The Great War wrecked Europe. Millions lost their lives, whole towns disappeared into the mud, and the golden age of civilisation collapsed. Meanwhile, at the other end of the world, a new nation was born. Australia leapt from the debris, led by Anzacs silhouetted against the rising sun.

One of the most astonishing outcomes of this war is the proliferation of art and creativity, both inspired by and addressing the War. Viewed as the most literary war ever fought, World War I was the first to involve literate populations on a grand scale.

In *The Purpose of Futility*, Clare Rhoden surveys Australian Great War narratives, demonstrating their particularly Australian features which help to explain the unique and disputed position of the Great War in Australian history.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

> *The middle child of a family of seven, Clare has always been interested in people and stories. Her father, child of migrants, passed on a passionate love of Australia while her mother taught her to read at the age of three. Clare’s research into Australian Great War novels reflects her abiding interest in how stories function to make our world.*

Clare Rhoden teaches in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. She completed her PhD in 2011 on Australian Great War literature, from which *The Purpose of Futility* resulted, after previously gaining a Master of Arts in creative writing.

Rhoden worked for twelve years as a speech pathologist in the Victorian Education Department, before changing her career path to work in university administration. She was head of a major student services department at the University of Melbourne, during which time she won two significant staff awards which enabled her to travel overseas for conference and research opportunities. Rhoden writes across a wide range of genres and is currently working on a science fiction novel based around the world she created for her short story ‘Man/Machine/Dog’ which appeared in *Overland* in early 2014.

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