen's position-taking in the social space by the articulation of views about the nation's collective histories. Children's writers then actively participate in the Australian public sphere as they 'create Australia'. The fictions I discuss in this chapter are those that advocate transformative possibilities for the reconceptualisation of the national symbolic. This effect is achieved in the literary discourse by the schematised articulations of some of the social determinisms that undermine the possibility of a 'fair go' for all Australian citizens and the possibility of equality and social justice. These fictions construct a social space where such action is possible.

Literary representations of ideological rupture in the nation's collective histories, that is, counter narratives, are the focus of this chapter's examination of the corpus of post-war Australian children's realist fictions. The fictions examined here schematise conceptualisations of the nation as a cultural, a symbolic and a political structure. In Australia, as in the Western world generally, conceptualisations of childhood and of the nation became increasingly enmeshed throughout the twentieth century. Rather than advocating the subjugation of children to the ideological dictates of a 'proper childhood', these fictions suggest the need for children to demand full democratic rights for themselves and others in the community who are disenfranchised by the current configurations of

legitimate power. The fictions discussed here offer child readers an opportunity to participate in debates about the conceptualisation of the national symbolic: contemporary conceptualisations of 'Australia'. Readers are invited to form opinions about Australian historiography, about Australia as a social structure, and as the context for lived experience. The examinations of fictions throughout the chapter suggest Bourdieu (1998) is right not to be pessimistic about the pervasiveness of national power as these texts attest to the possibility for rupturing the dominant discursive practices by the construction of counter narratives. The fictions discussed in this chapter adopt the Bourdieusienne approach of imagining transformative possibilities by a 'reconstruction of genesis' (1998:40),, that is, by a reconceptualisation of the originary moments of different Australian metanarratives, or collective histories. These fictions demonstrate that the reconstruction of genesis is a powerfully subversive strategy with regard to Australia's war metanarratives, pioneering and colonialist metanarratives and narratives of cultural diversity. That such understandings are available in literary texts again reinforces the importance of enabling children's narrative literacy.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Suddenly Hazel got up and took the caricatures from her cupboard. They were stored inside a cardboard tube and she unrolled them and spread them out on her bed and held down the corners with erasers and pencil cases and other things from her desk. The one from last year showed her holding a lollipop. Her head was big and her whole body was tiny, of course, which is the way caricaturists draw, and she was pinching the stick of the lollipop between thumb and forefinger of her tiny little hand, but the head of the lollipop itself, like her own head, was enormous. It was so big it could have been a mirror. As far as Hazel could remember, she hadn't been holding a lollipop at the time. Where did the caricaturist get the idea? This was her favourite one, anyway, she always thought it was better than the others. Well, almost always. She sighed. Today, it didn't seem so clever. She wasn't in the mood to appreciate it.

Odo Hirsch, Have Courage, Hazel Green (2003)

Since most artefacts used by contemporary children are produced for them rather than by them, in a power relationship that does not simply replicate any adult processes of production and consumption, it is also expected that people concerned with the study of children's culture will also be concerned with how that power relationship operates and what views of the world it seeks to transmit - that is, with the ideological conditioning of the message, with how texts organise the world in terms of particular ideologies.

John Stephens, 'Children's Literature, Interdisciplinarity and Cultural Studies,' (1996:177)

This study examines the steady transformations of representations of childhood in Australian realist children's fictions since the 1950s. A concomitant problematising and reconfiguring occurs of the conceptualisations of the Australian 'boy' and 'girl', of the 'family' and of the 'nation'. My concerns here connect with the ideological issues Stephens delineates in this chapter's second epigraph, that is, I focus on the views and

messages transmitted in mainstream fictions about the socio-cultural interpellations of the Australian child. However, a clear finding of this study is the extent to which conceptualisations and reconceptualisations of childhood in Australia—as lived experience or as represented in the corpus of children's fiction—connect with the transnational trends in the Western world. Niall' (1984) study sought to establish the ways that childhood in Australia was represented as a unique experience. By employing transnational frames in this study I investigate the connections between literary representations of Australian childhood and the general experiences of Western childhood.

Literary discourse and textuality are a second concern as I examine a corpus of texts that intentionally ruptures the traditional understandings of childhood as a time of happiness and freedom where the child remains protected and dependent. Inherent in this traditional understanding of childhood is a hierarchical adult/child relationship with adults having power over and full responsibility for children until they reach a legally determined majority. There is no recognition in these discourses of the 'evolving capacities' of children or of their rights to participate as citizens in the public sphere.

In order to avoid 'bad science' (Bourdieu, 2001:114), my study acknowledges its doxa and is transparent about its hermeneutics and poetics (Culler 1997:61). The intentions of the interpretations and conclusions offered here avoid '*ratifying* the real under the appearance of scientifically recording it' (ibid). Recording demonstrable change is politically efficacious in its confrontations of essentialisms such as those assumed by the penumbra of associations attached to the words 'child', 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and other metanarratives of lived experience in Australia. Macrotextuality—real readers, implied readers and historicised socio-cultural contexts—is a significant methodological strategy employed in this study. The conjunctures between the research findings in childhood studies, history, sociology, education, gender studies and literary studies in this study demonstrate productive interdisciplinarity.

I argue the value of transnational interaction is asserted by my engagement with the transcultural framework provided by Cunningham's histories of childhood, Chambers' cross-cultural study of the family and by Bourdieu's philosophical sociology. Bourdieu's analytical concepts assist the articulation of the epistemological and material implications of subversive discourses and/or a reconfigured story-worlds and storylines. Bourdieu's (1998:vii) scholarship emphasises the 'primacy of relations' that emerges as the ideological focus of the fictions in my corpus. The findings of my study demonstrate the extent to which the Australian construction of childhood fits within the general paradigm of Western culture.

The significance of the local is asserted by my macrotextual dialogism with Australian scholarship as the touchstones for this study. Particularly I note the past children's literature research of Niall, Saxby, Hollindale and White. The contemporary local children's literature scholarship of Bradford and Stephens is seminal to this project. In other disciplines the local scholars with whom intercontextual dialogism have been invaluable include Kociumbas and White's histories, Connell and Gilding's sociology, Davies educational research, the feminist research of Summers and the Australian cultural analyses of Turner. In my study the focus is on the discursive practices of the children's fictions in the corpus rather than on thematics. I thereby move beyond formalist criticism to critique. The outcome of lending significance to the discourse of the fictions is that they read differently intratextually and also that the 'distinctions and nuances' between fictions of similar eras become evident.

Literary texts engage with conceptualisations of childhood rather than with lived experience, but the intention of fictions that employ the realist mode is to admit child readers to a discursive interrogation of lived experience. The mainstream fictions in my corpus are distinctive because of their ideational shifts, represented in their reconfigurations of genres, storylines and participant attributes. They demonstrate shifts in

narrative modes from third person omniscient narrators, to narrators whose attitudinal/ideational point of view is relatively neutral or even elided, and where dialogues are the means of accessing a participant's perceptions, to narratives with much greater character focalisation, and then to obtrusive narrators who engage with the reader, often in opposition to participants. In the latter, extensive character focalisation and extensive use of free indirect thought is maintained, these fictions do not invite complete identification with the main focalising participants. Instead effective power shifts in any social structure are achieved by altering the structures of relations and not just by subjective changes in participants. Representing the negotiation of personal agency and the development of intersubjectivity with adults continues as the narrative challenge for children's fiction writers beyond postmodernity. In the *fin de siècle*, postmodern and transformative fictions draw the child reader's attention to the narrative structures and discursive practices of fiction and thereby enable child readers to interrogate the representations of fictive child subjectivities and the metanarratives of childhood which traditionally assume the disempowerment of the child. Furthermore child participants in the fictions examine texts as objects of representation and not as mimetic, and offer readers similar interrogative positions. The first epigraph to this chapter demonstrates this. Here new millennial realist discourse moves beyond postmodernist metafictional discursual conventions to offer 'a glance beyond doubt' (Rimmon-Kenan 1996), the possibility of personal subjective consistency even if only partial and temporary. There is a confident assertion of the possibility for intersubjective connection between reader and narrator, indeed between writer and reader, as investigation occurs of epistemological systems employing literary codes, shared socio-cultural texts and contexts. The literary convention employed here is an ekphrasis and it achieves significance as Hazel focalises her various responses to the caricature's possible meanings. While the art work speaks to her on many levels and prompts interaction but as in this case, she finds that it does not always suffice. The

complexity of the brief episode as Hazel transforms the lollipop to a mirror enables a plethora of meanings to be suggested to the reader. This example again points to the need for a reading pedagogy that develops children's narrative literacy.

The idealised Western conceptualisation of childhood has never been universally the lived experience of children even though the concept may have achieved universal approval. Australians may recall a former Prime Minister's 1987 unfulfilled election promise that by 1990 no Australian child would live in poverty. Some may argue that childhood is disappearing and there is some literal accuracy to this; there is a decline in the number of children being born in Australia and any child will have fewer siblings than was typical in the post-war period. This change in familial contexts is narrativised in the fictions in the corpus. As households are smaller so children engage with a wider community than just the family members. These changes represent more than just another reconceptualisation of childhood to sit beside the Romantic, Rousseauian, Lockean and scientific models of childhood. The ideologies of these conceptualisations signify childhood as a separate space, occupied by beings who are somehow 'other' to adults in most respects. The implicit diminution of the capacities and cognition of child subjectivity subjects is not only questioned by these texts, it is shown in the *fin de siècle* works to be an unjust restraint upon subjectivities and behaviours and upon personal agency and social competency.

All of the fictions in the corpus use the discursive practices of literature to encourage debate about the way young readers understand their place in Australian society. The literary child subjectivities recognise that the ideologies of childhood circulating in the social structure to regulate their lives do so in ways that are neither just nor necessary. Child subjects are represented as interrogating their positionings by adults, as well as by other children, and deciding, through more or less painful experiences, how they will respond and whether or not they will contest adult authority and disempowering social

structures. The desirable outcome posited by the new millennial fictions is that young subjects are allowed the same multi-dimensionality and freedom to become as are older people in Australian society. From this, then, it seems that the literary representations mean the dissolution of relations of domination. There is a need, then, for the deployment of narrative strategies that reconfigure child subjectivity so that it is not represented as a deficient and to also to transform representations of adult /child relations so that there is the possibility of mutuality and reciprocity in intersubjective relationships.

The temporal closure of my study, like the beginning, connects with post-cataclysmic international events that impact on the lived experiences of childhood. These events may or may not be shaped into literary discourse and storylines for child readers. The post-war fictions, the earliest fictions discussed in this study, demonstrate how adult writers deal with historical moments in diverse and contrasting ways. The reconfigurations of childhood represented in literary fictions, then, align with the patterns found in the research of other scholarly fields that suggest that the boundary separating childhood from adulthood is being dismantled. Some aspects of this reversal result from changes in adult life patterns while others devolve from shifts in those socio-political policies that impact on the possibilities for family life. Children themselves now contest the extended periods of disempowerment implicit in the idealised conceptualisations of childhood.

By the late nineteenth century a gender free conceptualisation of childhood existed across the Western world generally, devolving from romanticism, but the lived reality of children projected into the adult life-course meant that ongoing engendering was the everyday experience of children. This is especially evident in the Australian context, both as lived experience and as it is represented in the children's in this corpus. Until the recent third-wave feminist period, boyhood and girlhood have been separate spaces and literary representations encode and promote this ideology. Like Western literature generally, the field of Australian children's literature produced texts for children that were gendered and

engendering, and marketed with the tag-lines such as 'Books for Boys' and 'Books for Girls' still employed at the end of the millennium. However the mainstream fictions I discuss, from the mid-1960s onwards, increasingly contest and resist this gendering. Implied readers are interested in subjectivities that identify as feminine or masculine or either or neither. These are fictions where the subjectivities of girls and boys are represented as equally engaging. Arguably then, children's literature fictions understood as social practice can offer reconfigured gendered relations if writers choose to employ literary strategies to this transformative end. Traditionally the character attributes that comprise the schema of masculinity are regarded as superior to those of femininity. Feminine character attributes need recuperation as qualities essential for all members of society. However changing gender representation in narratives is not a simple matter of reformulating gender attributes or actions because aspects of narratives such as language and genre conventions (Stephens 1996) can reinstate traditional social relations and structures. Storylines need to represent more of the diversity of men and boys' lived experiences and to value them for qualities other than being the hero. Whether or not this trend in Australian children's literature is evident across all Western children's fiction is still to be investigated.

The delegitimation of patriarchy which has occurred in the period since the middle of the twentieth century has seen a radical rethinking of gender relationships which affects every aspect of the human condition from the understanding that subjects have of themselves across the whole gamut of intersubjective experiences both private and public. A significant part of this study examines the 'crisis in masculinity' as it is represented in constructions of Australian male parents, indeed, a crisis in 'fatherhood'. The literary project of reconfiguring masculinity in narratives for children has proceeded very slowly, partly because of the conservative nature of the field of children's literature as previously discussed, but also because of the inherently gendered nature of all fictional genres.

The third-wave feminism requires any critique of the traditional dual gender system to be alert to the repressive practices of dominant discourses, even those, like second-wave feminism, which may once have identified themselves as liberatory. The heteroglossia of intersecting accusations directed at the hitherto unquestioned regulation of bodies and minds constructed and reiterated as a 'natural' oppositional gender order requires the interrogation of the gendered discourses embedded in both patriarchal and pro-feminist literary metanarratives. As cultural formations, these metanarratives interpellate gendered subjectivities that not only reiterate the existing patterns of gender alienation in our society but also regulate the ways such gendered subjects should behave at specific periods of their lives, from the cradle to the grave.

It has taken decades to have Summers' (1975:34) call for 'genuine reciprocity' and 'mutual awareness' between gendered subjects to be represented in the relationships between gendered participants in children's fictions. Summers argued then that amelioration in gender dualism was 'light years away' (ibid). There is the possibility that the new millennium rhetoric can be less extreme but not optimistic. Even in fictions that represent reconfigured masculinities, or feminine subjectivities refusing to be complicit in patriarchal intersubjective relations, the transhistorical invariants in the dual gender system continue to be represented wherever traditional fathering is central to the story. Bourdieu (2001:88) offers little more when he writes that 'masculine domination no longer imposes itself with the transparency of something taken for granted' because 'it now appears, in many contexts, as something to be avoided, excused or justified'. Indeed Chambers (2001:176) argues that the 'new paternity man' is in fact a strategy for redeeming masculinist authority within the nuclear heterosexist family: '[m]asculinity is being recuperated in a domesticated, feminised and paternal version but refuses to relinquish its power'.

Conservative attempts to restrain Australian women are evident in contemporary

lived experience, a distressing situation for those who regard full individualisation of girls and women as a continuing issue of social justice. However in my corpus numerous fictions rupture representations of the archetypal Australian girl, and also adult feminine subjectivities. The significant disruption and transformation is in the representation of the female life course: in the post-war fictions there is an explicit expectation that all girls will follow a unitary life pattern in that the feminine subject's destiny is to become a 'good mother'. In new millennial fictions, this ideology sits in a conservative dialogism beside representations of the rights of women to full individualisation as citizens participating across the whole social space and accessing diverse life courses. Points of rupture occur not only in the literary representations of feminine subjectivity but also in storylines, story constituents and discourse, problematising the engendered structure of the literary social space. By mapping the moments of significant rupture in realist metanarratives I found two significant discursive shifts. First, representations of feminine participants explicitly reject a subordinate positioning in both the private and public spheres; second, there is a repudiation of an idealised unitary destiny of marriage and motherhood. I examine the different literary strategies employed in each fiction to resignify or dismantle the term, 'mother'.

In this study the discussions of the family have occurred within the frame of the gender relations. The concept of the ideal Australian 'family' in the 1950s was much clearer in the minds of the population and the institutions responsible for maintaining, monitoring and servicing it. It was similar to the definition shared across the Western world: nuclear family units based on the conjugal household and consisting of parents and many children; usually three to five children in fiction texts. The reconceptualisation of 'girlhood', 'motherhood' and 'the family' from unitary literary idealisations is evident in progressive and transformative fictions in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I argue that Australian children's fictions in the 1990s overtly engage with the cognitive struggle that

surrounds such issues, undermining this traditional secondary function of women in children's literature as being destined for motherhood. Reconfiguration of domestic gender regimes occurs in the four crisis areas: namely childrearing, the division of labour in the domestic household, economic independence (particularly employment of women outside the home) and intimate relationships. All of these incipient areas of rupture are represented as being ameliorated when the concept of the 'separation of spheres' disappears. The area of social life of the family as represented in children's fiction deserves further close examination.

Discourses of gender are not the only totalising hegemonic discourses needing interrogation; another is the 'nation'. There is no doubt that the local/national exists. The concept of 'Australian', as signifying a unitary 'national identity', experiences contestation across this half century. The signifier 'nation', like the signifier 'childhood', exists as both conceptualisation and as a site of material lived experiences: the nation exists as a symbolic entity with a history and traditions and as a structure of social relations organised by state bureaucracies and institutions. These are legitimised to shape the lived experiences of the citizens across the social space. The nation's institutions ensure the production of their own symbolic capital that enables the elision of the power relation needed for compliant citizens, including children and families, to submit to its social policy decisions. The state's responsibility for the management of childhood is a naturalised position across the Western world by the end of the millennium.

The power of the state in the construction of the national symbolic means that it faces real problems in shifting paradigms in the public imaginary; changes in policies require justification and re-education. Literary counter narratives, that is, literary representations of ideological rupture in the nation's collective histories, are the focus of examination of a corpus of post-war Australian children's realist fictions. The fictions offer child readers an opportunity to participate in debates about the conceptualisation of the

national symbolic, that is, contemporary conceptualisations of 'Australia'. Readers are invited to form opinions about Australian historiography, about Australia as a social structure, and as the context for lived experience. Bourdieu is not pessimistic about the pervasiveness of national power as he asserts that it is contestable, that rupture of the dominant discursive practices is possible and this is evident in the construction of counter narratives in children's fictions.

Currently the trope of 'creation' of the nation circulates widely, connoting the inclusion of all citizens as contributors to the nation's metanarratives. The intention is to pluralise the national symbolic by diversifying the viewpoints that are regarded as legitimate and by an extension of the kinds of subjects and issues worthy of scholarly investigation and circulation. The trope of creation also problematises the pursuit of the 'real' identity of a people as a mythology and repudiates the ideas of unity. Transformative fictions offer narrative reconfigurations of the originary moments of the various Australian historical metanarratives.

These fictions demonstrate that the 'reconstruction of genesis' (Bourdieu 1998:40) is a powerfully subversive strategy with regard to Australia's metanarratives—of war, of pioneering, of colonialism and of cultural diversity. The children's fictions in the corpus represent some of the aspects of the national stories that do not promote a 'fair go' for all Australian citizens. But the fictions certainly represent social spaces where agency is possible and where change can occur. Indeed writing literature for children is, in Bourdieusienne terms, an example of a citizen's positiontaking in the social space by the articulation of views about the nation's collective histories. Children's writers then actively participate in the Australian public sphere by the producing fiction that positions child readers to critique conceptualisations of 'Australia'.

My discussions early in the study encompassed the concerns of many international researchers and commentators who see the reconceptualisation of childhood as I outline it,

and the material conditions of everyday life for many children, as deeply disturbing. Recognising the negative implications of the changes she outlines, Metcalf (1997) summarises the situation this way:

In a world in which competing authoritative discourses vie with each other for ever shorter durations of time, children are forced to grow up sooner, learn the language games, and participate in them. With the shift in the perceptions of childhood and in childhood experiences, authors are addressing more precocious children who share more experiences with adults than children did a generation or two ago. The empowerment of the child has its price, and one may ask whether children are not overtaxed, confronted as they are with skepticism, contradiction, and ambiguities, and left awash in choices between sometimes equally valid ethical and behavioral codes. (53)

Of course the signification of 'precocious' is crucial and returns to the tropes of plants—unnatural early flowering or fruiting—to describe some representations of childhood. The negative connotation of the word when applied to children suggests that the 'good child' is still dependent, passive, submissive and naive; passivity and submissiveness may be qualified in the case of masculine child subjects. Is the child who is a capable and competent person in the spaces of social life still to be regarded as prematurely (unnaturally) developed? The moral dimension of having children engaging with the unpleasant aspects of contemporary social life are expressed by Saxby (2002) in the new millennium:

one could ask whether Southall, with those who followed him into the murky depths of social realism, do not actually position children in an insecure territory. That is one of the debates of contemporary criticism. (303)

Here the underpinning ideological assumption about childhood is that it still characterised by innocence. If that is the case, then Saxby's question will be answered affirmatively. My

study argues that the imposition of innocence on child subjects is disempowering for that person. Having considered the dilemmas of the situation, Metcalf (1997) draws this conclusion about child readers:

Nevertheless, the ability to make more or less informed choices even in the absence of grand narratives is a vital lesson for a child growing up in a democratic, consumer-oriented, information society. (53)

Like Metcalf, I prefer that the young of the society have the means to engage with texts independently.

The literary discourse of the first epigraph to this chapter indicates the kind of textual and ideological complexity children engage with as they read mainstream Australian children's fictions. Reading pedagogy must allow the child reader to become familiar with the codes and conventions that provide the 'distinctions and nuances' of literary discourse. Child readers thus empowered may identify the representations of sociality in which ruptures with old metanarratives are articulated and reconfigurations of social structures and practices are envisioned. As the first epigraph indicates, reading the metonymic discourse of realist modes is complex and connects constantly with literary conventions, codes, past literary modes and with macrotextual issues. It would be difficult, I think, to argue that a child equipped to read and recognise metonymic potentialities and ideological implications is not a citizen empowered as a cultural critic. Indeed, he or she is not critically literate. Further to this, I see that the intellectual rigour as well as pleasure, that occurs around such literary reading examples of Arnold and Ryan's (2003:5) 'transformative learning.'

When writers attend to a wide range of discursive and narrative constituents, and not just to the reformulation of storylines and participant attributes, they can achieve greater control over the ideological significances constructed in all levels of their fictions. Significantly, writers can employ narrative strategies that allow texts to offer a range of

implied reading positions rather than just the traditional ones, masculine or feminine or dominant culture perspective or plural social orientations. What I argue for here is no different from what Bourdieu (1996:9-10) asserts about any field of cultural production: to take part in the game in a field one must acquire a 'feel for the game', and in my particular case, I mean the often intensely serious game of reading fiction. Bourdieu (1996) argues the general situation thus:

The perception called for by the work produced within the logic of the field is a *differential* perception, distinctive, drawing into the perceiving of each singular work the space of compossible works, and hence attentive and sensitive to the *deviations* in relation to other works, contemporary but also past. The spectator deprived of this historic competence is doomed to the indifference of one who does not have the means to make the differentiations. (248)

Armed, thus, with Bourdieu's argument about the necessity of possessing a differential perception in any field of cultural production, I argue the importance of pedagogical practices relating to literary reading being made available to children. I recall my citation of Stephens (1996a:165), in Chapter 1, where he makes his argument more obliquely: '[s]pecific reading practices require different forms of orientation and different levels of attention'. This project reveals some of the differentiations, distinctions and nuances that exist in the mainstream children's fictions published in Australia between 1953 and 2003. The groundwork undertaken here in the local/national space will hopefully enable further transcultural literary projects in fields connected with reading and research into children's literature and culture. This study already shows the strong connections that exist between Australian children's fictions in the corpus and children's fictions of the Western tradition generally, with regard to the (re)conceptualisations of childhood.