

## I. Introducing Postcolonial Resistant and Carey's *True History of Kelly Gang*

This research work aims to depict the resistance against colonial assumption regarding Australian history and nationality in Peter Carey's *True History of Kelly Gang*. For this purpose, it focuses on the life and bravery of bushranger Ned Kelly, who had been regarded as a bandit or criminal through the perspective of colonial authority. However, Peter Carey in his novel evokes this historical figure as a true Australian legend as if he is countering the colonial culture, history and domination. In this sense, the novel stands as the counter of official history or as a means of post-colonial resistance. This research deals with the idea how Carey has countered the colonial official perspective by rewriting the myth like life of Ned Kelly in the form of novel. In doing so, he seems clear that he has strong sense of post-colonial resistance.

The novel begins with William Faulkner's words form the epigraph that "The past is not dead. It is not even past" (1) referring to the way that past actions survive long into the future through consequence, remembrance and guilt. This kind of survival of the past was evident in the Australian consciousness at the time of *True History of the Kelly Gang*'s publication and Australia's colonial history was being called into question. During this period, a lots of Kelly narratives appeared in popular culture in the form of novels, exhibitions, films, and children's books. Among them, Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang* has stood as the prominent literature that counters the previous colonial notion regarding Ned Kelly. This work examines Carey's representation of Ned Kelly in the fiction as the resistance of colonial ideology.

Australia being former colony of Great Britain, the literature produced here is regarded as post-colonial literature. Representation and resistance are two important concepts in the framework of postcolonial theory as well as literature. Representation refers to the way the West represents the East in literature and other works of art. Resistance is applied to the bulk of works

that were and are produced in the processes of decolonisation. Both concepts are recurrent in works of criticism that can be labeled as postcolonial. However, the reviving colonial history from own perspective itself is a form of post-colonial resistance. Jefferess identifies “one of the dominant ways in which resistance has been conceptualized as subversion of colonial authority” (4). Being based on similar idea this work examines Carey’s work as the subversion of colonial authority.

Australia has a unique history of its own. Some parts of it are prominent and distinct, while others lay ignored and indistinct. However, one piece of the history of Australia is not so distinctive. The history of bushrangers as outlaws belongs to this category. The most famous of these Australian bandits is a bushranger named Ned Kelly, one of the most popular figures in Australian history. Ned Kelly is at the centre of Carey’s novel *True History of the Kelly Gang* and his life of Ned Kelly is intertwined with the history of the continent itself in the novel. In doing so, Carey challenges the official colonial history as post-colonial resistant.

Carey has written historical novel in order to resist the colonial power. In this sense, he has New Historical standpoint. New historicism developed as a literary theory in the late 1970s. Yet, the term was only coined several years later by Stephen Greenblatt, an American critic who first used the term in a 1982 essay collection dealing with Renaissance studies. According to a very basic definition in Peter Barry’s *Beginning Theory*, new historicism is “a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period” (172). Previously, literary critics had predominantly used text-only approaches to interpret a literary work and, thus, historical influences on a text had often been neglected.

Even in the literary text the New Historicism might be effective perspective because every text is situated in certain time frame. So, In contrast to former approaches, new historicism

does not privilege the literary text, but instead “literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform or interrogate each other” (Barry 172). This new understanding of the relationship between these different types of texts also calls for a new understanding of the relationship between texts and history. Hence, advocates of the theory are interested in the representation of history in written texts, or, as Peter Barry calls it, in “history-as-text” (175). *True History of the Kelly Gang* is the experience of a victim, a culturally minorities group in the time frame of political, social and cultural tussles between high class ruling elites a lower class like Ned Kelly in Australian history. Lower class people were always suffered and high class people were supported by British colonial authority. Carey by providing the voice to the lower class people like Ned Kelly has tried to resist against colonial authority.

Although it is difficult to separate fact from fiction in the story of Ned Kelly’s life, it is clear that he lived a life full of struggle. He was an Irish Australian, loyal to his family whose history was steeped in the mythology of the Irish rebellions against the British. This was part of the cause of the tension between the wealthy British settlers and the poorer Irish in Australia during Kelly’s time. As a consequence, Ned Kelly himself had strong anti-English feelings and an extremely strong hatred to the police who in that era was under the English authorities.

Likewise, the police of those times were said to engender local distrust and contempt similar to that experienced on the gold fields. He lived at a time when the Irish-Australians experienced some rough and discriminatory justice from police and wealthy land-owners. These land-owners had assumed property rights and despite legislation to allow indigenous people to settle on the Crown land occupied by the settlers, the squatters still managed to maintain their monopoly on land and drove the natives off their lands. It was the combination of these oppressive forces that Ned Kelly tried to rebel against. Ned Kelly was in marginal position

during the rule of English people. He was regarded as the national criminal by the authority. However, Peter Carey questions on the authenticity of official English version of Australian history through the observation of the life of contemporary bandit. In doing so, he even searches for the roots of Australian history, culture and national identity as a form of colonial resistant.

Born in 1855 to Irish immigrant parents, Kelly was a notorious gentleman bandit who became a prominent figure in the Australian legend and folklore. Although Kelly and his gang murdered three policemen, they have since been immortalized as men who would not bow down to the British imperialistic government that controlled Australia in the nineteenth century. Using both conjecture and legitimate facts, Carey depicts Kelly as a poor and illiterate man who commits crimes only to settle injustices for the downtrodden- a mythical Robin Hood figure for Australia.

Kelly Gang is a real historical phenomenon, although even calling this small band of literal and figurative brothers a 'gang' begins to suggest constricting categories of judgment and evaluation. In fact, the gang was made up of four young men- Kelly, his brother Dan, Joe Byrne, and Steve Hart- whose fabled exploits begin with the shooting of the trooper Fitzpatrick in 1878 (an incident in which at least two of the four were not even involved), and continues through the Stringybark Creek killings of three policemen in October of that year and the hold ups of banks in December 1878 and February 1879. This last robbery was also the occasion for the composition of the famous "Jerilderie Letter", which formed the Jamesian germ of the novel and in which Ned Kelly attempts a sort of vindication of what some saw as the gang's murderous rampage. The end for the gang came in June 1880, in the ferocious gun fight at Glenrowan with which Carey opens his novel, and the end came for Ned, who barely survived the shootout, by

hanging on 11th November of that year. Purportedly, his last words on the gallows were “Such is life” (32).

Keeping the bandit life of Ned Kelly and Peter Carey’s portrait of Kelly in the novel as the main character into the consideration, following question could be raised. Why Ned Kelly always stood against the contemporary ruling power and the English landlord? Does his revolt as a bandit has any linkage with the independent movement of Australia from Great Britain? Why Peter Carrey has portrayed such a controversial bandit as the hero of his novel by trailing back to Australian history?

Peter Carrey has portrayed Ned Kelly, a bandit as the hero of the novel since he aims to redefine the Australian official history and tries to seek the true essence of Australian national identity in *The True History of Kelly Gang*. In doing so, he not only trail back to that historical period rather even seeks for Australian roots or heritage opposing the colonizer’s notion of history as if he is resisting colonial authority.

The primary purpose of this study is to bring the novel *The True History of Kelly Gang* into the dimension of its study. For this purpose, this research will deal with the history of Kelly Gang as mentioned in the text. This research aims to trace how the meditation upon history through the new historical standpoint can give the voice to the voiceless people based on the text as a form of resistant. Finally, it tries to seek the relationship of Kelly’s bandit activities with Australian identity.

This research has a significant contribution mainly in four areas of its concern. First, the research will bring the text *The True History of Kelly Gang* into the dimension of its study. Second, it will deal with the new historical methodology. Third, it will trace how the meditation upon history through the new historical standpoint can challenge the official version or

perspective of history. Fourth, it highlights the ideas that where should be the author's standpoint while being critical towards history. In this sense, major significant of this research is to trace out the history of a bandit Kelly as the quest for Australian national identity as a form of post-colonial resistant.

Peter Carey is one of the most celebrated authors of contemporary time. His novels have got a huge attention of critics. In "Peter Carey, the Booker, and the Repatriation of Australian Culture," Karen Lamb writes:

Since the publication of Peter Carey's latest work, *My Life as a Fake* (2003), its author has received extraordinary media attention, particularly on his frequent visits to Australia to promote the book. In almost every public utterance, Carey has taken pains to direct attention towards his new novel and its core intrigue: that one can imagine an untruth into full being, that myth can become reality. (17)

According to Karen Lamb, ironically, these imaginative preoccupations are by no means remote from the circumstances in which Carey now finds himself. Carey is an author struggling to separate his literary achievements and aims from the near-mythical figure, created in the media. Lamb praises Carey as "the famous Booker Prize-winning Australian author Peter Carey" (17). A publicist may argue that this is a wholly positive outcome, but the publicity multiplier effect of winning the British Booker Prize for fiction is not all advantage. This is most prominent award drives a process of cultural iconography that is every bit as protean and powerful as any of Carey's fictions.

Likewise, titles of Carey's novels are so effective that they promise readers cathartic benefit. With juvenile obviousness the titles make it easy for readers to picture the content of the novels. Most of the titles of Carey's novels are self-explanatory and based on the name of the

main protagonists as *Jack Maggs*, *Oscar and Lucinda*, *Parrot and Olivier in America* and *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*.

The inclusion of history in *True History of the Kelly Gang* makes the novel self-suggestive as it portrays the real history of Kelly Gang. Symbolically the titles encompasses the main happenings of the novels as in *His Illegal Life*, that how politics affects individual - directly as well as indirectly, making him / her adopt the ways so away from their real selves. Regarding history in Carey's fiction *True History of the Kelly*, Andreas Gaile mentions:

To begin with the former: the Kelly story demonstrates mythogenesis par excellence. It has been told so often, and in so many popular and scholarly forms, that its historical origins are by now hidden under a thick layer of narrative which obscures what is historically verifiable. But the historical facts are not what is actually important about Kelly. The outlaw is important because he has been meaningful for Australians. (41)

Australians could or still can relate their own experience to Kelly's spirit of anti-authoritarianism; his plight is mirrored in their own attempts at getting rid of any sort of control from outside. But Kelly could only be elevated to the rank of a national icon through the myriad narratives spun around his exploits. Thus lodged in Australians' minds, Kelly could develop into a full-blown myth.

Similarly, Carey has been innovative with his linear plots, narrative- style, language and characterization. Intense historical, political, cultural and emotional themes are present throughout his novels. He projects the life pattern of Australian, American and French and of the imaginative countries, Efica and Voorstand. Most of his novels are written in first person narrative where characters provide first-hand information of the events to the readers.

Carey's fiction is a unique blend of vernacular and simple language, and dialogues are created as per the time, situation, place and setting of the story. As a postcolonial writer he subverts the idea of traditional method of writing and never follows the rules of grammar. For example in *True History of the Kelly Gang* he uses the language suitable for the typical Irish people of nineteenth century rustic Australia. Like illiterate and innocent people of rural environment Carey does not care for the rules of grammar. In the same novel he uses plural verbs with singular nouns and pronouns and vice versa. He subverts the traditional way of writing and never uses inverted commas, full stops and signs of exclamations, etc. with quotes and narrative dialogues.

The story has fascinated Australians from the beginning, not least because the Kelly Outrage, as it was sometimes called, and the Kelly execution which finished it effectively represented the end of the bushranging era in Australia. This is a time which itself had spawned or revived a number of cultural masterplots: the story of oppressed Irish convicts, emancipists, and currency lads cheated, harassed, robbed, and generally abused by the Anglo power structure; the related story of small selectors hounded by the prosperous squattocracy; the story of the bravery and superb bushmanship conveyed in the colloquial simile 'as game as Ned Kelly'; the story of unswerving mateship maintained in the face of overwhelming odds; and the story of the charming larrikin whose misdeeds are more mischief than malice. In "Lies and Silences Cultural Masterplots and Existential Authenticity in Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*"

Carolyn Bliss mentions:

That Kelly himself has become a cultural icon is demonstrated by the fact that, according to Andreas Gaile, more than 1,200 books have been written on Kelly and his part in the bushranging phenomenon, not to mention innumerable popular ballads, poems, and



stories, as well as the Sidney Nolan series of paintings and a spate of dramatic treatments in plays, films, and television programmes. Clearly, Kelly figures as valuable currency in perpetuating and disseminating cultural master plots. (290)

Likewise, in *Oscar and Lucinda* construction of glass Church in Australia symbolizes the annihilation of the Aboriginals from their land and replacement of their culture through the spread of Christianity in Australia.

In “Bliss and Damnation Peter Carey in Australia,” Nicholas Jose writes, “As an Artist Peter Carey has qualities in common with the protagonists of his fiction” (137). He further asserts his view:

Many visitors to Carey’s fictions have had a similar response. The dreams of genius are idiosyncratic, as difficult to achieve as they are breathtaking in conception. That is the author’s energizing risk as he writes back to Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations* in *Jack Maggs* or tells the *True History of the Kelly Gang* in Ned Kelly’s own voice. Failure is factored into the wager excitingly as the underdog fiction-maker uses every trick of his trade to deliver himself from the task he has set. (137)

Thus, the novels of Peter Carey have been analyzed with various perspectives. This research work aims to include the theoretical modality of post colonial resistance to deal with the voices of the marginal characters from the history in Peter Carrey’s *The True History of Kelly Gang*.

This research work aims to include the theoretical modality of postcolonial resistance in order to reveal Carey’s question against official British version of history. In doing so, this research deals how Carey has revived the history of marginal people like Ned Kelly in the form of fiction. He has clear new historical standpoint since he gives the voice to voiceless. Thus, this research even takes the references from New Historicism since the author rewrites the history of

Ned Kelly who was as a means of mere criminal by colonial power. Peter Barry regards New Historicism keeps “the reciprocal concern between history and fiction” (10). Thus, a text is not free from the sociopolitical and historical influence as told by Michael Foucault. Keeping this notion into the consideration this research work will include the ideas from the new historians such as Louis Montrose, H. Aram Vesser and Peter Barry etc. Furthermore, the research includes proper library research, proper suggestions from its supervisor and teachers to complete the project. Ned Kelley had been regarded as the criminal or bandit by the official British history but Carey connects his personality with the true identity of Australian by shading lights on his positive aspects. This subversion of official history itself is a form of post-colonial resistance.

The idea of ‘resistance’ provides a primary framework for the critical project of post-colonialism. Resistance is a continual referent and at least implicit locus of much postcolonial criticism and theory, particularly in terms of the analysis of the failure, or deferral, of liberation in former colonies. David Jefferess mentions, “On the one hand, this emphasis upon resistance limits the purview of (post) colonial experience, in that it ‘denies any other kind of life to the people doing the resisting’” (3). Yet, the concept of resistance functions as an amorphous concept in postcolonial studies, identifying a diverse range of modes, practices.

For many critics of postcolonial theory, the emergence of colonial discourse theory has shifted attention away from the materialist concerns of the economic and political forms and effects of colonialism to concerns of discourse, language, and identity. Postcolonial theory has seemingly reduced colonialism to a cultural project, eliding its material impacts on colonized peoples and, more importantly, its role within the emergence of capitalism globally, both as an ideology and as a structure of material relationships. Significantly, the work of Frantz Fanon has been central to both the colonial discourse analysis of theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha and

other. Thus this research includes the theoretical insights of Frantz Fanon, Ascott Bill, Homi K. Bhabha and other post colonial critics based on the issue of resistance.

## II. Ned Kelly as an Ideal Bandit in Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*

Social bandit has its own images and characteristics in each society. Their image too is somehow controversial but the myths associated with outlaws or 'social bandits' are important elements of national identity in many countries. The myths of 'social bandits' and rural outlaws such as Robin Hood, Jesse James and Ned Kelly are important expressions of cultural identity in different nations. One such myth which remained alive in the collective memory of the Australian people is the myth of Ned Kelly though he has been regarded as a mere criminal by colonial authority. Even after his death, the outlaw Ned Kelly lives on in Australian culture through various media, ensuring his position as a symbol of Australian identity. And his life and national identity somehow has been resisting the colonial mentality of British imperialism. Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang* is a perfect example of colonial resistance since it evokes the positive aspects associated with Kelly's life.

This research work focuses on the myth or history of Ned Kelly, a mytho-historical character of Peter Carey's novel *True History of the Kelly Gang* and presents how the author has challenged the hegemonic power structure of the time and has proved Kelly as a national icon. He has revisited the past as an attempt to restore dignity to the historically marginalized and misrepresented person. The chapter analyses how a writer revisits the past and presents the marginalized Kelly as the national hero. This work also aims to study how Peter Carey, an Australian writer who rewrites the history of marginalized aboriginal and provides him the deserved status through fiction. In doing so, he not only subverts the official British notion of Ned Kelly but also resists against colonial tendency of Great Britain.

The novel begins with William Faulkner's words form the epigraph, "The past is not dead. It is not even past" (1). From this very first point one can assume that Peter Carey has tried

to revive the past in his novel. It refers to the way that past actions survive long into the future through consequence, remembrance and guilt. This kind of survival of the past was evident in the Australian consciousness at the time of *True History of the Kelly Gang*'s publication, as Australia's colonial history was being called into question. The novel revisits the life of Ned Kelly. Novel begins with Kelly's narration:

My first memory is of Mother breaking eggs into a bowl and crying that Jimmy Quinn my fifteen year old uncle were arrested by the traps. I don't know where my daddy were that day nor my older sister Annie. I were three year old. While my mother cried I scraped the sweet yellow batter onto a spoon and ate it the roof were leaking above the camp oven each drop hissing as it hit. (7-8)

From this point, Ned's life begins as if slowly looming in from the mists of forgotten memory. No information is given of the previous years, but the following ten or so years of boyhood are well described by Peter Carey. This first image serves as a summary of Ned's childhood. He presents Kelly's mother in the foreground, crying yet caring for him, his siblings and his relatives. Kelly's father is absent, though not forgotten. His elder sister too is absent. Kelly hardly understands the situation. The scene captures the dismal setting of a poor family's nastiness. There is a shadow of police oppression.

Ned grows up striving to help his mother and to replace his father, whom he loses first morally when he is put in prison for the "slaughter of a calf that Ned stole, and mortally as he dies soon after returning from prison" (28). It is an event that brings the "twelve year-old boy into youthhood" (41). Though he has trouble respecting his father, Ned acknowledges the practical abilities that he has learned from him which are "locked forever in my daily self" (21). Carey mentions, "Much work is required from the eldest boy, and he feels the responsibility" (24).

With five siblings, one older and four younger, a sixth is born with the terrified assistance of an 11-year-old Ned, “Cut she said and I saw the pearly cord going from her stomach down to the dark I shut my eyes and cut” (31). This event gives cause to a false rumor that Ned had “seen [his] mother’s naked bottom” (31) which is humiliating and infuriating to him. It is an attack on the honour of his mother and himself. It also suggests that the family’s poverty goes hand in hand with loose morals and bad upbringing. Thus, from the beginning, Carey evokes a kind of sympathy creating visual scene of the family from marginal community.

Here the author has taken a new historical standpoint. New Historicism renders a political reading of the text by giving a venue to the culturally and psychologically oppressed and marginalized in the society. New Historicism, according to Veaser, “juxtaposes the voices of men and women on the same social topics and movements and here the emphasis is not on organized women’s voices, but on the lonely and individual struggles” (152). New Historicism is also sympathetic towards the post-colonial way of thinking advocated by critics like Edward Said and GayatriChakravorthySpivak. It decries the inter contamination of language and cultures in colonial and post-colonial societies, and talks in terms of post-colonialism as a discourse and power. As Said puts it, “Orientalism is a ‘discourse’ in Michel Foucault’s sense; that is, an institutionalization of a special language which gives its users powers to define others” (Baldick 186).

Revisiting Ned Kelly life itself is a new historical task. The author gives detail of the life of marginal character. Ned goes to school, he feels very much looked down upon as “the Catholic boy”, but is determined to fight to prove himself as Carey writes, “. . . preparing the class’s inkwells as the best monitor that were ever born” (33). He has a desire that is echoed violently at Ned’s last stand in Glenrowan, as he comes towards the police shouting “I’m the boy

Monitor, boys!” (418). He even involves in or beating up the big school bully for badmouthing his father:

Patchy Moran were a good foot taller his voice broken like a man. Said he You are an adjectival tinker you can't give me orders. And with that he punched me in the temple so I fell . . . I thought he soon would kill me but I closed with him on the barren ground beneath the peppercorn tree and then by skill or luck I got round his dirty neck and pulled him to the ground . . . Patchy howled in my arms cursing and pleading but I held his shoulders to the earth as he thrashed and drove [the bull ants] into greater fury still. (18)

The persecution of the school bully and his inevitable defeat at the hands of the smaller Ned is not only a parallel with Ned's later resistance against the bullying police. Police are defeated in the aftermath of Ned's death both in public opinion and in the findings of the Royal Commission established to investigate police failures in the case.

Ned's school years are crowned with success when he saves a boy from drowning. It is the son of the well-to-do hotelier Mr Shelton. He awards Ned a green and gold sash for bravery in front of the whole class, disrupting at least for a moment the ethnic prejudices bearing down on Ned throughout his life:

I done as ordered and saw his little slit of mouth all twisted in a grin and then Eliza Mutton and George Mutton and Caroline Doxey and the Sheltons and Mr Irving staring at me with his wild bright eyes. . . The Protestants of Avenel had seen goodness in an Irish boy it were a mighty moment in my early life. (37)

The schoolmaster's eyes are 'wild bright,' probably due to anger or disbelief, and this glorious moment for Ned retains hints of the ambiguity that haunts the whole novel. He is not admired by the representatives of the unattainable English-Australian elite class.

The main obstacle for this, Ned's Irish descent, cannot and will not be denied, as is shown by the later events in his life. It is part of his identity and he will not give it up no matter what. Kelly narrates, "[B]y the time my 13th birthday come around I had a small breaking yard and thought myself an expert in the matter . . . I had become a very serious boy it were my job to replace the father as it were my fault we didn't have him anymore" (47). Ned's youth, his transition period from boy to man, is delineated by Carey by his father's death at age twelve and the return from his first stay in prison at age seventeen. The five six years are filled with many hardening experiences. For one his physical stature increases from his "head not being able to reach my uncle's sloping shoulder" (50) to "6 feet 2 inch broad of shoulder my hands as hard as the hammers we had swung inside the walls of Beechworth Gaol. I had a mighty beard and was a child no more although in truth I do not know what childhood or youth I ever had" (192).

The second change is his increase in skill like in horse breaking and horsemanship, but also in his fighting prowess and workload ability. He is in preparation for the performative excellence. At the same time, he remains quite untouched in the matter of girls and courtship, at fourteen when "I were trying so hard to be a man I had kept myself a child. Looking at my sister I saw how her cheeks glowed her bosoms pushed out against her blouse I blushed to think the things they would now be allowed to do together" (71). As at seventeen upon being sent to prison for three more years, he notes with sadness, "My last hope of youth was stripped away I had never kissed a girl but were old enough to be a married man" (194).

Likewise, the greater adjustment comes in his relation to his mother. Ned fights bitterly to stay by her side and help her, placing himself in the role of his father. In this connection, Carey narrates, "I could chop down five trees in one day . . . but Frost never picked up an axe" (67). His mother sees that Ned needs to distance himself from his mother to grow up, and so he is sent



away on what is necessarily his apprenticeship with the bushranger Harry Power to learn the trade, the robbing and the hiding.

The youthful Ned must pass a number of hardships such as enduring servitude, travelling barefoot for several days and taking part in Power's highway robbery. In the case of Peter Carey's Ned Kelly, the whole formal concept of apprenticeship crumbles and is turned on its head as Ned rebels against his mentor (whom he holds very little respect for), and beats up one of Power's adult friends for badmouthing his mother. Kelly narrates, "When I turned to Harry his thumbs was in his belt beside his guns. Come here said he. He's going to shoot me I thought but followed . . . I could feel the water flowing around my ankles it might as well have been my heart. 'Give me the boots' . . . I were dismissed" (104-5).

With the apprenticeship halted prematurely, Ned must still undergo one of the most bizarre parts of Carey's narrative, joining again with Power to hunt down Bill Frost for abandoning his mother, with the intent to kill him. This culminates in a chaotic and dreamlike ride through night and a bushfire, and in a distressed 15-year-old Ned shooting Frost in the tent of a Chinese prostitute, "I fired my musket from the hip I thought I missed but when he staggered against the lantern I observed his hand pressed to his gut the black blood flowing like jam between his fingers" (143).

Although Frost is not killed by the shot, Ned does not know this. The act of seeming murder binds him again to Power as his apprentice, as Ned, ridden with guilt and the fear of being caught, does everything his mentor tells him to. When Ned discovers that Power has been lying to him all along and sleeping with his mother at the same time, he bursts into a fury:

But Harry Power could not afford having a boy speak to him thus he therefore pulled his Colt .31 revolver from his belt and pressed it to my head above the ear. Now the quiet

descended all around me I looked into Harry's eyes they was dead and pale as a curtain . . . I returned his smile laying my left hand on his shoulder he were a big hard man I could feel the heft in him but as I were no longer afraid I punched him in the bowel. My hands was trembling I asked him did he wish to live or die. (154)

Ned's youth is marked by the absence of any viable male role model – with his father dead and disrespected for not tending to his family sufficiently. His stepfathers hated or at the least held in contempt for being lazy and big-mouthed. One of his uncles attempting to rape his mother and then burning down their house, his other relatives too distant to matter, the only one left is Harry Power, whom “he respects for his bushman skills” (139). However, he describes with distaste as a man of pitiful practical abilities and no hygiene, “crashing around drunk” (83) and whose “bowel were v. badly twisted” (85) and who “could not feed himself or even clean his teeth” (91). Although Ned learns much of bushranging from Power, he ultimately denounces him as a liar. Ned is thus left to fend for himself, powered by the bitterly negative motivation of deciding not to be like the adults he knows. This also reinforces his feelings for his mother, as he sees himself as “her sole protector, the only man faithful to her” (275).

In this sense, Peter Carey has provided positive images to bandit Ned Kelly. He tries to subvert the negative images created by colonial authority about Kelly. His revisiting Kelly life and time is a form of strong rejection or resistance against colonial power. Carey's narration is based on the power relation between colonized and colonizer. About the relation between colonized and colonizer Rizvi says:

Relations between colonizer and colonized are not binary and antagonistic, based on the oppression of one and the subjugation of the Other, who is incapable of resisting dominant discourses . . . Instead, they are characterized by varying experiences of

empowerment and disempowerment, dominance and exploitation In expressing their subjectivity, Indian business school scholars may appear to consent to globalized norms while casting doubt and subtly defying them. (Qt. Jefferess 3)

In fact, there is no binary opposition between colonized and colonizer since the assimilation of two power, culture and society. However, post-colonial attitude believes on the resistance against historical impose of colonial power and knowledge. Author from post-colonial nation often resists the colonial history through written discourse. Peter Carey too by evoking Ned Kelly's history in the form of fiction subvert and resist the one sided colonial assumption about Ned Kelly.

In doing so, Carey often focuses on the heroism of Ned Kelly as an ideal Australian figure. The young Ned has courage and fighting prowess, is as an outstanding person already. His character, where described, is principally the same as that of the adult Ned, only with less strength and skill. The events like his bushranger apprenticeship, his prison sentences, or other significant moments serve more to explain or excuse his later actions than to redefine his personality. Carey writes, "She pushed Dan firmly towards me. Look after him said she he were a lot of trouble getting born don't let him go to waste you hear me? Yes Ma" (275). Kelly family ties are very strong and Ned is constantly shown as part of his family, both in the temperament he has received from his bloodline, and in his unhesitating need to protect his family from dishonour and danger, as in the above quote, or when he goes to defend Dan from a false accusation (227) or refuses to abandon his mother in jail (282). Carey further narrates, "These familial ties include the many relatives from the Quinn tree who suffer the same level of police intervention – despite becoming unfairly estranged by his uncles, he retains that they "would not kowtow to no one and this were a fine rare thing" (181).

Even his mother's second husband Bill Frost, Ned's stepfather, although despised by him and never acknowledged as family (but always as an intruder and an enemy), achieves some value – thinking Frost dead by his hand, Ned is “guilty for having killed the father of [his] mother's child” (147). In this sense, Kelly even seems morally strong person unlike in British narration. The strength of the family bond and Ned's activity in fulfilling his role of protector is in line with Gilmore's observation on masculine family values:

Ned is willing to risk all for the Kelly honour – as is noted in the previous two chapters, he does not hesitate to attack men who are much stronger than him when they speak ill of his mother – he puts his own life at stake for the sake of his family, allowing for another of Gilmore's findings, “To be men, most of all, they must accept the fact that they are expendable.” (223)

His family ties are brought in parallel with his Irish origin and ethnicity, as “we Irish was raised to revile the traitors' names when I were a child . . . we learned the traitors better than the saints” (175). Irish culture is an important factor for Peter Carey's Ned, but also what is depicted as “a fierce loyalty to blood and a bitterly rebellious spirit in opposition to the dominating English” (175). Irish Catholicism is also mentioned in the novel.

Among all his relations, his mother Ellen Kelly holds a unique and unambiguously dominant position. References to her abound not only in the “parcels” of Carey's book dealing with Ned's childhood and growing up, but continue throughout. He clings to his mother emotionally and feels responsible for her, as “it were my job to replace the father” (47), but he is also very protective of her and jealous, as he says, “I would much prefer that she invited no new husbands to her bed” (66). This is not quite mirrored by his mother, as she tries to sever the relationship between them. Ned bears this badly, “My father were lost just two year before and I

didn't deserve to lose a mother too not even if I had offended her she should not cast me out" (84).

He ultimately rebels from Harry Power to return to her but he finds out his mother even paid the bandit money to take him on. Even though he falls out with his mother at times, his childly affections and loyalty remain but it mingles with hurt, as she prefers her third husband George King to her son. Mum's number one position is only partially displaced by Ned's love Mary Hearn.

Ned Kelly not only gives to his family, but is also on the receiving end of family support. Special notice is given to Margaret Skillion, one of Ned's younger sisters, who is portrayed as a very strong and capable woman and instrumental in keeping the gang provisioned and supported throughout their time as outlaws:

It was MrsSkillion. . . who possessed the unlimited confidence of her brothers and their mates. It was MrsSkillion who was always in close touch with her outlawed brothers and supplied them with the necessaries of life . . . It was MrsSkillion who frequently led the police, who were on foot, on many a wild goose chase over rough and extremely difficult country. (5)

Ellen is described as "the loving mother of Ned Kelly" (3) and her son's relationship with her is as unambiguous and respectful. Ned Kelly is concerned about his mother's safety and her unjust imprisonment following the Fitzpatrick incident, but he also worries for the family honour and strongly objects to his sister's name being brought into his mother's defense, apparently as it should not have been necessary and would have left Kate unprotected to the public.

Likewise, Kelly narrates, "As I rose I caught the eye of Caroline Doxey she smiled at me the first time ever. I put my shoulders back and walked up to Mr. Irving's platform" (36).

Women are there to admire Ned, to thrill him and encourage him simply by being. Although Ned has a number of sisters, he grows up naive and inexperienced in romance, focusing on his “manly” role of protector and provider. He does not realize his elder sister Annie has matured until she is proposed to, “I were trying so hard to be a man I had kept myself a child. Looking at my sister I saw how her cheeks glowed her bosoms pushed out against her blouse” (71). Ned does not have many opportunities to meet or interact with girls and he is clumsy in his actions when he begins to feel an attraction to the feminine – realizing with delay that his prolonged stare is unsuitable, “After a long time a v. pretty girl come along she was . . . already showing a womanly shape and she folded her arms across her chest when she saw me looking at her. Having sisters of my own I knew to look away” (131).

He follows the girl, Caitlin, as she invites him to come with her. He sits with her in beautiful seclusion of nature, he experiences one of his few moments of tranquil happiness, “Soon we come across the source of all the greenery it were a spring seeping from the rocks it were cool and dark with ferns growing from the crevices. Here we sat together side by side I were very happy for a while” (131). But such moments of interaction with girls are few and far between, and as the seventeen-year-old Ned is sentenced to three years of jail. He sadly remarks, “[M]y last hope of youth was stripped away I had never kissed a girl but were old enough to be a married man” (194). It does not take long and Ned, aged 24, meets Mary Hearn in what seems to be a brothel though Ned does not admit this and seems not to realize it. Ned is immediately excited by her physical presence. The text gives us a direct feed to where his eyes and nose are focused:

She could be no more than five feet tall but her beauty were much finer more delicate her hair were the colour of a crow’s wings glistening it would reflect the colour of the sky.

Her back were slender with a lovely sweep to it her shoulders was straight her head held high. When she came into my arms she smelled of soap and pine trees and I judged she were sixteen or seventeen years of age. (242)

They dance and talk and Ned feels “suddenly more happy than I had ever hoped to be” (242). The situation develops rapidly, Mary Hearn undresses before him and Ned does not hesitate to move from caressing to sex.

Ned Kelly does not think twice and shows no sign of trying to assert self-discipline to stop his sexual urges. His relationship with Mary overpowers even his feelings for his mother. In one moment he proposes to Mary and claims he does not care what his mother might think of the matter. He is lost in his passion, yearning for Mary at all times and fancying himself to be Romeo, one of Carey’s numerous intertextual nods to famous literary heroes. But even though he vows never to part with her and the child they have conceived together. Mary leaves to America and Ned, paralysed by his loyalty to his mates and to his imprisoned mother and supporters, does not follow, “I remained at my station that is the agony of the Captain if rats is tearing at his guts still must he secure the freedom of his mother and all them men in gaol” (371). Mary and the child disappear, the only trace being a cryptic telegram received from San Francisco, which Ned understands to mean his child is born.

Peter Carey’s Ned is not only shown as a somewhat awkward yet passionate lover, but also as a family man with a great potentiality for fatherhood. Already as a boy he looks at his newborn sister Grace with tenderness, “She were a little foal a calf her eyes were wide her newborn skin glistening white and bloody nothing bad had ever touched her” (31).

His eyes see a person of great and frail beauty, a child so worthy of admiration and protection for her pure, unspoilt humanity. At another time later on, as a youth, this

understanding is echoed in the feelings that overcome the contempt he holds for his mother's further husbands as Ned remarks on his stepfather's daughter, "She were no bigger than a loaf of bread she lay asleep in a fruit box on the table if ever dross were turned to gold then here she was" (163). And once more as he watches Mary Hearn breastfeed her child (born before Ned met her), he is softened to decide the baby "should have a father to look after him and it were then I got it into my head that I would make application for the post" (248). Although his view of the child changes when he discovers "its father is George King, his mother's husband" (265) he accepts his role of father and protector as he notes: "I went outside to keep watch over my family" (325). Thus, Kelly is portrayed positively in every aspects of his life.

Criminal and victim can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Any criminal activity has its victim (damaged party) and every victim has their damaging party. The two aspects will be contrasted in this chapter, beginning with Ned Kelly's criminality. Ned Kelly narrates, "I went peaceful as a lamb but I did not forget about George King or the sentence I would pass on him as soon as possible" (261). If a criminal is a person who takes the law into his own hands, then Ned Kelly is undoubtedly a criminal. He considers killing people left right and centre, repeatedly threatens them with death while armed with deadly weapon, "regardless of whether or not he would really shoot them, he forced them into obeying him" (374). He also shot three policemen but in defense of his own life, as the police were "intent on doing damage to the gang" (283). His crimes are admitted to so freely and happen so obviously in reaction to circumstances that the reader might feel obliged to pass over them without pausing to consider them actually criminal. There are some moments; however, where Kelly himself shows there is something not quite right going on, as when he gives the fatally wounded policeman the mercy shot, "Sgt Kennedy looked



up at me sharply. You have shed blood enough said he. I fired and he died instantly without a groan” (293).

Although these situations might be excused as an act of self-defence or desperation, Ned is not only a killer, but also a thief and a robber. When he breaks into a cattle pound to “take back what I legally owned . . . this did not seem a crime to me not then or now” (229). But when he steals fifty horses a moment later, he has no qualms saying, “Never having been a thief before I were surprised to discover what a mighty pleasure stealing from the rich could be” (234). In each of these cases, however, as also when he robs the banks in Euroa and Jerilderie, he does not appear to do so for selfish reasons. It was an act of warfare to defend against the enemy or to gain resources for his side. That is how he himself claims to understand it, “I’m sure you know I have spilled human blood when there were no other choice at that time I were no more guilty than a soldier in a war” (25).

Thus Ned is portrayed not so much a criminal, but rather as a soldier. However, both these aspects are overshadowed by that of a victim. Despite his dreams, threats and plans to cause death, Ned Kelly repeatedly claims he had no other choice in the circumstances. For example when riding to murder his stepfather Bill, “So we pushed on towards the murder and you can rightly say I would of proved my manhood better by turning back to Greta but on that fateful night I were caught between my 15th & 16th years and in my wisdom thought I had no choice but accompany Harry Power” (138). Or during the shoot-out with the police in Stringybark Creek, when Ned is forced to kill by the mortal danger of the situation and the split-second reaction required to defend himself, “Strahan popped up from behind the log his carbine raised. I squeezed the fateful trigger what choice did I have?” (287). Or when he allows Joe Byrne to go kill his former mate Aaron Sherritt, a police informer, Ned claims it was against his

own preferences as he himself would not do such a thing, “I did not wish Aaron Sherritt’s death though he were a traitor he would of seen me hanged as soon as look at me” (399).

Ned is forced into these situations, yet all he wants is for him, his family and his friends to be left alone to work and live in peace. Moments of tranquility are described briefly, but with fondness, “In two blessed years of peace I read LORNA DOONE three times, I also read some Bible and some poems of William Shakespeare” (218-19). Likewise, he adds, “Soon others was drawn into the ranges . . . they come not to avoid honest graft the opposite . . . We was building a world where we would be left alone” (234).

However, this wish is destroyed by “the injustice we poor Irish suffered in this present age” (7). The police will not leave them alone, locking up his uncles and cousins on false charges without evidence (158), threatening to “lockup the mothers babies too” (165), and sentencing Ned to three years in prison for “receiving a horse not yet legally stolen” (194). The persecution culminates in the incident with Constable Fitzpatrick, which is somewhat chaotic, but is clearly shown not to be any attempt at murder, the charge Fitzpatrick levies on them and the reason for “Ned being outlawed and his mother imprisoned” (270).

Kelly’s entire family member are somehow victims of social injustices, “Prison is a hard place the souls within it murderers or worse but them two words was carried by some unknown person to someone else unknown there were no gain to it only risk but even the lowest of them prisoners knew what were done against my mother were UNFAIR” (341). Overall, Peter Carey’s Ned is portrayed as a victim, a man forced into criminal activity by the actions and injustice of those, who are supposed to uphold the law. A moment later it is suggested Kelly wanted to lure the police out of the train, steal their horses, hijack the empty train and go “rob banks now unprotected by police” (189). But when questioned by police as to whether he wanted to kill the

people in the train, he says, “Yes, of course I did. God help them, they would have got shot all the same. Would they not have tried to kill me?” (214) Finally, in a statement while waiting for execution, he writes, “I can solemnly swear now before God and man that it *was never my intention to take life, even at Glenrowan* I was determined to capture [the police] for the purpose of exchange of prisoners”(258).

This is in line with Carey’s attempt to “do some justice to a man, who, in his day, appeared to many not as a black-hearted murderer, but as a new Messiah of Australian democracy” (12). His approach thus unsurprisingly shows Ned and his family as more of a victim. He notes that “it was evident that, at the age of fourteen, Ned was already marked” (38) and that the police had instructions to send them to jail “whenever the Kellys commit any paltry crime” (49-50). Of the Fitzpatrick incident remarks that the “evidence of one policeman, who, a few weeks later, was to be cashiered from the force” sent Ned’s mother “with a babe on breast” and two men “without records” to jail (56).

Likewise, Ned Kelly is portrayed as a member of the Irish Catholic ethnic/culture group, but it is interesting to note how much this is reflected in his actions and thoughts – if and when markers of Christianity appear in the text and what light they shine on events. As Kelly narrates, “Soon we passed that solid stone edifice wherein Bill Frost supposedly lay dead I couldn’t help but cross myself I were so ashamed and sorry” (145). Carey’s Ned cannot help but cross himself, recourse to Christianity is in-built in his nature, it is something he does not ponder on, does not really act upon, but does not doubt. He crosses himself before “engaging the police in Stringybark Creek” (287) and in the aftermath, with three men dead by his hand, he wishes the rain “could wash away my sin but it come on the cold breath of the Southern Ocean there were no forgiveness there” (293).

In Jerilderie he allows a captive Mrs. Devine to prepare Sunday Mass, but himself does not attend regularly. After sleeping with Mary Hearn, he notes, "On Sunday early we went to mass for me it were the first time in many years and when the priest heard my sins he said I must get married and I told him I would attend to that immediately" (257). Ned accepts the priest's words, confesses his various sins, yet continues with his actions under the excuse that he has no choice. Overall, Christian markers are relatively inconspicuous and Carey mentions Irish mythology much more than any Christian beliefs. However, it is the crucifix, the officiating priest and the "prayer proper to the Catholic Church for such occasions" that accompany Ned in his last moments on this earth (421). He has two final requests, showing where his thoughts and reliance turned to, are that his mother be released from prison and "his body handed over for burial in consecrated ground" (421). Christianity is in Ned's blood. It is an instinctive part of him inherited from his ancestors, which remains hidden under his skin only to seep through in moments of danger, shame and death.

Thus Ned Kelly is shown as a man deeply religious and humble, a man of many failings and sins, but who ultimately desires the mercy of his God and turns to him in his last moments with hope of a heavenly afterlife. In the court, Ned speaks out in answer to the judge, "My mind is as easy as the mind of any man in this world, as I am prepared to show before God and man . . . day will come at a bigger Court than this, when we shall see which is right and which is wrong" (249).

Ned's commoner origin is important for his image of manhood, as it requires him to do physical work and move around a lot "tending to the family selection" (59), "breaking in horses" (47), "working as a faller" (206), "surviving in the wilderness" (234) and "Ned Kelly's rough, but well-shaped physical condition" (192) places him squarely into the class of the poor, manual

labour. Ned as he is a labour but in order to make his elite weaker he does not work with internal enthusiasm. He is able and strength of his capabilities that he uses only for his family members. His resistance against colonial ideology can be assumed by the fact that although he is physically strong but does not work as a well manner.

His adherence to the common people of Australia is also important for his bushranger status and especially that of a national symbol, “As the poor pay fealty to the bushranger thus the bushranger pays fealty to the poor” (136). He is one of them and he remains one of them in a resolute show of reciprocal loyalty. He represents them in a “boxing match, wearing the Irish green of the majority of the poor and scorned selectors – his victory over the Protestant orange raises him to a God-like level of popularity and fame amongst his own” (213).

The common folk keep to Ned throughout, accepting him, cheering for him and celebrating his successes with him. Ned learns the lesson of Harry Power and does not forget those who support him or suffer in his defense, for they give him his power and invulnerability, “It had been men who protected Harry and it were a man who betrayed him in the end. Harry always knew he must feed the poor he must poddy& flatter them he would be Rob Roy or Robin Hood” (343).

Ned accepts this, accepts “his people” who harken to him “because we was them and they was us and we had showed the world what convict blood could do” (387). Their socially despised convict origin becomes a badge of honour, showing their strength as they are able to overcome prejudice and the difficulties and disadvantages of their discriminated position. Ned Kelly becomes the common Australian people’s Robin Hood, “robbing the banks that represent their oppressors and giving them money in their poverty” (366). In narrating Kelly’s life, Carey has presented him as an Australian idol since he stands against colonial power because there was

a colonial authority and Kelly himself was a byproduct of social injustice. Reviving a life of a bandit during colonialism as a national icon itself is a form of post-colonial resistance.

Jefferess focuses on instances in which the colonized harnessed resistance to decolonization and social transformation while also raising questions about identity and language. By seeking to tie the idea of resistance to that of agency and social change, rather than “just” subversion, he reflects the renewed interest in analyzing the material and historical contexts of the colonial era and their effective impact on the mobilization of different forms of resistance. Jefferess attempts to move past methodological postcolonial dichotomies and, instead, explores different articulations of resistance and liberation as both a material and discursive “transformation of human relationships” (87). Reframing resistance as transformation of both aspects of power dynamics opens up new ways of reassessing various ramifications of resistance under colonial rule.

Carey portrays Ned Kelly as a common working class people in order show his hardships in life. Kelly’s body strong and fit, conditioned by rough life and when he works as a feller and later as overseer, his prowess is subtly lauded by the remark that he was at no times earning less than top wages. His connection to the people of the land is, however, described in a more ideological, Marxist contrast between the ‘working class’ and the ‘bankers and capitalists.’ Kelly was not of them and had no sympathy with them, for blood and bone, he was of the people of the Australia which had fought at Eureka and was building a nation with its sweat, and carrying on in a new land the age-old struggle waged against the princes of Europe.

This class struggle is given as a motive why after three years of steady work Kelly opened large scale war on the wealthy stock-owners. Ned is supported in this cause by his fellow commoners, becoming a more powerful influence in this part of the world than wealth and police

authority itself. And he speaks out for his supporters, advising the rich to subscribe a sum and give it to the poor of their district as then the poor will stand by them and if the poor are on his side he will lose nothing by it. Riches were only depended on the police.

Ned Kelly was assisted by hundreds of poor farmers and cheered on by the lower classes of the city, much to the distress of the infuriated upper classes who are demoralized by the failures of the police and the many successes of the gang. The outlaw uses the money taken from the banks as a fighting fund to pay expenses of all who had helped to make the campaign a success. However newspapers of the day used to describe them as a meeting of thieves, prostitutes and foolish persons.

Ned Kelly is great in the novel. He is described as an amazing horseman, a wonderful shooter, a powerful fighter and even a “masterful orator” (360). Carey includes one more area for Ned to excel in wrestling, when he defeats the fearsome Wild Wright in a boxing match. This quality in Peter Carey, where Ned is depicted as rather asocial, staying mostly only at home or in hiding with his three mates. Either way, Ned’s public activity is limited to the two bank robberies, the day before the Glenrowan siege, and a varying number of disputable or dreamlike forays into night-time creating an image of Ned as a socially active and successful man. Although Ned’s other qualities redeem him to the extent that the writers throw no negative light on him for this lack of public activity.

He has no fear of pain or death while showing a willingness to protect family and honour at any cost, and proven by visible acts of daring. Ned Kelly refuses to bow down to the police and by the daring displays of horsemanship Kelly gives on more than one occasion. Carey goes into more detail and thus gives his Ned more specific opportunities to show his daring, such as when he “punches the big and fearsome Harry Power” (154), when he “brushes past the cowardly

police” (261), or when he “declares he will never abandon his mates or his mother and child” (337). Another such moment common to all the texts is when a “heavily injured Ned steps out in his armour to meet the police at Glenrowan” (414).

Carey portrays Ned as a physically strong and healthy person. He stresses this even more by contrasting him with the two men closest to his bushranger image, “Harry Power and Joe Byrne. Both are described on occasions as unhealthy and obnoxious – while the former’s bowel were very badly twisted” ( 85) and “his mouth probably smelled from not cleaning his teeth” (91), the latter also becomes “afflicted by the diarrhoea” (335) and becomes “pale and sick he had no charm” (344). This serves to subtly bring out Ned as the masculine ideal.

Ned takes care of his family and the people who support him, he is strong, capable and productive. Although he does not completely succeed in providing for his kin when outlawed, his ability to do so is undoubted at any time and his efforts are frustrated only because of the array of forces turned against him. He is more successful in providing for his supporters and, in providing a voice to the oppressed.

In this, Ned Kelly acquires the reputation and symbolic greatness in par with the likes of the legendary English Robin Hood, Scottish Rob Roy or William Wallace, the Carpatho-Ruthenian Nikola Šuhaj or the Japanese kyokyaku. He is an outlaw fighting against unjust persecution, punishing the evil and helping the poor and the weak. In this sense, Carey has portrayed him as a national myth.

Likewise, Ned Kelly is shown to be completely loyal to the common people. He represents the poor, the common people, especially the selectors of rural Australia and all those oppressed by the dominating social elite, and it is them he fights for and them he vindicates by his refusal to bow down to persecution. Ned’s successes resisting farcical attempts to capture



him and his smoothly operated bank robberies cause the police to become the laughing stock of a broad range of the public that already holds them in contempt, and are thus victories that the common folk celebrate on his behalf.

Ned does not get into much contact with the elderly, but he is shown as very respectful to women in all cases. He does not hurt them and speaks politely to them. He is shown to pay women special consideration as during both the bank robberies in Euroa and Jerilderie he asks about the lady of the house's state of health so as not to cause them any hurt or grievance.

Ned's refusal to give up his freedom and refusal to back down against the domination of stronger forces makes him symbolic of this trait in all three of his portrayals, though with some differences. Carey has Ned forced into certain actions by circumstances and partially enthralled by his lover Mary Hearn, but at the same time his fierce need for independence leads him to repeatedly rebel and strike out against his antagonizes no matter the odds stacked against him.

Ned refers to himself as the "Captain" (371) and is the one who ultimately decides what the gang will do. He is also portrayed as a strategic mastermind in his preparations of the Euroa and Jerilderie robberies and he himself suggest as much, showing self-assurance, when preparing the unsuccessful Glenrowan encounter, "The Commissioner thought he were the servant of Her Majesty the Queen but he were my puppet on a string he ordered the Special train as I desired . . . they never imagined they would be captives in a drama devised by me" (400). Ned has brilliance of psychological and tactical insight.

The character of Ned Kelly appears to be depicted very much as that of the generalized masculine ideal. His prowess in reading, writing and strategy may lead the reader to consider Ned Kelly the true man of modern times, achieving a synthesis of physical fitness and mental ability, rough manliness and tempered manners. However, this image is not quite stable, and the

straightforwardly idyllic picture is not even attempted, as it is filled with the cracks of contradiction and controversy. Rather, a hero is formed who is with his questionable.

There is no doubt that Ned Kelly is one (indeed it seems the most conspicuous) of Australia's national symbols. It is one of the first things noted in any study of the subject. The reasons for this are also broadly agreed upon, though focus may be placed on various aspects. Ned Kelly has become Australia's only real national hero. The image that is perpetuated by this interaction embraces the paradoxes and concerns of the Australian character. Yes, Ned Kelly was a murderer, but he only shot policemen, who have never been very popular in Australia anyway. He robbed the rich, perhaps not to help the poor, but at least to show that the wealthy and the powerful could not always have things their own way. Finally, and most important, Ned Kelly fought for what he believed in, and died for it.

Ned Kelly is considered far from perfect, but it is his paradoxical status that makes him so genuinely Australian. He does not bow down to the authorities nor the rich and powerful, and he is brave, keeping true to himself at all costs. Ned Kelly is both invader and outcast. His position encodes the longing to belong and the fear that white Australians will never belong. He would always be castaways in the continent of Australia.

Kelly the bushranger is emblematic of this ambivalence, but at the same time he serves to more firmly anchor white Australia to Australia itself. Even his vocation is iconic of a new, independent culture. Although a bushranger is essentially the same as the outlaws or bandits of any nation, the image that builds up suggests Kelly is not simply a bank robber, a gangster, a criminal or any of the other specific characters of cultures worldwide – he is a bushranger. He is the specifically Australian outlaw as unique to the country as every country is unique unto the rest of the world.

Although it might seem conceited if Ned talked of his own popularity, Carey manages to pull off a good number of mentions to Ned's fame without giving the impression the bushranger is bragging. The first such case, showing he is well known in the area, is when he is approached by an influential innkeeper to set up a boxing match, Ned remarks, "I knew him both by sight and reputation I were most surprised to learn he had any knowledge of me whatsoever" (211).

When robbing the Euroa bank, Ned talks to a group of "men they was Australians . . . the historic memory of UNFAIRNESS were in their blood" (359-60), implying that experience with unjust persecution is an innate Australian trait. He tells them his version of the Fitzpatrick incident and Stringybark Creek. The result is complete acceptance by representatives of the whole society, "In the hut at Faithfull's Creek I seen proof that if a man could tell his true history to Australians he might be believed . . . And lo they did applaud us with their eyes bright their faces red bank managers & overseers & ex policemen" (360-61).

Everyone not only believes Ned, but applauds him, showing him active support and acceptance. Even members of elite and otherwise hostile social groups: financiers, work leaders and the police. Ned is also glorified by proximity, when he notes of his mates on the eve of the Glenrowan battle, "Dan & Joe come back in from the night then all eyes went reverently to those armour'd men. The boys was noble of true Australian coin" (407). The impression that is given is that they (and by relation Ned) are heroes of the nation, the Australian version of the noble knight in shining armour. They are not fake pretenders to such a status, but they are "true" – authentic in their Australian character, the best that Australia has to offer that no other nation can provide.

In the last-but-one chapter of the book, Carey gives a nod to the whimsical self-derogative humour exemplified above, as he includes a comment by one of Kelly's detractors, the schoolmaster Thomas Curnow, which completes the picture:

What is it about we Australians, eh? He demanded. What is wrong with us? Do we not have a Jefferson? A Disraeli? Might not we find someone better to admire than a horse-thief and a murderer? Must we always make such an embarrassing spectacle of ourselves? (419)

Australians do not have big political figures and it is their admiration for Ned Kelly and the character traits he represents that make Australian culture stand out in a global context.

Ned is described as a "creature," "It was nothing human, that much was evident. It had no head but a very long thick neck and an immense chest and it walked with a slow ungainly gait directly into a hail of bullets. Shot after shot was fired without effect" (3). Such a depiction evokes imagery of headless ghosts, of the long thick necks of serpents and dragons, the enormous bodies and plodding tread of giants, the invulnerability of monstrous beings. However, this otherworldly character is subverted in the epilogue that returns to the same moment with a parallel script, but a wholly different commentary which serves to show him at once as a mere man, and at the same time to give him all the more recognition for overcoming his human frailty, "But he was not the Monitor, he was a man of skin and shattered bone with blood squelching in his boot. The Martini-Henry bullets slammed against him and he was jolted and jarred, his head slammed sideways, yet he would not stop" (418).

The Ned Kelly presented by Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang* certainly has a complex and intriguing personality and his self-narrative fulfils many roles. A great prominence is given to his years of childhood and youth and it is in these aspects that the reader gets closely

acquainted with him – his stubborn, somewhat naïve, family-bonded, heartfelt fighting spirit – these attributes remain the same throughout his adult life. His relationship with his mother is one of emotional dependency. His relationships with women are non-existent until the sudden, passionate affair with Mary Hearn that makes him a father avowing marriage – only for mother and child to disappear with equal suddenness and with hardly any lasting impact on Ned. The bushranger is forced into his criminal life by unfair circumstances, killing only in self-defence and stealing only from the rich who surely came by their great property through foul play.

He is drenched in Irish Catholic culture, crosses himself at any given moment and does not doubt a priest's words on the rare occasions he meets one, but does not let this hinder his actions. He is of the untamed country, his body honed by physical hardship, a man of the common people – and the common people claim him as their own. He is the stuff of heroes, a man of true grit – a master at all he does, fearless, loyal unto death, fending for those who need him, never bowing down to oppression, sexually potent, rough yet gallant, a captain of men. He is *the* Australian. He is the dark figure treading through the mists, bullets bouncing away. He is myth immortalized by Australian people. Peter Carey's choice of viewpoint creates a strong subjectivity which questions the narrator's reliability, destabilizes reality by introducing mythical beings, and opens up the protagonist's actual heroism as if he is subverting the colonial assumption regarding Ned Kelly. By doing this he resists the colonial power and history as a true post-colonial author.

### III. History of Ned Kelly: A Post-colonial Resistance

This research has explored the post-colonial resistance of Peter Carey by rewriting the life and history of Australian icon bandit or bushranger Ned Kelly in the fictional form *True History of Kelly Gang*. In doing so, Carey has presented details life and incidents faced by Kelly. Unlike the narration of official colonial history, Carey is able to portray him much positive character than a mere bandit. Revisiting history from the perspective of historically marginalized person itself is a task of questioning official colonial history as well as a strong sense of post-colonial resistance.

First of all Peter Carey establishes Ned Kelly and his family as a subordinate group who are low and working class. Originated as an Irish people these groups had been suffering due to the discrimination of English origin British people, the ruling group of colony. The hardship in life and injustice of ruling power pushes these groups to the much pitiful life. To be a bandit is a byproduct of the oppression of colonial authority. To survive and to keep his men and relative safe, Ned Kelly had no other option than to be a bandit. Carey has portrayed this reality of Ned Kelly in the novel. His portray of Ned Kelly is just opposite than the official colonial image of Ned Kelly since official colonial history has portrayed him as a mere bandit. However, the majority of Australians have been regarding Ned Kelly as a true Australian legend since he had stood against the contemporary colonial ruler.

Carey as a post-colonial author has captured the sentiment of Australian commoners and written Ned Kelly's life and history from the people of colony. In this sense, he has countered the colonial notion of Ned Kelly and has established him as a national hero, icon or legend who stood against the oppressive social and political structure of colonizer. Peter Carey has evoked this historical figure as a true Australian legend as if he is countering the colonial culture, history and domination. In this sense, the novel stands as the counter of official history or as a means of post colonial resistance. Through *True History of Kelly Gang*, Carey has countered the colonial official perspective by rewriting the myth like life of Ned Kelly in the form of novel. In doing so, he seems clear that he has strong sense of post-colonial resistance.

Australia being former colony of Great Britain, the literature produced here is regarded as post-colonial literature. Most of the post-colonial writings focus on post-colonial resistance by revisiting and writing about past. Carey too has written historical novel in order to resist the colonial power by placing himself in New Historical standpoint. From his narration it is clear that Ned Kelly's lived a life full of struggle. He was an Irish Australian, loyal to his family whose history was steeped in the mythology of the Irish rebellions against the British. This was part of the cause of the tension between the wealthy British settlers and the poorer Irish in Australia during Kelly's time. As a consequence, Ned Kelly himself had strong anti-English feelings and an extremely strong hatred to the police who in that era was under the English authorities of colonial period. Peter Carey by portraying Ned Kelly, a bandit, as the hero of the novel not only trail back to that historical period rather even questions official history as if he is resisting colonial power in the form of writing.

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