

Australian Civilization

A Symposium edited by Peter Coleman

CONTRIBUTORS

*Robin Boyd : Vincent Buckley : C. M. H. Clark
S. Encel : Max Harris : Donald Horne : Robert Hughes
K. S. Inglis : James McAuley : Douglas McCallum
A. A. Phillips : A. G. L. Shaw : Ronald Taft
Hugo Wolfsohn*



F. W. CHESHIRE

Melbourne : Canberra : Sydney

*First published June 1962
Reprinted October 1962*

*Printed in Australia
for F. W. Cheshire Pty Ltd
338 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
Garema Place, Canberra
and 18 Kingston Street, Haberfield, N.S.W.
by Halstead Press, Sydney*

*Registered in Australia
for transmission by post as a book*

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Notes on Contributors</i> | vi |
| <i>Introduction: THE NEW AUSTRALIA</i> by Peter Coleman | 1 |
| 1. THE OLD TRADITION by A. G. L. Shaw | 12 |
| 2. THE STATE OF LIBERTY by Douglas McCallum | 26 |
| 3. MORALS AND MANNERS by Max Harris | 47 |
| 4. THE LOOK OF AUSTRALIA by Robin Boyd | 68 |
| 5. FAITH by C. M. H. Clark | 78 |
| 6. INTELLECTUALS by Vincent Buckley | 89 |
| 7. THE SCHOOLS by A. A. Phillips | 105 |
| 8. LITERATURE AND THE ARTS by James McAuley | 122 |
| 9. PAINTING by Robert Hughes | 134 |
| 10. THE DAILY PAPERS by K. S. Inglis | 145 |
| 11. BUSINESSMEN by Donald Horne | 176 |
| 12. THE MYTH AND MIGRANTS by Ronald Taft | 191 |
| 13. POWER by S. Encel | 207 |
| 14. FOREIGN POLICY by Hugo Wolfsohn | 225 |
| <i>Index</i> | 243 |

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ROBIN BOYD, F.R.A.I.A., Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, is a partner in the firm of Romberg and Boyd, and author of *Victorian Modern* (1947), *Australia's Home* (1956, paper back edition 1961), *The Australian Ugliness* (1960), and a descriptive account of Australian architecture for older children, *The Walls Around Us* (1962).

VINCENT BUCKLEY is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Melbourne. Formerly he was the first Lockie Fellow in Creative Writing and Australian Literature. He was co-editor of *Prospect*, and has published *The World's Flesh* (poems, 1954), *Masters in Israel* (poems, 1961), *Essays in Poetry: Mainly Australian* (criticism, 1957), *Poetry and Morality* (criticism, 1959), and edited *Incarnation and the University* (1957) and *Australian Poetry* (1958).

C. M. H. CLARK is Professor of History at the Australian National University. His publications include two volumes of *Select Documents in Australian History* (1955, 1956) and *A History of Australia*, Volume 1 (1962).

PETER COLEMAN is Associate Editor of the *Bulletin*, Sydney, and author of a book on censorship in Australia entitled *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition* (1962).

S. ENCEL, Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the Australian National University, is author of *Cabinet Government in Australia* (1962).

MAX HARRIS is co-editor of *Australian Letters* and *Australian Book Review* and Chairman of the national TV programme "The Critics". Formerly he was co-editor of *Angry Penguins* which first published the poetical works of Ern Malley. His publications include *The Vegetative Eye* (a novel) and three volumes of verse.

DONALD HORNE is a former editor of the *Bulletin*, Sydney.

ROBERT HUGHES, artist, is art critic on *Nation*, Sydney.

K. S. INGLIS is Reader in History at the University of Adelaide. His publications include *Hospital and Community* (1958), *The Stuart Case* (1961), and an essay, "The Australian Catholic Community", in *Catholics and the Free Society* (edited by H. Mayer, 1961).

JAMES MCAULEY is Professor of English at the University of Tasmania. Previously he taught Government at the Australian School of Pacific Administration. Since 1956 he has edited *Quadrant*. He has published two volumes of verse *Under Aldebaran* (1946) and *A Vision of Ceremony* (1956), and a volume of essays, *The End of Modernity* (1959).

DOUGLAS MCCALLUM is Senior Lecturer in Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of Sydney, and has published articles in a variety of learned journals.

A. A. PHILLIPS is Senior English Master, Wesley College, Melbourne, critic, lecturer and broadcaster, and writer. Apart from textbooks, he is the author of *The Australian Tradition* (1958).

A. G. L. SHAW is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Sydney, and author of *The Economic Development of Australia* (1945), *The Story of Australia* (1954), and *Modern World History* (1959).

RONALD TAFT is Reader in Psychology at the University of Western Australia. He holds post-graduate degrees from Columbia University and the University of California where he specialized in social psychology. He has published articles and books on a variety of topics including the chapter on Australia in *The Institutions of Advanced Societies* (edited by Arnold Rose, for the University of Minnesota Press).

H. A. WOLFSOHN is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, University of Melbourne. He contributed the chapter on foreign policy in *Policies for Progress* (edited by A. Davies and G. Serle, 1954), and he edited and partly wrote *International Relations in the Modern World* (published by the Australian Army Educational Corps, 1955). In 1958-59 he worked in Calcutta for the Indian Government on problems of industrialization of underdeveloped countries.

PETER COLEMAN

Introduction : The New Australia

ONE OF THE GREAT turning-points in Australian history, according to R. M. Crawford, was the second half of the 1930's. "Rarely indeed," he claims in his *An Australian Perspective*, "is one given the means of dating the coming of age of a new nation so precisely as they are given in this case."

Unfortunately he only gives a few examples to illustrate this large suggestion and most of these are taken from the limited if significant field of public policy—the great expansion of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the decision systematically to recruit graduates to the Commonwealth Public Service, the cultural patronage of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. To strengthen his point other illustrations of a new direction in public policy could also be mentioned—the expansion in 1938 of the Commonwealth Literary Fund's patronage of literature, the establishing in 1937 of a Literature Censorship Board of scholars designed to liberalize the Commonwealth's crude and philistine censorship policies, and the Federal Government's decision in 1938 to welcome Jewish refugees from Europe.

But if these developments in public policy do not seem enough to justify the expression "watershed in Australian life", one may also add, selecting widely from the more general life of the country, Crawford's example from architecture—the emergence of Roy Grounds; or the formation of the Contemporary Art Society in 1938; or the new confidence in business which, despite the depression, was expanding by 1936 at a greater rate than ever before and beginning the full industrialization of the country; or the penetration of the key trade unions by the Communist Party; or the establishing in 1937 of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action.

In the light of all these random examples, Crawford's point seems more than plausible: the ground was obviously being cleared for some new stage in Australian life, but the questions still remain how radically these changes altered Australian life and whether they justify Crawford's optimistic expression, "the coming of age".

It is to questions such as these that this symposium is directed.

One way of briefly summing up these various changes is to see them as an aspect of the retreat of the Australianist legend

and the way of life it expressed and encouraged. This way of life never dominated the country; it was always limited by cultural, religious and professional traditions to which it was alien; but when the expression "the Australian way of life" was confidently used, it was the life expressed in this legend or ideology that was meant. The legend reached its fullest expression towards the end of the nineteenth century when in a limited way it gave some direction to the life of those Australians who were moved by it. It produced certain famous phrases such as "temper democratic, bias offensively Australian" and certain key words such as "White Australia" and "mateship", it was largely based on the bushman's egalitarian attitudes, it was expressed in some of Henry Lawson's poems and to a lesser extent in his stories, its main organ was J. F. Archibald's *Bulletin*, it was part of the ideology of the Labor Party. Whatever else it was, it was radical, populist, nationalist, racialist.

The legend enshrined a number of apparently incompatible attitudes,¹ two of which are relevant in a discussion of civilization: naïve humanism and nihilism. Taking humanism first, any critical mind surveying Australian life in the nineteenth century was struck at once by the thinness of cultural life, by the lack of serious literature, architecture, music and so on, but he was also often forced to conclude with J. A. Froude in *Oceana* (1886): "It is hard to quarrel with men who only wish to be innocently happy." What they lacked in culture they made up for, so to speak, in democracy.

This naïve humanism, this ideal of "innocent happiness" was a positive if limited virtue. It was the genuine democratic emotion. It was shared by the middle class as well as the working class, and its influence is obvious in Australian scepticism about British middle-class culture. Samuel Alexander, for example, liked to think of his space-time philosophy as "democratic" and John Passmore remarks in his *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*: "It is not absurd to suggest that his Australian origins had a certain effect upon his revolt against Absolutism in metaphysics." But as far as the Australianist legend was concerned its main expression was the concept of mateship, and along with the democratic "innocence" went the snarl of the collectivist bully. Lawson struck a characteristic note in his lines: "An' the rich an' educated shall be educated down."

¹ For different interpretations of this legend see Vance Palmer's *The Legend of the Nineties* and Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend*.

The other characteristic of the legend relevant here is nihilism. The legend placed a great value on frenzy, nervous energy, violence, vitality and robustness. This brought together attitudes involved in anything from popular imperialism, commercial plundering, heroic balladry, to the cult of the bacchanal, the cult of sport, the singing of vindictive folk songs, or the preaching of bullying racialism: "No nigger, no chinaman, no lascar, no kanaka, no purveyor of cheap coloured labour is an Australian," said the *Bulletin*, which in 1888 devoted a special issue to the expulsion of the Chinese.

This part of the Australianism is obviously not humanistic. Francis Adams noted it in his *The Australians* (1893): "They wear themselves out in all they do, mistaking the exercise of nervous energy for pleasure . . . The average temper of Australians more and more shows itself either indifferent or hostile to the outer world . . . Everyone is at heart a pessimist." Max Harris in his chapter in this symposium even speculates about a Camusian intimation of "absurdity" in the Australian temper.

The co-existence of these characteristics—humanism and nihilism, democracy and violence, the open smile and the broken bottle, is not paradoxical. It is to be expected among the people of a "new" country many of whose settlers had, like the convicts, never really been part of the parent civilization, or like the free settlers driven here by penury, ambition or sheer discontent, had more or less scorned it. Never having enjoyed and in any case being either unwilling or unable to live the British or European way of life, with its conventions, pieties and hierarchy, the Australians, or rather the Australianists, persuaded themselves that all they needed was their own good nature; and the vacuum was filled with vitality and robustness. The humanism and the nihilism supplemented each other.

What difference did this democratic-nihilistic complex make to Australian civilization? It is of course impossible when a civilization declines, to establish precisely how much is due to alien pressures and how much to internal corruption. In any Australian discussion the amount of internal corruption must be allowed for: Douglas McCallum in his chapter stresses that the great professional traditions have always been weak in Australia. But with this qualification made, the influence of Australianism on the institutional framework of civilization, on the ideas of Art, the State, Church, University and so on, is obvious.

The *Bulletin* expressed the characteristic attitude to universities in 1887: "The University in its absurd reverence for the extrinsic and the foreign, goes outside the literature, the language, the life and the history of its own country to seek for specious inspiration in a museum of antiquities, to burrow for worthless curiosities in the ruined catacombs and dusty cromlechs." As for the old ideology of State and Parliament, it could not thrive in a country where, as the *London Times* said on 31 August 1903, the people have "been known to send a member to Parliament much as a boy puts pennies in the slot of some mechanical device—just to see what happens". The Australianist attitude to literature is indicated by its use of the summary word "yarn", which limited the imagination to tales that were amusing, exciting or sentimental but always trivial, and by its obsession with Australianity and bushwhackery as themes—or perhaps as techniques to glamourize the lives and prejudices of the urban masses who demanded this literature.

Some of the contributors to this symposium deal with other aspects of this question. The incompatibility between European culture and Australianist temperament is treated as a permanent problem by A. A. Phillips when he discusses the problem of teachers attempting to initiate Australian children who assume happiness into European culture which assumes unhappiness. Dealing with religious institutions, Manning Clark shows how the incompatibility between their doctrines of man's depravity and the virtue of poverty on the one hand, and a society which assumed man's good nature and the virtue of prosperity on the other, helped reduce the churches to either the moral branch of the police force or to social clubs. In his chapter Robin Boyd shows how what I have called the democratic-nihilist complex involved a contempt for professional traditions and a cult of amateurism which made imaginative and beautiful architecture almost impossible, and Robert Hughes makes a similar point about Australian art.

Australianism in other words was an anti-civilized movement. This is not to say that many Australians did not maintain civilized standards. Despite a hostile environment, critical and liberal minds survived and sometimes even flourished in the arts, the universities, law and Parliament. Ronald Taft in his chapter stresses the contribution of the Australian middle-class tradition which, although ignored by the Australianists, helped maintain cultural life in the country, and Max Harris in his

chapter refers to the tradition of liberal gentlemen who, he says, have a greater right than Anthony Trollope's "nomad tribe" of shearers, bullockies and bushies to be called the builders of the country. But their ideology of civility and humanism could not for a time make itself heard above the drum-beaters of Australianism.

But Australianism could not last. By 1910 mechanization and the railways had destroyed the conditions of the "nomad tribe" that gave some content to the Australianist ideology, and the development of Japan, Russia and China had begun to undermine isolationist illusions which Hugo Wolfsohn describes in his chapter. The legend achieved its apotheosis in the Digger of World War I and then turned sour.

By the 1920's it was no longer able to provide any ideals, any sense of direction. This was "the mean decade", in Crawford's words, and although it was mean throughout the world it may have been meaner still in Australia for the reason Crawford suggests: that the 60,000 Australians killed overseas in the war included a high percentage of the men who, had they survived, would have been the élite of the country in the 1920's and 1930's.

The depression and the suffering that came with it actually intensified the meanness of the 1920's and added a new dimension of fear. With its fantasy of indefinite economic progress shattered and faced with the spectres of moral and political revolution, the community retreated to its thistle-roots and sought in repression and proscription the answers to its problems. This was the period when, after a Professor of Philosophy in Sydney had criticized some of the pieties of popular imperialism, the Premier of N.S.W. said his Government would do everything in its power to put a stop to such disloyal statements and the Chief Secretary urged the professor to get out of the country; the time when the Immigration Department's "dictation test" was used against a Czech Communist and a British woman whose morals were suspect; the time when the Federal Government's answer to Communism was to ban Communist books (thereby building a liberal platform for the Communists to stand on) and its answer to moral confusion was to ban all novels which would offend the Christian patriotic family man—that grandson of the wild colonial boy.

A. G. L. Shaw points out in his chapter that the Australian radical tradition always had a strong coercive element: in the 1930's this element was uppermost. The only answer to the

problems of moral disorder, political revolution, totalitarianism, industrialization, foreign affairs, was more coercion. The old ideology was played out; it survived for a time in vapid editorials, humourless cartoons and mechanical fiction. Perhaps its last flicker was, as James McAuley suggests, when the Communist Party adopted it for its purposes and, as it were, gave Henry Lawson a machine gun. By the late 1930's it was left to the liberals and sceptics who had kept civility and culture alive, who had not lost touch with what Archibald called the "ruined catacombs and dusty cromlechs", to pick up the pieces and start again. We had reached Crawford's Watershed.

* * * * *

One of the most significant expressions of a basic change in Australian life is the Counter-Revolution in Australian Historiography, which began after the war and which corresponds in some of its underlying ideas with what J. D. Pringle in his *Australian Accent* called the Counter-Revolution in Poetry. Pringle was referring to the reaction in the poetry of A. D. Hope, James McAuley and Harold Stewart to nationalism in Australian poetry, and the Counter-Revolution in Historiography is a reaction against the standard radical-leftist interpretation of Australian history which is given in nearly all textbooks, including the *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, V. G. Childe's *How Labour Governs*, H. V. Evatt's *Australian Labour Leader*, Brian Fitzpatrick's *A Short History of the Australian Labour Movement* and *The Australian People, 1788-1945*.²

On this view the theme of Australian history is the unfolding of Social Progress and the increasing initiative of the working class. It is marked by two characteristics: an almost completely uncritical attitude to the concept of Progress, an indifference to the decay of liberty and culture that may be involved in it, and by an obsession with the creative role of the Labor movement and a denial of the contributions of the middle classes, the churches, the universities and non-radical reformist and liberal movements. It not only had a narrow view of Progress, but it had an even narrower view of the

² Edward Shann's *Economic History of Australia* is an important exception, and in certain respects the Counter-Revolution represents a return to his work.

M. H. Ellis's biographies *Lachlan Macquarie*, *Francis Greenway* and *John Macarthur* are also exceptions.

sources of the progressive movement itself. It was the scholarly expression of the Australianist legend.³

Like the Whig legend in English history the radical legend in Australian history had illuminated a lot of ground and stimulated painstaking research into episodes which fit the interpretation. But it has tossed too many Australians on to "the dust-heap of history" and left the survivors in a sort of spiritual desert.

The post-war Counter-Revolution involves so many historians that it would be ridiculous to attribute it to the influence of any one man, but nevertheless the influence of Manning Clark has been of the greatest importance. By his questioning of the orthodox assumptions he did more than anyone else to release historians from the prison of the radical interpretation and to begin the systematic study of the neglected themes in our history, especially of religion. His attitude to the progressivist assumptions is seen in his Introduction to the *Select Documents, 1851-1900* when he is discussing the Australians of 1900: "So we leave them dumbfounded at their optimism, astounded that belief in material progress and mateship could be their only comforters against earth and sky, man and beast." The same Introduction explicitly rejects, for the period the book covers, the details of the radical interpretation: "First of all we had to reject one of the popular romantic interpretations of the period between 1851 and 1900. We did this with regret because the historians who put it forward did so with a warm heart. What we have in mind is their tendency to inflate the significance of Eureka, to attribute the movement for land reform, political democracy and the agitation against the Chinese to an unspecified and unidentified group of radicals on the gold fields. Then, with the result of such activities left delightfully vague, and skipping thirty years with a leap only equalled by the ram from Derbyshire, or our own Springheel Jack, we are invited to watch again the activities of these men (presumably their spiritual heirs) for a brief moment in camp at Barcardine in Queensland in April of 1891. Then there is an interval of seven years; the scene is changed to Kalgoorlie where we meet the diggers again, this time jostling Sir John

³ Brian Fitzpatrick's statement in his *Short History* is characteristic: "I take the view that the effort of the organized working class has been—perhaps could not but have been—beyond its class ends an effort to achieve social justice, whereas the possessing classes that have opposed Labor have not according to my reading, attempted to reform society, or to redistribute wealth in the interests of social justice."



Forrest, digging him in the ribs with an umbrella, and demanding the repeal of the odious 'Ten Foot' regulation. This will not do. The objection to it is not only the veneer of idealism with which it covers the activities of the diggers—a veneer which incidentally, they found embarrassing. It also gives approval to a simple rather than a broad conception of human motives. What is even more serious is the violence done to the truth and the emotions. After drinking in such an interpretation, and probably becoming drunk with it, the mind of the reader builds up a picture of a weak and tottering privileged group. The truth is that the century ends with neither their economic nor their political power seriously threatened."

In recent years historians have begun filling in the gaps. The history of religion, free thought, education, culture, business is being studied, and there is a growing concentration on the contribution of the middle class and of non-radical reformist ideologies.⁴ There are of course still large gaps: as Donald Horne points out in his chapter in this symposium, businessmen have been almost completely unwritten about in Australia, and Ken Inglis emphasizes the lack of any serious study of the influence of Australian newspapers. But the corner has been turned and the very creation in Sydney of a *Journal of Religious History* in 1960 is symbolic of the strength of the new interests.

In political history the emphasis is changing in a striking way. On the radical interpretation the Labor Party was the only creative party in Australian history, the only one worthy of and capable of serious study. It was seen as the creative initiator in both social policy and political organization. If historians criticized it for betraying ideals, it was because they believed that *only* in the Labor movement are creative ideals to be found. Before it was formed, on this view, there was properly speaking no party system at all, only a mess of middle-class factions and personalities held together for short periods by intrigues and deals. It was the organization of the Labor Party that forced the middle-class parties to organize on party lines and thereby saved responsible government in Australia.

⁴ Books include: T. P. Fogarty: *Catholic Education in Australia*, Melbourne, 1959; Geoffrey Blainey: *Gold and Paper*, Melbourne, 1959; Paquita Mawson: *A Vision of Steel*, Melbourne, 1959; R. M. Crawford: *An Australian Perspective*, Melbourne, 1960; A. G. Austin: *Australian Education, 1788-1900*, Melbourne, 1961; Manning Clark: *A History of Australia*, Vol. 1, Melbourne, 1962.

In social policy the movements which were genuinely progressive naturally merged with the Labor Party after it was formed in 1891 and since then that party has been the Party of Initiative, the others Parties of mere Resistance.⁵

A group of historians have now been establishing that this picture is a false one. They are sometimes polemically and unfairly labelled "the middle-class school" or "reactionary historians"⁶—unfairly because their work is not only disinterested but compatible with a leftist or even Marxist position. A Marxist, for example, would want to stress the contributions of the middle class and not to attribute a class consciousness to the working class almost at the First Settlement, as the orthodox radical historians tend to do. It is indeed a mystery how many of the orthodox historians ever get a reputation for working in the Marxist tradition.

The new historians show that before the Labor Party was formed there were already tendencies to organize in parties based on the conference, the pledge, and caucus, and that even without the fully developed party system responsible government was effective and the system worked. In the field of policy the same historians, and others working on similar lines, are both demonstrating the existence of a tradition of middle-class liberalism which did not and has not merged with Labor radicalism, and the contribution to Labor radicalism of influence normally taken as alien to it, for example, religious movements.

In discussing this new movement in historiography we are dealing with books-in-progress, monographs, articles, unpublished theses. But the ferment is real and in ten or twenty years' time, when the material is collected, someone will completely rewrite the whole of Australian history and the Counter-Revolution will be achieved.⁷

* * * * *

⁵ As Henry Mayer, who was one of the first to point this out, put it in 1956, the cards were always stacked against the non-Labor parties. If a non-Labor Government introduced a progressive measure, it was either attributed to Labor pressures or to a non-Labor party that was *really* a branch of the Labor Party: "Some conceptions of the Australian Party System", *Historical Studies*, November 1956.

⁶ The main writers meant are A. Martin, Bruce E. Mansfield and Peter Loveday.

⁷ Naturally the Counter-Revolution has its critics. Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend*, Melbourne, 1958, and Robin Gollan's *Radical and Working Class Politics. A Study of Eastern Australia, 1850-1910*, Melbourne, 1960, are recent lucid restatements of the radical interpretation.

One very important qualification must be made when discussing the basic theme of this symposium. The changes in Australian life which are dealt with are commonly referred to as a sign of "maturity" or "coming of age". These are ambiguous words, and like the allied words "sense of responsibility" can easily betoken a lowering of the level of civilization—if we take freedom and the enjoyment of rights to be essential to civilization. Because there has been an increase in institutionalized intelligence, whether in the universities, the various Commonwealth research organizations, the Australian Broadcasting Commission or the Treasury, it does not follow that the spirit of freedom is stronger. Perhaps the contrary is the case. Douglas McCallum argues in his chapter that, myths apart, the Australians have always been and still are a servile people, but perhaps the crucial chapter here is Vincent Buckley's: examining the new class of Australian intellectuals he finds them institutionally absorbed or job-conscious, suburban, ideologically unsophisticated, and very little concerned with the more intense manifestations of our culture. The intellectuals, in other words, do not seem likely to advance the feeble cause of liberty in Australia.

In a study of Australian attitudes to politics based on press correspondence during the 1959 controversy about the increases in salaries of Federal politicians, three Sydney political scientists found that most Australians think of politics in managerial terms, regarding the country as one big firm, with the politicians as the Board of Directors and the Prime Minister as the Chairman. Both those who supported and those who opposed the salary increases argued in terms of this analogy, the one saying the board deserved a rise and the other that it did not. This means, of course, that Australians think of the country in terms of enterprise, but it also indicates the passing of the old liberal-conservative ideology according to which a statesman is quite unlike a businessman and is a special kind of leader who maintains the peace of the country while everyone else, businessmen or professional men, trade unionists or churchmen, run the country and get things done.

If Australians continue to think of the Government as the source of all initiative—most of the examples Crawford gives of the "coming of age" in the 1930's are, as was mentioned above, the result of government initiative and in his chapter S. Encel stresses the growing centralization of decision-making in Australian political life—it

may well be that a later historian will see the new "maturity" as one aspect of the new managerialism which finally supplanted Australianism as the dominating ideology. It may not even be necessary to supplant it completely, since, as several contributors point out, Australianism has always had authoritarian undertones.⁸ Fidel Castro says his dictatorship is as "Cuban as a palm-tree"; an Australian dictatorship would readily claim to be as Australian as a gum-tree.

But signs of a real maturity are also clearly apparent in the growing willingness to criticize Australian life frankly and firmly, to see it clearly and wholly with all its limitations. This book is, I think, a product of this new spirit. It is a symposium, not a manifesto; there has been no attempt to reach agreement on all issues and no reader can possibly agree with all contributors. But one striking theme throughout is a severely critical note sometimes bordering on pessimism. It is, perhaps, the pessimism of these contributors which is the firmest ground for optimism in any discussion of Australian civilization.

⁸Cyril Pearl's *The Wild Men of Sydney*, London, 1958, is one of the few Australian historical books which recognize this.