FIGHTING FOR LEGITIMACY: MASCULINITY, POLITICAL VOICE AND *NED KELLY*

Sarah Pinto and Leigh Boucher,
University of Melbourne

'[Ned Kelly has] given me the courage to stand up and be true to what I believe in' (Heath Ledger).[1]

'Young men are acting self-destructively and I wondered what hopelessness or rage would lead them to act like that' (John Marsden).[2]

According to Katherine Biber, 'violent white men are the backbone of [Australian] culture.'[3] In terms of dominant cultural narratives of the twentieth century and beyond, no other violent white man has occupied more space than Edward "Ned" Kelly (1855-1880), underdog, bushranger, outlaw, murderer and hero. It comes as no surprise, then, that in 2003 Kelly yet again made an appearance on the Australian cinema screen. Gregor Jordan's *Ned Kelly* renders the historical figure of Kelly (Heath Ledger) visible through a narrative of violent struggle against an oppressive political order. In doing so, this film resurrects those all-too-potent tropes of 'struggle, courage, and survival, amidst pain, tragedy and loss' that Ann Curthoys has identified as shaping white Australian national identity.[4] Of course, an historical film about Kelly is always going to interact with understandings of national identity. From Australia's first feature film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (Charles Tait, 1906), to the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympics – and hundreds of books, films, paintings, poems, ballads, websites and exhibitions in between – Australians have demonstrated an enduring preoccupation with the figure of Kelly. As Kelly historian Graham Seal has noted, '(n)ational hero or national villain, Ned just won't go away'.[5]

Much as many might wish him gone, the figure of Kelly haunts Australian culture, mythology and historical narratives.[6] Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Kelly is *the* most significant and celebrated Australian. 'No prime minister, explorer, painter, artist, singer, (or) soldier', writes Keith Dunstan, 'has ever merited such attention. Ned Kelly the desperado outranks all his rivals by at least two to one'.[7] In a similar vein, Jordan views Kelly to be an inextricable part of Australia's cultural heritage, positioning him as 'defining of who we are as Australians'.[8] Like all renderings of this historical legend, *Ned Kelly* is thus framed by the parameters of this discourse. Not surprisingly, the film places Kelly in an explicitly nationalist frame of vision.

In evaluating this film, then, it is tempting to remain ensconced in a mode that analytically centralizes unchanging notions of masculinist national mythology. We are interested, however, in placing this film in its specific historical context. We are interested in why it is that this story is being told in this way *at this time*. What is Kelly being made to represent? And, perhaps more importantly, who is his story being made to serve?[9] In answering these questions, we emphasize components of the representation of this past often ignored in both popular and academic historical production. As such, our key analytic interest is the way in which this film is directed by anxieties about masculinity, national identity and the crafting of a legitimate political voice. Accordingly, when Heath Ledger remarked that the spectre of Kelly gave him 'the courage to stand up and be true' to his beliefs, he articulated precisely the political concerns of this film. In a context where men and manhood have been increasingly understood in terms of instability, when questions about "our" historical narratives have complicated national identity, and when the ability of white men to constitute a political voice has been plagued by anxiety, Ledger invokes the particularities of Kelly's masculinity to assume a place in the public sphere.

As historians, we were necessarily interested in this latest offering of the Kelly narrative. Unlike the many academic critics who engage with historical film merely to discredit its historical credentials, we are

disposed to take seriously the representation of the past on film.[10] Films concerned with the past are in a sense doubly historical. In the first instance, they are the constitution of the past into a coherent historical narrative and so form part of historical discourses, ostensibly linking the past to the present. At the same time, though, these films are themselves historical documents, speaking of a particular time and place. We came to this article's analytic schema, however, from the sense that this film was a jarring experience for us as viewers. The film, as we came to realise, is *about* masculinity.[11] More specifically, *Ned Kelly*, it seemed, sat strangely removed from the critical conversations about masculinity that have been conducted in recent Australian films. Whilst our research interests usually result in oddly disjointed conversations about areas outside our specialties (nineteenth century settler identity and historical fiction respectively), we realised that *Ned Kelly* was frustrating us for similar reasons. Historical film offers the potential to destabilise masculinist national histories in the same way that 1990s Australian films have worked to challenge contemporary ideas about masculinity. *Ned Kelly*, however, effaces this possibility. In its narratives and characterisations, Jordan's film is a transformative resuscitation of a mythologised masculinist national identity.

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In order to understand the ways in which this film is connected to a wider politics of national identity, however, we need to first interrogate the way in which this story is being told. Jordan's film tells the story of Kelly beginning with the tale of his boyhood rescue of a drowning child and ending with his capture following the Glenrowan siege. From the outset, the film seeks to characterise Kelly as engaged in a battle in which violence is his only weapon, conforming to traditional understandings of Kelly and relying heavily on Ian Jones' landmark work *A Short Life*. For Jones, Kelly is a figure of great social and political significance in Australian history. The mythological Kelly, according to Jones, 'showed what an Australian was capable of, and that was seen as magnificent or horrifying.'[12]

The film's first depiction of the adult Kelly tells the story of his arrest in what is known as the Wild Wright incident. The Wild Wright scene is paradigmatic, pointing towards the path the film – and indeed Kelly – must inevitably follow. In this scene, Kelly is unfairly harassed and arrested by Constable Hall (Russell Gilbert) for possession of a stolen horse. The scene seeks to establish the injustice of Kelly's persecution by the police by emphasising that he had no knowledge of the horse's origins. In fact, the film suggests Kelly was attempting to return the horse to whom he believed to be its rightful owner.

This scene establishes the tenor of Jordan's representation, in terms of both characterisations and structural form. Accordingly, it speaks of Kelly's horsemanship, his affinity with nature, his desire to protect women, his willingness to resort to violence and the absolute legitimacy of his anger. This script of persecution continues to play out as Kelly's dispute with the police incorporates his family, escalates to a violent and fatal confrontation with the police in the bush, and, quite unavoidably (according to the structure of the film) gives birth to Kelly the bushranger, outlaw and victim. The remainder of the film is concerned with the pursuit of Kelly and his fraternal pack through the Australian landscape, concluding with the now-infamous Glenrowan siege. The film chooses to conclude this narrative with Kelly's capture rather than his execution, in stark contrast to his band of brothers' death. [13] In doing so, the focus is maintained on Kelly's life – and, by implication, his character – rather than his death and subsequent entrance into the realm of mythology.

For Biber, a connection between death and masculinity has been a preoccupation of recent Australian cinema. Indeed, she argues that:

> The hero's death absolves us from responsibility for the type of "troubling" manhood he embodies. The hero dies before he fulfils his destabilising potential for Australian masculinity. Death is a narrative solution for those men whose masculinity is unravelling. [14]

Jordan's film, however, avoids this narrative form by refusing the temptation to depict Kelly's grisly end on screen. Unlike *Gallipoli* (Peter Weir, 1981), *Idiot Box* (David Caesar, 1996) or *Romper Stomper* (Geoffrey Wright, 1992), for example, whose narrative resolutions suggest the impossibility of their protagonists' non-normative masculinities, *Ned Kelly* valorises Kelly's masculinity by leaving its hero very much alive.

Jordan's Kelly, moreover, is an Irish-Australian hero who is a victim of oppression. Jordan has stated that *Ned Kelly* tells the story of an individual reaction against persecution: 'At the core of the story is a person fighting for a cause', he says. 'He's part of a persecuted minority so he fights back'.[15] As Kelly himself says to a group of hostages during the Jerilderie Robbery:

> My mother is rotting away in a prison cell because of the lies of a policeman named Fitzpatrick. She's an innocent woman, and so are these boys here [the Kelly Gang]. My Irish brethren have been unlawfully imprisoned and blacklisted from their selections. How do you expect me to behave other than to stand up against this treatment?

Ned Kelly gives voice to the idea that it is the pull of circumstance that propels Kelly into a life of crime;[16] indeed, how could you "expect" him to behave in any other way? Interestingly, despite the general status of Kelly as victim in the film, Jordan nonetheless bestows on his hero a sense of guilt for his crimes. Twice the film lingers on shots of Kelly with blood on his hands, first at Stringybark Creek, and then during the gang's period of outlawry, where they are forced to eat their own horse to survive. Furthermore, when Kelly passes out in the middle of the Glenrowan siege, he dreams of saving the life of a drowning boy as a child – 'proof that I've saved a life as well', he says. This comment, together with the repeated imagery of Kelly with blood on his hands, indicates *Ned Kelly*'s desire to furnish the outlaw with a sense of moral ambiguity.

This desire, however, is largely elided by the weight of Kelly's victimhood. For Jordan, then, Kelly was simply a decent person who had the courage to fight back in the face of oppression and abuse. 'I believe Ned was a good person who was fucked over', Jordan has said, 'he fought back and things just got worse and worse'.[17] Things were so bad, in fact, that in the world of the film the clash between Kelly and the authorities is characterised as that of a war. As Kelly tells the townspeople of Glenrowan on the night of the siege:

> We're all Irish boys and selectors' sons. Had war declared on us by Victoria, by New South Wales, by the Crown, and by the London Times even … it's Regina versus us, the Kelly Gang.

Indeed, with its dark atmosphere, sombre musical score and final battle scene, the film effectively positions itself (albeit not necessarily convincingly or successfully) within the genre of the war film. More particularly, Jordan's film aligns itself with Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* (1998), imitating many of Malick's filmic devices, including the use of voiceover, the many shots of the surrounding natural world, and the philosophical musings of characters.[18]

Like *Ned Kelly*, war films tend to focus on the actions and lives of individual men. Just as we would argue that *Ned Kelly* is a battle for masculinity, so too have scholars tracked the connections between the war film genre and the constitution of ideas of manhood.[19] As Susan Jeffords' landmark interrogation of 1980s Vietnam War narratives so convincingly demonstrated, the genre of the war film lends itself to the assertion of the 'interests, values and projects of patriarchy.'[20] *Ned Kelly*, as in the genre of war films more broadly, is not just an assertion of masculinity; it relies on stubborn tropes of what Kate Millet has termed the 'hunter-fighter-fucker' mould of masculine identity.[21] It is no coincidence that *Ned Kelly*'s closest filmic ancestors are *Breaker Morant* (Bruce Beresford, 1980) and *Gallipoli* (Peter Weir, 1981), Australian "renaissance" films concerned with masculinist national identity.[22] Indeed, through its mobilisation of the

conventions of the war film, *Ned Kelly* makes sense of this story in terms of battle, struggle and resistance.

In a similar mode to much Australian filmmaking of the "renaissance," *Ned Kelly* is also a lyrical rendering of this historical story.[23] The painterly depiction of Australian flora and fauna, the gentle pacing of much of the camera work, and the tendency to linger on scenes of Kelly "at home" in the landscape place this narrative firmly in a poetic mode. Much like Malick's rich evocation of the space of war in *The Thin Red Line*, this film romaticises (and in another sense, uncomplicates) this narrative space. The obvious question, however, remains: what, in particular, does this film lyricise? And, further, who is it valourising with this romantic form?

From the very beginning, Kelly's comfort and connection with the Australian landscape is firmly established. In the viewer's first encounter with the adult Kelly, he emerges from the landscape, awoken from a resting slumber within the native grasses in which he is, apparently, so at "home". It is important to note that in framing Kelly's connection to the "natural world" in a language of comfort, ease and belonging, this film effectively authorises a non-indigenous claim to the Australian space. Indeed, throughout the film, Kelly's connection with the landscape is contrasted with the unease of the police, who quite clearly do not – and cannot – belong. The lingering shots of nature which have so firmly lyricised this space enable a convenient manner in which to position the police as Other to Kelly's spatial entitlement. In the narrative of this film, it comes as no surprise that the police are willing to impose wholesale destruction on the landscape in their pursuit of Kelly. Following the Jerilderie robbery, for example, the police deliberately start a bushfire in an attempt to capture or kill Kelly and the gang. In the aftermath, the land is blackened and the film's loving nature shots are replaced with images of dead pigs, poisoned waterholes, snakes, and vulture-like birds feeding on animals killed in the bushfire. The police, unlike Kelly, do not treat this place as their home.

In sharp contrast, Kelly's sense of belonging is so strongly felt that he speaks at times of literally becoming the landscape:

> Lying low, living in caves, you get to learn some things. Eventually you can read soils and rocks like books…I've turned blood-red with cave mud. I've been a bloody rock.

In an all-too-convenient appropriation of the conflation of Indigenous peoples with the Australian space, Kelly and the gang are thus nativised. Just as one of the more enduring tropes of settler nationalism tends to situate Indigenous identity in and of the landscape, Kelly's connection to, and – unlike the Indigenous entitlement he effaces – possession of this space is made prominent.[24] Somewhat disturbingly, it is the white working-class man who thus stands to lose the most from the imposition of colonial rule in this film, with the authorities effectively attempting to "dispossess" Kelly and the gang of their homeland. As Kelly himself states when feted as a hero returning from the battlefront of outlawry in what is akin to the film's homecoming parade, 'the country belongs to us, and we'll go wherever we like.'

Given that the landscape is clearly proven to belong to Kelly and his gang – and this possession is marked out against the authorities' lack of entitlement – the film correlates Kelly's characterisation with national belonging. It is no surprise, then, that in this film the land belongs only to those who embody the characteristics of 'anti-authoritarianism, egalitarianism and mateship' that Phillip Butterss has identified as typically relating to the invocation of national identity on film. As Butterss notes, however, these characteristics are not merely about national identity; they are necessarily implicated in the articulation of masculinity.[25] Butterss is not alone. In foregrounding this connection between national identity and masculinity in a critique of the gender order enforced by cultural and political scripts that reverberate with Russel Ward's *Australian Legend*, Butterss can be linked to a number of other scholars. Marilyn Lake's groundbreaking work demonstrates the absolute centrality of a series of assumptions about the masculine to conceptions of

Australian national identity.[26] For Lake, '(i)t is time that we started treating men, historically, as men, socialised into "masculinity"…and pursuing their "masculinist" interests as men, as well as the interests of their class and race'.[27] As Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley and Susan Sheridan note, masculinism can be understood as the political mobilisation of men's interests.[28]

Following Lake, we argue that *Ned Kelly* is in fact about masculinity. Whilst articulated in a nationalist framework, the film engages in the constitution of the ostensibly sex-less project of national belonging in explicitly masculine terms.[29] As such, this film belongs within a lineage of recent Australian cinema dealing with masculinity and is part of a wider interrogation of masculinity on film.[30] Just as Sharyn Pearce has demonstrated that manhood on film in the 1990s has increasingly been problematised, so too has 1990s Australian cinema sought to represent a range of masculinities on screen, perhaps expanding the notion of what it means to be a man.[31] *Ned Kelly*, however, marks out filmic territory in firm opposition to this corpus.

Kelly's masculinity in this film is constituted in a language of anger and violence. He is motivated by an underlying sense of anger at the treatment of his family and the "oppression" of the Victorian police and Government. Central to Kelly's family-driven anger is his outrage at the treatment of his mother. *Ned Kelly* is strikingly clear in its depiction of the relationship between the unjust treatment of Ellen Kelly (Kris McQuade) and the motivations driving the actions of her son. In the film, Kelly's actions are almost entirely explicable in terms of the anger he feels in response to his mother's arrest and imprisonment.[32]

The key to this interpretation can be found in the scene which follows Ellen's arrest for her involvement in the Fitzpatrick incident, which is set to ominous music and under the cover of darkness. Ned's sister, Kate (Kerry Condon), rides to a Chinese camp where Kelly, his brother Dan (Laurence Kinlan), and Joe Byrne (Orlando Bloom) have been in hiding since the incident. Upon learning that his mother has been arrested and Constable Fitzpatrick (Kiri Paramore) has accused

Ned of shooting him, Kelly flies into an uncontrollable rage: 'They'd take the word of a drunkard liar and arrest an innocent woman? Is that right?', Kelly asks Aaron Sherrit (Joel Edgerton) as he grabs at him – and then throws him away – in anger. 'I won't take this injustice. I'm going to kill him. I swear I'll scatter his blood and brains like rain'. Indeed, Kelly is so lost to his anger and blind rage that he has to be physically restrained by Byrne and his brother Dan from taking his gun and murdering Fitzpatrick immediately.

Fuelled in part by the imprisonment of his mother, Kelly's anger is also directed towards the police and the Victorian government more generally.[33] Kelly is filled with anger towards the authorities as a result of their unfair and unjust treatment of his family, his friends, and, of course, himself. To return to the early depiction of Kelly's arrest in the Wild Wright scene, the film continually emphasises Kelly's apparently justifiable anger at the actions of the authorities. In Jordan's film, Kelly becomes wild with anger when Constable Hall attempts to arrest him for horse-stealing, of which the historical Kelly always maintained his innocence – 'I was a prisoner in Beechworth Goal until the 29 of March [sic] therefore I could not have stolen the mare', he wrote in the Jerilderie Letter.[34] The filmic Kelly engages in an argument with Hall about the ownership of the horse that eventually results in the Constable unintentionally shooting at him: 'what are you trying to do? I ought to tan your hide for that', Kelly yells at Hall as he attacks him in the street. Hall has to be rescued from Kelly's violent anger by two other police officers, and even then Kelly's anger cannot be subdued. Kelly encourages Hall to assault him as he is being restrained by the two other officers, provoking the Constable with taunts – 'Is that the best you can do you bloody coward?', Kelly asks.

Along with anger, Kelly's masculinity is structured by a constant willingness to resort to a language of violence. As Hilary Neroni has theorised in relation to American culture, there is a strongly felt yet largely unspoken link between violence and masculinity.[35] The threat of violence thus underlies much of this film. In "settling his score" with Wild Wright, for instance, Kelly is depicted as an individual who

uses violence to solve problems. In an evocation of a typical filmic street fight, Kelly and Wild Wright are represented amongst a cheering throng of male figures as the two men beat each other into submission. Indeed, the barely conscious Kelly is almost unaware that the fight is over when his supporters finally raise him to their shoulders. Wild Wright lays on the muddy ground; Kelly, though bloodied, is the violent victor. As Kelly says in voice-over, 'Wild Wright only got eighteen months for stealing that horse – you think I was going to let that one slide?'

Within the world of this film, Kelly's angry and violent model of masculinity is constructed as utterly unavoidable in the face of oppression. *Ned Kelly* goes to great lengths to establish the notion that Kelly's behaviour, actions and very mode of address are both justifiable and inevitable. Kelly's actions, after all, represent the only way of speaking his oppressors will hear. In light of his unjust persecution, Kelly is left with no choice but to act:

> They said I'd lost what it meant to be human. Maybe never had it in the first place. But wasn't this about protecting the ones I loved? The one's who gave me food and shelter? Even the clothes on my back?

As a consequence, the film works to both humanise and normalise Kelly's actions, rendering them entirely comprehensible. In operating in such a manner, *Ned Kelly* effectively endorses the actions of a man who bullies, steals and murders to get what he wants. Positioning Kelly's actions as understandable, however, is not the sole way in which this film seeks to legitimate – and, ultimately, valorise – Kelly's masculinity.

As RW Connell reminds us, the valorisation of a particular mode of masculinity is dependent upon the subordination of any alternative possibilities.[36] In this way, masculinities can be seen to be operating in a hierarchical manner, valorising one version at the expense of all others. *Ned Kelly* is no different, depicting multiple masculinities only insofar as they validate one: that of Kelly. Furthermore, this film is

really only about Kelly – his character is clearly the focus, as evidenced by the film's title. Whilst the historical narrative would seem to end with his execution, it is Kelly who is left alive in the closing scenes of this film.[37] Indeed, all other possible subjects of this story – principally Joe Byrne, Dan Kelly and Steve Hart – have either been ignored, shot or taken their own lives by the film's end.

Lending further weight to the valorisation of Kelly's masculinity is his comfort with the paraphernalia of manhood. In other words, it is Kelly who is most competent with all that is usually coded as masculine. It is, for instance, Kelly who knows when and where to fight, unlike his brothers. Similarly, it is Kelly who knows how to use a gun effectively, unlike the police. It is Kelly who is able to survive – and thrive – in the landscape, unlike his pursuers. And it is also Kelly – and Kelly alone – who is capable of speaking for the people. Finally, it is only Kelly whose masculinity is so enticing as to be capable of seducing Julia Cook (Naomi Watts), a married, English member of the squattocracy.

Interestingly, in a film with a clear desire to authenticate its story with appeals to "historical fact", the fabricated character of Cook is a glaring aberration. Although she serves more than one narrative function – she provides the film with both a romantic interlude and an explanation for Kelly's absence from the family home during the Fitzpatrick incident – we would like to suggest that her key function is in fact to enforce heteronormativity upon this narrative.[38] As Butterss notes, it has been suggested that in Australian film 'the main narrative function of the female lead is to prove that the male lead is not gay'.[39]

In a film where the screen is so crowded with men, the prospect of a brotherhood slipping into an erotic economy necessarily haunts the peripheries of the narrative. Indeed, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's pioneering work on the representation of male bonding and the maintenance of a patriarchal order in English literature demonstrated, the threat of homosexuality constantly unsettles the privileging of the homosocial.[40] Cook, then, ensures that Kelly – a man who seems to

spend most of his life in the intimacy of other men – remains untainted by homoerotic possibilities.

The importance of homosocial bonds to the maintenance of male privilege cannot be understated. Indeed, at its most basic level, these relations completely efface the importance, voice, and legitimacy of a female presence in the public sphere. So too, this film is characterised by an almost complete absence of women. In a continuation of the narrative delineations that enable the genre of the war film – specifically, the maintenance of a gendered division between a feminised homefront and masculinised battlefront – the battles of this film occur between bands of men. Carole Pateman has demonstrated how, in the apparently gender-neutral script of modern nationhood – liberty, equality and fraternity – the final of this trinary is often ignored. Indeed, Pateman's analysis reveals that the brotherhood of man is just that: a *brother*hood.[41] In a film that reinscribes the struggle for freedom and justice onto the history of Kelly, the power of the fraternal pact remains all-encompassing. This representation of the Kelly gang, necessarily energized by notions of national identity and apparent belonging, celebrates the primacy of the fraternal pact, and, indeed, pack.

The brothers of this film – and, more specifically, Kelly – are engaged in a battle to protect the fraternity and their masculinity. Indeed, if the maintenance of the homosocial bond is necessarily implicated in the project of asserting the legitimacy of the male voice in the public sphere, *Ned Kelly* has crafted a battle narrative around the legitimacy of a specific speaking voice.

If the figure of Kelly is fighting a battle for a violent fraternal speaking voice, what broader battle does this film fight? What wider political and social problems does it seek to solve? To whom does it give voice? And whose voices does it attempt to silence? In other words, how does *Ned Kelly*'s representation of this battle make sense in the film's wider cultural, historical and political context?

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It is important to note that this film is not operating in a vacuum and cannot be divorced from the discourses by which it is enabled. In order to comprehend *Ned Kelly* as an historical document, as a text that was produced in a particular historical location, we need to interrogate how ideas about masculinity, national identity and political legitimacy were contested in the public domain at the time of the film's production and release. As historians, we are necessarily interested in the social and political ramifications of this cultural text. Indeed, part of the reason we began our conversations about this film was not only to unpack the mode of masculinity it privileged, but to connect this articulation to its political moment. In a context where masculinity is said to be in crisis, changes to historical knowledge are forcing a renegotiation of national identities, and the notion of a universal subject position is continually under challenge, a film has emerged that resuscitates conventional (masculinist) modes of understanding Kelly and, by implication, Australian national identity. In doing so, *Ned Kelly* enters the political arena as part of a desire to settle that which has been unsettled.

What we are suggesting, then, is that this film is representing the Kelly story in this manner for a particular *reason*. That is, at a time when the historical narratives that support a particular subject position have been undermined, this film seeks to shore up the foundations of his speaking voice. Historians of film have been all-to-willing to connect films about masculinity to wider anxieties about men in the public sphere. However, we would like to suggest that there are, in fact, three interconnected crises with which this film engages. In a sense, our broader intervention with this work is to bring together a number of "crisis-points" that are reverberating throughout Australian – and Western – public life in the late-20th century.

In the first instance, *Ned Kelly* is firmly implicated in the crisis of masculinity said to be plaguing much of the white, western world. Since the early 1990s, it has become increasingly apparent that masculinity might be a "problem". According to this public and political narrative, we are currently going through a masculinity crisis.

Men – and often more disturbingly, boys – just do not know how to be men anymore:

> Mark Latham says [the crisis of masculinity is] about single-parent families, and you find it where boys grow up without dads. John Howard says it's about same-sex couples adopting children, and you find it with lesbians raising sons. The Catholic Church says it's about an abundance of women teachers, and you find it in classrooms without male role models.[42]

The idea of this crisis has drawn succor from a number of interrelated phenomena, including apprehension over boys' education, men's experiences in the Family Court, the mythopoetic men's movement, and an ever-increasing supply of self-help literature directed towards remaking men, manhood and masculinity.[43] The notion of a crisis does, of course, depend upon an implication of temporal specificity. Indeed, for something to be in "crisis," there needs to have been a prior point in time when the apparent "crisis" didn't exist, when masculinity was assured and undisturbed. A crisis thus implies a temporary aberration from some kind of norm. In light of this drive toward normalcy, *Ned Kelly* mobilises the Kelly narrative in part as an attempt to re-establish the very masculinity that the crisis discourse views to be under threat.

Significantly, by removing any reference to the power-relations between men and women, contemporary discourses about masculinity-in-crisis ignore the interventions of feminist politics over the past forty years.[44] These discussions of masculinity obscure, as Connell reminds us, the myriad ways in which the gender order privileges men.[45] Moreover, as Pearce has convincingly maintained, current masculinist politics are 'basically reactionary, conservative, and backward looking, because [they] appear to ask not how men can discover a new post-patriarchal equilibrium but how they can recover their former balance.'[46]
Accordingly, the effacement of male privilege has often been achieved through the articulation of white men as the victims of the late-

twentieth century. According to Sarah Maddison, discourses about men in recent times have positioned them precisely as the victims of discrimination and disadvantage.[47] The potency of this connection was aptly demonstrated when Pauline Hanson stated that 'the most downtrodden person in this country is the white Anglo-Saxon male. I think they've hit the bottom of the barrel.'[48] This conflation of white male identity with the position of the wounded party has, not surprisingly, made its way into Australian films. As Felicity Holland and Jane O'Sullivan have tracked, there has been a tendency for contemporary films about young men to represent them 'as "victims" of class, masculinity, and mateship'.[49] So too, *Ned Kelly* renders its protagonist visible in terms of his status as victim.

Indeed, in its glorification of the working class male as the victim of political oppression, this film positions Kelly in a manner that resonates with the notion that the working class male has borne the brunt of the social, political, and economic changes of late twentieth century capitalism. In wider cultural discourses and academic critiques alike, the working class male has been represented as the figure with the most to lose in the shift to a post-industrial economy. Peter Cochrane, for example, comprehends Pauline Hanson's appeal in relation to a wider currency of class alienation.[50] The turn of the twenty-first century, it would seem, is an increasingly difficult time for men. *Ned Kelly*, however, implores us to get back to a simpler time. Consequently, the film deploys the authority of this historical figure to legitimate a particular contemporary political agenda surrounding masculinity and identity.

Ned Kelly's engagement with historical discourses, however, is not solely related to issues of masculinity and identity; it is also part of a wider drive to resist the complication of a national past. The capital-H History this film attempts to draw on – and re-write – has been heavily contested within late-twentieth century academic critiques concerned with race and gender. Feminism, postcolonialism and postmodernism, whilst disparate, have all disturbed the ability of nations to construct coherent, singular and unchanging visions of their pasts. The exclusions and silences of nationally bounded histories that these

critiques draw attention to have revealed the fragility of national narratives of belonging. In an atmosphere of frequent challenges to traditional narratives of nation and identity in both popular and academic historical production, then, it is significant that *Ned Kelly* chooses to resurrect what is an unchallenging historical story in a decidedly unchallenging manner.

In making this choice, Jordan's film effectively aligns its version of the past with the revisionist side of Australia's ongoing historical debates, seeking to return to a 'relaxed and comfortable' relationship with the past.[51] In the words of Australia's Prime Minister John Howard:

> I believe the balance sheet of Australian history is a very generous and benign one … it is tremendously important [to remember] that the Australian achievement has been a heroic one, a courageous one and a humanitarian one.[52]

Howard's message, however, was not isolated rhetoric. As Marilyn Lake articulates, '(d)uring the last twenty or so years there has been extensive national discussion about the meaning of Australian history in a debate which assumes an identification between the present and the past'.[53] The debates Lake refers to can be termed an historical crisis, speaking as they do of challenges and counter-challenges to the foundations of Australian historical knowledge. The "history wars" have been conducted over questions of the character of Australian historical narratives, setting up an apparent battle between positive affirmations of an overwhelmingly successful "settlement" of Australia and an obsessive and nihilistic fixation on the destructive impact of colonialism and "invasion".

Australia's battles over history have been fought within many arenas, ranging from the controversy over the historical stories of the Bicentenary Celebrations of 1988 to the historical details of Canberra's National Museum of Australia.[54] It is easy to comprehend this national debate in terms of race and colonialism. The stories of (white) national generation enforced by Howard's rhetoric, however,

have been mirrored by historians less-than-comfortable with the incursion of women into their own national stories. John Hirst, for example, argues simply that '(d)efining the nation, ruling the nation and defending the nation have been done mostly by men … Prima facie, it is unlikely that women, generally excluded from the public realm, would have exercised the influence claimed for them' by feminist scholars.[55] As Joy Damousi has illustrated, feminism and feminist interventions have not always been welcomed in Australian history.[56]

Whilst we acknowledge the previous discussion has drastically oversimplified what has become an increasingly complex series of debates, we make these points to suggest that Australian historical knowledge has been unsettled – and, further, that *Ned Kelly* speaks to this destabilisation. In a context where the racial politics of Australian knowledge have been both highlighted and denied, *Ned Kelly* returns to an uncomplicated relationship between the white man and the Australian space. The crisis in historical knowledge of the past thirty years has manifested itself as a challenge to existing nationalist perspectives of Australian identity. In its construction of the Kelly narrative, however, this film renders an increasingly hard story an easy read. Rather than challenge existing mythologies, identities or histories, *Ned Kelly* instead presents an unchallenging, uncomplicated and uninteresting fairy-tale.

Remembering that the story told within this film was a choice, there were any number of narrative possibilities which *could* have been pursued. Taking into account the wisdom of the past forty years of feminist scholarship, for example, a filmic representation of the Kelly legend could surely have found space for the interrogation of the Kelly women. Similarly, it is possible to consider an interpretation of Kelly in terms of race, as evidenced, for instance, by the work of Deborah Bird Rose.[57] Patrick Wolfe has argued that the operation of settler colonial discourses are premised on the obliteration of any Indigenous presence in an Australian present or future.[58] Likewise, this film reasserts the primacy of the white (male) in the Australian past.

Indeed, the theoretical interventions that have destabilised Australian historical knowledge resonate with a wider set of epistemological questions that have unsettled white Western subjectivity. Fiona Probyn argues that the late-twentieth century has witnessed a 'crisis of the centrality of the western male subject.'[59] Just as "truth and fact" in historical knowledge has been complicated, so too has the truth and fact of universality become increasingly problematic. As the political movements and philosophical interventions of the last forty years of the twentieth century so convincingly demonstrated, the apparently universal human subject was, as it turned out, a white man.

The social movements and analogous identity politics of the 1960s and 1970s forced the entrance of gay, indigenous and coloured men (and women) into the public sphere. Accordingly, Philip Butterss has argued that since the 1970s 'there have been considerable pressures on unified notions of both national and masculine identity' in Australian film.[60] As a consequence, the absolute legitimacy of the white male speaking voice has been unsettled. The pressures to which Butterss refers have been part of an ongoing reformulation of notions of political legitimacy. The increasing prominence of individuals and groups who fell outside the boundaries of the (implicitly white and male) subject position demonstrated that any claim to universality was in fact enabled by a series of exclusions. Indeed, the model of identity politics that characterised much of this change emphasised the idea of difference rather than sameness, specificity rather than universality, and singularity rather than commonality.

As Alistair Bonnet's examination of American literature has demonstrated, attempting to locate an identity with claims to representational specificity around notions of the universal is an inherently unstable process.[61] The claims to political voice made on the basis of marginalisation from this apparently universal subject position only amplified this instability. Increasingly, the crafting of a political voice has required the formulation of a particular speaking position; it is only in the constitution of this subjectivity that those wishing to have a voice in the public sphere can find a platform from which to speak.[62]

At the historical moment when the legitimacy of speaking in the public sphere has become increasingly complicated, *Ned Kelly* offers a virtual manifesto for the constitution of a specific political voice. If the set of crises that have reverberated through western culture have made claims to universality impossible, this film engages in a process of crafting a mode of address characterised by oppression and violence. Alice Jardine has argued that the late twentieth century has witnessed a 'crisis in legitimation.'[63] Ultimately, this film's narrative of Kelly solves this crisis by resuscitating the legitimacy of the white male speaking voice.[64] In appropriating the position of the disenfranchised – in other words, in situating Kelly as Other to an apparently oppressive force – Jordan's film once again centralises the white male speaking voice.

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This film, like the masculinity crisis, has managed to cultivate a speaking voice on the basis of the poor white man as victim. As we have sought to establish in this article, *Ned Kelly* is a film intimately concerned with masculinist identity. Further, in its discussion of national identity, the film centralises the historical experience of the white man, invoking its particular mode of masculinity in order to legitimate a political voice. This version of Kelly is fighting for what the film pronounces to be a battle over political legitimacy. As such, *Ned Kelly* can be read as a transformative resuscitation of a masculinist speaking voice we believed had been thoroughly repudiated by the revelation of its political exclusions and historical silences. The implications of such a transformative resuscitation are neither apolitical nor innocent; far from it. In a period that has opened the possibility for the articulation of new masculinities, new histories and new identities, *Ned Kelly* effectively obliterates any chance of movement. In short, this film operates to close down rather than open up. [65]

Notes

[1] Heath Ledger in *Ned Kelly: Cultural Icon* (Kate Latimer, 2003), a featurette included on the DVD release of *Ned Kelly*.

[2] John Marsden, cited in Sharyn Pearce, '"Secret Men's Business": New Millenium Advice for Australian Boys', *Mosaic: a Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 34, no. 2 (June 2001): 57.

[3] Katherine Biber, '"Turned out Real Nice after All": Death and Masculinity in Australian Cinema', in *Playing the Man: New Approaches to Masculinity*, eds Katherine Biber, Tom Sear, and Dave Trudinger (Annandale: Pluto Press, 1999), 32.

[4] Ann Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology', *Journal of Australian Studies* (June 1999), 3.

[5] Graham Seal, 'Ned Kelly: His Past, Present and Future', *Australian Folklore* 10 (July 1995): 154.

[6] The idea that Kelly haunts Australian culture we have taken from Lyn Innes: 'Kelly has haunted not just popular and media culture but also high culture', Innes writes. See Lyn Innes, Resurrecting Ned Kelly, *Sydney Studies in English* 29 (2003): 70. For discussions of the Kelly myth and associated ideas, see, for example: Carolyn Bliss, 'Imagining the Truth', *Antipodes* 15, no. 1 (June 2001): 47-8, Colin F Cave, ed., *Ned Kelly: Man and Myth* (North Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1968), Robin Gerster, 'The Ned Kelly Myth and Australian Identity', *The Lancet* 357, no. 9253 (3rd February 2001): 401, John McQuilton, 'The Legend of Ned Kelly', *Overland* 84 (July 1981): 38-41, Graham Seal, *Tell 'Em I Died Game: The Legend of Ned Kelly* (Flemington: Hyland House, 2002).

[7] Keith Dunstan, 'Ned Reckoning', *The Bulletin* 118, no. 6254 (12th December 2000): 46.

[8] Gregor Jordan, in the documentary *Ned Kelly: Cultural Icon* (Kate Latimer, 2003) which accompanies the DVD release of the film.

[9] These questions are an adaptation of similar questions posed by Graham Huggan as part of his analysis of the representation of Kelly in recent historical novels. Huggan asks: 'Who is it, exactly, that Kelly represents? And who is it that his memory has been made to serve?''. Graham Huggan, 'Cultural Memory in Postcolonial Fiction: The Uses and Abuses of Ned Kelly', *Australian Literary Studies* 20, no. 3 (2002): 153.

[10] Over the past decade, historical fiction (particularly historical film) has increasingly become the subject of scholarly interest (although much of this work takes a highly critical rather than analytical perspective). Nonetheless, there have rarely been book-length studies of either historical film or historical novels, particularly by historians. For a discussion of the poverty of academic engagement with film, see Robert A Rosenstone, 'Does a Filmic Writing of History Exist?', *History and Theory* 41 (December 2002): 134-44.

[11] We are not the first to observe the connection between Ned Kelly and masculinity. David Coad gestures towards a more general connection between Kelly and the articulation of masculine national identity at the turn of the 21st century. 'What is noteworthy about Kelly mania is its millennium revival in various attempts to say something about Australian (masculine) identity [sic].' David Coad, *Gender Trouble Down Under: Australian Masculinities* (Le Mont-Houy: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 2002), 56.

[12] Ian Jones, *Ned Kelly: A Short Life* (South Melbourne: Lothian Books, 2003, 1st pub.1995), 302.

[13] Ina Bertrand, 'New Histories of the Kelly Gang: Gregor Jordan's *Ned Kelly*', *Senses of Cinema* 26 (May-June 2003). Available at www.sensesofcinema.com. Accessed 3rd February 2004.

[14] Biber, '"Turned out Real Nice after All": Death and Masculinity in Australian Cinema', 29.

[15] Gregor Jordan, cited in *Ned Kelly Production Notes*, available as part of the AFI Research Collection, RMIT University: 4.

[16] Bertrand, 'New Histories of the Kelly Gang: Gregor Jordan's *Ned Kelly*'.

[17] Gregor Jordan, cited in Lynden Barber, 'Behind the Mask', *The Weekend Australian* 1-2nd March 2003, *Review* 6.

[18] Adrian Martin, 'Homage Beats around the Bush', *The Age* 27th March 2003, *Culture* 5.

[19] See, for example: Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), Susan Jeffords, 'Masculinity as Excess in Vietnam Films: The Father/Son Dynamic of American Culture', *Genre* 21 (Winter 1988), Tanya Modleski, 'A Father Is Being Beaten: Male Feminism and the War Film', *Discourse* 10, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 1988), Yvonne Tasker, 'Soldiers' Stories: Women and Military Masculinities' in *Courage under Fire*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 19 (2002).

[20] Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), xi.

[21] Kate Millett, cited in Sharyn Pearce, 'Performance Anxiety: The Interaction of Gender and Power in *the Full Monty*', *Australian Feminist Studies* 15, no. 32 (2000): 228. Yvonne Tasker has demonstrated the connection between masculinity and the genre of the war film in her analysis of the performance of female masculinity in recent war films. Tasker, 'Soldiers' Stories: Women and Military Masculinities' in *Courage under Fire*, 211.

[22] William D Routt, 'Red Ned', *Metro Magazine* 136 (2003): 11.

[23] According to William Routt, '*Ned Kelly* is, unequivocally, a lyrical film'. *Ibid.*: 13.

[24] Rod MacNeil, 'Time after Time: Temporal Frontiers and the Boundaries in Colonial Images of the Australian Landscape', in *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies*, ed. Lynnette Russell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). The nativisation of Kelly is further reinforced elsewhere in the film when Kelly, at home in this landscape, engages in an unspoken communication of complicity with a wandering but silent tribal Indigenous man. Apparently, just as the tribal native knows/is the space, so too does Kelly belong there.

[25] See Philip Butterss, 'From Ned Kelly to Queens in the Desert', in *Social Justice: Politics, Technology and Culture for a Better World*, ed. Susan Magarey (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1998), 65-6.

[26] See, for example: Marilyn Lake, 'Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation - Nationalism, Gender and Other Seminal Acts', *Gender and History* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1992): 305-22, Marilyn Lake, 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context', in *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s*, eds Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley, and Susan Sheridan (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 1-15.

[27] Lake, 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context', 1.

[28] Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley, and Susan Sheridan, 'Introduction', in *Debutante Nations,* xviii.

[29] In a similar vein, these terms also function to efface the racial specificities of the settler nationalist project.

[30] Butterss in particular has been keen to emphasise the engagement of contemporary Australian films with issues of masculinity. See: Philip Butterss, 'Becoming a Man in Australian Film in the Early 1990s: *The Big Steal*, *Death in Brunswick*, *Strictly Ballroom*, and *the Heartbreak Kid*', in *Australian Cinema in the 1990s*, ed. Ian Craven (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 79-94, Butterss, 'From Ned Kelly to Queens in the Desert', 65-79, Philip Butterss, '"When Being a Man Is All You've Got": Masculinity in *Romper Stomper*, *Idiot Box*, *Blackrock* and *the Boys*', *Metro Magazine* 117 (1998): 40-6.

[31] Pearce makes this point in her discussion of *The Full Monty* (Peter Cattaneo,1997). Pearce, 'Performance Anxiety: The Interaction of Gender and Power' in *the Full Monty*, 228.

[32] This analysis draws on Sarah's work situating Kelly – and, more specifically, Jordan's film of Kelly – in terms of anger. See: 'Angry Histories: Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000) and Gregor Jordan's *Ned Kelly* (2003)', Unpublished paper given at the History Department's Brown Bag Seminar Series, University of Melbourne, September 2004, and 'History film and the emotion of the past:: the representation of anger in Gregor Jordan's *Ned Kelly*', XIIth Biennial Conference of the Film and History Association of Australia and New Zealand, Canberra, December 2004.

[33] 'It is well known that Ned Kelly's rage against the police was fuelled by the imprisonment of his mother', writes Cassandra Pybus in relation to Peter Carey's historical novel, *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000). See Cassandra Pybus, 'Novel History', *Overland* 163 (Winter 2001): 98.

[34] Edward Kelly, 'The Jerilderie Letter', in *Ned Kelly: A Short Life*, ed. Ian Jones (South Melbourne: Lothian Books, 2003), 313.

[35] According to Neroni, violence and masculinity 'have a distinct and multifaceted relationship to each other': violence can signify masculinity, violence can occur as a reaction to a perceived loss of masculinity, and violence can function as 'the object of an economic exchange between men'. Hilary Neroni, 'The Men of Columbine: Violence and Masculinity in American Culture and Film', *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture & Society* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2000), 256.

[36] R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1995).

[37] Ina Bertrand notes the significance of the film's choice to end with Kelly's capture rather than execution. Bertrand, 'New Histories of the Kelly Gang: Gregor Jordan's *Ned Kelly*'.

[38] Coad notes: 'In terms of normative masculine gender performance in Australia of the 1990s, there were quite a lot of queer things about the Kelly legend. If a male from this period imitated certain behaviours common to the Kelly gang such as wearing perfume, dancing with other men, cross-dressing and avoiding intimate contacts with women outside the immediate family, he would automatically be labelled a poofter.' It is significant that Jordan chose to excise these components of the Kelly legend from this film. Coad, *Gender Trouble Down Under: Australian Masculinities*, 70.

[39] Butterss, 'From Ned Kelly to Queens in the Desert', 69.

[40] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

[41] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988).

[42] Brian Greig, 'Here's the Real Masculinity Crisis', *The Age* 2 April 2004. Grieg goes on to argue that it is a fear of homosexuality that is animating this so-called crisis. The idea of a masculinity crisis in Australian public life has recently been centred around a speech given by former Labour leader Mark Latham in a National Press Club Address in February 2004. See Michael Bachelard and Rebecca DiGirolamo, 'Latham Targets the Boy Crisis', *The Weekend Australian* 19 February 2004.

[43] There is a vast amount of literature concerning both masculinity and the masculinity crisis, a detailed analysis of which is beyond the scope of this article. See, for example: Connell, *Masculinities*; R.W. Connell, 'Politics of Changing Men', *Australian Humanities Review* 4 (December 1996-February 1997), available at www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-Dec-1996/connell.html, accessed 3rd July 2005; Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870-1920* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2001); Mike Donaldson, 'What Is Hegemonic Masculinity?', *Theory and Society* 22, no. 5 (1993); Adam Knee, 'The Weight of Race: Stardom and Transformations of Racialized Masculinity

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[44] In an almost absurd situation, feminist politics are often blamed for the destabilisation of gender which has spawned the masculinity crisis.

[45] Connell, 'Politics of Changing Men'.

[46] Pearce, '"Secret Men's Business": New Millenium Advice for Australian Boys'.

[47] Maddison, 'Private Men, Public Anger: The Men's Rights Movement in Australia', 39-40.

[48] Pauline Hanson, cited in: Probyn, '"That Woman": Pauline Hanson and Cultural Crisis', 161.

[49] Felicity Holland and Jane O'Sullivan, '"Lethal Larrikins": Cinematic Subversions of Mythical Masculinities in *Blackrock* and *the Boys*', *Antipodes* 13, no. 2 (December 1999): 82.

[50] Peter Cochrane, 'Voices of the Past in Anglo Primal Scream', *The Australian* 10 October 1996. Marilyn Lake has insightfully observed that 'rural white men are looking to Pauline Hanson to restore their stolen masculinity.' Marilyn Lake, 'Pauline Hanson: Virago in Parliament, Viagra in the Bush', in *Two Nations: The Causes and Effects of the One Nation Party in Australia*, ed. Nadine Davidoff (Melbourne: Bookman Press, 1998), 116.

[51] Sean Brawley, '"a Comfortable and Relaxed Past": John Howard and the "Battle of History"', *The Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History* 1 (1996). Available at www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/articles/brawley.htm. Accessed 26th June 2005

[52] Adi Wimmer, 'Why We Need Black Armbands', *Journal of Australian Studies* 75 (2002): 13.

[53] Marilyn Lake, 'History and the Nation', in *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, ed. Robert Manne (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2003), 163.

[54] There is a large body of scholarship tracking these debates. See, for example: Janet Albrechsten, 'The History Wars', *Sydney Papers* 15, no. 3/4 (Winter/Spring 2003); Bain Attwood, 'Whose Dreaming? Reviewing the *Review of the National Museum of Australia*', *History Australia* 1, no. 2 (July 2004); Tony Birch, '"History Is Never Bloodless": Getting It Wrong after One Hundred Years of Federation', *Australian Historical Studies* 33, no. 118 (2002); Andrew G Bonnell and Martin Crotty, 'An Australian *"Historikerstreit"?' Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50, no. 3 (2004); Brawley, '"a Comfortable and Relaxed Past": John Howard and the "Battle of History"'; Dawn Casey, 'Culture Wars: Museums, Politics and Controversy', *Open Museum Journal* 6 (September 2003); Guy Hansen, 'White Hot History: The Review of the National Museum of Australia', *Public History Review: Outing the Past* 11 (2004); John Lewis, 'The History Wars from a Logical Perspective', *Quadrant* 48, no. 1-2 (Jan-Feb 2004); Stuart Macintyre, 'The History Wars', *Sydney Papers* 15, no. 3/4 (Winter/Spring 2003); Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars*

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[55] Hirst is talking in particular of the feminist history of Patricia Grimshaw *et al.*, *Creating a Nation: 1788-1900* (Melbourne: McPhee/Gribble, 1994); John Hirst, 'Women and History: A Critique of *Creating a Nation*', *Quadrant* 34 (1995): 36.

[56] Joy Damousi, 'Writing Gender into History and History into Gender: *Creating a Nation* and Australian Historiography', *Gender and History* 11, no. 3 (November 1999).

[57] Deborah Bird Rose, 'Ned Kelly Died for Our Sins', *Oceania* 65, no. 2 (December 1994).

[58] Patrick Wolfe, 'Nation and Miscegenation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era', *Social Analysis* 36 (1994): 93-96.

[59] Probyn, '"That Woman": Pauline Hanson and Cultural Crisis', 167.

[60] Butterss, 'From Ned Kelly to Queens in the Desert', 67-8.

[61] Alistair Bonnett, 'Whiteness in Crisis', *History Today* 50, no. 12 (2000).

[62] This point draws on Leigh's broader discussion of masculinity, whiteness and the problems of universalism in late-nineteenth century Victoria. See, for example, 'Benevolent Masculinity?: Thomas McCombie and the 1869 Aborigines Protection Act in Victoria', Unpublished paper given at the History Department's Brown Bag Seminar Series, University of Melbourne, October 2005.

[63] Alice Jardine, *Gynesis : Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 25.

[64] The obvious complication to this argument is the classed specificity of Kelly's position. It is possible to comprehend the working class as one of the oppressed minorities that has entered the public sphere to prompt the very crisis under discussion. However, in narratives of Australian history, the working class speaking voice, and indeed, the very narratives of national belonging that legitimate it, have often been celebrated. To return, once again, to Curthoys' insight, the very idea of oppression has tended to structure Australian national identities. In other words, the battler is often universalised in Australian narratives of national belonging. Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology'.

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