The Australian Body:
Masculinity, Whiteness, and Heterosexuality in 1980s Film

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In the 1964 prologue of seminal Australian cultural text *The Lucky Country*, author Donald Horn recounts how, during his extensive travels, conversations with friends, and talks with new acquaintances, he began to understand more about how the world viewed Australia. In Rome, an Italian senator discussed his point of view on the Australian communist threat; in Alexandria, Egypt, two Lebanese men questioned Australia's civil rights policies towards people of color. In New York, however, an American friend argued that due to limited global influence, Australia fails to exist at all in the consciousness of foreign nationals. The friend explained, "there is no image of Australia in America and there will not be until the intellectuals create one."[1]

Although the American friend's explanation of Australia is both exaggerated and over simplified, it still highlights a major truth about Australian identity. In the 1960s, there was no single, unified view of Australia, and thus no singular view of Australians. Domestically there was also a lack of clarity not due to a lack of identity, but rather, to an overcomplication of conflicting elements. The country was conservatively British and progressively American; colonially youthful and traditionally old; culturally European and geographically Asian. In short, Australia lacked a clear image to export, because it did not exist within the nation itself. Richard White writes, "We will never arrive at a 'real' Australia. From the attempt of others to get there, we can learn much about the travellers and journey itself, but nothing about the destination. There is none."[2]

Although a "real" Australia may not exist, a fabricated identity began to surface in the mid-1970s. Notably, it was not intellectuals who introduced this new image but, rather, artists, directors, actors and, through government investment in Australian film production, also politicians and lawmakers. The emerging image was tailored in the form of its makers, and created heroes of predominantly white, overtly heterosexual, physically rugged, traditionally masculine, men. This new ideal became known as "the Australian Body" and is characterized not only through its physicality, but also through its inherent utility and athleticism. This version of competent manhood has moved to the forefront of discourse on Australian identity in the twenty-first century and can be seen in contemporary films in the roles played by Hugh Jackman as Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* (2012) and P.T. Barnum in *The Greatest Showman* (2017). Chris Hemsworth's various portrayals of Thor, the Norse god, in the Marvel cinematic series are also good examples. Both the physiques and the utility of these actors embody their Australianness. These two actors, although not unique, embody an iconography of Australia purposely crafted through the film renaissance often referred to as the Australian New Wave. Through the analysis of three iconic Australian films that helped create the Australian New Wave: *Mad Max* (1979), *Gallipoli* (1981), and *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), we can identify the characteristics of the Australian Body and the ways in which it is tied to national imagery and global export.

The three films examined in this paper were released during a period of Australian history in which cultural upheaval, the development of strong social security, and a growing presence of Australia on the world stage, defined policy making. Many of these shifts were the result of a newfound national cohesion build upon bygone imagery from a falsely romanticized nineteenth-century colonial past, and frontier lifestyle. Russell Ward's frequently studied 1958 text *The Australian Legend* defines the Australian as "a practical man" who "swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, drinks deeply on occasion," who is a "sceptic" and thinks little of leaders unless they are blessed with "physical prowess."[3] Baron Alder explains that a wealth of criticism has been placed upon Wards notion of the Australian Legend in large part because critics argued that "*The Australian Legend* did not give a true and realistic picture of the average Australian."[4] This essay also takes a critical look at Australian manhood and masculinity, examining the historical ideas of the Australian Legend through the lens of Australian New Wave Cinema.

Australian Imagery

National identity and notions of national unity are fundamentally as abstract as the modern nation-state itself, in so much as they are both grounded in the imagination and mythmaking of a collective community. Although dated and notably only foundational to contemporary Western nation-states, Ernest Renan's notion that a nation is little more than "large-scale solidarity" still remains true.[5]

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Yet, it has been commonly asserted that this solidarity is formed through a historical shared sacrifice or at the very least, a perceived shared history. It is through such a shared history that the collective whole or imagined community pursues a shared future together. As Andreas Wimmer explains, "national identities can encourage solidarity with fellow citizens and lead individuals to sacrifice personal gain for the common good."[6] Today the debate surrounding the relevance and traditional power of national identity in confrontation with growing globalism is hotly contested. With that being said, the recent decade has proved the stable hold in which national tribalism and regional identities have had on global geo-politics and perceptions of self.

For many young nation-states this shared cultural heritage can often be difficult to pinpoint. As is the case with Australia, it is for the most part non-existent with the exception of the Gallipoli campaign. This is not to claim that cultural history is not prevalent in the minds of every Australian, but rather to argue that a shared and collective cultural history is absent. Instead Australia, through policy and both public and private funding, collectively built its identity around fabricated symbols. The Sydney Harbor Bridge; the racing yacht *Australia II*, winner of the World Cup in 1983; the kangaroo and the emu; a slouch hat; the Southern Cross and many other icons became cornerstones of Australian identity. Connected to each of these symbols, in some ways overtly and in others more opaquely, is the image of the Australian body: a white, masculine, heterosexual man. As Lisa Featherstone notes, it is not merely the imagery of the figure that remains significant, but also its inherent utility, allowing for the "physical and mental conquest of the land."[7] This connection with, and mastery of, the land further promotes notions of white colonialism, and excludes immigrants who migrated after early European settlement.

The Australian body and those who possess it are known by many names such as, stockman, bushranger, digger, larrikin, drover, and although they differ in temperament and personality, they imagery remains steadfast. However, as Neil Rattigan notes, this image is of a "largely mythical creature," and as such is not representative of a true or modern Australia.[8] Although these figures at times can be considered plucked from a bygone era, their characteristics are embodied in another group of people inherently tied with modern Australian identity, sports people and specifically sportsmen. While sport and its influence both on and from Australian national identity is beyond the scope of this paper, the essential physicality of sportsmen cannot be overlooked, nor can the power of sport in the process of nation building.

The Emerging Body: 1970-1990

Although this paper is focused on films released in, or at least very close to, the 1980s, given the long run up to cultural change, it would be remiss not to examine 1970s Australia. 1972 saw the election of Labor Party leader Gough Whitman to the position of Prime Minister, the first non-conservative in the position in 23 years. The Whitlam Government, with its socially progressive agenda, was ousted in late 1975 following the now infamous constitutional crisis. This short-lived tenure however was not without substantial policy change, with the abolition of conscription, the removal of the racist White Australia policy, and the establishment of nation-wide universal healthcare. The Whitlam government also brought about significant cultural change including petitioning to introduce of Advance Australia Fair to replace God Save the Queen as national anthem, the reestablishment of relations with China, and the foundation of the Order of Australia in place of the traditional British Honours system. Whitlam also led the creation of the Australian Film and Television School in 1973, and Australian Film Commission in 1975, ushering in what is now known as "Australian Film Renaissance."[9] Many of these objectives were made possible through the rise and active advancement of a "new nationalism" which saw the shedding of traditional British colonial ties in favor for a uniquely independent Australian image. As has been discussed, this image of the typical Australian form was not representative of a modern Australia and its population at the time, nor is it now.[10]

With the groundwork laid for the advancement of the Australian body the symbol of Australianness, the 1980s saw the exportation of this symbol to the wider world and a "cultural nationalist-boom" within Australian borders.[11] Beyond the export of the Australian body through film in the 1980s, Australia was yet again thrust into an era of heightened contradiction. Calls for an Australian republic and the removal of the Queen as head of state by recently elected Prime Minister Bob Hawke were halted with the 1983 Royal Tour. Later that year Australians regardless of class or wealth celebrated an Australian boat funded by an eccentric millionaire for winning a yacht race for the first time in its 132-year history. Five years later Australians stood ideologically split in either their celebration of, or opposition to, the bicentenary of the landing of the First Fleet at Botany Bay, marking the first permanent British settlement of the country. Despite the apparent confrontation and divisiveness in the nation, the films produced in this period promoted a singular Eurocentric identity, an identity Peter Kunze notes promoted "andronationalism," the often unconscious conflation of masculinist and nationalist interest so as to rally support behind a nation ideologically dominated by patriarchal authority.[12]

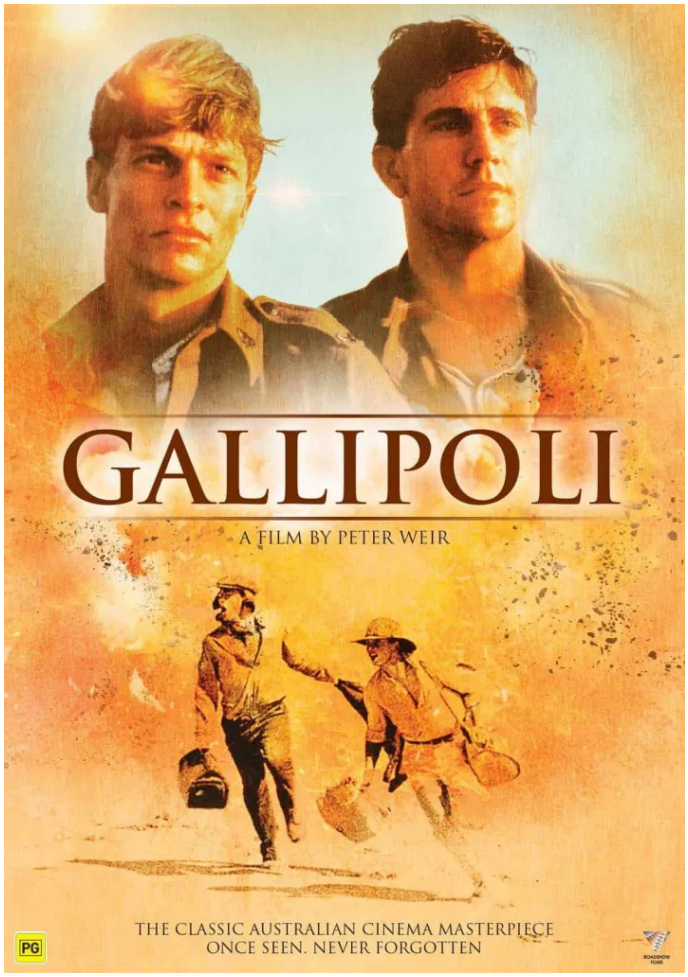
The role of cinema in both the reflection and reinforcement of collective ideology or mood within a society has been well established. However as is the case with Australia during the time in question, the reflection was not of a contemporary society, but rather that of an imagined history. The imagery of Australian identity as represented in the Australian body was although newly resurfaced, a product of strong historical ties, specifically to rural working men in the nineteenth century. Much of this imagery was grounded in unique Australian landscape. Unlike European romantic nationalism which had developed in previous decades, Australian writers and artists viewed their relationship with the land as far more

combative. Sue Beeton notes that Australia did not meet the "benign requirements of such an idyllic image" as was the case in Europe of the Unites States, and rather the Australian connection with the land came from hardship, pain, and danger.[13] Later imagery would reflect white conquest and taming of such landscape, often coated in racist undertones towards indigenous peoples. Communal defiance of the landscape fostered another significant component of perceived Australian national identity, mateship. Of national characteristics, mateship is perhaps the most overtly exclusionary in its inherent masculinity and gender marginalisation.[14] As will be examined further in relation to *Gallipoli* and its representation of mateship in conjunction with the Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) mythology, this component of national character lends itself closely with national unity and emotional closeness while remaining fundamentally heterosexual.[15] This foundation of the national body in the nineteenth century highlights that not only is it dated today, but it was already dated when resurfaced in the 1970s. As such, it was never in its conception forged to be truly representative of a contemporary Australian then, and certainly not now.

Gallipoli

Many a modern Western nation-state utilizes a shared historical struggle as the bedrock of their national identity. For Australia, the Gallipoli campaign during the First World War serves such a function. Stephen Alomes and Catherine Jones explain, "perhaps no event more influenced the character and development of Australian nationalism than the Great War."[16] The Gallipoli campaign and the unique experience of Australian and New Zealand soldiers in the battles against the Ottoman Empire has often been described as the seminal event in which both nations lost their innocence. With approximately eight thousand Australians dying as a result of the botched landing at Gallipoli, Australians found their common sacrifice, and the Anzac legend was born. Today both Australians and New Zealanders commemorate the landing each year as the main day of remembrance in their calendars.

Released in 1981 Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* follows the journey of two Australian men, Archy Hamilton (Mark Lee) and Frank Dunne (Mel Gibson) from Western Australia to the steep cliffs of the Dardanelles during the First World War. Hamilton, a young stockman with a deep desire to join the Australian Light Horse—the revered Australian Imperial Force Division—first meets Dunne at a local athletics event where the two face off in a sprint. Following Hamilton's win over Dunne, the two reconnect by chance at a nearby tearoom, where they agree to travel to Perth together so that Hamilton can again try to enlist after previously being rejected due to being underage. After poor travel planning and a long walk through the desert, the pair join the army, Hamilton with the Light Horse and Dunne along with three friends, Billy, Barney, and Snowy, with the infantry. The pair again meet while training in Cairo with their respective units, and successfully petition for Dunne's transfer to the Light Horse given the decision not to travel with horses and his history as a competitive



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athlete. Hamilton and Dunne travel to Gallipoli together where they are thrust into uphill trench warfare. With poor leadership and communication, Hamilton is involved in a charge against the enemy position, during which he is gunned down running without a weapon towards enemy machine gun fire.

Much can be examined in both the 1915 Gallipoli campaign and the 1981 film of the same name. For the purpose of this conversation on the Australian body, four major themes are of relevance, mateship, athleticism, whiteness, and youth. Of note is that Weir in his recreation of the Anzac legend not only reflects these themes but actively "promotes them" as components of national identity.[17] This representation of Australian identity in the form of two young male bodies goes beyond simple pro-Australian sentiment, to blatant nationalism. For the most part this nationalism is represented in anti-British and anti-Ottoman sentiment representing anti-authoritarian and xenophobic characteristics of Australianness. As James Bennett notes, the film, rather than serving as a recounting of true history serves as a "radical nationalist interpretation of events."[18]

As one of the film's seminal themes, mateship

serves as the backbone to Weir's representation of the Anzac myth's foundation. Mateship, in line with other gendered notions of togetherness such as comradery and fraternity, is rooted in stronger and deeper ties that go beyond friendship. As is the case with Australia, these deeply entrenched ties are little more than imagined, however are perceived to be forged in spaces absent of women, namely the bush and at war. Mateship in *Gallipoli* comes in a handful of relationships presented. Hamilton and Dunne are connected through their passion of sport and a desire to serve their country although for different reasons. Dunne, Billy, Barney, and Snowy are connected through labor, larrikinism, and apparent irreverence.[19] And finally, Major Barton and his men are connected when commands send them towards sure defeat. Notably, all of these relationships are between white men all of whom are connected through their identity as Australians.

Hamilton and Dunne although inherently connected through their national identity, first find friendship through their shared passion for sport. However, sport and athleticism in the film extends beyond a simple plot point to a major theme and in turn serves as a cornerstone of national identity. While initially reluctant to join the war, Dunne is confronted by Hamilton asserting that it is his responsibility to enlist "because you're an athlete."[20] It is through this athleticism that Australians are shown to literally embody their nationalistic sentiment, in that they are bound to act for their country. Australian athleticism is shown in stark contrast to the British who, when during the final charge of the film are described, although historically inaccurately, as "sitting on the beach drinking cups of tea," while Australians are presented sprinting towards enemy lines.[21] Hamilton's admiration for fictional World Champion Harry Lascelles, a sprinter, whose name he borrows to enlist, further develops the Australian idolization of successful athleticism, and enforces the notion that it is not only physicality, but also utility of the body which is notably Australian. This understanding of Australians as a sport fanatic people sits at the forefront of national consciousness today. To not be athletic, or at very least be interested in athleticism through sport, would be considered by many modern Australians to be "un-Australian." Such an understanding of national character is a key through line in Weir's depiction of Gallipoli and the Australian body present.

As has been discussed, *Gallipoli* excludes women from its presentation of the Australian foundational myth, both in its depiction of mateship and of masculinity in the form of male athleticism. The film also actively depicts the heroic Australian as being solely white, at the exclusion of all other races. Unlike the case with other national identities that are often grounded in ideology, Australia is grounded in the white man's body as is presented in *Gallipoli*. Such a difference allows a fundamental contradiction between character and image. With that being said, it is impossible for all peoples within a nation to identify with the latter. The resurgence of a white national identity in the film ran counter to contemporary Australian social policy, with the dismantling of the White Australia Policy, progress in the Aboriginal reconciliation movement, and influx of immigrants from both Mediterranean Europe and Asia. Weir notably looked to the far colonial past rather than the present or future in his constriction of the Australian image.

The final major theme in *Gallipoli* as it related to the Australian body is youth. Unlike underlying themes presented in the film, youth is actively addressed and celebrated. Hamilton, who is younger than the enlisting age of 21, lies to join the war, and the naivety of Billy, Barney, and Snowy is at the forefront of their larrikinism and irreverence. However, it is through the relationship with the British that notions of Australian youth are reinforced. Barney Ronay and Oliver Laughland in writing about the heated Australian and English cricket rivalry, explain the relationship as, "Australia has often looked to portray itself as a youthful, sunlit kind of place, freed from the lingering, pigeon-chested hierarchical neuroses of the old country."[22] This tense relationship is most present in the final moments of the film in which young Australian soldiers are sent to their deaths by British-sounding officers. In writing about the scene in question, Mark Connolly notes, "brave Australian soldiers were martyred by arrogant, inefficient British generals."[23] Although not problematic on the surface, the connection of national identity with youth discounts much of the long history of Australian indigenous people. Although the nation-state itself is relatively young, the embodiment of the national culture as old is discounted in the protagonists of *Gallipoli* and replaced with a whitewashed youthful alternative.

Crocodile Dundee

Of films considered "quintessentially Australian," perhaps none is so frequently mentioned in conversation as *Crocodile Dundee*. The 1986 comedy centres on protagonist and film namesake Mick Dundee (Paul Hogan) and his relationship with American journalist Sue Charlton (Linda Kozlowski). If *Gallipoli* served as the inspiration of the "modern" Australian body in film within Australia, *Crocodile Dundee* undoubtably exported it to the world. In this endeavour the film was by all accounts a resounding success, landing itself in the position as the highest grossing Australian film of all time. In his recent autobiography Paul Hogan highlights this success of the cultural penetration of Australian imagery worldwide. Hogan writes, "what I don't think any of us understood at the time was that *Dundee* would be the first exposure many people around the world would have to Australian culture . . . Suddenly *Dundee* was the image everyone associated with Australia."[24] However, the "culture" presented in the film was not and is still not representative of an Australian people, nor a contemporary culture. Rather it was little more than a crudely fabricated stereotype drawn from classic tropes of the Australian legend. Hogan in his role of Dundee exported two key bygone tropes of Australianness, notably aggressive heterosexuality and mastery over nature, both of which are actively embodied by Dundee. The film also aided in ushering in an era of nationalistic commodification of Australian identity in tourism, sport,

Deemed an international success at its release in 1986, *Crocodile Dundee* is a comedy starring Paul Hogan in the titular role and Linda Kozlowski as an American journalist and Dundee's love interest.

and exported products. Andrew Zielinski summarises how such an image is exclusionary in writing, "*Dundee* is now the archetype, full of all the stereotypical, superficial narrowing of identity."[25]

The film opens with the American journalist, Charlton, pitching her editor on an interview with hunter Dundee who is reported to have had a near death experience with a large saltwater crocodile. Charlton travels to Walkabout Creek in the Northern Territory where, after a series of untoward events in a local pub, the two are introduced by Dundee's friend Walter Reilly (John Meillon). The pair then travel together into the outback where they are confronted by a series of obstacles including poachers, a water buffalo, snakes, and of course a crocodile, all of which Dundee bests to Charlton's admiration. Dundee and Carlton's relationship develops, and the pair share a kiss before jetting to New York City. Although clearly an outsider in his new environment, Dundee once again overcomes all challenges, at first struggling with social and cultural norms of the city, conquering his unfamiliarity with a bidet, hitching a ride with a mounted policeman, and scaring away a mugger with his now iconic line "that's not a knife, this is a knife"[26] Following an engagement between Charlton and her editor, a disheartened Dundee looks to escape the city but is confronted by Charlton on a crowded subway station and professes her love for the Australian. The two ultimately kiss at the conclusion of the film once Charlton explains that she is calling off the engagement.

The first half of the film depicts Charlton, an American woman, thrust into an exclusively heterosexual male environment in outback Australia. The implication is that Australia itself and its national identity is inherently masculine and heterosexual in contrast to a feminized American outsider. Annie Dignan argues that such images "helped construct the outdoors as a male environment, but not just any male; rather a white, physically able, heterosexual male"[27] The "real" Australia as presented and subsequently exported in *Crocodile Dundee* is exclusively outdoors, especially in contrast with the highly urbanized New York City. This predominantly heterosexual notion of nationalism in a masculine environment is the result of a backward-looking search for identity to the nineteenth century in which men made up the vast majority of white people within Australian outback. This is not to say that homosexuality was not present in such an environment, but rather to highlight how homosexuality was only perceived as an act and never as an identity. This concept is reflected in *Crocodile Dundee* in which Dundee kisses another man in order to win a drinking game. Although the protagonist is engaging in non-heteronormative behaviour, he remains undeniably heterosexual. As such this representation of the Australian body excludes any identification with homosexuality and relegates it to an act in which heterosexual men may engage. Dundee's heterosexuality turns to ignorance and transphobia when introduced to a transgender woman at a New York party by Charlton. Dundee, clearly unable to comprehend the identity of transgender individual, proceeds to grope the woman to which Carlton asserts, "It's ok, he's Australian."[28]

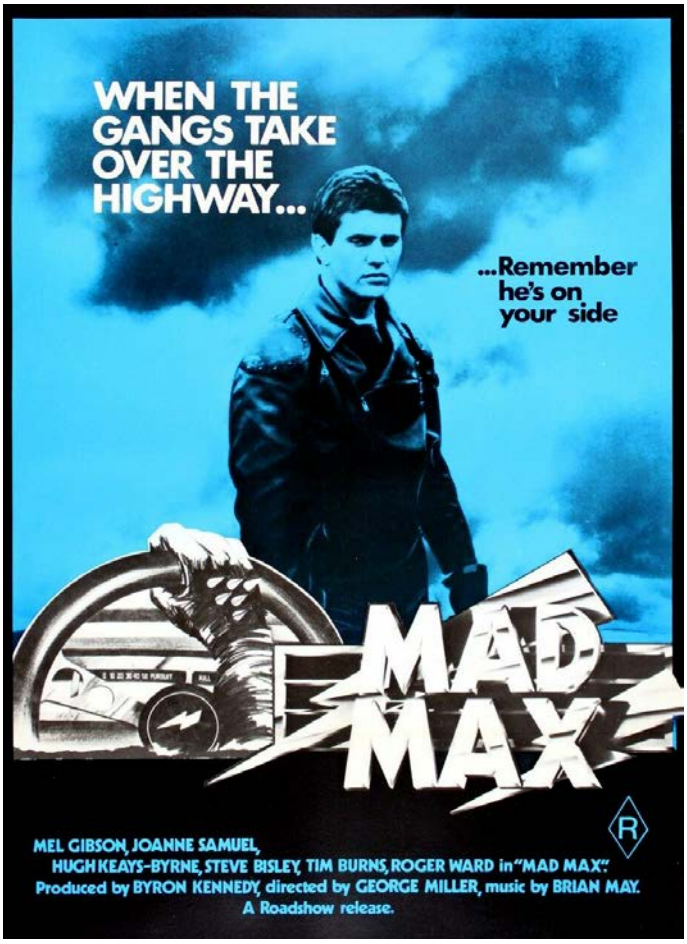
A cornerstone of *Crocodile Dundee* is Dundee's mastery over nature. The theme perpetuates both in his heroic masculinity over the bush and its wildlife in Australia, and in embracing new challenges in the alien environment of the urban jungle. This mastery is only possible through Dundee's unique ingenuity and ample athleticism. Anouk Lang highlights the ways in which "animals are the signifiers that allow Mick Dundee (Paul Hogan) to perform both masculinity and his Australian identity."[29] In environments devoid of animals, with the exception of those domesticated, the masculine dominance is displayed over a new "other," in this case Americans, and notably women. In the final scene of the film Dundee, unable to walk through a crowded subway platform towards Charlton, instead raises himself above the crowd and proceeds to walk atop the heads and shoulders of the bystanders. The scene is reminiscent of an Australian sheep dog mustering cattle, but in reality, shows an Australian icon literally walking above urban New York Americans. The scene embraces Australian masculinity as a defining feature of national identity in which Rose Lucas describes, "the man had control in every landscape he inhabits."[30] The film also explores the relationship which indigenous Australians have with

the land and with white Australians. In conversation with Charlton, Dundee claims "Aborigines don't own the land, they belong to it."[31] With Dundee's apparent mastery over the land, the implication is that he too, and for that matter all white men, have mastery over indigenous peoples. It is only through Dundee's white masculine body that mastery over land, animals, and other peoples is possible, and no other such body is able to achieve such an objective. This component of identity is racist, sexist, and not representative of modern Australian identity and yet still remains a key facet.

The commercialization of Australia by *Crocodile Dundee*, although not explicitly addressed in the themes of the film, cannot be understanded. The films commercial success led to two sequels *Crocodile Dundee II* and *Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles* released in 1988 and 2001 respectively, though neither reached the same level of success culturally or financially. Roger Ebert in his review of the first film noted that, "the movie feels curiously machine-made," in large part due to the fact that it was.[32] Australia and its rich cultural diversity were intentionally stripped down and a single stereotypical figure was used to appeal to wide global audiences. The commercialization of the Australian image in the film fell neatly into an era of Australian commercialization as a whole. Even today the film and it's dated tropes are still mined to sell Australia to the world. In a 2018 government backed advertising campaign, Tourism Australia placed a minute long trailer for a fictional reboot to the Dundee saga, this time the protagonist the American born son of Dundee (Danny McBride) returning to his cultural roots in the outback. The trailer knowingly joked at its own commercialization yet reinforced Australian identity in the image of a masculine white male Chris Hemsworth as a guide for McBride. What ultimately separates the depiction of Australianness in *Gallipoli* and *Crocodile Dundee* is the active selling of an Australian image to the wider world. Where *Gallipoli* looked to forge an image, *Crocodile Dundee* looked to profit off it.

Mad Max

Although released in 1979, *Mad Max* fits comfortably into an era of Australian New Wave cinema which dominated Australian popular culture in the 1980s. Privately funded on a low budget and yet far exceeding box office expectations, the film is often credited as a key player in the of future late twentieth century Australian cinema by renewing confidence in Australian filmmaking which had deteriorated in the post-World War II period. The cult classic, that would go on to produce three other films in its franchise, differs from the *Gallipoli* and *Crocodile Dundee* in that the protagonist is not himself explicitly Australian nor is the setting overtly Australian. Notably the film was dubbed with American accents when initially released to United States audiences. Nevertheless, the themes of the film offer insight into the Australian zeitgeist and concepts of national identity present at the time. The protagonist, Max Rockatansky (Mel Gibson), as with the other protagonists explored, embodies uniquely Australian fabricated



Making its debut in 1979, George Miller's *Mad Max* is one of the most notable films in the New Wave era of Australian cinema. Starring Mel Gibson as Max Rockatansky, the film and its sequels were major influences in popular culture of the 1980s.

characteristics which he acts upon through the utility of a masculine form. Rockatansky however unlike Dundee, Dunne, and Hamilton, embraces the classic role of the solitary hero made famous through traditional westerns. Rockatansky is only able to become such a hero figure through his suffering and subsequent embrace of violence as a tool for revenge. Finally, the excessive use of cars and motorbikes in the film, and the personalization of each, embraces Australian notions of individualism, freedom, and dominance over nature.

Set "a few years" in the future, in an alternate dystopian Australian setting, *Mad Max* begins with a high speed car chase in which Crawford "Nightrider" Montazano a member of the Berserk Motorbike Gang flees pursuit from the Main Force Patrol (MFP) following Nightrider's murder of an officer. Rockatansky, another officer of the MFP (which serves as a quasi-police force) joins the chase and causes Nightrider to crash resulting in his death. The gang after retrieving Nightrider's casket from a rural train station wreak havoc on the town and rape a young couple attempting to flee. The attacker, Johnny the Boy is arrested by Rockatansky and Jim "Goose" Rains, but then is released as no witnesses appear to Johnny's hearing. As revenge for the arrest, the gang attack Goose who is badly

burnt in his vehicle before being placed in an intensive care unit. After seeing Goose's injuries, Rockatansky takes a leave of absence from the MFP and proceeds to travel with his wife and young child. The trio are tracked down by the gang who kill the wife and child. As an act of revenge, with no shortage of violence, Rockatansky hunts several members of the gang including Johnny and leader Toecutter. The film concludes with yet another explosion as Rockatansky drives away.

The majority of the film portrays Rockatansky as a family man filled with compassion and love for his family, with strong bonds of mateship between his fellow officers. On this depiction of Rockatansky Belinda Du Plooy explains, "Max is depicted as a faithful husband, caring lover, adoring father, with endearing, kind and mutually supportive relationships with his wife, his police partner, his supervisor and colleagues."[33] This first film in the Mad Max saga serves as an origin story for the character who has not yet been raised to the position of a folk hero. It is only through the loss of his family and friends, and his resentment for authority figures both in the MFP and the court system that the 'Mad' figure of Rockatansky is born. Dennis Barbour in his evaluation of Rockatansky notes that the character "seeks to break with all traditions of the past, attempting to define his own reality through a solo existence, avoiding all thought or human connections, reducing his existence to nothing more than mere survival."[34] By doing this he seeks to be emotionally detached and void of past pain. This emotional detachment is in line with notions of the Australian Legend as in the image of white labourers in the second half of the twentieth century. These figures existed exclusively in masculine spaces, similar to those presented on the road in *Mad Max*. At the start of the film, when surrounded by friends and family Rockatansky is an exceptionally talented police officer, by the end, with his loves and companions removed from his life, Rockatansky is reborn as an Australian heroic icon.

To fill the void left from the departure of love and compassion from Rockatansky' s life, violence serves as a notable replacement. Such violence, and the people who embrace its use has little place in a modern urban society. However as portrayed in *Mad Max* such an environment no longer exists. Instead what remains is little more than a soon to be chaotic wasteland, not dissimilar to early white representations of a uniquely Australian landscape. Rockatansky becomes a hero not just through his violent acts, but also due to his acts fitting comfortably into the landscape which he lives. As such the landscape forms a crucial component of his own and as an extension his Australian identity. Although Rockatansky is presented in a dystopian future environment, its apparent emptiness, lawlessness, and outright violence is representative of perceived notions of an Australian past. Rockatansky in part becomes a hero of this environment due to his attempted taming of it, no matter the means. Film historian Ffion Murphy describes this depiction as a conscious act of "colonising the land."[35] As these acts and the landscape they take part in relate to the body, there is no overstating the role that Rockatansky supports as a white masculine male. It is only though his body, and what it represents that such taming, or rather colonization can take place.

Claire McCarthy notes the ways in which *Mad Max* is presented as a quintessential Australian film however also argues that the depiction of dystopian Australia, "spoke to the global issues of fuel shortages and environmental disaster."[36] Although the film does, in limited capacity, address global issues such as the oil conflicts of the 1970s, the hero of the film, Rockatansky, does not. Rather he is singularly focused on his family and then following their murder, the revenge of his family. His new connection becomes his identity with his vehicle. The car serves in many ways as secondary character in the film who, when paired with Rockatansky, springs into life becoming an extension of the protagonist. It seems, in fact, to be a part of his own body, which allows him to "tame" the uncivilized environment he inhabits. Claire Corbett writes, "the most typical and potent element uniting this heterochrony is the role of the car."[37] Through the unity of Rockatansky and his vehicle, the protagonist's body becomes an undoubtable master of the land. Without it the land, and the antagonists who are themselves a part of the land, Rockatansky is left all together helpless.

Conclusion

Although the three films examined continue to have significant cultural influence on notions of Australian identity today, they represent but a small portion of films presenting similar archetypal Australian man during the new wave movement of Australian cinema. The already explored sequels to *Mad Max* and *Crocodile Dundee* along with *The Man from Snowy River* (1982), *Burk and Wills* (1985) and *The Lighthorsemen* (1987), among others all present imagery of the Australian body in line with Wards "Australian legend." However, in the 1990s filmmakers looked to present a truly new image that runs contradictory to that presented in the decades prior. More women, people of colour, and people of a variety of sexualities began to appear in Australian-made film, often in lead roles. Michelle Arrow on the shift notes, "increasingly, Australian cinema disavowed interest in presenting a single unified version of national identity that many filmmakers had eagerly pursued during the 1980s."[38] Notable films of this era included *The Adventures of Pricilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994), *Muriel's Wedding* (1994), and *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), all of which presented imagery of the Australian which ran in contrast to those that came before it. Australia had not altogether changed, but rather its representation in film had finally began to catch up and dispose of bygone tropes. Gary Simmons explains, "bush myths and legends were either subverted or ignored, as cultural diversity generated national fictions that privileged women, migrants, Indigenous culture and diverse sexualities which had previously been marginalized."[39] Yet many of these films from the post-new wave movement remain as cult classics and did little to penetrate notions of Australian identity.

On the first day of 2021, Australian Governor General David Hurley upon the recommendation of current Prime Minister Scott Morrison amended the Austra-

lian National Anthem. The slight amendment is the first since the song was adopted in 1984 and replaces the line "for we are young and free" with "for we are one and free." The change, hailed by many for its inclusive outlook in recognition of the long cultural history of indigenous Australians, reinforces notions of a singular Australian identity. This identity is inherently tied to unrepresentative imagery of contemporary Australia, that is a white male body in line with Ward's notion of the Australian Legend. Such a body was drawn from historical and foundational myths, however, came to the forefront of national and global consciousness during the era of New Wave Australian cinema. Although there has been clear action to undo the bygone imagery, these actions have done little to shift modern conceptions of the Australian. This critique of the Australia Legend and the body which it exemplifies is by no means new or ground-breaking. However constant critique of the unrepresentative imagery utilized by Ward is required as its mystique still perpetuates the vast majority of Australian culture to date. As Baron Alder writes, "he is in 2008, as he was in 1858 and in 1958."[40] As Australian values continue to be tied to physical facets presented through the Australian body, any notion of national unity will remain nationalistic, isolationist, and prejudiced. Values tied to the body cannot be truly representative, in that a single body cannot itself be truly representative.

Notes:

1. Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country: Australia in the Sixties* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1964), 17.
2. Richard White, *Inventing Australia* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin Australia, 1981), x.
3. Russell Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 1-2.
4. Baron Alder, "The 'Australian Legend' Fifty Years On," *Quadrant* 52, no. 9 (2008): 79.
5. Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 52.
6. Andreas Wimmer, "National Identity and Political Power," *Foreign Affairs*, 16 April 2018, viewed at: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-04-16/national-identity-and-political-power .
7. Lisa Featherstone, "Sex and the Australian Legend: Masculinity and the White Man's Body," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 10, no. 2 (2008): 73.
8. Neil Rattigan, *Images of Australia: 100 Films of the New Australian Cinema* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1991), 27.
9. Susan Barber, "The Australian Film Renaissance, 1970-86: An Ideological, Economic and Political Analysis" (PhD Dissertation, The University of Southern California, 1988), 1.
10. Anne Pender, "The Mythical Australian: Barry Humphries, Gough Whitlam and 'New Nationalism,'" *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 51, no. 1 (2005): 29.
11. Peter Mageros, "Anzac Cinema: The Heroic Depiction of Australia's Film Industry, 1906-1988" (PhD Thesis, The University of Sydney, 2016), 204.
12. Peter Kunza, "Out in the Outback: Queering Nationalism in Australian Film Comedy," *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 7, no. 1 (2014): 51.
13. Sue Beeton, "Rural Tourism in Australia — Has the Gaze Altered? Tracking Rural Images through Film and Tourism Promotion," *The International Journal of Tourism Research* 6, no. 3 (2004): 127.
14. "Mateship" is an Australian idiom used to describe "the bonds of loyalty and equality, and feelings of solidarity and fraternity that Australians, usually men, are typically alleged to exhibit." See: Nick Dyrenfurth, *Mateship: A Very Australian History* (Melbourne, Scribe Publications, 2015), 6.
15. Anzac is an acronym used to describe the troops at Gallipoli in World War I, and is also currently used in relation to Anzac Day, a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand for those who fought in all wars.
16. Stephen Alomes and Catherine Jones, *Australian Nationalism: A Documentary History* (North Ryde: Collins Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1991), 163.
17. Marek Haltof, "In Quest of Self-Identity: Gallipoli, Mateship, and the Construction of Australian National Identity," *The Journal of Popular Film and Television* 21, no. 1 (1993): 31.
18. James Bennett, "Breaking Out of the Nationalist/ic Paradigm: International Screen Texts on the 1915 Gallipoli Campaign," *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 28, no. 5 (2014): 640.
19. According to historian Melissa Belanta, "Australia has often been said to possess a 'larrikin streak.' Today, being a larrikin has positive connotations and we think of it as the key to unlocking the Australian identity: a bloke who refuses to stand on ceremony and is a bit of a scallywag. When it first emerged around 1870, however, 'larrikin' was a term of abuse, used to describe teenage working-class hell-raisers who populated dance halls and cheap theatres." Melissa Belanta, *Larrikins: A History* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2012), 4.
20. *Gallipoli*, directed by Peter Weir (Associated R&R Films, 1981).
21. Ibid.
22. Barney Ronay and Oliver Laughland, "Australia v. England: A History of a Great Rivalry," *The Guardian,* 6 July 2013.
23. Mark Connelly, "Gallipoli (1981): A Poignant Search for National Identity" In *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches,* ed. James Chapman, Mark Glancy, and Sue Harper (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK., 2007), 42.
24. Paul Hogan, *The Tap-Dancing Knife Thrower: My Life Without the Boring Bits* (Sydney: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2020), 222.
25. Andrew Zielinski, "Two Breakthrough Spaces: Crocodile Dundee and Picnic at Hanging Rock," *Screen Education*, no. 52 (2008):131.
26. *Crocodile Dundee,* directed by Peter Faiman (Rimfire Films, 1986).
27. Annie Dignan, "Outdoor Education and the Reinforcement of Hetrosexuality," *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education* 6, no. 2 (2002): 78.
28. *Crocodile Dundee,* directed by Peter Faiman.
29. Anouk Lang, "Troping the Masculine: Australian Animals, the Nation, and the Popular Imagination," *Antipodes* 24, no. 1 (2010): 6.
30. Rose Lucas, "Dragging it out: Tales of Masculinity in Australian Cinema, From Crocodile Dundee to Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, no. 56 (2009): 141.
31. *Crocodile Dundee,* directed by Peter Faiman.
32. Roger Ebert, "Crocodile Dundee," *RogerEbert.com, 26* September 1986; at: https://www.rogerebert.com/ reviews/crocodile-dundee-1986.
33. Belinda Du Plooy, "'Hope Is a Mistake, If You Can't Fix What's Broken You Go Insane': A Reading of Gender (s), Heroism and Redemption in Mad Max: Fury Road," *Journal of Gender Studies* 28, no. 4 (2019): 419.
34. Dennis H. Barbour, "Heroism and Redemption in the Mad Max Trilogy," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 27, no. 3 (2010): 30.
35. Ffion Murphy, "From Sand to Bitumen, From Bushrangers to 'Bogans': Mapping the Australian Road Movie," *Journal of Australian Studies* 25, no. 70 (2001): 78.
36. Claire McCarthy, "Adaptations Down Under: Reading National Identity Through the Lens of Adaptation," In *The Routledge Companion to Adaptation,* ed. Dennus Cutchins, Katja Krebs, and Eckart Voigts (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 226.
37. Claire Corbett, "Repetition Compulsion and Heterotopia in the Australian Post-Apocalypse: from 'Crabs' to *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*," *Science Fiction Film & Televisions* 10, no. 3 (2017): 340.
38. Michelle Arrow, *Friday on Our Minds: Popular Culture in Australia Since 1945* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 158.
39. Gary Simmons, "From the Bush to the Mall," *Australian Screen Education,* no. 33 (2003): 58.
40. Baron Alder, "The 'Australian Legend' Fifty Years On," *Quadrant* 52, no. 9 (2008): 78.