

THE FOUNDING OF A TRADITION:  
AUSTRALIAN/AMERICAN LITERARY RELATIONS BEFORE 1868

by

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## ABSTRACT

In the eighty years from the arrival of English convicts and their gaolers in Australia to the death, in 1868, of Australia's first major writer, Charles Harpur, an Australian/American literary tradition was born. This dissertation traces the development of that tradition, one which few scholars have recognized. Even before the arrival of the First Fleet of convicts, many Britons saw Australia as potentially another America; consequently, Australia's early inhabitants did so too. A few radicals and idealists even contemplated Cook's Pacific discovery as a new and potentially greater America.

Botany Bay's first decades naturally witnessed some changes in these initial perceptions. Up to Darling's period of governorship (1825-31), Australia's ruling élite, though forced to trade with busy--and, at times, ruthless--Yankee merchants, considered the continuing presence of American boats to be a threat to the colony's security: American captains aided in the numerous escapes of convicts otherwise doomed to spend the terms of their natural life in New Holland. Reaction to Americans and American influence, then, depended on one's position in the colonial hierarchy.

However, after Governor Brisbane decided to allow freedom of the Press in 1824, significant shifts in the Australian/American relationship began. An expanding Australian middle class, chafing under the strictures

of colonial rule from London, began to identify its situation with that of the citizenry in pre-revolutionary America. Led initially by W.C. Wentworth, who published his Statistical Description in 1819, demand for self-government grew. This dissent should be viewed as Australia's first lively and recognizably indigenous literature. It draws heavily on American precedent. In the 1830's, '40's and '50's, revolutionary writers such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, James Otis and Patrick Henry became increasingly popular amongst Australians in search of political sovereignty. America came under scrutiny as a country experiencing parallel growing pains, but at a more advanced stage of development. At the same time, the example of American independence was of rhetorical and political value for Australians when dealing with a rigid Colonial Office in London.

While "Brother Jonathan," as America was often affectionately labelled, was a popular political weapon up to the 1850's, he was also of great literary significance in the later 1830's. Consumption of American books in Australia increased dramatically as the population expanded and books became cheaper. In 1838, John Dunmore Lang's Colonist reprinted William Ellery Channing's essay, "On the Importance and Means of a National Literature." Conscious of the efforts of Americans such as Channing, Emerson, Brownson, Fuller and Parker to establish a strong national literature in the United States, a small group of dedicated Australians strove to assert their own creative independence. They recognized not only Australia's political affinity with America, but social, intellectual and literary attachments as well.

Connections between Australia and America became far more sophisticated in the 1840's, '50's and '60's for a variety of reasons. One was the goldfields in California and Australia, with the subsequent interchange of population. Another was the more advanced system of communications between the two countries--the American Civil War, for example, was exhaustively covered in all Australian colonies. Third, and for this thesis most importantly, three Australian writers, John Dunmore Lang, Daniel Deniehy and Charles Harpur determined to consult a wide range of American sources in their quest to establish both a highly principled nation and a truly Australian literature.

Yet, as the works of Lang, Deniehy and Harpur indicate, Australians of the time rejected the path of easy imitation of Brother Jonathan. All three writers envisaged their country as a future world-leader. Rejecting both despotic colonial-government rule and America's abhorrent institution of slavery, they wanted to establish an ideal republic in the south--a utopia of yeoman-farmers.

Shaped by these republican musings, democratic sentiments and utopian speculations, a literary tradition of energetic interaction between Australian and American writers, enlarging on socio-political roots as old as the colony itself, was founded.

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That our colonial literature . . . is commonly squeezed into the skimpiest of chapters in our handbooks of American literature, is due, I think, to an exaggerated regard for esthetic values. Our literary historians have labored under too heavy a handicap of the genteel tradition--to borrow Professor Santayana's happy phrase --to enter sympathetically into a world of masculine intellects and material struggles. They have sought daintier fare than polemics, and in consequence mediocre verse has obscured political speculation, and poetasters have shouldered aside vigorous creative thinkers.

Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (1927)<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

. . . Australian literature will only be in a fair way of development when there is side by side with it an Australian school of criticism. For, after all, one should be judged by one's own people.

A. Patchett Martin in Sladen's  
Australian Poets (1888)<sup>2</sup>

Since the mid 1960's, Australian writers have acknowledged a surprisingly close relationship with writers from the United States-- surprising because, in standard critical appraisals and histories of Australian literature, few connections are noticed. This apparently sudden development, most conspicuous in recent poetry, raises the question: did earlier Australian writers read American authors?

Ironically yet appropriately, it took an American, Joseph Jones, in a 1976 University of Queensland book, to ask a question which laid down a challenge that few or no Australian critics have adequately met: "How does a democracy help beget other democracies?"<sup>3</sup> Partly answering it, Jones observes:

Looking, or listening [to nineteenth-century Australian literature] more intensively the comparative reader may

also become aware of a tone that he cannot label as the echo of any single American but that nevertheless sets up a resonance, a low-keyed thematic hum, which he would like to be able to record more precisely but is not quite sure about. This is intrinsically more important than sporadic "documentary" evidences: its presence means that two separate literatures are close to each other's wavelength, so to speak--that two peoples must be thinking and responding along similar lines.<sup>4</sup>

In essence, Jones denies the matter of direct literary correspondence, opting for a more generalized "spirit of the times," which is undocumentable. He begs the very question he raises. It is the purpose of this thesis to identify and clarify a vigorous current of Australian/American activity during the early history of Australian writing up to Charles Harpur's death in 1868. By the end of the 1860's, Harpur, Daniel Deniehy and John Dunmore Lang had advanced a radical critique of their society and literature which publicly confirmed the dialogue between Australian writers and Americans from Jefferson and Paine to Channing, Emerson and Whitman.

Indeed, when Australian writers of the 1880's and '90's turned--as so many Australian republicans, utopians, Single-Taxers, socialists and bushmen then did--to America as a source of political and literary inspiration, they were only repeating, in a more intense and widespread way, what Australians had done for at least two generations. They merely consolidated what amounted, by then, to an Australian tradition. It was the practice of the anti-colonial writer and thinker to look to American sources. Similarly, almost a century later, from the middle 1960's on, social discontent and disgust with the prevailing

literary climate again generated rebellious attitudes and a turn towards American models.

There are, basically, four critical views of the literary relations between Australia and the United States. First, there are those who have deemed exploration of the American connection fruitless because it simply doesn't exist. In 1941, Fred Alexander, one of the first historians to comment on the influence of American literature, maintained that "Australian art and literature owes much to English and European influence and to their own sturdy independence; they owe little to American sources."<sup>5</sup> Equally convinced, Vincent Buckley promulgated a similar line in 1957: ". . . so far the influence of American poetry has been so tentative as to be almost indiscernible."<sup>6</sup> As recently as 1970, Norman Harper, studying the history of Australian/American relations, wrote that the "American impact was relatively slight . . . and it wasn't until the 1930's that American literature came to influence Australian novelists."<sup>7</sup>

The second view originates with those who ignore the American connection completely. Such early literary historians as G.B. Barton might be excused on the grounds that they were seeking to establish sources, rather than study them in detail, and knowing little of American literature, got on with the initially important business of cataloguing what they could. Similarly, the next generation of mainly academic critics was writing with a London audience in mind, and consequently with a "colonial" vocabulary. But the neglect of the American connection by such a comparatively recent critic as

G.A. Wilkes can only be ascribed to ignorance. Wilkes has a pre-conceived notion that the only literary tradition is the great English literary tradition.<sup>8</sup>

Such conservatism is equally apparent in the third view: the passionate resistance to modernist verse in Australia during the unadventurous years between 1920 and 1960. The villain, the real threat, is most often identified as the free-verser from America; the defenders of the formal tradition range from academy poet-critics such as A.D. Hope and James McAuley, to freelance writers like James Devaney and F.T. Macartney.

The fourth view, apparent in the nineteenth century, identified America as an older-brother figure who had been through an identical teething stage of development. This attitude was articulated early by a number of radical newspapers in the 1820's and '30's, notably John Dunmore Lang's weekly The Colonist (1835-41). It found social expression in potentially revolutionary actions such as those of Tasmania's "Patriotic Six" (1846) and those at the Eureka Stockade (1854).<sup>9</sup>

Clearly, the American question, marked by the neglect, ignorance and prejudice of a wide variety of commentators for so long, needs careful examination. One must avoid the constant stream of unresearched, bald assertions which only serve to confuse the issues. The continued failure to acknowledge the historical and literary importance of an American connection has resulted in a denial of the recognition due to certain nineteenth-century Australian writers, and thinkers, in

particular John Dunmore Lang and Daniel Deniehy.<sup>10</sup>

This thesis, examining the changing nature of the Australian/American interaction in poetry and prose, comprises two main sections. The opening section explores the first fifty years of settlement, beginning with the circumstances leading up to Governor Phillip's arrival at Sydney Cove and the symbolic unfurling of the Union Jack on the night of January 26th, 1788. It ends in 1838, when John Dunmore Lang's Colonist printed William Ellery Channing's essay, "On the Importance and Means of a National Literature."

The second period stretches from 1838 to Charles Harpur's death in 1868, an appropriate date to mark the demise of the first generation of Australian radicals. Daniel Deniehy died in 1865, and Lang's polemical outbursts had waned by the 1860's. During this thirty-year span, republican verses, with obvious American analogues, consistently featured in colonial newspapers. Writers penned their protests and publicized their hope in a future utopian Australian which might eventually provide a moral example for all the world to follow.

My approach to the years covered by the thesis accords in one important way with that of Welsh scholar, Raymond Williams, in his two critical histories of English ideas and values, Culture and Society (1958) and The Long Revolution (1960). While mine is not a Marxist critique, it is, like Williams', focussed on cultural evolution-- on the importance not only of the established literary genres, but of the wider "body of intellectual and imaginative work which each generation receives as its traditional culture."<sup>12</sup>

For the greater part of its history, Australian literary criticism has at worst paid scant attention to the American contribution, and at best bitterly attacked its radical propositions. The long-term effects of this cannot be underestimated. G.B. Barton's Literature in New South Wales (1866), which complacently asserts Australia's debt to the "Mother Country," gave way to H.M. Green's An Outline of Australian Literature (1930) and his later A History of Australian Literature (1961). These, in turn, gave way to G.A. Wilkes's Australian Literature: A Conspectus (1969), in which the weight falls exclusively on the "European tradition."<sup>13</sup> These works generate an emphasis in Australian letters which few critics have seriously questioned, until recently.

The first belletristic poets in Australia and their subsequent critics trusted, along with James Macarthur, that "Reason and England" would prevail over "democracy and Australia."<sup>14</sup> However, after the gold rush of the 1850's and the sudden swell in population, the continued dominance of English "Reason," especially in Australian criticism, is more difficult to account for. What factors influenced critics in the years between Barton's initiating study and Wilkes' equally restrictive framework? This complex question is central to an understanding of the American connection with Australian literature. The history falls into four clear periods: the early years (1810-60); the years of academic colonialism (1860-1900); the arid years (1900-40); and the years dominated by the new colonials (1940-70).



1810-60

May this -- thy last born INFANT -- then arise,  
 To glad thy heart, and greet thy PARENT eyes;  
 And AUSTRALASIA float, with flag unfurled,  
 A new BRITANNIA in another world!

W.C. Wentworth, "Australasia" (1823)<sup>15</sup>

Australia's first fifty years as an English colony produced, not unexpectedly, little writing of literary quality and virtually no searching criticism. Yet the climate in the early years for the aspiring writer helps to explain critical responses later in the century and, for this reason, warrants some attention. England, for the bard in the Australian wilderness, meant more than a mere literary tradition in which he could write. It represented an entire way of looking at the world. It would, however, in the long run be an irrelevant way, in another hemisphere, under a different sky-- and it is an irrelevance not unlike that suffered by American writers who, for over two centuries, were apt to utilize an Old-World vocabulary and tradition in a New-World landscape. In 1934, William Carlos Williams articulated the dilemma of the American writer when, at the beginning of his essay on "The American Background," he remarked on the discomfort of the early settlers:

They saw birds with rusty breasts and called them robins. Thus from the start, an America of which they could have had no inkling drove the first settlers upon their past. They retreated for warmth and reassurance to something previously familiar. But at a cost. For what they saw were not robins.<sup>16</sup>

Similar problems faced the first Australian writers, many of whom, confronted by the difficulties and confusions of naming anew, gladly-- and mistakenly--thought of Australian literature as an insignificant branch of English literature. This attitude, more than any other, helped to mould derivative colonial thinking. It still survives.

In a country struggling for physical survival, literature necessarily had a low priority. A number of years passed before the wooden screw-press brought to the settlement by Phillip, in 1788, was even used. In fact, it wasn't until Macquarie's period of governorship that some poems were published separately: Michael Massey Robinson's series of birthday odes (1810-21), and the "fruits" of the self-proclaimed first "Austral harmonist," Barron Field (1819).<sup>17</sup> Then, a little later, came W.C. Wentworth's prize-winning Australasia, an Ode (1823) and the "wild notes" of Charles Tompson's "lyre" (1826).

Some idea of the techniques, motivations, and the intended audience of these early poets (and their lesser contemporaries) can be gained from Robinson's example. For his annual odes he received two cows from the government herd--a token of Macquarie's appreciation for the uplifting, patriotically English tone of the poems.<sup>18</sup> Needless to say, both of the English monarchs and Macquarie were lauded by Robinson for their benevolence, foresight and courage. Firmly Augustan, the first ode published illustrates the shallow rhetorical flourish of all that followed over the next eleven years:

Though, wafted by the refluent Tides,  
Your watery Waste her Sons divide,

Still shall the Muse prefer her tribute Lay,  
 And Australasia hail here GEORGE'S Natal Day.  
 Auspicious Morn! to BRITONS dear:  
 The Pride of each revolving Year!<sup>19</sup>

Later odes propagandize, proclaiming the colonists' zeal and achievements:

. . . BRITANNIA'S Sons came forth, to brave  
 The dreary Perils of the length'ning Wave;  
 When her bold Barks, with swelling Sails unfurled,  
 Trac'd these rude Coasts, and hail'd a new-found World.  
 Soon as their Footsteps press'd the yielding sand,  
 A sun more genial brighten'd on the Land:  
 Commerce and Arts enrich'd the social Soil,  
 Burst through the gloom and bade all Nature smile.<sup>20</sup>

But Robinson, a convicted blackmailer, perjurer and forger with sense enough to be disingenuous at a time when the rewards reaped through governmental patronage made it worthwhile, rarely strayed far from monotonously repetitive adulation towards his

SOVEREIGN! -- to whom thy People bend,  
 And hail their GUARDIAN, FATHER, FRIEND! . . .  
 Oh, deign from distant Shores to hear  
 The universal Wish, sincere,  
 Re-echo'd from AUSTRALIA'S Land  
 Which grateful owns thy fost'ring Hand; --

That HEAV'N indulgent to a NATION'S PRAYER,  
 MAY LONG THEIR SIRE PRESERVE--THEIR MONARCH SPARE!<sup>21</sup>

Who could blame him? Robinson knew where his next meal was coming from.

If the narrowness of subject must at times have made the onset of June in later years a boring prospect for Robinson, the financial recompense and prestige as Australia's first "Poet Laureat" no doubt compensated.<sup>22</sup> For the first of many times to come, external

considerations--the pervasive actual and psychological presence of "Home"--heavily influenced the pen of the colonial writer. Inevitably, many literary critics would, in the future, establish their criteria in purely English terms.

Though Robinson's contemporaries did not enjoy the same local esteem and financial recompense for their verse as he, they were no less aware of the audience they were attempting to please and the appropriate form their verse should take. They, too, wanted to maximize their chances of a warm reception from the English critics. For example, in 1819, Barron Field, the king's representative in the Supreme Court of the colony, published a slim two-poem volume with the mildly ambitious title First Fruits of Australian Poetry.<sup>23</sup> Both of the poems, "Botany-Bay Flowers" and "The Kangaroo," penned solely for the consumption of a distant London public, exploit the oddities of local flora and fauna. Field wasn't interested in responding in an individual way to the challenging circumstances in which he found himself. He didn't attempt to see the country with new eyes. Rather, as one critic has said, he "conceptualized it instead."<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, then, his travelogue included

A Flower [which] gladden'd me above the rest,  
 Shap'd trumpet-like, which from a palmy stalk  
 Hangs clust'ring, hyacinthine, crimson red  
 Melting to white. Botanic Science calls  
 The plant EPACRIS GRANDIFLORA . . .<sup>25</sup>

Later, he

. . . [spies] the Flowret in the grass,  
 Which forms the subject of this humble Song,  
 And (treason to my wedded Flower) cried: --  
 Th' Australian 'fringed Violet'  
 Shall hencefôward be my pet! . . .  
 And here are winged grasshoppers;  
 And, as to gnats for waggoners,  
 We have mosquitoes will suffice  
 To drive her team of atomies.        26

This was exactly what the reading public back home, needing to be titillated by the exotic, wanted to hear. They were already well on the way to establishing their own uninformed images of England's latest acquisition to the south, stereotypes to which many ambitious colonial bards and critics happily succumbed for most of the nineteenth century. Thus, some seventy years later, Douglas Sladen's three anthologies of 1888 are crammed full of black gins, gum-trees, kangaroos and Buddawong seed-nuts.<sup>27</sup>

Fields' purpose in First Fruits does not significantly differ from that of the host of reportage novelists in the following thirty years up to 1850. Both convey information, often humorously, for a remote audience, seeking throughout to entertain and enlighten, certainly not to disturb. The intention is not so much to convey accurate information as to meet the preconceptions of a distant reader. Knowing he would soon be returning to England, Field also wanted to establish for himself a modest reputation as a literary gentleman, a common colonial ambition.

The problem of satisfying established, and foreign, literary criteria also beset native-born writers throughout the century,

particularly early belletristic poets such as Charles Tompson and W.C. Wentworth. But while critics have constantly emphasized their Englishness, they have downplayed the circumstances under which they wrote. Both Tompson and Wentworth displayed some ability as poets (particularly Tompson); they emphasized contemplation, personality and a fairly sophisticated awareness of their locale. But their choice of poetic form and general attitudes was no less derivative than that of the expatriates. Their verse lauded Australia as potentially another England. Tompson wrote elegies, odes and pastorals in at times self-proclaimed imitation of the likes of Pope, Cowper and Gray.<sup>28</sup> His "An Elegy on Winter in Argyleshire" deals with the onset of winter in New South Wales, not Scotland, though the uninformed reader might not think so:

No more are heard the thrush's mellow notes,  
 No more the plover mounts the ev'ning breeze,  
 No more the soaring lark on aether floats,  
 Spoil'd of their honours, mourn the leafless trees.<sup>29</sup>

Without the early reference to the "Antarctic wilds," and the necessary use of an aboriginal place name, the poem is so conventional and general in its diction and syntax as to be thoroughly at home in the northern hemisphere.

Perhaps W.C. Wentworth best reflects the prevailing sentiments of those establishing early Australian letters. His conclusion to "Australasia," at once optimistic about an independent future and unwaveringly patriotic to Britain, implores "Celestial poesy" to

. . . grant that yet an Austral Milton's song  
 Pactolus-like flow deep and rich along: --  
 An Austral Shakespeare rise, whose living page  
 To Nature true may charm in ev'ry age; --  
 And that an Austral Pindar daring soar,  
 Where not the Theban Eagle reach'd before.

And, oh Britannia! should'st thou cease to ride  
 Despotic Empress of old Ocean's tide; --  
 Should thy tam'd Lion --spent his former might --  
 No longer roar, the terror of the fight: --  
 Should e'er arrive that dark, disastrous hour,  
 When thou, no longer freest of the free,  
 To some proud victor bend'st the vanquish'd knee; --  
 May all thy glories in another sphere  
 Relume, and shine more brightly still than here;  
 May this --thy last-born INFANT-- then arise,  
 To glad thy heart, and greet thy PARENT eyes;  
 And AUSTRALASIA float, with flag unfurl'd,  
 A new BRITANNIA in another world!<sup>30</sup>

It was Wentworth who, in 1853, would pilot the cause of those advocating an upper house in New South Wales comprised only of men with hereditary titles based on land holdings--an Australian House of Lords. This is a far cry from the radical challenges and angry young man's confidence evident in his first printed work: A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales (1819).<sup>31</sup>

In this climate of literary dependence, critics inevitably followed the apparent tendency of most local writers as, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they had in the United States.<sup>32</sup> When serious reviewing began in Australia in the 1830's, English periodicals set the standards. Since much, but by no means all Australian writing before 1868 reflected stolidly colonial thinking, so too did the concomitant critical commentary on that writing. A critical orthodoxy--

subservient to English standards--took shape, in spite of an equally committed but less visible and numerous group of Australians dedicated to democratizing society and literature.<sup>32</sup>

In 1969, G.A. Wilkes remarked that in the years between Cook's landing at Botany Bay, in 1770, and the publication of Charles Tompson's Wild Notes, in 1826,

Australian literature had a more cultivated temper than it was ever to possess again, and an elegance of form that it would be long in recovering. The libraries of educated colonists at this time typically included the works of Pope, Cowper and Goldsmith, with Thomson's Seasons, Young's Night Thoughts, and Blair's The Grave. It was completely natural for local writers to follow these literary modes. . . .<sup>33</sup>

When Wilkes identifies an eighteenth-century English literary style with "cultivation," he reveals himself as an Anglophile of perhaps limited literary sensibility. Secondly, in upholding "cultivation" as desirable, he is defending the tradition that finds aesthetic and intellectual value solely in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century English periodical. Third, and most importantly, this view of literature necessarily denies literary value to any other kind of writing. In order to establish a more reliable perspective, it is necessary, therefore, to look at the alternative body of literature to which most literary commentators have paid virtually no attention.

In a country founded along schismatic lines, initially committed to the establishment of a sharp social division between the privileged colonial administrator and the lowly convict, three kinds of writing are evident. There is that produced by the local "aristocratic"



circles--those unquestioningly loyal to the king, or shrewd enough to mouth patriotic sentiments. It emphasized the sculptured care of Augustan modes, using a language alien to Australian circumstances. There is that writing produced by the steadily more influential middle class, which usually found expression in the newspapers. The third is that of the illiterate convict, which often involved sardonic appraisal of the actualities of the Australian environment. It was oral, and constituted a folk literature. As the nineteenth century progressed, many critics paid attention only to the first group and to the more dignified products of the second. Hoping for publication in England, such critics were largely indifferent to any sign of a genuinely local literature until at least the 1890's.

Convict "literature," in the form of pipes, songs and ballads, grew initially out of the harsh penal experience. It was the first to voice dissent against the governor's authoritarian power. However, in 1824 press censorship was abolished, and the literature of protest assimilated middle-class dissatisfaction. As in pre-revolutionary America, the prestige and importance of newspapers grew. Simple cries of scorn for authority steadily matured into the more sophisticated expression of republican and nationalist themes. Strengthened by the successful revolt in America and the revolutionary climate in Europe, greater numbers of people adopted an anti-establishment stance. America was conceived of as inspiration, model and example. But the outlet for such views up to the 1840's was the spoken word or newspaper, not a book of poems or novel. Hence, in subsequent literary

appraisals and histories, it has been largely ignored.

1860-1900

Anticipating the tone of the principal works of Australian literary criticism for the next fifty years, in 1864 Henry Melville ('Henricus') declared that he and his fellow-colonists

. . . do not want a colonial literature. We are English. England is our country. The English language is our mother tongue. The English literature is our heritage.<sup>34</sup>

England, to the majority of critics and many of the writers, was "Home"--and those who disagreed in print with Henry Melville's orthodox position nevertheless found it impossible to escape the Mother Country's pervasive authority. A notable example is the England-educated G.B. Barton (1836-1901), author of the first two important critical works of the new country, both printed in Sydney: Literature in New South Wales (1866) and The Poets and Prose Writers of New South Wales (1866). As Reader in English Literature and Language at the University of Sydney, he represents the first of a long line of university-based commentators exerting considerable influence on the literary climate of their era.

Not unexpectedly, while restricting the scope of his works to "men who have identified themselves with the Colony," Barton still felt compelled to begin with the kind of deferential manner propriety demanded:

To trace the growth of letters in this community, from the earliest period of our history to the present time, and to shew in what manner that growth has been influenced by the productions of the mother country, are the objects sought to be accomplished in these pages. With us, Literature requires to be considered in two aspects: first, as a native or indigenous product; and secondly, as a foreign or imported one. Too young to possess a "national literature" of our own, the consideration of foreign influence becomes an all-important one.<sup>35</sup>

Not that this stopped him from articulating, later in the introduction, the real purpose of his work--to isolate the economic and social barriers operating against the founding of an independent literature:

If it is desirable that this country should not be known to the rest of the world simply in its commercial relations,--that it should, in due time, possess a literature of its own--how is this end to be accomplished? Unless a radical change takes place in the temper of the people, the prospects of an independent literature are extremely dim. If discouragement in its bitterest form must always await the man of letters, the result must be injurious to our character as a community . . . We shall thus be left to rely helplessly upon the productions of another land, as we do at present. . . .<sup>36</sup>

Yet, ironically, his own frame of reference is English. Despite his launching an attack on those who "rely helplessly" on English authors and critical standards, Barton himself couldn't avoid a similar dependence at times. Thus, in the midst of a concerned plea for literary autonomy, he writes:

If, however, in this country, the people will persist in their cold indifference to their native literature, then we must expect to go back, and to see the days of Chatterton and Goldsmith return upon us.<sup>37</sup>

Later, Barton follows his one-page appraisal of Kendall's Poems and Songs (1862), "the highest point to which the poetic genius of our country has yet attained," with almost two pages of excerpts from the London Athenaeum.<sup>38</sup> These excerpts purport to establish conclusive evidence of the validity of his lofty claim. The difficulty is that the only measure of success that Barton has is English "authority"; he cannot appeal to his reader's own taste of judgment.

Barton's great virtue as a critic is in seeing the fundamentally compliant temper of Australian literature as its central problem. Fifteen or so years after his two books were published, articulate reaction to Australia's colonialism began to gain momentum. This took place not in the universities or genteel country homes, but on the farms and in the urban sprawl of tenement houses. Yet academic critics in Australia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century persistently clung to the standards of another land. The prominent members of this "class of lettered élite," to use Barton's phrase, kept alive the spirit of Sam Buckley in the novel The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn (1859):

What honours, what society, has this little colony to give, compared to those open to a fourth-rate gentleman in England? I want to be a real Englishman, not half a one. I want to throw in my lot heart and hand with the greatest nation in the world.<sup>39</sup>

This, despite rapidly changing social attitudes and values. With the nature of class structure itself undergoing change, critics,

except those who looked to the Bulletin (1880- ) as their forum, began to lose contact with the developments of a blossoming new literature slowly discovering an independent, if unsophisticated voice.

Frank Wilmot's comment some years later that "all truly creative writing is years in advance of its criticism and . . . writing following the organized criticism is almost certain to be conventional" seems especially applicable to the academic critics and commentators of this period.<sup>40</sup> The leading proponents of this developing orthodoxy, led by the prolific anthologist and sometime poet and critic Douglas Sladen (1856-1947), were the poet and critic Arthur Patchett Martin (1851-1902); Melbourne banker and historian, Henry Gyles Turner (1831-1920), and his associate Alexander Sutherland (1852-1902), a one-time Professor of English Literature and registrar at the University of Melbourne; and T.G. Tucker (1859-1946), scholar, essayist and esteemed Professor of Classical Philology, also at Melbourne. All, it is worth noting, were English-born, except Sutherland, a Glaswegian, and all resolved to further their role as enlightened commentators on the literature of one of Britain's colonies. The preoccupations of many Australian writers, especially poets, were altering rapidly at this time, but there is little sign of this in the standard criticism. O'Dowd was writing to Walt Whitman, Farrell

to Henry George; Heney, Gay and Le Gay Brereton were reading Whitman and Thoreau; and Lawson, along with Furphy and Daley, were familiar with American radical example; but most of the critics outside the Bulletin adhered to the proven formulas. America went ignored.

Sladen represents the prototype. A graduate of Trinity College, Oxford, and the University of Melbourne, he spent five years in Australia (1879-84) before returning to England to "pursue his historical studies at 'Home.'"<sup>41</sup> He wasted no time exploiting his Australian experience. Deciding to harvest the "continuing crop of antipodean verse and to export it like Australian wheat and wool, to the home country," as one critic has put it, Sladen had three anthologies published in London in 1888, a centenary year.<sup>42</sup> His dedicatory lines and the poem opening the first volume accurately reflect the editor's bias--his criteria for selection. It begins: "This little volume, inspired by life in the Greater Britain under the Southern Cross, is dedicated TO THE ENGLISH OF THREE CONTINENTS." The first and last stanzas demonstrate its quality and direction:

We are all sprung from men who fought at Creçy;  
 We all were Englishmen when Shakespeare wrote;  
 And we are still compatriots in esse,  
 Though called Australians, Yankees, and what not . . . .

We all are English, born in one great union  
 Of blood and language, history and song,  
 All English, and to cherish our communion  
 We will present a common front to wrong.<sup>43</sup>

Stirring sentiments from a drum-beating English patriot, but hardly the stuff of which fully representative, lively anthologies of a

new country's writing are made.

Each anthology opens with an introduction by the editor, none of which reveals any sign of critical perception and insight. Australian Poets includes an additional essay by Sladen's friend, Arthur Patchett Martin. Asked by the editor to "please give your own experiences--what led you, trained and educated entirely in Australia, to write verses?" Martin eagerly grasps the opportunity to expatiate on his own importance in antipodean poetry.<sup>44</sup> Nor is it beneath Sladen to indulge in a little self-aggrandizement. His personal contribution to Australian Poets ranks third behind James Brunton Stephens and Henry Kendall (with Martin a close fifth).

The most precise critical claim in any of the three introductions, that "most young Colonial poets . . . except the few who have an original genius, draw their inspiration from English poets through the medium of either Gordon or Kendall," is at least questionable in the later 1880's.<sup>45</sup> Sladen, it seems, suspected this himself. In his conclusion to the Australian Poets introduction, he admits to being

conscious, before the book is printed, of the promiscuous abuse that will be poured upon it by the lower class of Australian papers, which are nothing if they are not "aboriginal."<sup>46</sup>

Again, the gap between local, informed opinion in the papers and magazines, and the purportedly representative standard work. Sladen's fears were not unfounded. "Aboriginal" papers such as the Sydney



Quarterly Magazine and the Bulletin predictably responded to the "slipshod workmanship" and "threadbare subjects" of the anthologized poems. One critic regarded the content as almost totally derivative of "the great works of English masters."<sup>47</sup> The Bulletin expressed dismay at the productions of this "representative Australian," maintaining that "modest natives fairly wilted before him. His 'Haw!' pervaded the whole continent."<sup>48</sup>

But if antipodean response varied noticeably, Sladen must not have been greatly discomfited. All three anthologies were a commercial success where it counted most: London. The sale of twenty thousand copies of Australian Ballads and Rhymes ensured the popularity of the next two anthologies.<sup>49</sup> In the three collections, London literary circles had their stereotypes of Australia (and its verse) confirmed. They got exactly what they wanted to hear:

Your sons might not pass muster in Bond Street or Pall-Mall,  
But when bush fires are raging, they go to face the hell . . .  
And something of the Norman must mingle in their blood,  
Who emulate old England by fence and field and flood --50

Sladen's anthologies not only gained him money and renown, they enhanced the credibility of certain scholars of the period. One beneficiary was Arthur Patchett Martin who, no doubt aided by the impetus given to his personal career as a result of the publicity derived from Australian Poets, delivered a lecture in London on Australian letters which was shortly afterwards published by Henry Sotheran, Piccadilly, as The Beginnings of an Australian Literature (1898).<sup>51</sup>

Sladen labelled Patchett Martin "a representative Australian litterateur."<sup>52</sup> Hence, it is not difficult to anticipate Martin's great reverence for the strong "Byronic personality" of Australia's so-called "true pioneer poet," Adam Lindsay Gordon, as well as the inveterately colonial tone of all his critical work.<sup>53</sup> The purpose of Beginnings, published in response to an expressed demand by the English public, and thus tailored to their taste, was, as the preface suggests:

. . . to deal merely with the belles-lettres--with the little scanty band of prose-writers and verse-men who, preserving the literary traditions and culture of the mother-land under novel conditions and circumstances, have been laying the foundations of a fresh branch of English literature in this far-off Austral world.<sup>54</sup>

The lecture begins with an interesting claim, one so Empire-conscious as to make even Sladen look a trifle unpatriotic:

In the strict logical sense of the words, there is--and there can be--no such thing as Australian literature; any more than there can be a South African, a Canadian, or even an American literature. . . . [The United States] though politically independent--at times, I fear, hostile--are still, in the old Greek sense, England's greatest colony.<sup>55</sup>

Martin effortlessly encompassed all writing in English as being either from "Old England" or "New England."<sup>56</sup>

Given the extreme orthodoxy of his beliefs and stance, the quaintness of the ensuing critical judgements comes almost as anticlimax. There is puzzlement as to why Marcus Clarke, in His Natural Life,

"should have devoted such an immense amount of labour to this compendium of crime," delight that Clarke and Henry Kingsley, "whom I consider to be the founder of Australian fiction, should both have been Mounted Policemen," and, finally, dismay that his friend George Gordon M'Crae should have published "at least two epic poems based on the traditions and mythology of the poor native races whom we have ousted. But you cannot write epics on the Australian blacks; you might as well compose a sonata on a monkey."<sup>57</sup>

Ironically, in the last paragraph of his article in Sladen's Australian Poets, Martin concludes that "Australian literature will only be in a fair way of development when there is side by side with it an Australian school of criticism. For, after all, one should be judged by one's own people."<sup>58</sup> Presumably Martin felt himself, as an honorary antipodean, part of this school when he lectured on the subject in 1898. He considered himself qualified to sum up the progress of Australian literature at the turn of the century, despite almost twenty years of considerable Bulletin and other activity, this way:

I fear that the youthful vigour and ability of the colonies have been displayed on the cricket-field and the mining market rather than in the poorly remunerated service of the Muses.<sup>59</sup>

One of the most reputable critics writing on Australian literature in the late nineteenth century, Martin left Australia for English shores in 1882. He stayed, permanently--to produce Beginnings

and works such as his prose anthology, Oak-Bough and Wattle Blossom (London, 1888), made up entirely of the writings of Australians living in England.

Having spent almost a third of Beginnings on Adam Lindsay Gordon,<sup>60</sup> Martin still manages to mention briefly the Bulletin poets in flattering terms. This was not the case in another book published in Australia and London in the same year: The Development of Australian Literature, by Melbourne's "literary-banker," H.G. Turner, and Alexander Sutherland, two writers even more consciously colonial in tone than Martin.<sup>61</sup> Begun as a series of articles for the Melbourne Review, Development attempted to give the most comprehensive critical statement on Australian literature to that point. Yet it totally ignored the Bulletin school, a point not lost on either Martin, or, needless to say, A.G. Stephens. Stephens responded to this neglect, casting doubts on the quality of the scholarship apparent. Indeed, one has to question not merely the literary judgements, but Turner's even more suspect historical pronouncements. We find generous praise for Sladen's anthologies, which "awakened an interest in those circles that make or mar the literary aspirant," namely, the English literary establishment, to whom Turner and Sutherland clearly direct their comments.<sup>62</sup> And we find historical premises cloaked by the smug condescension of a member of the Australian upper echelon--a group no different, British historian J.A. Froude observed during his Australian visit in the late 1880's, from their British counterparts. At one point Turner nonchalantly dismisses fifty years of radical

labour history in a paragraph:

Some of the most fervid outpourings of eloquence, on which excited crowds hung with red-hot enthusiasm, drew their inspiration from such subjects as anti-transportation--the unlocking of the lands,--the digger hunting for licences,--or the pinchbeck glory of the Eureka stockade. Set forth in cold print, now that all these temporary wrongs have been peacefully rectified, they provoke a smile at the tempestuous whirl of words that played round such comparatively unimportant issues.<sup>63</sup>

The conclusion of Turner's sketch of Australian literature

most accurately reflects both the impulse at the heart of the colonial mind and the book's working principle:

We are justified in looking for original thought, original social problems, and original philosophical theories; let us hope that in working them out in the printed page, the influence of the best of that grand literature which has been our heritage may always be apparent.<sup>64</sup>

For those critics moving in the same circles with Turner and Sutherland, there would always be an England.

Thomas George Tucker, though no less influenced by the Great Tradition than any of his academic contemporaries, approached the recent profusion of Australian bards around him from a slightly different standpoint. In the July, 1899, edition of the Melbourne periodical Review of Reviews, he called for an end to insular--and hence naive--local criticism. His later pamphlet, The Cultivation of Literature in Australia (1902), opens with the comment, so characteristic of a common nerve shared by the Melbourne and Sydney cultural élites, that life is too brief for the reading of Australian

books. Tucker's preoccupation was largely with the theoretical critical questions raised by contact with a new literature.

In a series of early lectures, appearing in print in the Melbourne Argus, Tucker cautioned the new generation of Australian readers for its "knowledge of the British Isles [being] one of books and hearsay only."<sup>65</sup> He stated that

We here in Australia, through our geographical extent and isolation, are very apt to develop patriotic ignorance on a dangerous scale. We are likely to talk ourselves into believing, and to instil into our children the belief that we are the most intelligent and best-governed people in the world, with the most wonderful of futures before us.<sup>66</sup>

He advised travel as the only means of overcoming cultural narrowness. For Tucker, typical of the literary critics of the period, the way to independence for Australian literature lay in consolidation of the historic links with English Literature.

1900-40

Australia belongs, by race, politics and language to a great civilization that reaches back for a thousand years, and it is constantly receiving an inflow, ideal as well as human, from the centre of this civilization.

H.M. Green, An Outline of Australian Literature (1930).<sup>67</sup>

Australia's literary critics were less patently colonial after 1900, but didn't reject a deferential role entirely. Turner and Sutherland voiced the opinion of most critics of their generation when they indicated that the test for Australian literature between 1850 and 1900 was "what the English reader was likely to think of it, what an English critic would be inclined to say of it."<sup>68</sup> However, after the intense Bulletin activity of the 1890's, as writers were emboldened to be less imitative of English models, a change in the tenor of local criticism appeared imminent. J.F. Archibald and A.G. Stephens harassed "colonial" critics; published Furphy, Lawson, Paterson and Dyson; condemned the "imperialism" of Tennyson and Kipling; and sought to establish a canon of major Australian works based on a rejection of writers in any way derivative of the English tradition. Vance Palmer, too, energetically railed against the deficiencies of a compliant culture:

. . . at the present stage of our civilization we are content to read English books for the interpretation of our life. We . . . are content to imitate the customs of old degenerate nations, and to let our individuality be obscured by the detestable word 'colonial!! Under such conditions our art must suffer.<sup>69</sup>

Even Christopher Brennan, a devoted advocate of the European tradition, felt compelled to take a stand in a 1902 article, "The University and Australian Literature: A Centenary Retrospect!"

An absolute dependence . . . was in itself bad, even given a general high standard of taste in London. But when London had degenerated, as it did in the eighties and nineties, Australia was bound to touch shuddering depths of vulgarity.<sup>70</sup>

The prolonged colonial bias in literary criticism, it seemed, would quickly diminish early in the century.

But it didn't disappear. For a variety of reasons, remnants of the colonial complex remained--possibly by default. There seemed to be no credible alternative. Historically, after Federation, as republicanism receded, nationalistic sentiment somehow became enmeshed, during the Boer War, with the cause of a waning Empire. Society narrowed politically and poets, with only a few notable exceptions, responded to the despotic precepts of Vision magazine, emphasizing, from desperation, a tired, anachronistic European tradition. Out of this void, H.M. Green produced the major critical work of the period, An Outline of Australian Literature (1930).

Despite good intentions and frequent perceptive critical judgments, Outline suffers from a failure of vision, a lack of initiative--for which one may perhaps blame the times, rather than the critic. Green reaffirms, though less enthusiastically, the old orthodoxy. As Brian Kiernan, a recent commentator, has noted, the book's "opening sentence retains the favourite metaphor and the guarded stance of the



'colonial' critic."<sup>71</sup> Unable to avoid the constricting "tradition" in which he was writing, the author opens his argument with logic strikingly reminiscent of Turner and Sutherland, and A.P. Martin, thirty years before:

Australian literature is a branch of English literature, and however great it may become and whatever characteristics it may develop, it will remain a branch . . . a proper understanding of it [must involve] an understanding of its origins and relationships. . . .<sup>72</sup>

Green utilizes the familiar "tree" metaphor of his predecessors, and approvingly employs the "parent/child" device. He stresses the crucial importance of writers and critics retaining their filial obligations, and later warns of the dangers of independent thinking, of "regarding the branch and its leaves as though they were isolated from the tree."<sup>73</sup> Towards the close of his introductory chapter, Green places his literary yardstick plainly before us. The judgements to follow presuppose the fact that "until quite lately the literary atmosphere of Australia was more than a generation behind that of England."<sup>74</sup> Virtually all questions of influence concern the native writer and his English models: Harpur's obvious debt to Wordsworth, Shelley and Tennyson; Kendall's to Shelley, and, in "Beyond Kerguelen," to Swinburne; and so on. In contrast, when Green suspects American influence on the Australian ballad tradition, his approach is tentative. He clearly doesn't know the material. At one point, he maintains that "There are writers of a similar kind of verse in the United States today."<sup>75</sup> In 1930, not even preliminary scholarly research on the

American connection had been carried out.

In the preface to his later two-volume work, A History of Australian Literature (1961), Green brusquely records an altered stance, being more keenly aware of the importance of the 1890's in moulding a unique Australian identity:

It is scarcely necessary to argue nowadays that the literature of Australia is worth discussing on its own account, and not merely as a part of the great literature in English of which it is an outgrowth.<sup>76</sup>

Ironically, when History was published, the author's concept of inclusive literary history had dated considerably. His restrained advocacy of "the abandonment of oversea models and the growth of the impulse to write in one's own manner about what he has experienced" had been usurped by the aggressive conservatism of the new orthodoxy of literary critics from the academy--A.D. Hope, James McAuley, Brian Elliott, and, later, G.A. Wilkes and Leonie Kramer.<sup>77</sup> New forces were at work.

1940-70

. . . Whitman's example prompted a multitude of imitative scribblings without Whitman's lurching force, making the writing of poetry easy for everybody. A fellow could go on the loose in such verse or a girl let her hair down, and whenever a policeman tried to stop the noise they merely laughed at law and order, until he gave up and joined the party.

Frederick T. Macartney, Australian Literary Essays (1957)<sup>78</sup>

In the two generations separating Barton's Literature in New South Wales and Green's Outline, the dominant critical attitude towards American literature altered from one of ignorance based on a strong sense of its inferiority and lack of sophistication, to one of ignorance rooted in apathy. Apart from a range of scholarly articles on Walt Whitman and Frank Wilmot's eclectic commentaries, attention to the Americans was slight indeed.

From about 1940 onwards, though, a curious change occurred. Apathy and unfamiliarity turned to suspicion, resentment, even vindictiveness, as the new orthodoxy of university critics flexed its muscles. This gave Australian criticism a more articulate, yet no less insular appearance. James McAuley and Harold Stewart conjured up the devastatingly successful "Ern Malley" hoax as a challenge to the cause of modernism<sup>79</sup>--inadvertently reestablishing a provincial literary climate in Forties and Fifties Australia against which only a handful of poets, and even fewer critics, struggled. The environment, in Chris Wallace-Crabbe's phrase, was one of "formalism and Bogartian toughness."<sup>80</sup> Ties with the old order flourished anew.

In criticism this emanated from the most influential quarters of the literary establishment: from literary journalists such as Frederick T. Macartney and James Devaney; from the poet-editors Douglas Stewart and Kenneth Slessor; and, most importantly, from such academic critics as A.D. Hope and James McAuley, G.A. Wilkes and Leonie Kramer.

F.T. Macartney, an ideological colleague of the academic critics, was a freelance journalist, Commonwealth Literary Fund lecturer, co-editor, with E. Morris Miller, of Australian Literature: a Bibliography (1956), and a strong presence in Australian criticism from the late 1930's onwards. His Australian Literary Essays (1957) measures the author's temper and exemplifies the reactionary atmosphere of the bulk of Australian literary criticism in the 1950's. Macartney, a self-confessed "policeman" defending the old ties, wastes little time getting down to the business of enforcement. He bitterly attacks both the progress of poetic modernism in the twentieth century and the theoreticians of the movement. The Americans loom large as targets for his vitriol. In the first couple of paragraphs in the opening essay, "An Attitude to Literature"--a most comprehensive statement of the author's beliefs--Macartney isolates T.E. Hulme and Ezra Pound as the twentieth-century initiators of "the Imagist same-day dry-cleaning service for art and philosophy."<sup>81</sup> He then isolates the root cause of the modern tendency towards free blank verse: Walt Whitman, ironically a poet with a substantial, but so far undocumented impact on the generation of Australian poets before Macartney. In a manner reminiscent of Jack Lindsay's editorial quirks

in Vision some years earlier, he proceeds to dismiss casually some of this century's major literary figures and works in a sequence of memorable journalistic one-liners: Joyce's Ulysses, "linger[ing] as an immense novelty, like the relegated bulk of a performing elephant no longer in the ring having its tricks elaborately explained, with Finnegan's Wake as an accompanying atavistic chimpanzee"; Gerard Manley Hopkins' "involutions and childish tongue-twisters"; the "verbal conjuring" and "boyish turns" of T.S. Eliot; and E.E. Cummings' "adult nursery rhymes . . . not to mention the hopeless muddle of spelling, typography, and meaning."<sup>82</sup>

Macartney delightedly points to the successful hoax of the Ern Malley poems, condemning "those oracles whom James Devaney in Poetry in Our Time calls 'the explainers of unintelligible poems.'"<sup>83</sup> Teacher, freelance journalist and literary critic, Devaney was a contemporary of Macartney who also exerted some effect on the literature of post-Second World War Australia through articles in periodicals such as Meanjin, and his critical work Poetry in Our Time (1952). Like Macartney, Devaney cites Eliot and Pound--for him "precious and ineffectual" poets<sup>84</sup>--as key influences on modernist poetry. Like Macartney, he quotes passages of Whitman and Sandburg disapprovingly. But he goes one better, concluding that

the master spirits of modernism such as T.E. Hulme, F.S. Flint, Hart Crane, who were so prominent in one phase or other of the movement, had no true understanding of poetry and wrote none worth keeping.

These people have far too much influence. They are really small potatoes, but they impress people. . . .<sup>85</sup>

No less incensed at the iconoclastic behaviour of the current practitioners of modernist literature, particularly the American moderns, Kenneth Slessor and Douglas Stewart attacked the abrupt technical innovations they felt were disrupting the continuity of English verse. In an early paper entitled "Modern English Poetry" (1931), Slessor expressed his appreciation for that arch-experimenter E.E. Cummings' refreshing vigour, but he could only conclude that it was, nevertheless, a matter of too much, too soon. Voicing sentiments which anticipated the tone of most Australian literary criticism for decades to come, Slessor warned:

There can be no sudden explosion of revolt, such as is attempted by the incendiaries under the domination of Cummings and Gertrude Stein. Even T.S. Eliot obtains his most powerful poetry by a simple inflection or variation of the standardized pentameter.<sup>86</sup>

The defenders of the English poetic tradition, mustering behind the reliable pentameter, clearly perceived the modernist rebels as a very real threat. Slessor edited Southerly from 1956 to 1961.

Douglas Stewart, like Slessor, was a man of profound influence in the Fifties and most of the Sixties through his own poetry, and in his capacity as literary editor of the Bulletin (1940-60) and of Angus and Robertson publications. He persistently expressed his deep concern for the state of contemporary literature. An excerpt from his critical work, The Flesh and the Spirit (1948), will suffice to illustrate his complete intolerance of modernist tendencies and writers:

Surely it is the twofold desire of escaping from art and escaping from Freud that has begotten the most difficult, the most "sophisticated," the most unintelligible art of our time. The vulgar displays of private erudition in "The Waste Land," in Pound's Cantos and in Auden's New Year Letter; Gertrude Stein's prattling, as of an idiot child . . . all these which we find "interesting" are merely, in the aggravated form of unintelligibility, those "allegories of the state of one's own mind" which Matthew Arnold rightly judged to be an escape into inferior art.<sup>87</sup>

The Americans again emerge as a feared force in the army of the enemy. Stewart could not condone what he termed in a Bulletin article pointedly entitled "Goodbye to the Wreckers," the "reduction of the English language into a private mumbo jumbo."<sup>88</sup>

Stewart's sentiments, at once antagonistic and resentful of the difficulties posed to the reader of modernist verse, typified the great bulk of academic criticism that dominated the Fifties. Brian Kiernan has rightly referred to this "major phase of Australian literary criticism" as "smug and conformist in many ways."<sup>89</sup> Indeed, three things characterize the temper of the period: an antipathy, bordering on hostility towards modernist poets, especially the Americans; the overwhelming anglocentrism of English departments in the major Australian universities--what one visiting American scholar identified as a "debilitating pommification";<sup>90</sup> and the insularity, the "closed-shop" tendencies of the Academy. Young critics with internationalism on their minds were running scared. Max Harris was right when, in 1966, he spoke of the "academic monopoly [in Australia] of the functions of criticism."<sup>91</sup> Later in the same article, he wryly and perhaps a little despairingly referred to the "vicious

critical circle of Hope endlessly on McAuley, McAuley on Buckley, Buckley on Hope, and Dr. Leonie Kramer on them all."<sup>92</sup>

McAuley and Hope made their biases very clear. Hope had no time for modernism, and he consequently attacked its leading proponents. Along with McAuley, he constantly expressed his determination to keep Australian literature free of the taint of rebellious experiment in essays such as "Standards in Australian Literature" (issued in 1956 as a Current Affairs Bulletin<sup>93</sup>), "The Discursive Mode" and "Free Verse: A Post-Mortem" (the last two included in The Cave and the Spring<sup>94</sup>). The titles themselves reflect both the author's inflexible sense of his own correctness and his caustic attitude towards those daring to cast their hats in with the opposition. The poet Les Murray's reference to recent Australian reviewing as "a Cosy Corner and a snakepit" seems far more appropriate to the angry Fifties.<sup>95</sup> Appraising modernism, Hope utilized a language of violence, and once again the Americans were the principal recipients of his hostility. In "The Discursive Mode" he refers to the present

destruction of the landscape of literature by the intrusion of alien and sterile forms of cheap amusement, by exhaustion of the heart and mind, proceeding from greedy and ignorant exploitation of their resources, and by a poisoning of the atmosphere of belief in which the forms of art breathe and flourish . . . .<sup>96</sup>

Hope traces the modern heresy back to Edgar Allan Poe. Poetry, he maintains, had been "music," but, under the impact of the tradition founded by Poe, it deteriorated into "the formless babble and vomit of the poet's subconscious mind."<sup>97</sup>



In "Free Verse: A Post-Mortem" Hope goes further, laying the blame for the proliferation of free verse in the twentieth century at the feet of Walt Whitman and his successors--two expatriate Americans who became French poets, Francis Vielé-Griffin and Stuart Merrill, as well as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Tracing the history of free verse, Hope suggests that after Pound's "1912" Imagist anthology, free verse spread back to America, "mainly by way of Marion Moore's journal Poetry, published in Chicago."<sup>98</sup> Presumably he has in mind Pound's 1914 anthology and Harriet Monroe's Poetry, which published Marianne Moore. Thence, via the "heretics" who published in Poetry, such as Pound, Yeats, H.D., Williams, Lawrence, Sandburg, Stevens and Eliot, free verse spread "like the great influenza epidemics of the period," through

a process resembling that by which certain parasites, like the tapeworm and the liver fluke, only become dangerous if they are able to carry out their stages of growth in the bodies of several types of animal in succession.<sup>99</sup>

A few pages later, Hope clarifies his view of the situation in military terms. He refers to the "corruption of the garrison from within," and the "barbarian assault from without."<sup>100</sup> The writer clearly senses his beleaguered classical world tottering.

James McAuley adopted an equally polemical pose. More overtly political than Hope, his critical work, The End of Modernity (1959), established McAuley as a critic determined to impose the most vigorous--and narrow--standards on the works he appraised.<sup>101</sup> Poetry should have nothing to do with metaphysics, theology, or any of the "ideological

drivel of the nineteenth century" like "deism, pantheism, nationalism, socialism, democratism and the rest."<sup>102</sup> His targets are familiar-- the so-called "old Guard of revolutionaries" like Eliot, Pound, Joyce and Lewis;<sup>103</sup> his artistic position, though perhaps more extreme than any of his colleagues in the Academy other than Hope, needs some attention, if only to help us to appreciate more fully the focus of those critics who commanded the most attention in Australia in the Fifties and Sixties. In his essay "The Magian Heresy," McAuley declares that

it is time to recognize that poetry during the past one hundred and fifty years and more has described an immense detour.<sup>104</sup>

McAuley founded the periodical Quadrant, and edited it for the next twenty years (1956-76) until his death. He was always a potent force-- whether as editor, political commentator or poet. In her Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture (1957) entitled "James McAuley: Tradition in Australian Poetry," Leonie Kramer, having criticized T.S. Eliot's "superficial technical and intellectual gimmicks," concludes by stating that McAuley's attempts to "breathe new life and vigour into traditional verse forms" are "calculable risks, far less to be feared than the apparent freedom of literary non-conformity."<sup>105</sup> Literary battle-lines, it seems, were carefully drawn between the insurrectionists and the establishment. Equivocation was not possible.

\* \* \*

G.A. Wilkes' Australian Literature: A Conspectus (1969) is only a product of its time. When it is remembered that in his C.L.F. lecture (1956) on the long poem in Australia and America (using the verse of, amongst others, Francis Webb and William Carlos Williams), Wilkes could write that poets in each country had "turned to historical subjects . . . because this is normal in 'colonial' literatures at a certain stage of their development," we recognize a framework consistent not only with most Australian critical works over the previous twenty-five years, but over the last century.<sup>106</sup> Wilkes' tracing of Australian literature "as an extension of European civilization to the south," is, for him, the only viable scholarly approach.<sup>107</sup>

A.D. Hope's pronouncement in his essay, "The Practical Critic," reflects a singular truth when applied to the history of Australian criticism:

The poem is always under the critic's microscope, and he seems never to reflect that while he is testing the poem the poem may in fact be testing him. Sometimes, if he were aware of it, a very sardonic eye is gazing back at him through his lens.<sup>108</sup>

There has been an "official" literature, cognizant of its European roots, which many critics over the years have emphasized at the expense of a great deal of oral literature, radical literature and utopian literature--that is, the kind of writing usually found only in the original journal form in which it appeared, and inconsistent with the established, "colonial" criteria, so often used as the only measures of good writing. In the nineteenth century, the social dominance of

an Anglophile élite probably forced emerging critics to voice these official views, lest, in breathing Americanness, they should proclaim themselves Republicans, or at the very least, anti-English. From the 1940's to the '60's, in the midst of a literary climate neatly encased in an anti-modernist shell, influential critics from the Australian Academy again perceived American literature as a threat to the orderliness of their own country's writing. They designated Whitman, Poe, Pound and their "fellow-travellers" as the enemy in Australia's midst.

And yet a strong literary connection between Australia and America-- which blossomed so remarkably in nineteenth-century Australia and again in the late 1960's--is almost as old as white settlement on the shores of Sydney Cove.

## TITLE PAGE/INTRODUCTION ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, 3 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927), p. vi.

<sup>2</sup> A. Patchett Martin, "Concerning American Poets," in Australian Poets: 1788-1888, ed. Douglas B.W. Sladen (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden, Welsh, 1888), p. xliv.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Jones, Radical Cousins: Nineteenth Century American and Australian Writers (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976), p. ix.

<sup>4</sup> Jones, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Fred Alexander, Australia and the United States (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1941), p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Vincent Buckley, Essays in Poetry: Mainly Australian (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1957), p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Norman Harper, in The American Alliance, ed. John Hammond Moore (Victoria: Cassell, 1970), p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Wilkes pleads the dearth of established sources. See, for example, G.A. Wilkes, Australian Literature: A Conspectus (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1969), p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> See below, Chapter IV, sections b) and c).

<sup>10</sup> This neglect is not confined merely to literature. "Australian History," Ray Aitchison wrote in 1972 (Thanks to the Yanks), "has played down the American story." Since the early 1940's, however, led initially by Lloyd Churchward and Gordon Greenwood, and more recently by John Hammond Moore, Norman Harper, E. Daniel Potts, Annette Potts and Noel McLachlan, Australian historians have created a situation encouraging, at last, to both a textual and a contextual literary study of the contact between the two countries. My debt to the above historians, at many points in the thesis, is gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>11</sup> See below, Chapter II, section b).

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), p. 320.

<sup>13</sup> G.B. Barton, Literature in New South Wales (Sydney: Thomas Richards, 1866), p. 1; H.M. Green, An Outline of Australian Literature (Sydney: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1930); H.M. Green, A History of Australian Literature, 2 vols. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1961); Wilkes, p. 130.

<sup>14</sup> Moore, T. Inglis, Social Patterns in Australian Literature (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), p. 239.

<sup>15</sup> Poem reprinted in G.B. Barton, ed., The Poets and Prose Writers of New South Wales (Sydney: Gibbs, Shallard, 1866), pp. 19-29.

<sup>16</sup> William Carlos Williams, Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams (New York: New Directions, 1969), p. 134.

<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Lachlan Macquarie was Governor of the colony from late 1809-to 1821.

<sup>18</sup> Robinson's odes commemorated the anniversaries of the birthdays of George III (June 4) and Queen Charlotte (January 18). See Green, History, p. 110.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Massey Robinson, Odes of Michael Massey Robinson, introd. George Mackaness (Sydney: D.S. Ford, 1946), p. 21; (Ode first published in Sydney Gazette, June 9, 1810).

<sup>20</sup> Robinson, p. 31 (Sydney Gazette, June 8, 1811).

<sup>21</sup> Robinson, p. 55 (Sydney Gazette, June 10, 1815).

<sup>22</sup> Green, History, p. 110.

<sup>23</sup> Barron Field, First Fruits of Australian Poetry (Sydney, 1819). The two poems comprising this volume are reprinted in Brian Elliott and Adrian Mitchell, eds., Bards in the Wilderness: Australian Colonial Poetry to 1920 (Melbourne: Nelson, 1970).

<sup>24</sup> Buckley, Essays, p. 4. It should be remembered, in Field's defence, that early American reports such as John Smith's A True Relation (1608) and Nathaniel Ward's Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America (1647) were also only barely disguised travel books which portrayed America exotically, in an attempt to encourage settlers.

<sup>25</sup> Elliott and Mitchell, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Elliott and Mitchell, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Sladon's anthologies (1888) are discussed later in this chapter. Some decades after their publication, Bernard O'Dowd again discussed the "fallacy of 'local colour.'" This fallacy is the notion that you

can make a set of verses Australian by sprinkling it with golden wattle, kookaburra feathers, myall blossom, and kangaroo tails. . . ."

See "Literature in Australia," Corroboree, 1, No. 10 (July 1922), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Tompson was just twenty when his Wild Notes from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel (Sydney, 1826) was published. His later poetry remains uncollected. Elliott and Mitchell republished three of his poems.

<sup>29</sup> Elliott and Mitchell, p. 29.

<sup>30</sup> Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> See below, Chapter III, section a).

<sup>32</sup> See below, Chapter II, in particular.

<sup>33</sup> Wilkes, p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> 'Henricus,' "Colonial Criticism," Australasian, February 27, 1869. p. 269. 'Henricus' was a pseudonym used by Henry Melville, a colonial journalist.

<sup>35</sup> Barton, Literature, p. 1. The italics are mine.

<sup>36</sup> Barton, p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> Barton, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Barton, pp. 105-7.

<sup>39</sup> Barton, p. 14; Henry Kingsley, The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn (London: Macmillan, 1859), pp. 400-1.

<sup>40</sup> This comment of Wilmot's comes from one of his uncollected literary essays, entitled "Modern Poetry." Frank Wilmot Collection, ML, MSS 4/4, Mitchell Library, Sydney.



<sup>41</sup> Douglas B.W. Sladen, ed., Australian Ballads and Rhymes (London, Walter Scott, 1888), p. 274.

<sup>42</sup> A.D. Hope, "The Provincial Muse: 1888-1900," Australian Literary Studies, 8, No. 1 (May 1977), p. 17. Sladen's three anthologies of 1888 were Australian Poets and Australian Ballads, already cited, along with A Century of Australian Song (London: Walter Scott, 1888). Australian Poets is different to the other two anthologies in that the editor aimed at giving "specimens of the best poems produced in the antipodes irrespective of subject." (p. xix).

<sup>43</sup> Sladen, Australian Ballads, pp. v-vi.

<sup>44</sup> Sladen, Australian Poets, p. xlii.

<sup>45</sup> Sladen, Australian Ballads, pp. xxiii-xxiv. It would be interesting to know who Sladen had in mind when he talked of the "few" poets with "original genius."

<sup>46</sup> Sladen, Australian Poets, p. xxx.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Heney, "On Some Australian Poems," Sydney Quarterly Magazine, Sept. 1888. Reprinted in John Barnes, ed., The Writer in Australia: A Collection of Literary Documents, 1856 to 1964 (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> [A.G. Stephens], "D.B.W. Sladen," Bulletin, XVIII, No. 918, (Sept. 18, 1897), red page.

<sup>49</sup> Hope, "Provincial Muse," p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Sladen, Australian Ballads, p. 208.

<sup>51</sup> Lecture delivered March 27, 1898, at South Place Institute, London. It was published as The Beginnings of an Australian Literature (London: Henry Sotheran, 1898).

52 Sladen, Australian Poets, p. xxii.

53 Martin, Beginnings, p. 16.

54 Martin, p. 8.

55 Martin, pp. 9-10.

56 Martin, p. 11.

57 Martin, pp. 20, 25, 30.

58 Martin, in Sladen, Australian Poets, p. xliv.

59 Martin, Beginnings, p. 42.

60 Martin praises, amongst other things, Gordon's ability in "A Song of Autumn" to be "in England and Australia at the same time." (Beginnings, p. 38.)

61 Henry Gyles Turner and Alexander Sutherland, The Development of Australian Literature (Melbourne, George Robertson, 1898). Sladen affectionately referred to Turner as a "literary-banker" in Australian Poets, p. xli.

62 Turner and Sutherland, p. 22.

63 Turner and Sutherland, p. 24.

64 Turner and Sutherland, p. 123.

65 T.G. Tucker, Things Worth Thinking About (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1890), p. 185.

66 Tucker, p. 189.

67 Green, Outline, p. 10.

68 Turner and Sutherland, p. vii.

69 Vance Palmer, "An Australian National Art," Steele Rudd's Magazine, Jan. 1905. Reprinted in Barnes, Writer in Australia, pp.

168-70. It is worth comparing Palmer's comments with those of the Rev. Sydney Smith. See below, Chapter I, section b).

<sup>70</sup> Christopher Brennan, "The University and Australian Literature: A Centenary Retrospect," Hermes, Jubilee No., 1902. Reprinted in The Prose of Christopher Brennan, ed. A.R. Chisolm and J.J. Quinn (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1962), p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> Brian Kiernan, "Literature, History, and Literary History: Perspectives on the Nineteenth Century in Australia," in Bards, Bohemians, and Bookmen: Essays in Australian Literature, ed. Leon Cantrell (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976), p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> Green, Outline, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Green, p. 12.

<sup>74</sup> Green, p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> Green, p. 72. A comparison between Henry Lawson and Bret Harte is briefly taken up in Chapter IX of Outline.

<sup>76</sup> Green, History, p. xi.

<sup>77</sup> Green, History, p. xiv.

<sup>78</sup> Federick T. Macartney, Australian Literary Essays (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1957), pp. 12-13.

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, A. Norman Jeffares, "The Ern Malley Poems," in The Literature of Australia, ed. Geoffrey Dutton (Middlesex: Penguin, 1964), pp. 407-12.

<sup>80</sup> Chris Wallace-Crabbe, quoted in Alexander Craig, ed., Twelve Poets: 1950-1970 (Sydney: Jacaranda Press, 1971), p. 101.

- 81 Macartney, p. 1.
- 82 Macartney, pp. 10-16.
- 83 Macartney, p. 16.
- 84 James Devaney, Poetry in Our Time (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1952), p. 7.
- 85 Devaney, p. 113.
- 86 Kenneth Slessor, "Modern English Poetry." Printed in Sydney by the Australian-English Association as offprint No. 9 in October, 1931. Excerpts contained in Herbert C. Jaffa, Kenneth Slessor (New York: Twayne, 1971), pp. 73-4.
- 87 Douglas Stewart, The Flesh and the Spirit (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1948), p. 94.
- 88 Douglas Stewart, "Goodbye to the Wreckers," Bulletin, LXIII, No. 3269 (Oct. 7, 1942), red page (p. 2).
- 89 Brian Kiernan, Criticism (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p. 29.
- 90 John Greenway, "Folksong--A Protest," Australian Literary Studies, 2, No. 3 (June 1966), p. 192.
- 91 Max Harris, "Conflicts in Australian Intellectual Life: 1940-1964," in Literary Australia, ed. Clement Semmler and Derek Whitelock (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1966), p. 26.
- 92 Harris, p. 30.
- 93 See Kiernan, Criticism, pp. 37-40.
- 94 A.D. Hope, The Cave and the Spring (Adelaide: Rigby, 1965).

- 95 Les Murray, The Peasant Mandarin (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1978), p. viii.
- 96 Hope, Cave and Spring, p. 2.
- 97 Hope, p. 5. See also pp. 7-8.
- 98 Hope, pp. 38-9.
- 99 Hope, p. 38.
- 100 Hope, p. 41.
- 101 James McAuley, The End of Modernity (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1959).
- 102 McAuley, End, pp. 63-5.
- 103 See James McAuley, "Comment," Quadrant, V, No. 1 (Summer 1960-1), 3-4.
- 104 McAuley, End, p. 159.
- 105 Leonie Kramer, James McAuley (Canberra: Canberra Univ. College, 1957), p. 11. Lecture printed with T. Inglis Moore's The Misfortunes of Henry Handel Richardson as a C.L.F. Lectures publication.
- 106 G.A. Wilkes, Some Trends in Australian Verse (Canberra: Canberra Univ. College, 1956), pp. 12-13. Lecture printed as a C.L.F. Lectures publication.
- 107 Wilkes, Conspectus, p. 131.
- 108 Hope, Cave and Spring, p. 76.

PART ONE: TO 1838

## CHAPTER I

## "A NEW AMERICA" OR BRITAIN'S "SINK OF WICKEDNESS"?

The comparison between the early colonists of America, at least those of the northern states, and the founders of Australia, must quickly run off into contrast. The primary object of the Pilgrim Fathers, was the enjoyment of opinions in peace. The early denizens of the southern world burned their first church to escape the tedium of attendance. The first pilgrims of New England attempted a community of goods on the plan of the apostles. The first Australians drew their stores from the commissariat, and adopted the traditions of Houndsditch and Wapping. The leaders of the first Americans were their clergy,-- the bible was their political and civil standard. The rulers of the first Australians were half marine, half soldiers, whose pay was supplemented by the sale of spirits sold by convict women, their mistresses. Thus for many years the government of these colonies was absolute, and the usual consequences sometimes appeared.

John West, The History of Tasmania (1852)<sup>1</sup>

Section A

## Exploration and Settlement

Even a brief sketch of the historical and geographical links between the Australian and American continents, and peoples, must begin before the arrival in Botany Bay, in 1792, of the American trading

ship Philadelphia. Before, even, the first steps on Australian soil, in 1770, of three American sailors--Gore, Matra and Thurmond--aboard Cook's Endeavour. Well before. It begins even before Australia was discovered, not with English, but with Spanish adventurers--men striving, throughout the sixteenth century, to give substance to the myth of the great south land.

In 1519, his imagination stirred by Balboa's testimony that a new ocean lay to the west, Ferdinand Magellan pushed beyond the strait now bearing his name, across the new ocean to the Philippines; he thus began a remarkable era of Spanish exploration of the Pacific, an exploration only possible because of Spanish settlement of the Americas. Subsequent voyages aimed at consolidating effective exploitation of the riches of the Spice Islands. But there was more: *terra australis incognita* and the promise of heaven. The myth of the great undiscovered south land loomed large in the imagination of every potential adventurer, as did the Church's promise of spiritual reward for those lions of the faith who could convert the heathen to the one true religion.

One hundred years of Spanish sea voyages thus began, amounting to both the first substantial step towards the discovery of Australia, and the first connection between the American continent and the undiscovered land to the south. Throughout the sixteenth century, ports in Peru and Mexico were the means by which Spanish explorers equipped their ships for the journey west.<sup>2</sup> After the last of the major Spanish voyages--Quiros' second expedition to the New Hebrides in



1606--Philip's coffers were hardly improved. But two things had been achieved: the Spanish had shown where land was not; and their island discoveries to Australia's north had given great credibility to the concept of an undiscovered land to the south.<sup>3</sup>

An entirely different American connection would have unfolded if Philip's emissaries had struck upon Australia's eastern side. However, a combination of severe winds, a formidable southern swell, and navigators disconcerted by not sighting land for so long a time, confirmed a route to the Philippines and Spice Islands always to the north. The Spaniards failed to sight Australia, but they had been on the very brink. One more southern tack of several ships would have made the difference.

In the early years of the seventeenth century, however, belief in the reports of Quiros (who was susceptible to hyperbole) and Torres was outweighed by the realization of Spain's decreasing naval power and the rise of France, Holland and England as trading and military rivals. It was left up to representatives of these three nations to clarify the subtleties of the Pacific through voyages commencing not from South America, but from home ports. It would be over two hundred years before occurrences in America again affected the nature of events relating to Australia and its near islands. Spain's role was over; England's yet to come.

Eleven months after Quiros landed in the New Hebrides, three weary ships captained by Christopher Newport, with George Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, and John Smith on board, dropped

anchor near the south of Chesapeake Bay, Virginia. Attention thus shifted from the southern Pacific to the western Atlantic, and would not revert to the south for a century and a half. When it did, in the late eighteenth century, it soon became clear that an American/European tension again characterized Australian history, just as the spirit of early discovery in the southern seas had been kept alive by the Spanish working out of the New World. This tension anticipates a similar development in the progress of Australian literature.

#### 1607-1788

On May 5th, 1768, representatives of the Royal Society interviewed Captain James Cook to ascertain his suitability for a most important mission: the observation, from Tahiti, of the transit of Venus. The Councillors eventually approved of Cook, but when his "cat-built bark," the Endeavour, left Plymouth on August 26th, 1768, Cook carried with him another, and more important, set of instructions-- from the Admiralty.<sup>4</sup> After fulfilling his obligations to the Royal Society, he was to head south, to approximately 40° of latitude, in search of the renowned southern continent, and claim it in George III's name.

Ninety-three other men sailed with Cook. The most visible personality was undoubtedly the debonair botanist and geologist Joseph Banks, in his early twenties and independently wealthy, who stepped on board with an appropriate retinue which included two artists, four servants, and even a sporting hound or two. Less prominent,

but no less significant for their symbolic value to their contemporaries were two Americans: John Gore, a Second Lieutenant from Virginia, and James Mario Matra, both loyal to the Crown, confirmed Tories without any Republican sympathies or connections at all.

It is worth remembering that as the Endeavour glided peacefully down the Channel, Gore and Matra must have been well aware of the "Wilkes and Liberty" catchcry currently sending shock waves through London circles--a grim and constant reminder of the failure of England's repressive colonial policies in America.<sup>5</sup> John Wilkes, an Englishman, voiced the spirit of democracy widely in his own country. He advocated the ethical ramifications of the constitution and on principle rejected the Stamp and Townshend Acts (which imposed duties on certain American goods and led to the rallying cry of "no taxation without representation"). This opposition endeared him to the great majority of American colonists, and when he was imprisoned for his stand the Bostonian Sons of Liberty sent a letter of solidarity, maintaining that

. . . your perseverance in the GOOD OLD CAUSE may still prevent the great system from dashing to pieces. 'Tis from your endeavours we hope for a royal "Pascite, ut ante, boves," and from our attachment to "peace and good order" we wait for a constitutional redress: being determined that the King of Great Britain shall have subjects but not slaves in these remote parts of his dominions.<sup>6</sup>

During the next one hundred years, the name Wilkes would recur curiously within the context of Australian republican history.<sup>7</sup>

In seeming recognition of the nature of the times, and as if to

counterbalance the two Loyalists on board, members of Cook's crew, as was often their wont, pressed an American sailor, John Thurmond, into service as he wandered through Funchal, the chief port of the Madeiras. A member of the crew of a New York sloop, Thurmond was brought on board the Endeavour struggling to the last. Partisan, republican, he would not serve the King--nor would he see his homeland or Europe again, being buried at sea before the completion of the voyage.<sup>8</sup>

Three Americans, then, one a partisan, the other two of Loyalist stock, belonged to the crew of the Endeavour the day Cook's first lieutenant, Zachary Hicks, sighted the eastern coast of Australia in 1788. Over the next fifty years, many of their countrymen would follow them, in an assortment of roles--some as political prisoners, a handful to settle, others in trading, whaling or sealing vessels. The Australian/American connection, destined to be influential in the Australian colony's early history, had truly begun. Not that anyone at the time paid any attention to the fact. Certainly not the English authorities. Their minds were on Americans in another part of the globe.

Fate's inevitable strange twist would soon inextricably link both continents. The War of Independence, and its implications, gave American patriots the reason they sought to flatly refuse to continue absorbing the prisoners Britain had been ridding herself of since 1717. A new dumping ground was needed. At this point, Cook's travels and discoveries in the southern hemisphere assumed far greater

importance for Britons. Attention turned to the far-off inlet to which Joseph Bank's pet scientific pursuit had given its name: Botany Bay. As Gordon Greenwood has put it: "At no stage in the early history of Australia was the influence of America more important or more direct than at the time when schemes for the settlement of Botany Bay were under consideration."<sup>9</sup> Britain needed a new corner of the world for her convicts, as well as a resettlement location for the vast numbers of American colonists who had remained constant to their British background.

After Joseph Banks came out, in 1779, in support of a colony in Botany Bay, people on both sides of the Atlantic began to consider, for the first time, comparisons between Britain's new territories in the southern hemisphere and the older ones in North America.<sup>10</sup> Banks based his proposal on the suitability of Botany Bay as a penal settlement. It seemed physically and geographically suited to the purpose-- being remote and having a small, usually peaceful native population, temperate climate and adequate soil. Given sufficient provisions, Banks predicted the new colony would become self-sufficient almost immediately. He indicated as much to a House of Commons investigative committee, which quickly handed down a favourable verdict.<sup>11</sup> But nothing specific was done for a couple of years.

Ironically, the man responsible for the first substantial proposal for Botany Bay's future was none other than James Mario Matra, the New York Loyalist. After his return from Cook's 1770 expedition, Matra left the navy, and, in 1772, was appointed British Consul at

Teneriffe on a very low income. During the revolutionary ferment, he returned to New York to protect his property but found that, like the great majority of Loyalists, he had been effectively dispossessed.<sup>12</sup> Most states passed legislation similar to Massachusetts' Conspiracy Act of 1779, which declared that all Loyalist property was forfeited to the state. Matra deemed that his loyalty deserved compensation and so, early in 1783, he penned a short tract entitled The case and claim of the American Loyalists impartially stated and considered.<sup>13</sup> He considered the Crown liable. Hence, falling back on past connections, he wrote to Joseph Banks, on July 28, 1783, asking for more detail on Bank's earlier proposals to the parliamentary committee. The outcome was a submission, on August 23, 1783, to Lord North's coalition government for a settlement in New South Wales. Matra conceived of the area scanned by Cook as potentially another America, recompense for the one lost, and an appropriate

asylum to those unfortunate American loyalists to whom Great Britain is bound by every tie of honour and gratitude to protect and support. . . .<sup>14</sup>

The myth of Australia as another America was born. It would affect the course of Australian political, social and literary history for at least the next one hundred years. In addition, Matra asserted the enormous strategic value of the location, of particular importance in the event of war with either Holland or Spain--thus giving Britain yet another reason for establishing a colony.

Wanting nothing short of a new nation of Loyalist plantation-

owners drawing on the coloured races of the nearby islands and China for coolie labour, Matra experienced initial trouble gaining a hearing. His first proposal to North's coalition government foundered when the ministry vacated office in December, 1783. Lord Sydney, new Secretary of State for Colonies in Pitt's reconstruction cabinet, heard Matra out, but suggested a colony based on convict transportation. Appreciative of the inflexibility of bureaucracy, Matra altered his plan to include felons--but as cultivators of their own small plot of land rather than as white slaves.

Though carefully considered, Matra's proposal failed for two reasons. First, Britons were still too sensitive to the astonishing sequence of events in America to favourably entertain thoughts of a duplicate copy somewhere else. The distressing implications of the recently signed Treaty of Paris, formally ending the war of secession, were fresh in their minds. Second, the influential East India Company still enjoyed a trade monopoly in China and the Indies and it was not about to approve any plans that might threaten, even mildly, that monopoly. So, despite continuing pressure on the government from prestigious Loyalist allies, enthusiasm for Matra's proposition failed to materialise at a government level. Indeed, Matra's own ardor for a South-Seas colony waned as his personal lot improved. He did write another staunchly loyalist pamphlet in 1788, but when many Loyalists were compensated for property losses in America, it seems Matra shared their good fortune. He was made Consul - General in Tangiers, dying there on March 29, 1806.<sup>15</sup>

One other plan was submitted to Lord Sydney on January 13, 1785, by Sir George Young, an admiral in the Royal Navy. Though in many ways a restatement of Matra's proposals, it did give greater emphasis to the accommodation of transported criminals, though still in the context of a Loyalist settlement aimed at establishing a new and thriving bastion of Empire. Pitt and Sydney had other ideas, however, and Young soon lost interest.<sup>16</sup>

Eventually, the indecisive Lord Sydney was jolted by the sudden realization that two matters needed attention, urgently: French encroachment into the South Seas; and the deteriorating convict situation at home. The magnitude of the setback to the efficient operation of Britain's penal system caused by the forfeiture of the American colonies could no longer be ignored. Thousands of convicts awaited transportation--a situation not helped when, in 1783, Virginia and Maryland again refused categorically to consider a contractor's plea to accept 150 convicts as plantation workers. Edmund Burke, too, continued to publicize the fact that the fate of 100,000 prisoners hung precariously in the balance. The overcrowded hulks were a festering and visible wound; thus, in August, 1786, Lord Sydney confirmed a government plan to send convicted felons to Botany Bay. Working with uncharacteristic speed, he had a fleet ready for the journey by May 13, 1787, under Captain Arthur Phillip. Eleven ships carrying a total of 759 convicts--568 men and 191 women--set out on the Capetown route on a journey that would end on January 26, 1788.



Just thirty-eight days after the First Fleet departed Portsmouth, American trade magnate, Robert Morris, commissioned the captain of one of his ships, the Alliance, to sail from the Delaware River to Canton via New Holland (Australia). Morris, responding to the fact that the normal route round the Cape of Good Hope could only be used in spring because of sailing conditions, wanted to increase the breadth of his China trade. Under Captain Reed, the journey was successfully negotiated. An American vessel had sailed the Tasman Sea for the first time.

#### 1788-1812

Shortly after the arrival of the First Fleet on January 26, 1788, Phillip organized the erection of a flagstaff to fly the Union Jack. Symbolically, the outpost was claimed for George III and his subjects, but American merchants, having carefully observed the British government's movements to settle New Holland, moved quickly to consolidate a role in the colony. The ambivalent nature of that role was early established by the first two American vessels to stop at the settlement.

On November 1, 1792, a Philadelphian captain, Thomas Patrickson, sailed his ship, the Philadelphia, into Port Jackson. Patrickson arrived with a speculative cargo and the additional security of a recommendation by Phineas Bond, British minister to the United States. Necessities like beef and pitch were quickly purchased by the authorities, at high prices. Unfortunately for the colony's welfare, luxury items

such as tobacco, gin and rum--later to become the liquid coinage of New South Wales--were snapped up by the officers of the 102nd regiment, the New South Wales Corps, and sold at ludicrously inflated prices to the nonmilitary populace. This set a precedent that would prove the scourge, and eventual downfall, of the three governors after Phillip.<sup>17</sup> Only when Governor Macquarie wisely brought his own regiment, the 73rd, with him to Sydney in 1809 did the practice cease, ending a period of some twenty years of corrupt military personnel holding New South Wales to ransom in rum. Mostly American rum.

When Phillip, desperate for supplies, welcomed Patrickson's ship, he inadvertently began a trade that would have dual consequences for the infant colony. If the Americans supplied New South Wales with much-needed food, they helped to undermine it with rum. As one recent commentator has put it: "His [Patrickson's] hard sell marked the beginning of a trading advantage which the United States has maintained against Australia ever since."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Patrickson's financial gamble actually paid off even more handsomely than he had anticipated as Phillip, in dire need of seaworthy vessels, chartered the Philadelphia for government errands to and from Norfolk Island. Later he purchased the ship outright.

A few weeks after the Philadelphia's arrival, another American vessel, the Hope, a Rhode Island sealer skippered by Benjamin Page, anchored in Sydney Harbour. Though officially putting in to Sydney to replenish supplies of water and wood, Page indulged in some busy

trading with Lieutenant-Governor Grose, the colony's interim head after Phillip's return to London due to ill-health. One problem threatened to interrupt the bargaining: Page's insistence that he would not sell the provisions unless his cargo of spirits was purchased as well. Grose's fear of drought forced him to agree.<sup>19</sup> The elaborate chronicle of colonial government antipathy towards America had begun. It would continue for many decades to come. America, for the first time, was an official problem.

Both the Philadelphia and the Hope established the pattern of the visits of American trading ships up to 1800: unashamedly speculative. Of the fifteen ships arriving in Port Jackson in the period, eleven were ventures aiming at quick profit. With the colony chronically short of supplies, Yankee captains demanded, and generally got, colossal prices for their supplies and spirits. One early governor, Hunter, protested his difficult lot: "When driven through necessity to purchase from speculators and traders who sometimes call here, we pay more than 500% above what the same article could be sent out for." Occasionally the American speculators were caught short. When Page's uncle came to the colony in July, 1794, as skipper of the returning Hope, he anticipated a substantial profit from his salted stores and spirits but found the colony "too well supplied to admit of any purchasers. . . ."<sup>20</sup> However, such occasions were rare.

More and more American traders began hearing about the law which stopped British merchants from trading in New South Wales for fear of violating the influential East India Company's charter on the area.

They came in large numbers after 1800, cognizant of the fact that in rum lay their most substantial return.<sup>21</sup> The colony's propensity for spirituous consumption was already well known.<sup>22</sup> Encouraged by corrupt colonial officers, the rum traffic grew alarmingly at the turn of the century. Governor John Hunter tried to stem the flow during his administration (1795-9), but was singularly unsuccessful; Governor Philip Gidley King (1799-1806), his successor, attempted to take firmer action in a deteriorating situation. In January, 1801, he denied landing rights to the American ship Follensby-- carrying some 20,000 gallons of spirits and wine. A few months later, the Missouri, with 14,000 gallons, was accorded the same fate. In the first diplomatic action between Australia and America, King despatched a circular to the British consul in New York informing him that foreign ships could no longer land more than three hundred gallons of spirit in the colony. The result was that, between 1800 and 1804, while almost 70,000 gallons of American spirits and wine were brought to the colony, only 20,000 were allowed to be landed.<sup>23</sup>

In this climate of government discouragement and intimidation, an illicit trade grew, and began to prosper. Defying a five per cent duty on spirits landed, and additional regulations imposed by King, American rum-runners either smuggled their product into the colony via nearby beaches, or sold it to outlying dependencies of New South Wales. Official disapproval of the traffic intensified up to 1810. So did the importation of American rum.

Relations between the local administration and visiting American

traders were further aggravated by the issue of specie. Virtually every American vessel that put in at Port Jackson intended to proceed to China, and each captain was no doubt aware of the Chinese aversion to most western goods. Trade was difficult without an adequate amount of specie, and here the trade in New South Wales came in very handy. Unfortunately, American merchants wanted what the colony had too little of. London advised its colonial governor "to prevent the current specie of the Colony from being carried out of it," but a combination of local susceptibility and efficient military corruption proved too powerful. As one New South Wales resident reported in 1809:

So necessary, indeed, has it been to admit the introduction of a certain quantity of Spirits . . . that when the supply . . . failed, Spirits have been purchased from American traders . . . at the serious sacrifice of every piece of coin it contained, money being the only payment which would be taken.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the hard bargain driven by the Americans, and persistent official disapproval of their activities, trade, legal or otherwise, continued unabated. Only with the onset of the War of 1812 did the situation alter drastically. A whaler, the Ann, which docked on August 1, 1812, was the last American ship to visit Sydney for over three years--a situation due not so much to cool postwar relations as to the fact that the Charter Renewal Act of 1813 ended the East India Company's monopoly. British merchants finally gained access to the Australian market, while foreign traders were effectively

prohibited.

In all, some sixty-six American vessels conducted trade with the growing New South Wales colony in the twenty years between 1792 and 1812.<sup>25</sup> But the extent of the interaction went well beyond mere bartering for goods. After George Vancouver's Voyage Around the World, published in 1798, made reference to the sighting of numerous fur seals in the south-west corner of Australia, it didn't take American sealers (and later whalers) long to investigate the reputed wealth of the South Seas.<sup>26</sup> Herman Melville (1851) anticipated Australian historians on the subject by a century or so in publicizing the importance of the whaler's role:

That great America on the other side of the sphere, Australia, was given to the enlightened world by the whalemén. . . . The whale-ship is the true mother of that now mighty colony. Moreover, in the infancy of the first Australian settlement, the emigrants were several times saved from starvation by the benevolent biscuit of the whale-ship luckily dropping an anchor in their waters.<sup>27</sup>

And certainly the whalemén had a significant place in the developing colony, but not in its teething stage. The initial impact was created by the audacious antics of the American sealers. Nantucket whalers did not arrive on the scene in any large numbers until after 1836.<sup>28</sup>

Many of the early merchant adventurers from Boston and Rhode Island visiting the New South Wales colony in the first twenty years readily adapted to sealing when the need arose. Struck by the potential resources of the South Seas, it took them little time to adjust their

normal route to China, via the Falkland and Crozett Islands, to include Australia. Seal skins were one of the few commodities of interest to the Chinese. If they could combine sealing with a little specie reaped from the sale of spirits and provisions in the Australian market, so much the better for their chances of leaving China with a bountiful cargo.

What meagre prosperity the communities of Sydney and Hobart initially enjoyed was largely attributable to the sealers and whalers. A surprising number of foreign fishing ships visited Port Jackson in the years before and after 1800--the majority, again, American. The first of these to sail through Bass Strait, the brig Fanny in November-December, 1802, was shortly afterwards followed by the Union, a sealer whose commander, Isaac Pendleton, decided to begin operations off the South Australian coast in 1803.<sup>29</sup> The brisk sealing and fishing traffic continued apace until 1807, when it suddenly became apparent that the ruthless pursuit of seal skins, regardless of sex, had virtually extinguished what could at the time have developed into a useful source of revenue for the new land. No record exists of any American sealer in Australian waters after 1807. The first American whaler to call in at Port Jackson was the Ann, from New Bedford, which docked in May, 1805, and again in 1809 and 1812.<sup>30</sup>

American sealers were able to dominate the seal trade in the early 1800's because of the ramifications of the East India Company's charter and the competitive nature of the Yankee sealers themselves, always ready for either some fishing or a fracas. British whaling and sealing

interests were completely hampered by the charter, which gave the company monopoly trading rights from the Straits of Magellan to the Cape of Good Hope. Under the terms of the document, British whalers could not bring provisions out for trade with New South Wales, having instead to use ballast.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, their skins or oil could at any time be seized as exports taken from a prohibited area.<sup>32</sup> The Americans experienced no such shackles, and were consequently very unpopular with colonial-government officials.

Incidents reflecting the ardour of the American sealers and the single-mindedness with which they pursued the job in hand figure prominently in the early Australian press.<sup>33</sup> For the authorities, particularly King during his years as governor, the sealers were a source of constant annoyance, if not infuriation. King had an awful time with them, being suspicious of their movements and aware of the potential threat they represented to his colony's stability. His failure to alter the East India Company's charter caused King to embark on a policy of hampering American sealers in Australian waters as much as possible. A measure of the seriousness with which he viewed their activities can be gained from the fact that, when requesting advice from London on what future action should be taken with foreign shipping, in November, 1802, he isolated only the Americans and the French.<sup>34</sup> Between 1800 and 1809, in fact, a variety of regulations were passed by officials wanting to suppress American attempts to exploit Australian waters.<sup>35</sup> American interference increasingly preoccupied the British establishment.



1812-16

Several years of deteriorating Anglo-Americans relations finally resulted in President Madison's declaration, on June 18, 1812, of war with England. He cited "Free Trade and Sailor's Rights" as the reasons.<sup>36</sup> In terms of lives and losses, the consequences of the War of 1812 for America were disastrous. The repercussions of the conflict for colonial Australia, on the other hand, bordered at times on the bizarre.

In October, 1812, London informed Governor Macquarie of the outbreak of hostilities and ordered all those loyal to the Crown to "do their utmost in their several stations, to Capture of the Ships and Vessels belonging to the Citizens of the United States, and to destroy their Commerce."<sup>37</sup> Macquarie was caught in a compromising situation. Relations with the captains of American merchandise ships and the few American fishing boats now in southern waters had improved. Confronted with the likelihood of sporadic supplies from England as a result of war, he badly needed imported goods to supplement a shaky supply (of few commodities) from the local market. Macquarie knew as well as anyone the invaluable, though often controversial role that American provisions had played in the colony's short history.

But this wasn't enough to stop the war edging in on the faraway colony in ways both psychological and actual. In November, 1812, for example, the American privateer Hölkar seized the English brig Emu, on its way to New South Wales. A cargo of desperately required female convicts hence failed to reach its destination--a bitter

blow to the prospective husbands among the rapidly growing emancipist ranks.<sup>38</sup> In the following year, English Secretary of State Earl Bathurst despatched word to Macquarie of a rumoured plan for a combined French-American attack on Sydney. However, the source, a Dane named Jorgen Jorgensen, didn't inspire much confidence in the credibility of the story. Bathurst, despite writing at a time of considerable edginess in London, could still recognize "the doubtful character of this Individual, the greater improbability of the plan itself, and the still greater improbability of such a person being minutely acquainted with its details. . . ."<sup>39</sup> Belief in the theoretical possibility of attack remained, though, and Macquarie gave close perusal to Jorgensen's allegations, then informed Bathurst that he would render as efficient as possible the small land force at his disposal in case of foreign attack.<sup>40</sup>

Events in the following years showed that Macquarie's vigilance was not completely misplaced. The American frigate, Essex, captained by David Porter, rounded Cape Horn in mid 1813 and moved into the Pacific with the object of harassing British shipping.<sup>41</sup> Porter supervised the construction of a fortified base by prisoners-of-war (gathered from a variety of British ships) at Nukahiva in the Marquesas Islands. While the American ship was absent in search of more booty, fourteen prisoners from the captured British storeship Seringapatam, all ordinary seamen, overwhelmed their guards and sailed the ex-whaler to Port Jackson to tell their story. When the vessel arrived in Sydney on July 1, 1814, a stunned public was informed of events

in the Sydney Gazette of the following day.<sup>42</sup> Porter's escapades were finally halted when the Essex was sunk by two British warships off the South American coast, but not before he had acquired some \$2.5 million worth of British naval property.<sup>43</sup> Australia, many well-to-do colonials hastily realized, was susceptible to foreign invasion; if the French failed to land in Australia, the Americans might. The "mortifying results" of the actions of American privateers on British shipping added to the unrest.<sup>44</sup> America, it seemed, was still a controversial presence in the south.

Australian waters were not an appropriate place for an American vessel between 1812 and 1816, for obvious reasons.<sup>45</sup> War and its aftermath inevitably weakened trading links--a situation worsened by the result of the major debate, in 1813, over the East India Company's monopoly charter. After numerous petitions by merchants from all major English cities, most of them citing the continuous advantage American traders were enjoying, some influential M.P.'s took up the cause of English commerce in parliament. After a long and at times bitter conflict, it was decided that New South Wales should no longer be a part of the East India Company's area of jurisdiction. Furthermore, the English government later decided to strictly enforce the Navigation Laws in New South Wales. All British colonies were forbidden to trade with foreign vessels--a move directed predominantly at the Americans.<sup>46</sup>

Even so, Governor Macquarie took steps to recommence trade connections when he allowed the American schooner Traveller to dock at

Port Jackson on February 19, 1816, because of the tea and sugar on board. Both commodities the colony badly needed. Having allowed entry, Macquarie departed to carry out official duties in the country. While he was absent, W.H. Moore, a government solicitor, and a regiment chaplain, the Reverend Benjamin Vale, both resentful of the rigidity of Macquarie's rule and his seeming preference for emancipated convicts, challenged the Governor's actions by claiming the Traveller as a lawful prize under the British Navigation Act. On his return to Sydney, Macquarie, outraged by the arrest of the American vessel, immediately ordered its liberation, declaring in a letter to London that he claimed precedent in substantiating his actions:

The constant usage and custom of this place, from its first becoming a British settlement, had been invariably (in times of peace) to admit American ships and cargoes to come to entry in every respect as if they were British property.<sup>47</sup>

The English authorities accepted Macquarie's defence, citing twenty-five years of continuous trade with American merchants, but insisted that in future the Navigation Act be adhered to. These instructions effectively put an end to the possibility of a renewed regular trade with American vessels until Sydney was re-opened to American ships in 1831--but not before a substantial Australian/American relationship had established itself in the young colony.

1816-38

In the fifteen years following the renowned Traveller case in 1816, few American ships used Port Jackson as a port of call. The American sealers General Gates (in 1819 and 1820) and Yankee called briefly for refreshment, having tired of operating in New Zealand waters, and the Chile stopped in 1823, owing to an outbreak of scurvy amongst the crew. Also, a small amount of indirect trade occurred through the transshipment of American goods in English boats.<sup>48</sup> But the rush of trading activity that characterized the years between 1800 and 1812 was not to re-emerge for many years.

When Australian ports were reopened to American merchant vessels, the first ship to arrive was the Tybee, despatched in 1832 by the trading firm of Nathaniel B. Rogers and Brothers of Salem, Massachusetts. The Tybee offered a shipment including tobacco, rum, lumber and muskets. An enthused Sydney Gazette, despite having expressed suspicion of American strategic designs on the South Pacific in the late 1820's, insisted on the cultivation of an "immediate intercourse with the United States."<sup>49</sup> The increasing number of Americans who joined the Rogers Brothers in responding to the call in the next decade were mostly South Sea traders who supplied Pacific whaling bases in return for wool, oil, hides and island products.<sup>50</sup>

The American firm of Kenworth and Company first seized the opportunity when it opened a branch trading office in Sydney in 1833. Other companies followed, leading ultimately to the appointment of James Hartwell Williams as first U.S. Consul to Sydney in May, 1836.<sup>51</sup>

The attitude towards the United States was, by the middle 1830's, radically different from the government-induced suspicion of earlier years. A decade of activity by a free Australian press (and middle class) receptive to the democratic content of American political thought and ideas, and finally able to express its admiration publicly, had apparently created a climate of widespread respect for America's successful struggle for independence and republican government. Williams' arrival in Sydney on the Draco on January 10, 1837, prompted a number of reputable Australian spokesmen to speculate on the likelihood, in the near future, of a shift in the colony's political, social and even literary priorities. They anticipated a movement away from the hitherto immutable ties with Great Britain, in the direction of the United States--a country often affectionately referred to as "Brother Jonathan."<sup>52</sup>

A survey limited to the government records, trading statistics and "official" interaction between America and Australia in the fifty years after the arrival of the First Fleet renders such a shift inexplicable. One must look elsewhere. If the governors from Phillip to Darling and their underlings were experiencing Yankee troubles, what was the bulk of the population--convicts, emancipists and new settlers--thinking? What factors influenced their concept of America? Indeed, what led to their contemplating America in the first place?

## Section B

### Attitudes to the New Colony-- in England and Tory Australia

The by-products of Empire--war, speculative investment, newly discovered flora and fauna--consistently captured the imagination of large numbers of Englishmen in the eighteenth century. Of all British colonies, America, because of its sheer size and potential, was mentioned most often--the more so in the 1760's and 1770's when it threatened to take the seemingly impossible path of political independence. Whigs, Tories and Radicals in Britain each adopted a different public position on the American War of Independence. In an atmosphere of often acrimonious debate, plans for a settlement in New Holland were confirmed.

Almost inevitably, events in America helped to shape people's reactions to Britain's latest colonial possession in the distant south. As one historian has put it, "the near-coincidence of the colonisation of Australia and the American War of Independence encouraged from the outset comparisons between the new dependencies in the South Pacific and the old ones across the Pacific in North America."<sup>53</sup> Many Britons, shocked by the revolt in the United States, began to

use Australia as a substitute and compensation for their lost American dream. Of interest, here, are the kinds of comparisons made, and by whom.

Four broad responses greeted England's newest colony: the first was held by a few Englishmen who, in Botany Bay's earliest years, persistently clung to a romantic conception of Australia's potential, despite the first load of "settlers" comprised almost entirely of convicts. These idealists portrayed Australia as a spacious, new and improved England. Another group wanted so much to see initial potential realized that it was willing to distort preliminary factual reports from the colony to match its preconceived notions. A third assemblage, comprising men like Sir Joseph Banks and Captain Watkin Tench, saddened by the prospect of British civilization declining in Europe, took solace in the notion that it might be "regenerating in the new societies which Englishmen had established": namely, in America and Australia.<sup>54</sup> A fourth opinion, shared by many writers, was that Australia, because of the deplorable calibre of its first citizens, offered a totally inferior comparison with America. How could a settlement rooted in wickedness and thievery possibly bear contrast with a land sworn to uphold the tenets put forth in the lofty prose of the Declaration of Independence?

The common factor of all four views was a tendency to see Australia as in some way a variation of an older mould: either a better America, a new America, another America or a wholly inferior America. Each will be looked at in turn. The point to be later taken up is that



given this English proclivity to make American/Australian comparisons, it was only natural that residents in Australia in the first forty years should do the same thing.

The spectrum of critical responses to Botany Bay quickly established itself, beginning even before the First Fleet of convicts left England. Perhaps the first writer to consider the Australian/American contrast, in an essay printed in the London Morning Post shortly after Lord Sydney's plans for a settlement became public, asked that "the origin and progress of our American Colonists be, for a moment, considered," and concluded that Sydney's plans would result in "eventual benefit to the British empire."<sup>55</sup> A scattering of similarly premature optimism appeared over the next twenty years. Some of it was grounded loosely in experience, like Joseph Banks' vision of "the future prospect of empires and dominions which now cannot be disappointed. Who knows but that England may revive in New South Wales when it is sunk in Europe."<sup>56</sup> Some of it, completely unrelated to the realities of the new land, simply found yet another context for applying eighteenth-century "enlightenment" ideas based on society's progress. Erasmus Darwin, naturalist, physician and occasional philosophic poet, was one. A confessed believer in nature's capacity to exist "in a state of perpetual improvement," Darwin penned some lines entitled "A Voyage of Hope--to Sydney Cove, Near Botany Bay," which appeared as a broadside in 1789. Inspired by a specimen of clay modelled into a medallion by Josiah Wedgwood, he foresaw a bright future for the great south land:

There shall broad streets their stately walls extend,  
 The circus widen, and the crescent bend;  
There, ray'd from cities o'er the cultur'd land,  
 Shall bright canals, and solid roads expand. --  
There the proud arch, Colossus-like, bestride  
 Yon glittering streams, and bound the chafing tide;  
 Embellish'd villas crown the landscape-scene,  
 Farms wave with gold, and orchards blush between. --  
There shall tall spires, and dome-capt towers ascend,  
 And piers and quays their massy structures blend;<sup>57</sup>

Thomas K. Hervey went even further, imagining Australia as the site of a utopian brotherhood,

To where a lovelier vision meets the eye;  
 Where spreads the British name from sun to sun,  
 And all the nations of the earth are One.<sup>58</sup>

Certainly a cluster of euphoric forecasts to suitably launch a new land could have been anticipated. However, in Australia's case, citation of the American example was just as quickly established as a tactic of those opposed to further colonial expansion who wished to censure the authorities. A concerned Alexander Dalrymple expressed disgust with the decision "to send the Convicts to Botany Bay, on the East-Side of New-Holland, whilst This Country is still smarting from a War with Her old Colonies, whom she found herself unable to keep in dependence."<sup>59</sup> Dr. Johnson, had he been alive to witness the finalization of plans for Botany Bay, would no doubt have concurred, since he viewed America's revolutionary leaders as "dictators of sedition" and "incendiaries . . . [who] toss brands among a rabble passively combustible."<sup>60</sup>

With the new century, and a fresh generation of observers, came

a gradually widening context of discussion, and more rational comment.

John Pinkerton, a Scottish geographer, typified the new composure:

[The] colony met with considerable difficulties in regard to subsistence, and the expence was considered as too great for the object. But men of more extensive and philosophical views beheld with complacence the design of transferring the English race and name to such a distant and important region of the globe, which might supply new objects to commerce and science, and in the course of a few centuries present as it were another America, a country of rising knowledge and civilization, in the midst of a benighted and savage region of the globe. Nor were views of ambition and glory undelighted with this new diffusion of the great and surprising people of a remote European isle, in the most distant extremities of the navigable ocean.<sup>61</sup>

For Pinkerton, Australia could well be a remarkable new addition to English power and prestige; like America; another bastion of Anglo-Saxon culture.

Arguably the most sensible and illuminating voice concerning Britain's ongoing relationship with America and Australia between 1800 and 1830 was the Reverend Sydney Smith--caustic observer, raconteur, and the most admired wit in Whig aristocratic circles in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Though a man so often given to facetious comment that close companions found it difficult to take him seriously, Smith established himself in the pages of the Whig Edinburgh Review, from its inception in October, 1802, to his last published article in 1828, as a lively spokesman for liberal principles and a staunch advocate of religious toleration and the rights of the underprivileged.<sup>62</sup> The discerning way in which he tackled controversial

issues can be gauged from his series of articles on "Botany Bay" and "America." Stretching over a period of twenty-five years, these articles amply demonstrate the tendency of informed English commentators of the period to closely identify Australia's progress with developments in America.<sup>63</sup> Smith unflinchingly utilized the same frame of reference for both countries, and a similar vocabulary. His comments, by far the most elaborate of the day, need close attention, if the predisposition of London circles of the time is to be effectively gauged.

Smith's attitude to both countries underwent a series of changes and modifications. In his first article on Australia he mouthed the old conservative prejudices in language not unlike that of Dalrymple some twenty years before. Apparently angered by the composition of the new colony, and, in 1803, unwilling to accept the questions raised by the democratic experiment in North America, Smith asked the question destined to disenchant a generation of prospective Australians: "Are we to spend another hundred millions of money in discovering its [Australia's] strength, and to humble ourselves again before a fresh set of Washingtons and Franklins?" As far as he was concerned, a repetition of the American experience in Australia at that time seemed certain: "The moment after we have suffered such serious mischief from the escapade of the old tiger, we are breeding up a young cub, whom we cannot render less ferocious, or more secure."<sup>64</sup> Smith assailed both the structure and the administration of the new colony as too shortsighted.

He mellowed. Throughout the turbulent years of war with France (and, in 1812, with America), Smith turned the attentions of his pen to a number of philanthropic endeavours unrelated to British territories. Then, in 1818, he published the first of three appraisals of America in the Review.<sup>65</sup> Collectively, they had a decided effect on his reputation in the United States. The weight of honest evaluation present throughout was lost in the hornet's nest aroused by two of Smith's digressions on American literature. His inflammatory statement, "Literature the Americans have none," in the first article, intended to cut any excessive American pride and patriotism to the quick, was bettered only by the cruelly accurate sequence of rhetorical questions he included in the second article, a review of a statistical work on America, in 1820:

In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue? . . . Finally, under which of the old tyrannical governments of Europe is every sixth man a slave, whom his fellow-creatures may buy and sell and torture?

When these questions are fairly and favourably answered, their laudatory epithets may be allowed: but till that can be done, we would seriously advise them to keep clear of superlatives.<sup>66</sup>

Comments apparently not easily forgotten. Over half a century later, The Nation mentioned Smith as the author of "savagely contemptuous articles about America," and as late as 1963 a television programme on an American network, entitled "Creative America," fashioned itself as a reply to Smith's "sneering" comment.<sup>67</sup>

But the popular image of Smith as a denouncer of American politics, culture and mores simply doesn't match the facts. The Edinburgh Review, and Smith in particular, always treated American subjects fairly. Indeed, so strongly had Smith warmed to the progressive nature of the democratic experiment by 1818 that he could describe himself in a letter to Lord Francis Jeffrey as a "Philoyankeist."<sup>68</sup>

Smith heartily applauded many of the legislative initiatives in the "land of Jonathan," time and again illustrating in print his agreement with Jeffrey's image of the majority of Americans as brave, enterprising and industrious!<sup>69</sup> He scrupulously singled out enlightening aspects of their country--an efficiently managed economy, low salaries for those in the public sector, religious toleration, popular education, universal suffrage and freedom of the press--as worthy of imitation by Britain.<sup>70</sup> As his image of America took on a different face, so too did the way in which he observed Australia's development. No longer concentrating his attention solely on the loathsome features of the colony, he began to take notice of certain redeeming features, constantly using America as the basis for comparison. Similarities were firmly endorsed. The "land of convicts and kangaroos" was gradually showing signs of developing into "a very fine and flourishing settlement," the "American arrangements respecting the education of the lower orders" being "excellent."<sup>71</sup> Differences were condemned:

New South Wales is a sink of wickedness, in which the great majority of convicts of both sexes become infinitely more depraved than at the period of their arrival. . . . The felon transported to the American plantations, became an insulated rogue among honest men. . . . But in Botany Bay, the felon, as soon as he gets out of the ship, meets with his ancient trull, with the footpad of his heart, the convict of his affections,--the man whose hand he has often met in the same gentleman's pocket--. . . .<sup>72</sup>

In the five years separating Smith's final two critiques of Australia, a noticeable Americanizing of his stance took place. He began to equate the two countries politically and socially; thus he opened his 1828 review with smatterings of hyperbole more characteristic of the proponents of propaganda eking out a living in colonial journals:

It is now several years since we have said anything in our pages of that New World which Britain has been creating on the other side of the Pacific--although it has been all the while in a state of continued and even rapid advancement. . . . [It] will be no unpleasing task to glean from the works, at the head of this article, some further notices of this infant colony--destined, perhaps, in the course of ages, to be the earliest records of a famous and potent nation.<sup>73</sup>

Australia--no longer Britain's garbage,"the fifth or pickpocket quarter of the globe"--could, through hard work, discerning leadership and the continued progress of all branches of industry, transform itself entirely. Not into another Britain, but "a new America."<sup>74</sup>

A number of Smith's contemporaries were in complete accord with his endorsement of American initiative, but, like Smith in the early years, equivocated over Australia. The prospect of a massive English

prison in the Pacific disturbed. One such contemporary was the influential utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham. In his own words more a "United States man" than an Englishman, Bentham corresponded at length with prominent American leaders such as Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, John Quincy Adams, and a variety of State governors.<sup>75</sup> A lawyer himself, Bentham particularly appreciated American legal reform, and from 1817 onwards, the year of his momentous Plan of Parliamentary Reform in the Form of a Catechism, etc., he encouraged his countrymen to share his views in a wide variety of avidly pro-American pamphlets.

The Westminster Review, begun with Bentham money in 1824, consolidated his sentiments into an orthodoxy in the 1820's. "America," the first issue stated, "is the only country which has presented us with the spectacle of a people governed by a system of genuine representation."<sup>76</sup> Australia's beginnings were abhorrent. Bentham detested Britain's "periodical harvests of malefactors," and in a section of his "Principles of Penal Law" on transportation he compared at length the differences between American handling of the "refuse of the British population" and Australia's.<sup>77</sup> If the effect on America was regrettable, the consequences for Australian development threatened to be catastrophic. Like Smith, Bentham objected to the policy in Botany Bay of congregating large numbers of convicts together in one place. New South Wales could become a settlement of "the highest political importance," but only with the "lapse of a certain number of centuries," and presumably only if an independent course similar



to the American one were pursued.<sup>78</sup>

Most writers who voiced their opinions on the Botany Bay penal settlement in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century--and there weren't many--saw it as a desperately inferior America. They felt, along with Bentham, that centuries would be required before the country could overcome its distressing roots. Things weren't as bad as Scottish bard James Montgomery's desolate image suggests:

Pass we drear New Holland's shoals,  
 Where no ample river rolls,  
 --World of unawaken'd souls.<sup>79</sup>

But neither did they warrant the buoyancy of an Erasmus Darwin or a William Lisle Bowles.<sup>80</sup>

Of those in Charles Lamb's circle, Lamb himself was the sharpest critic of the New Hôlland experiment. An "inauspicious unliterary Thiefland" he labelled Australia in a review of Barron Field's First Fruits (1820).<sup>81</sup> His comments in a letter to Field were scarcely more complimentary:

Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thief all day long, do they? . . . Have you any poets among you? Cursed plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em.<sup>82</sup>

William Hazlitt's estimate of his friend's aversion "to new faces, to new books, to new buildings, to new customs" might explain Lamb's reaction, however.<sup>83</sup> Hazlitt, in contrast, was inclined to judge the

inhabitants of the colony a little more sympathetically. Botany Bay was indeed an irritating mote in Britain's eye, but not all the convicts earned their passage as cut-throats and thieves.

An individual may be oppressed, a nation may be trampled upon, mankind may be threatened with annihilation of their rights, and the threat enforced; and not a finger is raised. . . . At the very time when all England went mad about the poor Queen, a man of the name of Bruce was sent to Botany Bay for having spoken to another who was convicted of sedition; and no notice was taken of it.<sup>84</sup>

Robert Southey was another to express a certain sympathy for the transported felons in his Botany Bay Eclogues, written at Oxford in 1794 at a time when he dreamt of human perfectability, no matter what the circumstances. Having read Watkin Tench's narratives of the colony, he depicted the convicted Elinor, doomed for eternity in the far-off

savage lands . . .  
Where angry England sends her outcast sons  
--repenting her transgressions and confidently embracing the after  
life:

On these wild shores the saving hand of Grace  
Will probe my secret soul, and cleanse its wounds,  
And fit the faithful penitent for Heaven.<sup>85</sup>

Southey's idealistic political concepts (Pantisocracy) enabled him to envision a better future, but the oppressive realities of the present were never far away. So while writing his Eclogues he identified life in Botany Bay, in America and in reactionary England as an

isolating experience. "Whether I linger out existence in England in America or among the convicts of New Holland is a matter of indifference," he wrote to Governor Charles Bedford in June, 1794.<sup>86</sup> His speculative idea of a free commonwealth located itself a long way from repressive Australia.

Much like Southey in later years, Coleridge rejected Botany Bay outright, labelling it a settlement of "despair" when compared with the lofty ideals pervading the political and social atmosphere of North America.<sup>87</sup> At one point in his early twenties, he planned to join a communal settlement on the banks of the Susquehanna.<sup>88</sup> The plan was shortly afterwards aborted, though Coleridge, despite establishing himself as one of the most lucid conservative voices of his era, maintained a high regard for the United States up to his death in 1834. The Quarterly Review of 1835 posthumously published an extract of his "table talk," where he once again identified his elevated impression of America's potential:

The possible destiny of the United States of America,-- as a nation of a hundred millions of freemen,--stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, living under the laws of Alfred, and speaking the language of Shakespeare and Milton, is an august conception. Why should we not wish to see it realized? America would then be England viewed through a solar microscope; Great Britain in a state of glorious magnification!<sup>89</sup>

A fledgling colony comprised predominantly of convicts, on the other hand, could hardly bear the strain of close and direct comparison at this point. Many of Coleridge's countrymen agreed with him in the early years of the nineteenth century, though as the years passed and the investment prospects

of Australia grew, they, like Sydney Smith, began to view Australia with increasing optimism. Australia and America might be more closely related than first thought.

\* \* \*

Clearly, then, many of George III's subjects at home viewed events in both Australia and America as in some way comparable, the majority at first agreeing with Coleridge, Bentham, William Cobbett and Richard Cobden that the immediate prospects of American democracy far outweighed those of New Holland's remote prison. The important point to be made, though, is not that one was arbitrarily favoured at the expense of the other, but that the two continents were oft times viewed with the same spectacles--wise Jonathan's land spoken of in the same breath as the sink of wickedness. The comparison was a natural. Sydney Smith, and, later, penal reformer Edward Gibbon Wakefield, merely articulated widespread opinion.<sup>90</sup>

One could reasonably expect that this tendency would hold true in the thoughts and writings of the first British settlers (and convicts) in Australia. If their countrymen back home kept insisting on the Australian/American contrast, they could hardly do otherwise. And so it happened. Archibald Alison's statement, looking back on the previous fifty turbulent years of republican activity, that "the democratic government of America has struck far and wide into the minds of European people," retained a unique validity in Britain's most recent acquisition in the south.<sup>91</sup>

The forces of "Americanization" worked in many strange ways right from the beginning, and it mustn't have been long before circumstances caused large numbers of men in Australia, mostly the gaoled, to identify their predicament with that of the inhabitants of pre-revolutionary America. Any faint hopes held by the new arrivals in Australia rested squarely with Tom Paine and his revolutionary brothers. For the occasional intrepid optimist, such as the ageing prisoner, Thomas Fyshe Palmer--Cambridge-educated political reformer, Unitarian minister and one of the five "Scottish Martyrs" sentenced to transportation for seditious practices--the new situation could even prompt excited anticipation:

The soil is capital, the climate delicious. I will take it upon me to say, that it will soon be the region of plenty, and wants only virtue and liberty to be another America. . . .<sup>92</sup>

Hyperbole in a country as yet so raw and physically taxing may have been unrepresentative, but it was inevitable that a tradition of esteem for America should establish itself at the outset, since Botany Bay perpetually served as the destination for a large number of independent and articulate spirits who refused to be silenced by the repressive policies of a nervous conservative government. Political prisoners arrived more strongly committed than ever to the advocacy of individual rights. The bulk of convicts, of course, knew nothing of the theoretical justification for the democratic cause. They had a pair of eyes, saw American boats, and schemed and schemed.

Local circumstances, too, reinforced the American comparison. Governor Phillip's Commission and Instructions from the Colonial Office, for example, were those normally dispatched to North American Governors, but for the names. Further, of Australia's first five governors, Hunter, King and Macquarie could all cite American battle experience, as could a substantial number of officers comprising the original military government and many of the Rum Corps troops who arrived in 1790. The odd American place-name around Sydney--such as Concord, Bunker's Hill, and Liberty Plains, near Parramatta--bears some testimony to emotional attachments.<sup>93</sup>

Sydney's first inhabitants were either members of the governing military clique, bound to support the King and to carry out scrupulously the edicts sent by the colonial administration in Britain, or they were convicts, forced to conform to these policies. A "middle" class did not constitute an effective social force until the end of Macquarie's period of governorship (1821). From these two principal groups of the colony--ruling military and felony--America elicited, not surprisingly, totally different reactions. As seen earlier, while the former inevitably responded in a cautious fashion to the American revolution and its spokesmen espousing democratic principles, the latter envied the representatives of a system which held liberty, equality and independence as man's inalienable rights. Eventually, as free settlers and emancipists increased the local population, and a middle class gradually took shape, these ideals found voice. It was undoubtedly imprudent for the few representatives of this group--merchant, surgeon, landed free settlers--

to openly advocate the American example during the decades of the first five governors; but, after the abolition of press censorship in 1824, few restraints existed to discourage public criticism of the authorities. As I will later show, Governor Darling (1825-31) would become the scapegoat of an increasingly boisterous middle class.

For the greater part of its first hundred years, Australia's ruling class despised and perhaps feared the political precedents being set in America, and greeted republican visitors nervously. Although, as we have seen, they were forced to encourage a trading connection with Washington's rebels in the early years, they didn't much like it. But the colony continually required certain necessities for its survival. It must have nettled Hunter and his colleagues to be constrained to deal with men unashamedly pursuing high profits, whatever the emotional cost, who came from a country not too many years ago at war with England, taking English lives. Rum smuggling, fishing violations, local disturbances including pub brawling and convict escapes, inflated food and general merchandise prices, and a desperate shortage of specie--all seemed to the authorities to be at least partially due to Yankee meddling.<sup>94</sup>

In the years up to the end of Darling's period of governorship in 1831, there is no reason to believe that the attitudes of Australia's ruling minority--their vigilance--towards the young American republic eased to any great degree. If anything, during the years leading up to the war of 1812, and throughout the period of hostilities, they appear to have become a trifle paranoid. The scare provided by Jorgen Jorgensen's allegations of a French/American invasion, and the exploits

of the American privateer Holkar and David Porter's frigate Essex, caused great concern among the small but all-powerful group in Australia who had something to lose.

Barron Field's responses and writings perhaps typify the ruling-class rationale of the time. His "mild, modest and conciliating manners" at first prompted Macquarie to believe that Field (a poor poet, and only marginally better as a judge on the Supreme Court of Civil Judicature in New South Wales between 1818 and 1824) might favour the emancipist cause. However, as time soon revealed, his decisions in the 165 actions at law and 13 suits in equity that he presided over in his first four years in the colony were marked by erratic, often reactionary prejudices. He forcefully opposed trial by jury and a legislative assembly for New South Wales.<sup>95</sup> In this he was at one with the "exclusive" or "exclusionist" cause.<sup>96</sup> More importantly, he opposed any semblance of democratic lobbying, feeling it indicative of a rising American spirit. When petitioned by a radical group of emancipists demanding greater equality of opportunity, he wrote to royal commissioner Bigge:

I see the shadow of the spirit of the American revolt at taxation rising in the shape of the petition for trial by jury; it will next demand legislative assembly; and . . . end in declaring itself a nation of freebooters and pirates.<sup>97</sup>

Government fear of possible naval aggression continued well into the 1820's. When an English settlement was planned for King George's Sound (Western Australia) in 1826, for example, the leader of the expedition, Captain Stirling, after changing the site to some land near the Swan



River, wrote home in a state of alarm that an American warship had been sighted nearby. The Home Office, though unimpressed by the possibilities of the terrain, recognized a certain strategic importance: "No other motive . . . than the political one of preventing other nations, as the French or Americans, of possessing themselves of the south-west corner of New Holland, should induce us to anticipate them. . . ." <sup>98</sup> Governor Darling could even conceive of a direct threat to Sydney as late as August, 1827. In that year the local government paper, the Sydney Gazette, expressed its disenchantment with American activities throughout the islands of the Pacific and publicized the distinct possibility of Americans "annoying" the colony "at no distant day." <sup>99</sup>

Distrust of America in the colonies was by no means limited to the King's direct representatives. Local squatters with their eye on the creation of a family dynasty or, at the very least, the security of life's comforts on land worked with convict labour, were often just as adamantly anti-American. John Macarthur, Rum Corps lieutenant and advocate of a home-grown aristocracy, echoed Field's sentiments in his criticism of Macquarie's land policy. The result, for Macarthur, of distributing only small grants to potential Australian colonists would be "a turbulent and immoral democracy like that of America, which will in the end overturn the government, and form a licentious republic upon its ruins." <sup>100</sup> He demanded protection from the mob. Property, Macarthur felt, must have its due respect and reward.

Not all the new settlers, however, wanted Macarthur's new England

on another shore. As time passed, more and more refused to countenance the question of one insular new arrival who asked where were the "blue-veined violets, hare-bells, butter-cups, daisies . . . ? Where were the lions, the tigers, elephant . . . ? The sequestered glens or purling streams, or mountains peaked with snow, the towering crags, or the gushing waterfalls--all that scenery which was sublime?"<sup>101</sup> They wanted to share in, to assimilate the fruits of the new land. But this meant agitating for legal and social recognition in the face of opposition from the large landowners, the "pure merinos" of the colony--those who, according to Roger Therry, a legal official from Ireland, "were not only free and unconvicted, but . . . could boast of having no collateral relationship or distant affinity with those in whose escutcheon there was a blot. [They] formed the topmost round in the social ladder."<sup>102</sup> Australia's developing middle class, confronted by social barriers, began to absorb and espouse American thinking in its search for a society in which they might have a greater stake.

### Section C

#### Convict Attitudes

It was natural for the "merinos" of the colony to reject entirely any American political ideas which would lead to changes in the status quo; it was equally appropriate for their challengers to endorse the same material. William Charles Wentworth's A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales (1819) gave first expression to a rising vocal group about to work significant changes in the colony's previously simple, two-part structure. Despite initial setbacks to the emancipist cause during the years under Governor Brisbane (1821-5), three occurrences during the period acted as the principal catalysts of the press uprising in the late 1820's: John Dunmore Lang arrived in the colony in 1823 determined to make it his home; Wentworth returned to New South Wales in 1824 (after a stint at Cambridge) with William Wardell, ex-proprietor and editor of the London Statesman; and press censorship was abolished in 1824. Their cumulative effect, as will later be shown, produced a new attitude towards America--one which increasingly incorporated American literary and religious ideas to complement political theory. But where were the precedents prior to the 1820's?

The widespread approval of American ideas evident in most colonial newspapers of the late 1820's would appear an aberration if viewed solely in terms of the sentiments of the ruling élite in the previous thirty years--attitudes ranging from wariness to occasional hostility. It becomes more explicable, however, if one examines American links in terms of the other, numerically overwhelming section of the Botany Bay population: the prisoners. An illicit yet thriving connection existed, one impossible to assess accurately, yet forcing the speculation, on the basis of the facts we do have, that it had an immense impact on the convicts--and, ultimately, colonial society and literature. To men isolated on an island prison, American ideas helped nourish the faint concept of freedom; American soil symbolized that freedom; and American ships represented the most visible means of achieving it.

For some ninety years, from the arrival of the First Fleet to the rescue of a group of Fenians by the New Bedford whaler Catalpa, in 1876, one stirring, though for obvious reasons poorly documented area of Australian history emerges as a saga of escape on American ships.<sup>103</sup> For the illiterate rank and file, unfamiliar with the rights Thomas Paine was insisting man had or the pursuit of happiness promulgated by Jefferson, the tenets of the American Declaration of Independence were embodied in the boats themselves. In a word, freedom. The hardships experienced in the first dark years must have disposed many a convict to focus a little obsessively on the flag of the Philadelphia, the first American vessel to visit Port Jackson.

It evidently didn't take the prisoners with initiative long to make contact, for, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, escape from the new settlement was so common that local authorities isolated all American boats in Neutral Bay, a few miles north of Sydney Cove. A compulsory £200 bond was lodged by American captains on arrival in Sydney, to be forfeited if escapees were discovered on the vessel before departure. Since the bond was later raised to £500, this too must have proved small discouragement.<sup>104</sup>

A remark by Captain W.R. Broughton, R.N., who sailed from Botany Bay on the H.M.S. Providence in October, 1795, indicates the magnitude of the problem that government officials faced, so soon after first settlement: "We abstained from following the example of other ships that have touched at this colony, by not taking away any of the convicts, a practice very general in merchant ships."<sup>105</sup> In this practice, Americans assumed the most prominent role for a variety of reasons, ranging from sheer expediency to philanthropy. Some skippers probably decided on the spur of the moment to aid escapees, having been forced to witness instances such as that of the convict Morgan, for whom a large gallows was constructed on Pinchgut Island so that he could hang in full view of every visiting ship, having first been dipped in tar to ensure he lasted long enough to satisfactorily advertise the disastrous consequences of violating English laws.<sup>106</sup>

The American presence exerted both direct and indirect effects on the stability of the colony as a result of the illegal assistance lent to convicts. The best example of the former, and the most

renowned escape in the early years of the colony was that of Thomas Muir, a high-principled Glaswegian lawyer and political reformer, and one of the "Martyrs" banished from Scotland. The exploits of Muir and his colleagues, closely connected as they are to an account of the effect of the American revolution on New South Wales and the colony's first contact with American political literature, warrant detailed attention at this point.

What an impact the arrival of the five "Scottish Martyrs" must have had on the tiny southern outpost. Sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay for periods ranging from seven to fourteen years, four of them--Muir, Thomas Palmer, William Skirving and Maurice Margarot--arrived on the Surprize in October, 1794. The fifth, Joseph Gerrald, arrived on the Sovereign in November, 1795. As one commentator has put it: "No series of trials in Scottish history ever created such world-wide interest. In America they provided fresh material for the discussion which Muir's case had provoked."<sup>107</sup> Many influential Whigs objected to the severity of the sentences, because of the questionable nature of the crimes. But to no avail. The convictions stood, bringing five men to Botany Bay on the wrong side of the law whose recent history--let alone past deeds--assured that their stay would prove of interest to anyone even vaguely familiar with current events of world interest. What were their crimes?

Thomas Muir's case sheds some light on a number of areas: the edginess of the Pitt government's handling of American issues at the time; the profound impact of the American War of Independence on a

Scottish labour movement aspiring to political awareness; the reading material of at least a few of the Botany Bay inmates; and the successful escape-rate they enjoyed in the years when rum was the primary concern of the country's gaolers. Muir attended both the universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, at one point studying under John Millar, the illustrious liberal professor of law.<sup>108</sup> The reverberations of both the American War of Independence (with its subsequent republican legislation) and the French Revolution caused him, along with a great number of colleagues, to adopt a radical, anti-monarchist position. As early as 1779, the impact of American politics had worked what one observer called "a great change in the sentiments of the nation."<sup>109</sup> Impassioned debate threatened to divide Scottish families. As the 1780's, Muir's impressionable years, began, clear signs that "the spirit of liberty had taken a northern turn" could be seen in the rising cry for country and burgh reform.<sup>110</sup> Topics listed for discussion by members of the Edinburgh Pantheon Debating Society reflected the growing militancy. One asked simply: "Should the American War be immediately terminated?"<sup>111</sup>

Powerfully influenced by the radical mood of the times, Muir was soon elected vice president of the Glasgow Associated Friends of the Constitution and of the People. At the general convention of the Scottish Societies of the Friends of the People in Edinburgh in December, 1792, he read an inflammatory address from the United Irishmen of Dublin--one of the reasons why he was arrested in January, 1793.<sup>112</sup> The other reason comprised a four-fold charge. In the

words of the Clerk of the High Court of Justiciary (of Edinburgh),  
Muir stood accused of

SEDITIONOUS SPEECHES and HARANGUES, a spirit of disloyalty and disaffection to the King and the Established Government; . . . EXHORTING persons to purchase and peruse seditious and wicked publications and writings . . . [and] feloniously DISTRIBUTING or CIRCULATING [this material].<sup>113</sup>

Finally, the Clerk exclaimed that Thomas Muir did

sometime in [September, October, or November, 1792] . . . wickedly and feloniously advise and exhort John Muir senior, late hatter in Glasgow, Thomas Wilson barber in Glasgow, and John Barclay . . . to read Paine's Rights of Man, and to purchase the same; which book or pamphlet, entitled Paine's Rights of Man, is a most wicked and seditious publication, calculated to vilify the Constitution of this country, to produce a spirit of insurrection among the people, and to stir them up to acts of outrage and opposition to the Established Government . . . [Further Muir did distribute and circulate] 'The Works of Thomas, Paine, Esq.' Also, a writing or publication, entitled, 'A Declaration of Rights, and an Address to the People, approved of by a number of the Friends of Reform in Paisley'. Also a paper or publication entitled, 'A dialogue betwixt the Governors and the Governed;' Also, a paper or publication, entitled 'The Patriot' . . .

Muir admitted having delivered an address, but denied it was seditious.

He categorically denied the other accusations, admitting only that he

exerted every effort to procure a more equal representation of the people in the House of Commons. If that be a crime, I plead guilty to the charge.<sup>114</sup>

Shortly before being arrested, Muir had obtained a French passport, intending to seek refuge in America. It was a logical step since the English government's repressive measures were widely reported



throughout the United States. When the sedition trials began, flames of outrage swept all America--fanned by two New York reprints (in 1794 alone) of the trial. One U.S. Senator summed up the popular feeling:

Are not Muir and Palmer, and the other martyrs of Scottish despotism, toasted from one end of the continent to the other?<sup>115</sup>

In New England, schoolmasters were apparently so moved by the court proceedings that excerpts from Muir's address to his accusers were, in later years, used in lessons. One contemporary, Scottish judge Lord Cockburn, remarked: "This is one of the cases the memory whereof never perisheth, history cannot let its injustice alone."<sup>116</sup>

Muir's contact with America was a reciprocal process. His political leanings demanded that he be familiar with American legislative precedents and revolutionary literature; likewise his case was required reading in American republican circles. On this basis we can posit that during his fifteen-month stay in Australia it is extremely unlikely that the man Lord Advocate Robert Dundas labelled a "demon of mischief" and the "pest of Scotland" could have limited himself purely to farming a small piece of land opposite Sydney Cove.<sup>117</sup> Someone of Muir's independent, confident persuasion undoubtedly would have utilized the time to demonstrate and, where possible, publicize his republican convictions. He had stated in his trial that he

advised the people to read different publications upon both sides, which [the question of parliamentary reform] had excited, and I am not ashamed to assign my motives. I consider the ignorance of the people, on the one hand, to be the source from which despotism flows: I consider, upon the other hand, an ignorant people impressed with a sense of grievances, and wishing to have these grievances redressed, to be exposed to certain misery and complete ruin. Knowledge must always precede reformation, and who shall dare to say that the people shall be debarred from information, where it concerns them so materially?<sup>118</sup>

Further, Governor Hunter acknowledged in a letter back to Scotland in September, 1795, that Muir, Skirving, Margarot and Palmer were all "very gifted in powers of conversation."<sup>119</sup> Muir he deemed "a sensible modest young man, of a very retired turn," but he was probably as poor a judge of this aspect of Muir's character as he was that he "seemed to bear his circumstances with a proper degree of fortitude and resignation." Some five months after Hunter recorded his character assessment, Muir escaped on the American Ebenezer Dorr's fur trader, Otter.

Muir's escape has been recounted fully elsewhere by two historians--Marjorie Masson and J.F. Jameson--in the American Historical Review (1923).<sup>120</sup> Briefly, he was picked up off the coast by the Otter on February 17, 1796, leaving behind a letter stating his intention to practise law in the United States. He got to Monterey, California, after transferring to the Spanish gunboat, Sutil, where he expected to obtain the Spanish governor's permission to join Joseph Priestley and other radical British exiles in Philadelphia. Instead, the Viceroy of Mexico ordered him transported to Spain. Aboard the frigate

Ninfa when it was attacked by the seventy-four gun British ship Irresistible, Muir was severely wounded, losing an eye, which resulted in his hospitalization at Cadiz. French foreign minister Talleyrand, familiar with Muir's past, interceded on his behalf and he was transferred to Paris in December, 1797, where, though initially something of a celebrity, he soon slipped into obscurity as a result of the constant political upheavals. He died a pauper at Chantilly, near Paris, on January 26, 1799--barely seven years after his inspiring address to the convention of Friends of the People at Edinburgh.

The extraordinary sequence of events surrounding Muir's escape makes interesting reading. Two points are relevant here: firstly, we know that when Muir anticipated proceeding to the United States in 1793, he and some of his close associates wrote to "the first people of the United States" endeavouring to familiarize them with his situation.<sup>121</sup> It is clearly possible that Muir's escape from Botany Bay was planned well in advance, indicating an illicit escape connection between persons in the settlement and American shipping/political interests. Hunter claimed, in a letter to the Home Secretary, that "several people" escaped on the Otter. In fact some thirty-two bolted for freedom--a measure of both the sheer efficiency of the operation and the considerable gap existing between official reports that might reflect adversely on the correspondent and the actual facts.<sup>122</sup> Secondly, while in Monterey, Muir wrote eight letters, the first of which he sent to George Washington, then President of the United States. Unless the British political scene changed

abruptly, Muir informed Washington, he intended to spend the rest of his life "in the United States, happy if, in the narrow range of my abilities, I may be able to demonstrate by their exertion my devotion and my attachment to the land of my adoption."<sup>123</sup>

Given the openly admitted esteem he had for America both before and after his time in Australia, and his intention, declared at the trial, to pass on relevant information to the oppressed whenever he could, it is impossible to conceive of Muir not propagandizing in the colony whenever he had the opportunity--and this wasn't when talking with Governor Hunter. The same may be said of his four colleagues in exile, although the impact of Skirving and Gerrald could only have been slight compared to the others. Skirving, the least combative of the group, fretted sorely for his wife and children, finally dying of dysentery after only eighteen months in the colony. Similarly for Joseph Gerrald, the emotional upheaval, allied with the forbidding physical effects of transportation on a body already consumptive, proved too much too quickly. Dead after only four months in New South Wales, he would not have had an opportunity to propagandize at any length about his several years' experience as a lawyer in Philadelphia in the busy years of the early 1780's (when the young republic was attempting to expand from a league of friendship to a truly national body). Gerrald had first-hand experience of the now historic Constitutional Convention, attended by some of the finest minds in America, including Washington, Franklin, Madison, Wythe, Ingersall and James Wilson. This inspired him to write several

essays on universal suffrage on his return to England in 1788-- writings familiar to many residents of New South Wales, even if Gerrald barely had time to discuss them in his land of exile.<sup>124</sup>

Perhaps because, unlike Muir, he intended making a little money during his enforced stay rather than risk escape, Thomas Palmer still managed to incur the ire of the authorities throughout his six years in the colony. An acquaintance of Joseph Priestley and his reformist Birmingham friends in England, he wrote to a friend a few weeks before being transported that

I am not quixote enough to attempt reformation in religion or politicks under a military government with a halter round my neck.<sup>125</sup>

Unfortunately his papers and effects were lost shortly after his death. They may well have clarified some of the puzzling details of his Australian stay. From what we do know, it is clear that he was anything but respectful to authority and he constantly challenged his gaolers to account for their actions rather than passively accept the lot of an exile.

On his way out in the Surprize, Palmer (along with Skirving) was charged by the ship's captain with conspiring to mutiny, with the aim of assuming command of the ship and taking her to France and America. On arrival in Botany Bay, the charges weren't pursued, but Governor Hunter, despite being initially impressed by Palmer's steadiness, soon had reason to doubt the validity of his first judgement.<sup>126</sup> Palmer refused to accept the trading monopoly enjoyed by members of the

Rum Corps and, because of this, they in turn attempted to ostracize him. Public orders were issued stating that no soldier could speak to him, under penalty of one hundred lashes. Nevertheless, Palmer, along with James Ellis and John Boston, two young free settlers who accompanied him on the Surprize, managed to pursue successfully several commercial avenues--among them, shipbuilding, sealing and merchandise-trading. Palmer refused to be discouraged: "My fellow-sufferers laugh at me, but I have no scruple in saying it [Australia] is the finest country I ever saw."<sup>127</sup>

As with Muir, it is difficult to imagine that Palmer, though aiming to survive his imprisonment, could ignore his earlier participation in the Dundee "Friends of Liberty," a group committed to political reform and completely familiar with current revolutionary literature. Palmer's myriad of activities in New South Wales would have brought him into contact with virtually all the influential people in the colony except for the governor and military (a worrying situation for those in authority, given Palmer's past record as a promoter of "levelling doctrines"<sup>128</sup>). For example, he struck up a close friendship with the settlement surgeon George Bass, who left his library of books in Palmer's care when he left for England in 1799. We know he maintained his interest in events at home, for he wrote to a friend in August, 1797:

We have read over and over again our little stock of books, therefore any celebrated pamphlets that our friends have done with, it would be a charity to send.<sup>129</sup>

A direct connection between Palmer and America cannot be proven, though he probably intentionally selected Boston and Co. as the name of his Sydney firm for its symbolic value. Furthermore, a curious episode took place after his death on the Spanish island of Guam in June, 1802.<sup>130</sup> Because of Palmer's unitarian beliefs, the Catholic priests on Guam refused to bury him and his body was interred on a beach "among pirates" where it lay until May, 1804, when an American ship, the Mary, called at Guam. The captain, familiar with Palmer's past, conveyed the bodily remnants to Boston. A tablet was placed over his tomb in one of the churches of that city.<sup>131</sup> It is difficult to avoid inferring that direct contact between Palmer and citizens of the new republic was likely.

Maurice Margarot, the son of a wine and general merchant, grew up in a household committed to reform. His father belonged to an active political group at a time when the "Wilkes and Liberty" slogan was reverberating around Britain. The son adopted many of his father's fighting tenets. An acquaintance of the revolution's leaders, and resident in 1789 France, Margarot had established himself as a threat to the Tory establishment well before he represented the London Corresponding Society at the British Friends' Convention in Edinburgh in 1793.<sup>132</sup> In April, 1792, he penned the first Address of the L.C.S., asserting liberty as every man's birthright in the same manner as Paine in Rights of Man. Later that year, with L.C.S. leader, Thomas Hardy, he travelled to Paris with a message of congratulations to the French National Convention. The communication forecast that "the

triple alliance [not of Crowns, but] of the people of America, France, and Britain, will give freedom to Europe and peace to the whole world."<sup>133</sup> Two more pamphlets soon followed. One advocated absolute equality before the law, and the other wanted immediate parliamentary reform. Not surprisingly, he too was arraigned for sedition and brought to trial in January, 1794--an occurrence bringing small relief to his accusers, for if Margarot behaved with brazen abandon before his trial, he apparently determined to be even more truculent during the proceedings; the scene was described as one of "Insolence, Effrontery, and Petulance unparalleled."<sup>134</sup> The crowd loved it, cheering his every public appearance.<sup>135</sup>

Margarot's audacious behaviour continued during his exile. Almost immediately after landing in Botany Bay he wrote to the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Governor Grose, insisting on "Freedom, the common birthright of Britons!"<sup>136</sup> It didn't take long for cheek of this kind to irritate the local authorities, and at least one senior officer soon considered Margarot's "the most seditious house in the colony"--an accusation especially appropriate after several insurrectionary incidents in which Margarot took part between 1800 and 1804. Governor Hunter closely observed Margarot's movements after he was indirectly linked with the rebellious plans of a group of Irish convicts in September-October, 1800. It seems, however, that Margarot continued to propound his republican feelings widely, untroubled for a few years at least, during King's period of governorship.<sup>137</sup>

This lasted until March, 1804, when a band of convicts, led by



the Irishman Philip Cunningham, rose in futile revolt against their better-equipped keepers.<sup>138</sup> A few months later, King ordered the seizing of Margarot's papers. What he found further prompts one to consider the distinct possibility of there existing in the colony an illicit network of republican bases aimed at undermining those in power.<sup>139</sup> King saw fit to comment on "the very elegant Republican sentiments" contained in Margarot's possessions, including attacks on his administration as well as British ministers, correspondence with English sympathizers, and a record of repeated meetings with local radicals.<sup>140</sup> At one point, Margarot even recorded his anticipation of a republic in Australia: "It has been observed that the Empire of the World has uniformly moved from East to West--in making the circuit of the globe it must, therefore, after America has enjoyed it, make its way eastward once more."<sup>141</sup>

Of the five martyrs, Margarot stayed longest in Australia--sixteen years in all. Given his record before, during and after exile, Margarot's sheer presence, let alone his inflammatory tendencies, would have exerted a vigorous effect on a settlement still small enough for him to be known by sight to virtually every resident. "Margarot's feeling for social justice was true," one historian has written, "and in him the intellectual 'left' came to Australia."<sup>142</sup>

In 1810, Sydney lost the last of the Scots transported for sedition, but not before it had witnessed, over the previous fifteen years, two martyrs' deaths and the presence for differing periods of three potentially explosive advocates of the republican cause. For reasons

of self-preservation they may have been loath to refer to Governors Hunter, King and Bligh by the democratic epithet "fellow-citizens"; yet it seems unlikely that any of them could have forsaken the principles for which they had so bitterly fought in Britain.<sup>143</sup> Their Scottish countrymen didn't forget them.<sup>144</sup> Nor would Australia. The stand taken in the late 1820's by radical Sydney newspaper editors suggests close correspondence with the values--and American precedents--first aired in the colony by the Martyrs from Scotland.

Thomas Muir was only one of many convicts to stow away, buy or beg his way on board a departing American boat. We lack widespread documentation of this phenomenon simply because no governor or government official who valued his position was likely to inform his London superiors that escapes were commonplace. Governor Hunter's reaction to Muir's escape was probably typical. Confronted by the escape of over thirty people on the Otter, he forwarded a dispatch to the Home Secretary which recorded the flight of a mere "several people."<sup>145</sup> A couple of years later, in 1798, he recorded the escape of a convict named Evan Morgan on the American ship Argo.<sup>146</sup> Given Hunter's apparent tendency to underestimate, it seems highly likely Morgan had some convict company.

During his period as Governor, King became so irritated by the number of escapes that he began regulating the visits of American ships to the colony. In June, 1804, he issued orders to this effect, citing as one of his reasons the constant practical assistance American boats gave to escaping convicts. Still the practice continued, for

in the Sydney Gazette of August 12, 1804, notice was given that no sealing vessel "under Foreign Colours" could return to a port from which it had been discharged. Acting Secretary Blaxsell testily outlined one reason as "the Injury His Majesty's Service sustains by the numerous Convicts that have escaped and been received on board American Merchant Ships on their Departure."<sup>147</sup> Escapes continued unabated, for in December of the same year King complained that the American ship Union had illegally departed nearby Norfolk Island with eleven men on board, aiming at a speculative voyage around the islands. Apparently the situation was no better as late as 1821, when Commissioner Bigge saw fit to mention it as a perennial concern in a letter to London.<sup>148</sup>

The aura America held for some convicts evidently withstood both travel and dislocation. Sent to the new settlement in the Port Phillip Bay region, English convict William Buckley escaped into the wilds with a few companions:

He and his comrades had originally thought of walking to California; for they were not educated men, and their geography was weak; but when Buckley was left solitary, he made no such attempt, because of the distance partly, and partly because he was in doubt as to California's precise whereabouts.<sup>149</sup>

If some convicts secured freedom as a result of the America-inspired stories abounding in the colony, others apparently acted on tales one or two removes from the truth, at their peril. Occasionally, gossip circulating the grog shops of Sydney had strange consequences in

areas totally removed from the source. When the Union visited Sydney in January and June of 1804, her crew members so highly praised the climate and economic potential of Kangaroo Island that other seamen passed on the information in Tasmania during their fishing voyages. Four Van Diemonian convicts responded by stealing a whale-boat and heading for the acclaimed island of milk and honey, accompanied by four Tasmanian aboriginal girls, Betty, Bumblefoot, Pussy and Sukey. They made it, eventually establishing a camp in the area of present-day Kingscote.<sup>150</sup>

The pervasive American presence in the infant colony, if begun by the almost immediate arrival of Yankee traders and sealers, could only have been further stimulated by the world-wide publicity accorded the trials, and ultimate transportation, of the five "Scottish Martyrs." Each man propounded a strong attachment to the new American democracy in the arena where he had most to lose--the High Court. There is little likelihood, as has been shown, that they would have less enthusiastically furthered the republican cause in Australia. Despite being warned by Lt. Gov. Grose on arrival to avoid "a recital of those politicks" that had caused them so much misery, it seems likely that when Muir and his countrymen settled in and around Sydney, the sink of wickedness was for the first time introduced to the ideas for which the War of Independence had been fought.<sup>151</sup> Tom Paine and his democratic brotherhood had arrived, though it would be many years before their supporters could publicly celebrate the fact.

## CHAPTER 1. ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> John West, The History of Tasmania (Launceston, Tasmania: Henry Dowling, 1852), 11, 339-40.

<sup>2</sup> In 1791, the reverse would occur. Food and supplies from Botany Bay aided Captain George Vancouver in his exploratory journey along the north-west coast of North America. See Gordon Greenwood, Early American-Australian Relations (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1944), pp. 59-62.

<sup>3</sup> The Spanish voyages are taken up by Greenwood in Early American-Australian Relations, Chapter 1

<sup>4</sup> For information on the Endeavour's fate, see Kylie Tennant, Australia: Her Story (London: Macmillan, 1956), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> The silversmith, Paul Revere, even saw fit to include the "Wilkes and Liberty" slogan on a punchbowl dedicated to the "Immortal 92" members of the Massachusetts assembly who refused to rescind a circular letter they had earlier adopted criticizing the nature of the Townshend Acts. See Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 193.

<sup>6</sup> Bostonian Sons of Liberty to Wilkes (June 6, 1768), quoted in Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), p. 111.

<sup>7</sup> See below, Chapter III, section C.

<sup>8</sup> Norman Bartlett, 1776-1976: Australia and America Through Two Hundred Years (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1976), p. 8. For information about the Americans aboard the Endeavour, I am indebted to Bartlett, pp. 8-21.

<sup>9</sup> Greenwood, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> See below, Chapter I, section b.

<sup>11</sup> Greenwood, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Loyalists numbered about one third of the population of the United States when the revolutionary war began.

<sup>13</sup> London, 1783. See Greenwood, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Greenwood, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> Greenwood, pp. 46-51.

<sup>16</sup> Greenwood, pp. 51-3.

<sup>17</sup> John Hunter (Governor from 1795-9); Philip Gidley King (1799-1806); William Bligh (1807-8). See, for example, Robert Lacour-Gayet, A Concise History of Australia (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), Chapter six.

<sup>18</sup> Aitchison, Thanks to the Yanks, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Werner Levi, American-Australian Relations (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota, 1947), p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Greenwood, p. 118.

<sup>21</sup> See Greenwood, Appendix I.

<sup>22</sup> John Dunmore Lang dryly noted that "during Governor King's administration the population of New South Wales consisted chiefly of those who sold rum, and of those who drank it. . . ." (John Dunmore Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, Both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony (London: Cochrane & M'Crone, 1834), I, 78.

<sup>23</sup> Greenwood, p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> Parliament of Australia, Joint Library Committee, Historical Records of Australia (Sydney, 1914- ), ser. 1, VII, 479, 202.

Hereafter, source will be cited as HRA.

<sup>25</sup> See Greenwood, Appendix I.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, H.A. Lindsay, "An American Settlement in Australia, 1803," Quadrant, 5, No. 2 (Autumn 1961), 43.

<sup>27</sup> Herman Melville, Moby Dick (1851; rpt. New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), p. 100.

<sup>28</sup> Compare the accounts of Greenwood and Levi with L.G. Churchward, "Notes on American Whaling Activities in Australian Waters 1800-1850," Historical Studies, 4, No. 13 (Nov. 1949), 59-63.

<sup>29</sup> Churchward, p. 60 (c.f. Greenwood, p. 67).

<sup>30</sup> Churchward, p. 59 (c.f. Greenwood, p. 67, and Levi, p. 26).

<sup>31</sup> HRA, I, iii, 765.

<sup>32</sup> Greenwood, pp. 67-8.

<sup>33</sup> The adventures of three of the first American expeditions into Australian waters--namely Captain Isaac Pendleton's Union, Captain Percival's Charles and Amasa Delano's Pilgrim--attest to

some of the colour and controversy surrounding this aspect of American interaction with the colony. See Greenwood, Chapter III, especially pp. 82-96. For more on Delano, see below, Chapter III, section c.

<sup>34</sup> HRA, 1, iii, 636. This is significant, since British relations with France were sorely strained. In agreeing to the Treaty of Amiens (March, 1802), Britain surrendered all her colonial conquests except Ceylon and Trinidad.

<sup>35</sup> See Levi, pp. 28-9; Greenwood, pp. 82-3.

<sup>36</sup> Morison, p. 382.

<sup>37</sup> HRA, 1, vii, 523.

<sup>38</sup> See HRA, 1, vii, 700, 728, 830; viii, 312, 352.

<sup>39</sup> Bathurst to Macquarie (August 19, 1813), HRA, 1, viii, 72.

<sup>40</sup> See Greenwood, pp. 105-110.

<sup>41</sup> See Greenwood, pp. 111-115.

<sup>42</sup> A different version of the story was given in the Sydney Gazette some months later (February 22, 1815).

<sup>43</sup> Greenwood, p. 114, footnote 78.

<sup>44</sup> London Courier, June 2, 1813; HRA, 1, ix, 57, 849. See Levi, p. 20.

<sup>45</sup> A peace treaty was signed at Ghent on December 24, 1814.

<sup>46</sup> Bathurst to Macquarie (December 11, 1815), HRA, 1, viii, 648.

<sup>47</sup> Bathurst to Macquarie (March 8, 1816), HRA, 1, ix, 42-3.

See Greenwood, pp. 139-41.

<sup>48</sup> Brisbane to Bathurst (June 25, 1825), HRA, 1, xi, 674.



<sup>49</sup> Sydney Gazette, August 21, 1832. See E. Daniel and Annette Potts, Young America and Australian Gold: Americans and the Gold Rush of the 1850's (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1974), p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Churchward, "American Whaling," p. 62.

<sup>51</sup> A U.S. consul was appointed to Hobart in 1843 and Melbourne in 1852. See Levi, p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> See McLachlan, pp. 372-3.

<sup>53</sup> N.D. McLachlan, "'The Future America': Some Bicentennial Reflections," Historical Studies, 17, No. 68 (April 1977), 365.

<sup>54</sup> Alan Frost, "'As it were another America,'" Eighteenth-Century Studies, 7, No. 3 (Spring 1974), 270.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in McLachlan, p. 366.

<sup>56</sup> Banks to Gov. Hunter (March, 1797), Historical Records of New South Wales, III, 202-3. Hereafter, source will be cited as HRNSW.

<sup>57</sup> Ian Turner, The Australian Dream (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1968), p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Australia, with other poems, p. 41, quoted in Coral Lansbury, Arcady in Australia (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1970), p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> [Alexander Dalrymple], A Serious Admonition to the Publick, on the "Intended" Thief-Colony at Botany Bay (London, 1786), quoted in Frost, p. 265.

<sup>60</sup> Samuel Johnson, Political Writings, Vol. X of The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, ed. Donald J. Greene (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 443-4.

61 John Pinkerton, Modern Geography, 2nd ed. (London, 1807),  
quoted in Frost, p. 256.

62 Smith was, in fact, "quasi editor" of the first number.  
See Sheldon Halpern, Sydney Smith (New York: Twayne, 1966), p. 30.

63 The first article, "Australia," was published in 1803; the  
last, "New South Wales," was published in January, 1828.

64 Sydney Smith, The Works of the Reverend Sydney Smith, 3 vols.  
in one (New York: Appleton, 1860), p. 21 (c.f. p. 141).

65 The other two appeared in January, 1820, and in July, 1824.

66 Smith, pp. 112, 141.

67 "Sydney Smith," Nation, XXII (March 9, 1876), 164.

68 Sydney Smith, The Letters of Sydney Smith, ed. Nowell L.  
Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), I, 305.

69 Smith, p. 140. See also pp. 115, 202-9.

70 Smith, pp. 108-9, 202-4.

71 Smith, pp. 122-4.

72 Smith, p. 130.

73 [Sydney Smith], "New South Wales," Edinburgh Review, XLVII  
(January 1828), 87.

74 Smith, p. 179; [Smith], "New South Wales," p. 97.

75 Bentham to Jackson, in Andrew Jackson, Correspondence of Andrew  
Jackson, ed. J.S. Bassett, IV (Washington: Carnegie Institution,  
1931), 46.

76 "Travels of Duncan, Flint and Faux in the United States,"  
Westminster Review, I, No. 1 (January 1824), 102.

77 Jeremy Bentham, The Works of Jeremy Bentham, ed. John Bowring (London, 1838-43; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), I, 490.

78 Bentham, p. 497.

79 "A Voyage Around the World," in James Montgomery, Poems of James Montgomery, ed. R.A. Willmott (London: Routledge, Warne & Routledge, 1860), p. 264.

80 See "The Spirit of Discovery," in William Lisle Bowles, The Poetical Works of William Lisle Bowles, ed. G. Gilfillan (Edinburgh: W.P. Nimmo, 1855), p. 289.

81 Charles Lamb, The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. E.V. Lucas, I (London: Methuen, 1903), 197.

82 Lamb, VI (1905), 500-1.

83 William Hazlitt, The Spirit of the Age (1825; rpt. London: Grant Richards, 1904), p. 265.

84 William Hazlitt, The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P.P. Howe, XX (London: J.J. Dent, 1934), 136.

85 Robert Southey, The Poetical Works of Robert Southey (London: Longman, 1838), II, 72, 74. See also Frederic's impassioned plea for divine forgiveness, p. 89.

86 Robert Southey, New Letters of Robert Southey, ed. Kenneth Curry (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1965), I, 57. See also II, 36.

87 Quoted in Lansbury, p. 19. John Keats also conceived of New Holland as a last and desperate frontier. See John Keats, The Letters of John Keats, ed. Maurice Buxton Forman, 3rd. ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1947), p. 455.

<sup>88</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. W.G.T. Shedd (New York: Harper, 1884), III, 623-4.

For Coleridge's later thoughts on this "stormy time" in his life when America "really inspired Hope," see Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Inquiring Spirit, ed. Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 54.

<sup>89</sup> Quarterly Review, LIII, No. 105 (February 1835), 95. Reprinted in Inquiring Spirit, p. 336.

<sup>90</sup> See Edward Gibbon Wakefield, A Letter From Sydney (1829; rpt. London: J.M. Dent, 1929), pp. 34-6, 66-9, 73-5, 156-9.

<sup>91</sup> Archibald Alison (1833), quoted in David Paul Crook, American Democracy in English Politics: 1815-1850 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), Epigraph.

<sup>92</sup> A Narrative of the Sufferings of T.F. Palmer and W. Skirving During a Voyage to New South Wales (Cambridge, 1797), quoted in Marjorie Masson and J.F. Jameson, "The Odyssey of Thomas Muir," American Historical Review, XXIX (1923), 54. The five "Scottish Martyrs" will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>93</sup> The first two Lieutenant-Governors, Robert Ross and Francis Grose, both fought at Bunker's Hill. See C.M.H. Clark, A History of Australia, I (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1962), 132-3; McLachlan, pp. 367-8.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Gov. King to Portland (July 8, 1801), HRA, I, iii, 111-112; HRA, I, V, 631.

<sup>95</sup> Australian Dictionary of Biography, ed. A.G.L. Shaw and C.M.H.

Clark, I (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1966), 373-4. Hereafter, source will be cited as ADB.

<sup>96</sup> The exclusionists were so named because of their strict exclusion of emancipists from their society. See K.S. Inglis, The Australian Colonists (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1974), p. 14.

<sup>97</sup> See A.W. Jose, Builders and Pioneers of Australia (London: J.M. Dent, 1928), p. 46.

<sup>98</sup> HRA, 1, xii, 775.

<sup>99</sup> Sydney Gazette, Austust 24, 1827.

<sup>100</sup> Letter to the London Morning Chronicle, extracted in the Australian, March 3, 1825, and quoted in McLachlan, p. 369.

<sup>101</sup> C.M.H. [Manning] Clark, A Short History of Australia (New York: Mentor, 1963), pp. 72-3.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Inglis, p. 14.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, Z.W. Pease, The Catalpa Expedition (New Bedford, Mass.: George S. Anthony, 1897); Bruce Rosen, "The 'Catalpa' Rescue," Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, 65, Pt. 2 (Sept. 1979), 73-90. Hereafter, source will be cited as JRAHS.

<sup>104</sup> L.G. Churchward, "Australian-American Relations during the Gold Rush," Historical Studies, 2, No. 5 (April 1942), 11.

<sup>105</sup> A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean (London, 1804), quoted in Masson and Jameson, p. 56.

<sup>106</sup> See Tennant, Australia, p. 23.

<sup>107</sup> Henry W. Meikle, Scotland and the French Revolution (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1912), p. 146.

108 Millar, a prominent "Friend of the People" in 1792, later emigrated to the United States. For more information, see Meikle, pp. 106-111, 157.

109 Dr. Somerville, of Jedburgh, quoted in Meikle, p. 1.

110 See Caledonian Mercury, March 3, 1784.

111 See Meikle, p. 2 (also p. 15).

112 By late 1792, Muir had adopted a radical political position (see Meikle, p. 109). His trial was held in Edinburgh on August 30-31, 1793.

113 An Account of the Trial of Thomas Muir, Esq., Younger of Huntershill, 2nd ed. (New York: Samuel Campbell, 1793), pp. 5-7.

114 Quoted in Masson and Jameson, p. 51.

115 The speaker was Senator Giles, in the Senate on November 26, 1794 (Annals of Congress, IV, 918). Quoted in Masson and Jameson, p. 55.

116 Quoted in Meikle, p. 131 (c.f. poem on p. 173).

117 Quoted in Meikle, pp. 133-4.

118 Quoted in Masson and Jameson, p. 51.

119 HRNSW, II, 856.

120 Masson and Jameson, pp. 55-71. See also Bartlett, pp. 34-5; ADB, II, 266-7.

121 Quoted in Masson and Jameson, p. 55.

122 See Masson and Jameson, pp. 57-8.

123 Quoted in Masson and Jameson, p. 62.

124 See ADB, I, 438.

<sup>125</sup> Palmer to J.T. Rutt (March 12, 1794), quoted in Marjorie Masson, "Thomas Fyshe Palmer, a Political Exile, 1793," Scottish Historical Review, XIII, No. 49 (Oct. 1915), 162-3.

<sup>126</sup> See HRNSW, II, 882.

<sup>127</sup> Palmer to Dr. Disney (August 14, 1797), quoted in Masson, p. 165.

<sup>128</sup> Sheriff of Perth to R. Graham (November 22, 1792), quoted in Meikle, p. 98.

<sup>129</sup> Palmer to Dr. Disney (August 14, 1797), quoted in Masson, p. 166.

<sup>130</sup> Palmer left Sydney for Britain in January, 1801, on the unseaworthy Spanish ship, El Plumier, after serving his seven-year sentence. After a terrible journey the ship, almost sinking, put in at Guam. Palmer died shortly afterwards.

<sup>131</sup> ADB, II, 312-13.

<sup>132</sup> The L.C.S. was more radical than the Society of the Friends of the People.

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in Michael Roe, "Maurice Margarot: A Radical in Two Hemispheres, 1792-1815," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXI, No. 83 (May 1958), 69.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in Roe, p. 70.

<sup>135</sup> One reason for this support was that the L.C.S. printed no less than 100,000 copies of Margarot's indictment (See Meikle, p. 145).

<sup>136</sup> Quoted in Roe, p. 72.

<sup>137</sup> See Roe, p. 73.

<sup>138</sup> See Inglis, pp. 178-81; Geoffrey Chapman Ingleton, ed., True Patriots All (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1952), p. 31.

<sup>139</sup> Margarot had burnt some papers a few days before the outbreak (Roe, p. 74).

<sup>140</sup> See, for example, HRA, 1, v, 535.

<sup>141</sup> Quoted in Roe, p. 74.

<sup>142</sup> ADB, 11, 206.

<sup>143</sup> See Meikle, p. 107.

<sup>144</sup> See Meikle, p. 238.

<sup>145</sup> HRNSW, 111, 47.

<sup>146</sup> Hunter to Under-Secretary King (Nov. 1, 1798), HRA, 1, ii; 235.

<sup>147</sup> Sydney Gazette, August 12, 1804.

<sup>148</sup> Bigge to Goulburn, October 31, 1821, quoted in J.J. Eddy, Britain and the Australian Colonies: 1818-31 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 247 (See also p. 250). It is worth noting that John Dunmore Lang, while travelling through the United States in 1840, met an ex-convict who claimed he had met a "considerable number of British convicts in the United States, who, like himself, had escaped thither from New South Wales." See John Dunmore Lang, Religion and Education in America (London: Thomas Ward, 1840), pp. 183-4.

<sup>149</sup> W. Fearn-Wannan, comp., Australian Folklore (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1970), p. 563.

<sup>150</sup> See Greenwood, pp. 92-5.

<sup>151</sup> HRNSW, 11, 868.



## CHAPTER II

PUBLICIZING THE "GRAND BEACON"<sup>1</sup>Section A

## The Press

This must be allowed on all sides to be a most pugnacious colony--a very centre of jealousies and fears--squabble and contention--libel and litigation.

(Australian Quarterly Journal, 1828<sup>2</sup>)

Before the middle 1820's there was no scope in New South Wales for public dissent, nor indeed any successful unified remonstrance against the state. Philip Cunningham and his mob of rebel Irish convicts tragically discovered this at Vinegar Hill in 1804.<sup>3</sup> The only effective protest--escape--was individual, and hence of limited impact. Between 1820 and 1830, however, the situation changed appreciably for three reasons: firstly, under Macquarie's benevolent policies, the number of emancipists had risen so sharply by 1820 that they comprised the largest free group in the settlement, and were annually growing in number.<sup>4</sup> Having spent some of the best years

of their lives as "canaries" in a merciless new country, the emancipists, now that they were in a position to do so, insisted on the land giving something in return.<sup>5</sup> Vigorously expressed by W.C. Wentworth, emancipist rights became a contentious issue. Secondly, as the decade progressed, the number of free settlers arriving in the colony significantly increased, from 1,307 in 1820, to a little under 5,000 by 1828; after 1828, under the influence of E.G. Wakefield's plan for colonial settlement, the influx of immigrants rarely fell below 2,000 a year. Australia's population jumped from 33,543 in 1820, to 70,000 in 1830, to 190,408 in 1840.<sup>6</sup> The new arrivals, hardly likely to suffer in silence under a system of government expressly designed to administer a penal colony, quickly began agitating for increased personal freedoms, led by the indefatigable John Dunmore Lang. Thirdly, in part as a response to the complaints of emancipist and immigrant alike, Governor Brisbane decided to "try the experiment of the full latitude of the freedom of the Press."<sup>7</sup>

During this time of great change in both the aggregate population of the colony and its social structure, the attitudes and priorities of many settlers began to alter--despite the observations to the contrary of "Fanny Flirt," who, in a letter to the Sydney Gazette of 1823, attacked the narrow and exclusively practical minds of the local male population: "As to conversation, nothing can be so sheepish. Young Arable's wits are gone a wool gathering--ever since he commenced grazing. Talks of music, and asks for a song, young Wholesale chaunts over an invoice, 'Money is your friend, is it not?'"<sup>8</sup> A surprising

number of commentators since then have accepted her appraisal as accurate. Indeed, H.M. Green, analyzing the first sixty years of the colony in his 1961 History, called them "an age of action, of little else but action. . . . great in nothing but action; its ideals were almost wholly material and it had little intellectual and scarcely any cultural background. . . ." <sup>9</sup> More recent assessments, however, have tended to reject judgements of this kind as too simplistic. <sup>10</sup>

As Brian Kiernan put it in 1976:

. . . the earlier nineteenth century was not as discontinuous with the nineties and the twentieth century as earlier accounts had assumed. . . . Australia had a more complex and vital culture than the stereotype of generations awaiting the coming of the Bulletin allowed. It was, of course, a "literary" culture in the fullest sense of the word, and most of its literature assumes most interest for us today in relation to that culture and its issues. <sup>11</sup>

Certainly, as one looks more closely at the two decades following the "age of Macquarie," one becomes increasingly aware of an era of action and considerable intellect; of a purposeful assemblage of people steadily establishing their indefeasible rights to land, improved education for their children and the freedom to worship the God of their choice in a country less "of adoption only" and more "their own"; <sup>12</sup> of a press determined to assert not just its right to exist free of coercion, but its vital role in the creation of a new nation; and, finally, of a dedicated band of individuals aware of the signal importance of literature in the shaping of a country, and willing to look to sources other than the Mother Country for inspiration.

The United States, for so many years a surreptitious element in the colony's social development, begins to figure more prominently in the public forum--not as a model so much as a country seen to be experiencing analagous political (and literary) problems, two or three paces to the fore, and similarly resolved to seek solutions in a context independent of Britain.

\* \* \*

When Charles Darwin visited New South Wales as part of his world voyage on the Beagle, he wrote in his diary on January 22, 1836:

"I formerly imagined that Australia would rise to be as grand and powerful a country as North America, but now it appears to me that such future grandeur is rather problematical."<sup>13</sup> Many Australians of the time would, while resisting the verdict, have happily endorsed the comparison itself--particularly members of the colonial press for they, more than any other single group in the colony, had for the past ten years constantly advocated the study of American political, social, legal, religious and literary developments. They persistently identified the problems and challenges confronting Australia with those facing the young republic across the Pacific. In effect, America was their most serviceable weapon.

The preoccupations and reactions of the press at this time emerge as by far the most energetic--and truly representative--literature of the era. Yet a number of scholars of Australian literature appraising the period have, in their strictly belletristic view, noted

only such comparatively vapid works as Charles Tompson's Wild Notes (1826). H.M. Green is a notable exception. The balance needs adjusting, much as it did in the United States when V.L. Parrington, in his Main Currents in American Thought (1927), commented:

That our colonial literature . . . is commonly squeezed into the skimpiest of chapters in our handbooks of American literature, is due, I think, to an exaggerated regard for esthetic values. Our literary historians have labored under too heavy a handicap of the genteel tradition--to borrow Professor Santayana's happy phrase --to enter sympathetically into a world of masculine intellects and material struggles. They have sought daintier fare than polemics, and in consequence mediocre verse has obscured political speculation, and poetasters have shouldered aside vigorous creative thinkers.<sup>14</sup>

The polemics of Australia's social, political and theological spokesmen, as expressed predominantly in the succession of newspapers and magazines of the era, require attention. Their columns form an ideological link between the radical philosophies of the political prisoners transported to Botany Bay in the first ten years of settlement and the agitation for self-government in all Australian colonies up to the middle 1850's.

As the inheritor of Brisbane's decision to do away with press censorship, Governor Darling could not have anticipated, on his arrival, the immense repercussions of his predecessor's decision. He was forced to deal with a medium which "ceasing to crawl," as H.M. Green has put it, "began suddenly to run."<sup>15</sup> Servility disappeared in the face of an expanding and volatile commercial class bent on questioning the dictates of colonial authority, sometimes

for principled reasons, other times for personal gain. Any attempt to grasp the attitudes to, or manifestations of, literature at this time virtually begins and ends with the press.<sup>16</sup> Thomas McCombie went too far, in 1858, when he argued that

The newspaper press constitutes nearly the only literature published in the Australian colonies. It monopolizes the greater part of the thought.<sup>17</sup>

But up to 1840, he is probably correct. The way in which men used and abused the columns of newspapers mirrored the rapidly changing affections of the community itself. If there was literature at this time, it wasn't in Barron Field's pastiche scribblings; it blazed right before the eyes of anyone with a few pence to spare.

Close parallels exist between these Australian newspapers and their American counterparts.<sup>18</sup> For example, the personal attacks, petty jealousies and vitriolic editorials characterizing the colonial press in New South Wales in the late 1820's and early '30's also typified American papers from the 1790's to at least the 1830's. The paltriness and indecencies which surfaced in a Philadelphia libel case in 1798 prompted the residing judge, Chief Justice McKean, to conclude that

Everyone who has in him the sentiments either of a Christian or a gentleman cannot but be highly offended at the envenomed scurrility that has raged in pamphlets and newspapers printed in Philadelphia for several years past, insomuch that libelling has become a national crime, and distinguishes us not only from all the states around us, but from the whole civilized world.<sup>19</sup>

Two decades and more later, evidently little had altered, since editors of penny-press newspapers in America liberally used epithets like "Obscene vagabond," "loathsome and leprous slanderer and libeler," "Polluted wretch," "Foreign imposter," "Daring infidel," "Pestilential scoundrel" and "Venomous reptile" to attack their ideological enemies.<sup>20</sup> As in Australia, press abuse tended to focus on either fellow-editors or political leaders. Attempted reprisals by the politicians were generally unsuccessful. Under severe press attack in 1797, as Washington had earlier been, John Adams tried to suppress the Republican papers through the use of the Sedition Law of 1797. He was briefly successful, until the people rallied to support the papers. Adams lost the 1800 presidential election to Jefferson. In New South Wales, Governor Darling introduced bills in 1827 and 1830 aimed at suppressing the attacks of Robert Wardell, A.E. Hayes and Edward Smith Hall but, in January, 1831, they were finally deemed inconsistent with English law by the Whig Secretary of State, and in October of that year Darling was recalled.<sup>21</sup>

Ralph Darling had a tough time of it in his six years as governor. A numerically small but determined middle class in these years seemed determined to establish its place in society. For the most aggressive of this aspiring group, newspapers were the vehicle. The period of press servility was over, and semi-educated, part-time editors gave way to "men of position and education, born to a tradition of leadership, or at least determined to lead, outspoken and impatient of authority, to whom journalism was a means rather than an end."<sup>22</sup>

Shortly after the abolition of press censorship, the editors of Sydney's Australian and Monitor quickly asserted their independence, rejecting the partisan government line of the Sydney Gazette. In the 1830's, matters became more complicated when papers like J.D. Lang's Colonist and A.E. Hayes' Currency Lad joined the throng advocating democracy and egalitarianism, in political opposition to the Tory organ of the Australia landed gentry or exclusivist group, the Herald. Throughout this time of wild excitement and accusation--when as at least one historian has suggested "revolution was just possible"<sup>33</sup>--American political precedents, writers, events and places figured prominently in debate.

Radical colonists recognized the immediate impact their arguments had on the authorities if embellished with American precedents. So they expressed approval of America's political system, along with its enlightened attitude towards education, finance, freedom of the press and religious toleration. Likewise government officials, or local Tories such as the Macarthurs, when looking for substance with which to poison their pens, typically accused on the basis of previous reprehensible Americans actions, aided by the use of clichéd anti-republican slogans (of the same variety as those utilized by the Federalists in America).

Government's problem throughout the period was simple: the newspapers were too popular. And Darling knew it. "The military and the prisoners," he noted, "are seen constantly reading the Newspapers."<sup>24</sup> The two most controversial organs (and it would seem, for that reason,



most popular) were the Australian and Monitor. We aim, the Australian declared early in 1825, "to convert a prison into a colony fit for a freeman."<sup>25</sup> William Charles Wentworth and Robert Wardell, its two founding proprietors, soon took steps to realize their intention. Throughout 1825 and 1826, familiar with American examples in the same areas, the Australian advocated trial by jury, a House elected on a low property franchise and the recognition of emancipists' claims to the vote and jury service.<sup>26</sup> The threat entailed in such an independent platform was not lost on English politicians. Some suggested outright suppression, others less drastic, but still punitive measures.<sup>27</sup> Secretary of State Bathurst was so disturbed by the potential for unrest represented by newly autonomous newspapers in the southern colony that, in July, 1825, he suggested that Darling authorise a stamp tax, registration of newspapers and annual licences resumable at any time at the will of the Governor with the advice of his Executive Council.<sup>28</sup> No doubt aware of the unhappy demise of the Grenville ministry shortly after it instituted the Stamp Act in March, 1765, Darling for a time refused to implement the suggestions of his superior; he held to his decision throughout 1826, despite the warnings of several concerned members of the Botany Bay citizenry that his continued tolerance might eventually lead to a revolt of the downtrodden.<sup>29</sup>

During 1826 Wentworth terminated his association with the Australian, though controversy continued to engulf the paper even without his contribution. A June, 1826, editorial assuring London readers that the stages towards self-government for the colony would not include

revolution evidently amounted to little comfort for Darling.<sup>30</sup> Exasperated, he finally responded to the continued personal attacks on his character and authority by introducing two bills to control the press. Darling justified his action on the basis that press licence threatened to destroy the relative stability of the colony. Government, he contended, simply could not function in the climate of suspicion created by, principally, Wardell's Australian and Edward Smith Hall's Monitor. Hall's boast that the imposing Cyclopean eye of his weekly (emblazoned atop the front page) determined to carefully scrutinize all government edicts and actions must have nettled Darling sorely. Edward Macarthur, John Macarthur's son, probably had Hall and his colleagues in mind when he referred to the seriousness of the colonial situation "now endangered by a democratic spirit sedulously encouraged, preferring the republican institutions of America."<sup>31</sup>

In Hall's case, the comment was particularly appropriate. The Monitor's motto, "nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice," scarcely reflected its aggressive, at times ruthless editorial line. For some five years after the inception of his newspaper, Hall devoted himself to the realization of what he felt to be fundamental liberties: trial by jury, free and elected government and, most important of all, a free press. In most matters a Jeffersonian, he urged his compatriots to establish the nation independently on the basis of "Liberal Principles and Free Institutions, Rational Liberty and Equal Justice."<sup>32</sup> For Hall, the political and social advances in America served as useful

guidelines to the Australian experience--a fact which soon became obvious in his lively polemical outbursts against injustice, so reminiscent of Samuel Adam's journalistic flourish in early 1770's Boston. Hall railed against

Packed Juries, and Magisterial Juries on Magisterial questions, and Taxation without Representation, [which] cannot long exist in the burning radiance of a free and virtuous Press.<sup>33</sup>

In his unflagging tirades against government incompetence and repression, Hall, "the Australian Cobbett," evidently flayed Darling's hide once too often during March, 1827.<sup>34</sup> In private correspondence, when castigating the subversive influences acting on Australian radicals at the time, Darling stated that "America is the Grand Beacon, which Mr. Wentworth and the opposition papers have in view."<sup>35</sup> The course which he had consciously avoided, in disregarding Bathurst's suggestion to introduce inhibitory legislation, now seemed inevitable. The colony needed to purge itself of the troublesome "republicans" and return to the security of "purely Aristocratick" government. So Darling, no doubt with considerable trepidation, introduced two bills into the Legislative Council, in April, 1827, in an attempt to counter the growing seditiousness of Sydney's newspapers. The bills proposed compulsory registration of newspapers, compulsory payment of fines imposed for blasphemous or seditious libel, resumable licences and, ominously, stamp duty.<sup>36</sup>

The colony's Chief Justice, Sir Francis Forbes, accepted the first

two measures but rejected the notion of resumable licences.<sup>37</sup> The imposition of fourpence stamp duty he also refused to countenance, finding it inconsistent with English law and repugnant to the freedom of the press. The Australian, Monitor, Sydney Gazette and Gleaner, while celebrating their success and the apparent integrity of Forbes' liberal principles, still remained censorious of the substance of the bill which did pass into law on April 25. They sensed the first stage of a return to press censorship.

Typically, Wardell reverted to the tactic which had served him (and his fellow-editors) so well in the past years: analogy with events in revolutionary America. He characterized the press bill as an Australian version of the repellent Stamp Act, and likely to produce similar results. For this he was tried--and found "not guilty," midst uproarious scenes of celebration--in December.<sup>38</sup>

As in England, the pattern of consciously invoking American example to validate one's opinion, whether by radical colonist or conservative, was becoming a familiar one to all inhabitants of the Australian colonies.<sup>39</sup> Sydney editors thrived for some time in conditions conducive to their agitation for increased liberties. So too did their Tasmanian cohorts, for a short period in the 1820's. Andrew Bent, arguably the foremost promulgator of protest in the extreme southern colony's formative years, was the first to mount a substantial challenge to the local authorities when, still in his mid-twenties, he established the Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter. Dissent rapidly permeated the colony. In H.M. Green's

words:

. . . if the struggle for the freedom of the Press was begun in New South Wales by the Australian, it was keenest in Tasmania . . . because here it took the form of a rebellion. . . .<sup>40</sup>

Bent, variously referred to by his contemporaries as the "Franklin of the Southern Hemisphere" or a "second Franklin," agitated in the Gazette for a free press for the remote colony;<sup>41</sup> later, after being tried and found guilty of libel, he continued to voice his sentiments in the Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser.<sup>42</sup> For a time the vitriol of his pen exerted a strong effect. When Bent refused to apply for a licence for the Times under the Licensing Act of 1827 and put his paper "In Mourning," he experienced considerable popular support, something tangible in return for his continued advocacy of the fundamental rights and capacity of the people.<sup>43</sup> Just as Jefferson had said that

. . . whenever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights.<sup>44</sup>

--so an anonymous Hobart Town Gazette contributor proclaimed in 1825 that

The people are seldom wrong in their opinions; in their sentiments they are never mistaken.<sup>45</sup>

The pressure of persistent government coercion finally caused

Bent, flat broke and spirit jaded, to migrate to Sydney. But he had spread the seeds well, and his principles were vigorously disseminated by others, among them the enigmatic Richard Lathrop Murray.<sup>46</sup> Totally familiar with American social and political history, Murray, like Bent, was not averse to using the hard lessons of the American Revolution for his own purposes. For example, when campaigning in his Austral-Asiatic Review for British financial accountability for the convicts transported to the Australian colonies, he threatened that

If . . . she [Britain] chooses to throw that expense upon us, we have that same which our American predecessors exercised, to deal with them as best suits our own views--to adopt the British expression--"according to our circumstances and situation!"<sup>47</sup>

Colonial radicals in New South Wales--all Americans at heart, snarled the governor<sup>48</sup>--continued to press their advantage throughout the last years of Darling's period of tenure. It rankled the man to be scurrilously attacked by the local papers and to receive sparse support from the Colonial Office. Hall, whom Darling considered "an ill-disposed if not dangerous man," persisted with his demands for greater personal freedom for colonists.<sup>49</sup> He was convicted a total of seven times for criminal libel, and colonial judges eventually sentenced him to fifteen months in gaol in 1829--only to find that for the Monitor it was business as usual. Further libels and additional sentences followed. Attempted repression merely created stiffer resistance. Relations deteriorated rapidly. Darling, feeling the hostile press now to be no more than "infatuated incendiaries,"

assumed a political position much closer to the exclusives, because they shared a common enemy.<sup>50</sup>

Macarthur and his fellows entreated the governor to act before the situation gave way to revolution, resulting in the Legislative Council's unanimous support of a new Press law based on one of the repressive Six Acts of 1819.<sup>51</sup> Any person convicted of seditious libel a second time could be legally banished from the colony. The Monitor instantly responded to this new challenge with a black-bordered editorial page displaying a coffin. It refused to capitulate, confidently maintaining with full biblical flourish: "I shall rise again."<sup>52</sup> Menacing statements such as this one had, for colonial conservatives, been all too frequent of late. Who, they asked themselves, was to blame? Anxious to maintain Government patronage, the Sydney Gazette condemned Hall's extremist behaviour, thoughtfully providing a bibliography of the "moral and political treasures" pervading his shadowy background:

Cobbett's Code of Anarchy; Harriet Wilson's Memoirs; Paley's Moral Philosophy; Paine's Rights of Man; Common Sense, and Age of Reason; Young's Night Thoughts; . . . Hoyle's Games; Licentiousness the Essence of Modern Liberty; Alladin, or the Wonderful Lamp; Gall's Phrenology; Munro on Lunacy; &c. &c. &c.<sup>53</sup>

Among other dark and wayward influences, Thomas Paine again, guilty no less than three times of corrupting the unsteady morals of the colony. Gravely culpable in Botany Bay's first years, it appeared some forty years later that he still strongly epitomized, for the

authorities, the forces of insurrection and anarchy.

Government sympathizers felt sure that the colony's resident rabblrouser, E.S. Hall, and his citizen friend Attwell Edwin Hayes, the "red-hot Radical" who had assumed the editorship of the Australian in 1828, intended to apply several of the assumptions underlying Paine's Common Sense and Rights of Man. And it is true that in their editorials they publicized, to use Paine's phrase, the "indefeasible hereditary Rights of Man." Like Paine, they wanted to realize their natural rights to "liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression."<sup>54</sup> But there the resemblance ceased. They were not prepared to make a total commitment to the cause of rebellion in New South Wales, much less to advocate, as Paine did, "The Revolution of the World."<sup>55</sup> Hall, it should not be forgotten, was a property owner. His was the dissent, to a great extent, of self-interest; it was the lightweight radicalism of the essentially conservative Philadelphian lawyer John Dickinson pushed to the limits, rather than the impassioned philanthropic zeal of a Tom Paine.

Darling justified his measures to his London superiors in two ways, citing the colony's populace, "chiefly . . . of convicts," and "the security of the colony, which the publications alluded to were in a high degree calculated to disturb and endanger."<sup>56</sup> For Hayes and Hall, the new Press law was just cause to batter government again. Hayes' Australian bitterly attacked the measure as "GAGGING-STRANGLING-PRESS-EXTINCTION," then for six weeks replaced the usual editorial with a cut of a printing press chained up by an



officer and the printer hanged on his press--all within an enlarged "D" in the word "INDEPENDENT."<sup>57</sup> After initial outrage, Hall, still in gaol, wrote a lengthy, reasoned letter to Secretary of State for the Colonies George Murray detailing his grievances. In tones reminiscent of Dickinson, and again alluding to the American spectre, the letter accurately reflects the true Whiggism at the heart of the author's philosophy rather than any substantial ties to militant action. It is a fine example of the lively polemic--the true literature --of the day:

I deeply regret . . . [eking] out my existence in this land of slavery, of slavery I mean for men accustomed to be free. . . . I sigh for the freedom and security I left behind me. Reflecting on the future I see nothing but political struggles for a better order of things, which may probably end before my death in a civil commotion. . . . For of one thing I am certain, ten years hence, the native youth will not quietly submit to that policy and those measures, to which the steady unshaken loyalty of us old colonists induces us to bend the neck with some degree of patience. The only consolation left me in such a state of things is to endeavour to persuade His Majesty's Government, by my public writings to change their views and measures, ere it be too late; and, in the meantime, to deter my countrymen at home from voyaging to a country which, besides its natural disadvantages, is torn by political dissensions, destroyed by impolitic laws, laid waste periodically either by flood or drought, and demoralized by the shameful hypocrisy of religious professors on the one hand, and the open profligacy of immoral men on the other.<sup>58</sup>

Hall here exploits all his resources testifying, among other things, to his wearisome unrewarding lot, the absence in the colony of the fundamental rights to which all Englishmen can lay claim and, finally, the inevitability of an Australian War of Independence if the Home

authorities fail to recognize the justness of his claims.

Reasoned attacks on the local administration, such as Hall's, finally took their toll. Darling's act was deemed inconsistent with English law on January 6, 1831. In March, the new Whig Secretary of State Goderich informed the governor that he was to be relieved. The Australian gloated: "Huzza--boys--Australia and Freedom for ever," while the Monitor jubilantly declared, in large capitals:

HE'S OFF!  
THE REIGN OF TERROR ENDED<sup>59</sup>

Coloured transparencies in the windows of Hall's offices celebrated the victory: "Liberty to the Press unfettered by the Darling Neck-lace!"<sup>60</sup> The Colonial Office denied that press agitation precipitated the governor's recall, but Darling was under no such illusion. Sadly, he reflected: "His [Hall's] triumph is complete."<sup>61</sup>

Just as in America, when profound changes followed Jefferson's election to the presidency in 1801, so in Australia Sir Richard Bourke's seven-year term (1831-8) changed the face of Australian society. When Jefferson assumed office he abolished all the aristocratic trappings attached to the presidency, resolving to "put her [the United States] on her republican tack, and she will now show by the beauty of her motion the skill of her builders."<sup>62</sup> Tory Federalists paled at the thought of a President so staunchly republican as to be virtually an anarchist. Australian exclusives criticized Bourke's administration, in a like manner, for its almost ruthless insistence on every citizen's right--emancipist or not--to social,

religious and political equality. This attitude, smacking of potential democracy, sorely antagonized Botany-Bay Tories. Both Jefferson and Bourke regarded the plainest citizen as worthy of both respect and consideration for any government office. Significantly, Bourke never had to curb the colonial press, though legally equipped to do so throughout his term.

In terms of sheer vitriol and vulgar abuse, little separated the newspapers of the 1820's and those of the '30's.<sup>63</sup> Editors continued to attack opponents waspishly, sparing no personal details, whether corroborated or not. Each journal's political position virtually dictated its response to the story of the day. What did undergo change, however, was the way in which the United States-- "Brother Jonathan"--was treated. The rigidity of Darling's stance on personal freedom in the 1820's, whether justified or not, caused America to continually figure in argument as a stick with which to beat the opposition. In their threats and counter-threats, both sides conceived of the United States as a menacing model of aggressive, egalitarian rule. Bourke's liberal Whiggism of the 1830's, however, would foster none of that. Commentators began to view America in a less impassioned, if more idealistic light. More and more articles constructively criticizing Australian society appeared. For a time there was simply no need to portend revolution. Rather, Australians asked themselves what help America might offer those colonists contemplating eventual self-government. The emphasis shifted from dissent to greater responsibility and reflections on the benefits of patriotism.

Not how did America cast off the last shackles of British oppression, but how did she handle the process of formulating a republican government based on the tenets of the 1776 Declaration? In this climate of inquiry and sober deliberation, questions concerning the importance of literature to a new society were asked for the first time. A few concerned colonists like John Dunmore Lang wanted to know whether literature could help create a national consciousness. They looked primarily to America for news.

Even before Darling had left the colony's shores, signs of changing priorities had begun to appear. An Australian article in September, 1831, in which the United States was labelled "a model for all new countries and New South Wales (hereafter) in particular," anticipated the transition to occur in later years. Pronounced admiration for American institutions found expression in several leading journals. Indeed, Thomas Fyshe Palmer's forecast made several decades before, of future grandeur for the isolated outpost to which he had been transported, for the first time gained widespread publicity in the colony itself in the 1830's. The "Future America fantasy" intensified.<sup>64</sup> E.S. Hall's Monitor proclaimed America's residents "the people of the best Government in the world, and infinitely the best the world ever saw, and probably the very best it will ever see"; a few years later Hall judged the American Constitution far better than the English, "being more free and at the same time more stable, and less liable to tumult and sedition." The Australian, barely able to contain its zeal, managed to pause long enough to consider a bountiful future

for its infant land realizing a "height of prosperity and power which reduces the boasted growth of America to a size and height no longer astonishing."<sup>65</sup>

Often considerations of American independence were incorporated into the wider plan of bolstering national awareness. For example, a short-lived literary journal, The Currency Lad (1832-3), published by Horatio Wills, "an Australian," canvassed enthusiastically in the first years of the decade for a certain combative nationalism.<sup>66</sup>

Wills, whose early years strikingly resembled those of the young Ben Franklin, recognized America's integral role in a world now "fast approaching to republicanism--to cheap and wise government."<sup>67</sup> He demanded that Australian "Sons of the Soil" strive to publicize their love of the new land lest they be overwhelmed by the numerous "high-salaried foreigners" present throughout the colony, "those men lolling in their coaches--rioting in the sweat of your brow." The fight, as Wills saw it, was

between the senate of England and the NATIVES OF NEW SOUTH WALES--between men who have the fate of America before their eyes, and men on whose brow are indelibly traced the stamp of free and determined INDEPENDENCE:--"WE WERE NOT MADE FOR SLAVES!"<sup>68</sup>

Always conscious of the need for a marked change in the thinking of the typical colonist if self-government were to be achieved, Wills took as his motto for The Currency Lad the challenge "Rise Australia" and selected his journal title fully aware that the term was "affixed as a mark of reproach--now become a boastful appendage." In this

respect, he explained, the journal's history resembled that of Yankee Doodle's.<sup>69</sup>

By the mid-1830's, most colonists were aware of the great and controversial presidency of the new man in Washington as a result of press coverage. Andrew Jackson's belief in the inherent capacity of the common man, political equality for all, equal economic opportunity, and the rejection of special privilege, had great appeal for a powerful emancipist group steadily asserting its just claim to a meaningful role in the destiny of its country. Australian democrats appreciated Old Hickory's commitment to the principle that all men were equal in their relation to government. Not surprisingly, then, Sydney journals reproduced the text of some of Jackson's speeches as a learning experience for their readers. In 1836, the Sydney Gazette eulogized the frontier President's "homespun" messages to Congress, maintaining that it was so "refreshing to turn from the dictatorialism of monarch speechmakings, to this plain-spoken emanation from the Chief of a vast republic. . . ."<sup>71</sup> A year or so later the Monitor reprinted, point by point, Jackson's farewell address to the 27th Congress.<sup>72</sup> In this address, the retiring President did little more than summarize the doctrines expounded in his eight annual messages. The representative Monitor reader would no doubt have endorsed Jackson's reiteration of his immense satisfaction at leading a nation at a time when special privilege was dealt a virtual death blow; his restatement of the maxim that "eternal vigilance by the people is the price of liberty," and that you "must pay the price

if you wish to secure the blessing"; his emphasis on the safety and advantages of plain and inexpensive institutions, and on the ability of a united people to ward off the ever-present danger of sectionalism; and, finally, the potent democratic conviction, allied with a homely warmth, of his closing remarks: "I thank God that my life has been spent in a land of liberty and that He has given me a heart to love my country with the affection of a son."<sup>73</sup> No aristocratic trappings; Australian democrats liked that.

Concern for instilling a Jacksonian patriotic love of country into the local populace was one of the habitual preoccupations of John Dunmore Lang. Though a Presbyterian minister on God's mission, Lang seemed to assign at least equal importance to his role as shaper of an Australian spirit. One part of this role, as Lang conceived it, involved opposing the exclusives, or budding Tories of the colony-- those men who felt privilege applied to only one class in the community. Hence, he devoted himself to relentlessly disparaging the journal of this group, the Sydney Herald.<sup>74</sup> The second, and more constructive aspect of Lang's didactic purpose found expression in his advocacy of positive courses of action for social improvement. The immigrant who deemed Australia "a country of adoption only" had to be convinced of the error of his ways.<sup>75</sup> As the 1830's progressed, Lang turned more and more to American example to authenticate his preaching pitch.

Lang's History of New South Wales (1834), a valuable work for many Britons of the era attempting to appreciate developments in the

southern colony, reflected his sympathy for American independence but didn't extensively address itself to the implications of republican legislation for his adopted land.<sup>76</sup> The Colonist, however, published a wide range of American material during its five-year publication span, underscoring the common social and political destiny of the two countries.<sup>77</sup> Australia was another America, even if untried as a working democracy. As such, Jonathan's progress promised to be of inestimable benefit to Australian politicians sufficiently perceptive to learn by America's successes and mistakes. And, of course, the reverse. In the future, "mutual advantages may be expected to flow."<sup>78</sup> When the first American Consul, J.H. Williams, arrived in Sydney in January, 1837, the Colonist grasped the opportunity to expatiate on impending independence. In contrast to the spite and anger of the 1820's, the tone of the passage, representative of the preference in the thirties for retrospection and examination, reflects a singularity of purpose from which Lang would never be diverted:

It is only natural that Australia should look on the United States with more than ordinary interest. Throughout the whole of their history, there are certain broad features bearing no imaginary resemblance to our own. America was once a British dependency; Australia is so now. America was once the receptacle of those whom Britain banished from her bosom; Eastern Australia is that receptacle now. America received her language, her manners, her literature, and the germ of her laws and political institutions, from the British Isles; so also has Australia. America at length outgrew the trammels of national juvenility, and asserted the prerogative of mature manhood, which she in the end compelled her reluctant parent to acknowledge: it is perfectly consistent with loyalty and common sense to



predict, that at some future period,--far distant no doubt it is,--Australia will pursue a similar course, and with similar success. No reflecting man can deny, or even question, that this Terra Australis is destined --unless Divine Providence shall alter that course of events which has hitherto attended the general history of nations--to become too wealthy, too powerful, and too enlightened, to need the leading strings which now hold her.<sup>79</sup>

## Section B

### Society and Literature

The pressmen, then, were the first colonists to tenaciously affirm the immense importance America held for present and future Australians. They initiated, and maintained, close ideological and social ties with the United States, the effects of which permeated all levels of society. Many Australians, as a result, assumed a familiarity with their American cousins transcending political affiliations. One contemporary observer, Surgeon-Superintendent Peter Cunningham, even commented on the physical resemblance between "our colonial-born brethren" and their American counterparts:

They grow up tall and slender, like the Americans, and are generally remarkable for that Gothic peculiarity of fair hair and blue eyes. . . . Cherry cheeks are not accompaniments of our climate, any more than that of America, where a blooming complexion will speedily draw upon you the observation, "You are from the old country, I see!"<sup>80</sup>

As the 1830's progressed, similar views on social, religious and literary issues consolidated the bond between the two countries.

Quite aside from the sea and trading connection, socially the American presence created an impact in a variety of ways. Despite

the fact that throughout this period the Australian colonies and North America actively competed for immigrants from England, at the community level many citizens with American affiliations and sympathies made significant contributions.<sup>81</sup> When welcoming the first U.S. Consul to Australian shores, in 1837, the Herald confirmed the validity of the close ties of friendship between the two countries, citing the surprising number of colonists with relations and friends on the other side of the Pacific.<sup>82</sup> So harmonious were the ties of friendship that when Charles Wilkes brought his geological expedition to Sydney in December, 1839, he and his colleagues, feeling a little homesick, gratefully responded to the lavish welcome they received. Almost as if they were family.<sup>83</sup>

This was not surprising, since the background of some of the community's most noteworthy citizens--prominent in areas such as law, religion, politics, education and business--attested to a familiarity with America and democratic principles. Francis Forbes, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and thus the only man in the colony able to legally veto government bills, was one. His crucial role in the defeat of several of the most repressive of Darling's measures to counteract press sedition reflected a commitment to Whig liberal principles. Darling remonstrated against Forbes' manifest "Yankee principles."<sup>84</sup> Later, presiding over a difficult case involving one of the colony's leading propertied citizens, John Macarthur, Forbes found both sides culpable but ordered Macarthur to pay the

£300 costs. Macarthur's son had early anticipated the difficulties that lay ahead for members of he and his father's class when dealing with a man whose understanding of every citizen's rights would inevitably cause him "to question local regulations which, although of manifest utility, are not strictly sanctioned by law."<sup>85</sup> So an objective and, above all, just decision was probably to be expected, particularly from a man who, in the opinion of a fellow-judge, had his mind "from early education . . . imbued with American sympathies."<sup>86</sup>

Exposure to democratic principles did indeed figure in Forbes' background. His grandfather, of Scottish ancestry, had settled in the Bermudas and, with his sons, established commercial interests in nearby America. Forbes apparently attended school and travelled widely on the mainland, thus absorbing "political opinions of the freest tendency."<sup>87</sup> A consistent advocate of certain essential rights of man, he not only rejected Darling's Stamp Act, but also introduced trial by jury (of free men and currency lads) and stood firmly behind a policy of opening the lands for the small settler. Large estates, Forbes maintained, would only encourage a plutocracy of the very few-- a view no doubt causally linked to Macarthur's attack on him as a "dangerous, detestable, unprincipled, immoral, base and artful man."<sup>88</sup>

Other prominent citizens in the colony sharing Forbes' commitment to certain liberal American ideals included John McEncroe, James McEachern, Timothy Pitman, Prosper de Mestre, and even the conservative Edward Deas Thomson. Born in Ardsallagh, Ireland, McEncroe, a Catholic priest (and later archdeacon), was ordained in 1819 at the age of

twenty-five. Three years later he volunteered to accompany Bishop England, a man of great charismatic energy and a proponent of liberal principles, to the American mission. Republican America deeply impressed the young Irishman, in contrast to the grim conditions he had experienced at home. He soon became editor of the United States Catholic Miscellany, an experience of great benefit to him in eliciting a self-appraisal of both religious and social principles of organization.<sup>89</sup> McEncroe's colleagues weren't slow to recognize his considerable natural talents, and he eventually became a Vicar-General.<sup>90</sup> After returning to Ireland in 1829, McEncroe accepted the position of official chaplain of the Catholics of Australia in 1832. Though scarcely influential in the years up to 1840, McEncroe's personal prestige and authority rapidly increased throughout the following two decades as the numbers of Roman Catholics grew and he himself became editor, in 1850, of the vigorous and undeniably important Catholic newspaper, the Freeman's Journal.<sup>91</sup>

Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary of the colony from 1837 to 1856, had, like McEncroe, first-hand experience of the United States. Born the youngest son of an accountant-general of the royal navy, Sir John Deas Thomson, and Rebecca Freer, of South Carolina, his education took him to Edinburgh High School, Harrow and Normandy, France. Following the death of his mother in South Carolina, Thomson visited America to sort out the estate in late 1826. For almost a year he travelled throughout the United States and Canada, keeping a journal, at his father's request, on the American armed forces and

matters of general interest. He took up a position as clerk of the council in New South Wales in May, 1828, married one of Governor Bourke's daughters five years later, and was appointed Colonial Secretary and registrar of the records at the beginning of 1837.<sup>92</sup>

Though an entrenched conservative, Thomson did use his American experience to good effect on occasion to clarify certain administrative problems, especially in the first years of representative government.<sup>93</sup>

James McEachern, one of the Scottish school teachers brought out to the colony by John Dunmore Lang in an attempt to raise the quality of the colony's citizenry, needed little time to display his close knowledge of radical writing--including Tom Paine's cardinal prose--of the previous decades. One literary historian credits him with being the author of the unique radical pamphlet "The Indefeasible Rights of Man" (1842). Like McEncroe, however, McEachern belongs more properly to the next period.<sup>94</sup> In the lively Sydney business world, two merchants to make their presence felt were Timothy Pitman and Prosper de Mestre. Americans by birth and upbringing, both were naturalized by special acts of the Legislative Council.<sup>95</sup> De Mestre's impact went beyond mere merchandise. One of the choice rumours circulating the colony at the time--and nothing titillated the colonial imagination more than juicy gossip--suggested that poor Prosper was in fact a bastard, the half-brother of Queen Victoria herself!<sup>96</sup>

American ideas exerted a marked effect in other areas of the colonial community, such as the temperance movement and religion. Societies preaching the limiting of liquor consumption began appearing

in the northern states of the Union from 1808 onwards, but for some years the success of the temperance doctrine was limited. It slowly permeated English society, mostly via the new industrial towns; in America it soon "ranked second only to the crusade for the abolition of slavery in the ferment of moral reform which was the most exciting and powerful force in national affairs before the Civil War."<sup>97</sup>

Two Quaker missionaries, James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, introduced temperance into Australia. After arriving in Hobart Town in February, 1832, they spent three successful years in Tasmania and the next two years (1835-7) in New South Wales. Their Quaker creed caused Backhouse and Walker to challenge, amongst other things, colonial morality and the woeful state of education. At public meetings they urged all listeners to adopt the temperance creed and to use the non-denominational textbooks of the School Society.<sup>98</sup>

One result of Quaker labour was the appearance in Sydney, in 1837, of the Australian Temperance Magazine, a journal of impressive literary quality and circulation figures.<sup>99</sup> Another was the forceful appearance of an energetic teetotaler movement--the Sydney branch led by M.T. Adam, another of Lang's Scottish imports, who had travelled extensively in the United States immediately before coming to Australia.<sup>100</sup> At its height the Temperance Society boasted support from colonial leaders such as Denison, Franklin, La Trobe, and even the poet Charles Harpur, for a brief period.<sup>101</sup>

Warmly endorsed by the influential fourth estate in the 1820's and '30's, and supported by the strong emotional ties of a powerful

bloc of local citizens, the importance of the American connection for Australia must have impressed itself on emigrants arriving during Bourke's governorship. Almost inevitably, these manifestations of friendship and admiration exerted a marked effect on the tentative gestures towards a national literature made for the first time in the 1830's. This less fitful decade encouraged greater catholicity of interests. Connections between Australian and American writers advanced beyond simply political considerations. Tories and patriots, conscious of their social position and its ramifications, patronized authors close to their hearts, and the spectrum of American writers discussed in Australia broadened noticeably.

With the colony approaching its fiftieth anniversary, English booksellers for the first time deemed Australia, in particular Sydney and Hobart, an avenue of potential profit and worthy of some attention. Speculative cargoes of mostly religious, literary and philosophical works had been arriving in the young settlement in greater numbers since the end of Macquarie's term as governor (1821), but booksellers throughout the '20's pessimistically appraised the meagre free population as prospective consumers. On arriving in Hobart on his way to Sydney, the Rev. John McGarvie noted with alarm, in May, 1826, that there "is not a bookselling shop in the town."<sup>102</sup> He was destined to find the settlement of Sydney no different.

In essence, the majority of books circulating the colony at this time lay primarily within the domain of the moneyed minority--that group Peter Cunningham designated as more prim than their English



counterparts; men who, for at least another fifty years, continued to dream of a prosperous and leisurely retirement at "Home." In England.<sup>103</sup> This élite included government officials, military officers, clergy, professional men and merchants. Curiously, while deprecating the politics of the United States, these men comprised a second avenue for the introduction of American works into the colony. If combative editors such as Hall, Wentworth, Bent, Murray and Wills, and their emancipist sympathizers, gravitated to the lively tradition of American political writers of the Revolution for radical precedent, their exclusivist opponents increasingly appreciated--and purchased--the products of two Americans whose belletristic works, appropriately Tory in spirit, began to arrive in the colony in the later 1820's: Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. As in England (and, for that matter, America<sup>104</sup>), Scott and Byron topped the ladder of favourites of the Australian gentry, but Irving and Cooper, along with Milton, Young, Cowper, Thomson and Shakespeare, apparently occupied the next rung of popularity.<sup>105</sup>

As early as the summer of 1826, a private vendor in Sydney, the Australian Company, offered for sale a total of one hundred books by authors they felt most likely to stimulate sales. Washington Irving was one. Six months later, the only advertisement for books in Tasmania during 1826 appeared. Again, along with the staples, Irving's works were tendered.<sup>106</sup> Interest in the stories, essays and character sketches of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent, continued unabated for some years. Essays in The Sketch Book (1819-20) describing

European travel, such as "Rural Life in England," "John Bull" and "Westminster Abbey" no doubt had a special appeal to the colonist determined to eventually return to his homeland.

An extremely impressive private library succumbed in Sydney to the auctioneer's hammer in 1828--the collection of Dr. Henry Grattan Douglas.<sup>107</sup> The table of contents listed Irving's works, together with those of Shakespeare, Scott, Southey and Crabbe. About the same time, in the later 1820's, interest in the novels of James Fenimore Cooper began to materialize in the pages of several sales sheets. Well-to-do colonists appreciated the adventurous tales of both the young and aged Natty Bumppo, in the first three novels of the Leatherstocking series. Catalogues of 1828 listed such Cooper titles as The Last of the Mohicans (1826), The Prairie (1827) and the sea story Red Rover (1828), just a year or two, sometimes only months after their London publication. Indeed, when Ralph Mansfield, editor of the Sydney Gazette, compiled a catalogue for the Australian Subscription Library, early in 1829, the only remotely contemporary authors he included, apart from the irrepressible Scott, were Cooper, Irving and John Gibson Lockhart (Scott's son-in-law).<sup>108</sup> It was merely a matter of course, then, that Mansfield should write to his English agent, the Rev. Robert Bourne, with a list of requirements specifying the conspicuous need for "All Washington Irving's Works, Known as Geoffrey Crayon's."<sup>109</sup> Bourne could now send supplies of The Sketch Book along with Bracebridge Hall (1822), a collection of forty-nine sketches and tales, again allegedly by Geoffrey Crayon, with a variety of

of settings (English as well as French and Spanish).

Enthusiasm for Cooper increased in the 1830's, as that for Irving gradually declined (though the brash eighteen year-old, James Martin, in publishing The Australian Sketch Book in 1838, acknowledged Washington Irving as his model).<sup>110</sup> In terms of advertisements for the period, Cooper ranked sixth behind Scott, Byron, Shakespeare, Johnson and Goldsmith, but his influence extended well beyond this.<sup>111</sup> A recent critic, Elizabeth Webby, has suggested the considerable effect of Cooper's extremely popular Indian characters--such as Chingachgook, Uncas, Magua, Hard-Heart and Mahtoree--on the literary conventions of early Australian novelists. This particularly applied to the portrayal of the aborigine.<sup>112</sup> Evidently this influence didn't escape some of the early Australian reviewers, either. Shortly after Charles Rowcroft's The Bushranger of Van Diemen's Land (1846) was published, one critic characterized its content as "almost pure Fenimore Cooper, with aboriginals substituted for Red Indians and an ending straight from The Last of the Mohicans."<sup>113</sup>

In direct imitation of their English paragons, then, budding Australian squires approved of Irving, their American humorist and traveller, and Cooper, their romancer.<sup>114</sup> Some emigrating Britons, however, recognizing an obligation to their new land, found their lot in Australia a complex one involving mixed loyalties. William Woolls, who came to Australia while still in his teens, clearly experienced this problem. In the early 1830's, he produced two long (and turgid) poems as his part of the bond with his new country:

The Voyage; A Moral Poem Written During, and Descriptive of, a Voyage from England to New South Wales (1832) and Australia: A Moral and Descriptive Poem (1833). Both present a wearisome succession of eighteenth-century couplets and suggest a consciously derivative muse; and both are the obvious products of an author caught between his self-confessed "natural fondness" for "my native country" (and an appropriate awareness of his principal audience--"the people of England, to whom this Poem is more immediately addressed") and his desire to be impartial, to view Australia with fresh and objective eyes.

In parts of Australia, Woolls attempts to consider the implications of his new environment. The "Argument" of the poem's last Canto, significantly, endorses an Australian/American social and political affinity:

The Colonial Poets, Wentworth, Tompson, Lang, and Halloran--the fate of Poets, their misfortunes and melancholy ends--the reward of merit--Columbus, Crichton --the Augustan age, the Court of Augustus--the Author's apology for digression--the United States of America, their greatness and liberality--an example for Australia!<sup>115</sup>

Though Woolls' tone throughout suggests that the English landscape will always dominate his imagination, he ardently praises the egalitarian principles on which America, "this rising State," was founded:

In those wide States, unshackled as the sea,  
 With sons as dauntless, and with hearts as free,  
 Who with one mind true Patriotism feel,  
 And hand and heart fight for the common weal. . . .  
 All equal there --no Lords, or Earls, or Kings --  
 No boasted blood whence pride descending springs --  
 No titled monkeys pension'd on the Crown,  
 Whose nobles sires would be asham'd to own. . . .116

Behind his rhetoric stands the figure of Thomas Paine. In the poem's last lines, the poet advocates America as the most ethical model for his adopted land:

. . . here's a lesson for Australia's coast!  
 Oh! could her sons a state responding boast!<sup>117</sup>

He implores Australia to

form one kingdom more,  
 Tread in the paths of those who went before:  
 Judge by the past, and let the hist'ry tell  
 How kingdoms flourish'd, or how kingdoms fell --  
 How wealth and lux'ry yielded to their foes --  
 How these by vices fell, and those by virtue rose!  
 And may this motto ripen in yourself,  
 "Knowledge is Pow'r, and Temperance is Health!"

For good reason, local reviewers expressed reservations about the poem's language; but they relished its lofty "TONE."<sup>118</sup> Skill might be lacking, but not commendable patriotic pride.

About the same time that Woolls published Australia, less than half a century after the first settlement, the establishment of a truly national literature was taking first root in the minds of a few lonely editors and thwarted poets who dreamed a unique but relentless country of drought, fire, flood and a strange night sky. One

was a schoolteacher named Carmichael, one of the men brought out by J.D. Lang to help modify the large convict balance of the population. Carmichael, in an address to open the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, maintained that

The living world of the mind we have quitted, although we may still glance at the panorama of its movements, as reflected in the literary and scientific publications of our beloved father-land. Yet if we mean to rise in the scale of nations, we must possess a literature and science of our own.<sup>119</sup>

Life under the more liberal regime of Governor Bourke seemed to invite such precocious speculation, for, during the next five or six years, several publications couldn't resist encouraging, in a variety of ways, the formation of a national culture. Attempts ranged from the flurry of rhetorical questions of the anonymous writer in the Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine:

Why should we not have our poets? Are not the inspiring influences of nature scattered over the land? Do not men every day behold the awful and the magnificent? Why may not some of them break out singing at the sight? Is there nothing in lofty summits and deep narrow glens, and silent limitless woods, and old undateable trees?<sup>120</sup>

--to the notable publication by Lang's Colonist, in 1838, of William Ellery Channing's monumental essay, "On the Importance and Means of a National Literature."<sup>121</sup>

No doubt Lang, almost certainly personally responsible for the latter (since he was in Sydney at the time, and possibly reading to prepare for his forthcoming trip to the United States<sup>122</sup>), regarded

Channing's sentiments as essential to the development of literature in his new country; indeed, as an advanced and eloquent statement of the local problem, and possible means of action. American precedent again emerged as pertinent to Australian conditions. Only this time with a difference. In the 1820's, Australian colonists had utilized and coveted an American Constitution already won. When Lang cited Channing's sentiments on literary development in 1838, the American theologian's searching appraisal retained a mutual relevance.

Channing's appeal to the American Philosophical Society and all his fellow citizens to help work towards the establishment of "a pure, deep, rich, beautiful, and ennobling literature" for his country, represented only one voice in a purposeful American tradition of literary nationalism stretching at least as far back as Philip Freneau's despairing cry for literary integrity in the 1786 poem "Literary Importation":

Can we never be thought to have learning or grace  
Unless it be brought from that horrible place  
Where tyranny reigns with her impudent face;<sup>123</sup>

Channing's plea, like so many others before him, went sufficiently unanswered that in 1837 Emerson saw fit to discuss the problem once again, though more optimistically, in his landmark oration, "The American Scholar."<sup>124</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, like so many of his countrymen, at last had his Intellectual Declaration of Independence.<sup>125</sup>

The fifty years between Freneau and Emerson, however, witnessed a succession of Americans, conscious of living in an age of practicality

and politics, attempting to urge their companions to do in literature what they had done on the battlefield and in Congress--that is, to establish, in Washington's words, "a most conspicuous Theatre . . . for the display of human greatness and felicity."<sup>126</sup> The stage of the American imagination barely had a skeletal framework erected at the end of the eighteenth century. Looking back over two centuries of European settlement in the country, Channing could find but two writers worthy of honourable mention: Jonathan Edwards and Ben Franklin--neither, be it noted, genteel or belles-lettristes.<sup>127</sup> — 11<sup>e</sup>

Men as politically diverse as Noah Webster, Fisher Ames and James Kirke Paulding added to the debate over the years, a debate which effectively centred on two points: first, the desperate need for all American writers to rid themselves of the "habit of servile imitation";<sup>128</sup> secondly, the necessity for local writers to recognize and use the creative resources of their new land. America had to be delivered into the artistic consciousness of her writers. On these two fundamental problems, Channing and Emerson seemed best equipped to comment, as well as to elaborate on the crucially important peripheral issues. It was only fitting, then, that these same two writers, having performed the crucial task of articulating their country's problem in the arts, should constitute two of the most vital influences on the imagination of Australian writers--in particular, Daniel Deniehy and Charles Harpur--in the 1840's, '50's and '60's, as they, too, sought to scale the formidable heights of creative independence. The extensive nineteenth-century tradition of affinity (and sense of shared resources) between



Australian and American writers had begun in earnest. With the prodigious impact of Walt Whitman, Bret Harte and Henry George, several decades later, it would reach full blossom.

As in America during the same period, some New Hollanders anxiously canvassed their country in the 1830's searching for some evidence, any tangible sign, of moral and intellectual improvement to counteract the overwhelming reliance on "future personal comfort and competency."<sup>129</sup> At that time, they looked in vain. Channing's strictures touched only a few in Australia, but for this hardy small gathering--of men like Lang and the youthful Charles Harpur and Daniel Henry Deniehy--his exhaustive evaluation of contemporary American letters provided a valuable guide to future action.<sup>130</sup> Deniehy, in particular, would later act as spokesman and publicizer of a literature rooted in Australian soil. He envisioned a unique literature of sunshine, light and democracy.

In his address Channing followed a logical outline, moving effortlessly from the question of why any country needed an indigenous literature at all to the present state of American literature and reason for its nebulous condition, and, finally, the possible courses of action for establishing a national literature. That is: problem, causes, means of redress.

Having defined "National Literature" severally, at the outset, as "the expression of a nation's mind in writing . . . . the contributions of new truths to the stock of human knowledge. . . . the manifestation of a nation's intellect in the only forms by which it can multiply itself abroad," Channing proceeded to express his thoughts on literature

in general. He regarded literature as "plainly among the most powerful methods of exalting the character of a nation, of forming a better race of men" and writing as "the mightiest instrument on earth."<sup>131</sup> America, he maintained, lacked both eminent writers and the appropriate resources of instruction because "our writers are accustomed to plead in our excuse our youth, the necessities of a newly-settled country, and the direction of our best talents to practical life. Be the pleas sufficient or not, one thing they prove, and that is our consciousness of having failed to make important contributions to the interests of the intellect."<sup>132</sup> Words obviously commodious to Australian colonists a decade later groping with the same problem, only in a more acute and less solvable form. Indeed, some commentators on Australian literature would be expressing identical reservations when the country was federated in 1901.<sup>133</sup>

Channing went on to declaim his country's huge reliance "on foreign minds" as one of the main causes of the deep malaise in American writing. Like ... Deniehy and the later John Dunmore Lang, he undercut the staunch Tory elements still casting a pall over the callow native product: "We boast of our political institutions, and receive our chief teachings, books, impressions, from the school of monarchy."<sup>134</sup> Then, in the most significant challenge issued by the essay, Channing questioned the generally accepted concept of "useful knowledge" as one of practical "utility." He broadened the qualitative and quantitative implications of the phrase which, for him, meant

knowledge which answers and ministers to our complex and various nature; we mean that which is useful, not only to the animal man, but to the intellectual, moral, and religious man; useful to a being of spiritual faculties, whose happiness is to be found in their free and harmonious exercise.<sup>135</sup>

Unless America sought to break the constricting fetters of a purely pioneering background and intellectual dependence, the future looked bleak. In possibly the best-known section of the whole essay, Channing passionately harangued the foreboding consequences of literary servility:

A people into whose minds the thoughts of foreigners are poured perpetually, needs an energy within itself to resist, to modify this mighty influence, and, without it will inevitably sink under the worst bondage, will become intellectually tame and enslaved. . . . It were better to have no literature than form ourselves unresistingly on a foreign one.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, he demanded that America recognize its being uniquely suited to view "more justly" than any other country, the "great subjects of literature." In Europe, one met "kings, nobles, priests, peasants. How much rarer is it to meet men." The particular and special destiny of the United States had to be articulated to enable American writers to creatively express the democracy they stood for:

We delight to believe that God, in the fulness [sic] of time, has brought a new continent to light, in order that the human mind should move here with a new freedom, should frame new social institutions, should explore new paths, and reap new harvests.<sup>137</sup>

Concluding with a programme of action, Channing formulated possible channels: encouragement and fostering by the people; enlargement of

literary institutions, together with teaching at a more "profound" level; better universities; and a new interpretation of the religious principle.

At a time when talk of literature in general, much less local writing, incurred the wrath of many of the colony's more practically minded citizens, Lang's publicity for Channing's landmark address was both brazen and consciously prophetic.<sup>138</sup> Like Channing, Lang well appreciated the crucial role literature had in the formation of a national consciousness. In calling on one of America's finest writers to illuminate the Australian situation, Lang was doing no more than following a pattern of action which Wentworth had established some twenty years earlier. With the difference that in 1838, in a settlement then over fifty years old, Lang clearly recognized the future relevance contemporary American speakers might have for an Australia with independence on its mind. In reproducing Channing's discourse, the Colonist forged an Australian link with American intellectual and literary activity that would flourish for the rest of the century. Channing's declaration, "We love our country much, but mankind more" attracted some prominent Australian emigrants with a desire to raise their station and at least two currency lads who, still smarting from the stain of convictism, would make it their business to inculcate the democratic sentiments of Channing, Emerson and the rest of the prominent Transcendalist writers upon the minds of their countrymen.<sup>139</sup> They were Daniel Henry Deniehy and Charles Harpur.

## CHAPTER II ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For the full text, see below p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Quarterly Journal, July, 1828, p. 246, quoted in Green, History, I, 45.

<sup>3</sup> See Inglis, Australian Colonists, pp. 178-81; Russell Ward and John Robertson, comps., Such Was Life: Select Documents in Australian Social History, 1788-1850 (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1969), pp. 23-5.

<sup>4</sup> See Gordon Greenwood, ed., Australia: A Social and Political History (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1955), p. 56; Clark, History of Australia, II, 153-5.

<sup>5</sup> Inglis, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> See Lacour-Gayet, Concise History, pp. 145-6; Greenwood, Social and Political History, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Eddy, Colonies, p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> Letter of "Fanny Flirt, a Maiden Lady," to the Sydney Gazette, October 9, 1823, quoted in Clark, Short History, p. 73; see Clark, II, 157.

<sup>9</sup> Green, I, 2.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the critical assessments of George Nadel, Michael Roe and Elizabeth Webby.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Kiernan in Cantrell, ed., Bards, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> South-Asian Register, i, (1827); Sydney Morning Herald, June 12, 1849.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Darwin, The Voyage of the Beagle (1906; rpt. London: J.M. Dent, 1955), p. 428.

<sup>14</sup> Parrington, Main Currents, introduction, p. vi.

<sup>15</sup> Green, I, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Much the same was true in the United States. See, for example, James Melvin Lee, History of American Journalism (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1923), p. 81.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas McCombie, The History of the Colony of Victoria (Melbourne, 1858), p. 323, quoted in Henry Mayer, The Press in Australia (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1964), p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Green, I, 79.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Lee, p. 101.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Lee, p. 198.

<sup>21</sup> Wardell and Hayes were successive editors of the Australian (a newspaper founded by Wardell and W.C. Wentworth in 1824); Hall was the founding editor of the Monitor (1826-38). For more information on Darling's recall, see R.B. Walker, The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803-1920 (Sydney: Sydney Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 17-18; J.A. Ferguson, "Edward Smith Hall and the Monitor," Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, XVII, Pt. 3 (1932), 163-199.

<sup>22</sup> Green, I, 74.

<sup>23</sup> Eddy, p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> Darling to Horton (February 6, 1827), quoted in Eddy, p. 113.

See also Walker, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Australian, January 6, 1825.

<sup>26</sup> See Walker, p. 7. It is worth noting that Thomas Jefferson felt the issue of trial by jury to be relevant to the American situation as late as the 1790's. See his letters to James Madison (Paris, December 20, 1787) and Alexander Donald (Paris, February 7, 1788) in Thomas Jefferson, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, ed. Julian P. Boyd, XII (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), 438-43, 570-2. The Boyd edition is incomplete; I will refer to it as far as it goes, to January 24, 1791, the terminal date of the last published volume. Correspondence after January, 1791, will be excerpted from Thomas Jefferson, The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson, ed. Adrienne Koch and William Peden (New York: Random House, The Modern Library, 1944).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, "The Australian Colonies," Quarterly Review, XXXII (1825), 314.

<sup>28</sup> See Walker, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> See Clark, II, 69.

<sup>30</sup> Australian, June 28, 1826.

<sup>31</sup> E. Macarthur to Horton (July 4, 1825), quoted in Eddy, p. 96.

<sup>32</sup> ADB, I, 501.

<sup>33</sup> Monitor, December 22, 1826; see also Monitor, November 24, 1826.

<sup>34</sup> Phrase used in Sydney Gazette, April 28, 1831. See also Clark, II, 75.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Eddy, p. 113.

<sup>36</sup> See Walker, pp. 12-13; Clark, II, 75-6.

<sup>37</sup> For more on Forbes, see below, Chapter II, section b).

38 See Clark, II, 79.

39 See, for example, Crook, American Democracy, p. 29.

40 Green, I, 75.

41 ADB, I, 87; E. Morris Miller, Pressmen and Governors (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1952), p. 85.

42 The Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser ran from 1825 1859. It was then incorporated into the Hobart Mercury.

43 The Licensing Act was introduced in Van Diemen's Land by Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur to curb press licentiousness.

See ADB, I, 87.

44 Letter to Richard Price (Paris, January 8, 1789), in Jefferson, Papers, XIV, 420.

45 Hobart Town Gazette, April 22, 1825.

46 See Miller, pp. 3-39.

47 Austral-Asiatic Review, lead article, October 8, 1833.

48 Darling to Murray (November 8, 1828), HRA, I, xiv, 445.

49 Darling to Bathurst (September 4, 1826), HRA, I, xii, 529.

50 Darling's reply to address (July 4, 1829), HRA, I, xv, 73-5.

51 See Walker, p. 19.

52 Monitor, February 20, 1830.

53 Sydney Gazette, May 5, 1829.

54 See McLachlan, p. 372; Walker, p. 16.

55 Quoted by Henry Collins in introduction to Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (London, 1791-2; rpt. Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 34.

56 Quoted in Ferguson, p. 194.

57 Quoted in Walker, p. 17.



- 58 Quoted in Ferguson, pp. 193-4.
- 59 Quoted in Inglis, p. 43; Monitor, October 22, 1831.
- 60 Monitor, October 26, 1831.
- 61 Quoted in Eddy, p. 121.
- 62 Letter to John Dickinson (Washington, March 6, 1801), in Jefferson, Selected Writings, p. 561.
- 63 See, for example, Clark, III, 141.
- 64 The phrase is historian N.D. McLachlan's. See McLachlan, p. 372.
- 65 Monitor, December 29, 1832; Monitor, December 9, 1835; Australian, November 11, 1834. See McLachlan, pp. 372-4.
- 66 Quoted in Inglis, p. 43.
- 67 Compare Franklin's Autobiography (London, 1868) with the details of Wills' early life in ADB, II, 605.
- 68 Currency Lad, August 25, 1832; Currency Lad, November 24, 1832, quoted in McLachlan, pp. 374-5.
- 69 See ADB, II, 605; Inglis, p. 43.
- 70 Andrew Jackson was elected President of the United States in 1828.
- 71 Sydney Gazette, June 11, 1836. It would seem to be no accident that America received publicity in the Gazette in 1836, since A.E. Hayes was editor of that newspaper from January 1, 1836, to August 29, 1836 (Walker, p. 22).
- 72 Monitor, May 31-June 9, 1837.
- 73 See James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson (New York: Mason Brother, 1861), II, 626-7; Robert Rimini, Andrew Jackson (New York: Twayne, 1966), p. 183.

74 See Clark, III, 141. Lang's own newspaper, The Colonist (1835-40), begun primarily to give its founder a political voice, labelled the Herald "that pure merino and high Tory establishment" in its issue of February 28, 1838.

75 South-Asian Register, i (1827).

76 See below, Chapter III, section b).

77 For example, the "Proceedings of the Senate of the United States" occupied almost as much space in The Colonist as the "Reports from the House of Commons." See Bartlett, p. 97.

78 Colonist, January 19, 1837.

79 Colonist, January 19, 1837.

80 P. Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), II, 54.

81 For more on the competition for immigrants, see Cunningham, I, 5-8, 256; Wakefield, Letter from Sydney, pp. 34, 68-9, 74; W.C. Wentworth, A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales (London: G. and W.B. Whittaker, 1819), title page.

82 See Herald, January 12, 1837.

83 See below, Chapter III, section c).

84 ADB, I, 392; see also Clark, II, 73.

85 ADB, I, 393.

86 Quoted in McLachlan, p. 368.

87 ADB, I, 392. One result of Forbes' American travel was his strong commitment to free education (see ADB, I, 397).

88 ADB, I, 396.

89 See ADB, II, 165.

90 Patrick O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia: A Short History, 1788-1967 (Melbourne: Nelson, 1968), p. 27.

91 Freeman's Journal (1850-71).

92 See ADB, II, 523-4.

93 See ADB, II, 526. For more detailed information on Thomson, see the recently published book by S.G. Foster, Colonial Improver: Edward Deas Thomson 1800-1879 (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1978).

94 See George Nadel, Australia's Colonial Culture (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1957), p. 21. Nadel, however, might be mistaken. The pamphlet, "The Indefeasible Rights of Man;" or the Contest Between the Antagonistic Principles of Democracy and Aristocracy in New South Wales (Sydney: R.S. McEachern, n.d. [1842]), was published anonymously. Further, the references to McEachern on p. 5 indicate that though he maintained that "the right to vote was based on the indefeasible and primordial rights of man," he might not have been responsible for the pamphlet itself.

95 Potts and Potts, Young America, introduction, p. 1.

96 See Inglis, p. 19. For more on the de Mestre family, see below, Chapter III, section c).

97 Michael Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851 (Parkville, Victoria: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1965), p. 165.

98 See ADB, I, 45.

99 See Roe, p. 165.

<sup>100</sup> Lang's Colonist favoured full prohibition from April, 1836, onwards.

<sup>101</sup> See Roe, pp. 168-9.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Webby, "English Literature in Early Australia: 1820-1829," Southerly, 27, No. 4 (1967), 274.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, Cunningham, II, 118-21; Inglis, p. 28.

<sup>104</sup> Sir Walter Scott's novels were particularly popular in the United States. See Russel B. Nye and Norman S. Grabo, eds., The Revolution and the Early Republic, Vol. II of American Thought and Writing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. xxxvii.

<sup>105</sup> See Webby, pp. 268, 276.

<sup>106</sup> See Webby, pp. 271, 276.

<sup>107</sup> Grattan clashed with Governor Darling, and subsequently returned to England in 1827. See Webby, p. 272.

<sup>108</sup> See Webby, pp. 273, 278-80, 282. See also Elizabeth Ann Webby, "Literature and the Reading Public in Australia 1800-1850: A Study of the Growth and Differentiation of a Colonial Literary Culture during the Early Nineteenth Century," I, Diss. Univ. of Sydney 1971, p. 247.

<sup>109</sup> The letter was dated February 25, 1829. See Elizabeth Webby, "Australian Literature and the Reading Public in the Eighteen-Twenties," Southerly, 29, No. 9 (1969), 17-18.

<sup>110</sup> For more on Cooper's increasing popularity in the 1830's and 1840's, see Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," I, 230; II, 84, 102, 104, 107, 138-9, 145, 148-9, et passim. For more on James Martin's

The Australian Sketch Book (Sydney: James Tegg, 1838), see Clark, History of Australia, III, 153-4; Webby in Cantrell, ed., Bards, pp. 25-6; Roe, p. 86; Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," I, 478-80.

<sup>111</sup> Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," I, 207.

<sup>112</sup> For more on the portrayal of the Indian in American fiction, see Lucy Lockwood Hazard, The Frontier in American Literature (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1927). A more recent view is given by Edwin Sill Fussell, Frontier: American Literature and the American West (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965).

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Webby, "The Aboriginal in Early Australian Literature," Southerly, 40, No. 1 (1980), 62.

<sup>114</sup> For confirmation of this view, see William B. Cairns, British Criticisms of American Writings, 1783-1815, A Contribution to the Study of Anglo-American Literary Relationships (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1918), and Perry Miller, The Raven and the Whale (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956).

<sup>115</sup> William Woolls, Australia: a Moral and Descriptive Poem (Sydney: Stephens and Stokes, 1833), p. xvi.

<sup>116</sup> Woolls, pp. 68-9.

<sup>117</sup> Woolls, p. 70.

<sup>118</sup> Monitor, May 1, 1833.

<sup>119</sup> H. Carmichael, "Introductory Discourse delivered at the opening of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts," New South Wales Magazine, I, No. 2 (1833), 78, quoted in Nadel, p. 73.

<sup>120</sup> Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine, I (September, 1835), 5, quoted in Nadel, p. 70.

<sup>121</sup> Channing's essay was first delivered as the Annual Oration of the American Philosophical Society, at the University of Philadelphia, on October 18, 1823. It is reprinted under the title, "Remarks on National Literature," in William Ellery Channing, The Complete Works of William Ellery Channing (London: "Christian Life" Publishing Co., 1884), pp. 134-43. John Dumore Lang republished the essay in the Colonist, April 16, 1838.

<sup>122</sup> Lang travelled throughout the United States, from Massachusetts to South Carolina, in 1840.

<sup>123</sup> Channing, p. 143; Philip Freneau, Poems of Freneau, ed. Harry Hayden Clark (New York: Hafner, 1960), p. 94.

<sup>124</sup> Oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard University, Cambridge, August 31, 1837.

<sup>125</sup> See Marcus Cunliffe, The Literature of the United States (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp. 46-7.

<sup>126</sup> George Washington, The Writings of George Washington, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, XXVI (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), 485.

<sup>127</sup> Channing, p. 136.

<sup>128</sup> James K. Paulding, "A National Literature," from Salmagundi, Second Series, August 19, 1820. Quoted in Nye and Grabo, p. 308.

<sup>129</sup> New South Wales Magazine, August, 1833, quoted by Webby in Cantrell, ed., Bards, p. 24.

<sup>130</sup> In England, the publishing of Channing's "National Literature" essay caused his reputation to reach a peak. The same essay was translated into French in 1838, and widely read. See Arthur W. Brown, William Ellery Channing (New York: Twayne, 1961), pp. 114, 140.

<sup>131</sup> Channing, pp. 134-5.

<sup>132</sup> Channing, p. 136.

<sup>133</sup> Many Americans could still express reservations about their own literature at the turn of the century. See, for example, Van Wyck Brooks, The Writer in America (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1953), p. 36.

<sup>134</sup> Channing, p. 137.

<sup>135</sup> Channing, p. 137.

<sup>136</sup> Channing, p. 138.

<sup>137</sup> Channing, p. 140.

<sup>138</sup> See Clark, III, 155-6.

<sup>139</sup> Channing, p. 135.

## CHAPTER III

## THE WRITERS

Section A

## William Charles Wentworth (1790-1872)

Love for the cut and thrust of politics and the passion to be independently wealthy dominated the thoughts of a wide spectrum of Australians, from exclusive to emancipist, currency lad to new arrival, in the country's first fifty years. A shrewd few adapted easily to the more expedient social norms, thus amassing large fortunes. Of these, William Charles Wentworth stands alone as the most charismatic. The sheer breadth of the man's talents--as horseman, explorer, grazier, satirist, prophetic bard, Bacchanal, lawyer, newspaper editor, orator, politician and libertine--justify his claim to being the epitome of the new colony's strengths and deficiencies. He is, in a real way, a representative man, the sum of the community's aspirations, achievements and follies.<sup>1</sup>

Appropriately, Wentworth's political and social opportunism



resulted in his being the first colonist to publicly taunt the Mother Country with the threat of colonial rebellion along American lines. Though conservative by inclination, Wentworth throughout his career fully appreciated the political capital to be made by comparing current Australian events to earlier American revolutionary gestures. He conducted his public affairs according to one rule of behaviour: when frustrated by rigid English bureaucracy, cite American precedent. Scare tactics, yes. And possibly immoral, given his conservative tendencies. But undeniably effective, he found, and likely to exert an effect before long.

Born sometime in the early 1790's, the son of a convict mother and a surgeon father who had avoided criminal conviction for highway robbery only because of his agreement to journey to far-off New Holland, Wentworth soon marked himself as a man capable of rising to pre-eminence in his native land.<sup>2</sup> His youthful proclivity for revelry and, as one contemporary put it, his tendency for "rough language" no doubt endeared him to his peers at a time when such behaviour appeared the mark of a manly spirit.<sup>3</sup> It wasn't long, however, before boyhood brashness yielded to the adult's lively and more crafty intellect. His language evidently remained unchanged, but the list of ambitions grew. Wentworth's inquiring mind began to conceive of the important contribution his family--and country--demanded of him.

Though always a stout advocate of the intrinsic worth of subjects English and the British constitution, Wentworth retained a deep respect for the valuable lessons of the American revolution and the integrity

of its principal spokesmen (he named a property bestowed on him by Governor Macquarie, "Vermont"). His letters, printed works and speeches unflinching exhibit a curious duality of allegiance: loyalty to George III, together with esteem for the serviceable ideas of Otis, Dickinson, John Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson and their countrymen. Like many of his contemporaries, Wentworth oscillated between the two in the 1820's, favouring one only as it suited his larger purpose. Not that those close to him ever doubted which alternative he would ultimately choose; for the greater part of his last twenty years he resided at Merly House, in Dorset, a contented member of Britannia's esteemed Conservative Club.<sup>4</sup>

Wentworth's A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales (1819) was one of the most influential books on the new settlement to be published in the half century to 1838.<sup>5</sup> To understand what lies behind it, however, it is necessary to briefly glance at Wentworth's life in the years just prior to the book's publication. He travelled to London in 1816 determined to pursue law at the Middle Temple, despite his father's express wish that he join the military. The atmosphere prevailing in post-Napoleonic England fortunately favoured the son, enabling him to begin studies in February, 1817. A letter written to his father's patron and kinsman, Lord Fitzwilliam, just before he began his studies, pertains to more enlightened preoccupations than mere personal aggrandizement:

I trust that your lordship will . . . pardon me for briefly disclosing the more remote objects of my ambitions. It is . . . by no means my intention in becoming a member of the bar to abandon the country that gave me birth. I am sensible of the sacred claims which it has upon me. . . . In withdrawing myself, therefore, for a time from that country, I am actuated by a desire of better qualifying myself for the performance of those duties that birth has imposed; and, in selecting the profession of law, I calculate upon acquainting myself with all the excellence of the British constitution and hope at some future period to advocate successfully the right of my country to participate in its advantages.<sup>6</sup>

The patriot, here, innocently envisions his success as tied to the inevitable rise of his native continent. The two may, in the foreseeable future, serve and benefit each other free of outside interference. Events soon shook Wentworth's youthful naiveté.

For one thing, he attempted to gain a sinecure from Secretary of State Bathurst, a reward to which he felt himself entitled by birth and background. Bathurst, while recognizing the applicant's merit as a prominent citizen of Britain's colonies and erstwhile explorer of note, refused to create the new position requested: Vendue Master to New South Wales.<sup>7</sup> Unused to rejection, Wentworth reacted bitterly to his first contact with bureaucracy in the Mother Country, maintaining that "every application, unsupported by interest," must fail in the face of "a government so corrupt as the present."<sup>8</sup> The workings of privilege for the first time militated against him, and he didn't like it.

Yet this experience alone failed to unduly modify the smugness acquired growing up in Australia (and England) as a member of a

family with powerful moneyed interests in the community. For Wentworth, having proposed in April to John Macarthur's daughter, continued to cling tightly to the apparent certainty of his coming marriage, a union which promised to fulfil his overriding ambition--a union, as he put it in a letter to his father,

so essential to the happiness of your son and to the accomplishment of those projects for the future respectability and grandeur of our family. . . .<sup>9</sup>

All going well, the political and social stages of the near future promised to be his. The combined fortunes of the Wentworth and Macarthur families would surely be sufficient to dominate the corridors of power in New South Wales. It was with these thoughts of hastening the ascendancy of a propertied class of gentlemen--a landed aristocracy--firmly in mind that Wentworth penned Statistical Description. By May, 1818, the book was essentially complete.

How to accelerate the emergence of his social stratum? Wentworth answered this question assertively, recognizing, like his American counterparts half a century earlier such as James Otis and John Dickinson, that an acceptable solution to the problem had to entail upheavals in the local power structure. He pursued two lines of argument: first, he strove to entice prospective British emigrants to choose Australia rather than America as their destination by stressing the "superiority" of the former's advantages. Bolstering immigration was crucial to Wentworth's plans for his native country if a change was to be wrought in its image as "the fifth and pickpocketous

corner of the globe."<sup>10</sup> Britons considering New Holland as their new home had to be convinced that the security of life and property could be guaranteed. So the great bulk of Wentworth's book amounted to an elaborate handbook of colonial life--indispensable points on how to survive, then thrive.

The second aspect of the book's argument was more important: consolidating the first steps towards the acquisition of self-government for the colony. To do this necessarily involved revealing the malignancies of arbitrary government and, of course, the perils of despotism from too great a distance. With British politicians and constitutional authorities in mind as his audience, Wentworth vigorously publicized the present woeful state of the colony; he utilized a lively rhetorical style which fully exploited his legal, philosophical, scientific and historical learning. Polemical prose suited him. As G.B. Barton so aptly put it, where "the author [Wentworth] touched upon political matters, he was evidently breathing a congenial atmosphere--his lungs expanded and his cheeks glowed."<sup>11</sup>

Wentworth voiced disgust with the "aristocratic body" in New Holland "which would monopolise all situations of power, dignity and emolument, and put themselves in a posture to domineer alike over the governor and the people."<sup>12</sup> Such people aimed at converting "the great body of the people into an hereditary deformity." But Wentworth didn't content himself with solely negative criticism. No doubt cognizant of seminal eighteenth-century American political tracts such as James Otis' The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and

Proved (1764), John Dickinson's Late Regulations respecting the British Colonies Considered (1765) and Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania (1767-8), as well as the confirmed republican propositions of John Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton and the Federalist Papers, he proceeded to outline a series of positive reforms. These echoed, in part or whole, the American colonial demands (and grievances) of the 1770's. Wentworth demanded an elected assembly of small property holders and a nominated legislative council; equal rights for emancipists; trial by jury and a satisfactory process of appeal; an end to press censorship; and no taxation without representation.<sup>13</sup>

Lest any of his absent-minded English readers miss the intended analogy, the brazen patriot, the self-confessed "native of Australia," clarified his position, elucidating the lengths to which some colonists might be prepared to go if their pleas went ignored.<sup>14</sup> Namely, emulation of, even alignment with, America. Wentworth soberly outlined the Australian case, giving special attention to the logistics of colonial strategy. If Britain continued to show it had learned nothing from the "terrible" lesson of the American Revolution, Australians would be forced to discard their "intolerable yoke" and place themselves "under the government of more just and considerate rulers." Furthermore, "from constrained resistance to tyranny, and in vindication of their most sacred and indubitable rights" they could readily conduct a guerilla war by initially retreating to the security of the nearby Blue Mountains:

To those who are acquainted with the local situation of this colony,--who have traversed the formidable chain of mountains by which it is bounded from north to south, who have viewed the impregnable positions . . . the independence of this colony, should it be goaded into rebellion, appears neither so problematical nor remote, as might otherwise be imagined.<sup>15</sup>

Unless Britain responded to the colonial cry, he concluded, "such will be the consequences of the impolitic and oppressive system of government pursued in this colony." His warnings closely paralleled John Dickinson's exhortations expressed in the draft of the "Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms" that the American Congress adopted on July 6, 1775.<sup>16</sup>

Wentworth's scheme might not have been practical (arms? men? supplies? revenue?) but it still jarred on the British imagination, giving first significant colonial voice to the direct connection between American revolutionary events (and ideology) and the political scene in New Holland. His rationale found ready acceptance amongst his more radical native colleagues throughout the 1820's as they gradually realized the power and influence of press stridency. Statistical Description established the effectiveness of America as a tool for the use of ambitious Australians.

From the outset, however, Wentworth categorically refused to advocate the republican position adopted by most of his American predecessors. Indeed, one paragraph after the threat of rebellion, he protested

against being classed among those who are the sworn enemies of all authority... . There is not a more sincere friend to established government and legitimacy than he, who

mildly advocates the cause of reform, and points out with decency the excrescences that will occasionally rise on the political body, as well from an excess of liberty as of restraint: such a person may prevent anarchy; he can never occasion it.<sup>17</sup>

He evidently wanted appropriate recognition of his claims--his due as an Englishman--so that he, and others of his social standing, might pursue higher goals as society's popular leaders. Certainly Statistical Description was no treatise for an independent Australian republic. Democracy had no place in Wentworth's plans. Landed property, he maintained at another point, constituted "the only standard by which the right either of electing, or being elected, can in any country be properly regulated." The Council that Wentworth had in mind bore "many resemblances to the House of Lords."<sup>18</sup> In effect, he wanted to replace one privileged group with another more regionally qualified. Once certain rights were established, the policy changes of the would-be incumbents promised to be minimal. For Wentworth, Americans like Paine and Sam Adams were anathema. Unashamed levellers and, God in heaven, Democrats.

Tory readers of Statistical Description, sensing a threat to their beliefs which didn't exist, seethed. In Australia, John Macarthur the elder viewed Wentworth's proposals with "decided disapprobation";<sup>19</sup> in England, the Quarterly Review assailed the book as yet another repugnant manifestation of that "spirit of universal inquisition" currently sweeping the civilized world. The Review writer thoroughly resented that colonial upstart Wentworth's "dictatorial and menacing tone," making cutting reference to his indulgence in the "fashionable



occupation of constitution-mongering."<sup>20</sup> Unbeknownst to these ultra-conservative thinkers, in little more than a decade their sentiments would be the middle-aged Wentworth's. Small consolation, admittedly, in 1819.

Because of its informative nature and controversial stance, Statistical Description soon became a standard work.<sup>21</sup> Three editions appeared in five years--the second edition an enlargement, and the third running to two volumes.<sup>22</sup> It was no coincidence that from the publication year of the first edition onwards, the British Press began to pay "regular if not copious attention to the overseas Empire. . . ."<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, reactions to the first two editions clearly exerted an influence on the New South Wales Act of 1823, which granted the colony a nominated Legislative Council and trial by jury in civil actions, and enhanced the legal status of emancipists (though not according them any political rights).<sup>24</sup> Wentworth, it appeared, had successfully launched his public career with a mixed bag of carefully researched information, bravado and deliberately provocative remarks prompting recollections of the American debacle.

Most importantly of all, the challenges inherent in Statistical Description virtually guaranteed that the struggle for fundamental personal liberties and self-government in Australia over the next decades would be viewed by both sides as closely analagous to the American experience. Wentworth first articulated the terms of the ongoing debate.

He was also the first of a number of his countrymen to abruptly modify these terms as his material situation improved. The expedient aims of many Australians at this time cannot be overlooked. Ever mindful of his personal ambition to fashion for himself "a reputation which shall reflect a splendour on all who are related to me," and aware of the constructive impression made by the first two editions of Statistical Description, Wentworth rewrote the 1824 third edition more carefully, removing the menacing bluster.<sup>25</sup> The Blue Mountains scenario disappeared, for, despite his feeling that the Legislative Council was "a wretched mongrel substitute" for a Legislative Assembly, an "abortious substitute," the 1823 Act evidently placated him sufficiently.<sup>26</sup> He felt the constitution of the Council and the system of judicature continued to infringe "on the rights and liberties of the colonists," and serve the interests principally of the colony's "aristocratic junta"; but the emancipists now had greater recognition at the expense of the exclusives' previous stranglehold on political power.<sup>27</sup> Wentworth construed the slender concessions as a symbolic act of faith. Greater liberties were "impliedly promised" in the constitution to follow in four years time.<sup>28</sup> However, just in case, Wentworth again raised the American alternative--only this time less bombastically. He likened colonial communities to

a piece of unmoulded wax. . . . Benefits sown there will yield gratitude; justice content; injuries hatred; oppression resistance in the first instance, defeat and separation in the end. Past history attests that tyranny flourishes but for a season; that injustice triumphs but for a day.<sup>29</sup>

The onus was on the Minister for the Colonies, for his actions would determine

whether, in fine, their infant establishments will remain the attached and dutiful child of a considerate parent, or seize the first favourable opportunity that shall occur to renounce the contract [sic] of an unfeeling master.<sup>30</sup>

Significantly, even as his personal politics grew rapidly more conservative in the decades after 1830, Wentworth continued to appreciate the shock value of citing American precedents and the good sense of certain American political and educational theory.

After the publication of the three editions of Statistical Description, Wentworth's local supporters quickly grew in number in the following ten years. Emancipist colleagues jubilantly hailed his reference to the colony's exclusives and their attendants as nothing but "whores, and rogues, and vagabonds"; they appreciated, too, his intimidating presence on the local scene after his return from England in 1824.<sup>31</sup> Wentworth's prediction of a "general revolution" and the bold independence of his claims temporarily boded ill for the grand plans and secret ambitions of colonial Tories.<sup>32</sup> The aggressive nature of the Wentworth-inspired petition to Darling in January, 1827, prompted the governor to write in a letter to home that

He [Wentworth] speaks as he wrote when compiling his book, of the independence of the colony, and compares it to the situation formerly of America, and the probability of its being driven, as America was, to shake off the yoke. In short, he is anxious to become the man of the people, and he seems to think that the best means of accomplishing this is by insulting the government.<sup>33</sup>

Two things are important here: Darling's conception of Statistical Description as a potentially revolutionary work and his insight into the personal motives hidden behind Wentworth's campaign for the public benefit. Occurrences in the 1830's bore out the validity of Darling's remarks.

What contributed to Wentworth's desertion of the free population? Among other things, the gradual waning of emancipist/exclusive hostility, Wentworth's substantial inheritance after his father's death in 1827, his marriage in 1829, his acquisition of many large properties in New South Wales, and the sudden increase of emigrants arriving in the colony. As the 1830's progressed, he became the increasingly reactionary spokesman not of Jacksonian democracy, but of Hamiltonian class privilege.<sup>34</sup> Wentworth asserted the claims of property and education for the moulding of a suitable governing class. He staunchly defended, as Alexander Hamilton had, the old aristocracy--what he in 1853 grudgingly acknowledged as a "squatocratic oligarchy"--against the claims of a rising tide of emigrants yearning for more land.<sup>35</sup> Though he referred as late as Australia Day (January 26), 1833, to government chosen by the "people" when recommending the American record for cheap government, he seemed by then to hold a different conception of the people.<sup>36</sup> Government by the people meant, for the Wentworth of the middle 1830's, government in the hands of his own class. He wanted an educated ruling minority, one constitutionally legalized and rich enough to resist the perils of democracy. Wentworth's ideas at this time mirror those of John Adams as outlined in Defence of the Constitutions

of the United States (1787-8) and Discourses on Davila (1790-1).<sup>37</sup>

The years following the formation (in 1835) of the insular, élitist Australian Patriotic Association witnessed a severe curtailment in Wentworth's popular support, since he now spoke for a certain vested interest--a minority of wealthy, ambitious emancipists and emigrants, and growing numbers of Tories. A succession of incidents soured the general populace: his refusal to chair the January, 1837, Australia Day meeting because only native-born were going to be present; the cancellation of his Sydney Gazette subscription; his furtive, unprincipled attempt to secure massive tracts of land from the New Zealand Maori people; and finally (and in the eyes of egalitarian Australians, most dèspicably), his sudden support of the movement to reintroduce convict transportation.<sup>38</sup> Wentworth's thousands and thousands of colonial acres needed cheap labour to convert them into profit. To obtain such workers, he willingly backed movements to secure more convicts, or, if necessary, coolie labour from nearby Pacific islands. Old friends sensed a Benedict Arnold. Sydney's popular press bombasted their hero of years gone by, calling him the Ursa Major of Australian politics, a "rabid, frothing bulldog."<sup>39</sup> Perhaps saddest of all, and the final irony, was the indictment delivered by the Australian, the paper Wentworth had helped to found so that ideals such as independence, freedom, consistency, honesty and integrity could gain credence in the colony. With Australia Day, 1842, but a week away, the Australian pronounced:

Mr. Wentworth is one of those persons who was an influential man. His day is gone by. His opinion is worth nothing. He stands alone and is altogether disregarded. Certainly he first taught the natives of this colony what liberty was, but he has betrayed them since and they have withdrawn their confidence in him.<sup>40</sup>

But Wentworth's influence did not decline. Actually, for the next decade he was arguably as powerful as any single man, other than the governor, in the colony. But his doctrines gained energetic support only from his social equals. The fresh waves of poor, democratically minded emigrants, of whom a significant percentage were radicals and Chartists, instantly distrusted Australia's great patriot. The dislike was mutual. For Wentworth, the mob consisted of "ignorant pretenders" who, for the well-being of the colony, had to be excluded from all branches of executive power on the basis of property, experience and education.<sup>41</sup> As Alexander Hamilton put it, the "great beast" had to be checked. Wentworth now fully agreed with the fundamental tenet of Hamiltonian economics: "That power which holds the purse-strings absolutely, must rule."<sup>42</sup> His money, apparently, testified to his capacity.

As events of the period from 1838 to 1868 demonstrate, even in his final, politically active years, Wentworth never forgot the attention paid his flirtations with revolutionary America. It is questionable whether he ever displayed a total affinity with any single American political theorist, but he always attended to American utility. With Australia on the brink of self-government, and his own conservatism perhaps more stringent than at any previous point in his life, Wentworth

could still make liberal use of American precedents during the constitutional debates of the early 1850's.

In the period from the abolition of press censorship in 1824 to the first parliament elected under a new constitution, in 1856, Wentworth, more than any other colonist besides Lang, established America as a fashionable political weapon. In doing this, he helped create the circumstances which caused growing numbers of Australian writers from 1840 onwards to consider American literary output, unconventional as it was, as a viable creative source. Wentworth, with Lang, put America on the map for Australian writers.

Section B

John Dunmore Lang (1799-1878)

Lang's first and second editions of An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales (1834 and 1837) need some consideration at this point, as they are preliminary manifestations of his important statements, tracts and doctrines to follow in the next two decades-- doctrines which were to stir the blood of a new generation of writers making the first attempt to absorb the Australian environment and peculiar historical circumstances into their writing.<sup>43</sup>

Like Wentworth's Statistical Description some fifteen years before, Lang's first edition, written during his third voyage to England in 1833, offered important clues to the writer's later political theory and practice. Wentworth alerted his countrymen to America's value as a potent weapon of intimidation, a ploy which anticipated the tone of the colony's 1820's; Lang's book more obviously characterized its decade in seeking less to shock, and more to getting on with the business of shaping a rapidly expanding community. Lang sought to identify the colony's history and character which, in the middle 1830's, he regarded as "peculiarly British property."<sup>44</sup> His book, like Wentworth's, became a marketing success, being ultimately published



in four editions over a period of some forty years. Despite the Westminster Review's much-publicized comment that Lang "might have entitled his work, The History of Dr. Lang, to which is added, the History of New South Wales, the volume is a more valid "history" than Wentworth's, if less rebellious in spirit.<sup>45</sup> It became a standard nineteenth-century source for those interested in the colony. As G.B. Barton commented in 1866,

No account of this Colony has met with more notice from the English Press than Dr. Lang's, and probably none has been more largely circulated. It cannot be doubted that the various editions of his History have done more to affect public opinion at home, with regard to this country, than any other publication.<sup>46</sup>

Like Wentworth in his first edition, Lang expressed an interest in, and respect for, the motivations of the American rebels. The seeds of later discontent appear in microcosm. At the beginning of chapter two, for example, he comments on the toil and dedication needed to found the colony in 1788. The first few pages provide some historical background:

Before the British colonies of North America were violently severed from the mother country, through unwise if not tyrannical legislation, the province of Virginia had for a long time been the only authorized outlet for those criminals in Great Britain and Ireland who had been sentenced to transportation.<sup>47</sup>

Worth noting is not only the evident sympathy for the American revolutionists, but Lang's obvious familiarity with American social and economic history. Later, he displays intimate knowledge of the American system

of religious voluntarism--to the point of openly advocating a similar system for New South Wales.<sup>48</sup>

The elaborate extracts on the American Voluntary System reflect the author's manifest discontent with the authoritarian measures of British imperialism, particularly apparent in religion. Lang attacks the "thoroughly exclusive, intolerant, and tyrannical spirit of Episcopal domination in the British colonies," immediately quoting from Smith's History of New York to portray the melancholy dilemma of the Scots Presbyterians of New York who encountered the "violent" opposition of the dominant Episcopal Party in the early eighteenth century.<sup>49</sup> He concludes the point by stating that

It was, doubtless, the repetition of such acts of intolerance and oppression . . . on the part of a domineering faction supported and abetted by the Government at home, that served gradually to wean the affections of the American people from their allegiance to their rightful sovereign, and that subsequently gave the American Revolution that moral and resistless force, that enabled it to wrest the fairest provinces from the British Empire, and to pluck the brightest jewel from the British Crown.<sup>50</sup>

In the years following 1834, Lang's outlook radicalized in accordance with his growing absorption with American republicanism. The first edition of Historical and Statistical Account, with its ridicule of certain of the trappings of British colonial government and its bold advocacy of a new set of colonial priorities ("Advance Australia, God save the King!"<sup>51</sup>) in important ways anticipated the pugnacity of later editions. More sophisticated appraisals of America

followed.<sup>52</sup> By the time the third edition was published in 1852, Lang had assumed one of the most radical stances in the colony. His succession of pamphlets asserted so forceful a republican position that, by the early 1850's, it was by no means outrageous for the Westminster Review to propose that "having now declared for a Republic, he probably means to finish off by being its first President!"<sup>53</sup> From the time of his visit to the United States in 1840, Lang totally committed himself to the publicizing of the ideals of the American republic, soon becoming the principal spokesman of Australian democrats.

Section C

Amasa Delano (1763-1823) and

Charles Wilkes (1798-1877)

Two of the earliest American commentators on the curiosities of Australian life were the "old weather beaten sailor," sea-captain, sealer and sometime author, Amasa Delano, and the controversial naval officer, explorer and scientist, Charles Wilkes, leader of the renowned American exploring expedition that visited and charted the coast of the Antarctic continent, countless Pacific islands and the American northwest coast for almost four years, from August, 1838, to July, 1842.<sup>54</sup>

Delano's account, A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres: comprising Three Voyages Round the World (1817), though devoid of any insight into the composition or political tendencies of New Holland at the beginning of the nineteenth century, makes interesting reading as it provides an alternative perspective on the highly controversial incidents that involved Delano and the crews of his two ships, Pilgrim and Perseverance, during their many months in Australian waters throughout 1804.<sup>55</sup>

As has been shown, the colony's early governors, especially Hunter

and King, experienced constant frustration with American traders and sealers. They were, on the one hand, forced to countenance the American presence because the colony sorely needed the food staples the Americans could supply; on the other hand, as a result, they had to endure the persistent annoyances of extreme Yankee thrift and intense single-mindedness. The Americans, and here Delano was undoubtedly typical, drove a hard trading bargain.<sup>56</sup>

Delano's Narrative supplies some insight into the motivations and aspirations of the hardy bunch of American seamen who created so pronounced an impact on the infant Port Jackson settlement. He outlines three actuating principles for the adventurous life he chose in his youth:

The first that I know of was an ambition to excel others in achievements; the next was, to satisfy my own curiosity in a knowledge of the world, and particularly to know how far myself and others were imposed upon with exaggerated accounts of the world, and false statements of things a great way from home; the third and last, and for many of my latter years by far the greatest, was, honestly and honourably to obtain a competency sufficient to support myself and family, through an old age, should I live to see it; to do a benevolent act now and then, and to leave an unblemished character behind me.<sup>57</sup>

Ego, inquisitiveness and the New England desire to make money, it seems, all had an equal stake in determining Delano's actions. And probably the actions of the majority of his countrymen in southern Pacific waters. After experiencing numerous skirmishes with British ships as a crewman aboard an American privateer working the West Indies route, he spent virtually all the years between 1790 and 1810

endeavouring to finally secure financial respectability for himself and his family--five of these years on the "long, extraordinary and tedious" voyage that incorporated the extended stay in Australian waters.<sup>58</sup> It is perhaps worth noting here that Herman Melville based "Benito Cereno" on Chapter XVIII of Delano's Narrative.<sup>59</sup> When Melville first published his tale in Putnam's Monthly Magazine in late 1855, the Narrative was virtually unknown, even in America.<sup>60</sup> The readership Melville had at the time, along with the revival of Melville scholarship in the 1920's and beyond, probably provided Delano's book with a greater audience over the years than it might otherwise have had.

The Australian section of the Narrative has its oddities, just like the incident involving the Spanish captain, Don Benito Cereno (and his mutinous slaveship), that excited Melville's imagination. Sufficient reason existed for Delano to have borne a grudge against George III and his representatives abroad, but the Narrative, strangely, exhibits virtually no feelings of animosity.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Delano, more consciously the meticulously honest, possibly even naive recorder of events, waxes optimistically on both the colony and England's noble role in "this highly important undertaking." He even goes so far as to ascribe "two grand motives" to the English government in the manner almost of a Westminster propagandist:

[The] first was pure humanity in saving the lives of such great numbers of vagrants . . . the second was, the great and magnanimous principle of planting a colony in the most remote region of the world, in order to civilize the natives and make that country beneficial to mankind.<sup>62</sup>

Delano seems oblivious to the intrigues and sordidness of the mean 1804 colony, a little later expressing total approval of the government's having "laid the platform for civilizing and uniting all parts of the world. No nation has been so much in the habit of doing similar deeds."<sup>63</sup> Visions of a coming utopia. Either Delano singularly lacked even the slightest capacity for penetrative observation, or he knew well the beneficial effects of flattering the sublime by-products of English innovation. I suspect the latter.<sup>64</sup>

Profitable visits by versatile sealers and traders like Delano in Botany Bay's first lonely years did much to prepare the way for the consolidation of social, economic and political ties in later years. It is unlikely that Delano, in contrast to many of his countrymen, assisted in the escape of convicts from the colony. In fact, he claimed some of his men had been shanghaied.<sup>65</sup> But to the extent that he competed actively with Port Jackson sealers for the Bass Strait seal trade, assisted government authorities if the price was right, and pursued profit relentlessly, he was typical of the Americans with whom the colony had first contact.

\* \* \*

Amasa Delano's observations on the New South Wales settlement were slight because he had ventured into southern waters with the sole aim of securing profitable ventures. Apart from his brief, optimistic forecasts for the future of the continent, he took no

interest in speculating on the repressive politics of New Holland or responding to any of its unique problems. By contrast, many members of the United States maritime exploring expedition who visited Sydney for several weeks in late 1839, and again in March, 1840, determined to do exactly that. Their diaries and official journals convey an enormous amount of information on the colony at the end of the 1830's. The more entertaining ones go beyond simple memos of events, animals and scenery to inject something of themselves (and their background) into what they record. As a representative sample, three journals will be discussed: the leader Charles Wilkes' Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition (1845); naval Lieutenant George M. Colvocoresses' Four Years in a Government Exploring Expedition (1852); and able seaman Charles Erskine's Twenty Years Before the Mast (1890).<sup>66</sup> Wilkes' Narrative, by far the most comprehensive and perceptive, will be emphasized for that reason.

When John Quincy Adams, in his first annual presidential message on December 6, 1825, suggested that a ship be rigged out to explore the American northwest coast, he gave possibly first public expression to a rapidly growing preoccupation of his people: the desire to expand commercial interests by charting remote areas either at home or overseas.<sup>67</sup> Growing numbers of citizens regarded this increase of knowledge as inextricably bound to the cause of enhancing the nation's international image. Something had to be done to assert America's claim as a major power. So, in 1828, a group of influential government officials proposed a major naval expedition.



In the ten years that followed, the planned destination, size and leadership of the expedition endured a succession of changes, delays and bitter controversies.<sup>68</sup> So stormy was the atmosphere that in the midst of the debacle one paper saw fit to comment that "Success alone can efface the recollection of the bickerings and heartburnings, the delays and blunders, which have marked the progress of this expedition from its inception to the present time."<sup>69</sup> Two points about the final composition of the party, regarding those who made it and those who didn't. First, the question of command. Several massive naval egos suffered immeasurably when the ambitious, but in rank lowly newcomer, lieutenant Charles Wilkes, was selected to command the expedition in March, 1838. A no-nonsense disciplinarian with strong faith in his ability and commensurate sense of his being destined for greatness, Wilkes made a considerable impact on Sydney residents during the month-long stay of the expedition. For those privileged citizens on the permanent invitation-list of Government House, he embodied style and panache. For some of the senior citizens, on the other hand, those who recalled the early days in Botany Bay and circumstances of settlement, his name brought back memories of a famous namesake associated with the republican cause, John Wilkes-- the man for whom the aura of monarchy held no fears, who had helped inspire a generation of Americans to revolt and thus indirectly create the circumstances which led to the Botany Bay settlement. John Wilkes was Charles' great-uncle.<sup>70</sup>

Secondly, since the expedition all along aimed at obtaining the

most talented personnel available, several prominent scholars coveted the position of official historian. One of the leading candidates was Nathaniel Hawthorne, later to become one of the principal figures in the American literary renaissance that blossomed in New England. Who knows what effects might have been wrought in his fiction if he had been a member of the Wilkes expedition? And he almost made it. Assisted by two old school friends, Horatio Bridge and Senator Franklin Pierce, who used their influence to try and affect the Senate Naval Committee, Hawthorne, at one point in early 1837, looked highly likely to win the \$1500 appointment. But the power struggle going on in naval command, and scientific jealousy, created delays which eventually destroyed his chances.<sup>71</sup> Hawthorne deeply lamented this lost opportunity for the rest of his life.<sup>72</sup> His friend Bridge, many years later, pondered the results of a successful application: ". . . the current of his life would have been strangely disturbed, and his later writings would, I think, have taken on an entirely different coloring--whether for the better, who shall say?"<sup>73</sup> Fate almost brought Hawthorne to Australian shores. Boston's Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth might have had their Sydney convict counterparts.

The expedition fleet--made up of the flagship Vincennes and five other vessels--finally left the United States in August, 1838.<sup>74</sup> Two of the ships, Vincennes and another sloop-of-war, Peacock, anchored off Sydney Cove a few hours after sunset on November 29, 1839, after Wilkes had negotiated the tricky shoals of the harbour without the aid of a pilot. No one knew of the arrival. Thus, on the morning

of the 30th, anxiety gripped Sydney's population of 24,000, many of whom felt their settlement to be under attack.<sup>75</sup> Their fears were soon put to rest, however, and friendly relations quickly established; but the circumstances of arrival prompted Wilkes and a number of his colleagues to comment on the meagre harbour fortifications. The expedition commander speculated:

Had war existed, we might, after firing the shipping, and reducing a great part of the town to ashes, have affected a retreat before daybreak, in perfect safety.<sup>76</sup>

One of his officers, Lt. Colvocoresses, expressed less concern with the tactics of seige. Amusing local reaction struck his fancy:

Several of the newspapers spoke of it [the arrival of the two ships] next morning as something very remarkable, and jocularly declared it to be a "Yankee trick" done for the purpose of saving the pilotage, and in perfect keeping with our usual keenness in money matters.<sup>77</sup>

His comments shed light on a couple of areas. For one, the exploits of early American sealers and traders obviously did establish certain stereotypes about the Americans in the minds of Australian colonists, not the least of which was thrift. Next, Colvocoresses conveys the impression that Australian/American relations were, in 1839, friendly in the extreme. Indeed, perusal of other sources points to an extraordinarily warm reception for the representatives of Brother Jonathan.

Bonhomie marked the expedition's entire stay, the immediate conviviality of the Australian hosts being more than reciprocated by the well-liked "Yankees." "We were," said the naturalist Titian

Peale, summing up the sentiments of all his colleagues, "greeted with the utmost hospitality, every attention was paid us by the authorities and citizens. We were elected honorary members of the Australian Club, who gave us a splendid entertainment under the patronage of his Excell<sup>y</sup> Sir George Gipps, the Governor. This was followed by a constant round of entertainments, both public and private, which lasted while we remained."<sup>78</sup> Officers, scientists and sailors alike responded to once again being in a "civilized country." Many became good friends with local families. The publicans and owners of Sydney pubs, inns and brothels, of course, rejoiced in the boost to their trade. "Yankee Doodle" everywhere competed actively with "Rule Brittania," the Marseillaise and the Russian anthem.<sup>79</sup> For the American crewmen there was, as one historian has put it, "a welcome in every grog shop along the Sydney waterfront."<sup>80</sup>

When the time came to depart for Antarctica, many members of the expedition expressed great reluctance to leave the warmth of Australian shores. For the officers, shackled by rank, criticism went no further than voicing protest in private.<sup>81</sup> Ordinary sailors, on the other hand, could attempt to take advantage of their greater anonymity by jumping ship. Many did, briefly reversing the pattern (of convict escape to American sanctuary) that had established itself over the previous half a century.<sup>82</sup> The attraction of what Wilkes identified as "the strong resemblance of all that we saw to our own homes, and the identity of language" proved too much for some sailors who preferred rather to risk the consequences of desertion than leave Sydney's

shores for the harsh, and possibly fatal Antarctic climate.<sup>83</sup>

Though we know that at least one local resident was a little disappointed with the American party in that they were neither Negroes nor Indians as she had expected, the great majority of colonists delighted in the unexpected visit. A measure of the strong feelings of affinity that Australians had for the expedition, and Americans in general, can perhaps best be gauged by Wilkes' observation on the return trip in March, 1840:

Our reception was flattering; scarcely was our anchor well down before many of our friends came on board to bid us welcome; and we felt tenfold that kind hospitality which on our former visit we had first become acquainted with. They appeared to rejoice in our success as if we had been their countrymen.<sup>84</sup>

As far as Australians were concerned, events of the previous fifty years had cemented a strong bond of friendship between themselves and their American cousins--the pleasantly surprised recipients of which were Wilkes and his large group. Even the current English government representative, Governor George Gipps, impressed Wilkes with "the liberal views and feelings he evinced towards our country."<sup>85</sup> For many Australians, it seemed the expedition had only endorsed a familiarity that was already ingrained.

But what of the other side? How did the representatives of the great Republic react to a country that only a couple of decades ago, as Erskine recalled, had been designated "the pickpockets' quarter of the globe?"<sup>86</sup> Wilkes himself couldn't resist the temptation to remark on the similarities between the two cultures. Several parallels

struck him. Nothing had evidently changed since John Dunmore Lang's Historical and Statistical Account some six years earlier, for Wilkes could see, like Lang, that "the acquisition of wealth" amounted to the principal motivator of most colonists, speculation being "as rife as we had left it in the United States."<sup>87</sup> Also, as in America, Sydney suffered the marked "influence of the public press," the only difference being of degree. For in the southern colony "it is more licentious than any except the lowest of our newspapers." Nevertheless, while censuring the excesses of the press, he remained faithful to the ideals on which his country had been founded in that he did praise the brave independence of newspaper editors. As intelligent and ceaseless advocates of reform and colonial rights, they were, for Wilkes, "the principal check on the Governor and his Council."<sup>88</sup> Appropriate public recognition, finally, from a citizen of the country which had perpetually served the role as model or sympathetic ally for these editors down the years.

Nor could the trained and meticulous observer restrain himself from speculating on a republican future for the founding colony. He saw familiar preliminary signs everywhere--an élitist system of government, quality citizens excluded from the upper reaches of government because of their having been born into the "lower classes," the continued implementation of the anachronistic "royal prerogative" and incompetent government from afar.<sup>89</sup> At several points in his work, Wilkes virtually agitates for self-government for New South Wales, consistently making reference to the colony as a country

tottering on the brink of civil upheaval. In the course of some twenty-five pages, he refers to New South Wales as "this rising colony," "the rising community," "this rising state" and "these rising colonies," culminating in a passage in which he comes very near to losing the last semblances of authorial detachment:

I cannot but believe that this state of society is destined in a very short time to undergo a great change; and many of the inhabitants seem to be of the same opinion, particularly if they obtain a colonial legislature. This it seems almost indispensable they should have, for the wishes and wants of the rising community are too little known and heeded, at the distance of sixteen thousand miles, to insure good government; and the acts and the varying policy of the mother country are so ill adapted to the state of things here, as to strike the most common observers, and only tend to loosen the ties of affection that bind the colonists to it.<sup>90</sup>

George Colvocoresses, whose journal was published in 1852, some seven years after Wilkes' massive text, saw the issue in even more absolute terms:

There is very little doubt that when sufficiently powerful, the colonists will shake off the yoke of the mother country, and erect themselves into a separate sovereignty, such a spirit being abundantly evident, even at present. They have not as yet the strength necessary for an undertaking of so great a magnitude; but none of the inclination is wanting, particularly since the home government has threatened to subject them to what they consider unjust taxation. Already the storm-cloud has begun [*sic*] to show itself above the horizon, and we will venture to predict, the time is not far distant when it will overspread the heavens, and shower upon them all the horrors of family strife.<sup>91</sup>

Both Wilkes and Colvoresses foresaw imminent change, and both considered

the local populace ready and willing to assume control. If this was true--and one must allow, to some extent, for the observers' subjectivity --then, as the 1840's began, the homeland of these two writers had been a powerful contributor to the volatile political situation they enthusiastically described.

The visit of the prestigious Wilkes expedition consolidated for many Australian colonists the goodwill that had been steadily growing for some decades in the convict settlement. The Americans apparently regarded the two-week sojourn as a chance to repay old debts. James Dana, the expedition mineralogist, was simply stunned by the extravagant welcome accorded him and his countrymen: "we have open door and open hearts everywhere."<sup>92</sup> At last, gratitude for America's substantial contribution to the cause of Australian freedom could be shown. Openly and honestly. The Americans responded in kind, Wilkes designating New South Wales "a glorious colony" with a bright future, and Colvocoresses remarking on its being "exceeding precocious, approaching fast to commercial and political greatness."<sup>93</sup> In summarizing the present thus, both men provided a symbolic link between the political advances of the previous fifteen years and the increasingly large strides towards self-government of the next fifteen.

When the last of the expedition vessels departed Sydney Harbour in March, 1840, farewelled by the friendship of a whole colony, no one could anticipate that in little more than twenty years Captain Wilkes would again be a local talking point--only this time in less propitious circumstances. As the exploits of the expedition excited



the Australian imagination in the early 1840's, so Wilkes' principal role in the infamous Trent affair would engage the attention of every colonist in the 1860's.<sup>94</sup>

## CHAPTER III ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the years from 1789 to 1850, H.M. Green has said: "Of an age as it has been outlined in this History, of its strength and arrogance and crudity and ideal enthusiasms, Wentworth is representative as Harpur could never be " (Green, I, 46).

<sup>2</sup> A.C.V. Melbourne in William Charles Wentworth (Brisbane: Biggs, 1934), p. 6, gives Wentworth's birthdate as sometime in "the latter part of 1792"; Michael Persse, in ADB, II, 582, suggests it was sometime in 1790.

<sup>3</sup> Barton, Literature in New South Wales, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> See ADB, II, 583; II, 589.

<sup>5</sup> Wentworth, W.C., A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales (London: G. and W.B. Whittaker, 1819).

<sup>6</sup> W.C. Wentworth to Fitzwilliam (January 15, 1817), quoted in Melbourne, pp. 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> Melbourne, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> W.C. Wentworth to D. Wentworth (March 22, 1817), quoted in Melbourne, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> W.C. Wentworth to D. Wentworth (April 10, 1817), quoted in Melbourne, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Sydney Smith's much-publicized phrase. See above, Chapter 1, section b).

<sup>11</sup> Barton, Literature in New South Wales, p. 122.

<sup>12</sup> Since Statistical Description (1819) was not available while this thesis was being written, reference to it is made through secondary sources. See Inglis, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> Sydney Smith, in his review of Wentworth's Statistical Description (1819), endorsed Wentworth's faith in the potential of New Holland, but he couldn't agree that the southern "land of convicts and kangaroos" was yet ready for an elected assembly: ". . . we are afraid that a Botany Bay parliament would give rise to jokes. . . ." (Smith, Works, pp. 122, 129). Several years later, Robert Southey, jotting down the principal points of Statistical Description (1824), specifically referred to Wentworth's "cry for an independent paper" in Southey's Common-Place Book, ed. John Wood Warter (London: Reeves and Turner, 1876), p. 578.

<sup>14</sup> Wentworth refers to himself as a "native of Australia" on the book's title-page.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Ward and Robertson, Such Was Life, p. 76. See also Levi, p. 52; Green, I, 59; Bartlett, pp. 83-4. The pertinent pages in Statistical Description (1819) are pp. 163, 243-6. Ward quotes from Statistical Description, 2nd ed. (1820), pp. 197-8, 277-80.

<sup>16</sup> See Nye and Grabo, pp. 31-2; David L. Jacobson, John Dickinson and the Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1764-1776 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1965), pp. 95-7.

<sup>17</sup> Ward and Robertson, p. 77.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in ADB, II, 584.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Melbourne, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Eddy, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup> See Lansbury, p. 42; Barton, Literature in New South Wales, pp. 121-2.

<sup>22</sup> The second edition of Statistical Description (1820) ran to 579 pages (compared with the first edition's 465). The third edition was entitled A Statistical Account of the British Settlements in Australasia; including the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London: Geo. B. Whittaker, 1824).

<sup>23</sup> Eddy, p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> ADB, II, 585.

<sup>25</sup> W.C. Wentworth to D. Wentworth (May 1, 1820), quoted in Clark, II, 47.

<sup>26</sup> Wentworth, Statistical Account (1824), I, 323; I, 326.

<sup>27</sup> Wentworth (1824), I, 331; I, 382. Wentworth recorded that "like the Indian juggler's bag of serpents, their [the exclusives'] nature is not altered, but they have happily lost their poisonous fangs." (I, 383).

<sup>28</sup> Wentworth (1824), I, 417.

<sup>29</sup> Wentworth (1824), I, 418-19.

<sup>30</sup> Wentworth (1824), I, 420. See also I, 417; II, 302-3.

<sup>31</sup> Wentworth (1824), I, 389.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Melbourne, p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> Darling to Hay (February 6, 1827), HRA, I, xiii, 81. In his petition, Wentworth demanded trial by jury, taxation by consent, suffrage for the "entire free population" and an elected assembly (ADB, II, 585-6).

<sup>34</sup> There are a number of similarities between Wentworth and Hamilton: both, it seems, were conceived out of wedlock; both influenced the constitution of their respective countries; both eventually defended a government of property and privilege in order to check impudent democracy; and both praised the British Constitution, especially encouragement of government by a wealthy minority.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Melbourne, p. 89. The phrase is from Wentworth's speech on the New South Wales Constitution Bill (1853). See C.M.H. Clark, ed., Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900 (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1955), pp. 334-40.

<sup>36</sup> See Australian, February 1, 1833.

<sup>37</sup> Both Wentworth and Adams envisaged a conservative political system in which a wealthy and experienced minority governed in such a way as to prevent what they regarded as democratic excesses. Only certain individuals in a country's population, they believed, were sufficiently educated and talented to lead. See Adams on "a natural aristocracy among men," in his letter to Thomas Jefferson (November

15, 1813), in Nye and Grabo, pp. 87-8.

<sup>38</sup> See Clark, II, 245; III, 158; ADB, II, 587.

<sup>39</sup> Clark, II, 245.

<sup>40</sup> Australian, January 18, 1842.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Melbourne, p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Parrington, Main Currents, I, 299-300. See also

Richard B. Morris, ed., Alexander Hamilton and the Founding of the Nation (New York: Dial Press, 1957), pp. 130-9, 285-376.

<sup>43</sup> John Dunmore Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony, 1st ed., 2 vols. (London: Cochrane and M'Crone, 1834); Historical and Statistical Account, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: A.J. Valpy, 1837).

<sup>44</sup> Lang (1834), I, ix.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Barton, Literature in New South Wales, p. 128.

<sup>46</sup> Barton, Literature in New South Wales, pp. 125-6. See also ADB, II, 77; Nadel, p. 37.

<sup>47</sup> Lang (1834), I, 21.

<sup>48</sup> See Lang (1834), II, 277-307 (especially 302-6).

<sup>49</sup> Lang (1834), II, 275-7.

<sup>50</sup> Lang (1834), II, 277.

<sup>51</sup> Lang (1834), II, 303.

<sup>52</sup> In Historical and Statistical Account (1837), for example, Lang compares and contrasts the American backwoodsman and the Australian squatter. See Bartlett, pp. 94-6.

53 Quoted in Barton, Literature in New South Wales, p. 128.

54 Amasa Delano, A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres: comprising Three Voyages Round the World (Boston: E.G. House, 1817), p. 462.

55 See Greenwood, Early American-Australian Relations, pp. 82-92.

56 See above, Chapter 1, section a).

57 Delano, pp. 421-2.

58 Delano, p. 421. See also, Dictionary of American Biography, V (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), 217. Hereafter, source will be cited as DAB.

59 Delano, pp. 318-53.

60 "Benito Cereno" first appeared in Putnam's Monthly Magazine, VI (October to December, 1855), 353-67, 459-73, 633-44. For documentation of the relationship between Melville's and Delano's texts, see Herman Melville, Piazza Tales, ed. Egbert S. Oliver (1856; rpt. New York: Hendricks House, 1948), pp. 230-8.

61 Early in the Revolutionary War, for example, Delano's father was captured and held prisoner on the British ship, Rainbow (DAB, V, 217). In the Narrative, the only time Delano expresses his impatience with English haughtiness occurs on p. 146, when he refers to the "abusive attacks" by the Quarterly Review on his countrymen.

62 Delano, p. 448.

63 Delano, p. 449.

64 See, for example, Delano's intentionally servile letter to Gov. King, in which he attempted to secure £400 for the aid he gave to an English ship in distress (Delano, pp. 461-3).

<sup>65</sup> See Delano, p. 463.

<sup>66</sup> Charles Wilkes, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1845); Geo.[orge] M. Colvocoresses, Four Years in a Government Expedition (New York: Cornish, Lamport, 1852); Charles Erskine, Twenty Years Before the Mast (Boston: the author, 1890).

<sup>67</sup> See Daniel C. Haskell, The United States Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842, and its Publications 1844-1874 (New York: New York Public Library, 1942), p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, Haskell, pp. 2-4; David B. Tyler, The Wilkes Expedition (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), pp. 26-7.

<sup>69</sup> Niles' National Register, LIII (October 28, 1837), 130, quoted in Haskell, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> See Daniel Henderson, The Hidden Coasts (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1953), p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> See Tyler, p. 12; Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne: the American Years (New York: Rinehart, 1948), pp. 200-1, 462-3; Horatio Bridge, Personal Recollections of Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York: Harpers, 1893), pp. 82-3.

<sup>72</sup> See Cantwell, p. 463.

<sup>73</sup> Bridge, p. 83.

<sup>74</sup> Haskell, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> See Wilkes, II, 160, 163.



- 76 Wilkes, II, 161.
- 77 Colvocoresses, p. 92.
- 78 Quoted in Jessie Poesch, Titian Ramsay Peale 1799-1885 and His Journals of the Wilkes Expedition (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1961), p. 165.
- 79 See Wilkes, II, 160; Tyler, p. 129; Erskine, pp. 95-6.
- 80 William Bixby, The Forgotten Voyage of Charles Wilkes (New York: David McKay, 1966), p. 58.
- 81 See Tyler, p. 127.
- 82 See Tyler, pp. 120, 126-7, 154; Wilkes, II, 277.
- 83 Wilkes, II, 160.
- 84 Wilkes, II, 362. The italics are mine.
- 85 Wilkes, II, 242.
- 86 Erskine, p. 94. The author is, of course, alluding to Sydney Smith's phrase (see above, chapter I, section b). Erskine then launches into a colourful series of comparisons between Sydney and a number of American cities: "George Street [in Sydney] is the Broadway of Sydney. The Cove--God save the name!--is the old Ann Street of Boston; South Street of Philadelphia; River of Styx, Norfolk; Sausage Row, Cincinnati; Five Points or the Hook of New York; Hog Lane of Canton. . . . There are plenty of old Fagins and old Fagin's pupils living here. Here you will find all nations mixed up together, eating, drinking, singing, dancing, gambling, quarreling, and fighting."
- 87 Wilkes, II, 164.
- 88 Wilkes, II, 225.

- 89 Wilkes, II, 220, 225.
- 90 Wilkes, II, 201; 220-1, 225-6.
- 91 Colvocoresses, p. 100.
- 92 Quoted in Tyler, p. 124.
- 93 Wilkes, II, 276; Colvocoresses, p. 100.
- 94 See below, chapter IV, section c).

PART TWO: 1838-1868

## CHAPTER IV

## SPREADING DEMOCRACY

No believer in the glorious destinies of the Anglo-Saxon race can look upon the events of the last three years [1849-52] without wonder and hope. The American and British empires are seated on all waters; the old and new worlds are filled with the name and fame of England and her children. The lands conquered by Caesar, those discovered by Columbus, and those explored by Cook, are now joined together in one destiny. There are indeed peculiarities in the various branches of the Anglo-Saxon race; but they are only the varieties of the same family, conscious of eternal unities. How awfully grand are their prospects. America attracted by gold has pushed forward her commercial pioneers, not only to the extremity of her territories, but to all the islands of the Pacific. The discovery of gold in California was scarcely less momentous to the Australasian than to the American continent. They are now our nearest neighbours: their markets are affected by our own; their territory offers the quickest transit to Europe; every hour will develop the immense importance of this contiguity.

John West, The History of Tasmania (1852)<sup>1</sup>

When Charles Dilke viewed at first-hand both Australia and the United States in 1866-7, he was struck by the differences between them as democracies. In the Australian colonies he found

no trace . . . at present of that love for general ideas which takes America away from England in philosophy. . . . Democracy in the [Australian] colonies is at present an accident, and nothing more; it rests upon no basis of reasoning, but upon a fact.<sup>2</sup>

While recognizing a dearth of any ideological commitment to democratic principles, Dilke discovered powerful evidence of what might be called "practical" democracy. He noted "that no male colonist admits the possibility of the existence of a social superior." The uncertainties evident in 1838 had apparently succumbed, over the ensuing three decades, to a more rigorous self-confidence. Though the country might be rudderless and wanting a distinctive national identity, the Australian in the street remained convinced of his own "equality with the best"--a curious contradiction which might help to explain the complete collapse of the republican movement in the community at large (and in literature) in the early years of the twentieth century, when Australian Nationalists were side-tracked by the Boer War, an Empire striving to maintain its waning credibility and Federation, which promised much and produced little.

In the crucial years between 1838 and 1868, the orientation of Australian colonists altered irrevocably, from the last vestiges of a penal complex to a semblance of self-assurance borne of over a decade of constitutional autonomy and responsible government. During

this period of swift change, America played an even more prominent role in colonial developments than in earlier years. Again, economically, politically and socially, the United States continued to aid and counsel democratic forces at work in Australia. But busy interaction for the first time took place, prompted by gold discoveries in California and New South Wales. John West, minister, editor and astute historian, grasped the implications of the new relationship in 1852 when he recognized the Americans as Australia's "nearest neighbours: their markets are affected by our own; their territory offers the quickest transit to Europe; every hour will develop the immense importance of this contiguity."<sup>3</sup> Exchange of both population and commodities occurred, and, more significantly, of ideas. Cultural ties solidified. As in England during the same period, American books were for the first time read in substantial numbers. In short, the sporadic and largely expedient nature of Australian/American relations that characterized Australia's first fifty years was replaced by close contact and more comprehensive understanding--a situation reflected in the literature of the day.

The relationship between the two countries after 1838 developed, decade by decade, as a function of major social events and movements. In the Forties, agitation for a greater say in government and the massive support for the anti-transportation movement once more motivated local demagogues to cite American precedent after the fashion of the 1820's. Two pamphlets to appear in Australia during this period, entitled Indefeasible Rights of Man (1842) and Common Sense (1847),

bear witness to a continuing appreciation of Thomas Paine's tacit relevance to colonial politics.<sup>4</sup> Then the discovery of gold, first in California in 1849, and a couple of years later in New South Wales and Victoria, created a social upheaval in both countries of such magnitude that the eyes with which each looked at the other altered considerably. Gold prompted Australians to adopt new attitudes towards themselves and their Pacific neighbours. Furthermore, American know-how, what George Francis Train called "Yankee notions," arrived.<sup>5</sup>

Under governors from Phillip to Bourke, America had always been a specific tool to which scheming colonists could turn; it was a weapon readily available to interested parties inspired by an ulterior motive. Events of the Fifties changed all that. Australians and Americans met at close quarters, exchanged greetings, political philosophies, songs and books. A strong demand for American news resulted in Australians receiving the latest American happenings not only via the London newspapers, but direct from San Francisco (a bare three weeks away). Initial distrust on the Australian goldfields, based on the poor reception accorded many Australians in 1849 California, gradually changed into a fairly widespread sympathy. Indeed, the Australian press between 1850 and the close of the American Civil War generally discussed events in the United States with an objectivity, and often warmth, wholly lacking in their London counterparts. Seeds of the intimate social ties of the 1880's and '90's were sown in this decade. Australian writers, mid-century, struggled to attain a state of mind that would ultimately lead them to the harvest and Walt Whitman.

Socially radical and egalitarian attitudes took firm root in the Australian imagination.

Slavery and the dramatic events of the Civil War ideologically divided Australia, if the press is any guide, almost as much as it did America. Colonial newspapers took their stand for the North or South. The issue of free trade, so important in Australia later in the century as the ideas of Henry George gained prominence, surfaced for the first time in the Sixties as many Australians sought to appreciate all the issues--not just slavery--surrounding the dreadful convulsions dividing their Pacific cousins. As American fired on American, some Australians even began to dream a grand dream: their country as God's chosen land, a southern utopia.<sup>6</sup> For Australia to emerge as an enlightened new world, Jonathan's mistakes had to be avoided.

Between 1838 and 1868, then, Australian/American relations underwent a series of alterations. Only one thing appeared unchanged by the passage of years: the high frequency of escapes on American boats. Ranging from the dramatic departures of the exiled Americans Benjamin Wait, Samuel Chandler and James Gemmell from Van Diemen's Land in 1841, through the Irish patriots' similar efforts between 1851 and 1853, to the bolt for freedom of John Boyle O'Reilly (on an American whaler, near Bunbury, Western Australia) in 1869, and culminating, eight years later, in the dramatic escape of six fellow-Irish political prisoners on the whaling ship Catalpa, the period is notable for its famous escapes, each widely reported at the time.<sup>7</sup>



With the Catalpa rescue in 1876, an era in American/Australian relations came to a close. Fittingly, in that centennial year of American Independence, prisoners from the last group of felons to be deposited at an Australian settlement were daringly heisted from an English gaol and assisted to freedom on an American boat to reside in Yankee New England. The pattern of nearly a century of similar, though often more covert escapes, was complete.

Section A

1840's

The principal difference between the political unrest in Australia in the 1820's and in the 1840's is that during the former period colonists aimed to realize no more than certain fundamental rights they felt their prerogative as Englishmen, while in the latter the impetus owed much to an irrepressible feeling that self-government should, and shortly would become a reality. This change occurred for a variety of reasons--principally an increase in the number of native-born Australians and ambitious migrants--and was accelerated by political Acts in the Forties themselves. First, the Constitution Act of 1842 created bitterness amongst the radicals, democrats and chartists in the colony by imposing a £20 franchise and by retaining the imperial government's right of veto and control over crown lands; and at the same time its companion, the Act for Regulating the Sale of Waste Land Belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies (1842) thoroughly disenchanted the conservatives. Both sides, in fact, advocated a similar strategy for future action as growing numbers of colonists equated their situation with the pre-revolutionary period in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Once again, American political example, and to a lesser extent thought, assumed a dramatic relevance in both New South Wales and Tasmania. In the late 1840's, as the issue of possible reintroduction of transportation gradually clarified into the principal question at stake in the colony, both conservative landholder and egalitarian emigrant once more recalled the ideals of the 1776 Declaration in a profusion of praise and censure. American principles continued to preoccupy the colonial imagination.

Constitutional debate in all the Australian colonies (except Western Australia) throughout the Forties and early Fifties drew strongly on the legislative precedents of the United States, either to preserve or to condemn the current situation. While there remained no doubt that the majority of colonists conceived of themselves as forever the "Sons of Britain," undeniably "English for thousands of years," this provided no barrier to their persistent questioning of the Mother Country's colonial policy.<sup>9</sup> And a part of this inquiry involved acclaiming the benefits of independence derived by the citizens of the United States. So often did the American constitution get bandied around in the Queensland Legislative Council that, as late as 1870, one official chided the body for sheer excess.<sup>10</sup>

In New South Wales, the man who had been the first publicly to taunt England with the threat of an Australian rebellion, William Charles Wentworth, was again the most prominent speaker to resort to similar tactics in the decade leading up to self-government. Just as he had in the first uncensored newspapers in the 1820's,

Wentworth played a major role in making America an accepted, if not pivotal talking point in parliamentary circles. By the Forties, however, he was an entrenched conservative and he no longer whimsically proposed revolution. Rather, he gravitated to those men who suited his now more reactionary political stance--such as Washington, the Frenchman Tocqueville and John C. Calhoun.<sup>11</sup> The ageing Wentworth, as his contemporary John West put it, "is yet a lictor when he turns towards the multitude, and a tribune only when he faces the seat of authority."<sup>12</sup> The lictor in Wentworth reacted violently, as Tocqueville had also, to the pervasive intimations of Jacksonian democracy. This new equalitarianism, causing every politician to depend for survival on "King Numbers," was anathema. For Wentworth, only wealth, property and education could train men for the principal offices of state (as Adams had maintained many years before).<sup>13</sup>

Though Tocqueville and Wentworth both feared levelling doctrines, they responded to the implications of the American democratic state in wholly different ways. Tocqueville accepted the fact that the "noble has gone down in the social scale, and the commoner gone up. . . . Every half century brings them closer, and soon they will touch." He recognized that the "gradual progress of equality is something fated."<sup>14</sup> Tocqueville's concept of majority tyranny rested on his observation that, in America, individualism was being continually compromised. True freedom of expression didn't exist and conformity abounded everywhere: "I know no country in which, speaking generally, there is less independence of mind and true freedom of discussion

than in America."<sup>15</sup> Wentworth, on the other hand, not only indicted "the vicissitudes of public opinion. . . . the proverbial inconstancy of the popular gale," he adamantly opposed the very "spirit of democracy abroad, which was almost daily extending its limits. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

As a Select Committee prepared the draft for an Australian Constitution in 1853, Wentworth lashed the group with strident anti-republican invective. When the time came to comment in the Legislative Council on the proposed Constitution Bill in August, 1853, he left no doubt as to his position, assailing democracy's "recklessness of consequences." Who, Wentworth asked, "would ever return, if once he left these shores . . . so long as selfishness, ignorance, and democracy hold sway?" He demanded the legitimizing of his ruling class of "Shepherd Kings," an ambition which could only be realized if the Legislative Council framed "a British, not a Yankee constitution."<sup>17</sup> Apparently oblivious to the larger pattern of Tocqueville's argument--which attempted, as George W. Pierson has put it, to "make democratie safe for the world"<sup>18</sup>--Wentworth proceeded to quote elaborately from the French aristocrat to justify his argument. He was by no means the first Australian landowner to use Tocqueville's Democracy in America for his own purposes.<sup>19</sup> But where Tocqueville attempted to purify democracy, Wentworth and his colleagues determined to oppose it.

Wentworth spent his last political years in opposition to the recent republican outpourings of Jacksonian America; yet, typically, even as he maintained that he was a man of entrenched "Conservative

principles," he reverted to his youthful trouble-making role as it suited him.<sup>20</sup> When Lord Grey equivocated over the repeated remonstrances by the Legislative Council for self-government, Wentworth, through an appointed Committee, gratuitously regressed to his seasoned trick of alluding to the American Revolution. The Committee informed Grey that the "annals of America prove . . . [that it was] only when the mischievous principle of direct intermeddling with the functions of their legislatures was asserted . . . that those unfortunate heart-burnings arose which led to their dismemberment from the British Empire."<sup>21</sup> The old political fox always recognized, and tormented, the soft underbelly of any opposition. And when he dealt with an intractable Colonial Office, America repeatedly provided him with teeth.

Charles Wilkes, during his squadron's Sydney visit in late 1839, observed that the "rising colonies" of Australia were proceeding rapidly towards autonomy. On many occasions throughout the Forties, his comments seemed to retain more relevance to volatile Tasmania than to New South Wales. One of Wilkes' countrymen visiting Tasmania in 1841, a merchant named Augustus Rogers, certainly thought so. In a letter home to his brother, in November, he commented:

. . . doubtless one of these days they will "throw off the yoke" here, their [sic] being considerable grumbling already as to their treatment by the mother country. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Like their mainland countrymen, agitating Tasmanian colonists consistently exhibited their appreciation of American history and political thought.

The early work of newspaper editors such as Andrew Bent and Robert Murray carried over into the Forties as a result of the tenacity and dedication of men such as John Morgan. A commissioned officer who had served with the Royal Marines in the War of 1812, Morgan befriended John Quincy Adams in the years between 1815 and 1817 when Adams was ambassador to London.<sup>23</sup> Whether their friendship acted as a catalyst or not, Morgan, especially in his later years, vigorously espoused the principles for which the Americans had engaged in the War of Independence. Having arrived in Richmond, Van Diemen's Land, in 1834 as police magistrate, Morgan spent short periods as a farmer, then as a journalist, until he found his bent in life--that of newspaper editor. Newspapers such as the Hobart Town Advertiser (1839), Tasmanian Weekly Dispatch (1839-41) and the Brittania and Trades' Advocate (1846-51) came under his control, enabling him to exert considerable political influence on the colony.<sup>24</sup> In these papers, he consistently made "commendatory references" to "American institutions" (as Linus Miller, one of the Americans exiled to Tasmania after the Upper Canadian rebellion, once remarked<sup>25</sup>). Completely dissatisfied with the workings of officialdom, and the performance of the Legislative Council in particular, Morgan mounted a campaign to resist the 1840 Road Act--an attempt by the Council to raise revenue through the taxation of free colonists. Like so many colonists before him dating back to the young Wentworth, Morgan resorted to that familiar Yankee cry, "No Taxation Without Representation."<sup>26</sup> Local authorities expressed shock and outrage at this blatant provocation. This from a

man who, earlier in the year, in an attempt to focus colonial opinion on the injustices confronting them, held a "National Union Dinner" to which he asked as many Americans and Frenchmen as he could find. And he held it just days before Australia Day. And they toasted the memory of Washington and La Fayette!<sup>27</sup>

Despite government attempts to stem his repeated attacks, Morgan continued to air his "liberal-cum-transcendental ideas" referring, whenever he felt the need, to memorable American political actions such as the Boston Tea Party.<sup>28</sup> Often he carried his words into action. When the Americans who were exiled after the Upper Canadian rebellion arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1840, Morgan apparently made a point of tendering his services to at least one of them--Linus Miller. Miller mentions that Morgan "talked much of our institutions, American enterprise, &c., which he greatly admired," and that he quickly launched an urgent appeal to the lieutenant-governor for the Patriots be treated with a liberality appropriate to the offence. Their crime represented "a sterling virtue in the estimation of nine-tenths of the civilized world," Morgan bravely informed the island population.<sup>29</sup>

His efforts to promote a more independent Van Diemen's Land were not in vain. Between 1845 and 1847, two issues erupted in the colony, in the second of which Morgan himself played a leading role. In 1845, the Tasmanian Governor, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, responding to his colony's debt of some £100,000, raised the duty on tea, sugar and foreign goods from five to fifteen percent. Six independent



members of the Legislative Council--named by their sympathizers, the "Patriotic Six"<sup>30</sup>--resisted the increase on the grounds of its unjustness and eventually resigned from the Council. Many heated public meetings ensued, the largest taking place in Hobart, where posters took up Morgan's earlier demand: "No Taxation Without Representation."<sup>31</sup> The enthusiastic acceptance of American catch-cries eventually paid off, as the Imperial Government agreed to give monetary assistance to the financially troubled colony, and the "Six" were reinstated.

Less than two years after the incident involving the "Patriotic Six" had first flared up, Morgan sparked another confrontation which rapidly escalated into a major issue. Suspecting yet another unlawful tax, he refused on principle to pay a dog licence--a fact he made sure received extensive coverage in the Brittania. Summoned, he suddenly found himself the litigant in a test case. The local court judged him guilty on two counts and instituted a fine; however, Morgan appealed to the Chief Justice, who found in his favour.<sup>32</sup> Jubilant, Morgan declared the decision a victory for virtue and liberal principles. The embarrassed Tasmanian Governor, William Denison, no doubt mindful of his precarious position in the midst of the continuous stirrings of young Democracy, must have privately cursed the liberalizing tendencies of the Home Office who insisted on avoiding another America at all costs.

Robert Lowe, to become Chancellor of the Exchequer under Gladstone in later political life, played a prominent role in perhaps the most

important political question of the Forties to rock the Colonial Offices of Stanley and Grey: that of resistance to transportation. The issue ignited in 1846 when W.E. Gladstone, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies (and, by the by, a Port Phillip property-owner) proposed to reintroduce convict labour to the Australian colonies.<sup>33</sup> All the major landowners and squatters endorsed the move. As Kylie Tennant puts it: "Just as the Virginian slave-holders clung to the institution of slavery, so did the squatters cling to convictism."<sup>34</sup> Lowe, a friend and sympathizer with squattocracy for the first few years after he arrived in Sydney in 1842, split irrevocably with Wentworth over the question. However, Lowe had learnt much in the short time from his colleague and he, too, had become adept in the art of alluding to America at just the right moment to engage crowd support. When still a part of the Wentworth circle, he had thrilled an 1846 Australia Day gathering with his barrage of vitriol against Governor Gipps and the Colonial Office. Would the bloody, expensive lesson of America have to be learned again by Britain, he asked, to the lusty and drunken cheers of a crowd of mostly landowners.<sup>35</sup>

The same group, however, were not quite so titillated with Lowe's more expansive Yankee reference a little more than three years later. When the convict ship Hashemy cast anchor in Sydney Harbour on June 11, 1849, a crowd of some five thousand gathered at Circular Quay for a great protest meeting. A veteran of many an Oxford Union debate, Lowe knew exactly how to appeal to the populace. To thunderous cheers, the Sydney Morning Herald reported, he implored the crowd,

as the Van Diemonian Morgan had been doing for years, to demand that colonial integrity be recognized:

He could see from the meeting the time was not far distant when they would assert their freedom not by words alone. As in America, oppression was the parent of independence, so would it be in the colony. The tea which the Americans flung into the water rather than pay the tax upon it, was not the cause of the revolt of the American States; it was the unrighteousness of the tax--it was the degradation of submission to an unrighteous demand. And so sure as the seed will grow into the plant, and the plant to the tree, in all times, and in all nations, so will injustice and tyranny ripen into rebellion, and rebellion into independence.<sup>36</sup>

Bested by the cunning use of his own device, Wentworth shouted into the wind. In Parliament, he labelled the Anti-Transportation League members nothing but levellers and anarchists, but as he did so, he began to look more and more isolated from the crowd that had once worshipped him. Anti-Transportation League banners flew on Australian ships as far away as San Francisco.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, the Hashemy's branded cargo had to be landed in the frontier outposts of Western Australia and Queensland.

This is not all. John West, the Tasmanian Congregational minister and historian, played perhaps the major role in his colony's abolition movement. His writings attest to a close acquaintance with American writers and events. In 1847 he discussed the case for abolishing transportation in a pamphlet entitled Common Sense: an enquiry into the influence of transportation on the colony of Van Diemen's Land (1847).<sup>38</sup> The short title itself guaranteed an audience, if only for

curiosity's sake--a fact of which the writer must have been well aware. Probably intended. In the booklet, West envisioned a community of small farmers replacing the present landed oligarchy. He shared ground with Paine in the sense that both desired to distribute the wealth of the community more equitably (though Paine foresaw different means<sup>39</sup>). But more importantly, his sense of the independent yeoman-farmer gave Australian voice to a notion which, in mid-nineteenth-century America, had become "the myth" of that country, as Henry Nash Smith demonstrates in his book, Virgin Lands (1957).<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Franklin (from the 1750's onwards), St John de Crèvecoeur and Thomas Jefferson gave clear expression to the myth in the second half of the eighteenth century by advancing the notion of the farmer as the cornerstone of a working Republic. As Jefferson put it, the "small land holders are the most precious part of a state."<sup>41</sup> Through the encouragement of the Western yeoman, America might well realize what in Europe had been simply a utopian dream. In Australia, it was precisely this idea that Lang and Deniehy would make their own in the 1840's and '50's.<sup>42</sup>

West's later writings reflected a keen enthusiasm for a constitutional union to bind the colonies. He wanted a strong federal governing body (Paine, too, had argued for a powerful central government in his Common Sense). In fact, some historians have credited West with being the first Australian to comprehensively treat the federation question. In a succession of eighteen articles for the Sydney Morning Herald in 1854, under the suggestive nom de plume

of "John Adams," he argued for a "Union of the Australian Colonies."<sup>43</sup> The fourth article attacked the administration in Downing Street where the "'groans of Australia' die away in silence . . . there despatches, which have run over half the world, are couched in oblivion; while beneath, in cellars of unfathomable depth, long-forgotten petitions that have prayed in vain, and memorials, as a dead man out of mind, lie deep in dust!"<sup>44</sup> The eighteenth article, concerned with the terms of a federal constitution, elaborated upon the example of the United States.<sup>45</sup> West's precision and eloquence so impressed the Herald's owner, John Fairfax, that he hired West as the paper's editor a couple of months after the last federation article appeared. As editor, West continued to pursue the paper's established conservative line, but it is clearly no coincidence that, whereas before 1854 the Herald dealt with American news only in editorial summaries, after that year it had an entire section to itself under the heading "America" or "American News."<sup>46</sup> Attitudes towards slavery and the American Civil War in the late 1850's and '60's took shape in the minds of many colonists according to the stance adopted by the Herald on these issues. If West's loyalty to the Mother Country was obvious in his firm conviction that England desired to avoid a repetition of the American debacle in Australia, he nevertheless retained a tremendous admiration for the United States. America was, to use West's word, Australia's "sister."<sup>47</sup>

In both New South Wales and Tasmania, then, throughout the Forties and early Fifties, the low hum of agitation rose to a clamour under

the impact of the self-government question and the prickly transportation dispute. Local spokesmen--including, as in years gone by, outraged bureaucrats<sup>48</sup>--readily used American precedents to bolster their arguments, but it is important to keep in mind that, at this time, as in earlier decades, the sources of protest remained essentially unaltered. The cry for self-government was anything but universal. In the two major colonies the plutocrats and educated middle-class orators continued to lead the way. Both groups were primarily concerned with protecting the "undeniable rights of property," as Robert Lowe's Atlas put it, not the "fanciful and metaphysical rights of man."<sup>49</sup> In Tasmania, John West grasped the tenor of the times accurately:

As might be expected, the prevailing spirit of the colonies is democratic: the democracy of the middle classes, not of the mob.<sup>50</sup>

As we have seen, these were Wentworth's sentiments exactly. For as a group, the middle classes contented themselves with the steady acquisition of rights, gained in relatively orderly fashion. West's conclusion to the second volume of his History of Tasmania (1852) was typical of the ploys used in the political literature of colonists owing a debt to Wentworth's controversial Statistical Description (1819)--namely, suggest the obvious military resources of the colony (distances, mountainous regions, the strong likelihood of foreign aid), make passing reference to the country which had so successfully undertaken severance from the Empire (the well-read West did so with cunning sophistication by quoting humorous satirical excerpts from

Sydney Smith and Benjamin Franklin<sup>51</sup>), then flatter the Mother Country with earnest declarations that she is not about to make the same mistake twice. "England," West maintained, "will not permit her ministers to oppress the colonies. . . ."<sup>52</sup> Finally, having flirted with revolutionary talk, solemnly reaffirm the Englishman's natural proclivity to peace and belief in social organization:

The love of order is too strong in the English breast to tolerate anarchy. . . . [Since] life is short, no wise man would wish to waste a considerable portion in passing through the disorders of a revolution to gain the mere name of a State.<sup>53</sup>

West was probably right, for no one in the Australian colonies pushed, as Tom Paine and Sam Adams had pushed, for revolution. Disenchanted Chartists arriving in substantial numbers in the Forties found a comparatively prosperous new land. Charles Dilke dryly quoted an old joke. "Question: 'What is a Colonial Conservative?' Answer: 'A statesman who has got four "points" of the People's Charter, and wants to conserve them.'"<sup>54</sup> The Australian situation was never sufficiently critical to sustain a revolution. Radical workers' groups themselves upheld such middle-class virtues as piety, thrift, sobriety and industriousness.<sup>55</sup> These, of course, had been precisely those values that Benjamin Franklin advocated as desirable for an expanding middle-class America in his Autobiography (1771-89). Even temperamentally, then, Australians and Americans were beginning to have much in common.

Section B

## 1850's

First news of the discovery of gold in California arrived in the Australian colonies in December, 1848. With the prospect of making one's fortune only a short voyage away, many Australians were sorely tempted to try their luck at the diggings across the Pacific. Emigration to America quickly and greedily began, as six crowded ships sailed out of Sydney Harbour and one from Hobart (in December, 1849, and January, 1850), followed by several from Melbourne in June. Within six months, 679 people, optimists all, had headed out to seek American gold. Australian/American relations were, for the first time, truly reciprocal, as an Australian presence rapidly established itself on Californian soil.

Tempting advertisements of all varieties appeared everywhere to lure the footloose. Tailors wanted to rig out the prospective digger, joiners to construct portable houses. A Mrs. Brignell actually offered to sell her house to be taken across the Pacific. Wrote the English-born trader and whaler Robert Towns:



The whole affair (to use a hackneyed phrase),  
 beggars description--a perfect phenomenon . . .  
wonderful and at the same time true.<sup>57</sup>

At first, the large-circulation Sydney Morning Herald added some fuel to the flames (though later it was more cautionary). Four days into the new year, the paper's leader, entitled "The New Gold Country," strongly supported the new trading outlet for Sydney's low-priced grain and flour. Tasmanian shippers were equally happy with the prospect of getting inflated prices for their excess quantities of grain and timber. Only Melbourne merchants and businessmen responded angrily from the beginning, appreciating their vulnerability. They stood to lose many valuable workers, while, because of their greater isolation, gaining no trading advantage. An Argus leader in January warned the labouring classes to be "careful how they exchange health, competence, and security here for a feverish dream in California."<sup>58</sup>

After the first group of ships departed Sydney, scepticism took hold of the population until at least a few rags-to-riches stories could be corroborated. The arrival of a ship from San Francisco, with twelve hundred ounces of gold, was apparently confirmation enough. Emigration figures rose steeply. So much so that, during the peak of the excitement, an estimated six thousand colonists left Australian ports (mainly Sydney) to seek Californian riches.<sup>59</sup> A significant percentage of these were convicts and ex-convicts, of whom one group in particular was to make a major impact on the Californian community: the infamous "Sydney Ducks."

Integrated into the mass of hopefuls leaving for San Francisco

were a bunch of notorious Sydney felons and fellow-travellers. They included Thomas Belcher Kay ("Singing Billy"), Sam Whittaker, John Jenkins, the handsome forger "Gentleman Jim" Stuart and George ("Jack the Dandy") Adams. With over a dozen more like them, these men constituted a gang known as the "Sydney Ducks" or "Sydney Coves," and made their base in a district in northeast San Francisco soon labelled "Sydney Town."<sup>60</sup> The "Ducks" were not the only Australian gang in California, merely the most renowned.

"Duck" activity soon gained a reputation among resident Californians who, because they often lacked proof, began blaming unsolved crimes on the reprehensible Sydney emigrants. All convicts, they shrieked, or damn near it. This hostility, allied to the growing crime rate (much of it due to the Sydney gangs, some not), had two consequences of more far-reaching importance for Australian/American relations through the early 1850's: first, anti-foreign legislation was introduced to curb the relentless waves of emigrants arriving on the American west coast--principally in the form of a Bill "for the Better Regulation of the Mines and the Government of Foreign Miners." A legislative committee proposed a tax on foreigners to prevent the country being inundated by "the worst population of the Mexican and South American States, New South Wales," and other areas.<sup>61</sup> Secondly, wide criminal activity occasioned the formation, in 1851, of the notorious Committee of Vigilance--a group constituted to prevent crime and punish offenders (by death, if necessary). The brutish "Sydney Duck," John Jenkins, was the first criminal hanged by the Committee which, through its

process of "democratic justice," accumulated evidence and then made decisions according to a majority vote. When it was finally disbanded, the Committee had cross-examined ninety-one suspects, hung four, whipped one, forcibly deported fourteen, ordered another fourteen to leave the area, handed fifteen over to the legal authorities and discharged forty-one.<sup>62</sup>

As a result of the vigilante activity of the Committee and the general low regard in which Australian arrivals were held, the goodwill that had marked contact between Australians and Americans for so many years began noticeably to deteriorate.<sup>63</sup> In 1850, California post-office workers even refused to make up mail for New South Wales.<sup>64</sup> New Hollanders, in turn, were informed that of sixteen men arrested in San Francisco in 1849, twelve were Sydneysiders. After a fire in December, the authorities detained some forty-eight Sydney men in a total of seventy.<sup>65</sup> Further, and more ominously, the Committee of Vigilance continued to assert its right to screen the passengers of all incoming Australian ships for undesirables. Naturally, the Committee's considerable power often produced excesses. The most serious example occurred when an innocent Australian captain was almost hanged by a rampaging mob after a San Francisco fire.<sup>66</sup>

As stories of California myopia, intentionally restrictive legislation and the questionable activities of the Vigilance Committee found their way back to Australia, the community, perhaps understandably, responded bitterly. Maybe the editors of newspapers such as the Argus, People's Advocate and Sydney Morning Herald were right after

all when they had prophetically warned of the dire consequences of risking security at home in search of an illusory fortune.<sup>67</sup> Only the worst class of adventurer would venture to the diggings, all had admonished. Fairfax's Herald, with tongue in cheek, reprinted a Punch article purporting to be a compilation of advice:

"What Class ought to go to the Diggins? Persons who have nothing to lose except their lives. . . .  
"Things you will find useful at the Diggins. A revolving pistol, some knowledge of treating gun-shot wounds, a toleration of strange bedfellows. . . .  
"What is the best thing to do when you get to the Diggins? Go back home. . . ."<sup>68</sup>

Unfortunately, light-hearted hyperbole turned into horrid reality for many Australians who, by the first half of 1851, were returning in larger numbers than those about to embark. Some were just plain disenchanted. Others had got word of the gold discoveries of an ex-Californian miner, Edward Hargraves, in their own Australian backyard. Having first recognized the close similarity between California gold regions and certain areas in New South Wales, Hargraves discovered commercial quantities of gold at a place near Bathurst, on February 12, 1851. The flow of Australian traffic to America halted abruptly. . . . Far more prosperous fields in New South Wales and Victoria were about to open up.

The Californian gold rush, for a time, did exert certain beneficial effects on the Australian economy. Astute businessmen, aware of the sudden and massive market in San Francisco, exported, apart from grain and flour, supplies of beer, timber, building materials and coal.

Possum-fur rugs and knapsacks, too, were in demand. The high point for local speculative cargo was reached in 1850 when eighty-six ships sold £95,473 worth of goods. Competition from the eastern United States, however, soon asserted control and Australian exports dropped to almost nothing in 1851.<sup>69</sup>

Apart from providing Australian traders with a brief boost, renewed contact with America prompted some local observers once again to comment on the potential for close ties between the two countries. As the pressure for self-government in Australia continued to build, some newspaper editors couldn't resist speculating, along with the irrepressible John Dunmore Lang, on the possibility of an Australian republic. One maintained that

Australians will not fail to recognize in the California constitution a model after which their own might be moulded. . . . The result of this recognition may lead, even during the existence of the present generation, to the establishment of independent Australian republics.<sup>70</sup>

Another applauded the Americans, who

. . . accustomed to action, not whining and petitioning, have elected their governors, and accepted their constitution, without a moment's obstruction; and have offered a practical lesson to these colonies which has produced a profound impression.<sup>71</sup>

But on the whole, the bad press accorded California's mob law and "kangaroo courts" overshadowed those who wished to focus on loftier ideals. A lot of Australians suffered in California. J.H. Williams, the United States consul in Sydney, knew it (and, much to the chagrin

of his countrymen, publicly expressed his total disapproval of the Californian anti-foreigner legislation.<sup>72)</sup> And the indignant colonial populace, despite an ocean of separation, knew it. Henry Parkes, Chartist editor of the Empire, couldn't contain his outrage when informed of the activities of the Committee of Vigilance and, worse, the participation of some Australians in that Committee against their fellows. Confronted by the probable return of these quislings, in the presence of a host of repugnant Californians, he fumed: "Let no door be opened to receive blood-stained wretches."<sup>73</sup>

In this atmosphere of anger and resentment, aggravated by the local press, thousands of Americans from all over the country--only a small proportion Californians--prepared to accept the challenge of the Australian goldfields in late 1851. Approximately nineteen thousand made the journey over the next five years, the first groups sailing from San Francisco, but the great majority departing from New York. Like their Australian counterparts, the American newspapers initially scoffed or issued stern warnings. "Beware," the New York Herald trumpeted, "of these South Sea bubbles and Yazoo speculations."<sup>74</sup> But their efforts were to no avail; stories of a true El Dorado to the south multiplied.

The first influx of Americans occurred with the stigma of California still in the air. Despite the growing familiarity between the two countries throughout the previous fifty years, certain members of the fourth estate insisted on stressing the friction of the recent past.

Parkes' Empire continued to lash out:

The blood thirsty mob cannot fling calumnies against Australia when guilty of such acts [as lynching Jenkins]. . . . When the infuriated citizens of San Francisco strangled the thief whom they had caught in their streets, they hanged that liberty which they seemed to think they could preserve. . . .<sup>75</sup>

In like manner, the Melbourne Argus suggested the introduction of immigration laws based on the American legislation, only this time to bar undesirable Californians.<sup>76</sup> The continued American endorsement of slavery and imperialist endeavours in Cuba and Hawaii only exacerbated the tension. With the situation reversed, many Australians began to guard against "Californian savages."<sup>77</sup> A correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald sardonically considered the positive effects of British law on Americans, now "without the aid of Judge Lynch or of County Justices, who smoke, chew tobacco, and spit in their Courts of Justice, while they sit on the bench in their shirt sleeves, picking their teeth with bowie-knives, and enforcing their decrees with revolvers."<sup>78</sup> A current favourite of the times, the "Australian Gold Digger's Song," captures the prevailing feeling:

So boys we'll now enjoy ourselves and have a jolly song,  
 We care not for America, and that she'll know 'ere long,  
 For though her "Cal" has golden mines, we have them here  
 as well,  
 Much richer too (Bale Gammon boys), she can't our story  
 tell. . . .  
 Those drabites told us more than once, that we were villains  
 all,  
 All rogues and thieves and vagabonds, deserving six  
 feet fall. . . .<sup>79</sup>

However, despite press and social harassment, arriving Americans were rarely physically abused. Resentment seldom went beyond talk.<sup>80</sup> In fact, it soon became obvious to the local citizenry that this first large inpouring of Americans into Australia--real interaction, at last, had begun--might realize numerous beneficial results. Americans in the flesh seemed to belie the nasty Californian stories. As C. Rudston Read, a Gold Commissioner, discovered, most Americans were not cut-throats or trigger-happy. They worked hard, intelligently, and wanted only to abide by prevailing British laws.<sup>81</sup> Suspicion bred in the short term quickly reverted to the respect of past years. Americans were not all California cut-throats.

Predictably, conservative elements in both England and Australia reacted to the gold rush with alarm. The London Times set the tone of most forthcoming responses. "What are we to expect," the editor lamented, "in a second California not separated by a vast Pacific Ocean, but placed by nature in the very centre of those colonies which we have selected for the haunts of crime?"<sup>82</sup> Bad enough that recent agitation for self-government in the colonies had taken on a disturbing American flavour; now Brother Jonathan himself was invading the Australian goldfields to act as a sustained stimulus to republican activity. Or so the argument went.

Government officials cautiously appraised the American presence on the gold-fields from the outset. William Peters, the British Consul in Philadelphia, sent a report to the Foreign Secretary on August 30, 1852, expressing the fear that Australia was shortly to



become a republic: "Hundreds, if not thousands, of adventurers are either now on their voyage, or soon will embark from various parts of the United States for Australia--most of them bent 'on extending the area of freedom' and on aiding their fellow men in the pursuit of Liberty and Republicanism."<sup>83</sup> Peters maintained that the Americans embarking for Australia were in reality revolutionaries, members of an organization known as the "Order of the Lone Star," whose sole purpose was to propagate republicanism world-wide.<sup>84</sup> Colonial Secretary Pakington in turn despatched copies of Peters' report to Governors Fitzroy and La Trobe for comment.<sup>85</sup> Fitzroy replied that the account exaggerated the extent of republican sentiment. Dr. Lang notwithstanding, he considered the Americans, and the populace at large, too busily engaged in acquiring a fortune. La Trobe also played down the American presence; in addition, he maintained that the colonial press and its entrenched tradition of radical interaction with American political theory and example posed a far more serious threat to colonial stability than the thousands of Americans in Melbourne and on the Victorian goldfields. He was right. Australian republicans loudly agitated, in the early Fifties, for the implementation of the principles of 1776. For a time, the influential Dr. Lang and the poet Charles Harpur could even contemplate revolution as a legitimate course of action.<sup>86</sup>

Administrative vigilance persisted for several years. In late 1853, the British Minister in Washington, John F. Crampton, informed Pakington that little doubt remained in his mind that "a revolution

in Australia by which its connections with Great Britain should be severed would be an event highly acceptable to the great mass of the American people."<sup>87</sup> He was probably correct in his assumption; however, most wanted a peaceful, rather than a violent transfer of power. James Gordon Bennett, editor of the New York Herald, had suggested in his edition of August 28, 1852, that "a declaration of independence is shortly anticipated" (probably the stimulus for Peters' hasty despatch); but, typically, he qualified these remarks in later leaders. He advocated a "great independent republic" along American lines in Australia, though not one achieved through "impending rebellion." Bennett, echoing the sentiments of his countryman Charles Wilkes over a decade earlier, predicted that Australians would ultimately "feel themselves too large for their colonial breeches. . . ."<sup>88</sup>

Contrary to the view of one commentator, that the Americans who invaded the Australian goldfields "were loud dissenters and rowdy agitators who shoved the people of Australia towards the road to self-rule," it seems clear that the Australian people, in large part due to American precedent and literature, were firmly established on that road in the early 1850's, their direction already determined. Furthermore, the American emigrants appearing all over New South Wales and Victoria inclined, for the most part, to views consistent with their ambition to make money. The American Consul in Sydney, James Williams, knew well what kind of American would be tempted to make the journey: ". . . our countrymen will eagerly seize upon this new field of profitable adventure."<sup>89</sup> Few militant republicans ventured

from America to Australia in the entire nineteenth century.

In the early 1850's, desire for gain was the principal motivator, not the wish to disseminate republican doctrines. The latter might well occur, but only between pannings for gold; just as, in earlier years, American whalers, sealers and traders often helped convicts to escape while simultaneously acquiring small fortunes in southern waters. Moreover, America, mid-century, was in a more advantageous position commercially to exploit the Australian market than she had ever been. "Her ships," as L.G. Churchward has put it, "were the fastest in the world, her skippers the hardest, and her merchants the keenest."<sup>90</sup>

The Americans who came to Australia between 1851 and 1856, then, can be loosely put into two groups: merchants and miners. Besides the profit motive, they had another common feature in that most had a skilled trade or profession on arrival, unlike the Australians in California. The Flying Scud, for example, a ship arriving in Melbourne in September, 1854, carried 135 passengers, all of whom were tradesmen such as carpenters, masons, plasterers and bricklayers.<sup>91</sup> With few exceptions, the impression the Americans made on the initially wary Australian was a positive one--either through diligence at the diggings (and in the case of several Americans participating in the Eureka Stockade, devotion to the cause) or commercial expertise in Melbourne. The vigorous works of two such representative Americans in Australia, the merchant George Francis Train and the miner Charles D. Ferguson,

will be discussed later.<sup>92</sup>

Merchants comprised a significant portion of the new arrivals. In 1854, some 35% of the American community resident in Victoria engaged in trade.<sup>93</sup> Though lavishly patriotic, especially on July 4, this group interpreted the "spread-eaglist" doctrine as an expansion in commerce, not as revolutionary republicanism.<sup>94</sup> Many, such as George Francis Train, believed in the platform of "Young America" (that the destiny of an emerging nation was to become a republic) only if the means to the end was both lawful and peaceful. Train, a leader of the American mercantilists in Melbourne, prominent local citizen, and advocate of American democracy, realized only too well that the success of his business ventures in Victoria depended entirely upon the economic and political stability of the colony. He had forged close trading ties with Great Britain which he didn't intend to undermine by publicly advocating the military overthrow of the British. He was not alone. Both J.M. Tarleton, the U.S. Consul at the time the Eureka uprising took place, and J.F. Maguire, his successor, were prominent members of the local Chamber of Commerce. All American businessmen realized that, no matter what their personal political affiliations, any diplomatic breach with Britain threatened their livelihoods.<sup>95</sup> The poet calling himself an "aspiring genius of Young America" who, while travelling to Australia on the clipper Baltimore, had written

O Australia, look out for your gold,  
We're bound to change your Government,  
And then your mines to hold.<sup>96</sup>

--no doubt succumbed to the prevailing pressures of his countrymen on arrival.

The majority of Australians appreciated the national advantages to be gained as a result of what the Hobart Guardian, in 1849, labelled Yankee "characteristic tact for business and go-ahead-ism."<sup>97</sup> Flattering reports of their energetic character constantly appeared. Some locals, however, interpreted Yankee keenness as sheer avarice. A contributor to the Sydney Morning Herald, in August, 1853, petulantly stated that they "are coming in more numerous than ever. It is easy to recognize their pallid countenances, which always have a careworn aspect . . . [as] if the worshipped dollar had set its seal upon their very faces."<sup>98</sup> Perhaps it depended on whether or not one was in active competition with American businessmen.

One observer of the American traders in Melbourne suggested that only "open oppression" would force them to abandon their commercial pursuits for a rifle. Perhaps he was right; they never suffered the onerous hand of English authority. On the other hand, the American diggers did. Several played crucial roles in the revolt at the Ballarat diggings in late 1854 that became known as the Eureka Stockade.<sup>100</sup> Events surrounding the Eureka uprising accurately reflect the composition of the American citizenry in Australia at that time--their motives, character and differences. In addition, the succession of controversial incidents leading up to the Stockade confirms the continuing reliance of the Australian populace on American revolutionary example at times when it wanted to undermine rigid English law and authority.

The long prelude to the brief and one-sided battle began as early as December, 1851, when some fifteen to twenty thousand diggers, furious at the doubling of the miner's licence fee, met at Mt. Alexander to voice their protest. The popular cries at this gathering, and at another militant demonstration at Bendigo in August, 1852, were variations on the old American "taxation without representation" theme.<sup>101</sup> By the early 1850's, of course, the phrase had begun to take on an Australian life of its own as a result of the almost continuous struggle with unbending colonial governors.<sup>102</sup> Relations between the miners and the authorities kept steadily fraying through 1853 and early 1854, at which point the intractable Sir Charles Hotham took over as Governor of Victoria from La Trobe. An ex-rear admiral in the British Navy, Hotham, disappointed with his latest appointment, approached the job in the spit-and-polish fashion of a man accustomed to strict regulations and behaviour. Land didn't suit him. He immediately demanded accountability from his inferiors as to why the state had accumulated such a large debt. He determined to rectify the situation.

One of the first things to catch Hotham's trammelled eye was the lag in the payment of miner's licences. His decision to put increased police-pressure on the many thousands of diggers throughout Victoria goldfields effectively set a chain of events in motion that would culminate in that grim December 3 morning. From September 13, licences were checked twice a day. The resulting tension reached a first climax when the Scotsman James Scobie died, early in October,

in circumstances which seemed to indicate a government cover-up of those responsible.<sup>103</sup> Three to five thousand miners staged a large rally outside the Eureka Hotel, Ballarat, to draw attention to government inertia; American revolutionary cries filled the air. Less than a fortnight later the Ballarat Reform League was instituted at a mass meeting. Again, members excitedly discussed the American revolution. On November 11, a massive League meeting resulted in agreement on a statement of principles with a familiar Jeffersonian ring: "That it is the inalienable right of every citizen to have a voice in the making of the laws he is called upon to obey. That taxation without representation is tyranny. . . ." Henry Seekamp, radical proprietor of the Ballarat Times, declared the League "the germ of Australian independence."<sup>104</sup>

Events rapidly escalated. First, on the night of November 28, a gang of Irish Tipperary boys attacked the last of a column of military wagons, injuring the American driver. Then, the next day, some twelve thousand miners assembled in Ballarat at a meeting. The "rebel" blue and white Southern Cross flag flew for the first time amidst masses of men chanting American slogans and carrying placards. All those involved swore the revolutionary Eureka Oath of solidarity and began constructing a stockade forcefully to resist the inevitable attack by the English military.<sup>105</sup>

Contrary to the story U.S. Consul Tarleton sent to his Washington superiors, both American faces familiar to Australian colonists played a prominent role in the Eureka stockade: representatives of the wily

profit-minded business community and a few aggressively republican miners who could only be pushed so far.<sup>106</sup> Despite the best efforts of Tarleton and his aides to absolve them wholly, not only from the Eureka conflict itself but from the succession of incidents leading up to that climax, a group of mostly anonymous American diggers joined hands with their cosmopolitan colleagues in defiance of the arbitrary decisions of English autocrats.<sup>107</sup> Historians have found difficulty ascertaining their numbers and motives, but agree on the fact that "a fairly large number of Americans" took part. Estimates range from twenty to over one hundred. The conservative guesses seem more likely.<sup>108</sup>

The hasty plans of the Eureka radicals originally divided their meagre force into three groups: the Irish pikemen, a group of some thirty Californian riflemen, and an assortment of miscellaneous enthusiasts headed by Nelson, an American carpenter. Betrayal, apathy and probably fear caused these groups to disintegrate throughout the night leading up to the fracas, but eight known Americans played active roles: the enigmatic James D. McGill, claiming he had a West Point education, was put in charge of stockade defence strategy and the Independent Californian Rangers (most of whom, suspiciously, were absent during the fight, including McGill); Nelson, "an American carpenter, a finely built man, full of energy and life, who had a corps under him composed of the very best men in the Stockade"; the colourful Ohioan, Charles Derius Ferguson, digger, horse-breaker and Cobb and Co. driver, who settled in Australia for some thirty-one



years before returning to America in 1882;<sup>109</sup> James Hull, who had accompanied Ferguson to Australia on the Don Juan; the New Yorker James Brown, "a man-of-war's man" and sometime sailor, gambler, digger and Mexican-War volunteer; the Negro John Joseph, a great scrapper, who "bore himself throughout the ordeal with a great deal of dignity" and, because of it, was subsequently arrested (and later acquitted in riotous circumstances) for high treason; Alanson P. Ward, who had been "deputed to collect arms and ammunition" and, like McGill, didn't participate in the fight; and, finally, an anonymous "brave American officer, who had the command of the rifle-pit men." At the beginning of December, many of the Americans at the diggings met at the Adelphic theatre, owned by one of their countrymen, and resolved to avoid involvement in the frenetic series of disputes in Ballarat. However, despite the best efforts of Consul Tarleton and his merchant-colleagues, some Americans enthusiastically embraced the popular cause as armed resistance approached. Through a variety of means--some diplomatic, others personally resourceful--all the Americans, with the exception of Joseph, escaped charges.<sup>110</sup>

The back-room diplomacy engineered by Tarleton and his aide, Dr. Kenworthy, to get the captured Americans released, prompted a curt response from two men, J.B. Humffray and C.F. Nicholls, who presented Governor Hotham in January, 1855, with a petition

to the effect that if "His Excellency had sufficient extenuation in the conduct of American citizens," we thought that there were equally good grounds for extending similar clemency to all, irrespective of nationality. . . .<sup>111</sup>

Curiously, despite his feeling that "designing foreigners" were clearly responsible for Eureka, Hotham could ask: "Were there any Americans at Eureka? I have not heard of it."<sup>112</sup> More sophisticated diplomacy with America, it seems, had already begun.

A number of years after the Eureka uprising, Mark Twain jubilantly proclaimed it

the finest thing in Australian history. It was a revolution--small in size, but great politically; it was a strike for liberty, a struggle for a principle, a stand against injustice and oppression. It was the Barons and John, over again; it was Hampden and Ship-Money; it was Concord and Lexington; small beginnings, all of them, but all of them great in political results, all of them epoch-making. It is another instance of a victory won by a lost battle. It adds an honorable page to history; the people know it and are proud of it. They keep green the memory of the men who fell at the Eureka Stockade. . . .<sup>113</sup>

If not the major event in Australian history, it certainly assumed importance in the second half of the nineteenth century. Conciliatory England, once again illustrating she had learned the American lesson well, soon after settled on a more democratic constitution for the Australian colonies. The spirit of Eureka continued in a number of militant causes up to 1901 (claims for universal suffrage and equal rights, protest against land laws, and worker demands), but only sporadically.<sup>114</sup> Australia's population, increasingly divided along class lines, never again threatened any unified resistance to English domination. Shortly after Eureka, the rebellion's doubtfully competent leader, Irishman Peter Lalor, declared "I confidently predict a Bunker's Hill. . . ."<sup>115</sup> Like many of his idealistic comrades, he

conceived of Eureka as the first step to separation along American lines. The first leap towards a national identity. But nothing materialized. It would take Australia until well into the twentieth century even to approach a truly national awareness, let alone a national identity. The Melbourne Age, in May, 1855, tentatively suggested "a flag of our own," only to be forced ignominiously to back down because of the pitifully small response.<sup>116</sup> Ultimately, Eureka was no more than a potent reminder to English government officials in Australia that America had been lost because of unwise policies. Australia had better not be.

The prominent role played by a number of Americans at Eureka did nothing to stem the expansion of American commerce in Australia, particularly in Victoria. By the middle 1850's, the American influence on day-to-day life in the colonies was felt in a variety of areas. Encouraged by the glowing reports that followed the initial scepticism in their dailies, large numbers of Americans endeavoured to exploit this new and "wide field for American enterprise," bringing with them not just Yankee know-how, but an abundance of Yankee goods.<sup>117</sup> Axes, picks, shovels, alarm clocks, rocking chairs and iron stoves were imported, along with large supplies of bacon and flour. As L.G. Churchward has put it, the "energy of the American merchant community, 1853-7, was remarkable. . . ."<sup>118</sup> A Boston water-cart first settled the dust of Melbourne streets; fire-fighting services began through American initiative; Americans owned some of the best hotels in Australia; and the Boston engineer, Sam McGowan, constructed the

first magnetic telegraph line from Geelong to Melbourne. A first culmination of American influence occurred in 1853 when the Australian Steamship Line was established in New York, though it managed only one New York/London/Melbourne journey.<sup>119</sup>

With the help of finance from George Francis Train, Freeman Cobb and several others established the Cobb and Co. American Telegraph Line of Coaches. Cobb and Co. became "a handy abbreviation of Yankee commerce."<sup>120</sup> Train, moreover, began Melbourne's stock exchange with an initial membership contribution of three guineas. Because of the signal American contribution to Victorian commerce, at one point he requested that George Washington's statue stand alongside Queen Victoria's outside the exchange.<sup>121</sup> Train was at the time the most renowned of a great number of Americans making a marked impact on the rapidly expanding colonies. The Melbourne Herald's leading article in praise of Freeman Cobb (February 3, 1855), entitled "Jonathan the Smart," might well have applied to any number of his countrymen reaping substantial financial dividends, partly through personal style and charisma, partly through wily business acumen.

The American merchants and entrepreneurs in Australia unashamedly geared their businesses to maximising profit. They supplied quality service, but charged quality prices. Many owned hotels, restaurants and boarding houses. Sam Moss' Criterion Hotel, for example, provided Melbourne with an opulence and grandness of catering never before seen by many locals. All major colonial functions were held there, from the Queen's Birthday Ball to mayoral banquets. Americans congregated

at the Criterion every Independence Day, where the Stars and Stripes was ceremoniously raised through the hotel's skylight. Moss presented such attractions as Lola Montez and "Rainers' Celebrated Troop of Ethiopian Entertainers." For his trouble, he charged the diggers handsomely. As did the "spirited Yankee" proprietor of the Kidd's Exchange, in Kiandra, New South Wales. He assured patrons of a hot meal (the only one on the diggings), but expected a handsome fee. The chance of renegeing was rendered impossible by the building's architecture. Just one exit.<sup>122</sup>

Exponents of Yankee thrift and initiative coloured many other avenues of colonial life as well, ranging from Langley the auctioneer, owner of the St. Louis Mart and St. Louis Stores, whose talent for hyperbole could convert the tattiest book into a crucial and coveted work of art, to the barber, Charles "Professor" Sands, who practised, in his own words, "the art of hair-cutting and shaving on scientific principles." Sands rarely cut hair because he busied himself with the "talkin' and tradin'" necessary to induce customers to walk away satisfied with his exorbitant rates.<sup>123</sup>

Clearly, then, what had been an interchange of mostly ideas, since the 1820's, became, in the 1850's, one of population and supplies. Gold necessarily encouraged speculation and commerce, not republican musings. However, even as goldrush fever gripped New Holland colonists, one aspect of society in the great American democratic experiment increasingly disenchanted Australian pundits: slavery. Admiration for the superb constitutional advances of the American revolutionary

forefathers began to wane as the 1850's progressed and America suffered through the presidencies of those weak sons of Jacksonian democracy, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan. To Australians, the "model Republic" began to look more and more like a country on the brink of a cataclysm. Henry Clay's Compromise of 1850 could not be maintained, they said, and, as early as 1854, one astute commentator suggested the likelihood, in the not far distant future, of civil upheaval for the Brothers Jonathan.

Section C

1860's

When the issue of transportation re-emerged so vigorously in Australia in 1848, it was inevitable that colonists concerned with the moral questions underlying the problem would turn their attention, at some point, to the more serious implications slavery held for their American cousins. While Free-Soil doctrines loomed in the 1848 American presidential elections ("Free soil, free speech, free labor and free men"<sup>124</sup>), in New South Wales the Sydney Morning Herald pessimistically appraised the grim American situation: "Rights clash with rights, interests with interests, ill-feeling is everywhere engendered."<sup>125</sup> Having aligned itself conscientiously with those forces opposed to the reintroduction of transportation into New South Wales, the Herald's position on slavery in the 1850's was obvious. It could not support enslavement under any circumstances, economic or otherwise. Because of the Herald's consistently large circulation throughout this period--second to none--the editorial stand of the newspaper heavily influenced the attitudes adopted by many Australian colonists.<sup>126</sup> Some country newspapers simply reprinted the Herald editorial without citing the source.<sup>127</sup>

President Franklin Pierce, the political unknown whose supporters tried to create an image for their candidate by naming him "Young Hickory of the Granite State," antagonized the editors of the Sydney Morning Herald with his entreaties to the "God of universal benevolence and love" to bless slavery.<sup>128</sup> Throughout his tenure, from 1852 to 1856, Pierce constantly employed the evasive phrase "involuntary servitude," when he meant slavery. And he considered slavery "an admitted right" allowed by the Constitution.<sup>129</sup> Herald readers were not impressed. They deemed his seemingly unashamed parading of pro-slave sentiments an ominous sign for the future of the republic. One of the most prominent Australians to recognize the close connection between the American slavery and Australian transportation issues was the Tasmanian abolitionist and sometime Congregationalist minister John West, who assumed the editorship of the Herald in 1854. In his Federation articles printed just prior to his becoming editor, West enlarged on comments made in his earlier History of Tasmania (1852). With his customary foresight, he prophesied the horrors to come if America failed to find a solution to the "fatal opposition of colour":

Three millions of slaves, with a language peculiar to themselves, silently reproach the oppression which consigns them to perpetual degradation, and by their immense number threaten a terrible vengeance. The union of north and south has often been jeopardised by this dire element in the national federation, and by this it is perhaps destined to perish.<sup>130</sup>



Further, anticipating the utopians and dreamers who emerged in Australia later in the century, West challenged local politicians to take the necessary steps to establish the Federation of Australia:

Let the Australian statesman, then, cast his eyes over these colonies, and let him felicitate himself that, through their length and breadth, he will discover no aspect incompatible with their unity.

If managed carefully, Australia itself might finally constitute the model republican state.

When President Pierce delivered his farewell address to Congress, he couldn't resist a last rebuke of free-soilers and abolitionists. His comments drew a sharp, incensed response from West's Herald, but the paper shortly became aware that his successor, another Union Democrat, James Buchanan, promised policies and behaviour scarcely different. In his inaugural address, much to the disgust of many disappointed Australians, Buchanan attacked the anti-slavery movement. They had dearly hoped for a victory for the "Pathfinder," the debonair explorer-cum-Republican-Party-leader, John C. Frémont. New South Welshmen probably took solace in the fact that at least West forecast a Republican victory next election.<sup>131</sup>

Perhaps the most important effect of widespread press discussion of the slavery question in the 1850's was the corrosion of any blind faith which sections of the Australian public might have retained in American democracy. Slavery shattered illusions. As the Illustrated Sydney News put it, slavery made America "an infinitely greater and more guilty tyrant than any avowed despot in the world."<sup>132</sup> Staunch

defenders of American republicanism in Australia, such as the indefatigable John Dunmore Lang, realized it represented the rock on which America would constantly founder unless something could be done to terminate it. When Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, gained a decisive electoral college victory on presidential Election Day, 1860, the catalyst appeared. Civil war threatened. On April 12, 1861, southern guns fired on Fort Sumpter.

The four years of civil convulsion in America defined yet another period of lively interaction between America and Australia. Despite the decline from 1856 onwards in the number of Americans resident in Australia, and the decrease in trading volume, Australians insisted on keeping abreast of the deeply regrettable, yet for them inevitable war dividing their American cousins. New South Wales, in particular, with its now extensive historical association with the United States, devoured all the contemporary American news. In keeping with the ambiguity that had marked contact between the two countries since Governor Phillip's settlement years, two reactions to the Civil War predominated: on the one hand, profound sympathy for the plight of a country which, since the colony's first years, had aided and abetted colonial men with initiative; and, on the other hand, the recurrence of paranoid fears of an American invasion--fears, again, as old as the colony itself. The cry for Imperial arms with which to defend the isolated Empire outpost could be heard once more. On at least three occasions during the 1860's--at the time of the "Trent," "Shenandoah" and "Alabama Claims" disputes--an Anglo-American war

seemed possible. Staunch loyalists in the colonies took every opportunity to castigate Britain's "degenerate children in America."<sup>133</sup>

The influx of Americans into Australia in the early Fifties initiated a continuous demand for American information. Thus, when the American Civil War began, the channels for prompt conveyance of American news were firmly established. Information came from either London or California. Naturally, the particular bias displayed depended on the origin of the report. English information always assumed an aristocratic, southern slant; Californian sources, alternately, adopted a firm northern pro-Lincoln stance.<sup>134</sup> At first this provided some confusion both for members of the Australian fourth estate and for their readership. However, it soon became obvious that prejudiced overseas news reports were forcing press-editors into a more interpretative role, a vicarious involvement in the action that had the effect of vastly increasing Civil War coverage.<sup>135</sup> The Australian public wanted to know what was happening; the Australian editor often asked himself why. Even small rural papers voiced an opinion. Over the four-year duration of the war, the Newcastle Chronicle published no fewer than fourteen editorials on varying aspects of the conflict.<sup>136</sup>

Initially, attitudes expressed tended to reflect the distance between the two countries. The Sydney Morning Herald early expressed an almost dispassionate desire that "the present crisis in America may turn out to the promotion of human freedom and to the prosperity of the American States."<sup>137</sup> Events, however, very quickly thrust Australians into the action. Charles Wilkes, the American captain

whose ships had struck fear into the hearts of all Sydney that late November morning in 1839, reappeared to play a prominent role in an incident in 1861 that would once again prompt Australian papers to consider the possibility of naval invasion by the United States. As captain of the U.S.S. San Jacinto, Wilkes boarded the British mail steamer Trent (on its way from Havana to Southampton) on November 8, 1861, to take into custody two Confederate diplomats, Senators James M. Mason and John Slidell. Wilkes should rightly have consigned the Trent to port for adjudication but, with his tendency to the grand gesture and love for the spotlight, he seized the ship in America's name. Britain was outraged, and the London press urged that America officially apologize for this insult to the English Lion. Lord Russell, on behalf of cabinet, drafted an appropriate demand which, fortunately, Prince Albert modified. The dispatch didn't reach American Secretary of State Seward until December 19, and by this time the dramatic popular support for Wilkes' heroism and the widespread nationalistic fervour in the north had subsided. Cooler heads prevailed and America eventually liberated the hostages, but not before England and her colonial territories around the world had begun military (and psychological) preparation for war.<sup>138</sup>

The English Colonial Secretary evidently considered the situation sufficiently serious that on December 26, 1861, he informed Australian government officials of his belief that Britain "may shortly be involved in war with the United States."<sup>139</sup> The fact that the protagonist in the dispute was the very man who had led an elaborate American expedition

to the south some twenty years earlier also warranted official comment. In Australia, a variety of responses greeted the Trent revelations. The mixed loyalties of the people were reflected in contemporary newspapers. John West's Herald reserved judgement, while the more democratically inclined Empire and Maitland Ensign supported the north. The Empire viewed the war as merely a revival of the feud between "Aristocracy and Democracy." Several country papers, mouth-pieces of the squattocracy, took the opportunity to berate the north, and democratic principles in general. Charles Dixon, in his Monaro Mercury and Cooma and Bombala Advertiser, attacked Abraham Lincoln, "a mere rustic attorney," and called for official diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy, which he felt continued to fight "Freedom's battle."<sup>140</sup>

In the first twelve months of fighting, the Australian press, ignited by the Trent episode, gave the Civil War exhaustive coverage. Interest was based on both self-interest and conscience. Or perhaps the erratic Newcastle Chronicle editor was not voicing a wholly eccentric opinion when he suggested that "the prospect of ourselves being involved in hostilities with one of the contending parties is far more exciting" than simply appraising the progress of the war.<sup>141</sup> Whatever the reason, the Australian people received a surfeit of information, and if the frequency of news reports decreased a little in the middle war-years, it intensified again in 1865 when the Confederate ship-of-war Shenandoah steamed into a surprised Port Phillip on January 25, sparking a second major dispute between England and the United States. Only this time, government authorities in

Melbourne were to play a leading role. The Confederate ship's twenty-four-day stay forced Australia to become directly involved in the hectic politics surrounding the American Civil War.

The Shenandoah had been the English ship Sea King, a fact which neither the English nor the Confederate authorities apparently wished to hide (in that the letters of the old name, adorning the ship, were only partly obscured). Furthermore, as the Shenandoah, the vessel had recently taken a terrible toll of Union shipping. Hence, when Captain James Wardell placed his craft on a government-leased slip for repairs, the Union government's consul in Melbourne, William Blanchard, demanded that Sir Charles Darling, Victoria's governor, seize it as a pirate ship.<sup>142</sup> Darling replied that his government would only "treat her as a ship-of-war belonging to a belligerent Power," no more. A few days later, Blanchard accused Wardell of recruiting crew members in Melbourne, thus violating the neutrality of that port. Realizing that if the Shenandoah were allowed to depart, she would obviously continue in her destructive ways, Blanchard launched into a furious correspondence with his Union superiors in Washington and with Darling, in an attempt to force the governor into action. But his series of angry entreaties failed. In desperation, shortly before the vessel was allowed to go, Blanchard sternly warned the Victorian governor that "the United States Government will claim indemnity for the damages already done to its shipping by the said vessel, and also which may hereafter be committed. . . ." He was right. In 1872 an international arbitration tribunal in Geneva awarded

a damages claim to the United States, because of the Shenandoah's exploits, amounting to over six million dollars.<sup>143</sup>

If the Trent episode had provoked Australian colonists merely to determine their sympathies, the Shenandoah's controversial stay, because of its proximity, demanded a reaction. Many thousands of Victorians made the trip to Sandridge to inspect the ship, though it is impossible to determine whether this represented a popular vote in favour of the south or just plain curiosity. Melbourne's Argus, throughout the war a Confederate supporter, naturally felt that the visitors "showed their Southern sympathies by cheering the vessel heartily," but this comment more truly gauges the eye of the beholder than the actual state of affairs.<sup>144</sup> The one unmistakable display of support for the Confederacy was shown by the moneyed members of the Melbourne Club, who enthusiastically wined and dined the Shenandoah captain and officers. Their partisanship elicited a hostile reaction from a number of the major Australian papers--among them the Herald, Empire and Age. The Herald drew attention to perhaps the most subtle implication of the Shenandoah's essentially pleasant stay when it highlighted the possibility of the very same ship returning, at war's end, under the stars and stripes, bent on teaching the locals the error of their ways.<sup>145</sup> The real issue had at last surfaced: in the event of another Anglo-American war, what would Australia's position be? Where would the sympathies of government lie? And what of the people?

The pressure exerted on the Australian colonies by the Trent

and Shenandoah disputes forced the local population deeply to consider the causes, progress and ramifications of the American conflict. Throughout, discussion continued not only in detail, but at a most sophisticated level of inquiry. Slavery, inquisitive Australian newspaper editors astutely realized, was not the only issue at stake. Virtually all publications advocated an anti-slave line, though this by no means accompanied a pro-Union philosophy. Unlike the consistently biased, anti-democratic outpourings and half-truths of the British press in the 1860's, the New South Wales press, in particular, aimed at depicting the whole truth as best it could. The refusal of the Sydney Morning Herald to support wholeheartedly one side or the other possibly best reflected the complexities at the heart of the conflict. While rigorously opposed to slavery in any form, West could not on principle deny the Confederacy's right to self-government. And though conscious of the serious moral flaws in Brother Jonathan's make-up, he continued to recall the fruitful relationship Australia had had with America since the first years of Botany Bay settlement. One recent critic maintains that in the Civil War years, the Herald "attained maturity and a world standard in journalism."<sup>146</sup> Certainly West's sympathetic treatment of the issues bore marked contrast to London newspapers of the same period, such as the blustering Times.

Some rural papers, too, responded to the intricacies of the war with a singular care and reason that at times transcended the emotion and subjectivity often marring discussion elsewhere. The Maitland Ensign, for example, while conceding Australian deficiencies,



stood firm on its objection to the principle of bondage:

We have had abundant proof of [radical prejudice] in our own colony in the case of the Chinese, and the Americans are just like ourselves, and probably, neither much better nor worse. Still there is a wide difference between having a dislike to coloured people and keeping them in slavery, and that is the difference which there is between the Federals and Confederates.<sup>147</sup>

Late in 1862, the Yass Courier focussed on two of the less-publicized motives responsible for the bloody American war, by now one of attrition:

Here we have a series of murderous assaults, and no object gained--oceans of blood split, not for the sake of freedom, but to gratify feelings of disappointment and revenge.<sup>148</sup>

Even the stentorian Newcastle Chronicle, war-minded throughout and eager for the battle to extend to Australia, had moments of insight. For its editor, a states' righter and free trader, slavery comprised only one of the war's causes. The other was the Morrill tariff, which resulted in an increase of duties on certain items rather than on the whole range of imports.<sup>149</sup> For the Chronicle, the chief cause of the war was the Union's economic "self-aggrandizement."<sup>150</sup> Whether one accepted this or not clearly depended on one's economic perspective. David Syme, a convinced protectionist and editor of the Melbourne Age, strongly supported the North's economic and moral stand.<sup>151</sup>

After the American Civil War, most concerned Australians, because of the enormous amount of publicity generated by the conflict, had become even more familiar with the benefits and deficiencies of the republican system of democracy in the United States. Perhaps the

general consensus was that slavery, the sin of the fathers, had visited in a brutal way the children of a later generation. For Australians, unequivocal praise for all American institutions was no longer possible.

In terms of the American Civil War's effect on Australia, two things should be emphasized. Firstly, throughout the upheaval, Australian authorities considered war with America a continuing possibility, as their predecessors had at certain times in the previous fifty years. As a whole, the population's attitude towards their American cousins was ambivalent at best. Yet, secondly, on one point all Australians were in complete accord: all shared an overwhelming admiration for Abraham Lincoln. Country-wide expressions of genuine grief greeted Lincoln's assassination less than a week after Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

For the four-year duration of the war, the New South Wales press, conscious of the close bonds with America built up in past years, often expressed confidence for the future. There were moments, however, when the brave front collapsed in the face of Anglo-American conflict overseas. The Trent affair unsettled New South Wales. Both the Sydney Morning Herald and the Empire asked numerous questions pertaining to the effectiveness of the colony's defences. The state governor toured harbour fortifications and warships maintained active status. For three months the Newcastle Chronicle remained convinced that an Anglo-American war had begun overseas, or was imminent.<sup>152</sup>

Cautious colonials raised similar cries in 1863, as Anglo-American

relations again corroded due to the extensive damage caused by the Confederate ship Alabama on the U.S. mercantile fleet in 1862-3. This time the Australian colonies actively formed a number of volunteer defence forces such as Naval Brigades, Artillery Units and Rifle Companies. The New South Wales government constituted a Select Committee in July, 1863, to enquire into harbour defences, resulting in the building of numerous fortifications around Sydney Harbour. If Australia was to be, as the Newcastle Chronicle claimed, a "golden bait to marauding expeditions," then militant New Hollanders determined to give them a fight.<sup>153</sup> Albeit a short one, for, despite the measures taken in 1863, two years later the Chronicle still expressed its complete dissatisfaction with the existing defences: "Perhaps, after Sydney, Newcastle and a few other places have been knocked to pieces, the Government may begin to think of securing them from attack."<sup>154</sup> Government and press fears of an American invasion continued for a number of years after the end of the war, and the Melbourne Argus' contention that "the political and moral questions [raised by the Shenandoah's exploits] have been by no means unravelled" retained a relevance to the Australian situation until well into the 1870's.<sup>155</sup> In the Australian imagination, it seems, America continued to be both close friend and potential foe.

Apprehension about the potential threat posed by American imperialism starkly contrasted the great love and admiration Australians had for the Union's leader throughout the war. Abraham Lincoln's status increased noticeably as the fighting got bloodier and the death list

longer. In mid-1862, a group of community leaders in Sydney wired a message to Lincoln praising his "firmness and fidelity." He was a popular figure, indeed a hero, in a land not inclined to issue high praise for people in authority; no doubt the Herald spoke for many Australians when it suggested that "there are few men in the world who have more of the esteem of nations than the present PRESIDENT of America."<sup>156</sup> Lincoln's sudden death, while at the peak of his powers and stature, devastated Australia when local newspapers first published the news on June 24. The black-bordered Empire editorial page sadly reflected that "nothing can compensate for the loss which freedom and the world has sustained. Men like LINCOLN belong to all nations, and have a place in every heart which throbs for the love of liberty."<sup>157</sup>

Thousands of Sydney people could not gain admittance to Lincoln's memorial service in the Prince of Wales Opera House because of the overwhelmingly large number of mourners who turned out. John Dunmore Lang felt a deep spiritual affinity with Lincoln and paid public tribute to the dead President.<sup>158</sup> Indeed, eulogies for Lincoln constantly appeared in Australian newspapers for many months after his death--and continued to appear, sporadically, for decades.<sup>159</sup> Joseph Furphy, barely in his twenties when Lincoln died, was one who determined to preserve his memory. In the poem, "Elegy on Lincoln," he mourns the loss of an international statesman. The entire world's future looks bleak:

Lincoln is gone--who ruled the Western Land  
From the Pacific to the Atlantic's brim--  
And cold and nerveless lies the might hand  
That struck the fetters from the negro's limb.

Now anarchy and rest overwhelm  
In mid-career our lordly ship of state  
For Lincoln's hand no longer holds the helm  
To guide her passage through the fearful strait.160

The political content might be naive, but there is no mistaking the  
deep love and respect.

## ENDNOTES CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> West, History of Tasmania, II, 347-8.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Wentworth Dilke, Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867 (New York: Harper, 1869), p. 319.

<sup>3</sup> West, II, 348.

<sup>4</sup> The pamphlet, "The Indefeasible Rights of Man," is essentially a collection of diverse material which rejects "the dangerous tendency of Aristocratic influence and Tory principles" (p. 2) and asserts "democratic principles" (p. 4). Two items reprinted in it are interesting: a long excerpt from the first section of the "Declaration of Independence" and William Ellery Channing ("Doctor Channing") on man's "indefeasible rights" (pp. 14-15). Channing elaborates on the "logic of despotism" and its continuing opposition to the liberty that all men have a right to enjoy: "that government is most perfect, in which Policy is most entirely subjected to Justice, or in which the supreme and constant aim is to secure the rights of every human being. This is the beautiful idea of a free government, and no government is free but in proportion as it realises this." For more on Common Sense, see Clark, III, 422-3.

<sup>5</sup> George Francis Train, My Life in Many States and in Foreign Lands (New York: D. Appleton, 1902), p. 163.

<sup>6</sup> See below, Chapter VI, section b), on Daniel Henry Deniehy.

<sup>7</sup> For more on the escapes of Wait, Chandler and Gemmell, see below, Chapter V, section b); for information on the escapes of the Irish patriots--T.B. MacManus, T.F. Meagher, John Mitchel and Patrick O'Donohue--see, for example, Jay Monaghan, Australians and the Gold Rush (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966), pp. 206-22; for information on John Boyle O'Reilly's escape, and his part in the Catalpa rescue, see above, chapter I, section c, footnote 103.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Michael Roe, "1830-50," in A New History of Australia, ed. F.K. Crowley. (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1974), pp. 90-1; Clark, III, 195-6.

<sup>9</sup> John Pascoe Fawkner, quoted in Clark, III, 103. See also III, 156.

<sup>10</sup> See Levi, p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> See Bartlett, p. 135; P. Loveday, "'Democracy' in New South Wales," JRAHS, XXXXII, Pt. 4 (1956), 187-200.

<sup>12</sup> West, II, 342.

<sup>13</sup> See Wentworth, quoted in Clark, Select Documents, p. 338.

<sup>14</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. J.P. Mayer and Max Lerner (Paris, 1835, 1840; rpt. New York: Harper, 1966), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Tocqueville, p. 235.

<sup>16</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, July 28, 1848, quoted in Melbourne p. 74; Empire, September 18, 1851, quoted in Melbourne, p. 78.

- <sup>17</sup> Wentworth, quoted in Clark, Select Documents, pp. 336-9.
- <sup>18</sup> George W. Pierson, quoted in Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. Richard D. Heffner (New York: Mentor, 1956), p. 13.
- <sup>19</sup> See McLachlan, p. 373, footnote 59; Clark, III, 193-5.
- <sup>20</sup> Wentworth, quoted in Clark, Select Documents, p. 340.
- <sup>21</sup> Quoted in Melbourne, pp. 79-80.
- <sup>22</sup> Quoted in E. Daniel Potts and Annette Potts, "The Voyages of William and Augustus Rogers of Salem, Massachusetts, to Australia, 1840-1842," JRAHS, LIV; Pt. 3 (Sept. 1968), 259.
- <sup>23</sup> Adams was President of the United States from 1825 to 1828. For information on the Adams/Morgan friendship, see Peter Bolger, "Lieutenant John Morgan: The Dog Tax Martyr," JRAHS, LV, Pt. 3 (Sept. 1969), 272.
- <sup>24</sup> See ADB, II, 258.
- <sup>25</sup> Linus W. Miller, Notes of an Exile to Van Diemen's Land (Fredonia, New York: W. McKinstry, 1846), p. 362. For more on Miller, see below, chapter V; section b).
- <sup>26</sup> Tasmanian Weekly Despatch, October 30, 1840, quoted in Bolger, p. 276.
- <sup>27</sup> See Bolger, p. 277.
- <sup>28</sup> See ADB, II, 258; Bolger, p. 277. Morgan was also an admirer of William Ellery Channing (see Roe, Quest for Authority, p. 177).
- <sup>29</sup> Miller, p. 259.
- <sup>30</sup> The "Patriotic Six" were Richard Dry, Thomas George Gregson, Michael Fenton, Charles Swanston, William Kermodie and John Kerr:



<sup>31</sup> See Clark, III, 325-30; W. Fearn-Wannan, Australian Folklore (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1970), pp. 410-11.

<sup>32</sup> See Bolger, pp. 278-9; ADB, II, 258.

<sup>33</sup> See Bartlett, p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> Tennant, p. 160.

<sup>35</sup> See Clark, III, p. 337.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Clark, III, 418.

<sup>37</sup> See Monaghan, p. 251, footnote 21.

<sup>38</sup> See Clark, III, 423.

<sup>39</sup> See Paine's Agrarian Justice opposed to Agrarian Law, and to Agrarian Monopoly (1797).

<sup>40</sup> Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Lands (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 153.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Smith, p. 144.

<sup>42</sup> See below, chapter VI, sections a) and b).

<sup>43</sup> Articles published between January 30, 1854 and September 1, 1854. See A Century of Journalism: The Sydney Morning Herald and its Record of Australian Life 1831-1931 (Sydney: John Fairfax, 1931), p. 355.

<sup>44</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, March 11, 1854, quoted in Century of Journalism, p. 357.

<sup>45</sup> See Sydney Morning Herald, September 1, 1854.

<sup>46</sup> Sub-headings used included "California," "Utah," and "Oregon." See Maya Valda Sapiets, "Australian Press Coverage of America, 1860-65, with special reference to New South Wales," M.A. Australian National Univ. 1969, p. 58.

<sup>47</sup> West, II, 341. A similar attitude prevailed in other parts of the colony. See, for example, Clark, III, 452-3.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Clark, III, 436-7; Roe, Quest for Authority, p. 56.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Clark, III, 320. See also III, 326.

<sup>50</sup> West, III, 347.

<sup>51</sup> See West, II, 344-5. West quotes rule XVI of Franklin's "Rules by which a Great Empire may be Reduced to a Small One." See Benjamin Franklin, The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, XX (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976), 397-8.

<sup>52</sup> West, II, 344.

<sup>53</sup> West, II, 343.

<sup>54</sup> Dilke, pp. 307-8.

<sup>55</sup> See T.H. Irving, "1850-70," in Crowley, p. 126.

<sup>56</sup> See Potts and Potts, Young America, pp. 2-3.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Monaghan, p. 96.

<sup>58</sup> Argus, January 19, 1849, quoted in Churchward, "Australian-American Relations," p. 15.

<sup>59</sup> Potts and Potts, p. 2. For more detailed figures, see Monaghan, pp. 121, 144, 177-8.

<sup>60</sup> See Bartlett, pp. 111-114.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Levi, p. 39.

<sup>62</sup> See Bartlett, p. 115.

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, Levi, p. 41, footnote 16.

<sup>64</sup> Potts and Potts, p. 3.

- 65 Monaghan, p. 154.
- 66 See Levi, p. 41.
- 67 See Monaghan, pp. 7, 10-12, 15, 117-118.
- 68 Quoted in Monaghan, pp. 28-9.
- 69 See Aitchison, p. 10; Monaghan, pp. 143-4; Levi, p. 44.
- 70 Colonial Times (Hobart), February 26, 1850.
- 71 Hobart Daily Courier, February 16, 1850.
- 72 See Potts and Potts, pp. 3-4.
- 73 Quoted in Bartlett, p. 116.
- 74 Quoted in Potts and Potts, p. 33.
- 75 Empire, August 20, October 22, 1851.
- 76 See Aitchison, p. 11.
- 77 See Potts and Potts, p. 161 (and p. 27).
- 78 Sydney Morning Herald, January 8, 1852.
- 79 Quoted in Potts and Potts, pp. 4-5.
- 80 See Potts and Potts, pp. 27-8.
- 81 See Bartlett, p. 124; E. Daniel and Annette Potts, "American Republicanism and the Disturbances on the Victorian Goldfields," Historical Studies, XIII, No. 50 (April 1968), 148.
- 82 London Times, September 19, 1851.
- 83 Quoted in Aitchison, p. 19.
- 84 See Potts and Potts, "American Republicanism," p. 145.
- 85 Sir Charles Fitzroy was Governor of New South Wales from 1846 to 1855; Charles Joseph La Trobe was Governor of Victoria from 1851 to 1854.

86 See below, chapter VI, sections a) and c).

87 Crampton to Pakington (October 31, 1853), quoted in Aitchison,  
p. 20.

88 Quoted in Potts and Potts, "American Republicanism," p. 146.

89 Quoted in Bartlett, p. 124.

90 Churchward, "Australian-American Relations," p. 16.

91 See Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 66.

92 See below, chapter V, sections c) and d).

93 L.G. Churchward, "Americans and other Foreigners at Eureka,"

Historical Studies, VI, No. 23 (Dec. 1954), 46.

94 See Potts and Potts, Young America, pp. 155-9.

95 See Churchward, "Americans and other Foreigners," pp. 46-7.

96 Quoted in Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 155.

97 Hobart Town Guardian, January 31, 1849.

98 Quoted in Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 100.

99 Quoted in Potts and Potts, "American Republicanism," p. 147.

100 California, of course, was known as the "Eureka" state.

Monaghan points out that American names began appearing throughout  
the mining areas of Australia in the 1850's (see p. 234).

101 See Monaghan, p. 235.

102 See above, chapter IV, section a).

103 See, for example, Monaghan, pp. 242-3.

104 Quoted in Robin Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics  
(Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1960), p. 28; Inglis, p. 197.

105 See Monaghan, p. 251.

- 106 See Churchward, "Americans and other Foreigners," p. 46; Aitchison, p. 32.
- 107 See Monaghan, pp. 246-7.
- 108 See Churchward, "Americans and other Foreigners," p. 44; Potts and Potts, "American Republicanism," p. 159; Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 189.
- 109 See below, chapter V, section c).
- 110 See Churchward, "Americans and other Foreigners," p. 48; Potts and Potts, "American Republicanism," pp. 157-8, 160, 163; Potts and Potts, Young America, pp. 186-91, 215; Aitchison, pp. 31-4.
- 111 Quoted in Churchward, "Americans and other Foreigners," pp. 48-9.
- 112 Quoted in Aitchison, p. 32. See also Monaghan, p. 257.
- 113 Mark Twain, Following the Equator (New York: Harper, 1897), I, 240.
- 114 See R. Else-Mitchell, "American Influences on Australian Nationhood," JRAHS, LXII, Pt. 1 (June 1976), 9.
- 115 Quoted in Monaghan, p. 265. See also below, George Francis Train on Eureka, chapter V, section c).
- 116 Quoted in Bartlett, p. 144.
- 117 See Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 98.
- 118 Churchward, "Australian-American Relations," p. 19.
- 119 See Aitchison, p. 16; Potts and Potts, Young America, pp. 204-8; Levi, pp. 45, 48.
- 120 Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 90.

<sup>121</sup> Aitchison, pp. 16-17. For more on the trade connection between Australia and America at this time, see Potts and Potts, Young America, pp. 96-122.

<sup>122</sup> See Potts and Potts, Young America, pp. 73-8; Aitchison, p. 15; Bartlett, p. 132.

<sup>123</sup> See Potts and Potts, Young America, pp. 66, 71; Bartlett, p. 125.

<sup>124</sup> See Morison, Oxford History, p. 568.

<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Bartlett, p. 107.

<sup>126</sup> See Walker, Newspaper Press in New South Wales, pp. 35-7, 42-3.

<sup>127</sup> See J.H. Moore, "New South Wales and the American Civil War," Australian Journal of Politics and History, XVI, No. 1 (April 1970), 29.

<sup>128</sup> Morison, p. 576; Sapiets, "Australian Press Coverage," p. 76. See Pierce's "Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1853), in James D. Richardson, comp., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1908), V, 199, 201-2.

<sup>129</sup> See, for example, "Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1853), quoted in Richardson, V, 202. See also Potts and Potts, pp. 199-200.

<sup>130</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, May 26, 1854 (see Century of Journalism, p. 358). West had, of course, voiced his position on slavery in his earlier History of Tasmania (1852), when he said: "More fortunate . . . than America, in these regions no African slavery exists--"

the brother will not sell his sister, or the father his son. The temporary inconvenience of transportation will leave no deep indent on colonial society; but the black brand of slavery is indelible " (II, 347). Further, two years after the 1854 Federation articles, the issue still remained unencumbered by regional and economic complexities: "Will Australia improve upon the pattern of the North, or follow the footsteps of the South?" (Sydney Morning Herald, May 22, 1856).

131 See Richardson, V, 432-6; Sapiets, pp. 95-6.

132 Quoted in Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 199.

133 Monaro Mercury and Cooma and Bombala Advertiser, January 24, 1862, quoted in Moore, p. 31.

134 See Moore, pp. 25, 29.

135 See Sapiets, pp. 209, 250.

136 See J.M. Graham, "The Newcastle Chronicle and the American Civil War," JRAHS, LVIII, Pt. 3 (Sept. 1972), 202.

137 Sydney Morning Herald, July 29, 1861.

138 See Morison, pp. 633-4; Inglis, pp. 227-8.

139 Quoted in Moore, p. 32.

140 Quoted in Moore, p. 32.

141 Newcastle Chronicle, January 15, 1862.

142 Blanchard was the former editor of an Abolitionist newspaper, the National Era (published in Washington). See Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 14.

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in Ernest Scott, "The 'Shenandoah' Incident, 1865," in Australia and the United States, ed. Norman Harper (Melbourne: Nelson, 1971), p. 26. See also Inglis, pp. 228-30; Dan O'Donnell, "The 'Shenandoah Affair,' and Anglo-Colonial Relations with the United States, 1864-1872," JRAHS, LVII, Pt. 3 (Sept. 1971), 213-42. For a typical American reaction, see the New York Times, April 29, 1865, quoted in Frank Crowley, comp., Colonial Australia 1841-1874, Vol. II of A Documentary History of Australia (Melbourne: Nelson, 1980), pp. 489-91.

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in Inglis, p. 229.

<sup>145</sup> See Moore, p. 36.

<sup>146</sup> Sapiets, p. 328.

<sup>147</sup> Maitland Ensign, October 11, 1862.

<sup>148</sup> Yass Courier, November 26, 1862.

<sup>149</sup> See Graham, p. 203. The Melbourne Argus, too, considered tariffs to be the principal cause of the Civil War (Inglis, p. 228).

<sup>150</sup> Newcastle Chronicle, December 14, 1861.

<sup>151</sup> See Sapiets, p. 326.

<sup>152</sup> See Graham, p. 207.

<sup>153</sup> Newcastle Chronicle, September 19, 1863.

<sup>154</sup> Newcastle Chronicle, August 16, 1865.

<sup>155</sup> Melbourne Argus, February 17, 1864. For more on the 1870's, see, for example, O'Donnell, p. 231.

<sup>156</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, August 10, 1864.



157 Empire, June 24, 1865.

158 At an in-memoriam service at the Scots Church Sydney on July 2, 1865, Lang mourned for the "illustrious American president. . . . 'He extinguished negro slavery in America.'" Quoted in Lang, John Dunmore Lang, ed. Archibald Gilchrist (Melbourne: Jedgarm Publications, 1951), II, 670-1.

159 See Moore, p. 37.

160 Joseph Furphy, The Poems of Joseph Furphy (Melbourne: Lothian, 1916), p. 55. See also, "The Death of President Lincoln," pp. 43-54.

## CHAPTER V

## YOUNG AMERICA AT LARGE IN THE COLONY

Section A

## Australians Reading

There is no doubt that the three decades between 1838 and 1868 are crucial to an understanding of both Australian society and its developing literature. In these years America figured prominently-- either providing the model for the slogans that colonial orators utilized when agitating for the abolition of transportation and self-government; or supplying many of the men who peopled the gold-fields; or furnishing the motivation, in the Fifties and Sixties, for discussion, by Australians, of just what they wanted for themselves, their country and their literature. An affinity of the imagination between the two countries took root.

As we shall see, men like the flamboyant George Train and Charles Ferguson, by their presence in the new country, helped to shape the opinions Australians held of Brother Jonathan. But they were certainly not the only sources of information. In the decades after Lang published Channing's seminal address "On National Literature," as

more and more American books became accessible to a surprisingly well-read, eager Australian public, the major works of America's political and creative writers began to channel the thoughts of their contemporary Australian counterparts in certain vital, and, most importantly, original directions.<sup>1</sup> In particular, John Dunmore Lang, Charles Harpur and Daniel Deniehy began listening to the fresh and captivating music emanating from America, and pondering over its relevance to the new frontier in Australia. Their works, certainly the most trenchant and rewarding of the period in question, will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

However, before discussing the unique contribution to early Australian literature of Lang, Harpur and Deniehy, the literary context in which they found themselves needs elaboration--if only to indicate the fact that the determination of these three writers to seek American sources was by no means atypical. Indeed, in the decades after 1838, American political and imaginative literary works were openly available to, and often read and discussed by Australians in all walks of life, whether poet or politician; merchant or miner. As Harpur grappled with Emerson's concept of self-reliance (and the liberating, democratic implications of transcendentalist thought) at his Hunter Valley farm, politicians in New South Wales and Victoria keenly subscribed to American revolutionary literature, and miners at Turon and Adelong and Ballarat thumbed reverently through Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852). If there was a common feature to the works sought after, perhaps it was that most inclined to sermonize. Vernon Parrington's claim

that the "foundations of a later America were laid in vigorous polemics, and the rough stone was plentifully mortared with idealism" relates closely to the American works from Paine to Emerson and Stowe that Australians wanted to read.<sup>2</sup>

Before 1833, even in England, few American books were available, and fewer still were read. Much the same was true in Australia. After this date, however, a steadily expanding number of American books became available in both countries. Once again, 1838 emerges as conveniently symbolic in that during that year a law was enacted to establish reciprocal international copyright. The U.S. Congress, however, refused to support the law, with the result that English publishers declared that American books could no longer be protected by copyright. A rash of pirated American editions almost immediately came onto the market and demand was such that, over the ensuing decades, the publication of cheap American works grew to epidemic proportions.<sup>3</sup> As one commentator has remarked: "The 1840's and 1850's were the heyday of the cheap American reprint."<sup>4</sup>

Inevitably, the greater availability of American texts in England began to exert a noticeable effect on Australia in the 1840's and thereafter. Indeed, at one point in the 1850's, the issue led to a heated public debate in Melbourne between the Argus newspaper and Melbourne's leading bookseller (and, ultimately, the doyen of nineteenth-century Australian publishers), George Robertson.<sup>5</sup> Robertson, sympathetic to the plight of the creative writer in any country, adamantly defended the right of American authors to a percentage of

publication profits. The Argus, on the other hand, declared the cheap pirated editions "among the best things America sends to us."<sup>6</sup> Further, it asserted that Robertson stood as culpable as anyone because there wasn't "a bookstore in the city which does not offer these reprints for sale." The editor expressed his wish that every decent household should have "a good library of cheap American reprints."

The comments of the Argus editor substantiate the fact that a wide variety of American works could be purchased in Australia by the early 1850's. Publication and distribution of American political and imaginative works had increased apace in the Forties, and with the influx of Americans to the Australian goldfields after 1851, demand grew further.<sup>7</sup> Expatriate Americans wanted to keep abreast of events in their own country--thus providing obvious opportunity for the enterprising speculator able to satisfy community needs. Certain American booksellers and auctioneers became renowned for their ministrations (and antics), responding colourfully to the unprecedented demand for American works. One seller and mobile librarian, apparently a Young American follower of Trainian economic theory, boldly advertised his wares in large letters in the Victorian goldfields: "Baker's Gold-diggers' Go-a-head Library and Registration Office for New Chums."<sup>8</sup> With hardy sellers like Baker and the intrepid auctioneer Langley ever eager to turn books into profit, diggers with the money to support their habit could at least read the best, despite their immediate discomforts.<sup>9</sup>

At a time, then, when Australians were beginning to soberly assess their country's prospects and potential, interested commentators had more convenient access to American texts.<sup>10</sup> The Australian/American connection quickly outgrew the single dimension of earlier years. For that small band of colonists concerned with exploring the deep implications of establishing a country and its literature, America assumed both an actual and an imaginative presence. And after 1838, they could usually obtain the American texts relevant to their pursuits. Those interested in Australia's progress towards self-government and possible independence could readily consult the writers of the Great Republic, who had been there before.

It is not difficult to guess the kinds of political works that sold well. In Melbourne, the New Yorker Benjamin Mortimer aimed at being the principal supplier of American books. Fully aware of the volatile political climate in Australia, Mortimer urged "the utility of studying the Constitution and the Construction of the Government of the United States" and boldly advertised the works of, among others, Jefferson, Calhoun, Clay, Maury and Prescott, along with copies of Webster's dictionary. Biographies of the major American political figures--like Washington, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and Franklin Pierce--could also be purchased, while those unable to afford the texts often relied on the newspapers to provide them with crucial areas of information.<sup>11</sup> In July, 1853, the Argus, for example, printed Jefferson's Declaration of Independence--the rhetoric of which was unswervingly utilized by miners in their demonstrations

leading up to Eureka.

Interested parties in New South Wales wishing to consult American writers in their pursuit of self-government had similar resources in their libraries and local bookstores. The Parliamentary Library, founded in the 1840's, possessed a comprehensive collection of American historical and political works.<sup>12</sup> It seems they were much in demand for, in the crucial debates of the early 1850's, William Charles Wentworth referred to the writings of George Washington, Alexis de Tocqueville and John C. Calhoun in such a detailed way as to reflect not only his own close familiarity with the doctrines in question, but a similar intimate knowledge on behalf of his audience. It is worth mentioning, too, that in an advertisement in the Free Press, of March 1842, boasting a "Sale of the most popular Books ever known in the Colony" the sponsor saw fit to include Thomas Jefferson's name, along with the staples (Shakespeare, Dickens, Cooper, Irving and Scott).<sup>13</sup>

Finally, with the influx of Americans into Australia in the 1850's, there is little doubt that, meeting at close quarters, the citizens of both nations would have discussed and contrasted the political systems in their respective countries. George Francis Train, for one, made it his business to circulate his private collection of crucial American works. Local politicians bombarded him with requests:

. . . as they intend framing a new constitution, all hands are inquiring for Bancroft's History of the United States, Massachusetts state papers, Franklin's works, the constitution,

and all the documents that were printed at the dawn of liberty in la belle America. I had two copies of the constitution, both of which are now in the possession of M.L.C.'s.<sup>14</sup>

Train's experience must have been a common one.

However, if the works of Jefferson, Franklin, Webster and their companions proclaimed the desirability of republican institutions and advertised the praiseworthy features of "la belle America," one other book possibly did more, single-handedly, to tarnish America's image: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin; or Life among the Lowly (1852). To most Australians, grimly aware of the way their country had been forged on the bloodied backs of chained convicts, slavery was anathema. They could not willingly model themselves on a nation in which slavery was legal--an attitude which contributed to the huge success of Stowe's sincere, though too sentimental tale.

An enormous success in 1850's England (indeed a "best seller" for the next fifty years) and thus hastily distributed in pirated editions, Uncle Tom's Cabin soon made a forceful impact on Australia.<sup>15</sup> Miners in the back-blocks so strongly sanctioned its honesty of purpose that the "much-thumbed" volume vied with the Bible for the diggers' loyalty.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Stowe's momentous work succeeded in the cities as well. Local bards wrote poems in response to it; songs, such as "The Slave Mother," owed their inspiration to it; even shopkeepers, recognizing the development of a widely understood local connotation, utilized the name.<sup>17</sup> Numerous lecture halls were awash with tears stimulated by re-tellings of the plot. People angrily questioned the



ethics of a system which could tolerate such shameful abuse of man by man. Australians were told that, in America, girls "with eyes as blue . . . and complexions as fair as any of Australia's fairest daughters . . . were bought and sold like beasts of burden or chattels in the marketplace." Many acknowledged Uncle Tom's inherent truth as a "withering exposure of the infidelity of a nation to its own political creed."<sup>18</sup>

Yet Australia did have its class of landed gentry who rigorously denied Stowe's assumptions in Uncle Tom's Cabin. Like their counterparts in the southern states of America, they could only see the positive benefits of slavery in Christendom for coloured heathen races. They supported William Charles Wentworth's plea for a class of "Shepherd Kings" in Australia.<sup>19</sup> Henry Kingsley's protagonist in The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn (1859) illustrates the point admirably. Roasting in "a placid, burning summer" in the Australian outback, he idly expatiates on the rewarding comforts of sitting back, relaxing on a cool verandah:

One thing only was wanted to make it perfect, and that was niggers. To the winds with Uncle Tom's Cabin, and Dred after it, in a hot wind! What can an active-minded, self-helpful lady like Mrs. Stowe, freezing up there in Connecticut, obliged to do something to keep herself warm,--what can she, I ask, know about the requirements of a southern gentleman when the thermometer stands at 125° in the shade? Pish! Does she know the exertion required for cutting up a pipe of tobacco in a hot north wind? No! Does she know the amount of perspiration and anger superinduced by knocking the head off a bottle of Bass in January? Does she know the physical prostration which is caused by breaking up two lumps of hard white

sugar in a pawnee before a thunderstorm? No, she doesn't, or she would cry out for niggers with the best of us! When the thermometer gets over 100° in the shade, all men would have slaves if they were allowed. An Anglo-Saxon conscience will not, save in rare instances, bear a higher average heat than 95°.20

Kingsley might have been having fun at the expense of the class he wished to depict, but the issue was one that, for most Australians, could be approached with little humour. Of one thing the author could be certain, however: in 1859 his references to Mrs. Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin and Dred would not be lost on either his English or his Australian readers.

Both of Stowe's abolitionist novels, Uncle Tom's Cabin and Dred, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp (1856) held so much interest for Australians that they prompted a number of stage adaptations.<sup>21</sup>

Frank Fowler, an English author and journalist who resided in Australia for health reasons between 1855 and 1857, penned an acclaimed version of Uncle Tom's Cabin entitled Eva, or Leaves from Uncle Tom's Cabin. This "clever and interesting" production, with its New Orleans panorama and special effects broken up by the banjo and tambourine interludes of Ethiopian minstrels, ran for six popular nights at the Lyceum Theatre.<sup>22</sup> The Freeman's Journal reviewed the show in flattering terms, labelling it a piece of "considerable artistic merit."<sup>23</sup>

Fowler's knowledge of American literature, as will shortly be shown, extended well beyond an acquaintance with Mrs. Stowe. A contributing member of Nicol Drysdale Stenhouse's important circle of writers (which included Deniehy and Harpur) in Sydney during the 1850's,

Fowler frequently exhibited an intimate knowledge of contemporary American literature either in private conversation, in his writings or on the podium.<sup>24</sup>

As Australian knowledge of American political events and policies grew throughout the 1850's, confusion and disenchantment intensified. The image of the forefathers who shaped the American Revolution remained untainted, but the escalating problem of slavery shattered illusions. So much so, that when Henry Kendall (shortly after the appearance of his first book, Poems and Songs (1862)) published a group of six sonnets in John West's Sydney Morning Herald in June and July, 1863, he could look at the war only with sad resignation.<sup>25</sup> No taking sides, no rhetoric, just a desperate plea for a cessation of the conflict:

Ay, stop and sob! this mad unnatural ire  
Which makes a man become his brother's foe,  
And goads and drives his son against the sire,  
Brings wilder tears than we shall ever know!<sup>26</sup>

Kendall had had enough of politicians from north and south, or perhaps newspapers in Australia, proclaiming the justness of one cause or the other. He could see only the sombre reality of suffering individuals:

But yet, within a lone red-trampled space,  
A Mother sits with moan and broken wail.  
How can the woman of this doleful place  
Care aught for "Glory" that they rave about!<sup>27</sup>

The tone of the final sonnet deserves mention. As the poet's "songs go forth" from "wild Australian hills," the grief of his American

brothers assumes deeply personal proportions. The emotional proximity and, above all, a sense of the universal human significance of the far-off conflict for both writer and contemporary reader are obvious. A measure of the quiet agony of several Walt Whitman poems in Drum Taps (1865-6) permeates the lines:

You yearn, my brothers, for a regal Rhyme  
Wherein might flow a tale of grief sublime,  
As flow the breezes bearing from the North  
The passion of a passion-haunted clime,  
But I am faint; and voices full and free  
Are not of storms.<sup>28</sup>

It is an indication of the disturbing impact of the American Civil War on Australia that, first, Kendall should be moved to respond so elaborately, and, second, that in expressing himself in such profoundly personal terms, he could rely on his readers empathizing.

Perhaps the most noticeable effect of New-World revolutionary prose and poetry on Australia in the decades after 1838 was the impetus it gave Australian writers to begin to speculate more seriously on their country's vast material and spiritual potential. Fanned by the liberalizing tendencies of Governor Bourke's tenure as governor in the 1830's, the end of transportation to New South Wales, and a steady influx of ambitious emigrants, a "custom of prophetic prophecy" began.<sup>29</sup> Australia still had a distinctive and influential group who, in the event of an Australian War of Independence, would choose, with Geoffrey Hamlyn's Sam Buckley, "The King's (I beg pardon, the Queen's) side, of course," but greater numbers were beginning to suspect

unquestioning loyalty to a far-off sovereign.<sup>30</sup> For the first time, some Australians realized that the ideal of self-government could become a reality. Optimism gained new strength.

When Thomas Campbell, in 1828, pondered Australia's future thus:

Delightful land! in wilderness even benign,  
The glorious past is ours, the future thine. . . .  
Land of the free! thy kingdom is to come--  
Of states, with laws from Gothic bondage burst,  
And creeds by chartered priesthoods unaccurst. . . .

--he envisaged another Britain in another hemisphere, as his countryman Erasmus Darwin had when Botany Bay was first settled. Radical thinkers in 1840's Australia, however, had different ideas. The hesitant expressions of independence of the '30's grew more confident, assertive. W.A. Duncan, a colonial fighter for the rights of the common man, published an anthem entitled "Australia The Wide And The Free" in 1842, which seemed logically to extend the declamatory arguments of protesting colonial newspaper editors of the 1820's. In the poem, Duncan advocated a reappraisal of the colony's relationship with England. Typically, alluding to the American Revolution, he asserted:

I sing not of wars, for our fields are unstained  
With the blood of our patriot men;  
'Tis in peace, and by commerce our honours were gained;  
Which in peace or by war--we'll maintain.<sup>32</sup>

For possibly the first time, a colonial writer tentatively proposed the idea of Australia as the ultimate New World--one as yet untarnished by warfare, and one free of Old-World prejudices and sordid international

intrigues:

We boast not indeed of antiquity's badge,  
Nor our ancestral deeds loud proclaim, . . .

Starting anew, Australia had the chance to build a nation out of idealism, carefully avoiding the smouldering ashes of Europe. Strong overtones of responsible government, of independence, pervade the poem. New-World rhetoric abounds as Duncan broaches the idea of a new beginning for the sons of man in the southern continent.

Over the next decades, some of Australia's most active men of letters began to use, or at times simply exploit, an American vocabulary. Henry Parkes, the wily monarchic democrat, or, if you like, democratic monarchist, included some overtly political poems in his second volume of (rather poor) poems, Murmurs of the Stream (1857). In "The Mother and Son," he makes specific reference to English shortsightedness when confronted by a genuinely popular American republican movement:

How its dogmas and edicts had anger'd the brave  
To unnatural war, by the wild Western wave!  
How its records were traced with the sword in the wild-wood  
And cities new-built of America's childhood!<sup>33</sup>

In the poem's conclusion, Parkes expresses the hope that no "son of Australia" will ever have to stand "a foeman" against England (after the American example). A similar spirit of democracy and independence pervades such poems as "A League Hymn" (written "to promote the objects of the Australasian Anti-Transportation League"), "Our Coming Country-men" and "The Sun-Thought."<sup>34</sup> Yet Parkes had none of the militancy

prevalent at the diggings, where the thoughts of Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams and Thomas Paine echoed constantly in the miners' protests, highlighted by the refrain of the song, "Victoria's Southern Cross," which emerged from the Eureka Stockade:

Be faithful to the Standard, for victory of death.<sup>35</sup>

The most consistent spokesmen for a republican, independent future for Australia, however, were John Dunmore Lang, Charles Harpur and Daniel Deniehy. By the middle 1850's, Lang had confirmed his position as the publicist of the movement, its Thomas Paine, if you like; Deniehy figured as the sometime orator, inspiration and critic of the cause, its Emerson; and Harpur, though hardly praised in his own time, emerged as the exemplar of the new critique, its Walt Whitman. These men did as much as anyone to consolidate a democratic future for Australia. And so successful were they that Henry Kendall, Harpur's protégé of sorts, could seriously suggest a utopian future for Australia in his 1859 poem "The Far Future." In the same manner as Duncan (and, as I will show, Deniehy), Kendall imagined the positive benefits of being a young and geographically isolated country:

The yoke of dependence aside she will cast,  
And build on the ruins and wrecks of the Past.<sup>36</sup>

He could foresee a future free of monarchy and slavery, a future Australia acknowledged to be the archetype of democracy by the rest of the world, including America:

When bursting those limits above she will soar,  
 Outstretching all rivals who've mounted before,  
 And, resting will blaze with her glories unfurl'd,  
 The empire of empires and boast of the world.

This idea of Australia as a future utopia--publicly pushed by Deniehy--would surface often between 1860 and the turn of the century. Some locals, such as Charles Thatcher, would utilize it for ammunition in an immediate cause (in Thatcher's case, the Land Question in the mid 1860's<sup>37</sup>); others, later in the century, determined to build their future lives on the premise that the idea could be realized in the short-term. However it was, though, the idea itself grew from an ideological frame of reference, and a vocabulary, grounded in part at least on the political and social principles of the American Revolution.

Complementing the wide variety of American political works beginning to effect changes in Australian social life was a corresponding awareness of, and publicity for more fanciful works by leading contemporary American authors. Again, mirroring the situation with political tracts, the rapidly expanding English market (in the 1840's) for pirated American books soon wrought its effect on Australia. Maya Sapiets has written that in England, as in her colonies, "the railway paperback owed its success to the availability of the works of such authors as Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Nathaniel P. Willis, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Russell Lowell."<sup>38</sup> Pirated one or two shilling copies of the Novel Newspaper specialized in Irving and Cooper, and responded to the large demand for Richard Henry Dana Junior's classic Two Years Before the Mast (1840), Charles Brockden Brown's Gothic



romances, James Kirke Paulding's Westward Ho! (1832), and the plays and novels of Nathaniel P. Willis and Robert Montgomery Bird.<sup>39</sup>

Local-colour novelists of the South, William Gilmore Simms and J.P. Kennedy, also had an audience for their pageants; the dime novels of Edward Judson and J.P. Ingraham flourished; and John Bull's children soon became familiar with the books of Peter Parley, Susan Warner and Jack Abbot.<sup>40</sup> Colonists with higher aspirations, of course, could readily acquire the works of Emerson and Channing, the poems and short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, or even the occasional Melville novel.<sup>41</sup>

This greater accessibility of imaginative works by American writers had distinct consequences for Australia between 1838 and 1868. Certain indirect statements of the time give us a clue. Frederick Sinnett's throwaway reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne's Gothic tale The House of the Seven Gables (1851) in his "Fiction Fields" essay (1856) takes for granted that his readership had, at the very least, an acquaintance-ship with the New England author's fiction.<sup>42</sup> A similar assumption is made in an 1864 poem attributed to Sinnett--this time in reference to Poe:

The late lamented Edgar Allen [sic] Poe,  
The author of "The Raven", as you know,  
Among his many well-remembered rhymes  
Has written certain verses upon chimes. . . .<sup>43</sup>

The poem puns profusely, and much of its humour would be lost on an audience who did not have a knowledge of, and appreciation for, Poe's darkly evocative poetry and prose. Poe's impact in Australia, in fact,

must have been a considerable one, for Frank Fowler, as early as July, 1856, delivered a lecture on the American writer at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts to an unexpectedly large audience. The great mentor of budding Australian writers of the period, Nicol Drysdale Stenhouse, chaired the meeting, attended by "several members of parliament and many gentlemen distinguished by their literary attainments." Both of the leading Sydney newspapers of the period, the Empire and Sydney Morning Herald, covered the lecture, the Empire reviewer maintaining that "nothing he [Fowler] has essayed has given more general delight than his evening with Edgar Allan Poe."<sup>44</sup>

Fowler, of course, was only one of a number of writers--including Henry Parkes, Henry Halloran, J.S. Moore, J.L. Michael, Richard Rowe, Henry Kendall, and, most importantly for my later purposes, Charles Harpur and Daniel Deniehy--who gravitated to Stenhouse's Balmain (Sydney) home in the 1850's and '60's to take advantage of the extraordinary resources of Stenhouse's library and partake of the fine conversation and company that always attended each visit. Ann Mari-Jordens' much-needed study, The Stenhouse Circle (1979), deals at length with the more important guests of Waterview House.<sup>45</sup> Several of the points she makes about members of the group closely relate to the American connection.

First, Stenhouse himself, a generous personality and undeniable influence on all who gathered about him, read extensively in American literature. He strongly endorsed the writers of the American Transcendentalist group, particularly Emerson, and this appreciation

is reflected in the substantial American holdings in his collection.<sup>46</sup> His library contained the works of, among others, Emerson, Channing, Fuller, Holmes, Poe, and a German translation of Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. In addition, he could supply eager borrowers of the "Circle" with an anonymous Handbook of American Literature, Samuel Kettell's Specimens of American Poetry (1829) and the first volume of the Eclectic Magazine (New York, 1846).<sup>47</sup>

Second, most of the members of Stenhouse's group, perhaps in part because of their patron's interest, displayed a keen sympathy for American writing. At times American authors dominated the conversation. Richard Rowe, not a great admirer himself of Emerson's philosophical musings, could recall many congenial evenings with "literary friends talking transcendentalism. . . ."<sup>48</sup> Fowler, certainly, was steeped in Emersonian philosophy and literary style--a preoccupation which caused quite a stir in the slim world of colonial letters. For him, Emerson's essays "contained the purest idealism, simplest religion, and profoundest thought."<sup>49</sup>

There is no doubt that the major works of American political and imaginative literature exerted a powerful effect on the Australian imagination in the Forties, Fifties and Sixties. They largely shaped the Australian writer's concept of America. However, the impact of the Americans actually resident in Australia at the time cannot be underestimated--in particular, the exiled Yankee prisoners sent to Van Diemen's Land for their part in the Upper Canadian rebellion,

and the merchants and miners who came voluntarily, hungrily, to Australia's shores in search of a fast fortune. It is to them that we must now turn.

Section B

Deeper into the Vortex<sup>50</sup>

"Be careful, sir, to restrain your evil propensities here. Your notions of liberty and equality must be kept within your own breast. Van Diemen's Land is not America."

Sir John Franklin, Governor of Van Diemen's  
Land, to American exile Linus W. Miller,  
1840<sup>51</sup>

In 1837-8, a rebellion took place in Upper and Lower Canada as English and French-speaking Canadians, chafing under the despotism and patronage of arbitrary British rule, sought to reform certain abhorrent sections of the constitution relating to colonies. They felt themselves entitled to a government more firmly controlled by local citizens. As might be expected, many of the Upper Canadian rebels, with whom this section will be concerned, were Americans who participated in the uprising for a variety of idealistic and economic reasons (while the great majority of rebels in Lower Canada were French Canadians). The revolt failed dismally. British military and judicial might moved quickly first to crush the outbreaks of violence, and then suitably punish the deeds of the principal insurgents. Twenty-nine men were executed; eight deported to Bermuda; ninety-six

French Canadians were sent to New South Wales; while fifty-eight Anglo-Canadians and United States citizens found themselves banished to Van Diemen's Land. Between July, 1839 and February, 1840, three ships conveyed the exiles to Hobart, the majority, seventy-eight in all, aboard the Buffalo, the last ship to arrive in the southern colony.<sup>52</sup>

Van Diemen's Land made a profound impression on the Canadian Patriots. Arriving in the island prison at almost exactly the same time as Charles Wilkes and his fleet sailed into Sydney Harbour to rest, restock and ruminate on the republican prospects for New South Wales, the exiles witnessed the operations of British justice and social organization from a far less privileged position. Prisoners, they soon found, had no rights. Especially political prisoners. Their free countrymen, bound for the Antarctic, might give vent to democratic musings, but the Patriots' only concern was escaping Devil's Island and returning home. Seven of the exiles, on returning to America at various intervals throughout the 1840's, determined to record their impressions of and reactions to enforced banishment.<sup>53</sup> Of these, a representative group of three will be referred to at length: the narratives of the Canadian Benjamin Wait, and the Americans William Gates and Linus W. Miller. The others, along with a more recently published book on another of the Patriots, Elijah Woodman, will be mentioned only as they expand the major lines of argument in a way that the three selected narratives cannot do.<sup>54</sup> The specific details of the prisoners' exile have been adequately covered elsewhere.<sup>55</sup>

My concern here is to place the works in a literary context, showing the contribution they make to Australian literature dealing with convictism in the nineteenth century.

When Marcus Clarke serialised his great but uneven work on convictism, His Natural Life, between 1870 and 1872, and published convict-related material in Old Tales of a Young Country (1871), he initiated the most fruitful nineteenth-century attempt artistically to come to terms with Australia's tarnished criminal past. But his singular contribution was only one of a series of such attempts, ranging from the early idealized account of convict life, Quintus Servinton (1830-1), by Henry Savery, to the darkly realistic stories of William Astley ("Price Warung") in compilations such as Tales of the Convict System (1892). Some kind of fitful tradition, that is to say, exists in Australian literature--to which celebrated authors like Thomas Keneally and Patrick White have, more recently, contributed.<sup>56</sup> The works of the American Patriots, who came to Australia in such grim and exacting circumstances in 1839-40, need to be accorded a place in that tradition, even though their books were not published in Australia.<sup>57</sup>

The narratives deserve recognition for several reasons: they deal, at first hand, with the events, people and places which Clarke and Warung discovered only through exhaustive research, and to that extent convey an immediacy, vitality and, at times, a sardonic humour of survival which later fiction writers, perhaps, could not emulate; their accounts, the products of surprisingly lively and inquiring

minds, are intriguing as literature (Wait's, in particular, being artistically organized as a "found" novel<sup>58</sup>); they admirably reflect the tenacity of the human spirit, recording the lofty sentiments of men committed to a set of ideals, and prepared to die for their principles if necessary; they focus our attention on North American men fighting for exactly the same concessions as would occupy the minds of Australians for decades to come; and, finally, they represent further consolidation of the shared ground between Australia and America, and the literatures of those two countries. Here are aggressive representatives of Brother Jonathan experiencing, at close quarters, the grim undercurrents of the British colonial sea.

Inspired by the nerve and vigour of American nationalism, which later crystallized as the ideology of Young America, the American Patriots sought to realize the destiny of the United States by taking positive steps towards entrenching those ideals in Canada. That they didn't propagandize in Van Diemen's Land is a measure of the brutality and horror of the system against which they were reacting, and the single-mindedness of their endeavour to return "Home"-- meaning, in contrast to the preoccupation of a number of their colonial contemporaries, the United States, not England.

When compared to the lot of the French-Canadian exiles in Sydney, the Upper Canadian insurgents received extremely harsh treatment. Britain's figureheads in the Australian colonies in the 1840's, like their predecessors, had little time for either petty thieves, poachers or murderers. But they actively despised treasonous activity. Sir



George Arthur, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada in 1838 (and former holder of the same office in Van Diemen's Land, 1824-6), gave the Patriots some idea of what kind of reception they could expect from officialdom in their land of exile in his dealings with them before sentence was passed. The "old sinner," as Gates called him, had gained promotion to the Canadian post in part because of his reputation, acquired in Tasmania, for inflexible treatment of dissidents.<sup>59</sup>

Arthur appreciated sober behaviour and industrious habits in his subordinates; but the minute anyone threatened his office, directly or indirectly, he responded viciously. He suffered not fools, had a distinct propensity for hangings, and abhorred rebels.<sup>60</sup> Mrs. Benjamin Wait, for years a stubborn agitator for the freeing of her husband and the rest of the Patriots, soon recognized that she "could not expect even a particle of mercy" from "the blood-stained hands of Arthur."<sup>61</sup> Nor would Arthur's successor in Van Diemen's Land, Sir John Franklin, a man of gross physical proportions, hear of any suggestion of leniency for men found guilty of challenging the colonial power of the British Lion. On being informed that many of the Canadian rebels were, in fact, American citizens, Franklin reputedly replied, "So much the worse. You Yankee sympathisers must expect to be punished. I do not consider the simple Canadians, especially the French in Lower Canada, so much to blame, as they have been excited to rebellion by you Yankees."<sup>62</sup> Despite being a nephew of the "immortal Benjamin Franklin," in Linus Miller's words, he had decidedly English aristocratic

sympathies and regarded the rebels as the worst kind of criminal wretch.<sup>63</sup> Throughout the short history of the British occupation of New Holland, English bureaucrats had almost unanimously disapproved of the principles for which the American Revolution had taken place, and that country's republican citizenry. Franklin, no exception, would make the lot of the insurrectionists he had in his charge as uncomfortable as possible.

Confronted by this official disapprobation, the exiles apparently determined to cling even more tightly to the principles which had originally motivated them to join the fracas in Upper Canada. Perusing the narratives, one is constantly made aware of the republican tenets that the authors stood for, and fought for, and the lengths to which they were prepared to go to maintain their humanity and, above all, integrity--in conditions hostile to their very lives, much less beliefs. The determination and courage of the Scottish Martyrs, early "visitors" to Botany Bay because of their adherence to the rights of man publicized by Thomas Paine, reappears in the Patriot accounts, which were written in part to celebrate their triumph over the terrible Tasmanian hardships. Because of their devotion to the principles of the American Constitution, as laid down by Jefferson and his contemporaries, and their total belief in the universal application of those principles, the exiles always exuded a certain superiority over their surroundings which made it impossible for them to be coerced by their forbidding environment.

Confidence in the justness of their cause pervades the narratives.

These are men assured of their rights as citizens of the state in a way that many Australians of the time were not. The indefatigable Ben Wait, in the introduction to his Letters from Van Diemen's Land, catalogues the sum of Upper Canadian grievances; among them are the absence of all security for life and property, taxation without representation, destruction of the liberty of the press, waste of public revenue "among swarms of foreign officials" and the destruction of the Colonial constitution. All stem, claims Wait, from "the existence of an arbitrary, arrogant, vindictive, and fraudulent oligarchy. . . ." <sup>64</sup> His charges echo those of the American revolutionaries in 1776; and, in fact, amount to precisely the same objections, though more caustically stated, that increasingly mobilized a generation of Australians to agitate for responsible government between 1824 and 1856.

The large number of participating Americans, the narratives indicate, recognized in the Canadian predicament their forefathers' plight in the early 1770's. Linus Miller, the erratic but compelling law-student-cum-rebel, puts it best at the beginning of Notes:

In their distress they had turned their eyes to these United States; studied our glorious and peaceful institutions, until they imbibed the spirit of the heroes of the American Revolution, and felt the God-like divinity of liberty stirring within their souls, and rousing their slumbering energies to action. <sup>65</sup>

All Canada, Miller maintains, cried out for help; it was a call which no patriotic American could possibly ignore. <sup>66</sup> The first chapter of Miller's account accurately reflects the fervour of the concerned

republican. His language is steeped in the rhetorical splendour of a committed advocate of Jeffersonian democracy and Paine's radical pronouncements. His comrades scarcely differed.<sup>67</sup> In the first chapter of Recollections, William Gates, the twenty-two-year-old farmer, exudes the true spirit of Jefferson's Declaration in his wish that

. . . Heaven speed the time when they [the Canadians] too, like the favoured people of our own glad Republic, shall sit under their vines and fig trees without molestation, and in that full and free liberty which is the inalienable boon of all men.<sup>68</sup>

Paine had talked of "the seed time of continental union, faith and honor."<sup>69</sup> The Patriots merely wanted to cast the seeds a little wider and stretch the continent a little further.

But they couldn't stretch so far as to include remote and barbarous Van Diemen's Land. Inflamed by Jefferson's vindication of each man's inherent worth, and Paine's claim that "as revolutions have begun . . . it is natural to expect that other revolutions will follow," the American rebels regarded their actions in Canada as nothing less than their sacred duty. Paine had exhorted them to preach widely in "this day of revolutions," and believe in the justness of their cause.<sup>70</sup> For this reason, all the Patriots categorically rejected the legality of their imprisonment and exile.<sup>71</sup> They were not common criminals, and felt insulted by the determination of their English prison warders to categorize them in this way; and worse, to put them in the same cells as murderers, prostitutes, drunkards and pimps,

the "offscourings of England."<sup>72</sup> The Patriots felt soiled by the experience, a fact which, perhaps better than any other, explains their desire to flee Van Diemen's Land as soon as possible, rather than view it as another frontier desperately in need of exposure to democratic principles. Miller, in one of his characteristically brash letters written just prior to an unsuccessful escape attempt, articulated the exiles' stand:

. . . we have rights, which, notwithstanding the convict apparel upon our persons, galling chains upon our limbs, and the menial tasks which we are made to perform, we have never forfeited. From the period of our first imprisonment in Canada, those rights have been trampled upon and violated. Tried under a provincial act, evidently unconstitutional and repugnant to the laws of England,-- nay, not tried, for the proceeding against us deserved not the name of a trial,--dragged through a thousand horrors to the shores of this "free and happy England," it was natural for us to hope for some amelioration of our woes where the divinity of justice presided in person; but the experience of a few months has taught us that hopes founded upon so baseless a fabric must be vain and delusive.<sup>73</sup>

Because of this illegal imprisonment, the Patriots regarded themselves not as political prisoners, but as slaves. In a letter to his father, Elijah Woodman closed with a stanza of verse musing on the blows of fortune:

Oh think on my fate, I once freedom enjoyed,  
Was happy as happy could be.  
From you I am severed, as a slave I'm employed  
And debarred the sweet joys of the free.<sup>74</sup>

Woodman was certainly no poet, but his letters have a poignancy and, in their simple way, a dignity of composition that much contemporaneous

bellestristic literature written in the United States and Australia could not equal.

In spite of the realization of their essential powerlessness in their sombre, enforced home, in spite of being compelled to contemplate life as "a manacled slave," all the Patriots refused to capitulate to Britain's system of convict transportation.<sup>75</sup> For them, it represented one of the most dreadful forms of legalized brutality and human degradation. And they would not be flogged. Flogging was the most common form of penal discipline, but Daniel Heustis, a Vermont native and one of the most intelligent members of the Patriots, maintained that "none of the Americans were flogged."<sup>76</sup> As one, they refused to submit themselves to this indignity. The American Constitution's Eighth Amendment (1791) deems "any cruel or unequal punishment" illegal.<sup>77</sup> No doubt the exiles felt flogging violated both the criteria cited in the amendment. To the extent that they refused to yield on this point, they were at least able to mount a muted personal protest. Miller stated that he felt he "could endure any thing but a flogging; and even the torture of the lash I cared but little for, but the degradation I could not bear; and resolved that I would not." Stubborn advocacy led to a number of heated confrontations with prison overseers, but, if Heustis is right, the Patriots celebrated a small but important triumph on this issue.

First-hand experience of life on a transport ship and in a desperate penal colony obviously created an indelible impression on each one of the political exiles. They reacted by criticizing not

just these obvious manifestations of a cruel and unfeeling administration, but the workings of the entire British social system. The Van Diemonian ordeal confirmed their worst suspicions of, and prejudices towards the real nature of the government their forefathers had overthrown.

Wait, Miller and Gates assail the sordid machinations of English power at every level--the indulgences of English monarchy and its aristocracy, the corruption and inhumanity of colonial officials such as Arthur and Franklin, and the inequalities of the English class system.<sup>79</sup>

Miller wryly questions the credibility of a people's Parliament which could spend "Seventy thousand pounds sterling for her Majesty's stables, and thirty-five thousand for public education in the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland!"<sup>80</sup> Wait regards his whole endeavour

as motivated by "a desire of exposing the system of treachery and consummate barbarity, as practiced . . . by the 'self styled' generous, liberal and humane British government."<sup>81</sup> Adherence to what set of

principles could possibly lead a government to lend its consent to an area under its jurisdiction continually perpetrating the worst kinds of cruelty on thousands of men, women and children? For Wait, there is only one guiding prescript: "might is right."<sup>82</sup> And, unfortunately, might permanently resides in the hands, as Gates puts it, of "a number of her queenship's most dutiful minions," those men easily identified in a uniform "tinselled with British authority."<sup>83</sup>

Van Diemen's Land, for the Patriots, represented one of the worst aberrations of a cankered system resolutely opposed to men asserting their indefeasible rights. Hence, ignorant of the existence of any

republican sentiment on the island, much less the mainland, they couldn't possibly embrace the cause of democracy in a land which symbolized the antithesis of their principles. They saw only a giant prison. And hated it. Referring to it variously as "that detestable penal colony," "the purgatory of England," and "that cursed land of Van Diemen," all delighted in leaving the island at last, as one might struggle free, finally, from the hitherto iron grip of Lucifer himself.<sup>84</sup> They strove to stay alive only because of the possibility of once again reaching America's shores--that "Land of Freedom," "asylum for the oppressed" and "home of the free and the brave."<sup>85</sup> They had to make it back before they died; and when at last they did return, for one of the exiles the northern heavens themselves elicited a response:

In crossing the equator, the southern cross soon disappeared, while the northern star, which had been hidden from my view so long, gradually arose above the horizon, and I hailed its first appearance as I would have done the face of an old friend.<sup>86</sup>

Preoccupation with a desire to return home inevitably meant that illegal flight never ventured far from their thoughts, though of all the Patriots who committed their experiences to print, only Wait managed a successful escape.<sup>87</sup> Miller tried repeatedly--ending up at the dreaded Port Arthur prison for one such attempt--but, like most of his countrymen, he experienced the frustration (and, in Van Diemen's Land, the terror) of continual failure. For some time, the Patriots clearly viewed escape as the only valid response to their



contemptible circumstances. However, as this outlet proved increasingly difficult, if not impossible after Wait and two other Patriots successfully escaped in 1842, they adopted alternate means of survival: an absolute commitment to independent behaviour and thought, and a desire to make the best of their lot. The latter often took the form of sardonically humorous appraisals of events and descriptions of resident bureaucrats.

The Patriots would not be cowed by the barbarity surrounding them. In their accounts, written so soon after returning that the terrible memories were still fresh, they all refused to indulge in sensationalism.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, they intentionally avoided the more horrifying aspects of their years in exile. Gates' aching reaction is typical:

There are sufferings there [in Van Diemen's Land] which not only rend the flesh and break down the stalwart heart of proud manhood, but they pierce the inmost spirit and make dead every feeling of humanity. There could be tales told of that island that would curdle the blood--tales that would make man blush to think them true of his fellow man, and which, if one should relate them so far away, his listeners would but think him attempting a game upon their credulity--so fiend-like are many of the hellish souls that lord it there but briefly over a gang of their fellow clay. I would not speak thus harshly; but when one thinks of those sufferings which bowed his spirit even to the dust--that crushed and took from him his manhood, and degraded him to the level of a beast, he must indeed be a man of more patience than was even Job, if he can smother the bitterness of his heart.<sup>89</sup>

This is a statement of great courage--uplifting in its spirit even as it professes intimidation. Gates, like his fellows, endured.

What continually surprises one in the narratives is each author's

ability to rise above his immediate surroundings in a variety of ways: a spontaneous reaction (such as the roar of laughter which followed their being first accoutred in convict clothing<sup>90</sup>), a boast, a declaration of faith, or, sometimes, a wry joke.<sup>91</sup> Survival tactics pervade the accounts. Early into their imprisonment, the Patriots made a point of celebrating Independence Day in defiance of their confinement:

Out of several pocket handkerchiefs a flag was manufactured, as nearly resembling the "star-spangled banner" as we could conveniently make it. We procured some lemons and sugar, which enabled us to pass around a refreshing bowl of lemonade. . . . the heroes of '76 were duly remembered. . . .<sup>92</sup>

Songs sometimes filled the air in a low moment. Needless to say, most were either patriotic or nostalgic in nature. Popular ones included "Hail Columbia," "The Star-Spangled Banner," "Hunters of Kentucky" and "Yankee Doodle."<sup>93</sup> In this, Elijah Woodman, one of the group's more senior citizens (he was forty-two when imprisoned, and he never did make it back to his homeland, dying on the ship going back<sup>94</sup>), played a prominent and recognized public role. On one occasion, when spirits were depressed, he "struck up 'Pretty Susan' and continued singing for some time" to enliven his despondent companions.<sup>95</sup> On another occasion, Miller records, a party of exiles had just returned to their huts after a cheerless day working in miserable Van Diemonian rain:

All were silent. Drooping heads and sad countenances indicated that the thoughts of the melancholy party were of bitter wrongs, or perchance of distant home and friends. . . . Suddenly Mr. Woodman sprang from his berth to the floor, and in a tone of voice that might have been heard a mile, struck up "the hunters of Kentucky." The effect was instantaneous. As if electrified, every man sprang to the floor; sick, blind and halt, joined in the chorus; some danced, others shouted, and all shook off the gloomy horrors of Van Diemen's Land.<sup>96</sup>

Whenever they threatened to succumb to their wretched plight, somehow, from somewhere, a new resolve was gained. Gates well remembered:

We exhibited symptoms of disaffection--we gave vent frequently to our curses. Though we were in the hands of cruel tyrants, they had not power to chain our thoughts, and our Yankee spirits were not so far subdued but that we would give tongue now and then to those thoughts.<sup>97</sup>

Perhaps this unswerving resolve is best reflected in the fact that not one of them appears ever to have lost his sense of humour. Recollecting the terrors of the past, Miller and Gates could still manage to laugh at their jailers. Sir John Franklin, that pompous, obese caricature of a man, comes in for a series of barbed comments. "Old granny" or "his bulkiness," as they called him, apparently cut an absurd figure, and both authors rise admirably to the occasion in their reminiscences.<sup>98</sup> Miller informs his readers that all their best imaginative efforts would still fail to grasp "the length, breadth, depth and height of the great, high and mighty Franklin," while Gates, in a passage of Swiftian savagery, also expresses his amusement at

the great man's appearance, for whether he was great in the mental qualities, he was truly great in all that makes the man, physically--flesh and blubber. His head was chucked down between his shoulders, for the wise provision, no doubt of shortening the esophagus; whilst the stomach made equal advances toward the head, thus bringing the two in such close proximity, that the sympathy which is said by physiologists to exist between these organs was extraordinarily developed. But the vital organs were so encroached upon by these neighbours, that they found it exceedingly difficult to keep the old man in sufficient wind, which came puffing from his brandy bottled nose, like steam from the escape pipe of an asthmatic boat.<sup>99</sup>

Humour, it seems, was an important aid in maintaining one's independence of spirit in circumstances which encouraged total submission.

## Section C

The "Go-A-Head-A-Tive" Americans<sup>100</sup>

Young America. . . . owns the past, uses the present, and discounts the future. He dives deeper, swims longer, and comes up drier. He thinks quicker, accomplishes more, and lives faster than any other party."

George Francis Train, Spread-Eagleism  
(1859)<sup>101</sup>

Two broad groups of Americans inundated Australian cities and goldfields in the 1850's: merchants and miners. Both had quick profit on their minds. Unfortunately, too few members of either group committed themselves to print--which is a pity, because the small number of speeches, fictional accounts and memoirs that we do have are lively, humorous and illuminating. The works of the three writers to be discussed--George Francis Train, Charles D. Ferguson and William H. Thomas--read surprisingly well. They are entertaining accounts, the products of alert, penetrating minds, and they assume more than just historical significance. Each writer, in his own way, takes us back to the 1850's, with its excitement and constant unpredictability. Train does so as the vigorous polemicist and epitome of "Spread-Eagleism," Ferguson as the wry, backwoods jack-of-all-trades,

and Thomes, in his better moments, as the keen observer of his new surroundings.<sup>102</sup> Train and Ferguson, in particular, represent identifiable American stereotypes of the times.

Like the memoirs of the American Patriots in the 1840's, the works of Train, Ferguson and Thomes, though for obvious reasons not technically a part of Australian literature, deserve a place because of the insights they supply into Australian mores of the time and into the characteristics of Young America down under. Moreover, they contribute to the widening ties, mid-nineteenth century, between the Australian and American communities. However, while Linus Miller and his exiled American comrades witnessed the brutal aspects of British colonialism at work, Train, Ferguson and Thomes were the fortunate inheritors of the more positive characteristics. Tantalized by "the dazzling brilliancy of the Southern El Dorado," as Train fervently put it, and perhaps conceiving of Australia as one more link in the logical progression of America's "manifest destiny," each man in his own way looked on Australia as the new frontier.<sup>103</sup> A place finally to obtain that elusive fortune. Each man arrived with distinctive skills, ambitions and prejudices, but it is not difficult to appreciate their common American background. They are all patriotic celebrants of July 4 and all confirmed republicans; but for them, Young American ideology transcends political considerations. They interpret it as primarily an economic and social doctrine. As Freeman Hunt, editor of the New York Herald observed, individual dynamism must be catered for. One must give the American at large a

chance to define his own limits of application. Only then can the world appreciate

"that Young America which pours its energies through all the channels of commerce in all quarters of the globe--which, at home or abroad, upholds the high character of its country--which is ready to plant itself wherever great achievements await it, whether amid the furs of the North West or on the quays of the seaboard; now ploughing the Arctic ices, or searching for new points of development under the Equator; now carrying our flag and institutions to erect them on the golden rocks of California; or, as if not finding room enough within our own boundless domain, aiding to establish a new port, build a new city and create a new commerce on the golden soil of Australia."<sup>104</sup>

This appraisal, written to clarify Train's growing achievements, could apply just as well to the dynamic Ferguson and some of the characters in Thomes' Australian novels.

"Citizen George Francis Train" undoubtedly emerges as the most vigorous writer of the three, and perhaps the most knowledgeable American commentator on the Australian/American nineteenth-century connection of his generation.<sup>105</sup> A compulsive traveller, defender of feminism, slavery, the Fenian movement and the Union (which, thus enumerated, reveal something of the man's idiosyncrasies), Train spent approximately three years in Australia, during which time he made an outstanding contribution to the rise of Melbourne as Australia's financial centre.<sup>106</sup> In addition, however, he found the time to write letters home (printed as guides to Australia in the New York Herald, 1853-5<sup>107</sup>) and deliver addresses, each July 4, to large and appreciative audiences of American patriots. His letters, speeches and critical commentaries all found their way into print. They form the basis of

his contribution to the literature of the times, and have been largely ignored.

Train pulled no punches. Brash, entertaining, an "admirable specimen of Young America," he represents an important figure in that, by way of the podium and his two books on Australia published in the 1850's, he must have contributed substantially to the shaping of American concepts of Australia, and, to some extent, the way in which Australians regarded their American cousins.<sup>108</sup> After hearing one of Train's addresses in celebration of "Young America," Charles Ferguson declared that "never before or since did I listen to a more eloquent speech."<sup>109</sup> The Illustrated London News even grudgingly admitted that at "a 'spread eagle' speech he has few superiors."<sup>110</sup> Train had the ability to move people with his orations and stimulate readers of his prose into action. In Australia, he delivered some of his very best addresses.

Freeman Hunt, introducing An American Merchant (1857) to the public, managed to find a literary category--and in colonial Australia, a most viable one, as this thesis attests--for Train's writings:

Commercial Literature is a new term. . . . It seems to have been thought that the only books for a merchant to read or to write, were those formidable rows of ponderous ledgers, dealing only in the inexorable logic of arithmetic, to which learning was a stranger, within whose lids a gleam of fancy or of humor dare not intrude, and which summed up the subjects and results of commerce, in the uninviting rhetoric of figures. But Commerce no longer lingers around its ancient haunts. It now pervades the world. . . . Whatever is valuable to man, calls on the merchant for help. The very gold which the sands and the rocks of



California and Australia so profusely yield, requires the merchant's ships and system of exchange to make it of the value it really represents. Why then shall not commerce be installed among the occupations whose achievements shall be deemed worthy of record, and possess a literature peculiarly its own.<sup>111</sup>

Certainly Train did bring considerable learning to his writing, a distinctive creativity of thought. Reading the belletristic fiction of the day (including Thomes' mammoth efforts, though one hesitates to assume a category for Thomes' productions other than of the "dime" variety), it is unlikely that one could find a contemporaneous novel with the off-hand freshness of Train's opening to Spread-Eagleism (1859):

"Young America Abroad," thrown off while running about the world the other day. . . .<sup>112</sup>

Yet, in that seemingly catchy beginning, Train subtly projects part of the rationale for understanding his Young America platform. The fact that he is, in his own words, not "a literary man--not a poet," is beside the point.<sup>113</sup> The prose races, and we find ourselves caught up in the whirl of words--especially when Train records some of the excitement of contemporary life and the possibilities inherent in Young American ideology. His style seems to be a mixture of Western tall-tale swagger and Emersonian aphorisms:

Our age is the age.  
 [Men of previous generations] walked--we take the rail-  
 way. Their dispatches went by horse power--ours by electricity.  
 The world is liberalizing.  
 Even Pandemonium has got a new and revised constitution.  
 The fires are not so hot as under the old Calvinistic  
 régime.

Young America observes that nature's features are regular. He likes joy, gladness, bright colors; growling, ill-nature, scowls he detests. Flowers, clouds, land and water have a thousand hues; the Creator did not dress this world in drab.

Young America believes in a good hearty laugh. Laughter is the only distinguishable mark from the brute--animals never smile. Only three cords draw down the face, but as many [as a] dozen take it up. . . .

Some think me too fast, others too slow; some say, modulate your voice more--gesticulate less--don't get so excited. Each gives advice, but all cheer.<sup>114</sup>

And, as readers, we often find ourselves doing just that. The author is as audacious as the era he describes.

Train confesses to never having written for a narrowly literary market, and yet in his autobiography, My Life in Many States and in Foreign Lands (1902), he suggests that Emerson "has had more influence upon me than any other man in the world."<sup>115</sup> Like many other statements in the book, the claim is a dubious one; Train's soulmate seems often to be Paul Bunyan, rather than the Concord Transcendentalist. However, he is no less entertaining for mistaking his sources. Indeed, in terms of linking concepts of America built up in Australia prior to the 1850's with those in the last decades of the nineteenth century, his works assume undeniable importance. They exude that mixture of cheekiness and independence, a certain likeable effrontery, that provided one of the stereotypes later Australian writers would make use of. Train epitomized the outspoken, thrifty, resourceful American.

Charles Ferguson's elaborate career in Australia, stretching for almost thirty-one years, served to extend that model. If we accept the assertion of F.T. Wallace, the compiler of Ferguson's memoirs, that in their personal interviews leading to the book the protagonist

"insisted that no exaggerations shall be indulged in, and nothing stated but the simple truth," then an entertaining record of some of the more colourful aspects of life in Australia in the decades after mid-century emerges.<sup>116</sup> It is the more compelling for being largely understated, reflecting a first-hand reaction to, and feel for, the times (and no one could have participated more fully in the panorama and excitement of a rapidly developing nation than Ferguson). How much we owe to Wallace's creativity we don't know, but certainly the portrait of the central "character" projected by the book effectively grabs our attention. Ferguson continually demonstrated that Yankee versatility which Australians of the time so much admired. Drover, bootlegger, shop-keeper, miner, original Eureka Stockader, Cobb and Company driver, abattoir worker, explorer (foreman with the monumental but ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition), horse-breaker and trick rider--Ferguson tried his hand, usually with marked success, at many professions. The "truth," as recorded in Experiences, has all the characteristics of fiction. Ferguson lent credence to the mid-western "tall tale" claims that Train made regarding "Young America." For many Australians he (Ferguson) must have represented a robust extension of the Davey Crockett legend.

In Experiences, we traverse, with Ferguson, the "mental panorama" of an inveterate adventurer, a man content to absent himself from his home state, Ohio, for close on thirty-four years.<sup>117</sup> "Visions of gold," the author exclaims in the opening of his first chapter,

excited my brain. It was not the gold alone, but an awakening of a strong desire of adventure which had pervaded my spirit from a small school-boy taking my first lesson in geography. Foreign countries marked upon the pages of the little school atlas were fascinating. . . .<sup>118</sup>

From the outset, we are alert to the priorities of the man whose experiences we are about to follow: travel, adventure and money-making. By the book's end, nothing has happened to change the reader's first impressions. Ferguson stands unrepentant. Apparently feeling it incumbent on him to counsel caution to any young readers ("stick to your farm or your trade, stand by the old homestead where you were born"), his real nature almost immediately responds in direct contradiction to such dutifully conservative urgings. He captures the spirit of the whole enterprise in a few lines:

Follow your own inclination as I did, for that you will be sure to do, as I did, and so will every boy. If he is inclined to be a lawyer, there is no use in trying to make a clergyman of him; so of one who is bound to travel, you cannot keep him at home.<sup>119</sup>

Ferguson would not accept the insular life of a small town in Ohio. He believed the world beckoned to every young man, and that Americans were peculiarly suited to respond to the challenge.

Oddly, despite Ferguson's penchant for a life of action, Experiences testifies to the fact that he has a literary interest; he exhibits familiarity with writers ranging from Shakespeare and Dickens to his countryman Poe.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, a compelling personality emerges from the book. The writer can be wryly humorous when the occasion

warrants--for example, when he records the demise of a Shakespearean actor of note from public personality to billiard-room employee as "rather a sudden drop from King Lear and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, down to a common billiard marker."<sup>121</sup> At another point, he impresses with his sincere and moving attempt to bridge the swirling waters of the American Civil War, for he approaches the conflict intelligently, with a deep sympathy for both sides.<sup>122</sup> But Ferguson is best when simply being himself. Perhaps the most endearing example of this occurs when he describes his beautiful female partner at a July 4 dinner. Rising splendidly to the task, he exclaims, all bright-eyed innocence:

. . . O how she did shine--the observed of all observers. The star-spangled banner on the wall, emblem of my beloved country, paled and grew dim in contrast with the sweeping train of my partner.<sup>123</sup>

Like Train, Ferguson no doubt exemplified for all the Australians with whom he came in contact that particular American type whose enthusiasm and vigour were contagious.

William Henry Thomes' characters in his three novels set in Victoria reveal a knowledge of Australia and Australian conditions clearly based on his own experiences.<sup>124</sup> Thomes' enterprise, like Ferguson's, led him to try a number of professions--such as printer, reporter, soldier, sailor, gold-digger, shop-keeper and, in the role of which we have most information, that of "dime-novel" author. Thomes spent at least twelve months in Australia, arriving in 1852-3

and leaving in late 1854, or early 1855.<sup>125</sup> During that time, he accumulated sufficient familiarity with local circumstances that he could give his fiction at least an authentic framework of local colour. His novels sag under the weight of the worst aspects of Cooperesque romanticism (in the tradition of the "Leatherstocking" series), and tend to exploit such devices as sensational chapter headings, but we do find traces of keen observation and a grasp of American and Australian manners.<sup>126</sup> The egalitarian conduct of his principle American characters makes sense--they are strong believers in republicanism and the rights of man--though Thomes' world has been, as one critic has indicated, "created for heroes, and . . . a hero is ipso facto a gentleman--even if only one of Nature's gentlemen."<sup>127</sup> We must recognize him, first, as an incorrigible American romancer, but his Australian novels are at times more than just historical curiosities.

In The Gold Hunters' Adventures; or Life in Australia (1864), written, the author sourly informs us, for the benefit of "those who used to drink my liquor and feast at my table," Thomes takes us on the travels of two American miners, Frederick (Fred) Button and the narrator, Jack.<sup>128</sup> Luckless on the Californian diggings, they head to Melbourne, which they find much more to their liking. They strike up a friendship with a ticket-of-leave man named Smith, who helps them find their way to Ballarat. At this point, the setting established, the three embark on a succession of picaresque adventures: among them, the tracking down and capture of the inevitable gang of bush-rangers; a triumphant return to Government House, Melbourne, to be

lauded for their heroic deeds; the eventual recovery of the bushrangers' buried treasure; the freeing of a youth about to be unjustly lynched; and, in the second half of the book, their lively existence on the Ballarat goldfields. The Ballarat section, in particular, has distinct fictional possibilities, but Thomes seems more interested in satisfying the requirements of a reader in thirst of endless action than in making the effort to give his characters depth and explore the implications of his frontier setting.

Thomes' second book, The Bushrangers (1873), is scarcely different from his first. It makes use of typically sensational subject headings, which fairly represent the plot--among them are "A Coquette at Work," "Rescue of an English Baronet," "Alligators and their Attacks," "Forward to the Rescue," "The Lost Child" and "The Hunt for the Baronet's Daughter."<sup>129</sup> However, there are certain redeeming features in Bushrangers. In the book's opening pages, for example, Jack accurately voices Young American wanderlust:

Heaven only knows what sent me to Australia the second time. I was very comfortable in Boston, for I had money, and it was safely invested. I had friends, or rather those who professed to be such. I had pleasant rooms, and a pair of fast horses; and men said that I was a lucky dog, and deserved my good fortune, and I have no doubt they were sincere in their expressions. But still I was not happy and contented. . . . I felt as though I could settle down and remain a quiet citizen . . . and made desperate attempts to convince myself that I was happy. But all in vain.<sup>130</sup>

The narrator's words could just as easily be Train's or Ferguson's.

Later, he authentically describes the grim realities of the Australian environment:

I thought of the clouds of blinding dust which drive the inhabitants of Australia frantic as it fills their eyes, noses, ears, and mouths, and burns the skin of the face like caustic. I recollected the wet winters, when the rain falls as though rivers in the clouds had broken loose, and were determined to sweep away all vestige of land; the piercing cold which is encountered on the mountains; the mud; the snakes; the millions of insects, which drive sleep from the eyes of the tender-skinned. . . .<sup>131</sup>

The names of Thomes' characters--like Hezekiah Hopeful (from Hillsborough County, New Hampshire), Captain Keelhaul and Bill Thrasher--come straight from the "dime" dictionary. And yet, while he usually contents himself with stereotyped situations in his stories, he can occasionally depict incidents with some social significance. One such incident occurs towards the end of Bushrangers when Jack finds himself the unwilling victim of the English class system. Though he has been instrumental in the safe return of the English aristocrat Sir William Byefield's long-lost daughter, Jack's request to marry this same girl prompts an unceremonious reply from her father. Sir William admits that Jack is "a fine, generous fellow . . . but still not her equal in position or fortune." An outraged Jack replies:

I intend to prove to you that an American sovereign is fully equal in position, if not superior in some respects, to an English baronet.<sup>132</sup>

This scene, several pages long, indicates Thomes' awareness of some of the social and political repercussions of the American presence



in an English colony in the 1850's; unfortunately, he all too often contents himself with the less-demanding task of replicating the standard situations of the limp romantic novel.

The memories of Train, Ferguson and Thomes, both fictional and factual, notably enlarge our notions of the American in Australia, mid-century. They are articulate, at times stirring spokesmen for their country, and the works discussed here, if not consciously literary, reflect considerable creative resourcefulness. The stay of the three Americans in Australia was mutually profitable. Train got his fortune, Ferguson sated his thirst for adventure, and Thomes acquired material for his novels. Australia, on the other hand, got "Americanized," to use Train's word.<sup>133</sup> Brother Jonathan had arrived and many, like Train, "at once undertook to spread the gospel of Americanism. . . ."<sup>134</sup> After initial suspicion, the great majority of these Americans were well received.<sup>135</sup> Some stayed for good.

Section D

## Money or Evangelism?

The fictional work of Thomes and the purportedly non-fictional accounts of Train and Ferguson all, in some way, reflect the aspirations and ideals of Young America in Australia at a crucial time for both the development of the American spirit abroad and the effect of that spirit on the hastening literary and social evolution of infant Australia. Their thoughts bear closely on the nature of the Australian/American connection of the time. Unlike the American Patriots exiled to Van Diemen's Land who arrived in their island prison grimly determined to return to their homeland as soon as possible, by whatever means available, the Fifties Young Americans eagerly sought Australia's gilded shores. They felt themselves bound for a new El Dorado, not for Devil's Island.<sup>136</sup> Barely a decade separated the two groups, and often as one reads the Young Americans, ironic contrasts with their predecessors arise. Train, Ferguson and Thomes simply do not look at Australia in the 1850's with the same eyes as their countrymen had surveyed Canada, and later Van Diemen's Land, in the late 1830's and early 1840's. The aggression of the new Young Americans is economic, not military. Train, for example, is content to boast,

while his predecessors sought to defend honour and principle with their lives, if necessary.

One of the principal characters in Thomes' The Gold Hunters' Adventures, Fred Buttons, perhaps sums up the attitude of many of his real-life counterparts when he is asked to comment on the links between Australian and American republicanism. He responds cautiously: "We don't care to talk on the subject."<sup>137</sup> Later, when pressed, he gives a more elaborate defence of the profit-minded American Eagles in Australia at the time:

Go and tell the dissatisfied miners that we will never plot against them, although it is probable that we shall not take up arms in their defence. We are traders, and have done with fighting, and wish to remain neutral.<sup>138</sup>

The zealous commitment typifying the Upper Canadian rebels had evidently lapsed. Americans fought at Eureka--a few, bravely indeed--but the integrity and, above all, resolute principles of action apparent in Canada were generally missing in Australia. When brought to trial, the American Patriots enthusiastically espoused egalitarian notions despite severe coercion. In Australia, however, if Charles Ferguson can be taken as representative, participants attempted to extract themselves by any means possible from the aborted rebellion. Never a thought of a moral stand. Arraigned, and extremely vulnerable, Ferguson posed as a Methodist minister<sup>139</sup>--a ploy which, with the backing of the American Consul and American merchants in Melbourne, apparently worked. Reading Ferguson's account of the strife, one is struck by his totally objective tone. He remembers not what we did,

but rather the "many grievances they suffered and of which they complained."<sup>140</sup> And he is at pains to indicate his chariness when a number of diggers strongly advocate militant action just prior to the Eureka revolt.<sup>141</sup> Thomes' brusque final dismissal of Eureka in a few lines reflects a truth.<sup>142</sup> Most American miners, urged on by their merchant countrymen (who wanted to avoid a rift with English civil authorities), saw fit to remain neutral. Moreover, of those who actually took part, some did so for a variety of essentially personal reasons. Reflecting on the aftermath of the revolt decades later, Ferguson concludes his comments in a bluntly disinterested way.<sup>143</sup> The fervent belief in the rightness of their cause that had served to inspire Miller, Wait and Woodman seems to be singularly lacking in the motivations of a great many of their countrymen who arrived in Australia in the 1850's.

Reading the Young Americans, we realize their motivating factor to be a largely personal goal--namely, accumulating a fortune as soon as possible. If the Patriots are Jefferson and Paine's men, the Young Americans are, to a large extent, Hamilton's. Train continually strove to defuse potentially violent conflicts. He counselled goodwill in the cause of expanding commerce and warily contemplated the "many revolutionists" in Victoria.<sup>144</sup> In fact, as Train prepared to depart Australia's shores, the Melbourne Herald praised his "strict and honourable abstinence from all participation in our local and national politics."<sup>145</sup> The Age agreed. For Train, Australia represented but a rung in the Young American ladder. He restricted his militant

activity to consciously republican remarks in his letters to American newspapers. One of these letters colourfully outlines his case, giving the rationale of his "commercial" literature. Imagining a dialogue between English civil authorities and Young America, he has the English party suggest desperate Yankee motives--to which Young America brazenly replies:

How absurd. . . . we have come to make money not to revolutionize your country. Don't be frightened governor; our revolvers we brought for sale--not for rebel lead.<sup>146</sup>

In Train, and those he led, the exploitative face of America that the New Holland colony had been forced to approve in its early years resurfaces with a vengeance. Yet a more subtle vengeance, at once flattering and devious.

The prevailing attitude towards England of the Young Americans bears marked contrast to the Patriots. While occasional criticism of English colonial methods occurs in the works of the Young Americans, they generally encourage feelings of compatibility.<sup>147</sup> Train's livelihood depended on cooperation, and he understood the importance of good relations. The willingness of Thomes' characters to woo the English, their desire to be upwardly mobile, again contains a great deal of truth. No one had more desire than Train, and when the occasion required ingratiating words, he could respond appropriately. Aware of the large readership his books could expect in Britain, he often acclaimed the beneficial effects of English settlement. Indeed, in his writings he wholeheartedly approves and utilizes the familiar

rhetorical metaphor of earlier English speakers. With slight alterations. Train talks of "the gifted mother and the progressive child."<sup>148</sup>

In The American Merchant, he eulogizes the relationship in glowing, but awful poetry. Train is, after all, a businessman:

So here's a health to hallowed Albion, the jewel of the sea,  
And her daughter, fair Columbia, the happy and the free;  
Long may their sons their praises sing, in friendship's  
    jovial strains,  
And drain the cup of fellowship while yet a drop remains.<sup>149</sup>

Still, he can't resist, at times, asserting his real feelings as he acclaims American commercial superiority. In the cocky opening section to Spread-Eagleism (1859), entitled "Every Man His Own Autocrat," written a few years after his Australian stay, Train adapts his "commercial" prose to accentuate his American-ness. With measured frontier crudity, he sketches the Young American purpose:

To overawe the world and to patronize Great Britain, and if the said Great Britain do not behave herself before her lusty and saucy progeny, to "give her a licking"--such is the wish of "Young America."<sup>150</sup>

Diplomacy collapses and real backwoods bravado takes over. Towards the end of "Autocrat" he affirms American ascendancy in terms of a characteristically light-hearted comparison:

England and America are partners, not rivals. The younger nation is the junior, who manages the western branch of the old concern; youth gives activity, and hence the young man opens his letters before breakfast, on the steps of the post-office, whilst the old gentleman prefers breaking the seal in dressing-gown and slippers after dinner. . . . old England rose with renewed vigor, in Young America.<sup>151</sup>

Train often aimed at eliciting audience laughter to sweeten the pill of a more serious assertion. Clearly, he felt "go-a-head-a-tive" America had surpassed England.<sup>152</sup> Just as Thome has his characters question English mercantile and industrial efficiency while themselves illustrating Yankee "know-how," so Train blusters at length about innate American capacity. Englishmen might be scared of new challenges and changing circumstances, but not Americans.<sup>153</sup> In contrast to "the slow conservatism and unchangeableness of the English civil office" stands rugged, tempestuous Young America. Train broadly hints that if a real contest of wills were to materialize, the English would be overwhelmed:

. . . America is still at full speed, while England has stopped to coal! We are now neck and neck in commerce. Where shall we be thirty years hence? . . . England knocks down the gates of stubborn nations, as in China, and America walks in and takes the toll of commerce. John Bull fights, Jonathan negotiates, but will fight if occasion demands it.<sup>154</sup>

At one point in "Autocrat" he outlines, point by point, his version of the Young American platform, but, in fencing thus his natural flare for the rhetoric of his cause, the statement doesn't read nearly as well as a section a little earlier where he fully captures the spirit of the mercantile Young Americans in Australia:

Spread-Eagleism is an Institution.  
 Young America is a nation, and signifies progress.  
 Young America don't mean sucking babies alone--nor school boys--nor fast young men. Of course not. It takes the country--the whole country, and nothing but the country. Every man, woman and child, old and young--every individual

born since the nation's birth-day, is a Young American.  
It is Young America as an amiable rival to old  
Europe. . . .

Young America is the vanguard of change--the coming  
of age. His watchword is Reform. . . .

Being true to himself, he can't be false to his neighbour.  
We cannot fasten an ism on him (except Spread-Eagleism). . . .  
Young America will be wanted.

The times are changing.<sup>155</sup>

This excerpt almost reads as a found poem of the era. Direct, confident, challenging--and representative. An element of Ferguson's adventurous advice to the young is captured here. And much more. Train emerges as the embodiment of enterprising (but always conciliatory and expedient) mercantile America in a vigorous piece of intentionally polemical prose.

The zealous nationalism of Train and his colleagues can never be questioned. Like the earlier American Patriots, they constantly praise republican institutions in rapturous terms. Train's writings and speeches exhibit a close knowledge of his country's constitutional and political history.<sup>156</sup> Again, like his captive countrymen in earlier Van Diemen's Land, Train regarded his southern sojourn as a temporary one. The tone of one of his letters to the Boston Post, written in late 1854, closely resembles the Patriots' passionate missives to home in the early 1840's:

. . . busy as you may be with the crowding events of this wonderful age, you need not forget us, for some time we are coming home!--the very thought of which supports us in our exile, and nerves us to renewed exertion.<sup>157</sup>

Passing through Port Phillip Heads on the way back to America, he can



hardly contain his exhilaration and joy.<sup>158</sup> Ferguson contrasts interestingly in this respect. A wholehearted patriot--he called one of his mines the "Sons of Freedom" and liked to quote the celebrated three tenets of the Declaration of Independence<sup>159</sup>--he nevertheless warmed to Australia as Train could not. As a miner and general roustabout, Ferguson got to know Australia in a way that his merchant fellow-American did not, so that he experiences the gloom and sadness of a native when he finally sails out of the Sydney Heads.<sup>160</sup>

The Young Americans, because of their greater involvement in the Australian community when compared to the Patriots, were moved to speculate on the potential republican future of their adopted land. They were aware of the strong forces at work in the young country. Train made it clear that he would not resort to arms in support of local independence, but he occasionally assumed the role of Young Australian propagandist. Using language reminiscent of Charles Wilkes before him, Train contemplated the future of the country he regarded as "the brightest star in the whole British galaxy!"<sup>161</sup> In his letters to American newspapers, his natural ebullience and awareness of the affiliations of his audience led him to conjecture an imminent republican horizon for Australia.<sup>162</sup> Sometimes he sounds a little absurd, as in the crude French of his outburst, "Vive le Australia! Vive le Melbourne! Vive le Republique!"<sup>163</sup> Yet he can be equally calculating. Assessing the effectiveness of the Ballarat revolt, he charges his words with overtones of 1776:

The love of liberty that is convulsing the shaking thrones of the old world has touched the giant chieftain of the Australians, and the "southern cross," three-fourths of the people say, must be the flag of the southern El Dorado.<sup>164</sup>

It is no surprise when, a few lines later in the same letter, he designates the Eureka rebellion as the "Australian Bunker Hill." (Did this have any bearing on Mark Twain's similar assertion decades later?) Thomes' characters, too, occasionally flirt with revolt but, when pressed, they react as Train did--treading with care, rather than commitment.<sup>165</sup>

## CHAPTER V ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> One visitor of the time wrote that "there is a general thirst for reading throughout Australia. . . . Everybody reads." See D. Mackenzie, Ten Years in Australia, 2nd ed. (London: William Orr, 1852), p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Parrington, Main Currents, introduction, p. vii.

<sup>3</sup> See Clarence Gohdes, American Literature in Nineteenth Century England (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1944), pp. vii, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Sapiets, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> George Robertson (1825-98) was Australia's foremost book publisher before 1890; his namesake (1860-1933), of Angus and Robertson publications fame, was the principal book publisher in the decades after 1890.

<sup>6</sup> See Argus, April 18-26, 1854, quoted in Potts and Potts, Young America, p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," II, 116.

<sup>8</sup> See William Howitt, Land, Labour, and Gold (London, 1855), quoted in Potts and Potts, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the auctioneer Langley, see Howitt, quoted in Nancy Keesing, ed., History of the Australian Gold Rushes (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 124-5.

<sup>10</sup> See Nadel, Australia's Colonial Culture, pp. 76, 104-5.

<sup>11</sup> See Sapiets, p. 12; Potts and Potts, pp. 66-7.

<sup>12</sup> Sapiets, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> See Bartlett, p. 135; Free Press, March 31, 1842, quoted in Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," II, 77-8.

<sup>14</sup> Geo.[orge] Francis Train, An American Merchant in Europe, Asia, and Australia: A Series of Letters (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1857), p. 386.

<sup>15</sup> In England, twelve different editions had been printed by December, 1852, and twenty-seven editions by April, 1853. See Sapiets, p. 9; Gohdes, pp. 29, 101, 141.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Potts and Potts, p. 67. See also, Keesing, p. 125.

<sup>17</sup> See Monaghan, p. 232; Clive Turnbull, Australian Lives (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1965), p. 19. The poem, "Suggested by the Perusal of Uncle Tom's Cabin," by "Theta," appearing in The Sydney University Magazine, I (Jan. 1855), 70-1, fairly represents the Australian poems written in support of the anti-slavery cause. It begins:

Up, ye sons of liberty!  
Up, and set your brethren free. . . .

Typical of the time, the poet records in a later stanza his sadness

that slavery's curse should brand  
Those whose fathers made a stand,  
Bearing freedom's banner high,  
Fighting for their liberty. . . .

<sup>18</sup> Hobart Daily Courier, July 1, September 30, October 12, 15, 1853, quoted in Monaghan, p. 232.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Clark, Select Documents (1851-1900), p. 339.

<sup>20</sup> Kingsley, p. 397.

<sup>21</sup> Dred (1856) did not have the same impact in Australia as its predecessor, and yet it still prompted several editorials in the Sydney Morning Herald. See Potts and Potts, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> See Sydney Morning Herald, August 25, 26, 28, September 1, 1856.

<sup>23</sup> Freeman's Journal, August 30, 1856.

<sup>24</sup> See Ann-Mari Jordens, The Stenhouse Circle (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1979), p. 54.

<sup>25</sup> Five of the sonnets appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald, July 2, 1863, and one on June 15. They are reprinted under the title, "Sonnets referring to the War in America," in Henry Kendall, The Poetical Works of Henry Kendall, ed. T.T. Reed (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1966), pp. 289-92.

<sup>26</sup> "The Night Before the Battle," Kendall, p. 290.

<sup>27</sup> "The Mother," Kendall, p. 291.

<sup>28</sup> "From Australia," Kendall, p. 292. Compare this sonnet with poems in Whitman's Drum Taps (1865) such as "Eighteen Sixty-One," "Beat! Beat! Drums!" "Rise O Days from Your Fathomless Deeps," "Come. Up from the Fields Father" and "The Wound-Dresser," in Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass, ed. Sculley Bradley, Harold W. Blodgett, Arthur Golden, William White (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1980), 11, 466-7, 479-82, 483-6, 486-7, 488-9.

<sup>29</sup> Inglis, p. 275. For a good example of early colonial optimism, see Currency Lad, October 27, 1832, where the writer claims that "the stagnant waters of ignorance . . . have now given place to those fountains of knowledge, which issue their almost boundless streams to fertilize, enrich, and bless the world."

<sup>30</sup> Kingsley, p. 238.

<sup>31</sup> "Lines on the Departure of Emigrants for New South Wales," in Thomas Campbell, The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell, ed. J. Logie Robertson (London: Henry Frowde, 1907), p. 283.

<sup>32</sup> Australian, December 23, 1842 (p. 2). For more on Duncan, see Roe, Quest for Authority, pp. 105-7.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Parkes, Murmurs of the Stream (Sydney: J. Waugh, 1857), p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> Parkes, pp. 21, 27-8, 29.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Ingleton, True Patriots All, p. 256.

<sup>36</sup> Kendall, pp. 241-2. The poem was first printed in The Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal, November 5, 1859.

<sup>37</sup> See the poem "Hurrah for Australia" in C.R. Thatcher, Thatcher's Colonial Minstrel (Melbourne, 1864), p. 24, reprinted in Crowley, Colonial Australia, p. 477.

<sup>38</sup> Sapiets, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Dana's Two Years Before the Mast (1840) was advertised in Australia as early as 1843. See the sale of books advertised in the Port Phillip Herald, March 3, 1843 (quoted in Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," II, 169).

<sup>40</sup> See Sapiets, pp. 8-9; Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," II, 60-1.

<sup>41</sup> Maya Valda Sapiets has said that "English critics began to take American novelists seriously only after the publication of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories of the 1840's" (Sapiets, p. 8). See also Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," II, 61, 153.

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Sinnett, The Fiction Fields of Australia, ed. Cecil Hadgraft (Melbourne, 1856; rpt. St. Lucia, Queensland: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1966), p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Sinnett, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Empire, July 11, 1856. See also Sydney Morning Herald, July 9, 1856. Fowler devoted a section to Poe (along with Longfellow and Emerson) in his posthumously published Last Gleanings (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1864), pp. 227-8. In particular, he appreciated the American's "most fantastic originality."

<sup>45</sup> Waterview House was the name of Stenhouse's Balmain residence.

<sup>46</sup> See Jordens, pp. 24, 48, and chapter 7, entitled "The Stenhouse Library."

<sup>47</sup> See Jordens, p. 126.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Jordens, p. 52.

<sup>49</sup> Fowler, p. 229. See also, Jordens, pp. 95-6; Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, p. 115.

<sup>50</sup> The section title is taken from one of Benjamin Wait's letters in Letters from Van Diemen's Land, written during Four Years Imprisonment for Political Offences Committed in Upper Canada (Buffalo:

A.W. Wilgus, 1843), p. 48.

<sup>51</sup> Miller, Notes of an Exile, p. 271.

<sup>52</sup> See George Mackaness, "Exile from Canada," JRAHS, 1, Pt. 6 (Dec. 1964), 429; George Rudé, Protest and Punishment--the Story of the Social and Political Protesters Transported to Australia 1788-1868 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> Wait, Letters from Van Diemen's Land (1843); Miller, Notes of an Exile (1846); William Gates, Recollections of Life in Van Diemen's Land, ed. George Mackaness, 2 vols. (Lockport, 1850; rpt. Sydney: D.S. Ford, 1961); Caleb Lyon, Narrative and Recollections of Van Diemen's Land during a Three Years' Captivity of Stephen S. Wright (New York: New World Press, 1844); Robert Marsh, Seven Years of My Life, or a Narrative of a Patriot Exile (Buffalo: Faxon and Stevens, 1847); Daniel D. Heustis, A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of Captain Daniel D. Heustis (Boston: S.W. Wilder, 1848); Samuel Snow, The Exile's Return: or, Narrative of Samuel Snow (Cleveland: Smead R. Cowles, 1846).

<sup>54</sup> The more recent book on Woodman is Fred Landon, An Exile from Canada (Toronto: Longman, Green, 1960).

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Edwin C. Guillet, The Lives and Times of the Patriots (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1938); J. Davis Barnett, "The Books of the Political Prisoners and Exiles of 1838," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, XVI (1918), 10-18.

<sup>56</sup> See Patrick White, A Fringe of Leaves (London: Cape, 1976); Thomas Keneally, Bring Larks and Heroes (Melbourne: Cassell, 1967).



<sup>57</sup> Linus Miller, for example, gives us rare first-hand information on the infamous Port Arthur prison in the remote south coast of Tasmania. He spent time there as an inmate (see Notes, chapters XXV and XXVI, especially pp. 328-33). Port Arthur "was situated at the tip of a peninsula which was joined to the island by a narrow isthmus where half-starved dogs were said to roam free" (Lacour-Gayet, Concise History, p. 162).

<sup>58</sup> For more on this, see Mary Brown's introduction to Benjamin Wait, The Wait Letters (Ontario: Press Porcepic, 1976), pp. 5-9.

<sup>59</sup> Gates, I, 32.

<sup>60</sup> See Wait, The Wait Letters, pp. 42, 140.

<sup>61</sup> See Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 21. See also pp. 22-32; Mrs. Wait's letters in Wait, Letters from Van Diemen's Land.

<sup>62</sup> Robert Marsh, quoted by George Mackaness in his introduction to Gates, p. 6. See also Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 132; Miller, pp. 339-40.

<sup>63</sup> Miller, p. 274.

<sup>64</sup> Wait, Letters from Van Diemen's Land, introduction. See also p. 45; Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 51.

<sup>65</sup> Miller, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> See Miller, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Many Canadians were no different, if Wait is in any way typical. The Toronto Patriot even called him a "Yankee Dandy" (quoted in Guillet, p. 109). Wait often mentioned "the cause of truth and the rights of man" in his writings. See Wait, The Wait Letters, pp. 12, 16, 41, 51.

<sup>68</sup> Gates, I, 9. See also p. 8; Samuel Snow, quoted in Barnett, p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Paine, Common Sense, ed. Isaac Kramnick (Philadelphia, 1776; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 82.

<sup>70</sup> Paine, Rights of Man, pp. 182-3, 184.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Wait, The Wait Letters, pp. 19, 79-80, 148-9; Miller, pp. 91, 232, 350, 352.

<sup>72</sup> Miller, p. 233. See also p. 119; Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 126.

<sup>73</sup> Miller, p. 232.

<sup>74</sup> Woodman, quoted in Landon, p. 196. See also p. 220; Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 34.

<sup>75</sup> Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 34.

<sup>76</sup> Heustis, quoted in Guillet, p. 211. See also Gates, I, 53, 70.

<sup>77</sup> See H. McQueen, "Convicts and Rebels," Labour History, No. 15 (Nov. 1968), 22.

<sup>78</sup> Miller, p. 331. See also p. 336.

<sup>79</sup> Arthur, in particular, is severely criticized--being variously called "the bloody Robespierre of the Canadian Revolution" (Wright, quoted in Guillet, p. 197) and "the Bloody Executioner" (Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 62).

<sup>80</sup> Miller, p. 217. See also pp. 213-16.

<sup>81</sup> Wait, Letters from Van Diemen's Land, p. 48.

<sup>82</sup> Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 82.

<sup>83</sup> Gates, I, 40, 30.

<sup>84</sup> Gates, I, 31 (see also II, 30-1); Wait, Letters from Van Diemen's Land, p. 48; Woodman, quoted in Landon, p. 257; Miller,

pp. 254, 326-7, 366, 368-9.

<sup>85</sup> Wait, The Wait Letters, pp. 11, 144; Gates, 11, 16, 40.

<sup>86</sup> Miller, p. 370.

<sup>87</sup> See George Mackaness' introduction to Gates, 1, 6. See also Gates, 11, 16; Miller, pp. 286, 304.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, Marsh, quoted in Guillet, pp. 194-7; Miller, pp. 325-6; Woodman, quoted in Landon, pp. 217-18; Gates, 1, 41, 54, 70-1; 11, 31.

<sup>89</sup> Gates, 11, 32. See also Woodman, quoted in Landon, p. 211.

<sup>90</sup> See Gates, 1, 42; Snow, quoted in Guillet, p. 212.

<sup>91</sup> See, for example, Woodman, quoted in Landon, pp. 226, 262.

<sup>92</sup> Heustis, quoted in Guillet, p. 197.

<sup>93</sup> Gates, 1, 33.

<sup>94</sup> Landon's An Exile from Canada, traces the full story.

<sup>95</sup> Woodman, quoted in Guillet, p. 196.

<sup>96</sup> Miller, p. 299. The first verse of "The Hunters of Kentucky" is given in Landon, p. 206.

<sup>97</sup> Gates, 1, 55. See also, Wait, The Wait Letters, p. 65; Miller, p. 323.

<sup>98</sup> Miller, p. 298; Gates, 1, 44.

<sup>99</sup> Miller, p. 263; Gates, 1, 45.

<sup>100</sup> Geo.[orge] Francis Train, Spread-Eagleism (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1859), p. xv.

<sup>101</sup> Train, Spread-Eagleism, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>102</sup> For more on Train's use of the term "Spread-Eagleism," see Spread-Eagleism, pp. vii-ix.

<sup>103</sup> Letter of Train, December 6, 1853, in George Francis Train, A Yankee Merchant in Goldrush Australia--the Letters of George Francis Train, ed. E. Daniel and Annette Potts (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1970), p. 88. See also, New York Herald, February 15, December 2, 1853, quoted in E. Daniel and Annette Potts' introduction to Train, Letters, p. xv.

<sup>104</sup> Freeman Hunt, introduction to Train, An American Merchant (1857), p. vi.

<sup>105</sup> Train signs himself "Citizen George Francis Train" at the end of the preface to his autobiography, My Life in Many States and in Foreign Lands (1902), p. xv. The book was published about sixteen months before Train died, in his mid-70's.

<sup>106</sup> See Potts and Potts' introduction to Train's Letters; Aitchison, Thanks to the Yanks, pp. 13-22.

<sup>107</sup> See Train, An American Merchant (1857) and Letters (1970).

<sup>108</sup> New York Herald, July 21, 1856, quoted in Potts and Potts' introduction to Train, Letters, p. xx.

<sup>109</sup> Charles D. Ferguson, The Experiences of a Forty-niner during Thirty-Four Years' Residence in California and Australia, ed. Frederick T. Wallace (Cleveland, Ohio: Williams, 1888), p. 328.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. xviii.

<sup>111</sup> Freeman Hunt, introduction to Train, An American Merchant, pp. iii-iv.

112 Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. v.

113 Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. vi.

114 Train, Spread-Eagleism, pp. x-xi.

115 Train, My Life, p. 61. It is worth noting that Emerson also knew of Train, though his thoughts on the aggressive merchant-cum-politician were not quite so flattering. He noted in his Journal (1862) that "Train said in a public speech in New York, 'Slavery is a divine institution.' 'So is hell,' exclaimed an old man in the crowd." See Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes, IX (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1913), 460.

116 Ferguson, Experiences of a Forty-niner (1888), p. viii.

117 Ferguson, p. 447. See also, p. 444.

118 Ferguson, p. 9.

119 Ferguson, p. 421.

120 See Ferguson, pp. 372, 401.

121 Ferguson, p. 329. See, in addition, pp. 247, 270, 332, 487.

122 See Ferguson, pp. 326-7.

123 Ferguson, pp. 331-2.

124 William H. Thomes, The Gold Hunters' Adventures; or Life in Australia (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1864); William H. Thomes, The Bushrangers: a Yankee's Adventures during his Second Visit to Australia (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1873); William H. Thomes, The Belle of Australia, or Who Am I? (Boston: De Wolfe, Fiske, 1884).

<sup>125</sup> See DAB, XVIII, 447-8; B.R. Elliott, "An American-Australian Novelist of the Nineteenth Century: W.H. Thomes," The Australian Quarterly, XXIX, No. 3 (Sept. 1957), 79-81.

<sup>126</sup> Chapter headings such as "Discovery of Stolen Treasures in the Stockman's Cellar (XIV) and "Finding a 110 lb. Nugget (XXXVII) in Gold Hunters' Adventures.

<sup>127</sup> Elliott, p. 79. For an example in a Thomes novel, see Bushrangers, p. 348.

<sup>128</sup> Thomes, Gold Hunters' Adventures, p. 14.

<sup>129</sup> Chapters XXVIII, XXXIII, XL, XLV, LIII and LVIII, respectively.

<sup>130</sup> Thomes, Bushrangers, p. 9.

<sup>131</sup> Thomes, Bushrangers, p. 10.

<sup>132</sup> Thomes, Bushrangers, pp. 450-1.

<sup>133</sup> Train, Letters, p. 92.

<sup>134</sup> Train, My Life, p. 157.

<sup>135</sup> See, for example, Ferguson, p. 240; Train, Letters, pp. 119, 121; Thomes, Gold Hunters' Adventures, p. 134.

<sup>136</sup> "Devil's Island" was a name commonly ascribed to Tasmania during the first half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>137</sup> Thomes, Gold Hunters' Adventures, p. 354. See also, pp. 265-72.

<sup>138</sup> Thomes, Gold Hunters' Adventures, p. 355.

<sup>139</sup> See Monaghan, Australians and the Gold Rush, p. 268.

<sup>140</sup> Ferguson, p. 275.

<sup>141</sup> See Ferguson, p. 281.

- 142 See Thomes, Gold Hunters' Adventures, pp. 554-63 (especially p. 563).
- 143 See Ferguson, pp. 300-1.
- 144 Train, Letters, p. 44.
- 145 Melbourne Herald, November 3, 1855, quoted in Potts and Potts' introduction to Train, Letters, p. xix.
- 146 Train's Letter to the Boston Post, April 11, 1855, quoted in Train, Letters, p. 158. See also, My Life, p. 160.
- 147 Train did, for example, uncharacteristically refer to "the curse of English tyranny and injustice" in one of his letters to the Boston Post (October 30, 1854). See also, Ferguson, p. 254.
- 148 Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. 40. See also, An American Merchant, p. 344.
- 149 Train, An American Merchant, p. 354. See also, Spread-Eagleism, pp. xxiii, 39.
- 150 Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. xviii. See also, p. xii.
- 151 Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. xxxiii.
- 152 Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. xv. See also, Thomes, Gold Hunters' Adventures, p. 132.
- 153 See, for example, Thomes' Gold Hunters' Adventures, p. 132; Train, My Life, pp. 131, 138.
- 154 Train, The American Merchant, p. 354.
- 155 Train, Spread-Eagleism, pp. viii-ix. See also, pp. xiii-xiv, 59.

- 156 See, for example, Train, Spread-Eagleism, pp. xx, 40, 57; Letters, p. 109.
- 157 Letter to Boston Post, February 2, 1855, quoted in Letters, p. 152.
- 158 See Train, Letters, p. 186.
- 159 Ferguson, pp. 256, 420.
- 160 Ferguson, p. 490.
- 161 Train, Spread-Eagleism, p. 42.
- 162 See Train, Letters, p. 84.
- 163 Letter to Boston Post, July 6, 1854, quoted in Train, Letters, p. 120.
- 164 Letter to Boston Post, April 11, 1855, quoted in Train, Letters, p. 160. See also, Letters, p. 140; Spread-Eagleism, p. 59.
- 165 See, for example, Thomes, Gold Hunters' Adventures, p. 339.



## CHAPTER VI

SIGNAL FIRES ON THE REDDENING HILLS<sup>1</sup>

I wish you would abolish the use of the word 'Colonial,' at any rate with regard to literature, and call it [Australian literature] either 'Australian' or 'National.' Depend upon it that Australia will never be more than a cipher among the nations, until her sons assume to themselves national characteristics, and proudly stamp them by the pen to be acknowledged and admired by the world!

The Colonial Literary Journal, February 27, 1845

. . . Australia [in the nineteenth century] needed an Emerson to repeat: 'All art--yet to be created; all literature--yet to be written; all nature--new and undescribed. . . . Why should not Americans enjoy an original relation to the universe?' An Australian Whitman was required to inject native life and vigour, a Poe to proclaim a cultural declaration of independence, and above all a Melville to write a masterpiece.

Geoffrey Serle, From Deserts the Prophets  
Come (1970)<sup>2</sup>

In his History of Australian Literature, H.M. Green properly draws attention to the fact that, as late as the 1880's, a significant number of Australian writers and a great many more readers still looked to England for news.<sup>3</sup> Preoccupation with the local product

could at times be a demoralisingly lonely pursuit, and despair regularly surfaced in the works of early writers who determined to be Australian. Strong drink provided the most common balm for the artistic soul in search of immediate comfort and companionship. For most of the nineteenth century, in fact, there is little doubt that the tone of colonial society owed much to the input of "nouveau riche boors," as Geoffrey Serle has characterized them, people motivated only by a desire to make money and retire to the comforts of home, England.<sup>4</sup> People with no time for the rustic colonial product. In the decades after 1838, no one was more aware of the constantly debilitating influence of this group than Daniel Deniehy, John Dunmore Lang and Charles Harpur. In defiance of the "Home" mentality, they recognized two things: one, that culture could not be readily transplanted from one hemisphere to another; and, two, that Australian literature could only be advanced by writers determined to create anew. Sunlight would have to be let in. Belief in the validity of this enterprise quite naturally took them to the Americans for ideas. But they approached independently, and alert. For them--the brash pioneers--it was a dialogue of equals.

The first truly creative links between Australia and the United States were forged in the 1840's, '50's and '60's. When Lang printed Channing's address, hoping to stimulate local letters, he, along with his more perceptive countrymen, appreciated the distinct historical differences between Australia and America. Unlike America, Australia had no political, social and artistic density.<sup>5</sup> As Frederick Sinnet

characterized it in 1856: "The antiquity of the United States quite puts us to shame. . . ." <sup>6</sup> The American lesson, therefore, could only apply up to a certain point. When Emerson delivered his address, "The American Scholar," to the Cambridge Phi Beta Kappa Society in August, 1837, there were many apparent similarities between his comments and numerous contemporary assertions in Australia. <sup>7</sup> But Australia at that time had only fifty years of white civilization behind it (and no rumoured prior settlement <sup>8</sup>). America, with over two centuries of white settlement, was ripe for a renaissance in literature. Rank and file Australians, on the other hand, would remain acquisitive for many years to come--leaving behind a trail of visionaries without a substantial audience.

Confronted constantly by the local preoccupation with material well-being, confronted by a community struggling to overcome acute dislocation, faced with the intractable nature of the authorities and a situation where there seemed to be "nothing for the public mind to break itself on," Deniehy, Lang and Harpur sought to establish Australia in the imagination of their fellows. <sup>9</sup> In their distinct ways, they attempted to create a unique identity for succeeding generations by formulating an original, radical critique for society and literature. Doing this involved a dialogue with Brother Jonathan, an acknowledgement of the advances made in America. The writers from the United States that republican Australians approved of addressed their works to all people, not just to the aristocracy. <sup>10</sup>

It is at once typical and symbolic that Deniehy, Lang and Harpur should be the sole--and extremely vociferous--members of an anti-war alliance in the mid 1850's, protesting possible Australian involvement (on the British side) in the Crimean War.<sup>11</sup> All three viewed Australian participation as a dangerous precedent. Avowedly "red republican," they strongly advocated an independent political course. For Deniehy and Harpur, in particular, political autonomy demanded, as its natural concomitant, literary independence. William Woolls, in the early 1830's, had suggested the formation of a "strong national literary culture."<sup>12</sup> In the three decades after 1838, Deniehy and Harpur seriously applied themselves to the task. Emerson's questions would be theirs:

What shall be the substance of my shrift? Adam in the garden, I am to new name all the beasts in the field and all the gods in the sky. I am to invite men drenched in Time to recover themselves and come out of time, and taste their native immortal air. I am to fire with what skill I can the artillery of sympathy and emotion. . . . I am to console the brave sufferers under evils whose end they cannot see by appeals to the great optimism, self-affirmed in all bosoms.<sup>13</sup>

That they could not come up with Emerson's answers would be a measure not so much of inferior intellect, as of the sharp contrast between the cultural milieu of Concord, Massachusetts, and of Sydney, New South Wales.

Section A

John Dunmore Lang (1799-1878):

Going for the Whole Hog<sup>14</sup>

Go on with your great labour! The approval of every  
thinking son of the soil . . . is surely an antepast of  
what will be yours in the coming ages.

Daniel Deniehy, in letter to John Dunmore  
Lang, 1854?<sup>15</sup>

Be it thine too, in thy grand  
Old age, to fashion with paternal hand  
A charter that shall all our rights complete!

Charles Harpur, "To Dr. Lang, on Reading One  
of his Books"<sup>16</sup>

In 1960, Australian historian Robin Gollan asserted that "modern historians have so far failed to accord [John Dunmore Lang] his proper place in the history of Australian democracy."<sup>17</sup> Very little has occurred since to alter the validity of that judgement today. We still have no comprehensive text of Lang's writings and speeches-- Archibald Gilchrist's two volumes of excerpts, though helpful, are oddly indexed, and frequently he alters the actual text to suit his own purposes, or perhaps to "improve" the original<sup>18</sup>--and any scholar

approaching this nineteenth-century colossus of Australian politics, religion and literature has virtually no critical tradition in which to write.<sup>19</sup> There is a need for some concerted study of the man's voluminous output, his character and milieu. He needs to be placed in a more adequate historical and literary context. Even C.M.H. Clark, in volumes two and three of his monumental A History of Australia (1968, 1973), scarcely accords Lang the attention he deserves. An outspoken Presbyterian minister, historian, land reformer, poet, critic, journalist, immigration and education theorist, anthropologist, and confirmed political activist and republican, Lang bestrode the narrow world of colonial Australia. Most of his countrymen laboured, at one time or another, under his vast and compelling shadow.<sup>20</sup>

Typically perverse, Lang reversed the usual human progression from youthful radical to middle-aged conservative. As he grew older, he came to question more assertively the nature of authority and the accepted social hierarchy. Like the great number of American revolutionary writers with whom he came steadily to identify, Lang had a general distrust of power--especially power at one remove, government from a distance. After a visit to the United States in 1840, though still holding tenaciously to a rigid Calvinist view of the world, Lang determined to promulgate levelling republican doctrines throughout Australia. In 1843, he intentionally invoked the spectre of the American Revolution by alluding to the old "taxation without representation" maxim. By 1850 he could, unlike his friend Dan Deniehy, contemplate with apparent consent (assuming the English government maintained its intractable

ways) an Australian armed revolt.

As his politics radicalized, Lang's debt to the protagonists of the American Revolution grew. His later prose contains many passages coming very close in spirit, and indeed in specific vocabulary, to the principal spokesmen of 1776, especially Jefferson and Paine. To publicly advance his main themes, Lang repeatedly looked to the American model.<sup>21</sup> If Daniel Deniehy and Charles Harpur were to have an audience for their ideas, they required Lang, like Tom Paine, a necessary stentorian figure, to manufacture an amenable social climate.

A Scot by birth, Lang attended the University of Glasgow between 1812 and 1820, and though training for the ministry under the stern hand of the Evangelicals, he seemed to absorb some part of his wider, more democratic surroundings. For two decades, Scottish radicals had fought a stout republican fight, inspired in large measure by Paine's Rights of Man.<sup>22</sup> The Paisley poet, Alexander Wilson, caught the dominant mood some years later in his Address to Synod of Glasgow & Ayr (1844):

The Rights of Man is now well kenned,  
And red by mony a hunder;  
For Tammy Paine the buik has penned,  
And lent the court a lounder.<sup>23</sup>

Certainly when Lang arrived in New South Wales in May, 1823, he had a clear idea of the rights of the British-born subject, as Governor Brisbane soon discovered when he gratuitously insulted Presbyterianism in the widely circulated Sydney Gazette.<sup>24</sup> Lang's outraged reply,

asserting the "civil and religious liberties" of the free-born Scot, gave the locals some hint of what the future might hold, particularly for those in authority.

Lang soon felt the new land to be his true home, and it wasn't long before he began to reflect on the possibilities and challenges entailed in the peculiar and remote environment with which he had decided to identify himself. Some of his early poems bespeak a vigorous national spirit. In the poem boldly entitled "Australian Anthem" (1826), Lang for the first time enlarged on his dream for the future of the southern continent:

Australia! land of hope!  
Thy sons shall bear thee up  
    Even to the skies!  
And earth's exalted ones  
Shall hail thee from their thrones,  
Queen of the Southern Zones.  
    Australia, rise!<sup>25</sup>

Not memorable poetry, but then that probably wasn't the writer's intention. He wanted to awaken his countrymen to the potential greatness of their future destiny as a leader in the southern hemisphere:

O be it then thy care,  
From Superstition's snare  
    And Slavery's chain,  
To set the wretched free;  
Till Christian liberty,  
Wide o'er the Southern Sea,  
    Triumphant reign!<sup>26</sup>

A quarter of a century later, Lang would enumerate Australia's responsibility as a potential world leader, but, in his early years in the colony,



he sought only to instill in the minds of all Australians a sense of identity with their new country. Hence, in another early poem, the humorous "Colonial Nomenclature" (1824), he proposed abandoning names which suggested Empire, in favour of names of Scot patriots and, more importantly, "native names," such as

Cookbundoon, Carrabaiga, Wingecarribbee,  
The Wollondilly, Yurumbon, Bungarribbee.

Further, the volume of poems entitled Aurora Australis: a Specimen of Sacred Poetry for the Colonists of Australia, printed in 1826, included, in addition to Greek and German translations, some poems translated from a local Aboriginal dialect.

This desire to consolidate an original Australian perspective quite distinct from Britain evidently prompted Lang, at some point in his capacious reading, to consult American precedents. In a May, 1833, address, he cited the words of current American president Andrew Jackson to establish the importance of a country's general "population," in particular the "cultivators of the soil."<sup>28</sup> A little later, in the first edition of his Historical and Statistical Account (1834), as we have seen, he demonstrated a surprisingly detailed knowledge of American political, religious and social history.<sup>29</sup>

This work prepares the reader of Lang in two ways for the statements and doctrines to come. First, he emerges as a clear and original thinker determined to judge Westminster legislation and bureaucratic action on ethical, rather than patriotic grounds. The revolution in

America, he suggests, occurred as a result of arbitrary and tyrannical legislation. Second, Lang displays an obvious sympathy for the motives which prompted rebellion in America. A careful reading of the two-volume History helps to explain the more radical revisions of the 1837 second edition as simply another step in the evolution of Lang's political posture during the second half of his long life. Admiration for democracy and American republican government necessarily involved Lang, at some stage during the middle 1830's, in an abrupt reappraisal of his beliefs and future directives.

In Historical and Statistical Account (1837), it becomes clear that Lang's political position and philosophical attitude towards government have undergone a marked change. He still pleads his own, and the colony of New South Wales' "affection toward the mother country," but his attitude towards local government has hardened noticeably:

The device of a legislative council appointed by the crown is nothing more nor less than an ingenious device for investing a governor, or perhaps the mere agent of a secretary of state, with absolute power and for concealing from the people he governs the fact that he possesses such power.<sup>30</sup>

He entertains the thought of a "more popular form of government" in defiance of the imprecations of the "colonial tories" in Australia. Lang was obviously beginning to identify more fully with the people. Thus his forecast of the coming Australian republic comes as no surprise. The terms in which he sees the republic are interesting, though, especially the recourse to analogy, so strongly reminiscent of Tom Paine's prose style in Common Sense (1776):

The colonists of Australia will doubtless at some future period establish a republican government for themselves and elect a president of the Australian states. It is a singular fact in the history of nations that Great Britain, with an essentially monarchical government, has for a long time past been laying the foundation of future republics in all parts of the globe and will doubtless be left at last, like the unfortunate hen that has hatched ducks' eggs, to behold her numerous brood successively taking to the water.<sup>31</sup>

In the tradition established by Wentworth, Lang indirectly, but no doubt purposefully, links Australia's tomorrow with America's yesterday.

In the years following the publication of the second edition of Historical and Statistical Account, Lang's public pronouncements assumed a tone steadily more irritated with the proponents of aristocracy and more deeply in tune with the American system of democracy. In 1840, he decided to view the United States at first hand--as de Tocqueville had done, so fruitfully, less than a decade earlier<sup>32</sup>--thus establishing a connection destined to affect the course of Australian history and literature for decades to come. Lang's visit incorporated a wide number of both northern and southern states, and from the outset he meticulously recorded all his impressions. This resulted, soon after, in the copious Religion and Education in America (1840).<sup>33</sup> Lang wanted to appraise the state of the American Presbyterian movement, and, in his own words, wished "to throw additional light upon the moral and religious aspects of American society."<sup>34</sup> (In attempting the latter, he supplies an even better insight into the substance of his own politics at that time.) But perhaps most pertinently, Lang wanted to institute a dialogue between Australia and the United

States by way of alerting Americans to "the blessings of civilization in the southern hemisphere . . . I mean the continent of New Holland, and the adjacent islands."<sup>35</sup> In Lang's hands, after his momentous 1840 journey, a real connection of substance between the two trans-Pacific continents begins.

Religion and Education is a fine resource for students of early Australian/American relations. In it, Lang broaches several areas of common interest: the republican system of government, the baneful effects of aristocracy (compared with democracy), abolition and slavery, universal suffrage, voluntaryism and universal education. Disenchantment with the English theory and practice of government pervades the book. Many passages recall the critiques of James Otis and John Dickinson, and are, in substance, close to the speeches which marked the first and second Continental Congresses--at once bitter and mildly conciliatory.<sup>36</sup> Lang discusses John Bull's chief failing:

. . . I confess I am still as much as ever in the dark as to where the Christianity of the British Government is centred, or in what it consists. . . . [It] is a subtle and evanescent quality, which perpetually eludes the search of the inquirer, and of which there is no possibility of fixing the habitat. . . . it is like a squirrel in a native fig-tree in an Australian forest--there is no doubt the creature is in the tree, for the black fellows saw it go in; but where it is exactly among the thick foliage no man can tell.<sup>37</sup>

Even in his most serious moments, Lang could not, at times, resist the playful analogy (although here, as in most of his writing, one suspects careful method behind the sardonic humour--again, Lang

utilizes a distinctly localized analogy). In a later chapter, he clarifies the contrast between the English system and the American system in terms of its effect on the common people. Whereas the English lower orders, "mere Pariahs, or outcasts from society," are made to feel the wretchedness and godlessness of their ignoble lot, their American counterpart

has his rights and privileges as well as the wealthiest in the land; and it is natural, therefore, that he should love the country that secures and protects them. The State has watched over him in his youth, and not only given him an education to fit him for a vigorous manhood, but thrown open to him every avenue to honour and preferment. . . .<sup>38</sup>

Lang categorically rejects Captain Marryat's charge that the American people have been "demoralized" by their sudden rise in status.<sup>39</sup>

On the contrary, he finds them both more religious and eminently more capable. As Thomas Jefferson, throughout his political career, put great faith in "the good sense of the people," so Lang, in 1840, clearly showed that he had assumed a similar position. Jefferson maintained that

wherever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights.<sup>40</sup>

This was almost exactly the stand Lang took in his lively dealings with the British Colonial Office throughout the 1840's and '50's.

At various points in Religion and Education, Lang's sense of the

sharp contrast between an aristocratic and democratic order in society becomes clear. He refers, at one stage, to "the aristocratic lesson of bribery and corruption."<sup>41</sup> Confronted by an eager, ambitious egalitarian people in America, he sees as inevitable the demise of privileged systems around the globe--and, like Paine, Jefferson and Samuel Adams, he rejoices:

. . . I have no doubt whatever, that . . . the full tide of democratic influence that is already setting in with a yearly increasing force and volume from the great Western world upon our shores, will sweep away in succession the law of primogeniture in Great Britain, and the law of entails, hereditary legislation, and the Established Church.<sup>42</sup>

Again, intentionally, he looks with suppressed enthusiasm to the "coming struggle" when the "moral and resistless influence" of America's "educated millions" will "'overturn, overturn, overturn.'" An ominous outline of Lang's challenges to the colonial authorities in Australia and England, some ten years hence, is virtually mapped in the last sections of chapter six. The present combative mood of the United States--of Young America growing in confidence--will shortly be Lang's own public commitment.

In the same manner as his countrymen, Daniel Deniehy and John West, Lang had grave reservations about the existence of black slavery in a so-called democratic country. Unlike the great majority of Australians, however, he was able to witness its operation at first hand. Lang hated what he saw, but he nevertheless refused to be swept away by the wind of abolitionist propaganda. Indeed, though

he felt that slavery in America and Texas would soon be abolished, he did not believe that the abolitionist tactic of direct confrontation would provide the means.<sup>43</sup> He admired the sincerity of the movement, its "honesty of intention," but he felt its militancy could only lead to the severance of the Union, which would in turn result in the abolition of slavery in America being "indefinitely and hopelessly postponed."<sup>44</sup> Twenty-five years before it happened, Lang failed to anticipate a Northern military defeat of the South, but he did predict that in slavery, the "grand anomaly in the political and social system of America," there lay the "source alike of present weakness" and "future calamity."<sup>45</sup> And he said as much to the American audiences he was able to reach. In an address to the American Colonization Society of New York, on May 13, 1840, Lang refused to sweeten the pill of criticism for fear of causing offence. That was never his way. At one point he proclaimed:

I trust I am under no obligation to conceal from this assembly my own cordial abhorrence of slavery, as a civil institution, and my own earnest desire for its immediate and entire abolition. I have ever regarded slavery as an evil and bitter thing for the country in which it exists, as well as for its miserable victims. It is the grand calamity of this country, that such a system was entailed upon it from a bygone age. It constitutes the only dark spot in your star-spangled banner--the only gloomy and portentous cloud in the firmament of your glory.<sup>46</sup>

Further, Lang again made reference to Australia's future noble role. In a passage of seminal importance to the history of Australian/American relations, he jubilantly asserted that Great Britain was

currently

raising up a second America in the Southern Hemisphere, to tread, I trust, the same path of glory as this great nation has trodden in the North.<sup>47</sup>

Over the next ten years, as Lang, like so many of his Australian colleagues, realized America was in danger of destroying itself over slavery, he began to put his trust in the destiny of Australia as potentially the world's spiritual leader.<sup>48</sup>

Slavery constantly worried Lang as he appraised America's social institutions, but he still strongly supported American innovations in religion and education. Contrasting the effect of universal suffrage on the people of Great Britain and the United States (where "a wise and paternal government are employing every available means of informing the understanding and improving the hearts of the people"<sup>49</sup>) Lang stated that he entertained no fears for its unqualified success in America, provided it was accompanied by two things: universal education and freedom of religion.<sup>50</sup> In complete sympathy with the most crucial principle for which the American Revolution was fought, he expressed entire agreement

with the Americans in thinking that a man's liberty, like his property, is safest in his own hands; and I am very much disposed to agree with them also in thinking that it is not safe at all any where else.<sup>51</sup>

Application of the same principle to Australia was but a short step away. Lang's American sojourn obviously clarified ideas that had been brewing in his mind since his university days in and around the



radical centre of Glasgow.

Religion and Education in America chronicles Lang's increasingly militant attitude towards English dominance, but it also serves as evidence of possibly the first significant interaction between articulate spokesmen from America and Australia. Lang could never be silent on issues about which he felt strongly, and it is certain that, while in America, he sought to enlighten those he met about social conditions in Australia. And he met some of America's most eminent citizens-- among them Noah Webster, the committed nationalist and lexicographer, John Trumbull, author of "M'Fingal," and even President Van Buren, who impressed Lang, when they chatted, with his informality. There was none of the "stiffness and hauteur" characteristic of the "military Representatives of Royalty."<sup>52</sup> As usual, Lang couldn't resist the opportunity of baiting his Australian Tory enemies. In addition, Religion and Education reflects the author's close knowledge of America through its casual mention of a variety of major American literary, religious and political figures. A more detailed study of Lang might do well to touch on the common ground he shared with two Americans he deeply admired--the impassioned theologian Jonathan Edwards (whose grave Lang made a special point of visiting<sup>53</sup>) and the theologian and scientist Cotton Mather, whose history of the American church, Magnalia Christi Americana (1702), Lang regarded as a "great work."<sup>54</sup> Lang makes incidental mention, as well, of William Ellery Channing ("a literary man and a man of talent"<sup>55</sup>), Emersonian Transcendentalism, Dr. Witherspoon, Aaron Burr, Washington

and Patrick Henry.<sup>56</sup> Characteristically, he refers to Wirt's account of Henry's legendary speech (1765) to the Virginia House of Burgesses, in which Henry issued his renowned challenge to George III:

Tarquin and Caesar had each his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third . . . may profit by their example! If this be treason, make the most of it!<sup>57</sup>

This is Lang's language.

The American visit represented a turning point in Lang's personal philosophy of government. He returned to Australia in March, 1841, apparently readying for a concerted drive towards an eventual Australian republic. However, he realized that this result could only be accomplished slowly, and tailored his speeches accordingly. As the Forties progressed, Lang's public voice grew more assertive; by the end of the decade, he could justly lay claim to being the Australian Thomas Paine. He steadily sought to apply what he had learnt in 1840, beginning with the gradual introduction of an American revolutionary vocabulary into the Australian political arena. A couple of years after his return, in a speech in the Legislative Council on judicial estimates (1843), Lang paraded all the old clichés--in particular the "taxation without representation" slogan--along with a few original departures, as if to signal his future intentions. Blaming "a jealous despotism," Lang predicted that the people,

having obtained one inch of the freedom that belongs to them of right, can only regard that inch as of value in so

far as it enables them to obtain the whole 'ell' that is their due. The struggle may be long and arduous, but the victory is sure.<sup>58</sup>

Taking care to avoid implicating himself at this precarious stage, for treason retained a harsh prison sentence, Lang prudently explained the inevitable consequences of arbitrary rule. Alienation, he cried, would take hold of the people, and more:

. . . what can we expect but that [a feeling of alienation] will gradually ripen into disaffection, and that disaffection will at length display her insurgent flag and rally around it a hundred thousand freeborn Australians to repeat the same scenes . . . as have been exhibited already in the misgoverned colonies of Britain in other and far distant lands.

But while due caution typified Lang's publicly expressed sentiments, in private his republican resolve bellowed. Never one to accept opposition to his ideas lightly, the zealot in Lang was beginning to tire of his constant clashes with Governor Gipps, as well as with the men who made up the Australian squattocracy. Impatient waiting for a more volatile colonial climate--of the kind that in America gave birth to Common Sense and a flood of less captivating revolutionary pamphlets--Lang penned in his notebook, dated July 7, 1845, a "Proclamation of the League of Liberators." In the document he gave full freedom to his talent for rhetoric, contrasting the heights of "the sacred cause of freedom" with the depths of the "galling and degrading yoke" of British colonial rule.<sup>59</sup> More significantly, though, he attempted to give substance not only to a republican dream,

but to an American one. His concept of Australia, like that of his countrymen John West and Daniel Deniehy (whom Lang obviously influenced), consisted of a society of small yeoman-farmers, all dedicated to the preservation of political equality and determined to bring about the transfer of power through bloodless means. As he put it in his later work, Freedom and Independence for the Golden Lands of Australia (1852), he wanted to make "the wilderness and the solitary place rejoice with the happy abodes of a numerous, virtuous and Christian population."<sup>60</sup> Here again was Australian expression of the "myth" of the small farmer that Jefferson and Franklin had done so much to establish in America.<sup>61</sup> Lang felt that only through agrarian expansion on small-scale republican lines could Australia transcend its tarnished criminal past. At this stage he could not advocate militant revolt to achieve his aim, though his stirring words seemed to be carrying him inevitably towards that end. Lang was evolving into an offensive political pamphleteer.

A letter Lang wrote to Lord Stanley in the same year as the League Proclamation confirmed his greater militancy in a few ways. Shrewdly pleading not "the slightest possible disrespect" to Governor Gipps, he spoke in general terms--if they can be so called--of colonial governors "playing the imaginary prerogative of the crown against the inherent rights and the dearest interests of the people."<sup>62</sup> Lang apparently felt the time had come to make blatantly obvious to all, the similarities between the present lot of his colonial countrymen and that of America just prior to the Revolution. He went on to

illustrate the sharp differences between expatriate Englishmen intent on exploiting Australia and those who had decided to make Australia their home. Again, directly alluding to the rights conceded the North Americans, Lang touched on a new theme which Deniehy, a few years later, would absorb and make his own: the natural aristocracy of talent that Jefferson instilled in the American mind. Lang put it this way:

. . . I am not insensible to the powerfully beneficial impulse that would immediately be given to the colonial mind by throwing open the highest offices under the local government to the honorable ambition of our ingenuous youth, and by making those offices dependent in future, not on patronage or interest, but on acknowledged ability.<sup>63</sup>

Lang spent the period 1846-9 in England agitating for Colonial-Office support of his plans to stimulate widespread British emigration to Australia in order that his vision of a Christian population of small farmers might come to pass. He experienced outright resistance, if not antipathy. The leveller in him had suffered fools for too long. As C.M.H. Clark puts it, two Langs returned to Australia: the old antipopish zealot and the assaultive new democrat.<sup>64</sup> Three years had been too long in the wilderness of English government corridors. The time had come for unabashed advocacy of an Australian Republic. The time had come to push publicly for the indefeasible rights of the Australian man. It was time to take the fight to the men Lang now saw as the latest of his growing list of enemies.

On November 14, 1849, shortly before he returned to Australia,

Lang wrote an open letter to Earl Grey which was later published in the British Banner. The contents indicated that Lang well knew the kind of language to which the English responded. America's escape from the fold of Empire still grated many acquisitive British citizens and, recognizing this, Lang devoted most of his letter to the close similarities between America and Australia. "I am now returning to Australia," he declared, "with the bitterest disappointment and deepest disgust, cherishing precisely the same feelings as the celebrated Dr. Benjamin Franklin did when he left England as a British subject for the last time."<sup>65</sup> Lang had at last identified himself unequivocally with the cause of Australian independence after encountering the expedient workings of the English ministry, just as Franklin opted for the revolutionary cause when exposed to the many devious political games in London.<sup>66</sup> But in case his allusion to the American scientist and statesman was lost on some of his younger audience, Lang clarified the point. With the continuation of the present colonial policies, he maintained, the people of New South Wales would be fully justified "in resorting to measures of self-preservation."<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, because of Colonial-Office inefficiency and government procrastination, the situation had escalated to such an alarming extent that the colonists "will now 'go for the whole hog,' or for nothing at all." Lang would be proved wrong--but in 1849, his polemical thrusts must have dis-comforted many in the upper echelons of Downing Street power. And he went on:

. . . your lordship has for three years past been knocking at the gate of futurity for the president of the United States of Australia. Be assured, my lord, he is getting ready and will shortly be out; and he will astonish the world with the manliness of his port and the dignity of his demeanor.

In the concluding section of the letter, Lang extended the substance of his dream by reiterating the point he had made in his 1845 Proclamation; he insisted that without the "baleful domination of Downing-street" and having "no foul blot of slavery to defile his national escutcheon, like Zachary Taylor, president of the United States of America," an Australian President would be free to direct "the brilliant career" of his country in such a way that it might generate social patterns to lead the world.<sup>68</sup> Daniel Deniehy, a few years later, would agree.

On arrival back in Australia, Lang endeavoured to make good on the direct threats contained in his letter to Grey. If the Sydney People's Advocate was right in saying that the letter represented "the first stake driven into the ant-hill," then Lang determined to repeat the effort as much as possible in the next few years.<sup>69</sup> His openly republican writings came increasingly to resemble Thomas Paine's at the time of writing Common Sense (though Lang was loathe to advocate violence and, while attacking English malpractice, usually absolved the monarchy). In April, 1850, Lang delivered three lectures in Sydney which were soon published under the title The Coming Event; or the United Provinces of Australia.<sup>70</sup> He makes no direct reference to Common Sense, but throughout the lectures a number of the points

he makes virtually replicate Paine's. Even his choice of title seems to owe something to Paine who had, for example, spoken of the independence of America as "an event, which sooner or later must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event could not be far off."<sup>71</sup> Further, Lang uses the phrase, "common sense," throughout The Coming Event.<sup>72</sup>

The similarities between Lang and Paine are striking. Both the Australian and the American abhorred government from a distance.<sup>73</sup> Both dedicated themselves to convincing their fellows that independence could only happen with vigilant, and, most importantly, immediate commitment.<sup>74</sup> Both exploited a revolutionary, egalitarian vocabulary, talking constantly of, in Lang's words, the "natural and inherent right, indefeasible and indestructible" of the colonists of New South Wales to their "entire freedom and independence."<sup>75</sup> Paine's introduction to the Rights of Man spoke, in like terms, of "a system of universal peace, [founded] on the indefeasible and hereditary Rights of Man."<sup>76</sup> Lang and Paine both proclaimed the need for a united front of citizens, and sought the expression of that solidarity in titular form as an integral part of the attempt to change the thinking of a nation. Naming was important to them.<sup>77</sup> Both saw the need to incite their compatriots to sever ties with Great Britain in an attempt to ensure peace with the rest of the world. They were deeply suspicious of Old-World liasons and scheming.<sup>78</sup> Where they differed was on the issue of tactics. Lang in 1850 could at times toy with the idea of a



military revolt:

. . . [taxation without consent] roused the spirit and nerved the arm of the American Colonists for their great and successful struggle for entire freedom and independence in the year 1776; and it is mortifying to reflect, that British despotism should have become no wiser from the lesson it was then taught, notwithstanding the lapse of full seventy years. Does Great Britain require that instructive lesson to be taught her in the Southern Hemisphere, as it was in the Northern? It would appear that she does.<sup>79</sup>

However, wary of the fact that in the Fifties a significant (though decreasing) majority of his audience were British-born, when he clarified the issue it was generally to endorse a policy of non-violent transfer of colonial power. He specifically disclaimed "all desire or intention to have recourse in any way to physical force," wanting instead "a course of peaceful but earnest and energetic agitation."<sup>80</sup> Paine, on the other hand, realized that independence could only be gained by forceful means.<sup>81</sup>

In his Coming Event lectures, Lang outlined his most comprehensive plan, up to that point, for his projected republic. At several points he indicated his debt to the United States Constitution and federal system.<sup>82</sup> That is, he made elaborate use of the American system-- and yet, like Deniehy, he almost immediately conceived of Australia surpassing the model:

. . . I question whether even the United States of America will have a more extensive field of political power and of moral influence to expatiate over than will one day acknowledge the sovereignty of the United Provinces of Australia.<sup>83</sup>

Ten years earlier, addressing an American audience, he had brazenly maintained a similar position:

. . . it must be evident to every intelligent American, that the series of colonies that have thus been successfully planted on the shores of the Australian Continent . . . will, in all likelihood, exceed all former precedent, will, at no distant day, exert a mighty influence, either for good or for evil, on a large proportion of the whole family of man.<sup>84</sup>

But there is no doubt that in his more publicized Coming Event lectures, the aging myth of Australia as a better America was given perhaps its most prominent airing. Deniehy, strongly influenced by Lang throughout this period, would try and give the dream some life in later years.

Lang's radicalism came to the boil in the early 1850's. He delivered his Coming Event lectures in varying forms throughout the colonies, arguing constantly, like Jefferson, for the introduction of certain fundamental principles.<sup>85</sup> His efforts culminated in the publication, in 1852, of the long political treatise Freedom and Independence for the Golden Lands of Australia--his major attempt to put his adopted country on what Jefferson once called "a republican tack."<sup>86</sup> Less rhetorical and more articulate than the Coming Event lectures, Freedom and Independence struck responsive chords at home and abroad. Essentially, it synthesized the fragmentary republican ideas that Lang had been widely disseminating in Australia during the previous two years. It was his major statement of liberation, not just for the benefit of his countrymen, but for the world to peruse.

The volume ran to three editions.

In the introduction, Lang proclaims the work to be his "proposal to establish free institutions throughout the Australian colonies on the basis of universal suffrage and equal electoral districts."<sup>87</sup> Relying heavily on James Grahame's History of the United States of North America (1836), he launches his first elaborate defence of republicanism as the most desirable political model available. Further, for a British colony aspiring to independence, it is the only "form of government either practicable or possible."<sup>88</sup> At one point, Lang illustrates just how far his Calvinism has been usurped by his democratic inclinations.

Why should [Englishmen] object to a form of government which has given birth, in every department of human excellence, to a series of the greatest and noblest men that have ever trod the earth?<sup>89</sup>

In keeping with his public statements down the years, he supports his arguments by citing established sources such as James Otis, Benjamin Franklin, Cotton Mather, the decisions of the American colonial legislatures, the 1765 New York Convention and the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia (1774).<sup>90</sup> Indeed, Otis and Franklin--"that great authority" whose opinion on colonial matters "is worth that of a hundred Westminster Reviewers"<sup>91</sup>--are the only two writers quoted by Lang in his introduction. The clarity of their arguments aids Lang throughout his searching enquiry.

The targets for Lang's vitriol are the same as in earlier years: Empire rule from London and the supposed infallibility of British

officials in the colonies. (He bitterly attacks, in particular, Governors Gipps and Fitzroy.) But he now more directly hints at the possibility of direct military action by New South Welshmen if their demands are not immediately met. Lang uses an old ploy, one first exploited by his perennial opponent, William Charles Wentworth, decades earlier:

. . . the passes of the Blue Mountains, on the road to the Gold Mines of the interior, like the Straits of Thermopylae, could be defended by a mere handful of Australian Greeks against the whole power of Persia. If "two or three thousand badly armed men" should attempt a revolutionary movement at the Australian mines, there is no calculating the possible issue.<sup>92</sup>

Again, the spectre of revolt raised to obtain Colonial-Office concessions. A familiar American and, by the early 1850's, Australian pattern.

In the years after the publication of Freedom and Independence, Lang continued to stump for independence and an Australian republic.<sup>93</sup> During that time, it became more and more obvious that, like William Ellery Channing, Lang despised war, but he considered some issues worth fighting for. Still an avowed enemy of Unitarianism, Lang evidently knew his Channing well, and in seeking to explain his stand on war in a Scots Church sermon in 1854, he alluded to the American when seeking justification:

I have no sympathy with those who maintain that all war is unlawful and unjust. The American divine, Dr. Channing, says: "A community may employ force to repress the violence of its own citizens, to disarm and restrain its internal foes; on what ground, therefore, can we deny it the right or repelling the inroads and aggressions of a foreign power?"<sup>94</sup>

Two things are interesting here: the man Lang had categorized as talented, but certainly not a "Christian divine" in 1840, had evidently assumed that elevated position in the Presbyterian minister's thinking in the middle 1850's.<sup>95</sup> Secondly, Lang's tone, in his sermon, suggests that his congregation had at least a working knowledge of Channing's prose.

In keeping with this stand, Lang violently denounced the prospect of Australian involvement, alongside Britain, in the Crimean War.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, he sought to justify the Eureka Stockade and establish it as but the first skirmish of a long campaign climaxing in the independence of both Victoria and New South Wales. Lang blamed Eureka wholly on Australia's ruling colonial officials and their sympathizers among the local gentry. In a letter to the Sydney Empire, a week after the short battle, he articulated his position--one as close as he would publicly get to encouraging armed revolution. Lang had come a long way since the tentative criticisms of English rule in the first edition of his Historical and Statistical Accounts, twenty years earlier:

No sane person will suppose that this outbreak is likely to end with the shooting down of thirty diggers at Ballarat. The blood shed will not be forgotten. The men in whose spirits the wound that has thus been inflicted will rankle long and widely, will "nurse their wrath to keep it warm" for some other and more fitting occasion. If a republic, such as certain at least of the more prominent diggers proposed, were successfully established at Port Phillip, it would be absurd to say that an irrepressible desire to follow this example would not be immediately created in ten thousand breasts in New South Wales, in which no such

feeling now exists. We have precisely the same grievances to complain of as the Port Phillip people. Let it be remembered that these grievances are incomparably greater than any the American colonists had to complain of when they put forth their famous declaration of independence in 1776.<sup>97</sup>

Thirty years of living in a country at best described as a "dependency of England," thirty years struggling to motivate a community to resist being "a mere football, kicked about at pleasure by every underling in Downing Street," had wrought significant changes in Lang.<sup>98</sup> In the early 1850's, at the peak of his powers, he had established himself as the preeminent spokesman for the Australian republican movement. His commitment to the cause of the colonies had deepened to such an extent that in 1855 he drafted a Declaration of Independence for the "Province of Victoria" which suggested "force of arms" as a feasible alternative.<sup>99</sup> The minister had turned into a militant. In the spirit of 1776.

\* \* \*

Lang's Australian countrymen finally rejected his challenging brand of republicanism. A number of reasons for this have been suggested: his dogmatic religious stand; his continual and lengthy overseas trips; and his unnecessarily vitriolic, personal attacks on his political enemies.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps the best explanation, however, is that in the final analysis even the more "radical" colonists felt satisfied, in the early 1850's, that self-government was imminent and

would, moreover, supply the appropriate vehicle for political independence. Lang's republic could wait a while. Though not a "lone prophet," as one historian has claimed, Lang never achieved widespread support for his ideas.<sup>101</sup> Charles Harpur backed him as much as he could, but Harpur was too busy fighting his own battle for literary survival in a grasping community.

Lang's legacy was to give Australians a greater confidence in themselves, a sense of legitimate autonomy. For a number of years, mid-century, he fulfilled his desire to be "a Tribune of the People."<sup>102</sup> As such, he would not let his country play a servile role in its relations with England. For his parameters of radical action Lang looked, throughout his public life, to the United States for guidance. Yet he recognized the danger of merely substituting one dominant influence with another. In Freedom and Independence, he spoke in clear terms of the Australian colonies becoming "one mighty power in the Pacific, that will condescend to play 'no second fiddle' to Brother Jonathan, but will claim perfect equality with him from the first. . . ." <sup>103</sup> It was an appropriately grand vision for a man who ever refused to think as a subordinate would.

Section B

Daniel Henry Deniehy (1828-65):

The Vehement Voice of the South<sup>104</sup>

"We have no long line of poets, or statesmen, or warriors; in this country, art has done nothing, but nature everything. It is ours, then, alone to inaugurate the future."  
Daniel Henry Deniehy, 1853<sup>105</sup>

Appraisals of Deniehy's career in politics and letters since his death have produced some interesting oddities. He died in 1865 in Bathurst, a town west of Sydney to which he had gone without his wife and children in the last year of his short life in a final, desperate attempt to cure his alcoholism and improve his financial situation, only to be buried in a pauper's grave. When, amidst all the nationalistic clamour surrounding the 1888 centenary celebrations, his bones were exhumed and placed beneath a handsome monument at Waverly Cemetery, Sydney, Australians remembered him only for his literary work, not for his political career as a moderate republican.<sup>106</sup> In the years since, as Frances Devlin Glass pointed out in 1974, biographical accounts have increasingly stressed Deniehy's politics at the expense of his literary pursuits. Thus, in her most informative



thesis, she attempts to "right the biographical balance" by once again emphasizing his career as a "publicist and literary critic."<sup>107</sup> Needless to say Deniehy, like his American New England counterparts, did not conceive of the two roles, that of public personality and man of letters, as separate and distinct entities. In both roles he projected an integrated vision--a vision strikingly similar in vocabulary, political and literary stance, to some of the most prominent contemporary writers in America, whom he had read.

W.B. Dalley, one of Deniehy's friends and himself a politician, referred to Deniehy as "the most brilliant of the native-born inhabitants of this country."<sup>108</sup> He was probably right. In his brief career, Deniehy distinguished himself in many areas as poet, short story writer, literary critic, orator, politician, essayist, historian and republican publicist. Just as he had expressed great admiration for the range of talents of the Irish radical and political exile, John Mitchel, so Deniehy aspired to reading and commenting on an extraordinarily large range of subjects.<sup>109</sup> Only in this way might he prepare himself to contribute to Australian progress.

Before dealing with the major aspects of Deniehy's political and artistic stance as a writer (and its kinship with American themes), three points need clarification. Firstly, with a commitment no less impassioned than Walt Whitman's in his 1855 "Preface" to Leaves of Grass, Deniehy vigorously espoused the need for Australia's native sons to recognize their mission in their new land. In a letter to John Dunmore Lang, he spoke of "my duty in establishing Republican

Institutions and advancing in every genuine method, my native land," and responded with a body of work and a public life consistent with this conception.<sup>110</sup> Fully aware of the hazards, he reluctantly entered local politics with a first nomination speech exemplifying his superb oratorical skill. Deniehy appreciated the impact of a questioning, aggressive New-World vocabulary:

. . . a crisis, you tell me, and I believe it, is at hand, or is rapidly approaching, and you want me. When the signal fires are reddening the hills at midnight, when the sharp tuck of the drum and the fierce, taunting invitation of the trumpet are abroad, is it for the recruit to plead that his drill is incomplete?<sup>111</sup>

His tone, here, closely resembles that in Thomas Paine's series of pamphlets, "The American Crisis" (1776-83). The first of Paine's thirteen pamphlets began: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."<sup>112</sup> For Deniehy, the political situation in 1850's Australia paralleled that in 1770's America. It is perhaps no accident that in his voluminous library Deniehy had a copy of William Wirt's Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry (1817).<sup>113</sup> Like Henry, Deniehy had legendary verbal skills, and he used this power to generate public awareness of his personal vision for Australia.

Secondly, throughout his life Deniehy promoted an independent Australia. After spending what he termed a "swallow's season" in

Ireland, he returned to Australia in 1844 full of enthusiasm for the Irish nationalist cause and determined to initiate a similar enterprise at home.<sup>114</sup> In one of his poems he contrasted the honesty and integrity of Irish patriot Henry Flood (the "Irish Ballad singer's joy") with the "flood" of corruption in local politics.<sup>115</sup> It is worth noting that it was Flood who, in 1782, had thundered in the Irish House of Commons:

A voice from America shouted to Liberty, the echo of it caught your people as it passed along the Atlantic, and they renewed the voice till it reverberated here.<sup>116</sup>

Deniehy, throughout his political career, constantly pleaded for the same humane, egalitarian values that Jefferson had articulated in the Declaration of Independence.

Third, and finally, having recognized Australia's unique circumstances, Deniehy realized that his country would need creative, independent thinkers; he determined to be one. He wanted no models. As G.B. Barton wrote, two years after Deniehy's death: "Minds of his stamp are essentially creative. They are never satisfied with absorbing the productions of others. Plastic power is part of their natural constitution."<sup>117</sup>

In arriving at his political position, Deniehy consulted a wide range of political theorists, including such disparate sources as Locke, Carlyle, de Tocqueville, Cobden, Burke, Hume, Plato and Aristotle. Appropriately, his stance reflected both radical and conservative attitudes: he advocated change, but only through systematic, above

all orderly government legislation. Yet on one issue he was adamant. Deniehy believed, as Francis Glass has said, that the "American experiment in democracy, republicanism and colonialization, rather than French democracy, or even British monarchism, would be the political example that Australia would ultimately follow."<sup>118</sup> Jeffersonian republicanism provides the main working principle of all Deniehy's writings. In one of his speeches to the Australian League, he pointed to the "democratic tendencies of the age" and gave "philosophical reasons why a new community . . . could only develop [sic] itself into a Republic."<sup>119</sup> Inevitably, he consulted the American revolutionary writers; one can see in his essays elements of Franklin, Jefferson, Henry, Paine and Adams. This study, in turn, took him into the wider realm of American literature to encompass, most noticeably, the principal Transcendentalists: Emerson, Parker, Channing, Fuller and Brownson. In addition to these, his library boasted works by Franklin, Irving, Longfellow, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville, as well as Holmes, Bryant, Brown, Stowe and George W. Curtis.<sup>21</sup>

Deniehy's earliest stories, written while still in his teens, betray a youthful desire to be offensively Australian. Published shortly after his trip to Ireland and England, they flaunt native pride in a way reminiscent of many American writers, from Franklin to Whitman. For Deniehy, there was ground to be made up, and he makes his loyalties quite clear. For example, in one story, "A Legend of Newtown" (1845), he portrays the local Sydney aristoi as "white beavered and tweed-coated gentlemen . . . [whose] very pockets, which ornament

their unmentionables, seem to button up of themselves, with an air which seems almost to say 'there is something in 'em,' and the air of heaven is tainted with the odour of cigars, and the effluvia of colonial ale. . . ."<sup>122</sup> In marked contrast, the hero, Elliot Egerton, a true "son of the soil," has an enthusiasm which

made him proud of the land of his birth, jealous and sensitive of the slights too often thrown on her, and the vapid sneers which expatriated wittlings find so much gratification in showering on the land which supports them, and gives them their daily bread. The chivalry of his youthful spirit made him look forward to distinguishing his country at his own hands, and stamping her fame, among the nations, in the burning characters of genius and immortality.

The young Deniehy obviously saw the need to be publicly assertive. Old prejudices had to be overcome and social barriers dismantled. Some years later--in perhaps his greatest speech, at the rally to discuss the Constitution Bill in August, 1853--he could intentionally invoke the name that had been used abroad for so long to effectively stain the southern colony: "Botany Bay." Said a more mature Deniehy, combatively,

I am proud of Botany Bay, even if I have to blush for some of her children. I take the name as no term of reproach when I see such a high, true, and manly sensibility on the subject of their political rights; that the instant the liberties of their country are threatened, they could assemble, and with one voice declare their determined and undying opposition.<sup>123</sup>

Like Channing, Deniehy had a deep "reverence for Liberty, for human rights," which he intended to communicate loudly to all his fellow

colonists.<sup>124</sup> From an early age, he sought to teach, as Emerson, Channing, Parker, Brownson, Ripley and Alcott set about educating their countrymen.

Furthermore, Deniehy's pride, if at times a little too forthright, was not narrowly bombastic, for he conceived of a framework in which love of one's land could be usefully applied. Deniehy's sense of "social progress" involved a vision of an Australian populace awakened to the communal benefits of literature and staunchly humane principles. As Frances Glass has rightly suggested, he believed in "an integrated social, political, aesthetic and intellectual ideal."<sup>125</sup> Independence, Deniehy once declared, would necessarily lead to a "really responsible" government "entirely identified with the place and people," and the "growth of a national character," the "necessity that would ensue of making the best of everything around us and so converting the country really into a Home."<sup>126</sup> One of his literary reviews makes mention of the "moral and mental vitality" so vital to a developing community.<sup>127</sup> Glass calls this notion "simple-minded," but if this is so, then some of America's finest liberal spokesmen of the era were equally naive.<sup>128</sup> George Ripley, for example, founded the socialist community Brook Farm, with a group Hawthorne termed "a knot of dreamers," in the hope of combining honest toil with intellectual freedom, cultural refinement and religious enquiry.<sup>129</sup> Emerson and Thoreau conceived of a similar model for society. Theodore Parker, too, worked towards an ideal America

when the few shall not be advanced at the expense of the many . . . [and] when all men shall eat bread in the sweat of their face, and yet find leisure to cultivate what is best and divinest in their souls. . . .<sup>130</sup>

William Ellery Channing, a great favourite of Deniehy's, devoted much of his time to the same subject. He considered every man capable of moral perfection, and stressed human dignity and worth in some of his most famous essays--such as "Honour Due To All Men" (1830), "Self-Culture" (1838), and "On the Elevation of the Labouring Classes" (1840). Channing enthusiastically proclaimed that

the mass of the people are beginning to comprehend themselves and their true happiness . . . they are catching glimpses of the great work and vocation of human beings, and are rising to their true place in the social state.<sup>131</sup>

Thomas Jefferson, of course, had made idealism a viable response of all future Americans when he listed, as among man's inalienable rights, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."<sup>132</sup> In construing an optimistic future for his country, Deniehy dreamed a representative New World dream, as we shall see, and if he lacked the support of an appreciable number of his own countrymen, he must have found gratifying sustenance among the distinguished New England writers comprising an important section of his library.

Yet even if we perceive Deniehy's notion of Australia's future as, in the broadest sense, idealistic, it is certain that he took pains to ground his framework on several hard, realistic principles--from the application of which he would not flinch. Again, they

reflect the influence of contemporary American thought, though comprising the basis of an immediate course of action in an Australian context. First, Deniehy insisted on the "fundamental popular right" of all men to nominate those "who are to make, or control the making of, laws binding on the community." Endorsing a basic Jeffersonian principle (and like vocabulary), he often spoke in defence of "the elective principle and the inalienable right and freedom of every colonist . . . to work out the whole organization and fabric of our political institutions."<sup>133</sup> Thomas Paine, too, had projected this as one of man's "natural rights" in the Rights of Man.<sup>134</sup> Like Paine and Jefferson, Deniehy opposed those aristocratic trappings he felt to be in total opposition to the tenets of a democracy--namely, nomineeism, patronage and primogeniture.<sup>135</sup> He viewed them as totally inappropriate, indeed insulting to a land striving to overcome the horrors of its convict past.

Secondly, while he admired the sound motivations of the genuine revolutionary temperament, Deniehy couldn't approve of its excesses.<sup>136</sup> Even when, in his mid-twenties, he promulgated the cause of belligerent republicanism on paper and in the lecture hall, he still could not countenance, as a prerequisite of this programme, militant revolt. Deniehy would have agreed with Paine that it was time to stir, but not in armed resistance. He shared the conservative inclinations of both Channing and Jefferson when forced to contemplate mob justice. Thus his disavowal of the Eureka Stockade participants, whose conduct amount to "rebellion":



The exercise of physical force on the part of the diggers has counteracted the influences of those moral agencies that were silently but surely, step by step, disenthraling these golden lands.<sup>137</sup>

Thirdly, Deniehy categorically rejected aristocracy and Australia's continued obeisance to England. Unlike so many of his countrymen, he put English institutions to the test. Like Paine, Deniehy concluded that England's government and social hierarchy had been founded by the repugnant use of force (originally the Norman Conquest).<sup>138</sup> He refused to accept, on this basis, that Australia had to adopt a servile role when assessing English demands; thus he associated with Lang and Harpur in opposition to Australian involvement in the Crimean War. After a meeting of support for the English cause was held at Malcolm's Circus, in Sydney, Deniehy caustically appraised the proceedings:

Look at the material of the joke: War between allied England and France with the Czar of Russia, on a question about the Greek Church, and a meeting of a certain number of persons at Sydney on the shores of Port Jackson in the Australian continent, sixteen thousand miles off, to express their "loyalty" (who ever doubted it, or complimented them enough to suspect it?) and devotion (how elegantly the choice of the noun) to Her Majesty. . . .<sup>139</sup>

Three months later, appraising the Solicitor-General's proposed tax to support the warring Lion, Deniehy apparently found the historical parallels with pre-revolutionary America too great to resist. He added his name to the growing list of Australian commentators since Wentworth (in 1819) who had threatened England with open colonial

revolt. For Deniehy, the idea of the tax was

about the most monstrous proposition we have ever heard, and would tend as much to alienate the People of this Colony from the parent stem as the infamous Stamp Act of America accelerated the rupture with, and ultimately produced the separation of the American colonies from the British Crown.<sup>140</sup>

The energetic Australian tradition of verbal intimidation lived on. Revolutionary rhetoric, in Deniehy's hands, continued to be a useful tool despite the likelihood of self-government in the near future.

Fourthly, Deniehy deplored the parochial pretentiousness he found around him. Hence, he waged a continual war of words with the Australian proponents of aristocracy. If the superior attitudes of English patricians were difficult to accept, despite an ocean of distance, the pretensions of the local "expatriated witlings" proved impossible.<sup>141</sup> "Colonial Toryism always stinks," he once said, "for it has suffered by transit from the old country. . . ."<sup>142</sup> Deniehy despised Wentworth's notion of a nominated Upper House, and in one memorable speech he put paid to the proposal for ever. Just as Jefferson felt bound, in the 1790's, to destroy the credibility of the Federalists--those men he felt to have been "dazzled by the glittering of crowns and coronets," and who "always contrive to nestle themselves into the places of power and profit"<sup>143</sup>--so Deniehy, in the early 1850's, denounced, and ultimately demolished any possibility of an Australian House of Lords. He laughed the "harlequin aristocrats, those Australian magnificoes" back into temporary oblivion when he coined the phrase "bunyip aristocracy" to characterize their pose.<sup>144</sup>

Fifth, and lastly, while still a very young man, Deniehy recognized the desperate need his country had for able republican propagandists. Rising to the challenge of Wentworth's attempt to establish a privileged Upper House, he soon assumed considerable responsibility as a popular disseminator of democratic doctrines. His literary life, for a time, took on secondary importance. In America, during the same years as Deniehy's active political involvement, George William Curtis, a Rhode-Island orator, editor and essayist, worked incessantly to mobilize his country's intelligentsia--most obviously in a classic address that he delivered to the Literary Societies of Wesleyan University, Connecticut, in 1856. After listing as the theme for his oration "the duty of the American scholar to politics," Curtis addressed himself to the issue of whether or not the scholar's role made non-involvement obligatory:

Because we are scholars of to-day shall we shrink from touching the interests of to-day? Because we are scholars shall we cease to be citizens? Because we are scholars shall we cease to be men?<sup>145</sup>

When Curtis asked these questions, he had in mind the issue of slavery, and the scalding Kansas debate in particular, yet the questions he asked were universal ones.<sup>146</sup> In Australia, Deniehy, Lang and Harpur by their actions answered an unequivocal "no" to them all.

Closely associated with Lang's Australian League, which dedicated itself to the establishment of an Australian republic, Deniehy delivered public lectures on the subject of republicanism at the Australian

College in Sydney, and in Goulburn.<sup>147</sup> Having been forced to leave Sydney for Goulburn in 1854, while at the height of his popularity and powers, to try and put his financial affairs on a more secure footing, Deniehy refused to be intimidated by the shift to a lesser location. He regarded it only as a temporary measure:

. . . I ere long shall return to Sydney with plenty in both pockets, leading the van of a Republican "opposition" that will, I trust, scatter to the winds the present corrupt and imbecile Administration--an Administration that has done its level best to bring contempt to the great institution of popular government. . . .<sup>148</sup>

In fact, in some ways the move to the country represented an ideal opportunity to advance what he called, in a letter to Lang, "our cause," at the expense of the advocates of "Englishmanism."<sup>149</sup> After being in Goulburn for well over a year, Deniehy believed he had "got a regular Reign of Terror, in the place."<sup>150</sup> He persistently advocated a thoughtful egalitarianism seeming to owe much to Jeffersonian thought.<sup>151</sup> Like Jefferson, who throughout his life remained convinced that "the republican is the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind," Deniehy vigorously espoused the equal rights of all men.<sup>152</sup> To do this, he had a "means of playing fiercely enough on the encroachments of the squatocratic and quasi-aristocrat mabs. . . ."<sup>153</sup>

Inevitably, Deniehy's active republicanism took him closer and closer to the mainstream of American democratic and Transcendentalist thought. Clear similarities appear. For one, Deniehy often expressed his total belief in the only aristocracy that for him really counted.

As he put it in his speech at the Constitution Committee Rally (1853):

. . . fellow-citizens, there is an aristocracy worthy of our respect and of our admiration. Wherever human skill and brain are eminent, wherever glorious manhood asserts its elevation, there is an aristocracy that confers eternal honour upon the land that possesses it. That is God's aristocracy, gentlemen; that is an aristocracy that will bloom and expand under free institutions, and for ever bless the clime where it takes root.<sup>154</sup>

Here was precisely the notion of a natural aristocracy among men that Jefferson so successfully inculcated in his countrymen; the very idea that William Wirt praised his country for when recognizing that system which could allow Patrick Henry to rise to such a prominent national position; the same proposition that Theodore Parker, Emerson and the other Transcendentalists took for granted.<sup>155</sup>

Emerson, though, went further than Deniehy and his American countrymen to consider the implications that the political revolution had for theology. In his Harvard "Divinity School Address" (1838), he asserted his belief in the perfectibility of man--an absolute democratic notion:

The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. . . . If a man is at heart just, then in so far is He God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice. . . . Good is positive. Evil is merely privative, not absolute. It is like cold, which is the privation of heat. All evil is so much death or nonentity. Benevolence is absolute and real.<sup>156</sup>

Unlike Hawthorne, who considered evil a reality of human existence, Emerson felt evil to be no more than the absence of good. Thus, he denied its existence. If all the people could be educated--and for

Emerson a political democracy created the conditions under which such an ideal might be realized--then mankind could reach perfection. While Deniehy might well have been aware that this view was implied by his vision of "God's aristocracy" in Australia, he was certainly not prepared to voice it. The narrow intellectual climate inhibited him and the immediate practicality of his aims precluded it. Even Emerson, in a more leisurely New England, suffered because he expressed his views; Harvard did not invite him back for thirty years.

Deniehy's Australian version of republicanism, however, did involve his energetic support of literature as a pre-eminent contributor to the national fabric. Nations, he felt, rose out of this native literature, just as great writers would increasingly emerge from an established nation. Channing had already expressed this sentiment in his "National Literature" address (1823):

. . . [literature] is plainly among the most powerful methods of exacting the character of a nation, of forming a better race of men; in truth, we apprehend that it may claim the first rank among the means of improvement.<sup>157</sup>

By the early 1850's, as Deniehy began to publicly formulate his conceptions of the nation-state, he had read and absorbed Channing thoroughly, regarding him as yet "another great man" from America (though of "lower intellectual range" than either Emerson or Theodore Parker<sup>158</sup>). Like Channing, Deniehy directed his remarks carefully toward the particular audience he desired. Thus, when considering the effect of literature on the local populace, he sought to emphasize the obligation of certain groups:

As a public duty, we know none more important--for parents particularly--than to aid in the cultivation of native literature. . . .<sup>159</sup>

--just as Channing had done in the last paragraph of "Self-Culture," an essay that, as I will shortly indicate, Deniehy felt to be of vital importance for his own countrymen. Deniehy saw his own personal responsibility to be that of encouraging and, if possible, ennobling the local product. He coaxed and assisted prospective authors as much as possible, delightfully capturing the spirit of the whole undertaking in the same Freeman's Journal article just referred to:

The little packet of juvenile manuscript dropped with a nervous hand and beating heart into the slit of a letter-box at a publishing office, may prelude grave and noble labours in riper years--labours which may perhaps make men speak with a lingering note of kindness in their voices of Australia, for the sake of things done by the hand, once so shame-fast [*sic*] and so small, that quivered at a letter-box one afternoon long, long ago.<sup>160</sup>

All the Transcendentalist writers in the 1830's and '40's affirmed the necessity of establishing an independent national literature. Channing stated that "a nation shall take a place, by its authors, among the lights of the world," while Orestes Brownson, in his essay, "American Literature" (1840) pointed out in singularly blunt language the absolute necessity for original thinking, lest native minds become "crippled" and literature deteriorate to the "tame and servile."<sup>161</sup> Deniehy recognized and applied the truth of their remarks to the rough-hewn Australian situation. Indeed, he often utilized a recognizably American Transcendentalist vocabulary, being especially fond of

Emerson's concept of "self-reliance"--the American's emphasis on the integrity of the individual person or state. When contrasting the merits of Australia adopting either a subordinate or independent political role, in one of his Australian League lectures (1854), Deniehy included Emerson's phrase to clarify his sense of constitutional liberty: "there must be something radically vitiating in dependence, and something supremely beneficial in freedom and self-reliance."<sup>162</sup> In the same year, when attacking the Tory bias of the Sydney Morning Herald, he portrayed that newspaper as a "stumbling block" in the way of "independence," "local feeling," "self-reliance" and "national development."<sup>163</sup> Deniehy also made use of Channing's notion of "self-culture." In one of his last literary reviews, he expressed his sympathy for the poet Henry Kendall who, "like most native men, laboured under disadvantages in his work of self-culture."<sup>164</sup> Presumably he had Channing's definition of "self-culture" in mind: "the care which every man owes to himself, to the unfolding and perfecting of his nature."<sup>165</sup> It is sadly ironic that in this same essay, Channing should issue a stern warning against the evils of alcohol:

Of all the foes of the working class, this is the deadliest. Nothing has done more to keep down this class, to destroy their self-respect, to rob them of their just influence in the community, to render profitless the means of improvement within their reach, than the use of ardent spirits as a drink.<sup>166</sup>

When Deniehy wrote his review, he was himself struggling with the alcohol which, a year or so later, would kill him.



The obvious corollary of encouraging a native literature, for Deniehy, involved urging the youth of one's country to risk ridicule by founding a literature based on local material, responses and pre-occupations. Shortly after Deniehy's death, Dalley justly drew attention to Deniehy's devotion during "his brief manhood to the instruction and elevation of his young countrymen."<sup>167</sup> When barely twenty-three, Deniehy could, with Whitmanic flourish, euphorically contemplate the pressing claims of Australia's youth:

. . . that noble race now gathering in the porches and vestibules of manhood, and which is to send forth the creators. . . . We have loving faith in the coming men of Australia. Our belief is strong and steady in the genius and the purity and the moral strength even now amid our native population, climbing and flowering with the profusion of aboriginal vines in the central wilderness. . . .<sup>168</sup>

Like Whitman, Deniehy appreciated the need for hyperbole to achieve a desired effect. To be an effective propagandist one had to be-- as Whitman obviously recognized in his 1855 "Preface"--both abundantly optimistic and consciously prophetic. Whitman felt the "genius of the United States" to be

always most in the common people, south, north, west, east, in all its States, through all its mighty amplitude. The largeness of the nation . . . were monstrous without a corresponding largeness and generosity of the spirit of the citizen. . . . The pride of the United States leaves the wealth and finesse of the cities; and all returns of commerce and agriculture, and all the magnitude of geography or shows of exterior victory, to enjoy the sight and realization of full-sized men, or one full-sized man unconquerable and simple.

The American poets are to enclose old and new, for  
America is the race of races. . . .<sup>169</sup>

Taking his understanding of his country's need one step further, Deniehy surveyed the field of contemporary Australian writers for those qualities which he desired to advance as exemplary for the purposes of a coming republican Australia. By 1865, he could declare that Australia had its "native men of 'minstrel fire'"; of the group, he regarded Charles Harpur as the "most eminent."<sup>170</sup> Thanks in great part to Deniehy's dedication and influence, Harpur had emerged in the 1850's as the new nation's most articulate--and controversial--literary figure. Deniehy first mentioned Harpur in a public lecture (on modern English poetry) that he delivered in 1851.<sup>171</sup> He made flattering reference to Harpur's ability and promised to take up the matter in detail at some later date. He was as good as his word. Twice in the next six years, regardless of the inevitable personal attacks aimed at him for defending a local poet, Deniehy publicly affirmed his belief in the quality of Harpur's verse--once in an elaborate review published in Henry Parkes' Empire in 1853, and once in a public lecture, chaired by Nicol Stenhouse, at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts in 1857.<sup>172</sup>

Frances Glass has called Deniehy's review (of Harpur's The Bush-rangers, A Play in Five Acts, and Other Poems) the "most penetratingly aesthetic consideration Harpur ever received in his lifetime."<sup>173</sup> Certainly Deniehy's appraisal of Harpur's long poem, "The Creek of the Four Graves," contains some moments of acute insight into the

poem's motives and direction.<sup>174</sup> More important here, however, is the way in which Deniehy greeted Harpur's contribution to the "higher spiritual life" of his country. For Deniehy, Harpur had, in the volume in question, established himself as one of "those sons of morning who shall yet enlighten and dignify our home, building up as with the hands of angels the national mind." Deniehy clearly viewed Harpur as a cultural asset, a man around whom a culture, a national life, could be partially woven:

Very surprising as the fact will unquestionably be to our English friends, whose notions of our social state--of the elements of a peculiar national existence, gathering rapidly below the shifting surges, the ebb and flow of a many-charactered immigration, are shaped from . . . the "Notes" of some returned passagère of six or twelve months' flying experience in the Southern World--Australia has already nurtured in her wildernesses a poet of her own.

It was only fitting, then, that in aligning himself with the Transcendentalist endeavour to isolate and encourage similar figures in America, Deniehy should make specific reference to both Emerson and Channing to reinforce his argument. He compared Harpur to the "American Emerson," then proceeded to utilize a Channing maxim as reinforcement for his argument:

Channing never uttered a more memorable truth, and none should be made to sink deeper in the minds of our growing students, than that men of a nation are not alone its only genuine products.

Such incidental allusions to the Americans appear to confirm the fact that Australia's "growing students" of literature were thoroughly

familiar with the works of their contemporary American counterparts. Like Deniehy, they recognized close connections between the American situation and their own.

Deniehy's review enthusiastically acclaimed Harpur's superior credentials. Like Channing, Deniehy demanded originality; not simply that Harpur was born on Australian "soil, and grew," but that his largely "free, self-dependent, and self-moulded intellect" promised a body of work peculiarly in touch with his Australian environment and issues of local importance. And like Emerson, Deniehy favoured, at this time in his country's literary development, an emphasis on content, rather than form. Just as Emerson, in his review of the younger William Ellery Channing's poetry (1871), applauded his friend's "more purely intellectual . . . American verses" and the "absence of all conventional imagery" and "workmanship," so Deniehy focussed on the abundance of ideas in Harpur's verse.<sup>175</sup> Orestes Brownson had said, some ten years earlier, that "nothing is more certain than that the men, who create a national literature, must be filled with the spirit of their nation, be the impersonations of its wishes, hopes, fears, sentiments."<sup>176</sup> Deniehy felt Harpur's Bushrangers volume to be imbued with just such content. Filled with the thirst and imagination of the young continent.

Having made similar claims about Harpur as those proposed in his earlier review, Deniehy concluded his School of Arts lecture by clarifying, for his audience, the parallel between the literary climates of Australia and the United States. Referring to the active

encouragement of poetry in certain parts of America, he ended with the question: "with how much advantage might not poetry be cultivated in Australia?"<sup>177</sup> Harpur's poetry fulfilled "the highest functions of the Muse." Australian literature and, more relevantly, Australian society, needed a succession of sons of the bountiful soil to plough further afield. Deniehy obviously felt the time had come to convert native pride and passion into positive achievement.

Naturally, after Deniehy made the connection between a local poet and the national destiny, conservative forces in Australia--many struggling still to make the leap from comfortable classicism to energetic romanticism--felt insulted by the content, the sheer affrontery of his lecture. John West's Herald reviewer castigated Deniehy for holding up "to the admiration and imitation of our colonial youth the writers of namby-pamby, wishy-washy, milk-&-water verses."<sup>178</sup> If Australians couldn't be self-critical, then they would "infallibly continue in the state of gross egotism and overweening self-confidence which Mr. Deniehy's lecture shows is so deeply planted in the colonial mind. This want of a true sense of our insignificance we see illustrated every day." It was wilfully perverse of Deniehy to parade, for universal inspection, "persons and things Australian, as will assuredly be laughed at, and that most heartily in Europe." Deniehy responded by denying the Herald correspondent's charges.<sup>179</sup> In the heat of the battle between the proud native and the debilitating English forces actively at work in the colony, Deniehy must have again found solace in the fact that if the impressive Channing was correct in asserting

that the great distinction of a country lay in its production of superior men, then so was he. Further, and for Deniehy possibly more rewarding, Channing maintained that

The most illustrious benefactors of the race have been men who, having risen to great truths, have held them as a sacred trust for their kind, and have borne witness to them amidst general darkness, under scorn and persecution. . . .<sup>180</sup>

Even Deniehy's enemies could not question the integrity of his opinions, and his Irish-Australian stubbornness.

In proclaiming Harpur's national importance, Deniehy gave the colonial community evidence of his notion of the "representative man" (to use Emerson's phrase) in society. Frances Glass rightly gives Carlyle credit for articulating, in the nineteenth century, the idea of the great man, but, more pertinently, it was Emerson who popularized the notion.<sup>181</sup> Possibly in direct response to Emerson's feeling that the "search after the great men is the dream of youth, and the most serious occupation of manhood," Deniehy saw the imperative need for Australia to produce

those massive thinkers, those rugged, undaunted masters and confessors for truth and right which the bold yeomanry of every European land and the giant American States have brought forth.<sup>182</sup>

He firmly believed in the great man as national treasure, and did his best in his short career to broadcast the talents of those he felt entitled to public acclaim.<sup>183</sup>

Deniehy had a clear idea of both the stance that Australia's emerging writers and leading citizens should take and their prodigious responsibility to the community. Here again, a strong connection with contemporary American thinking becomes evident. He obviously absorbed the core of the American argument, and this resulted in his upholding the principle of originality at all costs. When praising the expatriate Frank Fowler, and his contribution to local letters, Deniehy strove to establish Fowler's newness, denying the accusation that he was "but a 'dilution of Emerson.'" <sup>184</sup> Despite the great admiration that he had for Emerson, he did not want local writers to simply replace one model for another. Shortly before he died, Deniehy showed that he had not wavered from his position when he warned the up-and-coming Henry Kendall to avoid saturating himself in Poe or Tennyson, lest he compromise his commitment to Australianness. <sup>185</sup> "He is great," Emerson had said, "who is what he is from nature, and who never reminds us of others." <sup>186</sup> The Americans encouraged leaders, not followers, as Deniehy well understood.

Nor was it sufficient simply to be original. Deniehy's confessors for truth and right had to recognize their grave responsibility to gain an education and, in turn, to educate their fellows. Imposing these rigorous standards on himself, Deniehy, despite being constantly pressed to enter politics from 1853 onwards, refused to embark on a political career for another three years--when he deemed the move as vitally necessary. In a letter to Henry Parkes, in December, 1854, he summarized the reasons for his initial reluctance:

My education, in the deep sense of the word, is not yet complete--I have not yet built myself into what I conceive to be the requisite spiritual and mental proportions-- I have not yet learnt, thought and observed enough.<sup>187</sup>

And even when he finally sought the political arena, he did so with full knowledge of his insufficiency:

I would fain have known more of mankind ere I undertook to legislate for them. I would fain have abode longer in that atmosphere which Milton termed "the still and severe air of great studies."<sup>188</sup>

Perhaps the time had come, with Australia on the brink of making some claim to world citizenship, that men of his persuasion, regardless of their inadequacies should stand up for their principles. Australia's sons of morning had to realize their pedagogic responsibilities. For Deniehy, this was of primary importance. A review of all his writings and speeches reflects his clear commitment to educating the people in an impressive variety of social, religious, political, philosophical, moral and literary subjects. In Australia during the gold-rush years, this wasn't an enviable task. Theodore Parker's appraisal of the American dilemma, in his essay "Education," could just as easily have been Deniehy's:

We think the end of man is to live for this: wealth, fame, social rank. Genius, wisdom, power of mind, of heart and soul, are counted only as means to such an end. So in the hot haste to be rich, famous, respectable, many let manhood slip through their fingers, retaining only the riches, fame and respectability. Never till manliness is thought the end of man, never till education is valued for itself, can we have a wide, generous culture, even among the wealthiest class.<sup>189</sup>



Deniehy had Parker's essays in his library, and, not coincidentally, he regarded the Abolitionist minister as being in the first rank of "the great and refined and cultured teachers of America."<sup>190</sup>

In recognizing the desperate need for universal education in Australia, Deniehy once again gravitated to a fundamental notion held by American writers from Jefferson to the New England Transcendentalists and Whitman. The enlightened Jefferson had been one of the first Americans to encourage free and widespread education. Democracy necessitated an intelligent and informed populace. With this in mind, the later Transcendentalists endorsed the need for the artist to advance principles designed to encourage and enlighten the common man. In the 1820's and '30's, for example, Channing worked tenaciously to educate the poor and working classes to help themselves, endeavouring to elevate the tenor of their entire existence. His lectures reveal great insight into the principal causes of human misery and degradation. Deniehy's stance might well have owed its substance to ideas propounded by Channing in his second lecture on the "Labouring Classes":

Undoubtedly some men are more gifted than others, and are marked out for more studious lives. But the work of such men is not to do others' thinking for them, but to help them to think more vigorously and effectually. Great minds are to make others great. This superiority is to be used, not to break the multitude to intellectual vassalage, not to establish over them a spiritual tyranny, but to rouse them from lethargy, and to aid them to judge for themselves.<sup>191</sup>

In the Mechanics' Institutes in Australia, Deniehy recognized one important means of popular education. He liked to call the Institute "the Peoples' University of the age," and felt it to be an important

example of the people taking "their own culture into their own hands."<sup>192</sup> Channing often challenged moneyed interests in his society and referred to himself as a "leveller";<sup>193</sup> Deniehy probably had no objections to the term either.

From the beginning of his public life, Deniehy perpetually assailed those who supported, directly or indirectly, the "supremacy of a class" or "the predominance of a creed."<sup>194</sup> He violently opposed any state where, as he put it in one of his poems,

the People stand  
Barred out. . . .<sup>195</sup>

Again, he found an abundance of support from the Americans. Brownson perhaps put it most succinctly for his countrymen when he pronounced that "all who are born at all are well born."<sup>196</sup> Yet, as the Fifties progressed and Deniehy's experience of local politics grew, he began to dream a more inclusive, ambitious republican dream. He gradually articulated a vision of a society of undaunted, representative men, where all the separate ideas he had continually been advocating merged together to produce one nationally aware race. A truly brave and humane new world where culture and the common man were inseparable. Deniehy dreamed, in other words, the first comprehensive Australian utopian dream.

Disenchanted with politics, he broadened, rather than "narrowed" the scope of his awareness--perhaps as his only escape from the depressing here and now. Deniehy felt that it was within Australia's

grasp, in the near future, to establish a society of educators and those wanting to be educated, to establish a viable southern utopia. He proposed Australia as the model society America had hoped to be, but now no longer could, because of the cancer of slavery:

The business is not now, how to further the interests of two or three thriving little colonies at a remote point of the Pacific, anomalous in their origin, but offering a fair field for the immigrant whose labours were ill-requited in Europe. Now the affair in hand, is how preparations may be made for the safe conduct of the grandest experiment in fashioning a scheme of liberty and social happiness, the world has yet beheld. Wrecked on her slavery institution, America has but partially solved the great question; it remains for Australia.<sup>197</sup>

Ironically, the American Transcendentalists probably helped Deniehy to reach this conclusion, for no one was more outspoken about the horrific institution of slavery than the liberal humanists in the United States. Pennsylvanian journals in the 1770's rang with Paine's denunciations of slavery, just as New England pulpits and newspapers in the 1830's, '40's and '50's reverberated with the abolitionist assaults of Channing, Parker, Fuller and Thoreau.<sup>198</sup> Channing and Parker, in particular, played major roles in the anti-slavery cause.<sup>199</sup> Both preached the insurmountable barrier that slavery presented to a society which prided itself on its free institutions. Deniehy agreed; for him, America had been "for ages spoiled and damned . . . by reason of the caste-abysse of Slavery. . . ."<sup>200</sup> As early as 1853, in fact, Deniehy had begun to systematically apply to Australia the same kind of optimistic language and sentiment that had characterized

so much patriotic writing in post-revolutionary America. Arthur Ekirch, in The Idea of Progress in America, 1815-1860 (1951), shows how

The philosophy of progress developed by early European and American writers proved especially adaptable to the American faith in the idea that the United States were destined to carry out a political experiment in democratic government. The roots of the idea of a unique American mission extended far back in its history. From the time of its discovery America had been celebrated as a land of destiny. With the success of the American Revolution a sharp break seemed to be made with the past.<sup>201</sup>

Optimistic prophecy became particularly common in America in the decades from 1830 to the beginning of the Civil War. Orestes Brownson voiced the prevailing attitude of many of his contemporaries when he declared, in 1842, that "We are THE PEOPLE OF THE FUTURE. . . ."<sup>202</sup> By the early 1850's, Deniehy felt that only his country had the right to morally assume such a title. In his 1853 review of Harpur's poems, for example, he constantly alluded to the future, emphasizing the vital mission of both the individual poet and the land he represented. Harpur, Deniehy maintained, was

a type of the growing native mind, [who] must exalt every hope for the grandeur of our national destinies. . . . Out of the mental achievements of the native-born, of men who owe to the soil, not only their birth but their education, flow our deepest hopes for the progress of our country. . . . We cannot change the irrevocable Past, but we may even now do much for what shall glorify the future. . . .<sup>203</sup>

Just a month before his political career came to a close (in

1860), Deniehy reaffirmed his belief in a utopian Australia--only this time in an even more idealistic form, and in a form which had already been tentatively explored by Lang and John West. Deniehy, too, conceived of a society of small-farmers in Australia (in the spirit of Jefferson), but he took the model a little further, speaking of "the growth of home feelings," "the extension of those moral and domestic charities which bound the human race in one common brotherhood," of a "community of families" prospering in the Australian wilderness to produce a "happy and contented" nation.<sup>204</sup> It was a grand dream, and, though tentative, one of the first attempts by a native Australian to explore the moral implications and delineate the spiritual groundwork of an essentially free community about to embark on its first journey as a nation, independent of the encumbrances of war-torn Europe. Frances Glass calls Deniehy's conception the "simple-minded expression" of a "naive Utopian hope."<sup>205</sup> This may be so, but it certainly took him along the same Travel'd Road as some of America's finest writers and thinkers. A long and honoured tradition. And it was an idea which found a surprisingly large acceptance by many of Deniehy's own countrymen when they searched for social alternatives in the heady decades of the 1880's and '90's.<sup>206</sup>

In a letter to Emerson in 1840, George Ripley, one of the founders of Brook Farm, expressed his sense of the aims and objectives of the settlement in terms fundamentally similar to those of Deniehy:

Our objects, as you know, are to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now

exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom by providing all with labor adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; to do away with the necessity of menial services by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions.<sup>207</sup>

Brownson, Emerson, Channing and, earlier, Jefferson, all elaborated on America's noble mission and sacred trust. They, too, had large dreams, steering their ship, as Jefferson put it, "with Hope in the head, leaving Fear astern."<sup>208</sup> They, too, embraced a utopian faith in the future. America in the nineteenth century, like Australia, was not ready to turn the dream into substance. Brook Farm failed, just as William Lane's Cosme settlement in Paraguay in the 1890's would fail.<sup>209</sup> But, aside perhaps from its overwhelming optimism and belief in the unlimited potential of democratic man, there was nothing wrong with the dream. Or the dreamers. Only those on whose shoulders fell the task of application.

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In his literary reviews, Deniehy had kind words for a wide range of American writers--from Irving, Longfellow, Poe and Nathaniel Parker Willis to Emerson, Parker, Channing and Fuller.<sup>210</sup> He appreciated their array of skills, yet, like his colleague Harpur, he was principally

attracted by their tone. He perceived not the "slightest aroma of patronage" when he read the Americans.<sup>211</sup> Like them, he respected all humanity, and this showed itself in all the major concerns of Deniehy's writing. He wanted to instill a democratic spirit in the minds of his compatriots. Channing had said that the "true sovereigns of a country are those who determine its mind, its mode of thinking, its tastes, its principles. . . ."<sup>212</sup> Had he lived beyond his thirty-seven years, and had he been favoured with an editor determined to reflect his total artistic and political stance, Deniehy would undoubtedly have been accorded the recognition he deserved at the hands of the Bulletin generation, and those succeeding it. Harpur's words in the poignant sonnet, "To My Young Countryman, D.H.D.," might well have been the sentiments of many young Australians down the years:

Thy manhood's mental amplitude expands  
 Before me in its omens, when I find  
 Something of promise fashioned by thy hands,  
 Some blossom breathing of thy forming mind.<sup>213</sup>

Though the avarice and intrigues of colonial society almost certainly caused Deniehy to resist proposing a social model for the future based on the perfectibility of man, as Emerson had done, it is significant that as his personal fortunes declined, his public statements grew steadily more optimistic. In turning now to Charles Harpur, we will see that quite the opposite occurred. Harpur's world-view slowly deteriorated.





comprehensive, published in the poet's own time; a corrupt text (1883), published some fifteen years after Harpur's death, intended to adequately reflect the poet's best work, but in reality seriously marred by the emendations and distortions of an editor determined to shape a genteel poet in Wordsworth's image;<sup>216</sup> a short collection, of 1944, culled from the 1883 text; and, finally, a more representative recent compilation of Harpur's poetry, prose and correspondence (1973), responsibly edited, but a far from definitive collection.<sup>217</sup> Given Harpur's singular contribution to early Australian letters and, indeed, to the community taking shape around him, the fact that we don't have an edition of his collected works constitutes a sizable obstacle to any truly valid analysis of the development of literature in nineteenth century Australia, much less to an effective appraisal of the man and his poetry.<sup>218</sup> In September, 1845, W.A. Duncan's Weekly Register sought to encourage the kind of local readership it felt Harpur deserved.<sup>219</sup> The plea has gone unanswered for almost a century and a half.

Recent critics, however, have illuminated certain important aspects of Harpur's oeuvre.<sup>220</sup> I intend to extend the discussion in one particular direction by looking more closely at an area that has been mentioned often in the past, but scarcely elaborated on: Harpur's place in the lively tradition of nineteenth-century radical thought in Australia, particularly in the 1840's and '50's, and his connections, as a result of this activity, with American writers from Jefferson and Paine to Channing and Emerson.<sup>221</sup> Harpur, in

fact, put these writers to a stricter ethical test than did any of his Australian contemporaries. He probed for moral truths in order to give the country of his birth--so young and so vulnerable to ridicule--a basis for positive future achievement.

Harpur spent lengthy periods of his life on remote farms, physically and intellectually isolated. While in later years he sometimes rued his lot when he pondered the delights accompanying residence in Sydney, near Stenhouse and his energetic circle of friends, at the time he could still respond vigorously to the rural environment in which he mostly found himself. The harsh country life encouraged independent thought. No wonder the Americans, with their continuing emphasis on Man Alone in Nature, appealed.<sup>222</sup> In "Self-Reliance," Emerson voiced the fundamental tenet behind this idea when he said: "Insist on yourself; never imitate."<sup>223</sup> Harpur wouldn't imitate, but the very nature of his existence caused him to embrace a philosophy of life and literature which resembled prominent American writers in several unmistakable ways. First, carrying a Currency Lad's deep resentment at being excluded from the fruits of his native land, he adopted a radical stance towards authority. Possibly aroused by the attitudes of his convict father who had, with Wentworth and others, played a part (during the 1820's) in the campaign for the recognition of every Briton's inherent rights, Harpur soon inclined towards a republican philosophy of government.<sup>224</sup> It was the only system he felt could adequately meet the unique needs of a new country. The republican sympathizer in time became an outspoken political agitator

for Australian sovereignty and an active adherent of the universal rights of man. For a while, Harpur even felt that the end justified the means. He could, unlike Deniehy, advocate armed resistance as a possible means of liberation.

Secondly, throughout his lifetime, Harpur maintained a profound love for his country, its special qualities. If eventually disenchanted with the greed and ambition of his countrymen, like Whitman, he never lost confidence in the land itself. Harpur's ardent patriotism-- at least as fervent as that of Deniehy and Lang--led him to project Australia, at one point, as the potential stage for mankind's finest future accomplishments. It is sadly ironic, however, that the man who proudly designated himself "An Australian," and whose family simply yet eloquently captured his one true vocation in life on his grave headstone when they inscribed the word "Poet," should have been rejected by so many of his contemporaries for precisely those reasons he held dearest: Harpur fought hard to establish native pride and a robust, identifiably Australian literature.<sup>225</sup> In this, he is like the American Transcendentalists.

Thirdly, Harpur recognized, along with Deniehy, an extreme need his country had for spiritual leaders: prophets, moral guides were required to counteract the acquisitive tendencies of a frontier society. In America, Walt Whitman fought an increasingly successful battle to establish the validity of his role as American Poet and arbiter of social values. Harpur had an equally passionate sense of poetic mission--and like Whitman he adopted a wayward, yet undeniably impressive

appearance, with an elaborate host of wise, grey whiskers--yet he ultimately failed to capture his country's imagination. Perhaps pioneering values still had too great a hold.

Fourth, and finally, Harpur rigorously espoused religious principles founded on a rational, eighteenth-century basis, despite the antagonism his beliefs created in the community. He would not be coerced, even by the Church.<sup>226</sup>

The struggle to establish his own identity and the credentials of the group he represented inevitably led Harpur, as it had Deniehy, to American sources. Once again, Emerson and Channing received special attention, though Harpur approached them confidently, as an equal. He was attracted by many of the Transcendentalists' principles--their sense of the poet as seer and critic of social injustices, their attitude towards the luminous qualities of nature, their undeniably democratic tone and belief in a possible brotherhood of man, their advocacy of universal education, and, perhaps most importantly for Harpur, their commitment to Emerson's concept of "self-reliance." Harpur would call it "social individualization."<sup>227</sup> Only through this process could society begin to inherit the spiritual and moral benefits of a republican government. Harpur foresaw in Australia's future not so much a democratic society, as a society of Democrats.

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In terms of actual output, Harpur's narrative and descriptive

verse, often inaccurately deemed by critics to represent the whole of his artistic stance, comprises but a small part of his total poetic work. The editor of the posthumous 1883 volume, in particular, did the poet less than justice by imposing his own sense of literary decorum on the poems in hand. In trying to package Harpur for what he called "sympathetic recognition from the sons of song in England," he only succeeded in making him appear conventional and, worse, derivative.<sup>228</sup> (Deniehy, in 1884, suffered the same fate at the hands of his editor.) In fact, Harpur relished polemical poetry, and wrote an abundance of patriotic chants, satires, epigrams, parodies and political songs, usually aimed at a small number of familiar personal enemies and institutions. Radical humanist thought influenced him greatly--particularly that emanating from America. Sometime in his twenties, it seems, Harpur assumed a political position closely allied with that of some of America's leading spokesmen during the Revolution, particularly Paine and Jefferson.<sup>229</sup> Jefferson put that position well when he affirmed his belief in the republican as "the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind. . . ."<sup>230</sup> Harpur, too, remained throughout his life a convinced democrat; he never lost faith in the validity of the doctrine, though he would eventually despise some of its so-called enthusiasts in Australia.

In the early 1840's, Harpur published incessantly, particularly in W.A. Duncan's Australasian Chronicle and Weekly Register. In the

Register alone, between July, 1843, and the end of 1845, he contributed thirty-three signed poems and, according to Elizabeth Webby's estimation, some thirty-nine anonymous satires.<sup>231</sup> His meeting with Father John McEncroe, during this period, may have inspired him; or possibly the increasing encroachment of Wentworth and the Patriotic Association sparked a greater militancy. It might have been reading Paine's Rights of Man.<sup>232</sup> But whatever the reason, Harpur's verse began to steadily publicize the cause of political liberty and to rail against the inequities of Australian society and Europe's prolonged resistance to democratic ideas. In 1845, the Register published "The Tree of Liberty," a poem in which Harpur added further substance to the energetic tradition Australian spokesmen had established of invoking American revolutionary precedents. The poem begins with familiar symbolic purpose:

We'll plant a Tree of Liberty  
 In the centre of the land,  
 And round it ranged as guardians be,  
 A vowed and trusty band.<sup>233</sup>

Harpur wanted the optimism of the New World, not the animosities of the Old:

But here at last, uncurs'd by caste,  
 Each man at Nature's call  
 Shall pluck as well what none may sell,  
 The fruit that blooms for All.

Throughout the Forties, he enlarged on his ideas for a new social structure; he envisaged a system more clearly in tune with the needs

of the general populace, one which would encourage a people to be  
 "Eager, and noble, and equal, and free. . . ." <sup>234</sup>

Harpur whole-heartedly endorsed Emerson's assessment of the social implications of authoritarian and democratic systems. In "Politics," Emerson put it this way:

The fact of two poles, of two forces, centripetal and centrifugal, is universal, and each force by its own activity develops the other. Wild liberty develops iron conscience. Want of liberty, by strengthening law and decorum, stupifies conscience. <sup>235</sup>

Similarly, Harpur sensed the great benefit liberty promised to each individual: namely, intellectual independence. But on a national level, this could only be achieved through the persistent propaganda of a group of dedicated idealists. Harpur strove to be one. "Words," he once wrote approvingly, "may revolutionise or rear / A mighty state." <sup>236</sup> He wrote much, as his devotion to an Australian republic hardened. A note which accompanied the reprinting of "A Tree of Liberty" in the People's Advocate (1849) began defiantly:

For the republican spirit of this and others, if not all of my national poems, I can offer no apology. Why, indeed should I? Believing, as I do, that men progress as sequently from monarchial to republican ideas . . . as they do from feudal and despotic ones to those of a limited monarchy. . . . <sup>237</sup>

Here again is the "idea of progress" surfacing in an Australian context. In his middle years, Harpur, like Lang and Deniehy--and before them, a succession of Americans--felt that a New-World democratic society, beginning afresh and untainted by the Old World, could

convert optimistic prophecy into reality. This commitment to the theory and practice of republicanism changed not at all in the next six years, for in another of his many prose notes to individual poems (dated May, 1855), he advanced the foundations of his belief in democracy and democratic thinking even more clearly. In spirit exactly like Thomas Paine, Harpur declared:

As I feel but little respect for Monarchy men and Empire-worshippers (as such) I cannot apologise for speaking of them somewhat contemptuously. I am not only a democratic Republican in theory, but by every feeling of my nature. Its first principles lie fundamentally in the moral elements of my being, ready to flower forth and bear their proper fruit. Hence, as I hold myself, on the ground of God's humanity, to be politically superior to no fellow being, so, on the same ground, I can feel myself inferior to none. . . .<sup>238</sup>

The similarities between Paine and Harpur would for a time increase in the early 1850's as Harpur's political stance (like that of John Dunmore Lang during the same period) grew more militant. At a time when even committed republicans like his friend Dan Deniehy refused to contemplate arms, Harpur publicly proclaimed himself a "physical force revolutionist."<sup>239</sup> In the People's Advocate (1854), he republished an earlier poem, "War Song for the Nineteenth Century," this time with the addition of a new, and more openly aggressive concluding stanza. The last four lines strike a revolutionary note rarely seen in Australian literature before or since:

But unarmed right eye withers  
 In wrong's all blasting breath --  
 Then on, ye Red Republicans,  
 To Freedom or to Death.<sup>240</sup>



The challenge entailed in the poem was heightened by Harpur's prose addendum; in it, he elaborated on his concept of "Red Republicans" as "men whose convictions of the political necessity of republicanism is unshakably founded upon the God-designed sovereignty of the people; and who are prepared, therefore, whenever a true occasion offers, to champion its advent at all hazards, and in all places." In the spirit of Paine, Harpur ominously hinted that the time was fast approaching which would try the souls of all Australian men.

In 1851, Harpur had hoped to have a volume of his poems published under the title, The Wild Bee of Australia.<sup>241</sup> The volume failed to materialize, but Harpur continued to sting the forces of monarchy and hereditary title in Australia for years to come. His faith in the egalitarian commitment of local politicians eventually disappeared, but he always clung to a belief in the "onward marching spirit / Of immortal liberty."<sup>242</sup> Republicanism would eventually have its day. And yet despite this hard-edged side both to his personality and the majority of his poetic output, Harpur has continued to be frequently judged in terms of a reputation founded on the basis of a corrupt text, which largely ignores his fighting side. Our picture of this seminal Australian poet needs redressing, through the aid of a faithful and comprehensive text which reflects the whole man. All the warts.

Such a text would show that Harpur scrupulously avoided a narrow application of egalitarian principles. He was no smug jingoist; rather, he employed his idea of republicanism widely, just as the American revolutionaries had. Harpur articulately responded to Paine's cry,

many years earlier, for all men to work towards "the civilization of Nations with each other."<sup>243</sup> Harpur, too, propounded an internationalist creed as the only truly democratic response:

He but profanes the spirit of patriotism in his pretensions thereto, whose fraternal sympathies are not co-extensive with humanity, and as wide as the world, however they may primarily centre amongst his own countrymen and in the land of his nativity. Nay, wherever Truth obtains with the greatest certainty, and rectitude of conduct prospers most universally--thither still should our sympathies tend as to our better country--the country of Man. . . .<sup>244</sup>

The sentiments expressed here stem directly from the Rights of Man, which we know Harpur had read. He certainly liked to utilize Paine's phrase when proselytizing, and he many times went on public record in support of movements of national liberation around the globe.<sup>245</sup>

Only within this larger international framework did Harpur respond to the problems of his own country; his was not a narrow nationalism of the kind that typified the Home-Rule movement in Ireland. Harpur, it appears, had read Paine too closely for that. The more immediate issues at home he necessarily viewed within a context of extreme sympathy for foreign revolutionary movements. Thus he addressed himself to the prevailing crisis of identity in Australia, fully appreciating, as a native-born like Deniehy, the retarding presence of monarchic feeling in the colony. He deplored the conservative influence of the "squatterly" or local pastoralists. Here were "men brimful of Englandism" exerting a dominant influence on a country thousands of miles away from their acknowledged homeland.<sup>246</sup> When

they had made their fortune, they would thankfully set sail for England. For Harpur, these were the men who represented the principal barrier to effective political and intellectual independence in Australia. Not the English monarchy or parliament.<sup>247</sup> Hence he took every available opportunity to satirize or attack outright the powerful bloc of local "snob-tories," putting them in the same category as the Duke of Wellington, an Irishman whom Harpur deemed a sycophant to the English throne.<sup>248</sup> "Money's worth," Harpur complained bitterly in the late 1840's, was the sole priority of local squatters, and such men threatened to subvert any attempts to create a national consciousness.<sup>249</sup> There is great poignancy surrounding one of Harpur's prose notes, written in later life, in which he dispassionately records the loss of this idealism, how his "first faith in the perfectibility of the race" was "considerably discountenanced by my worldly experience."<sup>250</sup> It should be remembered, however, that Walt Whitman in his later work expressed a similar disenchantment with his countrymen. The optimism of Whitman's 1855 "Preface" starkly contrasts his later disillusionment in Democratic Vistas (1871):

. . . society, in these States, is canker'd, crude, superstitious and rotten. . . . The underlying principles of the States are not honestly believ'd in (for all this hectic glow, and these melodramatic screamings,) nor is humanity itself believ'd in. What penetrating eye does not everywhere see through the mask? The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. . . . our New World democracy, however great a success in uplifting the masses out of their sloughs, in materialistic development, products, and in a certain highly deceptive superficial popular intellectuality, is, so far, an almost complete failure in its social aspects, and in really grand religious, moral, literary, and esthetic results.<sup>251</sup>

Harpur's energy for the fight eventually waned in his last years, but not before he had hated out loud all the obstacles he saw obstructing the path to local independence. Yet vitriolic attacks on his enemies comprised only a part of his bold national programme. More constructively, he emblazoned his native faith and patriotism incessantly in the pages of colonial newspapers. The youthful stridency of early poems such as "To the Lyre of Australia":

With her green forests round me, above her blue sky,  
 I lap in thy measures some national dream;  
 And I find that the notes, though unstudied are high,  
 When the glory of future Australia's the theme!<sup>252</sup>

--was later balanced by his diligent attempts to map the unique environment and political possibilities of Australia. Naming played an important part in Harpur's scheme of things. Like Emerson, he recognized the poet as the third child of the Universe: "the sayer, the namer. . . ."<sup>253</sup> Harpur's naturalist bent emerges in several long and fascinating notes to the poems--especially that on the "Characteristics of the Cockatoo," where he discusses the sophisticated warning system of a flock of cockatoos.<sup>254</sup> He also wrote an article on the strange songs of indigenous birds.<sup>255</sup> Sympathy with the curiosities of his homeland stimulated Harpur's interest, too, in Australia's Aboriginal population, and he responded to its abundance of complex dialects and wonderfully rhythmic names. His notes to the poem "The Kangaroo Hunt" reflect more than a passing interest. Further, he called his Tuross River farm "Euroma," an Aboriginal word.<sup>256</sup>

Almost inevitably, Harpur's abundant faith in Australia's potentially great future led him, amidst the excitement and success of the anti-transportation movement in the late 1840's, to project a utopian vision. By the midpoint of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, many Americans had recorded a similar belief in their country as the natural fulfillment of the Republican dream and the epitome of progress--ranging from Paine's statement in Common Sense that "We have it in our power to begin the world over again" to Emerson's, some seventy years later:

It seems so easy for America to inspire and express the most expansive and humane spirit; new-born, free, healthful, strong, the land of the laborer, of the democrat, of the philanthropist, of the believer, of the saint, she should speak for the human race. America is the country of the future.<sup>257</sup>

Harpur, like his friends Lang and Deniehy, might have concurred with the Concord philosopher, were it not for the institution of slavery; for democratic Australians, this was an abhorrent stain.<sup>258</sup> At his most optimistic, Harpur penned an "Anthem for the Australasian League," which unfortunately remains uncollected:

Shall we sing of Loyalty  
 To the far South's fiery youth?  
 Yea--but let the paean be  
 Of loyalty to God and Truth:  
 To Man, to progress, and to all  
 The free things, nobly free,  
 Of which their loved Australia shall  
 The golden cradle be.

Hark! her star-eyed Destinies  
 Pour their voices o'er the seas --  
     Hither to the Land of Gold,  
     All who would be free!  
 Here a diadem behold  
     For immortal Liberty!  
 Not for Old World queens and kings,  
 Villain Slavery's outworn things!

Shall we sing of Loyalty  
     In this new and genial Land?  
 Yea--but let the paean be  
     Of loyalty to Love's command,  
 To Thought, to Beauty, and to all  
     The glorious Arts that yet  
 In golden Australasia shall  
     Like chrysolites be set.<sup>259</sup>

The diction and content here, though abstract, are thoroughly familiar. About the same time as his friend Deniehy, Harpur had begun to exploit a republican vocabulary emphasizing New-World terms such as "loyalty," "progress," "destinies" and "liberty." For both Deniehy and Harpur, Australia had the potential to become the cradle of world-wide democracy and, in turn, the Arts. Harpur's "Anthem," furthermore, places him in the tradition of nineteenth-century American thought as R.B.W. Lewis has outlined it in The American Adam (1955). According to Lewis, the Adamic "American myth" conceived of "the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World."<sup>260</sup> Harpur had almost exactly the same idea, only he projected "Australasia," not America, as the chosen site for humanity's new beginning.

Sadly, as the 1850's wore on, Harpur realized he could no longer pose Australia as a model state in the face of the sordid practicalities

of colonial politics and the unkind censures of some representatives of the local literary establishment. His idealism, like his blood and thunder, began to subside. And eventually to perish.

Harpur's confirmed republican inclinations inevitably placed him in close proximity to the mainstream of contemporary American thinkers. He shared many of their egalitarian predilections. But the connections run deeper, mainly because of his temperamental kinship, the particular problems and prejudices that he encountered in his own country, and his close scrutiny of Emerson's essays. Striking affinities emerge, with the Australian and the American thinking along similar lines.

Harpur, for example, felt very strongly about the poet's role in society--his moral responsibility to lead and teach. It is a pity that because of the editorial position of the 1883 Poems this aspect of the man has received so little attention, for it is essential to an understanding of his thought. In his early poems, Harpur struggled to express his fierce love of country and deep-seated sense of duty to the land of his birth. The caution of one born of convict parents, though, dominates:

And might I but hope that one song I may waken  
As a voice in the gale that drives over the glade  
Should ride, when my country her empire hath taken,  
On the flood of her ages, I'd count me repaid.<sup>261</sup>

But his confidence and self-pride clearly grew in his twenties, as the poem "The Dream by the Fountain," written and published in 1843,

indicates.<sup>262</sup> Hesitancy gives way to greater self-assurance. Perhaps even a little braggadocio. The suggestion of the Muse that the poet

Be then the Bard of thy Country! O rather,  
Should such be thy choice than a monarchy wide!  
Lo' 'tis the Land of the grave of thy father!  
'Tis the cradle of Liberty!--Think, and decide.<sup>263</sup>

--generates courage and optimism, such that the poet can make a similarly audacious claim in the poem's concluding stanza. Now, and in the future:

No matter how few in my wanderings cheer me,  
I know that 'tis mine 'mid the Prophets to stand!  
No matter how many that blame be anear me,  
I feel like a Monarch of Song in the Land!

Yet, while Harpur strives to establish the poet's vital responsibility in a new and democratic society, he cannot escape an Old World cliché to describe the subsequent feeling. Whitman wouldn't even think of calling himself a "Monarch."

Harpur's brashness, from one so young and raw, offended the delicate sensibilities of certain sections of the colonial literary establishment. Indeed, twenty years after "The Dream by the Fountain" first appeared in the Australasian Chronicle, G.B. Barton expressed his sharp disapproval of Harpur's self-appointed Whitmanesque title. This, said Barton, "is something new to Literature. If Mr. Harpur is entitled to that royal designation, he is in the unenviable position of a Monarch without subjects."<sup>264</sup> It is perhaps worth mentioning at this point that, unlike Whitman, Harpur would never be allowed



the self-satisfaction of receiving legitimately popular approval of his bardic pose. With Deniehy three years dead, few mourned Harpur's passing in 1868, despite his unceasing efforts to publicize both the role of the poet in general and his own vital commitment to Australia's social, moral and artistic development.

As the Forties progressed, Harpur endeavoured to make good on the promises entailed in "The Dream by the Fountain." Midway through 1845, in Duncan's Register, he outlined his sense of the poet's lofty calling and important social mission.<sup>265</sup> Then, about a year later, he elaborated on these ideas in the Maitland Mercury by way of a General Preface to the printing of over forty of his poems. It boldly sketched his future platform of action. For Harpur, the true vocation of the Poetic Muse

is at once to quicken, exalt and purify our nobler and more exquisite passions; and by informing the imagination with wisdom--suggesting beauty, both to enlarge and recompense our capacities of pathetic feeling and intellectual enjoyment, and further, in national and social regards, to illustrate whatever is virtuous in design, and glorify all that is noble in action; taking occasion also, at the same time, to pour the lightning of indignation upon everything that is mean and cowardly in the people, or tyrannical and corrupt in their rulers.<sup>266</sup>

It is doubtful whether Harpur, when he wrote this preface, was very familiar with the principles underlying Emerson's life and work (the poet in Whitman, of course, was still untapped potential, as he put his energies into the Brooklyn Daily Eagle). We do know that by the middle 1850's he had a copy of Emerson's Eight Essays (London: Tweedie,

1852) and, by the 1860's, he had an obvious grasp of the New Englander's thought.<sup>267</sup> But when he wrote the Mercury piece, this was probably not the case. And yet in it, we find so much Emersonian content: Emerson's stress, in "The Poet" on "not metres, but a metre-making argument" parallels Harpur's insistence that poetry have real substance by directing itself to literary and socio-political concerns relevant to the population;<sup>268</sup> Harpur's recognition of the instructive office of the artist establishes him as one of Emerson's true scholars, whose role was "to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances";<sup>269</sup> and Harpur, like Emerson, insisted on the poet's duty to publicly assail injustice and any abuses of power. If the poet fulfilled this obligation, he became, for Emerson, one of the "children of the fire."<sup>270</sup> It is no coincidence that Harpur saw fit to underline this same phrase, years later, in his Tweedie edition.

Above all, Harpur maintained that the poet had an obligation to follow his own instincts, not society's--a course which promised a rough, unsettling road. When Harpur had three articles on Emerson published by the Sydney Times in 1864, he was, by then, fully aware of the slings and arrows of a fickle frontier community. Thus, he warmly praised Emerson's independence of spirit, his continued determination to speak out against social wrongs. Of Emerson, Harpur said: "he has no despair--nay, he is ever readiest to champion a seemingly desperate truth. In the same spirit he conceives that whatever disturbs and startles . . . must be . . . good and wholesome."<sup>271</sup>

In acclaiming this side of Emerson, Harpur must have known he was indirectly singling out for acclaim a part of his own make-up. For some thirty years he had constantly paraded his controversial views on subjects as widely differing as the Crimean War, religion, education, republican government, aboriginal rights and Australia's squattocracy, in defiance of the majority feeling or outside pressures. Just as, in America, Emerson was joined on the public platform by Channing, Thoreau, Fuller, Parker and Brownson. "It is not possible to extricate yourself," Emerson once put it, "from the questions in which your age is involved."<sup>272</sup>

Harpur gained the kind of forum necessary for his attempt to popularize his views when he delivered a lecture entitled "The Nature and Office of Poetry" at the Sydney Mechanical School of Arts in late September, 1859.<sup>273</sup> Those familiar with his prose over the previous fifteen years would have recognized the principal themes of the talk as recurring ones in Harpur's work. But now he proposed them even more assuredly. As Channing had done in his essay, "National Literature," Harpur asserted that for poetry to be important it had to concern itself not only with "the utterance of exquisite feeling and beautiful fancy," but with "all manner of moral truth and social wisdom. . . ."<sup>274</sup> The poet who "regards his art as merely amusive, is either unaware of its oracular possibilities, or he has 'fallen from his high estate,' and become unequal to its destiny." Put bluntly, and using Emerson's (and Whitman's) terminology:

. . . the true social mission of the poet, in virtue of the natural bent of his genius, is to exalt and purify our noblest and most exquisite passions; and by informing the imagination with suggestions of love and idealisms of beauty, at once to nourish our capacities for pathetic feeling, and enrich our powers of intellectual enjoyment. And further, in national regards, it is in his vocation, to illustrate whatever is virtuous in design and glorify all that is noble in action; and at the same time, or from time to time, as occasion may arise, to explode the thunder of his indignation against whatever is degenerate and slavish in the people, and whatever is tyrannic and corrupt in their rulers.

Here lay one of the essential aspects of Transcendentalist thought.

In opposition to what Harpur later termed a "sham age," both the Americans and the Australian affirmed their status as moral legislators.<sup>274</sup> Only then could they lay claim to being "original" men.

At his most impudent--and intrepid--Harpur declared that he was "missioned to do more, for the intellectual future of my country than any other writer it possesses, either by birth or adoption," and yet by his nature he could not permanently attain a height that made him indifferent to criticism.<sup>275</sup> He sceptically appraised Emerson's pronouncement that the "Poet" would always be known to his own, and always consoled "with tenderest love."<sup>276</sup> Harpur knew too well the machinations typical of local literary politics.<sup>277</sup> So while he shared so many attitudes with the Americans, and did his best to promulgate his views, the unalterable fact remained that America, by 1850, could support and moderately encourage its artists in a way that was impossible in Australia for many decades to come. Gold-crazed Australia in the Fifties ran roughshod over the conscientious

few who presumed to legislate on ethical grounds, or who insisted on putting the poem before the horse and nugget.

Harpur and Emerson also shared a belief in the doctrine of self-reliance. When Harpur discovered Emerson, probably sometime during the later 1840's, he had already arrived independently at the conclusion that only through determined personal autonomy could the individual, or poet or scholar, truly fulfil his potential and make a lasting impression on the history of his land. Emerson's essay on "Self-Reliance" merely confirmed Harpur in his findings, and Transcendentalist dicta such as "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist," with their ring of sacred truth, must have hardened his resolve in times of doubt.<sup>278</sup> Certainly Harpur regarded this area of Emerson's thought as preeminently important. For Harpur, Emerson "at his best" was the profound "Bard of self-reliance," not the mysterious, Swedenborgian advocate of the Over-Soul.<sup>279</sup>

In a prose note to his poem "Finality" (1847), Harpur proposed his own sense of individual self-reliance in terms of a national programme centering on two areas: education and what he labelled "social individualization."<sup>280</sup> Through these means

every individual might be improved to the full extent and according to the specific character of his capacity. This is demanded by a new and singular (self-sustained and sustaining) order of consciousness, which is fast developing itself in the whole human race. All the great political, social and religious interests that were originally only operant as motive powers upon men in bodies or nationally, are beginning to centre and manifest themselves in Man the individual. . . . Hence, too, men can no longer mould

them characteristically into masses. . . . men, having progressed beyond the state-legislation contemporaneously obtaining, may become more and more, to the destined extent, each and all of them, Governments in themselves.

This is a seminal passage. The personal philosophies of Australian and American writers have perhaps never been closer, before or since, than they are in this extract. Here, in Harpur, are Emerson and Channing and Thoreau and Parker and Ripley. Only by going it alone can the individual obtain "spiritual prerogatives." Harpur, acutely aware of the still-difficult lot of the Currency Lad at a time when vested interests in Australia were attempting to reintroduce transportation, sought to instill individual integrity and responsibility in the population. He wanted those who had for so long been vilified to stand up for themselves. It is no accident that Harpur marked with approval Emerson's question in the essay "Character": "If I quake, what matters it what I quake at?"<sup>281</sup> In some positive way, Harpur wanted to articulate the principles underlying John Dunmore Lang's rhetorical call to all thinking Australians to make their stand for political independence.

Harpur held to the concept of individual sovereignty so fiercely that he could, on occasion, be especially critical of Emerson when he detected in the American the slightest straying from the full implications of self-reliance. Noble and manly conduct, for Harpur, grew out of the "spirited ways / And nascent self-reliances" of youth, and anything less than this rigorous standard triggered a hasty rebuke.<sup>282</sup> Harpur would have nothing of equivocation, nor would he

entertain thoughts that could not be grounded in reason or which carried the taint of aristocratic condescension and prejudice. The Australian rejected Emerson's notion of great men and his belief that you should not "criticise a fine genius."<sup>283</sup> He had had quite enough of authority-figures when growing up under the restrictions of a penal colony:

. . . [Emerson] has, like Carlyle, an almost insane admiration of conquering heroes, and of the mere material magnificence of armed power. . . . To use a law term of schoolboys, he would have us "knuckledown" at once to every veritable man-compeller, every genuine Giant Blunderbore. . . . But it is time all this demi-deification were scouted from our ethics. If men are ever giants in any political sense, it [is] only because of the slavish willingness of their contemporaries to be dwindled into dwarfs. And it should be the act of good citizenship, therefore,--not to worship, but to clench a collar of iron about the throat of every such heroical man compound.<sup>284</sup>

Harpur always put Emerson's pronouncements to the practical test. He had seen sufficient ill-directed hero-worship in New South Wales to make him at least suspicious of those in power. Unlike Emerson, he knew only too well from his own experience that unwise and foolish legislation was not "a rope of sand" which perished "in the twisting."<sup>285</sup> The rigid nature of colonial government had shown him that change could only be engendered by an abundance of toil, sweat and commitment. For the practically minded Harpur, Emerson's enlightened beliefs sometimes departed too abruptly from the slough of grim reality.

Furthermore, Harpur looked askance at Emerson's seeming contradictions. The New Englander's proper Concord manners on occasion drew Harpur's criticism. How could the man who so obviously appreciated farm life

when he wrote that the

day-labourer is reckoned as standing at the foot of the social scale, yet he is saturated with the laws of the world. His measures are the hours; morning and night, solstice and equinox, geometry, astronomy, and all the lovely accidents of nature, play through his mind.

--also say:

I could better eat with one who did not respect the truth or the laws, than with a sloven and unrepresentable person. Moral qualities rule the world, but at short distances, the senses are despotic.<sup>286</sup>

On this point, with the Australian defensively conscious of his social standing, Harpur and Emerson were worlds apart. Reading Emerson on manners, Harpur may very well have dismissed him as another Tennyson, an "old-world 'Towney'--a dresser of parterres, and a peeper into parks."<sup>287</sup> Harpur saw himself, by contrast, always as natural and self-sufficient man, a true, though often lonely advocate of democracy. With a flourish so characteristic of Whitman and Thoreau (particularly in Walden (1854)), Harpur projected himself as

a man of the woods and mountains--a wielder of the axe, and mainly conversant with aboriginal nature:--a man made stern and self-reliant, and thence plain, and even fierce, by natal nearness (if I may so speak) to the incunabula mundi.<sup>288</sup>

For a brief moment, here, Harpur becomes Emerson's "namer," aspiring to a condition in complete accord with his environment. In the section entitled "Spring," from Walden, Thoreau gives extraordinary



expression to the same kind of bardic illumination:

When I see on the one side the inert bank,--for the sun acts on one side first,--and on the other this luxuriant foliage, the creation of an hour, I am affected as if in a peculiar sense I stood in the laboratory of the Artist who made the world and me,--had come to where he was still at work, sporting on this bank, and with excess of energy strewing his fresh designs about. I feel as if I were nearer to the vitals of the globe. . . .<sup>289</sup>

At those moments when he experienced this "natal" proximity, Harpur no doubt felt that not even Emerson could lay similar claim to acting out the full implications of his philosophical position as Man Thinking and Alone.

The same practical-mindedness and inability to imaginatively escape his surroundings that led Harpur to impugn Emerson's social and political idiosyncrasies, caused him seriously to question Emerson's conception of the Over-Soul.<sup>1</sup> He deplored his "mysticism" or "Transcendent trash," Emerson's attempt to explore philosophical and religious depths that seemed to Harpur to bear no relationship with the here and now.<sup>290</sup> As another nineteenth-century Australian poet, Henry Halloran, put it, Harpur wanted only "Life as it is. . . ."<sup>291</sup> Harpur regarded Emerson's Over Soul, however, as only a temporary aberration, much like his own short-term lapses into bouts of intemperance:

. . . how drunk he must have gotten (naturally so strong-headed as he is) upon the lunar vintage of Swedenborg, and others of the illuminate, before committing himself to that perilous essay--the Over Soul?<sup>292</sup>

Interestingly, Harpur's principal objection to Emerson's notion focussed on its blatant disregard of individual autonomy. He didn't single out its ethereal nature--rather the fact that, according to Emerson's idea, "we have no rational individuality." How could men, with their souls thus threatened with eternal absorption into the mass, become established as Governments in themselves? Emerson's Over-Soul threatened Harpur's process of social individualization. He would have none of it, and dismissed the hazardous concept as "Emerson at the Worst."<sup>293</sup>

The serene side of Emerson's character that Harpur not only accepted, but celebrated, involved his absolute commitment to, and profound insight into Nature. He regarded Emerson's major essay of that title as one of his finest literary contributions ("It is as if he had ensconced himself bodily into the heart of the Great Mother. . . ."<sup>294</sup>). And no wonder. "Nature" (1836) supplies Harpur with more than ample justification for his chosen vocation, political stance and attitude towards the language of poetry itself. How the Australian, in his bush environment, must have warmed to chapter IV ("Language") of the essay, in particular, with its compelling expression of belief in the bard of the wilderness turned national prophet and namer in the land:

The poet, the orator, bred in the woods, whose senses have been nourished by their fair and appeasing changes, year after year, without design and without heed,--shall not lose their lesson altogether, in the roar of cities or the broil of politics. Long hereafter, amidst agitation and terror in national councils,--in the hour of revolution,--

these solemn images shall reappear in their morning lustre, as fit symbols and words of the thoughts which the passing events shall awaken. At the call of a noble sentiment, again the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the cattle low upon the mountains, as he saw and heard them in his infancy. And with these forms, the spells of persuasion, the keys of power are put into his hands.<sup>295</sup>

The passage almost reads as a biography of Harpur, with the sole difference that not even large helpings of national pride, poetic ambition and hard work could shape Harpur, so early in his country's literary life, into a poet able to faithfully record the music of the Australian woods in language recognizably in harmony with the unique southern landscape. In his poetry there occurred a constant battle between New-World ideas and Old-World verse forms and language. As a political thinker and literary theorist, Harpur was destined to be close to his Australian countrymen most of his life. As a practising poet, however, he would achieve this ideal position but rarely.

## CHAPTER VI ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The title of chapter VI alludes to a passage in Daniel Henry Deniehy's "First Nomination Speech for Argyle" (1856), reprinted in E.A. Martin, The Life and Speeches of Daniel Henry Deniehy (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1884), p. 58. See below, section b).

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Serle, From Deserts the Prophets Come (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1973), pp. 58-9.

<sup>3</sup> See Green, History, I, 137-8.

<sup>4</sup> Serle, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Inglis, pp. 275-6. Interestingly enough, when nineteenth-century Americans looked to England and Europe, many still felt their own country to be culturally inferior. See, for example, Philip Rahv, ed., Discovery of Europe (New York: Doubleday, 1960); Cushing Strout, The American Image of the Old World (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

<sup>6</sup> Sinnet, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Nadel, Australia's Colonial Culture, pp. 68-9, 74.

<sup>8</sup> Unlike America, whose reputed Viking settlement prompted William Gilmore Simms to acclaim American antiquity. See Simms,

"The Epochs and Events in American History," in Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845).

<sup>9</sup> David Blair, "Sydney in 1850: Morals and Manners," Centennial Magazine, 1, No. 10 (May 1889), 689, quoted in Ken Stewart, "The Colonial Literature in Sydney and Melbourne," New Literature Review, No. 6 (1979), 11.

<sup>10</sup> See Gohdes, American Literature in Nineteenth Century England, pp. 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> See Frances Devlin Glass, "Daniel Henry Deniehy (1828-65): a Study of an Australian Man of Letters," Diss. Australian National University 1974, p. 245.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," 1, 405.

<sup>13</sup> Emerson, Journals, V, 288-9.

<sup>14</sup> The section title comes from John Dunmore Lang's letter to Earl Grey, November 14, 1849, in which he threatens the Secretary of State for the Colonies that unless concessions are made, to "use a vulgar but very expressive phrase, which I trust your lordship will excuse, [the Australian colonies] will now 'go for the whole hog,' or for nothing at all." Reprinted in Archibald Gilchrist, ed., John Dunmore Lang, II (Melbourne: Jedgarm Publications, 1951), p. 459.

<sup>15</sup> Deniehy to John Dunmore Lang, June 6, 1854 (?), quoted in Cyril Pearl, Brilliant Dan Deniehy: a Forgotten Genius (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1972), p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> Adrian Mitchell, ed., Charles Harpur (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1973), p. 91.

<sup>17</sup> Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, pp. 9-10.

<sup>18</sup> Gilchrist, John Dunmore Lang (1951).

<sup>19</sup> J.B. Hirst has pointed out that, less than a decade after his death, public efforts to honour Lang completely ignored his republicanism. See J.B. Hirst, "The Pioneer Legend," Historical Studies, XVIII, No. 2 (Oct. 1978), 328; R.J. McDonald, "Republicanism in the Fifties," JRAHS, L, Pt. 4 (Oct. 1964), 262-76.

<sup>20</sup> For more detailed biographical information, see ADB, II, 76-83; Gilchrist, foreword; David S. Macmillan, John Dunmore Lang (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962).

<sup>21</sup> Lang's preoccupations included republicanism, immigration, education, anti-transportation and voluntaryism in religion.

<sup>22</sup> See chapter I, section c), on the "Scottish Martyrs" in Botany Bay.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Meikle, Scotland and the French Revolution, p. 121.

<sup>24</sup> See Macmillan, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> John Dunmore Lang, Poems: Sacred and Secular (Sydney: William Maddock, 1873), p. 106. While Lang's "Anthem" is constructed in such a way as to enable it to be sung to the tune of "God Save the King," the content closely parallels that in American poems such as Timothy Dwight's "Columbia" (1777), Joel Barlow's The Columbiad (1807) and numerous poems by Philip Freneau (such as "American Liberty," "A Political Litany," and "America Independent").

<sup>26</sup> Lang, Poems, p. 107.

<sup>27</sup> Lang, Poems, p. 154.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Macmillan, p. 10. Lang used the same passage, twenty years later, in his Freedom and Independence for the Golden Lands of Australia (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, 1852), p. 269.

<sup>29</sup> See chapter III, section b).

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 224. I was unable to obtain a copy of Lang's second edition (1837) when writing the thesis.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 226.

<sup>32</sup> Lang refers to Democracy in America as an "admirable work," and he labels Tocqueville himself "the ablest European writer who has yet written on the subject [of America and her institutions]." See John Dunmore Lang, Religion and Education in America (London: Thomas Ward, 1840), pp. 11, 271.

<sup>33</sup> Between 1840 and 1841, Lang visited Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina. See Lang, Religion and Education in America, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Lang, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Lang, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Lang makes specific reference to James Otis' The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved (1765) in his later Freedom and Independence (1852), p. vi.

<sup>37</sup> Lang, Religion and Education, p. 261. See also, John Dunmore Lang, The Coming Event; or, the United Provinces of Australia (Sydney: D.L. Welch, n.d [1850]), p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> Lang, p. 364.

<sup>39</sup> Lang, p. 39.

<sup>40</sup> Letters to Edward Carrington (January 16, 1787) and Richard Price (January 8, 1789), in Jefferson, Papers, IX, 49; XIV, 420.

<sup>41</sup> Lang, p. 42.

<sup>42</sup> Lang, p. 306.

<sup>43</sup> See Lang, p. 217.

<sup>44</sup> Lang, pp. 424-5.

<sup>45</sup> Lang, p. 419.

<sup>46</sup> Lang, pp. 454-5. See also, for example, Freedom and Independence, p. 287.

<sup>47</sup> Lang, p. 465.

<sup>48</sup> In 1863, Lang would publicly blame both the North ("its long and guilty complicity in that peculiar sin of the nation") and the South ("its direct maintenance and support of the hated institution" of slavery) for the Civil War. See Gilchrist, p. 668.

<sup>49</sup> Lang, p. 299.

<sup>50</sup> See Lang, pp. 271, 296; Gilchrist, p. 271.

<sup>51</sup> Lang, p. 299.

<sup>52</sup> Lang, pp. 150-2, 256. For more on Van Buren, see Freedom and Independence, p. 167.

<sup>53</sup> Lang, p. 294.



54 Lang, p. 13.

55 Lang, p. 373.

56 Lang, pp. 109, 294, 378-9, 426-7.

57 Lang, p. 109.

58 Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 347.

59 Quoted in Turner, The Australian Dream, pp. 32-4.

60 Lang, Freedom and Independence, pp. 163-4. It is worth noting, here, that newsletter No. 3 (May, 1980) of the "Australia: Bicentennial History (1788-1988)" project, lists as a "central theme" for the "Historical Geography" section of the project the "long-standing Australian infatuation with the yeoman farmer. . . ."

61 See section above on John West, Chapter IV, section a).

62 Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 364.

63 Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 364.

64 See Clark, History of Australia, III, 444-5.

65 Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 457. Franklin would become a favourite source for Lang. In Freedom and Independence (1852), Lang's major republican treatise, he refers to Franklin constantly, taking care to identify their common pursuit. In 1850's Australia (and England), Franklin evidently had sufficient prestige that he could be used as Lang's principal model and inspiration. See Freedom and Independence, pp. ix-x, 35-7, 39, 339.

66 See Morison, Oxford History of American People, p. 210.

67 Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 459.

68 Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 460. Despite the "blot" of slavery,

Taylor's election to the Presidency in 1844 was indirectly responsible for two of America's finest literary works: Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter (1850) and Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass (1855).

See Morrison, p. 568.

<sup>69</sup> People's Advocate, July 13, 1850.

<sup>70</sup> The lectures were delivered April 11, 16, 23, 1850. The first and second lectures were combined and published as The Coming Event (1850). See McDonald, p. 262.

<sup>71</sup> Paine, Common Sense, pp. 91-2. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>72</sup> Lang, pp. 5, 8, 27, 30.

<sup>73</sup> For example, Lang, p. 7; Paine, Common Sense, p. 90.

<sup>74</sup> See Lang, p. 5; Paine, Common Sense, introduction, pp. 63-4.

<sup>75</sup> Lang, p. 9. See also, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup> Paine, Rights of Man, pp. 183-4. See also, pp. 90-1; Common Sense, p. 98.

<sup>77</sup> Conscious of the importance of the title, the "United States of America," Lang declared at the end of his first lecture: ". . . I anticipate that the United Provinces of Australia--for I would decidedly prefer that name to the United States, both because it is equally appropriate, and because it would prevent all ambiguity, showing that we had no connection with the shop over the way--will, ere long, be the great leading power of the Southern Hemisphere, and will one day exercise an influence over the civilised world not inferior to that even of the United States." (p. 16). See also, pp. 27, 37; Freedom and Independence, pp. 253, 262-3.

78 See Lang, pp. 10-13, 31-2; Paine, Common Sense, pp. 86-7.

79 Lang, p. 19.

80 Lang, p. 33. Conscious of his audience, Lang concluded his second lecture craftily, maintaining that "I would not for all the world that that coming event, which, I confess, I look and long for with all my heart, should cost our Mother dear one single throe, one moment's agony, I wish not a man from England to be shot on the occasion, nor a single sixpence of English money to be lost. I wish the interesting event to take place without a single cry on the part of the parent, or the slightest struggle on the part of the child" (p. 38).

81 Paine, Common Sense, pp. 71-5.

82 See Lang, pp. 14-15, 26-30.

83 Lang, p. 37. See also, p. 16.

84 John Dunmore Lang, The Moral and Religious Aspect of the Future America of the Southern Hemisphere (New York: James Van Norden, 1840), pp. 5-6.

85 See Clark, III, 445. For a summary statement of Jefferson's principles, see, for example, his Inaugural Address (March 4, 1801), in Richardson, I, 321-4.

86 See letter to John Dickinson (March 6, 1801), in Jefferson, Life and Selected Writings, p. 561.

87 Lang, Freedom and Independence, p. x.

88 Lang, p. 64. See also, Coming Event, p. 64.

89 Lang, pp. 64-5.

- 90 Lang, pp. vi, ix-x, 15, 35-40, 339.
- 91 Lang, p. 339.
- 92 Lang, p. 361. See also, pp. 203-4, 211, 220, 259-60.
- 93 See McDonald, pp. 267, 275.
- 94 Quoted in Gilchrist, p. 567. Lang uses Channing as a source in Freedom and Independence, p. 266.
- 95 See Lang, Religion and Education, p. 373.
- 96 See Gilchrist, p. 561; Inglis, p. 219.
- 97 Empire, December 12, 1854, quoted in Gilchrist, p. 581.
- 98 Lang, Coming Event, p. 36.
- 99 Lang's "Declaration of Independence," in Geoffrey Serle, The Golden Age (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1963), appendix 6.
- 100 See Gilchrist, p. ix; McDonald, pp. 271-2.
- 101 McDonald, p. 273.
- 102 Lang, Freedom and Independence, p. 339.
- 103 Lang, p. 259.
- 104 Over Deniehy's grave, in Waverly Cemetery, is the following tribute:

The Vehement Voice Of The South,  
Is Loud Where The Journalist Lies;  
But Calm Hath Encompassed His Mouth,  
And Sweet Is The Peace In His Eyes.

See ADB, IV, 46.

- 105 Deniehy, "On the Constitution Bill," in A.L. McLeod, ed., Australia Speaks (Sydney: Wentworth Press, 1969), p. 30. McLeod's

extract uses the first person "I" (compared with the third person "he" of original account in Sydney Morning Herald, August 16, 1853).

106 See Hirst, "The Pioneer Legend," p. 328.

107 Glass, "Deniehy: Australian Man of Letters," pp. ix, xiii.

108 Deniehy in Freeman's Journal, 1865, quoted in Barton, '.

Literature of New South Wales, p. 60.

109 Deniehy, "John Mitchell [sic Mitchel] as a Literary Man," Freeman's Journal, September 15, 1858. Reprinted in Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, pp. 109-113.

110 Deniehy to John Dunmore Lang, June 6, 1854 (?), quoted in Pearl, p. 35.

111 Deniehy, "First Nomination Speech for Argyle" (1856), quoted in Martin, Life and Speeches of Deniehy, p. 58.

112 Thomas Paine, The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Citadel Press, 1945), I, 50.

113 See "Catalogue" of Deniehy's books--Mitchell Library 018 2D--item 308.

114 Deniehy, "John Mitchell [sic Mitchel] as a Literary Man," Freeman's Journal, September 15, 1858.

115 Deniehy, "A famous man was Harry Flood," Southern Cross, October 15, 1859, p. 2.

116 Quoted in Robert E. Spiller, et. al. Literary History of the United States, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 198.

117 Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, p. 148.

118 Glass, appendix D, p. 371.

119 "Mr. Deniehy's Lecture before the Australian League," People's Advocate, March 18, 1854.

120 In his "Australian League" lecture (March 18, 1854), for example, Deniehy quoted from Franklin's "squibs and jeux d'esprit" to illustrate "a parallel state of government profligacy in the North American colonies before the Revolution, to that prevailing in Australia at this moment." This was probably the result of Lang's influence.

121 See Deniehy's "Catalogue," items 93, 114, 139, 145, 150, 152, 164, 166, 167, 168, 197, 245, 257, 266, 280, 297, 298, 302, 305, 308, 309, 313, 320, 358, 366, 374, 379, 380, 390, 391, 399, 400, 408, 438, 450, 689, 704.

122 Deniehy, "A Legend of Newtown," Sentinel, November 5, 1845; Age (Sydney), November 8, 1845.

123 Quoted in McLeod, p. 30.

124 Channing, introductory remarks to "Essays, Discourses, etc." in Works, p. 61.

125 Glass, p. 198.

126 Deniehy, "Australian League" lecture, People's Advocate, March 18, 1854.

127 Deniehy, Review of The Bushrangers, A Play in Five Acts, and Other Poems by Charles Harpur, Empire, April 22, 1853.

128 Glass, p. 198.

129 Quoted in Parke Godwin, George William Curtis (New York: Harper, 1893), p. 6.

<sup>130</sup> Theodore Parker, "Thoughts on Labour" (1848), quoted in Robert E. Collins, Theodore Parker: American Transcendentalist (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1973), pp. 5-6.

<sup>131</sup> Channing, "On the Elevation of the Labouring Classes," lecture I, Works, p. 83. See also, lecture II, in which Channing expresses his desire for the labourer to be "a student, a thinker, an intellectual man . . ." (Works, p. 92).

<sup>132</sup> See discussion of Jefferson's framing of the Declaration of Independence in Nye and Grabo, American Thought and Writing, pp. 50-58.

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in McLeod, pp. 27-8. See also, Jefferson, "Opinion upon the question whether the President should veto the Bill, declaring that the seat of government shall be transferred to the Potomac, in the year 1790," July 15, 1790, quoted in Jefferson, Selected Writings, p. 316.

<sup>134</sup> See Paine, Rights of Man, pp. 90, 92, 166.

<sup>135</sup> See, for example, Deniehy's "The Peerage and Baronetage of New South Wales," People's Advocate, November 5, 1853; "In the early part of the reign of George III . . ." [The Evils of Patronage], Goulburn Herald, July 22, 1854; "Place and Patronage," Goulburn Herald, September 29, 1855; "In support of Murray's anti-primogeniture Bill," Sydney Morning Herald, July 3, 1858.

<sup>136</sup> See Deniehy, "John Mitchell" [sic Mitchel] article, in Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, especially pp. 110-111.

<sup>137</sup> Deniehy, "Rebellion at Ballarat," Goulburn Herald, December 16, 1854. Compare this with John Dunmore Lang's reaction (see above,

section a).

<sup>138</sup> Compare Deniehy, quoted in McLeod, p. 31, with Paine, Rights of Man, p. 94.

<sup>139</sup> Deniehy, "The Meeting at the Circus," People's Advocate, June 6, 1854.

<sup>140</sup> Deniehy, "The Solicitor-General's Proposed War Tax," Goulburn Herald, September 2, 1854.

<sup>141</sup> See above, footnote 122.

<sup>142</sup> Deniehy, "Address to Secure Lang's Return for the City," People's Advocate, April 29, 1854.

<sup>143</sup> Letters to James Madison (December 28, 1794) and Mann Page (August 30, 1795), in Jefferson, Selected Writings, pp. 529, 534.

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in McLeod, p. 29.

<sup>145</sup> Curtis, "The Duty of the American Scholar to Politics and the Times," in George William Curtis, Orations and Addresses of George William Curtis, ed. Charles Eliot Norton (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), I, 5.

<sup>146</sup> On May 25, 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill passed the Senate with a clear majority. According to the terms of the bill, the future status of Kansas--whether free or slave--would be up to the inhabitants of territory itself. Southern slaveholders and Northern anti-slavery men entered almost immediately in massive numbers. So much blood was shed that the area was soon called "Bleeding Kansas." See Morison, pp. 589-93.



<sup>147</sup> See Deniehy's "Lecture before the Australian League," People's Advocate, March 18, 1854; "Address to Secure Lang's Return for the City," People's Advocate, April 29, 1854; "New Constitution Bill Meeting in Goulburn," Goulburn Herald, November 25, 1854.

<sup>148</sup> Deniehy to Miss Ironside, May 25, 1854, quoted in Pearl, p. 31.

<sup>149</sup> Deniehy to John Dunmore Lang, June 6, 1854 (?), quoted in Pearl, p. 35.

<sup>150</sup> Deniehy to John Armstrong, January 1, 1856, quoted in B.T. Dowd, "Daniel Henry Deniehy: Gifted Australian Orator, Scholar and Literary Critic," JRAHS, XXXIII, Pt. 2 (1947), 71.

<sup>151</sup> Jefferson's "essential principles" of government, as outlined in his Inaugural Address (March 4, 1801), closely resembled Deniehy's. See above, footnote 85.

<sup>152</sup> Jefferson, "Response to the Address of Welcome" from the Mayor of Alexandria (March 11, 1790), in Papers, XVI, 225.

<sup>153</sup> Deniehy to John Armstrong, January 1, 1856, quoted in Dowd, p. 71.

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in McLeod, p. 30. See also, "Electioneering in West Syd.," Sydney Morning Herald, May 28, 1859.

<sup>155</sup> See, for example, Jefferson's letter to John Adams (October 28, 1813), in Jefferson, Selected Writings, pp. 632-4; William Wirt, Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry (Philadelphia: J.S. Winston, 1817).

156 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address," in The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, I (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, Harvard, 1971), 77-8, hereafter cited as Collected Works. As only two volumes of the Collected Works have thus far been published, quotations from works yet to be collected will be taken from Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Edinburgh: W.P. Nimmo, Hay & Mitchell, 1906), hereafter cited as Works.

157 Channing, "Remarks on National Literature," Works, p. 135.

158 Deniehy, "Frederick Robertson's Lectures," Southern Cross, November 12, 1859, quoted in Martin, p. 154.

159 Deniehy, "Mr. Frank Fowler's Magazine," Freeman's Journal, July 11, 1857. Reprinted in Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, p. 113.

160 Deniehy, "Mr. Frank Fowler's Magazine," in Barton, p. 114.

161 Channing, "Remarks on National Literature," Works, p. 134; Orestes A. Brownson, "American Literature" (1839), in The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, coll. by Henry F. Brownson (Detroit, 1882-1902; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), XIX, 27.

162 Deniehy, "Australian League" lecture, People's Advocate, March 18, 1854.

163 Deniehy, "Address to Secure Lang's Return for the City," People's Advocate, April 29, 1854.

164 Deniehy, "Australian Native-Born Poets II," Sydney Morning Herald, October 10, 1864. It can, of course, be argued that Deniehy is here voicing ideas fashionable at the time, rather than specifically American ones (witness the popularity, in England and America, of

Samuel Smiles' Self-Help (London: J. Murray, 1859)). This can be countered, however, by citing the actual vocabulary Deniehy uses, derived as it obviously is from Channing and Emerson.

<sup>165</sup> Channing, "Self-Culture," Works, p. 65.

<sup>166</sup> Channing, Works, p. 70.

<sup>167</sup> Quoted in Barton, Literature in New South Wales, p. 60.

<sup>168</sup> Deniehy, "Mr. Nicholl's Gallery at Woolloomooloo," Empire, November 19, 1851. See also, F. Devlin Glass, "D.H. Deniehy as a Critic of Colonial Literature," Australian Literary Studies, IX, No. 3 (May 1980), 330.

<sup>169</sup> Walt Whitman, Preface, 1855, to First Issue of Leaves of Grass, in Prose Works 1892, ed. Floyd Stovall, II (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1964), 435-7. Whitman's thought in the 1855 Preface seems to develop through the rhetoric he uses. Carried away by language, ideas occur to him. Whether this is also true of Deniehy it is impossible to say, since we are forced largely to rely on contemporary newspaper accounts.

<sup>170</sup> Deniehy, "Native-Born Australian Poets, No. 1," Sydney Morning Herald, September 29, 1864.

<sup>171</sup> See Cecil W. Salier, "The Life and Writings of Charles Harpur," JRAHS, XXXII, Pt. 2 (1946), 94.

<sup>172</sup> Deniehy, Review of The Bushrangers, A Play in Five Acts, and Other Poems by Charles Harpur, Empire, April 22, 1853; "The Poetry of Charles Harpur," Sydney Morning Herald, November 27, 1857.

- 173 Glass, "Deniehy as a Critic," p. 332.
- 174 See Glass, "Deniehy as a Critic," pp. 332-3.
- 175 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The New Poetry," The Dial, October, 1840. Reprinted in Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists: An Anthology (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1950), pp. 375-81.
- 176 Brownson, "American Literature" (1839), Works, XIX, 28.
- 177 Deniehy, "The Poetry of Charles Harpur," Sydney Morning Herald, November 24, 1857.
- 178 "Correspondent," in Sydney Morning Herald, November 27, 1857.
- 179 Deniehy, letter to the editor, Sydney Morning Herald, November 28, 1857.
- 180 Channing, "Remarks on National Literature," Works, p. 135.  
See also, p. 134.
- 181 Glass, "Deniehy: Australian Man of Letters," p. 46; William J. Sowder, Emerson's Impact on the British Isles and Canada (Charlottesville, Virginia: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1966), pp. 200-202.
- 182 Emerson, "Uses of Great Men," in Representative Men (1850), Works, p. 715; Deniehy, "First Nomination Speech for Argyle" (1856), quoted in Martin, p. 57.
- 183 See, for example, Deniehy, "Legislative Advancement of Knowledge," Goulburn Herald, August 5, 1854; Laying of the foundation stone at the Goulburn Mechanics' Institute, Goulburn Herald, January 6, 1858. For more on these addresses, see Glass, "Deniehy: Australian Man of Letters," pp. 46-7.

184 Deniehy, "Mr. Frank Fowler's Magazine," in Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, p. 115.

185 See Deniehy, "Australian Native-Born Poets II," Sydney Morning Herald, October 10, 1864.

186 Emerson, "Uses of Great Men," in Representative Men (1850), Works, p. 716. In recent decades, both American and Australian writers have once again seen the need to stress the "local" in their work. Charles Olson, William Carlos Williams and Jonathan Williams in America, and Les Murray and Bruce Dawe in Australia, are perhaps the best examples.

187 Deniehy to Henry Parkes, December 16, 1854, quoted in Dowd, p. 69.

188 Deniehy, "First Nomination Speech," quoted in Martin, p. 57.

189 Parker, quoted in Collins, p. 11.

190 Deniehy, "Frederick Robertson's Lectures," Southern Cross, November 12, 1859.

191 Channing, Works, p. 93. See also, "Self-Culture," Works, pp. 65, 69, 76; Parker, quoted in Collins, p. 109.

192 Deniehy, Laying of the Foundation Stone, Goulburn Herald, January 6, 1858. It should be mentioned here that the "Mechanics' Institute" was an English invention; the "Lyceum" or "Chautauqua" was an American imitation. In England, the Institutes were introduced to improve the lot of the lower classes, while in America the Lyceums were intended to create an informed populace. It is obvious that while he accepted the term "Mechanics' Institute," Deniehy foresaw

this body fulfilling an American function.

<sup>193</sup> Channing, quoted in Brown, p. 98.

<sup>194</sup> Quoted in McLeod, p. 30.

<sup>195</sup> Deniehy, "An Improvisation," People's Advocate, February 18, 1854.

<sup>196</sup> Brownson, "American Literature" (1839), in Works, XIX, 35.

See also, Channing, "On the Elevation of the Labouring Classes," lecture II, Works, p. 94.

<sup>197</sup> Deniehy, "Mr. R.H. Horne's Book on Australia," Southern Cross, December 31, 1859.

<sup>198</sup> For a discussion of American attitudes to slavery, see Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935).

<sup>199</sup> See, for example, Channing's "Slavery" (1835), "The Abolitionists" (1836), "A Letter to the Hon. Henry Clay" (1837), "Remarks on the Slavery Question" (1839), "Emancipation" (1840) and "The Duty of the Free States" (1842), in Works, pp. 488-629; Robert C. Albrecht, Theodore Parker (New York: Twayne, 1971), pp. 91-122.

<sup>200</sup> Deniehy to Henry Parkes, November (?), 1856, quoted in Pearl, p. 55.

<sup>201</sup> Arthur Alphonse Ekirch, The Idea of Progress in America, 1815-1860 (New York: Peter Smith, 1951), p. 38.

<sup>202</sup> Brownson, "Young America," New York Mirror, XX (October 22, 1842), 338, quoted in Ekirch, p. 52. See also, Ekirch on Whitman (p. 52), Channing (pp. 150-3), Parker (pp. 153-5), Fuller (p. 157), Emerson (pp. 157-62) and Thoreau (pp. 162-3).

- 203 Deniehy, Review of The Bushrangers, Empire, April 22, 1853.
- 204 Deniehy, In support of the Free Selection Clause, Sydney Morning Herald, October 27, 1860. Deniehy's idea, here, must be distinguished from the American notion of "Manifest Destiny" in one important sense. While he intended his southern utopia to serve as a model to attract the world, the American concept of "Manifest Destiny," as Albert K. Weinberg has shown in Manifest Destiny, was to instruct the world.
- 205 Glass, "Deniehy: Australian Man of Letters," p. 253.
- 206 See below, conclusion.
- 207 George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1840, quoted in George Hochfield, ed., Selected Writings of the American Transcendentalists (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 373.
- 208 Letter to John Adams (April 8, 1816), in Jefferson, Selected Writings, p. 667.
- 209 See below, conclusion.
- 210 See Deniehy, "Frederick Robertson's Lectures," Southern Cross, November 12, 1859; "Longfellow's Recent Poems. 'The Courtship of Miles Standish,'" Southern Cross, December 17, 1859; "Washington Irving," Southern Cross, February 11, 1860; "George Sand," reprinted in Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, pp. 140-1. See also Barton, pp. 101, 103-6, 131-2; Martin, pp. 154-5, 177-9, 188, 217.
- 211 Deniehy, "Robertson's Lectures," 1859.
- 212 Channing, "Remarks on National Literature," Works, p. 138.

213 Charles Harpur, Poems (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1883).

214 In 1851, two years before Harpur published his The Bushrangers and Other Poems, he had intended to publish a volume of poems, many of them staunchly republican, to be entitled The Wild Bee of Australia. See Salier, p. 93.

215 Harpur, "To an Echo on the Banks of the Hunter," Australasian Chronicle, March 14, 1843, reprinted in Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," III, 41.

216 See C.W. Salier, "Harpur and his Editor," Southerly, XII, No. 1 (1951), 47-54.

217 Harpur, Thoughts: A Series of Sonnets (Sydney: W.A. Duncan, 1845); The Bushrangers, a Play in Five Acts, and Other Poems (Sydney: W.R. Piddington, 1853); Poems (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1883); Selected Poems of Charles Harpur, ed. Kenneth H. Gifford and Donald F. Hall (Melbourne: J.C. Stephens, 1944); Adrian Mitchell, ed., Charles Harpur (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1973).

218 Judith Wright makes the same point in Wright, Charles Harpur (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 44.

219 Weekly Register, September 27, 1845. See Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," III, 342.

220 See, for example, Wright, Charles Harpur (1977); Elizabeth Perkins, "Emerson and Charles Harpur," Australian Literary Studies, VI, No. 1 (May 1973), 82-88; Perkins, "The Religious Faith of Charles Harpur," Quadrant, XXIII, No. 143 (June 1979), 29-35; Vijay Mishra, "The Literary Reputation of Charles Harpur: 1868-1900," Southerly,



XXXVI, No. 1 (1976), 432-40; Mishra, "Charles Harpur's Reputation 1853-1858: the Years of Controversy," Australian Literary Studies, VIII, No. 4 (October 1978), 446-56.

221 The only critic who has given Harpur's fighting side any prolonged attention is his biographer, J. Normington-Rawling, in his Charles Harpur, an Australian (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1962).

222 This topic alone, looking at Americans such as Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne and Melville, would be worth a long essay, if not a thesis.

223 Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in Essays: First Series (1841), Collected Works, II, 47.

224 See Normington-Rawling, p. 14.

225 See Normington-Rawling, p. 23; Clark, History of Australia, III, 457.

226 See Perkins, "Religious Faith," 29-35.

227 Harpur, prose preface to "Finality," Empire, June 30, 1851, quoted in Roe, Quest for Authority, p. 148.

228 Harpur, Poems, p. xiii.

229 It seems Harpur also had admiration for the "father" of the American Revolution--he named one of his sons "Washington." See Normington-Rawling, p. 168. See also, p. 152.

230 Jefferson, Papers, XVI, 225.

231 See Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," III, 52.

232 See Normington-Rawling, p. 82; Harpur, "Edmund Burke," quoted in Mitchell, p. 151.

- 233 Harpur, "Tree of Liberty," quoted in Turner, The Australian Dream, pp. 50-1.
- 234 Harpur, "The Emigrant's Vision," Poems, p. 199.
- 235 Emerson, "Politics," in Essays: Second Series (1844), Works, p. 207. As Elizabeth Perkins in "Emerson and Charles Harpur" (1973) has shown, Harpur acquired a copy of Emerson's Eight Essays (London: Tweedie, 1852) in 1855. The actual text, in which Harpur marked the passages he liked and disliked, is in the Mitchell Library. I will refer to the marked Tweedie text throughout this section. This passage from "Politics," for example, Harpur endorsed in his text.
- 236 Harpur, "Words," in Mitchell, p. 94.
- 237 Harpur, People's Advocate, December 8, 1849, quoted in Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," III, 88.
- 238 Harpur, "Note to Republican Lyric," in Mitchell, p. 148.
- 239 Quoted in Normington-Rawling, p. 194.
- 240 Harpur, in People's Advocate, January 7, 1854.
- 241 See above, footnote 214.
- 242 Harpur, in a war song for the Australian League (1853), quoted in J. Normington-Rawling, "A Currency Lad Poet," Quadrant, VII (1963), 23. See also, "Never Mind," in Mitchell, p. 82.
- 243 Paine, Rights of Man, p. 169.
- 244 Harpur, Sydney Chronicle, December 23, 1847.
- 245 Harpur often used the term "rights of man." See, for example, Harpur, quoted in Normington-Rawling, "Currency Lad Poet," p. 23; Charles Harpur, an Australian, p. 192. For more on Harpur's support

of national liberation movements, see "On the Easter Illumination of St Peter's at Rome" (Mitchell, p. 88); "John Heki" (Poems, p. 244).

<sup>246</sup> Harpur, quoted in Mitchell, p. xvi. See also, "Bush Justice," p. 101.

<sup>247</sup> Harpur did not hate England in the way that Thomas Paine did. See Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 5; Paine, Common Sense, pp. 71-81.

<sup>248</sup> See Harpur, in Mitchell, pp. 79, 92, 96; Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, p. 17; Roe, Quest for Authority, p. 75.

<sup>249</sup> Harpur, quoted in Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 138. See also Harpur, "The New Land Orders," in Mitchell, p. 146. It is worth mentioning that Harpur's sentiments here closely resemble those of Emerson in his Fortune of the Republic. See Emerson, Works, pp. 959-71.

<sup>250</sup> Harpur, "A Confession," in Mitchell, p. 140.

<sup>251</sup> Whitman, Democratic Vistas (1871), in Prose Works 1892, II, 369-70.

<sup>252</sup> Harpur, "To the Lyre of Australia" (written in 1835), quoted in Salier, p. 92. Between September and December, 1842, Harpur published eight poems--including "Lyre" and "Australia Huzza!"--which he labelled his "Australian Lyrics."

<sup>253</sup> Emerson, "The Poet," in Essays: Second Series (1844), Works, p. 133. Harpur, in his Tweedie text of Emerson's essays, marked with obvious approval a section from "The Poet" where Emerson states that "poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are

so finely organised that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down. . . . The men of more delicate ear write down these cadences more faithfully, and those transcripts, though imperfect, become the songs of the nations" (Works, p. 134). Harpur agreed with Emerson's idea that the true poet observed the essence of things, the real name, but he seems to have experienced these moments of poetic insight only rarely.

<sup>254</sup> Harpur, "Characteristics of the Cockatoo," in Mitchell, pp. 168-9. See also "A Storm in the Mountains" and "The Kangaroo Hunt," in which Harpur, in long prose notes, discusses the Australian locust and several Australian birds (Mitchell, p. 56; Normington-Rawling, "A Currency Lad Poet," pp. 16-18).

<sup>255</sup> See Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 274.

<sup>256</sup> See Wright, pp. 15, 30-1; Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, pp. 21, 316.

<sup>257</sup> Paine, Common Sense, p. 120; Emerson, "The Young American" (February 7, 1844), in Collected Works, I, 230.

<sup>258</sup> In a prose note to his long poem, "The Temple of Infamy" (1847), Harpur declared that America had become a land of "go-ahead selfishness." It was "unworthy of the graves of a Washington, a Henry and a Channing!" (quoted in Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 152). Harpur must have deeply resented the influx into 1850's Australia of profit-minded Americans such as George Francis Train, who flaunted Young America's economic rapacity.

259 Quoted in Salier, pp. 93-4. See also, "The Emigrant's Vision," Poems, pp. 197-9.

260 R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955); p. 5.

261 Harpur, "To the Lyre of Australia," quoted in Salier, p. 92.

262 "The Dream by the Fountain" first appeared in Duncan's Australasian Chronicle, June 10, 1843. See Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 94; Webby, "Literature: 1800-1850," III, 40.

263 Harpur, in Mitchell, pp. 85-6.

264 Barton, Literature in New South Wales, p. 99. Henry Kendall, on the other hand, clearly approved of Harpur's pose. The last stanza of Kendall's poem, "To Charles Harpur" (1862), indicates his position:

I would sit at your feet, for I feel  
I am one of a glorious band  
That ever will own you and hold you their Chief,  
And a Monarch of Song in the land!  
(Poetical Works, p. 45)

Kendall determined to reprint and publicize Harpur's boast.

265 Weekly Register, July 26, 1845.

266 Maitland Mercury, June 3, 1846, quoted in Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 114.

267 See above, footnote 235.

268 Emerson, "The Poet," in Essays: Second Series (1844), in Works, p. 135. Harpur marked this passage approvingly in his Tweedie text.

- 269 Emerson, "The American Scholar" (1837), in Collected Works, I, 62.
- 270 Emerson, "The Poet," in Works, p. 133.
- 271 Harpur's three articles on Emerson appeared in the Sydney Times, April 23, April 30, May 7, 1864. This extract comes from the third article, May 7, 1864, p. 3.
- 272 Emerson, Fortune of the Republic, in Works, p. 969.
- 273 See "Mr. Harpur's Lecture," Empire, October 3, 1859.
- 274 Harpur, "Epitaph," in Mitchell, p. 176.
- 275 See Perkins, "Emerson and Charles Harpur," p. 84; Jordens, pp. 62-3. Harpur, in his Tweedie text, clearly showed his disagreement with Emerson's statement that "Men of character like to hear of their faults. . . ." See Emerson's "Character," in Essays: Second Series (1844), Works, p. 167.
- 276 This passage, from Emerson's "The Poet," Harpur marked with three heavy crosses of disapproval in his Tweedie text.
- 277 See, for example, Harpur in Mitchell, pp. 127, 132, 175.
- 278 Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in Essays: First Series (1841), Collected Works, II, 29.
- 279 Harpur, "To the American, Emerson," in Mitchell, p. 89.
- 280 Harpur, Empire, June 30, 1851, quoted in Roe, Quest for Authority, pp. 148-9. See also, Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 161.
- 281 Emerson, "Character," in Works, p. 167.

282 Harpur, "Monodies" II, Poems, p. 173.

283 Emerson, "Nominalist and Realist," in Essays: Second Series (1844), Works, p. 217. This passage is marked with heavy crosses in Harpur's Tweedie text.

284 Harpur, Sydney Times, April 23, 1864. "True greatness in man," for Harpur, depended on the "qualities of justice, honesty and fraternal faith and hope, in holy alliance with genius, or the highest order of talent. . . ." (quoted in Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 167).

285 Emerson, "Politics," in Works, p. 202. This passage is marked with heavy crosses in Harpur's Tweedie text.

286 Emerson, "Nominalist and Realist," in Works, p. 213; "Manners," in Essays: Second Series (1844), in Works, pp. 181-2. Both passages are marked in Harpur's Tweedie text, the first approvingly, the second with crosses of disapproval.

287 Harpur, "On Tennyson," in Mitchell, p. 126.

288 Mitchell, p. 126.

289 Henry David Thoreau, "Spring," in Walden (1854), in The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, II (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1893), 472.

290 Harpur, Sydney Times, April 23, 1864. See also, "Emerson," in Mitchell, p. 175; "Emerson at the Worst," reprinted in Perkins, "Emerson and Charles Harpur," p. 83.

291 Henry Halloran, "The Bards' Colloquy," reprinted in Barton, Poets and Prose Writers, p. 213.

- 292 Harpur, Sydney Times, April 30, 1864, p. 3.
- 293 See Perkins, "Emerson and Charles Harpur," p. 83.
- 294 Harpur, Sydney Times, May 7, 1864, p. 3.
- 295 Emerson, "Nature" (1836), in Collected Works, I, 21.



## CONCLUSION

We have no records of a bygone shame,  
 No red-writ histories of woe to weep:  
 God set our land in summer seas asleep  
 Till His fair morning for her waking came.  
 John Farrell, "No," in How He Died  
and Other Poems, (1887).<sup>1</sup>

Between Harpur's death in 1868 and Bernard O'Dowd's "Poetry Militant" address in 1909, the literary tradition of interaction between Australian and American writers, so important to Lang, Deniehy and Harpur in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, developed extensively. However, despite the wealth of documents now available, particularly in manuscript and newspaper form, Australian literary scholars have as a rule ignored the connection. More work is needed to clarify the parallels between Harpur's generation of currency lads and the generation in "revolt" that followed.<sup>2</sup> For when many Australian republicans, utopians, Single-Taxers, socialists and bushmen turned, in the 1880's and '90's, to individual American writers as a source of political, social and literary inspiration, they merely repeated a larger pattern as old as the colony itself. They

consolidated an Australian tradition.

To put it this way, however, is to clarify a situation which at the time was barely comprehended. O'Dowd's generation, in fact, knew little of Harpur's<sup>3</sup>--partly because of a preoccupation with its own era; partly because of ignorance and poor scholarship; and partly because some of its more articulate spokesmen, including O'Dowd himself, considered that their fathers' generation had failed to follow truly democratic principles. As we have seen, if Australians of the 1880's remembered Lang, Deniehy and Harpur at all, they remembered them for the wrong reasons; Lang's works were out of print, while the writings of Harpur and Deniehy became available in 1883-4, in texts which virtually ignored their combative and prophetic sides.<sup>4</sup>

Inaccurate information abounded. In February, 1889, for example, Henry Lawson eulogised Peter Lalor, the leader of the Eureka Stockade, in the poem "Eureka (A Fragment)." He demanded that miners in the afterlife

Roll up and give him welcome such as only diggers can,  
For well he battled for the rights of miner and of man.<sup>5</sup>

Lawson might not have been so flattering had he known that shortly after Lalor was elected to the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1856 (less than two years after Eureka), he not only accepted official patronage, but supported a plural property franchise and was unaccountably absent when the House voted on the principle of manhood suffrage.<sup>6</sup> Lawson's contemporary, Bernard O'Dowd, was one of the

few who were able to grasp the essence of what had happened since the granting of colonial self-government in 1856. "Our fathers," O'Dowd asserted in an article on Walt Whitman (1899), came from lands

where the labourer who worked with his hands was treated as dirt by everyone, titled or not, who didn't work at all. They knew all this, and loathed it, and yet, when they came out here, they allowed the germs of the very same sort of thing to get root in the virgin soil of this country until we find the elect of the people throwing off their allegiance to the people who have raised them and trusted them, for the sake of a riband or a star. . . . [When] in the fifties we got universal suffrage and a glorious constitution, one would have thought that a free people, in a brand new country, would have done something to separate the few good laws from the leprous ones, and have parted with the latter for ever. But no; they were English, and therefore good. And accordingly, the whole of the unjust laws of distress for rent, the complicated feudal barbarisms of real property law, the anomalous and cruel laws which snatch the child from the innocent mother in cases of separation, the vile law which enables judges to tell juries that a poor man's daughter's honour is worth less in the eyes of the law than that of a rich man's daughter, the infamous doctrine of the "station in life"--all these things and many more, cruel in operation and anti-democratic in nature, were meekly tolerated by our alleged democracy, and are to the present day.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently ignorant of the staunch republican and utopian writings of some of its predecessors, O'Dowd's generation determined to create anew, rejecting the hypocrisies of the past.

In each of the diverse paths which Australian writers followed in the 1880's, '90's and early 1900's, American thought again figured prominently. But in the aftermath of the Civil War, most Australians looked at America--as Lang, Deniehy and Harpur earlier had--with no illusions about its infallibility. America after the Civil War came

to symbolize industrial ruthlessness. Indeed, by 1901, as one historian has put it, to Australians "the United States . . . was not the land of the free and the home of the brave, but the land of the wage slave and the home of trusts, corporations, and millionaires."<sup>8</sup> Australian writers and thinkers, perusing their options carefully and seeing their country as uniquely conducive to social experiment, began to focus attention on individual American writers. They weren't interested in the political and financial leaders of the United States, but looked to the much-maligned seers, social reformers and poets.

More and more Australians in the late nineteenth century considered socialism to be the new Christianity. Prophets, therefore, had to be found for a society fortunate enough to be in a position to learn from Old and New World mistakes. A disparate group of Americans and their emphatically democratic writings gained prominence on the Australian stage in this atmosphere of protest, labour demands and utopian speculation: republicans in the 1880's once more consulted Thomas Paine's revolutionary writings and publicized the American Declaration of Independence, evidently unaware of their own country's radical past; Single-Taxers looked to Henry George, the high prophet of their movement, and his Progress and Poverty (1879) and Social Problems (1884); idealists with utopian thoughts on their minds read Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward: 2000-1887 (1888) and Ignatius Donnelly's Caesar's Column (1890), and sought detailed information about American utopian communities such as Icaria (established in 1848 by Étienne Cabet); socialists and bushmen eagerly discussed and

distributed not only the works of George, Bellamy and Donnelly, but other reformist literature such as Laurence Gronlund's The Coöperative Commonwealth (1884), Henry Demarest Lloyd's Wealth Against Commonwealth (1894) and the pamphlets of Daniel de Leon, Jack London, Eugene Debs, Vincent St. John and E.A. Trautmann; while the hardy band of Australian "regenerated Democrats and raving Whitmanics," to use O'Dowd's phrase, unashamedly exalted their Walt's Leaves of Grass, at times pausing long enough to reflect on the transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau as well.<sup>9</sup> Inspired by the breadth of American writers available (and one should add that Mark Twain and Bret Harte had a keen local following, while Poe, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Joaquin Miller, Holmes and John Hay were also read<sup>10</sup>), Australian literature during this period assumed a vitality, sense of rebellion and literary catholicity which would not reappear until the late 1960's and early '70's.

What led Australian writers in the late nineteenth century to consult their American counterparts? The answer serves to underline the close, though at the time undetected ties between Harpur's generation and O'Dowd's. When Lang contemplated Australia as "the future America of the Southern Hemisphere," he acknowledged the political credentials of Franklin, Otis and Patrick Henry.<sup>11</sup> When Deniehy formulated the framework of his ideal Australian republic and its literature, he went to Jefferson, Channing, Emerson, Parker and Brownson for help. When Harpur asked:

Why pile we stone on stone, to raise  
 Jail, Fane, or Public Hall;--why plan  
 Fortress or Tower for future days;  
 Yet leave unbuilt, to wrong or guilt,  
 The nobler pile--the Mind of Man?<sup>12</sup>

--he gave literary expression to his search for "a Nation's thinking power"; Emerson supplied him with the inspiration for an effective answer. Similarly, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when Australians searched once again for a more thoughtful and humane social order, their recognition of the experience and, above all, wisdom of certain American rebellious thinkers stimulated the Australian/American literary connection into new life. With Deniehy's dream of a republic of yeoman-farmers in shreds (for the pastoralists and squatters had successfully defied government efforts to establish communities of small-scale farmers), Australians began changing their priorities, stressing the "union movement as against the trades union."<sup>13</sup> They regarded Labour's struggle as more than just a political issue; it illuminated the much larger philosophical question of human destiny.

As a result of this new emphasis, lively interaction between Australians and Americans took place. John Farrell (1851-1904), for example, initiated a long correspondence with Henry George; O'Dowd and his Melbourne group of "personal mates" began a brief but fruitful correspondence with Walt Whitman; Single-Tax Leagues, Bellamy Clubs and debating societies dedicated to the discussion of Leaves of Grass, multiplied throughout Australia; and Henry George and Mark Twain

both made extensive lecture tours of Australia in the 1890's.<sup>14</sup> Three aspects of this interaction need to be mentioned; all deserve close study. Firstly, the works of Australians such as Farrell and William Lane (1861-1917) suggest that this generation, like the previous one, responded warmly to the egalitarian tone of their American counterparts--in such a way as to recall Deniehy's special regard for Emerson's ability to talk "with you as an equal in every sense."<sup>15</sup> Of Henry George, Lane declared, echoing Lincoln, that he "wrote in the language of the people for the people and with a force and fire that only one of the people could feel. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, despite this appreciation of the democratic values of the American writer, and despite constant expressions of disgust for national and literary subservience, some of the more prominent writers of O'Dowd's generation display a curious tendency to hero-worship. Frank Cotton, a contemporary of Farrell and O'Dowd, voiced a typical Australian reaction to Henry George when he described him as a "hero, sage, and 'The Prophet of San Francisco'. . . ."<sup>17</sup> Poems of the period depicted George in similarly uncritical language. Farrell, for example, published two sonnets dedicated to him, the first of which begins:

Seer of the new great dawn! whose strong voice rings  
 Across drear wastes of life where Life grows pale  
 And cries "Arise!" to wan-cheeked men who wail  
 Beneath the iron feet of men-made kings.  
 Speak! and let light, as from an angel's wings,  
 Flood this dark world. . . .<sup>18</sup>

Edward Bellamy, too, was popularly perceived in reverent, indeed divine terms. Lane publicly acknowledged him as his master, on one occasion rhetorically inquiring (in his paper, the Worker):

If Jesus is not with the Labour Movement, where is he? Is there not in 'Looking Backward' the Christ-spirit breathing?<sup>19</sup>

O'Dowd and his Melbourne group of plasterers, drapers and boot-shop assistants praised Walt Whitman in even more explicit phrases of veneration. The opening salutations of O'Dowd's letters to Whitman best reflect their attitude. One letter begins "Dear Walt, my beloved master, my friend, my bard my prophet and apostle."<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, the dream of Australia as a better América, the location for mankind's last chance, not only resurfaced in the last decades of the nineteenth century, it at times dominated the thoughts of some of Australia's leading writers. In 1859, Charles Harpur exhorted all Australian writers to come to

recall the past, enchant the present, and realise the future--restore the lost, renew the changed, enrich the poor, and reunite, by an immortalising picture-power, the living and the dead.<sup>21</sup>

Though almost certainly unaware of Harpur's hopes for the future, members of O'Dowd's generation took up the challenge to establish an ideal community--O'Dowd himself, as we shall see, even echoing Harpur's actual words. Reminiscent of Young American spokesmen earlier in the century, the ultra-nationalist Bulletin (1887) declared



that "it is demonstrable that the intellect of the [Australian] people is freer, stronger and more original than in the age-old states of Europe, and even of America. To solve the problems over which the oppressed masses of northern nations are now poring in vain is the destiny of Australia. . . ."22 Australian expression of what R.W.B. Lewis has termed the "Adamic myth" was particularly common at this time.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Heney (1862-1928), for example, prophesied that from a

mother-city shall go forth  
 Tribe after tribe of her most valed sons.  
 Whether their steps incline to south or north  
 Or where the western wild their coming shuns,  
 A new world waits them and a future waits. . . .24

John Farrell's concept of the dream was coloured by an even more excited anticipation of the future. He projected that

"Here will we found a manlier English race --  
 A world-like nation, strong and kind and free,  
 Whose name through all the aftertime, shall be  
 High among names, unsullied by disgrace. . . .

And, with fair Peace's white, pure flag unfurled,  
 Our children shall, upon this new-won shore --  
 Warmed by all sorrows that have gone before --  
 Build up the glory of a grand New World."25

As Farrell saw it, Australia now constituted the nation of innocence and unlimited potential. The country with a manifest destiny.

In his first five books (1903-12<sup>26</sup>), Bernard O'Dowd frequently gave his Australian version of the "Adamic myth." His first book, Dawnward? (1903), begins with the poem "Australia," in which he asks:

'Last sea-thing dredged by sailor Time from Space,  
Are you a drift Sargasso, where the West  
In halcyon calm rebuilds her fatal nest?  
Or Delos of a coming Sun-God's race?'<sup>27</sup>

The last line emphasizes O'Dowd's determination to cling to the possibility of a bright future for his country despite the hardship and disappointments of the previous decade, with its severe drought (1890-2) and crucial worker defeats at the hands of government and landed interests. But his vision was gradually darkening. Behind the facade of optimistic rhetoric in his long meditative poem, The Bush (1912), one senses growing resignation. For decades, idealistic Australians had faithfully held to the belief that the new era was theirs alone to inaugurate. However, O'Dowd summed up the feeling prevalent in the years just prior to the outbreak of World War I when he bitterly appraised the present and posited what he called "Hy-Brasil" in the again-distant future:

Where is Australia, singer, do you know?  
 These sordid farms and joyless factories,  
 Mephitic mines and lanes of pallid woe?  
 Those ugly towns and cities such as these  
 With incense sick to all unworthy power,  
 And all old sin in full malignant flower?  
 No! to her bourn her children still are faring:  
 She is a Temple that we are to build:  
 For her the ages have been long preparing:  
 She is a prophecy to be fulfilled!<sup>28</sup>

In Democratic Vistas (1871), a disillusioned Whitman attacked the values of contemporary America, publicizing the gap between the real and his ideal America: "Today, ahead, though dimly yet, we see,

in vistas, a copious, sane, gigantic offspring. For our New World I consider far less important for what it has done, and what it is, than for the results to come."<sup>29</sup> So too O'Dowd, like Harpur before him, struggled to come to terms with his equally formidable concepts of present and future Australia. In "Poetry Militant" (1909), he stressed the need for the Australian poet of the future to be original, a seer and "an Answerer, as Whitman calls him, of the real questions of his age. . . ."<sup>30</sup> Written about the same time as The Bush and beginning with the assertion that he lived "in a community hypnotized by commercialism," the address is seminal.<sup>31</sup> Not only does it link him closely with Harpur, whose 1859 lecture, "The Nature and Office of Poetry," dealt with almost identical themes, but it seems a fitting symbolic conclusion to a period of widespread activity between Australian and American writers. Throughout the discourse, O'Dowd recalls Whitman's sentiments.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, he concludes by quoting the last two stanzas of "Song of the Answerer":

The words of the true poems give you more than poems,  
 They give you to form for yourself poems, religions, politics,  
     war, peace, behaviour, histories, essays, daily life,  
     and everything else,  
 They balance ranks, colours, races, creeds, and the sexes,  
 They do not seek beauty, they are sought,  
 Forever touching them, or close upon them follows beauty,  
     longing, fain, love-sick.

They prepare for death, yet are they not the finish, but  
     rather the outset;  
 They bring none to his or her terminus, or to be content  
     and full;  
 Whom they take, they take into space, to behold the birth  
     of stars, to learn one of the meanings,  
 To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the cease-  
     less rings, and never be quiet again.<sup>33</sup>

From at least as early as 1870 to the beginning of World War I, Whitman exerted a considerable influence on Australian writers--among them, O'Dowd, Thomas Bury, William Gay, Francis Adams, Thomas Heney and John Le Gay Brereton.<sup>34</sup> All appreciated his transcendentalism, spirited nationalism, humanism and irrepressible optimism.<sup>35</sup> Whitman was, for many Australians, the great Democrat. In July, 1883, the Bulletin labelled him "more than a writer of mystic runes--he is a great-hearted man, who loves his country and his countrymen, and the whole world, with an undying love."<sup>36</sup> But perhaps John Le Gay Brereton (1871-1933) grasped the nature of the Australian response to Whitman more ably than any of his contemporaries when he said that the American poet was "thoroughly imbued with the principle of UNIONISM. . . ."<sup>37</sup>

In the Australian imagination Whitman crossed barriers, for he was a celebrated poet with a profound social and political awareness. O'Dowd made a number of specific claims for him: he asserted, most importantly, that the writings of his American "Comrade" encouraged the world-wide founding of "an internal brotherhood movement"; he felt that Whitman, more than any other poet, dignified "the common average man"; and he celebrated Whitman's notion of the greatest city having the greatest men and women.<sup>38</sup> As O'Dowd put it in one of his early lectures (1891?):

Walt Whitman is certainly foremost among those whose aim is to build up the masses by building up grand individuals, not only grand moral and intellectual [beings], but superb physical beings.<sup>39</sup>

In later years, after Whitman's death in 1892, O'Dowd gained a more mature perspective on his own personal relationship with the American poet and on the desirable extent of Whitman's effect on Australian society and literature. He maintained in 1899 that "while I don't say that we must take him as an Australian Bible, I do say that our hope of democratic salvation lies in our evolving for ourselves and in ourselves an attitude of mind in Victorian matters something similar to that which inspired Whitman in his treatment of American matters."<sup>40</sup> The exuberance and heat of youth had begun to disappear. O'Dowd had grown more pragmatic, more consciously doctrinal, which was a pity because some extraordinary literature came out of that short but intoxicating meeting between Australian youth and innocence, and American age and experience, when O'Dowd and Whitman energetically compared notes in the last two years of Whitman's life. In this correspondence, the Australian/American literary tradition really blossoms.

In his first letter (March 3, 1890) O'Dowd delicately chided Whitman for confining his "'Come, I will make the continent indissoluble' to America."<sup>41</sup> Whitman responded with customary warmth, wishing "to hear every thing & anything ab't you all -- and ab't the Australian bush & birds and life & toil & idiosyncrasies there -- & how it looks -- and all the sheep work &c: you please me more than you know by giving such things fully -- write often as you feel to & can. . . ."<sup>42</sup> And O'Dowd did write frequently, touching on a wide variety of subjects. The high point in the correspondence undoubtedly occurred when O'Dowd--

the young poet's sensibility rising to the challenge of articulating the strange and wondrous affinity he felt with his mentor--grasped the special nature of their relationship by acclaiming Whitman's ability to make

those great [Australian] gum trees array themselves in such new meanings for us. Our amygdaline (Eucalyptus Amygdalina) once was your redwoods rival, now each towering over its native forest wafts comrade-greetings to the other, joining in tree-fashion "hands across the sea."<sup>43</sup>

Whitman, in turn, delighted that his "missives" had "struck deep" into the hearts of enthusiastic Australian democrats, responded in now-familiar terms by saying: "I write to you as an elder brother might to the young bro's & sisters. . . ."<sup>44</sup> The statement is representative; he sums up a century of Australian/American interaction, stressing equality and the intimacy of family.

Whitman left a substantial legacy to O'Dowd and his "mates" in the south. To be reminded of it, they only had to look at the title-page of any of the editions of Leaves of Grass from the 1876 version to the final "death-bed" edition (1891-2). Signing his name for the world, Whitman beckoned:

Come, said my Soul,  
Such verses for my Body let us write, (for we are one,) That should I after death invisibly return,  
Or, long, long hence, in other spheres,  
There to some group of mates the chants resuming,  
(Tallying Earth's soil, trees, winds, tumultuous waves,) Ever with pleas'd smile I may keep on,  
Ever and ever yet the verses owning. . . .<sup>45</sup>

The very language seemed unconsciously directed at his Australian brotherhood.

## CONCLUSION ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> John Farrell, "No," in How He Died and Other Poems (Sydney: Turner and Henderson, 1887), p. 29.
- <sup>2</sup> See H.M. Green, History, I, 498-510.
- <sup>3</sup> Bernard O'Dowd (1866-1953).
- <sup>4</sup> See above, chapter VI.
- <sup>5</sup> Henry Lawson, "Eureka (A Fragment)," in Poems (Sydney: John Ferguson, 1979), p. 10.
- <sup>6</sup> See Inglis, The Australian Colonists, pp. 205-6.
- <sup>7</sup> Bernard O'Dowd, "Walt Whitman: His Meaning to Victorians--Democracy v. Feudalism," The Tocsin, April 13, 1899, reprinted in A.L. McLeod, ed., Walt Whitman in Australia and New Zealand (Sydney: Wentworth Press, 1964), pp. 110-111.
- <sup>8</sup> Ruth Megaw, "The American Image in Australia," in Pacific Circle 2, ed. Norman Harper (St. Lucia, Queensland: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1972), p. 73.
- <sup>9</sup> See, for example, L.G. Churchward, "The American Influence on the Australian Labour Movement," Historical Studies, V, No. 19 (Nov. 1952), 258-77; Robin Gollan, "American Populism and Australian Utopianism," Labour History, No. 9 (Nov. 1965), 15-21; F. Picard,

"Henry George and the Labour Split of 1891," Historical Studies, VI, No. 21 (Nov. 1953), 45-63; B. Mansfield, "The Background to Radical Republicanism in New South Wales in the Eighteen-Eighties," Historical Studies, V, No. 20 (May 1953), 338-48; Gavin Souter, A Peculiar People: Australians in Paraguay (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1968), pp. 16-19; Robin Gollan, "The Australian Impact," in Edward Bellamy Abroad, ed. Sylvia E. Bowman (New York: Twayne, 1962), pp. 119-36; McLeod, *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Grace Diana Ailwood-Keel, "Homespun Exotic: Australian Literature, 1880-1910: A Study of Writing in Australia in the 'Nationalist Period,' with Particular Emphasis on Overseas Influence," Diss. Univ. of Sydney 1978, pp. 88-9, 287, 361-2, 374, 389-92; Coleman O. Parsons; "Mark Twain in Australia," Antioch Review, XXI, No. 4 (Winter 1961-2), 455-68; Joseph Furphy [Tom Collins], Rigby's Romance (Broken Hill, 1905-6; rpt. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1946), pp. 8, 21, 70, 95, 129, 148, 210, 249; Lucy Frost, "Taking Yankee Drolleries Seriously: Bret Harte and Mark Twain," in American Studies Down Under, ed. Norman Harper (St. Lucia, Queensland: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976), pp. 126-42.

<sup>11</sup> Lang, Future America, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Harpur, "Finality," in Mitchell, p. 77.

<sup>13</sup> Gollan, "Australian Impact," p. 123.

<sup>14</sup> See Charles Albro Barker, Henry George (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 545-8, 674; McLeod, pp. 18-39; Churchward, "American Influence on the Australian Labour Movement," pp. 259-61;



Keel, p. 366; Henry George Jr., The Life of Henry George (Toronto: Poole Publishing, 1900), pp. 522-42; Parsons, pp. 455-68.

<sup>15</sup> Deniehy, "Frederick Robertson's Lectures," Southern Cross, November 12, 1859.

<sup>16</sup> Lane, in Boomerang, December 21, 1889, quoted in Picard, p. 47. See also, sections on Bellamy and Gronlund in Churchward, p. 259; Gollan, "Australian Impact," p. 125; Gollan, "American Populism," p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Picard, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> Farrell, How He Died, p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> Lang, in Worker, August 7, 1890, quoted in Gollan, "Australian Impact," p. 132.

<sup>20</sup> O'Dowd to Whitman, March 12, 1890, quoted in McLeod, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> See "Mr. Harpur's Lecture," Empire, October 3, 1859.

<sup>22</sup> "Australia's Destiny," Bulletin, VIII, No. 407 (Nov. 19, 1887), 4. The editorial begins: "Australia is a land of unlimited potentialities. Not alone in the finite space of human interest which industry and commerce can measure, but in the matter also of those higher and nobler objects in which the absolute happiness and relative freedom of the human family are comprised."

<sup>23</sup> See Lewis, American Adam, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Heney, "Ode in Commemoration of the Commencement of the Australian Epos," in Fortunate Days (Sydney: Turner and Henderson, 1886), p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Farrell, "No," in How He Died, pp. 32-3.

<sup>26</sup> O'Dowd's first five books were Dawnward? (Sydney: Bulletin Newspaper Co., 1903); The Silent Land and other Verses (Melbourne: Lothian, 1906); Dominions of the Boundary (Melbourne: Lothian, 1907); The Seven Deadly Sins, a Series of Sonnets, and other Verses (Melbourne: Lothian, 1909); The Bush (Melbourne: Lothian, 1912).

<sup>27</sup> O'Dowd, "Australia," in The Poems of Bernard O'Dowd (Melbourne: Lothian, 1941), p. 35. See also, "Our Land," in Poems, pp. 257-9.

<sup>28</sup> O'Dowd, "The Bush," in Poems, p. 208.

<sup>29</sup> Whitman, Democratic Vistas (1871), in Prose Works 1892, II, 362.

<sup>30</sup> O'Dowd, "Poetry Militant," in Poems, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> O'Dowd, in Poems, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> See Poems, pp. 4, 9, 28, 31-2.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Poems, pp. 31-2. See Whitman, Leaves of Grass, I, 143.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Henry Kendall, "Notes upon Men and Books--Walt Whitman," Freeman's Journal, December 16, 1871, quoted in Leonie Kramer and A.D. Hope, Kendall (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1973), pp. 96-103; McLeod, *passim*; Jones, Radical Cousins; Ailwood-Keel, pp. 469-85; Elliott and Mitchell, Bards, pp. 119-20; William Gay, Walt Whitman: The Poet of Democracy (Melbourne: E.A. Petherick, 1893); William Gay, Complete Poetical Works (Melbourne: Lothian, 1911); Francis W.L. Adams, Songs of the Army of the Night (Sydney: Author, 1887); John Le Gay Brereton, The Song of Brotherhood, and Other Verses (London: G. Allen, 1896).

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, McLeod, pp. 9-10, 19, 22, 25, 46, 71-2, 105.

<sup>36</sup> Bulletin, July 14, 1883, quoted in Ailwood-Keel, p. 469.

<sup>37</sup> Brereton, "Hints on Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass,'" Hermes,

July 25, August 14, 1894, quoted in McLeod, p. 70.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in McLeod, pp. 23, 30, 42. See also, pp. 28, 32, 97.

<sup>39</sup> O'Dowd, "The Democratic Idea in Whitman's Works" (1891?),  
quoted in McLeod, p. 42.

<sup>40</sup> O'Dowd, "Walt Whitman: His Meaning to Victorians--Democracy  
v. Feudalism," Tocsin, April 13, 1899, quoted in McLeod, p. 113.

See also, p. 141.

<sup>41</sup> O'Dowd to Whitman, March 12, 1890, quoted in McLeod, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> Whitman to O'Dowd, October 3, 1890, quoted in McLeod, p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> O'Dowd to Whitman, September 1, 1890, quoted in McLeod, p. 24.

<sup>44</sup> Whitman to O'Dowd, October 3, 1890, quoted in McLeod, p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> Whitman, Leaves of Grass, III, opp. 650.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<u>ADB</u>	<u>Australian Dictionary of Biography</u>
<u>DAB</u>	<u>Dictionary of American Biography</u>
<u>HRA</u>	<u>Historical Records of Australia</u>
<u>HRNSW</u>	<u>Historical Records of New South Wales</u>
<u>JRAHS</u>	<u>Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings</u>

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