

## George Ernest Morrison: The Boy Within



Belinda Jane Ingpen  
Bachelor of Science in Applied Geology (Hons)  
Master of Business Administration (Technology  
Management)  
Master of Cultural Heritage

Department of History and Archaeology

30 January 2022

### **Statement of Originality**

*This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.*

(Signed)\_\_\_\_\_Date: 30 January 2022

## Abstract

Cyril Pearl; Hugh Trevor-Roper; Lo Hui-Min; Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin; Linda Jaivin and Tom Gardner have all written about ‘Morrison of Peking’ and ‘Chinese Morrison’. The focus of their works has been on Morrison’s role in the Boxer Rebellion, his journeys across China and his role as advisor to the Chinese delegation at the 1919 Peace Treaty at Versailles. The George Morrison Endowment has also been established by the Australian-Chinese community in recognition of Morrison’s contribution to cultural relations between China and Australia. The George E Morrison Lecture in Ethnology has been delivered by numerous notable Australians, including Herbert Evatt (1952); Ross Garnaut (1988); Kevin Rudd (2010) and Linda Jaivin (2011).

In contrast, Morrison’s youthful pursuits within Australia are relatively poorly documented outside his own diary. Born in 1862 into a prosperous middle-class family, Morrison attended the elite Geelong College. As a boy of 17, Morrison walked from Queenscliff to Adelaide in 1879-80 and a year later he rowed down the Murray River from Albury, to the mouth of the Murray at Goolwa, recording his first encounters with Indigenous Australians. In 1882, at 20, Morrison shipped as a seaman on a ‘blackbirding’ vessel to report on the people trafficking of Pacific Islanders for *The Age* newspaper, his condemnatory accounts stirring controversy in Queensland. In 1883, after dropping out of university, Morrison walked solo from Normanton to Melbourne following a similar route to the failed Burke and Wills expedition. Also in 1883, Morrison

ventured into the previously unexplored interior of New Guinea where he was injured in a spearing incident.

John Rickard; David Newsome; J.A. Mangan; Stanley Winslow; Heather Ellis; and Thomas Arnold all highlight that in the late nineteenth century educational philosophies were focused on building character, manliness and on Muscular Christianity or Imperial Masculinity. This thesis will examine Morrison's achievements prior to his leaving Australia through the lens of these themes, and particularly, with respect to religious devotion; moral and gentlemanly conduct; intellectual endeavour; courage and strength; and the use of these character traits in the protection of the weak and the advancement of righteous causes. The investigation of Morrison's protection of the weak and the advancement of righteous causes will also examine Morrison's role in the slavery debate of the time, which has been discussed by Victoria Stead and Lucy Davies; Marilyn Lake; and Tracey Banivanua Mar.

At the time of George Ernest Morrison's death in 1920, it was reported in *The Argus* newspaper, in Melbourne, that "the niche which Dr Ernest Morrison made for himself in history is unique." Lionel James, one of Morrison's journalist colleagues at *The Times* in China, described Morrison's "overwhelming pride in Australia and himself as an Australian." Pearl also suggested in *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Advisor and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic* that Morrison never forgot Australia, even though Australia forgot him.

Morrison's youthful achievements were remarkable and provided him with the skills necessary to prepare for a career where he was to become the man that

Andrew Barton (Banjo) Paterson described as having “outclassed the smartest political agents of the world.”

## Acknowledgements

Appreciation is expressed to the State Library of New South Wales for providing the digital versions of the diaries prepared by Morrison. These digital sources facilitated continuity of research during the struggles of the various lockdowns associated with the global Coronavirus-19 pandemic.

Alison Wishart and Dr Rachel Franks are especially thanked for introducing me to Morrison, providing access to resources and showing me the various pieces of miscellanea, which allowed me to get to understand Morrison better.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Mark Hearn, for his assistance and constructive critique during the past two years and his patience and faith that a scientist could also be an historian. My mother, Heather Saunders, is thanked for providing me with the inspiration to undertake this endeavour and for showing me that education should not be constrained by age.

Lastly, and by no means least, my gratitude goes to my husband, Ian, who has lived in the shadows of George Ernest Morrison over the past six years.

Thank-you for your inspiration, your editorial suggestions and particularly your words of encouragement when it all seemed too difficult.

## Table of Contents

Abstract i	
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Introduction .....	1
An Introduction to George Ernest Morrison .....	1
Historiography.....	7
Research Design.....	15
1. Character, Manliness and the Gentleman .....	18
1.1 George Morrison and Character in the Victorian Period .....	18
1.2 Gentlemanliness versus Manliness in the Victorian Period.....	25
1.3 George Morrison – the Victorian Gentleman .....	27
1.4 Manliness and George Ernest Morrison.....	36
1.5 Morrison – Both Manly and a Victorian Gentleman .....	42
2. Imperial Masculinity and Muscular Christianity .....	44
2.1 The Rise of Muscular Christianity and Imperial Masculinity.....	44
2.2 Morrison’s Education and Upbringing .....	50
2.3 Religious Devotion in the 19th Century Educational Context.....	54
2.4 Morrison and his Attitudes toward Religious Devotion .....	57
2.5 Moral and Gentlemanly Conduct of the 19th Century.....	60
2.6 Morrison and his Development of Moral and Gentlemanly Conduct	64
2.7 Intellectual Endeavour in the Victorian Period.....	67
2.8 George Ernest Morrison’s academic education .....	69
2.9 The Protection of the Weak and the Advancement of Righteous Causes .....	74
2.10 Morrison’s Championing of the Weak and Righteous Causes .....	77
2.11 Courage and Strength in 19th Century Australia .....	81
2.12 Morrison’s Exhibition of Courage and Strength.....	84
3. The Frontiersman and the Boys Own Adventure.....	96
3.1 The Manly Colonial Frontiersman .....	96
3.2 The Boys Own Adventure.....	98
3.3 Morrison – the Gentleman living the Boys Own Adventure .....	101
4. An evaluation of George Morrison’s Youthful Character .....	104
4.1 A remarkable young Australian Gentleman.....	104
4.2 Morrison’s Absence from the General Australian Memory .....	108
5. Bibliography.....	120
Primary Texts .....	120
Miscellanea.....	121

Texts and Journals .....	122
Newspaper Articles .....	131
Online Articles .....	139

## List of Figures

Figure 1: George Ernest Morrison aged around 25 .....	3
Figure 2: Correspondence from George Ernest Morrison to his mother dated February 16 <sup>th</sup> 1880 .....	35
Figure 3: Spear fragments extracted from Morrison, 1883 .....	37
Figure 4: A student view of George Morrison senior, 1873, drawn by E Watt .....	51
Figure 5: Medal awarded to Morrison for Scripture in 1876 .....	71
Figure 6: Cutlery Set used by Morrison on his various expeditions .....	86
Figure 7: Pocket knife taken by Morrison on his various excursions .....	86
Figure 8: Illustration from <i>Melbourne Punch</i> , which is accompanied by the text “Let him go” said the King with a gesture of disgust, we will wait for Captain Armit and George Ernest Morrison. Till then we must on with cold missionary pie and Colonial ale.” .....	89
Figure 9: Excerpt from <i>Melbourne Punch</i> .....	90
Figure 10: Young Morrison .....	100
Figure 11: Morrison as a middle aged man .....	112
Figure 12: The medal awarded to Morrison for his role in the Boxer Rebellion .....	113
Figure 13: Sketch of George Morrison from 1900 by F Whiting .....	114
Figure 14: Private print scanned ex-libris of George Ernest Morrison in <i>Ein Tagebuch in Bildern: Volume 1</i> .....	119

## Introduction

### An Introduction to George Ernest Morrison

George Ernest Morrison (also known as Ernest Morrison, Chinese Morrison, or Morrison of Peking) was a journalist and political advisor who led an adventurous life in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Australia in the late 1800s, was a time of idealism, when the nation was motivated by imperial ambition, nation building and the establishment of an Australian national life and national character.<sup>1</sup>

Morrison was born on the 4 February 1862 in Geelong, Victoria, the eldest son of a Scottish immigrant and educationalist. His early boyhood diaries reflect a life of privilege with a keen interest in not only religion but also politics, literature, humanity, anthropology, sport and nature, as well as a passion for those who explored it.

As a youth of 17, Morrison walked from Queenscliff to Adelaide and a year later rowed down the Murray River from Albury to its mouth at Goolwa, recording his first encounters with Indigenous Australians.<sup>2</sup> In 1882, at 20,

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<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Lake, 'The Australian Dream of an Island Empire: Race, Reputation and Resistance' *Australian Historical Studies*, 46, No 3 (2015): 411 – 414, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2015.1075222>.

<sup>2</sup> George Ernest Morrison, Collection, 1738-1935, MLMSS312, State Library of NSW, Sydney; William Morrison, *Ernest Morrison*. (Melbourne, Victoria: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1; Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1970), 8-13; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Hermit of Peking The Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse* (Alfred A Knoff Inc., 1977), 26-27; Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China* (Crows Nest: Allen &

Morrison shipped as a seaman on a “blackbirding” vessel to report on people trafficking for *The Age* newspaper, his condemnatory accounts stirring controversy in Queensland.<sup>3</sup> In 1883, after dropping out of university, Morrison successfully walked solo and unarmed from Normanton to Melbourne following a similar route to that of the failed Burke and Wills expedition.<sup>4</sup> Later in 1883, Morrison ventured into the previously unexplored interior of New Guinea, where he was injured in a spearing incident, which ultimately resulted in his abandonment of his position in the exploration race

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Unwin, 2007), 15-25; Belinda Ingpen, ‘The Boy Within’ *State Library New South Wales Magazine for Members* 10, No 2 (2017): 31; and Ian MacFarlane ‘George Ernest Morrison: Adventurer, Doctor, Journalist and Political Advisor’ in *Ten Remarkable Australians* (Redlands Bay: Connor Court Publishing Pty Ltd, 2019), 69–95.

<sup>3</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/4/Item 1, State Library of NSW, Sydney; George Ernest Morrison, ‘The Contributor A cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, October 21, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, October 28, 1882, 35; George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, November 4, 1882, 36; ‘No Title,’ *The Telegraph*, November 8, 1882, 2; George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, November 11, 1882, 35; ‘No Title,’ *Warwick Argus*, November 15, 1882, 2; George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, November 18, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, November 25, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, December 2, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, December 9, 1882, 35; Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 17-19; and Thompson and Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*, 29-43.

<sup>4</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/4/Item 4, State Library of NSW, Sydney; ‘The Queensland Slave Trade,’ *The Age*, May 9, 1883, 7; George Ernest Morrison, ‘Across the Australian Continent on Foot,’ *Bendigo Advertiser*, May 23, 1883, 1; Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 13-27; Thompson and Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*, 27; and Ingpen, ‘The Boy Within,’ 31.

into this new frontier and his semi-permanent departure from Australia.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence of this accident, Morrison returned to Australia and then to Edinburgh to complete his undergraduate medical qualifications and to have the spear fragments removed from his body.



Figure 1: George Ernest Morrison aged around 25<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea,' *Leader*, December 15, 1883, 17; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No II,' *Leader*, December 22, 1883, 33; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No III,' *Leader*, January 5, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No IV,' *Leader*, January 12, 1884, 18; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No V,' *Leader*, January 19, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No VI,' *Leader*, January 26, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No VII,' *Leader*, February 2, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No VIII,' *Leader*, February 9, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No IX,' *Leader*, February 16, 1884, 16; Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 41-53; Thompson and Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*, 57-75; and Ingpen, 'The Boy Within,' 31.

<sup>6</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 - 1935, MLMSS 312/35-115, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

Morrison's diligent recording of these excursions highlight both his curiosity, as well as his independence of thought, which later in his career provided him with strategic insight and percipience. Morrison sold numerous columns of his writing associated with these excursions originally to the *Leader* and subsequently to *The Age*. The lavish allocation of column space dedicated to these reports by Morrison, within the *Leader* and *The Age*, clearly indicates that their owner, liberal protectionist David Syme, felt that Morrison's achievements were either worthy of considerable note or he saw an opportunity to exploit Morrison's youthful enthusiasm to pursue his own causes. Symes subsequently initiated and funded Morrison's expedition into New Guinea despite Morrison's lack of experience in this type of venture.

Excerpts of Morrison's journeys were published more broadly than just the Colony of Victoria. Morrison's exploits were published in *The South Australian Advertiser*; *The Brisbane Courier*; *Evening News*; *Launceston Examiner*; *The West Australian* and the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* and even internationally in *The Times*.<sup>7</sup>

As an adult, and after completing his studies, George Ernest Morrison played an influential role in world and Australian politics, however, it seems that the memory of Morrison has faded from the general Australian consciousness. In

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<sup>7</sup> 'An Adventurous Journey,' *The South Australian Advertiser*, April 25, 1883, 5; 'Intercolonial,' *The Brisbane Courier*, April, 26, 1883, 5; 'Latest Telegrams,' *Evening News*, June 9, 1883, 4; 'Intercolonial News,' *Launceston Examiner*, June 11, 1883, 2; 'Vigilans et audax,' *The West Australian*, June 22, 1883, 3; 'Mr G.E. Morrison's Return from New Guinea,' *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, December 29, 1883, 3; and 'A walk across Australia,' *The Times*, July 31, 1883, 6.

contrast, and ironically, the failure of the Burke and Wills expedition, whose route Morrison emulated less than 20 years afterwards, has been the source of numerous historical accounts.<sup>8</sup> Frank Clune (1941), Cyril Pearl (1967), Hugh Trevor-Roper (1977), Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin (2007) and Tom Gardner (2021) have written extensively about Morrison of Peking and Chinese Morrison, the focus of these writings, however, has been on Morrison's understanding of the politics of Asia, as well as his role in the Boxer Rebellion, journeys across China and his role as an advisor to the Chinese delegation at the 1919 Peace Treaty at Versailles.<sup>9</sup>

Andrew Barton (Banjo) Patterson described his meeting with George Ernest Morrison in 1901 in the following terms:

of the three great men of affairs that I had met up to that time – Morrison, Cecil Rhodes, and Winston Churchill – Morrison had perhaps the best record..... Morrison had gone into China on a

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<sup>8</sup> Frank Clune, *Dig: The Burke and Wills Disaster* (Pacific Books, 1971); Sarah Murgatroyd, *The Dig Tree* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company 2012); Edmund Bernard Joyce and Douglas Andrew McCann, eds., *Burke & Wills: The Scientific Legacy of the Victorian Exploring Expedition* (CSIRO Publishing, 2011); Ian Clark and Fred Cahir, eds., 2016. *The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills: Forgotten Narratives* (CSIRO Publishing, 2016); and Peter Fitzsimmons, *Burke & Wills: The Triumph and Tragedy of Australia's Most Famous Explorers* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Frank Clune, *Chinese Morrison* (Bread and Cheese Club: Melbourne Australia, 1941); Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*; Lo Hui-Min, *The Correspondence of G E Morrison, Volume 1, 1895-1912* (Melbourne, Victoria: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Trevor-Roper, *Hermit of Peking The Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse*; Lo Hui-Min, *The Correspondence of G E Morrison 1912 -1920 Volume 2* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Thompson and Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*; Linda Jaivin, 'Morrison's World,' *China Heritage Quarterly, China Heritage Project*, 27 (2011); and Tom Gardner, 'Sympathetic or Sinister? Representations of China in George Ernest Morrison's An Australian in China,' *ANU Historical Journal* 11, No 2 (2021).

small salary for *The Times* and had outclassed the smartest political agents of the world.<sup>10</sup>

Ian MacFarlane in *George Ernest Morrison: Adventurer, Doctor, Journalist and Political Adviser* references Lord Sydenham, who in 1905, included Morrison amongst only two Australians with a world-wide reputation, the other being Nellie Melba.<sup>11</sup>

As George Ernest Morrison has been described as both uniquely important and intellectual and has been compared favourably to the likes of Melba, Churchill and Rhodes, it raises a number of questions: such as why Morrison is not better known within the current Australian consciousness despite producing a life-long legacy that includes numerous biographies, continuing scholarship and a commemorative lecture series; and whether Morrison was a man of poor character or were Morrison's achievements unremarkable and thus not worthy of recognition.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the magnitude and boldness of Morrison's achievements as a youth, there is limited biographical material that highlights these early accomplishments. The diaries of Morrison's youth and his early publications demonstrate his faith, kindness and humanity towards Mankind, as well as his curiosity, perceptiveness and a quest for knowledge. These diaries also

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Barton (Banjo) Paterson, *Happy Dispatches Journalistic Pieces from Banjo Paterson's Days as a War Correspondent* (Sydney: Landsdowne Press, 1980), 16.

<sup>11</sup> MacFarlane, 'George Ernest Morrison: Adventurer, Doctor, Journalist and Political Advisor,' 9.

<sup>12</sup> Paterson, *Happy Dispatches Journalistic Pieces from Banjo Paterson's Days as a War Correspondent*, 16; and Kevin Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, China Institute 70th George E Morrison Oration, 2010.

highlight Morrison's courage and sense of adventure.<sup>13</sup> Morrison's diaries also testify to the physical and moral strength that he acquired through struggle and his development into what Christine Cheater refers to in *Images from the Wild Frontier*, as a civilised gentleman and what Stuart Macintyre describes in *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, as a self-sufficient individualist.<sup>14</sup>

### Historiography

Charles Pearson in *National Life and Character*, argues that economic and technological advancement during the Industrial Revolution brought increased urbanisation to Britain. He suggests that this urbanisation brought degradation in the quality of civic and economic life and a rise in "weaker and more stunted specimens of humanity."<sup>15</sup> Yvonne Werner in *Studying Christian Masculinity: An Introduction*, stated in addition to this urbanisation, Christian faith and religious practice were becoming more feminised, which Joseph

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<sup>13</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410; and Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*.

<sup>14</sup> Christine Cheater, 'Images from the Wild Frontier,' *Bulletin (Olive Pink Society)*, 11, No 1–2 (1999): 4; and Stuart Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1991), 5.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Pearson, quoted in Mark Hearn and John Tregenza, 'Managing 'Self-Preservation': Charles Pearson's National Life and Character and the Early Australian Commonwealth,' *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 65, No 1 (2019): 17, <https://doi.org/10.1111/AJPH.12536>.

Bristow suggests restrained the aggression that often characterised manliness.<sup>16</sup>

John Nauright in *Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours*, suggests that as young men and boys were leaving their homes to take on work elsewhere, home gender roles were being reinforced and the home was more increasingly being associated with effeminate qualities.<sup>17</sup>

Jeffrey Richards, Andy Harvey, Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy and Stephen Scarff all suggest that to address this perceived deterioration of character and loss of manliness that the British Public School System should promote Thomas Arnold's philosophy of a strong body, godliness and good learning to develop manliness.<sup>18</sup> These foci for education in Britain were also highlighted by Heather Ellis in *Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of*

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<sup>16</sup> Yvonne Werner, 'Studying Christian Masculinity: An Introduction,' *Christian Masculinity. Men and Religion in Northern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Leuven University Press, 2011), 3; and Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (Unwin Hyman, London, 1991), 64.

<sup>17</sup> John Nauright, 'Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours, 1878 – 1906,' *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 23, No 2 (1992): 55.

<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey Richards, quoted in Andy Harvey, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' *Critical Survey* (Oxford, England), 24:1 (2012), 19; Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, quoted in Andy Harvey, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' *Critical Survey* (Oxford, England) 24, No 1 (2012): 20, <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2012.240102>; and Stephen Scarff, 'The British Public School and the Imperial Mentality: A Reflection of Empire at U.C.C.' (MA thesis, McGill University, 1998), 8.

*Boyhood* and J. A. Mangan in *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*.<sup>19</sup>

This concept known as Muscular Christianity or Imperial Masculinity focused on religious devotion; moral and gentlemanly conduct; intellectual endeavour, as well as courage and strength.<sup>20</sup> Mangan in *Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, and David Newsome in *Godliness and Good Learning*, suggest that muscular Christians trained their bodies to be used in the “protection of the weak and the advancement of all righteous causes.”<sup>21</sup> This Arnoldean approach to education was also considered by Nick Watson, Stuart Weir and Stephen Friend in *The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond*, as a means for building character and a way of shoring up the future strength of the British Empire.<sup>22</sup> Watson, Weir and Friend also propose that this educational

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<sup>19</sup> Heather Ellis, ‘Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood,’ *Journal of Victorian Culture* 19, No 4 (2014): 426, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13555502.2014.969975>; and J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Viking, 1986), 133.

<sup>20</sup> Gathorne-Hardy, quoted in Harvey, ‘Tom Brown’s Schooldays,’ 20; Scarff, ‘The British Public School and the Imperial Mentality: A Reflection of Empire at U.C.C.,’ 8; J.A. Mangan, ‘Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,’ *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27, No 1–2 (2010): 80; and Clive Moore, ‘Colonial Manhood and Masculinities,’ *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, No 56 (1998): 47.

<sup>21</sup> Mangan, ‘Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,’ 85; and David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning* (London: John Murray, 1961), 215.

<sup>22</sup> Watson, Weir, and Friend, ‘The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,’ *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005), 7.

philosophy becoming institutionalised into Victorian culture was a means of further increasing imperialism.<sup>23</sup>

Bruce Haley in *Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, describes character in terms of both gentlemanliness and manliness.<sup>24</sup> Haley, as well as Tara MacDonald in *Middle-class Manliness and the Dickensian Gentleman*, describe a gentleman as demonstrating self-control, fairness and showing a respect for rules.<sup>25</sup> John Tosh expands on this in *Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England*, suggesting that a gentleman placed value on refinement of appearance and social status.<sup>26</sup> Tosh also asserts in *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*, that the ideal Englishmen was rational and maintained self-control at all times.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Nick Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,' *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005), 7.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 235 – 236.

<sup>25</sup> Tara MacDonald, 'Middle-Class Manliness and the Dickensian Gentleman,' *The New Man, Masculinity and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (Routledge, 2015), 25–56; <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315654010-2>.

<sup>26</sup> John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 458, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S00804440102000191>.

<sup>27</sup> John Tosh, 'Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire,' in *Women and Men in History* (Harlow, England; Pearson Longman 2005), 85.

Conversely, manliness is described by Haley as being tough, independent, resilient, courageous and as being an individualist.<sup>28</sup> Harvey Mansfield expands upon this concept of manliness by suggesting that manliness was gained through struggle and was characterised by stoicism and independence.<sup>29</sup> Traits that were demonstrated by Morrison in each of his expeditions as a young man.

Within an Australian context, Stanley Winslow in *A Boys Empire: The British Public School as Imperial Training Ground, 1850 – 1918*, suggested that denominational secondary education schools borrowed largely from the historical example of the Great Public Schools of England.<sup>30</sup>

Cheater in *Images from the Wild Frontier*, suggests that the frontier is a place to confront one's inner self and develop the qualities of a civilised gentleman. She also proposes that Christian faith, courage and determination facilitate survival in the frontier of Australia and advocates that the development of strength comes through the exclusive experience of struggle and that success is the prerogative of the strong.<sup>31</sup> Robert Hogg in *The Most Manly Class that Exists, British Gentlemen on the Queensland Frontier*, also suggests that the frontier gentleman utilised their letters, journals and memoirs to display the

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<sup>28</sup> Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, 235 – 236.

<sup>29</sup> Harvey Mansfield, quoted in John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,' 461.

<sup>30</sup> Stanley Winslow, 'A Boy's Empire: The British Public School as Imperial Training Ground, 1850–1918' (PhD thesis, University of Virginia, 2010), 318.

<sup>31</sup> Cheater, 'Images from the Wild Frontier,' 4.

self that “they want others to know.”<sup>32</sup> Morrison in his journals and early publications showed himself to have gone through such struggle and having overcome adversity.

Angela Woolacott in *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self Government and Imperial Culture*, contends that the first Australian colonists were renowned for their responsibility, self-discipline, independence and reasoning.<sup>33</sup> These characteristics are all exemplified by George Morrison.

John Rickard in *National Character and the “Typical Australian”*: *An Alternative to Russel Ward*, however, describes Russel Ward’s image of a typical Australian colonial bushmen who was not only practical but also rough and ready with a tendency to swear, gamble and drink heavily.<sup>34</sup> Rickard further suggests that Ward’s bushman was also taciturn, egalitarian and sceptical of religion and intellectual pursuits. He also submits that Ward’s bushman was commonly disrespectful of authority and were loyal to their friends.<sup>35</sup> Joseph Bowes in *Pals: Young Australians in Sport and Adventure*, describes the Australian boy as being unaffected and natural. Martin Crotty in *Manly and Moral: The making of Middle-Class Men in the Australian Public*

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Hogg, ‘The Most Manly Class that Exists: British Gentlemen on the Queensland Frontier,’ *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 13 (2011), 73.

<sup>33</sup> Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015), 177-178.

<sup>34</sup> John Rickard, ‘National Character and the “Typical Australian”’: An Alternative to Russel Ward,’ *Journal of Australian Studies* 3, No 4 (1979): 13.

<sup>35</sup> Rickard, ‘National Character and the “Typical Australian”’: An Alternative to Russel Ward,’ 13.

*Schools*, suggests that the ideals promoted by public school headmasters of the time, were of young Australians upholding fair play and being accepting of victory and defeat, while also being disciplined and obedient.”<sup>36</sup>

Youth organisations and educational facilities promoted the concept of Muscular Christianity, but according to Beynon in *Masculinities and Culture* it was also dramatised within literature by placing an emphasis upon character building, courage, fortitude, patriotism and self-discipline.<sup>37</sup> The heroes in literature of this time were individuals who were not only upright but also brave, benevolent, and loyal. They were portrayed as natural leaders and were fearless.<sup>38</sup> Crotty in *Heroes of Australia: Race, Nation and Masculinity in Australian Boys' Adventure stories, 1875 – 1920*, suggests that the heroes of Kingsleyan literature were strong, sober and steadfast individuals with heads on their shoulders.<sup>39</sup> He also suggests that the hero of this time built their strength upon their ability to overcome threats brought from the environment and from Aboriginal Peoples. The youthful adventures of Morrison

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<sup>36</sup> Joseph Bowes, *Pals: Young Australians in Sport and Adventure* (London, 1910), 237; and Martin Crotty, ‘Manly and Moral: The Making of Middle-Class Men in the Australian Public Schools,’ *International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, No 2-3 (2000): 24.

<sup>37</sup> John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Buckingham, England; Open University, 2002), 36-37.

<sup>38</sup> Hogg, ‘The Most Manly Class that Exists: British Gentlemen on the Queensland Frontier,’ 67.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Crotty, ‘Heroes of Australia: Race, Nation and Masculinity in Australian Boys' Adventure Stories, 1875-1920,’ *Bulletin (Olive Pink Society)* 11, Issue 1–2 (1999): 24.

demonstrates this strength of character and ability to overcome threats from an environment with which he was not familiar.

Pearson's view in *National Life and Character*, where he posits that the deterioration of the quality of civic and economic life suggests that this degradation was a global issue, and he was not alone in these views. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the lack of "national character" in colonial Australia and the weakening of humanity was a source of fear and anxiety for many liberalists at a time of Empire building.<sup>40</sup> Macintyre in *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, suggested that liberalism is modelled on the "autonomous, self-sufficient individual" with "reason and moral responsibility, both to guide desire and emancipate the bearer from the tyranny of impulse."<sup>41</sup> He also advocates that masculinity was a common part of the liberal discourse, suggesting that "mastery of oneself and one's circumstances ... were associated with masculine virtues" and were aligned with civic humanist duties.<sup>42</sup> Gregory Melleuish in *Cultural Liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History*, contends that liberalism is more about the autonomy of the individual than that of the state.<sup>43</sup> Melleuish also

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<sup>40</sup> Pearson quoted in Hearn and Tregenza, 'Managing 'Self-Preservation': Charles Pearson's *National Life and Character* and the Early Australian Commonwealth,' 17.

<sup>41</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 34.

<sup>43</sup> Gregory Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 58-59.

contends in *David Syme, Charles .H Pearson and the Democratic Ideal in Australia*, that in order to maintain social order there is a need for self-regarding and social forces.<sup>44</sup>

## Research Design

This thesis examines George Ernest Morrison's achievements in terms of character; gentlemanliness; manliness and reputation; and explores Morrison's apparent disappearance from the Australian consciousness. The thesis investigates the key priorities of private education in colonial Victoria through the lens of religious devotion; bodily strength; and gentlemanly conduct and explores Morrison's achievements as a boy in this context. Morrison's achievements could equally have been examined from the perspective of family life, familial relationships, Protestantism, developmental psychology, gender and/or class. As the son of the Principal of Geelong College, Morrison lived with his family on the school campus, and as evidenced from his diaries the distinction between familial, Protestantism and educational relationships are hard to discriminate. These aspects were all relevant to Morrison's upbringing and consequently issues such as gender, class and Protestantism are referred to briefly in this examination. Detailed investigations into these themes were beyond the scope and time limitations of this thesis. Therefore, this thesis has focused on Morrison's achievements through the lens of his private denominational education only.

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<sup>44</sup> Gregory Melleuish, 'David Syme, Charles H. Pearson and the Democratic Ideal in Australia,' *Australian Journal of Political Science* 44, Issue 2 (2009): 218, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361140902862560>.

By examining these educational priorities, this study has explored whether the omission of George Ernest Morrison's youthful achievements from Australia's colonial history was attributable to his character and poor reputation; or the consequence of his achievements being unremarkable. Additionally, this thesis has investigated whether Morrison's youthful explorations established a foundation for his character, attitudes and achievements in later life and an historic legacy that includes continued scholarship; numerous biographies; and a commemorative lecture series established twelve years after his death.

The research methods utilised consisted of interpreting, comparing and contrasting primary resources, such as the diaries and journals of Morrison and his publications and correspondence that are currently held by the State Library of New South Wales. This study also included the consideration of primary sources, such as the Trove on-line collection of newspapers of the time. This research was supplemented by secondary materials, such as published biographies and articles prepared by Clune; Pearl; Trevor-Roper; Macklin and Thomson; MacFarlane; and Gardner that place emphasis predominantly upon Morrison's time as a journalist and as an advisor to the Chinese government. Only those documents relating to the period prior to Morrison's departure for Scotland in 1884 were analysed or assessed for the particular areas of interest.

This research has followed the key themes associated with the building of character, a consideration of both gentlemanliness and manliness, as well as the significance of Imperial Masculinity or Muscular Christianity. This masculinity has been examined through the lens of attention to religious

devotion; moral and gentlemanly conduct; and intellectual endeavour. These themes have been examined through Morrison's quest for knowledge and capacity for independent thought, courage and his advancement of causes for which he developed a righteous passion.

## 1. Character, Manliness and the Gentleman

### 1.1 George Morrison and Character in the Victorian Period

*Be more concerned with your reputation, because your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are.*

*John Wooden<sup>1</sup>*

Charles Pearson in *National Life and Character*, argues that economic and technological advancement during the Industrial Revolution brought increased urbanisation within the United Kingdom. Pearson states that this urbanisation brought degradation in the quality of civic and economic life and a rise in “weaker and more stunted specimens of humanity...”<sup>2</sup> At this time, Lord Baden Powell in *Scouting for Boys*, also suggested that the central problems affecting national efficiency could be prevented by focused training in the development of character and health that emphasised the systemised development of self-discipline, responsibility, resourcefulness, religion, fair play and helpfulness to others.<sup>3</sup>

In response to this urbanisation and perceived deterioration of character, educational models within the British Great Public School System promoted

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<sup>1</sup> John Wooden and Jack Tobin, *They Call Me Coach* (McGraw Hill Professional, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Pearson quoted in Mark Hearn and John Tregenza, ‘Managing ‘Self-Preservation’: Charles Pearson’s *National Life and Character* and the Early Australian Commonwealth,’ *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 65, No 1 (2019): 17, <https://doi.org/10.1111/AJPH.12536>.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, as quoted in Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man’s World* (Unwin Hyman, London, 1991), 194.

the virtues of a strong body, godliness and good learning, which were built on Thomas Arnold's philosophy that boys from Rugby School would develop manliness through attention to religious devotion; moral and gentlemanly conduct; and intellectual endeavour.<sup>4</sup> John Tosh in *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*, also suggested that education was aimed at building the character of students and through this facilitated the capacity of individuals to control their individual destiny.<sup>5</sup> Tosh goes on to highlight that character was a state to aspire to and required a certain standard of conduct. This approach to learning and the development of character through the acquiring of strength, courage and fair play became aligned with the concept of Imperial Masculinity or Muscular Christianity where the body was being trained for the protection of the weak and the advancement of righteous causes.<sup>6</sup>

David Newsome in *Godliness and Good Learning*, suggested that Leslie Stephen along with Thomas Hughes formulated ideals of behaviour and conduct which emphasised the importance of a vigorous, manly character that

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<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Richards, as quoted in Andy Harvey, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' *Critical Survey* (Oxford, England), 24, Issue 1 (2012): 19, <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2012.240102>; Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, quoted in Andy Harvey, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' *Critical Survey* (Oxford, England) 24, Issue 1 (2012): 20, <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2012.240102>; and Stephen Scarff, 'The British Public School and the Imperial Mentality: A Reflection of Empire at U.C.C.' (MA thesis, McGill University, 1998), 8.

<sup>5</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (Women and Men in History. Harlow, England; Pearson Longman, 2005), 85.

<sup>6</sup> Clive Moore, 'Colonial Manhood and Masculinities,' *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, Issue 56 (1998): 80.

embodied not only loyalty and patriotism but also courage, endurance and co-operation.<sup>7</sup> Pearson also goes on to propose that the breakdown in character and social cohesion in Britain was a phenomenon that was replicated on a global scale in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>8</sup>

Pearson was not alone in his views that the character of youth was deteriorating and that the current youth represented a weaker specimen of humanity than previous generations, which was being replicated globally.

Gregory Melleuish in *Cultural liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History*, suggests that the church played a role in ensuring that the forces of civilisation did not dissipate into chaos.<sup>9</sup> He also advocates that Thomas Arnold saw culture as the foundation of social harmony, turning the quarrelling classes and individuals into harmonious entities that pursue a common set of goals. According to Stuart Macintyre, George Higinbotham, a journalist, politician and Chief Justice and educational reformer, denounced the refusal of the churches in accepting the hypotheses of evolutionary theory and highlighted his concerns with respect to civilisation being unable to

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<sup>7</sup> David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning* (London: John Murray, 1961), 215; and Noel Gilroy Annan, as quoted in John Mallea, 'The Boys' Endowed Grammar Schools in Victorian England: The Educational Use of Sport' (PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1971), 26.

<sup>8</sup> Pearson quoted in Hearn and Tregenza, 'Managing 'Self-Preservation': Charles Pearson's National Life and Character and the Early Australian Commonwealth,' 17.

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 58-59.

“survive the loss of religion.”<sup>10</sup> Higinbotham also suggested that the loss of religion “threatened to unhinge the natural vigour of a man’s intellect and even the straightforwardness of manly character.”<sup>11</sup> Melleuish and Macintyre both concur that the loss of religion was impacting upon the lack of character and social cohesion within the Colony of Victoria.

Security within the region, in the scramble for European nations to build empires in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, also exacerbated fear and anxieties in the community.<sup>12</sup> This anxiety is evident in the *Port Augusta and Flinders Advertiser*, which states that “there is a good deal of anxiety among old colonists.”<sup>13</sup> This view and the inherent anxiety was also reflected in writings in *The West Australian*, who, in 1883, published that the:

Older generation of Australians often profess to great anxiety as to the character and as to the physical and mental capacity of that younger generation just grown or growing into manhood. They fear that a somewhat rapid deterioration of the race is imminent. They talk of indolence, boastfulness, want of reverence, want of fortitude, want of those strong sterling manly qualities which have built up the grandest empire in the world.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1991), 126.

<sup>11</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 126.

<sup>12</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 210.

<sup>13</sup> ‘No Title,’ *Port Augusta Dispatch and Flinders Advertiser*, June 13, 1883, 5.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Vigilans et audax,’ *The West Australian*, June 22, 1883, 3.

Higinbotham went on to describe the impact of the disabling of the male laity as negatively influencing “the education and training the undeveloped mind of the child and the receptive and dependent mind of the woman.”<sup>15</sup>

Character has been described as many things. The *Illawarra Mercury*, describes character as what a man is in his individual merits and virtues but not what he is judged as being by reputation.<sup>16</sup> While *The Broadford Courier and Reedy Creek Times*, describes character as an alternative for individuality in terms of sincerity, human sympathy and courage.<sup>17</sup>

The Australian press of the period placed significant focus on character and frequently cited individuals such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Ward Beecher as perceived authorities on character and the appropriate conduct of individuals. Similarly, A. B. Weigall, former headmaster of Sydney Grammar School and considered by some as “The Arnold of Australia”, and other headmasters were called upon as authorities not only on education but also on character.<sup>18</sup> Emerson and Weigall describe character as being the conscience of the society to which individuals belong, while Beecher described character as being made up of heredity, education and genius or natural ability.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 126.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Character,’ *Illawarra Mercury*, October 17, 4.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Character,’ *The Broadford Courier and Reedy Creek Times*, April 4, 1912, 4.

<sup>18</sup> ‘The Late Mr A B Weigall,’ *The Daily Telegraph*, June 14, 1913, 6.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Character,’ *The Daily Telegraph*, April 27, 1907, 7; ‘Character,’ *The Southern Record and Advertiser*, March 18, 1911, 6; and ‘Character,’ *Border Watch*, November 9, 1912, 6.

From the perspective of others, such as Emerson and Weigall, the young George Ernest Morrison could be seen as being not only a man of character but also a man of reputation. Morrison demonstrates individuality in terms of sincerity, human sympathy and courage but can also be shown to be a man of conscience. Morrison demonstrates his courage as a boy in his solo journeys from Geelong to Queenscliff; Queenscliff to Adelaide; and during his rowing down the Murray River.<sup>20</sup> Morrison's courage during his trip from Normanton to Melbourne is also noted in *The Times*, in London where he is described as:

a man who ventures in this country alone and unarmed must be possessed of no small amount of hardihood. Mr Morrison's feat commands the admiration of all interested in exploration, and must be set down as one of the most remarkable of pedestrian achievements.<sup>21</sup>

Morrison's racial principles are embodied in his preference to walk alone rather than to allow a man he describes as "one of the kindest and most considerate of men" from forgoing "himself of water if the day were hot that I might have more" during his exploration of the interior of Queensland.<sup>22</sup> As a youth, Morrison shows himself as a man of conscience and independence of thought. Morrison exemplifies his commitment to sincerity and human sympathy in his shipping on a Queensland labour vessel and the insertion of

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<sup>20</sup> Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1970), 373 – 374; Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 419 – 422; and Belinda Ingpen, 'The Boy Within' *State Library New South Wales Magazine for Members* 10, No 2 (2017): 31.

<sup>21</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 35.

<sup>22</sup> George Ernest Morrison, 'Across the Australian Continent on Foot,' *The Age*, May 19, 1883, 30.

himself into the controversial labour and race debate when his articles were brought to the notice of Lord Derby by the Aborigine's Protection Society and resulted in a brief suspension of trafficking.<sup>23</sup>

A reader of Morrison's various contributions to the *Leader*, also suggested that Morrison's achievements demonstrated self-reliance, dauntless courage and invincible determination providing characteristics which would form "a splendid foundation for a national character."<sup>24</sup> This same reader also alleges in the *Port Augusta Dispatch and Flinders Advertiser*, that "Australians have a tendency to blow and that this characteristic was conspicuously absent in young Morrison."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> George Ernest Morrison, 'The Contributor A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, October 28, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, 'A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, November 4, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, 'The Contributor A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, November 11, 1882, 35; George Ernest Morrison, 'The Contributor A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, November 18, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, 'The Contributor A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, November 25, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, 'The Contributor A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, December 2, 1882, 36; George Ernest Morrison, 'The Contributor A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, December 9, 1882, 35; 'Dr Morrison,' *The Lone Hand*, October 1, 1910, 472 – 478; and Elizabeth Morrison, *David Syme: Man of The Age* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2014), 166.

<sup>24</sup> 'Under the Verandah,' *Leader*, May, 26, 1883, 26; Excerpts from the Weeklies,' *The Ballarat Courier*, May 26, 1883, 4; 'Latest Telegrams,' *Port Augusta Dispatch and Flinders' Advertiser*, June 2, 1883, 5; and Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 34.

<sup>25</sup> 'Latest Telegrams,' *Port Augusta Dispatch and Flinders Advertiser*, June 2, 1883, 5; and Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 34.

The *Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette*, describes the character of man as being “the dowry of a nation where the influence of men of character lives after them.”<sup>26</sup> Despite a legacy that includes honours which have included recognition for his valuable service to China and for his “observations on Japan’s imperial ambitions in China and the Chinese-Australian resistance to the White Australia Policy,” Morrison’s reputation is now poorly acknowledged in modern Australia.<sup>27</sup> It could be considered that Morrison’s inability to “blow” or his absence of boastful behaviours may partially contribute to his achievements being absent from the general Australian historical lexicon.

## 1.2 Gentlemanliness versus Manliness in the Victorian Period

Character is assessed by Bruce Haley in *Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, in terms of both gentlemanliness and manliness. Bruce Haley describes a gentleman as being typified by self-control, fairness, respect for rules and effortless participation.<sup>28</sup> He also suggests that gentlemen have the ability to control their actions, an idea which is also supported by Tara Macdonald in *Middle Class Manliness and the Dickensian Gentleman*.<sup>29</sup> John Tosh in

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<sup>26</sup> ‘Character,’ *The Wyalong Advocate and Mining Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette*, October 14, 1927, 6.

<sup>27</sup> *The George E Morrison Lectures in Ethnology*, The George E. Morrison Lectures in Ethnology - Australian Centre on China in the World - ANU.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 235-236.

<sup>29</sup> Tara MacDonald, ‘Middle-Class Manliness and the Dickensian Gentleman,’ *The New Man, Masculinity and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (Routledge, 2015), 1, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315654010-2>.

*Gentlemanly politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England*, also suggests that a gentleman placed value on refinement of appearance and considered social status and sociability.<sup>30</sup> Tosh further maintains that the middle class gentleman preserved a rational manner and self-control while opting for virtue over effeminacy and resisting vices.

Sheldon Rothblatt in *Review of the English Gentleman, the rise and fall of an ideal by Philip Mason*, comments that “a gentleman was someone who behaved like one.”<sup>31</sup> He suggests that a gentleman was straight-forward in his dealings with others, truthful, respectful and courteous. A gentleman was also uncomplaining, brave and single minded in his sense of duties. These characteristics of a chivalrous gentleman were reiterated by Robert Hogg in *The Most Manly Class that Exists: British Gentleman on the Queensland Frontier*.<sup>32</sup> Hogg expands upon this ideal of the gentleman by suggesting that they were natural leaders. These characteristics were traits demonstrated by Morrison and are discussed further in Section 1.3.

In contrast, manliness is described by Haley in *Healthy Body in Victorian Culture*, as having an ability to endure and overcome challenges, which was expressed as toughness, independence, resilience, courage and individualism.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John Tosh, ‘Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 458, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0080440102000191>.

<sup>31</sup> Sheldon Rothblatt, ‘The English Gentleman, the Rise and Fall of an Ideal by Philip Mason,’ *Victorian Studies* 27, No 3 (1984): 394-395.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Hogg, ‘The Most Manly Class that Exists: British Gentlemen on the Queensland Frontier,’ *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 13 (2011): 67.

<sup>33</sup> Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, 235-236.

Unlike gentlemanly character, Tosh describes manly character in terms of the possession or acquisition of interiority and authenticity where “character is earned by mastering the circumstances of life and securing the respect of one’s peers.”<sup>34</sup> According to Tosh, this acquiring of manly character was independent of breeding and education and was as a result more socially inclusive. He also suggested that an individual needed to earn his manliness and the respect of one’s peers through navigating the circumstances of life. Harvey Mansfield in *The Partial Eclipse of Manliness*, also proposes that manliness is gained through struggle, stoicism and independence.<sup>35</sup>

### 1.3 George Morrison – the Victorian Gentleman

Through George Ernest Morrison’s achievements as a young man, he could be considered as a gentleman. Morrison’s status as a gentleman with social status and refinement of appearance was surely demonstrated by his presentation in 1881, at the age of nineteen, to the Governors Levee, a formal court reception given by a representative of the sovereign, after the publication of his series “Diary of a Tramp” in the *Leader*.<sup>36</sup> Morrison’s station in Geelong’s “polite” society is also evinced by his invitation to such parties as that with the Honourable John Cummings, a representative of the Victorian Legislative

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<sup>34</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire*, 458.

<sup>35</sup> Harvey Mansfield, quoted in John Tosh, ‘Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 461.

<sup>36</sup> ‘The Levee,’ *The Herald*, May, 24, 1881, 3.

Council and founder of the Cummings Brewery, and his dining with social reformer and anti-conscriptionist, Reverend Charles Strong.<sup>37</sup> Morrison also demonstrates gentlemanliness, as described by Haley and Tosh, by placing value on his appearance, as well as the appearance of others and showing self-control, fairness and a respect for rules.

Even in the earliest of Morrison's diaries, the intensity of his consideration of his own personal appearance can be seen by the measurement of height, weight, chest and arms on a regular basis and comparing these measurements to previous data.<sup>38</sup> In his diary entry from 30 May 1879, Morrison describes himself physically as "in fine trim as regards to mind and condition."<sup>39</sup> He also describes in his diary entry for the 2 December 1880, during his expedition down the Murray River in a canoe, as carrying not only a serge suit but also a hat and visiting cards amongst his possessions.<sup>40</sup>

The importance of the appearance of all in society to the gentleman of colonial Victoria is also documented in Morrison's diaries. Morrison describes his uncle's betrothed as being "ugly, uneducated, delicate and of advanced age" and describes one of his colleagues, Jack Bacchus, as "a miserable looking, spindle hanged fellow. He is 6 ft 10½ and about 24 years of age. He has fair

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<sup>37</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 115-168.

<sup>38</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 69.

<sup>39</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 23.

<sup>40</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 07, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 49.

hair and whiskers, the latter by the way are very nicely cut, good complexion and blue eyes” and another of his peers as “a stumpy stiff backed, straight legged, slopy shouldered boy of 17; who has the laugh which speaks the (sic) empty mind.”<sup>41</sup>

While it could be observed by some that this criticism of others by Morrison was harsh and ungentlemanly, according to Tosh in *Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England* manly speech, at times, could be seen as “socially unpleasant.”<sup>42</sup>

This direct and honest criticism of his peers and even his family, while confined to private diary entries, could be viewed as socially unpleasant but exemplifies the characteristics that Lionel James published in the *Nineteenth Century*, “appalled by his cold judgement on men and matters; enticed by peculiar vanity.”<sup>43</sup> This forthright and dispassionate appraisal was also noted in his contributions to the *Leader*, in 1882, where Morrison describes a man as a “fiendish looking brute” and describes an albino with a skin disease as “having his neck dusted as it were with fish scales, and his body covered with an eruption of black spots.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 69.

<sup>42</sup> Tosh, “Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,” 460.

<sup>43</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410.

<sup>44</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, October 28, 1882, 35; and ‘No Title,’ *The Telegraph*, November 8, 1882, 2.

Morrison demonstrates a respect for rules and effortless participation, as highlighted by Haley in the *Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, as features shown by a gentleman through his curiosity for the views of others, as well as inquiring about the beliefs and traditions of others.<sup>45</sup> This is exemplified by the diary entry of 16 January 1880, while enroute to Adelaide, where he references a lunch with Mr Irvine from Nirranda who he describes as “a genius, a poet, painter and phrenologist and the inventor of a new system of phonetic spelling.”<sup>46</sup> This curiosity for a broad variety of topics and the views and opinions of others is also documented in his diary from later this same year, when he references the achievements of William Shoebridge, a veteran of the Crimean War, who according to Morrison, “taught Valentine Baker the goosestep”, as well as describing the works of pastoralist and playwright F.R.C. Hopkins Esq. from Pericoota Homestead.<sup>47</sup>

Morrison’s curiosity about the beliefs, traditions and the way of life of others was further evidenced in his exhumation of an Indigenous warrior in December 1880, where he describes in detail how the body was placed, “there were alternate layers of sand and bark....”<sup>48</sup> Morrison goes on in his diary to describe mission life for Aboriginal children where “the children have four

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<sup>45</sup> Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, 235-236.

<sup>46</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 10.

<sup>47</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 07, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 191-285.

<sup>48</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 07, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 251 – 285.

hours school a day... and then have to work for their board.”<sup>49</sup> This cynicism regarding the harshness of mission life for Aboriginal children was again reflected in Morrison’s later writings in China where he refers to the missionaries as having “their harvest .... amounting to a fraction more than two Chinamen per missionary per annum.”<sup>50</sup> These attitudes are also highlighted by Tom Gardner in *Sympathetic or Sinister? Representations of China in George Ernest Morrison’s An Australian in China* where it is suggested that Morrison “argued against the effectiveness of the missionary presence in China.”<sup>51</sup>

Morrison’s diaries document this curiosity and inquisition further, in his descriptions of an Aboriginal family being “propelled through the water by a sturdy lubra. The husband comfortably reclined in the bow and her three daughters huddled together in the aft,” as well as “four blacks I met, three men and a woman, the former in front the woman... behind carrying an immense quantity of blankets and rugs.”<sup>52</sup> These observations illustrate his curiosity regarding the gender roles in the Aboriginal community.

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<sup>49</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 162.

<sup>50</sup> George Ernest Morrison, *An Australian in China*. (Hong Kong: Earnshaw Books, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> Tom Gardner, ‘Sympathetic or Sinister? Representations of China in George Ernest Morrison’s *An Australian in China*,’ *ANU Historical Journal* 11, No 2 (2021):5.

<sup>52</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 45.

Morrison's curiosity is also shown in his numerous descriptions of the homesteads and the agricultural practices he encounters.<sup>53</sup> In his diary annotations from December 1880, Morrison describes not only the "boiling down" establishment as a "large weatherboard building galvanised iron roof and painted white" with the ability to "employ 50 hands" and the capacity of butchering "500 sheep per day" but also describes in detail and candidly, the entire slaughtering process.<sup>54</sup>

This curiosity for the traditions and way of life of others continues to be evident in Morrison's penchant for travel, as well as his choice of literature as a youth. His diaries suggest Morrison read, amongst other items, *Coomassie and Magdala* by Henry Mooreland Stanley and *Life with the Hamran Arabs* by A.B.R. Myers. His diaries also reflect his regular reading of the British newspapers at the Mechanics Institute, as well as decorating the walls of his bedroom with excerpts from the *Illustrated London News*. Morrison's boyhood diaries further reflect his interest in travel where he documents that "Mr Campbell tells of his travels through India, China and Japan and across Siberia and the Holy Land in 1870, 1873 and 1878."<sup>55</sup>

Self-control is described in the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, in terms that "only a man who has control of himself...

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<sup>53</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 08, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 213.

<sup>54</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 07, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 305.

<sup>55</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 107.

can control others and can be of value and service to the community in which he lives.”<sup>56</sup> Roy Baumeister and Julie Exline in *Self-Control, morality and human strength*, indicate that self-control is key to moral character, which is reflected in human strength.<sup>57</sup> Baumeister and Exline also describe self-control in terms of Thomas Aquinas’ four cardinal virtues, which consider self-control in terms of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude and suggest that the preservation of self-control enables individuals to preserve their lives.

Morrison’s diligent journaling from his youth to the time of his death in 1920 shows great self-control. Similarly, the virtues of temperance and self-restraint are intimated at in his correspondence with his mother, in March 1882, where he writes justifying his enthusiasm for becoming a news correspondent that “...newspaper men are drunken in habits and undesirable companions does it not stand to reason that the quicker should be the success of one temperate and of refined morality.”<sup>58</sup>

Morrison certainly demonstrates great mental and emotional strength in facing difficulties associated with the environmental conditions that he encounters during his early journeys. It is evident in his contributions to the *Leader*, in 1879, relating to his expedition from Queenscliff to Adelaide, that he

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<sup>56</sup> ‘Self-Control,’ *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, November 3, 1888, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Roy Baumeister, and Julie Exline, ‘Self-Control, morality, and human strength,’ *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 19, No 1 (2000): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2000.19.1.29>.

<sup>58</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738 - 1935, MLMSS 312/280, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

encounters extremes in weather conditions and complained that he “had to sit down under the shade of a telegraph pole to cool my head” and suggested that the “heat was trying and atmosphere fearfully oppressive.”<sup>59</sup>

Articles describing Morrison’s excursion from Normanton to Melbourne in 1883, in *The South Australian Advertiser*, also describe Morrison’s perseverance and resilience through his encountering “the most dangerous part of the route, having for nearly 350 miles to wade almost daily considerable distances and to swim swollen creeks.”<sup>60</sup> Self-control through prudence, frugality and economy is documented in Morrison’s diaries where he maintains a detailed ledger of his expenses. Such prudence and frugality are shown while travelling from Normanton to Melbourne in 1883, Morrison expended sixpence on three pounds of flour and four shillings on two telegrams at Wilcannia.<sup>61</sup> Morrison’s thriftiness and frugality is also demonstrated in his economic use of paper in his correspondence with his mother, in February 1880, where he uses cross hatched writing (refer to Figure 2).

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<sup>59</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 15 and 30; George Ernest Morrison, ‘The Contributor. Diary of a Tramp – from Queenscliff to Adelaide – No II,’ *Leader*, May 8, 1880, 1; George Ernest Morrison, ‘The Contributor. Diary of a Tramp – from Queenscliff to Adelaide – No III,’ *Leader*, May 15, 1880, 1; and George Ernest Morrison, ‘The Contributor. Diary of a Tramp – from Queenscliff to Adelaide – No IV,’ *Leader*, May 22, 1880, 1.

<sup>60</sup> ‘An Adventurous Journey,’ *The South Australian Advertiser*, April 25, 1883, 5.

<sup>61</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 – 1935, MLMSS 312/4/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

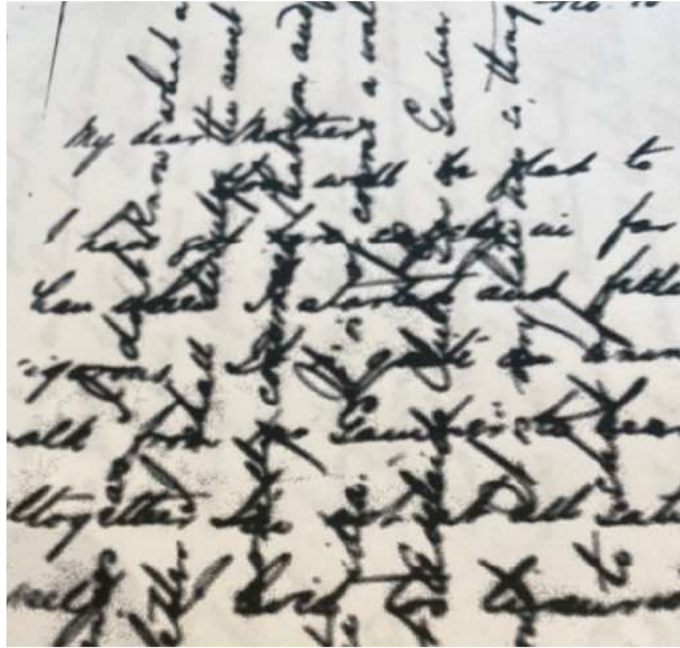


Figure 2: Correspondence from George Ernest Morrison to his mother dated February 16<sup>th</sup> 1880<sup>62</sup>

The *Illustrated Australian News* describes Morrison's writing in the *Leader* during 1883, as showing a "graphic and modest manner" and suggests that Morrison was "made of the stuff out of which such noted explorers as McKinley, Stuart, Burke and Howitt were fashioned."<sup>63</sup> In his nomination to the Royal Geographical Society in London, Sir Henry Barkly, the former Governor of Victoria, describes Morrison's endeavours as emulating the achievements of journalist and explorer, Henry M. Stanley, and war correspondent, Archibald Forbes.<sup>64</sup> These comparisons to explorers of the

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<sup>62</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 - 1935, MLMSS 312/35-115, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>63</sup> 'Mr George Ernest Morrison,' *Illustrated Australian News*, July 11, 1883, 100.

<sup>64</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 - 1935, SAFE/R 644/Item b, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

period, highlight the ease with which Morrison participated and described his achievements.

As described in Haley's *Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, gentlemanliness is typified by self-control, fairness, respect for rules and effortless participation, while Tosh's definition of gentlemanliness is considered in terms of the refinement of appearance and social status and sociability suggestive of the characteristics displayed by Morrison in his youth. These were typical of a Victorian gentleman of the time.<sup>65</sup>

#### 1.4 Manliness and George Ernest Morrison

While Morrison may have demonstrated character through gentlemanliness, even as a boy, he also showed manliness. While Morrison's diaries establish the importance he placed on status and appearance, he also demonstrates the interiority and authenticity of the manliness described by Tosh in *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*.<sup>66</sup> After Morrison's ill-fated journey to the interior of New Guinea in 1883, where his spearing resulted in his aborting the mission (refer to Figure 3), Morrison's main concern was not only with the trouble that he had caused his mother but also regarding how his sponsor David Syme, proprietor of *The*

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<sup>65</sup> Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, 235-236; and Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire*, 85.

<sup>66</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire*, 85.

*Age*, would view his failure.<sup>67</sup> So shamed by his failure, Morrison wrote in his *Reminiscences* that “I do not care to dwell upon these disagreeable months.”<sup>68</sup> The extent of this shame resulted in Morrison destroying all the papers connected with this particular journey so that he could “efface from my memory, all recollections of it.”<sup>69</sup>



Figure 3: Spear fragments extracted from Morrison, 1883<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410; and Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, 49.

<sup>68</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410; and Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, 52.

<sup>69</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410; and Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, 52.

<sup>70</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 - 1935, SAFE/R 645/Item c, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

Morrison's achievement of his pedestrian feats from Queenscliff to Adelaide and subsequently, from Normanton to Melbourne in 1883, as well as his canoe trip down the Murray River in 1880 – 1881, all demonstrate the manliness described by Haley. These attributes included having the ability to endure and overcome challenges; possess toughness, courage and resilience; and demonstrate his self-control and self-discipline.<sup>71</sup> Morrison's diary relating to the period 1879 to 1880, when he journeyed from Queenscliff to Adelaide, refers to his feet being raw, his arms being severely blistered above the hand from sunburn and his reference to the "fearfully hot" conditions he was enduring.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the challenges faced by Morrison on his journey from Normanton to Melbourne are described in the *Leader*, where he refers to wading through swamps and flooded creeks and being unable to see land for 15 miles. In his diaries he also notes the hunger that he experienced and his lack of provisions. He also describes the painful extrication of himself from his canoe on his journey down the Murray River.<sup>73</sup>

Morrison's expedition through outback Queensland, in 1883, shows his courage by fearlessly travelling unarmed and without a compass through an area of the country where only ten days prior was the scene of the Beresford

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<sup>71</sup> Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, 235-236.

<sup>72</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 23-35.

<sup>73</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 07, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 265 – 267; George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 08, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 133; and George Ernest Morrison, 'Across the Australian Continent on Foot,' *The Age*, May 19, 1883, 2.

massacre.<sup>74</sup> Marcus de la Poer Beresford, officer in charge of the Native Police at Cloncurry, was killed by the Kalkadoons, a local Indigenous group. This incident was typical of many described by Henry Reynolds in *Dispossession: Black Australians and White Invaders*, and *The Other Side of the Frontier*.<sup>75</sup> Timothy Bottoms in the *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times*, also highlights that in the Cloncurry area prior to this incident that the Native Police corralled Aboriginal Peoples into a gorge before killing them.<sup>76</sup> According to Reynolds, the Native Mounted Police used “friendly blacks” to counter the bush skills of the Aboriginal Peoples, in order to patrol the fringes of European settlement and were feared by the traditional owners.<sup>77</sup>

Morrison comments in the *Leader* that “the only excitement that sustained me in my weakness was the blacks – the wild Kalkadoons who are so greatly feared in the hills.”<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, no further reference is made regarding the Aboriginal Peoples or violence towards them, in this account apart from a description of his presence at a station:

whose owner is said to have shot more blacks than any two men in Queensland when the mailman came in and reported that he had

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<sup>74</sup> ‘Murder of Mr Marcus Beresford,’ *The Queenslander*, March 24, 1883, 469.

<sup>75</sup> Henry Reynolds, *Dispossession Black Australians and White Invaders* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, 1989); and Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1988).

<sup>76</sup> Timothy Bottoms, *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times* (Allen & Unwin, 2013), 164.

<sup>77</sup> Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier*, 104.

<sup>78</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘Across the Australian Continent on Foot,’ *The Age*, May 19, 1883. 2.

seen a black prowling around the stockyard. Loading his rifle he at once sallied out after him.<sup>79</sup>

Unfortunately, as noted by Bottoms, these actions could be undertaken with the knowledge that the Queensland colonial government would not do anything to stop this practice.<sup>80</sup> Bottoms goes on to highlight that there was less Aboriginal violence in Victoria as the Native Police force was more benign; protective efforts meant that the settlers were more heavily scrutinised; and the more sympathetic ideologies of the population were more entrenched.

This account highlights how some frontiersmen prided themselves on the taking of the lives of Aboriginal Peoples in a similar way to how Morrison in his youth maintained a log of the number of ducks that he had shot.<sup>81</sup> Morrison shows no sympathy for the Kalkadoon, nor does he provide commentary on this frontier violence as a guest in the homestead. He neither actively supports nor accompanies this frontiersman in his pursuit which probably reflects a negative attitude towards this behaviour, particularly when assessed in context, with his earlier interactions with Aboriginal Peoples.

Thompson and Macklin also refer to an incident in New Guinea where Morrison fired his rifle and inadvertently hits one of the 40 tribesman who had rushed Morrison's party of four. They note "Lyons later wrote, [Morrison] came and told us what he had done and said he felt like a murderer."

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<sup>79</sup> George Ernest Morrison, 'Across the Australian Continent on Foot,' *The Age*, May 19, 1883. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Bottoms, *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times*, 179-189.

<sup>81</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 234.

Thompson and Macklin also note that the next morning despite the warning of “crossed spears and a shield placed on the track” Morrison progressed down the jungle track and was found “stretched on his back covered with blood from head to foot” with “one spear ...lodged near his eye, another protruded from his belly.”<sup>82</sup>

In the account of his crossing of the continent in 1883, Morrison writes of the kindness shown by other Indigenous men that he encountered. One such travelling companion, he describes as a native of the Gold Coast, on the African continent, who is “one of the kindest, most considerate men it has been my lot to meet with... he would stint himself of water if the day were hot that I might have the more.”<sup>83</sup> Rather than take another man’s share of the drinking water, Morrison describes the selflessness of this companion “though parched with thirst he would not take his share. Not to be outdone I also refused any water.”<sup>84</sup> Morrison also writes about a “Kanakanaka” who “showed me the greatest kindness and attention” when Morrison was “taken very unwell...for three days.”<sup>85</sup>

As a young man, Morrison shows independence, individuality and security amongst the Aboriginal Peoples by undertaking his journey through central

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<sup>82</sup> Thompson and Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*, 67-68.

<sup>83</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘Across the Australian Continent on Foot,’ *The Age*, May 19, 1883, 2.

<sup>84</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘Across the Australian Continent on Foot,’ *The Age*, May 19, 1883, 2.

<sup>85</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘Across the Australian Continent on Foot,’ *Bendigo Advertiser*, May 23, 1883, 1.

Queensland not only alone but also unarmed and on foot. He exemplifies such independence by shipping as an ordinary seaman on the *Lavinia* to observe labour trade recruitment practices.<sup>86</sup> Whether Morrison was being used as a "puppet" of David Syme of *The Age* or not, he demonstrated noteworthy independence of thought in his correspondence to the editor of *The Age*. This was shown when he highlighted the cruelty of the Queensland slave trade on the South Pacific Islanders themselves, as well as upon the islands from which they were taken, provoking considerable debate and intervention by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and eventual reform.<sup>87</sup>

### 1.5 Morrison – Both Manly and a Victorian Gentleman

Mangan in *Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, suggested that mid-Victorians "followed a philosophy of independence, sensibly accepting the fact that life on the whole was a painful and arduous affair, justified its rigours as a proving-ground for character."<sup>88</sup> Through Morrison's arduous and at times painful, individual

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<sup>86</sup> George Ernest Morrison, 'Across the Australian Continent on Foot,' *The Age*, May 19, 1883, 2; Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 30; and George Ernest Morrison, 'The Contributor A cruise in a Queensland Slaver,' *Leader*, October 21, 1882, 36.

<sup>87</sup> 'The Queensland Slave Trade, to the Editor of The Age,' *The Age*, May 9 1883, 7; 'The Queensland Slave Trade, to the editor of The Age,' *The Age*, May 10, 1883; and 'Lord Derby and the Labour Traffic,' *The Age*, October, 12, 1883, 5.

<sup>88</sup> J.A. Mangan, 'Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,' *The International Journal of the History of Sport: "Manufactured" Masculinity - The Cultural Construction of Imperial Manliness, Morality and Militarism* 27, Issue 1–2 (2010): 85.

endeavours, he establishes himself as a youth of character and reputation and demonstrates both gentlemanly and manly virtues.

As a man of character, a bushman and an explorer, Morrison proved himself to have not only fortitude, courage and perseverance but also the self-discipline, responsibility, resourcefulness and helpfulness described by Robert Baden Powell in *Scouting for Boys*. The absence of these characteristics was considered by Baden Powell as central to the issues associated with national efficiency that brought degradation in the quality of Victorian youth and ultimately a deterioration in civic and economic life.<sup>89</sup> Pearson's concern for the degeneration of life in the Victorian Empire may well be accurate in describing the youth of many in Britain and Australia. This concern is contradicted, however, when considering the general description of Australian explorers given by *The West Australian* that may easily have applied to Morrison:

Explorers are looked upon as heroes, and are greeted with enthusiasm .... the Australian bushmen is pushing his way and that without hope of honour, reward or fame to stimulate his exertions, he is proving himself capable of an endurance under privation and suffering of an indomitable perseverance and pluck of a buoyancy of spirit under circumstances the most trying, of a courage and fortitude, which conclusively demonstrates that the old spirit of our fathers is alive in their Australian sons, and that all fear of any general degeneracy of the race in this land of the south may, for the present, at any rate be set aside.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, as quoted in Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 194.

<sup>90</sup> 'Vigilans et audax,' *The West Australian*, June 22, 1883, 3.

## 2. Imperial Masculinity and Muscular Christianity

### 2.1 The Rise of Muscular Christianity and Imperial Masculinity

*“In the playing field boys acquire virtues which no books can give them; not merely daring and endurance, but, better still temper, self-restraint, fairness, honor, unenvious approbation of another’s success, and all that ‘give and take’ of life which stand a man in good stead when he goes forth into the world...”*

*Charles Kingsley*<sup>1</sup>

John Nauright in *Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours*, highlights that in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, there was a perceived anxiety that males were becoming more emasculated.<sup>2</sup> During the Industrial Revolution, as young men and boys were uprooting themselves from their homes to take on service and work elsewhere, household expectations fortified the development of gender roles and reinforced the home as being associated with more effeminate qualities, such as emotion, tenderness and sentiment.<sup>3</sup> In the opinion of Charles Pearson, this was also exacerbated by these young men and

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Kingsley, as quoted in Mark Loane, ‘Ken Donald and Muscular Christianity,’ *Australian Health Review* 32, No 2 (2008): 305 -307.

<sup>2</sup> John Nauright, ‘Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours, 1878 – 1906,’ *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 23, No 2 (1992): 55.

<sup>3</sup> Kris Wolfe, “How Victorian Masculinity Still Influences Modern Manhood.” *Gentleman Lifestyle*, 2017; and Nick Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, ‘The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,’ *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005): 1.

boys, in factories, being deprived of proper access to light and air and being without muscular exercise.<sup>4</sup>

In *Studying Christian masculinity: An Introduction*, Yvonne Werner highlighted that Christian churches were increasingly being dominated by women and were viewed as weak, sentimental and irrational.<sup>5</sup> Christianity at this time was also being feminised with increasing numbers of females in congregations, as the males were moving away from the home.<sup>6</sup> Increasingly, church congregations were driving initiatives that were more restrained rather than the more militaristic and nationalistic activities that characterised a more masculine cohort.<sup>7</sup>

According to Joseph Bristow, at a time of increasing fears of emasculation: courage, pluck and toughness were considered the highest qualities of manhood. Clive Moore in *Colonial Manhood and Masculinities*, suggested

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Hearn and John Tregenza, 'Managing 'Self-Preservation': Charles Pearson's National Life and Character and the Early Australian Commonwealth,' *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, 65, No 1 (2019): 17, <https://doi.org/10.1111/AJPH.12536>.

<sup>5</sup> Yvonne Werner, 'Studying Christian Masculinity: An Introduction,' *Christian Masculinity. Men and Religion in Northern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Leuven University Press, 2011), 3; and Siphwe Dube, 'Muscular Christianity in Contemporary South Africa: The Case of the Mighty Men Conference,' *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, 71, No 3 (2015): 1, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2945>.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (Unwin Hyman, London, 1991), 64.

<sup>7</sup> Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 64; and Nauright, 'Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours, 1878 – 1906,' 57.

that “manly qualities of strength, courage, fair play and true amateurism became aligned to Muscular Christianity.”<sup>8</sup>

John Beynon in *Masculinities and Culture*, suggested that Imperial Masculinity was a concept that was a product of time, place, power and class, as well as racial and national superiority.<sup>9</sup> He proposes that, during this time of European expansion, the British were held to be superior to other races and a civilising force amongst these other races. Beynon also suggests that British Army Officer’s Gordon, known for his evacuation of Khartoum, and Kitchener, known for his role in the Boer War and subsequently, the First World War, along with Cecil Rhodes and Baden-Powell were the most notable examples of this concept of masculinity.

Educational models within the British Public School System, during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, followed a philosophy based on those of Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School from 1828 to 1841, which aimed at addressing this perceived degeneration and social disharmony. The Arnoldian philosophy aimed at boys developing manliness through attention to religious devotion; moral and gentlemanly conduct; and intellectual endeavour; and promoted the virtues of a strong body, godliness and good learning.<sup>10</sup> Gregory

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<sup>8</sup> Clive Moore, ‘Colonial Manhood and Masculinities,’ *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, No 56 (1998): 47.

<sup>9</sup> John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Buckingham, England; Open University, 2002), 28.

<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey Richards, as quoted in Andy Harvey, ‘Tom Brown’s Schooldays,’ *Critical Survey* (Oxford, England), 24, No 1 (2012): 19, <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2012.240102>; Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, quoted in Andy Harvey, ‘Tom Brown’s Schooldays,’ *Critical Survey* (Oxford, England),

Melleuish, in *Cultural Liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History*, suggests that this philosophy was key to the development of social harmony and was a means by which contentious and quarrelling classes and individuals could transition to harmonious entities pursuing common goals.<sup>11</sup> This approach to learning and the development of strength, courage and fair play became aligned with the concept of Imperial Masculinity or Muscular Christianity where the body was being trained for the protection of the weak and the advancement of righteous causes.<sup>12</sup> Stephen Scarff and Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy emphasised the virtues of religious devotion, bodily strength and gentlemanly conduct.<sup>13</sup> Nick Watson, Stuart Weir and Stephen Friend, in *The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond*, also suggest that the institutionalisation of Muscular Christianity was championed as a means of strengthening the future leaders and hence the

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24, No 1 (2012): 20, <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2012.240102>; and Stephen Scarff, 'The British Public School and the Imperial Mentality: A Reflection of Empire at U.C.C.' (MA thesis, McGill University, 1998), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 59.

<sup>12</sup> J.A. Mangan, 'Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,' *The International Journal of the History of Sport: "Manufactured" Masculinity - The Cultural Construction of Imperial Manliness, Morality and Militarism* 27, No 1–2 (2010): 80; and Clive Moore, 'Colonial Manhood and Masculinities,' 47.

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, quoted in Andy Harvey, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' *Critical Survey* (Oxford, England) 24, No 1 (2012): 20, <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2012.240102>; and Stephen Scarff, 'The British Public School and the Imperial Mentality: A Reflection of Empire at U.C.C.' (MA thesis, McGill University, 1998), 8.

strength of the British Empire.<sup>14</sup> The enrolment of the sons of British gentry and the upper middle class in boarding schools to build their self-reliance and determination was described by John Chandos, in *Boys Together*, who highlights that this style of education prepared them to serve the Empire.<sup>15</sup> Scarff expanded on this concept by suggesting at a time of European expansionism, that this type of education was also a means of ensuring the continuity of the British Empire.<sup>16</sup>

Heather Ellis, in *Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood*, suggests that Thomas Arnold's system of education prioritised moral earnestness, hard work and intellectual curiosity.<sup>17</sup> Ellis stressed that the concept of Muscular Christianity, as developed by Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, not only emphasised the strength and physicality of education, but also aided the institutionalisation of Muscular Christianity into Victorian culture.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Watson, Weir, and Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,' 7.

<sup>15</sup> John Chandos as quoted in John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Scarff, 'The British Public School and the Imperial Mentality: A Reflection of Empire at U.C.C.' (MA thesis, McGill University, 1998), 5.

<sup>17</sup> Heather Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood,' *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 19, No 4 (2014): 426, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13555502.2014.969975>.

<sup>18</sup> Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood,' 426; and Watson, Weir and Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,' 8.

Arnold, Kingsley and Hughes were not alone in their views of the need for physicality through the promotion of Muscular Christianity. Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish historian, writer and teacher, who wrote extensively on heroes and hero worship, expressed his respect for men of rugged independence and action. While British Army Officer, Robert Baden-Powell, known for his service in the Siege of Mafeking and for the founding of the Boy Scouts, also suggested that manliness had to be taught through exposure to the outdoors.<sup>19</sup>

Pearson, in *Natural Life and Character*, suggested that urbanisation brought about “weaker and more stunted specimens of humanity” and that this issue was not merely constrained to Britain.<sup>20</sup> According to Carole Hooper, in England, education was socially stratified with boys traditionally following vocationally focused classical or commercial courses, while girls were taught “polite accomplishments”.<sup>21</sup> Private denominational secondary education within Australia followed the British pedagogical model, which was based upon many of the Arnoldian educational philosophies. These private denominational schools had a strong belief in the superiority of single-sex education as a means of managing the morality of the students and used the building of strong bodies through sports to instill manly values. These manly

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<sup>19</sup> John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Pearson, quoted in Hearn and Tregenza, ‘Managing ‘Self-Preservation’: Charles Pearson’s *Natural Life and Character* and the Early Australian Commonwealth,’ 17.

<sup>21</sup> Carole Hooper, “Single-sex versus coeducational schooling in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Victorian Public Schools,” *History of Education Review*, 50, No 2 (2021): 266.

values were also engendered through the liberal use of the cane as corporal punishment.

In 1904, Frederick Gladman in *School Work*, suggested that for offences such as immorality, falsehood, bullying, cruelty, habitual carelessness, obstinacy and disobedience the use of corporal punishment was appropriate discipline.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.2 Morrison's Education and Upbringing

George Ernest Morrison was the son of a Victorian educationalist (refer Figure 4) who was the Principal and owner of Geelong College where the young Morrison was also a student. Morrison senior was a strict disciplinarian and, as highlighted by Helen Penrose, in *The Way to the Stars: 150 Years of the Geelong College*, ran the school under the philosophy of a “sound mind inhabiting a sound body” and that religious content was key to the development of young men’s good moral development.<sup>23</sup> Penrose also suggests that Morrison senior was, at times, “almost intolerable lacking not only the polish of a gentleman... He is enough to drive a fellow crazy sometimes” and documents a mass exodus of staff, in 1882, as a result of a disagreement with Mr Morrison.<sup>24</sup> Penrose also suggests that Mr Morrison senior was a known advocate of corporal punishment and detention.

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<sup>22</sup> Frederick Gladman as quoted in Department of Education, *Corporal Punishment*, accessed July 14, 2022, [Corporal punishment \(education.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.education.qld.gov.au/corporal-punishment)

<sup>23</sup> Helen Penrose, *The Way to the Stars: 150 Years of The Geelong College* (Geelong, Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2011), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Penrose, *The Way to the Stars: 150 Years of The Geelong College*, 19.



Figure 4: A student view of George Morrison senior, 1873, drawn by E Watt<sup>25</sup>

Geelong College, where Morrison grew up, prescribed to this Arnoldian philosophy and the Church of Scotland's Books of Discipline, which included a curriculum for intellectual, religious and moral development.<sup>26</sup> The College promoted itself in its prospectus, in terms of "the religious instruction as scriptural; and the grounds where there was every facility for cricket, football and exercise."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Geelong College, n.d. *Heritage Guide to the Geelong College*, accessed June 3, 2021, [Morrison, George MA \(1830-1898\) - Heritage Guide to The Geelong College](#).

<sup>26</sup> Penrose, *The Way to the Stars: 150 Years of The Geelong College*, 6.

<sup>27</sup> George Notman, and Bert Keith, *The Geelong College 1861-1961* (Geelong: Specialty Press, 1961), 11.

This approach to education was also evident in other denominational schools in colonial Australia. In Peter Rees in *Bearing Witness: The remarkable life of Charles Bean, Australia's greatest war correspondent* suggested that Bean's father, Headmaster of All Saints College, Bathurst and former Classics Master at Sydney Grammar under the leadership of A.B. Weigall, fostered the philosophies of Arnold and focused his schools' religious principles, gentlemanly behaviour and academic attainment. Rees also suggested that Bean senior emphasised the importance of character training and the virtues of loyalty, chivalry, sportsmanship and leadership.<sup>28</sup>

Morrison's diaries underline the virtues of religious devotion, bodily strength and gentlemanly conduct described by Scarff and Gathorne-Hardy.<sup>29</sup> Morrison's early diaries not only document his expeditions via his descriptions of vegetation, geology, wildlife, weather and particularly, the people that he encounters, but he also highlights the many aspects of the education at Geelong College in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In his diaries, Morrison details the progress that he had made completing his father's correspondence; his attendance at various church services and who these services were delivered by; and many interschool sporting contests with other denominational schools, as well as domestic and international sporting competitions, including the various sporting events hosted at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

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<sup>28</sup> Peter Rees, *Bearing Witness The remarkable life of Charles Bean, Australia's greatest war correspondent* (Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2015), 4-5; and Ross Coulthart, *Charles Bean*, Harper Collins, 2014), 7.

<sup>29</sup> Scarff, 'The British Public School and the Imperial Mentality: A Reflection of Empire at U.C.C.,' 74; and Gathorne-Hardy, quoted in Andy Harvey, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' 20.

In his diary of 1878, Morrison describes a football game against the Grammar School, including the players involved and highlights that “it was the roughest match I ever played.”<sup>30</sup> Morrison’s sporting prowess and interests were not just restricted to football, he also writes of his shooting pursuits, cricket and even provides commentary on the rowing styles of Charles Messenger and John Christie and upon Messenger’s use of the sliding seat.<sup>31</sup>

Morrison also frequently writes about the training he undertakes and his intellectual pursuits. In Morrison’s diary entries of 1 April – 30 June 1878, he undertakes a self-evaluation of his shooting style. While in his diary of the 1 July - 30 November 1878, he details additional Chemistry classes in the evenings under the tutorage of G. F. Link and documents his understanding of the chemical reactions of metals and hydrochloric acid. He notes in his diary, “if liquid is poured off and ammonia substituted, silver will dissolve, mercury becomes black and iron isn’t affected.”<sup>32</sup> Morrison catalogues his visits to the Mechanics Institute to read the English newspapers, as well as provides commentary on his results in Euclidean Geometry and Algebra. These diary entries detail that “I have stuck up on the wall facing me as I write this two dozen pictures all picked ones taken at various times from the *Illustrated London News*. The room looks quite cheerful now” suggesting Morrison’s

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<sup>30</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 123.

<sup>31</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 160.

<sup>32</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 141.

broad ranging interests were not only limited to the local and school environment, but also in the affairs of the Empire.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.3 Religious Devotion in the 19th Century Educational Context

As discussed previously within this thesis, Yvonne Werner, in *Studying Christian Masculinity: An Introduction*, stated that in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the urbanisation of Britain, Christian faith and religious practice became increasingly associated with womanliness and docility and focused on the home.<sup>34</sup> Werner also highlights that Christian churches were being feminised and were dominated by women and were therefore becoming weak, sentimental and creational. Bristow, in *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, postulates that this feminisation restrained the innate aggression that, at times, characterised manliness. J.A. Mangan, in *Social Darwinism and Upper Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, argues that religion “was not a spiritual commitment but a social habit and as much a framework around which a society is built.”<sup>35</sup>

Melleuish, in *Cultural Liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History*, suggests that religion played a role in ensuring that the

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<sup>33</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Werner, ‘Studying Christian Masculinity: An Introduction,’ 3.

<sup>35</sup> Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 64; and J.A. Mangan, ‘Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,’ 88.

forces of civilisation did not dissipate into chaos.<sup>36</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, in

*Ethical Religion*, also suggests that religion and morality:

was in the beginning simply the customary conduct of a community, settled ways of acting that men living together naturally fell into. By a natural process the good customs tended to survive and the bad ones to die out, since if the bad ones did not die out, they would weaken the community and lead to its extinction.<sup>37</sup>

In response to this perceived emasculation of the population and the adoption of Arnold's philosophies for the development of soft boys into hard men, there was increased focus on religion within schools. Watson, Weir and Friend, in *The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond*, suggested that "godliness was compatible with manliness as an antidote to the poison of effeminacy."<sup>38</sup> David Newsome, in *Godliness and Good Learning*, also suggested that Thomas Hughes believed that true Muscular Christians hung onto the belief that:

a mans body is given to him to be trained and brought into subjection and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes and the subduing of the Earth which God has given to the children of men.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia: A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History*, 58-59.

<sup>37</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, *Ethical Religion*, accessed October 24, 2021, [Ethical Religion \(mkgandhi.org\)](http://mkgandhi.org).

<sup>38</sup> Watson, Weir and Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,' 3.

<sup>39</sup> David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning* (London: John Murray, 1961), 214.

An alternate view was expressed in the *Dublin Review*, in 1886, that suggested that Muscular Christianity was a veiled attempt to maintain the concept of religion within the school system.<sup>40</sup> This article highlighted that the creation of a boy in the likeness of God was merely a means of emphasising muscle, pluck, self-reliance and independence without much reliance on the teachings in the bible. While Martin Crotty, in *Constructing Whiteness in the Australian Adventure Story 1875-1920*, suggested that religion, racial purity and domesticity were being utilised as a means of communicating civilised values.<sup>41</sup> Crotty also suggests in *Heroes of Australia: Race, Nation and Masculinity in Australia Boys' Adventure Stories, 1875-1920* that moral steadfastness could transition to independent endeavour and organised militarism.<sup>42</sup>

As Muscular Christianity developed during the 1850s and beyond, Christian morality became an integral part of the British Great Public School education system.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, from an Australian perspective, Stuart Macintyre, in *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, highlights that education in the colony of Victoria during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century had

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<sup>40</sup> Dublin Review, as quoted in J.A. Mangan, 'Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,' 86.

<sup>41</sup> Martin Crotty, 'Constructing Whiteness in the Australian Adventure Story, 1875-1920,' *Historicising Whiteness: Transnational Perspectives on the Construction of an Identity* (2007), 253-259.

<sup>42</sup> Martin Crotty, 'Heroes of Australia: Race, Nation and Masculinity in Australian Boys' Adventure Stories, 1875-1920,' *Bulletin (Olive Pink Society)* 11, Issue 1-2 (1999); 22-27.

<sup>43</sup> Watson, Weir and Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,' 7.

three dimensions: intellectual, spiritual and moral.<sup>44</sup> Macintyre also proposes that Charles Pearson used the “language and values of enlightened Protestantism to make a society unified by faith to one joined in citizenship” and in so doing making education more secular and the responsibility of the state.<sup>45</sup> Pearson, who was an alumni of Arnold’s Rugby School, also believed that the moral precepts of tolerance, charity and restraint were extracted from religious education and that generally an educated community is more law-abiding and moral and more capable of work.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.4 Morrison and his Attitudes toward Religious Devotion

According to Penrose, in *The Way to the Stars: 150 years of the Geelong College*, the educational philosophy at the school of George Morrison senior was built upon the British Public School system with a focus on intellectual, spiritual and moral development rather than on citizenship.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the fundamental moral traits of tolerance, charity and restraint, G.G.T. Heywood, in *Ideals of Schoolboy Life*, suggests that the ideal boy had characteristics that

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<sup>44</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1991), 135.

<sup>45</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 154.

<sup>46</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 153.

<sup>47</sup> Penrose, *The Way to the Stars: 150 Years of The Geelong College*, 6.

were unselfish, modest, frank and honourable and founded on true religion, which he frequently concealed.<sup>48</sup>

As a school that applied an Arnoldian philosophy, religious scripture was a key part of Geelong College's curriculum and as noted in the *Geelong Advertiser*, in 1870, and *The Australasian*, in 1874, George Ernest Morrison received academic commendations for his performance in Scripture.<sup>49</sup>

Morrison's early diaries highlighted his commitment to his religious education with numerous entries in his diaries where he describes that he "went to Campbell's in the morning. Thomson the son of the baker preached. Mr Hutchinson preached at All Saints." Similarly, in his later diaries of 1 December 1878 – 30 April 1879 he notes "went to church this morning and evening."<sup>50</sup> These diary entries could, however, be seen as just being part of the standard domestic life of a Scottish family who owned a denominational school.

Robert Baden-Powell, in his establishment of the Scouting movement, believed that character could be developed through focus on God through nature studies and it was with this perspective that Morrison annotated his

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<sup>48</sup> G.G.T. Heywood, quoted in J.A. Mangan, 'Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,' 79.

<sup>49</sup> 'Geelong College Annual Speech Day,' *Geelong Advertiser*, December 20, 2; and 'Geelong College Prize List,' *The Australasian*, December 19, 1874, 15.

<sup>50</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 11; and George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 03, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 50.

miniature bible and questioned the established religious norms taught within the Scripture curriculum of the College.<sup>51</sup>

In Morrison's commentary preceding the Book of Genesis, he writes on the order of creation: water, air and land; and later interrogates the plausibility of this order by suggesting that some mammals, such as whales and bats would have been created before other land mammals. He also questions and writes "four footed birds!" in the section in Leviticus which references "fowls that creep, going upon all fours."<sup>52</sup>

Morrison annotates Chronicles 26:1 with the comment that "Baasha builds a city years after his death" and in Chronicles 22:1 suggests that "Ahaziah is two years older than his father Jehoram." Further, beside Psalm 55:17, Morrison shows he is questioning the Bible by adding the comment "constipation a sign of grace. Leviticus 22."<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Morrison questions the ability for a "single ark 450 ft long, 75 ft wide and 45 ft high" to accommodate the "wants of 2,000,000 living creatures for one year" with eight persons attending to them. Morrison also highlights that "slavery sanctioned!" within Leviticus 25:44-46 and elsewhere, queries "why should it be twice as unclean to bear a maid child as to bear a man child."<sup>54</sup> These comments suggest that Morrison

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<sup>51</sup> Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 194; and George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 - 1935, SAFE/R 645/Item h, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>52</sup> Leviticus 11:20 (St James Version).

<sup>53</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 - 1935, SAFE/R 645/Item h, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>54</sup> Leviticus 12:2-5 and 25:44-46.

was something of a feminist as a youth and did not embrace the institutionalised racism of the time, as reflected in his later behaviours while on expedition or on board the “Queensland Slaver”.

Morrison’s annotations make numerous cross references to other sections of the Bible and references the writings of both Voltaire and Archbishop Colenso who doubted Genesis. At the beginning of the New Testament, Morrison notes that “Christ ascended from a mountain in Galilee, a house in Jerusalem, from Bethany and from Mount Olivet” and later in Matthew 1:16 queries “Joseph has two fathers Jacob and Heli” and cross references to Luke 3:23.

Morrison’s commentary throughout his Bible is demonstrative of his enquiring mind. This enquiry shows that Morrison questioned the authenticity of some of the Bible stories despite his regular attendance at church and the denominational focus of his education at Geelong College. Morrison’s criticisms also demonstrate not only his exploration of his alternate views on religion, evolution, labour, race and gender, but also suggest that church attendance was part of the social mores of the time rather than an activity that he was committed to solely for its religious values.

## 2.5 Moral and Gentlemanly Conduct of the 19th Century

In *Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood*, Ellis argues that Arnold regarded manliness as the development of both intellectual and moral maturity and an essentially adult trait. While Crotty, in *Frontier Fantasies: Boys Adventure Stories and the Construction of Masculinity in Australia 1870 – 1920*, highlights that the key determinants of success were a

good work ethic and a well-developed moral and religious sense.<sup>55</sup> The Arnoldian ideal of the Christian gentleman, as detailed by Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, was expanded upon by John Tosh, in *Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England*, by suggesting that Arnold's goals of gentlemanly conduct were aimed at the conversion of religious practice into action rather than anything related to the perpetuation of the rights of inheritance, status and appearance.<sup>56</sup> Tosh also suggests that birth, breeding and education were secondary compared with the moral qualities that were representative of manly character.<sup>57</sup>

It is argued by Dube, in *Muscular Christianity in Contemporary South Africa: The Case of the Mighty Men Conference*, that physical activities not only produce strength and physical fitness, but also build manly character and Christian morality.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Newsome in *Godliness and Good Learning*, suggested that Leslie Stephen, the English historian and biographer, found that moral value was gained through hard walking, which prevented undergraduates from becoming effeminate or wasting time on childish

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<sup>55</sup> Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood,' 428; and Martin Crotty, 'Frontier Fantasies: Boys' Adventure Stories and the Construction of Masculinity in Australia, 1870-1920,' *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 3, No 1 (2001): 57.

<sup>56</sup> Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, as quoted in John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 457, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0080440102000191>.

<sup>57</sup> Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,' 458.

<sup>58</sup> Dube, 'Muscular Christianity in Contemporary South Africa: The Case of the Mighty Men Conference,' 2.

mischievous.<sup>59</sup> Morrison was a committed walker, as can be shown in his walks from Geelong to Queenscliff, Queenscliff to Adelaide and later from Normanton to Melbourne. His diaries suggest an absence of childish mischief and a mature and essentially adult approach.

The concept of exploitation of physical activities to increase morality is also expanded upon by J.A. Mangan, in *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*; by John Mallea, in *The Boys' Endowed Grammar Schools in Victorian England: The Educational Use of Sport*; and by Caspar Whitney, in *A Sporting Pilgrimage*.<sup>60</sup> Mallea also advocates that a sense of fair play is developed through the articulation of the “normal” codes of conduct.

According to Mangan, in *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*, some Headmasters viewed games as a means of building character in their students, since games allowed their students to appreciate the merits of others and develop the highest standards of truthfulness and duty.<sup>61</sup> He further suggests that team sports provided the opportunity for students to learn to subordinate their own actions, pursue common goals and develop aspirations for a greater good. Beverley Nichols, advances in *The Unforgiving*

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<sup>59</sup> Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, 216.

<sup>60</sup> J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (Harmonsworth, Middlesex: Viking, 1986), 133; John Mallea, ‘The Boys’ Endowed Grammar Schools in Victorian England: The Educational Use of Sport’ (PhD, Columbia University, 1971), 3; and Caspar Whitney quoted in Mallea, ‘The Boys’ Endowed Grammar Schools in Victorian England: The Educational Use of Sport,’ 3

<sup>61</sup> J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*, 133.

*Minute: Some Confessions from Childhood to the Outbreak of the Second World War*, that boys left to their own devices will formulate their own ethics and construct their own codes of conduct. While, in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of English Middle-Class, 1780-1850*, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall believed that the ideal of the gentleman and their notion of masculinity was based on sport and codes of honour derived from military prowess.<sup>62</sup>

Robert Baden Powell, in *Scouting for Boys*, suggested that the myths of Empire were enabled through the physical and moral education of boys.<sup>63</sup> Bristow, in *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, highlights the popularity of the Scouting movement for the development of skills to facilitate cutting a pathway to change a backward and uncivilised world.<sup>64</sup> Mallea, in his thesis, suggests that the articulation of the “normal” and the codes of conduct associated with sportsmanship became the “moral yardstick upon which every aspect of life was measured upon.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Beverley Nichols, *The Unforgiving Minute: Some Confessions from Childhood to the Outbreak of the Second World War* (London: W.H. Allen, 1978), 91; and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, as quoted in Michele Cohen, ‘Manners’ Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750–1830,’ *The Journal of British Studies*, 44, No 2 (2005): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1086/427127>.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, as quoted in Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 174.

<sup>64</sup> Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 177.

<sup>65</sup> John Mallea, ‘The Boys’ Endowed Grammar Schools in Victorian England: The Educational Use of Sport,’ 3.

In *Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood*, Ellis highlights that Giovanni Battista Vica in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century theorised that “if moral maturity was to be successfully attained, it needed to focus on Christian morality, which he believed to be characterised by submission, self-denial, obedience and gentleness.” Baden-Powell, in *Scouting for Boys*, also believed that moral character could be developed through focusing on self-discipline and a sense of honour.<sup>66</sup> These attitudes are supported by Mark Girouard, in *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, who postulated that the moral code of conduct emphasised loyalty, courtesy, bravery and self-sacrifice, which became expressed in a form of gentlemanliness.<sup>67</sup> Gandhi also suggests, in *Ethical Religion*, that the elements of morality include a peaceful disposition, freedom from bad habits, chastity and temperance.<sup>68</sup>

## 2.6 Morrison and his Development of Moral and Gentlemanly Conduct

Morrison’s diaries from 1878 focus heavily on the sporting aspect of his education. On the 16 May, 1878, Morrison’s diary notes that the *Evening Times* had referred to Morrison playing cricket exceptionally well: “making some fine runs” and the *Evening Times* referred to his playing football on

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<sup>66</sup> Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood,' 429; and Robert Baden-Powell, as quoted in Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 194.

<sup>67</sup> Mark Girouard, as quoted in Anthony Fletcher, 'Patriotism, the Great War and the Decline of Victorian Manliness,' *History* (London), 99, No 334 (2014): 45, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-229X.12044>.

<sup>68</sup> Gandhi, *Ethical Religion*, [Ethical Religion \(mkgandhi.org\)](http://mkgandhi.org).

numerous occasions.<sup>69</sup> In the same diary, he also shows “extreme disgust” in himself when he “missed an easy chance of making the sides equal. I made a fearful fool of myself and I can’t help cursing my stupidity” reflecting the importance of sport and its role in his moral development.<sup>70</sup> His diaries also demonstrate his willingness to acknowledge the performance of other players “Boyd played magnificently. Mogg worked like a trojan.”<sup>71</sup> These acknowledgements are not just constrained to members of the Geelong College team, but also the opposition, as well as the umpires, demonstrating his sense of fair play and developing moral and gentlemanly conduct.<sup>72</sup>

Morrison shows a further element of his manly and gentlemanly conduct when he details the extent of his loyalty to teammates, region and nation. This loyalty is not only demonstrated to the Geelong College football and cricket teams, in which Morrison and his peers play, but also more broadly to the local Geelong district sporting teams and to the Victorian and Australian teams.

The diaries clearly show the extent of Morrison’s obedience to his father within the educational context. His diary entries of the 10 and 11 October, 1879, for example, detail that Morrison was attending to his father’s correspondence requesting participants in the Old Collegians Cup, “I wrote

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<sup>69</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 117 and 186-193.

<sup>70</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 15-16.

<sup>71</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 18-19.

<sup>72</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 02, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 18-19.

forty letters before I went to bed” and the subsequent day “stayed inside and wrote letters all day. I have written 109 altogether.”<sup>73</sup>

As early as 1878, Morrison’s diaries refer to the work of journalists. Apart from Stanley, in 1878, Morrison refers to John Henry Walsh when he writes “I found out tonight that the person who is such an authority on horses and dogs and who has written several books.... under the nom de plume of Stonehenge is J. H. Walsh, the editor of the *London Field*.”<sup>74</sup> Similarly, on the 27 August 1879, he wrote:

I heard today that Archibald Forbes for his newspaper corresponding services in the Turko-Prussian War was allowed £5000 expenses and when he got home received a present of £2000 from the proprietors of the *Daily News*. The letters in the *Argus* from abroad by ‘A Victorian’ are written by a tall skinny fellow called Waterstone and the ‘Aeglos’ articles in the *Australasian* are by Robert Waller, Mayor of Hawthorn.<sup>75</sup>

While Morrison has such an interest in these journalists and had aspirations of becoming a special correspondent, following discussions with his father around career choice, Morrison notes in his diary “it is decided I am to study medicine.... I have not given up hope of becoming a special correspondent.”<sup>76</sup> The evidence of this compliance confirms that Morrison is loyal and obedient to his father’s wishes despite not agreeing with him. Later, in 1882, in

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<sup>73</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 173.

<sup>74</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 218.

<sup>75</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 108.

<sup>76</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 132-133.

correspondence to his mother, he states “best of anyone you know that the desire of my life strengthened year by year is to become a special correspondent” before going on to say “I have heard father say that he doesn’t like me messing with newspaper men because of their shady character or words to that effect.”<sup>77</sup>

With respect to the development of moral and gentlemanly conduct through hard walking described by Newsome in *Godliness and Good Learning*, Morrison displays such development through his diaries when reflecting on the events of the expeditions of his youth providing ample evidence of the type of qualities described by Giovanni Battista Vica, Baden-Powell and Girouard as being necessary to develop moral character in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>78</sup>

## 2.7 Intellectual Endeavour in the Victorian Period

Mallea, in his thesis *The Boys’ Endowed Grammar Schools in Victorian England: The Educational Use of Sport*, records that, at the beginning of Queen Victoria’s reign, educational reformers emphasised the value of a balanced moral, physical and intellectual development.<sup>79</sup> Ellis puts forward the proposition that manliness is regarded as intellectual and essentially an adult

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<sup>77</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1735-1935, MLMSS 312/35-115, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>78</sup> Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, 216.

<sup>79</sup> Mallea, ‘The Boys’ Endowed Grammar Schools in Victorian England: The Educational Use of Sport,’ 22-23.

trait.<sup>80</sup> Watson, Weir and Friend, in *The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond*, also suggest that through exercise the body is made strong and healthy making an individual good and wise.<sup>81</sup> Michele Cohen contends that Vicesimus Knox, in *Liberal Education*, and William Barrow, in *Essay on Education*, both highlight that exercise and activity of the body also contributes to the strength and vigour of the mind.<sup>82</sup>

Stanley Winslow, in *A Boys Empire: The British Public School as Imperial Training Ground, 1850 – 1918*, suggested that denominational secondary education borrowed largely from the historical example of the Great Public Schools of England. He also cites Barcan, however, who opined that this was not necessarily the case in Australia where education did not follow a uniform pattern and never fully adopted the ideal of a Christian gentleman.<sup>83</sup>

Macintyre, in *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, reinforces Pearson's view that an educated community is generally more moral and law-abiding than an uneducated one and that an

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<sup>80</sup> Ellis, 'Thomas Arnold, Christian Manliness and the Problem of Boyhood,' 428.

<sup>81</sup> Watson, Weir and Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,' 3.

<sup>82</sup> Michele Cohen, 'Manners' Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750–1830,' *The Journal of British Studies*, 44, No 2 (2005): 324, <https://doi.org/10.1086/427127>.

<sup>83</sup> Barcan, quoted in Stanley Winslow, 'A Boy's Empire: The British Public School as Imperial Training Ground, 1850–1918,' (PhD thesis, University of Virginia, 2010), 318.

educated community is one more capable of work.<sup>84</sup> This focus on education as an enabler of a functional society rather than a facilitator for the development of young Christian gentleman was not necessarily reflective of the educational environment in which Morrison grew up.

## 2.8 George Ernest Morrison's academic education

Geelong College, where George Ernest Morrison lived and where he was educated, promoted, in its prospectus, that religious instruction was scriptural rather than denominational and described the grounds as having every facility for cricket, football and exercise.<sup>85</sup> The marketing of the College in terms of both canon and physical exercise suggests that the College's educational philosophy and thus, the education received by Morrison, was typical of those of other private schools in Victoria where Christian masculinity was practised and that exercise and activity of the body contributed to the strength and vigour of the mind. This approach was also repeated in the *Geelong Advertiser* where the newspaper stated that "a sound mind inhabiting a sound body was the hallmark of a Public School education."<sup>86</sup> This building of sound bodies was reiterated by Pearson, in *National Life and Character*.

Bristow, in *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, states that character was developed through focusing upon the classics and on the promotion of the

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<sup>84</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 153.

<sup>85</sup> Notman and Keith, *The Geelong College 1861-1961*, 11.

<sup>86</sup> 'Geelong College Annual Speech Day,' *Geelong Advertiser*, December 14, 1875, 2.

collective or team spirit.<sup>87</sup> The promotion of such collective or team spirit could be considered to have been gained through the playing of team sports, such as those pursued by Morrison (e.g., cricket, football and rowing). While Geelong College did not promote a focus specifically on a classical education, George Notman and Bert Keith, in *The Geelong College 1861 – 1961*, detail that one class “has gone through all Colenso’s Algebra, three books of Virgil and several chapters of Xenophon in addition to the usual amount of English” suggesting that some students at the College were exposed to the classics.<sup>88</sup> In addition, the *Geelong Advertiser*, also documented that Geelong College examined nine subjects including Greek, Latin and Euclidean Geometry.<sup>89</sup>

George Ernest Morrison’s academic achievements, while at Geelong College, were not unremarkable with him receiving academic merit in Geography and Scripture in 1870; and merit in English, Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra, French and History in 1873.<sup>90</sup> He also received merit awards for his achievements in English, Geography, History, Greek, French and Scripture in

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<sup>87</sup> Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man’s World*, 64; and Nauright, ‘Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours, 1878 – 1906,’ 58 – 59.

<sup>88</sup> Notman and Keith, *The Geelong College 1861-1961*, 12.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Geelong College Annual Speech Day,’ *Geelong Advertiser*, December 20, 1870, 2.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Geelong College Annual Speech Day,’ *Geelong Advertiser*, December 20, 1870, 2; and ‘Geelong College Annual Speech Day,’ *Geelong Advertiser*, December 12, 1873, 3.

1874 and 1875, as well as Latin and Mensuration in 1875 (refer to Figure 5).<sup>91</sup>

Morrison also received a merit for Algebra in 1877.<sup>92</sup>



Figure 5: Medal awarded to Morrison for Scripture in 1876<sup>93</sup>

Morrison's diaries confirm that his intellectual endeavours were not limited to school and suggest that he read Edgar Allan Poe, Shakespeare, Thomas Moore and Lord Byron and regularly attended functions at the Mechanics Institute, including lectures on Robert Burns and Queen Victoria.<sup>94</sup> Morrison was also a

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<sup>91</sup> 'Late Advertising,' *The Australasian*, December 19, 1874, 15; and 'Geelong College Annual Speech Day,' *Geelong Advertiser*, December 14, 1875, 2.

<sup>92</sup> 'Geelong College,' *The Australasian*, December 22, 1877, 2.

<sup>93</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 – 1935, SAFE/R 644/Item b, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>94</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 23, 151 and 286; and George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 03, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 140, 142-149 and 295-300.

regular reader of the newspapers held by the Mechanics Institute.<sup>95</sup> In his diaries for the period 9 to the 25 February, 1879, Morrison shows his depth of interest in literature by the inclusion of quotations from numerous pieces of poetry, including works by William Wordsworth, Caroline Elizabeth Sarah Norton, William Sawyer, Thomas Carew and Samuel Johnson.<sup>96</sup>

Despite these academic achievements, Morrison's commitment to intellectual endeavour was perceived to be lacking by his father, who publicly humiliated him in a speech to the school community. Morrison's diary entry for the 9 December, 1879, details his father's dinner speech to the school's alumni and the broader school community where he discusses his son's failure in a single subject in the Matriculation Examination and highlighting that George was "convinced that the failure was 'owing rather to an error of judgement on the part of the examiner' than to any fault of his own."<sup>97</sup> This public denouncement of his performance was exacerbated by an article in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, which confirmed that the unsuccessful candidate was the "son of the Principal."<sup>98</sup> Morrison's diary entries for the period between this dinner and his departure on the first of his pedestrian trips is constrained to a single entry denoting that "broke up for holidays" suggesting the depth of his

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<sup>95</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 03, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 344.

<sup>96</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 03, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 93 – 183.

<sup>97</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 266-267.

<sup>98</sup> "Geelong,' *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 13, 1879, 8.

humiliation.<sup>99</sup> The absence of correspondence with his father, during the subsequent expeditions may also suggest that Morrison's relationship with his father was strained and not as strong as that which he had with his mother.

Morrison's apparent failure in the examination of one of the key subjects of the conservative Victorian education system could have contributed to his embarking upon more physical pursuits, as it was only a matter of weeks after this humiliation that he commenced his walk from Queenscliff to Adelaide.

Morrison was also subsequently "plucked" out of Melbourne University for failing *Materia Medica*, one of the foundation subjects for a medical degree.<sup>100</sup>

These failures may have contributed to this demonstration of his strength and success through more physical pursuits, such as his walks from Geelong to Queenscliff; and Queenscliff to Adelaide; as well as during his rowing down the Murray River, where Morrison demonstrated his ability to deal with numerous environmental challenges.<sup>101</sup> Unlike some of his predecessors (e.g.

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<sup>99</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 268.

<sup>100</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 264; 'Geelong,' *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 13, 1879, 8; William Morrison, *Ernest Morrison*, (Melbourne, Victoria: Oxford University Press, 1962) 4; Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1970), 410; Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, China Institute 70th George E Morrison Oration, 2010, 13; and Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 25.

<sup>101</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410; Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, 373-374; and Thompson and Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*, 419 – 422.

Burke and Wills) and possibly attributable to his relative youth, Morrison's feats prior to embarking for New Guinea were purely for adventure rather than the seeking of fertile pasture and water or the conquering of the unknown interior in the quest for an inland sea.<sup>102</sup> Ironically, the only formal expedition undertaken by Morrison for the specific purpose of exploring was his failed New Guinea trip.

The perceived lack of intelligence of Morrison, by his father, is not reflected in the views of others. An article in *Frearson's Monthly Illustrated Adelaide News*, suggests that "His literary talent is alleged to be equal to his skill as a bushman."<sup>103</sup>

## 2.9 The Protection of the Weak and the Advancement of Righteous Causes

As previously stated, Newsome, in *Godliness and Good Learning*, proposes that Muscular Christians trained their bodies to be used in the "protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes and the subduing of the Earth which God has given to the children of men."<sup>104</sup> This view is also

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<sup>102</sup> Frank Clune, *Dig: The Burke and Wills Disaster* (Pacific Books, 1971); Sarah Murgatroyd, *The Dig Tree*. (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company 2012); Edmund Bernard Joyce and Douglas Andrew McCann, eds., *Burke & Wills: The Scientific Legacy of the Victorian Exploring Expedition* (CSIRO Publishing, 2011); Ian Clark and Fred Cahir, eds., 2016. *The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills: Forgotten Narratives* (CSIRO Publishing, 2016); and Peter Fitzsimmons, *Burke & Wills: The Triumph and Tragedy of Australia's Most Famous Explorers* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2017).

<sup>103</sup> 'Mr George Ernest Morrison,' *Frearson's Monthly Illustrated Adelaide News*, July 1, 1883, 3.

<sup>104</sup> Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, 214.

supported by Mangan, in *Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, and by Baden-Powell, in *Scouting for Boys*, where development of character was attributed to focusing on helpfulness to others and personal service for the community.<sup>105</sup>

Naomi Beck, in *Social Darwinism*, argues that Charles Darwin advanced the hypothesis that as the reasoning powers of humans evolved, in conjunction with accumulating experience, individuals learned that through helping others there was an increased likelihood for the reciprocation of help or assistance from others.<sup>106</sup> This implies that the assisting of the weak was not just for self-preservation, but was an enabler for those groups possessing the highest social and moral qualities to use this to rule over other weaker groups. Reference is made to Bertrand Russell's definition of the relationship between Imperialism, Darwinism and the training of the English gentlemen in *Athleticism: A Comparative Study of the Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*.<sup>107</sup> Russell refers to the careful nurturing of physical fitness, stoicism, a sense of mission and, in particular, the sacrifice of kindness for toughness; imagination for firmness; and intellect for certainty. Gandhi, in *Ethical Religion*, however, suggests that all men are created equal, but some

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<sup>105</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, as quoted in Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 194.

<sup>106</sup> Naomi Beck, 'Social Darwinism,' *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin and Evolutionary Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 195-201, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139026895.025>.

<sup>107</sup> J.A. Mangan, 'Athleticism: A Comparative Study of the Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology' (*PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1976*), 136.

individuals will have the ability to shoulder more duties and responsibilities, which should be used to protect, not oppress the weaker ones.<sup>108</sup>

Within a colonial Australian context, Catherine Martin, in *The Chinese Invasion: Settler Colonialism and the Metaphoric Construction of Race*, advocates that race enables the men being destroyed to be separable from the man in humanity.<sup>109</sup> Martin goes on to suggest that racial inferiority is in direct contrast to adhering to Christianity and the adoption of Britishness.

Similarly, Tracey Banivanua Mar, in *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indentured Labor Trade*, proposes that the South Pacific labour trade was based on the perceived racial suitability of the South Pacific islanders in conditions considered unacceptable for white settlers.<sup>110</sup> Thomas Millar and Shino Konishi both suggested that without any legislative protections; Aboriginal Peoples, Chinese, Japanese and Indians were all highly exploited.<sup>111</sup> While Victoria Stead and Lucy Davies, in *Unfree Labour and Australia's Obscured Pacific Histories: Towards a New Genealogy of Modern Slavery*, argue that there are parallels between the labour experiences of both

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<sup>108</sup> Gandhi, *Ethical Religion*, [Ethical Religion \(mkgandhi.org\)](http://mkgandhi.org).

<sup>109</sup> Catherine Martin, 'The Chinese Invasion: Settler Colonialism and the Metaphoric Construction of Race,' *Journal of Australian Studies* (2021): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2021.1992480>.

<sup>110</sup> Tracey Banivanua Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indentured Labor Trade* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 13.

<sup>111</sup> Thomas Bruce Millar, *Australia's Foreign Policy* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1968), 5-6; and Shino Konishi 2019, 'Intermediaries, Servants and Captives: Disentangling Indigenous Labour in D W Carnegie's Exploration of the Western Australian Desert' in Jon Altman, and Victoria Stead (eds). *Labour Lines and Colonial Power*. ANU Press (2019): 31.

South Pacific islanders and Indigenous workers.<sup>112</sup> These parallels lie, according to Stead and Davies, in the conditions in which they worked, as well as the “racialised understandings that underpinned their labour.”<sup>113</sup>

## 2.10 Morrison’s Championing of the Weak and Righteous Causes

This championing or protection of the weak against the strong was described by Macintyre, in *A Colonial Liberalism: the Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, and also in Elizabeth Morrison’s *David Syme: Man of The Age*, when describing the character of David Syme, who published George Morrison’s works in the *Leader* and agreed to pay him to report on the “Kanaka” or co-erced Pacific labour trade in Queensland.<sup>114</sup>

*The Age*, under the leadership of Syme, had a reputation as a political newspaper and Macintyre suggests that it “would take up a cause, publicise the scandalous consequences of its neglect, expound its benefits in special articles, advocate it in editorials, make its adoption a condition of support and persist until appropriate measures were legislated into existence.”<sup>115</sup> Consequently, Morrison’s articles were published and the series caused an outcry from the

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<sup>112</sup> Victoria Stead, and Lucy Davies, ‘Unfree Labour and Australia’s Obscured Pacific Histories: Towards a New Genealogy of Modern Slavery,’ *Journal of Australian Studies* 45, No 3 (2021): 410, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2021.1956571>.

<sup>113</sup> Stead and Davies, ‘Unfree Labour and Australia’s Obscured Pacific Histories: Towards a New Genealogy of Modern Slavery,’ 410.

<sup>114</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 87.

<sup>115</sup> Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, 87.

ship owners and sugar farmers, but also colonial politicians, such as McIlwraith, Herbert and Mackenzie, who had vested interests in facilitating profitable returns on their pastoral runs and ignoring crimes and brutality against Aboriginal Peoples and Pacific Islanders.<sup>116</sup>

F. Liddell, in *Chinese Morrison: A Great Australian*, suggests that Morrison had an ability to capture his audience through his “rough and ready sociability”, which was matched with his “insatiable curiosity concerning the lives, thoughts and deeds of all sorts and conditions of men.”<sup>117</sup> It was through his curiosity regarding the Pacific labourers, that Morrison was able to describe, in the *Leader*, the plight of a homeless “Malo” boy whom he felt indignant “that any health officer could be heartless enough to allow that he was in a fit state to make the long voyage to his island home.”<sup>118</sup> In a subsequent article, Morrison described a woman who was “suffering from a diseased foot, more than half the sole having rotten away.” He goes on to state that “the woman was in a shocking state of filth and disease, yet she had been landed in Queensland only ten months before healthy and active, which does not augur well for the treatment she had received there.”<sup>119</sup> This article also explains the method of acquiring more Pacific Islanders and details how the natives were

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<sup>116</sup> Raymond Evans, R. 2007. *A History of Queensland* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 99.

<sup>117</sup> F. Liddell, ‘Chinese Morrison: A Great Australian,’ *Royal Australian Historical Society* Volume 20, Part 6, 1934, 426.

<sup>118</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘The Contributor A cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, October 21, 1882, 36.

<sup>119</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver,’ *Leader*, October 28, 1882, 35.

invited on board and when there was sufficient, the schooner weighed anchor and indicates that “the number thus kidnapped was over twenty.”<sup>120</sup>

In response to Morrison’s criticisms, an article in *The Age* stated that “Lord Derby, Secretary of State for the Colonies, has officially directed the attention of the authorities of Queensland and Fiji to the statements supplied to *The Age* by George Ernest Morrison on the subject of the native labour traffic.”<sup>121</sup>

Similarly, when no action was delivered from Lord Derby, Sir Charles Lilley, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland, who had previously sentenced the crew of a “Blackbirder” for brutality and murder, again raised the issue as reported in the *Morning Bulletin* as:

Sir Charles Lilley speaking at a luncheon warmly condemned the apathy of Earl Derby in respect of the Aboriginal Protection Society. He directed his lordships attention to the cruise of the labour vessel Fanny and George Ernest Morrison’s charges of the revolting treatment of Polynesian women.<sup>122</sup>

Morrison’s criticisms were described in *The Argus* as having “vilified and misrepresented to the public” the state of the labour trade and a “collection of false yarns.”<sup>123</sup> Morrison is also described as:

the special travelling liar of the Melbourne Age, has been causing trouble. George is nothing, if not sensational. Not only does he write sensationally, but, if we are to believe common (and uncommon) rumour, that there is not an action he performs, from blowing his Young Australian nose, to walking unarmed from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Melbourne, which does not positively reek

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<sup>120</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘A Cruise in a Queensland Slaver’, *Leader*, October 28, 1882, 35.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Lord Derby and the Labour Traffic,’ *The Age*, October 12, 1883, 5.

<sup>122</sup> ‘Couriers Special Messages,’ *Morning Bulletin*, October 12, 1883, 2.

<sup>123</sup> ‘The Labour Trade,’ *The Argus*, July 7, 1883, 7.

with blood-curdling sensationalism .....even Earl Derby has been influenced by Victoria's patent Skulthorpe.<sup>124</sup>

Thomson and Macklin, in *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*, refer to articles describing Morrison similarly as "a very young man who does not bear a high reputation and whose narrative need to be received with much caution."<sup>125</sup> In response to this outcry and personal affront, Morrison prepared a more serious indictment of the labour practices, which was published in *The Age* as a letter to the editor.<sup>126</sup>

Morrison was not alone in his views, as an article in *The Queenslander* details "if Morrison's indictments are true then it is evident that fresh legislation, more stringent regulations and men more efficient and conscientious to enforce them are wanting."<sup>127</sup> Similarly, John Tregenza, in *Professor of Democracy: the Life of Charles Henry Pearson, 1830 – 1894, Oxford Don and Australian Radical*, suggested that Pearson in an editorial essentially substantiated all of Morrison's claims and, in so doing, fuelled the labour debate until legislative reform of the *Pacific Island Labourers Act, 1880*.<sup>128</sup> This reform resulted in the recruiters being forbidden from giving rifles and ammunition as incentives to the connections of prospective recruits and

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<sup>124</sup> 'Atrocities on "Fanny",' *Queensland Figaro*, October 27, 1883, 3.

<sup>125</sup> Thompson and Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*, 31.

<sup>126</sup> Elizabeth Morrison, *David Syme: Man of The Age*, (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2014), 166.

<sup>127</sup> 'Mischievous Slander,' *The Queenslander*, June 2, 1883, 857.

<sup>128</sup> John Tregenza, *Professor of Democracy: The Life of Charles Henry Pearson 1830-1894 Oxford Don and Australian Radical* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1968), 187-189.

subsequently, a Royal Commission being called in 1885.<sup>129</sup> Ironically, after calling the government to action with respect to this issue and as a first hand observer of the practices, Morrison was not called upon to give evidence at this Royal Commission. This exclusion could be considered a reflection that Morrison was doing the bidding of others (such as Symes and Pearson) as part of the nationalization of the Australian colonies.

## 2.11 Courage and Strength in 19th Century Australia

The concept of courage and strength has previously been highlighted as one of the core principles of Imperial Masculinity or Muscular Christianity. In *Masculinities and Culture*, Beynon suggests that boarding schools were used to indoctrinate the youth on the qualities of self-reliance and determination required to appropriately serve the Empire. While, Bristow, in *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, contends that courage, pluck and toughness were qualities that characterised manhood and that this fitness would strengthen the Empire.<sup>130</sup>

This is reinforced by Watson, Weir and Friend, in *The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond*, who proffer that through exercise the body is made strong and healthy, which made him good

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<sup>129</sup> Peter Corris, 'Blackbirding' in New Guinea Waters, 1883-84: An Episode in the Queensland Labour Trade' *The Journal of Pacific History*, 3, No 1 (1968): 91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223346808572126>.

<sup>130</sup> Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, 27; and Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, 66.

and wise.<sup>131</sup> Similarly, Mangan, in *Social Darwinism and Upper Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, proposes that Public Schools were characterised implicitly by a crude Darwinism with strength coming from struggling, and success being the prerogative of the strong.<sup>132</sup> He also suggested that true manliness could only be acquired by individuals overcoming their difficulties and challenges and through building character from what they had learnt from their errors and mistakes.

Mangan, in *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*, cites McNaughton who states that the true value of games comes from the character training that is provided through the development of “energy, promptitude, judgement, courage, watchfulness, generous emulation and appreciation of the merits of others and the highest standards of truthfulness and duty.”<sup>133</sup> This literature highlights the connection between character, manliness and the acquisition of independence, courage and strength and Tosh, in *Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England*, suggests that these manly values transcend class.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Watson, Weir and Friend, ‘The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,’ 3.

<sup>132</sup> J.A. Mangan, ‘Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,’ 84.

<sup>133</sup> Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*, 133.

<sup>134</sup> Tosh, ‘Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,’ 469.

The gaining of courage and strength, however, was more than schoolboy games and Beynon, in *Masculinities and Culture*, surmised that the youth displayed their masculinity through “roughing it” and through hardening both their bodies and spirits.<sup>135</sup> Christine Cheater, in *Images from the Wild Frontier*, also contends that the frontier was used as a place to confront one’s inner self.<sup>136</sup> Cheater also indicates that Christian faith, courage and determination assist youths in their ability to survive life on the frontier.

This building of character and the virtues of true manliness through exposure to the outdoors was put forward by Baden-Powell as a means of teaching grit, self-reliance, leadership and initiative and he used this as the basis for the foundation of the Scouting movement and in his seminal handbook, *Scouting for Boys*.<sup>137</sup> This focus on the environment was also highlighted by Gandhi, in *Ethical Religion*, where he proposed that there was a close interrelationship between morality and the environment and he suggested that Charles Darwin indicated there was an instinct of self-preservation and survival in men that extends beyond physical strength and mental capacity.<sup>138</sup>

Within the Australian context, the man of the 1880’s was a demonstrated “improvement in type” over the British man and was both stronger and

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<sup>135</sup> Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, 35.

<sup>136</sup> Christine Cheater, ‘Images from the Wild Frontier,’ *Bulletin (Olive Pink Society)* 11, No 1–2 (1999): 4.

<sup>137</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, quoted in Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, 28.

<sup>138</sup> Gandhi, *Ethical Religion*, [Ethical Religion \(mkgandhi.org\)](http://mkgandhi.org)

fairer.<sup>139</sup> Martin Crotty also showed in *Manly and Moral: the Making of Middle-Class Men in the Australian Public Schools* that Australians embraced sports as a means of developing boys into good and strong men and in so doing eliminated the deterioration of the race.<sup>140</sup>

The Australian man placed an emphasis on equality, mateship and the building of practical skills along with a “contempt for intellectual and spiritual pursuits and a virulent racism.”<sup>141</sup> Ronald Lawson, in *Towards Demythologizing the ‘Australian Legend’: Turner’s Frontier Thesis and the Australian Experience* also describes the traits of courage, enterprise, hardwork and perseverance as being representative of the measures of success needed by the early Australian pioneers.<sup>142</sup>

## 2.12 Morrison’s Exhibition of Courage and Strength

From the age of 17, Morrison’s diaries demonstrate his sense of adventure, courage, determination and acute observational skills. These diary entries clearly highlight Morrison’s exposure to the natural environment through his detailed descriptions of the vegetation, geology, wildlife and weather, while

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<sup>139</sup> Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Melbourne University Press, 2002), 67

<sup>140</sup> Martin Crotty, ‘Manly and Moral: The Making of Middle-Class Men in the Australian Public Schools,’ *International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, No 2 (2000): 24.

<sup>141</sup> Ronald Lawson, ‘Towards Demythologizing the ‘Australian Legend’: Turner’s Frontier Thesis and the Australian Experience,’ *Journal of Social History* 13, No 4 (1980): 577, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsh/13.4.577>.

<sup>142</sup> Lawson, ‘Towards Demythologizing the ‘Australian Legend’: Turner’s Frontier Thesis and the Australian Experience’ 577.

also illustrating his “roughing it” in his physical struggles through the extremes of floods and temperature, as he walked solo and unarmed through areas where recent racial conflict had been reported. Examples of the limited materials that he took on these adventures are represented by the equipment shown in Figures 6 and 7 and in the inventory of those possessions taken on his journey down the Murray:

Under the after deck holds a suit of serge clothes a hat ..... 3 handkerchiefs, 3 pairs of socks, my writing materials, two diary books, a bottle of ink, visiting cards, photographs, maps, a book to read, envelopes, writing paper...and a foot ruler. The box under the foredeck holds 100 cartridges ..... one 1lb tin of Cadburys Cocoa essence, 1lb of biscuits and a small lantern. Two 1 pint tins of pure olive oil lie close to the fore locker which also contains a tomahawk and tin opener. Under the deck on my right hand supported by leather straps is my single barrelled breach loader preserved from wet by an oilskin cover. In a canvas bag on my left is a small telescope, twine, ropes, tools, nails, strips of zinc, toothbrush and powder, comb, scissors, soap, towel and sewing materials, a fork and spoon, fishing lines and hooks and gun cleaning materials. .... Lying in the bottom of the boat are heavy boots, ...shoes, leggings, a sponge, a pannikin, a spare half paddle (for sailing), and a flannel coat.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 07, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 49-52.



Figure 6: Cutlery Set used by Morrison on his various expeditions<sup>144</sup>



Figure 7: Pocket knife taken by Morrison on his various excursions<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 – 1935, SAFE/R 645/Item d, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>145</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection 1738 – 1935, SAFE/R 645/Item d, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

In his diary and subsequent publication in the *Leader*, Morrison recounted, in his journey from Queenscliff to Adelaide in 1879 – 1880, of “sleeping in a clump of trees beside the river” and describes himself as being “wet through and sore.”<sup>146</sup> He also documented that his “feet were raw and did not feel in fit state for travelling”, as well as having “rheumatic pains down back brought on by sleeping out without any covering.”<sup>147</sup> These same diaries refer to Morrison having “to sit down under the shade of a telegraph pole to cool my head” and refers to a homesteader commenting on his sunburn and his “arms above the elbow being severely blistered.”<sup>148</sup>

The *Bendigo Advertiser*, which published Morrison’s recollections of his journey from Normanton to Melbourne in 1883, quoted:

when I was halfway through there came on a violent tempest of wind and rain. The track became a bog and the knapsack got so soddened with water that I groaned under its weight. ...., so I wearily struggled on through water and mud up to my knees forgetting the dangers of this dismal, gloomy country in the fatigue of walking.<sup>149</sup>

In a subsequent article in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, his account of the journey suggested that Morrison often walked through water up to his armpits and he

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<sup>146</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 1; George Ernest Morrison, ‘The Contributor. Diary of a Tramp No 1,’ *Leader*, May 1, 1880, 1; and George Ernest Morrison, ‘The Contributor. Diary of a Tramp No 11,’ *Leader*, May 8, 1880, 1.

<sup>147</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 2-3.

<sup>148</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 15 and 35.

<sup>149</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘Across the Australian Continent on Foot,’ *Bendigo Advertiser*, May 23, 1883, 1.

stated that “wading through swamps and swimming creeks with long distances to carry food, I yet experienced no fatigue, the dash of excitement kept it away” showing how his courage and strength in the face of adversity was no impediment to his expeditions.<sup>150</sup>

Reference in Morrison’s diaries is also made to the irritation resulting from creatures, such as identifying that he “found it densely populated with a very powerful species of *Pulex Irritans*” and noting the presence of fleas again at Glencoe Homestead.<sup>151</sup>

In 1883, subsequent to the Queensland government’s attempt to annex New Guinea, David Syme, owner of *The Age*, initiated an expedition to New Guinea under the leadership of Morrison. Politically driven, the expedition was justified by an interest in science and an absence of any previous attempt to penetrate the interior of the country despite Pearson suggesting that New Guinea should be put under the protection of Britain to stop the labour trade.<sup>152</sup>

The announcement of Morrison’s leadership of the 1883 expedition of New Guinea and its highlands was widely publicised with articles announcing the expedition appearing in not only *The Age*, but also *The South Australian Advertiser*; *Launceston Examiner*; *The Brisbane Courier* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* and was even parodied in the *Melbourne Punch* (refer to

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<sup>150</sup> George Ernest Morrison, ‘Across the Australian Continent on Foot,’ *Bendigo Advertiser*, May 23, 1883, 1.

<sup>151</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/3, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 9 and 24.

<sup>152</sup> Morrison, *David Syme: Man of The Age*, 165-167.

Figures 8 and 9).<sup>153</sup> The *Argus* of 9 November, 1883, described the expedition as extremely dangerous and Morrison as being very courageous, as he put himself in physical danger, in order to achieve his objectives.<sup>154</sup>



Figure 8: Illustration from *Melbourne Punch*, which is accompanied by the text “Let him go” said the King with a gesture of disgust, we will wait for Captain Armit and George Ernest Morrison. Till then we must on with cold missionary pie and Colonial ale.”<sup>155</sup>

<sup>153</sup> ‘News of the Day,’ *The Age*, June 9, 1883, 5; ‘Colonial Telegrams,’ *The South Australian Advertiser*, June 9, 1883, 5; ‘Intercolonial News,’ *Launceston Examiner*, June 11, 1883, 2; ‘The Brisbane Courier,’ *The Brisbane Courier*, June 12, 1883, 4; ‘Social,’ *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 14, 1883, 11; and ‘Our Special Correspondent in New Guinea He has not been eaten. He is Saved, Hallelujah,’ *Melbourne Punch*, July 26, 1883, 2.

<sup>154</sup> ‘Later News from New Guinea,’ *The Argus*, November 9, 1883, 8.

<sup>155</sup> ‘Our Special Correspondent in New Guinea He has not been eaten. He is Saved, Hallelujah,’ *Melbourne Punch*, July 26, 1883, 2.

**Epitaph.**  
**ON MR. GEORGE ERNEST MORRISON.**  
*By a Papuan who "was there."*  
**WE saw him fattening day by day—**  
**We helped him pass away—**  
**We cooked him in the latest style,**  
**Our appetites to stay.**

Figure 9: Excerpt from *Melbourne Punch*<sup>156</sup>

The success of Morrison's expedition, however, was ultimately short-lived, when, as reported in *The Argus*, he was speared by the natives after reaching the "right hand branch of the Goldie River," an incident described in greater detail earlier in this thesis.<sup>157</sup> A telegram from Morrison published in *The Age* indicates "I was struck by two spears, one in the hollow of the right leg and the other in the stomach."<sup>158</sup> An article, in *Frearson's Monthly Illustrated Adelaide News*, shows that others viewed Morrison as having courage, particularly where it references "whether skill, courage and unbending tenacity of purpose will suffice to rend the veil of obscurity from the vast unknown solitudes of New Guinea."<sup>159</sup>

The "roughing it" or struggle and courage demonstrated in Morrison's accounts of his trip from Normanton to Melbourne, in his earlier diaries, as well as his attempted exploration of New Guinea, largely focus on what is

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<sup>156</sup> 'Epitaph,' *Melbourne Punch*, October 25, 1883, 2.

<sup>157</sup> 'Later News from New Guinea,' *The Argus*, November 9, 1883, 8.

<sup>158</sup> 'News of the Day,' *The Age*, November 21, 1883. 5.

<sup>159</sup> 'Mr George Ernest Morrison,' *Frearson's Monthly Illustrated Adelaide News*, July 1, 1883, 3.

described by Daniel Putman, in *Psychological Courage*, as physical courage or the “capacity to overcome the risk of death or physical harm.”<sup>160</sup> This concept of physical courage is also explored by Stanley Rachman, in *Fear and Courage*, where courage is described in terms of “perseverance in the presence of threat, despite ones fear”, as well as by Uri Kugel, in *Physical Courage among Military Personnel and Veterans*, where physical courage is defined as “acts in which an individual’s safety is put at risk.”<sup>161</sup> Morrison’s experiences undeniably demonstrated this type of courage and the courage that is described by Cheater, Beynon and Bristow.

In addition to this physical courage, Morrison also demonstrated what is described by William Miller, in *The Mystery of Courage*, as moral courage, which he defines as the “capacity to overcome the fear of shame and humiliation in order to admit one’s mistakes, to confess a wrong, to reject evil conformity, to denounce injustice and to defy immoral or impudent orders.”<sup>162</sup> This ability to act morally while facing social oppression is also discussed by Eyal Press, in *Moral Courage: A Sociological Perspective*.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Daniel Putman, ‘Psychological Courage,’ *Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology*, 4, No1 (1997): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ppp.1997.0008>.

<sup>161</sup> Stanley Rachman, *Fear and Courage* (New York NY: W. H. Freeman and Co, 1990), 314; and Uri Kugel, ‘Physical Courage among Military Personnel and Veterans’ (PhD thesis, Palo Alto University, 2014), 2.

<sup>162</sup> William Ian Miller, *The Mystery of Courage* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 254.

<sup>163</sup> Eyal Press, ‘Moral Courage: A Sociological Perspective,’ *Society (New Brunswick)* 55, No 2 (2018): 181, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-018-0231-4>.

Morrison's moral courage against public opinion is demonstrated in his role in the cessation of the coercive recruitment of Pacific Islander labour in Queensland. Despite personal insult, Morrison's efforts contributed to reform of the *Pacific Island Labourers Act, 1880*. Within an article, in *The Brisbane Courier*, Morrison is accused of providing an "emotional story of pure fiction", which goes on to suggest that Morrison had "tarnished the good name of Queensland and there seems no way of removing the stain."<sup>164</sup> Many of the articles refuting Morrison's claims made personal assertions as to his character, including those in the *Queensland Figaro*, which described Morrison as being nothing, "if not unscrupulous" then accused him with "mashing New Guinea belles with the aid of grog, and then having half an hours fun with them."<sup>165</sup> Morrison is also described by Mr. Samuel Griffiths, the Premier of Queensland, in *The Brisbane Courier*, as "a very young man who does not bear a high reputation and whose narratives need to be received with much caution."<sup>166</sup> As a politician who lobbied for the cessation of the importation of Pacific Island labourers and went on to legislate regulatory reform to protect these labourers, Griffiths was surprisingly critical of Morrison.<sup>167</sup> The reasoning for this criticism is unclear but may be associated with the youthful tone of his writing in the series "A cruise in a Queensland Slaver"; or given Griffiths relationship with John Fairfax, it may be a result of

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<sup>164</sup> 'No Title,' *The Brisbane Courier*, June 13, 1883, 4.

<sup>165</sup> 'Atrocities on "Fanny",' *Queensland Figaro*, October 27, 1883, 3.

<sup>166</sup> 'Atrocities on "Fanny",' *Queensland Figaro*, October 27, 1883, 3; and 'The Lavinia Outrages,' *The Brisbane Courier*, February 9, 1884, 5.

<sup>167</sup> R.B. Joyce, "Griffith, Sir Samuel Walker (1845 – 1920)" *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 9 (1983).

the perceived use of Morrison as a puppet for Symes at the time of the Australasian Intercolonial Conference when “Victoria has been a wedge trying to get her views driven into an inert mass, represented by the other colonies whose passivity has overcome her force of nature.”<sup>168</sup> Alternately, Griffiths who according to R.B. Joyce deplored the domination of the weak by the strong, may have seen Morrison’s role on the Queensland Slaver as one of dominance and facilitating poor treatment rather than one of raising the general awareness of the situation to the public.<sup>169</sup>

On Morrison’s departure for Great Britain, it was also noted, in the *Launceston Examiner*, that “Morrison has been the recipient of anonymous communications, in which his veracity is only impugned in the coarsest manner, but charges of a most vile nature are made against him.”<sup>170</sup> In response to this outcry and personal affront, Morrison prepared a more serious indictment of the labour practices. This was published, in *The Age*, as a letter to the editor and it is further suggested, in the *Maryborough Chronicle Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, that on his return to England “laying before the Colonial Office well authenticated vouchers of my character, and expressing my desire to substantiate on oath every one of the charges I brought against your cherished slave trade.”<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> ‘Conventional News,’ *The Herald*, December 7, 1883, 3.

<sup>169</sup> R.B. Joyce, “Griffith, Sir Samuel Walker (1845 – 1920)”.

<sup>170</sup> ‘Echoes of Melbourne,’ *Launceston Examiner*, March 24, 1884, 3.

<sup>171</sup> Morrison, *David Syme: Man of The Age*, 166; and ‘Melbourne,’ *Maryborough Chronicle Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, February 23, 1884, 2.

While Morrison is demonstrating his moral strength and moral courage by ignoring the criticism of his character with respect to the labour debate, his resilience associated with public perception was quite different after his abandonment of his expedition into New Guinea. According to Pearl, Morrison's first utterances upon his injury in New Guinea were "oh my poor dear mother, the trouble I have caused you..... what will Mr Syme say at my failure."<sup>172</sup> Morrison was so ashamed of his failure that all papers associated with this period of his life were destroyed.<sup>173</sup> Under suffrage, Morrison completed nine articles for *The Age*, which he entitled "My failure in New Guinea", thus demonstrating the depth of his sense of failure. The articles were published, in the *Leader*, in late 1883 and 1884 under an alternate byline: "Exploration of New Guinea".<sup>174</sup> Morrison's sense of failure, in this instance, could have been exacerbated by the higher media profile of himself and that of the New Guinea expedition than his previous expeditions, which were

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<sup>172</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410; and Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, 49.

<sup>173</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410; and Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, 52.

<sup>174</sup> George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea,' *Leader*, December 15, 1883, 17; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No II,' *Leader*, December 22, 1883, 33; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No III,' *Leader*, January 5, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No IV,' *Leader*, January 12, 1884, 18; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No V,' *Leader*, January 19, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No VI,' *Leader*, January 26 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No VII,' *Leader*, February 2, 1884, 16; George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No VIII,' *Leader*, February 9, 1884, 16; and George Ernest Morrison, 'Exploration of New Guinea No IX,' *Leader*, February 16, 1884, 16.

generally reported upon after his successful return rather than advertised broadly prior to his departure.

### 3. The Frontiersman and the Boys Own Adventure

#### 3.1 The Manly Colonial Frontiersman

*“The man who goes alone can start today, but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready”*

*Henry David Thoreau<sup>1</sup>*

Morrison, through his demonstration of religious devotion; moral and gentlemanly conduct; intellectual endeavour; protection of the weak and the advancement of righteous causes, as well as showing courage and strength can be seen as a distinctly manly individual within an Imperial Masculinity or Muscular Christian context. Morrison’s characteristic self-control; his fairness and respect for rules; his effortless participation; and the value he placed on refinement of appearance and his considered social status and sociability suggest that, in addition to being manly, he was also a gentleman.

The manliness and gentlemanliness, as exhibited by Morrison, was a constant theme in the evangelical literature of the period and the concept of Muscular Christianity had become extensively institutionalised into Victorian culture.<sup>2</sup>

Just as youth organisations and educational facilities promoted the concept of Muscular Christianity, similar themes were also prevalent within literature.

The heroes in literature, of this time, were individuals who were not only

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Thoreau, *Walden* (Penguin Pocket Book, United Kingdom: Penguin Classic, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Nick Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, ‘The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond,’ *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005): 7.

upright, but also brave, benevolent and loyal. They were portrayed as being natural-born leaders and as fearless.<sup>3</sup> Robert Hogg, in *The Most Manly Class that Exists, British Gentlemen on the Queensland Frontier*, also contended that “frontier gentleman ..... were prepared to record their experiences in letters, diaries and memoirs..... And the letters, journals and memoirs contain their displayed self, the self they want others to know.” This “self” reflected the brave, benevolent, loyal and fearless leaders that these frontiersmen wanted to portray. While Morrison was not one of these Queensland frontiersmen, he too was able to get these traits of Muscular Christianity and a frontier gentleman incorporated into his literature.

The serialisation, by Morrison, of his time on board the “Queensland Slaver” was written in a style, which is described by Cyril Pearl, in *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, as bantering or in a humorous “Boys Own Adventure” style that may have diminished the effect of the criticism of the practice of slavery in Queensland.<sup>4</sup> It was not until there were rebuttals to his initial articles that Morrison wrote more seriously of his observations. This “Boys Own Adventure” style of journalism was set to typify the works and correspondence of many manly colonial frontiersmen.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Hogg, ‘The Most Manly Class that Exists: British Gentlemen on the Queensland Frontier,’ *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 13 (2011): 6.

<sup>4</sup> Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1970), 24.

### 3.2 The Boys Own Adventure

Joseph Bristow suggested, in *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, that 19<sup>th</sup> Century readers readily consumed numerous records of the white man's heroic exploits in Africa as courageous explorers, such as Stanley and Livingstone, and as zealous missionary workers.<sup>5</sup> Morrison showed a strong affiliation with Stanley, naming his canoe that he traversed the Murray River after him and reading Stanley's *Coomassie and Magdala*. He followed the progress of Stanley's account of his African journey with zeal and concomitantly, stated in his diaries, that the full account will be published in the coming month.<sup>6</sup> Morrison also dedicated his summary of Australian explorers to Stanley and provided commentary within the dedication piece that Stanley was "the most extraordinary man and the man for whom before all others in this world I admire the most."<sup>7</sup> Morrison's admiration for Stanley is also illustrated in the press relating to Morrison, such as that which stated "I know the great sufferings which this young gentleman endured in his endeavours to emulate the doings of Henry M. Stanley and his father's friend

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (Unwin Hyman, London, 1991), 26.

<sup>6</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 01, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 95.

<sup>7</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 07, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

Archibald Forbes.”<sup>8</sup> Also, Morrison’s desire to emulate Stanley is documented, in *The Riverine Herald*, where it states that:

It will be remembered that about twelve months ago Mr Ernest Morrison.....made a voyage in a Rob Roy canoe called the Stanley..... A Melbourne evening paper now states that this youthful traveller contemplates travelling to Africa for the purpose of searching in the neighbourhood of Ujiji for traces of Dr Livingstone’s memorable explorations.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, David Syme, Morrison’s financial sponsor for the New Guinea expedition, was described as emulating James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald” in the *Port Augusta Dispatch and Flinders Advertiser*. “<sup>10</sup>

Bennett reportedly provided the financial backing for Stanley’s expedition to Africa to search for David Livingstone, in exchange for exclusive access to the written accounts of the search. *The Age* also suggested that the decision to choose Morrison as the leader of the expedition into New Guinea was “giving to the Age as much fame as that earned by the New York Herald by Mr Stanley in his African wanderings.”<sup>11</sup>

The comparison of Morrison to the famed explorer Stanley possibly reflected the eminence with which Morrison was held in colonial Australia. It also demonstrates the characteristics of moral incorruptibility and physical strength discussed by Norman Vance, in *The Sinews of the Spirit: the Ideal of Christian*

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<sup>8</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738-1935, MLMSS 312/281-323, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Mr Ernest Morrison,’ *The Riverine Herald*, November 12, 1881, 2.

<sup>10</sup> ‘No Title,’ *Port Augusta Dispatch and Flinders Advertiser*, June 13, 1883, 2.

<sup>11</sup> ‘News of the Day,’ *The Age*, June 20, 1883, 5.

*Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, as being required by the manly schoolboy hero.<sup>12</sup> In this case, however, rather than being the hero of a particular schoolboy, Morrison, not being much more than a boy himself, becomes the hero of many others (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Young Morrison<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 158.

<sup>13</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738 - 1935, PX\*D 153/vol.2, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

Martin Crotty, in *Heroes of Australia: Race, Nation and Masculinity in Australian Boys' Adventure Stories, 1875 – 1920*, contends that the heroes of Kingsleyan literature were “strong willing fellows with heads on shoulders” who were also sober and steadfast.<sup>14</sup> He goes on to state that the hero of this time also overcame threats brought from both the environment and Aboriginal Peoples. In these instances, an individual’s physique was secondary in importance to a well-developed moral and religious sense; a good work ethic; and a determined nature.

### 3.3 Morrison – the Gentleman living the Boys Own Adventure

Morrison battled the extremes of an Australian summer and monsoonal flooding during his pedestrian feats and while he encountered Aboriginal Peoples during these journeys, his approach as an unarmed colonial bushman was non-hostile. This resulted in his ability to successfully traverse unarmed across central Queensland during the times that Henry Reynolds refers to, in *Dispossession: Black Australians and White Invaders*, as frontier violence.<sup>15</sup> It is also noted that a frontiersman with whom Morrison stayed, near Cloncurry, went out to pursue Aboriginal Peoples during the time while Morrison was a guest. In “Across the Australian Continent on Foot” Morrison describes the events:

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<sup>14</sup> Martin Crotty, ‘Heroes of Australia: Race, Nation and Masculinity in Australian Boys’ Adventure Stories, 1875-1920,’ *Bulletin (Olive Pink Society)* 11, No 1–2 (1999): 22.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Reynolds, *Dispossession Black Australians and White Invaders*. (Sydney, Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, 1989), 14.

One night I was at a station, whose owner is said to have shot more blacks than any two men in Queensland, when the mailman came in and reported that he had seen a black prowling about the stockyard. Loading his rifle Mr \_\_\_\_\_ at once sallied out after him, but came back in an hour quite disappointed that, though he could pick up the tracks by the stockyard, it was too dark to follow him.<sup>16</sup>

Morrison, however, despite the perceived rudeness of not joining his host did not accompany him in his pursuit. In reporting this incident, Morrison notably omitted the frontiersman's name from the published article. Whether this omission was the result of editorial review by Symes or an example of Morrison's purposely removing the name is unknown, however, the event was considered by Morrison worthy of inclusion in the limited space that he had for his article.

John Rickard, in *National Character and the "Typical Australian": An Alternative to Russel Ward*, describes Russel Ward's image of a typical Australian colonial bushman as "a practical man, rough and ready in his manners, a great improviser, a man who swears hard, gambles and drinks heavily, taciturn, egalitarian, sceptical of religion and intellectual pursuits, hating officiousness and authority and loyal to his mates....."<sup>17</sup> While Morrison may have been practical and a great improviser, he was well-mannered and was not a heavy drinker, as detailed in the correspondence to his mother of March, 1882, where Morrison writes "If newspaper men are drunken in habits and undesirable companions does it not stand to reason that

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<sup>16</sup> George Ernest Morrison, 'Across the Australian Continent on Foot,' *The Age*, May 19, 1883, 2.

<sup>17</sup> John Rickard, 'National Character and the "Typical Australian": An Alternative to Russel Ward,' *Journal of Australian Studies*, 3, No 4 (1979): 13.

the quicker should be the success of one of temperate and of refined morality.”<sup>18</sup> Morrison was also an intellectual, so he presented an atypical image of the bushman as propagated by writers, such as Paterson and Lawson. In contrast, Morrison was more aligned with the Australian youth described by Joseph Bowes, in *Pals: Young Australians in Sport and Adventure*, as “brave, loyal and totally unaffected and natural” and by Martin Crotty, in *Manly and Moral: The Making of Middle-Class Men in the Australian Public Schools*, as “upholding fair play, loyalty, accepting of victory and defeat, fortitude, discipline and obedience.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738 - 1935, MLMSS 312/35-115, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Bowes, *Pals: Young Australians in Sport and Adventure* (London, 1910), 237; and Martin Crotty, ‘Manly and Moral: The Making of Middle-Class Men in the Australian Public Schools,’ *International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, No 2 (2000): 11, 24.

#### 4. An evaluation of George Morrison's Youthful Character

##### 4.1 A remarkable young Australian Gentleman

*“Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time?”*

Thomas Browne<sup>1</sup>

Christian faith, courage and determination, as well as the ability to struggle and overcome adversity, as demonstrated by George Ernest Morrison, was evident in many young men of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. An article dated in 1881, in the *Northern Argus*, describes the English as:

a nation of excursionists, they have a season when they penetrate everywhere: more books of travel are published in England and more travellers emanate from those bleak regions, to discover unknown lands and dilate upon those already built and civilised, than from any other country in the globe.<sup>2</sup>

This showed that “wanderlust” and the desire to explore was common throughout this period.

Within Colonial Australia, and with a population of predominantly British origin, a culture of regular cross-country pedestrian excursionists was evident. In addition to the excursions of Morrison, the ill-fated journey of Burke and Wills has also been well circumstantiated.<sup>3</sup> Melissa Harper, in *The Ways of the*

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Browne, 1927. *Sir Thomas Browne's Hydriotaphia or Urne-Burial* (Little Books. London: Published by Peter Davies, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> ‘No Title,’ *Northern Argus*, November 29, 1881, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Clune, *Dig: The Burke and Wills Disaster* (Pacific Books, 1971); Sarah Murgatroyd, *The Dig Tree*. (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company

*Bushwalker: Bushwalking in Australia 1788-1940*, highlights the experiences of Fred Eden who walked from Melbourne to Sydney in 1891; and William Mogford Hamlet who walked from Brisbane to Sydney in 1907 and 1913 and Sydney to Melbourne in 1912; and *The Gundagai Independent and Pastoral Agricultural and Mining Advocate* reported of Francis Birtle's cycle trip from Fremantle to Melbourne in 1905 - 6.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in *The Amateur Tramp: A Walk of Ten Thousand Miles around Australia*, Aidan de Brune is described as having walked from Sydney and around the continent in 1921 while Edward William Cole and photographer George Burnell rowed from Echuca down the Murray River in 1861<sup>5</sup>.

Even in contemporary Australia, the allure of transcontinental pedestrian feats is frequently reported in the media. Terra Roam was reported, in the *Australian Geographic Adventure*, as being the first woman to walk solo and unassisted around the whole of Australia in 2018 and, like Morrison, she

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2012); Edmund Bernard Joyce and Douglas Andrew McCann, eds., *Burke & Wills: The Scientific Legacy of the Victorian Exploring Expedition* (CSIRO Publishing, 2011); Ian Clark and Fred Cahir, eds., 2016. *The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills: Forgotten Narratives* (CSIRO Publishing, 2016); and Peter Fitzsimmons, *Burke & Wills: The Triumph and Tragedy of Australia's Most Famous Explorers* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Melissa Harper, 'The Ways of the Bushwalker: Bushwalking in Australia 1788 – 1940' (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2002), 181; Melissa Harper, *The Ways of the Bushwalker* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2020), 113; and 'Face Danger and Death,' *The Gundagai Independent and Pastoral, Agricultural and Mining Advocate*, April 15, 1914, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Colin Choat, *The Amateur Tramp: A Walk of Ten Thousand Miles Around Australia* (Project Gutenberg Australia, 2018), 21; and E Cole Turnley, 'Edward William Cole (1832-1918),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 120.

walked through floods and heat waves.<sup>6</sup> According to *The Canberra Times*, Bob Hanley walked across the country in 1978 and as reported, in *The Islander*, Bill Mossel, Sue Thompson, Annabel Douglas-Hill and Sharna Dolak all followed in the footsteps of Burke and Wills in 1973.<sup>7</sup>

While Morrison's feats themselves are not unique, these achievements are definitely noteworthy in terms of how young Morrison was at the time that he completed these accomplishments. In the opinions of his contemporaries, however, Morrison was seen as a character of distinction. This was seen after his pedestrian tour from Queenscliff to Adelaide, where, while referring to the inclination of the English towards being excursionists, the *Northern Argus* refers to:

Young Australia, ... has proved itself more than once to be a worthy scion of a worthy sire, we talk not of the older explorer whose deeds are chiselled in bronze, but the younger branch of the old stock whose prowess has led them through bush, brake and scrub oftentimes to meet an untimely death from starvation or exposure. One of our boys, young Ernest Morrison of the Geelong College has already achieved distinction for himself being the first to make a pedestrian tour along the beach from Queenscliff to Adelaide.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, an article, in the *Geelong Advertiser*, described Morrison as a fine specimen and goes on to advocate that "anyone who has read his interesting contribution to this paper must have been struck most of all with the quiet self-

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<sup>6</sup> Angela Heathcote, 'Meet the first Woman to walk around the whole of Australia solo and unassisted,' *Australian Geographic Adventure*, May 2, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> 'Travelling through Gunning,' *The Canberra Times*, April 13, 1978, 1; and Catherine Murphy, 'Feet across Australia: forty years on from a four month trek,' *The Islander*, August 22, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> 'No Title,' *Northern Argus*, November 29, 1881, 2.

reliance, dauntless courage and invincible determination, which he has displayed under the most trying circumstances.”<sup>9</sup>

Praise of Morrison goes beyond the local Geelong community. In 1883, *The West Australian* published:

so long as in the Australian bush, men of the stamp of George Ernest Morrison may be counted .... We entertain no very great fear that this southern off shoot of Great Britain will fail to keep up the old traditions which have made the mother country so honoured and so great.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, the *Launceston Examiner*, noted that Morrison’s achievements as an explorer “far surpass those of the two gentleman who may fairly be assumed to be his rivals.”<sup>11</sup> Morrison’s achievements were also compared favourably with those of his boyhood hero, Henry M. Stanley, through his nomination to the Royal Geographical Society in London, whose membership includes notable explorers of the calibre of Ernest Shackleton and Alfred Russel Wallace.<sup>12</sup>

The importance and singularity of Morrison’s achievements was reflected by his invitation to the Levee by the Governor of Victoria in 1881.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the scale of his achievements was considered to be immensely marketable by others, such that a tent manufactured by Associated British Manufacturers, and

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Town Talk,’ *Geelong Advertiser*, May 25, 1883, 2.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Vigilans et audax,’ *The West Australian*, June 22, 1883, 3.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Echoes of Melbourne,’ *Launceston Examiner*, December 27, 1883, 3.

<sup>12</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738-1935, MLMSS 312/4/Item 04, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>13</sup> ‘The Levee,’ *The Herald*, May 24, 1881, 3.

branded as being suitable for adventurers and sportsman, was named The Morrison in honour of Morrison's exploration in New Guinea.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.2 Morrison's Absence from the General Australian Memory

At the time that Morrison left Australia in 1884, as a young man of only 22, he was being held up as a model of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Australian character. Morrison was perceived as not only manly, but also a gentleman. He was seen as a man of high moral standing in the Colony of Victoria and in most parts of Australia, with the exception of Queensland, and showed considerable moral and physical strength in his pedestrian excursions. In Queensland, largely due to the political discourse associated with the labour debate, as well as the timing of the Australasian Intercolonial Conference, Morrison is described, in *Queensland Figaro*, as "nothing if not sensational" and, in the *Maryborough Chronicle Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, as an "accomplished young Munchausen."<sup>15</sup> In addition, the *Maryborough Chronicle Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, printed an article suggesting that Mr Samuel Griffiths, the Premier of Queensland between 1883 and 1888, had described Morrison as not bearing "a very high reputation and his narratives need to be received with much caution."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> 'The Morrison Tent, To the Editor,' *The Age*, January 12, 1884, 10; and 'The Morrison Tent,' *The Age*, December 9, 1883, 3.

<sup>15</sup> 'Atrocities on "Fanny",' *Queensland Figaro*, October 27, 1883, 3; and 'Tasmania,' *Maryborough Chronicle Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, November 12, 1883, 2.

<sup>16</sup> 'A Correction,' *Maryborough Chronicle Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, February 11, 1884, 3.

In an article in the *Illawarra Mercury*, the author of the article portrays character as “an eminently personal thing. What a man is in his individual merits and virtues, and not what men judge him to be by his public manifestations, constitutes his character.”<sup>17</sup> Morrison was acknowledged by many, at the time, as having achieved a great deal in his youth and as being a man of such character. This was, at a time, when the search for character was on the national agenda and fears and anxieties were heightened associated with the deterioration of social cohesion and character from a loss of faith.

Through Morrison’s insertion into the labour debate and his relationship with David Syme, owner of *The Age* and sponsor of Morrison’s expeditions, his reputation within much of Queensland appears to have been tarnished. This resultant reputational impact raises the question whether Syme was using Morrison as a puppet with respect to the issues around labour and the proposed annexation of New Guinea by Queensland, in a similar way that one critic of Alfred Deakin believed that Deakin was also doing Syme’s bidding. This same critic suggested that Deakin’s collar should bear the inscription, “I am David Syme’s puppy.”<sup>18</sup>

Morrison’s absence from much of the general collective consciousness and also, to some extent, from Australian colonial history may possibly be attributed to his departure for Britain to undergo surgery following his “failure” in New Guinea. Many of Morrison’s characteristics were aligned to

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Character,’ *Illawarra Mercury*, October 17, 1873, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1991), 6.

the British educational philosophies based upon the ideas of Thomas Arnold of building strong bodies and minds. While Morrison showed the loyalty, fortitude, discipline and obedience typical of Martin Crotty's Australian male, he also showed self-control, which according to John Tosh was characteristic of middle-class Englishmen.<sup>19</sup> With Morrison's departure to Britain, and only returning temporarily between 1891 and 1893 to work at the Ballarat Hospital before returning to the Far East, Morrison may have been identified by Australians and correspondents of history as being more British than Australian, particularly, at a time of nation building. This could have been exacerbated by Morrison living amongst and working for the Chinese authorities later in his career, when the Chinese were viewed as "invaders, influxes and hordes of barbarians."<sup>20</sup>

Acknowledging that the youthful achievements of Morrison were pervasively documented in the Australian press of the time, the skills that he acquired as a youth equipped him well for his later life. After leaving Australia, to facilitate surgery on the wounds that he obtained in New Guinea, Morrison would continue his education and complete his medical degree. Morrison never lost his "wanderlust" and continued to travel to North America, Morocco, the West

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<sup>19</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (Women and Men in History. Harlow, England; Pearson Longman, 2005), 30.

<sup>20</sup> Catherine Martin, 'The Chinese Invasion: Settler Colonialism and the Metaphoric Construction of Race,' *Journal of Australian Studies* 2021: 1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2021.1992480>.

Indies, Spain, the Philippines, China and Burma.<sup>21</sup> While seeking a publisher for accounts of these journeys, he completed his thesis and graduated with a Doctorate of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh in August 1895.<sup>22</sup> In the same month, *The Times* appointed Morrison as Special Correspondent to the Far East.<sup>23</sup> Reportedly having being killed during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, Morrison later went on to become an advisor to the Chinese government and was part of the Chinese delegation at the 1919 Peace Treaty in Paris where the Chinese refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles (Figure 11).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 11, State Library of NSW, Sydney; George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 12, State Library of NSW, Sydney; George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/2/Item 13, State Library of NSW, Sydney; George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/5, State Library of NSW, Sydney; George Ernest Morrison, *An Australian in China* (Hong Kong: Earnshaw Books, 2009); George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/6, State Library of NSW, Sydney; George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/7, State Library of NSW, Sydney; and George Ernest Morrison, MLMSS 312/8, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

<sup>22</sup> Cyril Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1970), 58 and 73.

<sup>23</sup> 'Dr G E Morrison,' *The Times*, June 20, 1900, 4.

<sup>24</sup> 'The Late Dr Morrison, Lauded by The Times,' *The Daily Telegraph*, July 19, 1900, 5; Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*; Lo Hui-Min, *The Correspondence of G E Morrison 1912 -1920 Volume 2* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin, *The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007).



Figure 11: Morrison as a middle aged man<sup>25</sup>

The character traits gained from his education, focusing on Imperial Masculinity and Muscular Christianity, provided him with courage and strength and judgement which was manifested in his role in the Boxer

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<sup>25</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738 - 1935, PX\*D 153/vol. 1, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

Rebellion. An article, appearing in *The Times*, described Morrison in the following terms:

although not a military man... he had proved himself one of the most important members of the garrison, being always in motion and cognizant of what was going on everywhere, and by far the best informed person within the Legation quadrangle. To this must be added a cool judgment, total disregard of danger and a perpetual sense of responsibility to help everyone to do his best..... as dirty, happy and healthy a hero as one could find anywhere (Figure 12).<sup>26</sup>



Figure 12: The medal awarded to Morrison for his role in the Boxer Rebellion<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Peter Fleming, *The Siege of Peking* (Grey Arrow Edition, London, W1: Arrow Books, 1962), 164.

<sup>27</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738 - 1935, SAFE/R 644/Item j, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

Andrew Barton “Banjo” Paterson, in *Happy Dispatches Journalistic Pieces from Banjo Paterson’s Days as a War Correspondent*, describes his meeting with George Ernest Morrison in 1901, after the rebellion, in the following terms:

of the three great men of affairs that I had met up to that time – Morrison, Cecil Rhodes, and Winston Churchill – Morrison had perhaps the best record..... Morrison had gone into China on a small salary for *The Times* and had outclassed the smartest political agents of the world.<sup>28</sup>



Figure 13: Sketch of George Morrison from 1900 by F Whiting<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Barton (Banjo) Paterson, *Happy Dispatches Journalistic Pieces from Banjo Paterson’s Days as a War Correspondent* (Sydney: Landsdowne Press, 1980), 16.

<sup>29</sup> George Ernest Morrison Collection, 1738 - 1935, PX\*D 159, State Library of NSW, Sydney.

John Howlett-Ross FSS, Chief President of the Australian Natives Association, a lobby group formed by white men born in Australia and notably known for campaigning against non-white immigration and the promotion of Federation and the White Australia Policy, opined that it was a:

matter for regret that the truly amazing talent - perhaps genius would be a more appropriate word – of Dr Morrison was chiefly employed in countries other than his own, Australians must surely be proud that a Geelong schoolboy, a native of the youngest nation, has become the financial adviser and trusted friend of one of the oldest and most mysterious of the world's empires, China. Romantic and improbability do not adequately express the career of this great Australian.<sup>30</sup>

Howlett-Ross also went on to describe Morrison's work "as being not valuable only to China. His influence on the country's foreign policy during the war years was certainly not disadvantageous to England."<sup>31</sup> Such references show that, for some time and for some diverse groups in Australian society, Morrison's achievements and significance within Australian history was maintained beyond his departure from Australia and for some, beyond his death (e.g., the Chinese diaspora in Australia).

The moral strength and independence of thought shown by Morrison in relation to the labour trafficking issue was again exhibited in the stand that he made when addressing Article 156 of the Treaty of Versailles on behalf of the Chinese government. This Article mandated the handover of one of China's most valuable provinces, that of Shantung, to the Empire of Japan, their

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<sup>30</sup> 'Our Greatest Australians? No 11 George Morrison,' *The Herald*, April 4, 1931, 11.

<sup>31</sup> 'Our Greatest Australians? No 11 George Morrison,' *The Herald*, April 4, 1931, 11.

opposition to which led to China being the only nation at the Treaty that did not sign the agreement.

It was acknowledged, in *The Daily Telegraph*, that the observational skills that Morrison developed as a young man during his expeditions in Australia and his gentlemanly and manly character qualified him “for an occupation requiring considerable courage, as well as the rarer qualities of tact, discretion, and penetrant observation of men and things.”<sup>32</sup>

More recently, the Honourable Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister of Australia between 2007 and 2010 and in 2013, described Morrison’s “acute skills of observation which helped make him a masterful writer” in his Morrison Oration of 2010.<sup>33</sup> Rudd also references C. P. Fitzgerald, who describes Morrison “as a man of unusual percipience and thus freer than many of his contemporaries from the prevailing dominant ideas.” Rudd goes on, in his Morrison Lecture, to describe Morrison as being “little known in contemporary Australia.”<sup>34</sup>

This absence of Morrison from the contemporary Australian consciousness could be attributed to a number of contributory factors. Morrison’s achievements as a youth brought wide acclaim nationally, however, he departed from Australia in 1884. Apart from brief visits to the family and a

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<sup>32</sup> ‘The Foreign Correspondent,’ *The Daily Telegraph*, January 24, 1903, 8.

<sup>33</sup> Kevin Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, China Institute 70th George E Morrison Oration, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Kevin Rudd, *Australia and China in the World*, China Institute 70th George E Morrison Oration, 2010.

period between 1891 and 1893 when he worked at the Ballarat Hospital, the majority of his life was spent either in Britain or in Asia. As such, through his local absence at the ‘fin de siècle’, at a time of nation and national character building, this resulted in a lack of civic participation in colonial Australia, which may have been, at least partially, contributive to the erasure of Morrison’s achievements from the vernacular.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Catherine Martin in *The Chinese Invasion: Settler Colonialism and the Metaphoric Construction of Race* argues that an egalitarian white colonial Australian nationalism was based on the displacement of others on a racial basis to a large extent.<sup>35</sup> Just as William Stanner in his delivery of the Boyer Lecture in 1968 used the term, the “great Australian silence”, to describe the absence of Indigenous history, perhaps this silence extended beyond aboriginality to a broader racial cohort, which therefore, inadvertently incorporated Morrison as he was an advocate for the South Pacific Islanders and as someone who worked largely in Asia and as an advisor to the Chinese government.<sup>36</sup> Through this involvement, at the time of the White Australia Policy, conceivably Morrison’s displacement from the general Australian memory could also be attributed with racial groups that were not valued by the evolving “national character” type. Similarly, Morrison’s insertion into the labour trade discourse in Queensland and the

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<sup>35</sup> Catherine Martin, ‘The Chinese Invasion: Settler Colonialism and the Metaphoric Construction of Race,’ *Journal of Australian Studies*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2021.1992480>.

<sup>36</sup> William Stanner, and Robert Manneer, *The Dreaming and Other Essays*, (Melbourne: Black Press, 2011), 11.

poor reputation that he gained in this colony may have also contributed towards his erasure from the general colonial history.

Lastly, it can be demonstrated that Morrison exemplified the traits of a gentleman and as a result, he may not have been as relatable to the typical Australian youth, particularly, with the establishment of an Australian culture of mateship and larrikinism built upon the back of the efforts in the First World War.

It was reported at the time of his death in 1920 that “the niche which Dr Ernest Morrison made for himself in history is unique” although, apparently little recognised in the general Australian’s memory in the century since this time.<sup>37</sup> Lionel James, one of Morrison’s journalist colleagues at *The Times* in China, described Morrison’s “overwhelming pride in Australia and himself as an Australian and referred to Morrison’s kindness, tenderness, humour, peculiar vanity and many-sided greatness” in his obituary.<sup>38</sup> This suggests that even though Australians may have forgotten or devalued George Ernest Morrison’s contributions from the general historical consciousness, he never forgot Australia, the land of his birth and the place where he developed his character and the skills that proved invaluable in his later career.

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<sup>37</sup> ‘No Title,’ *The Argus*. June 1, 1920, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Pearl, *Morrison of Peking: Explorer, Foreign Correspondent, Political Adviser and One of the Makers of the Chinese Republic*, 410.



Figure 14: Private print scanned ex-libris of George Ernest Morrison in *Ein Tagebuch in Bildern: Volume 1*<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Mumm, Freiherr Alfons von Schwarzenstein. "Ein Tagebuch in Bildern." NII "Digital Silk Road" Volume 1/ Toyo Bunko, [doi:10.20676/00000175](https://doi.org/10.20676/00000175)

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