

Whitewash

The Writers' Festival debate between Windschuttle and Manne focussed on their differences. Despite his obvious passion for the topic, Windschuttle claimed to be a dispassionate, objective, researcher who relies on empirical evidence. Manne, on the other hand, regards Australian history with a sense of shame and pity.

Despite their obvious differences, Windschuttle, Manne and Hirst (the chairman of the debate) demonstrated that they share something in common. On several occasions, all three men talked about "the Aborigines and *their* women".

The language during the debate demonstrated a white male view of history. It dismissed the experiences and autonomy of aboriginal women. By making women invisible, they whited out her history.

Men who claim to be telling the "historical truth" need to acknowledge that their history is at best a partial truth. The 'legitimate historical records' often tell a story about men, written by other men.

The history of European occupation in Tasmania may never be fully told. Much of this history lies in the hearts and minds of people whose stories were never documented in government records, newspapers and diaries. The story of aboriginal women has been largely kept secret. It is indeed a sorry business.

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