

‘Let’s get her’: Masculinities and Sexual Violence in Contemporary Australian Drama and its Film Adaptations

Christine Boman

Many commentators have observed the existence of a masculinist bias as a significant feature in the history of Australian drama and film, with the nexus between masculinity and violence evident in a large number of texts. During the last two decades, issues concerning men and masculinity have gained a high profile on the public agenda and, in the aftermath of the second-wave of feminism, there have been frequent suggestions that masculinity is ‘in crisis’. A number of plays and their film adaptations, spanning the decade from 1991 to 2001, can be seen to engage with recent debates in their thematic treatment of masculinities ‘under pressure’. This article explores the various strategies that playwrights and filmmakers employ to represent masculinities, especially in relation to acts of sexual violence, in the following texts: *The Boys* (1991; 1998), *Brilliant Lies* (1993; 1996), *Speaking in Tongues* (1996), and *Lantana* (2001).¹

R W Connell conceives of masculinities as loose configurations of behaviours, attitudes, gestures and appearances which a particular society at a particular time recognises as masculine.² Gender is an inherently relational concept in that masculinity can only exist and have meaning in relation to femininity. Connell argues further that masculinities are actively constructed in social relationships and in the context of social structures and institutions.³ Feminism challenges the unequal distribution of power in a patriarchal society and can be seen to have a destabilising effect on men’s sense of their status and their manhood. This is readily apparent in *The Boys* and *Brilliant Lies*, where male characters voice strenuous opposition towards feminist ideologies and towards female characters who espouse such ideologies or put them into practice. Acts of sexual violence can be seen to function as an attempt to restore and reinforce a patriarchal gender order by relegating women to what the male perpetrators perceive to be their ‘proper’ subordinate place in society.

The interaction of gender with class has significant implications in the context of this struggle to maintain a power structure in which women, in general, are subordinate to men. Within the overall gender structure, multiple forms of masculinity are organised in relationships of hierarchy and hegemony so that all men in a patriarchal society do not have equal access to power and privilege. For instance, young unemployed men may have no more access to structural power than the women in their communities.⁴ Socially and economically marginalised and with limited future prospects, some working-class men may try to overcome feelings of powerlessness by asserting their dominance over women and children. This is particularly likely for men who construct their identity in accordance with what Connell terms ‘hegemonic forms’ of masculinity, those ways of being male that, although not necessarily the most common, are considered to be normative

and 'most honoured or desired' in a certain social group at a certain time in history.⁵ For instance, traditional, macho styles of behaviour are generally recognised as the norm for men in contemporary Australian culture. The capacity and willingness to engage in acts of violence often serves as a test of hegemonic masculinity.⁶ This is particularly evident in the play and film of *The Boys*, where escalating tension and violence fuelled by excessive alcohol consumption leads to the brothers' gang rape and murder of a young woman. Similarly, in the play and film of *Brilliant Lies*, the character of Gary, who has married up from his working-class background, sexually assaults a female colleague in an effort to overcome his feelings of inferiority.

The playwrights and directors construct a number of contrasting character types (often stereotypes) by assembling a collection of recognisable traits which function metonymically to invoke a whole schema.⁷ Such character types can function to create audience expectations by evoking common prejudices. For instance, the playwright and director's use of characterisation in *The Boys* sets up prejudices against young, unemployed working-class men, and through narrative events which show the Sprague brothers to be violent rapists and murderers. *Brilliant Lies* similarly confirms prejudices against the arrogant, macho boss from a working-class background who is accused of sexual harassment. The play and film of *Brilliant Lies* also evoke prejudice against young, ambitious, sexually liberated women and play on men's fear of false accusations of sexual assault. However, the narrative ultimately confirms the veracity of Susy's claims and thus subverts and problematises simplistic and biased assessments of her character. *Speaking in Tongues* and *Lantana* also create the expectation that the unemployed working-class male character has committed an act of sexual violence; however, the ultimate revelation of this character's innocence represents a marked departure in comparison with the other texts.

Following on from a 'history of masculinist celebration'⁸ and bias, a number of contemporary Australian plays and films propose attitudes towards, and explore anxieties surrounding, changing conceptions of gender at a time when it is frequently argued that masculinity is in crisis. In *Australian National Cinema*, Tom O'Regan observes that a masculinist bias is an 'often-noted characteristic of Australian cinema'.⁹ Further, Meaghan Morris argues that the predominant themes of the relations between the sexes in Australian film have been 'violence, hostility, alienation, misery and a difference of values and desires ... that verges on incommensurability'.¹⁰ Similarly, Dennis Carroll asserts that the 'hallowed relationship' of mateship together with its inherent misogyny have been central themes in modern Australian drama.¹¹ Textual representations of masculinities function in a dialogue with cultural formations of gender by highlighting possibilities for, and limitations of, different ways of enacting masculinity. As Linzi Murrie observes, such constructions 'invariably reproduce dominant ideologies of gender as well as disrupting them'.¹²

The playwrights' and filmmakers' use of intertextuality can be seen as a self-reflexive acknowledgment of their role in reproducing dominant ideologies of masculinity. For instance, in the play of *The Boys*, Brett boasts about being called 'The Terminator'¹³ and, in the play of *Brilliant Lies*, Susy claims that her boss, Gary, 'thinks he's Mel Gibson with a dash of Kerry Packer'.¹⁴ These references

suggest that the characters construct their identities in accordance with hegemonic forms of masculinity represented in other cultural texts, such as films and news media. The plays themselves both reproduce these dominant styles of gender practice and problematise them by foregrounding their limitations.

Features associated with hegemonic masculinities include being powerful, 'strong, successful, capable, reliable, in control' and willing to fight.¹⁵ The hierarchical organisation of masculinities causes conflict and violence as men compete to prove their masculinity and gain greater power and wealth than others. This is foregrounded in the play and film of *Brilliant Lies* in the figure of Paul, who is honest but ineffectual and whose achievement at business school is no guarantee of success in a ruthless and corrupt business environment. He claims that, in order to succeed, 'you've got to be an utter bastard with no conscience, no compassion and no remorse'.¹⁶ Unlike Paul, the character of Gary meets all of these criteria. His use of a metaphor of sexual penetration when he betrays his boss and implies that he is the one who has 'got the guts to go in hard'¹⁷ points to the constitution of hegemonic forms of masculinity in the dog-eat-dog world of corporate institutions. The texts do not condone these aggressive tactics, however, seen when Vince tells Gary that he has been 'ashamed'¹⁸ of their expedient conduct.

The historical source of recent debates about gender can undoubtedly be traced to the new feminism of the 1970s which served to destabilise accepted notions about masculinity and femininity.¹⁹ Feminism represents a significant challenge to the patriarchal gender order and, as such, it has often been met with resistance and hostility by men whose interests are best served by maintaining the *status quo*. This is particularly evident in the plays and films of *Brilliant Lies* and *The Boys*, which foreground men's opposition to feminist ideologies in various ways. The play and film of *Brilliant Lies* are set in the context of a backlash against feminism and the narratives revolve around the question of whether an alleged incident of sexual harassment actually took place. Gary strenuously denies Susy's claim that he sexually harassed her and he constructs himself as a victim of persecution and reverse discrimination. For instance, he declares that 'According to the feminists we're all rapists',²⁰ and expresses anger at being placed in a 'no win situation'²¹ whereby he can either agree to pay compensation or suffer damage to his family and reputation from the media attention that a public court defence is likely to attract. Similarly, in the play and film of *The Boys*, women's increasing independence is represented as a threat to masculine identities. For example, the fact that Jackie owns the car is represented as an insult to Glenn's pride, and the couple's argument in the film over the semantics of 'bought' and 'paid for' evidences her stubborn refusal of his attempt to save face. In contrast to the other texts, *Speaking in Tongues* and *Lantana* normalise the impact of feminism, as is evident in the film when Sonja demonstrates her assertiveness and independence by going dancing without her husband. Similarly, in the play, Bovell's use of reverse parallel dialogue when Leon asserts that his wife, Sonja, is 'Strong ... I depend on her' and Pete asserts that Jane is 'Fragile. She depends on me'²² suggests equivalence in power relations between the sexes. However, like *Brilliant Lies*, both of these texts point to men's anxiety about false accusations of sexual harassment. This is evident in the incident where Valerie accuses an

innocent passer-by of harassing her and demands to know his name. The fact that Pete looks guilty, even though he is not, suggests that he is the victim of reverse discrimination.

The interaction of gender and class can be seen as a significant factor in men's contradictory experiences of power. Although men in general occupy a dominant social position, men have differential access to social power and, as a result, many individual men feel powerless.²³ Working-class men who have little access to social power may use violence to overcome feelings of powerlessness and as a way of constructing a masculine identity. Connell argues that most working-class students leave education before they obtain advanced academic credentials and that this limits their options and their earning capacity in the labour market. The implications of 'economic vulnerability and constraint' for many of these people include having the worst housing and material facilities for raising children, for education, and for social and cultural life.²⁴ Connell also observes that working-class people are often subject to greater police intervention in their lives, evidenced by the fact that 'the overwhelming majority of prisoners in gaols are working-class men'.²⁵ Those who fail to gain social power through access to higher education, entry to professions and command of communication are likely to pursue other sources of power such as physical aggression, sexual conquest or sporting prowess.²⁶ Further, Connell asserts that the family represents that which is most valued in working-class life, and that the traditional gendered division of labour has survived the return of most married women to the workforce. Prolonged unemployment and working-class feminism are two of the factors which Connell suggests have challenged the traditions of working-class life in recent times.²⁷

Working-class masculinities are associated with resentment, powerlessness and violence in *The Boys* and *Brilliant Lies*. This is particularly evident in the play and film of *The Boys*, where Brett and Stevie are unemployed, and the characters inhabit an impoverished social environment. Brett's declaration in the film that 'This is it; this is the fuckin' future!' suggests that he has no hope of improvement or escape. Brett also destroys Glenn's illusions that if he works hard he and Jackie will be able to achieve the dream home and lifestyle that television promises by pointing out that his wage is well below the average. Brett's hostility towards Jackie, whose class status is slightly elevated by the fact that she has a job, also suggests his feelings of inferiority and resentment, evident in his assertion that 'We're not good enough for the likes of you [...] are we ...?' Similarly, in the play and film of *Brilliant Lies*, Gary's sense of inferiority due to his working-class origins compounds his feelings of humiliation at the hands of assertive middle-class women. His sense of inferiority is evident in his assumption that Susy despises him because he 'didn't go to the right school' and does not 'have the right accent'.²⁸ When she ends their affair, Susy's rejection places Gary in a powerless position, and this parallels the dynamic when his middle-class wife shames him by telling their children about his infidelity. The texts suggest that Gary's sexual violence towards Susy can be seen as an attempt to deal with his feelings of powerlessness and inferiority.

An analysis of the film of *The Boys* shows the ways in which images of sexuality are used to emphasise Brett's sense of powerlessness and emasculation,

which results, in part, from the pressures of feminism, and working-class status. David Buchbinder argues that masculinity is defined negatively in modern Western culture as ‘not female and [...] not homosexual’, and that subordinated forms of masculinity are aligned with the feminine.²⁹ Thus, dominant ideology suggests that a ‘real man’ is virile, impenetrable and hard, both physically and emotionally. Although Brett boasts about his ‘hard cock’, he suffers from impotence in his relationship with his girlfriend, who is forthright in her contempt. Michelle suggests that Brett’s inability to get an erection proves that he ‘took it up the arse’ when he was in prison. She further humiliates him by telling him that she slept with someone else when he was in gaol and that she does not want to see him again. Brett is powerless on all accounts: impotent, he is a ‘soft’ and, thus, feminised man who cannot have sex. The suggestion that he engaged in receptive anal intercourse constructs him as penetrable and, once again, feminised. He is powerless and humiliated over his girlfriend’s infidelity. And, finally, he is rejected by her when she initiates the breakdown of their relationship.

The contrasting emphasis in the film of *The Boys*, which represents Brett as feminised, and the play, in which Glenn is depicted as feminised, corresponds with the texts’ different narrative outcomes. This effects a direct link between the characters’ sense of emasculation and their participation in acts of sexual violence. For example, in the play, Glenn is repeatedly humiliated by his failure to please both Brett and Jackie, and the close of the play reveals that he was the ringleader of the gang rape and murder. Similarly, the film emphasises Brett’s feminisation and portrays him as the one who plans and initiates the violent attack.

Acts of violence against women can be seen to function as an attempt to reinforce a patriarchal gender order and reassert a tenuous and fragile sense of masculine identity. This is consistent with research into domestic violence which finds that ‘men’s subjective sense of lost or slipping control is often a precursor to wife beating’.³⁰ Further, in a culture which defines masculinity negatively as ‘not female’, misogyny can be seen to function as a strategy to ‘evade and resist the feminine’ and thus reinforce the masculine.³¹ This is evident in the play and film of *Brilliant Lies* where Gary’s use of verbal abuse to try to ‘punish’, ‘degrade’, and ‘annihilate’³² Susy suggests that he uses misogyny and aggression in an attempt to overcome his emasculation. His action of locking the door and forcing her to crawl on the floor and perform oral sex foregrounds his attempt to assert a sense of masculine dominance by forcing Susy into a position of physical subordination. The fact that he resorts to the use of force and violence emphasises his deep insecurity and sense of powerlessness. Similarly, in the film of *The Boys*, Brett’s frustration and rage at his emasculation erupts in a hypermasculine display of violence as he verbally abuses Michelle and repeatedly bashes her head against a wall. His behaviour can be seen as an attempt to overcome his sense of powerlessness and prove himself as a hard man who is to be respected and feared. This is evident when he releases Michelle only after she begs him not to hit her face, an act which shows that she is terrified of him and subordinate to him, and which therefore reinstates his superiority. However, Brett ultimately has few resources, and his association of masculinity with omnipotence — he perceives himself as a king or a god — is impossible to obtain. Thus, he uses aggression as a form of power by banding his increasingly intoxicated, angry and frustrated brothers together and engaging in a violent act of retribution as a way of reinforcing his masculine identity.

Connell cites overwhelming evidence in support of the fact that ‘men predominate across the spectrum of violence’.³³ For instance, men constitute the majority of members of the armed forces, police and prison guards, and they are responsible for a large majority of violent crimes including assaults, cases of domestic violence, rapes and murders. However, it is important to remember that although the majority of violent acts are committed by men, most men never rape, kill or even commit assault.³⁴ A central theme in *Speaking in Tongues* and *Lantana* is that trust is eroded as a consequence of living in a culture where betrayal and the threat of violence are disturbingly real for many people. This is evident in *Speaking in Tongues* in that Valerie perceives ‘all men as potentially dangerous ... and capable of betrayal’³⁵ as a result of her experience of childhood sexual abuse. In *Lantana*, Valerie’s fear of strangers is attributed to the fact that her eleven year old daughter was murdered. These incidents involving crimes against children affect a strong sense of insecurity as they are difficult to comprehend and they suggest that the world is not predictable nor a safe place. Such incidents can be seen to evoke prejudice against all men, despite the fact that only a minority of men pose any real danger.

The playwrights’ and directors’ representation of contrasting character types (often stereotypes) can be seen to create audience expectations by evoking common prejudices. The texts’ narrative outcomes may ultimately reinforce dominant ideologies by fulfilling such expectations. Alternatively, subsequent narrative events may disrupt audience expectations and, in doing so, problematise common assumptions about familiar character types to various ideological effect. The provision of a few attributes of a character type is sufficient to metonymically invoke a whole schema because audiences recognise such signs from other cultural texts.³⁶ For instance, in the film of *The Boys* the first appearance of Brett following his release from gaol establishes that he is an unrepentant ex-prisoner. His black beanie, tattoos, and other aspects of his physical appearance, together with his cynical stare suggest that he has a working-class background, and that he is angry and resentful. Recalling similar character types from other texts may lead the audience to assume that Brett is tough, violent, rude, quick tempered, a bully, a criminal, untrustworthy, uneducated, unlikely to find employment, likely to re-offend, a heavy drinker, a drug user, sexist, racist, someone to be feared, and so on. The film’s narrative trajectory, which sees Brett enlist his brothers to engage in gang rape and murder, bears out all these expectations and thus reinforces prejudices against ex-prisoners and young, unemployed, working-class men.

By comparison, in the play of *The Boys*, the narrative twist which reveals Glenn to be the ringleader of the brothers’ violent crime can be seen to have even more serious ideological implications. A crude summation of the contrasting character types represented in the play might distinguish Brett as the psychopath, Glenn as the responsible but ineffectual battler trying to make a go of his life, and Stevie as the immature and mentally dull figure. The fact that the character who tries to improve his prospects and fails subsequently initiates a violent rape and murder is extremely pessimistic and deterministic in the way it closes off the potential outcomes for young, working-class males.³⁷ This is reinforced by the fact that Nola and Jackie can find few solutions to improve the plight of Stevie’s

infant son who, Sandra remarks, looks just like her boys did, thus implying that his prospects are similar to those of the previous generation of males in his family.

The play and film of *Brilliant Lies* set up audience expectations based on prejudice against ambitious, sexually liberated young women. However, the texts ultimately undermine dominant ideologies about these 'types' of women, and about the issue of sexual harassment by dismantling these expectations. Susy is represented as a promiscuous party girl with high career aspirations, as is evidenced by her style of dress, her reputation and her behaviour. She wears revealing clothes with her 'Boobs popping right out',³⁸ has 'a new guy every week!'³⁹ and inflates her employment status by adopting the misleading title of 'Assistant Manager'.⁴⁰ This is likely to evoke audience assumptions that she is immoral, opportunistic and untrustworthy. Further, Susy's reputation for promiscuity is likely to discredit her allegations of sexual harassment against a man of 'substantial standing in the business community',⁴¹ and Susy herself fears that 'no one would believe [her]'.⁴² Prejudice against Susy's 'type' may evoke audience expectations that, through her behaviour and appearance, she encouraged, provoked or deserved this kind of attention, and that being subjected to sexual harassment would not distress her in the way that it would distress a 'respectable' woman. However, the texts' narrative outcomes vindicate Susy's character by demonstrating the veracity of her accusations, and this undermines superficial judgements based on her appearance and her reputation. The narrative outcomes also support the feminist ideologies that no woman deserves to be raped, that women do not provoke rape, and that a woman who has slept with more than one man is not available to everyone.

Speaking in Tongues and *Lantana* set up audience expectations by evoking prejudices against unemployed, working-class males and then dismantle these expectations as the narrative unfolds. The narrative outcomes of the play and the film problematise stereotypical notions about working-class men and point to the serious ramifications of assuming that certain 'types' of men are prone to violence. For example, Nick/Nik's anxiety about prejudicial treatment makes him reluctant to assist the police investigation into Valerie's disappearance, and Valerie's inability to trust that Nick/Nik means to help and not harm her, contributes to her death. In *Speaking in Tongues* Jane, Nick's neighbour, provides information which suggests that Nick is a certain 'type' of man: he is working-class, has been depressed and drinking too much since he lost his job, and one night he pushed his pregnant wife. Preconceptions about his 'type' might suggest that Nick is physically strong, dominating, bored, mentally unstable, misogynistic, violent and a heavy drinker, and this strengthens audience expectations that he has murdered a woman who has been reported missing. Even though he did not hurt Valerie, Nick is anxious about the likelihood of others pre-judging him as guilty of sexual violence, which is exactly what Jane does. His self-consciousness is evident in his repetition of the question: 'How is this going to look?'.⁴³ As a result of his anxiety about being falsely accused of sexual violence, he conceals evidence about Valerie's disappearance by throwing away her shoe.

In comparison, the representation of Nik in *Lantana* evokes prejudice based on his ethnicity as well as his class status, which is complicated by the portrayal of him as an actively involved father of young children. This sets up tension between

assumptions based on different aspects of his character. For instance, the combination of his ethnicity and gender may evoke preconceptions that he is macho, passionate, quick tempered, sexually predatory and voracious.⁴⁴ This is emphasised by the parallel with the young Latino man who tells Sonja, 'I'd like to fuck with you'. His use of incorrect grammar in the expression 'fuck with' emphasises his non-English speaking background and implies that his intentions are malicious as well as sexual. Nik's working-class status is evident from his behaviour and appearance: he works under the bonnet of his car, smokes, is unshaven and wears singlets, jeans and thongs. The fact that he is an unemployed, working-class man is likely to evoke assumptions about his character similar to those discussed in relation to the play: that Nik is bored, violent, sexist, a heavy drinker, and so on. However, the fact that Nik also cares for his children, plays with them and pushes the pram suggests that he is gentle, nurturing, and that he does not hold rigid beliefs about traditional gender roles, which disrupts stereotypical notions about working-class men. Nevertheless, when Valerie accepts a lift from Nik he is a stranger to her and when he turns onto a sidetrack unexpectedly she panics and jumps from the moving vehicle, runs into the bush in the dark and falls off a cliff. In the instant before she jumps from the car, the point of view shot of Nik's profile conveys the threat of violence which terrifies Valerie. The shot uses a low camera angle to emphasise Nik's imposing stature, and the view of his coarse, dark stubble as he raises his chin and draws on a cigarette foregrounds aspects of his ethnicity and his working-class status. This creates the impression that he is a violent rapist and murderer and helps to justify Valerie's impulsive action. The ultimate revelation of Nick/Nik's innocence in *Speaking in Tongues* and *Lantana* undermines the common preconception that working-class men are prone to commit acts of sexual violence. This reinforces the notion that although most violent acts are committed by men, the majority of men do not engage in acts of violence. As Nick/Nik explains, 'I just wanted to help the woman'.⁴⁵

Lantana subverts stereotypical notions of working-class men to a greater extent than *Speaking in Tongues* through a comparison of representations of Nik/Nick's marriage and family life. The play does not show Nick with his family and is more ambivalent about his relationship with his wife than in the film. For instance, his assertion that there had been 'trouble at home'⁴⁶ since he lost his job and that he 'take[s] it out on her'⁴⁷ suggests that he is resentful, violent, and that he has fixed ideas about the traditional gendered division of labour. This is in contrast to *Lantana*, where the relationship between Nik and Paula is shown to be loving and strong, and where Nik is represented as flexible and competent in caring for his children while his wife works in paid employment. The revelation that Nik did not hurt Valerie and the depiction of his close involvement with his children are consistent with the findings of cross-cultural studies which report that hypermasculine displays are rare 'in societies in which men develop and maintain close relationships with young children'.⁴⁸ This representation thus points to the potential for positive alternatives to hegemonic forms of masculinity.

Representations of masculinities and sexual violence in the contemporary Australian plays and film adaptations of *The Boys*, *Brilliant Lies*, *Speaking in Tongues* and *Lantana* create a dialogue with cultural formations of gender in

different ways. The narrative trajectories in the plays and films of *The Boys* and *Brilliant Lies* point to the significance of the interaction between masculinities and working-class status in acts of sexual violence. These texts represent men who use violence against women as a way of asserting power in an effort to deal with feelings of powerlessness and inferiority associated with their working-class status. Thus, these texts can be seen to reinforce prejudice against working-class men by representing them as misogynistic and violent. However, by emphasising the negative aspects of hegemonic masculinities, the plays and films of *The Boys* and *Brilliant Lies* also point to the need for changes to dominant styles of gendered identities. Whereas the film of *The Boys* offers few solutions, the play is decidedly pessimistic regarding the potential for such change, and deterministic in its representation of outcomes for the young, working-class male characters. This is evident in the revelation that the character who tried to rise above his impoverished social environment instigated the gang rape and murder. Glenn's failed attempt to enact a more 'sensitive' form of masculinity suggests that young, working-class males have no alternative than to use violence as a way of constructing and proving their masculine identities. This is in contrast to *Speaking in Tongues* and *Lantana*, which evoke and subsequently undermine prejudice against young, working-class males through the revelation of Nick/Nik's innocence. These texts emphasise the fact that the majority of men never commit acts of violence. Further, the representation of Nik in *Lantana* points to the potential for enacting positive, alternative forms of masculinity in which concerns for care, respect and social justice form the basis of men's relationships with women and children.

'Let's get her': Masculinities and Sexual Violence in Contemporary Australian Drama and its Film Adaptations
Christine Boman

- 1 Gordon Graham, *The Boys*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1994 (first performed 1991); *The Boys*, dir. Rowan Woods, adap. Stephen Sewell, 1998; David Williamson, *Brilliant Lies*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1993; *Brilliant Lies*, dir. Richard Franklin, adap. Peter Fitzpatrick and Richard Franklin, 1996; Andrew Bovell, *Speaking in Tongues*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1996; *Lantana*, dir. Ray Lawrence, adap. Andrew Bovell, 2001.
- 2 R W Connell, *The Men and The Boys*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 2000, p 27-9.
- 3 *ibid*, pp 11-12.
- 4 *ibid*, pp 10-11, 203.
- 5 *ibid*, p 10.
- 6 *ibid*, p 218.
- 7 Rolf Romoren and John Stephens, 'Representing masculinities in Norwegian and Australian young adult fiction: A comparative study' in John Stephens (ed), *Ways of Being Male: Representing Masculinities in Children's Literature and Film*, Routledge, New York, 2002, pp 219-20.
- 8 Linzi Murrie, 'Changing masculinities: Disruption and anxiety in contemporary Australian writing', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no 56, 1998, p 169.
- 9 Tom O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema*, Routledge, London, 1996, p 199.
- 10 Meaghan Morris, 'Fate and the family sedan', *East-West Film Journal*, vol 4, no 1, 1989, p 117.
- 11 Dennis Carroll, *Australian Contemporary Drama*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1995, pp 5, 23.
- 12 Murrie, *op cit*, p 170.
- 13 Graham, *op cit*, p 14.
- 14 Williamson, *op cit*, p 4.
- 15 Michael S Kimmel, 'Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity' in Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (eds), *Theorizing Masculinities*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, Calif., 1994, pp 125, 132.
- 16 Williamson, *op cit*, p 44.
- 17 *ibid*, p 56.
- 18 *ibid*.
- 19 Connell, *op cit*, p 3.
- 20 Williamson, *op cit*, p 18.
- 21 *ibid*, p 34.
- 22 Bovell, *op cit*, p 6.
- 23 Kimmel, *op cit*, p 137.
- 24 Connell, *op cit*, p 105.
- 25 *ibid*, p 106.
- 26 *ibid*, p 137.
- 27 *ibid*, pp 107-8.
- 28 Williamson, *op cit*, p 36.
- 29 David Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties: Re-producing Masculinity*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998, p 124.

- 30 Scott Coltrane, 'Theorizing masculinities in contemporary social science' in Brod and Kaufman (eds), op cit, p 55.
- 31 Buchbinder, op cit, pp 124-25.
- 32 Williamson, op cit, p 66.
- 33 Connell, op cit, p 214.
- 34 *ibid*, pp 213-15.
- 35 Bovell, op cit, p 65.
- 36 Romoren and Stephens, op cit, pp 219-20.
- 37 I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Robyn McCallum whose comments helped me to discover this point. I would also like to thank Robyn for providing helpful feedback on an early draft of this article.
- 38 Williamson, op cit, p 6.
- 39 *ibid*, p 10.
- 40 *ibid*, p 4.
- 41 *ibid*, p 31.
- 42 *ibid*, p 22.
- 43 Bovell, op cit, pp 49, 50.
- 44 See Kimmel, op cit, p 135.
- 45 Bovell, op cit, p 49.
- 46 *ibid*, p 44.
- 47 *ibid*.
- 48 Coltrane, op cit, p 49.