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The development of the discourses of mateship in Australia with special reference to the period 1885-1925.

Thesis submitted by

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in July 2003

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the school of Humanities
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Abstract

Mateship is widely considered to be an Australian convention that embodies egalitarianism in Australian culture. It is commonly thought of as a unitive convention that is most obvious in times of adversity. Yet while many Australians describe mateship thus, others call it a men's creed. These two opposing descriptions – egalitarian and masculinist – are difficult to reconcile, and give mateship a paradoxical nature that is difficult to explain. Most studies of mateship do not attempt to explain this paradox, and merely reproduce the assumption that that while mateship is a significant Australian convention, it is exclusive to men. This study differs from others in that here, mateship is defined as a discourse that has two major discursive forms: one inclusive and representative of the egalitarian component of mateship; and one exclusive and representative of the masculinist component of mateship. These discourses are traced to their origins in the period 1788-1850 as a re-reading of "the label of difference" that held the convict population subordinated to the upper class. The discourses of mateship evolved as the means of self-help that supported people in their quest to reverse the subjection by "difference" and thereby to survive and prosper. It is argued that exclusive mateship gained its ascendancy over inclusive mateship during the nineteenth century when mateship became a surrogate religion for many Australians. The mateship discourse melded with Christianity, and when it did, it caused mateship to be an inclusive discourse with a masculinist nature in the same way that Christianity is inclusive, though women are subordinated to males through its central masculine god. Exclusive mateship is shown to have consolidated its dominance over inclusive mateship during the period 1885-1925 with the assistance of the men's press, particularly The Bulletin under the editorial leadership of J. F. Archibald. Mateship, as it is commonly understood, is shown to be divided in itself, and while inclusive mateship is unitive, exclusive mateship is divisive. Exclusive mateship's divisiveness causes social problems, and its impact upon the lives of women is explored. It is argued that exclusive mateship is maintained in its dominant cultural position by reading practices which, over the years, have become dominant, making mateship appear to be a convention that is important to Australianness, but nonetheless restricted to men.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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                Signature   Date

Introduction

The argument

Mateship is undeniably an integral aspect of Australianness. In the first volume of the Federation edition of the Macquarie Dictionary, the Honourable Justice Michael Kirby described mateship as one of the four "virtues of the peculiar 'egalitarian' society which grew up [in Australia] in the wake of convict transportation" (viii). However, mateship is not so easily defined or understood because the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> are used so inconsistently that the concept of mateship is ambiguous. In literary representations mateship appears to have various meanings, some of which contradict each other and negate the notion of egalitarianism. The one certainty about mateship is that it is a continuity that traverses Australian history from penal days to the present. That scope is broad for one thesis but it is necessary to investigate literature in this timeframe to trace the development of the discourses of mateship in Australia. Special reference is made to the period 1885-1925 because most commentaries point to this period as being the time during which mateship became accepted as an integral component of national discourses. According to customary usage, mateship is generally accepted as a universal spirit that incorporates into concepts of Australianness sentiments like "a fair go for all" (egalitarianism) and "loyalty to one's mates" (fraternity). The sentiment of egalitarianism suggests that all Australians participate equally in mateship; but the concept of mateship as a loyal brotherhood negates egalitarian principles by excluding women's involvement, and it is as a men's creed that mateship is often represented, especially in influential historical works like Russel Ward's <u>The Australian Legend</u> (1958) and T. I. Moore's <u>Social Patterns in Australian Literature</u> (1971). Although it would seem obvious that mateship cannot be both universally Australian and exclusive to men, most mateship studies are based upon this assumption.

This study will present a new analysis of mateship that differs from existing studies in three ways. Firstly, mateship will be analyzed as a complex convention that has multiple meanings. Two of these meanings will be shown to be central: egalitarian mateship will be

categorized here as <u>inclusive</u> mateship; and the mateship limited to select men's groups will be categorized as <u>exclusive</u> mateship. Secondly, this study will contest the assumption that all men are automatically included in exclusive mateship and will argue that some men are excluded by exclusive mateship's restrictive version of masculinity. Thirdly, this study will argue that instead of mateship being the uniting spirit of egalitarianism that tradition would have us believe, that uniting spirit only applies to one form of mateship, inclusive mateship, while the exclusive form of mateship has in fact been a divisive influence on relations between Australian women and men. Both representations of mateship are readily identifiable in Australian literature and society, and it will be argued that while the two forms coexist, one dominates the other causing cultural confusion and social divisiveness.

It will further be argued that the exclusive form of mateship is a patriarchal discourse that endeavours to advantage males in society by institutionalizing in culture those power relations that favour the masculine. Participating in the masculine is, however, as David Buchbinder suggests, neither the right nor the privilege of all men (120). It will be shown that exclusive mateship not only subordinates the feminine, it also subordinates those men who are excluded from it. The divisiveness that exclusive mateship initiates is thus doubly potent in that while mateship appears to be a uniting spirit, it is only unitive in its inclusive form; the exclusive form of mateship is discriminatory and divisive.

In order to separate mateship into its two forms, inclusive and exclusive, this study will argue that mateship should be understood as a discourse; and that inclusive and exclusive mateship are related but distinct discourses, which differ on the basis of who is empowered by each. Inclusive mateship has no selection parameters and therefore offers membership and access to power to everyone. In contradiction to this, exclusive mateship only admits a select group of men, and only continues to accept them as long as they obey its strict codes of group loyalty. Inclusive mateship is empowering without being selective, while exclusive mateship is empowering on the basis of selectivity.

It will be argued that the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses shared origins but diverged in their historical development. That development will be traced from the pre-

Australian meanings for the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> to the meanings that were, and still are, applied to the words in Australian English. This comparison of pre-Australian and Australian usage will show that the words changed in meaning and significance in Australian culture in two ways: they acquired gender; and they attained special significance. Firstly, pre-Australian usage of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> showed common gender; that is neither of the words was associated with the masculine or the feminine. In such usage <u>mate</u> could refer to a male or a female, and <u>mateship</u> could describe relations between men or women or among women and men. Natural gender, the correlation of nouns "in part with sex" (<u>Macquarie Dictionary</u> 3rd ed. 882) was added to the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> in Australian English. The gender applied to the words was masculine and it has dominated the words' usage ever since. Secondly, pre-Australian usage does not add any significance to the word <u>mateship</u>; that is the word had a common meaning like the word <u>friendship</u> and it did not have the special, quasi-spiritual dimension that it acquired in Australian English. Sidney J. Baker, for example, claims that in Australian English <u>mateship</u> gained spiritual significance and became "a state of mind" that was peculiarly Australian (<u>Australian</u> 109). In Australian English <u>mateship</u> conveyed a sense of what Baker claims was "a basic article of Australian faith", an instinctive sense that issued as a survival measure in a moment of need (<u>Australian</u> 109).

This study will argue that the impetus for the development of the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses lies in the context of the social upheaval of colonial life, and that the change in the usage of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> in colonial Australia reflects the altered meanings of the words. The beginning of the mateship discourses will be explained as a re-reading of "the label of difference" by which prisoners were kept separated, and classes were kept distinct in colonial society. This re-reading of "difference" was necessary if colonials were to become sufficiently empowered to make the settlement succeed. According to Patrick O'Farrell, for example, such positive thinking was vital to the evolution of the Australian nation from the "very unpromising beginnings" of a penal colony, and it need not have happened except for the colonials themselves (9). Re-reading "difference" elicited survival responses from colonial residents. One such response was to recognise that everyone was equal against the backdrop of colonial newness, and that

people had to unite as equals to overcome hardship. This egalitarian sentiment gave rise to the inclusive mateship discourse. Another re-reading of "difference" that shared inclusive mateship's concept of collectivist loyalty and the union of strangers was, however, patriarchal in intent. It gave rise to the exclusive mateship discourse which, by its constitution of a loyal fraternal network, empowered otherwise powerless men (prisoners) against their keepers (authority) in the framework of colonial society.

This study agrees, as others do, that mateship is generally dominated by the assumption that it is a men's creed. Unlike other studies however, that assumption is challenged, and an explanation about how exclusive mateship gained dominance as the understanding of mateship in Australian culture is offered. It is argued that the confusion of the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses and the subsequent ascendancy of the exclusive mateship discourse occurred during Australia's first century when mateship became a surrogate religion for many people. Discourses can meld and influence each other even as they remain separate and oppose each other, so when patriarchal-based Christianity melded with mateship, it remained potentially inclusive but began to be described in masculinist terms.

This masculinist definition of mateship was consolidated during the period 1885-1925 when exclusive mateship became entrenched in national discourses. Reasons why exclusive mateship remains the dominant understanding of the convention in contemporary culture in spite of the evidence that shows mateship can be inclusive are explored. It is argued that the ascendancy of this masculinist meaning of mateship was aided by reading practices which promoted the mainly men's writing that developed such ideas, and ignored or selectively misread men's and women's writing that suggested otherwise. Such reading practices have embedded preferred readings of mateship in culture, and these are now established ways of thinking that condition the way people think about, and respond to, mateship.

The inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses will be shown to be distinct discourses within literary representations of mateship. Narrative portrayals of inclusive and

exclusive mateship will be examined to explain the difference between the two, and to demonstrate how each discourse operates within Australian society.

Definition of terms

This thesis is a re-reading of what is commonly accepted as the traditional definition of Australian mateship. The term <u>re-reading</u> here means constructing an oppositional or resistant reading to what is broadly accepted, and, as in the case of mateship, what is commonly endorsed by tradition, myth and influential representations of history.

Past studies have referred to mateship in its social context as an ethos, a creed, a concept, a spirit or a religion; but since each of these terms already has fixed meanings with regards to mateship, mateship will be referred to here in its social context as a convention; that is as "[a] textual or social practice shared by members of a culture or subculture" (O'Sullivan 64). According to the <u>Macquarie Dictionary</u>, a creed is "any system of belief or of opinion" (3rd ed. 511) and this is at variance with mateship's being defined in the present study as a convention. <u>Creed</u> can, however, apply to exclusive mateship in the sense that this discourse has strict codes of behaviour based on masculinist beliefs; so throughout this study, exclusive mateship is referred to as an exclusive men's creed wherever it is needed to clarify meaning. Where past studies have used any of the definitions given above to describe mateship, their descriptions have been used when discussing their work so that their intent is not changed.

In its cultural context, as distinct from its social context, mateship is defined here as a discourse. Discourse, according to Michel Foucault's definition, is "a certain rhetorical strategy that aims to extend the power or authority of one social group over another" (Sturrock 67). According to Foucault, the world of discourse is fluid, with a multiplicity of discursive elements in circulation at any given moment because discourses are not static. They "are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations" (Foucault, <u>Sex 1</u> 101-2). Using Foucault's description of discourse to describe mateship, it will be suggested that the discursive elements "come into play in various strategies" of power and

knowledge (Sex 1 100). One of these strategies is to empower all people through an inclusive sense of mateship expressed in an instance of union. Another strategy of empowerment through mateship applies to some men's groups. The sense of union is present in this latter form of mateship, but it is expressed as the union of men against a common threat, be it women, authority or the environment. The first form defined here is the inclusive mateship discourse while the latter is the exclusive mateship discourse.

It should be made clear that the usage of the terms inclusive and exclusive mateship in this thesis differs substantially from T. I. Moore's use of those terms. Moore uses the terms to describe what he calls the "two broad ecological types" that constitute the "special concept of mateship" that is specific to men (206-7). It is Moore's opinion that the universal spirit of Australian mateship is essentially a bond that operates among men, and so he uses the terms inclusive and exclusive to differentiate two expressions of men's mateship rather than, as this thesis attempts, to explain how mateship can be simultaneously inclusive and exclusive of women and some men.

In explaining the origins of the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses in Australian culture, the term re-reading difference will be used. The social and cultural implications of the term difference are those contained in Luce Irigaray's contention that "difference" or "dissimilarity" is used as the rationale for discrimination against a given group or individual, and for subordinating that group or individual in relations of power (Je 46). According to patriarchal ideology, for example, women are rendered different from men by biological determinants, and this "difference" means that women are inferior to men (Je 46). According to this ideology, women cannot access power because biological man is fixed as the measure of acceptance. Those who are deemed to be "different" suffer the stigma of differing from the norm as well as a humiliating rejection for not being the "same". They become the marginalised or silenced "others" in the binary opposition that links the accepted/rejected in relations of power/powerlessness. For clarity, whenever the words difference or different are used in the context thus described, they will be distinguished by quotation marks.

Social exclusion by the measure of "difference" from a given cultural norm produces a reduction in individual and group power. According to Foucault there is a desire to preserve the continuities that sanction social norms (<u>Archaeology</u> 12). He argues that part of the preservation of origins, traditions and knowledge is a reluctance to conceive "difference" because it disrupts the "privileged shelter for the sovereignty of consciousness" that protects the order of the same (<u>Archaeology</u> 12). In accordance with this argument, the term <u>difference</u> – written as "difference" – is used here to mean that being declared "different" from a society's cultural norms leads to exclusion from a secure position within that society. The term <u>rejection of the label of difference</u> means developing a resistant reading of the norms and assumptions that constitute the positions of "accepted" and "other" in society. For clarity, the term <u>the label of difference</u> will be distinguished by quotation marks. Mateship's origins will be traced to a re-reading of what "the label of difference" meant as colonials began to compare themselves positively against English cultural norms.

Why I wrote this thesis

The idea for this thesis originated when I noticed that although the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> were commonly used, they were applied with different and often contradictory meanings. There was also a pronounced difference between the way in which male and female Australian writers represented mates and mateship in their writing. Although this trend was not universal, women generally depicted an inclusive style of mateship in which the word <u>mate</u> was used in the sense of a partner. For instance, Mary Hamilton in Ada Cambridge's <u>A Girl's Ideal</u> (serialised in <u>The Age</u> in 1881 and not reprinted), spoke of a woman's mate as being a man she chose only once in life: "A woman can have but one true mate" (226). The way in which Desmond Byrne (1896) echoed this sense of mate in his review of Cambridge's work – in particular in his discussion of Cambridge's <u>A Marked Man: Some Episodes in His Life</u> (1891) – suggests that her application of the word <u>mate</u> was in keeping with the usage current at the time (140).

In contrast to this inclusive representation of mateship in women's writing, male writers most commonly portrayed mateship as the discriminative exclusive mateship. A good example of men's portrayal of mateship is Henry Lawson's story "Mateship" (1907). To emphasise mateship as exclusively masculine bonding, Lawson uses a telling comparison of the different connotations of the words friend, chum, partner, pal and mate. According to this comparison, a friend, chum, partner or pal would fail a test of trust; but not so a mate like the mates, Bob and Jim, of Lawson's story. When their friendship is tested the narrative depicts their mateship as holding fast. Such mateship apparently transcends understanding, and has a significance beyond the limits of friendship between chums, pals and so on (males implied):

> A friend or chum might have shunned Bob after that; a partner might have at least asked what he had been in trouble for; "a pal" would certainly have done so out of curiosity, and probably with rising admiration. But mateship didn't. (327)

According to Lawson, this "faith" among Australian men, as he calls it (327), is an instinctive bonding, and as such it is a reflection of the male bonding found in other cultures and in history. To prove his point, Lawson cites references to Americans, Alaskans, English (through Charles Dickens's characters) and to the "Samaritan who journeyed down to Jericho one time" (324).

The difference between the inclusive and exclusive representations of mateship is clear and consistent, and it remains so in the twenty-first century, as is evident in two recent newspaper articles. The first, which reports the horrific canyoning accident at Saxeton in Switzerland, appeared in <u>The Courier Mail</u> and <u>The Daily Mercury</u> in July 1999, depicts exclusive mateship. The second, which appeared in <u>The Courier Mail</u> on 29 August 2001, describes inclusive mateship between Australian swimmer Susie O'Neil and American swimmer Mary T. Meagher.

At the time of the first article, the word <u>mate</u> was splashed liberally throughout Australian newspapers. The young victims were women and men who were described as being on thrill-seeking adventures. However, in the reports, only the men are described as "best mates" and "good mates" (Robson 1; Sleeman 1). This exclusive usage of the word

<u>mate</u> associates men and mateship with courageous risk-taking, but it excludes the women from the "glorious image" of bravely facing danger. It confirms masculine appropriation of mateship by excluding the women even though they were involved on an equal basis in the event.

In contrast to this representation of exclusive mateship, the second article, "American sweetheart tumble-turns rivalry into mateship" (Smith 8), uses the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> according to the inclusive meaning of mateship that is peculiarly Australian. The report linked American ex-Olympian Mary T. Meagher and Australian swimming "darling", Susie O'Neill, in "mateship" because of Meagher's mate-like reaction in recognising O'Neill's swimming prowess. Meagher, once affectionately known as "Madame Butterfly" for the world record she held in that swimming stroke, was described as graciously conferring her title upon O'Neill when the Australian set a new record. According to <u>The Courier Mail</u>, this act "endeared her [Meagher] to Australians", hence the "honour" of inclusion in Australian mateship (Smith 8).

Why I argue for a re-reading of mateship

Representations of inclusive and exclusive mateship show that the two discourses have coexisted in Australian culture, but in spite of this, since the 1890s, mateship has mostly been regarded as a men's creed, and until a change in usage in the 1990s, inclusive mateship has been largely ignored, and its egalitarian spirit has instead been associated with male friendship and with exclusive mateship. Before that relatively recent change, the word <u>mate</u> was routinely associated with men, as for example in <u>The Sydney Morning Herald</u>'s article "Man's Best Friend" (1990), which conveys the sense of male-dominated mateship in its lead paragraph:

> How do you define that peculiarly Australian male bond called mateship? Here, five sets of blokes tell photographer Ponch Hawkes why they're best mates. (Pettitt and Wright 31).

Defining girls as mates, however, as <u>The Courier Mail</u> did in August 2002 when it reported that Sue Seymour separated from "all her mates" in Mackay so that the family could move to Brisbane to support football star brother, Brett, would have been rarely if indeed ever

published a decade earlier (Kent 2). This developing recognition of mateship in both its inclusive and exclusive forms is reflected in the changing definitions for the term mateship found in the three editions of the Macquarie Dictionary published between 1985 and 1997. In the first and second editions, the informal usage of mate is listed as "(a form of address amongst men): how are you going, mate?" (1st ed. 1062; 2nd ed. 1097). The third edition lists an informal usage of the word mate, but without the reference "amongst men" (1329), thus showing that mateship is now at least sometimes understood as inclusive. To this latter definition is added an entry which indicates that the exclusive interpretation of the word mate is part of a past discourse which is no longer reflective of common usage: "(formerly) one of two men who helped each other without formal agreement in usually hard tasks as fencing, land clearing, goldmining, etc." (3rd 1329). Even though this official record of the change in usage of the word mate and in the meaning of mateship recognises that mateship is an inclusive convention, it does not alter the fact that in the past, mateship was commonly regarded as an exclusively masculine creed, and that this male gendering of mateship's meaning contributed to a strong masculine influence on Australian culture through mateship's status as an essential quality of Australianness.

The exclusively masculine connotation of the words mate and mateship is the dominant understanding of mateship in traditional thinking, as influential cultural studies like Ward's and Moore's demonstrate and, according to Buchbinder, the cultural conditioning that has resulted from the "strong male-to-male affinity of mateship as a feature of Australian culture" has become a highly effective subliminal influence on cultural reproduction (116). The word mate has such a "strong male-orientated character" that even if women in contemporary times use it, they "must 'think man' socially or professionally" (Buchbinder 132). Mateship thus remains an ambiguous term in its Australian context.

This ambiguity was nowhere more evident than in the public debate that took place in March 1999 when Prime Minister John Howard tried to include the word mateship in the preamble that he wanted to add to Australia's constitution. The furore that ensued in the media showed that mateship remains contentious yet important to Australians. One main

point of the debate was that while the preamble was supposed to represent Australianness, the word <u>mateship</u> was thought by men and women alike to denote exclusivity, misogyny and even xenophobia. The debate showed that even though mateship is acknowledged as a cultural icon, it is not universally regarded as an inclusive convention. The arguments raised in the debate demonstrated the complexity of mateship's representation in Australian culture, and the uncertainty that surrounds its meanings. The fact that the debate occurred at all suggests that it is time to stop thinking of mateship as an exclusively masculinist creed that somehow represents all Australians, and recognise that the two contradictory meanings inherent in the traditional application of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> indicate that there are two major forms of mateship: one which is inclusive and represents all Australians; and one which is exclusively masculine and represents a select group of males.

The proposal here is therefore to investigate mateship as two distinctly different discourses that are related as much by their origin in Australian society as by their prominence in national discourses and by their opposition to each other. I will argue that mateship's complexity has been compounded by the confusion of inclusive principles with an exclusive practice. I will endeavour to demonstrate that mateship is primarily an inclusive concept, and that exclusive mateship is merely one selective application, and I will argue that challenging the commonly held beliefs about mateship opens up different readings of the convention.

This study will, then, offer a re-reading of mateship that acknowledges both women's and men's contributions to the development of this distinctive Australian convention. It will also provide a new approach to reading literary representations of mateship. While this will establish that both women and men contributed to the inclusive spirit of mateship, it will also suggest new understandings of literary representations of the past. This re-reading of mateship will unsettle the construction of mates and mateship that has been used to constitute national identity.

A single example here will illustrate how this re-reading will be employed, and also how the practice will open up a new understanding of, in this case, a well-known poem of

Henry Lawson's. Reading Henry Lawson's "The Glass on the Bar" (1890) using first the inclusive representation of mateship, and then the exclusive representation, will produce two different meanings emerging from the poem's portrayal of mateship: the meaning read through exclusive mateship will show the glory of mateship's union of men; while the meaning read through inclusive mateship will show that the former interpretation negates individualism and individual men's efforts.

The central image in the poem is the immortalised persona of a male mate. This is enacted through the symbolic placement of a dead man's beer glass (on which he had etched his name) "ever polished and clean" on the shelf beside the clock (95). The mate (represented by the beer glass) thus takes pride of place throughout time (the clock). This creates an impression of everlasting honour for a man who did something for others, if the poem is read through the inclusive meaning of mateship. But if the exclusive meaning of mateship is applied to the reading, then it must be added that the honouring of mateship is not for the dead man, because he does not feature as an individual. Rather, the dead man is made into an anonymous being whose life and humanity are subordinated to mateship. It is the aura of a collective men's mateship that is enshrined in the unused glass, not the dead bushman as an individual. The hotel patrons, who did not know "Harry the bushman", do not pay tribute to the man they never knew, they revere instead the power of the mateship that keeps the glass positioned in the isolation that is used in the poem to suggest a place of honour. One outcome of this act of subsuming all of the male drinkers into a collective men's mateship is that it locks the men into an anonymous stereotype, and bars them from being represented as individuals. It is therefore just as effective in blocking men's distinct, individual contributions to the spirit of mateship as it is in blocking women's input into the convention by excluding them from mateship.

This thesis will not offer such dual readings of every text discussed because that would be beyond the objective of tracing the development of the mateship discourses. What will be offered are readings from a wide selection of fictional and non-fictional literature to show that some texts specifically reproduce the inclusive mateship discourse

while others reproduce the exclusive mateship discourse. Such readings provide a better understanding of men's and women's contributions to Australian mateship.

Situating the study

As has already been indicated, this study differs from earlier analyses of Australian mateship, and although it is not possible to examine all such studies, a representative range has been selected from both well-known and lesser-known writers. The studies included are those that contribute to the understanding of the two main mateship meanings: egalitarian (inclusive) and masculinist (exclusive); and they have been grouped into four main approaches according to their positions in the debate about defining mateship.

The first group of studies defines mateship as a men's creed. The reading of mateship in these texts produces knowledge about men and their contribution to Australian culture and society. In this approach, women are excluded from men's mateship because of the assumption that women have no place in this singularly masculine bond. The second group of writers confirms this position and advances the notion that men's mateship is a significant component of national discourses. The knowledge produced from these readings of mateship is that women, who had no part in mateship, did not contribute to national discourses (like national identity). However, even though the writers in this section use the noun <u>men</u> as if it includes all men, their comments make it clear that those men who do not fit the sanctioned style of masculinity are, like women, excluded from an influential cultural position. The third group of writers accepts both that mateship is a men's creed, and that it has become an influential aspect in Australian culture; but they argue that mateship has had a detrimental impact upon Australian society because it separates women and men. The fourth group of writers acknowledges that mateship is considered to be a men's creed, but argues that the convention is more than a fraternity of males. They see mateship as a potentially inclusive convention that has been appropriated as an exclusory male creed, and they contest that appropriation.

Henry Lawson, who is popularly regarded as the principal spokesman for the exclusive form of mateship, belongs to the first group of writers. Considered alongside him is the group of feminists who argue that the exclusive mateship creed was initiated through Lawson's work, and that J. F. Archibald and the group of Bulletin Bohemians purposefully developed it. The Lawson tradition constructs mateship as an egalitarian nationalistic creed that has a strong masculine bias. While feminists like Miriam Dixson, Kay Schaffer, Patricia Grimshaw and Marilyn Lake agree, they also argue that mateship was a patriarchal construction intended to reproduce masculine dominance in Australian culture and society.

The second group of writers includes those who place mateship squarely within nationalistic traditions. Russel Ward's The Australian Legend (1958) confirms mateship's national significance and reaffirms the creed as masculine. T. I. Moore defines mateship as a social pattern, but he agrees with Ward on mateship's national importance and masculine definition. They both recognise the inconsistencies in the creed, like its racism, class discrimination and the rejection of those men who do not conform to expectations; but they argue that such exclusions do not detract from mateship's popular acceptance, national significance or cultural power. Neither attempts to explain the exclusion of women in any way other than to claim that females have no place in this male fraternity. Helen Townsend, whose Real Men: What Australian Men Really Think, Feel and Believe (1994) describes Australian mateship as a part of national identity that is essentially masculine and a necessary part of men's "primordial bond" (212), also belongs to this group, and her work is a good indicator of the contemporary domination of the exclusive meaning of mateship.

The third group of writers, who accept that mateship has national significance, and who do not challenge the assumption that mateship is a creed that excludes women, recognises that mateship is divisive because of the style of masculinity that it promotes in the context of Australian culture. This group includes Terry Colling, whose Beyond Mateship: Understanding Australian Men (1992) attempts to deal with the negativity associated with exclusive mateship's style of masculinity. He finds mateship a "dysfunctional model" of manhood that has had "far-reaching effects on the development

and history of the Australian male" (9). Linzi Murrie's "Australian Legend and Australian Men" (2000) deals with similar issues, and she also shows how mateship excludes women from national discourses.

The fourth group of writers differs markedly from the writers of the first three groups: while they accept mateship as a single convention, they do not agree that it is a singularly masculine code. Coral Lansbury suggests a radical shift in the meaning of mateship: in "The Miner's Right to Mateship" (1966) she challenges the idea of mateship as an exclusively masculine bond with the idea that the mateship that is exclusive to men is a product of the hazardous working conditions of mining. Women are not included in the style of mateship that Lansbury describes, but only because they do not work in the mines with men. Lansbury also questions the origins that Ward and Moore propose for mateship, arguing that Welsh miners rather than pastoral workers were the initiators of the convention. Gideon Goosen and Eugene Cuskelly also agree that mateship is not an exclusively masculine creed, describing it instead as an inclusive ethos that they liken to Christian love.

Don Edgar, whose Men, Mateship, Marriage: Exploring macho myths and the way forward (1997) is a comprehensive study of mateship and various Australian masculinities, is the final writer to be considered in the fourth group. While Edgar acknowledges that mateship is popularly thought of as a masculine creed, he argues that it is an inclusive convention that over time has been appropriated as a device for securing masculine power. He searches for "an antidote to the myth of mateship and male supremacy that has been built up" because he believes that mateship has impacted as negatively on men as it has on women (104). He argues that the valuable aspects of the mateship tradition have been lost in the race to gain male dominance, and that this has hurt both sexes. Mateship, according to Edgar, should not be used as a device for institutionalising male advantage: it should not be understood as "the domain of men alone", but as a "broader community value, rooted in the centrality of family life" (xiv).

The present study agrees that mateship is an integral component of Australianness, hence the initial interest in the peculiarly Australian mateship convention as a topic worthy of in-depth analysis. It begins by disagreeing with those writers who argue that mateship has one fixed meaning peculiar to its Australian context. On the contrary, I argue that there is no single permanent meaning peculiar to Australian mateship, a fact which is substantiated by the lack of consistent application of the words mate and mateship in Australian literature. Where writers like Ward and Moore explain the variable application of the words mate and mateship as inconsistencies within a single mateship discourse, I argue that the major misunderstanding about mateship arises from the fact that there are two mateship discourses rather than one. The two inconsistent components of mateship, egalitarianism and masculine domination, should not be read as paradoxical qualities of the same discourse; rather they should be read as indicators that mateship is two distinct and separate discourses. Therefore, while I agree that there is a form of mateship that does act as an exclusive men's creed, I define that as one form of mateship, exclusive mateship. The second part of this argument is that there is another egalitarian form of mateship, inclusive mateship, which is a separate and distinct mateship discourse. I argue that just as exclusive mateship has a clear definition, a history of development and a discernible cultural influence, so too does inclusive mateship. I agree that the exclusive meaning of mateship, which feminists would describe as the masculinist form of mateship, does dominate in Australian culture. But unlike the feminists who argue that this domination acts against women by subordinating the feminine to the masculine, I argue that exclusive mateship is a divisive cultural element that impacts negatively on men as well as women because it does not include all men. Therefore, I do not conflate mateship's inconsistencies into one form of mateship in the same way that other studies do. I argue instead for a reading of mateship that separates the convention into its two main forms, and in doing so, I set out to demonstrate the advantages that such a reading facilitates in understanding the representation of Australians and their culture.

Literary References and Timeframe

Most studies of mateship, including those by historians, are based on Australian literature, and this study is no exception. Literature here will include narratives from non-fictional literary texts because mateship, being a convention, is transdisciplinary and evidence of it often appears in narratives that are not fictional. Narrative strategies, according to Tim O'Sullivan, contribute to the constitution of meanings for daily life, and he describes narrative as the "devices, strategies and conventions governing the organization of a story (fictional or factual) into sequence" (194). In order to produce a narrative, material is selected and organised according to the rules of reading in a given culture, and since narrative is not isolated in fiction, it "is a feature of non-fictional stories like broadcast news" as much as it is a quality "implicit in many still images" (O'Sullivan 195). The narratives that appear in songs, ballads, jokes, verse, newspaper articles and advertisements from colonial to contemporary times provide rich sources of evidence about the mateship convention, and contribute information about the social and historical context of the fictional works that focus this inquiry.

The most important reason for using narrative in non-fictional as well as fictional texts for sources of information about mateship is that for many years much of women's work was not included in the canon of Australian literature that constituted mateship as an exclusive men's creed. Although some works by early Australian women writers are gradually becoming available in reprinted editions, much of it remains out of print and unavailable to the general public. However, some of this early women's writing – letters, diaries and travel journals – has been collected and published in anthologies, so the inclusion of narrative, especially from women's non-fictional writing, adds a rich and vital dimension to this study of mateship.

A flexible timeframe has also been adopted in this study because it is impossible to contain a concept like mateship in one snapshot of frozen time, and the purpose of the study is to trace the development of the mateship discourses. So although the texts selected

for this analysis of mateship fall predominantly between 1885 and 1925, evidence is also drawn from earlier and later periods.

One important aspect of the selection of texts to be examined remains to be defined. The sources for evidence about inclusive mateship come predominantly from women's writing, while the sources of information about exclusive mateship originate, in the main, in men's texts. This selection was not intentional. In researching the concept of mateship it became clear that men and women writers generally depicted mateship differently.

Methodology

Earlier studies treat mateship as one concept that has inconsistencies in its application. Separating mateship into the two forms identified in this thesis, inclusive and exclusive, documents and explains these inconsistencies, and thus allows a clearer understanding of mateship and its impact on Australians. In some ways, this could be defined as a feminist project because it challenges the masculine appropriation of mateship, and it examines the impact that such domination has had on Australians. However, this study differs from other feminist analyses of mateship in two ways: the masculinist representation of mateship is not treated as the only form of the convention; and exclusive mateship's cultural divisiveness is seen as being detrimental to both women and men.

Because this study challenges the masculinist interpretation of mateship, the method of analysis employed is that which best responds to the assumption that Australian mateship is a men's creed or exclusive mateship. The method used to analyse mateship therefore relies in part on a poststructuralist approach as adapted for use in feminist literary practice. Chris Weedon's method of applying feminist poststructuralism to literary criticism often informs the reading of fictional and non-fictional texts. As mentioned earlier, Michel Foucault's theory of discourse, along with his theories about the prison system are used to establish this new reading of mateship, and Luce Irigaray's work on ending the exploitation of women by valuing the difference between the sexes is drawn upon to demonstrate how exclusive mateship subordinates women through what she describes as the patriarchal conditioning of language that has empowered the masculine

and subordinated the feminine (Je 20). Irigaray's reading of gender, language and discourse also provides a means of showing how woman is constructed as an unvalued object always in deference to man, the valued subject of exclusive mateship. Irigaray's call for "a culture of the sexual, as yet nonexistent, be elaborated, with each sex being respected" (Je 12) also informs this study throughout.

Chapter Review

This thesis is divided into eight chapters that trace mateship from its origins in language to its manifestation as two different but related discourses. It offers an explanation of how and why mateship is understood as being an inclusive egalitarian convention, but is also commonly applied as an exclusive masculinist creed. It includes a discussion about exclusive mateship's impact upon the lives of women in Australian society, and concludes with an explanation of how the masculinist reading of mateship remains dominant in contemporary culture by means of reading practices which reproduce this one view of mateship.

Chapter One explores some of the studies that discuss mateship, and it places this study in the context of the debate between them. It has already been explained that an examination of all of the work on mateship is beyond the scope of this study, and that the selection of studies has been limited to those that reflect the central concern of this thesis. The position of this study is that while it shares commonalities with a number of these studies, it disputes others, and proposes a new reading of mateship.

Chapter Two traces the etymology of the words mate and mateship, showing that in pre-Australian usage the words were not gender-specific or of any special cultural significance. In Australian English the words' meanings changed in two ways: firstly, mateship became a uniquely Australian spiritual bond; and secondly, the word mate acquired the masculine gender, and mateship became a creed synonymous with men's friendships in selected men's groups. The major works drawn on in this chapter include The Oxford English Dictionary (1989), Middle English Dictionary (1975), The English

Dialect Dictionary (1970), Alexander MacBain's An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language (1896), The Scottish National Dictionary (1965), The Australian National Dictionary (1988), G. A. Wilkes' A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms (1996), Sidney J. Baker's The Australian Language (1966), Bill Hornadge's The Australian Slanguage (1986) and Eric Partridge's A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (1937) and his Words, Words, Words! (1933)

In Chapter Three, Australian mateship is defined as a discourse, and its two central forms, inclusive and exclusive, are identified as separate discourses. It is argued that discourses are "the product of social, historical and institutional formations" and, as O'Sullivan points out, "meanings are produced by these institutionalised discourses" (93-4). The two mateship discourses, like other discourses, influence the production of cultural meanings, and thereby, as Weedon explains, they compete with other discourses to influence "the organization of social power" (24). It is argued here that while inclusive mateship seeks to empower all Australians, the exclusive mateship discourse produces meanings that seek to reproduce masculine domination through a patriarchal organization of social relations. Texts cited in the discussion include H. W. Malloch's Fellows All: The Chronicles of the Bread and Cheese Club Melbourne (1943), Mary Grant Bruce's Mates at Billabong (1911), Henry Lawson's "Meeting Old Mates" (1894), "Telling Mrs Baker" (1901), "The Shearers" (1901), "The Australian Cinematograph" (1897), and his "Their Mate's Honour" (1908), Rosa Praed's Lady Bridget in the Never-Never Land: A Story of Australian Life (1915), Robert Goodwin's Mates and Memories: Recollections of the 2/10th Field Regiment R. A. A. (1995), Phillip Knightley's Australia: A Biography of a Nation (2000), Peter Henning's Doomed Battalion: Mateship and Leadership in War and Captivity (1995), Patsy Adam-Smith's Goodbye Girlie (1994), and a selection of stories and verse published in The Bulletin in the 1890s.

Chapter Four argues that inclusive mateship evolved from a re-reading of "difference" in colonial society. The concept of "difference" is shown to have been a divisive measure used to enhance authority's control over the colonial population. The argument employed here is based upon Foucault's belief that the emphasis on "difference",

as in naming prisoners as delinquents, was used to keep convicts separate from mainstream society (Discipline 251). It is argued that while force and the physical conditions of the penal settlement were used to implement authority, discursive control through the stigma attached to the felonry underpinned and reinforced that control. It is explained that the mateship discourse was an oppositional discourse to the stigma of penal servitude and the socially constructed label of deviance, and as such it gave rise to discourses of positivism: two of which are discussed here as mateship: the first encouraged uniting to survive and gave rise to inclusive mateship; the second encouraged men to bond with each other and gave rise to exclusive mateship. Texts cited in the discussion include L.L. Robson's The Convict Settlers of Australia (1965), Charles Griffith's The Present State and Prospects of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales (1845), Lord Robert Cecil's Gold Fields Diary (1935), Carboni Raffaello's The Eureka Stockade (1855), Reverend Arthur Polehampton's Kangaroo Land (1862), Ellen Clacy's A Lady's Visit to The Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53 (1853), Supreme Court Depositions, Port Phillip (1841), Alexander Harris's Settlers and Convicts or Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian Backwoods (1847), Louisa Meredith's Notes and Sketches of New South Wales (1844), Charles White's Old Convict Days in Australia (1906), John Thomas Bigge's Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales (1822), William Derrincourt's Old Convict Days (1899), Jessie Couvreur's "An Old Time Episode in Tasmania" (1891), and Eliza Winstanley's For Her Natural Life: A Tale of the 1830s (1876).

In Chapter Five, exclusive mateship, which dominates the meaning of Australian mateship, is discussed. Exclusive mateship originated in the same manner and by the same means and at the same time as inclusive mateship during the period 1788-1850, but exclusive mateship re-reads "difference" according to the patriarchal assumption of masculine dominance over the feminine. Exclusive mateship is shown to be a patriarchal discourse that emphasises "difference" on the basis of male-centred norms. It is explained in this chapter that exclusive mateship is most often found from approximately 1885-1925, and then most commonly in the writing of those men who had work published in The Bulletin. Luce Irigaray's and Chris Weedon's works on patriarchy and language are used to

demonstrate that exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse that has gained cultural dominance through language. Texts cited in the discussion include A. D. Ellerman's "Driving Mates" (1899), Toby Twist's "A Re-constructed Idol: A Vagary in Verse" (1893), Mary Gilmore's "The Truest Mate" (1910), Edward Dyson's "Peter Todd of Morris Vale: A Tale of Sacrifice" (1902), work by Grant Hervey, Montague Grover, Thomas E. Spencer, Will H. Ogilvie and Marie Pitt all published in The Bulletin, Barbara Baynton's "Squeaker's Mate" (1902), Catherine Helen Spence's Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever (1854), Mary Gaunt's Kirkham's Find (1897), William Coxon's "The Flash Colonial Barmaid" (uncertain date), Philip Lorimer's "Have those happy moments left thee?" (1901), E. J. Brady's "Riverine" (1911), and Henry Lawson's "The Men Who Made Australia" (1901), and his "A Romance of Three Huts" (1902).

Chapter Six addresses the confusion between inclusive and exclusive mateship, and offers an explanation for how and why exclusive mateship gained majority endorsement in spite of the fact that it is a minority discourse which contradicts Australian mateship's egalitarian inclusivity. Feminist discussions about the masculinization of culture during the 1890s are examined in order to demonstrate that patriarchy alone was not responsible for exclusive mateship's extraordinary cultural prominence. Rather, I explain how the confusion of inclusive mateship ideals with exclusive mateship's masculine definition occurred gradually over the first century of white Australia's history as mateship became a surrogate religion for many Australian people. The way in which mateship seems to be both inclusive in definition and exclusive in practice is similar to the way in which the Christian church works, because while it includes women, its power structure subjugates women to men. I argue that this confusion of the two mateship discourses was consolidated in the period 1885-1925, and that after this time, mateship was perceived as it is now, as an Australian convention that is masculine-dominated. Texts cited in the discussion include feminist arguments from Marilyn Lake, Kay Schaffer, Susan Sheridan, Kay Ferres and Helen Thomson; historical and cultural studies by Russel Ward, T. I. Moore and Linzi Murrie. Bruce Lincoln's theory of myth is used to explain mateship's connection to Australian myths. Fictional and non-fictional texts include, A. G. Stephens's "A Word for Australians" (1899), W. Scott McPheat's John Flynn: Vision of the Inland (1977), Eugene

Cuskelly's "Mother Mary MacKillop and Australian Spirituality" (1995), Russel Ward's
<u>The Australian Legend</u> (1958), T. I. Moore's <u>Social Patterns in Australian Literature</u>
(1971), C. E. W. Bean's <u>The Story of ANZAC: From the Outbreak of War to the End of</u>
<u>the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915</u> (1921), Bill Gammage's <u>The</u>
<u>Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War</u> (1974), Grant Hervey's "A Missing
Mate" (1910),   Mary Gilmore's "The Ringer", an anonymous verse "Peter and Paul"
(1885), C. R.'s "True Friendship" (1894), G. H. Gibson's "My Mate Bill" (date unknown),
Matchbox's "An Australian Epitaph" (1902), Homfrey Beale's "Danny Byrne" (1927),
Victor Daley's "His Mate" (1902), and Katharine Susannah Prichard's <u>The Black Opal</u>
(1921).

Chapter Seven returns briefly to demonstrating that inclusive mateship reflects
egalitarianism and the Australian ideal of "a fair go for all" to provide a backdrop for   the
following discussion about exclusive mateship's impact on society. I demonstrate that
exclusive mateship is a divisive discourse and that its discriminatory principles create
social problems that contradict the notion of egalitarianism. The problems focused upon
include the discourse's levelling influence on men and women as it negates individualism,
and the discriminatory attitudes that evolve from its emphasis on "difference". I
particularly emphasise exclusive mateship's divisiveness between the sexes in this chapter,
although, as I point out, I could have chosen exclusive mateship's discursive contribution
to social problems such as racism, homophobia, schoolyard bullying and dangerous risk-
taking activity by males. Fictional and non-fictional texts cited include Laura Palmer-
Archer's <u>A Bush Honeymoon and other Stories</u> (1904), Thelma Forshaw's "The Mateship
Syndrome" (1967), Kerry Carrington's criminologist's report <u>Who Killed Leigh Leigh? A</u>
<u>Story of Shame and Mateship in an Australian Town</u> (1998), Nick Enright's stage play <u>A</u>
<u>Property of the Clan</u> (first performed in 1992, published 1994), Nick Enright's stage play
<u>Blackrock</u> (first performed 30 August 1995, published in 1996) and the film <u>Blackrock</u>
(1997), and Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette's <u>Puberty Blues</u> (1979).

The assumption upon which exclusive mateship justifies its division of the sexes is
that all men are mates. In Chapter Eight I examine this assumption and argue that if some

men were not mates of the exclusive type, then all Australian men – either in the past or in the present – cannot be grouped as mates. The group on which I focus is the Irish-Australian males of the working class, who, according to Patrick O'Farrell, were a large and influential group of men who were not typical of the exclusive mateship type. I endeavour to show that in spite of there being no basis for the belief that exclusive mateship is the only form of Australian mateship, it is nonetheless maintained in this influential cultural position by dominant reading practices which have become embedded in Australian culture. I use Brian Moon's explanation of how such practices can become established ways of thinking, and I apply this to exclusive mateship to explain its dominance in Australian culture. I demonstrate how these reading practices reproduce indicators of exclusive mateship from texts that describe inclusive mateship, and further, how they negate the presence of inclusive mateship by ignoring texts that do not reproduce the preferred reading of mateship. I show that the assumption that all men are mates is not realistic in Australian English because it leads to an ambiguous reading of literature, and this ambiguity challenges the belief that exclusive mateship is the only meaning of mateship. Fictional and non-fictional texts cited include Jeannie Gunn's <u>We of the Never Never</u> (1908) and its film adaptation (1982), C. Hadgraft and R. Wilson's <u>A Century of Australian Short Stories</u> (1974 edition), Jessie Couvreur's "How a Claim Was Nearly Jumped in Gum-Tree Gully" (1891), Edward Dyson's "The Golden Shanty" (1887), Henry Lawson's "His Father's Mate" (1888) and his "Some Popular Australian Mistakes" (1893), "Native Mate" (an old bush song of uncertain date) and C. G. A. Colles "Gone Ahead" (1912).

The conclusion draws together the arguments presented, summarizes the findings, and indicates some further interesting research that might proceed from this thesis.

Referencing in this thesis follows the fifth edition of the <u>MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</u> (1999).

Chapter One   Literature Review

> Indeed, it is time we looked at mateship, not in vague terms of fanciful mythology, but as an historical truth and a contemporary fact.
>
> [……………………………………………………………..]
>
> For the first thing to recognize about it is that mateship is not as simple, even primitive, as it is sometimes made to appear. It is a concept with its own complexities. It has a wide variety of meanings, a variety never fully explored. There has been much talk about mateship, for and against, but little solid historical research or objective analysis to reveal its many meanings.
>
> T. Inglis Moore <u>Social Patterns in Australian Literature</u> (204 –5)

Because mateship is complex, and includes a wide variety of meanings, Moore's advice encapsulates the dilemma facing an investigator of the peculiarly Australian mateship convention. Yet his desire to establish mateship as a "historical truth" and a "contemporary fact" complicates rather than resolves the dilemma because fixing meanings involves choice and selectivity privileges some meanings over others. Such privileging has cultural repercussions with a concept like mateship because of its centrality to representations of Australianness. But meanings have been fixed for mateship in the past and since those meanings constitute knowledge that influences both the ways of reading literary texts that contain representations of mateship and those representations themselves, it is timely to investigate them.

There are two meanings that are commonly thought of as the "facts" associated with mateship: it is a men's creed; and it is integral to national discourses. As Moore explains, the first of these "facts" constitutes mateship as a perennial fraternal bond:

> Australian mateship offers a new variation on one of the most ancient of tunes – the friendship between man and man, keyed to equality, with loyalty as the refrain. (203)

According to Moore, mateship provides "its own faith concerned with man's kinship with man, regardless of any god", and in doing so, "it makes a distinctive contribution to Australian humanism" (206). This leads to the second mateship "fact"; that mateship, the

men's creed, is part of "the democratic tradition" that underpins "the Great Australian dream" (206), and as such is a component of Australianness itself. The "truth" represented in these two "facts", is that mateship, in being defined as "Australian", is therefore representative of all Australians; but the associated "fact", that mateship is a fundamental component of manhood, makes it obvious that mateship cannot represent all Australians. Moore has conflated the two meanings without explaining how mateship can be universal if it is exclusive to men, so what he is doing is describing inclusive mateship when he speaks of mateship's universal application, but he is promoting exclusive mateship when he claims that mateship only exists among men. The result of this description is an ambiguous representation of mateship, but the "facts" which have flowed from such representations have gained authority, and the "truths" that they endorse have gradually become integrated with Australian traditions.

In Russel Ward's account of the Australian legend, for instance, mateship's universality and its masculine exclusivity are taken for granted, and the basis of these "truths", namely the very narrowly focused reading of selected men's writing, is not challenged. Mateship often features in Australian English as this conglomeration of contradictory truths yet the inherent ambiguity is accepted without question. Bob Hawke's historic address as Australian Prime Minister at the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Anzac Day, held at Lone Pine in Turkey on the 25 April 1990, clearly shows that mateship is an important component of Australian tradition and that it is definitively masculine. Hawke stated that the "special meaning" of mateship was an Australian tradition which spoke of "the self-recognition of their dependence upon one another" at the heart of which lay a commitment: "a simple but deep commitment to one another, each to his fellow Australian" (194). According to Hawke, mateship represents a commitment to Australia, and it "defines, and alone defines, what it is to be an Australian" (194). Couched in the male-centred terms that Hawke uses here, mateship implies that being an Australian is synonymous with being a man who is loyal to his mates. It would appear that the "truth" about mateship is that it is a highly visible component of national discourse, and as such, has a correspondingly influential position in cultural power relations; but one "truth"

associated with this understanding of mateship's significance is that mateship is a masculine creed.

Poststructuralism challenges such "truths" and "facts" by maintaining that it is not possible to fix meanings (Weedon 22), and if this assumption is accepted, then the "truths" and "facts" that have been fixed for mateship in the past are open to re-evaluation. The present study acknowledges that the critical process is never finished, and meaning can never be permanently set, but if the competing discourses that constitute the meaning of mateship as a masculine creed of national significance can be momentarily stayed and examined, that will facilitate a re-reading of what actually constitutes Australian mateship. What will be attempted here therefore is to fix temporarily the various representations of mateship so that the mateship convention can be re-examined. The outcome of that re-reading, although not fixed, will contribute to a new and fuller understanding of Australian mateship.

The central argument of this thesis, that mateship has many forms, one of which (exclusive) has subsumed another (inclusive) form, places it in opposition to some influential existing readings of mateship, and in partial agreement with some others. Essentially, though, this study differs from all previous attempts to analyse mateship. Because of this difference, in this chapter I have sought to clarify my position in relation to the debate among other writers by advancing the main points of my argument alongside each contribution of those other writers discussed.

This study disagrees with texts that fix mateship as a masculinist creed. These include the influential works by Russel Ward and T. I. Moore already cited, as well as those by prominent feminists Miriam Dixson, Marilyn Lake, Patricia Grimshaw, Anne Summers and Kay Schaffer. Then, while this study shares points of agreement with writers like Helen Townsend, Terry Colling and Linzi Murrie, it also disagrees with them in that they do not contest the assumption that mateship is a masculinist creed. Foremost among the points of agreement with Townsend, Colling and Murrie is that exclusive mateship has promoted a specific style of masculinity. It is agreed that, as Murrie points out, mateship

has had a significant influence upon Australian culture, and since, as I shall argue, it is the exclusive form of mateship that has been dominant, that influence has promoted a discriminatory dichotomy of powerful/powerless between men and women. In Colling's case, one further point of agreement is that mateship has had a detrimental influence on Australian men by promoting one specific style of masculinity as the exemplar of manhood. With the last group of writers discussed here, Coral Lansbury, Gideon Goosen, Eugene Cuskelly and Don Edgar, there is agreement in that they challenge the masculinist meaning of mateship and argue that the convention is more than a men's creed. Overall however, this study differs from all these earlier investigations, because I argue that mateship cannot be understood as one single entity: it has multiple forms and must be interpreted as constituting multiple meanings. With my approach, mateship ceases to be the ambiguous cultural concept that I have pointed out, and instead each form of mateship can be read as a separate entity and consequently each entity's contribution to Australian culture can be defined and evaluated.

1. The Lawson tradition depicts mateship as a men's creed

For some critics, mateship and Australianness are so integrally connected that they use representations of the convention to gauge a writer's representations of the Australian essence. In this regard, Henry Lawson's work forms a "mateship yardstick" since Lawson is widely considered to be the initiator of the mateship convention. According to H. P. Heseltine, for example "in so far as articulate literature is concerned, Lawson may almost be said to have invented mateship" (5). Many writers (mostly males) were found acceptable because they emulated Lawson's attitude towards mateship, but others (mostly females) failed because they did not reflect his contribution to the Australian legend. The Lawson-styled response to bush life was read by Ward as a major contribution to the "national mystique" that underpinned the Australian legend. Barbara Baynton, whose work portrayed a version of bush life that differed markedly from Lawson's, was described by A. A. Phillips as revolting against "the Legend" (72), and while admitting her superior craftsmanship (76), he describes her stories as "intensely subjective" (72). Baynton's "Squeaker's Mate" shows exclusive mateship's divisive effect on relations between women

and men in marriage and in a small bush community. Her depiction of mateship mocks the belief that mateship (the men's creed or exclusive mateship) could be the unifying spirit that constituted the Australian legend. (See Chapter Five for full details.) Similarly, John Barnes argues that Rolf Boldrewood's "solidly factual approach to the local scene" was not convincing as a representation of Australian life (166). He describes Boldrewood's work as "Australian romance" (165) which, although sympathetic "towards the local scene", was not in keeping with the Australian "point of view" emerging in the 1890s (165). This point of view was distinctly nationalistic and contributed to the formulation of the Australian legend. Like Baynton, Boldrewood did not represent mateship according to the way in which it was being promoted as part of the legend; he did not depict exclusive mateship. In Robbery Under Arms (1889), for instance, men's mateship was a casual arrangement that was inclusive in nature because men were only mates in transient working arrangements such as mining (207; 246); that is, they shared resources and personal support to survive the rigours of the moment. Indeed, contrary to exclusive mateship's rejection of women, Boldrewood's hero mates seek the company of women in preference to the company of men, and on more than one occasion they risk their lives to be with women friends and lovers (320; 323).

In some studies of national discourses, Lawson's texts are treated as historic references and are assumed to be primary information sources. This usage of Lawson's work has resulted in his representation of mateship being authorised as a "truth" or a "fact". For example, to demonstrate a point about the anti-social nature of men on "the Australian frontier", Ward uses "a quatrain from Henry Lawson" as though its narrative construction is a snapshot of reality. This verse from "The Shearers" is supposed to illustrate "the strongly social sense of solidarity within the nomad tribe, and the equally strong, antisocial hostility to any control, or even patronage, from above" (Legend 245). Lawson's text is in fact offering only one of many possible representations of life's experiences, but it is read as though it is a factual account. His study is the source from which many writers, even feminists like Kay Schaffer, have claimed authority for establishing the prominence of exclusive mateship. According to her, Lawson's "writings have become a touchstone for the discourse on the Australian tradition" (Women 34) and she argues that his "imagined

presence as the founding father of the Australian tradition creates a centre through which a tradition evolves" (<u>Women</u> 36). However, even though Lawson's work is most commonly associated with exclusive mateship, in this study, it is read as including different representations of mateship.

Heseltine maintains that three forms of mateship are constructed in Lawson's literature (11), but one, the masculinist style (exclusive mateship), dominates. According to Heseltine, the Form One style of mateship is a vision splendid for a united future. In being an aspiration, it contrasts sharply with what Heseltine nominates as Form Two. Here mateship defines a past paradise of perfection that has somehow been lost. Form Three falls between these two in representing "Man's various, contradictory, incomplete existence in the fallen world" of the present (11). This multiplicity of meanings is apparent in Lawson's "The Cant and Dirt of Labor Literature" (1894) where at least two different meanings for mateship can be identified. Although Lawson does not explicitly name the forms of mateship he describes, it is apparent that he considers one to be idealistic and impractical, and the other to be "ideal" (399). He rejects the mateship that he claims was "born of New Australian imagination, and gushed about to a sickening extent" (399). According to Lawson, this mateship is egotistical and "too angelic to exist amongst mortals" (399). He could be speaking of inclusive mateship here, that is, the style of mateship that Heseltine names Form One, but there are insufficient details to connect the two. The mateship form that Lawson prefers, and describes as "our ideal", is men's or exclusive mateship, or what Heseltine calls Form Three mateship. Lawson's tone in this article is misogynous and implies that this mateship, when "realised", will win "the land" for male workers (399). This reading is endorsed by what Heseltine describes as the most consistent form of mateship in Lawson's texts: an aggressive men's creed that is "simply the rough, sometimes brutal community behaviour of vigorous and desperate men" (10). Lawson states as much in his "Mateship" (1907): "The faith of men [mateship] is as strong as the sympathy between them, and perhaps the hardest thing on earth for a woman to kill" (327).

The occurrence of multiple meanings of mateship in Lawson's work raises the issue of why a masculinist interpretation of the convention should take precedence over others. Certain feminist challenges to masculine cultural dominance, like those of Miriam Dixson, Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake and Kay Schaffer, point to possible answers. Generally, these writers argue that the masculine dominates Australian culture, and that this control was achieved by means of the promotion of concepts like mateship in literature and in influential publications like The Bulletin of the 1890s. They do not challenge the interpretation of mateship as a masculine creed, but they do argue that mateship was produced as part of the campaign to subordinate the feminine. The theory of mateship's origin underpinning such arguments is that the men's creed of mateship was developed for the bushmen, not from them. This argument maintains that mateship was a purposeful invention that featured in the fictional and non-fictional texts that defined Australia's history in terms of masculinist traditions.

Miriam Dixson thus argues that mateship is "an informal male-bonding institution involving powerful sublimated homosexuality", one that is "deeply antipathetic to women" (81). Dixson claims that Ward included mateship in his "configuration of values in our national identity" which is centred on a "special *style* of masculinity" that "reeks of womanlessness" and is "misogynist to the core" (24). Patricia Grimshaw agrees, arguing that in generating national discourses, men made spaces for themselves and places for women according to the dichotomy between powerful men and powerless women (113). The resultant "raw male frontier" contributed a peculiar style of masculinity to the developing nation – a "style of colonial masculinity which valorised all-male company and pursuits, which mocked family ties, and was essentially hostile to women" (114).

But if the mateship that was the spirit of the legend and the fibre of nationalism is a singularly misogynous creed, how and why did it assume priority over other forms of mateship? If, as it is argued here, both inclusive and exclusive mateship are depicted in literature, and this has not changed since the beginning of white culture in Australia, then the reason for exclusive mateship's ascendancy must be that the readings of mateship most commonly circulated were those that promoted exclusive mateship. In other words,

influential literature conveyed the sense that mateship was exclusive to men. This is so according to Kay Schaffer. She argues that the "nascent discourse on national identity" constituted within the definitive texts of the twentieth century "posit an image of the bushman-as-hero, as 'ideal type' who represents the national ethos of mateship" (Women 28). Yet, as Anne Summers argues, this stereotype, the ideal "bushman-as-hero", "the Australian man of the Bush", with his "brash, rugged, sardonic" style of masculinity, was oddly coincidental with the characteristics that "a swarm of men writers detected in themselves or in the males they observed" (82). She argues that those masculine qualities were characteristics that such men "were anxious to transpose into a living legend" (82). I would therefore argue that exclusive mateship was endorsed by, and circulated with this nationalistic rhetoric and male-centred narrative promoted in the men's press, and further, that as this narrow understanding of mateship became more familiar than the others, exclusive mateship became its accepted meaning.

Marilyn Lake extends Summers' argument by proposing that the desire to build a masculinist living legend was a power-based initiative to win control of Australian culture. According to Lake, one of the greatest political struggles in Australian history was the contest "between men and women at the end of the nineteenth century for the control of the national culture" (2). Mateship empowered men because it was promoted as a nationalistic creed with a masculine flavour, and it became the instrument of what Lake claims were "the militants of the emergent men's press" (3). Masculinist ideals were constituted through the language of concepts like mateship, and these ideals were based on a "valued masculine camaraderie" of men who were free from domestic concerns to live as they wished (3). It could be argued from this feminist perspective that mateship is a purposive masculinist construction, not a convention that can be described in terms of people's lived experience.

Schaffer's work on the forces of desire in the Australian cultural tradition also argues that mateship is such a construction. She argues that "the voice of Australia", "the voice of the Bush" that described and defined the Australian legend with its myths and traditions and its peculiar styles of masculinity and femininity, was "a construction of urban writers,

artists and critics and the *Bulletin*" (<u>Women</u> 29). This voice asserted "the nation's sense of its difference from the parent culture" (<u>Women</u> 29), but it did so in the name of the masculine. According to Schaffer, there is "no separate, autonomous position for women" in these nationalist discourses (<u>Women</u> 29). In the same way, there is no place for women in the convention of mateship that was proclaimed as a central component of those discourses.

According to this feminist reading of mateship, when the men's press constructed nationalism as an extension of the Bushmen's attitudes and values, mateship became a central component of national discourses. Mateship was then supplied with origins that gave it historical relevance and traditional endorsement. From that influential position, mateship (exclusive) became a signifier of one specific style of masculinity that constructed power relations between the sexes to perpetuate masculine dominance. But in doing so, mateship was defined in terms of an idealised bushman's fraternity. That construction opened mateship to men and closed it to women by virtue of biological determinants. At this historic moment, women, who were not included in the now dominant men's mateship, were subordinated in representations of national discourses, including Australian identity. From the promotion which mateship received in the male-dominated press at the crucial historical moment of pre-Federation nationalism, men's mateship became an institution within nationalist myths. According to Schaffer, it is this legend that "has endured as the representation of an authentic Australian identity" (<u>Women</u> 29).

This reading of the evolution of the mateship convention is based upon a feminist understanding of mateship's rise to national significance. But if mateship is, as feminists claim, a representation that has been projected upon men for the purpose of uniting men against women, there must be some men who are not mates of this exclusive mateship type, and that is indeed the case. A quick glance at what women writers have portrayed as male and female mates, shows that some men were not mates in the exclusive mateship sense. In 1904, for example, in an article titled "Woman Versus Man Question", Louisa Lawson called Adam "Eve's mate" in the sense of equal partners (288). In Katharine Susannah Prichard's <u>The Pioneers</u> (1915), Mary Cameron thought of her husband as her "yoke mate"

(316), and she told her future daughter-in-law: "It's a sad, sad thing to be parting from your life's mate" (276). Earlier in the novel, the scurrilous McNab had been described as being "no mate" for Deirdre (269). These representations of mateship show that women and men can be mates in a companionable style of mateship, so the feminist claim that mateship was part of the forces that pitted men and women against each other is not entirely correct. Feminists have assumed that all men belong to mateship and that all women are excluded from mateship "naturally", by virtue of biology. This is true of exclusive mateship, but it is not true of inclusive mateship, and the two forms of mateship cannot be read as one.

Some men were excluded from exclusive mateship along with women. This is evident in an episode from Kate Grenville's <u>Lilian's Story</u> (1985), which is set in 1910 at a time when the association of mateship with the masculine was becoming entrenched in culture. The scene is played out between school children in a backyard lane in Sydney. Lilian is an intelligent girl, who is very determined to be accepted by the powerful males in her life, namely, her father and the school bully, Rick. Rick, who is always surrounded by his mates, is tall, tough and in every way a strong contrast to Lilian's puny, shortsighted brother John. In an attempt to be admitted to Rick's gang, Lilian has committed a daring theft, but not to be outdone by her manoeuvre, Rick argues that John is the perpetrator of the deed. According to Rick, such daring is "man's work" (46). John refuses to own the deed, even when Rick promises him acceptance as a "proper one of the gang" (46-7). In his anger at Lilian for outsmarting him, and at John for betraying him, Rick has Lilian attacked and John (minus his glasses) is tied to a cart and pushed down the steep, winding laneway (47). Lilian is humiliated and John ends up with a broken arm. Lilian is an outcast according to the parameters of being a mate: she is a girl and however convincingly she proves her "bravery", she cannot belong to a "men's group". But John cannot belong either because in being a shy, timid boy, he is scorned as a "girl".

2. Exclusive mateship excludes men as well as women from national discourses

Ward does not critique mateship in <u>The Australian Legend</u>, but he does define mateship as a masculine creed in which women have no place. So when he asserts

mateship's centrality to national discourses through its part in the Australian legend, it follows that women are displaced from the legend's representation of Australianness because they cannot enter men's mateship. Ward confirms his link between mateship, men and the Australian legend through his description of "the typical Australian" (<u>Legend</u> 2). According to Ward, "the legend" is about the "wild boys we Australians are – or like to consider ourselves" (<u>Legend</u> 1). Apparently it was the physical, psychological and emotional makeup of "the actual bushman of the nineteenth century" that constituted "the typical Australian" (<u>Legend</u> 13). But Ward's oft-quoted description of "the typical Australian" also produces a meaning for Australian woman (<u>Legend</u> 2). By means of grammar, "the typical Australian" becomes the definitive male subject. The definite article "the" and the associated masculine nouns and pronouns ensure that the masculine gender is understood as "typical". If "typical" means masculine, then Australian woman is not typical and is therefore absent from the representation. Luce Irigaray says of such claims that "the realities of which his discourse speaks are artificial, mediated to such an extent by one subject and one culture that it's not really possible to share them" (<u>Je</u> 35). The "typical" Australian is thus a womanless man within his own artificial culture. Woman therefore is neither typical nor Australian, and she exists in Australian culture only as man's invisible "other". What must not be forgotten, though, is that just as the noun "man" does not represent all humans, "man", as idealised by the Australian legend, does not necessarily represent all men either.

Ward maintains that his representation is endorsed by "a solid substratum of fact" (<u>Legend</u> 1). But according to poststructuralist thinking, there is no single true meaning of the texts on which Ward draws because "meaning is not only plural but constantly deferred in the never-ending webs of textuality in which all texts are located" (Weedon 163). So Ward's saying, "We have seen that the Australian tradition is as old as our history" (<u>Legend</u> 258) is debatable. What can be seen, though, is that Ward's reading of national discourses conceals masculine dominance among "historic truths". But of most concern here is that Ward promotes mateship as a component of those discourses whilst making it specific to one style of masculinity and exclusive of women. Ward's reasoning suggests that women have no place in mateship because mateship is a creed peculiar to men. If this

is so, women can neither argue that mateship excludes them nor that they are excluded from national discourses by their position outside mateship. If mateship cannot be re-read as a component of Australianness that includes women, then women's exclusion from the national discourses based upon mateship is confirmed by the assumption that mateship is a men's creed.

According to Ward, mateship is an exclusively masculine creed that began in the absence of women (Legend 99). Yet he does not claim that women were totally absent in the environment that cradled mateship. Women were present because the men who initiated mateship often cohabitated with Aboriginal women and prostitutes (Legend 99). However, such women are discounted because, as Ward argues, it was the "absence of good women" that generated the cult of mateship (Legend 99-100). This absence of good women forced men to rely on each other, while the presence of "bad women", "the gins (sic)" and the "Mrs Johnstons" drove men to bond with their peers in mateship (Legend 99-100). It makes no difference to Ward's account of mateship's origin whether women were good or bad, present or absent. He asserts that men sought each other in a brotherly fraternity because of women. Inherent in this reading is the assumption that all men are the same because no mention is made of the men who sought female mates, as many demonstrably did.

Ward thus argues that mateship is a men's creed, no more, no less. It can be countered that such a creed is akin to the various bonds that form between women in life's crucial moments: like the friendships formed among adolescent girls at school; or among women in a maternity ward. If mateship really was something that men developed among themselves, women could not challenge being excluded from it. Such a challenge would be similar to a man trying to assert his right to be included in a reunion at a girls' boarding school. Men and women do share homosocial bonds with their own sex, and these need not be threatening to members of the opposite sex. It follows, then, that if mateship is the fraternal fellowship that Ward depicts, it is not a threat to women: they simply have no part in it. According to Ward, from mateship's inception among men, the creed gradually became a convention that entered into concepts of Australianness through men's influence.

It further follows, however, that mateship's influential position in Australian national discourses constructs a barrier between the sexes and differentiates between men. This divisiveness is an issue that still needs to be resolved. The problem is similar to the one that results from Ward's depiction of the typical Australian as a man. How can this male be typical of all Australians when some Australians are female and all males are not the same? The question that begs an answer is: if mateship is only for certain "men", how can it be a significant component of the discourses that define all Australians?

Moore's understanding of mateship, and of its place in national discourses confirms this contradiction because, while he excludes women from mateship, he also demonstrates how some men, and the style of mateship that they practise, are not part of what he calls "Australian mateship". According to Moore, mateship is a social pattern in Australian historical and fictional literature (205). He describes mateship's two "broad ecological types", exclusive and inclusive (207) (his terms are not those used in this study), as being based upon "various colourations of meaning" for mateship (206). Moore argues that the environment – social and physical – determines these divisions. The social environment determines what he calls exclusive mateship and the physical environment determines what he calls inclusive mateship (207). Since these defining parameters are not gender specific, women could be included in Moore's mateship definition, but they are not. Women are only included in Moore's representation of mateship in one of the ten groups that he claims are associated with the "different historical manifestations" of mateship (206), and their inclusion in that instance can only be assumed from his use of the term the Australian people because they are not mentioned specifically (234). Moore does however state that "the absence of women made mateship significant among convicts, bushmen, and gold-diggers" (213), so the meanings he applies to his terms inclusive and exclusive show that women's exclusion from mateship is, as Ward argues, biologically determined. Moore's findings thus concur with Ward's in three ways: on the concept of mateship's origin among men; the purely masculine manifestation of the mateship creed; and mateship's significance to national traditions.

Moore's "exclusive mateship" names the bond that endures among men who struggle against social forces. The groups who manifested this style of mateship included convicts, city larrikins, trade unionists and Marxists (207). This style of mateship is called "exclusive" because, Moore explains, the ethos is selectively inclusive with regards to the men it includes in its particular instance of male solidarity (207). Women cannot be included because mateship is a men's creed, and, it must be pointed out, although not stipulated as such by Moore, some groups of men are likewise excluded. In relation to this exclusive mateship, women belong to a social group of antagonists. Yet among those antagonists are the men who do not follow the group's response, that is the disloyal "others" from "the opposing social section" (207). The ostracism of these male outcasts is particularly vehement as they are deemed to be the traitors or "scabs" who are "guilty of disloyalty" (207). According to the parameters of inclusion in this exclusive mateship, women might be denied the right to belong, but men are denied the right not to belong.

"Inclusive mateship", in Moore's analysis, is not directed at opposing groups, like exclusive mateship, but at difficult environmental conditions. But women still have no place in the creed in spite of the word inclusive. Moore claims that there are three main groups of men who practise inclusive mateship: "bushmen; gold-diggers, miners and seamen, who may be taken together as workers engaged in hazardous occupations; and fighting servicemen – soldiers, sailors, and airmen engaged in active wartime service" (207). This style of inclusive mateship is also the bond that unites city dwellers in a "beery brotherhood" (233). These men unite with "good cheer and a friendly, inclusive companionship" even though there are no serious environmental hardships to battle (233). Once again it is assumed that all men belong to this style of mateship, and by inference those men who do not belong are excluded with women.

Members of nine of Moore's ten mateship groups are male. This fits neatly with his assertion that mateship is something "natural" to men throughout time (203). Yet given Moore's passionate declaration that mateship is a masculine creed, his tenth group of mates presents a contradiction. Moore's last group is comprised of all Australian people. Apparently, to the Australian people "in general", mateship is "a philosophy and practice

implicit in the popular usage of the term 'mate', accepted without demur or analysis as a distinctive part of the national tradition" (234). But even in making such an assertion, Moore remains adamant that women do not belong in mateship. According to Moore, if women are present, and if men take too much notice of them, that is, if a man falls in love or gets married, mateship desists. This is why Moore claims mateship was weakened among the larrikins. They focused more upon relations with women than with mates (213). Most feminists miss the implications here for men. If a man sides with the enemy of mateship, namely woman, he loses his right to belong. It would seem that he likewise loses his manhood if mateship is an ingredient of manliness.

The main point that Ward's and Moore's findings have in common is that mateship is a men's creed that arises from what these writers see as a kind of manhood essence. If this is correct, then women really do not have a place in the convention, and they really have no credible position from which to challenge their exclusion. But both writers maintain that mateship is integral to concepts of Australianness, and woman is absorbed into national discourses on the basis of the pseudo-inclusion afforded her by the phrase "all Australians". Yet at the same time women remain absent from national discourses because they have no place in mateship, and men can only take part in national discourses according to one style of masculinity, so their inclusion is limited. If men choose not to act according to the manhood stereotype dictated by exclusive mateship, for example they might be homosexual or they might have a girlfriend or wife as a mate, these men, like women, are excluded from mateship, and therefore from the national discourses based upon mateship.

Feminists argue that biological exclusion forces women out of national discourses, and I use their reasoning about mateship's involvement in national discourses to demonstrate that women are excluded from any cultural component that is based on exclusive mateship. Feminists further maintain that women have to fight for a place in Australian culture, and I argue that exclusive mateship effectively limits women's cultural influence and social power. But does a man have a better position in the same national discourses simply because mateship is supposed to include all males? A man can only be

included in such discourses according to the style of masculinity that is constituted as representing manhood by means of exclusive mateship. Because that construction of manhood does not suit all men, it is argued here that mateship, as it has become known in the exclusive sense, disadvantages both women and some men in Australian culture.

3. Men's mateship, manhood and one style of masculinity

To argue against the influence of writers like Ward and Moore by saying that there is no absolute "truth" is futile. According to Luce Irigaray people will believe something if it is given to them persuasively and often because the "majority of people no longer know what's true" (Je 28). This, she claims, is because the patriarchal voice dominates language and "the value of words and things has become partly real, partly arbitrary, partly dependent on trust" (Je 28). Irigaray argues that people "give up their right to judge for themselves" and blindly trust those who they think know best: "acceding to supposed capabilities in the social or cultural domain, or, more insidiously, consenting to the manipulation of role models in advertising, sections of the media, art, etc" (Je 28). The belief that mateship is a men's creed has been consolidated over a long time by some very commanding voices, and it has slowly become an accepted part of Australian culture. As Irigaray maintains, many people would find it hard to believe that the experts are wrong. So the influences informing dominant readings of Australian culture have been able to construct and maintain an interpretation of mateship that blocks alternative readings of the convention. Refocusing the understanding of that convention away from what is widely accepted as its "traditional" masculine meaning is therefore difficult, however necessary it may be to remove the confusion and contradictions inherent in it.

Writers like Helen Townsend prove Irigaray correct when they accept the contradictory aspects of the popular mateship "truth": the creed is an "important part of the fabric of Australian society" (211); but it is men's business and a "part of a wider human phenomenon of male bonding" (212). In Real Men: What Australian Men Really Think, Feel and Believe (1994), Townsend repeats the associated assumptions about Australian mateship without question, even when they appear blatantly contradictory. For instance,

Townsend argues "mateship has been a force for egalitarianism, in the union movement and in everyday life" (213). Egalitarianism is an acknowledged mateship principle, and a respected Australian cultural component, but egalitarianism is a "belief in the high value of EQUALITY among human beings and the desirability of removing inequalities" (Fontana 256), and it has already been argued that women and some men are excluded from mateship. So Townsend's claim that mateship, with its key elements of being masculine and egalitarian, "is one of the great Australian institutions" (211) is questionable. Yet her work echoes Ward's and Moore's in this regard, because the same contradictions appear and remain unexplained and unresolved in all three studies.

Unlike Ward and Moore, however, who investigate mateship's link to national discourses, Townsend uses the "truths" established by such influential people to examine mateship's impact on masculinity and Australian manhood. Townsend's book is not a scholarly work and she does not attempt to justify her assertions, though she claims that her work is based on "solid research" collected from more than 350 men for the purpose of studying "aspects of men's lives, their feelings and beliefs" (2). Townsend's text reflects what Irigaray argues is the conversion of unqualified assumptions into accepted truths through exposure over time. Since such work repeats rather than challenges the assumptions that perpetuate the one limited sense of mateship, that concept, with its discriminatory beliefs and values, is passed on to other generations of Australians. Townsend's text is influential in its own way, so its underpinning assumptions about mateship are confirmed as "common sense knowledge" via her readers.

Townsend's study shows some interesting correlations between established mateship "truths" and her research findings. These include: mateship in common understanding is "true" to traditional knowledge; mateship is most definitely a men's creed; and it involves men spending time together in pursuits based on rugged humour, aggressive competitiveness, masked emotions, unquestioning loyalty and an aversion to becoming intimately involved with male peers or females (211). Another common point is the mode of masculinity constituted by mateship. In poststructuralist criticism, there cannot be absolute meanings for femininity and masculinity (Weedon 173), but Townsend's image of

manhood is fixed and closely resembles Ward's "typical Australian", especially in respect to its misogyny (217). Like the "typical Australian" Townsend's traditional male mate is a stereotypical superhero – a man who is courageous and stoical and "who wins through even in defeat" (284). Townsend does not, however, question the assumption that all men belong in mateship – an assumption that obscures the reality that some men are excluded because they do not conform to the creed's definition of masculinity.

The close resemblance of Townsend's stereotyped man (the product of solid research) and Ward's "typical Australian" (the product of some fictional and historic texts) raises some interesting issues. Ward asserts that the national character "is a people's idea of itself" (Legend 1). Townsend's research, based as it is on some men's experiences, could validate Ward's assertion, especially his claim that national character springs from "a people's past experiences" (Legend 1). But Ward's argument that the perception of national character "modifies current events by colouring men's ideas of how they ought 'typically' to behave" might also be accurate (Legend 1). A poststructuralist reading of Townsend and Ward points to the latter. One peculiar image of mateship, masculinity and manhood has become established as a truth through the process by which Irigaray argues people assume truth over time. By continuous exposure, that image has become associated with Australian legends, traditions and national identity. Whether true or not, it is now extremely influential because it is considered to be the correct way of being a man and an Australian.

Terry Colling's Beyond Mateship: Understanding Australian Men (1992) is similar to Townsend's study in not questioning the traditional "truths" of mateship. Based on data collected from a cross-section of Australian men, it begins with the assumption that mateship is integral to the dominant image of Australian manhood. Colling's work parallels Townsend's in that his reading of research data confirms "common sense" understandings of mateship. These include that mateship, as a men's creed, is a type of male bonding that excludes women, and that it produces a specific mode of masculinity that is integral to Australianness.

From a poststructuralist perspective, however, the agreement between these writers does not mean that their findings constitute truths. Colling and Townsend might be trying to conduct fresh readings of mateship, but, like their interviewees, they are also subject to social and cultural discourses. They therefore read the data according to what is already accepted as common knowledge about mateship. Indeed, the same thing could be said of any of the other writers whose work has so far been discussed in this analysis. According to Weedon, texts need to be seen as "partisan discursive constructs offering particular meanings and modes of understanding" (172). From this perspective, Weedon claims it is possible to decentre "the hierarchal oppositions which underpin gender, race and class oppression" (165) and thereby to contest the "truths" that these notions have "naturalised" into acceptance.

Colling's study provides such an opportunity at the point where his conclusions differ from Townsend's. Townsend treats mateship as though it is a static, "natural" part of masculinity. She finds what she expects to find in her research, and those findings confirm popular beliefs. Colling, however, shows that mateship is a constructed part of masculinity. His divergence from traditional assumptions is useful for this inquiry because he argues that mateship is a concept that is historically specific, temporary and open to challenge and change.

Colling begins his study with an account of the historical development of mateship much like Ward's and Moore's, but he adds that mateship constructed a distinctive mode of masculinity. According to Colling, mateship began with the convicts. On this point he differs from Moore, who argues that convict mateship was not "true and genuine" (208). Colling agrees with Ward that mateship was a product of the skills, attitudes and values men developed in order to cope with hostile conditions (Colling 2-6; Ward, Legend 29-32). Ward, Moore and Colling all agree that part of men's response to these conditions was a lack of moderation in behaviour because of the absence of women (Ward, Legend 99; Moore 213; Colling 6). According to Colling, as the nation developed from a penal colony, mateship evolved as it passed from convicts to pastoral workers, larrikins, gold-diggers, unionists and armed services personnel. As it did, the attributes of the mateship mode of

masculinity developed. These included "reliability, steadfastness, loyalty, ingenuity, courage, toughness and humour" (Colling 9). Women were never mates, according to Colling; they were "outsiders, not to be trusted or taken entirely seriously" (9). Mateship's mode of masculinity developed in opposition to femininity because women "were different; they couldn't be understood, and they didn't understand blokes either" (Colling 9).

After reaffirming these popular assumptions about mateship, Colling's investigation moves on to look critically at the way in which mateship-styled masculinity works within culture. He is particularly interested in mateship's impact upon the lives of men, and he questions its relevance to contemporary society. This divergence from the accepted perspective on mateship springs from a point of agreement between Colling and Moore, both of whom subscribe to the view that mateship offers a mode of masculinity that functions well in adversity (Colling 9; Moore 236). They also agree that mateship has diminished because the contemporary world does not present the hardships of the past (Colling 9; Moore 236). But whereas Moore, like Townsend, maintains the popular belief that mateship remains an active and beneficial ingredient of masculinity, Colling claims that, without an external threat, mateship "often becomes a dysfunctional model" of manhood (9).

Colling concludes that mateship was "an unfortunate cornerstone of male identity" that constructed an image of desirable manhood that is not practical in contemporary society (9). He argues that mateship afforded men hero status that was especially noticeable in their effectiveness as soldiers (14). His depiction of men as mates in exclusive mateship is therefore in keeping with the popular understanding of the image of man as a tough worker, a rough player, but nonetheless a defender of the nation and a "good bloke". According to the image, this man might be stoical, uncommunicative and seemingly unfeeling (especially with women and children) and he might like a few drinks and a style of practical joking that borders on being risky, but he is always "dependable Australian man". By virtue of that heroic image, however, the power that it afforded men became a liability, because the image constituted only one very narrow way of being a man. It stifled

men's individuality because mates had to be loyal to each other and to the type. It also limited their opportunities for developing more satisfying and fulfilling relationships with each other and with women.

Colling argues that mateship contributed power to the masculine because its peculiar mode of masculinity was based on "power, control, sexuality, achievement and responsibility"; but as society evolved, and people's expectations adapted to modern challenges, mateship failed men (158). It became "a liability" for them because it constituted a masculine identity that precluded change and limited men's choices for relations with women, leaving individual men isolated among male mates and alienated from those outside the mateship group (19). Colling claims that in lived experience, this mode of masculinity inhibits men's "true capacity for self-expression and love, and their need for intimacy" (158), and in effect, through mateship, men were "trapped by their own propaganda" (14). This thesis agrees with Colling's conclusion that the mateship mode of masculinity informed a style of manhood that was dominant, but sadly dysfunctional. It is therefore argued here that one consequence of exclusive mateship's dominance is that mateship has had a far-reaching negative impact upon Australian men and women.

4. The politics of the mateship convention

In her "Australian Legend and Australian Men" (2000), Linzi Murrie concurs with Colling's belief that mateship influences Australian culture and society through its construction of masculinity. According to Murrie, mateship "was both a defining feature of this masculinity and the mechanism by which it was authorised and acknowledged" (90). She argues that masculinity acts within gender relations to empower men (81), and that mateship determines gender power in favour of the masculine through one peculiar mode of masculinity:

> While mateship functions to protect the interests of men, or groups of men, through the exclusion of others, it also functions to protect the prevailing notions of masculinity through its capacity to authorise men's status as masculine. (90)

Using the terms exclusivity and inclusivity, Murrie explains how this gender power is organised. Although these terms exclusivity and inclusivity are similar to Moore's exclusive and inclusive, Murrie applies very different meanings to them. She uses the positions of inclusivity and exclusivity to define how mateship designates power for men and women within national discourses, arguing that mateship's influence in national discourses went further than empowering the masculine. In what she calls the "context of mateship", the word "Australian" became a gendered term:

> In the context of gender relations then, there is a dual functioning to the mateship celebrated in the Australian legend. In its exclusivity, it positions women and other (marginalised) men outside the 'Australian', the 'national' and 'the masculine'; in its inclusivity, it authorises masculinity within the group, ensuring that dominant masculine values are reproduced in the male subject. (90-1).

What Murrie claims here offers one resolution to the problem mentioned earlier: why do women appear to be included in national discourses while they are excluded from mateship? Murrie argues that women cannot be included in national discourses because mateship maintains their exclusion. Women are positioned outside "the masculine" and the "national" and therefore cannot be "Australian". In this cultural construction, Australian means that men belong and women do not. Woman is neither included nor excluded: she is positioned as though she is invisible.

All the commentators discussed so far have agreed that mateship is a male privilege that excludes women because they have no part in it. But if mateship was and is this masculine privilege, why was it not targeted by feminists along with what Murrie calls the "practices which had such a negative effect on women's social well being – drunkenness, gambling, male sexuality (including lack of familial responsibility)" (83)? If, as she claims, women were "focussing on the very sites at which men exercise everyday control over women" (83), why did the feminists who organised suffragette campaigns, temperance programs and the various other challenges to masculine dominance, not question mateship? Surely mateship would have been recognised as an obvious site of masculine dominance if it was as blatantly misogynous as all of the writers discussed so far have claimed.

Could it be that women did not contest mateship because, as Lake argues, the feminists contesting men's appropriation of national discourses in the 1890s had an increased challenge in that "masculinist values had been elevated to the status of national traditions" (11)? Yet if Louisa Lawson's <u>Dawn</u> was the Australian women's "journal and mouthpiece" (Lawson, Olive 4), women were politically active and they did question nationalist values if they found them wanting. These women were astute in their selection of objectives, so if it was, as some contemporary feminists claim, that mateship was clearly the key to men's cultural dominance, why did the great women thinkers of the 1890s focus on the symptoms of the licentious lifestyle that mateship constituted for males rather than on mateship itself? After all, as Lake points out, women "sought to change mankind – to make men more considerate and responsible fathers, more companionable husbands" (12). Since mateship as a men's creed encouraged everything that opposed this mission, challenging such a misogynous creed would seem to have made an excellent starting point.

In fact, women did contest men's mateship, but more on an individual basis than as a part of a collective effort in the way that women campaigned for issues like temperance. Like many of women's opinions, however, their challenge to mateship was ignored. Miles Franklin, for example, associated male mates with power in <u>My Brilliant Career</u> (1901), and she resented the fact that women were excluded from mateship and from power. In the beginning of this novel, the young child Sybylla is "Daddy's little mate" (1), riding with the men as one of them (as she thought) (3); but by late adolescence, the now maturing Sybylla realises that girls and men cannot be mates, and that men "are the power to truckle to" (34). She both resents and regrets the fact that "social arrangements" do not allow men and women to be friends as equals (69). But Franklin's text was derided as a "romance" and, as Susan Sheridan points out, the feminist challenges inherent in her novel were ignored, even by men like A. G. Stephens, <u>The Bulletin</u>'s literary editor, who admired her work (Louisa 41).

The way that women's questioning of mateship was ignored is demonstrated by Henry Lawson's Preface to <u>My Brilliant Career</u> (1901) in which his critique of Franklin's writing shows in both its content and style the assumption of masculine supremacy against

which Franklin protested. For instance, Lawson referred to Franklin as a "girl" when she was nearly twenty-one and "girl" would have carried the same derogatory connotations as insulting a man by calling him "boy"(Preface). The term "girl" would also have implied childish immaturity and would have conveyed to readers a sense of the insignificance of Franklin's work. Further, in describing Franklin as "just a little bush girl", Lawson added to this image of authorial immaturity by expressing incredulity at her production of an account of the bush that he claimed was so "true to Australia – the truest I ever read" (Preface). It is as if Lawson cannot believe that a girl could see the truth as it was revealed to men. Lawson compounded his mockery of Franklin's efforts with his claim that he read Franklin's manuscript "one dull afternoon" because this admission implies that he had nothing better to do than to read this trite fictional offering by someone who later "confessed" that she was "a girl" (Preface). Lawson's reputation as a popular writer was powerful, so his opinion about Franklin's work would have influenced readers' perceptions of her novel, and his comments clearly placed Franklin's work outside the supposedly instructive canon of men's literature.

But Lawson's preface goes further when it deliberately obscures the author's feminist protest by constructing a dominant masculinist reading based on nationalistic sentiment. According to Sheridan, Lawson praised the parts of Franklin's work that fitted with the masculinist representation of the bush and its people, but he totally ignored the feminist argument against the masculinization of Australian nationality and culture (Louisa 41). This masculinist reading is established by focusing attention only upon details that meet with masculinist approval, like "the descriptions of bush life and scenery" (Preface). Those details are claimed to be "true", while everything else is described as "girlishly emotional parts" (Preface) not worthy of Lawson's attention. By adopting such a patronising attitude towards Franklin, Lawson relegates her writing to a less powerful position than his own, and thereby infers that her opinions are not as significant as his. With the author's work thus subordinated to men's writing, Lawson then appropriates the emphasised details of Franklin's writing in a way that suggests that he does so in the name of nationalism. For example, when he praises what he portrays as elements of national identity, "the country", its people and the spirit of the bush, are all subsumed within

nationalistic sentiments. But because he focuses on bushmen, these worthy bush qualities also assume masculine distinction.

This dominant masculinist reading renders the book's feminist protest impotent, and does so in a manner that provides a prime example of the masculinist domination of society to which Franklin was objecting in her novel. The Preface demonstrates in both its style and content that Lawson's evaluation of Franklin's work is based on a standard of comparison that privileges the masculine. The masculine is the norm by which all else is analysed; therefore those aspects of the text that reflect masculinist ideals, or which can be appropriated to endorse the masculine, are approved, while the feminine elements are denigrated. For example, the young heroine's concerns are considered non-masculine and therefore unimportant: they are left to be judged by "girl readers" (Preface).

In <u>My Brilliant Career</u> Franklin describes how social benefits and personal power are unjustly distributed in favour of males, but Lawson ignores this aspect of her work when he treats her novel as a romance (Preface). Franklin asks to be taken seriously in her Introduction, and she distinctly warns that her work is "not a romance", because, as she states, she has "too often faced the music of life to the tune of hardship to waste time in snivelling and gushing over fancies and dreams"(Introduction). Franklin is voicing concern about the unfair interpretation that masculinist discourses place upon female-male "difference". Lawson's use of sexual "difference" as the measure by which he criticises Franklin's work silences the young woman's voice while she rages against the very act that he is perpetrating. Lawson's Preface, and the fact that it precedes Franklin's writing, demonstrates how masculinist discourses trivialise the feminine by an irrational judgement based on sexual "difference".

Women's challenges to other masculine "privileges" were subjected to relentless counterattacks by the men's press, but women persisted, so why was their questioning of mateship not pursued more vigorously? Why did feminists not campaign against mateship if it was clear that this creed was an instrumental factor in incorporating masculine dominance into Australian culture? Could the reason be that during the social and cultural

upheaval of nation building, mateship was not thought of as a convention exclusive to males? Not all men belonged to the mateship group, or to that particular mate type, so some women would not have been mixing with the selective nomadic group of masculinist styled mates. Mateship might then have been thought of as an inclusive convention with no defining parameters of race, class or sex. Could mateship have had cultural credibility with thinking women because of what it meant to many Australian women and men?

One way in which mateship would have been available to women as well as men was through unionism. Unionism was often spoken of in terms of egalitarianism, nationalism and mateship, and since mateship was promoted as an ingredient of the first two, it was commonly regarded as the essence of worker unity. Randolph Bedford connects the Australian Labor Party, unionism and nationalism with mateship in A Story of Mateship (1936). Bedford argues that unionism, nationalism and mateship were integrally combined, and any opponents of unionism opposed Australia because Australia's nationhood, sovereignty and future relied upon it (40). "Labor in Parliament," Bedford wrote, "and Labor Governments were made possible only by the pioneering unions of the bush", in particular, "the miners and shearers' unions" which combined as the AWU (1). According to Bedford, what made the Labor Party successful was "the staunchness, the mateship, and the undeviating honesty of these early unionists" (14): the spirit of unionism was mateship, and it was "guarded with the jealousy of fanatics for their religion" (13). W. G. Spence also connected mateship, unionism and egalitarianism in his Australia's Awakening (1909) and, like Bedford he described mateship as a religion that originated in the bush with pastoral workers:

> Unionism came to the Australian bushman as a religion. It came, bringing salvation from years of tyranny. It had in it that feeling of mateship which he understood already, and which always characterised the action of one "white man" to another. Unionism extended this idea, so a man's character was gauged by whether he stood true to Union rules or "scabbed" it on his fellows. (78)

Patricia Grimshaw agrees that unionism was based on mateship, but she questions women's inclusion in the union movement because she argues that it was "manly identity" that unionists promoted through mateship, and the "proper responsibility" that they

advocated for women and children was a role which suited men, not an opportunity that facilitated equality of the sexes (168). Grimshaw is not alone in believing that unionism excluded women. Summers also argues that the principle upon which unionism sought reform was to entrench a "sexual division of labour and responsibility" that confirmed the superiority of the male and the subordination of the female in Australian society (355). Carmel Shute maintains, though without supporting evidence, that "the Australian union movement has been a men's movement which has excluded women" (166). Jenny Lee agrees, arguing that when the labour representatives on Wages Boards before 1903 advocated equal pay for women, though they "invariably couched their arguments in terms of equity, their clear intention was to exclude women" and thereby maintain jobs and wages for skilled male craftsmen (30).

This feminist view of women's effective exclusion from unionism seems dependent upon how each commentator interprets unionism's support for women workers. While feminists acknowledge that women were involved in unionism, and that unions did support women workers in various ways in different campaigns, they mostly maintain that in spite of this union activity on behalf of women, unionism was generally a movement that favoured male workers, and advocated a subordinate social role for women. Sheridan, for instance, notes that W. G. Spence calls for inclusion of women in the AWU and for them to have "full rights and privileges of membership" for the reason that "no good movement will succeed without women are in it"; but she maintains that women's inclusion in the unions as members was "uncertain" because of "the way they are invoked variously as 'wives and daughters of members' as equal union members needing special protection 'who have no home when out of employment'" (Faultlines 88). Statements such as Spence's could be read as being inclusive or exclusive of women, depending upon the reader, because, as Jennifer Curtain points out, women were involved in unionism and, according to her, their involvement was utilised to full advantage:

> What becomes evident here is that while trade union rhetoric has often been explicitly masculine and exclusive of women, women trade unionists have been able to utilise industrial mechanisms to further the interests of women workers, both with and without the support of their male colleagues. (37)

It can be argued that the mateship which unionism encompassed was likewise accepted and used to advantage by women.

Just as the extent of women's involvement in unionism depends on interpretations of historical evidence, mateship's centrality to unionism could likewise be read as inclusive or exclusive depending upon the orientation of the reader. Mateship could be viewed as the component of unionism that shaped the movement as something that privileged men, and this would lead to an exclusive reading of mateship. Mateship could just as easily be read as the component of unionism that united men and women in seeking justice for workers, and in this sense mateship would be inclusive. No doubt there would have been instances of exclusion of women from unionism, but there would also have been many instances of women's acceptance into unionism. Denis Murphy points this out in his lecture on the rise of Australian trade unions 1870-1890. The trade union movement relied upon mass membership, and it is therefore reasonable to argue that excluding women from unionism would have defeated the movement (Murphy).

Lawson acknowledges the misunderstanding about women's place in the union movement in "The New Religion" (1890). Lawson makes it clear that unionism includes women in spite of the fact that the union attitude towards women is "often misunderstood" by "advocates of women's rights" as much as by "unionists themselves" (113). Unionism, Lawson argues, is like religion, a concept that is universal and inclusive, with the only exceptions (according to him) being American Indians, Africans, South Sea savages and Australian Aboriginals who "will soon in the course of civilisation become extinct", and the Chinese who should be "killed or cured – probably the former" (113). In spite of these racist remarks (obviously not considered discriminatory or contradictory to Lawson) he claims that unionism is a uniting force that will forge a nation in multicultural Australia:

> Trades unionism is a new and grand religion; it recognises no creed, sect, language or nationality; it is a universal religion – it spreads from the centres of European civilization to the youngest settlements on the most remote portions of the earth; it is open to all and will include all – the Atheist, the Christian, the Agnostic, the Unitarian, the Socialist, the Conservative, the Royalist, the Republican, the black, and the white, and a time will come when all the "ists", "isms", etc., will be merged and lost in one great

"ism" – the unionism of labour. (112)

In this essay, Lawson is adamant that unionism aims to improve the working conditions for women as well as men, and he emphasises the hope that unions will "cure" the evils of poverty and the plight of deserted mothers left to raise families alone (113).

It is understandable however, that women's involvement in the union movement might have been limited to support roles in some instances because the occupations or trades being represented by the unions were not open to female employees. Jean Devanny and Betty Collins in their novels, Sugar Heaven (1936) and The Copper Crucible (1966) respectively, portray women supporting unionism by organising strike relief. But Dorothy Hewett shows women initiating a strike against employers in the textile industry in Sydney in Bobbin Up (1959). These women stick together because they do not want to "desert" their "mates" (male and female co-workers) (197), and one pregnant woman actually refuses to go to her wedding at the registry office even though the others beg her to go, because, as she says of herself, "She don't run out on 'er mates, ever" (202). Devanny's and Collins's novels describe the sugar industry's 1935 strike against Weil's disease and the 1961 lockout of Mt Isa mine workers, while Hewett's novel describes Sydney's working class of the late 1950s. Such a cross-section suggests that women would have been involved in unionism through organisational, participatory or support roles throughout the historical development of trade unionism.

William Lane's The Workingman's Paradise (1892) describes unionism and mateship among men and women of the working class. The central character Nellie Lawton is involved in organising women from some of the lowest paid employment, waitresses and seamstresses, into unions. She is also actively involved in spreading the word of unionism and her role in the novel could be described as educating her bushman friend Ned about the working lives and living conditions of Sydney's poorest people. The story is interwoven with inclusive mateship throughout, and most prominent among these instances of inclusive mateship is that Ned and Nellie acknowledge each other as mates. Ned thinks of Nellie as his "mate, that in re-incarnation after re-incarnation they had come together and found in each other the completed self" (152). For her part, Nellie declares that she and

Ned are "mates" and always will be, and Ned agrees: "Friends? Yes. Mates? Yes" (178). Ned makes it clear that the mateship between them is closer than brother and sister (178). But also significant among the instances of inclusive mateship, are the times when Nellie sees women like Mrs Macanany and other such "viragoes" support their men in strike action (134). Lane's story shows that men and women agree that unionism was the only way to improve the lives of the working class, and they work together for it.

One widespread indicator of men's and women's uniting in the union movement was in the use of the word "scab" to denote someone who was a traitor to the working class. A scab in the Australian idiom is a non-union worker, and such people work when there is a strike in progress. A scab is held to be a "contemptible, mean person" (Johansen 354), who, according to Spence, is a "weak character, if not worse" (78). Spence claims that male scabs were not popular with women and he notes that "the girls have refused to dance with them, the barmaids have refused them a drink, and the waitresses a meal" (78). This is the women's response to scabs recorded in the anonymous ballad, "The Union Boy", and the song demonstrates how the sentiments were constructed and circulated in popular culture (268). The song tells of how girls were attracted to "union boys" and how one man has found love because he joined the union. The hero of the song once scabbed, and his prospective mother-in-law, in acknowledging his new "union man" status, warns him of the dire consequences of "blackleggin', scabbin' or likewise" (269). In the woman's threat of physical violence for opposing the union, "I'll put you to every cruelty", it is made obvious that women, as well as men, hold the view that an anti-union stance is unmanly and anti-Australian:

> Come all you young and old men, oh wherever you may be,
> Oh, it's hoist-oh the flag-oh, the flag of unity.
>
> Then scabbin' in this country will soon be at an end,
> And I pray that one and all of you will be staunch union men. (269)

It can therefore reasonably be speculated that the union movement in the 1890s gave women a reason to believe that mateship included them, and it can be argued that such a belief would have increased mateship's popularity as a unifying convention. If women

believed that they were part of mateship, they would have encouraged it in the same way that they supported unionism, and this would explain why, when women targeted indicators of men's dominance, mateship was left untouched. It was inclusive mateship that women shared when they supported their husbands' campaigns against opposing groups (police, magistrates or bosses) so inclusive mateship was a convention that united women and men against intimidating social and environmental forces. This style of mateship was to be defended rather than challenged because it was in keeping with the feminist objective of achieving equality and respect between women and men. Louisa Lawson defined this objective when she wrote in her "Passing the Love of Women" (1892), the "bond of mutual sympathy and respect, that friendship, which is indeed the only true basis of wedded love" (125). There would have been thinking women who believed that mateship conveyed such ideals, realising, as Louisa pointed out, that men as well as women were conditioned by "inherited laws and customs which have predisposed them to look upon women as inferior creatures" (125). She encouraged women to believe that the solution to women's oppression could only be found when women and men worked "in concert" to find "equality, not through identity, but in difference", and that such union would mean that "every step forward by women is real progress for man" (125). Lane's character, Geisner, from The Workingman's Paradise echoes this sentiment when he explains to Ned that "two great reforms" are needed in society for humanity to progress – "the Reorganisation of Industry" and "the Recognition of Woman's Equality" (123). Inclusive mateship afforded women and men an opportunity to achieve a mutually respectful and supportive union, so there was no need for women to question it.

In encouraging this form of inclusive mateship, however, women lost ground in the cultural contest against the masculine, because exclusive mateship dominated the understanding of the convention, and mateship was less often thought of in terms of its unifying, inclusive role than in terms of its exclusive definition as a men's creed. Throughout the 1890s, mateship gradually became a double agent; securing male dominance within national discourses by masking its inherent power motives within sentiments of unionism, egalitarianism and nationalism. Yet when the meaning of mateship became associated with the masculine, it did not automatically mean that all men were

included in its empowering fraternity. Those men who did not suit the exclusive mateship stereotype were, like women, deemed to be outsiders, and all such others were excluded from national discourses based on mateship.

5. Inclusive mateship, the convention that is not solely the privilege of some men

Though they are not as well known as those who constitute mateship as a men's creed, there are some writers who argue that mateship is an inclusive convention, and that the exclusive nature of mateship among men is either a result of misreading recorded impressions of mateship, or the outcome of a flawed enactment of mateship. Coral Lansbury, for instance, argues in "The Miner's Right to Mateship" (1966), that mateship is merely a working arrangement between men, and that "the real and existing traditions of mateship" were those of the coal miners, and in particular, those from the Hunter River (435-6). According to Lansbury, this style of mateship came from Northumberland, Durham and Wales (440). In its original Welsh context, mateship was derived from the coal mining industry, and, more specifically, from the fact that the miners worked in pairs. Men chose a mate as carefully as they would a wife because, in an occupation where industrial accidents were common, a man's life depended upon the loyalty, courage and integrity of his mate (440). The partnership was thus a work-based arrangement that was made for life, and did not include women purely because women were not miners. In Lansbury's understanding, mateship did not sunder relations between the sexes as other writers have suggested. Mateship existed between men alongside their relationships with women.

Gideon Goosen and Eugene Cuskelly also describe mateship as an inclusive convention, likening it to Christianity. In his "Boomerang Theology: Reflections on Mateship" (1987), Goosen claims that there is Biblical substantiation for mateship's being a familial bond of mutual concern comparable with the concept of philos (308). According to Goosen, mateship has the potential to be "the ultimate specification of friendship" that unites people with God (314), if the inherent "barriers of exclusiveness and superficiality in our understanding and practice of mateship" can be overcome by "self-revelation,

unselfishness, [and] concern for others" (314). Goosen recognises the inconsistencies and ambiguities in the application of mateship, and while he does not deal with them at length, he does maintain that they must be challenged if the convention is to function as the relationship of trust, bonding and friendship that it ideally is. He argues that the aspects that need to be challenged in mateship include its masculine exclusiveness, its superficiality, and its tenet of loyalty at all costs even over moral considerations (313). Goosen does not exclude women from mateship, even though he cites many of the same historic and literary sources as Ward and Moore. Rather, he shows the inclusiveness of the convention by selecting men's and women's friendships as Biblical exemplars of mateship (308).

It is interesting to note that Goosen supported his theological research with surveys, and in this regard his work parallels Townsend's and Colling's. But what emerges as the overriding definitions of mateship from Goosen's research is quite different from that found by the other writers. Goosen's findings are worth including here in entirety because they differ so markedly from those of Townsend and Colling, and in doing so describe a completely different public perception of mateship.

Goosen surveyed two groups of people, whom he identified as A and B. He does not provide interviewee details other than to say that Group A were first year undergraduate students (sex not specified) and Group B were postgraduate students (sex not specified).

> Group A defined mateship as sharing, a bond, love, loyalty, togetherness, trust, friendship, standing by your friend, sticking up for him. All but two said it existed although some said it was not widespread.

> Group B defined mateship in much the same terms and added as key concepts: sharing based on difficult times and equality. They were also more critical of the ideal of mateship saying it had negative overtones of men only; friendship at all costs even over moral matters; and that it was superficial. Some said it was exclusive not extending to 'Aborigines, Ethnics and Asians.' Ten out of thirteen thought it really existed but qualified their response by saying 'only since WW11' or that it was not widespread and that it was superficial. (311)

Goosen's conclusions are that mateship is not a purely masculine creed although some Australians regard it as such.

In his "Mother Mary MacKillop and Australian Spirituality" (1995), Eugene Cuskelly argues that mateship began as a bond peculiar to colonial Australians, and was definitely not exclusively masculine. He differs from Goosen in that he does not believe that mateship is selfish, superficial or exclusive (5), but he agrees with Goosen in maintaining that mateship provides a peculiarly Australian example of "friendship with God through good works" (Goosen 314). Cuskelly defines mateship as a spirit of self-help that grew out of the harsh conditions of the pioneering days (4). Mateship manifested itself in a "special way" whenever people were "facing up to common difficulties" and "banded together to help anyone in need" (4-5). He argues that a woman, Mother Mary MacKillop, is a prime exemplar of mateship because in her life, "mateship was transformed into a living Christian community with those who joined her in the congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph" (5). He claims that Mary MacKillop, the Catholic nun who is Australia's first saint, was a remarkable Australian who espoused the ideals of mateship as Christian principle. Cuskelly bases his understanding of mateship on Mother Mary MacKillop's achievements and, according to him, mateship is one of "the qualities and attitudes that make for greatness in the Australian character" (3).

Don Edgar also argues that mateship is not an exclusively male creed. In his <u>Men, Mateship and Marriage: Exploring macho myths and the way forward</u> (1997), he maintains that mateship among men exists and has its "virtues", but that this is not the Australian meaning of mateship. To Edgar, the best expression of Australian mateship is the relationship between married partners. This is the "deeper mateship of husbands and wives negotiating and enjoying a life together in that suburban backyard that offers freedom, security and the chance to express individual creativity" (xv). His study attempts to dispel the rhetoric that defines mateship as an exclusively masculine creed, and his aim is to free the ethos to enable it to help build "a better understanding of men and women and their lives together" (xv).

Like Townsend and Colling, Edgar drew his evidence from interviews as well as from other research (xv); but his conclusions were, like Goosen's, quite different. His focus was also different. Townsend and Colling investigated mateship from the perspective of

men, but Edgar orientates his study towards the shared male-female focus on marriage and the family, which is very different from the manner in which mateship is usually treated. Another feature that distinguishes Edgar's study is that while other writers maintain the masculine interpretation of mateship, Edgar begins with the assumption that mateship as expressed in Australian society has a broad and complex application, that is not exclusive to men. According to Edgar, the concept of mateship remains current in Australian culture and it is timely to re-evaluate it and to expose what he sees as its main meaning: that mateship is a broad-based "community value, rooted in the centrality of family life" (xiv).

Conclusion

According to Leonie Young, her book <u>Mates</u> (1997) is "all about us [Australians], for you, all our mates out there!" (1). The objective of Young's children's book is to show: "We're all Aussie kids sharing the same big sky, which makes us mates" (1). In relation to the discussions of mateship that have taken place over the years, the analysis of mateship in this thesis is like that in Young's book. This thesis takes a new look at mateship, and in doing so is best described as post-legend thinking, because it does not subscribe to the exclusive definition of mateship. But it is also post-feminist thinking because it is based upon the belief that mateship practised in its exclusive form does not unite men against women. Rather mateship's being understood as an exclusive men's creed spreads divisiveness that has devastating outcomes for both sexes. In doing so, it opposes inclusive mateship which seeks to unite Australians in a common bond of Australianness.

Chapter Two   <u>Mate</u> and <u>Mateship</u> in Australian English

> "(Mateship) is the one word in all of this which is so unarguably, distinctively and dramatically and proudly Australian. You would not find it in any other preamble."   John Howard Prime Minister Australia (Shanahan 1)
>
> "Mateship is a hackneyed, clichéd term … taken from the Lawson era when it was a metaphor for solidarity in the workplace."
> Phil Cleary Real Republic Victorian Director (Zubrzycki 4)
>
> "It's corny with a capital C. What do they think they're doing putting mateship into the bloody preamble of a nation's constitution? Does this make everyone mates by law?"
> Bruce Ruxton Victorian RSL President (Zubrzycki 4)
>
> "To use the term [mateship] in the preamble would seem to me to assert a pre-feminist stance for all Australia […]. We're all Men from Snowy River it seems. I hope women stamp on this.
> Judith Wright Poet (Rintoul and Harbutt 5)
>
> But what about women? Is mateship inclusive or exclusive? Is it an egalitarian concept that will strengthen the national fibre and potentially underpin the philosophy of the new republic, or is it another example of what Paul Keating called a nation burdened by lingering stereotypes of "gormless men and shrimps and barbecues." (Rintoul and Harbutt 5)

These comments about mateship were among the many contributions to the 1999 debate over the inclusion of the word <u>mateship</u> in the proposed constitution preamble. Each contributor claims a different meaning for mateship, thereby demonstrating that in contemporary thinking there is no broad consensus about what mateship means in its Australian context. That is not surprising given the variety of meanings noted in Chapter One. Poststructuralism argues that each of these meanings is the product of a different discourse that in turn informs a different social reality. For example, at one extreme mateship is wonderfully inclusive and speaks of uniqueness in being Australian. At another, mateship is so exclusive to men of the armed services that Bruce Ruxton claims it is offensive to depict everyone as mates. At yet another, Judith Wright finds the way that mateship codes everything in the name of the masculine and thereby excludes the feminine is just as repugnant.

Poststructuralism explains this variation by arguing that meaning is constituted in language: there are no "fixed intrinsic meanings" that language can reflect or express (Weedon 22), because language "in the form of an historically specific range of ways of giving meaning to social reality, offers us various discursive positions, including modes of femininity and masculinity through which we can consciously live our lives" (Weedon 25-6). The meanings of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> changed from English to Australian usage as we have seen, and although the words can be applied in a number of ways, this study argues that in Australian English, two meanings became prominent: the first, inclusive mateship, defines an egalitarian unity of all people; and the second, exclusive mateship, expresses mateship as a masculinist creed that pretends to be open to all men but is by its definition of masculinity, closed to many Australian men. The variation in meanings for mateship arises because language consists of "competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning to the world, which imply differences in the organization of social power" (Weedon 24), and this can be seen when inclusive and exclusive mateship are compared. These two meanings for mateship are constituted by different discourses and those discourses constitute specific meanings and associated versions of social power. Inclusive mateship empowers all of those who participate in the camaraderie of a given instance of mateship, while exclusive mateship empowers men only and seeks to entrench that domination in Australian culture and society.

While it is not possible to fix permanently a meaning for mateship, it is possible to read the discursive production of the dominant modes of social reality that are constituted by the inclusive and exclusive mateship meanings. Inherent in these modes of social reality are constructions of power relations in Australian society. The starting point for investigating the discursive origins of the inclusive and exclusive meanings for mateship, the subjectivities discursively produced by the meanings, and both meanings' inherent power relations and their impact on daily life, involves temporarily fixing the two mateship meanings. This study, which is based on the poststructuralist assumption that language is a system that always exists in historically specific discourses, accepts that words (signifiers) "are always located in a discursive context" upon which the fixed meaning is dependent,

and that a given meaning "at any particular moment depends on the discursive relations within which it is located, and it is open to constant re-reading and interpretation" (Weedon 25). Therefore, for this temporary fixing and re-reading of mateship meanings, four specific historic investigations have been selected as the best indicators of the development of the two mateship meanings that developed in Australian usage. These will be treated separately in the following four sections.

In the first section, the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> are established as words that have currency in Australian English. This is accomplished using contemporary non-fictional literature from newspaper articles and advertisements.

In the second section, for the purpose of comparison, the pre-Australian usage of <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> are determined. The etymology of the words is traced using English, Scottish, Gaelic and Welsh dictionaries and selected commentaries on these languages. The following fictional works establish the English usage of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> before 1788; Thomas Nashe's <u>Christs Teares Over Jerusalem</u> (sic) (1593), <u>Sermons by Hugh Latimer: Sometime Bishop of Worcester</u> (1906), Madame D'Arblay's <u>Diary and Letters</u>. Vol. II. – 1785 to 1788 (n.d.) and Elizabeth Browning's <u>Aurora Leigh: with other poems</u> (1978).

In the third section, the meaning that establishes mateship as a word dependent on the masculine gender is explored before the usage that promotes the egalitarian based inclusive mateship is investigated. References here include R. N. Maconochie's <u>Australiana: Thoughts on Convict Management</u> (1839), Charles Griffith's <u>The Present State and Prospects of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales</u> (1845), Peter Cunningham's <u>Two Years in New South Wales</u> (1827), Elizabeth McArthur's letter home March 1791, Louisa Meredith's <u>My Home in Tasmania</u> (1979), Bill Hornadge's <u>The Australian Slanguage</u> (1986), G. A. Wilkes' <u>A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms</u> (1996), G. A. Wilkes' <u>Exploring Australian English</u> (1993), Sidney J. Baker's <u>The Australian Language</u> (1945) and English, Scottish, Irish and Australian dictionaries. Fictional texts cited include a "Tillettism" from <u>The Worker</u> (1898), A. Cher's "True Till

Death" (1893), S. Jessop's "The Last Straw" (1902), and J. Rogers's The New Rush and
other Poems and Songs (1864).

Finally in the fourth section, it is argued that the two mateship meanings which
establish mateship as inclusive, and mateship as exclusive, co-exist, but that exclusive
mateship dominates popular conceptions of mateship. Texts cited in this section include
Caroline Leakey's The Broad Arrow (1859), William Derrincourt's Old Convict Days
(1899), Rosa Praed's Lady Bridget in the Never-Never Land (1915), Ada Cambridge's A
Marked Man (1891), Eve Langley's The Pea-Pickers (1942), and White Topee (1954),
Olga Masters' "The Children Are Coming" (1982), Kate Grenville's Lilian's Story (1985),
Melina Marchetta's Looking for Alibrandi (1993) and Nick Enright's Blackrock (1996).

1. Meanings may vary but the words mate and mateship are popular in Australian English

Although meanings for the words mate and mateship vary, both words remain
current in contemporary usage. Surveying contemporary newspaper and magazine
headlines reveals that the words mate and mateship commonly occur in Australian English.
Both words have a widespread circulation in the print media, advertising, talkback radio,
film, television and conversational language. Within this usage, mate is applied to a wide
array of people; young friends, old associates, soldiers (especially in Anzac Day coverage),
blue-collar workers, police, criminals, politicians, school children, sportspersons, married
couples and business partners. Even pets are referred to as being mates of their owners.
Mateship in popular usage is applied across all social classes, so while people as diverse as
unemployed youth, blue-collar workers and sporting personalities are commonly referred
to as mates, so too are Australia's politicians, members of the judiciary, community leaders
and business people.

It is in the application of the words to politicians, and to their business, personal and
political associates, that the variety of meanings for the words is most clearly
demonstrated. Both words, mate and mateship, have been used to link politicians of all

political parties and their associates to involvement in relationships of friendship, intrigue, conflict and crime. For example, Sir Arthur Fadden, leader of the Country Party from 1941-58 and Prime Minister of Australia from August to October 1941, said of his political opponent and successor to the position of Prime Minister, John Curtin, that he had the utmost respect for him: "When I was Acting Prime Minister, Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition he gave me not only his personal co-operation, understanding and loyalty but also his mateship, often in the most difficult circumstances, even when we disagreed" (Reid 2). Yet in 1983, former Labor Party leader Bill Hayden, who had stepped aside to allow Bob Hawke to become Prime Minister, said of his own colleagues that mateship was a dangerous relationship because "when they call you 'mate' in the NSW Labor Party it is like getting a kiss from the Mafia" (Walsh 60). As for political intrigue, the press often depicted Bob Hawke as a mate of people like businessmen Alan Bond and Kerry Packer, and their mateship was portrayed as beneficial for all concerned (Clark, Pilita 7).

The word <u>mate</u> has often been applied in circumstances of scandal, and some of the most notorious of these instances have been in political and legal circles. In 1985, High Court Judge, Mr Justice Murphy, was charged with attempting to pervert the course of justice over what was supposedly an endeavour to assist Sydney solicitor, Morgan Ryan, through criminal proceedings. In reporting on the trial, <u>The Canberra Times</u> stated that Justice Murphy was alleged to have asked the NSW District Court for help for his "little mate" (Campbell 1). In July 1999, another such case of political intrigue involved three prominent Labor Party personnel in Queensland. They were discovered to have lucrative stakes in an Internet gambling company that had been given approval by Labor treasurer, David Hamill. <u>The Courier Mail</u> linked the three as mates in its headlines of 27 July 1999, "Internet jackpot for Labor mates" (Whittaker and Thomas 1).

The media applies the concept of mateship to a myriad of personal relationships from casual to intimate friendships, business acquaintanceships, sporting fellowships and criminal liaisons. <u>Mateship</u> is often used to define the casual, empathic relationship of victims flung together by the circumstances of natural disasters like fires, floods or cyclones. In the media's construction, mates can be those who help each other in the face

of catastrophes like mining accidents or vehicle crashes. Both words appear in conjunction with the brief but often binding relationships formed during the pressure of extreme circumstances. At such times, people who are total strangers unite to help each other, and that intense impromptu relationship is often described as mateship. One such incident was in July 1997 at the Maccabiah Games near Tel Aviv. The bridge across the Yarkon River collapsed and ninety Australian competitors were plunged into the river below. Sydney wrestler, Igor Praporschikov, ignored his danger to save others. He was "tagged a hero after rescuing 5 mates" (Maynard 19).

Widespread familiarity with the words mate and mateship can be presumed from the way in which the words and their popularly associated connotations are often exploited by advertisers. Newsprint and magazine advertising and radio and television commercials often feature the words mate and mateship. The concept of mateship has been used to sell products as diverse as cars, cigarettes, beer, mobile phones and banking or investment services. The depiction of mateship within advertisements reflects the diversity of meanings applied to mateship.

Mateship can be used as a persuasive device on the basis of its inclusive appeal. In 1998, Pauls Limited circulated advertisements for milk under the title "Mates for life". The advertisements in the print media featured depictions of mateship between various mates including young boys and girls and older married couples (Pauls 19; 16-17). That sentiment of inclusion is also apparent in the phrase mates' rates, which is so popular with advertisers, that the concept is employed year after year. The meaning of the phrase rests upon the belief that mates give each other the "best deal" because they are loyal and look after each other. In the year 2001, there were at least two occasions of such usage in prominent advertising campaigns. In March, the Bendigo Bank capitalised on the concept with its caption "Mates rates on personal loans" (16). The mateship sentiment expressed was that if clients were loyal (that is they held more than one account with the bank) they would be rewarded accordingly in "true mateship style" (Bendigo 16). Club Crocodile used the slogan in September to attract attention to its discounted off-peak rates for accommodation in the Whitsunday area (Airlie Beach). In August 2002, the Queenslanders

Credit Union used the same concept under the title "Great Rate Mate" to advertise that they were "looking after mates" with their interest rates (1).

Some advertisers rely on the exclusive appeal of mateship to target their product at specific men's groups. Advertisements such as the 1995 commercial for Hahn Beer used the word <u>mate</u> and relied on masculinist images of mateship among men for product sales (16). The Hahn advertisement, which featured a conversation between two mates, implied that mates are men, if the quote regarding one of the benefits of the beer, "You can perform afterwards! What more could you want?", is interpreted in its colloquial sense to mean, "behave in a sexual manner" (<u>Macquarie Dictionary</u>, 3rd ed, 1596). The advertisement subtly implied that a man could drink this beer and maintain his sexual prowess as well. The sexist attitude that this advertisement uses to enhance its product's appeal is not as blatant as the examples found by Sue Turnbull when she examined mateship in televised beer advertisements in 1993. Turnbull found that women were "largely absent" in the society portrayed in the advertisements. She noted that when women were present, "their major function" was "to define the kind of masculinity being promoted" (18). Women featured as "benign presences" against a backdrop that positioned men in the foreground as dominant. The beer advertisements examined by Turnbull define beer as a man's drink: " Men do, women don't. Drink beer, that is, at least in the recent flurry of beer ads designed to capture the thirsty TV viewer over the summer months" (17).

In the Australian usage of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> it would appear that the words are applied equally to the legal and illegal, the moral and immoral, the happy and sad, the good and bad. Both words are associated with stories of friendship, heroism and self-sacrifice, as often as they are associated with allegations of corruption and crime. What is also apparent is that mateship has a very wide variety of applications, some of which can be exclusive to particular groups. Although the application of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> has this obvious inconsistency, there is widespread acceptance that the words represent a peculiarly Australian cultural phenomenon. That usage involves varying degrees of interpersonal relationships from a casual address (sometimes aggressive) to the more familiar empathetic bonding between people. It is also apparent from the instances of

common usage that however the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> are applied, it is widely accepted that the mateship ideal is a signifier of something uniquely Australian.

2. Pre-Australian denotations for the words mate and mateship

Establishing the historic context of the usage of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> involves exploring the etymology of the words in pre-Australian usage. This provides the meanings that the early colonial population could be assumed to associate with previous applications of the words. However, since the objective of this thesis is to read mateship in its Australian context, a cross-cultural comparison of modes of mateship as constituted in literary references is not attempted. For that reason, only historically fixed dictionary meanings will be used to establish the early colonial applications of the words.

The early appearance of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> in literary works by both female and male writers suggests that Australia's first English inhabitants were familiar with the words, but that many of the Irish who made up a large proportion of transportees were not. The Irish spoke Gaelic among themselves, and only acquired English as a second language in England if they had transferred there before imprisonment, or in Australia after transportation (O'Farrell 25). Therefore, as Britain was the coloniser of Australia, the present etymological search is focused on the English language as used in England before the 1700s and during the 1800s. The Irish language is treated separately, and Gaelic influences on the Scottish and Irish languages are included where they clarify meanings associated with the etymology of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u>. Where necessary the search includes references to the Germanic influences on the English language.

According to Eric Partridge's research, <u>mate</u> was commonly used in England, and he gives the earliest appearance of the word as 1380 (<u>Words</u> 23). Partridge's study shows that <u>mate</u> is by "centuries the earliest" of the familiar English terms of address which include: mate, pal, chum, bo, buddy, digger, cobber, brother or comrade (<u>Words</u> 23). Partridge claims that <u>mate</u> dates back to Dutch or Low German origins where it "first implied a partaking and sharing of meat" and its first recorded use in 1380 echoed this sense of

companionable association (<u>Words</u> 23). The word <u>mate</u> is listed in Thomas Finkenstaedt's <u>A Chronological English Dictionary</u> (1970) as first appearing in Middle English between 1150 and 1450 (206). Its etymology is listed in this dictionary as Old French and Low German (206). Finkenstaedt states that the word <u>mate</u> appears again in 1509, but this time its etymology is given as Low German (394). The first entry had shown that <u>mate</u> could be used as a noun or as an adjective while the second entry lists its part of speech as a verb.

References indicate that in pre-Australian usage the word <u>mate</u> did not apply to a particular class. Partridge notes that John Camden Hotten, a lexicographer of slang, recorded <u>mate</u> as being a familiar form of address among "low Londoners" as "the term a coster or low person applies to a friend, partner, or companion" (<u>Words</u> 24). Hotten recorded in 1858 that the phrase "me and my mate" was a common form of address among members of the lower classes (Partridge, <u>Words</u> 24). Literary evidence shows that the word <u>mate</u> was also used among the English upper classes. Madame D'Arblay's use of the word <u>mate</u> to mean a married partner in her diary Vol. II – 1785 to 1788 indicates that the word was current in elite society because the author was a companion of the Queen (237). D'Arblay used <u>mate</u> to denote a husband. Hugh Latimer was Bishop of Worcester in 1535, and in his first sermon for King Edward the Sixth he used <u>mate</u> in the sense of a married partner to name a wife (81).

The word <u>mate</u> most commonly denotes some form of mutually agreeable friendship (Partridge, <u>Words</u> 23). What is also consistent from the studies consulted is that the word <u>mate</u> appears to be non-specific with regards to sex and is therefore applied as common gender. In the <u>Middle English Dictionary</u> (1975), <u>māte</u> also "<u>maite</u>", is either a "(a) Companion, friend or comrade" or a "(b) fellow, creature" (211). The definition listed as (c), states that <u>mate</u> can refer to the "mate of a ship;? a shipmate, sailor" (211). This could imply that mates were males but only if it is assumed that sailors were always men. The dictionary's listing "? a shipmate" means that this nautical meaning for the word <u>mate</u> is doubtful according to the evidence or opinion available at the time (<u>Middle English Dictionary Plan</u> 18). The <u>Middle English Dictionary</u> gives the word's origin as Middle Low German (211). <u>The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology</u> (1966) corroborates the claim

that mate meant a "habitual companion [...] officer assistant to another [...] one of a wedded pair" and that it was derived from Middle Low German (561). Mate is similarly defined, without specifying sex, as meaning one of a companionable couple, or one of a pair of working companions in The English Dialect Dictionary (1905) (52). This reference states that the word can also be "a common form of address to a stranger", a "match", or as a verb it means to match or to equal (52). This reference was the only study that stipulated sex for one of its definitions. The fifth meaning given here states that mate is used to name "the male of twin calves of different sexes" (52). The female is known as the "martin" (52).

While early usage of the word mate is commonly recorded in print, this is not the case with the word mateship. Sidney J. Baker claims that "*mate* and *mateship* are extremely old English words" (Australian 109), but mateship appeared in English a few hundred years after the word mate. Mateship appeared in 1593 as a noun apparently from Low German (Finkenstaedt 607). The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) gives the meaning of mateship as the "condition of being a mate; companionship, fellowship, equality" (468). Mateship is not mentioned in Partridge's Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (1937).

The entry for mateship in The Oxford English Dictionary shows infrequent use of the word mateship before its appearance in Australia (468). This dictionary lists the earliest usage of the word mateship – spelt "mateshyppe" – as Thomas Nashe's Christs Teares Over Jerusalem (sic) (1593) (468). Nashe used the word to explain that there was no amity between two rulers of Jerusalem (65). The same entry lists Elizabeth Browning's poem, "Aurora Leigh" (1856), as the next work containing the word mateship (468). Here the word is used to describe the uncomplicated companionship that a child shares with fellow creatures as he communes in childlike simplicity with birds, insects, animals and plants:

> How last I sat among them equally,
> In fellowship and mateship, as a child
> Feels equal still toward insect, beast and bird, […]. (312)

The child enjoys unity with other living creatures, "making friends" and "talk" with bird or goat, but this disappears as "the Adam" (the adult) in the child matures and "the privilege of Eden" (innocence) is "forgone" (312). This usage of the word mateship implies that mateship is devoid of motive and artifice. It is a companionship of equals sharing a

moment in time. Sex is not part of the meaning of mateship in these references, and the applications given also indicate that there is no meaningful significance attached to the word mateship.

The etymological evidence further shows that the words mate and mateship were both used in England and Scotland in the 1770s. It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that the words and these meanings – along with those not recorded in the various dictionaries examined – would have been familiar to the early emigrants who came to Australia from England. Although it is possible that natural gender had been applied to the words mate and mateship in pre-Australian usage, this application does not appear in the references searched. In this regard the pre-Australian denotations of the words contrast sharply with Australian dictionary definitions, which, in the main, record mateship as a masculine creed and a mate as male.

The only likely exception to the assumed familiarity of colonials with the pre-Australian usage of mate and mateship would have been the Irish, who formed a significant group of non-English speaking emigrants in the colony. Etymological evidence shows that these words were not part of the Gaelic language that Patrick O'Farrell claims was spoken by the majority of Irish people in the 1800s (27). The Irish Gaelic language, as documented in Alexander MacBain's An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language (1896), has no reference to the word mate or to the words make and marrow, from which some people argue that mate evolved. Make and marrow both appear in the Scottish language, but not in the Irish language, even though MacBain argues that the early forms of both languages have common Gaelic origins (i). What could account for this appearance of the words in Scottish is that the words evolved in English but not in Gaelic. According to MacBain, the Irish and Scottish Gaelic languages separated in the eighteenth century after which Irish Gaelic remained distinct (iv).

3. New meanings for <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u>

The words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> may not have signified a meaningful relationship in earlier English usage where the word <u>mate</u> was used in casual conversation either as a form of address or to name one of a pair of some kind or another. This casual usage is evident in Australian English as well, and some very early instances suggest that the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> were introduced into the Australian vernacular with much the same meanings as they had in England. These instances describe mateship as a work-based arrangement that was expedient rather than affectionate, and temporary rather than long lasting. In his <u>Australiana: Thoughts on Convict Management</u> (1839), R. N. Maconochie noted that "Ticket-of-Leave Men" often contracted to work "in parties of two, or more" and the partners were called "neighbours", "mates" or "partners", and the partnerships ended when the contract finished (220). Charles Griffith also described mates as partners in <u>The Present State and Prospects of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales</u> (1845). According to Griffith, the men travelled together and were partners in the sense that they divided their earnings (79). Boko's "How I was Had" (1895) confirms the temporary quality of mateship, but admits women to the relationship. The story tells how a young man meets and becomes "mates" with "a bronzed six-footer" when both are travelling on a ship to Western Australia to make their "fortunes in the far West"(28). The new mate, Charlie, has two sisters, one of whom becomes engaged to the narrator before the end of the voyage from Melbourne to Perth (28).

Yet there is widespread agreement that both words soon acquired distinctive significance in their Australian application. G. A. Wilkes maintains that the word <u>mate</u> is unique in the Australian English language and he argues, "[n]o word in the Australian vocabulary has such a wealth of associations as mate" (<u>Exploring</u> 41). Bill Hornadge notes that, in its Australian context, use of the word <u>mate</u> "has overtones not found elsewhere" (136). He argues that from the earliest times in Australian history the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> signified something intrinsically Australian (136). Sidney J. Baker even claims that mateship became "a basic article of Australian faith" (<u>Australian</u> 109).

What these scholars maintain is that mateship in its Australian context became something more than merely another word for describing a partnership or friendship. From the studies reviewed in Chapter One, it appears that mateship gained two additional dimensions in Australian English, and both those dimensions are evident in this "Tillettism" published in <u>The Worker</u> on 4 June 1898:

> Look here, lads, cultivate the spirit of mateship; love one another. If you don't love one another, you'll be cursed; if you are not loyal to each other, you'll be damned; and if you don't hang together against this highly skilled and drilled force which confronts you, you'll hang separately. (4)

The word <u>mateship</u> as it appears here describes a special spiritual bond, and because the text only mentions males, it could be said to be describing an exclusive comradeship of two or more men. Mateship was often thus linked with the sentiments of unity in the face of adversity, with egalitarianism and nationalism, and with fraternity when used to name the personal association among a group of men.

Such personal associations between men were often described as life-long relationships as A. Cher's "True Till Death" (1893) shows. The story is that an "old timer", Bill, has hanged himself, and a police officer is arguing that Bill's mate of over forty years is culpable for not cutting Bill down and saving his life. The old mate's defence is the code of mateship. While he concedes that "Bill did jump about a bit" as he died, he argues that mates don't interfere with mates, and as "Bill wasn't the sort of man to turn dog on an old mate," and the old man in turn was a good mate to Bill, he watched passively "sitting on a box alongside" as Bill committed suicide (23). S. Jessop also noted the same style of personal, close and long-lasting commitment of men to each other in mateship in "The Last Straw" (1902):

> "Yes, me and Bill
>   Was mates for years;
> We always shared
>   Each other's beers;
> My clothes were his,
>   And his were mine, –
> He saved my life
>   At Wondabine. (27)

The connotation of spiritual union among mates of either sex is not surprising because this addition is an extension rather than an alteration of the word's pre-Australian meaning. All that was added to the connotation of <u>mateship</u> was that a companionable relationship between those who shared a moment of need – working partners for the period of employment, people who teamed up to travel or live together, married couples or lovers – became mates according to the uniquely Australian bond of loyalty, care and concern. This is understandable because it can be deduced from observations of colonial life that a sense of needing each other pervaded all aspects of existence, so there would have been many moments of desperate need in which mateship relationships would have been forged.

One of the most overwhelming needs, which all of those who left England for Australia shared to some degree, was described by Peter Cunningham in 1827 as the stricken sense of loss one experiences upon parting from one's homeland:

> There is no event capable of awakening such deep-seated emotions in the human breast, as that of separating for ever from the place of our nativity, and thus rending at once asunder all those ties of affection and friendship which "grow with our growth", and close into warmer attachments as our youthful years ripen into manhood. (9)

Such soul wrenching affected pioneers who ventured to Australia and found themselves facing a daunting future in their "just punishment", "fate", "destiny" or "new life", according to their reasons for leaving England or Ireland. Humans need to feel that they belong, and under these emotive circumstances, and because the environment and conditions seemed so overpowering, people cleaved to whoever shared their existence. Elizabeth McArthur described this dependence on companions when she wrote on 7 March 1791 that they were soon to lose some friends, and in "so small a society we sensibly feel the loss of every Member more particularly those that are endear'd to us by acts of kindness and friendship" (24). In such instances, the companionship rendered offered the participants a feeling of unity as well as a much-needed means of survival. The initial feelings of desperation would have been intensified by the fact that many of those involved in such relationships were strangers to each other. The complications of penal life would have added further unifying influences as the suppressed struggled to build a life in the

colony, and the sheer enormity of that task transformed temporary associations into the uniquely Australian relationship of mateship.

It is easy to imagine that instances of mateship occurred when expedient unions were struck as much by chance as by design. The novel circumstances of a strange environment, the limitations of an embryonic society combined with the harsh penal code, tempered by ill or good luck forced sometimes improbable unions upon those who found themselves Australia-bound. Some of these mateship relationships were between people who would not have mixed in the same society in England had not transportation brought them together. Louisa Anne Meredith describes such an instance between herself and her servants. Servants, who started employment as convicts, stayed loyally with good masters, and the working associations became life-long friendships filled with the mutual respect, trust and love that companionship through hardship brings. Meredith shows the extent of the trust in such relationships when she compares being left alone in the house with her convict servants in remote Tasmania with living conditions in London, and she argues that she feels much safer and can "sleep safely and peacefully at night" in the former, but not in the latter (Tasmania 19).

It was in colonial times that the word mateship changed from naming a casual association to describing a spiritually significant, meaningful relationship. Its uniqueness of usage was the product of the distinctive, environmental and human context of early Australian life. Alexander Harris describes this inclusive style of mateship as a trait of bush people in colonial New South Wales when he notes that the hospitality and assistance afforded wayfarers encouraged "a great degree of frankness and cordiality among the persons" (22). Inclusive mateship is also what Baker defines as a spiritual manifestation that issues forth in moments of need:

> Basic to the concept of *mateship* in Australia is the principle that, when confronted with similar unpleasant circumstances, many different people, especially men, will react separately to these circumstances in much the same way. In short, *mateship* is more of a state of mind than of the emotions. Since circumstances calling forth such manifestations must be "unpleasant", it follows that they will be particularly apparent in times of crisis and only minor in favourable times. That is, in periods of social affluence, high

employment and collective well-being (as at present) there will be little accent on *mateship*, but in periods of social crisis – war, wide unemployment, economic depression, social injustice – *mateship* will become increasingly apparent. (<u>Australian</u> 109)

It is this inclusive style of mateship that Russel Ward describes as solidarity among colonial pioneers:

Pioneering conditions accentuated not only the dissolute habits, but also the toughness and adaptability of the pioneers; and the loneliness of bush life, no less than the brutalities of the system, accentuated their group solidarity. (<u>Legend</u> 35)

The friendships that were forged in such life-threatening circumstances among strangers gave rise to the pioneering traits that are commonly associated with mateship: strength, resourcefulness, courage, and determination to succeed.

Because this inclusive mateship is uniquely Australian, it is difficult to understand why the dimension of sex was added to the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> in Australian English. <u>The Oxford English Dictionary</u> claims that the first recorded Australian usage of <u>mateship</u> was by Price Warung in his <u>Tales of the Old Regime</u> in 1897 (468); but <u>The Australian National Dictionary</u> (1988) gives 1864 as the date of the first use of the word in "The Ghost's Song" written by J. Rogers (390). This reference suggests that the association of the masculine with the spiritually significant meaning of mateship was already in circulation three decades before the turn of the century, because in Rogers's song, mateship, spelt "mate-ship", expresses a sentiment that is more than a superficial association of people, but one that is explicitly masculine. While encompassing the ideal of friendship from earlier English meanings, <u>mateship</u>, as used by Rogers, implies the close spiritual bond that the convention is considered to have become in Australian usage. In the song, a ghost laments his life as a miner among sinful men and women, and leaves his "fellow-creatures" a "legacy" of advice in the name of "mate-ship ever true" (54). His application of the word suggests familial bonds of mutual support in that he offers "some friendly hints from chords devoutly true", and he does so to help others to survive and prosper (53).

It is clear that in Rogers's song there is an assumption that mateship is a creed or code of behaviour that circulates among men and not only in the absence of women. Rather, it is inferred that women are among the threats that cause men to unite in mateship. Firstly, the style of address and the subject matter indicate that the ghost considers his "fellow-creatures" in mateship to be men because he warns his readers (male) to keep away from women. Secondly, the feminine is degraded when women are compared to material possessions. The claim is made that both women and possessions must be vigilantly guarded:

> Wives are like watches, whimsical and hard,
> Dear to acquire, and difficult to guard;
> Unless you regulate them every day
> Your wife and watch will surely go astray. (53-4)

According to the ghost, women make life particularly difficult because they cause "commotion", and they should be avoided (53). Although the ghost warns readers that certain types of men must also be avoided, his condemnation of men is not as strong as his warnings about women. Mateship in this song can be read as being the masculine creed that later commentators identified.

Hornadge supports his reading of mateship by arguing that texts like "The Ghost's Song", namely those that constitute mateship as a masculinist creed, represent the commonest usage of the word in Australia because the word's usage "almost always was masculine" (139). But his selection of literary examples is limited to a very narrow group that supports his argument. Admittedly he is not alone in this selectivity because most influential references to mateship, like those cited in The Australian National Dictionary for instance, do not cite writers like Rosa Praed, Ada Cambridge or Katharine Susannah Prichard (to mention just a few), whose texts depict mateship meanings at variance with the masculinist meaning. It can therefore be argued that the masculinist application of mateship that Hornadge concentrates on was applicable in some circumstances, but was not the only or even the primary meaning of mateship. It can further be argued that this addition of the masculine to the meaning of the word mate and masculinist overtones to the word mateship is a peculiarly Australian phenomenon because it either only occurred totally in Australia, or was only recorded in Australian texts.

Hornadge acknowledges this discrepancy when he states that the word <u>mate</u> has multiple meanings in its Australian context (136); but he negates non-gendered meanings when he states that "mateship", the concept of which mate is a part, is "almost entirely masculine in expression" (136). Hornadge does not specifically deal with the addition of masculine gender to the Australian usage of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u>; but he does limit discussion of the possibility of other meanings by making the masculine meaning appear to have universal acceptance. There is also a further discrepancy in Hornadge's account of the usage of the word <u>mateship</u>: while he suggests that the word was generally considered to be masculine, his analysis of the etymology of the word does not support his claim. The etymology that Hornadge traces suggests that <u>mateship</u> is applied in Australian English in a way that is similar to its pre-Australian common gender denotation (137). Hornadge traces the masculinist meaning and the common gender meaning of <u>mate</u> and the "mateship concept" through different pathways of etymological evolution. According to Hornadge, the masculinist usage of the word <u>mate</u> refers to "a close (male) companion or associate", and this meaning originated from the Middle English word <u>make</u> (136). But in the <u>Middle English Dictionary</u>, <u>make</u> did not denote exclusively male companions. Rather, <u>make</u> could clearly represent either sex:

> (a) Either of a married human couple, mate, husband, wife; (b) either of a non-human couple, bird, animal or fish; a mate; (c) either of a betrothed human couple; also, lover, paramour, mistress; (d) <u>fig</u>. a person as a bride of Christ; also, Christ as bridegroom; (e) consort; queen. (52)

This common gender meaning for <u>make</u> is confirmed in <u>The English Dialect Dictionary</u> (1970). According to the references I consulted, <u>make</u> is defined as a "match, equal, fellow, 'marrow', a friend, companion, consort, 'mate' " (20). Such common gender usage is also confirmed by <u>The Scottish National Dictionary</u> (1965), which includes all Scottish words "known to be in use or to have been in use since c.1700" (Title page). If the word <u>mate</u> originated from the Middle English word <u>make</u>, mates were equals and definitely not exclusively males.

Hornadge traces the Australian application of the word <u>mateship</u> to the word <u>marrow</u> (137). He states that this "now (almost) obsolete north of England term" possibly evolved

from French and Latin origins (137). But my research shows that <u>marrow</u> is recorded in <u>The English Dialect Dictionary</u> as meaning a "match, equal; an exact counterpart or likeness, a facsimile" (41). <u>Marrow</u> does not appear in the <u>Middle English Dictionary</u> suggesting that the word was not originally French and could have come into English usage via a Gaelic influence from the Scottish, Welsh or Irish languages. <u>Marrow</u> is indeed listed with a similar meaning in <u>The Scottish National Dictionary</u> (210). In <u>A Dictionary of Lowland Scotch</u> (1888), <u>marrow</u> is listed as having been derived from the Gaelic "mar", meaning "like, similar" (128). Like the previously mentioned references this dictionary shows that <u>marrow</u> is not associated with a particular sex:

> Marrow, one of a pair, a mate, a companion, an equal, a sweetheart [...]. This word is beautifully applied to a lover or wedded partner, as one whose mind is the exact counterpart of that of the object of his affection. (128)

By an association of <u>mateship</u> with <u>mate</u> in the same sense that <u>friendship</u> is associated with <u>friend</u>, if <u>marrow</u> is not gender specific, then it can be assumed that mateship is likewise applied without reference to sex. Hornadge's failure to confirm the masculine reading that he advocates as the basis of Australian mateship can be therefore read as supporting my argument that at least two forms of mateship – an inclusive unity and an exclusive men's creed – co-exist.

Like Hornadge, Wilkes also offers a gendered definition for <u>mate</u> in <u>A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms</u> (1996). Here, while a mate is "an habitual companion; a working partner; a fellow-participant in some corporate activity," a mate is "always a man" (245). Unlike Hornadge, Wilkes leaves no doubt as to the significance of sex to the word. He does not accept that Australian mateship could ever apply to females because he states that <u>mate</u> in its "characteristically Australian sense […] belongs to an association of two men" (<u>Exploring</u>, 42). His exclusion of "the opposite sex" is most emphatic: " [Mateship] is a relationship between men which may be stronger than any relationship with a woman, and indeed 'mates' have some obligation to stand together against the woman's world" (<u>Exploring</u> 42). Even though it seems, as Wilkes points out, the word <u>mate</u> can be used as a mode of address with variations in meaning from friendliness to hostility, it is not usually applied to females.

However, the historically fixed denotations of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u>, as established from the words' etymologies, indicate that their meanings did change in Australian English. The origin of the words might be uncertain in some degree: any one or all of the alternatives <u>marrow</u>, <u>make</u> or the <u>mate</u> of German origins could have contributed to the evolution of the word <u>mate</u>. But what is clear is that the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> were not recorded as having sex associated with their usage in any of the dialects that formed the basis for Australian English. In Australia, <u>mateship</u> acquired a new dimension in the significance of the friendship relationship that it signified; and it also acquired strong associations with the masculine sex.

4. Australian mateship is not only for men

It was argued in Chapter One that the claim that mateship was a fraternal bond and that mates were always men, is not universally agreed. As Baker defines it, mateship was something beyond the simple idea of friendship (<u>Australian</u> 165). No sex was stipulated, so those sharing mateship could have been women. Many writers have agreed and, in their depictions of the convention, mates are women and men, and mateship is the spirit of mutual care and concern that Baker describes.

Caroline Leakey, for example, describes convict women as mates in <u>The Broad Arrow</u> (1859). Convict Martha Grylls was ordered by a prison officer "to curtsey the same as your mates" to "her betters" (17-8). William Derrincourt, whose memoirs of colonial life, <u>Old Convict Days</u> (1899), are claimed to be "one of the best first-hand accounts ever written about the convict settlers of early Australia", used the word <u>mate</u> for male and female working partners (Editor's Note). Derrincourt had a mining partner whom he described as his "girl mate"; a "young, tall and slender girl" named Rose Hinton (170). The pair helped each other to work neighbouring claims, and the congenial relationship was only ended when Derrincourt's wife became jealous of the friendship (179).

It is in marital relations that mateship finds its fullest expression in Rosa Praed's <u>Lady Bridget in the Never-Never Land</u> (1915). Colin McKeith proposes marriage to Lady

Bridget on the basis of mateship. She accepts on the condition that she and Colin will always be mates in the egalitarian sense that he describes (97). Ada Cambridge's <u>A Marked Man</u> (1891) is a story of mateship between Richard Delavel and Constance Bethune. They met when Richard, who was a penniless self-exile from England, was trying to make a new life in Australia. He fell ill and Constance nursed him back to health. They fell in love, but Richard was already married, albeit unhappily. The two became life-long mates even though their mateship over the next forty years could only be held in their hearts as other spouses, time and distance separated them. They shared a brief three years of marriage after the death of their respective spouses, but Constance's illness caused her untimely death. On her deathbed, she "lifted her arms to her faithful mate [Richard]", who hugged her gently as a mother rocks a child in pain (322). Richard was unable to cope with her loss and he died soon after. In the context of such colonial marriages, Baker notes that in Australian "river words" (the language of early colonials who used the rivers to travel), the wife of a captain travelling with her husband was referred to as "a long-haired mate" (<u>Australian</u> 111). In contrast to the amicable mateship described between married couples however, Barbara Baynton's story, "Squeaker's Mate" (1902), demonstrates that men's commitment to the mateship between them impacted negatively on relations between men and women. (See Chapter Five.) Mary's efforts are recognised by the men of neighbouring properties: " 'Squeaker's mate' the men called her, and these agreed that she was the best long-haired mate that ever stepped in petticoats" (15). Clearly, this is recognition of mateship in its inclusive sense. Yet no man speaks a word in her defence or lifts a hand in mateship to save her from the barbarous treatment inflicted upon her by her "mate", Squeaker. This, in contrast, is mateship of the exclusive kind that destroys inclusive mateship between husband and wife.

Depictions of inclusive mateship are not limited to the 1890s and early 1900s: they have persisted across time and appear in a wide variety of fictional and non-fictional texts. Laura Palmer-Archer's stories in <u>A Bush Honeymoon and Other Stories</u> (1904) portray mateship among men, women and children in isolated bush society. (See Chapter Seven.) Eve Langley's <u>The Pea-Pickers</u> (1942) and its sequel <u>White Topee</u> (1954) chronicle the adventures of the picaresque character Steve in her dramatic search for fame and love.

Steve and her sister, Blue, share mateship with male mates Jim, Kelly, Macca and Charles in <u>The Pea-Pickers</u> as they survive the itinerant lifestyle of fruit and vegetable pickers. The woman who Steve affectionately names "the Black Serpent" and her husband Edgar, along with Macca, Kelly and the Italian workers who bring Steve her cherished music and poetry, all share inclusive mateship in <u>White Topee</u>.

Joan and Ted's marriage is an instance of inclusive mateship in Olga Masters' "The Children Are Coming" (1982) and the story relates how Ted chooses mateship with his wife over mateship with his friend Wally. Joan and Ted have four children and several grandchildren, and Ted believes that Joan does too much for the children, and that their marriage is suffering because she cannot deny them anything. At the time the story takes place, they are arguing over the children and, in response to Ted's threat to leave, Joan tells him that she needs him to help her stand up to the children. Their argument is interrupted by the arrival of Wally, Ted's fellow taxi driver and mate of many years. Wally has turned to Ted for help because his de facto wife's son has ordered him to leave. Ted welcomes Wally and seems proud of his friend, but his loyalty lies with Joan and the children in spite of his disapproval of them. Wally needs a place to stay, but Ted uses his daughter's imminent return home as an excuse for not giving him the spare room. When Ted's two mates, Joan and Wally, are brought together and he is forced to choose between them, he chooses Joan.

In Kate Grenville's <u>Lilian's Story</u> (1985) depictions of inclusive mateship between Lilian and Duncan, Lilian and F. J. Stroud and Lilian and her female mates, Ursula and Joan, parallel the depictions of exclusive mateship between Rick and his gang of mates. What Lilian describes as one of her happiest moments was when Duncan called her "a good mate" (110), and she thinks of their relationship as mateship rather than as the intimacy between men and women that forms part of marriage (134). Yet the greatest torment in Lilian's childhood was being rejected from the exclusive mateship of Rick's gang. The parallel between the instances of inclusive mateship and exclusive mateship in this novel serves to show how women can be mates with men or each other, but they cannot participate in mateship of the exclusive kind.

Patsy Adam-Smith describes inclusive mateship in her <u>Goodbye Girlie</u> (1994) as a spirit of especially close camaraderie that existed among army personnel (66). She had a mate named Phyllis. One nurse tells Patsy that it is "mateship and camaraderie" that make their work effort effective (68). Melina Marchetta's <u>Looking for Alibrandi</u> (1992) depicts Jacob Coote and his Australian-born Italian girlfriend, Josephine, as "mates" (122), and the two young people support each other through the difficulties of their last year at secondary school and through the problems associated with growing up.

These instances of inclusive mateship in fictional narratives are paralleled by depictions of inclusive mateship in contemporary media, and this continued usage confirms the assumption that women could be, and still can be referred to as mates. In 1999 for instance, Michael Beh bases the argument in his "Mate, I've just got to be me, me, me" on the premise that the "Australian institution of mateship" is universally accepted as an altruistic bond among Australians. No sex is specified in the text. According to Beh, this bond, the "very cement of our national character", is apparently under threat from the economic forces that are pressuring people to think less of their neighbours and more of themselves (11). In February 2001, a picture of Peter Beattie, Premier of Queensland, out walking with his wife and dog, had the caption, "Best mates keep Pete's ego on short leash" (Franklin1). Another article in <u>The Courier Mail</u> 25 May 2001, "Friendly approach to children", has the lead paragraph: "You were the best of mates and then children came along" (Burke 16). Women here are mates, and the article discusses how children often come between women who were mates before motherhood.

Media usage of the word <u>mate</u> likewise shows that the word continues to be a familiar form of address among females and males alike. One example of this was in May 2000 after Nigel Parodi gunned down three Queensland police officers. Constable Sharnell Cole was said to have forced herself to stay conscious after being shot in order "to look after my mates" (two male officers) (Doneman 4). Again in December of the same year, young male and female cadets told an army inquiry how they fought to save their "mate", Karl Sperling, from drowning (Nolan 5). More recently, usage of the word mate in

association with the Academy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles demonstrated the currency, and widespread acceptance of the common gender application of the word. Headlines in The Courier Mail on the 26 March 2001, "Crowe shuns glamour for night with mates", proclaimed that Australian actor, Russel Crowe, preferred celebrating his Oscar with his mates (male and female) (Mathewson, Crowe 3).

Regardless of the meanings that are attached to the usage of the words mate and mateship, the belief that mateship expresses something uniquely Australian has been firmly embedded in popular conceptions (or misconceptions) of national discourses of Australian identity. This was apparent in Prince Charles's address at the opening of Australia's Federation exhibition in London in March 2001, when he observed that mateship, along with courage, initiative and teamwork, exemplified "not only the spirit of the Australian army, but of the whole Australian nation" (Marshallsea 16).

Although this belief represents one of the widely held assumptions about mateship, it is not the dominant meaning of Australian mateship. In spite of the textual evidence implying that mateship is an inclusive convention, the meaning that dominates common understanding is that mateship is a masculinist creed and, as such, mateship becomes what Weedon would call "an important site of political struggle" (24). It constructs through language a concept of inclusiveness for all Australians, but in a paradoxical way it also constitutes social power in favour of the masculine. One example of how subtly this designation of social power means that women can be excluded from mateship at the moment of inclusion is shown in Nick Enright's Blackrock (1996). Throughout the play, Jared's mother, Diane, addresses her son as "mate", but there is an artificial sound to the familiarity that the application of the word suggests. It is clear that when the word mate is used among males, there is equality and respect, but there is no such association when the word is used between mother and son. The males' various responses to Diane reinforce her subordination to masculine control against the patriarchal backdrop of community life. Rather than being included in men's mateship by language, that is by the word mate, Diane is seen as a pretentious interloper in the world of men when she uses the familiar term of address. Diane uses men's language, but she fails to meet the criteria for inclusion in their

fraternity because she is a woman. The outcome is that Diane is excluded from mateship at the same moment that it pretends to include her.

It is argued here that one of mateship's most visible political contests is over power between the sexes. This argument is based on the obvious discrepancy that occurs when mateship is constituted as a creed that excludes women yet somehow also manages to function as an egalitarian component of national discourses. Egalitarianism constitutes inclusion but in egalitarian mateship, biological "difference" constitutes exclusion for the feminine. The two most popular meanings for mateship are thus at the ends of the dichotomy inclusive and exclusive. These meanings construct very different concepts of social reality, very different modes of femininity and masculinity, and very different outcomes for women and men.

Conclusion

There is subliminal cultural pressure to accept the version of reality in which mateship as the masculine bond is "the mateship" that is thought of as being a significant aspect of Australianness. The masculine gender is thereby transferred to Australian identity. The support for this domination by the masculine through mateship is particularly apparent in the commonly held beliefs that connect mateship to the myths of Australian nationalism, and to the mixed heritage of narratives that construct Australia's past. Some of those myths are nationalist in a common gender framework, while others are strongly masculinist. For some people, mateship is a uniting empathy drawn from Australia's past hardships. For others, the "battler" origins that focus mateship are those of gallant forefathers fighting against "blacks" and resisting invasion by "Asian immigrants" to forge a nation from the virgin but threatening bush environment. In these myth-making texts, foremothers are mostly absent, while men conduct the business of nation building alone in their mateship with other men. But the national discourses of which mateship is a central component still somehow pretend to represent the feminine as well as the masculine in representations of Australianness. These inconsistencies in the meanings for mateship in

narratives from past historic moments to the present compel a rethinking of the meaning of Australian mateship.

Chapter Three   The Discourses of Mateship
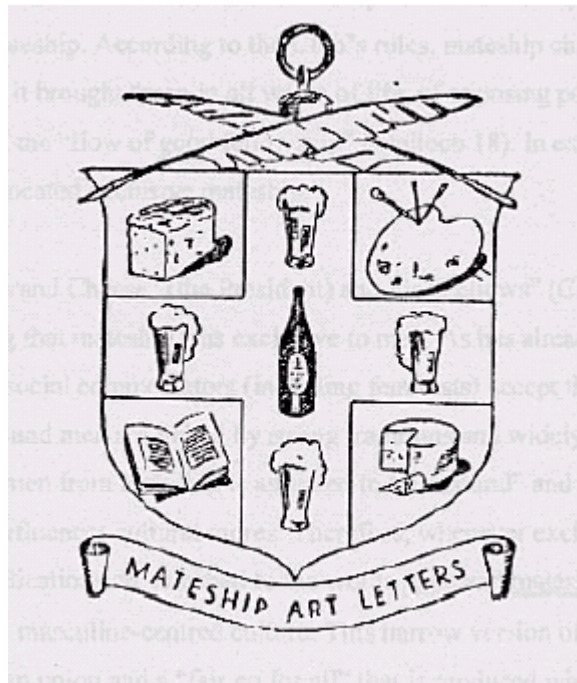
Mateship Art Letters

Motto of the Bread and Cheese Club
Inaugural meeting – 5 June 1938, Melbourne.

As set out in the rules, drawn by the Club's honorary solicitor, […] the
main objects of the Club are as follows: – "To promote mateship and
fellowship among persons of mutual interests, to foster a knowledge of
Australian Literature, Art and Music and to cultivate an Australian
sentiment; and generally, to assist in every way possible in the
publication and distribution of the works and productions of members
and others interested in the main objects of the Club, and to endorse
and carry out any schemes or projects relevant to such objects."
(Malloch 17)

The Bread and Cheese Club, formed on 5 June 1938 in Melbourne, was based upon Bohemian ideals with the strict edict that membership was for men only (Malloch 11). Its primary tenet was mateship. According to the Club's rules, mateship characterised their membership because it brought "men in all walks of life, of opposing policies and differing religions" together in the "flow of good fellowship" (Malloch 18). In excluding women though, the Club advocated exclusive mateship.

The "Knight Grand Cheese" (the President) and his "Fellows" (Club members) were not alone in believing that mateship was exclusive to men. As has already been argued, many historians and social commentators (including feminists) accept that national discourses, mateship and men are linked by strong traditions and widely accepted truths. The exclusion of women from mateship is assumed to be "natural" and that understanding of mateship in turn influences cultural mores. Therefore, whenever exclusive mateship is promoted, sexist implications are attached to the words mate and mateship, which in turn produces a sense of a masculine-centred culture. This narrow version of mateship contests the sense of egalitarian union and a "fair go for all" that is produced whenever inclusive mateship is described. Inclusive mateship produces a unitive culture that goes well with the fact that, since Australia's inception as a penal colony, it has always had a multicultural population and an egalitarian outlook. This image of Australians linked in egalitarianism by bonds of mateship is just as strongly believed as the link between Australia, mateship and men.

Both versions of mateship are thought of as Australian mateship, but since they oppose each other it is difficult to reconcile the two within a single convention. They can be reconciled though if mateship is thought of as a discourse instead of as a convention. Convention here is understood as "a textual or social practice shared by members of a culture or subculture" (O'Sullivan 64). According to Brian Moon, a discourse is "a category of language which relates to particular social practices" (38) operating "according to unwritten rules about who can speak, who is spoken to, and what kinds of things can be talked about"; and ultimately, as mateship does in Australian culture, operating "according

to certain relations of power" (36). In this chapter I will argue that Australian mateship is a discourse that has two major discursive forms – inclusive and exclusive.

In the first section I explain why mateship is categorised as a discourse, and I demonstrate why it is useful to define mateship in this way. Michel Foucault's theory of discourse is used to explain how mateship, which is commonly thought of as a masculine creed, is actually two discourses – inclusive and exclusive. I explain how the discourses are separate entities because each empowers a different group of people. Texts cited include Mary Grant Bruce's Mates at Billabong (1911), Henry Lawson's "Meeting Old Mates" (1894), and his "Telling Mrs Baker" (1901).

In Section Two, I examine mateship and egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is regarded as a central component of mateship and Australianness, but I demonstrate how inclusive mateship is the only truly egalitarian discourse. Texts cited include Curlew's "The Sandy-Whiskered Bloke" (1895), Laura Palmer-Archer's "Cassidy's Mick" (1904), Edward Dyson's "The Two Macks" (1895), Henry Lawson's "The Shearers" (1901), P. Luftig's "Comrades" (1898), Oscar Walter's "The Drink Before You Go" (1927), and Rosa Praed's Lady Bridget in the Never-Never Land: A Story of Australian Life (1915).

In Section Three I explain how each of the mateship discourses – inclusive and exclusive – empowers different groups of people. Inclusive mateship empowers all people without discrimination, and I demonstrate this with reference to Robert Goodwin's Mates and Memories: Recollections of the 2/10th Field Regiment R. A. A. (1995), Phillip Knightley's Australia: A Biography of a Nation (2000), Peter Henning's Doomed Battalion: Mateship and Leadership in War and Captivity (1995), and Henry Lawson's "The Australian Cinematograph" (1897). Exclusive mateship is shown to be a discourse that empowers select men only and I demonstrate this with reference to Henry Lawson's "Their Mate's Honour" (1908).

1. Why define mateship as a discourse?

It has already been noted that, when mateship is spoken of as an exclusive fraternal bond that operates in select men's groups, it is often referred to as a creed. A creed is defined in the Macquarie Study Dictionary (1998) as "any system of belief"(158), and while a "creed" as such can describe mateship in the limited sense of a loyal brotherhood of men in certain groups and circumstances, it is too simple a term to describe adequately the various dimensions of the inclusive and exclusive applications of mateship. In Chapter Two it was argued from the etymology of mate and mateship that the meanings that evolved for the words in Australian English were a response to the physical, social and emotional aspects of colonial life, and that the words also gained cultural significance, and upon that basis it is argued in this thesis that mateship is more than a simple system of beliefs. Mateship, it is suggested, is a complex convention that applies across various social settings and classes. As such, it determines cultural practices, some of which, like the emphasis on the masculine in exclusive mateship, and the emphasis on egalitarianism in inclusive mateship, have had a marked influence upon social relations. In thus acting as a cultural determinant, mateship constructs distinctive power relations that vary according to its manifestation as either inclusive or exclusive. Mateship can therefore be described as a discourse when discourse is defined as: "language in use in a particular setting, including considerations of the historical period, social setting and cultural practices that combine to produce the communicative habits of a particular speech community" (Macquarie Study Dictionary 192). I will argue that the confusion that surrounds mateship because it is thought of as being both male-dominated and egalitarian can be resolved if mateship is treated as two distinct but related discourses: exclusive which is masculinist, and inclusive mateship which is egalitarian.

Defining mateship as a discourse draws upon the poststructuralist argument that "discourses are power relations" (O'Sullivan 94), which "shape the attitudes, behaviours and power relations of the people involved" (Moon 38), and as Chris Weedon argues, provide "a structuring principle of society, in social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity" (41). Mateship constructs power relations in Australian culture,

and, as I will argue, defining mateship as a discourse helps explain two otherwise contradictory facets of Australian mateship: firstly that mateship is commonly thought to be both egalitarian and exclusive to men when it is impossible to be both simultaneously; and secondly, that the exclusive form of mateship dominates the understanding of mateship in Australian culture even though it coexists with the inclusive form of mateship.

Michel Foucault's theory of discourse can be used firstly to explain how exclusive and inclusive mateship are confused, and secondly to separate the two forms of mateship, and thereby resolve the confusion. He argues that discourses coexist in relation to each other within a field of force relations that produces the dynamic relationship he calls "power" (Sex 1 92). According to Foucault, discourses circulate in an environment of various "force relations" where different and even contradictory discourses "can exist within the same strategy", circulating "without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy" (Sex I 102). Discourse must be thought of "as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable", yet it is in discourse that "power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault, Sex 1, 100). This explains how it is possible that the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses can be confused as one discourse: they share the knowledge that union defeats adversity and connected to that, the egalitarian desire commonly described as "a fair go for all", and they are both empowering in their own ways.

But inclusive and exclusive mateship are not the same discourse and Foucault's theory explains how they can be distinct. According to Foucault, discourses are not fixed as submissive or oppositional forces to power; they are "both an instrument and an effect of power" as well as a "hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Sex 1 101). Discourse therefore "transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Sex 1 101). Exclusive and inclusive mateship both empower people, but they do so for different groups, transmitting and producing power for some while simultaneously depriving others of it. Using Foucault's terminology, exclusive and inclusive mateship are "instruments" and "effects" of power, and it is this issue of power

that demonstrates the division of the two discourses and confirms their separate identities. Exclusive mateship empowers some males and thereby takes power from the men and women it excludes; so while exclusive mateship can reinforce power, it can also undermine power. Inclusive mateship likewise produces and undermines power: it empowers those who are excluded from exclusive mateship, but it undermines the power given to men by the exclusive mateship discourse. Since the objects of power differ for inclusive and exclusive mateship, that is the people they include are not the same, each discourse's power outcome is distinct, and the two discourses cannot be the same: rather they are brought into conflict and oppose each other, and they must therefore be thought of as two different discourses. In saying that there are two distinct discursive forms of mateship though, it must not be forgotten that they are both part of what is thought of as Australian mateship.

It was pointed out in Chapter Two that exclusive mateship dominates the mateship image in Australian culture, and therefore inclusive mateship, though it persists in social usage, acts as a reverse or oppositional discourse when the two are related as components of Australian mateship. Weedon's examination of discourse, power and social relations, helps to explain the confusion that occurs when exclusive and inclusive mateship are related in this dichotomy of exclusive-dominant/inclusive-reverse. Weedon argues that power is a by-product of the interaction between discourses: it is a relation which "inheres in difference and is a dynamic of control and lack of control between discourses and the subjects, constituted by discourses, who are their agents", and further, power "is exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects" (113). From this reasoning, it can be argued that the dominant seek to maintain control through a discursive influence on culture, while the excluded others seek to undo that control by means of what becomes a reverse discourse at the moment of contest between the two groups. This power relationship between exclusive and inclusive mateship brings about a strange set of circumstances: firstly mateship is thought of as one convention with odd and inexplicable inconsistencies; and secondly, the egalitarianism that is truly enacted in inclusive mateship is credited to exclusive mateship, along with the belief that mateship is a masculinist creed. According to this contradictory but nonetheless commonly accepted understanding of mateship, what egalitarianism is supposed to express – equality of

everyone – is an unexplained component of the mateship that does not equally include or empower everyone.

The conflation of inclusive and exclusive mateship is deliberate, and the issue at stake between the two discourses is cultural power: exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse that uses inclusive mateship's egalitarian sentiments to mask its underlying intent to produce power relations that favour a select group within Australian society; namely some males. Exclusive mateship seeks to render culture male-dominated through its construction of modes of masculine and feminine subjectivity that reproduce dominant males and submissive females; while inclusive mateship opposes it in seeking to empower everyone. As a dominant discourse, exclusive mateship is one which, according to Moon, operates from a "position of power" (36); it allows those men to whom it gives power to speak at the same moment that it silences, and thereby takes power from, those it defines as "others", that is, women and those men who do not fit its peculiar mode of masculinity. But inclusive mateship also establishes power, so that in spite of being silenced or marginalised by exclusive mateship, the discourse does not go away, and the "others" – those it empowers – do not disappear or become mute. Exclusion unites them and they speak through alternative or oppositional discourses. As Weedon argues, reverse discourses enable "the subjected subject of a discourse to speak in her own right" (109). In the case of mateship, excluded others are empowered by inclusive mateship, so their collective voice persists in society, and hence, as previously argued, examples of inclusive mateship can be found in various fictional and non-fictional texts spanning Australian history from 1788 to the present.

When mateship is read as two separate discourses, inclusive and exclusive, it becomes clear that those who are not mates in exclusive mateship can still be mates in inclusive mateship, and this outcome is consistent with the representation of society reflected in literature. If mateship was peculiarly a creed that extended egalitarianism only to men (and that is hard to imagine given the meaning of egalitarianism) there would be no trace of inclusive mateship: women would not be portrayed as mates; men would not be

mates with women, and no men would be excluded from mateship; but literary evidence refutes all of these assumptions.

When mateship is represented as the exclusive discourse in a fictional or non-fictional text, it reflects egalitarianism and essential Australianness; but when the characters are analysed with respect to the society constituted in the text, then egalitarianism exists only between males. Further, personal power is disproportional as males are empowered and females are subordinated to the males. Mary Grant Bruce's Mates at Billabong (1911) demonstrates these contradictions by depicting mateship as an accepted component of Australianness and, while pretending to include females in the mateship of bush life, making it very clear that they are excluded from this essentially masculine bond. The image of men and women presented within this children's story suggests that girls/women are not as important or as powerful as boys/men in bush life, and that the sexes are not equal in any way. This image leads to the assumption that women's input into Australian culture is insignificant in comparison with men's. Furthermore, Bruce's story demonstrates how exclusive mateship's relations between the sexes gained popular acceptance in spite of the obvious bias in power relations.

Bruce's series of Billabong books, written for children, commenced in 1910 with the publication of A Little Bush Maid (1910). Norah, the "little bush maid", is the main character, but it is her brother Jim who takes centre stage in Mates at Billabong. In this story, Bruce has child heroes dealing expertly (in very adult ways) with the daily routines of station existence, but it is the boys whose contribution is recognised, while Norah's input, although described as vital to the family's existence, is placed a distant second. Norah is a good friend, sister and daughter to her family and acquaintances, yet her sex precludes her from equality with the male characters. She is portrayed as "a true little bush woman", skilled at all kinds of station tasks and extremely adept at housekeeping and caring for the menfolk, but every bit a woman who maintains the style of gracious but subordinated femininity that complements the image of courageous, dominant masculinity. After a hard day's mustering, for example, Norah comes to dinner "in a white frock, with her curls unusually tidy", and in being thus represented, she presents a stereotypical image

of wholesome, graceful but decorative femininity in comparison to her father who, in not changing for dinner because he is attending to business, presents a stereotypical male image of importance (22). Women's insignificance in this masculinist version of social relations is endorsed when Norah is shown to listen attentively to her father as he rages against his sister for not "writing legibly" in her efforts to economise by crisscrossing notepaper with her writing (22-3). Father's mocking his sister to Norah negates any feminine influence that the woman might have on the motherless Norah. By keeping this aunt, "who disapproved strongly of his upbringing of Norah" (23), absent from the girl's life, he is leaving the child vulnerable to the moulding of her womanhood by himself and the men around her. The whole scene connects men and women in a power relation of superior and inferior, and thereby endorses the cultural superiority of the masculine over the feminine.

This subordination of females to males in the society of station life is further represented in other incidents in which Norah is denied a part in the central action of the story. One such incident occurs when Norah is told she cannot take part in, or even watch, the branding of cattle, even though she has been expertly mustering all day. Instead, Norah is despatched to housekeeping duties against her wishes, and to finishing the socks for her brother's Christmas present (21-2). But Norah does not question, let alone rebel against, the role that she is given, and this acceptance further endorses the correctness of the images of masculinity and femininity being presented in the stories. At fourteen, Norah already understands clearly that a woman's role is to "mother" men, and there is an overriding theme of the girl's taking pain upon herself on behalf of the males. The males' attitude towards Norah is one of protection of a pet or piece of property, keeping her as a "little mate" outside the mateship that exists among men and from which, as a woman, she is excluded. The repeated mention of Norah's feelings of uncertainty about her femininity (142), and the similarly repeated reassurances that she receives from her brother and father that her isolated station upbringing will fit her for what the future has in store for her (223), reinforce the subordinated feminine subjectivity promoted by the exclusive mateship discourse that dominates the novel from its title to its closing lines. Even the fact that Norah depends on the males of her acquaintance for feedback on her femininity is evidence

that she is being coached as the "good woman type" that men assume is their fit complement. The story's final scene shows Norah willingly accepting a feminine role that her father wants of her, and she is shown to be contented with her place as a "little mate" outside men's real mateship:

> "And I can't talk prettily – you know, like Cecil did; and I don't know a single blessed thing about fancywork! I'd – I'd hate you to be ashamed of me, Dad, dear!"
> "Ashamed?" He held her close; and when he spoke again there was something in his voice that made Norah suddenly content.
> "Little mate!" was all he said. (223)

The placement of Norah outside men's influential social position conveys the sense that women's contribution to Australian culture is less significant than men's and therefore, the textual reproduction of exclusive mateship, like that in Bruce's Billabong stories, achieves dual objectives. It presents these versions of masculinity and femininity as factual representations of Australian people, and it reproduces these social relations as natural ways of being, that is as "facts" or "truths". Both of these objectives convey exclusive mateship's power relations to future generations, and thus encourage the continuation of the masculinist domination that exclusive mateship constitutes. Prue McKay speaks of the image of life that Bruce depicted as being something that appeared real and truthful: "When I was young the world she described was very real to me because of her ability to select and portray the high points of the common experience of bush life" (1). She argues that the "Billabong books struck a deep chord in the Australian psyche when they began to appear in 1910", and she claims that the novels were extremely popular and highly influential upon Australian children (1). To the extent that such stories carried the exclusive mateship image onto successive generations, Bruce's work, which was widely read, helped to shape the way children later thought as adults. Geoffrey Dutton, for example, argues that Bruce's version of bush life had a huge influence on many of Australia's writers: the "children's books these writers read were those that gave them the strongest sense of belonging to Australia" and of these, "Mary Grant Bruce was the most popular writer (read by as many boys as girls)" (49).

McKay claims that Bruce was "a central component in the creation of the Australian legend" (Jacket). Herein lies one means by which exclusive mateship gained prominence in descriptions of mateship, and by which its associated construction of male-female relations were promulgated in fictional and non-fictional literature. The mateship that Bruce portrays is exclusive, and it reproduces a dominant masculine and a silenced feminine. This male-dominant power structure is reproduced in the way in which mateship exists between the men, while it only seems that women are included as equals. Women appear to be included in men's mateship in incidents like name calling and inclusion in men's chores, but while this pretence allows women to assume equality, they are actually excluded and therefore maintained in their position as subordinated "others". Yet this artificial inclusion of females in mateship mimics egalitarian-styled inclusive mateship, so to those children who read Bruce's stories, the exclusive form of mateship, with its dominant men and submissive women, became accepted as the mateship convention.

Bruce was representing a style of family life in which patriarchal values were dominant, and while such families did exist, it cannot be argued that they were the only style of relations between men and women. Likewise it cannot be argued that the exclusive mateship associated with such representations of society was the only form of mateship. Yet it would appear so from Bruce's novels in which the exclusive version of mateship is represented as a "natural" part of childhood. This assumption that exclusive mateship was the natural form of mateship was consolidated during the period 1885-1925, especially through texts, like the stories of Henry Lawson's that promoted an exclusive reading of the mateship discourse. Stories like "Meeting Old Mates" (1894) show the pleasurable release that mates feel away from women's company (379). The mates, Tom and Joe, are very uncomfortable in the presence of Tom's mother and sisters, and their trip to the nearest "pub" shows the pair escaping from their "female persecutors" by fleeing to the hotel's woman-free territory. The men's mateship is described as natural and joyously masculine: "Oh, there's no smile like the smile that old mates favour each other with over the tops of their glasses when they meet again after years" (379). The comic image of men escaping from the house in order to drink together has a serious side in suggesting that men seek, and deserve, liberty from the unwarranted stress that women place upon them. But the

depiction of exclusive mateship inherent in this incident shows that men and women are separated into different social spheres according to the dichotomy powerful/powerless. Men's place is one of power and liberation in the public domain (the sphere of importance), while women's is one of powerlessness and isolation in the private or domestic domain (the sphere of unimportance). What is perhaps more detrimental to relations between the sexes in this depiction of mateship is that men and women are made into antagonists because men's power is made out to be natural, and women's attempts at disrupting that power are therefore unnatural. Further, it is implied that women spoil men's pleasure when they threaten men's power with their stifling dependence and emasculating domesticity, while exclusive mateship protects men from women's attacks on their power, liberty and manhood.

In the style of story that Lawson wrote in "Meeting Old Mates", men are united in exclusive mateship, and they put their mates and mateship before their marriages and families. This representation of men uniting against women is another means by which women's contribution to life, society and culture is diminished in relation to men's. The division of the sexes by exclusive mateship is developed as a theme in Lawson's "Telling Mrs Baker" (1901). Mrs Baker's husband Bob is a drover who presents as a weak character with a penchant for drink and no sense for business. He wastes his money and spends his time carousing with the barmaids he meets along the track. He has no scruples as he is said to have seduced the wives of some of his mates. Those who know Bob acknowledge that he neglects his wife and children, but he is still thought of by his male friends as a good mate in spite of his foibles:

> He'd been a jolly, open-handed, popular man, which means that he'd been a selfish man as far as his wife and children were concerned, for they had to suffer for it to the end. (58)

Exclusive mateship's separation of the sexes is apparent in the way that Bob's mates protect his memory in the telling of his passing, even though they empathise with the wife and children he wrongs.

Male indiscretions are acceptable to a man's mates. Bob Baker has two very loyal mates, Andy and Jack who, while aware of Bob's weaknesses, remain loyal to him even

though they do not condone his behaviour. After Bob's death, Andy tells Bob's young son Bobby that his father has gone to heaven (62), so while they argue over what Mrs Baker should be told about her husband's death, they agree that the boy should be given the idea that his father was a good man. In this lie, the glorified image of man and the strength of men's mateship are passed to the next generation through a very vulnerable child. As for what should be said to Mrs Baker, the mates cannot decide if it is better to tell her the truth or a lie. At one stage they agree that if Mrs Baker knows that Bob "was only a selfish, drunken blackguard she might get over it all the sooner", but Andy ends the discussion by opting to protect their dead mate, saying, "even if she is a sensible woman, we've got a dead mate to consider as well as a living woman" (60). The men decide to defend the dead mate, a course of action that Graeme Turner reads as making "a testimony to the strength of the links forged in the Australian bush" (95), to which I would add that the links forged between men by means of the depictions of exclusive mateship included a dominant masculine and a subordinated feminine. Evidence for this argument lies in the fact that the story can also be read as showing that, according to exclusive mateship, abusing women and children was not as serious a crime as disloyalty to male mates – in death as in life – because women are apparently the cause of men's problems. Bob Baker cursed his wife and children for "dragging him down to hell" (59), but he chose to work as a drover and to live away from home because he enjoyed the freedom from domestic responsibility. As the story reads, Bob's problems stemmed from Mrs Baker's marrying the wrong brother: she had "picked the wrong man – as girls mostly do" (60). Turning the blame on to Mrs Baker in this way suggests that women are powerful (a suggestion not upheld in the way women are treated by men in such stories) and that men must "stick together" to survive against them. Mateship, it seems, provides the means of men's union against women and, it must be added, the idea that women can have power over men in the domestic sphere seems to provide an excuse for exclusive mateship.

Reading mateship as a discourse therefore provides the means by which the two forms of mateship can be identified as separate entities, and explained on the basis of each discourse's empowering role in culture. Exclusive mateship empowers and therefore privileges the masculine, even though only select males are represented by it. Exclusive

mateship only purports to be egalitarian because empowering males alone excludes half of the population (women) and a further proportion of the population in rejecting those men who do not fit within its limited parameters of masculinity. Egalitarianism is the founding sentiment of mateship, but it is only truly a sentiment of inclusive mateship because this is the mateship discourse of universal mutual concern. It is this discourse that empowers all Australians. Inclusive mateship includes the original spirit of courage, tenacity, inventiveness and the will to endure that first circulated as a discourse that underpinned the survival of white Australians during the establishment of the colony 1788-1850, and it resurfaces throughout history whenever Australians face threatening circumstances. However, inclusive mateship is marginalised and its empowering ability is utilised by exclusive mateship to empower the masculine whenever mateship is promoted as a men's creed.

2. Inclusive and exclusive mateship and Australian egalitarianism

The inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses construct different viewpoints and advance conflicting attitudes, values and truths, especially in relation to the concept of egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is a respected component of Australianness, and in the sense in which it is linked to that image, it is generally understood to mean group solidarity, collectivist loyalty and the equality of all people. Since egalitarianism is a significant part of Australianness as well as a central component of both mateship discourses, a comparison of inclusive and exclusive mateship's expressions of egalitarianism with its accepted understanding shows that the primary difference between the two discourses is – as I have described above – that inclusive mateship is open to all people, while exclusive mateship is open only to some men.

Egalitarianism is the core sentiment of inclusive mateship because that discourse constitutes union and equality of all people in the face of adversity for the common good. Inclusive mateship can be described as truly egalitarian, and this is how it is represented in narrative: as a convention that exists among people in moments of shared need. Curlew's "The Sandy-Whiskered Bloke" (1895) contains a good example of inclusive mateship. The

men who become mates are both friendless strangers drifting in search of work. Neither of them has any money nor much in the way of possessions, but they share with each other the little they have. The Sandy-Whiskered bloke shares his food, drink and plans for finding work, while the narrator, the "I" of the verse, contributes his company, friendship and, later that night, his courage in helping the other to commit suicide after his body is crushed by a fallen tree. The mateship, which began when the Sandy-Whiskered Bloke asked the other to be "his mate", ended with the death of the former only hours after the relationship formed, but the incident aptly describes a brief but intense moment of inclusive mateship (23).

Another such incident of inclusive mateship that shows how its application of egalitarianism truly includes all people is described in Laura Palmer-Archer's "Cassidy's Mick" (1904). This story demonstrates how the union of people within the inclusive mateship bond is based upon the contribution that each person makes to the work and life of the community, and that individual differences are not used to exclude anyone from mateship. For instance, new chum Charlie St John, who is different from the usual sunburnt, tall, lanky stockman with "his fresh complexion and his baggy, English-made riding breeches", is accepted into the camaraderie of the station workers and, as a mark of his belonging, is given the nickname Scorchy (329). In this naming is a welcome and an acknowledgement that Scorchy is "an alright 'un" (329). Scorchy had persisted with whatever task was given to him, and since his start "on the lowest rung" of station work, he had become respected by the boss and his fellow workers as having "good stuff" in him (329).

Palmer-Archer's story also shows how permanent partnerships, like marriage or long-lasting friendships, can evolve from moments of inclusive mateship, and it therefore demonstrates how this mateship encouraged egalitarianism in Australian culture. The friendship between Scorchy and the stockman known as Joyful Jim is a typical example of a lasting friendship evolving from inclusive mateship, but more significantly, the friendship between the men of the station and Katy Cassidy shows that the same respect and friendship exists between women and men. Katy is an Irish immigrant who wins

everyone's affection for her resilience, friendship and good sense. She has several admirers among the men, but she does not trifle with their affections, and this conduct earns her the men's respect and friendship even when she later marries her childhood sweetheart from Ireland instead of one of them. In the central incident of the story, the men search wearily but ceaselessly through failing light and heavy rain to find Katy's lost child. The boy is found on Christmas day, and since then Katy has always celebrated the anniversary of his rescue by inviting the station workers to Christmas supper at her home. Although not explicitly called mateship in the story, the act of uniting to search for the child, and the inclusion of everyone in the communal care and concern, demonstrate the egalitarian spirit of inclusive mateship.

Exclusive mateship is also depicted as egalitarian, and the images of men sharing companionship and resources in a moment of mutual need resemble those of inclusive mateship. But a close reading of representations of exclusive mateship shows a discernible difference between the two forms of mateship: in representations of exclusive mateship, mateship is a fraternal bond and only men can be mates, and then only certain men. This selectivity shows that exclusive mateship is not a genuinely egalitarian discourse. Exclusive mateship's anti-egalitarianism is most apparent in stories involving male mates and women; especially when a mate marries a woman and the men's mateship is terminated. In Edward Dyson's "The Two Macks" (1895), for example, the mateship of McCarty and Mackenzie is ended when Mackenzie "wrongs" McCarty by getting married. The two men were constant mates, and they were affectionately known in the district as the best "bachers", caring for each other, sharing work and keeping a household together in a woman-like manner that caused great surprise and admiration in the community because the men were also thought of as tough fellows:

> They had been true mates for twenty odd years, in luck and out, in sickness and in health, and had been better friends than brothers. Their mateship had, after two years, become a synonym at Keep-it-Dark for straight-going, square-dealing and real grit. (27)

The climax of the story is the termination of the men's mateship and with that break-up comes the realisation that mateship is a convention that is exclusive to men. McCarty, the "wronged" mate, feels that the break-up is a desertion of himself and mateship, and he calls

Mackenzie "dirty mean to go back on a mate"(27). Mackenzie is also sensitive to the demise of the mateship, and he feels remorse for his part in it: he stands "shamefaced" and "the very picture of conscious guilt" during his mate's tirade of condemnation (27). The mateship of the men need not change just because some details of their lifestyle will alter when one of them marries. However, the story's theme is that exclusive mateship is a binding relationship between two or more men, and it cannot continue when one mate replaces the other with a woman. This suggests that if men who are mates in exclusive mateship marry, they must put their mates first and give mateship priority over marriage, thus keeping the wife in the background of the relationship between the men.

It would be reasonable to argue that egalitarianism cannot be a component of exclusive mateship simply because exclusive mateship is selective and egalitarianism opposes selectivity. But exclusive mateship is nonetheless considered to be egalitarian, even by those like Russel Ward and T. I. Moore who recognise that mateship is selective according to a number of parameters including race, class and gender (Ward, Legend 132; Moore 235). These discriminatory aspects of exclusive mateship are evident in Henry Lawson's "The Shearers" (1901), a poem used by both Ward and Moore as an example of the "strongly social sense of solidarity" fostered by mateship (Ward, Legend 245), and of the "kindly, hospitable friendliness" and brotherly fraternity of mateship (Moore 235). Yet the mateship described in the poem is exclusive, and it is not "democratic" as Moore claims (235).

Mateship is depicted in "The Shearers" as a unifying sentiment within nationalist thinking, one which is described as a revolt against the authority of the British in that the heroes are paving a new way in defiance of the old: "Their way is not the old-world way" (92). But the organization of the signs and codes in the poem shows that the word mateship only projects an illusion of union, and in stark contrast to what is being said, the concept of mateship described does not encourage a harmonious unification of disparate people at all. Mateship here means the fraternity of an elite group of men, and it empowers only those men because it excludes anyone who is not like them. The appearance of union that conceals exclusive mateship's discriminatory element is created through statements which

appear to unite people into a "mateship born of barren lands" in spite of their differences of race, "brown or black", character, "wrong man" or "right man", and religion, "Protestant" or "Roman" (92). However, any sense of unity based on an acceptance of "difference", and a celebration of diversity, is negated when it is made clear that the highest honour for a mate is to be called a "white man" (92). This term shows that inclusion in the fraternity of exclusive mateship denies individuality because the discourse demands conformity to the "white man" norm. Anyone who does not meet this norm is judged to be "different" and inferior, and thus becomes a non-mate outside the supposedly unifying mateship. In being thus selective, exclusive mateship does not unite: it actually divides on the basis of "difference" from its masculinist, white, heterosexual norm.

This reading of Lawson's poem also shows how exclusive mateship's discrimination is multi-faceted because the mateship described is misogynous as well as antagonistic towards class and race. The consistent usage of masculine nouns, pronouns and adjectives, coupled with the obvious masculinist perspective and the absence of anything feminine, confirms that the mateship being depicted is exclusively masculine: "They tramp in mateship side by side" and their loyalty to each other is strong: "The mate that's honest to his mates" is a "white man" (92). From that fraternity comes the denial of mateship membership to women, who are outside exclusive mateship's fraternity. "White man" is the norm to which everyone is compared, and "difference" from that norm means ostracism from the mateship union as well as, it would seem, from the privilege of being deemed a "true" Australian. A woman cannot be a "white man" so she is automatically excluded from mateship and from Australianness.

P. Luftig's "Comrades" (1898) offers an explicit example of the discriminatory nature of exclusive mateship. The "song of mateship in Bananaland", as it is called, mocks the ideal of an egalitarian federation of Australia's multicultural population by listing, in a derogatory style, the types of mates, the comrades, found in this "Sheol" that is Australia: the Chinese are untrustworthy and "Smellful"(sic); "the Jap, the little brown man" and "the Hindoo (sic) pedlar" are likewise considered to be dirty; and the South Sea Islanders are God-fearing but murderous and pathetic. Luftig facetiously suggests that all of these

"Mongrelians" will be welded into "a great and glorious nation" which although diverse "in breed and colour" will be "united by a sublime devotion to dirt and barbarism and a common undying hatred to soap and water" (30). The italicised refrains at the end of each stanza collectively insult the races being described, and the song culminates in a racist remark, *"Embrace me, camarados, while I hold my nose"* (30), that expresses xenophobia and an overriding desire for white supremacy. The concept of mateship as an egalitarian convention is being used in this song to suggest strongly that nationalism cannot be extended to those who do not fit the white, British norm.

The exclusion of women from mateship is similarly very pointed in Oscar Walters's "The Drink Before You Go" (1927). According to the poet, men share a close fraternity of mateship that exceeds the love of women and many other aspects of human existence:

> You may lose the love of woman that you
>   thought could never die,
> Fame may never pause to greet you,
>   Fortune pass disdainful by;
> Youth's pictures will grow fainter,
>   but there's one you'll carry far –
> The words in mateship spoken, the hand-grip in
>   the bar. (34)

According to Walters, this men's mateship survives life, and proceeds with mates into death, and even brings comfort to those who must "take the road below" (to Hell) (34). When a man's sins "are dragged starkly to the light", he will "take a brave step" if "there's someone" to shout him a drink before he goes (34).

However greatly the mateship discourses diverge on the issue of egalitarianism, they still share common elements, and in Chapter Four I will explain how this similarity occurs because the discourses have a common origin in the first sixty years of colonial society. For now though, the only aspect of the discourses' similarities that I want to examine is that they are both, like all other discourses, politically motivated. As I shall show though, they are motivated to empower different groups of people. Inclusive and exclusive mateship both evolved from the response of white settlers to the rigours of colonial life. Part of the effort to survive was a strong political push to win a powerful position within the emergent

Australian culture. But in contrast to inclusive mateship's political intent to secure power for the transported majority and their descendants against the ruling British elite, exclusive mateship's political motivation derives from its being a patriarchal discourse designed to secure power for the masculine. The objective of the latter was to embed in Australian culture the relations that bring about a powerful masculine and a suppressed feminine.

As I have demonstrated, exclusive mateship's discrimination against the feminine is not the only parameter of the discourse's selectivity, but exclusion on the basis of gender is the focus of this study. Differentiation based on the discursive construction of gender fragments society by uniting the masculine against the feminine – even if, as in the case of exclusive mateship, it is only a superficial male allegiance which does not include all men. Those seeking to empower themselves often use age, race, class, religion and education as divisive factors, but subliminal in all of these factors is gender, because the human race, however categorised, has two sexes. Divisiveness on the basis of gender – that is "the cultural differentiation of male from female" (O'Sullivan 127) – therefore has the potential to be the most harmful to society, especially if that society has biological divisiveness entrenched in its culture.

The gender-based divisiveness constituted by exclusive mateship in Australian culture has the ideological endorsement of patriarchy which, according to John Stuart Mill, was dominant in British society before the colonisation of Australia. It can therefore be argued that patriarchal concepts were part of the cultural baggage that transportees and their keepers brought with them to the new colony. In The Subjection of Women (1861), Mill argues that eighteenth-century England had an aggressively masculine culture supported by social and legal structures that perpetuated male dominance. Mill defines gender-based discrimination as "the legal subordination of one sex to the other" (7), and he argues against the concept because it is "wrong in itself", and because it is "one of the chief hindrances to human improvement" (7). Many feminists argue that Australian culture followed its parent British culture in its attitude towards the feminine, and some go as far as to say that misogyny was more intense in Australian culture. Miriam Dixson, for example, argues that women have such a low standing in Australia that "one of our most

interesting historical controversies, the great debate on national identity, virtually ignores women" (75); while according to Patricia Grimshaw, this concept of feminine subjection pervades all social levels:

> The defence of masculine democracy, the power of all men to govern all women in public, went hand in hand with a defence of patriarchy, the power of individual men to govern individual women in private. (105)

Feminists argue that this discriminatory division gradually became a highly visible characteristic of Australian identity and culture and, as Kay Schaffer points out, mateship was one means by which this powerful position was achieved (Women 28). I would argue, however, that this feminist version of social relations in Australian culture is as extreme as the masculinist versions of history that omit women from their stories of Australia's past. Facts like Australian women's gaining the right to vote before any other country except New Zealand indicate respect for women. I believe that a degree of balance can be introduced into this debate by examining mateship as two discursive influences that at one extreme (exclusive mateship) seek to produce patriarchal power relations, but at the other extreme (inclusive mateship), seek to unite women and men in an egalitarian nation.

Denis Altman argues that mateship "has a number of meanings, and partly for this reason may be used to bolster any number of ideologies" (172). These include a masculinist version of history and its opposite, a feminist rebuttal of men's representation of the past. Mateship has been used by some influential male writers to set men in a superior cultural position, but many influential feminist writers have used this masculinist reading of mateship in order to prove that Australia's culture is male-dominated. Both sides of the debate have largely missed the incidents of men and women's cooperation in inclusive mateship, and have therefore ignored the nation-building contribution that male and female writers record when they depict inclusive mateship. Rosa Praed's Lady Bridget in the Never-Never Land (1915) provides just such a depiction of mateship, but neither male historians nor feminist commentators have ever used it as an example of mateship in early Australia. Praed's depiction of mateship shows that the word mate can be used as both a casual form of address and as the signifier of the deeply respectful, egalitarian style of companionship that is generally accepted as Australian mateship. Furthermore, the mateship depicted by Praed is inclusive, and it describes harmonious relations between the

sexes, a respect for individual difference, and a desire to forge a culture that is tolerant of individuality and supportive of diversity.

When the word <u>mate</u> is used in Praed's novel as a casual form of address between strangers, it is applied in much the same way as its pre-Australian usage: as a word of greeting without the accompanying significance added to the word in Australian English. Colin McKeith, the novel's main male character, communicated with a group of bullock drivers using the word <u>mate</u>. On this occasion, his wife Bridget was spending her first night in a bush hotel, and she became agitated when some drunken bullock drivers began to behave boisterously. When he appealed to the men to stop the noise, Colin called them "mates": " 'Look here, mates.' The uproar stopped suddenly" (128). Colin did not know the men personally, but he addressed them using the word <u>mate</u> according to its informal sense of greeting.

The second application of the word <u>mate</u> in Praed's novel expresses an informal bond of mateship between work partners, and this application of mateship is again in keeping with pre-Australian, early English usage in which the word <u>mate</u> was used to name people who worked together for the duration of some form of employment. Colin and his foreman regard each other as "mates" in the sense of being work partners (179), and for these men, like the previously mentioned bullock drivers, mateship is part of a commitment to each other during the course of shared labour. This relationship is transient and therefore meaningful only for the purpose of completing a task. In such incidents, mateship is a product of circumstance rather than a meaningful commitment to help each other through a crisis. Both of these applications refer to men, but the sex of the mate is irrelevant because Colin has a similar working arrangement with his housekeeper, Mrs Hensor.

The third, most significant, application of mateship in Praed's novel is a sense of dedicated companionship between women and men, and this is the interpretation of mateship that Praed endorses as mateship's peculiarly Australian meaning. As Colin explains in his letter to Joan Gildea, true mateship is when a relationship goes beyond explanations. In trying to explain to Joan the breakdown of his marriage to Bridget, Colin

writes: "Explanations would not have been needed between true mates" (315). It is evident from this that the type of mateship he is describing is a spiritual bond which supersedes communication. According to Colin, mateship is the love shared by a married couple, and it is closer and dearer than any other form of mateship: "– a thing you couldn't talk about even to your mate – unless your mate was your wife – a flower that blooms once in your life, and that would never – if it were cut off – come to bloom again" (97).

This mateship is the relationship that Colin wanted to share with Bridget, and when their marriage faces a crisis, it becomes apparent (though not readily to Colin) that Bridget desires the mateship he promised but is failing to keep. When Colin calls Bridget "Mate" during their argument, she "thrilled to the old term of endearment, to which in their early honeymoon days she had attached a sentimental value" (178-9). Mateship was doubly important to Bridget because she saw Australian mateship as something that valued women and men equally. In the European upper-class society of which Bridget was a member, women were desired as objects to possess rather than as individuals to be respected. She believed that an egalitarian mateship relationship with Colin was a sign of his respect for her (97). From what she noted, though, some of the "out-back squatters" did not treat their "help-mates", that is their female companions, according to this egalitarian spirit of mateship, but rather as work mates in the casual sense of the word. Bridget did not want to be treated in such a manner by Colin because she considered it inferior to the mateship shared by a married couple, that is to the mateship which Colin had initially proposed. So when she thought that Colin had begun to treat her in the way that he treated those he casually called "mate", she no longer desired the appellative mate to be used between them (179). Bridget longed for what Colin had described as the "true mateship" and she separated from him because she did not want a marriage without it.

The multiple meanings of mateship are summed up in Praed's novel by an explanation of the word's grammatical applications:

> She [Lady Bridget] had not yet realised that while the word "mate" in Australese, like the verb *aimer* in French, may be used as a mere colloquial term, it implies in the deeper sense a sanctity of relation upon which hangs the whole code of Bush chivalry. (179)

Chivalry in this usage means "good manners; consideration of others" (<u>Macquarie</u> <u>Dictionary</u> 3rd ed. 387). Praed's explanation distinguishes between the casual usage of the word <u>mate</u> that reflects the word's English origins, and the usage that indicates the significance that mateship acquired in Australian culture. The code of Bush chivalry that Praed uses to describe mateship in its "deeper sense" is the egalitarian spirit that became the essence of what was added to mateship in its Australian context. The fact that Praed's novel depicts the purest form of mateship in the mid 1800s as that which exists between husband and wife, may not have interested masculinist or feminist commentators of Australian culture, but it does establish that mateship in the formative colonial years of 1788-1850 was observed by some writers as an egalitarian, inclusive convention that conveyed a sense of harmony and respect between the sexes.

3. **Inclusive mateship empowers everyone while exclusive mateship empowers only a select group of men**

As we have seen, mateship evolved in white society in the colonial period 1788-1850 as two conflicting discourses – inclusive and exclusive – as the colonial inhabitants established a peculiarly Australian ethnicity in response to local circumstances. Ethnicity here refers to the multicultural ethnic group bound together by a sense of identity that evolved from the British colonisation of Australia. The Currency people, or the Australian born descendants of transportees, were observed to differ markedly from the English. In 1831, Anne Bourke, Governor Richard Bourke's daughter, described the difference among the ethnic Australians as a marked "spirit of equality and independence": they were "harder to manage than the Dutch" because of this strong spirit (77). Similar observations made by Alexander Harris in 1847 suggest that the Currency people had become a distinct group with its own distinguishing ethnic character:

> I could not however, even at this early period of my acquaintance with this class of people, help observing one remarkable peculiarity common to them all – there was no offensive intrusiveness about their civility; every man seemed to consider himself just on a level with all the rest, and so quite content either to be sociable or not, as the circumstance of the moment indicated as most proper. (5)

Part of the ethnic character of the Australian people was that they formed what Sidney J. Baker calls "a linguistic community" that differed significantly from its British roots in its effort "to make the alien environment of Australia familiar and recognisable" (Australia 14). According to Baker, this fashioning of words by the Australian people suited their need to express the experiences of new surroundings, and it "made it possible for people to speak of things that were uniquely Australian" and, perhaps more importantly, "with much less likelihood of confusion than if they had clung undeviatingly to Britannia's linguistic apronstrings" (Australia 14). Mateship evolved its peculiar Australian meanings during this linguistic transition, and its evolution can be explained using the poststructuralist assumption that language is "a system always existing in historically specific discourses" (Weedon 24). The mateship discourse was simultaneously a catalyst for, and a product of, the historical moment of need that gave rise to the amalgamation of disparate peoples into one ethnic group. Further, poststructuralist theory can explain how the two opposing mateship discourses – inclusive and exclusive – evolved for different empowering purposes. According to Weedon, if language is a system of competing discourses determined to stamp their meaning on the world and thereby organise power relations to suit, "then language becomes an important site of political struggle" (24). It is therefore argued here that each mateship discourse empowered its own group of people, and that the primary variations in mateship evolved as it was appropriated by particular groups for their own diverse political motives. Inclusive mateship became the discourse that empowered those who united to survive colonial conditions, and exclusive mateship became the discourse of those who, while wanting to be powerful, saw being superior to women as the key to their success. It is this empowerment of the various groups through the discourses of inclusive and exclusive mateship that is reflected in fictional and non-fictional texts of this period.

Constituting mateship as a discourse allows the power relations that mateship produces within a text to be analysed. Although such reading does not fix a meaning, and other meanings are possible, the outcome of establishing mateship's production of power relations in fictional and non-fictional texts develops an understanding of how and why the

Australian mateship convention has had, and continues to have, such a powerful cultural influence. The reading process involved in this examination of mateship will be kept consistent across the diverse range of texts investigated by firstly identifying the moment of mateship union constructed in the text, then secondly by investigating whom mateship empowers in that instance. The moment of mateship will be defined as the instance in the narrative in which a number of people respond in a similar way to a shared moment of need: that is there is a marked group response to a crisis that is easily identifiable as a united effort to survive the challenging moment. However, not all potentially threatening circumstances create a crisis. A crisis only occurs if people feel they are under threat. For example, if an intense cyclone advanced over uninhabited land there would be no crisis, but if it became known that a group of tourists was in the area, the perception of the situation would change. The cyclone would become a major threat to human life and, as such, a crisis. Since it is the combined response of individual reactions that construct circumstances as a crisis, a crisis will be defined as an event perceived by a group at a given moment to be a force powerful enough to crush human life or to destroy something valued, be it physical, social or emotional. Many believe that a crisis unites people, but that is not so: as Baker says, it is the individual response of many reacting in much the same way to a specific moment that unites people (Australian 109). People unite in a crisis because they construct both the crisis and the strategy needed to defend them against what they judge to be its threat. The perception of a crisis involves thinking that there is an opposing force or power to be overcome, and in turn, such thinking elicits a reverse power discourse – like mateship – based on a desire to survive and succeed.

The confronting experience facing the colonial population constituted the crisis that brought forth the inclusive mateship discourse. It afforded a point at which fortunes could have turned in opposite directions to challenge or opportunity. On one hand, there was the ordeal of transportation and the emotional and physical anguish presented by dramatically different social and environmental conditions. On the other, the liberating, flexible openness of the novel circumstances encouraged inventiveness, tenacity and the will to succeed. The discourse of inclusive mateship was therefore part of two opposing, but linked, and often interconnecting discourses in colonial society. It was a part of the

discourse of fear, self-doubt, insecurity, submissiveness, negativity and low self-esteem that conditioned people to doubt their survival skills, and thereby to constitute a given set of circumstances as a crisis; and, at the same moment, it was a part of the productive discourse of the desire to succeed. That discourse included assurance gained from past exposure to crises, defiance against oppressive agencies like institutions or authority, collectivist loyalty from being in a similar predicament to others, the courage to act with ingenuity and inventiveness, and the confidence to speak as survivors. These qualities empowered people to face the crisis with optimism, confidence and a will to win. People who experience mateship, and who consequently share in and disseminate the discourse, today as much as in the past, are those whom Baker describes as reacting separately, but similarly, to a crisis (Australian 109).

In effect, inclusive mateship inculcated a rebellious desire to survive and succeed. It grew out of individual responses, which, in being similar to those of others at a given moment, united people by self-generated sentiments of like-mindedness and solidarity. Concomitant with the desire to endure was a need to depend upon others for subsistence, and a reciprocal need to help others under similar threat. The self-help was generated in order to improve personal chances of survival as well as to subvert or defeat the forces of oppression, whether physical, social or discursive. This is the truly egalitarian mateship that Marie Lion describes as occurring between the shearers in Black Pearl (1911), whose "need of affection drives them to seek companionship with another 'mate', that expressive word which indicates a community of interest, affection and fidelity" (71). According to Lion, mateship is a relationship of caring interdependence:

> One meets them thus in couples, helping each other through difficult moments, sharing alike good and bad fortune, tending each other in illness until, perhaps, the summons of the Dread Spectre calls for the last service which faithful hands can give. The Bush has its silent, secret language, known only to its initiates. (71-2)

It is also the mateship that persists into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries because, as Robert Goodwin describes in his Mates and Memories: Recollections of the 2/10th Field Regiment R. A. A. (1995), prisoners of war in the Japanese prison camps in South-East Asia during World Ward II survived because of mateship:

> During the days of captivity we were soon to realise how dependent we
> were on each other for survival. No one survived without a mate. During the
> long night marches into Thailand there was always someone by your side if
> your load became too heavy. We were never alone.
>
> For those of us who were fortunate enough to survive and return to Australia
> we have been privileged to share a unique bond with our wartime mates.
> (213)

Phillip Knightley points out that Australian collectivism saved many Australians from

death in the prisoner of war camps along the Burma-Thailand railway (212). This

collectivism was not apparent in the British camp and many more of their number than

Australians died (212). Peter Henning concurs with this observation, but he adds that:

> The significance of morale and determination were often allied with the
> assessment of the role of mateship, many of the 2/40th men concluding from
> their observations that the Australian emphasis on cooperation strengthened
> the will to endure and maintained morale. (304)

Mates of the moment in this inclusive mateship relationship might become mates for

a lifetime, especially if the crisis is something like war, which seems omnipresent,

threatening and indeterminate. Inclusive mateship exists as much among women or men as

between women and men, and long-term friendships and marriages may result from such

mateship. Robert Goodwin describes long-term mateship relationships when he tells how

the bond between him and his mates "has endured 50 years of civilian life and is as close as

that which exists between brothers" (213). But such mateship also existed between women

as explained by Patsy-Adam Smith, who states that "around Australia there are hundreds of

pairs of women who, fifty years later, still see themselves as army mates" (66).

Lawson's "The Australian Cinematograph" (1897) contains two crises, and each

calls forth an inclusive mateship response. The first crisis is the people's struggle against

an environment which can be both salubrious and treacherous. It can lull them into a sense

of security by offering unquestionable bountifulness, as Lawson depicts when he

introduces the drover's wife at home on a small selection:

> Rocky rises and pine-topped peaks in sunset colours; dark green "spurs" and
> grassy "sidings", a clear water creek with she-oaks; away down to the right
> a line of willows where the river runs. Just back from the steep grassy bank
> of the creek, amongst great gums and box trees, in an angle formed by the

> steep sides of the ridges, a cottage built of sawn timber and roofed with shingles; stockyard behind the house and cows and calves; a neat dairy built of nearly new stringy-bark and with a double roof, for the sake of coolness; haystack, and the corner of a paddock of ripening wheat. (536)

But the same benign climate just as soon turns nasty, withers hope and takes away life. The description of the drover's last moments alive depicts that clearly:

> The drover lifts his hands, and shading his eyes, looks out over the plain – over our heads as it were – but he sees nothing, save perhaps a sand-hill or drift, that we do not see in the opposite direction. In the distance the mirage – ever ahead and in the distance – that "smokes" away with a snaky motion as the traveller advances. No hope in the sky, which has not, for months, darkened for rain – for anything save the low, heavy, lurid dust cloud lifted and driven by the "scorching gale" or the smoke of distant bush fires. (535)

The second crisis is social: the workers of the bush, men and women, are forced to live, work and die in this environment because land ownership lies in the hands of capitalists – absentee landlords who live in splendid comfort in the cities. This crisis is introduced through Lawson's use of stanzas from Barcroft Boake's poem "Where the Dead Men Lie" (1897) to separate the scene in which the drover's remains are found, ironically among lush vegetation by the water he died for, and the selection at home where it is "all dry and all is hot", and his wife struggles to keep life going:

> Strangled by thirst and fierce privation –
> That's how the dead men lie!
> Out beyond Moneygrub's furthest station –
> That's how the dead men die! (537)

Although neither of these crises is resolved by the inclusive mateship that they call forth, mateship empowers the men and women of the bush to survive.

Two main scenes, one of a drover at a dry tank (an earthen reservoir made for the purpose of storing water), and another of the selection belonging to the drover and his wife Mary, structure the narrative and, in the sense of the title, they are focused upon as if by a motion camera panning both the physical and social landscapes. The camera zooms in to these dual points of grief; contrasting one with the other to give an image of rural workers kept tethered by poverty to a futile bush existence of slaving for a landowner who is the only one to benefit from their efforts. Both scenes appear twice, and each time the physical

environment forming the backdrop changes and mocks the misery of the humans who live within it.

The first scene is of the dying drover who, is perishing because he has "chanced it" (535). He has gambled on finding water, and it is for him as for other bushmen "once too often" because the tank that he had hoped would hold the water to save him has run dry in the drought (535). As the story goes, he has come to this point by an error of judgement "with that simple faith or courage which might be deemed heroic", and he pays for it with his life (535). Ironically, the second time that this scene appears is when the environment is at it best: "Soft skies and sunshine, an opening plain of waving grass waist high and stretching as far as the eye can reach" (536). "In the foreground" of this picture now, there is "a pool of grey clay-cold water rippling" gently, "flowing and ebbing in tiny waves" round "the bleached bones and blackened hides" of the drover and his horses (536).

The second scene contrasts with the first on both of the occasions that it occurs: it is of the drover's wife Mary and their children on a small selection at a time when the climate is salubrious. Yet the moment depicted in this scene is a difficult one for Mary because she manages the selection alone: tending the cattle, raising a small crop of wheat, keeping a dairy and mothering the children. This scene follows the one in which the drover dies alone of madness caused by thirst and despair on the drought-stricken plains. The selection is beset by drought in the second appearance of this scene, and Mary, the now dried-out woman, reflects the dried-out landscape as she works unceasingly against the time "she gets word from [her husband] Joe" (537). It is in this scene that Mary is told of Joe's death, and it contrasts cruelly with the lush surroundings in which her husband's remains were found.

Two incidents of mateship are enacted in the course of this narrative, and both centre upon the drover and his wife. The first occurs when three drovers, one of whom is the dead man's brother, find the body of the drover. The dying man's last words, scratched upon a billy (a quart pot for making tea) are to his wife and his children, and they also contain a plea for a "brother or a mate" to take care of the family he leaves behind (537). There

follows a depiction of inclusive mateship as the men console the bereaved brother and comfort each other:

> The brother stands by his horse's shoulder, with an arm thrown across the neck; and burying his face in the mane, is motionless save for a sob that shakes his shoulders now and again. From time to time the horse turns his head towards him, with an expression of almost human weariness and sympathy. The mate comes and stands by his side; his left hand gropes helplessly over the saddle till it rests on the pommel, which he grasps and holds on to steady himself. Suddenly he throws his right arm across the shoulders of the other, and drops his head on the saddle. (537)

The second incident of inclusive mateship occurs when Mary is approached by one of the mates, Andy, with the news of her husband's death. The mates who find Joe decide not to tell Mary how her husband died to save her from the pain of knowing that he suffered a slow and tormented death. They choose this course of action because they believe it is the best way to allow Mary to "be done with it" and get on with life (539). Andy takes his mother with him to help the widow in her grief, and in the ensuing scene of inclusive mateship, as Mary, leaning on "the breast of that other bush-woman", "sobs as if her heart would break", it is made clear that women as well as men share equally in mateship (539).

The point at which inclusive mateship encourages survival against the crisis brought about by both the physical and social aspects of the environment is obvious. The physical environment has taken a life and brought misery, but at this moment Lawson interjects another verse of Boake's poem to reinforce his argument that the reason these people have to suffer is because of capitalist landowners:

> Moneygrub, as he sips his claret,
>   Looks with complacent eye
> Down at his watch chain, eighteen carat,
>   There in his club hard by:
> Recks not that every link is stamped with
>   Names of the men whose limbs are cramped with
> Too long lying in grave mould camped with
>   Death, where the dead men lie! (539)

Yet inclusive mateship empowers the people against this social crisis as well, and the story promises the hope they feel; they will pull together and survive. Lawson describes this last

scene as one that is a "speaking" and a "living" picture: one that is "brighter […] in spite of all" (539). Andy's mother comforts the widow and Andy's lies, told with "his solemn grey eyes" fixed on Mary "lest she might, by a bare chance, doubt him", show how the people will shoulder each other's burdens in a time of crisis so that everyone might proceed with life (539).

In contrast to inclusive mateship's developing in the first sixty years of colonial existence, exclusive mateship found its fullest expression later in the development of the colony. (Exclusive mateship's rise to prominence is the subject of Chapter Five.) From the 1850s, survival was assured in the colony by productive self-sufficiency and continuing enterprise, so energy could be turned to determining power relations in the new culture. The nationalist fervour that accompanied demands for the creation of a Commonwealth of Australia at this time was a bid for power. As has already been pointed out however, this attempt to fix sovereignty for the Australian people was not the only power contest at the time: there was also a gender contest over the determination of culture. One discursive avenue through which this contest between the sexes was enacted was mateship.

The phase in which exclusive mateship is most obviously promoted as a men's creed is the two decades prior to Federation when issues of power and determination of culture became more intense. Russel Ward claims that by this time, the bushman with his "manly independence" and his collectivist ethos of mateship had become the prototype of "the national culture-hero" (Legend 180). This is difficult to believe given the evidence of women's involvement in mateship, and it is very odd that Ward should claim that this hero was accurately drawn in the work of "Furphy, Lawson and Paterson" (Legend 180), because this denies women's equal involvement in bush life and their equal representation of that life in fiction. It also denies women's depictions of mateship equal exposure. It is these heroic bushmen with their exclusive mateship who take prominence over inclusive mateship from this historic phase onwards into the twenty-first century. According to Ward, this particular form of mateship was a "powerful institution" by the 1880s, so much so, that "often one [a man] could refuse an invitation to drink only at one's peril" (Legend 181).

Mateship as a men's creed is described in Henry Lawson's "Their Mates' Honour" (1908). In the story there is a crisis for a group of male mates: the wife of one, Joe Large, is unfaithful to him. The woman's adultery threatens Joe's honour, and his mates respond to the crisis by getting rid of the wife. The theme of this story – men reacting with an exclusive mateship response to a situation of infidelity – is similar to one theme in Lawson's "Telling Mrs Baker" discussed earlier, and the way that mates behave in both stories shows that exclusive mateship's values endorse the empowering of the masculine and the subordination of the feminine. In "Telling Mrs Baker", Bob Baker is unfaithful to his wife and his mates keep his infidelity a secret from her to protect him even though he is dead. In contrast, in "Their Mates' Honour", the mates organise the departure of the wife and the punishment of her lovers, and tell Joe about her infidelity to protect his honour.

In both stories the men's actions are motivated by the exclusive mateship code of maintaining men's power over women, and the standard that male mates apply in decision making is that men's needs and well-being are paramount. This standard applies even if the moral codes that result are contradictory, and cause double standards for men and women in society. Bob Brown, for example, could be an adulterer and his honour was protected because he was a mate; but Mrs Joe Large could not be an adulteress (and get away with it) because Joe was a mate and his honour had to be protected. There is a second double standard here also in that Bob Baker was "a good mate" and was not punished, even though he seduced the wives of some of his mates; yet Mrs Large's lovers are run out of town. In Bob's case, the mates, whose wives he seduced, were absent, so no action was taken to protect them, but in Joe Large's case one of his wife's lovers was his "old mate Ted Cosgrove" (384) who often drank with him, so Cosgrove had to leave town for the sake of Joe's honour.

The decision to punish Mrs Large's lovers is evidence that exclusive mateship operates only within a given group of men, and that the group applies mateship's code of behaviour to suit group members, rather than according to a truly egalitarian response and consistent standards of behaviour. When Joe's mates first respond to the crisis, they only

know about one of Mrs Large's lovers; a white man named Ted Cosgrove. Even though they threaten violence towards Cosgrove – Bogan wants to smash a glass "in the brute's grinning face" (384) – they are content to let things stand until Joe finds out for himself and then, as they agree "it will be time enough for any of us that happens to be on the spot to do something" (383). There is a hint of cowardice about this response because Joe is apparently happy with Mrs Large and would "smash the first man that hinted a word against his wife" (383); but instead of confessing cowardice it is inferred that the mates are delaying their response to the situation out of respect for exclusive mateship's code of not interfering in a mate's business. However when the mates accidentally discover that one of Mrs Large's lovers is an Asian, "a turban-tipped" Abdul Khan, "the vision of Asia" pushes them to immediate action (384). Now it would seem that the honour of white mates (this group anyway) is threatened, because an Asian is consorting with a white woman, the property of a white man, and this right of ownership is sacrosanct. Exclusive mateship is distinctly racist in the standards it applies: a white man can be given some latitude in taking liberties with another man's wife, but an Asian's philandering is definitely not acceptable.

The plan to rid Joe of Mrs Large, though befitting the mateship dictate of loyalty (they are united for the sake of a mate), employs a woman "and a good woman too" according to the plan's mastermind Mitchell (384). This confession, contradictory though it might appear, shows why men use exclusive mateship to empower themselves and subordinate women. According to the story, the rationale for involving a woman is that women are powerful and threaten men, so men must unite in self-defence to retain control. The mates agree that "it takes a brave man to tackle a woman" or, as they state, "a hero to tackle some; more' n half-a-dozen heroes, in fact" (384). Since the mates agree that "none of us ain't a hero" they decide that one of the mates, Tom Hall, who "happened to be the only known and permanently married man amongst them" should ask his "good, straightforward little woman" to take on the task for the sake of Joe Large. (The use of the adjectives "good" and "little" emphasise that the woman is "good" for her husband and "little" in relation to him with regards to power.) The reasoning here is that a woman will defeat another woman with her power, and the men will be safe: safe from the women and safely in control with their power over women intact.

But Tom does not want his wife to be tainted in the eyes of the community by a visit to Mrs Large's residence. People might think his wife is the same as Mrs Large, and this would threaten his power just as it is now threatening Joe's, so the mates' plan involves Mrs Hall warning Mrs Large's sister that Joe's mates are going to tell him about his wife's love affairs. All the mates have to do is to take up a collection to get Mrs Large and her sister out of the community; provide them with transport to the nearest railway station; and get Joe drunk enough to listen to their explanation of why they got rid of his wife. This is a course of action they do not find threatening if only Joe is drugged with a chemist's sleeping potion as well as alcohol. To make matters even better for Joe (or for themselves) the plan includes sending Joe to another woman, Maggie Macauley, "the girl he should have married" (according to them), to help him get over his wife (386). Here is another indicator of men's use and abuse of women: no thought is given to the fact that Maggie might not want Joe because he is married; or because he is merely seeking her company after his wife has left him. Neither is there any consideration of Maggie's reputation (she is after all, in their plan, taking up with a married man, so she is an adulteress – the same as Mrs Large); or of the harm that might come to her if Mrs Large returns and Joe, in loving her as fiercely as he does, leaves Maggie for his wife. Maggie's feelings are ignored; she is a woman, and as such she is expected to do men's bidding as exclusive mateship dictates. These assumptions about exclusive mateship are reinforced by the story's conclusion, in which Maggie is doing her womanly duty, as expected, by tenderly caring for Joe. The story thus demonstrates how men's honour must be preserved at all costs, and the evidence reinforces the standards set by exclusive mateship, which ultimately acts as a divisive discourse in relations between men and women.

Exclusive mateship does operate among some men, and its codes of loyalty, treating a mate fairly, sharing resources and helping each other through a crisis all suggest egalitarianism; but the expression of egalitarianism here is limited to those within the mateship group, so it is not the true egalitarianism that is applied in inclusive mateship. Exclusive mateship is therefore divisive, uniting a mateship group of men against those whom it rejects. The comparison of these two stories of Lawson's also demonstrates

exclusive mateship's paramount principle of empowering the masculine over the feminine. But exclusive mateship's divisiveness is not limited to relations between men and women; it also divides men from men on the basis of who is in, and who is out, of the group, and it divides people on the basis of race. When responding to those outside the mateship group, these distinct guidelines are followed: white men who do not fit within the group are to be protected in preference to women; women only receive protection if they belong to a mate, that is they are a mate's "good woman" (the group is hereby extending mateship to their mate); Asians and other non-white races receive abuse rather than protection.

Conclusion

The exclusive mateship fostered by the Bread and Cheese Club was extended only to men who could prove their worthiness. Women were excluded, except for Mrs Susan Turner, the Club's Patroness and "only Lady Member" (Malloch 12). The criteria for membership and the job description of the patroness clearly define the roles of men and women in society according to the Club; men influence culture, and women are men's servants:

> Applicants for membership must produce evidence of having taken some active and substantial interest in the cultural life of the community, and of having being instrumental in forwarding the objects for which the Club was created. (Malloch 17)

The services for which Mrs Turner was honoured with her position and title have nothing to do with influencing culture:

> Fellow Turner's mother extended her maternal duties to embrace the lot of them [all thirteen of the original members] and as many others who cared to turn up.

> Mrs.Turner gave the infant club the freedom of her house, mothered its members, and acted as their cook. No one ever went away hungry or thirsty. So assiduous was this gracious lady in the performance of her self-imposed labours that the Club immediately broke one of it most sacred rules, which precludes women from becoming members, and made her the Club's Patroness. Mrs. Turner, is, therefore, the only lady member of the Club, and, although many others of her sex have endeavoured to enter its exclusive ranks, the members remain obdurate in their decision to enrol "men only".
> (Malloch 11)

It is clear that Mrs Turner was only admitted to "mother" or serve the men, and she was, along with the rest of "her sex", not considered able to take an "active and substantial interest in the cultural life of the community" (Malloch 17). The Bread and Cheese Club certainly saw men's social role as leading culture and women's role as supporting men in a quiet, unobtrusive manner.

The Club might have only been a small pocket of selective masculine dominance when it operated in Melbourne, but spread such influence across the nation in similar little pockets, and the masculine influence on the Australian way of life is enormous. Yet the same organization of gender roles occurred whenever exclusive mateship bonded the group into a fraternity, and given that culture is "the state or stage of civilisation of a particular people at a certain time […] or the total way of life of a particular group of people, including their skills, art, beliefs, values and customs, transmitted from one generation to the next" (<u>Macquarie Study Dictionary</u> 164), it can be argued reasonably that exclusive mateship ensured that women were subordinated to men in culture.

This domination of the male sex over the female, and its associated negation of the female's input into culture, is one real outcome of exclusive mateship. It is an outcome that hampers the growth and development of the Australian people because it ignores half of the population. Any opinions not tempered by the input of many minds and diverse perspectives risk being incomplete, and whenever males silence females they miss the potential benefit of this tempering. For instance, when the members of the Bread and Cheese Club limited Mrs Turner's input to nurturing men, they missed the feminine perspective that she could have added to their inquiries. In their obduracy to exclude the feminine altogether, they missed a valuable opportunity to unite men and women in mateship behind a project that would enrich Australian culture. In other words, Australian culture would have been improved at this stage by a greater and more varied range of "Cheeses".

Chapter Four   The Origins of the Inclusive Mateship Discourse

THE TRANSPORT'S LAMENTATION

All you distressed tradesmen, wherever you may be,
I pray you give attention, and listen unto me,
Tho' crime is bad, yet poverty makes many a man to be
A transport from his native land across the raging sea.

[………………………………………………….]

Think a sentence for one's life, for 15 years or less,
What tears it costs a family what anguish and distress
What heart but mourns the transport's fate? what eye but sheds a tear,
For tho' we hate the crime, liberty we hold dear.

The rich have no temptation but all things at command
It is for health or pleasure they leave their native land
But great distress & want of work, starvation & disease
Makes inmates for the prison & transports for the seas.

O, would our rulers make a law for man to earn his bread,
And earn sufficient wages to keep his family fed,
The judges would have less to do and half their pay might be,
Devoted to the public good, and bless Society.

The prisons would be empty soon, and transport ships would then,
Bring o'er the seas a load of corn & not a load of men,
Act after act our rulers make, but one they will not do
To do to others as they themselves would be done unto.

Would our rulers make a law for man to earn his bread
Crime would dwindle from our land & transportation Fled,
Let Providence direct their hearts to make such laws and then,
Instead of outward slaves we might have free and honest men.

1830   Farewell to Judges and Juries: The broadside ballad and
        convict transportation to Australia, 1788-1868. (447-8)

The lament of the transportee above is that in England there is a vast difference between the rich and the poor, and that life, while enjoyable for those with money, is hazardous for those without. There is a class hierarchy in place that opposes the upper class to the lower class and privileges the former, giving them power over all others. The

hierarchy is kept in place by the law, and that law is a servant of the rich, and therefore brings no justice to the poor. Resentment against the upper class is the burden of the lament and it is based on the speaker's inability to understand why the difference between being born rich or poor should mean that some enjoy luxury while others cannot find work or earn enough to feed their families. He cannot understand why his family should be "oppress'd with hunger so severe" while those who rule show little concern for the common good (447). He does not see the justice in not being able to find honest employment when he is more than willing to work, and he does not like having to beg and be rebuked for trying to save his wife and children. He laments being driven to crime for the sake of surviving, and he desires a fairer system that offers equality to all. What the speaker is asking for is an egalitarian classless system in which there is no discriminatory concept of "difference" to privilege some at the expense of others. Many of the convicts transported to Australia would have agreed, and in this chapter I shall explain how such feelings of resentment, anger and frustration, mixed with the desire to improve circumstances, contributed to the development of mateship.

Mateship evolved as a discourse of mutual help and concern as people like the above-mentioned speaker survived the life of a transport by sharing experiences with others and gradually overcoming great difficulties. To be successful, though, the convicts had to gain the power that had been the privilege of the upper class, and to do this, they had to reverse the class hierarchy that underpinned the discriminatory power relations; that is, they had to change the order of power from upper class to lower class. This reversal involved undoing the forces that held the hierarchy in place. There were three such forces: environmental, social and discursive. Mateship grew spontaneously, yet randomly, in response to the first two as people helped each other to overcome the difficulties of daily life, but mateship consolidated as a discourse when it acted to reverse the discursive forces of lower-class subordination. When it did so, mateship encouraged the re-reading of "the label of difference", and thereby encouraged the lower class to think positively and in terms of the nationalistic spirit that evolved a nation from an English penal colony.

The first section of this chapter explores the origins of mateship from what I call a colonial "re-reading of difference". The timeframe here is early colonial (1788 to 1850)

because, as I show, mateship began among convict men and women during the first sixty years of European settlement. The way of understanding mateship offered here is new because it is not usually thought to have begun among convicts, and also because, while mateship is often seen as a universal Australian convention, it is not usually associated with women. I demonstrate that mateship was called forth as a response to a crisis, and that one ongoing crisis in particular allows its development to be traced. That crisis is class distinction, and its inherent discrimination against those forcibly exiled from England and, by association, those who voluntarily emigrated from England to the penal colony. The assumption underpinning this discrimination against colonials was that they were "different" from English citizenry and, by dint of "difference", inferior. This concept of "difference" underpinned the class hierarchy, and if the colonials were to create a stable, viable community resistant to such demoralising labelling, they had to re-read "the label of difference" to achieve positivism from the implied negativism. Colonials had to unite in their beliefs to establish such an outlook, and I argue that the mateship people enacted as they shared experiences and faced the various crises of their situation became the unifying discourse that encouraged them to re-read the imposed negativity of "difference", and make from it the declarations of pride and independence that led to nationalism.

This initial phase of mateship was a time when friendship, beginning as it did in being thrust together in alien circumstances, was far more significant to transportees because life itself was at stake. This inauguration of the mateship discourse is marked by the change in language noted in Chapter Two. At this time there was a change in the meaning of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> from their English casual application to their Australian English spiritual sense of a meaningful friendship, and I cite the following fictional and non-fictional texts to demonstrate this change: L. L. Robson's <u>The Convict Settlers of Australia</u> (1965), Charles Griffith's <u>The Present State and Prospects of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales</u> (1845), <u>Lord Robert Cecil's Gold Fields Diary</u> (1935), Carboni Raffaello's <u>The Eureka Stockade</u> (1855), Reverend Arthur Polehampton's <u>Kangaroo Land</u> (1862), and Supreme Court Depositions – Port Phillip   (1841). I cite Alexander Harris's <u>Settlers and Convicts or Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the</u>

Australian Backwoods (1847) and Louisa Meredith's Notes and Sketches of New South Wales (1844) to support my argument about the first sixty years of colonial life.

In the second section I describe how mateship united people against the three forces that held the discriminatory class hierarchy in place – environmental, social and discursive. Mateship worked as a reverse discourse to the discourses of control that maintained that hierarchy. The sense of "difference" being re-read in this instance was that which labelled the lower class as delinquents and rejected them as "different" from their "betters". Re-reading of "difference" was part of the rebellious rejection of English values that characterised many nationalist sentiments. Mateship discursively united those who were rejected on the basis of their "difference" from a norm that quickly became irrelevant in the culture of the new colony. Contrary to what both masculinist and feminist writers maintain was a male-dominated campaign for nationalism, I show that men and women were united in their efforts to build a sovereign state from the humble, but not humbling experiences of the transportees. I cite early Australian songs and ballads, various broadside reports, letters and journals of convicts including Margaret Catchpole (arrived in the colony 1801) and Lydia Esden (arrived in the colony 1820) to substantiate this view. Historical references include Charles White's Old Convict Days in Australia (1906) and John Thomas Bigge's Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales (1822), William Derrincourt's Old Convict Days (1899), Alexander Harris's Settlers and Convicts or Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian Backwoods (1847), and Jessie Couvreur's "An Old Time Episode in Tasmania" (1891) provide fictional references.

In the third section of this chapter I explain that this mateship of the first sixty years was a unitive discourse that encouraged anyone who claimed Australian nationality, and that as such, it was an inclusive mateship. Even though this mateship rejected those who suppressed the people's desire to rise in power, and did everything possible to stop them, and so was exclusive of some people, it did not discriminate among those it empowered. I use specific examples of early incidents of mateship to show the inclusive nature of the discourse, and to show that it was not exclusive to men. I examine early colonial ballads,

Eliza Winstanley's <u>For Her Natural Life: A Tale of the 1830s</u> (1876), and references to the first sixty years of colonial life by Alexander Harris, Anna Cook, Rosa Praed, Katherine Kirkland and Elizabeth Fenton. I critique T. I. Moore's rejection of the convict influence on mateship, and demonstrate that mateship did begin among the convicts, and that this early form of mateship was inclusive.

1. The colonial "re-reading of difference" and the origin of mateship in Australia

Australian mateship in this thesis is defined as two separate discourses, inclusive and exclusive, and even though they differ because of whom they include, they have a common origin in one mateship discourse that began among the convicts. That discourse was a product of various stimuli and responses over time, so although its emergence cannot be given an exact date, it can be traced to the first sixty years of colonial existence through language; and in particular, through the changes in meaning of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> as recorded in fictional and non-fictional literature. During this period the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> changed in meaning from having no special significance, as they did in earlier English usage, to their colonial meanings whereby <u>mate</u>, even though it occasionally appeared as a casual term of address, most commonly named a special friend, and <u>mateship</u> named a caring, egalitarian relationship of deep significance. Initially convicts used the word <u>mate</u> according to its early usage, and L. L. Robson's reference to a young woman convict's calling her male partner a "mate" in his study of convict settlers 1787-1852 confirms this (75). Loyalty was added to the connotation of the word <u>mate</u> and, by association, to the meaning of <u>mateship</u> as well, by the 1840s according to the Supreme Court Depositions – Port Phillip of 20 December 1841. According to the witness's statements, a convicted horse thief said that while he was guilty of a theft for which another man was in prison, his "mate", whom he would not name out of loyalty, had actually stolen the horse in the present crime (n. pag.). <u>Mateship</u> at this time named an egalitarian working relationship according to Charles Griffith's <u>The Present State and Prospects of The Port Phillip District of New South Wales</u> (1845). He describes "mates" as men who travel and work together and share their earnings (79). <u>Lord Robert Cecil's Gold Fields Diary</u> (1935), which was written in 1852, confirms the common usage of the word: " 'Mate' is the

ordinary popular form of allocution in these colonies" (27), and Carboni Raffaello's use of mate in The Eureka Stockade (1855) shows the added Australian dimension when he names those who helped him to accept mining licensing hardships "mates" (5). The Reverend Arthur Polehampton in Kangaroo Land (1862) also uses mate to name a mining partner of close association (99-100). Ellen Clacy depicts mates in mining partnerships in her A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings of Australia in 1852-53 (1853). Mate according to Clacy is the name by which working associates at the diggings are commonly known (27), but her record of life on the gold fields does not portray a masculinist society. She describes companionable relationships between men and women "mates" in a society which respects women's contribution (56). Amongst her own party for instance, the men helped Clacy with meal preparation, even enjoying the chore of making a plum-pudding (67). These reports corroborate the currency of the new Australian connotation for the words mate and mateship.

As already mentioned, Sidney J. Baker argues that Australia "added a new dimension to the concept of mateship", and he claims that "the outlines of the new dimension" can be seen among the convicts, after which it "was strengthened in nomadic work-hunting days before the middle of the last century" (Australian 165). Alexander Harris supports Baker's claims in his Settlers and Convicts (1847). Harris, whose observations of the Australian people were made over sixteen years from his arrival in the 1820s (2), is what Manning Clark describes in the Foreword to this book as "the evangelist for mateship" (xiv). Harris's observations confirm firstly that there were connotations of significance added to the meanings of the words mate and mateship, and secondly that the changes were entrenched in Australian English by the 1850s. He describes Australian mateship as a comforting, supportive, loyal relationship between strangers whom circumstances have brought together:

> There is a great deal of this mutual regard and trust engendered by two men working thus together in the otherwise solitary bush; habits of mutual helpfulness arise, and these elicit gratitude, and that leads on to regard. Men under these circumstances often stand by one another through thick and thin; in fact it is a universal feeling that a man ought to be able to trust his own mate in anything. (180-1)

Contrary to Russel Ward's use of Harris's observations to argue that mateship is a men's creed, Harris does not exclude women from men's company, and the mateship he describes is inclusive not exclusive. Harris's descriptions of amicable relations between women and men show that men prefer women's company to men's. He demonstrates the widespread respect for women when he points out that in isolated working communities many workers live with their wives and generally it is "considered that 'a woman keeps a hut more comfortable' " (88). He confirms this observation with his opinion that work that separated men and women was not fulfilling, and that it was something which men only endured because they had no choice:

> My own sense was never so much that of absence of comforts and conveniences when living where there was no individual of the female sex, as that I was living an unnatural and incomplete life – that work which robbed me of female society was work which defeated its own end – that the positive loss was far beyond the gain. Still while I could not help myself I was fain to put up with it like the rest. (88)

According to this dating of the emergence of Australian mateship, Ward was correct when he says that the "main features of the new [Australian] tradition were already fixed before 1851" (Legend 11). Contrary to Ward's claims however, one of those "main features" was not that the mateship that underpinned the tradition was exclusive. Exclusive mateship developed from the original form of mateship, and its emergence can be traced to the period 1885-1925. (This will be discussed in Chapter Five.)

Australian mateship is brought forth as a response to a crisis, and even though its origins in the first sixty years of colonial life cannot be identified as a response to one crisis in particular, it can be aligned with the cause of an ongoing crisis – class distinction and its associated discriminatory and limiting consequences. Class distinction works on the principle that Luce Irigaray explains as "the establishment of different values which are supposedly universal but turn out to entail *one part of humanity having a hold over the other* " (Je 16). Irigaray uses this argument to show that woman is subordinated to man when "the patriarchal social body constructs itself hierarchically, excluding difference" (Je 45). In this establishment of values, the "world of men" has a hold over the "world of women", because women, who are "different" from men, are not privileged in patriarchal hierarchy (Je 16). In Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine (1991), Margaret Whitford

claims that Irigaray's work draws upon Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction (123). Irigaray uses deconstruction to explain how to reverse the patriarchal hierarchy so that sexual "difference" is respected and men's and women's contributions are valued equally. Irigaray's application of deconstruction can be used to describe how, in colonial society, the concept of "difference" structured a social hierarchy that privileged the upper class over the lower class, and how the lower class gained power when the hierarchy was reversed.

According to Whitford, "Derrida shows that metaphysics is constructed upon a system of differences" in the play of which "[o]ne of the two poles is always privileged at the expense of the other" (126); for instance, the upper class over the lower class in the colonial class hierarchy. "The main point is that metaphysics is based on a process of exclusion and hierarchies" (126), and if this understanding is applied to colonial society, then the practice of deconstruction that Irigaray uses to disrupt the patriarchal hierarchy can be employed to disrupt the class hierarchy. This process involves privileging "the subordinate term" – the lower class – "with a view to disrupting the hierarchy", and what is discovered is that "the hierarchy is held in place by force" (Whitford 126). As I have argued the forces that held the class hierarchy in place were environmental, social and discursive. Although the colonial population would not have thought of themselves as deconstructing a class hierarchy – they probably thought of themselves as winning a well-deserved advantage – history shows that they objected strongly to class distinctions and they forced class action for change. As Ward points out, "the lower orders were singularly unimpressed by the self-proclaimed superiority of the colonial 'gentry' ", and their "cynical attitude towards the pretensions of wealthy citizens" underpinned class consciousness and hostility (Legend 40).

So the lower-class colonials forced the deconstruction of the class hierarchy by the pressure of their desires, if not by artful design, and in doing so, they re-read "the label of difference" that effectively structured the hierarchy. This change was accompanied by a breakdown of the three forces that kept the hierarchy in place. Mateship's part in this change was that it grew from simple acts of human kindness expressed randomly in moments of need to being a discourse that embodied the way that Australians treat each

other and react in a crisis. Mateship can be called a discursive deconstructive device or force. It evolved as a discourse among the people as the first two of these forces, environmental and social, were gradually eroded. It then united the people informally, and in doing so functioned as a reverse discourse that counteracted the third and strongest force – discursive conditioning – by re-reading "the label of difference".

When the colony was first established, the upper class dominated the lower class in a continuation of English social norms. This hierarchy was maintained by distinctive class lines and by environmental, social and discursive forces. Reversing the hierarchy required contesting each of these three forces, and colonial circumstances encouraged the contest in that the physical structures of demarcation were lacking, and social mobility was possible. As for re-reading "the label of difference", the colonials could evaluate their success in comparison with their life in the old world. Further, there was an urgent need for colonials to re-evaluate this concept of being labelled "different" because such negativity retarded their progress and they needed to think positively to survive. All of these forces relied upon keeping the lower class suppressed and divided; but when people overcame environmental hardships by uniting in mateship they forged social ties of sharing, loyalty and egalitarianism that encouraged confidence, self-esteem and unity. Mateship made it possible for those of the lower class to think positively about survival and success, and in doing so, it dispelled the negativity generated by "difference" and encouraged the unitive sentiments of nationalism, thus undermining the divisiveness necessary to maintain the upper-class control of the lower class. In working against the three forces that held the class hierarchy in place, mateship became the people's spiritual uniting force, and in delivering them from the various crises they faced, it became a liberating discourse for Australians.

Divisiveness based on "difference" fragments society into groups that are antagonistic towards each other as some claim social power and others desire it, and the resultant inter-group tension is fuelled by distrust as groups maintain vigilance against those who are "different" from them. Amidst this antagonism, however, there is unity between members of a group because individuals feel the same as their associates but different from their antagonists. "Difference" is therefore simultaneously a uniting and

dividing force. People on both sides unite within their groups as much for self-assurance as for defence against the force of the "different others". This social cohesion/fragmentation was active in English society at the time of Australia's colonisation. As the capitalist ideology that underpinned the political changes of the Industrial Revolution provided a rich elite and a controlled, impoverished majority, many people became dispossessed and alienated. The industrial development brought great economic upheaval and social turmoil; poverty was widespread and what was described as crime, particularly petty larceny involving the theft of food and clothing, was rampant. There was suspicion and fear of the dispossessed majority by the elite, and there was likewise fear and suspicion of the elite by the workers. The elite feared for the safety of their persons and property, and there were incursions upon their power from the rising number of disgruntled dispossessed. Factors like the Irish resistance to English rule and the French revolution reinforced the fear that the working class threatened the elite. On the other hand, the workers felt resentment against the elite group as they struggled to live in a system that punished them for surviving as best they could. Survival for the poor often meant living by what the powerful described as crime. Imprisonment, violent punishment, death and exile by transportation, were some of the means by which the elite protected themselves from the threat of the working class. It was this social hierarchy, with its power structure that opposed the upper class to the lower class, and its inherent divisiveness, that was transported to Australia with the convicts and their keepers.

The concept of "being judged different" from English norms was a fracturing influence in colonial society, so for those who wished to make Australia their home, re-reading "the label of difference" counteracted both the feeling of being controlled by English norms and the stigma associated with living in a penal colony. This reaction underpinned the survivalist response of many colonials, so re-reading "the label of difference" was vital to the establishment of a stable progressive society. According to Patrick O'Farrell, "Australia was gradually and painfully created out of a stagnant English prison" (9), so anti-authoritarian discourses – like mateship – were vital to the development of a viable Australian society. O'Farrell claims that the idealised belief that the development of "growth and liberation" was inevitable is inaccurate because it need not

have happened given the "negative start" (9). The concepts of nationhood and the demands for national autonomy, which brought about Federation in a relatively quick 113 years from an inception in the wilderness, could not emerge from the passivity, obedience and mindless submission that the English elite had demanded of the working-class majority it transported to Australia in chains. Rather, progress had to be desired and fought for: "Good things had to be made to happen against the inbuilt tendencies of the early colonial situation towards evil, corruption, hopelessness, authoritarianism (even tyranny), a deadening obsession with conformity, and rampant persecuting prejudice" (O'Farrell 9).

The stigma of "difference" worked as an instrument of population control because it kept the people divided into classes of powerful and powerless. Louisa Meredith in Notes and Sketches of New South Wales (1844) describes how the classes in colonial society were distinct and diligently maintained:

> Thus – Government officers don't know merchants; merchants with "stores" don't know other merchants who keep "shops"; and the shopkeepers have, I doubt not, a little code of their own, prescribing the proper distances to be observed between drapers and haberdashers, butchers and pastry cooks. The general character of the invitations to the entertainments at Government House has caused much discussion and animadversion; the citizens who drive chariots not liking to be mingled in company with their tradespeople who only keep gigs. (52)

According to Meredith there is "a strong line of demarcation" between the emancipists and the emigrants and settlers, and that even though many of the richest colonials are emancipists, there is a very strong "prejudice against them" (50-1). But she acknowledges that the lower class contested the hierarchal placement. She concludes that the "good people of Sydney" have as their "anxious aim" a "resemblance to the higher middle classes at home" (52). This ardent desire to rise above their circumstances is described by Meredith as being widespread, but in her opinion, not achievable, so she derides the people's reaction as "too absurd to require a comment" (52). The intensity of her derision suggests that the upper class (of which Meredith was a member) felt the strength of the colonials' challenge. They contested the hierarchy that kept them socially suppressed, and therefore disadvantaged, in circumstances that afforded opportunities for advancement.

Many historians and social commentators have described this reaction against the upper class as part of the spirit of the colonial population. As Ward points out, in Governor Macquarie's rule, "the emancipists and their children felt that Australia, as it was beginning to be called, was *their* country, founded for them and their descendents" (Concise 72). But this particular response was effectively a collective lower-class challenge to "the label of difference". As such, it was an act of rebellion against a class hierarchy that was justified only by the fact that it was the order in the old world. Yet rebellion, according to Bruce Lincoln, does not mean breaking with traditions or radically altering the status quo: rebellion is the desire "to dislodge and replace those in positions of power and privilege" (4). The currency people were not content with power among themselves; they wanted the privileges of an upper-class position in the hierarchy. In other words, they wanted the power hierarchy structured on class to remain, but they wanted to be positioned as the upper class. The organizational hierarchy then would be that everyone was equal in the egalitarian sense and those of the rejected class would be anyone who did not adapt to the Australian way of life. This is the "levelling, egalitarian collectivism […] whose sum was comprised in the concept of mateship" to which Ward refers when he speaks of the advancement of Australian society (Legend 180). Such an egalitarian system could only happen if the lower class countered the opposition to their gaining power by reversing the class hierarchy. They therefore re-read "the label of difference" that held them socially suppressed by saying that they, the "different" ones, were the accepted ones in this new order on the opposite side of the world from England. Those not like them, namely the English upper class and those who refused to take on Australian ways, were then, by dint of "difference", the rejected others in colonial society, so the hierarchy of power was reversed. Ward argues that this class inversion operated among colonials, and that it was highly influential. According to him, the "great majority of free immigrants, who came from a working-class background at home, tended, after a few years' acclimatization, to adopt the attitudes and outlook of the old hands" (Legend 41).

It must be added here that, just as Ward argues that a squatter (a boss) could win the men's respect by being acceptable on their terms, those rejected could be accepted into the new Australian upper class if they adopted Australian ways and were likewise adopted by

Australians (Legend 196). This attitude of acceptance to those who earn it is perhaps most apparent among Australian soldiers. They have a wartime reputation beginning with the Boer War 1889-1902 for being undisciplined according to English military standards. As Bill Gammage reports, officers were not accepted by the soldiers until they proved themselves, and saluting, which was supposed to signify respect for the system, was interpreted by the Australians as respect for the recipient, so according to Gammage, they "accorded respect willingly only to very exceptional men" (38).

Rebellion against "the label of difference" framed by English norms maintained the social infrastructure of a powerful/powerless order in the colony: the new order had a powerful group of new Australians and a powerless group of those who rejected the emergent Australianness. Although this way of seeing the world may not have been reflected in the structure of government and the economy, it was enough that the people saw themselves as powerful in their own country. The fact that this attitude spread further later is reflected in the political movement of unionism that commenced with The Sydney Shipwrights' Association in 1829 (Macquarie Events 244), and the birth of the Australian Labor Electoral League in 1890 (Macquarie Events 285). According to Randolph Bedford in The Story of Mateship (1936), mateship was heavily involved in both of these movements. Initially though, surviving and prospering in colonial society was itself a form of defiance against the old order, and such defiance of English norms and their restricting expectations depended upon this rebellious re-reading of "difference" to entrench in society what was already happening for many in their lived experience. It was only by such re-reading of "the label of difference" that the lower class could speak with an independent voice, and they could construct with that voice, a society in which they could enjoy what they believed was social power.

This colonial "sense of its difference from the parent [English] culture" is considered by Kay Schaffer to be the voice of Australia that asserts the nation's identity (Women 29). Schaffer claims that this assertion of "difference" from English norms is based on "an image of the bushman-as-hero with his egalitarian values and his ethos of mateship", and that it is he who is "the voice of the Bush [Australia]" (Women 29). I agree with her claim

that mateship was an underpinning discourse in challenging "the label of difference", but I disagree with her assumption that men controlled the challenging Australian voice because, as I argue, mateship was inclusive in its formative years 1788-1850. Further, egalitarianism includes everyone, so the mateship to which Schaffer refers was inclusive not exclusive, because it was a practical application of egalitarianism. The Australian voice was not exclusively masculine; it was the collective voice of the men and women who challenged English norms. The colonial rejection of "the label of difference" was a central part of nationalism, and it was inclusive mateship that provided the unitive force within it.

By the 1850s mateship was part of the Australian way of life, or as Ward calls it, the "typical Australian outlook":

> […] a comradely independence based on group solidarity and relative economic plenty, a rough and ready capacity for 'stringy-bark and green-hide' improvisation, a light-hearted intolerance of respectable or conventional manners, a reckless improvidence, and a conviction that the working bushman was the 'true Australian', whose privilege it was to despise 'new chums' and city folk. (Legend 106)

Both "comradely independence" and "group solidarity" describe mateship. So although "working bushman" should be replaced with "working bushmen and women" to be more accurate in describing Australians and the original mateship convention, this description of the Australian outlook shows that mateship underpinned the challenge to the class hierarchy. Mateship among colonials enabled them to unite to overcome the three parameters – environmental, social and discursive – that reinforced the class hierarchy that favoured English norms and the upper class. Mateship empowered everyone who united against the various consequences of these parameters equally in an egalitarian manner, and in such a union, counteracted "the label of difference". Mateship was essentially an anti-authoritarian discourse that sought to raise those rejected by English norms to positions of power in the new Australian order. Mateship is most often thought of as being expressed among people as they help each other through some form of physical (usually environmental) crisis. This is because such incidents are the most common expressions of mateship found in fictional and non-fictional literature. But these instances of mateship represent only a small part of what mateship actually did for colonial Australians. Mateship worked as a unitive spirit of mutual support that helped colonials in all aspects of their

lives, especially in their quest to move from penal servitude to independence of English control and to national sovereignty.

2. Inclusive mateship and the challenge to "the label of difference"

Colonial conditions were conducive to challenging English norms because the physical parameters that symbolised class divisions were not substantial, and in some instances, like prison barracks, had to be built by the convicts. This meant that everyone, upper class and lower class alike, suffered the same environmental deprivations. In Old Convict Days in Australia (1906), Charles White describes how Governor Phillip lived "on the same daily ration as the meanest person in the settlement" when rations grew so desperately short that some died of starvation (112). He also records that deprivation of rations caused "a corresponding increase of crime" for which the punishment for both convicts and soldiers was the same and of "the severest kind" (109). Under such circumstances, working together to satisfy basic needs, lending a hand or support to a fellow worker, or sharing another's suffering, all provided opportunities for mateship to develop from such spontaneous and incidental acts of humanity. Joseph Smith (1845) reports that when he arrived in the colony as a fourteen-year-old convict in 1789, "there were only eight houses", so he and eighteen others slept in a hollow tree for seventeen weeks (103). According to Smith, he and twenty or thirty others were often "yoked" together like bullocks to clear timber (103). Mateship was also enacted in J. Lingard's account of men bathing "each other's shirt out of the wounds on their backs" (177). The wounds were the results of being flogged (177). It is easy to imagine the many crises that faced the colonial population, but the conditions causing the grief also worked for the lower class by disrupting the social parameters of the class hierarchy. Since the upper and lower classes both suffered, survival was a sign of success. For convicts, this was doubly so, because they were at the mercy of those in authority as well as at the mercy of the environment. Successful convicts were justified in thinking themselves better than their masters, because they were surviving by sheer determination and resilience, and such thoughts encouraged the desire to subvert the class hierarchy.

Social parameters were also disrupted when the upper and lower classes were forced to live together by the lack of sustainable physical boundaries. This caused a more rapid breakdown of the class hierarchy because the various social groups had more opportunity to mix on a personal level. This was especially so in domestic arrangements where convicts were assigned to households as servants. Disparate social classes lived together beneath one roof. Margaret Catchpole, a convicted horse thief, profited from inter-class mixing. As she stated in one of her letters home in 1806, "I live very well and much respected" (7). She was a successful farmer in her own right but her letter shows that she was also much sought after as a nurse (7). Catchpole says she is respected "as one of the family" by Mrs Rouse whom she nursed through a difficult childbirth (6). In another difficult situation, Catchpole and Mrs Dight (another appreciative client) helped each other and the three Dight children to survive when they sheltered on the top of a house during a severe flood (6). Part of the breaking down of social barriers was that mateship spread among the people in times of great personal need. It is mateship that Catchpole describes in a letter home to England in 1811 when she details the friendship that exists between her and those with whom she has shared difficult moments (9). Many of these people, like the Rouse family, were free settlers: "I have a good many friends that I go to see when I think proper. Such as I have nursed when they lay-in, cannot do without me. I am looked upon very well thank God" (9).

Another outcome of the classes being forced together was the inter-class heterosexual relationships which quickly characterised the colonial population. Convict women mixed, married and cohabited across all social levels as women and men formed alliances regardless of any declarations of "difference". The lament of one young man recorded in the anonymous ballad "Botany Bay Courtship" shows that although a free man, this fellow was in love with an inmate of the Female Factory:

> The Currency Lads may fill their glasses
> And drink to the health of the Currency Lasses;
> But the lass I adore, the lass for me,
> Is a lass in the Female Factory. (20)

Governor King, the third governor of New South Wales, had a common-law wife, Ann Inett, before his marriage to Anna (Clarke and Spender 50). Such relations would have

contributed significantly to the breakdown of social parameters of class demarcation. Mateship between women and men would no doubt have helped consolidate that breakdown as people from the various classes mixed. Nicolas Bayly's assistance to Lydia Esden and Mary Long is an exceptional example of mateship between men and women of the upper and lower classes. The women, who were both single and pregnant convicts, were assigned to Bayly of Cabramatta on their arrival in Sydney on 3 May 1820. They refused to work for Bayly and left his service without the required permission and passes. Esden's excuse was that she wanted to contact the father of her baby, John Hedges, an officer on the convict transport <u>Janus</u>, on which the women had travelled to the colony. Instead of having the women punished according to his rights, Bayly agreed to help them. He persisted, and repeatedly entreated the Governor until the women's complaints were heard. Their combined efforts resulted in an enquiry into enforced prostitution on the ship Janus (Clarke and Spender 17-9). These inter-class relationships between women and men possibly did more than anything else to disrupt social barriers.

In such a social climate, where the physical conditions of colonial life were not effective in maintaining demarcation between the classes, and the social barriers were disrupted by the mixing of classes on a personal level, authority could be thwarted, discipline could be defied, and the class hierarchy could be successfully contested and reversed. This was all the more likely because the colony's small population consisted predominantly of prisoners who, according to Manning Clark, "gloried in their past and boasted of it. 'Thank God I'm not a bloody immigrant,' they cried. 'Thank God I came out 'onorable (sic)!' " (<u>History III</u> 156). Their resentment of the system, and their defiant reaction against it, is clearly stated in "Penal Servitude", a broadside ballad c.1830:

> Here's to be a deal of reformation,
> About reform you've often hear a fuss.
> And while you keep your paupers in starvation
> You're sure to be surrounded by coves like us. (55)

The ballad empathises with those who are defined as criminals by a system that does not provide work and a decent lifestyle equally for all when it laments: "If I cannot earn an honest copper, / I'm in for penal servitude again" (55). The ballad also suggests that the prison system does not subdue the lower class. Rather it would seem that imprisonment

turns those it tries to suppress into defiant rebels. The ballad derides incarceration as an action that favours rather than punishes, and it claims that a prisoner's lot is better than that of the downtrodden honest worker:

> But still I can't keep laughing,
> When I see your paupers look so pale;
> There's thousands in the workhouse starving,
> While we live like lords in jail. (55)

As this ballad points out clearly, the antagonism against the system and the anger at the pretentiousness of the colonial upper class were fuelled by the fact that the colonial lower class was better off in Australia than they had ever been in England. As such feelings circulated and gained currency, they evinced collectivist sentiments like resentment of the upper class and loyalty to the lower class.

Ward points out that there was a "strong collectivist sentiment of group loyalty" among the convict population, and he argues this was "apart from his own individual cunning, the criminal's sole means of defence against the overwhelmingly powerful organs of state authority" (Legend 29). Such collectivist loyalty was part of the mateship that was uniting the convict population in defiance against discriminatory class distinctions. Colonial Australians turned defiant resistance into a trait among Currency people when they rebelled against the upper-class minority's control over a lower-class majority, and what worked in their favour was that there was a high demand for convicts' skills and labour, so convicts had two roles: prisoners and much needed workers. In his report on the Colony of New South Wales (1822) (74-5), John Bigge points out that the relationship between masters and convict servants was detailed in legislation that, even if flawed, regulated convict labour and made masters accountable for their treatment. Proof of the valued contribution of the convicts was that they were to be paid a wage for work done beyond the expectations of their work for a master, and if the assignee could not pay, the convict was free to sell his or her labour elsewhere in free time. Wages were set by the government and indentured convicts had to be kept for one year.

But even if the colonial population fervently desired to challenge the class hierarchy, and they could do so successfully by breaking down class distinctions maintained by the

physical and social forces of control, class discrimination could still be maintained by the discursive separation of people on the basis of "difference". Since this control is implemented and maintained through language, that is through discourse, it was the most effective of the three forces maintaining the class hierarchy, and therefore the most difficult to defeat. It is, however, upon this force that the mateship discourse had the most impact, because in being a unitive discourse of the lower class it was an effective reverse discourse to the discourses of class discrimination. "Difference" was initially re-read when the imposition of the label "convict", with the connotations of social outcast and powerlessness that it implied, became dysfunctional in the colony. Colonials (convicts) were not powerless; they could resist and they could survive and they did both. Yet to assert survival fortitude, the colonial population still had to counter the English discourses that deemed them "different" and therefore powerless.

One such discourse was the strong negativism of the label "convict" as it was applied to those who were transported to the colony by force. The label "convict" was a signifier of authoritative control over the lower class, and it separated those so classified from the upper class by discourse, and thereby complemented the physical and social separation of the two groups. To be convicted as a criminal was to be labelled anti-social, and in Michel Foucault's terms that meant being named a delinquent (Discipline 251). It was thought that delinquents constituted a group within society, and that that group had to be controlled for the good of the rest of the community. According to Foucault, a delinquent was a "strange manifestation of an overall phenomenon of criminality [...] found in quasi-natural classes" (Discipline 253). Therefore, being labelled as a delinquent amounted to a sentence of social exclusion. Various forms of surveillance were employed to maintain the exclusion of rejected individuals. Delinquents had to be kept under surveillance for two reasons: firstly, there was the control of the delinquent group (Foucault, Discipline 278), and secondly, surveillance facilitated what Foucault maintains was the collection of "clinical knowledge about the convicts" (Discipline 249). Yet such scrutiny constituted a powerless subjectivity for any individuals labelled as convicts because they were considered as objects to be "governed" by the controlling subjects. That construction of powerless subjectivity was part of what Foucault calls the "ideological barrier around those who went to prison or who

had been in prison", and he maintains that the bourgeoisie erected such a barrier to maintain the separation of prisoners from non-prisoners (<u>On</u> 17). It was that barrier that was held in place by language.

In the Australian penal context, the barrier between the controllers and the controlled was constructed in language as much as it was in the physical forms of social demarcation like punishment and incarceration. The appellatives <u>convict</u> and <u>prisoner</u>, together with post-prison labels such as <u>ticket-of-leave</u> and <u>emancipist</u>, and the term <u>free</u> <u>settler</u>, which was applied to those who chose to migrate to the colony, all became signifiers of the powerlessness projected upon criminals, and by association, their freeborn progeny and those who gained their freedom by serving their time. <u>Ticket-of-leave</u> for instance, meant that a convict was free within a certain area. However, as the convict writer William Derrincourt points out, such convicts had to find work in a designated location and had to report to the local magistrate every three months (91). An assigned servant, including one spouse assigned to the other, needed a pass: that is they had to have written permission to move freely within the district (91). Assigned servants had to return by eight o'clock each night and had to report regularly once each month to the local magistrate (91). Even the terms <u>free pardon</u> and <u>free settler</u> implied powerlessness. <u>Emancipist</u>, which meant that a prisoner had been granted a "free pardon", still defined ex-convicts as "not free" because they had to obtain certified proof of being "free" citizens. The term <u>free settler</u> locked voluntary emigrants into the discriminatory terminology as well. <u>Free settler</u> took its meaning from the concept of prisoners being "not free", while the word <u>free</u> had significance only because a person had not been free previously. This association meant that the colonial connotation of the word <u>free</u> was derived from the state of being "not free". So when this word was incorporated into the term free settler the implications of "not free" persisted. The connotations attached to the word <u>free</u> thus bound prisoners and free settlers together in the powerless state implied in being an inhabitant of a penal colony. Ward points out that the masses were "tainted with the stigma of felonry" (<u>Concise</u> 58), yet by living in a penal settlement, so was everyone else. This is noted by Jessie Couvreur's Mr Paton in the story "An Old Time Episode in Tasmania" (1891). Even though Paton was a voluntary emigrant, he describes himself as a self-convicted prisoner:

> What was he himself but a prisoner, since the day when he had madly
> passed sentence of transportation on himself and his family, because
> the pay of a Government clerk in England did not increase in the same
> ratio as the income-tax. (132)

The damnation of individuals thus implied in language was reinforced through judicial surveillance, and no one was free from this superintendence. The systematic supervision of colonial residents is evident in the numerous incidents of wrongful arrest depicted by Harris. Harris tells how one young man was arrested and detained until it was proved that he had arrived in Australia as a free emigrant. The traveller, who was innocent of the bushranging charges for which he was arrested, was treated like a criminal (75-7). Harris tells of another man who had been regularly wrongfully detained, twice a year for the past "twelve or thirteen years" (81). Harris claims that he himself was also wrongfully arrested and treated likewise in an abominable manner (80). According to Harris, the worst lot fell to those who were born in Australia, because such "natives" had no documentary proof of free status (81). This meant that those who were born in the colony entered the regime of supervision from the moment of birth regardless of the fact that they were free citizens. Harris blames the ineptitude of the judicial system upon endemic corruption among the military personnel who were its administrators, and he claims that their corruption spread outwards through society (80). Yet what Harris describes as the resulting "extensive and galling inconvenience to which the labouring class is subjected in this colony" (84) could have been what Foucault describes as the successful generation of antagonism between the army and the proletariat that maintains the bourgeoisie control of the proletariat (On 17). In Australia, that control was manifested via the systemic superintendence of the population, and the surveillance worked as much by fear and intimidation as it did by physical punishment and by discourses that divided people on the basis of "difference".

Judicial scrutiny was even carried out by the people themselves. One form of this social self-regulation was in the upper-class exclusion of prominent colonials on the basis of their relationship with convicts. Aspersions were cast upon character on the basis of a criminal past or because of family associations. Persons with such criminal connections

were not allowed to forget that they had married or been born to convicts. Such was the case of William and Sarah Wentworth. Carol Liston claims that the fact that William and Sarah were both born of convict parents, compounded by Wentworth's audacious behaviour and the fact that Sarah was William's mistress before they married, was forever to plague their appearance in the upper levels of Sydney's society. This was especially so in the case of Sarah. Liston points out that "[m]arriage for Sarah was the start, not the end, of her social problems" (118). But attitudes towards William, the rich and eccentric explorer, statesman and pastoralist, oscillated between acceptance and rejection. For example, public holidays were granted in honour of Wentworth's return from England in 1861, and for his funeral in 1872; but the legislative Assembly "opposed the hanging of his portrait in the Chamber in 1857" (Liston 133). In 1862, Sydney University erected a statue of Wentworth in the Great Hall, but "only on condition that Wentworth did not attend the ceremony" (Liston 133). Given this discrimination from the upper class, it is little wonder that the Australian outlook that evolved during these times should include a cynical attitude towards authority and an aversion to social snobbery.

Reaction against the label of <u>convict</u> was not merely the disapproval of a title: the reaction was a symptom of the rejection of the systemic control of the class hierarchy that underpinned the development and maintenance of the Australian penal colony. As I have shown, this multifaceted control was effective because it operated simultaneously on several fronts in many different modes, yet its lynchpin was social divisiveness, and that division was centred upon the rejection of the class of people labelled as <u>convicts</u>. This division encouraged colonials to maintain their own class groupings. The binary opposition of socially accepted/socially rejected became part of the metaphor powerful/powerless in colonial society. Such control measures overtly detained a class of people labelled as delinquents, but covertly the same division encouraged a separation of classes within society. In terms of colonial rule, this divisiveness facilitated easier management of a diverse population. It worked well for the offshore management of a distant colony. According to Foucault, this process of population control began with "the prison institution" (<u>Discipline</u> 231), and I argue its hold over the lower class ended when they re-read their "difference" from the English as a unitive rather than a divisive concept.

This re-reading of "difference" was evident early in colonial society. By the 1820s, Australia's emancipist population was rejecting being labelled "different" and was calling for the judicial and political rights of English citizens, namely "the immediate establishment of the two fundamental principles of the British constitution, trial by jury and a house of assembly" (Clark, Short 63). This re-reading of "difference" culminated in the call for cessation of transportation, which was described by J. Syme in "Austral Isle" (1848) as necessary for securing Australia's liberty:

> Arise, then, Freeman – rise:
> Secure your liberty;
> Ne'er rest till Transportation dies;
> And Austral's isle be FREE. (503)

One example of the development of the reverse discourse acting against the imposition of "difference" was the reaction of colonial residents against the narrow developmental vision imposed on them by England. English forward planning for the colony was characterised by a distinct lack of open-mindedness about the colony's future. It was based on desired solutions for England's imperialistic and domestic concerns rather than on the aspiration of creating a sovereign nation from a penal colony. Such thinking could have limited the options and opportunities of colonial residents, but the circumstances of colonial existence provided scope for social and economic advancement.

Oddly enough, the opportunity to rise through enterprise in the colony was an outcome of capitalism – the ideology that had initially caused the circumstances that had seen many colonials transported from England. According to Ken Buckley and Ted Wheelwright, the development of capitalism in Australia was inevitable, and they argue that it actually flourished because of colonial conditions (34). They claim that capitalism in Australia commenced with the trading activities of military and naval personnel and colonial officials who capitalised on the colony's demand for goods by co-operatively supporting each other in very profitable merchandising ventures (39). These ventures involved the formation of purchasing monopolies, and the "first milch-cow for capitalists in Australia was the British government" (38-9). Opportunities for advancement through capitalist enterprise were not limited to the colonial upper class because, as Buckley and

Wheelwright point out, the conditions provided "economic opportunity for some of the lowest on the social scale" (41). Convicts like Sarah Bird, who arrived in Australia in 1796, were sometimes included in these ventures (Clarke and Spender 9). She successfully traded goods en route to Australia as a convict, and although she probably did so with the patronage of an officer-lover, she still became a very successful entrepreneur in her own right. Janet Ranken, a free settler who came to Australia in 1821, observed that "we are all come here to make money and money we will make by hook or by crook" and she and her husband did (Clarke and Spender 150). Ann Hordern, another free settler arrived in Sydney with her husband Anthony in 1825 (Clarke and Spender 138). By selling and exchanging some of their possessions, Ann and her husband set up businesses in haberdashery and coach making respectively. Ann's business eventually became the more profitable, so Anthony joined her in what became "the famous Anthony Hordern Department Store" (Clarke and Spender 138).

This entrepreneurial challenge encouraged the evolution of a strong middle class. Initially the absence of a middle class in colonial society intensified the discourses of "difference", because without the emolliating influence of a middle-class stratum to afford opportunities of upward mobility, the lower and upper classes were constructed as opposing groups. Ward describes the upper class as "exclusionists" who tried to maintain the old English order by suppressing the criminal class (Concise 58-9) even though the criminal class outnumbered them. As prisoners were freed, and as more lower-class emigrants arrived in the colony, the lower-class ranks swelled in number and in influence because they could become rapidly wealthy and therefore socially mobile. Upper-class superiority was consequently challenged, and class distinctions had to be altered to suit the situational forces. A middle class evolved who challenged the upper-class monopoly of power, so in spite of plans to the contrary, the colony took its impetus from the largest sector of its population, namely, the lower class. In economic terms, the exclusion of convicts, and the suppression of their contribution to the emergent colonial culture, either by force or by circulating discriminatory discourses of "difference", failed.

Colonials had to reject "the label of difference" in order to take advantage of the opportunities for self-advancement available in the novel circumstances of the colony. Social mores and class mobility were in a state of constant flux in the colony because convict labour was in demand and selling much-needed skills earned good money. In addition, developing the infrastructure of civilisation opened up many opportunities for those with the ability and inclination to seize them. Under such circumstances the inherited status quo of lower and upper classes constituted expectations that were neither relevant nor maintainable. The gap between the imposed convict subjectivity and the survivor subjectivity invented from colonial experience afforded so-called social misfits many opportunities to contest their powerlessness. In other words, survival gave colonials the opportunity to change status in the dichotomy powerful/powerless if they stopped defining success as belonging to the past English order and gauged achievement by colonial standards. Indeed the colony's survival depended upon the convicts and their progeny being successful in achieving a sustainable existence, and when they were triumphant, instead of humbly crediting the English society that spawned them, they assumed the honour for themselves. This way of thinking might have been thought of by the upper class as "Currency arrogance", but it does show a rejection of "the label of difference", and such rejection was crucial to the establishment of a viable community from a prison.

New parameters of demarcation by "difference" evolved to meet colonial circumstances. During this evolution, inverted points of "difference" became the moments of resistance that afforded colonial residents the means of accomplishing self-regulation. Such a re-reading of "difference" provided the means of accessing the power that was the privilege of the upper class in the parent society. This state of affairs probably convinced some people to stay loyal to England as they sought to protect themselves against what they perceived as a potentially threatening uprising of the lower class, but it also evoked unifying sentiments of nationalism in others as they tried to take advantage of the liberating opportunities that the social upheaval afforded. This potential for self-improvement, coupled with the desire to seize the moment to survive, challenged the discursive ramifications of "difference". To use Ward's phrase, colonial Jack now had the wherewithal to be every bit as good as, if not better than his English master (Legend 2).

At this point the discourses of "difference" were reversed and the discourses re-reading "difference", like mateship, emerged.

3. The first expressions of mateship were inclusive

As we have seen, mateship is the response of a group of people, known or unknown to each other, who unite, either temporarily or long-term, to overcome a situation that the group perceives to be threatening. Within mateship disparate strangers contribute their individual ingenuity and strength to a situation, and individual differences are an integral part of the problem solving, and therefore of the success. This is the style of mateship that marked the inception of the discourse in the first sixty years of colonial existence. Its characteristics show that it was inclusive mateship. Inclusive mateship is not exclusive along culturally constructed parameters of diversity such as race or gender, so although it began as a reversal of the reading of "difference", "difference" within the mateship group was a catalyst for union, not a reason for division. This spiritual quality of egalitarian union is the determining principle of Australian mateship, and it remains so to the current day. This is in spite of the overshadowing masculinization of the discourse. Mateship evolved its determining principle when those mostly unwilling emigrants – convicts – acting from both positive and negative opinions of themselves, and thinking of their new world as both prison and opportunity, believed that they faced a crisis because of their tentative citizenship in an alien land, and met the challenge with their own courage and resourcefulness. Australia would become home to many of these people and their descendants, and for that initial period of colonial enterprise, when Australian culture was being constructed upon a basis of rejecting old-world ways, mateship functioned as a spiritual union that aided survival.

The suffering and hardship of colonial conditions stimulated the development of the courage, inventiveness and tenacity that Ward claims were convict traits (Legend 31), and the mateship discourse developed alongside them. Success at surviving and pride in prospering under such circumstances encouraged the belief that being a colonial Australian was better than being an English pauper. As Portia Robinson argues, the British-held belief about convict infamy and degradation "was not the opinion of the men and women who

had adopted New South Wales as their homeland, nor was it the opinion of their native-born children" (3). Clark claims that the spirit of independence among the "native-born currency lads" nurtured the belief that Australia belonged to the new generation of colonials:

> [...] since Australia was a convict colony, whose wealth and civilisation had been created by convict labour, it therefore belonged to the convicts and their descendants, and that settlers and emigrant free workers were all 'bloody foreigners'. (Short 46)

According to Clark, this belief was "fed by an ardent patriotism and nurtured later by a vision of what the native-born could achieve in a country that had not inherited the Old World evils of social class, war and poverty" (46). This rebellious self-confidence informed what The Bulletin later represented as the essence of nationalism, but the essence of that initial self-confidence was mateship. Mateship was the unitive discourse that underpinned the spirited response to enforced suppression, and the defiant rejection of all that being labelled "different" and "outcast" meant, but it was neither overt nor aggressive. Mateship was merely what it remains today: the self-help and mutual concern expressed whenever people unite to face threatening circumstances. That companionable spirit was shared among people whom English emigrant Anna Cook (1883) described as being from "all classes, all trades, and one or more from nearly every County, and every religion" (21).

Such a social mix was typical of colonial society; yet it was that mixed group of people who commenced the construction of Australian culture from a deconstruction of its English origins. Social reconstruction requires language to make sense of experience, and according to Brian Moon, such language involves discourses which "include not only terms and concepts but also ways of speaking" (36). Moon argues that these discourses are not neutral descriptions, but rather work for various power orientations, and as such, they "compete with one another for control of certain aspects of life" (36). Mateship was such a discourse: while it made sense of the daily struggle to survive when it was expressed in moments of union, it simultaneously empowered people within that union to speak of themselves as successful. But in doing so, it also worked as a reverse discourse challenging those forces and discourses that sought to suppress the colonial population. Mateship therefore began as a way of treating other people, as much as a way of coping with life, and

in particular, as a way of responding to the forces that threatened existence, be they physical, social or discursive.

For some people, the shared empathetic feelings and the response to each other that later became known as mateship began as early as their voyage to Australia. During the time at sea, each ship's population was its own small community. The unitive circumstances for these people were the dual sentiments of leaving England and Ireland for an uncertain future and being together with a group of strangers. As people faced separation from familiar faces and surroundings, feelings would have been mixed. While some would have greeted the change, others, as the anonymous writer of the "Letter from a Female Convict" 14 November 1788 complains, isolated themselves in their own woes: "every one (sic) is so taken up with their own misfortunes that they have no pity to bestow upon others" (Clarke and Spender 3-4). Others however, as the ballad "The Loss of the Convict Ship" (c.1835) suggests, shared the acute sense of loss of homes and families:

> It was in the month of May last,
> These Convicts did set sail,
> Leaving their friends and relatives
> In sorrow to bewail;
> Departing from their native land,
> They heaved a bitter sigh,
> Farewell unto Old Erin's land,
> They one and all did cry. (132)

Humans need to feel that they belong, and under such emotive circumstances, people would have cleaved to whoever shared their existence, the more so because there were fewer of them and the strangeness seemed so overwhelming. Sharing with others eased the sense of loss, even if, as Meredith points out, it was as brief and as anonymous as ships that meet at sea. She calls this empathetic feeling of sharing "mysterious communication" and she stresses that it was a universal, not an individual spirit:

> There is something peculiarly grand, and withal touching, in that meeting of ships on the wide ocean. People who never heard of each other before, who might live in the same street of the same city for years without knowing each other's face, thus meeting on that trackless highway of the world, the sea, look on one another as if some mysterious communion between them were at once established. I do not mean individually, but generally, for, although I might not accurately observe the face of any one human being on board that vessel, yet I felt as if they were *friends* whom we had met; and as

> she afterwards went on *her* way, and we on ours, I looked after her lessening sails with real regret. (Notes 11)

Although not known as mateship yet, the friendship struck between Joan Lopez and Margaret Nesbitt in Eliza Winstanley's novel For Her Natural Life: A Tale of the 1830s (1876) is an example of the mateship that arose within the confines of convict ships. The women's mateship was formed when they found themselves thrown together and in need of each other's support on their way to Australia aboard the convict transport Mary Jane. Both women were victims of poverty and a discriminatory legal system. Each had been tried and found guilty of a murder that she had not committed. Joan was supposed to have murdered her employer, Sir Dennis Wolfdene, but her brother had committed the crime. It was for her brother's sake that Joan remained silent about her innocence and suffered transportation. Margaret was likewise innocent but bound to silence by a faithless lover, Nesbitt Aubert. Aubert seduced Margaret, fathered her baby and deserted her. He wanted their liaison kept secret and made Margaret promise not to tell anyone about their marriage. He was the son of a rich man and he never intended to present Margaret, who was not of the upper class, to the world as his legal wife. When the child died of exposure and starvation, Margaret attempted suicide by drowning, but she and the baby's body were both pulled from the Thames. Margaret was charged with murdering her infant and sentenced to life as a convict in Australia. Joan and Margaret bonded through their shared loss, grief and silence, and they unselfishly protected each other from the bullying and sexual harassment of the Captain and the ship's doctor. The story ends with the tragic death of the women. They remained mates during their time in the colony and it was in mateship that they attempted to save each other from a cruel master, Captain Dunmarra. While attempting to escape, they killed Dunmarra in self-defence, and after putting out to sea in a small boat, subsequently died adrift at sea.

Such early instances of mateship were expedient unions struck as much by chance as by design. The novel circumstances of a strange environment, the limitations of an embryonic society mixed with the harsh penal code, and tempered by ill or good luck, in many cases forced sometimes improbable unions upon those who found themselves Australia-bound. In 1829, Elizabeth Fenton arrived in Hobarton after a distressing voyage

from the Isle of France only to find that her husband, whom she was to meet, had recently set sail for the Isle of France. The men of the district, led by the port officer, set out in a whaleboat to overtake Fenton and tell him of his wife's arrival. Elizabeth, a young mother alone with her baby in a strange and very lonely situation was aided by those with whom she would never have mixed under her usual circumstances (Fenton, Voyage 9-10). Harris also recorded this opportune type of mateship when he explained how he obtained his first job and his first Australian "mate". Harris was a mechanic, a skilled labourer who had immigrated to Australia to make his fortune. A friendly landlord organised a job for him, the conditions of which included help from a convict servant. This man, Harris wrote, was "to be my mate", and he described how in New South Wales, "it is not thought any derogation to travel with convict servants; in fact it is often unavoidable" (15).

Uniting with strangers created a deep sense of union when loyalty was initiated between those who suffered or triumphed together. Colonial circumstances afforded many opportunities for this loyalty to develop, and among these, resisting authority and thwarting discipline were foremost. It is a well-documented fact that colonials resented English control and that many of them took every opportunity to thwart it. It is also recognised by historians and social commentators that the people evolved support systems among themselves to maintain the rebellion against authority. Central to those systems was the loyalty that united the powerless against the powerful, and that collectivist loyalty was part of mateship. However, Moore claims that the loyalty among the convicts was the thievish type expressed among criminals. He argues that the "creed of loyalty" that convicts in Australia exercised against "their common enemy of the law" came from London, Dublin and the English countryside (208). Ward likewise claims that this loyalty among criminals, "this freemasonry of felony may have been, to a certain extent, institutionalised" (Legend 30). There is no doubt that English traits, attitudes and values were shipped to Australia with the transportees, and there is likewise no doubt that they contributed to the development of peculiar Australian cultural phenomena like mateship. But it must be added, loyalty, like other cultural traits, also changed to suit colonials. Colonial conditions changed the expression of loyalty from a sentiment expressed among criminals to a collective reliance upon others and an empathetic support that was vital for physical,

emotional and spiritual well-being. One incident described by Derrincourt shows this to be so. Although the loyalty expressed among the convicts here could be the "thievish loyalty" that Moore describes, a careful reading of the events shows that it is an example of inclusive mateship. Derrincourt and his mates were employed in mining coal, and the conditions were extremely harsh, the rations scarce and the punishment brutal (53-5). One night, some men in Derrincourt's cell robbed the commissariat by removing a flagstone from the floor – that is, from the ceiling of the men's cell below. Derrincourt was in the cell, but not one of the robbers, and he could have earned himself a handsome reward by raising the alarm either when he saw the theft in progress or later the next morning when chance allowed him a private audience with the superintendent, but he did not (70). He later received a flogging along with the others, innocent and guilty alike, when everyone in the cell was punished for the offence. If this loyalty was the thievish type that seeks to protect the individual rather than an expression of mutual support for fellow sufferers, Derrincourt would have betrayed his "mates", as he calls his fellow convicts, because he had much more to gain from those in authority than those in his cell. If it was retribution from his peers that he feared, such an outcome was unlikely since Derrincourt had the perfect opportunity to pass on the information undetected; his peers did not know of the tobacco he stole when the store was open during the night, and neither they nor the officers knew that he hid his stash in a hole before speaking to the superintendent the next morning (69-70). It was conditions such as these that changed casual acts of loyalty (be they among thievish types or otherwise) into the collectivist sentiment that became mateship – the spiritual union of strangers in a time of need.

Moore argues that this mateship among the convicts was what he calls "proto-mateship" – that is, not true mateship – for three reasons: "historically it was the earliest form in our history; conceptually it was rudimentary in character; factually it failed too often to fulfil the basic element of loyalty" (208). I agree with Moore with regards to the prototype description, because mateship at this stage, like the Australian culture of which it is a part, was in its earliest, rudimentary form. But I disagree with him about disregarding convict mateship because the loyalty that the convicts obviously shared with each other was expressed among small groups, and was not, at this stage, the universal characteristic

of Australian behaviour that it became over time. Moore does not deny convict loyalty, or that it was part of mateship, rather he acknowledges that it was, but claims that in being "combative mateship" expressed among members of small groups against an imminent crisis – authority – it "only rarely showed the higher elements of generous affection and sacrificial loyalty" of the "genuine" mateship (208). He does not say that convict mateship never showed heightened human qualities of selflessness, but he does argue that it could not have been "true mateship" anyway because this mateship was as yet only in pockets of humanity and not widespread through the colonial community. According to Moore, this true mateship, the "fraternal type of mateship", as he calls it, was common among "bushmen, seamen, and fighting servicemen" (209). The only objection that Moore really has against convict loyalty therefore is the size of the mateship group. But group size was largely beyond the control of individuals: it was determined by circumstances like the confines of a prison cell, the number in a chain gang or the number of men assigned to a master. These convicts were not part of a large collective; they were a group of people struggling to survive, and their mateship contributed to both the style and establishment of Australian mateship because it was in such small groups that the discourse began and then spread outwards to the broader colonial community.

Harris describes a group of convict shepherds who form this loyalty to each other and their shared aversion to authority into a mateship collective in order to survive their master's harsh treatment. Harris spends a night with these men whilst travelling to his own station from Bathhurst, and having been warned about the men's habits of stealing from strangers, does not fall victim to their treachery. Before entering the dwelling, Harris rolls his "current checks and orders" into his sleeve (196), and leaves only a "bad order" (one that will cause problems for whoever tries to cash it) and a few loose coins in his pocket as the prize for the one who will rob him during the night (199). The plan works well, and Harris happily leaves next morning only missing that which he was prepared to give away. But the main point he makes in this recount of a "night passed in one of the worst class" (195), is that these men loyally protect each other and they all share in the takings because they are united against the authority of the cruel master who employs them. The group unite in order to survive the circumstances that cause their defensive behaviour. As Harris

points out, such treatment of strangers is rare because colonials are most hospitable towards others. It must be noted that as far as hospitality was concerned, this group of men shared their food, drink and shelter with Harris, as he did with them, in spite of their obviously meagre provisions. Harris blames a cruel master for the attitude of these men, saying that their reason for stealing from travellers "may be traced with the clearness of cause and effect to the master's character" (195). This type of master abuses his men by not providing sufficient rations and decent quarters for them, and in return, the men do whatever they have to do in order to survive (195). If that involves stealing from their own brother, they will do it so that they don't starve (195). Mateship among this group of shepherds evolved as a form of self-protection against circumstances that were beyond the power of the shepherds to change, but its sentiments and its outcomes for the mates it protected were no different from the instances of mateship among free citizens.

In uniting against authority, convicts were sharing their will to survive and their resourcefulness with others. This is the essence of inclusive mateship, and its expression helped people through the hardships of colonial existence. Derrincourt's stories of convict life reinforce the idea that mates were people who, though thrown together by circumstances, looked out for each other as a matter or course. One incident recounted by Derrincourt was that when he was being flogged, he refused to cry out in pain for which he gained the respect of his "three mates"(63). They were standing in front of him during the ordeal, and afterwards they carefully tended his wounds. On another occasion, when Derrincourt and his mates were the ill-treated servants of a cruel master, Derrincourt stole a Yorkshire pudding and a "smoking and nearly cooked bullock's heart" from the master's oven" (84). He promptly shared it with his mates and bore the brunt of the master's wrath afterwards. Derrincourt's memoirs are full of such moments of mateship and they are not exclusive to men or to convicts. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Derrincourt and his mining mate Rose Hinton – both free citizens because Derrincourt was an emancipist when he went mining – worked neighbouring claims and benefited greatly from their mateship. From Hinton, Derrincourt acquired knowledge of mining as well as companionship, and Derrincourt protected her in return. On one such occasion, he assaulted "an individual of the larrikin type" who annoyed her (171). The mateship of the pair was reciprocated in

loyalty and trust as shown when Rose took care of Derrincourt's claim while he went to Sydney to be married (171).

Not all moments of union were in circumstances of distress, or at least the distress was not always serious, because mateship was a companionable spirit of enterprise as much as it was a defence against isolation, loneliness and harsh conditions. Some incidents that constitute the inclusive mateship discourse are humorous and construct a spirit of uniting through a shared sense of fun from laughing at what could have been considered a distressing moment. One such moment was the 1883 adventure of Anna Cook and a group of women who solved the difficulties of washing aboard a ship. As the women hung their "linen" (chemises and bloomers) above deck where the men went about their duties, embarrassment over how to conceal the underwear while it dried was overcome by necessity, and mirth followed as the linen was hung "in full sail" (20). Anna Cook also notes how much she learned from her fellow shipmates on the voyage to Australia, and this sharing of skills and knowledge was, in its own way, a contribution to mateship (21). The period that Rosa Praed describes in My Australian Girlhood (1902) is the late 1850s, and her impressions of mateship among a diverse array of characters, shows its various applications. For instance, Praed recalls the mateship she and other station children shared with Old Waddy, a stockman who told the most amazing stories of bush life (319). While it is well accepted that mates could be men who worked together at shepherding, stockwork or prospecting, according to Praed, Aboriginals who shared special relationships with their kin or with white people could also be mates. Praed claimed that her first love was her childhood companion-mate, Ringo. He was a "half-caste boy" from whom she learned bushcraft and Aboriginal lore (346). Two Aboriginal male mates of Praed's, Waggoo and Tombo, took her to watch a corroboree one evening. The excursion was unknown to Praed's parents, and the performance that she witnessed was a rehearsal for the massacre of the Frazer family at Hornet Bank (362). Such incidents of mateship demonstrate that the convention was a way of thinking and acting towards others as much as it was a spiritual union which supported and comforted those who shared it.

Inclusive mateship encouraged multilateral unity, and this unity occurred in the various affinity groups that formed whenever people united in moments of need. Such moments were sometimes an act of providing provisions for strangers travelling in the bush. Katherine Kirkland's memoirs of her first trip into the country in 1839 depict one such incident. In Kirkland's description of bush hospitality, inclusive mateship is shared by the stranger and the isolated bush woman, who never had "a lady [visitor] before" (51). In similar circumstances the succour afforded through this spirit of inclusive mateship assisted travellers through moments of despair. Elizabeth Fenton noted in her journal in 1830 that after exposure in a snowstorm in the dark of night in the bush, her family, which included a baby, was most distressed (Journal 126-7). Fenton's husband was recovering from an illness, she herself was pregnant and the baby had fallen ill during the day's journey (Journal 126). The account suggests that they might have perished but for the food and shelter offered by a stranger. This mateship towards unknown strangers as expressed by isolated settlers towards the travellers who called upon their hospitality was most clearly defined by Harris as an Australian trait that was most unlike English behaviour. He calls it "the custom of the colony and especially of his [working] class" (19). Harris attributes the difference between the uncharitable behaviour of the English and the hospitable behaviour of Australians directly to colonial conditions and to the colonials themselves. It is clear from his description of how people care for each other that mateship is a major component of the difference in attitude between the English in their country of origin and the English who adopted Australia as their home:

> Looked at in an abstract point of view, it is quite surprising what exertions bushmen of new countries, especially mates, will make for one another, beyond people of the old countries. I suppose want prevailing less in the new countries makes men less selfish, and difficulties prevailing more make them more social and mutually helpful. (176)

Mateship at this early stage of its development cannot be defined, as Moore argues, as a "fraternity of self-interest" or "perfect friendship" according to those who express the sentiment, or to the size of the group to which they belong. The mateship discourse was in its rudimentary stage of development and it was growing from the people's response to daily life as they adapted to the conditions of their new and very un-English surroundings.

A perfect example of mateship as the unifying spirit that it had become by the end of the mid-nineteenth century would show that it was a spontaneous response shared among a group of disparate people in the face of a crisis. Such is the mateship among the party of Australian bushmen and Aboriginal trackers who search for the three missing children Roderick, Bella and David Duncan in William Strutt's Cooey: A True Australian Story: or, The Trackers of Glenferry (1901). The search is undertaken by station hands as soon as the distraught father reports that he has failed to find the children after searching for a day. The first suggestion of egalitarianism is that it is the manager who organises the search: "I tell you what it is, mates. The thing must be done on a larger scale today," he tells the men (29). The business of the station is put aside because the owner, Mr Dalrymple, is "fond of those youngsters" (29). The story relates how Dalrymple respects the children's father as a worker and how he values his trustworthiness (32), and this respect is reflected in Dalrymple's visit to Mrs Duncan to encourage her "trust" and to reassure her that she would soon have her "bairns back all safe" (33). When the bushmen fail to find the children, Duncan engages some Aboriginal trackers, Nimrod, Corunguiam and Munight to help. The relationship between the bushmen and the Aboriginals is amicable and respectful and it is clear that everyone's concern is for the lost "piccaninnies" and their grieving parents (43). Mateship is foremost in the joy that is shared by everyone when the children are found alive:

> All now gathered round, and oh, what a group to paint! Bella pressed to her Father's breast as he rubbed her cold and stiffened limbs. Mr Macrae sitting with little David in his arms, whilst poor Roderick was supported by Rendall, the stockman.

> Old Nimrod and his sons, proud of their achievement, laughed with delight … and exclaimed every now and then, "Poor piccaninny! Poor piccaninny! (51)

This story is based on fact: three children Isaac, Jane and Frank Duff went missing from a Victorian station in 1864 and were found after nine days of wandering lost in the bush. It contains one of the many acts of mateship enacted throughout colonial Australia. If, from some vantage point in the future, these isolated acts of mateship across the widely dispersed pockets of Australian settlement could be viewed as one, then it could truly be

said that this way of acting that is mateship was indeed a universal response that had evolved into instinctive behaviour among Australians.

Conclusion

As the colonials persisted in their endeavour to survive rigorous conditions, the discourses that constituted divisiveness by "difference", and made their position in society powerless, were challenged. That challenge was mounted as much from each attempt to invent solutions to problems or to overcome hardship as it was from each instance of success. It was by slow but certain reversal of the discourses of "difference" that being declared a deviate in English society eventually translated positively for many convicts. The new land afforded them opportunities that never could have been theirs in England or Ireland, and their desire to survive and succeed prompted them to accept the challenges confronting them, and in doing so, they united with like-minded others and thereby helped themselves.

The biggest threat to the divisiveness by which the upper class sought to control the lower class was if the colonials united against the system. Yet they did unite in mateship, especially when conditions were at their worst. The inclusive mateship discourse drew substance from shared feelings and moments of distress and success, and in turn it supported resistance to the discipline of subordination. In doing so, inclusive mateship became one of the discourses that constructed defiant survival in the face of adversity as an empowering principle. That principle elicited hope from the despair of imprisonment. Hopefulness encouraged positivism that focused attention away from the anguish of transportation and on to the opportunities available in the social upheaval of colonial existence. The resulting colonial attitude fostered a radically positive re-reading of "difference". That re-reading of "difference" opened a gap in which a sense of egalitarianism could be constructed as people realised that transportation was a great leveller from which those who rose did so on a new understanding of equality. The sentiments of unity, self-reliance and loyalty among strangers in times of need, was combined with egalitarian sentiment as colonial residents read their own lived experience

by the success of those who survived and prospered. The resultant proactive response to "difference" evoked nationalistic desires. Such feelings were fuelled by necessity as much as by a blatant distrust of the justice system and an insurgent rejection of old world judgements and mores; but the uniting discourse was the mateship expressed in little ways, many times among the diverse population who became Australians.

Chapter Five   The Origins of the Exclusive Mateship Discourse

> **"We saved as many as we could."** (Russell 3)
>
> **"Reveller shocked as blast hit mate."** (Heffernan 3)
>
> **"Mates stick together after deafening explosion."** (Ryan 5)
>
> **"Olympian's tears for stepdaughter."** (Stolz 3)
>
> **"Relief tempered by concern for missing mate."** (Stolz 3)
>
> **"Touchdown to friends and safety."** (Koch 4)
>
> **"Mates escape across burning roof beams."** (Gregory 7)
>
> **"Footballer's brave act saved sisters from inferno."** (Buttler and Barry 5)
>
> **"Angel helped badly injured stranger flee inferno."** (Bartsch 3)
>
> **"Husband, wife shared tragic last words."** (Kiem 5)
>
> **"Dying girl sends love to family."** (Green 5)
>
> **"A wooden cross bears the load of a hurt nation."** (Griffith Front page)
>
> **"The night Heaven turned into Hell."** (Harvey 8-9)

These headlines are representative of those that appeared across Australia in the wake of the bombing of the Sari Nightclub in Bali 12 October 2002. "The night Heaven turned into Hell" sums up the event in which some two hundred partygoers, eighty-eight of whom were Australians, were killed in a terrorist attack (Harvey 8-9). Over the period of these headlines from 14-20 October 2002, the news reports unfold the extent of a tragedy that worsened each day as names were added to the list of the missing and dead. Australia's Prime Minister, John Howard, described the "terror" as puncturing "our nation's heart" but promised in the same breath "it will never break the Australian spirit" (Sunday Mail Front page). With the mention of the Australian spirit, it is not surprising that the reports of the attack and its aftermath, and the Australian responses to the event, include the words mate and mateship: this tragedy is exactly the type of crisis that calls forth what is typically believed to be mateship. It is also not surprising that in this international display of Australianness the ambiguity surrounding mateship persists: mateship is acclaimed as a worthy Australian characteristic, but it is commonly confined to the masculine.

In his statements about the tragedy, Prime Minister John Howard maintained the belief that mateship represents the Australian spirit and is not exclusively masculine. But Howard is among the minority in this regard because, as his fellow Australians' comments about the Bali bombing show, most people refer to men as mates and women as friends and thereby confirm mateship as a men's fraternity. In parliament on Monday 14 October, when Howard described the victims, he used the word <u>mate</u> to mean a friend of either sex:

> I know that the thoughts of everyone in this parliament – and, indeed, the thoughts of millions of Australians – are with those of our fellow country men and women who still do not know whether their daughter or their son or their brother or their sister or their lover or their mother or their father or their mate is alive or dead. (7497)

But Opposition Leader Simon Crean expressed the common attitude towards mateship when he connected it to the masculine by singling out the footballers among the mixed group of Australian men and women involved:

> The result was not just a loss of life; it was a loss of innocence and it was also, as the Prime Minister has remarked, very much a loss of mateship. A lot of people were there in groups, many of them football teams. (7501)

This association of mateship and males appeared repeatedly in the media reports about the Bali bombing. For example on the 15 October 2002, in <u>The Courier Mail</u>, a page of photographs and articles titled "Miracles emerge from mayhem", and dedicated to Bali reports, has one caption for a series of three photographs of male victims which reads; "Alive and well ... family photographs of Noosa football and surfing mates, from left Nat Meltzer; David Gafa, who was airlifted to Perth and is expected home soon, with Luke Grigg after a fishing trip; and Mitch Pardon" (Keim and Green 5). On the same page a lead paragraph "Holidaying mum was 10 steps from death" reports that Leanne Creese, who was with "a group of seven friends would have been inside the club at the time of the explosions if they had not been delayed by having to pick up another friend from the airport who arrived late on Saturday" (Keim and Green 5). Yet again on the same page, the Hatcher family greet their son and brother Sam at the airport. In the article he is a mate of another young male: "Sam, and his mate, Zac Reynolds, both 23 and both from the Sunshine Coast, were among hundreds of Australian holidaymakers who flew home yesterday, grateful just to be alive" (Mathewson, Grief 5).

Associating the word <u>mate</u> with males and the word <u>friends</u> with females confirms that mateship is commonly seen to be exclusively masculine and thereby links mateship – the essential component of Australianness – to the masculine. This is in spite of the fact that men and women's equal involvement in helping each other through the ordeal reflects inclusive mateship. Against this backdrop of men, mates and iconic masculinity, it is ironic that the image that <u>The Courier Mail</u> claims "captured the moment – the horror, the desperation, the bravery" of the bombing, is a photograph of a young woman, Hanabeth Luke, "helping a burnt and bloodied young [male] traveller from the hell of Kuta's bomb blasts" (Bartsch 3). But she was not his mate; she was "the angel who came to the rescue of an injured stranger amid the inferno of Bali's Sari nightclub" (Bartsch 3). As described in the Introduction to this thesis, the same masculinization of the word <u>mate</u> featured in the reports about the canyoning tragedy in Saxeton, Switzerland in 1999, and just as there was a sense of men being given prominence in those reports, the same downplaying of women's role is repeated in relation to events in Bali. This is in spite of the rare but no less significant reference to women and mates by Jaime Lee Brandt, who was at the centre of the bomb blast. Brandt called her friends "mates" in a comment that clearly defines inclusive mateship: "My mates wouldn't let go of me, they saved my life. No one hesitated, they just wanted to help each other. We were all fighting for each other" (Owen-Brown 4). Males are empowered by the automatic association of the spirit of mateship with the masculine because mateship is a significant component of Australianness. This association excludes women from the events of which they are very much a part and it gives them lesser standing as Australians.

The issue here is not merely that women are excluded from mateship according to the dominant understanding of the convention, but rather that in being excluded from mateship they are denied the same respect, privilege and social power as men. The system of values associated with the mateship discourse thus reduces women's cultural status to something significantly less than men's. As Jocelynne Scutt points out, the traditional concept of mateship (known here as exclusive mateship) "excludes 52 per cent of Australians":

> […] women are not subjects in the "mateship" system; the values of

"mateship" do not extend to them. Stereotypical views of the meaning of mateship often project the idea that if women are included, mateship walks out the window. Its very essence is of men together, men without women. It is almost as if men cannot be "bosom buddies", great friends, true companions, unless women are banished from the scene. (75)

But two peculiarities arise from this cultural status. Firstly it only occurs if mateship is thought of as exclusively masculine. It is exclusive mateship, not mateship the Australian convention, which constructs a framework of relations that forces the feminine to engage in Australian culture from a position of "difference" from one particular masculine norm. Secondly, women are not the only "others" rejected from mateship by means of "difference" from that male norm. As already discussed, some men are rejected from exclusive mateship because they do conform to its peculiar mode of masculinity, so exclusive mateship not only subordinates the feminine, it subordinates all but one style of masculinity as well.

Exclusive mateship is a divisive discourse because its unitive function is based on judging a person by the criteria of "difference" from a given norm: even as exclusive mateship unites those who are deemed acceptable by the dictates of its masculine norm, it excludes those who are deemed "different". The cultural downside of this division is twofold: those who belong to an exclusive mateship group must act like everyone else or risk rejection, so there is no room for individuality; for those who are rejected from exclusive mateship there is no tolerance of diversity. The cultural imbalance in power relations generated by the exclusive mateship discourse goes beyond a contest between the sexes: it extends discrimination by the judgement of "difference" in some form or another to all members of society.

This exclusive mateship, which is often identified with Australian mateship, is the subject of this chapter. Exclusive mateship originated in the same manner and by the same means and at the same time as inclusive mateship during the period 1788-1850, but exclusive mateship re-reads "difference" according to the patriarchal assumption of masculine dominance over the feminine. Exclusive mateship is shown to be a patriarchal discourse that emphasises "difference" on the basis of male-centred norms. I will argue that

exclusive mateship differs so markedly from the inclusive understanding of mateship in its exclusion of women and some men that it cannot possibly be the mateship that Australians believe forms a central part of their national identity. I will not include here a discussion on how exclusive mateship came to dominate inclusive mateship as this is dealt with in detail in Chapter Six.

In the first section I demonstrate that exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse. Like inclusive mateship, exclusive mateship originated as a discourse from a re-reading of "difference" in the period 1788-1850. But its patriarchal emphasis means that its measure of "difference" is based upon male-centred norms, and anyone judged "different" on this basis is excluded from mateship. Women are foremost among those rejected, but some men are also excluded. Luce Irigaray's and Chris Weedon's works on patriarchy and language are cited to demonstrate how exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse that has gained cultural dominance through language. The literature cited supports my argument that this selective understanding of mateship surfaced as the dominant understanding of the discourse in the period 1885-1925. This literature includes A. D. Ellerman's "Driving Mates" (1899), Toby Twist's "A Re-constructed Idol: A Vagary in Verse" (1893), Mary Gilmore's "The Truest Mate" (1910), all published in The Bulletin, and Henry Lawson's "The Men Who Made Australia" (1901).

In the second section I demonstrate that the message expressed by exclusive mateship is misogyny, and its primary focus is empowering men over women. The characteristics of the men and women described are stereotypical and they always bear the same message: man's bonding with man is the primal bond and women are destroyers of men's mateship and their lives. The literature is again drawn mostly from the period 1885-1925 and includes poems by Grant Hervey, Montague Grover, Thos Spencer, Will H. Ogilvie and Marie Pitt as well as a selection of verse published in The Bulletin. Barbara Baynton's "Squeaker's Mate" (1902) is analysed to show how Baynton, in critiquing mateship, pointed out that mateship in its exclusive form is not the egalitarian, unitive bond that defines Australian mateship.

In the third section I argue that exclusive mateship is not the egalitarian bond that characterises Australianness. The argument most popularly used to sustain this belief, namely that mateship is a men's creed because it was initially shared among men in the absence of women, is disputed. Instances of inclusive and exclusive mateship are examined in order to demonstrate that Australian mateship is inclusive, not exclusive. The literary evidence is taken mostly from the period 1850-1925 and includes: Catherine Helen Spence's <u>Clara Morrison: A Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever</u> (1854), Mary Gaunt's <u>Kirkham's Find</u> (1897), William Coxon's "The Flash Colonial Barmaid" (n.d.), Philip Lorimer's "Have those happy moments left thee?" (1901), E. J. Brady's "Riverine" (1911), Edward Dyson's "Peter Todd of Morris Vale: A Tale of Sacrifice" (1902) and Henry Lawson's "A Romance of Three Huts" (1902). The section concludes with a call for a balanced approach to understanding mateship so that exclusive mateship can be separated from the inclusive style of mateship that best describes Australian mateship.

1. A patriarchal re-reading of "difference" and the origin of exclusive mateship

While the development of inclusive mateship can be traced to the period 1788-1850, tracing exclusive mateship shows that it appears in fictional and non-fictional literature mostly from 1885 onwards. It is most often found from approximately 1885 to 1925, commonly in the texts published in <u>The Bulletin</u> and, in particular, in the work of the male writers fostered by J. F. Archibald. Archibald was associated with <u>The Bulletin</u> from its inception in 1880 until he sold out in 1914. He was editor from 1886 to 1902. According to S. E. Lee, the nationalism that <u>The Bulletin</u> was "so vigorously espousing" was reflected in the work it published after 1887, when, as he claims "Archibald was firmly in control with the policy of making his paper one written largely by its readers" (314-5). Australian writers were encouraged and among them, were men like Henry Lawson, Ernest Favenc, Price Warung, Edward Dyson, Banjo Paterson, Barcroft Boake, W. H. Ogilvie and E. J. Brady, who are often associated with arguments that claim exclusive mateship is Australian mateship.

The inclusive and exclusive discourses circulated alongside each other in the early days of their development in the same way that they do today; both uniting people for some purpose, but diverging on the basis of whom they unite and the reason for the union. The discourses diverged on the interpretations that each discourse placed on "difference"; inclusive mateship united those who were rejected as "different" from English society, and exclusive mateship made "difference" into a principle by which those who did not conform to the narrow masculine norms were rejected. Inclusive mateship initially operated as a unitive discourse among those who worked to make the new land their home. To these people, parameters of "difference" like class, race and gender were irrelevant; everyone was equal in the egalitarianism of the new world order. Egalitarianism is mateship's distinguishing characteristic, and the ideal is that if everyone is equal there should be "a fair go for all". But while inclusive mateship's attitude towards "difference" establishes that ideal, exclusive mateship's attitude negates it, making it an anti-egalitarian discourse. In what becomes a self-contradictory principle, exclusive mateship claims to maintain the principle of egalitarianism, but only selectively applies it among limited groups of males. Even this equality might be questionable because, according to A. D. Ellerman, the relationship between mates in exclusive mateship groups is based on a dominant mate and a subordinate mate. In his "Driving Mates", published in The Bulletin in 1899, Ellerman explains this curiously unequal relationship: "Of two mates, one has ever the upper hand. When this hand lies lightly, there is true mateship; when heavy, then Sheol" (32). In relation to those rejected as "others" by exclusive mateship, however, those within exclusive mateship are "equals". It is in a truly anti-egalitarian manner therefore that exclusive mateship maintains the divisiveness of the old world order, and thereby reproduces attitudes and values in complete contradiction to those of inclusive mateship.

Exclusive mateship is socially divisive and particularly opposed to the feminine. The discourse works to empower some over others, setting up as it does so a dichotomy of powerful/powerless on the basis of those who are "accepted" and those who are "rejected". The criterion for acceptance or rejection is "difference". Within exclusive mateship, "difference" is used to empower the masculine, and those regarded as "different" from the central male image – particularly women – are made inferior. Feminists argue that

Australian culture is misogynous, and Kay Schaffer believes that "difference" is the empowering principle for the masculine: "Meaning is made possible through reference to a system of differences (of relations between things) within an order of sameness (a white, masculine, heterosexual, middle-class culture)" (Women 13). The exclusive mateship discourse helps in this regard by asserting a dominant male role and a subordinate female role through the construction of its personable and seductive image of manhood. It also reinforces the stereotypical masculine and feminine subjectivities that maintain this power dichotomy. The man who belongs to exclusive mateship is one with his peers, but one more powerful than those who are described as "others" by its definition of "difference". But in order to protect their power, men must be vigilant against those who would disrupt their power dominance, and they must especially remain united against women.

A good example of the antagonism that exclusive mateship maintains between men and women is given in Toby Twist's "A Re-constructed Idol: A Vagary in Verse" written for The Bulletin in 1893. The narrator and his mate Andy Clayton have been separated by circumstances for thirty years when they meet by accident. The two, who were "working mates together", enjoyed a rough but pleasant time in honest labour and heavy drinking. After they parted Andy married and is living in Melbourne when the pair meet again. He is hardly recognisable to his old mate because he is now a city man, fashionably dressed, a spotlessly clean father of a "brace of stylish daughters", and not at all like the old mate in grimy moleskins that he had once been (26). It is made clear that the narrator, the "father's old-time mate", is not welcomed by Andy's wife and daughters. This meeting of the mates with women sets up the animosity between women and men that exclusive mateship encourages, and shows that Andy has lost "his days of freedom – happy days of dare and do" because a woman controls him (26). Andy has been imprisoned in domesticity by the emasculating influence of his wife, and he is lost to his mate and to the world of men. This loss is lamented by Andy when he parts from the narrator:

> "Lad, I envy you your freedom, ah, I miss the
>   old vocation –
> Miss the days of old excitement, mate, when
>   'life was more than meat' […] . " (26)

The enduring strength of exclusive mateship is that men stick together against all women, and this is demonstrated in Andy's promise to spend time with the narrator revelling "in the resurrected Past [sic]" (26). In this promise the narrator sees that mateship is permanent and that mates remain true to each other despite changing circumstances and time:

> I discovered Andy's "polish" was at best but
>   poor veneering –
> Lo! A scratch upon the surface, and – behold!
>   the same old mate. (26)

Exclusive mateship does not celebrate a union that is based on need and maintained by a loyalty born of sharing in the manner of inclusive mateship; rather, it compels a union based on group dictates, and demands loyalty to ensure the group's continuation. Its union of people is premeditated, while inclusive mateship's is impromptu, and these characteristics reflect the underlying principles of the respective discourses. Inclusive mateship unites people for the specific purpose of surviving a transitory need at a given moment, and so is an instantaneous response that may or may not develop into a permanent relationship later. In contrast, exclusive mateship unites men for the purpose of maintaining a permanent masculine allegiance against the feminine. This promotes a particularly misogynous style of manhood. According to David Denborough, the Australian display of manliness is based on such a desire "to control, dominate and denigrate femininity" (Wheatley 46). Exclusive mateship's definitive style of masculinity therefore means any men who are excluded from it are derided as effeminate. Exclusive mateship thus ensures that ostracised men are treated with the same derision as women, and its divisiveness therefore becomes total between the sexes and endures across time. Any fraternity that is based on exclusive mateship maintains one specific style of masculinity, and exclusive mateship reproduces the gender relations that keep that style of masculinity dominant and other styles of masculinity, along with femininity, subordinated to it. In being so divisive, exclusive mateship directly opposes inclusive mateship, and the two discourses compete with each other on the discursive field of Australian culture.

According to David Buchbinder, the link between mateship, men and acceptable Australian masculinity is obvious, well-established and highly influential on Australian culture:

The strong male-to-male affinity of mateship is a feature of Australian culture frequently remarked on by visitors and newcomers to Australia, as well as by scholars of Australian history and culture. It is particularly noticed, of course, by women: one's 'mate' may be a childhood or school friend, a co-worker, a drinking companion, one who assists or listens in times of crisis, but is always and exclusively male. Indeed, mateship – the ability of a man to find a male 'mate' and to maintain a relationship with him – appears to be a defining characteristic of masculinity in Australia.

It seems, further, to be more emphatic than the forms of male bonding elsewhere in Western, and especially Anglo-Saxon, cultures: the Australian 'mate' is qualitatively different from the America 'buddy', for instance, though obviously there are similarities. Mateship, unlike buddyship, has attained the status of an articulated national characteristic, so that commentators on Australia and Australian culture may speak of 'the mateship syndrome', confident that their readers will understand what is signified by this term. (116)

In this thesis, the mateship to which Buchbinder refers is exclusive mateship, and he notes how it is not accessible to women. Yet his remark about a man's masculinity depending on his being a mate with another man, suggests that a man who was unsuccessful in this regard would also be rejected from mateship. Exclusive mateship could be described as a discourse of what Luce Irigaray calls the "between-men culture" (Je 45). That "culture" is constructed by patriarchy and "excludes what the other sex brings to its society" (Je 45). As Irigaray explains, "the patriarchal social body constructs itself hierarchically, excluding difference" and "woman-as-other has to remain the natural substratum in this social construction" (Je 45). But as Buchbinder points out, patriarchy does not protect all men "equally and in the same way" (120). In this thesis, patriarchy is understood to conform to Tim O'Sullivan's definition:

The structural, systematic and historical domination and exploitation of women by men. In its original usage, this term referred rather narrowly to specific types of tribe, group, family or household that were characterized by a dominant male ruler, the patriarch, who assumed decisive power of control over the group and its social relations. In the case of family and household groups, the patriarch combined the power of the father with that of a dominant male member. The concept is now more widely and generally used to refer to the total social organization of gender relations, institutions and social processes which produce and reproduce women as socially, politically and sexually subordinate to men. (219)

I argue that exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse because it constructs a system that gives men power over women. That system is based on the understanding that "difference" from one specific masculine norm means subordination for the person or persons deemed "different". According to O'Sullivan, the feminist argument against patriarchy is that it is "not simply a system of differences between men and women", it is rather a cultural and social organization based on sexual "difference", with the male considered the norm (220). Feminists argue, "these differences are organised in a structured relation of subordination and domination, which is historically reproduced from generation to generation" (O'Sullivan 220).

In thus describing exclusive mateship, it is accepted in this thesis that exclusive mateship is an artificial construction that evolved as a discourse that shared some discursive principles with inclusive mateship. As Irigaray points out, "the realities of which his discourse [exclusive mateship in this case] speaks are artificial" (Je 35). According to Irigaray, these realities are "so far distanced from life that they become deadly" (Je 35). This "deadliness" is evident in the narrowly defined masculine and feminine subjectivities that exclusive mateship fixes within fictional and non-fictional literature. Exclusive mateship fosters the notion that the mateship expressed among all men is men's formation of fraternal allegiance against women. It assumes that all men and women are antagonistic towards each other, but the many instances of inclusive mateship between men and women negate this assumption. Exclusive mateship's dominance is therefore not based on social reality; rather – to use Irigaray's terms – it is "an artificial reality", and it is formed by specific reading practices. These practices rely on selected representations of mateship among men, and the ideas are disseminated by saturating language with images of male mates banding together to repel women's challenges to men's power. (A detailed analysis of the reading practices that construct exclusive mateship is given in Chapter Eight.)

Exclusive mateship is a discourse that constructs its systematic subordination of the feminine through language. It was initially through language that exclusive mateship gained its influential position in Australian culture. According to Irigaray, language is sexed and excludes the feminine: "alphabetical writing is linked historically to the civil and

religious codification of patriarchal powers" (Je 53), and sexual "difference" conditions language, determining grammar, vocabulary and the connotation of a word's gender (Je 68). She argues that man gains social and cultural dominance through sexed language which gives man's own gender to the universe: "he gives his own gender to God, to the sun, and also, in the guise of the neuter, to the laws of the cosmos and of the social or individual order" (Je 31-2). I argue that exclusive mateship promotes patriarchal values because it constructs a male-dominated culture. That construction is evident in fictional and non-fictional literature dating mostly from 1885 to contemporary times. Exclusive mateship moved into prominence in the emergent national culture in 1885 when the words mate and mateship were coupled with the masculine gender, and with the convention of mateship that had become, by then, a recognised Australian way of thinking and acting.

Irigaray claims that a supposedly gender-neutral term like mate or mateship becomes accepted as masculine firstly by identifying the "denominated reality with the sex of the speaking subject" (Je 70). That means that if the words mate and mateship are most often accompanied by the nouns man and men, and the pronouns he, him and his in written and spoken language, then the words will acquire the masculine gender in common usage. If this is the way in which they are most commonly used, it becomes accepted, first in language, then in culture, that mates are males and the mateship that is integral to Australianness is masculine. For such usage to gain currency in Australian English, females must be dissociated from mateship in the fictional and non-fictional texts that are promoted as representing the Australian people to themselves. Henry Lawson's work, though shown in this thesis to represent both inclusive and exclusive mateship, has often been acknowledged as most accurately reflecting Australians and their way of life in the period 1885-1925. In that acknowledgement, the mateship he promotes is claimed to be the exclusive type, and his representations of inclusive mateship are either ignored or read in such a way as to promote masculine dominance. It is exclusive mateship that Lawson describes in his "The Men Who Made Australia" (1901), and it is in such texts that the masculinization of language of which Irigaray speaks – in this case, the masculinization of the words mate and mateship – and how this masculine gendering of the words excludes the feminine, is obvious.

In Lawson's poem, masculine nouns and pronouns are coupled with the word <u>mate</u>, and the resultant impression is that only men are united in mateship as they battle against the environment – "the blazing sand wastes of the Never-Never Land" – and against capitalists – the rich "Wool-Kings" (117). These men are mates, "the sons of all Australia", and they take the dominant role in nation building:

> […] they were born to conquer fate –
>   And, where charity and friendship are sincere,
> Where a sinner is a brother and a stranger is a mate,
>   There the future of a nation's written clear. (118)

It seems that men can do wrong and still be ennobled: that is, they can be "sinners" and yet they are welcomed as brothers. Male strangers are immediately taken into this ruling fraternity as mates in sincere friendship. According to this reading of mateship, men have a dominant role and women have a subordinate role; men join together as cultural leaders and women are denied that privilege simply because they are not men.

The only reference joining the word <u>mate</u> to the feminine in Lawson's poem does not admit women into the supposedly egalitarian fraternity of men's mateship. Rather, men subordinate women "mates" to themselves when as bush workers, locked in "a loneliness that smothers love and hate", they take "a half-caste or a black-gin for a mate" to "far out-stations" where "white women" never go (118). <u>Mate</u> here, in conjunction with men, is valorised as valuable, active, powerful and masculine, and in comparison, <u>mate</u> used with regards to women degrades the feminine and subordinates it to the masculine. Further, the combination of Aboriginal women with the word <u>mate</u> in the sense of a concubine suggests that in this "mateship" between men and women, there is masculine dominance and feminine subservience. The association of power through the word <u>mate</u> is organised by means of victorious images for men and degraded images for women: the "Bushmen who were born to save the land" are true Australians; they "conquer the deserts" and they "made the land" (117). In stark contrast to the empty rhetoric of those in the cities, it is these men who federated Australia. Hence the joining of nationalism with men, mates and exclusive mateship. In the backblocks of the bush, in the selective male breeding grounds of the

camp fire brotherhood of working men, leaders are bred, and they participate in the rites of masculinity and acquire the distinctively Australian attributes of Australian manhood:

> Round the camp fire of the fencers by the furthest panel west,
>   In the men's hut by the muddy billabong,
> On the Great North-Western Stock-routes where the drovers never rest,
>   They are sorting out the right things from the wrong.
> In the shearers' hut the slush lamp shows a haggard, stern-faced man
>   Preaching war against the Wool-Kings to his mates;
> And wherever go the billy, water-bag and frying-pan,
>   They are drafting future histories of states! (118)

In contrast to this powerful image for men, women are either men's slaves or burdens, and as such they are not involved in conquering the land and making the Australian nation. The "gaunt Bush-women share the work of men"; but this brief acknowledgment of women's part in the development of the nation is immediately belittled when it is noted that "white women" do not go to the out-stations where men must go to "make a cheque to feed [them] the wife and kids" (117-8). Since this is the only mention that women receive in the poem, it can be concluded that in exclusive mateship's construction of society, men and women are divided into a highly motivated, productive and powerful masculine and a dependent, non-productive and powerless feminine.

Mary Gilmore's "The Truest Mate" (1910) demonstrates how defining Australian mateship as a masculine creed privileges men, giving them social liberty without responsibility. It endorses the antisocial style of masculinity that is promoted by exclusive mateship. Mate in Gilmore's poem definitely indicates a man because it is coupled with masculine nouns and pronouns, and what is more, this man who has "sinned" makes the best type of mate. According to the description of "the truest mate", men are allowed great liberty as well as power because it appears that if a man has sinned, the virtues he gains as a mate include wisdom, benevolence, compassion and knowledge:

> For the man who has sinned his sins himself,
>   And learned what a man may learn,
> Is wiser than he who has lived untried
>   By the fires that make, or burn. (Red Page)

This description of the best mate contradicts the 1890s women's protests against men's licentious habits of drinking, smoking, gambling and violence – the commonly

acknowledged male sins – but it does unite the masculine and mateship. It also demonstrates the assumption that exclusive mateship is true mateship, and further, the fact that the author is a woman, suggests that some women accept that mateship is a convention restricted to men.

Mateship in these poems by Lawson and Gilmore is exclusive, and it positions men in a leading, dominant role. True to what Irigaray says of patriarchal language, women in the poems are rendered powerless, functioning only as the complement of men: they are cultural non-entities. Men carry "the spirit of Australia" while women are cast in a secondary role. According to the language of exclusive mateship, the Australian lexicon, like other languages, has been what Irigaray describes as "sexed" (Je 32). In this construction, the masculine is powerful and the feminine is the subjected "other" in society, culture and history. Australian feminists agree that there is such a gender division of power in Australian culture. Schaffer argues that for Australians, "[t]he self as a cultural category is imagined as a masculine self" (Women 10). This argument maintains that women are subordinated in Australian culture as being "different" from men, so they disappear from anything that is significant or valued. The words mate and mateship carry this masculine influence into culture whenever mateship is thought of as exclusive, because they have become gender-specific words in a discourse that has a high profile and great cultural significance.

Language, according to Weedon, is the site of social organization, political definition and contest, as well as the place of construction of subjectivity (21). Exclusive mateship introduces sexual "difference" into language in Australian culture. Yet sexual "difference" not only conditions language, but according to Irigaray, it is also conditioned by language (Je 20), so when mate, with its peculiarly masculinist construction, is accepted as the connotation of the word mate, male mates are positioned as powerful men and as cultural leaders. Irigaray argues that language thus gendered becomes as culture does, "a single pole of sexed identity" (Je 21), and as in Australian culture and language, the feminine becomes institutionalised as subservient to the masculine. Australian men and women who are conditioned to believe that mateship is an exclusive men's creed accept these stereotypical male and female roles. Evidence of this is that some women writers, like

Gilmore already mentioned, eulogise men and exclusive mateship. As Russel Ward demonstrates in his closing paragraphs of <u>The Australian Legend</u>, men in Australia's traditions and national discourses overshadow women, and this belief has been made part of Australia's cultural heritage:

> It is generally agreed that without a distinctive national tradition a people lacks cohesion, balance and confidence. It is usually assumed that in a young country like ours, inherited attitudes exert less influence than in an old one. The truth may be that, because of its relative youth, our tradition is at once too dominating and too rigid, that we tend compulsively to worship it as, so to speak, a fair though sacred cow. But nothing could be more thoroughly within the tradition than to 'give it a go' – to venture boldly on new courses of action, and so modify, and even create, traditions as the anonymous bushmen and, later, the men of the 'nineties' did. Today's task might well be to develop those features of the Australian legend which still seem valid in modern conditions. (259)

As I have shown, however, inclusive mateship exists in common usage, and whenever it is represented in written and spoken texts, the gendered power dichotomy that privileges the masculine is contested. Contrary to what both the feminist and masculinist thinkers who support the idea that mateship is exclusive argue, there are Australian men and women who relate to each other with egalitarian respect and companionship. The women in such relationships are not usurping men's power because power is not the privilege of one sex, and the men are not "freakish feminised others" because they do not dominate their female partners.

2. Expressions of exclusive mateship

The message expressed by exclusive mateship is misogyny, and embedded in this message is the patriarchal principle of empowering the masculine through comparisons that endorse the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. The exclusive mateship discourse deliberately seeks to promote the twin beliefs that man's bonding with man is the primal human relationship, and that the man-woman bond is necessary only for procreation, so it should never come between men and their mateship. If it does, and a man leaves a mate for a woman, he is doomed and she is cursed. Grant Hervey's "The Girl Who Came Between"(1906) depicts this passionate hatred of women, and shows that the reason for the antagonism against women is that they abuse their place as procreators by using

their womanly ways to seduce men, to break the primal bond, and in thus enthralling a man, to take away his rightful power over her.

Hervey's strongly worded message of hatred is clear, and in being repeated in the first and last verses leaves no doubt about the poem's expression of misogyny:

> I hate her with a blood-red, endless hate –
> My curse pursues her o'er the stretching years;
> Were I the lord of Heaven's Jasper Gate,
> I'd hurl her down among the shattered spheres!
> I'd thrust her back into the Pit of Space,
> For all her breast of snow and hair's gold sheen;
> Harsh-eyed, I'd spurn her lovely, shining face,
> And mock her prayers and all her witching grace. (3)

According to the narrator, this evil woman should not even be allowed into hell because her crime against man is immense:

> Came she to Hell, and I were Tophet's lord,
> No gate would ope for her – no doors would part!
> "Go back and rot amid the ash of stars,"
> I'd cry to her, with unrelenting mien;
> I'd drive her back from Hell's own savage bars,
> To grope through space with pains and wounds and scars. (3)

Hervey depicts women as beautiful, beguiling seducers of men, and the attitude he describes towards them is that their beauty is an evil charm with which they entrap men. With their alluring wiles, women break up men's mateship and ruin men's lives. Men lose their power when separated from each other, and they are left as lonely, bitter wrecks of their former selves. Woman, according to Hervey, is therefore a destructive force, the deadly enemy of man:

> I hate all women – star eyed thieves, they come
> To steal our mates and leave us desolate;
> To leave men lonely, silent, sad and numb,
> Until their hearts fill up with savage hate. (3)

Against this description of the deplorable relations between women and men, the mateship relationship between men is ennobled. The mate who was "stolen" from the narrator was like no "other Mates on earth", and the two men shared a long and varied career of wandering the world. The narrator relates how his mate even nursed him through

a severe illness, and that the two "swore to stand together unto death" (3). But according to the narrator, this relationship, that surpassed all other friendships because it was a bond between "mates", was broken when the "thief with shining eyes and passion's mouth" – the evil female seducer – "took my Mate"(3). Within this accusation is the underpinning patriarchal message that woman is the lesser of the two sexes, and should be less powerful; but she is well able to usurp man's power if he does not remain vigilant against seduction. The comparison that carries this message is made when the "Mate" is endorsed as significant by the use of a capital letter for his name as well as the singing of his praises, while his seducer is described only in the bitterest terms: he is "a Viking-faced companion, brave and stern", and she is a "star-eyed" thief (3).

Whenever exclusive mateship is expressed, women are portrayed as dishonestly seeking to seduce men, and the assumption conveyed is that they deliberately do so in order to break men's power and thereby to subordinate men to themselves. Montague Grover's "Me and McGill" (1897) gives a clear example of women's supposedly evil ways. The narrator and his mate McGill fell out over "a girl". The "girl" is described as "a cunnin' woman" who set the mates against each other when "[s]he kidded us each that she liked him best" (3). But sadly for the men, the woman's interest only lasted as long as they had "money to fill the till", and all that they were left with afterwards was a broken mateship as "one went East and the other went West" (3). As in Hervey's poem, the parallel is drawn here between the wonderful relationship that is men's mateship and the deceitful treachery that is part of a relationship with women. The same patriarchal message persists: men's mateship is the primal human bond, and even if this bond is broken by a woman in life, it will be resumed by men after death in heaven, in the "[shearing] shed of eternal love" that is obviously for men only (3).

A poem that endorses all of these stereotypical qualities of womanhood is "A Test of Mateship" and, like the other poems discussed, it accuses women of breaking up men's mateship. Like the other poems too, men are blameless in this mating game that women play at men's expense. The poem, signed only by the letters ATA, appeared in The Bulletin in 1905. The two mates shared a strong relationship based on the egalitarian motto of

"Equal tucker, equal goods, an' equal work an' equal pay", until they met Kate Rooney (17). At the time, they were completing a labouring contract for Mr Harkway, and Kate was an employee on the property. After they saw Kate's "wicked, winsome, winkin' face", they "never felt the same" about each other. Indeed they began to fight, something they had never done before:

> An' it made us mad an' madder till at last we 'ardly knew
> What in thunder was the best for us to do or not to do –
> Any accident might start us on a row we both would rue. (17)

In keeping with their treating each other equally though, they decided to go to Kate and ask her whom she prefers, and to accept her decision manfully. But when they did approach Kate, she told them that she married Mr Harkway yesterday.

Thomas E. Spencer's poems "Paddy Flynn" (1907) and his "O'Toole and MacSharry" (n.d.) both repeat the assumptions that women are predators whose victims are innocent men, and that mates suffer when they are parted by women. As is usual in such poems, the men are exemplars of manhood and the women are ruthless and evil. In mateship the men share a rough life of "toil and dust and din", yet taking care of each other in oddly feminine ways that show men do not need women:

> I can feel your soft touch now,
> As it soothed my aching brow,
> When you charmed away my fever as you smiled,
> Paddy Flynn!
> As the crooning of a mother soothes her child. (13)

True to exclusive mateship's description of relations between men and women however, Paddy Flynn and his true mate of many years are parted by a bewitching woman:

> We were comrades, Paddy Flynn,
> Till we met that nymph of sin,
> With the full, red, painted lips and jet-black eyes,
> Who so charmed us with her wiles,
> With her witchery and smiles, […]. (13)

This woman made fools of both of the men according to the poem because when she challenged them to fight over her, they did. But she did not stay to watch the fight; she was inside "packing up her trousseau", after which she fled with a man named Jim. The two mates parted though, and the narrator laments how much he misses his mate:

> So I miss you, Paddy Flynn,
> With your kind, good-temper'd grin,
> For I want you, when I feel depressed and sad
> And I feel inclined to swear,
> When I think what fools we were
> When we let that black-eyed vixen drive us mad,
>   Paddy Flynn,
> And I lost the truest mate man ever had. (13)

In the same way, "O'Toole and McSharry" shared a love that "might have continued and been constant to the end" had they not met a woman and fallen out over her. Polly Doolan "so natty, neat and cool" was the daughter of Doolan the shanty owner, and the two men fought over her (344). In this case, though, Doolan was the winner because the men spent a considerable amount getting each other drunk. The men planned to court Polly when the other man was too drunk to get in the way, but they both became very drunk, hence the fight. During the fight, each man thought he had killed the other, so they both left the district bearing the guilt of their mate's death. They never met again, so they never knew that they both survived.

Women's overpowering of men and ruining of their lives along with their mateship is a common lament in poems that represent mateship as an exclusive bond between men. In Will H. Ogilvie's "God-Speed" (1906), the theme of men's mateship being broken up by a woman is repeated, as is the description of the men as true mates, and the fact that they shared a history of battling life's crises until they met a woman. But in this poem, Ogilvie openly expresses the belief that women deliberately come between men, and that this behaviour is characteristic of them in general. He also expresses the doubt that a relationship between a man and a woman can endure. On this basis, he urges his "Old Comrade" to shake hands and in wishing his mate "God-speed", leave their mateship intact should the one who is to be married need to return to the sanctuary of men's primal bond (181).

In M. Burkinshaw's "Friends" (1893), men's mateship was ruined by a woman, and while she is described as being the stereotypically evil type of woman, the mates are likewise the stereotypical men beguiled by women. It is made clear that seduction is typical

of women's behaviour, being as it is as old as civilisation, a fact underscored by the Biblical reference:

> *She* was just a slip of girlhood then – but girls' eyes
>   can work evil –
> Even Samson by a woman fell, and we are not
>   the first
> Who, holding faith through ups and downs and
>   Fortune's worst upheaval,
> Have put the Best of Friendship by for Love
>   that was the Worst! (3)

Burkinshaw's choice of diction, and his unusual capitalising of words, emphasise the underpinning message that women make a habit of ruining men's lives. Here the elevation of men to the most powerful role is evident in the statement that "human lives" are equated to men's lives, rather than to women and men's lives:

> And somewhere in the world she is – surprising
>   and undoing;
> She is somewhere wrecking friendship's faith and breaking
>   human lives; […]. (3)

Amidst these lamentations of women's doleful influence on men's lives is the accusation that relations between men and women are the root cause of man's self-destruction. The accusations do not always appear fair in the apportioning of blame, but they are nonetheless powerful endorsements of the negativity towards women expressed by exclusive mateship. Will H. Ogilvie's "His Gippsland Girl" (1906) tells how a shearer was made into a drunkard by the actions of a woman. The shearer vowed to work to save the money to wed "his Gippsland girl". He did so, but she married someone else. He promptly became a drunken shearer "who blued his cheque" (28). The young woman was judged culpable even though the poem does not show that she knew of the shearer's affection. It seems to have been a one-sided romance on the part of the shearer, but a case of one-sided blaming of the woman.

A similar observation can be made of the circumstances surrounding the heavy drinking, hard living style of existence of a character called Devil-May-Care. The scenario is recounted in Will H. Ogilvie's "The Ballad of Devil-May-Care"(1913). Devil-May-Care was a stockman who fell in love with the boss's young daughter. The lovers were ill

matched from the beginning. He was described as a philandering rebel who was risk-taking and very fond of drinking. The girl was portrayed as a "maid" with a "rosy child-mouth" so it would appear that she was very young and inexperienced in comparison with Devil-May-Care. The clandestine meetings of the pair were soon discovered, and the girl's parents ended their illicit romance abruptly. This could have been as much for the stockman's sake as for the girl's because their status was vastly different and, coupled with the immaturity of the girl, any liaison between the two was an uncertain proposition. But Devil-May-Care sank into dejection after the girl's parents sent her away, and he quickly resumed the heavy drinking that he had temporarily forsaken during the brief affair:

> Then he drinks – how he drinks! – down in Albury town;
> And, "Why should I sorrow? It's only my share
> Who believed in a woman!" – says Devil-May-Care! (21)

Whenever a man's reprobate lifestyle is excused because of a woman's actions, his reputation is enhanced at the expense of hers, and his image shines while hers is tarnished. This comparison reasserts the assumption that man is powerful and woman is subordinate. In doing so it supports the idea that this is the natural relation between the sexes, and if women upset this ideal, men suffer.

The misogynous attitude expressed by exclusive mateship did not go unnoticed by some writers. Will H. Ogilvie's collection <u>Fair Girls and Gray Horses</u> (1906), which contains some of the examples of exclusive mateship already discussed, includes "To a Misogynist", which argues that misogyny is misguided. According to this poem, there are as many true women as there are false, and men "are not so immaculate" as to be blameless (17-8). Mothers, sisters and lovers can all be true-hearted women, and men should carefully assess their own contributions to any broken love affair before accusing women of any wrongdoing. The theme is not to "damn all women as wantons or worse" simply because one "lover proved false", but to think that women, like men, can be both good and bad (17). Marie Pitt's "The Enslavement" (1911) echoes this sense of men's inability to assess their attitude towards women honestly. The theme of this poem is that all human beings are modern day helots whose enslavement is directly attributable to men's subjection of women. According to the poem, this degradation of human life began when man subordinated woman to himself; that is at the moment man assumed power by brute force

over woman. This subjection of women happened within the intimate relations of human mating many years ago "in some wild red dawning" of human existence: "When Man, the savage, took his savage mate, / And beat, and bent, and broke her to his will (50). The relationship between the main characters Mary and Squeaker in Barbara Baynton's "Squeaker's Mate" (1902) describes the degradation of human existence that flows from this brutal imbalance of power between the sexes. Baynton's story provides another example of an author's drawing attention to the misogynous attitudes of this period, and in it she connects misogyny directly to exclusive mateship.

Baynton's story is modelled on the type of bush tale that usually extols the virtues of exclusive mateship. Such a tale has a central hero-mate and a plot based on an incident in that character's life. The narrative is constructed on the basis of exclusive mateship's ideals, and as the story unfolds, the ways of men are lauded and the ways of women are denigrated. In Baynton's story there is a central hero-mate, and the plot is based on something that happened to that character, but even though the characteristics of exclusive mateship are reproduced, the outcome is very different. Instead of positively promoting the ways of men and negatively regarding the ways of women, as is normal for a bush tale based on exclusive mateship, these stereotypical ways of being men and women are shown to have no relevance to life, and further, the values reproduced by exclusive mateship are shown to promote divisiveness rather than the egalitarianism and unity that the proponents of exclusive mateship claim.

In her " 'Squeaker's Mate': A Bushwoman's Tale" (1986), Rosemary Moore argues that Baynton "used the genre of the bush tale to write a critique of the genre", and she also argues that Baynton "used the idea of male mateship to write a critique of 'mateship' within marriage" (29). While I agree with Moore's argument that Baynton's story is a critique, I do not agree that it was a critique of the bush tale genre, or of mateship in marriage. (Moore does not elaborate upon this second claim, and since she assumes that mateship is "male mateship", it would have been difficult for her to do so without contradicting the main thrust of her feminist argument.) I will argue that Baynton used the bush tale, the common genre for disseminating exclusive mateship's ideals, to critique

exclusive mateship. Although Baynton would not have described her story in such terms, she was deconstructing exclusive mateship by reproducing it perfectly in its usual format, but exposing its fraudulent representations as the bush convention of mateship by exchanging the usual male central character for a female. I believe Baynton's intent was not what Moore claims, to show that "the dominance of the patriarchy in Australia is dependent on male mateship" (43), because Baynton knew that women could be mates with men, so patriarchy did not totally control society in Australia. Baynton was examining the impact of exclusive mateship on community life; and from that point, its impact on Australian society in general.

I base this argument on the fact that Baynton was reflecting inclusive mateship in her story. She would never have given a woman the role of a good mate if women were not good mates with men in the bush life she knew. Such a substitution would have found no credibility with her readers, and her work would have been considered unrealistic. (It was described by A. A. Phillips (1958) as revolting against the school of thought that promoted "the Legend" which enshrined exclusive mateship, but it was not dismissed as unrealistic.) Baynton would not have used the title "Squeaker's Mate", suggestive of mateship in marriage (that is inclusive mateship), if she had not witnessed it herself, and if her readers would find the concept unrealistic. Contrary to what Moore says about Baynton trying to have her voice heard as a woman silenced by the patriarchy of the time (43), Baynton was outspoken. But she not only spoke on behalf of women, she spoke for the women and men who extended mateship and bush hospitality to everyone. Her claim was therefore not that women alone were robbed of a rightful claim to Australianness when exclusive mateship was expressed, but that men, women's mates in inclusive mateship, were also denied that right.

Baynton is critiquing exclusive mateship in her story, and by the simple substitution of a female for a male hero-mate as the central character she deconstructs the notion that exclusive mateship is the Australian mateship that promotes "a fair go for all". The hero of "Squeaker's Mate", Mary, is a bushwoman, and her characteristics are true to the hero-mate stereotype. She is duly given respect for her male qualities when men recognise her as

true and hard-working – "the best long-haired mate that ever stepped in petticoats"(14). This is in accord with respect for the male part she plays, and the story makes it clear that it is not to be taken as a sign of respect for her as a woman. Mary has a reputation for honesty (21), and she is particularly loyal towards her husband-mate, Squeaker, even though he does not return the compliment. True to the exclusive mateship ideal of a good mate, Mary silently shoulders the brunt of the burden, and respects the silence of her mate. She never questions or makes demands of Squeaker, although she makes demands of herself on his behalf. She always makes sure that he has his little conveniences, like the half pint that he likes when she walks to town for supplies. She asks nothing for herself save her pipe of tobacco, and she rations her supplies of that tobacco. Her hard-grafting "with the best of them for every acre and hoof on that selection" is acknowledged, especially by the men (22), and this is in keeping with exclusive mateship's assumption that men's opinions are the most worthy in society.

While Mary is assuming the role of a male hero-mate, her husband is cast as her feminine opposite. He is a weak person who, true to the stereotypical female role, takes on lighter duties, and has a flippant attitude that is not conducive to business or hard work. In keeping with the way women are treated according to exclusive mateship, Squeaker, who plays the woman's role in a male-dominated society, is not given the same respect that Mary, the "male", receives. He is known as weak and work-avoiding, and the men who respect Mary wonder why ''she had allowed it [the selection] to be taken up in his name, when the money had been her own"(22). The men criticize Squeaker, calling him "a nole (sic) woman", and in that insult, which in "man's fashion" means to "eliminate all [masculine] virtue" is the clue that Baynton is deconstructing exclusive mateship by a mirrored reflection of the discourse at work in society (22-3).

Mary is thus the male-mate hero, and she ably satisfies the criteria for the part except for the fact that she is a woman. On the other hand, her husband ably plays the role of her stereotypical opposite, a woman who is a distant second to man in exclusive mateship's organisation of power relations. This exchange of roles for Mary and Squeaker reverses the construction of man-woman relations upon which exclusive mateship is based; woman

becomes the powerful mate and man becomes her powerless other. Yet according to exclusive mateship's construction of society, such an exchange of power roles is not allowed – a woman cannot have power over a man. The story therefore cannot have a satisfying resolution for this hero-mate: she is doomed, and her feminized mate must be restored to his rightful position of power over her. The reaction of Mary's husband and her neighbours after her accident (when her pretence of being a man is ruined by her return to her weakened woman-self) reflects this attitude. Mary suffers hideous punishment for overturning what is "natural" and "God given". Like the snake that was cursed by God to crawl in the dust, and thereafter to inflict death upon itself by suicide as Squeaker points out to Mary (24), a woman who pretends to manly ways is doomed to turn upon herself, and others are in turn duty bound to turn against her. Squeaker in due course ascends to power and takes to himself a stereotypical female "new mate" who appears to endorse his rightful mastery. Baynton has the last say in this regard too, because in having Squeaker's new mate pregnant with another man's child, and intending to make a future without Squeaker after the birth of that child, Baynton reinforces her message that men and women do not fit the unnatural stereotypes of exclusive mateship's construction any more than exclusive mateship itself fits the Australian way of life or character.

But incredible as this barbarous treatment of one mate by another may seem, it is located in a stereotypical bush tale situation, one used repeatedly by Henry Lawson and other male contemporaries of Baynton. Central to the plot of these bush tales is a bushman-mate who is hurt or desperately in need. His mates, all quiet, hard-working fellows who neither ask questions nor expect answers, silently take care of the fallen one. This is the ideal mateship in which one acts on behalf of another, the male-to-male kindness usually promoted as the spirit of the bush. After 1885 it was generally accepted as symbolic of the egalitarian spirit of the nation, and erroneously believed by some to be exclusively a men's creed. In Baynton's story however, Mary is the bushman-hero-mate in need after an accident in the bush. In the conventional bush tale, if a tree fell on a man while he was chopping it down, it was cause for lament and the man was a hero, breaking his back against nature's wilful opposition. In such a case, men would have risen in revolt against nature, and neglected their own concerns to tend their stricken mate. The spirit of mateship

would have held them strongly united. Yet the spirit of mateship is not extended to Mary. Mary is a woman who usurps the man's role and this is the sin for which those in her community feel they must punish her. No one responds to a woman-hero-mate because women are excluded from exclusive mateship. Instead, when Mary falls victim to nature, nature is seen to be doing her job in punishing a woman whose unnatural behaviour had turned her into a freakish male substitute. It is only right therefore that no mates come to her aid.

Baynton's characters thus act in a way that reinforces her view that a society based upon exclusive mateship is neither natural nor true to the Australian character. The names she gives her characters makes her point by again turning the expected inside out. For example, Mary is named according to her chattel status in relation to her husband. In the title, she is defined by her subservient role and has no name of her own. But such naming belies Mary's and Squeaker's power relations. He is named as an ineffective vocal sound, a "squeaker", while she, though her voice is apparently subsumed by his impotent one, is named Mary after the archetypal woman and mother of Jesus. She is someone to whom man turns for succour in times of need, and Squeaker still calls to her after he has abandoned her as his mate. He is still calling in his ineffective voice for her help against her dog at the close of the story when he has just beaten her to death.

The same perverse inversion of character relations occurs when those of Mary's community react in typical Australian ways, that is, they are helpful and kind towards others in need, but they act this way towards the undeserving Squeaker, not the deserving Mary. If all things were equal and fair, and women and men enjoyed mutual respect and equality, as mateship suggests, the neighbors would have come to Mary's assistance after her accident. She would have received the care and friendship befitting a good mate. The women would have nursed her, and the men would have made Squeaker help his stricken mate and maintain the selection as she had always done. But the unthinkable happens: the women leave Mary alone and pamper Squeaker instead because "it must be miserable for him"(23). Neither the men nor the women react to Squeaker's abuse of Mary, and no one speaks for her. No one exposes Squeaker as the bullying coward that he is, even after he

subjects Mary to outrageous neglect and installs a new mate (a mistress).

This reaction from the close community described in the story is extremely hard to imagine let alone believe. Mary was disabled and could not take care of her basic needs of eating, drinking and personal hygiene, and she would have been in severe pain and discomfort because of the nature of her injury, her inability to move, and the unsanitary conditions of the rough bush hut. Squeaker had abused her before the accident in that his laziness caused her to accept the greatest share of responsibility; but when she is crippled, his treatment of her can only be described as torture. Mary suffers unspeakable horrors at the hands of her mate Squeaker, as when he lets her flesh burn when she cannot light her pipe. He drags her out of the hut, and abandons her in an older hut in preparation for the arrival of his new mate. Squeaker leaves Mary unattended, unwashed, exposed to the elements and often without provisions for days, as well as subjecting her to severe mental torment and emotional abuse. This treatment of Mary goes against the grain of what it means to be an Australian, especially with regards to "a fair go for all" and "taking care of the underdog". Yet this is the message of the inverted mateship situation drawn by Baynton: unnatural behaviour results from exclusive mateship because exclusive mateship is not natural to the Australian way of life.

Baynton is making one further point in having her characters act in such pointedly un-Australian ways. Their perverse reaction to the crippled Mary, attributable to an unnatural system of belief like exclusive mateship, impacts upon society, and if it prevails, over time it conditions people to accept its distorted attitudes and values. Baynton is demonstrating that if men and women deny the bush code of mateship, and follow instead exclusive mateship's dictates, the self-help and nurturing that is integral to the Australian way of life will be lost. The women's actions in questioning Mary's "right to womanly garments"(15), because she did not show the same shallow characteristics as themselves, and "she had no leisure for yarning"(23), support the stereotypical role of women promoted by exclusive mateship, and they also point out that the women themselves support this role. Women are subjected to conditioning by pervading discourses like exclusive mateship, and they come to fear any woman like Mary, who dares to mimic a male and pose as a good

mate, because she challenges the status quo that represents normalcy. Within exclusive mateship, men are constructed as the supreme beings, and women are expendable others to be used and abused by the man who claims the rights to their bodies and labour. The men and women of Baynton's story act out this perversion of humanity in a way that ironically is in keeping with the belief circulated by exclusive mateship – that women have power over their husbands in marriage – and Baynton uses it to show the cowardly desertion of Mary by both women and men. The women counsel their husbands to leave Mary alone, and like shadows of the men they are supposed to be according to exclusive mateship, the men comply with their wives' requests:

> They told him [Squeaker] in whispers what they thought of him, and with a cowardly look towards where she lay, but without a word of parting, like shadows these men made for their homes. (23)

According to exclusive mateship, loyalty is among men and is only to other men. Mates do not interfere with a mate's affairs, especially when it would involve taking the part of a woman or wife against a mate. The way a man treats his wife is however he wishes, because she is his property. Mary was a good mate, but she could not be accepted as a real mate because of her sex. She broke exclusive mateship's codes when she stepped outside her feminine role, and she had to suffer the consequences of shame and degradation for usurping the rights of her male superiors. Baynton was like Mary in this regard because she went against what was considered to be the role of the writer of her time: she did not contribute to the evolving Australian legend by upholding exclusive mateship. This role has been assumed by some masculinist and feminist commentators to be the role of men during the period 1885- 1925, and according to this opinion, Baynton was trying to assume men's role when she tried to point out the failings of exclusive mateship. Just as Mary was ignored and made to suffer for her rebellion, so was Baynton. According to A. A. Phillips, as already mentioned, Baynton revolted against the nationalistic trend of the times and thereby betrayed the developing "self-confident Australianism" (72). Instead of recognising that Baynton's depiction of mateship showed that exclusive mateship contradicted the legend, and therefore that the assumptions of male domination underpinning the legend needed examination, Phillips validates the legend and claims that Baynton's flawed writing was not recording the real life of the bush. This is in spite of his acknowledgement that she

knew the life of the bush with "a deep intimacy and something of an insider's pride" (77). According to him, she was driven by "a need to free her own spirit from nightmare obsessions" (73), so in her writing she is relieving her "burdened subconscious by symbolic expression" (75). Ward did not mention Baynton's work at all in The Australian Legend, but he could have had authors like her in mind when he said that there would be a few who would labour against the legend (Legend 258). According to Ward, such objectors would strengthen rather than weaken the legend, and in a way that he never intended, Baynton was doing just that. Although she was not in agreement with the male domination of the legend, she would have nonetheless strengthened it when she linked inclusive mateship to Australianness, because inclusive mateship admits all Australians to the legend.

3. Exclusive mateship is not the only form of Australian mateship

The claim that exclusive mateship is "Australian mateship" is made mostly on the basis that early in Australia's history mateship was enacted mostly among men because men outnumbered women. While this is partially true, because some men did live together without women in isolated outposts, it does not prove that those men were bonded together by the misogynous beliefs that came to form the basis of exclusive mateship. They could simply have been sharing companionship with each other in the absence of women. Attitudes and values are the deciding factor in judging if mateship among men in the absence of women is exclusive or inclusive. If men join in mateship solely for the purpose of survival, their mateship is inclusive; but if men unite primarily to dominate the "others" outside the group, then that group's mateship is exclusive. The "others" are women and those men who do not meet the standards of masculinity demanded by exclusive mateship. Undoubtedly there would have been misogynous groups in early Australian society, because there are still such groups now. But like the misandrist groups of females who wish to ostracise men, such minorities must be kept in perspective with other groups, including those men and women who share inclusive mateship. In the past, when mateship was thought of as one entity, the idea that it was practised mostly among men in the absence of women was used as an argument to justify the claim that mateship was a men's creed. However, if mateship is two discourses – one that includes everyone and one that

excludes women and some men – that assumption is invalid. Instances of mateship among men cannot be automatically assumed to be exclusive, because the men's mateship might be inclusive. If this recognition is added to the knowledge that men and women share inclusive mateship, then it can be reasonably argued that the mateship that is an exclusive men's creed is not the only form of Australian mateship.

However the claim that exclusive mateship is the dominant form of mateship persists, even though it is difficult to justify when, as an anti-egalitarian, divisive discourse, it does not have much in common with the unitive, egalitarian mateship described within national discourses. One explanation for the claim is that whenever mateship among men is described, it is read according to the assumption that men are together without women because they prefer each other's company and do not consider women as equals. But this need not be correct, because even though men and women can share only inclusive mateship, men can share either form of mateship. If the group of male mates is absent from females for some reason, and these men do not hate or exclude women, their mateship is inclusive. If however, the men deliberately form a group to exclude women, or they exclude men from their group because those men are not suited to the group's definition of masculinity, then their mateship is exclusive. So before Australian mateship can be claimed to be exclusive, it must be argued that men do not participate in inclusive mateship, and that all instances of mateship among men are exclusive. Both of these claims are false. Examples from fictional and non-fictional literature show that men and women share inclusive mateship, and that men's mateship is often depicted as inclusive, not exclusive. Two early examples of this are Catherine Helen Spence's <u>Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever</u> (1854) and Mary Gaunt's <u>Kirkham's Find</u> (1897).

In Spence's <u>Clara Morison</u>, mates are described as male working partners at the gold diggings. There is no suggestion that the mateship between the men is a substitute for a relationship with women, and it is not implied that male-male relations are better than male-female relations. It is indeed the reverse. Spence portrays the relationship between the men as an association which is inferior to that which they share with women. Mateship, as inferred from the use of the word <u>mates</u>, and from the relationships described, is a quality

relationship between women and men that helps everyone to endure the separation suffered when women maintain the home while men work on the gold fields. This would indicate inclusive mateship, an expedient, supportive bond initiated by the necessity to survive a common threat. The mateship among men separated from their loved ones by employment also demonstrates inclusive mateship because the text shows that the affinity between men is not as strong as the female-male bond between lovers or between brothers and sisters. Gilbert's letters to his sister Margaret demonstrate this: he describes how much men value the work (household duties) that their sisters do for them, and how the women are respected. Gilbert believes that even if the men's time at the goldfields has been worthwhile in some regards, it will not have been beneficial if the women have suffered. Gilbert's letters also demonstrate that an all-male existence is not the ideal relationship that representations of exclusive mateship typically present:

> Here, as elsewhere, the working men carry the day, partly from their greater strength and skill, but really mostly from luck. I think I may call myself a working man now, and require to be legislated for, like our friends of old. If we can only weather it, we shall not regret going, unless you have suffered a great deal in our absence; for this change must do us good in many ways, and it makes us feel how much you always did for us. I suppose no party at the diggings misses their sisters so much as we do; when we sit down to sew on a button, or set about our miserable washings, we remember whose hands were always ready to work for us, and whose good nature never complained for the trouble we gave. (238)

The mateship depicted in Mary Gaunt's <u>Kirkham's Find</u> is also inclusive. Here mateship exists between the male characters, the female characters and also between females and males. Mateship between the male companions Ned Kirkham and Allan Morrison is of a temporary expedient kind, and is much the same as the mateship between the sisters, Phoebe and Lydia Marsden, even if the women are not called mates. Mateship between the men is male friendship in the absence of women. Ned and Allan form a bond of mateship while they are isolated together in the outback working as shepherds and searching for gold. They share the many difficulties of shepherding, prospecting and mining in the harsh conditions of inland Australia. The men help each other through a fight with Aboriginals and a perilous journey to safety, but their allegiance to each other is clearly a distant second to their desire to be with the women they love.

A parallel example of same-sex inclusive mateship is that shared by Phoebe and Lydia as they build their farming enterprise together. But being women farmers and independent entrepreneurs is not the biggest crisis confronting the sisters. Their crisis is the social rejection they suffer because they rebel against the limiting female roles of the nineteenth century. Their mateship helps them to overcome this opposition, which is maintained more by women family members than by the men who share mateship with Phoebe and Lydia. Nancy, Phoebe's younger married sister, is Phoebe's most vocal opponent, and in the novel she espouses the restrictive attitude towards women, while her husband Joe Sampson, encourages women's liberation. It is Joe who lends Phoebe the money to set up her beekeeping business, and it is he who is first to encourage her to take the initiative to be independent (226). It is ironic therefore that when Nancy visits Phoebe, the successful entrepreneur, she expresses a wish that the sisters had embarked on the venture together, and says that it would have been fun to be farmers (255). Earlier, when Phoebe had devised the plan to keep bees and attain financial independence, Nancy had berated her, agreeing with their mother that she was not behaving as the "ideal woman" in wanting to live independently of men (229-30). At one stage, Nancy implores Phoebe to live with Joe and her as a dependent companion instead of working alone (223). This attitude represents the anti-egalitarian idea that women are somehow less capable than men, and the mateship that Phoebe and Lydia share help them to survive such discrimination. In keeping with this limited role for women, Nancy had married young in order to move into the moneyed class. In contrast to this ideal, Phoebe and Lydia strive to be independent, and what they experience in overcoming the hardship of attaining such a goal makes their life much more worthwhile than being an unhappy dependent upon a husband, a father, or a sister. The real benefit is that Phoebe and Lydia gain great pleasure and satisfaction from their hard-won financial independence. Nancy makes it clear that she has never achieved such happiness in her marriage, even though her husband is a kind and considerate man.

The bond between the respective sets of male and female mates in Gaunt's novel is formed by the aggregate of the pressure of the moment and the difficulties faced. But this is

not so for the mateship between two of the female-male couples who carry the theme's focus: Phoebe and her lover Ned, and Lydia and her lover Jack. The third relationship in focus is the marriage between Nancy and Joe, and it forms a contrast with the others in that there is no respect or mutual concern between the partners, just a sense of duty to a dysfunctional ideal of marriage. Joe is Nancy's husband, but he is Phoebe's friend, and they have more of a mateship bond in friendship than Joe and Nancy have as husband and wife. For the first two couples, their mateship is inclusive in that they unite their efforts to make a life together. The mateship, which the women and men find with each other as they prepare to marry, is based on their seeking a mate who will be a partner through whatever future experiences present, and this is the relationship most desired by Ned who proposes to Phoebe (328), and Allan who wanted to marry her (334). Neither the bond between the men nor that between the women is superior to the mateship articulated in the relationship of mutual respect and affection that Phoebe and her younger sister Lydia establish with like-minded partners Ned Kirkham and Jack Fletcher. The women and men enjoy respect, and equality of opportunity, even if for the women it has been hard won against strong family and social opposition. The mateship shared among these people is inclusive because it is based upon the partners being companions in equitable relationships.

Inclusive mateship reflects the egalitarian principle that men and women are equals, and as such both sexes are free to participate fully in the personal and public spheres of human existence. According to this principle, men and women interact in all kinds of circumstances, and they can share mateship at any moment. As Gaunt's depictions of relations between women and men show, they interact socially in friendship as Allan Morrison and Phoebe did (16-7). Allan was overawed by the prettiness of Phoebe's younger sister Nancy, but he declares to Phoebe that she is his friend: "I think it counts for a good deal to have a friend you can trust, especially if that friend is a woman" (44). Men and women can interact in a business relationship like Phoebe and Joe Sampson (226); in a moment of danger as when Jack Fletcher rescued Lydia from a mob of wild cattle (277); in a situation of helping someone in difficulty like Lydia's helping Jack's sister (277); as people involved in the same line of work such as Phoebe and Ned; or in courtship, marriage or family. But this is not so with exclusive mateship, which reflects a belief that

the sexes are rivals for power, and that as such, they are not equals, so women should not be active in the public sphere. This is a very narrow view of relations between men and women, and it does not admit that men and women can form egalitarian or friendly relationships. Rather all the interactions between the sexes are depicted in terms of stereotypical behaviour: a woman will always set out to beguile a man before emasculating him by some means, and a man who is seduced by a woman always suffers.

This stereotypical behaviour describes women as predators whose victims are males, and this behaviour of women towards men is particularly noticeable in relations between men and barmaids. Here the biological attraction between the sexes is described by the exclusive mateship discourse as an instance of women's desire to overpower men. In most depictions of exclusive mateship, this action by women is viewed as manipulative and cowardly because a man is vulnerable when he is relaxing over a few drinks with his mates. The phrase "lamb down", meaning "[T]o defraud a 'chequed up' bushman by keeping him drunk until his funds are supposedly exhausted" (Wilkes, Dictionary 227), was coined particularly for this purpose. According to the myths about the practice, the women employed as barmaids in outback shanties and city hotels were usually attractive. From the typical representations of these women, they appear to set out purposefully to seduce men, and one of their primary objectives is to "fleece men of their cheques". In William Coxon's "The Flash Colonial Barmaid", an old bush song of uncertain date, the barmaid is described as deliberately taking advantage of men. For instance, in the mornings when she is not "at work", she is described as being dowdy *"used up* and pale" with "hair scratched back", "boots half-laced" and "sleeves tucked up her arm" (108). But on the job at night, she is "got up to charm":

> She wears a showy satin dress, has flowers in her hair;
> A gold watch dangles at her waist, a gold chain's round her neck,
> She's cheap lace collars, cuffs, and apron without speck, […]. (108)

Such women have many admirers, but the outcome of romancing them is a popular lament in songs, verses and stories, which often express vehement hatred of women in general based on the fact that men fall victim to the spell of a barmaid. In "The Broken-Hearted Shearer", an anonymous ballad published in The Bulletin in 1885, the lambed- down shearer is broken-hearted and "ashamed to show" his face because he "drank" five years

pay in a few weeks in Sydney. But he does not blame himself for being foolish, even though he deliberately went to a hotel where he knew there was a barmaid who he had been cautioned to avoid. Rather, he blames the barmaid for his woes saying, "The way I have been treated is a shame and a disgrace" (266). He claims she beguiled him with her sweet talk to make him think she liked him, purely for the purpose of lambing him down. Oddly enough, when drunk and on his last drink, he asks the barmaid to be his "mate"; that is to take care of him now that he has no money.

In limiting men and women's interactions to the private sphere, even within the social sphere represented by the relationship between barmaids as employees and male drinkers as patrons, exclusive mateship is ironically suggesting that though it is "mating" that brings men and women together, they cannot be mates. Yet it makes sense for the exclusive mateship discourse to prove that the "mating" of men and women, that is the biological union of the sexes, is fraught with danger for men, because if this belief is accepted as the truth, then mateship will remain exclusive to men, and consequently the exclusive male union that ensures men's power over women will remain intact. This usage of the word mate to mean one of a wedded pair is not new: it was shown in Chapter Two that mate could refer to one of a pair of lovers or either the male or female spouse of a married couple. It is hardly surprising that "mating" should be used to depict exclusive mateship's view of the interaction between the sexes because it reflects the idea that men's and women's roles are separate and power orientated. According to this assumption, women's role is within the domestic or private sphere as homemaker and nurturer, and men's role is in the public sphere as the breadwinner. The home therefore becomes the common ground between men and women, and making a home is the primary reason for the sexes to mix. Reproduction of another generation is arguably the most important aspect of human existence, so biological mating is paramount, but since it brings the two sexes together, marriage and family have been overlaid with the traditions, customs, attitudes and values that reflect individual societies. Among those influences are power relations between the sexes, and in the context of Australian society immediately before and after Federation, mateship contributed constructions of power relations to this very personal aspect of men's and women's lives. As has already been shown, men and women could be

mates in inclusive mateship, so they could be married mates sharing power on an equitable basis; but exclusive mateship did not encourage such relationships. Exclusive mateship seeded the traditions surrounding courtship and marriage with attitudes and values that promoted men's domination of women, and thereby constructed power relations that favoured men. Exclusive mateship represents intimate relations between women and men as a battleground over personal power, and emphasises that women are a danger to men's liberty, self-control and power.

But some writers of the same period, while confirming that courtship is the act of finding a mate, and therefore reflecting exclusive mateship's bringing men and women together in "mating", do not agree that men and women are antagonists, and they do not promote the idea that there can be no mateship between them. Rather, <u>mate</u> in these texts names a loved one in a relationship that is clearly inclusive mateship. Henry Kendall's poem "Watching" (1862) has an anguished lover waiting "[l]ike a weary bird for a long-lost mate", and given the terms of endearment lavished upon the object of his love, it is clear that the "thee" who will be clasped "close, with a sweet surprise" is definitely not a man (42). Rather, the absent mate, who is deeply loved and sorely missed, is obviously a woman. Philip Lorimer's romantic poem, "Have those happy moments left thee?" (1901), echoes Kendall's use of the word <u>mate</u> in that it refers to a lost female lover. Lorimer uses the word <u>mateless</u> in the poem to express the sense of desolation that separation from a loved one brings (135). One further example of an absent lover being discussed in terms of mateship appears in E. J. Brady's "Riverine" (1911). Brady uses the concept of mateship to describe his lover in the poem. He speaks of there being "mateship staunch and true" in the "West" where his sweetheart, the "One" who waits for him with "welcome warm", longs for his return from what he depicts as the joyless, dispirited city (24). Again, in Brady's poem, the lover is a woman, unless the relationship described is homosexual, and no textual evidence suggests such a reading. Mars's "Last Night" (1899) provides an example of Platonic love between a woman and a man who refer to each other as mates. The characters, both destitute artists, are helped through a difficult moment in their lives by their mateship. The woman, Lily, is an unemployed actor, and Jack, her companion, is an aspiring writer. It is a cold, miserable night in Melbourne and the mates meet accidentally

when they seek shelter under an overhanging verandah. They spend the evening together sharing Lily's sparsely furnished lodgings and meagre amount of food. The couple's relationship is not sexual and this is emphatically stated in the mention of sleeping arrangements. Yet Lily speaks of her love for Jack, and when she explains love, it is couched in terms of mateship:

> Why I love you is because you are such a good mate, and because
> you are not ashamed to lift your hat to me when you are with your
> sisters. (32)

In responding to Lily by calling her his friend, Jack shows that the mateship of the pair is reciprocated. The shelter, the sustenance and the time together are spiritually uplifting for each person.

According to the two very different perspectives of men's and women's mating represented by inclusive and exclusive mateship, it is obvious that relations between the sexes can be interpreted in many ways. Interpretations of how men and women related to each other in the period 1885-1925 are no exception, and in this case, two popular viewpoints – the feminist and masculinist – oppose each other. Yet they both claim that in intimate relations, power is one-sided and one sex – the other – gains dominance. According to contemporary feminists, marriage and domestic life of this period provided the primary area of exploitation of women because, they argue, women in the home are kept in the narrow role of wife-mother, while men retain the dominance that they enjoy in the wider society. In this opinion, relations between men and women are a "war between the sexes". Susan Margarey argues that the marital statistics of the period 1880-1910 show that women were waging a "strike against marriage" because of a reaction against "the shock of discovering that marriage meant *sexual* labour"(95). In contrast, the masculinist attitude associated with the period and, according to feminist argument, particularly with The Bulletin and its editor J. F. Archibald, is that a man is free until he marries, and afterwards he is emasculated in the domestic sphere where women have the power. According to this opinion, women use their sex as a weapon against men. In his Bohemians of the Bulletin (1965), Norman Lindsay describes this sense of women's power over men in his recollection of completing a painting for a young woman. She commissioned two portraits of herself in the nude, and when they were finished she took one to show the

doctor for whom she worked as a receptionist. She later married him. According to Lindsay, the woman used the painting to "capture her medico" (25). Archibald expressed a similar attitude towards women on the occasion of his first meeting with Lindsay. Archibald commented that a young girl – "one of those full-breasted, big legged girls who sprout into full maturity about the age of fourteen" – had "a pair of legs that would get a man a jail sentence and a lashing into the bargain, with half a dozen words to a policeman!" (15). According to Lindsay, Archibald was obsessed with "the iniquitous administration of the law in cases of alleged rape" because, as he claims, at that time "any blackmailing slavey could go into the witness-box and swear away a man's liberty and reputation on her unsupported statement" (15). Lindsay claims that Archibald campaigned for years against "the law's malevolent wowserism in that respect" and eventually "brought about its present rationality over rape cases" (15). Oddly enough, even though the feminist and masculinist arguments are extreme opposites, they share the idea that intimate relations between the sexes are fraught with tension over power.

Exclusive mateship adds to this tension by reproducing the misogynous values that subordinate women to men whenever the discourse is expressed, and Edward Dyson's "Peter Todd of Morris Vale: A Tale of Sacrifice" (1902) provides a good example of how the discourse works in a text. Here men and women are described as being antagonists in a war over power, and women are described as loathsome characters who make men's life a misery. Marriage is depicted as a union that benefits women because it gives them the opportunity to usurp men's power, and men in turn are disadvantaged because they lose their manhood. Mateship is described as an exclusive masculine union that helps men defend themselves against women.

The hero of the tale, Peter Todd, is six feet tall, "a splendid man", and apparently "as hard as nails"(36). He works in a local mine as a winder, that is as the man in charge of the engine used to raise and lower cages in the mineshaft. Yet Peter, this glorious specimen of powerful manhood, is "strangely meek" towards his tyrannical wife, who in comparison with his noble character, is "small, and fierce, and sickly pale, / [w]ith thin, blue lips, a trifle stale"(36). Peter's emasculation is exhibited in public because, as the poem states, "he

went to chapel twice a week" with his wife, and they were the object of popular gossip (36). In describing Peter as a hero and his wife as a shrew, men are elevated in social status and women are degraded. The contrast shows that men and women are antagonists, and in marriage, women have a power advantage, so this intimate union of the sexes emasculates men. But while the tale presents a very negative view of women, it simultaneously presents a noble view of men's mateship. Since it is women's aggressive ways that form the crisis against which men unite in this poem, men's mateship appears all the more wondrous for defending men against them. How wondrous then must it be when a man purposely steals his mate's wife in order to save his mate by taking the woman's punishing treatment upon himself.

Such is the story here. Peter Todd and Jim Trail were two of the best mates, and Peter proved true to their mateship when he sacrificed himself for Jim by taking his wife Jane from him. Even though Peter hated women and thought "most women little worth", he seduced Jane, and took her as a common law wife in order to save Jim's life. Jim's life was "hell on earth" because of her: "She worried him with tongue and nail" (36). So Peter, whose life had been saved by Jim at some earlier stage in their friendship, returned the favour of mateship by taking Jane the scourge from Jim. During his deathbed confession to a parson, Peter states he took Jim's wife to save his friend the pain of having to live with her. He begs that Jim be told that he willingly suffered Jane's control over his life for the sake of mateship – to prove his "love [for Jim] beneath the flail [Mrs Pete ex Mrs Jim]" (36). Peter claims that the act of taking away Jim's wife was a "duty" that any man would do for his mate; in other words the sacrifice is an act of exclusive mateship:

> "He was my friend – he saved my life!
>   What did I then but make him free?
> I ran away with Jimmy's wife,
>   But he'd – have done – as much for me! (36)

Whenever exclusive mateship is expressed it recreates this tension between women and men. In Will H. Ogilvie's "Where the Brumbies Come to Water" (1906) for instance, the lament is that a mate, a stockman of enviable skills and attributes, has died because of a woman who his mates now curse:

> We've called her hard and bitter names who chose – another's wife –

> To chain our comrade in her thrall and wreck his strong young life;
> We've cursed her for her cruel love that seared like hate – […]. (43)

According to the poem, this was a man whom others loved and it was "for love" that they "planted" his rough slab, and out of love they mourn his passing. He was to them "the best of all the band", but now, thanks to the married woman, his "light-o'-love", he has been taken from them (42). If the poem maintained this condemnation of women, it would be celebrating exclusive mateship, but it does not. It offers an unusual twist in the final paragraph that highlights the aggravation that exclusive mateship creates between men and women, and it shows that the animosity that exclusive mateship presumes exists between the sexes is based on unfounded prejudice against women. The poem achieves this revelation by showing that the men's view of the stockman's death is not the only way of understanding the tragedy and its consequences. Men will take another mate and grow used to his ways; as the poem says, someone will fill his "vacant place"(43). Another "mate with rougher touch will twist our greenhide thongs", and someone will eventually "replace him in the wings", "sing his lilting songs"– though with a "harsher voice"– and generally take his place in the group as well as his horse and dog (43). Even if the standard is not the same, a new mate will take the old mate's place, and the men will forget him in time. But the mate's lover will not forget him, and she will not take a new mate; she will stay loyal to him. The poet admits that even after the men have forgotten their mate, "one will not forget"– the woman whom they all condemn (43). Ogilvie's poem is actually suggesting that the love of a man and a woman for each other is stronger than the "matey love" of man for man.

This is the message of inclusive mateship, and contrary to those who suggest that Henry Lawson is the apostle of men's mateship (exclusive), it is a message often found in his work. In his "A Romance of Three Huts" (1902), for instance, although biological mating is the influence that brings Tom Moore and Mrs Brent together, it is the four inclusive mateship relationships that connect the details of the plot and carry the story's theme of poor bush people joining together to overcome life's hardships. The first instance of mateship is between Mrs Foster and Mrs Brent. Mrs Foster is a well-respected older woman, "a gaunt, practical bushwoman" who "kept some cows and fowls and sold eggs

and butter, and assisted at bush confinements gratis" (145). Mrs Brent, who is described as "the girl who had gone wrong", lives alone with her twelve-year-old daughter and makes a meagre living by sewing (145). The two women became mates when Mrs Foster ignored what others said about the lonely Mrs Brent and befriended her. The second instance of mateship is between Mrs Brent's daughter Lily and Tom Moore's young son Harry. In going to school each day, Lily took Little Harry "in strict and motherly custody, from the time he left his father's hut until he returned to it" (146). There is also mateship between Mrs Foster and Tom. Tom's wife had died in childbirth "before they had their first serious quarrel" and it was Mrs Foster who helped the motherless family by taking care of "little Harry's stomach, and the seats of his breeches, while the father was at work" (146). Mrs Foster's home was Harry's home at night when Tom was on night shift at the mine where he worked. The fourth instance of mateship is between Mrs Brent and Tom. The story reveals that the two had a brief relationship before Mrs Brent went "wrong", and that both still care for each other. But their affair is not the reason they eventually unite as a couple, because Tom purposely keeps away from Mrs Brent for that reason; and for herself, Mrs Brent seeks a new relationship rather than reaching into a past she is desperate to forget. It is their mateship that builds the relationship that eventually leads to their marriage. Tom makes no move to take his sewing to Mrs Brent as other diggers do, but "he saw that her water cask was kept filled, in dry weather, from the spring on the flat, and that a load of cut firewood was dumped at the back of the hut occasionally" (146). On her part, Mrs Brent sewed for Harry even though Tom gave his thanks for the service to Mrs Foster. It is late on Christmas Eve when Tom and Mrs Brent declare their love for each other, and young Harry brings about their union. Tom is placing Christmas presents in his son's stocking (one of Mrs Brent's) when the child wakes. He tells Tom he is glad that Tom is Santa Claus. In this conversation, Harry acts like Santa Claus himself, because in telling Tom that it was Mrs Brent who made his clothes, and that she looked lovingly at a portrait of Tom "same's what we've got" (147), he shows that Mrs Brent loves Tom. It is having his feelings confirmed by the knowledge the child imparts that prompts Tom to admit his love for Mrs Brent, when soon after this conversation, she comes to check on little Harry because she thinks his father is at work.

While the attitudes and values promoted by inclusive mateship unite men and women, the opposite occurs when exclusive mateship promotes the belief that men and women cannot be mates. This divisive attitude is intensified whenever exclusive mateship is thought of as the only form of Australian mateship. When this happens, the patriarchal values that it espouses become confused with the values of Australianness. Although this naïve belief is productive for patriarchy, it is not correct, because not all mateship is exclusive. Claims, such as Miriam Dixson's, that mateship "is deeply antipathetic to women", and that its strong masculine bonding is responsible for keeping women suppressed in Australian culture (81), are therefore not correct. What they do, though, and this is true of the feminist arguments against mateship, is help to popularise the belief that mateship is exclusive, and a negative component of Australianness, because it divides the sexes in a power struggle that is biased towards the masculine. This is precisely what inclusive mateship does not do.

Conclusion

What is needed, therefore, in understanding mateship is a balanced approach that seeks to sort out the different expressions of mateship for what they are, and does not fail to distinguish between the different discourses. As Louisa Lawson, an oft-quoted feminist of the 1880s points out, men are not wholly to blame for women's subjected position in Australian society, and I add that mateship is not solely to blame either. The demonstrations of inclusive mateship discussed in this thesis attest to that. In her "Passing the Love of Women" (November 1892), Lawson calls for a "more commonsense view of the relations between man and woman" (124). Contrary to the way that Lawson is often cited as evidence for the feminist argument against men, she does not say that men dominate women through a ruthless desire to subordinate them. Rather, she claims that men are, like women, products of social conditioning, in particular, of the "inherited laws and customs which have predisposed them to look upon women as inferior creatures" (125). She is talking about patriarchy – among other influences – and I have argued here that it is an inherited ideology that inspired discourses like exclusive mateship to reproduce in Australian culture the system of power relations that favour the masculine. Exclusive

mateship is an example of the inherited customs of which Lawson speaks. She claims that such ways of thinking and acting must change for the good of society, and that "the only way in which we may expect to raise the status of women, is by acting in concert with men who desire the repeal of those laws which oppress us" (125). I believe that for the good of contemporary Australian society, men and women must unite to change the inherited ways of thinking about mateship that retard the beneficial aspects of the discourse. According to Lawson, it is social attitudes towards child rearing and education that need to change, and that any subsequent change will benefit both men and women. The same is true of beliefs surrounding mateship. Lawson argues that if the system can be changed to permit social equality between the sexes, then there will follow the type of respect and friendship between men and women that she calls "the only true basis of wedded love" (125), and I have already shown such unions to be inclusive mateship between married couples. She counsels that what we should be doing is "looking for equality, not through identity, but in difference, conscious that every step forward by women is real progress for men" (125). Lawson could have been comparing exclusive and inclusive mateship here. Exclusive mateship constructs an identity based on one style of masculinity, so it becomes divisive rather than unitive. Inclusive mateship though, builds respect for diversity on the basis of its acceptance of "difference". What is needed to understand Australian mateship therefore is an approach that begins by judging each expression of mateship on the ideals it espouses, and ends by linking those ideals to the individuals who espouse them. In this way, if misogynous ideals are linked to the minority groups who promote them, and not to Australians generally, it will be obvious that exclusive mateship is a minority belief system. When the division between exclusive and inclusive mateship is clarified, what Australians believe is their mateship will be seen for what it is at its best: an egalitarian, spirited union open to any Australians who wish to be part of it.

Chapter Six   The People's Religion

Adversity demands inclusive mateship

We believe in mateship, but see it as a men thing.
[…………………………………………..]
    But the resurgence of traditional religion, along with global people movement and an Australian backlash against globalisation may see us re-engage in a philosophical and particularly in a gender struggle many had thought was almost over.
    We might also have to rethink how we apply aspects of the Australian character to deal with the emerging world. Such as mateship. What a great ideal it is. It represents the egalitarian idea of Australian friendship and support, especially in adversity. Mateship is how we have bound ourselves together.

But it has been seen as part of male bonding in the filth of the trenches, the outer at the football or in the work sheds of the local emergency volunteers. Think of mates and think men, rarely women and never mixed company. It has a kind of identikit look about it, a cross between a bloke in a slouched hat and a bent elbow in a bar.
    We need to ensure mateship is extended to women and to blokes who do not fit, which means not excluding us from the golf course or work drinks, let alone from the trenches or key decision-making.
    We need to ensure we are all part of this great ideal and feel part of it.
    Our future in adversity may depend on all of us. May depend? Does depend.

Prue Goward – Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner (Goward 11)

Pru Goward describes mateship as an Australian ideal potentially inclusive of everyone, but all too often perceived as exclusive to men, and she speaks of a need to make mateship inclusive for the good of all Australians. I have argued in this thesis that mateship is inclusive, because it cannot be an Australian convention if it excludes over half of the population as exclusive mateship does. But comments like Goward's show that the belief that mateship is exclusive to men is so well established that it will need a major shift in attitude to change that perception. It is, however, broadly accepted that mateship is an egalitarian ideal that supports Australians in adversity – as Goward suggests – so what is needed in addition is to show Australians that their mateship is inclusive, and therefore not limited to select males only. Although I have argued that mateship is two discourses; a major inclusive discourse, and a minor exclusive discourse, and that the two have become confused, I have not yet explained how and why the confusion occurred: that is how and why exclusive mateship – the minority mateship discourse – gained majority endorsement in spite of the fact that in being selectively exclusive, it contradicts Australian mateship's egalitarian inclusivity.

This chapter will address these questions. I have already demonstrated that exclusive mateship is a discourse endorsed by patriarchal forces; but while those forces aided its circulation, and undoubtedly helped foster the belief that Australian mateship was peculiar to men, patriarchy alone is not responsible for exclusive mateship's rise to cultural prominence. I will argue that the confusion of inclusive mateship ideals with exclusive mateship's masculine definition occurred gradually over the first century of white Australia's history, as mateship became a surrogate religion for many Australians. I will argue that it was the accumulative pressure of people satisfying their spiritual needs without the benefits of institutional religion that enabled mateship to become what appeared to be an inclusive convention, even though it concealed within it a subliminal patriarchal structure that empowered males. The way in which mateship is both inclusive in appearance and exclusive in action is similar to the way in which the Christian church works, because its power structure subjugates women to men. I will show that this understanding of mateship was consolidated in the period 1885-1925, and that after this time, mateship was perceived, as it is now, in confusing terms as an Australian convention that is masculine-dominated.

The first section of this chapter explores the argument that exclusive mateship's ascendancy over inclusive mateship was the product of influential patriarchal forces in the 1885-1925. This exploration draws on feminist discussions about the masculinization of culture during the 1890s. Although feminists, like others, accept that mateship is a "natural" part of men's behaviour, and do not explore its origins or seek to explain its dominant cultural position, they do offer an explanation of how patriarchy became embedded in Australian culture, and exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse. Exclusive mateship gained prominence along with the various other patriarchal discourses that feminists claim were promoted at the time. So even though I am not directly concerned with feminist beliefs about the masculinization of Australian culture, I deconstruct their argument to show that while exclusive mateship rose to prominence with the help of patriarchal forces, it could not have gained the widespread endorsement it needed to become dominant by such promotion alone. Patriarchy excludes women from power, but it does not include all men (Buchbinder 120), so showing that exclusive mateship was

endorsed by patriarchy, and that patriarchy strengthened its influence on Australian culture during the 1890s, does not explain why men and women who shared inclusive mateship would believe in a discourse that neither included them nor described the mateship they understood. Feminist arguments are drawn from the work of Marilyn Lake, Kay Schaffer, Susan Sheridan, Kay Ferres and Helen Thomson. Historical texts cited include those by Russel Ward, T. I. Moore and Linzi Murrie, and Bruce Lincoln's theory of myth is used to explain mateship's connection to Australian myths.

In the second section, I argue that exclusive mateship's ascendancy occurred when mateship became a surrogate religion for the Australian people. I demonstrate how and why this came about, and show that, while the people accepted mateship as their religion, literary references uniting men, mateship and Christianity consolidated the belief that mateship, while including egalitarian, inclusive principles, was convincingly united with the masculine in culture. Tim O'Sullivan's explanations of critical terms are used to explain cultural conventions while Arthur Reber's definition is used to define religion. A. G. Stephens's "A Word for Australians" (1899), W. Scott McPheat's John Flynn: Vision of the Inland (1977), Eugene Cuskelly's "Mother Mary MacKillop and Australian Spirituality" (1995), Russel Ward's The Australian Legend (1958), T. I. Moore's Social Patterns in Australian Literature (1971), C. E. W. Bean's The Story of ANZAC: From the Outbreak of War to the End of the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915 (1921) and Bill Gammage's The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War (1974) are cited to establish links between mateship and the Christian religion. Literary references include Grant Hervey's "A Missing Mate" (1910), Mary Gilmore's "The Ringer" (1939), an anonymous verse "Peter and Paul" (1885), C. R.'s "True Friendship" (1894), G. H. Gibson's "My Mate Bill" (n.d.), Matchbox's "An Australian Epitaph" (1902), Homfrey Beale's "Danny Byrne" (1927) and Victor Daley's "His Mate" (1902).

In the third section, I use Michel Foucault's explanation of how ideologies embed themselves in society and culture to explain how exclusive mateship, although an overtly discriminatory discourse, can appear to be a widely accepted representation of Australianness. I use Katharine Susannah Prichard's The Black Opal (1921) as an example

of how men and women unquestioningly submit to, and endorse, exclusive mateship even as they live with the divisiveness it causes. Mateship becomes, as it does for the characters of Prichard's novel, the faith by which they conduct their lives, and if they notice that mateship organises power relations that favour the masculine and subordinate the feminine, they accept it anyway, and dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to this home-grown religion. They believe mateship is inclusive, and it is the principles of mateship that explain their human condition, organise the way they live with others and give them reasons to go on, so they devotedly reproduce its attitudes and values. This unquestioning acceptance is the means by which exclusive mateship remains dominant over inclusive mateship in Australian culture. Ultimately this endorsement allows mateship to maintain its prominence in national discourses as well as its social divisiveness with what would seem to be the willing compliance of a majority of Australians.

1. Patriarchy's contribution to the ascendancy of exclusive mateship.

As has already been shown, exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse, and in Chapter Five it was argued that this discourse consolidated during the period 1885-1925 along with what Marilyn Lake claims was "a style of masculinity that had deleterious consequences for the lives of women" (11). In their analyses of the masculinization of culture, feminists do not usually discuss mateship's origins, and they do not attempt to explain how mateship acquired its masculinist bias. They merely assume that mateship is patriarchal, and like many others, they accept that it is a part of men's behaviour. I am not dealing with the feminist argument about the masculinization of culture here, but since they maintain that mateship is a patriarchal component, their argument can be explored to see if it does offer an explanation of how and why exclusive mateship gained dominance over inclusive mateship. Kay Schaffer, for example, argues that "national identity and the Australian character are masculine constructions" (Women 4), and central to that identity and character is the heroic bushman of the nineteenth century with his mates and mateship (Women 28). According to Schaffer, these stereotypical bushmen types, who were the first exponents of nationalism, did not die out with Federation. They were replaced in history by the returned soldier, who for the modern day embodies "the ethos of mateship and the

bush, that is, the ethos of Australian manhood" (<u>Women</u> 29). Lake argues that women were marginalised in Australian culture when "masculinist values had been elevated to the status of national traditions" (<u>Women</u> 11); that is when the bushman character with his mates and their mateship became embedded in nationalism. This seductive image of men as mythical bushmen, heroic males, who espouse glorious visions of egalitarian nationalism, has, according to Lake, women counterparts who seek to curb men's behaviour and enforce constricting domesticity upon them (<u>Women</u> 4). Through the promotion of such patriarchal notions, men and women were locked into a battle of the sexes in the 1890s, and at the same time exclusive mateship became a men's creed which united men against women – "the spoilers of men's pleasures" (Lake 4).

According to the feminist argument, these patriarchal beliefs gradually infiltrated Australian culture with the help of the keepers of key channels of cultural reproduction like the men's press, particularly <u>The Bulletin</u> under the editorial leadership of J. F. Archibald. Susan Sheridan argues that <u>The Bulletin</u>'s defence against the rising feminist demands of the 1890s was to portray women "as if they were by definition obstacles to the progress of democracy" (Louisa 34). Lake claims that "[a]ccording to <u>The Bulletin</u>, home life trammelled a man's spirit and sapped his masculinity" (3). Kay Ferres claims that in the Australian national character celebrated by the legend of the 1890s, men were valorised and women were derided. The national character was "specifically masculine: nomadic, independent, anti-authoritarian and fiercely loyal to mates" (1). Against this character, women were either idealised as "longsuffering and resigned to neglect" as in Henry Lawson's stories, or treated with derision as <u>The Bulletin</u>'s jokes show (Ferres 1). This derision is obvious in Banjo Paterson's "Female Voters" (1903), in which he advises male candidates how to canvass votes among the women of Sydney. He describes women from all walks of life: barmaids and servants, "lady politicians", upper-class women from Potts Point, and women from the Rocks Push (175). The article is extremely derogatory, especially since he degrades women's intelligence and ability to think logically. His advice is that the rule for winning votes from women is to dress according to what each type of woman favours in a man of her social group, because women are not concerned with anything other than such frivolous criteria (175).

This ridicule of the feminine, which accompanied the institutionalisation of the masculine, was enhanced, as Helen Thomson notes, by "[t]he neglect of women writers in the literary and historical discourses of this century's first three decades" (19). Not publishing challenging feminist works helped to marginalise and silence opposition to the masculine, and thereby to consolidate masculine dominance. Louisa Lawson's journal "The Dawn", which commenced circulation on 15 May 1888, was intended to overcome this gagging of the feminine:

> Every eccentricity of belief, and every variety of bias in mankind allies itself with a printing-machine, and gets its singularities bruited about in type, but where is the printing ink champion of mankind's better half? (About 23)

However, the opposition of some men against The Dawn in 1889 demonstrates what feminists describe as the patriarchal manipulation of Australian culture. Lawson claims in her article "Boycotting The Dawn" (October 1889) that The Dawn was the object of bullying by the Typographical Society (union of compositors) because women compositors were employed to work on the journal. The Typographical Society was calling on all "the affiliated societies" within its influence "to boycott The Dawn", and if successful they would either damage it severely, or bring about its collapse (44). The reason, as Lawson explains, was not the issue of women being employed at a cheaper rate than men, because they were not, as The Dawn opposed any erosion of wages and conditions for all workers, male or female. The Typographical Society wanted to protect "the interests of its own members [men]" (43), and this was the only reason for their harassment of The Dawn and its employees.

Feminists argue that this masculinist thinking evolved from the fantasising of desk-bound disgruntled city men (Lake 4). According to Lake, it was self-styled Bohemians, like Archibald, who led this masculinist nationalistic push, and who, as part of it, successfully projected exclusive mateship on to the bush workers (3). To these men, male camaraderie was foremost, and rural life represented an existence of liberty unfettered by domestic drudgery. The bushman, as they constructed him, epitomised their masculinist ideals (Lake 4). Under their direction, the national image became one of a self-reliant, anti-authoritarian bushman-mate, who avoided domestic ties, preferring instead to wander freely with his

mates. His heart belonged to his country, and he gave his utmost loyalty to other men, and together (apparently without women) they triumphed over physical and mental torment, conquered the environment, and thereby laid the foundations of a sovereign nation.

Feminist deconstructions of Archibald's contribution describe a crudely misogynous message that they claim significantly influenced constructions of gender in Australian culture. It is those constructions that have endured and have contributed to the masculine domination of Australian culture. According to feminists, in the narratives promoted by The Bulletin, women were excluded from representations of national identity, and the feminine was thereby alienated from the culture. Lake describes Archibald as "an unhappily married, childless misogynist", and she claims that it was his "jaundiced views about the relations between men and women [that] formed a major strand of the *Bulletin's* message" (3). That message, she argues, was "the separatist model of masculinity which lay at the heart of the eulogies to the Bushman" (3). The romanticising of writers such as those patronised by The Bulletin led to what Linzi Murrie calls "the male homosocial group" (82) becoming characteristic of free-roving, rural, working-class males. According to Russel Ward in The Australian Legend (1958), this man was the heroic male mate of the bush, "the noble bushman" (226), but he was nonetheless an imagined "stereotype", and not real (211). Yet Ward argues that the influence of this character was enduring: "Even as they faded from the workaday world, the values and attitudes of the nomad tribe were embalmed in a national myth, thence to react powerfully, as they still do, upon thought and events" (211).

If this was The Bulletin's message, and if Norman Lindsay was correct in saying that the paper functioned as "the only cultural centre this country possessed" (12), then Lake is correct in claiming that The Bulletin was influential (3). The feminist argument about the ascendancy of the masculine in Australian culture – with exclusive mateship as part of it – therefore seems credible, especially since mateship became part of the enduring and very influential myths that were generated by patriarchy during this period. To these myths was added the tenet that all men were stereotypical mates, and over time, these mythical creations acquired the authority of tradition. According to Bruce Lincoln, myth is a mode

of discourse that possesses "both credibility and *authority*" (24), and since exclusive mateship is a discourse, it can be argued that the way that exclusive mateship gained cultural dominance was by means of the patriarchal-based myths generated during the 1890s. Tim O'Sullivan defines myth as a "widely and variously used term referring to a culture's way of understanding, expressing and communicating to itself concepts that are important to its self-identity as a culture" (192). Such are the myths, with their associated "truths", that Ward describes as the basis of "the Australian legend", and within this legend, mateship is exclusive. Lincoln argues that, in being a mode of discourse, myth is an authoritative narrative that can create a dialectic interaction of both past and present, and future and present (28). Exclusive mateship became an authoritative narrative in the period 1885-1925 through its circulation in fictional and non-fictional literature, and in the process, it projected a masculinist reading of the colonial past on to national discourses of the present, and made them appear vital to Australia's future as a nation. Discourse – and therefore myth – "holds the capacity to shape and reshape society itself" through what Lincoln identifies as the "paired instrumentalities of ideological persuasion and sentiment evocation" (9). The patriarchal-derived exclusive mateship paired with nationalistic sentiments, to construct the masculine-centred truths that finally became embedded in Australian culture. Associated with those "truths" was the belief that mateship, though central to national discourses, was exclusive to men.

Even though myth is one discursive mode by which established social forms are replicated, Lincoln argues that myth can also provide a means for the "construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of society itself" (3). Myth, as a mode of discourse, can also be used for both the preservation of "exploitative patterns of social relations" and for purposes of restructuring and reforming society (Lincoln 49). Both the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses had the potential to shape the direction of colonial society and the ensuing Australian culture. Inclusive mateship was, during its developmental phase (1788-1850), a discourse that was deconstructing the past as it re-read "difference", and in time it may have developed an equitable society and culture for the colony's future because it was devoid of the hierarchal binaries citizen/delinquent, upper class/lower class, against which it rebelled. The myths it created reflect such values, and they still exist today

whenever mateship is connected to Australianness. On the other hand, exclusive mateship, with its re-reading of "difference" centred upon the masculine, and its myths created to suit, promoted cultural constructions that were based on masculine power. Lincoln believes that myth is predominantly used to advantage the powerful, and he claims "the dominant discourse – including mythic discourse – in any age is the discourse of the dominant class" (49). In colonial circumstances, inclusive mateship endorsed power for the lower class, and many social commentators and historians, like Ward, argue that Australian mores came from the lower classes (Legend 13). But exclusive mateship was motivated by the patriarchal objective of empowering the masculine, so its cultural constructions were distinctly male-dominant. However, since not all men are included in it, exclusive mateship secured power for a select group of men, but strangely enough, in the name of all men. During the period of intense nationalism prior to Federation, and afterwards in the symbolic blooding of nationhood in World War 1 (1914-1918), the outcomes of the two discourses became confused: inclusive mateship's ideals of being an emotional, spiritual response of the Australian people endured, but they became aligned with the masculine. This confusion was advantageous for exclusive mateship because its misogynous principles were concealed, hidden by the belief that mateship was an Australian convention.

From such an influential position, the exclusive mateship discourse was able to contribute very powerful masculine images to beliefs about Australian identity by means of male-centred myths. Even though those myths endorse one very restrictive style of masculinity, and historians like Ward agree that they are not the characteristics of "Australians in general" (Legend 2), writers of his influence have made such myths credible by constituting the constructions as "historical fact" (Legend 1). Over time, these beliefs have been woven into the cultural fibre of Australian nationality. Luce Irigaray argues that myths are believed to represent "secondary realities", but they are actually "principal expressions of what orders society at any given time" (Je 23-24). Myths, such as those that support exclusive mateship, condition the way Australians think, act, feel, speak and experience existence, and even Ward acknowledges that the legend, with its masculine-based myths and mateship, conditions Australians' thinking. What was then believed to be the tradition of mateship that upheld Australian nationalism became accepted as a principle

of masculinity, and from that acceptance, it eventually became an Australian ideal that greatly influenced images of identity. This absorption of exclusive mateship into a position of national importance, and therefore of significant influence, was assisted in its progress by what Patrick O'Farrell describes as "the falsely unified way in which Australian history has been presented – one people from the beginning" (10), and as feminists claim, one sex from the beginning.

The feminist-based argument does provide a reasonable explanation of how and why exclusive mateship gained cultural dominance, but it is limited by the fact that patriarchy does not include all men. For exclusive mateship to become recognised as Australian mateship, something very convincing had to cause the majority of Australians – that is men and women – to ignore what they experienced daily in favour of the fictional representations of life from sources like The Bulletin. While Australians could be conditioned to believe patriarchy's construction of society, even if they read instances of mateship as a men's creed, such a reading is impossible if men are mates with women, or if men have no misogynous attitudes and share inclusive mateship. Then, if fictional texts featuring inclusive mateship were less numerous than those featuring exclusive mateship, inclusive mateship was still present in daily life according to the evidence already recorded in this thesis. Social conditioning alone would not have been enough to bring about the widespread agreement needed to recognise exclusive mateship as Australian mateship.

There are then, flaws in this feminist-based explanation of exclusive mateship's ascendancy, and they indicate that patriarchy was not the only reason for inclusive mateship being eclipsed by exclusive mateship. To begin with, it cannot be assumed that all men were part of this patriarchal movement because, as I have already demonstrated, some men shared inclusive mateship with women, so not all men maintained the misogynous attitude of exclusive mateship. Secondly, mateship of the exclusive type did not include all men, any more than patriarchy did. Even Lake admits that the promotion of the bushman type with his mates and mateship was not universal because "not all rural men qualified for heroic status" (5). Thirdly, not everyone agrees that Archibald was as influential as feminists claim. There seems little argument that Archibald made a significant contribution

to this view of the bush through his editorship of <u>The Bulletin</u>, but there are varying interpretations of that contribution. P. R. Stephensen, for instance, argues that, under Archibald's direction, Australian literature and culture were cast "at a formative time, in the *The Bulleteen's* mould" (69), but that what was produced in the 1890s was "crude", rather than "fine" literature (66). "Larrikinism" was substituted for "convictism" as "a theme, or more precisely, as an attitude in the Australian idea" (Stephensen 70). Finally, if patriarchy had achieved universal acceptance of the idea that Australian mateship was exclusive to men, inclusive mateship would have disappeared from society and from literature after the period 1885-1925 when mateship became identified with the masculine. But this did not happen, and inclusive mateship continues to be observed and demonstrated into the twenty-first century, one hundred years later. The inherent weaknesses in this argument therefore make it an inadequate explanation of how such an unrepresentative discourse as exclusive mateship, could, with only a minority of male support, come to overshadow the inclusive mateship discourse current among the majority of Australian men and women.

2. Australian mateship – the people's religion

To be dominant, exclusive mateship had to become a convention, that is "[a] textual or social practice shared by members of a culture or subculture" (O'Sullivan 64), and it had to have widespread, if not universal acceptance. According to O'Sullivan, conventions "work in the same way in both texts and social life: a text or piece of behaviour which conforms to convention is easily understood and widely accepted", and "breaking conventions socially or textually produces misunderstandings or resentment or both in others" (65). At best, though, exclusive mateship was shared only by a minority subculture that supported patriarchal beliefs, because as the many references linking men and women in inclusive mateship show, Australians generally shared an egalitarian style of mateship. Therefore with only limited support from an elite group of men, exclusive mateship would have gone against the grain of common experience, and it would not have been widely accepted. O'Sullivan claims that conventions are derived "from the shared experience of the members adopting them and they create shared expectations" (65), so exclusive

mateship could not have become an influential convention without the support of the wider community. However, the fact that exclusive mateship did become dominant means that at some stage people accepted it and gave it their support. But that support must have been given unwittingly, because people would not willingly accept a discourse that ignored them and their contributions to society, as is the case with exclusive mateship's exclusion of women and some men. Exclusive mateship must therefore have gained acceptance when people confused it with inclusive mateship through another convention that had widespread appeal. That convention had to be similar to inclusive mateship to appeal to the wider community, but it also had to have concealed within it a subtle patriarchal bias that enabled exclusive mateship to gain the support it needed to supplant inclusive mateship. To gain wide appeal, this convention had to answer the people's needs as well as complement their will to survive, and it therefore had to be part of the personal resources they developed in their struggle against the environment. Religion satisfies all of these requirements because, according to Arthur Reber's definition, religion is "a cultural universal which emerges invariably as an outcome of the need to understand the human condition" (659), and as I shall show here, mateship did become a surrogate religion in that it can be described as a universal cultural convention that helped many early Australians make sense of their lives. Mateship satisfied the people's spiritual needs, and even though, as a home-grown religion it was quite different from institutional religion, it shared principles with Christianity, the common religion of the early Australians. While many of Christianity's principles complemented inclusive mateship, Christianity is patriarchal, so mateship's functioning as a religion and its concomitant meshing with Christianity provided the opportunity for exclusive mateship to take dominance over inclusive mateship in a very subtle way that was accepted by the people because mateship was something they knew and understood.

Inclusive mateship's principles of love for fellow humans however diverse, self-sacrifice for others, and loyalty through good and bad times, are also Christian principles, but Christianity is patriarchal in that the power relations it organises subordinate women to men, and this male-centredness, which is also the commanding principle of exclusive mateship, likewise melded with representations of mateship. This melding was subtle and happened in a way that appeared neither to discriminate against women nor to reject any

men. To begin with, inclusive mateship is a practical union intended to keep body and soul together as people unite to overcome adversity. Women believed that mateship included them equally with men because in daily life many shared mateship as they struggled to survive. In the same way, and for much the same reasons, women believe in Christianity. They also accept that God sets man as the head of the family for their good as much as for men's, and more importantly for the benefit of children. In practice, when exclusive mateship eclipsed inclusive mateship in prominence, nothing about mateship altered for those who lived with it as part of daily life: mateship, like religion, gave people much needed spiritual support, and to them it remained an egalitarian discourse that defined essential Australianness. But it was not on the level of lived experience that the significant change was occurring in mateship: that was happening on the cultural level, where mateship was being represented as a cultural product. Exclusive mateship was subtly supplanting inclusive mateship whenever mateship was likened to brotherly love or described either as a brotherhood or as a fraternity of mates, and when mates in narratives were described in terms of Christianity. Such changes were imperceptible, because, as I argued in Chapter One, not even the women who were actively campaigning against the aspects of male behaviour that were detrimental to women and to families opposed mateship. So while mateship represented inclusivity for most people in the reality of daily life, it produced patriarchal power relations in culture. From this subtle confusion, exclusive mateship rose to dominance over inclusive mateship and its ascendancy was formalised during the period 1885-1925 when patriarchal forces were popularising discourses that empowered the masculine.

The temperament of colonial Australians combined with the prevailing environmental conditions to create a paradoxical situation in which orthodox religion was widely rejected at the same time that the spiritual service it provided was supplanted by mateship – the people's home-grown religion. In his "A Word for Australians" (1899), A. G. Stephens claims that religion was a diminishing influence on Australia's social and cultural evolution, and upon what he calls "the development of the national character" (62). Stephens was talking about the Christian religion, and he claims that the move away from organised religion was a characteristic of Australians. He argues that it was "the spirit of

Australia – that undefined, indefinable resultant of earth, and air, and conditions of climate and life" that was destroying the religious heritage brought with the colonials from England (62). Although he admits that in part the drift from religion was in accord with the trend of mental enlightenment leading to a "decay of faith in outworn creeds", he claims that in the case of Australians, the environment was "unfavourable to the growth of religion", and "in the developing Australian character" there was "a sceptical and utilitarian spirit that values the present hour and refuses to sacrifice the present for any visionary future lacking a rational guarantee" (62). W. Scott McPheat's observations of people in the Northern Territory in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries confirm that there was a backlash against organised religion. He also endorses the characteristics of the people described by Stephens, and he likewise maintains that one of the reasons for the strong anti-clerical sentiment arose from them. But, according to McPheat, religion was not being totally lost; its "practical side" was being replaced by the outback "doctrine of mateship" (8).

Religion then, was not disappearing; it was changing from an orthodox form to an unorthodox form, and environmental conditions and Australian characteristics were combining to encourage the new religion to be mateship – the people's spirit of faith in themselves. Among the environmental stimuli that encouraged colonials to turn to mateship as their religion was an adverse reaction to Christianity. To begin with, the style of religion practised by Reverend Samuel Marsden, leading cleric of the Church of England during the formative days of the colony, represented cruel religious domination to some colonials (Ward, Concise 67-8). According to Ward, Marsden used his position as magistrate to enforce his Protestant beliefs ruthlessly and beyond "the laws of God and man" (Concise 67). His harshness left a legacy of distrust and resentment towards orthodox religion for many of the convicts and their children. The Church of England was initially the dominant colonial religion, and there was very little religious tolerance, especially towards Catholicism (O'Farrell 39), and this alienated the Irish, who formed a large section of the colonial population. Irish Roman Catholics turned against organised religion because, to them, the Anglican Church represented the oppressive English authority they hated. This was a sentiment that Patrick O'Farrell claims became focused later in the 1820s under the

leadership of Father John Joseph Therry, when Irish Catholicism "became identified with the challenge to a status quo composed of English social conservatism and the Anglican religion" (40). The way that Christianity was represented to colonials exacerbated antipathy towards organised religion, and simultaneously turned people's attention to themselves for answers to their condition. People in isolated communities therefore turned to each other with a solidarity born of necessity. Mateship – the union of those in need – offered a form of solace against an environmental harshness that included the Christian church's oppressive attitude towards transportees.

Meanwhile, the environmental factors that gave rise to acts of mateship aided mateship's acceptance as an informal religion, and it subsequently became a spiritual alliance that functioned in adversity. For those who needed to believe in something beyond themselves in order to make sense of their experience, that need was satisfied by the informal bonding with others in mateship, especially in times of distress when the need is greatest. In other words, mateship was inclusive and non-judgemental, the exact opposite of institutionalised colonial religion; and mateship was there in the moment of need, when institutional religion was not. What people shared with each other – the empathic sense of being alone but united in their isolation – was inclusive mateship. It helped men and women to understand the human condition according to their situation, and by the time that institutional religion was established in the outback, these people already had a creed that satisfied their spiritual needs. They felt that they were able to exist without the church because, as Eugene Cuskelly describes in his "Mother Mary MacKillop and Australian Spirituality" (1995), the early settlers looked for and found "inner resources of strength, courage and perseverance" within themselves (4). With that measure of self-reliance, they found the strength of endurance that allowed them to cope with difficulties without being discouraged (Cuskelly 4). This, Cuskelly claims, was actually an "inventiveness to find their way around difficulties" (4), and it came directly from the personal fortitude that arose from sharing mateship with others. Mateship allowed the people to rely on themselves instead of submitting their will to what appeared to be an uncaring institution, and it grew in acceptance both because of, and in spite of, religion. But what grew subtly with mateship's replacement of Christianity was a masculinist bias in the interpretation of

what was undoubtedly inclusive mateship. This bias is evident in the non-fictional and fictional literature that records mateship as a cultural product of the Australian people.

The endorsement of mateship as a religion of the Australian people is evident in the writings of historians like Ward, and it is in texts like his that the confusion of exclusive and inclusive mateship becomes apparent in the fictional literature he uses to support his argument. Ward was convinced that mateship was exclusive to men and, writing from that assumption, he explains that "by the end of the last century, mateship had become for some bushmen a consciously-held substitute for religion" (183). He quotes the song "My Religion"(1905) to demonstrate that this attitude towards mateship was established by the end of the nineteenth century (183). The song clearly indicates that mateship is a uniting force that is recognised as a religion:

> But let man unto man like brethren act,
>   My doctrine that suits to a T,
> The heart that can feel for the woes of another,
>   Oh, that's the religion for me. (183)

But it is also clear that this religion is claimed in the name of the masculine: "To be upright and downright and act like a man, / That's the religion for me" (183). Thus mateship here is a religion, but it is exclusive, not inclusive. In his Social Patterns in Australian Literature (1971), T. I. Moore calls mateship the Australian men's religion, and he claims that mateship was an "inspiring ideal" which "provided salvation for the soul against the damnation of the overwhelming loneliness of the outback" (206). According to Moore, mateship affirmed the "value of life" and though "non-religious in the ordinary sense of the term", mateship supplied "an alternative to religion" (206). In his "Letter to Tom Collins – Mateship" (1943), Manning Clark states that Tom Collins and Henry Lawson "almost canonised" the word mate, and that to them, "mateyness" was a way of behaving towards other men that "made life bearable", and therefore acted as a "metaphorical comforter" (40). H. P. Heseltine even found a saint, Henry Lawson, for this men's religion (5). Lawson is popularly considered to be the earliest advocate of mateship, and he is credited with spiriting mateship into Australian culture, and is often described in religious terms as the "Apostle of Mateship" (Heseltine 5).

These observations are based on selective representations of men and mateship in which the lines between inclusive and exclusive mateship are blurred as mates are described in orthodox Christian terms, and as these terms are united with principles – like nationalism – that include all Australians. Religion is associated with mateship among men in moments of trauma and, as in the case of Grant Hervey's "A Missing Mate" (1910), that association is then tied to nationalism. It is also often the case that a mate who is a sinner is really a saint in disguise in such texts. The missing mate in this case, Jack Duggan, is no exception. Duggan was a rough railway worker who, though prone to stubbornness and fighting, was nonetheless a saint when it came to taking care of his mates:

> Cheerful and pagan and hearty, one of the whitest
>   and best!
> A strong man was he and a smiter, wielding the hammer
>   and drill;
> Crossed with a streak of the fighter – "scrapped" with a
>   pile-driving will!
> Never went seeking a riot, *there* when you needed
>   him bad; […]. (14)

Duggan, though described as "a pagan", "buried and prayed for the dead", and in many ways was a good Christian in his mateship with others:

> Took no account of the giving – "Take it and d—n you!"
>   he said.
> Swore like an angel from Heaven, tending and fixing
>   the sick;
> Sinners who parted unshriven, leaving the shovel
>   and pick;
> Bones that are perished and nameless, taking their rest in
>   the sand;
> Souls that are vanished and fameless – these knew the touch
>   of his hand!
> Fought them in days of their vigor, helped them in times
>   of despair;
> Nursed them in hours of Death's rigor, muttered their
>   burial-prayer! (14)

According to the poem, Jack Duggan and his kind are integral to nationalism: they are the men who are building the nation with "splendor (sic) and pride"; "Sounding the Commonwealth's tabor – sounding it royally yet!" (14).

It is such men and their deeds that Mary Gilmore makes into heroes in "The Ringer" (1939). According to the poem, the Ringer takes many forms and has, in the short time of white Australia's history, set traditions "through our land" (4). Urged on by a desire that "[c]alls to the spirit that inheres in force to break for liberty", the Ringer calls "[t]he shout of life to prove combatively its will to live"(5). In this cry is embedded "the need of man as man" and as such a hero, the Ringer and the numerous men who live his tradition, know themselves "as God, master of time and space"(5). Churchmen and labourers alike will honour this man – the cumulative body of men of the tradition throughout "our Australian history"(5).

Men, exclusive mateship, nationalism and religion were often united in events of national significance, like war, and the widespread exposure of mateship mixed exclusively with men in such prominent events, helped consolidate the connection. In his official history of Australia in World War 1 (1914-1918), C. E. W. Bean testifies that mateship was the religion for the soldiers of the first Australian Imperial Force. Among these men, "the strongest bond" was the mateship they inherited with their Australian character:

> He [the typical Australian] was seldom religious in the sense in which the word is generally used. So far as he held a prevailing creed, it was a romantic one inherited from the gold-miner and the bushman, of which the chief article was that a man should at all times and at any cost stand by his mate. That was and is the one law which the good Australian must never break. It is bred in the child and stays with him through life. (6)

The certainty of mateship being a men's creed is confirmed in two ways in this description. The "typical Australian " is defined as a male through the use of the subject as soldiers (only men could engage in combat), and the use of the masculine pronouns <u>he</u> and <u>his</u> endorse the subject's masculinity. Bill Gammage also defines mateship as a masculine spiritual force when he describes it as the "distinctive fellowship" among Australian soldiers during World War I (246). He claims mateship was the staying power of the Australian army, and in his account mates are definitely men:

> In the heat of battle mateship gave men their strongest incentive to fight, because they prized the lives and respect of their mates [...]. Mates strengthened a man's attachment to his unit, shared and eased the oppressions of battle and hardship, and multiplied the diversions of leave and the back areas. (246-7)

By the end of World War 1, Australian mateship was widely assumed to be exclusively masculine, and as already pointed out, it remains so in much current thinking.

The masculinization of mateship through mateship's evolution as a surrogate religion was not sudden. Rather, it happened slowly between 1850 and 1925. However, it can reasonably be argued that it became formalised and accepted during the period 1885- 1925 when exclusive mateship became a discourse separate from, and dominant over, inclusive mateship. Its ascendancy can be traced in literature through the melding of men's mateship with Christian ideals. Sometimes this connection is made through the use of Biblical names for male mates. Those names signify Christian characteristics, and the narratives construct meanings through the connection made between the names and the myths surrounding the Biblical characters. In the anonymous verse "Peter and Paul" (1885) for instance, Peter and Paul have been mining mates "for over 25 years" when Peter dies. Peter is invited by St Peter to enter heaven because his "way through the world was straight", but he refuses the invitation to the "City of Crystal Light" until St Peter promises to "let in" his "old mate Paul"(14). To defy St Peter's invitation is heresy because according to Christian beliefs, entry to heaven is by grace, not by demand from a sinner. But Peter's stance makes the point that mateship between men is as respected in heaven as it is on earth. The bond of mateship is so strong between these men, whose names just happen to be those of two original apostles and saints, that it will not be broken by death, or opposed by heaven.

C. R.'s "True Friendship" (1894) likewise authorises men's mateship by showing that the mateship between men is respected in heaven, even if, as the case is for Jim and Bill in this poem, the mates are sinners, indeed criminals. In the poem, the dying burglar Jim is forgiven his trespasses and prepared for his death by a "Parson" who had "converted him to grace and set his soul's accounts to rights" (22). But Jim's mate Bill is particularly distressed as his mate lies dying, and to comfort him, Jim promises to "prig" St Peter's key in order to "drop it in the old place" for his mate Bill (22). Bill, "the Cracksman", would then be assured of entry to heaven, so the pair would be able to resume their life-long friendship. Because God's representative on earth, "the Parson", has absolved "the Burglar" of his sins, it is understood that God will accept the mates as his own. That "the

Burglar" will be able to carry on his trade in heaven against St Peter suggests that the ways of male mates are as acceptable as men's mateship is in heaven.

G. H. Gibson's "My Mate Bill" (n.d.) is written on a similar theme and displays the same irreverence and even heresy. In the ballad, old Bill, the "daddy of all stockman", has died and gone to heaven. But those who remember him say he will be bored in heaven with nothing to do. They say he will not make a good angel, with a face as "white as chalk", and he will not be able to sing: "He couldn't 'arp for apples – his voice 'ad tones as jarred", and he apparently had an ear for music as good as "a bald-faced bull, or calves in a brandin'-yard (206)". His mates believe, though, that he will muster the goats on judgement day with the expertise he had in his earthly existence, and in doing so, he will greatly impress all of those in heaven:

> If they saddles a big-boned angel, with a turn o' speed, of course,
> As can spiel like a four-year brumby an' prop like an old camp-horse –
> If they puts Bill up with a snaffle, an' a four or five-inch spur,
> An' eighteen foot o' green-hide for to chop the blinded fur,
> He'll draft them blamed Angoras in a way, it's safe to swear,
> As 'll make them toney seraphs sit back on their thrones an' stare! (207)

Exclusive mateship was also connected to the Christian religion through men's informal observance of rituals of worship. Such references legitimise the masculinist interpretation of mateship by subtly merging what are believed to be the unorthodox values of the bushman, like anti-authoritarianism, risk-taking and an indulgent attitude towards a lack of self-discipline, with orthodox Christian principles. "An Australian Epitaph", attributed to "Matchbox" when it appeared in The Bulletin in 1902, provides an example of such affirmation of the virtues of male mates and their mateship through Christian ritual. The mate for whom the epitaph was written was the partner of the writer through "ten long years of toil"(3). He is said to have believed in God and to have been heard to "pray (his own way)" in times of distress. Since the distressing incident mentioned in the epitaph is that "Clancy's team was bogged with all our flour", the religious reference parodies the Biblical sentiment of devotion through prayer (3). But the humorous style of the exposition conceals the subliminal message that mateship and the Christian religion share the same value – the brotherly love of simple men.

It is perhaps through the concept of brotherly love that exclusive mateship gained most of its widespread acceptance, because Christianity includes the ideal of fraternal devotion, and so does exclusive mateship. This construction of mateship as Christian brotherly love is evident in Homfrey Beale's "Danny Byrne" (1927). The association of mateship and Christianity here seems unquestionable because the amalgamation of the two is based on the shared "simple creed" that God will help those who help their brothers in need:

> Sometimes he'd tell me. "When yer die yer
>   gotter answer straight
> To Him wot made yer for ther way y've
>   treated ev'ry mate.
> For all of us   'as loads ter 'ump, no matter
>   wot we do.
> An' if yer tries ter 'elp yer mates the Lord'll
>   'elp yer through. (27)

Through the character Danny Byrne, mateship's values are meshed with religious ethics, as the character's principles and deeds are portrayed as evidence of a Christian attitude. This is especially so with the circumstances of his death. Byrne died saving another man, albeit one who was too inebriated to save himself. Byrne lived frugally and helped others, did not drink much, shared his meagre wealth and gave his life to save "a drunken sleeper" from a burning pub. He was a good bloke, a mate, and, it would seem, though not religious in the orthodox sense, a Christian by his actions. But the text's emphasis upon masculinity, coupled with the absence of any mention of the feminine, links Christianity with exclusive mateship, and it is through characters like Byrne that mateship is confirmed as a worthy Australian convention. It is also through this connection of mateship and religion that being mates is constructed as a godly, manly way of being.

The link between manhood, mateship and Christianity is confirmed in texts such as Victor Daley's "His Mate" (1902). Here, God and Jesus are referred to as male mates, and Jesus become mates with Andy Blane, "a stark old sinner" (189). As for God, he is a " White Man" of the mate type (192). The narrative is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the association of mateship characteristics with Christian myth confirms the moral goodness of mates and the virtue of their lifestyle on the basis of the righteousness of

exclusive mateship. Blane meets Jesus as a dying stranger in the desert. In true "Good Samaritan" style, Blane gives Jesus his last drop of water (190). Mateship here is exclusive in its use of masculine references. For instance, the sense of a strong male fraternity is depicted when the stranger, revived by the water, cries, "Let us pass on! As brother might with brother" (190). Blane's final act of charity before he dies is to give his new mate, Jesus, his cheque (192). This act is a recognised signifier of exclusive mateship, and here it becomes a Christian act as well. In the values described in the poem, mateship absolves mates of their sins, because Blane passes from his earthly, sinful being into heaven. When Blane thanks God for acting "more than square" in forgiving him his sins, the text shows that entry to eternity for mates is possible through their mateship, because mateship is the same as an association with God (194). The underpinning assumption here is that exclusive mateship is next to godliness, and godliness is manliness, and manliness is to be mates in exclusive mateship.

While the convergence of mateship and the Christian religion helped consolidate mateship's prominence among the people, it also assisted the patriarchal appropriation of mateship. Mateship was, as Moore points out, a doctrine like Christianity in the "readiness of its loyalty to embrace the ultimate duty of self-sacrifice" (237), and it did, as Cuskelly claims, become "typical of the Australian spirit" (4). However, while mateship was akin to Christianity, it was also described as exclusively masculine in culture. Through connections of man with God's image, "good male mates" became the image of Australian identity, while women became rejected "others". The power of male mates and the subjugation of women were endorsed in mateship in the same way as Christianity confirms male power through the masculine Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and people accepted the organisation as "natural". Mateship was a powerful discourse because people believed in it, and it organised their lives. But its power was associated with the masculine because mateship was assumed to be exclusive to men. In Australian English, the words mate and mateship initially acquired a significant spiritual connotation in the Australian lexicon, but this was then appropriated for the patriarchal purpose of excluding feminine cultural attitudes and values, and ironically it happened through an alliance with the Christian religion.

3. Mateship, the people's religion – an example

While appearing to be an inclusive principle of Australianness, exclusive mateship's representation of social relations empowers the masculine and, according to comments like Pru Goward's quoted at the beginning of this chapter, it does so very convincingly. Australians think mateship is theirs, so they do not question that it is often limited to one style of masculinity. The consequences of exclusive mateship's divisiveness therefore go unchecked. (These consequences will be discussed in Chapter Seven.) Exclusive mateship thus occupies a privileged position in Australian history, society and culture even though it excludes over half the population. This happens because its misogynous intent is what Michel Foucault would describe as "tolerable", since patriarchy masks a substantial part of itself within the popularised representations of mateship that are so important to Australians. Foucault describes this historical construction of invisible power relations as a process in which powerful institutions insinuate themselves upon a culture by gaining acceptance as "agencies of regulation, arbitration, and demarcation, as a way of introducing order in the midst of these powers, of establishing a principle that would temper and distribute them according to boundaries and a fixed hierarchy" (Sex 1 86-7). According to Foucault, such institutions legitimise their power hierarchies and ensure their continuation through intricate systems of popular acceptance. That acceptance cannot be denied because it appears to be integral to the social and cultural fabric of the community. Foucault claims the success of such an institution "is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (Sex 1 86). Exclusive mateship is so successful that, while mateship is thought of as "a men's thing", as Goward calls it, it persists as a representation of which Australians are generally proud.

I have argued that patriarchy was concealed within exclusive mateship in the narratives of heroic mateship in bush society. When egalitarianism was included in these narratives, the discourse appeared to be championing the rights of "every man", and mateship became a spiritual support akin to a religion for many Australians. However, the realisation that "every man" excluded "every woman", along with a large number of men who were "different" from the masculinist norm, was lost in the highly emotive,

nationalistic rhetoric. As these male mate characters battled the various environmental tyrannies, their narratives established a set of home-grown myths and traditions that were difficult to resist because they summed up much that was highly desirable in Australian culture, and they seemed to be inclusive. These traditions would, as Schaffer points out, surface time and again throughout history at moments of national crisis (<u>Women</u> 29), and at those times they would draw Australians together while subtly placing the masculine in a position of dominance over the feminine. (See the discussion of the 1999 canyoning tragedy in Saxeton in the Introduction, and the reports of the 2002 Bali bombing in Chapter Five for contemporary examples of this organisation of power in practice.) These myths and traditions became part of what Foucault calls "a whole series of tactical alliances" that enable a particular discourse to "gain acceptance" while obscuring its underpinning ideologies (<u>Sex</u> 1 86).

Beneath the exterior of normalcy surrounding male mates and their mateship runs a steadfast unity which could be described, in Foucault's terms, as a continuous history: "a total description [which] draws all phenomena around a single centre – a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape" (<u>Archaeology</u> 10). This continuous history repeats specially conceived truths that describe one narrowly focused account of Australia's past. The history thus constructed narrates the birth of a new race of people, and the story of the generation of a nation, and the basis of these constructions is a masculine image. This image opposes the signifier "mate" to "non-mate", and thus fixes man as dominant in relation to his binary partner "non-mate", who is either woman or one of the "others" not privileged by exclusive mateship.

This biased history is unchallenged by those it excludes because it is a seductively reasoned, neatly packaged, and very comforting explanation of origins and defining events. It composes a future that reflects, duplicates and guarantees an image of how Australians like to think of themselves, but concealed within that image are patriarchal power relations. So "normal" does this way of thinking about mateship appear, that those excluded by it reproduce its ideals in the belief that they are part of a wonderful convention that functions as a religion for many Australians. There is a very good example of exclusive mateship

working in this way in Katharine Susannah Prichard's <u>The Black Opal</u> (1921). This novel explores what Dymphna Cusack calls "the doctrine of mateship", the philosophy that "a mate stands by a mate" (Introduction); and in showing mateship functioning as a religion in a small community, it shows how mateship maintains a social system of control that while appearing to be egalitarian is based on patriarchy. The town's social infrastructure openly discriminates against women, but it is nonetheless met with dedicated commitment from the townspeople. No one challenges its blatant divisiveness in spite of the fact that women and children become victims of men's power. In not reproving the way in which mateship is celebrated while it maintains a system of discrimination against the feminine, this novel unwittingly reflects the way that Australians believe that mateship is egalitarian even as they experience its discrimination.

Mateship is the principle by which the Ridge people live. It is their surrogate religion because it satisfies their spiritual needs, gives their community its moral and civil codes of behaviour, and governs their relations with each other. There is a strong sense that mateship is inclusive, especially since mateship between the main female character Sophie and her male lover Arthur Henty, who is not her husband, is described as a bond of great significance –"that instinct of mate for mate" (275). But mateship here is not inclusive because women do not share power equally with men. People dedicate themselves to mateship and its informal laws without recognising that the social organisation it maintains subtly endorses patriarchal power relations that make men dominant and women subordinate in the community. The exposition of mateship in this novel shows how easily exclusive mateship is confused with inclusive mateship, and how people dedicate themselves to mateship even though it is obviously discriminatory.

In <u>The Black Opal</u>, Fallen Star Ridge, known affectionately as the Ridge, is an opal mining community in which the mines are owned and worked by groups of (usually three) "mates". The people are poor but proud members of the working class, and their tiny township regulates itself according to mateship principles:

> The Ridge code affirmed simply that "a mate stands by a mate." The men say: "You can't go back on a mate." By those two recognitions they had run their settlement. Far from all the ordinary institutions of law and order, they

> had lived and worked together without need of them, by appreciation of their relationship to each other as mates and a fraternity of mates. (40)

The Ridge people's "sacred principle" (27) is a collectivist morality based on mateship, and loyalty, trust and unity are community conventions: "there was not money enough in the world to buy their loyalty to each other and to their mates" (21). Mateship forms part of the people's response to the harsh environment, and it serves as their religion:

> Ridge folk take the heat as primitive people do most acts of God, as a matter of course, with stiff-lipped hardihood, which makes complaint the manifestation of a poor spirit. They meet their difficulties with a native humour which gives zest to flagging energies. (56)

Mateship is not "a question of law, but of principle – honour" (268), and according to this "philosophy of the Ridge" (81), the people make and keep their own justice system. Laws are unwritten, but universally respected as "the Ridge ways of doing things", as the trial of the unofficial community leader, Michael Brady, shows (268). Michael's "trial" is "an inquiry by men of the Ridge into the doings of one of their mates", and as the men argue, "evidence doesn't matter" (268); the opinion of a man's mates is all that is important. Everyone accepts their part in the social network, and in turn people are respected according to how well they play their part, which means how well they honour mateship.

Mateship appears inclusive, but the sub-surface tensions prove that it is exclusive mateship that dominates life on the Ridge. This is most noticeable in that people are only included in mateship's sanctum if they unquestioningly obey it and remain true to the roles demanded of them:

> There is no formality about the acceptance. It just happens, that if a man identifies himself with the Ridge principle of mateship, and will stand by it as it will stand by him, he is recognised by Ridge men as one of themselves. But if his ways and ideas savour of those the Ridge has broken from, he remains an outsider, whatever good terms he may seem to be on with everybody. (58)

Mateship's exclusivity is also obvious in the men's strictly maintained roles, which are believed to be the sacrosanct "natural rhythm" of life:

> Ridge miners find happiness in the sense of being free men. They are satisfied in their own minds that it is not good for a man to work all day at any mechanical toil; to use himself, or allow anyone else to use him, like a working bullock. A man must have time to think, leisure to enjoy being

alive, they say. Is he alive only to work? To sleep worn out with toil, and work again? It is not good enough, Ridge men say. They have agreed between themselves that it is a fair thing to begin work at about 6.30 or 7 o'clock and knock off at four, with a couple of hours above ground at noon for lunch – a snack of bread and cheese and a cup of tea. (58)

In this maintenance of men's liberty, Ridge mateship shows itself to be exclusive. For instance, after men "saunter down to the town and their homes" (58) to their evening meal, most men, married or single, go to the hotel, where they drink, and discuss Ridge business in its all-male environment. Some of them become so inebriated that they can only find their way home with the aid of a mate. This is the way that Ridge men live "in accord with certain fundamental instincts, on terms of good fellowship with each other" (58). Mateship determines the way they work, the way they share the money they earn, and the way they support each other (13), and going "back on a mate," is "the major crime of the Ridge code" (58). It is a distinctly male-dominated way of living.

The characteristics of a good mate are well defined, but in masculine terms. Mates are loyal to each other as all the various mining partnerships show. Michael exemplifies the Ridge's devotion to loyalty, and in doing so he is the community's exemplar of a good mate. Yet Michael is brought to trial by his mates for breaking the Ridge code, but as his trial shows, he acted out of loyalty to save a mate. The series of events leading to this trial begins when Michael gives Charley Heathfield, his mate, all of his best opals so that when Charley goes to Sydney, supposedly to earn money while their mine is not productive, he will not be penniless. This is in spite of the fact that Michael knows that Charley robbed another mate, Paul Rouminof, and that he is deserting their partnership as well as taking five pounds Michael borrowed for him. On the Ridge, "robbery of a mate by a mate had never occurred before", and it "struck at the fundamental principle of their life in common" (39), so Charley is guilty of taking what he thinks are Paul's opals (35). He is also leaving his teenage son Potch alone on the Ridge. Michael therefore did not have to remain loyal to Charley, but he did, because he is involved in the theft albeit for loyalty to Paul and his child Sophie. Charley does not have Paul's stones; Michael does. He stole them after Charley fell into a drunken sleep. He intended to keep them for Paul, but in not returning the stones, Michael breaks the Ridge code of conduct and thereby commits a crime. Before

the truth is finally known, Michael's staunch loyalty to his mates emerges again. Michael castigates himself for not telling his mate Potch that he is holding opal that is not theirs: "Potch was his mate, Michael reminded himself; and entitled to know what his partner was doing with opal which was not their common property" (136). But Potch need not have known because Michael's "crime" occurred before their partnership. Michael gives himself up for trial to save the Ridge from being commercialised by John Armitage. Michael could have worked for John when he offered him a "bribe of silence" (227) that would have hidden his crime (225). Michael's admission of guilt could also have been hidden when an old eccentric, "Snow-shoes", confesses to taking the opals from Michael, thus preventing him from returning them to Paul (256). However, Michael's decision to plead guilty before his mates is a dedication to the Ridge code of mateship, and his doing so eventually saves the mines from being sold to John (270).

One aspect of loyalty is that men do not interfere with a mate's business. It will be shown later that this leads to the concealment of domestic violence on the Ridge, however among men it means that they rarely take action against a mate who needs "correcting". For instance, they do not approve of Charley, but he is Michael's mate, so they keep their reservations hidden (33). Likewise, they do not care for Paul, but they accept him while he keeps the code of mateship. They think even less of Jun Johnson, but they hide their distrust and give him "grudging admiration" (13). The code of not interfering is obvious in an instance in which the men act to ensure fair play for a mate. They save Paul from being cheated out of his share of opals by Jun by forcing Jun to share the opals publicly. Jun is angered by their behaviour because it contravenes the code of mateship: "It was so unusual for one man to suggest to another what he ought to do, or that there was anything like bad faith in his dealings with a mate" (20). But the men appraise and divide the stones in spite of the belief that interfering between mates is an obvious "insult" (21).

Men of the Ridge are mates, and their relationship with each other is described in terms of love. This love between men reflects the fraternal love of Christianity, and the basis of men's mateship on the Ridge is said to be such love, devotion and service to each other. This is especially so with Michael and Potch. When Jun and Charley leave town,

both Paul and Michael are left without a mate. Potch is left fatherless, and because he is only a teenager, he has never had a chance to be a mate. It is commonly agreed that Paul is a loss as a mate, and Potch, as his names suggests – potch is poor opal (14) – will be likewise especially with the legacy of his father's bad reputation, so it is a surprise to the men that Michael takes Paul and Potch as mates (46). They call Potch and Paul Michael's "brace of dead-beat mates" (53), but only out of Michael's hearing. Together Potch and Michael do the work and carry Paul as a "sleeping" mate, but between the pair, deep respect develops. Michael defines this as love, and later when he confesses to Potch about keeping Paul's stones, his main concern is that he will lose Potch's love, which to him is of "inexpressible value" (240).

Men's activities and ideas are thus carefully detailed, but that is not so with women. Knowledge of women's lives is drawn from observations of how they interact with men. This is further evidence that the mateship enacted on the Ridge is exclusive. Women's role is to support men, and they do so under extreme conditions. Homes are bag huts with thatched roofs, and there is neither running water nor electricity. The primitive conditions in which women prepare meals, launder clothes and raise children, include wood stoves, earthen floors and calico curtains over glassless windows. There is no school in the community, so the women educate their youngsters. If the men begin work at six-thirty or seven in the morning, although such detail is not stated, it is highly likely that the women start earlier. Apart from hearing that the women meticulously keep their houses, herd goats for milk, butter and cheese, sew by hand, press clothes with fire-heated irons, and devote themselves to family life, little is said about them. Sophie's mother cut and polished opals, and Sophie also learns these skills, but other than this humble occupation, which complements the men's mining, paid employment is not common among women. Two women come to the Ridge for a brief period to work at the hotel, but they are the only women other than the owner's wife employed in that male domain. As scanty as the details of women's work are, knowledge of their ideas is even scantier. It is, however, stated though that women agree with the men on all matters:

> Women like Maggie Grant share their husband's outlook. They read what the men read, have the men's vision, and hold it with jealous enthusiasm. Others, women used to the rough and simple existence of the back-country,

are satisfied with the life which gives them a husband, home, and children. (60)

It is clear that if women do not accept the Ridge way, they are not accepted:

> Those who sympathise with Mrs. Watty Frost regard the men's attitude as more than half cussedness, sheer selfishness or stick-in-the-mudness; and the more worthy and respectable they are, the more they fret and fume at the earthen floors and open hearths of the bark and bagging huts they live in, and pine for all the kickshaws of suburban villas. The discontented women are a minority, nevertheless. (60)

Women are included in Ridge mateship according to their relations with men. They do not call each other "mate", yet they believe that mateship applies to them because they talk about Sophie's being "mates" with Arthur (275). They enact inclusive mateship among themselves in everyday situations, but their mateship is not as important as men's exclusive mateship. Women merely mimic men's mateship, but it makes them feel they are a part of that mateship, otherwise known as the Ridge code. One example of this is when they prepare a dress and share their resources to outfit Sophie for the ball at Henty's Warria station. It was expected that Sophie would marry Arthur because he had been courting her, and Sophie's attending the ball was the Ridge women's way of showing the upper-class Henty family that Sophie was worthy of their son (102).

Martha M'Cready's activity in the community is a prime example of inclusive mateship, but even though her contribution is essential to the community, it is unacknowledged and, like other women's work, is taken for granted. Affectionately known as "Mother M'Cready", Martha is the town's midwife, social worker and maid-of-all-occasions:

> […] Martha had looked after sick people, brought babies into the world, nursed the mothers, mended, washed, sewed, and darned, giving her help wherever it was needed. Always goodnatured (sic), hearty, healthy, and wholesome, what a wonderful woman she was, Mother M'Cready, […]. (189)

Sophie shows that she is ready to take up this community act of "love and service" when Martha is exhausted. This unobtrusive devotion is expected of the women, and they in turn

expect it of themselves. Martha sums it up when she thinks about why Sophie, who is not well, is taking over the community's mainstay caring role:

> She recognised Sophie's need for common and kindly service to the people of the Ridge. She knew what that service had meant to her at one time; the pride and pleasure she had had in it always. (233)

In Martha's light-hearted accusation that Sophie is "blackleggin' on me" (232), is the realisation that the women describe their duty in terms of men's affairs. Here Martha uses the jargon of unionism to chide Sophie's intentions good-naturedly. Women have no identity separate from men, and this indicates that women are subordinate to men. Yet the women characters show that while they realise this fact, they accept it.

Women's subordinated position in Ridge life is confirmed when it is shown that Michael, not Martha, is the community's leader. Michael exemplifies the best of masculine and, oddly enough, feminine ways, and Martha, though apparently the epitome of femininity, has only the attributes of womanhood. Although Michael is uneducated in the formal sense, he is an avid reader. Yet his mates do not fear him because "there was nothing of the schoolmaster" about him, and "Michael used his books for, not against, themselves" (9). The Ridge men are sure that although Michael is "attached to books and learning", it is purely for what this can do for "his mates" (9). In other words, Michael is self-effacing, and does not take on the authoritative role that is anathema to exclusive mateship. He excels in his male role and, as it is pointed out in this lengthy description, Michael excels in Martha's – the feminine role – as well:

> Michael Brady, however, was much more the general utility man than encyclopaedia of Fallen Star Ridge. If a traveller – swagman – died on the road, it was Michael who saw he got a decent burial: Michael was sent for if a man had his head smashed in a brawl, or a wife died unexpectedly. He was the court of final appeal in quarrels and disagreements between mates; and once when Martha M'Cready was away in Sydney, he even brought a baby into the world. He was something of a dentist, too, honorary dentist to anyone on the Ridge who wanted a tooth pulled out; and the friend of any man, woman, or child in distress. (9-10)

Although it is suggested that Michael does not receive recognition for his work, unlike Martha, who is unacknowledged, Michael is accorded leadership because of the "the unconscious power he was in the community" (10). Martha is given no such exalted

position, even though her selfless devotion is equal to Michael's. This comparison of Michael and Martha serves to show women's standing in the community: while they are an essential part of Ridge life, they are subordinated to men in importance and power.

The treatment of women in this novel suggests that they religiously believe in mateship, even though their part in its order is compliance. They feel that what they contribute to domesticity is for the good of the community, and through this devotion to service, they find satisfaction. Sophie's choice of Potch as a "mate" over Arthur reinforces the idea that the "natural" relationship between man and woman is one of master and servant. Sophie may want to marry Potch "in order to secure them: to live the life of any other woman on the Ridge with her mate" (182), but she is already "mates" with another man. This mateship she shares with Arthur is an instinctive bond in which "every fibre in her" has a mate within Arthur (202), but it is significant in terms of the novel's attitude towards mateship that Sophie tells Potch she cannot marry Arthur. If Sophie and Arthur did become a pair, this would make inclusive mateship more important than the exclusive mateship that dominates the community because Sophie, the heroine, would have chosen the former over the latter. According to Sophie, there is no future with Arthur – in terms of Ridge life – but there is in marriage with Potch. In marriage a woman is subordinate to her husband and women's willing compliance is their contribution to the Ridge:

> "I can work with you and Michael for the Ridge … . You know I care for you too, Potch, and I want to have the sort of life that keeps a woman to a man … mend your clothes, cook your meals, and — " […]. (223)

Sophie denies herself a spiritual bond in parting from Arthur, and chooses instead to seek redemption and happiness through devotion to the collective. This is a strong female endorsement of the Ridge way:

> Sophie had a sensation of hunger satisfied in the life she was leading. She expected her life would go on like this, days and years fall behind her unnoticed; that she and Potch would work together, have children, be splendid friends always, live out their days in the simple, sturdy fashion of Ridge folk, and grow old together. (186)

Sophie recognises women's subservient status, and her glorification of this role shows women's belief in duty.

The community is organised around a religious devotion to mateship: "Ridge folk as a whole have set their compass and steer the course of their lives with unconscious philosophy, yet conviction as to the rightness of what they are doing" (60-1). Yet, while it is implied that men and women share mateship as part of the Ridge way of life, there are very few instances of mateship between women and men. The mateship between Michael and Sophie's mother, Marya Rouminof is one such case, but even this could be because paternity rather than mateship influences Michael's behaviour. On her deathbed, Marya asks Michael to take care of Sophie as though she is his own child, and Michael promises to do so (5). It is for the sake of this promise that Michael keeps the opals he took from Charley away from Paul. He knows that if Paul has the opals, he will take Sophie away from the Ridge, and that is against Marya's wishes (5). This incident is significant in terms of the mateship of the Ridge, because Michael breaks the codes of men's mateship in order to keep his promise to Marya. However, two incidents suggest that Sophie is the love child of Michael and Marya. Firstly, there had been gossip about Michael and Marya. They were often seen together, and there "was something in the way that Mrs. Rouminof walked beside Michael […] in the way she smiled when she looked at Michael; there was something in the way Michael slouched and smoked beside Mrs. Rouminof, too" (52). Secondly, before Michael's trial, Sophie comforts him, and here Michael describes her as "indeed the child of his flesh as she was of his spirit" (241).

Given that mateship between men is the superior form of mateship in this novel, the mateship that is described as an instinctive bond between a man and a woman is an anomaly in Ridge mateship. The women acknowledge that this bond is powerful and very important to life itself. But Sophie denies this mateship, and submits to Ridge ways, thereby making this supreme form of human bonding inferior to relations between men. The mateship between the lovers is described by the women as a bond of intense feeling, commitment and passion; an intuitive mating of flesh, mind and soul that is "an instinct of mate for mate" (275). It occurs instinctively, and their mateship is an inner compulsion by which they are controlled. The bond is life-long and governs the pair even if they become separated or one dies, because it is an ancient instinctive bonding of a woman with her mate and it is "stronger than herself", this "feeling a woman's got for the man who's her

mate" (262). The women agree that the severing of the instinctive bond caused both Sophie's and Arthur's personal unhappiness, because their denial of love contravened "the natural impulse of their lives" (275). The women wonder how "different both their lives would have been if Sophie and Arthur had been true to that instinct of mate for mate" (275).

The intensity of this mateship is shown at the end of the story when Arthur passionately begs Sophie to leave the Ridge with him. Although Sophie desperately struggles against her instincts of wanting to be with her "mate", she finally rejects his wishes. She refuses Arthur even though she loves him and realises that he is her special mate. Even Martha M'Cready, who is portrayed as foremost among women, and who witnesses this struggle between Sophie and Arthur, confesses that she would have given in to Arthur's pleading. But Sophie is placed first in femininity by this confession of Martha's, so her denial of the special bond of mateship shows that the Ridge ideal is greater than any bond between woman and man (273). It is implied that the mateship ideals of the Ridge are greater than life itself because Sophie lives and Arthur dies. Arthur proves that he cannot live without his "mate" by committing suicide (263). His suicide reinforces the strength of the Ridge code because Sophie can go on living her woman's role without him.

The reigning mateship then is between men; and it is exclusive, because it constructs social relations that empower men. To begin with, men are the decision-makers, and decisions are made where men commonly group without women – at the mines during the midday meal, or at the hotel during the evening:

> The community to all intents and purposes governs itself according to popular custom and opinion: the seat of government being Newton's big, earthen-floored bar, or the brushwood shelters near the nines in which the men sit at midday to eat their lunches and noodle – go over, snip, and examine – the opal they have taken out of the mines during the morning. (57)

One issue in which a community decision was vital to everyone was John Armitage's proposed commercialisation of Ridge mining. The welfare of women and children should have been integral to the discussion, and women should have been present to give their

opinions, but they were not invited. In the all-male forum, it is the scheme's proponents who first mention women's needs. They argue that commercialisation will bring the "advantages of civilisation" to Ridge women and children (250). Ridge men only mention women in their rebuttal. They maintain these advantages – the "flashy clothes and fixings" acquired by working for a wage – would not be appreciated as much as "the real things of life and happiness" that the men can offer (252). They argue that what they have "stood for" is better than anything commercialisation can give (252). The only woman who makes a comment about the takeover is Sophie, and this is not at the meeting, but in private when she tells John that she will not support the idea because it is against the Ridge way (215-6). It is assumed that all women will think like Sophie, and agree with the men.

Not only are the women thus deprived of participation in communal decision making by the "natural" order of mateship, but the same code curtails their civil rights as well. Mateship's code of loyalty among men prevents them from interfering in a mate's affairs, and this effectively conceals domestic violence. If a man abuses his wife and children, as Paul does to Marya and Sophie, his mate can help the victims, but he will not do anything to stop the perpetrator from re-offending. At Marya's funeral, Paul cries as the town shows its respects, but Sophie remembers how "he had always been with her mother and with her, querulous and complaining, or noisy and rough when he had been drinking" (5). Sometimes they had even been forced to sleep outside "in a shed at the back of the house" when his drunken rages were severe (5). Charley's treatment of his wife and child was no better, but taking action against him would mean going back on a mate which is against the Ridge code. This is odd in the case of Paul and Charley, because neither man is liked, but their rights are still upheld before those of women and children.

This forgiveness of men for their abuse of women is also evident among the women themselves, showing the universal acceptance of mateship's code of conduct and women's place within it. One instance in point is when Bully Bryant assaults Sophie. She was asked to sing at the hotel, and even though she had done so before, on this occasion, the noisy, drunken men in the bar scare her so she sings on the verandah. During the singing, Bully Bryant, a youth who is infatuated with her, grabs her roughly and kisses her. A fight ensues

between him and Arthur. Sophie is hurt and degraded, and her reputation is blackened. But she forgives Bully, even though she is extremely angry with him, and her forgiveness seems the right thing to do (108). Such incidents demonstrate the women's low standing. The Ridge men admit that they participate in anti-social behaviour, "drinking and gambling"; and they also admit that their actions impact negatively upon women and children. But they claim that their behaviour is at its best when they have "interest" in their work, that is, they are their own bosses (252). In other words men behave well if they are in control, especially over women.

In this novel, praise for exclusive mateship is given by a woman writer, thus showing that in Australian society, as in Ridge society, women and men are similarly conditioned by discourses, like exclusive mateship, for example. Prichard's praise for mateship is achieved by means of a stylistic device that reinforces the idea that while mateship is the theme of the novel, it is mateship among men that is the most worthy. This device works through an obvious connection of the feminine with negativity, and it serves to empower the masculine and subordinate the feminine.

To begin with, this device separates women and men into groups of powerful and powerless. Michael, for instance, is portrayed as a mate to all people on the Ridge, but by the law of men's mateship he could not tell a woman about Paul's stones before he told the men (139). Yet he would not tell his mates because of another flaw attributed to females: "they both had wives, and Watty was not permitted to know anything Mrs. Watty did not worm out of him sooner or later" (42). The device also attempts to keep men and women conforming to the roles of dominant men and subordinate women so, true to exclusive mateship, in instances where a woman exerts a sexual influence, she is described as using her sex inappropriately, and her actions are portrayed in such a way that the feminine is derided. These feminine tactics are described as "tricks of sex", and Michael notes that with Sophie they are "an unconscious witchery"(89) obviously aimed at beguiling men. Sophie is often described as enjoying the game she plays with men, but with Potch, the man she marries without loving, there are no such tricks (181). This comparison shows that

in marriage Sophie will keep her place, even though she has enormous power over men with her femininity. Charley describes it as matrimony sobering a woman down (230).

This division of men and women by the derogatory association of the feminine with negativity is further enhanced by describing women as unintelligent in instances where the feminine is being used to portray a human failing. This is apparent in the description of the way that John influences the men of the Ridge: "When he exerted himself to entertain and amuse them, they were as pleased with him as a pack of women" (71). The phrase "pack of women" suggests a mindless mob. This image of weakness and mindlessness is also associated with Arthur. Arthur's sister Elizabeth is said to be "twice the man" he is because of his fear of horses (92), and the men who worked for him "never had any great opinion of him" because they thought him sensitive and lacking in manly courage (275). But most telling of all the instances joining the feminine to negativity is that the main scoundrel in the story, Charley, is consistently derided, and the attitude towards him is formed through images of femininity. He is portrayed as a worthless mate who let Michael down, and he is described as a woman who had used the wiles of sex to beguile Michael: "He had played it like a woman for Michael, and Michael had taken him on as a mate and worked with him when no one else would" (41). Charley is really a cunning thief, and when this comment is made during a conversation with Potch, he is again described in feminine terms:

> Potch stood staring at him. Light from the window bathed the thin, yellow face on the faded cushions of Michael's couch limning the sharp nose with its curiously scenting flare, all the hungry, shrewd femininity and weakness of the face: smile of triumphant malice gliding in and out of the eyes." (229)

Part of this stylistic device is to subordinate female characters to males. This has already been pointed out with Martha and Michael, but Sophie's willing surrender to Potch is more significant in that it implies that the man-woman domination is the natural order of society. Sophie had independence in that she had a career which made her financially independent. She also had many men who wished to marry her. One of her suitors was John, who was the rich son of Dawe Armitage, the opal buyer who visited the Ridge. Sophie could have had a glamorous lifestyle, and continued her singing career in America,

if she had not wanted so passionately to return to the Ridge. She gave up everything, and freely relinquished her power over men, for the peace that she believed she would gain from obeying the Ridge code:

> She had ceased to desire happiness: she was grateful for this lull of all her powers of sense and thought, and eager to love and to serve Potch as he did her. She believed her life had found its haven: that if she kept in tune with the fundamentals of love and service, she could maintain a consciousness of peace and rightness with the world which would make living something more than a weary longing for death. (231)

This subordination of women to men is reinforced in the placement of domestic happiness second to men's affairs on the Ridge, and it is shown in the closing lines of the novel:

> Voices were heard exclaiming gaily, light-heartedly: the rhythm of everyday affairs was taking its course. From the crisis which came near to shattering the Ridge scheme of things, and all that it stood for, the hope and enthusiasm of a new endeavour, were growing. (277)

The hierarchy of power on the Ridge is organised by exclusive mateship and it places men and men's relationships first, and women second. In this scheme there is an order that is portrayed as "natural". Men take command of all social action while women work behind the scenes. Men protect the women who raise the children, and so the rhythm of life goes on.

Conclusion

Mateship became a surrogate religion for many Australians in the same way that it did for the people of the Ridge. Then, as it was seen in Ridge society, exclusive mateship constructed a seemingly natural order of masculine dominance that was accepted by both men and women. In this organisation of social relations can be seen Foucault's claim that powerful institutions construct and maintain their power within a culture by masking their intent through such seemingly natural chains of command and systems of belief (Sex 1 86). Prichard's novel makes it easy to see how exclusive mateship was integrated into such a "natural order" of social relations. It is just as easy to see how this form of mateship became that which championed the workers; and as Australian civilization progressed from penal colony to pioneering settlement to self-regulating nationhood, the inclusive mateship

that had made this development possible was neither lost nor forgotten; just obscured by the association of mateship with the masculine.

Chapter Seven   The People's Problem

Who Killed Leigh Leigh? A Story of Shame and Mateship in an Australian Town.

> This book is a reverse detective story of sorts. It retraces the police investigation into the rape and murder of fourteen-year-old Leigh Leigh at a beach party on the third of November 1989. The police investigation left many questions unresolved. Prosecutions for the rape of the murder victim were never pursued by the investigating police, despite graphic forensic evidence of severe genitals injuries and witness evidence of a planned group sexual assault. And a number of others who admitted committing criminal offences including assaulting the victim have gone unpunished for their role. As has the adult who purchased her alcohol on the evening of her murder.
>
> The court cases that led to the convictions of Matthew Grant Webster for the murder, another man for assault, and another boy for carnal knowledge, do not resolve this investigation nor solve the crime.
>
> [………………………………………………………………………….....]
>
> The book tells a tale of what can happen when shame and mateship mix with a small- town mentality. (x-xi)
>
> Kerry Carrington, 1998.

The mateship described by Carrington in her Who Killed Leigh Leigh? is the exclusive mateship that is often thought of as the only form of Australian mateship. It persists largely unchallenged in spite of the fact that it promotes social divisiveness by not including those it considers "different" from its central image of masculinity. Sexism is the most obvious division caused by exclusive mateship's discrimination by "difference", but women are not its only targets. Rather, exclusive mateship discriminates against femininity, so any man who is ostracised for being "different" from exclusive mateship's concept of masculinity is derided as effeminate. Thus the division caused by the exclusive mateship discourse is more intense and pervasive than any biological division based on sex, and it therefore has the potential to cause greater social problems. Racism is another expression of exclusive mateship's discrimination against anyone who is "different". Russel Ward concedes this, admitting that "the bushman carries in his cultural swag delusions of racial grandeur as well as mateship" (Legend 258). He does not seem to notice that such an attitude contradicts the egalitarianism that is supposed to be a cornerstone of mateship. T. I.

Moore agrees: "Australian society has shown at times an unbrotherly discrimination and intolerance towards the aborigines (sic), the Chinese, and foreigners" (235). Discrimination on the basis of "difference" from a supposed cultural norm causes communal divisiveness; but exclusive mateship's chauvinism has been well concealed: in the past by nationalistic ideals, and in the present by the notion that this interpretation of mateship is sacred to Australia's myths, legends and traditions.

The basis of exclusive mateship's social organisation is an image of an ideal mate. This mate is a man who is not real in the sense of lived experience. He is a fictional character, yet a figment of popular appeal, and for ease of discussion here, he will be called mate man. Mate man is the standard measure by which all others are judged to be the "same" or "different", and through him exclusive mateship produces divisiveness. This characterisation has a concomitant representation of stereotypical females and non-mate males, and all of these representations are discursive products circulated by exclusive mateship. The discourse promotes this mate man character as the central image of Australian culture, and according to that representation, everyone else is excluded as "different others". As was pointed out in Chapter Six, feminists believe that "city men" created this mate man character, and literary critics like Norman Lindsay agree that he appeared in the seminal literary works that founded the Australian legend. Lindsay describes Henry Lawson's characters as types, "all out of one mould, indistinguishable as personalities from each other" (67). Graeme Turner claims that the literary convention of mateship was dependent "upon a representation of character", and that character, he asserts, was "ideologically *opposed* to the individual" (87). Turner argues that in the male literary tradition the texts of writers like Henry Lawson and Joseph Furphy were used to develop the characters of exclusive mateship, and to negate individuality (95). According to Turner, character was "used as setting rather than as expressions of the self"; events became more important than personality; and individuality was sacrificed in order "to present a sense of the kind of community in which the characters exist" (90).

That kind of community was represented as egalitarian, but it was based on exclusive mateship's interpretation of "difference", which relied on the assumption that some people

were less equal than others, as judged by the standard of its mate man ideal. Exclusive mateship was the mateship that W. K. Hancock described in 1930 as something that was aggressively levelling, and somewhat misdirected in its "egotistical assertion of rights" (56):

> The ideal of 'mateship', which appeals very strongly to the ordinary good-hearted Australian, springs not only from his eagerness to exalt the humble and meek, but also from his zeal to put down the mighty from their seat. If ever the ship of Australian democracy enters the calm waters of its millennium it will carry a fraternal but rather drab company of one class passengers […]. (57)

Exclusive mateship invested power in the mate man ideal, so it became a highly desirable ideal to which to conform. To protect the concept of sameness that guaranteed masculine power, those who were not the same were rejected with the derision attached to "difference". The outcome of this ruthless sameness was an abhorrence of individuality, and a concomitant conformity to group dictates that enforced acquiescence to mediocrity: hence the popularity of the tall poppy syndrome in Australia, and the sense of urgency about "bringing down" those who attempt to be "different".

Exclusive mateship directly opposes inclusive mateship because the latter promotes an acceptance of diversity, and while inclusive mateship encourages the egalitarian ideal of "a fair go for all", exclusive mateship does not. I have already argued that exclusive mateship cannot be the only form of Australian mateship because its exclusivity stops it from being egalitarian, and in the first section of this chapter I will analyse Laura Palmer-Archer's stories in A Bush Honeymoon and other Stories (1904) to demonstrate that the mateship ideal of "a fair go for all" is enacted through inclusive mateship. This return to examples of inclusive mateship is necessary at this point in my argument because it forms a timely comparison for the analysis of exclusive mateship's impact on society that follows in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The second section of the chapter demonstrates how the divisiveness caused by exclusive mateship's discriminatory principles creates social problems that contradict the notion of egalitarianism. The problems focused upon here are exclusive mateship's levelling influence as it negates individualism, and the discriminatory attitudes that evolve

from its emphasis on "difference". Both categories are related and, as shown in Thelma Forshaw's "The Mateship Syndrome" (1967), they often occur together, because while exclusive mateship compels everyone to imitate its central mate man ideal, there is derision aimed at those who try to escape it, and at those who fail to meet it.

The social problems created by exclusive mateship include a wide range of discriminatory practices against women, and against men who are not of the exclusive mateship type, such as homosexual males and people from non-Australian ancestry. While the impact of exclusive mateship could be studied in association with homophobia, schoolyard bullying, dangerous risk-taking among males and racism, to name a small selection, I have focused upon its division of the sexes because it impacts on everyone regardless of other parameters of "difference". If I had chosen to focus on any one of the other social problems, there would not be a shortage of material, and I could have begun with the following very brief list of fictional and non-fictional texts: racism – Nino Culotta's They're a Weird Mob (1957); racism, schoolyard bullying and homophobia – Pina Grieco-Tiso's Sticks & Stones (1998); dangerous risk-taking among young males – Angela Thirkell's Trooper to the Southern Cross (1934) and Kenneth Cook's Wake in Fright (1961); dangerous risk-taking among young males and homophobia – Paul Radley's Good Mates! (1985).

In the third section, I cite fictional and non-fictional literature to demonstrate the impact of exclusive mateship's divisiveness between the sexes. The texts used are Kerry Carrington's criminologist's report Who Killed Leigh Leigh? A Story of Shame and Mateship in an Australian Town (1998), Nick Enright's stage play A Property of the Clan (first performed in 1992, published 1994), Nick Enright's stage play Blackrock (first performed 30 August 1995, published in 1996) and the film Blackrock (1997). I cite Kerry Carrington's critique of the fictional work "Playing with Fact and Fiction" (Chapter Twelve of her report) to show how closely the fictional literature resembles the way that the community interprets the facts of the case. Nick Enright denies the association of his texts with the case, claiming that his stage plays, one of which was adapted for film, were about the "conflicting responses of a community to such a crime" rather than about the

victim or what happened to her (<u>Blackrock</u> [stage play], Author's note). According to Carrington, however, the parallels between Enright's work and the facts of the case are unmistakeable (154 –5). To show that the representation of society in these texts is not isolated, I include a brief examination of and Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette's <u>Puberty Blues</u> (1979), and I also include a list of other works which deal with this theme.

1. Inclusive mateship reproduces the egalitarian ideal of "a fair go for all"

Laura Palmer-Archer's <u>A Bush Honeymoon and Other Stories</u> (1904) contains a number of descriptions of inclusive mateship in small, isolated bush communities. The mateship here is between women and men, adults and children, and there is even one story in which a lonely old man has a cat for a mate. These stories show that inclusive mateship often arose among people through sharing an adverse moment, but they also show that the discourse satisfied people's need to belong to a social group, however small. Further, there is a sense of mateship's fulfilling people's spiritual need to understand life, and to appreciate the meanings that they create as they share their existence with others. This is particularly evident in "Amblin' Jimmy's Offsider" (131). Amblin' Jimmy was a lonely old man until he literally "found" a mate. The mate, a boy who was part-Aboriginal, part-Chinese, became known as Sandy or Amblin' Jimmy's Offsider (131). The two became mates after Amblin' Jimmy rescued the child who had been abandoned by his Aboriginal kin. At that stage, Sandy was a four-year-old with a broken arm, suffering pain, dehydration and the effects of exposure. The pair's relationship was as unconventional as their meeting, but their mateship was genuine.

The relationship between Jimmy and his mate satisfies a need in each to belong, and mates of whatever description help each other to survive life's difficulties. Amblin' Jimmy had rescued Sandy from a certain death alone in the bush, and Sandy later returns the favour. Many of Amblin' Jimmy's acquaintances distrust Sandy because of his mixed racial heritage. Jimmy is often teased about his "offsider", and the popular opinion is that one day the child's mixed Aboriginal and Chinese blood will cause him to turn against the

old man, and they believe Sandy will kill Jimmy, and rob him as he sleeps. In defence, Jimmy sings the child's praises, and threatens to fight anyone who thinks differently.

The bond between the two is unshakeable, and Sandy proves to be a devoted mate by saving Amblin' Jimmy's life when no "white men" will help. Sandy executes an ambitious and outrageous campaign to get medicine for Jimmy, and when that fails, he risks his life to obtain a bottle of brandy to satisfy Jimmy's delirious demands. In the beginning of his quest, Sandy assaults the station's storekeeper, "Billy the Pig". Billy accuses the child of lying about Jimmy's needing medicine because of illness, and Sandy takes offence at the insulting remark that the old man is drunk, and has not been doing his work – dingo baiting – for weeks (135-6). Amblin' Jimmy has a fever, and he has been genuinely ill, but Sandy has been doing his work for him. When this attempt to procure "medsin alonga Chimmy" fails, in his desperation not "to let his mate die", Sandy robs the mailman, "Lyin' Harry" (137). Jimmy wants brandy, and since the nearest hotel is twenty miles away, the mailman with his supplies for the station's store becomes the closest source of the much-needed alcohol. Sandy shoots one of the horses harnessed to the buckboard in an effort to get Lyin' Harry to stop, but thus bailed up, Lyin' Harry is scared and flees "for dear life into the scrub" (137). Later, Lyin' Harry heads a search for "the bushranger" who ambushed him, but the quest leads to Amblin' Jimmy's hut at Blackfellows' Gully. What the search party finds is not bushrangers, but "Amblin' Jimmy and his offsider fast asleep, with their arms about each other" (138). One of the search party is a shearer who had once teased Amblin' Jimmy about his strange little mate. This man regrets his teasing and shows his respect for the mateship of the unlikely pair: "the burly western shearer winked back a tear, and whispered, as if to himself: "Blow me! If I don't get th' old cove and th' kid up to Caroline ter keep my hut" (138).

It might have been a shared need which sparked such instances of bonding between those who became mates, but empathetic ties of informal kinship often maintained them. What began, perhaps, as helping each other because of need, often developed into caring relationships, as those whom circumstances flung together contributed what they could to the relationship and made it endure. This is the case in Palmer-Archer's "Old Stockin' ",

where the bond of mateship proved to be as strong as any family ties. Like Amblin' Jimmy, Jim Dawson found his mate when he stumbled upon a two-year-old baby in the bush. The child's mother had died and the infant was alone. Jim buries the mother and declares to the child: "[W]e're mates. I've struck you in a rum sort of way. I ain't got no one to care for, and you ain't too flush of friends, poor little beggar!" (193). The odd pair become mates, and the child is named Old Stockin' by Jim, because it is "the greatest term of endearment out back" (193).

The mateship between Jim and the child endures and the two express their affection through staunch loyalty to each other. Jim pays a shearer's wife to raise the child from infancy, but for those three years, he cares for the child in his own hut every weekend. The child plays with the bush toys that Jim keeps for him, and he calls Jim "Daddy Jim". Jim loves the boy as if he were his own child:

> When Old Stockin' was tired, he crept into Daddy Jim's arms, and fell asleep with one brown arm tightly clasped round Jim's neck; and then old Jim thought of his youth, and the girl he had loved, and kissed the sleeping child. He would take the child home when asleep, for Old Stockin' cried bitterly at parting from Daddy Jim, while awake. (193)

When Old Stockin' turns five, he goes to live with Jim, and Jim teaches him all he knows, including how to read and how never to "*turn dog on a mate*" (195). "Not turning dog on a mate", or loyalty, the informal union among diverse strangers, is the foundation of mateship. Through loyalty, mates express feelings of belonging, and satisfy their need to share with, and care for others, and it is, in a sense, an expression of tribal kinship and group solidarity.

Old Stockin' demonstrates his loyalty to Jim by saving Jim's life at the risk of his own (196-7). One evening, Old Stockin' began to prepare the evening meal after the mail boy passed by and told him that Jim was on his way home. When it became late, and Jim did not return, the child saddled a horse and went to look for him. He found Jim unconscious and barely breathing. Jim had been thrown from his horse, dragged by the stirrup, and he bore a "cruel hoof-mark upon his chest" (196). After cutting brigalow saplings to make a windbreak for Jim, and resting his head upon dry cane grass, the child

left the dog to guard him while he went for help. This was not easy because it was night, and apart from being alone miles from anywhere, the child was unsure of direction and distance. He eventually found a white woman camping with two Aboriginal companions, and begged her to help his "mate, Daddy Jim" (197). The child fainted from fear, shock and exhaustion, but the woman believed him and gave both him and Jim the much-needed help. This act of mateship had a double blessing, because Old Stockin' reunited Jim with his lost female mate, Pretty Kitty, as it was she who came to the rescue (199).

The loyalty that characterised these early Australian mateship relationships was peculiar. It was not the type of commitment that develops from years of interpersonal communication, as the time for knowing each other was often short in many of these initial instances of inclusive mateship. In times of need, or in moments of crisis, people have to trust instinctively, or as some would call it, have blind faith in others. Early Australian settlers did learn to trust each other, and their openness and hospitality were well known. Evidence of this loyalty in an instance of temporary mateship can be seen in Palmer-Archer's "Sixpennorth o' Coppers" (169). In this story, a stockman, who has been injured by a wounded bull, is taken in for treatment by a rogue named Old White Ants. This ruffian keeps a shanty with a "dead-house" from which many shearers have "disappeared". The stockman, who is suffering from a broken leg and head wounds, is at the mercy of Old White Ants, and he quickly realises that Old White Ants has drugged him, and taken his horse, money and rifle, and left him to die (174). But the stockman is rescued by a small "half caste" girl named Sixpennorth o' Coppers. She has been kept by Old White Ants as a slave. It is she who provides the stockman with food and water and eventually helps liberate him from the "dead house". Sixpennorth o' Coppers tells the stockman how Old White Ants murders shearers for their money, and that their remains are buried "alonga gully down there" (175). The graves are cleverly hidden in the "nice soft pfeller ground alonga there", and Old White Ants, his wife and the young girl, camouflage the spot by "put 'em saplings about" (175). She tells the stockman that he is in the "dead-house", the place where Old White Ants leaves his victims to die. It is a hut specially prepared for the purpose, and is some distance from the shanty that Old White Ants and his wife run for the purpose of "lambing down" and trapping unwary shearers and lonely travellers.

Sixpennorth o' Coppers tells the stockman about Old White Ants' crimes and completes her description by saying that his missus is "[a]longa lock-up … trooper catchit that pfeller … gib it tix munse (six months) hard" for stealing a horse that belonged to a hawker (175-6). The girl, who is flogged and starved by Old White Ants, has escaped from him herself, and she has returned to raid the storehouse because she has seen Old White Ants leaving on the stockman's horse. Knowing that Old White Ants has left on an errand of his own, the stockman asks Sixpennorth o' Coppers to go for help. This is a dangerous request because the child has to travel on foot twenty-five miles, and she could at any moment encounter Old White Ants. However, she goes for help, and as she promised earlier, she takes the opportunity of revenging herself on Old White Ants. She arrives back at the dead-house with a trooper just as Old White Ants is attempting to murder the stockman. Sixpennorth o' Coppers knocks Old White Ants unconscious in front of the trooper. The stockman and the little girl had established a mateship bond, and in return for her saving him, he promised to bring Old White Ants to account for his crimes (178).

Sometimes the isolation of bush work meant that people lived in the absence of human company. For some of these lonely people, like Old Jenkins in Palmer-Archer's story "Old Jenkins", animals became cherished mates. In this story, Jenkins had his black cat, Captain, who at the old man's death "peered pitifully into his face, with a human-like cry of sorrow, for he had lost his mate" (216). But Jenkins was also good mates with his boss's young daughter, Rachel Hazeldene. Years earlier, Rachel Hazeldene's father had taken Jenkins in, and cared for him in spite of his problem with alcohol. Upon his death, Jenkins honoured their mateship by bequeathing moneys "possessed or entitled to" to Rachel. The old man dies upon receiving notice that he had inherited his late brother's fortune. The money saves Rachel's family from their imminent financial difficulties.

In writing the Foreword for Palmer-Archer's collection, Rolf Boldrewood praised the accuracy of her depiction of Australians:

> Strongly, even painfully, realistic as are some of the incidents, they are treated with the true insight and the sympathy which discovers the virtues of pity, kindness, and unselfish courage, shining even more brightly, amid strange and incongruous surroundings. (Foreword)

It is his hope that readers will gain from the stories "a wider comprehension of the trials, the tragedies, the comedies, and, above all, the underlying comradeship of the men and women of the great pastoral solitudes" (Foreword). This "underlying comradeship" is surely inclusive mateship.

2. Exclusive mateship's form of egalitarianism translates in society as "a fair go" for some and derision for others

A mate by exclusive mateship's principles is treated to all the benefits of the fraternity, but no such joy of belonging is extended to a woman or to a non-mate man, and it is even worse for a man who turns his back on his mates. At the basis of the anxious desire to belong is a fear of being rejected, and an accompanying fear of being alone. Underpinning group membership is a compulsion to be the same, and this means meeting whatever standards the group dictates for acceptance. There is no respect for individuality, and even if a man disagrees with the group his need to belong holds him firmly to the group's rule. If he leaves the mateship group, he risks isolation and loneliness, and he must face the fear of the unknown. Distrust and fear of others lie closely beneath the surface of each man's feelings in this atmosphere of coercion and compliance. The only way to maintain any sense of security is to maintain the group, and that necessitates consistent surveillance of every mate by his mates. Interpersonal relations among mates are therefore tentative and judgemental, and above all, there is a ruthless compulsion to conform, which amounts to a levelling of everyone within the group. A prime example of this levelling at work, and its impact on the men in the mateship group, and through them to the women with whom they associate, is in Thelma Forshaw's "The Mateship Syndrome" (1967). This story describes the demoralisation of the individual by means of exclusive mateship's imposed limitations, and it charts clearly the way in which exclusive mateship constructs and maintains mediocrity among those who live according to it.

The main male character, Ace, is a sheet metal worker who is a boilermaker by trade, and a well-qualified tradesman. He is nicknamed Ace by his workmates "who don't much like" him because they suspect that he is "different" (174). When he and his mates have their first argument over Ace's chance of promotion, a mate accuses him of being

"different", and Ace returns the accusation. The intensity of the exchange shows how much "difference" is feared and hated:

> "You and the others – you're different since The Trump offered me that job."
> "*We're* not bloody different. It's *you* that's bloody different."
> "Me! What's got into yer? It's youse that're different – not me."
> "We got nothing to be different about – it's you that has." (176)

Ace has a sister, Lil, who, because of her relationship with him, is the story's main female character. Early in her life, she was ostracised from what she calls "the tribe", because she was "different" according to those around her: "that is, [she was] bookish, free-thinking, shockingly frank" (177). Contrary to the belief that a woman should not be "so talky" or "so big-headed", in other words, she should be submissive and unintelligent with no opinions of her own, and totally subservient to the male to whom she is attached by birth or marriage, Lil was once, before her marriage and divorce, a reader, a writer and an outspoken woman, and therefore a pariah among her people (175).

At the time that this meeting between Lil and Ace takes place however, Lil thinks of herself as a "tame bear who no longer danced to her own drum" (179-80). She had always hankered after belonging to "the warm safety of the herd" (177), and she surrendered her individuality in an impersonation of the character that was required of her as a woman of the tribe. After a lifetime of rigorous conditioning to exclusive mateship's dictates from her family and friends, it was hard for Lil to stand alone against her desire for acceptance: "It was mateship she craved. The fellowship and moral support of the class into which she had been born" (178). Even though that mateship rejected her as a woman unless she acted out the passive role that it dictated for her sex, and even though the group had despised her for being "different", Lil sought its approval by pretending to conform. According to Lil, the passivity that was required for universal approval from her people "sprouted out of a sub-soil of national attitudes the flower of which was the creed of mateship" (180). It affected men as well as women, because men who dared to overstep the line of the group's standards were not wanted any more than women.

Lil realised that "mateship was not a reward for what you *did*" even though "what you did may be sacrifice (sic) in its name", but rather, mateship was "for what you *were*" –

"you were one of us – or you were not" (180). To reach beyond it would have needed the courage and "the arrogant self-containment of the solitary" that Lil did not possess (177). But if she had possessed the fortitude to break free, that is, to reach beyond "the realm of the dead-level", her self-liberation would have been construed as "a form of treason against the egalitarian idea" (179). Lil did not want to be alienated from her class even though they had already disowned her. She copes with her situation by living as an alien among her own people, but only with the aid of what she describes as a mask that disguises her real self to others:

> The disguise had been built up over a long period of seeming to give offence by her very nature. You could say she had been shocked into disguise. Shocks of self-discovery induced by the reactions of those around her. (175)

Ace is facing the same dilemma of wanting to leave the group, but not having the courage and strength of his convictions to stand alone, when he makes a rare visit to Lil's one night. He had been tolerated among his peers because he was a man and a co-worker, but he had aspired to individuality by educating himself in his trade, so his mates only grudgingly included him in their mateship because they feared his desire to "better himself". Years of extra study at night school had qualified Ace for a supervisory position, and now that he has been offered the job he has worked for and deserves, he is torn between wanting to achieve his ambition and not wanting to lose his mates. While the desire is in his heart, Lil notices that "the dread of loneliness and of betraying a creed – dread of being shut out from all he had known" is in his eyes (180):

> He was a man who wanted to realize his full potential. He wanted his head above the crowd, to have status but, not being born to it, he must first reach for it with his own hands, confront painful choices – above all be ruthless enough to discard those who stand in his way. The social climate in which he lived did not favour such bold and kingly growth. (181)

Ace comes to Lil "[n]eeding permission to commit the treason of excelling his mates"(180), and, as Lil defines it to herself, he wants her help to find the courage to overcome "the artificial dwarfing called bonsai" which "was practised upon men's spirits when it seemed they might overtop their fellows" (181). Ace has to choose between his ambition and his mates, and towards the end of their conversation he chooses to stay with

his mates. Lil encourages him to do so, and she imagines his mates "[d]rawing him back to them again, proud of him now, the boilermaker who beat university-trained blokes – three of them Yanks – yet who chose to prove their rightness and their power rather than prove himself" (182). She imagines that this would be the moment that the flag of solidarity, with "its emblem of two hands clasped in mateship", would fly over the reunion of Ace and his mates (182). The group would accept Ace's learning because they would say he did it for them. He would have proven that the group is superior to the bosses, and in doing so he would have defeated authority, thus displaying triumph for all working-class mates. Ace would no longer be a threat, "difference" would no longer be an issue, and he would be one of them again. The moment would be an occasion for celebration, because the group's self-imposed levelling, supported by the rigorous maintenance of everyone at the same standard, would have won the day, and all mates would be back in the fold. Lil's and Ace's suffering shows the smallness of the lives of the working class. Further, the determination of these people to keep each other committed to mateship not only keeps them securely in this niche, but also makes them vulnerable to manipulation by "others" as much as by each other.

Lil believes that in the country of the blind (Australia) "the one-eyed man is an *offence*", a deviation", and the "one-eyed woman is even more so" (177). Ace, like Lil, has made himself such "a one-eyed" person by reaching above the "dead-level" with ambition and education. Ace's choice to stay with his mates eventually proves his downfall, because the group refuses to take him back. With his attitude, his qualifications and the boss's invitation to join the authoritative elite, Ace has moved towards individualism, but as Ace acknowledges, life without mates shuts him off from "his own people" (181). Yet he realises that he does not fit with the boss's crowd either (181). Finally, there is the issue of manhood. Ace is described as a genuine working-class male: "He dared to bear himself proudly. He walked tall" (174), and this pride in masculinity is endorsed by mateship. Lil can appear to accept her exclusion submissively because, as a woman in a society based on exclusive mateship, she is conditioned to believe that her gender makes her a lesser being than a man anyway. She keeps an illusion of her "difference" alive for herself with her diaries and her reading, but outwardly she wears the appearance of submission required of

her, and therefore maintains her femininity. Ace, though, cannot accept exclusion submissively, because inclusion in the group is an endorsement of masculinity, and being a mate is the measure of manhood. Unlike Lil, Ace has no other way to prove himself, and his masculinity is at stake. Ace needs his mates' approval because that alone confirms his masculine sense of himself.

Lil listens to Ace, and during the conversation she submits herself to his will. In doing so, she satisfies her brother's need for personal power by assuming the female's subservience that exclusive mateship demands of her. This submission of the female to the male's control is characteristic of the group's interpersonal relations between women and men, because feminine submissiveness guarantees masculine control and endorses masculine power. So when Ace's self-esteem is threatened by his mates' withdrawal of their confirmation of his manhood, he needs a woman to bully and insult to feel powerful. Ace was not married because "he knew enough already to put mateship before his lust for women" (174), so he substitutes Lil for the submissive wife he does not have. Ace went to Lil whenever he "had a problem" and needed her (174). For her part, Lil felt like an "emetic" (176). On this occasion, Ace uses Lil to resolve his personal confusion, and later he abuses her and insults her; yet he goes to her for protection when he is running from the police. He treats her contemptuously when he throws her prized books at her, as well as at the police officers who are trying to arrest him for assaulting one of his "mates" (184).

Even though their acceptance of group dictates leaves men like Ace vulnerable to peer pressure, and open to manipulation from those outside the mateship group, the rigid role modelling empowers men in a culture where having personal power proves one's manhood. The power of exclusive mateship comes from a rejection of individualism, from men's bonding together, and from their boosting morale by self-congratulation. Mate men perceive themselves to be the centre of what they believe is Australian. Yet their power is an illusion because it is based on reading the "difference" of those outside the mateship group as evidence of the masculine strength and power of mates within the group. Exclusive mateship effectively relies on "difference" to justify itself, and it makes this discrimination by "difference" a perceived value in Australian culture. The readings of

cultural products like literature, which are conditioned by such an evaluation of "difference", continue to endorse the appealing image of the heroic mate man, with his larrikin contempt for discipline and authority, as the core of Australian identity. This reading in turn reproduces and maintains exclusive mateship and its social divisiveness.

3. **Exclusive mateship impacts on people's lives through the divisiveness that it causes between the sexes.**

Mateship is a discourse that is pervasive and highly influential in Australian culture. It influences human activity, socialisation practices and power relations. Brian Moon defines culture as "the social relations, practices, beliefs and values which prevail in a community of people" (28). He argues that human beings construct culture to organise the way they live, and they are the only animal species capable of freeing themselves from what he calls "nature" (28). According to Moon, nature represents the limits associated with a given species of animal, and humans, in being able to break free of such restraints, can create their own limits (28). There are many possible options for the organisation of a community, but humans limit themselves to a selection that they then "naturalise" by authorising them as "patterns of living" (28). The first European Australians had to develop a culture of their own, and although inherited mores helped shape their choices, the result was very different from the parent English culture. Mateship was an important aspect of that difference. When strangers were united by need, and their reliance upon each other fostered acceptance of diversity and egalitarian values, inclusive mateship was naturalised as a peculiarly Australian way of doing things, and it eventually became an authorised pattern of living. Yet while the inclusive mateship discourse reproduced in Australian culture those egalitarian attitudes and values from which it had sprung, the exclusive mateship discourse reproduced the patriarchal ideals of a dominant masculine and a subordinate feminine that were the basis of its authorisation as a pattern of living. Over time, each of these discourses influenced what became naturalised in Australian culture, and as each did so, it reinforced its own form of mateship.

Discourse works within language to construct seemingly natural ways of being and, according to Moon, it is in the study of literary texts that those constructions, complete with the various institutionalised structures with which they promote power for an elite and take power from others, can be seen at work in a given society (36). I have already shown how both the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses work in texts, and I have demonstrated how power relations are constructed according to each discourse. However, while I have shown that inclusive mateship constructs equitable relations between all people, and therefore works towards a fairer society, I have not previously focused upon exclusive mateship's impact on people's lives. It is possible to see how such a discourse impacts on society through the study of literature, because it is in texts that "the processes of division and oppression" become apparent (Moon 28). Through such study it can be seen that the attitudes and values that exclusive mateship produces maintain an aggressive power struggle between the sexes, and that the discourse therefore promotes behaviour that institutionalises masculine dominance in society. Divisiveness in society causes frustration, social alienation and anger, and such feelings make men and women vulnerable, depressed and subject to abuse. From these emotional states arise an extensive array of social problems like assault, domestic violence, rape, and alcohol and substance abuse. The impact of these crimes is devastating, and leaves no corner of society, and no person untouched.

There is an excellent example of exclusive mateship's divisive influence on society in the literature surrounding the vicious rape and murder of fourteen-year-old Leigh Leigh at a beach party near Newcastle on 3 November 1989. Another powerful example is Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette's Puberty Blues (1979). These two examples are ideal for the purpose of examining exclusive mateship's influence on society because both are a mixture of fact and fiction; that is they take actual events and present them through fictional and non-fictional literature. In order of production, the fictional works about Leigh's death are: Nick Enright's stage play A Property of the Clan (first performed in 1992, published 1994); Nick Enright's stage play Blackrock (first performed 30 August 1995, published in 1996); and the film Blackrock (1997). Kerry Carrington's twelfth chapter "Playing with Fact and Fiction" is cited in the analysis of these texts because her

critique of the fictional literature shows how closely the feelings of the fictional community reflect those of the real-life community. <u>Puberty Blues</u> is an autobiographical account of the teenage years of its two authors, and like the story of Leigh, it was adapted for the film <u>Puberty Blues</u> (1981). All of these texts repeat, without question, the assumption that mateship is exclusive of women because it is a men's creed.

Moon claims that such texts can be used "as weapons in the ongoing struggles for power between groups of people" (28), and this certainly becomes apparent in all of these texts. Exclusive mateship naturalises masculine dominance, and conditions people to accept the "natural" rules of mateship's fraternity, which include rituals of manhood, and an aggressive, anti-social style of masculinity. Women are not only ostracised from this fraternity, but in the patterns of living naturalised by exclusive mateship, they are actively degraded because females of all ages, and of any relationship to males, are treated as objects to be abused for the purpose of proving masculinity. Males who do not adhere to exclusive mateship's behavioural style are likewise ostracised. But apart from one boy, Glen, being abused as a "wuss" and a "gay" in <u>A Property of the Clan</u> (42), there is no mention in any of the texts about divisiveness among males. On the contrary, the masculine is presented as a united force acting by the rules of exclusive mateship to dominate the feminine.

In her investigations of Leigh's murder, Carrington found that the crimes against the victim, and the accompanying inept police investigation, ended in a verdict which did not include charges of rape and assault because of mateship's protection of males, and its sanctioning of men's right to express masculinity through physical abuse, intimidation and sexual violence. This is clearly exclusive mateship that Carrington is describing, because it confirms a fraternity of males unified by misogynous attitudes and behaviour. It is important to note, though, that Carrington emphasises that the males who participate in this mateship fraternity are products, rather than instigators, of the discourse (160). This confirms that exclusive mateship is accepted as a natural way of living, and that it has considerable influence in the Stockton community where Leigh and the other partygoers lived:

> By local standards there was nothing terribly unusual about what went on [at the beach party]. Matthew Webster and his mates didn't invent words like 'slut', 'mole', or 'bitch', nor the sense of mateship that accompanied the violence they collectively unleashed. (160)

Carrington further confirms the institutionalised status of exclusive mateship by showing that the rituals of sexual intimidation enacted by the young men collectively as a group were considered by members of the community, and the investigating authorities, to be normal, acceptable behaviour: "This is a world of young men steeped in a culture where a degree of sexual intimidation is widely tolerated and only mildly condemned" (131). The young men at the party on the night that Leigh died were "acting out their place in a gender order where the degradation of girls was in some sense natural to them" (160). According to Carrington, this is to be expected when people grow up in an environment where, along with sexual intimidation being "normal", "sex is expected", but "sexual autonomy is not respected", and where "girls who do say *no*, are threatened, abused or ostracised, and where the pretext of romance is a lure for entrapment" (161):

> The cultural tapestry of these gender relationships, characteristic of a socially cohesive industrial working-class culture, has continued for generation after generation in Stockton, just as in other traditional working-class suburbs of Newcastle and other Australian mining communities. Where the rituals that govern everyday life are predicated on stark power imbalances between the sexes, it should not be surprising that the use of force or intimidation in interpersonal and sexual relationships tends to be considered normal – just as it was one warmish night in early November 1989. (9)

Carrington suggests that "our sense of ourselves as masculine or feminine (or neither) is sustained by considerable social effort", and that effort "is so inscribed in our daily rituals we sometimes mistake its effects as natural to us, but they are not" (170). The bonds of exclusive mateship hold males to their dominant role, and females to their submissive role, and Carrington's observations on exclusive mateship show that she assumes, without doubt, that exclusive mateship is a dominant cultural influence in this community. Since males must prove their masculinity at the expense of females in exclusive mateship's construction of social power, males are encouraged to be violent and aggressive towards women, and women are conditioned to accept the abuse. According to Carrington, the inadequate police inquiry, and the casual attitude with which they have since treated the disappearance of eight other young women in the same area between 1979 and 1996,

reflect the wide acceptance of these male and female gender roles, and shows that they have been both normalised and *institutionalised*.

In societies in which exclusive mateship is dominant, the individuals are pressured by those around them to act "normally" – that is, the way that everyone else does, including adherence to the strict gender roles of dominant male, subordinate female. As Carrington points out, though, some males "are prepared to sever the bonds of mateship when confronted with the choice of behaving like one of the boys, or in a manner civil" (171). This points to the fact that exclusive mateship is not without its objectors, but Carrington does not elaborate on her observation. She does, however, discuss how difficult such an individual stance is, especially when part of the institutionalised gender roles is what she calls the sexual rituals, which act as proof of masculinity and provide a passage to manhood. These rituals depend on the degradation of females. According to one study of adolescence that Carrington uses to explain such sexual rituals, boys' failure "to demonstrate sexual prowess", that is, their failure to have sex with girls, makes them "vulnerable", and they are likely to be seen as "wimpish abominations – as not real men" (161). The male role in this ritual is peer-endorsed and "boys are drawn into a set of sexual strategies which entail the subordination of girls" (161). In these rituals, the purpose of having sex with girls "is not to share an intimacy – but to establish sexual prowess by bragging about it afterwards" (161). Another study to which Carrington refers found that while victims of sexual assault in Australia were mostly young girls, ninety-eight per cent of sex offenders were male, mostly aged between fourteen and thirty, and "that young men were more prone to attack *in groups* than alone" (160). The evidence of police interviews with suspects reflects this passionate need of the boys who had sex with Leigh on the night of the party to have intercourse with as many girls as possible, and as often as possible, during the evening. Jed Jones, for instance, admitted having sex firstly with Leigh – at her request according to him – then with a second girl, Sara Porter, and also of "getting onto Samantha Richards" before leaving with Narelle Adams and a mate, Bruce Duckworth (51-3).

While boys become men through such rituals, women become victims, and the subsequent relationship between the sexes reinforces the lowly standing of women in relation to men whenever exclusive mateship dominates a community's culture. This relationship was enacted on the night of the party when Leigh was assaulted by a group of boys, with what appears to have been a smaller group of girls looking on. Several witnesses reported seeing Leigh lying on the ground. She was encircled by boys who were kicking and abusing her. According to these witnesses, they were "laughing and telling her that she was a stupid little bitch and a mole and stuff like that" (21). One boy, who confessed to taking part, said he thought it was "funny to see what they were doing" (21). His mates were "filling their mouth (sic) with beer and spitting it over her; they were also spitting saliva on her" while she was "just lying on the ground moaning and rubbing her fingers through her hair where the beer was being poured on her" (22). Carrington suggests that boys are forced into these attacks by peer pressure, and that even though, alone, they might have genuine respect for the girls, in a group, they "deny these warm and fuzzy feelings" to be accepted into the clan (163). At the basis of this desire is mateship:

> The desire to be accepted – as one of the mates – no doubt generates a collective pressure for young men to deny their own feelings and behave in ways they wouldn't when alone. In this sense what those young men did that night can be seen (at least partly) as the product of a social chemistry forged on a dangerous cocktail of mateship and machismo – the demonstration of sexual prowess through conquest. This is the cultural script that underlies a great deal of violence in modern society. (163)

There is evidence of this desire to prove his masculinity in terms of the ritual of sexual violence in Matthew Webster's confession. In the transcript of his interview, Webster said he tried to have sex with Leigh, but she refused him. In his reaction to her refusal, he showed his fear of failing this test of his manhood. When she started pushing him away, he became angry, held her by the throat and "grabbed the rock and killed her" (75).

These peer-endorsed rituals of manhood have dire consequences for girls and not only because they are the victims. They learn at an early age that their place in the world is to be subordinate to males, and they fear stepping outside the expected role that the community endorses. The fact that the Stockton community strictly maintains these beliefs is reflected in the blame that people placed upon Leigh after her death. The endorsement

also shows the extent that fear is used to keep people acting according to expectations, because even some of Leigh's friends agreed with the accusations against her. Carrington reports that "schoolyard gossip was that Leigh 'asked for it, that basically when it came to her death it got out of control but that she'd walked into that situation anyway' " (133). Leigh was a virgin before her rape and murder, but even the public confirmation of this did not stop the rumours from circulating about her, and those rumours suggest that while it is a woman's role to be submissive, she is still responsible for what happens to her. The fact that she was blamed at all suggests that a woman's role is also to be responsible for the actions of males, even though she has no power over them:

> The lack of substance to any of these aspersions about Leigh Leigh didn't prevent them from influencing what people believed happened. Blaming the victim did not stop in the schoolyard. A great deal of public conjecture about the reasons for this crime turned on the victim's own conduct: What did she do to provoke such an attack? What was she wearing? Did she have too much to drink? Was she behaving in a sexually provocative manner? Did she have a reputation for being sexually promiscuous? Was she too physically mature for her age? Should she have known better? What precautions did she take to avoid being attacked? Did she put herself in a position of risk? Was she a virgin who became remorseful after consenting to her first sexual encounter and then cried rape? (134)

One friend of Leigh's, when interviewed as an adult by Carrington years after the murder, summed up this communal response as fear: "I think a lot of my friends were frightened that it might happen to them and that by labelling her cheap or whatever they'd be safe" (134).

The exclusive mateship that Carrington describes as a contributing factor in the death of Leigh is prominent in the plays and the movie created on the basis of the crime. Nowhere in any of these texts is the belief that mateship is a men's creed questioned, so the misogynous content of exclusive mateship is repeated as though it is a cultural truth, and the behaviour it condones is therefore natural. Men group together as mates against women, and they are constructed as powerful characters while women are degraded. Although these texts vary somewhat in plot and characterisation, they are similar in several ways: the expression of exclusive mateship's dominance; antagonistic relations between the sexes; gender roles that promote a dominant masculine and a subordinate feminine; and

the community's response to the crime and its aftermath. The fictional details of all three texts closely resemble the main facts of the case as reported by Carrington; but where she finds that there has been no justice for the victim, in that the perpetrators of the rape and assault have not been punished, each of these texts infers contributory guilt on the victim's part, and questions whether the males involved received justice. In spite of these important differences, all four texts show that exclusive mateship underpins the narratives, and that it is a cultural yardstick against which the behaviour of males and females is measured. This means that in the non-fictional literature, as Carrington argues, the victim was treated according to her place in society, and the males involved in her rape were likewise only acting out their "natural roles". The murder then, was an unfortunate outcome of what Carrington describes as "the pressure to demonstrate [the] sexual dominance" of males (167) combined with the fact that "the responsibility for negotiating safe sexual relationships has traditionally been placed on the party with the least leverage to effectively do so – young women" (168). It can be inferred from the communal acceptance of supposedly "natural" values such as sexual intimidation in teenage relationships, and that the party on the night of Leigh's murder "was a highly contrived and socially orchestrated affair which drew upon established rituals of masculinity regularly celebrated elsewhere" (168), that there would be consensual agreement that no one person should be blamed for Leigh's rape and murder. The same reasoning makes it understandable that Leigh should receive some of the blame because girls are supposed to be able to regulate sexual encounters. This interpretation of events is precisely the understanding presented in the three fictional works related to the crime: Leigh's death is thought of as an unfortunate accident in which the victim was asking for the treatment she got, but events went further than expected.

This comparison of real-life community with fictional community is made by Carrington in her chapter "Playing with Fact & Fiction" (151-74), and because it offers an insight into how closely the two sets of attitudes correlate, her critique is referred to in the analysis of each of the fictional texts. There is another reason for the closeness of the factual and fictional texts in this case that also makes it necessary to include factual information in my analysis. Nick Enright worked with the community to write the play A

<u>Property of the Clan</u>. Carrington explains that Carol Myers, a Stockton local, who was studying drama at the University of Newcastle, assisted in the scripting and production of the play (151). It was evolved over months with community assistance and "[t]he young people from Stockton and their parents willingly participated" (Carrington 157). The play was meant to provide the community with healing and closure according to Myers, but she claims that the final script, which levelled blame upon the victim, seemed to be a reaffirmation of the wrong views (158). The way in which the play was written blurred the lines of fact and fiction and made them difficult to separate: a fact that is demonstrated by the use of real-life scenes in the movie <u>Blackrock</u> (Carrington 154-5). In keeping with this blurring of fact and fiction, it became necessary to include comments from factual texts like a psychologist's report, police and witness statements and various opinions of real-life community members in the analysis of the fictional texts. Collectively this blurring of fact and fiction in the fictional texts offers a window through which to view the closeness of fictional representation of real life, and this provides a better understanding of how exclusive mateship functions in society, and of the problems associated with its influence on the culture of a community.

In <u>A Property of the Clan</u>, the theme of the play – "prejudice and discrimination are based on assumptions" – is given in the opening scene by a school teacher to a class at the high school attended by the students involved in the party at which Tracey – the fictional Leigh – is raped and murdered (8). The play upholds the belief that there are natural ways of being, and people should keep to those ways, or accept the consequences of their actions. The main character Jared, who witnessed Tracey's rape by three males, carries this message, and although he was in a position to save her, he did not. Jared admits this to his ex-girlfriend, Rachel, who comes from a rich family outside the beach suburb where the play is set:

> Because the world is totally fucked. Why did she have to be the way she was? People don't do things out of nowhere. Ricko's life is ruined. Total. Total wipe-out. Fifteen years locked up because she didn't know the limits. All because she was out there, and said what she said or did what she did, and wham. It's just one moment. Wham. Could have been a fist or the back of his hand. And she would have copped a few bruises, and no-one would have heard a word about that night. But she got him going and he put his

hand out, and there was a rock. And she's gone, and he's gone. (51)

The message that people "have to act the way they are", is given by Ricko, the youth charged with Tracey's murder, but in his confession, he shows that acting the way one is, is really acting the way one is assumed to be:

> … it was easy to catch up with her. She didn't hardly know which way she was going. One point, I thought she was going to walk into the sea. I sort of steered her back, but she pulled away from me. The way she'd always done round me. So there she is, carrying on about being pregnant, and hurting, and all this shit, when all she was was blind and legless … I said I'd had my eye on her for months, and how come she was putting out for everyone and not for Ricko? She said tonight was her first time, which had to be bullshit, same as everything else she ever said. I knew heaps of guys had been through her … . If it was the first time, how come she always carried on like she was the greatest little slut in town? And she just looked at me, and started walking off. Saying she had to find her other earring. Earring. That's when I lost it. I grabbed her, and pushed her down on the sand … [Silence.] She was a total moll. A real little cock-teasing whore. Ask anyone. But I still feel like shit. And when I read in the paper that all them doctors, they reckon she was a virgin the night she bought it, I thought there's something wrong somewhere. There's gotta be something wrong somewhere. Something really wrong. People have to act the way they are. (45-6)

At the bottom of that final assumption is the prejudice and discrimination produced by exclusive mateship, and culturally endorsed in the society of which Ricko is a member. On the night of this murder, exclusive mateship was enacted, and as was normal in this beachside community, girls were targets for the boys' need to prove their manhood. Ricko was assumed to be acting out his natural male role, and Tracey was assumed to be available to him. This community's acceptance of that assumption means that Tracey contributed to what happened to her, and that the males involved in her rape and murder were only acting according to their nature. As Toni Maunsell, Leigh's aunt, said of the play, "It portrayed the boys as victims":

> They were nice guys. They came from nice families and they just made a mistake but they were very, very sorry for that mistake. They were very sensitive guys. (Carrington 153)

This fictional conclusion concurs with the real-life conclusions drawn about the roles of the males and females involved in the party according to Carrington's observations. She claims that the title of the play <u>A Property of the Clan</u> is an expression that means a girl

who has had sex with the members of a gang is their common property. This assumption is at the base of the character Ricko's thinking in the play, and it was apparent to Dr Strum, the psychologist who supplied the pre-sentence report on Matthew Webster. He identified "a collective ritual of sexual degradation of the victim" as being influential in the murderer's violent attack (85). The rape of the girl was, in Strum's words, "*a ritual of degradation with strong sexual overtones: in some ways symbolically declaring her* [Leigh Leigh] *to be the property of the clan*"(85). In Carrington's opinion, if the sentencing judge had accepted Strum's report, the crime would have been opened up "to its roots in a collective ritual involving as many as ten boys, tacitly supported by as many passive observers, some of whom were girls" (85), but he did not. Carrington found that on the night of the party, the gang rape of Leigh was planned. One witness reported to police that Mat Webster had told him early in the night: "Hey dude, we're going to get Leigh pissed and all go through her" (14), and according to police records, at least four witnesses confirmed that there were plans "to get Leigh drunk and rape her" (93). This disturbing side of the crime, and the fact that the practice is naturalised as acceptable, was never investigated, and the opportunity to do so was missed. Leigh was presumed by the boys to be promiscuous, and since she was "asking for it", according to community attitudes, she got what she asked for. She must, according to the community, therefore accept responsibility for her rape, and for what happened to the young man who murdered her, because she led him to it.

The play Blackrock, and its film adaptation, are similar to A Property of the Clan with only a few minor variations. In A Property of the Clan, Ricko, the young man convicted of Tracey's murder, is jailed (48), while in the play and the film Blackrock, he commits suicide: in the former by hanging himself in his cell (60), and in the latter by jumping off a hill onto the rocks below to avoid being arrested by the police. The texts share a central male hero who is the leader of the youth's mateship clan. He commits the murder and, in spite of his crime, he remains as the image of a hero and best mate even when he is no longer with the group. The presence of such a character confirms the battle of the sexes constructed by exclusive mateship, because while he exemplifies the cultural standard of excellence, females cannot be considered equal in any way. Females cannot

even be themselves; rather they must be what they are assumed to be in relation to this man. This is exclusive mateship's construction of social relations, and as Carrington points out, in the play and the film <u>Blackrock</u>, "Women, as mothers and partners, threaten to interfere with the bonds of mateship" (156), and therefore threaten mateship. According to this system of social relations, Tracey can never receive justice, because that would challenge mateship and its sanctioned male dominance.

In all three texts, Ricko is the central male hero, and Carrington argues that such a heroic matey identity contributed to the real-life community's assessment of the rape and murder of Leigh. She mistakenly calls him Rocko in her discussion (156), but she believes he embodies the community's codes of manhood in his beliefs, values and actions:

> The character Rocko [Ricko] represents the untamed version of Australian masculinity –the uncivilised larrikin idolised by the other blokes. There is a set of shared cultural expectations that 'real men' kill for mates, die for mates, take the rap for mates, do anything for mates. Do otherwise and you're not a real man. (156)

To the young people with whom Ricko associates, at five to six years their senior, he is their leader. Ricko has a car, a surfboard, no job, and a casual lifestyle, and he has a girlfriend, Tiffany, who lends him money, has sex with him, and forgives him for the loathsome way he treats her, and for his lechery with the young girls he pursues.

The final act in these texts keeps this heroic male image. Jared, the youth who watched Tracy being raped by three young men, has vehemently maintained that Ricko died "because some moll didn't know the limits" (<u>Blackrock</u> 61); but in the closing scenes he visits Tracey's grave, seemingly in an act of remorse. It is as if Jared apologises on behalf of his mates. Until this point, the texts have shown that the way the males think is the same as the community, but Jared's response suggests attitudes are changing since it indicates a measure of acceptance of responsibility for what happened. Carrington describes Jared's actions as miraculously snapping out of "his hypnotic deference to the demands of mateship" (156). But his change is out of character, and considering his behaviour before this momentary lapse, the effect is not convincing in any of the texts. Jared's act of contrition does not change the separation of the sexes that is naturalised as a

pattern of living by the exclusive mateship discourse that dominates life in this community. According to exclusive mateship, although the girl was the victim, there was widespread community acceptance that she somehow deserved what she got. But the boy or boys involved were construed as innocently being boys with their mates: "He was just being rough or just a boy or acting-out as a bloke with his mates and that was it" (Carrington 133).

The real-life community is also affected by the aura associated with the central heroic mate. Carrington suspects that the motivation that prompted the youth who was convicted of being the lone perpetrator of the murder to keep silent about his accomplices was a desire to be a hero: "not just Fat Mat, the hefty over-grown kid from Stockton, with little chance of success in his corner of the world" (142). She asks, "Was he so attached to the bonds of mateship that he took the rap for what others may have done?" (142). If he did, then Carrington suggests that Mat was also "a victim of mateship and masculinity and a community, forged on both, that left little opportunity for young men like him" (142).

In 1979, ten years prior to Leigh's death, Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette had described similar derogatory attitudes towards females in their autobiographical account of growing up in the surfie culture of Sydney, Puberty Blues. The boys of the "Greenhills gang" to which Susan Knight and Deborah Vickers are attached, by making themselves available for the boys to "root […] every weekend" (81), fit the mate man image perfectly. Their manly prowess might be expressed on a board on a wave at the beach, but the heroic mate type character and the exclusive mateship are the same. Loyalty to mateship is paramount:

> The beach was the most sacred place of all. Boys' boards came before everything. It was waves, then babes. They were faithful to the sea and we were faithful to them. (29)

The gang's expression of manhood includes the rituals of proving one's masculinity by having sex. The surfers commonly discuss their sexual exploits, even while waiting for waves:

> Yet that's all the boys *did* talk about, way out on the flat sea, sitting on their boards, in between sets. They told every detail. The Greenhills guys knew

the ins and outs of every girl in the gang. (47)

In the case of the Greenhills gang, "scores" of sexual exploits are recorded in "the screwing competition" (80). The group admire the results:

> In Jacko's drawer, pinned to the wood, was a piece of paper with all the boys' names on it. Johnno, Dave, Wayne, Danny, Gull, Hen and Strack. After each conquest they got a tick next to their names. (80)

Regardless of the frequency of sexual contact between males and females, there is a natural divide between the sexes, and the girls cross it at their peril. At the local shopping mall – the youth domain – for instance, if the girls saw their boyfriends, they could not speak to them:

> If your boyfriend was there, you didn't hang around him 'cause he was with his mates. You stayed with the girls and walked around on parade, going from the Fashion Wheel Boutique to the Igloo Deli to the Fashion Wheel boutique to Surf Dive and Ski. (63)

Males dominate in this world where a girl is useful only for proving manhood. Puberty Blues is a record of criminal acts of degradation of females. It includes sex with underage girls who pay for their friendship rings with sexual intercourse "in the back of cars, under the bowling alley, on Cronulla Beach, down behind the Ace-of-Spades Hotel, in the changing rooms of the football field" (62). It also describes the rape and abuse of those girls considered to be gang property, and it does so in a way that blames the girls, who are derided by both males and females, as "slack-arsed molls" (44). Such crimes point to a violent and brutal divide between the sexes, but this behaviour is as naturalised a way of living as the sexual rituals enacted by the young men. Gang rape is an accepted mode of behaviour among the teenagers. Frieda Cummins thought she had earned membership of a top surfing gang by having sexual intercourse with seven of them. When the rape is over, Frieda is thumped, spat on, called a moll and told to "Rack off moll" (76). Another girl was deceived into having sexual intercourse with the same group, and the gang had deliberately plotted the rape (77). Yet another girl fell in the gutter after being gang raped. She was "nudged and prodded" by the boys' "thonged feet" as she lay writhing in agony (78). Such girls were treated as detestable, and neither males nor females went to their aid in any of the incidents described.

If the connection of mateship with violence against females in these texts was the product of an isolated incident, it might be argued that the example does not indicate the prevalence of such ways of thinking in the wider community. But the incident is not isolated. Julia Sheppard's Someone else's daughter (1991) describes the life and death of Anita Cobby, who was abducted, brutally raped and murdered by a gang of young men in Sydney in February 1986. The story leaves no doubt that the bonds of exclusive mateship united the perpetrators. Gordon Graham's play The Boys (1994), Stephen Sewell's screenplay The Boys (1998) adapted from Graham's play, and the film, The Boys (1998), are fictional works all based on Anita Cobby's murderers. The movie Shame (1987) likewise deals with packs of youth united by the bonds of exclusive mateship, who rape, abuse and brutalise females, and believe in their right to do so. It is interesting to note that in Shame the community endorsed the actions of the gang, and in the real life case of Anita Cobby, while there was outrage against her murderers, there was still strong support for them. A girlfriend of one of the five convicted killers said, "I think the sentence sucks", and she hoped their appeal would be successful (192). Her reason was that "Anita Cobby shouldn't have been walking home that night" and, of the men, they cannot really be blamed: "They were all drunk, they were all stoned" (192).

Conclusion

Collectively these texts demonstrate exclusive mateship's brutal division of the sexes and its horrific impact upon society. It is not, however, the texts alone that show that exclusive mateship is nonetheless embedded in Australian culture. The fact that some authors choose to represent mateship as exclusive, and others choose not to question its exclusivity, indicates that this form of mateship is pervasive and influential. Many authors write about mateship as though it is a natural part of being Australian, and yet they describe it as a men's creed. They do not question its exclusiveness in relation to the egalitarianism that it is described as promoting, and they assume that their readers understand and accept this one, very limited reading of mateship in the same way. Yet such a belief biases the interpretation of social behaviour, and it therefore influences any subsequent fictional and non-fictional literature. To appreciate fully the impact that exclusive mateship has on

society, it is necessary to read the texts that discuss that discourse as though it is the only form of mateship, with the knowledge that mateship can be inclusive, firmly in mind. This reading practice allows inclusive and exclusive mateship to be separated from each other, and it is only by applying such a reading that it can it be seen that exclusive mateship does not generate the productive patterns of living most often associated with the mateship that represents the egalitarian aspects of Australianness. From that perspective, it is possible to see that exclusive mateship is an identifiable cultural product that has a negative impact upon Australian society because it has been naturalised and accepted as an essential part of Australian culture.

Chapter Eight   The Culture of "Difference"

Songs of Australia

We have no songs ready written and set to music.
Life is a song and we feel it –

[……………………………………………………….]

O, give us your hand, mate. Your brown hand, firm and rough with
the sinews like cords, a strong hand ready for work, or a sock on
the jaw or the grip of a mate.

Give us your hand. I have seen your hand gripping the reins and
holding the wheel and strong on the lever, sliding easily down the
shaft of an axe, parting the ram's wool, moving with knowledge
down the flanks of a horse, grasping the shears, shaping the stone
and twisting the iron, rising and falling as it hauled on the rope,
holding a life on a thread in its grip. The hand of a maker and
saver, a hand I will trust, the hand of my friend and man to
depend on. O, give us your hand, strong, true and steady.

O, give us your hand, digger, dingo, sand-groper, old fossicker,
swaggie, cow-cocky, sheep-chaser, mullock-shoveller, crow-eater,
boundary rider and farmhand and the man on the tractor, ringer
and rouseabout, ganger and nipper, teamster, off-sider, swamper
and cookie, bush-whacker, hard-doer, old-timer and new chum,
horse-breaker, bull-fighter, drover and bagman, squatter, stock-
man and pink jackaroo, cabbage-grower and cornstalk, and the
long slabs from Queensland, whiskered old wiregrass, dam-
sinkers and fencers, hell-raisers and liars and other Australians,
oh, give us your hand.

For Christ's sake, don't sing; but give us your hand.

Paul Hasluck 1969 (112-4)

There are no women here in Paul Hasluck's poem, unless they are among the "other
Australians" who are asked, after the hell-raisers and liars, to join in the song and "give us
your hand": this is men's land. It has what Luce Irigaray calls a between-men culture that is
founded upon an "insufficiently thought out relation between biology and culture" (<u>Je</u> 47).
As I have argued, exclusive mateship is such a discourse that reproduces a patriarchal
"between-men" culture in Australia. That culture is based on a subjugation of females for

no better reason than their biological difference from males; and this thinking, which is the founding assumption of exclusive mateship, has become naturalised to a degree where it is widely accepted as an integral part of Australianness. Yet exclusive mateship constructs and reproduces a divisive "culture of difference" in Australian society.

In the first section of this chapter, I argue that the exclusive mateship discourse is based upon the assumption that all men are mates, and that it is upon this basis that exclusive mateship justifies its division of the sexes. I set out to demonstrate that this assumption is not correct by showing that all men are not mates of the exclusive mateship type. I do this by contesting the historical basis of this assumption so I begin with feminist historian Miriam Dixson's assertion that Australian women's low social status is a product of working-class male influence, and that this influence is associated with Irish men and mateship. I cite Patrick O'Farrell's research into the history of the Irish in Australia to show that even though Irish-Australians were a large and influential group of people in the early development of Australian culture, Irish men were neither typical of the working class, nor of the exclusive mateship type. If this substantial group of men were not mates of the exclusive type during the formative stages of exclusive mateship's development, then it cannot be argued convincingly that all Australian men – either in the past or in the present – can be grouped as mates who wish to subjugate women.

In the second section, I endeavour to show that in spite of there being no basis for believing that exclusive mateship is Australian mateship, it is maintained as such by the dominant or preferred reading of mateship. I use Brian Moon's explanation of how dominant readings can become established ways of thinking to explain why established ways of thinking about mateship influence readings of the mateship discourse. I argue that exclusive mateship is kept in a culturally dominant position by reading practices that reproduce indicators of exclusive mateship from texts that describe inclusive mateship. I cite Jeannie Gunn's We of the Never Never (1908) and its film adaptation (1982) as examples of this translation of inclusive mateship into exclusive mateship.

In the third section of this chapter, I argue that the belief that exclusive mateship is Australian mateship depends on negating the presence of inclusive mateship, and that this depends on ignoring texts that do not reproduce the preferred reading of mateship. I use C. Hadgraft and R. Wilson's discussion of the Australian short story in <u>A Century of Australian Short Stories</u> (1974 edition) to show how this selective reading practice works. I include oppositional or resistant readings of Jessie Couvreur's "How a Claim Was Nearly Jumped in Gum-Tree Gully" (n.d.), Edward Dyson's "The Golden Shanty" (1887) and Henry Lawson's "His Father's Mate" (1888) to describe the inclusive mateship ignored in some readings of these texts. Henry Lawson's "Some Popular Australian Mistakes" (1893) is used to show that Lawson questioned some of the assumptions about bush life that were being popularised during the 1890s.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that since mateship is a discourse it is constructed through language. I have also argued that inclusive mateship is obvious in many texts, so the common practice of associating the masculine with the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> has not made the inclusive mateship discourse disappear from Australian culture. In the fourth section of this chapter, I add one final point for arguing that mateship is not one, but two discourses. I show that the assumption that all men are mates leads to an ambiguous reading of literature, and that this ambiguity questions the belief that exclusive mateship is the only possible reading of mateship.

1. In the culture of "difference" constructed by exclusive mateship, it is assumed that all men are mates

Exclusive mateship's subjugation of women is based on the belief that mates can only be men, and therefore women, in not being men, cannot be included in mateship. This emphasis on women's "difference" from men is used to justify the discourse's organisation of an antagonistic division between the sexes. The underlying assumption in this system of beliefs is that all men are mates as defined by exclusive mateship's style of masculinity. But all men are not mates of that type, because if they were, all men would be misogynists, so no men would be mates with women. This is not so because, as I have demonstrated

throughout this thesis, men can be, and are, mates with women in egalitarian inclusive mateship.

The assumption that all men are mates is based on the belief that Australian culture was shaped in its early development by lower or working-class men. As Russel Ward argues, the Australian legend, with its components like mateship, began with the lower class and gradually worked upwards through society and eventually entered national discourses:

> From the beginning, then, outback manners and *mores*, working upwards from the lowest strata of society and outwards from the interior, subtly influenced those of the whole population. (Legend 13)

Miriam Dixson agrees, adding "the sociocultural 'weight' or influence of the working class" is greater in Australia than in any other form of democracy (82). According to Dixson, "Australia is internationally renowned as a proud democracy" built upon the "crucial contributions" of a very strong trade union movement (81). This amalgamation is linked to mateship which, she argues, resoundingly rejects women (81). However, working-class men are a disparate group of people, who were, like other groups, erroneously categorised as a single type. As such, these men, beginning with their rural ancestors, are all assumed to be of the exclusive mateship type. Dixson argues that the "major configurations of values in our national identity" (including mateship and its misogynous attitudes) came "mainly from *male* convict, working-class, Irish and native-born Australian sources" (24). But Patrick O'Farrell argues that one group subsumed within this broad grouping of the working class, namely the Irish, are not of this type, so such a generalisation is questionable. O'Farrell's description of the Irish in The Irish in Australia (1986) suggests that Dixson's association of Irish men with mateship is an unfounded racist assumption, because according to O'Farrell, Irish qualities are hard to detect in the Australian male image of the "[s]un-bronzed, masculine, hedonist […] a devotee of the cult of mateship, military, wholesome, non-intellectual, a son of sand and surf" (19).

According to O'Farrell, Irish convicts, especially poor Catholic Irish from both Ireland and England, made up a large proportion of the convicts transported to Australia,

and even though they have often been misunderstood and maligned, their influence on Australian culture is significant. They were a prominent, distinctive and very vocal minority group who opposed the English. They refused to be culturally suppressed, and they fought as hard against that repression as they did against being denied the economic and social opportunities that the colony could afford them. O'Farrell argues that the Irish significantly influenced the development of Australian culture through their opposition to English dominance. Indeed, he claims that the Irish have been "the galvanising force at the centre of the evolution of our national character" (9), because Irish opposition forged Australian nationalism by contesting English power:

> The distinctive Australian identity was not born in the bush, nor at Anzac Cove: these were merely situations for its expression. No; it was born in Irishness protesting against the extremes of Englishness. (12)

The Irish fought against discrimination by dint of their "difference" from English norms, and their attitude is reflected in the sentiments of mateship. Mateship qualities like independence, clannishness, group loyalty, egalitarianism, distrust of authority, protest against suppression, caring for the social "underdog", and banding together in times of need were described by O'Farrell as traits that emanated from the Irish in their Australian context. Such traits became survival characteristics that eventually found their way into shades of inclusive mateship and into Australia's emerging national identity. According to O'Farrell, the qualities of the national character embodied in the image of the ideal bushman mate drew heavily on the Irish, in particular on their "independence, lawlessness; stereotypes that were easy-going, anti-hierarchy and authority, generous, fun-loving, boozy, and as game as Ned Kelly"; but the Irish themselves were never part of the image (19). He claims "the quick dark Celt, pale, short and wiry, intense and individualist, defied generic inflation", and according to O'Farrell, "[t]he constant Australian occupation of image-building went on without Irish participation" (19). It therefore seems that, as O'Farrell points out, while "the frame and flesh of the typical Australian were not Irish […] his disposition was"(19). But not "so his mind and heart", warns O'Farrell; Irish men did not conform to the masculinity requirements expressed by exclusive mateship (19). Rather the Irish kept their own identity, and therefore "[i]t is no accident that the Australian stereotype image of the tall, tanned, bushman/digger/lifesaver presented a physical

idealisation of non-Irish characteristics" (18). It would seem, then, that while the Irish were not of the exclusive mateship type, some of their traits were imitated by others, and the resultant style of masculinity was then mixed with the misogynous attitudes that defined exclusive mateship.

While O'Farrell argues that Irish men were neither typical of the working class nor of the exclusive mateship type of male, Dixson disagrees. She claims that the Irish influenced the low cultural standing of women in Australia through their prominent place in the working class: "Yet the overall standing of women in Australia comes close to the *lowest* among Western industrial democracies, having a faintly non-Western flavour (maybe because of the role of the Irish)" (21). She argues that women's status among the lower paid working classes was demeaned because men who were demoralised by the capitalist system, which undervalued their worth, in turn subjected women to the same bitter social rejection (92). O'Farrell contests claims such as Dixson's, saying that this claim that Irish men were misogynous is a "fairly recent construct" and one that is among "the many absurd libels foisted on the Irish by those incapable of understanding them" (153). He argues that contrary to this assertion, the misogynous attitude "was something they [the Irish] found in Australia", and he describes how one Irishman, Phil Mahony, was astonished "by the dominance of masculinity" he observed in Melbourne in 1882 (153).

According to O'Farrell, the Irish did comprise a large percentage of those who became known as working class in Australia, being well represented in the occupations of railways, transport services and mining (144). Such working-class industries, along with pastoral occupations like shearing and stock-work, cradled unionism and the infant Labor Party, two supposed bastions of exclusive mateship. But exclusive mateship's tenet of being exclusively masculine ran counter to the Irish disposition toward family life, which was respected by Irish men and women. Among them there was a need "to include the female perception and to value its unique encounter with the world" (O'Farrell 153). So, in effect, the Irish disposition towards light-hearted larrikinism, a desire to be free of restraints, the habit of heavy drinking and the tendency towards enjoyment of the moment, were not misogynous Irish traits, but they were naturalised as patterns of living by the

exclusive mateship discourse, and this mixture of attitudes and values was not created by the Irish.

O'Farrell's findings indicate that the Irish were family orientated, and that women and children played an important part in Irish life. In Australia, "big families were regarded as an essential adjunct to successful colonial rural life" because they provided clannish security and pleasure in a "ready made social group", and economic support with "labour where it was scarce and expensive" (151). The pro-family stance of the Irish was linked to "traditional Irish society" and to "the vigorously pro-family stance of the Catholic Church" (O'Farrell 151). This attitude of respect for the family is seen in John O'Brien's "Making Home" (1921), where the depth of concern that a man holds for his wife and children, the partners of his thirty-five years of farming are obvious:

> There were joys your heart was craving, but you
>   never gathered them;
> Fragrant buds that yearned to blossom, but you
>   hacked them from the stem;
> Hearts of children, erring sometimes-ah, but
>   golden through and through,
> Beating back to where you led them, big with love
>   of home and you!
> Now you see them in the distance, making
>   Home, [...]. (160)

In arguing that the family was the central concern of Irish working-class males, O'Farrell contradicts the belief that Irish men were of the exclusive mateship type, which opposed a supportive male role in domestic life.

Irish men, were not, however, the only males who did not fit the exclusive mateship style of masculinity. They had many companions among the men described in this thesis as being mates with women. Even Ward admits that the characteristics of the heroic mate man and his mateship could not be said to be those of all Australians. Rather, they were confined to a very small and relatively powerless percentage of the colonial population: "the outback employees, the semi-nomadic drovers, shepherds, shearers, bullock-drivers, stockmen, boundary-riders, station-hands and others of the pastoral industry", and they were merely "attributed to the bushman of the last century" (2). So contrary to what both

feminist and masculinist social commentators argue, these characteristics have never been general masculine traits for Australian males, even if the traits can be linked to some aspects of masculine behaviour, or to some minority groups. No one could say, for instance, that the group of mates who attacked, raped and murdered Anita Cobby in 1986 or Leigh Leigh in 1989 as discussed in Chapter Seven, were either common among men or typical of Australian males, yet they were men who maintained exclusive mateship's misogynous attitudes.

2. Maintaining exclusive mateship as the preferred reading of mateship relies on maintaining dominant reading practices

I have already argued that inclusive mateship persists, even without wide cultural endorsement, but that does not make exclusive mateship any less influential. In spite of there being no basis for the belief that exclusive mateship is Australian mateship, it has been the dominant reading of mateship since its consolidation and promotion in the period 1885-1925, and from this influential position it constructs and maintains a division between the sexes. Kay Schaffer in her "Henry Lawson, the drover's wife and the critics" (1993) argues that the 1890s was "a decade when an Australian ethos takes shape in the form of the bushman as hero with his egalitarian values and ideals of mateship; a decade when the Australian legend is immortalised, at least for modern readers" (199). While she points out that many have challenged this ideal, she believes "none would blunt its enduring influence on Australian culture" (199). One means by which exclusive mateship continues to thwart challenges to its dominance is by reading practices which produce exclusive mateship from texts that actually represent inclusive mateship.

A comparison of Jeannie Gunn's <u>We of the Never Never</u> (1908) and its film adaptation (1982) is an example of one such reading. In this instance, the companionable relations between the men and women of the novel, which represent inclusive mateship, become in the film, the antagonistic feelings and attitudes indicative of exclusive mateship. The reading of the text reproduced in the film is clearly against the author's intention, but it is in agreement with the myths and traditions of the past which endorse a patriarchal

reading of mateship and of relations between men and women. The production of such readings creates the illusion that mateship is solely a men's creed, and this conveys the impression that it is normal in Australian culture for men and women to be divided by mateship.

In Gunn's novel, inclusive mateship unites those who approach life in the bush with a survivalist attitude. These women and men seek to endure the environment, and as much as possible, to enjoy the experience. A very strong sense of communal friendship exists among the bushfolk (women and men), and as Mac tells Jeannie: "bushmen have a sixth sense, and know a pal when they see one" (41). Mac does differentiate between men and women, but in a way which Jennie realises means that when women are excluded in a bush community, it is because they have excluded themselves. Mac tells Jeannie that men do not often "find a pal in a woman", but Jeannie's experience shows her that "when they [men] do, that woman is to be envied her friends" (41). Jeannie finds that women who are prepared to enjoy bush life are as welcome as any man. Indeed Jeannie, on meeting those at the station, passes the test so well that she is declared to be one of "them". Aeneas, Jeannie's husband, known to the men as the boss or Maluka, sums up the men's greetings to Jeannie: "Then the introductions over, the Maluka said, 'And now I suppose she may consider herself just 'One of Us'' " (42)."

A patriarchal reading which focuses on gender, or even a feminist reading which seeks instances of women's exclusion from society, might interpret this conversation between Mac and Jeannie, and the Maluka's comment, as proof that women were subordinate to men in the past; but the overriding emphasis in the novel is on equality of the sexes. The same opportunity of living successfully in the bush is open to everyone, and it is people's right to respond how they will. In a bush existence, those women and men who share the survivalist attitude become companions regardless of social constructions like gender because they are of a like mind. This is made clear early in the novel by the Head Stockman, Dan, who sets out straight away to educate the Missus, because as he says, "She'll do for this place!" (39). He cheerfully calls her "the dead finish"; a comment that is acknowledged by everyone as being "in some indescribable way […] the highest

compliment in his power" (39). Dan's ideal bush character is a woman, "Mrs Bob", whom he regularly praises for her survivalist qualities, which include a sense of humour. The Head Stockman's statement about people fitting into bush society attests to this reading of the inclusive mateship discourse: "Any place is fit for a woman, [...] provided the woman is fitted for the place. The right man in the right place, you know. Square people shouldn't try to get into round holes" (45-6).

Jeannie's acceptance in the bush community is evident in the way the bushmen quickly receive her into their company, and in their delight in "educating her" so that she will not be imprisoned like a "dog in her house" (66). Dan in particular is very happy when the homestead cannot be built, because he believes any more rooms than the one already available will "only interfere with getting the missus educated" (60). The men believe that she will enjoy bush life better if she understands its ways, and they all willingly contribute to her "education". After an initial period of getting acquainted, which is normal in any relationship, the men welcome Jeannie into their lives, and it is obvious that the enjoyment of the mixed company is mutual. Jeannie finds nothing patronizing about the men's attitude towards her, and she whole-heartedly returns their companionship by sharing her skills, knowledge and sense of humour. She even teaches one of the stockman, Jack, how to read, and there is interest, encouragement and pride shared by everyone over this venture (205).

It is clear from Gunn's text that women will be accepted into the bush community if they are accepting of bush life and its ways, and those ways are not necessarily men's. Jeannie sees this as a commonly held truth among bush people. One night while she is out camping with the men, and enjoying the camaraderie of the yarn telling before they go to sleep, she feels that she is beginning "to see into the heart of things" (66). She observes that "when a woman finds love and comradeship out-bush, little else is needed to make even a glowing circle of a camp-fire her home-circle" (66). The proviso for acceptance into "bush life" is not exclusive to women, and it is not men or masculinist discourses that influence standards of acceptance. Rather, it is a communal response, a discourse of bush life which dictates citizenship principles and responsibilities. This bush life discourse is not gender-specific. It is about life and death mixed with aspirations of developing a nation in a

strange environment; it speaks of human desires, fears and survival; and it encompasses inclusive mateship. Inclusive mateship is described in the actions of Mrs Bob, who Dan admires so much. To him "[s]he was the right sort if ever there was one" (65). She enjoyed the good times "yarning", as Dan describes it, and she inspired the down-hearted to keep going. She was nurse to those who needed her in body or spirit, even wandering "sick travellers" could rely on her mateship (65).

But a contrasting image of bush life and relations between women and men is given in the film We of the Never Never (1982). It depicts a stereotypical gender battle among the characters, and in contradiction to the inclusive mateship of the novel, exclusive mateship dominates the plot. The film reflects exclusive mateship's misogynous bias in the way it represents relations between Jeannie, her husband and the workmen. The review of the film printed on its video jacket states that Jeannie's "arrival on the station is met with bitter disapproval by the hardened Australian stockmen who believe 'the bush is no place for a white woman' ". In The Australian Film Book 1930 – Today (2001), Simon Brand states that Jeannie "becomes deeply involved in everything that takes place on the property, much to the chagrin of her husband and his employees" (134). The gender division is set very early in the film, when Jeannie is told by one of the women who is dressing her for her wedding, not to try to be a mate to Aeneas, but to leave that to the men who work for him. She counsels Jeannie to keep her femininity, observe proprieties and to keep a wife's place: "You must manage his household, supervise his servants, and grace his table." But such notions are the filmmaker's interpretation of relations between the sexes, because men and women are not antagonists in the novel. Contrary to what the film shows as instances of women being snubbed by bushman through a sense of masculine superiority, men do not "reject" Jeannie, or indeed any other woman in the novel. What the film depicts as men's rebuff to women is portrayed in the novel as the product of natural shyness and men's lack of experience with women, rather than as misogynous actions.

The typical bushman described by Gunn is a man who feels ill at ease with women because he is not usually in mixed company. A bushman, often alone and isolated from society, lacks self-confidence in his ability to respond to women. When such a bushmen is

in the company of a woman, he feels that he is not prepared for such circumstances, and becomes ill at ease. This is shyness, caused by uncertainty about etiquette, and lack of experience in interpersonal relationships. Dan, for example, describes himself as an expert on the subject of relations between women and men, but in his vast experience of forty years out-bush, he has known only eight or ten women. He proudly declares, "I ought to know something about it", though at best his experience is so limited that, like the other men, he feels awkward when meeting a woman (39). Men's initial reaction of exacerbated self-awareness in the presence of women who enter what is usually a womanless domain, is perfectly understandable given the infrequency of the occurrence, and there is no reason given in the novel to read this male response as antagonism towards women. In the film however, this response by males towards women is read as a misogynous attack on women.

The relations between women and men in the bush in Gunn's novel show that, given time and a concentrated effort by all parties, relationships are congenial. This is obvious in one of the novel's many camp-site conversations:

> He [the bushman] may be, and generally is, sadly in need of a woman
> friend, "someone to share his joys and sorrows with"; [...] . "Friendly like"
> is what appeals to us all; and the bushfolk are only men, not monstrosities –
> rough, untutored men for the most part. The difficult part to understand is
> how any woman can choose to stand aloof and freeze, with warm-hearted
> men all around her willing to take her into their lives. (130)

Jeannie takes part in these campsite conversations as a respected equal, but such instances of agreeable relations between women and men are omitted from the film. When it focuses on what has been read here as men's lack of experience, the film does so by making men's responses appear to be an abhorrence of women. For instance, in the incident in which a man seeks homestead help for his dying mate, the mate's insistence on avoiding the homestead because of the "Missus" is represented in the film as a rejection of Jeannie, and through this, a hatred of the feminine. But this is not the way the incident is presented in the novel. Rather, the incident shows a man protecting his mate according to the mate's wishes. As Gunn observes, "[b]ushmen are instinctively protective", and "nothing calls it forth in its self-sacrificing tenderness like the helplessness of a strong man stricken down in his strength" (147). This feeling of one man for another indicates inclusive mateship if there is no evidence of misogyny. There is no evidence of misogyny in the novel, so the

relationship between these travellers is inclusive mateship, but the film's representation of the incident depicts the men's mateship as exclusive.

As recounted by Gunn in the novel, the situation is that a chronically ill bushman, whose strength is based on self-reliance, does not want others to see him stricken because he fears being considered weak. As the incident unfolds, it becomes apparent that the biggest grievance for the man and his mate is not that there is a woman at the station, but that they have to seek help at all (146). These men are proud and they do not want anyone, woman or man, to witness their vulnerability. This reading is endorsed by the man's offering to pay for the food and services rendered to his mate by those at the station, because the mate "was always independent, and would never take charity" (151). However, the man accepts the help given at the station when the Maluka explains that it is given as hospitality for a guest: "We give no charity here; only hospitality to our guests" (151). This indicates that the communal sense of inclusive mateship is foremost and respected by everyone equally.

The mateship between these two men is strong, but in their wanderings through the bush they have only their own company, so they have developed a mutual shyness along with their dependence upon each other. But surpassing this strong male friendship, which exists between the men in the absence of women, there persists the communal sense of inclusive mateship, which is readily extended to all people who support each other. This is reflected in the remarks of the dying man to his mate, which include the observation that mateship between men is not as common as a good marriage between a man and a woman: "A good mate's harder to find than a good wife" (147). Ironically, after the man's death, his mate confesses that even though they had been companions for seven years, he knew "little of his comrade's life" (148), suggesting that communication between the men is superficial, and their relationship is shallower than those which the novel presents between women and men. It is the communal sense of inclusive mateship that eventually helps the man recover after his mate's death. Firstly he receives the support of everyone at the station, and secondly, members of the Line Party who were friends of those at the station

offer him employment. Most importantly, though, everyone, including Jeannie, freely gives him companionship in his time of need, and he responds in a like manner to all.

In the novel, Jeannie quickly becomes used to the bushmen's shyness of women, and she understands it as reticence rather than as dislike of herself or females. In her relationships with the many sick men who stay at the homestead, Jeannie respects this peculiar shyness, and initially only exchanges occasional greetings with them to put them at ease by not being obtrusive. But as the men become more confident with Jeannie, they confide in her, and tell her their strange life-histories, suggesting that as their strength returns, these men respect and trust Jeannie. Even the mate, who the film depicts as rejecting Jeannie, foregoes his desire to fill in his dead mate's grave to drive Jeannine back to the homestead after the burial (150). They gradually enter into the shared mateship of the station in a spirit of egalitarian communion that is ignored in the film's adaptation of the story.

While it is the case, as Brian Moon points out, that "[r]eadings are the meanings produced when a reader applies a particular reading practice to make sense of a text or some element in the culture", it can also be that readings are "established 'ways of thinking' about some aspect of the world" (106). From the instances of mateship's being thought of as an exclusive men's creed given in this thesis, it could be argued that such thinking has become an established part of Australian culture for many Australians. Many people therefore read mateship as exclusive, and even though textual indications point to alternative readings of mateship, namely inclusive mateship, "the established ways of thinking" remain influential, and all mateship is deemed to be men's mateship in which women have no part. This has the effect of encouraging misogyny in Australian culture, and it leaves the impression that men and women are divided in a sexist battle, when many of them are not.

3. **Maintaining exclusive mateship as the established way of thinking relies on ignoring resistant readings of mateship**

Exclusive mateship retains its influential position in Australian culture because it has become the dominant or preferred reading of the discourse. According to Moon, such readings "represent the beliefs and values which are most powerful in a culture" (104). So while all men are not mates of the exclusive type, and all women are not victims of misogynous attitudes, the exclusive mateship ideal remains firmly entrenched in Australian culture. It is so firmly entrenched that in contemporary times when economic and social changes are reflecting more instances of equality of the sexes, mateship is still mostly read as a men's creed. This established way of reading mateship is the product of a naturalised way of thinking that can only be justified by ignoring or misreading texts that oppose the preferred reading of mateship.

The preferred reading of mateship is most apparent in the literature promoted by <u>The Bulletin</u> in the 1890s and early 1900s. The "bush" was the setting for these stories, the heroes were men, their deeds were legendary, and this image was promoted as representative of the Australian people. However unrepresentative these notions of mateship were in relation to the daily lives of "real Australians", the masculine bias was endorsed in influential works like Ward's <u>The Australian Legend</u>, where the preferred reading of mateship was reinforced by a rigorous selectivity in the choice of textual evidence. Some texts, particularly women's writing of the sort used in this thesis to provide instances of inclusive mateship, were excluded from the canon of work used by Ward to support his construction of mateship as a creed exclusive to men. The works of other writers, like Alexander Harris and Henry Lawson, were selectively chosen, and only those sections of the texts that endorsed the masculine bias on Australian culture, and likewise on mateship, were included in Ward's argument. Dale Spender calls this the "malestream/mainstream tradition", and she argues that the selectivity which produced it has given Australians "a predominantly male literary tradition" (<u>Writing</u> 161). She claims that a writer who did not "make a contribution to this particular representation of hardship – and mateship – was all too often deemed to have no contribution to make" (<u>Writing</u> 161).

As the exclusive mateship discourse moved into its dominant cultural position, inclusive mateship was eclipsed, and the belief that all men were mates allied against

women in an exclusively masculinist bond intensified. This empowering of exclusive mateship, and the corresponding disabling of inclusive mateship, can be seen in C. Hadgraft and R. Wilson's discussion of the Australian short story in the introduction to their anthology <u>A Century of Australian Short Stories</u> (1974). Hadgraft and Wilson maintain that the stories selected for publication in <u>The Bulletin</u> in the 1890s were "real" Australian short stories unlike earlier examples "by women only, by expatriates, by those of Irish stock" which, according to them, could not be considered as representing anything truly Australian (x). According to these editors, these "really Australian" short stories began with <u>The Bulletin</u>'s publications in the 1890s (xii). Hadgraft and Wilson claim that the tradition commenced with Edward Dyson's story, "The Profitable Pub" (later renamed "The Golden Shanty"), which appeared in <u>The Bulletin</u> on Christmas Eve 1887. According to Hadgraft and Wilson, "the flow of characteristically Australian stories grew wider and deeper" from 1888 onwards (xi). Henry Lawson's first short story to be published by <u>The Bulletin</u>, "His Father's Mate", appeared on 22 December 1888 (xi), and according to Hadgraft and Wilson, Dyson and Lawson, along with John Farrell, Victor Daley, Ernest Favenc, William Astley, Louis Becke, A. Dorrington and A. H. Davis, constructed the genre of the Australian short story (xii).

The only woman mentioned in relation to Hadgraft and Wilson's list of "real Australian short story writers" is Jessie Couvreur (Tasma). However, Couvreur's stories, which precede those of the men's, were succinctly dispatched from inclusion among the "real Australian" stories: "So far as the real Australian short story is concerned, however, there was (with the doubtful exception of one of Tasma's) no such thing before the late 1880's" (xii). That story, "How a claim Was nearly jumped in Gum-Tree Gully", was included in Hadgraft and Wilson's anthology accompanied by a notice that its selection was purely because of its historical relevance to the mateship tradition later made famous by Lawson: "This story by 'Tasma', Mrs. Couvreur (1848-1897), has been frequently enough noted as a precursor of the 'mateship' stories of Lawson to warrant, if only on historical grounds, its inclusion here" (ix). This evaluation of mateship representation is an example of the selectivity that was applied to texts, and the specific reading process that was inherent in the construction of exclusive mateship's dominance. Yet stories such as

Dyson's "The Golden Shanty", Lawson's "His Father's Mate", and Couvreur's "How a Claim Was Nearly Jumped in Gum-Tree Gully", though claimed by Hadgraft and Wilson to support the real Australian short story with its emphasis on mateship, all represent inclusive mateship as the pervading spirit of bush life. They do not present exclusive mateship at all, so the way they have been interpreted by Hadgraft and Wilson provides a clear example of the misreading and misrepresentation of inclusive mateship.

Couvreur's "How a Claim Was Nearly Jumped in Gum-tree Gully" (n.d.) depicts inclusive mateship. In the story, which is set in the 1870s, there were two men who were mates. They had gone prospecting together, and when they were unsuccessful, like so many others, they turned to farming, at which both men labour with what the community describes as uncommon zeal, to prepare a home for "T". "T" is Tilly, the "heart's desire" of one of the men, Dave. She had stayed in "the old country" when Dave went to seek his fortune in Australia (48), but in a rare moment of self-disclosure, Dave tells his mate of his love, and Tilly becomes an "ideal"(51) and an "incorporeal presence" for both men (54). Dave had not seen Tilly for over twelve years, and his mate had never met her, but Tilly is each man's mate in spirit, and both men work feverishly on her account (50). To Dave, Tilly is his true companion, and he expresses this sentiment when he introduces Tilly to his mate: " 'It's my mate,' was all Dave said by way of introducing him. 'I put you first, you see, Tilly, and he comes second' " (54). But Dave's mate agrees, because to the men, inclusive mateship with a woman is the ideal to which they aspire. Dave's mate considers Tilly as his mate, and his desire for her eventually drives him from the trio (56). Out of his commitment to mateship with both of his mates, Dave and Tilly, Dave's mate will not "jump" a mate's claim.

This representation of mateship as inclusive rather than exclusive, also features in Dyson's story, "A Golden Shanty". This is the story of a married man, Mickey, who is more than contented with his wife and family life. Mickey is of "Irish extraction" (24), and even though the family's environment is impoverished, he makes no attempt to wander away from home with mates on the pretext of earning sustenance for his wife and nine children. Mickey is portrayed as a character who thinks of his children as "foine, shtrappin'

childer, with th' clear brain" (31), and he dutifully provides for them and his wife, even though he considers that they eat too much (24). The husband and wife team works together through poverty, and they battle side by side to thwart the plundering Chinese. Mrs Doyle rescues her husband from a beating on more than one occasion by "chipping" at the Chinese attackers' skulls with "an axe-handle" (25). Their relationship is mateship of the inclusive kind because they suffer, sacrifice and survive together through good and bad times.

A similar relationship appears to exist between Tom Mason and his family in Lawson's "My Father's Mate" (56). Tom Mason is a family man who lives with his wife on the goldfields of "Pounding Flats". After Tom's wife dies, he shows his devotion to her memory by staying where they had lived although the gold had long since petered out and the place is almost deserted. Tom's love for his youngest son, who is fondly nicknamed Isley, is shown by the companionship they share. One indicator of their closeness is the way that the old man teaches the boy English and mathematics while the two work the mining claim. The father and son are mates in a very caring partnership, and there is nothing exclusively masculinist about the devotion of the pair for each other. Neither is there such a masculinist relationship between little Isley and his special mate, "Tom the Devil", who is like a second father to the child. The strength of Tom Mason's love for his son can be seen in his praying that Isley might be taken to "Heaven" so that he is not tempted to the life of crime indulged in by Tom's older son (60). Isley dies in an accident soon after that wish is made, and his death breaks Tom's heart (64). The old man's subsequent death represents the end of a mateship that was of a deeply personal, loving kind, and of a very different style to exclusive mateship.

Exclusive mateship only becomes the dominant discourse in the reading of these texts if the assumption that mateship is a men's creed is accepted. Although this reading practice is widespread because it has become part of people's cultural conditioning, resistant reading practices, those that "refuse to play by the conventional rules" (Moon 102), are possible. They detect a very different meaning for mateship, so if the assumption that mateship is only for some men is momentarily placed aside, the previously "ignored or

silenced" features of the text become the focus. Such readings of texts, like Lawson's, that are often used to support the claim that mateship is exclusive, offer a new insight into the nature of the mateship described. Such a reading of Lawson's "Some Popular Australian Mistakes" (1893), for instance, reveals different images of bushmen, and questions the idyllic bush lifestyle that usually frames exclusive mateship. Here men's life in the bush is a necessity, not a romantic choice: "No bushman thinks of 'going on the wallaby' or 'walking Matilda', or 'padding the hoof'; he goes on the track – when forced to it" (274). Bushmen, according to Lawson, are not stereotypical male mates: "The poetical bushman does not exist; the majority of the men out back now are from the cities. The real native out-back bushman is narrow-minded, densely ignorant, invulnerably thick-headed. How could he be otherwise?" (275). Lawson describes the romantic impressions of bushmen and their lives as pure fiction and the result of writers' misjudgement: "Australian poetical writers invariably get the coastal scenery mixed up with that of 'out back' " (274).

Over the years, however, the idealised images of bushmen to which Lawson is referring have generated a mythical class of male mates, who bond in mateship to defend themselves against mutual threats including the feminine. These images are found mostly in men's writing, and then through the use of a dominant reading practice that constructs exclusive mateship. Lawson's concluding remarks in his article contradict such readings:

> We wish to Heaven that Australian writers would leave off trying to make a paradise out of the Out Back Hell; if only out of consideration for the poor, hopeless, half-starved wretches who carry swags through it and look in vain for work – and ask in vain for tucker very often. What's the good of making a heaven of a hell when by describing it as it really is we might do some good for the lost souls there? (275)

Ward agrees with Lawson's rebuttal of the bushman image when he acknowledges that this vision of bushmen – "wild boys" – is a stereotype that is "often absurdly romanticized and exaggerated" (Legend 1). Yet he persists in endorsing the image by linking it to myths, tradition and history, and he authenticates it when he calls these notions "this people's idea of itself", and when he connects it to the "reality" of a past that influences the present (Legend 1). When such a reading practice reproduces exclusive mateship as the dominant form of mateship, it simultaneously silences alternative readings and thereby obscures inclusive mateship.

When a text depicts exclusive mateship, that is the writer makes it clear that mates are men and mateship excludes others, particularly women, there is no alternative way of reading that text – the mateship it presents is exclusive. Some texts, however, clearly describe inclusive mateship in which men and women are mates and they enjoy equality in their relationship. There should be no possible alternative reading of this depiction of mateship, but often there is. Firstly, the texts can be ignored, so its depiction of inclusive mateship is excluded from the canon of texts that establishes a description of mateship. This was evident in Hadgraft and Wilson's version of mateship and the Australian short story. Ward practised the same selectivity in developing his thesis on the Australian legend. Alternatively, the reader can take the depictions of mateship and deliberately interpret them in a way that reproduces exclusive mateship despite the author's intention, as was the case in the film adaptation of Gunn's <u>We of the Never Never</u>. Over time these reading practices have constructed and maintained exclusive mateship as the dominant understanding of mateship in Australian culture.

When such a reading practice is applied to a text that is neither explicitly exclusive nor inclusive, that is there is no specification of gender given and the ideals espoused are basic to either form of mateship – egalitarianism, group loyalty, and joining together to overcome adversity – then exclusive mateship is produced from the text because of the association of the masculine with the word <u>mateship</u>. If the text is read with the belief that mateship is not necessarily exclusive to men, a very different reading is produced because no connection is made between the masculine and mateship. Tim Flannery's comment on mateship, for example, could be read as describing either inclusive or exclusive mateship because it has no explicit indicators of either, so it offers a good example of how varying the reading practice can produce different ideas about mateship:

> "What we had in Australia," says the palaeontologist, mammalogist, author, and the new director of the South Australian Museum, "was an incredibly harsh and difficult environment which hit us on the head from the beginning."

> "And it dictated: You won't survive alone, but work together and you've got a chance. And as part of that working together, we developed mateship,

a key element in Australian society." (Eccleston 2)

If the dominant reading of mateship – that is, mateship is exclusive to men – is applied to this text, in spite of the fact that men receive no special mention, they are immediately given credit for developing this very worthy convention of mateship. But if a resistant reading practice, one that "goes against the grain" (Moon 102) of the dominant reading practice associated with mateship, is applied to this text – that is the reader seeks to learn about mateship rather than merely confirming links between men and mateship – then mateship may be seen to be inclusive of all Australians instead of exclusive of women. In Flannery's text, this would mean that mateship was developed by many Australians working together, and was therefore an inclusive survival strategy of which Australians could be justifiably proud. So it is that the application of the dominant reading practice associated with mateship produces the belief that mateship is exclusive, but resistant reading practices including widening the canon of texts used to describe mateship in the past, paying attention to what the writer is saying, and reading against the belief that mateship is only exclusive to men, permits mateship to be seen as two different discourses. In this way, inclusive mateship can be reclaimed from its eclipsed position in relation to exclusive mateship.

4. Automatic association of men and mateship causes ambiguity

If the association of the word <u>mate</u> solely with the masculine is accepted as a truth, wherever <u>mate</u> appears, masculine dominance is confirmed along with the exclusive meanings for mateship. If this transference of meaning becomes automatic, then the associated power relations endorse a dominant masculine in any texts that feature mateship. This is an example of what Luce Irigaray describes as the masculine gendering of language. As poststructuralists remind us, however, meaning is never fixed, and if this transference happened with every usage of the word <u>mate</u>, the exclusive mateship discourse would not only dominate, it would totally obscure the inclusive mateship discourse in Australian culture. But because this has not been the case, it cannot be assumed that the masculine and mateship are inseparable. It has already been shown that both fictional and non-fictional literature associate the word <u>mate</u> and the convention of mateship with both

sexes; and that the automatic assumption of a masculine connotation for mateship and the word <u>mate</u> leads to an inaccurate reading of mateship in those texts in which no gender is stipulated. A further reason why there should not be an automatic association of the masculine gender with the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> is that where there are no overriding textual clues as to the form of mateship being described, an assumed masculine definition leads to confusion which actually challenges both the validity of the suggestion that the word <u>mate</u> can only denote the masculine and the assumption that mateship is an exclusively masculinist creed.

Two final examples will serve to highlight this confusion and to demonstrate that in language, and therefore in culture, even though it is not a widely publicised interpretation of mateship, there is a dissociation of the masculine from the word <u>mate</u>, and likewise from beliefs about mateship. The first example is a traditional Australian folk song "Native Mate" in which the chorus line, "With that dear native mate that will share it with me", can apply to either a man or a woman because sex is not specified (137). If <u>mate</u> names a woman, and the singer is a man, then the song challenges the exclusive meaning of mateship by suggesting that mateship is truly inclusive. Likewise, if the singer is a woman who wishes for a male "native mate", the song does not describe exclusive mateship. Then if the singer is a male who wishes for a male mate, or a female who wishes for a female mate, the song suggests that homosexual love is linked to mateship. All of these possible interpretations contradict the exclusive meaning of mateship, which is homosocial, and so does not happen between women, and which is homophobic, so two men could not want to "mate" homosexually. This folk song is therefore clearly celebrating inclusive mateship.

Ambiguity about the meaning of mateship also results when the word <u>mate</u> is read as denoting solely the masculine in C. G. A. Colles "Gone Ahead" (1912). Again no sex is specified for the "I" who narrates the poem, but the "old mate of my dreams" is definitely a male because he is identified as such by masculine pronouns (3). If "I" is a male, then it is difficult to think of the men as not being homosexuals when the poem describes their mateship in the passionate sentiments of romantic love:

> To hopes one half remembers,
>   By ways where shadows go;
> Not back shall I be taken
>   To haunts and hills forsaken,
> But rather sleep, to waken,
>   Old mate, in lands you know. (3)

But since exclusive mateship is homophobic, it is unlikely that the "I" is a man because this would contradict the style of masculinity promoted by exclusive mateship. But if the "I" is a woman, this would also challenge exclusive mateship because it would mean that the mateship described names a partnership of both sexes, and is therefore inclusive mateship.

It is clear from these examples that the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> cannot be automatically assumed to mean that mates are men and that mateship is an exclusively men's creed.

Conclusion

While the product of a resistant reading does not alter the fact that mateship has been widely accepted as a men's creed, it does point to language as being the way to change this established thinking about mateship. Of necessity, though, this change in language begins in the past. In concluding his description of the Australian legend, Ward challenges readers to "give it a go" and "create traditions" that have relevance for today, and "to develop those features of the Australian legend which still seem valid in modern conditions" (259). Inclusive mateship is a part of the Australian legend, but a largely silenced part, because women and some men are excluded from the exclusive mateship that is commonly connected to Australianness. A creation of traditions that reflect today's Australian culture therefore has to begin by dispelling the belief that mateship does not include women and men other than the macho, misogynous stereotypes. This involves promoting inclusive mateship as the true spirit of Australian mateship, and it begins with showing that the "bushman" of the myths, legends and histories that construct the past, has a "bushwoman mate". When this simple addition is made to Ward's challenge, for instance, the change in tone of the statement from exclusively masculine to inclusive of everyone is instantaneous:

> But nothing could be more thoroughly within the tradition than to 'give it a go' – to venture boldly on new courses of action, and so modify, and even create, traditions as the anonymous bushmen [and bushwomen] and, later, the men [and women] of the 'nineties did. (258-9)

This experiment, simple though it is, shows that since exclusive mateship's dominance has been achieved through language, it is through language that it can be challenged. When female mates share centre stage with male mates in language, exclusive mateship's dominance disappears, and as it does so, inclusive mateship appears, and with it returns the spirit of egalitarian togetherness that is needed to encourage and unite Australians against uncertainty as much today as it was in the past.

Conclusion

> "Mateship might be a myth but it's worth fighting for."
>
> Sometimes it seems that being born an Australian woman means being precluded from all the highest prized rituals and codes of our society. Take mateship, for example. It is as hard for women to enter the mysterious realm of mateship as it is for her to become a Mason. Both are bastions of secret behaviour that women are destined never to penetrate.
> Susan Mitchell (Mitchell 11)

If mateship were only for men, then why would the Prime Minister, John Howard, declare, as Mitchell notes in the article cited above, that his wife is his best mate (11)? Is there another dimension to mateship, and are Mitchell and those like her who think that mateship "is a form of secret handshake between Australian men" (11), missing something terribly important about it?

This paradoxical nature of mateship was what started my endeavour to find out why a convention that is regarded as an essential part of Australianness should also often be thought of as exclusive to men. The literature I read did not provide convincing answers. As described in Chapter One, there is confusion and very little agreement among those who have studied Australian mateship. One point of agreement shared by all researchers, though, is that mateship, while being a significant Australian convention, is commonly thought of as a men's creed. The evidence offered to explain why mateship should be so strongly associated with the masculine rests solely upon the unfounded assumption that mateship is a part of the Australian legend, and in the myths and traditions of that legend, men are mates and mateship is a men's creed.

In Chapter Two, the tracing of the etymology of the words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> reveals that the meanings for both words changed in Australian English. The changes were markedly odd. Firstly, both words gained special, spiritual significance where once they had none, being used only to define a matching pair or a couple of some kind. Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, the meanings attached to the words were changed from being gender neutral to masculine. These changes showed that in Australian English, the

words <u>mate</u> and <u>mateship</u> became culturally significant and associated with the masculine at a very early stage in Australian history.

Given these significant changes in usage, mateship cannot be described accurately in any of the ways that it is normally promoted – that is as a spirit, an ethos, a creed or a religion. Even explaining mateship as a convention has its limitations because in popular usage, mateship, in the past as much as in the present, has the same dual meanings – significance to Australianness and a particularly masculine definition. In Chapter Three, I therefore describe mateship as a discourse. This way of examining mateship provides the flexibility that encompasses mateship's extremes of meanings, while also facilitating the means of resolving its paradoxical nature because discourses are fluid and can be part of each other at the same moment that they separate and form opposites. Yet to define and explain the paradoxical features of mateship, it is necessary to accept that mateship has at least two major discursive forms: one is inclusive and speaks of the egalitarian unity so dear to Australians; and the other is exclusive and speaks of masculine exclusivity and patriarchal empowerment of the masculine and subordination of the feminine. But separating the discourses thus produces another anomaly when instances of inclusive and exclusive mateship are examined in fictional and non-fictional literature: men can be and often are shown as being mates with women, and since such men are rejected from exclusive mateship, not all men automatically belong to exclusive mateship.

With exclusive and inclusive mateship defined as two separate discourses, the task of tracing their origins is simpler because the paradoxical nature of mateship disappears, and what was once one history of development with inexplicable anomalies becomes two separate histories with some commonalities. In Chapters Four and Five, therefore, the origins of the inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses are traced respectively. The discourses shared an initiating phase in the first sixty years of colonial existence, between 1788 and 1850, and their origins were tied to a re-reading of "the label of difference" that was applied to convicts, emancipists and, by association, to free settlers as well, because Australia was a penal colony. This re-reading of "difference" was part of a vital survival strategy that enabled the colonial population of predominantly British outcasts to gain

strength from believing in themselves. The inclusive and exclusive mateship discourses, however, used this re-reading of "difference" in very different ways. Inclusive mateship formed as a discourse from a re-reading of "difference" that centred upon colonials rejecting the old-world ways and English norms that had made them into social outcasts, and replacing those norms with a belief that colonial ways were standards by which to assess inclusion and exclusion. This turnaround in thinking meant that colonials were no longer "different" and therefore no longer outcasts: colonial society was the new standard, and those who did not suit it were the "different others". Exclusive mateship, however, while maintaining the re-reading of "difference", used the masculine, and in particular one specific form of masculinity as the norm of acceptance. The way in which these discourses re-read "difference" empowered different groups of people: inclusive mateship empowered anyone who sought to survive by sharing with others; and exclusive mateship empowered males only. The exclusive mateship discourse was then brought into prominence and became closely associated with Australian mateship in the period 1885-1925 with the aid of the men's press, in particular with <u>The Bulletin</u>.

But patriarchy alone could not have been responsible for making exclusive mateship into the dominant mateship discourse, because mateship was a powerful survival discourse shared by women and men. In Chapter Six, I examine this notion and find that it was mateship's becoming a surrogate religion akin to Christianity that conveyed exclusive mateship into dominance in Australian culture. Mateship became a surrogate religion for many Australians during the nineteenth century and when the discourse of mateship melded with the Christian religion, it caused mateship to be an inclusive discourse with a masculinist nature in the same way that Christianity is inclusive, though women are subordinated to males through the centrality of a masculine god.

Exclusive mateship is a patriarchal discourse, and because its basic tenet is misogyny, it causes social divisiveness. But since exclusive mateship also rejects those men who do not suit its peculiar style of masculinity, the social divisiveness it causes impacts on men as well as women. This aspect of mateship's exclusiveness would have formed an interesting area of study because it brought into focus many male-male conflict

situations like homophobia, schoolyard bullying and dangerous risk-taking activity by males. But, since exclusive mateship's main reaction is against the feminine, in Chapter Seven, I examine its social impact upon the lives of women. The texts examined connect exclusive mateship to physical and sexual abuse of young women.

Finally, in Chapter Eight, I argue that exclusive mateship is maintained in its dominant cultural position by reading practices which cause mateship to be read as exclusive through established ways of thinking that are now entrenched in Australian culture. In the past, these ways of reading mateship caused researchers to select as evidence only those texts that promoted exclusive mateship, or on some occasions, to change an original inclusive meaning of mateship in a text to an exclusive meaning. Mateship is a discourse – a special form of language – and it does in its present confusing state empower the masculine through mateship's connection to Australianness. The only way to undo that confusion, and thereby to empower all Australians through mateship, is to stop thinking that the union of men and mateship is automatic, and instead apply resistant reading practices which reveal that mateship can be, and often is, inclusive.

Many fascinating connected projects suggested themselves during the lengthy research involved in this study. Among them, several are pertinent for today's society in which statistics show that in Australia we have one of the highest youth suicide rates in the Western world. Because many of these young people are men, these statistics could be connected to exclusive mateship in that, as Terry Colling said, mateship (exclusive) is now a dysfunctional model of manhood that leaves many Australian men isolated and alone with poor communication skills and such a low respect for women that interpersonal relationships are meaningless. The research I have started on exclusive mateship could be helpful in examining the abuse of males in Australian society through bullying and homophobia, as well as social forms of self-abuse like dangerous risk-taking activities including heavy drinking and inappropriate use of motor vehicles. Also from the perspective of men's health, but touching also on women's lives, is exclusive mateship's connection to pack mentality and violent crimes against women and homosexual males. Last, but not least, it would be very interesting to examine any connections between

exclusive mateship and Australia's "tall poppy syndrome" which works on the basis of keeping everyone at the same level as one's mates, and thus, achieving only to the lowest common determinant.

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