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Melissa Bellanta

Bury Me Deep Down Below: Masculine Sentimentality on the Turn-of-the-Century Australian Frontier

Abstract

The idea of a 'feminisation of sentimentality' taking place over the long nineteenth century has a long currency in Anglophone scholarship. Many historians of masculinity have indeed argued that white masculinity was defined in opposition to sentimentality by the turn of the twentieth century: as sexually aggressive, militaristic, racially competitive, and characterised by a lack of sympathy for 'blacks'. White men certainly did use an anti-sentimental rhetoric to ridicule women and their political adversaries in this period. We can see this in turn-of-the-century Australia, where conservative settlers often juxtaposed masculine practicality and effeminate sentimentality in debates over the treatment of Aborigines. In this article, I challenge this rhetoric by showing that rugged white men engaged in many forms of sentimentality in this period. A key Australian example of this was the 'dying bushman' tradition. It made the suffering of rugged white men into a source of pathos. It also ensured that frontier violence and tender masculine feeling were interrelated, giving the lie to the notion of a 'feminisation of sentimentality'.

Introduction

'Unfortunately there has always been a sentimental section of people who can indulge in the rhetoric of the rodomontade, but this class never allies itself … to the practical party of action'. So wrote a South Australian journalist in 1891 in defence of William Willshire, a member of the colony's Native Police corps charged with killing two Aboriginal men. Willshire was the first white man to be brought to trial over the murder of Aboriginal people in South Australia. Since the murders occurred while he was acting in his capacity as a member of the Native Police (a force consisting of white officers in command of Aboriginal constables), the case was hugely controversial. According to this journalist, the civilians who supported the charges against Willshire were of a kind that rarely strayed from comfortable parlours in the cities. They criticised his actions from a position of cosy ignorance, preferring 'a policy of Quaker-like meekness, or of unmanly impotence' to purposeful law enforcement on the frontier ('The Tempe Downs Tragedy'; Nettelbeck and Foster).

An opposition between sentimentality and practicality appeared repeatedly in debates over humanitarian issues in turn-of-the-century Australia. This was especially the case when the debates were about settlers' treatment of Aborigines (e.g. 'The Blackfellow's Luck'; 'Missions to Blacks'; 'The Aborigines Bill' 1892; 'The Aborigines Bill' 1899). Sometimes both sides accused the other of 'sentimentality', by which they meant a combination of impracticality and effeminacy (Kaladelfos 200, 205). Those who most often used 'sentimental' as an insult were rugged conservatives with experience of Australia's frontier districts, which by the late 1800s were located in the centre and north of the continent (Banivanua-Mar et al 358–65). These men prided themselves on being no-nonsense, get-down-to-business types. Many believed in taking firm measures with Aboriginal people, even if it meant doing so with a rifle in hand.

Gendered attacks on the 'sentimental humanitarianism of rose-water idealists' were not confined to Australia ('Britain in Africa'). They could be found in debates over the treatment of colonised people, among other humanitarian issues, in a range of colonial and imperial settings. Nonetheless, they were particularly prominent in Britain's settler colonies: the United States, New Zealand, parts of Canada and South Africa, and Australia. Many white men linked their masculinity to a rigorous assertion of racial superiority over 'blacks' or 'natives' in these societies. They also mocked those members of the British imperial administration who insisted on racial equality (Lake and Reynolds 124–5). Like right-wing politicians ridiculing 'inner-city elites' today, they suggested that this 'Exeter Hall set' only held its liberal views because they lived molly-coddled lives (e.g. 'The Aborigines Bill' 1892).

It would be tempting to present the anti-sentimental rhetoric used by sturdy colonists as part of a 'feminisation of sentimentality' taking place over the course of the long nineteenth century. As Mary Chapman and Glenn Hendler show, this term (or its equivalent) has been used by a range of scholars over the years. American feminist historians and literary scholars once wrote about mid nineteenth-century sentimentality as if it became 'ensconced solely in a feminine "world of love and ritual"' or an '"empire of the mother"' (3). Conversely, scholars of masculine adventure novels have stressed the fact that their authors pitted themselves against the feminine 'world of love and ritual' in the late nineteenth century and valorised aggression over sentimentality (e.g. Phillips 1996; Crotty ch. 5). Historians of masculinity such as Gail Bederman, John Tosh, Robert Morrell and Jock Phillips have further claimed that military fervour, physical strength, racial competitiveness and/or sexual aggression were white masculine ideals by the end of the century. Australian historian Stephen Garton also tells us that these developments went hand in

hand with the notion that men should engage in an 'avoidance of affect' in the course of their everyday lives (54).

Though a good deal of what these scholars say accords with the fact that 'sentimental' was used as an insult in debates about humanitarian issues, it is ultimately misleading to speak of a feminisation of sentimentality. For a start, it encourages us to overstate the limitations imposed on men when it came to their consumption of romantic novels, melodramas, and pathetic ballads. It *did* become more fraught for men to engage with these cultural forms over the nineteenth century. But there was much more social tolerance of them in practice than the concept of a feminisation of sentimentality suggests. More importantly, that phrase encourages us to forget that anti-sentimental rhetoric was indeed just that: a rhetoric used for strategic ends. Those who used it were trying to further their own political cause or interests rather than offering a straightforward description of their relationship to sentimental things.

As American literary scholars Julie Ellison (20) and Jennifer Travis (43) have noted, men have long made attacks on the emotional excesses of women to justify their own emotionalism. The same applied to practical colonists' attacks on 'sentimental humanitarianism' in turn-of-the-century Australia. Many of the men who noisily attacked 'the sentimental section of the people' still engaged in their own forms of sentimentality – it is just they just did not explicitly name them as such. Their sentimentality has tended to go unacknowledged ever since because it was what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls an 'open secret' in Australian society (145). It was something everyone knew about, but conveniently overlooked when men claimed to be the more rational sex, or when rugged frontiersmen paraded their practicality.

A key form of sentimentality practised by white men in turn-of-the-century Australia was the dying bushman tradition. As I show here, it was common for white men to write, read, recite and sing doleful texts about other white men dying in the bush in this period. Closely related to the pioneer legend (Hirst 1978), this tradition invited its participants to feel the pathos of white men struggling against the elements, living far from city comforts and loved ones. In some cases it went further to highlight the threats posed to bush settlers and their families by marauding Aborigines. Dying bushmen lore thus intertwined sentimentality with 'practical' masculinity. Sentimentality was also interwoven with frontier violence. That violence was rarely motivated solely by fear or greed or an aggressive commitment to white settlement. Male settlers' protectiveness towards their families and/or their intimate bonds with other white men also played its part. Throwing the spotlight on masculine sentimentality thus tells us something valuable about the history of the emotions in turn-of-the-century Australia. At the same time, it offers insights into gender relations and the humanitarian controversies of the day. Ultimately, it shows us how rugged white men came to be presented as subjects worthy of sympathetic identification in Australian culture, while tender feeling expressed by women and humanitarian sentiment focused on Aborigines was ridiculed.

So What is Sentimentality?

Before I discuss the dying bushman tradition, it is necessary to define 'sentiment' and 'sentimentality'. Following the lead of American literary scholars Julie Ellison (4) and June Howard (65), my definition of these terms is deliberately wide, reflecting the fact that they are used elastically in everyday speech. Keeping its common usage in mind, I define sentiment here as a feeling belonging what might alternatively be called the 'human affections' or 'tender emotions'. I use *sentiment*, that is, to refer to feelings such as grief, pity, sympathy, fondness, adoration and compassion, all of which relate to close personal bonds between individuals (Solomon 9). I use *sentimentality* to mean the expression of tender feelings in a scripted way, drawing on shared conventions in the hope of evoking an empathetic response in others (Samuels 5; Howard).

As Howard says, we call something *sentimental* when it is expresses a 'packaged' sentiment, revealing the socially constructed nature of the emotion in question (73). This exposure of the socially-constructed nature of emotion is the key grounds on which sentimentality has been attacked since the late 1700s. Countless journalists, novelists, politicians and critics have juxtaposed the artifice of sentimentality with genuinely heartfelt feeling over the years (Solomon 9; Howard). From the start of the twentieth century, modernists also attacked sentimentality on the basis of its conventionality. Since modernist critics and cultural producers placed a premium on originality, they despised the notion of relying on already-established language or forms for expressing emotion in art (Clark).

In defining sentimentality as the expression of tender feeling in a conventional manner, I aim to explore it as a broad cultural phenomenon. Sentimentality is a multifaceted thing: something practiced by individuals in their personal lives, featured in various forms of literature and popular culture, and exhibited in the press and public life. It is thus best explored in ways that range across these realms, attending both to discourse and social practice. It is also important to acknowledge that people engage in sentimentality for many reasons: to cynically play on other's emotions, to render raw feelings more manageable, and/or to genuinely strive to express personal feeling in a way that others will understand.

Another reason we should define sentimentality broadly is to avoid limiting it to the dominant forms it assumed earlier in the Victorian era. The so-called 'cult of sentimentality' flourishing in the early-to-mid Victorian period was a particular historical phenomenon (Kaufman 10). It was characterised by elaborate rituals for mourning, a florid vocabulary for the expression of pathos, by weepy ballads, stylised expressions of emotion in melodramatic theatre, and an idealised vision of domesticity (Jalland chs 3–10; Moody 212–13; Tompkins). It was also intertwined with the early-Victorian growth of Evangelical humanitarianism, the most obvious expression of which was the campaign to end slavery (Samuels; Ellis ch. 2). Sentimentality need not be confined to these specific historical associations, however, because the

sentimental mode continued to develop in new ways after the Victorian cult of sentimentality had waned (Williamson).

The Dying Bushman Tradition

In 1894, a prose account of two men travelling through northern Queensland was published in the *Glasgow Herald*. Afterwards it was reprinted in the Queensland press. Written by W. Kinnaird Rose, a Scottish-born journalist who edited the *Brisbane Courier* between 1889 and 1891, it concerned a journey he had made with the police magistrate William Parry-Okeden as members of a board investigating Queensland prisons ('The Late Mr Kinnaird Rose'). In his story Rose presented Parry-Okeden as a lion of practical masculinity: 'spare of flesh, but hard as nails, as active as a kangaroo, and the best horseman and whip I have ever met' (1894a and b). He had good reason to present his colleague in this way. The man who would become Commissioner of Police in 1895, and shortly afterwards defend the colony's notorious Native Police force against accusations of murder, was indeed a fine cricketer and rider (De B. Collins Persse; Kidd 43).

Having established Parry-Okeden's masculine credentials, Rose went on to describe his pious treatment of a bushman's corpse. The dead man had been lying in the country outside Winton, he wrote. Evidently he had laid down to rest 'in hopeless suffering', questing in vain for water. Knowing he was about to die, he had laid out his Bible: 'precious solace of that departed soul'. Moved by this, Parry-Okeden dug a grave and put the body to rest. His musical voice 'reverberated with tender pity as he repeated a passage from the Hebrew psalm as a glorious requiem: "Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him"'. Parry-Okeden was also moved by what he saw as the bushman's sacrifice to the cause of white settlement. In a 'fine phrase' he told Rose: 'A new land is manured by the bones of its pioneers'.

Pathos-filled descriptions of settlers dying in the bush had appeared in Australian literature and journalism long before this account. Some concerned defenceless children. There were so many of these, in fact, that Peter Pierce has described the spectre of babes lost in the bush as 'an Australian anxiety'. Others, like Charles Harpur's 'Glen of the Whiteman's Grave' (1846), brought a Romantic gravity to the notion of bush death. This poem told of a 'visionary Youth' murdered by bushrangers in a melancholy wilderness (218–24). As the century progressed, however, dying-bushman lore was less likely to focus on starry-eyed youths and more likely to emphasise hardy masculinity, both of the man who died and the mourners he left behind. In 'Death in the Bush', Henry Kendall thus drew emotive force from the spectacle of hard men moved to tears by the death of a mate. Published in 1869, this poem told of 'rough, flinty fellows' crying after a male friend breathed his last:

> This day, and after it was noised abroad
> … That he was dead 'who had been sick so long',
> There flocked a troop from far-surrounding runs,
> To see their neighbour, and to bury him;
> And men who had forgotten how to cry
> (Rough, flinty fellows of the native bush)
> Now learned the bitter way (16–17).

Harpur and Kendall were not the only colonial men to write dying bushman poems. Published in 1888, Douglas Sladen's anthology *A Century of Australian Song* contained numerous examples. These included Arthur Chandler's 'Bush Idyll' (111–15); P. J. Holdsworth's 'Station Hunting on the Warrego' (225–41); C. R. Sherard's 'Lost in the Mallee' (414–17); and F. S. Wilson's 'Waiting for the Mail' (539–39). Another example was Adam Lindsay Gordon's 'The Sick Stockrider'. Published the day before Gordon committed suicide in 1870, this famous poem underlined the masculinity of its ailing protagonist; his life of splendid male companionship and derring-do outdoors (Gordon 8–13; Kramer). It also drew attention to his lack of piety ('I've had my share of pastime, and I've had my share of toil... / And the chances are I go where most men go') before ending on a note of low-keyed pathos:

> Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
> With never stone or rail to fence my bed;
> Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
> I may chance to hear them romping overhead.

Though the poets just mentioned were all from the south-eastern colonies, Queensland writers contributed to public sentimentality about dying bushmen. Death-in-the-bush poems were arguably even more resonant there than in the more settled districts further south. Given that the north of Queensland was still a frontier in the late 1800s, it is not perhaps surprising that Sladen's anthology included a poem entitled 'Death in the Queensland Bush' by 'Queenslander' (375–6): nor that other Queenslanders such as John Nicholson (27–30), George Vowles and the roving prospector Alexander Forbes composed death-in-the-bush poems. Published in Rockhampton in 1869, Forbes' *Voices From the Bush* included numerous pathos-filled numbers about dead bushmen bearing titles such as 'Lost in the Bush', 'The Digger's Grave', and 'The Shepherd's Grave' (1–3; 15–17, 27):

> … For low and deep doth the shepherd sleep,
> By the Queensland waters lying,
> He hath laid him down in a nameless grave,
> Where the curlews shriek, and the gum trees wave,
> And the southern winds are sighing (27).

With the exception of 'The Sick Stockrider', none of the poems just mentioned reached a large popular audience in their own right. Considered collectively, however, they reveal the emotional significance of the dying bushman trope in colonial society. Other cultural forms contributed to this: short stories such as Henry Lawson's 'A Bush Undertaker', journalistic writing such as Kinnaird Rose's, and visual images such as Thomas McCombie's 'The Bush Graves of Australia' and Frederick McCubbin's 'A Bush Burial'. More revealing still were ballads set to well-known melodies. These were modelled on British songs about wandering men who suffered lonely deaths: soldiers on far-off battlefields, miners who had emigrated, and sailors in distant seas. As folklorist Hugh Anderson notes, two such songs circulating in early-to-mid colonial Australia were 'The Old Stable Jacket' and 'The Tarpaulin Jacket'. They influenced the numerous local songs featuring bushmen in the second half of the century such as 'The Stockman's Last Bed', 'The Bushman's Lullaby' and 'Careless Jim' (Sladen 543–7).

The best-known ballad about bush death was 'The Dying Stockman'. Set to the tune of 'The Tarpaulin Jacket', it was like Kendall's 'Death in the Bush' in that it simultaneously celebrated powerful masculinity while foregrounding the tearful sentiment of mates:

> A strapping young stockman lay dying,
> His saddle supporting his head,
> His two mates around him were crying,
> As he rose on his pillow and said:
>
> 'Wrap me up with my stockwhip and blanket,
> And bury me deep down below,
> Where the dingoes and crows can't molest me,
> In the shade where the coolibahs grow' (Paterson 66–7).

The popularity of this song prompted amateur poets to publish their own compositions called 'The Dying Stockman' in the popular press in the 1880s (e.g. Colwell; G.C.). After a numerous papers reproduced its lyrics in 1894, the song was also performed at amateur concerts and socials in country towns ('The Dying Stockman' 1894a, 1894b, 1894c; 'Terang'; 'Calginee'; 'Penshurst'; 'Baths Concert'). In the same year, two members of the public sent different versions of its lyrics in response to the *Queenslander*'s call for bush songs 'sung every day by the camp fire'. They were men from Roma and Dalby in the Queensland interior ('Songs of the Bush'). We thus get a sense of its broad circulation in the period: at private gatherings and communal occasions, around camp-fires and in town halls, read in lyrical form over the morning paper and used as inspiration for other compositions about white bushmen's deaths.

The Emergence of Laconic Sentimentality

In her history of Australian mourning between 1788 and 1914, Patricia Jalland argues that the culture of death in the Australian bush was vastly different to the one in metropolitan society. In cities such as London and Boston, funerals and mourning rituals were highly elaborate affairs and the language of grief was intensely emotive and religious. By contrast, Australian bush funerals had few trimmings and were often secular in character. Crucially, bush deaths tended to be imbued with stoic fatalism or grim heroism when they were represented in Australian culture. They were not treated sentimentally. Representations of grimly heroic bush deaths could be found in poems or stories about dead explorers, while representations of stoic fatalism could be found in the ballads about death sung by bushmen, full of 'laconic humour and ironic realism'. Stoic fatalism could further be found in the agnosticism of Gordon's 'The Sick Stockrider', and in 'realist' stories by Henry Lawson such as 'A Bush Undertaker' and 'The Union Buries Its Dead' (248, 255–56). By the First World War, Jalland tells us, this stripped-back, unsentimental bush culture came to influence Australian approaches to death at large (253).

To characterise the Australian culture of death in the bush as unsentimental is to overlook the lachrymose character of many bush ballads and poetry. Lawson's work is also misrepresented if it is described in this way. He was not just a 'realist' who wrote casually about hard things. Instead, he strove to express the human affections through his stripped-back style (Baxter; Phillips 1970: 87). Much the same might be said about Gordon's dying-bushman poem, which was so well known that most Australian bushmen could allegedly recite it by rote in the early 1900s ('The Sick Stockrider'). Jalland may have been struck by its impiety, but many of this poem's enthusiasts in this period were struck rather by its pathos. One reader even declared that its 'now cynical, now tender, contrasts' contained 'a wistful, haunting plaintiveness that finds a ready access to the heart' (Forbes 1894: 297). Reviewing a performance set to music at an Australian Natives' Association social, a Charters Towers critic called it 'that familiar and soul-stirring poem of poor Adam Lindsay Gordon, which so ably and pathetically deals with realistic phases of early Australian bush life' (Untitled).

The idea that the impact of a work was more emotionally powerful if it was simply expressed grew in popularity at the turn of the century. As Lea Jacobs says, one could find a reaction against formality and floweriness in language in the United States by the 1910s (1–24). The same reaction was evident somewhat earlier in Australia, most obviously in late nineteenth-century representations of bush figures and scenes. We can also see it in the push to simplify burial customs in the late 1800s. As Jalland herself points out (ch. 16), the idea that it was more loving to mourn someone simply rather than through a showy funeral was gaining currency throughout the Anglophone world in this period. It would become commonplace in the aftermath of the First World War (see also Cannadine 192). This idea was articulated by a group of Gordon enthusiasts who conducted a pilgrimage to his grave in Melbourne in 1892. 'There will be no formal ceremony, but a simple gathering round the poet's grave', they declared in an invitation to the public (Anonymous). The pilgrimage involved laying wildflowers on Gordon's headstone and a

recitation from a Kendall poem written in his memory rather than from the Bible. This modern ritual demonstrated that being plain and secular could still mean being sentimental. Certainly that was how its organisers viewed its relative informality.

Once we recognise that informality and pathos could be intertwined, it becomes possible to see past the anti-sentimental rhetoric of the turn-of-the-century period. Yes, a rejection of the Victorian cult of sentimentality was evident in English-speaking culture and in public and everyday life. Yet it makes sense to see this as part of a development of new conventions for conveying the human affections rather than a rejection of sentimentality *per se*. Literary scholar Aaron Ritzenberg has suggested this in an American context, most notably in a reading of Mark Twain's work. Twain was known for his aggressive critique of literary sentimentality. It was not the language of tender feeling that irked him, however, but the heavily stylized mechanisms for representing emotion so prevalent in the mid-Victorian years (47). Others have even said comparable things about Ernest Hemingway, a man renowned for his 'stripped-down, undemonstrative style and his relentless focus on maleness and masculinity' in later decades (Cassuto 5; Strychacz). These men were involved in elaborating new conventions or mechanisms through which to express tenderness and evoke empathy: conventions reliant on vernacular language and/or a plain or terse mode of expression. Such efforts were focused on the figure of the male bushman in turn-of-the-century Australia – especially if he died a lonely death far from home.

The Dying Bushman Tradition and the Pioneer Legend

The pioneer legend was another form of masculine sentimentality developing in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century. It too was expressed in simple language and concerned plain-talking, 'practical' types. The pioneer legend held that settlers who had endured hardships in frontier districts were the backbone of the nation. These people had laboured not just for themselves (so the legend had it), but for the whole settler community (Hirst 1978). The community should thus uphold them as objects of reverence for the wounds they had suffered and the griefs they had endured. We can see the intersection between this legend and lore about dying bushmen in Parry-Okeden's earlier-mentioned comment: 'A new land is manured by the bones of its pioneers'. Both the pioneer legend and the death-in-the-bush tradition were indeed concerned with the creation of emotional connections between settlers and the Australian country that could be used to justify their possession of the land (Jalland 255; Foster et al 9–10).

There are plenty of examples of dying bushmen being offered them as objects of reverence on the basis that they were white pioneers. Poems about dead explorers were the most obvious. These were not in fact all grimly heroic. Many instead mixed patriotic-cum-nationalist sentiment with the language of sympathy (Haynes 115–18). Consider 'Ludwig Leichhardt', a poem appearing on the first page of a work by the Queensland poet-teacher, John Nicholson:

> Thou on Australia's map hast marked my name;
> I, in my book, will do for thee the same:
> Leichhardt, thou hast in all our hearts a shrine,
> And thou shalt have a loving word from mine.

As Robert Foster et al have noted, early twentieth-century versions of the pioneer legend often emphasised the threats posed by Aborigines as one of the hardships facing white pioneers (9–10). This was evident in a collection of settler families' memories published in Charters Towers in 1932. Called *North Queensland Pioneers*, the recollections appearing in this work gave a tender cast to the frontier violence in which the region's pioneers had engaged. They suggested that male settlers who had skirmished with Aborigines did so not because they loved violence, but because they wanted to protect their families and fellow white men (Black 25–9; 36; 52; 59; 62–6; 69–70). Similar justifications for killing Aboriginal people were often given in the turn-of-the-century years. At the same time as he ridiculed Willshire's 'sentimental' critics, for example, the South Australian journalist I mentioned earlier appealed to male settlers' desire to protect those they held dear. 'Are not the colonies full of stories of the sanguinary butcheries and torture endured by helpless women and children at the hands of the natives?', he implored. Were not gun-toting policemen such as Willshire then necessary? ('The Tempe Downs Tragedy') We can see here that humanitarians had no monopoly on sentimentality – that even white men who used an anti-sentimental rhetoric indulged in their own forms of sentimentality when it suited them. We also get a sense here of the links between end-of-the-century sentimentality and frontier violence on the country's northern frontier.

Frontier Violence and Sentimentality: the Case of Frederic Urquhart

In 1892 a story called 'One Night's Work' appeared in the Christmas supplement of the *North Queensland Register*. The story concerned a dying bushman: in this case, a selector, John Deering, killed by warriors from the so-called Nilgarra tribe. Its narrator was Jim Broughton, a white officer with Queensland's Native Police. (As with its South Australian equivalent, Queensland's Native Police corps consisted of white officers in command of Aboriginal troopers (Richards 2008)). The plot revolved around a frightening night in which Broughton and his subordinates tried to protect Deering and his wife from a Nilgarra raid. Broughton managed to shoot one warrior in the head, but not in time to save Deering from a fatal spear wound. The story then drew out Deering's death in classic melodramatic style. It transpired only after he made gasping declarations of love to his wife as she cradled him in her arms. Once he had breathed his last, Mrs Deering refused all offer of comfort:

> Don't, please Mr Broughton; he was my all – husband, father, family, everything – and he – is – dead.

One of Broughton's friends then organised a retaliatory attack on the Nilgarra. When he was finished, Broughton said, 'such a thing as a Nilgarra blackfellow was never heard of' in the district again (Urquhart 1892: 10, 12).

The Nilgarra were most likely a fictionalised version of the Kalkadoon (a.k.a Kalkatungu or Kalkadungu) people. Their country was in north-west Queensland in and around the township of Cloncurry. Jim Broughton was surely a fictionalised version of the author, Frederic Urquhart, who was also an officer in Queensland's Native Police. Urquhart served as a sub-inspector for the Native Police in the far north of the colony between 1882 and 1884, and in the Cloncurry district between 1884 and 1889. His posting to Cloncurry was prompted by the death of another Native Police officer at the hands of Kalkadoon warriors in 1884. Kalkadoon men also killed the local grazier James Powell shortly after he arrived. Urquhart promptly organised a punitive expedition to avenge Powell's death, joined by Powell's business partner and fellow grazier, Alexander Kennedy. For the rest of the decade he conducted raids aimed at 'dispersing' the Kalkadoons and other Indigenous peoples in Australia's far north (Johnston; Richards 2008 36–37; Richards n.d.).

During the period that he was meting out violence to Indigenous north Queenslanders, Urquhart published verse in the colonial press. Most of his offerings were later collected in a book called *Camp Canzonettes, Being Rhymes of the Bush and Other Things* (1891). One poem appearing in the *Carpentaria Times* explicitly concerned the expedition that Urquhart and Kennedy had conducted against the Kalkadoons in 1884. Its title was 'Powell's Revenge' (reproduced in Fysh 141–42):

> … And there beneath a low bent tree
> They see a ghastly sight,
> And scarce could fancy it was he
> They knew was slain that night.
>
> And one spoke out in deep, stern tones,
> And raised his hand on high,
> 'For every one of these poor bones
> A Kalkadoon shall die'.
>
> Then mournfully they turn their backs
> Upon that lonely place,
> And ride away upon the tracks
> To give the murderers chase.
>
> … See how the wretched traitors fly,
> Smitten with abject fear;
> They dare not stop to fight or die,
> And soon the field is clear –
>
> Unless, just dotted here and there,
> A something on the ground,
> A something black, with matted hair,
> Lies without life or sound.

Literary scholar Patrick Buckridge has described 'Powell's Revenge' as 'dispassionate', presumably because of the pitilessness with which it recounted the massacre of Kalkadoons (32). There is actually plenty of emotion in the verse, however, for it foregrounds the horrified grief felt by the male settlers who discovered the 'poor bones' of the bushman Powell. Alexander Kennedy certainly considered the poem to have sentimental value. Decades later, when the writer Hudson Fysh interviewed him for a book called *Taming the North*, he could still recite it by heart (146).

Sentimentality was evident in another of Urquhart's poems about frontier violence called 'Told Around the Campfire' (1891: 141–42). It was written from the point of view of a rough bushman whose wife and baby were slain by 'blacks'. The poem was couched in an inept approximation of the bushman's speech, and began by mocking humanitarian attitudes towards Aborigines. '"Poor blacks" you was saying, was you?', the bushman asked. 'Well, if you ain't got no call / To speak of 'em any different / Don't mention 'em at all'. Very quickly, however, the verse honed in on the bushman's grief after he found the dead bodies of his family. The emotion he felt was offered as justification for his punitive violence against Aborigines:

> I have heard a lot of playin'
> On piannys and organs too;
> But the music of them there rifles
> Were the sweetest I ever knew.
>
> It's all passed now, and over,
> And to be resigned I tries;
> But my heart's up there to nor'ard
> Where Sal and her baby lies.

In writing this poem in the vernacular, Urquhart was participating in the turn toward informality discussed earlier. He was also linking frontier masculinity to down-to-earth simplicity. Fascinatingly, however, many of the other poems in *Camp Canzonettes* were written in high-toned language. His paean to the 'honoured

lost one' Leichhardt was remarkably similar to John Nicholson's (5). It appeared alongside a mournful reflection on a shipwreck (27) and rapt apostrophes to Love and Grief. 'O Grief!', the latter began. '... O thou twin sister of Despair / Fell enemy of bliss' (24). When this is combined with what we know about the melodramatic nature of his Native Police story, it is apparent that Urquhart felt free to express himself in a variety of voices: some of them sentimental, by no means all of them plain or stern.

Urquhart was not alone in using elevating language in the bulk of his verse. As John Hirst notes in his aptly-titled *Sentimental Nation*, the greater Australian public still considered formal language most appropriate for poetry and oratory in spite of the emerging vogue for plain-talking galloping rhymes (23–25). The turn to informality was gathering momentum, but was by no means ubiquitous. Many more men indeed drew on the conventions of Victorian sentimentality than scholarship on turn-of-the-century masculinity allows. Bederman, for example, makes no mention of sentimentality or tenderness in her influential work *Manliness and Civilisation*. Nor do scholars of imperial adventure novels such as Richard Phillips and Martin Crotty. With the exception of Robert Hogg's recent work, the same can be said for scholars of masculinity in turn-of-the-century frontier societies such as Angela Woollacott, Robert Morrell, Raymond Evans and Clive Moore (see also Henningham for a good summary of this scholarship: 119–20).

One would hardly guess from reading scholarship about frontier masculinity that a Native Police officer might have drawn on the conventions of pathetic melodrama, nor that a 'hard-as-nails' police magistrate might quote from a 'glorious psalm'. These instances are instructive, however, in that they allow us to see the inconsistencies and hypocrisies associated with frontiersmen's attacks on feminine sentimentality. They point to the fact that even though practical white men participated in an anti-sentimental discourse, plenty still conveyed the human affections in conventional ways. Urquhart's *oeuvre* also allows us to see that frontier violence was intertwined with white masculine sentimentality, both in practice and in literary and public discourse.

Conclusion

Over the past fifteen or so years, feminist scholars such as Julie Ellison and Jennifer Travis have shown that male 'emotionalism' played a significant role in Anglo-American culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They have done this to reveal the hypocrisy of male attempts to demean women on the basis of their emotional susceptibility. As Travis notes, sentimentality was by no means a solely feminine phenomenon in 1800s America. On the contrary, 'representations of masculine pain and suffering lie at the heart of some of American literature's most canonical texts' (3). Others besides Travis have noted the extent to which white American men staked a claim to affections both public and private on the basis of their precious heartaches over the second half of the century (e.g. Chapman and Hendler 1999; Sedgwick 2008; Barnes 2011). I have been showing something similar here in an Australian context. Even though white men on the Australian frontier sneered at the sentimentality of the 'Exeter set' or of 'rose-water idealists', they still luxuriated in the pathos of hearts broken by marauding 'natives', of bushmen lost in the wilderness, and other sufferings of white pioneers.

A plain-mannered, unadorned style was becoming increasingly desirable at the turn of the twentieth century, whether in literature and popular culture, or in public and everyday life. Crucially, this did not prevent the expression of masculine sentimentality. Rather, vernacular and laconic styles of conveying sentiment were developing at the time. There was also a considerable tolerance of an 'old-style' sentimental register provided it was linked to suitably masculine subjects such as the dying bushman or the pioneer. After the First World War, too, Australians had a new focus for tender feeling: the figure of the soldier dying on a battlefield far from home. Even more than the dying-bushman or pioneer traditions, this so-called Anzac legend gave any male Australian the opportunity to express pathos without compromising his masculinity. It also provided another instance of the connection between masculine sentimentality and violence, which at the turn of the century had been clearest in the context of the northern frontier.

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